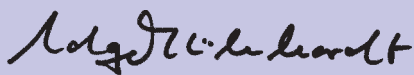


EDITORIAL

The negotiations between the European Union and Turkey, we have often said this, are not negotiations in the strict sense of the word. They are preparations for the acceptance of the EU's *acquis communautaire* by Turkey. At the same time, they should enhance the recognition of Turkey as a new member country of the EU and they should advance and stabilize the modernization process in Turkey. In this sense, the opening of three new chapters is a case in point. Enterprise and industrial policy, statistics and financial control - nobody would deny that it is in the genuine interest of Turkey to modernize its state operations in these areas as much as possible. Everybody would agree that the EU must insist on common standards among its member states.

The next round of negotiations begins amid new political debates and developments, both in Turkey and inside the EU. If at all, the overlap of these developments indicates the growing interdependency between the European Union and its candidate country Turkey. The more the negotiations enter the period of looking into technical details, the better for both sides. It helps to de-politicize the relationship while at the same time it serves its ultimate political objective. The European Union and Turkey get closer to each other by way of streamlining Turkey's enterprise and industrial policy as well as its system of statistics and financial control. This is the message of the next round of negotiations and our monitor looks into the details related to it.



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Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome. "Family picture" in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin.
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STEADY PROGRESS

Despite all obstacles, negotiations continue

Andreas Marchetti

For EU-Turkey relations the German Presidency has produced better results than the preceding Finnish Presidency. Although it is not always in the power of the country presiding the Council to achieve progress, Germany remained determined and committed to the process started on 3 October 2005. Despite many Christian democrats' reservations concerning Turkish membership in the EU, Chancellor Angela Merkel continuously sticks to her approach of "pacta sunt servanda", i.e. the government based on a Grand Coalition pursues the negotiations with Turkey, eventually aiming at Turkey's accession.

Accordingly, three new chapters were opened for negotiations during the German Presidency. The chapter on Enterprise and Industrial Policy (20) was opened on 29 March and the chapters on Statistics (18)

and Financial Control (32) were opened on 26 June. With regard to last year's developments and the still valid suspension of eight chapters out of a total of 35, this can be seen as a clear sign of progress in EU-Turkey relations. It implies that despite all obstacles, the EU remains committed to the negotiation process. In addition, this process is now advancing to tackle the more and more technical details necessary for accession.

However, from a Turkish perspective, these positive developments have been somewhat blurred by the moves and interventions of the newly elected French President Nicolas Sarkozy. It is mainly attributed to France's position that the opening of another chapter, Economic and Monetary Policy (17), was not even on the agenda of the Accession Conference in June. The reduction of the agenda from three to two chapters spurred strong criticism in Turkey: the Turkish press cited ▶

Turkey's chief negotiator Ali Babacan emphasizing that Turkey - in contrast even to some EU member states - already fulfilled two out of four criteria to join the economic and monetary union.¹ However, based on a diplomat's account, the French side was reported to have been opposed to the opening of chapter 17 because it would have needed more time to evaluate the Commission's report on the issue.² If this were the only - rather technical - reason, Turkey could hope for the opening of the chapter after a reasonable delay during the Portuguese Presidency. However, Sarkozy was also reported to have lobbied against the opening of the chapter because the issue of economic and monetary policy had "particular political and symbolic resonance"³; opening this chapter would therefore imply bringing Turkey considerably closer to membership, an outlook Sarkozy seems determined not to advocate, making a timely opening of the chapter more unlikely.

Just if this would not have caused enough excitement, Sarkozy voiced his proposal of a "Mediterranean Union" in which Turkey could play a major role. However, so far he has failed to exactly outline the functions, set-up and aims of this Union and its relation to present EU policies in the region.⁴ Having regard to these shortcomings, one might think that the proposal is less aimed at enhancing EU-Mediterranean relations, but rather to serve as a bluff package for the idea of "privileged partnership".

With the December decision in mind and other inconveniences ahead, Turkey had presented a road map to pursue reforms in all 35 chapters already in April, aiming at aligning Turkey to the *acquis* independently of formal progress in negotiations. Although the ambition to complete the alignment by 2013 might prove too optimistic, the formal opening of three chapters strengthens Turkey. To achieve the provisional closure of these chapters, the EU has defined specific benchmarks that will have to be met. As a general benchmark - applying to all chapters - Turkey is obliged to meet "its obligation of full non-discriminatory implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement."

Enterprise and Industrial Policy

The first chapter to be opened after the suspension of eight chapters in December 2006 was Enterprise and Industrial Policy. After the more or less symbolic opening and provisional closure of the chapter on Science and Research (25) in June 2006, this constitutes the first chapter with real negotiation contents in the sense that there is *acquis* to be implemented in the field.

The Progress Report in November 2006 had already acknowledged good progress in this chapter because reasonable alignment to the *acquis* had already been reali-

sed.⁵ In order to achieve the provisional closure of the chapter, Turkey is demanded to provide the Commission with a "revised comprehensive industrial policy strategy aiming at strengthening Turkey's industrial competitiveness."⁶ In this strategy, Turkey is supposed to address all sectors of industry, including its heavy industries. The EU highlighted in particular the "importance of a functioning market economy as an essential element" of the chapter. Hence, also this chapter leads to one of the cores - if not of the European Union - of the European Community.

Statistics

For the chapter on Statistics the Progress Report had stated that Turkey had made some progress.⁷ The adoption of a new statistical law had been recognised as important step to strengthen the Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat). The *acquis* in this chapter consists to a very large extent of legislation which is directly applicable in each member state.⁸ To meet the requirements for the provisional closure of the chapter, the EU demands of Turkey to "provide progress reports on setting up its farm registers and on the methodology and organisation foreseen for the collection of statistics." In addition, Turkey will have to "provide relevant statistics, and key national accounts indicators, together with the methodology used."⁹ These measures are aimed at making Turkey's statistics compatible with European statistical requirements, in order to provide reliable data that can also be used for policy decisions.

Financial Control

The chapter on Financial Control was one of the few chapters the 2006 Progress Report did not address individually. The Screening Report highlighted that public internal financial control and external audit constitute relevant parts of the chapter, although there is no EU legislation that would require transposition into Turkish law. Nonetheless, the report clearly stated that the EU expects Turkey to "adopt international control and internal audit standards and EU best practices."¹⁰ Accordingly, the benchmarks now formulated include "implementation of Public Internal Financial Control legislation and of legislation to guarantee the functioning of the Turkish Court of Accounts".¹¹ The other two areas of concern in this chapter are the protection of the EU's financial interests as well as protecting the euro against counterfeiting. Since there is relevant *acquis* in these two areas, the EU also demands the "alignment of the Turkish Criminal Code with the convention on protecting the EU's financial interests, and legislative and administrative alignment with the *acquis* for the protection of the euro."¹² From a technical point of view, these last provisions constitute an evident connection to the chapter on Economic and

Monetary Policy. The question therefore remains if there will also be the *political* will and commitment to adhere to the intrinsic logic of negotiations in due course.

- 1) Cf. "Turkey voices discontent over French blockage on EU negotiations", <http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=76890>.
- 2) Cf. "France blocks start of Turkey eurozone talks", <http://euobserver.com/9/24354>.
- 3) "Sarkozy blocks key part of EU entry talks on Turkey", <http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/06/25/news/union.php>.
- 4) Cf. Michael Emerson/Nathalie Tocci: *A little clarification, please, on the "Union of the Mediterranean"* (CEPS Commentary), Brussels 8 June 2007.
- 5) Cf. Commission of the European Communities: *Turkey 2006 Progress Report*, Brussels 8 November 2006, p. 51ff.
- 6) Commission of the European Communities: *Enlargement Newsletter*, Brussels 4 April 2007, <http://ec.europa.eu>.
- 7) Cf. Commission: *Turkey 2006 Progress Report* [5], p. 49f.
- 8) Cf. *Screening report Turkey. Chapter 18 - Statistics*, 4 December 2006.
- 9) Commission of the European Communities: *Enlargement Newsletter*, Brussels 2 July 2007, <http://ec.europa.eu>.
- 10) *Screening report Turkey. Chapter 32 - Financial control*, 28 September 2006.
- 11) Commission: *Enlargement Newsletter*, 2 July 2007 [9].
- 12) *Ibid.*

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THE FUTURE OF TURKISH POLITICS

Battles won? Battles lost? Battles still to fight?

Can Akdeniz

"I wonder if I've been changed in the night? Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is 'Who in the world am I?' Ah, that's the great puzzle!"

Alice in Wonderland

Time for realism? Since November 2002, the single-party-led Government by Justice and Development Party (AKP) has provided a taste of a political stability in Turkey which appears at face value to be a good thing: on many fronts Turkey is now at a critical juncture. With the diverse set of challenges Turkey faces - such as the current impasse in the election of the new President, fragmentation in the political landscape, the increasing concern over security threats, as well as public pessimism with EU integration

- it could be said that Turkish Delight has begun to taste bitter and the recent political crisis seems to underline how different Turkey is from the rest of Western Europe. The direction of Turkish politics seems to have become unpredictable and difficult to understand. Many observers are talking about the worrying signs of a rise of nationalism in Turkey. "Turks have become rather more disillusioned, particularly in the past couple of years, about whether they will ever get into the European Union - and that has made them feel a bit more nationalistic"¹, writes John Peet, the Europe editor of *The Economist*.

All eyes are now turned on the course and outcome of the general elections. Most observers argue that this is an important moment in the history of Turkey. Some even fear that the new parliament might not be able to solve the dispute over the presidential election and predict a continuation of the

political crisis. Just after the general elections, Turkish politicians will struggle to overcome problems in domestic politics, to form a stable government and to elect the new Turkish President. What does all this imply for Turkey's future? Is Turkey falling back to the time of volatile governments and destabilisation after elections? Or can the parliamentary elections put the chaotic political situation to an end? In a nutshell: there is no shortage of questions.

What comes after 22 July 2007

As always happens when a political crisis in Turkey occurs, some overconfident experts on Turkish politics predict a major change in Turkish foreign policy. For example, in a recent issue of Foreign Affairs, Stephen Larrabee explains that the new trends in Turkish politics were brought about by "important domestic changes in Turkish society", primarily by the replacement of the pro-Western elite that has shaped Turkish foreign policy since the end of World War II by a more conservative, more religious, and more nationalist elite that looks upon the West with suspicion². Is the context of Turkish politics changing fundamentally? Is the contemporary understanding of Turkish politics in need of fundamental review? Recent arguments that Turkey is not what it used to be seem to be narrow, as they neglect the continuity in Turkish politics. A look at Turkey's recent past shows that Turkey's fundamental political drivers and doctrines did not change with the emergence of the AKP: Turkey seeks European integration and subscribes to the rules of globalisation. Drastic changes, however, were never likely; even the most liberal economic reforms developed in collaboration with the IMF have been implemented by the AKP. Although the EU-Turkey accession negotiations are "an open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed" and running slowly, the government underlined its aim to further adopt the European law (i.e. the *acquis*). With the exception of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), all opposition parties are in favour of Turkish integration into Europe.

Recent political crises show that the main problem in Turkey lies not in domestic change but in its unfinished political system. The victory of the AKP in the November 2002 elections opened a new chapter in Turkish domestic politics, but not because of the new agenda of the AKP. The emergence of the AKP, a party formed in 2001, reflects the dissatisfaction of voters with the old way of politics, which caused, in February 2001, the most serious financial and economic crisis in Turkey's post-war history. AKP has been praised for its economic policy reforms and for the start of negotiations with the European Union. Thanks to its clear

CURRENT NEGOTIATING STATUS

No. Title of chapter

| | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 1 | Free movement of goods | (X) |
| 2 | Freedom of movement for workers | X |
| 3 | Right of establishment and freedom to provide services | (X) |
| 4 | Free movement of capital | X |
| 5 | Public procurement | X |
| 6 | Company law | X |
| 7 | Intellectual property law | X |
| 8 | Competition policy | X |
| 9 | Financial services | (X) |
| 10 | Information society and media | X |
| 11 | Agriculture and rural development | (X) |
| 12 | Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy | X |
| 13 | Fisheries | (X) |
| 14 | Transport policy | (X) |
| 15 | Energy | X |
| 16 | Taxation | X |
| 17 | Economic and monetary policy | X |
| 18 | Statistics | X |
| 19 | Social policy and employment | X |
| 20 | Enterprise and industrial policy | X |
| 21 | Trans-European networks | X |
| 22 | Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments | X |
| 23 | Judiciary and fundamental rights | X |
| 24 | Justice, freedom and security | X |
| 25 | Science and research | X |
| 26 | Education and culture | X |
| 27 | Environment | X |
| 28 | Consumer and health protection | X |
| 29 | Customs union | (X) |
| 30 | External relations | (X) |
| 31 | Foreign, security and defence policy | X |
| 32 | Financial control | X |
| 33 | Financial and budgetary provisions | X |
| 34 | Institutions | X |
| 35 | Other issues | X |

Legend: X not yet opened (X) suspended
 X opened
 X provisionally closed

Data as of 1 July 2007

▶ majority in parliament, AKP has delivered a political stability which, after the weak coalition governments of the 1990s, has delighted financial investors. Evidence for this is that in 2006 Turkey attracted USD 17 bn foreign direct investment inflow and in the last five years the economy grew at an annual rate of 7,5 %. This all seems to indicate that AKP and its policies are not in question. However, AKP's intention to elect the Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gül, as the new President was severely criticized by the opposition parties and pressure groups, which are concerned about the growing power of the AKP. Being prevented from electing the successor to the incumbent Ahmet Necdet Sezer, the AKP had no choice but to call early general elections.

Where do we go from here? The Japanese have a saying - "Issan saki wa yami" - which means, "an inch in front of my face, total darkness." That pretty much sums things up when it comes to predicting what's next in Turkey after the elections of 22 July 2007: it is unrealistic to claim that predictions have a high chance of being correct. Historically this has been demonstrated to be unlikely, however it is worth considering the small range of possible outcomes. Perhaps three factors are worth mentioning here: the first is the stake in the election held by the Turkish political system itself. Unlike most Western European countries, the wheels of the Turkish political system do not run smoothly. It is characterized by rapid rise and fall of political parties and their political support. The aftermath of the elections in 2002 gave the impression that Turkey might move towards a two-party system where AKP and the Republican People's Party (CHP) domi-

nate the elections. However, the latest surveys show that in the post-election period we might have three parties represented in parliament e.g. a multi-party system and a substantial number of independent members of parliament.

The second factor is the policy agendas and election manifestos of the political parties. AKP was successful in covering sensitive social issues of public interest and is keen to carry forward its policies. It seeks a mandate for a new constitution, a reform of the judicial system and a constitutional change, which allows the election of the president by public vote. AKP's rivals are not putting such an "exceptional" agenda on the table, besides the security issue, action against threat by terrorists and some concerns about privatisation. Only MHP wants to pursue an alternative policy in relations with the EU, saying "the relations with the EU will not be regarded as a matter of identity or fate for Turkey; Turkey is not obliged to be dragged behind the EU."³ Surprisingly, the opposition parties do not adequately address economic issues in their election manifestos.

The last factor is external circumstances. It is hard to deny that the policy of the EU towards Turkey influences Turkish domestic politics. A Turkey with a clear membership pledge by the EU would be a more stable democracy. Despite the turbulence in the negotiations with the EU, most Turks want to see their country in the EU.

Other emerging problems are disturbing the Turkish public. There are recent terrorist attacks on the Turkish military in Southeast Turkey. Public pressure on the government

is growing and the opposition is blaming the AKP-led government for ineffective counter terrorism policies. The Turkish public is worried about the situation in North Iraq, which is used by terrorist as a backyard to attack Turkish security forces. Under pressure from the public, AKP might pursue a new policy towards North Iraq: as a reaction to the growing pressure, Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül has already announced that a military operation is possible before the elections.⁴ But quite recently in an interview the Prime Minister Erdogan has turned away the proposal to launch an operation before elections.⁵ In sum: it is very likely that security issues will be shaping the outcome of the elections.

Battlefields of Turkish politics

In the light of the foregoing, we can no longer meaningfully talk about "the outcome" as concerns Turkey's immediate future. The analogy of a battlefield could be helpful in understanding the future of Turkish politics. Here are few battles in Turkish politics to look for:

Firstly, the AK Party has battles still to fight to remain in power. AKP's selection of its own Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül as the next Turkish president was boycotted by the opposition parties and finally blocked by the decision of the constitutional court. This can be seen as a victory for the opposition, as the Turkish President has substantial power in the political system. Election polls show that the AKP is still strongest in the race and may pick up a bigger share than the 34% of the national vote it took in 2002. However, the opposition ▶

CHRONOLOGY

compiled by Volkan Altintas

2007 19 January: Hrant Dink, founder and editor-in-chief of Agos, is assassinated in Istanbul.

2007 25 March: 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome.

2007 29 March: The Accession Conference with Turkey meets at ambassadorial level. The Conference opens negotiations on "Enterprise and industrial policy".

2007 14 April: Ahead of the start of the nominations for presidential elections, more than 300,000 people go to the streets in Ankara, protesting against the possible candidacy of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan - or any other member of the ruling AKP.

2007 24 April: Abdullah Gül, Turkey's Minister for Foreign Affairs, is announced to be AKP's candidate for the presidential elections.

2007 27 April: In light of the controversies related to Gül's candidacy, the Turkish military issues a statement, stressing the importance of the kemalist principles.

2007 28 April: The first round of the presidential elections is held in the Grand National Assembly. Only 361 parliamentarians are present, 357 vote for Abdullah Gül.

2007 1 May: The Turkish Constitutional Court annuls the first round, arguing that less than two thirds of all deputies - the quorum needed to elect a new president - took part in the vote.

2007 3 May: The National Assembly decides on early elections, scheduled to be held on 22 July.

2007 6 May: The National Assembly embarks on another election round. Again, the two thirds margin is not met. Abdullah Gül withdraws his candidacy.

2007 6 May: In the second round of presidential elections in France, Nicolas Sarkozy (UMP) defeats Ségolène Royal (PS). Sarkozy, succeeding Jacques Chirac on 16 May, is believed to take a tough stance on Turkey's accession.

2007 21-22 June: The European Council, meeting in Brussels, overcomes the constitutional deadlock and agrees on a new intergovernmental conference to negotiate a revised treaty. A "European Constitution" is no longer on the agenda.

2007 26 June: The Accession Conference with Turkey meets at ministerial level. Two additional chapters are opened for negotiations: "Statistics" and "Financial control".

2007 27 June: Gordon Brown becomes Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, succeeding Tony Blair who had been in office since 2 May 1997.

2007 1 July: Portugal takes over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In its presidency programme, Portugal stresses the importance of fulfilling existing commitments on enlargement and its commitment towards the Mediterranean.

Sources: www.abhaber.com, www.ft.com, www.abgs.gov.tr, www.euractiv.com, www.iht.com, www.libertysecurity.org, www.eu2007.de, www.setimes.com.

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▶ to AKP is fragmented. Yet AKP could fail to get a majority of the seats in parliament and be forced to form a coalition government.

Secondly, those who want to see Turkey in the EU, have battles still to fight. At a time when "the Sarko show"⁶ is on the European stage, Turkish entry into the EU remains a pretence. French President Nicolas Sarkozy is determined to keep Turkey out of the EU: recently France blocked the opening of one of three new chapters in Turkey's negotiations. He has proposed a "Union of the Mediterranean", saying "Dear Turkey, I do not want you in the European Union, but why not instead join us as a major player in the Mediterranean Union?"⁷. Sarkozy sees Turkish entry as a zero-sum game for France. France has already lost influence in the bloc of 27. Turkish accession, with strong voting rights, would be another setback for France's influence. Yet there is still hope: Prime Minister José Sócrates of Portugal, who will take center stage in Europe over the coming months, believes that a halt in the entry talks with Turkey would undermine the EU's credibility on the world stage and dent its relations with the Muslim world. Alluding to France, he stated that EU member states were entitled to have their views, but added that Portugal would press to open more negotiating chapters with Turkey during the next six months.⁸

The EU may not want to. Turkey's chief EU negotiator, Economy Minister Ali Babacan, said that Turkey would integrate its legislation with the EU's as soon as possible, "regardless of what chapters are opened"⁹. Such a move is unique in the history of EU enlargement: Turkey is willing to take the burden of the costs of a massive transformation without a clear membership prospect. Even more impressive is Turkey's Customs Union with the EU: Turkey has got itself a non-declared status as a passive EU member. Although Turkey is subscribing to most of EU law, it does not have decision rights. Most of the Turkish public sees EU-Turkey relations as an unequal partnership. Given the declining public support in Turkey for EU membership, this "EU centric" Turkish policy might be revised in the near future. Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül recently criti-

zed the European Union, accusing it of playing games with Turkey.¹⁰ Another recent example came a month ago, as Turkey withdrew its military support to the EU under the European security and defence policy. Turkey is not happy to be excluded from decision-making and command mechanisms in the European security and defence policy operations. In its decision, Turkey said, "we have supported the European security and defence policy since the very beginning and contributed to the EU's basic targets. Turkey has totally fulfilled its commitments stemming from the European security and defence policy. During this process, Turkey explained some of its difficulties and expectations to the EU. However, we could not get tangible development yet."¹¹

Thirdly, the Turkish political system faces a major challenge. The election of the president and the outcome of the general elections raise important questions about the political stability in the future. According to Eurasia Group analyst Wolfango Piccoli, "the approaching snap election could result in a fragmented, multi-party legislature and a difficult cabinet building process."¹² Eurasia Group thinks that exacerbating the AKP's troubles, opposition parties have taken steps toward consolidation that increase the probability of a fragmented electoral outcome. It adds that fragmented governments commonly result in larger budget deficits and reduced macroeconomic stability. Thus, this foreshadows potential problems for Turkey's political environment and budget, as well as for monetary and economic reform policies. If this is a time for new elections and beginnings, can it also be a time for a commitment to a sustainable political system in Turkey?

Fourthly, there is still a battle to fight on the sustainability of the Turkish economy. Turkish economic politics has changed with the challenge of globalisation. It is more open and aims at playing the card of globalisation by attracting substantial foreign direct investment and becoming the regional hub for investments. Since recovering from a fiscal crisis in 2001, the country has racked up one of the best growth rates in the world, and today it is the 17th largest economy. Growth is expected to remain at 6 % in 2007 and 2008. Turkey is rapidly becoming a signifi-

cant trading partner and investment hub for foreign investors, too. Turkey has also recorded a significant increase in exports. This is particularly true since the economic recovery in the euro zone increases the demand for Turkish products significantly.

Although Turkey has greatly improved its economic fundamentals, the Turkish economy is vulnerable to domestic and international turbulence and shocks. Foreign investors hold around 70% of floating shares on the Istanbul Stock Exchange. The current account deficit is partly financed by foreign liquidity. Further economic reforms are needed to improve competitiveness and external balances, to reduce informality in the business sector as well as enhance resilience to shocks.¹³

The outcomes of these battles are hard to predict. What is certain, however, is that they will shape Turkey's near future.

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- 13) See OECD, OECD Economic Outlook: Turkey, No. 81, May 2007.

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HARD CHOICES FOR THE TURKISH ELECTORATE

Nigar Göksel

As 22 July nears in Turkey, three parties (AKP, CHP and MHP) and over 30 independent candidates are expected to make it into the parliament.¹ The vote is more "in support of AKP" or "against AKP" than it is for any alternative political vision. In this polarized environment, enthusiasm is not widespread.

Even the strongest AKP enthusiasts carry

concern for a scenario in which AKP would end up with "too many" seats (having the ability to change the constitution or elect the president without seeking consensus) this would fuel the concern among the establishment and the citizens who believe AKP to be a threat to their lifestyle and values.

The suspicion that AKP has a long term plan to raise the prominence of religion in society and undermine secularism has risen in the past couple of years.² This fear, felt genuinely among an influential circle, has also

been voiced by the establishment (including various circles in institutions ranging from the higher education board to the judiciary and security bureaucracy), and exploited by opposition parties, especially CHP. Another sentiment that has been politicized is nationalism. AKP has been deemed "soft" on threats to Turkey's national interests (especially PKK terror) by political rivals.

As three parties are expected to pass the threshold of 10 percent, the seats of both CHP and AKP will most likely fall ▶

▶ from their current number. The most widespread prediction is that AKP will again have enough seats to form a single party government however will need to put more effort into striking a consensus with the opposition parties and independent candidates in parliament. This would prevent AKP from fielding a candidate with Islamist background as president, yet being a single party government will allow for proactive policies to continue.

A dilemma for the voter concerned with AKP's secular credentials is that in terms of economic stability and political discipline AKP seems to be the safest bet. Neither CHP nor MHP give confidence to those who see Turkey's stability as resting on the continued pursuit of the economic policies that have produced consistent stability and growth since 2001. Moreover, neither party seems eager to pursue the EU integration track which provides political discipline and much needed structural reform. Those concerned about AKP's intentions are often as concerned about what CHP or MHP in government would do to the markets and the europeanisation process. But with the strong belief that in the long term AKP will take Turkey down an irreversible path of political Islam, some calculate that in the short term, the economy and the EU can be sacrificed. Some will go so far as to say, that if this takes pumping up nationalism, so be it - the means justify the ends when the stakes are so high.

A popular tool in deciding who to vote for has been the ARI Movement's internet based election results simulation <http://www.ari.org.tr/bilincloy/> that provides the resulting breakdown of seats for each scenario of parties' vote percentage the user inserts. So the user sees the implications of the increase of each party's votes to the other parties' seats. For those who are voting strategically, with a view to the larger picture of party breakdown they prefer, this tool comes very much in handy. And especially for these elections, given there is widespread disillusionment with the parties, less idealistic voting and more pragmatism prevail, rendering this internet-based forecast frequently visited.

The parliamentary elections and presidential elections are quite intertwined this year in Turkey. The profile of the president (to be elected soon after the parliament is formed) will depend on the parliamentary breakdown of seats. Thus, as people go to the ballot box they are not only voting for a party but are also voting with a view to opening the way for the preferred presidential candidate of the party.

Due to the relatively weak system of checks and balances the same party having control of both the president's palace and the parliament is reason for concern. For some, AKP's power in parliament is easier to digest than the thought of a core member of

AKP sitting in the seat of President, which is a post that, in many people's hearts and minds, represents the principles and character of the Republic. This is one reason why Abdullah Gül's candidacy for president was received by such vocal reaction.³ The fact that his wife wears the headscarf was central to the argument that he was unfit for president.

This point brings us to the centrality of the debate revolving around women-related issues, often based on symbolism, in the run-up of the elections: "There are some who fear that Turkey may be turning its back on its secular traditions. Some of the loudest voices come from Kemalist women, who insist that the rise of 'political Islam' represents an acute threat to the rights and freedoms of Turkish women. There have even been calls for restrictions to Turkish democracy, to protect women's rights."⁴

Opposition forces have argued women's liberties and empowerment will be curbed if AKP's power is consolidated. However they have not matched their concern for these issues with alternative solutions to the problems women face in the country, such as the absence of welfare services that would ease women's efforts to balance work with family responsibilities. Nor have they, in any past opportunity, pushed for concrete progress in this sense, such as for gender equality to be enshrined in the penal code or for the increase of shelters to give an option to women who face domestic violence.

Truth be told, much progress has been made during AKP's government on these issues. Whether the drive was "sincere" or not, as many secularists doubt, ultimately the government yielded to the demands from the EU and from the feminist activist women who clearly do not represent their constituency. Such receptiveness, according to ESI's recent report on the topic, is the most important indication of a maturing democracy.

Due largely to awareness building and advocacy work carried out by women's organizations like KA-DER, as well as attention by mainstream newspapers, the number of women candidates fielded by each political party has been an item of debate. The call for a gender quota fell on deaf ears once again, however the number of women on candidate lists was increased, if only as a showcase in some instances.

Rising terror has been another issue that has dominated the national agenda in recent months and has been used to undermine AKP. There has practically been a race to appease nationalist segments, and every party has gotten sucked up into it. One of the *credentials* of nationalism is hard-line rhetoric about cracking down on terror. Opposition parties have criticized the government for not taking strong enough measures and "allowing" terror to swell. Pressure

has thus mounted on the government to appear hard on terror and prove this with willingness to approve a military operation into north Iraq to target PKK camps.

Increasing terror has been attributed largely to American reluctance to take action against PKK in north Iraq and thus has fuelled anti-Americanism. Scepticism towards the EU has also been on the rise as the conviction that the EU is hypocritical and will never admit Turkey has spread. Instead of portraying responsible leadership, the trend of rising nationalism has been cashed into by many politicians. These issues have benefited parties such as MHP.

As elections near, politicians try to stir emotions, provoke fears and resentment, and invoke religion. It works to some extent - and is dangerous. How reversible these pumped up drives are is unclear.

However, from the perspective of the casual observer, it appears the Turkish people increasingly do not buy the cheap political shots. They do not believe the absurd election promises, they look at the candidate names on the election lists and judge whether they reflect the spirit of the election manifesto, they have confidence that young people and women can bring about change, and they want to see responsible leadership rather than populism and brinkmanship. They are not getting what they want in this election.

1) DP also seems to have a narrow chance to enter the parliament as the fourth party according to some forecasts.

2) As religion is practiced more visibly and becomes a more social affair, the assumption of the "secularists" is that those who live with practices that do not conform with the doctrine of Islam will be excluded and under pressure to conform. As concessions are made to religious practices infiltrating into public spheres, it will get out of control. The government will increasingly favor those of its own - also economically. Eventually this will lead, according to this outlook, to the spoiling of the delicately constructed separation of religion from public life that has been ongoing since the foundation of the Republic.

3) Referring to the large rallies held in a number of cities in late April, early May.

4) European Stability Initiative, *Sex and Power - Feminism, Islam and the Maturing of Turkish Democracy*, www.esiweb.org.

Nigar Göksel is Analyst for the European Stability Initiative (www.esiweb.org) and Editor of Turkish Policy Quarterly (TPQ) in Istanbul.

ZEI ACTIVITIES

The presidential elections in Turkey have received extensive media attention. On 8 May, ZEI Research Fellow Andreas Marchetti commented on the elections and their implications for Turkey and its future political development on PHOENIX, the public affairs and documentary channel launched by ARD and ZDF.

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AS A POLITICAL TEST

One step toward post-Kemalist rule?

Dorothee Schmid

After five years of AKP rule, the renewal of the political team in command in Turkey could have gone along rather smoothly if the process had followed a strictly constitutional path. But the calendar of elections has been modified and the whole process appears not the least bit neutral. A very sharp political debate has indeed arisen concerning the presidential election, instantly casting its shadow on the organisation of the general elections. This rather confused debate has inspired hasty political decisions in Erdogan's government and triggered an open reaction both from the Turkish civil society and the army. While the date for anticipated designation of the members of the next Grand Assembly has been firmly imposed by Prime Minister Erdogan (July 22), the presidential issue still seems to inspire rather obscure calculations and behind the scenes deals. The suspense remains high both about the way the president will be elected and about the date of the vote, not to mention the name of the candidate.

The fact that the competition of political forces inside Turkey could strongly affect the unfolding of the election process might not bode well for the consolidation of the democratic system, but it should not provoke great surprise either. The modernisation of Turkish institutions is presently overtly on the agenda, partly due to the ongoing EU-Turkey negotiation process, and partly due to the accelerated re-composition of the political landscape in the wake of the 2002 Islamist "soft revolution". The presidential election is not a marginal topic and it has indeed become the knot of the democratic intrigue. Its reform may mark a symbolical point of no return on the way to next generation of politics in Turkey.

According to the 1982 constitution, which was adopted right after a military coup, Turkey's 11th President should be elected by a majority vote at the Grand National Assembly. The President is both a symbol and a pillar of the Kemalist spirit of Turkish institutions. Mustapha Kemal Atatürk, founder of the Turkish Republic, was elected as its first president in 1923 and all his distant successors still "sleep in Atatürk's bed"¹. They still have to endorse the weight of history as, in the wording of the current constitution, the President "*represents the Republic of Turkey and the unity of the Turkish Nation*". The president is thus primarily a symbol of national unity but he should certainly not be only considered as a neutral type of ornamental post-monarch. He is the head of state, detains executive authority, promulgates laws and may veto legislation

passed by the National Assembly. He is also empowered to appoint an important list of high ranking civil servants and military staff, such as the members of the Constitutional Court, the chief of the General Staff, the Supreme Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors, the Council of Higher Education and all university presidents, as well as all diplomatic representatives. Often labelled as an impartial referee, the President is thus in fact able to strongly influence the fragile balance between competing centres of power in Turkey. And to this day, he has traditionally played with the Kemalist camp, notably watching very carefully for the defence of secularism. Ahmet Necdet Sezer, whose mandate theoretically ended two month ago, was elected as an independent candidate but imposed himself as a true counter-power resisting all governmental measures that would comfort the Islamist's religious inclinations.

All presidential elections in Turkey since the death of Atatürk were in fact held in a very particular climate of political tension. Rumours of military coups are classic in Turkey in the periods immediately preceding or following presidential elections. The status of the president has become a metaphor for the health state of the Republic and the person that is finally sworn in should abide by a broad consensus defined between the different forces sharing power. The new difficulty with AKP's pretence to hijack the presidency is that it would introduce a major breach to this implicit consensus. Abdullah Gül's candidacy immediately ignited a heated debate among the Turkish elite for two main reasons. Some felt that the internal Turkish balance of power was threatened, with a step being taken to establish a monopoly of power in the hands of a single party. Behind this first concern lies the old suspicion of AKP's potential hidden religious agenda. Some effectively blamed Islamist politicians for being too ostensibly religious - Gül's election meaning to usher in a veiled woman as the next First Lady of Turkey. This is primarily considered as a provocation towards the founding principle of secularism; but it could also be a very awkward signal addressed to the outside world, especially at a time when the Euro-Turkish relationship is showing growing signs of tension.

Yet the Turkish Islamist paradox is strong. In order to sustain a fragile consensus among its very heterogeneous electorate, AKP has played the game of modernisation for the last five years. Presenting itself as "Muslim democrats", the party has been the champion of reform including on the political front. After a warning by the army and the decision of the Constitutional Court to invalidate Gül's election by the Parliament, Erdogan reacted by proposing to have the President

elected directly by the people. Such a move could be interpreted as further democratic progress fitting with the European agenda. At the same time, AKP tries to catch the aspirations of a post-Kemalist Turkey refusing both to live under permanent military supervision and to accept the small arrangements of older political parties. Facing the mistrust of the traditional political and economic establishment, the Islamists are bringing into the power game a new middle class, which might be socially conservative while economically and even politically modernist.

Whatever the outcome of the presidential crisis may be, it will thus be an important test of political maturity for all competing forces in Turkey. AKP's programme for the general elections is now evoking the possibility of introducing an entirely new constitution. The balance between political stability and the democratic dynamic certainly remains hard to strike in Turkey nowadays. The rising number of nationalist incidents and acts of terrorism, coupled with a recurring tendency of the army to comment about the direction of political life, all point at the latent instability of the country. A serious prospect for EU membership still holds as the major anchor to keep the situation under control.

¹ An image recently used by a Turkish scholar in a casual conversation, trying to explain the President's *aura*.

Dorothee Schmid is Research Fellow at the Institut Français des Relations Internationales, Paris.

ZEI ACTIVITIES

On invitation of the German Federal Foreign Office, ZEI Research Fellow Andreas Marchetti talked about "Modernising Turkey: Developments and Challenges" during an informal meeting of the Council working group for enlargement in Berlin on 25 May 2007.

In March, ZEI Research Fellow Andreas Marchetti participated as discussant in a conference on "Turkey and Europe: The public debate in France, Germany and Turkey" in Paris. The trilateral conference was organised by the Comité d'études des relations franco-allemandes (Cerfa) at the Institut français des relations internationales (Ifri) in close cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and TÜSIAD.

ZEI *EU-Turkey-Monitor* editors Andreas Marchetti and Volkan Altintas published an article on the "Political deadlock in Turkey", reflecting on the presidential elections in Turkey, available at www.cafebabel.com.

THREE QUESTIONS

to Hüseyin Bağcı

Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Bağcı, Department of International Relations at Middle East Technical University, Ankara.

The presidential elections - and therefore parliamentary elections as well - have taken an unexpected turn with all sorts of positions, rifts and struggles in Turkish politics and society coming to light. In how far have the recent political developments changed Turkey's political landscape?

Turkey is experiencing another important phase of its democratisation process. Indeed, Turkish democracy - despite all the deficits - is making very good progress. There has been no regression of democracy in Turkey. The upcoming presidential elections as well as the ongoing parliamentary elections strengthened Turkey's political stability. The ruling AKP has realised that Turkey cannot be turned into an Islamic regime and that democratic rule is the most suitable for Turkish society. In other words, Islamist AKP left its Islamic ideology paradigm and turned into a pragmatic political party. Now that it claims to be a centre party and invited many people form different political directions to run for AKP shows that pragmatism and realism prevail.

Kemalist secularism, as well as democracy, remain the most important parts of Turkish political thinking as well as of society's behaviour. All the recent peaceful demonstrations showed that Turkey is a mature democracy. The political parties in Turkey remain loyal to secularism and democracy. With this, Turkey showed to the entire world that democracy and secularism in an Islamic society can function. It was positive that the EU has also welcomed this process. The direction of Turkey is - as it showed - the one of a modern, open and democratic society.

In this context Turkey also remains a good example for other Islamic countries: In the 21st century democracy can be a solution to the Islamic world's problems. Without the rule of law and open societies it is difficult to make progress - though the process is painful. Turkey seems to have passed the democracy examination - others should follow.

With regard to domestic debates, how would you characterise the current Turkish commitment to the accession process?

The accession process is still going on without major interruption. Reforms are conducted and despite certain statements by some EU politicians, Turkey seems not to have the intention to stop the process - at least for now. What the future will bring is unknown. Until these elections, there was not even a debate to stop the process or freeze the relations. Only recently there are much



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louder voices and opposing political forces increasing. In case the ruling AKP does not win the elections and forms the government, there would be some new developments. Because if the nationalists and Social Democrats came to power and made a coalition, there would be another style of conducting the reform process, which could slow down then. However, it is to be expected that the commitment to the accession process will continue. The EU will also not be interested in stopping the process. Both sides' interests are at stake.

The negotiation process between the EU and Turkey is continuing, however at a much slower pace than intended. This seems to be mainly due to the fact that the process is constantly confronted with certain obstacles and delays if it comes to further steps such as the opening of new chapters. What concrete perspectives do you see for progress in EU-Turkey relations at present?

The general mood in Turkey in this respect is more that of disappointment than of happiness. After the last summit in Brussels under German presidency there were only two chapters opened for negotiation instead of three. There will definitely be more obstacles and delays in the future but not a train crash as expected last year. The EU is also undergoing an important reform process and facing major problems as the last summit proved. Turkey understands the difficulties of enlargement and is not interested in stopping the process. The slowdown does not signify the "exclusion" of Turkey - it does however not yet mean "inclusion", though. Both sides should keep the process working and open new chapters in the future so that Turkey's democratic quality can increase. It is a fact that Turkey is not going to become a member in the next ten to fifteen years if the EU is having such difficulties with its internal reforms. The EU has been successful in bringing the European nations together in the last 50 years and the next 50 years will be important as to what the EU makes of them: becoming a global player or remaining a regional organisation. Turkey's desire to be part of the EU is a way of thinking of the state and not necessarily a government policy. This is why we can talk of a state and societal commitment of Turkey to be in Europe. The faster chapters are opened and reforms are conducted, the better for Turkey and the EU. A reformed and democratic Turkey contributes to Europe's political and economic stability.

The interview was conducted by Andreas Marchetti, Research Fellow at ZEI.



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