

TURKEY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION: OTHER COMPLEMENTARY  
OPTIONS?

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September 2001

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# ABSTRACT

## Turkey and the European Union: Other Complementary Options?

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Is Turkey's perception of membership in the European Union (EU) as an 'ultimate goal' justified? Are there complementary options supporting Turkey's membership in the Union? These questions are the focus of the present thesis.

In order to find an answer to these questions, the present thesis displays the shift in EU policies toward Turkey from 1997 to 1999 and its reasons. Furthermore it proceeds to display the criteria Turkey has to fulfill before accession negotiations can be opened. In particular, the work examines to what extent Turkey already meets the political Copenhagen criteria and, therefore, what kind of a reform process needs to be launched in order to fulfill the requirements not yet met.

While investigating complementary possibilities for cooperation, first Turkey's chances for cooperation with its Middle Eastern neighbors, as well as with Israel and the Turkic Republics are taken up. The thesis will also examine, whether Turkey's membership in the organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation could be supportive of its prospective accession to the EU.

The work concludes that although the way to accession to the EU will be rocky for Turkey, its actual membership is desirable. Turkey has to strive for membership in the EU if it wants to strengthen its position within the international system of states on the one hand and consolidate its democracy and economy on the other. Turkey's membership in the organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation could be complementary in many respects to its prospective membership in the EU.

Keywords: Turkey, International Relations, European Union, Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Middle East, Turkic Republics, Central Asia

# ÖZET

## Türkiye ve Avrupa Birliği: Tamamlayıcı Opsiyonlar Ne Olabilir?

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Avrupa Birliğine üye olmak Türkiye için gerçekten ulaşılmaması gereken yegane amaç mıdır? Türkiye-Avrupa Birliği ilişkisinde tamamlayıcı opsiyonlar neler olabilir? Bu tezde bu sorular ele alınmaktadır.

Türkiye ve Avrupa Birliği ilişkileri, Avrupa Birliği politikasındaki 1997 ile 1999 yılı arasındaki değişiklikler ve bunun nedenleri çerçevesinde alınmaktadır. Türkiye'nin AB'ye asli üye olarak katılması ve görüşmelere başlanabilmesi için getirmesi gereken hususlar (özellikle Kopenhag Kriterleri ardından yerine getirilmesi gereken reformlar süreci bağlamında) gözden geçirilmekte, Türkiye-AB birlikteliğine ek olarak hangi birlikteliklerin içinde yer alabilir sorusunu yanıtlayabilmek için de Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu ülkeleri, Türki Cumhuriyetler, İsrail ve Karadeniz Ekonomik İşbirliği Teşkilatı ile ilişkileri incelenmektedir.

Bu tezde, son tahlilde, Avrupa Birliği'ne giden yolun zorluklarına rağmen AB üyeliğinin Türkiye için uluslararası açıdan, devletler sistemi içindeki yerini güçlendirmek ve ulusal açıdan demokrasi ve ekonomisini daha iyi hale getirmek konusundaki önemi vurgulanmaktadır. Öte taraftan Türkiye için Karadeniz

Ekonomik İşbirliđi Teşkilatı içinde yer almanın Türkiye-AB ilişkisini tamamlayıcı önemli bir opsiyon olduđu sonucuna varılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye, Uluslararası İlişkileri, Avrupa Birliđi, Karadeniz Ekonomi İşbirliđi, Ortadođu Ülkeleri, Türki Cumhuriyetleri, Orta Asya

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Art.	Article
Blackseafor	Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
BSTDB	Black Sea Trade and Development Bank
CEE	states in Central and Eastern Europe
CESDP	Common Europe Security and Defense Policy
CUA	Customs Union Agreement
EC	European Community
ECCS	European Community for Coal and Steel
ECT	European Community Treaty
EEC	European Economic Cooperation
ERF	Economic Research Forum
ESDI	European Security and Defense Identity
ETA	Basque separatist group = <i>Euzkadi Ta Azkatasuna</i>
EU	European Union
EUT	European Union Treaty
GAP	Southeast Anatolian Project = <i>Güneydogu Anadolu Projesi</i>
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
ICBSS	International Center for Black Sea Studies
IMF	International Monetary Fund

IRA	Irish Republican Army
MHP	Nationalist Action Party = <i>Milliyetci Hareket Partisi</i>
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
No.	Number
NSC	National Security Council
OSCE	Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe
PABSEC	Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation
parag.	paragraph
PKK	Kurdish Workers' Party = <i>Partia Kerkeren Kurdistan</i>
TASG	Turkish Area Study Group
TC	Trade Creation
TD	Trade Diversion
TPP	True Path Party = <i>Dogru Yol Partisi</i>
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Socialist Soviet Republics
Vol.	Volume
WEU	Western European Union
WP	Welfare Party = <i>Refah Partisi</i>

# CHAPTER I:

## INTRODUCTION

More than a decade has past since ruptures in the international system and the strive for independence by fifteen states in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia gradually undermined the balance of the bipolar system of the Cold War. The result of this process of demise was the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact in 1991 which had been prominent actors in the international system for the previous half century. Thus, the Iron Curtain lifted and the Cold War together with its bipolar world order became a part of history. What Fukuyama back then called the “end of history”<sup>1</sup> and others as the beginning of a “new world disorder”<sup>2</sup> express the states’ search for their position in world politics in the aftermath of the confrontation between the USA and the USSR. At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the process of finding or redefining a place within this changed international system continues for most of the nation-states throughout the world. Turkey in particular was affected by these developments and has made every effort to stand and consolidate its ground within world politics.

At times of the Cold War Turkey primarily served as the “Southern flank” of NATO<sup>3</sup> and thereby played a leading part in the containment of the Soviet Power

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<sup>1</sup> F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the last Man* (London: Hamilton, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> See for instance B. Tibi, *Die neue Weltunordnung: Westliche Dominanz und islamischer Fundamentalismus* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> See for example M. Abramowitz, “Foreword.” In G. Fuller and I. Lesser (eds.), *Turkey’s New Geopolitics: From the Balkans to Western China* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), viii; and B. Tibi, *Aufbruch am Bosphorus. Die Türkei zwischen Europa und dem Islamismus* (München und Zürich: Diana Verlag, 1998), 100; F. A. Váli, “Bridge across the Bosphorus” (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins Press, 1971), xii similarly referred to Turkey as “the southeastern redoubt of NATO”.

and the Warsaw Pact,<sup>4</sup> which posed the main threat to Turkey's security. Therefore Turkey took up a policy that concentrated on preventing a clash with the Soviet Bloc. After the collapse of the USSR Turkey's role within world politics seemed to lose significance. Yet, contrary to Turkey's marginalization, which resulted from the restructuring of the world order, the possibility seemed to open up that Turkey might become a focus within its region. Within Turkey's geographic proximity newly independent states emerged which provided new opportunities for Turkey's foreign policy: The Russian-Turkish border became suddenly more permeable, the Turkic Republics were no longer under control of communism but became sovereign states with the possibility of shaping foreign policy on their own and new possibilities emerged for cooperation among states within the Black Sea region. Fuller and Lesser even argue that Turkey has recently ascended to the status of a 'pivotal state'<sup>5</sup> in so far as its alliances stretch from Eastern Europe to Western China<sup>6</sup>.

The dramatic changes in the international system after the collapse of the Soviet Union also had an impact on Turkey's relations with the European Union. In view of the fact that the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc had released the Central and Eastern European states (CEE) from the rigid system of communism the European Union envisaged an enlargement process. At the beginning of the 1990's the EU

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<sup>4</sup> Compare Z. Khalilzad et al., *The Future of Turkish-Western Relations: Toward a Strategic Plan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2000), x, 1, 79.

<sup>5</sup> Compare G. Fuller, "From Eastern Europe to Western China: *The Growing Role of Turkey in the World and its Implications for Western Interests* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1993). This view is also supported by Z. Khalilzad et al., *The Future of Turkish-Western Relations: Toward a Strategic Plan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Compare G. Fuller, "From Eastern Europe to Western China: *The Growing Role of Turkey in the World and its Implications for Western Interests* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1993).

begun to discuss the eligibility of the CEE for accession to the organization after those states had signed Association Agreements with the Union.<sup>7</sup>

Although Turkey's ties to the then European Economic Community (EEC)<sup>8</sup> almost date back to the genesis of this cooperation-project, Turkey was not taken into consideration as a candidate for accession. Twelve years after the initiative for establishing the European Community for Coal and Steel (ECCS) in 1951, the Ankara Treaty<sup>9</sup> was signed on 12 September 1963, with which Turkey became an associate member of the EEC. Besides Greece in 1962, Turkey was the only country to enter into such a relationship with the EEC. According to the Association Agreement, Turkey's relations with the Community were supposed to pass through three different stages: a preparatory, a transitional, and a final stage resulting in a Customs Union between Turkey and the then EEC. Furthermore the Ankara Treaty foresaw an examination of Turkey's eligibility for accession to the community "as soon as the operation of the agreement has advanced far enough". The Ankara Agreement was followed in 1970 by the Additional Protocol,<sup>10</sup> which marked the beginning of the transitional stage. Both documents entailed a roadmap for the establishment of a Customs Union between Turkey and the EC, and the EEC respectively, to be fulfilled by 1995. In fact, on 1 January 1996, the Customs

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<sup>7</sup> Poland and Hungary were the first in 1991 in signing an Association Agreement and Slovenia was the most recent in 1996.

<sup>8</sup> The European Economic Cooperation (EEC), the European Atom Community (EAC) and the European Community for Coal and Steel (ECCS), fused in 1967 to the European Community (EC) and with the treaty of Maastricht coming into force in 1993 it finally converged to the European Union (EU).

<sup>9</sup> For the official document (not available in English) see [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/de/lif/dat/1964/de\\_264A1229\\_01.html](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/de/lif/dat/1964/de_264A1229_01.html)

<sup>10</sup> The Additional Protocol implemented the second stage of the Association Agreement, see R. Bourguignon, "A History of the Association Agreement between Turkey and the European Community." In A. Evin and G. Denton (eds.), *Turkey and the European Community* (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 1990), 54, for the Additional Protocol see [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/lif/dat/1970/en\\_270A1123\\_01.html](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/lif/dat/1970/en_270A1123_01.html).

Union between Turkey and the EU was put into effect after the Customs Union Agreement (CUA)<sup>11</sup> had been signed in March of the previous year.<sup>12</sup> An example of the prevailing attitude in Turkey at that time concerning the prospective membership in the EU is a statement by the former Prime Minister Tansu Ciller who said<sup>13</sup>: “We cannot afford to miss this train of globalization: we either become a part of Europe or we face total isolation and marginalization”<sup>14</sup>

In spite of its long-standing association with the European Union, Turkey was never accepted as a formal candidate for accession. In 1987, the Turkish State had surprisingly applied for membership to the then EC which was refused in 1989 on the grounds that the organization would not decide on an enlargement process before its envisaged development into a union was completed in 1993.<sup>15</sup> In fact, by signing the Treaty of Maastricht in February 1992, the EC had deepened to the envisaged European Union. After this process of deepening to a union had been completed, the EU’s consideration of a prospective enlargement became more

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<sup>11</sup> For the official document see [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/lif/dat/1996/en\\_296Do213\\_01.html](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/lif/dat/1996/en_296Do213_01.html).

<sup>12</sup> For the impact of the Customs Union on Turkey see R. A. De Santis, “The Impact of a Customs Union with the EU on Turkey’s Welfare, Employment and Income Distribution: An Age Analysis.” *Journal of Economic Integration*, Vol. 15 (2), 234-235; see also G. Schiller, “The Customs Union EU – Turkey: A first Assessment.” *Südosteuropa aktuell*, Vol. 29, 1999, 17-23; and C. Hartler and S. Laird, “The EU Model and Turkey: A Case for Thanksgiving?” *Journal of World Trade*, Vol. 33 (3), 149-155.

<sup>13</sup> Tansu Ciller made this statement in order to justify Turkey’s entry into the Customs Union with the EU.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in M. Eder, “Becoming Western: Turkey and the European Union.” In J. Grugel and W. Hout (eds.), *Regionalism across the North-South divide: state strategies and globalization* (London: Routledge, 1999), 79.

<sup>15</sup> However, as a reason for rejection economic and political shortcomings were also mentioned by the then EC. Compare I. O. Lesser, “Bridge or Barrier? Turkey and the West after the Cold War.” In G. Fuller and I. O. Lesser (eds.), *Turkey’s new Geopolitics: From the Balkans to Western China* (Boulder et al.: Westview Press, 1993), 104-105. The application was surprising for many observers both inside and outside of Turkey, compare A. Eralp, “Turkey and the European Union in the Aftermath of the Cold War.” In L. Rittenberg (ed.), *The Political Economy in Turkey in the Post-Soviet Era: Going West and looking East?* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 41. Nicole and Hugh Pope describe the EC’s reaction to it as follows: “Even if Turkey might one day become an economic Cinderella and a dream partner for European business, the European establishment reacted as if one of the ugly sisters had asked the prince for a dance.”, see N. and H. Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: Atatürk and After* (London: Murray, 1997), 180.

concrete. The European Council's Copenhagen summit in 1993 agreed on certain preconditions for accession to the European Union to be fulfilled by any state applying for membership. What from then on became known as the Copenhagen criteria<sup>16</sup>, included political conditions (first and foremost a consolidated democracy), economic conditions (a functioning market economy, which is able to cope with competitive pressures) and legal conditions (referring to the ability to adapt the EU's *aquis communautaire*, that is the entirety of the EU's rules and legal practices).

In 1997, the European Commission presented its Agenda 2000<sup>17</sup>, which mainly entailed a proposal for the EU's enlargement. According to its Agenda 2000 the Commission suggested the widening of the EU by ten Central and Eastern European states<sup>18</sup> (CEE) and Cyprus but not Turkey. It is true that the Commission considered Turkey to be eligible, but judged it not ready for accession yet on the basis of the Copenhagen criteria. Adopting the Commission's recommendation, the European Council's Luxembourg summit in December 1997 did not include Turkey in the EU's enlargement process. Although the European Council also stated Turkey's eligibility for accession, its exclusion from the enlargement process, of which Turkey had hoped to be a part, manifested the darkest period in Turkey-EU relations. Turkish voices opposing against the EU's attitude toward Turkey became louder. Some of the complaints put forward against the EU's policy

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<sup>16</sup> For the Copenhagen criteria (criteria for accession) see <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/intro/criteria.htm>.

<sup>17</sup> Compare European Commission, *Agenda 2000, Vol. I*, 15 July 1997, Part Two (VI.), see <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/agenda2000/strong/26.htm>.

<sup>18</sup> Those states were Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

toward Turkey will be investigated with respect to their validity from a Turkish perspective as well as an EU point of view.

The Luxembourg decision, which reflected the Commission's opinion, turned out to be a strategic mistake because Turkey's importance for the European security environment had been underestimated. Apart from the convergence to the Copenhagen criteria other aspects became the focus of attention for the evaluation of the Turkish case. Therefore, in 1999, the European Commission changed its mind and recommended to include Turkey in the EU's enlargement process. In its 1999 report on Turkey's progress towards accession, the Commission advised that Turkey should be given candidate status. Yet, the opening of accession negotiations – as foreseen for the remaining six candidates – was still not considered for the Turkish case<sup>19</sup>. In compliance with the Commission's recommendations, the European Council's Helsinki summit in December 1999 accepted Turkey as a formal candidate for membership. Similar to the decision to open accession negotiations with such applicants as Bulgaria, Slovakia and Romania which were not merely based on their fulfillment of the Copenhagen criteria, Turkey was accepted as a candidate although its domestic situation had hardly changed. This Thesis will argue that not only the recognition of Turkey's importance in Europe's security architecture changed the EU's mind about Turkey's prospects for membership, but also developments in the Union's overall enlargement process and

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<sup>19</sup> In 1997 the EU had decided to open accession negotiations with Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia. Then, in 1999, the EU also decided to open accession negotiations with Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania and Slovakia, which had been official candidates since 1997.

changes in the domestic and foreign policies of various EU member states contributed to Turkey's changed status.

Turkey is now an official candidate for accession to the European Union and entered into an accession partnership with the organization in March 2001. This new status for Turkey vis-à-vis the EU will be evaluated with respect to the steps that have to be taken and reforms that have to be carried out on the Turkish part in order to meet the Copenhagen criteria – in particular the political ones – which are prerequisite for progressing on the road to membership in the European Union. The argument is that in spite of many problems which Turkey has to face and solve in order to prompt the Union to open accession negotiations and disadvantages which might result from Turkey's actual membership, Turkey's perception of the European solution as an ultimate goal is nevertheless justified. With respect to security politics and geostrategy point of view, the EU faces advantages alongside eventual security risks by including Turkey in its enlargement process.

This work also argues that Turkey's bargaining position vis-à-vis the European Union will be improved if Turkey's role in its geographic proximity is strengthened. Chapter III shows that Turkey's relations with its Middle Eastern neighbors are problematic and that Turkey's ties to the Turkic Republics are not as close as it was once believed. Therefore the only options which could turn out to be supportive for and complementary to Turkey's prospective membership in the European Union are Turkey's cooperation with Israel and the cooperation among the Black Sea littoral states.

## **CHAPTER II:**

### **MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN UNION – An 'ULTIMATE GOAL' FOR TURKEY?**

“All that is certain today ... is that the negotiations between Ankara and Brussels will be difficult, painful, and will most likely last for many years to come”<sup>20</sup>

Turkey's relationship with the Union has been turbulent since its beginning in 1964<sup>21</sup> when Turkey became an associate member of the then EEC. Despite these pains membership in the European Union promises to be worth each and every effort on the part of Turkey. In March 2001, Turkey finally entered into an accession partnership with the EU after being accepted as a formal candidate in 1999.

The present Chapter focuses on Turkey-EU relations from the 1990s onwards. The relationship was rocky in the 1990s due to different attitudes toward Turkey's exclusion from the Union's enlargement process. The Chapter will proceed in analyzing the change in the EU's attitude toward Turkey from 1997 to 1999 and its importance for Turkey. Moreover the Chapter attempts to answer why membership in the EU has always been an ultimate goal for Turkey and what needs to be done on the part of Turkey in order to reach this aim. It concludes by remarking on Turkey's future as an EU-member.

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<sup>20</sup> E. Rouleau, “Turkey's Dream of Democracy.” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79 (6), November/December 2000, 114.

<sup>21</sup> The document had already been signed in 1963.

## 2.1 Turkey's Repulse in Luxembourg

In July 1997, the European Commission released its Agenda 2000, which mainly dealt with the Union's overall enlargement process. The European Council's Luxembourg Summit held in 1997 took place against this background. "In the light of its discussions, it has decided to launch an accession process comprising the ten Central and Eastern European applicant states and Cyprus".<sup>22</sup> As advised by the Commission, Turkey – although an applicant state – was not invited to participate in the accession process. Instead, it was attributed a special status because of a special strategy aimed at preparing the country for accession "by bringing it closer to the European Union in every field"<sup>23</sup>. Similar to the opinion the Commission displayed toward Turkey in 1989<sup>24</sup> when it rejected Turkey's application for full membership, the country's accession was rejected in 1997 on the grounds that its "political and economic conditions ... are not satisfied".<sup>25</sup> Yet, this time Turkey was judged on the basis of the Copenhagen criteria set up in 1993. According to the Copenhagen criteria<sup>26</sup> membership in the EU requires:

1. the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities
2. a functioning market economy with the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the EU

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<sup>22</sup> Luxembourg European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, 12 and 13 December 1997, parag. 10, see <http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec97.htm>.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* parag. 31.

<sup>24</sup> See M. Müftüleri-Bac, "The Impact of the European Union on Turkish Politics." *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 34 (2), June 2000, 162.

<sup>25</sup> Luxembourg European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, 12 and 13 December 1997, parag. 31, see <http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec97.htm>.

<sup>26</sup> For the Copenhagen criteria (criteria for accession) see <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/intro/criteria.htm>.

3. the ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

Due to the set up of these requirements for accession in 1993 the EU's "interpretation of democracy is now much deeper compared with the rather restrictive interpretation offered at the time of Greek or Spanish accession to the Community"<sup>27</sup>.

Evaluating Turkey on the basis of the Copenhagen criteria the European Council – in compliance with the Commission's recommendations – made Turkey's pursuit of the economic and political reforms, which it had already initiated, a prerequisite for intensifying Turkey's relationship with the EU. The political reforms<sup>28</sup> referred to Turkey's alignment of human right standards and practices on those which are in force in the EU including the respect and protection of minorities, first and foremost with respect to the Kurdish minority living in Turkey. Other political problems the European Council mentioned were Turkey's tense relations with Greece and their struggle over sea rights in the Aegean Sea and over Cyprus. Greece has been a member of the European Union since 1981. As unanimity applies within the EU for questions of new membership, an improvement of the Turko-Greek relationship was unavoidable. Otherwise Greece would continue to veto Turkey's prospective membership. Moreover the EU determined that Turkey's democracy suffers from the lack of civilian control over

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<sup>27</sup> Z. Önis, "Luxembourg, Helsinki and beyond: Towards an Interpretation of recent Turkey-EU Relations." *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 35 (4), 2000, 465.

<sup>28</sup> Luxembourg European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, 12 and 13 December 1997, parag. 35, see <http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec97.htm>.

the military because the institution of the National Security Council constitutionally guaranteed political representation to the military.<sup>29</sup>

Concerning Turkey's convergence with the Copenhagen economic criteria, the EU identified difficulties within Turkey's agricultural and financial sector.<sup>30</sup> Farming in Turkey at that time offered a job or at least a basis for living to most people in Turkey and was marked by a high degree of inefficiency. In 1997, Turkey's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in Power Purchasing Parities was U.S. \$ 6463 per capita, far below the EU's average GDP of U.S. \$ 20546 per capita<sup>31</sup>. According to the EU, Turkey's macroeconomic instability gave cause for concern because this might mean difficulties in coping with the competitive pressures of the European common market. A similar picture resulted from an evaluation of Turkey's financial sector. The rate of inflation was high and the banking sector lacked security.

## **2.2 After Luxembourg – Turkey deeply offended**

Of all applicants, Turkey was the only country – with thirty-four years of association with the EU and its predecessors – not invited to the Luxembourg Summit in December 1997. Out of twelve applicants, including ten Central and Eastern European Countries and Cyprus, only Turkey was not recommended as a candidate for EU membership by the European Commission.

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<sup>29</sup> The Turkish Constitution determines the existence of a National Security Council composed of the President, the Prime Minister, the Chief of the General Staff, the Ministers of National Defence, International Affairs, Commanders of Army, Navy, Air Force and Gendarmerie convening under the chairmanship of the President.

<sup>30</sup> Compare European Commission, *Agenda 2000, Vol. I*, 15 July 1997, Part Two (VI.), see <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/agenda2000/strong/26.htm>.

<sup>31</sup> Source: OECD, see [http://www.statistik.at/fachbereich\\_14/englisch/k17\\_frame.htm](http://www.statistik.at/fachbereich_14/englisch/k17_frame.htm).

The decision to exclude Turkey from the formal launch of accession negotiations triggered a storm of indignation to break out in the Turkish Republic. While the Association Agreement between Turkey and the then ECC signed in 1963 mentioned in Article 28 the possibility of Turkey's accession, this very same Article was interpreted by Turkey as a right for accession in the future. Not alone the disregard of this supposed guarantee for accession but especially the inclusion of Cyprus offended the government in Ankara. Furthermore, the Turkish public felt left "behind such paragons of economic and democratic virtue as Slovakia and Bulgaria".<sup>32</sup> The political leaders in Turkey questioned how countries with far shorter histories of democracy and less advanced economies were offered to begin EU negotiations before Turkey. Against this background they demanded<sup>33</sup> that Turkey should be given at least the same treatment as the second group of applicant states<sup>34</sup>.

The injury that Turks felt, expressed itself in such harsh statements as the one by then Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz who angrily asserted that a "new cultural Berlin Wall" is being erected between Christian Europe and Muslim Turkey.<sup>35</sup> Later, he even went as far to compare Germany's support for the EU's Eastern enlargement with the methods of the Nazi regime. By describing the German

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<sup>32</sup> "World Politics and Current Affairs." *The Economist*, 14 March 1998, 72-73.

<sup>33</sup> Compare the demand by then Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz quoted in "Turkey and the EU. Not so fast." *The Economist*, 20 December 1997, 30.

<sup>34</sup> The second group of applicants from Central and Eastern Europe – Latvia, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria were offered pre-accession partnership including financial aid and an annual review. For the first group of applicants comprised of Cyprus and the five CEE: Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia, and the Czech Republic accession talks were opened. Compare Luxembourg European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, 12 and 13 December 1997, parag. 10-19, 27-30, see <http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec97.htm>; and "Unsafe at many speeds?" *The Economist*, 20 December 1997, 29-30.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in "Turkey and the EU: Not so fast." *The Economist*, 20 December 1997, 30.

positive stance on the inclusion of the CEE into the EU as *Lebensraum*-politics, Yilmaz accused the German government of seeking room to expand.<sup>36</sup>

After the Luxembourg decision Turkey broke its connection with the EU or at least froze it.<sup>37</sup> Since Turkey was not even put on the EU's mid-term list for potential candidates, it refused in turn to continue any further accession talks and turned down the invitation to the European Council set up mainly with respect to Turkey. The political dialogue with the EU about such pending Turkish problems as the issue of human rights violations or the country's hostility towards its Greek neighbor and the Cyprus issue was broken off.<sup>38</sup> Turkey stated that its relation with the EU would henceforth be based merely on existing texts, that is the Association Agreement, the Additional Protocol and the Customs Union Agreement.<sup>39</sup> With regard to the fact that Turkey's efforts in the past have not been appreciated by the EU and thinking that they will never be rewarded Turkey looked around for other potential allies. Thereby the decision at Luxembourg and the Turkish reactions to it exemplify how a decision in the international environment influences foreign policy.

Whereby Turkey reacted to the Luxembourg exclusion with a feeling of unjust treatment and deep offence, commentators – even in EU countries – reacted with a shake of the head to the EU's action. The British polit-magazine 'The Economist' commented after the Luxembourg Summit:

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<sup>36</sup> See "Mesut Yilmaz, ambivalent Turk." *The Economist*, 14 March 1998, 42.

<sup>37</sup> Compare S. Kinzer, "Turkey, Rejected, Will Freeze Ties to European Union." *New York Times*, 15 December 1997, see also M. Ugur, *The European Union and Turkey: An Anchor/Credibility Dilemma* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), X.

<sup>38</sup> Compare European Commission, *1<sup>st</sup> Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession*, 4 November 1998, section A (parag. b), see [http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/turkey/rep\\_11\\_98/x.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/turkey/rep_11_98/x.htm).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

If the European summit [at Luxembourg] last week ever comes to be regarded as historic, it is likely to be because of a historic mistake. Unless matters are put right, ... historians may look at the Luxembourg meeting and judge it to be the occasion when Europe needlessly offended Turkey, thus increasing that country's sense of exclusion, its ... reluctance to reform, its awkwardness over Cyprus and NATO and perhaps its readiness to embrace either Islamic or quasi-military rule. Not bad for two days of work.<sup>40</sup>

The common argument by security specialists for the importance of Turkey is its geostrategic position. In their opinion this always has to be kept in mind when making a decision about Turkey's integration into any Western organization. In view of the European security environment, especially in American perspective, Turkey's participation in such a courageous integration attempt as the European Union is necessary for its success. As for the future of European security politics and any European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) Turkey's contribution seems indispensable.<sup>41</sup> In the past Turkey had sided with the European states in many crises such as the second Gulf War in 1991 and Bosnia in 1992-95 and thereby supported the mission's success.<sup>42</sup> After Luxembourg the Americans argued that in case Turkey was not accepted at least as a candidate for accession to the European Union a dilemma might arise once the WEU<sup>43</sup>, of which Turkey is an associate member since 1992, is fully absorbed by the EU.<sup>44</sup> The WEU Council, in which Turkey participates, would then cease to exist and be replaced by the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy on which Turkey as a mere applicant for membership in the EU would have no influence. In this vein the ESDI

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<sup>40</sup> "The Luxembourg rebuff. Europe needs to repair relations with Turkey, fast." *The Economist*, 20 December 1997, 19.

<sup>41</sup> Compare G. Aybet and M. Müftüler-Bac, "Transformations in Security and Identity after the Cold War: Turkey's problematic relationship with Europe." *International Journal*, Vol. 4, autumn 2000, 581.

<sup>42</sup> See *Ibid.*, 576.

<sup>43</sup> The WEU was established in 1954 as a collective defence system among Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany.

discriminated against Turkey as long as the country was not accepted as a formal candidate for EU-membership which granted Turkey at least an associate status in the EU's evolving security role. Thus, the European Union with its decision in 1997 to exclude Turkey from its enlargement process closed a channel of communication with Turkey and lost access to Turkey's geostrategic and military capabilities.<sup>45</sup>

In the aftermath of the European Council's Luxembourg summit the Turks put forward a number of complaints against the EU's line of action. The following section will examine the validity of this criticism within the framework of official statements in EU documents.

### **2.3 Turkey and the EU: Different Attitudes toward Turkey's Exclusion from the Enlargement Process**

Already before but even stronger after the summit of the European Council held in Luxembourg in 1997 the EU's unchanged criticism of Turkey's domestic situation were countered by a number of complaints which Turkish politicians uttered against the EU. Those objections raised by the Turkish government vis-à-vis the European Union will be displayed in the following paragraphs. Each complaint will also be checked for its validity from a Turkish point of view as well as from the perspective of the EU.

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<sup>44</sup> In fact, the European Council decided in June 1999 to merge the WEU and the EU.

<sup>45</sup> Compare M. Müftüler-Bac, "Turkey's Role in the EU's Security and Foreign Policies." *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 31 (4), 2000, 490.

- Due to its long-standing connection with the EU, legally underpinned by the Ankara Agreement of 1963, Turkey enjoys a right of accession<sup>46</sup>, which the EU refuses to guarantee without any legal justification.

In fact the Association Agreement signed on 12 September 1963 and in force since the 1 December 1964 determines in the preamble that the European Economic Cooperation (EEC) by helping the Turkish people in improving their standard of living “will facilitate, at a later stage, the accession of Turkey to the Community”<sup>47</sup>. Similarly Article 28 of the same document lays down that after the requirements arising out of the Treaty of Rome are met “the Contracting Parties shall examine the possibility of the accession of Turkey to the Community”<sup>48</sup>. At that time apart from Greece Turkey was the only country enjoying such a status in the then EEC. From the exegesis of the Ankara Agreement follows that although Turkey’s possibility for accession to the Community was foreseen some time in the future, it did not implicitly include an unconditional or unilateral right of accession.<sup>49</sup> It rather stipulated that Turkey would be offered the possibility of accession if an evaluation of Turkey in the distant future turns out positively.

- Contrary to the promises made by the EU, and the EC as well as the EEC respectively, Turkey is left alone in carrying out the necessary reforms to fulfill the EU criteria for membership and in coping with the initial difficulties caused by the establishment of the Customs Union in 1996.

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<sup>46</sup> Compare “Statement of the Turkish Government“, 14 December 1997, 1, see <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/TurkeyAndEurope/govstatement14dec.htm>.

<sup>47</sup> EEC, “Abkommen zur Gründung einer Assoziation zwischen der Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft und der Republik Türkei“ (not available in English), 1964, Preamble, see [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/de/lif/dat/1964/de\\_264A1229\\_01.html](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/de/lif/dat/1964/de_264A1229_01.html).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., Art. 28.

<sup>49</sup> F. Gröning, *Turkey at the Doorsteps of the European Union: A Roadmap to Accession Negotiations* (Ebenhausen: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2000), 17.

Although the Turkish State had been assured financial aid<sup>50</sup> supposed to overcome the initial costs arising out of the efforts undertaken on the way to the Customs Union, Turkey never received the granted support. The Turkish claim is legitimate on the basis of reached agreements. Already the Ankara Agreement signed in 1963 assured Turkey financial support according to its 4<sup>th</sup> financial protocol. As a reaction to the military intervention in Turkey, followed by the arrest of the leaders of the pre-coup parties, the European Community suspended the financial aid guaranteed in the Association Agreement.<sup>51</sup> The 4<sup>th</sup> financial protocol is today still blocked by the Greek veto in the Council of Ministers. On the basis of the common internal procedures of the EC and the EU respectively all members – without exception – had to agree on translating the financial promise into public policy. The actual transfer of financial aid for Turkey has so far either failed because of the Greek veto<sup>52</sup> or has been blocked by a decision of the European Parliament, which in 1996 denied Turkey financial support due to the country's lack of respect for human right standards and practices.<sup>53</sup>

- The Central and Eastern European countries (CEE) are preferred to Turkey, both are not judged on an equal footing.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore the EU planned an enhanced pre-accession strategy which includes financial assistance exclusively

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<sup>50</sup> EEC, “Abkommen zur Gründung einer Assoziation zwischen der Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft und der Republik Türkei“ (not available in English), 1964, Art. 3 (1). Financial aid was already guaranteed in the finance protocol attached to the Association Agreement, see [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/de/lif/dat/1964/de\\_264A1229\\_01.html](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/de/lif/dat/1964/de_264A1229_01.html).

<sup>51</sup> See M. Müftüler-Bac, “The Impact of the European Union on Turkish Politics”, in *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 34 (2), June 2000, 164.

<sup>52</sup> Compare N. Neuwahl, „The EU-Turkey Customs Union; a Balance, but No Equilibrium.“ *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 4 (1), 1999, 48.

<sup>53</sup> F. Gröning, *Turkey at the Doorsteps of the European Union: A Roadmap to Accession Negotiations* (Ebenhausen: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2000), 17.

<sup>54</sup> Compare “Statement of the Turkish Government“, 14 December 1997, 1, see <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/TurkeyAndEurope/govstatement14dec.htm>.

for the CEE. Therefore those countries receive a better treatment than Turkey which has been denied financial support for several times.

There are scholars in Turkey, like for instance Müftüler-Bac, arguing that the EU put forward justified objectives against Turkey's accession to the EU but that the Union operates a double standard in so far as the Central and Eastern European Countries were accepted although their domestic problems are similar in scope and quality to those of Turkey.<sup>55</sup> On the first sight this complaint seems to be valid but several aspects have to be taken into consideration which justify, at least partially, the EU's mode of action:

Fundamentally the EU's maxim has to be kept in mind that every single applicant country has to be dealt with according to its specific situation and the needs that derive from that situation.<sup>56</sup> Since the CEE still suffer from the drastic change of a socialist command into a capitalist market economy they deserve a different treatment than Turkey with its long tradition in capitalism<sup>57</sup>. Furthermore in a comparison of Turkey's economic data with those of the CEE most of the latter come off better. Only the data of Romania and Bulgaria, called the poorhouses of Europe, are worse than Turkey's.<sup>58</sup> Although in absolute numbers Turkey's GNP in

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<sup>55</sup> M. Müftüler-Bac, "The Never-Ending Story: Turkey and the European Union." S. Kedourie, *Turkey before and after Atatürk: internal and external affairs* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998), especially 255-257.

<sup>56</sup> Compare Luxembourg European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, 12 and 13 December 1997, parag. 2; see <http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec97.htm>; This maxim is emphasized again in the Presidency Conclusions of the Helsinki European Council held in December 1999. There it was stated that "each candidate State will be judged on its own merits", compare Helsinki European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, 10 and 11 December 1999, parag. 11, see [http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99_en.htm).

<sup>57</sup> Although Turkey can be described as a capitalist system one has to admit limits with respect to the fact that many Turkish enterprises and factories are partially or even mainly state-owned.

<sup>58</sup> Compare the statistics by the EU Commission "Strategiepapier zur Erweiterung: Bericht über die Fortschritte jedes Bewerberlandes auf dem Weg zum Beitritt", see [http:// eu-kommission.de/pdf/erweiterung/f-tuerkei](http://eu-kommission.de/pdf/erweiterung/f-tuerkei).

Purchasing Power Standards is the highest among the twelve applicants<sup>59</sup> for EU-membership it is relatively low taken its large population into consideration. Accordingly Turkey's GNP per capita ranks behind Latvia, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Romania on the fifth lowest position.<sup>60</sup> Turkey's rate of inflation was equally bad and even worsened in the course of the financial crisis the country suffered from in February 2001.<sup>61</sup> The high percentage which agriculture makes up of the gross national product (GNP) poses a further problem to its integration into the EU; especially in view of the fact that more than 40 per cent of the population work in the agricultural sector but that their share of the GNP amounts to only 14 per cent.<sup>62</sup> This is an unmistakable sign that agricultural production in Turkey is inefficient and displays hidden unemployment.

These are all obstacles which would make it hard for the Union to bring Turkey up to an economic standard comparable to the EU-average. Although this is admittedly difficult to reach for some of the CEE as well one has to take into account that even Poland, by far the largest CEE, has only less than half of Turkey's total area and a little more than half of its population. Furthermore the

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<sup>59</sup> At this point (1997) only eleven applicant States (the ten CEE and Cyprus) were accepted as formal candidates by the EU, Malta joined them later, compare Luxembourg European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, 12 and 13 December 1997, parag. 10, see <http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec97.htm>. However, since Turkey applied already in 1987 for membership in the then EC the author defined the country as an applicant.

<sup>60</sup> Compare the statistics in "Unsafe at many speeds?" *The Economist*, 20 December 1997, 29. Sources of this statistics were the OECD and the World Bank. Since those figures were ascertained in 1996 they are probably similar to the ones that the EU took into consideration for its decision in Luxembourg.

<sup>61</sup> For the financial crisis in Turkey and its background compare "Türkische Lira bricht nach Kurs-Freigabe ein." and "Das Vertrauen fehlt immer noch.", both *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 23 February 2001, 21.

<sup>62</sup> Compare the statistics by the EU Commission "Strategiepapier zur Erweiterung: Bericht über die Fortschritte jedes Bewerberlandes auf dem Weg zum Beitritt", see <http://eu-kommission.de/pdf/erweiterung/f-tuerkei>; see also a comparison of the figures for economic development of the years 1994-1998 exclusively for Turkey EU Commission, *1999 Regular report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession*, Nov. 1999, 51-55, see [http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report\\_10\\_99/en/word/turkey.doc](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report_10_99/en/word/turkey.doc).

fear of the Union that the reform process in the CEE might be reversed led to their more spontaneous acceptance as a candidate. Yet, the accession process will proceed for the CEE at a slow speed as well.

- The EU has the self-image of being a ‘Christian Club’<sup>63</sup> which Turkey as a Muslim country is not welcome to join.<sup>64</sup> In order not to speak out frankly that the EU sees the religion and culture most Turks adhere to as a hindrance to Turkey’s membership so-called political reasons are put forward as a pretext.<sup>65</sup>

As for the constitutional principles of the European Community and the European Union to which it had developed by 1993 there exists no such reference to a common religious foundation. On the contrary Article 151 (4) of the European Community Treaty (ECT) reads as follows: “The Community shall take cultural aspects into account ... in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures”<sup>66</sup>; and the European Union Treaty (EUT) which replaced the former in 1993 states in Article 6 (3) that: “The Union shall respect the national identities of its Member States.”<sup>67</sup>

Since religion forms an integral part of culture and national identity the argument is twofold: On the one hand special emphasis is put on religion as part and parcel of culture and national identity. On the other hand culture and national identity, thus religion also, are not further specified so that the respect asked for in

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<sup>63</sup> A view especially put forward by the Welfare Party.

<sup>64</sup> See A. O. Makovsky, “Post Luxemburg Blues – An American Perspective.” In H. Bagci et al. (eds.), *Parameters of Partnership: The U.S. – Turkey – Europe* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1999), 195.

<sup>65</sup> Compare “Statement of the Turkish Government“, 14 December 1997, 1, see <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/TurkeyAndEurope/govstatement14dec.htm>.

<sup>66</sup> European Community Treaty (ECT), Art. 151 (4), 108 see [europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/ec\\_cons\\_treaty\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/ec_cons_treaty_en.pdf).

<sup>67</sup> European Union Treaty (EUT), Art. 6 (3), 13, see [europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/eu\\_cons\\_treaty\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/eu_cons_treaty_en.pdf).

the constitutional documents of the EC and EU refers to any religion the population in an eventual or actual member state believes in. This opposes the widely held assumption that a possible member state has to have a mainly Christian population. Today's EU consists already of a conglomerate of different religions. It is true they are all variations of Christianity but there are deep divisions within Christendom itself: The Christian believers are divided in Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant Christians. In the past the believers of different branches of Christianity waged bloody wars against each other not much different of those between Islam and Christendom. Apart from the divisions within Christianity one should also keep in mind the religious minorities of non-Christian descent which nowadays live in EU countries.

Nevertheless there seem to exist certain reservations concerning Islam. This perception is nourished by various statements of leading EU politicians, for instance the one given by Wilfried Martens, the Belgian Chairman of the European People's Party<sup>68</sup> who once said that "the European project is a civilizational project [therefore] Turkey's candidature for full membership is unacceptable"<sup>69</sup>. If religion is actually a reason for Turkey's non-acceptance it follows that the totality of EU member states – however different they may be – have a generic common identity going beyond their respective national boundary. In fact the member states of the Union have neither a language nor a culture nor a religion in common. The uniting element is their perception of a common history in which the Ottoman Empire

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<sup>68</sup> The European People's Party is the name of the party of Christian Democrats acting within the institutional framework of the EU.

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in A. Mango, "Turkey and the Enlargement of the European Mind." *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 34 (2), 1998, 171 (and 191 footnote 3). For the notion of the EU as an identity project compare the English summary in A. Lundgren, *Europeisk identitetspolitik: EU:s demokratibistand till Polen och Turkiet* (Uppsala: Universitetsbiblioteket, 1998), 185-192.

played an important role<sup>70</sup>. The Ottoman Turks, perceived by the Europeans as invaders, occupied for quite some time substantial parts of Europe. Today's Turkey still includes – even if a tiny proportion, that is, a small part of Eastern Thrace and Istanbul – territory geographically defined as belonging to Europe. This geographic proximity is more a reason for Turkey's incorporation into the European civilizational project than its exclusion. After all according to the Association Agreement of 1963 “the Contracting Parties shall examine the possibility of the accession of Turkey to the Community”<sup>71</sup>. This statement would have hardly been made if the EEC “had assumed that Turkey was disqualified by geography, religion, or culture”<sup>72</sup>

## **2.4 What do Turkey and the EU have to keep in Mind**

Taken all the above into consideration the Turkish complaints seem comprehensible and understandable on a psychological level and especially against the background of Turkey's political culture. Yet, from a legal perspective most of them are not justified and hence lack validity. Gröning even makes the point that Turkey's complaints are completely unfounded and that Turkey should be rather pleased about the improvements in its relationship vis-à-vis the European Union.

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<sup>70</sup> Yet, “the Ottoman state was never accepted as an integral element of the European system.”, see A. L. Karaosmanoglu, “Officers: Westernization and Democracy.” In M. Heper et al. (eds.), *Turkey and the West: Changing Political and Cultural Identities* (London and New York: Tauris, 1993), 29; see also H. Inalcik, “The Meaning of Legacy: The Ottoman Case.” In C. L. Brown, *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 21-23.

<sup>71</sup> EEC, “Abkommen zur Gründung einer Assoziation zwischen der Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft und der Republik Türkei“ (not available in English), 1964, Art. 28, see [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/de/lif/dat/1964/de\\_264A1229\\_01.html](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/de/lif/dat/1964/de_264A1229_01.html).

After all, the European Council confirmed in Luxembourg for the first time “Turkey’s eligibility for accession to the European Union. ... judged on the basis of the same criteria as the other applicant States.”<sup>73</sup> In spite of this progress in the Turkey-EU relationship the author agrees at least in parts with Hugg who disapproves the Union’s decision not to invite Turkey to its Luxembourg summit by arguing that it displayed “insensitivity and destructiveness toward Turkey”.<sup>74</sup>

The European integration project was once set up as an alliance for economic cooperation<sup>75</sup> also aiming at overcoming a tense relationship between France and Germany, which had grown out of a troublesome past. This undertaking proved to be successful in ameliorating that conflict. As for Turkey the European Union should keep in mind that Turkey’s accession might also turn out to be a means for getting over a biased attitude on both sides concerning religion. This in turn would contribute to the integration of Muslim minorities living in Europe. The perception of the ‘other’ is a dialectic process in so far as the Europeans have a sense of Turkey as being somehow different and the Turks perceiving themselves as the distinct ‘other’. The Turks feel excluded and react accordingly which further contributes to the European perception of them as being different.

This *circulus vitiosus* is hard to break down because religion plays the integral part in it. Political disparities are possible to overcome whereby problems

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<sup>72</sup> W. Hale and G. Avci, “Turkey and the European Union: The Long Road to Membership.” In B. Rubin and K. Kirisci, *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers 2001), 42.

<sup>73</sup> Luxembourg European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, 12 and 13 Dec. 1997, parag. 31, see <http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec97.htm>.

<sup>74</sup> P. R. Hugg, “The Republic of Turkey in Europe: Reconsidering the Luxembourg Exclusion”, *Fordham International Law Journal*, Vol. 23 (3), 2000, 691.

<sup>75</sup> The initial emphasis was put on coal and steel.

based on different religions resemble a Gordian knot.<sup>76</sup> However, even in spite of its predominantly Muslim population Turkey has been included in other European Organizations such as the Council of Europe, the WEU and the OSCE.<sup>77</sup> And after all “... diversity in itself is an essential part of the European Union’s foundation. To argue differently would mean to put the whole philosophy and construction of the European project into question.”<sup>78</sup>

Other, rather unofficial, reasons behind the EU’s Luxembourg decision and the Commission’s preceding advice to exclude Turkey from the enlargement process might have been Greece’s objection to Turkey’s inclusion and the fear of the Union that once it accepts Turkey as a candidate it is sooner or later forced to make a move. Turkey would probably expect that soon after its acceptance as a formal candidate accession negotiations would follow. Yet, this requires further compliance with the EU’s criteria for membership on the behalf of Turkey and the EU’s honest desire to see Turkey as one of its members in the foreseeable future.

The European Union reserves the right to decide when the Union will be overburdened which is related to its “ability to assimilate new members”.<sup>79</sup> In order not to sacrifice the goals of the European integration project the EU has to stand by its principle for enlargement according to which the integration of an additional member must lead to more benefit than disadvantage. As a rule the more different

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<sup>76</sup> For a similar view compare M. P. Pace, “Turkey, Cyprus, Malta – Potential EU Members?” In *The European Union and developing countries: The challenges of globalization* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 217.

<sup>77</sup> Compare H. Kramer, “Turkey and the European Union: A Multi-Dimensional Relationship with Hazy Perspectives.” In V. Mastny and R. C. Nation (eds.), *Turkey Between East and West: New Challenges for a Rising Regional Power* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1996), 204.

<sup>78</sup> F. Gröning, *Turkey at the Doorsteps of the European Union: A Roadmap to Accession Negotiations* (Ebenhausen: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2000), 35.

<sup>79</sup> Luxembourg European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, 12 and 13 Dec. 1997, parag. 26, see <http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec97.htm>.

an applicant state is, compared to the rest of the EU, the higher will be the costs of its integration on both sides. Against this background the case of Turkey has to be well considered, apart from evaluating its political and economic performance on the basis of the Copenhagen criteria. The country surpasses with respect to territory and population by far all other candidates for membership: Turkey's surface embraces those of the three largest applicant countries (Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria) and the three Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) altogether and its population exceeds those of the two candidate states which are richest in population (Poland and Romania).<sup>80</sup> Not all Central and Eastern European Countries are so much ahead of Turkey but the latter's integration would have much more impact on the development of the European Union as a whole.

## **2.5 The Decision in Helsinki and its Importance for Turkey**

On 10 and 11 December 1999, when the EU's Helsinki European Council meeting was held, the Union finally agreed on putting Turkey on the list of prospective full members. This decision placated Turkey which now felt to be put back on the track to EU membership after the rebuff it had received in Luxembourg. The spontaneous reactions in Turkey after the decision was made public were full of enthusiasm and emotionality which manifested itself in newspaper headlines, for example "Finally the day has come ..."<sup>81</sup> or statements by politicians, for instance

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<sup>80</sup> Compare the statistics by the EU Commission "Strategiepapier zur Erweiterung: Bericht über die Fortschritte jedes Bewerberlandes auf dem Weg zum Beitritt, see <http://eu-kommission.de/pdf/erweiterung/f-tuerkei>.

<sup>81</sup> O. Eksi: "Nihayet o gün geldi..." *Hürriyet*, 11 December 1999, see <http://arsiv.hurriyetim.com.tr/hur/turk/99/12/11/yazarlar/01yaz.htm>.

the one by then president Süleyman Demirel: “Now Turkey has reached Europe...”<sup>82</sup>.

According to the British polit-magazine ‘The Economist’ opinion polls carried out among Turkish citizens show a solid majority of around two-thirds in favor of Turkey’s entry into the European Union.<sup>83</sup> A similar picture results from a survey conducted exclusively among Turkish elites.<sup>84</sup> When top executive business people, journalists of major Turkish newspapers, government ministers and academics were asked if they are in favor of Turkey joining the EU as a full member an overwhelming majority of 86 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed, only the remaining 12 per cent disagreed but no one strongly.<sup>85</sup>

It seems as if within the Turkish public as well as among the country’s elites membership in the European Union is a goal with top priority.<sup>86</sup> The 10 and 11 December 1999 became a rather historic moment. After more than a decade that Turkey has been standing in the queue for acceptance as a member it was finally accepted as a formal candidate. The question arising is why the European solution is seen as an ultimate goal.

Nowadays joining the European Union appears as the fulfillment of a dream once dreamed by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of the Turkish Republic. When

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<sup>82</sup> Quoted also in *Hürriyet*, 11 December 1999, see <http://arsiv.hurriyetim.com.tr/hur/turk/99/12/11/yazarlar/09yaz.htm>.

Admittedly not every politician was that enthusiastic, Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit (also quoted in *Hürriyet*, 11 December 1999, see <http://arsiv.hurriyetim.com.tr/hur/turk/99/12/11/dunya/02dun.htm>) hesitated at first to accept the EU’s offer because a solution to the Cyprus issue was made an obligatory precondition for Turkey’s membership.

<sup>83</sup> “Survey: Turkey: Why are we waiting?” *The Economist*, 10 June 2000, 6.

<sup>84</sup> L. M. McLaren, “Turkey’s eventual membership of the EU: Turkish Elite Perspectives on the Issue.” *Journal of common market studies*, Vol. 38 (1), 2000, 121-122, 125.

<sup>85</sup> The survey was carried out before the European Council’s Helsinki Summit, nevertheless, 32 per cent of the interviewees were strongly in favour of Turkey joining the EU as a full member and 54 per cent were in favor.

he established the Turkish Republic back in 1923 the European integration project was indeed not on the agenda yet, but Atatürk wanted Turkey to catch up with Europe. Therefore the foundation of the Turkish Republic was based on a radical modernizing project in which modernization became equated with Westernization. This Westernization meant “embracing and internalizing all the cultural dimensions that made Europe modern”<sup>87</sup> and aimed at making Turkey belong to the European civilization. With the acceptance as a formal candidate in December 1999 Turkey was officially granted this place in the civilization of Europe it had yearned for so long.

Apart from the historic dimension of Turkey’s prospective EU membership there is also a socio-political one to it: Representatives of all sorts of social and political currents hope to benefit from Turkey’s eventual EU membership.<sup>88</sup> Secularists expect EU membership to push religion finally back into the private sphere so that Islam in Turkey will change into something like a *religion civile*<sup>89</sup>, that is merely a spiritual source of meaning that is at work only outside of the public realm. Such a development would support their goals by taking the wind out of the Islamists’ sail. Those however hope for a general liberalization from a prospective affiliation with the European Union. Although at least the radical part of the Islamists would normally reject any convergence with the Western political system and in particular the adoption of European cultural achievements they

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<sup>86</sup> Compare *Milliyet*, 12 December 1999, see <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/1999/12/12/dunya/dun00.html>.

<sup>87</sup> Keyder, “Whither the Project of Modernity? Turkey in the 1990s.” In S. Bozdogan and R. Kasaba (eds.), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997), 37.

<sup>88</sup> Compare “Survey: Turkey: Why are we waiting?” *The Economist*, 10 June 2000, 6.

<sup>89</sup> For the notion of religion as a *religion civile* compare A. Comte, *Rede über den Geist des Positivismus* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1994).

expect their task to become a lot easier once Turkey joined the Union. The Islamists' penetration into the political arena has been hampered many times,<sup>90</sup> most recently by the closure of the Virtue Party on 22 June 2001. The party represented political Islam in Turkey<sup>91</sup> of which the military as well as the secular establishment is very critical. The military in Turkey has an important impact on Turkish politics via its dominance in the National Security Council, legally underpinned by the Turkish Constitution. Due to pressure exerted by the military generals the Turkish Constitutional Court had also dissolved the Virtue Party's predecessor, the Welfare Party, and banned its leaders from politics in January 1998. Islamists expect from EU membership a facilitation of their work. Within a more liberal atmosphere they hope to be able to give unhindered expression to their religious goals without being subject to strict rules and boundaries set up by the secular political and the military establishment in particular.

As for the military establishment they believe the tenets of Kemalism, first and foremost secularism, safeguarded once Turkey has joined the Union. From their point of view the Turkish Republic will then become immune against challenges from socio-political currents urging a liberalization that questions the Kemalist ideology. The military is keen on seeing Atatürk's dream of Turkey officially becoming a part of European civilization realized. Although the military has some reservations it hopes that the Kurdish separatism will lose its appeal once Turkey became a member of the EU. The Union has a genuine interest in preserving the integrity of states belonging to it because separatist claims from

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<sup>90</sup> See E. Rouleau, "Turkey's Dream of Democracy." *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79 (6), November/December 2000, 112.

minorities living in a member state and border disputes among members would undermine the cohesion within the EU. Whereas the Kurdish minority in Turkey hopes to improve their legal and societal status due to the more generous treating it expects to experience in case Turkey will become a member state of the European Union. Benefit from an overall liberalization process, which might get going with Turkey's entry into the EU, is also hoped for by various non-governmental organizations (NGOs). If their work is eased civil society will gain ground and this will please the liberals who like to see the influence of the state restricted.

In general the European Union is perceived by the Turkish public as an engine for economic development and accordingly joining this organization is equated with the ticket to economic prosperity. Furthermore the EU membership is equated with a bulwark against internal and external threats posed to the Turkish democracy by such domestic pressure groups as the PKK or the Islamists and by the external Middle Eastern environment being to a great extent authoritarian, traditionalist, and religious. For Turkey joining the 'European Club' amounts to healing the wounds of being excluded and divided. As a non-Arabic country<sup>92</sup> on the one hand it never enjoyed much respect among most states in the Middle East. Yet, as a country with a mainly Islamic population, the European public has still some reservations about fully accepting Turkey as European. For this reason Huntington defined Turkey as

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<sup>91</sup> See M. Müftüleri-Bac, "The Impact of the European Union on Turkish Politics." *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 34 (2), June 2000, 170.

<sup>92</sup> Israel and Iran are the other two non-Arabic countries within the Middle East. Whereas Israel's relationship to the other States in the Middle East due to its treatment of the Palastines is tense, Iran is somewhat accepted among its Middle Eastern neighbours because its political system is one of an Islamic – albeit Shi'it – theocracy.

a torn-country<sup>93</sup> oscillating between East and West. Turkey's entry into the European Union would for the Turks equal the unqualified admission to the concert of the European nations.

Expectations from Turkey's prospective membership in the European Union are high and go through all levels of society. A final answer to the question if the different hopes of the Turkish people will come true and their perception of EU membership as a goal with top priority is any justified cannot be given, nevertheless the following sections will attempt one.

First it will be displayed how the European Council's decision in Helsinki to accept Turkey as a formal candidate came about. The following paragraphs will argue that so far Turkey is nothing more than accepted as a formal candidate and that the country will have to face certain problems and make obvious efforts to solve them in order to first convince the EU to open accession negotiations with them and later to receive its acceptance as a new member. The most pertinent necessary steps for the fulfillment of the political Copenhagen criteria – a prerequisite for the opening of accession negotiations with Turkey and an unavoidable condition for acceptance as a member– will be discussed afterwards.

The long way Turkey has to cover before eventually becoming a member and the advantages as well as the difficulties, which might arise out of Turkey's actual membership, will be assessed in form of a cost-benefit analysis. The chapter will end with a final evaluation of Turkey's prospective membership in the European

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<sup>93</sup> S. P. Huntington, *Kampf der Kulturen: Die Neugestaltung der Weltpolitik im 21. Jahrhundert* (München: Europa-Verlag, 1997), 226-236, (English version: *The Clash of Civilization*, New York 1996).

Union and try to give an answer to the question whether its perception as a goal with top priority is justified.

## 2.6 Why did the EU change its Mind?

In 1989 the then EC refused Turkey's application for membership addressed at the EC two years before. Comparing Turkey's state of affairs within the economic realm in 1989 with the one in 1999 a significant improvement can be observed. The EC Commission in 1989 was of the opinion that Turkey in case of accession would not be able to overcome "the adjustment problems ... in the medium term"<sup>94</sup>. Ten years later, however, it stated that Turkey "should be able to cope, albeit with difficulties," with the new situation under the conditions of membership.<sup>95</sup>

A similarly positive evaluation was reached by the Commission in 1999 with respect to Turkey's ability to assume the obligations of membership such as the adoption of the EU's *aquis communautaire*.<sup>96</sup> The Commission appreciated the "high level of adoption of European standards" and "the high degree of alignment in the customs area".<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless there were also shortcomings in this area mentioned in the Commissions 1999 regular report on Turkey's progress towards accession like for instance the "need for a new customs code"<sup>98</sup>.

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<sup>94</sup> EU Commission, *2000 Regular report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession*, 8 November 2000, 22, see [http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report\\_11\\_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report_11_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf).

<sup>95</sup> EU Commission, *1999 Regular report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession*, Nov. 1999, 25, see [http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report\\_10\\_99/en/word/turkey.doc](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report_10_99/en/word/turkey.doc).

<sup>96</sup> In 2000 already 54 per cent of Turkish law were in concerted parallel development with the Union, compare E. Özücü, "Turkey Facing the European Union – Old and New Harmonies." *European Law Review*, Vol. 25, 2000, 523

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

The Commission in the very same report uttered criticism as severe that it equals an impediment to Turkey's prospective accession when it comes to the fulfillment of the political criteria for membership:

Recent developments confirm that, although the basic features of a democratic system exist in Turkey, it still does not meet the Copenhagen political criteria. There are serious shortcomings in terms of human rights and protection of minorities. Torture is not systematic but is still widespread and freedom of expression is regularly restricted by the authorities. The National Security Council continues to play a major role in political life.<sup>99</sup>

Nevertheless the Commission, which since 1998 prepares annual reports evaluating Turkey with respect to its convergence to the Copenhagen criteria, advised to accept the Turkish Republic as a formal candidate for accession to the EU in 1999. The decision at Helsinki in favor of Turkey was based on political calculation and therefore more of a strategic nature than a straightforward conviction and appreciation of Turkey's progress on its way to fulfill the requirements set up by the Union.

There are several reasons for the EU's decision to include Turkey in its enlargement process. According to official EU documents, the acceptance of the Balkan States in 1997 was based on their progress in converging to the Copenhagen criteria. Since Turkey in economic terms ranks above Romania and Bulgaria and is also far ahead of Romania and Slovakia measured by their political performance, the confirmation of Turkey's exclusion in 1999 would have gone against the consistency and reliability of EU policies.

The background of Turkey's inclusion was set up by political calculations, which led to the opening of accession negotiations with the Balkan States in 1999. The experience of the Kosovo conflict in the spring of 1999 had shown that the EU

would be well advised anchoring the Balkan States to the EU for the sake of stabilizing Europe as a whole. This conviction directed the EU's eyes further to Turkey as a country with historic roots in this region. From the EU's point of view Turkey has a strategic importance due to its geographic position. The Union has an interest in keeping Turkey as an ally because it believes that Turkey might play a moderating role in case of a crisis in its region. What further contributed to the change in the EU's policy toward Turkey was the Union's developing security role.<sup>100</sup> "By the end of the 1990's, Turkey's role as a gatekeeper for Europe had acquired such importance that insisting on this rejection was no longer reasonable..."<sup>101</sup>. Müftüler-Bac further argues that Turkey's inclusion into the EU's Common European Security and Defense Policy (CESDP) was considered more and more crucial so that it seemed ill-judged to exclude Turkey entirely from the Union's enlargement process.<sup>102</sup> As mentioned earlier three factors are responsible for Turkey's significance within Europe's Security Architecture: First, due to its membership in NATO Turkey has an institutional lever on the ESDI, the European pillar of the Alliance.<sup>103</sup> Second, by Turkey's inclusion into the EU's security structure its military capabilities would be significantly increased because Turkey has a large standing army and, third, the EU would gain further access to Turkey's geostrategic position.<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, Turkey's possible membership in the EU "may bring new security headaches to the Union"<sup>105</sup>. Among the new security

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Compare M. Müftüler-Bac, "Turkey's Role in the EU's Security and Foreign Policies." *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 31 (4), 2000, 489.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 490.

<sup>102</sup> See *ibid.* 489.

<sup>103</sup> Compare *ibid.* 492.

<sup>104</sup> Compare *ibid.* 492-493.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.* 490.

risks would be the EU's exposure to several problems in Turkey's geographic proximity, such as tensions and Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East and ethnic conflicts in the Caucasus. Furthermore the EU would incorporate the Cyprus conflict into its domain by accepting either Turkey or Cyprus itself as one of its members.

Another decisive development affecting the EU's attitude towards Turkish membership was the softening of conditions for the membership of Cyprus. While the EU had before insisted on a solution of the struggle between Greece and Turkey over the Cypriot bone of conflict<sup>106</sup> it relaxed this former prerequisite for the accession of Cyprus on the European Council's Helsinki Summit in 1999. In order to oblige Turkey and to "provide an incentive for Turkey to pressure its northern Cypriot allies into making concessions"<sup>107</sup>, the EU accepted the Turkish Republic as its thirteenth formal candidate for membership. In the run-up to the summit Greece had threatened to block the EU's enlargement by the first wave of applicants if the settlement of the Cyprus question was held hostage for the island's accession. In the Greek view this condition equaled a Turkish veto and was therefore unacceptable. The Turkish Cypriots in turn uttered the threat to merge with Turkey in case the Southern part of Cyprus would join the EU and demanded recognition before agreeing to further negotiations on political settlement. In Helsinki the Greek interests were satisfied by the reformulation of the paragraph on Cyprus which now explicitly stated that "[i]f no settlement has been reached by the completion of accession negotiations, the Council's decision will be made without

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<sup>106</sup> Compare Luxembourg European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, 12 and 13 Dec. 1997, parag. 28, see <http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec97.htm>.

the above being a precondition”<sup>108</sup>. Nevertheless the EU left itself a loophole by also underlining “that a political settlement will facilitate the accession of Cyprus”<sup>109</sup> and that “all relevant factors”<sup>110</sup> would be taken into consideration for a final decision.

Another factor, which can be associated with Greece’s foreign politics in light of the EU’s overall enlargement process, contributed to a pro-Turkey stance. Since there is no such possibility, though often demanded by Turkey, to keep the Cyprus issue and the enmity with Greece out of the negotiations about Turkey’s membership in the EU, it remained a pending problem that had to be dealt with in the aftermath of the European Council’s Luxembourg summit in 1997. As long as Greece and Turkey perceived each other as a foe and had severe disputes over Cyprus and sea rights in the Aegean Sea the EU-member Greece would probably veto Turkey’s accession to the Union. Since the EU decides with unanimity about the integration of a new member a détente in the relationship was a prerequisite for Turkey’s acceptance.

This significant improvement in the relationship between Greece and Turkey came about after two new foreign ministers had taken office in their respective countries. Although politics in Turkey and Greece is very much personalized political decisions nevertheless need to strike roots within the population in order to be effective. The breakthrough in this regard was brought about by, so to speak,

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<sup>107</sup> K. Nicolaidis, “Europe’s Tainted Mirror: Reflections on Turkey’s Candidacy Status after Helsinki.” In D. Keridid and D. Triantaphyllou, *Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization* (Dulles, V.A.: Brassey’s, 2001), 250.

<sup>108</sup> Helsinki European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, 1999, parag. 9 (b), see [http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99_en.htm).

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

nature's cruelty. In this vein Nicolaidis reaches the following assessment of the disastrous earthquake Turkey suffered from in August 1999:

It is hard to imagine a more effective catalyst for turning around public opinion than to witness, en masse, the suffering of thousands of mothers and children. It is to a great extent as a result of this initial surge of sympathy that hundreds of cooperative initiatives have emerged at the level of civil society between the two countries.<sup>111</sup>

In September 1999, three weeks after the earthquake in Turkey, another occurred in Greece. Thus, Turkey reciprocated for the Greek help it had received by joining the rescue efforts there.<sup>112</sup> This 'earthquake diplomacy' contributed to the détente of the Greek-Turkish relationship and smoothed Turkey's way for accession, which had been blocked for so long by the Greek veto. Moreover as Önis emphasizes the Greek elites began to realize that Turkey's inclusion into the EU would serve their own economic interests in so far as in case Turkey's economy would prosper due to its membership in the EU this would also open up new possibilities for economic gains for Greece.<sup>113</sup>

Another decisive development also concerns Greece but is also linked to the EU's overall enlargement policies. In the beginning of the 1990s when the EU started to discuss its enlargement by the CEE different degrees of cooperation among EU members was again on the agenda. Since the envisaged 27 members' level of development differs to a great extent it seemed unrealistic for all to participate in advanced integration moves at the same time. Therefore the earlier

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<sup>111</sup> K. Nicolaidis, "Europe's Tainted Mirror: Reflections on Turkey's Candidacy Status after Helsinki." In D. Keridid and D. Triantaphyllou, *Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization* (Dulles, V.A.: Brassey's, 2001), 252.

<sup>112</sup> B. Güngör, "Türken und Griechen entdecken Tränen als gemeinsame Sprache. Die Erdbebenkatastrophen schaffen Verbundenheit." *Die Welt*, 9 September 1999, see <http://www.welt.de/daten/1999/09/09/0909eu128596.htm>.

<sup>113</sup> See Z. Önis, "Luxembourg, Helsinki and beyond: Towards an Interpretation of recent Turkey-EU Relations." *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 35 (4), 2000, 473.

developed idea of a ‘multi-speed Union’<sup>114</sup> was discussed again as a solution to the dilemma. In compliance with the increased flexibility resulting from this concept there would be a core of states – in all probability the existing 15 – further deepening their connection and a periphery which would not yet share some of the new common policies. “In such a Europe, Greece is more likely to be in the core than is Turkey for a long time after the latter accedes”<sup>115</sup>. Looking at Turkey’s prospective accession to the EU this way the Greeks perceived it as less a threat to their own position within the European Union.

Önis puts forward that the change of the domestic politics of several EU member states, manifested by their shift from a right-of-center, conservative to a social democratic government, had a positive impact concerning to decision to include Turkey in the EU’s enlargement process.<sup>116</sup> Central in this regard are the elections of September 1998 in Germany, which replaced the former Christian Democratic-liberal government by a coalition between the Social Democrats and the Green Party. Önis further argues that although the Social Democrats and the Greens in particular are more concerned about Turkey’s human rights record, Turkey’s inclusion into the European project matched their vision of Europeanness as multi-cultural, contrary to the Christian Democrats understanding of Europe as ‘ethnically homogeneous’.<sup>117</sup> Since Germany – due to its size and relative wealth – is one of the influential EU-members a significant change in its domestic politics,

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<sup>114</sup> Compare “Unsafe at many speeds?” *The Economist*, 20 December 1997, 30.

<sup>115</sup> K. Nicolaidis, “Europe’s Tainted Mirror: Reflections on Turkey’s Candidacy Status after Helsinki.” In D. Keridis and D. Triantaphyllou, *Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization* (Dulles, V.A.: Brassey’s, 2001), 253.

<sup>116</sup> See Z. Önis, “Luxembourg, Helsinki and beyond: Towards an Interpretation of recent Turkey-EU Relations.” *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 35 (4), 2000, 470-472.

<sup>117</sup> See Ibid.

which also has an effect on its foreign policy, is reflected on the higher level of the European Union.

Finally, the United States, which had severely criticized Turkey's exclusion from the EU's enlargement process pushed for a revision of the decision. The US would like to see their strategic ally, Turkey, as part of the European project because this would support US interests in the Middle East and Central Asia.<sup>118</sup> As a member of the EU Turkey would be "firmly anchored to the norms of the European Union"<sup>119</sup>, and thus, representing a bulwark against the authoritarian, traditionalist and religious governments in its surrounding.

The critics of the EU towards Turkey prevail even after the country's acceptance as a formal candidate at the European Council's Helsinki Summit in December 1999. Nevertheless the Helsinki decision provides some proof that Turkey has a strategic leverage that should not be underestimated.

## **2.7 Turkey after Helsinki – Is it really well on the Way to Accession?**

The European Council's summit in Helsinki on 10 and 11 December 1999 and its final decision on Turkey becoming a formal candidate for membership in the EU marked a rather historic moment for Turkey. The official statement of the EU reads as follows: "Turkey is a candidate State destined to join the Union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to the other candidate States".<sup>120</sup> Like the other 12

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<sup>118</sup> Compare W. Wallace, "From the Atlantic to the Bug, from the Arctic to the Tigris? The transformation of the EU and NATO." *International Affairs*, Vol. 76 (3), 3 July 2000, 492.

<sup>119</sup> Z. Önis, "Luxembourg, Helsinki and beyond: Towards an Interpretation of recent Turkey-EU Relations." *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 35 (4), 2000, 475.

<sup>120</sup> Helsinki European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, 10 and 11 December 1999, parag. 12, see [http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99_en.htm).

candidates<sup>121</sup> Turkey “will benefit from a pre-accession strategy to stimulate and support its reforms”<sup>122</sup>. This strategy designates the EU’s support for Turkey’s endeavor to meet the EU conditions. It will be given in the form of enhanced political dialogue and financial aid. However this “Community assistance is conditional on the fulfillment of essential elements, and in particular on progress towards fulfillment of the Copenhagen criteria”<sup>123</sup>. Although Turkey has already shown some effort to fill the Copenhagen bill, there is still a lot that needs to be done.

Especially in fulfilling the political criteria the EU is anything but satisfied with Turkey’s performance. Since the EU defines that “compliance with the political criteria laid down at the Copenhagen European Council is a prerequisite for the opening of accession negotiations”<sup>124</sup> Turkey’s first step towards accession must be to tackle its political shortcomings. Most pertinent problems in the political realm Turkey needs to resolve before the EU will open the accession negotiations are:

- the resolution of the political problems with Greece concerning sea rights in the Aegean Sea and the status of Cyprus
- the legal and political status of the Kurdish minority in Turkey and the human rights violations in this connection
- the role of the military in Turkey

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<sup>121</sup> The other twelve candidate States are the ten CEE, Cyprus and Malta.

<sup>122</sup> Helsinki European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, 10 and 11 December 1999, parag. 12, see [http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99_en.htm).

<sup>123</sup> European Union Council, “Council Decision on the principles, priorities, intermediate objectives and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the Republic of Turkey“, 8 March 2001. *Official Journal L 085*, 24 March 2001, 13-23.

As for the settlement of the dispute with Greece over Cyprus and sea rights in the Aegean Sea the author will leave it at that for the time being. The difficult relationship with Greece has improved constantly after the EU's decision in Luxembourg not to accept Turkey as a formal candidate. Political dialogue thanks to the EU's and the UN's efforts to mediate has progressed so that a solution for the Cypriot bone of conflict and an arrangement concerning the sea rights in the Aegean Sea might be possible in the foreseeable future.<sup>125</sup> The remaining two political problems which Turkey has to face and find a solution for in order to convince the EU to open accession negotiations will be discussed in the following sections.

### **2.7.1 Turks of Kurdish Origin or Kurds of Turkish Nationality?**

Generally speaking an analysis of the situation of the Kurdish minority in Turkey is such a complicated issue that it would burst the frame of this inquiry which as a consequence would lose its focus. However, the Kurdish question has to be discussed at this point with regard to a potential accession of Turkey to the EU in the future. Nearly all official statements of EU bodies referring to the Turkish case fault the dealing of the Turkish State with its Kurdish minority<sup>126</sup> which constitutes the second largest group after the Turks.

Already since the establishment of the Republic the state has refused the Kurds fundamental rights. Kemal Atatürk, however, did not have any kind of

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<sup>124</sup> The text continues: "... compliance with all the Copenhagen criteria is the basis for accession to the Union." Helsinki European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, 10 and 11 December 1999, parag. 4, see [http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99_en.htm).

<sup>125</sup> Compare the positive statements of Turkey's Foreign Minister Ismail Cem about the relationship with Greece, see [www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ad/adc/TR-EU.cemstatement1.htm](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ad/adc/TR-EU.cemstatement1.htm), 4.

<sup>126</sup> Estimations vary from 5 to 15 million, compare F. Sen et al., *Länderbericht Türkei* (Darmstadt: Primus-Verlag, 1998), 192.

ethnic nationalism in mind when he founded the Turkish Republic back in 1923. The definition of each and every citizen of the Turkish State as a Turk regardless of his or her ethnic origin seemed to him as the appropriate means for uniting an ethnically, culturally, and religiously heterogeneous conglomerate – an reflection *en miniature* of the former Ottoman Empire. Although during Atatürk's time in office Kurdish upheavals<sup>127</sup> were bloodily put down the president of the Turkish Republic never thought of an exclusion of the Kurds from the process of nation-building. On the contrary according to his definition of the Turkish nation every citizen living on the territory of the Turkish State was *per se* a Turk.<sup>128</sup>

Yet, the Kurds themselves had a feeling of distinctiveness. Therefore the assimilation of minorities was necessary. This was meant to be reached by propagating the Turkish language as mother tongue for everybody living in Turkey. In the 1930s and throughout the 1940s and 1950s<sup>129</sup> there were public campaigns and demonstrations, centered around the slogan: "Citizen! Speak Turkish!".<sup>130</sup> After the third intervention of the military into politics on 12 September 1980 the written use of Kurdish was prosecuted and even its oral use was banned.<sup>131</sup> In this

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<sup>127</sup> Compare L. Yalcin-Heckmann, "Ethnic Islam and Nationalism among the Kurds in Turkey." In R. Tapper (ed.), *Islam in modern Turkey: Religion, Politics and Literature in a secular State* (London: Tauris, 1994), 103; see also D. B. Sezer, *State and Society in Turkey: Continuity and Change?* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1993), 27.

<sup>128</sup> Exceptional was the small part of the Turkish population of Greek origin in so far as Atatürk initiated a population exchange with Greece in 1924/25 during which the Greeks left Turkey for Greece and vice versa the Turks Greece for Turkey.

<sup>129</sup> After Atatürk's death in 1938 his adherents followed his definition of the nation.

<sup>130</sup> B. Oran, "Linguistic Minority Rights in Turkey, the Kurds and Globalization." In F. Ibrahim and G. Gürbey (eds.), *The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 152-153.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

vein the 1982 Constitution declared that Turkish was “the language of the Turkish State” instead of using the expressions of previous Constitutions<sup>132</sup>.

In fact all definitions of a nation no matter if they apply an objective primordial or a subjective willing approach include a common language as one of the basic features of a nation. The difference is that according to the subjective willing approach this common language does not have to be a citizen’s mother tongue. Since in Turkey citizenship is based on *jus soli* everybody who is born on the Turkish territory is a Turk independent from his or her religious or ethnic origin. Nevertheless the cohesion of any state demands a common official language.

According to the Copenhagen criteria, which Turkey has to fulfill before the EU, will open the accession negotiations minorities have to be granted equal rights. Although the situation has lost tension the Kurdish minority in today’s Turkey is still not guaranteed what the EU considers to be such equal rights. It is true that since the presidency of Turgut Özal the state has adopted a much more liberal attitude vis-à-vis its Kurdish population. Nowadays the Kurds in Turkey publish books, newspapers, periodicals and produce music in Kurdish language which is accepted and tolerated by the Turkish State.<sup>133</sup> The Kurds are defined as a minority today therefore the Turkish State gave up its politics of assimilation in favor of a policy which aims at integrating the Kurds into the Turkish polity. However, to set

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<sup>132</sup> The first Constitution of the Republic of Turkey used 1924 the term “the State language“ and the one that followed one year after the military coup of 1960 employed the wording “the official language”, see B. Oran, “Linguistic Minority Rights in Turkey, the Kurds and Globalization.“ In F. Ibrahim and G. Gürbey (eds.), *The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey* (New York: Tauris, 2000), 154.

<sup>133</sup> B. Oran, “Linguistic Minority Rights in Turkey, the Kurds and Globalization.“ In F. Ibrahim and G. Gürbey (eds.), *The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey*, New York: Tauris, 2000, 154; A. Bozkurt, *Außenpolitische Dimensionen des Kurdenproblems in der Türkei* (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, 1997), 313.

up a TV or a radio station broadcasting in Kurdish or opening a school with Kurdish as its language of instruction is still prohibited<sup>134</sup>. Viewing both as basic cultural right the EU criticized this restriction in its most recent report on Turkey's progress towards accession.<sup>135</sup> Obviously the European Union does not distinguish between group rights, for instance the right to be educated in one's own language, and cultural rights, for example the right to speak one's own language. Even though it has to be considered as a group right and not as a right of an individual, the EU defines the use of the Kurdish language for teaching purposes as a cultural right. The education in a language other than the official state language would probably be opposed by most Western democracies, too; the US, for instance, has some second thoughts on Mexican.

However, with respect to its Kurdish population Turkey is far from fully guaranteeing the freedom of speech as one of the basic human rights. Much that has been published on the Kurdish issue has fallen victim to the censorship of the state and many Kurdish publishers and those who are sympathizing with them – Kurds and non-Kurds alike – have been accused of 'separatist propaganda' and taken to court.<sup>136</sup>

Although there are parties claiming to represent Kurdish interests they continuously have to struggle against obstacles laid in their way. Experience tells

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<sup>134</sup> B. Oran, "Linguistic Minority Rights in Turkey, the Kurds and Globalization." In F. Ibrahim and G. Gürbey (eds.), *The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey* (New York: Tauris, 2000), 154.

<sup>135</sup> EU Commission, *2000 Regular report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession*, 8 November 2000, 18, see [http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report\\_11\\_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report_11_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf).

<sup>136</sup> A. Bozkurt, *Außenpolitische Dimensionen des Kurdenproblems in der Türkei* (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, 1997), 313.

that government politics often de-radicalizes a party.<sup>137</sup> Due to the necessity to compromise a party which was considered to be extreme before having a share in the parliament often loses its radical appeal. Therefore Turkey should opt for an inclusionary politics concerning the political representation of the Kurdish minority. Mango argues that “if the ban on ethnic parties were lifted, it would be reasonable to expect not one, but multiple Kurdish parties to emerge, reflecting the deep divisions within Kurdish society”<sup>138</sup>.

Finally it is worth mentioning that the EU fully accepts the fight of the Turkish State against the PKK. In particular because EU member states also suffer from terrorism carried out by groups with separatist aspirations like ETA in Spain and the IRA in Northern Ireland.

### **2.7.2 The problematic leading Role of the Military in Turkey**

The role of the military in Turkey is up to today extremely ambiguous therefore the range of interpretations of their severe and direct intermingling into domestic political affairs is anything but uniform. On the one hand there exists the common perception of the Turkish military as the safeguard of democracy, which becomes evident in such statements as: “They (the military) did not ... turn the regime into long-term authoritarianism, because, for them, rational democracy continued to be an end in itself.”<sup>139</sup> But on the other hand vis-à-vis to those there are others

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<sup>137</sup> When a party with rather radical aspirations is forced to work within the institutional framework of a democracy its views not seldom become de-radicalized due to the necessity to make compromises. For the de-radicalization of the religious Welfare Party in Turkey see M. Heper and A. Güney, “Military and the Consolidation of Democracy: The Turkish Case.” *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 26 (4), summer 2000, particularly 646-647; also M. Heper. “The other face of Refah.” *TASG News*, No. 45, Nov. 1997, especially 26-29.

<sup>138</sup> A. Mango, *Turkey: A Challenge of a New Role* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994), 50.

<sup>139</sup> M. Heper, “The State, Religion and Pluralism: The Turkish Case in Comparative Perspective.” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 1, 1991, 51.

seemingly contradictory to the former, which consider “the ... role of the armed forces ... at best anachronistic and at worse incongruent with the regime’s commitment to the norms associated with liberal democracy ....”<sup>140</sup>

The question that arises is what notion of democracy the military have and whether it is in line with our present day’s understanding of liberal democracy, in which differences and the rising problems following from them are reconciled through discussion, persuasion and compromise rather than by forcible imposition or simple assertion of power.

The ethos<sup>141</sup> of the armed forces dictates their understanding of democracy as a rational debate. What is problematic about this idea of ‘rational democracy’<sup>142</sup> is its authoritarian notion according to which a pluralistic society is acceptable within certain boundaries. Yet, such a restriction undermines pluralism as such. A pluralistic discourse is open to all kinds of different opinions and interests, may they be based on religion or ethnicity or something else. Therefore the military’s sensitivity on the Kurdish question – from their perspective posing a threat to the integrity of the Turkish State – and on Islam – from their point of view jeopardizing the secular basis of the Republic – is not compatible with pluralism. For the military ‘rational democracy’ is an end in itself but pluralism is not part and parcel of this so-called democracy.

The European Union’s understanding of a democracy as defined in the political Copenhagen criteria demands for civilian control over the military.

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<sup>140</sup> Ü. Cizre-Sakallioğlu, “The Anatomy of Turkish Military’s Political Autonomy.” *Comparative Politics*, 31, 1997, 151.

<sup>141</sup> For the military’s ethos compare M. A. Birand, *Shirts of Steel: An Anatomy of the Turkish Armed Forces*, London 1991.

<sup>142</sup> For the term ‘rational democracy’ see G. Sartori, *The theory of democracy revisited. Part one: The contemporary debate* (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House, 1987), 51-55.

Therefore the role of the National Security Council, which enables the high command to have general access to politics, is from the EU's point of view not acceptable. The military has to be depoliticised in order to prevent future coups and their frequent interference into domestic politics.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore the military's blind devotion for safeguarding the Atatürkist Republic with all its implications needs to be replaced by a true commitment to the tenets of a liberal democracy.

Turkey is in need of workable democratic institutions that will mediate between different views and interests and resolve arousing conflicts, otherwise the military's 'rational democracy' will remain 'the only game in town'. Merely if civil society organizations, the military, the bureaucracy and political parties exchange their views and work hand in hand on political visions for future Turkey, then this country will make its way further down the road to liberal democracy and thereby to its membership in the European Union.

## **2.8 Current State of Affairs in Turkey**

Although there are certain shortcomings regarding the Turkish democracy, it fulfils at least all the basic requirements of a democratic political system. According to Juan Linz an established democracy is defined as "the freedom to create political parties and to conduct free and honest elections at regular intervals without excluding any effective political office from direct or indirect electoral accountability"<sup>144</sup>. At first sight Turkey meets all the criteria brought up in this

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<sup>143</sup> Compare D. Beetham and K. Boyle: *Introducing Democracy. 80 Questions and Answers* (Cambridge, U.K: Chatham House, 1995), 83.

Linzian definition which is in the same vein as Max Weber's classical term of the legal rule<sup>145</sup>. This definition, however, is only a minimal one in the sense that prerequisites for the viability and durability of a democratic system are omitted. The EU's notion of a consolidated democracy is much more demanding therefore the overall evaluation of Turkey's political situation is still not satisfying measured according to the standards set up by the EU. In its most recent regular report on Turkey's progress towards accession the EU Commission<sup>146</sup> makes the following devastating appraisal of Turkey's political situation in the year 2000: "... compared to last year, the situation on the ground has hardly improved and Turkey still does not meet the political Copenhagen criteria." However, the Commission singles out for praise the signing "of two major international instruments in the field of human rights"<sup>147</sup> and the "endorsement by the government of the work of the Supreme Board of Co-ordination for Human Rights"<sup>148</sup>. The remaining matters of concern which were decisive for the Commission's overall negative evaluation of Turkey's political situation are: corruption, regular restrictions on freedom of association and

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<sup>144</sup> Cf. J. Linz, *The Breakdown of democratic Regimes – Crisis, Breakdown and Re-equilibration* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 5.

<sup>145</sup> M. Weber, *Soziologie. Universalgeschichtliche Analysen. Politik* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1992), 151-154.

<sup>146</sup> EU Commission, *2000 Regular report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession*, 8 November 2000, 20-21, see

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report\\_11\\_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report_11_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf).

<sup>147</sup> EU Commission, *2000 Regular report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession*, 8 November 2000, 11, see

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report\\_11\\_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report_11_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf). Those two major international instruments in the field of human rights are: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

<sup>148</sup> EU Commission, *2000 Regular report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession*, 8 November 2000, 20, see

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report\\_11\\_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report_11_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf).

assembly as well as on freedom of expression especially when related to the Kurdish issue and the limited civilian control over the military.<sup>149</sup>

The sphere of civil society has still not reached a level comparable to those of the member states of the EU; “NGOs and branches of NGOs which are active in the field of human rights continue to be subject to pressures and/or to be closed down”<sup>150</sup>. Since a “viable democracy needs not only autonomous political parties, but also autonomous social groups”<sup>151</sup> the profundity of the Turkish democracy should be put in question. Neither political parties nor social groups in Turkey are enjoying autonomy from the state.

After three direct interventions of the Turkish military into politics, followed by another indirect, the military in Turkey acts still largely independent from civilian control. Just recently, in June 2001, the pressure the generals put on the government led to the closure of the religious Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*) by the Turkish Constitutional Court, an act watched with concern by the EU.<sup>152</sup> Heper categorizes the Turkish military as “a ‘total institution’, in complete isolation from

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<sup>149</sup> EU Commission, *2000 Regular report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession*, 8 November 2000, 20-21, see

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report\\_11\\_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report_11_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf). In its presidency conclusions from the Göteborg summit on 15 and 16 June 2001 the European Council emphasized again that further progress is needed in a number of areas such as human rights, see <http://ue.eu.int/Newsroom/LoadDoc.cfm?MAX=1&DOC=!!!&BID=76&DID=66787&GRP=3565&LANG=1>.

<sup>150</sup> EU Commission, *2000 Regular report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession*, Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2000, 17, see

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report\\_11\\_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report_11_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf).

<sup>151</sup> M. Heper, “The ‘Strong State’ and Democracy: The Turkish Case in Comparative and Historical Perspective.” In S. N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *Democracy and Modernity* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 147.

<sup>152</sup> For the background of the ban on the Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*) compare L. Boulton, “Turkey bans Islamist opposition party.” *Financial Times*, 22 June 2001; and “Turkey’s troubles.” *Financial Times*, 25 June 2001. For the EU’s negative reaction to the decision of the Turkish Constitutional Court compare “Turkey: Closure of the Fazilet Party”, see <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/LoadDoc.cfm?MAX=1&DOC=!!!&BID=73&DID=67003&GRP=3616&LANG=1>.

both political elite and social groups”.<sup>153</sup> The National Security Council<sup>154</sup> – an institution sanctioned by the Turkish Constitution – serves the military as a means to assert its influence in the political realm. Yet, in a political system that claims to be a liberal democracy the military is the wrong institution to safeguard the very principles of democracy.

As in other documents before, the EU Commission urges the Turkish State again that “neither legislation nor practice should prevent the enjoyment of cultural rights for all Turks irrespective of their ethnic origin”<sup>155</sup>. In terms of the people of Kurdish origin in Turkey cultural rights such as broadcasting in Kurdish are sometimes still denied. Furthermore pro Kurdish views are still vigorously opposed by the Turkish State by closing down associations supporting a Kurdish stance, for example the Diyarbakir Branch of the Human Rights Association, and by forbidding newspapers and magazines for instance *Dersim* and *Pine*.

Although the insufficient fulfillment of the political criteria for membership in the EU constitutes the main obstacle in the Commission’s evaluation of Turkey’s progress the majority of the Turkish elites believe other factors to be more decisive for Turkey’s non-admittance.<sup>156</sup> Economic problems and religion for instance represent in the perception of the Turkish elites a greater problem on Turkey’s way to accession to the EU than any political shortcomings.

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<sup>153</sup> M. Heper, “The ‘Strong State’ and Democracy: The Turkish Case in Comparative and Historical Perspective.” In S. N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *Democracy and Modernity* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 147.

<sup>154</sup> For the EU Commission’s assessment of the National Security Council see EU Commission, *2000 Regular report from the Commission on Turkey’s Progress towards Accession*, 8 November 2000, 14, see [http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report\\_11\\_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report_11_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf).

<sup>155</sup> EU Commission, *2000 Regular report from the Commission on Turkey’s Progress towards Accession*, 8 November 2000, 18, see

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report\\_11\\_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/report_11_00/pdf/en/tu.pdf).

<sup>156</sup> Compare L. M. McLaren, “Turkey’s eventual membership of the EU: Turkish Elite Perspectives on the Issue.” *Journal of common market studies*, Vol. 38 (1), 2000, 124.

## **2.9 What if...? Taking a Look into Turkey's Future as an EU Member**

There are not only pains for Turkey to go through before the EU will open the accession negotiations. Further effort is necessary in order to be accepted as a member state within the European Union and even as an official EU member Turkey would have to face problems arising out of its membership in the Union.

If Turkey some time in the future became a member state of the EU<sup>157</sup> it would benefit from this new status, nevertheless the eventual risks and costs should not be overlooked. The EU membership will have a deep impact on Turkey's economic sphere in the areas of trade, capital traffic and transfers from the EU's budget. The social sphere will be affected by migration in both directions because immigration and emigration will change the composition of the Turkish society. The political sphere will be influenced in so far as joining the EU will trigger a transformation process in Turkey.

It is important for Turkey to weight out the positive aspects of a potential EU membership against the negative ones in order to gain a clearer picture of Turkey's possible future in the European Union. Since the advantages and disadvantages of Turkey's potential membership in the EU are only two sides to the same coin in the essay on hand the positive and negative aspects will not be dealt with separately.

In the economic sphere the positive and negative aspects balance each other. With respect to trading Turkey as a member of the EU would on the one hand enjoy free entrance to each and every national market within the Union but on the

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<sup>157</sup> The views expressed in this subchapter derived the author from discussion in a seminar. This seminar "European economic politics: Economics of the real and monetary integration" took place in the fall semester 2000 at the Georg-August-University Göttingen under the supervision of Prof. Renate Ohr.

other hand the country would have to cope with an increased competition on the common market of the European Union. Positive for Turkey would be that as soon as it becomes a member of the EU it would have to fear no more safeguard clauses or anti-dumping measures set up by the Union. If Turkey became a member the other states within the EU would have to give up their right for protecting their national market from cheaper Turkish agricultural and textile products, areas in which Turkey has an comparative advantage vis-à-vis the EU members at present. To justify protectionist actions by arguing with the fear of a drastic price-dropping would then become unacceptable. However, what applies to the other EU countries must be valid for Turkey as well so that after joining the EU the Turkish State loses its option to ask the EU for protectionist emergency measures or subsidies. Moreover Turkey has to say goodbye to the general preference system the country had enjoyed so far on third markets.

Taking into consideration that half of Turkey's exports go to countries within the EU and half of its imports also stem from countries within the EU the savings gained by the lowered transaction costs will be considerable for Turkey. Furthermore as one of the poor and less-developed EU-members Turkey would have a justified claim to transfers from the EU budget but the price Turkey would have to pay is that the Turkish representatives will have to engage in conflicts with other capital-poor EU members about the distribution of money from the EU-pots.

Considering the capital traffic Turkey as an EU member would on the one hand become more attractive to foreign investors<sup>158</sup> but on the other hand would in this way give up its possibilities to restrict the capital traffic. As part of the EU Turkey would be left without protection against capital flight and foreign infiltration. Since membership in the EU is judged as a sign of stability and therewith future domestic developments become predictable and reduce the risks of an invention the interest of investors from outside the country will grow.

There is, however, also a negative side to this increased interest: Businessmen from outside of Turkey might take over all profitable factories and auspicious companies. Coming from capital-intensive countries such as Luxembourg, Germany, the Nordic States, Great Britain and France they are able to make a better offer than local entrepreneurs. Furthermore Turkish financiers might withdraw their capital from the Turkish market and transfer it to any other state of the EU which offers more convenient conditions.

Looking at the social sphere the composition of the Turkish society would change after Turkey joined the EU because of migration moves into and especially out of the country. The impact of migration on the Turkish development should not be underestimated. As an EU member Turkey would definitely benefit from the opening of the labor market for Turkish labor force. Unemployed people within Turkey would have the possibility to find an occupation in one of the other EU countries. In case they are successful Turkey's rate of unemployment will be

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<sup>158</sup> The believe that membership in the EU or EC respectively would encourage foreign capital to invest in Turkey was a significant reason for Turgut Özal's (then Prime Minister) pro-EC stance; compare Y. Celik, *Contemporary Turkish foreign policy* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), 107-108; and also A. Mango, *Turkey: A Challenge of a New Role* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994), 90.

lowered. The one's who were lucky in finding a job in another country within the Union will in all probability send some of their earnings to their relatives left in Turkey and therewith contribute to a rise in Turkey's gross national product (GNP). In case those people later return to Turkey they would bring along technical and scientific know-how, which could be useful for Turkey's further development. The danger of brain drain will probably be little for Turkey because the land, in comparison with the industrial countries of the EU, is rather underdeveloped. However, the effects for Turkey would be disastrous if the best educated and most highly-specialized of all Turkish people would leave the country in order to make a better living in one of the rich EU-countries.

To join the EU will also mean for Turkey to give up some state sovereignty in favor of its cooperation within common institutions of the EU. Turkey has to face the fact that the EU is not merely an economic community or a free trade zone anymore, like the EEC and later the EC were in the 1950s and 1960s, but that it has converged to a political union with common values, policies and for the most part a common legislation. However, the state tradition in Turkey with its strong nationalist and authoritarian blends contradicts the aim of the EU to become a political union. It is rather questionable if Turkey is prepared and really willing to give up essential parts of its sovereignty to the higher instance of the EU.<sup>159</sup> All in all Turkey will gain from its membership in the European Union but the risks and disadvantages might be even more costly for Turkey. One statement can be made for sure in case Turkey would join the EU: The outcome of the transformation process, triggered by Turkey's possible membership in the EU, will depend on how

successful Turkey would be in modernizing its economic, educational and legal system by adopting the EU's *aquis communautaire*.

## **2.10 EU Membership as the 'ultimate Goal' – A justified Perception?**

Turkey has to realize that it is still a long way before the European Union will open the accession negotiations and an even longer one to a final accession to the EU. Yet, a quickly realized accession would be negative not only for the Union but for Turkey, too. Experience showed that the opinion among the Turkish population about a political party most of the time stands or falls by its performance. When the Turks voted in the parliamentary elections in 1995 with 21.4 per cent for the religious Welfare Party it was interpreted as an Islamist shift.<sup>160</sup> The international environment feared a development of Turkey's political system towards a theocracy similar to the Iranian model. Assessed retrospectively it signaled the dissatisfaction of many Turks with the performance of the parties that hold office. Necmettin Erbakan<sup>161</sup> and his Welfare Party got a chance to show that they do better, when they failed to do so, they had to give the wood of relay to MHP, which

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<sup>159</sup> Z. Khalilzad et al., *The Future of Turkish-Western Relations: Towards a Strategic Plan* (Arlington V.A.: Rand, 2000), 2 pose a similar question.

<sup>160</sup> Compare C. Akkaya, „Aktuelle Politische Entwicklungen in der Türkei.“ *Zft aktuell*, No. 47, Aug. 1996; A. Yayla and M. Yürüsen, *Forschungsarbeit über die Türkische Wohlfahrtspartei* (Ankara: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 1996). For a somewhat opposing analysis compare E. Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics; Challenges to Democratic Consolidation* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers), 2000, 87-93.

<sup>161</sup> Erbakan resigned as Prime Minister on 18 June 1997 due to the pressure of the Turkish military backed by civil societal entities. Compare E. Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics; Challenges to Democratic Consolidation* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 120-121. The military establishment "...perceived the increased reactionary activity [of the Welfare Party] as a serious threat to the secular state in Turkey .... See M. Heper and A. Güney, "Military and the Consolidation of Democracy: The Turkish Case." *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 26 (4), summer 2000, 645; also D. Shankland, *Islam and Society in Turkey* (Huntingdon: The Eothen Press, 1999), 111-112.

after the last general elections held in April 1999<sup>162</sup> became the second largest parliamentary party in the Grand National Assembly.

A similar treatment can be expected for the European Union: Like the political parties it would be judged according to its achievements in the short-run. Probably the Turkish public would compare the effects on Turkey obtained during the accession process with their own expectations from Turkey's prospective membership in the EU. In all probability the hopes of the Turkish people will be hard to meet since the EU's budget is limited. Therefore the aid Turkey can expect from the Union will not be nearly as much as Turkey would need to consolidate its market economy. Given the fact that Turkey is a relatively poor country with large parts of its population occupied in the agricultural sector it is likely that in the short-run Turkey will have a hard time in meeting the Copenhagen criteria which in turn might lead to the rise of anti-European feelings among the Turkish public.

However, the requirements set up by the EU will do good for the whole country. It will have a positive effect to find solutions to such pending problems as the dispute with Greece over sea rights in the Aegean Sea and over Cyprus and to the domestic problem with the Kurdish minority which frequently has contributed to the destabilization of the Turkish democracy. The consolidation of Turkey's democracy will progress once the Turkish military is under the supervision of the elected government. Such civilian control over the military is one of the conditions set up by the EU. In all reports on Turkey's progress towards accession the EU

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<sup>162</sup> For the result and analysis of this last election see H. Bacia, "Eine Protestwahl sichert Ecevit die Macht." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 April 1999; see also M. Lüders, "Einmal Sultan immer Sultan." *Die Zeit*, 22 April 1999.

Commission criticized the high degree of autonomy<sup>163</sup> the generals in Turkey enjoy. Before, however, the military will give up its prerogatives the civilian politicians have to prove competence and first and foremost reliability. These are political skills the EU expects the Turkish politicians to have which is manifested by the Union's condemnation of political corruption. Broadened political skills of Turkish political leaders will further contribute to the consolidation of Turkey's democracy.

Civil society in a more liberal atmosphere, which is to expect once Turkey is a member of the EU, will flourish and be further inspired by the other member states and the new possibilities of network-building. This backing of civil society will in turn bring benefit to all Turkish people. Although they had probably suffered from the measures taken in order to fulfil the EU's economic criteria the diversification of society coming along with further liberalization offers new opportunities for an individual planning and shaping of one's personal life.

"Membership means all things to all people not all of whom can be satisfied".<sup>164</sup> In fact everybody has to make concession – an experience of every day life – but nevertheless all social and political currents in Turkey are likely to benefit once Turkey has entered into the EU. The radicalized part of the Kurdish minority affiliated to the PKK has to give up its separatist aspirations since the EU will try to prevent any border disputes within its territory. On the other hand the Kurds will probably gain more freedom. If a settlement of the Kurdish question can be reached Turkey would benefit from this peacemaking, internally as well as

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<sup>163</sup> For the autonomy of the Turkish military compare Ü. Cizre-Sakallioglu, "The Anatomy of Turkish Military's Political Autonomy." *Comparative Politics*, 31, 1997.

<sup>164</sup> "Survey: Turkey: Why are we waiting?" *The Economist*, 10 June 2000, 6.

externally. The state would save money that it had to spend on restrictive measures before and externally Turkey would move a step further down the road to accession to the EU.<sup>165</sup>

The military establishment will have to make most concessions. However, their role even if domestically increasing might gain within the framework of the Union's security politics, especially in view of the fact that Turkey provides the second largest army within NATO. Secularists will celebrate a victory with respect to the diminished danger of the establishment of a theocracy along the Iranian model. Yet, like the military they will also have to make concessions concerning the respect for a democratically voted party with religious ambitions. The military and the secularists in Turkey will have to tolerate the participation of a religious party in the political decision-making process as long as such a party does not shake the very foundations of democracy.

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<sup>165</sup> Compare P. Robbins, "Turkey and the Kurds: Missing another Opportunity?" In M. Amramowitz (ed.), *Turkey's Transformation and American Policy* (New York: The Century Foundation Press, 2000), 71-75.

### **CHAPTER III:**

## **COMPLEMENTARY OPTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION?**

The formal dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991 set free a number of states from the rigid system of communism and created an atmosphere which allowed cooperation between the newly independent states and the states in their surrounding to emerge. Turkey was one of the states highly effected by these changes in the international system because within its geographic proximity several new states were constituted. Along with them Turkey's possibilities for cooperation significantly increased. During the Cold War, Turkey's possibilities for cooperation with states such as Bulgaria and Romania was very limited due to the fact that they belonged to the Soviet Bloc and that Turkey on the contrary was an ally of the Western hemisphere. The Turkish-Russian border had been to a large extent impermeable for Turkish goods.

In the beginning of the 1990's, Turkey's foreign policy in view of the collapse of the Soviet Bloc took a more active role. The present Chapter will take a glance at some possibilities for Turkey to cooperate with states in its surrounding. The focus will be on the description and analysis of a regional integration model among the states close to the Black Sea. Yet, some Middle Eastern States and the Turkic Republics in Central Asia as well as Azerbaijan will also be investigated with respect to their potential for a fruitful cooperation with Turkey.

### **3.1 Turkey, its Middle Eastern Neighbors and Israel**

The first part of Chapter III aims to show the difficulties of Turkey relying on its Middle Eastern neighbors for prospective cooperation. It will look at Turkey's relations with Iran, Iraq, Syria and Israel and point out those issues, which have caused tension between Turkey on the one hand and these countries on the other. Finally it assesses if there is a chance of overcoming these problems in the foreseeable future.

#### **3.1.1 Turkey and Iran**

The two neighbors Iran and Turkey have been divided along an ideological fault line since the end of the fifteenth century when the Islamic schism in Sunni and Shi'a occurred.<sup>166</sup> The Persians adhered to Shi'a Islam and the Ottomans were mainly Sunnis, a division that lingers on in the present relationship between Turkey and Iran. Nowadays Turkey's relations with Iran are tense due to fundamental differences in their respective political systems. Whereas the Turkish Republic since its establishment in 1923 has been based on secular democratic principles – albeit with some challenges by a small group of radical fundamentalists – Iran after the revolution in 1979 founded a Shiite theocracy.

Both during and after the Gulf War tensions in Turco-Iranian relations increased due to the fear of both states that the other one might undermine its influence throughout the Middle East.<sup>167</sup> Turkey believed that the Iranian role in

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<sup>166</sup> See H. J. Barkey, "Iran and Turkey: Confrontation across an Ideological Divide." In A. Z. Rubinstein and O. M. Smolansky (eds.), *Regional Power Rivalries in the New Eurasia: Russia, Turkey, and Iran* (London and Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 147.

<sup>167</sup> Compare A. Eralp, "Facing the Challenge: Post-revolutionary Relations with Iran." In H. J. Barkey (ed.), *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey's Role in the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1996), 103-104.

the region would gain importance if Iraq was weakened. Iran for its part was concerned that Turkey in cooperation with the United States would decrease Iranian prestige in the Middle East and extend its control over Northern Iraq. The competition between Iran and Turkey for regional influence was further spurred after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the emergence of sovereign states in Central Asia. Turkey was once more perceived as an ally of the US, which hoped that Turkey would become established as some kind of a role model in the Turkic Republics.<sup>168</sup> Yet, there is at least one interest both states have in common, that is, the maintenance of Iraq's territorial integrity. Together with Syria, Iran and Turkey oppose an independent Kurdistan in Northern Iraq since this might encourage the Kurds living in Iran and Turkey to strive for the same.<sup>169</sup>

The former Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan tried to improve the Turkish-Iranian relationship during his time in office because he was interested in strengthening Turkey's Islamic roots. Yet, the secular elite in Turkey managed to thwart his ambition. Therefore Turkey and Iran are up to the present – apart from an unfinished gas pipeline project – not on good terms with each other. Turkey takes offence at Iran's PKK support<sup>170</sup> and accuses the Iranian mullahs ruling in Teheran of training fundamentalist terrorists to attack secularists in Turkey.<sup>171</sup> Iran perceives the Turkish-Israeli military cooperation on which Turkey and Israel

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<sup>168</sup> See *ibid.*, 104.

<sup>169</sup> See *ibid.*, 109-110; see also H. J. Barkey, "Iran and Turkey: Confrontation across an Ideological Divide." In A. Z. Rubinstein and O. M. Smolansky (eds.), *Regional Power Rivalries in the New Eurasia: Russia, Turkey, and Iran* (London and Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 158-160.

<sup>170</sup> Compare K. Kirisci, "The Future of Turkish Policy: Toward the Middle East." In B. Rubin and K. Kirisci (eds.), *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 95-96.

<sup>171</sup> Compare A. Makovsky, "U.S. Policy toward Turkey: Progress and Problems." In M. Abramowitz (ed.), *Turkey's Transformation and American Policy* (New York: The Century Foundation Press, 2000), 233.

agreed in February 1996 as a threat to its security.<sup>172</sup> As a response Iran offered Syria a similar military pact a few months later which in turn further deteriorated Turkey's relationship with Iran.<sup>173</sup>

### 3.1.2 Turkey and Iraq

As for Iraq, Turkey shares with it the fear that the 'safe zone' in Northern Iraq could develop into the core of a larger independent Kurdish State.<sup>174</sup> During the second Gulf War in January and February 1991, Turkey participated in driving Iraq from Kuwait by making its territory available as a military base of the coalition forces. However, soon after the war Turkey spoke up for the lifting of the UN-embargo against Iraq. Since the Iraqi oil in times before the Gulf War had passed to a large proportion in and out of Turkey, the country has a vested interest in the termination of the economic sanctions against Iraq.<sup>175</sup>

In spite of Iraq's importance as an economic partner for Turkey's Southeast, Iraq says, that Turkey violates its sovereignty by engaging in various military maneuvers against PKK bases in Northern Iraq. Furthermore the Iraqi and the Turkish governments are involved in a struggle over water issues. Similar to the Syrians the Iraqis are upset that Turkey lays absolute claim to the rights of the

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<sup>172</sup> M. Mufti, "Daring and Caution in Turkish Foreign Policy." *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 52 (1), winter 1998, 40.

<sup>173</sup> K. Kirisci, "The Future of Turkish Policy Toward the Middle East." In B. Rubin and K. Kirisci (eds.), *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power* (London and Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 103.

<sup>174</sup> For the first time in 1992 elections for a Kurdish Parliament took place in Northern Iraq, see U. Steinbach, "Die Türkei, der Nahe Osten und das Wasser." *Internationale Politik*, Vol. 1, Jan. 1998, 11.

<sup>175</sup> For the same reason Turkey promoted the UN Resolution 986 which stood under the motto 'oil for food'. Since December 1996 Iraq was allowed to export a certain amount of oil in order to receive food and medicine in turn. Both the oil as well as the food and the medicine have to pass in and out of Turkey which brings money. See A. Nachmani, "Turkey in the Wake of the Gulf War: recent History and its Implications." *Security and Policy Studies*, No. 42, May 1999, 11.

water of the Euphrates and the Tigris river which both have its source in Turkey. Being the upstream country, Turkey believes it has sovereign rights over the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris basin.<sup>176</sup> In this vein Turkey defines the Euphrates-Tigris system as a “transboundary water system”<sup>177</sup>. The Turkish officials are of the opinion that Turkey has priority on the use of the Euphrates and the Tigris water because most of it is generated within its territory.

Since the end of the first Gulf War the latest, Iraq had joined Syria in opposing the Turkish GAP project<sup>178</sup> and the Atatürk Dam.<sup>179</sup> Syria and Iraq both perceive the GAP project as a means to guarantee Turkey’s sway over the water of the Euphrates and the Tigris river. Thus, Iraq and Syria have become dependent on Turkey because the latter has the ability to control the water flow to both states. Therefore Iraq as well as Syria demand sharing the waters of the Euphrates, “which they claim to be an international waterway”.<sup>180</sup> Furthermore they argue that all riparian states should be granted equal rights over international waters. In this vein they demand that Turkey consult them before building a new dam. Yet, since there exists no established and agreed International water code<sup>181</sup> the issue remains unsettled although Turkey has agreed to grant a certain amount of water to both Iraq and Syria. It is true that the International Law Commission of the United

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<sup>176</sup> Compare A. Carkoglu and M. Eder, “Water Conflict: The Euphrate-Tigris Basin.” In B. Rubin and K. Kirisci, *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 237.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> The Southeastern Anatolia Project, *Güneydogu Anadolu Projesi*, (GAP) will consist of 22 dams and 19 installations for the generation of energy.

<sup>179</sup> Compare A. Carkoglu and M. Eder, “Water Conflict: The Euphrate-Tigris Basin.” In B. Rubin and K. Kirisci, *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 239.

<sup>180</sup> A. Nachmani, “Turkey in the Wake of the Gulf War: Recent History and its Implications.” *Security and Policy Studies*, No. 42, May 1999, 5.

Nations decided in 1997 that the distribution of international waters has to be equitable and reasonable but the formulation is so vague that each party has a possibility of interpreting it according to its own interest.<sup>182</sup>

### 3.1.3 Turkey and Syria

Turkish-Syrian relations are comparable to those with Iraq with respect to Turkey's sway over the water of the Euphrates and Tigris. The sharing and the quality of water from the Euphrates-Tigris basin has been among the most controversial issues in the relationship of Turkey and Syria.<sup>183</sup> Although in 1987 Turkey had granted Syria an annual flow of a minimum 650 cubic yards per second of water<sup>184</sup> from the Euphrates the flow dropped in March 1991 to 395-480 cubic yards.<sup>185</sup> Back then the Turkish officials justified themselves by referring to the great amount of water that was needed – for a limited period of time – to fill the Atatürk Dam. Syria held the entire GAP project responsible for the reduction of water that passes the Turkish-Syrian border. According to the Turkish newspaper *Radikal* Syria uttered massive protest against the dams Turkey has installed in the Euphrates-Tigris basin when the amount of water flowing to Syria further dropped to 100 cubic meters per second. In July 2001 the chairman of the GAP project

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<sup>181</sup> Compare K. Özal and H. D. Altinbilek, "Water and Land Resources Development in Southeastern Turkey." In M. Ergin et al. (eds.), *Water in the Islamic World: An Imminent Crisis*, Amman: The Islamic Academy of Sciences, 1995, 217.

<sup>182</sup> See A. Carkoglu and M. Eder, "Water Conflict: The Euphrate-Tigris Basin." In B. Rubin and K. Kirisci, *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 238.

<sup>183</sup> Compare *ibid.* 235.

<sup>184</sup> The granted amount was later reduced to 500 cubic meters per second.

<sup>185</sup> See A. Carkoglu and M. Eder, "Water Conflict: The Euphrate-Tigris Basin." In B. Rubin and K. Kirisci, *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 247.

responded that drought – not the existing GAP dams – were responsible for the small proportion of water going to Syria.<sup>186</sup>

Although dialogue about this issue started recently, Turkey maintains that Syria does not make use of the waters in the best way.<sup>187</sup> Nevertheless the tension on the water issue has seemed to relax. Syria had invited the supervisors of the GAP project and the Syrian minister of irrigation to pay a visit to Turkey in August 2001. After meeting with the Syrian minister of irrigation, the Turkish minister of state responsible for foreign trade announced that Turkey will distribute the waters evenly for the interests of the three countries (Turkey, Syria and Iraq).<sup>188</sup> According to the Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, Turkey has also tried during the last few months to raise the proportion of water that flows to Syria to 650 cubic meters of water.<sup>189</sup>

Historic antagonism between Syria and Turkey can be attributed to disagreement over the Turkish Hatay province, which officially became a part of Turkey in 1939, but which so far has never been accepted as belonging to it by the Syrian government.<sup>190</sup> Turkey's attitude vis-à-vis Syria has worsened because the latter had backed the PKK by allowing them to operate against Turkey from their

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<sup>186</sup> See "On the water issue between Syria and Turkey." *Arabic New.com*, 19 July 2001, see <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/010719/2001071919.html>, in compliance with "Ankara and Damaskus meet for peace relating to water." *Radikal*, 18 July 2001.

<sup>187</sup> See "The Turkish waters to Syria." *Arabic New.com*, 23 August 2001, see <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/010823/2001082303.html>.

<sup>188</sup> "The Syrian-Turkish water talks." *Arabic New.com*, 23 August 2001, see <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/010823/2001082312.html>.

<sup>189</sup> See "The Turkish waters to Syria." *Arabic New.com*, 23 August 2001, see <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/010823/2001082303.html>, referring to *Cumhuriyet*, 22 August 2001.

<sup>190</sup> Compare A. Gresh, "Turkish-Israeli-Syrian Relations and their Impact on the Middle East." *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 52 (2), spring 1998, 193. France, the Mandatory power in the Levant at that time, ceded the Hatay province to Turkey.

territory<sup>191</sup> and denied Turkey's request to extradite Abdullah Öcalan, the head of the PKK. The tense Turkish-Syrian relationship at least as far as this issue was concerned relaxed when Syria officially declared in October 1998 that the PKK is a terrorist organization.

Another small sign of détente in the Syrian-Turkish relationship was the participation of the Turkish President at the funeral of the Syrian President Hafiz Assad on 10 June 2000. Since June 2001 relations between Syria and Turkey have further eased off. First, the Turkish President Necdet Sezer stated that Turkey wants to develop its relations with Syria in all fields. In his speech at the Harran University in Sanli Urfa on 9 June 2001, Sezer stressed the importance of talking about Turkey's Southern neighbor, Syria, with whom Turkey shares the longest land border.<sup>192</sup> This was followed by the decision to raise the level of trade exchange between Syria and Turkey to one billion U.S. dollars.<sup>193</sup>

Turkish diplomats in Damascus describe Turkey's current relations with Syria as being better than ever. As noted above, continued dialogue between Syria and Turkey about sharing the waters of the Tigris and the Euphrates has only recently started. In the beginning of August 2001, the Syrian deputy Foreign Minister Siba Nasser paid a visit to Turkey which, according to the Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, will pave the way for the visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem to Damascus and the visit of the Syrian President Bashar al-

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<sup>191</sup> Compare M. Mufti, "Daring and Caution in Turkish Foreign Policy." *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 52 (1), winter 1998, 35.

<sup>192</sup> Necdet Sezer quoted after "Sezer: We will work to develop relations with Syria." *Arabic News.com*, 9 June 2001, see <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/010609/2001060909.html>.

<sup>193</sup> See "Turkish-Syrian relations are in their best." *Arabic News.com*, 15 June 2001, see <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/010615/2001061503.html>.

Assad to Ankara.<sup>194</sup> In the aftermath of the visit, Mrs. Nasser stated that the talks in Ankara which primarily dealt with the bilateral relations between Syria and Turkey “were useful and good”<sup>195</sup>.

However, Turkish-Syrian relations are still negatively effected by Turkey’s close relationship with Israel. Syria is concerned about Turkey’s military cooperation with Israel – a state that occupies the Golan Heights. Yet, there is the possibility that Turkey might mediate between Israel and Syria. During the visit of the Syrian Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer to Ankara on July 9 2001, he asked his Turkish counterpart Sabhattin Cakmakoglu to deliver two messages to the Syrian President Bashar Assad: First, that Israel desires to return to the negotiation table and, second, that Syria shall cease its support for Hizbullah and make all efforts to force Hizbullah to release the kidnapped soldiers from Lebanon.<sup>196</sup>

### **3.1.4 Turkey and Israel**

Turkey’s relations with Israel are at their best. Turkey was the first among the Muslim countries to recognize the newly founded State of Israel in March 1949. Yet Turkey remained neutral for a long time in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Since the 1990’s, Turkish foreign policy towards Israel has shifted from neutrality to entente.<sup>197</sup> Turkey was interested in an cooperation with the Israeli military – the

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<sup>194</sup> See “On relations between Syria and Turkey.” *Arabic News.com*, 2 August 2001, see <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/010802/2001080207.html>, in this article a reference is made to the Turkish *Cumhuriyet*, 01 August 2001.

<sup>195</sup> Nasser quoted in “Nasser describes her visit to Turkey as positive.” *Arabic News.com*, 4 August 2001, see <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/010804/2001080409.html>.

<sup>196</sup> See A. O’Sullivan, “Israel asks Turkey to mediate with Syria.” *The Jerusalem Post*, 10 July 2001, see <http://www.jpost.com/Editions/2001/07/10/News/News.30088.html>.

<sup>197</sup> Compare W. Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy: 1774-2000* (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000), 296-297.

most advanced army in the Middle East. Such a connection would act as an deterrence vis-à-vis Turkey's enemies in the region, such as Iran and Syria.

Today the Israeli-Turkish military cooperation includes many domains such as air, sea, land, and intelligence. Furthermore it is unique in structure and institutionalization in so far as the cooperation involves meetings on a regular basis, strategic dialogues and steering committees.<sup>198</sup> The joint sea maneuver 'Mermaid' with Turkish, Israeli and American participation gave rise to numerous protests from Muslim states. Although Israel and Turkey insisted that their military cooperation was not directed against any particular country Turkey's Middle Eastern neighbors reacted with mistrust. Once more Turkey was seen as an ally serving American interests in the region by improving its relationship with America's close ally, Israel. Strategic ties between Israel and Turkey were further strengthened by the Israeli offer in July 2001 to set up a joint missile-defense umbrella.<sup>199</sup>

However warm Turkey's relationship with Israel may seem, it is dependent upon the reactions of the Muslim neighbors. If there occurs a significant deterioration of Turkey's relations with one of its adversaries in the region, or if Israel's relations with its neighbors deteriorate then both countries might withdraw from the alliance in order not to destabilize their respective security environments.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Compare A. Nachmani, "The Remarkable Turkish-Israeli Tie." *Middle East Quarterly*, June 1998, 24.

<sup>199</sup> See A. O'Sullivan, "Turkey welcomes joint missile-defence offer." *The Jerusalem Post*, 10 July 2001, see <http://www.jpost.com/editions/2001/07/10/News/News.30083.html>.

<sup>200</sup> A. Liel, "Israel und die Türkei: Eine besondere Beziehung." *Internationale Politik*, Vol. 55 (11), November 2000, 35.

### 3.2 Turkey and its Turkish ‘Brothers’ in Central Asia and Azerbaijan

The notion of Pan-Turkism arose parallel to the emergence of Azerbaijan and the Turkic Republics in Central Asia. Five out of fifteen newly constituted Republics of the former Soviet Union had predominantly Muslim populations and were Turkic in origin, namely: Kazakhstan, Kirghistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. These states were immediately referred to as the 'Turkic Republics', particularly in Turkey.<sup>201</sup> Turkish president Turgut Özal saw Turkey as a regional power with alliances stretching from Eastern Europe to Western China. Just before he died on 17 April 1993, he made an intensive tour of Central Asia in order to strengthen Turkey's position in the region.<sup>202</sup>

The United States also had an interest in Turkey's serving as a role model for the peoples of Turkic origin. America wished to see its democratic and secular ally Turkey as a model for Central Asia rather than Russia or the theocratic Iran. At a first glance, the Turkish model representing both democracy and market economy was attractive for the leaders of the Turkic Republics that wanted to receive international recognition and support.<sup>203</sup> However, neither Central Asians nor the Azerbaijanis were interested in replacing one “dominant patron”, the Soviet Union, by another.<sup>204</sup> The paternalism Turkey – probably unintentionally – expressed

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<sup>201</sup> Compare I. Bal, *Turkey's relations with the West and the Turkic Republics: The rise and fall of the 'Turkish model'* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 139.

<sup>202</sup> See S. V. Mayall, *Turkey: Thwarted Ambition* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1997), 63-65.

<sup>203</sup> Compare G. Winrow, “Turkey and the Newly Independent States of Central Asia and the Transcaucasus.” In B. Rubin and K. Kirisci, *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 179.

<sup>204</sup> See H. J. Barkey, “Iran and Turkey: Confrontation across an Ideological Divide.” In A. Z. Rubinstein and O. M. Smolansky, *Regional Power Rivalries in the New Eurasia: Russia, Turkey, and Iran* (London and Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 162; the chapter focuses also on Turkey's role in Central Asia.

toward the new Central Asian states when treating them as its ‘little brothers’ discouraged them.<sup>205</sup> In the beginning, the Turkic Republics had appreciated Turkey’s links with the West and hoped for financial aid but soon they realized Turkey’s limits concerning economic support. Özal envisaged a common Turkic market and Turkish businessmen invested heavily in the region. The Turkic Republics, however, also developed ties with other countries.<sup>206</sup>

Although there exists still talk about Turkey’s special relationship with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kirghistan, and Azerbaijan the so-called Turkic Republics do not have many features, which necessarily unite them with Turkey. Apart from the Azeris, linguistic kinship with the peoples of the Turkic Republic is not close. They cannot be regarded as a single entity. The peoples of the Turkic Republics are ethnically quite diverse and perceive themselves as distinct.<sup>207</sup> Above all Kazak President Nazarbaev once stated that “the restructuring of the region along ethnic and religious lines would impede ... integration with the rest of the world”.<sup>208</sup> Furthermore Russia remains an important factor in Central Asia to be reckoned with. As former parts of the Soviet Union, Russia and the Turkic Republics in Central Asia as well as Azerbaijan share a common history. Today, there still exist structural alliances between them – particularly in the

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<sup>205</sup> Compare P. M. Carly, “Turkey and Central Asia: Reality Comes Calling.” In A. Z. Rubinstein and O. M. Smolansky, *Regional Power Rivalries in the New Eurasia: Russia, Turkey, and Iran* (London and Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 190-191.

<sup>206</sup> See *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>207</sup> Compare *ibid.*, 191; also I. Bal, *Turkey’s relations with the West and the Turkic Republics: The rise and fall of the ‘Turkish model’* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 141; and R. C. Nation, “The Turkic and Other Muslim Peoples of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans.” In V. Mastny and R. C. Nation (eds.), *Turkey Between East and West: New Challenges for a Rising Regional Power* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 104.

<sup>208</sup> P. M. Carly, “Turkey and Central Asia: Reality Comes Calling.” In A. Z. Rubinstein and O. M. Smolansky, *Regional Power Rivalries in the New Eurasia: Russia, Turkey, and Iran* (London and Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 192.

economic sphere –which to a great extent date back to Cold War. Russia and Iran both compete with Turkey for influence over the Turkic Republics. Craig Nation concludes that “the original exaggerated enthusiasm for Turkey’s role in the region has already been replaced by what might fairly be called an equally exaggerated disillusionment”.<sup>209</sup>

### **3.3 Economic Opportunities in the Black Sea Region**

With the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union, Turkey faced a changed security environment and new challenges in the region. Turkey was now surrounded by newly emerged states which strove for transforming their formerly state led economies into market economies. One means to achieve security in the region surrounding Turkey was to link the states around the Black Sea to each other so that their common interest would prevent them from harming each other.

The former Turkish Ambassador to Washington, Sükrü Elekdag,<sup>210</sup> was in 1990 the first to utter the thought of economic cooperation among the Black Sea littoral states. Turgut Özal, the Turkish President at that time, took up this idea, too. Being strongly interested in economic matters, such a promising cooperation attempt immediately caught his attention. Özal wished to see Turkey as a regional

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<sup>209</sup> R. C. Nation, “The Turkic and Other Muslim Peoples of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans.” In V. Mastny and R. C. Nation (eds.), *Turkey Between East and West: New Challenges for a Rising Regional Power* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 105.

<sup>210</sup> See T. Bukkvol, “The Black Sea Region.” In E. Hansen, (ed.), *Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, the Barents Region and the Black Sea Region* (Oslo: Fafo Institute of Applied Social Science, 1997), 38; as well as S. Sayan and O. Zaim, “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Project.” In L. Rittenberg (ed.), *The Political Economy of Turkey in the Post-Soviet Era: Going West and Looking East?* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 1998), 117; on the contrary Faruk Sen ascribes this idea to a Turkish diplomat, named Volkan Vural, see F. Sen et al., *Länderbericht Türkei* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 1998), 88.

power with a hegemonic position; the initiative for establishing a cooperation among the Black Sea states seemed to him to serve that interest. Through economic cooperation in the Black Sea region, Özal hoped for the emergence of Turkey “as an economic powerhouse in the region, channeling Western capital and technology to former Eastern bloc countries and making a profit in the process”<sup>211</sup>. In spite of geographic proximity countries formerly belonging to the Soviet Bloc had a “relatively insignificant volume of trade ... with Greece and Turkey”<sup>212</sup>. In order not to miss this opportunity any longer the countries around the Black Sea – with Turkey taking the initiative – began multilateral talks on the idea to form a regional arrangement for economic cooperation.

The initial talks had already started with Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and the Soviet Union at the end of 1989.<sup>213</sup> The latter still existed at that time but was already facing a severe threat by the decay of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe. After the USSR formally dissolved the number of prospective members of the envisaged cooperation increased to nine: Representatives of Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, and Georgia as well as Moldova, Azerbaijan and Armenia (who participated in spite of their lack of Black Sea coast lines) held several meetings to discuss the project. Finally, on 25 June 1992 the Black Sea Economic Cooperation was founded in Istanbul. It is now composed of the nine above mentioned states with Albania and Greece as additional members.

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<sup>211</sup> Ömer Faruk Genckaya quoted in T. Bukkvol, “The Black Sea Region.” In E. Hansen (ed.), *Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, the Barents Region and the Black Sea Region* (Oslo: Fafo Institute of Applied Social Science, 1997), 38.

<sup>212</sup> S. Sayan, “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Project: A Substitute for a Complement to Globalization Efforts in the Middle East and the Balkans?” *ERF Working Paper*, No. 9806, 11.

<sup>213</sup> See S. V. Mayall, *Turkey: Thwarted Ambition* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1997), 63.

The overall aim of this regional cooperation was twofold: On the one hand it was supposed to contribute to security in the region by strengthening economic cooperation among the member states. On the other hand it was intended to promote the integration of its members into the European and the world economies. The BSEC was not set up as an alternative to existing integration projects but understood as being complementary to them.<sup>214</sup> Accordingly, the Summit Declaration on the Black Sea Economic Cooperation stated in Article 7 that the BSEC would not prevent members from participating in other regional initiatives.<sup>215</sup> Later the Charter of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation even declared in Article 3d that the economic cooperation of the BSEC members would not contravene “the inter-national obligations of the Member States including those deriving from their membership to international organizations”<sup>216</sup>. The BSEC aimed at introducing or expanding common activities in the region and at promoting trade relations. Moreover the BSEC countries intended to stimulate bilateral as well as multilateral cooperation in the areas of economics, environment, technology, communication and health protection.<sup>217</sup> By means of cooperation, the member states wished to transform the Black Sea area into one of peace, stability, security and prosperity.

The BSEC appears as a new model for regional integration since it has neither rigid requirements nor any complicated procedure for accession to it like

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<sup>214</sup> Compare N. B. Gültekin and A. Mumcu, “Black Sea Economic Cooperation.” In V. Mastny and R. C. Nation (eds.), *Turkey Between East and West: New Challenges for a Rising Power* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 179.

<sup>215</sup> See S. Sayan, “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Project: A Substitute for a Complement to Globalization Efforts in the Middle East and the Balkans?” *ERF Working Paper*, No. 9806, 7.

<sup>216</sup> “Charter of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, see [http://www.bsec.gov.tr/Charter\\_1.htm](http://www.bsec.gov.tr/Charter_1.htm), Art. 3d.

the European Union has.<sup>218</sup> Basically every state willing to join can do so as long as it shows commitment to the very foundations of the organization by signing the Declaration on Black Sea Economic Cooperation.<sup>219</sup> There is also the possibility for other organizations, firms and enterprises to take part in the implementation of BSEC projects if those wish to do so.<sup>220</sup> The BSEC sees itself as a dynamic network without rigid structures which is based on direct contact and relations between public and private institutions, firms, companies and enterprises. Thus, this model of regional cooperation differs from the European model. Furthermore the BSEC differs from the European Union's model of regional cooperation in the former's strong emphasis on an interactive approach. Economic cooperation is intended to be interactive with respect to the relationship of the BSEC's institutional framework and the respective national economic sphere of the member states: While the intergovernmental component of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation outlines the general framework and ensures the operation of the basic working instruments, it will be the task of the national business communities to search for and determine what may be accomplished through the opportunities offered by the BSEC.<sup>221</sup> The Council of Ministers (Foreign Ministers of the member states) sets rules concerning cooperation of the participating states and

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<sup>217</sup> See "Black Sea Economic Cooperation: Common Interests and Priorities", see <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/af/Bsec2.HTM>.

<sup>218</sup> See "The Black Sea Economic Cooperation: An Open Entity", see <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/af/Bsec5.HTM>.

<sup>219</sup> See "Summit Declaration on Black Sea Economic Cooperation", Istanbul, 25 June 1992, see <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/af/Bsec7.HTM>.

<sup>220</sup> See "The Black Sea Economic Cooperation: An Open Entity", see <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/af/Bsec5.HTM>.

<sup>221</sup> "The Black Sea Economic Cooperation: Future Horizons", see <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/af/Bsec6.HTM>.

their respective economic spheres. Yet, those rules are, in turn, influenced by suggestions from the private economic sector.

The states involved all hope for welfare gains, which among cooperating market economies normally arise by eliminating or at least reducing trade barriers.<sup>222</sup> Welfare increases if the trade creation effects (TC) caused by the cooperation outweigh the trade diversion effects (TD).<sup>223</sup> TC occurs in case that a product formerly produced nationally is now imported from another country inside the cooperation which produces the same product more efficiently, that is at a lower cost. TD occurs if a product formerly imported from a third country is now imported from a country within the cooperation, which produces the product at a higher cost. As a high tax is put on the product of the third country the same product now seems to be cheaper from the country within the cooperation. Such a switch from a more to a less efficient producer decreases the welfare of the importing country. Although it is one of the BSEC's future prospects, members of this organization have not yet eliminated tariff and non-tariff barriers which could produce TC and TD effects within the organization.<sup>224</sup> Trade barriers between BSEC members, by contrast, are structural in nature. Members agreed in the Summit declaration to remove obstacles to trade because of inefficiency, or lack of

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<sup>222</sup> Compare S. Sayan and O. Zaim, "The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Project." In L. Rittenberg (ed.), *The Political Economy of Turkey in the Post-Soviet Era: Going West and Looking East?* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 1998), 118.

<sup>223</sup> Jacob Viner developed the conceptual framework of TC and TD in the 1950s when he studied the welfare effects of a customs union; see J. Viner, *The Customs Union Issues* (New York: The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1953).

<sup>224</sup> See "BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future towards a more consolidated, effective and viable BSEC partnership", see [http://www.bsec.gov.tr/petra\\_1.htm](http://www.bsec.gov.tr/petra_1.htm), section I.

channels, or differences in the trade system, all of can be attributed to the former separation between capitalist and centrally planned economies.<sup>225</sup>

### **3.4 What the BSEC has achieved so far**

The BSEC became a regional economic organization in 1999 with legal status in the international system and is an observer at the Organization of the United Nations.<sup>226</sup> It has developed multiple dimensions comparable – though not in scope and intensity – to the European Union. The multidimensional structure build up by the BSEC is designed to encourage cooperation at five different levels: Cooperation takes place at intergovernmental, inter-parliamentary, private enterprise, banking and finance and finally academic levels.<sup>227</sup>

As for the governmental platform two institutions need to be mentioned: the Council of Ministers composed of the Foreign Ministers of the member states and PERMIS, the Permanent International Secretariat. While the former functions as the highest decision making body, comparable to the EU's European Council, the latter is responsible for coordination among the participating states and the matching of the BSEC's activities through different Working Groups. Parliamentarians of member states form the BSEC Parliamentary Assembly

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<sup>225</sup> Compare S. Sayan, "The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Project: A Substitute for a Complement to Globalization Efforts in the Middle East and the Balkans?" *ERF Working Paper*, No. 9806, 9-10.

<sup>226</sup> See "BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future towards a more consolidated, effective and viable BSEC partnership", see [http://www.bsec.gov.tr/petra\\_1.htm](http://www.bsec.gov.tr/petra_1.htm), Introduction. The name of the BSEC then changed to the BSECO (Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization) however since the literature still refers to it as the BSEC the present essay will use both names.

<sup>227</sup> See "The Work Program of Turkey during its Chairmanship of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation", 01 May – 01 November 2001, see [www.bsec.gov.tr/chair\\_1.htm](http://www.bsec.gov.tr/chair_1.htm), 2-4.

(PABSEC) which serves as an inter-parliamentary organ for consultation in the decision-making-process.

As already noted, the private enterprise makes up another pillar of the BSEC. Since the organization attaches great importance to the private economic sector there exists a BSEC Business Council with representatives of private enterprises in member states. The Council builds on the expertise of its members and is supposed to provide the necessary infrastructure for the private sector by opening new possibilities for economic cooperation. On 21 June 1999, the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB) was founded in Thessalonica, Greece. Its capital amounts to 300 million dollars provided by the member states on the basis of special quotas, with Turkey, Greece and the Russian Federation as the main share holders. The initial capital will increase to 1,5 billion dollars after the remaining shares are purchased.

Finally, cooperation within the framework of the BSEC takes place on the academic level. Special emphasis is put on science and technology and the application of its achievements in the economic realm. A BSEC Standing Academic Committee has existed since 1998 which aims at further promoting academic cooperation and joint scientific projects. Furthermore a Black Sea University Network has been established and an International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) was founded in September 1998 in Athens. The Center carries out policy oriented and practical research supporting the realization of the BSEC's objectives.

Given the goals the BSEC members had established themselves upon, the establishment of the organization can be described as successful. In fact, the BSEC

triggered economic cooperation that enhanced dialogue among its member states and thereby contributed to the improvement of their relations with each other. The BSEC adheres to the formula that economic cooperation is an effective confidence building measure.<sup>228</sup> Moreover the “profusion of contacts at all levels is one of the characteristics of the BSEC”<sup>229</sup>. Since the ministers of foreign affairs of the BSEC member states meet every six months, their contact is likely to prevent the escalation of conflicts among them. This progress has led to more stability, and hence security, in the Black Sea area. In April 2001, six members of the BSEC, namely Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria and Georgia signed the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group (Blackseafor) agreement, envisaging cooperation in a joint naval force.<sup>230</sup> Moreover the BSEC provided an institutional framework for the discussion of sensitive issues, such as organized crime and illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs. On 17 October 1996, in Yerevan the BSEC members signed a joint statement which declared organized crime as a top priority and envisaged appropriate measures to combat it.<sup>231</sup>

Structural barriers have been overcome in so far that the participating states that formerly belonged to the Soviet Bloc go through a transformation process from centrally planned to market economies – albeit each at a different speed. Only ten years have passed since the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union which set 15 states free from the system of a centrally planned economy. Having the chance to determine their respective economic systems, the newly independent states all

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<sup>228</sup> Compare E. Özer, “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Regional Security.” *Perceptions*, Vol. II (3), September-November 1997, 99.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>230</sup> See “Black Sea Countries sign naval cooperation agreement.” *Turkish Daily News*, 03 April 2001, see <http://www.photius.com/blackseafor/signing.html>.

<sup>231</sup> See *ibid.* 101.

opted for a development toward a market economy. Within the short period from the beginning of the transformation process to the present, the establishment of consolidated market economies was not feasible. Therefore, those states still have difficulties in coping with the requirements of the world market. Their industries urgently need modern technology, better management and higher efficiency. The BSEC therefore aimed at an enhanced exchange of technology, in particular with respect to communication and transport. So far three communication projects have been initiated.<sup>232</sup> Yet, due to their transformation to market economies – even though with some restrictions – those states have been integrated into the European and the world economy.

The European Union has taken interest in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and appreciates that it contributes to prepare some of its member states for membership in the Union. By now, apart from Greece which has been a member of the EU since 1981, two other BSEC members are seriously discussed as prospective EU members, namely Bulgaria and Romania. Turkey has also entered into an accession partnership with the Union and signed an Association Agreement with the organization in March 2001.

### **3.5 Evaluating the Options**

The prospects of Turkey cooperating with its Middle Eastern neighbors are not promising for Turkey. States like Syria, Iraq and Iran perceive Turkey as “a Trojan horse” through which Western imperialism infiltrates into the Middle East in order

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<sup>232</sup> See F. Sen et al., *Länderbericht Türkei* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 1998), 89.

to weaken the defense of states that disagree with its policies“<sup>233</sup> It is true that Turkey has some influence in that region in so far as its policies directly affect the Middle Eastern States and therefore Turkey’s foreign policy is taken into account in the political decisions of Iraq, Syria, and Iran. However, more than a strategic relationship with Syria, Iran and Iraq never arouse so far and probably never will because the differences in the political systems are too big and the issues of disagreement are too problematic to be solved soon. Not even when the religious Welfare Party while in power managed to improve relations significantly since the opposition in Turkey from other parties and the military and bureaucratic establishment was too great. As for the Israeli-Turkish relations they can be described as warm but unsteady, in so far that the future of the relationship is dependent on the reactions of their respective neighbors in the Middle East.

As for the Turkic Republics apart from the initial euphoria Turkey’s hopes for taking a leading role among the peoples of Turkic origin remain unfulfilled. It is true that in July 1999 Devlet Bahçeli, leader of the Nationalist Action Party which has a share in the present government, called for the creation of a Turkic common market, but it remains unlikely. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation can be judged as an interesting project which already managed to realize some of its aims. Turkey has a special status in the BSEC underlined in Article 11 of the Istanbul Summit Declaration (18 November 1999)<sup>234</sup> but this refers basically to the fact that Turkey initiated this project of economic cooperation between states adjacent to the Black Sea. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation has only a short history and the

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<sup>233</sup> M. Muslih, “Syria and Turkey: Uneasy Relations.“ In H. J. Barkey (ed.), *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey’s Role in the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1996), 129.

long-term effects of its policies remain to be seen. Yet, membership in the European Union is possible alongside membership in the Organization of the BSEC. The EU approves BSEC-membership of states that wish to accede to the European Union. Therefore, one can argue that it is in fact a complementary option for Turkey supporting its struggle for membership in the Union.

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<sup>234</sup> See “Charter of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, see [http://www.bsec.gov.tr/Charter\\_1.htm](http://www.bsec.gov.tr/Charter_1.htm), Art. 11.

## **CHAPTER IV:**

### **CONCLUSION**

In 1989 Turkey received a rejection from the European Union, two years after it had applied for full membership. Furthermore it seemed that Turkey's role in world politics would cease after the Cold War had come to an end, and thus the United States no longer had to rely on Turkey which so far had helped to contain the Soviet Power. After the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact Turkish foreign policy therefore underwent a process of reorientation. The political and economic performance of the newly independent states in Turkey's geographic proximity might have a direct effect on Turkey. In case those states failed in developing themselves in a positive direction Turkey would face a less predictable surrounding which might have a negative effect on Turkey's security. On the other hand if those states succeeded in developing stable democracies with functioning market economies Turkey might gain access to new markets.

Against the background of its changed environment which offered new opportunities but also posed new challenges Turkey maintained a predominantly Western orientation. The thesis displayed Turkey's long hurdle race before finally being accepted as a formal candidate for membership in the European Union. Before this decision the European Council agreed on at its Helsinki Summit in 1999, Turkey had already experienced two official refusals: the first in 1989<sup>235</sup> and

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<sup>235</sup> Although Turkey had already applied for full membership in 1987 it took two years before the EU decided to reject the application.

the second in 1997. The Thesis argued that Turkey's rejection by the EU in 1997 was a strategic mistake. When the European Commission had recommended not to put Turkey on the list of formal candidates, the latter had brought forward a number of complaints against the Union – some of them with justification. The Council's 1997 summit was marked by the EU's envisaged enlargement process of which Turkey with its long-standing history as an associated member had hoped to be a part. The country felt betrayed because some Central and Eastern European states had been accepted, although their political and especially their economic performance was worse than Turkey's. Although Turkey's domestic performance with respect to meeting the Copenhagen Criteria had hardly changed compared to 1997, the EU in 1999 made up for what the Turks had perceived as a rebuff and promised the Turkish Republic an accession partnership which was declared on 8 March 2001.<sup>236</sup>

The European Union's reservations about Turkey's eligibility for accession remained unchanged but strategic considerations, the détente in the Turko-Greek relationship, the change in German government and the United States' favorable attitude towards Turkey's incorporation into the Union, induced the EU to accept Turkey as a formal candidate. The Union believes that Turkey has a strategic importance for the European Security Architecture due to its membership in NATO, its military capabilities and its geographic position. In the Kosovo conflict, for instance, Turkey had proved to be a reliable ally. In line with the EU's perception Turkey's leverage in its geographic proximity is moreover derived from

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<sup>236</sup> See Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Latest Situation of Turkey-EU Relations – July 2001*, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ad/adc/latest1.a.htm>.

its religious affinity and ethnic kinship to the peoples of the Turkic Republics; and its religious bonds with the population of the other states in the Middle East. Therefore the Union has an interest in keeping the Turkish State well disposed towards it so that in case a crisis in Turkey's geographic proximity occurs it can play a moderating role. In fact Turkey's relations with its Middle Eastern neighbors had never been warm and the bonds with the Turkic Republics are rather loose so that Turkey's actual influence in the region is not as great as the EU believes it to be. Furthermore, Turkey's incorporation into the European Union might bring new security risks to the Union, such as the unsolved Cyprus conflict, Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East and tensions in the Caucasus.

In spite of this positive signal from the EU concrete accession negotiations will not be opened as long as Turkey falls short of the Copenhagen criteria. Those demand a fully consolidated democracy and market economy as well as the adoption of the EU's *aquis communautaire*. Whereas the EU commended Turkey's progress in adopting the *aquis* it urged the country to vigorously implement the economic program agreed with the IMF. The latter had developed a plan for economic recovery after the financial crisis Turkey suffered from in February 2001. However, the Union's main concern with respect to Turkey's accession remain the shortcomings in fulfilling the political criteria. The political system of the Turkish Republic can be defined as basically democratic, yet not as fully consolidated. The public realm is still censored which becomes evident for instance in the closure of newspapers, like for example *Dersim* and *Pine*, or the ban on political parties, for example the ban on the Virtue Party in June 2001. This undermines one of the basic human rights, that is the freedom of expression, and therefore the Turkish

democracy cannot be described as liberal yet. Not seldom the military can be held responsible for such restrictions. By means of the National Security Council the military establishment continues to have an influence on Turkish politics which it often brought to bear. Perceiving itself as the safeguard of democracy the military is sensitive with respect to the Kurdish issue and any Islamic trend because both pose a challenge to Turkey's unifying force. Since the military wants to prevent that either the integrity or the secular basis of the Turkish Republic are put in jeopardy it sometimes puts restrictions on the development of civil society. Basically, the military in Turkey wishes a well and responsibly functioning political system and civil society so that it will not have to concern itself with the problems that properly belong to the civilian sphere. Yet, the EU does not accept this rationale on the part of the military; it sees it as an excuse for the military's continuous interference in politics. In order to get further down the road to membership in the European Union Turkey has to put its own house in order "above all by developing a sense of national identity that can accommodate the diversity of Turkey's ethnic and religious communities ... [t]he other [necessity] is a leadership with sufficient imagination".<sup>237</sup>

From a legal point of view the EU would have the possibility to deny Turkey the accession even though it fulfils the Copenhagen criteria. In paragraph 26 of the Luxembourg European Council's Presidency Conclusions the EU reserves the freedom to refuse a member if the organization runs the risk of being overburdened.<sup>238</sup> The fulfillment of the criteria is a necessary prerequisite for

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<sup>237</sup> M. Mufti, "Daring and Caution in Turkish Foreign Policy." *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 52 (1), winter 1998, 50.

accession but no guarantee. Yet, once Turkey actually fulfils the criteria set up by the EU the latter will be in need of a plausible excuse not to accept Turkey as a new member. It is true that the decision about Turkey's accession will have to be unanimous but the representatives of the member states will be under the whip. In all probability the acceptance can only be postponed otherwise the EU's reliability would be questioned. Moreover the EU will avoid to confront Turkey with such a stark rebuff. The European Union is afraid that Turkey will turn its back on Europe in case it would be refused even though meeting the Copenhagen criteria. It cannot be in the EU's interest that Turkey devotes itself to other alternatives because the Western democracies want to keep Turkey as one of its dependable allies.

The present essay analyzed those options for Turkey that had presented themselves due to the fall of the iron curtain. In times when Turkey functioned as America's ally by containing the Soviet Power there was no chance of an intensive cooperation with the states of the Middle East except for Israel. Similarly cooperation with states under the Soviet Union's sphere of influence or the USSR itself was strained because of Turkey's close relationship with the West. After the break-up of the Soviet Union new states emerged and along with them new possibilities for cooperation seemed to arise for Turkey. Against this background the former Turkish President (1989-1993) Turgut Özal took up an active foreign policy. During his period of office Turkey initiated the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. Furthermore he tried to build up a cooperation with the Turkic Republics having in mind that Turkey would ascend to a regional power. On the

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<sup>238</sup> Luxembourg European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, 12 and 13 Dec. 1997, parag. 26, see <http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec97.htm>.

contrary the former Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan (1996-1997) tried to improve Turkey's relations with the Middle East.

As for the Middle East severe limitations were revealed concerning Turkey's possibility of developing common goals, except for a strategic alliance with Israel. The Turkish-Israeli relations can be described as cooperative. However, if the connection between the two maintains its closeness depends upon the reactions of Turkey's and Israel's Muslim neighbors. Turkey's relationship with Iran is tense due to the fundamental difference in their respective political systems. Both states are divided along an ideological fault line and compete with each other for influence within the region. As for Iraq the relations with Turkey can be defined as pragmatic. Their common goal to prevent the Kurds in Northern Iraq from forming an independent Kurdish state and Turkey's economic interest in the lift of the UN-embargo against Iraq allowed for some cooperation. Yet, their respective regimes and policy orientations differ to a great extent and, similar to Syria, Iraq also quarrels with Turkey over water. Although recently there have occurred some positive developments concerning the Turkish-Syrian relations a number of discords between them such as the water issue. Syria's refusal to recognize Turkey's sovereignty over the Hatay province, and their contrary foreign policy vis-à-vis Israel remain to be solved. In the Turkic Republics the initial euphoria for creating stronger bonds with the Turkish State soon ceased. Since Turkey's potential for economic aid is restricted the Turkic Republics were more interested in a direct contact to the West without a Turkish mediator in between. Furthermore the Turkic Republics were not keen on replacing one 'big brother', that is the former Soviet Union, with another, that is Turkey.

The only interesting option – apart from Turkey’s alliance with Israel – that remains is the Black Sea Economic Cooperation which can be supportive and complementary to Turkey’s envisaged EU membership. Since the BSEC builds on a different integration model than the EU it is possible for Turkey to advance in both. This option is even preferred by the Union itself which sees BSEC membership as a kind of transitory stage for states that want to become a member in the European Union.

However, all this time membership in the European Union remained a goal with top priority for Turkey. Accession to the EU is perceived as the ultimate goal because it is seen as a guarantor for stability, social and political liberalization, and economic prosperity. Although the EU’s financial aid will probably be less than Turkey hopes for and in spite of the necessity for serious reforms in order to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria, Turkey will in the end benefit. It is important to mention that there are also possible disadvantages of membership in the EU. As a member of the European Union, Turkey would be confronted with increased competition within the common market. Furthermore Turkey would lose its option to ask the EU for protectionist emergency measures or subsidies. Since Turkey will have to give up its possibility to restrict the capital traffic the Turkish State will also become more vulnerable to capital flight. Moreover Turkey might also suffer from brain drain after joining the Union.

The outcome of Turkey’s membership in the Union will be dependent on Turkey’s willingness and success in adopting the EU’s *aquis communautaire*. The advantages for Turkey as an EU member could be great if Turkey manages to reach the EU’s standards concerning economic and political liberties and if Turkey’s

economy will be able to cope with competition within the EU. Turkey would then benefit from free access to the national markets of the EU's members. The Turkish export to EU countries would not be hindered anymore, as it had often been the case in the past when the EU discriminated Turkish export goods via safeguard-clauses or anti-dumping measures. Given the fact that about half of Turkey's imports stem from EU countries and that also about half of its exports go to EU countries Turkey will save a great amount of transaction costs once it has joined the Union. Moreover Turkey – as an EU member – would probably become more attractive for foreign investors.

The author agrees with Mortimer who thinks, “the European Union is not a paradise.”<sup>239</sup> However, among the given choices there is a lot good to it; membership in the European Union would make Turkey stronger as a whole and more attractive for the surrounding states. All in all it is neither a short nor an easy way for Turkey to become a member of the European Union but among the given possibilities it is the best for the Turkish people because a compulsion to further liberalization and the consolidation of Turkey's democracy is inevitably linked to it.

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<sup>239</sup> E. Mortimer, “Im Kreuzungspunkt der Kräfte – Die Türkei in einer veränderten politischen Umwelt.“ *Bergedorfer Gesprächskreis*, No. 109, 1997, 101. Edward Mortimer is the Foreign Affairs Editor of the Financial Times Europe.

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