

EU-Turkey-Monitor

Vol. 6 No. 2/3

December 2010

Editorial

More than five years have already elapsed since the beginning of accession negotiations between the European Union and the Turkish Republic. Despite a hopeful beginning, the process – declared to be “open-ended” from the very start – continues to be contested. As criticism and scepticism is rising on both sides, the initial momentum has not been maintained and mutual commitment seems at a constant minimum. With only thirteen out of 35 negotiation chapters opened, even the rather technical way ahead is still long. Hence, what the future holds, five or even ten more years down the road, is most uncertain.

In this issue of the *ZEI EU-Turkey-Monitor* European and Turkish authors discuss different development perspectives by looking into current trends in the EU and in Turkey. While the European Union – after the tedious process of treaty reform – is currently absorbed in handling the financial and budgetary crisis in order to support its economies and even save entire member states from bankruptcy, Turkey continues to advance – but only very indirectly on its way to Europe. In addition to these analyses, the *ZEI EU-Turkey-Monitor* also presents five possible scenarios treating the future of EU-Turkey relations: They range from an increase in “accession momentum” over the maintenance of the current pace of negotiations up to the – most unlikely – end of negotiations. It will be up to political actors and public opinion which possible future might prevail in the end.



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The Berlaymont building reflected in the façade of the Council.

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PERSPECTIVES ON EUROPE'S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE 2020

Jared Sonnicksen

1. Introduction

When considering the possible future of European politics, it is imperative to reflect on the current situation, which requires, in turn, an awareness of developments up to now. Meanwhile it has become generally evident that the European Union constitutes a political union. This, however, has not always been the case. For the most part, the European Communities have been considered unprecedented, being viewed as neither a state nor an international organisation. This reflected the ambivalent character and undetermined development of the integration project, which for a long time was not explicitly understood as “political”. To a wide extent, a number of European political conflicts can be connected to this ambiguity.

Nevertheless, it did not take long until the alliance initiated sixty years ago as a joint coal and steel community was to expand

to further areas of policy and responsibility. With a view to the history of European integration, it becomes obvious that this process has been equally characterised by setbacks and failed projects as well as success and progress.¹ Building on integration momentum with spill-over effects and adaptational pressures entailed, the European Communities became – instead of “just” a functionalistic means to achieving lasting peace and security – ever more necessary for the member states and their problem-solving and policy-making capacity.²

The perennial question of “in which direction” European integration should go already offers sufficient breeding ground for political debate and discordance. Furthermore, the recent Treaty of Lisbon with its character as a “Compromise Treaty”³ confirms that the finalité of this sui generis construct remains indeterminate. This ongoing ambivalence of European integration is underlined by competing concepts like “Europe of citizens” with a federal, state-like framework versus a “Europe of states” or

► “Europe à la carte” of various degrees and flexible integration.⁴ To be sure, there is political conflict or contestation in the EU, but its nature is particularly delicate, even precarious in light of the EU itself being a contested polity. Accordingly, in the policy-dimension, i.e. in carrying out an ever increasing amount of tasks and responsibilities, the EU is, on the one hand, a source of political dispute. In the polity-dimension on the other hand, i.e. regarding the questions of its ultimate goals and nature of the union as well as the critical questioning of its legitimacy, the EU serves likewise as an object of political debate, itself being even politically controversial. Moreover, it can be supposed with utmost certainty that these issues will remain volatile for European political actors in the politics-dimension and, if anything, will intensify.

This dense overview of the current political situation of the Union provides a good starting point for thinking about the political landscape of Europe 2020. The political process is understood here in a classical sense, as a process of contestation around values, goods and services (whether material or immaterial, of regulatory or distributive character), whose provision, regulation and distribution are determined through a collectively binding decision-making process in a polity or political system (in this case: the EU). At the same time, the term “political landscape” commonly refers mainly to the political party circumstances, for example, following an election. In the following however, the term will be applied in a broader sense, meaning that policy areas and, above all, cleavages (or dimensions of conflict) will be considered that are especially significant and politically contentious for the EU.⁵

2. Political Cleavages in Europe

Certain political issues, often in combination with one another, become inflamed along a cleavage or “fault line” of division in a society. These cleavages are thus significant as they offer a basis for mobilising political competition.⁶ Of course, not all possible cleavages are relevant or even existent in all political systems. Rather, the political cleavages that belong to a certain political landscape are correlated to the particular society and the political system it encompasses; in short, different societies have not only different conflicts, but also different types of political contestation. While classic cleavages like “centre vs. periphery” or “labour vs. capital” are manifest in the sphere of EU politics, the EU exhibits its own dimensions of conflict, evident of its peculiar character. In the EU of the present and in the next years, the main cleavages could be summarised as follows:

- Pro- vs. Anti-Integration
- Left vs. Right
- Small vs. Big Member States

- Rich vs. Poor Member States
- New vs. Old Europe
- Neoliberalism vs. Welfare State
- Transatlantic vs. Autarky
- Supranational vs. Intergovernmental

For the political process in the sense of politics and particularly for political party competition in general, the significance of the left-right divide is paramount. While political actors and parties at EU level can also be located in “left” or “social” versus “right” or “conservative” positions, this divide does not play the primary role there, in contrast to national political systems. This cleavage is further complicated by the issue of European integration: whether a party identifies itself as either social or conservative, for instance, says little about how the party positions itself at EU level. Indeed, there are pro-integration as well as integration sceptical parties and individual politicians on both sides of the political spectrum.⁷ To characterise political cleavages in the EU, both dimensions would need to be viewed together.

Given the nature of the EU as a predominantly economic oriented decision-making system, it should come as no surprise that political actors have been especially difficult to map along both dimensions. This applies all the more so, considering that election campaigns in Europe (including to the European Parliament) are carried out by national parties, which are positioned mainly along the left-right scale. It seems questionable that one or the other cleavage could come to dominate EU politics. Both dimensions seem to be increasingly polarised and politicised, but most likely the previously “sleeping giant” of pro- vs. anti-integration as a political cleavage will become particularly controversial in the future.⁸ Moreover, the results from the 2009 elections to the European Parliament confirm the trend of a growing mobilisation around EU issues, which – judging by the record successes of so-called “Eurosceptics” and even explicitly anti-EU parties – is not necessarily promising for the future development of European politics.⁹

The tension between small and big member states, on the other hand, emerges with individual decisions, but is strongest in the course of treaty revisions.¹⁰ This type of dispute is also embedded in the decision-making processes and patterns of representation of the EU institutions. For instance, parliamentary seats and voting weights are not allocated on a strictly proportional basis, but rather in rough relation to member state population with substantial discrepancies and an over-representation of smaller member states (in the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers and the Commission), while the treaties also guarantee manifold veto powers and blocking minorities.¹¹ The growing diversity of the Union could also exacerbate, rather than

moderate the conflict potential of this division. For similar reasons, the same applies for the dimension of “rich” versus “poor” member states. This divide has widened already due to the EU enlargement to its current 27 countries and is thus closely intertwined with the conflict potential of “new” versus “old” member states.

As in the case of the left-right and integration dimensions, this example illustrates that, rather than discrete issue fields, a great deal of overlap exists between these dimensions that, in many cases, even exacerbate one another. Granted, since the Eastern Enlargement of the EU of 2004/2007, there have been few clashes along the “old” vs. “new” member states dimension. Thus one could postulate that the admission of “new” member states has induced fewer “new” conflicts into the Union, but rather intensified the existing cleavages (small vs. big, poor vs. rich).¹² Still, one cannot disregard altogether the potential of an “old” vs. “new” cleavage, especially with regard to foreign policy. In the context of the issue concerning a “transatlantic” vs. an “autarkic” (i.e. independent) orientation for European foreign policy, the various interests and goals can and will remain contentious, not only, but particularly between old and new member states.¹³ The dispute among EU member states triggered by the run-up to the Iraq War in 2003 or the ongoing tension in relations between the Common Foreign and Security Policy and NATO demonstrate that the issue of the Union’s orientation in foreign, security and defence matters has not only been insufficiently resolved, it bears further potential for major dissent.

From a structural as well as policy perspective, the “neoliberalism” vs. “welfare state” and “supranational” vs. “intergovernmental” cleavages warrant particular consideration. Both are closely connected to the Polity-issue and affect multiple conflict dimensions, while encompassing various levels, namely institutional and policy-field related factors. With regard to the former, it should be emphasised that, barring any major reforms, questions pertaining to a “social Europe” and any form of EU redistributive policy face particular restrictions from the outset due to treaty law. But with the financial crisis of 2008 and the ensuing 2010 Euro Crisis at the latest, calls for European market corrections to market failures could surely be expected to get louder in the future. The socio-economic dimension is linked, in turn, substantially to the dualism of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism in integration. The latter represents perhaps the fundamental cleavage in European politics par excellence. Though it is not new, it will maintain its currency nonetheless. In parallel, debates along this dimension will be triggered more frequently (e.g. because the Treaty of Lisbon expands EU competences on the one hand, while strengthening ► intergovernmental elements – like

▶ the inclusion of national parliaments or subsidiarity reviews – at the same time). These conflicts, however, will become more difficult to organise or resolve in an ever more disparate Union. If anything, it is precisely this multi-dimensional diversity of member state preferences that can be deemed the main source of the “political” in Europe.¹⁴

3. Outlook toward 2020

How the political landscape of Europe develops in the future will depend on multiple factors. Admittedly, this sort of general, almost trivial statement can apply to any political system or country. Indeed, developments are initiated often more by reactions to crises, externalities or catastrophes of a “higher power” that emerge in the short-term rather than by far-sighted strategies and are thus widely unpredictable. Nevertheless, the assertion above is superlatively valid for the EU. For the EU in its current stage, in contrast to most states, polities or international organisations, cannot yet be conceived as a “final good”. To that extent, the Union is still far too indeterminate – both with regard to enlargement or widening as well as its authority or deepening. This condition endows the EU, which is already *sui generis* or “one of a kind” in a structural and functional sense, with an additional dimension of uniqueness. And as long as its constitution (understood in a dual sense) is under construction, the polity-dimension will remain a core feature of Europe’s political landscape, a feature that – when considering the future development of the EU – has to be considered from the outset.

Based on the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty and political developments up to now, several tendencies on future EU politics can nevertheless be concluded. The Treaty of Lisbon has endured a truly “difficult birth” which began after the failure of the Treaty for a European Constitution and experienced its own crisis of ratification along the way. This treaty and the corresponding treaty-making process thus give particularly good reason to expect fewer grand visions

in the EU, or at least fewer serious attempts to realise such far-reaching plans. Instead, European politics in general as well as any treaty revisions will continue to be strongly oriented toward consensus and compromise. Accordingly, this seems politically essential for the Union, since its structural complexity and the predominant need for consensual decision making will remain, rather than giving way to a clearer, more cohesive model of integration. An additional reason to expect a more modest tone from Brussels is provided by the “Europe 2020” programme.¹⁵ This strategy paper sets noticeably lesser ambitious goals than the Lisbon Strategy declared in 2000, according to which Europe was to become the most competitive, dynamic and knowledge-based economic area in the world by 2010.¹⁶ In the next decade, the EU will perhaps be more of a “Europe of projects”.¹⁷ Of course this perspective does not preclude that a constitutional debate could re-emerge in the next few years. The impact of such a discussion, however, would probably be marginal.

On account of the Lisbon Treaty, citizens, civil-society actors and interest groups in Europe have gained additional direct and intermediate channels of participation in order to have an influence on European decisions.¹⁸ Surely the ubiquitously criticised democracy deficit of European governance has not been resolved entirely, but it has been redressed in part, for example by upgrading the directly elected European Parliament, enhancing inclusion of national parliaments or introducing a European wide citizen right to initiative. Indeed, the significance and trajectory of European political decisions is growing continuously, while the opportunities for citizen participation in decision-making processes have expanded concomitantly, though reactively. Above all, this indicates that, in future, the polity, policies and politics of the European Union will experience an increasingly intense politicisation. Furthermore, this development toward a more politicised EU represents the “novelty” of the changing political landscape of Europe. And it is also in this context that a self-perpetuating European dilem-

ma becomes salient. The compromise or “hodgepodge” character of the EU, which is absolutely necessary for its acceptance as well as conflict- and problem-solving capacity, will, in turn, facilitate and ultimately intensify further political contestation.

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CHRONOLOGY

compiled by Dr. Volkan Altintas

10 May 2010: At the EU-Turkey Accession Council press conference, EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Stefan Füle, fuels hopes for the opening of more negotiation chapters in the course of the year.

31 May 2010: Israeli-Turkish relations deteriorate after an Israeli intervention on the “Freedom Flotilla” off the coast of the Gaza Strip.

30 June 2010: The EU and Turkey open the negotiation chapter on food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy.

1 July 2010: Belgium takes over the Council Presidency.

12 September 2010: A constitutional referendum supports the course of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s government as voters approve 26 amendments to the country’s Constitution, dating back to 1982.

9 November 2010: The European Commission publishes its annual Progress Report on Turkey.

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THE EU AT A CROSSROADS

Scenarios of the Union's Development

Louis-Marie Clouet and Andreas Marchetti

The European Union currently is at a crossroads. Based on a this assessment, a joint research group of ZEI and Ifri formulated four different scenarios for the future of the European Union. Looking at the next decade, the scenarios take into consideration internal and external developments of the Union. The implications for EU-Turkey relations are evident: Only a strong, self-confident and stable European Union will eventually welcome Turkey as a new member. However, current trends can be interpreted in different directions.

Scenario I: The "second founding"¹ of the European Union

Union and member states' policies largely respond to current challenges and expectations. Increased international standing and an overall positive economic development increase acceptance of European policies in the eyes of political actors and the public. Conscious of the added value of member states acting together, the European Union supports the sustainable transformation of Europe's economy and also acts more unified on the international scene. More efficient instruments will be developed, leading even to slight modifications of the existing treaties. In important policy fields, strategies will be formulated and existing ones updated, particularly focussing on a better interplay between Union and member states' actions. Even enlargement policy can be reanimated, positively affecting EU-Turkey relations.

Scenario II: Europe of (un)limited opportunities

The European Union continues to progress on the basis of the Treaty of Lisbon, with the "méthode Monnet" remaining the guiding principle of the Union's functioning. In how far the Union can positively develop will largely depend on its international performance and economic development: Economically, much will depend on Europe's ability to really develop a knowledge-based and sustainable economy; internationally, much will depend on whether the Union can exercise international leadership, in an increasingly competitive and multilateral world. Here, one central issue will also be if the Union can stick to commitments, particularly if it comes to enlargement. The scenario *Europe of (un)limited opportunities* hints well beyond the second decade of the 21st century: As scenario of transition it can lead to a more pro-active Union. However, if stagnation or restraint prevail, Europe can also see itself driven back.

Scenario III: Europe divided

While the Union is advancing internationally and economically, the distribution of wealth becomes increasingly unbalanced and there-

fore the prosperity gap in European societies widens. This leads to a stronger fragmentation *within* member states as well as *between* them. Disputes between member states become more and more pronounced. Increasing social tensions lead to a rise in nationalism – translating into "Euro nationalism" (Timothy Garton Ash) to the outside of the Union. The Union uses its international clout to make the aggregated egoisms of its member states heard on the international stage. However, in the long-run, this behaviour provokes the rejection of "European" norms. Accordingly, the EU will find itself more and more challenged beyond 2020. Hence, the scenario *Europe divided* is neither internally nor externally sustainable and therefore also a scenario of transition. In contrast to *Europe of (un)limited opportunities*, it leads to a more negative development after 2020.

Scenario IV: Volatile Europe

The Union cannot live up to expectations. Rather negative developments in the economic sphere and a decreasing international standing go hand in hand with strongly negative developments in social terms. Although member states also display deficiencies in their policy-output, they are strengthened by growing nationalism, accompanied by increased xenophobia throughout Europe. Even among the acting elite compliance and identification with the Union decrease. The project of European integration is challenged as such, although its structure remains in place to pursue national interests – in contrast to the "spirit of the treaties". Internationally, the EU and its members see themselves more and more marginalized. Europe finds itself politically and economically reduced to its

actual geographic scope as Western peninsula of the Eurasian landmass. Its attractiveness is substantially reduced – willingness to take in new members is equally low as ambitions of countries at its borders to join.

Perspectives

The Union is indeed at a crossroads and the next decade will decide on the way the Union will develop. Although stakes are high and challenges seem enormous, the Union has enough and sufficient potential to influence its sort. If the Union and its member states act more coherently and tackle inefficiencies, the Union's perspectives are quite good. If, however, national interests or even egoisms increase, the Union's potential will be used up for short-term results. Turkey, as important partner of the EU, has an almost vital interest in a strong and influential EU. If both do their proper homework, relations could possibly exit the current deadlock and strengthen the already existing bonds – for the benefit of both.

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EU-TURKEY RELATIONS

Bound to end in a blind alley?

Burak Gümüş and Banu Avuk

The President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, gave his first address on the State of the European Union in Strasbourg in September 2010. He set out his strategic programme for the Union for the next year – just like the annual speeches of US Presidents. By doing so, Barroso evidently is trying to become the face Europe still needs. However, the much-awaited speech to the European Parliament has failed to meet expectations for a strong EU leadership. The Union still has to give proof that it is more than just 27 states combined together.

The challenge for the EU in the coming years will be to fill the Lisbon Treaty with life and particularly to unify its different foreign policy tools in order to play a more pronounced role in the world. However, it is hard to ignore that on the one hand the Union tries to increase political unity on various issues while on the other hand the individual national interests of some of its 27 member states also gain in importance. This – increasing – non-convergence of European national interests also becomes evident in the issue of Turkey's EU membership bid.

In order to act efficiently, the EU needs a well-defined aim in its enlargement policy and a single, firm voice. However, the topic of enlargement was missing in the speech of Barroso in Strasbourg. But what are the EU's goals for its enlargement policy? In absence of a clear-cut answer, Turkey is losing patience with the EU. EU foreign ministers certainly look for possibilities to strengthen ties to Turkey, a nation with growing clout. Therefore, they recently discussed in Brussels about the future of the relationship between member states and Turkey, despite the deep divisions existing among the 27 nations on the issue. However, instead of reviving the stagnating accession negotiations started in 2005, EU High Representative Catherine Ashton offered to develop a "strategic dialogue" on global key issues, independent of accession negotiations: "The purpose of today's debate is ... to recognize that as well as a candidate country, Turkey is a partner with us in lots of issues across the world."¹ However, Turkish foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu made it clear that Turkey will never accept any replacement or any alternative to the accession process. According to him, deeper strategic ties are therefore directly related to progress in negotiations.²

Accession talks began in 2005, but have

only made little progress ever since. German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy have both rejected the idea of Turkey's membership. As a substitute, both promote the idea of a "privileged partnership" although the EU treaties, at the heart of the *acquis*, do not mention such an alternative to EU membership. Consequently, these and similar suggestions arouse nothing but declining confidence between the accession partners. Turkey's chief EU negotiator Ege-men Bağış even considers such offers as insults to Turkey and confirms the foreign minister's standpoint that Turkey will never accept these.³ At least, this is not only a position voiced in Turkey: Belgian foreign minister Steven Vanackere supports Bağış and confirms that the goal has been set to be membership.⁴ As long as the Union's general rules concerning membership do not change, it is incomprehensible, how non-standard offers can be made to Turkey.

The European Union is deeply divided on the issue of Turkey joining the EU. The Nordic states, Britain and Italy are backing Turkey's cause, because Turkey's rise as a regional power forces the EU to find ways to work more closely with Turkey. The foreign minister of Finland, Alexander Stubb, even estimates that Turkey is more influential in the world than any of the EU member states – together or separately.⁵

However, considering the growing economic and political weight of the country, voices are getting louder in Turkey that EU membership might not be necessary after all. Due to stagnating membership talks, Turkey's target aim of membership suffers under increasing internal scepticism. While the accession talks for membership are ongoing, progress has been sluggish and is on the verge of deadlock. 8 chapters out of a total of 35 are currently blocked by the EU due to the refusal of Turkey to implement the Ankara Protocol and to normalize bilateral relations with Cyprus. Despite five years of negotiations, only 13 chapters have been opened so far: among these, twelve chapters are still open, only one single chapter has been provisionally closed. Considering that EU membership is a strategic goal for Turkey and stakes are high on both sides, EU member states have to deliberate on the way the Union wants to shape its future relations with Turkey. With 35 chapters altogether, 8 blocked due to political reasons and 13 opened, Turkey has more and more difficulties in opening additional negotiation chapters. If measurable progress decreases even more in the future, it is doubtful whether Turkey can

really continue the accession process and maintain its clear orientation towards the EU.

Is Turkey "changing sides"?

In parallel, Turkey's growing engagement in the Middle East has created serious concerns of a possible "axis shift"⁶ in its foreign policy. Among the "evidence" put forward in this sense are the increasing number of economic and political agreements with various Arab countries, Turkey's harsh criticism of Israeli operations in Gaza ("One Minute Issue"), the invitation of Hamas leaders by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) to Turkey, the "Uranium Exchange Agreement" between Iran, Brazil and Turkey, and finally, the clear objection to an Israeli military intervention on the "Gaza Freedom Flotilla", resulting *inter alia* in the deaths of nine Turkish citizens.

To answer the question whether an axial shift is really taking place or not, one has to look at distinct components of this concept. First of all, the most important – if not sole – condition for an axial shift would be, according to the think tank *Turksam*, the existence of a nuclear power, entangling Turkey in its gravitation field.⁷ Yet, there is no such actor in the Middle East attracting Turkey. Accordingly, Turkey cannot change its orientation by itself because of its limited own capacity, making it dependent on scientific and technological progress of other countries. Hence, there is no alternative axis to shift to, because there is no other superpower but the US attracting Turkey.

Secondly, the changing structure of the world after the Cold War increasingly creates opportunities for Turkish involvement and growing engagement. During the Cold War, Turkey was a reliable member of the US-led Western Alliance against the Communist Block at the South-Eastern border of NATO, directly in the neighbourhood of Bulgaria, the Soviet Union and Iran as well as to the pro-Russian Arab countries Syria and Iraq. After the breakdown of the Eastern Block and of Yugoslavia, Turkey has – just like the US or the EU – tried to fill the vacuum of power in these regions. Geopolitically speaking, the end of the Cold War also permitted Turkey to restore relations to territories formerly under Ottoman rule but behind the Iron Curtain for decades or belonging to the hinterland of the US or the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Despite Cold War history, Turkey shares a common cultural and historical legacy with ex-Ottoman countries and even has close ethnical and lingual ties to the Turkic countries of Central Asia and of the Caucasus. ►

▶ According to Veysel Ayhan, Middle East advisor of the Middle East Center for Strategic Studies (ORSAM), Turkey only had few contacts behind the Iron Curtain and to the Middle East during the Cold War because of the dominance of the US or of the Soviet Union in these regions.⁸ With the end of the Cold War, a window of opportunity opened for Turkey. The gaps of power in the Balkans, in the Caucasus, in Central Asia, caused by the dissolution of the USSR and of Yugoslavia, have to a certain extent been filled by Turkey, building on the mutual legacy and acting on the basis of close coordination with the West. Hence, the opportunity for a new balance of power after the end of bipolar stability enabled Turkey to play a more pronounced role in regions “where no Turk has gone” for decades.

Thirdly, the new doctrine as formulated by foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu (“Strategic Depth”) has become a central government objective: Turkey strives for “zero problems” with and between Turkey’s regional neighbours by entertaining good relations with these countries and acting as a mediator between them. After Turkey’s outreach to the former “enemy states” Greece, Southern Cyprus, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Serbia, and Armenia as well as – Turkish and Iraqi – Kurds, the neighbouring Muslim countries are next on the agenda to establish good neighbourly relations and contacts.

Fourthly, the various economic and cultural ties between Turkey and the Arab world create an opportunity for societal (and transnational) influence in order to mutually build up a region still under – at least indirect – control of the US and the EU. Since American and European involvement in the Middle East is perceived by some as religiously motivated or kin to imperialism, Turkey – as a dominantly Muslim country – can stabilize both states and societies in the region by being closer to the hearts and minds of Muslim Arabs. In accordance to the Foundation for Economic and Social Studies in Turkey (TESEV), Turkey can be a role model for Arab countries because of its popularity and success, built on democracy and freedom.⁹

In order to play such a central role, Turkey has to undergo a deep and radical process of change and transition to a neo-Ottoman cultural and economic soft power with a strong but not anti-Western Muslim identity. This reform and transition process with effects on Turkey’s internal and international affairs, is pursued by the Erdoğan government. Ioannis N. Grigoriadis (Bilkent/ELIAMEP) confirms that the ruling Justice and Development Party is a reformist actor to change the domestic and external structure of Turkey.¹⁰ This process is closely coordinated with the USA and the EU.

Both, the so-called “opening initiatives” (mainly unilateral concessions towards Armenia, Greek Cypriots, members of the Greek-Orthodox minority, PKK, the Iraqi Kurds etc.) and the waves of detention of obstructionist nationalist hardliners in the military, jurisprudence, bureaucracy, polity, media and economy serve the realisation of the “zero problem doctrine”.

All this is well in line with US and European expectations. Even the referendum of 12 September 2010 on the reform of the Turkish constitution – giving the president more power against the Courts and in doing so, possibly paving the way for a transition to an authoritarian semi-presidential system – is welcomed by the West because it is likely to ensure the continuity of reforms even against a powerful status quo oriented nationalist opposition.

As some European media judge, recently introduced reforms have opened the way for an islamisation of Turkish national identity, putting Turkey in the position to get the sympathy of Muslim Arabs which is a central condition to really become an accepted, soft-power based leader in the region. According to the Theory of Hegemonic Stability, a powerful hegemon uses its power to uphold the existing system, even against resistance. As this is costly, the hegemon’s “empire” can break apart. This challenge can currently be identified for the US: The forceful presence in the Middle East and vis-à-vis Muslim actors (Iraq, Afghanistan) – inter alia to ensure access to energy sources – creates substantial costs like concrete casualties, bad image, collateral damage and financial loss. Hence, the presence of a power acting peacefully and legitimate in the eyes of the societies and states concerned, can substantially reduce costs. In the current situation, if Turkey is perceived as Muslim and anti-Israeli, it can act as an agent of the principal US and as a sub-hegemon because it has enough reputation that allows it to be accepted by Arabs.

In the long run, Turkey might even take over regional leadership from states like Egypt and Jordan – having considerably lost reputation in the eyes of many anti-Western segments of the pan-Arab society – and keep them away from the influence of the Shiite revolutionary state of Iran. In this context, Turkey’s moderate Islam and its limitation of anti-Israeli criticism to non-violent, peaceful discourse and diplomatic initiatives can be seen as a decisive factor to prevent some frustrated Arab leaders and societies from becoming followers of Iran. In this sense, Turkey’s ambition to play a more decisive role in the region, is in line with Western aims – consequently, there is no such thing as an axial shift in Turkish foreign policy, because Turkey’s behaviour is mainly in line with US and EU

interests.

According to Hüseyin Bağcı, Middle East Technical University, Turkey’s strategic importance for the EU increases visibly.¹¹ Europe is well aware of this development, but has considerable reservations when it comes to full membership. The European approach to Turkey is characterized by ambivalence: On the one side, Turkey is seen as an important partner, on the other side, European aloofness towards Turkey causes Turkey to also consider alternative options. Hence, the debate on an axial shift does not reflect the nature of a changing Turkey but rather reflects European fears of losing Turkey.¹²

Perspectives

Already by looking at voting and election processes, the European Union appears to be rather cumbersome, almost static, non-spontaneous and incapable of taking initiatives for action. It can also be assumed that the financial crisis will continue to have negative impacts on Europe, worsening Europe’s reluctance. Charles Kupchan, Council on Foreign Relations, goes even as far as asserting the end of the project of European integration – caused by the economic and financial crisis and combined with a renationalization of Europe.¹³ In order to prevent such an outcome, the EU needs to act much more coherently – internally as well as externally. Continuing inconsistencies have a deep and negative impact on the accession negotiations and therefore on relations with Turkey in general. However, most Europeans still have doubts if it comes to Turkish membership in the Union. By staying reserved, most of them seem to disregard, though, that today’s Turkey is not similar to the Turkey that had signed the association agreement with the EEC in 1963. With its economic, geopolitical, political and cultural capabilities and opportunities, Turkey gains more and more importance – also for Europe. The fact that US President Barack Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron held speeches in the Turkish National Assembly shortly after assuming office, underscores this importance of Turkey. Accordingly, as put forward by Ahmet Davutoğlu, the EU now has to decide whether it wants to be a continental or a global power.¹⁴ Europe’s current reluctance hints to the former, a clear-cut strategy to enable Turkey joining the Union would pave the way for the latter. But even then, currently discussed timeframes do not nourish hopes for fast progress: EU Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Füle has underlined that Turkey still has to take some decisive steps before possibly joining the Union.¹⁵ Füle’s predecessor, Olli Rehn, believes that Turkey will still have to wait „10 to fifteen years“,¹⁶ Barroso assumes an accession not before 2021.¹⁷ According to Stefan Füle, ▶

► Turkey's policy of "zero problems" has to be supplemented with further policies: zero problems during the negotiations, zero problems with inner structural reforms and zero tolerance if it comes to terrorism.¹⁸ However, whether accession around 2020 is realistic or not will not only depend on Turkey's accomplishment in implementing the *acquis*, but largely on the European definition of the EU's ambitions and the place Europe is willing to grant Turkey in this endeavour. As integration into the EU is of benefit to both sides, conditions should be set once and for all, and Turkey should be treated with fairness and respect.

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CURRENT NEGOTIATING STATUS

No.	Title of Chapter	Status
1	Free movement of goods	●
2	Freedom of movement for workers	●
3	Right of establishment and freedom to provide services	●
4	Free movement of capital	●
5	Public procurement	●
6	Company law	●
7	Intellectual property law	●
8	Competition policy	●
9	Financial services	●
10	Information society and media	●
11	Agriculture and rural development	●
12	Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy	●
13	Fisheries	●
14	Transport policy	●
15	Energy	●
16	Taxation	●
17	Economic and monetary policy	●
18	Statistics	●
19	Social policy and employment	●
20	Enterprise and industrial policy	●
21	Trans-European networks	●
22	Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments	●
23	Judiciary and fundamental rights	●
24	Justice, freedom and security	●
25	Science and research	●
26	Education and culture	●
27	Environment	●
28	Consumer and health protection	●
29	Customs union	●
30	External relations	●
31	Foreign, security and defence policy	●
32	Financial control	●
33	Financial and budgetary provisions	●
34	Institutions	●
35	Other issues	●

Legend: ● not yet opened ● suspended
 ● opened
 ● provisionally closed

Data as of December 2010

ZEI PUBLICATIONS

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FIVE POSSIBLE FUTURES

Potential Developments in EU-Turkey Relations

Andreas Marchetti

When accession negotiations between the European Union and Turkey started in 2005, the EU underscored the “open-ended” nature of this process. Although former accession negotiations have always led to EU membership, their outcome in the case of Turkey “cannot be guaranteed” (Negotiating Framework 2005). Despite concrete challenges and unresolved obstacles on the way, the continuously open-ended nature of the process is structurally owed to an ever increasing enlargement fatigue in European public opinion and the translation of this sentiment into political hesitation – particularly with regard to Turkey. In reaction to this, the reform momentum has not been kept at a constantly high level in Turkey with public support for membership declining there as well. Accordingly, the central question still open in 2005 remains unanswered in 2010 as well: Which will eventually be the place of Turkey in Europe?

Political actors and opinion makers alike underline the importance of close and mutually reinforcing ties between the European Union and Turkey. However, despite ongoing negotiations, membership is not the only possible outcome. Options have rather been multiplied with growing frustration linked to an accession process that just does not seem to lead to imminent membership.

Future I: Gradual integration

Ever since the beginning of accession negotiations, politicians and commentators have discussed the potential advantages of an approach leading to a more flexible integration of Turkey into the European Union structure, avoiding the current approach of going from zero percent to one hundred percent in one formal step (e.g. Karakas 2006). However tempting such an option might be from a pragmatic point of view, neither European leaders nor Turkey seem to be ready to consider it at present. From a sceptical European point of view, such an approach – which would not exclude accession in the long-run – could effectively pre-decide on a later full membership of Turkey.

From a Turkish government perspective, gradual integration could be suspected of playing into the hands of those who want to adjourn accession until the cows come home – leading to some sort of concept similar to the continuously rejected idea of “privileged partnership”. However, if the EU would really offer substantial gradual integration, Turkey could benefit from at least some (and potentially growing) mechanisms of formalised inclusion and prove its capacity to act as reliable partner in Europe. Under such circumstances, Turkey might then even be inclined to perform more consistently towards the fulfilment of membership criteria and alignment with the *acquis communautaire* and thereby reducing doubts in Europe.

Future II: Euro-ambitious Turkey

Despite EU reluctance, the Turkish government might not only rhetorically but concretely opt for more ambitious and effective reforms to meet the requirements for membership. Although the current government might find it hard to find domestic backing for such a policy, it would put enormous pressure on the reluctant European Union. Either the EU would then have to respond positively to Turkey’s efforts and work towards the conclusion of accession within this decade or the Union would pursue its current approach, risking to weaken its ties to Turkey which could then be particularly inclined to search for other international partners.

Future III: Turkey changes its mind

Over the past months, many have voiced concern about a “new”, self-confident Turkish foreign policy. Along the lines of this reasoning, Turkey could try to become a regional power without necessarily depending on the European Union, elaborating ties to the Middle East, Asia and Africa instead. This might force the EU to reconsider its reluctant accession policy by setting membership as undisputed target for both sides, eventually leading to a re-Europeanisation of Turkish foreign policy, or be considered as problematic but sovereign decision of Turkey by an EU unable to substantially al-

ter its policy towards the Turkish Republic. In any case, the European reaction cannot be easily predicted, as the pressure exercised by Turkey would just be as important as the objection to Turkish membership in European public opinion.

Future IV: Ending Negotiations

As stakes and mutual commitments are high, one of the most unlikely scenarios is a formal end of negotiations in the foreseeable future. Despite all obstacles, neither side seems inclined to opt for a formal stop as it would undermine credibility and additionally ruin the terrain for a pragmatic and positive renewal of bilateral relations. This would be in neither side’s interest.

Future V: Business as Usual

In contrast, a rather likely but politically not necessarily efficient possibility is a continuation of the negotiation process at its current pace. This would enable the parties to stick to commitments without being obliged to fully deliver in the near future on contentious issues (Turkey) or to live up to expectations raised ever since granting candidate status to Turkey (EU). Although this option could avoid a substantial alienation in the near future, it might turn out to be just as undesirable in the long run: Turkey and the EU would continue to be engaged in a mutually binding process without benefiting from the full range of possibilities a formal joining forces could offer.

As things stand, “Business as Usual” seems a quite likely option; however, other “futures” are probably more effective. To find a way out of this dilemma will be the common challenge of Turkey and the European Union during the years to come.

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Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung
Center for European Integration Studies

IMPRINT

ISSN 1817-1729
Center for European Integration Studies
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The *ZEI EU-Turkey-Monitor* is published three times a year.
Authors are responsible for the views expressed in their contributions.