

THE “ARMENIAN QUESTION” IN EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS¹

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Abstract: *The issue known as the “Armenian question” and which entails the genocide allegations, apart from other matters like the opening of the border with Armenia, increasingly confronts Turkey especially during the process of EU membership. The purpose of this research is to display the approach of the EU and the foremost member countries of the EU towards the “Armenian question” by addressing the resolutions adopted and the reports prepared regarding the Armenian question in EU institutions. The European Parliament, which has brought the genocide allegations the most to the agenda, has particularly been underlined. The significance of the European Parliament is that regardless of how the seats are distributed, it reflects public opinion or perhaps on the complete opposite, forms public opinion. Considering that the attempt of the Parliament, which puts to vote the membership process of candidate countries, to convince the Commission to accept Turkey’s recognition of the genocide allegations as a pre-condition for membership is dominant, it must be paid attention to.*

By drawing attention to the discussions and statements in the Parliament, the approach of European politicians has tried to be conveyed. By leaving out those repeating each other, examples have been provided among the statements, discussions, parliamentary questions and the responses given to these in the records and proceedings of the Parliament and the documents have been provided completely based on the original texts. Besides the approach of European countries towards Armenian terror during a certain period, the article has also shortly addressed which countries and political groups have supported Armenian theses the most and the reasons for this.

Keywords: *Turkey-EU relations, Armenian problem, Armenian terror*

Introduction

The issue described as the “Armenian question” and whose most important dimension represents the issue of Turkey being pressured by Western countries

¹ The Turkish article entitled “Avrupa Birliği Kurumlarında ‘Ermeni’ Meselesi” to be published in the *Ermeni Araştırmaları Dergisi* number 39, has been translated by Gizem Sökmensüer.

to recognize the 1915 events as “genocide” and to apologize for it, is a matter possessing a serious potential to transform into a crisis in Turkey-European Union (EU) relations. Since the issue is not considered to be “today’s issue” due to EU membership not seeming close for the time being, it seems necessary to take measures from now even if it is for the “potential issue of the future.”

The Armenian question has two aspects to it within Turkey-EU relations. The first is the issue of genocide, while the second is the normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia; in other words, the opening of the border and establishment of diplomatic relations. Another heading that could form a third dimension in the future which does not seem as an issue yet, but could turn into an obstacle any time with the guidance of Armenian lobbies in Europe could be the Armenians in Turkey having minority status.

Among the EU institutions, the European Parliament in particular is steered by the Armenian lobby to a great extent, defends the Armenian theses against Turkey and adopts resolutions in this direction quite frequently. In 1987, the European Parliament recognized the Armenian events as “genocide.” Moreover, many parliaments of countries which are either members of the EU or outside the EU, have also declared the 1915 events as “genocide.” This situation shows that members of the European Parliament, the parliament representatives in EU member countries and at the same time public opinion have recognized the events as genocide; in other words, it shows that they believe this to be true. This belief is much stronger in countries like France where especially the Armenian diaspora is more active in.

Right after Turkey’s acceptance as a candidate country to EU membership in 1999, the diaspora Armenians in Europe have established a permanent organization in 2000 whose central office was located in Brussels. This way, they have aimed to assess the membership process of Turkey, which was highly susceptible to pressures, in line with their own interests. They have started activities of propaganda directed towards the Parliament, which the lobbies could influence the most, being at the forefront, and the other institutions of the EU and even the national parliaments of member countries. The goal is for Turkey to open its borders with Armenia, but most importantly, for it to recognize the Armenian “genocide”. On the one hand, either at an EU or a national level, Armenian lobbies have caused these countries to recognize the “genocide” while on the other, has caused serious pressures to be inflicted on Turkey.²

Just as European politicians wanting to obstruct Turkey’s path to EU membership,

2 Ömer Engin Lütem, “Facts and Comments”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, No. 16-17, Winter 2004-Spring 2005.

Greek and Kurdish nationalist separatists conducting activities against the Turkish state have also been influential in the success of Armenian lobbies. Those not being acquainted with Turkey much, not knowing the true story of the 1915 events, individuals being subjected to disinformation and the ignorant defenders of human rights should also be added to the list. By taking advantage of the present negative situation, the anti-Turkish lobbies have been so successful that the possibility of setting a pre-condition for EU membership of recognizing the so-called genocide has seriously emerged. Actually, this type of condition has no place within EU law. Before membership or after, these kinds of requests have not been asked from other candidates who have “truly” experienced massacres, genocides, immoral activities or crimes against humanity in their histories.

TURKEY-ARMENIAN/ARMENIA RELATIONS DURING EU PROCESS

Turkey-Armenia Relations in the European Parliament

Since the European Parliament constantly maintains on the agenda the issue of “genocide” which has not found a place much in the other more serious and technical institutions, Turkey-Armenia relations has remained in the second place. It is not the Armenian government which directs the Parliament, but is the Armenian diaspora in Europe. For the diaspora, the acceptance of the “genocide” is much more important than the relations between the two countries. On the other hand, it could even be said that the Armenian diaspora is against the normalization of relations and the opening of the border through the establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Armenia. Since the only element which sustains the diaspora and creates its identities is Turkish-Armenian hostility, the normalization of relations between the two countries is not in the interest of the diaspora. As a matter of fact, the protocols, official calls and rapprochements between Turkey and Armenia are criticized by the diaspora and Armenian politicians are protested. Therefore, the issue of Turkey-Armenia relations has not been addressed in the Parliament in a remarkable way.

For the diaspora, the acceptance of the “genocide” is much more important than the relations between the two countries.

In the resolutions adopted or the reports prepared in the Parliament that “genocide” has been committed against Armenians, the necessity to open the border with Armenia has also been generally underlined.

In a Parliament report dated 15 November 2000, the importance of Turkey developing friendly relations with all its neighbors has been mentioned and a call

has been made for the elimination of the embargo towards Armenia and starting of diplomatic and commercial relations with Armenia again.

In another report of 2004, the European Parliament has not only called on the Turkish Government to recognize the “genocide” and to open the border with Armenia as soon as possible, but has also called on the EU Commission and Council. This way, the Commission and Council, which could make binding decisions towards candidate countries, have been encouraged to take action on this issue.

In the report of 25 September 2006 entitled “Parliament's Position on Turkey's Candidacy for EU Membership”, it has been conveyed that Turkey's unjust and unnecessary embargo towards Armenia still continues. It is mentioned that this situation has not only caused Turkey not to fulfill the requirements for accession, but also the stability in the region to be threatened.

In the resolution adopted in the Parliament on 18 October 2007 regarding Turkey-EU relations, it has been put forth that it is sorrowful to see that Turkey continues its “economic embargo”, keeps the borders closed, and threatens its neighbors of conducting military operations. Although it is correct that the border between Turkey and Armenia has been closed by Turkey, defining this situation as an “economic embargo” is wrong. On the other hand, Turkey does not threaten its neighbors, but fights against terrorism. However, considering that the purpose of this resolution, which is evident that it is determined by a few individuals and procures acceptance by others, is political mechanisms like “steering” or “pressure”, it is not important whether its content is correct or not.

Turkey-Armenian/Armenia Relations in the Commission

The Commission, which is concerned with the technical dimension of the enlargement process of the EU, has become the institution having the right to comment the most on Turkey-Armenia relations based on the article that border issues should not exist as a pre-condition for membership. Due to concern for votes, while the European Parliament has emphasized the subject of genocide by addressing the political and populist aspect of the matter, since the Commission focuses on enlargement, it has leaned towards rather more realist issues like the development of diplomatic relations of the two countries, the settlement of the border issues and Armenian minorities obtaining more extensive freedoms within the framework of democratization.

The progress reports of the Commission in which the annual processes of

development of candidate countries are being evaluated each year should be assessed as significant documents for displaying how the EU technically approaches the issue.

Turkey-Armenia Relations in the Progress Reports

In the first of the progress reports of 1998, the way the Armenians have first been mentioned is that the number of Armenians in the country was 50.000 and existed in the category of minorities. In 1999, the word "Armenian" has not been written and in the report of 2000, the very few signs of tolerance towards Armenian minorities have been found and the border with Armenia remaining closed has been mentioned for the first time. In 2001, it has been recorded that the border still remains closed and Armenia has been mentioned among the countries trafficking human beings.

When entering 2002, it could be seen that the Armenian issue has started being more extensively discussed all of a sudden. The issues of the Armenians, being among non-Muslim minorities, like lacking legal personalities, encountering problems of property rights, and a ban on the training of clergy in Turkey have been addressed along with the Armenian Patriarch's request for a special university department to be established specializing in the teaching of Christianity. Despite the border still remaining closed, the continuation of bilateral relations, starting of a process of dialogue, the establishment of a Turkish-Armenian Business Council, and visa requirements for Armenians entering Turkey being simplified have been mentioned as positive developments. It has also been indicated that minorities continue to face limitations regarding education, training of clergy, legal personality and property rights.

In the Progress Report of 2003, just as the year before, the general problems of Armenians living in Turkey as non-Muslim minorities have been repeated. A difference is that it has been mentioned there have been complaints that school history books are responsible for inducing feelings of hostility towards minority groups. It has been indicated that the Ministry of Education issued a circular requiring schools to organize conferences and essay competitions on "controversial historical events" related to the Armenians, Greek Pontus and Assyrians. Concerning the issue of borders, the possibilities of reopening the border to diplomats and foreign tourists and Turkey reconsidering its linkage of bilateral relations to the Karabakh issue have been mentioned. "Controversial historical events" mentioned in this report could be considered as an implicit reference to the genocide allegations. More importantly, apart from the Armenians, the Greek Pontus and Assyrians have also been included among the parties to these events.

In 2004, the problems of non-Muslim minorities related to schools and the difficulties experienced in teaching Armenian language have been indicated. It has been stated that despite the border remaining closed, there seems to be rising public awareness of the benefits of reopening it and that air transportation started from Istanbul to Yerevan. The benefits of reopening the railway between the two countries have been emphasized while the existence of a dialogue between Turkey, Azerbaijan and Armenia has been mentioned as positive developments.

Just as in the previous years, the report of 2005 has touched upon points like the problems of Armenian schools, the difficulties in teaching Armenian, the existence of a dialogue despite the border remaining closed, and the conducting of numerous bilateral meetings. A case being brought against Orhan Pamuk in the same year under Article 301 in relation to remarks he had made to a foreign newspaper regarding the killings of Armenians and Kurds in Turkey has also been mentioned. It has been indicated that the prosecution was initiated despite the fact that an earlier investigation by another prosecutor had been dropped following a different interpretation of the same article and that upon the order of the sub-governor of Sutçuler (province of Isparta) for the destruction of all Pamuk's books, Hrant Dink was convicted under Article 301 and was given a suspended six month prison sentence in relation to an article he had written on the Armenian diaspora. The cases of Emine Karaca convicted under Article 301 and Ragıp Zarakolu known as a "prominent writer" have also been addressed.

The report of 2005 has also put forth that some progress has been made on open and free debate. It has been expressed that a conference regarding the Armenians (Ottoman Armenians during the collapse of the Empire: Scientific Responsibility and Issues of Democracy) was to take place at Bilgi University, but that it had been postponed by the organizers following a critical speech by the Minister of Justice and details that its location was changed and that it received public support of the Prime Minister and government were not forgotten. As another example to progress in freedom, according to the Turkish Publishers Association, the publication of books related to the Kurdish and Armenian questions being easier than in the past has been conveyed. However, attention has been drawn to the fact that books focusing on these issues are in some cases still banned and individuals are occasionally convicted.

An indication has also been made that a Regulation on the Methods and Principles of the Boards of Non-Muslim Religious Foundations, adopted in 2004, has not been implemented in response to requests by the Armenian community, that of the 2,285 applications, 341 have been accepted regarding property rights, that given the religious communities' lack of legal status, their existing properties are permanently at risk of being confiscated, and that a number of non-Muslim

religious communities are still not entitled to establish foundations, including the Catholics and Protestants.

In the 2005 report, it has also been stated that the Turkish Prime Minister proposed to set up a joint commission composed of independent historians and other international experts with unconditional access to all relevant archives with a view to discuss the tragic events of 1915 and that in response, the Armenian President pointed out that "instead of employing historians, governments should rather establish diplomatic relations first and create a joint government commission dealing with all critical questions of the relationship, including closed borders." Furthermore, it has been pointed out that in the wake of the 90th anniversary of the 1915 events, Turkish academics participated in conferences in Yerevan and Armenian Parliamentarians made an official visit to Turkey.

The report of 2006 has indicated that the reason for Hrant Dink to face the suspended six month prison sentence under Article 301 was that he insulted "Turkishness" in his articles and writings regarding Armenian identity. The report has also put forth that Article 301 should be in line with EU standards and calls on Turkey to abolish the prosecution of expressing similar non-violent ideas in the other provisions of the Penal Code. Moreover, it has mentioned that the Anti-Terror Law has raised concerns that it could jeopardize the freedom of expression. It has also been indicated that despite an official exchange of letters between the Turkish Prime Minister and the Armenian President in 2005, important progress was not made in relations and that Turkey still did not open the border, although this step would benefit both sides.

In the progress report of 2007, it is indicated that "Hrant Dink, a Turkish journalist of Armenian origin who faced several criminal charges for expressing non-violent opinions related to historical issues, was assassinated". It has also been mentioned that while his death led to a movement of solidarity in Turkish society, there were also expressions of support for the perpetrators. Moreover, it is stated that Dink's case of murder is ongoing and there is a need for full investigations, including into allegations of police negligence.

Furthermore, it is mentioned that the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) judgment in the *Fener Boys High School Foundation v. Turkey* case became final, that the Court held unanimously that there had been a violation of laws and recommended either return of the property or financial compensation for the complainant. A friendly settlement has been concluded between the Turkish government and the Istanbul Armenian Hospital Foundation on a case brought to the ECHR by the Foundation and was decided that Turkey returns the property. It has also been stated that the final adoption of the new Law on Foundations voted

by Parliament in November 2006 and subsequently vetoed by the then President is still pending and that actually the new law would address a number of issues which religious communities face with property management and acquisition. It has been put forth that Article 301 has resulted in numerous prosecutions and, at times, convictions of people for the expression of non-violent opinions on, among other things, Armenian and Kurdish issues, and the role of the military and that judicial proceedings and threats against human rights defenders, journalists, writers, publishers, academics and intellectuals have created a climate which has led to occurrences of self-censorship in the country.

There has also been an indication that with Armenia, meetings between high level Armenian and Turkish officials took place and more importantly, that Turkey took the symbolic steps of inviting Armenian representatives to the funeral of the assassinated Turkish journalist of Armenian origins Hrant Dink and to the inauguration of the restored Akhdamar Armenian Church, but that there were no further substantial developments and Turkey maintained its border with Armenia closed.

In 2008, it has been indicated that the Turkish President played an active role in foreign policy and travelled extensively abroad and that at the invitation of the Armenian President, he paid a visit to Armenia with a view to establishing a bilateral dialogue leading to the normalization of bilateral relations. Moreover, the registration of the Turkish Armenian Business Development Council being rejected by the Governorate of Istanbul, without clear legal grounds has been mentioned. Official discussions taking place between the Armenian and Turkish Foreign Ministers, Turkey maintaining its offer to establish a joint commission of historians, Turkey starting efforts to facilitate the solution of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, and the first trilateral meeting taking place between the Foreign Ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Armenia have also been expressed.

The progress report of 2009 has addressed the concerns raised by high-profile cases about the quality of the investigations and the cases of Ergenekon, the murder of three Protestants in Malatya and the murder of Hrant Dink have been provided as examples to this. The necessity to address why security forces refrained from taking action despite receiving information about death threats against Dink has been mentioned. Moreover, it has been indicated that a petition signed by 200 Turkish intellectuals to denounce “the denial of the Great Catastrophe that the Ottoman Armenians were subjected to in 1915” and to apologize to the Armenians was launched on the internet, 30,000 signatures were collected, and that this sparked a wide debate. Furthermore, it has been mentioned that intense debates took place in the media on other topics perceived as sensitive by Turkish public opinion, such as the Kurdish issue, minority rights in general,

the role of the military and Atatürk’s legacy. The pending for a number of years of the Armenian Patriarchate’s proposal to open a university department for the Armenian language and clergy has been expressed. It has also been reported that the distribution in schools of the documentary “*Sarı Gelin –Blonde Bride: The Truth behind the Armenian Issue*” was suspended by the Ministry of National Education following complaints by the Armenian community about what it considered discriminatory education, but that it was not withdrawn from schools and the decision whether to disseminate and show it was left to individual education authorities. There has also been an indication that the public radio network started to broadcast in Armenian in March 2009.

Furthermore, the report has recorded that following the visit by the Turkish President to Armenia in September 2008, the two countries increased the number of bilateral meetings and moved significantly towards normalizing their bilateral relations and that the two parties even agreed to prepare the signature and ratification of two protocols in order to establish diplomatic relations.

In the progress report of 2010, concerning Turkey-Armenia relations, it is stated that through its “zero problems with neighbors” policy, Turkey made efforts to normalize relations with its neighboring countries such as Greece and Armenia. On the other hand, it has been reminded that the protocols signed with Armenia to normalize relations are still not ratified.

As regards freedom of expression, while attention has been drawn to the fact that an increasingly open and free debate continued on a wide scale, topics perceived as sensitive such as the Kurdish issue, minority rights, the Armenian issue and the role of the military have been mentioned. As regards freedom of assembly, the “Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day” being held on 24 April has been provided as an example. Within the framework of freedom of religion, the first religious service since 1915 being held at the Armenian Holy Cross church on the Akhdamar Island in Van has been indicated as a positive development. As negative developments, the Armenian Patriarchate’s proposal to open a university department for the Armenian language and clergy still pending and the court case of Hrant Dink continuing without significant progress have been criticized.

THE ISSUE OF GENOCIDE IN EU PROCESS

The Issue of Genocide in the Parliament

The institution in which the issue of “genocide” is discussed the most, where the most number of reports are prepared on this subject and resolutions are adopted is

the European Parliament. As soon as Turkey's interest in the EU was noticed, the Armenians in the European diaspora started their activities of propaganda against the Parliament members.

Bringing the issue of genocide to the agenda has first been carried out by the French members of the Parliament. The first initiative of the French has been the resolution of 1981 entitled "The Condition of the Armenian People".³ In the beginning of the 1980's, French socialist Parliamentarians Henry Saby and Gisele Charzat, along with socialist Belgium Parliamentarian Ernst Glinne, have requested several times from the Parliament to recognize the "genocide", only to be rejected each time by the Presidency.⁴ While the resolution of 1987 was being adopted, the French, insisting in a strange way on this issue, embraced this situation as "normal" by stating that the issue was a domestic political problem and that it did not target Turkey.⁵

The 1987 Resolution

As a result of the strengthening pressures and insistences with the participation of Greek Parliamentarians in 1984, there has been a decision to prepare a report in the Parliament concerning the issue. In the report completed in 1985 by Belgian Jaak Vandemenlebroucke, appointed as rapporteur, he has defended that the events constitute genocide.⁶ The report addressed twice in 1986 has caused extensive discussions and in 1987, a resolution has been adopted which recognizes the 1915 events as genocide.

We should note that rapporteur Vandemenlebroucke was a member of the Vlams Belang party known for being extreme-rightist and racist and furthermore, that he distributed the declaration, published against Turkey by extreme Kurdish groups who organized activities in various European cities in order to protest Turkey's operation on the territories of Iraq, in the building of the European Parliament.⁷

In the "*Resolution on a Political Solution to the Armenian Question*", in general, it has been asserted that the 1915 events constitute genocide and that this is "historically" proven, but that despite this proof, no enforcement has been made

3 Pulat Tacar, "The Tale of European Parliament's 1987 Resolution Entitled 'Political Situation to the Armenian Question'", *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 9, 2005, p. 48.

4 Sedat Laçiner, "Türkiye-Avrupa İlişkilerinde Ermeni Sorununun Etkisi (1980ler)", USAK website, 12 June 2009.

5 Pulat Tacar, "The Tale of European Parliament's 1987 Resolution Entitled 'Political Situation to the Armenian Question'", *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 9, 2005, p. 50.

6 Sedat Laçiner, "Türkiye-Avrupa İlişkilerinde Ermeni Sorununun Etkisi (1980ler)", USAK website, 12 June 2009.

7 Press and Information website, 10 March 1987, <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/ayintarihidetay.aspx?Id=273&Yil=1987&Ay=3>

on Turkey, that Turkey did not recognize the “genocide” and therefore, deprived the Armenian people of the right to their own history. In the resolution, it has been stated that the recognition of the “genocide” by Turkey is viewed as a “profoundly humane act”. A statement existing in the resolution which says that the “genocide” has been “historically” proven will mean that different views, new findings, comprehensive discussions regarding the matter and even suspicions will be blocked.

While being indicated in the resolution that the Parliament believes the events in 1915-1917 constitute genocide, there has been an emphasis that neither political nor legal or material claims against present-day Turkey could be derived from this recognition. However, then, it is stated that the “genocide” did not “receive due compensation” and these contradicting two expressions have actually crossed each other out.⁸ Using both expressions together which completely contradict each other displays the cunningness in “pleasing both sides” which Europeans frequently use. However, playing both sides this way will create much greater problems in the future.

While on the one hand, it is put forth that Turkey cannot be held responsible for genocide, on the other, it is said that it must recognize the genocide. If it cannot be held responsible, then why is there a desire for it to recognize the genocide?

In the resolutions of the European Parliament, only membership is not used as a carrot in order to convince Turkey to recognize the “genocide”, but maneuvers are also used. While on the one hand, it is put forth that Turkey cannot be held responsible for genocide, on the other, it is said that it must recognize the genocide. If it cannot be held responsible, then why is there a desire for it to recognize the genocide? If the Armenians pressuring the EU to adopt this resolution cannot receive money or territory, then why should they be contented with Turkey stating “I recognize” which is only a symbolic expression creating no results? We should also note that the EU’s expression of “cannot be held responsible”, which has become unreliable for going outside the law, agreements and statements many times, is nominal and deceiving.

Furthermore, this resolution requests the development of a specific identity for the Armenian people and the securing of its minority rights. Expressing such a desire shows that European Parliamentarians have no idea about the condition of Turkish citizen Armenians who were accepted as minorities for more than 50 years and who had minority rights. Therefore, this example is only one of the evidences

⁸ Pulat Tacar, “The Tale of European Parliament’s 1987 Resolution Entitled ‘Political Situation to the Armenian Question’”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 9, 2005, p.54.

showing that participation by the Parliamentarians who were unaware of the truth concerning Turkey and the Armenians in the elections took place by one-sided steering.

The most striking point of the resolution is the one related to Armenian terrorism. The terrorist attacks between 1973 and 1986 are regretted, it is expressed that it was deplored by a majority of the Armenian people, and terrorism carried out by “isolated groups unrepresentative of the Armenian people” is condemned. However, describing the terrorist attacks as “mindless” at the same time has greatly simplified it. What is more striking is that Turkey has been criticized for

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adopting an obdurate stance due to the “mindless terrorism” and has been accused for helping in no way to reduce the tension. Actually, just as much as the Armenian diaspora, the Europeans are also well aware that the Armenian terror has caused the Armenia allegations to be heard all over the world. What is perhaps more interesting is that while there were Turkish victims of terror, it was the Armenians who played the role of the victim, and instead of the Turks as victims of terror, international support was directed towards the Armenians who raised their voice through terrorist activities.

Although the title of the resolution is related to the Armenian issue, the Kurdish question and the Cyprus and Aegean issues have also been included among the “obstacles to consideration of the possibility of Turkey’s accession.” In this section in which the influence of Greek Parliamentarians is intensely felt, issues like Turkey not resolving the Cyprus problem, its reluctance to eliminate the differences of opinion with Greece, its denial of the existence of the Kurdish question, and the lack of freedoms have been mentioned among these obstacles. Pulat Tacar, who served as Permanent Representative to the European Union in that period, described this section as a “package paragraph”, because all criticisms of Turkey are filled into this package.⁹ This package contains all headings “used” frequently by the EU like Cyprus, Kurdish, democracy, freedoms, Greece, and Armenian. These issues are considered as “insurmountable obstacles” to Turkey’s accession to the EU. Tacar has also expressed that in that period, Turkey was brought to the agenda of nearly all EP meetings and was criticized

9 Pulat Tacar, “The Tale of European Parliament’s 1987 Resolution Entitled ‘Political Situation to the Armenian Question’”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 9, 2005, p 56.

and condemned.¹⁰ The influence of the Greeks is strong here. As a matter of fact, the Greek Cypriots and Greeks have been pleased with the 1987 resolution as much as the Armenians.¹¹

Perhaps what is more interesting and significant than the content of the 1987 resolution is the process of its discussion and ratification. The draft has illegally come to the agenda of the General Assembly and has been approved through the intimidation of Parliamentarians.¹² The document has been rejected in the first meeting based on the justification that the Parliament is not a historical institution. According to the procedural by-law, the rejection of a report required the issue to be dropped from the agenda and never be addressed again. Based on the descriptions of Tacar who was a witness of the events, despite the pressure exerted upon the Political Committee's Chairman for the report to be reassessed, the Chairman has rejected it. Therefore, the Parliamentarians, under the pressure of the Armenian diaspora, have waited for the Chairman's term to come to an end. The new chairman has brought the issue to the agenda as if it were a fresh issue. For being contradictory to by-law, a few Parliamentarians have attempted to bring the issue to the By-law Committee, but the Committee has rejected this appeal.¹³

It is now presently accepted that the structure of the EU, which is said to be established upon rules and standards, has been spoiled many times when Turkey has been the issue.

The by-laws were once again contravened and the French socialist Parliamentarian holding the presidential chair, during a lunch break, passed a resolution at where a very few number of people were present in the Parliament, denouncing the military operation of Turkey towards the PKK.¹⁴ It is now presently accepted that the structure of the EU, which is said to be established upon rules and standards, has been spoiled many times when Turkey has been the issue. When it was not seen at an early date like 1987 that Turkey's laws, promises, and general implementations could change according to the situation, these acts contradictory to by-law has been surprising for that period.

10 Pulat Tacar, "The Tale of European Parliament's 1987 Resolution Entitled 'Political Situation to the Armenian Question'", *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 9, 2005, p. 46.

11 Pulat Tacar, "The Tale of European Parliament's 1987 Resolution Entitled 'Political Situation to the Armenian Question'", *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 9, 2005, p. 56.

12 Pulat Tacar, "The Tale of European Parliament's 1987 Resolution Entitled 'Political Situation to the Armenian Question'", *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 9, 2005, p. 45.

13 Pulat Tacar, "The Tale of European Parliament's 1987 Resolution Entitled 'Political Situation to the Armenian Question'", *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 9, 2005, pp. 50-51.

14 Pulat Tacar, "The Tale of European Parliament's 1987 Resolution Entitled 'Political Situation to the Armenian Question'", *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 9, 2005, p. 52.

For the amendment, ratification or strengthening of the draft, more than 100 motions for amendment being issued since the acceptance of the first draft until the day it would be covered in the General Assembly, displays how important each detail is and that therefore, great significance is given to this resolution.

Noticing that rapporteur Vandemeulebroucke was filled with disinformation by

By taking the floor, German Parliamentarian Wedekind has been able to convey that he was threatened with weapons by Armenian terrorists and that this actually took place in the building of the EU Parliament.¹⁵

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the Armenian diaspora, Pulat Tacar had invited the rapporteur to Turkey in order for him to be able to conduct a deeper research on the issue and to even come together with the Armenians in Turkey, but presumably due to the pressure and threats of the diaspora, he had rejected the invitation. In fact, to each meeting with the Turkish delegation, he was accompanied by an Armenian.¹⁵ Tacar, who expressed that it became clear Vandemeulebroucke was an actor used by the diaspora, indicated that among the documents utilized in the report there existed documents, the fraudulence of which were ascertained, and factious assertions. Moreover, he has explained that the documents prepared by Turks and presented to both the rapporteur and other parliamentarians were not taken in to consideration and were even directly thrown away to the trash box.¹⁶ Actually, Tacar has been

suspected that the report was drafted by the Armenian diaspora.¹⁷

While the draft was being dealt with again in the General Assembly, Dutch socialist parliamentarian Peter Dankert wanted the draft to be completely rejected, while German socialist parliamentarian Klaus Hansch wanted the expression “injustice to Armenians” to be used, as written in the first draft, in replace of the term “genocide”, but these proposals have not been taken into notice by the majority. The Turkish delegation and parliamentarians being threatened with weapons by the Armenians is a known fact. By taking the floor, German Parliamentarian Wedekind has been able to convey that he was threatened with weapons by Armenian terrorists and that this actually took place in the building of

15 Pulat Y. Tacar, ‘Ermenilere Soykırım Yapıldığı Savının Hukuksal ve Ahlaki Açılardan değerlendirilmesi’, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Volume: 1, No: 2, June-July-August 2001, p. 98.

16 Pulat Tacar, “The Tale of European Parliament’s 1987 Resolution Entitled ‘Political Situation to the Armenian Question’”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 9, 2005, p. 49.

17 Pulat Tacar, “The Tale of European Parliament’s 1987 Resolution Entitled ‘Political Situation to the Armenian Question’”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 9, 2005, p. 50.

18 Ahmet Sever, ‘Soykırım Sözcüğü de Girdi’, *Milliyet*, 19 Haziran 1987’den aktaran Sedat Laçiner, “Türkiye-Avrupa İlişkilerinde Ermeni Sorununun Etkisi (1980ler)”, USAK website, 12 June 2009.

the EU Parliament.¹⁹ However, no one has taken notice of this situation which is serious enough to cause a great scandal regarding another issue.

In the discussions, the communists, the Greens and all Greeks, regardless of their party, being against Turkey’s membership have shown great efforts for the term “genocide” to be mentioned in the draft. Greek parliamentarians, considering the negative atmosphere towards Turkey an opportunity, have also brought the allegations regarding the Cyprus problem, Kurdish question and non-existence of freedom of expression in Turkey to the agenda in relation to the “genocide”. This way, they have tried to display Turkey as a “perpetrator of genocide” and “unlawful.”²⁰ During this period, many demonstrations have been organized and those defending Turkey’s theses have been threatened with death.

The balances formed in the Parliament left no possibility of going against the demands of the French.²¹ On the other hand, not more than three fourths of the parliamentarians had attended the session, in which the resolution was adopted.

Therefore, the imbalance against Turkey has further increased. The reason for low attendance was that despite being against the resolution adopted, the parliamentarians were not able to use a dissentive vote due to threats, because those voting against the report at the first meeting had confessed that they were being threatened, would not take part in the second voting, and that it went against all rules.²²

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Some Resolutions Adopted in the Parliament After 1987

The period after the resolution of 1987, in which the European Parliament recognized the “genocide” against Armenians, was much easier for opponents of Turkey. Within the framework of relations established through various means like steering by the Armenian diaspora, bribery, threat, satisfaction of interest, or friendship, the French and Greeks have constantly adopted resolutions which condemn and criticize Turkey. Even if not on the agenda, the issue of genocide has become a subject matter many times in the Parliamentary sessions.

19 Pulat Y. Tacar, ‘Ermenilere Soykırım Yapıldığı Savının Hukuksal ve Ahlaki Açılardan değerlendirilmesi’, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Vol: 1, No: 2, June-July-August 2001, p. 99.

20 Ahmet Sever, “Ermeni Tasarısında Belirsizlik”, *Milliyet*, Sedat Laçiner explaining from 17 June 1987, “Türkiye-Avrupa İlişkilerinde Ermeni Sorununun Etkisi (1980s)”, USAK website, 12 June 2009.

21 Pulat Tacar, “The Tale of European Parliament’s 1987 Resolution Entitled ‘Political Situation to the Armenian Question’”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 9, 2005, p. 50.

22 Pulat Tacar, “The Tale of European Parliament’s 1987 Resolution Entitled ‘Political Situation to the Armenian Question’”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 9, 2005, p. 52.

1996

In the communication entitled “Towards a European Union Strategy for Relations with the Transcaucasian Republics”, prepared in 13 September 1996 by H el ene Carr ere d'Encausse, links with Christianity have been brought forth in the assessments regarding Armenians:

“...The religious factor, even though it is no longer as important as it once was, should not be underestimated, since it is an essential part of national identity. The conversion of Armenia and Georgia to Christianity in AD 301 and 330 respectively, was a major event, since it led these two ancient nations, for better or worse, to draw apart from their respective neighbours, establish contact with Europe (particularly during the Crusades) and to preserve their identity right down to our time. Account must also be taken of the spread of Islam amongst the peoples of the region - Persians, Turks, Azeris and North Caucasian peoples. The result, for the Georgians and Armenians, was confrontation with their neighbours which led the latter to perpetrate genocide as a result of the potent combination of religious beliefs and 19th and 20th century nationalist ideologies...”

While the statements in the report have displayed the Christians as victims, the Muslim perpetrators of genocide have tried to be conveyed as “oppressors”. Although not much geographically, Armenia and Georgia are regarded as European on the basis of belief. Having a common belief means that these countries could sometimes be more European than other countries. For example, although Turkey has a political and economic culture closer to Europe, Armenia and Georgia are culturally recognized as more European than Turkey.

2000

The “Report on the 1999 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey’s Progress Towards Accession” known as the “Morillon Report”, has been adopted by being ratified on 15 November 2000. In the report prepared by Rapporteur Philippe Morillon, it has been mentioned that support must be given to the Armenian minority, as an important part of Turkish society, “because of the tragedy that befell them”. When the report was taken to the General Assembly, the expression of the “tragedy that befell the Armenians” was replaced by “publicly recognizing the genocide suffered by Armenians”.²³

In the report, it has been conveyed that those suffering from genocide were the

23 Soner Karag ul, “Avrupa Birliđi ve Ermeni Sorunu”, *Ermeni Arařtırmaları*, No. 8, Winter 2003, p. 181.

Armenian minority in Turkey. This section of the report has caused concern among diaspora Armenians. Putting forth the assertion that the Armenian minority in Turkey was the group suffering from “genocide” once again shows that the report has been prepared through manipulations, without any research. Another point is that there has been no indication that Turkey not recognizing the genocide will prevent EU membership and no reference has been made to the 1987 resolution.²⁴

A majority of the Parliamentarians have acknowledged French general Morillon’s views that Turkey has not yet fulfilled the Copenhagen criteria, but has welcomed the continuation of mutual dialogue and efforts. Apart from warning concerning issues like democracy, human rights, Kurdish minority, the Cyprus problem, and freedom of expression which exist in the Commission reports each year, the Armenian question has also been addressed. Also, Turkey is urged to “respect the rights of minorities such as the Armenians” and once again, it is seen that they are misinformed about the right of Armenian minorities. Furthermore, an amendment that was adopted calls for the Turkish authorities to “publicly recognize the genocide suffered by that minority before the establishment of the modern state of Turkey”.²⁵

Putting forth the assertion that the Armenian minority in Turkey was the group suffering from “genocide” once again shows that the report has been prepared through manipulations, without any research.

During the discussions, Morillon has praised the progress concerning human rights in Turkey and has stated in a careful and moderate manner that developments regarding the Cyprus and Kurdish problem and the influence of the army on politics should be recorded.

While French socialist Pierre Moscovici stated on the one hand that Turkey still did not comply with the Copenhagen criteria, on the other, he opposed imposing excessive conditions and expressed that Turkey must be treated the same as any other candidate country. Austrian socialist Hannes Swoboda has not only defended that it was in the EU’s interest for Turkey to become a member, but also said that an amendment should be made which calls on the Turkish authorities to recognize publicly the “genocide” suffered by the Armenian minority. Although Daniel

²⁴ Ömer Engin Lütem, “Facts and Comments”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, No. 3, September-October-November 2001.

²⁵ “Turkey is urged to respect the rights of minorities such as the Armenians. An amendment that was adopted calls for the Turkish authorities to publicly recognise the genocide suffered by that minority before the establishment of the modern state of Turkey”, Philippe Morillon (EPP-ED, F), *Report on the 1999 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey’s progress towards accession*, Doc.: A5-0297/2000, Procedure: Consultation paper, Debate: 14.11.00, Vote: 15.11.00.

Marc Cohn-Bendit, who is not only a member of the Greens, but also of the European Free Alliance,²⁶ has stated that it had been correct to accept the candidacy of Turkey, he has also indicated that it was very important to recognize that the “genocide” in Armenia did occur and emphasized that Turkey must face up to its past and the Parliament should debate this “genocide”.

While the Morillon report was covered in the Parliament, British Andrew Duff²⁷ being among the liberal democrats, expressed that he does not give approval to the European Parliament acting as a tribunal on the past and that Turkey should appraise its past itself. Another liberal democrat and British Baroness Emma Nicholson has conveyed that she has regretted the "hostile" amendments that were being tabled and their references to "genocide", that these were racist and discriminatory, and that the modern Turkish State was not responsible for the Armenian massacres that had taken place under the Ottoman Empire.

Commissioner Günther Verheugen has expressed that his all elements of his criticisms towards issues like Kurdish minority, democracy, human rights, and Cyprus brought to the agenda by some parliamentarians were referred to in the progress reports. He has said that making a resolution of the Cyprus issue a precondition for accession would lead to the failure of the whole process and that raising the Armenian question would not help with what was currently being debated.²⁸

Another report prepared in 2000 was signed by French Alain Lamassoure, who was among the Christian Democrats. The efforts of the Armenian lobby to make additions to the report regarding the genocide allegations has failed to bring any results and with the requests for additions being rejected in the General Assembly, the report has been adopted on 25 October 2001.²⁹

In Article 10 of a resolution adopted in 2000 by the European Parliament on the progress report of Turkey towards accession, it is stated that “the European Parliament calls on the Turkish Government and the Turkish Grand National Assembly to give fresh support to the Armenian minority, as an important part of Turkish society, in particular by public recognition of the genocide”. A similar disinformation once again draws attention here. Those expressing the genocide allegations are not Armenian Turkish citizens, but are the diaspora and Armenians of Armenia. In fact, the Armenians living in Turkey are the Armenians who have not been subjected to relocation and have settled in the West.

26 EFA: European Free Alliance

27 ELDR: European Liberal Democrats

28 Philippe Morillon (EPP-ED, F), Report on the 1999 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's progress towards accession, Doc.: A5-0297/2000, Procedure: Consultation paper, Debate: 14.11.00, Vote: 15.11.00.

29 Soner Karagül, “Avrupa Birliği ve Ermeni Sorunu”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, No. 8, Winter 2003.

2002

On 28 February 2002, a report prepared by Swiss Per Gahrton from the Greens Group concerning the EU's relations with the South Caucasus has been adopted. The feature of the report is that it contained references to the 1987 resolution and has ratified the resolution once again. One of the points of the resolution is that "the recognition of the Armenian genocide by the European Parliament and by several Member States and the fact that the Turkish regime after the First World War had several of those responsible for the genocide severely punished ought to provide a basis for the EU to present constructive proposals to Turkey on the handling of the matter, e.g. by setting up a multilateral international committee of historians on the 1915 Armenian genocide". In a footnote, it was asserted that in a speech delivered in the Assembly on 10 April 1921, Atatürk had accepted the so-called "genocide" against the Armenians.³⁰

In the discussions held during the transformation of the report into a resolution, rapporteur Per Gahrton had said that it was not clear whether Turkey really committed genocide or not, but has still rejected the motion for amendment which would delete the term "genocide" from the report.³¹ This behavior is a very important detail which displays how the reports have been prepared and the resolutions have been adopted.

During the discussions, a few numbers of individuals have come forth who have supported the proposal to get rid of the term "genocide", have stated that the EU is not the judge of history, and who have even been aware that Turkey had not placed an embargo on Armenia.³²

In general, the report has underlined that the blockade against Armenia must be terminated, has reiterated that the resolution of 18 June 1987 recognizing the "genocide", and has called upon Turkey to create a basis for reconciliation.

Those expressing the genocide allegations are not Armenian Turkish citizens, but are the diaspora and Armenians of Armenia. In fact, the Armenians living in Turkey are the Armenians who have not been subjected to relocation and have settled in the West.

30 Soner Karagül, "Avrupa Birliği ve Ermeni Sorunu", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, No. 8, Winter 2003.

31 Soner Karagül, "Avrupa Birliği ve Ermeni Sorunu", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, No. 8, Winter 2003.

32 Soner Karagül, "Avrupa Birliği ve Ermeni Sorunu", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, No. 8, Winter 2003.

2004

The Parliamentary resolution of the European Council dated 3 December 2004 on the progress of Turkey's accession is quite interesting. On the one hand, opening the sacred places of Armenians to worship by the Armenians, the ban on the use of minority languages like Kurdish and Armenians, and the extraordinary efforts of Turkish historians on genocide and the re-establishment of relations with Armenians have been considered as significant steps for the future. On the other hand, it is asserted that all these efforts must be directed towards a "true result" and this result is the opening of the borders. "Still" and "in particular" regarding the problems of Cyprus and Armenia no freedom of expression existing has been shown as a serious problem for Turkey in the report. It could be seen once again that while the reports were being prepared, incorrect statements were made based on the fact that real research was not conducted and everything made with the purpose of propaganda was permitted.

Anyhow, since "genocide historically proven" exists according to the European Parliament, the purpose for establishing such a committee is eliminated, because allegations to be discussed are already "proven".

In the Parliament's report of 15 December 2004, there has been a call on Turkey to promote the process of reconciliation with the Armenian people by acknowledging the genocide perpetrated

against the Armenians as expressed in the European Parliament's 1987 resolution.

The necessity for both countries to establish a bilateral committee of independent experts in order to overcome the tragic experience of the past and for Turkey to open the borders as soon as possible has also been mentioned.

Both governments to establish "a bilateral committee of independent experts" displays once again the Europeans' act of playing both ends and fooling both sides. Anyhow, since "genocide historically proven" exists according to the European Parliament, the purpose for establishing such a committee is eliminated, because allegations to be discussed are already "proven".

In fact, it could be seen that right after, the Parliament has called on the "Commission and the Council to demand that the Turkish authorities formally acknowledge the historic reality of the genocide perpetrated against the Armenians in 1915". By referring to the Commission and Council here, the Parliament, whose resolutions are not binding, has defended that pressure be applied on Turkey for it to benefit from candidate status.

On the other hand, the report has also mentioned that Turkish authorities have still

not complied with the calls concerning the other Armenian issues made by Parliament in its resolution of 1987 and that this is an obstacle to EU membership.

2005

On 29 September 2005, the European Parliament had postponed the voting of the Ankara Agreement protocol. This protocol entailed the enlargement of Turkey’s existing agreement with the EU according to the 10 new members. The reason for this postponement has been concern that Turkey, which declared that the protocol does not mean any form of recognition of Cyprus, will gain legal power, since ratification of the protocol in the Parliament would mean that Turkey’s statement is acknowledged. During the voting taking place afterwards, a resolution was adopted expressing the Commission and Council’s view that Turkey had fulfilled the prerequisites to start accession negotiations on October 3rd 2005.

Although the resolution was directly related to the Cyprus problem, during the voting the Parliament had also conveyed that Turkish recognition of the Armenian “genocide” must be a prerequisite for accession. If a prerequisite was to be set, placing responsibilities upon Turkey concerning the settlement of the Cyprus problem could have been a more ordinary solution. However, it is interesting to see the Armenian “genocide” being inserted into a resolution which does not relate to the issue.

2006

Another of the Parliament reports is the one dated September 4th 2006, prepared by Camiel Eurlings and being ratified after several amendments. In this document, Turkey’s recognition of the “genocide” has been set as a precondition for membership to the EU. Article 49 added to the report concerning this issue is as follows: “Reiterates its call on Turkey to acknowledge the Armenian genocide, as called for in previous European Parliament resolutions of 15 December 2004 and 28 September 2005; considers such acknowledgement to be a precondition for European Union accession”. However, this paragraph has been omitted from the report with 320 votes against 282 votes.³³

Furthermore, the report has contained a statement of “Turkish authorities to facilitate the work of researchers”. There is no such obstacle. The archives are open to researchers. The actual problem is that maybe the documents will indicate that the relocation was not genocide. It is interesting that currently there is no

33 Ömer Engin Lütem, “Facts and Comments”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 11-12, 2007, p. 21.

Armenian actually doing research at Turkey's archives. It is known by European Parliamentarians that attentive researchers at the archives in Armenia are being discouraged and are even thrown into jail. The European Parliament resolutions indicate that the Dashnak archives in Boston can be examined only with special permission and that, to date, no Turk has been granted permission for this.³⁴

Sometimes some statements in the resolutions of the European Parliament and sometimes the speeches delivered by parliamentarians display the Armenian allegations using the same expressions used by the Armenians. This situation which Lütem has also drawn attention to is that "it is as if a text drafted in Yerevan was incorporated into the report without thinking."³⁵ The approach in the

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Parliamentarians' discussions or these kinds of proposal resolutions being one sided and not mentioning Turkey's views at all is a serious gap. By mentioning some names in the report, their acquittals are considered as a positive development in the area of freedom of expression. The interesting point is that almost all persons whose names were cited in the context of freedom of expression were supporters of the Armenian theses.³⁶ This should once again be regarded as the text prepared by the Armenian diaspora or Yerevan being adopted exactly as it is.

Demonstrations that "there is no Armenian genocide" being held in European countries have been strongly criticized. Displaying these demonstrations as racist which was

contradictory to European principles and which was actually carried out by "permission" and within the scope of rules, is another example of the EU's biased approach. As much as arguing that the Armenian genocide took place, defending that it did not should also be a freedom and right. However, even the nation preparing the universal declaration of human rights has requested for the closing of the institution organizing the protests by putting forth that genocide did not happen.

In the report of 25 September 2006 entitled "Parliament's Position on Turkey's Candidacy for EU Membership", it has been stated that in 2004, a clear call for

34 Ömer Engin Lütem, "Facts and Comments", *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 11-12, 2007, p. 24.

35 Ömer Engin Lütem, "Facts and Comments", *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 11-12, 2007, p. 25.

36 Ömer Engin Lütem, "Facts and Comments", *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 11-12, 2007, p. 26.

Turkey to acknowledge "the genocide perpetrated against the Armenians was issued and that it has repeated this position ever since the 1987 resolution. Also a statement that "Turkey has still not acknowledged the genocide perpetrated against the Armenians, despite numerous calls from the European Parliament and several Member States".

The following statements in the report also draw attention: "although the recognition of the Armenian genocide as such is formally not one of the Copenhagen criteria, it is indispensable for a country on the road to membership to come to terms with and recognize its past. MEPs urge Turkey to take the necessary steps, without any preconditions, to establish diplomatic and good neighborly relations with Armenia, to withdraw the economic blockade and to open the land border at an early date. A similar position should be adopted for the cases of other minorities (e.g. the Greeks of Pontos and the Assyrians)".

Moreover, although the European Parliament had voted yes on October 3rd 2005 for the starting of negotiations, it had stated that it viewed Turkey's recognition of the Armenian genocide as a precondition for accession.

The recognition of the genocide allegations being set as a precondition in the report was put forth by the Parliament before. This article existing in the 1987 resolution was also conveyed many times in the following years and sometimes in reference to the 1987 resolution.

Sometimes on the contrary, by arguing that the recognition of the genocide allegations are not part of the Copenhagen Criteria, it has been put forth that this cannot be a precondition. The most interesting view is that setting this as a precondition is technically and officially impossible, but that "it is a requirement for a country expected to be European to recognize these kinds of allegations by confronting its past". The term "requirement" here is interesting for displaying how an issue could be set as a precondition without using the word "precondition".

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2007

On 18 October 2007, another resolution has been adopted by the Parliament concerning Turkey-EU relations. This document has made references to the 1987

resolution of the Parliament and has called upon Turkey to officially recognize the so-called Armenian genocide, to apologize from Armenia and to start a process of reconciliation.

The “undisputable existence” of the Armenian genocide constantly brought to the agenda throughout a period of more than 20 years until 2007 and the pressure applied on Turkey to recognize it have almost come to a standstill after this date. The Parliament in particular has not adopted new resolutions or prepared reports on this matter. Organizing marches of “we are all Armenians” in Turkey after the murdering of Hrant Dink in the beginning of 2007 has actually been perceived as a negative incident being transformed into a positive development to ease the tension between the two countries. However, a reconciliation or improvement of relations has not taken place as much as expected.

The significance of 2007 was actually the starting of the normalization process of relations between the two countries. Continuing of this process without any halts and opening of the border as the first concrete step have been important for Armenia and the EU countries. The side not having any interest from the opening of the border is Turkey. Therefore, the country being convinced for the normalization process is also Turkey. Bringing the genocide issues to the agenda again could have been an attempt to prevent Turkey from becoming distant from the process. Therefore, the purpose was to first achieve normalization and open the borders. The idea that there will be time and opportunity to bring the genocide allegations to the agenda later on possible exists.

Another evaluation could be made on the general situation of Turkey and EU relations. The significance bestowed on EU membership by Turkey gradually decreasing and becoming distant from the EU as a result of the EU’s negative approach is regarded with concern by many segments. Although this could seem as a positive development for those opposing Turkey’s EU membership, drifting apart of Turkey is on the opposite considered as a negative situation, because this way Turkey has gotten out of control and has withdrawn from the field of inspection. Turkey’s withdrawal from EU membership will also be against segments making claims on Turkey, as much as against the Armenians. Turkey no longer being a candidate would mean its relations with the EU turning into equality. This way, the EU will have lost its authority to apply pressure on Turkey. The EU will no longer possess sticks and carrots for the non-candidate country of Turkey.

Ever since the possibility of losing Turkey as an EU candidate emerging, some changes have been viewed in the EU’s stance. For instance, the negotiation process expected to be stalled upon the Cyprus problem not being settled has

continued, although slowly. Instead of the harsh tone in the progress reports, milder statements have been used. It seems that the so-called genocide issue has also been laid aside for some time, based on these facts.

Debates

Even though sometimes the subject has not been Turkey’s EU membership, the so-called Armenian genocide has been brought to the agenda in the European Parliament. Addressing this issue frequently, rather than recalling it several times in a year, causes individuals to gain incorrect information on the subject over time. On the other hand, however much people and with however much frequency the issued is only addressed one-sidedly and if no explanation is provided from the other side, the numbers of those recognizing the genocide will increase as much.

2001

In the debates taking place during the talks on the “Proposal for a Council regulation on assistance to Turkey in the framework of the pre-accession strategy, and in particular on the establishment of an Accession Partnership” prepared on 14 February 2001 by Austrian Socialist Hannes Swoboda,³⁷ the Armenian issue has been addressed many times. Rapporteur Swoboda’s response towards recognition of the Armenian “genocide” to be set as a precondition for Turkey’s membership is given below:

“As far as the Armenia issue is concerned, I personally am opposed to the notion that foreign parliaments should seek to judge history and events which took place a hundred years ago. But I am also opposed to the exploitation of this issue for nationalist purposes in Turkey. A more relaxed and, above all, a more active role in the Armenia issue would be helpful. If Turkey were to take steps to invite its own historians and those from Armenia and third countries to come together to discuss this issue, this would also be a step forward towards a sensible debate about this question. In this spirit, ladies and gentlemen, I would ask you to adopt my proposal in order to give Turkey the opportunity to prove that it wishes to follow the path towards Europe.”

... Applause

³⁷ On the given date, Swoboda was member of the PES-ED alliance. PES: Group of the Party of European Socialists; ED: European Democratic Group

Although Swoboda's statement seems positive for Turkey, on the opposite, it should actually be considered as an initiative aiming to make Turkey a part of the asymmetric relationship. As has clearly emerged in the following years, Swoboda does not approve Turkey's EU membership. This statement does not defend anything else but that making Turkey do what they want by continuing Turkey's relations with the EU will be better. "Giving

Requests from Turkey, like the recognition of the Armenians genocide allegations, will easily be achieved with the EU membership carrot. If no relationship exists with the EU; in other words, if the EU does not accept starting negotiations with Turkey, since no carrot will exist for Turkey, then applying pressure over it will become impossible.

Turkey the opportunity to prove that it wishes to follow the path towards Europe" proves our thesis. At the basis of the strategies of individuals like Swoboda lies the following idea: Requests from Turkey, like the recognition of the Armenians genocide allegations, will easily be achieved with the EU membership carrot. If no relationship exists with the EU; in other words, if the EU does not accept starting negotiations with Turkey, since no carrot will exist for Turkey, then applying pressure over it will become impossible.

On 24 October 2001, a joint debate has been made by one of the French Christian Democrats Alain Lamassoure,³⁸ on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common

Security and Defense Policy, on the proposal for a council regulation on pre-accession financial assistance and on the Report on Turkey's progress of 2000.

Lamassoure:

"Since our resolution of 15 November 2000, which is cited in our current motion for a resolution, our Turkish partners have been aware of the importance our Parliament attaches to the official recognition of the Armenian genocide. We hope that the processes of dialogue, such as those which bring together former diplomats and academics from Armenia and Turkey, will lead to a common understanding based on scientifically-recognised historical facts."

Cohn-Bendit (Greens/EFA,³⁹ France):

"Our role as the European Union is not, therefore, simply to give lessons, but, rather, to accompany Turkey on the journey towards democracy, in

38 On the given date, Lamassoure was member of the EPP-ED alliance. EPP-ED: Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats

39 EFA: European Free Alliance

other words, to have positions to defend. And that is why I will make a comment, and I would ask all those who still wish to tell Turkey that there was a genocide seventy-five years ago – which is true – in what way does that help the debate in Turkey today? I do not think that that helps it.”

Pernille Frahm (GUE⁴⁰/NGL,⁴¹ Denmark):⁴²

“Mr. President, I think it important that we send two clear messages today. The first must be that we want Turkey as a member of the EU and as a member of the European family. It will be good for Turkey, but it will also be good for ourselves. The second message must be that Turkey is faced with a number of tasks, including that of being honest about its history and its genocide of one and a half million Armenians, half a million Assyrians, Chaldeans and Syrians and several hundred thousand Greeks. In addition, there are the tasks – not only on paper but also in practice and in the real world – of improving the conditions in Turkish prisons, ceasing to keep prisoners in solitary confinement, guaranteeing the rights of minorities and ensuring democratic progress not only for minorities but, I would emphasize, for the whole of the Turkish people.”

Charles Pasqua (UEN,⁴³ France):

“I have tried in vain to understand why the majority of this House have an absolute desire for Turkey to join the European Union. For a start, most of the territory of Turkey is not in Europe... What I do not understand, even though a certain number of countries have, unanimously in some cases, such as France, condemned the genocide suffered by the Armenians, is why the current Turkish government and Turkish people, who are not responsible for the past, but who are responsible for a collective history, are determined not to accept responsibility for that genocide... In any event, as long as it has not been recognized, as far as we are concerned, we will remain firmly opposed to Turkey’s entry into the European Union.”

2002

In the report prepared on 27 February 2002 by Per Gahrton⁴⁴ from the Swiss

40 GUE: Group for the European United Left

41 NGL: Nordic Green Left,

42 GUE/NGL: Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left

43 UEN: Union for Europe of the Nations Group

44 EFA: European Free Alliance

Greens, it was expected for Turkey to recognize the Armenian “genocide” and to terminate the “blockade” against Armenia. In Gahrton’s report, the following statement has been made:

After the First World War, Turkish courts sentenced those mainly responsible – Enver Pasha and many others – to the most severe penalty under the law, partly for their responsibility for the mass murders of Armenians. It is a mystery to me why, 80 years later in Turkey, the attempt should be made to brush all this under the carpet. All nations have skeletons in their historical cupboards. Those who recognize this and openly come to terms with their pasts command respect, while those which deny and conceal their pasts mostly evoke surprise and disappointment.

2003

Dutch Christian Democrat Arie Oostlander’s report prepared on Turkey’s application for EU membership has been debated in the European Parliament on 4 June 2003. The statement of Joost Lagendijk⁴⁵ from the Dutch Greens delivered during this debate draws attention:

“My remark is directed towards the Members from the GUE⁴⁶/NGL⁴⁷ Group, whom I urge to stop doing the dirty work of the Armenia lobby. In my eyes there is a carefully considered compromise on this question in the text and I honestly find the constant attempts to tighten the thumbscrews on this point increasingly irritating.”

2004

The most interesting two debates among those taking place during the voting on 6 October 2004 for the opening of negotiations with Turkey are the ones belonging to the French and Belgian parliamentarians. Leader of the GUE⁴⁸/NGL⁴⁹ group and French parliamentarian Francis Wurtz has indicated that the Cyprus and Armenian question existing among many other issues, membership automatically should not be possible. Belgian independent parliamentarian Philip Claeys has stated “considering that Cyprus is under occupation, the Armenian genocide is not

45 On the given date, Lagendijk, was member of the Greens-EFA alliance. EFA: European Free Alliance

46 GUE: Group for the European United Left

47 NGL: Nordic Green Left

48 GUE: Group for the European United Left

49 NGL: Nordic Green Left

recognized and no respect exists towards ethnic minorities, it can be seen that something never coming to mind is happening.”

While the “EU Policy towards the South Caucasus” was being addressed on 26 February 2004, Per Gahrton’s report was covered and independent, French parliamentarian Dominique Souchet has said the following:

“...The rapporteur is sufficiently perceptive to see that such a pact requires a climate of confidence to be established and that it therefore has little chance of seeing the light of day so long as Turkey continues its incomprehensible blockade of Armenia and Ankara obstinately continues to deny the Armenian genocide, for example. In that regard, the Parliament’s 1987 resolution unfortunately retains all its relevance and it is appropriate that the report should refer to it.”

It could be seen that although not having anything to do with the subject under debate and although by forcing it, the Armenia question is brought to the agenda from time to time. An example has taken place on 27 October 2004 while the referendum results and elections were being discussed. Independent Democrat, Polish Wojciech Wierzejski (IND/DEM)⁵⁰ was able to combine the elections in Belarus and Turkey under the same heading and was even able to compare the level of “persecution” in both countries:

“There can be no doubt that human rights are violated in Belarus, that basic democratic standards are not respected in that country and that there is discrimination against minorities, primarily the Polish minority... A parallel may be drawn here with Turkey, a country that has recently been the subject of much discussion. Turkey is a country that is occupying half of Cyprus. Turkey does not maintain diplomatic relations with Greece or Armenia. It persecutes the Kurdish minority and has still not apologised for the genocide of the Armenian people. In spite of all this, Turkey is regarded as a potential member of the European Union. Belarus is a country where the persecution of minorities is not as widespread as in Turkey. Belarus does not pursue any kind of hostile policy towards other nations and it wishes to open up its foreign policy and cooperate with other countries. Even so, Belarus is condemned, whilst Turkey is regarded as a country that could belong to the European Union. At the very least, we should apply similar standards to both countries.”

During a debate taking place in the Parliament on 13 December 2004 concerning Turkey, English parliamentarian Jim Allister, taking the floor, has said the following:

50 IND/DEM: Independence/Democracy Group

“Is this the European Union or do some have expansionist ambitions beyond the boundaries of Europe? That is a key and defining question which arises from Turkey's application for EU membership. Turkey is not part of Europe, it is part of Asia: only a finger of land flanking Istanbul lies in Europe. That does not make it a European nation. You might as well say that Spain is African because it has some outposts on the North African coast. It is a shameless agenda of expansionism which drives the EU in wanting to encompass Turkey.

Turkey itself has a shameful history of expansionism. Witness its brutal invasion and occupation of Northern Cyprus. Witness its genocide of the Armenian people. Witness also, despite the massive inducements of pre-accession aid from Brussels, its intolerant suppression of religious freedom, in particular with regard to Christians.

No – Turkey is one country and culture that we can well do without.”

Different from criticizing or objecting, Allister's statement is strongly filled with rage. The reason for the English parliamentarian opposing Turkey's EU membership is not only geographic, but also due to the fury bottled up inside. In fact, this rage is not only directed towards Turkey, but also to the EU for opening its door to Turkey.

2005

Concerning the Commission's strategy of enlargement, a debate has taken place in the Parliament on 28 September 2005 related to the report prepared by German Christian Democrat Elmar Brok. In this debate, some parliamentarians have explained with reasons how they voted. We are only displaying the statements made which relate to our topic:

Erna Hennicot-Schoepges (EPP-ED,⁵¹ Luxembourg):

“...I voted in favour of Turkey's accession during the vote in December 2004, out of respect for those who campaign for human rights. Since that vote, there has been no end to the provocations on the part of the Turks..., the denial of the Armenian genocide lead me to vote against the start of the negotiations... We need to see acts on the part of the Turkish Government, proving its willingness to comply with the rules of the European Union.”

51 EPP-ED: Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats

Marine Le Pen (Independent, France):

"Although Turkey still refuses to acknowledge its responsibility in the Armenian genocide... the Heads of State or Government, the Commission and Parliament are preparing to bypass the opinion of the people in defiance of their sovereignty... This accession will do nothing other than reinforce a logic of promoting minorities in society, and one that paves the way for the fragmentation of Europe."

Luca Romagnoli (Independent, Italy):

"Turkey is not Europe... Cyprus, the Armenian genocide, the Kurdish issue, civil liberties, social tensions – I could go on with a long list of undeniable contrasts that count against Turkey joining the European Union... The vast majority of Europeans do not want Turkey in Europe: that is the people's mandate, and we have a duty to respect it by voting 'no'."

(Applause)

Marie-Arlette Carlotti (PES,⁵² Fransa):

"...we are far short of the target... On the contrary, Turkey is digging in its heels and even becoming more radical as regards at least two points: the recognition of Cyprus, which can under no circumstances form the subject of negotiations, and the stubborn refusal to tackle the issue of the Armenian genocide, a willingness to tackle which I consider to be a preliminary condition for membership."

Hélène Goudin, Nils Lundgren and Lars Wohlin (IND/DEM,⁵³ Sweden):

"...Turkish membership cannot therefore be dismissed on religious or geographical grounds. The June List therefore believes that Turkey should in the long run be able to become a member of the EU... Quite a few requirements concerning respect for human rights have not been implemented. The Armenian genocide of 1915 has not been recognised, and nor has Cyprus's sovereignty... We are therefore voting against the resolution as a whole."

52 PES: Group of the Party of European Socialists

53 IND/DEM: Independence/Democracy Group

Fernand Le Rachinel (Independent, France):

“On many occasions, we have stressed the fact that Turkey is not a European country... The Turkish people, who are themselves being provocative, refuse to recognise the Republic of Cyprus on the grounds that they occupy part of it. They do so in defiance of international law. This is without mentioning the Armenian genocide of 1915... In their new penal code, making reference to this very Armenian genocide or to the occupation of the northern part of Cyprus is punishable by imprisonment. In these conditions, and without even mentioning the tragic fate of the Christian minorities, it is obscene to open accession negotiations on 3 October with a large country in Asia Minor.”

Jean-Claude Martinez (Independent, France):

“...It was a ‘no’ from all sides. The speakers spoke of ‘Armenia’, ‘the violation of human rights’, ‘the light years separating two civilisations’, ‘the occupation in Cyprus of part of European territory by a foreign army... In this House, the representatives of the people of Europe’s nations are repeating the ‘no’ uttered by Cervantes at Lepanto, by Lord Byron at Missolonghi, by the Greek children of the Catacombs who used to practice their religion in fear, by the paintings and poems of, respectively, Delacroix and Victor Hugo on the empire of massacres and kidnappings, and by the martyrs of ‘Midnight Express’.

Erik Meijer (GUE⁵⁴/NGL,⁵⁵ Holland):

“...Last week, a court banned a conference on the mass murder of the Armenian people in 1915, which had been denied for many years.”

Tobias Pflüger (GUE⁵⁶/NGL,⁵⁷ Germany):

“...Freedom of the press is continually violated: for example, anyone publishing material that takes a critical line on the genocide of Armenians or the continuing Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus still faces imprisonment...”

Martine Roure (PES,⁵⁸ France):

“On 23 September 2005, the Turkish Court of Justice banned a conference

54 GUE: Group for the European United Left

55 NGL: Nordic Green Left

56 GUE: Group for the European United Left

57 NGL: Nordic Green Left

58 PES: Group of the Party of European Socialists

on the Armenian genocide from being held. This ban unfortunately makes it clear that the Turkish Government authorities continue to keep this debate shrouded in complete obscurity and entirely outside the law... The resolution of the European Parliament of 18 June 1987 emphasised four points comprising major obstacles to the accession negotiations with Turkey. They related to: the refusal of the Turkish Government to recognise the Armenian genocide, its reluctance to comply with international law in its differences of opinion with Greece, the ongoing presence of Turkish occupying troops in Cyprus, the denial of the Kurdish issue. The Armenian issue cannot be sunk into oblivion as these negotiations become part of history. I stand firm in refusing to accept that. The European Union is strong enough to impose upon Turkey a significant change of attitude, if the latter wants to join our Union and respect our rules and values."

2006

On 16 February 2006, a debate entitled "Cultural Heritage in Azerbaijan" was organized.⁵⁹ The following statement of Polish parliamentarian from the Independent Democracy group, Urszula Krupa (IND/DEM)⁶⁰ talking during this debate has drawn attention:

"Today's debate on human rights and democracy concerns the protection of the cultural heritage of the Armenian people, which is threatened with total destruction. Armenia, which has a population of 4 million, has been Christian since 301 AD, making it the first Christian country in the world. This fact is supported not only by historical documents but also by the thousands of crosses carved onto stone tablets, called khatchkars, which have been destroyed, just as other Armenian cultural treasures have been destroyed in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey."

Krupa, providing technical and historical information on the khatchkars, has also mentioned that the Armenian cultural heritage is being destroyed and that the government of Azerbaijan sent special army units to destroy the stones bearing Armenian crosses. While indicating that the Armenians have been persecuted for centuries who "are a nation with a wealth of experience", she has said that the Azeris have experienced suffering too, but that no conflict can justify the destruction of cultural heritage, which is a common legacy for the whole of humanity.

59 Debates, 14.1 Cultural Heritage in Azerbaijan, 16.2.2006, European Parliament website.

60 IND/DEM: Independence/Democracy Group

In her statement, Polish parliamentarian has attempted to display the Armenians as victims by emphasizing Christianity. The persecution experienced by the Azeris, who she believed also suffered with the Armenians, has not concerned Krupa at all and she has not even considered that a Muslim community could also possess a cultural heritage.

In a debate held on 27 September 2006, Dutch Christian Democrat Camiel Eurlings's (EPP-ED)⁶¹ statement that “*recognition as such is formally not a criterion, but for a country on its road to Europe it is indispensable to come to terms with its past*” had received great applause from other parliamentarians.

An interesting point here is the existence of the thought that although the recognition of the genocide as such is formally not a criterion, in other words, since no such precondition exists for other candidate countries, the situation is different when Turkey is the issue and Turkey must recognize these events as genocide. The second interesting point is the mentioning that Turkey must allow research on the events.

On October 5th 2006, the idea of the recognition of the Armenian “genocide” by Turkey being a precondition for its EU membership has been rejected as a result of the voting taking place. However, Eurlings’ statement that “recognition is formally not a criterion, but for a country on its road to Europe it is indispensable to come to terms with its past and therefore we want committees, research, open discussion” has been used. An interesting point here is the existence of the thought that although the recognition of the genocide as such is formally not a criterion, in other words, since no such precondition exists for other candidate countries, the situation is different when Turkey is the issue and Turkey must recognize these events as genocide. The second interesting point is the mentioning that Turkey must allow research on the events. This once again shows the non-existing belief that Turkey does not allow research on these events.

On the same date, during debates on the slowdown of the reform process in Turkey, the necessity to establish diplomatic relations with Armenian without any preconditions has been put forth and the settlement of border disputes being a requirement for EU accession has been indicated. However, considering the EU accession process of the Southern part of Cyprus, it could be seen that the settlement of border disputes is not always a requirement.

Many parliamentarians during this debate have conveyed their views. By expressing that the EU needs Turkey as a partner, Dutch socialist Jan Marinus

61 EPP-ED: Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats

Wiersma has indicated that Turkey must recognize what happened, but that this could not be a sine qua non for membership as it was not part of the Copenhagen criteria. Joost Lagendijk (Yeşiller/EFA),⁶² from the Dutch Greens, has stated that there was a big problem with the Eurlings report, the paragraphs in which, following amendments instigated by lobby groups, recognition of the Armenian genocide by Turkey was described as a precondition for Turkey to join and he has argued that one must be “critical but fair” towards Turkey. Irish Christian Democrat Simon Coveney (EPP-ED)⁶³ has defended that the Armenian issues should not be a new precondition for accession.

Austrian independent parliamentarian Andreas Molzer has expressed that Turkey was not ready to join the EU because of Cyprus, the non-recognition of the Armenian genocide and the Kurdish question continuing. English Christian Democrat Charles Tannock (EPP-ED)⁶⁴ has indicated that his party was in favor of Turkish membership of the EU, but that since Turkey does not recognize the Armenian “genocide” as well as some other problems, this process could be lengthy. French development commissioner Louis Michel has put forth that the Armenian “genocide” had never been a precondition and to impose it as such would amount to moving the goalposts, while he has argued that what matters is “freedom of speech” and a process of “internal awareness raising and conciliation”.

2007

On 15 February 2007, during the debate concerning the humanitarian situation of refugees from Iraq, English Christian Democrat Charles Tannock, being at the forefront of the parliamentarians who expresses the Armenian theses the most, has been able to refer to the genocide allegations even on this issue:

“I too want to focus on the Assyrian Christians who are now seeking refuge mainly in Syria and Jordan. Iraq’s Christian communities are amongst the world’s most ancient, speaking Aramaic, the language of Christ. They suffered terribly during the 1915 Armenian genocide...”

During the debate on 21 June 2007 generally concerning the recognition of the genocide, the extreme right French parliamentarian and member of Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty group Bruno Gollnisch (ITS)⁶⁵ has stated that “... I

62 EFA: European Free Alliance

63 EPP-ED: Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats

64 EPP-ED: Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats

65 ITS: Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty

would like to highlight the curious lack of condemnation of the crimes of Stalin or of the Armenian genocide in this text. Only the crimes of Hitler and crimes that are recognised by international courts (Srebrenica, Rwanda) are listed...” With this statement, he has fulfilled the task of once again reminding people of the Armenian genocide issue which was not on the agenda.

In the session on 24 October 2007 where Turkey’s accession process was debated, the parliamentarians speaking have tried to bring the genocide issue to the agenda again:

Sebastiano (Nello) Musumeci (UEN,⁶⁶ Italy):

“One year on from the last resolution adopted by this House on EU-Turkey relations, it is sad to see that certain fundamental issues remain tragically topical. Turkey does not recognise Cyprus, to all intents and purposes a Member State of the European Union; freedom of the press is still curtailed, since Article 301 of the Penal Code has not yet been amended and Turkey persists in not acknowledging the genocide of the Armenian population in 1915.”

Kyriacos Triantaphyllides (GUE⁶⁷/NGL,⁶⁸ Southern Cyprus):

“...Turkey must recognize the genocide of the Armenians.”

Charles Tannock (EPP-ED,⁶⁹ England):

“According to The Times newspaper of London, the recent US Congressional resolution on the Armenian genocide was appallingly timed. So, when is it a suitable time to talk about genocide?”

The Armenian lobby is so vociferous in this Parliament precisely because of the apparent conspiracy of silence that has surrounded the genocide question for almost a century. The murder of the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink should have provided a period of national reflection but, sadly, this did not happen. Nevertheless, reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia, including the reopening of the closed border, is an important element of Turkey’s efforts to join the EU. But, in my view, no true democracy can be in denial of its past, even its deepest and darkest secrets.

66 UEN: Union for Europe of the Nations Group

67 GUE: Group for the European United Left

68 NGL: Nordic Green Left

69 EPP-ED: Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats

Tannock's, who can easily be assumed to be among the parliamentarians establishing the most relations with the Armenian lobby, statement that "the murder of the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink should have provided a period of national reflection, but, sadly this did not happen" does not reflect the truth. Dink's murder had caused a great reaction in Turkey; in fact, the Turks had gone as far as declaring "we are all Armenians". This fact, whether consciously or unconsciously, was attempted to be covered and perhaps Tannock, just like many other parliamentarians, had only fulfilled the task of reading the text issued by Armenians without being aware of it or researching its validity.

2008

On 21 April 2008, independent Bulgarian parliamentarian Slavi Binev, taking the floor during the hearing of the Commission on crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes committed by totalitarian regimes, has made the following statement:

"During the 20th century, in addition to the totalitarian regimes of communism and nazism, there is another fact: the atrocious assaults against the human rights of the Bulgarian and the Armenian people by the Ottoman Empire. For almost five centuries, under the rule of the Ottoman state, the violence against the Bulgarian people was marked by the features of genocide. A considerable part of the Bulgarian population was taken away into slavery, exterminated or forcibly converted to Islam, which is basically a purposeful ethnic cleansing.

Another undeniable fact is the forcible deportation and killing of over one and a half million Armenians by the Turkish authorities between 1915 and 1917. All of these acts against Bulgarians and Armenians fully match the elements of crimes defined in UN instruments on the prosecution and punishment of genocide. The recognition of genocide against Armenians and Bulgarians would send a clear signal to the Republic of Turkey to assume its liability and apologize for the five centuries of oppression against the Bulgarians and for the crimes and mass murders committed, and to compensate the heirs of refugees for the suffering and for the private estates stolen from them which remain on Turkish territory."

The accusations put forth by the Bulgarian parliamentarian are surprising. However, what is more surprising is that the person posing these accusations is the citizen of a country which had aimed to eliminate all Turkish existence in the country a short while ago and which had made initiatives for cultural genocide.

2009

During a debate on China on 15 July 2009, English Christian Democrat Tannock has been able to bring up Turkish hostility again:

“I note that Turkey’s Prime Minister Erdogan has labelled this violence as a genocide: a bit rich coming from him when his own country fails to recognise the Armenian genocide. His efforts to appeal to pan-Turkic nationalism are also hypocritical, given Turkey’s treatment of its own minorities and in particular the Kurds in eastern Turkey.”

Minutes

The parliamentarians are given one-minute times to speak in the European Parliament on the subjects they find the most important. The issue of the Armenian “genocide” does not seem like a heading important enough to influence Europe and be discussed in a minute. However, as mentioned earlier, the pressures, threats and bribes of the Armenian diaspora and the internal policy concerns of France in particular have made the issue, which actually does not concern Europe at all, significant enough to be made the subject of one-minute speeches.

2004

Just as the rapporteur of the 1987 resolution Vandemenlebroucke, in the minute on 19 April 2004, Philip Claeyns (Independent), both Belgian and a member of the extreme rightist and racist Vlaams Belang party, has reminded that in the next couple of days, ceremonies will be held in various places around the world to commemorate the Turkish genocide against the Armenian people and has stated that the lives of more than one million people were claimed, that between 1915 and 1918, the Turkish army evacuated almost all Armenian villages within the Ottoman Empire, that this involved the immediate execution of hundreds of thousands of citizens, while others died later, under horrendous circumstances, during hunger marches to Syria, and that this was the first genocide of the 20th century. Then, he has expressed that Turkey refuses to acknowledge this genocide and that this is quite a serious blemish on a candidate member state, because it illustrates the way in which today’s Turkish Government views human rights. Mentioning *“I would remind you of the resolution adopted by our own Parliament in 1987, which clearly stipulates that Turkey has no claim to EU membership as long as it does not recognise the Armenian genocide”*, Claeyns has said that this

same resolution, which is still valid, be brought to the attention of the Commission and the Council.⁷⁰

What is more interesting than the incorrect information Claeys possesses regarding the 1915 events is his misinterpretation of the resolution adopted by the Parliament, which he describes as “our own parliament”, either intentionally or unintentionally or trying to show it that way. As known, Turkey’s recognition of the “genocide” was not put forth as a precondition in the 1987 resolution for membership.

2005

Marie Anne Isler Béguin (Greens/EFA,⁷¹ France) has spoken in the following way on 27 April 2005:

“As Chairman of the Delegation for relations with the countries of the South Caucasus, I very much hope that the European Parliament commemorates the 90th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. They represent ninety years that have seen the Armenian people living haunted by the past and awaiting recognition of this genocide: recognition by the world as witness, as our European Parliament did in 1987, and recognition by the perpetrators as culprits. This recognition is a long time coming, as we are dealing with the realm of pure emotions and extreme sensitivity. I remain convinced, however, that this moment will come, and it is the responsibility of the Union to encourage it.

In the framework of accession negotiations with Turkey, the Union must help the Turkish people and authorities to begin their memorial work, as Germany did in seeking forgiveness from the Jewish people. We must prevail upon Turkish society to recognise the Armenian genocide of 1919. I am hopeful, particularly today thanks to the agreement by the Armenian authorities to participate in an intergovernmental committee with Turkey on the genocide. I am truly convinced that Armenians and Turks will be able to find the road to reconciliation so that they may live together as good neighbours.”⁷²

Serious problems exist which eliminates the seriousness of Béguin’s speech. The parliamentarian talking about the world as witness puts forth that world witnesses

70 Debates, European Parliament website.

71 EFA: European Free Alliance

72 Debates, European Parliament website.

of these events exist today who are aged at least 98-100. Secondly, by making a similar mistake, she says that the “perpetrators as culprits” who are no longer alive must recognize the “genocide”. Towards the end of the French parliamentarian’s speech, expressing her thanks to the Armenians which constitute one of the sides reaching an agreement to participate in an intergovernmental committee on the “genocide” makes the speech insignificant. While it is normal for the side being subjected to “genocide” to participate in such a committee, the “perpetrator as culprit” participating in this commission should be regarded as a behavior worthy of applause. However, this one-sided “thanks” reveals the side Béguin supports and makes this speech, already entailing problems, completely worthless.

2006

Georgios Karatzaferis (IND/DEM,⁷³ Greece):

“The month of May this year marked the 61st anniversary of the end of Hitler’s barbarity against Europeans and Jews. However, it has been 87 years since the barbaric genocide of Turkish Greeks by Kemal Atatürk. On 19 May 1919, he entered the city and slaughtered 490 000 people. The Black Sea turned red. Observers at the time said that there were squares piled with the heads of innocent people. The only difference is that post-Hitler Germany said sorry. Turkey has never said sorry, either for the genocide of the Turkish Greeks or for the genocide of the Armenians. On the contrary, the other day it coerced the French parliament into withdrawing the Armenian genocide bill and three days ago in Vienna Mr Erdogan embarrassed the Greek prime minister because we want to acknowledge the genocide of the Turkish Greeks.”

Parliamentary Questions

The parliamentarians pose their questions concerning any issue, either written or orally, mostly to members of the Council or Commission and from time to time, to other institutions. Since the Commission and Council are obliged to respond to these questions, parliamentary questions are a mechanism of inspection and monitoring, allowing EU institutions to be supervised. The intensity and frequency of the questions may put pressure on the Council and Commission, constraining decision makers. Since 1999, the parliamentarians have the right to pose questions, either written or orally, to other institutions of the EU. The responses

73 IND/DEM: Independence/Democracy Group

are mostly vague, general responses. Since the responses regarding our topic generally entail expressions like "continuation of Turkey's EU accession process, Turkey being under close monitoring by the Commission", examples from the most interesting responses have been provided.

2000

7 April 2000

Subject: Dispute between Armenia and Turkey

To the Council

Marie Isler Béguin (Greens/EFA,⁷⁴ France):

"On 11 December 1999 the Council accepted Turkey's application for accession to the European Union. Paragraph 3 of Parliament's resolution of 18 June 1987 'Calls on the Council to obtain from the present Turkish Government an acknowledgement of the genocide perpetrated against the Armenians in 1915-1917 and promote the establishment of a dialogue between Turkey and the representatives of the Armenians'. Turkey has not acknowledged the genocide in question and is still imposing its economic blockade on Armenia. What action has the Council taken to encourage the development of political relations between Armenia and Turkey?"

Is the Council considering lifting the embargo as one of the indispensable conditions for Turkey's accession to the European Union?"

The person responding to this question on behalf of the Council has been Portuguese Seixas de Costa. Costa has expressed that the first objective of the EU is to promote stability in the Caucasus and that the Karabakh issue is specifically given importance: "...we cannot automatically accommodate Turkey's interests, and are also making greater demands on Turkey as regards the way it responds to requests made of it by the European Union. This will, of course, oblige Turkey to adopt a set of attitudes regarding traditional aspects of EU external policy towards countries in that area. In view of this, it is worth pointing out that cooperation between the European Union and Armenia is part of the *acquis communautaire* which Turkey will have to adopt..."

Upon Béguin stating that his answer was vague, Costa has tried to give an answer

74 EFA: European Free Alliance

again. After saying that the genocide issue is open to political interpretation and are based on a historical assumption which is important, but which is not a precondition for reopening dialogue, he has reiterated that Turkey must achieve good relations that the EU enjoys with Armenia, but that they will not intervene in forcing countries to develop good relations with another country.

28 November 2000

Subject: European Charter of Minority Languages and the teaching of Armenian⁷⁵

To the Commission

Florence Kuntz (UEN,⁷⁶ France):

“Since the 1915 genocide, the situation of the Armenian people has been without parallel: over half of the world’s Armenians are scattered across the entire planet. Thus in the EU Member States, we find Armenian communities making sure that their culture survives by making educational and linguistic provision for their children...

In France, western Armenian, taught in certain schools, has been classified as a language to be taken into consideration within the framework of the European Charter of Minority Languages.

Can the Commission provide information as to the full range of community actions, programmes and/or budgetary items under which it might be possible to find funding for the teaching of Armenian in schools?

In certain well-known French schools, Armenian is taught in premises which should be enlarged, due to growing demand.

Can the Commission tell me whether the requisite school extensions could be paid for by the EU, and if so, how and within what framework?

Could subsidies for such work come under the same heading as the teaching of minority languages, and if not, what programmes or budgetary items might be appropriate as possible sources of funding for school extensions?”

75 European Parliament archives, document no. P-3731/00

76 UEN: Union for Europe of the Nations Group

Answer Given by the Commission⁷⁷

5 January 2001

...Member States are responsible for the content of teaching and the organisation of their education systems... it is possible that such projects could be eligible for support from the Structural Funds, provided the schools in question are in the areas to which the Funds' objectives apply and the aims of the project correspond to the Community priorities in the relevant field...

2001

5 February 2001

Subject: Turkey's application for EU membership⁷⁸

To the Commission

Roberto Bigliardo (TDI,⁷⁹ Italy)

"Can the Commission say whether it intends to adopt any binding provisions, and if so what they are, following the unanimous vote in the French Parliament on 18 January 2001 recognising the Armenian genocide as an undeniable fact?"

Turkey has prepared a series of trade and political reprisals against France.

How can the Commission accept and justify upholding Turkey's application for EU membership?"

Account should also be taken of Turkey's continuing blatant hostility towards Armenians. We should remember that France's national team recently had to refrain from selecting the player Djorkieff, who is of Armenian origin, for the match against Turkey.

It is inconceivable that such persistent persecutory behaviour should be one of the basic characteristics of a country which for so many reasons aspires to join the European Union."

77 European Parliament archives, document no. P-3731/2000

78 European Parliament archives, document no. E-0229/01

79 TDI: Technical Group of Independent Members - mixed group

2003

19 June 2003

Subject: Turkey and the denial of the Armenian genocide

To the Commission

Miquel Mayol i Raynal (Greens/EFA,⁸⁰ Spain):

“In recent months the Turkish authorities' policy of denying the Armenian genocide has become ever more aggressive. The European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy reports that the Turkish government, through its education ministry, has launched a counter-information campaign to refute the accusations of genocide against the Armenian people. The ministry is now running indoctrination sessions for teachers and officials, with the aim of imposing an official classroom line, contrary to the right of free expression, claiming that the Armenian genocide never happened. In a decree of 14 April 2003, the Ministry called on primary and secondary schools to hold lectures affirming that the Armenian people and other peoples who have been victims of genocide have never been persecuted in Turkey, and to encourage pupils to write essays on "how to fight genocide claims".

This manipulation of history in the classroom is a practice that runs counter to European education standards. The policy of denying the genocide is, furthermore, incompatible with the European values of protection of human rights and minority rights, and is therefore in breach of the Copenhagen criteria.

Does the Commission believe that the Turkish authorities' policy of denial is compatible with the principles of the Copenhagen agreement and with the acceptance of Turkey as a candidate country?

Does the Commission consider that one of the indispensable requirements for the launching of accession negotiations with Turkey in the near future must be the public admission by the present Turkish authorities of the facts of the Armenian genocide, as recognised by the European Parliament in June 1987?”

80 EFA: European Free Alliance

Answer Given by the Commission⁸¹

1 August 2003

In response to the points raised by the Honourable Member, the Commission indicates that this issue does not fall under the scope of the Copenhagen political criteria.

6 October 2003

Subject: Denigration by Turkey of its ethnic minorities⁸²

To the Commission

Jonas Sjöstedt (GUE⁸³/NGL,⁸⁴ Sweden):

“Violations of human rights in Turkey are continuing. This is in spite of the fact that Turkey has adapted some of its national legislation to take account of EU standards. One example of the continued denigration of minorities is that the Turkish Education Ministry issued a decree on 14 April 2003 to all schools in the country requiring essay competitions and lectures to be organised denying the genocide in and after 1914 against ethnic Armenians and Assyrians/Syrians, and accusing these ethnic groups of having been traitors to the Ottoman Empire. Assyrian/Syrian and Armenian children are suffering discrimination on a daily basis, specially by being forced to participate in these lectures which are an insult to their own ethnic and religious identity.

The Turkish human rights organisation IHD has reacted sharply to the decree and has recently launched a campaign together with human rights lawyers seeking to prevail upon the Turkish government to cancel the decree and cease these violations. The Education Ministry's decree of 14 April 2003 contrasts starkly with the demands made on Turkey at the European Convention and elsewhere.

What measures does the Commission propose to take with a view to prevailing on the Turkish government to abolish this decree and cease the insults to its ethnic and religious minorities?”

81 European Parliament archives, document no. E-2038/2003

82 European Parliament archives, document no. E-3032/03

83 GUE: Group for the European United Left

84 NGL: Nordic Green Left

Answer by the Commission⁸⁵

24 November 2003

...the Commission is aware of the difficulties encountered by minorities throughout Turkey and will continue to closely monitor their treatment.

2004

9 September 2004

Subject: Recognition of the Armenian genocide by Turkey

Philip Claeys (Independent, Belgium):

“In 1915 more than one million people lost their lives in acts of genocide against the Armenian people. Over the period 1915-1918 the Turkish army evacuated virtually all Armenian villages in the Ottoman Empire, and hundreds of thousands of people were massacred or died later in terrible conditions during hunger marches to Syria. This was the first case of genocide in the 20th century.

To date Turkey has refused to admit that this genocide took place.

Does the Commission intend to ask Turkey formally to acknowledge the Armenian genocide?

To what extent can a candidate country which refuses to admit to a genocide it carried out be considered to have a credible human rights policy today?”

The same parliamentarian has delivered the same speech (or the same text prepared) in another session.

30 September 2004

Subject: Human rights violations in Turkey (state interference in education)

Koenraad Dillen (Independent, Belgium)

“A memorandum forwarded to all Members of the European Parliament by

⁸⁵ European Parliament archives, document no. E-3032/2003

various human rights organisations (including LICRA in Paris, CETIM in Geneva, MRAP in Paris and TÜDAY in Cologne) indicates that on 14 April 2003 Turkey's Minister of Education, Dr Hüseyin Çelik, sent a circular to all secondary schools insisting that they deny the claims by the Greeks and Armenians that genocide was committed against the Armenian Christians in 1915. In Elbeyli in the province of Kilis, the Public Prosecutor has even charged six teachers with 'instigating social unrest' because during a seminar they put critical questions about this circular. The teacher Hülya Akpınar was even imprisoned for a time. (Source: press release of 10 October 2003 from the human rights organisation TÜDAY and memorandum from the Working Group Recognition - Against Genocide, Munich, 2004). Various official history books have been falsified in order to deny the genocide (e.g. Tarih LISE 2 MEB Ist. 2003 4. Baskı).

In its resolution 18 June 1987, however, the European Parliament stipulated that recognition of the genocide committed against the Armenians by the Turks must be a strict condition for Turkey's eligibility for accession.

Was the Commission aware of the circular issued by the Turkish Ministry of Education, and has there been any protest against it from Europe?

Ought not the granting of financial assistance, as in the case of the ? 100 m granted to assist education in Turkey in 1995-1999, to be conditional on firm commitments by the Turkish authorities to guarantee freedom of education and not to organise State campaigns of denial?

More generally, what steps will the Commission take to secure respect by Ankara for the resolution of 18 June 1987?"

When Belgian parliamentarian Dillen describes the Armenians as "Armenian Christians" in his question and puts an emphasis on Christianity, his effort to display the matter as an issue of the Christians and not of the Armenians draws attention. No matter what a good choice it is to use "state interference in education", expressed in brackets in the subject of the question, in order to display Turkey as anti-democratic, it is completely devoid of meaning. Education is organized by the state in all places of the world, so the state interferes in education

When Belgian parliamentarian Dillen describes the Armenians as "Armenian Christians" in his question and puts an emphasis on Christianity, his effort to display the matter as an issue of the Christians and not of the Armenians draws attention.

and “freedom of education” cannot be found anywhere. On the other hand, could it be possible for the education institutes of European countries to teach crimes against humanity or open to discussion the Holocaust which those countries have committed? Is Belgium able to teach the massacres committed in its colonies during lessons? An example of extreme bias is seen once again.

Answer by the Commission⁸⁶

15 November 2004

... the Commission supported a Human Rights Project in Course Books as part of a wider project on Democracy, Human Rights and Citizenship worth ? 5 million. The purpose of this project was... addressing the general insufficiencies in the educational system concerning human rights, democracy education and recognising the need to change, develop and approve improved high-quality curricula in textbooks in line with human rights and democratic principles.

As regards the question concerning the resolution of the Parliament of 18 June 1987, the Commission confirms its position already expressed several times that this issue does not fall under the scope of the Copenhagen political criteria...

2005

7 April 2005

Subject: Armenian genocide

To the Commission

Frank Vanhecke (Independent, Belgium):

“According to the Dutch newspaper de Volkskrant, the well-known Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk was prosecuted in February 2005 for his statements about ‘the murder of 30000 Kurds and 1 million Armenians, which no one in Turkey dares to mention’. 24 April 2005 will be the 90th anniversary of the genocide. Eli Wiesel has called the Armenian genocide ‘the holocaust before the holocaust’. Recently the extensive work ‘Porträt einer Hoffnung’

⁸⁶ European Parliament archives, document no. E-2263/2004

(Berlin, Verlag Hans Schiler), edited by the well-known historian Huberta von Voss, has been published. Huberta von Voss adduces irrefutable evidence that a real genocide was carried out in the early 20th century...

Is the Commission aware of the prosecution of Mr Orhan Pamuk? What is the Commission's assessment of this prosecution in the light of the principle of freedom of expression? What steps will the Commission take vis-à-vis the Turkish Government? Is the Commission aware of the most recent research into the Armenian genocide? Why is Turkey's reluctance to acknowledge the Armenian genocide not a problem for the Commission? If accession negotiations are opened, will the Commission make it clear to Turkey that unwillingness to acknowledge this genocide is an obstacle to accession?"

The most interesting point in this question is the expression "irrefutable evidence" used by Belgian parliamentarian Vanhecke in the statement "Voss adduces irrefutable evidence that a real genocide was carried out in the early 20th century". A genocide being committed towards Armenians is proven with irrefutable evidence this way and the issue is even closed to discussion since it is considered as a concrete fact. However, the allegations and archives of Turks are always discussed. This approach, having nothing to do with being scientific, comes at the forefront of factors which eliminate the credibility of those supporting the Armenian allegations and makes their allegations meaningless.

Answer by the Commission

17 May 2005

The Commission is concerned by the facts mentioned by the Honourable Member concerning the measures taken by a representative of the local authorities against the writer Orhan Pamuk. In recent weeks, the Commission shared its concerns on several occasions with the Turkish authorities about court cases brought against journalists for expressing non-violent opinion. In its Regular Report of 6 October 2004, the Commission noted that there are still a significant number of cases where non-violent expression of opinion is being prosecuted and punished... The Commission mentioned that 'the prospect of accession should lead to improving bilateral relations between Turkey and its neighbours in line with the principle of reconciliation on which the European Union is founded.'

7 June 2005

Subject: Attempt by the Turkish Government to prevent the holding in Istanbul of a convention on the Armenian genocide

To the Commission

Mario Borghesio (IND/DEM,⁸⁷ Italy):

“The Turkish Government (in the person of the Justice Minister, Cemil Cicek) has exerted pressure with a view to preventing an historic convention on the Armenian genocide from being held at a prestigious Istanbul University, and has even described the initiative as a ‘stab in the back of the Turkish nation’.

In the light of the EU's relations with Turkey (a country which is applying for EU membership), what view does the Commission take of this extremely serious matter, which does not tally with the assurances given to the EU by the Turkish Prime Minister — Mr Erdogan — concerning Turkey's acknowledgement of the Armenian genocide?”

Answer by the Commission⁸⁸

8 July 2005

As far as the Commission is aware, the Conference referred to in the Honourable Members' questions was due to take place at Bosphorous University... The title of the Conference was to have been ‘Ottoman Armenians during the collapse of empire: Scientific responsibility and democracy problems.’ The decision to postpone the conference was taken by the organisers in Bosphorous University following controversial comments made by Cemil Çiçek, Minister for Justice, in Parliament. Prime Minister Erdoğan subsequently stated that Mr Çiçek's remarks had been made in a personal capacity and did not reflect the position of the government on this issue. As far as the Commission is aware, no new date for the conference has yet been fixed, although it is expected to take place in the near future.

The Commission hopes that the Armenian question and other such sensitive issues can, in practice, be discussed in an atmosphere of tolerance in Turkey.

87 IND/DEM: Independence/Democracy Group

88 European Parliament archives, document no. E-2062/05, E-2070/05

Universities in Turkey should, of course, be free to play a significant role in facilitating open and informed debate and freedom of expression.

The Commission will continue to monitor Turkey's compliance with the Copenhagen political criteria, including those elements relevant to freedom of thought and freedom of expression.

22 August 2005

Subject: Arrest of the Turkish scholar Yektan Turkyilmaz in Armenia⁸⁹

To the Council

Emma Bonino (ALDE,⁹⁰ Italy):

"Yektan Turkyilmaz, aged 33, is studying for a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology at Duke University, North Carolina. Mr Turkyilmaz is an expert in Turkish history, in particular the late period of the Ottoman Empire. For this reason, he was given permission to have access, as the first Turkish scholar, to the Armenian National Archives.

On 17 June, as Mr. Turkyilmaz was about to fly out of Yerevan, he was forcibly removed from the aircraft and detained. When boarding his flight, he was carrying with him his research material and the books that he had bought in second-hand bookstores and the open-air market in Yerevan.

Mr Turkyilmaz has been charged with smuggling under the Article 215, paragraph 2 of the Armenian Criminal Code, and he faces a jail sentence of between 4 and 8 years. Since 17 June, Mr Turkyilmaz has been held in the National Security Service headquarters in Yerevan under high security conditions.

Mr Turkyilmaz bought the books legally from second-hand bookstores (as the testimonies of the booksellers' confirm) and did not imagine that he would need permission to take these books out of Armenia. He is being treated in the same category as a nuclear weapons smuggler.

Is the Commission aware of the case of Mr Turkyilmaz? Has the EU representative in Yerevan sought permission to visit Mr Turkyilmaz in prison?

89 European Parliament archives, document no. E-3048/05

90 ALDE: Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

Has the Commission formally requested clarification of this matter from the Armenian Ambassador? If not, why not? If so, what replies have been received?

What representations will the Commission make to the Armenian Government so as to ensure that the right to a fair trial is respected by the Armenian authorities in this case?"

Although not frequently, parliamentarians approaching the events objectively or supporting Turkish theses have also raised their voices. Italian parliamentarian Bonino has attempted to bring to the agenda the situation of a Turkish individual treated unjustly in Armenia.

Answer by the Council

23 November 2005

The Council is aware of the case of Mr Yektan Turkyilmaz in Armenia and has sought information from the Government of Armenia regarding the case. The person in question was convicted with offences under the 2004 Armenian 'Law on export and import of cultural goods' and Article 215 of the Armenian Criminal Code relating to his attempt to take out of Armenia a number of books of cultural value. From the information received by the Council, the trial began on 9 August, at the court of the Malatya-Sebastia district of Yerevan. On 16 August, the court found Mr Yektan Turkyilmaz guilty in smuggling of books, but the prosecutor pointed that he had cooperated with the investigation and has admitted is guilt and therefore requested a suspended sentence. The person in question has received a suspended sentence and was released in the courtroom. The verdict came into force two weeks after the reading, which meant that Mr Yektan Turkyilmaz was free to leave Armenia as of 31 August, which, according to the Government of Armenia he did in the first days of September. According to the information given by the Government of Armenia, the Council has no reason to think that the right to a fair trial has not been respected in the case of Mr Yektan Turkyilmaz.

The questions of those on Turkey's side are evaluated as in the Council's reply. The Council has clearly indicated that it completely trusts the information provided by the Armenian government and that it makes a comment only based on this information without finding it necessary to conduct other research. However, when Turkey is the issue, not only is the Turkish government not taken into consideration, but by putting forth human rights, comments are made only based on the statements of terrorists.

6 July 2005

Subject: Suppression of the freedom of expression in Turkey⁹¹

To the Commission

Mogens Camre (UEN,⁹² Denmark)

"... A conference was recently held in Copenhagen on the genocide against the Armenians. In the closing debate, the hope was expressed that there could be greater openness about the historical facts, and the Armenian ambassador stressed that present-day Turks did not share the guilt of those responsible for the genocide, still less were they to be identified with them. A similar conference was scheduled to take place at the Bosphorus University in Istanbul. The day before the conference the Turkish Minister of Justice, Cemil Cicek, gave a speech in the Turkish Parliament in which he accused the university of treachery and of stabbing the nation in the back. Under these circumstances the university decided to postpone the conference.

On 1 June 2005 the new Turkish criminal code entered into force which, among other things, limits the freedom of the press and heavily penalises those who act against fundamental national interests. The initial drafts for the article in question contains penalties for asserting that the Armenian genocide actually took place...

Does the Commission still seek to defend Turkey's suppression of the freedom of expression, as condoned by the new criminal code, and does the Commission still believe that a country which in reality bans conferences of this type at a university can become a member of the EU?"

Answer by the Commission⁹³

29 August 2005

In its regular report on Turkey's progress towards accession (2004), the Commission made the assessment that the new penal code 'provides only limited progress on freedom of expression'. Subsequently, the Turkish

91 European Parliament archives, document no. E-2412/05

92 UEN: Union for Europe of the Nations Group

93 European Parliament archives, document no. E-2412/2005

Parliament adopted several amendments to provisions of the penal code, which entered into force on 1 June 2005. The impact of these amendments remains to be seen, as much will depend upon their application in practice.

As regards the other issue mentioned by the Honourable Member, the Commission is aware that the Bosphorus University decided to postpone the conference on Armenia initially planned for late May 2005.

7 November 2005

Subject: Condemnation of an Armenian-Turkish journalist for ‘insulting the Turkish state’⁹⁴

To the Council

Philip Claeys (Independent, Belgian):

“On 7 October Hrant Dink, a journalist working for the Armenian-Turkish weekly Agos, was handed down a sixth-month prison sentence by a Turkish court for ‘insulting the Turkish state’ and ‘weakening Turkish identity’. The sentenced was suspended, but will come into effect if Mr Dirk repeats ‘the offences’. Under the new penal code in Turkey, certain opinions, in practice usually concerning such matters as the Armenian genocide, discrimination against the Kurds, and the military occupation of the north of Cyprus, are still regarded as insulting to the state. The sentence has been reduced, but imprisonment nevertheless remains possible. With this penal code, freedom of the press and freedom of expression are largely impossible.

What concrete measures has the Council taken to have the Turkish penal code brought into line with the standards of democracy prevailing in the European Union?

Following the sentencing of Hrant Dink, will a warning be issued on the subject of calling a halt to the accession negotiations with Turkey?”

Although Claeys’s evaluations and criticisms could be appropriate, the possibility of Turkey being threatened is an important problem. There is a great difference between making criticisms and threatening Turkey with bringing the accession negotiations to a halt. Using this threat brings those making criticisms on top of

94 European Parliament archives, document no. E-4071/05

turkey, further increasing the existing inequality. This "hierarchy" could cause Turkey to react all over again, rather than taking into consideration the criticisms directed towards them.

2006

28 April 2006

Subject: Recognition by Croatia of responsibility for massacre of Italian population⁹⁵

To the Commission

Roberta Angelilli (Italy)

"It is now a historical fact that the militia of the former Yugoslav Communist regime's Croatian authority carried out a large-scale ethnic cleansing campaign between 1945 and 1948 against the country's Italian population, murdering more than 20000 innocent victims.

However, 50 years on, Croatia has still not admitted responsibility for the massacre. Admitting its historical, political and moral responsibility for the mass killing of the Italian population should be considered an essential condition for completion of Croatia's EU accession negotiations, as has already been demanded of Turkey with respect to the Armenian genocide.... Will the Commission state whether recognition of this responsibility will be considered an important prerequisite for Croatia's accession to the EU, in line with the line taken in respect of Turkey?..."

19 May 2006

Subject: Threat of a boycott of French businesses by Turkey⁹⁶

To the Commission

Koenraad Dillen (Independent, Belgian):

"In the French Parliament, round about now, a bill tabled by the Socialists

95 European Parliament archives, document no. E-1812/06

96 European Parliament archives, document no. E-2231/06

is being debated to make it a criminal offence to deny the Armenian genocide, by analogy with the ban on denial of the genocide against the Jews during the Second World War. This is of course a purely domestic issue for France.

However, the Turkish Government has, by way of protest, withdrawn its ambassador Osman Koruturk from Paris for consultations and has warned France that Franco-Turkish relations would be severely damaged if this legislation were to be adopted.... the possibility of a boycott of French products is not excluded...

According to a report in the French newspaper Le Figaro of Wednesday, 10 May, a call is already circulating on the Internet for a boycott of such businesses as Axa, Danone, L'Oréal, Renault and Lafarge. The contract for the Areva group to build Turkey's first nuclear power station is also said to be at risk.

In 2001, when the French Parliament recognised the Armenian genocide, Turkey already cancelled contracts with French companies such as Thomson and Alcatel.

- 1. Is the Commission aware of these economic and commercial threats by the Turkish Government against France?*
- 2. Is not such an attitude on the part of Ankara completely contrary to the spirit of the European Treaties and the internal market?*
- 3. What steps will the Commission take to induce Ankara to immediately halt any form of boycott of French businesses?*
- 4. In the light of these facts, is it not necessary to suspend the negotiations on accession to the EU?"*

If there is no other reason for the Belgian parliamentarian to embrace an issue which directly concerns the commercial relations between France and Turkey, then this is a good example for displaying that the European spirit has exceeded national boundaries. The last of the questions, posed as different points by Dillen, has removed the value of the previous ones. Addressing the suspension of the negotiations in the last point makes one think that the issues expressed until that point were not real problems, but were only used as an excuse to end the negotiation process. In other words, every opportunity is taken in order to suspend the negotiations.

Tensions arising in relations between countries could be resolved without quarrels. Always continuing relations on a normal level is particularly important in Europe's approach. Up to this day, no country has been removed from membership in the disagreements arising between EU members. It is quite interesting that the suspension of negotiations is mentioned without referring to any interim remedy for this issue which concerns Turkey and France.

Answer by the Commission⁹⁷

30 June 2006

The Commission has learned that the draft law referred to in the question has been withdrawn from the agenda of the French Parliament. The Commission is not aware of any economic or commercial threats by the Turkish Government against France.

... Turkey's progress in preparing for accession will be measured, inter alia, on the Copenhagen criteria as well as on Turkey's obligations under the association agreement and the Customs Union.

Paragraph 3 of the negotiating framework provides that 'in the case of a serious and persistent breach in Turkey of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law on which the Union is founded, the Commission will, on its own initiative or on the request of one third of the Member States, recommend the suspension of negotiations...

9 June 2006

Subject: Reopening of the border between Armenia and Turkey⁹⁸

To the Commission

Marie Isler Béguin (Greens/EFA,⁹⁹ France)

"In 1994, Turkey closed its border with Armenia, blocking all road and rail traffic between the two countries ever since.

97 European Parliament archives, document no. E-2231/2006

98 European Parliament archives, document no. E-2503/06

99 EFA: European Free Alliance

This closure has had a direct economic and social impact on the border regions of both countries but has also considerably slowed development in the area as a whole, isolating Armenia further in the South Caucasus.

Does the Commission consider the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border a priority issue in the accession negotiations launched between the EU and Turkey on 3 October 2005?

Would the Commission agree to admit a new Member State that kept the border with one of its neighbours closed?

What reasons does Turkey give to justify this closure to the European Union? Does the Commission consider them valid arguments?"

4 July 2006

Subject: The Armenian genocide¹⁰⁰

To the Commission

Mogens Camre (UEN,¹⁰¹ Denmark)

"The denial of the Holocaust, i.e. the extermination of the Jews by the Nazis, is rightly regarded in most civilised countries as completely unacceptable, and as we know Holocaust denial is a criminal offence in a number of countries.

This is justified by the need to acknowledge and understand in our own times one of the greatest crimes in world history, both out of respect for the dead and out of human consideration for the survivors and their descendants, and as a form of prevention, so that such crimes do not happen again.

Contrasting with the Western world's attitude to Holocaust denial is the official Turkish denial of the genocide committed against the Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks in Turkey between 1912 and 1923. Over 3 million people of Christian culture were murdered or starved to death as part of an ethnic cleansing process in Turkey.

100 European Parliament archives, document no. E-2992/06

101 UEN: Union for Europe of the Nations Group

No-one wants present-day Turkey to bear responsibility for acts committed in an earlier generation, but it is a serious issue that Turkish officialdom does not want to acknowledge the historical reality, and that Turkey prosecutes citizens who discuss the events which took place.

Turkey is thus guilty of a holocaust denial which is entirely equivalent to the denial of the Nazi genocide by certain individuals or by the Iranian government.

How does the Commission propose to ensure that a country which is seeking membership of the EU is not permitted to deny the genocide committed in Turkey at the time around the First World War?"

Instead of regarding those asserting to be subjected to genocide as a group or person, the Danish parliamentarian describing them as "people of Christian culture" once again reinforces his attempt to draw attention by emphasizing Christianity.

12 October 2006

Subject: The Armenian genocide¹⁰²

To the Council

Nils Lundgren (Sweden):

"The President of France, Jacques Chirac, said in a speech in Armenia on 30 September that Turkey must acknowledge the genocide against the Armenians in order to become a Member of the EU. Chirac described an acknowledgement of the genocide as a precondition for future EU membership. On 3 October, the EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Olli Rehn, adopted the opposite position, stating that there was no need for Turkey to acknowledge the genocide in order to join the EU. It is after all the Council that accepts new members into the EU. Does the Presidency consider that Turkey must acknowledge the genocide against the Armenians? What is the Council's agreed position on this political issue?"

¹⁰² European Parliament archives, document no. H-0885/06

20 October 2006

Subject: Unprecedented interference in France's internal affairs by Commissioner Rehn¹⁰³

To the Commission

Georgios Karatzaferis (IND/DEM,¹⁰⁴ Greece):

This speech of the Greek parliamentarian is filled with rage which is generally seen in those “being more royalist than the king”. Karatzaferis considers the assessment of a Commission member towards France as “interfering in internal affairs” and even as interfering in the internal affairs of “one of Europe’s oldest democracies like France”.

“According to the Greek press, Commissioner Rehn has addressed inexplicable remarks and instructions to democratically elected members of parliament in connection with a draft law shortly to be voted on in the French National Assembly, calling on them to face up to their responsibilities and stressing that the draft law, which seeks to make it an offence to deny the Armenian genocide, is counter-productive and could have serious consequences for relations between the European Union and Turkey...

Adoption of the law could have two consequences: it would restrict debate on the Armenian question in Turkey and would also be a barrier to discussion of freedom of speech in the country...

With what justification and on what grounds is Mr Rehn interfering in France's internal affairs, giving support to Turkish positions and offering instructions to democratically elected members

of one of Europe's oldest democracies?...

Would Mr Rehn not do better to devote his efforts to convincing the Kemalist-nationalist authorities in Ankara that it will not be able to join the EU unless it recognises that racist, hate-fuelled crimes, such as the genocide of the Pontic Greeks and the Armenians, were committed?”

This speech of the Greek parliamentarian is filled with rage which is generally seen in those “being more royalist than the king”. Karatzaferis considers the assessment of a Commission member towards France as “interfering in internal

103 European Parliament archives, document no. E-4505/06

104 IND/DEM: Independence/Democracy Group

affairs” and even as interfering in the internal affairs of “one of Europe’s oldest democracies like France”. The Greek parliamentarian, who does not approve of “instructions” being given to France, has indicated that it is better for the same commissioner to instruct Turkey to recognize the genocide allegations and to even threaten them. Once again, the biased approach of the parliamentarian makes his statements and assertions worthless.

26 October 2006

Subject: Draft French act restricting freedom of expression on the Armenian genocide¹⁰⁵

To the Commission

Marco Cappato (ALDE,¹⁰⁶ Italy)

“The French National Assembly has just passed at first reading an act which, were it to enter into force definitively, would punish anyone who contested the actual occurrence of the 1915 Armenian genocide with penalties ranging from fines (EUR 45000) to 5 years' imprisonment.

According to three Armenian intellectuals under investigation in Turkey for having raised the issue of this genocide, this act seems to be designed to fight genocide and claims to be founded on responsibility and universal human rights, but in reality it stands in total opposition to the freedom of expression, which is the principle underlying the exercise of every human right (Etyen Mahcupyan, Hrant Dink and Ragip Zarakolu in Le Monde of 13 October 2006).

Does the Commission not feel that this act, were it to be adopted by a Member State, would run contrary to the fundamental freedoms of European citizens, and might in particular strike at freedom of thought and the free circulation of ideas, especially in an area which historians and experts still want to and should debate without preconceptions being imposed?

Will the Commission notify the French authorities that adoption of this act could represent a violation of the freedom of expression?”

105 European Parliament archives, document no. E-4590/06

106 ALDE: Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

Answer by the Commission¹⁰⁷

22 December 2006

The Commission is aware of the French bill making illegal the denial of the Armenian genocide. In an article published in the French newspaper Libération on 12 October 2006, the Member of the Commission responsible for Enlargement stressed that only an open and democratic debate within Turkish society, between Turkey and Armenia and between Turkey and the Armenian community at large can lead to reconciliation in relation to the tragic events of 1915. Some encouraging steps have been taken in this respect. Last year, the Turkish Prime Minister proposed to set up a joint commission composed of independent historians and other international experts with unconditional access to all relevant archives. A conference on the issue, during which all points of view could be expressed, took place in autumn 2005 in Istanbul. In general, debate has increased in Turkish society on Armenian issues.

31 October 2006

Subject: Criminal reaction of Armenian genocide denial in France¹⁰⁸

To the Commission

Kyriacos Triantaphyllides (GUE¹⁰⁹/NGL,¹¹⁰ Southern Cyprus):

“Ignoring Turkish reactions, the French National Assembly has voted in favour of a law imposing a one-year prison term accompanied by a fine of EUR 45000 on anyone found guilty of denying the 1915 Armenian genocide. The Turkish Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gül, declared that the bill seriously undermined longstanding relations between Turkey and France. More specifically, on 11 October the Turkish legislators responded by tabling a law recognising the genocide of Algerians by the French colonial forces in 1945. The Turkish Government also announced that it was unable to end the boycott of French products, which was an expression of the will of the people.

107 European Parliament archives, document no. E-4590/2006

108 European Parliament archives, document no. E-4691/06

109 GUE: Group for the European United Left

110 NGL: Nordic Green Left

What view does the Commission take of this matter? Does it believe that such reactions are consistent with the European image currently being projected by Turkey?”

Answer by the Commission¹¹¹

11 December 2006

The adoption of a draft law by the French Parliamentary Assembly ‘repressing the contestation of the existence of the Armenian genocide’ sparked a wide debate in Turkey.

However, the Turkish Government resisted pressure from Turkish public opinion to impose a boycott on French products.

Furthermore, all political parties agreed to sign a common declaration which, whilst condemning the French draft law, asked for debates about history to be dealt by historians and not by politicians. In this respect, the declaration recalls the proposal of the Turkish Prime Minister to set up a joint commission composed of independent historians and other international experts with unconditional access to all relevant archives.

14 November 2006

On 14 November 2006, the Parliament has held a question time concerning the “Armenian genocide” and the parliamentarians have directed various questions to the Council.¹¹²

Nils Lundgren (Sweden):

“The President of France, Jacques Chirac, said in a speech in Armenia on 30 September that Turkey must acknowledge the genocide against the Armenians in order to become a Member of the EU...On 3 October, the EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Olli Rehn, adopted the opposite position, stating that there was no need for Turkey to acknowledge the genocide in order to join the EU. It is after all the Council that accepts new members into the EU. What is the Council's agreed position on this political issue?”

111 European Parliament archives, document no. E-4691/2006

112 European Parliament archives, document no. B6-0445/2006

Although Lundgren had asked the same question shortly before, this question which was once again carried to the agenda has been answered by Finn President-in-Office **Paula Lehtomäki** in the following way:

“...The Council of the European Union will not adopt an opinion on the alleged genocide of Armenians in Turkey. Making historical judgments is the job of historians. The Union takes a positive view of certain initiatives, such as the conference in Turkey on the Armenian Question and Prime Minister Erdogan’s proposal to set up a joint Turkish-Armenian commission of historians to research the tragic events of 1915. The Union is enthusiastically encouraging Turkey to do all it can to improve relations with its neighbour Armenia, especially with regard to opening the border between the countries, which would be a very propitious move for the entire region. It was this summer that the European Council last reconfirmed that it would adhere to its commitments on enlargement. No new criteria should be set midway through the negotiations process.”

Danutė Budreikaitė (ALDE,¹¹³ Lithuania):

“Madam Minister, I fully agree that historians are the ones charged with evaluating history; however, they have different attitudes. A democratic state, which is unable to assess its own past, cannot be called democratic. I doubt that Turkey complies with the first Copenhagen criterion. Turkey also fails to meet other requirements, such as the specification of the Ankara Protocol to open Turkish ports to Member States of the European Union. It seems that Turkey is dictating EU membership terms; therefore, I am concerned about possible severe outcomes if Turkey starts dictating further terms”.

Piia-Noora Kauppi (EPP-ED,¹¹⁴ Finland):

“...Mr President, you have now twice stated the Finnish Presidency’s view that recognition of the Armenian genocide cannot be a new condition for Turkey’s membership. The Commission is of the same opinion. Is this the Council’s common position, by which I mean has the legislative process on the Armenian genocide now under way in France been discussed and common conclusions adopted?”

113 ALDE: Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

114 EPP-ED: Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats

Lehtomäki:

“... as I said in an earlier answer, it was this summer that the European Council last stated that it would adhere to its commitments on enlargement. The Council is also committed to the notion that no new criteria will apply to candidate countries...”

2007

1 February 2007

Subject: Murder of the journalist Hrant Dink¹¹⁵

To the Commission

Kyriacos Triantaphyllides (GUE¹¹⁶/NGL,¹¹⁷ Southern Cyprus)

“On Friday, 19 January 2007 the Turkish journalist of Armenian origin, Hrant Dink, was assassinated in Turkey. He was particularly well known for his position on the Armenian genocide and had been sentenced by a Turkish court, under Article 301 of the Penal Code, for ‘revealing’ the Armenian genocide.

Will the Commission give its views on this matter?

What efforts is it making to have Article 301 repealed?

Is this kind of assassination compatible with the principles of law and democracy promoted by the European Union?

How does it interpret the statement by the Speaker of the Armenian Parliament, Mr Torosian, who stressed shortly after the assassination, that: “... after this assassination, Turkey should not even dream about joining the European Union”?”

The statements of parliamentarians from the southern part of Cyprus once again draw attention due to the rage and strange accusations they entail. He has put forth that the assassination is not compatible with “the principles of law and democracy promoted by the EU”. He also does not explain how there is a link between an

115 European Parliament archives, document no. E-0305/07

116 GUE: Group for the European United Left

117 NGL: Nordic Green Left

assassination taking place and the principles of law and democracy in this country. Assassinations are conducted and murders take place in every country. The problem does not lie in these kinds of crimes existing, but could emerge in the stage following them. If the Greek parliamentarian had criticized the trial, mentioning the faults during the legal procedure could have been a valuable criticism. However, creating a connection between assassination and EU principles is nothing but a forcible factor to accuse Turkey.

13 February 2007

Subject: Holocaust Denial¹¹⁸

To the Commission

Frank Vanhecke (ITS,¹¹⁹ Belgium):

“Brigitte Zypries, Germany’s Justice Minister (SPD) is seeking to make Holocaust denial a criminal offence punishable in all EU Member States.

This move has been identified as a priority of the German EU Presidency for which the European Commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs, Mr Franco Frattini, has pledged his full support. His spokesman commented ‘This would give a good signal that there are no safe havens for racists and xenophobes in the EU’

He also does not explain how there is a link between an assassination taking place and the principles of law and democracy in this country. Assassinations are conducted and murders take place in every country.

Eli Wiesel, a Nobel Prize Winner and Holocaust survivor, described the Armenian genocide as ‘the Holocaust before the Holocaust’. In 2005 the famous historian Huberta von Voss, in her comprehensive work entitled Portraits of Hope, indicated that the genocide of the Armenians at the beginning of the 20th century was something that could not be denied.

Although Mr Barnier, the former French Foreign Minister, declared in December 2004 that the Armenian question must be settled prior to commencement of accession negotiations the EU did not regard this as an issue.

118 European Parliament archives, document no. E-0585/07

119 ITS: Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty

In its progress report for 2004 to the Commission, Turkey made not a single mention of the Armenian genocide. In December 2004, the Dutch Parliament adopted a special resolution on Armenia in response to failure to consider this question officially at European level

Does the Commission agree with the legal definition of the mass murder of the Armenians as genocide? If not, why not? If so, does the Commission consider it acceptable in legal, political and moral terms to make denial of the genocide of the Jews a criminal offence while failing to do the same regarding the Armenian genocide?"

20 July 2007

Subject: Armenian genocide denial trial in Turkey¹²⁰

To the Commission

Charles Tannock (EPP-ED,¹²¹ England):

"Following the tragic murder in January 2007 of Hrant Dink, the Editor-in-Chief of the Agos Turkish-Armenian bulletin, allegedly intimidation and judicial harassment by the Turkish authorities against the publication and its staff has not ceased. Arat Dink, the current editor and son of the late Hrant Dink, and three of his colleagues have been reportedly charged with 'denigrating Turkishness' in accordance with the article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code. Their crime has been to challenge the States' denial of the Armenian genocide of 1915..."

As the Portuguese Presidency is hoping to re-open admission talks with Turkey, should the Turkish government not be encouraged to remove or substantially modify Article 301 as an act of good faith and drop proceedings against Arat Dink and his colleagues?"

120 European Parliament archives, document no. E-3744/07

121 EPP-ED: Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats

2009

23 October 2009

Subject: Turkey's handling of the Armenian genocide issue¹²²

To the Commission

Morten Messerschmidt (EFD,¹²³ Denmark)

“Does the Commission consider that the signature of a document establishing diplomatic links between Turkey and Armenia on Saturday 10 October 2009 in Zurich has wiped out at a stroke Turkey’s past handling of the Armenian genocide? Can this be true when Turkey still officially refuses to use the term ‘genocide’ and when the notorious Section 301 of the Turkish Criminal Code — in spite of cosmetic changes — not only still enables ultra-nationalist groups in Turkey to bring proceedings for ‘attacks on Turkishness’ against journalists, authors and editors who refer in articles and books to the genocide perpetrated on the Armenians in 1915, but also blurs the distinction between the judiciary and the executive, since all Section 301 cases have to be approved by the Ministry of Justice. This most recently happened in the Section 301 case against author Temel Demirer, who was sued after he had publicly expressed the view that the Armenian-born editor Hrant Dink was not murdered because he was Armenian but because he acknowledged the genocide perpetrated against the Armenians, leading the Turkish Minister of Justice, Mehmet Ali Sahin, to say ‘I will not allow anyone to call my state a murderer’. For reference, see the article “All Turks insulted by Pamuk” in the Danish daily Politiken of 25 May 2009.”

Answer by the Commission¹²⁴

9 December 2009

“The Commission welcomes the signature of Protocols for the normalisation of relations between Turkey and Armenia.

... The Commission closely follows the specific case against Temel Demirer, and had reported on this issue in the 2008 Progress Report on Turkey.”

122 European Parliament archives, document no. E-5191/09

123 EFD: Europe of Freedom and Democracy

124 European Parliament archives, document no. E-5191/2009

9 November 2009

Subject: The recent rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia¹²⁵

To the Council

Charles Tannock (ECR,¹²⁶ England)

“What is the Council's view of the recent rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia? To what extent does the Council believe that such a rapprochement, if followed through, would contribute to regional stability? Given that the European Parliament has recognised the Armenian genocide, how important in the Council's view is the recognition of the Armenian genocide for the long-term success of Turkey-Armenia relations? Moreover, to what extent does the Council believe that Turkey's recognition of the Armenian genocide is a requirement for Turkey's entry into the EU?”

2010

26 March 2010

Subject: Turkish ambassador to Sweden protests against vote on resolution on Armenian genocide¹²⁷

To the Commission

Philip Claeys (Independent, Belgium)

“The Turkish ambassador to Sweden, Zergun Koruturk, has been recalled to Turkey in protest at the adoption of a resolution on the Armenian genocide in the Swedish Parliament.

Is the Commission aware of the facts? Has contact been taken up with the Turkish Government in this connection?

Does the Commission regard the denial of the Armenian genocide by the Turkish Government as in accordance with the Copenhagen criteria? Does the Commission consider the Turkish position conducive to accession negotiations?”

125 European Parliament archives, document no. E-5944/09

126 ECR: European Conservatives and Reformists

127 European Parliament archives, document no. E-1883/10

Answer by the Commission¹²⁸

11 May 2010

The European Union is not about judging history, but about reconciliation. It is a future oriented project, aiming at securing peace, democracy, stability and prosperity on the continent.

Against this background the Commission encourages Armenia and Turkey to remain committed to the process of normalisation and calls on both countries to ratify and implement the bilateral protocols without preconditions and in a reasonable timeframe. The Commission believes that the full normalisation of bilateral relations between Armenia and Turkey would be an important contribution to security, stability and cooperation in the Southern Caucasus. It will require vision, courage and dialogue to overcome the wounds of the past.

The Commission knows that both ambassadors have in the meantime returned to their posts.

22 April 2010

Subject: Armenian genocide-impact on relations between Turkey and the EU¹²⁹

To the Commission

Franz Obermayr (Independent, Austria)

“Both the Swedish Parliament and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the US House of Representatives have recently passed resolutions classifying the Turkish massacre of Armenians during the First World War as genocide. Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan has described these resolutions literally as a ‘farce’, a ‘parody’ and the ‘product of erroneous polices’, and has reacted by stating that relations between Turkey and the other countries are now strained... He also threatened immediately to expel 100 000 Armenians who did not have valid residence permits.

How does the Commission view these blatant threats by the Turkish Prime

128 European Parliament archives, document no. E-1858/10 , E-1883/10 , P-2010/10

129 European Parliament archives, document no. E-2684/10

Minister against the USA and Sweden, in particular with regard to Turkey’s democratic and political maturity and further accession negotiations?

Will the Commission react appropriately to Erdoğan’s threat to deport 100 000 Armenians?

Will Erdoğan’s announcement have appropriate consequences for Turkey’s accession negotiations with the EU?”

1 June 2010

Subject: Relations with Turkey¹³⁰

Jonas Sjöstedt (Sweden)

“Violations of the Christian minority’s human rights persist. The rights of individuals freely to practice their religion and use their own language are, in practice, restricted. Old churches and monasteries fall into ruin or are deliberately destroyed. The Turkish authorities continue to deny the genocide of Armenians and Syrians at the beginning of the previous century.

How does the Council intend to raise the question of the oppression of Armenians and Syrians in Turkey in its contacts with that country with its possible membership of the EU in view?”

The Significance of the European Parliament

Until slightly strengthening with the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Parliament has actually been an institution so weak that it could be described as “ineffective”. However, the only EU institution, whose representatives are elected by the public, being this weak, has raised discussions of a democratic deficit and the influence of the European Parliament has been increased.

The Parliament is not a legal-political institution like the Council or a legal-technical institution like the Commission, but is entirely a political institution. This political arena, in which numerous debates are held on all subjects, is also open to propagandas, lobbying activities, bribes, and influences and is susceptible to an environment where concerns for votes and guidance makes the Parliament

130 European Parliament archives, document no. H-0312/04

function. Although its resolutions are not binding and its reports mostly create no results, the Parliament is still significant enough to be deterministic on some issues. For instance, the membership of a candidate country is also ratified by the Parliament. Therefore, the voting of an institution that contains resolutions regarding the “genocide” committed by Turkey and whose members view Turkey “so backward that it does not accept its crimes” becomes more important. The resolutions adopted in the Parliament regarding the Armenian issue could be considered as an important criterion which determines the approach within the EU towards this subject.¹³¹ The complete opposite of this is also possible. Rather than being deterministic, the Parliament could also be an institution which represents the already existing approach.

The reports, resolutions, proposals and the questions posed towards the officials within the EU are actually completely directed towards pressuring the Council and Commission and to influence these important decision-making institutions.

Perhaps, in order to ease the situation, comments are made that when the Parliament prepares reports or adopts resolutions particularly against Turkey, these documents are sometimes not binding in any way towards the Turkish public opinion and their consequences are not important. Although this assessment is correct, it entails several problems. The reports, resolutions, proposals and the questions posed towards the officials within the EU are actually completely directed towards pressuring the Council and Commission and to influence these important decision-making institutions.

The starting point of the Armenian genocide allegations, which have been recognized today by the parliaments of many countries, is formed by the European Parliament. With the recognition of the EU’s most insignificant, ineffective, and most easily influenced institution, the thought that the genocide allegations are true has spread to member countries and in fact, to other countries within the spheres of influence of those member countries.

Although the 1987 resolution has created no legal result “for now”, it reflects a certain view. In an institution in which the majority is formed by those regarding Turkey as a “perpetrator of genocide”, it seems quite low, under the present circumstances, that a “yes” result will be obtained for Turkey’s membership despite not accepting “its crime”. It will not be surprising that when the time comes for membership, the 1987 resolution will be brought forth as a “final condition” or “final attempt for prevention”.

131 Soner Karagül, “Avrupa Birliği ve Ermeni Sorunu”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, No. 8, Winter 2003.

Even after 1987, many debates, press statements and reports have been prepared which defends that the Armenian "genocide" must be recognized by Turkey. Ideas and pressures regarding the recognition of the "genocide" do not only belong to 1987, but has continued up until this day. Armenian authorities have put forth that although the recognition of the so-called "genocide" does not seem as a precondition for EU membership for now, the general view of EU members is that it must be set as a precondition. In this context, the Armenians believe that the decision of the European Parliament is an important political document and that Turkey is obliged to acknowledge the so-called genocide and to open the border before membership.¹³²

In the Parliament resolutions or documents, while on the one hand Turkey not being able to be held responsible for the crimes committed in the last period of the Ottoman Empire was emphasized, on the other, pressures were applied on the Turkish Republic to recognize the "genocide". We should note that the expression Turkey cannot be "held responsible" actually means that Turkey will be held responsible and that there is no obstacle to paying its penalty. With this play on words, in order for Turkey to recognize the "genocide", it has tried to be conveyed as if after this recognition, Turkey will not face any liabilities. Karagül has drawn attention to the fact that one of the Turkish theses is supported in some of the resolutions. This means that on the Turkish side, the establishment of an institution on an international level, formed by neutral and independent researchers to historically examine the issue will be expressed.¹³³

The process of recognition of the Armenian allegations by the Parliament starting at the same time with Turkey bringing the issue of EU membership to the agenda is seen as an attempt to halt Turkey's membership process. Although this allegation is true, it is incomplete, because if membership is obstructed right from the start, the resolutions adopted by the Parliament will carry no significance for Turkey, the criticisms towards Turkey in the EU will not fulfill its purpose and the link between Turkey and the EU will be cut off since candidate status will no longer exist. Therefore, pressuring Turkey, which was thought to accept everything for membership, is a much more rational inference than rejecting its membership. Throughout the membership process, Greeks, Armenians, separatist Kurdish nationalists and all radical groups could make claims under the name of human rights and freedoms. There is no guarantee that in the last moment, the result will be "no" for Turkey who believes that it has approached membership by accepting these claims. On the contrary, all official documents of the EU show that the process is "open-ended" or in other words, it frequently conveys that the end

132 "Armenia Positively Assesses European Parliament Decision on Turkey", *PanARMENIAN.Net*, 29 September 2006.

133 Soner Karagül, "Avrupa Birliği ve Ermeni Sorunu", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, No. 8, Winter 2003.

of the accession process is not membership. This way, it escapes the immorality and liability which breaking a promise will bring.

The resolutions and reports of the Parliament regarding the issue are used as an instrument of pressure and seem dangerous enough to have an “intercepting” effect on membership by putting forth “genocide” any time as a precondition. However, a point worth indicating is that decisions on membership are always taken “politically” and the decision is usually reached by several great countries. When Turkey’s time for membership comes, if the “decisive countries” believe that this membership is to their interests, then their “yes” vote will not be able to be prevented neither by the Armenian diaspora, nor the Commission, Parliament and small countries. Therefore, what is actually important is whether or not Turkey’s membership is desired by the major countries of the EU. In such a situation, not only the recognition of “genocide”, but even whether it took place or not will no longer have any significance.

The Issue of Genocide in the Commission

It could be seen that in the Commission, the concept of “genocide” is not stated and that at the most, “1915 tragic events” or only “1915 events” are mentioned. The Commission is a technical institution, keeping far from politics, which do not only protect the interests of member states, but the whole of EU interests. Since the Commission is also formed by representatives, it could show as much weakness as any institution possessing “humans” within issues of objectivity and being political. However, its essential purpose of fulfilling the EU’s general interests distinguishes this institution from the others.

Therefore, it could be better understood why none of the documents of the Commission entails the genocide allegations. As can be seen in the answers of the Commission which are given to questions of Parliamentarians and which we displayed above with examples, the Commission is careful with its criticisms towards Turkey and most of the time, do not take the side of any party. However, it is still clear in the progress reports that for sometimes being misinformed, the Commission willingly takes sides concerning some issues.

The issue which the Commission particularly dwells on or repeats each year by addressing it in the progress reports is good neighborly relations. The technical basis needed for the Commission to mention the genocide or to bring it forth as a precondition also does not exist, because there is no point in the Copenhagen Criteria related to the recognition of the genocide.

THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE ARMENIAN TERROR

Relations between Turkey and the EU are not only conducted through EU institutions. The approaches, view points and bilateral relations of especially the strong member states towards Turkey are as important as the views of the EU institutions. Those among these countries which possess negative behaviors and actions, going as far as hindering Turkey, must be evaluated in particular. For instance, it is not a coincidence that the members today which pressure Turkey the most concerning the so-called Armenian genocide are those countries which had given the greatest support in the past to terrorist organizations which targeted Turkey.

The reason for the ASALA not instantly drawing reactions was that similar to the method of the PKK, it had not created a problem for Europe. If it does not create tensions in Europe and for Europe, then for Europe this means that there is no problem. These groups being terrorists, committing murders, and conducting massacres is not much important for the European. ASALA has also been a group which has not been taken into notice for a long time by Europe.

Like other fundamentalist groups, on the condition of not being a problem for the Europeans, the ASALA and the PKK have also been able to freely become organized, make their plans, launder money, make propaganda and have even been able to hide.

Despite the center of the ASALA being Western Beirut-Lebanon, France has come forth as a more important center, because the aim has been to find supporters within European public opinion. ASALA choosing France as the center of coordination in Europe has been important from several aspects. While a large number of Armenians existing in France provides easiness in finding finance and militants, the actual easiness has come from the French government. With the private treaty signed in 1980, in return for activities not to be conducted within the borders of France, an agreement was reached in obtaining a safe haven for the ASALA terrorist organization.

Like other fundamentalist groups, on the condition of not being a problem for the Europeans, the ASALA and the PKK have also been able to freely become organized, make their plans, launder money, make propaganda and have even been able to hide. Since the ASALA only targets the Turks, it has been able to easily take shelter in the territories of Western countries. The bomb exploded in 1983 in front of the Turkish Airlines bureau at the Orly Airport in Paris has caused the French to be directly effected by the ASALA for the first time and measures to be taken. Actually, when looking at the bombing of the Orly Airport from the aspect of the ASALA, there has been a strategic mistake. The terrorists had explained the

reason for the Orly incident as France starting to violate the agreement signed between France and the ASALA.¹³⁴

France has not accepted Turkey's request to get involved with the prosecution process of the Armenian terrorists and those supporting the terrorists. It is even doubtful whether the judgments really took place or not. The majority of the terrorists have already been released.

Concerning the ASALA's relations with Europe, France has been the leading country in aiding the terrorist organization the most. The reason for this is given as the number of Armenians living in France being high and this being evaluated as a threat to both internal affairs and security. However, considering that the same state had supported the PKK, it is seen that this optimistic viewpoint is not correct. More than the presence of Armenians in the country, the aim seems like interests directed towards foreign affairs. Today, France is still the country which brings the allegations, which are one-sided and which sometimes truly reaches a radical extent through negotiation, most extensively to the agenda and is the most "ambitious" country which is in an attempt to utilize these against Turkey.

Greece, another country within the EU today, has hosted the small units of the ASALA organizations, but more importantly, has been the European state directly providing financial resources to the Armenian terrorist organization.¹³⁵ Together with Greece, similar to their support given to the PKK, the Greek Cypriots has also been among the countries aiding and harboring the ASALA in the following years. Some suspicious indications like the ASALA members being arrested and then being set free despite the evidences found could be considered among the signs showing that Sweden is also among the European countries supporting the ASALA. Considering that the PKK organization is strong in Sweden, we could assume that this country has also supported the ASALA. The support provided by England to the Armenian rebels during the First World War has also been given to the ASALA later on. Just as they have done for the PKK in the following periods, the English media has participated in the ASALA's propaganda initiative by publishing the allegations and messages of the Armenian terrorists.¹³⁶

Although the ASALA was recognized as a terrorist organization by Europe during the period in which it was active and seems as if it has now disappeared, it has actually achieved an important opening through Europe. The Armenian allegations have come to the agenda this strong for the first time through ASALA. After the terrorist organization introduced the Armenian allegations to the world and

134 Ercan Karakoç, *Geçmişten Günümüze Ermeni Komiteleri ve Terörü*, IQ Kültür Sanat, İstanbul, 2009, p. 405.

135 Ercan Karakoç, *Geçmişten Günümüze Ermeni Komiteleri ve Terörü*, IQ Kültür Sanat, İstanbul, 2009, p. 192.

136 Ercan Karakoç, *Geçmişten Günümüze Ermeni Komiteleri ve Terörü*, IQ Kültür Sanat, İstanbul, 2009, p. 413.

completed its mission, it disappeared. However, the Armenian allegations became permanent and remained on the agenda never to be fallen off it again. Perhaps the ASALA has abandoned its weapons, but has continued its struggle in the political sphere.

The support of the Europeans given to their selves has no longer been a "support given to terror", but has been "support given to a victimized group." Europe, which does not openly support the ASALA, is in a situation to openly support the Armenian theses, because surprisingly the victim has changed: The victims are no longer the Turks as victims of terror, but are the Armenian victims of genocide.

On the other hand, a relation has been established between the ASALA and the PKK terrorist organization for a long time. Armenian terrorists also being captured among the PKK and the PKK representation office in Yerevan publicly operating are known facts. Furthermore, the allegation of ASALA leaving its place to the PKK while withdrawing is being defended. The ASALA not acting for a long time is again linked to the existence of the PKK. At the point reached today, there are assertions that the PKK has fulfilled its mission, so now it will leave the stage for the ASALA once again.¹³⁷ On the other hand, there are also those who do not believe in the order of the emerging of the PKK and the ASALA and think that the PKK terrorists have not learned from the Armenians, but the Armenians have taken lessons from the PKK.

Armenian terrorists also being captured among the PKK and the PKK representation office in Yerevan publicly operating are known facts.

WHO IS WORKING IN THE EU ON THE ARMENIAN ISSUE?

While those among European countries and within the EU who support the Armenian allegations the most by a long shot are the French parliamentarians, representatives of Sweden, Belgium, Italy, Holland and Denmark follow behind. All these countries mentioned have a stained record regarding crimes against humanity and not only have not accepted their responsibilities, but have attempted to impose their principles on other countries. It could be seen that in all Western countries strongly accusing Turkey for the Armenian "genocide" and recognizing this so-called genocide, there is a history of crime against humanity which is tried to be covered up. As examples, it is possible to give the massacres of Belgium in

137 Sinan Oğan, "Protokoller İmzalanırken ASALA'nın Yeniden Piyasaya Sürülmesi Neyin İşaretidir?", 15 October 2009, <http://www.turksam.org/tr/a1825.html> (Moreover, the site includes the declaration by the ASALA published in Armenian newspapers); For an article which argues that the awakening of the ASALA is low see. Ömer Engin Lütem, "Is the Armenian Terror being Awakened?", 6 December 2010, AVİM website, <http://www.avim.org.tr/degerlendirmetekli.php?makaleid=4488>

Congo, France in Rwanda and Algeria, the Greek Cypriots in Cyprus, Greece in Western Thrace, Holland in Srebrenica and Indonesia, and the activities of provocation of Sweden towards the Sami people and towards the “ordinary race” in their own country, along with the crimes against humanity committed by all colonial powers against African slaves. Some of these countries still not admitting their crimes increase their feelings of guilt and makes these countries more aggressive in accusing the others. Moreover, in order to cover up these incidents, countries like France view these periods as a necessary and constructive part of their history.

As a political group, with the Greens-European Free Alliance, European People’s Party-Group of European Democratic Alliance, and Group for the United Left-Nordic Green Left Alliance being at the forefront, it could be seen that almost all parties and groups have carried to the Armenian allegations to the agenda and have supported them. In general, the French Socialists and the Greens come to the foreground.

Observing the debates taking place in the European Parliament, the tempers of those supporting the Armenian genocide allegations going out of control and the choice and aggressiveness of the words they use display them as “more royalist than the king”. Defending the interests of another group with such passion should not be quite ordinary. There are several reasons to this situation.

It is not surprising that Greece has supported the Armenian theses. Greece regards Turkey as a threat towards them and attempts to weaken Turkey by utilizing all the opportunities. It has been proven and revealed to the entire world that Greece has supported the ASALA and the PKK, that it has obstructed the financial aids to be given to Turkey, has made the Cyprus problem an issue of the EU and has been used as in instrument to prevent Turkey’s membership. Therefore, Greece is a supporter of the so-called genocide which is already known, expected and considered as ordinary. The fear towards Turkey has caused them to be passionate supporters of the Armenians.

The reason for French Socialists to support the Armenian allegations should be tied to internal affairs and concern for votes. It is known that traditionally, the Armenians support the Socialists. Even the Socialist parliamentarians have criticized the support by the Socialists of the Armenian allegations being this hysterical and have put forth from time to time that this approach is “selective.”

Leader of the Socialist party François Hollande, together with the leader of the French Dashnaksutyun Murad Papazyan, have signed a text on April 3rd 2004, calling on Turkey to recognize the so-called Armenian genocide. The leaders have

expressed their devotion to the democratic and social Europe and have explained that states wanting to become members of the Union must adopt ethical values. Based on this thought, according to the leaders, in order for negotiations to start with Turkey, as much as conforming to the Copenhagen criteria, the resolution of 18 June 1987 of the European Parliament also had to be adopted.¹³⁸ When failing to establish the recognition of the so-called genocide as a precondition for negotiations to start, this time they have strived to make it accepted as a precondition for membership.

According to the majority of the Socialists, "if the Turks do not recognize the genocide, the door will be shut on their face." According to Michel Rocard among the prominent figures of the Socialists, "negotiations will serve in the progress of the Turkish community. From this aspect, naturally the recognition of the genocide will confront Turkey during this process."¹³⁹

In France, not only the Socialists, but all other groups believe that genocide has taken place. However, when bringing it to the agenda or reaching decisions, they act by taking relations with Turkey into consideration. For instance, the draft resolution which foresees the acceptance of the denial of the Armenian genocide as a crime, has been prepared by Socialists, but has been rejected by rightist groups by particularly taking into consideration the commercial bilateral relations. On the other hand, based on the fact that almost the entire right wing is against Turkey's EU membership, setting the recognition of the Armenian genocide as a precondition for Turkey has become an issue also supported by those against this membership.

For instance, it is known that center-right leader of MoDem François Bayrou, being among the individuals opposing Turkey's EU membership, had made this proposal a long time back before the genocide was recognized in the French Parliament in 2001. In an interview, Chirac's evaluation of the Armenian question as an issue between Armenia and Turkey had drawn reactions from the Armenians in the country and some parliamentarians along with Bayrou.¹⁴⁰

If the right parties opposing Turkey's EU membership are after the votes of those doubting the EU and are closer to the extreme right, then the Socialists seek not losing the votes of the Armenians. The Socialist Party embracing the Armenian question and attempting to establish the so-called genocide as a precondition relates to internal politics.¹⁴¹ In an article published in 2004 in the *Libération*

138 "M. Hollande Exige la Reconnaissance du Génocide Arménien", *Le Monde*, 4 June 2004.

139 Eric Aeschimann, "Turquie: PS et UMP Tournent Casaque", *Libération*, 9 June 2004.

140 Christiane Chombeau ve Nicolas Weill, "Les Arméniens de France Répondent Vivement au Chef de l'Etat", *Le Monde*, 2 May 2004.

141 Eric Aeschimann, "Turquie: PS et UMP Tournent Casaque", *Libération*, 9 June 2004

newspaper, it has been stated that by the Armenian Socialist Party, entering the elections of the European Parliament together with the Socialist Party, threatening the Socialists with forming their own lists in the two regions in which Armenian presence is very high, they have been successful in carrying the Armenian issue to the very top.¹⁴² For the Socialist Party, although the so-called Armenian genocide as a means or an instrument of pressure is not a new discovery, addressing the issue in such an intensive and furious way is a development of the recent years.

As can be seen in the examples provided above, European Parliamentarians even sometimes bringing the Armenian allegations to the agenda in sessions which do

According to the Armenian allegations, sufficient research and examination have already taken place and there is no need to prove that the events constitute genocide. It is also seen that some European politicians have put forth that the genocide, whose “reality is already proven”, must be recognized. This situation is nothing other than the Europeans reading the note prepared by Armenian lobbyists.

not relate to the issue in any way draws attention. It is possible to link bringing the so-called Armenian genocide issue to the agenda, regardless of what the subject of the session or debate is and despite not having any connection to the subject, to the successful lobbying activities of the Armenians. Even when discussions take place on different subjects, money obtained in high amounts or indirect gains have caused parliamentarians to bring the subject to the genocide allegations, although they would seem ridiculous, by adding a theatrical atmosphere.

It could be seen that in various international conferences, meetings or television programs, statements sometimes not relating to the subject in any way and whose contents are most of the time clearly incorrect have been conveyed.

Generally, statements have been delivered by a speech text thrust into hands with an amount of money. When directing any kind of question to the speakers, obtaining an answer from them has not been possible.

The Europeans do not only mention that genocide took place against the Armenians. At the same time, they defend the updated Armenians theses. For instance, the Armenians express that they do not want a commission, comprised of historians, to be established. From time to time, they accuse Turkey of being “fetishist” for being so keen on archives or documents. According to the Armenian allegations, sufficient research and examination have already taken place and there is no need to prove that the events constitute genocide. It is also seen that some European politicians have put forth that the genocide, whose “reality is already

142 Eric Aeschmann, “Turquie: PS et UMP Tourment Casaque”, *Libération*, 9 June 2004.

proven", must be recognized. This situation is nothing other than the Europeans reading the note prepared by Armenian lobbyists.¹⁴³

Although Europe seems as a developed civilization whose freedom of expression should be taken as an example, disregarding what they did in the past or not accepting these, it silences those arguing that genocide has not been committed upon the Armenians and only allows the supporters of "genocide" to speak up. In the conferences held in European countries, those against "genocide" are not invited and even if they are, their rights to ask questions are kept restricted. In some conferences open to the press, restrictions are only applied on the Turkish press. It is known that some academicians and politicians have faced punishment in European countries due to denying the "genocide". News was published in which a 13 year old Turkish student was suspended from school for rejecting the "genocide" and more surprisingly, was asked from him to prepare a homework regarding the "genocide". The actual conflicting point is that the Europeans, who punish the opponents of "genocide" in their own countries, condemn criticisms directed towards those recognizing the "genocide" in Turkey.

REASONS FOR ARMENIAN ADVOCACY IN TURKEY

Although Armenians do not generally always have a high population in the countries they live in, they play an active role within the society's economic, cultural and political life.¹⁴⁴ On the one hand they maintain their own identities while on the other, they easily become integrated into the society they live in. The number of the Armenian population might be important within domestic politics for receiving votes. However, quality is more important than quantity. The Armenians being active within the areas of culture, art and politics is more effective than their numbers. Countries like the US and France, in which the Armenians are this strong, take the lead in utilizing the Armenian theses against Turkey.

Power being high along with the number brings the lobbies to the foreground. Behind many of the resolutions or reports in the US, France and the EU lie the Armenian lobbies. Power means that the activities of the Armenian lobbies are successful. This success is achieved as a result of various agreements of interest with money being at the forefront.

European countries recently being concerned with the Caucasus has resulted in the Armenian theses started being supported again. Regarding timing, there is a direct

143 Ömer Engin Lütem, "Facts and Comments", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, No. 16-17, Winter 2004-Spring 2005.

144 Soner Karagül, "Avrupa Birliği ve Ermeni Sorunu", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, No. 8, Winter 2003.

parallelism between the emphasis on the policies of the Caucasus and the increase in pressures for Turkey-Armenia relations to be normalized. The Caucasus policies, being based on economy and energy, firstly and particularly entails Europe becoming closer to Armenia. In order for Armenia to escape from Russia's domination, it must withdraw to Europe's side and for this, it must be "conquered" through various promises and guarantees by the EU. The Armenians are known for being one of the nations who could do many things with various promises. By promising to convince Turkey on critical issues like recognizing the so-called genocide or opening the borders, the possibility of Europe trying to fulfill their requests from Armenians - like abandoning the Russians - must be taken into consideration.

In order for Armenia to escape from Russia's domination, it must withdraw to Europe's side and for this, it must be "conquered" through various promises and guarantees by the EU.

Besides the EU's policies of the Caucasus, its bilateral relations are also important. The EU's most powerful three states like Britain, France and Germany are concerned with this region. However, France, who has the closest relations with Armenia, is in the most fortunate position within this rivalry.

It is important for a country like Germany, who is guilty of genocide, to find another perpetrator who committed genocide before it. This way, Germany will have eased the guilt weighing upon it. Allegations exist which put forth that Hitler had learned many of the methods of applying genocide from the methods of the Ottomans used towards the Armenians. This not only eases the weight for the Germans, but for all the Europeans, because the country guilty for the Holocaust is not only Germany which committed this directly, but is the other European countries which handed over the Jews in their own countries to Nazi Germany. In this situation, all of Europe laying claims on a genocide that took place before the Holocaust is understandable.

On the other hand, there is a Muslim-Christian aspect to the issue. Throughout history, it has been the Christians who have committed genocide, exploited and oppressed, while those being exploited, slaughtered, left underdeveloped and oppressed have been the Muslims. However, the so-called Armenian genocide, which could be perceived as a Muslim nation committing genocide against a Christian nation, once again becomes a reason to eliminate the Christian Europe's great burden and to ease them psychologically.

It will not be correct to explain the condition of obsessive embracement of the Armenian allegations in European countries with thinking similarly with the

Armenians on only some issues. The issue also has a Turkish dimension. Considering the existence of Turkish hostility and the belief that “my enemy’s enemy is my friend” in these countries, this support could be better understood. In countries fighting against the Ottomans like Britain and France, there is intensive hostility towards the Ottomans.

The idea of the “oppressed Armenian” has become one of the political instruments fostering Turkish hostility by using it together with the genocide allegations. As the French Socialist Party has done, it has sometimes only or mostly been used with the purpose of domestic policy and has sometimes gained significance based on interests of foreign policy. The subject which those wanting to prevent Turkey’s EU membership have mostly dwelled upon is the recognition of the Armenian “genocide” being set as a precondition for membership. European countries are also aware that there is not a possibility for Turkey to take steps like emerging as a perpetrator of genocide which they know for sure did not take place, recognizing this, apologizing, paying compensation, and responding to the territorial claims. This way, by on the one hand displaying themselves as supporting Turkey’s EU membership they are not “double-crossers”, while on the other, by saying “yes” by putting forth the condition of recognizing the genocide, they are actually saying “no.”

In various comments, due to the sensitivity on concepts like human rights, protection of minorities, oppressed nations, historical justice and law, it is put forth that Europe supports the genocide theses. In Europe, these concepts are highly used with the purpose to serve national interests.

In various comments, due to the sensitivity on concepts like human rights, protection of minorities, oppressed nations, historical justice and law, it is put forth that Europe supports the genocide theses. In Europe, these concepts are highly used with the purpose to serve national interests. In other words, a general and impartial sensitivity exists regarding human rights and the protection of minorities. They are able to deport the oppressed in their own countries, to infringe on their rights, support terrorist organizations committing murders, protect the murderers, and act far from justice “inside”. Therefore, these principles could be put into or out of use within the framework of national interests. For instance, concerning the crimes against humanity of France towards Algeria, France accepting these events as massacre, crime or genocide has come to the agenda. However, against these accusations, the French government has given the same answer as Turkey concerning the Armenian allegations: “Let us leave the judgment of these kinds of allegations to historians.” While not accepting the

judgment of the Armenian genocide allegations to be left to historians, wanting to leave the judgment of the allegations concerning the massacres in Algeria clearly displays the situation regarding domestic policy, interests and principles.

CONCLUSION

Within Turkey's relations with the EU, the Armenian question is an issue which has increasingly gained significance. Actually the issue known as the Armenian question is a heading remaining on the EU's agenda and confronting Turkey at various times ever since it declared its intention to become a member of the EU. The reason for it "increasingly" gaining significance is that Turkey's negotiation process is approaching an end. After the negotiation process is completed, establishing the recognition of the so-called Armenian genocide as a precondition is highly possible.

The time has also come for Turkey to react, because it is evident that they will not only be satisfied with the recognition of the genocide, but Turkey will also be pressured with claims for territory and compensation.

Despite the presence and success of the Armenian diaspora which operates very intensely and actively, Turkey has not taken great initiatives regarding this issue. It could be seen that Turkey, which displayed its power

during the period of the ASALA terror, chose not to respond to the accusations concerning the Armenian issue in the following periods. Perhaps, the idea that responding would mean "defense" and defense would mean "accepting the crime" could explain Turkey's preference to remain passive. However, the "opposite side" has received and is still receiving the results of their works, lobbying activities, and propaganda. The time has also come for Turkey to react, because it is evident that they will not only be satisfied with the recognition of the genocide, but Turkey will also be pressured with claims for territory and compensation.

The Armenian theses being embraced so much by Europe cannot only be linked to the success of the Armenian lobbyists. There are many other reasons also. Those among the countries who are against Turkey's EU membership and cannot openly express their thought attempt to obstruct Turkey's path to membership in indirect ways. The Armenian question comes at the forefront of these indirect ways. We could note that for the Europeans, the Armenian question is a "political instrument."

This "political instrument" is sometimes applied in order to obstruct Turkey and

sometimes to receive votes from the diaspora. In this situation, the Armenians become an "instrument" used by the Europeans for their own interests, just as can be seen in other examples within history.

The negotiation process is the most appropriate time for those who have various requests from a candidate country, but cannot impose them on the country at "normal times". The candidate wanting to become a member of the EU is obliged to fulfill the requests required from them for membership. These requests do not sometimes entail the necessary conditions for EU membership and are requests within the interests of more dominant countries or sections. For instance, while some EU member countries do not recognize the presence of minorities in their countries although they exist, they could require the candidate countries to grant extensive rights to minorities. This is not directly related to EU membership. If becoming a member of the EU, whether or not Turkey recognizes the so-called Armenian genocide will have no effect on the whole of the EU. However, through Armenian lobbies, sections against this membership attempt to set this as a precondition, although it does not exist in EU legislation. The support for Turkey's EU membership by countries having claims like the Armenians and Greeks could be explained in this direction. These groups think that they could make claims through the EU during this period in which Turkey is open to pressures the most. These groups do not actually support Turkey's membership, but its candidacy.

In this situation, the Armenians become an "instrument" used by the Europeans for their own interests, just as can be seen in other examples within history.

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