MULTICULTURALISM IN THE GOVERNANCE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF TURKEY'S ACCESSION

Avrupa Birliği Yönetişiminde Çokkültürlülük ve Türkiye'nin Katılımının Sağlayacağı Katkılar

Cansu ARISOY[*]

Abstract:
Since 1920s Turkey and Europe have been in a continuous interaction. This active relationship has become more dynamic with the beginning of the accession process in the early 1990s. In this modern world where national borders are almost abolished with the impact of rising globalism the EU must show its authority as a consolidative power. In this respect EU can benefit from Turkey in many ways. In this article these benefits are discussed in terms of Turkey's Muslim identity, population, energy and security. The benefits that will be provided by Turkey if it enters into the Union are handled on a socio-cultural basis.
Keywords: European Union, Turkey, multiculturalism.

Özet:
1920'lerden beri Türkiye ve Avrupa devamlı bir etkileşim içindedir. Bu aktif ilişki Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği'ne giriş sürecinin başlayışıyla 1990'ların başında daha dinamik hale gelmiştir. Ulusal sınırların artan küreselleşmenin etkisiyle neredeyse ortadan kalktığı modern dünyada Avrupa Birliği, otoritesini birleştirici bir güç olarak göstermelidir. Bu bağlamda AB, Türkiye'den pek çok şekilde faydalanabilir. Bu makalede söz konusu faydalar Türkiye'nin Müslüman kimliği, nüfusu, enerji ve güvenlik konuları üzerinden ele alınacaktır. Türkiye'nin AB'ye girmesi durumunda Birliğe sağlayacağı faydalar sosyo-kültürel bir zeminde ele alınmıştır.
Anahtar kelimeler: Avrupa Birliği, Türkiye, çok kültürlülük.

[*] Cansu ARISOY graduated from the Sociology Department of Middle East Technical University and completed MA Political Communications in Cardiff University School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies.

INTRODUCTION

For the last decades with the effect of increasing globalisation; the interaction and interdependency have became the indispensable features of today's societies instead of independency. These are the features which found in economic, security, social and cultural issues. In other words, in every component that forms societies. In such a period, the European Union constitutes "the most successful regional integration project in the new world order".[1]

In Turkish history *westernization* is always thought as the other name for modernization. Since the proclamation of the Republic in 1923; westernization has become the main aim for the Turkish governments. The reforms that had been carried out in 18ᵗʰ and 19ᵗʰ centuries were the reflections of the desire to become westernized. In this respect, being a member of the EU is an essential part of this process.

Nearly almost all the governments put a certain effort to be accepted as a member of the EU. Even the Islamist, conservative and nationalist parties in Turkey committed to the target of the EU membership. The relationship between the EU and Turkey has been deepened with the Customs Union and has gained another dimension with the confirmation of Turkey's candidacy status on December 1999 in Helsinki Summit. Being officially accepted as a candidate country by European Council in December 1999, Helsinki Summit was a turning point for Turkey. In the time of Helsinki Summit, Turkey was in a deep economic and political crisis. In this period, economy and democratization are the main problems to be solved by Turkish government. Especially if the last economic crisis which started in 2001 and New Europe's emphasis on human rights during 1980s and 1990s are considered, the importance of the two factors can be seen more easily.

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[1] S. Aydın, *Possible Contributions of Turkey's EU Membership to the Union* (2002).

As a result of an old and hard journey, the decision of the EU was a milestone in Turkey's history. Today in everywhere, in taxis, universities, restaurants and coffee houses same question is asked: whether or not the EU will accept Turkey which is a Muslim majority state.

In this article the benefits of Turkish accession to the EU will be analysed in the framework of multiculturalism. During the examination, factors of Islam, population, security and energy will be the main points.

1. MULTICULTURALISM and IDENTITY CONFLICT

1.1. Being an Exclusive Club in the Territory of Universal Borders

European identity is formed as a result of the accumulation of the long lasting wars, bloody revolutions, religious-political pressures, enlightenment and industrialization. European states do not act as unified members of one coalition. On the contrary, they protect their own national interests and act as autonomous nation states. This means that when a security problem occurs, those states will watch for the hegemonic power rather than economic prosperity of the union and multiculturalism. As Aydin underlines that,

> *the fact that the concept of Europe denotes a certain degree of cultural, political and demographic unity despite these factors does not come to mean that a European consciousness is fully internalised by the people of member countries.*[2]

Before studying the place of multiculturalism in the governance of the European Union, it would be beneficial to take a look at the operational meaning of multiculturalism. Rosado defines multiculturalism as

> *a system of beliefs and behaviours that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and*

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[2] Aydın, *Possible Contributions,* 39.

> *encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society.*[3]

To understand Turkey's role in the European Union better we should first understand that Turkey has always been a multicultural society. Turkey is not a melting pot though, in which all the cultures can be found in a homogenous position. Turkish society is heterogeneous which all the ingredients stay as they are, not mixed with each other. Turkey is a culturally rich country where people protect their own heritages. In this respect Turkish multiculturalism resembles to a traditional Turkish desert named *aşure*. In aşure every ingredient preserves its very own flavour but altogether they compose a delicious taste. In this sense the EU's characteristic might be resembled to jazz music. According to Kahraman, jazz is one of the most democratic music systems.[4] It is because jazz is about the relationship between the individualistic freedom and team unity. Jazz means everyone being him or herself and contributing to the overall production as him or herself. Eventually this is a life culture. There is a harmony between the component and complement. Kahraman also states that maybe the roots of the relationship between the individual and democracy which everybody looks for, is founded in jazz.

Rosado introduces a term which can be applied to the relationship between the EU and Turkey: *Transculturation*[5] is a reciprocal process which two cultures give and take from each other. As a result of this process a "new cultural reality"[6] occurs. The concepts of culture and identity are both formed as a result of an ongoing change, exchange and dynamism. As Aydın states that, "collective identity formation is a dynamic process which comes into being with reciprocal social interaction."[7] It is a fact that contiguity requires cultural exchange. In this respect it can be said that, the relationship

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[3] C. Rosado, *Toward a Definition of Multiculturalism* (1996), 2.

[4] B. Kahraman, *Kitle Kültürü Kitlelerin Afyonu* (Agora Kitaplığı, 2007), 38.

[5] Rosado, *Toward a Definition,* 7.

[6] Aydın, *Possible Contributions,* 38.

[7] Aydın, *Possible Contributions,* 38.

between the EU and Turkey depends on mutual interests. By affecting each other, both the EU and Turkey can learn from each other without losing their identities.

In the era after Copenhagen, the EU seemed like a divided entity which deals with severe identity crises. Armesto asks the crucial question: is there any such thing named European civilization? According to him, "there is no such thing as a European civilization that is shared by all the peoples of Europe and is unique to them – a civilization that marks 'us' out from the rest of the world."[8] Although cultural exchange is the reality of the EU, Armesto declares that,

> *strength, which have made Europe an arena of competing cultures rather than a single civilization; and they have been cultivated, by peoples on Europe's frontiers, with neighbours outside, with a sort of centrifugal effect. Common historical experience is a dangerous background to which to appeal: its effect is generally divisive.*

In such an environment where cultural differences become sensitive phenomena that include many meanings and multiculturalism becomes an internationally important dynamic; European Union's strategy to stay as an exclusive club creates disharmony. Because being exclusive brings exclusionist policies to world politics, then transculturalism becomes invalid. In all political entities, "social structural and political conditions influence people's attitudes towards ethnic in and out groups".[9] And these attitudes reflect the realities of the members of these ethnic groups which are based on divergent identities. A Turkey that will be successfully integrated to the EU depends on a "nonxenophobic EU immigration policy" and this has two characteristics:

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[8] F. F. Armesto, "A European Civilization: Is There Any Such Thing?" *European Review* Vol 10 No1 (2002): 3-9.
[9] M, Verkuyten, K, Zaremba, "Interethnic Relations in a Changing Political Context," *Social Psychology Quarterly* Vol 68 No 4 (2005), 383.

1) the acknowledgement of the suboptimal nature of the exclusive club implied by nationality

2) the alleviation of the nondivisibility and nontransperancy of the immigration issue.[10]

Referring to the popular sociological opinion, the world is becoming more like a global village. Also there is an emphasis upon post-national norms. In such context, the Westphalian understanding of governance started to change its essence. This is a post –Westphalian world and in this formation democratization, economic welfare and collaboration are the key factors.

Since the EU gave Turkey a date for the start of the accession talks, the agenda of the people in the street started to change. Everywhere people began to ask each other whether the EU can accept Turkey, specifically, a majority - Muslim society or not. According to Elver, "Turkey's application has never received a warm welcome".[11]

According to Benhabib there is an "irony" in current political developments:

while state sovereignty in economic, military, and technological domains has been greatly eroded, it is nonetheless vigorously asserted; national borders, while more porous, still keep out aliens and intruders.[12]

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[10] Uğur, "Freedom of Movement vs. Exclusion: A Reinterpretation of the 'Insider'-'Outsider' Divide in the European Union," *International Migration Review* Vol 29 No 4 (1995): 64.
[11] H. Elver, *Reluctant Partners Turkey and the European Union* (2005), 25.
[12] S. Benhabib, "Borders, Boundaries, and Citizenship," *American Political Science Association* Vol 38 No 4 (Oct.2005): 674.

Benhabib states that while the terrains that we are travelling on have changed, our normative maps have not.[13] The societies which do not have an EU origin are called the third country nationals and the situation of these countries is different. It is a dramatic fact that while European Union citizenship makes it possible for all EU citizens to vote, run for, and hold office in local as well as Union-wide elections, this is not the case for third-country nationals.[14]

The period that we are experiencing is the "era of cosmopolitan norms".[15] This is the time when the struggle between the state sovereignty and national hospitality has become less intense. However it has not been completely abolished. But new types of political positions have emerged to challenge these disparities between the citizens and long-term residents. In other words: "insiders and outsiders."[16]

1.2. Bermuda Triangle: Turkey, the EU, and the Issue of Islam

In November 2002 the Islamic oriented Justice and Development Party (AKP) took 34.28% of the votes and became the party in government. The major bottlenecks that stand on Turkey's path of the EU journey are the "anti-Muslim feeling in Europe and resurgent ethnic nationalism in Turkey".[17] Samuel Huntington's theory of "clash of civilizations"[18] is a pioneer concept which demonizes Islam. The striking consequence of this theory is the rising of anti-Muslim feelings in the Western world.

Fear of Islam is a growing feature in Western societies. Especially September 11 triggered the dreadful feelings against the Muslims among most of the Europeans. Carr puts forward the striking concept of

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[13] Benhabib, "Borders, Boundaries."
[14] Benhabib, "Borders, Boundaries," 675.
[15] Benhabib, "Borders, Boundaries," 675.
[16] Benhabib, "Borders, Boundaries," 675.
[17] Elver, *Reluctant Partners,* 24.
[18] S. P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking the World Order* (Touchstone: USA, 1996).

"Eurabia".[19] This is the fear of Europe's turning into an "Islamic colony called Eurabia". This is a very influential term among the intellectuals who think that Europe "as a doomed and decadent continent".[20] The conspiracy theory has turned out to be Islamophobia and Xenophobia among Western societies which have the thought that Muslims have diametrically opposite values to West. Islam's "celebrated cultural achievements" are despised and Islam is seen as "a perennially barbaric, parasitic and oppressive religion".[21]

The long lasting argument that the EU is a Christian Club is discussed too many times. With respect to the concept of European identity, EU's attitudes towards Turkey are affected by the Christian–Muslim conflict. However it is interesting that the representatives of so called soft Islam, showed a noteworthy effort to implement the EU provisions. On the contrary, previous governments, despite the fact that they had strong bonds with the West, were not as successful as the AKP government.

For many years Turkey's political conflicts and economic regression slowed down its involvement project with the EU. However now it is widely accepted that Turkey has achieved progress in these domains. Economy is growing, inflation has been decreasing. Military's role is getting smaller and minority rights are being extended. Although Turkey's overpopulation still constitutes a problem, as a result of these reforms, Turkish government believes that Turkey deserved to become a member of the EU at last.

Besides the supporters of Turkish accession to the EU, for example Gerard Schröder and Tony Blair; there are also hostile voices like the former president of France and the head of the Convention on the Future of Europe Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. According to him and others who share the same idea, Turkey's Muslim identity is the biggest barrier on its path to the EU. According to this view Europe's secular future would be endangered if a

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[19] M. Carr, "You Are Now entering Eurabia" *Race and Class* Vol 48 No 1 (2006): 1.
[20] Carr, "You Are."
[21] Carr, "You Are," 6.

Muslim country like Turkey enters into the Union. Even d'Estaing has resembled "Turkey's possible entry into the European Union to the end of Europe".[22] As he signified in November 2002, "[Turkey] had a *different culture, a different approach, a different way of life*".[23] According to a TESEV (Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation) survey about the EU enlargement it is claimed that the first criteria for enlargement process is to be European. This means that applications will be directly rejected if the applicants will not be considered as European like in the case of Morocco.

Another survey from TESEV puts forward the support of the Turkish electorates for EU membership and the demand for policy improvements. According to the survey,

> *90 percent of respondents appear to be extremely unhappy about the workings of Turkey's democracy and 74 percent indicate that the right to use ethnic languages should be allowed under all circumstances*.[24]

Besides the problems related to the Copenhagen Criteria, there are other barriers to Turkish accession to the EU. The first one is the cultural difference between the Union and Turkey which is mostly generated from the different religious backgrounds of Turkish population. In the speech that was given in 2002, by Valery Giscard d'Estaing, former president of France and chairman of the committee of the European Constitution put forward the general point of view about Turkey's accession to the EU. According to him most of the European leaders are agree with d'Estaing but they do not dare to say so in public: "an unbridgeable cultural divide existed between Turkey and Europe, that Turkey was not a European country and that its membership would bring about the end of the EU."[25] It is noteworthy that this opinion holds a strong contrast to Turkey's position as a bridge.

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[22] M. Bunzl, "Between anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Some thoughts on the new Europe," *American Ethnologist* Vol 32 No 4 (2005): 505
[23] Bunzl, "Between.*"*
[24] Öniş, *Domestic Politics, International Norms and Challenges to the State: Turkey-EU Relations in the Post-Helsinki Era* (2002), 16.
[25] Öniş, *Domestic Politics.*

Certainly this attitude is in conflict with the European understanding of multiculturalism and "its Renaissance ideals which it has exported to the whole world".[26]

In this sense, in the process of EU enlargement the communication factor is very important. Members of the EU are hesitating about whether Turkey can adapt the nature of the EU or not. To wipe out these doubts, people should be informed about that

> *Europe, just like Turkey, is not a uniform, monolithic bloc with a single opinion or a single voice [...] EU is not just a VIP club where members are being too whimsical to allow new members in. It is, in fact, a complex sum of rules, regulations, institutions, and codes of conduct that demand convergence and cohesion among its members.*[27]

The discrimination of the Muslim population in European societies is an example of the classic dichotomy between *us* and *them*. In this context, "the basic principle of a universal welfare policy is not to discriminate between citizens".[28] However the fact is that Islamophobia concerns Turkey's membership in the EU. Despite the reforms that are about the minorities, Turkey's identity as a Muslim country always puts obstacles on its way to the EU. The cynical European point of view can also be seen again in the words of Haider's Freedom Party. This organisation concretely specified that Turkey is an Islamic Trojan horse and its entry in the EU will start the Islamization of the continent. According to Haider Turkey's population will be 95 million for the year 2050 and he shouts out loud the worst fear of the New Europe,

> *the country with the highest population in the EU would then be Islamic! [...] Today an estimated 15 million Muslims already live in*

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[26] Öniş, *Domestic Politics.*

[27] A. Esen, *Absorption Capacity of the EU and Turkish Accession: Definitions and Comments,* (2007).

[28] Crepaz and Damron, "Constructing Tolerance: How the Welfare State Shapes Attitudes About Immigrants," *Comparative Political Studies* (2009), 445.

the members states of the EU [...] Turkey's EU accession would
certainly be the end of this community.[29]

Today Islam is becoming one of the religions in Europe Karlsson emphasizes that, [Islam] has become a European religion and soon people will start to mention about Western Islam the same way like Eastern Christianity. Then Islam must be accepted "recognized and regarded as a *domestic* European religion".[30]

2. CONTRIBUTIONS OF TURKISH ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

2.1. Turkey's Role as a Cultural Communicator

For centuries Turkey existed as a cultural bridge between European and Asian societies and this enriched its very formation. Turkey is always seen as a window which opens to West from East and vice-a-versa. Turkey's position as a bridge or a window makes possible the country to "combine properties that seem contradictory such as European identity and Islam and make this combination a symbol of its culture".[31]

In Europe, Islam is the second common religion after Christianity. In this sense, Turkey's accession to the EU will help to mitigate social and political strain between the citizens by becoming an example for the other Muslim communities residing in Europe.

Turkey would be the best example for the Muslim countries with its secular structure and stable democracy. The Muslim world badly needs such examples According to Karlsson,

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[29] Crepaz and Damron, "Constructing Tolerance:"
[30] I. Karlsson, *Turkey in Europe But Not Of Europe?* Tesev Foreign Policy Program (Lund University Centre for European Studies, 2009), 15.
[31] Aydın, *Possible Contributions,* 39.

if Turkey remains outside the Union, this will have serious consequences [...] The Turkish membership of the EU would demonstrate the falsity of the argument that Islam and democracy cannot co-exist and would help to bring about favourable changes in the Islamic world's attitude towards Europe.[32]

It should be realized that Muslims can positively contribute to the construction of global governance which holds an important place in New Europe. The Muslim existence should be seen as cultural affluence not as a hurdle. More importantly Turkey's accession to the EU will prove that the Union is not a Christian Club. Taking a negative attitude towards Islam is against the Union's essence. If the Union discriminates Islam from other cultures that are present in Europe's essence, this may lead to the creation of a "ghetto Islam"

Europe does not have a religious Christian essence, but the formation of Europe and European values is an open historical process. A 'no' to Turkey on religious and cultural grounds will be disastrous for Europe since it will send an immediate and strong message to the fastest growing segments of the European population that they will always be considered unwelcome and second class citizens even if they chose a secular way of life. Sending such a message could, before we know it, lead to an emergence of a ghetto Islam in Europe instead of a modern tolerant European Islam.[33]

In this respect, a secular, modern and democratic country which has a free market economy and a Muslim majority population will have a drastic effect on discarding the concept of Christian Club. According to the idea, Europe is a socio-cultural mosaic, and for the Union to prove this it must pay respect for cultural differences. In this sense Turkey's full membership would be beneficial. However, as mentioned above, according to a certain

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[32] Karlsson, *Turkey in Europe*, 14.

[33] Karlsson, *Turkey in Europe*, 14.

side Turkey is even seen as an "Islamic Trojan horse."[34] Accession of Turkey will be an opportunity for the EU to show its commitment to unity in diversity which is also the Union's essence. It is noteworthy that if the EU will show that it is not a Christian Club; the trust of the Middle Eastern countries to the Union will increase. This means that Turkey will act as a cultural communicator. Turkey's membership to the EU will strengthen Turkey's binding role between two sides. Eventually this would help the EU to spread its own values and contribute to the development of the countries in the region.

2.2. An Overpopulated Country in the Union Possible?

Another drawback about Turkey's accession to the Union is the country's oversized population. As mentioned before the biggest fear was uttered with Haider's words:

> *the country with the highest population in the EU would then be Islamic! [...] Today, an estimated 15 million Muslims already live in the members states of the EU [...] Turkey's EU accession would certainly be the end of this community.*[35]

The uncontrolled population of Turkey constitutes a problem for the forthcoming generations in terms of education quality and employment. Huge population in Turkey creates distrust and suspicion among the European countries. However, in terms of economic dynamism, Turkey's young population will play a crucial role to keep European economy alive. Especially the educated, skilled young workers will have the leading role in developing technology and science. Domaniç states that this disadvantage of Turkey can be turned into a gift for the EU:

> *At the moment, around 20 percent of the Turkish population is below the age of 10 and as demographic trends show, by 2020 the*

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[34] Bunzl, "Between," 505.
[35] Bunzl, "Between," 505.

percentage of the working age population to the rest will reach optimal levels. If Turkey manages to enhance this demographic gift with correct educational policies and investments, the Turkish human capital will be the driving force of sustained economic growth and structural change, not only domestically but also regionally. Increases in human capital would also facilitate a faster convergence with the EU.[36]

Flexible labour market requires more temporary labour immigration. With its dynamic population, Turkey will make a positive contribution to the EU's global economic power. A TÜSİAD (Turkish Industrialist' & Business Association) report announces that,

with a population of 71 million, a steadily increasing GDP level (671 billion euros), an economic growth average of 7% in the last 5 years, a young and entrepreneurial population, an export oriented industrial economy and a rapidly developing information society, Turkey's accession will increase the size and competitiveness of the European internal market.[37]

Turkey's young and educated population will constitute an important part of Europe's qualified labour force. Although this characteristic of Turkey will boost Europe's economy by bringing dynamism to "European tourism sector, Eurasian markets, energy networks, attracting even more investments";[38] it creates fear of unemployment among the Europeans. Besides Turkey's accession will raise the level of competition among the private sector and this will provide better services to the public.

United Nations Population Fund declared that in the economies of Western Europe, in most sectors, more labour power will be needed in every

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[36] S. Domaniç, *The Turkish Accession to European Union: Mutually Beneficial? Mutually Possible?* (Institute of Public Affairs, 2007), 5.
[37] *Main Contributions of Turkey's Membership to the EU* (TÜSİAD).
[38] *Main Contributions*

level of skill.[39] In the report it is also mentioned that in the years 2050s Turkey's population will start to fall down so this issue will not be problem anymore. Briefly it is a fact that European population gets older rapidly and in short term Turkey will provide the young, dynamic and educated population to the old continent.

2.3. Turkey's Importance in Terms of Security and Energy

As a reliable member of the NATO, Turkey's accession in the EU will balance the military and civil aspects in the Union. From a geo-strategic perspective Turkey's importance for Europe is unquestionable. At this point Öniş underlines a crucial argument about the EU as a "security community":[40]

> *the underlying logic of the EU as a security community is, that a process of mutual democratization and economic integration, rather than using direct force and the threat of military action, provides peace.*

It is a fact that an EU with Turkey will be more efficient while struggling with political problems and crises. According to TÜSİAD's report, "threats from undemocratic regimes, terrorism, illegal immigration and trafficking in drugs, arms, and human beings [etc]" will be easier to cope with if Turkey would be included in the EU.[41] Turkey has a considerable experience in struggling with terrorism. In this framework nations and transnational organisations should collaborate to prevent terrorism. This brings the necessity of cooperation between Turkey and the EU. Turkey is open to every kind of collaboration to abolish terrorism for a very long time. Also in every opportunity Turkey utters that it is ready to share all the accumulation and experience that it gained about terrorism.[42]

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[39] *Türkiye Üyeliğinin AB'ye Muhtemel Etkileri* (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı Müsteşarlığı, Kasım 2004), 39.
[40] Öniş, *Domestic Politics,* 21.
[41] *Main Contributions.*
[42] *Türkiye Üyeliğinin,* 15.

Without Turkey's role as a bonding power between the civil and military aspects and as a reliable ally of NATO, EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy will not have an effective power. Turkey's geo-political and geo-strategic importance will help the Union to make instrumental contributions to world peace and stability of political affairs.

In addition to security, Turkey has a crucial role in the arena of energy. It should be underlined that Turkey is a transitional country to the regions which have rich underground sources like petrol and natural gas. Turkey constitutes an important bond in East-West energy corridor. As mentioned in the TÜSİAD report, Turkey plays an important role in "channelling the Caspian and Middle Eastern energy to Europe and world markets".[43] EU's energy security will be increased with Turkey's accession to the EU. Because Turkey can provide secondary paths like "Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Iraq-Ceyhan oil pipelines; Turkmenistan-Turkey-Europe, the Shah Deniz, the Black Sea and Turkey-Greece natural gas pipelines".[44] With regard to the same report, Turkey has the "biggest potential for renewable energies such as hydroelectric, thermal, solar, biomass and wind power reserves among European countries."[45]

Besides Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, and Syria; with Turkey's accession the Union will be neighbour to Iraq and Iran to the countries which are at the heart of Middle East. This will give the Union the opportunity to play a more active role in international arena. Turkey's existence in the EU will provide sustainable stability in the Middle East, Balkans and Aegean region. Moreover Turkey's geographical position in the Black Sea, Russia, and the Central Asia will place the EU in a more important and international place.

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[43] *Main Contributions.*
[44] *Main Contributions.*
[45] *Main Contributions.*

CONCLUSION

Since 40 years, Turkey and European Union have a reciprocal relationship. The map of this relationship was drawn at the Helsinki Summit in December 2004 with the decision to open up the accession debates. It is now six years that Turkey and the EU have been sitting at the negotiation table. During the negotiation talks which last for several years Turkey has not threw the towel.

In this contractual relationship both Turkey and the EU tried to drew benefit from each other as much as possible. While the talks are progressing, two sides came to the point of splitting off because of several critical points. Turkey's Muslim identity is one of the main issues in this respect. Islam, one of the building stones of Turkish society, creates a continuous conflict in the accession process.

Officially, the EU should not take into consideration of the religion factor while making the decision during the accession process of Turkey. Yet, still many of the people from all around Europe, Turkey and Cyprus are wondering, whether a Muslim country can have the permission into the EU. And if it can, would it really fit into the Union. It is a fact that pluralism will bring dynamism to the stagnant Europe and if Turkey fulfilled the Copenhagen criteria, how could Islam become an obstacle on accession road? In this sense it is important to see Turkey as a lucrative shareholder not as a potential threat.

Eventually it is important to stress that Turkey is not a Muslim but a politically secular country where this is one of the unchanging principles of the Turkish constitution till 1937. Additionally it is hard to understand Turkey's history without the 500 years old Ottoman history which is bonded to Europe with strong ties. Since 16th century the ongoing cultural and political interaction between the continent of Europe and Turkey continues.

In an age of cultural pluralism and diversity, multiculturalism is needed to provide a corrective to the reality of European identity. Political leaders and the society should pay attention to understand *others* by respecting

diversity. This is an essential condition to be fulfilled to create harmony in diversity in a multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual age. Europe cannot be expected to compose a homogenous and united structure where ethnic, national, cultural diversity is so deep. Considering this fact a supranational European identity can compass whole Europe's common interests and makes a real political and economic unity possible. Turkey, as a bridge between two continents, is one of the most vital features of the diversity in Europe. In this sense a multidimensional society like Turkey would make fundamental contributions to the process of creating the supranational European identity.

As a result, in terms of cultural pluralism Turkey's full membership will make a great contribution to the process of identity formation in Europe which is based on cultural pluralism. It is apparent that the cultural mosaic that Turkey's long lasting heritage created would form one of the most crucial components of the multicultural and enriched European identity that the Union tries to build up.

The concept of the New Europe must be therefore founded on the grounds of an open dialogue for diversity and respect for multiculturalism. In a world where civilizations are assumed to be in a clash, Turkey's acceptation to the EU will prove that the Union, as a supranational entity can unite nations on a common platform. In this platform differences will be eliminated and this will create democratic global governance that our contemporary era requires.

The conclusion is that, in terms of globalisation, interaction and interdependency are getting stronger. This makes it necessary to share the responsibility to struggle with the problems like unemployment, terrorism, global warming. To reach ideals like sustainable development, stability and a secure environment; to spread welfare and peace, the EU should not hesitate to combine its power with Turkey.

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