

There is no EU-wide debate on EU-Turkey relations, but rather a set of overlapping yet distinct European debates reflecting the different actors, interests and ideas across the European mosaic. Talking Turkey II unpacks this complex reality by analysing the positions of national stakeholders across the EU, the reactions of Turkish stakeholders to these EU debates, as well as the influence of the US in shaping European debates on Turkey. The underlying aim of this research is to develop an EU Communication Strategy for Turkey. Based upon the findings of this project, a Communication Strategy ought to be differentiated and dynamic. It must also engage in a genuine two-way communication with its interlocutors. It is only by Talking Turkey and making such talk a two-way street that Turkey's European course may be strengthened in the long-term.

December 2008

13

*English
Series*

TALKING TURKEY IN EUROPE: TOWARDS A DIFFERENTIATED COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

edited by Nathalie Tocci

Talking Turkey II
IAI-TEPAV Project



Quaderni IAI

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction, Nathalie Tocci	5
1. “Mamma Li Turchi!”: Just An Old Italian Saying, Emiliano Alessandri and Ebru Canan	11
2. Polish Stakeholders in the EU-Turkey Debate, Adam Balcer	41
3. Austrian Stakeholders in the EU-Turkey Debate, Cengiz Günay	59
4. Greek Stakeholders in the EU-Turkey Debate, Kostas Ifantis and Eleni Fotiou	85
5. Danish Stakeholders in the EU-Turkey Debate, Dietrich Jung	103
6. Marcus Aurelius’ Foot: Looking for Turkey’s Project in the EU. An Interpretation of the French Debate on Turkey, Anne-Marie Le Gloannec	119
7. Wait-and-See Attitudes of German Stakeholders Towards EU-Turkey Relations, Barbara Lippert	135
8. UK Stakeholders in the EU-Turkey Debate, Richard Whitman	161
9. Attitudes of Key Stakeholders in Turkey Towards EU-Turkey Relations: Consensual Discord Or Contentious Accord? Asli Toksabay Esen and H. Tolga Bölükbaşı	175

10. The Effect of US Policy in the Middle East on EU-Turkey Relations, Henri J. Barkey	199
11. From Advocate to Stakeholder: US Policy Towards Turkey and Implications for EU-Turkey Relations, Ian O. Lesser	215
12. The Impact of Transatlantic Relations on the European Debate on Turkey, Hanna Ojanen	231
13. A European Communication Strategy on Turkey, Nathalie Tocci and Donatella Cugliandro	249
Notes on Contributors	279

INTRODUCTION

Nathalie Tocci

In 2007 IAI and TEPAV launched a network of European analysts assessing the public debates in several member states on EU-Turkey relations. The network analysed how perceptions and misperceptions shape European public debates on conditionality and impact in EU-Turkey relations. Beyond the creation of the network “Talking Turkey”, the project organized a set of events in Rome, Ankara, at the European Parliament in Brussels, as well as spin-off meetings in Washington, London and Helsinki to present its first publication: Tocci, N. (2007) (ed.) *Conditionality, Impact and Prejudice in EU-Turkey Relations*, Quaderno IAI (available in print and freely downloadable from: http://www.iai.it/sections/pubblicazioni/iai_quaderni/indiciEng.asp#9E).

1. Opening the Member State Box: European Stakeholders in the Turkey Question

This first cursory analysis revealed that member state positions not only vary widely, but also and most saliently, that within each member state different actors hold different views for different reasons on the Turkey question. In other words, Turkey is “talked about” in different ways both within and across EU member states, and the reasons for this are rooted in a diverse and dynamic set of interests and ideas. Having scratched the surface of this complex reality, in its second stage our project has adopted a constituency-based approach. The first phase provided valuable findings

regarding the specific themes raised in the context of the EU-Turkey debate in different member states (see Table 1). Yet gaining a deeper understanding of which actor within which member state frames the debate on Turkey by focusing on which specific theme is of the essence.

Table 1 - Core topics regarding Turkey's EU membership as revealed by Talking Turkey I

	Culture Religion	EU Institutions	Human Rights, Democracy	Security Foreign Policy Energy	Immigration	Economy (trade, FDI, EU budget, labour market)
Austria	x				x	x
Brussels		x	x	x		x
Denmark	x		x		x	
Finland			x	x		
France	x	x	x	x	x	x
Germany	x		x		x	x
Greece			x	x		
Poland	x	x		x		x
Slovenia				x		
UK				x		x

In order to communicate Turkey to the EU and the EU to Turkey, it is therefore necessary to identify and analyse far more clearly and carefully the positions of the stakeholders within different member states, concentrating on the following set of questions:

- *Who* are the principal stakeholders within each member state on the “Turkey question”? Which actors influence the state’s stance on EU-Turkey relations? Stakeholders include, where relevant, political parties, state institutions, the business community, the media, civil society actors and interest groups, academia, key personalities in the arts and entertainment, as well as “public opinion” at large.
- *What* is their position on Turkey? In this respect, the analysis focuses on stakeholder views and objectives regarding EU-Turkey relations and Turkey’s accession process.
- *Why* are these views and positions held? What are the underlying interests and beliefs underpinning these stakeholder positions, are these related to specific Turkey-related concerns (e.g., specific business interests in

Turkey) or are they instrumental to other objectives and beliefs (e.g., promoting a particular understanding of the EU, its institutional functioning and identity)?

- *How* do such stakeholders influence the overall position of each member state on the Turkey question? How influential are these actors, what kind of alliances do or might they forge, what is their overall influence within national debates?

- *What* are the implications for the development of a differentiated and dynamic Communication Strategy? Given national stakeholders, their views, their underlying interests and their influence over national policy-making, what does this entail for a Communication Strategy that resonates within each member state?

This set of questions is tackled by analysing eight member states: Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland and the UK. Of course, this list is far from comprehensive and other member states which play as critical a role in shaping European public debates on Turkey were excluded. This selection has been driven by the priority of considering cases which exhibit relatively negative (e.g., Austria, France), positive (Italy, UK, Poland) as well as mixed (Denmark, Germany and Greece) attitudes towards Turkey's accession process. This selection criteria was used in order to ensure as broad a representation as possible of the different actors, actions and arguments raised by Europeans in relation to Turkey. At the same time we wanted to keep the number of member state studies limited in number, in order for the final chapter to do justice to all authors.

Finally, we include a study on Turkey. While also analysing the positions, interests and beliefs of Turkish stakeholders in EU-Turkey relations, the focus of this chapter is somewhat different. The objective here is not that of analysing how Turkish stakeholders shape the European debate on Turkey, but rather to examine how Turkish actors have reacted to European debates on Turkey, and what impact this has had on the evolution of EU-Turkey relations as well as on Turkey's process of EU-driven reform.

2. The Transatlantic Dimension

In addition to this set of questions, Talking Turkey II broadens the scope of analysis beyond the EU. As evident in the results from Talking Turkey I, the positions of different member states and stakeholders within them are cru-

cially affected by their wider understanding of Turkey's role in its region and in the world. As such a second branch of our research delves into the "Impact of Global Trends" on European stakeholders regarding the Turkey question. Arguably, the most important source of external influence on European stakeholders' wider understanding of Turkey and its role in the world is the United States. US policies and positions have shaped European views, interests and objectives regarding Turkey by operating on three different levels:

- By interacting directly with Turkey and engaging Ankara in debate about its EU course;
- By influencing the positions of the EU, its member states and Euro-Atlantic institutions on the Turkey question;
- By shaping the overall regional and international milieu in which EU-Turkey relations unfold, including most saliently the situation in Iraq and the Middle East.

More specifically, US policies towards Turkey, the EU and the wider Middle East have different impacts on different stakeholders within the EU. During periods of intense US pressure on European capitals to launch and proceed with Turkey's accession process, such as for example in the run up to European Council meetings in 1999 or 2002, US lobbying efforts may have increased the propensity of some member states to proceed with Turkey's accession process (e.g., the UK and Italy), while backfiring with others (e.g., France). Yet the overall effect of US influence remains unclear. The evolution of US-Turkey, US-EU and US-Middle East relations affects the views of different European actors in ways that remain, to date, only vaguely and intuitively understood. Moreover, and far more interestingly for the purpose of this study, the effects of American policies have been differentiated both over time and across different actors in Europe. While some European stakeholders may be positively affected by some American policies, quite the opposite may be true for others. Understanding the nature of these differentiated impacts in time and place is another key question on our agenda.

We have thus added this "Transatlantic leg" to our work by delving into the following three questions:

- *How* do US-Turkey relations, and their evolution in the political, economic and security domains, affect the views of European stakeholders on the Turkey question?

- *How* do Transatlantic relations – bilateral and multilateral – affect the views of European stakeholders on the Turkey question?
- *How* do US policies in Turkey's neighbourhood influence the views of European stakeholders on the Turkey question?

3. A European Communication Strategy on Turkey

We conclude this project and study with a chapter dedicated to “An EU Communication Strategy on Turkey”. The leitmotif running through this project, encapsulated in its final chapter, is that a European Communication Strategy on Turkey ought to be differentiated and dynamic in order for it to be effective. It must be a Strategy that targets the right audience, with the right message, delivered by the right “messenger”, at the right time. It must also be a dynamic Strategy, having inbuilt within it the potential to react to specific “short-circuits” and trigger-points that may inflame and monopolize public debates in the years ahead.

For it to be credible, moreover, the aim of such a Strategy should *not* blindly promote Turkey's accession process. The participants in this project and this author are known sympathizers or supporters of Turkey's EU membership. Precisely because of this, we firmly believe that shaping a Communication Strategy as an explicit promotion campaign for Turkey would, in the long-run, do no justice to Turkey's membership ambitions. Arguments used and abused in public debate may at times be rife with misperceptions or outright prejudices. Yet even when they are, these debates often touch upon very real concerns, beliefs and interests, which must be engaged with and not simply dismissed. It is only by engaging with these debates, no matter how unpalatable they may be, that European debates on Turkey can be informed, enriched and influenced. It is only by listening, empathizing and only then reacting that Turkey's accession course can be redirected to a healthier and more constructive path. It is only by Talking Turkey and making such talk a two-way street that Turkey's European course may be strengthened in the long-term.

1. “MAMMA LI TURCHI!”: JUST AN OLD ITALIAN SAYING

*Emiliano Alessandri and Ebru Canan**

Italy’s traditionally positive attitude towards Turkey’s entry into the European Union is unlikely to reverse in the foreseeable future. The prospect of Turkey’s membership has received, to date, wide bipartisan support at the political level and is favorably seen by the business community. “Mamma li Turchi!” (Mum, the Turks are coming!), an old Italian saying dating back to the Saracen conquest of Sicily, hardly holds any serious meaning in Italy today.¹

Widespread support for closer EU-Turkey relations, including membership, does not mean, however, that there is no need for a “Communication Strategy” that “communicates Turkey to the EU and the EU to Turkey”. The picture is, in fact, far more complex than first meets the eye. Misperceptions, manipulation, if not outright prejudice, often underlie both the message of those who resist and those who favour Turkey’s membership. First, there is a problem of sheer knowledge: the debate on Turkey in Italy is both scarce and ill-informed. A by-product of this is the gap

* The authors wish to thank Istituto Paralleli of Turin, and in particular Dr. Rosita di Peri and Dr. Antonio Ferighi, for the critical research support they provided to this chapter. A special thanks also goes to IAI, TEPAV, the Turkish Embassy in Rome, the Italian Embassy in Ankara, and to all the interviewees who have kindly participated in this study. Unless otherwise indicated, personal interviews were carried out by E. Alessandri.

¹ See Gargiulo, R. (2006) *Mamma li Turchi. Il leone e la mezzaluna*, Pordenone, Biblioteca dell’Immagine.

between the views of Italian elite stakeholders, which are generally positive, and those of the Italian public, which are far more negative. Second, the development of an effective Communication Strategy should account for the views of important, albeit not mainstream, Italian stakeholders which oppose, sometimes resolutely, the prospect of Turkey's EU integration. Most prominent among these is the regionalist and eurosceptic *Lega Nord* (Northern League), which obtained a remarkable result in the 2008 general elections and now controls key ministries, including the Ministry of Interior. Whilst analyzing the motivations underlying this resistance we delve into whether the Italian debate on Turkey is "authentic" or rather acts as a proxy of other issues and debates.

This last observation introduces a further question worth discussing: Italy's "Christian public opinion". A big obstacle could, in fact, materialize and stand in the way of a constructive and focused discussion of EU-Turkey relations if the debate on Europe's identity (and the role of religion in defining it) would at some point intersect or merge with the nascent debate on Turkey's European future. Christian public opinion is divided on the issue and has not spawned in any case a large-scale "no-Turkey-in-the-EU movement" so far. Yet a "dynamic" Communication Strategy, which takes into account possible future developments as well, must account for the complex and evolving role of Italian Catholics.

In order to delve into these questions, this chapter is organized as follows: after a brief background section, the analysis first concentrates on the positions of Italy's major political and economic stakeholders and then turns to how the media has covered the issue. In this connection, some thoughts are offered regarding how Italian public opinion has approached the Turkey question. A specific section containing poll analysis is provided to complement the otherwise qualitative nature of this survey. The chapter concludes with a discussion about the implications that can be drawn from the Italian debate in order to develop an effective Communication Strategy.

1. Turkey-Italy Relations: Some Background Notes

Turkish-Italian relations date back to at least the 14th century when the Ottomans, the Genovese and Venetians established trade relations among each other. Recent history has been marked by fairly friendly relations between Turkish and Italian peoples, including during World War I and II (WWI and WWII). During the Cold War, Italy and Turkey were both mem-

bers of NATO and the Western European Union (WEU), both countries have provided military bases to the US and actively contributed to Western defense against the Soviet Union. In the European context, Italy has traditionally been one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Turkey’s EU membership. Diplomatic relations have generally been very cordial and rarely punctuated by tensions or misunderstandings. The two countries have established official annual bilateral summits to strengthen their dialogue. The 2007 “Strategy Paper” signed by the Italian and Turkish governments confirmed the commitment of both countries to deepen economic and political cooperation.

1.1 Economic Relations

Italy is currently Turkey’s third economic partner, but could be listed second after Germany, considering that Russia’s presence is mainly concentrated in the energy sector. Bilateral investments have increased steadily in recent years.² The stock of Italian foreign direct investment has reached USD 4,4 billion in 2006. Currently, 600 Italian firms and companies operate in Turkey. Italy imports from Turkey mainly leather, wood, clothing and shoes besides an increasing volume of machines and electronic appliances. Italian firms mainly export intermediate goods (such as plastic and metal products), agricultural goods, high-tech commodities, as well as “made-in-Italy” commodities. Overall, the trade balance has traditionally been in favour of Italy, thus strengthening further the perception of Turkey being an asset for Italy, with exports rising from USD 3,484 million in 2001 to USD 9,967 in 2007, and imports from USD 2,342 to USD 7,478 in the same period. This trade surplus is even greater if one includes commodities that enter the Turkish market through local branches of Italian firms or local firms owned by Italian companies.³ Energy is becoming a major area of cooperation between Turkey and Italy. The transport of natural gas to Italy via Turkey has increased in volume. The same can be said for the field of technology, especially new technologies such as biotechnology and nanotechnology, which see the scientific communities of both countries meeting regularly to share knowledge and develop common projects.

² Source: Istituto Nazionale per il Commercio Estero (2007) *Rapporti Paese Congiunto ICE/MAE*, 2nd semester <http://www.ice.gov.it/estero2/istanbul/default.htm>.

³ Ibid.

2. Political Stakeholders: Might the Green Light Turn Yellow?

2.1 *Solid Bipartisanship*

The Italian political landscape is characterized by widespread support for Turkey's EU membership. Italy has been one of the earliest and most committed supporters of Turkey's accession considering both specific Italian interests and general principles that have guided Italian foreign policy since WWII. There has been bipartisan support across the centre-left and centre-right spectrum for Turkey's EU accession. The Former President of the European Commission Romano Prodi, Italy's former head of government and leader of the centre-left actively supported Turkey's accession arguing that this would mark a crucial step towards drawing Europe's borders, and establishing its identity and status as an international actor: 'Turkey's membership in the EU is a strategic goal', he declared in 2007 during his visit to Ankara.⁴ Likewise, Silvio Berlusconi, current prime minister and leader of Italy's centre-right, has repeatedly declared his full support for Turkey's membership: '[w]e are your best friend in Europe', Berlusconi confided to Turkish prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan back in 2002: 'Italy will bring you into the EU'.⁵ Former Foreign Minister Massimo D'Alema, who in 1998 had been the target of harsh criticism from Ankara due to the decision not to extradite PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, reiterated Italy's firm support for Turkey's EU membership on several occasions.⁶ In an interview dated June 2007, D'Alema identified four reasons for supporting Turkey's membership: 1 - the common "Mediterranean" identity of Italy and Turkey and the desir-

⁴ See 'EU Commission Backs Turkey Talks', *CNN.com*, 6 October 2004, <http://edition.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/europe/10/06/eu.turkey.talks/index.html>. See also Prodi, R. (2004) *The Commission's Report and Recommendation on Turkey's Application Presentation to the European Parliament*, European Parliament, Brussels, 6 October <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/04/440&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>; and 'Prodi: La Turchia nella UE e' un traguardo strategico', *La Repubblica*, 22 January 2007, <http://www.repubblica.it/2007/01/sezioni/esteri/prodi-turchia/prodi-turchia/prodi-turchia.html>.

⁵ Quotes are drawn from Ansaldo, M. (2002) 'L'abbraccio di Berlusconi a Erdogan: «L'Italia vi porterà in Europa»', *La Repubblica*, 14 November, p. 18, <http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2002/11/14/080l.html>.

⁶ Romano, S. (2007) 'Il Caso Ocalan e il dilemma del governo D'Alema', *Corriere della Sera*, 23 June, p. 35, <http://www.corriere.it/solferino/romano/07-06-23/01.spm>.

ability of shifting the EU centre of gravity from Eastern to Southern Europe; 2- Turkey as a “hub” between the Balkans, Caucasus, and Central Asia, especially in the energy sector; 3- Turkey as a successful experiment in combining Islam with secular and democratic institutions, and 4- Turkey’s accession as representing the crucial test for the EU to decide upon whether ‘to define itself according to an “exclusive” identity or as an open political project’.⁷

While sharing in part the same line of argument,⁸ the centre-right tends to emphasize more three further issues: 1 – Turkey’s membership as a guarantee of the EU’s Atlanticism and its continued strategic partnership with the US through NATO; 2 – Turkey as an attractive market and a crucial commercial partner for Italy (this business perspective is particularly strong in *Forza Italia*, Berlusconi’s party);⁹ 3 – echoing the logic of other conservative parties (i.e., in the UK) Turkey’s entry as a way to “dilute” the European political project and strengthen the ideal of a “Europe of nations”.¹⁰ Moreover, compared to the centre-left, the centre-right attributes less importance to the argument that Turkey could act as a bridge towards the Muslim world.¹¹

2.2 Sources of Resistance

Political parties that resist Turkey’s entry into the EU are currently few, and it is unlikely that they will cooperate in a common campaign in future. Among the sceptical, but not intransigently opposed, we find the Communist parties, which resist Turkey’s accession in view of what Turkey is today (i.e., its democratic and human rights shortcomings), and not what it may become in future (and certainly not because of its Muslim popula-

⁷ D’Alema, M. (2007) ‘L’Italia alleato critico della Turchia in Europa’, *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 13 June, p. 1, http://rassegna.camera.it/chiosco_new/pagweb/immagineFrame.asp?comeFrom=search¤tArticle=EOLMW.

⁸ See *Interview with On. Umberto Ranieri*, Former President of the Chamber of Deputies Committee on Foreign Affairs, 26 March 2008. Ranieri is a member of the Democratic Party, the new and largest party of Italy’s Centre Left.

⁹ See *Interview with Paolo Quercia*, Director of the project: “Fare Italia nel Mondo”, Fondazione FareFuturo, 8 May 2008.

¹⁰ *Interview with Paolo Quercia*, op.cit. See also *Interview with On. Umberto Ranieri*, op.cit.

¹¹ See Mantica, A. (2007) ‘L’Europa non abbandoni la Turchia’, *Il Secolo d’Italia*, 20 April, p. 1, http://rassegna.camera.it/chiosco_new/pagweb/immagineFrame.asp?comeFrom=search¤tArticle=E5AFD. On. Mantica was vice-president of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs between June 2006 and April 2008. He is currently Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Berlusconi government and a leading member of Alleanza Nazionale.

tion).¹² Dramatically downsized after the 2008 elections and internally divided, the left-wing parties concentrate on the Kurdish question as a reason to oppose Turkey's membership, and couple this argument with the idea that Turkey's membership would consolidate a 'Europe of markets and capital', as opposed to a political and social Europe.¹³ They also argue that Turkey could act as an American "Trojan horse" in Europe, capable of thwarting the development of an independent EU foreign policy. 'We are against Turkey into the EU', Member of Parliament (MP) Iacopo Venier of the *Partito dei Comunisti Italiani* (Party of the Italian Communists) explained, 'for reasons that are eminently political': 'the inclusion of Turkey into the EU [...] would cause the final crisis of any idea of Europe as a political community by emphasizing instead its nature of an economic market'.¹⁴

Yet, while critical, these parties are ready to admit that, if accession negotiations were to be accompanied by a more serious political discussion on the above issues, they would consider a policy shift. Indeed the Communist parties underline that it would be extremely important for Europe to demonstrate its identity as a multiethnic and multi-religious polity, a notion they fully concur with given their focus on "class struggle" over the "clash of civilizations" as well as their stance towards the developing world. A further reason to accept Turkey is that the majority of Kurds themselves, whose claims Italian Communists are very sensitive to, support accession as a way of gaining recognition and guarantees. Confronted with these conflicting forces, for the time being Italian Communists remain open to exploring alternative "partnerships" with Turkey in the context of some form of partnership along the lines of Sarkozy's vision of a "Union of the Mediterranean", that would provide an alternative to, or delay full membership.

A more resolute, and currently more powerful, opponent of Turkey's membership is the *Legha Nord* (Northern League), a regionalist, xenophobic and

¹² 'We oppose membership', the head of the foreign policy section of *Rifondazione Comunista* (Re-founded Communists), Fabio Amato, points out 'not because Turkey is an Islamic country: this would be a racist perspective'. but 'because the Kurdish question is far from being solved'. *Interview with Fabio Amato*, 2 April 2008.

¹³ In particular the leftist parties point at out the deregulation of the Turkish labour market, where unions are extremely weak and labour rights not fully guaranteed.

¹⁴ Venier, I. (2007) *Turchia: Testa in Europa*, speech at the Conference 'Turchia, 22 luglio 2007: elezioni politiche, rappresentanza, democrazia, diritti', 8 June, <http://www.iacopovenier.it/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=391&pagenum=4&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>.

euro-sceptic party. The Northern League is perhaps the only relevant political stakeholder that is intransigently against Turkey in the EU. The Northern League also openly called for a referendum on Turkey's accession in 2004. The motivation is clearly and self-admittedly a question of religion and identity: Turkey's society and state, however “secular on paper”, are deeply imbued with “Islamic culture” and thus Turkey cannot become part of Europe, because the latter is “Christian”.¹⁵ As MP Mario Borghezio, Head of the Northern League delegation to the European Parliament puts it: ‘[b]e aware of the Turks and other Muslims (“*mussulmaneria varia*”), that all across Padania [Italy's northern plains], the cross of St. George waves in every corner ... never in the world, let alone if it is the Turks to demand it, we will give up our sacred symbols’.¹⁶ The Northern League bases its argument also on the repression of the Kurds, in view of its sympathies and identification with other separatist movements.

More recently, the current Interior Minister Roberto Maroni has presented a resolution at the Chamber of Deputies asking the Government to call for an interruption of the negotiations and to support, instead, Turkey's inclusion in the Union of the Mediterranean.¹⁷ Despite the use and abuse of propaganda a stereotyping, the Northern League has tried to link its arguments to European-wide debates. As Pamela Morassi of the League's Legislative Office points out: ‘the position of the Northern League on Turkey emerged in the context of the discussion on the EU constitutional treaty between 2001 and 2006’; ‘the reason why negotiations should end’, she adds, ‘is that the Copenhagen criteria are simply inadequate. They amount to political and statistical criteria having no reference to cultural values and principles’.¹⁸

Finally, similarly highly critical of Turkey's EU membership is *La Destra* (“The Right”) – a tiny but vociferous party on the extreme right. In this

¹⁵ See Piccamej, M. (2000) ‘La Turchia in Europa: un pericolo sottovalutato’, from the website of the *Movimento dei Giovani Padani*, <http://www.giovanipadani.leganord.org/articoli.asp?ID=2656>; see also *Interview with Pamela Morassi*, Legislative Office – Foreign Policy, *Lega Nord*, 10 May 2008.

¹⁶ See Blog site of On. Mario Borghezio, December 2007, <http://leganordopera.blogspot.com/2007/12/borghezio-ai-turchi-rispondiamo-siamo.html>; see also On. Borghezio's remarks on the 2007 European Parliament Progress Report on Turkey, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=CRE&reference=20080521&secondRef=ITEM-004&language=IT&ring=A6-2008-0168>.

¹⁷ See Atto Camera (2007) *Risoluzione in Assemblea 6/00017*, Seduta di annuncio 174, 21 June, http://banchedati.camera.it/sindacatoispettivo_15/showXhtml.asp?highLight=0&idAtto=13479&stile=6

¹⁸ See *Interview with Pamela Morassi*, op.cit.

case, “cultural” reasons are emphasized over strictly “religious” or “ideological” ones: ‘[o]ur position’, Alessandro Pucci explains, ‘is not a position based on ideology but on culture’; ‘Turkey may even be included into Europe from a geographical perspective, but it is not part of Europe in terms of cultural ties’.¹⁹ When elaborating on this position, however, the religious element surfaces again: ‘Atatürk’s secular vision of the state was a great vision [...] but there is currently more religious freedom in Europe than in Turkey [...]’²⁰ What is suggested for the present is, as in the case of the Northern League, inclusion in the Union of the Mediterranean. Despite these forces of resistance, we are unlikely to see coordinated action between the Communist parties, the Northern League and The Right, which are ideologically divided not only on the left-right spectrum, but also on issues such as federalism. The Northern League in particular may think twice before pushing forward a “no-Turkey-into-the-EU” campaign given that this would expose it to criticism of an important segment of its constituency – Northern businessmen and traders, in particular – who could see their interests undermined if EU-Turkey economic relations were to stall or deteriorate.

2.3 *Some Signs of Change*

The picture presented above, which speaks of a wide although imperfect bipartisan support for Turkey’s EU membership, must be mapped against a “cooling off” of some sections of the Italian political establishment. The latter seems to be the product of both external and domestic factors. Among the former is the uncertain and often contradictory signals coming from Turkey, which have been the object of media attention in Italy, such as the exacerbating political tensions between the AKP and the Turkish establishment, or the fear of an AKP “hidden (Islamic) agenda”. Among the domestic factors, one may cite a growing euroscepticism and a tendency, particularly strong among Italian conservatives, to interpret Italy’s and Europe’s mission in today’s globalizing world as a “defence of threatened identities.”²¹ The “fundamental” role that Christianity and the Church have had in the “Italian tradition” is increasingly emphasized by both representatives of the

¹⁹ See *Interview with Alessandro Pucci*, Head of Foreign Policy Area, *La Destra*, 6 May 2008.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ See Pera, M. and Ratzinger, J. (2004) *Senza radici. Europa, relativismo, cristianesimo, Islam*, Milano, Mondadori. See also Veneziani, M. (2006) *Contro i barbari. La civiltà e i suoi nemici, interni ed esterni*, Milano, Mondadori.

centre-left and centre-right.²² The authority of the Pope is often emphasized, although nobody questions the secular character of the Italian Republic and its institutions. Political leaders, especially those of the centre-right, have made recurrent references to the centrality of Christian values in domestic and foreign policy.

This strong reaffirmation of Italy’s Christian identity has not led to date any parties to significantly change, let alone reverse, their official position on Turkey.²³ Some interviewees, however, are ready to admit that within both *Alleanza Nazionale* (“National Alliance”) and *Forza Italia* (“Go Italy!”), sceptics are on the rise.²⁴ Within the *Unione dei Democratici Cristiani e di Centro* (“Union of Christian and Centrist Democrats”), several are sceptical or opposed to Turkey’s membership, including MP Luca Volonté, one of the most proud and outspoken paladins of a Christian Europe.²⁵ The Northern League in particular succeeded in expanding its political constituency to Italy’s Centre-North regions in the 2008 elections by framing its security, immigration and employment agenda in an anti-EU, xenophobic, and often also religion-imbued tone.

That these trends will amount to an authentic political “movement” opposing Turkey’s EU membership is fairly improbable. Pushing against this are several factors. First, the position of the Vatican, which, since Pope Benedict XVI’s visit to Turkey in 2006, seems to have dropped its previously expressed reservations on Turkey’s EU accession.²⁶ Second,

²² The Speaker of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, On. Gianfranco Fini has recently emphasized the ‘fundamental role’ that Christianity has played in the ‘defence’ of Italy’s ‘cultural identity’ when pronouncing his inaugural speech in parliament. See Fini, G. (2008) *Inaugural Address*, Chamber of Deputies, Rome, 29 April, http://www.camera.it/resoconti/dettaglio_resoconto.asp?idSeduta=1&resoconto=stenografico&tit=00090&fase=. The speech was acclaimed as ‘historic’ because allegedly ‘ending the post-WWII era’. Fini is the political leader who completed the transition of the Italian Right to post-fascism in the delicate phase of the end of the Cold War. See Lussana, M. (2008) ‘Dal ghetto a Montecitorio. La lunga marcia di Gianfranco il “freddo”’, *Il Giornale*, 1 May, p.6., http://rassegna.camera.it/chiosco_new/pagweb/immagineFrame.asp?comeFrom=search¤tArticle=HYLUS.

²³ See *Interview with Rocco Buttiglione*, 12 June 2008, Italian philosopher and President of the Union of Christian Democrats.

²⁴ See *Interview with Pamela Morassi*, op.cit., *Interview with Luca Volonté*, former Head of the Union of Christian Democrats group in the Chamber of Deputies, 3 April 2008; *Interview with Sandro Magister*, vaticanist from *L’Espresso Group* 6 May 2008; *Interview with Andrea Tomielli*, vaticanist from *Il Giornale*, 14 May 2008.

²⁵ See *Interview with Luca Volonté*, op.cit.

²⁶ See ‘Cardinal Ratzinger: Identifier la Turquie à l’Europe serait une erreur’, *Le Figaro*, 13 April 2004.

the existence of strong economic interests in favour of closer Turkey-EU relations promoted by the centre-right. Third, the propensity, among conservative intellectuals and politicians to consider the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party - AKP) as a possible Turkish equivalent of their own parties. Indeed MP Marco Zacchera, a leading representative of the National Alliance and member of the Chamber of Deputies Committee on Foreign Affairs, emphasizes that there has been a constructive dialogue between Italian conservatives and the AKP, including an exchange of delegations.²⁷ Paolo Quercia, a conservative intellectual close to *Alleanza Nazionale* points out that many in the centre-right are attracted to the AKP's "moderate" interpretation of Islam because to some extent it mirrors Italy's own religious revival. 'The AKP', Quercia notes, 'displays an outlook in some ways similar to the one of Italy's centre-right parties: a liberal approach to economic issues coupled with a rediscovery of national identity, starting with religion'.²⁸ Rocco Buttiglione, the President of the Union of Christian Democrats and one of the leading Turcosceptics among Italian Catholics, claims the paternity of this constructive dialogue between Italian conservatives, the European People's Party, and the AKP.²⁹

Sandro Magister, a well-known journalist from *l'Espresso*, notes how 'some Italian conservatives see the AKP attempt to challenge the Kemalist interpretation of secularity as a right struggle against a repressive and intolerant interpretation of *laïcité*'.³⁰ Watching closely the AKP, of course, does not amount to an identification with it and may also be a double-edged sword. As put by Yasmin Taşkın, Turkish correspondent in Italy for *Sabah*: 'the fact that the AKP challenges secularism in Turkey may well give leverage to Italian Catholics wishing to do the same in Italy; but the fact that Turkish politics is witnessing a revival of identity issues, including religion, may also be welcomed by Italian conservatives as a way to mark the differences between Italian society and Europe on the one hand, and Turkey and Islam on the other'.³¹

In sum, the picture is mixed. What is safe to conclude is that the situation is fairly fluid and more complex than a few years ago, when the debate on

²⁷ Interview with Marco Zacchera, Alleanza Nazionale, 6 May 2008.

²⁸ Interview with Paolo Quercia, op.cit.

²⁹ Interview with Rocco Buttiglione, op.cit.

³⁰ Interview with Sandro Magister, op.cit.

³¹ Interview with Yasmin Taşkın, Rome correspondent from *Sabah*, 7 May 2008.

Turkey’s membership first started in Italy. Yet, ‘unless Berlusconi himself changes his mind on the issue’, former Minister of Foreign Trade and EU policies, MP Emma Bonino, argues, ‘it is highly improbable that the Italian government will change its position’;³² ‘rather, what is more plausible is that Italy will not support Turkey’s negotiations in Brussels in the years to come as actively as many hoped it would just a few years ago, when Rome and London were perhaps Turkey’s best friends in Europe’. In short, Italy’s green lights may well turn yellow, but are unlikely to turn red in the foreseeable future.

3. Economic Stakeholders: “Turkey is Already Part of Europe”

3.1 Strong Economic Partnership

Luca Cordero di Montezemolo, Italy’s former president of *Confindustria*, the leading organization representing Italian industry, recently pointed out that, from an economic standpoint, ‘Turkey is already in Europe’.³³ In saying this, Mr. Montezemolo was in fact repeating a widely-shared understanding among Italian entrepreneurs and traders. Well before Ankara’s EU bid, Italian firms turned to Turkey as a close and attractive market to be not only explored, but also integrated into the European one. The Italian government, influenced by Italy’s business community, was among the first in Europe in the 1960s to ask for the signing of a customs union agreement between Turkey and the European Communities. FIAT, Italy’s leading car company, entered the Turkish market as early as the 1920s. In 1968, FIAT established a joint-venture with the Koç Group giving birth to Tofaş, in Bursa, where FIAT’s “world car”, Palio, is now produced. ‘At FIAT, people like to think that Turkey is a chunk of Italy that has somehow slipped towards the Middle East’, says Enrico Franceschini, a journalist of *La Repubblica AUTO*.³⁴ Some of Italy’s “strategic” companies, such as Finmeccanica, the leading aerospace and defence firm, have a long history of doing business with Turkey

³² *Interview with Emma Bonino*, Vice President of the Italian Senate, 22 May 2008.

³³ ‘Italia Turchia: Montezemolo, per imprese Ankara già in UE’, *AGI*, 8 November 2007, available at <http://www.aziende-oggi.it/archives/00041157.html>.

³⁴ Franceschini, E. (2008) ‘La scommessa della Turchia’, *La Repubblica*, http://www.repubblica.it/online/auto_prima/fiat100anni/otto/otto.html; Ferigo A., *Interview with FIAT Representative*, May 2008.

because of Italy-Turkey cooperation in NATO.³⁵ Italy's leading energy company, ENI, has significantly increased its presence in the Turkish market over the decades. In 1999, ENI signed a contract with Gazprom for Blue Stream, a pipeline connecting Russia to Turkey through the Black Sea. In 2007, it inaugurated Samsun, a 550 km-long pipeline which ENI built in partnership with Turkish Çalık Group.³⁶

In view of these commercial relations, one can speak of an "economic lobby" in Italy favouring Turkey's EU entry, whose influence on the Italian government can be taken for granted.³⁷ This "economic lobby", which includes major energy companies (ENI, ENEL and EDISON), banking firms (Unicredit), car companies (FIAT), telecommunication companies (Telecom), defence firms (Finmeccanica and Fincantieri), is supported by several other firms whose interests in Turkey are growing. Among these: Eldor in the metallurgic sector and Omron in the field of electronics; ITAL-FERR in the engineering sector; Benetton, Chicco and Zegna in clothing and apparel, Barilla and Perfetti in the food sector; Valtur and Costa Crociere in tourism.

3.2 *Digging Beneath the Surface*

The analysis above suggests that as far as Italian economic stakeholders are concerned, Turkey's accession is strongly supported. Yet digging deeper two questions deserve further discussion. First, is the question of whether Turkey's EU accession may incite resistance amongst the economic "losers" from increased Turkish competition. Here the magic word, often repeated by interviewees, is "compatibility".³⁸ Many, in fact, argue that Italy has nothing to lose from Turkey's integration into the EU, because the comparative advantages of the two economies dovetail rather than compete. In particular, the trend so far has seen Italy exporting to Turkey mainly intermediate goods, technology, know-how, and importing raw materials, textiles, clothing, leather products, and plastic. The concept of compatibility, however, has to be qualified. Compatibility, indeed, describes the situation

³⁵ *Interview with Giovanni Soccodato*, Director of Strategies, Finmeccanica, 15 May 2008. See also, Gasparini, G. (ed.) (2007) *Turkey and European Security*, IAI Quaderni, English Series No.8, http://www.iai.it/pdf/Quaderni/Quaderni_E_08.pdf.

³⁶ See ENI website, http://www.eni.it/en_IT/eni-world/turkey/projects/blue-stream.shtml.

³⁷ The term "lobby" is used here neither in a strictly technical nor in a negative or detracting sense.

³⁸ See 'Forum: La Turchia in Europa', *Associazione Europa Cultura*, Trieste, 19 November 2007, <http://www.radioradicale.it/scheda/240135/la-turchia-in-europa>; See also *Interview with Giuseppe Scognamiglio*, Diplomatic Advisor, Unicredit Group, 7 April 2008.

at the macro level, but does not do justice to all sectors of the Italian economy. Concerns about the competitiveness of Turkish products are not uncommon among Italian agricultural firms and transport companies.³⁹ Maurizio Reale from *Coldiretti*, the leading organization of Italian farmers, argues that ‘when it comes to fruits and vegetables, competition is already a reality’ pointing to the fact that 32% of the Turkish population is employed in agriculture and that Turkish farmers are more than EU farmers combined.⁴⁰ However, while being aware of the Turkish challenge, *Coldiretti* admits that it would be short-sighted to resist this development. ‘[w]e do not oppose such a development’, Reale explains, ‘what we ask for is the maximum degree of transparency in the negotiations in Brussels and the adoption in Turkey of all regulations and standards that are respected by farmers in the EU’.⁴¹

On the delicate subject of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), *Coldiretti* does not see insurmountable obstacles, declaring itself confident that fair decisions will be made in Brussels. ‘By the time these decisions will be taken’, Maurizio Reale explains, ‘Italy would hopefully be less dependent on funds and will have a modern, fully self-sustaining, agricultural sector’.⁴² Hence however intuitive the hypothesis that Italian farmers, traditionally leaning towards Christian Democrats, could be mobilized in an anti-Turkey campaign by religion coupled with economic arguments, this eventuality looks in today’s Italy highly implausible.

Second, is the question of whether Italian economic stakeholders could settle for less than membership, in view of the EU-Turkey customs union. Indeed, Italian firms have already accepted to do business with Turkey in a context of less than full integration and could be satisfied with simply deepening further their trade ties with non-member Turkey. Yet some key members of the Italian “Turkish lobby” have based their investment plans on reasonable expectations of Turkey’s full membership in future. These firms underline that EU membership comes with a set of norms and regulations providing Italian exporters and investors with further assurances about the openness and stability of the Turkish market.⁴³ Membership also guarantees

³⁹ Ibid. See also *Interview with Lucio De Michele*, Diplomatic Counselor, Italian Embassy in Ankara, 24 April 2008.

⁴⁰ *Interview with Maurizio Reale*, Head of Coldiretti External Relations Dept, 17 April 2008.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ *Interview with Giuseppe Scognamiglio*, op.cit.; *Interview with Giovanni Soccodato*, op.cit.

Turkey's political stability and the economic diligence of Turkish governments. Unicredit, in particular, insists on this point arguing that its strategy of expansion to foreign markets has targeted only those countries whose prospect for membership is realistic.⁴⁴ 'Banking companies,' Giuseppe Scognamiglio from Unicredit emphasizes, 'have a clear stake in the political stability of the country in which they operate. We do not just export commodities or provide services [...] we provide capitals and actively contribute to the development of a country', he explains. 'This requires that the system as a whole is healthy and the EU demands exactly this by tying the prospect of membership to a wide set of political and economic standards'.⁴⁵

This overview of Italian economic stakeholders would not be complete without an analysis of Italian trade unions. Their opinion seems generally in favour of Turkey's accession, if this means more norms regulating the Turkish market and more rights for Turkish labour. Giorgio Cipriani, trade unionist at FIAT, stresses that what happens in Turkey is of direct concern to Italian unionists, because of the ties between the two economies. 'I'm in favour of Turkey joining the EU', he explains, 'because in my long experience as a unionist I realized that the interests of Turkish society overlap with those in Italy, although sometimes different in scope and scale'.⁴⁶ 'Membership', he clarifies, 'can be granted only if social besides economic standards are met [...] unions will keep heading in the direction that we already chose: exchanges of delegations, education and training, joint campaigns and other expressions of solidarity'. Gianni Italia, director of Iscos (Institute for Unionist Cooperation), confirms that Turkey's future membership in the EU is generally supported among Italian unionists, even if some fear that advocating Turkey's membership could expose unions to the anti-immigration campaign already underway in politics. 'I have several connections with Turkish unions', he stresses, 'and the best way to help them is to promote the European social model – is it then possible to propose a model while at the same time closing the doors to full membership?'.⁴⁷

A last element worth adding to this overview is the role of the Italian regions in promoting economic ties between Italy and Turkey.⁴⁸ Some regions have

⁴⁴ *Interview with Giuseppe Scognamiglio*, op.cit.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Ferigo A., *Interview with Giorgio Cipriani*, trade unionist, FIAT, May 2008.

⁴⁷ Ferigo A., *Interview with Gianni Italia*, Director, Iscos, May 2008

⁴⁸ *Interview with Lucio de Michele*, op.cit.

organized “business missions” to Istanbul, Ankara and other economic poles in the country, with the goal of inducing socialization between Italian investors and traders with the culture, besides the economic environment, of contemporary Turkey. Particularly proactive in this respect have been the regions of Lombardia, Puglia, Marche and Friuli.

4. The Public Debate: Open but not Informed Enough

4.1 *The Need for More and Better Information*

If the concept of “public opinion” is highly problematic not least because it is elusive, what is safe to say is that the media plays a critical role in shaping it. Thus, a survey of the Italian stakeholders has to account also for the role of the media in shaping the Italian debate on the Turkey question.⁴⁹ Most interviewees, and many Italian journalists, recognize that the “Turkey question” has been tackled; nonetheless, the Italian public debate remains rather uninformed: ‘Interest in what is happening in Turkey has grown in the past few years and this is very positive’, Turkish journalist Yasmin Taşkın recognizes, ‘but not all newspapers have offered as deep and detailed an analysis as the highly complex issues covered would have deserved’.⁵⁰ Many interviewees worry that Italians have a vague understanding of the issues at stake in Turkey-EU relations and poor knowledge of contemporary Turkey.⁵¹ Interviewees also point out that information has been insufficient both on Turkey and on the accession process: ‘media, be it radio, television or the press, has mobilized only sporadically and in connection to specific events, such as official visits, or folkloristic or tragic events’, Giampaolo Carbonetto from the *Messaggero Veneto* laments.⁵² Notwithstanding such setbacks, the media debate on Turkey has been fairly open with both supporters and opponents airing their views about the Turkey question.⁵³ However, openness has also meant that stereotype and prejudice have permeated the debate, especially in arguments raised by

⁴⁹ This section of the study is based both on interviews and on a screening of news regarding Turkey (major newspapers and TV channels) between 2006 and 2008.

⁵⁰ *Interview with Yasmin Taşkın*, op.cit.

⁵¹ *Interview with Giampaolo Carbonetto*, from *Messaggero Veneto* and President of *Associazione Europa Cultura*, 21 April 2008.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Interview with Fabio Amato*, op.cit.

Turkey-sceptics. A case in point is that of *La Padania*, the Northern League's newspaper, in its frequent and simplistic links drawn between Turkey and Islam.⁵⁴ A case of a deliberately violent commentary has been that of the former group leader of the Union of Christian Democrats within the Parliament, MP Luca Volonté, who blended his staunch defense of Christian values with vitriolic anti-Turkey rhetoric: 'subtly introducing Turkey into a democracy or in a democratic continent like Europe, like the germs of a virus reducing human rights and favouring intolerant Islamization appears to me as a form of suicide we do not deserve'.⁵⁵ To be fair, both in *La Padania* and in the articles by Volonté, stereotypes have been more the vehicle than the content of the message, which generally contains more moderate claims. When interviewed, for instance, Volonté argued against Turkey's membership by focusing on Turkey's non-compliance with the Copenhagen criteria given the violation of human rights and religious freedoms.⁵⁶

4.2 Explaining Peaks: The Focus on Religion

What are the possible explanations for the surge of the sporadic Italian debate on Turkey? To some extent, of course, this is a general trend affecting news, in general. However, this has also reflected a list of priorities on the part of Italian journalists and commentators covering Turkey and Turkey-related news. If some of these "peaks" in media coverage can be considered as the natural consequence of key events, (e.g., the 1998 "Öcalan affair"; the 2005 launch of accession negotiations; or the 2007 Turkish elections) other peaks reflect a particular sensitivity in Italian public opinion to some issues, first and foremost related to religion.

In the recent past, media attention in Italy generally concerned Turkey's uncertain future as a secular democracy (e.g., Don Andrea Santoro's murder in Turkey in 2006, the headscarf issue in 2007 and the closure case against the AKP in 2008). What is interesting in this respect is not the coverage of the news itself, but the way the news has been dealt with. First, newspapers leaning towards political parties supporting Turkey's EU membership, have recently hosted articles analysing with concern Turkey's

⁵⁴ See www.lapadania.com

⁵⁵ Volonté, L. (2007) 'Turchia in Europa? Sarebbe Introdurre Germi di Intollerante Islam', *La Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno*, 20 September, p. 23, http://rassegna.camera.it/chiosco_new/pag-web/immagineFrame.asp?comeFrom=search¤tArticle=FMAAB.

⁵⁶ *Interview with Luca Volonté*, op.cit.

domestic developments, interpreting them as instances of an ongoing religious radicalization or even “Islamization” of the country. This is the case of conservative newspapers, such as *Il Giornale* and *Libero*.⁵⁷ Second, so far growing concerns about Turkey’s domestic developments have not been systematically extended to the question of Turkey’s membership and its future in Europe. If this were to happen, then the Turkey question could become an item of broader domestic debate, where religion-related issues attract growing attention and where contested questions such as immigration are often approached from a religious perspective, too. A recent survey by the Ministry of Interior together with Makno & Consulting, for instance, shows that the majority of Italians considers “Muslim immigration” as posing greater risks to Italy than immigration of other groups.⁵⁸ One Italian out of three, according to the survey, opposes the construction of mosques in Italy not just because of the perceived link between sites of worship and terrorist activities, but simply as a matter of Catholic religion and culture. Whether the Turkey question will become part and parcel of this debate remains an open question, and much will depend on the reaction of “Christian public opinion”, a convenient phrase to identify the segment of the Italian public which is particularly sensitive to religious considerations because inspired by a Christian-Catholic approach not only to ethics, but also to politics. Christian public opinion is fairly strong in Italy, although difficult to quantify, and includes among its most outspoken members some intellectuals and political leaders who subscribe to a Christian interpretation of Europe’s political future. According to them, the EU’s borders should not extend to encompass Muslim Turkey.⁵⁹ A trigger factor that consolidate, irreversibly, the views of this sector would be the opposition of the Holy See to Turkey’s membership. Nevertheless,

⁵⁷ See articles by Facci, F. from *Il Giornale* and Camilleri, R. (2007) ‘Quell’omicidio allontana la Turchia dall’Europa’, *Il Giornale*, 27 January, p. 10, http://rassegna.camera.it/chiosco_new/pagweb/immagineFrame.asp?comeFrom=search¤tArticle=D9P4W. See also Taormina, C. (2007) ‘Sulla Turchia nella UE l’Italia dia ascolto alla lezione di Sarkozy’, *Libero*, 31 August, p. 11, http://rassegna.camera.it/chiosco_new/pagweb/immagineFrame.asp?comeFrom=search¤tArticle=FF4Y6.

⁵⁸ See

http://www.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/sala_stamp/notizie/immigrazione/0809_2008_04_29_ricerche_immigrazione.html.

⁵⁹ See the position of On. Rocco Buttiglione and of On. Marcello Pera, former President of the Italian Senate. See in particular the book that Pera co-authored with Joseph Ratzinger, *Senza radici*, op.cit.

the Vatican has not expressed an official opinion on the issue and will probably refrain from doing so in future.⁶⁰ Furthermore, considering the Pope's recent turn on this question⁶¹ and the statements made by the Pope's Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, in 2007, at most we may expect a warmer stance of the Vatican on this question.⁶² As Franca Giansoldati notes, 'what the Pope is seeking is juridical recognition of the Christian church in Turkey [...] something that is missing today and is therefore the object of bargaining between the Vatican and Turkish authorities in the context also of Turkey's negotiations with the EU'.⁶³ This orientation of the Vatican seems to be confirmed by a growing emphasis of the clergy that Turkey is one of the "cradles" of Christianity, a land that cannot be excluded from Europe and the rest of "Christendom". In other words, if a more open position of the Vatican on the Turkey question were to consolidate in future, this could be an important factor to defuse the potential "short circuit" generated by the explosive link being made in public debate between Turkey and religion.

5. Testing Public-Elite Opinion on the Turkey Question: A Quantitative Perspective

A new form of religion-based cleavage has emerged in Europe in the post-9/11 era in the form of tensions between Christian majorities and Muslim minorities. The contested nature of Islam and democracy in Europe among the public and political circles inextricably relates to the EU membership of Turkey – a predominantly Muslim but secular state founded on democratic values and principles. Furthermore, being one of the member states receiving the highest number of immigrants of Muslim origin in Europe, these tensions have sharpened further in Italy in recent years.

Italy is one of the EU member states in which public opinion is, in general, favourable to the idea of EU enlargement. However, on cultural and religious grounds they put Turkish membership under critical scrutiny.

⁶⁰ Interview with Giuseppe Fiorentino, from *Osservatore Romano*, 18 May 2008.

⁶¹ See Cardinal Ratzinger: *Identifier la Turquie à l'Europe serait une erreur*, op.cit. See also Interview with Andrea Tornielli, op.cit..

⁶² See Tosatti, M. (2007) 'Turchia in Europa? La Chiesa dice sì', *La Stampa*, 30 May, p. 15, http://rassegna.camera.it/chiosco_new/pagweb/immagineFrame.asp?comeFrom=search¤tArticle=EJEXA.

⁶³ Interview with Franca Giansoldati, vaticanist from *Il Messaggero*, 22 May 2008.

According to the Special Eurobarometer 255 Report on Attitudes towards European Union Enlargement (2006),⁶⁴ Italians are the strongest supporters of enlargement viewing it as “a good way to reunite European continent” (68%), “a good way to communicate EU solidarity to potential candidates” (64%), a means that “will strengthen the EU” (64 %) and that “consolidates European interests and values” (64%). For 66% of Italians enlargement is an instrument that also “ensures peace and stability in Europe”, “strengthens the role of EU on the international scene” (67 %), “promotes democracy in Europe” (67%), “increases the protection of human rights and minorities” (66%), “reinforces the power of the EU to fight criminality and terrorism” (61%), “enriches Europe’s cultural diversity” (68%),⁶⁵ “facilitates mobility of people within Europe” (72%)⁶⁶, and “ensures better integration of populations from future member states in the EU” (60%).

Yet as far as Turkey’s accession is concerned, attitudes are far from supportive. The Eurobarometer 255 shows that in Italy, Turkey’s accession generates disapproval, with only 36% of the public who supporting Turkey’s accession. On the other side, the Italian political elite – the Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), are far more favourable to the specific issue of Turkish membership in comparison with the Italian public.

In light of the previous discussion, it is particularly interesting to analyse Italian public and elite attitudes towards Turkey with a specific focus on the question of Islam and democracy: how do Italian people and political elites answer the question of whether Muslim Turkey is compatible with EU membership and democracy?⁶⁷ Available data shows that between 2004 and 2007 a decreasing pattern of warm feelings towards Turkey emerged both at public and elite levels, the former

⁶⁴ Available at: : http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_255_en.pdf.

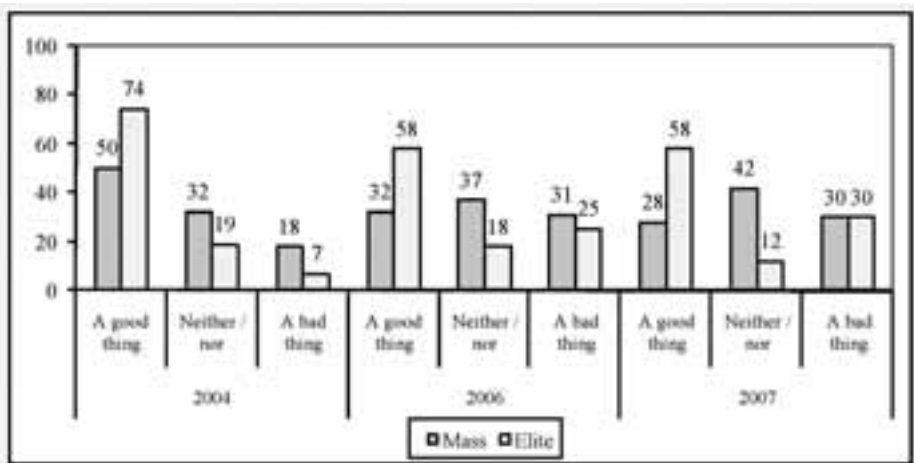
⁶⁵ Italians are the third strongest opponents of the idea that the enlargement “makes cultural identities and traditions disappear” (57%).

⁶⁶ Thirty-nine percent of Italians disagree with the assumption that enlargement increases illegal immigration in Europe.

⁶⁷ Survey data comes from the Italian Elite Survey (IES) (2004), European Elite Survey (EES) (2006 and 2007) and Transatlantic Trends Surveys (TTS) (2004, 2006 and 2007). Data are available at: www.transatlantictrends.org and www.compagnia.torino.it for TTS (2004, 2006 and 2007); for IES and EES (2006 and 2007) <http://www.gips.unisi.it/circa/>. (See Annex I for technical notes).

being less warm.⁶⁸ This trend, however, did not change the overall picture as regards opinion on “Turkish membership of the EU”. The Italian public welcomed Turkish membership of the EU less than Italian elites (Figure 1). With respect to Italian MPs, who were strongly positive (74%) of Turkey’s membership in 2004, Italian MEPs in Brussels approached the issue less optimistically (58%) in recent years (2006 and 2007) (Figure 1).

Figure 1. - Turkish membership of the EU “good”, “neither/nor” or “bad”



Source: TTS (2004, 2006, 2007), IES (2004), EES (2006, 2007)
 See ANNEX II for question wording. Note: 2004: Nmass = 903, NMPs = 54; 2006: Nmass= 932, NMEPs = 40; 2007: Nmass = 1009, NMEPs = 40

What might explain the public-elite opinion cleavage regarding Turkey’s membership? The TTS (2004) and IES (2004) surveys contained two filter questions: What is the main reason why you think Turkey’s membership of the EU would be a (a) good thing? (b) bad thing?. The main reason why

⁶⁸ All surveys studied here, include the same thermometer question that reads: ‘Next I’d like to rate your feelings toward some countries, institutions, and people, with 100 meaning a very warm, favourable feeling, 0 meaning a very cold, unfavourable feeling, and 50 meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from 0 to 100. If you have no opinion or have never heard of that country or institution, please say so: - Turkey’. The question measures “feelings about Turkey” and tells us how warm public and elites feels on a scale from 0 to 100 degrees towards Turkey – regardless of its EU candidacy or other aspects. The feelings thermometer on Turkey results are: Mass: 2004 – 43°, 2006 – 39°, 2007 – 38°; Elites: 2004 – 66°, 2006 – 50°, 2007 – 52°.

Italian public opinion favored Turkish accession was that "it would help the EU promote peace and stability in the Middle East" (38%) (Table 1). However, elites declared themselves more confident (49%) that Turkey's membership would 'strengthen moderate Islam as a model in the Muslim world' (Table 1). On the contrary, for those who viewed Turkey's membership as a "bad" thing, answers included Turkey's "problematic democracy" (34%) and "Turkey's predominantly Muslim population" (32%) (Table 1).⁶⁹ These reasons identified two main areas of concern: "Islam" and "Turkey's record with democracy", and the perceived link between the two.⁷⁰

Table 1. - Why is Turkey's membership a "good" and "bad" thing?

	<i>Mass</i>	<i>Elite</i>
<i>Turkish membership is</i>		
<i>"a good thing"</i>		
<i>because...^a</i>		
It would help the EU promote peace and stability in the Middle East	38	41
It would have a positive effect on Muslim communities in other European countries	25	10
Turkey's membership would be good in economic terms for the EU	11	--
Turkey's membership will strengthen moderate Islam as a model in the Muslim world	26	49
Total	100	100
<i>"a bad thing"</i>		
<i>because ...^b</i>		
As a predominantly Muslim country, Turkey does not belong in the EU	32	--
It would drag the EU in the Middle East conflict	16	--
Turkey is [too poor or too populous] to be digested in a growing EU	5	--
It would make the running of the European institutions more complicated	13	--
Turkey's democracy is still problematic	34	--

Source: TTS 2004 and IES 2004.

^a Question: "What is the main reason why you think Turkey's membership of the EU would be a good thing?"

^b Question: "What is the main reason why you think Turkey's membership to the EU would be a bad thing?"

⁶⁹ The IES study found no valid result on this question; Italian elite gave "Don't know" answer to this question.

⁷⁰ For an in-depth analysis, see Canan, E.(2007) 'Islamofobia and Mamma gli Turchi! An Analysis of Italian Public and Elite Opinion on Turkey' Betam Working Papers (April) No: 2007/1.

5.1 *The Islamic “Threat” and “Muslim Turkey” in the EU?*

In 2004, Islamic fundamentalism was taken more seriously by Italian MPs than other issues, such as illegal immigration, terrorist attacks with weapons of mass destruction, or an economic crisis. The Italian public perceived it as a threat (54%) more than elites did. Hence this might lead to support the hypothesis that ‘if Islamic fundamentalism were perceived as an important threat to Europe, then this would cause negative feelings towards Turkey’s accession to the European Union’.⁷¹ Nevertheless, as shown in Table 2, in 2004 a vast majority of Italian MPs who perceived Islamic fundamentalism as an “extremely important threat” favoured Turkey’s membership even more strongly (86%). By contrast, between 2004 and 2006 the Italian public became more agnostic towards Turkey’s membership as much as they perceived Islamic fundamentalism as an important threat. By 2006, Italian public opinion was driven by the idea that 1- Islamic fundamentalism is a global threat; and 2 - Turkey’s membership is contentious.⁷² However, Italian MEPs, even if they perceived Islamic fundamentalism as an important threat to Europe (72%), believed that Turkey’s membership would be “a good thing”. In sum, ordinary Italians were more negative towards Turkey’s membership as they felt more threatened by Islamic fundamentalism.

⁷¹ See Canan (2007) for detailed theoretical discussion and empirical analysis of impacts of Islamic fundamentalism as a perceived threat of Turkey’s EU membership.

⁷² Note that there was no significant correlation between threat perception and opinion on Turkey’s membership in terms of public attitudes. Yet, as regards Italian elites, both those who thought Islamic fundamentalism is an important threat (74%) and not an important threat (74%) agreed that Turkey’s membership is a “good thing”.

Table 2. - Cross-tabulation of "Turkish membership" by "Islamic fundamentalism a threat" (%)

		<i>"Islamic fundamentalism a threat"</i>			
		<i>Mass</i>		<i>Elite</i>	
		Yes ^b	No	Extremely important ^c	Important
2004	Turkish membership is...^a				
	A good thing	74	74	86	95
	A bad thing	26	26	14	5
	Total (N)	571	42	21	21
	Chi-square (χ^2)	.001		1,105	
	Df	1		1	
2006	Turkish membership is...^a	Yes ^b	No	Yes ^d	No
	A good thing	49	78	72	50
	A bad thing	51	22	28	50
	Total (N)	532	40	29	4
	Chi-square (χ^2)	12,200 *		0, 836	
	Df	1		1	
2007	Turkish membership is...^a	Likely ^e	Not likely	Likely ^e	Not likely
	A good thing	42	63	58	73
	A bad thing	58	37	42	27
	Total (N)	378	202	19	15
	Chi-square (χ^2)	23,390 *		.875	
	Df	1		1	

Source: TTS (2004, 2006, 2007), IES (2004), EES (2006, 2007)

^a "Neither good nor bad" response category is excluded from the analysis. See Annex II for question wording.

^b The question of "Islamic fundamentalism as a threat" is recoded into two response categories as (1) [Yes = extremely important threat + important threat] and (0) [No = not an important threat]. DKs are not included into the analysis (missing values).

^c The frequency of response category 'not important at all' is 0. Therefore, it is not presented in the table. DKs are not included into the analysis (missing values).

^d The question of "Islamic fundamentalism as a threat" is recoded into two response categories as (1) [Yes = very important threat + somewhat important threat] and (0) [No = not very important threat + not an important threat at all]. DKs are not included into the analysis (missing values).

^e The question of "Islamic fundamentalism as a threat" is recoded into two categories as (1) [very likely threat + somewhat likely threat] and (0) [not too likely threat + not likely threat at all]. DKs are not included into the analysis (missing values).

* p < 0.05

5.2 *The Dialectic Between Islam and Western Democracy*

In 2006, responses to the question ‘Do you feel that the values of Islam are compatible with the values of [country]’s democracy?’ revealed an interesting gap between elite and public beliefs. Italian elites believed twice more strongly than the public that Islamic values and democracy are compatible (68% and 32%, respectively). Those who saw these two values as incompatible blamed ‘Islam in general’ (51% of the public versus 33 % of elites). By contrast, Italian elites were more concerned about the problem of specific Islamist groups (67% versus 49% of the public) that created an incompatibility between Islam and democracy. The question of Islam-democracy compatibility was correlated with an assessment of Turkey’s membership of the EU. Most Italians – elites and public – support the idea that Turkey’s membership is “a good thing” in so far as they believe that Islam is compatible with democracy (Table 3). Yet the Italian elite (82%) was much more ($p < 0.05$) in favour of this view (Table 3).

Table 3. - Cross-tabulation of “Turkish membership” by “Islam-democracy compatibility” (%)

	“Islam compatible with democracy”			
	Mass		Elite	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
<i>Turkish membership is...^a</i>				
A good thing	71	40	82	38
A bad thing	29	60	18	63
Total (N)	170	369	22	8
Chi-square (χ^2)	44,154 **		5,487*	
Df	1		1	

Source: TTS and EES (2006) Survey

^a See footnote to Table 2.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.001$

To conclude, *Islamofobia* subsists in the severe form of “Islamist fundamentalist threat” in the minds of “ordinary Italians” who link the political issue of Turkey’s membership to a cultural religious dynamic. If religious fundamentalism becomes more of a threat, it may incite ascendant blasts of “*Mamma li Turchi!*”. This analysis also highlights that while popular attention to Islamic terrorism polarizes views over Turkey’s accession, elite awareness on the independence of these two questions bodes well for Turkey’s EU aspirations. Large sections of the Italian public and elite consider Turkey’s membership “a good thing” thanks to the awareness that

“Islam and democracy” are compatible and that Turkey’s Muslim democracy may provide a bridge between civilizations.

6. Implications for an Effective Communication Strategy

An effective Communication Strategy does not necessarily entail the promotion of Turkey’s accession process, but rather aims at “communicating Turkey to the EU and the EU to Turkey” without simplifications, deformations and manipulations so that all relevant stakeholders can come up with an informed opinion based on a balanced assessment of the pros and cons. When applied to the case of Italy, this line of reasoning means that the “right” Communication Strategy should not be one aimed at building support for Turkey’s membership into the EU, a support that is already fairly widespread. The goal, rather, should be to make both supporters and opponents more informed, so that they can base their arguments on more solid grounds, or may even reverse their original opinions if recognized as mistaken. The keyword, therefore, seems to be “information”.

It has been pointed out that some sources of opposition exist among Italian stakeholders. At the political level, concerns range from Turkey’s unsolved Kurdish question to its restricted rights and freedoms. Other stakeholders, instead, raise the specter of massive and uncontrollable immigration from Turkey. Sometimes, this concern is coupled with a prejudice that Turkish immigrants would perturb domestic order just because they are “Muslims” and therefore not just different but intolerant, if not “evil”. In this case, data regarding existing immigration flows from Turkey to Italy should be made available as well as more general data regarding trends in emigration from Turkey. Another important piece of information would be data regarding the increase, if any, of migration flows from acceding countries after EU membership was granted. This data would be of interest not only to those stakeholders which have played up the immigration card, but to Italian workers, and especially the low-skilled, who might be concerned about the impact of Turkish immigrants’ entry in the Italian job market. Other relevant data would be that regarding the Turkish community already living in Italy, which is rather small and well-educated and almost all regularly employed.⁷³

At the economic level, the priorities seem to be: first, providing informa-

⁷³ Interview with Deniz Erdoğan, Turkish Embassy in Rome, 28 May 2008.

tion on how the Turkish labour market will be reformed before membership. Some, especially among Italian unionists, fear that the Italian “Turkish lobby”’s interest in Turkey has to do not only with the availability of workforce but also with the labour market’s present deregulation; second, articulating further both concepts of “compatibility” and “competitiveness” in order to know what the comparative advantages of the two economies will be after Turkey’s inclusion in the EU. Moreover, a debate should be opened regarding the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy before or as a consequence of Turkey’s accession.

At present, more and better quality information on Turkey is urgently needed, especially as concerns its more recent developments at the social, cultural and political levels. In the past few years Turkey has been going through a very delicate transformation whose final outcome is still unknown to Turks and other Europeans alike. The unpredictability of future scenarios calls for a more informed debate, unburdening the discussion of deceiving and misleading misperceptions which pollute the arguments, although not equally, of both supporters and opponents of Turkey’s EU bid. For example, Italian “supporters” of Turkey emphasize the common “Mediterranean identity” of both Italy and Turkey. The concept of “Mediterraneity”, however, is much more appealing in Italy for obvious historical and geographical reasons than it is in Turkey, which is used to think of its national interests as encompassing a much broader region.⁷⁴ References to Turkey’s “Mediterranean identity”, moreover, might be interpreted in Ankara as an attempt to downscale its inclusion in the EU to membership in a Union of the Mediterranean.⁷⁵ Another case of misperceptions affecting the discourse of Turkey supporters regards their scant attention paid to arguments surrounding the EU’s “integration capacity”, leaving the debate exclusively in the hands of opponents. Supporters of membership, lastly, seem to engage with opponents on the latter’s ground. The link between Turkey and Islam is a case in point. Suggesting that the inclusion of Turkey would mean the establishment of a bridge towards Islam and the Middle East may be a legitimate opinion, but as an argument, it should be clarified and qualified, not least because it avails of notions,

⁷⁴ See Interview with Lucio De Michele, *op.cit.*

⁷⁵ See Interview with Deniz Erdoğan, *op.cit.* In this respect, it is worthwhile pointing out that at a meeting in Rome in December 2007, the Spanish and Italian governments came on board on condition that the recent French proposal of a “Union of the Mediterranean”, if adopted, would not jeopardize Turkey’s accession process.

such as “Islam”, that are broad and complex. However, the risk is to reduce the Turkey question to a matter of religion, thus strongly simplifying and manipulating the issue.

On this last point, religion, this chapter has attempted to highlight the potential problems and dangers by discussing, among other things, the role that “Christian public opinion could have (and to some extent, already has) in this debate. The current situation may be described as both safe and fluid. It is safe because to date it has not created a “short circuit” with other contentious debates that have following in Italy, such as the one on immigration, where biases and prejudices often underpin the religion-loaded arguments that surround the main bones of contention. The situation is also fluid, however, because some stakeholders have attempted to merge the debate on Turkey with other contentious and religion-related domestic debates and this attempt may succeed in future precisely because Italian Catholics are divided on the issue of Turkey’s EU membership, with many voicing an opposition that could spread to Christian public opinion at large. In this respect as well the solution does not stem from removing religious considerations from the debate, it rather entails providing as much information as possible both on the internal situation of Turkey and on the positions of Catholics in Italy and in rest of Europe, which display a high degree of diversity. What seems lacking, in fact, is an open debate on the issue, in which institutional and private interests and perceptions are openly acknowledged yet views on the matter are formed through public debate; a debate through which principles and information can constructively spawn informed views and positions.

Annex I

Technical note – 1: The IES was conducted with the participation of 93 Italian parliamentarians from the Chamber of Deputies and Senate (MP). The EES was carried out with the participation of Italian Members of the European Parliament (MEP) in 2006 (N=43) and 2007 (N=41). The TTS (2004-2007) included questions asked at the public opinion level (each year around 1000 people).

Annex II – Operationalization of variables (Survey question wordings)

Dependent variable: ‘Opinion on Turkey’s membership of the EU’

Question: “Do you think Turkey’s membership is good or bad?”

- A good thing
- Neither good nor bad
- A bad thing

(Source: TTS 2004, 2006, 2007; IES 2004; EES 2006, 2007)

Independent variable I: “Threat of Islamic fundamentalism”

Question: ‘I am going to read you a list of possible international threats to Europe in the next 10 years. Please tell me if you think each one on the list is an extremely important threat, an important threat, or not an important threat at all - Islamic fundamentalism (the more radical stream of Islam).’

- Extremely important threat
- Important threat
- Not important threat

(Source: IES 2004, TTS 2004 and 2006)

Question: ‘I am going to read you a list of possible international threats to Europe in the next 10 years. Please tell me if you think each one on the list is a very important, somewhat important, not very important or not an important threat at all - Islamic fundamentalism (the more radical stream of Islam).’

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not an important threat at all

(Source: EES 2006)

Question: 'In the next 10 years, please tell me how likely you are to be personally affected by each of the following threats - Islamic fundamentalism'

Very likely

Somewhat likely

Not too likely

Not likely at all

(Source: TTS 2007; EES 2007)

Independent variable II: "Islam's compatibility with democracy".

Question: 'Do you feel that the values of Islam are compatible with the values of [country]'s democracy?'

Yes

No

(Source: TTS 2006; EES 2006)

2. POLISH STAKEHOLDERS IN THE EU-TURKEY DEBATE

Adam Balcer

In view of its economic and demographic potential,¹ Poland might become an important partner for Turkey, especially in view of the latter's efforts to join the EU. Although both Polish public opinion and political elites support Turkish membership, the issue has not been debated much within the country, not least because it has been perceived as rather insignificant to Polish national interests so far. Since 2005, in the view of the cooling-off between Ankara and Brussels, the issue of Turkey's accession has slipped even lower on the Polish political agenda. Were the issue to be debated publicly, attitudes may well have been – and thus may become – different. Generally speaking, public support for Turkey is not grounded upon strong convictions. In addition, anti-Muslim and anti-Arab feelings are strong within Polish society, and these are reflected somewhat in attitudes towards the Turks. Knowledge about Turkey is rather limited, and sometimes based on misperceptions and negative stereotypes.²

¹ Poland is ranked 6th in the EU in terms of population (38,5 million) and 7th in terms of its economy, with a GDP (PPP) of USD 620 billion, preceded by Holland.

² These half-truths and negative stereotypes, including religious fanaticism, poverty, widespread violence against women, might fall into the category defined by Edward Said as "Orientalism".

1. Historical Background

Despite a long-standing relationship between the two countries, Polish historiography has not dwelled much upon Polish-Turkish relations.³ Comparisons between the “Commonwealth” (*Rzeczpospolita*: the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) and the Ottoman Empire have tended to focus on differences rather than similarities, despite the fact that many existed.⁴ The Commonwealth indirectly bordered the Ottoman Empire through its vassal territories from 1396, and had a direct border with the Empire between 1526 and 1793. Both countries were home to the same ethnic and religious communities (Christian Orthodox Slavs,⁵ Jews, Tatars, Armenians, Karaites and Vlachs), thanks to whom many social contacts took place. Such interactions were also made possible by a greater degree of religious tolerance in both powers compared to the West. As a consequence, Poland was among the Western countries characterized by the greatest level of knowledge about Turkey.⁶ Some prisoners of war from Poland even played an important role within the Ottoman Empire.⁷ Poland was the first European country to sign a friendship pact with the Turks in 1533. Wars between Poland and the Ottoman Empire lasted only 25 years,⁸ although clashes between subjects of the Polish king and Poland’s Ottoman

³ In Poland, Professor Dariusz Kołodziejczyk is the only historian to deal with the subject of the Ottoman Empire and Ottoman-Polish relations in a professional way (knowledge of the Ottoman Turkish language, work in Turkish archives, etc.).

⁴ Both Poland and the Ottoman Empire were large agricultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious countries. Poland was more democratic and decentralized than the Empire, however the latter was certainly not an absolute centralized monarchy.

⁵ Orthodox Christians in Poland fell within the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople until the end of the 17th century.

⁶ Poland sent diplomatic missions to Turkey and to the Crimean Khanate, the Ottoman vassal state more than any other European state. They were distinguished by the large numbers of delegates. Many Poles, including representatives of the elites, spent a part of their lives within the Ottoman Empire captivity. Up until the 18th century, Poles constituted a numerous group among represented a considerable share of pilgrims travelling to visiting Jerusalem.

⁷ Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566), the most outstanding of the Ottoman sultans, married Roxelana, who came from the eastern part of the Kingdom of Poland and was the daughter of a Christian Orthodox priest. The sultan’s wife strongly influenced Ottoman policy. She held intensive contacts with the Polish royal court and greatly contributed to developing positive relations between Poland and the Ottoman Empire. Wojciech Bobowski (Ali Ufki), the 17th century principal interpreter at the court in Istanbul, was a composer who combined Ottoman and Western music. He translated important Western writings into the Ottoman language and made unique records of Ottoman music using the Western stave notation.

⁸ The Polish-Ottoman wars were much shorter and less bloody than Poland’s conflicts with Sweden and Russia, or the Ottoman wars with other countries.

vassals (the Crimean Tatars) were quite frequent. Furthermore, the centre of religious authority of Poland's Muslim minority – the Tatars⁹ – was in Istanbul and Muslim merchants travelled regularly to and across Poland, these being two phenomena which could not be found elsewhere in the area of Western Christendom.¹⁰ Poland has borrowed a host of material culture, military tradition and language from the Ottomans.¹¹

This notwithstanding, the misperceptions about Polish-Turkish relations have been exaggerated in Poland's collective memory in view of the Battle of Vienna (1683), which inspired the emergence of the myth of Poland as the bulwark of Christianity (“antemurale Christianitatis”). The memory of the Relief of Vienna (the myth of the Polish king Jan Sobieski's troops saving Europe from the Muslim conquest) still has some influence on Polish identity. In the 18th century, notwithstanding the alliance between Poland and the Ottomans in the attempt to contain Russia, Poland was ultimately partitioned between Russia, Prussia and Austria. A significant group of Polish insurgents, fighting against Russia in the 19th century, found shelter in the Ottoman Empire.¹² Many served in the Ottoman army and state administration contributing to the country's modernization, and in some cases converted to Islam.¹³ A key personality was Konstanty Borzęcki (Mustafa Celaleddin Pasha), who became one of the founding fathers of modern Turkish nationalism.¹⁴ The legend, according to which the Ottomans were the only power that refused to recognize the partition of Poland, originated at this time. By the same token, another popular legend, known as “the prophecy of Wernyhora”, claimed that Poland's resurgence would take place when Turkish troops marched into its territory.¹⁵ The Ottoman Empire

⁹ Some outstanding Poles had Tatar ancestors.

¹⁰ In the 19th century, Ismail Gasprinsky, an ideologue of Pan-Turkic nationalism, presented the Tatar minority in Poland as an example of a successful merger of Western and Muslim values to be followed by other Turkic nations.

¹¹ Poland sometimes also took on the role of a cultural mediator between the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe. Janissary music bands and some Ottoman architectural motifs, for example, came to the West via Poland.

¹² Polish émigrés set up a village near Istanbul, whose current name is Polonezköy (the Polish village).

¹³ Józef Bem, one of the greatest Polish commanders, earned the rank of general in the Ottoman army and converted to Islam.

¹⁴ His grandson was Nazim Hikmet Ran, one of the greatest Turkish poets, who was aware of his Polish origin.

¹⁵ The author of the legend was Joachim Lelewel, the founding father of modern Polish historiography.

indeed played a critical role in fostering ideas for Poland's struggle for independence as conceived by Polish émigrés,¹⁶ and Polish military units, which fought against Russia, were often trained on Turkish territory.¹⁷

Poland was also one of the first countries to recognize the government of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the two countries had good relations in the interwar period. Following the German and Russian assaults against Poland in 1939, the Turkish ambassador offered asylum to the Polish government. Relations cooled after WWII in view of the two countries' roles in opposing sides of the Cold War divide. With the demise of Soviet Union, Polish-Turkish relations have recovered – e.g., Ankara supported Poland's accession to the NATO – with the singular exception of the crisis caused by the Polish parliament's resolution recognizing the Armenian genocide in 2005. History still influences Polish perceptions of Turkey and most interviewees referred back to historical ties and events. Politicians in particular often emphasized the intimate historical relationship between the two countries and argued that Polish support for Turkey's EU membership bid is a due act of gratitude for Turkey's stance vis-à-vis Poland's partition in past centuries and its entry into NATO in the 1990s. Before his visit to Turkey in 2007, the President of Poland explained Polish support for Turkey's EU bid precisely by using these arguments. Nevertheless, public statements by Polish bishops and attitudes of conservative circles and the Catholic Church in Poland also indicate a latent and easily ignited negative perception of Turkey, grounded on the myth of the Relief of Vienna. One interlocutor from civil society clearly stated that Poles are receptive to anti-Islam discourses rooted in the tradition of the battle of Vienna.

2. Public Opinion

In most of the opinion polls carried out in Poland between 2000 and 2008, the majority of respondents have revealed a positive attitude towards Turkey's accession. Generally speaking, support for EU enlargement in Poland is ranks as one of the highest in the Union. This said, Poles support Turkey's accession less than the accessions of all other candidate countries or potential candidates such as the Western Balkan countries and even

¹⁶ Adam Mickiewicz, the most famous Polish poet, died in 1855 in Istanbul not by mere chance.

¹⁷ During the Russo-Turkish wars by contrast, many Poles fought in the Russian army against Ottoman troops.

Ukraine. Over recent years, support for Turkey's membership has somewhat weakened and is now half-hearted, with the lack of strong positive sentiments towards Turks.¹⁸ These results appear to contradict the position of most interlocutors interviewed for this chapter.

Over the latter half of the 20th century contacts between the two countries were very limited. At present, direct contacts between Polish and Turkish societies are more frequent, although still rather limited. At present, direct contacts between Polish and Turkish societies are rather limited. The Turkish Diaspora in Poland is very small, comprising several hundred people. In 2007, only 277,000 Poles visited Turkey (0.7% of Poland's population) and 50,000 Turks visited Poland (less than 0.1% of Turkey's population). Contact, real or perceived, is driven by the presence of kebab bars called "Turkish bars" in Poland (despite the fact that their owners are often Arabs) or the popularity at particular points in time of Turkish pop music in Poland. Educated Poles also have a rather limited knowledge of modern Turkish culture. Until recently translations of Turkish literature into Polish were rare. Interest towards Turkey, especially among the educated, is rising however. A case in point was the popularity of the exhibition in 2000 on the Polish-Ottoman cultural relationship. Furthermore, especially after the Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk received the Nobel Prize for literature in 2006, Pamuk's novels have been published in Poland, receiving enthusiastic public and media responses. Timidly growing interest can also be noticed as far as Polish attitudes towards Turkish arts and cinema are concerned.

By contrast, cooling attitudes can be explained by the tensions generated with and after the attacks of 11th September 2001. According to an opinion poll conducted by the Pew Research Centre in the spring of 2008, the negative view of Muslims in Poland rose from 30% in 2005 to 46% in 2008. This said, officials from the Foreign Ministry and the European Commission have emphasized that these negative perceptions may strengthen and translate into resistance to Turkey's EU bid as and when immigration from Muslim countries into Poland increases due to Poland's demographic trends.

¹⁸ The Transatlantic Trends 2008 survey included a question whether Turkey's membership in the EU would be good or bad. 65% of Poles answered that it would be 'neither good nor bad', or had no opinion on this subject. 20% believed it would be good, and 15% thought it would be bad. In comparison, 45% of the French declared that Turkey's membership would be bad (www.transatlantictrends.org).

3. Stakeholders in the EU-Turkey Debate in Poland

3.1 *The State Administration*

Bilateral contacts between Poland and Turkey are limited, albeit regular. After the fall of communism, the Polish Prime Minister visited Turkey only once at bilateral level and the Turkish Prime Minister has never visited Poland for a bilateral meeting. This lack of bilateral visits can be explained by the limited economic cooperation between the two countries. Presidential visits are more frequent. Since 1989, every Polish and Turkish President has visited Turkey and Poland respectively at least once. In 1993 the Polish-Turkish presidential committee, consisting in officials from key ministries was established.¹⁹ The meetings of the committee take place once a year. In addition to Turkey, Poland has established a committee of this kind only with Ukraine.

The Polish political elite calls for further EU enlargement. In particular, Ukraine's EU membership is regarded as Poland's key strategic goal. As such, the issue of Turkey's accession is viewed as secondary and subordinate. The paradox underpinning Poland's stance is its support for Turkey's membership alongside its emphasis on the role of Christianity in defining a common European identity. Indeed, in 2004 Poland was one of the most fervent supporters of a clause mentioning Europe's Christian roots in the preamble of the Constitutional Treaty. As far as Turkey is concerned, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs represents the most relevant stakeholder within the state, and the high level of professionalism manifested by Polish diplomats dealing with Turkey is an important asset of the Ministry. Indeed, since the fall of the communist regime, every Polish ambassador to Turkey has been a fluent Turkish speaker, often having lived in Turkey for a long period of time.²⁰ Between 2003 and 2006, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared several "confidential" analyses and organized many seminars on the impact of Turkey's accession on Polish national interests. Furthermore, in 2005 a Turkish project was launched by the Centre for Eastern Studies, a

¹⁹ The initiator of this committee was Polish President Lech Wałęsa, who was interested in securing Turkey's support for Poland's accession into NATO.

²⁰ The best example of the influence of former Polish ambassadors to Turkey is Andrzej Ananicz, who was twice head of the Foreign Intelligence Agency, vice-minister of Foreign Affairs, minister in the President's office and deputy plenipotentiary for Poland's accession negotiations to the European Union.

Polish public think-tank, which has monitored and published reports on Turkey's domestic and foreign policy. By the same token, the Polish Institute of International Affairs – a think-tank linked to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – constantly monitors Turkish politics and policy.²¹

When it comes to arguments in favour of Turkey's EU membership within these circles geopolitics is of the essence. Poland considers an increased Western role in the Caucasus (a close interest also of President Kaczyński, who also supports these countries' EU accession), Black Sea and Central Asia, aimed at counterbalancing Russia's presence in these regions²² and ensuring alternative energy supplies and routes from the Middle East and the Caspian region to Europe, as a key national interest. Turkey's role in Europe is considered as essential to this quest. To some extent, the positive stance towards Turkey's accession also stems from Washington's ardent support for Turkey's EU bid, considering that Poland stands out as a staunch American ally. Another argument raised by the Foreign Ministry is that in so far as Poland itself was accepted as a member state, Warsaw cannot stand against Turkey's (or other candidates') membership. Since 2004-5 a prevalent line of reasoning within the Polish Foreign Ministry has been that Turkey and Ukraine's memberships are interrelated, given that if the former were to happen, the latter could not be blocked. This said, Polish diplomats are also aware that turbulent Turkey-EU relations and internal conflicts in Ukraine have made the prospect of the two countries' membership more distant and unclear.²³ Furthermore, Poland's support for Turkey's accession can be interpreted as a possible reward for Turkey's backing of Ukraine in its bid to enter NATO, an organization in which Ankara has a considerable say. During Stefan Meller's term as Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Polish-Turkish relations deepened. Consultations between departments of Polish and Turkish Foreign Ministries were regular and frequent. In 2006 Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Stefan Meller also proposed to mediate between Turkey and Armenia an agreement to restore diplomatic relations ruptured in 1993. Indeed, as a criterion for EU membership Turkey is required to

²¹ The number of think-tanks in Poland is significantly smaller than in Western Europe.

²² However, Turkey's rather moderate reaction to Russia's war against Georgia in August 2008 has caused some unease among Polish diplomats.

²³ This point of view has often been based on the unspoken assumption that Ukraine is more European than Turkey. There have even been opinions that Ukraine's membership prospects will become more attractive because of fears related to a significant increase of Muslims in the EU as a consequence of Turkey's entry.

enjoy friendly relations with all its neighbours. According to the proposal, the Polish embassy in Yerevan would act as an unofficial representative of Turkey in Armenia, while the Polish embassy in Ankara would do likewise for Armenia. Poland would also work to establish a Turkish-Armenian committee of historians, dealing with the unsolved events of 1915, and share its experience of reconciliation with Germans, Jews and Ukrainians with the two parties. However, such initiatives have been met by explicit scepticism by Armenia and by more muted yet equal reluctance by Turkey, not least in view of the 2005 Polish parliament's recognition of the Armenian genocide. The proposal was then dropped by Stefan Meller's successor.

Since then, the intensity of contacts between Polish and Turkish Foreign Ministries has weakened. In May 2008 the Polish Foreign Ministry proposed to the EU to launch a new "Eastern Partnership", intended to complement the Northern Dimension and the Union for the Mediterranean by providing an institutionalized forum for discussing visa agreements, free trade deals and strategic partnership agreements with the EU's eastern neighbours. Its geographical scope would include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Belarus would only participate at a technical level, while Russia would be invited to participate in some local initiatives. Turkey, however, was not consulted on this initiative.

3.2 *Political Parties*

Since 2004 the Polish political landscape has been dominated by two parties, the conservative-liberal Civic Platform (PO) and the conservative-nationalist Law & Justice (PiS), which together represent 70-80% of the electorate. By contrast, considering the weakness of the left-wing, it is very unlikely that it will gain ground in the foreseeable future.²⁴ PO and PiS are thus likely to dominate the political discourse in the years ahead, with Civic Platform being the major party in government (in coalition with the smaller Polish Peasant Party) since 2007, and Lech Kaczyński, who is clearly associated with Law & Justice, being elected president in 2005 for a five-year term.

Both Civic Platform and Law & Justice support Turkey's EU membership, although the latter's backing has been rather lukewarm. Indeed, in 2004, MEPs from Law & Justice voted against starting negotiations with Turkey. On that occasion, the party's leader Jarosław Kaczyński, together with other

²⁴ Tadeusz Iwiński, a left-wing politician, is the head of the Polish-Turkish parliamentary group. He has been to Turkey many times and speaks Turkish.

affiliates, spoke out against Turkey's accession on the grounds of cultural differences and financial costs to the EU in view of Turkey's economic conditions, its 70 million citizens and large agricultural sector.²⁵ However, during the Law & Justice government in 2005-7, both Jarosław Kaczyński and his brother Lech, the President, declared their support for Turkey's EU membership while recognizing the "cultural differences" between the two sides.²⁶ Law & Justice's standpoint mirrors the conservative and traditional views of the majority of its electorate, which regard Christianity as a basic foundation of Europe and are ill-disposed towards Muslims. Moreover, Law & Justice represents the poorer, and predominantly agricultural sector of the country. However, a primary aim of Law & Justice has been that of counterbalancing Germany within the Union, as well as promoting a more active EU policy towards the Black Sea and the Caucasus, which would benefit from Turkey's involvement. While still reticent to whole-heartedly embrace Turkey for the above-mentioned perceptions of cultural and religious differences, geopolitical and strategic considerations are beginning to prevail within the party's discourse.

By contrast, Civic Platform has never spoken explicitly against Turkey's membership despite having criticized developments in Turkey. However, although politicians from the Civic Platform, interviewed for this project, declared their support for Turkey's accession, one of them also claimed that Turkey's membership was strategically indifferent to Poland. The reasoning here was that while the gains from Turkey's accession were uncertain, intangible and distant to Poland, the costs – such as the EU's internal divisions on this question or financial costs – were real. In other words, while maintaining their non-objection to the Turkish EU cause, they are unlikely to stand up to reluctant member states.

Other two smaller parties are represented in parliament: the Democratic Left Alliance and the Polish Peasant Party, whose support ranges between 5% and 7%. Both parties support Turkey's accession, although the latter is very sensitive to issues concerning the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Regional Policy. Hence the party could perceive Turkey as a threat to the interests of its electorate in future.

²⁵ Poland has the third-lowest GDP (PPP) per capita in the EU, and the largest agricultural sector in the EU.

²⁶ In an interview for Reuters in March 2008, President Lech Kaczyński said that 'the problem of Turkey is mainly a cultural problem; Ukraine and even Georgia do not have such a problem.'

On a final note, the question of the Armenian massacres committed in 1915 has also had a (negative) impact on Polish perceptions of Turkey, in so far as this question is often discussed in Poland from the Armenian perspective.²⁷ In 2005 the Polish parliament adopted a resolution according to which the Armenian massacres had indeed represented a genocide. Some politicians insisted that Turkey's EU membership should be made conditional to Ankara's recognition of the massacres as genocide.

3.3 *The Media*

Poland's three major TV corporations are the commercial TVN and Polsat, and the public TVP. The Polish radio market is dominated by three giants as well, two commercial (RMF FM and Radio Zet) and the public Polskie Radio. Public TV and public radio discuss foreign issues more extensively than private channels. As far as newspapers are concerned, readership is lower in Poland than in most Western countries. The Polish national press market is shared by five major dailies, including two tabloids (*Fakt* and *Super Express*) and three opinion-forming newspapers, namely the liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the conservative-liberal *Dziennik* and the conservative *Rzeczpospolita*, whose circulation is only slightly larger than that of the two tabloids.

Both Polish newspapers and TV stations do not have permanent correspondents in Turkey, send journalists to Turkey very rarely and all interlocutors from these media outlets argued that Turkey's EU membership was not an important issue for Polish society, although some admitted that its importance is underestimated.²⁸ A representative of the public media said that the media would become more interested in the subject if diplomatic relations between Poland and Turkey intensified. Whereas, a journalist from a major commercial station believed that a rise in bilateral FDI would attract

²⁷ The estimated number of Armenians in Poland is between 40,000 and 80,000. New emigrants constitute the vast majority, although there are nearly 8,000 Armenians who have lived in Poland for centuries. Another group consists in people who have some Armenian ancestors. The latter group is heavily represented in the ruling classes, including political parties. The informal leader of the Armenian lobby in Poland is the Catholic priest Father Tadeusz Isakowicz-Zalewski, who has close links with Law and Justice.

²⁸ The head of *Dziennik's* foreign affairs section noticed that the lack of editorials in the second page of the newspaper was a perfect illustration of lack of attention to Turkish issues. He also referred to public opinion polls commissioned by his newspaper, where respondents had been asked to indicate the most interesting foreign issues and Turkey had not been mentioned among them.

greater media attention. Generally speaking, the image of Turkey presented by the media is rather negative. Special attention is devoted to negative events, such as terrorist attacks or clashes between the Turkish army and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).²⁹ A surge of media attention also occurred in 2004 in the run-up to the European Council, and in 2006 in the wake of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to Turkey.

Notwithstanding the overall positive attitude towards Turkey's accession process, the depth of research among the media on this question is rather low, mainly because of limited knowledge about Turkey. Most strikingly is the limited media focus on Turkey's role in the regions perceived as important to Polish national interests such as the Black Sea and the Caucasus. TV and radio broadcasts clearly reflect the views of mainstream elites and the public about Turkey's membership and do not attempt to shape opinions on the question. The situation is far more complex in the case of newspapers and magazines. The conservative daily *Rzeczpospolita*, often expressing critical opinions about Islam, published an editorial opposing Turkey's accession in the wake of the dispute over the lecture given by Pope Benedict XVI in Regensburg in 2006. After the Pope's lecture, *Rzeczpospolita's* editor-in-chief wrote an article attacking the Turkish Prime Minister for his response to the Pope's speech. However, the head of *Rzeczpospolita's* foreign affairs section, who has published several commentaries on Turkey, including critical ones, declared his support for Turkey's membership in an interview with the author, and also stated that the ruling AKP cannot be branded as an Islamist party aiming at introducing Shariah law in Turkey. The conservative-liberal daily *Dziennik* has not published yet any editorials expressing clearly negative or positive attitudes towards Turkey's EU membership. However, *Dziennik's* editor-in-chief described the AKP's overwhelming victory in 2007 as a signal of Turkey turning its back to the West. *Rzeczpospolita* and *Dziennik's* total circulation is almost two-thirds that of the liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza*, which instead clearly supports Turkey's accession. On their part, the two major tabloids tackled the issue very rarely. In 2006, *Super Express* published a series of articles in defence of a Polish athlete arrested in Turkey: on that occasion, the newspaper appealed to the Polish government to withhold its support for Turkey's accession to the EU.

²⁹ One of the most famous Polish TV journalists asked a pointed question, 'When did we mention Turkey in our programme last time? And when did they carry out the last terrorist attack there?'

Across the board, Polish editors dealing with foreign issues generally do not oppose the idea of Turkey's EU membership. Nevertheless, their support is rather moderate and is driven foremost by geopolitical arguments. In interviews with some editors, only one interlocutor might be defined as an enthusiastic supporter of Turkey's accession. Many point out that it would be mistaken to perceive Turkey as unable of integrating culturally into the EU, while also noticing significant cultural differences. Still, one editor interviewed for this project claimed that Turkey is not a European country, but rather a military semi-dictatorship whose nationalist nature was predominant in Europe before World War II. Another editor instead declared his moderate opposition to Turkey's accession in view of the perceived link with the prospects of Ukraine's membership. According to him, the negative stance taken by some member states towards Turkey has translated into a negative reaction to enlargement *tout court*. Hence removing Turkey from the enlargement equation might improve Ukraine's European perspective. This editor was also concerned that Turkey's membership would become too heavy a burden to the Union's budget, as a consequence of which Poland would inevitably incur financial losses. He argued that Turkey's accession would confront the EU with troubled Middle Eastern borders. By contrast, this editor did not oppose Turkey's accession on "cultural" grounds and was open to change his sceptical stance if Turkey were to become a fully democratic and developed country, which would not strain the EU's institutions, economy and identity. At the same time, he questioned however the ability of EU institutions to ensure such a complete transformation of Turkey citing the deficiencies in the accession processes of Romania and Bulgaria

3.4 *Business*

As bilateral trade is not high between the two countries, the Polish business community cannot be regarded as a fundamental stakeholder in the relationship between Poland and Turkey. Nevertheless, trade exchange between the two countries has intensified in recent years. In 2001, the trade turnover was USD 537 million, and in 2007 it peaked at USD 3,644 billion.³⁰ With 1,1% of Polish exports going to Turkey, while 1.3% of Polish imports coming from Turkey, Turkey ranks 19th in the Polish trade balance.

³⁰ Data provided by the Turkish Statistical Institute differ significantly from those stated in this text. However, we have relied upon Polish statistical data in so far as compiled in compliance with EU standards (Eurostat).

Polish FDI in Turkey is very limited. By late 2007, Poland invested as little as USD 2 million in Turkey. However, Turkish investments in Poland are significantly higher, with Turkey investing more than USD 200 million (over 2.2% of Turkish FDI) by 2007. The involvement of some Turkish businessmen in financial scandals, which were highly publicized by the Polish media, has however damaged the image of Turkish business in the country. Commercial relations are expected to deepen with the establishment of the Polish-Turkish Chamber of Commerce in May 2007. Thirty companies (26 from Poland and 4 from Turkey) have signed up to the organization's articles of association so far and the first Polish-Turkish Economic Forum took place in October 2008 in Warsaw with the participation of some 100-150 Polish and Turkish entrepreneurs. According to officials from the Polish Foreign Ministry, progress in Turkey's accession course is set to strengthen and improve economic relations between Poland and Turkey in terms of both trade and investment. As a consequence, Poland is likely to become more interested in the Turkey's accession process.

3.5 Civil Society, the Roman-Catholic Church and Academia

Given the small size of the Turkish community in Poland, the only two noteworthy groups are the Association for Polish-Turkish Friendship and the Polish-Turkish Chamber of Commerce. Furthermore, there are three small departments of Turkish studies at Polish universities (Warsaw, Poznan, Cracow), whose social impact is very limited.³¹ These departments mainly offer linguistic and literary studies, while courses on contemporary Turkish history and politics are rather an exception. By the same token, Polish academic publications rarely focus on such issues. Adam Szymański, an analyst from the Polish Institute of International Affairs, is the author of the only comprehensive article ever written on the possible consequences of Turkey's EU membership on Poland.³² In their forthcoming book on the Polish geopolitical future in the 21st century, Kazimierz Wóycicki and

³¹ Nearly 20 people graduate from Turkish departments every year.

³² The author argues that the prospect of Turkish membership is so distant and the opportunities and problems related to it are so complex that it is difficult to assert clearly what the impact on Poland will be. In the author's opinion, the accession of this poor country, whose political culture is less democratic compared to western Europe, may strengthen the objections against Ukraine's membership. Moreover, Poland and Turkey within the EU may find themselves at odds with each other with the former supporting an eastern and the latter a southern orientation.

Andrzej Krawczyk, in cooperation with this author, present Turkey as a key country to Polish national interests, also in view of Polish immigration needs. Non-governmental organizations rarely hold conferences and panel discussions on EU-Turkey relations. What more, conferences dealing with the Black Sea, Russia and the Caucasus, key issues for both Poland and Turkey, mostly do not take into account the Turkish perspective on these matters. The most significant academic conference on the issue was held in late 2004 by the Union & Poland Foundation and the Centre for Eastern Studies. The Eastern Institute is planning to organize the Forum "Europe-Turkey" in December 2008. This would be the largest conference ever organized in Poland on Turkey, with approximately 150 participants from Turkey and Europe expected to attend.

By contrast, Poland's Catholic Church is rather influential as a stakeholder in the debate about Turkey's accession. This is mainly because Polish society is significantly more pious and conservative than the Western European average and thus more prone to the political influence of the Church. It is worth remembering that the clergy in Poland holds a more conservative stance than its counterparts in Western Europe, a tendency which has strengthened further in recent years. Indeed, the clergy tends to be more critical than the rest of society about Turkey's EU membership. To a certain extent, conservatism, religion and negative approaches towards EU-Turkey relations are related, because of the Polish perception of the EU's Christian identity,³³ and the frequent overlap between conservatives and eurosceptics, with the former viewing the EU as "unfriendly" to religion and traditional values (e.g., on issues such as homosexuality, abortion and euthanasia).³⁴ The church's hierarchs in Poland have never officially opposed Turkey's accession.³⁵ In 2004, before the Brussels European Council, the Polish church addressed a memorandum to the government, wherein they declared to accept a launch of accession negotiations, while calling for greater protection of Christians' rights in Turkey. In 2005, during the annu-

³³ However, even in these circles there are people who view positively Turkey's accession, as it is seen as a potential conservative ally in the contested issue of the EU's approach to values and religion.

³⁴ This negative attitude towards the EU also has a nationalist aspect; indeed, the Union is perceived as a threat to Poland's sovereignty and independence.

³⁵ Pope John Paul II, whose influence on the Polish church was exceptionally high, never opposed Turkey's membership and manifested a far more positive attitude towards Islam than his successor, Benedict XVI.

al conference on the “Role of Catholic Church in the process of European integration”, Turkey’s membership was one of the issues covered. Archbishop Alfons Nossol declared his support for Turkish accession, notwithstanding its perceived cultural differences and geographical distance from Europe. He proclaimed to be in favour of accession mainly because it represented a “Christian obligation” in the spirit of solidarity. Turkey’s membership might also have a deradicalizing influence on the Muslim world and improve relations between Islam and Christianity.

Other bishops, however, have expressed critical opinions about Turkey, which they link back to the myth of the battle of Vienna. Primate Józef Glemp, speaking at a demographic congress in 2001, while noting the demographic need to open the country to immigration, argued: ‘[t]here are 20 million Muslims in Europe. This is a cultural and civilizational phenomenon, which raises concern about the future. [...] The demographic gap [in Poland] can be filled by those against whom Jan III Sobieski defended us, while we want neither a different culture nor terrorism.’ In 2007, Tadeusz Płoski, field bishop of the Polish Army, declared during a mass commemorating the anniversary of the battle of Vienna that ‘the September 11, 2001 attacks [...] were planned with criminal precision by Osama bin Laden and a group of Islamic terrorists so meticulously, almost to match the exact hour, [...] of the anniversary of the battle of Vienna [...] At those times, in 1683, when Poles saved Europe from the Islamic invasion, Turks had been planning to turn Europe into a European Caliphate’.³⁶

Conversations with religious hierarchs have revealed that their general attitude towards Turkey’s membership overlaps with the stance of Pope Benedict XVI. Some uncertainties about the success of the accession process restrain their full consent, which is also conditional upon the respect of Christians’ rights in Turkey. Turkey’s accession is regarded as an asset to improve the relationship between Christianity and Islam, as well as the peaceful coexistence of Muslims and Christians. According to the hierarchs, such coexistence is hard to achieve because Islam is “less tolerant” than Christianity, despite the more moderate tones of Turkish Islam. Most of the clergy interviewed for this study identifies Christianity with both Europe and democracy. According to them, even if Turkey were to join the EU, it will never become a culturally European country because of these unchangeable essentialist features.

³⁶ Bishop Płoski’s opinion was criticized by other Polish bishops.

4. Implications for a Communication Strategy

While many of the arguments, both in favour and against Turkey's accession, raised in Poland mirror those of other member states, what distinguishes the Polish point of view is firstly the perceived link between Turkey's membership Ukraine's EU prospects, and secondly the above EU-average preoccupation with the rights of the Christian minority in Turkey, shared in particular by the conservative wing of Polish society. On a whole, and not unlike most other member states, Turkey is not a priority issue in Polish debate, not least in view of the negligible Muslim minority in Poland and the limited economic and political ties between Poland and Turkey. The current mood in Poland is thus cautiously and unenthusiastically positive. In view of this lukewarm attitude below are several factors that may switch the Polish stance to negative:

- A return to a clear negative stance of the Pope on the Turkey question;
- Turkish domestic problems;
- A rise in Islamist terrorist attacks in any Western country;
- Reform of the EU budget to Poland's disadvantage;
- Closer relations between Turkey and Russia, compromising Poland's perception of Turkey as an asset in the development of European policy towards eastern Europe and the Caucasus;
- An influx of Muslim immigration into Poland and consequent problems related to their integration.

The key issue remains however the relationship between Ukraine and the EU. In particular, if France³⁷ and Germany come round to supporting Ukraine's accession, while retaining a negative stance towards Turkey, then Poland's support for Turkish aspirations are destined to weaken, activating a vicious circle which will involve the media and the general public as well. By contrast, some factors that might strengthen Polish support for Turkey's accession and Polish perceptions of Turkey include:

- Further Turkish democratization, which would grant and guarantee rights to Christians;
- Stronger Turkish support for Ukraine and Georgia's NATO and EU accessions, and deepening relations with these countries;

³⁷ It is worth remembering that during his visit to Poland in late May 2008, the French President Nicolas Sarkozy stated that Ukraine, unlike Turkey, is a European country from the historical and geographical point of view.

- Ankara's initiative to cooperate with Poland in the Black Sea region, the Caucasus and Central Asia, especially in the energy sector;
- Turkey's firmer policy towards Russia;
- Intensification of trade and investment relations between Turkey and Poland;
- The promotion of a more nuanced and moderate image of Islam in the media;
- Focusing on Turkey's unique position in the Muslim world;
- Support for historical research, conferences, publications and articles dealing with Polish-Turkish relations (the deconstruction of the "antemurale Christianitatis" myth) and the Ottoman Empire, thus changing the Empire's negative image and developing greater awareness of the forgotten massacres committed against Muslims in the Balkans and the Caucasus;
- The promotion of both Turkish elite and mass culture (films, literature, music etc), especially as concerns its "modern" elements (rock bands, hip hop etc.) and ecumenical ones (such as dancing dervishes).

3. AUSTRIAN STAKEHOLDERS IN THE EU-TURKEY DEBATE

Cengiz Günay

Within the EU, Austria leads the group of opponents of Turkey's accession. However, Austrians are not only highly sceptical of Turkish membership, they are also amongst the most critical of the EU in general and of its enlargement process in particular. Thorough changes in the country's economic, political and social environment have unleashed anxiety, fear and an inward-looking political discourse. The established and large people's parties have failed to develop credible and comprehensible political strategies to counter fears and create a spirit of optimism. Instead rightist populism increasingly gained ground and became an enduring part of Austrian political culture. Despite the country's undeniable economic success, change triggered by globalization and liberalization has incited sentiments of insecurity. In the face of these changes many Austrians have deemed the country to be simply too small to have a say. Many people are craving for the "good old days" when Austria was still perceived as "an island of the blessed".

The Turkey question, largely neglected and hardly discussed until 2004, suddenly gained momentum with the eastern enlargement that year. Despite clear economic benefits for the country, many Austrians, and in particular handcraft labourers and small sized companies deemed enlargement as having taken place too early, fearing competition from cheaper neighbours. When Austria became an EU member state in 1995, many Austrians thought they had joined an "exclusive club". After all, EU membership affirmed once and for all Austria's affiliation with the western dem-

ocratic world. Many people, not aware of the tremendous changes going on at their borders, had difficulties in understanding why Eastern Europe should become a member of the same club.

The debates on Turkey took shape in this atmosphere. The discourse on Turkey, triggered by the far right, was charged with all the fears connected with economic restructuring, the deconstruction of the social welfare system, problems with increased migration and a polarized debate on Islam. The discussions on Turkey compensated internal debates on very real domestic problems. However, the discourse reflected all these issues on Turkey. Therefore the question of Turkey's membership attained political significance much beyond that of other foreign policy issues. The debate clearly worsened in 2004 when the Social Democrats, then the major opposition party, shifted to a hardline position against Turkey's membership. The fact that this was less out of ideological reasons, but rather a tactical shift in order to gain back its own grassroots which were increasingly permeated by the slogans of the far right, can be regarded as an example of the ills of EU policies in Austria. The number of sceptics further grew with the two negative referenda results in France and in the Netherlands in 2005. From then on, hardly any pro-Turkey voice has been represented in the public discourse. The whole political and economic establishment distanced itself from the idea, as it has not been one of Austria's priorities. These priorities lie in the Balkans. In order to promote the integration of the Western Balkans – Austria's historical sphere of economic and political interest – it was deemed necessary to decouple this issue from the Turkish question. The government's announcement to hold a referendum on Turkey once the negotiations are completed cooled the overheated debate off and helped to postpone unpleasant decisions. Today, one can speak of a normalization of relations with Turkey. Indeed the reaction of most of the stakeholders consulted in this study was "to wait and see".

Although from the outside it might seem as if Austria consists of a homogeneous block of opponents to Turkey's membership, a closer look reveals that reasons for disapproval might radically differ between different opponents. To understand these different sources of resistance, it is necessary to first scrutinize the country's political system, its democratic culture, historical narratives which have contributed to national identity and self-perception as well as pro and con arguments applied in the debates. Indeed, better knowledge about different stakeholders is indispensable for the development of a communication strategy. Any such strategy should, however,

refrain from being perceived as a campaign for Turkey's accession, but should intend to debate Turkey's accession with its pros and cons, comparable to a SWOT analysis, elaborating the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats which Turkey's membership might entail.

1. The Formation of a Nation-State and Post-War Austrian Identity

The borders of today's Austria were established in 1918, after the dissolution of the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian Habsburg Empire, comprising most parts of the German-speaking territories of the former Habsburg lands. The loss of the Empire traumatized Austrian society and the new Republic inspired little enthusiasm among its people. There was widespread belief that the new state, cut off from its industrial centres and from its hinterland, would not be able to survive on its own.¹ The young state indeed proved fragile. Its democracy was characterized by tensions between the Left and Right and economic instability, reaching the verge of civil war and culminating in the establishment of an authoritarian regime referred to as "Austro-fascism". The regime overemphasized the Catholic character of Austrian culture and suppressed any political or social group which was not Catholic-Conservative.² However the Austro-fascist regime remained rather weak, as it failed to generate mass support. The regime was also linked to the rising German nationalism at the time. In fact the Austro-fascist regime did not build on an independent Austrian identity, but regarded Austria to be part of the great German *Kulturnation*, though as a better German state in so far as it was Catholic (in contrast to largely Protestant Germany) and because the regime perceived itself as the guardian of the spirit of the old Roman German Empire. The Austro-fascist regime's Catholic nationalism articulated the mentalities of the countryside and Catholic traditions against the city.³

Nevertheless, Austro-fascism could not avert Austria's annexation by Nazi

¹ Referenda were held in different parts of the country which pleaded for unification with Germany; in Vorarlberg, the country's most western province people opted for unification with Switzerland. However, the allies favoured a downsized but independent Austrian state. They forbade further referenda on unification.

² The Austro fascist regime persecuted Social Democrats, Communists and members of the rising Nazi movement.

³ See Spohn, W. (2002) 'Austria: Europe and the Nation in Austrian National Identity', *Euronat State of the Art and Historical Report*, April, p. 14, <http://www.iue.it/RSCAS/Research/EURONAT/200204AtReport.pdf>.

Germany in 1938 and, tellingly, without any significant resistance Austria was integrated into the Third Reich and renamed into “*Ostmark*”. In 1943, the Allies agreed to restore Austrian independence after the war. The narrative developed by the Second Republic regarded the years 1938-1945 as an unwelcome occupation and thus purged from Austrian history. Austria supposedly bore no political or social relation to the Third Reich; the claim to victim status served well as a “founding myth” of the Second Republic.⁴ After ten years of occupation of allied troops, Austria only regained national sovereignty in 1955, with the signing of the “*Staatsvertrag*” (The so called State Treaty, signed between Austria and the four allied powers; US, UK, France and USSR). However, Austria’s return to full sovereignty was bound to its commitment to perennial neutrality. Initially, a product of the political realities of the Cold War era, the principle of neutrality became another central element of post-war identity building in Austria, portrayed as the very *raison d’être* of the Austrian state and as the basis for its economic development and social welfare system.⁵ Moreover, neutrality was perceived as a symbol of national independence, a guarantee for the inviolability of the national territory, a guarantor for the democratic system and, therefore, as a symbol for Austria’s integration with the western democratic world.⁶ Yet despite neutrality, Austrian foreign policy was comparably active in relation for example to Switzerland, with Austria soon seeking inclusion in international organizations such as the UN, the Council of Europe and the European Free Trade Area.

Neutrality not only helped to restore national sovereignty and territorial integrity in contrast to Germany but, in a global environment characterized by the Cold War, it enabled Austria to act as a mediator of East-West diplomacy. Particularly, the summit between Kennedy and Khrushchev, held in Vienna in 1961, restored Austria’s international prestige, confirmed its international role and established Vienna as a venue for international summits. Neutrality thus awarded Austria a role in international politics, which was disproportionate to its size or economic role. This helped the country regain self-esteem and a feeling of importance, overcoming the trauma of

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See Heidemarie Uhl cited by Ehs, T. (2005) ‘Die Inszenierung der österreichischen Identität’, 1945-55, *Online Zeitung der Universität Wien*, 25 October, <http://www.dieuniversitaet-online.at/dossiers/1945-55.html>.

⁶ See Höll, O. (2005) ‘Lange Schatten der Vergangenheit, 50 Jahre österreichische Außenpolitik’ *International*, 3-4, p. 16.

being downgraded from an Empire to a small and internationally insignificant country.

The formation of a distinct Austrian identity was a process rather than the immediate outcome of World War II. In contrast to the First Republic, conscious efforts were made to build an Austrian nation and deepen an Austrian identity. This included the institutionalisation of national symbols such as flags or the national anthem, but also the elimination of elements of German - *Kulturnation* nationalism, and their replacement through regional and cultural traditions, perceived as expressions of a distinct Austrian identity.⁷ Contemporary Austrians' self perception is that of harmless – cosy – singing and peaceful people with a long history of outstanding cultural activities.⁸ 'Our nation can be neither reduced to a particular common language, nor to borders that could be explained through geographical conditions, nor to a revolution. What remains is the mythic concept of culture.'⁹ The concept of a distinct Austrian *Kulturnation* inevitably established links with the grandeur of the imperial past and its Catholic character and helped to contrast the little state with its huge German neighbour. Furthermore, the concept of a great nation of culture also supported lingering feelings of superiority, particularly vis-à-vis the former subjects of the Empire in the neighbouring east.¹⁰ The consolidation of an Austrian national identity thus corresponds to a high degree of Austrian national pride in Austrian history, art, sports, their social security system, science and education.¹¹

2. The Post-War System and Political Parties

In contrast to the First Republic (1918-1938), the post war political system was built on the quest for consensus between the two major political camps: the Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the conservative Austrian People's

⁷ See Spohn, W. (2002) op.cit. , p.15-16.

⁸ See Heidemarie Uhl cited by Ehs, T. (2005) op.cit.

⁹ Head of the Cultural Policy Section at the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, Ambassador Emil Brix (2007) 'Interview mit Botschafter Emil Brix' in *Wiener Zeitung* 21 April, <http://www.bmeia.gv.at/aussenministerium/aktuelles/reden-und-interviews.html>.

¹⁰ It should be noted however that the post-war image of Austria as an "island of the blessed" has been challenged by writers and artists, such as Thomas Bernhard or Nobel Prize winner Elfriede Jelinek, whose works have strongly criticized Austrian society's inward orientation and its reluctance to cope with its past.

¹¹ Spohn, W. (2002) op.cit. p.17.

Party (ÖVP). The reconciliation between these two camps has been perceived as an important cornerstone for political stability, social peace and economic development.

An important element of this so-called system of “consensus democracy” has been the “social partners”. These are representative bodies of labour and business, such as the workers’ chambers, the federation of trade unions, the chambers of commerce and the chambers of agriculture in negotiations over pay rates and economic policy. These “social partners” have usually gained importance in eras of grand coalition governments including the SPÖ and the ÖVP.¹² The system of social partnership has clearly contributed to balanced income distribution, social justice, political stability and a negligible number of strikes and walk-outs. However it has also favoured neo-corporatism,¹³ and a political culture characterized by opaque negotiations among state elites behind closed doors. In the long run, this practice has weakened the role of the parliament as a place of open political debate and negotiations and instead favoured the prospering of “*Proporz*”, the proportional distribution of posts and contracts in the public sector and state owned industries between the two camps. At its height, the “*Proporz*-system” divided the state into fiefdoms which were allocated according to party affiliations. Insurance companies, banks and even automobile associations have been divided into red and black ones.¹⁴

The division of the country into the spheres of influence of Social Democrats or the People’s Party was only softened with the rise of the so-called third camp: the Freedom Party (FPÖ). When Jörg Haider became leader of the party in the mid-1980s, the FPÖ moved to the far-right. The long-standing German nationalistic tradition within the party was gradually transformed into an Austrian right-wing nationalist-populism targeting the anxieties of the common man.¹⁵ This entailed the adoption of a populist “Robin Hood discourse” defending the interests of the common “good and diligent” Austrians against their internal antagonists: the “top brass” in politics and the dangerous “Other”, be it foreign migrants, asylum seekers or ruthless international businesses.

From the mid 1980s, Austrian society began experiencing deep economic and social transformations. The decline of industrial sectors and increasing

¹² See ‘Sleeping with the enemy’, *The Economist*, 22 November 2007.

¹³ See Tálos, E. (2006) ‘Sozialpartnerschaft, Austrokorporatismus am Ende?’, in H. Dachs et al. (eds) *Politik in Österreich. Das Handbuch*, Wien, Manz, p. 425.

¹⁴ The Reds are the Social Democrats, while the Blacks are the Conservatives.

¹⁵ See Spohn, W. (2002) op.cit, p. 16.

unemployment rates in some regions coincided with a new influx of migration. In this context the Freedom Party pointed out the ills of the “*Proporz*-system”, presenting itself as the voice of the people against the distribution of posts according to party affiliations and all its implications. This necessary system critique was also imbued in xenophobic tones, targeting the growing number of labour migrants and asylum seekers referred to simply as *Ausländer* (foreigners). The term increasingly gained a negative connotation as the FPÖ applied it in order to describe “benefit-cheats” abusing Austria’s social system.

As other parties failed to openly address the problems experienced at the grassroots, the FPÖ’s xenophobic tones dominated the political discourse throughout most of the 1990s and the two people’s parties could hardly compete against this growing rightist populism. From the mid 1990s, the FPÖ’s populist rhetoric grabbed most protest votes. In order to maximize its share in votes and capitalize upon anti-EU sentiment in the country, the party did not shrink from a radical shift in its attitude towards the European Union. Whereas the FPÖ had always pursued a pro-EU line, in the run up to Austria’s membership the party suddenly changed sides and turned into one of the most ardent opponents to membership. In the following years, the party became a pool of anti-EU and anti-enlargement voices. Between 1996 and 1999, the FPÖ introduced 20 motions against enlargement in parliament.¹⁶

The FPÖ’s political rise continued until 1999 – the party’s share in votes rose from 5% in the late 1980s to 27% in 1999. That year, for the first time in post-war history, the so-called third camp was able to outdo the People’s Party and became the country’s second largest party. The FPÖ’s participation in a coalition with the conservative ÖVP was commented as a turning point (*Wende*) in Austrian politics. The joining of an openly xenophobic and populist protest movement in government was a premiere, provoking large national and international protest. For domestic politics, the FPÖ’s joining in government implied the breaking of the principle of “consensus democracy”. Relations between the social partners worsened parallel to the cooling down of the relations between the big political parties. Consequently, the SPÖ adopted a tough opposition course against the new government.

¹⁶ European Stability Initiative (2008) *A referendum on the unknown Turk? Anatomy of an Austrian debate*, ESI Report, 30 January, http://www.esiweb.org/index.php?lang=en&id=156&document_ID=101.

Ironically, it was the FPÖ's participation in government, which changed the tune with regard to EU and enlargement issues. The party's participation in government silenced xenophobic and anti-European tones. After all, the conservative ÖVP had demanded the FPÖ's commitment to enlargement as a precondition for building a coalition. The conservative–rightist ÖVP-FPÖ/ later-BZÖ coalition under Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel (ÖVP) ruled until 2006.¹⁷ In this period of time no political party campaigned against enlargement.¹⁸ The fourth established political camp in the Austrian system is the Green Party. The Greens emerged from a growing environmentalist movement in the 1980s. Over the years the Greens have evolved into a professionalized opposition party with a political agenda that goes far beyond environmental issues. The Green Party has consciously tried to establish itself as a counter-balance to the rightist Freedom Party, defending leftist-liberal positions, particularly with regard to migration issues. It has thus challenged the Social Democrats from the left.

3. The European Union and Enlargement

In 1994 Austrians endorsed membership to the EU with a majority of 66%.¹⁹ The two major parties (SPÖ and ÖVP), then united in a grand coalition, campaigned for EU membership. The “social partners” were also strongly involved in the accession process. In particular, the trade unions played an important role in gaining the rather sceptical working class' consent. By contrast, the opposition parties – FPÖ and the Greens – were opposed to EU membership, however for entirely different reasons.

Whereas Austrians were euro-enthusiasts at the beginning, the mood gradually changed turning them into eurosceptics. Eurobarometer polls tell us that positive evaluations on the EU have fallen consistently over time. In 2008 only 36% assessed the EU as something positive. While 26% of the Austrians indicated that they see the EU as negative, another 36% see it neither positive nor negative. Similarly low is people's trust in institutions of the European Union, such as the Commission or the European Parliament.²⁰ Different reasons explain this trend. In 1994, the grand coal-

¹⁷ Interrupted by early elections held in the fall of 2002.

¹⁸ European Stability Initiative (2008) op.cit.

¹⁹ In 1995 the country became a member of the European Union.

²⁰ Bürger, J. (2008) 'EU-Skepsis in Österreich weiter hoch', *Oberösterreichische Nachrichten*, 15 July.

tion government had countered populist anti-EU rhetoric with populist pro-EU rhetoric. The government's promise that EU membership would promote security and economic advantages had crucially influenced the people's positive decision.²¹ Expectations were high particularly in regard to economic savings of private households. In contrast, in recent years prices have been constantly rising, and the situation in the labour market has become increasingly difficult.

The public was particularly worried about developments at the country's doorstep. Many perceived the eastern enlargement as taking place too hastily. Psychologically, the public was not prepared. 'Austrians had thought they had entered an exclusive club, and now even the poorer family members next door were accepted'.²² Whereas Austrian businesses spread into the neighbouring east and the economy largely benefited from enlargement, these economic benefits did not trickle down to common citizens. Instead, citizens felt exposed to an increasingly competitive economic environment, rising prices, increasing crime rates and growing migration. Economic concerns were mainly related to a further rise of unemployment rates. Local blue-collar workers in the manufacturing sectors as well as unqualified white-collar workers in the service sector feared "social dumping", as well as being replaced by more qualified and cheaper personnel from new member states. Social fears also related to the possible abuse of the existing non-contributory social welfare provisions and increased competition for cheap housing in inner-city areas. This explains also why trade unions and workers' chambers shifted to a more reserved position towards enlargement, creating a rift between social partners. Other concerns related to increased crime rates and the negative effects on the social cohesion of an increasingly heterogeneous society.²³ These uncertainties, connected with the fear of loss of social status and economic income, could be easily incited by anti-EU, anti-enlargement campaigns by the boulevard media and the far-right. Other factors, which also contributed to a negative image of the Union, were government politicians' double talk, offloading responsibility of unpopular issues to Brussels and claiming success for themselves. Thus, in

²¹ See Luif, P. (1994-2001) 'Österreich', in W. Weidenfeld and W. Wessels (eds) *Jahrbuch der Europäischen Integration*.

²² See Rauscher, S. (2008) 'EU schlechtestmöglich. Drei Antworten für die schlechte EU-Stimmung', *Der Standard*, 29 August.

²³ See Krieger, H. and B. Maître (2006) 'Migration Trends in an Enlarging European Union', *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1, March, pp. 45-66, p. 46.

domestic debate the EU became the scapegoat for rising energy prices as well as a symbol for nuclear energy lobbies or genetic engineering. In this context, pro-European elites and business circles as well as the media failed to confer positive images of the EU and create enthusiasm over enlargement. The discourse became rather inward-looking and gradually assumed folksy populist tones.

Austria's EU membership in 1995 implied the "Europeanization" of Austrian foreign policy, with the EU becoming the frame of reference for Austrian foreign and security policies and the visibility of foreign policies radically decreasing at national level.²⁴ Further fuelled by enlargement, there has been much complaint about Austria's decreasing role in a larger Union, which has been dominated by large member states. Many Austrians consider the country as being simply too small to cope with globalization and prevail against big states in an enlarged EU. Thus 46% of the Austrians think their country has only little impact on EU decisions.²⁵

Despite the public's scepticism of further enlargement, elites almost unanimously support the integration of the Western Balkans and consider this to be a prime goal of Austrian foreign policy. The Austrian public leads the group of opponents of further enlargement towards Eastern Europe with 62% dismissing Macedonia's accession, 73% being against Albania's integration, 59% being against Bosnia and Herzegovina's and 65% against Serbia's accession to the EU.²⁶ Only Croatia's accession is largely undisputed; even the FPÖ stated that the EU should stop enlargement after Croatia's integration. Today, a majority of 55% support Croatia's accession, a rather high figure in the light of rather negative feelings prevailing in regard to further enlargement.²⁷ The elites' strong support for Croatia has certainly boosted positive views on the country. Only a few years ago, in 2002, support for Croatia was as high as for Turkey (with 34% in favour and 51% opposing of Croatian accession and 32% in favour and 53% opposing of Turkish acces-

²⁴ See Höll, O. (2002) 'Einleitung: Österreichische Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik unter veränderten Rahmenbedingungen' in Neisser, H. and S. Puntischer Riekmann (eds) *Europäisierung der österreichischen Politik, Konsequenzen der EU-Mitgliedschaft*, Wien, WUV, p.375.

²⁵ 'EU-Skepsis: Die Kommission kritisiert Politik und "Krone"', *Die Presse*, 14 July 2008, <http://diepresse.com/home/politik/eu/398388>.

²⁶ Eurobarometer (2006) *Special Eurobarometer 255: Attitudes towards European Union Enlargement*, July, p. 68, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_255_en.pdf.

²⁷ Ibid.

sion).²⁸ Elites, however, also view the Balkans as a neighbouring region with close cultural, historical and personal ties with Austria. It is also the major area of expansion for Austrian economy. There are many Austrians with a Balkan background, with over 100,000 people having arrived in the course of the Balkan wars in the 1990s. Involving the entire region in the process of European integration is seen as the only option for achieving long-term peace and stability in the region. Official Austria holds that the prospect of increasing integration into the so-called “European mainstream” represents the most effective incentive for Balkans countries to speed up their processes of domestic reform.²⁹ Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik (ÖVP) indeed states that: ‘the Western Balkans are a necessary part of a united Europe and inseparably connected with our stability and security.’³⁰ In other words, even though the integration of the Balkans has not yet won popular support, it has become tantamount to Austria’s prime foreign policy strategy, broadly accepted across party divides. Even the FPÖ has fallen in line, although the party has repeatedly warned against a hasty enlargement, as was the case with Romania and Bulgaria.³¹

In return for Austria’s “Balkans project” Austrian elites “sacrificed” the project of Turkey’s EU integration, a project which would require strong political will, stamina and passion. From an Austrian point of view, in the short and middle runs, Turkey’s controversial accession has promised rather little to Austria and it has simply not been among its priorities. Therefore the Turkish question has lacked committed advocates to defend and promote the project against strong headwind.

4. Political Stakeholders in the Turkish Question

The decision to grant Turkey the status of an official candidate in 1999 was hardly discussed by commentators, the media, political parties or other groups in Austria. At that time, the Austrian public simply passed over this

²⁸ Eurobarometer (2002) *Eurobarometer* 57, Spring, p. B.83-84, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb57/eb57_en.pdf.

²⁹ See <http://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/foreign-ministry/foreign-policy/europe/western-balkans.html>

³⁰ Plassnik, U. (2008) *Westbalkan untrennbarer Teil unserer Sicherheit und Stabilität*, <http://www.bmeia.gv.at/aussenministerium/aktuelles/presseaussendungen/plassnik-westbalkan-untrennbarer-teil-unserer-sicherheit-und-stabilitaet.html>.

³¹ See http://www.fpoe.at/index.php?id=477&backPID=616&tt_news=21194.

fundamental decision. The question of Turkey's membership was not represented in public debate. This did even not change with the FPÖ's joining in a coalition with the ÖVP in 2000. On the contrary, in return for participation in power, the FPÖ gave up its resistance against the eastern enlargement and Jörg Haider even declared his support for Turkey's EU membership for economic and security reasons.

However, in 2004 with the first wave of the eastern enlargement, the scenario radically changed. Within a couple of months the situation altered from one with a practically non-existent debate into one characterized by heated debates, agitation and massive political campaigning against Turkey's membership. The Turkey question was first raised by some elements within the FPÖ, who were dissatisfied with the party's new political line in government. Ever since its participation in power, the FPÖ had seriously lost popularity among its electorate. Its share of votes fell within two years from 27% to 10%. The FPÖ struggled with the difficulty of bridging its character as a protest movement based on populist rhetoric with the *raison d'état*. The more "ideological" wing in the party increasingly rebelled against the cabinet members and the former party leader and governor of Carinthia, Jörg Haider. The ideological wing accused them of abdicating the party's ideals. In particular, Haider's messages in favour of Turkey's membership alienated many party members and sympathizers. The ideological core group, a coalition of Catholic-clerical and German nationalist (*Deutsch-National*) elements vehemently demanded the return to the party's key policies. After all, Haider's anti-*Ausländer* and anti-EU campaigns had constituted the backbone of the FPÖ's political campaigns and had crucially contributed to its rapid rise in the 1980s and 1990s.

The FPÖ's internal debate on Turkey heralded a break within the party. In 2004 Andreas Mölzer, one of Haider's former chief-ideologues and a representative of the German nationalist wing within the party, provoked the leadership by competing in the European Parliament elections against the party's official candidate. Mölzer targeted anti-Islamic feelings. In an interview he declared: 'we have to turn the elections for the European Parliament into a referendum on Turkish membership. Europe has to distance itself from Islam.'³² The question of identity and culture found fertile ground among groups threatened by social and economic decline. The Social Democrats were determined not to leave the field to the right. The

³² See <http://www.wno.org/newpages/pol66.html>.

SPÖ leadership was alarmed by the increasingly negative mood among its own grassroots. The discussions on Turkey sprung from an atmosphere characterized by ongoing uncertainties about the effects of the eastern enlargement, in which an open discussion on the pros and cons of the eastern enlargement was practically non-existent. The issue of Turkey thus served as a valve for all undigested sentiments with regards to enlargement.

In the face of growing popular anger against another elite project which did not take into consideration the will of the people, the SPÖ's steering committee decided to change the party position and follow the demands of its grassroots. The party veered to a clear position against Turkey's membership. Against its own commitment to grant Turkey the status of a candidate, the party U-turned and rejected the opening of negotiations with Turkey. However, the Social Democrats' populist shift faced also criticism, especially within the own ranks. The mayor of Vienna, Michael Häupl, disagreed with the official party line and declared his support for negotiations, although he emphasized their open-ended character. As the Viennese Social Democrats dominate local politics in the capital, they have also established close contacts with Turkish migrant communities in the city, which represent one of the few growing electoral constituencies. The city of Vienna has also established strong ties and various forms of cooperation with the cities of Istanbul and Ankara. The SPÖ's spokesman on foreign affairs and later state secretary Andreas Schieder explains the party's U-turn as 'a question of maximising domestic politics' in so far as 'the SPÖ defends integration, but as the integration project has come to a standstill and as at the same time many questions concerning Turkey, such as the effects of Turkey's size, the size of its population and so on, are pending, the party's veering to an anti-Turkish membership course was a relief'. Schieder also adds that 'of course the question of Turkey's accession has also a cultural-political dimension. It has been deeply connected with the question of identity. This has clearly shaped public opinion. The SPÖ as a people's party had to respond to these feelings. The debate on Turkey has touched on an emotional level, but we have to admit it has also touched on real problems. The image of Turkish migrants has played an important role. People have been afraid of accepting a country where the majority of people live such as a lifestyle. In regard to Serbia for instance, considering its size this is less relevant'.³³

³³ *Interview with Andreas Schieder, Vienna, 29 May 2008.*

The Social Democrats' U-turn challenged the ÖVP-FPÖ government under Chancellor Schüssel. The Social Democrats became the spokesmen of Turkey's opponents. Yet the fact that many of opponents were adherents of the conservative-rightist spectrum represented by the governing parties, brought the government into a difficult situation. The Social Democrats intensified their critique after the 2004 European Council, which opened the way for accession talks with Turkey. The SPÖ attacked Chancellor Schüssel (ÖVP) for having given-in too easily on the issue. In the following months, pressure on the coalition to revise Austria's position mounted both from the public as well as from within the party organizations.

Voices from within the internally divided coalition partner FPÖ openly demanded to veto the opening of negotiations. Tensions between the ideological wing and the members of the government over the FPÖ's change in government, culminated in a break-up. After the grassroots' rebellion against leadership, the latter group around Jörg Haider split-off from the party and founded the BZÖ (Union Future Austria). The leftover FPÖ elected H.C. Strache as its new leader. Under H.C. Strache, the FPÖ returned to its well-trying anti-foreigner and evermore anti-Islamic campaigns. The FPÖ's anti-Islamic rhetoric increasingly infiltrated into the public discourse. The party used anti-Islamic discourse in order to draw a clear line between multi-culturalism and ethno-centrism, specified as Islam versus Christianity. The party's election posters have often referred to religious symbols as markers of the home land (*Heimat*) identified with the Christian Western world which is threatened by the "Other", the "Muslims", symbolized by minarets, mosques, pictures of Taliban or *higab*-wearing women. The FPÖ has played with fears and prejudices deeply entrenched in Austria's collective memory. The amalgamation of nationalist and religious rhetoric turned the Turkey question into a question of identity. Problems of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society have been viewed from an ethno-centric perspective. The FPÖ announces from its webpage that: "Turkey does not belong to Europe and this is why the FPÖ refuses any negotiation on this issue."³⁴

After the split within the FPÖ, the coalition continued with the BZÖ, which comprised all former FPÖ cabinet members as well as most of the parliamentary club. Chancellor Schüssel tried to restrain the growing resist-

³⁴ See <http://www.fpoe.at/index.php?id=7304>.

ance against Turkey's integration by citing Austria's international obligations. The government tried to impede, delay and condition the start of negotiations with different reasons. Also strongly backed by the German Christian Democrats, Schüssel brought up the idea of a "privileged partnership". However, it soon became clear that Austria was rather isolated, in so far as accepting any of Austria's demands would have amounted to revising the common decisions reached at the 2004 European Council. In turn, the Austrian government conditioned its consent to the opening of negotiations to regulations which stipulate the open-ended character of the negotiations, as well as a clear reference to the Union's absorption capacity. Austria also insisted on ambiguous wordings which would leave an open door for alternatives to full membership in future.

Besides messages to the domestic public, this strategy was also intended to couple Austria's consent to Turkey and the opening of negotiations with Croatia. In the run up to the 2005 European Council, the European Commission had criticized Croatia for not having sufficiently cooperated with the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague and it had recommended delaying the opening of negotiations with Croatia until it reverses its policy. Schüssel stated in this context: 'if we think that Turkey is capable of making progress, then we should think the same about Croatia, as it would be in Europe's interest to immediately start negotiations with Croatia.' Schüssel also maintained that the governments should draw lessons from the two negative referenda in France and the Netherlands, and listen to public opinion.³⁵ As mentioned above, Croatia's integration with the EU has been a part of Austria's foreign policy strategy, but it has been a matter particularly close to the heart of the conservative ÖVP. Andreas Schieder (SPÖ) sees the conservatives' outright commitment for Croatia as being linked to the "Catholic factor", this being also the reason for Austria's keen acknowledgement of Croatia's and Slovenia's independence in 1991.³⁶ Finally, Austria gave in and the EU decided to open accession talks with Turkey as well as with Croatia. Schüssel presented Austria's hardline as a success, pointing to the stipulations mentioning the open-ended character of the negotiations. He also silenced critique from the opposition by announcing that the final decision on Turkey's membership would be up to the Austrian people through a referendum. Former Ambassador Wolfgang

³⁵ See http://www.orf.at/050929-91782/91783txt_story.html.

³⁶ *Interview with Andreas Schieder*, op.cit.

Wolte speculates that the decision to hold a referendum was Schüssel's decision alone, taken for domestic political reasons, which in fact ran contrary to what Austria had previously preached.³⁷ The announcement to hold a referendum in the far future, however, has helped to cool down the over-heated debate. It has calmed anxiety as it gives the illusion to leave the final decision with the people. Schüssel could thereby prove his respect for the will of the people and postpone an unpleasant discussion. This populist move was hardly criticized, only a few commentators pointed to the dangers of a referendum and warned against xenophobic polarization. Instead the referendum, celebrated as a means of democratizing EU politics, was welcomed by all parties except the Greens and helped to establish a rare moment of cross-party consensus. Schüssel's promise of a referendum was later formalized into the new coalition agreement between SPÖ and ÖVP in December 2006.³⁸

Looking back, the decision to hold a national referendum on a key European issue, opened a Pandora's box. In 2008 the SPÖ-ÖVP government had difficulties to argue on the one hand in favour of a referendum on Turkey's accession but on the other hand against a referendum on the Reform Treaty, as it was demanded by a growing number of eurosceptics. After the negative Irish referendum in spring 2008, the SPÖ, torn by internal dispute and falling poll rates, tried to make a U-turn by joining in with the chorus of eurosceptic voices. The party suddenly changed its position and declared that henceforth all EU treaties which might affect or alter the Austrian constitution should be presented to the will of the people. The SPÖ's strategic change brought the end of the shaky coalition government and led Austria to early elections.

³⁷ *Interview with Wolfgang Wolte*, Vienna, 21 May 2008.

³⁸ There is no legal obligation to hold a referendum. The decision to hold a referendum on Turkey's membership, once the negotiations are completed was a clear political decision limited to the issue of Turkey only. There is no talk of a referendum in the case of Croatia's accession nor in the case of any other candidate country. The government also refused to hold a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, against strong criticism from rightist as well as leftist parties and organizations. However, later, following the Irish "No" to the Lisbon Treaty and continuously falling support for the EU, the Social Democrats declared they would hold a referendum on any future treaties, a decision which was highly criticized by the ÖVP and which led to the break-up of the coalition.

5. Different Cultural Arguments

Many Austrians view Turkish culture simply as not European. Green MP and spokesman on foreign affairs Ulrike Lunacek states that strong resistance against Turkey's membership has been shaped by the image of the Turkish migrant which corresponds to that of the Turkish *Gastarbeiter* in Germany of the 1970s. 'In contrast to Germany, there are hardly any prominent examples of positive integration [in Austria]. The general image of Turks is that of people with low education and lots of children who threaten our jobs. This image has been reflected by politicians. Unfortunately there have been no prominent Turkish voices who have publicly opposed this image'.³⁹

The Greens have been ardent opponents of a debate centred on ethno- or religion-related *Leitkultur*. With regard to Turkey, the Green Party is the only political stakeholder which has clearly supported the opening of negotiations.⁴⁰ The Greens advocate negotiations because they see Turkey as a bridge between Europe and Asia, and because they consider a European perspective as crucial in order to strengthen Turkey's reformist forces. The Green Party regards Turkey's integration with Europe not only as an asset for Europe, but also as a positive signal to the Muslim world.⁴¹ However, whereas the party has decided to stick to a position which defends Turkey's membership, this is not part of the party's political campaigns given its unpopularity. Furthermore, not all elements within the party agree with this position. The two Green MEPs Voggenhuber and Lichtenberger, for instance, disapprove of Turkey's membership, criticizing its human rights abuses, the role of women as well as citing the EU's absorption capacity.

By contrast, the cultural-religious argument has been particularly prevalent among small but ideologically influential conservative Catholic groups and fraternities within the Austrian People's Party. In the light of changes in the structure of society, the increasing visibility of Muslim migrants and the ongoing discussions on the lack of their societal integration, traditionalist

³⁹ Interview with Ulrike Lunacek, Vienna, 29 May 2008.

⁴⁰ Whereas the Greens have decided to support negotiations with Turkey, this decision was not backed by two Green MEPs, Johannes Voggenhuber and Eva Lichtenberger. While Voggenhuber grounded his veto on the fact that he thinks that Turkey would challenge the Union's absorption capacity, Lichtenberger based her veto on human rights violations and in particular Turkey's deficiencies in the field of women rights.

⁴¹ See http://www.gruene.at/europaeische_union/tuerkei/.

and conservative circles including Catholic networks, social clubs, associations and conservative student fraternities have been seized by the concern for the future of the Christian Western world. These basically pro-EU circles have regarded Christianity as the foundation of Europe's identity. Most of these circles regard Muslim Turkey as incompatible with their idea of a united Christian Europe.

Although the FPÖ also uses cultural and religious arguments, these are not anchored in the party ideology, nor among its electorate. In the FPÖ's discourse, Catholicism serves rather as a marker of identity, authenticity and as a demarcation against the threatening "Other", which has been increasingly defined by its different and unknown religion. In contrast to conservative-Catholic groups, who defend a Christian notion of solidarity, the FPÖ is not clerical and it is anti-European in its essence. Its political agitation and open xenophobia are often not to the taste of conservative Catholic bourgeois circles. Nevertheless, arguments raised by conservative politicians, especially at the regional and local levels, have often not differed radically from those of the far right. In 2005, the mayor of Graz Siegfried Nagl (ÖVP) referred to historical trends by saying: 'Graz has always been Western Europe's last bastion against Turkish invasions. Graz has a long history of resistance against Turkey, today this fight has to be continued.'⁴²

More recently, the question of Turkey has been superseded by heated discussions on Muslim migrants' capacity to integrate into Austrian culture. However, the definition of integration has remained rather vague. In this context, the question of the construction of minarets has raised tempers in local and regional politics. Particularly, local ÖVP, FPÖ and BZÖ politicians have braced themselves against the construction of mosques with minarets. The three parties initiated in different provinces and municipalities decrees, which aim to impede the construction of mosques. Haider (BZÖ) explained and justified this motion in the province of Carinthia 'as a part of the fight against radical Islamism and in order to protect our western oriented Leitkultur.'⁴³

⁴² See <http://oesterreich.orf.at/steiermark/stories/78964/>.

⁴³ ORF Kärnten (2007) 'Leitkultur schützen. Haider: Bauverbot für Moscheen und Minarette', 26 August, <http://kaernten.orf.at/stories/217207>.

6. Other Actors

6.1 Social Partners

As mentioned above, the representative bodies of the social partnership have played an important role in the Austrian political system. Their support was crucial for Austria's EU membership. However, whereas before 1995 these bodies were tied together through the system of *Proporz*, after Austria's EU integration, this interest coalition began to break apart.

While the chambers of commerce and business groups have been fervent supporters of the eastern enlargement, the unions have been less enthusiastic. As the unions have feared increasing pressure on the Austrian workforce by cheap labour and dumping prices, they have insisted on strict transition periods. This created a rift between the unions and the chambers of commerce and some entrepreneurs, who, by contrast, complained about the shortage of qualified personnel. The rift between the social partners grew with the gradual electoral losses of the two major parties and reached its height with the FPÖs joining in a coalition government with the conservatives in 2000. Since then, relations have been disturbed. Even the grand coalition government established in 2006 could not cure the sores of the past.

Unsurprisingly, the workers' chambers and the federation of trade unions have a rather reserved position towards Turkey's accession. However, they emphasize that their reservations are not out of cultural or religious reasons, but connected to the conviction that Turkey's size, its geographic and geopolitical situation, as well as its economic structure would seriously challenge the European Union's absorption capacity. The trade unions maintain that Turkey's accession might lead to the establishment of a liberal free trade zone, with little protection for the labour force. They deem that Turkey's accession might endanger the project of social Europe with consistent standards in peace and welfare. Turkey would rather further broaden the gulf between rich and poor within the Union.⁴⁴

The Federation of Austrian Industry, in contrast, regards Turkey as an extremely important partner with much potential. Austrian investments have grown over the last years, particularly in the energy sector. Due to strong economic ties and good relations with their business partners in

⁴⁴ See Greif, W. (2007) *Der Türkeibeitritt aus gewerkschaftlicher Perspektive*, GPA-DJP, 22 January, http://www.gpa-djp.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=GPA/Page/Index&n=GPA_6.9.a&cid=1174636991676.

Turkey, the federation supports Turkey's accession negotiations. The federation sees the major parties' veering to a clear anti-Turkish membership position in the context of domestic politics. 'They are both people's parties. They don't want to leave the issue with the FPÖ.'⁴⁵ The Standard Newspaper reported on 20 May 2008, on the occasion of President Heinz Fischer's official visit to Turkey, that Austrian businessmen harshly criticize Austrian foreign policy, citing an anonymous businessman who argued: 'what they do ruins our business. We try hard to be commissioned, but our Turkish partners frown at us, because Austrian politicians only put obstacles in our way.'⁴⁶ The federation, however, declares that they do not believe that Austrian companies have faced negative effects so far. 'This might be true for the French, but not for Austrian companies, because Austria does not block the negotiation process, but lets it run and even backs it. The rest is rhetoric used for domestic politics. In reality it does not affect the accession process. If Austria would really impede the negotiations this would have negative effects.'⁴⁷ Whereas the French changed from being supporters into opponents, Austria's position was clear from the start, mentioned a representative of the Chambers of Commerce. Therefore French businesses faced more difficulties in Turkey. He added that generally speaking one can say that economic relations are quite pragmatic as manifested by the prospering Austrian-Turkish economic relations over the last years. 'They are rather independent from political decisions. For us it is less relevant whether Turkey is a full member or not. There is a customs union between Turkey and the EU and even more important there has been a change in attitude within Turkey. Today, the environment for foreign investments and partnerships with foreign companies is much friendlier than it used to be.'⁴⁸

Indeed, economic relations between the two countries have flourished. Austrian investment in Turkey has boomed since 2002 by 500%. Direct investment in Turkey has reached USD 1.3 billion, ranking tenth among the biggest foreign investors in Turkey.⁴⁹ Some of Austria's leading companies

⁴⁵ *Interview with Michael Löwy*, Vienna, 29 May 2008.

⁴⁶ Prantner, C. (2008) 'Schönwetter-Tour für Österreich, Scharfe Kritik Wirtschaftstreibender an der Wiener Türkeiipolitik', *Der Standard*, 20 May.

⁴⁷ *Interview with Michael Löwy*, op.cit.

⁴⁸ *Interview with a representative of the chambers of commerce (WKO)*, 27 August 2008.

⁴⁹ Fercher, H. (2008) 'Türkei: Bei Investitionen spielt Österreich in der "Superliga"', *Wirtschaftsblatt*, 11 February, <http://www.wirtschaftsblatt.at/home/international/wirtschaftspolitik/312583>.

have already entered the Turkish market (Red Bull, Mayr Mellenhof, Magna, OMV, Verbund, BankAustria); small and middle-sized companies, however, have been more cautious. Also trade between the two countries developed over the last years. Exports from Austria grew since 2002 by 60%, and in 2006-2007 alone they grew by 12.6%. Imports from Turkey grew by 5.8% reaching a total of USD 786.7 million.⁵⁰

With regard to a referendum on Turkey's accession, the interviewees maintain that the question is still remote, and that all depends on Turkey itself. 'Let us wait and see the outcome of the negotiation process'.⁵¹ 'If Turkey develops in a very positive way no one will hinder Turkey's accession. Now let's negotiate first!'⁵² Andreas Schieder from the SPÖ also mentioned that in the long run, Austria's clear-cut (albeit negative) position might be appreciated: 'at least we are honest', he said.⁵³

6.2 *The Media*

Over the last years, Turkish domestic and foreign policies have been intensively covered by the Austrian media. Some newspapers, such as the mass circulation paper *Kronenzeitung* (largest Austrian daily), have played an important role in shaping public opinion. The *Kronenzeitung*, known for its biased political campaigns, has incited against Turkish membership within the context of its populist pro-Austrian, anti-EU and anti-enlargement line. The paper's strong negative campaign also prepared the ground for xenophobic feelings. Most of the bourgeois and liberal papers instead have remained rather neutral. Whereas comments and op-eds dealing with the pros and cons of Turkey's membership have largely diminished, Turkish politics has remained on the headlines. Reporting on political turmoil, difficulties with Cyprus or on the intrusion of Turkish troops in Northern Iraq have been presented as further proofs of Turkey's alleged unEuropeanness. Recent developments in Turkey do not help either. 'The Turkish invasion in Northern Iraq, the standstill on the Kurdish question, the case against the [pro-Kurdish party] DTP, the deficiencies with regard to human rights issues which now also affect the AKP itself, all these issues are factors which further cool down relations', mentioned Andreas Schieder (SPÖ).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ The representative of the Chambers of Commerce mentioned that it would be a fatal error if Austria were to be the only country to hold a referendum.

⁵² *Interview with Michael Löwy*, op.cit.

⁵³ *Interview with Andreas Schieder*, op.cit.

However, strong public attention to Turkey also had an interesting side-effect. Extensive reporting on Turkey has generated a group of journalists, specialized in Turkey or Turkey-EU issues. Most of them have good knowledge about Turkish politics and its actors, and about Turkey's social and historical background. Probably most important, they have established information networks with Turkish colleagues, academics, politicians, diplomats and business circles. In turn, the quality of reporting on Turkish issues has certainly improved over the last years.

6.3 The Church

Whereas the Catholic Church has not entered into the public debate on the issue, single representatives, such as the Bishop of Graz, have made negative statements on the Turkey question. Egon Kapellari, responsible for European affairs within the Austrian Episcopal Conference, declared 'that if the EU's enlargement ambitions do not come to an end, the EU will quickly absorb too much and lose its balance.' 'The native population in the EU should be better informed and they should be asked what they want.' After all, EU membership would also imply far-reaching liberties, such as the freedom to migrate. Kapellari added to this that it made an absolute difference to an EU member state whether its Muslim community were to grow from 10% to 40% in 30 years down the line and warns that opening the EU's doors might generate instability in Europe.⁵⁴ However considering the church's influence, particularly on society and political discourses in mountainous rural regions and among conservative urban bourgeois circles, it is notable that the church has by and large refrained from entering public discourse on the issue.

6.4 Silent Stakeholders

As the question of Turkey's membership has become intertwined with domestic issues such as migration and integration, representatives of migrant communities, the Muslim communities and NGOs involved with integration matters ought to be considered as the other, albeit rather silent, stakeholders in the debate. In Austria, mass migration from Turkey is a rather new phenomenon. After massive migration waves from Hungary in the 1950s, from former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the last large wave of migration into Austria took place in the 1990s and in the 2000s from

⁵⁴ See http://religion.orf.at/projekt02/news/0212/ne021210_kapellari_fr.htm.

Turkey. Most of the Turkish migrants in Austria have rural backgrounds. Besides the mass of Turkish labour in menial jobs, students from Turkey have also had a long tradition in Austrian universities. While in previous years mainly graduates from the St George high school in Istanbul continued their studies in Austrian universities, in recent years there has been an influx of Turkish students with a conservative-religious background, who have been banned from access to Turkish universities either due to the fact that they are graduates from *imam-hatib* schools (professional schools with a religious emphasis for the training of imams and hatibs) or because they wear a headscarf (banned in Turkish universities). Meanwhile also the children and grandchildren of first-generation migrants have knocked at the doors of Austrian universities. In cities like Vienna one can find a growing community of Austrian-educated businessmen, lawyers, doctors, employees and entrepreneurs with a Turkish background.

Despite these growing levels of “integrated” or rather established migrants, these citizens are not organized through associations or groups which might influence public debate. Contrary to newer arrivals, they often do not correspond to the image and stereotype of ‘the Turkish migrant’ and are largely invisible in Austrian society. ‘The image of a Turkish migrant is generally that of someone speaking poor German, living isolated in his/her community, in a parallel society.’⁵⁵ On an institutional level, there is rather little cohesion and solidarity within the Turkish community. Whereas there are different religious communities affiliated with mosques and prayer houses, or based on kinship, ethnic or political factors, there is hardly any umbrella organization embracing the migrant community from Turkey. There are only few organizations with Turkish roots, promoting Turkey’s EU aspirations in Austria. One of them is the Union of European Turkish Democrats in Austria, an organization considered to be affiliated with the AKP. The UETD has organized various public discussions with Turkish politicians and intellectuals. However, the organization is hardly known to most Austrians. In Austria, as a legacy of the Habsburg Empire, Islam is acknowledged by the state as an official religion. This implies, for instance, Islamic religion classes in public schools and the training of religion teachers by the Austrian state. However, in many cases, migrant communities from Turkey do not have any institutional ties with their official representation. Amina Baghajati, the spokeswoman of the Muslim community in Austria, argues

⁵⁵ *Interview with Michael Löwy, op.cit.*

that Muslims enjoy the Austrian model, which grants Muslims an official status and guarantees religious liberties. Baghajati states that the official Muslim community supports Turkey's accession. With regard to the discourse around Turkey's EU membership driven by emotions, anxiety and fear of Islam, Baghajati mentions that the burdens of history and the wounds of the past are evidently much deeper than the positive memories of the 19th and 20th centuries.⁵⁶ Baghajati believes that the situation in Austria is much more relaxed than for instance in Germany. This is also because the Muslim community in Austria is much more heterogeneous. Turks represent around 40-50% of Muslims in Austria.⁵⁷

7. Implications for a Communication Strategy

Although Austrians' opinion on Turkey's membership is clearly negative, it is important to keep in mind that the accession process is a long-term project which might last for the next ten to 15 years. In this period, public opinion is likely to change, if Turkey takes a positive curve, inducing Austrians and Austrian stakeholders to revise their stereotypical and prejudiced views on Turkey.

However, under current conditions, a dramatic change in Austrians' views on Turkey is unlikely. This is not only the result of the crisis within Turkey and the standstill of the reform process, but it is also connected with Austrian domestic problems focusing on identity and fears of economic decline. As a result of heated public debates and a predominantly negative discourse over the last 2-3 years, the market seems to be saturated and any communication strategy would struggle against a majority that believes it has firmly made up its mind on the issue. Negative opinions seem fixed and in fact entrenched with difficulties facing both the EU and Turkey.

It should also be reiterated that the decision to hold a referendum on Turkey's membership has, paradoxically perhaps, helped to calm the discussion and has stolen the far right's thunder. Whereas a referendum seems to be an unfair and an undesirable tool, it appears, in this case, to have generated a positive momentum as well. The cooling down of the debate on Turkey can be interpreted as an opportunity. The accessions of Bulgaria and

⁵⁶ *Interview with Amina Baghajati*, Vienna, 27 May 2008.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Romania were potentially as unpopular as Turkey's accession, however the fact that there was no public debate on this issue averted any negative political campaigns and facilitated a constructive role by the principal stakeholders involved.

Despite heated debates, Turkey is still the big unknown to most Austrians. 46.3% of Austrians declare that Turkey is not a European country. 73% believe that cultural differences between Turkey and the EU are too significant. These sceptical attitudes are pervasive across the population regardless of people's occupation, as Eurobarometer figures reveal.⁵⁸ The same poll reveals that only 20% of Austrians believe that Turkey's accession would strengthen security in the region.⁵⁹ Given that the lack of knowledge about Turkey is striking, delivering more information is of the essence. This could take place in the framework of seminars, workshops, as well as cultural events, which deal with different topics such as women rights, the political system, religion and tradition in Turkey. For the time being, it seems important to decouple information on Turkey from the enduring question of membership.

It is also critical for a communication strategy to bear in mind that the debate on Turkey's membership in Austria is a debate about Austria itself, its identity and its social model; only in second place is it a debate dealing with Turkey. Indeed the Turkey debate rose to such heated levels precisely because people felt that Turkey's membership would affect them personally. It is the failure to touch and relate back to these perceived personal consequences that explains why Turkish counter-arguments have often failed to reach Austrian recipients.

In this respect, Michael Löwy from the Federation of Austrian industries prompted to change Turkey's communication strategy arguing that 'official Turkey, but also organizations such as TÜSIAD insist on their right to become a member, as this was promised by the EU [...] however, this is the wrong strategy, you must address people's honest fears and uncertainties in order to win their hearts and minds'.⁶⁰

Hence an effective communication strategy must acknowledge that the arguments raised in public debate are not simply arguments against Turkey

⁵⁸ Eurobarometer (2005) *Eurobarometer 63*, Spring, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb63/eb63_en.pdf.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Interview with Michael Löwy*, op.cit.

or Turkey's membership, but underpin existing fears and anxieties amongst the public. Understanding and empathy should be the first step for developing an effective communication strategy. In so far as fears of further migration, incomprehension for phenomena like forced marriages or honour killings, as well as the lack of knowledge about Islam dominate the discourse on Turkey, these issues should be openly addressed in any communication strategy. An effective communication strategy should take cultural issues as well as social concerns into account, but should however refrain from focusing exclusively on such arguments.

An effective communication strategy should, thus, contain features of a SWOT analysis, which includes Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in connection with Turkey's membership. A SWOT analysis would also have the advantage of bringing the discussion to a more objective level. It is indispensable to actively involve the Turkish migrant community in Austria into any such strategy, as they are the major representatives of Turkey in this country. Although larger companies as Bank Austria, Verbund or OMV could be seen as potential agents for a more positive discourse on Turkey, some factors should be considered in this regard as well. First, some, even though influential, companies do not want to become involved into such a hot political question, in which they see many risks and few immediate returns. Furthermore, despite their importance within the Austrian context, these companies have a relatively limited voice and power to influence public discourse in the existing heated environment. Second, any intervention by these companies might backfire as it would confirm the trade unions' fear that Turkey's membership would only be to the benefit of large companies. This said, businesses are an integral element in undertaking an objective SWOT analysis on Turkey, which can then be communicated to different stakeholders and to the public at large. This would require a shift in the attitudes of Austrian stakeholders, attempting to lead rather than simply react to changing public moods, while doing so in a manner that accounts for the concerns of the public.

4. GREEK STAKEHOLDERS IN THE EU-TURKEY DEBATE

Kostas Ifantis and Eleni Fotiou

1. Security Reigns but Policy Shifts

Successive Greek governments and the public at large have approached Turkey's EU drive almost exclusively in security terms, and in a context defined by the bilateral dispute in the Aegean and the Cyprus problem. For most Greeks, Turkey – at least since the late 1950s – has been a “revisionist” threat, an archetype of an “enemy” that needed to be deterred and contained by all means and on all fronts. In the late 1990s, following a strategic shift, Athens became a sincere supporter of Turkey's quest for EU membership in view of its working hypothesis on “Europeanization”: by conforming to European norms, Turkey would transform into a more democratic polity, thus desecuritizing bilateral relations and rendering Turkish “revisionism” unbearably costly for Ankara. As such, for Athens, the support for Turkey's EU vocation cannot be separated from the expectation of Turkey's full compliance with the EU's political criteria and requirements. Greek consent and support is a strategic choice, but not a *carte blanche*. However, the domestic debate is by no means over. Despite the positive developments over the last decade in bilateral relations, old threat perceptions are still present.¹ At the same time, Greece's steady Europeanization

¹ Ifantis, K. (2004) ‘Perception and Rapprochement: Debating a Greek Strategy Towards Turkey’, in M. Aydin and K. Ifantis (eds) *Turkish-Greek Relations: The Security Dilemma in the Aegean*, London and New York, Routledge.

process since the late 1970s has led to the gradual institutionalization of domestic political processes and resulted in diluting parochial ethnocentrism by increasingly linking foreign with domestic policy and politics, and by broadening the foreign policy agenda in line with that of the EU.²

The shift in Greek foreign and security policy emerged in a rather dramatic way in the late 1990s. The triangle of crises over Imia, the Russian S-300 antiballistic system and the capturing of Öcalan between 1996 and 1999 resulted in a sharp deterioration of bilateral relations. This revealed both the limitations of an exclusive and rather unsophisticated Greek internal-balancing policy towards Turkey, and the need for a multidimensional and mixed internal-external balancing strategy.³ The drive towards membership in the European Monetary Union meant that the annual 4,5% GDP devoted to defence spending was unsustainable, especially at a time of strict economic austerity programmes and “inflexible” budgetary constraints. Economic imperatives and the need to advance Cyprus’ EU accession process against a backdrop of sceptical EU partners resulted in a new set of policies, which culminated in the 1999 Helsinki decision to allow Turkish candidacy. Greece thus moved from a “containment” to an “engagement” strategy, inserting the bilateral relationship in the context of the European enlargement process.

Since then, Greece has been a sincere supporter of Turkey’s European vocation. And this support has indeed been strategic. The Turkish aspiration to join the EU as a full member has allowed Athens to deal with the Turkish threat – as perceived in Greece – in a context of bilateral engagement and rapprochement defined by the more benign European “rules of the game”. The Helsinki decision has been the departure point for engaging Turkey in a context in which Greece has enjoyed a comparative advantage, thus making the EU a major determinant in Greek-Turkish relations.⁴

This engagement strategy rests on the expectation that increasing social, political and economic interaction with Turkey along with the latter’s adap-

² For an extensive account of the effects of Europeanization, see Keridis, D. (1999) *Political Culture and Foreign Policy: Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of European Integration and Globalisation*, Report prepared in fulfilment of the obligation of a NATO Fellowship, Cambridge, Mass., June, <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/97-99/keridis.pdf>.

³ Tsakonas, P. (2003) ‘Kinonikopiontas ton antipalo’ (‘Socializing the Adversary: The Greek Strategy’, in P. Tsakonas (ed.) *Syghroni Helleniki Exoteriki Politiki: Mia Synoliki Proseggkisi (Contemporary Greek Foreign Policy: An Overall Assessment)*, Vol. B, Athens, Sideris.

⁴ Ifantis, K. (2005) ‘Greece’s Turkish Dilemmas: There and Back Again...’, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol.5, No.3, p. 382.

tation to European normative pressures may eventually bring about a transformation of the Turkish political system and foreign policy, rendering the country more democratic and less “revisionist”. This would allow for a gradual convergence of bilateral security perceptions and interests. Against this contextual background, Greece has been pursuing a policy of “Europeanization” of both bilateral relations and the Cyprus problem, linking issues and demands for good neighbourly relations with Turkey’s European accession process.

In this framework, the positive impact of the earthquakes that devastated both countries in the summer and early autumn of 1999 should not go unnoticed. The earthquakes and the subsequent civil society mobility brought Turks and Greeks closer and provided additional legitimacy to the Helsinki rapprochement. Natural disasters “de-demonized” societal perceptions and precipitated waves of cooperation at many levels with local authorities and the academic communities in both countries becoming pioneers with the help provided by EU-funded programmes and projects. The number of joint task forces, seminars, conferences and symposia mushroomed and a more realistic image of the “Other” started deconstructing old images and perceptions at civil society level.

2. The Stakeholders

The influence of domestic actors in foreign policy is traditionally conditioned by the nature of the political system and political culture.⁵ Stakeholders in Greece, as far as Turkey’s EU membership is concerned, are parliamentary parties and interest groups – such as business, the media, and academia. They can exercise influence, but their actual impact on the policy-making process depends on their political legitimization.

The leverage of the Greek Orthodox Church in shaping public debate and foreign policy in Greece, by contrast, does not imply it is among the principal stakeholders in the Turkey debate in Greece. Despite the fact that the deceased Archbishop Christodoulos had expressed concerns on foreign policy issues (e.g., the name problem with FYROM), the Church’s stance towards Turkey’s EU accession has followed official government policy,

⁵ The term “political culture” is used according to the definition of Gabriel Almond. For an extensive account, see Almond, G. (1980) ‘The intellectual history of the Civic Culture concept’ in G. Almond and S. Verba (eds) *The civic culture revisited*, Boston, Little, Brown.

possibly with a higher emphasis placed on the rights of the Greek minority in Turkey. The Church is a stakeholder only to the extent that Turkey's EU accession has a direct impact on the improvement of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's "living conditions". In any case, the Church's role cannot be compared to that of the Catholic Church and the Pope, who have vocally expressed concerns about Turkey's European aspirations. In addition, the present Archbishop Ieronimos is widely regarded as a modernizing moderate who is exclusively devoted to the Church's spiritual mission and with no intention – or indeed sign – of interfering in Greek politics and policies. At the same time, the state bureaucracy, and in particular the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, should not be treated as a stakeholder as much as it is the political leadership and governments that shape agendas in the foreign and security policy field. As Ioakimidis argues, the Diplomatic Service never really questions the strategic policy decisions taken by their political bosses.⁶ The same holds for the military, which after the fall of the 1967-74 junta regime and the reinstatement of democracy, is entirely under the control of civilian authorities.

*2.1 Political Elites: Paving the Way?*⁷

The dividing lines in the contemporary political debate on Turkey are not found between political parties, but rather within them, regardless of their ideological positions. The Turkey debate in Greek society is interlinked with the overall perception of Greek identity, which discloses two opposing standpoints: the ethnocentric definition of the Greek state and the containment of Turkey by all means, versus a more "European" conception of the state and public policy, a more broad foreign and security policy agenda,

⁶ Ioakimidis, P. (2003) 'To Montelo Shediasmou Exoterikis Politikis stin Hellada' ('The Foreign Policy-Making Model in Greece'), in P. Tsakonas (ed.) *Syghroni Helleniki Exoteriki Politiki: Mia Synoliki Prossegeisi (Contemporary Greek Foreign Policy: An Overall Assessment)*, Vol. A, Athens, Sideris.

⁷ This section is informed by personal interviews with Polina Lampsa, International Secretary of PASOK, 2 September 2008; Grigoris Niotis, MP PASOK, Member of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee for National Defense and External Affairs, former Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, 9 September 2008; Kyriakos Mitsotakis, MP Nea Demokratia, Member of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee for National Defense and External Affairs, 12 September 2008; Georgios Karapostolou, Director General LAOS, in charge of National Defense and Foreign Affairs in the party's Political Council, 12 September 2008; Antonis Samaras, MP Nea Demokratia, Member of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee for European Affairs, former Minister for Foreign Affairs, 16 September 2008. The authors express their most sincere thanks and gratitude to these interviewees.

and the resulting strategic shift that would allow for the support of Turkey's EU perspectives.

The majority of the rank and file as well as parliamentarians of both the liberal *Nea Demokratia* and social-democratic PASOK, which have alternated into power since Greece's entry in the EU, favours Turkey's full membership and puts special emphasis on the implementation of the political criteria as expressed in the 2005 Negotiating Framework and other relevant EU documents. For Greek political forces, Turkey's compliance with EU norms and *acquis* is not a pretext for neutralizing Turkey's prospects. It rather constitutes a requirement of vital substance, which will pave the way for the normalization of bilateral relations and the advancement of cooperation in all policy areas.

It is worth noting that in light of the recent political crisis in Turkey, these majorities remain committed to the idea that it is crucial for Turkey to remain on the accession path and that the umbilical chord between the EU and Turkey is not amputated. They consider the negative statements made against Turkey's European perspective in certain European capitals to be detrimental to Ankara's reform efforts. Moreover, they would accept the suspension of accession negotiations with Turkey only under extreme circumstances.

At the same time, Turcosceptic hardliners can be found in the circles of both the so-called "patriotic" wing of PASOK as well as the more conservative wings of *Nea Demokratia*. They stress the historical background in Greek-Turkish relations, the unreliability of Turkish political elites, the unabated "revisionism" of Turkish foreign policy, the country's democratic deficits and the role of the Turkish military. They support Turkey's EU accession path, not as a process that will eventually result to Turkey's Europeanization and modernization, but as a process of coercion, which will lead to Turkey's enfeeblement and final "retreat". For this reason, they favour a long-lasting accession course, which will require tough and unrelenting negotiations on Greece's part.

Hardliners, who adopt an even more hawkish stance towards foreign policy issues are against Turkey's EU membership, but rather favour a "privileged partnership" status. They can be found in the rank and file of the small populist extreme right wing Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS). This party lays special emphasis on the protection of Greek minorities abroad and its anti-Turkish rhetoric is founded on the "rights" of the Greeks and the "Lost Homelands" in Asia Minor and on the cultural gap that divides

Turkey from Europe. Its opposition to Turkey's EU accession is grounded on the belief that Greek foreign policy will not produce the expected results: Turkey will never become a real democratic polity capable of honouring its obligations and fulfilling EU political criteria and Turkey's demography will eventually damage the Greek economy and human capital. LAOS's objection should also be interpreted in the context of its vocal anti-European discourse. Although it rejects any kind of conflictual escalation in Greek-Turkish relations, it argues very strongly in favour of an all-out deterrent strategy against Ankara. It should be noted, however, that Turkey is not the spearhead of LAOS's opposition rhetoric. Rather, like almost all European extreme right-wing political groups, their political agenda is topped by issues with a strong xenophobic and populist flavour: globalization, immigration, unemployment and internal security. On the other extreme of the political spectrum, the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) also opposes vehemently Turkish EU membership. In this case, however, KKE's objection must be placed within the context of the party's total political and ideological rejection of the EU. It is worth noting, though, that this rejection is accompanied by high overtones of parochialism and a particular – sometimes extreme – nationalist rhetoric, which is both anti-capitalistic and anti-Turkish.

In sum, it is rather safe to assume, that the majority of the political forces as represented by the two major parties, which account for over 80% of the popular vote, support Turkey's European aspirations and have succeeded in building a grand consensus that has filtered down to other societal and economic stakeholders, notwithstanding disagreements over tactical manoeuvres.

2.2 *Business: Ardent Advocates*⁸

The fact that Turkey is an attractive market is uncontested. During the last five years, FDI flows to Turkey have increased steadily, despite the setbacks in the country's EU accession process, political uncertainties and the subsequent tight monetary policy and the currency shock, which constrained domestic demand. Since 2002-3, Turkey has attracted USD 50 billion in FDI, a figure that is attributed by Greek businessmen to the AKP's politi-

⁸ This section was informed by interviews with Antonis Kamaras, Representative Office NBC, 1 September 2008; Dimos Tsoukalas, Business Development Manager, EFG Securities, Istanbul, 2 September 2008; Antonios Mouzas, Deputy General Manager, Millenium Bank, Turkey, 2 September 2008, to whom the authors are grateful for their kind contributions.

cal and economic reform agenda, which led to the start of accession negotiations and served as a credible international anchor for investors.⁹

In the eyes of Greek businessmen, Turkey is a naturally lucrative market with a large and rapidly modernizing economy and a huge growth potential. Furthermore Greek businessmen view Turkey's business environment as new but not as fundamentally different from that in Greece, especially in view of the European orientation of the country. Moreover, Greek businessmen are certain that Turkey can offer many investment opportunities, with major assets in view of its geographical proximity and ties to the Caucasus and Central Asia.

At the same time, economic analyses have noted the slowing down of the Turkish economy since 2006. They attribute this negative economic environment to the deceleration of the pace of the reforms, the political turbulence during the AKP's second term in office and to the international market crisis.¹⁰ Greek business circles view the decision of Turkey's Constitutional Court not to ban the AKP very positively, in so far as it has ended the political uncertainty, which had led to the depreciation of the lira and the rise of interest rates. In light of the current macroeconomic environment and the tight external financing conditions, many Greek banks claim that political commitment to sound policies and reform is the only means to reverse the slowing down of output growth and rising inflation.¹¹ The rapprochement between Greece and Turkey as it evolved in tandem with Turkey's accession process has already led to the development of strong bilateral business ties and has provided the launching ground for Greek investment activities in Turkey.

According to the Greek business community, Turkey's full membership will increase political and economic stability and create the ground for the intensification of business activities and the expansion of Greek investments. By contrast, the scenario of a privileged partnership may create turbulence, which businessmen do not like, and will decrease strategic FDI's. A potential suspension of negotiations would be a disastrous scenario because

⁹ Grigoriadis, I. and I. Kamaras (2008) 'Foreign Direct Investments in Turkey: Historical Constraints and the AKP success story', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 1, pp. 53-68.

¹⁰ Triantopoulos, C. (2008) 'Political risk "brakes" Turkey's rate of growth' ('O politicos kindinos "frenari" tin anaptyxiaki poria tis Tourkias'), *Vima Ideon*, 5 September.

¹¹ Gkionis, I. and G. Phoka (2008) 'Trip Notes: Turkey-key notes from our recent trip to Ankara & Istanbul: July 23-25', *Economic Research EFG Eurobank*, 5 August, <http://www.eurobank.gr/Uploads/Reports/TurkeyJuly2008Tripnotes%20.pdf>.

all business activities would freeze and this would have a direct impact on Greek business as well. However, Constantine Papadopoulos, Advisor on European Affairs at Eurobank EFG, Athens, suggests that there is no simple correlation between FDI inflows and membership prospects per se, and that under both scenarios, Greece and Turkey would continue to enjoy fruitful economic relations.¹²

Turkey's EU accession process has already had a remarkably positive impact on Greek business. The nine agreements following the Helsinki decision touched upon several areas of "low politics" such as trade and investment, shipping and transport as well as tourism and customs. These agreements have led to several joint ventures: the establishment of the Anatolian Fund with a venture capital of USD 100 million by the National Bank of Greece with Turkish Garanti Securities; the takeover of Kardalco in Giresun by Cardico; the takeover of two mines for the extraction of barite by Silver and Baryte Orc Mining Co.; the establishment of hospital units in Turkey by the Medical Centre of Athens, etc.¹³ Furthermore, they have led to the establishment of the Greek-Turkish Chamber of Commerce, which initiated the "Turkish Aegean Coast and Greek Aegean Islands Economic Summit" that resulted in the establishment of the Aegean Business Bank, a Greek-Turkish joint business venture in 2005. According to the President of the Greek-Turkish Chamber of Commerce, Panayiotis Koutsikos, the private sector should operate regardless of prejudices and stereotypes of the past. Greek businesses consider Turkey's membership perspective of utmost importance.¹⁴

For Greek companies, Turkey holds golden opportunities for joint ventures in various sectors, such as textile, tourism, food, shipping, fisheries, financial services and banking. Greece's three largest financial institutions announced separately that they would invest USD 4,5 billion in three Turkish commercial banks and a brokerage firm (three buy-outs and one

¹² Papadopoulos, C. (2008) 'Greek-Turkish Economic Cooperation: Guarantor of Détente or Hostage to Politics?', *SEESOX Occasional Paper*, No 8, <http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/seesox/occasionalpapers/papadopoulos2008.pdf>.

¹³ Other examples include EFG Eurobank, Intracom, Intralot, Sarandis, Eurodrip, Spyrou, Kleeman Hellas, Mylonas, Moda Bagno and Crown Hellas. On the 13 August 2008, *Kathimerini* newspaper published an interview of the President of OPAP, the Greek lotteries, Mr. C. Chatziemmanouel, who announced the imminent agreement between OPAP and three Turkish companies, Doğuş, FIBA and Alarco, for the acquisition of Milli Piyango, the Turkish lotteries.

¹⁴ Koutsikos, P. (2002) 'Hellenikes Ependiseis stin Tourkia' ('Greek investments in Turkey'), *Kosmografia*, Vol. 2, Spring.

joint venture), resulting in Greece accounting for about a fifth of Turkey's total FDI. The most striking example is the acquisition of 46% of Finansbank by the National Bank of Greece in 2006, an investment that created the third largest foreign capital flow in Turkey and contributed tremendously to the profitability of the NBG.¹⁵

Greek investments in Turkey today exceed USD 450 million, without counting in the USD 3 billion investment of the National Bank of Greece, the USD 12 billion joint venture by the construction companies AKTOR and ENKA for the construction of a town in Oman, and the USD 100 million joint investment for the establishment of the Greek-Turkish Bank. Today, 130 Greek businesses have invested in Turkey with 22 of them located in the region of Izmir. The expectation is that the total investment rate will further increase as a result of the recently established Greek-Turkish Bank, which aims at financing Greek-Turkish investments, trade and services.

In the period 1999-2006, the numbers show the rapidly changing realities in business relations between the two countries. While in 1999, the trade capacity reached merely USD 200 million, in 2006 it exploded to USD 2,6 billion. Today, 2,200 Greek and Turkish companies are involved in bilateral trade. According to statistics provided by the Greek-Turkish Chamber of Commerce, Greece has increased its trade capacity by 155%, a rise which has no historical precedent. For Greece, in 2006 Turkey ranked as the sixth most important export market, accounting for 5,1% of Greece's total exports.

Supportive of the bilateral economic cooperation, the legislative amendments on double taxation with respect to taxes on income came into force in January 2005. In turn, both governments have worked for the modernization of the customs system. Transport between two countries has improved, giving and gave a new impetus to tourism. More specifically, the development of the railway connection between Thessaloniki and Istanbul, Dostluk/Filia Express, the connection of the Egnatia to the Turkish highway to Istanbul, and the hectic tourism activities between the Turkish shores and the Greek islands, have all increased profits for transport companies and tourism agencies.¹⁶ Tourism is in fact the second most important field of

¹⁵ Finansbank accounts for one-third of NBG's total net profits. For an extensive account on the investments of the Greek banking sector, also see Papadopoulos, C. (2008) op.cit.

¹⁶ There are two daily passenger ship connections from Mytilene, Greece to Piraeus, whereas four daily ships to Ayvalik, Turkey; from Samos there are two daily connections to Piraeus and five to Kusadasi, Turkey. For an extensive account of bilateral business ties see Egilmez, A. O. (2008) 'Developing business ties', *The Bridge*, No. 7, April, http://www.bridge-mag.com/magazine/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=378.

economic interaction. On another front, more recently, two joint agreements, the first between DEPA and BOTAŞ to construct the ITGI gas pipeline and the second between DEH and TEIAS to link the two countries' national electricity grids, have inaugurated a new strategic area of common interest between Greek and Turkish companies and entrepreneurs.¹⁷

Unsurprisingly, Greece's business community is among the strongest advocates of the normalization of Greek-Turkish relations and Turkey's EU accession. However, it is only fair to attribute the development of bilateral economic cooperation to the continuity of rapprochement and the normalization since 1999 spearheaded and pursued by PASOK and *Nea Demokratia*. The Greek political elites have maintained a low profile in the acquisition of Finansbank by NBG, but it is highly probable that the acquisition would not have been possible without their consent.

It is worth examining how the position of Greek business will evolve in the case of a regression in Turkey's EU course. It is common knowledge that business circles are never fond of foreign policy decisions that put economic stability at stake. Crises and political volatility have always had a negative impact on business activities, investment and tourism in particular. In the period 1991-1995, for example, the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV), the Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Enterprises of Northern Greece had openly criticized Greece's policy towards the Balkans. Greek business also defied the Greek embargo imposed on FYROM in 1994.

Concerns regarding government policy towards Turkey were also expressed by Greek businesses and trade unions. In the 1990s, the deterioration of bilateral relations threatened to jeopardize the then limited investment activities and economic opportunities. In turn, Greek and Turkish tourist agents signed a "Protocol of Cooperation" in Athens during the peak of the Imia crisis foreseeing joint activities.¹⁸ This was the first time the Greek business community openly disputed Greek official position vis-à-vis Turkey. In April 2000, during an Economist Conference in Athens, the President of the

¹⁷ Despite the energy interdependence between the two countries, in the energy field Greece and Turkey are competitors in so far as both aspire to become an energy hub by promoting different energy projects (i.e., South Stream vs Blue Stream). See Papadopoulos, C. (2008) 'Greek-Turkish economic relations: Guarantor of normalization or hostage to the course of events?' ('Ellinoturkikes ekonomikes sheseis: Egkyitis omalotitas I omiros ton exelixeon?'), *Vima Ideon*, 5 September.

¹⁸ *Kathimerini* newspaper, 9 May 1996.

Turkish Industrial and Business Association and the President of the Greek-Turkish Business Cooperation Council publicly declared that the ‘the hope and wish of businessmen in both countries is the disengagement of trade and economic relations from the dependence on political conditions’. This statement was made in light of the decision taken a few months earlier during the Öcalan crisis by Rahmi Koç, Chairman of the Executive Board of the Turkish-Greek Business Council, to cancel an upcoming meeting, claiming that bilateral relations had reached a point of no return. The Öcalan affair had also triggered a Turkish boycott on Greek products. However, bilateral economic relations have proven to be crisis-resistant, despite the collision of two fighter planes over the Aegean and the freezing of several negotiation chapters in 2006, as well as the Cyprus problem. Of course, resistance to crisis depends on expectations and levels of investment. The higher the investments and the easier it becomes to bear the costs of political crisis. The higher the stakes, the stronger the reasons to support Turkey’s EU bid. However, the major contribution of Greek business to the EU-Turkey debate is that it has consolidated the consensus in Greece to support Turkey’s accession course.

It should be noted that when referring to business circles, we do not include big business only, but also take into consideration small- and medium-sized enterprises that have profited from bilateral economic cooperation, trade and investment. We also include the mass culture industry, which has flourished due to the “earthquake diplomacy” drawing upon the commonalities in traditions and folk art. In fact, the joint cultural exchange initiatives have not only contributed to the Greek-Turkish rapprochement at the ceremonial level, but have also played an important role in the blooming of a mass culture industry. Joint film productions, TV series featuring the love story between a Turk and a Greek, and thousands of music performances, including the Greek-Turkish Youth Orchestra, have not only helped in getting to know each other, but have also helped creating a new cultural trend, supported by music companies and film enterprises.¹⁹ Furthermore, it has become increasingly popular to read novels written by Turkish authors,

¹⁹ As Katerina Moutsatsou confesses, ‘actually, the movie that took me to Turkey as an actress for the first time had been shot in 1998 (a year before the earthquakes) ...but it is after the earthquakes that the movie became popular! Years later, the Turkish television series that I participated in, especially the Turkish TV-series *Yabancı Damat* (Borders of Love), shown for the same time on both sides of the Aegean, entered every single Greek and Turkish home at the same time’. Katerina Moutsatsou is an actress who performed in the first Greek-Turkish co-production *Kayıkçı* and in various Turkish TV series, which made her the most popular Greek actress in Turkey (Fotiou, E. (2007) *Interview with Katerina Moutsatsou*, Athens, October).

such as Orhan Pamuk and Elif Şafak; eat at luxurious kebab restaurants, such as Tike and Köşebaşı; go shopping to Ipekyol, Coton and Inci Ayakkabı at the Athens Mall, and cheer for Turkish sport stars playing for Greek clubs, such as Ibrahim Kutluay.

The mass culture industry has followed the pace of expansion of bilateral contacts and has profited from the improvement of Greek-Turkish relations. Despite the fact that artists are not in position to influence directly foreign policy, they can play a major role in shaping public opinion, and in the case of Greek-Turkish relations, in contributing to the overall process of reconciliation between the two countries, which began after the 1999 earthquakes.

2.3 *Media: Seeking High Ratings*²⁰

The role of the media in the political process may occasionally prove highly important, since the influence it can exert on foreign policy can be decisive, especially in a country like Greece with a traditionally securitized foreign policy. The press, as Thomson puts it, 'should not be regarded simply as a channel for the circulation and diffusion of symbolic forms, but also as a mechanism which creates new kinds of actions and interactions, and contributes to the establishment of new kinds of social relations'.²¹

In the Greek case, most media groups operate along partisan lines to a great extent. In addition, with very few exceptions including public broadcasting, they tend to be populist, superficial in their reporting and quite explicit in their attempt to shape public opinion and attitudes. In this context, they constitute a powerful factor in the construction of the foreign policy public discourse, at least in the short run. They are thus capable of exploiting to some extent the Greek-Turkish nexus in order to put governments under pressure. Populist and simplistic attitudes are promoted by hawkish but influential groups in the media and this becomes rather evident when one looks at the way representations of Turkey and Turks are transmitted to the public.

The Greek press has often drawn from the reservoir of negative images and perceptions of the "Other" to report on present events. If we take three cases as examples of how the press covered Greek-Turkish relations, the

²⁰ This section was informed by interviews with Alkis Courcoulas, Turkey Bureau Chief, Athens News Agency & columnist in the Greek newspaper *To Vima*, 15 September 2008; and Alexandros Massavetas, Istanbul correspondent of the Greek newspaper *Kathimerini*, 17 September 2008, to whom the authors are grateful for their kind contribution.

²¹ Thomson, J. B. (1990) *Ideology and Modern Culture. Critical Social Theory in the Era of Mass Communication*, Cambridge, Polity Press, p. 265.

1987 crisis, the 1996 Imia crisis and the 1999 Helsinki decision, it is easy to conclude that negative stereotypes of Turks exceed the positive ones by far. Turkey is presented as a “revisionist” power, “expansionist” with a “provocative behaviour”. Its claims are “provocations”, and the issues between Turkey and Greece are “National Issues”, a term that does not leave much space for critical evaluations.²² This “revisionism” is often portrayed as an inherent characteristic of the Turkish nation and Turkish policy and is embellished by historical memories of Greek-Turkish relations. Sometimes, a sense of retreat and humiliation is attributed to the Greek government for the way it treats Greek-Turkish issues,²³ as opposed to Turkey’s obstinacy.²⁴ These claims reproduce the negative images and stereotypes generated also by schoolbooks, at least until recently. Generally, the dramatization of events has served the utilitarian aim of increasing press distribution and television ratings.²⁵

As Piers Robinson has noted in his “CNN Effect” thesis,²⁶ a lack of state policy may lead to its substitution by media guidance. This argument is certainly confirmed by the 1996 Imia crisis. The escalation of the crisis was to a large degree generated by the media, while its de-escalation was circumscribed by the media. During the crisis, the Greek media referred to ‘the superiority of the Western civilization based on the culturally different and Asiatic orientation of Turkey, instead of the European Greeks’. In this context, the Turk was the “barbarian”, “uncivilized Other” and ‘distant to the Greek-European identity’.²⁷ The Greek media also made some ironic remarks about the fact that a woman (Ciller) was the Prime Minister of Turkey by referring to the position of women in traditional Muslim societies.²⁸

After the shift of Greek foreign policy in the mid 1990s, the 1999 Helsinki

²² Panagiotou, N. (2003) ‘The Role of the Press in a “Conflict”: The Greek Press Coverage of the Greek-Turkish Dispute’, paper presented in the 1st LSE PhD Symposium on Modern Greece: *Current Social Science Research on Greece*, London, June, http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/hellenicObservatory/pdf/1st_Symposium/NPanagiotouLSEPAPER.pdf.

²³ Headline: ‘Shame on us, we have been humiliated by the Turks’. Subtitle: ‘They placed the Turkish flag in Imia’, *Eleftheros Typos*, 21 January 1996.

²⁴ Headline: ‘Turkey is intransigent’, *Eleftherotypia*, 6 February 1996.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Robinson, P. (1999) ‘The CNN effect: Can the News Media drive Foreign Policy?’, *Review of International Studies*, Vol.25, No.2, pp. 301-309.

²⁷ *Adesmeftos Tipos*, 26 January 1996.

²⁸ Kayhan, Y., A. Sykakis, I. Tsantoulis (2005), paper presented at the ELIAMEP-IPC conference on “Learning Conflict Resolution and Producing Peace”, Athens, 18-20 February, <http://www.eliamep.gr/eliamep/files/Sykakis%20et.%20al..doc>.

decision was portrayed in a similar style in the Greek press, despite the government's efforts to support the Greek-Turkish rapprochement. However, some newspapers were in favour of Greece's new foreign policy approach and Turkey was presented in a slightly more positive manner. Nonetheless, the undemocratic structure of the Turkish state, the status of the Turkish military and Turkey's "revisionist" approach remained the *leitmotif* in the Greek discourse on Turkey. The Greek press continued to reproduce the zero-sum culture and appraised the containment policy as the only feasible and realistic approach to Greek-Turkish relations, condemning Greek governments of appeasement and compromising national interests.

These representations disappeared after the devastating earthquakes in 1999. The mutual dispatch of emergency teams and the adequate promotion by TV channels and the mass media generally affected positively public opinion on both sides of the Aegean.²⁹ The Greek media started "discovering" common elements of the Greek and Turkish traditions and folk culture. Overplaying folklore and "banal"³⁰ scenes of rapprochement also contributed to the new climate between Greeks and Turks.

It has been argued that 'the political and economic changes do not have an impact upon the way that Greek-Turkish relations are viewed',³¹ but recent developments, especially in the field of energy, do not support this argument. The inauguration of the ITGI Pipeline on 18 November 2007 was reported as a success of the "new" Greek foreign policy and as a positive sign for future relations between the two countries. Nonetheless, even today simplistic and superficial negative reporting and "analysis" are dominant. The Greek media tends to overemphasize the rivalry between Kemalists and Islamists and to represent Turkey as a country where the military is real bearer of power and, thus, whose democratic deficit cannot be bridged.

Notwithstanding, the "earthquake diplomacy" has not left this sector unaffected. A Greek-Turkish Journalists' Forum has been established and an increasing trend of collaboration between Greek and Turkish newspapers

²⁹ Bilgic, T. and P. Karatzas (2004) 'The Contraction in Greece-Turkey-EU Triangle: Rapprochement at the edges', March, <http://www.econturk.org/Turkischeconomy/turkey-greece.pdf>.

³⁰ The term "banal" here follows Michael Billig's interpretation in the book *Banal Nationalism* (London, Sage, 1995), referring to the fact that everyday habits may serve a more complicated reality.

³¹ Panagiotou, N. (2003), *op.cit.*

can be traced as a consequence of the synergies explored by Turkish and Greek press holdings, such as the Doğan Holding in Turkey and the International Herald Tribune and Kathimerini editions in Greece. Cooperation remains limited however in view of the structure of media ownership in Turkey along with the prejudices in Greek public opinion: Turkey “sells” in Greece, but for the wrong reasons.

2.4 *Academia: Keeping Pace*

Despite the long and “seditious” history of the Greek intelligentsia and its contribution to Greece’s democratization after the junta period, Greek academia has not played an active role in the Europeanization of Greece’s foreign policy.³² International law and history have always dominated the academic foreign policy debate on Turkey, and the focus has been on the deterrence of the Turkish threat without questioning common wisdom in Greece or suggesting an alternative approach. This is why Greece’s foreign policy shift preceded the academic debate. As Tsakonas puts it in our interview, ‘IR scholars failed to act as “agents of reform” in rationalizing the dominant irrational paradigm of Greek political culture, which was based on introversion, fatalism, defensiveness and an ex post-facto management of international developments’.

The reproduction and exploitation of the Greek-Turkish historic experience has nourished an “underdog culture” in Greek society,³³ which has been further legitimized by academic writings. This has generated a seemingly sophisticated ethnocentric approach, which in turn created and reproduced dividing lines between “cosmopolitans” and “patriots”, those who emphasize “prudence and interdependence” and those who believe in “conflict”, as well as “liberals” and “realists”.³⁴ Academic circles in Greece are polarized, because they approach Greek-Turkish relations through the

³² For an extensive account, see Tsakonas, P. (2005) ‘Theory and Practice in Greek Foreign Policy’, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol.5, No.3, p. 427-437.

³³ For an extensive account of the nation-state building process in Greece and the construction of national stereotypes, see Veremis, T. (1990) ‘From the national state to the stateless nation: 1821–1910’, in M. Blinkhorn and T. Veremis (eds) *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality*, Athens, Sage/ELIAMEP; and Ozkirimli, U. and S. Sofos (2008) *Tormented by History: Nationalism in Greece and Turkey*, London, Hurst & Company.

³⁴ Konstantinidis, S. (2003) ‘Helleniki Exoteriki Politiki: Theoria ke Praxi’ (‘Greek Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice’) in P. Tsakonas (ed.) *Syghroni Helleniki Exoteriki Politiki: Mia synoliki Proseggkisi, (Contemporary Greek Foreign Policy: An Overall Assessment) Vol. A’*, Athens, Sideris.

competing prisms of engagement and containment.³⁵ On the one hand, there is a widespread view that meeting Greece's security interests calls for Turkey's democratization. On the other hand, some believe that a containment strategy, which aims at weakening Turkey's ties with the EU and thus limiting its power, is the only realistic approach to serve Greek national interests. Another segment of the Greek IR community – the “eurocentrics” or “federalists” – while supporting Turkey's EU accession, emphasize the prior need for EU institutional reforms, viewing Turkey's membership as a potential threat to the European integration process.³⁶

All in all, in recent years, the main division in the community of IR scholars is between the supporters of engagement versus containment. Since the late 1990s, the former have gained more legitimacy and have moved closer to decision-making circles. Today, the majority of advisers in the Greek Ministry for Foreign Affairs and research fellows working for the leading Greek foreign affairs think tanks support the strategy of engagement and the Greek-Turkish rapprochement.

3. By Way of Conclusion: Greek Public Opinion

Public opinion is formed by deep-rooted traditions, facts that quite often are mythologized and images that are constructed from the era of Greek nation-state and identity formation. During most of the post-1974 period, Greece's national security strategy was based on containing what Greek elites and public opinion perceived as the “threat from the East”, i.e., the threat from a country that could not be trusted and whose history was blamed for much of the ills of Greece's political, social and economic development.³⁷

The earthquakes in 1999 and the projection of the image of Turks helping Greeks and vice-versa created a counter-shock within both sides, which has led to self-questioning and an eagerness to learn more about each other. Civil society initiatives opened the space for dialogue and people-to-people contacts, and resulted in a unprecedented number of “low-politics” agree-

³⁵ Ifantis, K. (2005) op.cit. p.380.

³⁶ Mitsos, A. (2008) ‘The support to Membership’ (‘I ypostirixi tis entaxis’), *Vima Ideon*, 5 September.

³⁷ Ifantis, K. (2005) op.cit., p.381.

ments. Increasing economic exchanges instead enhanced the prospects for “normal” relations and more structured cooperation.

Despite the developments at the level of civil society and the efforts of successive governments to raise public support for their decision to “sponsor” Turkey’s accession, Greek public opinion remains cautious and rather sceptical. Between 2000 and 2006, Greek support for Turkey’s EU bid ranges between 20% and 26% reaching an “unnatural” 40% in 2000, right after the earthquakes. By the end of 2002, public support for Turkey’s membership dropped to 20% and has remained stable since.³⁸ There is no doubt that the Greek security dilemma remains largely unaltered despite the rapprochement of the last decade. In this context, raising awareness and reducing ignorance on Turkey is a strategic imperative of a Communication Strategy. Turkey is not a monolith, but a country with a variety of constituencies. It is undergoing great turbulence and change at all levels. There is an emerging elite that needs all the support it can get in order to drive the country towards full democratization and sustainable reform. What Greeks need to understand is that the benefit for Greece of Turkey as a “natural insider” is much higher than Turkey as a “major outsider”.³⁹ Ultimately, though, much will depend on Turkey itself; and a positive Turkish response on the Aegean and Cyprus has not been forthcoming.

³⁸ Kotsiaros, A. (ed) (2007) ‘O Evropaiki Kini Gnomi ke I Tourkia’ (‘The European Public Opinion and Turkey’), Athens, Institute of European Integration and Policy, Research Unit Turkey-Economy, Politics and International Relations, March, <http://eeep.pspa.uoa.gr/RUT-WP02.07.pdf>.

³⁹ Bilgic, T. and P. Karatzas (2004) op.cit.

5. DANISH STAKEHOLDERS IN THE EU-TURKEY DEBATE

*Dietrich Jung*¹

‘The EU will always find an excuse!’ So was the reaction of the barber Hüseyin Özkan in Copenhagen on the critical remarks with which Mogens Lykketoft, a leading member of Denmark’s Social Democrats and previous minister of foreign affairs warned against Turkey’s accession into the EU.² In the fall of 2002, Lykketoft joined the choir of voices that argued against Turkish membership before the EU enlargement summit in Copenhagen, expressing actually what many of his Danish colleagues thought. This negative attitude towards Turkey’s membership was in striking contradiction to the overwhelming support which the EU enlargement process in general enjoyed among Danish politicians. It was not enlargement as such, but the accession of Turkey against which Lykketoft came out. Apparently, Turkey’s candidacy has a very precarious status in Danish politics and it is knit into both political discourses on the EU and the public debate about migration and Islam. In which ways is Turkey’s EU accession perceived in Denmark? How are the stakeholders framing this perception? Why does Denmark’s desire for enlargement not comprise Turkey? For proper answers to these questions, we have to take into account the general context of Danish EU politics. Since entering the EU in 1973, Denmark has been a rather “eurosceptic” country. This is particularly visible in the four

¹ I would like to thank Catharina Sørensen for her excellent comments on a previous draft of this chapter and Sine Tarby for her indispensable help in collecting the necessary data. Possible errors and the expressed opinion are my responsibility alone.

² *Politiken*, 10 November 2002.

Danish EU opt-outs, which were a consequence of the Danish no-vote to the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. In order to meet Danish concerns, the EU granted Denmark a special status. Copenhagen does not participate in common defense policies, in the economic and monetary union, in juridical cooperation besides the inter-governmental level, and it maintains a unilateral declaration on EU citizenship. It is important to understand that these opt-outs reflect deep concerns among ordinary Danes, rather than on the side of the Danish political and economic elite. The issue of Turkish EU membership, therefore, is not so much an issue of bureaucratic politics but first and foremost a topic of public debate among politicians, media pundits and a number of publicly known personalities. In Denmark, stakeholders such as business associations and state institutions seem to have a limited influence on those EU decisions which have been subject to public referenda. The no-vote on the Euro in 2000 was but one example in which a majority of Danes obstructed the shared desire of Denmark's political and economic elite to participate in the monetary union.

Against this background, this chapter will contextualize and analyse the complex public debate in Denmark. In this debate, for instance, business actors and the security community play dominant roles in supporting Turkey's EU membership bid, however, without being able to exert a significant influence on the people. In order to define the principal stakeholders, it makes sense to take into consideration that Turkey's membership might be up to a public referendum, as it has been discussed in several EU member states. In Denmark, only the nationalist *Dansk Folkeparti* (DF) explicitly demands a referendum on Turkey's membership. Yet this demand finds some resonance among other politicians and the population at large. It is therefore questionable whether political parties will continue opposing a referendum. For any communication strategy regarding Turkey it is thus imperative to have the public debate in Denmark as one of its core targets and to be aware of the fact that "top-down" support by the elite might backfire as it was in the case of the referendum on the Euro.

In a first step, we will have a look at Denmark's own history with the EU and briefly explain the origins and nature of the country's continuing EU scepticism.³ This historical sketch provides the overall frame of reference in

³ This section is based on the book edited by Sørensen, C. (2007) *50 år med EU. Danske Perspektiver*, Copenhagen, DIIS, <http://www.diis.dk/sw45861.asp>. The book presents the papers of the conference *Danske Perspektiver på 50 år med Den Europæiske Union* which was organized by the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) and the Priority Area "Europe in Transition" of Copenhagen University.

which EU politics has been discussed in Denmark. Then, we move to the official positions of stakeholders such as the government, political parties and business associations. In a third step, we will take an analytically guided glance at the media debate and the different themes under which Turkey's EU membership has been discussed by the Danish public. The chapter concludes with some recommendations for the improvement of Turkey's status in Danish public opinion. The paper will argue that this communication strategy must aim at informing the Danish public and introducing new, in particular economically relevant themes into the debate rather than pushing leading economic and political actors to support more directly Turkish membership. Therefore, it tries to identify possible avenues for promoting Turkish membership without giving the impression of political impositions by national governments or the EU.

1. The Danish EU Dilemma

There is large agreement among observers of Danish EU politics that the country joined the European Community in 1972 predominantly because of economic reasons. During the 1960s Denmark enjoyed a period of industrial growth which convinced both entrepreneurs and parts of the trade unions that the Danish economy had achieved a level of competitiveness which made it beneficial for the country's economy to directly participate in the European market. In the 1972 referendum, this economic self-confidence surmounted the political scepticism vis-à-vis the European Community, which however remained an influential force in Danish EU politics. In particular among Social Democrats and left-of-centre parties, the European Community was viewed as a conservative power: too Catholic, too capitalist, and dominated by Christian Democrats. Moreover, the Danes were convinced that the Scandinavian version of the democratic welfare state was superior to the political systems of other European democracies. Deeper political integration with Europe was thus associated with a threat to this ideal model of Scandinavian statehood, and perceived as putting the achievements of Danish society at stake.

Yet also the Scandinavian model was in need of an economic fundament, which increasingly depended on European market integration. The times of isolated national economies were history and in order to maintain the allegedly superior Scandinavian welfare state an enhanced economic integration was imperative. This structural straightjacket partly explains the

Danish EU Dilemma, which is a dilemma of the country's political economy: in order to remain superior in political terms Denmark had to join the Community at least economically. In addition, Danish democracy differs from other European democracies in its "popular" character. While many European states such as Germany or France emphasize the constitutional prerogatives of the rule of law, Danish democracy puts a particular stress on the influence of the people and therewith on parliamentary power. From this perspective of "popular" versus "constitutional" democracy, as the political scientist Marlene Wind from Copenhagen University puts it, the integration of Europe in political and juridical terms has often been viewed as ultimately threatening the sovereignty of the Danish people. While Danes increasingly were happy with economic cooperation, they rejected the idea of deeper political integration. Since 1972, the Danish EU debate, therefore, revolved around issues such as qualitative differences in the standards of democracy and the freedom of speech, elements of direct democracy, European statehood versus national sovereignty, or the future social face of Europe.

To sum up this brief glance at Danish-EU relations, since joining the European Community a large part of the Danish population has retained its sceptical stance towards an ever closer Union, as evidenced by the Danish EU opt-outs. However, this does not mean that the Danes do not really want to be a part of the EU. There are also strong concerns of losing touch with core EU developments. Danish EU scepticism is accompanied by anxieties of becoming isolated and a sincere desire for enhanced economic cooperation. Hence the Danish attitude towards European integration is ambivalent and the mood of the population tends to shift with respect to questions of economic versus political integration. Consequently, the forthcoming referenda on the EU opt-outs will be determined by the balance between the perceived threats posed by both integration and disintegration, taking into account the sometimes volatile mood of the Danish electorate.⁴ In recent years, the positions of the Social Democrats and of some of the left-of-centre parties became more positive towards the EU.

⁴ A recent opinion poll shows how difficult it is for the politicians to handle the Danish constituency. If the government put all four opt-outs as a package on referendum, then a majority of 44% to 40% of the Danes would vote to maintain them. Putting them individually on referendum all four opt-outs would be abandoned. Only joining the Euro zone seems contested by 50% yes and 44% no votes. Therefore, the government considers to conduct four subsequent referenda (<http://nyhederne.tv2.dk>, accessed 15 May 2008).

However, a change that has been accompanied by the rise of the meanwhile very influential *Dansk Folkeparti* on the right which took over the anti-EU position and now articulates the previously rather leftist theme of EU threats to the welfare state in a predominantly nationalist voice. Danish EU policies are conducted within this context of ambivalent attitudes towards the EU project and it is important for the political elite not to give the impression of making any major EU policy decisions without consulting the people. This applies also to the issue of Turkey's EU membership and it is therefore my suspicion that in the end Denmark's political establishment could give-in to public pressure and eventually decide to put this question to referendum.

2. The Official Positions of Danish Stakeholders

2.1 *The Political Elite*⁵

The incumbent Danish government under Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen supports Turkey's EU membership under the condition that the country has to fully comply with the demands of the Copenhagen criteria. The government basically expresses the position of the two centre-right parties – *Venstre*; *Det Konservative Folkeparti* – constituting Denmark's minority government.⁶ Both parties emphasize that Turkey should not be excluded from the EU as a matter of principle. However, they also express clear scepticism about the country's ability to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria. Their judgment of the accession negotiations between Ankara and Brussels up to now is rather negative. *Venstre* views the course of the negotiations as not very good and stresses that Turkey's membership only can be expected in the far future if it happens at all. In a similar vein, *Det Konservative Folkeparti* calls for sharp attention in following the negotia-

⁵ The official statements of Danish parties concerning Turkey's EU membership are accessible from their respective Danish websites. The last national elections took place in 2007, with the following results (votes/seats): *Socialdemokratiet* (25,5/45); *Det Radikale Venstre* (5,1/9); *Det Konservative Folkeparti* (10,4/18); *Socialistisk Folkeparti* (13,0/23); *Dansk Folkeparti* (13,9/25); *Venstre* (26,2/46); *Enhedslisten* (2,2/4); *Ny Alliance* (2,8/5); the figures are taken from the website of the Danish Parliament: www.folketinget.dk.

⁶ Both parties understand themselves as liberal parties, but can be placed somehow right from the centre in the Danish party system. However, given the deeply rooted importance of the welfare state in Danish politics, in comparison to other European liberal parties, in particular *Venstre* has traits that remind of the welfare policies of Social Democrats in other EU states.

tions and emphasizes that the outcome of the accession process is open. Moreover, the party suggests seriously taking into consideration the sceptical position vis-à-vis Turkey among large parts of the population.

The two ruling parties, however, only hold a minority of 64 seats in the Danish Parliament.⁷ Therefore, any government decision has to look for votes beyond the representatives of *Venstre* and *Konservative*. So far, these votes have been provided by *Dansk Folkeparti*, a nationalist party on the political right with a strong anti-EU rhetoric which has been able to almost double its votes since it was elected into parliament for the first time in March 1998. The *Dansk Folkeparti* is strictly against Turkey's membership. The party considers the decision to take up accession negotiations with Turkey as irresponsible and points to the widespread anti-Turkish sentiments among Europe's populations. For *Dansk Folkeparti*, Turkey is in terms of culture fundamentally different from Europe and the reforms of the Turkish legal and political systems cannot bridge this cultural gap. Therefore, the assumption that a Turkey living up to the Copenhagen criteria is a different (read: European) Turkey, in the eyes of *Dansk Folkeparti* is nothing more than wishful thinking.

Looking at the opposition, mainly parties at the centre or on its left, there is no party that would explicitly reject Turkish membership. The position of the Social Democrats (*Socialdemokratiet*) is close to the two ruling parties, stressing the ultimate conditionality of the Copenhagen criteria and the length and arduous nature of the process lying ahead. Contrary to *Venstre* and *Konservative*, the Social Democrats also emphasize the economic conditions and point to the fact that Turkey has to develop a competitive and transparent market economy. In a similar way, the *Socialistisk Folkeparti* (Socialist Peoples Party) supports Turkish membership based on conditionality. It also expects a minimum of ten years ahead before the country might live up to the political and economic standards of Europe. The leftist *Enhedslisten*, itself an anti-EU party, rejects all kinds of religious or ethnic discriminations of potential EU candidates and, thus, supports Turkey's accession as long as Turkey itself wants to join the Union. The two liberal parties, *Det Radikale Venstre* and *Ny Alliance*, share a positive stance on the EU's further enlargement but stress the sustainability of this future enlargement process. *Det Radikale Venstre* (RV)

⁷ The current Danish Parliament has a total of 179 seats out of which 175 represent the election results of the last national election in November 2007. The remaining four members represent the Faroe Islands (2) and Greenland (2).

is the only party which does not only emphasize the need for Turkey to comply with EU conditionalities but also comes with some positive arguments for Turkey's EU membership. The *Radikale Venstre* argues, for instance, that for many states the EU accession process was the way from dictatorship to democracy and that the democratic inclusion of Turkey could serve as an example for other Muslim states. In addition, it envisions Turkey's economy, in the long run, becoming an asset for the EU.⁸

In sum, the clear majority of Danish parties expresses lukewarm support for Turkey's EU membership based on the strict conditionality of the Copenhagen criteria. Thereby, most parties view Turkey's EU accession in a one-dimensional way: it is Turkey as an applicant that wants to join a beneficial club and Brussels should carefully scrutinize that the country fully lives up to European standards before joining the EU. Only *Det Radikale Venstre* discusses Turkish membership in its official statements as possibly beneficial for both Turkey and the EU. *Dansk Folkeparti*, instead, rejects Turkish membership completely on cultural and nationalistic grounds. *Enhedslisten* opposes the EU but not Turkey's membership in it.

2.2 The Economic Elite

In the eyes of Denmark's political establishment, Turkey is an EU candidate with still questionable democratic credentials and a relatively feeble human rights record. This negative political picture of the country is additionally framed within cultural stereotypes according to which Turkey is not imagined as a European country. This negative image is not shared by Denmark's business elite. In their official statements, Turkey is presented as a dynamic economy with a fast growing private sector and high potential for the future. Turkey often is called a "tiger economy" and the business sector puts its emphasis on integration. It is not a cultural gap but an increasing integration into the European market that characterizes the perceptions of Turkey in business circles.

From an economic perspective, Turkey is a promising and still underdeveloped market for Danish entrepreneurs. In 2003, Danish exports to Turkey ranked 13 among 15 member states and comprised only 0.4% of total exports from Denmark. Between 2001 and 2007, Danish exports to Turkey increased by 33%. Thereby, chemical and pharmaceutical products com-

⁸ This overview of the different positions of various Danish parties comprises only parties currently represented in the Danish parliament.

prised 39% of total Danish exports to Turkey, with machinery and means of transportation ranking second (33%). While Turkey slowly develops into an interesting market for Danish business, Turkish exports to Denmark have risen in an exorbitant way. In the same six-year period as mentioned above, Turkish exports went from 1.5 billion DKK to 4.5 billion DKK, an increase by 179%.⁹ These figures indicate the economic potential for bilateral trade and explain why a large part of Denmark's business community views Turkey's EU accession process as a chance and not, as most of Danish politicians do, as a burden.

In 2004, *Dansk Industri* (DI) published a report *Tyrkiet på vej!* (Turkey on the way) which aimed at informing its members and the Danish public about the perspectives and opportunities associated with Turkey's EU accession.¹⁰ In his preface, the then director of DI, Hans Skov Christensen, called the question of Turkey's EU membership the second biggest issue after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In the name of DI, he declares that without any doubt, Turkey, like the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, should be invited to join the EU. Although also emphasizing the conditionality of Turkish EU membership determined by the Copenhagen criteria, the report points to three gains that the EU would have from Turkish membership. First, Turkey could serve as a bridge in EU security and foreign policies toward the Middle East and the rest of the Muslim world. Second, the country could play an important role in securing the EU's energy supply from Russia, Central Asia and the Middle East. Third, the growth potential of Turkey's economy would give the European market a real boost and contribute to improve the EU's global competitiveness. Finally, with its comparatively young and well-educated population, Turkey could provide the EU with a reservoir of labour for the future, actually turning the political worries about Turkish labour-migration upside-down. In conclusion, DI perceives Turkey's future EU membership in a very positive light. According to its report, Turkey underwent a "silent revolution" and a reformed Turkey would be an asset for a reformed EU in economic and political terms.¹¹

⁹ *Internationale Nyheder*, 1 January 2007.

¹⁰ *Dansk Industri* is Denmark's most important business association. It comprises enterprises of all sizes in the fields of production, services, trade, transportation and technology. The members of *Dansk Industri* employ more than one million people, almost half of them working outside Denmark (see www.di.dk).

¹¹ See 'Tyrkiet på vej! Perspektiver og muligheder', *Debat*, December 2004, Copenhagen, Dansk Industri.

3. "Talking Turkey": Turkey in Danish Public Discourse

The supportive though rather lukewarm way in which most of Denmark's political parties position themselves towards Turkey's EU accession does not necessarily reflect the opinion of their respective electorates. In a recent Eurobarometer survey, only 50% of the Danes would accept Turkish membership if the country complied with all standards set by the EU.¹² In comparison to two local polls, this figure of Eurobarometer could even be too high. In a representative survey among 1073 interviewees in June 2007 conducted by the Greens, 37% of the participants were in favour and 53% against Turkey's membership. Among the supporters of the two currently ruling parties, more than 60% were against Turkey's EU membership.¹³ Similar results were obtained in another poll conducted by "Rambøl Management" in the summer of 2007. In this survey, the supporters and opponents Turkey were also approximately 30% and 60% respectively, and almost 70% of the government's voters were against Turkish membership. Even more important, six out of ten Social Democrats resisted Turkey's accession to the EU.¹⁴ According to these opinion polls, the official positions of most Danish parties are in contradiction to the majority position among their voters. Only the supportive stance of *Det Radikale Venstre* and the rejectionist position of *Dansk Folkeparti* seem to be in relative accordance with their constituencies. In light of these surveys, it is not surprising that in the public debate many politicians position themselves more critically vis-à-vis Turkey than expressed in officially documented party lines. In general, this debate is characterized by the assumption that Turkey is not really able to live up to the Copenhagen criteria. Danish observers apply the standards of the Scandinavian model and their critical stance towards Turkey is in line with the general suspicion that European integration causes a threat to the democratic credentials of this model. In this way, the contemporary debate on Turkey's EU membership is still characterized by the perceptions that made Denmark itself a reluctant EU member. I will explore this proposition in relation to two political issues in which Turkey played a central role: the EU's decision to partly stop accession negotiations with Turkey because of Ankara's stance towards Cyprus, and the question of freedom of speech

¹² Eurobarometer (2006), *Special Eurobarometer 255: Attitudes towards European Union Enlargement*, July, p. 71, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_255_en.pdf.

¹³ *Børsen*, 14 June 2007.

¹⁴ *Jyllandsposten*, 10 October 2007.

raised under the Muhammad Cartoon Crisis which shook Denmark in 2005/2006. The chapter will then briefly glance at the more general debate in Danish newspapers and the way in which the idea of a referendum on Turkey's EU membership has been discussed.

In December 2006, Turkey's refusal to open its ports and airports to traffic from Cyprus led to the suspension of negotiation talks between Brussels and Ankara on eight out of the 35 chapters of the *acquis communautaire*. In this quarrel between Turkey and the EU, the Danish Prime Minister first joined the camp of the EU hardliners (Cyprus, Greece, France and Austria) who called for a stop of the accession negotiations. Before the Luxembourg summit, Anders Fogh Rasmussen (*Venstre*) said that he wanted to keep Turkey on the European track, but only by giving Ankara a clear and ultimate signal. The Danish Prime Minister added: 'it is Turkey that has to adjust itself to the EU and not the other way round!'.¹⁵ In a similar way, the leader of the Social Democrats, Helle Thorning-Schmidt, reacted to the Cyprus crisis. In joining sides with the Prime Minister, she supported the idea of France and Germany to give Turkey an ultimatum of 18 months to sort out its problems with Cyprus. Also Thorning-Schmidt emphasized that it is in Europe's own interest to work together with Turkey, but the EU's rules apply to all and there is no room for Ankara to make its own rules.¹⁶ In light of the Danish opt-outs, which from Southeastern Europe might be viewed as a kind of membership according to specific Danish demands, this position of Denmark's leading political representatives undoubtedly enhanced the Turkish feeling that Brussels applies double standards.

Apparently, Anders Fogh Rasmussen and Helle Thorning-Schmidt felt the pressure of public opinion. Even more important, they had to react to *Dansk Folkeparti's* suggestion to stop accession negotiations with Turkey entirely and to give up the idea of Turkish membership. The DF's speaker on EU politics, Morten Messerschmidt, interpreted the discussion to stop negotiations because of the Cyprus conflict as a first step towards the understanding that Turkey will never be able to live up to European standards.¹⁷ Only Henriette Søtoft, head of the section for European affairs at *Dansk Industri*, criticized this emphasis on the Cyprus conflict in the public debate. In her opinion this discussion completely overshadowed the

¹⁵ *Politiken*, 29 November 2006.

¹⁶ *Politiken*, 5 December 2006.

¹⁷ *Politiken*, 29 November 2006.

ongoing process of positive reforms, which has nevertheless been taking place in Turkey. Consequently, she viewed a halt of Turkish-EU negotiations as disproportionate.¹⁸ Eventually, the Danish government supported the suggestion of the EU Commission to stop negotiations only with regard to eight chapters of the *acquis* and to continue the rest of the accession process. According to Foreign Minister Per Stig Møller (*Konservative*) a reasonable compromise was achieved.¹⁹

In September 2005, the Danish daily *Jyllandsposten* published a series of Cartoons about the Prophet Muhammad. As a questionable contribution to the rather nasty Danish debate on Muslim immigrants, this publication was probably meant as a provocation of Danish Muslims. In the beginning of 2006, however, this provincial affair turned into a political crisis with global dimensions. One factor, which triggered the internationalization of the cartoon crisis, was the decision of Prime Minister Rasmussen in fall 2005 to reject the request of 11 ambassadors from Muslim states – Turkey among them – to meet with him to discuss the issue. In the eyes of the Danish Prime Minister this meeting would have been a violation of the freedom of speech. The fact that the Turkish ambassador participated in this request induced Prime Minister Rasmussen to give a stern warning to Ankara. In his understanding Turkey joined the wrong side in this controversy. Aspiring full-membership in the EU means to fully accept the principle of freedom of speech.²⁰ Rasmussen added that if the Turkish ambassador's protest expresses Ankara's attitude towards this fundamental principle then Turkey would risk a straight "No" to its EU membership-bid.²¹

Generally speaking, Danish public opinion reacts in an extremely sensitive way to any restrictions of civil liberties. Therefore, incidents such as the Muhammad crisis, Ankara's demand to close down the Kurdish TV-station Roj TV that broadcasts from Denmark, or the trial against the literature Nobel Prize award winner Orhan Pamuk figure prominently in public debate. Of course, these cases clearly show that Turkey indeed has problems in complying with the political standards of the Copenhagen criteria.

¹⁸ *Børsen*, 13 December 2006.

¹⁹ *Politiken*, 11 December 2006.

²⁰ It is important to know that in Denmark the principle of the freedom of speech enjoys a very broad and open interpretation, which is not necessarily shared by all EU member states. One example is the production and dissemination of Nazi propaganda, prosecuted in Germany and Austria, almost completely free in Denmark.

²¹ *Berlingske*, 25 October 2005.

However, the continuing focus on these democratic deficits by politicians and public opinion-makers emphasizes the shortcomings in Turkey's reform process at the expense of its many achievements. The dominant feature in Denmark's public debate is expressed well by the Prime Minister's response to the question whether the French President's stance on Turkish membership is not the biggest obstacle for Turkey at the moment: 'the new French President is not Turkey's biggest problem in the contested accession negotiations with the EU. Turkey itself is the main problem [...]. Turkey obviously does not live up to the conditions in a satisfactory way in order to achieve progress in the negotiations'.²²

While the Danish government maintains Turkey's formal right to be considered a candidate for full-membership in the EU, some of its leading representatives give the impression they neither believe nor want to believe in Ankara's ability to meet the Copenhagen criteria. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that public support for Turkish membership is low and that the demand of *Dansk Folkeparti* to hold a referendum on Turkey finds resonance beyond its constituency, despite this being rejected by leading politicians of all other parties.²³ The speaker in European affairs of the governing *Venstre*, Charlotte Antonsen, for instance, said that there is no tradition in Denmark to hold referenda on the accession of other countries. In addition, Antonsen argued that this question is also irrelevant because Turkey is far from reaching the necessary standards.²⁴ The position that Turkey is so far from becoming a member that the issue of a referendum is just not on the agenda is largely shared also by many supporters of Turkey's membership in the public debate. These supporters often display a kind of "therapeutic" attitude toward Turkey: "We have to help them and to treat their democratic deficits otherwise they will never be able to enjoy living in a democratic society with a functioning market economy."

To a large extent, supporters and opponents of Turkish membership view the country in similar ways. What makes the difference is whether they

²² *Jyllandsposten*, 9 May 2007.

²³ The newly appointed Minister of Social Affairs, Karen Jespersen (*Venstre*), for instance, demanded in public to hold a referendum on Turkey's EU membership. In this case, Prime Minister Rasmussen intervened immediately and declared that the Danish government has no plans to hold this kind of referendum. Rasmussen added also that if Jespersen, a former Social Democrat ardently opposing Turkish membership, continues to go public with her demand she should leave the government.

²⁴ *Jyllandsposten*, 3 February 2007.

believe in Turkey's ability to reform. Explicitly or otherwise for a large part of the opponents, Islam is the decisive variable. For those who view Islam and liberal democracy as incompatible, Turkey is divorced by an unbridgeable cultural gap from Europe. Ralf Pittelkow, a former literature professor and member of the Social Democrats, plays a leading role in framing the resistance against Turkish membership in the public debate.²⁵ In a newspaper commentary in 2005, he argued that the accession process should be halted and the EU should tell Turkey that more than a "privileged partnership" is impossible. Doing this now would be far fairer towards Turkey than to keep Ankara in the illusion of one day joining the EU. Pittelkow underpins his opinion with a survey of the Turkish public as well. Based on this survey, he indicates that a majority of Turks has a particularly critical stance towards Christians and desires Islam to play a more prominent role in Turkish society. In addition, he stresses that not only Europeans are sceptical about the prospects of democracy in Turkey, but that even 48% of the Turks do not believe that democracy could function in their country.²⁶

Generally speaking, the Danish debate moves within the formal framework of Turkey's EU candidacy, but it focuses almost entirely on the democratic deficits of the country and the reluctance of its political elite to fully live up to the norms of liberal democracy. On closer examination, the observer can detect a certain mismatch between the official statements of Denmark's political elite and the way in which they argue in the public debate. This mismatch might be behind the barber Hüseyin Özan's comment on Lykkeftoft that in the end politicians will find an excuse to prevent Turkey's full membership. Although Denmark's political establishment continues to reject the idea to hold a referendum on Turkish membership, eventually such a referendum could precisely be the excuse Hüseyin Özan meant; an excuse which could be given precisely in the name of popular democracy.

²⁵ Together with his wife, Karen Jespersen, Pittelkow published *Islamister og naivister* (Islamists and Naivists) in 2006. The book argues that Islamists are increasingly gaining ground in Europe and only politically naïve persons could underestimate the threat that Islamists pose to Europe. For an English review of the book, see Bilefsky, D. (2006) 'Danish wake-up call on Islam', *International Herald Tribune*, 26 September, <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/09/25/news/denmark.php>.

²⁶ The article appeared in *Jyllandsposten* 24 July 2005. Not surprisingly, these figures are presented out of context. Indeed, the Turkish electorate has increasingly been disenchanted by the performance of its political representatives. However, this has not caused a frustration with democratic reform in the country, but has dramatically strengthened the public's voice for more democracy.

4. Conclusions: How to Talk About Turkey in Denmark?

This chapter argues that promoting Turkey's EU membership in Denmark is not an easy task. The country's public debate is stuck in a circular discourse about Turkey's ability to democratize. While supporters approach this question in a therapeutic way, opponents base their arguments predominantly on religious and cultural grounds. The arguments of both sides seem to be rooted in the Danish self-confidence of representing a superior model of the democratic welfare state. The debate, therefore, partly reflects previous discussions about Denmark's membership in the EU. However, while in the 1960s the question was whether Denmark had to sacrifice its democratic achievements in joining the European Community, today it is Turkey's possible accession that threatens the democratic and social achievements of the EU. Among the major stakeholders, only Denmark's business community and politicians associated with the security community try to break with this circular debate and point also to the possible benefits which the EU could gain from Turkey's membership. Any strategy to support Turkey in its desire to become a member of the EU has to support these efforts of breaking through the biased and circular nature of the Danish debate. Talking Turkey first and foremost means to discuss Turkish membership with the Danish public. How might it be possible to make an impact on this public debate?

Regarding the issue of a referendum on Turkish membership, a majority of Danes might view the idea of holding a referendum as part and parcel of Danish "popular" democracy. However, given the official position of Danish politicians, this issue will not be decided in Denmark alone. On the contrary, only if other EU members will conduct such a referendum will Danish parties have a problem in maintaining their official line of rejection. Therefore, the issue of a referendum most probably also in the Danish case will be decided on the European and not on the national level.

In order to promote Turkey's interests in Denmark instead, it is important to move the pro-Turkey camp from its therapeutic position toward a cost-benefit argumentation, from politics to economics. It is crucial to introduce the so far hardly discussed economic impacts of Turkish membership into the debate as this theme is in line with Denmark's own positive perception on European integration. For this strategy to work, the business associations and *Det Radikale Venstre* would be the major partners among Denmark's official stakeholders. Probably, this strategy could also find support among the two members of parliament with a Turkish background who represent

the Social Democrats and *Socialistisk Folkeparti*. With regard to Danish civil society, Denmark's European Movement (*Europabevægelse*) certainly is an important partner. In particular its subdivision *Netværk for Tyrkiet i EU* (Network for Turkey into the EU; TRiEU.dk) has already been lobbying in the above-mentioned direction.

A general point of concern for any strategy should be the low level of information about Turkey, which characterizes the public debate. Even among university students, Turkey still represents a void, often filled by positive or negative stereotypes. Looking at the business community, so far their focus has been on top-level economic actors. Their support for Turkey, however, should trickle down to Denmark's workforce where information on Turkey is bitterly needed. The debate about Turkey's EU-membership is not only a problem of competing political ideologies, but also of different class perspectives. Given the enormous relevance of various forms of adult education in Denmark, it is in this field that information strategies should be implemented. Thereby, information on Turkey has to be put into an historical framework, emphasizing the close interconnectedness between not only Turkey but also its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire and European political developments. By adopting a broader historical perspective, the most burning issues of the Danish debate – cultural difference, human rights deficits, and democratic shortcomings – could be tackled in a more comprehensive way. Linked to this and contrary to Turkish anxieties, the issue of the Armenian genocide could be one point of departure for the reexamination of European-Turkish history. Moreover, it could serve as a “big idea” around which Turkish-EU relations could develop into the desired democratic future. The killing and deportation of the Armenians was the culmination of the mutual policies of intimidation, expulsion and ethnic cleansing which characterized the policies of European states and the Ottoman Empire from the late nineteenth century until the years after the First World War. This period is still a dark and poorly understood chapter of European history in which millions of people, Christians and Muslims, lost their lives. It is the revision of this part of European history which both EU member-states and Turkey need and could help cast Turkey in the wider European context.

With regard to West European perceptions, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's position was telling. In an interview with the French daily *Le Monde* the then President of the European Convention rejected Turkey's claim to Europeanness on geographical grounds, stressing that the Turkish capital is

not situated in Europe, and almost 95% of the Turkish population reside in Asia Minor.²⁷ Yet, it was not the geography but the political history of Europe that reduced the territory of modern Turkey largely to Anatolia, and the political processes in the wake of World War I caused the homogenizing of its population in religious terms. The fact, for instance, that the Christian population of contemporary Turkey only amounts to a tiny 0.15% is not only due to the discriminating policies of the Kemalist state, but largely a result of European power politics. Unfortunately, the public debate about Turkey and Europe neglects the very fact that a large proportion of contemporary Turks can trace back their family's origins to regions in Greece, Russia, the Ukraine and the Balkans – and not to the legendary steppes in Central Asia, as established in the Turkish nationalist discourse. From a historical perspective, Turkey's geographical location and its predominantly Muslim population today are very recent products of international politics. In other words, Turkey's current condition, used by some as an intrinsic proof of Turkey's unEuropeanness, is the very product of European (including Ottoman and Turkish) history. Not only from the Danish perspective, the re-examination of this part of European history indeed could provide a similar big idea for Turkey's EU accession as the Cold War did for Eastern enlargement.

²⁷ 'Pour ou contre l'adhésion de la Turquie à l'Union européenne', *Le Monde*, 9 November 2002, http://www.lemonde.fr/web/imprimer_element/0,40-0@2-3210,50-297386,0.html.

6. MARCUS AURELIUS' FOOT: LOOKING FOR TURKEY'S PROJECT IN THE EU. AN INTERPRETATION OF THE FRENCH DEBATE ON TURKEY

*Anne-Marie Le Gloannec*¹

All is quiet on the Western front – at least as far as Turkey is concerned: a furious and rancorous debate which had raged in France for five years over Turkey's EU membership, has lulled after the last echoes of Nicolas Sarkozy's bid for presidency abated a year and a half ago. While the French had debated Turkey's Europeanness and its place in the EU roughly between 2002 and 2007, the question has apparently vanished from the radar screen since then. From the weaknesses of the French economy to the bail-out of American and European banks, from the rise of China to the demise of Georgia, other issues and other sources of concern are now looming large on the domestic and international horizons, superseding the "Turkey question". In the meantime, negotiations between Turkey and the EU are proceeding and the French Presidency of the European Council has, wisely enough, not tried to halt or highjack them.

The "Turkey question" however is far from being solved. French concerns over Turkey's membership have all but disappeared: if any change is to be registered since Sarkozy's election, it is the increase in the proportion of those who oppose Turkey joining the EU. Certainly the French were always among those who most adamantly rejected Turkey's EU request. Various opinion polls, national or international, recorded the constant French oppo-

¹ I would like to thank particularly my colleague and friend, Riva Kastoryano, for the help she gave me. My thanks also go to Dorian Ryser and Sylvie Haas, always helpful in providing research material.

sition, alongside that of the Austrians and Germans. Certainly public opinion in various countries is increasingly hostile to Turkey's membership.² Of all, however, the French are most resolutely opposed: whereas the well-established French polling institute IFOP recorded that 67% of the French, asked about their opinion on Turkey's membership, firmly asserted their opposition in 2004, 80% did so in 2008, ahead of the Germans (76%), the Belgians (68%) and the Dutch (67%).³ Whatever qualifications may accompany each opinion poll, the trends and the proportions are eloquent. Analysts have often underlined the paradox which lay at the heart of French-Turkish relations. Without going as far back as the 16th century when – now mythical – ties linked François I and Suleyman the Magnificent, French advocates of Turkey's EU membership alongside Francophile Turks recall the fact that France served as a model to the founder of the Turkish Republic, Kemal Atatürk, and that France has since kept or built its presence in Turkey.⁴ It has maintained a network of schools – French lycées, bilingual schools and lycées, the best known of which is the school and lycée of Galatasaray, as well as a number of Catholic schools attended by Turks of all faiths. Numerous French companies have invested in Turkey, Renault among others, which has been a major industrial employer in Turkey for the past fifty years. Generally speaking, France has been a primary investor in Turkey for a number of years as well as a major importer and exporter. Against this backdrop, the French opposition to Turkey's membership appears perplexing.

What can be so overwhelming in France as to overtake French cultural and economic interests vis-à-vis Turkey? What is at stake? What explains the bitterness of the debate? The argument advanced here is that both debate and policy have been shaped by vocal minorities for the sake of short-term electoral gains, while almost all the advocates of Turkey's European vocation have silently withdrawn. A combination of factors have helped: the

² See the results of the *Eurobarometer* (http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion) and *Transatlantic Trends* (<http://www.transatlantictrends.org>) surveys over the years.

³ IFOP Le Figaro (2004) *Les Européens et la Turquie*, 13 December, <http://www.ifop.com/europe/docs/europeturquie.pdf>, and IFOP Valeurs Actuelles (2008) *L'adhésion à l'entrée de la Turquie dans l'Union Européenne*, 18 August, <http://www.ifop.com/europe/docs/Turquieue.pdf>. In both cases, a sample of citizens in only six to seven countries were interviewed.

⁴ On the opinion of francophile Turks see Pope, N. et al. (2008) *Les Francophones Turcs S'expriment Sur L'impact De La Politique Française*, Istanbul, Open Society Institute, AF-Turquie, http://www.osiaf.org.tr/images/basin/pdf/Les_Francophones_Turcs.pdf.

complexities of the Turkish polity and the state's policies, which are not immediately understandable to most French, as well as the complexity of the accession process and the consequences of enlargement to Turkey; the lack of knowledge that most French hold of these subjects; and last but not least, the very limited communication strategy that Turkish authorities have displayed so far.

1. Governmental Policy: The Worst of Possible Solutions

In December 1999, the heads of state and government gathered in the European Council in Helsinki decided to take into consideration Turkey's candidacy to the EU. President Jacques Chirac had not consulted with his party nor had there been any previous discussion in Parliament or debate in the public space. As one politician puts it, 'Chirac had forgotten to inform the French'.⁵ The decision was taken by the President alone. No detailed explanation was given, no communication strategy put in place. The case of Turkey was however far from easy: the country did not meet then the Copenhagen criteria; and the fourth wave of enlargement was well under way, opening the door to ten, then twelve, East European countries without the French – nor other Europeans – knowing where the road would lead, nor where it would end. For practically two years, this issue remained unaddressed and leadership on this issue vacant, two years during which unspoken misunderstandings and unlaboured prejudices filled the void: 'les non-dits se mettent en place', as a journalist put it.⁶

The political debate was more or less launched at the end of 2002, when former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing departed from all political correctness and firmly rejected Turkey's claim to join the European family: '[i]ts capital city is not in Europe, 95% of its population lives outside Europe, it is not a European country'.⁷ As a professed federalist who had done much to promote European integration when he was a Minister of Finance and later President of the Republic, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing foresaw the demise of the Union with the accession of Turkey: '[t]hose who have promoted most the enlargement towards Turkey are the adversaries of

⁵ Interview with Pierre Lellouche, Representative, UMP, September 2008.

⁶ Interview with Thierry Oberlé, Journalist, *Le Figaro*, September 2008.

⁷ 'Pour ou contre l'adhésion de la Turquie à l'Union européenne', *Le Monde*, 9 November 2002, http://www.lemonde.fr/web/imprimer_element/0,40-0@2-3210,50-297386,0.html.

the European Union', he claimed. In other words, he thought that EU institutions could not adapt to Turkey's membership – though, ironically enough, as a consequence of enlargement they were being revamped by the Convention he was presiding.⁸ The timing of the declaration was not innocent: it took place a few weeks before the December 2002 Copenhagen summit, when the European Council turned to the question of opening accession negotiations with Turkey.

The referendum on the European Constitutional Treaty in May 2005 and the presidential election two years later punctuated the debate. In May 2005, the French rejected the European Constitutional Treaty: though set apart from two summit meetings during which Turkey progressed on its way to Europe – the Brussels European Council in December 2004 where the decision was taken to start negotiating with Turkey on October 3rd 2005, and that very date of October 2005 – and though the question of Turkey's accession did not loom prominently in the constitutional debates, some advocates of the “No” camp instrumentalized the Turkey question to further their aims regarding the Constitutional Treaty. On the extreme right, Philippe de Villiers (*Mouvement pour la France*) for instance said “No to Turkey in Europe” and, on the extreme left, by a bizarre twist, Olivier Besancenot (*Ligue communiste révolutionnaire*, of Trotzkyist allegiance) put Turkey back on the forefront while asserting that its “No” was not anti-Turkish but rather internationalist. Eventually about 35% of the French who rejected the Constitutional Treaty meant to oppose Turkey's accession to the EU.⁹ A year later, during the presidential campaign, it was Sarkozy's turn to instrumentalize the Turkish question by asserting his opposition to Ankara's membership on the grounds that it is part of Asia Minor.

While no French president so far, neither Jacques Chirac who advocated Turkey's entry, nor Nicolas Sarkozy who opposed it,¹⁰ bothered to spell out the pros and cons of their stance and thus left the public uninformed, the ultimate decision was curiously enough handed over to the electorate. After Jacques Chirac had disastrously taken his decision at Helsinki without consulting or informing, he sought to regain credibility on the question by calling for a referendum, which he first mentioned in 2004, meaning by this

⁸ The “federalist argument” should not be dismissed easily however, as we shall see below.

⁹ Cautrès, B. and N. Monceau *La tentation du refus? Européens et Turcs face à l'adhésion de la Turquie à l'Union européenne*, Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, forthcoming.

¹⁰ In order to steal the show from his former mentor, as many suspect.

that his successors would have to consult the electors in due course. Criticized as it has been, this *lex turciae* underwent further twists: while the French constitution was revised in 2008, it was suggested that a referendum on further enlargement would only take place for those countries whose population represents over 5% of the overall European population – an indirect reference to Turkey, a formulation which was deemed unacceptable to many, especially in the Senate. The final wording was milder in so far as all future enlargements will be subjected to a referendum unless the Parliament refers the decision to the President, who may in turn decide to organize a parliamentary vote or ... a referendum. Yet convoluted as it was, the law could not hide a reference to Turkey. In the case of small countries, the decision would be devolved to the President who would refer to Parliament. In the case of Turkey, however, no actor will want to bear the responsibility of not having consulted the French population. The socialist candidate to the presidency, Ségolène Royal, had not expressed a different view on the matter in 2007.

This time, however, the parliamentary discussions hardly spilled over into the public sphere. In other words, the debate remained contained. After the presidential elections, Sarkozy quickly dropped demagoguery in favour of pragmatism. Some of his advisers, Jean-David Lévitte, diplomatic counselor at the Elysées Palace, Bernard Kouchner, a member of the socialist party whom the President chose as his Foreign Minister,¹¹ Jean-Pierre Jouyet, secretary of state for European affairs, or Pierre Lellouche, a representative from Sarkozy's UMP well-versed in foreign and security policy, may all have contributed to smoothen the President's approach. In any case, all made fairly quickly a trip to Ankara and helped retain or regain some sympathy in the Turkish capital. The President did not try to halt the ongoing negotiations between the Commission and the Turkish government and a solution was found: the chapters that have been opened could either lead to membership or to a deeper form of association of Turkey with the EU, but in no case to membership alone – again a rather convoluted solution as if the French could not come up with anything else than convoluted solutions when it comes to Turkey! Most important however, some of the damage already done may have been repaired. As one outsider put it: '[i]f Erdoğan came to Paris on July 13, 2008 to attend the opening conference

¹¹ Though, technically, it is the Prime Minister who decides upon the Cabinet.

on the Union for the Mediterranean, he certainly did so because he had been offered some guarantees'.¹²

2. The Intricacies of the French Political Landscape: An Armenian Vote?

This extremely unsatisfactory chain of events underlines or hides a number of French specificities. The first is the enormous power of decision that the French president holds, one way or another: Jacques Chirac stood behind Turkey – only to hide later behind a referendum; Nicolas Sarkozy denied Turkey's Europeanness – while benefiting from the existence of the referendum. None actually ever made the case. Here lies the second specificity: the lack of information and communication is appalling. No French politician has really bothered to address in detail the pros and cons of Turkey's membership or lack thereof. Declarations were made, in favour of Turkey's accession or against it, but they have been mostly pithy, biased and truncated. One of the very few who has had the merit of exposing at length the difficult case of Turkey is Michel Rocard, a prominent member of the Socialist Party and a member of the Ahtisaari Commission on Turkey. In his recent book *Oui à la Turquie*, Rocard discusses the path that Turkish reformers have covered so far and the reforms which still remain to be done, the vibrancy of Turkish civil society and the sclerosis of the deep state, the intricacies of inner-Turkish battles, the difficulties the Union will encounter and the enormous gains it may reap from having Turkey as a member.¹³ The book, one must add however, has not had much echo. This gigantic failure of communication is linked to a lack of leadership, which has been equally gigantic. As some analysts have underlined, Michel Rocard has nothing to lose: as a former Prime Minister and a member of the European Parliament, he tries to influence French opinion from the sidelines. Most other politicians have preferred either to go with the wind of the "No", which has blown since the early years of this century, or to stay silent.

In this climate, a very small minority has been able to exercise disproportionate influence, exerting in some cases an enormous pressure on politicians only too eager to catch their votes – and this is the third specificity of the French political landscape: the power of the small French community of Armenian origin. This community is probably as large as the Turkish

¹² Interview with Dominique Rreynié, Professor of Political Science, September 2008.

¹³ Rocard, M. (2008) *Oui à la Turquie*, Paris, Hachette.

community in France: both may encompass roughly 400,000 people.¹⁴ Both communities cannot be treated in the same way however in so far as the Turks, who have migrated to France in the past decades, often do not hold a French passport, whereas those of Armenian descent are French, born French on French soil, whose parents or grandparents escaped the genocide and found refuge in France. The French of Armenian origin are often doubly integrated: not only are they French citizens but they often are extremely well-integrated and as such are over-represented in the political, social and intellectual arenas in France.¹⁵ The Turks instead are an “invisible community” without noticeable figureheads, as opposed to Germany.

The ties of the French of Armenian origin to the political parties are twofold. First, ties were established between Dashnak, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation in exile and left-wing parties, such as the Communist Party and the former SFIO and later the Socialist Party, the PS. These well-established ties created an intimacy between the French left and the French of Armenian origin. Second, French of Armenian origin have settled in a relatively small number of constituencies, around Paris, Lyon or Marseille as well as in the Rhône valley. Though limited in number, they are well-organized, articulate and vocal, even though it is by no means possible to speak of *an* Armenian community, coming as the population is from different countries at different periods of time, and diverse as it is. In the same way one cannot speak of *an* Armenian vote, but rather of the plurality of Armenian votes. Indeed, the French of Armenian origin weigh-in on the policy of their mayors or of their representatives: according to one of these representatives, 200 families determine the policy of a 14,000 constituency. When the first socialist president of the Fifth Republic, François Mitterrand, was elected in 1981, his government encompassed a number of ministers who, through this twin network, had very close ties with the Armenian community. In 1984, François Mitterrand went so far as to recognize the Armenian genocide in Vienne – a city in the Rhône valley by stating: ‘it is not possible to erase the mark of the genocide which struck you’. In the following years, conservative parties emulated the socialists in order to capture some of these votes. As Michel Marian underlines, while the French of Armenian origin had pre-

¹⁴ This is difficult to tell as the French do not take ethnic backgrounds into consideration.

¹⁵ To quote Michel Marian, from whom I borrow much information on this question. *Interview with Michel Marian*, Ministry for Education and Research, Member of the Comité de Rédaction of Esprit, September 2008.

viously bet on the unrealistic request of a renegotiation of the post World War I Treaty of Sèvres, which was subsumed by the subsequent Lausanne Treaty, by the 1960s their demands started focusing on the recognition of the genocide and the fight against its negation, in a context of renewed awareness of the Jewish Holocaust in a number of countries, the advances in international law and Turkey's candidacy, which they deemed inadmissible in the current situation.¹⁶ In France, they exercised their influence in order to have two laws adopted, one with success, the other still-born, at the time Turkey's EU membership was coming under scrutiny. The first law was adopted by the French Parliament in 2001 to recognize the genocide committed by the Ottoman Empire against its Armenian population. Five years later, in 2006, the French representatives made a step further and forbade the negation of the genocide, reproducing another French law which condemns the negation of the Jewish Holocaust.¹⁷ For the Senators, this was a bridge too far and this law was never put to vote in the Senate. While it did not serve the purpose it was meant for, this still-born law certainly did some collateral damage to French interests: in any case, Paris managed to find a niche between a rock and a hard place, possibly irritating both the AKP government and Kemalists in so far as the position of the French President has upset the government while the criminalization of negationism upset the Kemalists. The laws also damaged the incipient debate on the genocide in Turkey itself as well as the relations between Turks of Turkish origin and Turks of Armenian descent.

3. Turkey's Advocates: Mute or Active? Mute and Active?

On the whole, the political debate seems to have been heavily skewed by those politicians who seek to defend limited short-term interests at the expense of long-term national interests. As one shrewd observer of Franco-Turkish relations puts it, musing over the question of having a third country, Turkey, enter the French constitution: 'domestic considerations overtake geostrategic and economic interests'.¹⁸ As a result, the advocates of Turkey's membership have allowed themselves to be pushed aside. Here there is some similarity between Turkey's case and the fate of the EU in

¹⁶ As the criticism of Bernard Lewis in the United States, or Gilles Veinstein in France, underlines. *Interview with Michel Marian*, op.cit.

¹⁷ The draft was introduced by members of the Socialist Party and voted by a majority of socialists and conservatives.

¹⁸ *Interview with Hervé Magro*, Direction internationale, Groupama, September 2008.

France: such is the power of the “No” that politicians hardly have the heart to fight a losing battle. Actually the parallel between the way the EU fares among the French and the way Turkey is being perceived by them is far from accidental: Turkey’s candidacy is inevitably being perceived or examined through the lens of the EU, through the very passions and analyses which permeate the European debate or are applied to it.

Behind or beneath the French political discourse or the absence thereof, the question of Turkey’s candidacy is being raised in a number of newspapers, fora and blogs, conversations and debates, which approach it with arguments that certainly deserve attention.

3.1 *The Churches*

Catholics and Protestants alike put a premium on religious freedom beyond any other consideration. Though the Catholic hierarchy has not deemed it necessary to take an official position on what is dubbed as a political question in a country, France, where the separation of Church and State is primary,¹⁹ religious freedom is for a number of thoughtful Catholics the epitome of fundamental freedoms and should be respected. Whereas religious freedom had not been taken into consideration by some earlier reports and declarations on Turkey, it was later included as a key signal of Turkey’s progress towards democracy, notably at the insistence of the Church. As long as religious freedoms of all, Catholics, Jews, Chaldeens, Alevis etc., is not respected, Turkey cannot be considered as a full-fledged democracy, they argued. The paltry situation of some communities and congregations and the assassination of Catholic priests and Evangelical converts in recent years has stirred unease. Some even go a step further and argue that Turkey cannot be considered as a secular country – *laïc* in the same sense France is: in France, both state and church are independent from one another whereas in Turkey only the state asserts its independence while dominating the Mosque.²⁰ However, religion itself and the Church in France is not expected to be an obstacle to Turkey’s membership, even though parts of the Catholic rank-and-file certainly harbour conservative xenophobes, who are hostile to the idea of opening up to a Muslim country. As Hyppolite Simon,

¹⁹ Cardinal Ratzinger was against Turkey’s EU membership while Benedict XVI is rather in favour.

²⁰ See de Charentenay, P. (2005) ‘La Turquie n’est pas un bon exemple’, *Le Monde*, 2 December, <http://www.turquieeuropeenne.eu/article921.html>.

Archbishop of Clermont-Ferrand and deputy-president of the Conference of the Bishops of France, underlines, 'to exclude Turkey would amount to give-up hope for Turkish Christians to ever live in a democracy'.²¹

Similar thoughts are expressed by Protestants: even though not enthused by the Turkish brand of *laïcité*, the newspaper *Réforme* has argued in favour of Turkey's membership in order to avoid a clash of religions and civilizations. As Jean-Luc Mouton, its executive editor puts it: [t]he European West is not a Christian West, Europe does not belong to judeo-christianity [...].²² Yet this stance was met by an uproar among some of its readership. In any case, Protestants may be more active in their rapprochement with the Muslim world than the Catholics are – I come back here to my own formulation which is a little different – for having fought in favour of *laïcité*, i.e., of the decoupling of the French state and the Catholic faith.²³

3.2 Trade Unions

Trade unions have a very mixed approach of Turkey's EU membership. The CGT (*Confédération Générale du Travail* - General Confederation of Labour), close to the Communist Party, advocates Turkey's membership in a subdued way. On the one hand, it espouses the policy of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), which advocates Turkey's entry in the EU on the ground that it will help to overcome a possible cleavage between the European continent and the Muslim world, provided that full-fledged democracy takes root in Turkey. Though it might have objected to Turkey's membership on the grounds that it could trigger a possible influx of migrant labour, both ETUC and CGT discard this argument or fear. They stress that 'Turkish migration is behind us': those Turks who wanted to work in Europe are already there and no further immigration from Turkey is to be expected, with the exception of illegal migration transiting Turkey from neighbouring countries, which will be easier to control once Turkey joins the EU.²⁴ On the other hand, the CGT has never subscribed to Turkey's membership or to further enlargement of the EU in any of its official doc-

²¹ See for example 'Note d'information de Mgr Simon, Archevêque de Clermont, Vice-Président de la COMECE'. See also *Interview with Mgr Simon*, Archevêque de Clermont, Vice-Président de la COMECE, September 2008.

²² *Interview with Jean-Luc Mouton*, Executive Editor of *Réforme*, September 2008.

²³ In France for instance, Protestants are lending temples and prayer rooms to Muslims.

²⁴ Decaillon, J. (2004) (Secretary General of the ETUC) 'L'Europe des droits fondamentaux passe par Ankara', *La Nouvelle Vie Ouvrière*, 17 December, http://www.cgt.fr/IMG/pdf_1104832770.pdf.

uments, congress platforms, etc. The pressure from below apparently calls for caution, be it an opposition to further enlargement, be it a strong feminist and secularist movement – including a tradition of free masonry. It is not the first time that grassroots and leadership are at odds within unions: in the early years 2000, the CGT was torn between those who did not deem it necessary to pass a law forbidding girls to wear a veil in school while the leadership did. Later, in 2005, the leadership's opposition to the European Constitutional Treaty was not accepted by all.

Practically however, the CGT is an active promoter of rapprochement between Turkish and French workers. At EU level, a project involving four Turkish trade unions as well as the trade unions of seven EU member states, including France, has been launched by the European TU to overcome prejudices through encounters and discussions in seminars and conferences held in Turkey and in Europe.²⁵ Another trade union, the FNSEA (Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants Agricoles, National Federation of the Farmers' Trade Unions) is not primarily concerned with Turkey's accession, at least in the short term though in the long term it will be a major challenge, being a huge and poor country, specialized in products that will directly compete with French products. As a representative of the FNSEA underlines, French agriculture will be safeguarded only in so far as all the *acquis* will have been taken over by the Turkish authorities.

3.3 Business

The business world is certainly most favourable to Turkey's EU membership. French industries, and more recently services, have been massively investing in Turkey for a number of years. France is second in terms of investment stocks, major companies are present with roughly 300 subsidiaries which provide 65,000 jobs and the automobile industry represents an important part of it. Renault for instance has been present on the ground for five decades.²⁶ Relations between French business leaders and their Turkish counterparts or between French business and Turkish politicians

²⁵ The project is entitled 'Civil society dialogue: bringing together workers from Turkey and the European Union through a shared culture of work'. The first conference was held in Ankara on 21-22 October 2008.

²⁶ Such as Accor, Air France, Alcatel, Arcelor, Axa, Carrefour, Citroën, Danone, Darty, L'Oréal, Lafarge, Michelin, Peugeot, Renault, Saint-Gobain, Schneider, Sodexo and Total.

have been fruitful. For French companies, Turkey's EU membership is a truism: "Turkey is already in Europe". The Customs Union smoothed the way, ties are extremely close. In a way one might wonder what Turkey's EU membership would add to the current situation. Yet equally clear in the minds of French business, while Turkey has progressed on the way to reforms, membership would entrench Turkish democracy and strengthen stability and hence the security of investments. In other words, it would offer the best guarantee of all. Some businessmen and women have clearly advocated Turkey's membership. Key examples include Louis Schweitzer, when he was president of Renault, at the time the main foreign investor in Turkey, or Laurence Parisot, president of the MEDEF (*Mouvement des Entreprises de France*, Confederation of France's companies), in particular when she hosted her counterpart, Arzuhan Doğan Yalçındağ, President of Tüsiad.²⁷

French business may have tempered recent governmental policy and contributed to more pragmatism – though it could not avoid incurring the wrath of Turkish officials after the adoption of the law criminalizing the negation of the Armenian genocide: according to several estimates, about €5 to €8 billion of contracts were lost, *Gaz de France* was evicted from Nabucco, the gas pipeline which should be built across Turkey – however not all companies suffered. French companies are also active in contributing to a rapprochement between Turkey and France, just as the trade unions are doing. A *Saison de la Turquie* will start next year – after the elections of the European Parliament in order to avoid undesirable interferences. Years or seasons are decided by the French President, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and embassies to promote the culture and knowledge of a particular country in France. The *Année de l'Arménie* took place from September 2006 till July 2007. The *Saison de la Turquie* was put forth by the previous government and is being funded by a committee of patrons, including the biggest investors in Turkey under the leadership of Henri de Castries, the President of Axa's directory.

²⁷ Schweitzer, L. (2003) 'Le rattachement à l'Union me paraît une étape naturelle et nécessaire', interview with *Les Echos*, 24 November, <http://archives.lesechos.fr/archives/2003/LesEchos/19037-57-ECH.htm>. See also MEDEF-TÜS?AD – *Déclaration commune*, Istanbul, 22 February, http://www.medef.fr/site/core.php?pag_id=106715.

4. Facing Reality: A Federal Union or Marcus Aurelius' Foot?

Trade unions and companies are stepping in the vacuum left by the political class, fulfilling two tasks in one: they aim to provide information and explanations – as government and political parties forgot to inform the French and to form public opinion – and they aim at fostering a rapprochement between Turks and French – against the prejudices which ignorance has nurtured. The trick meanwhile is not to hide the difficult questions that Turkey's candidacy is posing for the EU. At this point it is worthwhile examining both public opinion and the opinions of a number of intellectuals. Though very different in their approach, they all address one major question which remains so far unanswered: what will Turkey bring to the EU?

Without information and explanation, French public opinion pondered the purpose of a further enlargement at a time when the arrival of ten/twelve new members was not easily understandable. To that extent, the Turks are paying the check left unpaid by others: they are paying – we are paying – the price of an enlargement process which seems endless and hence whose purpose escapes reason. Some politicians ruthlessly play with this reality, evoking the borders with Iraq in order to dismiss Turkish membership. Others, politicians or intellectuals, underline the necessity to include Turkey to stabilize the Middle East. None address the deep fears of people who feel they are losing their bearings. Enlargement took place and is taking place alongside globalization. The EU should provide a framework to live and to come to terms with both globalization and enlargement but it does not – and this is the reason why a majority of French rejected the Constitutional Treaty, for lack of familiarity with it, and this is the reason why they are rejecting Turkey. As one parliamentarian puts it: 'we did not know how to sell Europe and here we are, coming up with Turkey'.²⁸ Clinging to a framework that might be or should be familiar, a majority of French reject Turkey, as the "other", the odd man out, grasping at the easiest explanation to underline the difference: Islam – and identity.²⁹ Thus the question of Turkish membership is being framed in essentialist terms. As Dominique Reynié aptly puts it, the second enlargement – to the South –

²⁸ *Interview with Richard Mallié*, Representative, UMP, September 2008.

²⁹ Other easy explanations such as Turkey being the Trojan horse of the US do not appear to resonate much amongst the public.

was about agriculture, the fourth one – to the East – was about money, the next one will be about identity.³⁰

Intellectuals have similar questions, though put in a more sophisticated way. A number of them still call for a federal union, in which case Turkey might alter the balance. All the geostrategic advantages that Turkey might bring in, would not be enough to counterbalance, let alone eliminate, the threat it poses to the construction of a federation. Those who are realistic enough to recognize that the federalist dream has vanished, still consider that Turkey owes an explanation to the EU: what is Turkey's European vision? As Philippe Perchoc underlines, when two get married, it is because they share a project, regretting as he is that Turkey is not explicit about its project.³¹ Certainly for fear of diluting the Union and for the sake of its capacity to act, a number of intellectuals call for a – relatively – small Europe while Turkey would find its space in the Middle East, a space where it is increasingly putting its imprint.

Against this backdrop, what can be done? Recommendations are twofold. On the one hand, more should be done to inform the French on Turkish realities. Certainly the task is enormous. Turkey is difficult to understand, the complexity of the stakes and of the battles between left and right, between secularists and Muslims, between conservatives and reformers, the vibrancy of its society, the role of women and the rise of NGOs, all this escapes the man on the street in France. Newspapers in France publish very little on Turkey. As several interlocutors put it including politicians, trade unionists and intellectuals, the average knowledge on Turkey is paltry: the bazaar of Istanbul, cheap beaches and veiled women. It is not certain that more knowledge will turn the French into advocates of Turkey's entry. Yet at the very least, prejudices might disappear. In order to inform and form French opinion, such initiatives as the societal dialogue put forth by the European trade unions and the *Saison de la Turquie* that the political establishment and the business world promote, are going in the right direction. More is required. What about Turkish culture, its creative cinema, its jazz, or, as Gaïzd Minassian recalls: "Marcus Aurelius' foot", which was recently recovered in Turkey: 'We forgot to put culture at the forefront'.³² On the other hand, Turks themselves should furbish their political argu-

³⁰ Interview with Dominique Reynié, op.cit.

³¹ Interview with Philippe Perchoc, Founder and President of Nouvelle Europe, September 2008.

³² Interview with Gaïzd Minassian, Political Scientist, September 2008.

mentation. So far Turkish authorities have mostly pleaded their case in geostrategic and geoeconomic terms. For most of the French, for all those who do not think in strategic terms, the argumentation falls short: what is required is to think about the cultural and political gains that Europe could reap – a Europe where unity and a certain kind of togetherness count.

List of personalities interviewed

Yves Bur: Representative, UMP.

Pierre de Charentenay: Editor, *Etudes*, a monthly journal published by the Jesuits.

Jean-François Courbe: CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail), Euromediterranean activities.

Haydar Demiryurek: President, CCMTF (Comité de Coordination des Musulmans Turcs de France).

Amiral Jean Dufourcq: Director of Studies, Ecole Militaire.

Riva Kastoryano: Sociologist.

Mariannick Le Bris: CGT, Central and Eastern Europe.

Pierre Lellouche: Representative, UMP.

Hervé Magro: Direction internationale, Groupama.

Richard Mallié: Representative, UMP.

Michel Marian: Ministry for Education and Research; Member of the Comité de Rédaction of *Esprit*, a monthly journal founded by Emmanuel Mounier.

Joël Meyer: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in charge of the Mediterranean countries.

Gaïzd Minassian: Political Scientist.

Jean-Louis Mouton: Editor, *Réforme*, a journal published by the Protestant community.

Marie-Christine Naillod: CGT, Europe/International.

Thierry Oberlé: Journalist, *Le Figaro*, a conservative newspaper.

Philippe Perchoc: Founder and President of *Nouvelle Europe*, a junior think tank on wider Europe.

Dominique Reynié: Professor of Political Science, specialized on European public opinion.

Christian Rivet de Sabatier: Directeur Risques et Financements Internationaux, Renault.

Monseigneur Hyppolite Simon: Deputy president, Bishops' Conference, France.

Claude Soudé: FNSEA (Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants Agricoles), deputy-director, agricultural policies.

7. WAIT-AND-SEE. ATTITUDES OF GERMAN STAKEHOLDERS TOWARDS EU-TURKEY RELATIONS

*Barbara Lippert**

1. Introduction

In Germany the discourse on EU-Turkey relations is multifaceted and complex with regard to the issues dealt with and the stakeholders involved. Generally one should differentiate between two sets of stakeholders. First, a relatively small group of experts within political parties, non-state organizations and the media who ground their pluralistic positions on Turkey in a deep knowledge of and reflection on Turkey's relations with Europe and Germany. Second, a public debate on Turkey that evolves with its own logic and dynamic and is dominated by daily and domestic policy issues and general political attitudes.

As far as the discourse of experts is concerned, foreign and security policy related motives strongly shape attitudes and perceptions. Their debate is also driven by the stakeholders' preferences and positions on European integration in general and on enlargement in particular. They touch upon broader questions like concepts of Europe (in terms of geography, culture, history) and the finalité of the European Union. Increasingly identity-related questions weigh in on both experts' and public discourse. They deal with

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the relation between state and church, the compatibility of political Islam with liberal democracy and the rule of law, aspects of majority/minority cultures (*deutsche Leitkultur*) and experiences with the integration of more than two million Turks living in Germany. Thus, domestic policy and value-based concerns are important shaping factors. Attitudes towards Turkey – its state and people – are not exclusively defined in terms of EU-Turkey relations. The Turkish-German relationship stands out because of the size of Turkish population in Germany, the degree of economic interdependence, as well as friendly historical ties especially in the realms of science and military cooperation.¹ However, today these questions are superseded by the importance of the EU membership issue, which is the crucial one (*Gretchenfrage*) when identifying positions of key stakeholders vis-à-vis Turkey.

2. Political Parties

2.1 *Geostrategic and Security Arguments: Pro-Membership*

Perceptions and motives linked to security policy and Turkey's NATO membership and anchorage to the West have always been key in understanding Germany's relationship with Turkey. For security and strategic reasons Germany has constantly taken a special interest in a politically and economically stable Turkey. Based on a bi-partisan consensus, every German government has strongly supported Ankara's overall orientation towards the West and the EU. They advocated for association (1963) and later for Turkey's inclusion in the EU customs union (1995). With the end of the Cold War, this stance has persisted, adapting itself to the new power constellations in international politics and the new dynamics of the European Union.

Today "Berlin" perceives Turkey increasingly as an active regional power with strong links to countries that are crucial to Europe's security and welfare. Hot spots like Iraq, Iran and the Southern Caucasus, energy rich Central Asia and the conflict-ridden Middle East all lie in Turkey's neigh-

¹ Kramer speaks of Germany as Turkey's preferred and special partner during the Cold War years. See Kramer, H. (2008) 'Die Türkische Republik und Europa', in M. Reinkowski (ed.) *Die Türkei und Europa. Eine wechselhafte Beziehungsgeschichte*, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, pp. 103-180, p. 141.

bourhood and are priority concerns in Ankara's foreign policy. Specific emphasis is put on Turkey as an energy transit hub with high significance for the EU's energy security, this perceived significance might even increase when the US withdraws from Iraq considering its huge oil and gas fields in the North.² Within the foreign and security policy elite in Germany the widespread perception is that the EU and Turkey's interests basically converge or concur, despite the fact that different geographical locations imply that Turkey prioritizes and pursues at times slightly different interests vis-à-vis individual neighbouring countries. Security policy is thus an important argument in favour of integrating Turkey into the EU rather than regarding it as a buffer zone in between the EU and what is perceived as an arch of crisis stretching from Turkey to Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. EU membership is also endorsed on the grounds that excluding Turkey would imply allowing Ankara to act as a "loose canon" in the region.

These strategic arguments in favour of Turkey's EU membership are naturally stressed by the foreign and security community and transatlantic camps in all parties, with the exception of the Left,³ a party that is widely anti-NATO and opposes transatlanticism as well as any EU defence policy. Turkey's potential as a regional player with strong connections with the Muslim world, the Black Sea, the Caucasus and Central Asia is now generally regarded as a strong pro in arguments about Turkey's accession. The positive experience of the summer of 2008 when Turkey engaged actively in the diplomatic activities of the EU and Germany to manage the Georgian-Russian conflict adds a new facet to Turkey's image and its soft power capacities in particular.

However, this novelty is unlikely to spill-over from expert debates to the public writ large. In so far as geostrategic arguments are not terribly well understood by the German wider public, representatives of the foreign and security community have attempted to sell the slogan: "Turkey's membership would act as a bridge to the Muslim world". The "bridge metaphor" mingles foreign policy with domestic societal aspects surrounding the Turkey question. The formula appeals to those who hold realist assumptions in terms of regional balances and argue that Turkey strength-

² See Martens, M. (2008) 'Transitraum für Energie', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 July.

³ The Left party (Die Linke) was founded in June 2007. It is a merger of the "Labour and Social Justice – the Electoral Alternative" originating in Western Germany/North Rhine Westphalia in 2005 and the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), i.e. the successor party of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), the communist state party of the former GDR.

ens the relative “power” of the “West”. It likewise appeals to others who think in terms of liberal internationalism with Germany and the EU as civilian post-national powers that project their norms and values to third countries. This argument resonates particularly well within the SPD⁴ and the Green Party but also in the FDP.⁵ Hence, Foreign Minister Steinmeier (SPD) has repeatedly claimed that Turkey, if committed to European values, will become an important bridge to other Muslim states.⁶ Claudia Roth, one of the leaders of the Green Party, stated that ‘Turkey can serve as living proof that Islam and democracy are not incompatible. That would be a bright signal throughout the wider Middle East’.⁷ In this context, the SPD and the Greens also highlight the transformative power of the EU in inducing the democratization and modernization of Turkey that can only become effective when connected to a credible EU perspective.⁸ Atlanticists and the foreign and security community as well as the Foreign Office establishment form a stable alliance in favour of Turkey’s membership. This outlook gains momentum with current political and public concerns over energy security, the need to improve relations with the Muslim world and the higher profile of German foreign policy in bilateral and multilateral frameworks, namely the EU. It remains however difficult to calculate the impact of these arguments on the overall political debate for the reasons explicated below.

2.2 Constraints Linked to Domestic Politics, Immigration and Identity

When turning from foreign to domestic politics, Turkey’s membership is discussed in the context of immigration and migrant integration, thus touching upon policy fields like education, social policy and internal security, especially after 9/11. The growing fear of “Islam” dominates many discussions and works against framing Turkey’s EU membership predominantly as a question of foreign or EU policy. In this context we also note the long-standing neuralgic issues in German-Turkish relations, such as the free

⁴ Social Democratic Party.

⁵ Free Democratic Party.

⁶ See speech by Foreign Minister F.-W. Steinmeier at the SPD party congress in Hamburg, 28 October 2007, <http://parteitag.spd.de/servlet/PB/menu/1731440/index.html>.

⁷ See Roth, C. (2007) ‘Turkey’s Future Course: A European Perspective’, opening address at the conference *The Evolution of U.S.-Turkish Relations in a Transatlantic Context*, Washington DC, 26 March, <http://www.claudia-roth.de/themen/europa>.

⁸ See The Greens (2005) *Election programme 2005*, p. 120, http://www.gruene.de/cms/default/dokbin/141/141550.wahlprogramm_2005.pdf.

movement of workers (following the end of the recruitment agreement in 1973) and the German governments' distancing from a clear support for Turkey's EU membership.⁹

Thus, membership negotiations proceed on the background of severe deficits and problems of integrating Turks into German society. Reaching 2.4 million in number they constitute the largest group of migrants in Germany and count for more than 50% of the overall Turkish population inside the EU. Today the third generation of Turks is living in Germany. As part of German society, their below average level of formal education, poor language skills, relatively high rates of unemployment, high levels of male juvenile delinquency and the tendencies to maintain parallel societies with rules and norms of their own are significant.¹⁰ 72% of Turks between 15 and 65 years are without certified vocational qualification.¹¹ By and large also the PISA survey, a comparative study of the educational standards of OECD countries, confirms that children with migrant backgrounds display poorer cognitive capacities and obtain significantly lower educational results than their peers with two German parents – notwithstanding the fact that they received their entire schooling in Germany.¹²

All parties accept that these are imminent problems, irrespective of the disagreement regarding the underlying reasons, causes and responsibilities for past negligence and failures. Recently, at the Länder and federal levels as well as municipalities, special efforts were taken to integrate migrants, namely Turks. Two integration summits in 2006 and 2007 illustrate that migrant integration is now considered as a political priority. Efforts are

⁹ See Weick, C. T. (2001) *Die schwierige Balance. Kontinuitäten und Brüche deutscher Türkei politik*, Münster etc., Lit Verlag; for an overview see Kramer, H. (2007) 'Türkei', in Schmidt, S., G. Hellmann and R. Wolf (eds.) *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*, Wiesbaden, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 482-493.

¹⁰ See Halm, D. and M. Sauer (2006) 'Parallelgesellschaft und ethnische Schichtung', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, Nos. 1-2, pp. 18-24, <http://www.bpb.de/files/AQ6PWB.pdf>; Kramer, H. (2008) op.cit., p. 151.

¹¹ See Speech of Minister of State Maria Böhmer (2008) *Integration braucht faire Bildungschancen*, official speech at the Carl Bertelsmann Prize 2008 award ceremony in Gütersloh, 4 September, http://www.bundesregierung.de/nn_56546/Content/DE/Rede/2008/09/2008-09-04-boehmer-carl-bertelsmann-preis.html.

¹² Baumert, J. et al. (2003) *PISA 2000 - Ein differenzierter Blick auf die Länder der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Zusammenfassung zentraler Befunde*, Berlin, Max-Planck-Institut für Bildungsforschung, pp. 51-57, http://www.mpib-berlin.mpg.de/pisa/PISA-E_Vertief_Zusammenfassung.pdf.

mostly targeted at improving education and professional training in general and language skills, in particular with the intended consequence of better migrant integration into the labour market. A spouse who wants to settle in Germany needs to pass a simple language test before entering. Integration via citizenship is encouraged by a new law on citizenship that was introduced by the red-green government in 2000.¹³ Recently it was made obligatory to pass a multiple choice naturalization test covering aspects of German history and culture (literature, the arts), provisions of the German basic law (constitution), etc.¹⁴

The general trend is towards a more systematic and comprehensive approach with clearer demands on immigrants. While political parties including the formerly reticent CDU¹⁵ now accept the reality of Germany being a country of immigration (*Einwanderungsland*), they are also more inclined to spell out concrete measures on immigration and integration which are contested by political parties as well as interested NGOs.¹⁶

Moreover, in September 2006 Minister of the Interior Schäuble (CDU) called in a “German Islam Conference” (DIK) for regular high-level ‘inter-cultural dialogue between the German state and Muslims in Germany’ who account for 3 to 3.4 million.¹⁷ The DIK aims at improving religious and social integration of the Muslim population and fostering an environment of religious tolerance.¹⁸ ‘The conference is based on an understanding of integration which recognizes cultural and religious differences while requiring the complete acceptance of Germany’s liberal democracy’.¹⁹ The German state is not a secular state in the rigorous way France is, but adopts

¹³ This law entails elements of the principle of “birthright citizenship” (*ius soli*), making it possible for children born to non-German parents to acquire German citizenship.

¹⁴ See Federal Office for Migration and Refugees’ information about the naturalization test, http://www.integration-in-deutschland.de/cln_101/nn_282952/SubSites/Integration/EN/02_Zuwanderer/_Home-Teaser/InfoEinbuengerungstest_Zuw.html.

¹⁵ Christian Democratic Union of Germany and its Bavarian sister party the Christian Social Union (CSU).

¹⁶ See Federal Minister of the Interior’s overview of federal policy on integration, http://www.bmi.bund.de/cln_028/nn_957292/Internet/Content/Themen/Auslaender_Fluechtlinge_Asyl_Zuwanderung/Integration/Ueberblick_Integrationspolitik_en.html.

¹⁷ According to the Federal Ministry of the Interior 2.5 million are Sunnis, 200,000 Shiites and 500,000 Alevis. Besides Turkey, other countries of origin are Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iran, Morocco, Afghanistan and others.

¹⁸ Federal Ministry of the Interior information about the German Conference on Islam,, http://www.bmi.bund.de/cln_012/nn_1026714/Internet/Content/Themen/Deutsche_Islam_Konferenz/DatenUndFakten/Islamkonferenz_Kurzinfo_en.html.

¹⁹ Ibid.

a 'positive neutrality'.²⁰ This concept is represented in the DIK, which includes all three levels of government – federal, regional (Länder), municipalities/local – alongside five umbrella organizations of Muslims in Germany and ten personalities from diverse backgrounds. Given the strong institutionalization and “quasi-corporatist” relationship between the German state and the Catholic and Protestant churches and also the Central Council of Jews in Germany, a corporation under public law, this pattern does not go to the advantage of the highly underorganized Muslim community.²¹ In the context of EU-Turkey relations two points are worth noting. First, for the first time a governmental forum – the DIK – addresses head-on questions regarding the fit/misfit of Muslim, secular or Christian-oriented behaviour with “German ways of life”.²² Second, the DIK was initiated to engage in a dialogue with Muslims on the backdrop of radical political Islam spreading in Europe and can be regarded as preventive diplomatic security measure.²³

The Greens, and to some extent also the SPD, have long linked their support for Turkey’s EU membership to a positive concept of modern multicultural societies in Germany and the EU. This concept values diversity and counts on the strengths of democracy, mutual tolerance and other universalist norms. It is highly compatible with the construction of a rights- and norms-based post-national EU as outlined by Ruiz-Jimenez and Torreblanca.²⁴ On the contrary, the Christian Democrats, who also place values and identity high on the agenda, use these arguments to question Turkey’s EU accession, referring to the questioned compatibility between Islam and Christianity and the practical implications for coexistence; the expected massive immigration of Turks into Germany as their traditionally

²⁰ Böckenförde, E. W. (2007) *Der säkularisierte Staat. Sein Charakter, seine Rechtfertigung und seine Probleme im 21. Jahrhundert*, München, Carl Friedrich von Siemens Stiftung.

²¹ Only 15% of Muslims in Germany are organized in one of the five organizations.

²² Working groups deal with following: 1- The German social system and value consensus; 2- Religious issues and the German understanding of the Constitutional order; 3- Media and the private sector as bridge; 4- Security and Islamism.

²³ Islamists of Turkish origin use Germany as a platform to operate and plan terrorist activities and support al-Qaeda. It is estimated that there are currently about 33,000 persons (among them 28,000 Turks) with “Islamist potential” in Germany. See Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (2007) *Verfassungsschutzbericht 2007*, p. 186, http://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/publikationen/verfassungsschutzbericht/vsbericht_2007.

²⁴ Ruiz-Jimenez, A.M. and J.I. Torreblanca (2007) ‘European Public Opinion and Turkey’s Accession. Making sense of arguments for and against’, *EPIN Working Paper*, No. 16, May, http://www.epin.org/new/files/EPIN_WP16_RuizJimenez_Torreblanca.pdf.

preferred EU country;²⁵ the potential influx of (illegal) migrants from the Middle East through Turkey; and security risks from political Islam finding shelter and support in the Muslim/Turkish community in Germany. These are all concerns that reflect public opinion. Eurobarometer (Spring 2008) shows that 63% of the German population are against Turkey's accession.²⁶ Older surveys that asked more detailed questions find that only 22% think that having Turkey as a EU member country would increase security in the region. Furthermore, the survey reveals that 78% of Germans are afraid of increased immigration of Turks into more developed member states.²⁷ The CDU/CSU also (rightly) suspects that domestic policy concerns – that refer to the lack of a “we feeling” between Turks and Germans and the fear of social decline and exclusion (*Sozialängste*) – are latent also within party-members and voters of the SPD and The Left. They compete with Turks for cheap housing, low and unskilled jobs and for social security transfers. Competitors with the Turkish community go beyond the “*precarariat*”²⁸ social class, and includes potential losers and unsettled middle classes. So far the mainstream parties have avoided making a connection between migrant integration and Turkish membership, and have also resisted the temptation to base their arguments on enlargement in general on these concerns. With the probable exception of the Left,²⁹ all parties in the Bundestag fear a populist instrumentalization of more critical and open declarations and debates. Thus they all share a rather low key approach to a public debate on the Turkey question.

2.3 Constraints Linked to Positions on Enlargement and EU Integration

All political parties support the renewed EU consensus on enlargement centred on the “three C”, i.e. consolidation, conditionality and communica-

²⁵ Further immigration is expected given Turkey's demographic growth, its young population and the severe economic and social disparities inside Turkey.

²⁶ Eurobarometer (2008) *Eurobarometer 69 - National Report: Germany*, Spring, p. 42, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb69/eb69_de_nat.pdf.

²⁷ Eurobarometer (2006) *Eurobarometer 66*, Autumn, p. 226, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb66/eb66_en.pdf.

²⁸ This sociological term gained wider public attention after the publication of the study *Gesellschaft im Reformprozess* by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in 2006, http://www.fes.de/inhalt/Dokumente/061017_Gesellschaft_im_Reformprozess_komplett.pdf.

²⁹ In a 2005 election campaign speech, the current chairman of the Left Party, Oscar Lafontaine, warned of ‘alien workers’ (*Fremdarbeiter*, a term which bears a Nazi connotation) stealing work from Germans.

tion.³⁰ Generally, a slower pace of future enlargement is expected, based on strict conditionality, i.e. the complete fulfilment of all membership criteria, a lesson from “premature” 2007 accessions of Bulgaria and Romania.³¹ All parties support the European perspective for the Western Balkans within a timeframe of 15-20 years³² and Croatia is singled out as the next likely member that could join as early as two to three years.³³

Turkey’s membership instead is mostly seen as a special and very controversial case. Most sceptic arguments refer to the fiscal (EU budget), institutional (Turkey’s weight in institutions, implications for efficiency and legitimacy) and social (free movement) costs of Turkey’s accession. These costs are either expected to outweigh the benefits or to be accommodated only within the context of an innovative and large-scale EU reform process. The Christian Democrats as the traditional pro-integrationist party in Germany with a distinct federalist background raise these issues, sometimes for tactical reasons but consistent with their overall approach to European integration. Integrationists inside the SPD and the FDP share these concerns but often avoid to express them publicly. Many of them believe that the EU will be creative and courageous enough to control and manage the problems through transitions periods and other instruments. They prefer not to start a cost-benefit discussion today also because the scenario is full of

³⁰ See speech by Chancellor Angela Merkel, chairwoman of the CDU, on the CDU Party Convention, Dresden, 27 November 2006, http://www.dresden2006.cdu.de/download/061127_parteitag_rede_merkel.pdf; CSU (2007) *Grundsatzprogramm der CSU: Chancen für alle!*, http://www.csu.de/partei/unsere_partei/grundsatzprogramm/; SPD (2007) *Hamburg Programme - Principal guidelines of the Social Democratic Party of Germany*, <http://parteitag.spd.de/servlet/PB/show/1734195/Hamburger%20Programm%20engl.pdf>; FDP (2005) *Arbeit hat Vorfahrt*, <http://files.liberal.de/fdp-wahlprogramm.pdf>; Alliance 90/ The Greens Parliamentary Group (2007) *Seizing Europe’s Opportunities. Driving the EU forward with vim: Green expectations on Germany’s EU Council Presidency*, <http://www.gruenebundestag.de/cms/publikationen/dok/164/164769.html>.

³¹ See Silberhorn, T. (2007) ‘Minutes of the Bundestag, 16th electoral term, 123rd session’, 8 November, p. 12874.

³² See speech by Chancellor Angela Merkel at the SEECP Summit in Zagreb, 11 May 2007, http://www.bundesregierung.de/nn_6566/Content/EN/Reden/2007/05/2007-05-11-rede-merkel-zagreb.html. See also press release by Foreign Minister Steinmeier, *Bindungen zwischen Serbien und der EU stärken*, 5 July 2007, http://www.auswaertigesamt.de/diplo/de/Infoservice/Presse/Meldungen/2007/07070_5-BMserbAM.html.

³³ See Schäfer, A. (2007) ‘Minutes of the Bundestag, 16th electoral term, 123rd session’, 8 November 2007, p. 12870. See also Resolution of the 20th party convention of the CDU (2006), *Deutschlands Verantwortung und Interessen in Europa und der Welt wahrnehmen*, p. 4, http://www.dresden2006.cdu.de/download/Beschluss_A_End.pdf.

unknowns regarding the state of the EU and of Turkey in 2020/2025 rendering futile and contested the results of any such impact studies. Experience from previous rounds of enlargement show that in economic terms accession is a win-win situation for old and new members alike. But benefits are distributed unevenly and real or imagined losers cannot be ignored by political parties. Interestingly for former Chancellor Schröder (SPD) German economic interests in Turkey were relevant reasons for supporting Turkey's EU candidacy and later on for his support for opening of negotiations, economic reasons are shared particularly by the FDP and the Greens. However, economic arguments are only rarely put forward in favour of Turkish membership within party discourses as well as the wider public.

Other critics and sceptics refer to the limits of the EU's integration capacity. They argue that Turkey's membership will endanger the Union's political ambitions³⁴ and as such positions regarding the EU's finalité become part and parcel of the debate on Turkey. Some critics challenge the EU's official working hypothesis that Turkey's membership is compatible with the EU political criteria. They refer to Turkish history, culture and religion that generates a political culture that cannot be twinned with EU membership obligations. In short, the subtext underlying many of these reservations is "too poor, too big, too different"³⁵ to become an EU member. Besides the solid anti-Turkish membership majority in public opinion, the constellation of the grand coalition is also a reason why political parties agree to keep silent on the issue for the time being.

The lowest common denominator shared by all parties represented in the national parliament is that the EU, and thus the German government, must

³⁴ See European Parliament (2008) *European Parliament resolution of 10 July 2008 on the Commission's 2007 enlargement strategy paper*, P6_TA(2008)0363, 10 July, point 6: '[The European Parliament] recalls that integration capacity is linked to the EU's ability at a given point in time to decide on and thus to achieve its political objectives, in particular the aims of promoting economic and social progress and a high level of employment in its Member States, of asserting its identity and its ability to act on the international scene', <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2008-0363&language=EN&ring=A6-2008-0266>.

³⁵ Cf. similarly Kramer, H. (2008) op.cit., p. 170 and Hughes, K. (2004) 'Turkey and the European Union: Just another Enlargement? Exploring the Implication of Turkish Accession', *Friends of Europe Working Paper*, June, p. 1, <http://www.friendsofeurope.org/Portals/6/Documents/Reports/Turkey%20and%20the%20European%20Union%20-%20Working%20Paper%20%20FoE.pdf>.

stand by its commitment. This state of affairs is confirmed in the 2005 coalition agreement³⁶ between CDU/CSU and the SPD. The red-green government that came into office at the end of 1998 changed the German position on EU-Turkey relations. It actively (see the Schröder/Ecevit exchange of letters in 1999) supported Turkey's candidacy as agreed at the European Council in Helsinki in December 1999. Schröder/Fischer wanted to stop the discrimination (in the eyes of Turkey on religious or cultural grounds) of Turkey, the only applicant that had not been granted candidate status at the time. However, equal treatment of Turkey did not mean that the government campaigned for a swift opening of accession negotiations but rather for the EU's fair treatment with regard to Turkey's efforts to meet the membership criteria, thus throwing the ball back into Turkey's court.³⁷ Hence the preferences of the respective party leaderships diverge on key issues and are reflected in their respective party programmes and key policy documents. The CDU and CSU favour a vaguely defined "privileged partnership"; the CDU even declares its preference for a privileged partnership in its 2007 Party Manifesto strongly pushed for by the federate CDU party basis.³⁸ Therefore, the Christian Democrats only half-heartedly support the ongoing negotiations and the CSU in particular uses every incident to call for a suspension or halt of negotiations, as for example the controversial speech by Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan on assimilation in Germany in February 2008.³⁹ CSU parliamentary spokesperson for foreign relations, Karl-

³⁶ SPD and CDU coalition agreement (2005) *Working together for Germany – With courage and compassion*, Berlin, 11 November, p. 123-124. The carefully worded paragraph says that negotiations are an 'opened process which does not imply any automaticity and whose outcome cannot be guaranteed at the outset. This poses a particular economic, demographic and cultural challenge... Should the EU not have the capacity to absorb Turkey, or should Turkey not be able to comply completely and in full with all of the commitments which membership entails, Turkey must be linked to the European structures as closely as possible and in a way that further develops its privileged relationship with the EU.', http://www.fesdc.org/documents/Koalitionsvertrag2005_engl.pdf.

³⁷ Minister of State Ludger Volmer (Foreign Ministry) explained the U-turn of the red green government and argued that a special second class waiting room for Turkey is incompatible with EU and German interests. Volmer, L. (2000) 'Vor einer neuen Türkeipolitik? Die deutsche Außenpolitik vor einer möglichen EU-Mitgliedschaft der Türkei', *Zeitschrift für Türkeistudien*, No. 1, pp. 95-102, p. 95; Kramer (2008) op. cit, pp. 165-167.

³⁸ CDU (2007) 'Freedom and Security. Principles for Germany', *Party Manifesto*, 4 December, p. 61, http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_13533-544-2-30.pdf. See also Hickmann, C. et al. (2007) 'Basis rebelliert gegen Türkei-Politik der CDU', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 1 November, p. 5, <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/deutschland/artikel/830/140532/>.

³⁹ See 'Söder fordert einfrieren der Beitrittsverhandlungen', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 15 February 2008, p. 2.

Theodor zu Guttenberg considers Turkey to be inapt for accession – even in the long term. He mentions divergences over Cyprus, Ankara’s obstructive position on ESDP (“Berlin plus”), and the domestic political situation in Turkey as reasons to stop negotiations and re-orient them towards a privileged partnership. The Turkish “invasion of Northern Iraq” in early 2008 was also seen by zu Guttenberg as an international affront and a reason to stop accession talks.⁴⁰ Hence politicians from the CDU frequently refer to the Declaration of Norderstedt of 2000, in which the party excluded the possibility of Turkey’s EU membership and has argued in favour of a privileged partnership ever since.⁴¹ This concept has, however, remained quite diffuse and seems dated considering the depth of existing EU-Turkey relations. One of the few detailed proposals for the content of a “privileged partnership” comes from zu Guttenberg (CSU). In an extensive analysis he outlines options for institutional cooperation, possible concessions regarding the four freedoms (visa facilitation, trade and services, and capital movements), and fields of acquis harmonization (e.g. competition, agriculture).⁴² The other parties are not against alternative solutions but they argue, that it is only Turkey that can accept anything below membership given the EU’s commitments already made. The SPD and the Greens⁴³ see alternatives to membership only as a fall-back solution. The FDP falls somewhere in between. The Liberals seem more inclined to actively explore alternatives while accession negotiations continue.⁴⁴ The Left instead supports negotiations without taking explicit views on alternatives.⁴⁵

The *pacta sunt servanda* position is framed as a question of “political credibility” (SPD) and continuity of German foreign and European policy (see

⁴⁰ zu Guttenberg, K. T. (2007) *Beitrittsreife der Türkei nicht ansatzweise erkennbar*, http://www.zuguttenberg.de/pdf/artikel_270.pdf, and zu Guttenberg, K.-T. (2008) *Invasion in den Nord-Irak offenbart: Türkische EU-Mitgliedschaft unvereinbar mit dem Aufbau europäischer Sicherheitsstrukturen*, http://www.zuguttenberg.de/pdf/artikel_315.pdf.

⁴¹ Bundesvorstand der CDU (2000) *Norderstedter Erklärung, Programmatische Offensive für Deutschland*, p. 10, http://www.kas.de/upload/themen/programmatische_offensive_fur_deutschland/2000_Norderstedter-Erklaerung.pdf.

⁴² zu Guttenberg, K.-T. (2004) ‘Die Beziehungen zwischen der Türkei und der EU – eine Privilegierte Partnerschaft’, *Hanns Seidel Stiftung Aktuelle Analysen*, No. 33, http://www.hss.de/downloads/aa33_internet.pdf.

⁴³ See SPD (2007) op.cit., p. 30. See also Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (2002) *Die Zukunft ist grün*, p. 152, http://www.gruene.de/cms/files/dokbin/68/68425.grundsatzprogramm_die_zukunft_ist_gruen.pdf.

⁴⁴ FDP (2005) op.cit., p. 46.

⁴⁵ Linkspartei.PDS (2005) *Wahlprogramm zu den Bundestagswahlen 2005*, p. 120, <http://die.linke.de/fileadmin/download/wahlen/bundestagswahlprogramm2005.pdf>.

FDP and the Foreign Office establishment).⁴⁶ Also the CDU/CSU presents its contradictory position on Turkey (personified in the views of Chancellor and party leader Merkel) as a case of continuity. In this way the Christian Democrats hope to redirect smoothly negotiations with Turkey, avoiding the impression of a U-turn or break with past politics.

When asking well informed and open-minded politicians and experts in and around mainstream parties about the medium term perspective of EU-Turkey relations one gets a sense of their striving for a nuanced, balanced and process-oriented approach with no clear end in sight. No one fervently advocates membership, few trust that membership understood as full membership will happen. The general line is “keep on negotiating, with setbacks and very long timeframes in order to bring negotiations in tune with the internal state of the Union”. While nobody imagines that Turkey can be a “perfect member”,⁴⁷ membership is not excluded especially considering that the EU may become more internally diversified and foresee for Turkey flexible and innovative solutions like permanent safeguard clauses, long transition periods and sectoral opt-outs. An EU heading for a looser Union of concentric circles with different intensities of integration and different sets of institutions and procedures will increase its integration capacity, however at the price of giving up the concept of full membership as commonly understood. Ideas on partial membership on the basis of opt-ins are discussed as an interim stage, in particular in the area of foreign and security policy. Although these discussions seem to be more of a *fuite en avant* than a genuine strategic orientation, they do show how Turkey might become a turning point in enlargement policy and a possible radical reshaping of the EU.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Speech by Foreign Minister F. W. Steinmeier at the SPD party congress in Hamburg, op.cit. See also Steinmeier, F. W. (2007) ‘EU Verhandlungen mit der Türkei geordnet fortsetzen’, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 27 June, p. 2; FDP (2007) *Westerwelle traf Gül - EU-Beitritt im Zentrum der Gespräch*, 30 May, http://www3.liberal.de/webcom/show_article.php?wc_c=567&wc_id=1574.

⁴⁷ Mayhew, A. (2000) ‘Enlargement of the European Union: An Analysis of the Negotiations with the Central and Eastern European Candidate Countries’, *Sussex European Institute Working Paper*, No. 39, p. 10, <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/wp39.pdf>.

⁴⁸ See Lippert, B. (2008) ‘Alternatives between Full Membership and Non-membership – Fata Morgana or Silver bullet?’, Paper for the conference on The EU and its Neighbours: In Search for New Forms of Partnership, Sounio, July 3-6, <http://www.eliamep.gr/eliamep/files/Lippert-Alternatives-between-Full-Membership-and-Non-membership.pdf>; Lippert, B. (2005) ‘Die Türkei als Sonderfall und Wendepunkt der klassischen EU-Erweiterungspolitik’, *Integration*, No. 2, pp. 33-49, http://www.iep-berlin.de/fileadmin/website/09_Publikationen/integration_2005/Lippert_01.pdf.

While the German political elite is sceptical or agnostic with regard to membership, it passionately insists on securing Turkey as a partner who is strongly linked to the EU and steadily anchored in the West. Any spectacular failure in accession negotiations would not only damage the EU but also have severe repercussions on German domestic politics and bilateral German-Turkish relations. The state of reflection and debate shows an “intellectual wait and see” approach that seems typical and appropriate for the period of grand coalition intent on downplaying expected dilemmas. However, playing for time and hoping for the best without developing an exit option means that at some point in future, i.e., when 34 chapters will be closed, the German government in office will have to decide either to veto or to agree to Turkey’s membership. The CDU/CSU that seems to have the most inconsistent position on the matter believes that current developments play into their hands. Enlargement fatigue in other member states, clear anti-Turkey positions in Austria and France, and the slower pace of future enlargement will prevent Germany from standing alone on the issue. However, enlargement pressures from Eastern Europe, as well as from Ukraine and Georgia, hint that this confidence might be ill-conceived and falsified soon.

2.4 Developments in Turkey - Mixed Signals

In this context of diverging views, all parties critically follow and scrutinize Turkey’s reform process. They acknowledge the domestic reforms that have been carried out since 2002 and the strong German critiques of Turkey’s human and minority rights record in the 1980s have given way to more nuanced position that takes into account relative progress in recent years. Foremost those in the SPD, the Green party and the FDP, which are supportive of membership negotiations, hold up the standards of the Council of Europe and the EU in the area of human rights, gender and the treatment of the Kurdish minority. The CDU/CSU is particularly interested in the rights of non-Muslim minorities, especially Christians. All parties were concerned about the new law on foundations in Turkey especially given that German foundations affiliated with the CDU (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung), the SPD (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung), and the Greens (Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung) all have offices in Turkey and are actively engaged in communication with parties, media and opinion-makers in both Turkey and Germany. The perception of political parties with regard to Turkish domestic developments will probably follow assessments in other member states and the reporting of the Commission.

Many Christian Democrats are now relaxed. They think that the AKP and Turkish citizens realize that they need more time to modernize and might even become more selective in their approach to the EU and eventually take into consideration alternatives to membership. Within all parties profound sceptics but also supporters of Turkey's membership are less concerned with Turkey's *acquis* compliance, regarding this a question of time, Turkish political priorities and the economic performance of both Turkey and the EU. They are more concerned with the strong and what is deemed anachronistic sense of sovereignty, statehood and nation prevalent in Turkey. The role of military in Turkish politics and society is one case in point. Here the misfit with EU countries in terms of constitutional provisions as well as their anchorage in society and the public sphere is evident. This thinking of a former imperial power collides with the evolving post-modern design of the EU, its polity and policy-making. While this image of the EU is a construction linked to the question of the Union's political identity, it can work against Turkey's accession.

2.5 Assessment

Taken together, there is little debate and strategic thinking inside political parties on Turkey-EU relations that go beyond the current or next term of government. The cleavage over Turkey cuts across political parties. For the lifetime of the present grand coalition there is no need to take decisions that bear costs. Forward thinking would face all parties, with the possible exception of the Greens, with an inconsistent and ambivalent muddling through attitude that has characterized German politics on Turkey in the past.

Only geostrategic and security related arguments speak overwhelmingly in favour of Turkey's EU membership. Domestic policy concerns will constrain every German government in supporting clearly and openly Turkey's membership bid. The EU-related preferences of the political class regarding European integration are in flux. The younger generation of EU experts within political parties see traditional integrationist beliefs and the deepening/widening paradigm in particular as fading. They follow a very pragmatic line and want to open the EU to innovation and change, making the new EU also more compatible with future Turkish EU membership. On the whole, support for Turkey's membership is lukewarm at best and its biggest obstacle lies in the sphere of domestic politics.

3. Other Stakeholders

All stakeholders in the debate on EU-Turkey relations adopt a relatively low-key approach. Public debate reached its climax in 2004-2005 when the decision to open negotiations was on the agenda.⁴⁹ Thereafter the issue lost public attention and returned to the realm of experts.

3.1 Business Community – Consistently Pro

The business community can still be regarded as the strongest supporter of Turkey in Germany. Turkey ranks 17th in Germany's exports (€ 14.4 bn) and 20th in imports (€ 9.2 bn).⁵⁰ The overall trade volume was € 23.5 bn in 2006 and increased by 5.1% in 2007 reaching € 24.8 bn.⁵¹ Over the last decade, following the establishment of the customs union, German exports to Turkey more than tripled. The most important export branches are the automobile, chemical and machineries industries. Among others, companies such as MAN, Siemens, Bosch, Volkswagen and Daimler are particularly active in Turkey. For example, the market share of Volkswagen in the Turkish automobile sector ranges at about 9-10%. As far as investments are concerned, currently more than 2,600 German firms permanently operate in Turkey.⁵² Since 1980, the stock of German FDI reached more than USD 5.2 bn, and Germany now accounts for 17% of annual FDI inflows to Turkey.⁵³ Germany is the top foreign investor in Turkey, in 2007 FDI tripled and reached USD 1 bn. Important direct investors in Turkey are the German Metro Group, and retailers like the Bauhaus, Tchibo and C&A. Also the liberalization of the Turkish energy market is very attractive for German business, as evidence for example the electric utility RWE joining the Nabucco consortium. German business perceives Turkey as a strategic

⁴⁹ Wimmel, A. (2005) 'Transnationale Diskurse in der europäischen Medienöffentlichkeit: Die Debatte zum EU-Beitritt der Türkei', *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, Vol. 46, No. 3, pp. 459-483, available as *TranState Working Paper* No. 29, <http://andreaswimmel.files.wordpress.com/2008/03/wimmel-2005-sfb-wp.pdf>.

⁵⁰ Mostly textiles, agricultural products, automobile supplies. The import/export figures apply for 2006.

⁵¹ Statistisches Bundesamt: Außenhandelsatlas – Türkei, <http://ims.destatis.de/aussenhandel/Default.aspx>.

⁵² BDI (2007) 'Türkei: Wachstumsmarkt in strategisch interessanter Lage', *Außenwirtschafts-Report Special*, http://www.bdi-online.de/Dokumente/Europapolitik/070405_Einlageblatt_Tuerkei.pdf.

⁵³ BDI (2007) 'EU Kandidat Türkei: Wirtschaft, Wirtschaftsbeziehungen und EU-Verhandlungen', *BDI-Drucksache*, No. 377, <http://www.bdi-online.de/Dokumente/Europapolitik/Tuerkbrosch.pdf>.

market for both the Middle East and Europe.⁵⁴ The EU membership perspective is regarded as an important factor for improved business and investment conditions. Thus, utilitarian arguments are dominant: seeking stability and predictability, German business has an interest in uninterrupted and smooth membership negotiations. The Federation of German Industries (BDI) claims a clear and credible European perspective for Turkey, and would welcome membership in the European Economic Area (EEA) as an interim solution. However, the German business community is relatively silent as far as political reform and critical developments in Turkey are concerned. As Arend Oetker, Vice President of the BDI, points out, the BDI wishes for accession negotiations to continue even in times of political crisis.⁵⁵ However, in spite of its strong economic interests in Turkey's membership, the BDI does not raise its voice in public debate. Business relations are highly institutionalized and flanked by an active economic policy of the German government and the Länder.

In contrast to this low-key approach, BDI's Turkish counterpart, the Turkish Industrialists' and Business Association (TÜSIAD), is very active in Germany. It initiated a public relations campaign: "Traditionally European. Turkey. Initiative Modern Turkey". In a supplement brochure of the high quality (conservative) daily newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, TÜSIAD published testimonials from ten prominent stakeholders in the EU-Turkey debate in Germany featuring the key German arguments in favour of membership. As elder statesman Walter Scheel (FDP, Foreign Minister 1969-1974, President of the Federal Republic of Germany 1974-1979) explains: '[m]embership of Turkey is a logical continuation of a success story'; acting politician/EU official Günter Verheugen (SPD, Member of the European Commission since 1999, Commissioner for Enlargement 1999-2004) points out: '[t]he big economic potential of Turkey will strengthen Europe' and Franz Müntefering (Chairman SPD, Minister for Labour and Social Affairs and Vice Chancellor 2005-2007) envisages: '[f]or

⁵⁴ Bundesagentur für Außenwirtschaft (2008) *Branche kompakt - Kfz-Industrie und Kfz-Teile. Türkei*, <https://www.bfai.de/DE/Content/bfai-online-news/2008/10/medien/b2-tuerkei-branche-kfz-2008,templateId=raw,property=publicationFile.pdf/b2-tuerkei-branche-kfz-2008?show=true>.

⁵⁵ Speech by Arend Oetker (2007), Vice President of the Federation of German Industries, German Turkish Business Summit, Hanover, 16 April, http://www.bdi-online.de/Dokumente/Europapolitik/GTBS_einfuehrung_oetker.pdf. See also BDI (2007) 'Türkei ...', op. cit.

a strong Europe friends must become partners'; female politicians with Turkish backgrounds, Emine Demirbüken-Wegener (CDU, member of the Berlin state parliament), Lale Akgün (SPD, member of the Bundestag) and Bilkay Öney (Greens, member of the Berlin state parliament) reassure: '[t]he overall direction is right'; finally, representatives from the business community and financial sector follow: Edzard Reuter (former CEO of Daimler-Benz AG) confesses: 'Turkey is my second home (*Heimat*)', Roland Berger (Chairman von Roland Berger Strategy Consultants) believes: 'Turkey is full of energy' and Norbert Walter (chief economist Deutsche Bank) expects that 'Turkey is the next economic miracle in Europe'. The apparent aim of this campaign was to emphasize what Germany and the EU can gain from Turkey's membership. Interestingly, representatives from trade unions, academia, culture/football, churches or media are missing in this campaign. Also, beyond the above mentioned politicians, "Turkish success stories" in other fields were not included. The target group was German opinion-makers, political and economic elites.

3.2 Trade Unions – Overall Positive

Publicly, trade unions (as represented by the DGB⁵⁶) take a strong interest in Turkey's political reform. They keep a special eye on the freedom of trade unions, gender, working conditions and social standards.⁵⁷ They generally support accession negotiations but insist on the fulfilment of membership conditions and the open-ended nature of negotiations. Traditional concerns in accession negotiations are wage dumping, job competition, equal pay, and control of migration flows. Impact studies will be scrutinized carefully by the unions. The DGB opposes the concept of a "privileged partnership" as it suspects this to imply a mere free trade agreement void of social standards and political norms.⁵⁸ The political impact of the DGB on public debate seems rather low however, given the trade union's preoccupation with other issues on their agenda. Especially since the opening of membership negotiations in 2005 the issue has lost its urgency for the

⁵⁶ German Confederation of Trade Unions.

⁵⁷ DGB webpage,

http://www.dgb.de/themen/europa/eu_erweiterung/eu_tuerkei/index_html.

⁵⁸ DGB press release (2004) *Die Türkei braucht eine europäische Perspektive*, 7 May, http://www.dgb.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/pmdb/pressemitteilung_single?pmid=2365; Alleweldt, K. and V. Roßocha (2004) *DGB – Diskussionspapier zur Beitrittsperspektive der Türkei zur Europäischen Union*,

http://www.dgb.de/themen/themen_a_z/abisz_doks/d/diskussionsp_tuerkei.pdf.

DGB, which rather passively awaits future developments. The DGB warns not to capitalize on the controversy over Turkish membership and rejects populist and anti-Islam sentiments.

3.3 *Turks in Germany – Solidarity*

The majority of Turks in Germany (2.4 million) most likely identifies with Turkey's ambition to join the EU and supports steps in this direction. They generally feel close to parties like the SPD or the Greens because they are perceived as backing this course. Although most Turks living in Germany hold conservative values, their party preferences go to the SPD and the Greens.⁵⁹ In a survey regarding the 2005 elections conducted by *Hürriyet*, the largest Turkish-daily in Germany, 77% of Turks entitled to vote in Germany would give their support to the SPD and only 5% to the CDU.⁶⁰ The Foundation Centre for Turkey Studies also found that the SPD is the most popular party among Turks, followed by the Greens.⁶¹

3.4 *Churches – Sensitive and Critical*

The Protestant and Catholic churches approach the issue of Turkey's EU membership from specific angles. In a concrete and narrow sense they focus on Turkey's fulfilment of conditions regarding freedom of religion, non-discrimination of non-Muslim communities, the treatment of other minorities (Kurds), and human rights in general.⁶² Moreover, the Protestant church also requires from the Turkish government a process of reconciliation with Armenians.⁶³ Rarely the churches engage in the debate over the institutional framework of future relations. However, the laymen organization of Catholics (*Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken*) by and large backs the CDU's official position, thus advocating a privileged part-

⁵⁹ Wüst, A. M. (2003) 'Das Wahlverhalten eingebürgerter Personen in Deutschland', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, No. 52, pp. 29-38, <http://www.bpb.de/files/SII7LE.pdf>.

⁶⁰ Reimann, A. (2008) 'Wie Koch und die CDU bei den Migranten landen könnten', *Spiegel Online*, 29 January, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,531717,00.html>.

⁶¹ Sauer, M. (ed.) (2007) *Perspektiven des Zusammenlebens: Die Integration türkischstämmiger Migrantinnen und Migranten in Nordrhein-Westfalen*, Essen, Stiftung Zentrum für Türkeistudien, <http://www.zft-online.de/UserFiles/File/NRW-Bericht%202006.pdf>.

⁶² Lehmann, K. (2007) *Pressebericht des Vorsitzenden der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, Karl Kardinal Lehmann, im Anschluss an die Herbst-Vollversammlung vom 24. bis 27. September, in Fulda*, 28 September, <http://www.dbk.de/aktuell/meldungen/01481/index.html#IV-1>.

⁶³ Huber, W. (2004) *Huber: EU-Beschluss zur Türkei weist in die richtige Richtung*, 18 December, http://www.ekd.de/aktuell_presse/news_2004_12_18_1_rv_tuerkei_beschluss.html.

nership.⁶⁴ Also the Protestant church is open-minded as far as alternatives to membership are concerned. High-ranking representatives explicitly refer to the option of a privileged partnership.⁶⁵ Both Christian churches are foremost concerned with the fulfilment of the political criteria and the situation in Turkey. However, they broaden the Commission's "accountant's approach" by raising fundamental and normative (philosophical, theological and spiritual) questions. Thus they inject a specific dimension into the discourse and frame it as a part of their overall debate on and with Islam, ranging from the right to convert to another religion to theological differences in the conception of god and the challenge of religious fundamentalism. Moreover, the churches also account for problems in citizens' everyday life, namely integration, religious education, the headscarf issue, etc. The Protestant church published a comprehensive piece with the programmatic title "Clarity and Good Neighbourliness. Christians and Muslims in Germany",⁶⁶ which addresses tensions in the relationship and pleads for dialogue between religions that acknowledge diversity.

The influence of the Catholic and Protestant churches on public discourse is not negligible. Two thirds of Germans are affiliated with the Roman Catholic or Protestant churches and thus likely to at least hear their views.⁶⁷ Moreover, they are strongly institutionalized (through the Central Committee of German Catholics, the German Bishops' Conference and the Evangelical Church in Germany) and enjoy regular exchange and ties especially with the

⁶⁴ Zentralkomitee Deutscher Katholiken (2005) *CDU und ZdK lehnen Berliner LER-Pläne ab*, 14 April, <http://www.zdk.de/pressemeldungen/meldung.php?id=272>.

⁶⁵ Speech of Bishop Wolfgang Huber (2005) *Religionsfreiheit und Toleranz - Wie aktuell ist der Augsburger Religionsfriede?*, 22 September, http://www.ekd.de/vortraege/050923_huber_religionsfriede.html.

⁶⁶ Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (2006) 'Klarheit und gute Nachbarschaft. Christen und Muslime in Deutschland', *EKD-Texte*, No. 86, http://www.ekd.de/download/ekd_texte_86.pdf; see also speech of Bishop Wolfgang Huber (2007) *Dialog der Religionen in einer pluralen Gesellschaft – Überlegungen aus evangelischer Perspektive – Rede anlässlich der Verleihung der Ehrenmedaille des EAK zum Gedenken an Hermann Ehlers*, 16 June 2007, http://www.ekd.de/vortraege/huber/070616_huber_eak.html.

⁶⁷ While a recent study by the Bertelsmann Foundation found that the majority of Germans consider themselves religious, affiliation with the churches is on constant decline. E.g., only 31% of Germans are member of the Catholic church, in the Länder of the former GDR the average is at 6%. See Deutsche Bischofskonferenz, *Zahlen und Fakten*, http://www.dbk.de/zahlen_fakten/statistik/index.html. See also Bertelsmann Foundation (2007) 'Deutschland, (k)ein Land der Gottlosen', <http://www.heute.de/ZDFheute/download/0,6741,7001890,00.pdf>.

Christian Democratic Party but also with the SPD. With prominent personalities such as Protestant Bishop Wolfgang Huber (SPD) and cardinals Lehmann and Meisner, the churches also gain constant media attention.⁶⁸ This is somewhat reinforced by the current papacy of the German Joseph Ratzinger. Before his papacy, Ratzinger was a clear opponent of Turkish membership.⁶⁹ His alleged change of opinion during a journey to Turkey in August 2007 was revoked by the Vatican and was probably only a tribute to his troubled relations with the Muslim world after the Regensburg speech.⁷⁰ Overall, the Catholic and Protestant churches belong more to the sceptic and critical stakeholders in the debate on Turkey's membership.

3.5 *Academia and Other Opinion-Makers – Divided*

Also prominent representatives of the academic world, mostly from university departments of history, sociology, philosophy and political science from time to time contribute to the public debate on Turkey's relations with the EU. The spectre of positions is well presented in a book edited by Claus Leggewie⁷¹ covering key aspects of the relationship like Europe's identity, democracy and religion, economy and human rights, historical development of the debate in Germany as well as geopolitics. The academic debate often mirrors the prefer-

⁶⁸ See for example 'Bischöfe stellen Forderungen an Türkei', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 27 September 2003,

<http://www.faz.net/s/RubFC06D389EE76479E9E76425072B196C3/Doc-E2053B3C0E4EF42CDAEF0C8B89EAAAABD5~ATpl~Ecommon~Scontent.html>; Huber, W. (2006) 'Religion im 21. Jahrhundert. Glaube und Vernunft', *FAZ.net*, 31 October, <http://www.faz.net/s/RubBF7CD2794CEC4B87B47C719A68C59339/Doc-E596A7F190C45474888EE866EC632BA47~ATpl~Ecommon~Scontent.html>; Deckers, D. and P. Schidler (2007) 'Kardinal Lehmann: Islam rechtlich nicht gleichstellen', *FAZ.net*, 21 July, <http://www.faz.net/s/RubC4DEC11C008142959199A04A6FD8EC44/Doc-EA71D9FA3370A4D538FB7C31C6956D6E6~ATpl~Ecommon~Scontent.html>.

⁶⁹ See Fischer, H. J. (2004) 'Die Mauern des Vatikans. Skeptische Zurückhaltung gegenüber einem EU-Beitritt der Türkei', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 16 December; Speech of Pope Benedict XVI (2006) at the University of Regensburg, 12 September, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html; Österreichischer Rundfunk (2004) *Ratzinger: Türkischer EU-Beitritt wäre ein großer Fehler*, 21 September, http://religion.orf.at/projekt02/news/0409/ne040921_rattinger_fr.htm.

⁷⁰ See 'Dialog mit dem Islam', *Zeit Online*, 30 August 2007, <http://www.zeit.de/online/2006/48/Papst-Erdogan>. See also 'Türkei fordert vom Papst eine Entschuldigung', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14 September 2006, <http://www.faz.net/s/RubFC06D389EE76479E9E76425072B196C3/Doc-E7DE28A3C4B5B4A049AF94A3FBBE2F45E~ATpl~Ecommon~Scontent.html>.

⁷¹ Leggewie, C. (ed.) (2004) *Die Türkei und Europa. Die Positionen*, Frankfurt/Main, Suhrkamp.

ences and ambiguities that we know from the political debate. Opinion-makers and also academics often adopt an explicit advocacy (pro or contra) position, which they address at length through culturalist arguments that give evidence of a Eurocentric and nation-based historic outlook.⁷² A confrontation of pro and counter arguments shows that at a certain level of reflection, good and convincing arguments can be found on both sides, so that it is not a question of right or wrong. However, most agree that finally a political decision has to be taken in the course of a continuous weighing of the arguments.

3.6 Media – Mostly Bad News

It is very difficult to judge the impact of the media on the debate on EU-Turkey relations. In terms of the quality press, reports are generally well-informed and comments are balanced, pluralist and mostly in line with the general political (party) orientations of the respective papers. According to Wimmel, the opinion editorials in the more conservative, and CDU-close newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* consistently argue against Turkish membership focusing on issues related to European culture, identity, heritage and history. However as a reader one gets a more pluralistic view and balanced information from this conservative paper. Wimmel also finds that the politically more liberal/leftist paper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* refutes culturalist arguments and argues for or against EU membership based on the future development of the Union and utilitarian cost-benefit calculations.⁷³ The tabloid press instead tends to capitalize on local and other imminent conflicts and problems (in particular with regard to the Turkish population in Germany, building of new mosques, drug dealing, honour killings) that emerge. Hence, often bad news dominates. Sometimes the “Turkish dimension” of more general problems (e.g., religious symbols in the public sphere, religious education in schools etc.) provokes debates about issues where the social consensus is withering away.⁷⁴

⁷² Kramer, H. (2008) op. cit, p. 179.

⁷³ Wimmel, A. (2006) ‘Beyond the Bosphorus? Comparing German, French and British Discourses on Turkey’s Application to Join the European Union’, *Reihe Politikwissenschaft/Political Science Series*, No. 111, http://www.ihs.ac.at/publications/pol/pw_111.pdf. His analysis is based on newspaper articles in several leading European newspapers published between 1 October and 31 December 2002.

⁷⁴ Özalan, R. (2007) *Das Türkeibild in den deutschen Medien*, <http://www.marketing-boerse.de/News/details/Das-Tuerkeibild-in-den-deutschen-Medien/5145>. See also Freudenberger, M. (2008) *Das Türkeibild der deutschen Presse. Wie Tageszeitungen konstruieren*, Saarbrücken, VDM Verlag.

In general, several studies conclude that the German media paints a rather one-sided image of Turkey and the Muslim world. Public TV stations, ARD and ZDF, tend to culturalize political issues, i.e. repeatedly reporting about Turkish EU accession in the context of Islam.⁷⁵ Media coverage is often based on repeating controversial positions on Turkey's EU accession and neglecting factual information on the actual situation in Turkey.⁷⁶ Thus one might say, that the Turkish image has suffered from 9/11 and its aftermath in so far as Turks are increasingly associated as part of an "Islamic threat".

4. Public Opinion – Widely Negative

German public opinion was non-enthusiastic of the recent rounds of enlargement. While in 2003, according to Eurobarometer, there was a relative majority of 42% of Germans supporting enlargement with 39% against it, acceptance sharply declined subsequently with only 28% in favour and 56% against in the spring 2004 survey.⁷⁷ Public opinion had hardly changed in the run-up to the 2007 enlargement round with 30% in favour of future accessions and 64% against.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, there was a strong feeling that the new member states belong to Europe and are part of the European family. According to the Special Eurobarometer of July 2006, 66% of Germans agreed with the statement: "[e]nlargement is a good way to reunite the European continent."⁷⁹ This feeling of belonging is shared less with Turkey. Every year millions of Germans spend their holidays in Turkey. This kind of tourism which reached its peak in 2007 with 4.15 million, however, does not generate a "we-feeling".

According to a survey by Emnid in February 2008, 66% were against Turkish membership and only 26% in favour (2004: 54/40%; 2002:

⁷⁵ See Hafez, K. and Richter, C. (2007) 'Das Islambild von ARD und ZDF', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, Nos. 26-27, pp. 40-46, <http://www.bpb.de/files/GB72LS.pdf>.

⁷⁶ See Gür, G. (2005) 'Das Türkei bild der deutschen Presse', *Bürger im Staat*, No. 3, pp. 122-129, http://www.buergerimstaat.de/3_05/eu_tuerkei.pdf.

⁷⁷ Eurobarometer (2003) *Eurobarometer 59*, Spring, p. 20, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb59/eb59_rapport_final_en.pdf; Eurobarometer (2004) *Eurobarometer 61*, Spring, p.93, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb61/eb61_en.pdf.

⁷⁸ Eurobarometer (2007) *Eurobarometer 64*, Spring, p. 406, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb64/eb64_en.pdf.

⁷⁹ Eurobarometer (2006) *Special Eurobarometer 255: Attitudes towards European Union Enlargement*, July, p. 22 and, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_255_en.pdf.

48/43%).⁸⁰ These findings are in line with the results of the 2007 Transatlantic Trends Survey whereby 16% of Germans consider Turkish EU membership a good thing against 43% considering it a bad thing.⁸¹ In 2008 76% of German respondents thought that Turkey is not part of the West.⁸² Hence Turkey is widely seen as special case. Combined with a general feeling of enlargement fatigue, public opinion must be regarded as a major constraint for pro-Turkish membership strategies. The majority of Germans hold sceptical or outright negative positions on the question and this constitutes a real obstacle for parties in government to address the question openly. We have little empirical information on why citizens hold negative attitudes. If one wants to influence public opinion or respond to it through a Communication Strategy more information is necessary. Recent research comes to the following tentative findings:⁸³ citizens' attitudes are quite stable and only loosely correlated with the position represented by their preferred party. They relate to concepts of Europe's borders in terms of history and culture. Expected repercussions of Turkish membership are a priority concern (immigration, budgetary costs).⁸⁴ Public opinion seems not to buy the security policy arguments of the pro camp but tends to expect more turmoil. This is reflected in the Eurobarometer survey of 2006, which shows that only 22% of Germans expect any security gain from Turkey's accession.⁸⁵

As of fall 2004, voters of the Greens were the most favourable to Turkey's accession (72% pro), 64% pro among supporters of the SPD and amongst CDU voters still 45% in favour. Geographical factors (East – West Germany) does not yield significant differences, whereas gender differences do, with women being more sceptical (38% in favour, men 46% in favour),

⁸⁰ 'N24-Emnid-Umfrage: Immer mehr Deutsche lehnen EU-Beitritt der Türkei ab', *Presseportal.de*, 12 February 2008, <http://www.presseportal.de/meldung/1134911>.

⁸¹ German Marshall Fund (2007) *Transatlantic Trends 2007: Topline Data*, p. 10, http://www.transatlantictrends.org/trends/doc/TT07Topline_FINAL.pdf.

⁸² German Marshall Fund (2008) *Transatlantic Trends 2007: Key Findings*, p. 21, http://www.transatlantictrends.org/trends/doc/2008_English_Key.pdf.

⁸³ Schoen, H. (2008) 'Die Deutschen und die Türkeifrage: eine Analyse der Einstellungen zum Antrag der Türkei auf Mitgliedschaft in der Europäischen Union', *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, No. 1, pp. 68-91.

⁸⁴ For example, when asked whether in the next 10 years they will be affected by large flows of immigrants/refugees coming into their country, 74% of Germans consider it likely (2005: only 48%). Germany is well above the EU average here (66%) and above countries such as France (53%) and the Netherlands (55%). See German Marshall Fund (2007), *op. cit.*

⁸⁵ Eurobarometer (2006) *op.cit.*, p. 226.

possibly due to the issue of women's rights in Turkey and the role and appearance of female Turks in Germany. Generally, there is a positive correlation between education and pro-Turkish attitudes, with the more educated being more in favour of EU accession. As regards to age, the most in favour are those between 20 and 30 and more sceptical are young people and to a lesser degree the elderly.

Amongst those who express themselves in favour of accession, the most frequently voiced arguments are: Turkey belongs to Europe (34%) and Turkey is a bridge to the Islamic world (17%). Among opponents, the most frequently expressed arguments are that Turkey is not a state under the rule of law (27%), not a Christian country (25%), and does not belong to Europe (23%).⁸⁶ Their arguments boil down to the fact that "religion" or "Islam" are regarded as the key point. It is nearly impossible to deconstruct and rationalize these culturalist opinions. But it also seems naïve and politically risky to ignore this solid residuum of membership opponents.

In an analysis based on Eurobarometer data Ruiz-Jimenez/Torreblanca propose 'more arguing and less bargaining',⁸⁷ as the appropriate Communication Strategy. We have already pointed out that politicians confirm that it is far too early to enter into cost/benefit scenarios in concrete terms. However polls presented here have all shown that citizens expect rather negative impacts across the fields of security, welfare and political order of the EU and Germany. It is also evident that value-based motives (fear of Islam and "otherness") are dominant and cannot be ignored by a Communication Strategy. The proposal to frame Turkey's membership as a question of commitment to universal values and rules does not have a sufficient empirical basis amongst the German population, whose majority believes that Turks are not Europeans, even if they are deemed democrats, as one of the interviewed experts concluded.

5. Outlook

Among key stakeholders who influence the debate in a pro-Turkish membership direction three stand out: the foreign and security policy community across parties, the business community and Turks living in Germany or

⁸⁶ Mertes, M. (2005) 'Enorme Unterschiede. Aktuelle Demoskopie zum EU-Beitritt der Türkei', *Internationale Politik*, No. 1, p. 61-63.

⁸⁷ Ruiz-Jimenez, A.M. and J.I. Torreblanca (2007) *op.cit.*, p. 24.

German citizens of Turkish origin. Others, notably public opinion, hold more sceptical, ambivalent or negative opinions. It is difficult to identify a clear leadership among opinion-makers in either direction. Moreover, currently Turkish membership is not a salient issue but it constantly bears a high potential for politicization and emotional confrontation. Prime Minister Erdoğan's speech in Cologne in February 2008 and public reactions to his performance are a vivid example. For any government it will be difficult to talk about Turkey in Germany. This issue is inextricably linked to the difficulties of integrating Turks into German society, to the latent enlargement fatigue and the growing fear of Islam and xenophobia. If this context does not change, for example as a result of new external threats and new enemies that redefine Turkey as part of the "West", there is little chance for real change in attitudes towards Turkey's membership.

The current approach of the government – to balance geostrategic security motives in favour of Turkish membership with domestic and EU integration motives that work against membership – will reach its limits over the course of negotiations. Soon and foremost the "intellectual wait and see attitude" within the political class must give way to a better and more realistic understanding of the options and room for manoeuvre at national and EU levels. On the basis of such a revised strategy, political leadership can be built, accompanied by a "Talking Turkey" Communication Strategy.

8. UK STAKEHOLDERS IN THE EU-TURKEY DEBATE

Richard Whitman

1. The Profile of Turkey in the UK

The question of Turkish membership of the EU has a very low level of political and public saliency within the United Kingdom. The positive or negative effects of Turkey's EU membership are not widely debated by British politicians and debate that does take place is largely confined to a relatively small constituency of foreign policy-makers, analysts and academics. However, successive UK governments have been strong and consistent supporters of Turkey's EU accession.

But there is also an important distinction to be drawn between an increasing interest in Turkey *per se* within the UK and the issue of Turkey's prospective EU membership. The increasing interest of the UK business community in the opportunities provided by a growing Turkish economy is a key characteristic of the last decade and evidenced by increasing levels of trade and investment by UK companies within Turkey. This, however, has not translated either into increased levels of debate on Turkish EU accession within the UK nor in the development of a more vocal constituency pressing for Turkey's EU membership.

There are a number of reasons for the low level of contemporary debate within the UK on Turkey's EU accession. The first is the relatively significant geographical distance of Turkey from the UK. Turkey tends to be viewed by British citizens at-large as a leisure destination for holidays and increasingly as a second home or retirement destination. This is in contrast

to other EU member states, where Turkey is viewed as a source of past and present migrant labour or where there is a substantive Turkish Diaspora community.

The UK-based Turkish community constitutes a relatively small Diaspora. The 2001 UK population census registered 53,964 residents declaring Turkey as their birth place, with over two-thirds of this number resident in London. There are also conflicting estimates that place the Turkish population at between 58,000-100,000 Turkish citizens resident in the UK and additional estimates of up to 130,000 residents of Turkish Cypriot origin.¹ There have been successive waves of Turkish Cypriot labour migration to the UK commencing before the Second World War, responding to periods of labour shortages within the UK and then accelerating during periods of political instability in Cyprus. Migration patterns from the Turkish Republic have had somewhat different drivers with economic migrants joined by migrants driven by educational opportunities in the UK, political refugees during periods of military rule in Turkey and Turkish businesses pursuing economic opportunities in the UK. This population of Turkish origin is largely London-based but with notable communities also in Birmingham, Glasgow and Nottingham.

This UK-based Turkish community does not attract any identifiable inter-communal hostility from the majority population and has a very low level of visibility in the print and electronic media in the UK. However, it should be noted that the role of Kurdish and Turkish organized crime in human trafficking and narcotics to the UK, as demonstrated in a number of recent high-profile court cases and police operations, has created an association in the media between these illegal activities and the Turkish-Kurdish Diaspora community.

The issues noted above are intended to illustrate that debate on Turkey and its accession to the EU in the UK takes place against a backdrop which is largely uncomplicated by issues of heightened public concern about issues of migration and integration, which are present in other EU member states. Furthermore, there are a number of additional important factors that explain why Turkey's EU accession has been a low-level political issue in the UK and why there are a relatively small number of British stakeholders

¹ For comparison with other EU member states see Manço, U. (2004) 'Turks in Western Europe', Centre for Islam in Europe, University of Gent, <http://www.flwi.ugent.be/cie/umanco/umanco3.htm>.

in the process of Turkey's accession. The limited number of stakeholders in the UK's position on Turkish accession are identified below.

2. UK Stakeholders, Positions and Interests in the EU-Turkey Question

The key stakeholders who are significant in shaping and understanding the UK's current stance on Turkey's EU accession are: governmental, parliamentary, party political, academic, public opinion, and political economic. The actors in these sectors are significant for comprehending the degree and form of commitment that the British government gives to Turkish accession and provide an understanding of the depth of understanding (and support) for EU enlargement in general.

2.1 Governmental

Since coming to power in 1997 the New Labour government has pursued the long-standing British government policy of enthusiasm for EU enlargement. There has been no change of government standpoint with the change of Prime Minister from Tony Blair to Gordon Brown in 2007. The enlargement policy pursued by the New Labour governments has been conditioned by different factors from predecessor governments. Prime Minister Blair set himself the early goal of putting the UK at "the heart of Europe" and directing a more enthusiastic European policy for the country.² What is of importance here is that the UK has had a much more sympathetic European policy than that pursued by the preceding Thatcher and Major governments. It can be argued that Blair has "normalized" the UK's position towards the EU. This normalization shifted the British government away from the automatic opposition to the deepening of European integration, which had been the hallmark of British policy since the mid-1970s.³

In a limited number of areas, the British government has even sought to stimulate new directions for EU policy that might be viewed as integrationist in spirit (particularly noteworthy is its contribution to the development of the ESDP since the St. Malo Anglo-French summit of 1998).

² Smith, J. (2005) 'A missed opportunity? New Labour's European policy 1997-2005', *International Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 4, July, pp. 703-721.

³ O'Donnell, C. M. and R. G. Whitman (2007) 'European policy under Gordon Brown: Perspectives on a future prime minister', *International Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 2, March, p. 253-272.

However, this should not distract from the fact that the Blair and Brown governments have kept the UK outside the core of European integration by not seeking UK membership of the single currency.

If the Blair/Brown governments could be said to have departed from some aspects of his predecessors' European policy, there has been a strong element of continuity in the support for EU enlargement. The issue of EU enlargement has not been an issue of dispute within the Cabinet of the British government nor between any ministers or government departments within the UK. This was the case for the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, and remains the case for the accession of Turkey.

The current Brown government's official stance on Turkey's prospects for EU membership still strongly favours enlargement to Turkey. A key reinforcement of that standpoint was the agreement in a meeting between the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown in London on 23 October 2007 to set out a Turkey-UK Strategic Partnership.⁴ This agreement is significant in so far as it represents the most developed statement of the objectives of Anglo-Turkish relations since the Second World War, and the most important development in Anglo-Turkish relations since the early 1970s. The partnership is clear and unambiguous in stating the desire of the UK government to work for Turkish accession to the EU. The section dealing with accession is clear and unambiguous in the level of support offered by the UK government to Turkey:

- *Close dialogue and co-operation* in support of Turkey's preparations for EU accession. We shall hold regular consultations between our Foreign Ministries on Turkey's accession process and wider developments within the EU, backed up by periodic review at Foreign Minister level.
- *Advice on the negotiating process*. Assistance and co-ordination in troubleshooting on individual chapters where further cooperation is needed. Help with continued compliance with the political criteria, including through resumption of our human rights dialogue.
- *Joint work on promoting Turkey in Europe*, improving the understanding in governments, the public and the media of the strategic importance of Turkey's accession bid, and demonstrating that Turkey is capable of and prepared to take the bold reforms necessary for accession. Further EU-

⁴ See <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/newsroom/latest-news/?view=News&id=3070052>.

Turkey networking and relationship-development projects such as the Bosphorus Conference. A public diplomacy campaign to give improved visibility to Turkey's contributions to the EU in e.g. the field of CFSP.

- *More - and more strategic - EU Twinning and bilateral projects* to help Turkey fulfil the priorities in its Accession Partnership and reinforce its administrative capacity to assume the obligations of membership. Help to ensure the effective use of IPA funds. More work on political reform and human rights, through Whitehall visits and exchanges. English language training for officials working on Accession issues. Use of the Foreign Office Global Opportunities Fund - Reuniting Europe project budget, and greater involvement in the Commission's Civil Society Dialogue (e.g. through city twinning, university and NGO links).⁵

The commitments given by the British government in the declaration on the Partnership are significantly deeper than those given publicly by any other EU member state to-date and are considerably at variance with the current stated policies of the French, German and Austrian governments. However, the Partnership is also intended to facilitate a wider relationship and contains objectives to work together in a number of other areas that provide a clear indication of the benefits that the UK government sees arising from Turkish accession to the EU. There is a heavy emphasis on defence and security relations, with the Partnership particularly looking to deepen UK-Turkey defence relations (both in NATO but also with support for Turkey's participation in ESDP operations), global security issues (the fight against terrorism, counter-proliferation and aviation security, the illegal drugs trade, illegal immigration and other organized crime), and regional stability and peace in the Middle East and Afghanistan. There is also a commitment to 'ending the isolation of Turkish Cypriots'.

The Partnership also anticipates increasing bilateral trade and investment with measures to strengthen business-to-business links between the UK and Turkey. Additional strands to the partnership include climate change, energy security and education and culture.

The Partnership was characterized as focusing 'on the long-term strategic objectives between Turkey and the UK' by the UK Minister for Europe Jim Murphy in the House of Commons on 12 December 2007. The Partnership should be read in its totality as an investment by the UK in a relationship

⁵ See <http://ukinturkey.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/word/3629574/strategic-partnership>.

that is intended to yield benefits to the UK in a post-Turkish accession scenario. The UK government is cultivating a relationship that is intended to benefit the United Kingdom by laying the groundwork for a potentially important new ally within the EU. The Partnership is intended to be driven by six monthly high-level consultations by the two governments and was cemented in May 2008 by the first state visit to Turkey since 1971 by the British Head of State Queen Elisabeth II.

Of particular note is that Turkey's accession to the EU receives favourable assessment within the governmental defence community in the UK. Turkey's EU membership is viewed positively as a possible strong contribution to strengthening the capabilities of the ESDP which has been a key UK policy objective. However, there does not appear to have been wide-ranging and deeper analysis conducted on the impact of Turkish accession on the ESDP or its impact upon UK defence and security priorities.

The Al Qaida terrorist attacks on the British consulate and a branch of the HSBC in Istanbul on 20th November 2003, and the subsequent investigation, have created an enhanced Anglo-Turkish collaboration on intelligence and security issues. It is, however, difficult to discern the extent to which the UK intelligence community has translated this collaboration into an enthusiasm for Turkish EU accession. Anglo-Turkish police and judicial cooperation has also increased in the last decade with a number of notable cases of narcotics and people trafficking networks being disrupted and with individuals brought to justice in the UK. This is also an area in which the UK government is seeking to enhance collaboration in the future and hence its prominence in the Strategic Partnership.

To summarize, there is a consensual view across government on the UK's position on Turkey's accession to the EU, which has not been the cause of "bureaucratic politics". Intra-departmental tensions are minimal on the question, with wide agreement between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) on the UK's position with respect to the Turkey and the EU. The predominant view is that Turkey should be seen as an asset to the EU as long as it can achieve the necessary thresholds required for EU accession.

2.2 Party Politics and Parliament

Turkey's EU membership is a *relatively* insignificant parliamentary political issue measured in terms of parliamentary time devoted to the issue. The Turkey-UK Strategic Partnership has not been subject to any sustained

scrutiny by the two Houses of Parliament and its committees. Questions have been asked by individual members of Parliament regarding the impact on the role of the UK as a guarantor power in Cyprus, and the government has presented the Partnership as assisting in the reunification of Cyprus. The Partnership is also the subject of cross-political party agreement in the UK, and has not been contested by the two main opposition parties in the UK parliament, the Conservative and Liberal parties.

The deepening of European integration (as opposed to widening EU membership) is a much greater key issue of division across the three main political parties. The primary disagreements are on the desirability of strengthening the formal integration process through strengthening European institutions or broadening the scope of EU policy competence. By contrast, enlargement, to Turkey as well as to the Western Balkans, and possibly also further to Eastern Europe (e.g., Ukraine) is widely accepted by the three principal political parties in the UK.

Conservative Party position

Although European policy in general acts as a key dividing issue between New Labour and the Conservative Party, this is not the case on enlargement. The Conservatives' position on the enlargement has been consistently supportive whilst objecting to the idea that the EU's institutions need to be strengthened to facilitate future enlargements. Even under its new leader David Cameron, the Conservative Party remains strongly opposed to the Lisbon Treaty. However, the Conservative Party is strongly in support of Turkish EU membership. It has argued that Turkey's accession is needed because Turkey represents a 'bridge to the Islamic world' and for geopolitical and military reasons.⁶

These rationales (and beyond the notion that widening the EU has a diluting or restricting effect on the deepening of European integration) are also attractive for the Conservative Party because they are shared with the United States. The Conservatives remain strongly committed to the "Special Relationship" with the US and reject the direction that the ESDP has taken since St. Malo. Turkish EU accession is viewed as a basis upon which to strengthen the Atlanticism and NATO. The Conservative Party

⁶ Dr Liam Fox, Shadow Defence Secretary (2006) 'Turkey could be a beacon to the Islamic world: that's why it must be admitted to the EU', *Daily Telegraph*, 3 September, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2006/09/03/do0305.xml>.

has consistently viewed NATO as the appropriate venue for European defence, regarding the EU's defence aspirations as duplicating NATO and sees Turkey as an ally on this issue.

The Conservative Party leader, David Cameron, has indicated support for Turkey's accession and the Shadow Foreign Secretary William Hague reiterated this standpoint at the Conservative Party annual conference on 1st October 2008 by stating: '[w]e are firm in our view that it is EU membership or its prospect that has helped to entrench democracy in many nations of central and eastern Europe, and that prospect must be there for people across the Balkans, the Ukraine, Turkey, and indeed Georgia, if they wish to attain it'.⁷

Members' of Parliament expertise

The more extensive parliamentary expertise on Turkey is concentrated in the House of Lords rather than the House of Commons. Members of the House of Commons who declare an interest in Turkey are minimal. The members of the House of Commons who take the keenest interest in Turkey are primarily those with Turkish (or Cypriot) communities based in their constituencies. As the UK has such a low recorded population of Turkish origin, Turkey and Turkey-related issues have little impact on electoral politics, beyond the relatively small number of parliamentary constituencies in North London, where local constituencies require members of Parliament to take an informed interest in Turkey and Cyprus. Key cases here include Andrew Dismore, MP for Hendon, and Joan Ryan, MP for Enfield North. There are also a number of former foreign and defence ministers and diplomats, such as MPs Giesla Stuart and Dennis MacShane and Lords Hannay, Howell, Patten Roberston and Tugenhart sitting in Parliament who take a continuing informed interest in European issues and follow Turkey's enlargement prospects. There is, however, a small organized cross-party lobbying effort and interest in Turkey in Parliament. The normal method for organizing interests in Parliament through the creation of an "All party group" exists for Turkey, namely the "All-Party British-Turkey Parliamentary Group", which seeks to bring together Parliamentarians who are supporters of Turkey's EU bid. There is also an additional group on "European Union Enlargement", whose purpose is to liaise with countries

⁷ See <http://www.epolitix.com/analysis/epolitix-analysis-detail/newsarticle/william-hague-speech-in-full-1/>.

requesting EU membership status and who seek to keep the issue of Turkey's EU accession on the Parliamentary agenda.

A report published by the Business and Enterprise Committee of the House of Commons in June 2008, entitled *Keeping the Door Wide Open: Turkey and EU accession*, is striking in its balanced assessment of the benefits of Turkey's EU membership and strongly supports accession.⁸ In the process of producing this report, the committee took evidence from government and in particular from the Minister for Trade Promotion and Investment, Lord Jones of Birmingham, UK Government officials from the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), and the UK Trade and Investment (UKTI). The Committee also heard oral evidence from the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the British side of the Turkish-British Business Council (TBBC). The Committee also visited Turkey in March 2008 as a part of the inquiry and held meetings with business groups and government officials in Istanbul and Ankara. The report is an excellent summary of the political and economic advantages that stakeholder groups in the UK perceive to be available from Turkish EU accession and clearly demonstrates the mood of members of Parliament, drawn from across the political spectrum, that Turkey's EU membership is beneficial to the UK.

The most detailed parliamentary attention and scrutiny of EU enlargement and Turkish accession comes through the committees of both Houses of Parliament. In the House of Commons, the relevant committees are the Foreign Affairs Committee, the European Scrutiny Committee and to a lesser extent the Defence Committee. Each of these select committees have a majority of Labour members of Parliament and have not been a source of hostile opinion regarding Turkey's EU membership in Parliament.

The House of Lords has kept a close eye on EU enlargement developments. The House of Lords European Union Select Committee has considerable European expertise and its sub-committee C "Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Policy" has taken a particular interest in EU enlargement. The EU Committee of the House of Lords has been supportive of Turkey as an EU candidate, but has raised particular concerns about the pace of Turkey's transition process.

⁸ Business and Enterprise Committee, House of Commons (2008) *Keeping the Door Wide Open: Turkey and EU Accession* HC 367-I, London, The Stationery Office Limited, 30 June, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmberr.htm>.

The House of Lords provides a key resource in the oversight of the EU enlargement process and a source of creative and original thinking on the EU developments. The Lords European Union Select Committee demonstrates the added-value that engagement of informed parliamentarians can have on the EU if time is taken to examine the issue-area in-depth. The generally positive assessments of Turkey's EU accession reached by the Lords illustrates that an informed understanding of European issues does not automatically generate hostility among UK parliamentarians.

2.3 *Think-Tanks*

The UK has a vibrant think-tank scene on EU issues. There are both pro- and anti-integrationist think tanks. The think-tanks currently divide on the question of whether Turkey's accession is a desirable proposition. Broadly the pro-integrationist think-tanks favour Turkish accession. The Centre for European Reform and the Federal Trust have both published in the UK arguing in favour of Turkish accession, and Chatham House (the Royal Institute of International Affairs) has developed a "Strategic Focus on Turkey" strand of activities and is supported by the Turkish business Doğan Holding. The UK is also home to a number of anti-integrationist think-tanks that oppose a deepening of European integration without holding strong views on Turkish accession *per se*. The most well-established of these think-tanks, "Open Europe", has not adopted a position on Turkey's accession since its foundation in 2005. Think-tanks dealing with sectoral issues have raised particular questions associated with Turkish accession, such as the impact on migration flows raised by Migration Watch. Because there is no dedicated think-tank or pressure group devoted to the single issue of Turkish accession to the EU, the costs/benefits of Turkey's EU membership are discussed in a more diffuse rather than systematic manner by UK think-tanks.

2.4 *The Political Economy of British Turkey policy*

The political economy aspects of Turkey's accession to the EU are an important potential dimension for comprehending the UK's perspective, with bilateral trade now at record levels and with an annual trade volume of nearly USD 12 billion consisting of USD 6,8 billion in exports from Turkey to the UK, and USD 5,1 billion in imports from the UK to Turkey (2007 figures). Turkey is also one of the UK's fastest growing trading partners and investment destinations. UK companies are the fifth largest

investors in Turkey. A number of large UK businesses have recently targeted Turkey as a destination for investment and increased business activity. As illustrative of the growing levels of investment by UK companies in Turkey (which has climbed from USD 165 million in 2005 to USD 883 million in 2006), the UK supermarket chain Tesco announced in January 2008 that it plans to invest USD 750 million to triple the size of its business to over 150 stores over the next five years; British American Tobacco (BAT) acquired the Turkish state-owned tobacco company Tekel in February 2008 for USD 1,72 billion; and Vodafone, the UK-based telecoms group, bought Turkey's Telsim Mobil Telekomunikasyon Hizmetleri in 2006 for USD 4,55 billion. The UK's main exports to Turkey (by order of value) are road vehicles, medicinal and pharmaceutical products, metalliferous ores and metal scrap, power generating machinery and equipment, and specialized industrial machinery. Turkey's exports to the UK (by order of value) are clothing, road vehicles, electrical machinery, electrical machinery, telecoms and sound equipment and textile yarn and fabrics. The implications of this political economy aspect of the UK-Turkey relationship as a key stakeholder element are significant. In particular there is now an active attempt to target Turkish businesses to invest in the UK through "Think London", the public body seeking to promote investment opportunities to Turkish businesses in London, where the economy is projected to grow as a consequence of hosting the 2012 Olympics. However, there is no single UK-based organization making the business case for Turkish accession to the EU or an active lobbying programme in place organized by the business community. A departure from this past situation might be anticipated with the business focus within the Strategic Partnership, which would boost business-to-business links and may create a more organized lobby within the UK.

2.5 Public Opinion

Outside elite circles, Turkey's EU membership has an even lower level of salience in British political life. Other EU issues such as the Lisbon Treaty, membership of the single currency and the consequences of labour migration from the 2004 and 2007 enlargements of the EU attract greater interest and attention. The indication of the low-level of salience of Turkey's EU accession in UK public political life is that Turkey has been a non-concern in the most recent general elections.

Turkish membership of the EU has not been an issue that has attracted considerable interest and/or concern. There is no active organized public hostil-

ity to Turkey as an EU member primarily due to public ignorance. And there has not been any active effort made to inform the public or lead public opinion. More pressing issues of public concern on enlargement have been the scale of migration from Central Europe as a consequence of the opening of the UK labour market to citizens of the 2004 and 2007 accession states.

3. How do Stakeholders Influence the UK Position on the Turkey Question?

At present the UK suffers from neither an over- nor under-whelming enthusiasm for Turkey's EU accession. And as noted above, there is a small informed constituency. However, there are a number of change factors which might bring about a shift in the UK attitude.

The first, given emphasis to above, is the Turkish-UK Strategic Partnership, which is intended to result in a closer relationship between the UK and Turkey. Of direct relevance to this project is the commitment in the Partnership to engage in joint work promoting Turkey in Europe with the ambition of '[...] improving the understanding in governments, the public and the media of the strategic importance of Turkey's accession bid, and demonstrating that Turkey is capable of and prepared to take the bold reforms necessary for accession. Further EU-Turkey networking and relationship-development projects, such as the Bosphorus Conference. A public diplomacy campaign to give improved visibility to Turkey's contributions to the EU in e.g. the field of CFSP.' If this objective is followed through, then there would be a considerable heightening of the debate on Turkey within the UK and the issue of Turkish accession to the EU.

The second possible change factor is that the next UK general election is expected to be scheduled in 2009/2010. The Conservative Party's position on enlargement does not currently differ much from that of New Labour. However, as European policy in general is an issue that distinguishes the two main parties, the prospect of future enlargements of the EU being an issue of contestation cannot be entirely ruled-out as the election comes closer. Furthermore, as the issue of immigration is currently a political issue that has considerable resonance with the public, and as Turkey represents a possible additional source of labour migration to the UK, rising public opposition to accession is a distinctive possibility.

Public opinion polling indicates that immigration represents the most pressing political issue that the British public wishes to see the government

address. There also appears to have been a spillover impact on public enthusiasm for enlargement with a drop-off of public support for the principle of enlargement as a consequence of the perceived impact of the eastern enlargements.

4. Implications for Communication Strategy

Turkey's accession to the EU is currently an issue of low-level political concern within the UK. As indicated above, there is, as yet, no core constituency of active opposition to Turkey's EU membership. Rather, there is a level of general support across the UK political elite for EU enlargement. Public opinion polling suggests that the wider public is less engaged on the prospects of Turkish EU accession. Prime Minister Brown has stated at various occasions that he admired the EU for its enlargement policy to date in its success in promoting peace in Europe. This suggests that the current government continues to see further enlargement in a positive light. A key conditioning factor for the maintenance of the current attitude towards Turkey's accession depends on whether labour migratory consequences become an issue in the UK. The UK government has a key role to play here in making clear to the public what the likely volume of any migration would be and what advantages would accrue to the UK from labour migration. This should be done to pre-empt the emergence of a negative narrative on migration from Turkey in the UK media.

The UK is an interesting example of a member state where there is not an organized constituency hostile to Turkey's EU accession. As the recently published House of Commons report cited above clearly illustrates, the more members of Parliament inform themselves on Turkey and the issues associated with Turkish accession, the greater the reinforcement of the positive benefits of accession. Furthermore, what is also clear from the UK case is that a developing interest in Turkey is accruing as a direct result of the growth of its economy, the business advantages that this represents, and that investors are making investment decisions which strengthen the political-economy relationship between the UK and Turkey. The lesson from the UK seems to be that the greater the opportunities for knowledge of and direct engagement with Turkey, the less susceptible the environment for hostility or antipathy to EU accession.

9. ATTITUDES OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN TURKEY TOWARDS EU-TURKEY RELATIONS: CONSENSUAL DISCORD OR CONTENTIOUS ACCORD?

Asli Toksabay Esen and H. Tolga Bölükbaşı

1. Introduction

Turkey has almost half a century of history with the European integration project, but the accession process sparked fervent discussions only over the last decade in the aftermath of the Helsinki European Council which confirmed Turkey as an accession candidate. While the post-Helsinki period was characterized by optimism and high levels of popular support for the accession process in Turkey as well as in the EU, the positive mood seems to have been steadily waning, as reflected in recent Eurobarometer and national public opinion surveys.¹ The debate on Turkey's EU accession has recently taken an even sourer turn, with an evidently weaker commitment to and declining popular support for Turkey's accession on both sides. The debate on relations with the EU is increasingly being couched in terms of an essentialist discourse on Turkey: its identity, where it belongs, and where it is headed. The attitudes of key stakeholders in Turkey regarding relations with the EU seem to reflect the country's domestic political issues and identity concerns as was the case in the accession processes of many current member states.

¹ See Eurobarometer surveys of Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 and Transatlantic Trends Survey http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb68/eb68_tr_nat.pdf; http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb69/eb69_tr_nat.pdf; http://www.transatlantictrends.org/trends/doc/TT07KFR_FINAL.pdf; <http://www.transatlantictrends.org/trends/index.cfm?id=125>.

At the same time, Turkey's accession, perhaps more so than in the case of any other candidate, has teased out a series of contentions about the nature and future of the Union within the EU. Strikingly, however, despite the polemics on Turkey's "Europeanness" articulated by EU stakeholders, their counterparts in Turkey categorically view EU membership as a state/process of essential(ist) be(com)ing, describing it as a 'modernization project', a 'civilization project', or a 'lifestyle project'. In the words of a political veteran, 'to support EU membership is to adopt the (universal) civilization project as if you are breathing together with the whole world'.² The main purpose of this study is to map out the attitudes of various key stakeholders in Turkey towards Turkey's EU accession process in the post-Helsinki period by, first, examining their stance (level and nature of support) towards Turkey's European vocation, second, investigating any major changes thereunto, and finally, providing an account of the motivations underlying their respective positions. This chapter relies heavily on primary data collected through semi-structured interviews. 179 stakeholders were contacted for an appointment and 85 interviews were conducted with leading figures from major political parties, business and labour organizations, civil society groups, civilian bureaucracy, the media and academia. As the military bureaucracy is repeatedly claimed by European observers and EU institutions to play a significant role in the Turkish domestic political scene, the sample of interviewees included also representatives of the armed forces. Attempts at realizing interviews with incumbent representatives have proven unsuccessful and therefore the study has relied on proxies such as retired generals and observers following civil-military relations. In order to unpack and cross-check the collected material and shed light on other background questions, interviews were also conducted with several journalists and scholars observing the attitudes of domestic stakeholders on the relationship between Turkey and the EU. In addition to the interviews, the study relies on surveys of print media and other primary resources such as declarations and official documents as a basis for "reality checks" and templates to compare our own findings and musings against. The sample of interviewees is heavily represented by members of the two main parties in the Turkish parliament (the AKP as the government party and CHP as the main opposition party), three business organizations, and the armed forces. Due to

² *Interview with Mr. Mehmet Dülger*, former DYP and AKP MP, former head of Parliamentary Foreign Relations Commission, 6 June 2008.

space constraints, the study will directly cite only a number of interviewees while the text represents an analytical summary of the entire sample.

The rest of the article is structured as follows. The second part provides an overview of prevailing attitudes of the two main political parties represented in the parliament, influential business groups, and the armed forces. It traces the rationales behind their respective attitudes and the changes thereunto over time. The third part presents reflections shared by many Turkish stakeholders on EU actors' perceptions and attitudes regarding the nuts and bolts of the Turkish accession process. The final part concludes by offering a set of insights selectively drawn from the present survey for preparing a Communication Strategy.

2. Attitudes of Key Stakeholders in Turkey Towards EU Accession

2.1 Political Parties

This section argues that narratives from left, right and centre point to the fact that the EU truly has a make-or-break effect in Turkey – it is a fault line between mainstream and marginal politics, it appeals to masses and broadens electoral bases, helps alleviate scepticism in the eyes of domestic and foreign audiences, and finally, it features prominently in the official and embedded “state policy” that hardly any government may dare challenge.

AKP

The ruling *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party-AKP) is a reformist/heretic extension of *Refah* (Welfare), *Fazilet* (Virtue), and *Saadet* (Felicity) parties (the latter of which has survived to date), all of which represented the movement of political Islam in Turkey and zealously resisted any close relationship with the West in general and the EU in particular. The AKP, in turn, has surprised observers by emerging as an ardent supporter of the accession process passing major reform packages following its electoral victory in 2002. Although the AKP's election manifesto stated that the party supported Turkey's EU membership ‘as a natural outcome of the country's modernization process’,³ the enthusiasm and energy they put into pursuing the accession agenda was unexpected nevertheless. Despite

³ AKP (2002) *General Election Manifesto*. Turkish version available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/bildirgeler.shtml>.

the AKP's keen interest in advancing EU-Turkey relations in its early years in office, however, Turkey's EU membership trajectory has come to a near stall with the onset of accession negotiations. Besides, the party line as reflected in its daily discourse and actions has been less than consistent and uniform with factions expressing varying concerns and reactions under different circumstances. The party leader himself, Mr. Erdoğan, has, on certain occasions, reverted to a harsh anti-western rhetoric despite his apparent commitment to Turkey's Westernization (i.e. Europeanization).

The underlying motivations of the AKP for promoting Turkey's EU accession are the following: first, popular support for EU accession (as high as 70% in 2002⁴) seems to have proved a vehicle for electoral success in the 2002 elections.⁵ Second, AKP members, particularly those who served in the economic bureaucracy, tend to emphasize the benefits of the EU anchor (in the context of the accession process) with respect to trade, foreign direct investment, and development.⁶ Third, and perhaps most significantly, AKP representatives maintain that they see the EU reform process as the answer for the democratic consolidation and wider rights and freedoms they desire.⁷ Nevertheless, the portrayal of the issue by party members, with the possible exception of the more liberal minority, appears to be inspired by a subjective and selective understanding of liberty: MPs typically refer to the freedom of religion, conscience and religious practice, while freedoms of thought, expression, association etc. only come into the picture when they are related to the former.⁸ Amongst party representatives, regardless of whether they consider themselves to stand on more liberal or conservative

⁴ According to a EuroBarometer poll of 2002, the rate of Turkish people who believed that EU membership is a good thing stood at 65% and those who believed that Turkey will benefit from membership was 73%.

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/cceb/2002/cceb_2002_highlights_en.pdf.

⁵ AKP officials claim that their constituency offers the largest rate of support for EU membership along with the DTP electorate. *Interview with Mr. Reha Denemeç*, AKP MP, 3 June 2008. Demokratik Toplum Partisi (Democratic Society Party, DTP) largely represents the interests of the Kurdish population in Turkey.

⁶ *Interview with Mr. Denemeç*, op. cit.

⁷ *Interview with Dr. Suat Kınıkloğlu*, AKP MP, Speaker of Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee and former head of German Marshall Fund in Ankara, 5 June 2008; *Interview with Mr. Denemeç*, op. cit. Party representatives frequently cite the prison sentence Mr. Erdoğan served on the grounds of having incited religious or racial hatred by reciting a poem at a rally in 1997 and explain that they have a sensitivity towards freedoms because they, too, have suffered from its lack.

⁸ A case in point is the headscarf issue, which is offered as an issue of liberty of expression.

flanks, there is a very strong reference to religion, the ‘cement of humanity’.⁹ Finally, observers agree that the AKP has benefited largely from the legitimacy that came along with its EU effort, in terms of positioning itself closer to the centre of the political spectrum as a mainstream/mass party, avoiding the trap of marginalization like its predecessors, securing external support from the EU as well as the US, and creating popular appeal by rallying people along a common dream.¹⁰ This seems to be the common rationale of liberal groups in Turkey, both on the left and the right, in offering their support to the AKP as they considered it to be the only party determined to introduce liberal reforms.¹¹ At the same time, the AKP considers what has come to be termed the “post-modern coup” of 28 February 1997 a crossroads, whereby a generation of politicians acknowledged that they would not be able to stay in power (regardless of their popular support through the ballot box) unless they shifted towards mainstream politics, whereby the “EU goal” was seen as a decisive parameter of the “mainstream”. From the outset, the AKP was careful in positioning itself as a conservative, religiously sensitive, pious quasi-centre-right party. In terms of shifts in party line, observers have added, however, that the AKP’s second term after a landslide victory (46.6% in 2007 compared to 34.4% in 2002) has brought it more power, but less authority, in view of its weakened legitimacy partly due to its increasing aloofness towards the EU accession process.¹² Indeed, many personalities who featured in the party’s higher ranks during the first term in office and actively strived for the EU process have been either alienated or “shelved” after the 2007 elections.¹³

⁹ *Interview with Mr. Ali Bayramoğlu*, AKP MP and former chairman of MÜSİAD, 3 June 2008.

¹⁰ These points are based on interviews with both supporters and critics of the AKP. The legitimacy tool is a recurrent theme while its perception (whether positive or negative) varies across respondents. See also Oğuzlu, T. (2008) ‘Middle Easternization of Turkey’s Foreign Policy: Does Turkey Dissociate from the West?’, *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 9, pp.3-20 for more on this point.

¹¹ The recent shift by the AKP towards a more authoritarian and politically controversial line has to a great extent disillusioned and alienated this political group.

¹² The clash between the state establishment and the government has had an eroding effect on the legitimacy of the AKP. The government’s uncompromising and non-consensus-seeking attitude in many instances like the drafting of a new Constitution, the election of the President, the constitutional amendment regarding the use of the headscarf, etc. have been other factors.

¹³ Mr. Ertuğrul Yalçınbayır and Mr. Mehmet Dülger were influential figures from the centre-right within the party who endorsed and actively pursued the EU process. Neither was nominated for a second term. Former Foreign Ministers Mr. Yaşar Yakış and Mr. Abdullah Gül, both keen supporters of EU accession, have lost their influence over the party’s EU policy as well.

Such attitude amongst the party administration has helped critics argue that their initial scepticism towards AKP's "sincerity" in pursuing the EU vocation has been vindicated. The question of sincerity as to who is more Europhile "in essence" seems to loom large in contemporary Turkish politics.¹⁴ Whether AKP respondents indeed reveal a dose of pragmatism, viewing the EU process exclusively in an instrumentalist manner as alleged by its critics, is another question.

As for the factors that account for the drop in the government's EU momentum, prominent AKP figures, particularly government representatives, disagree that the pace of reform has tapered off, arguing instead that the process has taken a 'technical' turn and is therefore 'less visible'.¹⁵ Alternatively, some MPs attribute the sliding of the EU to the backburner to exogenous factors rather than a decline in the government's resoluteness to pursue the EU course.¹⁶ However, more liberal-minded representatives of the party regretfully note that the pace of reform has indeed slowed down.¹⁷ Among the reasons cited by respondents for such loss of momentum are the following: first, the blurring of the membership perspective has taken its toll on the ruling party's willingness to take chances to push forward politically sensitive reforms, especially in a context in which the EU faces declining popular support in Turkey. While some party officials expect that reform would find little appreciation in the EU due to the categorical opposition of some European capitals to Turkey's accession and that it is best to wait for the tide to turn, others contend that this is a counterproductive strategy. Second, the EU decision to suspend eight negotiation chapters in view of Turkey's failure to open its ports to Cypriot vessels and the opposition of France to the opening of several other chapters on grounds that they are directly related to the final accession stage seem to have disheartened the Turkish government. Observers note that these events have undermined any leverage the EU may have had and left the

¹⁴ The debate on discourse versus essence is increasingly influential in recent years. Parties and social segments keep looking for ulterior motives, questioning the "true intention" behind the actions of other groups as the level of distrust rises within society.

¹⁵ *Interview with Mr. Cemil Çiçek*, former Interior Minister, current Government Spokesperson, and AKP MP, 29 May 2008.

¹⁶ *Interview with Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu*, AKP MP and European Council Parliamentarians Assembly Member, 20 June 2008.

¹⁷ *Interview with Mr. Yaşar Yakış*, AKP MP and EU Parliamentary Committee Chairman, former Foreign Minister, 23 May 2008; *Interview with Dr. Kınıkluoğlu*, op. cit.

AKP and Premier Erdoğan 'heartbroken'.¹⁸ Others added that the AKP may have underestimated the difficulties in the negotiation process and been excessively optimistic about the course of events. Third, some AKP interviewees acknowledged the weight of the ECHR court case against the headscarf ban (which ended with an unfavourable decision against plaintiff Leyla Şahin¹⁹) in the disillusionment of at least the more conservative ranks of the AKP, who believed that the EU reform process would have granted their much-sought-after religious freedoms. Most critics concur. While the harsh reactions by Msrs. Erdoğan and Gül against the decision of the ECHR can be considered as indicators of AKP disillusionment with Europe writ-large,²⁰ the exact influence this may have had on the AKP's enthusiasm for the EU process remains unclear. Nevertheless, it would be safe to say that religious freedoms and the freedom to wear the headscarf are influential factors in the AKP's politics. Fourth, heightened polarization within Turkey along "Islamist" vs. "secularist" lines manifested in increased tension between the "established order" and the government, the recent "*e-ultimatum*",²¹ and the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007 put the EU off the government's agenda.²² At the same time, while the government has arguably grown stronger after the 2007 elections and hence in a better position to carry out reforms, the tensions between the government and the opposition as well as other influential state institutions has undermined its

¹⁸ *Interview with Mr. Soli Özel*, Lecturer in International Relations at Istanbul Bilgi University, Columnist in Sabah Daily and Advisor to TÜSIAD, 24 May 2008.

¹⁹ In the Leyla Şahin v. Turkey case, a university student sued the Turkish Republic over her claim to a right to access to university wearing a headscarf. Ms. Şahin lost the case.

²⁰ The government had been reluctant to stand for Turkey as the defendant and afterwards was highly critical of the ECHR's decision that favored Turkey over plaintiff Şahin. Mr. Erdoğan argued that the Court should have consulted with religious scholars before the verdict. Mr. Gül added that defending bans was not honourable. See <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=3514764&tarikh=2005-11-13>; <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/11/11/siyaset/axsiy01.html>. Both statements were cited as violations of the secularism principle in the Constitutional Court's indictment in the banning case against the AKP.

²¹ An electronic letter was published on the website of the Turkish General Staff on 27 April 2007 in the Presidential election process condemning the acts that strive to undermine Republican principles and warning that the military is ready to take action to protect the Republic against assaults of its "enemies".

²² *Interview with Mr. Ertuğrul Yalçınbayır*, Former AKP MP, 30 May 2008; *Interviews with Mr. Çiçek*, and *Mr. Çavuşoğlu*, op. cit. Mr. Algan Hacaloğlu agrees that while Turkey can easily handle negotiations, domestic issues have priority now, delaying progress in EU-Turkey relations. *Interview with Mr. Algan Hacaloğlu*, CHP MP, 19 June 2008.

capacity to handle reform.²³ Fifth, AKP MPs claim that the government has been suffering from a reform fatigue after introducing many difficult reform packages.²⁴ Sixth, observers emphasize that the ideological composition of the party leaning towards religious conservatism has forced the AKP to revert to its fundamentals. Such trend, it is claimed, is reflected in the alienation of the more liberal elements within the party.²⁵ Reflecting a more essentialist line, a segment in the party that feeds on anti-European/pro-Middle Eastern sentiments finds integration with the *gavur*, the infidels, unpalatable.²⁶

Finally, while some respondents stressed the inevitable drop in enthusiasm between the run-up to a critical juncture (such as the launching of negotiations) and the practicalities of technical/bureaucratic negotiations,²⁷ some AKP MPs criticize this viewpoint on the grounds that EU accession remains a political issue that needs to be nurtured politically.²⁸ Other social sectors, including political parties, the business community and civil society, are also critical of the negotiation process, particularly of its bureaucratic and technical settings, of the lack of transparency as well as the so-called “dubious-inclusiveness” of the process. With regard to civil society, it participates in the “negotiations discourse” only by writing some op-eds. Together with a highly confusing bureaucracy, a lack of inclusiveness in the negotiation process may have contributed to the wane of Turkish popular “EU euphoria”.

CHP

Being the heir of Atatürk’s party and positioning itself as the guarantor of the “achievements of the republic” in terms of establishing a secular, unified and centralized nation-state, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Republican People’s

²³ Many significant and controversial reforms between 1999 and 2004 could be passed thanks to a consensus between ruling and opposition parties or among coalitions of parties that came from different ideological backgrounds, strengthening the legitimacy of these in public opinion and eliminating the risk of effective dissidence.

²⁴ *Interviews with Dr. Kınıklioğlu and Mr. Denemeç*, op.cit.

²⁵ *Interview with Mr. Özel*, op. cit.

²⁶ *Interview with Dr. Çağrı Erhan*, Head of European Communities Research Centre, Vice President of Eurasia Strategic Research Centre (ASAM); Former Vice Chairman of Doğru Yol Partisi (True Path Party-DYP), 30 May 2008.

²⁷ *Interviews with Mr. Çavuşoğlu and Mr. Çiçek*, op. cit; *Interview with Ms. Zeynep Damla Gürel*, Advisor to the President of the Republic on EU Affairs and former CHP MP, 18 July 2008.

²⁸ *Interview with Dr. Kınıklioğlu*, op. cit.

Party – CHP) has been central to Turkey’s Westernization endeavour. Recently, however, as the major opposition party, the CHP has faced criticism in public debates for shedding its social democratic credentials and becoming a conservative establishment party with a different outlook on the EU process. There is a discrepancy between such perception and the way the CHP explains its own position, however. Although the party claims that the republican achievements are being threatened by the current course of events in the accession process, a defensive CHP maintains that it remains unequivocally committed to the goal of full membership. Party officials stress the support they have provided for “a 73-year old Europe” goal,²⁹ as well as for the reform packages in the earlier stages of candidacy, a factor also acknowledged by senior AKP members.³⁰ Former party member Ms. Damla Gürel recalls how the CHP, despite some reservations, did not obstruct the legislation process for the 500-odd-article Penal Code, which would have been impossible to ratify in the event of intraparlimentary divisions.³¹ The party ‘had pursued the Customs Union [...] and has always been a staunch supporter of the EU process.’³² Other influential figures added that CHP ‘believes in integration’ as ‘a Turkey with a population of 80 million, a significant potential and a strategic geopolitical status can make important leaps and breakthroughs provided that integration does not undermine certain pillars’.³³ These “pillars”, which cannot be foregone under any circumstances or for any goal according to the CHP include territorial integrity, the unitary nature of the state, its democratic, secular and republican principles, and certain indispensable national interests of the country.³⁴

The following factors instead account for the CHP’s increasingly critical tone towards the EU process. First, the turning point for CHP has been the government’s signing of the protocol at the December 2004 European Council meeting despite its calls for caution. CHP accuses the EU for violating the *pacta sunt servanda* principle by allowing Cyprus to hijack Turkey’s accession process, and blames the AKP government for letting this pass, thereby com-

²⁹ Interview with Mr. Onur Öymen, Vice Chairman of CHP and retired ambassador, 6 June 2008.

³⁰ Interview with Mr. Çiçek, op. cit. Mr. Dülger remembers the period as a ‘contributive constructive process’, Interview with Mr. Dülger, op. cit..

³¹ Interview with Ms. Gürel, op. cit.

³² Interview with Mr. Oğuz Oyan, CHP MP, 28 May 2008.

³³ Interview with Mr. Hacaloğlu, op. cit.

³⁴ Interviews with Mr. Hacaloğlu, Mr. Öymen and Mr. Çetin, op. cit.

promising Turkey's future. Essentially, it is the 'rejectionist attitude' and 'double standards' of the EU and the 'blurring of the full membership prospects' that have triggered the critical turn in the CHP's discourse. The party believes that the process is facing an 'impasse' partly due to the 'cold shoulder given by the Europeans' and partly the government's 'submissive', 'ineffective' and/or 'indifferent' attitude that fails to respond to these challenges.³⁵ Second, the CHP complains that the government has shifted away from its consensus-seeking attitude of the speedy reform period of 2002-4 and does not try to incorporate the opposition in any part of the process.³⁶ Indeed, the CHP believes that the government lacks sincerity and transparency in its EU approach and moreover argues that it uses the critical attitude of the CHP as well as segments of state establishment as a scapegoat for its own lack of momentum.³⁷ The party represents the view popular among secular nationalists that the AKP is bringing 'the EU excuse' on the table in order to free more political space to pursue its Islamist neo-conservative agenda, while the CHP has always considered the EU as an end in itself rather than as a means to pursue its domestic interests.³⁸ Third, observers repeatedly emphasize that domestic political competition mainly explains the CHP's critical approach, with an 'opposition reflex'³⁹ and a response to the waning popular support for EU membership. This may be more than simple political pragmatism at certain instances, where EU reforms interlock with the more fundamental domestic debate on the nature of the Turkish political system. In fact, on a self-critical note, former Foreign Minister Mr. Hikmet Çetin adds that the CHP now conveys the image that it opposes the EU accession process although the reality is entirely different, but cautions that images can be more influential than reality.⁴⁰ Fourth, on a defensive note, CHP officials find it unfair when their critical attitude against some issue, action or person is mis-

³⁵ *Interviews with Mr. Öymen, Mr. Hacıoğlu, Mr. Oyan*, op. cit.

³⁶ The party declined on the same grounds the request for an appointment by Foreign Minister and Chief Negotiator Mr. Ali Babacan who wished to present the national programme to the CHP and demands active involvement in the actual preparation process of the programme rather than an observer status.

³⁷ *Interviews with Mr. Öymen and Mr. Oyan*, op. cit. 'It is not as if they brought on reform packages and we failed to endorse them', Mr. Öymen says, 'they did not bring any reform packages in the first place'.

³⁸ *Interview with Mr. Öymen*, op. cit.

³⁹ *Interview with Mr. Murat Yetkin, Ankara Bureau Chief of Radikal Daily*, 29 May 2008.

⁴⁰ *Interview with Mr. Çetin*, op. cit. Mr. Çetin also argues that the CHP should avoid making use of EU accession as an issue in domestic politics and be careful to separate its critical attitude of the AKP with any possible objection to EU relations.

taken for a fundamental opposition to Turkey's EU membership. Former Deputy Secretary General of CHP Mr. Oyan remarks that '[the EU] behave[s] as if defending national interests is a crime when it comes to Turkey, while they guard theirs zealously at all times'.⁴¹

Despite strong resentment towards recent attitudes emanating from the EU and some of its member states, and disapproving the AKP's approach to EU-Turkey relations, CHP views the EU anchor as 'essential' in keeping the country away from shifting to more 'Middle Eastern lines'.⁴² Despite its concerns over "national interests", the CHP remains a key stakeholder that sees the EU accession process as a significant component of Turkey's modernization process.

2.2 Business Groups

With respect to the umbrella organizations representing business interests, the major motivation underpinning the accession process, unsurprisingly, seems to be economic. Business leaders appear to have got over their concerns over the detrimental impact of competition they might face from their European counterparts with the completion of the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU and their attention has shifted towards the stability, predictability, and assurances that EU accession entails.⁴³ They also feel that the Customs Union is growing obsolete and counterproductive, as the volume of trade, the diversification of trade routes and the inclusion of third parties now make it mandatory for Turkey to have a place in the decision making mechanism itself.⁴⁴ They have, therefore, shifted to a more supportive position in so far as full membership guarantees, in their viewpoint, full access to the European market. Nevertheless, the discourse of business groups incorporates elements of the long-standing political issues that have traditionally marred the relationship between Turkey and the EU. Not only does the political stance towards the EU of various groups in this category influence their overall approach, but also each organization has a political agenda that they seek to buttress via the EU process.

⁴¹ *Interviews with Mr. Oyan*, op. cit

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ The concerns of the Koç Group, currently the largest conglomerate in Turkey have not diminished. CEO Mr. Mustafa Koç earlier this year argued that Turkey failed to reap the benefits of the deal and even accrued losses. See <http://www.aksam.com.tr/haber.asp?a=116764,6>. Mr. Murat Peksavaş explains that the Koç Group's concerns are related to Turkey's national interests and welfare, given that, by contrast, the group itself has benefited immensely from the Customs Union. *Interview with Mr. Peksavaş*, Advisor to Koç Group on EU Affairs, 17 June 2008.

⁴⁴ *Interview with Mr. Cem Duna*, Chairman of TÜSİAD Foreign Relations Commission, 2 June 2008.

TOBB

Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği (Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges-TOBB), as the largest business organization in Turkey⁴⁵, has traditionally been at the centre of the political arena with its claim to a powerful electoral base and sizable resources. It holds a leading position in the Social and Economic Council, which represents employers and employees' organizations. Although the top ranks of the organization are resolutely in favour of Turkey's EU membership, TOBB has been regarded as a less vocal supporter of the EU accession process than TÜSİAD.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the chambers of industry and commerce have also been leaders in the process, having founded *İktisadi Kalkınma Vakfı* (Economic Development Foundation – İKV) in 1965. The foundation, which has offered whole-hearted support for the accession process, was considered to be the only civil society organization operating in the area of EU affairs up until recently. However, one can safely argue that this was only an indirect avowal of TOBB's support, in so far as TOBB is made up of heterogeneous elements whose worldviews starkly differ, and thus has found it more difficult to form a united front to vocally support Turkey's EU vocation. TOBB has therefore chosen to carry out information campaigns among its members to strengthen the support among its grassroots.⁴⁷ In recent years, TOBB has also displayed a more proactive stance, taking initiatives to facilitate Turkey's membership goal.⁴⁸ It actively promotes the EU accession process through various organizations under its umbrella⁴⁹ as well as its EU Affairs Department, and has lobbied the government to take part in the EU negotiation process. The

⁴⁵ As per the Continental Model, membership in a chamber is mandatory for any corporation and therefore all companies in Turkey are by definition members of TOBB. Because SMEs dominate the economy, as is the case of the EU, membership profiles shift in favour of SMEs.

⁴⁶ See for example Ülgen, S.(2006) 'Turkish business and EU accession', London, Centre for European Reform, http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/essay_turkish_business_accession_dec06.pdf.

⁴⁷ Interview with Mr. Mustafa Bayburtlu, Head of EU Department at TOBB, 3 September 2008.

⁴⁸ Dissident voices persist though. A case in point is Mr. Sinan Aygün, Secretary General of Ankara Chamber of Commerce, who, espousing a nationalist discourse, criticizes the EU's stance towards Turkey.

⁴⁹ Apart from the Economic Development Foundation (İKV), organizations affiliated with TOBB include the Foreign Economic Relations Council (İDEİK), TOBB University of Economy and Technology (TOBB-ETÜ) and the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV/EPRI).

organization tries to maintain a high profile in European chambers of commerce, to enhance its capacity in EU affairs and to provide information on Turkey-EU relations to both domestic and foreign audiences. It engages in networking and lobbying activities for Turkish accession in general as well as on specific business-related issues.⁵⁰ TOBB insists that Turkey will be an important contributor to EU integration in economic terms, bringing along an unparalleled potential in terms of demographic dynamism and entrepreneurial spirit.⁵¹ Although TOBB's emphasis rests on the economic welfare effects of accession both for Turkey and for the EU, it also stresses the positive impact that the integration process would engender with respect to securing democracy, liberty, stability, and the entrenchment of the rule of law in Turkey. TOBB President Mr. Hisarcıkloğlu views the EU as an anchor and a goal for more freedom and welfare that must be pursued with 'heart and soul'.⁵²

TÜSİAD

Türk Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği (The Association of Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen – TÜSİAD) has always been a significant player in Turkish politics as it represents big business. It is acknowledged to have prompted and laid out the basics for political reform with a 1997 report titled "Turkey's Democratization Perspectives"⁵³ and has promoted reform ever since, attracting at times the ire of political authorities for that reason. TÜSİAD representatives are careful to argue that their concern with political reform and democratization is instrumental in so far as they are ultimately interested in establishing an environment of confidence and stability conducive for economic and business development.⁵⁴ An influential representative, Mr. Bülent Eczacıbaşı adds that TÜSİAD emphasizes the EU process, as well as democratization and political issues, because 'it has come

⁵⁰ Interview Mr. Bayburtlu, op.cit.

⁵¹ Interviews with Mr. Mete, Dr. Sak and Mr. Bayburtlu, op.cit.

⁵² Lüle, Z. (2008) 'TOBB: Özgürlükler için AB'ye sarılalım' (TOBB: We should embrace the EU for freedoms), *Hürriyet Daily*, 21 February, <http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=8275773>.

⁵³ TÜSİAD (1997) *Türkiye'nin Demokratikleşme Perspektifleri*, (Turkey's democratization perspectives), 1 December, [http://www.tusiad.org/tusiad_cms.nsf/LHome/8A5B2F034AD03768C225733F003302AF/\\$FILE/demoktur.pdf](http://www.tusiad.org/tusiad_cms.nsf/LHome/8A5B2F034AD03768C225733F003302AF/$FILE/demoktur.pdf).

⁵⁴ An anonymous source confides that TÜSİAD's effort to downplay its political demands as a way to promote economic interests may be symptomatic of a wariness to avoid the image of interfering with politics, as has often been alleged against it.

to see that this country won't get anywhere otherwise'.⁵⁵ Arguing that 'Turkey's EU orientation has never been an issue of debate for TÜSİAD', the organization's representative in Ankara, Mr. Zafer Yavan, maintains that TÜSİAD sees in the EU as a 'well-thought, well-designed blueprint' in terms of proposing 'a reform agenda, a body of legislation, good governance practices and administrative capacity' that Turkey requires.⁵⁶

TÜSİAD has been very active in supporting and promoting Turkey's membership bid, and it can be safely argued that its Brussels office is the most influential of its offices within the EU. The association is known to mobilize all its power and means to contribute to the process. TÜSİAD indeed claims and is considered by many observers to be the most fervent supporter of the EU accession process in Turkey⁵⁷ so much so that CHP MP Mr. Öymen defines its enthusiasm and faith in eventual membership as 'somewhat naive' within the current patchy climate. However, this may be an overstatement. While TÜSİAD continues to voice support for Turkey's full accession, it is highly critical of the anti-Turkish discourse in Europe. TÜSİAD's press statements in June 2007, when the EU failed to open a chapter due to the French opposition and again in December 2007 when France demanded the exclusion of the term "accession" from the European Council Presidency Conclusions, were quite harsh in tone. The former statement proposed that in order to agree to accession, Turkey should impose its own conditions on the EU, including 'the cessation of xenophobic, demagogical, narrow-minded and hostile political discourses and attitudes like those against Turkey, which, according to TÜSİAD, deals a blow to the democratic values and the prestige of the EU,⁵⁸ while the latter statement defined the attitude of the French presidency as 'unlawful, prejudiced, malevolent, hostile' and finally, 'pathological'.⁵⁹ Despite having

⁵⁵ *Interview with Mr. Bülent Mr. Eczacıbaşı*, TÜSİAD Honorary President, 2 June 2008.

⁵⁶ *Interview with Mr. Zafer Yavan*, TÜSİAD Ankara Representative, 4 June 2008.

⁵⁷ Mr. Mehmet Ali Birand wrote in February 2008 that the only standing fortress that EU has is TÜSİAD. <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=8294611>.

⁵⁸ TÜSİAD (2007) Fransa, Türkiye'nin AB'ye tam üyelik sürecini engelleyemez (France cannot block Turkey's EU full membership process), 27 June, [http://www.tusiad.org/tusiad_cms.nsf/BMKitlerTarih/C2EA658406F731D0C2257340004884BB/\\$File/duyurunol1002.pdf](http://www.tusiad.org/tusiad_cms.nsf/BMKitlerTarih/C2EA658406F731D0C2257340004884BB/$File/duyurunol1002.pdf).

⁵⁹ TÜSİAD (2007) Fransa Türkiye'ye karşı kültürel önyargı, art niyet ve hasmane tutumundan vazgeçmelidir (France should drop its cultural prejudices, malevolence and hostile attitude against Turkey), 12 December 2007, [http://www.tusiad.org/tusiad_cms.nsf/BMKitlerTarih/80880C02D8781B14C22573AE004DD850/\\$File/fransabasinbulteni.pdf](http://www.tusiad.org/tusiad_cms.nsf/BMKitlerTarih/80880C02D8781B14C22573AE004DD850/$File/fransabasinbulteni.pdf).

offered support to and appreciation of the AKP's EU vocation in the earlier years of its term in power, TÜSİAD is highly critical of the party too, having it missed the goal of keeping negotiations on track.⁶⁰

MÜSİAD

Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği (The Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen - MÜSİAD) is an association of small to medium-sized enterprises of pious or Islamist origins, although recently some of its members have prospered enough to be termed large companies or holdings. MÜSİAD's roots can be considered as anti-Western and anti-European, favouring instead relations with the Islamic world. Their position has changed somewhat recently towards a pro-globalization attitude. MÜSİAD currently pronounces support for Turkey's accession to the EU and acknowledges the EU process as a stability factor,⁶¹ but its support for the EU process appears less unequivocal than TÜSİAD or TOBB's. The Association (rather than individual members, as in the case of TÜSİAD) nurtures a critical stance towards the Customs Union, arguing that it was badly negotiated, poorly implemented, has hurt domestic and local industries, and worsened trade balances.⁶² However, rather than simply displaying a critical stance towards the EU integration process, as in the case of many other stakeholders, this position seems to stem from the organization's general orientation. MÜSİAD often reiterates that, rather than being its backbone, the EU is only a component of Turkish foreign policy, and not the only alternative. As recently as 2005, a MÜSİAD report proclaimed that the principles which the EU espouses such as human rights, basic liberties and the rule of law, are straightjackets that limit the lifestyles of people with a Muslim identity.⁶³ Additionally, MÜSİAD often expresses disappointment and discontent with the EU on the grounds that the EU does not offer adequate support for religious freedoms in Turkey.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ *Interview with Haluk Tükel*, TÜSİAD Secretary General, 6 August 2008.

⁶¹ 'MÜSİAD: İşsizlik ve fakirlik sorunu devam ediyor' (MÜSİAD: The problems of unemployment and poverty persist), *Hürriyet* 8 January 2006, www.hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=3756975&tarikh=2006-01-08.

⁶² *Interview with Mr. Ömer Bolat*, former chairman of MÜSİAD, 2 June 2008; *Interview with Mr. Bayramoğlu*, AKP MP and former chairman of MÜSİAD, 3 June 2008; *Interview with Mr. Ali Resul Usul*, Advisor to MÜSİAD on EU Affairs, 2 June 2008.

⁶³ 'AB elbisesi müslümana dar' (EU dress too tight for the Muslim), *Hürriyet* 7 April 2005, <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2005/04/07/624235.asp>.

⁶⁴ *Interview with Mr. Usul*, op. cit.

2.3 Turkish Armed Forces

While some political figures consider it misleading to study whether or not the Turkish military is in favour of EU accession,⁶⁵ the general sentiment is that 'the weight of the military in Turkish politics cannot be denied'.⁶⁶ Regular progress reports by the Commission have repeatedly referred to the military as an influential actor in Turkish politics. The armed forces remain far from silent in political affairs, including in Turkey's EU accession process in so far as the issue has many political but also strategic/security-related ramifications. Many observers, however, believe that the military's influence over daily politics is grossly exaggerated, yet their seemingly significant political clout enables political actors to use it as a scapegoat and avoid accountability.⁶⁷

The question as to how the Turkish Armed Forces view Turkey's European vocation finds contrasting and even contradicting answers. While some respondents believe that there is not a single faction within the military that supports the EU vocation, others contend that the military has always offered its endorsement for the project.⁶⁸ Such a contradiction seems to stem from a fundamental dilemma facing the military, one that resembles the position of many others in different sectors. Stakeholders in Turkey who are in favour of EU accession find it difficult to reconcile their enthusiasm with the current state of affairs, the dim membership prospects and what they perceive as the EU's 'take what you can, give nothing back' approach towards Turkey.

With respect to the military's past motivations, at the eve of the Helsinki European Council meeting for example, the military had several incentives to endorse EU candidacy. These included the fundamental belief in Westernization, participation in ESDP decision-making, the acquisition of an equal footing with Cyprus, and the idea that Kurdish separatism and the Islamist movement which, in their view, threatened the fundamentals of the Republic, could be controlled more easily once Turkey entered the

⁶⁵ *Interviews with Mr. Öymen and Mr. Çavuşoğlu*, op. cit.

⁶⁶ *Interview with Mr. Süleyman Demirel*, Former President and Prime Minister, 10 July 2008.

⁶⁷ *Interview with Dr. Nihat Ali Özcan*, TEPAV Senior Expert on Civil-Military Relations, 21 May 2008.

⁶⁸ Current President Abdullah Gül expresses his satisfaction at having received full support even for the most difficult reforms including the ones that involved the military. *Interview with Mr. Abdullah Gül*, President of Turkey, Former AKP MP, PM and FM, 1 July 2008.

EU.⁶⁹ However, “security during transformation,” i.e. the control over domestic threats *during* the reform process and *prior to* actual membership remains a question for the military. The pronounced “open-endedness” of the negotiations and the weakening faith that membership will take place in the foreseeable future have rendered the armed forces more cautious against the wider freedoms that the reform process grants. Nevertheless, a keen observer claims that ‘the army refuses to “surrender its soul”’ in so far as it is unable to make clear projections about the future of the EU process, while at the same time, ‘it refuses to be the one to tear the game apart’.⁷⁰ On the former note, another expert adds that ‘one seems to wonder how to keep the situation that emerges under control’.⁷¹ On the latter, the common view is that the military is unwilling to assume responsibility for hampering the process in a situation in which a plethora of actors as well as public opinion are in favour. In the words of Mr Çetin: ‘[t]he military is very cautious not to allow a problem to emerge due to their own actions’.⁷² The military finds the idea of ‘being against the EU’ ‘offensive’, due to its perceived identity as the founder and guardian of the Republic, which inevitably includes a Western orientation along with what they call the ‘democratic, secular nature of the state of law’.⁷³ The military supports EU membership as a guarantor of a secular, unitary democracy in Turkey as ‘it gives the military an opportunity to transfer its own mission to another body and hence to save the country from remaining in the second league as a paradoxical country where democracy is ensured by the military. You simply need a glue to keep the people together, and EU prospect promised to be just that’.⁷⁴ Despite acknowledging the hesitancy of the inner circle, observers see the military’s concession during the restructuring of the State Security Council as clear evidence that it prioritizes the nation’s interests above its own, or perhaps identifies one with the other.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Our findings on the military’s position over EU accession corroborate the claims proposed by Ersel Aydınli, Nihat Ali Özcan and Doğan Akyaz (2006) ‘The Turkish Military’s March Toward Europe’, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 1.

⁷⁰ *Interview with Dr. Özcan*, op. cit.

⁷¹ *Interview with Mr. Mehmet Ali Kışlalı*, Columnist at Daily Radikal, 8 July 2008.

⁷² *Interview with Mr. Hikmet Çetin*, Former Foreign Minister and former CHP Chairman, 13 June 2008.

⁷³ *Interview with Ret. Gen. Edip Başer*, Former Deputy General Staff, 17 June 2008.

⁷⁴ *Interview with Dr. Mustafa Aydın*, Chairman of Department of International Relations, TOBB-ETÜ, 22 May 2008.

⁷⁵ *Interview with Ms. Barçın Yınanç*, Columnist, Referans Daily; 17 June 2008; *Interview with Dr. Özcan*, op. cit.

At the same time, according to some, it is precisely this identity that underlies the military's irritation with the reform process, which opens up spaces of freedom in a country challenged by several perceived threats and disarms the Armed Forces in their quest to guard the Republic against its internal and external enemies. This sentiment is compounded by the army's scepticism of the current government, one that they feel has fundamentalist intentions.⁷⁶ The military has grown suspicious of the measures taken by the government to limit its weight in the state apparatus. It also feels that the government, propounding the reform process as an excuse, constrains the struggle against the PKK. 'The goal may be finding a seat for Turkey within contemporary civilization, as Turkey's founder Atatürk put it', says Dr. Nihat Ali Özcan, 'but a significant consideration is still the survival of the unitary state. Hence the fundamental dilemma for Turkey's republican establishment'.

Respondents also argued that the military's scepticism is also driven by the EU's actions, such as its 'incomprehensible tolerance' of Kurdish separatist terrorism, its side-taking in what is now known as the 'secularism-democracy' divide and its 'double standards' in both Cyprus and Turkey-Greece relations.⁷⁷ 'The military is not against the EU; in fact, it is sympathetic to it, but it simply cannot digest the things the EU is doing'.⁷⁸ Even more Europhile figures caution that 'Turkey will not agree to anything that will jeopardize its territorial integrity and unitary state structure. It will not bring its national unity at stake in order to become an EU member. We will say "Stop!" when it comes to that'.⁷⁹

3. From EU's Woes to "Double Standards": Common Threads Across Stakeholders

As sketched above, most stakeholders and commentators agree on a common note that a major part of the problem stems from the EU side. Turkey has caught the EU in the midst of an "existential crisis", whereby there is widespread controversy within the Union on which path to proceed.⁸⁰ Moreover, unsympathetic governments are in power in influential

⁷⁶ *Interview with Mr. Kışlalı*, op. cit.

⁷⁷ *Interviews with Mr. Başer and Mr. Kışlalı*, op. cit.

⁷⁸ *Interview with Mr. Kışlalı*, op. cit.

⁷⁹ *Interview with Mr. Demirel*, op. cit.

⁸⁰ *Interview with Mr. Çavuşoğlu*, op. cit.

European capitals. Most respondents find it regrettable that Turkey's accession process remains a political question of "whether" while it should now be simply a technical matter of "when and how".

Another common point raised is that Europe did not anticipate the rapid progress that Turkey made and therefore was not ready for Turkey having 'satisfactorily fulfilled' the Copenhagen criteria in a matter of few years.⁸¹ Former Head of the European Commission Delegation to Turkey Mr. Michael Lake recalls in 1993 when negotiations for a Customs Union began, no one in any EU institution believed Turkey could successfully complete the negotiations for the CU to take effect.⁸² Likewise, President Gül, who was foreign minister at the time of debates on whether to give Turkey a date to commence accession negotiations, describes European leaders as 'shocked', for they expected the AKP government would suspend rather than force the EU process ahead.⁸³ Likewise, Mr. Fidan thinks that 'the EU never thought things would get this serious and when they did, the EU started to debate Turkey's membership from an identity perspective the way Turkey had been doing over the last 30 years. When Turkey finally made up its mind, Europe took over the debate, albeit at a time when it was no longer justifiable as the political decision to go ahead with the accession process had already been made'.⁸⁴

A common thread across several interviewees was the understanding that both sides have been "pretending" for a while that negotiations were ongoing. With eight chapters suspended due to the Cyprus row, another five *de facto* stalled due to French opposition, the provision that no chapter can be closed, the overall anti-Turkey mood in a significant number of European capitals, the current talk on alternatives to full membership, *inter alia*, have led various social groups and political parties in Turkey to conclude that any effort for membership for the time being is in vain. As indicated earlier, the more Europhile believe that this situation is conjunctural and reforms should be maintained in order to demonstrate Turkey's level of commitment as well as to be ready for accession when the tide turns in Europe.⁸⁵ Many

⁸¹ Interview with Mr. Denemeç, op. cit.

⁸² Lake, M. (2005) 'Introduction' in M. Lake (ed.) *The EU and Turkey: A Glittering Prize or a Millstone*, London, Federal Trust for Education and Research, p.10.

⁸³ Interview with Mr. Gül, op. cit.

⁸⁴ Interview with Mr. Hakan Fidan, Deputy Undersecretary to the Prime Ministry, 18 June 2008.

⁸⁵ This group includes President Gül, Parliamentary EU Committee Chairman Mr. Yakış and TÜSiAD representatives, among others.

others, ostensibly including the government *and* the opposition, see no point in “losing leverage” by undertaking reforms that will have no resonance in the EU, or in “giving concessions” when there will be no positive return.

This chapter indicates that while motivations, level of criticism, and opinions on how to proceed vary across key actors, the goal of full membership remains a common thread – a point shared by all segments in the Turkish political and economic arena. Criticism and a dose of resentment appear to be universal at this point in time, but this should not be read as a categorical rejection of the project in and of itself. An overview of responses by stakeholders implies that the current declining level of popular support may simply indicate a reactive disenchantment. In fact, popular support for the accession process in Turkey seems to run parallel to the ebbs and flows of elite support for Turkish membership, which, in turn, tends to follow the cyclical pattern of the European mood regarding Turkey. Although scepticism towards EU motivations is commonplace, this study suggests that such trend is reversible with a change in tone in the EU discourse on Turkey, which may help revive the EU project in Turkey. For the time being, however, although they agree on the benefits of EU membership in principle, influential decision-makers in both the ruling and opposition parties appear to concur that the mood in Europe makes reform efforts futile and even counterproductive. Hence the question becomes whether a new bipartisan consensus to put the brakes on the accession effort has replaced the former reformist accord characterizing the period between 2001 and 2004.

Although motivations for accession depend on the way interviewees perceive the nature or the essence of the EU project, the emphasis on the modernization and democratization aspect is almost universal. Various groups have different perceptions as to what democracy entails and who is meant to benefit from it, but most stakeholders prioritize values like human rights, democratic good governance and rule of law,⁸⁶ which inevitably implies that the EU is considered as an essentially political project and one that complements Turkey’s enlightenment movement. Even where motivations are primarily economic, like in the case of the business community, it involves a dose of political anticipation of something better to come. Most commentators agree that the EU reform process and eventual membership will act as a catalyst to facilitate and accelerate modernization, institution-

⁸⁶ *Interview with Mr. Demirel*, op. cit.

alization and better governance, although these can all be achieved by Turkey's internal means and dynamics.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, change, which most sides would like to see taking place in Turkey, is likely to require the impetus of external linkages to ensure faster and more sustainable results.⁸⁸

Another common thread worth noting is that nothing less than full membership will do. Even though most believe it will not be “the end of the world” if Turkey fails to become a member, all respondents agree that the current discourse on “privileged partnership” or any other arrangement (e.g., the Union of the Mediterranean) will never be accepted as a replacement of full membership. Former President Süleyman Demirel warns that “Turkey will lose its power in the international platform in the following fifty years if it agrees to anything less than EU [full membership]. EU membership is Turkey's right. It is not a favour of some sort. It is a right that arises from international commitments. Europe should not challenge this right for arbitrary reasons’.⁸⁹ In fact, the unfavourable mood in Europe about Turkish membership and the discourse on arrangements that fall short of full membership have had a dramatic impact in undermining the morale in Turkey. The discourse on Turkey's “non-Europeanness”, on the limits of the EU's “absorption capacity”, on a “privileged partnership” and the “Union of the Mediterranean” have been tremendously influential in a country where the media's radar captures all anti-Turkey discourse within the EU regardless of how politically insignificant the speaker may be. Considering the fact that Turkey's relationship with the EU is extremely delicate, whereby symbols matter, the non-invitation to the 50th anniversary of the Union celebrations or the omission of Turkey on the European map on Euro notes/coins can have unparallel repercussions in fuelling the prevalent feeling of “unwantedness”, not to mention intentional political decisions like refusing to mention “accession” in a high-level EU document on Turkey's accession. The level of resentment in Turkey is such that the EU is criticized harshly even by its most enthusiastic allies on matters such as double standards.⁹⁰ Accusations

⁸⁷ Not everyone agrees: Mr. Eczacıbaşı does not find it credible that all of Turkey's problems will be solved upon accession as these are deeply rooted in historical, geographical or endogenous factors.

⁸⁸ *Interviews with Mr. Çiçek and Mr. Hacaloğlu*, op. cit.

⁸⁹ *Interview with Mr. Demirel*, op. cit.

⁹⁰ See Aydın Düzgit, S. (2006) ‘Seeking Kant in EU's Relations with Turkey’, *TESEV Publications*, 1 December, http://www.tesev.org.tr/UD_OBJS/PDF/DPT/AB/seeking%20kant_SON_07.12.06.pdf.

of EU “double standards” are now part of the daily discourse on EU-Turkey relations, as reflected in the interviews.⁹¹ Indeed some interviewees go as far as accusing the EU of “hypocrisy” and “deceitfulness”.

4. Way Out of the Impasse? Selective Insights for a Communication Strategy

This chapter has revealed that the quasi-consensus in Turkey is that only a stronger signal from the EU in a first instance will put relations back on track. A stronger EU prospect will not only translate into a stronger EU anchor for Turkey but also much stronger popular support and commitment by key stakeholders. Such a gesture may help even in cases of particularly sensitive problem areas such as the Cyprus issue whereby even the more informed wonder why make any concession if the EU is unwilling to allow Turkey in the club. Hence, the current vicious cycle in EU-Turkey relations cannot be resolved unless this widespread sense of cynicism in Turkey is overcome.

The interviews, particularly with experts and observers, indicate that more awareness in Turkey about the EU (and viceversa) is also essential. Turkey should be included within debates in and on Europe both as an object of analysis and as a subject of the discussion. The former means that the EU, particularly at the institutional level, should make an effort to bring Turkey into the debate in terms of economic, social and political analyses and forecasts. The time may have come for a renewed impact analysis concerning Turkey’s “prospective” accession, and Turkey can, and in fact should, be incorporated into debates on economic, sectoral, foreign policy, security and defence matters, and demographic and labour force projections. As a significant step in this direction the EU should begin considering the inclusion of Turkey in the 2014-20 budgetary framework, which would be perceived as a strong signal of commitment. European civil society is already incorporating Turkey into its agenda, but this role may be strengthened through interaction and cooperation with institutional bodies, Turkish counterparts and Turkish politicians. In turn, Turkey must make an active effort in building its capacity over EU affairs, with the necessary expertise to contribute to intra-EU debates such as the EU’s institutional set-up, level of integration, global position and regional role.

⁹¹ Indeed, respondents in 73 out of 85 interviews referred to “double standards” in one context or another.

On the EU side, both European institutions and member states need to understand that any major leap forward in Turkey's reform agenda is to be achieved only through an all-encompassing consensus and/or enthusiasm among major stakeholders in Turkey. Today, a power struggle is going on in Turkey. Recent progress reports as well as press declarations from EU institutions, which favoured one side over the other, not only are counter-productive, exacerbating the scepticism against the EU, but become also dangerous, encouraging an inadequate reading of the Turkish political scene and undermining any chance of building renewed consensus and dialogue with Turkish non-governmental stakeholders as well. Indeed, both Turkish and EU stakeholders need to develop new channels of communication allowing better understanding⁹² among the elites before a communication strategy might be widened to include the public writ large.

Finally, the EU, at both Union and member state levels, has to face and resolve its existential problems and leave behind atavistic sentiments towards Turkey. As the above survey on attitudes of key stakeholders in Turkey shows, the common perception among these actors is that the current impasse stems directly and indirectly from the EU side. This implies that, *if and when* the EU summons the political will needed to advance Turkish accession, it should be more tactful in treating this candidate as an equal subject at the table. Meanwhile, it seems likely that the lukewarm status quo in EU-Turkey will prevail.

⁹² A more intensive dialogue with various Turkish stakeholders represented in Brussels, which have recently come to include CHP, would in and of itself be a step in the right direction.

10. THE EFFECT OF US POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST ON EU-TURKEY RELATIONS

Henri J. Barkey

Turkey could not have a more vigorous advocate for its quest for EU accession than the United States. Successive administrations in Washington strongly made the case that Turkey was an intrinsic part of Europe; historically and politically Ankara played a critical role in the defence of Europe against the Soviet Union and now it is an indispensable country in the bridging of the civilizational divide. Since the early 1970s, the United States had decided to locate Turkey in Europe, bureaucratically speaking of course. Hence, Turkey, which used to be in the Middle East bureau in the State Department and elsewhere in the bureaucracy, was transferred to the European divisions of the respective administrative agencies. It is therefore ironic that after arguing for decades that Turkey is a European country, the US through its Iraq invasion has in one bold stroke managed to push Turkey back into the Middle East in the eyes of many Europeans. Of course, other events, especially Turkish domestic politics, have also played a role in making this perceptual move possible. Simply stated, as US security concerns shifted east and away from Europe, it was only natural, though far from intentional, that Washington would take Ankara along for the ride.

This article analyses the impact of US policies in the Middle East on EU-Turkish relations. How did Washington's war on Iraq, its *bras de fer* with Iran, pursuit of a democratization agenda in the Middle East and its approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict help shape EU views of Turkey's accession process? It should be stressed from the outset that there is no uniform

answer to these questions as the EU is not a homogenous enterprise. It is in fact the differentiated impact of US policies in the Middle East which is of interest here. In many instances, different stakeholders in each member state may have reacted in a sundry of ways to these policy developments. The approach advanced here is anything but systematic; it starts with a broad overview of how US policies in the Middle East have affected Turkey in the first place. It is only then that one can venture an analysis of the differing European reactions.

1. US Policies and Turkey

Starting with the end of the Cold War, but especially with the first Gulf war of 1990-91, the US found itself drawn increasingly into the Middle East. The post-Cold War containment of Saddam Hussein's Iraq relied extensively on Turkey. In fact, one can make the argument that without Ankara, Washington would have had a terrible time keeping Saddam Hussein in a box. The no-fly zone that protected the Kurds in northern Iraq from Saddam's wrath was based in the Turkish airforce base of Incirlik. In fact, the official US policy was one of dual containment levied at both Iraq and Iran. Concerns about a Russian and Iranian chokehold over the emerging new oil states of Central Asia and the Caucasus, inspired the US administration to champion new pipelines, the most important of which is the Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan (BTC) line that brings Azeri oil to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan. Although initially spurned as uneconomical and unfeasible by many, the completion of the BTC pipeline gave Turkey a boost in becoming an energy transit route to Europe.

Perhaps a publicly unarticulated conviction among policy-makers in Washington was that support for Turkey's European accession process was more about bolstering a pivotal state whose influence and power projection capabilities were indispensable to the US. As an EU member, Turkey would be more prosperous, more democratic, more self-confident and, therefore, more of a role model for the region.

In the Clinton years, the US also spent an inordinate amount of time on the Arab-Israeli peace process; the 1993 Oslo agreements set the stage for a series of negotiations and initiatives designed to bring the parties together. Turkey played a small role in this, in part, because it was not very enterprising and, in many ways, bureaucratically unprepared for a major role.

But it is the attacks of 9/11 and the Bush administration's decision to over-

throw Saddam Hussein that represented the final *coup de grace* in pushing Turkey towards the Middle East. Washington needed Ankara to participate in its plans and pressed very hard to open a second – northern – front against Baghdad in 2003. If it were not for a parliamentary debacle – an unintentional one in my view – Turkish troops would have entered Iraq to establish a *cordon sanitaire* just behind the advancing American 4th Infantry Division. In a confusing ballot, the Turkish parliament voted not to allow for the transitioning of US troops. Whereas many in Europe, and certainly many people opposed to the war, saw in the parliament's decision the emergence of a new Turkey more closely aligned with the EU, the details of the case revealed something different. The new Turkish government, a moderately Islamist one as well, had after long and sometimes difficult negotiations signed a memorandum of understanding with Washington on the modalities of this second front. Every aspect, from the moment troops landed in Iskenderun to how they transited through Turkish territory into northern Iraq, was negotiated. Despite the recommendation that MPs vote for the resolution, a large number of AKP parliamentarians, convinced that the resolution would pass and that their vote would be of little consequence, went against their leadership and rejected the motion. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the permission failed by a few votes.

The Iraq war also led to a crisis in Transatlantic ties. The active opposition of some of its allies to its goals troubled Washington. As a consequence of the war, the perception of the US in the public opinion of its allies tumbled precipitously. Turkey was not immune to this trend, in fact, public opinion surveys showed that Turks consistently manifest a lower appreciation of Americans than all of their European counterparts. The Iraq war may have brought Turkey and the EU closer and therefore reduced fears that Turkey would represent an American Trojan Horse left at the gates of the EU. However, even if the war reduced the distance between Ankara and Brussels, the fact is that Turkey has always relied on the US to champion its cause in EU capitals. Post-Iraq, American unpopularity in Europe has also weakened Washington's ability to lobby for Turkey and has led to public spats between the Bush administration and France in particular. The most public of these was when, at the occasion of the NATO Summit in Istanbul in 2004, French President Jacques Chirac publicly rebuked President Bush 'for calling for special treatment for the Turks'. Mr. Bush, he complained, 'not only went too far but went on to territory which is not his own.' He then added: 'it's as if I was advising the US on how they

should manage their relations with Mexico.¹ Ironically of the war's two effects, getting Europe and Turkey closer to each other and reduced US influence on championing the Turkish cause, the latter was perhaps far more significant and likely to be longer lasting.

2. War and Consequences: The Iraq War and Turkey

The Bush administration's decision to go to war in Iraq had three mostly predictable but unintended consequences for Turkey. First, it inflamed the East-West divide, or the clash of civilizations, as some prefer to refer to it. Second, it brought the Middle East closer to Europe and, in the chaos that Iraq sank into, it raised the consciousness of the Europeans to Turkey's geographic reality, a border state on the edge of mayhem, turmoil and violence. Third, the chaos in Iraq or that country's transformation into a federal, if not bi-national state, with Iraqi Kurds assuming an important if not critical role, unnerved Turkey's leadership, which put much of its energies once again into preventing the emergence of a federal or independent Iraqi Kurdish state. All three factors strongly influenced EU positions and views on Turkey's accession prospects.

The "clash of civilizations" argument was one that had always been advanced to demonstrate how Turkey's inclusion into the EU would help defeat the very idea that such a clash exists. The incorporation of an industrious Muslim society can only prove to the rest of the world that the West is not indelibly opposed to Islam. In fact, this is an argument that many supporters of Turkey's membership on both sides of the Atlantic have articulated. This is also an argument that received an important boost from the ascendance to power in 2002 of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), a moderately Islamic party, willing to push for a European-inspired reform agenda that was far more ambitious than any of its more secular predecessors had ever done. In fact, one can even argue that the very nature of the AKP as the governing party has increased the stakes for Europe. This is because denying an accession process when such a party rules Turkey would act as further proof of the anti-Muslim sentiments dominating the EU. As Anne-Marie Le Gloannec and I argued, if Europe accepts Turkey and thereby 'Turkey's democracy deepens, not only will Atatürk's – and even the Ottomans' – original dream of west-

¹ Black, I., M. White, and G. Tremlett (2004) 'Angry Chirac puts Bush in his place', *The Guardian*, June 29, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/jun/29/eu.nato>.

ernizing Turkey be fulfilled but also the twinning of Islam and democracy will have proven possible [... in so far as] Turkey certainly has shown that state and religion may be separated on the soil of Islam [...although] the “Christian-democratization” of Islam has still to happen.’² In turn, this accomplishment would serve as a model for the rest of the Muslim world that has struggled with its transition to democracy.

But the clash of civilizations, for which Turkey is offered as a potential panacea, may have had an opposite effect at the level of society by hardening perceptions of division and difference. The invasion of Iraq (together with Afghanistan) brought the conflict closer to home in both the Muslim and European worlds. In Muslim societies the initial reaction was quite uniform; this was part of a grand anti-Muslim conspiracy to appropriate natural resources and the like. The 9/11 attacks with their Hamburg-based cell of conspirators had already had the effect of taking the perception of a clash of civilizations a step further. It recreated the fears that Christian Europeans had about the “other” and in this case the “other” was the Muslim living in their midst. It was no longer an issue whether people could live side by side, but rather of potential security threats unintegrated and alienated migrant groups represented. The Madrid and London bombings in 2004 and 2005 further confirmed such fears among the public. Turks, of course, are not “ordinary Muslims” – their traditions and aspirations have always been different if not at odds with those of Muslim societies in the Middle East. Still, the ghetto-bound settlement patterns of Turks in Europe, the difficulties involved in assimilation and the inability (or unwillingness) of the Turkish government to help along the process of integration all served to raise doubts about the process of Turkey’s EU accession.³

The Iraq war may have strengthened pro-EU forces in Turkey,⁴ but its media

² Barkey, H. J. and A. M. Le Gloanec (2005) ‘The Strategic Implications of Turkey’s Integration in the European Union’, in E. Brimmer and S. Frolich (eds.) *The Strategic Implications of European Union Enlargement*, Washington, DC., Center for Transatlantic Relations and Johns Hopkins University, p.142.

³ To the consternation of many European leaders and also supporters of Turkey in Europe, Prime Minister Erdoğan in 2008 spoke out against efforts to integrate Turks living in Europe, arguing that assimilation was a crime against humanity. Turks, he argued, should maintain their identity. Forgetting perhaps that the Turkish state’s policies since the inception of the republic forcibly and sometimes violently tried to force the assimilation of Kurds, this statement created doubts in the minds of many as to what the real aim of the AKP, Erdoğan and Turkey were in regards to EU membership.

⁴ Öniş, Z. and Ş. Yılmaz (2005) ‘The Turkey-EU-US Triangle in Perspective: Transformation or Continuity’, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 59, No. 2, Spring, p. 266.

and other institutions have continued to pounce on any intended or unintended, real or imaginary European slight against Turkey. This has gained added momentum following the EU's decision to freeze negotiations on eight chapters of the *acquis communautaire* following Turkey's refusal to open its ports to EU member Cyprus and President Nicolas Sarkozy's election. The strong divergence in the public perception of a possible Turkish contribution to the narrowing of the clash of civilizations between the publics and their leaders makes this a particularly difficult issue to assess as it can be forcefully argued from both sides of the argument.

The second consequence was to bring the problems of the Middle East closer to Europe. As the Iraq war did not live up to its expected conclusions, the resulting chaos and uncertainty reminded Europeans that Turkey's accession would mean that Europe would in fact become a neighbour of Iraq, Syria and Iran. One outcome of this has been to think of Turkey not as a bridge to the Middle East and beyond but rather as a buffer between itself and unstable and in some cases fundamentalist regimes. Iran as a revisionist power does present problems for Western security but in addition its interests in the region do not match those of Turkey, especially in Iraq. Much of the Iranian-Turkish rivalry is rooted in the Sunni-Sh'ia divide and Iran's pursuit of a regional sphere of influence that would include a Sh'ia dominated Iraq. Turkey would very much prefer for Baghdad to be looking to Ankara rather than Tehran. Iran has also historically eyed Turkey as a NATO dagger and Turks have accused the Iranians of interfering in Turkish domestic politics. On the nuclear question as well, there is a division in Turkey between the government and the security establishment who is far more worried by Iran's nuclear ambitions. Is Iran's challenge to Turkey also a challenge to the EU? These are some of the questions that the EU decision elites and publics have to weigh.

Turkey has already become a transit point for illegal immigration and has for decades been a transshipment location for drugs. Today would-be immigrants, while easily crossing into Turkey, still have to cross one more frontier to enter Europe. Were Turkey to become a EU member then these immigrants would have crossed into Europe once on Turkish soil. As Nathalie Tocci argues, if for 'reasons of political interest and identity,' Europe were to 'choose not to extend its borders to Iraq, Iran and Syria by refuting Turkey's accession,' then 'the EU's borders would [have been] determined on the basis of their [perceived] functional political utility in pursuing the Union's interests, defining a European identity and allowing the European polity to live in a comfort

zone, protected by friendly buffer states such as Turkey.⁵ Yet under such circumstances, it is questionable whether Turkey would in fact offer much cooperation in combating illegal migration.

Moreover, Turkey, unlike many EU countries, takes security questions seriously and proportionally spends more of its national income on defence than any other EU country. As a result, the security argument can be turned around. Turkey offers Europe the services of a robust military establishment that can act as a deterrent or buffer in the region. In effect, Turkey then becomes the EU's forward defence line. Supporters of Turkey's accession in Europe often use this security argument. They also remind the Atlantic community of Turkey's role during the Cold War. To the extent that the United States is seen as being weakened by the Iraq war, the saliency of Turkish military prowess becomes more relevant. The US has lost not only politically but is also perceived to have neither the stamina of further military confrontations nor the ease to maneuver in many more theatres of operations given the pressure on its military infrastructure of the combined wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have caused.

Still the evidence at hand is not sufficiently convincing that Turkey will employ its military capabilities to serve European interests. Europeans for one have not responded encouragingly to Turkey's concerns, such as increased coordination on military and political responses to crisis situations, or Ankara's inclusion in ESDP planning processes (rather than just be called upon for contributions).⁶ Past Turkish foreign policy behaviour has exhibited a singularly independent and non-alliance dependent line. Lothar Rühl has argued that the fragility of the European-Turkish and Turkish-American military relationship exposed during the Iraq crisis, when France and Germany caused a paralysis of NATO institutions over Turkey, had been evident for a long time. The Turkish understanding of national security has led to minimum levels of cooperation with its US ally and European interests have always been trumped by Turkey's regional concerns.⁷

⁵ Tocci, N. (2007) 'Unpacking European Discourses: Conditionality, Impact and Prejudice in EU-Turkish Relations', in N. Tocci (ed.) *IAI Quaderni English series* No. 9, p. 21, http://www.iai.it/pdf/Quaderni/Quaderni_E_09.pdf.

⁶ Ülgen, S. (2008) 'The Evolving EU, NATO and Turkey Relationship: Implications for Atlantic Security', *EDAM Discussion Paper Series*, No. 2008/2, p. 5, <http://www.edam.org.tr/images/PDF/yayinlar/makaleler/edam-discussion%20paper2%202008.pdf>.

⁷ Rühl, L. (2005) 'The Mediterranean and the Greater Middle East', in E. Brimmer and S. Frolich (eds) *The Strategic Implications of European Union Enlargement*, Washington D.C., Center For Transatlantic Relations and Johns Hopkins University, p. 216.

Third, the Iraq war has dramatically changed the equation for the Kurds, in Turkey and in Iraq, although other factors, such as the end of the Cold War and the influence of globalization, had already sparked the emergence of the Kurdish nationalist genie. An Iraqi Kurdish state within a federal Iraq is the minimum the Iraqi Kurds will settle for. Even if Turkish Kurds are unlikely to seek secession from Turkey, the very existence of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq has given them more confidence. There is no question that the Kurdish issue is the single most important challenge facing Turkey today and in the years ahead. Turkey can no longer put the Kurdish genie back into its bottle. Furthermore, having squandered numerous opportunities in the past, Ankara now faces a challenge that is no longer just a domestic conflict but one that is completely internationalized. Ankara will also discover that the twin challenges of domestic Kurdish mobilization and an incipient Kurdish state in northern Iraq are likely to alter its relations with friend and foe alike and have deep repercussions on its domestic politics. It is quite possible that the failure to develop a coherent strategy can result in disastrous consequences for Turkey's place in the Western alliance and the Middle East.

The Iraq war, therefore, has accentuated the challenges for Turkey that go to the very core of the definition and identity of the Turkish state. Much of the debate in Turkey about the EU has focused on the implications of reform measures and membership on the unitary nature of the Turkish state. The Kurdish problem is, of course, not new to Turkey as successive governments in Ankara have tried to deal with this troublesome minority over the years, sometimes by exiling leaders and populations, at other times using excessive force but almost always by adopting a state discourse that denied their very identity. Documents show that Turkish governments have been excessively worried about the Kurdish question even when the issue did not appear to be salient by international standards.⁸ The Iraq war has heightened Turkey's doubts about its long-term ability to contain Kurdish secessionist tendencies. The war came after Ankara's long struggle with the PKK. By leading to the rise of a federal Kurdish entity in northern Iraq with a great deal of clout in Baghdad, the war also deepened Turkey's suspicions of the West. For many Turks, and powerful ones at that, the Kurdish state is a long-term project designed to continue the carving up of the Ottoman

⁸ Akçura, B. (2008) *Devletin Kürt Filmi*, Ankara, Ayraç Kitabevi Yayinlari.

Empire, the so-called “Sèvres Syndrome” as this line of argument, or more accurately, condition has come to be known in Turkey. In the process, the war which coincided with the ascendance to power of a mildly Islamist party, AKP, also unnerved the dominant military establishment. For them, the EU process is a recipe for hastening the dissolution of the Turkish state. It is worth noting that as recently as this past August, both the incoming Chief of Turkish General Staff, General Ilker Basbug, and the new commander of the Land Forces, Isik Kosaner, issued warnings against the EU and even blistering attacks on Turkish non-governmental organizations that receive funds from Europe and the US.⁹ Included was also a warning against any civilianization of the military, which is a requisite condition for EU accession.

The military has always complained about the lack of European follow through on pursuing PKK nodes in Europe and perceived European tolerance for such establishments such as Roj-TV, the pro-PKK satellite television channel that has a wide viewership in Turkey and beyond. The resurgence of the PKK after the Iraq war has, not surprisingly, increased Turkish sensitivities regarding the PKK's presence in Europe. The deeper the conflict gets with the PKK, the more Turks get alienated from Europe and its politically liberalizing agenda. The PKK issue in fact cuts both ways. Turkish-Kurdish tensions have already migrated to Europe, where Kurds, most of whom are far more radical than their brethren in Turkey, constitute an important segment of the Turkish migrant community. As a result, Europeans are already familiar with the tensions associated with this problem. There are over 2,2 million people of Turkish extraction in Germany alone; most are non-citizens and have tended to live rather isolated lives from the mainstream population. Of these, as many as 500,000 of these Turks are thought to be of Kurdish extraction. Not all are politicized, but as it is with most Diaspora communities, those who are politicized on both sides of the divide tend to be far more militant and uncompromising. European Kurds have been a major source of funding for the PKK. Despite the bans imposed on the PKK in Europe, the organization has managed to create subsidiary associations to continue recruitment and fundraising. As with the arrest of the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, the PKK is quite capable of mobilizing large numbers of people throughout Europe and create mayhem. Turkish-Kurdish tensions in Europe tend to flare

⁹ Congar, Y. (2008) ‘Işık Koşaner’in Ulusalçı Manifestosu’, *Taraf*, 29 August and Bila, F. (2008) ‘İlker Pasa’dan Acik Uyarilar’, *Milliyet*, 29 August.

up in parallel with developments in Turkey and the danger has been that this will assume a far more violent character with time. As the Kurds in the Middle East become more active and forceful with their demands, Europe is likely to become a battleground of sorts. Already, linkages between Turkish and other Kurds have grown over time especially with the increase of Kurdish illegal migration into Europe. The European unease with this potentially explosive situation cannot be underestimated. This is because, as Lauren McLaren convincingly demonstrates, the hostility to Turkish admission is rooted in the fear of 'long-term, large-scale migration. Instead of creating a climate of empathy for the country of origin of these migrants, high levels of Turkish migration have created a climate of perceived threat to in-group resources and culture.'¹⁰

There is another way in which the PKK challenge affects EU-Turkey relations. This has to do with northern Iraq and the Turkish preoccupation with preventing the emergence of an independent Kurdistan and fighting the PKK presence there. The PKK has been a difficult adversary to defeat. After more than 20 years of fighting, the Turks, with one of the largest armies in NATO, have not managed to eliminate this insurgency. Perhaps as much as half of the PKK's fighting force, some 2,000 insurgents, are based in remote parts of northern Iraq. Ankara blames the PKK's access to northern Iraqi territory for its failure to defeat this insurgency. As a result, the Turks have put a great deal of pressure on Iraqi Kurds and the US to eliminate the PKK by threatening to intervene themselves in northern Iraq if not. Following some spectacular ambushes in late 2007, when Turkish soldiers suffered important casualties, the US and the Iraqi Kurds relented and allowed the Turks to begin cross-border operations. Turks in their attempt to prevent the KRG from becoming independent have also warned Iraqi Kurds that if the oil-rich city and province of Kirkuk were to be incorporated into the Kurdistan region, they would step in to prevent it. Such threats and the cross-border operations beginning in December 2007 have worried Europeans sufficiently to issue Ankara a warning in February 2008 'not to use disproportionate force' in its ground and air operations.¹¹ In

¹⁰ McLaren, L. M. (2007) 'Explaining Opposition to Turkish Membership of the EU', *European Union Politics* Vol. 8, No. 2, p. 254.

¹¹ 'EU Presidency Statement on the military action undertaken by Turkey in Iraqi territory', *CFSP Statements*, 25 February 2008, http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/February/0225MZZturkey.html.

effect, the EU realizes that Turkey's domestic problems, particularly the Kurdish question, increasingly risks involving Ankara in Iraq militarily. In turn, were Turkey to become an EU member state, the projection of Turkish power onto an uncertain and unstable Iraq entails risks that are far too large for Europeans to contemplate.

This is why the EU has insisted with Turkey to improve its domestic record with its Kurdish minority. The size of the Kurdish population in Turkey, up to 20% of Turkey's population, is not insignificant and can no longer be ignored in an age of globalization. The closer Turkey gets to Europe the more intense will be the scrutiny it will find itself subjected to. In this respect, EU Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn forcefully argued: 'Ankara needs to improve the access of its Kurdish population to radio and television broadcasting and to support the teaching of languages other than Turkish.'¹² Therefore, it would be unrealistic to expect Europeans to admit a Turkey incapable of resolving its domestic divisions peacefully. However, in so far as this issue goes to the heart of Turkey's national identity, resistance to EU accession on European terms will also tend to increase in Turkey.

In sum, US Middle East policy under the Bush administration has had a subtle, but overall negative impact on Turkey's prospects for EU membership. This, of course, was an unintended consequence of American actions. 9/11 in of itself without the American reaction was likely to have emphasized some of the divergence between Turkey and Europe, but the cumulative effect of opening a Pandora's Box of sorts in the Middle East have not been to Turkey's advantage.

3. The AKP's Foreign Policy Ambitions

The US may not have done Turkey any service with its Middle East policies, especially in Iraq, but paradoxically it has made it easier for the governing AKP to pursue an ambitious and uncharacteristic foreign policy for Turkey. Washington unintentionally created an opening for Turkey to play a bigger role in the Middle East. And Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was more than willing to oblige. The perception of a decline in American

¹² 'EU enlargement chief urges Turkey to promote cultural rights, reduce poverty of Kurds', *Associate Press wire*, 3 March 2008, <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/03/03/europe/EU-GEN-EU-Turkey-Kurds.php>.

influence in the region allowed the AKP to push in multilateral diplomatic venues, specifically between Israel and Syria and within Lebanon. It is too early to say whether these will be successful or fruitful ventures and, in fact, the chances are that the US will grab back the mantle of leadership following the US elections in November 2008.

The AKP was already intent on pursuing a new foreign policy that aimed at increasing Turkish influence not just regionally but more globally. The AKP government not only used its Islamic connections to improve relations with its neighbours, including Syria and Iran, but also pushed for Turkey's inclusion in international bodies in order to raise its international voice. While successful at winning the leadership of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, it set its sights even higher: a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council. The last time Turkey served on the UNSC was in the early 1960s. To this end, the AKP leadership has spared no expense or effort. Erdoğan and Turkish foreign ministers have crisscrossed the globe and Ankara has decided to open 15 new embassies in Africa alone. The chances are quite good that Turkey will succeed in its quest to win a seat which it will undoubtedly make use of for further forays into international diplomacy.

More important, however, is Ankara's venture into the Middle East. With its NATO membership, links to the US and Israel, Turkey has always been viewed suspiciously in the Middle East. Past Turkish leaders had deliberately turned their back on the Middle East as they focused on the West. The AKP's Muslim credentials, its ability to stand up to the arch-secularist establishment, its criticisms of Israel and willingness to buck US pressure on numerous instances have all helped increase its cache in the region. At a time when Washington was trying to isolate Syria, Erdoğan offered a warm embrace to the beleaguered Bashar al-Assad. For Assad and Syria, Turkey emerged as an important lifeline to get relief from the post-Hariri assassination pressure. Similarly, following the Hamas victory in the 2006 Palestinian elections, the Turks invited Hamas' hardline and unelected leader in exile Khaled Meshal to Turkey despite the fact that inviting the Hamas' leader, considered a terrorist organization and boycotted by both the US and the EU, undermined Turkey's own discourse on terrorism and the PKK. More importantly, it created question marks in Washington's mind as to Turkey's true intentions and weakened Turkey's supporters in the US. Graham Fuller had predicted a far more independent Turkish foreign policy not because of Washington's weakness, but rather because 'the

more hegemonic and unilateral Washington's policies become, the greater the tensions and the greater the likelihood that Turkey will find itself more sympathetic to an EU also striving for strategic independence.¹³

Irrespective of the reasons, these were risky ventures. They were also, however, quite popular with the Turkish public, which has become far more important in foreign policy decision-making than ever before. The AKP astutely used its newly built foreign policy capital to support the deployment of a Turkish force to Lebanon following the 2006 Lebanon war. What the AKP also understood was that it is its relations with America and Israel that gave it a winning hand. Erdoğan became the co-president of the UN-supported Alliance of Civilizations together with Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Zapatero. Ankara also sponsored a secret dialogue between Syria and Israel when the US had almost no contact with Syria and, in fact, was discouraging the Israelis to hold such talks. Enhanced Turkish influence means that Ankara has enough clout to push for initiatives of its own choosing without being rebuffed. As one senior Turkish foreign policy advisor argued, public expectations changed dramatically as a result of the AKP's diplomacy and now there is an expectation that Ankara should become more active in crises in its neighbourhood.¹⁴ Yet, as the recent foray by Erdoğan into the Georgian crisis has demonstrated, Ankara can push the envelope somewhat too far. Not only was there a certain naïveté in his approach,¹⁵ but also his proposed Caucasus Pact had not been coordinated with Turkey's principal allies, the US and the EU. This notwithstanding, even Erdoğan's fiercest critics in the establishment media fêted his "accomplishments" and pronounced that he had even been more successful than Sarkozy, who had been to Moscow and Tblisi ahead of him.

Will Turkey's increased influence and profile as active mediators in the Middle East and elsewhere help Ankara with the EU? Certainly. However, Turkey would be well advised to act prudently for three reasons. First, there is the possibility of overconfidence and overreach. Although Turks often remind the foreign visitor that they know the Middle East best having ruled over that region for centuries, the fact of the matter is that the Ottoman past and memory is largely irrelevant to policy formulation in the modern Middle East, which has

¹³ Fuller, G. E. (2004) 'Turkey's Strategic Model: Myths and Realities', *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3, Summer, p. 62
, http://www.twq.com/04summer/docs/04summer_fuller.pdf.

¹⁴ *Interview with senior Turkish foreign policy advisor*, Ankara, 8 July 2008.

¹⁵ Jenkins, G. (2008) 'Devils and Details: Ahmedinejad Visits Turkey', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 5, No. 156, 14 August, http://www.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2373317.

been buffeted by many different currents and forces since the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey has actually invested very little in its educational and government institutions to the study of that region and, though more so, to the Caucasus. Overconfidence that manifests itself in freelancing on the periphery without proper consultations with its allies is likely to alienate European decision-makers. It would be a mistake for Turkey to think that Transatlantic problems are significant enough to play the EU against the US. In the final analysis, the EU and the US are condemned to work in cooperation, though not necessarily in harmony, for the foreseeable future.

Second, because the current Turkish diplomatic success is partially conditioned on American weakness or imperial hubris, a change in US administration and policies may also serve to undercut Ankara's saliency. Even now, as the Turkish-sponsored Syrian-Israeli negotiations demonstrate, the final heavy lifting will have to be done by Washington. The Democratic administration in Washington will first seek to repair the tarred transatlantic relations and obtain European support for its exit policy from Iraq. In turn, it may be far more accepting of Turkish "diplomacy," but it will also be more demanding that Ankara execute domestic reforms and, thus, aligns itself more closely with the EU on pushing Turkey on domestic matters.

Third, in the event of the emergence of a coherent and cohesive European foreign policy, how would Turkey participate in it? As much as the AKP espouses its willingness to become a member of the EU, the fact of the matter is that it has foreign policy ambitions that transcend the EU. It is quite conceivable that the AKP, if it can see that far, imagines that Turkey's foreign policy role within the EU would be akin to one of the big powers, such as France and Britain. Its desire for an ascendant global role could easily put it on a collision course with Brussels.

Finally, as the research by Antonia Ruiz-Jimenez and Jose Torreblanca demonstrates, the European public is not going to be convinced by arguments based on the utility of Turkish accession, in other words, on what benefits Turkey would likely bring to the Union. They believe that 'a strategy highlighting the likely benefits of Turkish membership may hardly impress those already against Turkey's accession.'¹⁶ In fact, the sensitivities to non-utilitarian arguments for Turkey are such that even the French busi-

¹⁶ Ruiz-Jimenez, A. M. and J.I. Torreblanca (2007) 'European Public Opinion and Turkey's Accession: Making Sense of Arguments For and Against', *EPIN Working Paper No. 16*, May, p. 23, http://www.epin.org/new/files/EPIN_WP16_RuizJimenez_Torreblanca.pdf.

ness sector, which has invested USD 23 billion in Turkey with tens more in the pipeline, is unable to articulate a strong pro-accession position for Turkey. As Philippe de Buck, secretary general of *Business Europe*, the main umbrella organization for EU business, points out, '[w]e are in favour of a strong economic relationship [...] but the political issues are not for us to judge. It's not up to us to judge membership.¹⁷ This does not augur well for Turkey. Even the return of the Russian hardline policies on NATO's periphery and European uneasiness with its reliance on Russian energy supplies, for which Turkey offers an alternative conduit, is unlikely to change the perceptions of EU citizens.

4. By Way of Conclusion

So where does this leave Turkey in the aftermath of forcible US intrusions into the Middle East? There is no question that Turkey has made a partial journey towards a far more activist and discernible foreign policy. It has, in the words of its architects, attempted to build its "soft-power". This should help bolster its security argument in negotiations with the EU; it no longer is sheer muscle that it has to offer. Therefore, this is a far more subtle security argument. However, as Ruiz-Jimenez and Torreblanca state, Turkey's problems with the EU have a better chance of being resolved if Turkey (and its supporters) were to highlight its accommodation with, what they call, post-national visions of Europe. In other words, Turkey needs to re-brand itself and change public perceptions in Europe if it wants to communicate its case more effectively to the EU.¹⁸ It has to convince that its inclusion into the EU would help build the European idea and ideal. In the words of Robert Cooper, Turkey has to make the transition to the European post-modern state and politics.¹⁹

It may be that even without the US invasion of Iraq, Turkey would have found itself in this contradictory situation in the Middle East, concomitantly hindering and promoting its EU accession course. While trying to exert diplomatic influence over its neighbourhood, Ankara also finds itself pulled

¹⁷ Taylor, P. (2008) 'In Turkey's Potential, a Bonanza - but not for France', *International Herald Tribune*, 11 February, <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/02/11/business/rtrinside12.php>.

¹⁸ Barysch, K. (2007) 'What Europeans Think About Turkey and Why', *Centre for European Reform Briefing Notes*, September, http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/briefing_kb_turkey_24aug07.pdf.

¹⁹ Cooper, R. (1996) *The Post-Modern State and the World Order*, London, Demos.

into the region, which is still in the throes of “modern politics” characterized by an emphasis on nationalist values and the importance of boundaries. As long as the fundamental security issue in Turkey is defined in nationalist terms that are basically zero-sum in nature and, therefore, it is unwilling to make an accommodation with its Kurdish citizens, Turkey will find that developments in Iraq will continue to pull it away from Brussels. What the Iraq war did was to hasten the moment of decision for the Turks.

11. FROM ADVOCATE TO STAKEHOLDER: US POLICY TOWARDS TURKEY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EU- TURKEY RELATIONS

*Ian O. Lesser*¹

As Turkey's EU candidacy has evolved, the American role as champion of Ankara's European aspirations has also changed in fundamental ways. Part of this change has been structural. The opening of accession negotiations altered the scope of American diplomacy on the question of Turkey's membership in the EU. Successive American administrations have strongly supported the notion of Turkish membership, but arguments based on broad geopolitical aims – anchoring Turkey to the West and building bridges to the Middle East and Eurasia – have become less salient and less effective in Europe as Turkey's candidacy is subjected to closer and more technical scrutiny. To be sure, the European debate on Turkey continues to have an important geostrategic component, but it is no longer the dominant element in the European calculus. Troubled transatlantic relations, and even more troubled relations between Turkey and the US, are also part of the equation.

This chapter explores the last of these elements: the changing nature of US policy towards Turkey and the meaning for the European debate on Turkey and Turkey's EU candidacy. The analysis inevitably touches on a wide range of regional and functional issues, not least because much of the US's Turkey policy is actually a by-product of other concerns and strategies – Russia, Iraq, Iran, the Balkans, Cyprus and the Aegean, energy security, and of

¹ The opinions expressed in this paper are the author's and do not represent the views of GMF.

course, the wider canvas of transatlantic and Muslim-Western relations. Turks have long complained, with some reason, that Washington has not paid sufficient attention to Turkey *qua* Turkey as a strategic partner in its own right. The security-heavy character of US-Turkish relations is another key theme with continuing implications for how Europe views Turkey in a Euro-Atlantic context. To the extent that Americans remain relatively comfortable with hard power and the use of force in international affairs, this will continue to shape American views of Turkey as a contributor to regional security.

With some critical exceptions, Turks have moved towards the European mainstream on many foreign policy questions, including attitudes towards the use of force. This too has implications for US-Turkish relations and the prospects for continued Turkish convergence with European norms. In recent years, Turkey has suffered from the widespread European perception that Ankara is too close to Washington on critical international issues, and could serve as a “Trojan Horse” for American policy preferences within the EU. The reality of relations in recent years has been quite different, with Turkish public and elite opinion often strikingly at odds with American policy. In terms of transatlantic disagreements, especially on Iraq and Iran, Turkey has often been in the European vanguard, even “European-and-a-half” in many respects. Moreover, the Turkish critique is often more sweeping – moving rapidly from opposition to specific policies to a wider indictment of American power – both in Turkey’s neighbourhood and globally. In short, the problem of anti-Americanism is probably deeper, wider and more entrenched in Turkey than elsewhere in Europe.

Of course, the pervasiveness of Turkish anti-Americanism in recent years does not necessarily imply closer Turkish relations with Europe, or warmer European attitudes towards Turkey as a potential member of the EU. European perspectives and policies towards Turkey have their own diverse dynamics. American influence and US-Turkish relations are part of the equation, but not the core, and arguably becoming less central over time.

1. An Enduring Geopolitical Perspective

Europe has debated relations with Turkey for over 500 years, and the debate over relations between Islam and the West is, of course, far older. But the American debate on Turkey, while always relatively marginal, is now

some 200 years old.² In the earliest years of US-Turkish relations, American perspectives on Turkey were driven overwhelmingly by developments and attitudes in Europe. In this sense, the US has a long tradition of viewing Turkey as part of the European “system” if not necessarily as part of Europe in the cultural and political sense. In the 18th and 19th centuries, American relations with the Ottoman Empire were centered on the “Turkey trade”, commerce protection in the Mediterranean, and the presence of Protestant missionaries in the Balkans and Anatolia. British and French support for anti-Turkish independence movements in the Balkans had parallels in the US, especially among ardent philhellenes. The sense of American cultural affinity with Ottoman (and later Republican) Turkey remained weak, with commercial and strategic interests consistently at the fore.

The experience of two world wars and fifty years of Cold War did little to change this perspective. American advocacy for Turkey in a Euro-Atlantic setting begins in earnest with the Truman Doctrine and the early enlargement of NATO to include Turkey in 1952.³ The dominant position of the US as a security arbiter in Europe in the early Cold War years, and growing Western concern about Soviet ambitions in the Balkans, the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, meant that there was little European opposition to Turkey’s integration into European security arrangements. Turkey’s ability to contain substantial Warsaw Pact forces on NATO’s southern flank was as welcome in Paris, Bonn and Rome as it was in Washington. The progressive expansion of American arrangements for power projection from Turkish territory always had a NATO component, related but distinct from bilateral uses (as at Incirlik airbase). But the Cold War management of the strategic relationship with Turkey was generally left to the US, with little European input. To a degree, this reflected Europe’s relatively limited ability to project military power in Turkey’s neighbourhood, and limited European means to make use of Turkish territory and facilities for defence in Europe or the Middle East.

The Cold War legacy and the security nature of US-Turkish relations even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, has sustained an important asymme-

² See Field, J. A. (1969) *America and the Mediterranean World 1776-1881*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

³ The transatlantic debate on this question is discussed in Kuniholm, B. R. (1980) *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, Princeton, Princeton University Press; and Athanassapoulou, E. (1999) *Turkey – Anglo-American Security Interests 1945-1952: The First Enlargement of NATO*, London, Frank Cass.

try in European and American views of Turkey. Indeed, the focus on Balkan, Middle Eastern and Black Sea security has kept this asymmetry fully alive in the post-Cold War years. As the EU has acquired a stronger economic, political and cultural interest in Turkey and the question of Turkey's integration, American leaders and strategists have remained attached to a geostrategic perspective on Turkey and Turkey-EU relations. This perspective only began to change with Turkey's rise as an emerging market after 2001, and the durability of this new interest is open to question.

As a global power, it is not surprising that the American view of Turkey has been closely tied to questions of geography and power projection, and less concerned with questions of integration and identity.⁴ In a way, the American perspective resembles European views of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century: a mix of uncertainty regarding the Empire's internal cohesion, and interest in the country's position as a Balkan, Eurasian and Middle Eastern actor, and a bulwark against Russian power. American strategists have readily adopted the "bridge" imagery regarding Turkey, alongside the (generally unspoken) notion of Turkey as a "barrier" against instability on the European periphery. This traditional approach to Turkey's strategic position sends a number of signals to Turks and Europeans, not all of which have a supportive impact on Turkey's European aspirations.

First, as noted above, it is an approach that emphasizes geography over identity, a preference at the core of the American argument about Turkey's value to Europe and the EU. As an unashamedly multicultural society, Americans are often uncomfortable with the idea of cultural identity as a driving force in international affairs. American policymakers could make the argument about Turkey's European identity, but this is rarely the thrust of American lobbying on Ankara's behalf. Rather, successive American administrations have argued that Turkey matters to Europe because of its geopolitical significance, its security contributions, and increasingly, its economic and political convergence with European norms. In short, the argument is that Turkey belongs in the EU because of *where* and *what* it is, rather than who the Turks *are*. A variant of this approach underscores the unsettled nature of Turkey's internal and external

⁴ The evolution of the American strategic perspective on Turkey is discussed in Lesser, I. O. (2007) *Beyond Suspicion: Rethinking US-Turkish Relations*, Washington, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/events/docs/beyondsuspicion.pdf>.

orientation, and the need to anchor the country in Western and, above all, European institutions. A further variant holds that Turkey also “deserves” full membership in the EU as a longstanding member of the Western security order. This line of reasoning has been at the core of American diplomacy on Turkey’s behalf at critical junctures in EU-Turkey relations. It has not always been well-received in Europe, but on the whole it was effective before the 2003 Iraq war and the emergence of a more troubled relationship across the Atlantic and in US-Turkish relations. One explanation for the effectiveness of American lobbying in the EU, first over the 1995 Customs Union agreement, and even more dramatically in the run-up to the 1999 Helsinki European Council, was the link to Cyprus and Greek-Turkish détente. The brinkmanship over Imia/Kardak in 1996 had an especially galvanizing effect on American policy.⁵ Subsequent American engagement on the question of Turkey’s EU candidacy carried with it the implicit idea of a “package deal” in which longstanding issues of stability in the Aegean and even the Balkans might be resolved. For the US, Turkey’s EU candidacy was, and continues to be about more than Turkey’s place in Europe; it is about regional security and development in the European periphery – and beyond. The emergence of a meaningful détente between Athens and Ankara in the late 1990s also had a liberating effect on American policy, allowing successive American administrations to make the case for Turkey against a backdrop of Greek support. From an American perspective, the improvement in Greek-Turkish relations has had a transforming effect, encouraging a shift from crisis management to a more strategic approach in relations with both countries, and reducing Congressional opposition to lobbying on Turkey’s behalf. However, with Cyprus’ accession to the EU, Congressional attention to the European dimension of Washington’s Turkey policy has been further reduced.

Second, it is an approach that emphasizes the links, geographical and political, between Europe, Eurasia and the Middle East. This was illustrated during the 1990 Gulf War when Turkey’s active participation in the coalition against Iraq was presumed to strengthen Ankara’s case for closer integration with Europe. However, in this case, many Europeans were inclined to see the experience as underscoring Turkey’s role as a valuable *Middle Eastern* rather

⁵ This was accompanied by a strong perception within the Clinton Administration of European passivity on Turkey and Greek-Turkish relations. Then Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Richard Holbrooke famously described Imia-Kardak and its resolution as a crisis that unfolded “while Europe slept.”

than European ally. More generally, European policymakers and publics tend to be wary of expansive security-related arguments about Turkey, especially those that imply new EU requirements and responsibilities. The notion of new EU borders with Iran, Iraq and Syria is not inherently attractive to mainstream European opinion, even if this might confer some advantages in managing Middle Eastern challenges. This argument is common in American strategic circles. In Europe, it tends to be shared by eurosceptics and those who prefer a looser, less ambitious Europe. Ironically, it is also a view espoused by some who favour a more assertive EU, capable of augmenting or even replacing American power in Europe's neighbourhood. In this context, Turkey's population, resources, military potential and borders, can be seen as assets for a more assertive and independent EU.⁶

Third, the post-September 11th climate has encouraged American policymakers to revisit the place of Turkey in identity politics. The result has been a synthesis between the geostrategic approach, which remains dominant, and a "civilizational" perspective emphasizing Turkey's distinctive position as an interlocutor between the Muslim world and the West. Although interest in democratic transformation has waxed and waned, Turkey has often been cited by US policymakers as an example of a "moderate, democratic Muslim country". This formulation makes many Turks uneasy, not least because it implies a degree of American comfort with Islamic politics in Turkey, while offering Turkey as a model for development in the Middle East rather than an example of diversity in Europe. Neither interpretation is entirely accurate. But the net unintended effect of this argument from Washington has been to locate Turkey, culturally and politically in the Muslim Middle East, reinforcing unease about Turkey's European identity and complicating the debate over Turkey's EU candidacy. Overall, the discussion of Turkey as a model has been an irritant in US-Turkish relations and complicating factor in relations between Turkey and Europe.

2. US Stakes in Turkish Convergence with Europe

Amid the discussion of American support for Turkey in European diplomacy, another significant dimension of US engagement on the issue is

⁶ For a selection of European and Turkish perspectives on this issue, see Gasparini, G., (ed.) (2007) 'Turkey and European Security. IAI-TESEV Report', *IAI Quaderni English Series*, No. 8, http://www.iai.it/pdf/Quaderni/Quaderni_E_08.pdf.

often overlooked. In addition to lobbying Europeans on the virtues of Turkish membership, American policymakers and experts have also been active in making the case for Europe with Turks. In official and unofficial settings, American interlocutors have repeatedly stressed the importance of the European project for Turkey's economic and political development. The consistency of this message reflects American interests, as well as evolving American attitudes towards European integration. American observers are aware of the security-heavy nature of the US-Turkish relationship, but the prospects for diversification depend critically on the modernization of the Turkish economy and the soft infrastructure for foreign investment (predictable rule of law, regulation, etc.). These facets of the US-Turkish partnership would be significantly enhanced to the extent that Turkey continues to converge with European norms and practices. Steady process towards accession is probably the best guarantee of this, but ultimately the American interest may lie in Turkey-EU convergence rather than Turkey's EU membership *per se*.

Turkey's EU project is also seen as vital by those Americans who have grown increasingly concerned about the drift of Turkish politics and foreign policy, since Turkey opted for an arm's length approach to American policy in Iraq after March 2003.⁷ Turkey's failure to facilitate the opening of a second front against Iraq, coupled with a more active Turkish policy towards Iran, Syria, and the Palestinians, and the rise of a Eurasian "lobby" in Ankara, have clouded bilateral relations against a backdrop of pronounced anti-Americanism at the public level. In some quarters, the appearance of rising religiosity in Turkish society contributes to this concern.⁸ Although there has been little if any formal deterioration in what both sides continue to describe as a "strategic relationship", the mood of concern in Washington can be gauged by the number of analyses, projects and meetings devoted to the question "are we losing Turkey?"⁹ It is an article of faith among most American experts that steady progress towards membership in the EU is the best guarantee that Turkey will remain anchored in the West and eschew Eurasian and Middle Eastern alter-

⁷ For a strong argument along these lines, see Cagaptay, S. (2006) 'Secularism and Foreign Policy in Turkey: New Elections, Troubling Trends', *Washington Institute for Near East Policy Policy Focus*, No. 67, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC04.php?CID=268>.

⁸ See Rabasa, A. and F. S. Larrabee (2008) *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, Santa Monica, RAND, http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG726.pdf.

⁹ See Menon, R. and S. E. Wimbush (2007) 'Is the United States Losing Turkey?', *New American Foundation Working Papers*, <http://www.newamerica.net/files/MenonWorkPaper.pdf>.

natives.¹⁰ Given the overall weight of Europe in Turkey's economic prospects, few Americans are prepared to argue that Turkish ties to the US represent a viable alternative, except perhaps in narrow defence-related terms. Turkey-EU relations are now widely perceived as integral to US-Turkey relations, and this is reflected in government and expert discourse on all sides. As the AKP government has become less energetic in pursuing EU-oriented reforms, it has contributed to unease in Washington even among those generally well-disposed towards the Erdoğan government.

Given the stakes as seen from the US, it is not surprising that American criticism of European policy towards Turkey has also grown, and this has been received more negatively over time in Europe. Many American observers share the widespread Turkish view that key European governments, France and Germany in particular, have not acted in good faith towards Turkey, and that without political leadership in critical EU states, public ambivalence will doom Turkey's prospects for membership.¹¹ At the same time, American observers tend to see movement towards European norms as a key measure of Turkish domestic policy and governance. Hence, stalled reforms in Ankara predictably lead to criticism from Washington as well as Brussels.

3. A Complicated Strategic Relationship

European observers often characterize American perspectives on Turkey as uncritical and relatively unconcerned about questions of human rights, minorities, civil-military relations and Turkey's own foreign policy behaviour. Certainly, during the Cold War, American policymakers could seem relatively oblivious to these issues in light of an overwhelming focus on the containment of Soviet power and the fear of leftist movements in Europe

¹⁰ For a discussion of trends and prospects, see International Crisis Group (2007) 'Turkey and Europe: The Way Ahead', *Europe Report*, No. 184, 17 August, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5021>.

¹¹ The most recent *Transatlantic Trends* survey by the German Marshall Fund points to an intriguing disparity in European views of Turkish membership. On the one hand, a majority of Europeans polled hold negative views about Turkey joining the EU. On the other hand, a substantial majority believe Turkey will eventually become a member. Is this faith in the evolution of Turkey (and Europe) over the long term, a comment on previous enlargements, or an implicit reference to the "democratic deficit" in the EU? See German Marshall Fund (2008) *Transatlantic Trends 2008: Key Findings*, http://www.transatlantic-trends.org/trends/doc/2008_English_Key.pdf.

including Turkey. This experience has left a legacy of mistrust on the Turkish left, together with a far more widespread Turkish sensitivity to sovereignty issues and suspicion of interference in Turkey's internal affairs. For different reasons, Europeans and Americans overlook the often troubled history of Turkish-American relations in the Cold War era and afterward.¹² In light of the particularly troubled bilateral relationship since 2003, Turks, too, tend to reflect on a "lost golden age" in US-Turkey relations. In reality, these relations have often been crisis prone, and no less troubled than Turkish relations with Europe – and frequently over similar issues. Cyprus is a leading example, with Turkey actually under US and UN sanctions in the wake of the 1974 Turkish intervention on the island. In the decades since 1974, the Cyprus issue and the wider question of Greek-Turkish relations in the Aegean have continued to plague relations between Washington and Ankara, just as these issues have perturbed relations between Turkey and the EU. The climate over Cyprus and the Aegean has improved markedly in recent years, but the unresolved nature of the disputes persists as a factor on both sides of the Atlantic. In the 1970s, alongside Cyprus, Turkey's role in the drug trade became an extremely neuralgic issue in the bilateral relationship, just as it was to become a controversial issue in Turkish relations with Europe two decades later.

In the 1990s, Turkey's counter-insurgency operations against the PKK and the question of Kurdish rights emerged as leading issues in European debates on Turkey, especially in relation to German arms sales to Ankara and European tolerance for Kurdish political movements, some linked to the PKK. At the political level, European criticism of Turkey's human rights performance was particularly intense. These issues were also fully part of the American debate and were a leading obstacle to Congressional approval of successive military assistance and arms transfer packages to Turkey during the Clinton administration. At points, Turkey has felt to be under a virtual arms embargo, despite the historically close strategic relationship between Washington and Ankara (the emergence of a closer Turkish security relation-

¹² Recent analyses from an American perspective include Cook, S. A. and E. Sherwood-Randall (2006) 'Generating Momentum for a New Era in U.S.-Turkey Relations', *Council Special Report*, No. 15, <http://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/TurkeyCSR.pdf>; Flanagan, S. J., S. J. Brannen (2008) *Turkey's Shifting Dynamics: Implications for US-Turkey Relations*, Washington, CSIS, http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/080606_turkeyshiftingdyn.pdf; and Lesser, I. O. (2007) op. cit.

ship with Israel and Russia also owes something to this perception).

Debate over recognition of an Armenian genocide has been a perennial issue in US-Turkey relations, with almost yearly confrontations between proponents of a Congressional resolution on the subject and administrations, both Democratic and Republican, opposed to a “genocide resolution” on strategic grounds. Europe has seen similar debates and the passage of resolutions in several European parliaments, in some cases with legal consequences. The proposed Congressional resolutions are largely symbolic, with no legal force. Nevertheless, Ankara has consistently made the Armenian resolution a central issue in US-Turkey relations, and it looms as an emotive challenge for bilateral relations for the next American administration. Developments in this area are unlikely to affect European perceptions and policies directly. But a significant thaw in relations between Ankara and Yerevan (strongly supported by Washington, not least as a way of ending the impasse over the genocide issue) would almost certainly be well received in Europe as a contribution to stability in the Caucasus, and as evidence of the continued “Europeanization” of Turkish foreign policy.

Iraq is likely to remain the central issue in US-Turkey relations for some time to come, with important implications for Turkey-EU relations, and European attitudes towards Turkish membership. The Iraq issue has multiple facets in the context of the bilateral relationship. The Turkish public as well as policy elites continue to distrust American intentions regarding northern Iraq and the possible emergence of an independent Kurdish state there. American policy has consistently underscored the commitment to a unitary Iraq, however federal in design. Certainly, there can be no question of the US commitment to Turkey’s own territorial integrity as a NATO ally. But Turks remain deeply suspicious, with Washington now being the leading worry in a country that remains in the grip of the “Sèvres syndrome” and is inclined to see continued threats to Turkish sovereignty.¹³

The specific issue of the PKK has been an irritant in the bilateral relationship since the 1990s. Many Turks view American policy in Iraq from 1990 onward as having spurred Kurdish separatism and created the conditions for the PKK’s insurgency and terrorism. US policymakers, while sensitive to

¹³ The reference is to the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres, never implemented, which envisioned draconian constraints on Turkish sovereignty and further territorial concessions in the wake of the First World War. Kemal Kirisci and other writers have addressed the legacy of this experience in contemporary Turkish perceptions and politics.

the threat the PKK poses to a NATO ally, also tend to view the issue as interwoven with Turkey's wider Kurdish problem, and would prefer not to see unilateral Turkish military operations against PKK strongholds in northern Iraq. Over the course of 2008, bilateral intelligence cooperation on the PKK threat has reportedly improved considerably, to the extent that the new Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Ilter Basbug, recently described US-Turkish cooperation on the issue as "perfect". This improvement in coordination has only had a marginal effect on Turkish public and elite opinions, both of which continue to eye American policy with considerable suspicion.

Despite Turkey's overall discomfort with America's Iraq strategy, Ankara has also acquired a stake in the American security presence inside Iraq. The emergence of an independent "Kurdistan" is often described as a nightmare scenario for Turkey. Yet a chaotic Iraq would pose equal challenges for Turkey (and the two scenarios are not incompatible). As a result, Turkey has acquired an interest in a sustained American military presence across the border and the avoidance of a near-term disengagement. This perspective potentially places Turkey at variance with at least some European partners, including Spain and possibly France.

On Iran, there is a degree of convergence between the strategic establishments in Ankara and Washington on the risks posed by a nuclear or nuclear-ready Iran. But Turkish policy preferences on Iran lean heavily towards diplomatic and economic engagement, and the Erdoğan government has proven far more willing than its predecessors to meet directly with the Iranian (and Syrian) leaderships. Turkey's energy and trade ties argue for this approach, which fits broadly within the AKP strategy of "zero problems" with neighbours and "strategic depth".¹⁴ Turkish engagement with Iran, including a well-publicized 2008 visit by President Ahmedinejad to Istanbul, was strongly criticized by some US observers. In broad outline, however, Turkey's Iran policy is essentially in the European mainstream.¹⁵ Those Europeans who worry about the potential for Turkey to serve as an advocate for American policy interests within the EU should find Ankara's current policy towards Tehran and Damascus reassuring.

¹⁴ See Larrabee, F. S. (2007) 'Turkey Rediscovered the Middle East', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 4, July/August, pp. 103–114, <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/2007/4.html>.

¹⁵ See Altunilik, M. B. (2008) 'The Possibilities and Limits of Turkey's Soft Power in the Middle East', *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10, No. 2, April-June, pp. 41-54, http://www.insight-turkey.com/Insight_Turkey_10_2_Meliha_Benli_Altunilik.pdf.

As discussed at length in Henri Barkey's contribution here, the future of American behaviour on Turkey's Middle Eastern borders may well turn out to be a leading factor in the country's EU prospects, and potentially more important than US lobbying with Europe on the issue of Turkish membership *per se*. A chaotic or insecure Iraq, or open conflict with Iran, would strongly reinforce European concerns about the implications of new European borders and more direct policy challenges in the Middle East. Under these conditions, Turkey may be perceived as part of a turbulent and unstable region, with the prospect that Turkey within the EU would be a costly consumer rather than a producer of security. To be sure, strategists may argue the contrary; that Turkey could become an even more essential partner in dealing with Middle Eastern challenges that Europe already confronts. At the public and political levels, this geopolitical argument may be less persuasive. In either case, the continuing role of the US as the leading security actor on Turkey's borders means that American policy in the Middle East will shape the environment within which Europe's Turkey debate will be conducted.

This argument can be extended to the area of energy security, where Turkey aspires to a more significant role as a transit country and *entrepôt* for Europe. Over the longer term, Turkey's ability to play this role will depend on several factors, including its own energy requirements, the role of Russia, commercial decisions, and not least, American policy towards Iran and Iraq. Washington can be a leading influence on the outcome of future pipeline projects, and the incentives for alternative non-Russian routes have clearly grown as relations between Moscow and the West have deteriorated. The US lobbied strongly and effectively for the construction of the Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, and the future security of this route will depend in part on the future of American security policy in the Black Sea and Caucasus regions. The existing pipelines from Iraq to Turkey's Mediterranean coast have roughly twice the capacity of BTC, but violence in Iraq has limited production, throughput, and the security of the transport system. Here, too, US policy can influence Turkey's position and Turkey's importance in European energy security. US policy towards Iran will also play a role to the extent that larger-scale Iranian oil and gas exports via Turkish pipelines could reinforce Ankara's importance to Europe – a less likely development under conditions of conflict between Washington and Tehran and more likely in the event of an Iranian-American détente.

4. Some Open Questions in US-Turkey Relations and Their Implications for Europe

Looking ahead, several open questions concerning US-Turkey relations are likely to have particular relevance for Europe's Turkey debate. One question concerns the future of relations with Russia in the wake of the Georgia crisis and potential crises in Ukraine and elsewhere. The US and at least some NATO allies may pursue a more forward-leaning policy towards Russia's near abroad, including more rapid movement towards NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia. Programmes to rebuild Georgia's military and economy could be greatly facilitated by Turkish cooperation, including the ability to conduct naval operations in the Black Sea. Ankara is clearly sensitive to the implications of a resurgent Russia for Turkey's own security interests. But Russia is also Turkey's largest trading partner, and an essential partner for energy commerce. Turkey will be especially attuned to sovereignty issues concerning the Turkish Straits and the Black Sea, and will be unenthusiastic about a new strategy of containment in Eurasia. At a minimum, a new US and NATO emphasis on Article V commitments and territorial defence vis-à-vis Russia could pose difficult dilemmas for Turkey, and could challenge Ankara's ability to pursue the balanced "all azimuths" strategy that has been one of the hallmarks of AKP foreign policy.¹⁶ The result could be the reinvigoration of Turkey's Western orientation and commitment to the EU project as a matter of deterrence and reassurance. Or Turkey might opt for a more neutral strategy that preserves its close economic ties to Russia. If Russian foreign policy emerges as a new source of tension in transatlantic relations, this could contribute to a further decoupling of Turkish relations with the US and Europe – in this case, Turkey would in all likelihood opt for Europe (and might expect an acceleration of its accession process in return?). In short, the rapidly evolving relationship with Russia could emerge as another factor shaping Turkish-US relations, with ensuing consequences for Turkey-EU relations.

The deepening financial turmoil and uncertainty in the global economy may also have significant implications for the triangular US-Turkey-EU relationship. Since 2001, Turkey has had among the highest growth rates in the

¹⁶ See Lesser, I. O. (2008) 'After Georgia: Turkey's Looming Foreign Policy Dilemmas', *On Turkey*, GMF, <http://www.gmfus.org/publications/article.cfm?id=476>.

OECD; some 6-7% on average. Together with the opening of the Turkish economy and the simultaneous expansion of the “real” and speculative economies in the country, US investors began to take a more serious interest in Turkey. This positive diversification of the American interest in Turkey took place in parallel with a troubled relationship on political and security issues. A recession – or worse – in the US, spreading to developed and emerging markets, including Turkey, could alter the calculus of Turkish ties to the West in unpredictable ways. It could make the assumed costs of further large-scale EU enlargements look even more daunting and reinforce nationalist and xenophobic tendencies across Europe, including Turkey. It could spur an American retreat from activism on Turkey’s borders, just as it may embolden Russia or Iran (unless global energy demand collapses first). At a minimum, economic stringency is likely to distract policymakers from the broad strategic thinking that would be most supportive of Turkey’s European aspirations. A less secure and less prosperous EU could be less attractive to Turkey and less inclined to want Turkey as a member. A renationalization of strategy in the face of economic threats – the “interwar scenario” – could erode American interest in the Turkish case, and possibly make Washington less inclined to lobby on Ankara’s behalf, and Europe less inclined to listen.

5. US-Turkey Relations and the European Calculus

This analysis suggests that the US remains a leading stakeholder in Turkey’s EU accession process, but Washington’s ability to serve as an effective advocate for Ankara with European partners has almost certainly declined over time. The troubled state of transatlantic relations in recent years, and especially since the Iraq war, is part of this equation. The opening of Turkey-EU accession talks and structural progress in Turkish-European relations must also be taken into account. The basic asymmetry in US and European perceptions of Turkey persists: the US tends to view Turkey in geopolitical and power projection terms; 21st century Europe is increasingly inclined to see Turkey as an economic and cultural partner without a clear position in the European “space”. Americans discuss Turkey in terms of geography and strategy, Europeans discuss Turkey in terms of economics and identity – broad generalizations, perhaps, but descriptive of a basic difference in transatlantic perceptions.

American influence over Turkey’s European prospects may be less direct, but it remains substantial. Any future American administration is likely to

be supportive of Turkey's EU candidacy because the US retains a strong interest in Turkey's continued convergence with European norms and practices. Washington's ability to argue this case in Europe in the future will depend critically on the outlook for transatlantic relations, of which relations with Turkey are a part. To the extent that the US remains a leading actor in security on Turkey's Middle Eastern borders, this too can shape European receptiveness to Turkey's membership. A turbulent and unstable environment in Turkey's neighbourhood could further complicate the EU accession process, and the US will be a player in the key flashpoints, including Iraq, Iran and Palestinian-Israeli relations. Evolving relations with Russia will be another element in the transatlantic debate over Turkey. Overall, the US role has evolved from one of an advocate at key junctures in Turkey-EU diplomacy to a driver of the strategic environment within which Europe's debate on Turkey is shaped. Put another way, the US has played both roles over two decades, but the role of diplomatic advocate has arguably declined in weight and effect over time.

Finally, the Turkish and European calculus has been influenced by two enduring myths, both of which are in need of updating. US-Turkey relations may have an enduring strategic quality in the perception of both sides, but it is misleading to forget that these relations have been crisis prone and sometimes deeply troubled over the last fifty years. In this context, the most recent frictions over Iraq are neither new nor irredeemable. It is equally misleading for Europeans – or Americans – to assume that Turkish strategic interests and behaviour will naturally align with the US for geopolitical reasons. The experience of recent years, including Turkish policy towards some of the most difficult issues in transatlantic relations (e.g., Iran, Russia), is actually far closer to European than US preferences. If Turkey progresses in its EU accession process over the next decade, more substantial foreign policy adjustments may be required in Washington than Brussels.

12. THE IMPACT OF TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS ON THE EUROPEAN DEBATE ON TURKEY

*Hanna Ojanen*¹

This chapter delves into the question of whether transatlantic relations influence the European debate on Turkey. This issue immediately opens up two further questions: how might such influence be seen and assessed in Europe, and, if influence can be detected, what kind of specific impact does it have on European debates on Turkey?

The term “transatlantic relations” can be interpreted in different ways, all of which are relevant for the analysis in this chapter. First, they include the relationship between the United States and each single EU member state. Second, transatlantic relations can be assessed within the overall context of NATO. More specifically, when it comes to EU/ESDP-NATO relations, Turkey is singled out as a country hindering proper cooperation between the EU and NATO.² The assumed impact of Turkey’s EU membership on EU-NATO might also be a background factor influencing the European debate on Turkey. Third, transatlantic relations also take the form of EU-US relations. Even though less evident – there exists, for instance, no common EU strategy on the US – these relations are based on institutional structures and policy practices specific to this particular bilateral relationship.

¹ Many thanks to Pia Alilonttinen and Outi Tuohi at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs for their skilful and very important help with the background and with further elaboration on the assumptions of this chapter. Special thanks also to Dr Nathalie Tocci for her excellent editorial comments.

² Evidently, views differ as to what the real obstacles are.

Especially when speculating about future trends, this side of the transatlantic dimension should not be overlooked.

Starting from the simple assumption that the US has an interest in the question of Turkey's EU membership, and that it would like to exert influence on the countries that are in a position to decide on it (i.e., the member states), research should ideally indicate cases of such US behaviour and perhaps even attempt to measure its effectiveness. Yet evidence of such political lobbying is very difficult to document. Evidence is not easily available. Research literature that could be referred to as a source is rather general in nature and thus of limited help in answering this question. Interviews of certain "eye-witnesses" or key persons might be the only way to obtain information, yet still very difficult – undoubtedly because of the "behind closed doors" and "in the corridors" nature of lobbying.

The impact of transatlantic relations on European debates on Turkey and its membership in the EU should also be placed in the broader context of US influence on its European allies and on the EU collectively through its member states. There is a rather widespread view in the literature that the US – as other major powers such as Russia – would purposively use bilateral channels with their main allies within the EU to maximize their influence vis-à-vis the Union as a whole. Such an attitude, in turn, may be welcomed by some member states, which focusing on their own bilateral relationship with the United States may consider this privileged channel as a means to attain their own foreign policy goals. By contrast, other member states can object to such a lobbying efforts, considering these as an attempt at undermining the EU's cohesiveness as a unitary actor – or indeed efforts at becoming recognized as an actor.

In other words, US lobbying on the EU regarding the Turkey question may resonate differently in different countries: the UK, Poland, Germany and Italy may find that Turkey's membership is important because it helps fostering a close transatlantic relationship. By contrast, other member states might be suspicious about Turkey's membership precisely because it would open the door to more Atlanticism, especially in the security and defence sectors.

Against this backdrop, we need to bear in mind that transatlantic relations have been, and still are, a divisive issue within the EU, in particular in foreign, security and defence policies. EU member countries are often divided roughly in two camps: the Atlanticists that see the US as an indispensable actor in European security, and the Europeanists who would rather aspire

to build a European defence by Europeans alone. For some EU member states, transatlantic links and support for NATO represent a good reason to support Turkey's EU membership, as, assumedly, Turkey would strengthen the Atlanticist side. For others, these very issues may be a reason to oppose Turkey's EU bid. Yet there is an important dynamic element to be added in this analysis, whereby the ups and downs in transatlantic ties, especially in recent years, will have had an impact on the degree of divisiveness of these different European responses to US pressure. For example, the cautiously improving climate in transatlantic relations over the last five years may well have reduced the internal EU divisions generated by US pressure on the Turkey dossier, compared for example to the 2002-4 period.

Furthermore, the American influence on EU affairs is bound to vary from one field to another. EU enlargement is notoriously an issue where the EU member states have the final word. As known, the decision to accept new members is taken by member states unanimously within the European Council. In turn this explains why much US attention regarding enlargement questions is devoted to the member states, through its bilateral relations and channels with them. In this context, Washington can be regarded as the single most important external actor shaping EU views on the issue of Turkey's EU membership, in particular given that the US is also a goal-oriented actor with, seemingly, a clear policy and a communication strategy on this matter. Whether and how such a strategy has been effective or otherwise is the subject of this chapter.

1. Assumptions and Background

1.1 *Background and Trends in US-Turkey Relations*³

Since the end of WWII and the onset of the Cold War, Turkey's most durable and significant bilateral relationship has been developed with the US. Turkey's association with the US began in 1947 when the US Congress designated Turkey, under the provisions of the Truman Doctrine, as the recipient of special economic and military assistance intended to contain

³ Unless otherwise specified, this background is based on Metz Chapin, H. (1995) (ed.) *Turkey: A Country Study*. Washington, GPO for the Library of Congress, <http://countrystudies.us/turkey>; and Cook, S. A. and E. Sherwood-Randall (2006) 'Generating Momentum for a New Era in U.S.-Turkey Relations', *Council Special Report*, No. 15, <http://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/TurkeyCSR.pdf>.

possible threats from the Soviet Union.⁴ A mutual interest in containing Soviet expansion provided the foundation of US-Turkey relations for the next four decades. In support of the US's overall Cold War strategy, Turkey contributed personnel to the United Nations forces in the Korean War (1950-53), joined NATO in 1952, became a founding member of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO),⁵ and endorsed the principles of the 1957 Eisenhower Doctrine. In the 1950s and 1960s, Turkey generally cooperated with other US allies in the Middle East (Iran, Israel and Jordan) to contain the influence of countries that were regarded as Soviet clients (Egypt, Iraq and Syria). Throughout the Cold War, Turkey was the bulwark of NATO's southeastern flank. It maintained the second largest military force in NATO, playing a critical role not only in the defence of Europe but also in the planning and preparation of NATO's out-of-area contingencies later on. Since 1954, Turkey hosts the Incirlik Air Base, an important operations base of the United States Air Force, which has played a critical role during the Cold War, the Gulf War, and the Iraq War.

One of the tensest phases in US-Turkish relations was in 1974, caused by the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in response to a Greek-inspired coup that ousted the Cypriot President Archbishop Makarios and aimed at implementing *enosis* (union) between Cyprus and Greece, ruled by a military junta at the time. In response to the Turkish intervention, the US halted arms supplies to Turkey. Ankara retaliated by suspending American military operations in all Turkish installations that were not clearly connected with NATO missions. The United States imposed an arms embargo on Turkey in 1975 that lasted until 1978, causing considerable damage to bilateral defence cooperation.

During the 1980s, relations between the two countries gradually recovered despite the continued attempts by the US Congress to restrict military assistance to Turkey because of Cyprus and to introduce congressional resolutions condemning the Armenian Genocide. It was in this period that the Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) was established and started to licence and build

⁴ Kuniholm, B. (2001) 'The Evolving Strategic Significance of Turkey's Relationship with NATO', in G. Schmidt (ed.), *History of NATO—The First Fifty Years*. London and New York, Palgrave Macmillan, Vol. 3, pp. 339-357, p. 342.

⁵ CENTO (The Central Treaty Organization), modelled after NATO and inspired by the United States that later joined its military committee, was established in 1955 by Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. It was dissolved in 1979. For more, see Kuniholm, B. (2001), op. cit. p. 348.

F-16 Fighting Falcon jets in Turkey. Washington also demonstrated its support for Prime Minister Turgut Özal's market-oriented economic policies and efforts to open the Turkish economy to international trade by pushing for acceptance of an International Monetary Fund programme to provide economic assistance to Turkey. Furthermore, the US, unlike European countries, did not persistently and publicly criticize Turkey over its human rights violations and did not pressure Özal on the Kurdish problem.

At the end of the Cold War, Turkish leaders had to reassess the country's international position. The disappearance of the Soviet threat and the perception of being excluded from a reuniting Europe created a sense of vulnerability with respect to Turkey's position in the fast-changing global political environment. Özal believed that Turkey's future security depended on maintaining a strong and solid relationship with the US and therefore supported the US position during the Gulf war, although Turkey's economic ties to Iraq were extensive and their disruption hurt the country. After the war, he continued to support most US initiatives in the region, including the creation of a no-fly zone over northern Iraq, the Arab-Israeli Oslo process, and expanded ties with the Central Asian members of the CIS. Özal's pro-American foreign policy was not well-accepted by the Turkish public. The US use of Turkish military installations during the bombing of Iraq in 1991 led to antiwar demonstrations in several Turkish cities, and sporadic attacks on US facilities continued in 1992 and 1993. Nevertheless, among Turkey's political elite, a consensus had emerged by January 1995 that Turkey's security depended on remaining a strategic ally of the United States. For that reason, both Demirel and Çiller's governments undertook efforts to cultivate relations with the Bush senior and Clinton administrations.

Turkey's immediate reaction to the September 11 2001 terrorist attacks was one of clear commitment to stand with Washington in fighting global terrorism. Yet, sweeping changes occurred in the US-Turkey relationship at the onset of the Iraq war in 2003. The US pressured Ankara to allow the Fourth Infantry Division to enter Iraq through Turkey. Confronted with strong domestic opposition, the Turkish Parliament failed to reach the absolute majority of 276 votes needed for allowing this (264 votes were cast for and 250 against). This led to a brief period of cooling in relations, particularly following the "hood incident" – a group of Turkish military personnel operating in northern Iraq were captured, hooded and interrogated by the US military – which was perceived as an act of US hostility in Turkey. The United States

and Turkey have also diverged in their foreign policy on Syria, Iran and Israel. However, bilateral relations between the two allies soon regained momentum through diplomatic, humanitarian and indirect military support. The vast majority of the military and civilian logistic support to US troops stationed in Iraq goes through Turkey via land or air.

Bilateral relations have nonetheless remained relatively strained when compared to past decades. Ankara is particularly cautious about an independent Kurdish state arising from a destabilized Iraq. Turkey fights against the PKK – recognized as a terrorist organization by both the US and the EU – seeking Kurdish independence. The US has cooperated in this fight, being directly responsible for tracking the whereabouts of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1999. Ankara has pressured the US to suppress guerrilla training camps in northern Iraq, but Washington has been reluctant to do so due to northern Iraq's relative stability compared to the rest of the country as well as its lack of spare forces to divert away from the most unstable and violence-ridden areas of Iraq. On 17th October 2007, the Turkish Parliament voted in favour of allowing the Turkish Armed Forces to take military action against the PKK rebels based in northern Iraq.⁶ In response, US President George W. Bush stated that he did not believe it was in Turkey's interests to send troops into Iraq.⁷ In October 2007, Turkey recalled its ambassador to the US, after the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs passed a resolution recognizing and condemning the Armenian genocide. This resulted in a delay of a full House vote on Resolution 106.⁸ Congress Speaker Nancy Pelosi has pledged to bring the resolution to a full vote, but pressure from the White House and Turkey has kept her from doing so. On Prime Minister Erdoğan's visit to the White House on 5 November 2007, the US expressed its commitment to assist Turkey in its fight against PKK/Kongra-Gel terrorism, which President Bush characterized as a "common enemy" of Turkey, Iraq and the US.⁹

The US and Turkey continue to cooperate in projects such as the Joint

⁶ BBC (2007) 'Turkish MPs back attacks in Iraq', *BBC News*, 18 October, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7049348.stm>.

⁷ CNN (2007) 'Turkey approves Iraq incursion', *CNN*, 18 October, <http://edition.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/meast/10/17/turkey.iraq/index.html>.

⁸ Felsenthal, M. (2007) 'Armenian genocide measure to advance', *Reuters*, 14 October, <http://www.reuters.com/article/politicsNews/idUSN1429966620071014>; CNN (2007) 'Turkey recalls ambassador over genocide resolution', *CNN*, 12 October, <http://edition.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/10/11/us.turkey.armenians/index.html>.

⁹ US Department of State (2008), *Background Note: Turkey*, July, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3432.htm>.

Strike Fighter programme. In June 2008, The US and Turkey began to cooperate on peaceful uses of nuclear energy with a pact that aims to transfer US technology, material, reactors and components for nuclear research and nuclear power production to Turkey for an initial 15-year period, followed by automatic renewals in five-year intervals that provide a comprehensive framework for peaceful nuclear cooperation between the two nations under the agreed non-proliferation conditions and controls. The importance of Turkey's role in providing Eurasian energy security routes to its Western (EU and US) and regional allies has also been recognized by the US.

The strains in US-Turkey relations have been reflected in public opinion. Turkey's positive stance towards the US has declined markedly over the past five years. In 2000, 53% of Turks had a positive image of the US. In 2002, this figure was 30% and in 2003 it dropped to 15%.¹⁰ A June 2007 Pew Research Center survey found that only 9% of Turkish citizens have a favourable opinion of the US, the lowest percentage out of all 47 countries surveyed, including the Palestinians (13%) and Pakistanis (15%).¹¹ The decline of US-Turkish relations is primarily a result of the US war and policies in Iraq. Turkey views the war as a significant threat considering that northern Iraq acts as a safe-haven for the PKK. Furthermore, Turkey regards the destabilization of Iraq as a possible incentive for Kurds to claim independence from their respective countries, first and foremost Turkey but also Iraq and Iran.

1.2 US Support for Turkey's EU Membership

Transatlantic relations entail an American say on Turkey's bid to join the EU. The reasons for this support are explored in detail in Lesser's contribution. Here we outline several different hypotheses to explain US support for Turkey, viewed from the triangular US-EU-Turkey relationship:

- As a long-standing ally, the US is genuinely committed to support Turkey in one of its most pivotal foreign and domestic policy quests, hoping for Turkish backing of future American policies in return;
- Washington now calls for a stronger EU role in security and defence matters, achieved through a strengthening of the European Security and

¹⁰ Ugur K. (2008) 'Où vont les relations turco-américaines?', *Le débat stratégique*, No. 95, 26 January, <http://www.cirpes.net/article206.html>.

¹¹ Pew Research Center (2007) 'Global Unease with Major World Powers', *Survey Reports*, 27 June, <http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/256.pdf>.

Defence Policy (ESDP), which would be greatly supported by Turkey's inclusion in the EU;

- The US does not share the EU's preoccupation with the construction of a politically united Europe, or may even aim at weakening the EU by increasing its internal heterogeneity;
- In view of US interests in a stable and prosperous Turkey, Washington views the EU as the most solid anchor to achieve this end.

Turkey's importance to the US raises exponentially when we locate Turkey in its region. As Barkey points out here and elsewhere,¹² four main reasons might provide an explanation:

- Ankara is a platform for Washington's projection of power in the Middle East;
- Turkey is one of the US most reliable NATO partners, critical in its troubled neighbourhood;
- Turkey can act as a bulwark against revisionist regimes in the area;
- Turkey's democratic government might be viewed as a positive example for countries in the Middle East and Central Asia.

To this, one might add the importance of Turkey as a key American ally in dealing with transnational crime involving drug and human trafficking, money laundering and terrorism, stemming from or transiting through the region.¹³

In short, the US has been traditionally in favour of Turkey's EU membership, mainly in order to secure Turkey's political and economic stability and thus achieve its wider strategic objectives. As far as security and defence are concerned, the main argument lies in the fact that EU-NATO cooperation would become easier and that Turkey would strengthen the ESDP – in particular when it comes to capabilities – thus making the EU a more credible partner for the US. Furthermore, Turkey's inclusion in both NATO and the EU may provide a useful mediating function between EU and US perspectives on security and defence.

In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the US has notably increased its support for Turkey's EU membership mainly because of its immediate security priorities. In the long-run, the US aimed at strengthening the

¹² Barkey, H. J. (2003) 'The Endless Pursuit. Improving U.S.-Turkish Relations', in Abramowitz, M. (ed.) *The United States and Turkey. Allies in Need*, New York, The Century Foundation Press, pp. 207-249, p. 209-10.

¹³ Öniş, Z. and Ş. Yılmaz (2005) 'The Turkey-EU-US Triangle in Perspective: Transformation or Continuity?', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 59, No. 2, Spring, p. 272.

“Turkish model” of a secular democratic state, with a predominantly Muslim population, for the Arab Middle East. In the short run, its prime concern was to ensure full Turkish cooperation in its quest to overthrow Saddam Hussein’s regime.¹⁴

In general terms, the US’ goal has been that of firmly anchoring Turkey to the West by integrating it into its institutional settings – NATO and the EU – and thereby sharing with Europe the burden of responsibility in making Turkey a strong and stable ally in the Middle East. Furthermore, the US is no longer inclined to be the sole external guarantor of Turkey’s political and economic systems and has looked upon with favour the radical transformations, in the economic and political realms, induced by the EU accession process in Turkey.¹⁵ Clearly, Turkey’s EU membership would imply more advantages than disadvantages for the US. Among the costs one can cite Turkey’s greater independence vis-à-vis Washington in view of its greater alignment with Brussels in the more contentious points in transatlantic relations. Yet on balance, the economic opportunities to be reaped from a stable and prosperous EU member Turkey, the stabilizing and democratizing role that EU institutions would have on Turkey’s political system, and Turkey’s contribution to the EU as a strategic partner of the US, are expected to outweigh by far any costs. Indeed, as Barkey argues, Turkey’s EU accession could prove even more important to the US than that of the United Kingdom.¹⁶

1.3 US Influence on EU Affairs

In view of these US interests in the Turkey-EU question, one of the prime instruments adopted by the US to pursue its case has been to lobby the EU on behalf of Ankara through its diplomatic missions across European capital cities. The 2004 Atlantic Council Policy Paper provides interesting insights into how such lobbying might take place.¹⁷ It stresses, first, that the timing of EU decisions on whether to begin accession negotiations with Turkey was crucial both for the US and for transatlantic relations, and second, that Washington has, for strategic reasons, ‘long been a strong

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 276-277.

¹⁵ Barkey, H. (2003) op. cit., p. 216.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 242-243.

¹⁷ Abramowitz, M. I. et al. (2004) ‘Turkey on the Threshold: Europe’s Decision and U.S. Interests’, *The Atlantic Council of the United States Policy Papers*, http://www.acus.org/docs/0408-Turkey_Threshold_Europe_Decision_U.S._Interests.pdf.

advocate of Turkish accession'. The executive summary states (emphases added):

'The United States can contribute to a positive decision by pursuing an *active but differentiated* approach. In particular:

- the United States should focus on the new EU members and a few others,¹⁸ where U.S. advocacy could make a positive difference, but *not campaign openly in those countries such as Germany or France*, where public efforts are likely to be counterproductive. In those countries, quiet encouragement of favourably inclined leaders is likely to be a more effective strategy;
- the United States and Turkey should reach out to the human rights community and other key constituencies in Europe with the message that *accession is the surest way of addressing their concerns*;
- the United States should *work to broaden the debate in Europe* beyond internal issues, such as EU governance, and instead encourage greater emphasis on the strategic implications of the decision, including its impact on Euro-Atlantic relations with the Muslim world;
- the United States and the European Union should continue working with the United Nations to achieve a Cyprus settlement. *But the absence of such an accord should not be reason to delay the start of Turkish accession negotiations*. The United States can be particularly helpful in encouraging Turkey to take some new steps to demonstrate its continuing commitment to a solution, perhaps including a reduction in its military presence in northern Cyprus. The United States and the European Union should make clear to the Greek Cypriots that a similarly constructive and serious initiative is expected from them.'

The paper then goes on to argue that

'[...] the United States is likely to find that the path to Turkish accession to the European Union will present a number of challenges. The US-Turkey relationship will change, and not necessarily for the better. As Turkey must prove its willingness to adhere to common European positions, the United States may well find Turkey on the other side of the transatlantic fence on some key issues. Differences are most likely to emerge over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the International Criminal Court, and perhaps over Iran and the need for reform in the broader

¹⁸ The Netherlands is mentioned.

Middle Eastern region. Turkey's candidacy and eventual membership may give the EU more weight in NATO decision-making and NATO-EU relations, requiring the United States to change the way it manages issues within NATO. But membership may also enhance the military capabilities of the European allies, bolstered by Turkish armed forces. These changes will not always be easy for the United States, Europe, or Turkey to manage. At times, it will be important to recall that the alternative to Turkish accession would be a Turkey less anchored in the West and more susceptible to domestic and regional pressures that could lead to instability – an outcome that would benefit no one.'

And it adds: '[t]o ensure that Turkish accession is beneficial for the larger transatlantic relationship, the United States, European Union, and Turkey should:

- Avoid the temptation to view this as a zero-sum game, with the United States "losing Turkey" and the EU gaining a new adherent to its position, or as the United States interfering in an EU decision;
- Acknowledge the complexities of integrating Turkey into the EU, but not neglect the strategic advantages of accession, both for Turkey and the broader Middle East region, as well as for the United States and the European Union;
- Establish a mechanism for regular trilateral discussions about the impact of Turkish accession on transatlantic relations, including NATO, and on other priority regions, especially the broader Middle East.'

In light of these considerations we might expect systematic lobbying with a highly differentiated approach used in different countries. But has lobbying really taken place? If so, how, and how successfully and how differentiated has it been? Key moments in which evidence of lobbying could be researched are the run-ups to key European council meetings, particularly those of December 1999 and December 2004. Indeed, during the Helsinki European Council in December 1999, Turkey was offered EU candidacy, while at the Brussels European Council in December 2004, the EU set a date for the start of accession negotiations with Turkey. According to Öniş and Yılmaz, the US became increasingly active in promoting Turkey's membership aspirations from the late 1990s onwards. Following the disappointments of the Luxembourg European Council in December 1997, the Clinton administration provided active diplomatic support for Turkish initiatives vis-à-vis the EU. This was, in part, instrumental in securing a favourable outcome for Turkey in Helsinki. By contrast, the Copenhagen

European Council of December 2002 displayed the limits of American power on decision-making regarding EU membership. In this respect, Turkish domestic reforms and its ability to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria prevailed over US lobbying efforts.¹⁹

Delving deeper into American influence in the run-up to the Helsinki European Council, some research emphasizes the key role played by Washington prior to and during the summit.²⁰ In Finland, holding the EU presidency at the time, the US position was a strong factor pushing in favour of a positive EU decision on Turkey's candidacy. The previous presidency country, Germany, had endeavoured to take a decision on the question during the Cologne European Council in June 1999. The draft conclusions included the goal of creating a timetable for reforms in Turkey and a request for the following European Council, in Helsinki, to decide on the question. The whole paragraph on Turkey was, however, removed from the final conclusions mostly because of Greek and Swedish oppositions. In the summer of 1999, the Finnish government decided to promote active and open relations with Turkey in order to convince Ankara that a positive outcome would also depend on its own actions.²¹ In fact Finland remained a bit uncertain about whether Turkey was ready to be accepted as a candidate, and therefore the Finnish policy was defined as doing everything possible for a positive decision, but without maintaining a rigid adherence to this line, if developments in Turkey pointed in a different direction. On the way towards the Helsinki European Council, progress in EU-Turkey relations was clearly visible – spurred also by the dramatic earthquake in Turkey in August 1999. In the Gymnich meeting in Saariselkä, several member countries still had reservations and conditions on the question, including Sweden's insistence on the need for progress in human rights and Greece's specific conditions regarding Cyprus and the Aegean. Especially as far as

¹⁹ Here, the authors refer to Parris, M. R. (2003) 'Starting Over: US-Turkish Relations in the Post-Iraq War Era', *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring, p.7.

²⁰ Pauliina Peltonen's research looks at decision-making in the EU from the point of view of the presidency country. She takes up eight such case studies, one of which is the decision on Turkey's candidacy. See Peltonen, P. (2000) 'Päätöksenteko Euroopan unionissa – kahdeksan esimerkkitapausta puheenjohtajamaan näkökulmasta', in T. Martikainen and T. Tiilikainen (eds.) *Suomi EU:n johdossa. Tutkimus Suomen puheenjohtajuudesta 1999*, Helsinki, Helsingin yliopisto, yleisen valtio-opin laitos, pp. 112-116.

²¹ Peltonen lists instances in which Finland tried to convey this message: the troika meeting of political directors in Ankara, the foreign ministers' lunch with Foreign Minister Cem, the OSCE summit in Istanbul in November 1999, and the official visit of Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari to Turkey.

Greek demands were concerned, Finland was expected to solve the question. A compromise was found, and after an initial moment of suspicion and reluctance, Turkey accepted the wording of the presidency's conclusions. In concluding her analysis of the main factors contributing to this positive outcome, Peltonen states that among the actors external to the EU, the US's strong support and high level political contacts with Greece and Turkey had a significant impact.²²

2. Analysis of Member States Reactions to US Influence²³

Having acknowledged the general influence of the US on EU decisions regarding Turkey, delving deeper in the analysis requires a more detailed understanding of the differentiated impact of US policies on EU positions, as hinted at also in the Atlantic Council's study reported above. Clearly, national perceptions of the US in different member states influence the respective impact of US lobbying efforts regarding the EU-Turkey question. In order to assess this differentiated impact this chapter turns to examine comparatively the responses provided by three member state authors in this project to a set of questions regarding US influence on their national debate on Turkey. The following summarizes the responses provided on Denmark, Italy and Greece, while complementing these with further ideas regarding other member states.

2.1 *Why does the US support Turkey's EU-membership?*

When it comes to the US, Greek perceptions are by far the most negative, suggesting a suspicious if not negative Greek reaction to US lobbying efforts on Turkey's behalf. In Greece, it is a commonly agreed perception that Turkey is, in geostrategic terms, very important to the US. This is demonstrated in the context of NATO and by the importance attributed by the US to the stability of NATO's southeast European flank. A more recent perception in Greece is that the US pushes for Turkey's inclusion in the EU in order to weaken the European integration project. A final Greek perception is that the US is a disturbing factor in the process of Greek-Turkish rapprochement in view of its interests in selling armaments to both countries.

Denmark also highlights the US's geostrategic approach to the EU-Turkey

²² See Peltonen, P. (2000), *op. cit.*, p. 112-116.

²³ Many thanks to Luigi Narbone for contributing to formulating these questions, and to the chapter authors for their analyses.

question, but its approach to this is far more neutral. Like Greece, Denmark considers US support for Turkey's EU membership to be driven mainly by geostrategic considerations. Alongside this, Washington may also be concerned that an EU rejection of Turkey might generate rifts within NATO. There has also been a tradition in the US to view Turkey as a European state and not as an integral part of the Middle East, in contrast with the perceptions of some Europeans on this question.

By contrast, Italy's two main government coalitions are probably the most ready to admit and to accept that the US supports Turkey's EU membership because it would strengthen the "Atlanticist" orientation of Europe. It has often been argued that Atlanticism and Europeanism have fruitfully combined in the making of Italian foreign policy since the end of WWII. As such the concern that Turkey would act as an "American Trojan horse" hampering or hijacking European integration does not strike many chords in Italy. On the contrary, in Italy's view Turkey's EU membership would benefit Italy directly by shifting the axis of the integration process from Eastern to Southern Europe and the Mediterranean. It would also benefit the transatlantic relationship indirectly, by allowing a NATO member and a traditional US ally into the EU. Italian communist parties have sometimes cited the "Trojan horse" argument, hinting that Turkey's EU accession would render the Union less "Europeanist", less political and more fiercely capitalist. Yet while these views certainly hold some sway amongst the public, they have not been reflected in government positions (whether centre-left or right) regarding the triangular US-EU-Turkey relationship.

2.2 How do these three member states react to US influence?

While far from being anti-American, most Danes would reject US attempted influence on the EU regarding the Turkey question. They probably would share US strategic arguments, pointing, however, to the fact that it is the fulfilment of the Copenhagen Criteria, rather than geopolitics and strategy, that ought to determine the progress of Turkey's EU course. Compromising upon these criteria for the sake of geostrategic considerations would be wrong. Furthermore, while appreciating Turkey's role in NATO, Danes criticize Ankara's problematic stance in EU-NATO collaboration.

Far more evidently in the case of Greece, the US's push for Turkey's membership, if overplayed, may backfire. Indeed when making the case for Turkey's EU bid in Greece, arguments related to NATO and the US should not be used as supportive arguments for Turkey's membership, because

they may have a negative impact on Greek stakeholders' debate on Turkey. By contrast, Italian political stakeholders recognize that US influence has been historically important although it has declined since accession negotiations were opened. Arguments regarding the strengthening of the transatlantic link through Turkey, or the role of Turkey as a bridge to the Middle East, are supported by major Italian political stakeholders, with parties of the centre left, emphasizing more the benefits to Europe of Turkey's accession (regardless of the US), while parties of the centre right being more inclined to follow Washington all the way in its geostrategic reasoning. Yet in both cases US influence is not frowned upon but rather viewed as providing a welcome push for Turkey's EU accession.

2.3 Other member state reactions to US influence

According to the Danish view, likely to be shared by most European observers, no EU country can be completely influenced by Washington in its final decision on Turkey's accession. In some member states, such as Greece mentioned above but also France and Germany, US pressure might even harm Turkey's cause, in particular damaging its image vis-à-vis public opinion.

Most European observers would concur that the UK is America's closest ally in Europe, and because of this London is the strongest supporter of the Turkish cause. Both the Conservative Party and New Labour share similar views to the US regarding the European project, its nature and its desirable future orientation. Like Washington, London supports Turkey's membership in so far as it would strengthen Europe's Atlanticism and NATO. As such the UK views US influence on EU-Turkey welcome because rooted in a shared normative understanding of the EU. The Eastern European member states, and in particular the Baltic States, the Czech Republic and Poland, also back Turkey's EU bid, and their support also has a strong base in American influence. In these cases however, rather than simply sharing a similar reading to the US of the case for Turkey in the EU, these countries are more likely to support Turkey's EU bid out of deference to their externally.

In most other member states, reactions to US influence are likely to be mixed. In Germany for example, the "transatlantic camps" within all political parties alongside the "foreign and security community" are likely to be more receptive to US influence in so far as their arguments in favour of Turkey are grounded upon geopolitical considerations and in particular Turkey's role as an energy transit hub. Other sectors of society focusing more on the EU's institutional architecture, migration and European identity politics, are most

likely to frown upon Washington's cajoling. In France a different type of consideration may come into play. While overt US pressure would most likely backfire, security related arguments on Turkey's EU accession, if framed in a more Europeanist tone, may bear fruit. Far from supporting Turkey's accession in the light of a consequent strengthening of EU Atlanticism, when Defence Minister Hervé Morin in the autumn of 2007 proposed a special status for Turkey in the ESDP his argument was that it would strengthen the EU's independent capabilities in security and defence.

3. Drawing Conclusions

This analysis reveals a well-defined pattern, whereby Atlanticist member states and stakeholders within them are far more favourable to Turkey's EU membership than others. Hence there is close connection between the degree of member state alliance with and warmth towards the US and their respective support for Turkey's accession. The reasons however differ. Some of these actors may support Turkey's accession *because* it is supported by the US (e.g., the Eastern European countries), suggesting a high degree of US influence on them. Others may support Turkey's accession because they share a similar reading EU and Western interests and international outlook to the US (e.g., the UK), suggesting that correlation does not necessarily imply a relationship of causality between US influence and member state support for Turkey. By contrast, the reasons why other member states reject Turkey's EU membership may also be inversely correlated with US influence. A case in point is Austria, whose negative stance might also be fed by the country's non-membership of NATO. Yet in other cases, the scepticism of member states such as France are likely to be linked more to specific French views regarding EU institutions, identity and borders. The analysis of three NATO members – Denmark, Italy and Greece – above also shows that there are considerable differences among the members.

Notwithstanding such arguments, one has to admit that Washington cannot have a final decisive say on the issue, probably in all member states. Perhaps there are certain "windows of influence" in the process of enlargement, i.e. certain phases of the process where outsiders have more say. Perhaps the Turkey question is, compared to other issues such as defence or trade, too much of a European or an internal issue for the US to have decisive influence. In other words, public debate on Turkey in the member states depends much more on other issues, such as historical links with Turkey, the

presence of Turkish minorities in the country, the impact of cultural and religious arguments, or the overall assessment of EU enlargement.²⁴ However, in member states in which the security and defence establishments weigh in more in public debates on Turkey, US influence is likely to be somewhat higher.

Turning to the future, some considerations can be tentatively advanced. First, the US stance on Turkey's bid to join EU is unlikely to alter. Despite the cooling-off in American-Turkish relations in the wake of the Iraq war, Washington continues to openly declare its support for Turkey's accession. The fundamentals in US interests in Turkey's EU accession have remained unchanged and relate to security and military considerations, strategic and geopolitical interests, and the need for sharing the burden of Turkey's still problematic economy. Second, in light of unchanged US positions on the Turkey question, the key question here regards EU member state reactions to Washington's stance and whether any change may be expected in this respect. A key variable here is the US's international legitimacy under a new administration, and in particular with respect to EU enlargement, the latter being a quintessentially EU issue. Third, questions arise also in the context of NATO, whose future role remains uncertain. In this respect, the US may increasingly view the ESDP as a necessary complement to the North Atlantic Alliance in military and security terms. Consequently, the US might decide to take a more positive stance towards ESDP as appears to be the case already, viewing it as an essential organization in European and transatlantic security.

²⁴ See also the outcome of the first phase of the "Talking Turkey" research project.

13. A EUROPEAN COMMUNICATION STRATEGY ON TURKEY

Nathalie Tocci and Donatella Cugliandro

1. Existing Conceptualizations of a Communication Strategy

The importance of developing a Communication Strategy on Turkey was first recognized by the European Commission in the fall of 2004, when the opening of Turkey's accession negotiations loomed on the horizon.¹ In response, in April 2005 the Commissioner for Institutional Relations and Communication Strategy, Margot Wallstrom confidently declared that 'enlargement [is] an easy thing to communicate [...] a bit tricky, but still it [is] very concrete and it [is] something that could be done'.² The issue of enlargement has indeed been "trickier" than anticipated, especially as far as Turkey is concerned. Before delving into the conclusions of our study, let us take a step back and assess how EU actors have conceptualized, crystallized and implemented such a Strategy, and what problems they have faced.

1.1 An EU Communication Strategy on the EU

Efforts to create a Communication Strategy were first directed to the broad question of the relationship between the EU and more specifically "Brussels" and the member states, and can be traced back almost a decade.

¹ See Commission of the European Communities (2004) *2004 Regular Report on Turkey's progress towards accession*, SEC(2004) 1201, Brussels.

² *Interview: Commissioner Wallström on the EU's communication strategy*, 6 April 2005; <http://www.euractiv.com/en/general/interview-commissioner-wallstrom-eu-communication-strategy/article-137597>.

In 2001, the European Commission published a Communication, whose aim was ‘to establish a new inter-institutional relationship, [...] to provide information at grassroots level, [...] to bring Europe closer to its citizens’.³ While not specifically aimed at elaborating a “strategy”, the Commission endeavoured to provide guidelines for a coordinated policy in the field of communication. A more detailed programme of action was announced in 2002, when the reasons to elaborate and implement a Communication Strategy were explicitly recognized. In particular, the Commission stressed the need to improve public perceptions of the Union through the implementation of an ‘information and communication policy’.⁴ The Strategy would aim at ‘polishing [the EU’s] image [and] developing the means of controlling [it]’.⁵

The approach was transparent: the objective of the Strategy was to present a new “face” for the Union, to improve its image; not to question its substance. This “window-dressing” approach has its merits. Some argue that ‘the EU’s soft power derives as much from style as from substance’.⁶ Moreover, “Brussels” does have an undeniable image problem – being viewed as dull, bureaucratic and elitist –, an image which does not do justice to its many virtues. Branding and re-branding the EU also helps contributing to the public perception of a single European face and voice. Aware of these pros, EU institutions have instinctively associated the need for “communication” with the creation and recreation of the Union’s “image”. As put by the Commission: ‘the acquisition of a new *communication* culture will depend on a coherent and methodical reconstruction of the “European Union’s *image*”’.⁷ This approach was reproduced in successive documents, such as the 2005 Action Plan, the 2006 White

³ Commission of the EC (2001) *Communication from the Commission to the Council, European Parliament, Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions on a new framework for co-operation on activities concerning the information and communication policy of the European Union*, COM(2001)354, Brussels.

⁴ Commission of the EC (2002) *Communication from the Commission to the Council, European Parliament, Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions on a new framework for co-operation on an information and communication strategy for the European Union*, COM(2002) 350 final/2, Brussels.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Van Ham, P. (2005) ‘Opinion Piece Branding European Power’, *Place Branding*, Vol. 1, p. 124; Henry Stewart Publications, http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20050400_paper_vanham.pdf.

⁷ Commission of the EC (2002) op. cit. [our italics].

Paper,⁸ as well as the 2005 Commission “Plan-D” for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate, aimed at responding to the French and Dutch rejections of the Constitutional Treaty. As a response to the European impasse, the Plan crystallizes the paradigm of communication interpreted as the reconstruction of image. The Plan aimed at generating public approval of the EU and of the Treaty by explaining the text (thus providing much-needed information on it) as well as by increasing its appeal by polishing its image (thus increasing its legitimacy): ‘*Plan-D* must seek to clarify, deepen and legitimize a new consensus on Europe’ (emphases added);⁹ its aim was not that of re-discussing the content of this consensus or the functioning of the EU as a whole.

Setting aside the merits and achievements of this approach, it evidently neglected a fundamental problem regarding both substance and strategy. The Commission’s window-dressing approach automatically implied that the EU’s faults were exclusively or at least primarily due to its image rather than its substance. This made the Commission an easy prey of civil society critiques that such a Communication Strategy was all about ‘selling Europe, [rather than] opening-up Europe’,¹⁰ as the Platform of European Social NGOs argued. This civil society forum stressed the fact that ‘communication cannot be addressed in an abstract way and always needs to be connected to content’.¹¹ In other words, the three D’s (dialogue, debate and democracy) by definition ought to have implied a genuine openness to substantive change, achieved through dialogue and debate with civil society and the wider public. Yet the public struggled to see this. This is not to deny that a Communication Strategy must inevitably have a top-down element to it. In so far as effective and constructive communication hinges upon the delivery of “information”, EU-level actors in a first instance must provide

⁸ See Commission of the EC (2005) *Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe by the Commission*, SEC(2005) 985 final, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/pdf/communication_com_en.pdf; and Commission of the EC (2006) *White Paper on a European Communication Policy*, COM(2006) 35 final, Brussels, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0035:FIN:EN:PDF>.

⁹ Commission of the EC (2005) *The Commission’s contribution to the period of reflection and beyond: Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate*, COM(2005) 494 final, Brussels.

¹⁰ Platform of European Social NGOs (2006) *Communicating: Selling Europe or Opening Europe?*, October 5, http://cms.horus.be/files/99907/MediaArchive/Policies/Participatory_democracy/EN-Response%20White%20Paper%20on%20Communication.pdf.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

information, in a re-branded and accessible manner, to the public. Yet if the aim is communication rather than “selling” a particular product or policy, this would be the beginning and not the end of the process. The difference between information delivery and communication lies precisely in the fact that once information is delivered and receives discernible reactions, those reactions are acknowledged, debated and followed-up by a genuine attempt to incorporate them in the construction of Europe.

The absence of this second step in the process of communication has generated an internal inconsistency in the EU’s ensuing strategy. Precisely because the aim of a Communication Strategy is to bring the Union closer to its citizens, the latter’s perception of an EU which is not genuinely willing to question itself has hindered the Strategy’s objectives. It is difficult to see how the gap between Brussels and the European publics is to be bridged if the former openly states that its prime objective is that of polishing its image in order to “appear” rather than “become” more attractive to the latter.

1.2 An EU Communication Strategy on Enlargement

In view of worsening opinion poll figures, the question of enlargement was also acknowledged as an issue that required improved communication.¹² To do so, the Commission proposed a joint EU-member state effort to develop a coherent communication policy, aimed at persuading Europeans of the need and desirability of enlargement. The Commission in 2004 focused on the implementation of an information and communication strategy, highlighting the role of national institutions in this process. It also stressed that the object of this Strategy was not only the 2004 enlargement, but also the ongoing enlargement process: the Communication Strategy ‘should also cover the ongoing negotiations with the other candidate countries,’ and not be restricted to the entry of the ten new member states.¹³

Reading in and in-between the lines of the Commission’s documents several points stand out. First and most importantly, the Communication Strategy on enlargement displays a striking “one-size-fits-all” approach. While recognizing member state (and candidate country) actors as indispensable part-

¹² Commission of the EC (2002) op. cit.

¹³ Commission of the EC (2004) *Communication from the Commission to the Council, European Parliament, Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions on implementing the information and communication strategy for the European Union*, COM(2004) 196 final, Brussels.

ners in the process, the Commission does not address specific strategies to each country, assuming that views and arguments on enlargement are homogenous across the Union and beyond. Yet there is no single “European public debate” on enlargement, there are several, interlocking European debates, rooted in the overlapping yet different historical trajectories, interests and ideas within the European mosaic.

Second, and as in the case of the Communication Strategy on the EU, the Communication Strategy on enlargement is interpreted as a one-way process. The communication is intended to flow from the Union, through national institutions, to the public, rather than envisaging the reverse process of communication as well. It sets aside the need for a genuine “two-way communication” and associates communication with information-provision from the EU to the national level, albeit information presented in a more appealing manner to the European publics. This brings to the fore a central problem to which we return to below: a conflict of interests which arises between the aim of “managing enlargement” and that of “communicating enlargement”. If genuine communication entails a readiness to change in substance (i.e., questioning enlargement), then a contradiction arises in the Commission’s mandate to manage the accession process with existing candidate countries. Whereas genuine communication can be promoted directly by the Commission as far as potential candidates and other neighbours are concerned (e.g., Ukraine or Moldova), it cannot directly promote as easily a genuine Communication Strategy for existing candidate countries such as Turkey.

Finally, the Communication Strategy on enlargement is meant to inform the public in general rather than elite national stakeholders within the EU and in the candidate countries as target audiences in their own right. National actors are seen exclusively as transmitters in the implementation of the Commission’s Strategy rather than as target audiences. In the case of Turkey, while the Commission delegation in Ankara has identified the media and business amongst its elite and mid-level target groups of a Communication Strategy,¹⁴ tellingly, Turkish institutional actors are excluded from the list, being viewed only as transmitters to reach the public rather than target audiences as well. Yet public opinion is formed prima-

¹⁴ Commission Delegation to Turkey (2007) *Information and Communications Support Programme*, http://www.avrupa.info.tr/AB_Mali_Destegi/AB_Program_Bilgileri,Enformasyon_.letisim.html?LanguageID=2.

rily through the views expressed by national stakeholders, including institutional ones, and thus much of the misinformation and misperceptions permeating public debate reflect the deficiencies embedded in the national messages delivered to citizens. In other words, national elite and mid-level actors are not simply the necessary filters, translating EU messages to the European publics in languages that resonate. Related to the first critique raised above, a two-way process of information-sharing is necessary, with national actors being the mediators, who communicate to the public and communicate back to the EU level the concerns, perceptions and interests of the public. Without this mediating role, the process of communication, which allows both sides to inform and be informed, risks being truncated, thus thwarting the goal of a Communication Strategy.

On closer inspection, the interplay and circularity in these critiques is essential for the purpose of our study. A Communication Strategy has so far been conceptualized and implemented as a one-way street, in which EU actors present “objective” information to the European publics in a more appealing, repackaged and rebranded manner. In order to do so, the role of national-level actors is critical, in translating EU messages in languages – literally and figuratively – that resonate with the people. This process of rebranding, through the aid of national mediators, certainly inserts an element of differentiation in the process. Yet differentiation is limited to the delivery of the message, its style and language, and not to the message itself, whose content remains undifferentiated across national and sectoral contexts. Closing the circle, differentiation does not go deeper precisely because communication is interpreted as a one-way street stemming from a single set of actors (and the Commission in particular) to the public. Yet the public disclosure of this approach has also sowed the seeds of its limited success, not only because it has been viewed as a quintessentially top-down window-dressing process, but also because it has failed to engage with the “real” debates – prejudiced or otherwise – rooted within European societies.

1.3 A Turkish Communication Strategy on EU-Turkey Relations

Turning to Turkey, here the most salient effort to report and comment upon is that undertaken by Turkish institutions to communicate their case for membership to the EU and to the Turkish public. In 2000, the government established its Secretariat General for EU Affairs in order to coordinate the efforts of several domestic institutions involved in the harmonization with

EU laws and regulations. More recently, the Secretariat has developed a project called “EU-Turkey Communication Platform”, aimed at ensuring an interactive communication among all relevant stakeholders in both Turkey and the EU. Others have followed suit. The “Avrupa Birliği İletişim Grubu” (European Union Communication Group – ABIG) is a partnership of Turkish public and private organizations established to provide accurate information about Turkey’s progress towards EU accession.¹⁵ It should be noted however, that in the overall cooling-off climate in EU-Turkey relations since 2004 many of these projects have lost their momentum and no new public-private initiatives have been taken.¹⁶

These Turkish efforts are commendable in so far as they expressly target national stakeholders in Turkey, the EU and the candidate countries as well as public opinion writ large. This is particularly evident in the target audiences identified by the EU-Turkey Communication Platform. Indeed, on the Turkish side these include not only individuals, but also ministries and public institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, universities and the mass media. The list continues on the EU side, including EU institutions, member states, candidate countries, embassies of member states and embassies of candidate countries.¹⁷ In terms of EU member states, particular attention is paid to the Belgian, French, German and British cases.¹⁸ In the case of ABIG instead, communication efforts are targeted specifically to decision-makers and the media. Its goal is that of informing these elite mediators in order for these actors to communicate effectively with the general public.

Yet this greater degree of differentiation in Turkey’s communication efforts opens up, not only in the specific case of Turkey, but also on a broader conceptual level, a problem of coordination, vision and strategy. Some have pointed out that a comprehensive strategy in Turkey has not come to the fore yet largely because of problems of coordination. At present, there are approximately 33 institutions which provide information, from and about Turkey, ‘however, there is almost no coordination, no strategic outlook and

¹⁵ ABIG consists in the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Secretariat General for EU Affairs, TOBB, TUSIAD and IKV. See <http://www.abig.org.tr/>.

¹⁶ Ulgen, S (2006) ‘Turkish business and EU accession’, *Centre for European Reform* http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/essay_turkish_business_accession_dec06.pdf.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

no resources to reach out to foreign audiences on key Turkish foreign policy issues'.¹⁹ Hence '[w]hat is needed is a new agency with a chief communicator who coordinates Turkey's communication with European and foreign audiences' claims Suat Kiniklioğlu.²⁰ Achieving a strategy that is both differentiated as well as coherent and coordinated is no small feat. While full coordination in a strict sense may be difficult to come by, a common strategic outlook and a unifying idea appears critical in providing overall coherence to the differentiated communication efforts of different actors to different audiences. Another problem is the inconsistency of pursuing concomitantly the goal of effective communication while also favouring a particular outcome regarding the object of such communication. This has been the main problem bedeviling Turkish efforts in communicating with EU-sceptics in Turkey and Turkey-sceptics in the EU. Inevitably, the aim underpinning Turkey's efforts to elaborate a Communication Strategy is to promote its accession course. Turkish actors have not shied away from stating this reality. The aim of a Communication Strategy is deliberately not "neutral", but aimed at 'reach[ing] a "conscious acceptance" by the majority of the Turkish public for Turkish membership to the EU.'²¹ To this we may add the goal of selling Turkey's case to the EU, by highlighting the positive and downplaying the negative aspects of Turkey's accession.²² Yet this inevitably creates a perception of bias within the targeted audiences, a perceived bias which dilutes the objective strength of the arguments raised regarding both the pros and the cons of Turkey's membership.

In the case of Turkey of course, there is no way of effectively by-passing this problem, and perhaps recognizing it upfront is the best way forward. Yet when it comes to an EU Communication Strategy on Turkey it is of fundamental importance that this "conflict of interests" is hedged against. It is in this spirit that we argue that a Communication Strategy on Turkey ought not to simply and directly promote Turkey's EU accession, but rather instill a more open, informed and empathic debate on the question, a goal, which

¹⁹ Kiniklioğlu, S. (2006) 'Turkey needs to act on a communication strategy now', *Turkish Daily News*, 16 November, http://www.suatkiniklioglu.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=150&Itemid=914.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Secretariat General for the EU Affairs, *EU-Turkey Communication Platform*.

²² Dogan, C. (2005) 'Der lange Weng nach Westen', *Politik & Kommunikation*, March, http://www.euractiv.com/29/images/turkey_tcm29-137878.pdf.

if achieved, cannot but support Turkey's EU bid.

The main conclusions from this overview can be summarized as follows:

- The need for a Communication Strategy to be a two-way street and have in-built within it the readiness to change, in substance and not only in style. This also entails the need for a Communication Strategy to have "communication" as its prime object and purpose if it is to be viewed as genuine and credible by its recipients, thus avoiding to push for a particular policy position;
- The need for a Communication Strategy to be differentiated and view national-level stakeholders as targets and not only transmitters of an EU message. This relates to the need for a Communication Strategy to include a wide variety of actors, differentiating its messages, its audiences and its messengers;
- The need for a Communication Strategy to retain overall vision, coordination and purpose despite its internal differentiation and dynamism.

2. Building an EU Communication Strategy on Turkey

Having distilled what we mean – and what we don't mean – by a Communication Strategy let us apply these lessons to the case of an EU Communication Strategy on Turkey.

2.1 An Informed Two-Way Communication

The objective of an EU Communication Strategy on Turkey, thus, ought to have "communication" as its object and purpose. It would not use communication as a means to promote Turkey's EU accession, i.e., as a public relations campaign for Turkey. While initiatives such as those carried out by Turkey or by member states such as the UK (e.g., through its UK-Turkey Strategic Partnership as discussed by Whitman) are of critical importance, they do not share the interpretation of a Communication Strategy endorsed here. Only if the genuine aim is that of promoting communication per se would a Communication Strategy avoid the temptation of persuading EU stakeholders and publics of the desirability of Turkey's EU membership and rather engage in an authentic debate over the pros and cons of accession. Such communication would have two principal functions. On the one hand, it would engage in a debate on the "real" issues on the minds of stakeholders and publics, including the thorniest questions surrounding Turkey's accession. On the other hand, it would provide information and attempt to

instil a more constructive and informed debate on these questions. These two interrelated functions of a Communication Strategy would promote a healthier enlargement process to Turkey, which would hedge against the spoiling potential of misperceptions, avoiding ugly surprises either during the accession process or at its conclusion. It is in this, indirect, manner that a Communication Strategy would support Turkey's European prospects.

Listening and responding to public concerns

Turning to the first function, a Communication Strategy would listen to and tackle head-on the concerns of stakeholders and publics, and thus engage in a genuine two-way communication with them. As pointed out by Lippert, there is little empirical information on why exactly German citizens hold negative attitudes towards Turkey's accession process. The same can be said of other member states as well. If the aim is to influence public opinion and respond to it through a Communication Strategy, then in a first instance more information on what the public thinks is needed. This information can be collected through polling or compiled by establishing forums for domestic dialogue with representatives of civil society. An interesting example of this is the "German Islam Conference" (DIK) established by the Ministry of the Interior in 2006. The DIK does not tackle directly EU-Turkey relations, but deals with relations between the German state and its Muslim citizens. It is important in highlighting the method of communication, which is indeed a two-way dialogue, beginning with an appreciation and understanding of the concerns of all parties.

Engaging in genuine dialogue would also entail avoiding the temptation of not dealing with the hottest issues surrounding the Turkey question. Some may think that it is wiser to postpone public debate on potentially explosive topics altogether or up until when Turkey's accession comes closer on the horizon. All authors confirm that to date, the thorniest issues surrounding the Turkey question have rested in the identity-religion-migration nexus. Especially in cases such as Italy, Poland or the UK, where the debate on Turkey has been rather low-key because it has not been associated (yet) with this nexus, the temptation may be that of avoiding the subject. Indeed if the aim is that of directly promoting Turkey's accession process, then the argument "if it ain't broken don't fix it" holds sway. This is particularly true from a Commission perspective, whose mandate is that of proceeding with the accession process, rather than questioning its desirability. Indeed from a Commission point of view (and indeed from Turkey's too), the argument is

that Turkey should have been “talked about” prior to 1999 when it was accorded candidate status. Since then, as put by Esen and Bölükbaşı, the debate about Turkey ought to be about “when and how” and not about “whether” it should enter the EU. As far as the Commission is concerned, its mandate to negotiate accession is in fact grounded precisely on the understanding that Turkey was talked about and a consensus emerged from that talk in 1999. This relates back to the conflict of interests within the Commission between “communicating enlargement” and “managing enlargement” highlighted above. We return to this contradiction and a possible way out of it below.

While these authors sympathize with this position, from the perspective of promoting genuine communication, the picture changes. True, Turkey ought to have been talked about openly prior to the recognition of its candidacy in 1999. But it was not. And when public debate is ignited, as it was in France or Austria, often for unrelated domestic political reasons, it tends to take radical and unexpected turns. The most evident case in point is that of Austria, where prior to 2004, Turkey was not debated at all, and certainly not in terms of identity, religion and migration. Yet when the debate was sparked in the context of domestic political competition – i.e., the rise of the FPÖ and the need for the two people’s parties to react – prejudices imbued in xenophobic rhetoric spread like wildfire. Had those issues been discussed beforehand in a less populist and less polarized political climate we may have expected a different outcome. As argued by Günay, Austria today presents a new opportunity. After several years of populist Turkey talk, the decision to hold a referendum on Turkey’s accession has calmed spirits in the country. A similar argument is put forth by Le Gloannec in the French context. Yet rather than using this period of calm to revert back to the former “don’t talk Turkey” approach, this opportunity could be used to proactively instil a more cool-headed and informed debate about Turkey. This re-energized debate however would only steal the thunder of populist, prejudiced or uninformed “Turkey talk” if it responded to not shied away from the preoccupations bedeviling Austrian and French societies. These arguments would not avoid dealing with “real” public concerns over immigration, social welfare, the pace of enlargement and the future of the European political project. They would not replicate the silencing approach adopted during the eastern enlargements, which then boomeranged on public views regarding the ongoing process of enlargement to the Western Balkans, Turkey and beyond.

Providing information

This leads to the second function of genuine communication, i.e., that of injecting informed facts and arguments into the public debates.²³ Without attempting to simply persuade the publics of the advantages of Turkey's accession, greater information is likely to benefit Turkey's EU bid. The lesson from the UK in particular seems to be that the greater the knowledge of and direct engagement with Turkey, especially amongst elite stakeholders, and the less susceptible the environment to hostile and prejudiced views about Turkey's accession. Likewise, in Germany, Lippert suggests that there is a positive correlation between education and pro-Turkish attitudes. While the function of information-provision has an inevitable top-down element, reminiscent of the Commission's "Plan D" on the Constitutional Treaty, information-delivery in the context of a two-way communication would respond to rather than speak on top of the concerns of the public. In other words, the function of information-provision would be intrinsically tied to the function of listening to and debating about the questions concerning societies, including the most sensitive subjects.

The chapters in this volume mention several areas in which information provision is of the essence. In chapters on Austria, Denmark, France, Greece and Poland, the emphasis is placed on the need to provide more and better information in the realms of history and culture, through the revision of history books, but also through greater efforts in the realms of art and entertainment. Through these different mediums, the aim would be that of adding nuance to the monolithic "Battle of Vienna syndrome", in which the Turks are represented as the unknown "other",²⁴ by bringing to the forefront "Marcus Aurelius' foot", that is the many ways in which Turks have been part and parcel of Europe's complex and evolving history, art and culture. This would include not only bringing to the fore elements of Turkish tradition but also of Turkish modernity in the realms of music, art and entertainment.

In the UK and Italy, authors focus on migration and integration. These are questions that have not "short-circuited" yet in both countries, as well as in Poland, but may do so in future for different reasons, including

²³ As noted by Le Gloannec in her chapter, a noteworthy example in this respect is the recent book by Michel Rocard, which, while advocating Turkey's cause, does not shy away from highlighting the costs and challenges to the EU and the negative sides of Turkey. See Rocard, M. (2008) *Oui à la Turquie*, Paris, Hachette.

²⁴ In the case of Greece, the "Battle of Vienna Syndrome" does not exist. Negative stereotypes derive from the period of Ottoman rule over the Greek Orthodox population.

“Christian public opinion” in Italy and Poland, and the link between migration and enlargement in the minds of the British public. Hence, the need to provide accurate information on existing migration flows to and from Turkey, projections on whether and how there may be labour migratory consequences from Turkey’s accession, and on what the social, political and economic implications of these would be. Furthermore, information would also be provided and discussed as regards to the trends of integration of existing Turkish communities living in these countries. This would be done to pre-empt the emergence of a dominant prejudiced narrative on migration from Turkey in the national medias and by political figures at some point in future.

A third and final argument, which may be worth exploring, in order to hedge against its possible manipulations in future, is the link between the financial crisis and Turkey’s membership prospects. The crisis and its implications on the European economy and political systems cannot be foreseen. In turn, its impact on the enlargement project in general, and Turkey’s accession in particular, cannot be anticipated. Yet given the inevitably far-reaching implications of the crisis, we may expect a link being drawn in public debates between the crisis and Turkey’s accession process. It may thus be worth preparing such public debates by instilling within the EU information about Turkey’s position, reactions and adjustments to the crisis.

A cost-benefit approach to communication

Having listened to public concerns and the reasons underpinning those concerns through national polling and civil society dialogue, and having provided information there where it is missing or one-sided, a Communication Strategy would adopt a cost-benefit approach to the question of Turkey’s accession. It is above all in this respect that a Communication Strategy must avoid downplaying the costs while overstating the benefits of Turkey’s membership. For it to be credible, a Communication Strategy must not, and must not be seen, as promoting Turkey’s accession course. It is here again that the delicate balancing act of the Commission as manager of Turkey’s accession process and communicator of Turkey’s accession process comes to the fore. In 2004 the Commission published a cost-benefit analysis of Turkey’s future membership.²⁵ The approach was laudable in many respects, and

²⁵ Commission of the EC (2004) *Issues Arising from Turkey’s Membership Perspective*, Commission Staff Working Document, SEC(2004) 1202, Brussels, 6 October.

remains the most serious and systematic attempt to assess the possible impacts of Turkey's accession to date. However, this "one-size-fits-all" impact study failed to strike many chords in European public debates. A single cost-benefit balance-sheet has the advantage of reaching clear "objective" answers or reasoned hypotheses to complex questions. Yet it cannot escape the critique that providing an authoritative balance-sheet of the state of affairs in an indefinite future on the relationship between two moving and multifaceted objects – the EU and Turkey – is next to impossible.²⁶ Furthermore, a single impact study necessarily fails to engage with the different and specific preoccupations across national, regional and sectoral domains within the EU and Turkey.

A Communication Strategy would not have the ambition of presenting an "impact study". It would however engage with the pro and con arguments within different geographical and sectoral arenas in the EU and Turkey in order to promote a more informed and constructive debate on the different dimensions of EU-Turkey relations. It would respond to the different arguments and concerns of different stakeholders and publics. This would imply first responding to the specific questions viewed as important by different European stakeholders. Hence, as suggested by Alessandri and Canan, when debating with trade unions, a main subject of debate would be the costs and benefits of Turkey's accession regarding EU and Turkish labour rights. Second, cost-benefit arguments would be framed in a manner that resonates, i.e., they would be aware of and respond to the particular interests and worldviews of specific stakeholders. Hence, when speaking to a French federalist, as opposed to a British eurosceptic, it would be nonsensical to present as a benefit the hypothesis that Turkey's accession would dampen the European political project. Doing so would either fall on deaf ears or consolidate rather than question existing assumptions regarding EU-Turkey relations within specific groups.

2.2 *A Differentiated and Dynamic Strategy*

The discussion above opens the way to a second prerequisite of an EU Communication Strategy on Turkey: the need for it to be differentiated and dynamic. But what do we mean by this? What has emerged over the course

²⁶ As discussed at length in *Talking Turkey I*, a key question when discussing Turkey's "impact" is the level at which such impact unfolds (e.g., the impact on the global, EU, national or candidate country levels). See Tocci, N (ed.) (2007) *Conditionality, Impact and Prejudice in EU-Turkey Relations*, *LAI Quaderni, English Series*, Rome.

of this two-year project is that there is no EU debate on Turkey. The debates vary widely across as well as within member states, adding to this complex EU reality the debate in Turkey itself as well as within the Brussels-based policy community. These different debates are the reflection of different interests and ideas, which are either directly or indirectly related to the EU-Turkey question. These debates also oscillate over time, whereby particular issues are sparked and others diffused in public debates at different points in time, again as the result of the changing configurations of domestic, regional and international interests and ideas. In other words, an effective Communication Strategy cannot be a “one-size-fits-all” EU-wide strategy, but must be based on a careful and constantly monitored selection of its content, timing and interlocutors. It must target the right audience, at the right time, with the right message delivered by the right messenger.

As this book has attempted to do, a differentiated and dynamic Communication Strategy must begin with an analysis of the different stakeholders within member states, the EU and Turkey. This analysis would seek to uncover who these actors are, what their position is, what the interests and ideas underlying such positions are, and how these intersect with the Turkey question. Having undertaken such analysis here, let us turn to examine what a differentiated and dynamic Communication Strategy might look like.

A differentiated message

The first and most evident point to make, linking back to a Communication Strategy which resonates with the interests and concerns of its audiences, is that the message delivered by such a Strategy must respond to the existing debate within a specified group. Hence, there is little point in presenting the geostrategic costs and benefits of Turkey’s accession when the existing debate is focused on the effect of Turkey’s accession on EU institutions, its budget or its agricultural policy. A subtler variant of this point would be that even the same topic may be treated in a variety of ways depending on who the specific interlocutor is. Let us take the question of identity-religion to highlight this point, an aspect which across the EU represents the single most important source of resistance to Turkey’s accession.

Here we can unpack a set of different arguments whose appropriateness would depend on the specific audience to whom the message is delivered and discussed. A first argument is that of Turkey having a (positive) impact on a multicultural EU, which makes of multiculturalism, alongside toler-

ance and coexistence, a principal defining feature of its identity. This is an argument that would resonate well with European socialist, liberal and left-wing political groups, with liberal/left-leaning intellectuals and civil society organizations, and with Diaspora community associations. It would strike the wrong chords instead with right-wing and ethnocentrist political, media and civil society groups, or with those who identify the EU with its Christian-Judaic roots in member states such as Italy and Poland.

Second, Turkey can and has been presented as a bridge to the Middle East and a model of Muslim democracy, thus strengthening the EU's foreign policy potential. This is an argument that tends to resonate well with the foreign policy community across the EU, and has been often cited by the foreign and defence communities in member states such as Italy and the UK, as well as sceptical member states such as France and Germany. As argued by Lippert, this argument is convincing to foreign policy realists who aspire at strengthening the relative "power" of the West vis-à-vis the Muslim world, as well as to liberal internationalists who view the EU as a civilian post-national power that projects its norms beyond its borders. Yet not all foreign policy experts would value highly this line of reasoning. As argued by Balcer, in Poland foreign policy attention turns east: to Russia, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. Polish foreign policy experts have less of an interest in building a bridge to the Middle East and the Muslim world and are more concerned with Turkey's relations with Russia and the Caucasus, as well as the links drawn between Turkey's accession process and Ukraine's EU perspective. In the case of Greece also, this line of reasoning holds little sway amongst foreign policy realists, who remain anchored to the idea that Turkey ought to be contained and weakened through all possible means. As argued by Jung, beyond foreign policy this argument would not strike any chords with stakeholders across member states who view Islam and liberal democracy as incompatible, and would thus use the slightest glitch in Turkey's human rights record to affirm their thesis. In other words, even if we were to see an entirely reformed Turkey with glittering human rights standards projecting peace and stability to its neighbourhood, any minimal incident in Turkey would be flagged as "proof" of the unbridgeable cultural gap separating "Muslim Turkey" from "Christian Europe".

Third, Turkey can be represented as one of the cradles of Christian civilization while being a predominantly Muslim country. Polish and Italian "Christian public opinion", the Roman Catholic Church, Law & Justice in Poland as well as Catholic networks, social clubs and student fraternities in

Austria would abhor arguments that present Turkey as an asset to a multi-cultural Europe. Yet they may be more sensitive to arguments regarding Turkey's role in the history of Christianity. Hence the importance of Pope Benedict XVI's apostolic visit to Turkey in November 2006 cited by several authors in this volume.

Finally, Turkey can feature in European debates on secularism. Notwithstanding its peculiar interpretation of secularism, certainly distinct from the French understanding of *laïcité* as discussed by Le Gloanec, Turkey is a secular state in so far as it is a country where citizens can be either religious/practicing or not, and both are accepted by the state and society. This is an argument that may appeal to European secularists, as well as right-of-centre and conservative groups with little sympathy for "Islam". By contrast, other conservative parties in Europe, and in particular Christian democratic parties in Italy, Austria and Germany may find more appealing arguments about the AKP as a "Muslim democratic" party, comparable to their own parties, which are liberal in economic outlook but socially conservative.

A differentiated audience

The messages delivered and debated by a Communication Strategy would focus on two sets of actors: elite and mid-level stakeholders on the one hand and public opinion on the other. However, whereas in the case of stakeholders a Communication Strategy would foresee a genuine two-way debate, in the case of "public opinion" the Strategy would envisage an indirect form of communication through the mediation of national stakeholders. National stakeholders would represent the views of the wider public to the EU level and communicate back to the public the messages elaborated in the context of the Communication Strategy. In other words, a Communication Strategy would target directly national stakeholders and through them reach the wider public.

Across all member states we note that elite stakeholders tend to hold more open views regarding the Turkey question than "public opinion". On the one hand, this would facilitate the task of a Communication Strategy. On the other hand, this finding shadows the reality that public opinion is formed through the messages delivered by elite stakeholders, which in turn often hide behind public opinion when adopting defensive positions in a classic Putnamite "two-level game". In other words, to reach-out to public opinion it is essential that debate is undertaken with national stakeholders, who would mediate more nuanced messages to the publics.

The stakeholder audiences across member states include several actors. First we find state institutions and the civil service. These actors tend to have greater influence in member states in which Turkey is a low-level political issue, such as in Poland or the UK, as well as in countries where there is a relatively strong bi-partisan support for Turkey's EU accession, such as the UK or Italy. These actors also tend to hold rather positive views on Turkey's accession in so far as they are driven above all by foreign policy considerations, making them more open to the positive geopolitical arguments about Turkey's accession. This is because actors within state institutions dealing with Turkey are normally located in foreign ministries or in foreign affairs committees in parliaments, as discussed in chapters on Poland and the UK in particular. Furthermore, civil services are sensitive to *pacta sunt servanda* arguments, whereby Turkey, having been granted candidacy in 1999, ought to proceed with the accession process on the exclusive basis of its compliance with EU conditions, as argued by Turkish stakeholders as well.

Second we find political parties. This is the domain where we report the largest degree of variance across member states. It is these differences, rooted in the domestic politics and trajectories of each member state, which above all else explain the absence of a single European debate on Turkey. The area of similarity and overlap across member states lies in the extremes. Far-right parties tend to oppose resolutely Turkey's membership on the grounds of religion and culture, being backed by some segments within strongly Catholic parties. Hence, the similar rhetoric permeating the *Legha Nord* in Italy, FPÖ in Austria, the *Dansk Folkeparti* in Denmark, the *Mouvement pour la France* and LAOS in Greece, as well as some elements within Law & Justice in Poland, the CDU/CSU in Germany or the Union of Christian Democrats in Italy. Parties on the far-left instead often tend to mildly oppose Turkey's accession while being open to change. They reject Turkey's membership in view of its human rights record, its treatment of the Kurds, its reluctance to recognize the Armenian genocide and its deregulated labour markets. However, they would be ready to accept Turkey's accession if the country were to fully reform and are enthusiastic of the assets Turkey would bring to a multicultural Europe. Following this line of thinking we find *Rifondazione Comunista* in Italy, *Socialistisk Folkeparti* in Denmark as well as the Greens in Austria. When it comes to the mass centre-left and centre-right parties in the EU, differences prevail instead. In some member states we find strong bipartisan support in favour of Turkey's accession (Italy, UK, Greece), in others cautious or weak bipartisan support

(Denmark and Poland), in others strong bipartisan rejection of Turkey's EU bid (Austria and France), while in other still stark divisions both within and between parties (Germany).

Third, we find business, which across all member states represents the single most ardent, committed and undivided supporter of Turkey's EU cause. While claims that Turkey is "already in Europe" may give rise to doubts regarding the degree to which business is truly interested in Turkey's membership, most confirm the importance attributed to Turkey's reform process, which they view as being intrinsically tied to the anchor of membership. In other words, while EU business stakeholders consider Turkey to be already "in Europe", as confirmed by their trade and investment decisions, their expectation as well as their desire is that Turkey becomes a full EU member state. Interestingly, this is largely true also of the most sceptical member states: France and Austria. This said, business has been a relatively silent stakeholder in the debate, having sway on government positions, but not exposing itself in public debate. With few and far away exceptions such as the report published by *Dansk Industri* in Denmark, the activities of TÜSIAD in Germany, or the *Saison de la Turquie* financed by French business, the strong and committed support of business stakeholders has not translated into a vocal EU-wide economic lobby in support of Turkey's cause.

Fourth, we find trade unions and economic interest groups. Here the story to be told is fairly consistent across member states, and most notably in Germany, Italy and France. While far from being vocal, trade unions tend to take an interest in Turkey and are open to the prospect of Turkey's accession – or at the very least they are certainly not against Turkey's EU bid for reasons related to religion and culture. However, trade unions are concerned with the state of labour rights in Turkey and the deregulation of the Turkish labour market, which, they fear, could either spill-into the EU or may generate unfair competitive pressures on member state workers. This is particularly true of some sectors, such as the agricultural one in member states such as Italy or the FNSEA in France.

Fifth, we find the media. Here again the story to be told is fairly similar across the EU. The media, on the whole tends to paint a rather negative image of Turkey, driven above all by its commercial logic whereby stereotypes, sensationalism and alarmism "sell". This is certainly true of the tabloid press in cases like Poland and the UK, television in Germany, but also, to a lower degree, of the principal national dailies across member states, with the possi-

ble exceptions of Germany or the UK.²⁷ Cross-cutting tendencies in member state medias include “culturalizing” political issues and reporting about Turkey’s EU accession in the context of Islam, focusing on tragic incidents or crises, and linking these back to the depiction of Turkey as the unknown “other” and its inability to conform to “European standards of civilization”. Sixth, we find the Churches. Here again, the position of the churches is fairly consistent across member states. As far as the Catholic Church is concerned, the message of the Vatican has been cautious, yet some Catholic personalities have expressed a resolutely negative stance on the Turkey question. Reasons include broad-brush arguments related to Europe’s “Christian identity”, as well as more subtle arguments related to the rights of Christians in Turkey. Protestant churches in Germany and France in particular have discussed Turkey both in the context of religious freedoms as well as in terms of secularism and its meaning in Europe. This fairly homogenous message of churches across member states must however be mapped against the different degrees of influence that the churches yield within them. On one end of the spectrum we find Italy and Poland, where the views of the Vatican hold considerable sway on public opinion. On the other end, we find the UK, Denmark and interestingly, Greece, where the Church either has been conditionally favourable to Turkey’s accession (Greece) or has little sway over public opinion (UK and Denmark). In the middle we find Austria, France and Germany, where both Catholic and Protestant churches have spoken on the Turkey question but have influence on specific sectors of society rather than on public opinion writ large. Finally, we find Diaspora communities. Here again the story is fairly consistent, with Turkish Diaspora communities being viewed as “silent stakeholders”. This is either because of their small numbers (Poland, Italy), because they are weakly organized (Austria, France, Denmark), because they are relatively well-integrated and thus “disappear” in the public space (Italy), or because the political system reduces the prospects for community groups to make an impact through electoral politics (UK). Only in Germany, in view of the sheer size of the Turkish community, the EU-Turkey cause is promoted by well-known personalities of Turkish origin and associations (often organized as “Muslim” rather than specifically Turkish organizations). This notwith-

²⁷ In the case of the UK however there has been a growing link being drawn by the media between the Turkish-Kurdish Diaspora and organized crime.

standing, in member states such as France, Denmark, Germany and Austria, the real and perceived non-integration of these “silent stakeholders” becomes a prime source of argumentation against Turkey’s EU bid by other vocal stakeholders. This relates to and contrasts with another Diaspora community: the French of Armenian origin. While not being one monolithic community, the level of integration and organization of the French Armenians has allowed them to occupy much of the space left vacant by a poor, irresponsible and unresponsive leadership regarding the EU-Turkey question.

STAKEHOLDERS	POSITIONS
State Institutions	
Austria	Silently follows government’s rejectionist line.
Denmark	Leading representatives give the impression they neither believe nor want to believe in Ankara’s ability to meet the Copenhagen criteria.
France	Enormous presidential power. Former President Chirac in favour. Current President Sarkozy against. Both defer decision to referendum.
Germany	Foreign and security communities in favour.
Greece	Follows the bipartisan conditional support for Turkey.
Italy	Commitment to deepen economic and political cooperation (Italy-Turkey Strategic Partnership).
Poland	For the President, support is a due act of gratitude for Turkey’s support for Poland’s NATO entry. Support stems from strategic and geopolitical reasons too. For the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey and Ukraine’s membership perspectives are interrelated.
Turkey	State institutions largely in favour, including, albeit conditionally, the military whose ‘weight in Turkish politics cannot be denied’.
UK	Strong evidence of commitment through the Turkey-UK Strategic Partnership. Support both from the FCO and the Ministry of Defence.
Political Parties	
Austria	Bipartisan opposition (FPÖ and SPÖ-OVP, referendum required), except from the Greens.
Denmark	Mixed picture. Conditional support both from the government (centre-right parties – <i>Venstre</i> , <i>Det Konservative Folkeparti</i>) and opposition (<i>Socialistisk Folkeparti</i> , <i>Enhedslisten</i>). Liberal parties, <i>Det Radikale Venstre</i> and <i>Ny Alliance</i> share a positive stance. The nationalist <i>Dansk Folkeparti</i> opposes membership and calls for referendum.
France	Bipartisan opposition.
Germany	Bipartisan yet cautious consensus on Turkey’s (open-ended) membership negotiations by grand coalition, but low-key approach to public debate on the issue.

Greece	Strong bipartisan support by PASOK/ <i>Nea Demokratia</i> . Extreme right (LAOS) and Left (KKE) oppose membership, but for different reasons.
Italy	Bipartisan consensus. Opposition from <i>Lega Nord</i> , <i>La Destra</i> and <i>Rifondazione</i> , but for different reasons. Opposition stems from some representatives of the Christian Democrats as well.
Poland	Support from Civic Platform and Law & Justice, but latter's support is lukewarm. Support from the Democratic Left Alliance and Polish Peasant Party.
Turkey	All mainstream parties in favour of full accession despite conjunctural criticism.
UK	Support from all three major parties (Labour, Conservative and Liberal Parties).
Business	
Austria	Little interest, but positive attitude. Customs union might be viewed as sufficient by some actors.
Denmark	Positive stance, but no significant influence on public.
France	Strongly in favour of Turkey's EU bid. Influence on government behind closed doors.
Germany	Strongly in favour of Turkey's EU bid.
Greece	Strongly in favour of Turkey's EU bid. Scepticism to anything but membership because it would destabilize Turkey.
Italy	Strongly in favour of Turkey's EU bid. Strong influence on government policy.
Poland	In favour but not influential. Low level of bilateral trade. Hence low interest in Turkey's accession.
Turkey	Major supporter of accession process, with partial exception of relatively eurosceptic MÜSIAD.
UK	Key stakeholder and strongly in favour of Turkey, but there is no single UK-based organization making the business case for Turkey nor actively lobbying for it.
Unions/Professional associations	
Austria	Reserved position. Turkey's size and economic structure would seriously challenge EU absorption capacity. With the exception of the Federation of Austrian Industry, position in line with the business community.
Denmark	Relatively silent.
France	Mixed approach. CGT mixed. For FNSEA Turkey's membership will be a major challenge in the long-run.
Germany	Conditional support (Copenhagen criteria and open-ended negotiations).
Greece	Debate on EU-Turkey relations not a priority.
Italy	Generally in favour.
Poland	Silent.
Turkey	TÜSIAD and TOBB strongly in favour. Relative

	scepticism from MÜSIAD.
UK	Silent.
Church	
Austria	Some negative statements, but refrained from entering public discourse on the issue.
Denmark	Silent.
France	Mixed. Not major obstacle because ‘to exclude Turkey would amount to give-up hope for Turkish Christians to ever live in a democracy’.
Germany	Conditional support provided conditions regarding freedom of religion, non-discrimination of non-Muslim communities, the treatment of other minorities (Kurds), and human rights, are respected.
Greece	Conditionally favourable with emphasis on the rights of the Greek minority in Turkey.
Italy	“Christian public opinion” and authority of the Pope important. Catholics divided on the issue: Europe’s “Christian identity” moderated by the Pope’s relatively open position.
Poland	Influential and relatively negative: even if Turkey were to join the EU it will never become a culturally European country because it is not Christian.
Turkey	N/A. No comparable church establishment in Turkey.
UK	Silent.
Civil Society/Intellectuals	
Austria	Silent.
Denmark	Support from Denmark’s European Movement (<i>Europabevægelse</i>). Its subdivision <i>Netværk for Tyrkiet i EU</i> (Network for Turkey into the EU; TRIEU.dk) has already been lobbying.
France	Mixed. Some intellectuals in favour. Others more sceptical, calling for a small Europe while Turkey finds its place in the Middle East.
Germany	Mixed. The academic world, mostly from universities, contributes to the public debate on Turkey’s EU bid with both positive and negative positions.
Greece	Division in the community of IR scholars between supporters of engagement versus containment. Since late 1990s, the former have gained more legitimacy. Academia follows rather than leads official positions.
Italy	Mixed. Some intellectuals subscribe to a Christian interpretation of EU’s political future. Others, on the conservative side, consider the AKP as a Turkish equivalent of West European conservative parties.
Poland	Limited impact of three small departments of Turkish studies at Polish universities. Polish academic publications rarely focus on the issue.

Turkey	Growing number of CSOs operating on EU affairs. Positive stance.
UK	Majority support. Most in favour. Some have not adopted a clear stance. Few point to the impact on migration flows.
Media	
Austria	Alarmist and superficial. But in recent years, gradual establishment of information networks with Turkish counterparts. Important role in shaping public opinion. Increasing attention to Turkish domestic and foreign policy.
Denmark	Relatively balanced coverage but within a discursive context in which culturalist arguments, in particular regarding religion, are often emphasized.
France	Very little attention on Turkey.
Germany	“Culturalizing” and providing one-sided image of Turkey. Little factual information, especially after 9/11. Tabloids dwell upon bad news.
Greece	Superficial reports and partisan lines. Turkey is presented as a “revisionist” power, “expansionist” with a “provocative behaviour”. Gradual moderation of views after the 1999 earthquakes.
Italy	Insufficient and often one-sided information. Sporadic mobilization, especially for tragic and negative events. One-sided information given by some newspapers (<i>La Padania</i>).
Poland	Overall positive attitude, but depth of research among the media is rather low. Limited knowledge about Turkey.
Turkey	The mainstream media is generally supportive but can be critical depending on conjuncture. It typically captures all anti-EU discourse in the EU.
UK	Relatively balanced coverage, with exception of superficial association drawn between illegal activities and Kurdish-Turkish Diaspora.
Diaspora community	
Austria	Rather silent. The Union of European Turkish Democrats, one of the few organizations with Turkish roots, is hardly known to most Austrians.
Denmark	Potentially an important stakeholder, yet rather silent so far. Little confidence in Turkey’s EU accession.
France	Armenian Diaspora highly involved in French political institutions. Turkish community rather uninfluential.
Germany	Large Turkish community and largest migrant community in Germany. Majority lives in a parallel society. Organized Turkish community and five Muslim umbrella organizations. However increasing number of prominent German citizens of Turkish origin in politics,

	arts, business and entertainment.
Greece	Turkish national minority silent.
Italy	Rather small, well-educated and almost all regularly employed. Silent.
Poland	Small-sized Turkish community. Only two noteworthy associations: the Association for Polish-Turkish Friendship and the Polish-Turkish Chamber of Commerce. Silent.
Turkey	
UK	Relatively small. Low level of visibility in the media. Increasing role of Kurdish and Turkish organized crime in human trafficking and narcotics.

Differentiate the messenger

A differentiated Communication Strategy ought to have at its core a differentiated message, a differentiated audience, but also, and less obviously, a differentiated messenger. The same message if delivered by one stakeholder as opposed to another can have a very different effect. To take one evident example, it may well be counterproductive for a British conservative, perceived as auguring the dilution of the European political project, to argue the merits of Turkey's accession to a French or a German federalist. It may be far more appropriate for Italian diplomacy or political parties to argue Turkey's case to their French or German counterparts, in so far as Italy is viewed as a more committed Europeanist member state.

Exploring this question further, three actors have punched beneath their weight in their communications on Turkey. First and most evidently is the case of business, which while being an ardent, committed and virtually undivided supporter of Turkey's EU accession across the EU spectrum, has been rather silent in public debate. This silence, particularly in member states such as Austria or France, may be linked to the belief of there is little point in publicly swimming against the tide of public opinion in a situation in which "business as usual" proceeds in economic relations with Turkey. Yet business stakeholders, while ill-equipped to capture and contribute to the "ideational" arguments regarding EU-Turkey relations (e.g., identity, religion, etc), can contribute to highlighting the gains, as well as the challenges to both national and EU economies stemming from Turkey's entry. Particularly if these arguments are articulated more vocally by business actors alongside trade unions and professional associations, some of the space occupied by the alarmist economic messages given by some political figures may be rebalanced in public debate.

Second and displaying the most urgent need of attention is the media. We

have already discussed how the media, across member states, bears a major responsibility in (mis)representing Turkey to EU publics. At the same time it is recognized by all as *a*, if not *the*, key messenger with the power to mould European debates on Turkey. The question becomes how to ensure that the message delivered by the media becomes more nuanced and cool-headed, focusing not only on moments of political crisis or covering Turkey in the context of Islam, but also devoting space and attention to other issues surrounding the EU-Turkey debate such as culture, art, history, as well as Turkey's complex process of political, social and economic transformation. In all member states, journalists are identified as key targets of information campaigns, highlighting the need to establish more organic links between academia and the media regarding the Turkey question, as well as between journalists and media holdings in Turkey and in EU member states. A key example in this respect are the joint Greek-Turkish media initiatives such as the Greek-Turkish Journalists' Forum and the synergies explored by the Doğan Holding in Turkey and Kathimerini in Greece, explored in the chapter by Ifantis and Fotiou.

Finally, three chapters in this volume have examined the multifaceted role of the single most important external stakeholder in European debates on Turkey: the United States. All concur that the US has played a decisive role at key points in time in EU-Turkey relations (e.g., in conjunction with the European Council meetings taking major decisions on Turkey between 1999 and 2004). All agree that this influence has declined in recent years, primarily because Turkey has become an increasingly "internal" EU matter. Yet what emerges from the chapters by Barkey, Lesser and Ojanen is also that American influence has at times punched beneath its weight, while at other times it has misfired. The US appears not to have made the most of its potential influence primarily because it has pressed for Turkey's cause by relying upon geostrategic and geoeconomic considerations, which in turn hold sway primarily in those member states which are already "converted" to Turkey's cause (e.g., the UK, Italy or Poland). A possible exception here is Germany, where at least some stakeholders appear to be increasingly sensitive to geopolitical arguments. Furthermore, in some respects, US policies have, unintentionally, backfired in the EU, by pushing Turkey increasingly into the Middle East either in concrete (e.g., through the war in Iraq) or discursive terms (by talking about Turkey within the paradigm of the "clash of civilizations").

Either way, the underlying line emerging from these chapters is that beyond

geopolitics, US messengers could target more effectively other EU stakeholders. These include the European human rights communities, often concentrated on the liberal and left ends of the political spectrum, which are at times sceptical of Turkey while open to change their views. Washington could target these stakeholders not only directly by engaging in debate with them, but also and above all by strengthening its messages to Turkey regarding its reforms and domestic politics. It is above all in this way that the remaining concerns about Turkey representing an “American Trojan horse” in Europe, often voiced by liberal and left quarters in Europe, would diffuse or disappear.

2.3 Retaining Overall Vision

This project has argued and these chapters confirmed that a “European Communication Strategy on Turkey” ought to be differentiated and dynamic in order to be effective. It must be differentiated in terms of its messengers, its messages as well as its target audiences, departing from “one-size-fits-all” approaches to communication. The Strategy must be finely tuned in order to address the multiplicity of discourses and actors within each and every member state. The Strategy must also be dynamic, by carefully selecting its moments of intervention and promptly reacting when public debates inflame and veer in dangerous directions. Moreover, an effective and influential Communication Strategy must not blindly promote Turkey’s accession course, but rather engage, genuinely, with the interests, beliefs and arguments dominating European public debates. A Communication Strategy must engage in a genuine two-way conversation with different European stakeholders and constituencies in the EU-Turkey question.

Yet, we are left with two dilemmas. First, if a Strategy is to be differentiated with a plethora of messages, audiences and messengers, how can it retain overall coherence? Coherence and coordination call for a Strategist pulling the strings of communication, but wouldn’t a single Strategist undermine the efforts of achieving differentiation? Second, if a Strategy is to avoid simply pushing for Turkey’s EU cause, who is to carry it out? Both candidate Turkey and the Commission mandated to negotiate Turkey’s membership have an underlying conflict of interests, wishing to proceed with accession without jeopardizing it with communications that may undermine the project of enlargement. Even if the underlying premise of a Communication Strategy and indeed of this project is that a healthier

process of communication would indirectly support Turkey's EU bid, what is clear is that genuine communication would go right to the heart of the overall desirability of Turkey's membership, a question which both Turkey and the Commission would find difficult to deal with in an open-minded manner. Yet who then could act as the Strategizer who would formulate, coordinate, implement and constantly revise this Communication Strategy? These two dilemmas are closely intertwined and the way out rests precisely in their inter-linkage. There is no actor other than the Commission who could provide the necessary coordination and strategic vision underpinning an EU Communication Strategy on Turkey. This does not entail that the Commission must be on the frontline of such a Strategy, elaborating the messages and delivering these to different audiences. Indeed its vested interests in Turkey's accession course is such that it cannot be at the forefront of such communications. The Commission would rather select and promote fora for dialogue between specific messengers and target audiences, based upon its understanding of the different debates that resonate within different national and sectoral contexts. In other words, the Commission would initiate and coordinate the communications between different European stakeholders, providing coherence and vision in the overall architecture of the Strategy and not in the substantive messages delivered within it. The Commission would also listen to these differentiated debates, enriching its own substantive communications to select stakeholders and audiences. Its Communication Strategy would thus begin with an appreciation of the stakeholders, arguments and audiences involved in public debates; it would proceed with coordinating and promoting communications between these actors, and it would conclude by revising its own substantive communications on the grounds of the mediated messages it has heard. Hence the dynamism as well as the differentiation in the Strategy.

A supporting idea regarding the overall architecture of a Communication Strategy and the Commission's own substantive messages would be that of seeking an overall "big idea" underpinning and weaving a strong yet subtle thread across the many messages communicated to and from the Strategy. This idea would have the same strength and appeal as the "transition from dictatorship" in the case of the southern enlargements, "economic development" in the case of the northern enlargements, or the "reunification of Europe" in the case of the eastern enlargements.

Such a single and powerful idea in the case of Turkey's accession seems

hard. Rather than a single idea related to the content of communication, perhaps a more plausible unifying idea may be found in the realm of procedure. What emerges starkly from this project and the chapters of this book is that arguments within the EU about Turkey's accession ought to focus less on why the EU "owes" Turkey membership, why membership would benefit Turkey, as well as why Turkey would benefit the EU in strictly utilitarian terms (e.g., arguments related to economy or geostrategy). It would rather focus more on what Turkey would contribute to Europe in political, cultural and ideational terms, on how Turkey would enrich the European political project, contribute to the process of European construction as well as strengthen the cross-fertilizations in the European cultural mosaic.

This alternative reading of a cost-benefit approach puts a major onus on Turkey itself. Beyond strategizing about communication, what speaks most eloquently of all to EU stakeholders is what actually happens in Turkey itself: its reform process, its political, economic, social and cultural dynamics, as well as its role in the wider world. It is here we find a final dilemma, accurately examined by Esen and Bölükbaşı in their contribution. The multifarious yet often negative European debates on Turkey have not gone unnoticed by the multitude of Turkish stakeholders in the EU-Turkey debate. And it is here that the often negative communication stemming from the EU has interlocked with at times passive, at other times defensive, and at other times reactionary or adversarial communications in Turkey itself on the EU question. Hence the slowing down of the reform process. Hence the disillusioned Turkish public opinion. Breaking out of this vicious circle is no small feat. Both sides point the finger to each other: EU stakeholders, including the most committed to the Turkey cause, call for a resumption of Turkey's reform process. Turkish stakeholders, including the most committed to the EU project, call for fairer treatment of Turkey in the EU. Reality, inevitably, goes both ways. It is only through greater EU efforts in Talking Turkey and dealing with Turkey's accession process in a more constructive manner, alongside efforts of Turkish stakeholders to swim against the tide and resume the reform process, that renewed virtuous circles can be set in motion in the practical and discursive domains of EU-Turkey relations.

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Index (1996-2008)

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