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LOBBYING ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST GROUPS DURING THE EU MEMBERSHIP PROCESS OF TURKEY

Şükrü Alper YURTTAŞ¹

Abstract

In parallel to the devolution of authority from member nations to the EU, the lobbying actions of various entities towards EU institutions have expanded over time. A variety of organisations coordinates lobbying efforts on behalf of EU institutions. The aim of this research is to investigate the impact of a candidate country's interest groups' lobbying efforts by focusing on Turkey as a case.

Due to the length of the EU membership process, which has exceeded 20 years, Turkey is regarded as an exceptional case. This study examines the lobbying actions of four economic and two political bodies in Turkey between 1999 and 2021, based on a typological description of two sorts of groupings. In terms of research method, a two-stage approach was adopted by using qualitative and quantitative tools together. In the first stage, written documents were analysed to determine the institutions' general attitudes towards the EU accession process and the topics they focus on. The documents in question includes periodic activity reports, thematic reports, press releases, statements of institution representatives for non-governmental organizations and party programs, election manifestos, statements of party leaders or representatives, and parliamentary minutes for political parties. In addition, the news in the national media about the activities of the institutions was examined through an extensive media scan. Following this, in the second stage, semi-structured questionnaires were prepared for all institutions and answers were sought in in-depth interviews with EU representatives of the institutions examined, EU decision makers who are the addressees of the lobbying activities, and relevant experts on lobbying in the EU.

According to the findings of the research, the study suggests that variations in Turkey-EU relations have a detrimental impact on the lobbying actions of these entities. However, the lobbying actions of the entities listed below are less influenced by these changes. These are the groups that focus on their particular field of operations at the technical level rather than the Turkish accession process and create deeper relationships with transnational umbrella organizations. The statistics imply that non-governmental organizations are more effective than political parties in EU lobbying actions.

Keywords: European Union, Interest Groups, Interest Representation, Lobbying.

Jel Codes: F50, N40, N44.

¹Öğr. Gör. Dr., İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi, E-posta: alpyurttas@itu.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0003-3461-8290.

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TÜRKİYE’NİN AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ ÜYELİĞİ SÜRECİNDE ÇIKAR GRUPLARININ LOBİ FAALİYETLERİ

Öz

Üye devletlerden Avrupa Birliği kurumlarına yetki aktarımındaki artışla birlikte, çıkar gruplarının Birlik kurumlarını hedef alan lobi faaliyetlerinde artış görülmektedir. Birçok farklı çıkar grubu bu süreçte Birlik düzeyinde lobi faaliyetleri yürütmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, AB adayı bir ülke olarak Türkiye’den siyasi ve ekonomik çıkar gruplarının yürüttükleri lobi faaliyetlerini ve bu faaliyetlerin hangi şartlar altında etkin olabildiğini yansıtmaktır.

Çalışma kapsamında, adaylık süreci 20 yılı aşan ve bu yönüyle diğer aday ülkelerden ayrılan Türkiye’den iki siyasi ve dört iktisadi kuruluşun 1999-2021 arasında yürüttükleri lobi faaliyetleri mercek altına alınmıştır. Araştırma yöntemi açısından kalitatif ve kantitatif araçlardan birlikte faydalanılarak, çalışmada iki aşamalı bir yaklaşım benimsenmiştir. Birinci aşamada, incelenen kurumların AB katılım sürecine ilişkin genel tutumlarının ve hangi konu başlıklarına daha fazla önem verdiklerinin belirlenmesi için yazılı belgeler incelenmiştir. Söz konusu belgeler; sivil toplum kuruluşları için dönemsel faaliyet raporlarını, tematik raporları, basın bültenlerini, kurum temsilcilerinin açıklamalarını, siyasi partiler içinse parti programlarını, seçim bildirelerini, parti liderlerinin ya da temsilcilerinin açıklamalarını ve TBMM tutanaklarını kapsamaktadır. Bunların yanı sıra, yapılan basın taramasıyla kurumların çalışmalarına ilişkin basında yer alan haberler de incelenmiştir. Bu belgelerin incelenmesinin ardından, ikinci aşamada ise tüm kurumlara yönelik yarı yapılandırılmış soru formları hazırlanmış ve incelenen kurumların AB temsilcileriyle, bu kurumların yürüttüğü lobi çalışmalarının muhatabı olan AB karar alıcılarıyla ve diğer uzmanlar olarak adlandırdığımız, AB’de lobicilik konusundaki uzmanlarla yapılan derinlemesine mülakatlarda bu sorulara yanıt aranmıştır.

Araştırmanın bulgularına göre, odaklanılan grupların lobi faaliyetlerinin AB-Türkiye ilişkilerindeki iniş çıkışlardan önemli ölçüde etkilendikleri görülmüştür. Bunun yanında, Türkiye’nin üyelik sürecine dair çalışmalar yerine kendi çalışma alanlarına odaklanan, bu alanlarda siyasi değil teknik düzeyde lobi faaliyetleri yürüten ve özellikle ulusüstü çatı kuruluşlarla güçlü ilişkiler geliştiren gruplar, AB-Türkiye ilişkilerindeki dalgalanmalardan daha az etkilenmektedir. Diğer taraftan, çalışmadan incelenen farklı türde gruplar arasında tipolojik bir ayrıma gidilmiş ve iktisadi çıkar gruplarının siyasi gruplara nazaran Birlik düzeyinde daha etkin lobi faaliyetleri yürüttüğü görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Avrupa Birliği, Lobicilik, Çıkar Grupları, Çıkar Temsili.

Jel Kodları: F50, N40, N44.

1. INTRODUCTION

As a tool for influencing decision-making, lobbying has been used for many years by interest groups regardless of country, region or political system. Due to its multilayer governance structure, the European Union (EU) has gradually become a target for lobbies in parallel with the enlargement and deepening process.

From a lobbying perspective, the EU can be described as an arena mainly interest groups of member countries, and EU level umbrella organizations are active lobby actors. Thus, the EU lobbying literature mostly consists of studies focused on lobbying strategies, access points to decision-making mechanisms and behavioural patterns of these interest groups. (Bunea & Baumgartner, 2014) Nevertheless, the EU provides opportunities in many aspects to interest

groups of member countries, and these groups lobby the EU institutions for influencing the decision-making process.

In this study, based on the hypothesis that political and economic actors of a candidate country can lobby the EU, this assumption is tested whether it works in the Turkish case. In this context, the lobbying activities of Turkish political and economic actors have been analyzed and tried to determine the necessary conditions for effective lobbying. On the other hand, answers to why there may be variances in the effectiveness of lobbying actions among the different types of groups were sought, and how and to what extent fluctuations in EU-Turkey relations have affected the groups' lobbying performances.

Due to its candidacy process for over 20 years, Turkey has been a candidate status longer than any other EU candidate country. In this respect, it is a very convenient case for this study. The length of Turkey's candidacy process also makes it possible to observe potential changes in the effectiveness of the lobbying activities of the groups in this long-term process. Thus, the lobbying activities for 22 years from 1999 (when the institutions of the EU accepted Turkey's candidacy application) to 2021 were examined in this study.

This study focuses on the lobbying activities of six groups, consisting of four economic and two political actors. The selection of these groups is based on three criteria; (1) their regular contact with EU institutions in their fields of work, (2) their support for Turkey's EU membership, and (3) their permanent representation in Brussels.

Based on the criteria listed above, within the scope of economic actors, it is examined Turkish Industry & Business Association (TUSIAD) as the representative organization of the business world, The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) as the representative organization of professional chambers, Economic Development Foundation (İKV) as the first Turkish representative institution of the private sector at EU level and The Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey (KAGİDER) as a social identity group. On the other hand, political actors' side the study focused on Justice and Development Party (AKP) and Republican People's Party (CHP). The reason for choosing these parties are their pro-EU approaches (at least in rhetoric), and since their positions as the ruling party (AKP) and the main opposition party (CHP), they represent a large part of the society for many years.

First, written documents were examined to better understand the general approaches of these groups to EU-Turkey relations and the topic they prefer to focus on. For economic actors, these documents consist of periodic and thematic reports, press releases and statements of

leaders or representatives of the groups. Besides this, for political actors, it consists of party programs, election manifestos, statements of party leaders or representatives, and the parliamentary minutes. In addition, news in the national press about the lobbying activities of these groups was also examined through a press scan. Then, semi-structured questionnaires were prepared for all groups, and in-depth interviews were conducted with the EU representatives of the institutions. The main reason for using the in-depth interview method is that face-to-face lobbying is one of the most used methods. However, if these interviews conduct only to group representatives, it reflects a one-sided approach, and therefore it provides information about “perception of influence” instead of the actual influence. In order to overcome this problem and to reach more objective results on the influence of lobbying activities, in-depth interviews were also conducted with representatives of EU institutions that were the addressees of these lobbying activities. The third group, whose opinions were sought, consists of people, called "other experts", who are neither representatives of the groups we examined nor EU institutions, but knowledgeable about Brussels' interest representation structure. Experts from different professions such as think tank members, journalists, academicians, researchers, and lobbyists were interviewed in this context.

The study will proceed as follows. First, key terms such as “lobbying” and “interest group” will be defined, and then the EU lobbying literature will be examined. After that, the issues focused on in the current studies and the deficiencies in the literature will be revealed. Then, the lobbying activities carried out by economic and political actors in Turkey's EU membership process will be analyzed. Finally, in light of the findings, the lobbying activities of the groups at the EU level will be evaluated. Thus, the assumption that political and economic actors of a candidate country can carry out effective lobbying activities at the EU level will be tested.

Due to the examination of two group types in the study, one can make a typological classification of lobbying among these groups. Because of the types of groups differ in terms of the effectiveness of lobbying, the reasons for this difference will be discussed. Whether there has been a change in the effectiveness of lobbying activities over time, and to what extent the activities carried out are affected by the fluctuating course of Turkey-EU relations are other topics to be discussed.

2. LOBBYING AS A TOOL FOR PARTICIPATION TO DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

In countries, institutions and organizations ruled by democracy, the broad participation of interest groups in decision-making processes is an essential indicator in terms of legitimacy. The democratic legitimacy of the structures, in which the citizens determine the administrators by voting at regular elections and which do not have the opportunity to participate in the decision processes, is becoming more and more controversial. A management structure in which different social segments can actively participate in decision-making mechanisms emerges as one of the essential characteristics of democratic systems. From this approach, lobbying can be considered one of the crucial tools for interest groups to make their voices heard by decision-makers and to influence them in line with their interests and demands.

As Kaleağası stated, lobbying can be defined as “influencing political decision-making mechanisms” in the most basic sense. (Kaleağası, 2011, p. 3) On the other hand, Klüver emphasises the symbiotic relationship between the information needs of decision-makers arising from the lack of time and personnel and the demands of interest groups to influence decision making by defining lobbying as a process of mutual exchange between interdependent actors. (Klüver, 2013a, p. 3) Gullberg’s definition of lobbying as "interest groups' communication with and activities for decision-makers in order to influence public policies" is also quite simple and inclusive. (Gullberg, 2013, p. 612) Based on these definitions, it can be said that three essential elements are necessary for lobbying; (1) primarily an interest group, (2) individuals or institutions in decision-making positions, and (3) the tools used by interest groups to influence decision-makers.

At this stage, it would be helpful to briefly touch upon which groups fall within the scope of interest groups. According to Beyers, a group must have three characteristics to be defined as an interest group; (1) a specific organizational structure, (2) aiming to influence political outcomes, and (3) not being a candidate to manage the political structure it aims to influence. (Beyers ea., 2008, p. 1106-1107) Considering these criteria, political parties are not included in the scope of interest groups because they aim to gain power through elections. However, two political parties are included among the institutions to be examined in this study. Because although the political parties aim to gain power at the national level, they do not have such claims at the EU level. Therefore, political parties can be considered interest groups in terms of their lobbying activities at the EU level.

As a reflection of lobbying practices, the lobbying literature generally focuses on studies directed towards the USA. However, there is an extensive literature on lobbying activities aimed at influencing decision-making processes in the EU as well.

When the academic studies on lobbying in the EU from 1958 when the EEC was founded to December 2013 are examined, the dramatic increase in interest in this field is clearly seen. Looking at the change in the number of articles over the years, only 12 articles published on lobbying in the EU between 1958-1993 were reached, while 184 articles published between 1994-2013 were reached. It can be said that the deepening of integration with the Maastricht Treaty affected the increase experienced after 1994. When the 1994-2013 period is evaluated within itself, it is seen that while 57 articles published between 1994-2006 were reached, 127 articles published between 2007-2013 were reached. (Bunea & Baumgartner)

As these facts indicate, lobbying studies at the EU level have become a rapidly developing research field. The increase in the academic interest in lobbying, in consequence of, on the one hand, the transfer of power to the EU in many legislative areas, on the other hand, the increase in the number of the EU member states with the enlargement waves. In other words, the increase in both the policy areas where decisions are made and the number of countries affected by these decisions, and therefore the number of citizens, has led interest groups to turn to the political orbit of the EU.

Some of the academic studies in the field of lobbying focus on the factors that affect the success of lobbying, as it is tried to do in this study. Michalowitz classifies these factors under three main headings as “structural conditions”, “level of conflict” and “type of issue” and emphasizes that the level of influence of interest groups on decision processes changes depending on the combination of these three factors. According to her, the level of democracy and transparency of the structure that is the target of lobbying, the low level of social polarization in the lobbying area, and the technical aspects of the issue are at the forefront rather than the political aspects will be effective in the success of the lobbying work. (Michalowitz, 2007) Similarly, Mahoney, in his study, which focuses on the success conditions of lobbying studies, again with a triple classification; states that factors arising from institutional, subject-based and interest group characteristics are influential in the success of lobbying activities. (Mahoney, 2007, p. 36)

Klüver, in her study focusing on the legislative process in the Commission, defined lobbying as a process of mutual exchange between interdependent actors. She claims that the interest

groups that come together periodically in line with a common goal, which she defines as "collective lobbying", increase the chance of success. In the same study, she emphasizes the importance of information supply, citizen support and economic power factors in its success. She suggests that the probability of success of the lobby camp, which provides these three elements more strongly, will increase. (Klüver, 2013b) Chalmers, who examines the effect of information types and the tactics used in the transfer of information on the success of interest groups, claims that the way of transferring information is more effective than the content of the information. In other words, the tool is more effective than the message. (Chalmers, 2013)

While some of the studies of lobbying literature focus on a specific EU institution such as the European Commission, The European Parliament (EP) or the Council, some others focus on specific policy areas such as energy, environment and transportation. (Marshall, 2010), (Eckhardt, 2011). In the literature, there are also studies focusing on the lobbying activities of social identity groups, member countries, candidate countries and third countries. (Rasmussen & Alexandrova, 2012)

In the EU lobbying literature, there are also studies examining Turkey's accession process and the impact of interest groups on this process, albeit few in number. The study of Kaya and Kentel, which examines the impact of the Euro-Turks on Turkey's EU accession process, is one of the first examples of studies in this area. (Kaya & Kentel, 2005, p. 69)

Focusing on the relations of Turkish NGOs with the EU, Alemdar argued in her study that the harmony between intergovernmental organizations and NGOs regarding norms and values is the main determining factor in the interaction of NGOs with these organizations. (Alemdar, 2005) The study of Kuşku Sönmez, which deals with the impact of the EU accession process in lobbying in certain areas of civil society in Turkey, is another crucial contribution to the Europeanization literature. (Kuşku Sönmez, 2013)

As can be seen, the literature on lobbying studies in the EU is quite diverse and comprehensive, both thematically and methodologically. However, in this large literature, the lack of studies focusing on interest groups of candidate countries stands out. This study aims to eliminate one of the deficiencies in the literature in this field by examining the lobbying activities carried out by interest groups both for Turkey's accession process and in their own working areas between the years 1999-2021.

3. INTEREST GROUPS' LOBBYING AT THE EU LEVEL

Since 1959, when Turkey made a partnership application to the European Economic Community, opinions of different social groups on relations with the EU began to emerge. However, the main interest of these groups in the EU accession process has started to increase since the Luxembourg Summit in 1997, where Turkey's candidacy status was first evaluated in the Council. Parallel to the development of Turkey-EU relations, the issue has taken place on the agenda of wider interest groups. Particularly, with the discovery of the influence of the EU on Turkey in the reform processes and the understanding that the accession negotiations affect all areas of social life, interest groups have increased their contacts in Brussels. In this section, the lobbying activities of interest groups during the critical turning points of Turkey-EU relations will be analyzed.

3.1. Economic Actors

Turkey-EU relations have followed a fluctuating course since the 60s, and a period in which relations became closer was followed by another period in which tensions came to the fore. After the Customs Union (CU) Agreement, Turkey's candidacy was added to the agenda again. Since this period, discussions on Turkey-EU relations began to be held in the axis of the accession.

Turkey attached great importance to the 1997 Luxembourg Summit, as the roadmap for the countries to be included in the new enlargement wave of the EU will be revealed. However, in the final declaration of the Summit, it was stated that although Turkey has the capacity to become a member, it has not yet fulfilled the political and economic conditions of the EU. This decision was met with a reaction in Turkey, especially since the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC) were given candidate country status. At the same time Turkey was left out, and caused the government to cut off the political dialogue with the EU. Thus, Turkey-EU relations became tense again which had a positive course in the CU process. Like previous trends, a new crisis period followed a period in which relations were developed.

On the other hand, at the Helsinki Summit in 1999, Turkey was recognized as a candidate country. The factors are stemming from the international conjuncture, such as the social democrat-green coalition taking office in Germany and the positive atmosphere between Turkey and Greece after the 1999 Earthquake, were influential in the change in the EU's perception towards Turkey in this period from 1997 to 1999. However, the intense lobbying

efforts of interest groups that evaluate the international conjuncture also contributed to overcoming the crisis with the EU.

This process can be defined as the first period of lobbying activities carried out by TUSIAD during the accession process. Considering Turkey's EU membership process since the CU Treaty, the Association has also started to work on issues such as democratization and the protection of the individual against the state. (Uğur & Yankaya, 2008, p. 588) The first step for TUSIAD to bring its demands on human rights and democratic rights to its agenda was taken with the report, *Democratization Perspectives in Turkey*, prepared in 1997. Bahadır Kaleağası, Secretary-General of TUSIAD, describes the report as "one of the most important milestones in Turkey's candidacy," which brings comprehensive suggestions on many issues from the law on political parties to the Kurdish issue, from trade union rights to judicial independence. Kaleağası stated that this report was used together with the Commission's progress report during the European capital visits of TUSIAD after the report was published. The report's contribution to Turkey's candidacy process is explained with the following statements. (Kaleağası, 2017)

"This report has changed history. It has shown that Turkey has a democratization problem, but that all of these problems are a breakdown, it is no hope for the impossible. This has been tremendously effective. It is what influenced everyone's decision. Of course, we cannot say that Turkey's candidacy was only thanks to TUSIAD, but we can say that it would not have happened without TUSIAD."

One of the results of TUSIAD's lobbying efforts can be considered the declaration of opinion regarding the recognition of Turkey as a candidate country in the statement published after the Confederation of European Business (BusinessEurope) summit held on 2-3 December 1999 before the Helsinki Summit. In the declaration, Turkey was described as "an important economic actor in Europe", and demands were expressed that "Turkey should be treated equally with other candidate countries and not discriminated based on the Copenhagen criteria and the relevant decisions of the European Council". ("Avrupalı işadamları: Türkiye AB için önemli", 1999)

Another lobbying activity of TUSIAD is the visits to the member states' capitals. Attaching great importance to the visit to Germany, Kaleağası emphasizes that this visit is another turning point in Turkey's candidacy process. (Kaleağası, 2017)

"During our visit to Germany, the President of the German Industries Federation (BDI), the President of TUSIAD and I visited Gerhard Schröder. He was the new prime minister at that time and he did not have extensive information about Turkey. However, with the influence of the BDI, he took a stance on Turkey's side. He said that Turkey's full membership process is in the national interest of Germany. In this process, we went to other capitals and carried out similar studies, but Germany was the turning point."

In this period, İKV was another group that carried out lobbying. Before the 1999 Helsinki Summit, İKV re-intensified its activities at the EU level. During the visit to Brussel, meetings were held with the President of the Commission Romano Prodi, the Commissioners and officials from COREPER. (“İKV, haftaya Prodi’ye gidiyor”, 1999)

İKV Brussels Representative Haluk Nuray stated that the Luxembourg Summit was a disappointment and emphasized that they worked intensely between 1997-1999. Nuray sums it up in words as "we only helped them open their eyes in this process, we made them realize that they were starting to lose Turkey." for the work carried out during this period. (Nuray, 2017)

After obtaining candidacy status in 1999, Turkey's next goal in the accession process was to start accession negotiations. In this period, in which positive opinions of the public, the business world and most of the political parties regarding the EU accession process stand out, significant steps have been taken on fundamental issues that may pose an obstacle in Turkey's membership process. Political reforms can be considered one of the most important steps for this target. When we look at the lobbying activities in this process, especially TUSIAD’s visit to EU countries in 2002 comes to the fore. The visit to Germany by the TUSIAD delegation in March 2002, where meetings were held with political party leaders, business representatives and bureaucrats, can be evaluated in this context. The statements made by the interviewees in favour of Turkey's membership after the meetings held by the TUSIAD delegation are important in terms of raising awareness in the international public opinion. (“TUSIAD: AB’ye doğru gidişimizin önünde kimse duramaz”, 2002) In the same year, TUSIAD embarked on a new lobby tour that included Greece, Denmark, France, Italy, Portugal and Spain and requested support from EU leaders in these visits so that Turkey would not be distracted from the reform process. With AKP coming to power after the general elections in November 2002, it is seen that some of TUSIAD's lobbying efforts aimed to eliminate the concerns that pose a threat to Turkey's secular structure.

Before the Copenhagen Summit, İKV also carried out lobbying activities. The Foundation provided substantial support to the “European Movement 2002”, an ad hoc organization with broad participation. In particular, they have contacted the Commission before the progress report, and their works also found place in the Commission's report. (Aktar, 2005)

TOBB, another lobbying organization during this period, visited Brussels with a delegation of approximately 260 people, under the name of “Turkey Platform”, which was formed together

with IKV and comprised of different segments of civil society. The delegation expanded further with the participation of Turkish NGOs in Europe, conveyed its messages to the Institutions of the EU in line with the candidacy status of Turkey. Representatives of organizations such as the EU Chambers of Commerce and Industry (EUROCHAMBRES), the European Confederation of Trade Unions (ETUC) and the European Bar Association (CCBE) attended the meeting of the Turkey Platform. (“AB için sivil işbirliği”, 2002)

Despite the reforms implemented and the lobbying efforts carried out by different elements of civil society, no decision was made at the 2002 Copenhagen Summit to start negotiations with Turkey. On the other hand, at the Summit, the progress achieved by Turkey in terms of the Copenhagen Criteria was emphasized and the reforms were supported. In addition, it was stated at the summit meeting to be held in December 2004 that accession negotiations would be initiated if it was decided that Turkey fulfilled the Copenhagen political criteria. (Baykal & Arat, 2013, p. 349)

After pointing out 2004 for the initiation of negotiations, lobbying activities focused on this date. Particularly before the 2004 Brussels Summit, IKV carried out lobbying under the umbrella of the Turkey Platform. The Platform organized a meeting in Brussels in which high-level officials from the institutions and bodies of the EU also took part as speakers. At this meeting, which took place with 750 participants from Turkey and Europe, messages were conveyed to the Union institutions to grant Turkey candidate status. According to Nuray, the activities done during this period can be considered an example of very serious and valuable lobbying. (Nuray) With the effect of the accepted reforms and lobbying efforts in this period, it was decided to start membership negotiations with Turkey on October 3, 2005.

Looking at the works of TOBB in this period, one can say that the relations with EUROCHAMBERS has a considerable role. TOBB President Rifat Hisarcıkıoğlu was elected as a member of the board of directors of EUROCHAMBRES in 2004. In the same year, the EUROCHAMBRES Presidency Council convened for the first time in its history, in a city other than Brussels, in Istanbul. After the meeting, EUROCHAMBRES President Christoph Leitl, asked by journalists, “Are you going to lobby to support Turkey before the negotiations that will start on 3 October?” He replied that their meeting in Istanbul could be regarded as a sign before political negotiations. (EUROCHAMBRES Başkanlık Divanı Toplandı, 2005)

Despite the decision taken at the Brussels Summit to start accession negotiations, negative statements such as there may be long transition periods, unique arrangements and permanent protection measures for Turkey, the negotiations are open-ended and Turkey's possible accession to the EU structures could not be fulfilled, have also been made at the final declaration of the summit. (Macmillan, 2010) In addition, before Turkey and the EU started membership negotiations, the EU's approval of the protocol extending the Ankara Agreement to include Southern Cyprus, and Turkey's declaration that it does not recognize the Greek administration, which is referred to as the Republic of Cyprus in this protocol, EU-Turkey relations have entered a new tense period since 2005. In 2006, upon the recommendation of the Commission and with the Council decision, the opening of the negotiations in eight chapters and the closing of all other chapters were conditioned to Turkey's opening its airports and ports to the Greek Cypriot Administration which brought the tension to a different level. Since France's unilateral blocking of five negotiation chapters in 2007 and six chapters of Southern Cyprus in 2009, the accession process has been interrupted again.

In this period, the reform process in Turkey was also interrupted, and the internal motivation of the government to continue the reforms decreased. Simultaneously, the language used in the reports and declarations published by the Commission and the Parliament regarding Turkey's membership process has become increasingly harsh. The criticisms against the political criteria have gained importance. This process, which started in 2005, directly affected the lobbying activities of interest groups. After that, the groups which could have a strong presence at the EU level with the effect of the positive course of relation carried out lobbying activities in their own fields of work and at a more technical level, rather than Turkey's accession process. (Kaygusuz, 2013, p. 418-419)

The opening of the Bosphorus Institute (Institut du Bosphore) in France in 2009 with the contributions of TUSIAD and the French business actors can be cited as an example of the lobbying efforts carried out when Turkey started to move away from the membership perspective. TUSIAD Brussels Representative Bahadır Kaleağası was appointed as the chairman of the Institute, which was designed to bring together people from different backgrounds such as politicians, business people, economists and academics from both countries. Bosphorus Institute has carried out various activities to discuss Turkey-EU relations in a more neutral platform in France. Kaleağası emphasizes that the Institute made an essential contribution to the annulment of the law, which penalized the denial of the Armenian Genocide by the French Constitutional Court. (Kaleağası, 2017)

Like TUSIAD, TOBB also carried out lobbying activities to change the hostile atmosphere in the accession process. Prior to the discussion of the draft law on the Armenian genocide allegations in France in the French Parliament in 2006, the TOBB President visited EUROCHAMBRES, the leading network of entrepreneurs in France (MEDEF) and the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry and conveyed the difficulties that the adoption of the bill would bring. (Sancar, 2014, p. 108-109) When a similar bill came to the agenda of the French Parliament once again in 2011, this time, in addition to its lobbying activities, TOBB agreed with a professional lobbying firm in France and preferred to reach the members of parliament through this firm. (Ermeni iddialarıyla ilgili 'lobi'ye devam...TOBB ETÜ'de araştırma enstitüsü kuruluyor, 2012)

KAGIDER, whose Brussels agency was established in 2008, is another group that carries out lobbying activities in this period. The most prominent example of the association's work for member countries is the events held in Germany, Austria and France in 2009-2010. During the visits to these countries, which approach Turkey's membership at a distance, the representatives of KAGIDER visit have met decision-makers, civil society representatives and women's entrepreneurship associations aiming to change the perception of Turkey in a positive way and to strengthen women's dialogue. With the influence of these efforts, KAGIDER was the only non-governmental organization that German President Christian Wulff met during his visit to Turkey in 2010. (KAGİDER Faaliyet Raporu 2009-2011)

As seen, after 2005, interest groups aimed to change the negative course of relations rather than contribute to the participation process. In order to stop this negative trend and accelerate the accession process, the "positive agenda" was put into practice in 2012. Within the scope of this, (1) energy, (2) visa exemption and (3) migration issues were determined as three priority areas and it was decided to cooperate on issues such as energy supply security and diversification of resources as the first step of cooperation. (Erhan & Akdemir, 2016, p. 20)

Shortly before the positive agenda came to life, the TUSIAD delegation met with the Energy Commissioner, Foreign Trade Commissioner, and Enlargement Commissioner during its visit to Commission on 5-6 March 2012. In addition to the Commission, the delegation also held contacts with members of the Council, EP and BusinessEurope. These contacts of TUSIAD can be considered lobbying efforts to set the framework for the positive agenda. According to TUSIAD Brussels Representative Dilek Aydın, the initiatives carried out for both Turkey and the EU side during the implementation of the Positive agenda were very effective in

determining three concrete areas where integration could continue and in taking these steps by preserving the framework of the membership negotiations. (Aydın, 2017)

The Schengen visa application for Turkish citizens has also become one of the issues that led to the questioning of the credibility of the EU in its relations with Turkey. It has been frequently stated that the EU applies double standards to Turkey because visa liberalization has been granted to all candidate countries except Turkey and negotiations have been started to abolish visas with non-candidate countries such as Ukraine and Moldova. (Aka & Özkural, 2015, p. 259) The works of IKV in the field of visa liberalization, which is one of the issues discussed within the scope of the positive agenda, stands out. First of all, IKV has implemented research to understand the problem of visa restrictions for Turkish citizens in all its dimensions. With the "Visa Complaint Line" project implemented in 2010, IKV collected visa complaints via telephone, fax and internet for a month. Afterwards, all complaints were classified and conveyed to many decision-makers, especially the relevant commissioner. These activities have led the EU to think more seriously about the visa problem. (Nuray)

At the meeting held in the EP in 2011, the visa issue was brought to the agenda. It was announced that a visa liberalization roadmap for Turkey would be prepared and some measures would be taken immediately to reduce the problems in the visa process. However, the realization of freedom of travel has been associated with Turkey's signing of the Readmission Agreement and strengthening its border security. (Baykal & Arat, 2013, p. 395-396) The lobbying activities carried out in this period also seem effective in making decisions.

The modernization of the CU is another prominent issue in the recent period of Turkey-EU relations. Currently, freedom of movement is provided for industrial products and processed agricultural products with the CU. By deepening the CU, it is aimed to broaden this practice considerably and join the EU single market, which is basically built on the free movement of goods, services, capital and persons. In addition, Turkey has been obliged to harmonize customs, competition and intellectual property policies with the EU. (Ülgen & Yenigün Dilek, 2015, p. 33)

The economic actors focus heavily on the modernization of the CU, which is one of the most critical topics. TUSİAD mentions many potential positive effects on the update of the CU in its report published in 2015. According to TUSİAD, an updated CU would first and foremost contribute to Turkey's economic governance. As the legislation and regulatory framework that shapes the business and investment environment aligns with the EU, the predictability of

public policies that affect the functioning of the economy will increase. (Ülgen &Yenigün Dilek, 23) Underlining that the issue is one of the most important topics of TUSIAD's EU agenda, Aydın said that the Association carries out very effective works on this issue. She states that significant progress has been made in terms of the acquis. (Aydın)

TOBB, another group directly affected by the developments in the CU, also carries out lobbying activities in this area. According to Mustafa Bayburtlu, Head of TOBB EU Department, the main issue in the lobbying work during the 2002-2005 period was to explain the reforms and start negotiations, and this was achieved. The main issue after 2005 is the opening and closing of new chapters in the accession negotiations. As a country, only 16 chapters were opened and one chapter was temporarily closed. Issues such as visa, customs union, transport quotas and Syrian refugees continue to be among the main work areas. (Bayburtlu, 2018)

One of the main features of the lobbying efforts of economic actors is the use of umbrella organizations at the EU level as an effective lobbying channel. By developing solid relations with TUSIAD-BusinessEurope, it could conduct more effective lobbying activities with EU institutions. It is seen that a similar relationship has been established between TOBB and EUORCHAMBERS.

KAGIDER, which started its lobbying activities later compared to other interest groups examined in the study, provided its socialization at the EU level in a very short time. The Association, whose Brussels representation was established in 2008, was accepted to the Turkey-EU Joint Advisory Committee in the same year and became the first Turkish women's organization to participate in the committee. (KAGIDER, 97) KAGIDER Brussels Representative Aslıhan Tekin states that the lobbying activities of the Association are carried out in a tripartite structure. (Tekin, 2017)

“Our relationships consist of three pillars. The first is the EU side. In addition to our relations with the Commission and Parliament, we have relations with structures such as the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC). Second, relations with women and civil society are at the EU and world level. We are active in the European Women's Lobby (EWL). We are one of the founders of the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), the umbrella organization of European women's entrepreneurship associations. The third pillar consists of state institutions such as the Turkish Permanent Representation to the EU and the Turkish Ministry for EU Affairs. In this triple classification, we conduct our relations in parallel.”

In the works carried out by KAGIDER at the Commission level, the General Directorate of Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG Growth) and the General Directorate of Neighbourhood Policies and Enlargement Negotiations (DG Near) come to the fore. When we look at the work on the Parliament, it is seen that certain committees are given

priority, the meetings of these committees in the field of women's rights are followed and relations with the parliamentarians are developed. The women's rights issue is tried to be brought to the EP's agenda through bilateral meetings. In these works, KAGIDER develops relations not only with parliamentarians related to Turkey but also among party groups, in a more homogeneous structure, in a wider range, mainly those dealing with women's rights at the EU level. The association especially follows the meetings of the Women's Rights Committee and the Foreign Relations Committee. In other words, KAGIDER works in a more homogeneous structure by not establishing relations with individuals and institutions that are only interested in Turkey or only in women's rights.

In the relations established with umbrella organizations, KAGIDER has developed strong relations with EU-level organizations operating in its fields, such as TUSIAD and TOBB. European Women Lobby (EWL), which lobbies on women's rights and gender equality at the EU level, and Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), the umbrella organization of women's entrepreneurship associations at the European level, are among the channels that KAGIDER develops relations with and benefits from in lobbying. KAGIDER's relations with these two institutions focus on women's rights issues rather than Turkey-EU relations.

As can be seen, all of the economic actors examined, except IKV, which is not within the body of an umbrella organization by its nature, have developed close relations with umbrella organizations at the EU level and benefited from the capacity power of these organizations in lobbying. It should be noted that one of the reasons why economic actors can develop close relations with supranational organizations is that the EU business world is the group that most welcomes Turkey's membership compared to other actors of the EU. As Tocci has stated, the business world is the most determined, consistent and undivided supporter of Turkey's accession process due to its belief that an enlarged EU will increase its competitiveness in the global economy. (Tocci, 2013, p. 127)

On the other hand, after 2005, when the accession process was interrupted and Turkey moved away from the membership perspective, interest groups' focus shift towards more technical issues such as the modernization of the CU, visa and energy can be considered another common feature of the lobbying activities.

The fact that the data we have reached in the study is based only on the reports of the institutions examined and the opinions and statements of the representatives may be misleading in terms of evaluating the effectiveness of lobbying activities. The subjective

opinions of the people who directly carry out these activities may not always reflect the truth. Therefore, to make a more objective assessment, in-depth interviews are conducted with decision-makers in EU institutions and other experts interested in lobbying activities in Brussels. The insights obtained from these interviews also largely confirm the data obtained from the interviews we had with the representatives of the institutions.

According to Amanda Paul, a senior analyst at the Brussels-based think tank European Policy Centre (EPC), lobbying builds relationships with relevant people in EU institutions. Paul states that she finds the Turkish business world quite successful in this respect and emphasizes that TUSİAD can be placed at the top of the list. She expresses, “They have a good strategy, a good network. They are quite proactive.” about the lobbying activities of TUSIAD. (Paul, 2017) EP Turkey Forum Secretary-General Laura Batalla Adam also stated that TUSIAD and IKV are among the most active groups lobbying for Turkey's EU membership. (Batalla Adam, 2017)

3.2. Political Actors

While many academics study the lobbying efforts of economic actors at the EU, it is challenging to say the same thing for political parties. However, political parties also carry out many lobbying activities at the EU level and can become effective over time.

Looking at the Turkish case, considering that public support for EU membership is closely related to political views, political parties stand out among the leading institutions that affect public opinion. (Nas, 2017, p. 578)

As mentioned in the previous title, Turkey's accession process can be divided into two as before and after 2005 in terms of the lobbying behaviour of interest groups. This can also be observed in the lobbying activities of AKP. The ideological approach of the AKP is mainly defined by the concept of conservative democracy which does not aim at an anti-secular transformation in the state, deals with religious freedoms at an individual level and expresses a closer line to the mainstream Turkish right wing parties and the Christian Democratic parties of Europe, rather than the Islamic state model adopted by the traditional National Movement (Milli Görüş) ideology. (Saatçioğlu, 2014, p. 90)

Despite AKP's positioning itself in this way, the claim that the party has a "hidden agenda" aiming at an Islamic transformation in Turkey has often come to the fore in domestic and foreign public opinion. Influenced by these allegations, AKP frequently emphasized the EU membership process in its election manifesto published before the 2002 elections and stated

that the reforms demanded by the EU were internalized by them and would be implemented quickly. (Her şey Türkiye için: AK Parti Seçim Beyannamesi, 2002, p. 13) AKP also developed good relations with non-governmental organizations in its early periods. Although TUSIAD, in particular criticizes government policies from time to time, it has generally supported the party's economic program, its opening on the Cyprus issue, and its approach to the EU membership process. (Öniş, 2004, p. 227)

In the 2002 elections, AKP reached the majority to form a government independently. Right after the elections, the party's senior officials made a series of visits to many EU countries. These visits were perceived as indicating that AKP considers relations with the EU as its main priority. (Tezcan & Aras, 2005, p. 8) Then, even if he was politically banned, as the de facto leader of AKP, Erdogan visited the United States to seek support for starting membership negotiations. (Avcı, 2004, p. 204) The primary purpose of these visits is to lobby before the upcoming Copenhagen Summit and change the prejudices towards AKP in western countries.

During the period of intense lobbying for EU institutions before the Copenhagen Summit, AKP also contributed to the activities of NGOs. During this period, the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs attended and supported the events organized by the Turkey Platform. ("AB'ye 'sivil' çıkarma", 2004) These efforts have importance in showing the EU decision-makers and the European public opinion that the goal of EU membership is adopted not only by the ruling party but also by a wide range of social groups.

AKP government, which adopted EU membership as the government's priority after the elections, implemented legal and constitutional reforms in this direction. (Yankaya & Yenigün Dilek, p. 591) In order to fulfil the EU political criteria, a total of nine harmonization packages were adopted by the 58th and 59th governments.

In 2005, AKP started to take part in the European People's Party (EPP), the umbrella organization of the European centre-right parties, with the status of an observer member. However, the period, which is called the golden era by many researchers, has started to change since 2005.

This period, in which the reform process did not stop completely. However, the government continued the reform process in certain areas by prioritizing the necessities brought by domestic politics instead of following the EU's roadmap precisely, is also defined by concepts such as "passive activism" (Avcı, 2011, p. 419) and "selective Europeanization" (Yılmaz,

2014, p. 305). A sharp transformation in AKP's EU policies began from this date on. Different reasons are put forward for the reasons of this transformation.

On the one hand, the EU has ratified the protocol extending the Ankara Agreement to include Cyprus, has emphasized that the membership negotiations will be open-ended, the EU's digestive capacity and permanent restrictions may be applied to Turkey, and the EU countries have opposed Turkey's membership through identity politics. These developments are seen as a trigger for tension. On the other hand, these justifications are not considered sufficient in transforming EU policies. According to Saatçioğlu, since military and judicial institutions are suspicious of AKP due to its Islamic roots, the party implemented reforms aimed at demilitarization and liberalization in many areas to guarantee its political presence in the first period of its rule. However, when AKP consolidated its power after the elections in 2007, the party decreased its dependence on the EU and continued the reform process only in certain areas. (Saatçioğlu, 2014, p. 88) Similarly, Yılmaz explains transformation mentioned above by linking AKP's legitimacy with public support rather than the EU, with the increase in support for the elections. (Yılmaz, 2014, p. 313-314)

This change in AKP's approach to the EU process also had negatively affected lobbying efforts. The party, which had developed strong relations with both EU institutions and member states and was accepted by its interlocutors, lost its lobbying activities to a large extent after this date. Asiye Bilgin, who served as the Vice President of AKP Brussels Representation between 2014-2016, are in the same direction. According to Bilgin, the party, which has made serious reforms regarding the EU since 2002-2003, has also taken significant steps in communication. Especially in the first period, the communication activities were quite effective. However, the suitability of the political atmosphere in this period also played a key role in the effectiveness of the activities. However, after 2005 this excitement started to disappear. (Bilgin, 2017)

The transformation in AKP's EU policies has started to show itself in election manifestos since 2007. In the 2007 declaration, positive references on relations with the EU have decreased compared to previous ones. In the 2011 declaration, negative references appeared for the first time and criticisms were directed towards the EU's position on Cyprus and its privileged partnership views.

With the implementation of the positive agenda in 2012, steps were taken on energy, visa exemption and migration and there were signs that AKP-EU relations would strengthen again.

However, after the Gezi Park protests in 2013, the relations have become more tense than ever before. In 2013, one of the important developments in AKP-EU relations was the party's group change in the EP. The party joined the European Conservatives and Reformists Alliance (AECR) from the EPP. (Tezcan & Aras, p. 24)

In 2015, the expressions used in the declarations prepared before the general elections held in June and November reveal AKP's approach to the EU. When the two declarations in which almost the same expressions are used are analyzed, it is seen that the decreasing trend in the positive discourses regarding the EU membership process continues and EU scepticism comes to the fore.

Finally, after the coup attempt in Turkey on 15 July 2016, EU institutions and member states harshly criticized the AKP government for reasons such as the extension of the state of emergency, human rights violations and authoritarianism. In the continuation of the process, after the EP's recommendation to freeze the membership negotiations with Turkey, relations that had been strained for a long time almost came to a breaking point. Since then, criticism by EU institutions has mainly focused on increasing authoritarianism and democracy deficit in Turkey.

The lobbying activities of AKP in Turkey's EU accession process have progressed in parallel to the general course of Turkey-EU relations and have been greatly influenced by domestic political dynamics. As mentioned above, the party developed strong relations with the EU between 2002 and 2005. After that, crises were very prominent apart from the short periods when relations tended to improve. In these periods, EU scepticism came to the fore in party policies, both in speeches and written documents. Again in this period, especially in the progress reports of the Commission and the reports of the EP, the criticisms against the ruling party both increased qualitatively and quantitatively. (Yurttaş & Şekercioğlu, 2019) Thus, it is difficult to say that the party has conducted active and effective lobbying after 2005.

Looking at CHP's approach in Turkey's EU accession process, it is seen that the party supports the accession process as a general approach, but this support is not unconditional. Both in the election manifestos, the party program and the statements of the party leaders and spokespersons, the demands for Turkey to be treated equally with other candidate countries during the EU membership process are frequently emphasized.

In the election manifesto published by CHP before the 2002 elections, the EU was determined as one of the six main headings. In the declaration, especially emphasizing the economic

dimension of the EU accession process, economic stability and rapid growth were associated with EU membership. In the declaration, the “Turkey Model”, which is expressed as a secular, democratic republic founded based on Muslim society, was highlighted and it was emphasized that Turkey as an EU member could more effectively fulfil its mission of being a bridge of culture and reconciliation between the east and the west. (Güzel Günler Göreceğiz: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi 2002 Seçim Bildirgesi, 2002)

In the manifesto for the 2007 elections, The EU was mentioned under the foreign policy heading instead of including as one of the main topics. In the manifesto, while emphasizing full membership on equal terms, the EU issue was mainly discussed in the context of a criticism of the government, because an open-ended negotiation process was accepted and concessions were made on the Cyprus issue. (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi: Pusula '07, 2007)

The founding of CHP Brussels Representation Office in 2008 contributed significantly to CHP's establishing direct channels of dialogue with EU institutions. Thus, CHP gained the opportunity to convey its messages to EU decision-makers and the European public more effectively, whose views on Turkey are largely based on the government's policies. After this date, naturally, the party's contacts with EU institutions gained momentum.

CHP Brussels Representative and European Socialist Party (PES) Board Member Kader Sevinç was appointed as the Brussels Representative in 2008. Sevinç states that the Brussels Representation Office was established to express at the EU level that CHP strongly supports the EU accession process and reforms, the EU institutions do not have the right to blame the opposition party for the government's actions. (Sevinç, 2017)

Looking at the party's 2011 election manifesto, it is seen that the contribution of the EU membership process to the welfare of the country was emphasized and the economic dimensions of the process were brought to the fore again. Another highlighted issue is the criticism that the government is moving away from Turkey's membership process with anti-democratic practices. (Özgürlüğün ve Umudun Ülkesi Herkesin Türkiye'si: CHP 2011 Seçim Bildirgesi, 2011)

In the June 2015 elections, which coincided with one of the most problematic periods in Turkey-EU relations, the EU membership process was more strongly embraced by CHP than in previous years. In the manifesto, which harshly criticized the government on the grounds that it alienated Turkey from EU membership, it was clearly stated that the EU orientation in

foreign policy under the CHP government would continue. The EU standards were emphasized in many policy areas. (Yaşanacak Bir Türkiye: 2015 Seçim Bildirgesi, 2015)

CHP receives the greatest support from PES in its lobbying efforts towards EU institutions in Brussels. In other words, the interest group-umbrella organization relationship, which is observed on the economic actors, is also encountered in the CHP example.

A significant part of the members of the three effective bodies of the EU decision-making process, the Council, the Commission and the Parliament, are also members of the PES. Therefore, CHP can use PES as an important tool in lobbying activities. The member countries where the PES member parties are in power are influential in the decisions taken at the EU summits where the general orientations of the EU are determined, and the ministers from these parties are also involved in the decision-making processes by taking part in different formations of the Council. Similarly, although it changes periodically, approximately one-third of the members of the Commission are members from the PES member parties. Looking at the EP, it is seen that the PES member Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group is the second largest group after the EPP with 145 seats. Thus, CHP has the opportunity to influence the EU decision-making mechanism from many different points through PES.

A lobbying activity carried out by CHP for the Commission is interesting in that it shows the direct impact of Turkey-EU relations on the work of CHP. CHP Brussels Representation formed an "EU Negotiation Monitoring Team" to inform the party administration about the contents of the EU negotiation chapters and to provide policy suggestions. In a short time, the Commission started negotiations with the team established. However, then with Sevinç's words "the government is being completely blown away in terms of democratization" led to the suspension of these talks and there was not much to talk about due to the tension in the relations. (Sevinç)

As seen in the example above, the lobbying efforts of CHP are directly affected by the course of Turkey-EU relations. Especially in periods when Turkey-EU relations are tense, the decrease in dialogue channels interrupts lobbying. Active participation of all political parties of the parliament in the membership process, which is seen in some candidate countries, is not in question in the case of Turkey. Therefore, when evaluating the lobbying activities of CHP, it should not be ignored that these activities are carried out as an opposition party and that the party's contribution to Turkey's EU accession process is limited compared to the ruling party.

Nevertheless, the EU institutions consider the views of CHP to establish a relationship with different segments in Turkey based on pluralism.

In the conclusion part, the lobbying activities of interest groups will be evaluated. The reasons for the difference between group types regarding the effectiveness of lobbying activities will be discussed in light of the findings obtained in the study.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the study, the lobbying activities carried out at the EU level. The success conditions of these activities were examined through the political and economic actors of an EU candidate country. The assumption that the lobby groups of the candidate countries could also carry out effective lobbying activities at the EU level was tested by examining the lobbying activities of six groups in total. By making a dual classification, the lobbying activities of the actors between 1999-2021 in Turkey, whose candidacy process is over 20 years (which is a unique example in this respect) are examined. Thus, it aims both to reveal the differences in terms of the lobbying effectiveness between the types of groups examined and to reflect the effect of Turkey-EU relations on lobbying activities in different periods of the EU accession process.

Two main features stand out in the general picture of Turkish interest representation at the EU level. The first is that interest groups are very few. The number of Turkish interest groups that have representation in Brussels, the headquarters of the EU, cannot reach double digits. It is a very low number on the scale of Brussels, where interest groups from all over the world and from many different segments are involved. Very high budgets are allocated for lobbying which is considered the second centre of lobbying in the world after Washington DC. The second feature is that Turkish interest representation does not have a balanced and multifaceted structure. All of the institutions examined under the title of economic actors in the study are represent the business world's organizations. Structures representing different socioeconomic segments and social identity groups, especially trade unions, do not have a sufficient presence in Brussels. It makes the representation of interests at the EU level one-sided and non-inclusive.

According to the findings, the study has similarities and differences with other studies examining lobbying and interest groups in the EU.

As emphasized above, collective lobbying directly effects the success of the lobbying activities. However, in Turkey case, collective lobbying is not seen except the years 2002-2005. In these years, contrary to the general view of the Turkish interest representation

structure, collective activities and lobby coalitions were frequently seen between different actors and between these actors and the state. However, after this period, as the ups and downs in Turkey-EU relations started to increase and Turkey moved away from the membership perspective over time, interest groups were more effective in lobbying activities in their fields of work rather than contributing to Turkey's accession process. In this sense, the lack of collective work except in exceptional circumstances is one of the peculiarities of the Turkish case.

On the other hand, as Michalowitz underlines, “types of issue” affect the level of influence. In the light of the findings of this study, Turkish groups are more likely to be successful in lobbying when they focus on technical issues rather than political ones.

When interest groups are evaluated in terms of the effectiveness of lobbying efforts, a clear distinction emerges between the types of groups examined in the study. Considering both the self-declarations of the representatives of the institutions and the interviews with the representatives of EU institutions and other experts on the subject that are the target of lobbying, it is seen that economic actors are more effective than political actors in lobbying.

In the light of the findings, this difference between group types stems from four main reasons. First, the economic actors have developed stronger relations with EU institutions and bodies over time and have more strongly ensured their socialization at the EU level. Except IKV, all of the economic actors we examined are members of EU-level umbrella organizations in their fields, and some even take part in the management of these organizations. It facilitates the lobbying of interest groups at a supranational level and provides a quick and relatively easy access channel to EU institutions and member states. On the other hand, the situation is different for political parties. AKP has not been able to establish a strong relationship either with the EPP or with the AECR. It is largely due to the ever-increasing fluctuations in Turkey-EU relations and the EPP and AECR broadly incorporate political parties against Turkey's membership. Looking at the CHP-PES relationship, a different picture emerges. The party has developed strong relations with PES and can use this channel effectively in lobbying. However, due to the tensions experienced in Turkey-EU relations in recent years, the EP's function has decreased as a lobby channel. It has also affected CHP's relations with the EP, which is considered one of the most critical lobby channels for a political party.

The second reason is that the economic actors have a more homogeneous structure in relations with the EU than the political actors. While political parties, which are heavily influenced by

domestic political dynamics, frequently have EU-sceptical discourses, the economic actors developed a more consistent discourse during these periods. In other words, while discourses reflecting EU scepticism emerges in political parties, especially during election periods, such a trend was not observed in business organizations that are directly affected by Turkey-EU relations economically.

Third, organizations that lobby in their fields of activity and diversify their lobbying channels expand their sphere of influence and increase the possibility of intervention in decision-making processes. In this context, groups that focus on more technical issues in their fields of study are more likely to get results, instead of working in a field such as Turkey's accession process, which has a predominant political aspect, depends on many variables, and where it is not possible to get results by just lobbying. In addition, organizations that do not limit their work only within the framework of Turkey-EU relations are less affected by the ups and downs in Turkey-EU relations in their lobbying activities. KAGIDER's lobbying style is one of the most striking examples of this. The association, which does not limit its network of relations with EU institutions only to individuals and organizations related to Turkey, acts with the identity of a European NGO by focusing on women's rights and gender equality, which are its main fields of work. In this way, it can keep its lobby channels open even in the periods when Turkey-EU relations are tense and less affected by these processes than institutions that focus on the Turkey-EU relationship. On the other hand, as mentioned above, political parties cannot sufficiently benefit from the EP, which usually is seen as the most effective channel for lobbying. The EP, which is made up of politicians, is naturally influenced by national elections. Just as anti-EU rhetoric emerges even in the parties that support the EU accession process in Turkey during election periods, discourses against Turkey's membership come to the fore during election periods in member states. Its reflections are also seen in the EP. The statements of the parliamentarians regarding Turkey and the resolutions adopted in the General Assembly generally contain more open and harsh criticisms compared to the decisions of the Commission or the Council. The fact that the JPC, one of the main lobby channels of political parties, can become dysfunctional due to the conjuncture, deprives political parties of one of the most basic lobby channels. As stated above, this finding coincides with Michalowitz's approach, which is mentioned in the first chapter, which claims that lobbying efforts on technical issues at EU the level are more effective than those on political issues.

The fourth reason, unlike the others, is not due to interest groups but to the approach of Union institutions and actors to Turkey's membership. The European business world is generally considered the group that gives the strongest support to Turkey's accession process. Therefore, it cannot be said that the Turkish business world has difficulty getting this group's support. On the other hand, for the reasons mentioned above, it is not always possible for political parties to receive similar support from EP member political groups.

Briefly, interest groups, which ensure their socialization at the EU level, especially the umbrella organizations in their fields, strengthen their supranational structuring and develop a stable and two-way relationship with the Union institutions by having consistency in their discourse and actions over time, increase the probability of success in lobbying. In addition, it is seen that interest groups can significantly reduce the risk of being affected by the tides in Turkey-EU relations in their lobbying efforts by focusing on technical issues in their fields of work and developing relations in a wider range when creating their communication channels.

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