



Makalenin Türü / Article Type : Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article  
Geliş Tarihi / Date Received : 11.01.2022  
Kabul Tarihi / Date Accepted : 01.06.2022  
Yayın Tarihi / Date Published : 30.06.2022  
Yayın Sezonu / Pub Date Season : Bahar / Spring

## Accession Journey of Turkey to The European Union Membership

**Mur-hamida Sapaih Eldani\***

### Keywords:

*Accession Process,  
European Union  
(EU),  
EU membership,  
Turkey.*

### ABSTRACT

*Turkey and the European Union established a good partnership in social, economic, political, and cultural aspects of development. By utilizing historical hermeneutics and examining the accession journey of Turkey into the EU membership, this review aims to assess the possibility of the Turkey admission to the European and gives clarity to Turkey's stance on the accession process. This review also allows us to understand an aspiring state's journey towards joining an influential global organization and its challenges and efforts for membership. This paper argues that Turkey's journey to EU membership was characterized by uncertainty and vagueness. The possibility of Turkey's admission to the EU lies in eliminating all the internal and external challenges such as the human rights issue, the Cyprus problem, the approval of the EU members, and all barriers that hindered Turkey's compliance with the EU accession requirements.*

## Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği Üyeliğine Katılım Yolculuğu

### Anahtar Kelimeler:

*Katılım Süreci,  
Avrupa Birliği (AB),  
AB üyeliği,  
Türkiye.*

### ÖZ

*Türkiye ve Avrupa Birliği, kalkınmanın sosyal, ekonomik, politik ve kültürel yönlerinde iyi bir ortaklık kurmuştur. Bu makale, tarihsel hermenötüğü kullanarak ve Türkiye'nin AB üyeliğine katılım yolculuğunu inceleyerek, Türkiye'nin Avrupa'ya kabul edilme olasılığını değerlendirmeyi amaçlamakta ve Türkiye'nin katılım sürecine ilişkin tutumuna açıklık getirmektedir. Bu inceleme aynı zamanda, hevesli bir devletin etkili bir küresel organizasyona katılma yolculuğunu ve üyelik için zorluklarını ve çabalarını anlamamızı sağlar. Bu makale, Türkiye'nin AB üyelik yolculuğunun belirsizlik ve muğlaklıkla karakterize olduğunu savunuyor. Türkiye'nin AB'ye kabul edilme olasılığı, insan hakları sorunu, Kıbrıs sorunu, AB üyelerinin onayı gibi tüm iç ve dış zorlukların ve Türkiye'nin AB'ye katılım gerekliliklerine uyumunun önündeki tüm engellerin ortadan kaldırılmasında yatmaktadır.*

\*Master's Student, Selcuk University International Relations Faculty, Social Science Institute. eldanimurhamida@gmail.com

## **INTRODUCTION**

The birth of the current state, Turkey, came out from the old great Ottoman Empire in the early ages of civilization. The newly independent Turkey was headed by a great leader named Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Under Atatürk, the foreign policy of Turkey centered on modernization through Westernization. Turkey started to develop its foreign policy and relationship with the West and began to join and enter western international organizations from the Western powers like NATO. Turkey appealed to the European Economic Community (EEC) until 1959. This promising beginning of enjoinment ripened to establishing the Ankara Agreement and further deepened the relationship (Paul, 2015). One of the most significant achievements as the product of the European Community (EC) and Turkey's negotiation was the 1963 Ankara Agreement. This agreement gave birth to more connections between the two parties. When the EEC was formulated in 1987, Turkey tried to enter the European World through Community membership as an aspiring country. However, Turkey could not come to the Union due to some circumstances. Despite this, Turkey was continuously inspired to be part of the European World. In 1999, after years of close cooperation at the Helsinki summit, Turkey finally became an official candidate state for European Union membership. Moreover, their official accession negotiation started in 2005 (Pehlivan, 2008). In this relation, this work reviews Turkey's admission process and effort to become an EU member state. It also discusses the criteria for the aspiring EU states, the European enlargement process, and Turkey's challenges toward EU membership.

## **EUROPEAN ENLARGEMENT AND COPENHAGEN CRITERIA**

As the excellent relationship among the European Union members continued to progress, its influence triggered other European countries to join the EU league. The enlargement process was somehow an achievement for the EU because it could extensively strengthen its principles. Upon creating the Copenhagen Criteria, new nation-states were inspired to fulfill these European requirements. The Copenhagen Criteria became the backbone of the EU. The Copenhagen Criteria serves as a basis before joining or entering the world of Europe. The evaluation involves the structure of a country's economy, politics, and the rule of law. It is concerned with the state's institutional stability, corruption, and minority treatment. Economic competitiveness and its social status also matter. The ability or the willingness to follow the rules under the Copenhagen criteria and fulfill other membership obligations are also part of the conditions (Veebel, 2011). To be part of the EU states, candidates must fulfill the laws and standards of the EU. Also, the consent of the EU institutions and their members is part of the requisite. The citizen's consents are necessary during the referendum or national parliament session for their approval or disapproval. Thus, the aspiring candidates must comply with the European Council's Copenhagen criteria (European Commission, 2020b).

Copenhagen or accession criteria involve political and economic facets and administrative or institutional organs to implement the EU values. Political matters include promoting EU values. Simultaneously, a country's market competition and economic marketing condition are part of the candidate country's economic aspect (European Commission, 2016a). Therefore, the Chapters of the Acquis are necessary conditions for acquiring EU membership. There are 35 Chapters to be considered, and these chapters cover issues on laws, services, information, media, and policies on a candidate country's political, social, cultural, and economic aspects (European Commission, 2019).

Furthermore, accession to the EU requires three stages, including readiness to become a candidate state for membership. Afterward, a candidate country proceeds with the official negotiation for membership which includes enforcement of the EU laws and values and meeting the accession criteria or the Copenhagen criteria. Lastly, upon engaging in reforms and the satisfaction of the involved parties (EU and the candidate), the candidate would finally become a member state. The

Chapter negotiations, as mentioned above, involve the screening process and negotiation. The Commission examines the Chapters as a policy field of the candidate country and makes remarks or reports. Furthermore, under the negotiating positions, benchmarks are being made by European Union to determine if the aspirant meets the condition of the Chapters. The negotiated chapters' approval or closing depends on the EU commission's evaluations (European Commission, 2016b).

Since the creation of the EEC, the Union's enlargement has gone with consistency until it became the EU. It originated from six to twenty-five members and extended to four other candidates like Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, and Turkey. Western Balkan countries were also offered future membership privileges and enthusiastically sought candidate statuses like Ukraine and other former Soviet Republics (Bretherton and Vogler, 2005). Upon possessing the needed EU accession qualifications, the six waves of enlargement created enormous European Community changes. The enlargement process always brings new members to the European family; from 1973, 1986, 1995, 2004, and 2007 about 21 new member states were welcomed by the EU. Furthermore, in 2013, Croatia also officially entered the European Union, which in all, there are 28 member states until now. Other candidate countries for accession include Albania, Ireland, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey (European Union, 2014).

#### **TURKEY ON EU ENLARGEMENT**

The desire of Turkey for EU membership started since the EEC's founding and establishment. The economic partnership between Turkey and the EU could bring benefits to both actors. Turkey has plenitude agricultural products, and if it attains its accession, surely Turkey could be the community's great advantage. Indeed, Turkey's journey to the EU has faced many obstacles and hindrances. These include the single market's incompetency, the labor force's free movement, and other similar factors (Ulchenko, 1998).

Similar to other aspiring member states, Turkey needs to meet the Copenhagen criteria for accession. For Turkey, accession is an inseparable step since its policy always looks forward to Westernization. Nevertheless, the European Council's verdict brought disappointment to Turkey. Before becoming a candidate, the Council gave the candidate status to eleven states, including Cyprus, while Turkey remained excluded. The European Council gave Turkey a chance to enlargement process, but unfortunately, it did not attain the entire membership or candidate status. Some existing issues on Turkey's political and economic structure and pressures from other EU members hindered its candidacy (Eralp, 2000). Due to this unpleasing result, Turkey started to feel doubts and uncertainty about its relationship with the Europeans. Notwithstanding, its first attempt was unsuccessful. Turkey and the EU's relationship continued until time Helsinki conference happened. The Helsinki Conference is one of the most highlighted events for Turkey. The event marks the firm hope of Turkey to become an EU member. Hope for becoming a candidate country was given to Turkey in 1999, particularly in December. This event triggered Turkey's positive feeling of real inclusion in the European world. In the following years, the relationship between the two parties continued and progressively bloomed. From 2000 to 2012, several changes in Turkey's social, political, and economic structure rapidly advanced (Aksu, 2013).

#### **ACCESSION JOURNEY OF TURKEY TOWARD THE EU MEMBERSHIP**

As the EU and Turkey relationship is perpetually evolving, in March 2001, the "Accession Partnership" has finally embraced by the Council, and this partnership served as a framework to assist Turkey. It helped Turkey as an aspiring nation-state to fulfill the local programs in its country on the Acquis or EU's law adoption. This partnership served as a way for Europe to help Turkey accomplish the criteria for its accession to the EU, including its politics and advancing its constituents' rights. The

Council also adopted the regulation of the European Council's pre-accession financial assistance focused on the pre-accession process. In the same year (2001), many political dialogues were conducted, including Cyprus, Human Rights, and the Customs Union. Besides, significant adjustments to Turkey's law or some constitutional articles happened, including constitutional amendments to fundamental freedoms. An assessment of Copenhagen Criteria, including its political and economic developments, was also made (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). As aforementioned, the Cyprus issue is one of the issues that influenced Turkey's position on the EU membership, mainly in the post-Cold war. The issue did not only change the EU-Turkey relations but also led to multidimensional results. The EU perceived the Cyprus problem within the context of Turkey's membership process. Hence, the EU likewise developed one-sided impositions instead of adopting a will to resolve the existing crisis. Also, Cyprus had negatively expressed its opinions on Turkey's human rights, democracy & freedom of expression (Durmaz, 2015).

Furthermore, Turkey could not easily comply with membership criteria despite many reforms in political and economic matters. In the 2001 Regular report, Turkey's progress and steps towards adopting the Acquis were evaluated. Based on the overall assessment, Turkey was told to ensure the conformity of its country's new legislative proposals to the EU's Community Acquis. The report likewise stated that Turkey's alignment to the Acquis was uneven because some were advanced and some were less advanced. Hence, massive discrepancies were also noticed between the two parties due to the difficulty of the transposition process (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). In addition, the reports tackled Turkey's development matters in human rights issues which were still deficient and subject to more improvements. The report similarly mentioned the economic category in which Turkey's economic advancement was immensely affected by the 2001 crisis. On the bright side, remarks about the country's competitiveness due to Customs Union's enactment were also reported. Nonetheless, the report was only limited to the end of September 2001, and the National Program's precedence was still up to the month of 2002 to complete other reports (Dartan and Nas, 2002).

Under Recep Tayyip Erdogan's party, Turkey's negotiation on its accession to the EU remained persistent upon winning the new regime. As previously mentioned, the *Accession Partnership and National Program* served as a tool for Turkey to concentrate on Political Criteria that observe or include the rule of law, democracy, rights, freedoms, as well as other similar legislation. The first legislation Package was adopted in February 2002. As stated, a new party came to power. Until 2003, the adoption of more Harmonization Package was continuous. Likewise, on May 22, 2004, there was a political change in Turkey. Turkey's constitution has been amended, including removing the death penalty (Aybey, 2004). The Harmonization package serves as a reference for amendments to laws in Turkey and is subject to the approval or rejection of the Parliament. The enforcement of the first harmonization package in 2002 was used to amend the Penal Code, which includes the law on terrorism (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007).

Before Turkey's formal accession process (around 2004), some EU member country leaders like Jacques Toubon and Angela Merkel suggested a "special partnership" rather than accession. In the following year, in contrast, on October 3, 2005, Turkey's official accession negotiation was opened. The screening process also began with the 35 titles or the chapters. The negotiations were incorporated with other conditions before it could proceed, like new civil codes and other legislation, because Turkey refused and did fail to comply (Aybey, 2004). Turkey and the EU agreed on legislative changes in line with the accession partnership, implemented with persistence from 2001-to 2004. Besides, as a conclusion to Turkey's first regular report, it was perceived that Turkey has been determined and sincere in reformation to accomplish the accession process. Consistent constitutional reforms, adoption of new codes in 2001, and the 8 (eight) legislative packages that included Civil and Penal codes adaptation happened correspondingly in 2002 (Commission of the European Communities, 2004).

In 2004 (December), at Brussels's Summit, as mentioned above, the formal accession talks were decided to open in 2005. The EU simultaneously demanded Turkey recognize Cyprus as an EU member. The new penal code has also amended in the same year due to media restriction complaints. The EU recognized this step, but it was insufficient to meet the human rights concern (BCC News, 2018). Moreover, for the Ankara Agreement's extension, an additional protocol was signed in 2005. However, in 2006 due to the Cyprus tension, the European Union suspended its relationship with Turkey; this included the suspension of negotiation for eight chapters and could only be closed upon Turkey's application of additional protocol recognizing Cyprus (Hauge et al., 2016).

After the negotiation, there were some changes, ups, and downs. Criticism of its slow development and some failure to comply with the membership assessment were also noticed. In addition, some of the EU member states were found to disfavor Turkey's step toward Europe. Hence, based on surveys concluded in 2006 and 2009, Greece, France, and Germany are examples of European Union members that were quite uneasy about Turkey's membership (Akşit et al., 2009). 1999 to 2005 focused more on reformation, especially on human rights laws. It involved transforming and formulating new laws or legislative reforms that could co-inside with EU laws' principles. However, in the post-2005 period, the reformation became unhurried due to implementation problems and challenges in the formerly existing reformed laws like fighting against torture and freedom of expression issues. Furthermore, during these periods, concerns about the Turkish government's political aspects involving the rights of the minority, like the Kurdish and non-Muslim rights, were given attention (Aydin-Dtizgit and Keyman, 2013).

In the year 2006, in terms of chapter negotiations, there was only one Chapter opened and, at the same time, closed temporarily by the EU and Turkey. Thus, at the end of the year (2006), few outstanding achievements occurred. Moreover, despite the European Union's redundant request, Turkey had not permitted the Cypriot-flagged ship to step into Turkish water. Therefore, the suspension of the eight chapters was decided by the EU. The EU can negotiate and be open only until Turkey fulfills the Ankara Agreement's additional protocol (Horváth and Szűcs, 2007). The additional protocols pertained to the arrangement and conditions for the transitional stage implementation, including freedom from custom unions and goods (Council of the European Communities, 1992).

In 2007, another crucial chapter was opened for negotiation; five chapters were opened, mainly concerned with industrial and enterprise ruling. A few months later, Chapters 18 and 32 dealt with statistics, and financial control was subjected to negotiations. Before the year ended in December, Chapter 28 (Consumer's health and protection) and Chapter 21 (trans-European network) were also welcomed. Besides, Turkey's Harmonization Package to EU *acquis* was declared (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020).

The trading relationship was doing well, but when the Euro crisis in 2008 happened, the two parties' economic relationship in the next year (2009) weakened. Indeed the exchange of import goods also decreased (Baracani and Çalımlı, 2017). Nevertheless, due to the trade volume increase that reached more than two hundred billion, Turkey successfully had the fastest growth or increased rate in the circle of OECD economies during the first half of 2010 (Grabbe and Ülgen, 2010). In 2008, the political dialogue focused on the challenges of Turkey on the Copenhagen Conditions for political matters. A foreign policy issue was also tackled in Turkey's neighboring country or the Middle East. The bilateral trade between the two parties increased due to the Customs Union in 2006 for about 100 billion Euros. Turkey also became the 7<sup>th</sup> largest trade partner of the EU. In 2008, financial aid was also intended for the country from Pre-accession Assistance. In June of the same year, the Chapter on the company and intellectual property policy was opened. In December, Chapter on capital's free movement and society's information and media had also been ready for accession talks (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020).

The negotiation continued in the preceding years. The discourse was held in February of 2010. The difficulty of Turkey in fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria was discussed. The foreign policy matter relative to their mutual interest in regional ranges on neighboring countries was also incorporated in the meetings. In the same year, financial assistance was provided under the Pre-Accession Assistance program. The Pre-accession assistance was technical and financial aid for the candidate country. It supported reforms as part of the preparation for becoming an EU member. This funding encouraged civil society enhancement matters, including political categories and the media. Technical assistance for Turkey to improve good services for its active citizenship was also included (European Commission, 2010; European Commission, 2020a).

In 2011, the topic of Cyprus Issues was brought again and consequently became a hindrance once more for accession progress. When president Erdoğan visited Northern Cyprus, he emphasized that a solution must be made by 2011, or the island would remain divided. Also, the president said that if Cyprus presumed the EU presidency of the EU council (by the Southern part of Cyprus), he claimed to freeze Turkey's relationship with the EU because he could not deal with a president or leader who did not recognize Turkey. This event brought negativity on Turkey's part and brought criticisms from Greek Cypriots and the EU (Morelli, 2010).

In 2012, out of 35 chapters, only 12 were opened for negotiation. The progress on opening chapters for Turkey's membership seems to be sluggish. Some chapters were unopened and frozen by the EU for various reasons, including the Cyprus matter, because Turkey did not want to open its port for trading with Cyprus. Besides, the EC froze the other eight chapters and decided not to close them until the issue on Cyprus was resolved. Furthermore, Cyprus and France turned out to be a hindrance due to their veto rights to block some chapters (Thomas, 2003). At the beginning of the chapter negotiation back to 2005, the accession process of Turkey towards the European Union faced many adversaries as well as interruptions. Despite Turkey's sincere effort to be part of the EU, the way to full membership was still stagnant. In April 2013, the energy chapter for accession was opened for negotiation by both parties. This energy security matter could also be vital in the accession negotiation. Likewise, the parties' uncertain or unsure negotiation might negatively impact energy cooperation (Koranyi and Sartori, 2013).

Unexpected and displeasing experiences similarly happened in May 2013. The Gezi Park revolt incident received many criticisms from the EU. There was a subdued result. Thus, the European Parliament proposed mainly judicial reforms as well as human rights matters. In the Annual Report of 2013, they appreciated Turkey, but at the same time, they were appraised on some political climate regarding democratic issues (Blockmans, 2014). In May 2015, the European Union and Turkey gave a verdict to modernize the 20-year-old Customs Union agreement, for they believed that this could help develop the bilateral trade relations. This step does not represent an alternation to the accession negotiation but an additional measure to strengthen the parties' relationship (European Commission, 2015). A Memorandum of Understanding was issued to fortify the Customs Union. Albeit slow progress in some political aspects of negotiation, the bilateral economic relationship moderately did well (Yalcin et al., 2016).

In November 2015, a meeting between the two parties energized their relationship, especially in managing the immigration crisis. The following year, another meeting was held on March 17-18, 2016. The issue on Visa Liberation has been opened. On June 30 (2016), the Accession Conference opened the Financial and Budgetary provisions under Chapter 33. Out of 35 chapters, 16 have been opened for negotiation, and as mentioned, only one Chapter was provisionally closed (Science and Research) (European Union, 2018). Both parties decided to have the Joint Action Plan for the improvement of support to the Syrians. The EU support and the continuous humanitarian assistance to the Syrians in Turkey were also stated in the gathering. Moreover, launching the dialogue on the cooperation of both parties in energy matters was likewise welcomed (EU Council, 2015).

In 2016, when the military coup happened, the EU and Turkey's relationship was quite affected. Based on Progress Report, the July 15 coup attack was denounced by the European commissions and supported the democracy in the country. After the coup, Turkey acted more firmly or willfully, which contradicted the democratic ruling. However, the 16 chapters have been opened for negotiation. The other eight were temporarily close, while others are still subject to Turkey's possible development. The European Union and Turkey cooperated in fighting against terrorism and working together on immigration. Also, visa liberation was said to be achieved upon completing the needed criteria. On the other side, the "State of Emergency" by Turkey's leader, as remembered, triggered the statement of advice from the EU to comply firmly or strengthen the issues on human rights laws. The European Council thought Turkey became inconsistent with human rights practices contrary to the EU principles. The occasion resulted in the suspension of the relationship between the two parties (Akçay, 2017).

Since the end of the Military coup in 2016, no new chapter has been opened for negotiation. Furthermore, in 2016, the European Parliament Members (MEP) embraced a resolution for negotiation suspension. This event was due to the country's repression act and human rights issues. This call for suspension continued until Turkey's adoption in 2017, which was not binding. The military intervention of Turkey during the Afrin operation triggered the EU's reaction. Moreover, MEP subsequently adopted a measure for Turkey to elevate the country from the emergency status. Likewise, MEP condemned the arrest of some journalists that showed disapproval and discouragement of the action of Turkey. Despite this, both actors (EU and Turkey) still work together on some issues of migration. Both parties concluded an agreement that talks about the migration crisis (European Parliament, 2018a).

According to the April 2017 media report, the relationship between the two parties became more paradoxical. Still, the issue of Cyprus is one of the biggest hindrances in its accession process. The failure of unification between North and South Cyprus significantly affected the Turkey-EU connection. As long as Turkey remained consistent in working with the EU membership, then Southern Cyprus, at the same time, could also be persistent on its objection or blockage. Despite these negative signs on its accession process, Turkey and EU interaction was still ongoing (Ünal, 2017).

Regarding economic relations between the parties, their trade relationship was doing well with a high rate in 2016-2017. However, due to some imbalance in capital inflows and vulnerability to outside shocks, the lira was also devalued. The EU is still the largest trading partner for Turkey, whereas Turkey is one of the community's active allies in trade matters. In regional relationship matters regarding Cyprus, Turkey was willing to talk about a peaceful settlement. Unfortunately, further progress in both parties' negotiations and talks was not seen (European Commission, 2018).

A "Refugee Deal" between the two communities happened in March 2016 Summit. It involved talks about their cooperation in regulating the irregular route of migration from Turkey to the EU countries. In this period between 2016 and 2017, changes also occurred in the relationship of both parties. Turkey had emphasized more on migration, democratic values, the Cyprus problem, and other similar problems. As a result, the 2016 progress Report on Turkey became more critical of the country's improvements, but Turkey remained a strategic partner of the EU (Dossier, 2018).

In 2017, the European Council assisted by financial means to support and promote more of Turkey's civil societal programs or continue the support for developing Turkey's civil society that involved fundamental rights promotion. Moreover, Turkey actively joined some EU programs, including Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, Customs 2020, and similar projects. However, in January of 2017, Turkey decided to withdraw from the Creative Europe Programme but still participated in other projects like the European Environmental Agency (European Commission, 2018).

Turkey's ongoing reform saw its perseverance in line with EU rulings and values. Unfortunately, when the negotiation for accession officially started in 2005, the positive impulse declined. Some undemocratic changes that the West perceived in Turkey's ruling, like the constitutional referendum and the harsh authoritarian response of the AKP party to the 2013 Gezi Park revolt, influenced the EU's attitude towards Turkey. Other factors included several ministerial government scandals which involved president Erdoğan's family. As a result, after many years of negotiation, only 16 chapters were opened, and only one was temporarily closed. Turkey's president also taught that the EU was applying double standards and Islamophobia to their country on various occasions. But despite these vague possible endings, the relationship between the two parties was continuous. Thus, Turkey still receives the Pre-accession Assistance from 2014-to 2020 and works for their shared interests (Yabancı, 2016).

Both Turkey and the EU shared a similar interest in finding a solution regarding the Syrian crisis and terrorism. Besides, the EU Council and Parliament permitted the European Commission to enhance cooperation with Turkey. In March 2016, Turkey agreed to take responsibility for the migrants who illegally entered the EU by Turkey, particularly those who did not need international protection. On the other hand, despite the cooperation, other factors affecting the EU-Turkey relationship were some EU members' opposition. From the early period up to the present, Germany's Angela Merkel still expressed opposition to Turkey's accession (Philippe, 2018). Hence, in 2016, Austria's leader also asserted its disapproval of Turkey's accession journey and the prevailing Liberal party of Denmark as well (European Parliament, 2018).

At the Turkish Parliament's 3<sup>rd</sup> legislative session on October 1, 2017, Turkey's leader stated that their country does not have the necessity of membership to the EU; however, they added that they are not on the side of giving up the accession. Turkey's leader also criticized the EU for failing to fight against terrorism (TRT World, 2017). In 2018, many challenges negatively affected the EU and Turkey's relationship, especially the accession process. In September 2018, the European Union canceled 70 million euros to Turkey for failure to comply with Human Rights practices and no progress under the rule of law. These funds were initially intended for immigration programs (The Globe Post, 2018). However, there was also positive feedback during November. The EU commission said Turkey was close to completing the necessary criteria on no visa access requirement for travel around the Schengen regions for the country's citizens or Turkish citizens (Hürriyet, 2018).

During the 2019 report, it was cited that Ankara was getting near to fulfilling the visas' liberalization fulfillment for free-visa travel to the EU member-states. However, 65 out of 72 benchmarks are vital for liberalization. Thus, 2 out of 7 remaining criteria continue to be tackled in Turkey. This liberalization process started at the end of 2013 and was somehow sluggish in progress. Furthermore, Turkey's issue with Cyprus could hinder visa liberalization because Turkey has to sign a cooperation agreement with other EU members, of which Cyprus was one. The entire benchmark fulfillment could also be impossible not until Turkey considers the state of Cyprus's Greek side to be an independent nation-state (Kılıç, 2019).

## **CONCLUSION**

Despite the active engagement of Turkey towards its country's reformation based on the EU standards, Turkey's journey to EU membership became similarly paradoxical. There are 16 chapters open to negotiation, including chapters on the free movement of capital, company law, intellectual property rights, society and media information, policy on food safety, Vet. and Phytosanitary, policy on economic and monetary, taxation, enterprise, and industrial policy. Other opened chapters also include statistics, Trans-European networks, regional policy and coordination of structural instruments, science and research, education and culture, environment, consumer and health

protection, financial control, as well as financial and budgetary provisions. Nevertheless, despite these 16 above-mentioned opened chapters for negotiation, it was clear that the progress was slow-moving. After years of cooperation, only one Chapter (science and research) has been closed provisionally out of 35 chapters for accession membership. Turkey's failure and unsuccessful attempts to comply with all the requisites for membership placed the country in uncertainty and vagueness for EU membership. In addition, internal challenges within Turkey, such as democratic values, civil liberties, and human rights, significantly affect its standing in its accession journey. Likewise, external factors such as the antagonistic attitude of some the EU members like Cyprus contributed to the vague culmination of the two parties' relations. Hence, the possibility of membership depends on eliminating the significant challenges that hindered Turkey from completing the accession conditions and the EU members' sincerity in welcoming Turkey to be part of the EU world.

## References

- Akçay, E. Y. (2017). Avrupa Birliği'nde Koşulluluk İlkesinin İşlevsizliği: 15 Temmuz Sonrası Türkiye-Ab İlişkileri Çerçevesinde Bir Analiz. *Al Farabi Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 1(3), 503-516.
- Akşit, S., Şenyuva, Ö., & Üstün, Ç.(2009). Turkey Watch: Eu Member States' Perceptions on Turkey's Accession To The Eu. *Center For European Studies, Middle East Technical University: Ankara*.
- Aydin-Dtizgit, S. And Keyman, E.F. (2013). Eu-Turkey Relations and The Stagnation Of Turkish Democracy. *Global Turkey In Europe: Political, Economic, And Foreign Policy Dimensions Of Turkey's Evolving Relationship With The Eu*, 2, 7-8. [Http://Www.Iai.It/Sites/Default/Files/Gte\\_Wp\\_02.Pdf](Http://Www.Iai.It/Sites/Default/Files/Gte_Wp_02.Pdf) (30.05.2021)
- Baracani, E. And Çalimli, M. (2017). Eu-Turkey Relations: Facilitating or Constraining Democratization? *European Perspectives On Turkey's Domestic Politics And Foreign Policy*, P.11.
- BCC News. (2018). <Https://Www.Bbc.Com/News/World-Europe-17994865>.
- Blockmans, S. (2014). Eu-Turkey Relations: Turning Vicious Circles Into Virtuous Ones. *Ceps Policy Brief Or Centre For European Policy Studies, Brussels*, 3-4. Retrieved From <Https://Www.Ceps.Eu/System/Files/Pb%20317%20sb%20on%20turkey%20final.Pdf>, (02.12.2018).
- Bretherton, C, And Vogler, J. (2006). The European Union As Global Actor. *German Law Journal*, 9(2), Pp.211-215.
- Commission Of The European Communities. (2001). 2001 Regular Report On Turkey's Progress Towards Accession. Retrieved From <https://www.avrupa.info.tr/sites/default/files/2016-11/2001.pdf>
- Commission Of The European Communities. (2004). Recommendation Of The European Commission On Turkey's Progress Towards Accession. Retrieved From <Https://Eurlex.Europa.Eu/Lexuriserv/Lexuriserv.Do?Uri=Com%3a2004%3a0656%3afin%3aen%3apdf> (21.04.2021).
- Council of The European Communities. (1992). EEC-Turkey Association Agreement And Protocols And Other Basic Texts. Brussels. Retrieved From <Http://Aei.Pitt.Edu/56864/1/Protocols.Turkey.Pdf>
- Dartan, M. And Nas, Ç. Eds. (2002). *The European Union Enlargement Process And Turkey*. Marmara University, European Community Institute.
- Dossier, M. (2018). Eu-Turkey Relations. Retrieved From [Https://Www.Cetus.Uni-Koeln.De/Sites/Jean\\_Monnet/User\\_Upload/Eu-Turkey\\_Relations\\_-\\_Monteus\\_Dossier.Pdf](Https://Www.Cetus.Uni-Koeln.De/Sites/Jean_Monnet/User_Upload/Eu-Turkey_Relations_-_Monteus_Dossier.Pdf), (03.12.2021).
- Durmaz, F. (2015). Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemde Türkiye-Avrupa Birliği İlişkilerinin'kibris'boyutu. *Gümüşhane University Electronic Journal of the Institute of Social Science/Gümüşhane Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Elektronik Dergisi*, 6(13).
- Eralp, A. (2000). Turkey In The Enlargement Process: From Luxembourg To Helsinki. *Private View*, 8, 2-3.
- EU Council. (2015). Meeting Of Heads Of State Or Government With Turkey-Eu-Turkey Statement. Retrieved From <Https://Www.Consilium.Europa.Eu/En/Press/Press-Releases/2015/11//29/Eu-Turkey-Meeting-Statement/>, (24.12.2021).

- European Commission. (2010). Turkey 2010 Progress Report. Retrieved From [https://ec.europa.eu/Neighbourhood-Enlargement/Sites/Near/Files/Pdf/Key\\_Documents/2010/Package/Tr\\_Rapport\\_2010\\_En.Pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/Neighbourhood-Enlargement/Sites/Near/Files/Pdf/Key_Documents/2010/Package/Tr_Rapport_2010_En.Pdf) (02.12.2020).
- European Commission. (2015). Eu And Turkey Announce Modernisation Of Customs Union, Retrieved From <Http://Trade.Ec.Europa.Eu/Doclib/Press/Index.Cfm?Id=1307>, (11.12.2020).
- European Commission. (2016a). Accession Criteria. Retrieved From [Https://Ec.Europa.Eu/Neighbourhood-Enlargement/Policy/Glossary/Terms/Accession-Criteria\\_En](Https://Ec.Europa.Eu/Neighbourhood-Enlargement/Policy/Glossary/Terms/Accession-Criteria_En)
- European Commission. (2016b). Steps Towards Joining. Retrieved From [Https://Ec.Europa.Eu/Neighbourhood-Enlargement/Policy/Steps-Towards-Joining\\_En](Https://Ec.Europa.Eu/Neighbourhood-Enlargement/Policy/Steps-Towards-Joining_En)
- European Commission. (2018). Turkey 2018 Report. Retrieved From <Https://Ec.Europa.Eu/Neighbourhood-Enlargement/Sites/Near/Files/20180417-Turkey-Report.Pdf>, (27.01.2021).
- European Commission. (2019). Conditions For Membership. Retrieved From [Https://Ec.Europa.Eu/Neighbourhood-Enlargement/Policy/Conditions-Membership/Chapters-Of-The-Acquis\\_En](Https://Ec.Europa.Eu/Neighbourhood-Enlargement/Policy/Conditions-Membership/Chapters-Of-The-Acquis_En)
- European Commission. (2020a). Instrument For Pre-Accession Assistance. Retrieved From [Https://Ec.Europa.Eu/Neighbourhood-Enlargement/Instruments/Overview\\_En](Https://Ec.Europa.Eu/Neighbourhood-Enlargement/Instruments/Overview_En)
- European Commission. (2020b). Conditions For Membership. Retrieved From [Https://Ec.Europa.Eu/Neighbourhood-Enlargement/Policy/Conditions-Membership\\_En](Https://Ec.Europa.Eu/Neighbourhood-Enlargement/Policy/Conditions-Membership_En)
- European Commission. 2018. Key Findings Of The 2018 Report On Turkey. Retrieved From <Https://Www.Avrupa.Info.Tr/En/Eeas-News/Key-Findings-2018-Report-Turkey-7577>, (30.12.2020).
- European Parliament. (2018a). Reassessing Eu-Turkey Relations. Retrieved From <Http://Www.Europarl.Europa.Eu/News/En/Headlines/World/20170426sto72401/New-Beginnings-Reassessing-Eu-Turkey-Relations>, (22.12.2020).
- European Parliament. (2018b). Future Eu-Turkey Relations. P.5 Retrieved From [Https://Www.Europarl.Europa.Eu/Regdata/Etudes/Brie/2018/628290/Eprs\\_Bri\(2018\)6282\\_90\\_En.Pdf](Https://Www.Europarl.Europa.Eu/Regdata/Etudes/Brie/2018/628290/Eprs_Bri(2018)6282_90_En.Pdf)
- European Union. (2014). Negotiation Chapters: 35 Steps Towards The European Union, Eu Information Centre, Retrieved From [Https://Europa.Rs/Images/Publikacije/07-35\\_Steps\\_Toward\\_Eu.Pdf](Https://Europa.Rs/Images/Publikacije/07-35_Steps_Toward_Eu.Pdf) (30.11.2020).
- European Union. (2018). Delegation Of The European Union To Turkey: Current Status. Retrieved From <Https://Www.Avrupa.Info.Tr/En/Current-Status-742>, (01.12.2020).
- EU-Turkey: We Want Full Membership, Eu Needs To Stop Being Overly Critical", Says Erdogan. (2018). Retrieved From <Https://Youtu.Be/2m4ck3aqi20>. (20.12.2020).
- Grabbe, H., & Ülgen, S.(2010). The Way Forward For Turkey And The Eu: A Strategic Dialogue On Foreign Policy. Retrieved From [Https://Carnegieendowment.Org/Files/Turkey\\_Eu\\_Policy1.Pdf](Https://Carnegieendowment.Org/Files/Turkey_Eu_Policy1.Pdf) (03.12.2020).
- Hauge, H. L., Eralp, A., Wessels, M. W., & Bedir, N. S. (2016). *Mapping Milestones And Periods Of Past Eu-Turkey Relations*. Feuture Working Paper, 09.

- Horváth, Z., & Szűcs, P. (2007). *Handbook On The European Union*. Hvg-Orac.
- Hürriyet. 2018. Turkey Close To Visa-Free Travel: Eu Commissioner. Retrieved From [Http://Www.Hurriyetdailynews.Com/Turkey-Close-To-Visa-Free-Travel-Eu-Commissioner-139292](http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/Turkey-Close-To-Visa-Free-Travel-Eu-Commissioner-139292) (01.03.2021)
- Kılıç, T.(2019). Two Criteria Remain Challenging As Turkey Nears Visa Liberalization With The Eu. Retrieved From [Https://Www.Dailysabah.Com/Eu-Affairs/2019/01/02/Two-Criteria-Remain-Challenging-As-Turkey-Nears-Visa-Liberalization-With-Eu](https://www.dailysabah.com/Eu-Affairs/2019/01/02/Two-Criteria-Remain-Challenging-As-Turkey-Nears-Visa-Liberalization-With-Eu)
- Koranyi, D., & Sartori, N. (2013). Eu-Turkish Energy Relations In The Context Of Eu Accession Negotiations: Focus On Natural Gas. *Global Turkey In Europe* li, 23.
- Ministry Of Foreign Affairs. (2007). Political Reforms In Turkey. Retrieved From [Https://Www.Ab.Gov.Tr/Files/Pub/Prt.Pdf](https://www.ab.gov.tr/files/pub/prt.pdf)
- Ministry Of Foreign Affairs. (2020). Chronology Of Turkey-European Union Relations (1959-2015). [Https://Www.Ab.Gov.Tr/Files/Chronology.Pdf](https://www.ab.gov.tr/files/chronology.pdf), P.5, (22.12.2020).
- Morelli, V. (2010). European Union Enlargement: A Status Report On Turkey's Accession Negotiations. *Library Of Congress Washington Dc Congressional Research Service*.
- Philippe, P. (2018). Future Eu-Turkey Relations. *European Parliamentary Research Service*, 4-6. Retrieved From [Http://Www.Europarl.Europa.Eu/Regdata/Etudes/Brie/2018/628290/Eprs\\_Bri\(2018\)628290\\_En.Pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/regdata/etudes/brie/2018/628290/eprs_bri(2018)628290_en.pdf) (20.12.2020)
- The Global Post. (2018). Eu Cancels €70 Million Fund For Turkey Due To Failure In Human Rights. Retrieved From [Https://Turkey.Theglobepost.Com/Turkey-Eu-Fund-Cancelled/](https://turkey.theglobepost.com/Turkey-Eu-Fund-Cancelled/)
- Thomas, S.(2003). The Accession Of Turkey Into Eu: Reasons For The Slow Progress. Retrieved From [Http://Edepot.Wur.Nl/251421](http://edepot.wur.nl/251421), (25.11.2020).
- TRT World. (2017). President Erdoğan Says Turkey No Longer Needs Eu Membership. Retrieved From [Https://Www.Trtworld.Com/Turkey/President-Erdogan-Says-Turkey-No-Longer-Needs-Eu-Membership-](https://www.trtworld.com/Turkey/President-Erdogan-Says-Turkey-No-Longer-Needs-Eu-Membership-)
- Ulchenko, N. (1998). Turkey-Eu Economic Relations: Problems And Prospects. *The Turkish Yearbook Of International Relations*, 18, 142.
- Ünal, Ç.(2017).The Cyprus Conundrum In Turkey- Eu Relations. Retrieved From [Http://Www.Hurriyetdailynews.Com/Opinion/Unal-Cevikoz/The-Cyprus-Conundrum-In-Turkey-Eu-Relations--111561](http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/Opinion/Unal-Cevikoz/The-Cyprus-Conundrum-In-Turkey-Eu-Relations--111561)
- Veebel, V. (2011). Relevance Of Copenhagen Criteria in Actual Accession: Principles, Methods, And Shortcomings Of Eu Pre-Accession Evaluation. *Studies Of Transition States and Societies*, 3(3), 3-23.
- Yabancı, B. (2016). The Future of Eu-Turkey Relations: Between Mutual Distrust and Interdependency. *Feuture Online Paper*, 1, 1-37.
- Yalcin, E., Aichele, R., And Felbermayr, G.(2016). Turkey's Eu Integration At A Crossroads (Ged Study)," *Books*, 8. Retrieved From [Https://Www.Bertelsmann-Stiftung.De/Fileadmin/Files/Bst/Publikationen/Grauepublikationen/Nw\\_Turkey\\_S\\_Eu\\_Integration.Pdf](https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/Files/Bst/Publikationen/Grauepublikationen/Nw_Turkey_S_Eu_Integration.Pdf) (03.12.2020).