

EU MEMBERSHIP FOR TURKEY:
ENDLESS NEGOTIATIONS?

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16

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FOREWORD

After a flurry of new countries joined the European Union in the past decade, Europe may now be encountering enlargement fatigue. When Bulgaria and Romania joined in 2007, there were high hopes in Turkey that its membership would soon follow. Even after Croatia's accession in 2013, however, the question of Turkey's membership still remains unclear. After receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012 in recognition of the success of the European project, the EU again looked at its foreign and enlargement policies, and the prospect for adding new member states. Existing members are undecided on Turkish membership, with countries such as Germany and France preferring a "privileged partnership" to full membership.

More than ten years after the EU initiated negotiations for Turkey's EU membership, the country remains locked in negotiations, with economic concerns, human rights, and the Cyprus issue looming large. Turkey is an essential country in the West's relations with the Middle East and is a key NATO ally. Germany, as a leader in the EU with a sizeable population of Turkish descent, is an integral player in the EU's enlargement policy toward Turkey and the two countries share deep ties. Indeed, German President Joachim Gauck's recent visit to Turkey shows the close educational and cultural connection between the two countries. At the same time, his criticism of Turkish democracy and freedoms highlights the challenges still facing the country and has sparked tensions between Ankara and Berlin. The United States is also invested in Turkey's relationship with Europe, emphasizing the need for Turkey to be integrated into Western institutions as a model for an Islamic democracy in its larger neighborhood, in addition to its value as a strategic NATO partner. But Washington is also concerned about Turkey's recent domestic turbulences.

This publication offers insights into the Turkish-German-U.S. relationship, and assesses the prospect of Turkey's EU membership. Nilgün Arisan Eralp suggests that there are "glimmers of hope" for Turkey-EU relations, including initiation of a dialogue on visas, high-level visits, and the resumption of talks to resolve the Cyprus dispute. However, risk factors remain, especially concerns regarding the lack of a true participatory democracy in light of the Gezi Park protests. Rana Deep Islam states that a "fresh start" is needed in EU-Turkey negotiations in order to provide leadership in the Muslim world, maintain credibility for the EU, and ensure greater burden-sharing in regional conflicts. Germany is an important actor in reviving negotiations, but, as Islam discusses, the domestic divide among German parties and public may prove a stumbling block to greater German support. Finally, Joshua Walker offers a perspective on EU-Turkey relations from across the Atlantic. Turkey has long prioritized its relationship with the West and the prospect of EU membership has been a driving factor in much of Turkey's internal reforms. Today, Turkey is globally engaged and its economy has expanded considerably, but it still struggles at times with its democratic foundation and domestic policy. As the EU, Turkey, and the U.S. engage in their own elections in 2014, the trilateral dialogue must remain important and not fall victim to domestic populist rhetoric. All three authors highlight the importance of the relationship not only to Turkey, but also to the West.

AICGS is grateful to the authors for sharing their analysis on this important relationship and to the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung for its support of this publication and project. Our work on Turkey will continue, and we invite you to visit our website, www.aicgs.org, for additional commentary.



Jackson Janes
President, AICGS

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Nilgün Arisan Eralp has been the Director of the European Union Institute at the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) since 2009. From 1987-1996, Ms. Eralp was an advisor to several senior public authorities including the Ministry of State in charge of EU Affairs and Deputy Prime Ministry, and Prime Ministry in Turkey. In 1996, she coordinated the “Information Network Project for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises on Customs Union” jointly financed by the Economic Development Foundation (IKV) and the European Commission. Between 1997 and 2000, Ms. Eralp functioned as the Head of Department of Policies and Harmonization in the Directorate General for the EU Affairs at State Planning Organization. After leaving this position, she served as the Director of National Program in the Secretariat General for the European Union Affairs (EUSG) until 2009. Throughout this period she has been a member of the Academic Board in the European Research Centre at Ankara University on behalf of the EUSG. Ms. Eralp has lectured in several universities on EU-Turkish and EU relations and has several publications on the same topic. She received her M.A. in economic development from Leicester University, her M.Sc. in European studies from the London School of Economics, and her B.S. in economics from Middle East Technical University.

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Dr. Joshua W. Walker rejoined The German Marshall Fund of the U.S. as a Non-Resident Transatlantic Fellow in September 2013. In addition to his work with GMF, Dr. Walker is the Director of Global Programs at APCO Worldwide in the Office of the CEO, specializing in foreign policy, international affairs, and public-private partnerships. Before working in the private sector, Dr. Walker was a Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow serving as a senior advisor to a variety of executive branch principals. He worked at the U.S. Department of State in Secretary Kerry's Office of the Chief Economist in 2013 and served in Secretary Clinton's Global Partnership Initiative as the senior advisor on the Middle East and North Africa in 2012. Prior to his work with the U.S. State Department, Dr. Walker was a Transatlantic Fellow at the GMF responsible for the Turkey program and Japan portfolio of the Asia team. Active in bridging the academic and policy worlds since his childhood in Japan and pursuing a Fulbright Fellowship in Turkey, he co-founded the *Yale Journal of International Affairs*, *Young Professionals in Foreign Policy* in New York, and the Project on Religion, Diplomacy, and International Relations at Princeton along with being a Foreign Policy Initiative Future Leader and Truman National Security Project fellow. He was selected as a "Top 99 Under 33 Foreign Policy Leader" and "Young American Turkish Society Leader." Dr. Walker has worked for the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, Turkey Desk at the State Department, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon. He has been affiliated with and taught at Brandeis University, George Mason University, Harvard Kennedy School, Middle East Technical University, Istanbul Sehir Merkez, Tokyo University, Transatlantic Academy, Princeton University, University of Richmond, and Yale University. Dr. Walker earned his PhD in Politics and Public Policy with a specialization in international relations and security studies at Princeton University. He holds a Master's degree in International Relations from Yale University, a Bachelor's degree from the University of Richmond, and speaks both Japanese and Turkish fluently.



A “UNIQUE” PARTNERSHIP

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TURKEY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION: A “UNIQUE” PARTNERSHIP

NILGUN ARISAN ERALP

Introduction

The fiftieth anniversary of Turkey-EU relations came and went without notice in autumn 2013. Although the relationship between Turkey and the European Union (EU) is rooted in history, geographical proximity, and ideological appeal of Europe, “trying to get a perspective on Turkey’s relationship with the EU has been a difficult task, somewhat like attempting to paint [the] landscape on a fast moving train: the scenery would change before a particular setting could be captured with its significant detail.”¹ The evolution of the relationship has been affected by the rapidly changing political and economic situation in both Europe and Turkey and in the international/regional conjuncture. Consequently, the partnership between them has become complex, unique, and quite unpredictable.

The volatile nature of the relationship was expected to change after Turkey became an official EU candidate country in December 1999, and especially after the decision by the EU to initiate accession negotiations with the country in December 2004. However, the Turkey-EU relationship has been a unique case in the history of EU enlargement in that a negative turn in the relationship took place after the initiation of the negotiations. In principle, the initiation of accession negotiations constitutes the beginning of an irreversible process in which the candidate country’s membership prospect becomes gradually clearer²; however, it has turned out to be the opposite case for Turkey. Relations between the parties have been almost in constant crisis since 2005.

Turkey has had a politicized, and consequently stalled, accession negotiation process with the EU. Of the thirty-three accession chapters, more than half are blocked in the process. Energy (Chapter 15),

Judiciary and Fundamental Rights (Chapter 23), Justice, Freedom, and Security (Chapter 24), Education and Culture (Chapter 26) and Foreign, Security, and Defense Policy (Chapter 31) are among these blocked chapters. Existing EU member states have proven to be not wholly in favor of Turkish membership: In addition to the unresolved Cyprus issue,³ the country has had to face a vocal Germany, which has emphasized its special interest in a “privileged partnership”⁴ (which has now evolved into a “strategic partnership”) as well as a unilateral French veto on five (that has recently become four) chapters⁵ due to their direct bearing on membership.

Turkey’s situation has become an important topic in the domestic debates in the leading EU member states, particularly Germany, France, and the Netherlands, and especially during periods of elections and referenda. These debates have started to revolve around major identity issues, i.e., the “Europeanness” of Turkey. In this debate, the “Europeanness” of Turkey was defined in terms of cultural/religious identification rather than political/economic references. The debates on Turkey have been increasingly contextualized in the Islam versus West debate.⁶

The EU’s discriminatory attitude led to the weakening of the pro-EU coalition in Turkey. Accordingly, the Turkish government has decelerated the reform process, which would have improved the lives of its citizens. There has been a lack of progress in the fields of transparency, accountability, corruption, gender equality, and freedom of expression.⁷ Although the EU has had an important role in this setback in the democratic consolidation process of the country, it would not be fair to attribute all the major flaws in Turkish democracy to the hesitant

stance of the EU stemming from issues of identity. Turkey has had serious difficulties in understanding and embracing the EU norms and values and the gist of the accession process. This misunderstanding sometimes displays itself as a possible shift in the way Turkey perceives its relations with the EU. The prime minister of Turkey has been heard several times stating that the country would abandon its quest to join the EU if it was offered full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the governing party recently joined the Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists, which is known for its anti-EU stance in Europe.

Glimmers of Hope

While Turkey-EU relations looked grim and frustrating after the repression of the Gezi Park protests sparked an exchange of harsh and accusatory statements and postponement of opening one negotiation chapter in summer 2013, the end of 2013 appeared to herald glimmers of hope. Although neither the EU nor Turkey has given a definitive opinion on the final target of the relationship, both have given the impression that they want to keep the process alive and the atmosphere seems marked by a “cautious optimism,” given the following developments:

■ After the rather sharp tone adopted in the “Political Criteria” section of the 2012 Progress Report for Turkey prepared by the European Commission—the most critical since the late 1990s and early 2000s—the 2013 Progress Report assumed a milder tone. Though including rightful criticisms, especially regarding the state of fundamental freedoms and participatory democracy in Turkey, the Report tried to highlight reformist steps, even minor ones, taken by the government.

■ After three years of a standstill, an important chapter in the accession negotiations (Chapter 22: Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments) was opened on 5 November 2013. This chapter was among the five previously blocked by France during Nicolas Sarkozy’s presidential term.

■ In mid-December, the parties initiated a visa dialogue, agreeing to a long-awaited roadmap for the liberalization of visas for Turkish nationals wishing to

travel to the EU. This followed Turkey’s agreement to sign the “Readmission Agreement,” which was a precondition for the instigation of this process, that compels Turkey to take back third-country nationals who have entered the EU illegally via Turkey.⁹

■ Important high-level visits occurred in early 2014. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey visited Brussels after a hiatus of four years to hold meetings with the top executives of the European Commission, European Council, and European Parliament. He also visited Germany and met with Chancellor Angela Merkel. French President François Hollande also visited Turkey, despite France still blocking four negotiation chapters.

■ Finally, in February 2014, after two years of standstill, a joint statement¹⁰ by the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders announced the resumption of peace talks to resolve the Cyprus dispute under the auspices of the UN Secretary General’s Good Offices mission. The EU welcomed this development and seems to be willing to contribute to the ongoing talks. These talks have the potential to result in a real breakthrough in Turkey-EU relations as “in everything but name, a solution in Cyprus has become a condition for Turkey’s EU membership.”¹¹ It seems rather unfair as Turkey and Turkish Cypriots supported a comprehensive and balanced solution package named after the then secretary general of the United Nations in 2004, i. e. the Annan plan, whereas it was rejected by Greek Cypriots in a referendum in Cyprus.

Although there are different interpretations of the factors that have led to this rapprochement, the recent developments in Turkey’s neighborhood emerge as the main catalyst. For Turkey, instability and increasing isolation in such an unstable and risky region of the world necessitated a renewed approach toward the West and the EU. The fragility of the economic situation—namely a declining growth rate, a large and structural current account deficit, heavy reliance on short-term capital inflows, declining foreign direct investment, and a private sector with large foreign currency liabilities—seems to have played a significant role as well. The economic situation has become even more tenuous with the U.S.’ withdrawal of monetary stimulus from emerging markets.

From the European perspective, the EU does not want to lose its influence on Turkey, whose position acts as a buffer between the EU and a strategic region whose instability has a serious potential to easily spread to Europe. Thus, there has been a willingness to re-engage with Turkey constructively and to retain leverage on the democratic consolidation process in the country, which has been lost in recent years. In this sense, the EU has become especially vocal in the aftermath of the Gezi Park protests. The protests have been instrumental in changing the perception of Turkey in the EU, as many Europeans “were deeply impressed by the popular upsurge in defense of liberal democratic values” and, for that reason, the EU was advised against “running away from Turkey.”¹²

It is unlikely that the aforementioned developments signal a shift setting the EU-Turkey relationship on an irreversible positive track. On the contrary, Turkey-EU engagement still has an unsettled nature that can easily deteriorate due to a number of risk factors.

Risk Factors in the Turkey-EU Partnership

INHERENT RISK FACTOR

The main risk factor, i.e., the vicious circle that is almost inherent in the relationship, has not changed much. The EU’s reluctance to embrace Turkey, mainly on “essentialist” grounds questioning its Europeaness, led to the evaporation of the domestic ownership of the EU accession process in the country, as referred above. In the aforementioned high-level visits by the French president to Turkey and by the Turkish prime minister to Germany, neither the French nor the German leader made statements that would assuage the feeling of exclusion among the Turkish public. Instead, Hollande referred to the popular referendum that would take place in France for Turkey’s membership once the negotiations are complete, and Merkel said that nothing has changed regarding her skepticism about EU membership for Turkey.

In Turkey, although the EU accession has become a state policy, it has remained at the rhetorical level and never been internalized. “Decision-makers are supportive of EU membership in principle but tend to

be uncomfortable with key elements of EU conditionality,”¹³ particularly those that appear in the form of norms and values. As the EU has lost its leverage on Turkey, there has been a serious slowdown in Turkey’s democratic consolidation process, and the country seems to not be developing into a pluralistic type of participatory democracy based on the separation of powers and the rule of law. This situation further strengthens the anti-Turkey stance in the EU.

Apart from this “structural risk factor” in the relationship, most of these recent developments have their own uncertainties that can actually be disruptive for relations and can render the outlook for the future unpredictable.

THE POTENTIAL RISK FACTORS

For a better assessment of the evolution of Turkey-EU relations, some potential risk factors need to be carefully observed.

Messages of the 2013 Progress Report

The European Commission’s last Progress Report on Turkey was generally regarded as an indicator of warming relations.¹⁴ The Report’s moderate tone was the main factor that resulted in such an interpretation, which was welcomed by the Turkish government. However, the Report should be read carefully in light of the recent developments in Turkey before reaching such a conclusion.

Referring to the overall peaceful nature of the infamous Gezi Park protests, the Report emphasizes that a real participatory democracy has not yet been consolidated in Turkey. Furthermore, it states that respect for fundamental rights—mainly freedom of expression and freedom of association—in the judicial process will be regarded as a key benchmark for the democratic reforms in Turkey. The message for Turkey with these evaluations seemed to be “there is more to liberal democracy than just the ballot box.”¹⁵

The messages of the Progress Report should be taken very seriously for the future of Turkey-EU relations, given the state of participatory democracy, rule of law, and fundamental freedoms in Turkey. It is not difficult to guess that the EU would have quite a nega-

tive reaction to two recent laws in the country, the first tightening the government's grip on the internet and the second subordinating the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors to the Minister of Justice.

Shift of Emphasis in Accession to the "Rule of Law" as Declared by the 2012 and 2013 Progress Reports and the Recent Corruption Probe in Turkey

A major shift of emphasis in the EU's Enlargement Strategy began in 2012. The EU has placed the "rule of law" at the heart of the enlargement process, making it a key pillar of the Copenhagen political criteria, resulting from challenges faced by the enlargement countries and some relatively new member states including Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary in this area. The EU's 2013 Enlargement Strategy states that "countries aspiring to join the Union need to establish and promote [...] the proper functioning of the core institutions necessary for securing the rule of law. [...] Fighting organized crime and corruption is fundamental to countering the criminal infiltration of the political, legal and economic systems."¹⁶

Given this approach by the EU, and given the way the recent corruption probe is being handled in Turkey via monopolizing control over the critical institutions of the Turkish state and the erosion of the independence of the judiciary,¹⁷ it would not be wrong to think that Turkey's performance regarding "rule of law" may emerge as another stumbling block in its already problematic accession process to the EU. In Erdogan's visit to Brussels and Berlin, it was made clear to him that, no matter how this corruption probe started, the transparent and impartial functioning of the judiciary is of crucial importance and it is absolutely necessary for Turkey to conclude the corruption investigation. As the current developments in Turkey do not seem to be in line with these decisive recommendations, it is getting harder to be optimistic about the future of Turkey-EU relations.

Accession Negotiations

The prospects of the accession negotiations will be contingent on additional considerations.

■ *Continuation of French Blockage: A Credibility Problem for the EU*

After a three-year delay, the recent opening of another chapter is presented by some as a breakthrough and/or a strategic shift in the accession negotiations. However, this is over-stating its importance, as France continues to unilaterally block the remaining four chapters; Hollande made no statements regarding its removal during his visit to Turkey.

It is obvious that the negotiation process suffers from a credibility problem. Consequently, only a tiny percentage of the population of Turkey believes that the country would be an EU member state if it fulfills all the membership conditions. A significant percentage thinks that no matter what the country does, Turkey will never become a member. France's block of accession chapters is largely the cause of this sentiment. What has been particularly frustrating is that no other EU member has taken an official position against this stance. Consequently, the remaining blockage is a credibility—and maybe a legitimacy—test for the EU in its stance vis-à-vis Turkey as it not only contradicts a unanimous decision by the EU,¹⁸ but also, naturally, is not based on any EU decision.

In this context, Chapter 17 on economic and monetary policy has to be singled out from the other four blocked chapters, as all EU member states (including France) decided unanimously to open this chapter and invited Turkey to submit its negotiation position document with an official letter from the German EU presidency at the beginning of 2007. After Turkey submitted its negotiation position in March 2007, France chose to block the chapter. The result is that an EU member state nullified a unanimous decision made by the EU and disregarded an official letter from the EU presidency.

When this issue is raised in EU circles, its defenders come up with an apparently reasonable argument: the *acquis communautaire* in Chapter 17 keeps changing due to the ongoing measures that aim to remove the factors that caused the euro crisis and alleviate its negative effects. However, these amendments and additions could be presented as "closing benchmarks" to Turkey, if and when Chapter 17 is

opened. As none of the chapters would be fully closed until the negotiation process comes to an end, it is possible to change and make additions to the closing benchmarks. One also wonders why the problem of a constantly changing *acquis* chapter on economic and monetary policy has not been raised in the accession negotiations with Iceland, with whom the EU opened the chapter at the end of 2012.

Hence, it would be important for the future of the relationship to determine whether France's current stance on Chapter 17 will continue to be backed by the EU.

■ *Opening of Chapters 23 and 24: Another Credibility Issue for the EU*

Chapter 23 on judiciary and fundamental rights and Chapter 24 on justice, freedom, and security, which are important for the political reform process and visa liberalization, respectively, are still independently blocked by Cyprus. Although the European Commission, as well as Hollande and Merkel during the high-level visits, refer to the necessity of opening these chapters in order to make progress on fulfilling political criteria and for an enhanced cooperation in visa dialogue, it has become another credibility issue for the EU since the chapters are "hostage" to one member state.

Cyprus has unilaterally blocked these chapters since 2009. It is difficult to be convinced that two founding member states—France and Germany, who still form the core of the EU—cannot persuade Cyprus to stop blocking the opening of these two crucial chapters.

Visa Liberalization Process

Visa liberalization has a significant symbolic importance for regaining the Turkish public's trust in the EU. Besides its practical importance for business, students, and tourists, visa liberalization would contribute to alleviating the feeling of being "other" for the ordinary people of Turkey. The risk in this process exists in the way it was presented to the public in Turkey; i.e., that visas will be automatically removed in three and a half years. In reality, a visa-free regime in the EU is conditional upon some difficult commitments in the Road Map prepared by the Commission

and the Re-Admission Agreement signed by Turkey.

The Re-Admission Agreement governing treatment of migrants to the EU via Turkey, which will enter into force in 2017, would definitely necessitate a burden-sharing between Turkey and the EU, at least for the construction of reception centers and refugee camps until Turkey signs re-admission agreements with the home countries of the illegal migrants. This can be done with the EU's financial assistance and an extensive cooperation in border management between the parties.

The discrepancy in the way the commitments in the road map are perceived by the EU and Turkey is a serious problem in the visa dialogue process. In the road map prepared by the EU, Turkey appears to have two tough commitments to fulfill. These are:

- removing the geographical limitation in the Geneva Convention of 1951¹⁹ on refugees in compliance with the EU *acquis* and
- amending the visa-free regime it has introduced to the countries in its neighborhood as an important source of soft power.

However, in the "Annotated Road Map"²⁰ prepared by Turkey, it is argued that these commitments will be fulfilled upon EU membership, even though such a reference to membership does not exist in the Road Map prepared by the EU.²¹

Even if all these difficult commitments are met, the final decision regarding visa liberalization would still be made by the EU Council of Ministers by qualified majority and the European Parliament by absolute majority. Germany will definitely be dominant in the Council voting, where a majority of the remaining member states would follow suit. It should be taken into consideration, however, that xenophobic parties are growing in countries like Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, and they will have a renewed weight in the European Parliament after the elections in May 2014.

If Turkey's commitments cannot be fulfilled or if the EU refuses to initiate a visa-free regime for Turkey despite the fulfillment of all conditions and the visa regime

remains intact, this would be another serious blow to the public's trust of the Turkish government, to the EU, and most probably to the accession process.

Cyprus Talks

Given the complicated nature of Cyprus in Turkey-EU relations, the resumed "Cyprus talks," which were triggered mainly by the discovery of offshore gas resources in the eastern Mediterranean and the impact of the euro crisis, have a great potential to play a significant role in breaking the deadlock in the accession negotiations for Turkey.

However, the resumption of the talks *per se* does not seem to have an immediate positive effect on Turkey's accession negotiations. At the beginning of the peace talks, Cyprus President Nikos Anastasiadis made it clear²² that he would not consider removing Cyprus' unilateral block of negotiation chapters if Turkey does not implement the additional protocol, i.e., if Turkey continues to keep its ports and airports closed to Cyprus. There is a need for caution while estimating the positive effect of the talks on Turkey-EU relations.

The gas findings in the eastern Mediterranean still have the capacity to further exacerbate the tensions stemming from the underlying sovereignty dispute at the heart of the Cyprus problem²³ until a final agreement is reached.

Prospects for Turkey-EU Relations

Despite the emergence of some positive developments toward the end of 2013, it does not seem quite feasible that Turkey-EU relations will quickly come out of the impasse they have been in for some years.

Although the "privileged partnership" option was regarded by some European politicians as a panacea for Turkey-EU relations, it will not be acceptable as long as it is presented as an alternative to membership; it is off the agenda. Some scholars²⁴ claim that, thanks to the measures to cope with the euro crisis, the emerging multi-tier and/or multi-speed structure in the EU would pave the way for new and more flexible formulations for the membership of Turkey in a post-crisis Europe. It is argued that Turkey can adopt the EU *acquis* on key policies such as energy, trans-

portation, the single market, or common security and defense, but remain outside the EU framework for the social charter, the Schengen regime, and the euro. Such an approach can be very attractive and comfortable given the current state of relations between the EU and Turkey; however, it does not seem very plausible. As one high-level EU official said, "you have to be in first, to be out." Although a multi-tier and/or multi-speed Europe seems to be *de facto* emerging in the EU, for the moment such a structure does not have a legal base in the Treaties. Most important than all, even if we assume that such a structure becomes legal and Turkey was offered a place in a multi-tier Europe, it does not seem probable that it would be Turkey who would choose the EU policies it has to adopt. The key question would be "will Turkey be in the decision-making mechanisms where the policies it has to adopt are designed?"

Although none of the parties seems to be willing to really work for an accession, neither of them would dare to put an end to the relationship easily. Currently, an effort to keep the negotiation process on track—which is getting more difficult—without thinking about the end sets the tone. The question is: how long are they going to be able to do it?

Withdrawing from EU negotiations would require a serious policy change in Turkey. The goal of EU accession has become state policy. Nearly half (44 percent) of the Turkish public still believes that EU accession, which was the anchor of the political, economic, and social transformation of the country, is a good thing.²⁵ Turkey's fading attractiveness in its own region owed a lot to its EU accession process. There are approximately four million Turks living in Europe, the EU is still Turkey's main trading partner, and two-thirds of Turkey's foreign investment comes from EU member states.

For the EU, to suspend the negotiation requires a proposal either from the European Commission or from one-third of the member states and necessitates an approval based on qualified majority from the Council of Ministers. It would be difficult for the Council to make such a decision, given the current distribution of voting power, as it would necessitate 255 votes. Additionally, none of the member states would prefer such a rupture with Turkey, given the

severe conditions in its neighborhood.

The real breakthrough in the relationship can be achieved via an “active and credible accession process,” as stated by the European Commission. In order to attain that objective, the parties should stop pretending and start regarding each other as real partners. This would be the litmus test for successful cooperation.

On the EU’s side, this necessitates dealing with Turkey’s deficits in fulfilling membership conditions seriously rather than only the “Cyprus problem and civilizational compatibility questions.”²⁶ Such a shift in the EU’s stance can be sustainable if it does not stem from a re-evaluation of its interests due to a change in conditions: “It is in the EU’s hands to change this stance but it is the Turks who can reinforce it.”²⁷ Turkey should take the EU accession process seriously to attain and internalize the universal norms and stop referring to EU criticisms as interference in its domestic affairs. A country cannot continue to have a European vocation while resenting the involvement of the EU in its so-called “internal affairs,” especially when these “internal affairs” correspond to crucial EU and universal values like rule of law and fundamental freedoms.

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3 The EU has suspended eight negotiation chapters related to customs union as Turkey does not implement the additional protocol, i.e., keeps its ports and airports closed to Cyprus. Cyprus unilaterally blocks six chapters.

4 Under Angela Merkel’s leadership, the German coalition has turned to the notion of “privileged partnership” short of membership, first coined by Heinrich August Winkler, a prominent historian opposed to Turkey’s accession.

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A FRESH START IS
NEEDED

A FRESH START IS NEEDED: FOSTERING TURKISH MEMBERSHIP WITHIN A RENEWED EU ENLARGEMENT SET-UP

RANA DEEP ISLAM

Looking at the seemingly endless story of Turkish-European Union relations is reminiscent of the legend of Sisyphus.¹ The Greek king was made to roll a boulder to a mountain's peak but the rock falls back as he reaches the top, and Sisyphus has to start from the beginning—time after time. Those ups and downs are characteristic of Turkish-EU relations as well. Tied by a decade-long process, the relationship displays a constant cycle of diplomatic alienation and proximity. Mutual treaties and the expressed desire of both sides to proceed with EU accession talks alternate with serious diplomatic stalemates in which the two actors seem to have neither the intention nor the interest in really achieving substantial progress on negotiations. Like Sisyphus' infinitely-rolling stone, the story of EU-Turkish relations is caught in the same loop. In order to avoid ancient history becoming the guiding light for twenty-first century politics, it is imperative to launch political initiatives that are finally able to end this cycle.

Where We Stand Right Now

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Turkish EU membership enjoyed momentum. First, the European Union appeared to be committed as never before to push forward the case of Turkish accession. The German chancellor and French president at the time, Gerhard Schröder and Jacques Chirac, respectively, were among the staunchest advocates of such an enlargement. Both decision-makers brought the needed political weight to finally reach a breakthrough on the European level, illustrated by the 1999 EU Helsinki decision that formalized Turkey's membership application. Next, the 2003 coming to power of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was the starting point for a unique domestic reform program that

demonstrated the country's willingness to implement essential European economic and political values, a prerequisite for further integration. The direction was clear: Turkey was on its way toward Europe, whose gates were flung open as never before. Membership talks began in 2005.

By 2014, times have changed. The atmosphere of integration that could be witnessed has turned into the opposite. Nowadays, politicians and experts from both sides increasingly question whether Turkey and the EU would be better off if they terminate the still-ongoing negotiations.

Four Reasons for the Turkey-EU Stalemate

First, substantial parts of the accession negotiations, divided into thirty-five negotiation chapters, are blocked. The Turkish government still refuses to extend the free-trade agreement to Cyprus, although it is obliged to do so on the basis of the free-trade agreement it maintains with the EU. Ankara explains this as a reaction to the EU's non-implementation of trade liberalization measures for the Northern part of the island, after the Southern Cypriots rejected the so-called Annan Plan. This diplomatic initiative by the United Nations (UN) would have sketched out a road map for the island's reunification. The European Commission considers the Turkish refusal to open its entry hubs for Southern Cypriot trade carriers to be discrimination of an EU member state. Consequently, Brussels decided in 2006 to block the opening of eight negotiation chapters. Another six chapters in the field of economic and monetary policy were stalled due to former French President Nicolas Sarkozy, a vigorous opponent of Turkish EU membership. He argued that negotiations in those crucial chapters touch upon the core business of EU integration and

therefore lay the ground for a path dependency that will make Turkish accession irrevocable. Current French President François Hollande seems to be more friendly to integration and willing to end his predecessor's course. At the moment, however, it is not yet clear whether Hollande is committed to unblocking all areas of negotiations that had been previously been kept on hold, or just those that appear to be economically and politically opportune, at least from the French perspective.

Second, hurdles of political legitimization may prove to be insurmountable. Important member states like France, Cyprus, and Austria have announced their intentions of conducting referenda on a Turkish accession. Public opinion polls in those countries illustrate a stable majority against such an enlargement. As the votes are supposed to be binding for the respective governments, Turkish membership appears almost impossible, as every enlargement decision must be made unanimously by the Council of the European Union. A single dissenting vote is enough to let decades of mutual negotiations erode overnight.

The third explanation for the estrangement between Ankara and Brussels relates to the two already mentioned, namely the blocked negotiation chapters and the referenda that are hard to win: Turkish decision-makers naturally recognize the public and political rejection from the EU. In this regard, diplomatic relations are not different from human relations. If one loses old friends, he will look for new friends, as Turkey did when it fundamentally reshaped its foreign policy preferences. Under the auspices of foreign minister Ahmet Davutoglu and Muslim neighbors, took Turkey only a few years to substantially improve its reputation among Islamic societies. Many of these countries consider Turkey to be a successful example of a state with a Muslim majority population that is able to adopt democratic norms and values—generally identified as “Western”—while not losing its unique Muslim identity. The Arab Spring made the limits of Turkish rapprochement with the Arab world obvious. However, one thing became clear: Turkey no longer sees itself as a state at Europe's periphery, but rather as a regional center that has stakes in both the EU and its eastern neighborhood. EU membership remains of value for Turkish decision-makers, but

nowadays it represents just one of several strategic goals that are weighted according to its cost-benefit ratio for Turkey. The warm Turkish-European relationship of the past has been replaced by chilly *Realpolitik*.

Fourth, and most importantly, the Turkish government has lost its commitment to democratic liberalization. The reform spirit that characterized Erdogan's policy right after he came to power is fading away. This was dramatically illustrated by the brutal crackdown on the so-called Gezi protests in 2013 and rhetorically stated by the European Commission in its annual Progress Reports. The guarantee of fundamental freedoms is a necessary and non-negotiable prerequisite of EU membership. Since its founding, the European Union has been a community of values and not just an internal market, as more pragmatic EU observers might assume. In other words: The commitment to freedom of press, opinion, and assembly, as well as minority rights, is at the heart of the European integration project and must not be put in question. If Erdogan and his government do not deliver on that front, accession will be impossible, not because of political obstacles, but, rather, because of different approaches vis-à-vis the value of civil society involvement and democratic participation mechanisms beyond voting.

A German Perspective

The shift in EU-Turkey relations and the related enlargement fatigue is well illustrated when looking at the issue from a German domestic viewpoint. Due to the migration of Turkish “Gastarbeiter” (guest workers) in the 1960s, the Turkish community nowadays makes up the largest proportion of foreigners in Germany. This fact ties the two countries closely together and provides the basis for the high priority accorded to Turkish politics in Germany. For a long time, Germany's position on Turkish EU membership was characterized by bipartisan consent. Things changed after the end of the Cold War in 1989/1990. Turkey lost its unique geostrategic position it had occupied for so long in the context of the Western and European security architecture. Instead, cultural and identity-related ideas became more pronounced in the Brussels-Ankara relationship. A new question was being asked: Is a country like Turkey, with a popu-

lation of mainly Muslims, really compatible with the Judeo-Christian heritage of the European Union? The German center-right party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), adopted this stance and made it an essential part of its party profile. Turkey-skepticism was reflected in executive politics by then Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Things changed at the end of the 1990s. The Helsinki Council in 1999 brought new momentum for Turkey-EU relations and finally granted official candidate status to Ankara. Reasons for this turn were multifaceted, but a key factor was the political shift in several European countries from conservative to center-left governments, which seemed to be more inclined toward Turkey's membership. When Gerhard Schröder became chancellor in 1998, his newly-elected coalition with the Green party was determined to put the country's bid for accession at the top of its European agenda.

The split between center-right and center-left forces in German politics primarily arose from different conceptions of the role and purpose of the European Union. In the CDU, the dominant voices became those who considered the EU to be primarily a cultural project, based on a common religious and historical heritage not shared by Turkey. On the other side of this debate, the Social Democrats and the Greens displayed a different understanding of the European project. For them, the core of EU integration was essentially characterized through diversity, making it rather inappropriate to elevate cultural differences—alleged or real—to factors of exclusion. Instead, in their view the European Union was founded on the basis of universal political values like democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, which should be applied as the guiding principles for judging Turkey's Europeaness.

However, this clear-cut dividing line of the German party spectrum blurred as enlargement fatigue grew and Turkish government officials' constant undermining of basic rights. As a consequence, Germany's political left softened its public position in favor of Turkish EU membership. During a state visit to Germany by the Turkish prime minister and foreign minister in January 2014, representatives from the Greens and from the SPD emphasized the impor-

tance of accession negotiations. Primarily, however, they had been talking of the necessity to leave open the door for membership while not mentioning the desirability of membership, *per se*.² In other words: Keeping up negotiations is considered a useful tool for pushing the implementation of basic rights in Turkey and securing strategic and economic ties that are essential for both actors. In this sense, negotiations are more strongly weighted than the final outcome. With the majority of the German population against Turkish EU membership, political strategy also recommends the center-left spectrum not tie its political fate to this matter. Therefore, it can be expected that Turkish membership itself will be of decreasing relevance for the Greens and the SPD, meaning that the Bosphorus country is about to lose important advocates.

The Role of the United States

Across party lines, the U.S. has always been in favor of Turkish EU accession. Strategic and security considerations pushed Turkey's EU ambition to a U.S. foreign policy priority. During the Cold War, Turkey served as a bulwark against Soviet influence. The country's NATO membership and its geographic location at the very east of the Mediterranean made it a significant asset for rolling back Moscow's attempts to gain access to Europe, at least from a U.S. perspective. After the September 11 attacks, Turkey became of even more strategic interest. Washington's foreign policy decision-makers recognized the country's potential as a political and cultural bridge into the Muslim world. At a time when the idea of a "clash of civilizations" dominated the mainstream of international politics, Turkey was seen as an antidote that could foster diplomatic dialogue with the region. The Bush administration publicly supported Turkey's membership aspirations, regularly leading to transatlantic frictions: Even the Europe-based proponents of Ankara's accession considered Washington's only support as interference in "domestic" EU politics. Some even argued that a U.S. call for Turkish entry into the EU would be equivalent to European decision-makers demanding Mexico's integration as the fifty-first state. Regardless of the technicalities, this comparison shows the irritation and estrangement felt by European decision-makers toward American support for the Turkish cause.

This transatlantic dividing line almost disappeared under the Obama administration, which has more or less remained silent on the membership question. In principle, it can be assumed that President Barack Obama, like his predecessors, prefers Turkey to be in, rather than out, of EU structures. However, he is unwilling to translate such a position into public policy and let this issue be an additional burden for the transatlantic relationship. The U.S. administration's reservation in this regard is not to be misinterpreted as a form of complacency about Turkey as a whole; quite the opposite. Washington still acknowledges the country's strategic advantage as a stable democracy in a conflict-torn region, as seen since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, during which Obama and Erdogan have maintained close personal and diplomatic contact.³ The relationship remains strictly bilateral and does not take place within the multilateral EU context. It seems that the U.S. considers Turkey to be an essential part of its Middle East politics but, in a break from the past, is no longer an element of transatlantic relations. The U.S. course of non-interference in EU enlargement is significant for and correlates with the stuck negotiation process itself.

Terminating Membership Talks is Not an Option

The EU's negotiation process with Turkey is open-ended. This means that accession is the aim of negotiations but not predefined, as was the case with all other enlargements in the past. Turkish decision-makers consider this limitation as proof of a "second-class membership," illustrating the EU's unwillingness to grant accession. Accordingly, the open-ended process is a delaying tactic that allows the EU to elevate Turkey's association with the Union while postponing the final decision to an indefinite time in future. Be that as it may, the negotiation mandate—a treaty of international law—was approved by all parties involved in October 2005, stating:

*"As agreed at the European Council in December 2004, these negotiations are based on Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union. The shared objective of the negotiations is accession. These negotiations are an open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed beforehand."*⁴

An open-ended process implies the possibility of failure. And seeing the many burdens and challenges that are characteristic of today's state of Turkey-EU relations, such a scenario is currently more likely than integration. Of course, one can legitimately question the point of negotiations when both partners have seemingly lost their commitment and will to bring the membership talks to a common success. However, the first question must be: What are the consequences of terminating the accession process? With regard to all actors named above—the U.S., the EU, and Turkey—three considerations should be kept in mind:

- **Leadership in the Muslim world.** Turkey must have a strong interest in keeping up the closest possible ties with the European Union. Its improved reputation among Muslim societies, as previously mentioned, is predicated upon its status of being a genuine European democracy. Turkey's political system, its symbiosis of a Muslim heritage and Western values, is highly appreciated among many people in the region, and it distinguishes the nation from the autocratic or non-elected decision-making systems that are still in place in many countries of the Middle East and North Africa. This means, too, that once Turkey and the EU cut their bonds entirely, Ankara will lose its unique selling point that made it a source of inspiration for democratic and liberal transformation in the past. Furthermore, and from an economic perspective, Turkey has always been a gate keeper for European-Middle Eastern market relations. Turkey served as a facilitating hub for trade, market access, and foreign direct investments. An end to the negotiation process and its unforeseeable economic implications will be a huge set-back for the development of regional markets, especially at a time when huge economic and demographic challenges, aggravated by the events of the so-called Arab Spring, suggest that economic integration is needed most.

- **Maintain credibility.** The European Union, too, would be well advised not to diminish its relationship with Turkey. Throughout fifty years of common history, the EU (and its predecessors) has announced—some would say promised—membership for Turkey several times. The so-called Ankara Agreement from 1963 established a close association between both sides; the Turkey-EU customs union from 1995; the EU

decision to make Turkey a membership candidate in 1999; and finally the start of negotiations in 2005 were steps in a process that was supposed to lead to membership in the end. However, anything other than full-fledged integration would dramatically undermine the EU's credibility for being a reliable and trustworthy actor in international politics. The Turkish case would thus reach far beyond the borders of EU-Turkey affairs and give the impression of a European Union not sticking to its commitments. Such a scenario would deeply affect the EU's ability to interact with other non-EU entities on the basis of legally-binding treaties. Loss of credibility in foreign and security policy is also a concern. Considering the multifaceted stability challenges in the EU's neighborhood, Turkey is an outstanding asset. The country maintains diplomatic relations, personal contacts, and cultural affiliations with many regional stakeholders, as well as traditional soft and hard power tools. Ankara can significantly contribute to make the EU's actions in international relations more robust. Former enlargement commissioner Günter Verheugen often underlined that, in this regard, the EU needs Turkey more than the other way around.⁵

■ **Burden-sharing.** The U.S. would also benefit from the leadership and credibility that would come with maintaining Turkey-EU relations. The closer their bonds, the better and more capable both partners, the EU and Turkey, can act on the international level, especially vis-à-vis the Middle East. At a time when the United States feels pressure from the limitations of its own foreign policy, the more it gives attention to international burden-sharing and alliance-building with like-minded partners. Iran's nuclear program; the Syrian civil war; and constant unrest in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia exceed the individual conflict resolution mechanisms of the U.S., Turkey, and the EU, while implying serious economic, political, and stability implications for all three. Only through cooperation will Washington, Brussels, and Ankara have a chance to pacify a conflict-ridden region. The membership talks are an essential element of the strategic partnership between Turkey and the EU, and they benefit the U.S.' interest in the medium-term, too. As such, Washington should end its silence on Turkish-European affairs.

In the end, it is clear that even though a termination

of membership talks might be possible, it must not be an option. Such a scenario is not in the interest of the EU, Turkey, or the United States.

Time for New Ideas

The current stalemate on Turkey-EU relations poses a dilemma: while negotiations are going nowhere, neither side can afford a de facto end. This makes sense to look again into the negotiation mandate, which states:

*"While having full regard to all Copenhagen criteria, including the absorption capacity of the Union, if Turkey is not in a position to assume in full all the obligations of membership it must be ensured that Turkey is fully anchored in the European structures through the strongest possible bond."*⁶

The emphasis needs to be put on the idea of a "strongest possible bond." The formulation implies the prospect for a mutual relationship that is still to be determined. This lays the groundwork for the concept of a "dynamic membership." The enlargement process in its current form does not foresee anything other than a clear-cut "yes" or "no" to the membership question, an outlook that seems to be too short-sighted to fully mirror the complexity of the issue at stake. It was Cemal Karakas, a German political scientist from the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, who introduced the concept of a so-called gradual membership.⁷ The idea is that membership talks do not need to lead to an entire adoption of the *acquis communautaire* at once. Instead, accession could be planned to take place step-by-step, depending on the accession country's technical ability to comply with the EU's required common rights and obligations. Such a procedure allows the sectoral inclusion of Turkey into policy fields where feasible and appropriate, for instance customs, energy, or foreign policy.

The current blockade of the membership process is foremost due to the lack of political will and ability to reach a common solution. During the process, the opening or blockade of a negotiation chapter itself has turned into a trivial bargaining chip that is meant to serve a domestically-driven interest agenda instead of negotiating in a constructive spirit of achieving progress. In reality, disagreements on the factual level

are much less than the current stalemate might suggest. The technical and administrative implementation of EU legislation could have already been much further developed now if both sides had followed the idea of a gradual membership plan.

One significant example where sectoral inclusion would be helpful is in trade and customs policy. Based on the mutual customs union that the two sides agreed to in 1995, the EU defines the common external tariff that also extends to Turkey, although the country is not involved in decision-making. In other words, Brussels decides on the trade policy that Ankara maintains with third countries. Such a transfer of national sovereignty to the European level without political representation implies a serious lack of democratic legitimacy for EU-Turkey relations. Gradual integration can cure such an institutional malfunction that has crept into EU-Turkey relations.

Other policy areas, too, would allow such a gradual integration, be it food safety, intellectual property, energy, transport, or free movement of capital. Negotiations are already under way in all those fields. In the event that Turkey fulfills all adoption criteria, those chapters should be closed and accession talks finalized by transferring full membership rights to Turkey in those policy areas. Granting partial membership rights would allow Ankara to take part in the respective Council of Ministers, including full voting power but excluding the veto right. The latter should be no crucial matter, considering that an increasing number of decisions are made by qualified majority voting (QMV).

Furthermore, the Committee of Permanent Representatives of the EU member states, which prepares the respective Council meetings, tries to reach consensus on all policy issues beforehand. A strong esprit de corps remains the guiding principle of decision-making on all levels. However, at the same time, it must be clear that once Turkey is included in EU structures on a member level, the country commits to fully implement all directives and regulations that are decided by the Council in that policy field. In order to also maintain the co-decision procedure between the European Parliament and the Council, and for the sake of assuring democratic participation as much as possible, Turkish representatives of the legislature

could be integrated into a Turkish-European parliamentary chamber that could evolve out of the existing EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee. Turkish decision-makers could then participate in the full spectrum of EU legislation.

Last but not least, a gradual integration must not be confused with the idea of a “privileged partnership,” which is particularly supported by German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The dynamic form of integration, as described above, keeps the long-term goal of fully-fledged membership and will allow the EU to stick to its promises at the same time. The “privileged partnership,” however, excludes any form of membership and will therefore not resolve the credibility gap that the EU would suffer if it rejects the Turkish accession bid.

What to Expect from a Renewed Enlargement Set-up

There are four clear advantages to a fully revamped enlargement set-up:

First, dynamic membership allows a step-by-step integration that would not overburden the institutional design of the EU. It should be kept in mind that the so-called Copenhagen Criteria not only apply to a candidate country, but also to the EU that is supposed to have enough absorption capacity to successfully integrate a new member country into its structures. And indeed, a Turkish accession would have far-reaching implications for the EU’s policy set-up, e.g., with regard to the free movement of labor, the mobility of people and services, the allocation of structural funds and subsidies, or the distribution of votes in the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. Furthermore, one can argue that the EU has not yet successfully coped with the “big bang” enlargement of 2004 that added ten new countries into the circle of EU member states. We can legitimately question whether the EU will again be able to integrate a country as big as Turkey in size and population. A dynamic integration, however, would prevent an institutional overstretch and allow a smooth transition into the Union, according to the EU’s capacities.

Second, a gradual approach would counter Turkey’s ostensible turning away from Europe. Indeed, Turkey

redefined its strategic relations that it maintains with its neighboring non-European countries. In January 2013, Prime Minister Erdogan caused irritation in European capitals when he stated that Turkey can imagine replacing its EU candidacy with membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a multilateral forum including, among others, China and Russia.⁸ Partial integration into the EU, however, would keep the country within genuine EU structures. The institutional ties would even be reinforced as the level of association would be as dense as never before. A structural rift between the two parties could be forestalled.

Third, a dynamic membership appears to be the only option acceptable for Ankara. Turkey still rejects any kind of institutional association that does not include full membership status. As a mutual agreement can only be reached on the basis of consensus, Brussels must offer more than just “everything but institutions” as it does with the countries of its neighborhood policy. Indeed, Turkey would be subject to a newly arranged enlargement procedure, which might lead to suspicions of a second-class membership. However, it must be clear that “take it or leave it” accession rounds, like the one from 2004, are definitively over. Ten years later the setting and the frame conditions for European politics completely changed, be it with regard to the financial crisis, questions of democratic legitimacy, or the serious foreign policy challenges in the EU’s neighborhood. The enlargement procedure, too, must adapt to those realities of the EU in the twenty-first century. However, a full-fledged membership still remains the final goal of the process. The dynamic integration therefore appears to be the only viable option that can serve the priorities and needs of both sides.

Fourth, such new membership logic can also be considered as a role model, because it is transferrable to other aspirant or candidate states that want to become part of the EU, e.g., the countries of the western Balkans. And regarding the revolutionary events in Ukraine in 2014, it is very likely that Kiev’s membership will also sooner or later form part of the enlargement agenda. In all those cases the structural deficits of the EU’s integration capacity remain the same. As such, the dynamic integration can take effect far beyond the Turkish case. Even more so: the

United Kingdom, too, is committed to renegotiate the terms of its membership status. The Cameron administration openly admits its desire to renationalize certain policy fields that are currently governed by the EU. Considering that London apparently wants to partially opt-out of the Union, the gradual membership pattern can be of value for candidate countries in the waiting line as well as for member states that want to loosen their EU ties. Altogether this new form of dynamism could once and for all bridge the gap between the seemingly disparate poles of deepening and widening.

Conclusion

The idea of a dynamic membership leaves open many issues and it is legitimate to question its compatibility with European law. However, the EU has always been a project under construction, constantly undergoing significant changes in its more than sixty-year history. There is no such thing as *finalité* as the EU’s institutions are in a permanent flux depending on the imperatives of its socio-political environment. Now is the time for European decision-makers to remember this strength that always characterized the idea of integration—change. The economic and financial crisis, which turned into a democracy and legitimacy crisis, and the many security challenges in Europe’s neighborhood, give good reason to cast doubt on the efficiency of the EU’s political and institutional capabilities. “Business as usual” is the worst of all possible options. Instead of maintaining a policy of “muddling through,” what is needed most is a major redesign of EU politics. The enlargement agenda cannot be excluded from such a general review as the EU’s relations toward newcomers was always at the very heart of European integration. All stakeholders, be it from academia, politics, or civil society, are now called upon to be creative and think of new and fresh ideas. The idea of a dynamic membership is meant to give stimulus in this regard as it might be able to break the cycle of mutual frustration and disappointment that became a permanent factor of Turkey-EU relations in the past. What we need now is creativity for how best to unite two partners that belong together.

Notes

The views expressed are those of the author alone, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Stiftung Mercator.

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03
EU-TURKEY RELATIONS AS
SEEN FROM WASHINGTON

DEFINING THE RELATIONSHIP: EU-TURKEY RELATIONS AS SEEN FROM WASHINGTON¹

JOSHUA W. WALKER

2014 has not been a good year for Turkey and by extension its relations with the European Union. Beginning with the political uncertainty—stemming from a wide-ranging corruption probe that broke at the end of last year—Turkey, the region’s most stable democracy, is now more focused on its domestic rather than foreign policy priorities. Unfortunately for Turkey’s friends in Europe and EU enthusiasts in Turkey, this means that a process that was already difficult enough, given the history of relations, has become even more complicated. In the short term, the best that can be hoped for is to quietly keep the process alive on technocratic life-support so that it does not become a victim of politics on either side. Since the 1960 Ankara agreement between the European Community (EC) and Turkey, in many ways, the EU-Turkish relationship has been both domestic and foreign policy for Ankara; therefore, this should be nothing new.

Unfortunately, there seem to be dark clouds hanging over EU-Turkish relations since protests erupted last year over development of Gezi Park in Istanbul. The protests quickly focused non-stop Western media coverage domestically on Taksim Square, which became mistakenly equated in Western minds with Tahrir Square, despite the major differences between Egypt and Turkey. Further complicating the relationship are recent threats from Ankara to expel Western ambassadors over comments on domestic developments, law suits over media coverage, and a culture of fear that many thought Turkey had moved beyond. Perhaps even more importantly, against this backdrop, foreign investors are staying away from Turkey—causing the lira and the Istanbul stock exchange to plummet and Turkey’s economy to sputter.

Making matters more complicated, Turkey has three elections in less than a year’s time, each of which will

test the ruling Justice and Development Party’s (AKP) hold on municipal, presidential, and parliamentary power, all in an election year for the European Parliament, too. While the AKP triumphed at the municipal polls on March 30, the real tests are still yet to come. With all these factors at play, uncertainty is now the norm for Turkey. Even before the recent domestic developments, Turkey’s outlook for 2014 was sobering, with leading risk consultancies such as Eurasia Group and International Crisis Group putting the country in their Top 10 most risky areas.

With domestic elections in both partners scheduled for 2014; continued regional chaos without clear leadership on, or direction in, Ukraine or Syria; and accumulated frustrations from the peak of what once was considered a mutually beneficial relationship that made global sense, Turkey and the European Union find themselves at a crossroads. 2014, it seems, will be as much about weathering the short-term storm as defining and focusing on the long-term relationship that these two critical partners have shared since the end of World War II—even despite the changes and dynamics at play today. Similarly, the EU and Turkey’s relationships with the United States have been evolving, but rather than being a mutually reinforcing set of trilateral relations, they are increasingly separated bilaterally and growing apart. Therefore, in many ways it is time for Turkey and the EU to define their relationship by either taking it to the next level with tangible progress on membership or agreeing to take a break while they figure out their priorities, lest they simply drift apart like cold Anglo-Saxons or passionately break-up like Mediterranean lovers. Whatever happens, it will equally define U.S.-EU-Turkey relations for the twenty-first century.

Setting the Stage

Turkey's attributes are well known: a key ally of the United States, a long-standing member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and a candidate for membership in the EU, Turkey has strong ties to the West in a volatile, yet strategic region of the world. Turkey sits geographically at the crossroads of Eurasia, but has only in the last decade of the post-Cold War environment assumed the confidence and trappings of a geopolitically pivotal player. As a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council from 2008-2010, a G20 founding member since 2008, and most recent holder of the post of Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Turkey's rise regionally has impacted its global ambitions and the contours of its relationship with the EU.

At the dawn of the new century, scholars of Turkish foreign policy declared that Turkey was "changing"² and entering a "new world,"³ however, in hindsight, the most significant changes were yet to come in Ankara. Indeed one of the more active debates about Turkish foreign policy today is to what extent what is being observed today is "real" change versus a continuation of what was observed in previous times under new rhetorical guises and the level of disconnect between Ankara's ambition and capabilities. Given the extremely dynamic nature of Turkish politics, predicting the future is always foolhardy, but if history is any guide, its foreign policy and key bilateral relationships—like with the EU—are always only one domestic crisis or flourish away from success or failure.⁴ Historically, betting against Turkish civil society and its people has never been a smart move, yet its government and institutions have rarely lived up to the promise of Ataturk's republic born from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire over ninety years ago

Turkey, with its combination of economic pragmatism and soft power, appeals as a Muslim-majority secular democracy with a conservative and pious Muslim leader, and has fared much better than almost any other Muslim-majority nation in global affairs in recent years, yet now the foundations of its "success" are being challenged. Shedding its former policies of disengagement in international politics, Ankara has become an active participant in all of its regions over

the last decade and, particularly given its close geographic proximities to the "hotspots" of this decade, has become a central player who acts as a force multiplier for the West. It has been a critical actor, but with its internal malaise, could unfortunately become a polarizing divider just as easily. Turkey has been transformed in a way not seen since the days of the Ottoman Empire as a truly global player whose reach extends far beyond just its geographic neighborhood, as demonstrated most recently by internal policy decisions and court rulings on the use of Twitter and YouTube that has garnered widespread attention.

Turkey has emerged in the twenty-first century stronger than it has ever been in its modern history, going from a peripheral player to Europe's most dynamic actor and economy, yet this rise is accompanied by challenges and areas for structural concern.

Turkey's Place in the West⁵

Relations between Turkey and the West have always been dynamic and reflective of the historical circumstances. Turkey for the past seventy years has prioritized its relationship with the West as manifest in its membership in almost every Western multilateral organization. Casting its lot with the West during the Cold War was made particularly easy given the Soviet Union's aggressive movements on the Turkish straits and northeastern Anatolia. As a result, Turkey's Cold War relationship with the U.S. was indicative of most bilateral alliances during the period and represented a convergence of national interests in containing the influence of the Soviet Union. With the Truman Doctrine, the United States publicly committed itself to protecting Turkey, thereby linking it with the West. While the historical roots of Turkish-Western relations can be traced to the gates of Vienna where the Ottomans twice laid siege, Turkey's inclusion was not ideational but rather facilitated by the geo-strategic realities of the Cold War and America's leadership of the West.⁶

The collapse of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 was met with fear in Ankara that it was no longer relevant to the West, and to Washington in particular.⁷ Having been unequivocally part of Europe since

joining NATO in 1952 during the Cold War, and based on the strategic logic of the time, Turkey expected its Western credentials to hold up. As a part of almost every European organization from its inclusion in the Council of Europe in 1949 to the Ankara agreement of 1963 that created a customs union with Europe, Turkey looked to Europe as its logical home and partner. But Turkey's successive coup d'états and war in the 1990s against the Kurdistan Worker Party (PKK) led to an inward focus and European protests about human rights violations further strained relations.⁸

Turbulence in U.S.-Turkey relations has always been inevitable given the global, regional, and domestic changes that both countries have experienced over the last decade. Given the strategic foundation of this alliance, the challenges currently faced in Ankara are often played down and muted by the benefits that strong relations offer declining U.S. leadership in Turkey's neighborhood. There are causes for real concern regarding changes in Turkish domestic politics and foreign policy that could lead to even greater tensions in U.S.-Turkey relations down the road and the choice between stability in the short term versus liberal democracy in the long run are often self-fulfilling for an interagency process in Washington that has always had trouble dealing with the complexities and paradoxes of Turkey. Yet it is equally clear that Washington has a critical role to play in the future direction of Turkey and that the country continues to offer the U.S. numerous opportunities for strategic cooperation and support if managed correctly. Therefore, while U.S.-Turkish relations have deteriorated since the Cold War years and the "model partnership" framing of the relationship has never been realized, given that Turkey is at the center of one of the most critical regions of the world, and recent events in the country, as well as the region, have only heightened Turkey's importance to America.⁹

Europe: Turkey's Western Anchor?¹⁰

Turkey's historical preoccupation with Europe and its subsequent quest for an acknowledged European identity can be explained on many levels. Historically, Europe has represented "modern civilization" in the words of Turkey's founding father Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Economically, Europe represents over half of

Turkey's foreign investment and the bulk of lucrative foreign trade is conducted with EU member states. Geo-politically, Turkey has always insisted on being part of every European organization based on its 3 percent geographic claim to Europe. However, despite the arguments made by many Atlanticist quarters in Europe and the United States that favor Turkey's geo-strategic value within the framework of the EU, many Europeans remain skeptical about Turkish membership.¹¹ As a result of this sentiment, the EU has kept Turkey waiting at its doorstep for over four decades, to its own detriment, and now, with events unfolding internally and in Ukraine, perhaps peril. Still, for Turkey, the single most important historical external factor in its domestic agenda remains the EU.

The prospect of EU accession has traditionally been a major factor in Turkey's internal reform process. The major impetus for reform came after Turkey became a candidate for membership in December 1999. The reform process initially started in 2001 with a series of critical constitutional amendments. A series of reform packages followed. They brought *inter alia* greater freedom of expression and association, banned capital punishment, reduced the influence of the military over civilian government, and improved the rights of minorities. The EU, through these reforms, also helped to catalyze the growth of civil discourse in Turkey. In this period, many taboo issues such as the Kurdish question, the Armenian genocide claims, the rights of non-Muslim minorities, the Cyprus problem, and the limits of secularism became subjects of debate. The EU's conditionality clearly contributed to Turkey's democratic transformation.¹² Reform packages adopted in the context of EU accession also steadily reduced the military's influence, and precipitated a revolutionary change in the military's mindset.¹³ EU engagement also helped transform the Islamist movement from strongly opposing EU accession to embracing the idea, as well as the reforms associated with it.¹⁴ As Turkey transformed domestically, its allies in the EU grew in strength and number, leading to the opening of negotiations in 2005 on the grounds that Turkey had "sufficiently" fulfilled the Copenhagen political criteria.

When the AKP came to power in 2002 as the historical successor of Turkey's right-leaning Islamic

conservative movement, it had many domestic hurdles to overcome. Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the AKP began using their foreign policy agenda to placate their domestic opposition and to expand areas of possible cooperation with Turkey's secular elites and business community. In particular, the AKP focused on the EU accession process to broaden its domestic support and weaken its opponents between 2002 and 2005. Ironically, the launch of EU accession negotiations in October 2005, after an acrimonious debate in the EU over Turkey's membership and problematic terms of Turkey's Accession Negotiations Framework, actually triggered setbacks in the reform process in 2006 and 2007. The decisive victory won by AKP at the July 2007 national elections ushered in short-lived expectations of a renewed period of reform. However, the government's enthusiasm for drafting a new constitution was undercut by resistance from the opposition and the judiciary's case against the AKP in 2008. In part, this resistance was provoked when the government became distracted from its constitutional reform agenda and instead pushed through legislation to lift a ban on the use of headscarves in universities.

Having spent much of the young twenty-first century celebrating Europe's various achievements, for Brussels, the perennial question involving Ankara was whether to deepen or widen. Yet only seven years after Greece joined the euro zone in 2001, the Global Financial Crisis erupted in the United States and spread to Europe. Previously unthinkable scenarios and questions became common discussion points. The question of whether the euro zone would disintegrate and what would be the consequences for the EU became a real, rather than an academic, one that Turkey seemed to revel in, given its own economic growth and trajectory. The widespread concern among economists that a Greek exit from the euro zone would lead to serious, even catastrophic, consequences for the rest of Europe and the global economy was never realized, but it reinforced a Turkish confidence, some would say arrogance, that reinforced the very worst qualities in domestic politics.

In an ironic twist of fate, at precisely the moment in which the EU process could offer Turkish leaders to empower their civil society and be seen as a critical partner and true friend, the foundations of the EU

were being questioned. As a result, Turkey's newfound swagger and emergence as a global actor has been both decried as arrogant and welcomed as a sign of a more engaged partner that could help to determine the future direction of Europe as a global actor. Yet, in the EU's darkest moment, Turkey remained eerily silent and distracted about the euro zone crisis as well as its own accession process, while the EU has been dismissed because of its loud critiques during Turkey's most recent unrest.

Newspaper columns and columnists—who used to write about every aspect of the accession process and EU decision-making with sensationalist headlines about ramifications for Turkey—have turned their attention elsewhere. The most visible sign of the apathy and indifference of the Turkish government and public was the most recent EU Commission Progress Report on Turkey released last fall. What used to be one of the most significant international spotlights for Ankara, for the first time generated almost no headlines other than the Turkish EU minister's colorful criticisms about Europe being like a camera that was out of focus that could not capture the dynamism of Turkey in a still frame. Unlike events at home, Syria, or Ukraine that continue to make headlines, Turkey's European dreams seem to be drifting off into oblivion with little attention being paid on either side of the Mediterranean.

Populist rhetoric on the part of Prime Minister Erdogan against the EU has become a common talking point in Turkish politics, yet it risks further alienating Europe at precisely the wrong moment. Being blinded by hurt pride and a rightful sense of injustice at the hand of certain European politicians, Turkey has begun to look more toward its neighborhood. However, Ankara's value-add in its new neighborhood hinges precisely on the ongoing domestic transformations that are highly dependent on its EU accession process, as being seen throughout the region's democratic revolutions. Turkey's continuing accession process is a net positive regardless of its eventual membership outcome and is in fact one of the primary reasons for the country's enhanced value to its neighbors.

Turkey and Europe Still Need Each Other

The EU is no longer the sole driver of reform now that Turkey is coming of age as a regional power in the midst of the “Arab Spring” and euro zone crisis. Reform must come from within and Turkish voters will ultimately decide on the parameters within which their leaders will operate. Yet the EU is needed as an anchor. In fact, it is needed more now than ever before, especially in order to reinvigorate the divided and polarized pro-reform grand coalition that the AKP once succeeded in rallying in its first term in office. This coalition is now in disarray and off course as a result of everything going on in domestic Turkish politics. Rather than being blinded by ambitions of grandeur or zero-sum electoral politics, Turkey’s leaders should realize that its value-added in the neighborhood largely hinges on its ongoing domestic transformation—a transformation the EU process still empowers. In addition, the EU mechanisms and support for strengthening key domestic institutions such as the judiciary, media, and military are now needed more than ever.

Even beyond domestic reforms, the link between Turkey’s EU candidacy and its neighborhood policy cannot be underestimated. Ankara’s ambition to be a regional leader is best captured by Arab perceptions of Turkey. The attractiveness of Turkey for Arab investors is directly associated with its ability to bridge markets because of linkage to the EU. This is especially important in times of uncertainty and crisis. Annual surveys of Arab public opinion published since 2009 reveal that the majority of respondents have consistently believed Turkey’s EU membership prospects made it an attractive partner for the Arab world. Yet internal struggles have led to drops in these beliefs, which suggests that respondents are aware of Turkey’s slowing EU accession process.¹⁵ However, the majority and plurality believes that abandoning the EU would be detrimental to Turkey’s long-term interests.

The EU continues to be Turkey’s biggest trading partner. Bilateral trade in 2010 totaled €103 billion. Furthermore, almost 80 percent of foreign direct investment in Turkey comes from the European Union.¹⁶ Reinvigorating Turkey’s relations with Europe represents not only a key to economic

success, but also the best guarantee that the country’s domestic transformation will ultimately culminate in a standard of democracy that will make it a guiding light for the region. The transatlantic anchor provided through NATO injects the Turkish military with the necessary confidence to embark upon and allow reforms in the country.¹⁷ Therefore, in order to fulfill its full potential, both domestically and on the world stage, Turkey’s EU process is critical not just for Ankara, but for Brussels and Washington as well.

Finding a place for Turkey in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which has been described as an “economic NATO,” is a critical short-term step and a good place to start in reestablishing trilateral cooperation and Western support of Turkey by reassuring jittery foreign investors. As Turkey’s EU membership continues to stall, Washington must be creative and fresh in its approach, including pushing its European allies to do the same to reinvigorate a trilateral partnership that has broken down in recent years. Combined Western resources could be leveraged in Ankara and other regional partners to develop key regions and sectors. The power of Western brands—and symbolism of joint American and European investment—in Turkey will help the private sector engage in a critical Middle East market. And given that conspiracy theories and anti-Westernism makes engagement in other parts of the region almost impossible, the opportunity is growing more urgent every day.

The alternative is not that Turkey will morph into an Islamic Republic, as many alarmists charge. Turkey’s historical and contemporary experiences, as well as economic, social, and religious make-up, suggest that such fears are misplaced. However, as in many of its Arab neighbors—and more than a few of its EU counterparts—the lure of populist nationalism and streaks of intolerance are strong. The euro zone crisis and domestic scandals have certainly emboldened and seemingly legitimized populists—in Turkey as well as in Europe. Today, the danger is more apparent that a Turkey with no EU prospects comes to resemble an increasingly authoritarian Russia that also sits outside of the EU as a Eurasian regional power.

Going Beyond Life Support

The EU accession process—which for now thankfully no governing parties have an interest in suspending—should continue but be detached from strategic cooperation, without the wires being crossed. The European Commission-sponsored “positive agenda,” proposed last year, already has sought to develop a Turkey-EU discussion in the areas in which progress is possible. But the mix of membership and non-membership goals means that even this modest strategic dialogue has never really taken off, let alone led to an agenda of action. It has been held hostage too long to the accession process that includes parochial veto players and the rhetorical flourishes of short-sighted politicians rather than statesmen on both sides. In a new framework built completely outside EU settings and with strong backing by the United States, strategic cooperation between Turkey and the EU could finally develop, shifting attention from bilateral difficulties to common goals in the midst of the euro zone crisis.

The EU can no longer be taken for granted in Turkey and political will is necessary to break out of the current status quo. Ankara is unlikely to call off the accession negotiations, but it will continue to vigorously and confidently pursue economic and diplomatic relations with its neighbors, looking for opportunities to exert influence and reap commercial benefits. In this case, interdependence does not rule out conflict: a continued deadlock in accession negotiations might well inject a hefty dose of antagonism in the relationship and foment competition. One need not look further than Ukraine to understand the strategic stakes involved for the EU and Turkey. Therefore, a better trilateral framework should be established for a future partnership. To make interdependence work, Brussels needs to engage Ankara and vice-versa, with Washington playing the role of honest broker and partner.¹⁸

Re-affirming Turkey's value to Europe and Europe's value to Turkey in the midst of the elections may be politically difficult. But it is strategically critical. Given that Turkey and the EU share a common neighborhood, not just compatible strategic interests, a structured framework for cooperation beyond the accession process is critical to weathering the short-

term storms without the casualty of Turkey's European aspirations. It must go beyond the security confines of NATO or business realms of the customs union and TTIP. Yet, it should not be as cumbersome as the longer-term project of EU membership. The dialogue ought to begin now. Otherwise, there is the risk of silence for the foreseeable future.

Kick-Starting the Trilateral Debate

Discussions about “alternatives” to the EU were once all the rage in Ankara. Today these debates happen more often in Brussels, Moscow, and Washington. Turkey seems content to re-assert itself throughout its former Ottoman domains with a flexible attitude toward alliances and partnerships that would have been unthinkable less than five years ago. While convergence between Ankara and Washington has reached new heights as a result of the “Arab Spring,” the same cannot be said for EU-Turkish relations that lack a sense of purpose or urgency. If anything, the weakening of the EU through the euro zone crisis has been welcomed by Turkey, and Ankara's tarnished shine from internal scandals has been cheered by some in Europe. Thus, as America draws closer to Europe (as a result of Russia's aggression in Ukraine) and Turkey (because of the need for support in the Middle East), trilateral U.S.-EU-Turkey cooperation is in danger of being cannibalized and replaced by bilateral relations that are not mutually reinforcing or as foundationally strong.

Turkey today is at a crossroads. It is more globally engaged than at any time since the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Yet, its democracy is far from perfect, and its relationships are strained in the aftermath of the “Arab Spring” and its own domestic scandals. There is no panacea to these foreign policy crises. However, there is at least one policy framework that will help enable Turkey's Western friends to better understand and address them: a deeper Ankara-Brussels-Washington partnership, even despite the domestic political concerns in all three partners. As the Middle East's largest and Europe's fastest-growing economy, Turkey is uniquely situated to play a consequential role in a region critical to U.S. national interests.

The U.S. will continue to temper Ankara's sometimes nationalist and populist policies in favor of pragmatic cooperation, such as with Israel and Cyprus (both of which may look to Turkey for energy transit or export projects in the near future) or even the European Union. Washington can play bad cop to Brussels' good cop (or vice-versa if coordinated in advance) given their broad areas of agreement and mutual economic incentives with Turkey. Where there are short-term disagreements, longer-term gains will eventually facilitate Turkey's evolution as a responsible regional leader—one that is on the right path to joining the European Union to further enhance its influence along with having the strong backing of the United States, or if necessary, the tough-love of a stable partner.

Timing in 2014: Election Year

Election years always seem to bring out the worst in democracies. From electoral politics to powerful SuperPACs in America, the system often gets strained. Yet, elections are a necessary process, in which leaders must demonstrate to their domestic constituencies that they understand their daily concerns. As a result, elections rarely hinge on foreign policy. In Turkey's factitious parliamentary system, Prime Minister Erdogan has been campaigning since the beginning of the year simultaneously for Mayor of Istanbul, President, and Prime Minister in a populist tone—puzzling many Europeans not used to the style of Turkish politics. Listening to the nationalist/populist tone of Turkey's most successful campaigner and politician in living memory, analysts continually try to equate Erdogan's words to Turkey's actions. Foreign policy concerns and formerly deferential statements on Europe are falling by the wayside. Indeed, amid Turkey's most consequential set of elections in decades, the very champions and daily managers of the EU must not hide behind the worst populist tendencies to score cheap political points at the expense of a valuable long-term partner.

Turkey has enjoyed its decade-long regional rise as a pragmatic and active actor in the Middle East while neighboring states have failed their population. Particularly in light of Ukraine, the time is ripe for the Turkish government to engage in healing its domestic wounds through enhanced foreign cooperation to

carry Turkey across the threshold of full-fledged liberal democracy. Only by deepening and projecting its "democratic depth" can it have a lasting impact at home, representing the best to and serving as a leader in its neighborhood.¹⁹ Unfortunately Turkey's own championing of democracy and regional reform is still as fragile as its own democratization process, as evident in the lack of progress on a new constitution or the perennial Kurdish problem. Turkey's stalled EU accession has only added to the difficulty for democratically-elected and populist leaders. Whether Turkey will develop into a more liberal type of democracy should be more important to the future of U.S.-EU-Turkey relations than joint dialogues, speeches, or initiatives on the regional and world stage.

At a moment in which Western leadership is being questioned in Eurasia and sectarian tensions continue in the Middle East, the timing has never been more opportune to re-focus on the core principles and universal values of U.S.-EU-Turkish relations. Coordination and policy on Turkey continues to affect vital interests throughout Washington that ideally must go beyond the administration to the Hill and society at large, even if there is short-term turbulence. Despite record levels of communication and travel between top leaders in Ankara and Washington, the societal and institutional connections are still in need of revitalization and strengthening. Senior Turkish officials brag about the amount of time their leaders spend on the phone with top U.S. officials. As a result, Ankara has grown accustomed to listening only to the administration, which is particularly unhelpful in a Washington that is so polarized and split along partisan lines. Similarly, in Brussels, as European leaders shift and new priorities are found, Ankara should be engaged as a potential partner in finding solutions to Europe's problems rather than being part of the problem. Washington's proactive encouragement and support for both Brussels and Ankara as they go through elections creates greater opportunities for synergy and trilateral cooperation even if often bilateral concerns will need to be dealt with reactively.

Re-Affirming Turkey's Western Credentials

Double standards and contradictions, motivated by domestic, economic, or geopolitical interests,

nonetheless remain in the foreign policies of America, Europe, and Turkey. These issues should be honestly discussed with a view to overcoming them jointly. To the extent that the West is defined as a set of principles and democracy, the very challenge with Turkey is applying these standards consistently and universally in constructing a viable partnership that is consequential, flexible, and mutually beneficial. Rather than seeing Turkey's growing international role as mere hubris or its domestic scandals as being its downfall, they should be taken as an opportunity to reinforce Turkey's Western credentials that makes it a unique interlocutor to all its neighbors.

Reinvigorating Turkey's relations with the West continues to represent the best guarantee that the country's domestic transformation will culminate in a standard of democracy that will make it a guiding light in the Middle East. The transatlantic anchor provided through NATO, and hopefully TTIP and the EU, can inject Turkish leaders with the necessary confidence to embark upon immediate reforms. U.S. policy toward Turkey has been stale for too long. In 2014, Ankara, Brussels, and Washington need a new, more comprehensive framework to coordinate and implement policies jointly. Without a fresh, holistic approach—and regardless of domestic politics in all capitals—the U.S.-EU-Turkish relationship will continue to have intrinsic worth, but miss its full potential in 2014 and far beyond.

Notes

- 1 This work builds on previous writings of the author including Joshua W. Walker, "The U.S.-Turkey Relationship in 2014," Transatlantic Academy Blog, 18 April 2014, <<http://www.transatlanticacademy.org/node/686>> and "Eerie Silence about the Euro Zone Crisis," *The EuroFuture Project Paper Series*, August 2012, <<http://www.gmfus.org/archives/eerie-silence-about-the-euro-zone-crisis/>>.
- 2 Heinz Kramer, *A Changing Turkey: The Challenge to Europe and the United States* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2000).
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- 4 Classic works on Turkish foreign policy include William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy 1774-2000* (London: Frank Cass, 2002); Andrew Mango, *Turkey: The Challenge of a New Role* (London: Praeger, 1994); Philip Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy Since the Cold War* (Seattle, WA: Washington University Press, 2003); and Reşat Kasaba, *The Cambridge History of Turkey. Volume 4: Turkey in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
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- 6 Stephen Larrabee and Ian Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2003).
- 7 See Huseyin Bagci, *Zamnin Ruhü: Kuresel Politikalar ve Turkiye* (Istanbul: Orion Publishing, 2007).
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- 9 For more see Joshua Walker, (November, 2010). "The United States and Turkey: Can they Agree to Disagree?" *Middle East Brief #46* (Crown Center for Middle East Studies, November 2010).
- 10 Draws extensively from co-authored reports "Getting to Zero" and 2010 Brussels Forum Paper Series: Kemal Kirişçi, Nathalie Tocci, and Joshua Walker *A Neighborhood Rediscovered: Turkey's Transatlantic Value in the Middle East* (Washington, DC: German Marshall Fund, 2010).
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- 12 Senem Aydın and Fuat Keyman, "European Integration and the Transformation of Turkish Democracy," EU-Turkey Working Papers No. 2 (Centre for European Studies, 2004).
- 13 Ersen Aydın, Nihat Ali Özcan, and Doğan Akyaz, "The Turkish Military's March Towards Europe," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 1, (January-February 2006), 84.
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- 15 See TESEV polling in Meliha Altunisik, "Turkey: Arab Perspectives," *TESEV Foreign Policy Analysis Series* 11 (2009), 25.
- 16 Turkey 2011 Progress Report
- 17 For more on this see Kemal Kirişçi, Nathalie Tocci, and Joshua Walker *A Neighborhood Rediscovered: Turkey's Transatlantic Value in the Middle East* (Washington, DC: German Marshall Fund, 2010).
- 18 See most recent ECFR report "What Does Turkey Think?" <http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR35_TURKEYFINALFINAL.pdf>.
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