

European Union -Turkey Relations in the Context of Multidimensional and Pro-Active Turkish Foreign Policy

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ABSTRACT

Apparently, Turkey has developed an active and multidimensional foreign policy, with a particular focus on the Middle East, due partly to changes in international system and developments in the politics of the Middle East. In this regards, the continuity of EU-Turkey relations has becoming an important factor in Turkey's new foreign policy because of Europeanization effects on Turkish domestic and foreign policies, as well as the importance of the EU with regards to the attractiveness of Turkey's position as being part of both Western and Eastern institutions.

Keywords: *Domestic Politics, European Union, Europeanization, Foreign Policy, Middle-East, Soft Power and Turkey.*

Çokboyutlu ve Proaktif Dış Politika Bağlamında Türkiye-Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri

ÖZET

Son yıllarda Türkiye'nin çok boyutlu ve proaktif bir dış politika izlediği görülmektedir. Uluslararası sistemde meydana gelen değişimlerin ve Ortadoğu politikasında yaşanan gelişmelerin de etkisiyle, Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu bölgesini önceleyen bir dış politika stratejisi izlediği görülmektedir. Bu bağlamda, Türkiye-Avrupa Birliği ilişkilerinde yaşanan gelişmeler, AB'nin Türk dış politikası içerisindeki rolünü tartışmalı kılmaktadır. Ancak, AB'nin Türkiye'niç ve dış politikasında oluşturduğu "Avrupalaşma etkisi" ve taraflar arasındaki güçlendirilmiş işbirliğinin Türkiye'nin "doğu-batı" bağlamındaki rolüne olası katkıları dikkate alındığında, Türkiye-AB arasında sürdürülebilir bir işbirliğine ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Avrupalaşma, Avrupa Birliği, Dış Politika, İç Politika, Ortadoğu, Türkiye ve Yumuşak Güç*

Introduction

There seems to have been some important changes in Turkish foreign policy in the last decade. Traditionally European Union (EU) membership has constituted one of the most important objectives of Turkish foreign policy since the early of 1960s. In the last decade, Turkey has been actively involved with regional politics of the Middle East: Turkey's active involvement foreign policy in its neighbourhood has been to, a

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large extent, connected to the recent dramatic changes in politics of the Middle East. Therefore, regional politics has become a top priority in Turkish foreign policy. On the other hand, attractiveness of EU membership for the Turkish foreign policy has been subject to debate in recent years. Despite some progress undertaken on the way of EU membership since the accession negotiations starts in 2005, the feasibility of Turkish membership appears to be uncertain, at least in the foreseeable future.

The main contention of this article is that European Union should constitute an important part in Turkey's multidimensional and active foreign policy, since Europeanization aspects of its domestic politics and foreign policy would contribute to its power politics at influencing regional and international politics. The article also argues that the stalemate in EU-Turkey relations cannot be attributed merely to the change of priorities in Turkish foreign policy. Internal developments in European integration and vague promises of the EU about Turkish membership have also affected the current situation in EU-Turkey relations. Therefore, this article firstly assesses main factors behind changes in Turkish foreign policy by looking at recent literature on Turkish foreign policy. Then, the second section examines EU-Turkey relations by analyzing how an EU-Turkey relation is important for Turkey's multidimensional foreign policy. The conclusion section summarizes the finding of the study.

1. Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy: Motivations and Interests and Instruments in a New Turkish Foreign Policy

There has been a growing literature on Turkish foreign policy. In fact, recent changes in Turkish foreign policy have attracted a lot of interests of scholars and commentators in analyzing main motivations and interests behind the Turkish foreign policy.¹ There seems to have been two main contrasting views on explaining of transformation of Turkish foreign policy between those scholars who suggest a *paradigm shift* in Turkish foreign policy, and those who disagree with a *shift of axis* argument on the subject.

As regards some standard critical views on Turkish foreign policy, based on *paradigm shift account*, they have tended to reflect the contention that Turkey has been slowly drifted away from the traditional policy objective of '*Westernization*', with the aim of being part of '*Islamic Civilization*'. For example, Alexander Murinson argued that transformation in Turkish foreign policy since the end of the Cold War has, to a large extent, been a reflection of the philosophy of '*neo-Ottomanism*'; He stated that *since the AK Party came to power in November of 2002, the Turkish government pursued the realization of the Neo-Ottoman doctrine in its foreign policy.*² Similarly, F. Stephen Larrable suggested that Turkey's active involvement in the Middle-East presents as an '*important departure*' from standard Turkish foreign policy discourse, due partly to regional security challenges for Turkey in post Cold War Era.³ Turkey's active foreign policy towards the Middle East

¹ A detailed analysis about the general characteristics of Turkish foreign policy, see Ahmet Sozen, "A Paradigm Shift in Turkish Foreign Policy: Transition and Challenges", *Turkish Studies*, Vol.11, No 1, 2010, pp.103-123.

² Alexander Murinson, "The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.42, No.6, 2006, p.953.

³ F. Stephen Larabbe, "*Turkey Rediscovered the Middle East*", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.86, Issue 4, 2007, p.103.

has attracted criticism from Soner Cagaptay on the grounds that Turkey has begun to take more critical and reluctant policy approach towards the West, with increasingly *anti-Western rhetoric*.⁴ Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that such *paradigm shift* accounts on Turkish foreign policy seem to have been very rigid and presented identity based rhetorical explanations for changes in Turkish foreign policy, rather than providing convincing evidence to support their arguments.

On the other hand, other scholars and commentators have, while differing in details, provided economic, political, security and systemic framework to explain main motivations and interest behind changes in Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War Era. For instance, Saban Kardas has underlined a number of factors behind Turkey's active foreign policy which include 're-arrangement of power politics in international and regional systems', 'changes in Turkish domestic politics', 'the agency and identity of the policy makers of the ruling elite' and 'public opinion'.⁵ On the other hand, Kemal Kirisci has offered economic framework to explain basis of transformation of Turkish foreign policy by suggesting that economic considerations, such as export markets, investment opportunities and energy, have to a large extent, determined characteristics of Turkish foreign policy in recent years.⁶ Kirisci has also underlined how the way in which government officials and economic actors have interacted with each other in formulating foreign policy.⁷ Similarly, Ziya Onis has underlined economic motivation and interests that have driven Turkey's active foreign policy towards the Middle-East, North Africa and post Soviet region with the aim of reaching new markets.⁸ However, Ziya Oniş has criticized new active Turkish foreign policy on the grounds that it has become more independent and assertive without taking into account the trade-offs and the cost-benefit-calculations of new assertive policy in the long run.⁹

According to Tark Oguzlu, '*Middle-Easternized*' Turkish foreign policy has been the product of Turkey's '*pragmatic approach*' towards the USA and the EU.¹⁰ Oguzlu also suggested that Turkey's own security interests have been a driving force behind its assertive foreign policy towards the Middle East, considering that security aspect of Turkey's relations with the USA and the EU has been inadequate for security needs of Turkey.¹¹ Alternatively, Fuat Keyman has underlined '*the environment*', '*capacity*' and '*strategy*' factors to assess as to whether the proactive Turkish foreign policy will be viable and sustainable in foreseeable future.¹² Keyman has suggested

⁴ Soner Cagaptay, "Is Turkey Leaving the West?", *Foreign Affairs*, Snapshot, October 26, 2009.

⁵ Saban Kardas, "Turkey: Redrawing the Middle East Map or Building Sandcastles?", *Middle East Policy*, Vol.17, No 1.,2010, p.117.

⁶ Kemal Kirisci, "The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of the Trading State", *New Perspective on Turkey*, No.40,2009, p.39.

⁷ Kirisci, *a.g.m.*, p.46.

⁸ Ziya Onis, "Multiple Faces of the "New" Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique", *GLoDEM Working Paper Series*, No.4, 2010, p.12. (<http://glodem.ku.edu.tr/>).

⁹ Onis, *a.g.m.*, p.4.

¹⁰ Tark Oguzlu, "Middle Easternization of Turkey's Foreign Policy: Does Turkey Dissociate From the West?", *Turkish Studies*, Vol.9, No.1, 2008, p.3.

¹¹ Oguzlu, *a.g.m.*, p.14.

¹² E.Fuat Keyman, "*Turkish Foreign Policy in the Era of Global Turmoil?*", SETA Policy Brief, No.39, December 2009, p.1

that the sustainability of multi-dimensional and constructive foreign policy requires a working relation with the EU and consolidation of democracy.¹³

As is seen from the existing literature on Turkish foreign policy, Turkey has been deeply involved with regional politics of the Middle East in recent years. Given that having a closer relationship with countries in the region provides economic and security benefits for the concerned parties, assertive and active foreign policy seems to have been a rational policy objective for Turkey. This activism can be regarded as Turkey's efforts to play a stabilizing role in the regional context. As an example, Turkey attempted to perform as a third party to find some common grounds between Israel and Syria and played an important role for participation of Iraqi Sunni in the general election of 2005.¹⁴ Besides, Turkey made efforts to offer arbitration between Iran and the USA over the nuclear issue and between Pakistan and Afghanistan.¹⁵ As Bulent Aras has pointed out that:

*"Turkish policy makers try to overcome differences between countries in conflict through confidence-building measures and by acting as a mediator and facilitator to find solutions to chronic regional problems."*¹⁶

However, as is seen recent developments between Turkey and countries in the region (in particular tension with Israel and serious problem with Syria and even strained relations with Iran), the sustainability and the viability of Turkey's active efforts to play facilitating role is more questionable.

As is seen the declared objectives and principles of the pro-active and multi dimensional Turkish foreign policy - formulated, to a large extent, by Turkish Foreign Ministry Ahmet Davutoglu - security considerations and cooperation with countries in its regions, identity politics with reference to historic-cultural associations and geography, and economic interests, have played an important roles in Turkish foreign policy objectives.¹⁷ It is commonly accepted that Turkey has been a regional power with considerable influence in international politics. However it should be pointed out that Turkey's close relations with Western world; in particular its accession process to the EU membership, has constituted one of the most important attractive aspects of its power in influencing regional and international politics.¹⁸ Therefore, the next section is devoted to analyze EU-Turkey relation in the context of Turkey's multidimensional foreign policy.

¹³ Keyman, *a.g.m.*, p.1.

¹⁴ See Meliha Altunisk and Esra Cuhadar, "Turkey's Search for a Third Party Role in Arab-Israeli Conflicts: A Neutral Facilitator or a Principle Power Mediator?," *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol.15, No.3, 2010, pp.371-392.

¹⁵ Ziya Onis and Suhnaz Yilmaz, "Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy activism in Turkey during the AKP Era", *Turkish Studies*, Vol.10, No.1, 2009, p.19; Also see Ahmet Davutoglu, "Turkey's Zero Problems Foreign Policy", *Foreign Policy*, May 20, 2010.

¹⁶ Bulent Aras, "*Davutoglu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy*", SETA Policy Brief, Brief No.32, May 2009, p. 7.

¹⁷ For detailed analysis on principles of Turkish foreign policy, see Bulent Aras, *Davutoglu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy*, SETA Brief, Brief No.32, May 2009 ; Also see Ahmet Davutoglu, "Turkish Foreign Policy and the EU in 2010", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 8, Number 3, pp.11-17.

¹⁸ Harun Arkan, "Post Helsinki, is Turkey in the Enlargement Process?", in Nanette Neuwahl (ed.), *European Union Enlargement: Law and Socio-Economic Changes*, Les Editions Themis, Montreal, 2004, p.284.

2. European Union -Turkey Relations in the Context of Turkey's Multidimensional and Active Foreign Policy

European Union has always been an important aspect of Turkish foreign policy in many respects.¹⁹ During the Cold War Era, political, security, economic and identity motivations and interests had played an important role in Turkey's interest to have a closer relationship with the EU, with the aim of becoming a member of the EU. These factors have still played vital role in Turkey's relation with the EU. However, it is no secret that EU-Turkey relations have not yet reached the desired level. Although the EU has opened an accession negotiation with Turkey in October 2005, the progress has not been entirely satisfactory.²⁰ There seem to have a number of factors behind the failure of the accession negotiations. A detailed assessment of these factors would surely go beyond the scope of this article, but a short account helps to better understand the failure of negotiations. Firstly, the Negotiating Framework, which set out principles for negotiations, does not seem to have provided a clear accession commitment for Turkey: In fact, there are several inconsistencies and ambiguities in the Negotiating Framework for Turkey, with a particular focus on 'absorption capacity of the EU', 'an open ended nature of negotiations' and 'permanent safe guard clauses'.²¹ All these inconsistencies and ambiguities have caused serious concern to the feasibility of Turkish membership in foreseeable future.²² As John Redmond rightly suggested that "the negotiations are 'open-ended' and may end with Turkey being offered some arrangement that falls short of full membership".²³

Secondly, due to internal developments in European integration, in particular economic and financial crisis in some EU member states, the EU has shifted its priority from enlargement to economic issues to stabilize the euro area. In fact, the EU has suffered serious economic problems that obliged the EU to give priority economic policy over the enlargement.²⁴ This seems to have been rational policy choice for the EU, considering that enlargement also involves costs/risk concerns for the economic integration of the Union. By implications, a slow progress in Turkey-EU accession negotiations can partly be attributed to internal development of the EU.

On the other hand, Turkey's slow progress towards establishing the proper functioning of participatory democracy, rule of law, human rights and solving the Kurdish issue have also undermined the EU-Turkish accession negotiation. The EU has criticized Turkey on the grounds of some shortcomings in freedom of expression,

¹⁹ Detailed analysis on the subject, see Harun Arıkan, *Turkey and the EU: An Awkward Candidate for EU Membership?* (Second edition), Ashgate, 2006.

²⁰ For a detailed analysis about the progress towards Turkish accession to the EU, see European Commission, *Turkey 2011 Progress Report*, SEC (2011) 1201, final, Brussels, 12.10.2011.

²¹ Council of the European Union, *Negotiating Framework: Principles Governing the Negotiations*, Brussels, 12 October 2005.

²² Harun Arıkan, *Turkey and the EU: An Awkward Candidate for EU Membership?*, Second Edition, Ashgate, 2006, p.238.

²³ John Redmond, "Turkey and the European Union: Troubled European or European Trouble", *International Affairs*, Vol.83, Issue 2, 2007, p.310.

²⁴ EU's economic consideration and priority can be clearly seen in European Council presidency conclusions. For this, see European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, EUCO76/12, Brussels, 29 June 2012.

in protection of minorities, and in judicial system.²⁵ More importantly, as is seen in the first section of this article, Turkey has been actively involved with regional politics of the Middle East. Social movements and regime changes in some countries in North Africa, interstate conflict in Syria and in Iraq, and other developments in politics of the Middle East have obliged Turkey to get involved with developments of its region. Therefore, Turkey seems to have shifted its foreign policy priority from the EU to regional politics of the Middle East.

However, this is the main contention of this article in that having a closer relation with the EU in the context of Turkey's proactive and multidimensional foreign policy seems to have becoming more important for the following reasons:

- Having a close relations with the EU would further Europeanization effects on Turkish domestic politics and on its foreign policy, thereby improving Turkey's soft power role and its attractiveness as a model for its region;
- Having a close relationship with the EU would improve attractiveness of Turkey's unique position as being part of both Western and Eastern institutions;
- Having a closer relation with the EU would not only mitigate 'a *clash of civilization*' argument,²⁶ but also undermine the *paradigm shift* argument of new Turkish foreign policy.

As regards the Europeanization effects on Turkish domestic politics and on Turkish foreign policy, there has been a growing literature on the subject suggesting that the EU has been effective at influencing domestic and foreign policy developments in Turkey.²⁷ It is by common consent that Turkey has been, to a large extent, very responsive to the EU criticism with regards to human rights and democratization. In fact, since the Helsinki Summit of the EU in 1999, with the acceptance of Turkey's candidacy for membership, the EU have exerted a strong influence on developments of Turkish democracy and its human rights regime through the accession card.²⁸ As Meltem Muftuler Bac argued that "*Turkey's EU candidacy since 1999 has stimulated the Turkish political and legal reforms and intensified the Europeanization process in Turkey.*"²⁹ In the meantime, Europeanization process seems to have provided rational and legitimate grounds for the policy makers of Turkey to

²⁵ For this, see European Commission, *Turkey 2011 Progress Report*, SEC(2011), 1201 final, Brussels, 12.10.2011.

²⁶ For the clash of civilization argument, see Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.72, No.3. 1993, pp.22-49.

²⁷ For Europeanization effects on Turkish domestic politics, see Tocci Nathalie, "Europeanization in Turkey: Trigger or Anchor for Reform?", *South European Society and Politics*, Vol.10, No1, 2005, pp.73-83; and Meltem Muftuler Bac, "Turkey's Political Reforms and The Impact of the European Union", *South European Society and Politics*, Vol.10, No1, 2005, pp.17-31. For the Europeanization effects on Turkish foreign policy, see Meltem Muftule –Bac and Yaprak Gursoy, "Is there a Europeanization of Turkish Foreign Policy?: An Addendum to the Literature on EU Candidates", *Turkish Studies*, Vol.11, No.3, 2010, pp.405-427 ; and Mustafa Aydın and Sinem. A. Acikmese, "Europeanization Through EU Conditionality: Understanding the New Era in Turkish Foreign Policy", *Journal of Southern Europe and The Balkans*, Vol.9, Number 3, 2007, pp.263-274.

²⁸ Harun Ankan, *Turkey and the EU: An Awkward Candidate for EU Membership*, (Second Edition), Ashgate, 2006, p.247.

²⁹ Meltem Muftuler-Bac, "Turkey's Political reforms and the Impact of the European Union", *South European Society and Politics*, Vol.10, No.1, 2005, p.18.

undertake the necessary policy reforms in contentious topics. As a result, sustainability and continuity of Europeanization process in Turkey will largely depend on the continuity of deeper relationship between the EU and Turkey, with the accession prospect. As Ziya Onis and Sahnaz Yılmaz suggested that Europeanization process provides Turkey with benefits of ‘*strong economic performance*’, ‘*major steps towards democratic consolidation*’ and ‘*foreign policy based on soft power*’.³⁰ In conclusion, democratization through Europeanization is important in a sense that credential of Turkey’s soft power role in its foreign policy depends, in part, on the credentials of Turkish democracy and its human rights regime.

As far as Europeanization effects on Turkish foreign policy are concerned, accession negotiations require the alignment of Turkish foreign policy actions with the common foreign and security policy of the EU, including the policies and positions adopted by the EU and its member states.³¹ As the recent European Commission report on Turkey stated that

“*The regular political dialogue between the EU and Turkey continued to cover international issues of common interests*”... and “*Turkey aligned itself with 32 out of 67 relevant EU declarations and Council decisions.*”³²

As is seen from the above, Turkey has, to some extent, made progress towards aligning its foreign policy with the EU. An Europeanization effect is also seen in policy making procedure of Turkish foreign policy: apart from the officials, political parties, civil society organizations, NGOs, think tanks and business associations have engaged in public debate on foreign policy issues, thereby affecting the outcome of foreign policy decisions.³³ Indeed, with the effects of democratization and Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy, Turkey appears to have applied soft power instrument to deal with foreign policy issues. As Meltem Muftuler-Bac and Yaprak Gursoy argued that due to democratization and the increasing role of civilian power in foreign policy making process, Turkey has increasingly use ‘*economic*’ and ‘*diplomatic*’ instruments in resolving disputes rather than using hard power of force.³⁴ Similarly, Mustafa Aydın and Sinem Acikmese also suggested that Europeanization process in Turkish foreign policy through conditionality has played a critical role in transformation of Turkey’s foreign policy in relations to Greece, Syria and Cyprus issue.³⁵ Overall, Europeanization process in Turkish foreign

³⁰ Ziya Onis and Sahnaz Yılmaz, “Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol.10, No.1, 2009, p.21.

³¹ See the Council of the European Union, *The Negotiating Framework for Turkey: Principles Governing the Negotiations*, Brussels, 12 October 2005.

³² European Commission, *Turkey 2011 Progress Report*, SEC (2011), 1201 final, Brussels, 12.10.2011, p.106.

³³ For this argument see Meltem Muftuler-Bac and Yaprak Gursoy, Is there Europeanization of Turkish Foreign Policy? An Addendum to the Literature on EU Candidates, *Turkish Studies*, Vol.11, No.3, 2010, pp.405-427. And also see Ziya Onis and Sahnaz Yılmaz, “Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol.10, No1, 2009, p.20.

³⁴ Meltem Muftuler Bac and Yaprak Gursoy, “Is there a Europeanization of Turkish Foreign Policy?: An Addendum to the Literature on EU Candidates”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol.11, No.3, 2010, p.411.

³⁵ Mustafa Aydın and Sinem. A. Acikmese, “Europeanization through EU Conditionality: Understanding the new Era in Turkish Foreign Policy”, *Journal of Southern European and the Balkans*, Vol.9 Number 3, 2007, p.263-274.

policy would not only contribute to Turkey's soft power capacity, but also increase its credibility in regional and international politics.

The second factor as regards the importance of EU factor in Turkish foreign policy is associated with Turkey's unique status of being part of both Western institution and Islamic world. As former Foreign Minister and current President of Turkey Abdullah Gul stated that "*Turkey is the only country that is both a member of OIC and Accession candidate to the EU*".³⁶ This unique position is also underlined by Ahmet Davutoglu by stating that *Turkey is the only country that is simultaneously a member of G-20, NATO and OIC.*³⁷ Indeed, Turkey holds a unique status of having a member of both Trans-Atlantic and Islamic World, *inter alia*, through its membership of NATO, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and European Council and Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and Economic Cooperation Organization ECO.³⁸ This is an important point in Turkish multidimensional foreign policy in a sense that continuity and sustainability of Turkey's close relationship with the EU would promote its capacity as an influential 'facilitator' between the West and the Islamic worlds. In fact, Turkey's close relations with the EU and its cultural affinities with Islamic world would enhance its role to increase dialogue between Western and Eastern worlds. This is a suitable point at which to evaluate Turkey's new active and multidimensional foreign policy in regional and international context. That is, as underlined by Foreign Minister of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoglu, '*dialogue*' through diplomacy and political interactions and '*cultural harmony*' with '*mutual respects*' are considered as main pillars of multidimensional Turkish foreign policy.³⁹ In this context, institutional framework with Western and Eastern worlds is a vital to achieve the declared objective of Turkish foreign policy. Overall, the continuity and sustainability of EU-Turkey relations with membership prospect would increase not only Turkey's credential as a regional actor, but also increase the EU's influence in over countries in the Middle East and Caucasus.⁴⁰

The last factor in relation to the importance of European anchor in Turkish foreign policy is associated with Turkey's role in mitigating *the clash of civilization* argument of Huntington. Turkey has not only a close relationship with the West, but also has deep religious, cultural and historical affinities with Islamic world. This provides Turkey with considerable credits for its role in undermining *the clash of civilization* argument. This is one of the main decisive factors behind the UN's inclusion of Turkey as co-sponsor of the *Alliance of Civilization Project* with Spain.⁴¹

³⁶ Abdullah Gül, "Turkey's Role in a Changing Middle East Environment", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol.15, No.1, 2004, p.6.

³⁷ Ahmet Davutoglu, "Turkish Foreign Policy and the EU in 2010", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol.8, Number 3, p.15.

³⁸ Harun Arıkan, "Post-Helsinki: Is Turkey in the EU Accession Process", in Nanette Neuwahl, (ed.), *European Union Enlargement: Law and Socio-Economic Changes*, Les Edition Themis, Montreal, 2004, p.284.

³⁹ Ahmet Davutoglu, "Turkish Foreign Policy and the EU in 2010", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol.8, Number 3, p.12-13.

⁴⁰ See Michael Emerson and Nathalia Tocci, *Turkey as a Bridgehead and Spearhead: Integrating EU and Turkish Foreign Policy*, EU-Turkey Working Papers, Center for European Policy Studies, 2004.

⁴¹ A detailed analysis about Turkey's role in The Alliance of Civilization, see Ali Balcı and Nebi Mis, "Turkey's Role in the Alliance of Civilization: A New Perspective in Turkish Foreign Policy?" *Turkish Studies*, Vol.9, No.3, 2008, pp.387-406.

Overall, the continuity and sustainability of Turkey's relations with the West in general and with the EU, in particular, would further an approval and appropriateness of Turkey as regards its role in mitigating *the clash of civilization* argument. Furthermore, as stated in the first section of this study, Turkey's new foreign policy has been criticized by some circles on ground of *the paradigm shift* from the West to the East, with anti Western rhetoric. Therefore, the continuity of EU-Turkey relations with membership prospect would be interpreted as a strong message to those who support paradigm shift argument.

Conclusions

As is evident from the analysis of Turkish foreign policy, Turkey has developed an active and multidimensional foreign policy, with a particular focus on the region of the Middle East. Assertiveness of Turkish foreign policy in the regional context can be attributed to changes in international system in general and recent developments in the politics of the Middle East, in particular. However, it should be pointed out that a multidimensional foreign policy and soft power politics require multilateralism and appropriate foreign policy instruments. In this regards, Turkey cannot ignore the EU factor in its foreign policy. Without a doubt, the continuity and sustainability of EU-Turkey relation appears to have becoming more important in the context of Turkey's multidimensional foreign policy, due to Europeanization effects on Turkish domestic and foreign policies, as well as the importance of the EU in relation to attractiveness of Turkey's position as being part of both Western and Eastern institutions. Respectively, the EU cannot also ignore the importance of Turkey in its external relations, but assessment of Turkey's significance for European Union is surely beyond the scope of this article.

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