

## THE EU CONSENTED TO NEGOTIATIONS, BUT WILL IT ALLOW TURKEY IN?

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The Europeans fought the Turks and tried to drive them away from Europe for about 16 centuries, starting in around 452 C.E. when **Attila, the Emperor of Huns**, sieged Rome. They almost achieved that goal with the **1912-13 Balkan War**. However, the circumstances brought the Turks to the gates of Brussels almost 90 years later, this time as a candidate for the EU membership. The most advanced stage Turkey reached in the process of accession came with the EU's decision to start negotiations on October 3, 2005. The success of the AKP Government should be acknowledged with that respect. They reached a point no Turkish cabinet had reached until now. However, it is obvious that the repercussions of the December 17, 2004 decision should not be overestimated.

Turkey still faces ambiguous perspectives with special conditions imposed on the country, and possible compromises might be demanded in the future. Why don't we first analyze the content of the December 17 decision, and then discuss the possible reasons for the policy adopted by the EU towards Turkey.

### EU's 'Bon Pour L'Orient' Negotiation Process for Turkey:

*BON POUR L'ORIENT* is a French term referring to the stamps affixed by the Western educational institutions on the low-level diplomas which are not recognized in the West and which are valid only in the Eastern countries (see **Ahmet V. Alp, H.O. Tercüman, Dec. 18, 2004**). This is the most suitable definition that can be given to the perspective presented to

Turkey on December 17. The adopted document, containing provisions which stipulate that permanent restrictions could be put on freedom of movement, imposes procedures which were never applied to any other candidates before Turkey, and in that regard, reflects a serious discrimination. In addition, the end-result of the negotiation process becomes ambiguous before it even started with the possibility of receiving a "**special status**" put on the records implicitly in the form of the expression "**anchoring in the EU without full accession.**" For the first time in the EU history, this organization emphasized in writing that full accession of a candidate member is not guaranteed. It is more likely that Turkey would be directed via a "special route" towards "special membership," especially when **Merkel** and **Sarkozy** come to power by 2007. In the words of British ex-Prime Minister **Harold Wilson**, "[even] a week is a long time in politics." It is not possible to forecast exactly the results of the elections in France and Germany in 2006 and 2007. However, the current situation is very clear, **Schroeder** and **Chirac** who appear to be supporters of Turkey are likely to go.

The option of membership with "special status" for Turkey currently has no legal ground. But the EU Constitution has options. It can support a "different status" within the EU, which is not fully defined yet. Most people believe this amendment was made with countries like Turkey in mind. In the meantime, this referendum is also exceptionally important. What will France say - after the negotiations for the membership of Turkey are completed along with everything else, and all obstacles are removed; that is, after Turkey rescues the princess kept by a giant in a cave behind a fairytale mountain? "Wait, let us ask the French people!" The negotiation date for Croatia's membership is the same per law

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to be enacted by the French Senate in March 2005, but its accession will not be subject to any referendum, unlike Turkey's membership. It seems inevitable that Austria, even Belgium, will also follow the referendum procedure. It is very likely that 'fear of Islam' and even 'racism' will be on the rise in various E.U. countries over the next 10-15 years. Dutch Foreign Minister **Bot** stated that those referendums significantly decreased the chance of membership (see **Milliyet, Dec. 20, 2004**). Since no exact date is given for accession, it is also possible that the membership of Turkey might be postponed to well after 2014 by using the accession of Ukraine or some Balkan countries as a pretext. According to the first paragraph of the December 17 Declaration, the accession of the candidates is conditional not only on their performance during the negotiations, but also on the capacity of the EU to digest new members. If Ukraine and the Balkan countries become members of the EU, Turkey's membership might be delayed "for good." When the Turkish delegation in Brussels consented to those conditions, even the **Swedish Prime Minister Persson** expressed his outrage by that situation saying "if I were there, I would not accept it."

#### **Problems of Intergovernmental Conference Mechanism**

During the summit in Brussels, the proposals of the EU Commissions were accepted and a decision was made to start the negotiations. According to **Can Baydarol, the Chairman of Turkey-EU Foundation**, the acceptance of the negotiation mechanism proposed in the **October 6 Report** signifies the commencement of a negotiations process full of entrapments (see **Referans Gazetesi, Nov. 15, 2004**). The negotiations with the previous candidates were conducted within 31 topics while that number was increased to 35 for Turkey and Croatia. Meeting the requirements of an intergovernmental conference,

which require unanimous vote for closing each negotiation file, would inevitably be seen in Turkey as "**70 bribes per member**" process. Requests of commercial or political bribes which might transform the agenda of Turkey to a new minefield will always be on our minds. Theoretically, such a thing as "arbitrary veto" should not exist. However, what will prevent the exercise of veto powers frequently and for very insignificant details?

The procedure, as a way of progress, should be the same with the one applied to other member states, rather than separate intergovernmental conferences for each file. Intergovernmental conference should be held only at the beginning of the negotiations, the remaining process should be conducted and finalized through the E.U. Commission, but the decision of full accession after the end of the negotiations should be subject to the votes of the individual members. Some may be satisfied with the current procedure; Turkey might have passed through that threshold. The negotiations may appear to have been started. But these negotiations will lead Turkey to ambiguity, to an unknown end, sort of bottomless pit, and will only maintain Turkey suspense for 10 years, and then 15 more years, and then 20 years more. It is a sad thing that the only politician who pointed to these issues is **Mesut Yılmaz** (see the **interview with HABERTÜRK TV on Oct. 10, 2004 - Dec. 19, 2004**) and the only Turkish journalist is **Oktay Ek\_i** (**Hürriyet, Dec. 16, 2004**). **Zafer Ça\_layan, the Chairman of Ankara Chamber of Commerce** points to another problematic and ambiguous issue in his speech on December 19, 2004: will the negotiation topics be discussed individually or in groups? Considering that discussing only the issues of freedom of movement and agriculture would take 10 years each, the negotiation process for Turkey cannot be completed even by 2094, let alone 2014, if the topics are discussed individually. Therefore, Turkey,

already trailing a point in the game of "intergovernmental conference" must pay attention to this last opinion.

**The European Parliament said Turkey should "withdraw troops from Cyprus and admit the Armenian Genocide"**

Several months have passed by. But, for whatever reason, very few people paid attention to these details. Now, that resolution lies before Turkey. I am talking about the resolution adopted by the **European Parliament** by 407 against 263 votes, and which proposed the membership perspective of Turkey to the EU Council. All of us remember the photograph related to the passage of that resolution. Those who were in favor expressed their support with banners that said "yes" in various languages: **"Yes, Oui, Ja, Evet."** Didn't we all draw consolation in that photograph! The European Parliament is usually known by its anti-Turkey resolutions. But the last one actually does not represent a break with the tradition. The resolution contains "striking" proposals (see **Yalçın Doğan, Hürriyet, Dec. 25, 2004**). For instance: (1) **"...Take steps to achieve breakthrough in Turkish-Armenian relations in view of the remarkable study by Turkish historian Halil Berktaş on the Armenian genocide..."** (Paragraph GG); (2) **Recognize Southern Cyprus and withdraw troops from Northern Cyprus** (Paragraph 44); and (3) **Allow a Kurdish political party in the Parliament** (Paragraph 4,9,22). The **European Parliament is said to refer to many other previous resolutions - all unacceptable for Turkey - in the "footnotes" of the last resolution.** It is well-known that the resolutions of the European Parliament generally bear the nature of recommendations. But according to columnist and Istanbul University professor **Mithat Melen**, the expression "The EU Council notes the resolution of the European Parliament of December 15, 2005" in **paragraph 21** of the Final Declaration of the December 17 Summit means that the

recommendatory resolution of the European Parliament becomes part of the resolution of the EU Council and thus the document dated December 15, 2004 and the conditions contained therein become "*primary law*" for Turkey and "*preconditions*" for the negotiation process. Personally, I do not think that the word "notes" can create such broad legal effects. That should require a more clearly defined expression. However, it is a fact that Turkish governments must be very careful with regard to such details in the future. In November 2005, the EU will present Turkey a new Accession Partnership document containing the conditions to be met in a certain part of the negotiations. That document may contain such conditions as the **release of Abdullah Öcalan under the pretext of a "general amnesty"** as well as the conditions referred to above. The Turkish Government should take measures against such possibilities in advance.

#### **To what extent the EU needs Turkey?**

Many strategists in Turkey argue that the EU has opened the door to Turkey for the following reasons: (1) Turkey's large market; (2) the ability to prevent the conflict between the civilizations; (3) Turkey's capacity to make the E.U. 'another superpower'; (4) young population; (5) Turkish army; and (6) geo-strategic position of Turkey. In my opinion, the geo-strategic position of Turkey is a determining factor. Turkey, which used to be a forward post of NATO against the USSR during the Cold War, has now become a protective belt for the West against the lawless states of the Middle East. Turkey is situated on the passage to the Caucasus' gas and oil, is in a position to affect the newly independent Turk republics, is the most effective area to fight global drug traffic, and has a key position in controlling immigration to Europe. As the U.S. has established hegemony over all Middle Eastern

countries except **Iran** and **Syria**, and even neutralized **Libya**, it becomes necessary for France and Germany to hold positions in Turkey in order to maintain their presence in the Middle East. Besides, the Turkish Armed Forces is the NATO's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest military power and has become even stronger after enduring guerilla warfare of PKK. If the Turkish Armed Forces can be utilized by the EU without Turkey's full accession, the EU may have more power to intervene in the critical zones worldwide.

With the exception of these two latter factors, none of the reasons above are realistic. The EU has already gained the control of Turkish market through the **Customs Union**. Full accession of Turkey would not make the E.U. another superpower as it will undermine the political unity of the EU and end the "Federal United States of Europe" project. And I do not think that the EU needs Turkey for "young population." The EU can attract young immigrants from many countries including Turkey if it develops flexible migration policies like the U.S. Currently, the U.S. attracts 1 to 2 million immigrants from Mexico each year, yet it has never considered it necessary to integrate Mexico into the Union. In addition, Turkey has already acquired the right to "freedom of movement" in 1985 under the **1963 Ankara Treaty** and the "**Annexed Protocol**" of **1970**, but unfortunately this right is not exercised at the moment. If this right which has been unilaterally highjacked by many countries is allowed in the future, this problem will be solved. I also think that the problem of the EU caused by "low economic growth" can be solved with certain "structural reforms." For instance, the social security systems of most countries, which typically aim to sustain individuals "from the cradle to the grave" can be restructured and the economic burden can be reduced. The principle of "etatism" which is still explicitly or implicitly in effect in many EU economies

can be eliminated by completing privatization, and the production level can be increased by other serious reforms in E.U. wide employment laws to increase flexibility. The economic system of the U.S. can set an example for the EU.

On the other hand, most Muslim countries have been under foreign domination for long periods in history and gained independence relatively recently. In this case, it might be very difficult for a lot of them to adopt Western-type democracy, to achieve such political maturity in the near future, even in the medium term. It must not be forgotten that it took nearly 500 years for the European states to reach the level they are at now. For the U.S. this is 100 years, if not more. Turkey did not even succeed in convincing the Turk states that share the same roots to accept the "Turkish model." The modern communication systems, like the internet, mass media might help close this 'maturity gap' quicker. However, it might be unreasonable to expect it to close 'within the next few years'.

There is another obstacle to the democratization of the Middle East based on the Turkish model. Nearly all borders of the Middle East are drawn in accordance with the **1916 Sykes-Picot Agreements**. They do not correspond to the ethnic and historical realities of the region. Many states can rightly be labeled as 'artificial states'. National identity in many of them is not strong yet. Under many undemocratic regimes, territorial integrity has been achieved at the expense of human rights. If democracy 'spreads' to them too prematurely -and especially 'through external interference'-, there is the risk that they might be drawn into civil wars and the current political system in the Middle East can collapse, just like a house of cards. I doubt that the elections held in Iraq in late January of 2005 will bring democracy to that country.



Iraq consists of three large ethnic groups, namely the Shiites, the Kurds and the Sunnites which do not trust each other and have conflicting goals. What kind of a consensus will they reach? In the event of a U.S. withdrawal, will the situation in Iraq be like that of **Afghanistan** after the Soviet occupation rather than a democratic country?

Terror and the conflict between the civilizations will continue in an increasing manner until the **Palestine Question** is solved and until the U.S. changes its policies and continues to bomb Muslim countries arbitrarily. If the U.S. attacks Iran, the division between the Sunnites and Shiites will become less sharp and this can potentially make the 'clash of civilizations scenario' more likely.

#### **Do the USA and Europe play games against each other?**

**"Full accession" of Turkey is unacceptable for France.**

It is beyond any doubt that the U.S. attaches high importance to Turkey's accession to the EU. We can understand American reasoning if we take a look at the book titled **The Grand Chess Board** by **Brzezinski** who was the U.S. National Security Advisor in **Carter**'s administration and who continues to influence the U.S. policies with his articles and studies. **Brzezinski** is in favor of accession of the Russian Federation and Turkey to the EU. He holds views that through an enlarged EU the United States can expand its hegemony in Eurasia. In his opinion, the EU should be a bridgehead for the U.S. In other words, the U.S. needs to weaken the political unity of the EU, to make it "softer" by means of the accession of Turkey, and even Russia, and thus to continue to hold control over Europe. The EU, under the leadership of Germany, is becoming an important strategic rival for the United States. **Global Trend 2015**, the

report drafted in 2000 by the NIC (**National Intelligence Council**) is just one of the studies disclosing that fact.

Today, Turkey's population has reached 72 million. The country's population is larger than in any European state except Germany. According to the population estimates provided by the United Nations, within the next twenty years, Turkey will have the largest population in Europe - about 89 million people (about 100 million by 2050 - same as the population of France and Germany combined). The population of Germany, France and the United Kingdom within the same period will reach respectively 82, 64 and 63 million. That means that Turkey would be represented by 96 members in the parliament. As far as the Council of Ministers is concerned, the Constitution stipulates a system of dual majority: in order for a resolution to be adopted, it must be supported by 55% of the states having 65% of the population. In that case, Turkey becomes a major element in decision-making mechanism with a population share of 15-20% (see **Le Figaro, Nov. 24, 2004**). Some studies argue that Turkey, holding a key vote, will be able to block 76% of the decisions of the Council "without the need for any complicated alliances" (see ABHABER, Dec. 14, 2004).

When Turkey draws the support of the "*anti-federalist*" countries such as the United Kingdom and Denmark whose views on the EU perspective differ from those of France and Germany, it will be able to block any legislation and foreign policy initiatives. In the words of French ex-Minister of Justice **Toubon**, this "**may cause the break of the Berlin-Paris axis which is the most effective axis in the decision-making mechanism of the EU, and its replacement with the London-Ankara axis**" - this is exactly what the U.S. would like to see. Why is the United Kingdom the most enthusiastic supporter

of Turkey in the EU? Why does the U.S. provide such support to the Turkey's accession to the EU? Only as a friendly gesture to France and Germany, and the EU? Turkish-American relations have been strained since March 2003. Even if those relations come to a breakpoint in the future, the accession of Turkey which adopts an approach similar to that of the United Kingdom will dilute the political unity of the EU, will make it "softer", and thus the United States will have achieved most of its goals. An E.U. with 30 or more members, and a population of around 600 million is bound to remain politically impotent.

Some may think that this scenario is unrealistic. But an alternative scenario may not be acceptable for a country like France either. The **Newsweek** magazine issue published in late July of 2004 wrote that Turkey, upon becoming a member, could form an alliance with Germany and **the driving axis of the EU could be Ankara-Berlin axis**. In 1540s, **François I, the King of France** formed an alliance with Ottoman Sultan **Suleiman the Magnificent** against **Charles V, the King of Spain**. The Ottoman navy had bases in South of France. Today, the famous *Cote d'Azur* region of France belongs to France, not Spain, - arguably- because of the Turks. Yet, France and Turkey have never been on good terms after the 17<sup>th</sup> century and most of the time supported conflicting sides. France undermined the Ottoman Empire during its weakest period and occupied **Algeria, Tunisia, Syria** and **Lebanon**.

Turkey has had much more historical, political and cultural ties with Germany than France, which have roots in the period of **Kaiser Wilhelm II**. During World War I Turkey took side with Germany; and during World War II **Fevzi Çakmak**, Chief of Staff, **Numan Menemencio\_lu**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and many of their deputies supported Germany, though Turkey remained

officially neutral. Approximately 3 million Turks who migrated to Germany over the past 40 years create another tie between the two countries. Germany is the largest trade partner of Turkey. In September 2002, **Schroeder** won the general elections only by 6,000 votes with the help of the Turkish population. These facts support the opinion that Turkey may prefer partnership with Germany rather than France.

At the end of World War II, France was humiliated and lost most of its power. **Charles de Gaulle** made France believe that it could become a global player again by uniting her power with Germany and using other European countries to its advantage. Is it not a fact that the EU system has been based on the control of "medium size" states such as Italy, the United Kingdom and Spain by the German-French axis and on the absorption of other 20 some "smaller" states? Would the accession of Turkey not disrupt that equilibrium and cause France to be transformed into a "medium size" state within the EU? Is it not true that the Eastern European countries that are currently under the U.S. influence will come under Germany's influence while France's position in the EU will be weaker?

**Would accession of Turkey to the EU be advantageous  
for Germany?**

Germany has tried to control the Middle East and reach the **Indian Ocean** since the time of **Bismarck. Wilhelm II** considered Turkey an important bridge on that route, which should be kept under control. Recently, the German Government appears to be an important supporter of Turkey in its bid to join the EU. It is obvious that Germany would not be adversely affected by the full accession of Turkey as much as France. However, there are some political calculations that would cast a shadow on the

good intentions. German Foreign Minister **Fischer** was taped by some TV crew when he said to his Danish counterpart **Per Stig Moeller** "Don't worry, the Turks will never make it to the EU, we will lull them and then forget them" in a cocktail party during the Copenhagen Summit. The documentary "**Fog behind the Scene**" was broadcast by **Swedish DR1 TV channel**, and became hot news (see **Zaman, May 3, 2003**).

With the end of the Cold War, Turkey had a potential to influence areas with certain population "from the Adriatic to the Great China Wall." But, Turkey could not go beyond Edirne and Kars because of the political and economic crises in the last 10 years. A "strong" and "wealthy" Turkey with full member status in the EU may influence the "Muslim Belt" in the Balkans (Bosnia, Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia). Turkey is currently the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest foreign investor in Bulgaria and Romania despite the existing economic conditions. **Arçelik** has established Eastern Europe's largest durable consumer goods plant in Romania. Last year, **The Koç Group** almost bought **Bulgarian Telecom** which eventually was acquisitioned by the U.S. **Advent Group** in the last minute deal. These two countries may gradually enter into the zone of Turkey's influence. Germany attributes great importance to the Balkans. This country was the sponsor of the disintegration of Yugoslavia. It considers the Balkans to be its "backyard" and a way to gain access to the warm seas. On the other hand, it is not easy for Germany to accept that Turkey would gradually acquired an influence equal to, or even more than the one of Germany in the EU. Would Germany, which in order to protect its strong position at the world gold market attempted to foil gold production in Bergama by provoking the villagers (see **Necip Hablemito\_lu, German Foundations and Bergama Case, Toplumsal Dönü\_üm Publications, 2003**), ever allow a Muslim country to have more influence in the EU than itself?

In view of of these facts, it is obvious that full integration of Turkey to the EU as well as exclusion from the EU are against the interests of the EU. It is more likely that the EU plans to keep Turkey in suspense and take the advantage of such situation as long as possible, and then to exclude it through referendums or, if there still is a need for Turkey, to integrate it into the EU as an "outsider" depending on the geo-strategic equilibria of the time. If the EU ever allows Turkey in, it would be done in a manner that separates Turkey from the U.S. camp and to avoids the U.S. traps. German ex-Chancellors **Helmut Kohl** and **Helmut Schmidt**, who have been very influential figures in the last twenty years, said that none of the EU leaders was sincere with Turkey; on the contrary they all had their own behind-the-scene plans. The EU leaders who will not be holding office in 15-20 years take comfort in that, saying "deluge after me." Will the "good cop" Germany put the "bad cop" Austria against Turkey over the next few years? Will France use the Armenian and Cyprus questions as pretext during the negotiations?

**Despite everything, the December 17 decision will be a source of encouragement, motivation and stability for Turkey**

Despite the ambiguous and sometimes hypocritical attitude of the EU which was discussed above, the December 17 decision is an important opportunity for Turkey. A negative decision on December 17 would demoralize the people, destabilize the economy, and **AKP** - an unnatural conservative-liberal-nationalist coalition - would start disintegrating like the late **Özal's ANAP** almost immediately. As journalist **Cengiz Candar** put it, Copenhagen Criteria would be replaced by **Mamak Criteria** (meaning military) instead of Ankara Criteria (see **D.B. Tercüman, Dec. 18, 2004**). Now, there is an opportunity to

attract foreign capital and to liberalize the economy and democracy in Turkey even more within the framework of the liberalization trend coming from Europe. Adopting 110,000 pages of EU *acquis* as its internal law would help Turkey to turn into a modern country in every field even if it does not join the EU the future. Turkey must attempt to come up with tens of billions of Euro needed to adapt Turkey's industry and economy to the EU norms. The 9bn euro likely to be offered by the E.U. until year 2013 may not be enough to enable the Turkish governments implement the environmental/ structural reforms necessary to conform to the E.U. requirements during the accession talks. All of these is as important as accession to the EU itself.

The December 17 decision will arguably help Turkey feel "psychologically more secure" in the short term while the Middle East, the Caucasus and the Middle Asia will continue to go through the period of turbulence. What the future will bring remains to be seen.