

## Introduction

In autumn 2003, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan declared: "The European Union is our national goal". Since Spring 2002, two extensive constitutional amendments and eight harmonization packages, which imply fundamental changes in domestic policy and throughout Turkish society, were enforced. Prior to the start of the EU accession negotiations in October 2005 two thirds of the Turkish population supported the country's accession to the EU. Since then the rate dropped to 60%, but the consensus is still very high. Traditionally, Turkish reform projects were geared toward Europe's development. This alone, however, can neither sufficiently explain the high support for EU membership among the public nor the speed and scope of legal reforms undertaken by the government. Both must be seen also against the backdrop of three important events in recent years.

- First, when Turkey was given the formal candidate status by the European Council at the Helsinki Summit of 1999, the EU's credibility improved significantly regarding its willingness to accept Turkey as a member state.
- Second, Turkey's financial and economic crisis of 2000/2001, the latest one in a series of crises during the past two decades, triggered a wave of bankruptcies and massive job losses affecting all segments of society. Thereafter, the prospect of material benefits through EU membership seemed increasingly attractive.
- And third, the war in Iraq brought about a downturn in the traditionally tight strategic relationship with the US. Consequently, a stronger bond with the EU appeared in a more favorable light (Önis, 2004: 5-7).
- These facts alone, however, cannot sufficiently explain the countrywide EU enthusiasm in Turkey. It is even surprising given Turkey's crisis-ridden

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economic and political past and also, that the driving force behind this reform process is a government with Islamic roots.

This paper examines the Turkish people's motivation more in greater depth by reflecting the pros and cons that various stakeholders expect from an EU accession. It also evaluates the chances that particular expectations will naturalize. This will make it possible to identify the potential "losers" and "winners" of EU accession among the Turkish population.

Part I of this paper deals with the far-reaching effects of the EU-harmonization process on Turkey. Essentially it is a prefixed summary of the results of the subsequent parts of the paper. It draws up a balance sheet of the entire society by dividing the different interest groups into "winners" and "losers" of an EU accession. Part II reveals four core conflict areas in the dispute over Turkey's EU membership where the stakes for Turkey seem to be particularly high. Parts III, IV and V are an analysis of the positive and negative expectations of a full EU membership from the point of view of select groups of Turkey's economic, social and political spheres. Each part concludes with an examination of how realistic those expectations are under the conditions of the EU accession criteria.

### I) Economic and Political Effects of EU Accession

#### 1) *The Copenhagen criteria as the foundation of EU accession*

On May 19, 2003 the European Council agreed on the principles, priorities, intermediate objectives and conditions as outlined in the revised Accession Partnership for Turkey. According to this, the accession process is

determined by the Copenhagen criteria, which require the following:

“... that the candidate State has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities (political accession criteria), the existence of a functioning market economy, as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union (economic accession criteria), the ability to take on the obligations of membership, including the adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union (adoption of the *acquis*)” (European Council, 2003).

Economic effects prior to and after EU-accession are primarily based on the Copenhagen criteria and the adoption of the *acquis*. For the purpose of adequate implementation, as a candidate country, Turkey is eligible to receive significant financial support from the EU. Some positive economic effects such as drastically reduced inflation rates, a higher inflow of foreign investment and institutional changes within the economic structure are already noticeable (EU-Kommission, 2004: 173-174 / DPT, 2004: 46).

Expected positive political effects include an increase in democracy and the rule of law, increased minority rights and the end of sexual, religious, ethnic and language discrimination. The bulk of Turkish law concerning these aspects has been adjusted. The practical implementation of these harmonization reforms will be difficult and involves a fundamental change in the mind-sets and attitudes of Turkish citizens.

### 2) *Potential losers of EU accession*

The Turkish people have varied hopes for – but not all groups will be able to benefit from – Turkey’s EU accession. Overcoming the dual structure of the Turkish economy necessitates structural changes in the agricultural sector. The accession process might accelerate and intensify this structural change and its undesirable side-effects. The ongoing loss of jobs in this sector primarily hits female workers. According to the current rules and support structures of the EU, Turkey as a full member would receive massive aid from the EU for structural change and agriculture – provided the EU does not make use of the relevant safeguard clauses included in the EU’s Negotiating Framework for Turkey.

The population groups who presently have no social insurance, who are illiterate and do unpaid work, are least likely to benefit from such EU assistance. Not being statistically registered, unpaid workers can hardly be considered during the planning of such development programs, which is why it will be hard for them to reap the benefits of the Turkey-EU harmonization process. Consequently, this sector of the population is likely to fall behind further in the course of the accession process. Despite of this, the high rate of support for EU membership by a majority of Kurds, women in general and female workers in the underdeveloped rural regions of Turkey is difficult to understand. They either do not anticipate a loss of income related to EU accession or they regard the likely political and legal advantages of an EU accession as more valuable than a loss of their income sources.

### 3) *Supporters and opponents of an EU accession*

Proponents of Turkey’s EU membership expect the following economic effects: economic growth and wealth based on macroeconomic stability, foreign investment, reduced corruption, financial adjustment assistance, a high share of the EU budget, increased competitiveness of small and medium enterprises (SME), new markets and free movement of labor. Those hopes are realistic to different degrees. Because of the probable financial benefits of EU accession listed above, the following groups can be seen as possible beneficiaries of the accession process: big and medium-sized companies, the tourism and the service sector, the government and trade unions.

Early pro-EU coalitions were built between Turkish companies and business-backed civil society organizations (e.g. TÜSIAD, the Turkish Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association) (Müftüoğlu, 2004). Important parts of the state bureaucracy and business-financed universities followed, and much later political parties as well (Zaptcioğlu, 2004 / Önis, 2004: 6). Pro-European intellectuals and moderate Islamists also form an alliance.

Due to the realization of the political criteria of the harmonization process there are some additional potential winners of Turkey’s accession process: religious and ethnic minorities, a high proportion of the Sunni population, civil society organizations including the women’s movement, the media, trade unions, center-right and pro-Kurdish political parties and their potential voters as well as voters of the Republican People’s

party (CHP). These groups should benefit from an increase in minority rights and increased gender equality.

These predominantly positive expectations of an EU accession are reflected by the stakeholders' voting behavior. In a country-wide survey in 2004, roughly 80% of interviewees of those working in the industry and service sectors and 65% of agricultural workers voted in favor of Turkey's EU membership (DIE, 2005: 8, 18). Remarkably, Turkey's EU membership meets with utmost approval among minorities (80% to 90% of the Alevis and Kurds approve) (Yilmaz, 2005b: 18 / DIE, 2005: 14, 18 / IKV, 2004).

The opponents of Turkey's EU accession are not as easily identifiable. The Turkish anti-EU movement that refuses any kind of harmonization with the EU consists of the hardliners among the military and the far-right MHP (Party of the Nationalist Movement) (Cremer et al, 2004: 32). Among all interest groups reviewed in this paper (see Part III, IV and IV), only the Marxists and radical Islamists refuse EU membership unconditionally. The Turkish Communist Party (and the anti-globalization movement) want to prevent an "institutionalized imperialism" or "capitalism à la EU" and in addition call for a revised EU-Turkey customs union (TKP, 2004). Radical Islamists (and/or voters of the SP party) principally prefer a theocracy to a democratic state order (Yilmaz, 2005b).

A majority of nationalist and militarist circles hope for Turkey to become a full member of the EU despite their fears that EU accession will bring about a loss of national identity, national sovereignty, a sellout of Turkey's assets to foreigners and, in the worst case, Turkey splitting apart. Kemalist-military circles also warn of a threat of re-islamization precisely because of the adjustment process with the EU. Those opponents who are uncompromising in regards to the core conflicts (see further below), fight, for example, against the "lopsided power relations" of the customs union between Turkey and the EU, against giving up Cyprus and the Aegean and against the implementation of rights that promote diversity in Turkish society. With or without EU membership, they insist on a revision of the current customs union and advocate a self-confident relationship with the EU that better meets Turkey's national needs as they, the opponents of EU accession, perceive them to be (Zaptcioglu, 2004).

Due to the support the opposition receives from the state within the state ("derin devlet") and from parts of the military, which still has significant informal po-

litical and economic power, this numerically small opposition maintains a great sphere of influence and is sure to continue to influence the debate over Turkish EU accession (Cremer et al, 2004: 31-32).

## II) Four Core Conflicts

This chapter highlights four fiercely debated topics between EU supporters and EU antagonists in Turkey. It concentrates on the dispute surrounding agriculture, the customs union, Cyprus and Turkish national identity. It is in these areas that some interest groups will be expected to make the greatest confessions and others to reap the greatest benefits, if Turkey joins the EU.

### 1) Agriculture and rural development

The discussion on social security, workers' rights and education within the context of agriculture and rural development is very important since the process of joining the EU and the related "revolutions" will have significant impacts on a big part of the Turkish population: the poor rural classes with little education, an informal basis of livelihood and no social security.

For two reasons, the extension of the customs union to agricultural goods might entail more welfare losses than gains for Turkish producers. Trade liberalization in agricultural goods would essentially mean a reduction of currently higher Turkish tariff rates. Moreover, Turkish producer prices are higher and less competitive than EU prices (Oskam et al, 2004: 245, 248-249). Turkey's main agricultural export goods, which are labor-intensive in production, are fruits and vegetables, cotton, lamb, milk, sugar and tobacco (Cakmak, 2004: 1, 32).

The restructuring of the agricultural sector will require extensive privatizations. And indeed, more foreign direct investment (FDI) is expected to flow into the labor-intensive Turkish agricultural sector as a consequence of EU accession (Cakmak, 2004: 32). However, to attract additional FDI it is necessary that investors can successfully capitalize on advanced technologies. This is only possible when there is well-educated human capital present that is able to adopt and use new technology and thus increase productivity (Airaudo et al, 2004: 19). However, a lack in education and professional training are symptomatic for Turkish agriculture. This is a major constraint regarding the optimism

about FDI and the adherent transfer of labor to high-productive employment fields.

According to rough estimations, the restructuring of Turkish agriculture from its current state to become a modern and market-driven agricultural system of production will entail the loss of approximately three million jobs (Öztürk, 2005: 97). Within a decade, the transfer of one third of the underemployed (particularly the rural and female) labor force to the industry and service sectors could be accomplished (Gros, 2005: 7).

In any case, the agricultural sector and the rural areas appear to bear the brunt of post-accession adjustment (Oskam et al, 2005: 149). Under the present socio-economic conditions a rapid reduction of jobs in the underdeveloped regions would lead to serious problems instead of supporting development efforts (Cakmak, 2004: 6). The affected population needs to be sufficiently prepared for adjustment pressures (Oskam et al, 2005: 149).

In their otherwise optimistic convergence scenario for Turkey, Dervis et al (2004a) draw attention to two of Turkey's biggest structural weaknesses that obstruct the adjustment process with the EU: rural development and the low level of education. However, payments from the EU structural policy funds designed to narrow rural-urban and regional disparities, will be available to Turkey only post-accession (Oskam et al, 2004:252). Education as well is at risk of not being a priority in the pre-accession period because the *acquis* is primarily concerned with the implementation of single market regulations and EU policies (Oskam et al, 2004: 246). Under the current socio-economic conditions in Turkey's rural areas, women working in agriculture will be particularly hard hit during the downsizing of the agricultural sector. The National Employment Strategy and the subsequent National Action Plan, developed in accordance with the European Employment Strategy, will show to what extent education measures ought to reach out and incorporate rural working women (DPT, 2004: 5, 80-81).

## 2) *The customs union*

The EU-Turkey customs union is another controversial topic. For Erol Manisali, a renowned professor of economics close to Kemalist-nationalist circles, it is the manifestation of the "onesidedness of the EU-Turkey relations" because it shows how "unfair competition"

takes place under unequal conditions. This customs union regulates free trade of industrial goods and the industrially processed parts of agricultural products. Hence it applies to only one third of the goods produced in Turkey. Manisali ascribes Turkey's chronic trade deficit with the EU to this fact. Furthermore, Turkey is obliged to adopt all trade agreements concluded by the EU with third countries without (Manisali, 2003).

Groups in favor of Turkey becoming an EU member make out several advantages for the Turkish economy that have arisen from the customs union since its launch in 1995. There is the significant increase in trade volume implying welfare gains for both sides, the extension of Turkey's trade relations to third countries and its contribution to the transformation of Turkey's industry sector. The scientists Ülgen & Zahariadis (2004) are of the opinion that Turkey will realize the main benefit of the customs union only post-accession by means of full access to the Single European Market. This will take place particularly through the liberalization of trade in services, since services make up two thirds of Turkey's economy.

Two other outstanding arguments in favor of EU-accession arise because of the low competition levels in the service sector and the high degree of state intervention in the Turkish economy. Liberalization and deregulation would accelerate productivity in the services sector. Spillover effects in terms of declining costs for the manufacturing industry would boost overall growth. Furthermore, the *acquis* demands a regulative framework and independent regulatory institutions. A subsequent higher degree of good governance would create an economy less prone to shocks and crises and more likely to sustain growth.

Ülgen & Zahariadis agree on one aspect with the critics of the customs union: the cause for existing asymmetries needs to be eliminated, namely the fact that new trade partners of the EU are granted full access to Turkish markets while the new markets remain closed to Turkish exporters. Turkey on her part, still needs to abolish her non-tariff trade barriers. Otherwise a degeneration to a free trade area between Turkey and the EU seems more likely than a consolidation of the existing bilateral trade relations.

On July 27, 2005, by signing the Additional Protocol extending the customs union to all new EU Member States, including the Republic of Cyprus, Turkey fulfilled the final condition for starting accession negotia-

tions with the EU (Euractiv, 30.6.2005). However, therein lies no indication whether Turkey will be granted the right to influence EU trade policy issues before accession. However, the optimism about a strong increase in trade volume only after EU accession is more realistic (Independent Commission, 2004: 44).

### 3) Cyprus

At present, the Cyprus issue plays a critical, if not a decisive, role in the accession negotiations with the EU. "Cyprus is our national issue. The European Union is our national goal. We must find a way to reconcile these two issues" (Erdogan, cited in: Berkan, 19.11.2003). With this statement Prime Minister Erdogan launched a dramatic turnaround in Turkey's Cyprus politics, which has made the prospect of a reunited island of Cyprus more probable. By referring to the International Agreements of 1960, most Turks agree that the EU acted unlawfully when it incorporated the Greek Republic of Cyprus into the EU. Manisali criticizes the EU that it did not wait until after Turkey becomes a full member to conclude critical issues such as Cyprus and the Aegean (Manisali, 2003).

Liberal voices on the other hand believe that resolving the Cyprus issue is of vital importance before accession negotiations are complete and that the Annan Plan for the reunification of Cyprus is the appropriate road map (Berkan, 19.11.2003).

In April 2004, in two separately held referenda, the Turkish Cypriots voted with overwhelming majority in favor of a reunification plan under the auspices of the UN. The Greek Cypriots rejected this plan in their own referenda. Nevertheless, in May 2004 the Republic of Cyprus was granted full EU membership while the Turkish Cypriots were denied membership status (TDN, 4.9.2005).

### 4) Identity Crisis

The political accession criteria on human rights and the protection of minorities have exposed Turkey's identity crisis. Muslim parts of Turkey's population, the Kurds and Alevis, have begun to claim a minority status as is accorded to non-Muslim groups in Turkey .

The unitary sense of national consciousness has traditionally evolved around the Turkish-Sunni identity. The biggest worry among the nationalist-Kemalist es-

tablishment is the weakening of this national identity, which in their opinion would inevitably lead to the disruption of Turkey a la Sevres. Nationalists and Kemalists are, for example, unwilling to accept the new term that emerged from the ongoing discussions on the notion of "constitutional citizenship": "Türkiyeli", meaning "being from Turkey". It is meant to replace "Turkish" or "Turk" since the latter imply an ethnic dimension. "Türkiyeli" would relate exclusively to citizenship and leave room for secondary identities and ethnic and religious designations.

## III) The Economy: Costs and Benefits

The status quo of Turkey's and the EU's economic relationship is determined by the customs union of 1995. Thanks to the union, the EU has become Turkey's most important trading partner. Since 1998 more than half of the Turkish exports have been destined for the EU zone (50% of all industrial goods and 30% of all textiles & clothing). In addition, most foreign capital inflows and more than half of the tourists visiting Turkey are EU-members (DTM, 2005a / ZFT, n.d.: table 17 / TCMB, 2005: 53-54).

This section contains a cost- and benefit-analysis of selected economic interest groups of Turkey with regard to further EU-integration and even full EU membership. Due to their socio-economic relevance, the sectors agriculture, textiles & clothing and tourism will be analysed.

### 1) The micro-economic perspective

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) comprise 99.8% of all Turkish companies and employ 77% of all workers (DPT, 2004: 82). Medium-sized companies and their representatives (e.g. MÜSIAD) expect (like the large-scale companies) new market opportunities to arise from increased trade due to the EU-integration.

Turkish SME also fear that EU accession could bring several disadvantages for Turkey. They believe that their technology and personnel are not on par with those of their EU competitors. Additionally, they think that the permanent restrictions on free movement of Turkish labor is unacceptable. In their opinion the reason for this is Turkey's second class membership in the EU under a "privileged partnership agreement". Besides, due to Greece's veto they do not receive ap-

proved EU financial aid payments (Koyuncu, 2004 / Öztürk, 2005: 95-98).

## 2) *Selected industries*

Ongoing structural change within the Turkish economy shows that, since 1990, the relative importance of the agricultural sector – measured by the share of GDP and total employment - has strongly declined, while services gained much significance. The share of the industry sector remained relatively constant (EU-Kommission, 2004: Statistical Appendix / Tunali, 2003: 15 / World Bank, 2005).

### **Agriculture**

For many Turkish agriculture is the most important source of their livelihood. The agricultural sector employs 35-48% of the labor force but only produces 12% of the GDP (DIE, 2004: 174 / Oskam et al, 2005: 142).

In 2001, Turkey's informal economy matched roughly 60% of the country's formal economic performance and employed 40% of all employees. Both agricultural and informal activity is predominantly located in the rural areas. Over 80% of informal workers are employed in the agricultural sector and more than two thirds of them are female.

There is a broad consensus that the informal economy has reached such enormous dimensions that it inhibits development. This is why structural change in Turkish agriculture has become an absolutely necessary option. However, the massive job losses (roughly three of seven million agricultural jobs) that are linked to restructuring will aggravate unemployment enormously. In the opinion of MÜSIAD, Turkey will be unable to cope with such a burden if it does not receive the EU adjustment aid to which it is entitled (Öztürk, 2005: 97).

### **Textiles & clothing**

Due to large investments that were made in the past in order to prepare the Turkish textile & clothing industry for the EU-Turkey customs union, this industry is presently equipped with the biggest production facilities in the EU (third biggest capacity worldwide). This industry is highly labor-intensive (11% of the formal labor force), earns 10% of the GDP and is internationally

competitive (35% of all Turkish exports) (tekstilveren, 2005).

The Turkish textile & clothing industry claims that it has been neglected and, due to the EU's very low common external tariff rate for textiles and clothing, left unprotected by the EU. Therefore it perceives itself as being at the mercy of partially subsidized competitors from third countries.

### **Tourism**

Tourism is a very dynamic sector of the Turkish economy. It employs half a million people, generates high foreign exchange revenues and is responsible for the highest positive contribution to Turkey's current account (TCMB, 2005: 53).

Representatives of this branch appreciate the acquis as a driving force with respect to the elimination of Turkey's shortcomings in the vital areas of health, the rule of law and security. The complete adjustment to EU economic standards should further enhance the competitiveness of Turkish tourism (primarily through education programs and quality improvements). Turkey's improved global image as a tourist destination, mainly due to swift accession negotiations, should result in increased tourism and even higher foreign investment flows into Turkey's tourism industry (Özdemir, 2004).

## 3) *The macro-economic perspective*

This chapter sums up the expected costs and benefits of Turkish economic stakeholders regarding EU accession. It shows how realistic they are in terms of the conditions of EU integration and its possible effects.

The economic Copenhagen accession criteria are determined by the Maastricht criteria for macro-economic stability concerning the development of prices, interest rates, exchange rates, the budget deficit and the public debt of a Member State. The European Commission's Progress Report 2004 acknowledges that Turkey is on a convergence path with the EU (EU-Kommission, 2004: 173-174).

The importance of the continuation of Turkey's reform process is being stressed by Turkey's economic experts (e.g. TÜSIAD, cp. Airaudo et al, 2004). The high public debt and the high current account deficit

are traditionally the Achilles heel of Turkey's economy. Airaudo et al consider the start of the negotiation process with the EU as a decisive signal for financial markets, so that Turkey's high real interest rates can be lowered. By 2008, the public debt might be reduced to below 60% of GDP (one of the Maastricht fiscal stability criteria). Moreover, the start of the negotiations would provide a "strong political anchor", which would likely lead to a substantial increase in FDI flows. FDI are important for the stabilization process in several ways. First, they are regarded as a relatively stable source of finance for the negative current account. And second, the urgently needed transfer of technology and labor to high productivity sectors (i.e. industry and services) could be accomplished through FDI (Airaudo et al, 2004: 18, 25 / Gros, 2005: 7).

For long term growth, however, macroeconomic stability must be achieved (ABGS, 2004: 3). This stability could be provided by an economic system that works according to EU guidelines (Birand, 19.5.2004). Through such prolonged development, Turkey would be able to join the ranks of the developed countries (i.e. states with no political risk) in the long run. An internal prerequisite to achieve this goal is to overcome the dual structure of Turkey's economy through progress in rural development (Vural, n.d.).

Estimations of Turkey's financial benefit (pre- and post-accession) remain speculative because such potential benefits depend, for instance, on the EU rules and regulations that will be in effect at the time of Turkish accession (Schultz, 2005: 6-7).

As a candidate country, Turkey is eligible to utilize various pre-accession tools such as IPA, SAPARD (agricultural and rural development) and ISPA (infrastructural policies). However, Turkey will be able to make use of such measures effectively only after 2020. Irrespective of the exact amounts, the intended use of pre-accession aid given to Turkey concentrates on the fulfillment of the political accession criteria and on environmental, agricultural and rural development (Schultz, 2005: 1-2).

After attaining full EU Member State status (possibly by 2015), Turkey would be entitled to a proportional share of the EU budget. Payments to Turkey would be relatively high given Turkey's large significant regional development gaps, its rural-urban divide and the large size of its agricultural sector. While the maximum assistance level per member country is to be reduced, there will be a priority shift towards rural development within the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). With

respect to overcoming its dual economy, these are overall positive prospects for Turkey (Schultz, 2005: 2-3, 7 / Grethe, in: Schultz, 2005: 3).

Irrespective of the EU's right to lower financial aid in the areas of agricultural and rural development, Turkey as a full Member State under present EU law, would receive a net transfer of 0.2% of the Union's GDP (currently about EUR 20 billion). However, the real budgetary effects for Turkey at the time of its entry into the EU are likely to be significantly less. In any case, Dervis et al (2004b) assess the economic effects of EU payments on Turkey as significant but affordable under the current EU budget.

Since Turkey maintains comparative advantages in agriculture and its services sector, extending free trade to these areas after EU accession will open up new markets for Turkish companies and Turkey will be able to count on increased FDI in these sectors.

A Strategy and Action Plan was set up in 2003 to enhance the international competitiveness of Turkish SME that pays special attention to their financial and technological problems (DPT, 2004: 70). Despite Turkey's strong desire to achieve free movement for its citizens within the EU, this will hardly become reality before 2025, particularly if taking into account the EU's right to enforce long transitional measures and permanent safeguard clauses to restrict free movement of labor (Gros, 2005: 8).

#### **IV) Implications for the Turkish Society**

This chapter deals with the hopes and fears of Turkey's diverse social interest groups (minorities, women, civil society, trade unions and the media) regarding Turkey's possible EU membership.

##### *1) Selected Actors*

##### **Minorities**

The Turkish population is composed of a multitude of ethnic groups, nationalities, religions and denominations. The two largest groups who see themselves – contrary to the official Turkish view – as minorities, are the Alevis and Kurds.

Over 95% of Turkey's population are Muslim, of whom at least two thirds are Sunni and one fifth to

one third Alevi. The Alevis' primary requests within the context of the EU harmonization process are the official recognition of the Alevis as an independent religious community alongside the Sunni community, protection against religious discrimination, an end to compulsory religious education, the recognition of their prayer houses ("cemevleri") as religious institutions and finally the abolition of the government's Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet), which Alevis claim exclusively reflects the belief of the Sunnis (DEM Gazetesi, 10.5.2005).

The Kurds constitute Turkey's largest ethnic minority (one third of the total population). They demand the legal recognition of their ethno-cultural identity and not to be treated any longer as a "security problem" (Incesu, 18.2.2005). Kurdish representatives believe that the EU accession process will finally bring about a political solution to the Kurdish question in Turkey (Kongra-Gel, 3.10.2004). Only few Kurds point at the vagueness of the Copenhagen criteria and the fact that these criteria do not explicitly mention the Kurdish minority rights (Isik, 17.7.2004).

### **The women's movement**

Women's rights activists argue that the legal equality of sexes in the field of civil law can be achieved faster with the help of the Copenhagen criteria. Up to now, improvements in the Penal Code entail, for instance, the prosecution of physical and sexual abuse (including rape) of women and children (also within the bond of marriage and family) and sexual harassment in the workplace (bianet, 30.5.2005). In the course of the accession process they expect some more important amendments to the Penal Code, but also in the field of labor law such as equal treatment in social security, equal pay, more rights for pregnant women and a comprehensive access to education facilities (Köylü, 7.1.2005).

They are, however, rather skeptical about the inadequate embodiment of sociopolitical aspects in EU legislation that are particularly relevant to women (e.g. child care) and criticize the European Commission's willingness to be satisfied with Turkey's legal and technical changes while shortcomings in implementation persist (Acuner & Bilgütay, 27.7.2004 / bianet, 27.7. 2004).

### **Civil society organizations**

There is a remarkable development progress in Turkish civil society. This development began in the 1990s with the pioneers of the pro-EU movement, particularly the business-backed organizations, and has quickly gained in multitude and magnitude (Önis, 2004: 5-6). Thanks to the harmonization process with the EU, they were able to accelerate Turkish civil code reforms regarding the freedom of the press, expression, and peaceful assembly.

Some civil society groups consider a change in mainstream attitudes in Turkey as an unconditional requirement for the realization of democracy, freedom, human rights and the rule of law (Alaton, cited in TÜSEV, 2005: 11). This also implies the development and spread of a "new political understanding" in the sense of stronger political participation of the people, particularly of women and the younger generations (Köprülü, 2001).

In the opinion of Turkish NGOs, human rights violations do not affect exclusively members of certain ethnic groups (Uskul, 2002). Therefore they criticize the EU for reducing human rights issues in Turkey to the ethnical aspect. The concentration of EU financial support on only a few areas such as human and minority rights would curtail the further development of Turkish NGOs.

### **The trade unions**

Turkish trade unions have been fighting for a long time for the right to organize and strike, for better health-care and safe working conditions, social security and rights concerning child labor and the black economy. The Commission's Progress Report is conducive to their efforts. However, from the trade unions' point of view, the Report also includes unacceptable conditions such as the restrictions on the free movement of labor. Also, the acceleration of the privatization process would stand in serious contradiction to the establishment of social security (TÜRK-IS, 2004).

### **The media**

The Turkish mass media are controlled by monopoly-like structures that are tied to political parties, the state and businesses. Therefore, Turkish journalists put great emphasis on the local and regional media's role as a vehicle for the spread of information. This gains importance during the democratization process – even more



if the impartial and pluralistic reporting of the mass media are put into question (DGB, 2005: 47-48 / Belovacikli, 2002). Since the smaller media outlets work under comparably more difficult conditions, they hope to benefit significantly from EU funding and IT and communications projects (Sarikaya, 2002).

## 2) Effects on the social system

The social interest groups' expectations linked to an EU accession would materialize in the broadest sense by enforcing the political accession criteria. With respect to human and civil rights and the protection of minorities and children's rights, Turkey's national legislation has largely been brought in line with EU legislation and UN standards. To prioritize international human rights agreements over national legislation is something that is being imbedded in the Constitution (EU-Kommission, 2004: 30-31). This trend shows that Turkey has committed itself to guarantee each citizen all fundamental human rights and freedoms.

The sustainability of the reforms will require a change in attitudes and behavior of the Turkish population as well as of those who apply and enforce laws and regulatory measures (civil servants and the staff of police, bureaucracy, judiciary and the military) (ABGS, 2003: 5). NGOs are considered to be collaborating in the implementation of schemes for the consolidation of democratic practices, the rule of law, equality of the sexes as well as human rights and minority protection (Schultz, 2005: 2005). This ongoing process spreads throughout the whole society (for examples, see Aydin & Keyman, 2004: 46).

Worries among Turkish NGOs that the European Commission pays insufficient attention to shortcomings in practical implementation can be mitigated to some degree. The EU's Negotiating Framework for Turkey includes a built-in "emergency brake", which the Commission is entitled to use "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". If necessary, the Commission can propose the suspension of negotiations and the Council will then decide on the issue (Euractiv, 30.6.2005).

Finally, some of the Turkish stakeholders' motives (from society and the economy) are related to the components of the Accession Partnership on social pol-

icy and employment. These include the assumption of the *acquis* in the areas of labor law, equal treatment for women and men, health and safety at work, the fight against discrimination, public health and furthermore the extension of social security and preparation for the European Employment Strategy (European Council, 2003: 47, 53).

## V) Implications for the Political Landscape

Finally, the cost-benefit considerations of the factions of Turkish politics in view of EU accession remain to be highlighted. This section deals with the Turkish government, the political parties and the military. Generally, Turkey's political landscape is characterized by a difficult relationship between the civil government and the powerful army generals.

### The government

The present AKP (Justice and Development Party) government has been aiming at EU membership as a tool to modernize domestically. The government is following an all-embracing political, economic and institutional reform agenda with a determination and continuity that has strengthened its moral authority and its support among the population. Additionally, the government's diplomatic approach to solve the Cyprus conflict with Greece (and with the domestic nationalists) improved its international standing (Gülalp, 2005: 81, 83, 85).

From the point of view of domestic policy, the possibility for EU accession has not only served to marginalize extreme inclinations within the Islamist and secularist groups (Gülalp, 2005: 82). It also helped the civil government to achieve greater independence from the military.

In case of accession, Turkey would have significant voting powers. Its population size is comparable to that of Germany, so Turkey would have considerable influence on decisions made in the EU institutions (i.e. the Council, the Commission and the Parliament) (ABGS, 2004: 4).

In terms of security policy, EU membership would give Turkey greater prestige in its transatlantic relationship as well as increased credibility in the eyes of its Arab neighbors (Gülalp, 2005: 84-85).

The government wants to develop Turkey as a democratic role model for the Islamic world. Prime Minister Erdogan believes that Turkey's EU membership would show to the world that different cultures can merge on the basis of universal values (Hürriyetim, 28.6.2005).

The Turkish government considers EU membership as a guarantor for Turkey's internal and external security (Cremer et al, 2004: 34). At the same time the government is aware of the considerable risks that are linked with EU accession (ABGS, 2004).

### Political parties

In the national elections of 2002, the AKP and the CHP won 34.2% and 19.4% of the vote respectively (66% and 34% of the seats in parliament). The AKP obtained a constitutional majority and the CHP became the only opposition party (Aydin & Keyman, 2004: 38).

Results of a representative survey in 2003/2004 reflect Turkish attitudes toward EU membership (Yilmaz, 2005a). The electorate of the radical-Islamist SP opted with 57% against EU membership. All other parties voted in favor of EU accession by a large majority (74% on average).

In contrast to the otherwise relatively EU-friendly political left, the Turkish Communist Party (TKP) is positioning itself against EU membership (TKP, 2004). The leadership of the center-left and Kemalist CHP has been supporting the political reforms rather halfheartedly.

Another public survey asked potential voters to choose among several categories to determine the principle benefit they expect to be achieved from an EU membership:

- positive economic benefits: 27%
- decreasing corruption: 19%
- advanced democracy and more political participation of the population: 17%
- free movement of labor: 11% (Yilmaz, 2005b).

### The military

Since accession prospects have improved, the military has been indecisive regarding their stance on Turkish EU accession. This may explain their contradictory statements regarding accession.

On the one hand the military takes position in favor of EU accession because this would realize Atatürk's vision of tying Turkey firmly to Europe and because EU membership would loosen the tight military alliance with the US (Woollacott, 18.12.2004).

On the other hand the military is predicting that EU accession will destroy the unitary character of the nation state. Additionally, they are worried that accession would give rise to the Islamists and eventually a theocracy. Moreover, they are concerned about increased separatist movements from the Kurds if Turkey were to join the EU. Finally, the military is questioning whether Turkey should be making unilateral concessions on sovereignty issues such as Cyprus and the Aegean, given that the accession negotiations are open-ended (Peuch, 15.6.2005).

### The modernization of Turkish politics

An often expressed desire of various interest groups (also from the realms of society and the economy) is advancing democratization and stronger political participation by the people. One aspect of Turkish electoral law that needs to be improved is the parliamentary election threshold of 10%, which discriminates against smaller political parties. This is why Kurds receive very little representation at the national level. The Commission's Progress Report mentions this threshold but does not formulate its alteration as a condition for accession (EU-Kommission, 2004: 51). The public administration reform, however, seems to offer tangible results. Decentralization measures are shifting various areas such as education, culture, health and the environment from national to local authorities.

A major progress in democratization is the reduced political role of the military. Through the National Security Council (NSC), the military had the final say in matters of Turkey's national security and foreign policy. In 2001, the NSC's role was reduced to that of a consulting body and put under civil leadership. Consequently, the military can no longer veto the government's decisions or enact pressures on the fields of higher education, broadcasting and television (EU-Kommission, 2004: 22-24).

Finally, another widespread hope arising from the prospect of EU accession is to fight corruption more effectively, especially in the economy and the government sectors.

One of the obligations of the Accession Partnership is the adoption of measures to fight corruption. Furthermore, Turkey is under pressure also from the IMF to decouple the economy from politics (Aydin & Keyman, 2004: 11). In 2004, Turkey joined the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), which monitors its compliance with European anti-corruption standards.

building the fabric of social trust and reducing ideological polarization..." in Turkish society (Cevik, 7.4.2004). These are all aspects that play large roles in the debate surrounding Turkey's drive for EU membership.

## Conclusion

Turkey's population pins a multitude of hopes on EU membership that are of economic, social and political kind which Turkey has not been able to fulfill on its own. This might explain much of Turkey's EU enthusiasm.

Most of these hopes are realistic to varying degrees. Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of the interest groups dealt with in this paper are rightly optimistic about Turkey's EU membership. Exceptions are, roughly summarized, the rural poor who are likely to bear the brunt of structural change without a prospect of adequate compensation. Their hopes regarding EU membership seem to be excessive. The hardliners among the nationalists and the military as well as radical-Islamist and anti-globalization circles expect, rather rightly so, to lose more than to gain from Turkey's EU accession process.

All in all, it is not certain whether the modernization process has already developed a momentum strong enough to push Turkey further along its current path also without the accession perspective. However, EU supporters agree that modernization is being significantly accelerated due to EU assistance and by the effort to become a full EU member.

Without doubt, the legal harmonization process will lead to economic change. However, above all it is the political reform process, which is raising additional questions related to the relations between the state and civil society, the state and the economy, politics and the military and between the military and civil society. Finally, there is the dispute over Turkish national identity formation in the face of increased diversity movements due to possible EU accession. The proceeding harmonization with the EU will likely be instrumental in finding the long awaited solutions to those questions. "The real value of the EU accession (might be) in

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