

LUXEMBOURG, HELSINKI AND BEYOND:
TOWARDS AN INTERPRETATION OF RECENT
TURKEY-EU RELATIONS

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I. INTRODUCTION

The European Union has undergone four successive rounds of enlargement since its inception in 1957. Currently, the EU finds itself in the midst of a new wave of enlargement, in the context of a simultaneous process of "deepening" and "widening" (1). The enlargement process, in progress, aims to incorporate the former communist countries on the eastern periphery of the Community. It is rather ironic, however, that Turkey, one of the earliest applicants for membership of the Community, is not included among the group of countries, notably the four Visegrad countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia), countries which enjoy a serious prospect of being admitted into the Community in the near future. This constitutes a paradoxical development in the sense that the claims of these countries for full EU membership is very recent, dating back to their liberation from the communist rule in the aftermath of the Revolutions of 1989.

The Luxembourg Summit of the European Council held in December 1997 generated a deep sense of disappointment on the part of the Turkish political elite and the public at large (2). The Luxembourg process excluded Turkey from the list of countries with whom the EU was prepared to initiate negotiations with a view to eventual full-membership. The exclusion of Turkey and the comparatively smooth manner whereby the former communist countries of the Central and Eastern Europe have been incorporated into the European enlargement process appeared to provide a certain degree of justification that the European Union is ultimately a civilizational project with clearly defined boundaries and no place for a country with a predominantly Muslim population (3). Increasingly, debates on Turkey–EU relations centred on the reasons for Turkey's apparent omission from the process of eastern enlargement. Was it due to poor governance at home, given the country's significant deficits in the areas of economic reform, democratization and human rights? Alternatively, did the frequent references to the

much publicized shortcomings of Turkey in the political and the economic spheres simply helped to disguise a more fundamental reservation, namely the fact that Turkey was not considered by the Europeans themselves as being part of the collective European identity, indeed constituting the natural or the obvious “other” for the project of European integration and enlargement?

Rather paradoxically, however, within two years of the Luxembourg Summit, Turkey emerged as a candidate for full EU membership at the Helsinki Summit of December 1999 which, in turn, helped to reverse the deep sense of isolation which had prevailed over the course of the past two years. Indeed, what appeared to be a drastic U-turn in Turkey–EU relations generated a new wave of optimism concerning the future of course of democratization and economic reforms in Turkey during the early months of the new century (4). The objective of the present article is twofold. The first objective is to investigate and uncover some of the key dynamic precesses involved during the two year interlude resulting in a dramatic reversal of the EU policy during the course of the Helsinki Summit. The second objective is to probe into the future course of Turkey–EU relations looking beyond the Helsinki Summit. The interesting question to pose in this context is the extent to which there is indeed a radical departure in the EU’s approach to Turkey after the Helsinki Summit. Stated somewhat differently, would it be possible to detect an underlying continuity in the EU’s approach to Turkey extending from Luxembourg to Helsinki and beyond?

Whilst recognizing that the Helsinki Summit represents a landmark in Turkey–EU relations, a central claim of the paper is that Turkey’s transition to full-membership is likely to prove a slow and protracted process. The justification for this claim is based on the observation that a sense of mutual misunderstandings prevail which tend to generate a certain degree of impasse or stalemate in Turkey–EU relations. In the case of Turkey, the misunderstanding

largely arises due to the fact that the EU has been changing dramatically since the 1980s. Its interpretation of democracy is now much deeper compared with the rather restrictive interpretation offered at the time of Greek or Spanish accession to the Community. The Turkish political elite and policy makers have not fully realized that the EU has been transformed so intensively during the past couple of decades. Indeed, the Turkish political elite's vision or perception of European integration is still constrained by the parameters of the Ankara Agreement of 1963, which defined the relationship between Turkey and EU in primarily economic terms, namely membership of the Customs union combined with free mobility of labor. Clearly, considering the single-minded commitment to democracy and human rights which has increasingly become the hallmark of collective European identity during the 1980s and the 1990s, the Turkish political elite needs to realize the following: It would not be possible to associate oneself with a deep integration project such as the EU on the same lines as the relationship with the United States, with economic and strategic interests dominating over other possible considerations (5). It would be fair to argue that domestic politics in Turkey constitutes a significant barrier to Turkey's early full-membership.

At the same time, however, it is also possible to diagnose a certain sense of misunderstanding or lack of sensitivity on the part of the EU concerning the nature of domestic politics in Turkey. In retrospect, influential voices within the EU have been perhaps over-sympathetic to the claims of the religious right or ethnic separatist elements whilst, at the same time, bring overcritical of the official state position on these issues. Certainly, the same degree of tolerance to extreme right parties or ethnic separatist movements have not been displayed within the orbit of the EU itself, based on the argument that a democratic order needs to be safeguarded against possible threats originating from authoritarian or anti-systemic political movements.

II. CYCLES IN TURKEY–COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Westernization and a European identity have always been fundamental goals for the Turkish political elite from the very inception of the secular Republic in 1923. From a European perspective, however, relations with Turkey have consistently posed a problem, arguably not evident in relations with other potential members in the context of successive rounds of EU enlargement or, indeed, with non-European states with no possible claim for full EU membership. Turkey has always been considered an important country in terms of its strategic role during the Cold War as part of the NATO Alliance, as a possible gateway Russia and the Central Asian Republics in the post-Cold War setting and as an important trading partner given the scale of its domestic market. Yet, its very size, its relative underdevelopment in economic terms and most significantly of all its predominantly Muslim population rendered Turkey a rather problematic and unlikely candidate for a project involving deep integration of member countries. In retrospect, the single-minded commitment of the Turkish political elite, in the tradition of Kemal Atatürk, to be part of the United Europe has been mixed with the Europeans's desire to maintain an arm's length relationship with Turkey. The outcome has been a complex, tense and at times a mutually disappointing relationship over the years. Perhaps it is fair to say this uneasy association has carried over to the present day and continues to characterize Turkey–EU relations in the post-Helsinki era.

Against the background of the rather uneasy relationships that has been a characteristic throughout the post war period a distinct cyclical pattern in Turkey–EU relations over time may also be identified. Turkey applied for membership of the European Economic Community in 1959 and became an associate member following the Ankara Agreement in 1963 (6). The Ankara Agreement envisaged a three stage process involving the integration of Turkey into the European Economic Community, where the integration process was conceived of in rather

limited terms of a customs union and free mobility of labor. 1963 was identified as the preparatory stage, followed by a transition stage in 1973, culminating with 1995 as the final stage in Turkey's transition to full-membership of the Community. The logic of the extended time framework for membership was based on the argument that the early exposure of the Turkish economy to full competition in the context a free European market would undermine and jeopardise Turkey's industrial development itself, an argument which received significant support from the domestic policy circles in Turkey itself.

In line with the initial expectations, the year 1973 represented a critical turning point in Turkey's relations with Europe. The "Additional Protocols" which came into existence during that particular year resulted in a significant reduction in tariff barriers within Europe against Turkish exports, with the exception of textiles and agricultural products. Indeed, the relationship appeared to proceed fairly smoothly during the first half of the 1970s, although already one could detect signs of resentment on the European part, with the potential free mobility of labor issue posing a major problem from a German point of view. Up to that point, one could argue that no fundamental differences existed concerning the positions of Turkey and the Southern European trio of Spain, Greece and Portugal which later became members of the Community. During the 1960s and the early 1970s, both Greece and Turkey were associate members of the Community and enjoyed broadly similar standings as important NATO allies in south-east Mediterranean. The fortunes of Turkey and countries of the southern European periphery diverged rapidly, however, in the latter half of the 1970s (7).

The Cyprus intervention of 1974, the growing economic and political instability on the domestic front, and, finally, the collapse of democracy and the military interlude during 1980–1983 have pulled Turkey decisively away from the European Union. At the same time, Greece, Spain and Portugal, shedding off their authoritarian past, have experienced a progressive

rapprochement with the European Union leading to full membership during the course of the 1980s. Full-membership of the EU, in turn, appears to have generated significant benefits for these countries in terms of economic development as well as the consolidation of their nascent and fragile democratic regimes. Indeed, the gap in terms of per capita incomes and the depth of industrial transformation between Turkey and the southern European trio, not striking in the late 1950s and the early 1960s, opened up significantly in the post-1980 era. Frequent allegations exist that Turkey, under the premiership of Bülent Ecevit, has missed an important opportunity by its failure not to apply for full-membership in the latter half of the 1970s. Whilst this is a matter for historical research, it is not clear that applying for full-membership at the same time as Greece would have produced positive results, especially given the Cyprus intervention, deepening economic and political instability at home as well as deeply held reservations on the part of the European elites concerning Turkey's full-membership.

Following Turkey's return from authoritarian rule to parliamentary democracy in late 1983, relations with Europe started to improve, reaching a climax with Turkey, under the premiership of Turgut Özal, applying for full-membership of the EU in 1987. The outcome, however, was another round of disappointment. The application for membership was rejected and Turkey had to settle for the customs union, already guaranteed by the Ankara Agreement, as a second best alternative. The initiation of the customs union agreement in January 1996 constituted yet another temporary peak point in the uneasy, cyclical trajectory of Turkey–EU relations. The Turkish political elite greeted the customs union with enthusiasm, regarding agreement as only a preliminary step towards the eventual goal of full-membership. It was also abundantly clear that the customs union agreement constituted the deepest form of integration possible in short of full-membership. Hence, Turkey was considered as being ahead of all the other potential applicants.

Yet, once again, the period from the inception of the customs union to the Luxembourg Summit of December 1997, proved to be another round of dejection from the Turkish point of view. What was not so obvious from the perception of Turkish political elite was the tremendous change that had taken place in the nature and direction of the European integration project during the course of the 1980s and 1990s. The political element of the European project had become increasingly more important, with membership status progressively resting on performance in relation to democratization and human rights. Turkey's democratic deficits severely constrained its relations with Europe in the post-customs union era, resulting in the failure to activate the financial package which was an integral part of the original customs union agreement itself. The critical turning point arrived with the Luxembourg Summit of December 1997, where Turkey was explicitly excluded from the two-tier structure of countries considered for potential full-membership. On Turkey's part, the Luxembourg decision was met with a profound sense of disillusionment. The disappointments of Luxembourg were compounded by the fact that the Union had taken significant steps, in the course of the 1990s, in terms of incorporating the former communist countries of the Central and Eastern Europe, arguably countries with deeper authoritarian legacies than Turkey, into its orbit. Hence in retrospect, the Luxembourg Summit represented yet another low point in the complex and uneasy interaction between Turkey and the EU, characteristic of the post-war period as a whole.

III: THE PATH FROM LUXEMBOURG TO HELSINKI AND BEYOND: TOWARDS A RESOLUTION OF THE PARADOX

The two year interlude extending from the disappointments of Luxembourg to renewed jubilation and hope for Turkey at Helsinki constitutes an interesting and paradoxical period to explore. In retrospect, several influences were at work which collectively help to account for

the EU's initial decision to exclude Turkey from candidate country status in December 1997 and to include Turkey in a candidate country status, shortly, thereafter, in December 1999. Historically, the foreign policy of the European Union has always been characterized by paradoxes and ambiguities. This is, in part, due to the obvious fact that the EU is not a unitary actor in the traditional sense and conflicts between individual member states can inevitably result in contradictory foreign policy behavior (8). At a more fundamental level, however, the ambiguities are by-products of the fact that the foreign policy of the EU has oscillated between the principles of idealism and realism. A similar, perennial conflict of principles has also been in evidence in relation to EU's relations with Turkey. An idealistic perspective pointed towards exclusion of Turkey from potential full-membership of the Union considering its deficient record in terms of democracy and human rights. Yet, a realist understanding of the situation drew attention to the important role of Turkey for the EU as an economic and strategic partner. Given the tremendous resentment on Turkey's part to the decision taken at Luxembourg, there was growing recognition on the part of the European political elites during the course of 1998 and 1999, that Europe's own economic and security interests would not be adequately served if Turkey was allowed to drift towards isolation and authoritarianism. Following the Luxembourg decision, a number of EU countries, notably Britain and Italy, have been particularly vocal in their criticism, concerning the exclusion of Turkey from the candidate status. Self-interest clearly constituted the basis of their argument.

At the same time, the social democratic wave which had affected all the major countries of Western Europe, with the exception of Spain, represented a critical turning point in Turkey–EU relations. Traditionally, Turkey's relations with the European socialists or social democrats have been quite problematic in the sense that the social democrats, on the whole, have been more single minded in their criticism of Turkey's domestic politics and human rights

performance compared to their conservative or Christian Democratic rivals. Yet, it is rather interesting that an inclusionary project for Turkey appeared to fit rather well with the growing vision of a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Europe which the new wave of Social Democrats had developed to differentiate themselves from the right of center, conservative parties (9). It would be fair to say that the Social Democrats or the New Labor increasingly resembled the right in their economic policies and the weakening enthusiasm for the large welfare state. Increasingly, their understanding of “multi-cultural citizenship” constituted the key element which tended to distinguish them from their Christian Democratic or conservative counterparts, whose vision was much more in the direction of an ethnically homogenous Europe, a Europe conceived of as a Christian Club, hence, a Europe with fairly definitive natural boundaries.

At this point, the domestic politics of key member states such as Germany, but also Holland and Belgium, becomes an important issue to consider and a vital variable to take into account in the context of our analysis. A large Turkish minority has established itself over time as an increasingly significant and vocal influence on the domestic German political scene. This growing influence is also related to the growing class differentiation which has been occurring over time among this Turkish population itself. Whilst, at the beginning of the wave of migration from Turkey to Germany during 1960s, the migrants were almost exclusively working class, undertaking the type of manual tasks which the Germans themselves were not willing to accomplish. Furthermore, these highly unskilled migrant workers had a deep sense of commitment towards returning to their homeland after accumulating a sufficient amount of savings. Recent empirical research, however, reveals that the Turkish minority in Germany at the present juncture exhibits a much more heterogenous character compared to the first generation of migrants in the 1960s. What is fascinating to observe in this context concerns the

pronounced upward mobility and the dramatic rise of entrepreneurial activity among these groups (10).

It is abundantly clear that the second or third generation migrants are economically far more productive and they tend to visualize themselves as an integral part of the German society with no intention of returning to Turkey on a permanent basis. Whilst they have no intentions to return, they still would like to maintain, however, an intimate contact with their homeland (11). Indeed, the German Social Democrats and the Greens have explicitly tried to appeal to these groups by including the issue of “dual citizenship” on the electoral agenda, on the road to their successful electoral campaign leading to victory in the German elections of September 1998. Ultimately, legislation on the dual citizenship could not be accomplished, once in office, due to strong opposition from the Christian Democrats (12). What is significant for our purposes is that the Turks in Germany, a large majority of which will to become German citizens at the age of eighteen, increasingly constitutes a critical intermediating force between the Turkish and German societies. Furthermore, given their progressively more significant economic role in the German society, they are likely to emerge as a highly influential force in shaping the future of Turkish-German-EU relations, as has been the case on the road to Helsinki during the 1997–1999 period.

Together with Germany, Greece proved to be the country most resistant to Turkey’s candidacy during the Luxembourg Summit of December 1997. Indeed, the vetoing power of Greece following its incorporation into the Union in 1981 has been a continuous source of embarrassment and tension for Turkey–EU relations ever since. A fascinating transformation which has taken place in the interlude between Luxembourg and Helsinki concerns the rather unexpected rapprochement between Turkey and Greece. In retrospect, the development of closer relations between Turkey and Greece during the course of 1999, leading to Greek support for

Turkish candidacy in the context of the Helsinki Summit, embodied a romantic and a realistic dimension. The romantic element was very much associated with the successive earthquakes which occurred first in Kocaeli, Turkey, on a massive scale in August 1999 and in Athens, on a smaller scale, in September 1999. The two natural disasters and the organization of the civil rescue efforts thereafters exercised a tremendous psychological impact in terms of pulling the two societies together. This also resulted in a bottom-up process of self-questioning and self criticism in both societies, a process which has also subsequently influenced political leadership in both countries. Hence, in the latter half of 1999, a major psychological leap forward has taken place which has seriously started to question the traditional basis of enmity and conflict between the two nations **(13)**. It would be incomplete, however, to account for the changing position with respect to Turkey leading up to the Helsinki Summit purely on the basis of powerful psychological processes or bottom-up civil initiatives. The realist dimension also needs to be brought into the analysis. There was also a realization on the Greek political elite that its own economic and strategic interests would not be properly served if Turkey was left isolated and pushed further away from the European sphere of influence. There was also a realization on the Greek political and business elites that as the two societies prospered mutual economic gains in terms of expansion of trade, investment and tourism would be truly impressive **(14)**.

The emphasis on the economic and strategic dimensions of Turkish–Greek relations also brings into focus another important actor, namely TÜSÝAD, as the interest association representing the interests of the externally oriented, big business interests, in shaping the contours of Turkey–EU relations in the most recent period. Whilst states continue to play an important role, it is increasingly recognized that non-state actors are also critical in shaping international relations in the current conjuncture. Big business in Turkey has been particularly in favor of Turkey’s full membership of the EU both on economic grounds and, more recently, in

terms of its potential benefits for the process of democratic consolidation in Turkey. In retrospect, TÜSÝAD has been particularly vocal in terms of its lobbying efforts, not only in Brussels, but also in the two critical countries, Germany and Greece, which have hitherto proved to be the principal stumbling blocs to Turkish endeavours to join the European Union. This is not to suggest that traditional diplomatic activity on the part of the state or the foreign policy establishment has not been active or influential in terms of reversing the Luxembourg decision. What is striking in the context of the more recent wave of Turkey–EU relations concerns the growing interactions in the sphere of civil society and pressures that non-state actors can bear upon foreign governments of which the TÜSÝAD case is a rather vivid example **(15)**.

Finally, the role that the United States has performed in pressuring and persuading the European political elites for Turkey’s inclusion among the candidate candidates prior to Helsinki also deserves a special emphasis **(16)**. The American leadership has been particularly vocal in pushing for Turkey’s full-membership, the underlying assumption being that its vital interests in the Middle East and the Central Asia would be best served by having its strategic ally, Turkey, firmly anchored to the norms of the European Union.

IV. DOES HELSINKI REPRESENT A U-TURN IN TURKEY–EU RELATIONS?

From the Turkish point of view, membership of the customs union or acquiring a special country status, falling considerably short of full-membership, represented rather weak forms of economic and political integration. Arguably, harsh conditions had to be fulfilled in order to sustain and deepen the relationship; yet, few incentives were presented to encourage compliance with these requirements at the same time. Consequently, the customs union agreement appeared to constitute a form of “competition without full integration” or “loss of sovereignty with

limited participation” (17). In this respect, Helsinki represents a dramatic and definitive turning point in Turkish–EU relations. The beneficial effects of the Helsinki Summit are already visible in the economic sphere during the early months of 2000. The renewed confidence and optimism following the Helsinki decision appear to have provided a favorable environment for launching a comprehensive stabilization program by the incumbent coalition government which presents a great opportunity to breakdown the country’s long-standing chronic fiscal deficits and persistently high inflation rates (18).

In retrospect, the Helsinki decision represented a clever U-turn on the part of the European political elites, in the sense that they have effectively shielded themselves from arguments based Turkey’s exclusion on purely cultural grounds. After Helsinki the ball is firmly in Turkey’s court in the sense that it has to undertake the radical reforms in the domestic sphere both in the arenas of democratization and economic policy reforms in order to qualify for full-membership. Stated somewhat differently, the door is open, provided the necessary conditions are satisfied. This approach makes a sharp contrast with the earlier EU position which imposed similar conditions without providing a clear perspective of full-membership.

Indeed, in terms of the conditions imposed, there exists a great deal of continuity between the outcomes of the Luxembourg and Helsinki Summits. It is unambiguously the case that Turkey’s full-membership rests critically upon its ability to fulfill the EU requirements in three specific areas: consolidation of economic reforms, democratization and the rights of the "Kurdish minority" and improvement in relations with Greece which effectively means an internationally acceptable settlement to the Cyprus issue. The economic component of these requirements appear to be less problematic in terms of generating widespread political support and possibly the secondary component associated with these conditions, even though economic considerations still constitute a formidable barrier to Turkey's full EU membership. The

explicitly political component of EU conditionality involving the rights of the "Kurdish minority" and the Cyprus issue are likely to present the principal challenges for Turkey–EU relations during the coming years. Indeed, in a recent visit to Turkey, Günter Verheugen, the EU Commissioner responsible for Enlargement, explicitly stated that the EU would not open negotiations for full-membership with Turkey unless Copenhagen criteria are fulfilled and definitive steps are taken on the part of the Turkish policy-makers or political elites to undertake a radical program of reforms in the sphere of human rights notably with respect to the position of the "Kurdish minority" and the resolution of the Cyprus dispute (19). Hence, whether Turkey will be able to join the EU in 2000 or 2015, to provide some hypothetical dates, depends critically on Turkey's own domestic politics. The key question is how much sacrifice are the Turkish political elites prepared to accept, which means moving away from long-established and highly entrenched positions on fundamental issues of conflict that we have drawn attention to. Clearly, to make progress and accomplish a relatively speedy and smooth entry into the Union, Turkey, itself, needs to develop a full program involving extensive democratization and reforms in the political system, in addition to the on-going program of reforms in the economic sphere. Furthermore, a political program which simply focuses on relatively minor issues which can be easily improved upon, such as the state of prisons in Turkey, resulting in the exclusion of broader and more fundamental issues from the agenda is unlikely to create a basis for substantial progress. An appropriate political strategy on Turkey's part needs to include, if it stands any chance of success, a program which recognizes the cultural rights and autonomy of the "Kurdish minority" within the framework of a unitary Turkish state, as part of a broader agenda of democratic deepening and expansion of individual rights, and an independent Cyprus with full protection of the Turkish community on the island (20). Anything less than this agenda would close off the possibilities for full-membership for

Turkey. It should also be clear from the EU point of view that any concessions beyond this would not be acceptable to Turkey, even if the cost is perennial isolation and permanent exclusion from the European Community.

V. THE POST-HELSINKI ERA: THE CHALLENGES ON THE ROAD TO FULL-MEMBERSHIP

Probably the major challenge facing Turkey on the path to full-membership of the EU lies in the sphere of its domestic politics and institutions. The strong tradition of a highly centralized state and the ideology of Kemalism involving a deep sense of commitment to secularism and the unitary nation state, with its well-defined boundaries, constitute the essential pillars or the building blocs on which the Turkish political system is based. Still haunting the Turkish political elites is the constant threat of fragmentation or the breakdown of the nation, for which the term the "Sèvres Syndrome" constitutes an apt description (21). The single-minded emphasis on threats to the unity and the secular character of the Turkish state, effectively blocs the prospects for a more open political system which would be in a position to accommodate a mild, liberal, non-fundamentalist version of political Islam and would also help to resolve the "Kurdish problem" by recognizing the cultural rights of the "Kurdish minority". It would be unfair to blame the military as the only institution in Turkey which upholds this ideology. Other layers of the established state apparatus such as the Constitutional Court and key elements of the bureaucracy broadly conform to similar principles. Moreover, almost all the major political parties in Turkey, whether on the right or the left, tend to be strongly nationalistic in their outlook (22). Indeed the only major established political party, the Social Democratic Republican People's Party (CHP), which recognized the existence and adopted a liberal approach towards the claims of the "Kurdish minority", as part of a broader project of

democratic deepening and extension of individual rights, proved to be an electoral failure. CHP could not pass the ten percent national threshold during the general elections of 1999 and for the first time in its long history, failed to send any representatives to the Parliament. At the same time, it is also interesting that the liberal approach of the party with respect to Kurdish question contrasts sharply with its ultra-strong secularist stance against any type of Islamic political movement.

Given this background, the different layers of the Turkish political elite, whether it is the military or the leaders of major political parties, are confronted with a serious dilemma in the post-Helsinki era. There exists a broad agreement across the Turkish political spectrum that closer relationship with Europe leading to full-membership is highly desirable. Even the Islamists in Turkey have changed their position from being staunch opponents of Europe and the West during the 1995 general elections to an explicitly pro-European stance during the elections of 1999. Following the closure of the Islamist Welfare Party (RP) in January 1998, its successor, the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi), has increasingly formed closer links with Europe as the only means whereby the party's very existence could be consolidated and secured in an otherwise hostile domestic environment.

At the same time, however, considerable ambiguity continues to characterize the approach of the Turkish political elites to the issue of EU membership. Whilst it is recognized that the EU by its very nature embodies post-Westphalian character and hence, it is no longer possible to view domestic politics in isolation from international norms, they are, at the same time, extremely sensitive to and uncompromising upon the issue of state sovereignty (23). Such a dilemma would not exist if Turkey had not cared about its European ideology and had not applied for full-membership involving deep integration with the European Union. Perhaps, in that case, its relations with Europe would not be fundamentally different from its relationship

with the U.S., with strategic and economic interests dominating over all other considerations. By its very nature, however, the European project involves a whole redefinition of the notion of state sovereignty, with a corresponding delegation of political authority on key issues from national governments to Brussels. The dualistic tendency involving the Turkish political elite's desire to be part of the European Union on the one hand, and to maintain state sovereignty in the full sense of term, on the other, is likely to retard the move to Turkey's full-membership by a considerable margin. What is obvious is that Turkey's full-membership of the EU would require a major revision of the current constitutional order and the whole notion of "state sovereignty" which constitutes a fundamental element of the existing constitutional structure.

The uncompromising attitude in relation to the principle of state sovereignty continues to dominate the official wisdom with respect to three fundamental areas of conflict involving the Kurdish issue, political Islam and the Cyprus dispute. On the Kurdish issue, the dominant paradigm, although increasingly challenged from various quarters, suggests that a problem of minorities in Turkey simply does not exist, since all citizens are equal by law, or that it is simply an economic problem of regional underdevelopment which could be alleviated through an appropriate set of economic policies and growing investment in the south-eastern part of the country. Whilst the conflict has an obvious economic dimension, it would be rather simplistic to assume that the political or cultural components of the problem simply do not exist. In relation to political Islam, the official approach conceives this as a serious and overarching threat, and in the process fails to differentiate between shades of political Islam within the overall movement itself. Finally, the dominant approach towards the resolution of the Cyprus conflict involves a strategy of constructing a loose confederation of two independent states in the island, a solution which is clearly not favored by Greece or the European Community at large.

One should also recognize, however, that it is not only the domestic politics of Turkey which is likely to perform a constraining role in this regard. There is no major enthusiasm on the part of Europe itself, after Helsinki, to absorb Turkey over a short space of time. The genuine feelings of solidarity and the desire to help the newly liberated countries of Eastern and Central Europe following the Revolutions of 1989, resulting in a comprehensive program of enlargement towards the east with a large financial package associated with it, are conspicuously absent in the Turkish case. Indeed, influential elements exist within Europe such as the Christian Democrats and the radical right, in whose cultural vision of the European order Turkey constitutes a natural “other”, hence, a country, which by definition ought to be excluded from full-membership. A certain degree of ambiguity is also apparent in the EU’s policies towards far right or fundamentalist political movements. The recent “Haider Affair” in Austria, in the context of which the EU has taken a very tough stance against a far right political party emerging as a major coalitional partner contrasts with the rather critical attitude that the EU has traditionally adopted concerning the state’s repression of religious radicalism in Turkey (24). Perhaps it might be fair to suggest that a post-Helsinki equilibrium has emerged, in the context of which both the Turkish and the European political elites are content with a slow trajectory towards full-membership, but for quite different reasons.

A favorable external environment can provide a strong impetus to the process of democratic consolidation in countries with fragile or newly emerging democracies (25). It is also the case, however, that external influences alone cannot guarantee that a democratic order will be consolidated unless there exist groups within the domestic sphere which actively push in the direction of democratization. Relating this broad observation to the Turkish case, Turkey’s move to full EU membership constitutes a serious challenge to several key dimensions of the existing state ideology. Hence, it is highly unlikely that the military, the bureaucracy or even the

established political parties will instigate change by challenging the very contours of the dominant state ideology. Perhaps the key challenge in this context could originate from the business community itself. TÜSÝAD, the key interest association representing the large-scale industrialists in Turkey, has concentrated its efforts throughout the 1990s in the direction of reforms in the Turkish political and legal system (26). Considering the active role that TÜSÝAD has played on the road to Helsinki is pressing for Turkey's candidacy for full-membership, it could also perform a similar constructive role in pushing for key political changes, both in the domestic sphere and in the realm of foreign policy. These, in turn, would help to speed up Turkey's entry into the EU as a full-member. Whether TÜSÝAD or any other element of civil society for that matter, is likely to perform this catalytic force for change constitutes a key challenge of the next few years.

VI. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The interplay between domestic politics and foreign policy is crucial to an understanding of Turkey–EU relations. It is perhaps an irony of history that the critical turning point in Turkey–EU relations occurred at a time when the social democrats have established themselves as the dominant political force on the continent. The social democrats in Europe are firmly opposed to Turkey's exclusion on purely cultural or civilizational grounds. At the same time, they are highly critical of human rights practices and democratic malpractices in Turkey. The social democratic vision of Europe suggests that the addition of Turkey with superior democratic credentials would constitute a source of enrichment in the context of a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural project of enlargement.

Thus, the logic of the post-Helsinki order clearly implies that how much progress can be accomplished with respect to attaining full-membership status or in broader terms from the

overall benefits to be derived from participation in the European project itself depends critically on Turkey's own efforts. Hitherto, Turkey's own vision of relations with the EU has been hampered by what one would describe as the "Ankara Agreement Syndrome" and the failure to recognize fully the major changes which have taken place within the Union itself over the past few decades, resulting in a type of deep integration project which would be inconceivable when the Ankara Agreement was first signed back in 1963. Such misperceptions, in turn, have resulted in a certain degree of self-exclusion on Turkey's part from the ongoing process of deepening and widening in the European Community. In purely economic terms, for example, the Ankara Agreement and the subsequent focus on the customs union have tended to bias Turkey's relations with the EU towards trade at the exclusion of other forms of economic interaction. One of the benefits of the Helsinki Summit is that a variety of Community-wide projects will now be available in such key areas as education and technological development, which if fully participated on Turkey's part will result in significant benefits over time in a step by step, bottom-up integration process leading to full-membership. Increasingly, international relations are shifting away from the previously dominant state to state interaction and moving in the direction of transnational networks. The natural corollary of this proposition is that the development of such networks between institutions and civil society organizations in Turkey and Europe will provide a significant impetus to deepening of relations, with positive spillover effects in the spheres of democratization and economic development.

Finally, the appropriate mix of conditions and incentives are crucial in a graduating country to a full-membership status. This argument clearly implies that the EU itself needs to pursue an active policy oriented towards the integration of Turkey along the same as the strategy it has been pursuing so forcefully in relations to the Central and Eastern European countries. This would involve both a policy of activating financial resources to Turkey and a

more sensitive approach to Turkey's own domestic political dilemmas. Such an approach would facilitate domestic political and economic change in Turkey on which the country's prospects of becoming a full EU member are so critically dependent in any case.

NOTES:

1. On the origins, dynamics and conjectures concerning the future course of the EU enlargement process, see John Redmond and Glenda G. Rosenthal, eds., The Expanding European Union. Past, Present and Future, Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998.

2. The major conclusions of the Luxembourg Summit of December 1997 are presented in the European Commission's Report, Agenda 2000: For a Stronger and Wider Union, Luxembourg, Office for the Official Publications of the European Communities, 1997.

3. On the nature of the European Union as a civilizational project and its perception of Turkey as the "other" of Europe see Ziya Öni°, "Turkey, Europe and Paradoxes of Identity: Perspectives on the International Context of Democratization", Mediterranean Quarterly, Vol. 10, No. 3, Summer 1999, pp. 109-136 and Meltem Müftüler-Baç, "The Never-Ending Story: Turkey and the European Union", Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 34, No. 4, 1998, pp. 240-258.

4. On the outcome of the Helsinki Summit, see Matthew Keminski, "EU Reaches Accord with Turkey: Ankara Accepts Offer to Apply for Membership", Wall Street Journal, December 13, 1999; Stephen Kirzner, "Turks Jubilant as European Unlock Door", New York Times, December 13, 1999; Questin Peel and Leyla Boulton, "Little is Left to Chance in Turkey's Bid for Europe", Financial Times, December 13, 1999. On the official text of the Helsinki Summit, see Presidency Conclusions, the Helsinki European Council, 10 and 11 December 1999.

5. The United States has also been concerned with Turkey's human rights record in recent years. See the web page of the U.S. Department of State, Turkey: Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998, available at: <http://www.state.gov> (27.04.2000)
6. On the evolution of Turkey EU relations, see Canan Balkýr, "The Customs Union and Beyond" in Libby Rittenberg, ed, The Political Economy of Turkey in the Post-Soviet Era: Going West and Looking East?, Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998, pp.51-78 and Heinz Kramer, A Changing Turkey. The Challenge to Europe and the United States, Washington D.C: Brookings Institute Press, 2000. For the text of the Ankara Agreement signed on September 1, 1963, see the web page of Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr> (27.04.2000)
7. On the southern enlargement process of the EU, see Christopher Preston, Enlargement and Integration in the European Union, London: Routledge, 1997. On the contrasting fortunes of Greece and Spain incorporated into the European Union and Turkey excluded from the process in the post-1980 era, see Fatih Tayfur, "Yunanistan ve Ýspanya'nýn Avrupalýlaşma Serüveni ve Türkiye: Ýki Nikah ve Bir Cenaze", in Atila Eralp, ed., Türkiye ve Avrupa, Ankara: Ýmge Kitabevi, 1997.
8. On the ambiguities and contradictions underlying the EU's "foreign policy", see Jan Zielonka, ed., Paradoxes of European Foreign Policy, The Hague and London: Kluwer Law International, 1998.
9. On the nature of the recent social democratic wave in Europe, its intellectual origins and its emphasis on "multicultural citizenship", see Kenneth Dyson, "Benign or Malevolent Leviathan? Social Democratic Governments in a Neo-Liberal Euro Area", The Political Quarterly, Vol.70, No.2, 1999, pp. 195-209; Kelly Duncan, "Multicultural Citizenship: The Limitations of Liberal Democracy", The Political Quarterly, Vol. 71, No. 1, 2000, pp. 31-40; Anthony Giddens, The

Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998 and Will Kymlicka, Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. Indeed, explicit references to multicultural citizenship appear in the political programs of both German Social Democrats and the British Labour Party. See "the Basic Policy Programme of Social Democratic Party of Germany" available at <http://www.spd.de/english/politics/programme01.html> and "Labour Party Policies" concerning democracy and citizenship available at: <http://www.labour.org.uk>

10. It is estimated that 3.2 million Turks live in Europe, a very large proportion of which are based in Germany. Interesting research has been undertaken in recent years by the Research Center for Studies on Turkey based in Essen, Germany under the direction of Faruk Çelen, concerning the economic activities of the Turkish population both in Germany and in Europe at large, research which has drawn attention to the rapid rise of entrepreneurial activity among these groups. For a number of publications concerning Turks in Europe, see the Center's web page available at: <http://www.uni-essen.de/zft> (27.04.2000)

11. Concerning overlapping identities and the complex nature of interaction between Turks in Germany and Turks in the mainland Turkey, see the interesting article by Kevin Robbins, "Interrupting Identities: Turkey/Europe" in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, eds., Questions of Cultural Identity, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996, pp. 61-86.

12. For a good discussion of the citizenship issue which has played an important role in the German general elections of September 1999 tilting the balance in favor of the SPD, see "Who Should be German, then?", The Economist, July 4, 1998, p. 27 and "Turkish Germans", The Economist, January 9th, 1999, p.15.

13. For an attempt to uncover the psychological bases of the Turco-Greek conflict, see Vamýk D. Volkan and Norman Itzkowitz, Turks and Greeks: Neighbours in Conflict, Huntingdon: The Eothen Press, 1994.

14. For a valuable analysis of the economic bases underlying the recent rapprochement between Turkey and Greece, see Theodore Coulumbis, "Greece and Turkey: Dawn of a New Era?", Paper presented at the International Relations Seminar, Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey, February 25, 2000. Coulumbis argues that rapid economic development and growing possibilities for mutual economic gains from further interaction are exercising a positive influence over Turkey–Greece relations. For another useful analysis of the multiple influences at work underlying the recent Turkish-Greek rapprochement, see S. Gülden Ayman, "Springtime in the Aegean", Private View, No. 8, 2000, pp. 56-60.

15. The Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen's Association, TUSIAD, is an interest association representing large-scale firms or conglomerates which play an important role in the Turkish economy. On the important role performed by businessmen in general and TÜSÝAD in particular on the road from Luxembourg to Helsinki, particularly in terms of influencing the decisions of two key countries Germany and Greece, valuable information has been provided by TÜSÝAD Chairman, Erkut Yüceođlu in an interview on the Turkish TV channel, Kanal D, December 23, 1999.

16. The United States has been critical of the EU's decision in Luxembourg to exclude Turkey from candidate status right from the outset. See Stephen Kirzner, "U.S. Pressing European Union to be More Friendly to Turkey", New York Times, January 5, 1998. Indeed, the U.S. has consistently pushed for Turkey's candidacy consistently pushed for Turkey's candidacy throughout the period leading to the Helsinki Summit. President Clinton's visit to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) meeting held in Istanbul during

November 1999 represented the climax of such efforts which has undoubtedly performed an important role in persuading the European leaders to take a favorable decision on Turkey's part. On the Clinton visit and the OSCE Summit, see Charles Babington, "Improve Rights Record, Clinton Urges", Washington Post, November 16, 1999.

17. See in this context Chris Rumford, "Turkey and European Enlargement: Cross-Border Projects and a Pre-Accession Strategy for Non-Members", New Perspectives on Turkey, No. 19, Fall 1998, pp. 71-96 and Heinz Kramer, "Turkey-EU Customs Union Economic Integration and Political Turmoil", Mediterranean Politics, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1996, pp. 60-75.

18. On the most recent set of economic reforms designed to reduce the structural budget deficit and the persistently high rates of inflation in the Turkish economy, see OECD Economic Surveys, Turkey, 1998-1999, Paris, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development 1999. On the growing optimism concerning Turkey's ability to undertake the reforms required in the favorable external context provided by the Helsinki Summit, see Ziya Öni, "The Turkish Economy at the Turn of a New Century: Critical and Comparative Perspectives", in Morton Abramowitz, ed., Turkish Transformation and American Policy, Washington D.C: The Century Foundation, 2000 (forthcoming).

19. On Günter Verheugen's visit to Turkey during March 2000, see Stephen Kirzner, "EU Again Tells Turkey, It Must Be More Democratic", New York Times, March 11, 2000.

20. For a critical examination of the "Kurdish problem" in Turkey and for non-military solutions to the problem, see Kemal Kiriçi and Gareth Winrow, The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-state Ethnic Conflict, London: Frank Cass, 1997.

21. For a discussion of the strong state tradition and the official state ideology, see Metin Heper and Fuat Keyman, "Double-Faced State: Political Patronage and the Consolidation of Democracy in Turkey", Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 34, No. 4, 1998, pp. 259-277. The

"Sèvres Syndrome" has deep historical roots going back to the total collapse of the Ottoman Empire by the end of the First World War. The Turkish state faced a situation of near extinction following the Sèvres Treaty of 1920, whereby the Asia Minor was partitioned among the victorious allies. The process could only be reversed by the War of Independence during the early 1920s, leading to the creation of the modern Republic in 1923. On the "Sevr Syndrome", see Kemal Kirişçi, "Turkish Foreign Policy and the EU", paper presented at the Boğaziçi University, Center for European Studies Conference on "Turkey in the European Union: A Question of Image or Governance?", December 3, 1999 and "Turkey" in Stelios Starvidis, Theodore Couloumbis, Thanos. Veremis and Neville Waites, eds., The Foreign Policies of the European Union's Mediterranean States and Applicant Countries in the 1990s, London: Macmillan Press, 1998.

22. For a recent attempt to classify and characterize the different political parties in Turkey, see Ziya Öni°, "Neoliberal Globalization and the Democracy Paradox: Interpreting the Turkish General Elections of 1999", Journal of International Affairs, 2000 (forthcoming).

23. Concerning the argument that a major constitutional change is needed in Turkey to accommodate to the requirements of full EU membership, given the strong emphasis on "state sovereignty" by the current constitutional order, see Bülent Sözer, "Some Remarks and Comments on the European Law with Particular Reference to the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey", mimeographed, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul.

24. On the imposition of diplomatic sanctions on Austria by the EU in response to the participation in government of the far-right Freedom Party under the leadership of Heider, see Konstantin Richter, "Austrian Response to EU Sanctions is more Muted than Mutinous", Wall Street Journal Europe, April 7, 2000. The basic thrust of the EU's approach is that participation in a member government should respect specific rules which reflect the basic values of the EU.

Nobody has asked, however, that the respective party should be outlawed and its leader put in jail. Hence, one needs to exercise a certain degree of caution in making direct comparison with Turkey in this instance.

25. On the significance of a conducive international environment for democratic consolidation in newly emerging democratic polities, see Laurence Whitehead, ed., The International Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

26. TÜSÝAD has published a number of studies on different aspects of democratization notably on legal and electoral reform in Turkey during the course of the 1990s. Among these the most important and controversial is Türkiye’de Demokratikleşme Perspektifleri, Istanbul: Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association, 1997.