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Turkey's Troubled Quest for EU Membership*

Gökhan Akşemsettinoğlu**

Abstract

Turkey-European Union (EU) relations are always worth pondering. It is surely without doubt that relations between Turkey and the EU, within a six-decade period, have broken down frequently. Recently, a number of issues have worsened relations once again. A number of EU leaders and authors have thereupon put forward ill-advised alternatives for Turkey's EU membership, such as privileged partnership instead of full membership. Should Turkey consent to privileged partnership instead of full membership due to recent problems experienced with the EU? This article takes a brief look at the recent developments in Turkey-EU relations and challenges the idea of privileged partnership. Based on the case-study methodology, the findings of this article reveal that adhering to the target of full membership by way of waiting for the appropriate time would be the proper stance for Turkey. In this sense, the idea of flexible integration emerges as a suitable path toward membership for Turkey.

Keywords

Turkey-EU relations, customs union, privileged partnership, flexible integration, Europeanization.

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** Assoc. Prof. Dr., Çankaya University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department Of Political Science And International Relations – Ankara/Turkey
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6990-6834
gokhana@cankaya.edu.tr

Introduction

As a requirement of its Westernization policy, Turkey has based its foreign policy on a proWest orientation. As a part of this ideal, Turkey, beside other international organizations, also established a relationship with the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1959, which continues albeit with some difficulties. Turkey's membership aspirations with the EEC/EU, continuing for well over half a century, have an intricacy that is rarely encountered in history. Within this framework, this article examines the latest period in which relations between Turkey and the EU have reached a stalemate due to political reasons. In this period, the relationship declined to a point at which decision-makers began to speculate on the possibilities of pursuing alternative cooperation rather than full membership. This article challenges to the idea of alternative cooperation, such as privileged partnership. In this study, we investigated whether there is another path away from privileged partnership as a result of Turkey's deteriorating relations with the EU. In this context, it investigates possible approaches to normalizing the worsened relations, such as updating the Customs Union and offering flexible integration as path to becoming a full member.

In this context, this study analyses the Turkey-EU relationship in four parts. The first part draws a conceptual and theoretical frame for the study by reference to "Europeanization" and "Sociological Institutionalism", respectively. The second part focuses on current issues, problems and some possible solutions. This part emphasizes the need to update the customs union to invigorate relations between the parties. The third part covers different views regarding Turkey-EU relations. This part focuses on privileged partnership and flexible integration as two opposing approaches to the relationship and puts forward flexible integration as the path of integration for Turkey's full membership. It also underlines the positive conjuncture (waiting for the right time) to take steps toward membership. The fourth part is the commentary of the article.

In the Europeanization process, the EU has made an important impact on Turkey. In such a case, the question arises as to whether Turkey should consent to privileged partnership instead of full membership due to recent problems experienced with the EU.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The interplay between the EU and its member states has played a role to form and deepen the European integration project. This multi-directional process is called "Europeanization". It transforms the member states according to the dynamics of the integration and to the restrictions of the acquis communautaire. Europeanization is defined as a "process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that the EU political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making" (Peterson et al. 2006: 340). Fundamentally, Europeanization has affected the member states and has made noticeable changes in their political, economic and social conditions. However, as soon as the European Community (EC) started to accept newer members, the Europeanization process became an effective way to influence candidate countries with the idea of "Europeanization beyond Europe" (Öner 2014: 23). In this so-called accession conditionality, "external incentives have impacted on the politics, polity, and policies of candidate states (like Turkey) and pushed them towards 'European' forms" (Taylor et al. 2013: 33).

The Europeanization process has affected Turkey's legal harmonization with the EU acquis. For this, between 2002 and 2004, the Turkish government prepared reform packages in the fields of democracy and human rights. During this period, reform packages that were adopted to comply with the accession criteria had also affected the role of the military in Turkish foreign policy. For example, the National Security Council (NSC), which was given priority for decisions previously, became an advisory organ under the leadership of a civilian secretary-general. The reform packages also strengthened the position of the government in the decision-making process. For example, soft policy instruments such as economic transactions and diplomatic means have transformed civil-military relations in Turkey for the benefit of civil practices (Müftüler-Baç et al. 2009: 411). These reform packages have so strongly affected Turkey's external politics that Turkey has begun to prioritize multilateralism as a basis of its foreign policy (Üstün 2010: 226). Therefore, Turkey has agreed with joint actions of the EU on military-security issues and even took some part of the EU's military and civil operations.[1] All these attempts indicate the existence of convergent interests between Turkey and the EU in foreign policy and security issues. Therefore, "Europeanization" is the conceptual framework of this study.

In this context, Bache (2008: 12) reminds us that "much of the Europeanization literature is institutionalized" and "sociological institutionalism" draws the theoretical frame for this article. In "sociological institutionalism"[2] actors assess their situations within social norms and cultural practices, and act according to the "logic of appropriateness" (Breuer 2012: 115). In sociological Institutionalism, institutions play a role to change and re-define the interests and identities of candidate countries. Therefore, candidate countries adopt the roles, choices and values of institutions and act accordingly (Torun 2013: 80). In this context, the "social learning model" based on the "logic of appropriateness" can explain the changes in Turkish foreign policy. In this model, actors are "motivated by internalized identities, values, and norms" (Terzi 2012: 209).

The changes in Turkish foreign policy between 1999 and 2008 and therefore the start of the accession negotiations with the EU in 2005 are the results of Turkey's intention to pursue "appropriate behaviours" with the EU comprising peace, stability and good neighbourliness (Terzi 2012: 206). Within this framework, supporting the idea of resolution in the Aegean with Greece, seeking of a rapprochement with Armenia, pursuing a dialogue–oriented policy towards the Middle Eastern countries, and preferring a diplomatic solution to the crisis on Iran's nuclear activities shows the changing behaviours of Turkey (Terzi 2012: 211). In a similar way, Turkey did not want to be a part of America's war in Iraq in 2003. Turkey preferred to act with the European countries (Oğuzlu 2010-2011: 657) and used economic instruments as a means of using soft power. In this sense, Turkish companies invested in Iraq and engaged in important projects (Müftüler-Baç et al. 2009: 418). All these exemplify the "appropriate behaviours" of changing Turkish foreign policy and indicate sociological institutionalism as the theoretical framework of this study.

Current Issues, Problems and Possible Solutions

For the last couple of years, the refugee movement, derailed accession negotiations, increasing euro-scepticism and identity issues have all occupied the agendas of both Turkey and the EU. These issues have set the tone of Turkey-EU relations. Therefore, it would be prescient to touch briefly on these issues to assess the current situation of Turkey-EU relations.

The first issue, the refugee movement – the flow of Syrian refugees to neighbouring countries following the civil war in 2011 – has caused new problems, both for an on-going readmission agreement between Turkey and the EU, and for visa liberalization for Turkish citizens in EU member states. The Turkey-EU Readmission Agreement was signed in December 2013, which started the visa liberalization dialogue between Turkey and the EU. The Agreement, whose implementation has been in force since October 2014, was conditioned to a roadmap covering 72 criteria in the fields of "migration, border management, public order, security and fundamental rights" (Öner 2016: 74, 75). Although Turkey had fulfilled 65 of the visa liberalization roadmap criteria by the end of April 2016, disagreements over the remaining criteria, especially on revising the anti-terror law has prevented the completion of the process. In fact, not only anti-terror laws but also data protection laws, anti-corruption strategies, transition to biometric passports and signing operational agreements with Europol need to be completed (Zeytinoğlu 2018: 41).

The second issue pertains to derailed accession negotiations. In other words, it is about Turkey's on-going accession process for EU membership. This issue requires further attention. Between February 2002 and July 2004, Turkey took important steps to implement the Copenhagen political criteria. In order to do so, the Turkish government reviewed the Turkish Constitution and made significant changes. For example, with the exception of crimes committed during times of war, Turkey repealed the death penalty. Turkey had also removed any legal barriers on broadcasting in different languages. Concurrently, relations between Turkey and the EU have gained a "civilizational dimension" (Gordon et al. 2006: 66). More importantly, these reforms have become so effective in the eyes of the EU that the Commission, in its 2004 Progress Report, has expressed that Turkey had complied with the Copenhagen political criteria. Consequently, the Commission advised member states to commence accession negotiations with Turkey. The EU thereupon began accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 October 2005.

These accession negotiations nevertheless marked a new wave of problems in Turkey-EU relations. Political problems between Turkey and a number of EU member states have resulted in the suspension of negotiations and have hindered the opening of a number of other accession chapters. For

example, since the opening of the accession negotiations, 16 chapters (out of 35 chapters) were opened for negotiations and only one chapter was provisionally closed. When Turkey signed the Additional Protocol, extending the Ankara Agreement to the new EU member states, it issued a Declaration on 29 July 2005 stating that the term "The Republic of Cyprus" did not imply to recognize the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus (GCASC) by Turkey.

The Turkish government also announced that Turkey would not open its harbours to Greek ships unless member states rescinded the policy of isolating the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). In response, the EU's Counter Declaration of 21 September 2005 requested that Turkey implement the Additional Protocol without discriminating against member countries and remove all restrictions to means of transportation. Following the Counter Declaration, the EU decided not to open eight of the remaining chapters and elected not to close any chapters provisionally that were already open to negotiations until the Commission endorsed that Turkey met its commitments related to the Additional Protocol. In addition to the Commission's decision, a number of member states had decided to independently apply sanctions on Turkey. As a result, both France and GCASC issued declarations for the unilateral cessation of negotiating some chapters. In this context, France blocked five chapters and GCASC blocked six chapters.[3]

The accession process had therefore been politicized and derailed. The EU had by that time hedged off the accession negotiations by declaring that the negotiations were open-ended and could be suspended. Moreover, the absorption capacity would be considered at the end of the process (Wiersma 2018: 83). This attitude of the EU may be considered its means of using its soft power or enforcing its policy through a "carrot and stick approach" on Turkey. For example, the commencement of accession negotiations with Turkey in October 2005 was a so-called "carrot," whereas the suspension of eight chapters of the negotiation process in 2006 was the so-called "stick" (Akçay et al. 2017: 416). Furthermore, following the decision to suspend negotiations with Turkey, signing COSME[4] between Turkey and the EU could have been considered the "carrot". Therefore, the EU has applied a pull-push balance in the accession process (Usul 2014: 286).

The third issue relates to increasing euro-scepticism. The start of the accession negotiations had increased the number of euro-sceptics in Turkey and similarly in terms of results, the economic crisis in Europe increased the number of euro-sceptics in the EU. When the accession negotiations began on 3 October 2005, pessimism among Turkish political parties towards Turkey's membership in the EU increased. There were, for example, five political parties objecting the EU during the 2002 general elections in Turkey and seven political parties expressed their opposition to the EU during the 2007 general elections (Başkan et al. 2012: 26). In the EU, however, the numbers of euro-sceptics had risen among the peoples of the EU member states when Turkey arrived on the agenda in Europe. The economic crisis has exacerbated discontent towards Turkey. In reality, the economic burden of Turkey in a possible membership alarms EU member states. The economic crisis has also debilitated Turkey's supporters in the EU, such as Spain, Portugal and Italy (Öner 2016: 70). Since these states have also been affected by the crisis, they have lost the power to support Turkey for full membership.

The fourth issue is the long-standing problem of identity, which include and comprise questions of image and perception. For a long time, Turkey's socio-cultural characteristics have been compared with that of Europeans and differences have always shown as an identity problem. Although the Turks have been part of European society since the Treaty of Paris (1856), at least, where the Ottoman government was admitted into the European system of states, the Turks have been labelled as the "other" (Steinbach 1988: 13). In fact, identity is mostly defined in terms of the "other" as it is created in a "dynamic exchange of settings" (İnalcık 2006: 183). This understanding has created a double standard between "us" and "them" in conformity with Robert Cooper's (2002: 13) "New Liberal Imperialism,"[5] which has become a veritable challenge in the post-modern world. In this context, Turkey is considered to be the so-called "other." However, Alaaddin F. Paksoy and Ralph Negrine (2016: 499, 500) assert that Turkey is a "positive other". In other words, Turkey is not an enemy despite its being different. It is an "other," but in a positive sense. This characteristic of Turkey can be evaluated by the EU as a bridge between post-modern Europe and pre-modern Europe, between the West and the East (Macmillan 2010: 460).

All these problematic issues have ultimately led to the breakdown of Turkey-EU relations. Therefore, both parties must first normalize the worsening relations and then revive them. In this sense, we can present a number of possible solutions. For example, updating the customs union may play a role in reinvigorating relations. In fact, the "Positive Agenda" (2012) had also implied an update to the customs union by emphasizing "enhanced cooperation"[6] (Cini et al. 2019: 446) in trade. Moreover, other attempts, such as a civil society engagement, track II diplomacy, and dialogue projects can help to normalize and reset relations (Vesterbye 2018: 71-73). Shared energy investments, such as the Southern Gas Corridor Initiative, carrying gas from Azerbaijan to Europe, can also help to normalize relations between Turkey and the EU. After all, the longest pipeline of the initiative, called Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) will run through Turkey (Kozma et al. 2018: 93). Among those possible solutions, however, updating the customs union seems more logical and therefore needs to be discussed.

Updating the customs union

When the customs union became operational on 31 January 1995, the transitional phase was completed. The 1995 Madrid Summit announced the assent given by the European Parliament starting the final phase of the customs union. In the final phase, full membership had become the main target for Turkey. In the meantime, the European Commission announced a "European Strategy for Turkey" in March 1998 "to prepare Turkey for accession, by bringing it closer to the EU in every field" (Kabaalioğlu 1999: 48). During this period, Turkey removed all restrictions on industrial products and processed agricultural products imported from the EU. Moreover, Turkey commenced applying the Common Customs Tariff of the EU for imported products from third countries (Bilici 2013: 100). In fact, the Turkey-EU Association Council also decided to implement a number of other principles to expand the area of influence of the customs union. For example, the Association Council decision requested Turkey eliminates non-tariff barriers to facilitate free movement of goods in a more proper manner. Accordingly, it required Turkey to harmonize its legislation on competition rules with that of the EU. Although Turkey has failed to achieve some of these principles, it has taken important steps on the path toward elaborating the customs union. For example, Turkey changed its industrial

property regime in 1994 and established the Turkish Patent Institute in the same year. Turkey also signed a number of international conventions on intellectual property rights, such as TRIPS.[7] In a similar manner, the Public Procurement Act came into force on 1 January 2003 and the Electronic Public Procurement Platform began to operate as of 1 September 2010. Nevertheless, Turkey still has obligations to fulfil. For instance, Turkey needs to repeal derogations and restrictive elements that are not in line with the EU acquis.

According to a Turkey-EU Association Council decision, Turkey adopted the preferential trade regime applicable to third countries. This includes the signing of bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) that the EU signs with non-member states. The problem here is that third countries sometimes refuse to sign FTAs with Turkey. Since third countries sign agreements with the EU, the goods of these third countries can enter in Turkey without customs while they continue to impose high tariffs on Turkish goods, which put Turkey in a difficult situation. For this reason, Turkey wants the EU to stipulate that a third state sign a similar agreement with Turkey and allow any FTAs to come into force until that third state signs a similar agreement with Turkey (Erhan et al. 2012: 60). Therefore, in order to eliminate the current asymmetry in Turkey's commercial relations with the EU, it is necessary for the Turkey-EU customs union to be modernized and strengthened.

Different Views Regarding Turkey-EU Relations

International developments from the beginning of the 21st century, and especially the terrorist attacks of 2001, have once again reinforced the indispensable place of Turkey in the eyes of Western powers. More importantly, following the refugee influx from Syria, security problems at the borders of EU member states have made them reconsider Turkey's position both in its region and in the international arena (İnaç 2016a: 229, 230). The economic hardships of a number of EU member states and the on-going threats of terrorism have consolidated this consideration. Therefore, discussions about Turkey-EU relations have gained momentum recently and have produced some views about Turkey-EU relations. Among others, two intermixed issues, namely "privileged partnership" and "flexible integration," have been debated frequently among scholars.

Privileged partnership or flexible integration

Privileged partnership has been put forward by some circles as an alternative policy to integration. Although its content is ambiguous, it intends to upgrade the existing Association Agreement between Turkey and the EU in a restricted manner, leaving out the possibility of full membership or integration. At this point, the difference between "association" and "integration" should be revealed. Although the association is a type of connection with actors that "exceeds solely observer status but does not include full membership" (Gümrükçü 2002: 41), integration is a "causal interdependence among parts, consistent, and structured connectedness" (Olsen 2003: 326). For that matter, Hüsamettin İnaç (2016b: 681) has reminded us that cultural and political problems between Turkey and the EU can be overcome by increasing the level of integration, but not limited to an ambiguous concept of "privileged partnership". Therefore, the current problematic issues between Turkey and the EU should not deter Turkey from its ultimate goal of full membership.

Unlike privileged partnership, flexible integration is a type of integration. In flexible integration, member states move at different speeds to achieve the goals of integration (McCormick 2015: 29). Since the mid-1990s, flexible integration models, such as two or multiple-speed Europe, the Europe of concentric circles and variable geometry, have been discussed among politicians and statesmen of EU member states to make further enlargement rounds possible. Especially when the gap has widened between Eurozone member states and non-Eurozone member states due to the economic crisis[8] (Alpan 2015: 20, 21) and after Brexit in particular, flexible integration has consolidated its position in the unification process.

Flexible integration may provide insight into Turkey's prospects of accession into the EU. According to Cemal Karakaş (2007: 15), in such a multi-tier membership model, Turkey should participate in the decision-making mechanism in the customs union. Selcen Öner (2016: 81) put forward that the Accession Negotiation Framework (2005) – principles governing negotiations with Turkey – had referred to some "permanent derogations" in areas of the free movement of people as well as structural and agricultural funds. According to article 12 of the Accession Negotiations Framework, "…derogations, specific arrangement or permanent safeguard clauses…

may be considered. The Commission will include these, as appropriate, in its proposals in areas such as freedom of movement of persons, structural policies or agriculture". Similarly, article 14 underlines that "Turkey will participate in economic and monetary union from accession as a Member State with derogation…" (Chislett 2015: 26, 27). This means that Turkey could be left out of some policy areas such as Schengen and the Eurozone.

Although derogations imposed by the Accession Negotiations seem discouraging for Turkey to become a member of the EU, the possibility of flexible integration comforts Turkey to maintain relations with the EU on the basis of membership. In this sense, the idea of flexible integration (opting out / opting in) can ease the conditions and obstacles in front of Turkey to become a member of the EU. In other words, flexible integration is the only way for Turkey to fight for membership.

"Opt-out is the practice whereby one or more member states refuse to cooperate in a particular policy area despite the fact that the majority of member states wish to commit themselves to do so" (Cini et al. 2019: 461). Reluctant member states were given opt-outs at the time of revising and ratifying treaties to maintain integration. For example, The United Kingdom (UK) and Denmark were granted a full opt-out from participation in the Euro. Also Denmark was granted an opt-out from participation in defence.

Flexibility is the form of enhanced cooperation and indicated "horizontal federalism" in the EU since "enhanced cooperation has the advantage of being able to use EU institutions to develop, enact, and implement policies" (Buonanno et al. 2013: 327). For the first time, the Maastricht Treaty allowed member states not to implement some policies of the EU. The following treaties have consolidated this policy. For example, the Amsterdam Treaty constitutionalised flexibility by the close cooperation provision (renamed "enhanced cooperation" by the Lisbon Treaty), which allows some policies to be developed without all member states participating, and constructive (positive) abstention provision, which allows member states, in certain cases, to abstain from voting on Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) decision, without blocking unanimity. The Nice Treaty streamlined enhanced cooperation arrangements, by making them easier to apply (Nugent 2010: 91). The Lisbon Treaty has broadened the treaty base for greater flexibility, by adopting "permanent structured cooperation",

which allows 25 member states (excluding the UK, Denmark, and Malta) with military capabilities that fulfil higher criteria to make more binding commitments to one another in the area of security and defence (Cini et al. 2019: 462). Within this framework; some member states in the EU exempted from Schengen Agreement, Economic and Monetary Union, defence, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and the area of freedom, security and justice.

Waiting for the right time

Another view on Turkey-EU relations asserts that Turkey's membership may in due course become a reality. Güzin Bayar and Özgür Çalışkan (2007: 50) in 2007 conducted research into the highest benefit of the Turkey-EU relationship for the EU. According to the study, based on a game theory model, if there were an antiTurkish climate, the highest benefit for the EU would be to stall Turkey and draw out the process leading to full membership. If there were a proTurkish climate, however, the highest benefit for the EU would be to accept Turkey with full membership. It seems that this model is still valid because the EU's push and pull strategy continues. Therefore, according to the model, Turkey should pursue full membership. In other words, waiting for the right time and encouraging a proTurkish atmosphere could be a logical perspective for Turkey-EU relations.

Turkey's main goal is to become a full member as soon as the accession process is completed (Usul 2014: 291). Thus, when the time comes, Turkey's membership can be beneficial for Turkey and the EU. For example, Turkey's membership is important for security reasons for both Turkey and the EU. Tarık Oğuzlu (2004: 104) put forward that "the accession process with the EU would contribute to Turkey's sense of security through the transformation of Turkey's structural conditions in line with the EU."

Moreover, Turkey's accession to the EU would not only demonstrate the democratic and multicultural maturity of the EU, but it would also facilitate the de-stigmatization of states previously labelled as "other". This would enable the EU to fight against xenophobia, racism, and discrimination (Samur 2010: 163). In this context, Turkey's membership could have a "demonstration effect" for other countries. This effect could both lead them to reform their political and economic structures and remove the negative effect on relations between the EU and other Muslim countries (Tovias

1993-1994: 63). Thus, Turkey's EU membership prospect should remain on the agenda.

Waiting for the right time and pursuing full membership are meaningful expectations because common interests and joint attempts between Turkey and the EU encourage us to think positively. For example, security, energy and trade have always been common areas of interest for both parties. In fact, Turkey has been a part of the Western security architecture through NATO for approximately seven decades. It has also become an influential player in surrounding regions, such as the Balkans, the Middle East and Central Asia. Since these regions are also points of interest for the EU through its CFSP, the Turkey-EU partnership becomes even more meaningful. For example, in the Balkans, Turkey has pursued regular participation in multilateral operations with the international community. This has contributed to fostering peace among different societies in the region. Thus, Turkey's conventional wisdom in the Balkan region can affect Turkey-EU relations positively (Göral 2013: 113). Moreover, energy resources in the Middle East and the Caspian Sea basin are other areas of common interest (Clesse et al. 2004: 200-204) between Turkey and the EU. For example, Turkey's position in China's Belt and Road Initiative and its capacity to fill the gap in the energy transformation between Central Asia and Europe are assets in the perspective of the EU (Janning 2018: 63).

Commentary

Current issues have ruined the relationship between Turkey and the EU in terms of both their positive and negative correlations. As to the positive correlation, politicization of Turkey's membership process and the anti-Turkey campaigns implemented by the EU member states, especially during the election periods, has to a great extent marred relations. The domestic policies of the EU member states to keep Turkey out of Europe have gained them votes. Moreover, devious statements such as privileged membership or such unclear messages given by the EU leaders and politicians when the negotiations went sour were made to deter Turkey from full membership. In a similar vein, the identity issue has always been used against Turkey by EU leaders and authors. In this sense, having a different religion and culture were shown as the major obstacles to Turkey acquiring membership. Here, we also see that the subject of identity is more of a problem for the EU rather than for

Turkey. Overcoming the provision in Article 2 of the EU agreement, which emphasizes "indiscrimination," is a subject the EU member states will have to seriously discuss in order to overcome the problem.

A number of issues, however, have worsened relations due to the negative correlations. Without doubt, for example, the economic crisis experienced by the EU and leading to Brexit has negatively affected Turkey-EU relations. The economic crisis, which caused Brexit and which has caused the EU to view candidate members negatively, has created a pessimistic attitude leading to EU members questioning themselves and their future. Under these circumstances, the EU was once again not even willing to cooperate in the restoration of Turkey-EU relations.

The course of Turkey-EU relations has always been problematic, so there ought to be a rational evaluation of Turkey-EU relations. Daily, short-term and spontaneous solutions which may alter the course of the relations should be avoided. The relations, which had gained traction with the initiation of accession negotiations, have slowed with the freezing of negotiations related to political disputes. While the problems discussed here pose the most significant threat in the near future, they may be solved at a time when the political agenda is favourable.

Thus, Turkey and the EU should first update the customs union to reinvigorate relations. This seems to be the best path toward the normalisation of relations between the parties. It is believed that reviewing the customs union and making the appropriate amendments will be a great opportunity for Turkey's membership in the EU once the political obstacles are overcome. Taking into consideration the alternative types of relationship, such as privileged partnership, is the second important point. Privileged partnership should never be viewed by Turkey as an alternative for full membership. It is out of the question for Turkey, which has been conducting negotiations with this perspective for over half a century, to accept an alternative approach. Rather, thinking in terms of flexible integration and considering one of the proper models of flexible integration, such as "the Europe of concentric circles," is suitable for the original purpose of the Ankara Agreement. During the 1990s when the enlargement process gained importance, the flexible integration models were intended for the enlargement process and for Turkey to be loyal to the membership criteria. Turkey may become a part of the integration

project within such a flexible model with the possibility of passing into the upper level by overcoming the integration project. Therefore, arranging policies according to changing conjunctures and expecting the EU to treat Turkey as a candidate country, but not an ordinary third country, will ease the process for both parties.

Conclusion

Today, it is not easy to consider Turkey-EU relations only in terms of Turkey's geopolitical and geostrategic significance. Turkey's changed position in its region and extended influence in international politics should also be considered. Ever since Turkey began to pursue multilateralism in its foreign policy, it has become a more active player in its region. In other words, Turkey has particularly concentrated on both economic and diplomatic means in relations with its neighbouring countries. Therefore, the preference for soft power in its foreign policy has helped the "Europeanization" of Turkey in international politics (Müftüler-Baç 2011: 288). For this reason, Turkey has expected the EU to understand its new role in international politics and to be treated accordingly in terms of its changing expectations. That is to say, Turkey "seeks recognition and respect of its own aspiration" and "demands parity in its relationship with the EU" (Janning 2018: 58). There is no doubt that Turkey and the EU have common interests in economic and political issues. In this context, Marietje Schaake (2018: 35) has stated that Europeans should not "lose sight of the significance of solid cooperation" between Turkey and the EU. Therefore, the leaders of the member states should understand that the time is ripe to work with Turkey in a new set of dynamics.

In summary, the main reason for the unification of Turkey still being viewed as a problem at the level we are today is that the EU is still endeavouring to evaluate Turkey within the void dynamics of the Cold War. Similarly, the EU has also been applying to Turkey the reward-penalty approach that it applies to third countries. The EU's intent is to make Turkey appear to be a third country rather than a candidate country. With the EU distancing itself from Turkey, which employs foreign policies and conducts negotiations, Turkey does not receive the respect and prestige it expects from the EU. Therefore, the EU should begin to view Turkey as a country not against the EU, but one that embraces it and changes its attitude in this regard. This endeavour will be very important for the future of Turkey-EU relations.

Notes

1 Turkey appeared in the European Union Force Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR ALTHEA); The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX); and the European Union Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUPM).

2 "Sociological Institutionalism" is a type of "New Institutionalism", which tries to explain how institutional structures and norms affect the choices and actions of actors. This approach has three more types, apart from "Sociological Institutionalism". Therefore, "Historical Institutionalism" focuses on the effects of institutions on politics over time. This means that "institutional choices taken in the past can become 'locked in', thereby shaping and constraining actors later in time" (Wiener et al. 2004: 139). "Rational Choice Institutionalism" is about actors' behaviours that are based on a cost-benefit analysis, which brings "logic of consequences" (Breuer 2012: 115). "Discursive Institutionalism", which is the newest type, "takes account of the substantive context of ideas and the interactive processes by which ideas are conveyed and exchanged through discourse" (Schmidt 2010: 3). It, therefore, explains the dynamics of change.

3 However, when the government changed in France in 2012, the new government removed its veto on three chapters.

4 "COSME" is the EU Program for the Competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (2014-2020).

5 According to Robert Cooper, EU member states differentiate between their own members and "others" or non-member states in their actions. While they act according to certain rules and regulations adopted toenhance cooperation, they rule out such rules and regulations and interact with "others" following different approaches, such as pre-emptive strikes, trickery, double standards, according to their level of development.

6 Enhanced cooperation is a method that allows a group of member states who demand to integrate further than provided for in the acts to do so.

7 "TRIPS" is the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. It provides standard conditions for intellectual property. The standards were negotiated at the GATT/Uruguay Round in 1994.

8 For example, the economic crisis of 2008 led to a protest in Spain in 2010 called Indignados.

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Türkiye'nin Sorunlu AB Üyeliği Arayışı*

Gökhan Akşemsettinoğlu**

Öz

Türkiye-Avrupa Birliği (AB) ilişkileri, üzerinde her zaman düşünmeye değerdir. Hiç şüphesiz ki, Türkiye ile AB arasındaki İlişkiler, altmış yıllık bir dönem içinde sık sık bozulmuştur. Son zamanlarda, bazı sorunlar ilişkileri bir kez daha kötüleştirmiştir. Bunun üzerine bazı AB liderleri ve yazarları Türkiye'nin AB'ye üyeliği ile ilgili olarak tam üyelik yerine imtiyazlı ortaklık gibi sakıncalı alternatifler ortaya koymaktadırlar. Türkiye, AB ile son dönemde yaşanan sorunlar nedeniyle tam üyelik yerine imtiyazlı ortaklığa razı olmalı mıdır? Bu makale, Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinin son dönem gelişmelerine kısaca bakmakta ve imtiyazlı ortaklık önerisine karşı çıkmaktadır. Örnek-olay araştırma yöntemine dayanan bu makalenin bulguları, uygun zamanı bekleyerek tam üyelik hedefine bağlı kalmanın Türkiye için doğru bir davranış olacağını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu anlamda, esnek bütünleşme fikri, Türkiye'nin üyeliği için uygun bir yol olarak görünmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Türkiye-AB İlişkileri, gümrük birliği, imtiyazlı ortaklık, esnek bütünleşme, Avrupalılaşma.

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** Doç. Dr., Çankaya Üniversitesi, İİBF, Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü – Ankara/Turkey
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6990-6834
gokhana@cankaya.edu.tr

Турция на пути к членству в ЕС*

Гёкхан Акшмсеттиноглу**

Аннотация

Отношения между Турцией и Европейским союзом (ЕС) всегда заставляли задуматься. Несомненно, что в течение шестидесятилетнего периода они часто обострялись. В последнее время отношения вновь обострились из-за ряда проблем. Ряд лидеров ЕС и авторов в этой связи выдвинули необдуманные альтернативы членству Турции в ЕС, такие как привилегированное партнерство вместо полноправного членства. Следует ли Турции согласиться на привилегированное партнерство вместо полноправного членства из-за недавних проблем с ЕС? В этой статье дается краткий обзор последних событий в отношениях между Турцией и ЕС и оспаривается идея привилегированного партнерства. Результаты данной статьи, основанные на методологии тематического исследования, показывают, что соблюдение цели полного членства путем ожидания подходящего времени было бы правильной позицией для Турции. В этом смысле идея гибкой интеграции становится для Турции подходящим путем к членству.

Ключевые слова

Отношения Турция-ЕС, таможенный союз, привилегированное партнерство, гибкая интеграция, европеизация.

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** Доц., д-р, Университет Чанкая, Факультет экономики и административных наук, кафедра политологии и международных отношений - Анкара / Турция
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6990-6834
gokhana@cankaya.edu.tr