

## EU's "soft power": The Case of Turkey

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The European Union's "soft power", its ability to attract and persuade countries to adopt its norms and goals, has united most of the European states on the basis of the principles of "democracy, human rights, rule of law, respect for and protection of minorities", and transformed Europe into a bastion of peace and prosperity in the world. Enlargement and the extension of membership to an increasing number of European countries, has been EU's most successful soft power policy. EU's conditionality for membership has helped transform both the authoritarian regimes of Southern Europe and totalitarian regimes of Central and Eastern Europe into stable market democracies.

Since the mid-1990s the perspective of EU integration has also been helping to encourage Turkey to liberalize its democracy and economy along EU norms and standards. Turkey, however, may be said to be the test case of the dependence of the transformative capacity of EU's soft power on the credibility of the EU and its institutions in the minds of the accession country's citizens and elites. In this paper, I will try to first present a brief overview of the ups and downs of Turkey's relations with the EU since the early 1960s. Secondly, on the basis of that overview, I will try to show how the rising and falling credibility of the EU has affected the political transformation of Turkey. Thirdly, I will try to point to the factors that explain the drastically falling public support for EU accession recently. And finally, I will discuss possible scenarios for the future of the Turkey-EU relationship, and their probable consequences for Turkey.

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Turkey's relations with what was to become the EU in 1992 began with the signing of an association agreement with the EEC in 1963 which envisaged a stage by stage integration, including the establishment of a customs union. It also involved a vague promise of full membership in the future. Ankara's motivation for signing the agreement was primarily to prevent Greece which had signed a similar agreement in 1961 from gaining unfair advantage in its relations with Europe.

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At the time Turkey was pursuing an import substitution strategy of industrialization, and its political and other elites were not highly interested in participating in European integration. When Greece applied for membership in the EEC in 1975, Turkey did not. It was, in fact, not before the middle of the 1980s that a broad consensus among the political elites on the desirability of joining the EC began to emerge in Turkey, which had by then adopted a more open and market oriented economic policy. Ankara's application in 1987 for membership in the EC was rejected, however, on the grounds that it was not yet politically or socio-economically ready to join the community, but its general eligibility for membership was confirmed.

Ankara ardently started pursuing membership only after the end of the Cold War, when the EU's interest turned towards former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. A Customs Union agreement (involving industrial products) was signed with the EU in 1995 which was seen by Ankara as a step towards full membership. Greece did not veto the CU agreement with Turkey in return for Ankara's tacit approval of the opening of accession talks with Greek Cyprus.

The CU agreement, which put Turkey's external trade under the jurisdiction of an international organization in whose decision-making it could not participate, was opposed by many, and especially by the Islamist movement which was in principle against Turkey's association with the EU. It was criticised as a serious breach of sovereignty, which would also be to the detriment of Turkish industry.

The agreement led to the adoption of regulatory reforms in the economy, and also of certain constitutional amendments towards broader democracy. Although the growing trade with the EU started to display a significant deficit, Turkish industries increasingly acquired competitive power.

The CU agreement with the EU did not, however, hinder the military intervention which took place in February 1997. The military pushed the coalition government between the Islamist Welfare Party and center right True Path Party led by Mr. Erbakan out of power through public pressure. Turkey's growing relations with the EU may explain why Turkey did not experience an outright military takeover, but what has been called a "soft coup". It may also be argued that EU hopes have also had a role in explaining why Turkey was able to preserve the democratic nature of the regime despite the violent separatist insurgency led by the PKK between 1984 and 1999. EU used the PKK insurgency as one of the arguments to reject Turkey's application for membership in 1989. The fact that certain Europeans regarded the PKK as the sole representative of the suppressed Kurdish identity in Turkey, and the covert support provided by Greece to it shadowed Turkey-EU relations. (The capture of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, and declaration of ceasefire by the PKK in early 1999 was to open the way for Turkey's candidacy for the EU at the end of that year. EU did not, however, include the PKK in the list of terrorist organisations prior to May 2002.)

Despite the CU agreement, a sense of exclusion and isolation from the EU prevailed and reached its peak when the EU in June 1997 decided to open accession talks with six candidate states including Greek Cyprus, while Turkey was not even considered as a candidate for membership. Ankara reacted strongly by accusing the EU, and especially German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, of pursuing a "Christian Club" policy, and suspended political dialogue with Brussels. The dialogue was to resume only after change of government in both Germany and Turkey.

The EU Commission, curiously, issued in November 1998 the first Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Toward Accession, although Turkey was not yet officially a candidate for membership. In a letter addressed to Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in the summer of 1999, Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit declared Ankara's intention to fulfill the Copenhagen Criteria for EU membership, and asked for Germany's support for Turkey's EU bid. The exchange of letters between Ecevit and Schröder paved the way for the EU to declare Turkey at the Helsinki summit in December 1999, as a "candidate State destined to join the EU on the basis of the same criteria as applied to other candidate States."

Candidacy was greeted in Turkey with great joy, and as a major step forward in the country's over two centuries long history of Westernization. Opinion polls showed at least two thirds of the public in favor of EU membership. A strong pro-EU consensus formed among the political, economic, cultural elites, including the civilian-military bureaucracy attached to Kemalist principles. The prospect of accession to the EU appealed to nearly all segments of society. Secularists hoped the EU would secure the secular nature of the state. Islamists hoped EU would help ease restrictions on religious freedoms. Kurds hoped EU would bring about the recognition of Kurdish linguistic and cultural rights. Alevis hoped EU would open the way to the recognition of their identity and equal treatment by the state. Non-Muslim minorities hoped EU would facilitate removal of restrictions on their religious and educational rights. The military hoped EU membership would help secure the secular nature of the regime and the territorial integrity of the country, and fulfill Atatürk's dream of a Westernized Turkey. Employers hoped EU would open up new investment opportunities, and the employees hoped for broader social rights. The population at large hoped EU would bring greater prosperity and broader freedom.

In the aftermath of the Helsinki decisions of the EU, however, various coalition governments composed of center right and left parties were slow to initiate the reforms necessary to fulfill the Copenhagen Political Criteria, the precondition for starting accession negotiations with the EU. The reforms finally started in early 2002 under the three-party coalition government led by Democratic Left Party leader Bülent Ecevit, and gained momentum after the coming to power of the Justice and Development Party.

JDP was one of the two parties formed when the Islamist movement split following the banning by the Constitutional Court of the Virtue Party in 2001, as had been the case

with its predecessor WP in 1998. The leaders of the “Renewalist” faction of the Islamist movement, Recep T. Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül pioneered the establishment in the same year of the Justice and Development Party which declared itself to be a Conservative Democratic Party committed to secularism, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, the market economy, and EU membership.

The JDP made EU accession the center piece of its platform in the general elections of November 2002, which may partly explain its success in winning about one third of the national vote and two thirds of the seats in parliament, enabling it to form a single party government, and bringing Turkey out of a decade of coalition governments composed of parties with widely different agendas. The JDP government led by Mr Erdoğan pursued an energetic reform policy aimed at fulfilling the Copenhagen Political Criteria.

The Turkish parliament adopted between February 2002 and May 2004 eight legislative packages that substantially reformed the constitutional and legal framework for human rights and democracy. Reforms were undertaken most importantly to suppress human rights violations, expand freedoms of expression, assembly and association, decrease the influence of the military in politics, and towards recognition of Kurdish identity, allowing for broadcasts and education in Kurdish.

The prospect of EU membership affected not only domestic politics, but also the foreign policy of Turkey. The success of pro-solution and pro-EU forces in the parliamentary elections of Turkish Cyprus in 2003, opened the possibility of a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus problem. The JDP government was finally able to persuade the civilian and military bureaucracy to agree to the fifth version of the Plan for the unification of the island prepared by the General Secretary of the United Nations, Kofi Annan. The Plan which was submitted to referenda on both parts of the island in April 2004 failed when the Greek side rejected it with overwhelming majority, while the Turkish side adopted it with a wide margin. Henceforth neither Ankara nor the Turkish Cypriots could be blamed for blocking a solution to the Cyprus problem.

Unexpectedly swift and comprehensive reforms by Ankara paved the ground for the decision of the European Council in December 2004 to conclude that Turkey had “sufficiently fulfilled” the Copenhagen Political Criteria, and accession negotiations could begin in October 2005. Accession talks formally began on October 3, 2005 after what British Foreign Minister Jack Straw called “a pretty gruelling 30 hours of negotiations” to persuade Austria to withdraw a demand that Turkey be offered a “privileged partnership” rather than full membership in the EU, an idea that was flatly rejected by Ankara.

In the accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey, only one chapter has so far been concluded, and the parties seem to be on course towards what by Olli Rehn, EU Commissioner in charge of enlargement, has been called a “train crash”. EU insists that

Turkey opens its air and sea ports to Greek Cypriot vessels in line with the agreement to extend the Customs Union to the ten new members of the EU. Turkey, on the other hand, remains determined not to do so unless EU ends the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots as promised in 2004 and opens Northern Cypriot ports to direct trade. Even if JDP leadership was in favor of opening the ports to continue with the negotiations, it would be impossible for the government to introduce such an unpopular measure, taking the risk of even a rebellion among the ranks of JDP.

At the moment it is not clear how a "train crash" can be avoided. Austria and Greek Cyprus have suggested suspension of negotiations altogether, while others suggest halting of negotiations on a number of chapters. Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan has already declared "If the negotiations halt, then let it be..." The EU Council will decide on the issue at its December 2006 meeting.

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What conclusions then can be drawn from the above overview of Turkey-EU relations? It seems possible to put forward the following observations:

A broad consensus on the desirability of EU accession emerged in Turkey only in the 1980s, and especially after the military regime of 1980-83. The closer EU moved towards Turkey, the stronger has been the support for EU among the Turkish public, and vice versa. The stronger the credibility of the EU, the stronger has been the support for EU in Turkey, and vice versa.

Doubts about Turkey's European identity were raised in Europe only after the end of the Cold War, and particularly after the decision in 2004 to start accession negotiations with Turkey. It seems as the closer Turkey moved towards the EU, the weaker the support for Turkey in Europe became. There is no doubt that the "enlargement fatigue" experienced in Europe plays an important role in the rise of negative attitudes towards Turkey. It may also be argued that the EU bodies have failed to inform and prepare European public opinion for future membership of Turkey.

Despite its long-drawn out character and many ups and downs, the EU-Turkey relationship has survived and deepened during the last ten years or so. This can only be explained by the commonality of interests. If recent history is a judge, Turkey-EU relationship is unlikely to break down unless either the EU or Turkey disintegrates.

The rising prospect of membership in the EU especially after the Helsinki decisions of 1999 unified Turkish society on an unprecedented scale. All segments of society at both ends of the ideological, ethnic, religious and socio-economic divides in Turkey have shared the vision of EU membership as a major means of overcoming internal differences and of enhancing the integration of the country.

The prospect of EU membership has also led to a major political realignment in Turkey. The traditional cleavages of Secularists - Islamists, Turks - Kurds, Sunnis - Alevis, capitalists - workers, civilians - military, etc. were superseded by the cleavage between those who were in favor of Europeanization of Turkey and those who opposed it. The cleavage between

Europhiles and Euroskeptics cut across all traditional cleavages. Europhiles bring together all forward looking, progressive forces in favor of an open, democratic society, while Euroskeptics unite dogmatic Kemalists, Turkish ethnic nationalists, Islamic fundamentalists, Kurdish nationalists advocating the use of violence, unreformed communists, and militarists who together form what has been called the “Red Apple” front. (“Red Apple” being a symbol for world hegemony among ancient central Asian Turkic tribes.)

Perhaps the most important impact of the EU on Turkish politics is the transformation of the Islamist movement. The Islamist movement led by Necmettin Erbakan which was strongly opposed to association with the West in general and with the EU in particular, began to change its position in the middle of the 1990s. The Welfare Party which was to become the leading party of the country, conducted a staunchly anti-EU, anti-Customs Union campaign during the elections of 1995. Soon after forming a coalition government with the True Path Party led by Tansu Çiller, however, WP adopted a series of U-turns, and assumed a pro-EU stance. The split between “Traditionalists” and “Renewalists” which began in the ranks of the Welfare Party in the mid-1990s, gradually evolved into a division in the Islamist movement between what may be called a liberal Muslim faction, and a Muslim nationalist faction. The primary representative of the former faction is the JDP, while the Felicity Party is the main representative of the latter. The JDP in power has pursued a liberal political and economic agenda while maintaining a culturally conservative, Sunni Muslim identity. The evolution of the Islamist movement in Turkey towards adopting increasingly liberal positions is one of the major achievements of Turkish democracy. EU’s soft power has certainly had a share in this development.

EU’s soft power has led to a division also in the secularist ranks, between pro-EU liberals on the one hand, and anti-EU authoritarian secularists. Liberal secularists are represented mainly by civil society groups and organisations. Authoritarian or Kemalist secularists, on the other hand, who accuse JDP of having a hidden agenda to bring about a religiously based regime in Turkey, are represented mainly by the People’s Republican Party (PRP) which may not be able to repeat its performance in the elections of 2002 when it garnered 19 percent of the total vote.

Prospects of EU accession has even affected the ranks of the staunchly secularist and nationalist Turkish military. The military seems to be divided between moderates who support a working relationship with the former – Islamist JDP government, and those who are in favor of a more confrontational stance. Former and current commanders in chief of the Turkish Armed Forces are regarded as representatives of the two different approaches.

Formerly Islamist JDP has become the leading force for political democratization and economic modernization in the country, while the reformist party of the earlier periods, the secularist PRP has assumed the role of being a bulwark of conservatism. The alliance

between liberal Muslims and liberal secularists seems to be a vital condition for the future of the reform movement in Turkey.

Promise of EU membership has also split the ranks of Kurdish nationalists. Groups that hope for the betterment of the situation of the Kurds as Turkey moves towards the EU have increased their following, while the PKK seems to be losing ground. The return to violence by the PKK between the summer of 2004 and October 2006 can perhaps be explained by its desire to put a stop to its growing isolation.

EU conditionality has certainly helped Turkey improve substantially its democratic credentials, although the pace of reforms have slowed down since the end of 2004, and their implementation remains uneven as underlined in EU Commission reports. But Turkey is on the whole a far more open and liberal society today than what it used to be just ten years ago. It is now possible to argue that democracy is more consolidated than ever, although rumours of military intervention continue. The military command continues to play a political role, but via indirect means, mainly by making public statements about politics. EU's loss of credibility is also reflected in the increase in political statements made by the military.

EU conditionality has also provided an important anchor for the economic stability and reform program adopted by the former coalition government, and strictly implemented by the current JDP government. During the last four years the economy has displayed a 7 percent annual growth rate increasing per capita income from around 3200 to over 5000 US dollars (7600 US dollars in terms of purchasing power parity). During the same period annual inflation rate has fallen from about 80 percent to 9 percent. The last two years have witnessed an annual FDI inflow of 10 billion US dollars, up from about 1 billion in previous years. Turkey's exports have reached the level of 80 bn, and imports 120 bn dollars with EU having a more than 60 percent share in Turkey's foreign trade. Current account deficit, going up from about 6 to 8 percent of GDP this year is, however, raising concerns about the future stability of the economy.

EU conditionality has improved Turkey's performance in many ways. No one in Turkey has claims that Turkey is in a position to join the EU tomorrow. But if the accession process were to continue Turkey would certainly be a far more attractive as a member for the EU than it currently appears to be. Under the current circumstances, however, when the public opinion is turning against the EU, even Europhiles are led to conclude that the EU conditionality has started to discourage rather than encourage reforms. If the trend continues Turkish governments may arrive at the conclusion that it is no longer desirable or possible to pursue EU membership. The loss of credibility of the EU has already led the JDP government and an important part of the Europhile elites to argue that the end (membership) is nothing, but the movement (accession process) is everything in order to sustain support for accession negotiations.

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While official relations between the EU and Ankara have become strained, public support in Turkey for EU accession has witnessed a dramatic decline during the last two years. In public opinion surveys the proportion of those who support EU membership has recently fallen from about 65 - 70 percent in 2004, to 30 - 35 percent, with close to 80 percent finding the EU unreliable. Disappointment with the EU does not seem to be limited to the public at large, but extends also to the Europhile elites. Among the Europhile elites, there are those who raise the idea that a "train crash" may be beneficial in terms of providing an opportunity for both sides to rethink their relationship, those who argue that the EU conditionality has become counter-productive in terms of advocacy for reforms, since reforms are conceived increasingly as concessions to an EU that has no intention of accepting Turkey as a member. There are also those among them who have simply gone over to the Euroskeptic side. On a widely watched television debate a group of former foreign ministers with different political party affiliations arrived at the conclusion that Turkey should unilaterally suspend accession talks to allow both sides a "period of contemplation" on how to reestablish their relationship on a sound basis.

The question, then, is how can this drastic change of minds about the EU in Turkey on both public and elite levels be explained? A number of factors can be considered in this context: Helsinki European Council in December 1999 had declared Turkey to be a "candidate state destined to join the EU on the basis of the same criteria as applied to other candidate states." But the EU Council in December 2004 decided that the negotiation process was "an open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed beforehand", meaning there was no commitment on the part of the EU to accept Turkey in the union at the end of the process of negotiations. Even if the negotiations were to be concluded successfully, the EU would have to consider its "absorption capacity" and reserved the right to stipulate "long transitional periods, derogations, specific arrangements or permanent safeguard clauses" before Turkey could join the Union. An increasing number of Turks believe that the EU is changing the rules of the game and discriminating against Turkey.

That France and Austria have introduced legislation to subject future member states to approval by referenda is perceived as measures directed against Turkey to make sure that it is locked out of the Union. Turkish public opinion is increasingly becoming aware of the fact that even if accession negotiations are concluded successfully, Turkey's membership will have to be approved by governments of all (i.e. at least 28) member countries, including two (France and Austria) which will decide by referenda, and finally by the European Parliament. This means Turkey will have to win over the European public opinion which is currently two thirds opposed. That may prove to be an insurmountable obstacle even after ten years.

Greek Cyprus whose government, contrary to its commitments to work for a comprehensive solution of the Cyprus problem, actively campaigned against the Annan Plan, has joined the Union, while Turkish Cypriots who have strongly embraced the Plan are left out. While Turkey



is required to solve its border disputes with neighbours before joining the EU, Greek Cyprus was accepted in the union without a solution for the island. While the EU has supported the Annan Plan, implicitly recognizing the existence of two different peoples and political entities on the island, it regards the Greek part as the sole legal representative of the whole island. These inconsistencies of the EU are widely perceived as a double standard towards Turkey.

The Greek Cypriot government is perceived as using its EU membership as a leverage for a return to pre-1974 conditions on the island. To many it is incomprehensible how a state the size of Greek Cyprus can dictate to the EU the terms of Turkey's accession. The conviction that the Greek Cypriot state is simply being used by certain bigger member states to block Turkish accession is widespread.

The European Court of Human Rights, whose judgements form part of the EU Acquis, endorsed the headscarf ban in the Turkish universities. The Progress Reports of the EU Commission have never taken up the issue of the headscarf ban which is regarded by a large segment of society as a violation of religious rights of the Sunni majority. Such disregard for their complaints have disappointed and alienated devout Muslims who had hoped that EU accession would help lift restrictions on religious rights and freedoms.

Calls from the European Parliament for the recognition of the "Armenian Genocide" and even other "genocides" committed by Turks, and statements by French politicians demanding recognition of the "Armenian genocide" to be set as a precondition for Turkish membership in the EU, have not helped the EU's popularity.

The widespread identification of Islam with terrorism and the rising tide of Islamophobia (and by extension Turcophobia) in the West and particularly in Europe in the aftermath of 9/11 have had their share in the growth of anti-West, anti-EU sentiment in Turkey. The crisis created by the publishing of cartoons about the Prophet Muhammed in Denmark and elsewhere in Europe, followed by Pope Benedict XVI's references to Islam as being "inhuman and evil" have helped spread the image of the EU as a "Christian Club", where Turkey is not wanted.

In explaining the declining support for EU in Turkey during the last two years, it is also necessary to consider the "love - hate" kind of relationship the Turks have had with the West in general and Europe in particular. It may be argued that when the West or Europe shows its "love" for Turkey support for EU goes up, and vice versa.

Finally, it needs to be emphasized that the sharp decline in the support for the EU membership in Turkey cannot be attributed to rising nationalism, but to growing disappointment with what is perceived as discriminative treatment by the EU. Such perceptions are obviously being exploited by nationalist groups who are far from representing the mainstream in

Turkey. Neither can the growing opposition to US policies in Turkey be explained by rising nationalism. During the Presidency of Bill Clinton, the US appeared in public opinion polls as one of the most favored foreign countries. The Bush administration's policies toward the Middle East in general, and Iraq and the Palestinians in particular have raised great concern. It is thus not anti-Americanism, but anti-Bushism which is rampant in Turkey, and that trend extends to the full political spectrum. It needs to be borne in mind that ideological or cultural orientations do not change in relatively short periods of time. The JDP, whose successes at the polls, cannot be explained by the rise of religiosity or nationalism, is still the leading party, likely to continue to govern the country alone or in coalition following parliamentary elections due to be held next year. According to recent polls the National Action Party which is the main representative of nationalists, may not be able to surpass the 10% threshold necessary to gain representation in parliament.

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I would, finally, like to briefly discuss possible scenarios for the future of the Turkey-EU relationship. Accession negotiations have started and the question as to whether Turkey belongs to Europe or is theoretically settled. But the question as to whether Turkey will eventually join the EU remains as relevant as ever. There may be said to be basically two scenarios for the future, depending on how the current crisis emanating from Ankara's refusal to open Turkish ports to Greek Cyprus vessels, will be managed.

The optimistic scenario is that the crisis will be managed, and the parties will find a compromise solution to carry on with the process, even if by slowing it down at least until after elections in Turkey next year and in Greek Cyprus in 2008, while renewing efforts to find a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem. This is probable, because as a Chatham House expert in the EU-Turkey relations has recently pointed to, Turkey-EU relationship is based on "cold, strategic considerations of costs and benefits" (Fadi Hakura, "Sour Romance or Rugby Match", Open Democracy, November 13, 2006). Turkish side is interested in the EU relationship because it helps the country to consolidate democracy and increase people's prosperity. The EU side, on the other hand, is interested in Turkey for its role in expanding markets, enhancing energy security, contributing to aging demography, stabilising the Middle East, and serving as a model for the Muslim world.

EU is not monolithic. It has both Turcoskeptics and Turcophiles. European citizens may be overwhelmingly against Turkey currently, but among European elites (and particularly among Eurocrats) Turcophiles may be said to prevail. An important factor in determining the future course of the EU-Turkey relationship, therefore, will be the determination and performance of Turkey in fulfilling the Copenhagen Criteria. The EU functions on the basis of consensus and compromise. This is likely to advance Turkey's prospects, because member states will be reluctant to see the collapse of the accession process for fear of strategic consequences. Even Greece and particularly Greek Cyprus will not want to see the negotiations collapse, because the EU is their only leverage against Turkey. Secondly,

Turkey's economic ties with important EU players are growing. Many EU countries including those whose governments and publics oppose Turkish membership like Germany, France, Austria, and Greece are heavily investing in Turkey.

It needs to be emphasized that the future of the Turkey-EU relationship will be equally dependent on what happens to the EU, and what shape the union will assume during what is expected to be a minimum of ten years of negotiations with Turkey. If the EU evolves towards deepening and federalism, that will certainly not help Turkey's aspirations. But if, as it seems more likely, the EU will move in the direction of a multi-speed Europe, in which members will integrate with varying speeds, that kind of a Europe may find it easier to take in Turkey.

But even if the current crisis is managed and accession negotiations carry on despite delays and difficulties, it is clear that the soft power of the EU over Turkey has drastically diminished, and unless miracles happen it is not likely to catch up any time soon. One can, therefore, definitely argue that in the near future EU conditionality is unlikely to make as strong an impact on Turkey's politics as it did between 1999 - 2004.

The unlikely and, from the point of Europhiles in Turkey and Turcophiles in Europe, pessimistic scenario is that the current crisis proves impossible to manage, and as some observers have already concluded, accession process comes to a stop, perhaps never to resume.

What happens in Turkey without the EU anchor? First of all it will definitely not be the end of the Turkey-EU relationship. The sides are likely to agree on a kind of relationship that will "fully anchor Turkey in the European structures through the strongest possible bond" as decided in the EU Council of December 2004. This may, indeed, be some sort of "privileged partnership" of Turkey with the EU as opponents of Turkish membership have long been hoping for.

It is not likely that Turkey will alter its multi-dimensional foreign policy, which builds on a basic Western orientation supplemented with stronger and friendlier ties with Russia, Middle East countries, and the world at large. Turkey is likely to continue to support efforts to find a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem in the context of the United Nations, but will definitely be less motivated.

EU is likely to further lose leverage over Ankara's foreign policy, and depending on an eventual Democratic administration in the US, and on its adopting positions similar to Turkey's in the Middle East, Ankara may move closer to Washington than Brussels. But if the US fails to meet Turkey's expectations, it is likely to lose leverage over Ankara. EU accession process may have helped prevent Turkish military intervention in Iraq. Without the continuation of that process, however, and the US failing to help stop the PKK from using Northern Iraq as a base of operations against Turkey, and the issue of Kirkuk is not resolved in a satisfactory manner, Ankara may want to take the initiative in its own hands.

On the domestic front, Turkish democracy and civil society are certainly much stronger today than what was the case ten or twenty years ago, and a reversal of democratic reforms is not to be expected, although the military may want to gain back the influence it has lost due to EU conditionality which has put an end to its constitutional tutelage over Turkish politics.

Without the EU accession process, it is probable that the traditional ideological, ethnic and religious cleavages move to the foreground of Turkish politics. EU accession or no accession, rising Kurdish nationalism may be said to be the "soft belly" of political stability in Turkey. While the PKK and secular nationalists in general seem to lose ground among the Kurds of Turkey, Kurdish religious nationalism is reported to be on the rise (Onder Aytac & Emre Uslu, „The revival of Kurdish Islamism?“, The New Anatolian, November 17, 2006).

Ankara has so far not succeeded in developing policies to tackle the challenges posed by the rising Kurdish demands. The recent ceasefire by the PKK, and the growing demand on both sides of the Turkish-Kurdish divide for an end to violence may, however, still provide a window of opportunity for the normalisation of the situation in the Southeast.

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