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Promoting Dialogue and Solutions: What European Legislators Think of Turkey

Zerrin Cengiz, Aybars Görgülü, Mehmet Ünlü, Samuel Doveri Vesterbye



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Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı**
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Preface

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Turkey is going through difficult times. For the first time in its history, Turkey will repeat the general elections because the 7 June 2015 Elections has not resulted in the establishment of a coalition government. On the other hand, the Syrian refugee crisis is hitting the country harder than ever, and the economic and financial markets are not in a good state either. Against this background, EU accession process has become relatively less visible in the public agenda. It has been stated that there are also mixed signals coming from the European Union regarding Turkey's membership bid. The European member states have conflicting perspectives about Turkey's current state of affairs vis-à-vis the EU, which creates a major setback for the accession process. It also seems that the majority of European public is still negative about Turkey in terms of democracy, human rights, freedom of press, transparency and accountability. In this context, TESEV and the Young Friends of Turkey (YFoT) have conducted a timely research to shed light on the ways in which the parliamentarians at both national and European levels perceive Turkey's prospective membership in the EU.

The research team conducted interviews with 30 parliamentarians at national level and 27 at the European level, all from different sides of the political spectrum. The main objective of the research is to understand the national legislators' rhetoric, while analysing to what extent perceptions about the Turkish accession process are influenced by prejudice and which remedies are available to solve such issues. The findings reveal that the majority of the European parliamentarians are reported to be favouring Turkey's membership, but that an even larger portion believes that the accession process is affected by political prejudice. This is actually a very striking finding, and it indicates that Turkey's European integration at the legislative level has been rather successful against all the political odds since the accession negotiations started in 2005. It also reveals forms of prejudice and politicised action on behalf of EU member states and narratives. This finding is based on what the parliamentarians have said, and it should be surely analysed through a discourse analysis within the scope of a forthcoming scholarship.

The findings of this research also indicate that the interviewed parliamentarians have considerable concerns about personal freedoms, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, human rights, democracy, the Kurdish issue, the domestic political developments and the rise of authoritarian tendencies in Turkey. This research also finds out that the core European concept of promoting cultural diversity is at risk of being lost due to the growing religious and cultural intolerance against Turkey's membership. All in all, this is a very skilfully conducted research and scientific analysis. Thus, I would like to welcome such extensive research, and congratulate the research team on the meticulous work that they have undertaken. I am also delighted to see that the European integration of Turkey has finally lessened anti-accession beliefs generated by the earlier parliamentarians in the EU. And I hope that such research could also be extended to the European public level in order to analyse the content of the dismay of the European public about the current state of affairs in Turkey.

Introduction

Full membership to the European Union (EU) has been a major foreign policy aspiration for any government leading Turkey in the past three decades. Accordingly, Turkey has been a candidate for EU membership since 1999 and accession negotiations started in 2005. Despite this positive momentum, Turkey is pretty far from full membership perspective as of mid-2015. A decade after the start of the accession negotiations, both sides seem quite busy with their internal problems and the official negotiation process is left into limbo. Although the current political climate does not offer an optimistic look, Turkey's full membership aspirations are still present. It is clear that Turkey's membership is different from any previous accession especially due to the size and the demography of the country. However, it should be noted that Turkey deserves a fair treatment and evaluation from the Union if the membership criteria are fully met. Here we face the question of how to tackle socio-cultural prejudice and discrimination with regards to Turkey's accession process.

There is growing scholarly concern and media coverage on tackling socio-cultural prejudice and discrimination regarding Turkey's accession process pointing towards a variety of problems related to national and cultural bias. The accession process, based on technical benchmarks and political criteria, often appears to divert from its unbiased predisposition as legislators and electorates from various member states of the European Union put a disproportionate strain on the process as a result of socio-cultural biases with reference to religion, culture and other discriminatory grounds. This, in turn, merits further investigation and improved understanding, as it contradicts the basis of enlargement that theoretically remains as an unbiased selection based on technical and political performance rather than cultural prejudice.

This report reflects the findings of an extensive research project aiming to shed light on anti-discrimination measures by having a better understanding of issues expressed by legislators in various European countries, which could significantly help reduce intolerance and socio-cultural bias towards Turkey. It is apparent that certain legislators and domestic electorates from various member states of the EU put a disproportionate strain on Turkey's membership process due to socio-cultural bias based on religious, cultural and other factors. This necessitates deeper investigation and better understanding, as the basis of enlargement is stated to be fairness and performance rather than cultural references. Moreover, putting forward socio-cultural difference in speech and national rhetoric has facilitated a cyclical trend of bias and anti-Turkish voting trends, which is continuously affecting the accession process. With seemingly growing cultural discriminatory speech and political rhetoric at the Member State level, objective standards for opposing Turkey's membership appear less enforceable at the EU level. Simultaneously, the core European concept of promoting cultural diversity is also at risk of being lost. This report therefore aims to reveal the nature and scope of such discrimination against Turkey's membership in order to contribute to the betterment of Turkey-EU dialogue by creating original data on the issue.

The specific objective of interviewing parliamentarians on this topic is to fully understand the national legislators' discriminatory rhetoric, while grasping to what extent perceptions about the Turkish accession process are

influenced by prejudice and what remedies are available to solve such issues. The report starts with brief background information on Turkey-European Union relations, continues with the methodology of the study and the definition of socio-cultural bias. It then focuses on the analysis of the research project's findings under five consecutive chapters. Finally, the report ends with policy recommendations to both Turkey and the European Union.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON TURKEY-EUROPEAN UNION RELATIONS

The foundations of the EU were laid after the Second World War with the aim of maintaining a long lasting peace in the continent. In 1950 Robert Schuman, the French Foreign Minister at the time, came up with a proposal - authored by French bureaucrat Jean Monnet - proposing the idea to establish a common market for coal and steel industries in Western Europe. Six European countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany, France and Italy) evaluated this proposal and agreed to sign the Treaty of Paris, establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951. The motivation was to put forward a new economic and political framework that would help avoid another Franco-German conflict. For the first time in history, some of the central areas of policy which until then had exclusively been tackled within the framework of the nation state, passed into the hands of a supranational organization. Furthermore, this comprehensive economic integration was ultimately intended to lead to a political union.¹

In 1957, the Treaty of Rome was signed aiming for a deeper integration among its members, both economically and politically. The treaty designed the establishment of a common market, common agricultural policy to protect and support the European farmers and a common external trade policy which eventually led to the establishment of the European Economic Community in 1958. All internal tariffs had been abolished by 1968, which accordingly gave way to the advancement of trade between European states. The Treaty of Rome also included the Treaty Establishing the European Atomic Energy Community, also known as the Euratom, which formed a unified safer European nuclear market in order to ensure the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The EEC continued to enlarge more, integrating new member states, that ultimately led to the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 (also known as Treaty on the European Union) which established the European Union as it is known today. The Maastricht Treaty significantly changed the community's institutions and their decision making processes; it created the concept of European citizenship and set the basis for a monetary union and common currency. With this development, the size (*15 members in 1995 with the inclusion of EFTA members – Austria, Norway and Finland-*) and the scope of the European Union became much wider including all aspects such as the cultural, political, social, economic, environmental and judicial spheres. The Union still goes through constant reformation processes such as the Eastern Enlargement rounds in 2004 and 2007 including the signing of the Lisbon Treaty in 2007, which has amended the two fundamental treaties of the union, the Maastricht and the Rome Treaties. Now the EU is one of the largest supranational, intergovernmental unions in the world with 28 deeply integrated members.

EU-Turkey relations started with Turkey's application to the EEC in 1959. The community's response to Turkey was to establish a close cooperation until the circumstances of Turkey permitted its full accession.² This required the

1 European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) article on *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/topic/European-Coal-and-Steel-Community>

2 Information on EU-Turkey Relations. Retrieved from <http://www.etcf.org.tr/EN/Genel/BelgeGoster.aspx?17A16AE30572D313AAF6AA849816B2EF3143C82B0599388A>

establishment of an association framework which was finalized with the Ankara Association Agreement signed in September 1963. This agreement aimed at paving the way to full membership through the establishment of a customs union between Turkey and the EEC. An Association Council along with a Joint Parliamentary Committee were established under the Ankara Agreement and these two institutions brought Turkish and European members of parliament (MPs) together for better relations. The Additional Protocol of the Agreement - signed in 1970 - set a timetable for deeper integration, including trade and the abolition of tariffs and quotas between both parties. If all conditions under the protocol were to be implemented fully, the free circulation of goods and services and the harmonization of Turkey-EEC legislation on various areas would have been completed in 22 years.

At the beginning of the 1980s relations stagnated due to the military coup in Turkey but after the elections in 1983 relations were re-established. Meanwhile, Turkey shifted its economic policy from an import-substitution model to a free-market economy with “The 24th January Decisions (1980)³”. In the light of these developments, relations between both parties came to a point of normalization and in 1987 Turkey applied for full-membership to the union. The council forwarded Turkey’s application to the European Commission (EC) for the preparation of an opinion. The opinion - prepared and published in two years - confirmed Turkey’s eligibility for membership. It also asked for more favourable conditions in Turkey and underlined the difficulties of focusing on an enlargement project on the eve of forming a Customs Union.

The Customs Union between Turkey and the EU officially started on 1 January 1996, in which a free trade area was established between the two parties. Following that, the political turning point in relations came at the end of the 1990s. Based on the Commission’s 1999 *Regular Progress Report on Turkey*, the European Council gave Turkey the status of ‘candidate country’ for EU membership in the Helsinki Summit of December 1999. This meant that if Turkey fulfilled the ‘Copenhagen Criteria’ (also known as the Accession Criteria), which had been defined after the 1993 European Council Summit in Copenhagen, it would be able to become a full member of the EU. The Copenhagen Criteria were essential conditions that any applicant must comply with in order to become a member. These conditions were:

- *political criteria: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;*
- *economic criteria: a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competition and market forces;*
- *administrative and institutional capacity to effectively implement the acquis and ability to take on the obligations of membership.⁴*

Following the candidacy status, the EC started preparing an Accession Partnership for Turkey and declared it on 8th March 2001. A framework for regulation of the legal basis of the Accession Partnership was also adopted by the General Affairs Council on 26th February 2001. With the adoption of these two documents, an important part of the legal procedure for the accession process was completed. As an important official step on the Turkish side, the Secretariat General for EU Affairs was established in 2000. The Secretariat was entitled to coordinate the reform and adaptation processes of public institutions, to guide the application of decisions made by relevant committees and groups, to do the necessary research and investigation based on government decisions and to work on official

3 “The 24th January Decisions” refer to a liberal economic program that made structural changes in the Turkish economy such as the establishment of a free-market economy and the liberalisation of foreign trade.

4 The European Commission. “Accession Criteria.” 7 Sept. 2012. Web. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/accession-criteria_en.htm

grounds in cooperation with the Prime Ministry.⁵ The Secretariat General for EU Affairs later became the Ministry for EU Affairs in 2011 which continues to work on negotiations and the aforementioned areas.

In October 2005, the Accession Negotiations officially began with the screening process, meaning the examination of each chapter of the “*acquis communautaire*” through which Turkey is expected to adopt and implement a considerable part of the EU *acquis*. For practical purposes, the *acquis communautaire* is divided into 35 subject-related chapters. The first chapter to be negotiated was *Chapter 25 – Sciences and Research* and this was provisionally closed in 2006. So far, although 13 more chapters have been opened to negotiate, none of them have been closed. 8 chapters are blocked by the EU Council Decision on 11 December 2006 and none of the chapters are going to be provisionally closed until Turkey fulfils its commitments⁶ under the Association Agreement.⁷ Those eight chapters which are currently blocked are *the free movement of goods, right of establishment and freedom to provide service, financial services, agricultural and rural development, fisheries, transport policy, customs union and external relations*.⁸ In addition to these, in 2007 France declared that it will not allow the opening of 5 chapters (one of which was previously blocked by the Council decision) including the following ones; *economic and monetary policy, regional policy and coordination of structural instruments, financial and budgetary provisions and institutions*. Later in 2009, the opening of 6 more chapters (*freedom of movement for workers, energy, judiciary and fundamental rights, justice, freedom and security, education and culture, foreign security and defence policy*) was further blocked.⁹

In light of these developments and despite Turkey-EU relations coming to a stagnation point, in May 2012 a new ‘positive agenda’ was launched in Ankara by Štefan Füle, the Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, and Egemen Bağış the Turkish Minister for EU Affairs with the aim of bringing new dynamics to the relations.¹⁰ Within the framework of the Positive Agenda, working groups were established on issues relating to the eight chapters: *Right of establishment and freedom to provide services, company law, information society and media, statistics, judiciary and fundamental rights, justice, freedom and security, consumer and health protection and financial growth*.¹¹

Another development concerning the negotiation framework occurred on 12 February 2013 when the French Foreign Minister announced that France was in favour of opening one of the blocked chapters; chapter 22 of the EU *acquis* (*Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments*)¹². On 5 November 2013 the EU and Turkey

5 AB Bakanlığı. “Avrupa Birliği Genel Sekreterliği Teşkilat ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun.” Retrieved from <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?l=1&p=289>

6 Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “Turkey-EU Relations.” Retrieved from <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-the-european-union.en.mfa>

7 *For the official document: ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL to the Agreement establishing an Association between the European Economic Community and Turkey following the enlargement of the European Union. (2005). Official Journal of The European Union, 58-68. Retrieved from <http://ec.europa.eu/world/agreements/downloadFile.do?fullText=yes&treatyTransId=2281>*

8 House of Commons. “UK-Turkey Relations and Turkey’s Regional Role - Foreign Affairs Committee Contents.” Retrieved from <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmfaff/1567/156711.htm#note425>

9 Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “Turkey-EU Relations.” Retrieved from <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-the-european-union.en.mfa>

10 Press Release Database. European Commission. Retrieved from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-12-359_en.htm

11 Press Release Database. European Commission. Retrieved from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-12-359_en.htm

12 Embassy of France in London. “France Backs Opening New Chapter of EU Talks with Turkey.” 15 February 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.ambafrance-uk.org/France-wants-to-give-new-boost-to>

officially started talks on this chapter, putting the accession talks back on track after three years of stalemate. The French ministry underlined Turkey's importance as a key partner and that further engagement is necessary for better dynamic relations.¹³

A relatively recent significant step was made when Turkey and the EU signed the Readmission Agreement and launched a Visa Liberalization Dialogue on 16 December 2013. The agreement was ratified by the Turkish Parliament in June 2014. As indicated by the authorities, "the main objective of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement is to establish, on the basis of reciprocity, procedures for the rapid and orderly readmission, by each side, of the persons having entered or are residing on the territory of the other side in an irregular manner."¹⁴ The signing of this agreement revealed the will of both parties in forming further and deeper relations. It also showcased an important development in terms of co-operation between Turkey and the EU on shared regional issues like migration.

Since 1998, the Commission annually publishes a Progress Report on Turkey, and based on these reports, the European Parliament (EP) adopts a "Resolution on Turkey" the latest of which was adopted on 10th of June, 2015. Additionally, The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) still serves as a platform to exchange views on the accession process. The JPC is the only parliamentary body between Turkey and the EU since 1965, then established by the Turkish Grand National Assembly and the EP. The latest meeting of JPC was held in Ankara on 19-20 March 2015.¹⁵

Concerning the latest developments of relations between Turkey and the EU, the regular Progress Reports¹⁶ published by the EC constitute an important source of information on the current situation and on how Turkey is perceived from the perspective of the EU. In the last three years, the Commission has reported that Turkey presents a mixed picture especially concerning the developments regarding the political criteria. In all three reports, Turkey has been regarded to be an important partner to the European Union as a significant actor in its own region and in the wider neighbourhood. The need for further cooperation on energy security, migration policy, foreign policy and security issue have been underlined. Among the developments; the third and fourth judicial reform packages, civilian oversight of the security forces, establishment of an Ombudsman Institution, further economic integration with the EU, launching of a Positive Agenda and Visa Liberalization Dialogue, the Readmission Agreement signed in December 2013, increasing cooperation in the field of energy and justice and home affairs have been found quite positive.^{17,18,19}

13 Embassy of France in London. "France Backs Opening New Chapter of EU Talks with Turkey." 15 February 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.ambafrance-uk.org/France-wants-to-give-new-boost-to>

14 Statement by Cecilia Malmström on the Ratification of the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement by the Turkish Parliament. 26 June 2014. Retrieved from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-14-210_en.htm

15 Türkiye Dış İşleri Bakanlığı. "Türkiye - AB İlişkileri." Web. Retrieved from <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-ab-iliskilerine-genel-bakis.tr.mfa>

16 The Progress Reports are additions to the annual Enlargement Strategy papers adopted by the Commission explaining their plans on enlargement policies. The Progress Reports are written separately for each official and potential candidate countries.

17 Turkey Progress Report. The European Commission (2012). Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20141008-turkey-progress-report_en.pdf

18 Turkey Progress Report. The European Commission (2013). Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/brochures/turkey_2013.pdf

19 Turkey Progress Report. The European Commission (2014). Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20141008-turkey-progress-report_en.pdf

The Kurdish Issue is exclusively mentioned in all the three reports and an ameliorating trend, which can be observed from the year 2012 to 2015 concerning the resolution of the issue both on the legal basis and in practice. Progress is reported on the protection of minorities, efforts for a peaceful settlement and a better legal foundation to the settlement process. However there is a downward trend noted on the respect for and protection of fundamental rights in practice, democracy and rule of law. Attempts for a new constitution and democratization packages and efforts for aligning laws with the EU *acquis* are appreciated each time but whether these reforms are taken seriously in practice is a question mark. Growing concern on the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law can be observed especially after the corruption scandals of December 2013. The commission reported an increasing political polarization in the country and a lack of peaceful dialogue across the political spectrum. One issue that draws attention in all the reports is the Commission's call for Turkey to comply with the Additional Protocol of the Ankara Agreement.

In general, the three Progress Reports tell us that Turkey is advancing its alignment in several chapters of the *acquis* regarding trade, finance, science and research and external relations. However Turkey is expected to show effort and significant progress in the areas of judiciary and fundamental rights, justice, freedom and security, environment and climate change, social policy and employment, information society and media, intellectual property law, agriculture and rural development.

It should be noted that the past three progress reports did not attract too much attention neither from the public, nor the policy-making circles in Turkey. Ankara usually looks at the bright side of the EU's bittersweet reports and the media pays relatively little attention in comparison to the post-2005 era. The primary reason behind this is the "increasing lack of interest" from the Union's side to accept Turkey as a full member. This, of course, triggers a lack of enthusiasm on the Turkish side. Out of the 35 negotiation chapters, 17 Chapters are currently blocked due to the political decisions on the part of the EU. In addition to the procedural deadlock, Turkey is also considered to be quite "unpopular" among Europeans and its Muslim identity seems to lie at the heart of this public feeling.²⁰ Turkey is rated poorly, mostly based on its religious and cultural differences, by the European public as indicated in various surveys and opinion polls. Results of an opinion poll in France, Germany, Poland, Spain and the UK indicate "though the European publics see 'economic welfare' and 'democracy', two seemingly non-cultural factors, as the major components of European identity, cultural norms and values come to the fore when they form their opinions regarding Turkey".²¹ Other indices and surveys have also found that Turkey is a disliked country among Europeans, not compatible with European values for cultural and identity reasons. The 2011 Transatlantic Trends survey revealed that only "31% of Europeans and 62% of political elites accept that Europe and Turkey share common values".²² It also indicated that "a mere 21% and 51% respectively are enthusiastic about Turkey joining the EU".²³

Even though there is a relatively negative public opinion regarding Turkey's membership to the European Union, it is important to measure how much this negative attitude is shared by the European lawmakers. It can be argued that the public opinion can change throughout the time, however the elite views are more difficult to change and

20 Hakura, F. (2005). Turkey and the European Union. Nicholas Kitchen (Editor). <http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR007/eu.pdf>

21 Yilmaz, Hakan. (2009) European Perceptions of Turkey as a Future Member State. http://www.academia.edu/3075715/Problems_of_Europeanization_and_European_Perceptions_of_Turkey_as_a_Future_Member_State

22 Hakura, F. (2005). Turkey and the European Union. Nicholas Kitchen (Editor). <http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR007/eu.pdf>

23 Hakura, F. (2005). Turkey and the European Union. Nicholas Kitchen (Editor). <http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR007/eu.pdf>

more importantly, they shape to a great extent the views of the public. Therefore, this study fills a significant gap in the literature by focusing on the possible discrimination against Turkey's accession into the EU from the perspective of legislators in member states and their decision making patterns. It is clear that if such discrimination exists, it will have a direct impact on shaping the public opinion in Europe and this will eventually make Turkey's membership more difficult. However, if there is a relatively weak socio-cultural bias towards Turkey's EU membership in the political and societal discourse, then Turkey's membership to the Union can become a reality if the necessary steps are taken.

Methodology

INTRODUCTION

In order to identify and evaluate the most significant topics surrounding Turkey's accession process into the EU, this study adopts a two-tiered methodological approach. The first phase consisting of data collection is followed by both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Data collection included a field research that involves semi-structured interviews with parliamentarians (MPs/MEPs) from across the EU on topics gathering their opinions surrounding Turkey-EU relations. The second part, namely the analysis, is carried out by TESEV and YFoT experts to ascertain the extent of the existence of socio-cultural bias towards Turkey's EU membership in the political and societal discourse. In addition to this aspect, the analysis also focuses on the personal decision making processes of the MPs/MEPs regarding Turkey's accession into the EU. This is concretely accomplished by mapping out voter pressure, party positions, personal sentiments, concerns and pro/anti-Turkey factors throughout the data set. All the data has been evaluated by the analysis team in accordance with the necessities of quantitative analysis on the one hand and qualitative reporting on the other. All the collected data was read and listened recurrently by the analysis team, cross-referenced with the accession criteria, analysed and presented in detail to reveal personal prejudices as well as societal perceptions, voter pressure, party influence, concerns, personal sentiments and pro/anti-Turkey factors.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE METHODOLOGY

This study fills an important research based, policy-oriented gap in the literature concerning the existence of socio-cultural discrimination against Turkey.²⁴ More specifically, it looks at areas of socio-cultural discrimination against Turkish accession into the EU from the perspective of legislators in member states and their decision making patterns. The study is based on data collection through semi-structured interviews with parliamentarians from a diverse selection of EU member states. In terms of research novelty, a study of this scope²⁵ conducted through face to face meetings is seemingly unprecedented.²⁶ Within the framework of this project, we conducted interviews with 30 multi-partisan parliamentarians from national parliaments (8 at the Belgian Federal Parliament, 5 at the French Parliament, 8 at the Bundestag, 5 at the British Parliament and 4 at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey) in addition to 27 MEPs at the European Parliament from 16 different countries and 7 political groups. The size and diversity of the sample renders it entirely unique by any standard. By analysing the legislators' opinions

24 "Conditionality, Impact and Prejudice in EU-Turkey Relations" published by Istituto Affari Internazionali & TEPAV also dwells upon the issue of socio-cultural prejudice in Turkey's EU accession. However, it does not adopt the interview method with legislators from across the European Union. Retrieved from http://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/quaderni_e_09.pdf

25 It should be noted that the "EPRG MEP Survey Data" has collected extensive data on several issues regarding EU politics. In addition to the three surveys conducted in 2000, 2006 and 2010, another survey is being conducted as of 2015. However, this study is categorically different from ours due to the fact that it does not adopt a face-to face interview method or focus primarily on EU-Turkey relations. See <http://www.lse.ac.uk/government/research/resgroups/EPRG/MEPsurveyData.aspx> <http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/politics/research/meps-in-the-2014-19-european-parliament-the-rise-of-eurosepticism/meps2014-19>

26 Simon Hix, Roger Scully and David Farrell (2011) 'National or European Parliamentarians? Evidence from a New Survey of the Members of the European Parliament'. Retrieved from <http://www.lse.ac.uk/government/research/resgroups/EPRG/pdf/Hix-Scully-Farrell.pdf>

concerning Turkey and socio-cultural bias against its EU membership, this study systematically demonstrates whether there are actual reasons to question the objectivity of the Turkish accession process. Accordingly, it questions whether the process is being jeopardized due to discriminatory national and European practices, policies and discourses.

The scepticism about Turkey's accession on socio-cultural grounds is most evident when scrutinizing domestic election cycles across European countries. According to numerous studies, such domestic and local election results tend to manifest strong discriminatory sentiments towards Turkey and its accession into the EU based on prejudice.²⁷ Furthermore, the last European Parliament election results indicated an increase in right leaning tendencies throughout EU public opinion.²⁸ Given this situation, our use of new data directly and personally acquired from MPs and MEPs has been of great significance in understanding both the political and societal sentiments towards Turkey's accession into the EU. This is important as parliamentarians are considered to represent their constituents nationally and locally, while also mirroring their political parties. The direct and unprecedented information given by the MPs/MEPs throughout this research is believed to in part represent the positions of their respective governments, political parties, and constituencies.

Turkey's accession negotiations with the EU started in 2005; but quickly ran into difficulties in 2007, which led to a political stalemate between 2008 and 2015. Procedural technicalities, political disagreements and other issues such as the EU's enlargement policy are influential in this regard, yet socio-cultural bias is also considered to hinder the progress of the negotiations. In fact, implicit and sometimes explicit socio-cultural prejudice with regard to Turkey's membership has not gone unnoticed by officials and academics over the years.^{29 30 31} This is in direct contradiction with the stated aims of the accession process, which are considered to be solely based on technical procedures and objectively defined political, legal and economic criteria. Yet at times, the discourse seems to divert from what should be an objectively defined framework due to socio-cultural bias across member states. Such socio-cultural bias can be found in speeches of political leaders of EU member states, including contradictory and populist stances regarding Turkey's membership. Through its analysis, this study aims to present a clear picture with respect to the existence and types of socio-cultural bias against Turkey's EU membership.

DEFINING SOCIO-CULTURAL PREJUDICE

According to article 49 of The Treaty on the European Union of 1992, also known as The Maastricht Treaty, "Any European State which respects the values referred to in Article 2³² and is committed to promoting them may apply to

27 Barysch, K. (2007). WHAT EUROPEANS THINK ABOUT TURKEY AND WHY. Retrieved from http://www.cer.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/pdf/2011/essay_turkey_barysch_25sept07-1392.pdf

28 Grabow, K., & Hartleb, F. (2013). Expanding the Demagogues: Right-wing and National Populist Parties in Europe. Retrieved from http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_35420-544-2-30.pdf?140519123322

29 Ebner, Adrian. (2014) Turkish Culture as European Culture? - Cultural Diplomacy and Turkey's Road towards EU Membership. Retrieved from [http://www.andrassyuni.eu/upload/File/Forschung/Andrassy Beitrag IB/8-BIBEbnerdeff.pdf](http://www.andrassyuni.eu/upload/File/Forschung/Andrassy%20Beitrag%20IB/8-BIBEbnerdeff.pdf)

30 ISTITUTO AFFARI INTERNAZIONALI. (2007) CONDITIONALITY, IMPACT AND PREJUDICE IN EU-TURKEY RELATIONS. Retrieved from http://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/quaderni_e_09.pdf

31 Benhabib, Seyla, and Türküler Isiksel. (2006) Ancient Battles, New Prejudices, and Future Perspectives: Turkey and the EU. pg: 218-233. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1351-0487.2006.00452.x/full>

32 "The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail." Retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:12012M/TXT>

become a member of the Union”³³ Furthermore, the Copenhagen Criteria of 1993 have set an explicitly objective framework by which countries need to abide in order to be considered for membership. These criteria are:

- *Political criteria: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;*
- *Economic criteria: a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competition and market forces;*
- *Administrative and institutional capacity to effectively implement the acquis³⁴ and ability to take on the obligations of membership.³⁵*

Although the above mentioned framework provides clear and unbiased benchmarks for EU membership, the concept of “*absorption capacity*”, which has formally been part of the accession framework since the Copenhagen Summit of 1993, has not been able to go beyond a vaguely defined notion.³⁶ It has been concluded at the end of the summit that:

“The Union’s capacity to absorb new members, while maintaining the momentum of European integration, is also an important consideration in the general interest of both the Union and the candidate countries”³⁷

Scholars and policy experts have addressed the elusiveness of the concept through various analyses.^{38,39,40} Emerson et al. have argued that “*the term ‘absorptive capacity’, however, has slid into the official usage of the EU without being rigorously defined, yet with the implication that it stands for an objective reality*”⁴¹ whereas Senem Aydın Düzgit has pointed out to the notion that although the concept was not clearly defined, it has nevertheless been unprecedentedly utilized specifically within the official discussions about Turkey’s EU accession.⁴² By stressing how vaguely it was defined in 1993, she stated that:

“In the previous enlargement round, it was actually treated as a ‘consideration’ that calls upon the EU itself to reform rather than a formal criterion of accession. Applied to Turkey, however, the debate focused upon Turkey itself, and

33 Treaty on the European Union. Consolidated version (2012). Retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:12012M/TXT>

34 European Commission Glossary. “Acquis”. Web. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/acquis_en.htm

35 European Commission Glossary. “Accession Criteria”. Web. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/acquisition-criteria_en.htm

36 European Commission Press Release Database. Retrieved from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_DOC-93-3_en.htm?locale=en

37 European Council in Copenhagen, Conclusions of the Presidency (1993). Retrieved from http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/copenhagen/co_en.pdf

38 Emerson, M., de Clerck-Sachsse, J., Noutcheva, G., & Aydın, S. (2006). Just what is this ‘absorption capacity’ of the European Union?. CEPS Policy Briefs, (1-12), 1-24. Retrieved from <http://www.ceps.eu/system/files/book/2009/08/1381.pdf>

39 Aydın-Düzgit, Senem. (2013) “The Souring of Turkey-EU Relations: Is There a Way Out?” Retrieved from http://eu.boell.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2013/12/aydin_turkey_eu_relations.pdf

40 TEPAV (2007) “Absorption Capacity of the EU and Turkish Accession: Definitions and Comments” Retrieved from http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1252667182r9668.Absorption_Capacity.Of.The.Eu.And.Turkish_Accession_Definitions_And_Comments.pdf

41 Emerson, M., de Clerck-Sachsse, J., Noutcheva, G., & Aydın, S. (2006). Just what is this ‘absorption capacity’ of the European Union?. CEPS Policy Briefs, (1-12), 1-24. Retrieved from <http://www.ceps.eu/system/files/book/2009/08/1381.pdf>

42 Aydın-Düzgit, Senem. (2013) “The Souring of Turkey-EU Relations: Is There a Way Out?” Retrieved from http://eu.boell.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2013/12/aydin_turkey_eu_relations.pdf

particularly its unchanging and unchangeable features: its size, population, culture and unpopularity with the EU citizens, conveying the message that, unlike the Eastern enlargement, complying with the formal criteria alone may not be sufficient for Turkey's full accession to the Union".⁴³

What 'absorption capacity' might stand for and whether the concept itself paves the way for the normalization of prejudice against Turkey's accession officially could be further scrutinized.⁴⁴ Considering the ambiguity of the concept's definition, in order to understand and clearly present the existence of prejudice on the part of the parliamentarians themselves, in this study we have decided to define socio-cultural prejudice in relation to 'ethnicity', 'geography' and 'religion'. That Turkey has already been granted an official candidacy status reinforces the assertion that it has officially been categorized as a European country in terms of geography by the EU. Furthermore, neither the accession criteria (The Acquis and The Copenhagen Criteria) nor the 'absorption capacity' refers to any membership limitations stemming from the religious affiliation or the ethnic background of the countries' population. Therefore, in our analysis on the existence of prejudice against Turkey's EU membership among parliamentarians, we have specifically focused on anti-Turkey accession discourses which have been based on religious, ethnic and/or geographical reasons by the interviewees themselves. Accordingly, any personal statement diverting from the accession criteria due to religious, ethnic and/or geographical grounds have been categorised as socio-culturally biased.

EXECUTION OF THE INTERVIEWS

As outlined briefly in the introduction section, a total of 57 parliamentarians⁴⁵ were interviewed in France, Belgium, Germany, the UK, Turkey and at the European Parliament in Brussels by research teams from TESEV and YFoT. Furthermore, 3 additional meetings were held with the policy advisers of parliamentarians who could not be present at the meetings themselves. The various law makers interviewed for this study were primarily chosen from their parliaments' Foreign Affairs Committees, European Affairs Committees as well as Parliamentary Groups, Delegations or Committees dealing with Turkey and EU enlargement. This selection was conducted in order to present a well-informed picture of Turkey's accession into the EU, including any inconsistencies and relevant issues. It should be noted that the Turkish parliamentarians were interviewed not for the analysis itself, which focuses on understanding socio-cultural bias against Turkey's EU membership among European legislators, but in order to gain a better understanding as to how Turkish parliamentarians evaluate the current situation based on their expertise. Finally, the research team held three meetings with European officials in Brussels: at the Enlargement and European Economic Area Unit of the European Parliament; at the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations of the European Commission; and the European Union External Action Service to have a thorough comprehension of the current situation and to develop a sustainable roadmap for the future.

The interview questionnaire was prepared in accordance with the semi-structured interview methodology. The reason why we opted for the semi-structured interview method was because it facilitates the scope of socio-cultural discussion, while providing ground for interviewees to add supplementary issues whenever deemed relevant or important by the MP/MEPs. The questions facilitate detailed and lengthy answers instead of rigidly

43 Aydin-Düzgit, Senem. (2013) "The Souring of Turkey-EU Relations: Is There a Way Out?" Retrieved from http://eu.boell.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2013/12/aydin_turkey_eu_relations.pdf

44 Emerson, M., de Clerck-Sachsse, J., Noutcheva, G., & Aydin, S. (2006). Just what is this 'absorption capacity' of the European Union?. Retrieved from <http://www.ceps.eu/system/files/book/2009/08/1381.pdf>

45 See "Appendix 1" for the detailed list for each parliament.

restricted ones, which allowed for openness and auto-criticism throughout the research. Furthermore, neither the attitude of the interviewer nor the questions were formulated judgementally or intrusively. All the European interviewees had the opportunity to express their views on chosen topics; yet the dynamics of their own countries and political stances were revealed at the same time.

The questions were formulated with the specific aim to understand the positions of the European parliamentarians vis-à-vis Turkey's prospective EU membership; the anti/pro-Turkey factors according to which they had formulated their own stances; how Turkey's image was formulated in their constituencies, countries and parties; to what extent they were influenced by their party cultures and constituencies; and what they believed regarding the prevalence of socio-cultural prejudice against Turkey in Europe.⁴⁶

In order to concretely discern what MPs/MEPs believe regarding the existence of socio-cultural prejudice against Turkey, we asked the following yes/no question⁴⁷ to each parliamentarian which was immediately followed up by another question. The second question expands upon the types of prejudices the parliamentarians deemed present had they answered the question positively.

Do you believe that there are any prejudices against Turkey's membership due to sociocultural factors?

Yes

No

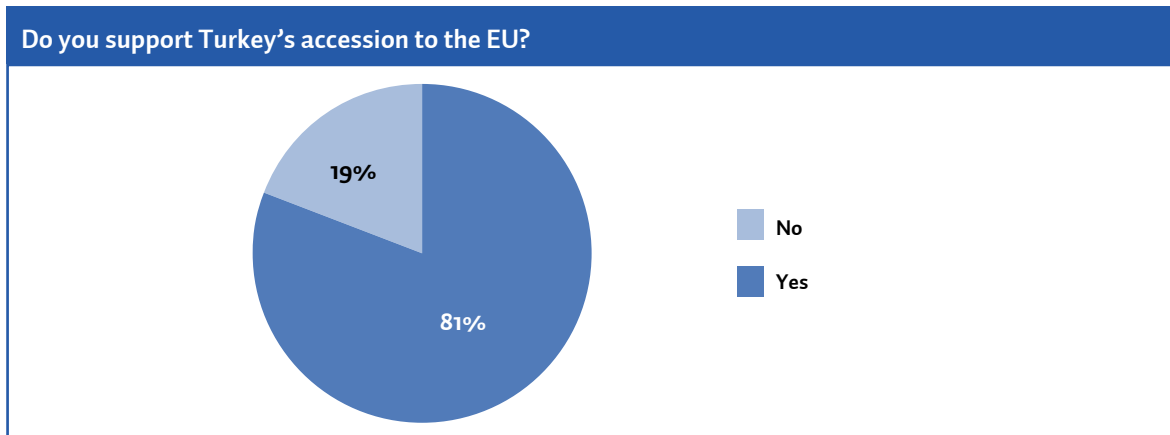
The findings of this specific question were listed one by one for each parliamentarian in order to see whether there had been a repetition, equivalence or similarity in the responses across all the interviewees. The outstanding responses uttered by the parliamentarians were then analysed and presented (see Analysis, Chapter 2) in order to depict what they believe about the existence of socio-cultural bias against Turkey's membership in Europe or in their respective societies.

Finally, all data collected in Europe, whether written or recorded, was re-read/re-listened by the analysis team in order to detect whether the parliamentarians themselves had expressed any socio-culturally and/or geographically biased opinion contradictory to the pre-defined accession criteria outlined in detail above. These statements were then cross-referenced with the accession criteria, analysed and presented in detail to reveal the personal prejudices, if any, of the parliamentarians (see Analysis, Chapter 3). It should be noted that a total of approximately 300 MPs from the national parliaments (the UK, Belgium, Germany, France and Turkey) and 400 MEPs from the European Parliament were contacted for a meeting request at least once by the research team. Given the number of interviews confirmed and conducted, we believe that there may be a positive inclination on the part of the interviewed parliamentarians towards talking about EU-Turkey relations and Turkey's accession in general which may have manifested itself in our research findings as a slight positive bias toward the issue at hand. Nevertheless, it should also be noted that the low response rate is also due to the busy schedules of the target group in question.

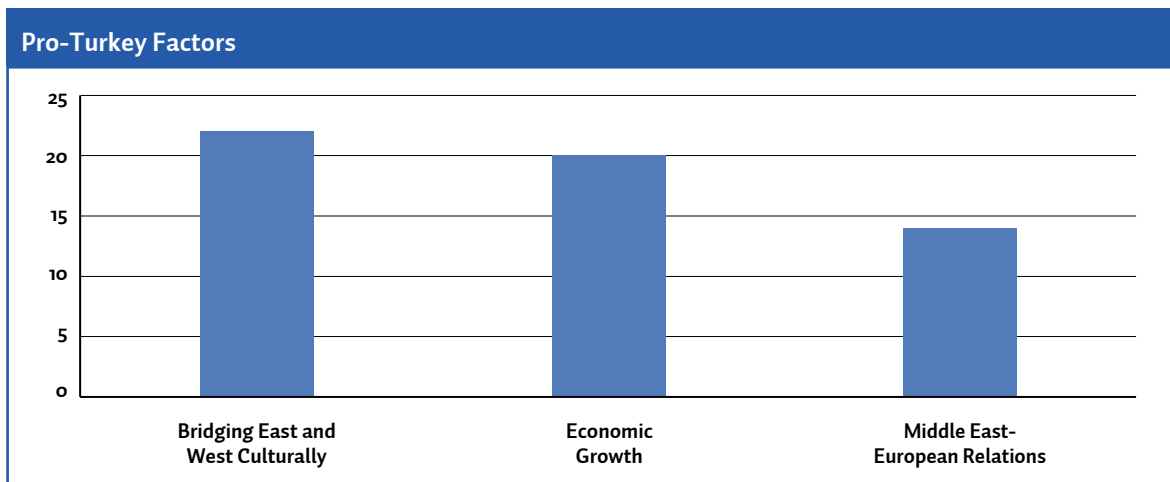
⁴⁶ See "Appendix 2" for the complete set of questions which provided the research team with the general framework of the semi-structured interviews.

⁴⁷ See "Appendix 2" for the complete set of questions which provided the research team with the general framework of the semi-structured interviews.

Key Findings



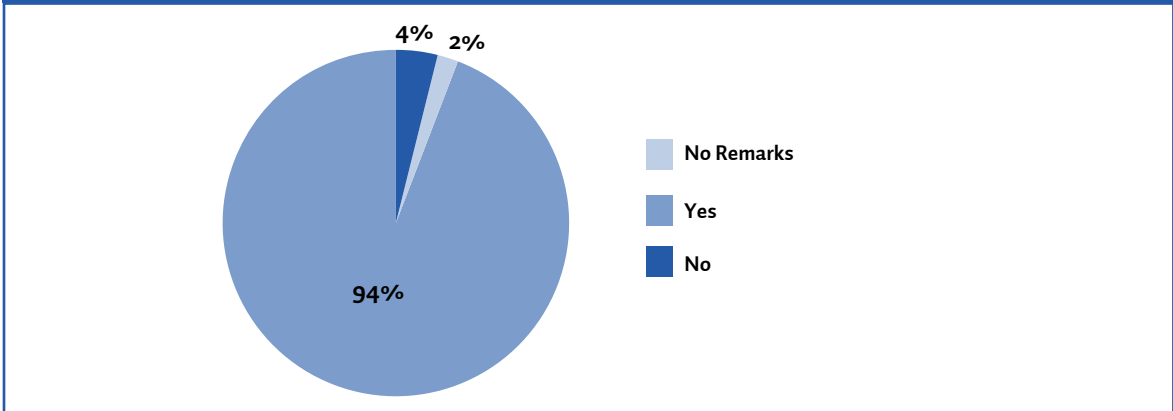
1. Our findings suggest that 81% of the participating parliamentarians support Turkey's accession into the European Union. This outcome – approximately a 4/5 majority in favour of Turkish accession – asserts that public opinion is not in accord with the opinions of the representatives of the EU public, both at the national and European levels given that the recent Eurobarometer has indicated that 48% of the EU public opposed further EU enlargement⁴⁸.



2. Our research also demonstrates that the idea of Turkey being a cultural bridge between the West and the East, its economic success over the last decade and the role Turkey would play in Middle-East European relations primarily contribute to the pro-Turkey accession position on the part of the parliamentarians.

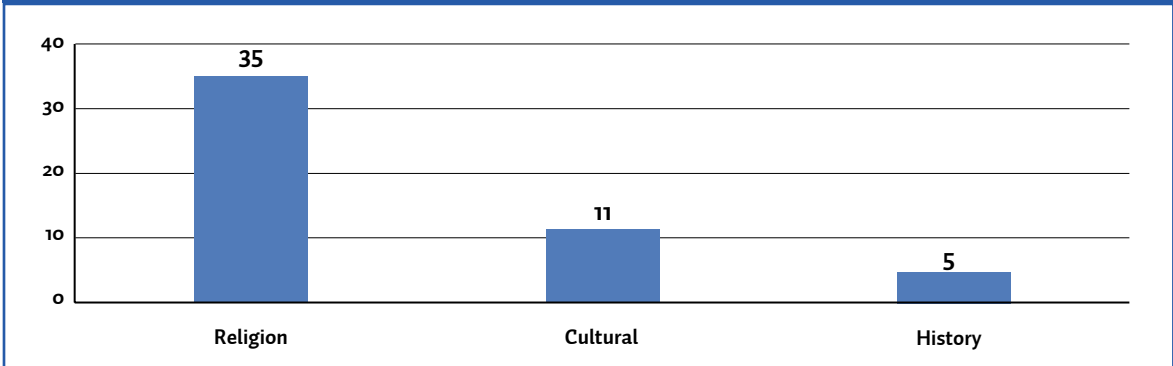
48 Standard Eurobarometer 82 (2014). Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb82/eb82_publ_en.pdf

Do you believe that there are any prejudices against Turkey's membership due to socio-cultural factors?



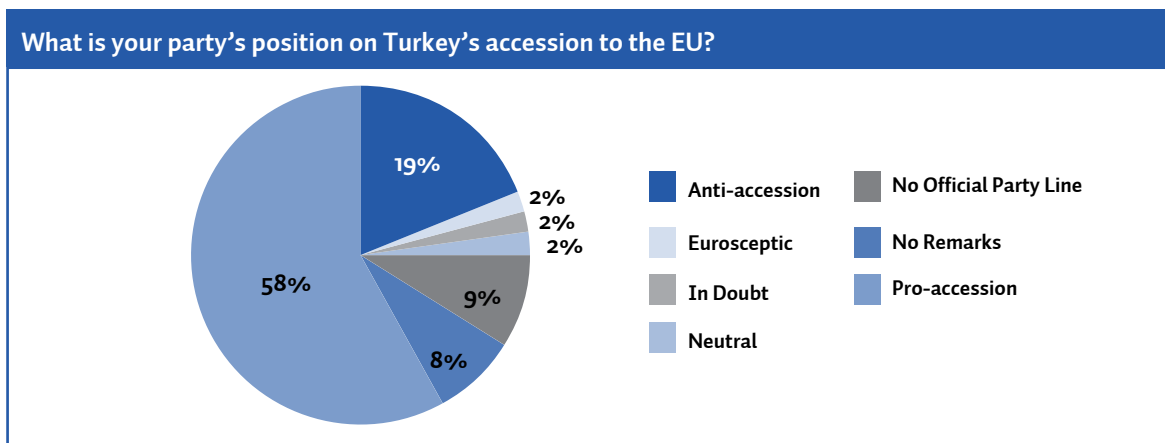
3. The research findings indicate that 94% of the interviewed European parliamentarians believe that socio-cultural prejudices against Turkey's prospective EU membership exist among the European public.

Type of Prejudice

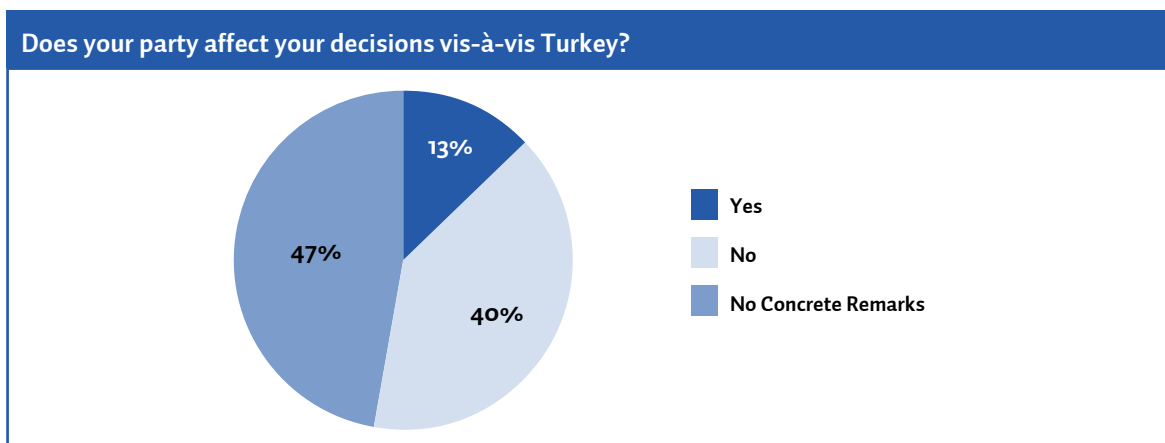


4. In terms of the factors due to which the parliamentarians believe socio-cultural prejudices against Turkey's EU membership exist, 66% of the total participants expressed that the major form of socio-cultural prejudice against Turkey's accession is the fact that Turkey is a Muslim country. Furthermore, assumed cultural differences stand out as another anti-Turkey accession factor according to the participants while historical aspects, mainly Turkey's Ottoman past as expressed by some of the parliamentarians, are believed to be among the most widespread prejudices in the eyes of the European public.

5. The research findings suggest that only 6% of the participants have personal opinions could be categorized as prejudiced about Turkey’s prospective EU membership. This figure – representing only a small minority expressing any prejudice regarding Turkey’ accession to the EU – was an unexpected research finding. This outcome asserts that there is a remarkable discrepancy between what the MPs/MEPs believe regarding the existence of socio-cultural prejudice against Turkey among the European public and their own personal stances.

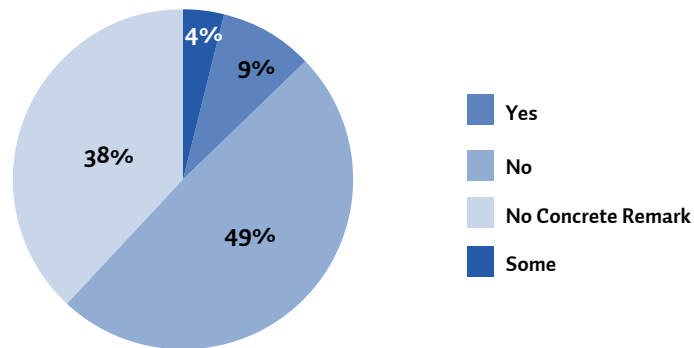


6. 58% of the participants stated that their political parties support Turkey’s accession to the European Union while 19% expressed that their parties are not in favour of Turkey’s EU membership. Furthermore, 9% of the participants indicated that their political parties do not have an official line with regard to Turkey’s accession whereas 8% expressed no remarks on their party positions.
7. Our findings point out to the widespread notion that Turkey’s EU membership is less popular among the right wing parties in Europe. This has been revealed by the study given that 9 out of 10 participants who stated that their political parties did not support EU’s enlargement towards Turkey were members of parties at the right of the political spectrum.



8. 47% of the participants did not enunciate whether or not they were under the influence of their parties regarding their positions on Turkey’s EU accession. While a significant figure of 40% stated that their parties did not have an effect on their decisions vis-à-vis Turkey, only 13% addressed that they were influenced by their parties’ positions.

Do your voters/the public affect your decisions vis-à-vis Turkey?



9. Our findings suggest that 49% of the participants do not feel any pressure from their voters or the public regarding their decisions vis-à-vis Turkey. While 38% of the participants did not clearly express whether or not they were under the influence of their voters or the public regarding their positions on Turkey's EU accession, only 13% addressed that they were fully or partially influenced by public opinion.
10. Finally, our findings indicate that on the part of the parliamentarians, there is remarkable concern about personal freedoms, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, human rights, democracy, the Kurdish issue, the domestic political developments and the rise of authoritarian tendencies in Turkey.

Analysis

In this section, all the findings of the study have been analysed quantitatively and qualitatively, after which we have presented the findings with regards to the accession criteria, political developments and statements provided by participating European parliamentarians. The broad and detailed approach of the semi-structured interview framework has been narrowed down to five categories for the sake of conciseness and accessibility, all of which comprise of data collected through several correlated questions.

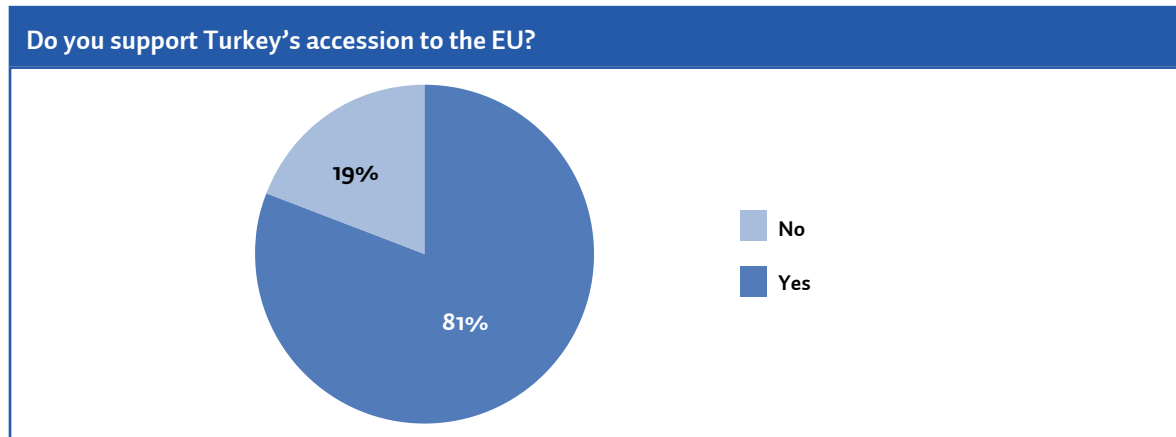
The following analytical sections are as follows:

1. YES/NO POSITION FOR TURKEY'S ACCESSION
2. EXISTENCE OF PREJUDICE IN THE SOCIETY AGAINST TURKEY'S MEMBERSHIP
3. PERSONAL BIAS EXPRESSED BY THE MPS/MEPS
4. WHAT INFLUENCES MPS/MEPS' POSITIONS ON TURKEY?
5. MAJOR CONCERNS REGARDING TURKEY-EU RELATIONS FOR MPS/MEPS

It should be noted that the analysis presented in these sections is based on 26 interviews conducted in the national parliaments of France, Belgium, Germany, and the United Kingdom in addition to 27 at the European Parliament. Since the specific objective of the action was to understand and help reduce socio-cultural bias towards Turkey through in-depth perception analysis from various parliaments across the European Union, including the European Parliament, this section solely focuses on the interviews with European legislators. As indicated in detail, the meetings with the Turkish MPs are meant to evaluate the overall picture of the situation according to which some policy recommendations for both parties have been developed.

Chapter 1

Yes/No Position for Turkey's Accession



Our findings suggest that 81% of the participating parliamentarians support Turkey's accession into the European Union. This outcome – representing approximately a 4/5 majority in favour of Turkish accession – was an unexpected research finding. This figure asserts that public opinion is not in accord with the opinions of the representatives of the EU public, both at the national and European levels. This idea is reinforced by the recent Eurobarometer, which indicates that 48% of the EU public opposed further EU enlargement⁴⁹ and there has been a continuing anti-Turkey accession trend in the EU public opinion⁵⁰.

Based on their initial 'Pro or Against Turkey' response, the parliamentarians were asked about the factors which had had an effect on their personal convictions regarding Turkey's EU membership. The participants who answered yes to the first question were requested to express their primary reason for being in favour of Turkey, while also ranking the pre-determined pro-Turkey factors in terms of priority⁵¹. The remaining participants were asked to verbally express the reasons why they had an anti-Turkey accession stance.

The parliamentarians who expressed their lack of support for Turkey's EU membership put forward several reasons regarding their personal stances. The most uttered reasons for being anti-Turkey accession were (quoted directly from the interviews): *"Turkey's internal political developments; repression on personal freedoms; increasing authoritarian tendencies; freedom of the media; transparency and the situation regarding human rights"*. While a majority of participants expressed the aforementioned grounds for their position (7 out of 10), the remaining 30% of parliamentarians put forth geographical reasons for their anti-Turkey accession stance.

49 Standard Eurobarometer 82 (2014). Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb82/eb82_publ_en.pdf

50 Standard Eurobarometer Archives. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_arch_en.htm

51 See "Appendix 2" for the questionnaire.

It should be stressed that 2 out of the 10 parliamentarians who do not support Turkey’s accession expressed that they had a change of heart over the past few years. This suggests that the deterioration of EU-Turkey relations – as a consequence of the political stalemate and lacking domestic reforms in Turkey – are believed to have contributed to this change on the part of these parliamentarians. Examples of this include parliamentarians whom voiced their⁵² concern over the compatibility of Turkey’s political agenda with the EU philosophy as one parliamentarian stated that *“I used to support it (Turkey’s accession to the EU). I no longer support it. Given the domestic Turkish politics, I don’t think Turkey is ready at all for accession at the moment.”*

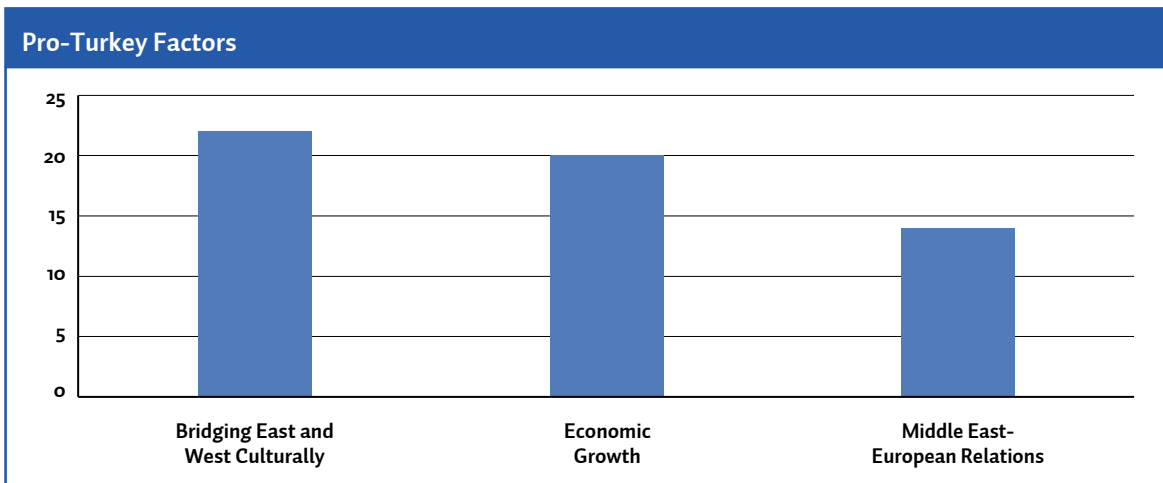


Figure1 The figures in this graph have been numerically ranked according to the top 3 priorities expressed by the parliamentarians in response to question 1B which could be seen in “Appendix 2”.

This graph indicates the top three priority factors for being pro-Turkey accession from the list provided to the participants. Out of the 12 factors listed, these 3 were the most commonly selected factors for being in favour of Turkish accession.

These findings clearly confirm the assertion that Turkey is regarded as a cultural bridge between the West and the East. Turkey is considered to be a significant and unique case that should join the EU according to most interviewed parliamentarians. This is not only because of geographical location, but equally in terms of its political culture as a leading secular Muslim country. 10 parliamentarians also noted that – by accepting a Muslim country like Turkey inside the EU – the odds of handling domestic ethnic stability in Europe more effectively would increase. Accordingly, one could assert that Turkey is seen as an indispensable actor in relation to both European Muslim populations and the non-Western world due to its hybrid peculiarities. The notion of the EU being a ‘Christian Club’ would no longer be a valid criticism; while the EU’s domestic and international policy would likely make it an ‘equal for all’ stakeholder.

Turkey’s economic growth stands out as another prioritized pro-Turkey accession factor. Almost all the participants, including the ones not supporting Turkey’s EU membership, touched upon and praised the economic success of Turkey over the last decade. The economic challenges experienced on the part of the EU as a result of its enlargement to the economically less developed post-communist Eastern European countries in 2004 and

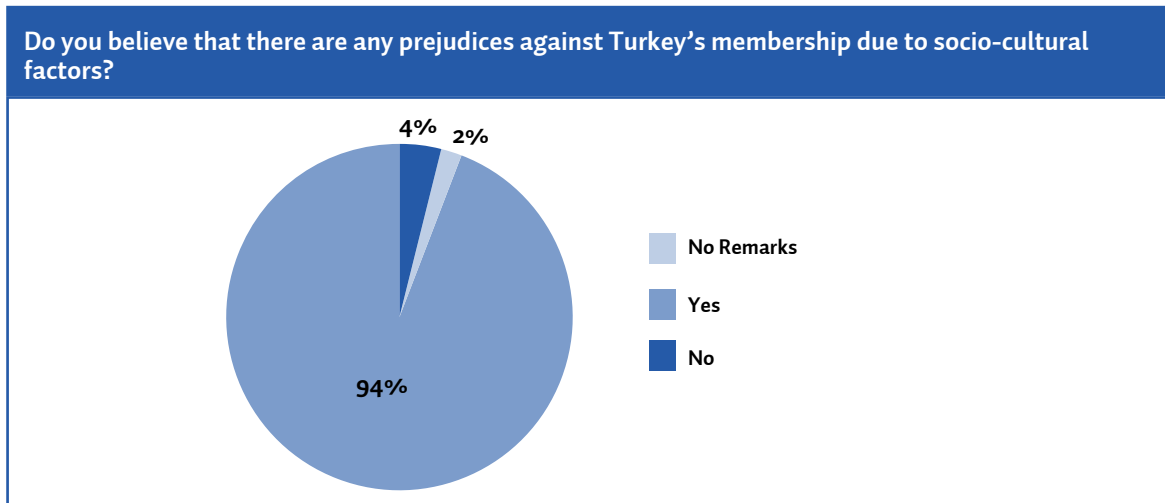
52 This possessive adjective has been used in order to ensure the anonymity of the parliamentarian.

2007 as well as the on-going financial crisis in the Eurozone are believed to have an impact on why economic growth stands out as a main reason why parliamentarians support Turkey's accession into the EU.

Finally, our findings suggest that Middle-East European relations rank 3rd among the priority factors for parliamentarians to be in favour of Turkish accession. When contextualized with the remaining parts of the interviews, it appears as if the recent developments in the Middle East weigh heavily on why parliamentarians see Turkey as a necessary mediator in Middle-East European relations. Recent escalation of armed conflicts, terrorism, refugee flows and civic unrest are having indirect and direct repercussion inside the EU and are not expected to be solved or settled unless Turkey is fully involved as a cooperative NATO and EU partner.

Chapter 2

Existence of Prejudice in the Society Against Turkey’s Membership



According to our research, 94% of the participating European parliamentarians believe that socio-cultural prejudices against Turkey’s prospective EU membership exist among the European public. In order to concretely discern what the MPs/MEPs think of regarding the existence of socio-cultural prejudice against Turkey, they were directly asked whether or not they believed prejudices against Turkey’s membership due to socio-cultural factors existed. It should be noted that since this question was asked in an open-ended fashion, meaning that it did not directly address a specific group of individuals in its formulation⁵³, the answers may have comprised of a combination of the European public in general, the parliamentarians’ own countries’ population or their constituencies. What is significant about this figure is that whether it refers to the totality of EU citizens or the public of a specific geography for the interviewee, more than 90% of the representatives of these respective groups believe in the notion that there are indeed socio-culturally based negative biases against Turkey’s membership.

53 See “Appendix 2” question number 5.

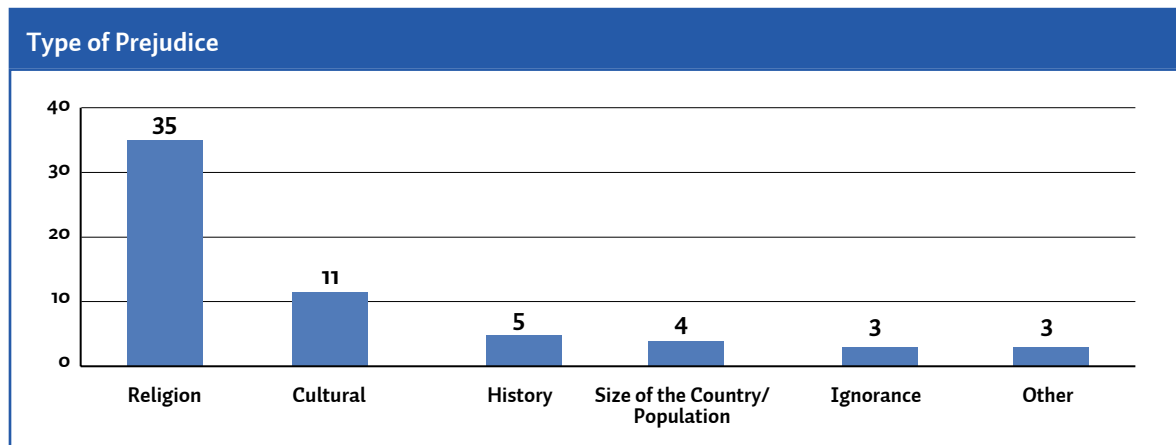


Figure 2 The figures in this graph are based on the numerical repetition of what the participating MPs/MEPs said during the interviews. The parliamentarians were at liberty to mention as many factors as they wanted, therefore the total number of factors mentioned exceed the total number of interviewees.

In terms of the factors due to which the parliamentarians believed socio-cultural prejudices against Turkey’s membership exist, “religion” comes out as the most frequently referenced one. 35 out of the total 53 participants expressed that the major form of socio-cultural prejudice against Turkey’s accession is due to the fact that Turkey is a Muslim country. In this regard, one participant stated that they⁵⁴ believed “*the only reason why the EU does not want Turkey is neither economic, nor democratic but only because it is a Muslim country*”.

Assumed cultural differences stand out as another anti-Turkey accession factor according to the participants while historical aspects, mainly Turkey’s Ottoman past as expressed by some of the parliamentarians, are believed to be among the most widespread prejudices in the European public. One parliamentarian stated that “*because Europe has an experience of things, to have the experience in Turkish imperialism. And then it has been felt, seen and suffered. It’s the Ottomans that were reaching to and arrived to Vienna. It’s the history we have*” while another expressed that “*we have this idea because of historical reasons that Turkish population is very violent*”.

Although historical reasons are believed to be one of the reasons why the European public considers Turkey non-European according to a significant number of the participants, 16 of them have also expressed that they personally believe that Turkey is and has always been a European country due its historical ties with the European continent. As one parliamentarian stated during our interview “*Turkish influence, especially going back through to the Ottoman Period, has had enormous impact on Europe over the centuries. And that the culture and the identity of Europeans is inextricably bound up with Turkish people and modern Turkey as it is. You can say Syria is not European or Iraq is not European, but you cannot say that Turkey is not European*”. It is important to emphasize that while on the one hand Turkey’s historical background is believed to have made it a less popular EU candidate among the European public, the same historical ties are considered to have significantly contributed to Turkey’s “Europeanness” in the eyes of European legislators on the other.

These factors could be better understood and evaluated in relation to the ever-increasing societal trends in Europe related to Islamophobia, xenophobia and concerns about integration. The annual reports published by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) since 1997 shed light on the general social context

54 Used in order to ensure the anonymity of the participant.

in Europe with regard to the issues of racism, intolerance and xenophobia among others. In the last three ECRI reports⁵⁵, a growing concern over the rise of xenophobia, neo-Nazism and racism within the framework of populist political parties; religious discrimination and intolerance; and Islamophobia have been spoken out.⁵⁶ In the most recent report, which was published in July 2015, it was asserted that:

*“Europe also witnesses a growing trend of Islamophobia. This is often expressed in views that see Islam as inherently opposed to European values of democracy and secularism, and ignore the reality of Muslim communities. The rise of extremist and violent Islamist movements is often manipulated to portray Muslims in general as unable and unwilling to integrate into European societies and therefore as a security threat”.*⁵⁷

Given this observation, we believe that the findings of our report should not only be interpreted within the framework of a Turkey-specific situation, but also with reference to the more general and growing trend of Islamophobia in European societies. The ever-increasing notion that Islam is fundamentally against the cores of European culture is believed to have repercussions in shaping prejudices against Turkey’s EU membership. Furthermore, these findings also point out that European parliamentarians significantly believe in the existence of socio-cultural prejudices against Turkey in Europe, the most predominant of which could be attributed to the worrisome developments in European societies.

55 The ones published in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

56 European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (2012, 2013, 2014) Annual Reports on ECRI’s Activities. Retrieved from https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/Annual_Reports/Annual%20report%202012.pdf and https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/Annual_Reports/Annual%20report%202013.pdf and https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/Annual_Reports/Annual%20report%202014.pdf

57 European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (2014) Annual Reports on ECRI’s Activities. Retrieved from https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/Annual_Reports/Annual%20report%202014.pdf

Chapter 3

Personal Prejudice Expressed by the MPS/MEPS

As explained in the methodology section in detail, the notion of ‘socio-cultural prejudice’ was defined with reference to ‘ethnic’, ‘religious’ and/or ‘geographical’ grounds. The reason why these three notions were specifically opted for is due to the fact that neither religion nor geography, nor ethnicity can be found as a benchmark in any of the accession criteria (The Acquis and The Copenhagen Criteria) and we believe that they could not in any way be related to the vaguely-defined notion of ‘absorption capacity’. Accordingly, we have specifically focused on anti-Turkey accession discourses which have been based on ethnic, religious and/or geographical reasons by the interviewees themselves. Any personal statement diverting from the accession criteria due to these aforementioned grounds have been categorised as biased.

Throughout the research, only 6% of the participants⁵⁸ made statements which could be categorized as prejudiced about Turkey’s prospective EU membership. This figure – representing a significant majority not expressing any prejudice regarding Turkey’s accession to the EU – was another unexpected research finding. This outcome asserts that there is a remarkable discrepancy between what the MPs/MEPs believe regarding the existence of socio-cultural prejudice against Turkey among the European public and their own personal stances. This has been reinforced by our finding that while 94% of the participants believe that socio-cultural prejudices against Turkey’s prospective EU membership exist among the European public, only 6% of the same participants have similar biases themselves.

In order to determine whether the parliamentarians themselves expressed any socio-culturally biased opinions contradictory to the accession criteria, all data collected in Europe was re-read/re-listened one by one by the analysis team. The detected statements were then cross-referenced with the accession criteria and analysed in detail to reveal the personal prejudices of the parliamentarians.

Out of the 3 parliamentarians who made prejudiced remarks according to our methodological framework, no parliamentarian brought religion or ethnicity forward as a factor that should be discussed within the accession negotiations. All 3 participants, however, referred to geographical reasons, namely the notion that Turkey is not geographically European, in their arguments. One participant asserted “*What is Europe, what is the identity of Europe? Most part of Turkey is not part of Europe, geographically and we have to accept that Europe has borders. I mean, when you say Turkey should be part of or another says Israel could be part of Europe... So for me the question is what the identity of Europe is*”. Similarly, another parliamentarian stated that “*If Turkey ended at the Bosphorus, we were very sure that could be part of Europe*” while another said “*Turkey has two parts: one of them is European, this is Istanbul and etc., and one part which is a bit different, from Ankara towards the east*”. It should be noted here that all of the above mentioned 3 parliamentarians are also against Turkey’s EU membership and they are all members of right-wing political parties.

⁵⁸ This corresponds to 3 parliamentarians.

“What is Europe, what is the identity of Europe? Most part of Turkey is not part of Europe, geographically and we have to accept that Europe has borders.”

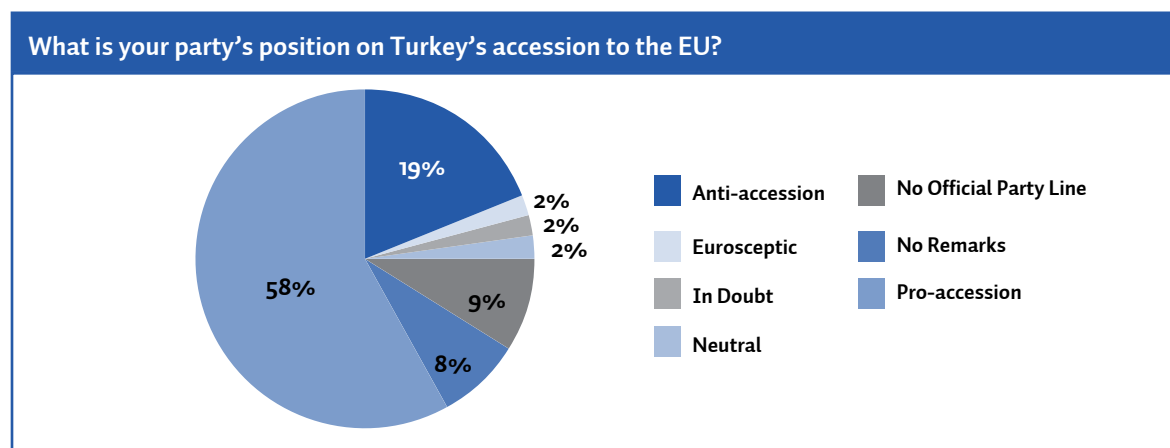
One of the most significant findings of this research is that it clearly demonstrates the divergence between what the interviewed parliamentarians believe with respect to the existence of prejudice against Turkey’s prospective EU membership among the European public and their own personal positions as while 94% of the participants assume that prejudices against Turkey’s accession exist among the European public, only 6% of the same participants have biases themselves. Furthermore, it should be stressed that although no parliamentarian expressed any personal prejudice based on religious grounds, “religion” comes out as the most frequently referenced factor due to which the parliamentarians believe prejudices against Turkey’s membership exist. Finally, while geographical reasons are not considered as a source of societal prejudice by the parliamentarians, they come forward as the main form of prejudice on the part of the parliamentarians.

Chapter 4

What Influences Parliamentarians' Positions on Turkey?

Understanding legislative behaviour is crucial to analyse the policy outcomes in the EU. However, this is relatively difficult because of the EP's supranational character when compared to national legislatures.⁵⁹ There are various factors that shape MPs/MEPs' voting behaviours and decision making mechanisms, some of which are member states, national party affiliations, influence of EPGs, economic factors and voter pressure. Because our research comprised of both MPs and MEPs, we looked at two of these factors which are common to all participants: party affiliation and voter pressure. Accordingly, we asked each parliamentarian whether their parties' position and the electorate affected their decisions vis-à-vis Turkey.

This section focuses on these possible factors which could be considered to affect parliamentarians' positions on Turkey's EU membership. In order to understand how European MPs/MEPs formulate their own stances regarding Turkey's accession, they were asked a series of questions regarding their party/political group positions; whether there is party pressure on how they should behave or speak about Turkey's membership and if they feel significant influence on the part of their voters or the public with respect to how they should formulate their own stances.



31 of the total 53 of the participants stated that their political parties support Turkey's accession to the European Union. It should be noted here that while there may seem to be a direct correspondence between the 19%⁶⁰ segment of the parliamentarians who expressed that their parties had an anti-Turkish accession stance and the 19%⁶¹ who opposed the process themselves (see Chapter 1 - Yes/No Position for Turkey's Accession), 4

59 Rasmussen, Maya Kluger. (2008) "Another Side of the Story: A Qualitative Case Study of Voting Behaviour in the European Parliament". Retrieved from <http://www.epin.org/new/files/MRAarticle.pdf>

60 10 parliamentarians.

61 10 parliamentarians.

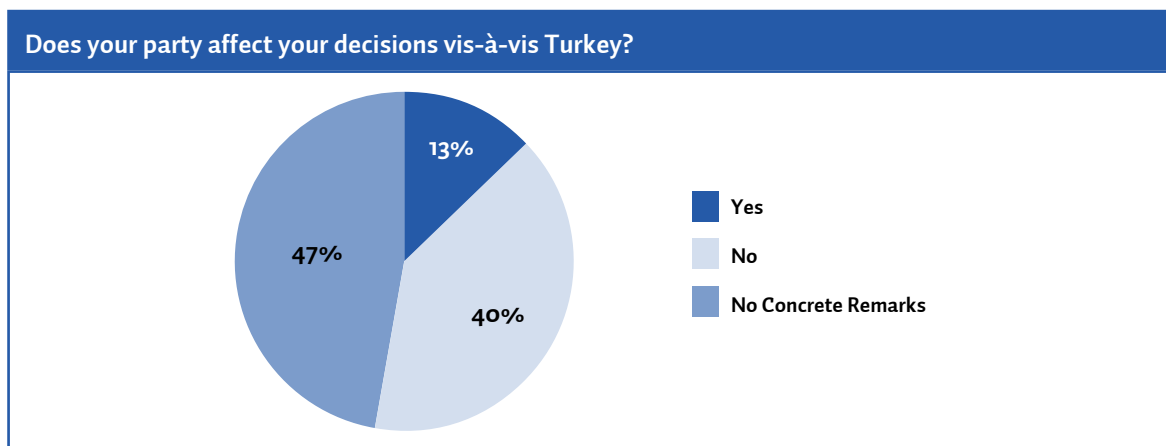
parliamentarians openly expressed that they were pro-Turkey accession although their parties were officially not. Furthermore, one participant who said that they changed their position about Turkey's accession due to Turkey's internal developments and domestic politics also pointed out that their party's official line was and had always been anti-Turkey accession.

It should be stressed that the political parties of the 10 parliamentarians who openly expressed that their parties' stances were anti-Turkey accession, are located at the right of the political spectrum except for one left-wing parliamentarian who said:

“Even if all the criteria are fulfilled, the question concerning the deepening of European integration remains. And for me personally but also for my political party, that is very important; EU should not be some kind of an open, as large as possible. I think that there are challenges in international politics that demand a strong political EU as well”.

We believe that our findings verify the widespread notion that Turkey's EU membership is less popular among the right wing parties in Europe. This has been revealed and confirmed by the study given that 9 out of 10 participants who stated that their political parties did not support EU's enlargement towards Turkey were members of parties at the right of the political spectrum.

Another important finding of this specific question is that 23% of the participants indicated that their political parties did not fall into the binary of being pro or anti-Turkey accession. However, this figure did not translate into indecisiveness on the part of the parliamentarians since all stated their clear yes or no position at the beginning of the interviews.

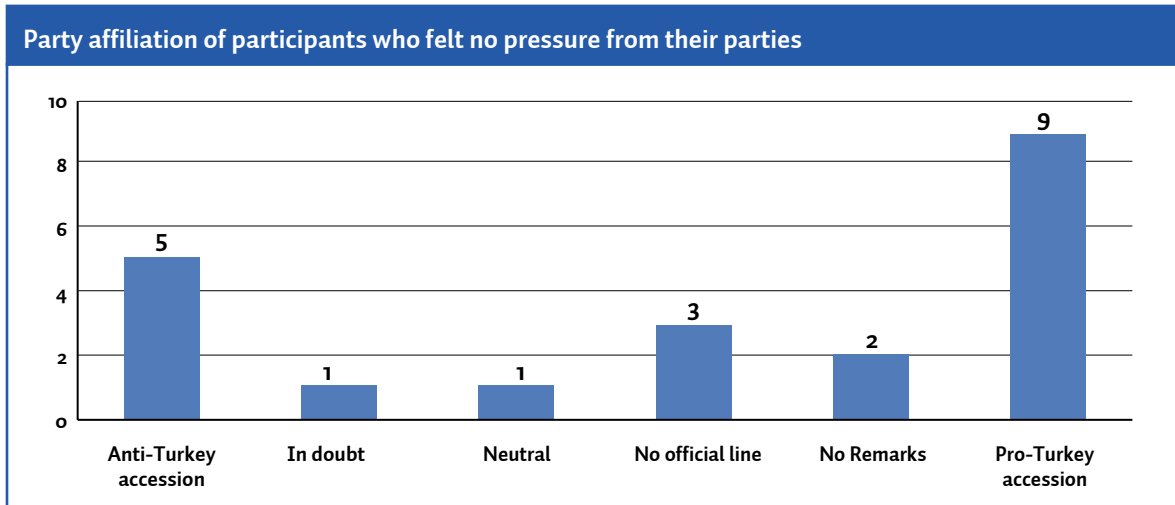


As the above graph displays, 47% of the participants did not enunciate whether or not they were under the influence of their parties regarding their positions on Turkey's EU accession. While a significant figure of 40% stated that their parties did not have an effect on their decisions vis-à-vis Turkey, only 13% addressed that they were influenced by their parties' positions.

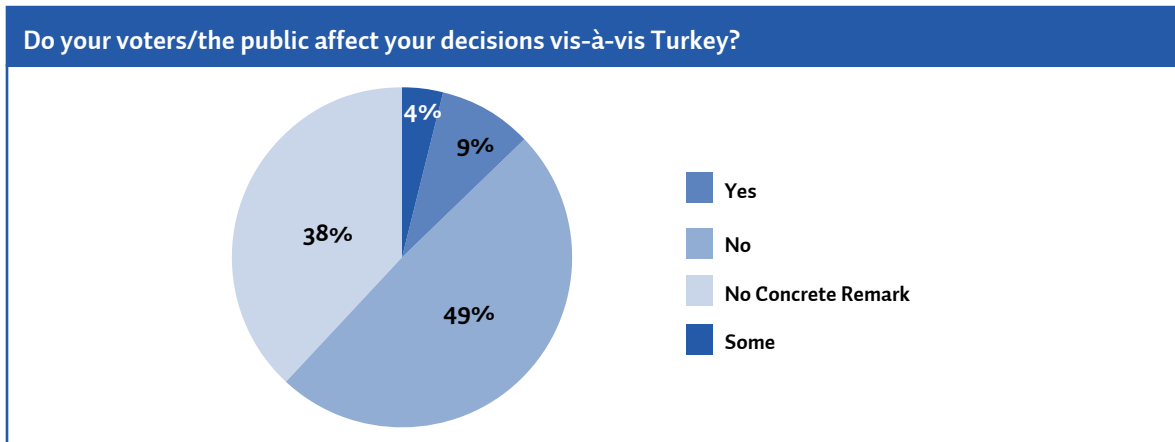
Although this 47% outcome could be attributed to several reasons, such as reluctance on the part of the parliamentarians to openly speak about party pressure or lack of tangible experience to have a substantial comment, it is believed that this result points out to a different trend when it is cross-referenced with other data. Accordingly, it should be stressed that 18 out of the 25 participants who made no concrete remarks about the influence of their parties on their personal stances also stated that their parties were pro-Turkey accession. This

figure, combined with our finding that no parliamentarian from pro-Turkey parties expressed that their personal position was anti-Turkey, brought us to the conclusion that this figure denotes to a general trend that these parliamentarians⁶² did not feel the need to express the parallel between their own positions and the ones of their parties’.

Another point that needs to be dwelled upon is the 40% that stressed that their parties did not have an effect on their decisions or positions regarding Turkey. This figure indicates that a significant portion of the participants did not feel any credible pressure from their official party lines about how they should formulate their stances about Turkey’s EU accession. The breakdown of this figure by party position could be found in detail below.



Finally, our study shows that 13% of the participants believed that they were influenced by their parties’ positions. In spite of the fact that an answer as such could be evaluated in a number of ways, we believe that since our study did not specifically focus on the ways in which parties affect their members, it would not be possible to address whether there is official pressure, a tacit consensus or an ideological congruity between the parties’ leaderships and its members.



62 The 18 parliamentarians whose parties are pro-Turkey accession.

As the above figure demonstrates, 38% of the participants did not clearly express whether or not they were under the influence of their voters or the public regarding their positions on Turkey's EU accession. While a significant figure of 49% stated that neither the voters nor the public had an effect on their decisions vis-à-vis Turkey, only 13% addressed that they were fully or partially influenced by the public.

The 9%⁶³ segment of the participants, the ones who stated that there was influence on the part of the public or their voters on them which did have an effect on their decisions vis-à-vis Turkey, needs to be scrutinized by further analysis. While one participant stated that they were heavily influenced by the Turkish community in their constituency in a pro-Turkey accession direction, three others – although both their personal and official part positions were pro-Turkey- expressed that public opinion is still relevant to make a final decision regarding EU enlargement as exemplified by one participant who stated that *"For such an important issue like EU enlargement, you cannot rule against the majority in the country"*.

Some studies have revealed that voter pressure has had an important impact on how the politicians formulate their behaviour and ideas that they express in the political arena. In their study "Attitudes towards Turkish membership in the EU among citizens in 27 European countries", Gerhards and Hans argued that most of the EU citizens are not supportive of Turkish membership and the pressure they create on politicians not to ignore their citizens cannot be underestimated.⁶⁴ Another scholar underlined the importance of public pressure on parliamentarians' votes concerning Turkey with statistical findings by concluding that *"...a one-percent increase in the favourable public opinion toward Turkey increases the odds of voting against the **special status** amendment by 9.3 percent"*.⁶⁵ The general findings of such research are that even a small change in the public opinion matters significantly in the voting behaviour of the parliamentarians. However, our study reveals that only 13% of the total number of parliamentarians feels some form of pressure from the public on their decisions vis-à-vis Turkey related issues.

63 5 parliamentarians

64 Hans, Silke, and Jürgen Gerhards. (2010) "Why Not Turkey?" Retrieved from http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/soziologie/arbeitsbereiche/makrosoziologie/mitarbeiter/lehrstuhlinhaber/dateien/Why_not_Turkey.pdf

65 YUVACI, Abdullah. (2013) "The voting behavior of the European parliament members on Turkish accession: an analysis of the impact of member-state, European party groups and national party affiliations on a special status amendment vote for Turkey," Retrieved from <http://www.meliksah.edu.tr/ayuvaci/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/EP-on-Turkey-full-text.pdf>

Chapter 5

Major Concerns About Turkey-EU Relations According to the MPS/MEPS

During the course of the interviews, although the participants were not directly asked about the concerns they believed were hindering Turkey-EU relations, a significant portion of them (42 out of the total 53 parliamentarians) expressed their opinion about such issues. This outcome shows that the semi-structured interview method was particularly beneficial for understanding the prevailing notions among the European parliamentarians about Turkey since it provided ground for the interviewees to touch upon the issues they deemed relevant or important without being asked a specific question. Owing to the fact that some particular issues were brought up rather frequently during the interviews by a majority of the participants, this section has been dedicated to a detailed analysis of these outstanding topics.

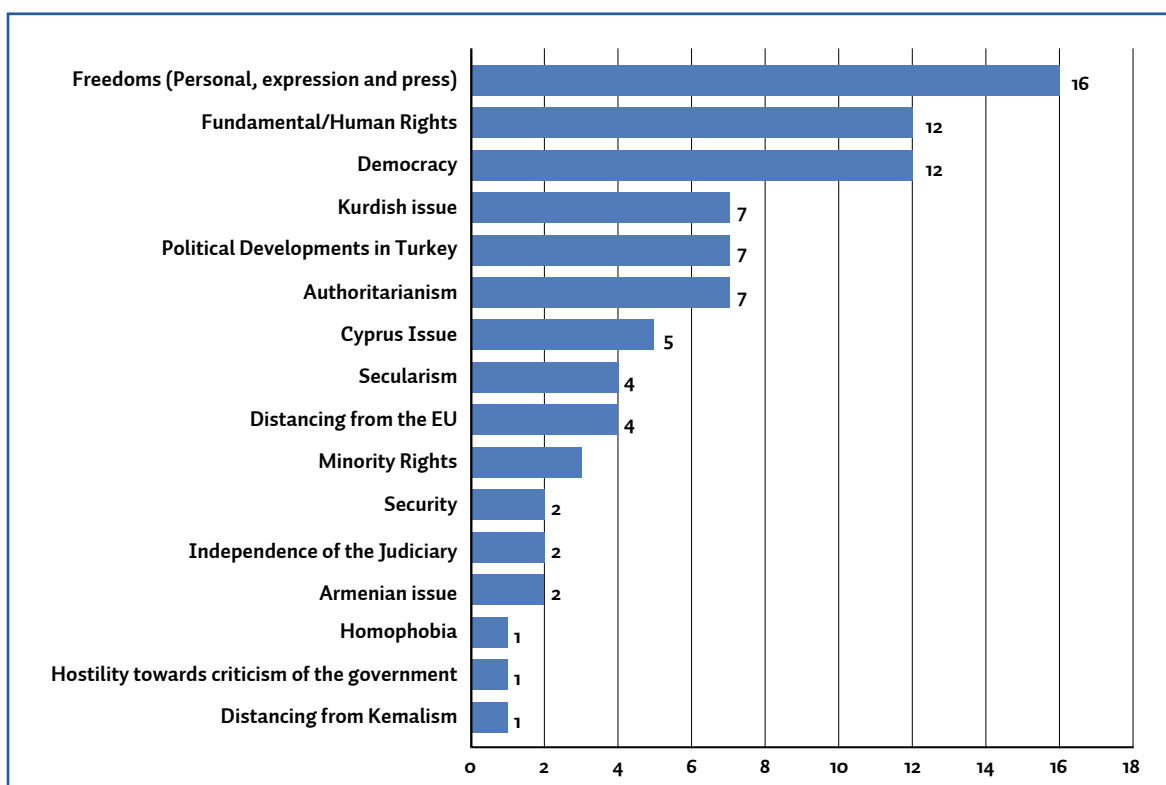


Figure 3 The figures in this graph are based on the numerical repetition of what the participating MPs/MEPs said during the interviews. It should be noted that some participants mentioned more than one concern during the course of the meetings.

These numbers demonstrate that among European parliamentarians, there is remarkable concern about personal freedoms, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, human rights, democracy, the Kurdish issue, the domestic political developments and the rise of authoritarian tendencies in Turkey. Moreover, it should be emphasized that these concerns were not addressed groundlessly on the part of the participants, but the parliamentarians who voiced these, contextualised their reasoning within the framework of what they believed was restraining EU-Turkey relations over the previous years. As the Accession Negotiations and EU-Turkey relations have been in stagnation since 2006, these figures would be of utmost significance in understanding the widespread perceptions of European legislators about the past, present and the future of the process.

"I think the time for tact is probably passed now because I have been a huge supporter. I was a big supporter of Turkey becoming a full member of the EU but many of us feel rather disillusioned now by Turkey's approach to international relations, human rights; freedom of expression, which is very sad"

"First of all, Turkey has to do its homework. Turkey has to know that as a candidate country in a negotiation process, it has to step by step to implement the Acquis Communautaire; and all that which is inside this Acquis Communautaire is obligatory for Turkey in different categories; social, demographic, politics. And in particular, in the political criteria for the moment we have some serious doubts if Turkey is able to overcome the situation. If we speak about fundamental rights, if we speak about independence of justice system, all the things are really problematic from our perspective. This could be really helpful if Turkey does his homework"

These concerns could be better understood with reference to Turkey's general outlook in the international arena regarding the aforementioned issues such as the freedom of expression, freedom of the press, human rights and democracy.

According to the "Democracy Index 2014" published by The Economist's Intelligence Unit, Turkey has been classified as a "hybrid regime" following "full democracies" and "flawed democracies", the categories to which the EU member states belong.⁶⁶ Moreover, as reported by the Freedom House index for the freedom of the press and the media, Turkey is now classified as a country without a free press and with only partial internet freedom.⁶⁷ According to the same index, Turkey's overall freedom status has been defined as "partly free" with "a downward trend arrow due to more pronounced political interference in anticorruption mechanisms and judicial processes, and greater tensions between majority Sunni Muslims and minority Alevis" in 2015.⁶⁸ Furthermore, Turkey was ranked 149th out of a total of 180 countries by "the 2015 World Freedom Index" which corresponds to the second worst category in the overall study.⁶⁹ It should also be noted that between 2006 and 2014, Turkey's ranking followed a declining course which went down to #154 from #98.⁷⁰ The latest study of 2015 expressed that:

"Turkey's rise in the index must be put in context. It was due above all to the conditional release in 2014 of around 40 imprisoned journalists who nonetheless continue to face prosecution and could be detained again at any time. Turkey's

66 The Economist Intelligence Unit. (2014) Democracy Index. Retrieved from <http://www.sudestada.com.uy/Content/Articles/421a313a-d58f-462e-9b24-2504a37f6b56/Democracy-index-2014.pdf>

67 Freedom House. (2015) Index for the freedom of the press and the media. Retrieved from <https://freedomhouse.org/country/turkey#.Vbsw4Pmqkko>

68 Freedom House (2015) Index for the freedom in the world <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/turkey#.Vbs4Gvmqqko>

69 World Press Freedom Index (2015). Retrieved from <http://index.rsf.org/#!/index-details/TUR>

70 World Press Freedom Index (2015). Retrieved from <http://index.rsf.org/#!/index-details/TUR>

*“underlying situation” score – covering such areas as cyber-censorship, lawsuits, dismissals of critical journalists and gag orders – actually worsened, showing that freedom of information continues to decline”*⁷¹

When the assertions of these international indices and studies are taken into consideration, we believe that the context in which parliamentarians addressed their concerns could be better understood. Accordingly, the deterioration of Turkey’s image in the international arena related to the issues of freedom, democracy and fundamental rights, is believed to have contributed to a growing concern on the part of European legislators and a potential questioning of Turkey’s dedication to join the EU.

71 World Press Freedom Index (2015). Retrieved from <http://index.rsf.org/#!/index-details/TUR>

Policy Recommendations Based on the Field Research

- 1) Although only a small portion of the representatives of the European public expressed prejudice against Turkey's EU membership, a significant majority of them believe that the public they represent is remarkably biased due to socio-cultural, religious or historical reasons none of which is among the accession criteria. Therefore, European representatives and politicians should make public diplomacy and policy-oriented efforts to inform the public about the accession process and to influence the public opinion in line with their own positions regarding Turkey's membership.
- 2) Both Turkey and the EU should expand public diplomacy efforts promoting the domestic and international benefits of Turkey's accession into the EU.
- 3) Since Turkey is seen as an indispensable actor in the Middle East, the EU should prioritize Turkey's EU membership over shorter-term, predominantly military partnerships or collaborations in order secure becoming a long-term, prominent stakeholder in the Middle East.
- 4) The EU should be aware of its negative outlook as a 'Christian Club' and that accepting Turkey would not only contribute to its domestic ethnic stability and to gaining more credibility on the part of its Muslim population, but would also likely make it a more reliable international actor in the Muslim world.
- 5) Turkey should be more active and visible in major EU countries as well as in Brussels in order to better explain the complex domestic political developments and reach out more efficiently to European policy makers.
- 6) Based on the meetings we conducted with Turkish MPs, we believe that Turkish political parties need to develop a clear and determined agenda with regards to Turkey's EU membership. A common, supra-partisan foreign policy approach regarding Turkey-EU relations would not only contribute to the betterment of Turkey's outlook on the European side in terms of decisiveness, but would also affect Turkish public opinion so that the support for EU membership would eventually increase.
- 7) Turkey should boost the reform process in order to harmonize with the *acquis* in all related areas.
- 8) European legislators and policy makers should address the parallel between the increasing Islamophobia and xenophobia in Europe and the socio-cultural prejudices against Turkey's EU membership. Accordingly, efforts to reduce discrimination against Muslims in Europe and maintain the objective criteria of accession for Turkish membership should be developed and implemented at the European level.
- 9) Promoting cultural diversity ought to be a priority for the EU and the enlargement process should be incorporated into such programmes targeting discrimination.
- 10) Turkey should engage in close relationship with the leading European political parties. Especially the right-wing conservative parties which are in charge in Europe share a similar worldview with their Turkish

counterparts; therefore a close cooperation seems as a must in order to trigger a new round of rapprochement between the EU and Turkey.

- 11) Turkey should be aware of its negative outlook in the international arena regarding the issues of freedoms, rights and democracy. Accordingly, it needs to develop policies in order to repair its image internationally and to show its commitment to the accession process.
- 12) The vaguely-defined notion of 'absorption capacity' should be clearly formulated since it has formally been part of the accession framework since the Copenhagen Summit of 1993.

General Policy Recommendations for the Future of Turkey-EU Relations

- 1) The EU had a strong leverage on Turkey and had played a constructive opposition role in early 2000s in Turkish domestic politics, which eventually accelerated the reform process in many fields. In the past couple of years, the Union lost this leverage and has almost no influence on the policy-making level. The EU should continue playing this constructive opposition role and promote reforms in Turkey.
- 2) The EU should make efforts to finalize the visa liberalization protocol that would allow Turkish citizens to travel freely to the EU member countries. This would be a positive incentive for further engagement of Turkish citizens with the European public which in turn might help diminish the existing socio-cultural prejudices against Turkey and its citizens.
- 3) Trade between the EU and Turkey and the subsequent economic integration of Turkey into the EU should be further enhanced. In addition to the development of the Customs Union, the EU should consider including Turkey in TTIP which would eventually pave the way for further integration and reforms not only in the economic sphere but also in other areas.
- 4) The EU should assume responsibility for the management of the Syrian refugee influx by developing further settlement plans and humanitarian aid programs inside of its borders.
- 5) The EU should open the closed chapters to encourage Turkey to undertake the major reforms necessary for full membership.

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Appendix 1

PARTICIPANTS FROM THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT			
	MEP	POLITICAL PARTY	GROUP
1	Alyn Smith	Scottish National Party	Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
2	Amjad Bashir	Conservative Party	European Conservatives and Reformists Group
3	Artis Pabriks	Unity (Vienotība)	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
4	Bodil Ceballos	Sweedish Green Party (Miljöpartiet de gröna)	Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
5	Brando Benifei	Democratic Party (Partito Democratico)	Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
6	Ernest Maragall	Nova Esquerra Catalana	Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
7	Fernando Maura Barandiaran	Union, Progress and Democracy (Unión Progreso y Democracia)	Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
8	Frank Engel	Christian-Social People's Party (Parti chrétien social luxembourgeois)	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
9	Heidi Hautala	The Greens of Finland (Vihreä liitto)	Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
10	Helga Stevens	New Flemish Alliance (Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie)	European Conservatives and Reformists Group
11	Ilhan Kyuchyuk	Movement for Rights and Freedoms	Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
12	Ismail Ertug	The Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)	Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
13	Ivo Vajgl	The Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (Demokratična Stranka Upokojencev Slovenije)	Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
14	Jaroslav Walesa	Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska)	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
15	Javier Lopez	The Socialists' Party of Catalonia (Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya)	Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
16	Jordi Sebastia	Commitment Coalition (Coalició Compromís)	Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
17	Kati Piri	Labour Party (Partij van de Arbeid)	Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats

PARTICIPANTS FROM THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

	MEP	POLITICAL PARTY	GROUP
18	Knut Fleckenstein	The Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)	Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
19	Marc Tarabella	Belgian Socialist Party (Belgium Parti Socialiste)	Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
20	Marietje Schaake	Democrats 66 (Netherlands Democraten 66)	Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
21	Michael Gahler	Christian Democratic Union (Christlich-Demokratische Union)	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
22	Paul Rübig	Austrian People's Party (Österreichische Volkspartei)	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
23	Pavel Poc	The Czech Social Democratic Party (Česká strana sociálně demokratická)	Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
24	Renate Sommer	Christian Democratic Union (Christlich-Demokratische Union)	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
25	Takis Hadjigeorgiou	Progressive Party of Working People (Anorthotiko Komma Ergazomenou Laou)	Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left
26	Tiziana Beghin	Five Star Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle)	Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group
27	Tomas Zdechovsky	The Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party (Křesťanská a demokratická unie)	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)

PARTICIPANTS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

	MP	PARTY
1	Ann Clwyd	The Labour Party
2	Fabian Hamilton	The Labour Party
3	Lord Balfe	The Conservative Party
4	Lord Clement-Jones	Liberal Democrats
5	Sir Tony Baldry	The Conservative Party

PARTICIPANTS FROM BELGIUM

	MP	PARTY
1	Brecht Vermeulen	New Flemish Alliance (Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie)
2	Fatma Pehlivan	Socialist Party Differently (Socialistische Partij Anders)
3	Griet Smaers	Christian Democratic and Flemish (Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams)
4	Meyrem Almaci	Green (Groen)
5	Raf Terwingen	Christian Democratic and Flemish (Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams)
6	Anonymous	New Flemish Alliance (Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie)
7	Anonymous	Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats (Open Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten)
8	Wouter de Vriendt	Green (Groen)

PARTICIPANTS FROM GERMANY

	MP	PARTY
1	Andreas Nick	Christian Democratic Union (Christlich-Demokratische Union)
2	Anonymous	The Left (Partei die Linke)
3	Dietmar Nietan	The Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)
4	Dorothee Schlegel	The Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)
5	Anonymous	Christian Social Union (Christlich-Soziale Union)
6	Heinz-Joachim Barchmann	The Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)
7	Michelle Müntefering	The Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)
8	Philipp Missfelder	Christian Democratic Union (Christlich-Demokratische Union)

PARTICIPANTS FROM FRANCE

	MP	PARTY
1	Jacques Mezard	President of the European Democratic and Social Rally Group at the French Senate (Président du groupe du Rassemblement Démocratique et Social Européen)
2	Laurence Dumont	Socialist, Republican & Citizen (Groupe socialiste, républicain et citoyen)
3	Meyer Habib	Union of Democrats and Independents (Union des Démocrates et Indépendants)
4	Paul Giacobbi	Radical, Republican, Democratic and Progressist (Radical, républicain, démocrate et progressiste)
5	Pierre Lellouche	Union for a Popular Movement (L'union pour un Mouvement Populaire)

PARTICIPANTS FROM TURKEY

	MP	PARTY
1	Aykan Erdemir	Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)
2	Şafak Pavey	Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)
3	Rıza Türmen	Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)
4	Anonymous	Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi)

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

	NAME	TITLE/AFFILIATION
1	Anonymous	Policy Adviser of a German MP from Christian Social Union (Christlich-Soziale Union)
2	Anonymous	Policy Adviser of a German MP from Christian Social Union (Christlich-Soziale Union)
3	Anonymous	Policy Adviser of a German MP from Alliance '90/The Greens (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen)
4	Patrick Paquet	Acting Head of Unit, Turkey The Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
5	Thomas Grunert	Head of Unit Europe: Enlargement and European Economic Area
6	Giles Portman	Adviser Turkey and Head of Division Turkey The European Union External Action Service

Appendix 2



Bu proje Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti tarafından finanse edilmektedir
This project is co-funded by the European Union and the Republic of Turkey

Promoting Dialogue and Solutions: What European Legislators Think of Turkey

1-) Do you support Turkey's accession to the EU? Yes / No

If your answer is YES , please continue with this part:

1a) Why? What is your primary reason for being in favor of Turkish accession?

1b) Please rank or explain your views on the following pro-Turkey factors in terms of priority:
(from 1 to 11, 1 being the most important)

- Demographic
- Economic growth
- Military defense
- EU Foreign policy ambitions in the Middle East
- Bridging East and West culturally
- Domestic ethnic stability in Europe as a result of accepting a Muslim country inside the EU
- Energy dependence
- Russian-European relations
- Middle-East-European relations
- Transatlantic relations
- European Accession / enlargement broadly
- Others (Please specify)

1c) Have you always had this stance? Yes No

1d) How could you (and your position) practically help improve the chances of Turkish accession?

1e) Suggest REAL methods to advance relations between Turkey and the EU (e.g. more Turkish committee oversight in EU affairs, improve inter-European parliamentary support for Turkey, more interaction between the European Parliament and Turkish Legislature, etc.)



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If your answer is NO, please continue with this part:

1a) Have you always had this stance? Yes / No

If your answer is NO → what changed your stance if that is the case?

If your answer is YES → what formulated/influenced your beliefs?

1b) What are the issues which don't convince you of Turkey entering the European Union?

1c) Do you believe that the problem can be overcome?

1d) Do you believe that the EU should provide assistance for the solution of these problems?



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2-) **Another formula for Turkey other than membership?** Yes / No

If YES, what is an alternative option?

If NO, why not?

3-) **TURKEY's IMAGE**

3a) How is it shaped in your constituency?

3b) How is it shaped in your country?

3c) How is it shaped inside your party?

3d) Where do you get your primary sources of information regarding Turkey from?

4-) **PARTY CULTURE / VOTER DEMANDS**

4a) How effective is public pressure, especially from your voters on you?

4b) Do you believe that prejudices can be overcome? How?

4c) How does your party affect your decisions vis-à-vis Turkey?

4d) How do you transfer knowledge to your voter base and communicate with them regarding foreign policy and EU affairs/ accession?



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5-) Do you believe that there are any prejudices against Turkey's membership due to sociocultural factors?

Yes

No

6-) Do you believe Turkey would change inner dynamics of the EU if it were to join it?

Yes

No

If YES, in what ways?

If NO, why not?

7-) Do you believe the accession process could change the inner dynamics of Turkey if it were to join / or taken seriously as a candidate member?

Yes

No

If YES, in what ways?

If NO, why not?

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