

DISSERTATION TITLE:

EU – Turkey Negotiations

Obstacles to Turkey’s application to join the EU

MA in Contemporary Diplomacy

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A dissertation presented to the Faculty of Arts in the University of Malta for the

degree of

Master in Contemporary Diplomacy

Word Count; 21, 164

(Word Limit 20-25.000 words with 10% margin)

DECLARATION

Sir/Madam,

I hereby certify that this dissertation, and all related research, is my own original work.

Signature

Catherine Farrugia

October 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to start by thanking my tutor, H.E. Mr. Saviour Borg, who not only put me on the right track, but also guided me throughout this project.

My gratitude goes also to a number of persons who supported my efforts through this work. These are Mr Patrick Borg and Ms.Sylvana Bugeja from DiploFoundation, Prof. Edward Scicluna - European Parliament Representative on the European Statistical Advisory Committee, whose expert knowledge on this subject contributed in no small measure to the outcome of this research.

A warm and special thanks goes to my family for their constant and indefatigable encouragement, my dearest mother Lorenza Caruana, my two wonderful daughters, Laura and Anthea and last and not least, my very considerate partner Ian Hendy. This would not have been possible without your love.

This experience has contributed in many ways and areas for me to explore options for negotiations and the interests between a country and an institution in multilateral scenery. The knowledge achieved by this experience has also contributed to my understanding of the tasks carried by Ambassadors where I currently work.

I sincerely thank you all

Catherine Farrugia

Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to my beloved father who passed away at the age of fifty three on the 4th of October 1997 and who will never have the chance to see what I have achieved today.

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Abstract

Turkey's accession to the European Union is one of the most controversial topics the EU faces. There is a division both between EU Politicians and European citizens about Turkey's accession to the EU. For a number of factors, the Turkish application has not been perceived by the EU in the same way as other applications. In fact, various Chapters are blocked due to the uneasy relationship which exists between Turkey and some EU Member States

This paper examines the negotiations between the EU and Turkey and the long standing application due to various obstacles Turkey is encountering in order to implement the necessary reforms to reach all the criteria for accession. The research takes an in-depth look at the formal and informal obstacles that are hindering Turkey's application. We used data to support arguments for those supporting or opposing Turkey's membership. This paper does not analyze policy and institutional implications. Rather, this paper seeks to explore the various challenges on the Turkish application.

Europe's politicians should assist in efforts to first change the image of Turkey and build trust, both internally and externally, with a main objective to ensure that Turkey is moving forward to be accepted by all the E.U. Member States. Perhaps, this is the best way forward

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AKP	AdaletveKalkinmaPartisi (Justice and Development Party)
CAP	Common Agriculture Policy.
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
EDAM	Center for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies
ECtHR	European Courts for Human Rights
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
MRG	Minority Rights Group
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
PKK	PartiyaKarker Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers Party)
RTÜT	Turkish Radio Television Broadcasting
SETA	The Johns Hopkins University and the Washington branch of the Ankara-based Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations

Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this research is to review Turkey's initial developments to Europeanization, its bumpy application to become a member of the European Union and its encompassing obstacles. This research is about the challenges that were implemented by Turkey in its efforts to join the European block and other criteria that lie ahead to reach the Copenhagen Conditions. It is important to first identify the initial stages in the course of Turkey-EU relations.

The origins of Turkey's modernization can be already traced to the Ottoman Empire. As early as the 17th Century the Ottoman ruling elites ventured to adhere European ideas in their culture, lifestyles, and ways of thinking and political systems. The will towards a constitutional government system was visualized during the period 1789 – 1808 under the ruling of Sultan Selim the Third.

“My people are going to learn the principles of democracy the dictates of truth and the teachings of science. Superstition must go. Let them worship as they will, every man can follow his own conscience provided it does not interfere with sane reason or bid him act against the liberty of his fellow men.”

— Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

The continued political desire towards the European system was accelerated upon its inception as a Republic in 1923 under the power of General Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. Bogdani writes that “he and the other founding fathers of modern Turkey wanted to make Turkey a part of the European System of states”. (Bgdani and Mirela, p.20). This statement by Ataturk demonstrates his eagerness to become a modern secular

Turkish Republic. Ataturk's objectives focused on introducing multi-dimensional reforms in all spheres of life with the aim of national reconstruction and development based on European principles. He proclaimed various reforms constituted on Republicanism, Secularism and Turkish Nationalism. Ataturk also implemented reforms with European characteristics such as; he outlawed the fez and the veil and changed Turkey's alphabet from Arabic to Latin. Ataturk established a legal and political system that allows Turks to embrace Islam in their private lives, while separating religion and the state affairs with the objective to modernize the state.

The pro-Western elites, which dominated Turkey's foreign and defence policies perceived Turkey's affiliation with European and international institutions such as the Council of Europe on the 9th of August 1949, NATO on the 18th of February 1952 and OECD in August 1961 and an associate member of the Western European Union since 1992, as positive steps towards joining the western camp. (Euroactiv, 2005).

Turkey's first application for association with the EEC was submitted as early as 1959. Turkey was granted Association Membership in September 1963 following the signing of the Ankara Association Agreement which became effective on December 1, 1964, with the aim of integration of Turkey and the EU. It was specifically designed on three stages the preparatory stage, transitional stage and the final stage. (Republic of Turkey. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011). The Additional Protocol of 13 November, 1970 to be enacted in January 1, 1973, was a framework of strategies that would lead to the establishment of a Customs Union. However, during the mid-1970s both Turkey and the world had been through some political and economic difficulties which resulted in the breakdown of the Association Agreement.

Turkey formally applied for Membership in 1987 but to Turkey's disappointment its application was deferred until 1989 due to the fall of the Iron Curtain and the

unification of Germany. Further sectors considered by the Commission as posing difficulties for Turkey's membership were based on economic, regional, political and human rights issues.

Nevertheless, Turkish-European relations re-emerged after the end of the Cold War. In 1996 Turkey succeeded to sign with the EU a Customs Union Agreement with the objective to eliminate tariff and quantitative barriers of imports from Turkey. In addition, the Agreement also included provisions that kept open the door for Turkey's membership of the European Union. This successful achievement could be considered as the start of the progress for progressive reforms towards Europeanization.

In January 1999, Bülent Ecevit won victory and came to power heading a coalition government with Mesut Yilmaz. With reform primarily on the agenda, Ecevit was successful to convince Head of States or Governments of the EU at the Summit in Helsinki in December 1999, to grant Turkey candidate status.

Membership negotiations were officially inaugurated in October 2005 und the Government of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan representing the justice and Development Party (AKP) that was formed from the remnants of Islamic Parties. The EU was fully supportive to Turkey's accession talks provided that all the necessary criteria of the Copenhagen Agreement are fulfilled. However, no firm deadline for accession was ever proposed. This historical step was described by media coverage as the new era in EU-Turkey relations. European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso hailed the deal as a "milestone" in Europe's relationship with Turkey, while German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer saw it as "a big chance for both sides". (BBC News, 2005).

Turkey's long standing application to join the European Union has become not only a matter of major importance but also one of considerable controversy. Turkey is a country located between Europe and Asia, better known as the land-bridge linking Europe and Asia. It is considered to have one foot in Europe and the other in Asia. Turkey is, they emphasize, a diplomatic bridge between East and West, not a power with imperial designs. Kendall writes that "it has a long varied history and geostrategic importance even though the collapse of the Soviet Union removed the Soviet threat and weakened Turkey's geographical position". (Kendall, 2011)

1.2 Aim of the Study

Some critics argue that it is less the candidate membership status per se that matters but rather the unfavourable domestic and regional factors that left Turkey in the back of the queue for several decades. Other intellectuals refer to Turkey's size, poverty and religion as reasons to keep it away from the block. The aim of this study is to identify the various obstacles that arose in the EU-Turkey negotiations in order to join the European Union. In fact, negotiations seem to be progressing very slowly because Turkey is not aligning with its obligation.

In the first Chapter I will explore the principles of the negotiation package, the strong will of Turkey to implement reforms in order to fulfil the EU's requirements and some of the issues raised by opposing countries and the current situation of the process.

In Chapter II, I will identify several informal obstacles such as identity, religion and demography.

The following Chapter III, I will analyse Turkey's internal flaws which are regarded as formal obstacles, mostly concentrated on human rights, freedom of expression and minority rights.

The final chapter; I will concentrate on Turkey's foreign policy with regards to the Republic's regional obstacles and Turkey's position as an international actor, mediator and a peace maker.

During this research several questions have arisen such as: Is Turkey ready to adopt and accept EU Directives and strengthen its public administrative institutions to function effectively according to the EU principles? What are the factors that make member states supportive to Turkey's accession and others highly opposing it? There are several arguments that have arisen by individual Member States during the debate to hinder Turkey's application which is reflected on their opinion that Turkey is too big, too poor and too different.

1.3 Methodology

This research will deal with an objective and detailed enquiry into the process for application of Turkey's accession into the European Community.

The research was based on secondary data which was extracted from relevant material already published including, books, Textbooks, Journals, Magazines, News Papers, and internet sources.

Articles and government websites, along with reports released by NGO's and EU Institutions, were critically important to the understanding of Turkey's problems to fulfil certain reforms and reach the EU criteria needed to close the thirty five chapters.

The purpose of this research is to analyse the entire perspective of Turkey's culture, religion and history and how these issues can aid or hinder its prospects as an EU Member State. The researcher identified the various obstacles hindering Turkey's accession to join the European Union and divide those obstacles into two sections

informal and informal. The researcher was faced with a problem of lack of support by individuals to be interviewed.

Chapter Two

2.1 EU Turkey's Accession Process and Framework

Turkey's EU accession negotiations started in 2005 after fulfilling the initial political criteria. Negotiations with Turkey started with two conditions, namely, to extend its custom union to the additional 10 Member States including Cyprus which they didn't recognize and the adoption of a criminal code in line with EU standards. Accession talks begin when all requirements are met and the EU institutions and Governments of member states approve their collective consent.

Turkey's negotiations are different from other candidate countries due to its internal problems and other tensions with individual EU Member States. Various historical facts marked by conflict in the region left mutual prejudices, which are still alive in various forms today. In effect Turkey's negotiations are likely to be extended and possibly even withheld periodically. Although the final objective is accession, it was explicitly laid down for the first time in history that negotiations were open-ended by nature which means that they are not time-bound and that their outcome is not guaranteed beforehand. (Euroactiv, 2005). Thus, no promise or target date of membership was given to Turkey, and it was implied as a long term goal. In other words a veto by one country could bring the deadlock of the opening or closing of a chapter which a case in view are the various chapters that have been frozen by Cyprus and France. This means that these chapters will remain closed until issues between them are resolved. Harry Flam notes that "while, the EU has also set a

timetable for the accession of Bulgaria and Romania, for Turkey, no timetable has been timetable set, despite its status as candidate for membership". (Flam, 2003).

Turkeys negotiating framework (Luxembourg, 2005) was designed with additional clauses set on three paragraphs that is:

- The stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities;
- The existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; and
- The ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union and the administrative capacity to effectively apply and implement the '*aquis*'.

To complicate the picture further, the drafting of Turkey's negotiating framework was influenced by individual countries mainly Cyprus, Austria and France to suit their national interest. Burak Akçapar noted that "the Austrian and Greek Cypriot demands were not only unacceptable but also unabashedly abusive". (Akçapar, 2006 p.15)

Turkey's Negotiating Framework include clauses in a paragraph specifying that in the period up to accession, Turkey will be required to progressively align its policies toward third countries and its positions within international organizations with the policies adopted by the Union and its Member States. This supplement was invoked by Greek-Cypriots which has a frozen application for membership in NATO by Turkey due to their dispute between them.

The initial steps of negotiations are a comprehensive study called "screening", of the EU laws known as the "aquis communautaire", which the candidate country must

conform with. Therefore, the first measures are based on an in-depth explanation of and understanding of the content of the rules, identifying the areas where a country is already aligned to these rules and exploring fields for improvement. The “acquis” paves the way to a stable democracy, a competitive market economy and the capacity to implement EU laws and policies. It is composed of thirty-five chapters with 80,000 pages in rules and regulations that range from free movement of goods to agriculture to politics. All candidate countries wishing to join the EU should accept the EU’S rule book the “acquis”. The objective of these set of rules is that countries must reform their institutions, management capacity and administrative and judicial systems up to EU standards both at national and regional levels. (EU, 2012)

In the case of Turkey only thirteen chapters were opened with only one chapter in science and research provisionally closed on 12 June, 2006. Currently, the EU opened negotiations on seven chapters namely: Enterprise and Industry (March 2007) Financial Control and Statistics (June 2007), Trans-European Networks and Consumer and Health Protection (December 2007), and Intellectual Property and Company law (June 2008). On 18 February 2008 the Council adopted a revised Accession Partnership with Turkey. (EC, 2012).

Grabbe (2004) argues that many of these reforms will be difficult for Turkey to ‘swallow’ because they entail significant costs, as well as deep restructuring of the public administration over a long period. However, if a country is willing to join the block, development strategies could be achieved faster through well-organized management and political unity accompanied by the participation of all stake holders and decision makers as was proven by other Balkan countries.

The framework of the EU-Turkish negotiations is based on the principles of the Union’s foundation in various paragraphs drafted at ministerial level to establish the

terms under which the applicant will meet and fulfil the rules in each chapter. The dynamism of the EU is that all countries function under the same laws and these set of laws stretch down into the roots of the political, economic and cultural systems of a country. The preliminary paragraphs highlights the responsibility posed on the Commission to monitor and assess Turkey by issuing “progress reports” to the Council and the European Parliament, on whether conditions and progress are being accomplished. A chapter is closed when all conditions are met. When all 35 chapters are completed a country is then theoretically prepared to be a member of the EU whereby negotiations reached are drafted into an accession treaty submitted to the Council and the European Parliament for consent. After the approval the treaty must be ratified by all Member States and Candidate Countries. (EU, 2005).

Paragraph 4, within the Framework of EU-Turkey Negotiations is quite controversial, and has been very often debated between Member States of the EU. The framework stresses the need that Turkey is expected to sustain the process of reform and to work towards further improvement in the respect of the principles of liberty, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Furthermore, Turkey has obligation to take measures specifically in relation to the zero tolerance policy in the fight against torture and ill-treatment, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, women’s rights and minority rights. (EU, 2005).

According to the Human Rights Watch reports on Turkey, the Government of Turkey has not prioritized human rights reforms since 2005, and freedom of expression and association have both been damaged by the ongoing prosecution and incarceration of journalists, writers, and hundreds of Kurdish political activists. (EU, 2005). Kendall writes that “according to the International Press Institute, Turkey has more journalists in prison than either China or Iran. Many have not been charged”. (Kendall, 2011).

In 2004, various Governments from EU Member States appeared disposed to recognize Turkey as an official candidate only if Turkey adopted laws with more respect to human rights, reduced the role of the military in government affairs and if Turkey seriously commits itself to sustain economic growth in order to avoid the influx of migration. According to the Eurobarometer (2008) opinion towards Turkish membership, 45 percent of the respondents are in favour of Turkish accession once it has fulfilled all the necessary criteria: It is appropriate to note here as reported by Maltatoday that Malta's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Tonio Borg, has expressed Malta's support to Turkey's application for EU Membership once fulfilment of the criteria is accomplished and also gave his reassurance on this matter to Turkey's Minister and Chief Negotiator of EU Affairs Egemen Bağış upon his official visit to Malta in April 12, 2012. (Maltatoday, 2012). However, it is also to be noted that this assurance gave rise to some criticism among some of the members of the Political Party in Government with one of the Government Parliamentarians, expressing contrary views to Turkey's application, explaining that it is not culturally European. (Sansone, 2012).

Paragraph 5 of the EU-Turkey Framework of Negotiations states that should Turkey persist with the violations of the above rules and rights, the Commission has the authority to suspend negotiations and propose the conditions for eventual resumption provided by a qualified majority of the council after hearing both parties in the Intergovernmental Conference. (EU, 2005).

Thus, the development or progress in the negotiations will be determined on Turkey's commitment towards accession within the structure of economic and social consolidation and with reference to the Commissions reports as stated in Paragraph 2 of the Framework of Negotiations. Furthermore, progress will be measured in

particular against the necessary requirements as indicated in Paragraph 6 which will be discussed in the following chapters. (EU, 2005).

Another important element demanded by the EU in the process of EU-Turkey negotiations relates to the comprehensive Political and Civil Society Dialogue. The objective of the civil society dialogue is for the EU and its citizens to learn more about Turkey and permit Turkish citizens comprehend the EU's values and policies towards their integration. It is to be noted that, the EU will be providing €21.5 million to Turkey for the promotion of the Civil Society Dialogue to implement various projects such as Youth Initiatives for Dialogue, Cultural Bridges Program, University Grant Scheme, Town and Municipalities Grant Scheme and Professional Organization Grant Scheme.

The framework of negotiations highlights the need to provide a considerable number of translators for the production of the '*aquis*' translations in Turkish at the right timing before accession complemented with a number of translators and interpreters to join the grid into the EC institutions. (EU, 2005).

The single market economy emphasizes the implementation and enforcement of the rules aligned with the elements of the '*aquis*'. Under the single market, the EU will determine products standards for Turkish goods; health and safety regulations for its factories, companies and offices equipped with high technology and in line with environmental standards, and strict limits on the government's industrial subsidies. Turkey will have to make use of all available instruments to prove a functioning market economy supported by adequate legislative institutions. Candidate countries falling under the umbrella of the EU will have to revise every aspect of their governance from economic structures and the way their political systems function to their recipes of their traditional foods.

In December 2006, the European Council froze eight relevant chapters until Turkey fulfils its obligations to implement the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement with Cyprus. As noted above, one of the conditions was the extension of the customs union to the new ten member states. However, Turkey has failed for example to open its air and sea ports for Cypriots vessels and air traffic and Turkey's constant rejection to do so have blocked advancement of 14 chapters of its negotiations. Another six chapters are blocked by France because it believes Turkey should be offered 'partnership and not integration' process.

Doubts continue to be raised as to whether Turkey and the EU see eye to eye on the need to reform the country. Grabbe (2004) concludes that "the Accession Process is not about finding common interests between equal partners. Rather, it is about finding a timetable to apply the EU's laws at home". In other words, the Accession Process will not lead to a win-win solution. On the contrary either you are fully in or out.

Simsek (2012) reported that "since 1959, Turkey has been struggling to enter the European Union marked by ups and downs either due to Turkey's domestic political upheaval or due to the irresponsible policies of some short-sighted politicians in Europe" as sustained by Egemen Bağış and quoted in the same article. However, both factors are food for thought and will be dealt with in the next chapters. Although Dr Bağış constant rhetoric is that "We are not going to give up our strategic goal for EU membership", others argue that membership today is not a top priority for the ruling AKP. (Simek, 2012).

2.2 Turkey progress on reforms and policies.

In the past decade Turkey under the leadership of the AKP and the prospect of EU membership, has proved to bring radical change to its nation. Based on the

Commissions Progress Report of 2011, Turkey continues to sufficiently fulfil reforms in various areas. Despite all these changes, Turkey still fails to comply with international standards or the principles laid down in the European Human Rights Convention. The report reveals that substantial progress has been made over the past years, but it continued to highlight concerns about the freedom of expression, the independence of the judiciary, the military's interference in political life and the Turkish failure to make any developments on implementing the 2004 Ankara Protocol with Cyprus and open its ports and airports to Greek-Cypriot traffic. (EC, 2011).

Between 2001 and 2004, Turkey accomplished a series of comprehensive legislative and constitutional reforms, which significantly broadened the scope of democracy and brought the Turkish legislative system closer to EU standards. Nine 'constitutional packages' were passed to amend the Turkish Constitution written under the military rule in 1982 to align Turkey's legal system with that of established democracies in the EU. (Alessandri, 2011 p.70). But although Turkey has implemented some constitutional changes and reforms mainly in the legislative institutions the desired fulfilment is not yet reached and is currently brewing much heated debate.

Turkey has implemented several reforms such as the abolishing of the death penalty, freedom of expression, restructured the rebalancing of civil-military and its powerful role in Government institutions. The Government also launched the 'zero tolerance policy for torture and ill-treatment' in 2004. Indeed, some policemen were accused of and sentenced for tortures and ill-treatment of inmates. The amendment of Article 145 of the Constitution was highly welcomed by the Commission which significantly restricted the competence of military courts and may have a positive impact on the prosecution of crimes committed by Turkish armed forces. However, according to

Emma Sincliar-Webb, Turkey's researcher at Human Rights Watch, "the authorities in Turkey has been notorious for protecting torturers," and "The Çeber verdict should signal that the Turkish justice system will no longer turn a blind eye to torture and other ill-treatment." (Human Rights Watch, 2010).

Moreover, following the visit by Thomas Hammarberg (2012) Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe to Turkey between the 10th to the 14th of October 2011, the European Courts for Human Rights (ECtHR) expressed concern on the administration of justice and human rights protection. In his report, ECtHR, identified a number of long-standing systematic problems, including:

- the need to tackle the backlog of pending cases and heavy workload of courts and prosecutors, and encourages the authorities to step up their efforts to increase judicial and para-legal staffing. The backlogs of cases are hindering the administration of the Turkish justice system to reach its potential
- the harsh treatment and conditions of detained prisoners which are highly regarded as being very degrading. In this context, The Commission urged the authorities to avoid situations where persons spend unreasonable periods which can currently go up to ten years, in detention before they are sentenced which could amount to 'internment by remand'; and
- the need to reinforce the 'gate-keeping function' of Turkish prosecutors, that is, the initiative they can use to filter those cases which do not merit being prosecuted at public expense. The Commissioner called for more transparency to adequate resources for the police to conduct and co-ordinate their investigations and to assess evidence transmitted. (ECtHR, 2012)

Equally important, was the lack of improvement recorded with regards to the pending of serious criminal cases that needed to be thoroughly monitored. Thomas Hammerberg (2012) “made special reference to the way in which investigations were conducted in the murder of the writer and journalist Hrant Dink on 19 January 2007”. The Commissioner was specifically concerned about “the effective proceedings in Cases of violations of Article 2 ECtHR where it particularly demonstrated the shortcomings of the way in which the Turkish judicial system had tackled issues concerning impunity”. (ECtHR, 2012). BBC News reported that “the verdicts given in the trial of his murder were marked by angry demonstrators”. (BBC News, 2012).

Another factor observed by the Commissioner is “the impartiality of the judiciary on the freedom of expression mostly on the violation of Article 10 ECtHR”. (ECtHR, 2012). The Commissioner notes that Turkey lacked proportionality in the interpretation of the legal provisions relating to freedom of expression by both the judges and prosecutors, who often perceive notably the expression of minority identities as a threat to the interests and integrity of the state. The number of applications filed with the ECtHR from Turkey in 2011 also increased considerably. In fact, in 2011, about 9,000 applications were submitted compared with less than 6,500 in 2010. This clearly indicates that “some things are not going in the right direction in Turkey despite a set of regulations, reforms or developments expected for the judiciary”. (Bianet News, 2011).

ECtHR report makes reference to “the implication and the nature of the Terrorism Act in Turkey”. (ECtHR, 2012). His widespread concern was about the definition of some offences concerning terrorism and membership of a criminal organisation and their wide interpretation by the Courts. The Commissioner suggested that the prosecutors and judges need to be further sensitized to the case-law of the ECtHR concerning in

particular the frontier between terrorist acts and acts falling under the scope of the rights to freedom of thought, expression, and association and assemble. (ECtHR, 2012).

In relation to the anti-terrorism act, Turkey was highly criticized in the past years by the Non-Governmental Organisation Amnesty International who played a crucial role as a guardian for children's rights in Turkey. At the same time, Amnesty International has welcomed a move by the Turkey's Parliament to end the prosecution of children under anti-terrorism laws solely for taking part in demonstrations. (Amnesty International, 2010). On the 23 July 2010, the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) reported that amendments to the law, passed by the Turkish Parliament on Thursday, mean that all children previously convicted under anti-terrorism legislation will have their convictions quashed. The new law will also end the prosecution of children aged 15 and over in adult Special Heavy Penal Courts. (Amnesty International, 2010).

Further progress was reported in Turkey's political system. In past few decades, Turkey's political system evolved from one-party rule to a multi-party system. Bogdani writes that "since the end of military rule 1980-83 Turkey has moved gradually towards greater civilian control of their government". (Bogdani, 2010 p. 26).

It is also worth taking a look at the various Constitutional amendments approved in September 2010 by a referendum and Turkey's future process towards reformation. The main challenge for Turkey's future reform lies on the consolidation between the Turkish political parties, ethnic and religious minority leaders and other constituted bodies that enjoy a broad consensus among Turkish citizens in order to lay down the foundations of the common interests of the various actors in the Turkish society. The new Constitutional amendments have further increased women rights,

introduced the principle of positive discrimination against children and the right of state protection against all abuse and violence, the disabled, the elderly, established the institution of the Ombudsman and approved further protection to Turkish workers. Noteworthy among other important Constitutional amendments are the changes in the freedom of movement, Administration of Parliament and most importantly in the Military Justice which allowed for high army officers to be tried in civilian courts further limiting the privileges of the military. It was reported that “restrictions on the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike have been removed”. (Tuysuz, 2010). But, although the Constitutional amendments passed in September 2010, went overall in the right direction in terms of further democratizing Turkey, it is argued “that they were prompted only by the AKP, exacerbating polarization in a country already divided along ideological and ethnic fault lines and raising doubts in some quarters that the AKP is selectively focused on those reforms that may help it consolidate its power”. (Alessandri, 2011, p. 70).

At the same time, the results of the referendum in favor with 58 percent of the votes were boycotted by the Pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party. Kurdish leaders argue that the constitutional reforms failed to highlight the shortcomings of the constitutional amendments on guaranteeing more rights for Kurds. There was a growing frustration over the way initiatives addressing the Kurdish issue, such as the ‘democratic opening’ launched in 2009, not being fully followed up. (Alessandri, 2011, p.74)

Nevertheless, the introduction of the Kurdish language at schools, the approval of a Kurdish Language and Literature Department in Alparslan University, a television station broadcasting in Kurdish language twenty-four hours are among positive reforms implemented in the last decade by the AKP party.

Akdogan (2012) notes that “in order to control corruption, other changes within the Laws of Employment of Civil Servants were enacted Law No. 657 (1) prohibits civil servants from being active or employed in private activities other than in government institutions”. The law also specifies the prohibition of consultancy, brokering and representation of services provided to any private entities. In other words civil servants are bound by an agreement of loyalty towards their Government. Furthermore, the rule also dictates that should a civil servant leaves the institution to set up a private firm or entity he or she are not able to provide any services to the institution they served within the time frame of 3 years of their departure of their employment. The law also forbids civil servant from receiving gifts or hospitality related to their duties. (Akdogan, 2010).

At the end of the report the European Commissioner on Human Rights highly praised Turkey’s clear determination and good will in tackling some of the concerns highlighted in his report with regard to the reform strategy of the judicial system, legislative changes, as well as the amendment of some key provisions of the Turkish Constitution. (ECtHR, 2012).

Nevertheless, the report of the Independent Commission on Turkey (2009) revealed that Turkey’s progress has been hindered by the effective blockage of more than half of the negotiating chapters and the negative reaction of EU Head of States or Governments gives the impression that it is not welcome. The Independent Commission stressed that, on the other hand the AKP government missed opportunities and failed to sustain the momentum of reforms before it was challenged by a plethora of domestic distractions. Ilgazet argues that “Turkey undertook many reforms in such a short time that the country is still adjusting to the reforms and a

certain lag between the formal adoption of harmonization packages and their implementation is evident". (Ilgazet et al, 2001).

2.3 The current status of Turkey's Accession

It is apparent that there is a general agreement that the phase of deep transformation in Turkey has slowed down. The various speculations for this development are multiple and can be attributed to several reasons. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey writes that "after the start of negotiations, certain member states have changed their policies in contradiction with their own previous decisions and commitments". (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011).

The initial diplomatic melodrama was marked by the stormy inquiries forwarded by the Austrian Government. The international press reported that "the Austrians were calling into question the ultimate objective of the accession talks". (Akçapar, 2006 p.14) Furthermore, the Austrians were the founders of the suggestion of a new model of 'privileged partnership' instead full integration for Turkey. Akçapar also noted that "Austria was completely isolated in this regard, failing to gain support even from the Greek Cypriots". (Akçapar, 2006 p.14).

Austria's endless pressure for an alternative to full membership was exposed by Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger last September immediately after Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Beşir Atalay announced that Turkey will freeze EU ties if Cyprus assumes the EU Presidency. Michael Spindelegger's immediate statement was that "should a stalemate in Turkish-EU membership talks occur it will be an opportunity to discuss what he termed a privileged partnership with Turkey in some detail". (Today's Zaman, 2011). However, the proposal put forward by the Austrian and German ruling political elitists is clearly not welcome by Turkey and should a

privileged partnership will be imposed on Turkey it will raise grave concern about the credibility of the Union.

The second point in view, was the thorny issue of Cyprus question itself, as the Cypriot Government tried all in their force and ability to intimidate Turkey to comply with their requests and recognize 'Cyprus' which obviously would mean recognizing that the Greek Cypriot Government will represent the Turkish Cypriot as well. This issue was prominent during in a public lecture with the title 'Creating a Common Future: Need for a Visionary Europe', held in Malta on April 10, 2012 by The Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator of the Republic of Turkey Egemen Bağış on his official visit to Malta. When asked how Turkey intends to solve this problem Minister Bağış replied that "if this issue was not a prerequisite for Cyprus in the framework of negotiations this should not be a prerequisite for Turkey". (Bağış 2012). However, the Austrians and the Greek Cypriots demands were not accepted by Turkey and could lead to an escalation in heated debates.

In the last report presented by the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2010-2011", members noted that "freedom of the press; women's rights and protection of religious minorities were still slowing down negotiations as is the deadlock in negotiations between Cyprus and Turkey". (Brussels, 2010).

Turkey's road to accession will be faced with tougher challenges not only from Governments but also from the populations of some EU Member States. Therefore, Turkey will strive to work hard to join the EU since it will have to win the hearts and minds of the Europeans in order to eliminate stereotypes from the opposing citizens as well. Edward Said argues "that even contemporary scholarship was infected by similar distortions, bias and imperial ambitions towards Turks". (cited in Akçapar

2007, p.34). Indications show that Turkey is most likely to be the first country which will have to wait the result of referendums for its accession intended to be held by France followed by other member states such as Austria, Denmark and the Netherlands.

The constant restrictions and contempt towards Turkey's application are distancing the Turkish Republic from the prospective of joining the European Union. French President Nicolas Sarkozy has reaffirmed his opinion against the countries' EU membership ambitions. His profound implications were then affronted by President Gul who "insisted that membership remains the priority of his country". (Kuebler, 2011). Dan Bilefsky reported that "Prime Minister Erdoğan wanted to be the first conservative Muslim leader who would bring Turkey to the West, but after Europe betrayed him, he abandoned those ambitions". (Bilefsky, 2011).

Another key issue, whose significance is one of grave concern, is the EU's weak commitment towards Turkey which is leading the reform process to delay and even to reach a point of stalemate. While the Commission kept a watchful eye on the accession process, several European governments failed to keep their commitment made in 1999 and reaffirmed in 2005 on Turkey's future accession. The EU has also lost popularity among the Turkish nation as a result of the EU's hesitations and prejudice. Public opinion in Turkey has already turned away from such a prospect. According to surveys by the German Marshall Fund, 73 percent of Turks saw membership as a good thing in 2004, but only 38 percent felt that way by 2010. In A blog posting Turkey & European Union Relations (2012) noted that "according to a collection of surveys by Turkey's statistics authority, support for the EU among young Turks plunged to 47.2 percent in 2011 from 74 percent in 2005. Among adults, support as well dropped from 63 percent to 44.3 percent".

The principles of the Copenhagen Criteria are built on rational grounds and even suggests that all candidate states shall be treated equally since the principle of the "pacta suntan servanda" foresees that all agreements are honoured. This applies to the European commitment towards Turkey on equal grounds as previous candidates to the membership to the European Union. However, Dr Aktar argues that "double standards have become one of the main characteristics of this process". (Simek, 2012). Moreover, we have those who argue that "the treatment being used with Turkey was not used with Portugal and Spain which lacked stable democratic institutions". (Guney, 2004).

There is also the prospect that negotiations between the EU and Turkey will deteriorate when the rotating presidency will be passed on to the Cypriot Government in the second half of 2012. Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said that "if Cyprus assumed the EU Presidency without a solution to the future of the divided island, Turkey's relations with the EU would be frozen". (Today's Zaman, 2011). The complexity of Turkey's accession and the increasing obstacles will be further argued in the chapters to follow.

Milliyet newspaper outlined the fears of many Turks with the headline: "Sarkozy the new obstacle on the path towards EU", saying that the victory would "increase the potential of already chilly Turkish-French ties to worsen". (BBC News, 2007). However with the fall of President Sarkozy and the newly elected French President Francois Hollande could lead to a positive attitude and opinion towards Turkey's application to join the EU contrary to the anti- Turkish perception instilled by Nicolas Sarkozy. In a blog posting, Finkel (2012) wrote that "News from the latest NATO summit in Chicago is that Sarkozy's successor, Francois Hollande, is trying to turn the page. German attitudes may also be changing". The German Foreign Minister

Guido Westerwelle delivered a message very different from Merkel's stating that "What is important is to seize the opportunity that emerged after the latest elections in Europe and restart EU-Turkey ties". (Finkel, 2012).

Indeed, recently things took a new twist with the commencement of new talks between the EU Commission for Enlargement Stefan Füle and Chief EU Negotiator Egemen Bağış where they launched a "positive agenda" plan, a framework for bringing new momentum to Turkey's stalled EU accession process which commenced in Ankara on Thursday 17, May 2012. (Today's Zaman, 2012). The objective of this framework is to explore for progress in those seventeen chapters that have been blocked without at this stage affecting their current status of blocked. In return, the Commission would try to persuade EU Council Members, who have the last say on enlargement and the opening of chapters, "in favour of letting Turkey open the blocked chapters". (Donat, 2012). It is hoped that this new positive agenda will bring tangible results and benefits to both parties. At the launching of The Inter-parliamentary Exchange and Dialogue Project; the President of the European Parliament Martin Schultz said that "the project will give us a chance to eradicate pre-conceived notions in Turkey and the EU. The project will make it possible for those looking at Turkey with doubts to get to know the country better". (JTW, 2012). At the same event, The Undersecretary of Turkey's EU Ministry Haluk Ilıcak noted that "touching on the deadlock in Turkey's EU process, the 'Positive Agenda' was intended to get over the deadlock but was not an alternative to negotiations". (Donat, 2012).

Chapter Three

Obstacles hindering Turkey's Application – Informal Obstacles

3.1 Identity

What is identity? In recent years the concept of “identity” has been at the centre of lively debates in every major subfield. In politics the concept of “identity” can be attributed to a state’s sovereignty based on its norms and values of a given society marked by historical and cultural characteristics. Our present definition of identity could be formed by the image of how we visualize a country and the customs of its nation. In the case of Turkey, image plays a potential role that poses high popular opposition among Europeans. Mary Lee Settle observes that “of the countries known to her Turkey had the worst and most ill-drawn public image an image that have psychological fixations against a former colonial master”. (cited in Akcapar, p. 33). This is an image designed primarily by those who have never ventured to visit Turkey or tried to learn more about the Turkish nation and simply base their perception on the dark shadows of historical conflicts between the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe. Continuous prejudice and contempt continue to infect the image of Turkey in Europe and are only motivated by fears and the risk of importing problems and disturbances. In this Chapter II will try to identify the ‘different’ characteristics related to Turkey’s identity that influence the constant negative European perception towards Turkey and is therefore regarded as alien.

“The West has always been prejudiced against the Turks ... but we Turks have always consistently moved towards the West ... In order to be a civilized nation, there
is no alternative”

Kemal Ataturk (1) (Erdogdu, 2002)

The primary recognition of Turkey as a European country was when France and Britain accepted Turkey as a European power in 1856 and was embraced in the concern of Europe during the Crimean War. In the 1940s and throughout the Cold War years Turkey's strategic position played a potential role due to its security dimensions and Europeans thought that "Turkey's inclusion in the western camp created no problems, issues of culture were of secondary concern". (Erdogdu, 2002).

Although Turkey and the EU enjoyed healthy relations in the past years, they have always lacked the common grounds of historical roots and cultural values that shape their identities. One initial argument that is gaining ground is based on whether Turkey is actually a European country. Does Turkey hold European principles? "Turkey is perceived by many as being 'too big, too poor, too different'". (cited in Kylstad 2010, p. 2). Turkey holds different characteristics from European customs hence its culture is more common to the Arab world. Most European countries identify themselves as Christians or have their principles based on Christianity. On the other hand, Turkey is identified with the Muslim world. As such, it is not the size of the country or the elements of poverty that troubles the European perception but the basis of the fundamental characteristics of the 'different' principles attributed to the historical roots and cultural values.

Having said that, it is important to distinguish the fundamental products of the Turks and European values which form their different identities. First it is essential to understand "the identity of a united Europe that emerged in the early 1950s presented by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Robert Schuman". (Piodi, 2010). From a geographical point of view Europe has no defining borders as a continent such as Africa or Australia. European identity can be defined as a collective category based on the same set of values of a group of social actions. As such, Europe's

identity is more a new political identity rather than a national identity. Perhaps people perceive themselves as Europeans “simply from the fact that EU Member States are being governed under the umbrella of a common set of rules and laws. (Article 6 TEU)”. (EU, 2008). Indeed each country is shaped by its own identity and borders recognized by different national languages, anthems and flags but at the same time embracing a ‘common European identity’. President Martin Schultz underlined that “membership in the EU does not imply losing a country’s identity”. (cited in Turkish Weekly, 2012). Europe has developed into a multicultural community of societies sharing a set of universal law. Stråth argues “that religion differences (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox and Christianity) and linguistics differences (Romance, Germanic and Slavic languages) are seen correlated between Member States”. (Stråth Bo, 2002).

“The European values are based on democracy, rule of law, human rights, tolerance, equality, pluralism, liberalism, fundamental freedoms and constitutionalism”. (Bogdani and Mirela. p. 50). Religion almost in every country was used to guide our behaviours and actions until the emergence of the separation of state and religious institutions. Charles Taylor argues that “Religion is part of moral basis of Western Civilization”. (cited in Bogdani and Mirela, p. 50). As a matter of fact, societies felt a sense of security, stability and safety under the guidance of religion.

In fact, the foundations of the European actions, values and norms are built on the pillars of Christianity which evolved and developed to liberal-democracy. Graham Avery said, “A number of historians and politicians argue that Christianity is one of the defining features of European identity”. (cited in Bogdani and Mirela, p. 78). As such, social activities in a political, economic and cultural context are based on liberal-democracy. In Western modern societies, social actions have changed in the

course of time as well as the images of states with the implementation of modern reforms and policies that controls the morals and believes of societies. It might take decades to transform the actions and norms of a society, however the evolution of Enlightenment, this so called ideology of improving the living standards of their nation that was translated by prosperity and higher living standards in almost all countries where it was implemented. A member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in his research for the success of the West revealed that “The Christian Moral foundation of social and cultural life was what made possible the emergence of Capitalism and then the successful transition to democratic politics”. (cited in O’Gorman, 2011). European identity is not a fixed identity but rather it is being continuously evolving and negotiated among and between political actors.

Another objective of the European Union transformation of identity was the introduction of a European Citizenship which was introduced in the Maastricht Treaty that states: Every person holding the nationality of a Member state shall be a citizen of the Union. The 1997 Amsterdam Treaty clarifies the link between European and national citizenship. As a point of fact, the European Union designed symbols such as an EU flag, Anthem, the Euro, Europe Day and an attempt to draft a constitution which failed to be ratified by all countries, by which features it wants to be identified.

Islamic values, on the other hand, never felt the need or have limited the space of Enlightenment in order to civilize the Muslim societies. Undeniably, a large number of countries where the majority is Muslims have remained backward and undeveloped due to their cultural extremism. Bogdani argues that “one reason for this apparent backwardness is that Islam has remained almost unchanged since its foundation in the seventh century”. (Bogdani and Mirela. 2010 p. 66). As Bogdani noted “Islam worshippers believe in a divine law that regulates all aspects of human

activity, including even food and drink”. Turkey’s values represent the values of a combination of secularist Islamic culture. The amalgamation of Islamic values with European democratic principles and values.

Actually, some critics’ attribute the Islamic countries to disarray and under-developed caused by regimes that have kept them blindly focused on religion, rather than improving their lives and as a result left no room for progress, Turkey was the only Muslim country fostering a conservative democratic identity. Lewis (1994) writes that “it became very clear in Islamic lands when both rulers and intellectuals were becoming increasingly aware of the poverty of their societies and the weakness of their states, as contrasted with the wealth, power and aggressive self-confidence of the West”. Karlsson notes that “a Turkish stable democracy in a Muslim society could be the model that the Muslim world needs so desperately”. (Karlsson, 2008).

In accordance, with to the principles of Ataturk, Turkey has long sought to modernize their country although progress has been hindered by various political developments, as a consequence of, the fall and changes in the Turkish ruling Governments. Modern Turkey sees itself as a responsible country, keen to adhere European norms. Turkey’s unique and different identity is marked by a number of factors such as the change in regulations, crises, new constitutions and coups that left its impact on the nation’s moral fibres. Yet, the more problematic aspects of Turkish case arise mainly, at the national level, with regards to its internal conflicts on Turkey’s real identity. Lewis notes that “Turkey has long been identifying itself as a ‘secular’ Muslim country even though Turkey still struggles with fundamental problems of identity that have been part of the psychic landscape for as long as modern Turkey has been a nation”. (Lewis, 2009).

However, Turkey like other countries succeeded to develop a national system with western principles separating the state and religion drafted in a constitution and ruled by a democratically elected representative government while preserving its nationalistic and traditional values and customs. “Turkey is a living example that there is no reason why democracy, secularism, and Islam should be incompatible. (Akcapar, 2006 p.48)”. Another similar example was Japan who led a visible transformation of the country based on the British model, to a civilized highly developed state through education, technology and services. But through the adoption of the representational practices of the European enlargement program Turkey’s identity will continue to be reshaped and constituted according to the European characteristics that have been shaping the European identity. This could be achieved through effective policies supported by a strong unified nation that is willing to take its place among its European allies.

Although Turkey is still a divided country striving for identity, there are however significant prospects that Turkey is currently inspiring other Muslim countries to adhere to its western democratic identity. Perhaps, the 21st Century uprising in the Arab world could have been in part influenced by Turkey’s success. Anti-regime protesters took to the streets in a common voice for the transition of democracy which they strive to fulfil their aspirations. “Turkey is a source of inspiration for many in the Middle East and North Africa who aspire to a modern democratic society – European Parliament President Jerzy Buzek said in a speech to Turkish lawmakers”. (Madson, 2011). “But many observers question whether its treatment of its Kurdish minority gives it the right to be treated as a role model” writes Constanze Letch. (2011).

According to the stereotypical perception of some European critics, Turkey's visual image is seen out of European borders. On 8 November 2002, in an interview with *Le Monde*, Valery Giscard d'Estaing flatly asserted that "Turkey simply is not a European Country". (Teitelbaum et al, 2003). He also made reference to the geographical position of Turkey being out of Europe, cultural differences in approach and its life styles. Giscard d'Estaing statements were revived by President Nicolas Sarkozy, when he said that "Turkey's entry to the EU would mean the death of political Europe". (*BBC News, 2007*). In other words, the real issue in Turkish accession has little or nothing to do with legal criteria, economic requirements or international relations. As suggested previously, "the Copenhagen criteria are a thin veneer coated over old religious cultural prejudices" (*cited in James Toghill - Benhabib and Isiksel, 2006*).

3.2 Religion and culture differences.

Europe is not only decorated by the dynamism of political and economic prosperity but also by the strength of tolerating diversity. In accordance with the principle "unity in diversity", the Union promotes the diversity of its cultures, while "bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore" (Consolidated Version of the Treaty Establishing the European Community, 2002). Although this element leaves room for debate since Europe's political leaders and population are divided and confused in this regard. Turkey, as explained in the above sub-paragraph, identifies itself as a secularist, Muslim country but if Turkey holds secularist ideology why do Europeans consider Turks as culturally very 'different' from European countries?

Indeed, Turkey and the EU have their obvious socio-cultural and religious differences and although some critics refer to it as a sensitive issue due to the EU's 'motto unity in diversity', it is worth to point out. The Turkish Minister and Chief Negotiator

Egemen Bağış states that “Turkey’s accession will enhance the multicultural nature of the EU and bring further meaning to its motto, unity in diversity”. (Bağış, 2011).

However, some individual countries use ‘difference’ as the basis of their argument, thus it is essential to identify the characteristics that render Turkey’s application ‘different’ and highly critical from other candidate countries. The established religion in Turkey is the Sunni Islam and it plays a potential role in politics with the state dominating areas such as paying for the preachers, acting as custodians of the mosques and articulating the contents of their rituals. “Religion is also embedded in the constitution and with an established special Directorate of Religious Affairs”. (The Republic of Turkey, the Presidency of Religious Affairs, 2011). “The primacy of Sunnis Islam is enshrined in the constitution, which mandates compulsory education in its tenets, and with the State directorate of religious affairs assigned the duty of tending to the needs solely of the Sunnis, the republic has indeed to all intents and purposes recognised only ‘one religion’”. (Karaveli, 2012).

Although, Kemal Ataturk aimed at secularizing his country from its inception as a Republic it seems that his cultural revolution has never reached the hearts and minds of the majority. Indeed, statistics show that “99 per cent of the population is Muslim in Turkey”. (BBC News, 2008). Bogdani notes that “Turkey’s accession would change the religious statistics within the EU approximately from 3 per cent Muslims to roughly 20 per cent”. (Bogdani, p 147). Furthermore the Hurriyet Daily News published that “eighty-three percent of Turks identity themselves as religious”. (Hurriyet Daily News, 2009).

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Ataturk established a system where religion and public affairs will be separated as he thought it was the only way for modernization. In 1924, he abolished the Caliphate, closed religious schools and along with it the

remnants of the Islamic or the Shari'a Law. "The Islamic law and institutions were replaced by the Swiss Civil and Criminal Codes of a nonreligious character and banned the display of religious symbols in public institution". (Oikonomakis, 2010). The stronghold of his principles towards secularism, were embedded in the Constitution of the 1937. It is sometimes maintained by some Turks that this series of reforms, were in themselves anti-religious.

Here it is appropriate to analyse the fundamental elements that have kept the Turkish nation divided towards the road to reformation. There has always been political conflict between Kemalist and Islamist ideologies in Turkey owing to the fact that the ruling Republicans left the way open for religious activity to develop on the five pillars of the Koran. Kemalism is the ideology upon which the birth of Turkey as an independent country is based. It emerged in 1923 and it was driven by secularism and nationalism while opposing the practice of Islam within the governing system. "The founder of modern Turkey immediately launched his "cultural revolution" and believed that Islam had no place in the state's affairs, so he embarked upon a campaign to subordinate religion to the state". (Oikonomakis, 2010). The military and not the state, is by law the guardian of the Kemalist principles and it is in their force and ability to defend the secularist Kemalist ideology. On the other hand, Political Islam was the foundation of the long lasting Ottoman believes and culture which was rooted in the social fabric for about seven decades. Huntington labels Turkey as a "torn country, divided over whether its society belongs to one civilization or another". (Huntington pg.79). No doubt that these two different ideologies have been causing a clash between secular Kemalist and neo-Ottoman Islamist. Therefore, "the sudden reform imposed on the Turkish people has eventually been causing a subtle civil conflict between secularist Turks and those embracing Turkish traditions including Islam". (Zubaida, 2010). The guardians of Ataturk's secularism expressed their

displeasure towards the overthrow of several Governments by four military coups d'état since 1960, as elected governments tried to please the desires of the majority for a more pro-active supportive government towards Islamic ideals. The results of the past three elections won by the AKP and an elected Islamist Prime Minister have been an eye-witness that by and large this is the favoured orientation of the Turkish majority.

This highlights the current uncertainty and fears in European's perception towards Turkey as being a 'different' candidate. While Turkey identifies itself as a secularist country, its norms and values are based on Islamic believes which are totally different from the values of Christianity. Certain rights may pose quite a big challenge to implement due to the rooted social values of Islam in their culture and the lack of cohesion and unity towards reformation. Various EU reforms, which are based on the values of Christianity, will be confronted by opposing citizens as they will be negatively perceived and at times regarded as dishonouring their values. Furthermore, Islamic values fail to comply with the EU fundamental democratic values and principles. Emily Fernwood writes that "some argue that the principles of individual autonomy, freedom of speech and press, secularism and universal suffrage that are central to any liberal democracy fundamentally conflict with the teachings of Islam". (Fernwood, 2011).

Certain Islamic factors reveal that Islam is not merely a religion but a way of life which give rise to elements of fear and negative sentiments among Europeans. Some observers contend that Islamic culture is at odds with European traditions and worry that Europe's growing Muslim population will significantly transform European politics and society in the decades ahead. Some who support this view warn of "Europe's decline and a possible 'Islamification' of Europe". (*cited in Muslims in*

Europe). There are several other aspects that must be considered such as the Islamic violent intolerance towards other minority religious groups or those who are not Muslims, marked by bloody attacks on those who refuse to accept Islam.

The phenomenon of Islamophobia in the period after the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York on 11 September 2001, have left stereotypes and prejudices on all Muslims and are seen as terrorists, violent or otherwise unfit. Further events in Europe by radical extremists such as the Madrid 2004 bombing by an inspired al-Qaeda group from Northern Africa, the November 2004 murder of Dutch Filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a young Muslim Dutch extremist and the July 2005 attacks in London's underground system carried out by young Muslims born and raised in the United Kingdom have led to extensive discrimination and negative effect on the Muslim minorities living in Europe. These incidents have raised questions as to whether European Governments have done enough to promote the integration of Muslims into mainstream European societies. "For decades, some countries such as Germany and Austria made little effort at integration of its Muslim population, viewing Muslim immigrants as temporary "guest workers". (Archick et al, 2011).

However, Turkey succeeded to implement a mechanism integrating democracy with Islam in an effort to modernize by with the rest of the European countries. John Hughes speaks about that "success does offer welcome evidence that Islam and democracy can coexist, maybe even integrate". (Hughes, 2009). Nevertheless, the AKP has fallen under severe criticisms about Turkey's recent behaviour and the directions the country seems to be directing.

In the past decades, after the death of Ataturk and the evolution of multiparty system, religious matters developed into an electoral issue and political parties used religion as propaganda for popular attachment which led to the polarization of the Turkish

population. This has been marked in the recent years, by the ruling AKP that has been getting stronger and more involved in the state's political affairs. During an interfaith conference held towards the end of 2005, Prime Minister Erdoğan said "to those wishing for a clash of civilizations we must be able to say this: not to clash of civilizations, yes to an alliance of civilizations". (Christianity Today, 2005). However, throughout the 2011 electoral campaign, Erdoğan promised "to replace Turkey's existing constitution with one that better guaranteed the principles of democracy, while opposition parties continued to attack the AKP for introducing Islamist elements—both legislative and cultural into Turkey's historically secular government". (Leo, 2011).

Although Burak Akçapar argues that "religion is not on Turkey's agenda" several factors had been the target of criticism in recent history of Turkey that were applied by the ruling Government. During the AKPs domination Turkey has experienced a re-emergence of Islam in the social sphere. The AKP has been encouraging women to wear scarves and the black carsaf cloaks, employing civil servants with strong holds in religious believes, impede people from eating and drinking outside during Ramadam fasting, halted the consumption of alcohol out of centres in provincial areas and increased the number of state religious schools. "The guardians of Ataturk's secularism expressed their displeasure towards the overthrow of several Governments by four military coups d'état since 1960, as elected governments tried to please the desires of the majority for a more pro-active supportive government towards Islamic ideals". (Feroz Ahmad, 1993). Their political careers within Erbakan's organizations are now building on his Islamist legacy, using state institutions to shape public opinion in favour of Islamism. The Turkish Prime Minister argues that he is only implementing the wishes of his constituencies that elected him in power since 2002. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan underlined that

“by accepting Turkey as a member, the EU would prove that "it is not really a Christian club, but a place where civilizations meet". (Euroactiv, 2011)

Indeed, some critics argue that the AKP is only using religion as a powerful tool to safeguard their political survival. The above factors are all elements related to the Islamic religion that are increasing suspicion within the European nation. The big question remains whether or not Erdoğan will be strengthening Islam in Turkey. Fernwood (2011) also notes that “currently, there is a debate over secularism versus Islamism in Turkish politics, which highlights the recurring theme of the tricky balance between religion and politics in the Muslim world, as an increasing number of people favour a more traditional type of regime”. As a matter of fact, the secular Turkish military has in recent history exposed its disagreement toward Erdoğan’s Islamic-oriented government in the ‘Ergenekon plot’ to overthrow the ruling Government in 2003. Further evidence of Turkey’s embrace to Islamist ideology lies in the AKP’s support for Hamas. Recent history also reveals Turkey’s embrace of Islamist regimes in Sudan and Iran in its foreign policy that will be discussed in the last chapter. “Opponents of accession will cite differences in culture and values and emphasize the incompatibility of Islam and the West, preaching Turkey’s unsuitably as member of the EU”. (cited in James Toghil 2011/2012).

3.3 Demography

There is apparent acknowledgement of the complications of EU-Turkey negotiations aggravated by structural obstacles such as demography. Turkey is a remarkably large country in comparison with other Member States both in population and in surface area. The accession of Turkey will mean the largest enlargement in EU history in terms of area and population and could have complex implications for the European institutions. “Indeed, Turkey’s surface area of 783, 562 km²with a

population of 74,724,269 as of January 2012, with a population growth of 3.3% yearly, is larger than the total size of the ten Member States that achieved accession in 2004".(The Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry, Investment Support and Promotion Agency, no date). The ten Member States had a population of roughly 74,722,000 people at that time which is roughly equal to Turkish whole population today. Turkey's population growth suggests that by the time of accession in several years it will be ahead of the Germans, so by the time Turkey becomes a member it will have the most populated state in the whole European Union. While European countries population growth rate implies actual decline in population including Germany and Italy, Turkey's population growth continues to increase. "According to the 2009 census figures by the Turkish Statistics Institute Turkey's population growth grew by 1.45% compared to 2008". (Today's Zaman, 2010).

Germany and France being most politically influential and the largest nations with the highest number of Members in Parliament are highly concerned about the demography of Turkey. The "too many" fear is that Turkey will surpass Germany to become the most populous EU member state by 2020, as a growing Turkey surpasses a shrinking Germany. (Migration News, 2012). The decision making mechanisms in certain intergovernmental policy areas are based on the size of a Member States' population, thus Turkey with its large size will have more influence on Europe's policy making than less populated countries such as France and the UK a state of affairs which Europe's great powers would hardly ever accept. In fact, Turkey's population size is a rising significant concern within the Union regarding the internal political balance and the political weight Turkey will have in European Institution. Its implications will affect the voting power that is based on the population of a member country which in the case of Turkey will be able to highly influence, control or determine the decision making mechanism of the EU. Currently German

and France are the countries holding the majority of the voting power within the EU. Ilgaz and Toygür said “looking beneath the surface, the negative stance of some member states rest on political concerns, which can be explained by the fear of fragmentation of the Union as a result of Turkey’s accession”. (Ilgaz and Toygür, 2011).

Moreover, it is estimated that there are approximately 3, 6 million Turkish nationals living abroad of which about 3, 2 million are in European countries. Turkey’s accession continues to ground fears based on a large scale migration to EU countries. “There are also those who predict that migration to Germany will increase from 2 million to 3.5 million in thirty years when membership is granted and free movement of labour is allowed”. (CSIS, 2012)

The free movement of workers and groups is a matter of serious concern mainly for Germany and France. “With large labour force and around of 50% of the population being under 18, a significant migration of labour is expected upon Turkish accession”. (cited in James Toghil, 2011/2012). Both countries are predicting that should Turkey join the EU millions more of Turkish workers will leave their country and move freely to European cities. “Some see youthful Turks playing a useful role in German and EU labour markets, while others fear the arrival of too many low-skilled Turks”. (Migration News, 2012). The free movement of workers is one of the policy chapters of the ‘*aquis communautaire*’. The rights of economically active persons to free movement within the EU have been “complemented by limited rights for non-economically active citizens to move freely within the EU, under Article 45 of the TFEU and Directive 2004/38/EC on the right to move and reside freely within the EU”. (EC, 2010). It is an EU right and privilege that no member country could be

deprived from. Some EU officials argue that given size of Turkey, the right to free movement of workers could pose major problems for the national identity and social and cultural cohesion of EU member states. However, as Bogdani wrote “Numbers, it seems, start becoming a concern when a big nation is different in terms of culture, religion and values”. (Bogdani, 2011 p. 164).

Some countries may want Turkey out for the reason to protect their domestic markets. An important issue about Turkey’s size is the EU’s structural funds and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Chapter Four

Obstacles to Minority Rights, Fundamental Freedoms and Human Rights – Formal Obstacles

4.1 Minority Rights

The main official rationality for opposing Turkey's application for EU membership is its failure to implement the political criteria in areas such as human rights and fundamental freedoms which are the pillars of the principles of the Copenhagen Criteria. The Minority Rights Group International (MRG) in their report about minorities in Turkey explains "how the status of minorities in Turkey is established by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which defines minorities on the basis of Religion. The MRGI report also reveals that although Lausanne grants minority status to all non-Muslims, in practice Turkey has restricted the scope of the Treaty to Armenians, Jews and Rums and continues to violate the treaty since its adoption". (MRG, 2007). Article 42 of the Constitution declares Turkish as the 'Mother Tongue' of the Turkish citizens and prohibits public education in any other language, reserving the terms of Lausanne.

It is to be pointed out that Turkey has become a State Party to a significant number of international human rights instruments over the years, both within the UN structure and within the framework of the Council of Europe, of which it has been a member since 1949. "Turkey has signed the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN International Covenant on Social and Economic Rights (although with reservations); Protocol No. 6 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECtHR) on the abolition of the death penalty; the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;

the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights and the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women". (Yonah et al 2008 p. 637). "Moreover, a constitutional amendment has established the supremacy of international agreements in the area of fundamental freedoms over internal legislation". (Yonah et al, 2008 p. 637). Although legally bound by several charters and member to various international institutions Turkey's position still continues to be a matter of concern and controversy triggering strong reactions in the face of discrimination and abuses towards several human rights and is therefore one of Turkey's key obstacles in fulfilling some of the principles of the '*acquis communautaire*'. In recent years, Turkey has adopted major reforms to its legal framework in order to reach the Copenhagen criteria, however more needs to be done in areas such as minority rights, freedom of expression and freedom of the press as well as women's rights among others. The MRG report argues that "in Turkey there is no legislative framework for minorities either directly through laws granting minority rights or indirectly through an anti-discrimination law". (MRG, 2007). As indicated above Turkey has implemented significant constitutional and legislative reforms mostly in 2002, but the current Constitution and laws seek to constrain the political participatory, religious, educational and linguistic rights of minorities.

It is apparent that a hidden reason lies behind the severe restrictions of a considerable number of human rights violations in Turkey. Therefore to comprehend better Turkey's restrictive attitude and its internal fears in fulfilling these criteria, some deep analysis in Turkish history and the relationship between one another is perhaps a key to understanding the on-going internal conflicts. Turkey's problems lie in the perceived need of the nation state in order to stress national unity and combat separatism.

Ayşe Kadioğlu argues that the notion of the "indivisibility of the Turkish state with its country and nation" is the most pervasive taboo of the Turkish republic. Kadioğlu in his article continues to point out that "when taboos are sustained by law, the minds (and, many times, bodies) of citizens end up being imprisoned". (Kadioğlu, 2012).

"In 2002, law allowed the opening of private courses for teaching minority languages subject to the requirement that such instruction does not violate the "indivisible integrity of the state". (MRG, 2007). After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the borders of Turkey were drawn, Turkey has evolved into a home of vast ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. The Minister of European Affairs and Chief Negotiator Egemen Bağış said that "Turkey is still home to Kurds, Alevis, Assyrians, Arabs, Armenians, Laz, Greeks, Roma, Circassians, Christians, Muslims, Jews and others making Turkish society a mosaic of diverse cultures". (Bağış, 2012). "But instead of celebrating this diversity, the history of the Republic of Turkey is one of severe and some-times violent repression of minorities in the name of nationalism". (MGR, 2007). In spite all this, diversity has been gaining momentum in the past decade through the foundations of several minority organization that were triggered by Turkey's attempts to join the European Union in order to gain recognition.

In fact, the impulses of these developments were marked by the assassination of Hrant Dink who was charged and convicted under Article 301 and sentenced for six months imprisonment. "Mr. Dink, an ethnic Armenian, was shot to death by an ultra-nationalist teenager on January 19, 2007, outside the offices of Agos, a biweekly newspaper in Turkish and Armenian that he used to edit. Mr. Dink was a leading spokesman for Armenians in Turkey and an advocate for peace and minorities' rights". (Arsu, 2012). Dink campaigned relentlessly for official recognition of the killings of more than one million Armenians by the Ottoman Army in 1915 that is

considered by some EU Member States as genocide. Uğur Ümit Üngör writes “how the Turkish government is denying a genocide that its own population remembers. Üngör conducts his research on oral history which he finds as a potential tool for scholars interested in mass violence”. (Üngör, 2012)

Touching upon the emigration of Anatolian Armenians during World War I, Erdoğan firmly denied allegations of genocide against the Anatolian Armenians during the Ottoman era. “My ancestors didn’t commit genocide; they wouldn’t,” he said, while noting that progress in ongoing normalization efforts between Armenia and Turkey were related to progress concerning the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan”. (Today’s Zaman, 2009). “Turkey’s genocide rhetoric was confronted by the former French President Nicolas Sarkozy who, ordered his government to draft a new law punishing denial of the Armenian genocide with a”. (BBC News, 2012). “The bill was eventually approved on December 22, 2011 by the French Parliament criminalizing the denial of the Armenian Genocide and rendering it punishable with a year in jail and a fine of 45,000 Euros”. (Armenian Weekly, 2011). Sarkozy’s reactions were spurred by the suspension of political ties between the two countries. Ambassador Tahsin Burcuoglu was immediately recalled to return to Ankara. At the same time the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan announced “a serious of sanctions on France such as suspension of all kind of political consultation with France, cancellation of bilateral political, economic and military activities and joint maneuvers”. (Armenian Weekly, 2011) Prime Minister Erdoğan affronted the former President Sarkozy by accusing him with a similar genocide conducted by the French Colonial Rule from 1945 onwards. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that “French massacres in colonial Algeria were themselves a genocide, and has since vowed “retribution” for the French law that treats with an issue in Turkey that has never been resolved”. (CNN, 2011).

The 2012 the French Presidential elections resulted into a positive twist in the diplomatic Franco-Turkish spectrum. Turkey has immediately welcomed the newly elected Government of President François Hollande. The Journal of the Turkish Weekly reported on the 22 June 2012 that “Turkey has ended sanctions against France thanks to the newly elected French President François Hollande’s positive approach toward Turkey in a restoration of ties that had deteriorated under the rule of ex-French leader Nicholas Sarkozy”. (Turkish Weekly, 2012). The new approach of France towards Turkey was described as a new era between the two countries.

4.2 Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Press

Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press in Turkey has been long a strong point of discussion. Serious concerns also remains among European politicians, critics, academics and intellectuals all over Europe. The 2004 EU Commission Progress report on the Turkish Accession demonstrates that “although positive legislation from Prime Minister Erdoğan on banning torture, abolishing the death penalty and improving the rights of Kurdish and non-Muslims, these laws had not been sufficiently implemented”. (EU, 2004). During the past years hundreds of intellectual, writers and artists have been prosecuted or served terms of imprisonment for expressing their non-violent opinions or because they dared to express their political views. Any propaganda against the indivisible integrity of the state is seen as a terrorist threat. “More than 100 journalists remained imprisoned at year’s end 2010, with most charged under the anti-terrorism law or for connections to an illegal organization”. (United States Department of State, 2011).

Hasan Cemal explains “how since the 1990’s, the ‘fear’ of communism has been replaced by the ‘fear’ of separatism. Now, it is the Anti-Terror Law that suffocates free expression in Turkey affecting most negatively the Kurdish media”. (Cemal,

2012). The Anti-Terror Law has been the cause of negative criticism against Turkey from various political actors, organizations and institutions from all over the world. The anti-Terror Law is being interpreted as tool to jail and silence journalists, academics or intellectuals should they venture to speak out their ideas. Under the strict penal code, terrorism offences even apply to young teenagers.

“In 2010, more than 350 children between thirteen and seventeen were serving sentences in adult prisons in Turkey for participating in demonstration organized by Kurds or the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK)”. (Head, 2010). In the eyes of the Turkish political elites not only Kurdish adults are seen as a treat but also their children. In October 2008, during a demonstration the police arrested six young Kurds between the age of thirteen and sixteen for throwing stones, singing slogans and distributed posters of the illegal Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Daniel Steinvorth reported “that because such teenagers, in his view, had to be the "children of terrorists," the provincial governor recommended punishing the families and cancelling their claims for pension and social benefits”. (Steinvorth, 2009). The UN Committee on the Rights of Children repeatedly showed concern about articles 17, 29 and 30 of the Convention. In its 2012 report, the Committee noted that “in some cases with regard to education, freedom of expression and the right to enjoy one’s own culture and use one’s own language, these reservations have a negative impact on children belonging to ethnic groups which are not recognized as minorities under the Turkish Constitution in particular children of Kurdish origin”. (UN, 2012). In paragraph 42 of the report, the Committee expresses “deep concern about the ill-treatment and torture of children, especially Kurdish children who have been involved in political assemblies and activities, in prison, police stations, vehicles and on the streets”. (UN, 2012).

On many occasions these critics have been victims since their ideas have been misinterpreted as insulting or act of terrorism towards the government. “The proposed changes fail to reform terrorism laws widely misused against journalists and pro-Kurdish activists, Human Rights Watch said”. (HRW, 2012). “In Turkey the High Board for Radio and Television Broadcasting (RTÜK) enjoys, and uses, powers to fine or shut down TV channels for days or even weeks if their content is deemed by it to offend national or family standards”. (Lake, 2005 p.95)

US Ambassador to Turkey Francis Ricciardone commented while meeting with Ankara representatives of various newspapers that “as he sees that Turkey’s democracy has made significant progress, he cannot understand that a country that has covered so much distance in its democracy keeps intellectuals in jail. People should not be thrown in jail for their statements”. (Today’s Zaman, 2012). The Time Magazine published that “the Ambassador was harshly criticized by the Turkish government, with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan calling him an amateurish ambassador.” Erdoğan has refused “to comment on the wave of media arrests, saying they are a legal matter”. (Turgut, 2011). However, Prime Minister Erdoğan denies such allegations in various statements. While delivering speeches at Johns Hopkins University and the Washington branch of the Ankara-based Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) following his meeting with US President Barack Obama in December 2009, Prime Minister Erdoğan said, “the press was even free to insult the president, the prime minister and their families.” (Today’s Zaman, 2009).

4.3 The Kurdish Problem

Before World War I, the indigenous Kurdish people lived in a mountainous region known as Kurdistan “the Land of the Kurds”. The region formed parts of eastern

Turkey, northern Iraq, northern western Iran and northern Syria. The Kurds form a prominent majority population with historical bases of a Kurdish culture, language, and national identity. (The Washingtonpost, 1999)

Kurdish tribes cherished their virtual autonomy until the last years of the Ottoman Empire. “The breakup of the Ottoman Empire after the war created a number of new nation-states, but not a separate Kurdistan and the traditional land of the native Kurds was divided among these founding states”. (The Washingtonpost, 1999). The British idea of a nation state with a defined set of borders and the struggle for independence became the inclination of the Kurds dispersed in these areas. But, the concept of the Kurdish nationalism failed to establish a nation state and this ethnic group with a language and no homeland ended with no set space on the map. Turkey officially recognizes a few minority groups such as the Greeks, Armenians and Jews but not the Kurds. A few Kurds began to call for recognition and better cultural rights in the 1960s, and a growing number identified with the Turkish left in the 1970s. They were banned to speak Kurdish in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup. “In 1984, Kurdish nationalism found violent expression in the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which embarked on a guerilla war against the State”. (MRG, 2005). Today the PKK is a designated terrorist group by Turkey, the European Union and the United States. The subsequent bloody conflicts in Turkey have been marked by the lives of around 30,000 people or more. “Kurdish rebels have used northern Iraq as a springboard for attacks on Turkish targets in their decades-long fight for autonomy in Turkey’s Kurdish dominated south east”. (Hacaoglu, 2012).

Kurds are the largest ethnic and linguistic minority in Turkey amounting to 10 to 23 percent of the population. Turkey fears that the Kurds will unite and create an independent state and claim their autonomy. So Turkey’s constraint on freedom of

expression and freedom of the press are being used as a defensive tool in order to protect its territorial borders and the veiled attempt to break up the state. Flam writes that “given the history of disintegration of the Empire as a result of emerging nationalism the ethnic Turkish majority views expressions of Kurdish nationalism as a threat to the territorial integrity of Turkey”. (Flam, 2003).

Leyla Zana, who spent 10 years in a Turkish prison in 1992 after speaking in Kurdish while taking her parliamentary oath, told *Rudaw* in a recent interview that “a referendum should be held in Turkey on the growing Kurdish demands for autonomy”. (Rudaw, 2012). In a speech to a Kurdish audience Prime Minister Erdoğan said that Turkey is ‘one nation, one flag and one country’, adding ‘whoever doesn’t like it can leave’. (Steinvorth, 2008). However, Prime Minister Erdoğan’s hopes to resolve the conflict are still strong even though amid bloodshed in recent escalating violence by the PKK in southeast Turkey. Various policies were implemented in an effort to resolve the conflict. The policies implemented were marked as a significant step to highlight Turkey’s democratic credentials in the hope of eventual admission in the European Union.

Prime Minister Erdoğan has sought to address the largest indigenous Kurdish minority’s grievances by eliminating restrictions on Kurdish-language in private schools, television, and radio broadcast. He also stated that lessons in Kurdish-language will be granted in schools if enough students asked for them. Gultan Kisanak of the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy party said permitting lessons on only an elective basis “amounts to oppression”. (BBC News, 2012).

The Government believes that conflict will not end through military means but through negotiations. He also suggested “he was prepared to hold talks with Leyla Zana after she said she believed he was capable of ending the Kurdish troubles”.

(Today's Zaman, 2012). However, she became a target of both the PKK and the BDP, Erdoğan said, speaking at an opening ceremony in the eastern province of Van, his second stop on June 13. "Now they are trying to silence Zana with threats. That is what the terror organization and its extension does," Erdoğan said. (Turkish Weekly, 2012). Abdullah Demirbas, the mayor of a district in the mainly Kurdish city of Diyarbakir in eastern Turkey said that "a state that wants to end violence should widen the political sphere as much as possible, so that people who used to feel compelled to use armed force will turn to dialogue instead".(Letch, 2011). In 2007, "Abdullah Demirbas was removed from his functions and was prosecuted under Article 220(8) of the Turkish Penal Code and faced three years imprisonment for claiming the use of Kurdish language in public services". (KHRP, 2009).

4.4 Women's Rights

Domestic violence is an existing factor in all societies all over the world in various dimensions and it should be inhibited. Turkey is no exception and came under fire several times on its failure to take heed against this problem and is regarded as a very complex factor. In Turkey, as well in other countries, women and children are primarily the victims affected by domestic violence. "In recent years, violence against women and especially physical violence and violence that results in murder has been brought to the agenda intensely". (Akkoç, no date)

"Although, early reforms modelled on Western ideals empowered women in the public sphere -- especially in such areas as education, political enfranchisement, and dress --these reforms left the private sphere (and most of Turkey's rural population) untouched". (Sussmann, 2011).

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) welcomed the legislative reforms that "have been taken and the adoption of a wide

range of legislative measures policies and programmes to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination against women in Turkey”. (UN, 2012).

“Turkey abolished the traditional provision that rape can go unpunished if the perpetrator marries the victim with the reform of the Penal Code in 2004”. (CDGE, 2010). In the 2010 report, CEDAW made special reference to the amendments to the Penal Code to combat violence against women, the amendment to the Law on the Protection of the Family and the Law on Child Protection. However, CEDAW viewed concern on various areas of life where “recommendations for improvement have already been made and Turkey failed to provide all provisions for implementation to be in line with the Convention”. (UN, 2010).

In May 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey and other Members of the Council of Europe signed Convention on preventing domestic violence and other forms of violence against women. “The ratification by Turkey of the Convention is a clear prove that the Government has committed itself to combating violence against women,” says Güldal Aksit, President of the Parliamentary Commission on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women. (Marchand, 2011). However, Aksit argues that “treaties and reforms can only go so far in protecting women in a country where gender-based violence has a strong cultural component. The victims are isolated because the traditional Turkish family structure endures”. (Marchand, 2011).

This means that the problems of domestic violence in Turkey lie in the basic roots of the Turkish social system. “There is a consensus over the fact that crimes of honour emanate from cultural and not religious roots and that they can be found worldwide, mainly in patriarchal societies or communities”. (Turkish Culture Foundation, 2011). Nebahat Akkoç writes that “this is a problem of the system , the system is structured on a basis of violence, has defined the roles of men and women, has regarded

women as someone's daughter or wife or mother, has given men the right and responsibility to monitor women". (Akkoç, no date).

Although, legislative steps have been taken in Turkey most notably under Law 4320 the Family Protection Law, the States authorities fail to protect women against domestic violence. CEDAW urged "the Turkish Government to evaluate and strengthen the law by enacting comprehensive legislation on all forms of violence against women and to ensure that in such legislation all victims of violence have access to immediate means of redress and protection". (UN, 2010).

"Life-saving protections, including court-issued protection orders and emergency shelters, are not available for many abuse victims because of gaps in the law and enforcement failures". (HRW, 2011). In January 2009, "the Turkish Hacettepe University found that 42 percent of women in Turkey aged 15-60, and 47 percent of women in rural areas, had experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their husbands or partners at some point of their lives". (HRW, 2011). Women's solitude when faced by violence is earmarked by the responsible authorities in Turkey in various levels. Several reports reveal that when women seek support on domestic violence they receive little or no attention from the police or gendarme. Most of the time victims are urged to go back to their offenders. The host of a popular Turkish TV Show Professor Faruk Beser during a program "Islam in Our Life, urges a woman to "carry this pain within you and keep living with your husband," prescribing constant prayer over divorce, and reminding the woman of the rewards she will receive in heaven for her suffering. (Sobecki, 2009).

Based on the report of the Human Rights Watch several facts can be listed why women in Turkey refrain from seeking protection:

- “The predominant obstacle Turkish women face is financial support and means of maintenance for themselves and their children, therefore many victims are forced to rely on their abusers due to their economic dependence.
- Another major obstacle is the State Authorities and the lack of their support due to their poor experience in tackling domestic violence. In most cases women are turned down and urged to reconcile with their offenders instead of enforcing the laws.
- In areas with large Kurdish population women have difficulties with language problems since authorities fail to speak Kurdish or Kurdish victims are unable to speak Turkish and no interpreters are provided.
- The mediocre judiciary system due to the lack of expertise and shortages of staff also poses disadvantages for women to reporting violence in various areas.
- Shortages of shelters – there are currently 52 shelters throughout Turkey and even where they are available conditions security and quality of service is sometimes inadequate”. (HRW, 2011)

The government did not effectively protect vulnerable populations, including women and children. “Violence against women, including so-called honor killings and rape, remained a particularly significant problem”. (United States Department of State, 2011). The Istanbul Bar Association wrote that “following this ratification of the Law, 3207 cases in 2001; 4248 cases in 2002, 6375 cases in 2003, 8276 cases in 2004 and 9132 cases in 2005 were filed and finalized”. (Tuskan, 2011). Several projects have been conducted by the Istanbul Bar Association in order to raise awareness on

women related issues, their rights and to strengthen women to fight domestic violence.

In 2007 with the Law No.5636, the law was amended and established a protection order system whereby “a person subjected to abuse by a family member living under the same roof, male or female, can apply directly through a prosecutor for an order from a family court for a period not more than six months”. (HRW, 2011 p. 4). Turkey has improved its laws, setting out requirements for shelters for abused women and protection orders. However, “gaps in the law and implementation failures by police, prosecutors, judges, and other officials make the protection system unpredictable at best, and at times downright dangerous”, Human Rights Watch said. (HRW, 2011). Evidently, this is a conflict between those championing reform and awareness and those seeking to oppress women in the name of religious traditions.

Another gruesome phenomenon in the Turkish cultural social fabric is the so-called honour killings, now under the reconstructive face-lift, comes the emergence of ‘honour suicide’. Crimes of Honour are frequently occurring in Eastern Anatolia where the eminence of tribal and feudal communities prevails. Most honour killings happen for simple reasons as wearing tight clothes, receiving a message from a boy or talking to a man who is not a relative and even declining a marriage in order to continue their education. A case in point is that of an eighteen year old Elif from Batman Southeast Turkey. “All Elif had done was simply decline the offer of an arranged marriage with an older man, telling her parents she wanted to continue her education. That act of disobedience was seen as bringing dishonour on her whole family – a crime punishable by death”. (Navai R, 2009). Worse still: "At least five women in Turkey are killed every day," Hülya Gülbahar said. These murders are often called "honour killings". Girls and women “are killed for bringing dishonour to

their family - having a boyfriend or an extramarital affair, or even just wearing clothes deemed too immodest by their more conservative male relatives". (Conrad N, 2012).

The Turkish National Assembly has recently produced the first official statistical data regarding honour crimes. According to the report, 1091 honour crimes have been committed in Turkey between the years 2000 and 2005. According to police records, "29% of these events are due to issues of honour, 29% due to disagreements within the family, 15% due to extra-marital affairs, 10% due to blood feuds, 9% due to sexual harassment, 3% due to rape, 3% due to disagreement in marriage arrangements and 2% due to other reasons". (Livaneli, 2011). According to government figures, "there are more than 200 a year – half of all the murders committed in the country". (Navai, 2009). Although, CEDAW notes the measures taken to combat honour killings, by the issuance of a Prime Ministry Circular and the "highly concerned about the persistence of such killings and the lack of data available on its incidence in rural or remote areas". (UN, 2010).

Evidently, the problem of honour crimes and domestic violence in Turkey cannot be resolved through the frail laws that continue to fail to protect women. The Government is bound to take stricter measures in legal, educational and economical areas to bring awareness about this problem. In June 8, 2011 just a few days before the general elections, Prime Minister Erdoğan announced his initiative to reshuffle the Ministries as part of the new structure for the Council of Ministers. The Governments resolved to abolish the Ministry for Women and Family and instead established "the Ministry of Family and Social Policies". (HRW, 2011). Issues of concern related to children, the aged, the disabled and the families of soldiers who die during active service, as well as family and women's right are all under the portfolio of the Ministry. "The Turkish government's decision to scrap the Ministry for

Women flies in the face of research showing major shortcomings on women's rights and horrendous violence against women," said Gauri van Gulik, women's rights advocate and researcher at Human Rights Watch. (HRW, 2011). "Women in Turkey need more determined action by the government, not less, to protect women's rights in practice".(HRW, 2011).

Hülya Gülbahar claimed that in "Turkey, to be a lawyer, to fight for women's rights, means that you are of course risking your own life". (Conrad, 2012). The identity and virtue of women are tied to someone else. Tuskan notes that "women are regarded as an entity belonging to father pre-marriage and husband after it, thus degraded". (Tuskan, 2011). Bogdani argues that "several factors related to Muslim practices and customs such as forced marriages, refusal of women swimming in pools, honor crimes, female chastity or women are considered second class in mosques in the UK, are perceived as bizarre, primitive and backward by most Europeans". (Bogdani, p. 69).

The EU Commission acknowledged efforts made in fighting violence against women and encourages the authorities to pursue them, considering that this work could provide inspiration for other problem areas where the judicial system plays a crucial role. The Istanbul Bar Association says that "the State should pull on its weight and it should give support and the guarantee required to protect women who are subject to violence, provide them with a shelter, strengthen them financially, provide them with employment facilities in coordination with NGO's". (Tuskan, 2011).

Chapter Five

5.1 Principles of Turkey' Foreign Policy

In this section we will discern Turkey's strategic foreign policy objectives and the strategic consequences, risks and treats of Turkey's EU membership as seen by those opposing Turkey's accession. Turkey strategic location situated at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and the Middle East enables Turkey to play a pivotal role in regional and international affairs. Furthermore, Turkey is currently in the middle of two crisis that of West who are under an economic crisis and the east who is absorbed under political turmoil.

“According to Davutoğlu, Turkey possesses ‘strategic depth’ which allows it to implement a multi-dimensional foreign policy and claim a central role in global politics”. (Grigoriadis, 2010).

First and foremost we need to identify the characteristics that form the Turkish Foreign Policy under the Foreign Affairs Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. Grigoriadis explains “the vision of Ahmet Davutoğlu's Foreign Policy” and argues that “although geopolitics still comprises a framework of Dovutoglu's strategic thinking, it is supplemented by liberal elements, such as soft power, conflict resolution and promotion of ‘win-win solutions’”. (Grigoriadis, 2010)

In the past decade, Turkey has embraced a set of principles to adjust its domestic politics and foreign policy in order to solve regional critical problems particularly with its neighboring countries. Turkey's rational and active diplomacy is based on the resolution of issues through peaceful means. The approach of the Minister of Foreign Affairs is based on the principle of soft power through the motto “Zero

Problems with Neighbors” that is “*peace at home peace in the world*”. (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011). The main objective entailed resolving problems with neighboring countries to increase Turkish security and economic cooperation on the basis of mutual benefits. Akçaptan points out that “the country’s leader and diplomats have been exerting maximum efforts to transform old foes into friends”. (Akçaptan, p. 147).

“Some of the achievements conducted through Turkey’s active foreign policy are Turkey’s close ties with Western organizations and customs union, the extension of the opening of new Embassies in Africa and Latin America, the abolition of visas with 61 countries and the customs union attempt with Syria, Jordan and Lebanon”. (Nas, 2011). According to Bulent Aras, “Davutoğlu’s ideas have been shaped in a context that assumes Turkey is part of Europe. Thus the vision of the EU is an unchanging part of Turkish foreign policy”. (Aras, 2011).

At the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) the President of the CSIS John Hamre noted that “Turkey lives in a complicated neighborhood and it keeps being drawn into that neighborhood”. (Hamre, 2012). As a matter of fact, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu sustains that “Turkey as a country situated in a highly volatile region affected by all conflicts, tensions and developments in neighboring regions, is indeed very much interested and involved in mediation and facilitation efforts of the surrounding external affairs”. (The Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Indeed, Turkey’s strategic ‘soft power’ policy was translated into a key role as an effective international mediator and peacekeeping player. The Economist (2012) reported that “Turkey was able to mediate between Lebanon’s rival factions, between Iraq’s Shias and Sunnis and between Israel and Syria, until Israel’s 2009 assault

against Gaza which has clearly deteriorated Turkish-Israel relations". The first indications were marked in January 2009 at the Global Economic Forum in Davos where the Turkish Prime Minister walked away from the Panel. The attacks of May 2010 on the Mavi Marmara incident that "resulted in the death of eight Turks and one Turkish-American citizen when Israeli Special Forces attacked, in international waters, the flagship of a flotilla carrying volunteers and humanitarian aid to Gaza, has continued to crumble relations". (Turan, 2011).

Turkey's interests abroad, especially in the regions of the Balkans, Middle East and Africa through the use of 'soft power' are Ankara's ambitions to enhance Turkey's profile around the world most notably in Muslim countries. Turkey succeeded to establish healthy bilateral relations with neighboring Russia becoming its largest single trade partner and energy supplier. Turkey has also been serving as a web for energy security with leading energy transport routes in the country. As Turkish-Russian Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group Chairman Salih Kapusuz (2011) stated in anticipation of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Russia, "A high level of political trust that is unprecedented by historical standards has been attained." "Another landmark event was Turkey's participation to a conference under the theme 'Preparing Somalia's Future: Goals for 2015', in an effort to lead the process of the reconstruction of Somalia". (Mohamud, 2012)

This successful opening to countries beyond the confines of the EU raises the question lies whether the EU is ready to accept all the challenges of a country like Turkey that is surrounded by countries in a political crisis? Does Turkey bring more opportunities or threats to the European Union? "An effective dialogue on foreign, security, and defense issues would complement the accession process". (Grabbe and Ülgen, 2010)

At the same time, some EU Member States see Turkey as a security burden primarily due to the fact of its direct involvement in the Cyprus problem, the possible new escalations with Greece on Greece's extension of the territorial area in the Aegean Sea and Turkey's borders with unstable countries in the Middle East and the Caucasus. Karina Oborune and Ibragim Zalel analyze "the benefits and the losses from Turkey's accession to the EU and point out various negative factors which these two analysts believe, will be imported into the EU's foreign policy agenda". (Oborune and Zalel, 2009). These factors are seen by some EU Member States as "obstacles to Turkey's application to join the EU and would bring new challenges to the block including such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, illegal trafficking of drugs and people and terrorism, issues which are probably the most dangerous for the EU". (Oborune and Zalel, 2009).

There are also claims about the shift in Turkey's Foreign Policy. As the Economist reported (April, 2012) "that over the past decade, under Mr Erdoğan's government, Turkey embarked on an activist foreign policy, courting Iran and long-forgotten Arab neighbours as the European Union cooled on Turkey's aspirations to join". Kattan argues that "Erdoğan has been shifting Turkey away from a more Western-oriented foreign policy and towards a foreign policy aligned with some of the West's most dangerous enemies". (Kattan, 2012). Claims over a shift in Turkey's foreign policy orientation are "deliberate" and "unfair," Erdoğan said, "while noting that as a member of the Western alliance, Turkey's capability of speaking with everyone should be seen as "an opportunity." (Today's Zaman, 2009). Nas (2011) writes" that Turkey's increasing engagement in the region if based on similar values and strategies of the EU would complement and strengthen rather than contradict Turkey's European vocation".

Micah N. Levinson in his article “makes a negative comparison with President Theodore Roosevelt and writes that Roosevelt’s speak softly and carry a big stick foreign policy enhanced American power and prestige around the world”. (Levinson, 2012). On the other hand, today Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan imperils his country’s chances of regional preponderance by pursuing a policy of speaking pugnaciously and carrying no stick.

Current tensions with a number of regional countries have been testing Turkey’s soft power that has been characterized by the constant aggressive rhetoric and military threats to intimidate these countries that are igniting further concern among EU Member States and possibly that will continue to hinder Turkey’s application for EU membership. Cases in view are the Cyprus problem and Syria’s current internal turmoil which will be analyzed separately in this chapter.

Although Turkey’s Foreign Policy clashes with the EU Foreign Policy in cases such as Iran and Israel, “others claim that with Turkey’s membership in the EU, Europe could enhance its influence in Central Asia and compete with other potential superpowers such as Russia, China and the United State, where Turkey already plays a significant role due to the already embedded roots through powerful businessmen and contractors”. (Motica, 2010).

5.2 The Cyprus Question

One of the top obstacles faced by Turkey is the Cyprus issue. The debate at the EU Summit on December 17, 2004 almost ended with bitter memories due to the demands and condition tabled for Turkey by the Republic of Cyprus. The Cyprus problem has extensively harmed Turkey-EU relations since its initial steps and has exerted negative influence on other Member States that tend to hide to block Turkey’s application. Cyprus itself is blocking several Chapters in Turkey’s

negotiation process. Turkey's invasion of northern Cyprus has left a deep scar in Turkish-European relations. The distrust of our legacy between Greece and Turkey left its impact on the geopolitical interests of the Cypriot island soon after Cyprus's decolonization from the British Forces. Shyamal Kataria writes that "despite all the challenges facing Turkish accession into the EU, it seems as though it will be the 'Cyprus Problem' that may prove to be the ultimate stumbling block to its entry with its inability to implement the 'Ankara Protocol' and the problem continues to haunt Turkey". (Kataria, 2009).

The roots of the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots dispute lie in the attempt of the Greek Cypriots majority for unification or enosis with Greece, an inspiration that transpired during the Greek War of Independence in the early nineteenth century under the British colonial rule. While delegates of the Turkish minority considered Turkey as their mother land, Greek Cypriots regarded Greece and unification with Greece would have meant for the Turkish Cypriots being a smaller minority within the Greek nation. The regional power of both countries "is a symbolic connection towards the Cypriot when the Greek-Cypriots unceasing desire to join Greece caused an escalation of communal conflict with the Turkish Cypriots which led to the Turkish-Cypriot heading North and the Greek-Cypriot in the South". (United States Department of State, 2012).

In 1960, under the dominant rule of President Makarios, Cyprus signed the Treaty of Independence under the guarantors Britain, Greece and Turkey in Zurich. Nevertheless the joy of Independence was short lived, due to the disparities that emanated on the implementation and interpretation of the Constitution. President Makarios resolution to make constitutional changes led to the outbreak of further intercommunal conflict and the rise to the pro-enosis forces no longer

supportive of Makarios. In July, 1974, the military junta in Athens sponsored a coup led by Greek-Cypriots against President Makarios. "Citing the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee, the Turkish military intervened immediately with the aim to protect the Turkish-Cypriot minority". (North Cyprus, 2012).

The events of 1974 led to the internal displacement of the Cypriot population of the island. Leaving behind their birth place and residences, almost all Greek-Cypriots fled to the south while all Turkish Cypriots fled to the north leaving behind their birth places and residences.

On November 1974, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously "adopted by a recorded vote of 170 in favour, none against and no abstentions resolution 3221 (XXIX), which put into place a structure for a solution to the Cyprus problem with forces maintaining a buffer zone between the two sides that freed the island from further violent conflicts". (UNGA, 1974). Following the sour events of 1974, the Turkish Cypriots formed their own institutions in the northern area of Cyprus that took control of 38% of the island, by electing a "President" and a "Prime Minister". In the late twentieth century, Turkish Cypriots declared independence as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The process was rejected by the international community and the United Nations Security Council with "its resolution 367 (1975) of 12 March 1975 and was only recognised by the Republic of Turkey by maintaining about 40,000 troops in the Northern part". (UNGA, 1975)

Several attempts were led by the United Nations to deliver a resolution for the Cyprus problem. In 2004, the Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan orchestrated direct talks between the leaders of the two communities by releasing a settlement proposal for the unification of their country, informally called the "Annan Plan". Intensive efforts were made to get the support of both sides support for the

plan prior to Cyprus accession to the EU on the 1st of May, 2004. However, the package that was considered to be carefully designed to supposedly accommodate both parties was put to a referenda held simultaneously in both parts of the island. However, “the package was rejected by the Greek-Cypriot side, winning only one fourth of the votes. On the other hand, two thirds of the Turkish Cypriots voted in its favour”. (Faustmann, 2004). “One delighted Ankara civil servant said in the aftermath of the referendum that ‘the whole world can see that we seek peace, that we are not the ones who have broken the possibility of a settlement’”. (cited in Lake, 2005 p. 54).

Furthermore, on the 24th April 2004, the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council stated its determination to put an end to the isolation of the Turkish-Cypriot community so as to facilitate the unification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of northern Cyprus. The Council recommended “the establishment of a package consisting of the Green Line Regulation, Financial Assistance Regulation and Direct Trade Regulation for ending the isolation of Northern Cyprus”. (Ilgaz and Toygür, 2011). Mehmet Ali Talat noted that “the Commissions two regulations drafted on the 26 April 2004 in accordance with the Council’s invitation aiming to provide direct aid to Turkish Cypriots and starting direct trade between the North and the EU, have been blocked by counter efforts from Greek Cypriots within EU institutions after being granted membership in the European Council on 1 May 2004”. (Brussels, 2004). He argues that the EU bears a historic responsibility for restoring equality to the political dynamics in the discussion and negotiation of the Cyprus problem that was harmed by the full-membership of the Greek Cypriot Administration in the EU on behalf of the whole island. It is apparent that Cyprus effectively exerts its political influence on the enforcement of the package.

Rejection of the plan meant that Cyprus remained divided and only the Greek area joined the EU. In April 24, Kofi Annan said that “today Cyprus missed an historic chance to resolve the decades-long problem after voters rejected a reunification plan, leaving the island nation divided as it prepares to join the European Union next week”. (UN News, 2004). While he criticized the Greek Cypriots the Secretary General showed his appreciation towards the Turkish Cypriots for their support to the Annan plan and he regretted to see that they will not equally enjoy the benefits of the EU membership. According to various critics the Annan Plan “lacked support of the Government of Cyprus and other politicians for various factors. President Papadopoulos called on his constituents to reject the reunification plan. The Greek Cypriots had little incentive to accept the plan”. (The Washington Institute, 2004). Niels Kadritzke writes about “the melodrama of President Papadopoulos upon his calls for rejection to the Annan plan on television on the evening of 7, April 2004”. He notes that “the rejection of the plan was only instigated by needs for security and a fear of all political risk, as well as a perception of Turkish Cypriots as competitors rather than as partners in the shared wellbeing of a re-united island”. (Kadritzke, 2004).

On the other hand, President Papadopoulos claimed that the plan fulfilled almost all the Turkish-Cypriots demands but hardly any of the Greek-Cypriots conditions. “The plan was excessively oriented towards a bi-zonal situation in the sense of creating permanent ethnic and legal separation. The central government would be weak and both political entities would enjoy extensive local autonomy”. (Chadjipadelis and Andreadis, 2007).

The Greek Cypriots already recognized by all EU Member States as an independent state gained accession in the EU in 2004 that was highly opposed by the Turkish

Cypriot minority occupying the northern part of Cyprus triggered by the rejection of the plan. For two years following the Annan Plan referenda, the divided island saw little progress towards cohesion. Yet, when “the Secretary for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari visited Cyprus in July 2006, he thrived to accomplish a commitment between both parties to commence exploratory talks which commenced in July 8, between President Papadopoulos and Mr Talat”. (The Republic of Cyprus, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009).

Even though some critics argue that negotiations faltered due to the expectations of the sides aims and wants, Alvaro de Soto, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, “told the Security Council that it seemed attributable to failings of political will, rather than to the absence of favorable circumstances”. (UN News, 2004).

Negotiations between the two parties commenced again on the 3 September 2008 under the UN auspices with a ceremonial meeting at the official residence of Mr. Tadeusz Zerkow, the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative in Cyprus. Two fruitful Joint Declarations were issued respectively on the 23 May and 1 July 2008 where both actors committed themselves to giving birth to a bizonal and bi-communal Cypriot Federation with ‘political equality’ defined as a ‘partnership’ which will have a ‘Federal Government with a single, as well as a Turkish Cypriot Constituent State and a Greek Cypriot Constituent State, which will be of equal status’. The leaders also ‘discussed the issues of single sovereignty and citizenship which they agreed in principle’ During these set of negotiations issues regarding Governance and Power Sharing, Property, EU Matters, Economic Matters, Territory, Security and Guarantees were discussed, however parties were able to reconcile

only on matters of Governance and Power Sharing, EU Matters and Economic matters.

In the meantime during these negotiations, President Talat paid a visit to Brussels to meet with the European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso. At their meeting President Talat stated that because of the Greek Cypriot side's EU membership, the Cyprus Issue has now become a matter of the EU and accordingly the EU has an important responsibility to find a solution to this issue and added that "the Cyprus Issue should not be a precondition for the admission of Turkey to the EU". (The Republic of Northern Cyprus, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009).

In an article a Ministry official Petros Kareklas stressed that "security is top priority for the divided island of Cyprus both the internal security which is marked with the tensions that culminated between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriot minority in December 1963 and externally since it forms part of the external border of the European Union". (Famagusta Gazette, 2011). Although Cyprus is seeking to establish unity with the Turkish Cypriots who occupy approximately 37% of the territory without or little foreign intervention, internal security is definitely bound to outside involvement. As a fact several Military forces such as Greece, Turkey and Britain, are still stationed in Cyprus to safeguard the physical security of the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots communities.

In late 2010 relations saw again an escalation of tensions between both parties after the discovery of huge gas fields under their rich bed of the Mediterranean which have triggered again the Greek Cypriots eroding mistrust. Disputable maritime boundaries and exploration natural gas deposits off the divided island are the cause of the current tensions. Didem Akyel Collinsworth said that "the gas discovery could be the locomotive for reunification, but unilateral developments will make a negotiated

settlement even more difficult, further raise tensions and shatter hopes of future security and stability around the island”. (cited in International Crisis Group, 2012)

On the 17 December 2010 Cyprus and Israel has signed a maritime border delimitation agreement. The Cyprus-Israel agreement was highly criticized by the Turkish Prime Minister in part due to the diplomatic aftermath following Israel’s raid on the vessel participating in a 2010 aid flotilla bound for Gaza where nine Turkish activists were killed and on the other part due to the fact that Turkey does not recognize Cyprus as a state. Selcan Hacaoglu points out another factor to Turkey’s objection towards the agreement and writes “Turkey on Tuesday slammed a maritime border accord between Cyprus and Israel, saying it was "null and void" because it disregards the rights and jurisdiction of Turkish Cypriots on the island”. (Hacaoglu, 2010). Minister Davutoğlu explains that “Turkey does not have any claim regarding the maritime areas subject to the said Exclusive Economic Zone delimitation agreement”. (The Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Turkey approaches this issue within the context of the Cyprus problem and points out that “Turkish Cypriots have also rights and jurisdiction over the maritime areas of the Cyprus Island”. (The Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Turkey insists that the Greek Cypriot Government does not represent the interests of the Turkish Cypriots since Cyprus is a divided island.

Micah N. Levinson writes that “when Nicosia ignored Ankara’s threats, Turkey conducted live fire naval exercises near the disputed natural gas fields”. (Levinson, 2012). Commenting on his remarks on the 30, April 2012, Cyprus President Demetris Christofias said to CNL that “Cyprus will not submit to Turkish threats, pointing out at the same time that Turkey would also benefit by the exploration of Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone if it changes its stance and contributes to the

solution of the Cyprus problem". (Phantis, 2012). In the same article it was reported that the government of Cyprus has protested to the UN and the EU about Turkey's moves, saying it has a sovereign right to exploit its natural resources, pointing out that Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots will benefit from any benefits that may come from oil drilling. Cyprus has also protested to the UN and the EU against the illegal drilling for hydrocarbons conducted by the Turkish Petroleum Corporation in the occupied area of Famagusta who signed a bilateral agreement with Turkey.

5.3 The Syrian Crisis

Another argument disputing about Turkey's application relates to Turkey's regional borders with Iran, Iraq and Syria a troubled area with which the EU Member States would be directly faced due to the security challenges posed by these countries and their instability if Turkey becomes a member of the EU. The current obstacle that has arisen for Turkey's application is the indispensable Syrian crisis. The Syrian crisis is the result of a wave of claims demanded by the Syrian nation that were triggered by the achievements of Tunisia, Egypt and the revolution in Libya to topple their dictators.

Turkish-Syrian bilateral relations have in general been marked by tensions mostly during the 1980's and 1990's. Damla Aras writes that 'historically, Turkey's strategy toward Syria was based on instruments of hard power, an approach that was, in part shaped by Syria's sponsorship of the PKK in the early 1980's". (Aras, 2012) Relations took a twist when PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, was handed over by Syria to the Turkish Commandos. On the 28th October 1998, Ankara and Damascus has signed the Adana accord, which declared the PKK as a terrorist organization and stated its camps in the Bekaa Valley would be abolished and deporting Ocalan from Syria where he was living in exile for a number of years. Consequently, Turkish-

Syrian stable relations led to significant prosperity. The Turkish Foreign Affairs statistics show that “trade volume registered increase from 796 million USD in 2006 to 2.5 billion USD in 2010 while the number of Syrians visiting Turkey increased considerably after a Visa Exemption Agreement was signed on Turkish-Syrian border in October 2009”. (The Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

But, as Damla (2012) argued “the decade-long honeymoon between Turkey’s ruling Justice and Development Party and Bashar al-Assad’s regime has all but ended”. On the 10th of February 2012 at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington DC, Foreign Minister of Turkey Ahmet Davutoğlu explained “how last year, Turkey conducted three-stage diplomacy to tackle this problem. The first stage was bilateral engagement with the administration; we did it. We worked very hard – eight months – until September. Unfortunately we weren’t able to convince the administration to stop the violence and to go direct to the reforms”. (CSIS, 2012). Then we started after September – we started a regional initiative with the Arab League. We supported all Arab League plans, Arab League observers. When Arab League came to a point that it is – there is (enough of ?) international support, we had the third stage, international stage, and Arab League support to the resolution to U.N. Security Council, and Turkey supported this resolution. Unfortunately, “there was a veto by Russian and China who are friends of Assad”. (CSIS, 2012).

Bayram Balci reports how “Assad stonewalled Turkey’s pressure and after the visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister in August 2011, Turkey changed its stance and became supporter of the Syrian opposition which conducts its activities from European capitals between 1984 and 1998”. (Balci, 2012). “Another stormy approach was in March, 2012 with the immediate closure of the Turkish Embassy in Damascus”. (Balci, 2012)

It is to be noted that, Turkey made a dramatic change in its foreign policy towards the Syrian dictator Assad in order to safe guard its own interests. There are claims that Erdoğan's quick shift towards the Assad regime is due to Ankara's concern over the rekindled relationship between the PKK and the Assad regime. Damla concludes that "the Syrian Civil war means increasing instability with a mass of influx of Syrian fugitives and refugees into Turkey and the possible revival of PKK threat from across the Syrian border".(Damla, 2012). Balci also notes "that the Turkish foreign policy towards Syria is influenced by its concern about the possible impact of the Kurdish issue in Syria on Kurds in Turkey". Balci also highlights "the positive existing relations between Assad's regime and the Kurdish Democratic Union Party which are known to be close to the PKK and Turkey fears renewed guerrilla attacks from Syrian territory". (Balci, 2012)

Nevertheless, there are other reasons attributed to the Syrian problem. Ihsan Dagi writes that "since the eruption of the Syrian crisis the Turkish Government has been faced by a burdensome problem and Turkey has been left alone by the West to tackle this problem and is currently housing the biggest number of refugees". (Dagi, 2012). Dagi also points out that "this burden involves heavy economic problems to support the 100,000 refugees with humanitarian aid and how their extended presence is disturbing social peace and harmony in the provinces where they are settled". (Dagi, 2012).

On the 30th August 2012, at the UN meeting that was called by the French Presidency, the Turkish Foreign Affairs Minister proposed the UN to implement a buffer zone inside to shelter the millions of Syrian refugees. Minister Davutoğlu said that Turkey has adopted an open door policy for those Syrians looking for shelter and security and urged the international community to share this burden.

However, Turkey's muscular policy was not able to intimidate Bashar al-Assad and is causing division at national level on which course Turkey should pursue towards the Assad's regime. Justin Vela reported that "according a recent survey from the Center for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies (EDAM), a Turkish think-tank, 56.2 percent of respondents oppose an intervention in Syria while 40 percent say they support any diplomatic or military intervention". (Vela 2012). Although Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had threatened Syria with military retaliation after the downing of a Turkish military jet in June 2012, Turkish deputy Prime Minister Bulen Arinc emphasized that "the country has no intention of going to war". (Parker, 2012). The Washington Institute reported that 'These domestic differences have some interesting echoes from almost a decade ago, when Turkey was torn over involvement in another conflict -- the Iraq war. But as Baymar reports "Turkey is not willing to face a conflict with Syria alone, and other countries are unwilling to participate despite calls for action from the International community". (Balci 2012)

Conclusion

Turkey's application is not like any other Candidate State and the EU is not like any other Institution. The EU has founded a set of rules and principles based on fundamental and democratic standards for all those cherishing prospects to join the block as a E.U. Member State. In this context, the EU has served as a power- house to improve the standard of living of those nations falling under the umbrella of those set of rules.

After commencement of the Accession Negotiations with the EU, Turkey has undertaken important measures toward reforming and modernizing its public administration structure and the way it functions. However, there is a recognition that Turkey needs to immediately accelerate development and the adoption of policies and legislation to align its legal framework and institutions according to the European and International standards with a view to eliminate obstacles and other factors which have given rise to much heated controversy and debate.

In fact, various Chapters are blocked due to the uneasy relationship which exists between Turkey and some EU Member States. European scepticism expressed by a number of E.U. Member States, but in particular by Cyprus, France, Austria and Germany has slowed down negotiations which in turn have resulted in a loss of interest both by the Turkish Government and the Turkish population to join the European Union. The Prime Minister of Turkey himself has been on record of showing his feeling of betrayal by the attitude and methods advanced with respect to

Turkey's application to join the European Union. As a result, Turkey is turning its attention more and more to the regional dimension, particularly in matters of critical relevance to its security and cooperation with its immediate neighbours.

Turkey's eventual successful bid for E.U. Membership will also go a long way to prove the E.U.'s transformative power of the Institution which will hopefully reverberate in Eurasia countries as well as the Muslim world. On the other hand, the EU's full commitment to honour its long-held principles will be judged in the processing of Turkey's application to join the EU.

The strategic location of Turkey in the Mediterranean basin could serve as an example how to be progressive while preserve culture values. It would show not only the Muslim world but also beyond, that it is not impossible to be both modern and democratic while maintaining a country's own culture and identity. Turkey's stable relations with the Muslim world will indeed convey such message.

EU Membership would anchor Turkey in the West, fortify it as a firewall against terrorism, and help make it a model of democracy to other like-minded countries including the Muslim world. However, the lack of faith and reluctant attitudes by some leaders of E.U. Member States have brought to a snail's pace, if not to a standstill, the negotiations, a situation which is having negative impact in the implementation of the necessary internal reforms in Turkey. Moreover, this blocking attitude on the part of some of the E.U. Member States has also instilled a lack of motivation by the Turkish side to accelerate the process and therefore to put pressure on the ruling elites in trying to achieve the necessary criteria.

Europe's politicians should assist in efforts to first change the image of Turkey and build trust, both internally and externally, with a main objective to ensure that Turkey

is moving forward to be accepted by all the E.U. Member States. Perhaps, this is the best way forward.

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