

## LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES ON TURKEY'S ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

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### ABSTRACT

*Turkey's full membership to the European Union is stipulated on the Copenhagen political criteria. These criteria, which have been broadly discussed by the Turkish public since 1999, centered around certain sensitivities such as the partial transfer of national sovereignty to the European Union, abolition of capital punishment, restoration of the National Security Council (MGK) and enhancing the rights of ethnic and cultural minorities. Political and public opinion leaders, political parties have developed quite diverse and conflicting perspectives on these sensitivities. In this study, a comparative analysis of these perspectives is given and their possible impact on Turkey's European vision is estimated. The gravity of these countervailing approaches, which swing between Europhilia and Euroclasm, seems to rest ultimately in Europe.*

### ÖZET

#### **Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği'ne Girişi Üzerine Liderlik Perspektifleri**

*Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği'ne tam üye olması Kopenhag siyasi kriterlerine bağlanmıştır. Bu kriterler 1999'dan bu yana kamuoyunda etraflıca tartışılarak belirli hassasiyetlerin ön plana çıkmasını sağlamıştır. Ulusal egemenliğin kısmen Avrupa Birliği'ne devredilmesi, İdam cezasının kaldırılması, MGK'nun ıslahı ve kültürel haklar en kritik konuları oluşturmaktadır. Liderler, kamuoyu önderleri ve siyasi partiler tarafından bu konulara ilişkin çok çeşitli ve birbirleriyle çelişen görüşler ortaya atılmaktadır. Bu çalışmada söz konusu görüşlerin karşılaştırmalı bir analizi yapılarak Türkiye'nin Avrupa vizyonu üzerindeki olası etkileri*

*değerlendirilmektedir. Avrupa hayranlığı ve komplo teorileri arasında çok geniş bir yelpazeye dağılan bu yaklaşımların ağırlık merkezi son keredede yine de Avrupa'dan yana gözükmektedir.*

**Key Words:** *European Union, political leaders, political parties, public opinion leaders, Copenhagen criteria, supra-nationality, National Security Council, cultural rights, Europhilia, Euroclasm.*

## **Introduction**

Since the Helsinki Summit in December 1999, at which Turkey was welcomed as a new candidate state for full membership, various issues and criteria concerning Turkey's accession process have been discussed both in Turkey and in the Union. The debates and their results are exchanged by the two sides under particular supervision of Gunter Verheugen, the commissary of the Union who is in charge of enlargement.

The Accession Partnership has been discussed in Turkish public opinion. Especially the requirements itemized in line with the Copenhagen political criteria attracted much attention partly because they may be the most difficult issues for Turkey to realize and partly because they concern a wide range of social and interest groups. Economic criteria as well as the adoption of the *acquis*, on the other hand, are taken as technical and specific issues to be handled by experts.

All short- and medium-term political requirements have been discussed and reduced by the political elite and opinion leaders to a number of intersecting categories according to the degree of their salience for Turkish political agenda. These categories may be formulated as follows:

- 1- The question of supra-nationality: that is, transferring some part of national sovereignty to the governing bodies of the European Union;
- 2- Modifying the status and role of the National Security Council (MGK) and of the General Staff in line with the standards in member states;
- 3- Abolishing death penalty;
- 4- Radio/TV broadcasting and education in mother tongues of minorities, particularly in Kurdish;
- 5- The Cyprus issue and the border disputes over the Aegean Sea with Greece

Political leaders, parties, civil society and voluntary organizations develop different perspectives and attitudes ranging between 'very negative' and 'very positive'. This creates an ambiguous or undecided political will. Turkish people, on the other hand, are much more determined and willing to enter the European Union, hoping that Turkey will become economically more prosperous and politically much stronger. The results of a public

opinion poll conducted on a large sample, which is capable of nation-wide representation, show that the 68.7 percent of Turkish people are prone to Turkey's full integration into the Union while only 9.9 percent are cone. The remaining 21.4 percent have no clear idea. Those who object to accession fear that Islamic and notional values may be worn out if Turkey enters the EU (*Milliyet*, 21 Sep 2000). Although this trend may temporarily decline as a result of some critical developments in international politics such as the recurrent recognition of 'Armenian genocide' by the French Parliament (the number of pros declined to 25.2 percent whereas that of cones rose to 43.06 percent, and the 'no answer' group reached 20.6 percent), in the long-term it floats in high percents.

This paper aims at analyzing in a comparative way major political perspectives developed by prominent leaders and political parties on the five political issues summarized above. The framework of analysis will be based on general characteristics of political agenda building in Turkey. Questions such as "how far is it possible to reach consensual policies on the critical issues concerning Turkey's accession to the EU"; "what are the basic factors determining Turkey's official attitude towards the Union"; and "what are the alternative political choices available to Turkey" will be covered.

### **Major Dynamics of Political Agenda Building in Turkey**

Soon after the Accession Partnership document had been published by the European Council, the undersecretary of National Intelligence Agency (MİT), Şenkal Atasagun, organized a press conference addressing the Ankara representatives of daily *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Sabah* and *Star* concerning the issue of radio/TV broadcasting in Kurdish. Mr. Atasagun declared that the state should open radio and TV stations broadcasting in Kurdish. He claimed that this would decrease the dissonance between the state and people in the Southeast. Atasagun stressed that this would also reduce the influence of the PKK, which had already been addressing people through Medya-TV. Şenkal Atasagun also stated that the MİT objected to the execution of Abdullah Öcalan in a MGK meeting on 25 February 1999. The Council members reacted by asking, Atasagun Said, "how could you say this". Pointing once again to the Kurdish question Atasagun argued:

We should be able to use Kurdish just as we manipulate Apo [Abdullah Öcalan]. We can do this in a form we choose, not in a form demanded by others from us. That a theater group performs a play in Kurdish in order to make Kurdist propaganda is something different from the use of Kurdish by the state in order to communicate its citizens (*Hürriyet*, 28 Nov 2000).

Atasagun's press conference remained in Turkish political agenda for a few weeks. Part of the discussions was held on whether Atasagun was authorized to give a conference concerning such a big sensitive issue. The then Prime Minister, Bülent Ecevit, stated that Mr. Atasagun had asked for his permission well before the conference. This brings to mind the likelihood that Ecevit and Mesut Yılmaz, the then Vice Prime Minister, might have asked him to give such a press conference. As may be known, one of the three partners of the coalition government, the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) is cautious towards Turkey's accession to the Union and opposed to some of the political conditions stated in the Accession Partnership. The other two partners, the Democratic Leftist Party (DSP) and the Motherland Party (ANAP) support accession, and are willing to pass the legal changes necessary in order to fulfill the political criteria. MHP's attitudes can be explained by the choices of its electorate. It took 18 percent of votes in the last general elections, which were done two months after the arrest of Öcalan. This is the highest percent of votes cast in its history.

In short, this should be a good example of political agenda building by strong state and/or political actors on a narrow ground. The actor in question could have been a high-ranking military officer instead of Şenkal Atasagun. In answering a question asked by one of the journalists about what major inhibitions are there before MİT's proposals, Atasagun gave some clues in whose name he was speaking

Naturally we bureaucrats can speak more easily because we have no electoral anxiety. Politicians have a vote base. In addition to this you cannot proceed so fast in certain things. Passing from one discourse to another is not too easy (*Hürriyet*, 28 Nov 2000).

Mr. Atasagun seems to have undertaken the role of politicians in shaping public opinion and political agenda in order to protect them against the pressure of voters. In this way the governing politicians had a chance to learn the reactions of various social groups that are interested in Kurdish question.

Another example is the traffic accident happened near Susurluk, a small district in Western Anatolia, in November 1997. This accident is publicly known as the Susurluk Accident. Near Susurluk, in a wet night, a Mercedes and a truck crashed into one another. Hüseyin Kocadağ, an ex-chief of police, Abdullah Çatlı, one of the active ex-MHP militants died, and Sedat Bucak, a member of the parliament from True Path Party (DYP) was heavily wounded.

Mass media, civil society organizations, professional and trade unions, opposition parties, student associations all took the issue quite seriously. The consensus reached in public opinion was that the accident

showed a triangle constituted among the police, the politicians and the Mafia. TV channels, newspapers called for and organized protest movements. One of the most interesting protest movements named *sürekli aydınlık için bir dakika karanlık*, dark one minute for light ever, was that people in big cities all together turned on and off the lights rhythmically in their houses for five minutes every evening at 21 p.m. during a full month. Similarly, thousands of people met in urban squares and supported the first group by lighting and blowing off candles.

Wide protest movements urged the parliament to take some initiative. An investigation committee was set up. But, the committee faced many difficulties in collecting information and clues. Meanwhile, the public platform insisting on the decipher of corruptive relations in politics, bureaucracy and economy was broken by bringing sensational events to the political agenda of the country. Finally, four years after the accident six people have been fined to sentence varying between four to six years. However, public opinion does not seem to have been satisfied with the trial. Many people believe that what has been done is just the visible part of the iceberg. Therefore, public opinion in Turkey, even held by a wide platform of social groups has still a limited effect on state actors and institutions.

Turkey's full EU membership concerns even a wider platform of actors, both national and international. In the country political parties, professional unions, civil society organizations, universities, big institutions both in public and private sectors, local governments are well interested in the issue. Outside the country, on the other hand, various organs and representatives of the Union, governments and peoples of Member States, third Countries or institutions such as the United States, NATO, IMF, Amnesty International and UN are able to influence the political agenda and public opinion in Turkey. This is quite compatible with the two basic dimensions of globalization as put forth by David Held:

First, it suggests that many chains of political, economic and social activity are becoming worldwide in scope. And, secondly, it suggests that there has been an intensification of levels of interaction and interconnectedness within and between states and societies (1995; p. 21).

Outside developments have always played important roles on the realization of big projects such as nation building, Westernization and transition to multi-party politics. Thus, we can hope that the national and international actors and the public opinion they form together may well influence Turkish state and political leaders to implement the necessary policies for integration. This is particularly important because Turkish

political leaders, bureaucrats, officers and other power elite hold a wide variety of opinions that cannot easily be reconciled.

### **Leaders, Political Parties and Perspectives**

#### *The President: Ahmet Nejdet Sezer*

President Sezer builds his views on globalization and its repercussions. He states that by globalization the disparities between developed and underdeveloped countries increase further. This makes the world system work more and more on behalf of the former. Especially since 1980, according to Sezer, globalization process created new political and economic unions. Turkey should not remain outside them. However, it should not sacrifice national sovereignty and the qualities of being a nation-state while integrating in such unions. He says: "That the regulations inhibiting foreigners to intervene in the vitally important decisions, which have direct impact on the future of the state, should be passed is quite decisive for national independence" (Sezer, 2000; p. 12).

According to Sezer, Turkey's candidacy for full EU membership is a new and concrete stage in its Westernization process since the foundation of the Republic. Turkey is a European country especially with its secular, democratic and republican qualities. It has deep roots in Europe for centuries and still contributes to the development of European values. On the other hand, he believes that Turkey's full membership will not be an easy process. Therefore, Turkey should work very hard in order to meet the requirements for full membership. He stresses that the Union and the member countries should share efforts with and help Turkey in this process.

President Sezer approaches Turkey's integration into the Union from a strategic perspective as well:

I think it would be useful to note that the integration process in Europe, which is also gaining a defense dimension, cannot be accomplished without full participation of Turkey that has one of the strongest armies in NATO, that reserves %10 of its total budget for defense and that stands for a security and stability in its region (Sezer, 2000; p.15).

In sum, the President of Turkey takes the issue as a grand project of the twenty-first century. However, he seems to have two reservations in mind. One is that Turkey as a developing country may lose part of its national sovereignty in the process of accession to the European Union. The other one is that Turkey has to try very hard to become a full EU member because it may be difficult for Turkey to satisfy some of the requirements expected by the Union.

## **The Justice and Development Party (AKP)**

The AKP was born as heir to the Virtue Party (FP) upon its closure by the Constitutional court. This party, like its sibling, the Felicity Party (SP), comes from an Islamic-conservative tradition. Its constituency approaches with skepticism to modern European value that are imbued with liberal tones. However, the AKP now holds the position of a most Europhile organization. In its by-law and party program, the AKP has given minor importance to relations with Europe. But, after the November 3 elections last year, the then Prime Minister Abdullah Gül and the party chair person Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (now Prime Minister) went to Copenhagen in December, and spent unexpected efforts to fix a date for starting accession negotiations with the leaders of the EU. AKP's pro-European efforts have increasingly lasted to the present. The successive AKP governments headed by Abdullah Gül and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan passed a number of reform packages to satisfy the Copenhagen political criteria.

Although AKP does not have a long-term European vision, it is nevertheless motivated by important factors. First of all, AKP received the 34 percent of the votes, which yielded a qualified majority in the parliament but in the sense of public consensus left the party with a legitimacy problem like a minority government. The party then shifted its position towards popular opinions in society such as supporting Turkey's EU membership, democratization and human rights. Indeed, this attitude legitimized to a certain extent the AKP government in the eyes of the public.

Second, AKP began to see its pro-European attitude as a strategic means to struggle the rigid understanding of secularism in Turkey and its hard-liners such as the military, the Constitutional Court and universities. A strong European aspiration might justify this struggle both in the eyes of the masses and in those of Europe as an external force of change.

Although the AKP and its core constituency did not fully internalize the values of the EU, they took a pro-European position in order to open a greater domain for their religious freedoms, which they think restricted by the present political system and official ideology in Turkey. However, how AKP's future togetherness with Europe will be is a matter of ambiguity due to its Islamic identity. Can AKP improve its identity in line with western civilization or will their roads be apart in the future? It is hard to know this now.

## **The Ex-Prime Minister: Bülent Ecevit**

Bülent Ecevit states that Turkey is a European country for at least six hundred years. By the foundation of the Republic comprehensive political, economic and cultural changes started, and they further made

Turkey closer to the West. For Ecevit, Turkey is not only a European country but an Asian country as well. This endows it with a Eurasian identity. If the European identity of Turkey is still being questioned today, there are two main reasons for this: The first one is that racism has not totally disappeared in Europe. The second reason is that the tendency to see Europe as a Christian club is still influential. Ecevit suggests that Turkey's full membership will be equally beneficial both for Turkey and the Union, severely criticizing thinkers such as Rudyard Kipling and Samuel P. Huntington who emphasize the cultural distance and conflicts between the East and the West (Ecevit, 2000).

Bülent Ecevit develops quite an optimistic approach concerning Turkey's fulfillment of the accession criteria:

The EU believes that it will take Turkey long years to meet the conditions of membership. But, I contend that we can reach these goals in a much shorter time through the dynamism of Turkish society and its devotion to democracy. However, Turkey and the European Union should do with good intention the responsibilities they undertook (Ecevit, 2000; p.19).

Ecevit tries to show the enthusiasm his government has in order to implement new policies such as developing democracy and human rights, which would make closer Turkey and the Union. He believes that there can be no European Union without Turkey and vice versa.

### **Ex-Vice Prime Minister: Mesut Yılmaz**

Mr. Yılmaz was the coordinator of Turkey's initiatives for accession. He was the supervisor of the General Secretariat that is in charge of Turkey's efforts directed towards the accession process. Yılmaz believes that Turkey will contribute greatly to Europe's becoming a global power. The strategic importance of Turkey due to its geopolitical position connecting the Levant, the Black Sea, the Caspian Basin, highways and pipelines will provide this. Turkey's accession to the full EU membership will be beneficial for both sides. Turkey will become one of the advanced societies in the world in many respects.

Mesut Yılmaz, as a coordinator of accession program, sometimes complains that certain actors of the state such as the military, the bureaucracy and MHP (one of the three partners in the coalition government) are reluctant to enter the EU. Nonetheless, he is quite pleased to see that a great majority of Turkish people is willing to become a full member of Europe. Yılmaz states:

Turkey's full membership seems to be inevitable in the light of historical, geo-strategic, geopolitical and geo-economic facts. We



should work in an understanding of national mobilization in order to accomplish the membership with the best conditions and in the shortest time. We have a lot of work to do in the short-term. That a great majority of Turkish society supports Turkey's full EU membership is encouraging (Yılmaz, 2000; p. 33).

### **Ex-Vice Prime Minister: Devlet Bahçeli**

Devlet Bahçeli, the head of the MHP, is the most opposed of the three coalition leaders to Turkey's full EU membership, because the main philosophy of his party is based on absolute national sovereignty, a unitary (indivisible) state and complete supremacy of Turkish culture and language.

Dr. Bahçeli in the last parliamentary group meeting of the year 2000 evaluated the Accession Partnership and the law draft ratified by the French Parliament recognizing the 'Armenian genocide' in 1915 in Turkey as well as the Cyprus issue and the border questions with Greece. He believes that the European Union is not sincere in its policies towards Turkey:

Once looked carefully at the content of the Accession Partnership Document it will be impossible not to see the traces of some evil intentions... The Union sent an invitation card, but immediately put mines on Turkey's road to accession (Bahçeli, 2000; pp. 1-2).

Bahçeli claims that the Union supports Greece and South Cyprus against Turkey and North Cyprus with an ever-lasting prejudice. The requirements concerning the minorities in Turkey, as stated in the Accession Partnership, Bahçeli contends, are intended to divide the territorial unity of Turkey. A more important point, which he thinks proves the lack of sincerity on the part of the Union, is the exclusion of Turkey from the European Security and Defense Identity:

Our country is asked to entrust troops for the new defense mechanism of the Union, while being left outside the decision-making process. We cannot even discuss this understanding, let alone accepting it. One should not forget that a European Union, which would like to utilize NATO's means, has to take into account the rights and interests of all NATO members (Bahçeli, 2000; pp. 2-3).

The views of Devlet Bahçeli on Turkey's integration into the EU are compatible with an understanding of strong nationalist ideology, which is not open to outside world and outside actors. Bahçeli concludes: "It should be known that no target or promise cannot surpass Turkey's existence, unity and future" (Bahçeli, 2000; p.3).

### **Recai Kutan: Head of the Virtue Party (FP/now defunct)**

Recai Kutan and his party used to have a positive understanding towards Turkey's full EU membership hoping that this may help the development of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, principal rights and freedoms including those of veiling, praying, religion and conscience. However, Mr. Kutan has a number of reservations. First of all, he is anxious about the supra-national character of the European Union. In case Turkey becomes a full member, it has to deliver some of its national sovereignty to the governing bodies of the Union. He develops a conditional perspective towards Turkey's accession:

Following the completion of this preparation period when the negotiations begin for full membership, the attitude of the VP will depend on the structure of the EU at that time, on the benefits it can provide for the Turkish nation, on the responsibilities Turkey has to undertake and on the future it promises for Turkey (Kutan, 2000; p. 20).

Mr. Kutan refers to the paragraphs 4 and 9 of the Helsinki Declaration. Border disputes should be solved among the neighbor states by reconciliation. If this cannot be succeeded until 2004, the problems should be subject to the treatment of International Court of Justice. According to Kutan, in such a case the court will increase the continental divide of Greece to 12 miles in line with the relevant UN Charter. The same will happen concerning the continental shelf. Kutan states: "It is quite obvious that, as Mr. Mümtaz Sosyal said, 'only two bunches of moss will remain as continental shelf for us'" (Kutan, 2000; p. 25).

Similarly, Kutan suggests that if the Cyprus problem cannot be solved through peaceful initiatives until 2004, the Union will be able to make Cyprus a full member. This will cause Turkey to have border disputes with the European Union. According to Kutan Greece did not veto Turkey's candidacy for full membership in Helsinki but gained great advantages in the Aegean Sea and Cyprus against Turkey.

Recai Kutan is pessimistic about the possibility of Turkey's full membership. According to him Turkey won't be able to meet the Copenhagen political criteria in a reasonable period of time. He doesn't believe that a totalitarian official ideology and state tradition intervening even with how citizens dress will change so easily. He is quite cautious about whether the Helsinki declaration opened the way for Turkey to become a full EU member. He claims that, if the internal dynamics of both Turkey and the Union are taken into account, Turkey's accession may not be completed forever. He concludes by asking questions in order to state his doubts:

Will the European Union, abolishing its religious and racist prejudices, be able to sacrifice for the prosperity of different societies scattered in a large geographical zone? How will the Western European citizens react towards the possibility of Turkey's holding the first or the second highest number of representatives in the European Parliament where the member states are represented in direct proportionality with their populations? (Kutan, 2000; pp. 29-30)

### **Tansu Çiller: Ex- The Head of the True Path Party (DYP)**

Professor Çiller and her party was a partner of the coalition government during the rule of which Turkey became a member of the Customs Union. Çiller actually supports Turkey's full membership. However, she believes that the process of accession will both be difficult, and will take a long time. She blames the present government at two points. One is that the government is not sincere in its policies concerning the EU. The second one is that the full EU membership of Turkey could not be put forth by the government as a project of civilization. Therefore, according to Çiller, this issue could not be made a popular concern (Çiller, DYP 2000).

In the website of DYP the Accession Partnership is summarized in Turkish, and then evaluated as a party outlook. The conclusions drawn as the party views are as follows:

-As can be seen, the Accession Partnership entrusts important responsibilities to Turkey to be realized in a very short period of time.

-It seems impossible for Turkey to become a full member in the short-term as the conditions posed in the Accession Partnership.

-It is impossible for Turkey to become a full EU member with its current social and economic structure...

-Especially the Cyprus issue should be separated from Turkey's accession to the Union. Apart from this, utmost care should be taken in the issues, which necessitate a particular sensitivity for the unity of the country.

-The affairs that Turkey realizes in the short and medium terms depend largely on the availability of financial sources. Thus, the European Union should not neglect financial aids.

-The Accession Partnership Document should be taken as an opportunity because it may enforce and accelerate the change of governance in Turkey.

-Turkey's National Program should be prepared very carefully, and unnecessary undertakings should be avoided (DYP, 2000).

It seems that both Professor Çiller and her party desire Turkey's full EU membership, but they do not believe that this could be realized easily in a short period of time. Furthermore, it is likely that they don't trust the EU government in that it may expect too many things of Turkey, but may help it too little to realize them.

### **The Republican People's Party (CHP)**

The CHP engaged a number of scholars, experts and university professors to prepare reports covering the crucial problems of Turkey and proposing solutions for them (*CHP Türkiye Raporları*). Here, how the CHP approaches to the Southeast question will be highlighted. The report dealing with the Kurdish question reminds that it was the CHP, which formulated the first policies directly concerning the question in 1990.

According to the report, the Republic of Turkey was founded as a nation-state like many European countries. It is a multi-ethnic society. The fact that there are different ethnic groups, cultures and identities is a good quality of pluralist democracy. The unitary state structure, which embraces citizens having different ethnic origins, mother tongues, and faiths, should learn how to develop a multi-cultural society without losing this quality. The report states that mother tongues pertain to the cultural sphere while the official language is a means of public sphere and political unity. Due to historical reasons mother tongues and official languages may not always be the same. This fact can also be observed in many Western countries. The official and constitutional language of Turkey is Turkish. But, there are mother tongues such as Kurdish and Zaza which are spoken by millions of people (*CHP Türkiye Raporları*, p. 1).

The report claims that the basis of national unity is not blood ties but the conscious of citizenship. A modern state is ethnically blind. It cannot privilege any race or religion against others. According to the report, in democracies neither states could ignore different cultural identities nor could the latter have the right to seek an independent political identity. Every nation is a consequence of a political unity. This quality gives it an official identity. This identity is above all the ethnic and cultural differences in the country and represents a kind of neutrality (*CHP Türkiye Raporları*, p. 1).

Nationalism in multi-cultural societies such as Turkey should not be based on an ethnic ground, because it may bring about division rather than unity. The basis of national unity is neither cultural sphere nor blood tie, but the conscious of citizenship and political sphere. The only common identity that Turkish citizens should carry is the official/political identity. This is a super identity. Other identities such as the Kurdish identity should not conflict with it (*CHP Türkiye Raporları*, p.1-2).

The CHP report concerning the Kurdish question stresses that the problems in the Southeast cannot be solved merely by military measures. If the state insists on military measures, this may aggravate the situation rather than alleviate it. Therefore, Turkey should develop new social and economic policies to be implemented through a democratic understanding. The solutions proposed by the CHP are systematically listed as follows:

- a) Terrorism cannot be justified in any way; problems cannot be solved by using weapons;
- b) The indivisible unity of the country cannot even be questioned;
- c) The bloodshed should be stopped, and problems should be solved within a peaceful and tolerant atmosphere;
- d) Problems cannot be solved by assuming the Kurdish citizens potential terrorists; the citizens living in the region who are of Kurdish origin are the victims of the conflicts;
- e) Finding democratic solutions to ethnic sensitivities is the *sine qua non* of multi-cultural societies and pluralist democracies;
- f) Transgressions of human rights cannot be ignored; the rule of law cannot be given up;
- g) Disparities cannot be overcome without abolishing the feudal structure; long-lasting solutions cannot be produced to the problems without institutionalization of the structural principles of the social state;
- h) Problems of economic development encountered in the region should rapidly be solved;
- i) The unitary state structure is not an obstacle for a pluralist local democracy and governance (*CHP Türkiye Raporları*, p.3).

### **People's Democracy Party (HADEP)**

HADEP represents particularly the Kurdish people in recent years. Nearly %5 of votes was cast for it in the last general/local election. HADEP could not have any chair in the parliament due to % 10 barrier, but gained local governments in seven cities, in about thirty districts and in many small towns and boroughs. This party seems to increase its activity in the future of Turkish politics. That is why it should be taken as one of the actors associated with the political agenda with respect to Turkey's accession to the European Union.

HADEP stresses the urgent need to democratization both in Turkey in general and in the Southeast in particular. It declares that problems cannot be solved by violence, pressure or other anti-democratic means. First of all a

democratic atmosphere should be created in the country so that the Kurdish question could be debated by all concerned groups:

Democratic steps to be taken in Turkey and particularly in the region will consolidate the unity of the country, not the division of it as falsely assumed. Policies based on force, violence and denial have collapsed. Problems can be solved within the territorial unity of Turkey by democratization and recognizing the Kurdish identity (HADEP, 2000; p.1).

HADEP proposed that the concept of 'constitutional citizenship', which implies all cultural, religious, ethnic and social differences could freely be enjoyed under one state and within one territory. The outlook of HADEP concerning the foundation, current structure and the future of Turkish Republic is as follows:

The Republic of Turkey was not founded as a republic of race and blood tie or ethnic origin. It was born out of a sense of common formation and shared ideal. It was a collective creation of peoples who were different from one another in language, culture, ethnic origin, but equal in status as founding agents (HADEP, 2000; p. 1).

HADEP would like to see that provisions inhibiting TV/radio broadcasting, instruction and education, making legal political propaganda before elections, giving names to children, locations and settlements be abolished in the near future. HADEP hopes that the Southeast be subject to equal treatment with other regions. Practices such as the martial law, emergency rule, village protection, and the armament of certain tribes should come to an end. HADEP suggests that the rural people who had to quit their hamlets due to terrorism should be returned within new socio-economic projects (HADEP, 2000).

### **Evaluation and Conclusions**

Mehmet Uğur analyzes the relations between Turkey and the EU in an equation, which has two unknowns: anchor and credibility. According to Uğur, the development of Turkey-EU relations depend on to what extent the Union can be an anchor for Turkey as well as to what extent Turkey is credible in its policies and attitudes concerning the satisfaction of the Copenhagen criteria, especially the political ones (Uğur, 1999). The Framework Regulation can thus be an anchor for Turkey where as Turkey's National Program can increase her credibility in the eyes of the European Union.

It has been said that the military admits the increase in the number of civilian members by including the Ministers of Justice, and Education in the

Council However, this may not satisfy the requirements stated in the Accession Partnership, because the latter document requires the alignment of the role played by the NSC with the practices in Member States. This means that a structural change may be necessary as well as a relative modification in the number of attendants. Apart from this problem, the General Staff should be affiliated with the Ministry of Defense instead of the Prime Ministry. Whether the changes in order to limit the role of the military in Turkish democracy will satisfy the EU or not can better be understood in the course of new practices.

Likewise the minority rights, which are popularly known as the Kurdish question, or alternatively, the right to radio/TV broadcasting and instruction in Kurdish and other mother tongues, appear as another important problem to be overcome. This problem has particularly been ignored or even denied throughout the republican history. The Turkish History Thesis (THT) and the Sun-Language Theory (SLT) formulated in the 1930's denied all ethnic and cultural minorities except those recognized by the Lausanne Treaty, that is, the Greeks, the Armenians and the Jews (Şimşek, 2002). This official denial has persisted up to the present. General Nurettin Ersin, an ex-chief of the General Staff and an ex-undersecretary of MİT claims:

There is no language so called as Kurdish. I had a number of philologists investigate the subject when I was undersecretary in the MİT. There is no Kurdish Language but Zaza. Kurdish is a mixture of Persian, Arabic and ancient Turkish (Sabah, 1 Jan 2001).

It may be difficult to remove this denying tendency from the subconscious of both Turkish people and the ruling elite.

However, we may observe that Turkish people have the necessary enthusiasm and dynamism for a full EU membership because Turkey has always turned its face to the West. Therefore, it may be quite difficult for Turkey to meet the Copenhagen criteria but not impossible. Murat Karayalçın, an ex-foreign minister and deputy prime minister succinctly states:

There is a dilemma concerning Turkey's full EU membership both in Turkey and in the member countries. Nevertheless, the dilemmas are inversely related. In Turkey people have a positive approach towards accession but the government and other state agents are in a hesitant position. In Europe, on the other hand, the political wings are prone to Turkey's entry to the Union but peoples of the member states are reluctant. Thus there is an inverse symmetry with regard to this issue between Turkey and Europe (Karayalçın, 2000; p. 58).

If we take this true, then efforts should, first, be focused on ameliorating the image of Turkey in the European countries. Second, the possible widest platform should be created as consisted of both internal and external actors in order to create a strong public opinion so that the Turkish ruling elite could see Turkey's accession as an irreversible process. The European Union should play the role of an anchor for Turkey, as Mehmet Uğur stated. By doing so it may encourage Turkey to take more credible steps.

The destiny of Turkey's accession depends largely on the existence of political will and political stability. The existence of political will may not be sufficient in itself. There should also be a state of political stability. The existence of the latter is proportionally associated with economic situation in the country and the problem of terrorism especially in the Southeast. Political governments are to lose their legitimacy when these problems are aggravated. Then the military interventions or manipulations become more justifiable in the eyes of the people. This really inhibits the political reforms in line with the Copenhagen criteria. Why are Turkish politicians and statesmen not as enthusiastic as Turkish people? There may be several reasons for this. Some state actors may be anxious about losing their privileged positions, while others may fear that they may lose votes, and another group may assume that Turkey may have to sacrifice its national character, and still others may believe that Turkey may organize alternative unions such as with the United States, the Islamic countries, the Caucasian and Central Asian countries, and even with China (Perinçek, 2000). Some believe that the European Union would not admit Turkey's full membership in the final stage. Some Leaders and intellectuals suggest that the target of full membership may accelerate the process of democratization in Turkey. But, seeking different alternatives or asking for special treatment relative to other candidate states may weaken Turkey's dynamism for accession to the European Union (Dağı, 2000). Even though Turkey could organize unions with non-European countries, this does not mean that its association with Europe becomes unnecessary. Turkey is by all means coterminous with, and an integral part of Europe.

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