Compulsory consensus in Turkey and its side effects in Euro-Turkish relations

Dr. Ozan Serdaroğlu

Dr. Ozan Serdaroğlu
Assistant Professor, European University of Lefke
oserdaroglu@eul.edu.tr

Dr. Ozan Serdaroğlu received his doctoral degree at Institut d'Etudes Politiques d'Aix-en-Provence (Political Studies Institute of Aix-en-Provence). His academic interests include Euro-Mediterranean and Euro-Turkish relations, business networks, politicization of entrepreneurs and democratization. Currently he is Assistant Professor at European University of Lefke, within the department of Public Administration.

In Turkey, due to deep-rooted security concerns, the legal framework of citizenship is designed in a way to prevent the expression of certain thoughts in the public sphere. In addition, cultural and educational authorities have for a long time been disseminating a structured common cognition among citizens. Today, despite the beginning of accession negotiations between Turkey and the EU, such compulsory implications of citizenship are considered as the fundamental obstacle to Turkey's full membership. On the other hand, it is obvious that EU members also have their own security concerns that are not totally compatible with Turkish sensibilities, and populist politicians and opportunist attitudes inhibit "Europeanization" of Turkey in diplomatic terms.

This paper suggests that the main problem of Euro-Turkish relations is the political reluctance in Turkey to change the polity structure, and in the EU to change the diplomatic status-quo. There is a need to revisit the security apprehension on both sides and reconsider Turkey's Europeanization as a desirable and realizable goal.

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After an introductory observation on Turkey, a political scientist would notice the existence of an arbitrary dynamism which results in unforeseeable changes in relatively short periods. This situation makes this country a difficult research object for political science. It takes long intellectual efforts to perceive the Turkish political life as a meaningful series of events, since the roles, discourses and objectives of political actors change constantly. Besides, even if the researcher begins to make connections between the events and understand what is really happening in Turkish politics, he/she will face the difficulty of describing these events according to the accepted/classical terminology of political science. While intending to talk about "contemporary Turkey", one should bear in mind that the "Turkish polity"[1] is structured in an atypical way, and cannot be analyzed within the framework of general theories on political regimes. The Turkish political life needs a specific theoretical definition, and there have been researchers that have contributed to satisfy this scientific need. Before referring to their works, we would like to discuss the reasons for the Turkish polity's "arbitrary dynamism" which distinguishes it from more general polity categories.

The fundamental reason for this arbitrary dynamism is the psychological environment within which political activity is undertaken. The Turkish politics is oriented towards action, not only in terms of political service (which means policy formulating for social regulation), but especially in terms of striving for power. In an exact conformity with Weber's perspective, politics in Turkey has no purpose above itself, and struggling for power is a necessary condition for acting politically (Palonen 2003). Turkish politics is characterized by different groups' efforts to acquire power or influence its distribution. There are numerous "clashing" actors who strive for power and tend to get their share from the distribution of power in one way. This situation has historically been a major problem for the country, and does not only concern the contemporary context. The multiplicity of opposing/conflicting actors in political competition is a fundamental problem producing political irregularity. To be more specific, one can mention the past contradictions between republicans and conservatives, seculars and Islamists, businessmen-workers, left-right wingers, Alevis-Sunnites, and to some extent, Turks-non-Turks. This political life founded on cultural/political/economic fault lines has repetitively been a factor of instability and political crisis.

At the same time some groups do not canalize their activities towards competition with their opponents, but activate themselves with the objective of challenging state power. Again, from a Weberian perspective, we can describe the State as a relation of men dominating men, a relation supported by means of legitimate violence. For a state to uphold its existence, the dominated must obey its authority which is symbolized by the monopoly of legitimate violence. In this sense, for the Turkish case a certain "political order" has not yet been achieved. Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, there has always been "challengers" to the State's authority, meaning that several actors have defied its authority both by use of officially illegitimate political discourse and officially illegitimate violence.

The struggle of power between opposites and the challenges to state power have made themselves felt under different forms. Beginning from the 1960s, internal social conflicts and tensions have been intensifying. Especially the cultural allegations and demands of Kurdish, Alevite and Islamist conservative groups have been creating a climate of social antagonisms. Physical confrontations between left-wing and right-wing armed groups, deadly attacks on public places were, among others, tragic events deteriorating the social order (Bozarslan 2004; Tekel/Ilkin (1993). This process of accelerated contradictions and challenges reached its peak in 1980. During the first eight months of 1980, there were more than 1600 political assassinations whose victims were deputies, university professors, trade union members and local governors.

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[1] We use the term polity for the sphere within which political activity is undertaken. This sphere comprises the institutional, juridical and cultural framework of a political system.

Between 1979 and 1980, over 95 000 workers went on a total of 657 strikes (Trak/Turan 1980). At the beginning of the 1980s, violence and confrontation have become the main features of the social landscape.

Based on unfortunate experiences of conflicts and violence, the Turkish political regime is based on remedies against the strengthening of certain groups. The strongest Turkish security institution, the Turkish army, is the main actor behind the institutionalization of this political regime of remedies. First, it has responded to the violence with its own violence, staging the military coup of 12th of September 1980. Second, it initiated a political process of "constructing a pacified social order", based on radical arrangements for eliminating the explosive social fault lines. The Constitution of 1982 stemming from this initiative has been designed in a way to prevent two things that are interrelated:

- the expression of certain ideas and thoughts that are considered as "extremist" within the public sphere.

- the reinforcement of existing social cleavages which can easily be transmitted to social conflicts.

In this sense the Constitution of 1982 reflected the will of its creators to establish a "homogenous" political culture among Turkish citizens which excluded ideological confrontations. Instead, the new "pacified" social order would be based on one shared world vision by all citizens, a kind of metaideology dominating other political currents, an ideology that is often called "Kemalism"[2]. The strong attachment to the values of this ideology is emphasized throughout the Constitution, starting with its preamble in which Mustafa Kemal Ataturk is described as the "founder of the Republic", the "immortal leader" and the "unrivaled hero"[3]. It can be argued that the Constitution of 1982 was an attempt of the "guardians of the Turkish political regime", which are the military officials and their social partners taking part in their project (high-ranking jurists, academicians and bureaucrats), to go back to the "roots of the Republic". In many parts of the Constitution it is possible to observe the use of the same "social order building" instruments as during the beginning of the Republic, such as diffusing "a set of cultural practices that were to constitute the discursive foundation for a modern and secular national identity" (Keyman/Öniş 2007: 15) These discursive elements are conveyed in many parts of the Constitution. According to Article 2 of the Constitution, one of the unamendable articles,

"The Republic of Turkey is a democratic, secular and social State governed by the rule of law; bearing in mind the **concepts** of public peace, national solidarity and justice; respecting human rights; loyal to the nationalism of Atatürk, and based on the fundamental tenets set forth in the preamble".

In this article, the Constitution emphasizes "concepts", meaning intellectual mental representations that are combined to construct a certain understanding of the world. The Turkish polity structure is reshaped around **concepts** evoking "unity", "nationalism" and "solidarity" within a peaceful non-conflictual public sphere. Some other articles also reflect the same approach. According to article 3 "The Turkish State, with its territory and nation, is an indivisible

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[2] The Constitution of 1982 does not explicitly define the action principles of such an ideology, and the term "Kemalism" is not expressed in any of its articles. However this term is frequently used as the name of the official ideology of the Turkish Republic. For a lecture on the main principles of this ideology labeled as "Kemalism", see Tocci (2001).

[3] "Preamble", *Constitution of the Republic of Turkey*, http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/images/loaded/pdf_dosyalari/THE_CONSTITUTION_OF_THE_REPUBLIC_OF_T URKEY.pdf.

entity. Its language is Turkish". According to the article 5 "The fundamental aims and duties of the State are; to safeguard the independence and **integrity of the Turkish Nation, the indivisibility of the country, the Republic and democracy".**

Within this juridical framework, the Turkish state can be conceived as an institutional construction which is adapted to the realities of Turkish politics. As an antidote to the confrontations of the past with their tragic consequences, the new political system was formed in order to achieve social consensus around a common "national understanding" of the world. In the constitution, there is no trace of any systematic thought that elucidates this understanding. There are only broad references made to the concepts like "nationalism of Ataturk", with the aim of constructing the juridical basis for a common understanding and legitimate civic discourses.

Some explicit components of a certain systemic thought are however observable in the actions of public institutions in charge of cultural policies. These institutions impose certain compulsory components of the citizens' beliefs, opinions and representations. This systemic thought is based on a Turco-Islamic synthesis which is designed to diffuse one homogenous natural cultural base on the Sunnite version of Islam and Turkishness. By integrating Islam in nationalist philosophy, this ideology is conceived as a remedy for preventing political violence and tensions and conflicts between different social layers, like those that occurred before the military coup of 1980.

In this regard, some researchers argue that the Turkish Constitution and public institutions impose a "compulsory consensus", which would guarantee social cohesion by a common imaginary world that encompasses all citizens. French political scientist Etienne Copeaux (2000) defines compulsory consensus as "a set of opinions, judgments, and public attitudes required from the citizen about certain values, certain facts or present events or the past". Another political scientist, Elise Massicard (2005) emphasizes that if certain actions and discourses do not include any norm and value from the compulsory consensus, they will have to cope with the problem of "legitimacy". According to Massicard, any assertion or expression made within the public sphere must protect itself from eventual accusations of separatism. In order to legitimize his discourses each political actor must refer to the compulsory consensus and talk on behalf of the national unity against separatists.

The compulsory consensus can thus be considered as a sub-ideology (under the meta-Kemalist ideology). The set of opinions, judgements and comportments that it contains are expected to guide/direct the citizens' goals, expectations, and actions. In order to find a radical solution to the problem of conflict between different social layers and to maintain social cohesion, public institutions aim for controlling the "cognitive framing" process of citizens. In this way these institutions intend to control the modification of symbolic status of social situations (www.syntec-rp.com). In perceiving each other and their relations with the outer world citizens are expected to interpret their situation by referring to same "frames", to the same scheme of interpretation. In simpler terms, Turkish citizens are expected to have built the same series of mental and emotional filters in making sense of the world.

Against this background, cultural policies become strategic instruments for the reproduction of the regime. The central institution for diffusing the compulsory consensus is the "Atatürk High Institution of Culture, Language and History" founded after the adoption of the Constitution of 1982. The mission of the Institute is to conduct research on the thoughts, principles and reforms of Atatürk and on Turkish culture, history and language, to make them known, and to propagate them and edit publications"[4]. On his work on the ideology of Turco-Islamic ideology, Günter Seufert (2002) explains the role of this Institute in the arrangement of education program and the general curriculum applied in both public and private schools and in the redaction of scholar books with reference to the postulates of the synthesis. Etienne Copeaux (2002) demonstrates how the values and representations of the discourse of "national unity" are

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[4] "Article 134", *Constitution of the Republic of Turkey*, *op. cit.*

conveyed by scholarly manuals. The religious education is also an important pillar of the education system. Article 24 of the Constitution stipulates that all religious education at every level (religious school, private Koranic courses, public education)
should be subject to State's supervision. The religious education is compulsory in primary and high schools. Another example of use of religion as a social cement is the function of the Presidency of religious affairs. According to the article 136 of the Constitution, the institution
is founded to achieve national solidarity and union through religious feelings".

All these efforts of controlling the citizens' intellectual and spiritual orientations reflect the main idea behind the political regime created in 1982. The most important priority of the military staff who founded this regime was to control the social reactions even before their apparition within the public sphere, which means even before citizens interact with each other and with the political system. In modern terms, citizenship can be defined as "membership to a political community and regroups individuals that are not immediately solidary but who have the only common characteristic of having same juridical attributes and principally have access to same resources for exercising these attributes" (Leca 1982: 24). In Turkey citizens are expected to have other common characteristic than juridical attributes. Social cohesion is expected to be achieved through a dominant "Turkish" identity, with the objective of converting the society into a large community sharing the same political culture that is composed of conciliating values, norms and symbols[5].

The "compulsory" character of the consensus does not merely stem from the cognitive impositions within the cultural policies. In case of the expression of a rejection or non-approval of the norms and values of the dominant official ideologies, the "rejecters" or "non-approvers" may face severe sanctions, including imprisonment. The fear of the erosion of social cohesion has given birth to the philosophy of "control", leading to the reinforcement of security institutions like the army, police, secret service and judiciary institutions. The "security ideology" appears as a second sub-ideology, which backs up the compulsory consensus by producing juridical and political instruments. Due to the huge national and international debate around it, the most symbolic instrument of the security ideology is the Article 301 of Turkish Penal Code. This article prescribes that a person who publicly denigrates the Turkish nation, the Republic or the Grand National Assembly of Turkey can be punished by imprisonment for between six months and three years. In cases where the denigration of the Turkish nation is committed by a Turkish citizen in another country the punishment is to be increased by one third. Again, according to this article, a person who publicly denigrates the government of the Republic of Turkey, the judicial institutions of the State, the military or security organizations is to be punished by imprisonment for between six months and two years[6]. Since this article has entered into force in 2005, it has constituted the basis of arguable charges to several Turkish intellectuals, the most famous being Orhan Pamuk, the Nobel Laureate in Literature in 2006.

To conclude, the regime of 1982 can be understood as a regime of control and reorientation of the use of fundamental citizen rights, in conformity with the dominant ideologies.

2) Side effects on Euro-Turkish relations:

On the other hand, it is also possible to talk about a "contemporary" European philosophy which can be summarized as "a fear that in middle or long terms Europe will not be able to prosper in a secure and foreseeable context". This philosophy insists on, or emphasizes, the struggle against terrorism, border controls, political reforms and rule of positive law in neighboring countries

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[6] http://www.tuerkeiforum.net/enw/index.php/Translation_of_selected_Articles_of_the_Turkish_Penal_Code

(especially Europe's neighbors), and controlling the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This philosophy could be as well considered as a securitarian meta-ideology, to which European Union (EU) refers in formulating policies regarding her relations with her neighbors. In terms of the creation of an action, a strategy or an opinion in relation to the rest of the World, the first concept that European policy makers refer to is "security". This is especially visible in European neighborhood policy and EU's relations with southern and eastern Mediterranean countries: Europe's projects and interventions in relation to this region (the reasons of building such projects and making such interventions) are mainly legitimated by this ideology. Before building a partnership, it is important to contribute to Europe's security by building new kinds of relationships with the neighbors.

For the Euro-Turkish relations, the big question is whether EU and Turkey have similar kinds of security interests and threat perceptions (some part of the Turkish public opinion and political elites even perceive EU as a threat to the "national unity/security"), whether they find themselves on the same or on the opposing sides over security issues and international conflicts; whether or not they follow compatible criteria for the use of force, and to what extent their security is mutually dependent or supplementary. In fact, Turkey should be considered as a country which is not far away from sharing the same security ideology, since in the past both sides have belonged to the same anti-communist bloc. During the bipolarity and the cold war period the convergence in security concerns had influenced Turkey's own security ideology, and has left some deep traces whose effects are still being felt. As a country on the frontline of the cold war, Turkey was for a long time influenced by a psychology emanating from the perception of a threat from the "Communists" (e.g. political actors used to refer to their adversaries as "Communist"). The rise of extreme leftist ideologies and a shift towards Soviet socialism have been considered as main threats to national unity and security.

The convergence in terms of security concerns have begun to pave the way for an irrevocable process, and the interdependence between Europe and Turkey has been confirmed with the beginning of Turkey's "Europeanization"[7] process, after the signing of the Ankara Agreement. This document still constitutes the juridical basis for the relations by defining the methods of an economic integration and paving the way for Turkey's full membership in the European Community[8]. Until late 1970s, Euro-Turkish relations were evolving within the framework of economic and military partnership, both contractors being principally concentrated on commercial stakes and believing in the convergence of their security interests.

The priorities and the perceptions began to change during the period 1979-1982, with the election of the European Parliament (EP) by universal suffrage in July 1979. After this date the institutional balance of power within the European polity was shaken. As an institution representing the European citizens and their views, the new Parliament had increased legitimacy and was more sensitive to issues such as human rights and political developments that were closely followed by European public opinion[9]. This change resulted in the broadening of the

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[7] Radaelli (2003) defines Europeanization as "a process involving, a) construction, b) diffusion and c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and sub-national) discourse, political structures and public choices".

[8] "As soon as the operation of this Agreement has advanced far enough to justify envisaging full acceptance by Turkey of the obligations arising out of the Treaty establishing the Community, the Contracting Parties shall examine the possibility of the accession of Turkey to the Community". "Article 28", Ankara Agreement, website of the Prime ministry of Republic of Turkey, Secretariat General for EU affairs, http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=117&l=2

[9] The EP's assertiveness with respect to the external promotion of human rights certainly stems from the perceived importance of its identity as the only Community body elected by direct universal suffrage (after 1979 and the initiation of direct elections to the EP). Since 1983, the European Parliament has adopted an annual report and resolution on human rights in the world, in which it reviews Community/Union activities and makes policy recommendations. See *The European Parliament and Human Rights,* Office of Official Publications of the European Community, Luxembourg, 1994, p. 7.

communicational context between Turkey and Europe. Until 1979, this context was narrower with more straightforward objectives. The rise of the EP as an international actor, the military coup of 1980, and the Constitution of 1982 politicized the relations. From this moment on, economic/military objectives would be overshadowed by the political situation in Turkey. Concepts such as "human rights", "minority rights", "cultural rights", "civic rights", "democratization", and "universal law" became important codes of the Euro-Turkish communication.

After the military coup of 1980, the European Parliament suspended the Ankara agreement in 22 January 1982 (Résolution sur la peine de mort imposée à 52 leaders d'associations turcs"). Nevertheless, the most brutal reaction to the new regime founded after the military coup was the EP's resolution of 1985, in which the Parliament announced that the Turkish regime founded with the Constitution of 1982 has launched a systematic genocidal campaign against the Kurdish minority, and that this regime's oppression of intellectual activities and use of torture have provoked justified hatred of the international public opinion (Résolution du Parlement européen sur la violation flagrante des droits de l'homme et la terreur sanglante en Turquie" du 11 avril 1985). In addition to the denunciation of the violent practices of public institutions, the juridical framework of the new regime was vigorously criticized. For the EP, the military coup had established a juridical system which was causing the erosion of social rights, and which was inadequate for guaranteeing the state of law and fundamental liberties (ibid). The refusal to grant "contemporary civic rights" to all citizens was an important obstacle to the representation of interests and expectations of citizens within the political system (Résolution du Parlement européen sur les élections en Turquie" du 13 octobre 1983"Résolution du Parlement européen sur les élections en Turquie" du 13 octobre 1983). The EP regarded the political regime of 1982 as a juridical construction designed for restricting the intervention of citizens in the political processes.

Nevertheless, the economic and security stakes continued to frame the relations and the European Community did not turn its back on Turkey. There was a relative normalization of relations in 1987, when Turkey made an official demand for membership. While this demand was about to open new perspectives, the whole paradigm of interdependence between the West and Turkey collapsed in 1989 with the fall of the iron curtain and end of the cold war. This created a major change in Europe's relations with Turkey, since the main element of its inclusion - security against the Soviet Union - no longer seemed crucial. The country found itself increasingly marginalized in the new European order. Members of the European Community, which became the European Union (EU) in 1992, were very excited with the idea that the continent would be unified by enlargement towards Eastern and Central Europe, and Turkey was not a part of their new plans. Besides, the 1990s were very tragic years in Turkey, where challenges to the compulsory consensus and to the state power caused their greatest damage in the country. That was the period of nationalist reactions to the security problem in the south-eastern part of the country, where the conflict between the Turkish army and the Kurdish insurgent organization PKK (Kurdistan Worker's Party – a separatist organization which fights an armed struggle against the Turkish state) saw its most intensive phase. In the 1990s, tens of thousands of Turkish citizens were killed, including soldiers and villagers by the PKK, and the PKK militants themselves. It was a period where Turkey's own security ideology was applied strictly and the security forces had far-reaching rights in the juridical system and became violent (unfortunately there are documented and reported cases of torture). This situation deepened the gap between the EU and Turkey.

Between the launching of the famous "Copenhagen criteria" in 1993 and the signing of the Euro-Turkish customs union in 1995, the European Parliament adopted 14 resolutions on Turkey in which it severely criticized the Turkish political regime and the human rights problems.

Suddenly Turkey found itself at the margins of Europe, and its contribution to the continent's security was considered less important than ever before. In any case both parts could sign the agreement on the customs union in 1995, and the process that was started in 1963 with the association agreement had successfully ended. Despite the fact that the Luxembourg Council of 1997 excluded Turkey from the European enlargement process[10], relations continued towards integration first with the Helsinki Council of 1999[11], and the beginning of accession negotiations in 2005.

Between 2001-2006 Turkey's commitment to become a member of the EU has created a psychological environment in favor of political reforms. Tens of constitutional articles and specific laws (the penal code, anti-terror law, and legislation on collective actions and associations) have been amended. The role of the army in political life has been reduced. In terms of minority rights, the ban of Kurdish language, and the state of emergency declared in several eastern and south-eastern provinces with a Kurdish majority have been abolished. Since 2006 broadcasting in Kurdish has actually been liberalized. At this point, the role of a permanent membership objective for domestic political and economic change cannot be underestimated. As the Euro-Turkish relations were advancing towards integration, the set of reforms between 2001-2006 "have set off a process whereby Turkey has been able to make significant progress in terms of consolidating its democracy and accomplishing a genuinely open, pluralistic and multi-cultural political order" (Keyman/Öniş 2007: 65).

However, in the contemporary context the Turkish political regime has still very little credibility vis-à-vis the European institutions. This situation is best expressed in the report prepared by EP deputy Arie M. Oostlander which underlines that "the Constitution adopted in 1982 under a military regime does not form an appropriate legal basis to guarantee the rule of law and fundamental freedoms" and that "the underlying philosophy of the Turkish state, 'Kemalism', implies an exaggerated fear of the undermining of the integrity of the Turkish state and an emphasis on the homogeneity of Turkish culture (nationalism), together with statism, an important role for the army, and a very rigid attitude to religion, which means that this underlying philosophy is itself a barrier to EU membership" (Report on Turkey'sapplication for membership of the European Union, 12 mars 2003). As seen through this report, Turkey's accession is directly linked to ideological and cognitive issues. Other European documents which highlight the philosophical and constitutional problems of Turkish polity are the European Commission's Progress reports that are published annually to assess the Turkish efforts for accession. In reports of 2007, 2008 and 2009[12], the Commission called for radical changes in Turkish Constitution, that it sees as a the most important obstacle to "allow further democratization in a number of areas and give stronger guarantees of fundamental freedoms in line with EU standards"[13].

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[10] The Council has decided to begin accession negotiations with 12 Eastern and Central European countries: Cyprus, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Slovenia Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Bulgaria. *Presidency Conclusions of the Luxembourg European Council Meeting of 12-13 December 1997,* http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/032a0008.htm

[11] The European Council of Helsinki has given Turkey the official "candidate" status to join the EU:
"The European Council welcomes recent positive developments in Turkey as noted in the Commission's progress report, as well as its intention to continue its reforms towards complying with the Copenhagen criteria. Turkey is a candidate State destined to join the Union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to the other candidate States. Building on the existing European strategy, Turkey, like other candidate States, will benefit from a pre-accession strategy to stimulate and support its reforms".
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/hel1_en.htm

[12] See Turkey 2007 Progress report: Brussels, 6.11.2007, p.6
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2007/nov/turkey_progress_reports_en.pdf
Turkey 2008 Progress report: Brussels, 5.11.2008, p.6
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press_corner/key-documents/reports_nov_2008/turkey_progress_report_en.pdf

[13] Progress report 2009: communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Brussels, 14.10.2009, p.7. http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/tr_rapport_2009_en.pdf

In addition to this general critic of the foundations of the political regime, the policies of "compulsory consensus" are strictly condemned by European institutions. Compulsory religious education, Article 24 of the Turkish Constitution, and the national education Basic Law are expected to be abolished. According to the European Commission, the religious education in Turkey does not just give a general overview of religions but provide specific instruction in the guiding principles of the Muslim faith, including its cultural rights. Therefore, Turkey is asked to bring its education system and domestic legislation into line with EU legislation[14]. Cultural Rights regarding the right to education are also causes for concern. On this issue the European Commission underlines that in Turkey full respect for and protection of language, culture and fundamental rights in accordance with European standards have yet to be fully achieved, and that Turkey has made limited efforts to enhance tolerance or promote inclusiveness vis-à-vis minorities[15]. To this regard the European Commission calls the Turkish public authorities to sign important European agreements on protection of minorities and of regional languages, and to formulate regulations guaranteeing the participation of minorities in public life and broadcasting in minority languages[16]. Although there have been important ameliorations in terms of the daily use of minority languages, the Commission criticizes restrictions on use of languages other than Turkish in private TV and radio broadcasting, political life, education and contacts with public services. It considers the legal framework on the use of languages other than Turkish as open to restrictive interpretations[17]. According to these documents, abolishment of policies of "compulsory consensus" remain main problems of Turkey's accession progress, because they represent the fundamental difference between Turkey and the entity it is intending to join.

3) Divergent world vision cannot wipe away the opportunities

During the period 2008-2009, the Turkish AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi - Justice and Development Party, conservative) government initiated an important "Kurdish opening" project aiming in the amelioration of the Kurdish population's cultural rights. However, the realities of Turkish politics did not allow concrete outcomes from this initiative. The interested parties - PKK, DTP (Demokratik Toplum Partisi - Democratic Society Party, Kurdish-population oriented political party which was closed in December 2009), BDP (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi - Peace and Democracy Party, the political party created by old DTP deputies) - and other political parties in the Parliament, MHP (Milliyetçi hareket partisi - Nationalist Movement Party, nationalist) and CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi - Republican Turkey, social democrat and "Kemalist") did not support the initiative because of their political ambitions: a continuing strife for power and the elimination of the competitor were considered more important than reconciliation. The most interested parts, the DPT, later on the BDP and the PKK have rejected the opening by describing it as an initiative for eliminating the PKK and reducing its power in the region[18]. The political parties in opposition have tried to gain political stakes by isolating the AKP government. MHP named the opening "treason" and a "project of demolition of national unity"[19], while CHP has qualified it as "PKK project aiming at the decomposition and division of

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[14] Progress report 2009: communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Brussels, 14.10.2009, p.21. http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/tr_rapport_2009_en.pdf
[15] *ibid.*
[16] *ibid.*, p.29
[17] *ibid.*
[18] "Türk 'sine-i millet', Ayna 'açılım bitti' dedi",
http://www.cnnturk.com/2009/turkiye/12/04/turk.sine.i.millet.ayna.acilim.bitti.dedi/554176.0/index.htm
[19] "Açılım denen yıkım projesi", 11.04.2010,
http://www.cnnturk.com/2010/turkiye/04/11/bahceli.acilim.denen.yikim.projesi/571688.0/index.html

the Turkish nation"[20]. Although the project has never been presented by the government in detail it has created a major political debate and has been rejected by AKP's political competitors. Most tragically, the competition in terms of regional political stakes between PKK/BDP and the AKP government resulted in intensified violence. Since May 2010 PKK activities have become extremely dangerous and caused the deaths of tens of Turkish citizens. Within the current context of rising violence, the government finds little support from the public opinion to diminish the compulsory consensus by formulating "human" oriented, and not "concept" oriented policy regulations. In fact, whether the government has ever had such an intention remains unclear, since its projects have not been explicitly defined in details and are still being formulated.

The slow evolution of Turkish political regime towards a more society oriented and "western standardized" democracy continues to decelerate the pace of Turkey's accession process to the EU. For the first time in European enlargement history, a candidate country begins negotiations without any guarantee for membership, even if the negotiations will be successfully achieved[21]. Furthermore, many European leaders express openly that they are against Turkish membership, even if the accession negotiations achieve with success full membership is not guaranteed.

However, neither Turkey, nor the EU can leave the negotiation table. The lack of a common world vision and the existence of a mutual interdependence create a paradoxal relationship including both the perspective of exclusion and integration. As the Turkish polity could be reformed according to European democratic standards the Euro-Turkish relations could progress towards integration.

The main reason to believe so is the existence of concrete opportunities that deeper relations can open to both sides. Turkey finds itself astride the two principal conflicts of the early 21st century, Iraq and Iran, and is on the border of other hot zones likes the southern Middle East and the Caucasus. In today's uncertain international environment, Turkey and the EU have a convergence of interests, but in other forms than during the bipolarity. Most of the international conflicts that the EU will find itself facing in the near future will be in Turkey's geographical proximity. Especially the Document on European Security Strategy of 2003 ties Europe's future plans for its own security to the region where Turkey is located. According to Chris Donnelly, special advisor to NATO security general, "Turkey is now the keystone state for Western security in general and European security in particular"[22]. In fact, Turkey's own security ideology can also have beneficial consequences for Europe. Turkey, independently from its NATO membership, is a considerable military power. During the last ten years, Turkey had a very high level of military spending, around 4% of its GDP which makes an amount of 12 billion dollars. That reflects one of the most important consequences of Turkey's security ideology: after the USA, it is the second NATO member in terms of the highest GDP/Military spending proportion[23]. Considering its military power it is often argued that Turkey should become a member of European Defense Agency even before it becomes a member of the EU. Especially countries like UK and Italy (who is next to the Balkans) consider Turkey as a country which would contribute efficiently to the continent's security. This is why they want a closer relationship with Turkey.

After the end of bipolarity, the first factor which made Europeans remember Turkey (and also NATO) has been the conflicts within Europe, most specifically in the Balkans. Especially the Kosovo crisis of 1999 constituted a turning point. It is also important to mention other military

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[20] "Baykal:açılım bir hıyanete dönüşmektedir", *Milliyet*, 08.12.2009
[21] "These negotiations are an open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed beforehand". *Negociation framework*, 3 October 2005, Luxembourg, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/st20002_05_tr_framedoc_en.pdf.
[22]*Financial Times*, June 2004
[23] http://www.globalissues.org/article/75/world-military-spending.

contributions, like in Afghanistan. Turkish army then had important roles in the fight against fundamentalist Islamists, by participating in 2002 in the ISAF (International Stabilization and Assistance Force) operations. In 2003, it took over the NATO forces' command in Afghanistan. During the same period, Turkey became incorporated in the European defense and security policy and participated in all EU led military operations since 2003 (except the one in Congo). Currently Turkey continues to contribute to Europe's security by participating in European Union battle groups under control of the European Council, as a part of the Italian-Romanian-Turkish Battlegroup, which will be on standby for duty during June–December 2010. It also contributes operational staff to the Eurocorps multinational army corps initiative of the EU and NATO.

The importance of the security aspect is also expressed by European officers. In our interview, the former chief of Turkey Unity of the European Commission emphasized that more than Turkey's Europeanness the EU was interested in its strong sides, such as military power for realizing its international and security objectives. According to this official, when Turkey obtained candidate status in 1999, the main reason for such a decision was the future of European security, especially in the eastern-southern Europe and in the Middle East[24]. "Advocates of the European Union as a fully fledged superpower have predicted that the addition of Turkey's military would make it a true global player"[25].

The main problem in Euro-Turkish relations, based on the facts expressed in this paper, can be summarized as follows: two interdependent sides who declare that they have the same security concerns and who cooperate closely in security issues do not fully share the same perceptions in terms of threats. In fact, the future of EU and Turkey relations depends on the way Turkish public authorities will be able to moderate the Turkish security ideology and reform the Turkish political regime of "compulsory consensus". If Turkey adopts the European standards of democracy, it would become an essential card for the EU in its projects regarding political reforms in its neighbors, especially in the southern-eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. A "Europeanized" Turkish polity can show that Islam and democratic values are compatible, that a country with a Muslim population can be governed according to liberal democratic principles.

In fact, this is the case since many years, since the foundation of the Republic in 1923 Turkey is a secular state with a parliamentary regime, and since 1950 it has a multi-party system. There is a strong civil society and strong interest groups in the country. In terms of political science, we can say that there is a public sphere, there are secular norms and symbols which bind the citizens together by the tie of citizenship, and even if there exist discursive restrictions, citizens are allowed to bring their problems to the public sphere and represent their interests.

Besides, since the recognition of its candidate status to enter the EU in 1999, the Turkish regime has undergone an important reform process. The role of the security forces in the juridical processes are weakened, the case of torture and bad treatment are minimized, if still not totally eliminated. The death sentence has been abolished. There are some important progress regarding minority rights as well, especially for the Kurdish population. The issue of cultural rights, which remained as a taboo for a long time, is now being explicitly discussed within the public sphere.

For the time being Turkey is not a perfect democracy model in a European sense, due to the reasons argued above. Nonetheless, if there will be concrete European support for Turkey, this country can reform its defective political regime. The reforms undertaken since 1999 prove

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[24]Interview with an official from DG Enlargement of the EU, Brussels, February 2004.
[25]Evans-Pritchard, Ambrose (2004): "Turkish army crucial to EU power hopes".
http://www.theage.com.au/news/World/Turkish-army-crucial-to-EU-power
hopes/2004/12/17/1102787272096.html

that when a permanent EU anchor exists the problem of cognitive divergence can be eliminated if Turkey can be encouraged to reform this regime. The biggest encouragement is a concrete perspective for Turkey's EU accession and a clear date of membership. It should also be emphasized that there is also a symbolic issue here. For calming Turkey's security worries and contributing to its democratization, EU should also show solidarity by adapting a common position against some specific threats to Turkey, especially against the most important threat to Turkey's security, the PKK. Today the EU officially considers PKK as a terrorist organization, which is a step for broader cooperation. It should not be underestimated that a considerable part of Turkish society and its political representatives have doubts about the EU regarding the Kurdish issue[26]. In case of a concrete support for Turkey, opponents to political change in Turkey will have fewer bases for their arguments, and the general Turkish public opinion will see that the EU and Turkey can be on the same sides over security issues.

We would like to underline, once again, that in Turkey politics have no purpose above itself, and keeping the power, and increasing it is the main concern of policy-makers. If the source of political power weakens with a decrease in the general electorate's support, governments can hardly formulate innovative policies and push for reforms. The Turkish public opinion's confidence and optimism about the future of Euro-Turkish relations is the key factor for the successful implementation of "Europeanizing" political reforms.

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[26]For example, the leader of the MHP considers that the AKP government's efforts in ameliorating the situation of the Kurdish population is a "PKK and EU imposition on Turkey". "Kürt sorunu oyuncak değildir", *Günlük*, http://www.gunlukgazetesi.net/haber.asp?haberid=89387.

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