

ALTERNATIVES

Turkish Journal Of International Relations

Volume 5

Number 3

Fall 2006

Turkey and the EU: A Survey on Turkish MPs' EU Vision

Kudret Bulbul*

Even though Turkey's dream for being a member of European Union (EU) dates back to late 1950s, it can be said that this process has gained its momentum since the governing period of Justice and Development Party, which is shortly called AK party or AKP in Turkish. When compared with earlier periods, the enormous accomplishments during the AK party's rule are recognized by domestic and European authorities alike. In the parallel of gigantic steps towards the European membership, which is now a real possibility for Turkey, there have been increasing debates about this process. While some European authorities generate policies over Cyprus issue against Turkey's membership, some others mainly lead by German Christian Democrats propose a privileged status rather than full membership. Turkish authorities do not stay silent over these arguments, and probably first time the Turkish foreign minister can articulate that "should they (the EU) propose anything short of full membership, or any new conditions, we will walk away. And this time it will be for good" (The Economist 2005 30-31) After October third, Even though Mr. Abdullah Gül, who is the foreign minister of the AK party government, persistently emphasizes that there is no such a concept so-called "privileged partnership" in the framework document, (Milliyet, 2005) the prime minister of France puts forward that this option is actually one of the possible alternatives.

Although the EU membership process of Turkey has relatively long history, its future still remains uncertain. In this study, which is based on a survey conducted among the members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), we attempt to analyze

- whether they support conditionally or unconditionally the EU membership,
- whether they are ready to relinquish some of their powers to the EU parliament,

- what kind of barriers on this process they perceive,
- what other alternatives for Turkey they can think of in case the European membership does not occur,
- and finally how much trust they can place in the EU.

Because the membership possibility of Turkey is intensively debated within Turkey and EU countries, this study will shed some light on continuing discussions in terms of the perspectives of the TGNA's members.

I. The Brief History of the Relationship Between Turkey and EU

The history of the relationship between Turkey and European countries is based on many ages. Even though some European leaders still argue against it, the fact that Turkey is a part of Europe was first recognized by the Paris Treaty in 1856.

The history of the adoption process of European values, institutions, and principles goes back to the Tanzimat¹ period around early 1830s. After its debut in the Tanzimat period, the westernization process accelerated when the Turkish Republic was established in 1923. Turkey took immediately her place in many international organizations soon after the Second World War ended. Turkey became a member of European Council in 1949 and a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952.

Turkey, the first time, applied for the association with the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1959. Because Turkey's application, as a second application to EEC, came just soon after Greece's application, it has been often linked to the Greece's initiation.² (Karluk, 2005: 660; Birand, 2000:39; Baç, 2001: 26)³ However, it would be more meaningful to consider this application as an indispensable part of Turkey's long journey that has its roots in the Tanzimat period rather than linking it to the Greece's application.

Four years after Turkey's application, the Ankara Treaty was signed between EEC and Turkey on September 12, 1963. The Ankara Treaty, aiming ultimately the full membership of Turkey, states in its 28th article that "As soon as the operation of this Agreement has advanced far enough to justify envisaging full acceptance by Turkey of the obligations arising out of the Treaty establishing the Community, the Contracting Parties shall examine the possibility of the

accession of Turkey to the Community.”⁴ This treaty assumed that the association would comprise a preparatory stage (five years), a transitional stage (consisting of two separate periods; 12-year and 22-year as of 1973), and a final stage.

However, the ensuing developments did not occur as presumed, and planned targets were not achieved. Even though some more negotiations to improve the mutual cooperation between Turkey and EEC continued until 1980, all relationships after the military coup on September 12, 1980 were suspended by a decree of the European Parliament on January 21, 1982 until the political stabilization was achieved and all human rights were secured in Turkey.

During the governing era of Motherland Party, which came to the power after the period of the 1980 coup d'état, the prime minister, Mr. Turgut Özal spent considerable efforts to restore the relationships with the EEC. As a result of these efforts, previously suspended all relationships resumed again based on the meeting between Turkey and EEC membership council on September 16, 1986. Apart from the Ankara Treaty, the Özal government applied for the full membership to the European Union (EU) on April 14, 1987 based on the rights that are assumed for entire European countries. The relationship between EU and Turkey gained a new dimension when the custom union negotiations started in 1993. After two-year long negotiations, the custom union between EU and Turkey became operative with the declaration 1/95 of the Membership Council on January 1, 1996.

The relationship between EU and Turkey has always continued with stop-go cycles.⁵ One of these abrupt stops happened in 1997 during the Luxembourg summit where Turkey was kept out of the candidate countries. As a result, Turkey ceased the political dialogue with the EU. Later on, Turkey was accepted as a candidate country in the Helsinki summit that took place in December 1999. Karluk (2005) states that there was not actually much improvement despite the fact that Turkey was accepted as a candidate country in the Helsinki summit. It is because negotiations for the full membership were not initiated only for Turkey out of total 13 candidate countries (Karluk, 2005: 882-885).

After very intensive debates in the Brussels summit that took place on December 17 2004, the process of negotiations leading to the full membership of Turkey was accepted to start on October 3, 2005 without any specific datelines. The Cyprus problem always maintained its importance in the daily agenda during and after this summit. It would be fair to point out that this

problem has always been a leverage for those either who do not explicitly want the membership of Turkey or who wish to obtain more concessions from Turkey.

If we make a general assessment about the relationships between Turkey and EU, it is possible to state that both Turkey and EU have acted according to current conditions and have not been truly prepared for the full membership from the beginning. When we apply a timetable, it can be said that the Turkish public did not warmly embrace the membership idea during the cold war era, and the Turkish political elites and establishments did not consider this membership as a priority in the same period. After the cold war era, while the Turkish public and the Turkish political elites have increasingly desired the EU membership over time, the public and the leaders of some countries in the EU have approached to this idea with suspicion.

It appears that other international players as well as the natural parties of this process will play important role in the future of the relationship between Turkey and the EU. The EU's position against the US, the aspiration of the EU to become a global or regional power (Canbolat, 2005: 39-57), and the Middle East policy of the US will determine the future of relationship between Turkey and the EU. While some countries such as Greece, Portugal, and Spain were admitted along with their democracy problems and the assumption that they could solve these problems after entering the union (Çalış, 2001: 394-395), whether Turkey will be strictly required to first deal with her flawed democracy and other problems before being admitted is going to be determined within the general framework of global affairs as indicated above.⁶ Therefore, it seems that the relationship between Turkey and the EU is going to be shaped according to current trends and developments as usual.

II. The Exposition and the Methodology of the Survey

1) The Determination of the Sampling in the Survey

This survey that conducted with the members of the TGNA is a part of another broader study. Since the primary subject of this study is to understand general approaches of the members of AK party and the Republican People's Party, which is shortly called CHP in Turkish, the survey scope is MPs from AK Party and CHP in the Parliament. When we consider the composition of the TGNA's 22nd period, it can be confidently said that the proportional presence of other parties in the parliament is negligible. This survey was carried through between December 2004 and May 2005.

Because the aim of this study is to provide some estimations with respect to regions and parties, the sample size was determined as 100 based on the formula $n = \frac{t^2(p * q)}{d^2}$ where n is the total sample size, t is the value on the Student's table for 95% significance level, and p is the sample proportion which has particular units, d is the sensitivity level, and $q = 1-p$. In this study, we determine the sample size as 100 (i.e. $n = 100$) based on 1% sensitivity level and 95% confidence level after considering the costs and labor factors. In order to specify the allocation of this ratio across regions, we followed the multi-stage sampling methodology based on each party's deputies in these regions. To be able to guarantee the estimation in each stage, the distribution of the sample size over stages was obtained through compromise-allocation method. The formula in this distribution is $n = \tilde{n} [K^2 + (1-K)^2 * (Mh)^2]^{1/2}$ where \tilde{n} is the sample size falling in the relevant stage, Mh is the effect of the relevant stage's weight on the total weight of all stages, K^2 represents the relative importance with $K = n_{min}$, and $Mh = \frac{Nh}{(N/H)} = H * Wh$ with H representing total number of stages, N representing total stages, Nh representing the unit numbers in the stage, and finally Wh representing the weight of the units in the stage. We assume that $K = 0.75$ and $\tilde{n} = 7$.

Based on the defined criteria and the method above, the following table displays the required number of deputies from each region and political party with whom we need to have our survey.

Table 1: The Distribution of the Deputies of AK Party and CHP and Sample Sizes across Regions

<i>Regions</i>	<i>AK Party</i>		<i>CHP</i>	
	<i># of Deputies</i>	<i>Sample Size</i>	<i># of Deputies</i>	<i>Sample Size</i>
<i>Mid-Anatolia</i>	70	9	24	6
<i>Aegean</i>	38	7	33	7
<i>Marmara</i>	79	9	49	8
<i>Black Sea</i>	59	8	16	6
<i>Mediterranean</i>	38	7	29	7
<i>Eastern Anatolia</i>	44	7	12	5
<i>Southern Anatolia</i>	39	7	13	6
<i>Total</i>	367	54	176	45

The ratios were determined according to the allocation of deputies across parties when we started the survey. Because it is a frequent observation to see deputies changing their political allegiance, it is quite possible that these ratios might change later on.

We used both close-end and open-end questions together in this survey. Before starting the actual survey, there was a pilot application on a group of people consisting of the faculty members of the Political Science Department of Ankara University, some bureaucrats, and some businessmen. In the actual application, the survey was applied on arbitrary deputies until reaching the defined quotas for each region and party. In this due course, the survey form was given to 300 members of Turkish Parliament. We received answers from 105 deputies and evaluated 99 of these responses. When we consider that the AK party and CHP had total 513 deputies (355 and 158, respectively) and total number of deputies was 546 during the preparation of this article, the evaluated responses constitute approximately 20% of entire Turkish Parliament. A great majority of surveys was conducted through personal meetings with the deputies. This approach allowed us to provide necessary explanations about the survey during a meeting. A fewer number of deputies preferred to fill out the survey privately and returned it to us later.

2) The Demographic Characteristics of the Samples

The characteristics of the deputies in terms of demography, region, known foreign languages, and political affiliation are provided in the following table.

Table 2: The Characteristics of the Samples in terms of Demography, Region, Known Foreign Language, and Political Identification

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Valid %</i>		<i>Number</i>	<i>Valid %</i>
GENDER			LANGUAGES		
Female	5	5.1	English	51	51.5
Male	94	94.9	French	11	11.1
OCCUPATION			German	10	10.1
Bureaucrat/Public Sector	16	16.3	Arabic	16	16.2
Officer					
Private Sector	15	15.7	Kurdish	18	18.2
Academician, Teacher,	17	17.3	POLITICAL		
Educator			IDENTIFICATION		
Lawyer/Attorney	14	14.3	Nationalistic	4	4

Doctor	10	10.2	Conservative	27	27.3
Journalist/ Writer	4	4.1	Liberal	19	19.2
Other	2	2	Leftist	25	25.3
EDUCATION			Kemalist	13	13.1
High School and Two- Year College	13	13.3	Conservative Democrat	13	13.1
Bachelor's Degree	57	58.2	Social Democrat	4	4
Master and Doctorate	18	18.4			
Post-doctorate	10	10.2			
AGE					
35 – 44	21	21.4			
45 – 54	50	51			
55 and over	27	27.6	TOTAL	99	100

In the subsequent analyses, we will only consider the responses with 10 or above and disregard the remaining.

III. The Results

1) The Amount of Support for the EU Membership

It is a well known fact that the Turkish public has been increasingly supportive for the EU since early 1990's. Based on the Fall 2004 data from Eurobarometer 62, the general views of the Turkish public towards the EU membership are summarized in the following table (2005:70).

	A good thing	A bad thing	Neither good or bad thing	Don't know
2004-2	62%	12%	20%	5%

According to the results of this study, the support of Turkish Parliaments as a combination of the representatives from the AK party and CHP seems to be higher than the Turkish public.

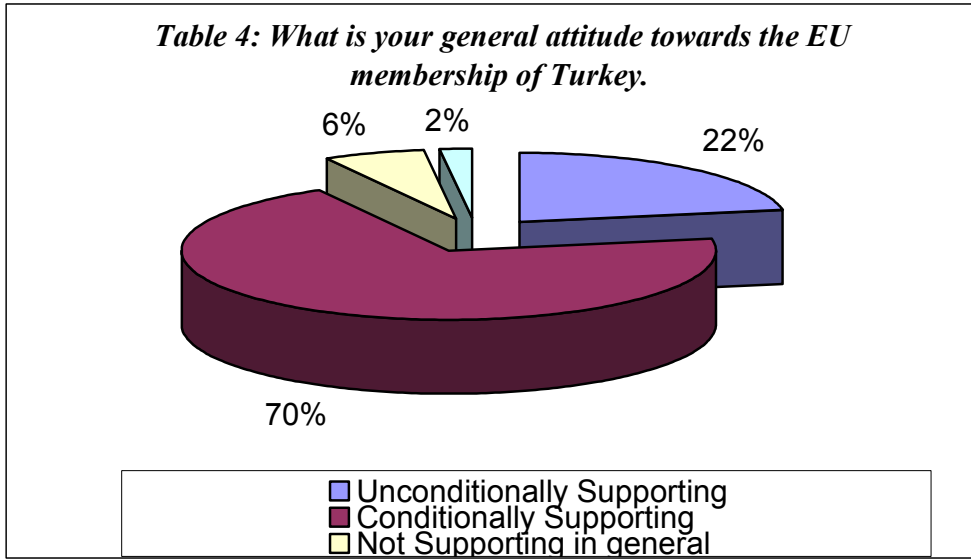


Table 5: The General Support Level of the Deputies

		Party Affiliation		General
		AKP	CHP	
What is your general attitude towards the EU membership of Turkey?	Supporting	92.5%	91.1%	91.9%
	Not Supporting	7.5%	8.9%	8.1%
Total		100%	100%	100%

As can be seen from table, the support level from the deputies of the AK party and CHP for the EU membership is well above the support level from the general Turkish public and is exceeding 90%. Moreover, there is not much difference between the AK party and CHP in terms of the extent of their support (the AK party's 92.5% and CHP's 91.91%).⁷ Because we had seen the outcome that the general support level of deputies for the EU membership would not be so different in terms of their political allegiance even before starting the survey, we also asked whether their support was conditional or not in order to understand the qualitative aspects of their support. Even though we did not provide any explanatory note about the concept of "conditional", there was not any inquiry about it from the deputies either. It is possible to assume that the concepts of "conditional" or "unconditional" were probably interpreted as "with

reservation” and “without reservation” on some sensitive issues such as the Cyprus problem, the so-called Armenian Genocide, and any other “humiliating” proviso imposed by the EU.

Table 6: The Conditional Support Level of the Deputies

		Party Affiliation		General	
		AKP	CHP	Number	%
What is your general attitude towards the EU membership of Turkey?	Unconditionally supporting	29.6%	13.3%	22	22.3
	Conditionally supporting	63%	77.8%	69	69.7
	Not supporting in general	5.6%	6.7%	6	6.1
	Totally against	1.9%	2.2%	2	2
Total		100%	100%	99	100

There is no significant difference among the deputies of the AK party and CHP with regard to the views of “totally against” and “not supporting in general”. Depending on whether the support is conditional or unconditional for the EU membership, deputies’ approach, however, become divergent. This divergence is crucial to understand the nature or the stress of the deputies’ support for the EU membership. As it can be observed from *table 6*, the members of the AK party support generally the EU membership by 16% more than the members of CHP. While 29% of the AK party’s deputies support the EU membership “without condition”, this ratio remains at 13.3% for the CHP’s deputies.

The basic features of the support for the EU membership in terms of demography, region, known foreign language, and political identity are as follows.

Table 7: The Support Level based on Various Attributes

	Unconditional Support %	Conditional Support, %	Not Supporting in general	Totally against, %	Total %
OCCUPATION					
Bureaucrat/Public Sector Officer	31.3	68.8			100
Private Sector	14.3	77.1	8.6		100
Academician, Teacher, Educator	23.5	58.8	11.8	5.9	100

Lawyer/Attorney	35.7	57.1	7.1		100
Doctor	20	70		10	100
EDUCATION					
High School and Two-Year College	15.4	69.2	15.4		100
Bachelor's Degree	21.1	77.2	1.8		100
Master and Doctorate	33.3	50	11.1	5.6	100
Post-doctorate	20	60	10	10	100
AGE					
35 – 44	19	76.2		4.8	100
45 – 54	16	74	10		100
55 and over	37	55.6	3.7	3.7	100
LANGUAGES					
English	21.6	68.6	5.9	3.9	100
German	10	70	20		100
French	18.2	72.7	9.1		100
Arabic	18.8	68.8	12.5		100
Kurdish	44.4	55.6			100
POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION					
Conservative	25.9	59.3	11.1	3.7	100
Liberal	31.6	52.6	10.5	5.3	100
Leftist	16	76	4	4	100
Kemalist		92.3		7.7	100
Conservative Democrat	23.1	76.9			100
REGIONS					
Mid Anatolia	26,7	73,3			100,0
Aegean	7,1	71,4	14,3	7,1	100,0
Marmara	17,6	82,4			100,0
Black Sea	21,4	64,3	7,1	7,1	100,0
Mediterranean	28,6	57,1	14,3		100,0
Eastern Anatolia	33,3	66,7			100,0
Southern Anatolia	23,1	69,2	7,7		100,0

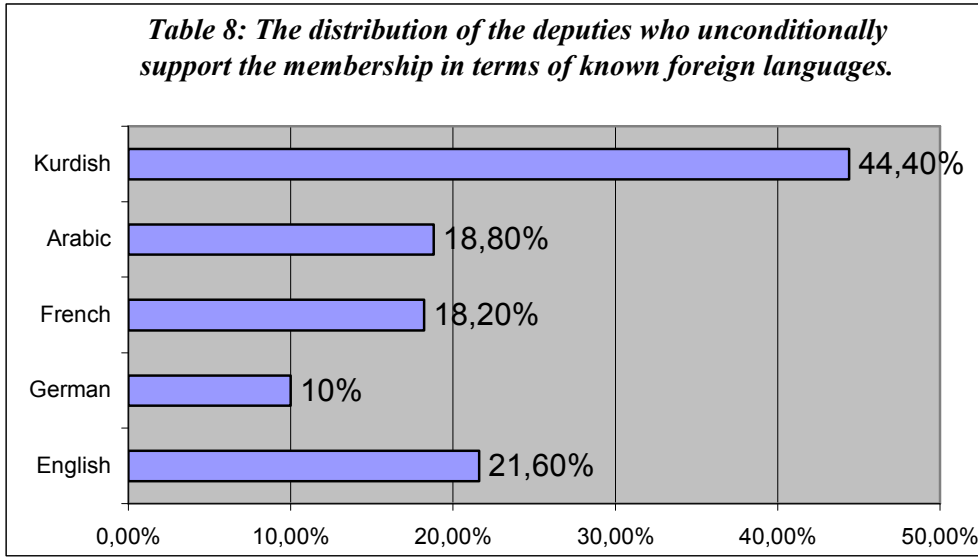
There is a very high level of support for the EU membership in terms of demography, region, known foreign language, and identity. However, the level of support is not uniform when we consider if it is conditional or unconditional.

As opposed to general expectations, the process of the EU membership according to the occupational distribution is most ardently supported by those deputies who are coming from bureaucracy and public sector employment. 31.3% of the deputies from the public sector supports the EU membership unconditionally and 68.8% of them supports the EU membership with some conditions. With respect to occupational origin, the highest opposition against the EU membership comes from those deputies who are academician, teacher, and educator. 18% of the deputies from this occupational section do not support the EU membership with subcategories 11.8% “not generally supporting” and 5.9% “totally against”. The relatively negative approach of the deputies from education sector towards this process can be partially explained by the fact that Turkish universities and high schools are less involved in the issues related to the EU than private and public sectors.

According to this survey, there does not seem to be a linear relationship between the support level and the education level of the deputies. Except for the bachelor’s degree, around 15 and 20% of the deputies from all other educational backgrounds support the EU membership. It is interesting to note that those deputies who are totally against the EU membership primarily emerge from the highly educated group and have academic titles such as associate and full professorship. Because all academicians are a part of the education system, this result is consistent with the results that we have provided for the occupational analysis above.

There does seem to be some difference among the deputies in terms of the age distribution. Around 5% and 10% of the deputies in all age groups are against the EU membership. We observe that 37% of the deputies within the age group 55+ support unconditionally the EU membership, and this ratio is around twice as much the ratios belonging to the age groups 35-44 and 45-54.

One of the questions in the survey was aimed to understand what foreign languages the deputies know. The fact that the deputies who know Kurdish support the EU membership with 100% is noteworthy. The opposition to the EU membership among those deputies who know English, German, French, and Arabic vary between 10% and 20%. In terms of the conditional and unconditional aspects, there is some differentiation based on the foreign languages that the deputies know. The distribution of the “unconditional support” response based on the foreign languages is as follows.



As it can be seen, the deputies who know Kurdish differ from the others in terms of “unconditional” support in that 44.4% of them support the membership without any condition. This ratio is twice as much the second leading ratio which comes from those deputies who know English in terms of “unconditional” support.

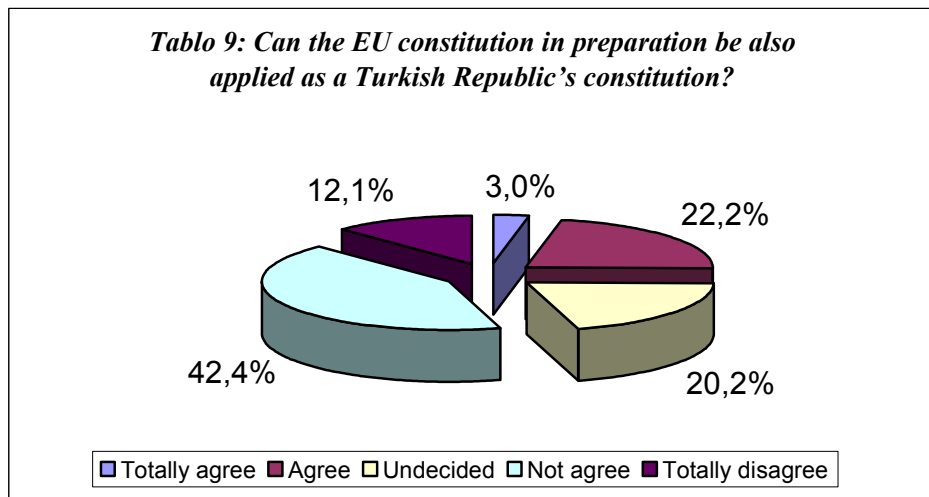
There is no relationship between the political identification and the support level for the EU membership. While the deputies in all political descriptions do mostly support the EU membership, the “conservative democrats” generally seem to support this membership 100%. Even though the EU membership is generally supported, the Kemalist deputies do not support this membership “unconditionally” at all. 16% of the leftist, 23.1% of the conservative democrat, 25.9% of the conservative, and 31.6% of the liberal deputies support the membership unconditionally.

The deputies from all regions mostly support the membership. The deputies from the Eastern Anatolia, Mid-Anatolia, and the Marmara regions generally support the EU membership 100%. The highest opposition against the EU membership comes from those deputies who are from the Aegean region with a ratio 21.4%.

2) The Approachs of the Deputies in Sharing Some of their Authorities with International Institutions

a) The applicability of the EU constitution in preparation as a Turkish constitution

We asked two questions to understand the practical implications of the deputies' theoretical support for the EU membership and how much they are willing to share some of their authorities with higher (international) institutions. The first one is the applicability of the EU constitution being in preparation as a Turkish constitution, and the second one is whether the deputies agree or disagree with the statement that "there is no problem if many functions of the TGNA can be undertaken by the European Parliament or other global institutions instead." In the following lines, we will analyze the answers given for the first question.



The deputies do not provide the same rigorous support level for the idea that the EU constitution can be also applied as a Turkish constitution as they do for the process of the EU membership. It is certainly the case that the EU constitution will not substitute the national constitutions. Therefore, this question can be evaluated as the approach of the deputies towards the EU constitution. Overall, 54.5% of the deputies think that the EU constitution cannot be applied as a Turkish constitution.

Table 10: The Applicability of the EU Constitution in preparation as a Turkish Constitution in terms of Political Affiliation

	Party Affiliation		General	
	AKP	CHP	Number	%
Totally agree	1.9%	4.4%	3	3
Agree	29.6%	13.3%	22	22.2
Undecided	27.8%	11.1%	20	20.2
Disagree	38.9%	46.7%	42	42.3
Totally disagree	1.9%	24.4	12	12.1
Total	100%	100%	99	100

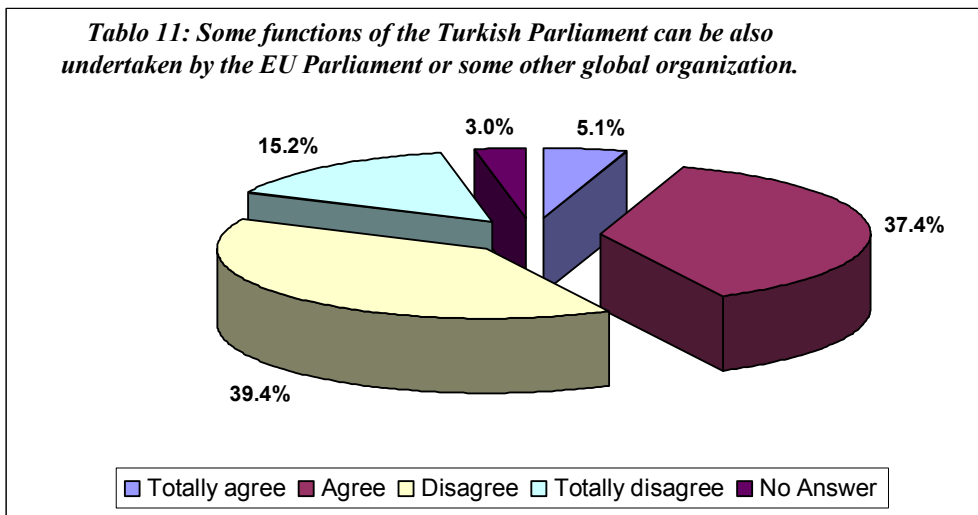
Whether the EU constitution can be applied as a Turkish constitution as well?	Party Affiliation	
	AKP	CHP
Agree	31.5%	17.7%
Undecided	27.8%	11.1%
Disagree	40.8%	71.1%

The deputies of the AK party more positively approach to the idea that the EU constitution can be also applied as a Turkish constitution than those of CHP do. While more than 70% of the CHP's deputies disagree with this statement, this ratio for the AK party's deputies remains below 50%. There is also a discernible difference in terms of "totally disagree" option between the deputies of two parties. While only does 1.9% of the deputies from the AK party totally disagree with the relevant statement, 24.4% of deputies from CHP totally disagrees.

When we consider the demographic attributes, the lowest support for the applicability of the EU constitution as a Turkish constitution comes from those who are academicians /teachers/educators with ratio 17.6%, from those who have post graduate education with ratio 10%, from those who are in the age group of 45-54 with ratio 18%, and from those who are from the Black Sea region with ratio 7.1%. In terms of the known foreign language and the political identity, the highest support for the relevant statement comes from those who know Kurdish with ratio 50% and from those who identify themselves as conservative-democrats with ratio 38.5%. While the agreement and disagreement ratio with the relevant statement is the same (38.5%) for those deputies who identify themselves as conservative democrats, the disagreement ratio is always greater than the agreement ratio for those deputies who identify themselves other than conservative democrats. The largest disagreement with this statement comes from those deputies who identify themselves as Kemalist with ratio 84.6%.

b) The possibility that many functions of the Turkish Parliament can be also undertaken by the EU Parliament or other global organizations

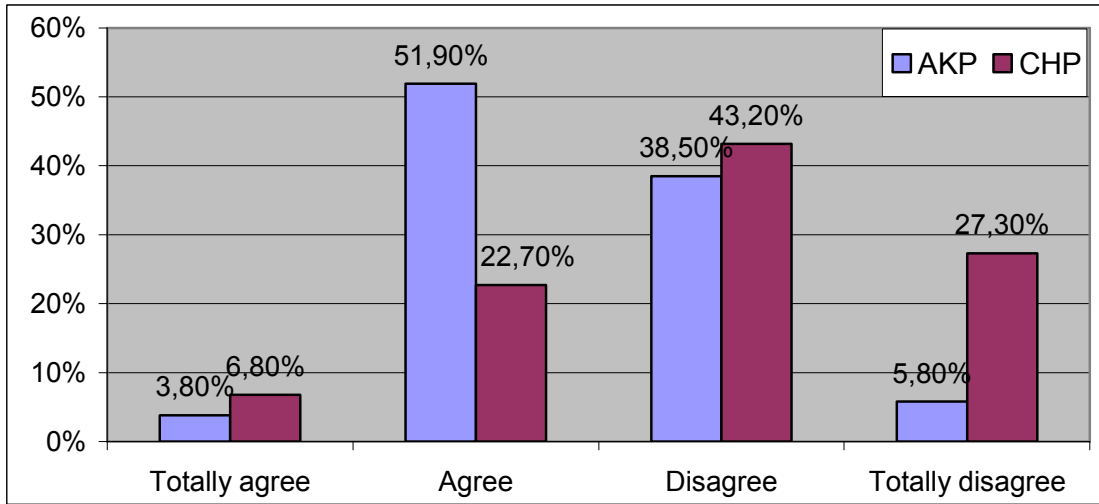
In order to understand whether the deputies are pragmatically ready for the EU membership as well as their theoretical support for this process, we asked if they agree with the idea that some functions of the Turkish Parliament can be also undertaken by the EU Parliament or some other global organizations. Because the content and the future of the EU constitution are still uncertain as of today, we provided an “undecided” option in the choices for the question about the EU. However, we did not provide the same option for the question about other international organizations in order not to create any confusion in understanding the question and to receive clearer answers.



In the parallel of the answers provided for the question if the EU constitution can be also applied as a Turkish constitution, approximately 55% of the deputies disagree with the idea that some functions of the Turkish Parliament can be carried out by some international organizations.

In terms of political parties, the answers for this question are provided in the following table.

Table 12: In terms of political affiliation, the distribution of the answers for the question: Can some functions of the Turkish Parliament be also carried out by the EU Parliament or some other global organizations?



As it can be seen from table 12, the deputies of the AK party seem to be more ready than the deputies of CHP to share some of their powers with international institutions. 55.7% of AK party's deputies think that some of the functions of the TGNA can be carried out by either the EU Parliament or other international organizations, while this ratio remains at 29.5% for the deputies of CHP. In addition, the ratio for the "totally disagree" is much higher for the deputies of CHP than that of AK party's deputies (27.3% versus 5.8%, respectively.)

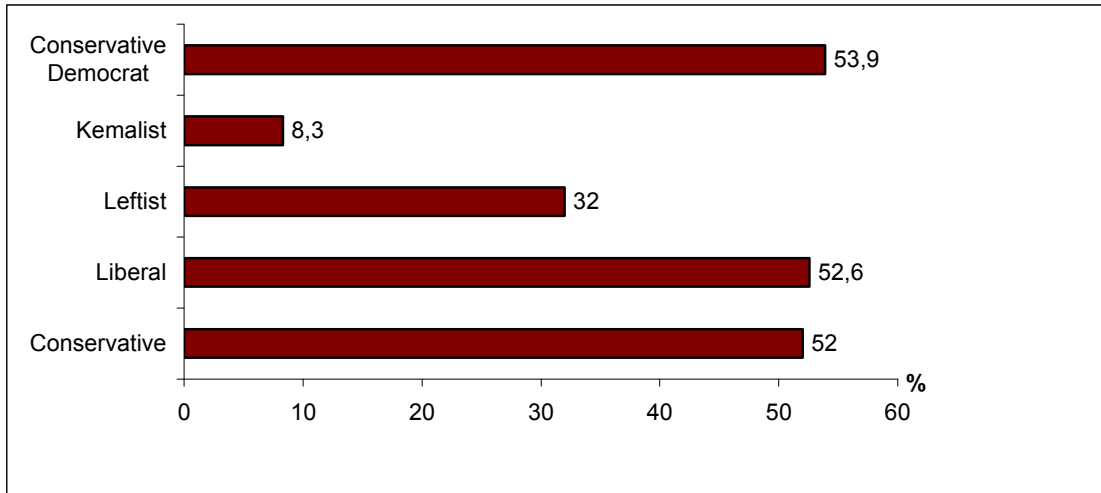
In terms of occupational distribution, the agreement ratio for all deputies is below 50%. The deputies coming from private sector give the highest support with ratio 46.5%, and the deputies who are lawyers or attorneys exhibit the highest opposition with ratio 71.5%.

In terms of educational attainment level, the highest opposition for the idea that some functions of the Turkish Parliament can be also carried out by the EU Parliament or some other global organizations comes from those deputies who have post doctorate education with ratio 80%.

Apart from German, 50% of the deputies agree with the statement in terms of the distribution of known foreign language.

There are some difference between the way that deputies politically identify themselves and the agreement ratio with the idea that some functions of the Turkish Parliament can be also carried out by the EU Parliament or some other global organizations.

Table 13: In terms of political identification, the distribution of the answers for the question: Can some functions of the Turkish Parliament be also carried out by the EU Parliament or some other global organizations?

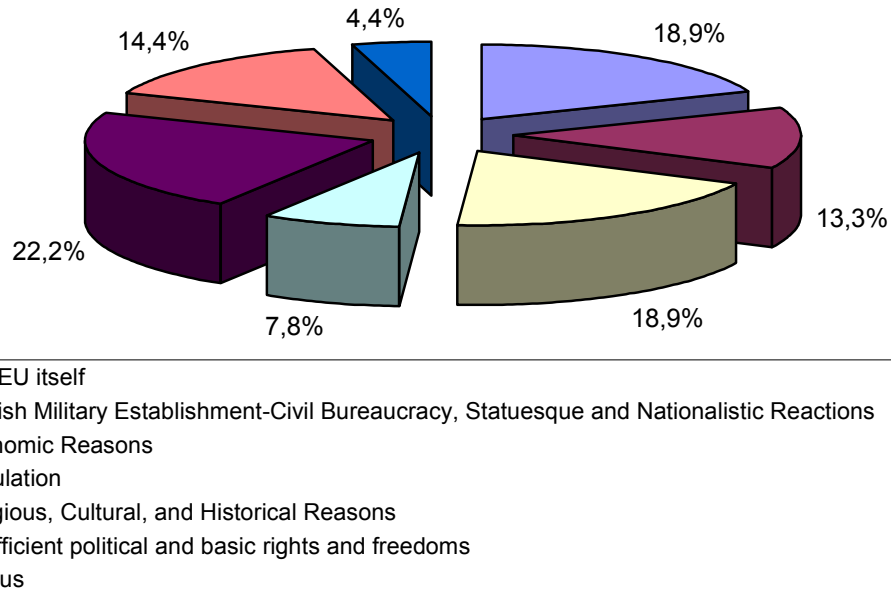


While more than 50% of deputies who identify themselves as either conservative democrat or liberal gives support the idea that some functions of the Turkish Parliament be also carried out by the EU Parliament or some other global organizations, only 8.3% of Kemalist deputies provide their support. 32% of deputies who identify themselves as leftist supports this idea.

3) The Most Important Barrier on the EU Membership

The barriers on the membership of Turkey to the EU are extensively discussed within both Turkey and Europe. Various reasons for why Turkey cannot be a member are often put forward. In order to understand what the deputies think about this issue, we asked them the question; "What is the most important barrier on the membership of Turkey to the EU?". We received the following answers for this open-ended question.

Tablo 14: What is the most important barrier on the membership of Turkey to the EU?

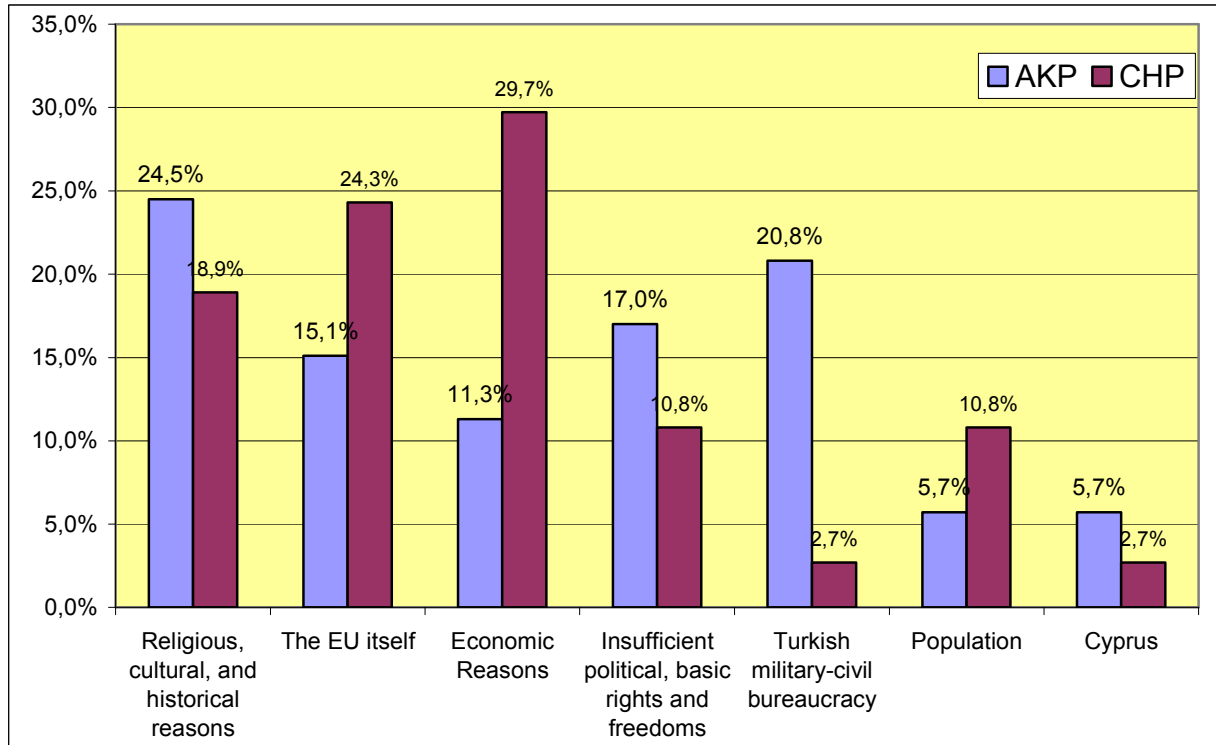


The deputies think that the most important barrier on the membership of Turkey to the EU comprises religious, cultural, and historical reasons. This one is followed by the problems which are caused by the EU itself and economic reasons. Even though the Cyprus problem occupies a great deal of severe debates in the EU affairs of Turkey, only 4.4% of the deputies thinks that this is an important barrier on the EU membership.

In terms of political affiliation, the distribution of barriers on the EU membership is given in the following table;

Table 15: In terms of political affiliation, the distribution of barriers on the EU membership

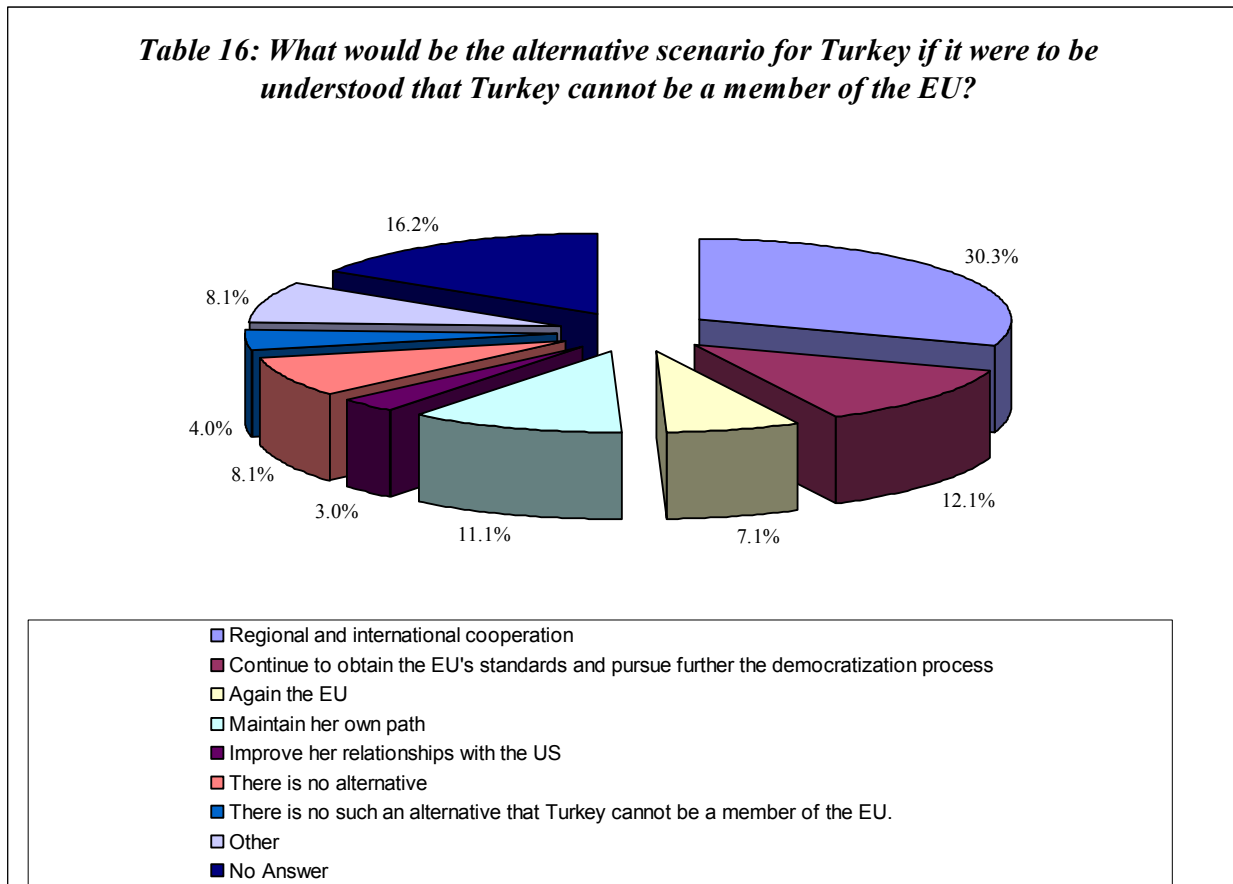
(collected from the answers given to the open-ended questions)



While the AK party's deputies think that the most important barrier on the membership of Turkey to the EU consists of religious, cultural, and historical reasons with the ratio 24.5%, the CHP's deputies point out economic reasons as the first-hand barrier on the membership with the ratio 29.7%. The AK party's deputies think that the second most important barrier on the membership is Turkish military and civil bureaucracy (20.8%), but only 2.7% of the CHP's deputies maintain this argument. In short, the AK party's deputies emphasize (i) religious, cultural, and historical reasons, (ii) Turkish military and civil bureaucracy, and (iii) the statuesque and nationalistic reactions as the top three barriers. The CHP's deputies highlight (i) economic reasons, (ii) the problems that originate from the EU itself, and (iii) religious, cultural, and historical reasons as the top three barriers on the membership of Turkey to the EU.

4) What would be the alternative scenario for Turkey if it were to be understood that Turkey cannot be a member of the EU?

Various political and social establishments articulate that the EU is not the single option for Turkey, and there are actually some alternatives that Turkey can utilize (press releases from former the secretary of the National Security Council, Tuncer Kılıç) (Zaman, 2002). We asked the deputies what would be alternative scenarios for Turkey in case the EU membership does not materialize. The distribution of the answers is as follows.



(collected from the answers given to the open-ended questions)

The deputies propose primarily more regional/international cooperation as an alternative option for the EU. It is very often argued that Turkey should increase her cooperation with the Turkic states in the Central Asia, the Balkan states, the countries in the Middle East, and neighboring countries such as Russia and Iran, even though we did not take into consideration this proposal as an alternative choice. 16.2% of deputies did not answer this question, and this ratio takes the second largest place in all answers. In addition to these results, the outcome that

the other alternative propositions remain at very low ratios suggest deputies do not really have many options in their minds to offer viable alternatives for the EU membership. The party distribution of the alternative propositions is as follows.

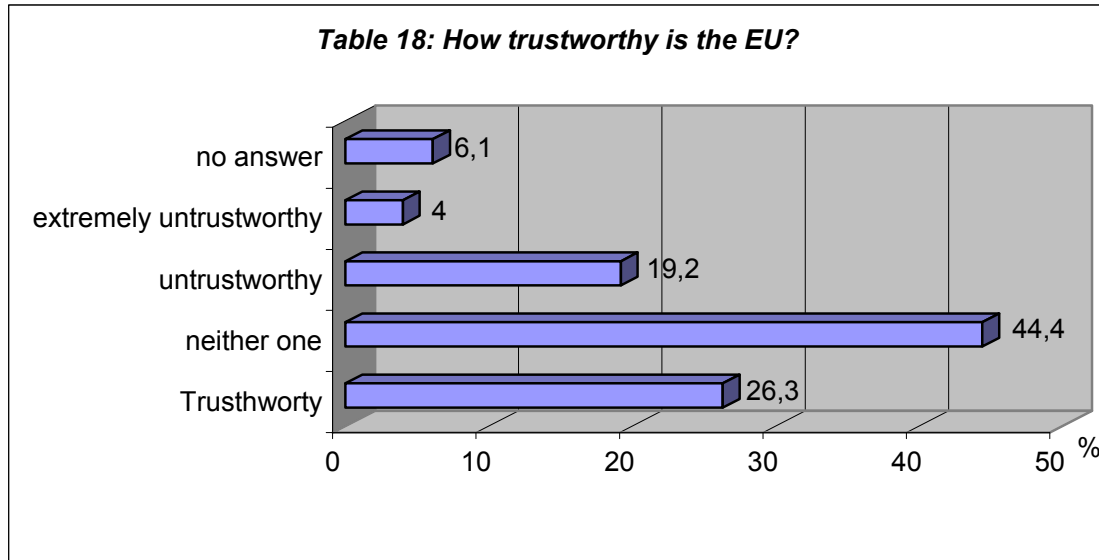
Table 17: The distribution of alternative propositions for the EU membership in terms of political affiliation

What would be the alternative scenario for Turkey if it were to be understood that Turkey cannot be a member of the EU?	Party Affiliation		General
	AKP	CHP	
Regional/international cooperation	40%	30.3%	36.1%
Continue to obtain the EU's standards and pursue further the democratization process	16%	12.1%	14.5%
Maintain her own path	12%	15.2%	13.3%
There is no alternative	4%	18.2%	9.6%
Other	8%	12.1%	9.6%
Again the EU	8%	9.1%	8.4%
There is no such an alternative that Turkey cannot be a member of the EU	6%	3%	4.8%
Improve her relationships with Turkey	6%		3.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Compared with the previous analyses for the issues (i) the general approach towards the EU membership, (ii) whether the EU constitution can be also applied as a Turkish constitution, (iii) whether some functions of the Turkish Parliament can be also carried out by the EU Parliament or other global organizations, and (iv) the most important barrier on the EU membership, the deputies of the AK party and CHP seem to have similar mind setting in terms of alternative propositions for the EU membership. As it can be seen in table 17, the ratios for the alternative propositions from each party are very close. The most noticeable difference is that the deputies of CHP more firmly believe “there is no alternative for the EU membership” than the deputies of the AK party do (18% versus 4%). When we evaluate this result along with the ratios for the unconditional support, we can conclude that the deputies of the AK party are more eager for the EU membership than the deputies of CHP even though they consider there are more alternatives for the EU membership.

5) How trustworthy is the EU?

In order to understand the deputies' approach towards the EU membership, we asked "how trustworthy is the EU?" as the last question in this survey.



44.4% of the deputies consider the EU neither trustworthy nor untrustworthy. While 23.2% of the deputies think that the EU is trustworthy, 26.6% of the deputies think that the EU is not trustworthy.

Even though more than 90% of the deputies support the EU membership and 43.7% of them agree with the idea that some functions of the Turkish Parliament can be carried out by the EU parliament, it is interesting to see that only 26.3% of the deputies do find the EU trustworthy. This situation indicates that deputies have a confidence problem though a majority of them do support the EU membership and consent to render some of their authorities. It can be stated that continuous confrontations between Turkey and the EU are the most likely reason for the confidence problem that the deputies feel towards the EU.

Even though there was another choice which is "very trustworthy" in this part of the survey, none of the deputies marked this option. The choice "I do not trust at all" also was marked by only 4% of the deputies. The deputies lay their preference between "I trust" and "I do not trust" rather than between "I do very much trust" and "I do not trust at all". As such, the remaining analyses will be based on the interval between "I trust" and "I do not trust".

Table 19: The distribution of the EU's trustworthiness in terms of political affiliation

		Party Affiliation		General
		AKP	CHP	
How trustworthy is the EU?	Trustworthy	25.9%	29.3%	28%
	Neither trustworthy nor untrustworthy	50%	43.9%	47.3%
	Untrustworthy	23.1%	26.8%	24.7%
Total		100%	100%	100%

Similar to the answers in the previous section, the deputies from both the AK party and CHP do not substantially differ on the trustworthiness of the EU. The answers are mainly clustered on the choice “neither trustworthy nor untrustworthy”, and the ratios for both parties are very close. The results that the ratios from both parties about the trustworthiness of the EU are similar and very low imply the confidence problem is actually a phenomenon which goes beyond the political affiliation.

Table 20: The distribution of the EU's trustworthiness in terms of various attributes (after no-answers are proportionally distributed)

	Trustworthy %	Neither trustworthy nor untrustworthy	Untrustworthy %	Total %
OCCUPATION				
Bureaucrat/Public Sector Officer	26.7	60	13.3	100
Private Sector	30.3	54.5	15.2	100
Academician, Teacher, Educator	31.3	37.5	31.3	100
Lawyer/Attorney	23.1	53.8	23.1	100
Doctor	44.4	11.1	44.4	100
EDUCATION				
High School and Two-Year College	33.3	41.7	25	100
Bachelor's Degree	29.1	45.5	25.5	100
Master and Doctorate	26.7	60	13	100
Post-doctorate	20	50	30	100
AGE				
35 – 44	26.3	42.1	31.6	100

45 – 54	23.4	55.3	21.3	100
55 and over	38.5	38.5	23.1	100
LANGUAGES				
English	29.8	40.4	29.8	100
German	22.2	55.6	22.2	100
French	30	50	20	100
Arabic	28.6	50	21.4	100
Kurdish	29.4	52.9	17.6	100
POL. IDENTIFICATION				
Conservative	19,2	53,8	26,9	100
Liberal	26,3	47,4	26,3	100
Leftist	39,1	34,8	26,1	100
Kemalist	16,7	50,0	33,3	100
Conservative Democrat	25,0	58,3	16,7	100
REGIONS				
Mid-Anatolia	33.3	40	26.7	100
Aegean		69.2	30.8	100
Marmara	43.8	37.5	18.8	100
Black Sea	23.1	53.8	23.1	100
Mediterranean	41.7	33.3	25	100
Eastern Anatolia	45.5	36.4	18.2	100
Southern Anatolia	7.7	61.5	30.8	100

Even though the ratios vary from one category to another, the trustworthiness of the EU is always below 50% for all attributes. While the deputies who claim to know Kurdish and identify themselves as conservative democrats openly declare their unconditional support for the EU membership and agree with the idea that some functions of the Turkish Parliament can be carried out by the EU parliament, they exhibit very low level of confidence on the trustworthiness of the EU (29.4% and 25%, respectively.) When we combine this result with the conclusion that we reached for the political affiliation analysis above, it can be said that suspicions regarding the trustworthiness of the EU has very deep roots above all political parties, political affiliation, and regions.

IV. Concluding Remarks

In this study, we attempt to analyze what the members of the Turkish Parliament in the 22nd period think about the EU membership, surrendering some of their powers and functions to the EU parliament, the barriers on the EU membership, alternative options for the EU membership, and the trustworthiness of the EU. The results can be summarized as follows.

While the Turkish public's support level for the EU membership is around 62% based on the 2004 data from Eurobarometer, the deputies' support level exceeds 90%. There is not a significant difference between the members of the AK party and CHP in this general support. The deputies support conditionally the EU membership at 70%. However, there are some differences between the deputies of the AK party and CHP with respect to the characteristics of their support. The AK party's unconditional support is higher than the CHP's unconditional support. In terms of known foreign language, the highest unconditional support comes from the deputies who know Kurdish with the ratio 44.4%. The deputies who identify themselves as Kemalist do not provide any unconditional support for the EU membership. The highest support for the EU membership comes from conservative democrat deputies with the ratio 100%. It can be said that conservative democrat deputies are closer to the EU membership than conservative deputies. In terms of educational background, the greatest opposition to the EU membership comes from those deputies who are academician, teacher, and educator and have some postdoctoral education. Given this result, we can state that deputies who have close relationships with the universities provide relatively lower support for the EU membership.

The deputies provide less support for the proposals that the EU constitution can be also applied as a Turkish constitution and some functions of the Turkish Parliament can be undertaken by either the EU parliament or other international organizations than the general approach towards the EU membership. However, there is a clear distinction between the AK party and CHP. While 55.7% of the AK party's deputies consent that and some functions of the Turkish Parliament can be carried out by either the EU parliament or other international organizations, only 29.5% of the CHP's deputies agree with such an idea. In addition, the proportion of the deputies who do strongly oppose such a proposition is much higher in CHP than the one in the AK party (27.3% versus 5.8%, respectively.) In terms of political identification, the ratios for the agreement with the proposition that some functions of the Turkish Parliament can be undertaken by either the EU parliament or other international organizations differ. More than 50% of

conservative democrats and liberals support this proposition while only 8.3% of the Kemalist deputies provide their support. 32% of the deputies who identify themselves as the leftists support such a proposition.

The deputies recognize that religious, cultural, and historical reasons are the primary barriers on the EU membership. The first group of barriers is followed by the reasons emanating from the EU itself and economic reasons. Even though the Cyprus problem occupies a great deal of attention and time in the relationships between Turkey and the EU, only 4.4% of the deputies think that it might be a big barrier on the EU membership. While 24.5% of the AK party's deputies think that the most important barrier on the EU membership is religious, cultural, and historical reasons, 29.7% of CHP's deputies point out economic reasons as the most important barrier on this membership. The AK party's deputies claim the reactionary behavior of the Turkish military-civil bureaucracy as the second most important barrier on the EU membership (20.8%). However, only 2.7% of the CHP's deputies agree with this proposition. Overall, the AK party's deputies emphasize (i) religious, cultural, and historical reasons, (ii) the Turkish military-civil bureaucracy, (iii) reactions from statuesque and nationalistic establishments, and (iv) insufficient political and basic rights and freedoms as the top three barriers on the EU. The CHP's deputies highlight (i) economic reasons, (ii) the reasons emanating from the EU itself, and (iii) religious, cultural, and historical reasons. The deputies who know Arabic and Kurdish consider the Turkish military-civil bureaucracy and reactions from statuesque and nationalistic establishments as the most important barriers on the EU membership. The deputies who identify themselves as Kemalists assume that the reasons emanating from the EU itself are the most barriers on the EU membership.

The deputies propose increasing regional and international cooperation as the most viable alternative for the EU membership. It is very often articulated that Turkey should increase her cooperation with the Turkic states in the Central Asia, the Balkan states, the countries in the Middle East, and neighboring countries such as Russia and Iran, even though we did not take into consideration this proposal as an alternative choice. The deputies who abstained from answering this question take the second largest place with ratio 16.2%. Based on these results, it is possible to state that the deputies do not really have many options in their minds to offer viable alternatives for the EU membership.

Compared with the previous analyses for the issues (i) the general approach towards the EU membership, (ii) whether the EU constitution can be also applied as a Turkish constitution, (iii) whether some functions of the Turkish Parliament can be also carried out by the EU Parliament or other global organizations, and (iv) the most important barrier on the EU membership, the deputies of the AK party and CHP seem to have similar mind setting in terms of alternative propositions for the EU membership. The ratios for alternative propositions that each party's deputies offer are very close to each other. The most noticeable difference is that the deputies of CHP more firmly believe "there is no alternative for the EU membership" than the deputies of the AK party do (18% versus 4%). When we evaluate this result along with the ratios for the unconditional support, we can conclude that the deputies of the AK party are more eager for the EU membership than the deputies of CHP even though they consider there are more alternatives for the EU membership.

44.4% of the deputies find the EU neither trustworthy nor untrustworthy. While 23.2% of the deputies think that the EU is trustworthy, 26.6% of the deputies think that the EU is not trustworthy.

Even though more than 90% of the deputies support the EU membership and 43.7% of them agree with the idea that some functions of the Turkish Parliament can be carried out by the EU parliament, it is interesting to see that only 26.3% of the deputies do find the EU trustworthy. This situation indicates that deputies have a confidence problem though a majority of them do support the EU membership and consent to render some of their authorities. It can be stated that continuous confrontations between Turkey and the EU are the most likely reason for the confidence problem that the deputies feel towards the EU.

Similar to the answers in the previous question, the deputies from both the AK party and CHP do not substantially differ on the trustworthiness of the EU. The answers are mainly clustered on the choice "neither trustworthy nor untrustworthy", and the ratios for both parties are very close. The results that the ratios from both parties about the trustworthiness of the EU are more or less the same and very low imply that the confidence problem is actually a phenomenon above the political affiliation.

Even though the ratios vary from one category to another, the trustworthiness of the EU is always below 50% for all attributes. While the deputies who claim to know Kurdish and identify themselves as conservative democrats openly declare their unconditional support for the EU

membership and agreement with the idea that some functions of the Turkish Parliament can be carried out by the EU parliament, they exhibit very low level confidence on the trustworthiness of the EU (29.4% and 25%, respectively.) When we combine this result with the conclusion that we reached for the political affiliation analysis, it can be said that suspicions regarding the trustworthiness of the EU has very deep roots that go beyond political parties, political affiliation, and regions.

* Kudret Bulbul is a doctor of political Science, the Department of Public Administration at the University of Kirikkale, , PO Box 71450, Ankara Yolu, 7. Km., Kirikkale/Turkey,
kbulbul@politics.ankara.edu.tr

Notes

¹ The word ‘Tanzimat’ refers to the concepts of restoration and reformation in the old Turkish. More specifically, “the Tanzimat period” indicates the starting era of modernization attempts in the late Ottoman State.

² Turkey’s application was just sixteen days after Greece application on July 15, 1959.

³ In particular, the statement by the foreign minister of this era, Fatin Rustu Zorlu, “If the Greece were to jump into an empty pool, you should also jump in without hesitation not to leave this country alone. (Karluk, 2005: 660)” has been often used as a basis for this argument.

⁴ See the following websites for the Turkish and English versions of this treaty, respectively;
http://www.belgenet.com/arsiv/ab/ab_ankara.html and <http://www.deltur.cec.eu.int/kitap/e-ankara.rtf>.

⁵ In fact, Turkey’s membership affairs with the EU resemble the march of the Ottoman military band, which is called Mehteran Team as they used to go two steps ahead and one step back.

⁶ Anthony Giddens, a British political scientist, points out an interesting point regarding the democracy criteria demanded by the EU as follows “There is a famous statement about the EU: If the EU were to apply for the membership, it would not be admitted.” The democracy conditions that the EU demands from their members do not even fit its own structure. (Giddens, 2000:95)

⁷ Otherwise it is indicated, hereafter the “deputies” will comprise the members of both the AK party and CHP.

References

- Baç, Meltem Müftüler, (2001), **Türkiye ve AB: Soğuk Savaş Sonrası İlişkiler**, İstanbul: Alfa
- Birand Mehmet Ali, (2000), **Türkiye'nin Avrupa Macerası 1959-1999**, İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık
- Canbolat İbrahim s., (2005), "Küreselleşme Sürecinde AB ve Türkiye" **Demokrasi Platformu**, S. 1
- Çalış Saban H., (2001), **Türkiye-Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri, Kimlik Arayışı, Politik Aktörler ve Değişim**, Ankara: Nobel.
- EUROBAROMETER 62, (2004), **Public Opinion in the European Union, Ulusal Rapor Türkiye**, European Commission
- Giddens Anthony, (2000), **Elimizden Kaçıp :Giden Dünya-Küreselleşme Hayatımızı Nasıl Yeniden Şekillendiriyor**, Çev: Osman Akınbay, İstanbul: Alfa Basın Yayın Dağ.
- http://www.belgenet.com/arsiv/ab/ab_ankara.html, (2005), (consulted November 2005)
- <http://www.deltur.cec.eu.int/default.asp?lang=1&ndx=12&mnID=3&ord=1&subOrd=0>, (2005), (consulted November 2005)
- <http://www.deltur.cec.eu.int/kitap/e-ankara.rtf>, (2005), (consulted November 2005)
- <http://www.dpt.gov.tr/abigm/tabi/tarihce/tabi.doc>, (2005), (consulted November 2005)
- <http://www.ikv.org.tr/tarihce.php>, (2005), (consulted November 2005)
- Karluk, Rıdvan s., (2005), **Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye**, İstanbul: Betaş Yayınları.
- Milliyet, (2005), <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/10/06/siyaset/asiy.html> (consulted November 2005)
- TGNA, (2005), http://www.TGNA.gov.tr/develop/owa/milletvekili_sd.dagilim (consulted November 2005)
- The Economist, (2005), "Turkey and European Union, Bazaar Bargaining", September 3rd-9th.
- Zaman, (2002), "Türkiye Dünyanın Neresinde Durmalı", <http://www.zaman.com.tr/2002/03/12/strateji/butun.htm> (consulted November 2005).