

TURKEY IN EUROPE BUT NOT OF EUROPE?

TESEV FOREIGN POLICY PROGRAM-LUND UNIVERSITY
CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES JOINT REPORT



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Table of Contents

TESEV's Preface, 5

Preface of the Centre for European Studies at Lund University, 7

Introduction, 9

I. The Ottoman Empire and Europe, 9

II. Atatürk's European Project, 10

III. Pacta Non Sunt Servanda?, 12

IV. The Absorption Capacity of the EU, 12

V. The Geographic Argument, 13

VI. Security and Geopolitical Arguments, 13

VII. The Identity Factor - Is EU a Christian Community?, 14

Author Biography, 16

TESEV's Preface

This report* has been prepared in order to be presented at a joint conference organized by TESEV Foreign Policy Program and Lund University Centre for European Studies, on 27 May 2009. It has been authored by Ingmar Karlsson, a retired Ambassador, former Consul General of Sweden to Istanbul and a distinguished scholar at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Lund University. The objective had been to examine the historical background to EU-Turkey relations and future prospects for that matter.

The history of EU-Turkey relations is long and Turkey's future accession to the Union still remains a controversial issue inside the EU. The European public is deeply split over this issue, as are governments and parliaments across the continent. We believe, Turkey represents both a great challenge and a great opportunity to the EU. This study tries to bring forth the arguments pro and con for Turkey's membership while contributing to the debate on Turkey's membership.

We, as TESEV Foreign Policy Program, see Sweden and Swedish term presidency as a golden opportunity with respect to the state of affairs in EU-Turkey relations. Although it has been a long run, we observe that Sweden is willing to contribute to and supportive of Turkey's membership process as well as the resolution of the problems that are currently blocking the talks; i.e. the Cyprus problem.

TESEV has for long years worked on the issue of Turkey-EU relations. As one of the forerunner supporters of Turkey's accession to the European Union, TESEV Foreign Policy Program has facilitated talks with both Turkish and European officials. Thus, we have aimed at communicating the messages we convey through our research and publications as well as conferences we organize at various European capitals to the decision making circles.

We believe that this publication should be conveyed to all EU member states, especially to those who fear that the Union will face certain structural and strategic liabilities once Turkey joins the Union. That is why; we have aimed not only at publishing this report but also presenting it at an international conference that will take place at Lund University.

Besides the author, many people have spent time and energy for this publication. The entire TESEV Foreign Policy Program staff has contributed to the realization of this project. We would like to also thank Swedish Consulate General in Istanbul, OSIAF and TESEV High Advisory Board for their financial support.

Mensur Akgün
On behalf of TESEV Foreign Policy Program

* This paper is a longer version of a FRIDE paper that was published in 2008.

Preface of the Centre for European Studies at Lund University

As of July 1, 2009, Sweden will take up its second term presidency ever of the European Union since becoming a member in 1995. This is of course a milestone in Swedish politics and a major event in Sweden. The Centre for European Studies (CFE) at Lund University has, almost needless to say, devoted the bulk of its program activities during 2008 and 2009 to the impending Swedish presidency. Therefore, when TESEV invited the CFE to co-organize a one-day workshop in Lund with a distinguished group of diplomats and academic experts on the subject of EU-Turkish relations and Turkey's prospects for membership we did not hesitate. These are matters of vital importance for the future development of the European Union.

When Sweden formulated its five prioritized areas of substance in the so-called 18-month program prior to taking up its presidency, the continued enlargement of the European Union was one of them. Sweden has all along been one of the foremost proponents of Turkey's accession to the European Union. Therefore as well it comes natural for the CFE to co-organize this important workshop.

It is a well-known fact, however, that Turkey's accession to the European Union is not without its critics. The argument that it would be fatal for EU identity to accept a member country largely perceived as Muslim is not likely to convince a critically minded, academic audience. There are other obstacles that are harder to surmount, however. The concern that the European Union must not compromise on the principle that democracy and human rights be scrupulously observed by member states as well as acceding countries is a real one and has to be taken seriously. This is why it is so important to maintain a vital academic EU-Turkish dialogue on these matters. This is also why we look so much forward to our jointly organized workshop on May 27.

We, too, would like to express our great appreciation to Ambassador Ingmar Karlsson, the former Consul General to Istanbul, for his inspired organizing efforts and to the Consulate General in Istanbul for financially facilitating the workshop.

May 2009

Introduction

**“They are not only Europeans,
They do not have the will to take part in the European integration project,
Their membership will derail the European project,
USA and NATO are behind their membership application,
The country is too big. It will bring the institutional system out of balance,
Their agricultural sector is not compatible with the common agricultural policy.”**

This is a quote from a French president but it is not Sarkozy talking about Turkey. The words are Charles de Gaulle’s and they date from January 1963 when he vetoed British membership in the European Economic Community, a veto that was then reiterated in November 1967.

Following Turkey’s ratification of the Ankara Treaty regarding its membership perspective on 12 September 1963, the first chairman of the European Commission Walter Hallstein made the following statement:

“Turkey is part of Europe. This is the deepest possible meaning of this operation, which brings –in the most appropriate way conceivable in our time – the confirmation of a geographical reality as well as a historical truism that has been valid for several centuries..”

Hallstein also made the following remarks regarding Turkey’s convergence with Europe:

“There has been nothing comparable in the history of influence on European culture and politics. Indeed we feel that here exists an essential relationship with the most contemporary events in Europe. What is therefore more natural than an identity between Europe and Turkey in their actions and reactions: militarily, political and economic.”

I. THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND EUROPE

The Turkish writer and poet Nazim Hikmet compared Turkey to a horse with its head on the continent of Europe but its body still on the Asian continent from which the Turks migrated westwards.¹

The first Ottoman sultans had, so to speak, their sights set on Europe. They considered their realm to be the successor of the Roman Empire. Henceforth, after the conquest of Anatolia they named it *Mamalik-i-Rum*. Thus, the Ottoman sultans had the same political dreams as the German and Frankish emperors. The difference was that they wanted to recapture and re-establish the former Roman empire from the east. After its fall in 1453, Constantinople received the epithet of ‘the second Rome’. Sultan Mehmet, the conqueror, became *keysar-i-Rum*, the Roman emperor, and the European parts of the realm were called Rumelia.

To the sultans, according to Claudio Magris, Vienna was the “city of the golden apple”² which they tried in vain to conquer to make it the capital of the “Roman-Muslim” empire that they aimed to establish. It may be said that while in 1806 Napoleon brought the remains of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation to an end, the Roman Empire in the east did not disappear until Atatürk abolished the caliphate on 3 March 1924.

¹ Ran, Nazim Hikmet. *Kuvay-ı Milliye Destanı*.

² Magris, Claudio. (1986). *Danubio: Un Viaggio Sentimentale attraverso la Mitteleuropa*. Milan: Garzanti Editore, p. 215.

For most of its history, the Ottoman Empire was an important factor in European politics. It was often a conqueror like all the European great powers, but sometimes was in close alliance with other major European actors. In the peace treaty signed in Paris after the Crimean War in 1856, the Ottoman Empire – “the sick man of Europe” – was a part of what was known as the Concert of Europe and it took part in deciding the future of Europe together with Austria, France, Great Britain, Prussia, Sardinia and Russia.

At the same time, the sultans made great effort to reform and westernise the Empire. As a reaction to these reforms, the Empire’s Islamic character was again emphasized to the detriment of the policies of westernization. Although, the reform period (*Tanzimat*) through the years 1839 – 1876 deeply altered the Empire, all of its goals were not achieved.

At the end of the 19th Century, the Young Ottoman Movement once again sought inspiration from Europe, in particular France and England. It advocated a constitutional government and openly discussed issues concerning rights and freedoms. Following a strong backlash from the sultan, the Young Ottomans retreated from the political scene, but their ideals of freedom and modernization survived. These ideals were later taken up by the Young Turks, who with the support of the west-oriented military elite, chose the revolutionary path. One of the lasting achievements of the Young Turks was that they initiated a process of building a Turkish nation in harmony with westernization which they considered inevitable for the survival of the nation.

II. ATATÜRK’S EUROPEAN PROJECT

Hence, Turkey’s rapprochement with Europe did not start with Atatürk and the birth of the Turkish Republic had been initiated a century earlier.

The concept “Avropa” (Europe) was associated with efficiency, knowledge and modernity. Thus, reforms were carried out to reach these ideals. The Ottoman reform efforts served as a source of inspiration both for the reforms which Mustafa Kemal Atatürk initiated following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and for his aspirations to create a modern Turkey out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire with the European nation states as a model.

Atatürk considered Turkey’s Ottoman and Islamic heritage to be the greatest obstacle to his project. He therefore took drastic measures to remove these obstacles. This new system, *Kemalism*, was however only western in its form but authoritarian and dogmatic in its substance. The reforms were dictated from above and westernization was largely linked to symbols while western concepts such as representative government, pluralism, freedom of expression and freedom of thought took the back seat. Genuine democratic reforms were regarded as unsuitable for Turkey. The vision of a European Turkey could only be realised through a strong central system. Religion was regarded as a superstition that must be kept under control and the immense cultural heritage of the Ottoman Empire was considered an obstacle since it was reminiscent of an Orient that Turkey was to leave behind.

In this new reform initiative, republicanism was set above democracy; a construed ethnic and religious homogeneity above diversity; the armed forces above civil society and the state above the community. According to Ernest Geller *Kemalism* was as reactionary and dogmatic as any religious orthodoxy. “The nation must be held by the hand” is a statement attributed to Atatürk. The attempts to radically rewrite Turkish culture, history and identity led to a permanent Kulturkampf³ against the old society. This in turn became an obstacle to the transition to a western liberal democracy which was the stated objective. The new Turkey became a one-party state and was so until 1946.

The main supporting pillars of *Kemalism*, underpinning this project, were nationalism and secularism in accordance with the French model. A national religious directorate –*Diyanet*– was established to keep religious manifestations under control. This enforced secularisation had two paradoxical consequences for Turkish Islam. It provided an identity for the opposition to confront the authoritarian and antidemocratic tendencies of *Kemalism*. It also contributed to the modernization and reformation of religion as a counter-force to *Kemalism*, which in its continuation led to a development towards an Islamic variant of the Christian Democratic parties of Europe.

The second pillar was the establishment of a nation state. *Kemalism* regarded the nation as a historic necessity which required all citizens to embrace the same culture, identity and outlook on the world. However, this did not imply a voluntary participation of individuals with different sub-identities within the framework of an overall Turkish identity.

3 The German term Kulturkampf (literally, “culture struggle”) refers to German policies in relation to secularity and the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, enacted from 1871 to 1878 by the Chancellor of the German Empire, Otto von Bismarck. For more see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kulturkampf>.

As a result of this identity project, a lot of communities that came as refugees or migrated in earlier generations from the Caucasus and the Balkans -Albanians, Bosniaks, Macedonians, Pomaks, Bulgarians, Tatars, Laz, Cherkessians, Chechnyans, etc. - were forced to embrace a new identity and become Turks, a concept which had been of a very disparaging nature during the Ottoman period and had largely signified a country bumpkin. Ironically, this integration took place on the basis of the Ottoman concept of a nation based on religion.

After the Turkish-Greek War in 1921, there was a population exchange and the Turkish-speaking Greek Orthodox Christians from Anatolia were exchanged for the Greek-speaking Muslims from the previously European parts of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand The Orthodox Christian Turkish speaking Gagauz could not become Turkish citizens. The only exceptions to this assimilation were the religious minorities, Jews, Armenians and Greek Orthodox, who were recognized by Turkey in the Treaty of Lausanne.

By replacing the Arabic alphabet with the Latin alphabet, Turkey consciously turned to the West and broke a strong link with its Muslim heritage. The new generation did not learn the Arabic alphabet and was thus totally cut off from Ottoman culture and its values.

Right up to 1995, when the Islamic Welfare Party (RP) began to grow in strength, no comparisons between Arab and Turkish cultures were permitted in geography and history books, but now with the Justice and Development Party (AKP), the question “Where does Turkey belong” came to the foreground again. The Islamic Welfare Party openly criticized the secularists’ aspirations for closer relations with the EU. They argued that if Turkey reconnects with the Muslim world, it will be spared the humiliation of standing cap in hand at the door of Europe. In Erbakan’s words: “instead of a Turkish identity which 65 million hate, we prefer a Muslim identity embracing billions”. When Erbakan became Prime Minister in 1997, he paid his first visit abroad to the different countries in the Arab world. However, Egypt’s President Mubarak refused to receive him and in Libya he was criticized by Colonel Qaddafi for Turkey’s policy on the Kurdish issue. In the Arab world, Turkey was associated with Ottoman imperialism. Attempts to shift loyalty to the Muslim and Arab world ended in a loss of face for the Turkish Islamists who were soon forced from power by pressure from the military in what has been designated the first post-modern coup.

After the military coup in 1980 in Turkey, a ten percent barrier was introduced in parliamentary elections to prevent an Islamic party from putting a spoke in the wheels of Atatürk’s European modernization project in the future. Due to this barrier AKP – The Justice and Development Party- with over 32 percent of the votes - acquired a safe majority in Parliament after the elections in November 2002. When the party leader Tayyip Erdoğan became Prime Minister, many feared that he would pursue a hidden agenda with the aim of gradually, by means of salami tactics⁴, Islamizing the secular Republic.

Instead, Erdoğan and his government did more in two years than all previous Kemalist postwar predecessors to bring Turkey along the route to Europe through a reform package which led to the decision at the EU-summit in Copenhagen in December 2004 on starting negotiations with Turkey.

Those who had seen Turkey’s road to Europe as a way of suppressing the Muslim identity could now instead witness how an Islamic party can pursue a reform policy that opens the way to membership negotiations with the EU.

It is a historical irony that the very domestic forces that Atatürk tried to crush 80 years ago are now in the process of fulfilling his vision of a Turkey firmly rooted in the West. The religiously oriented AKP and the Kurds are now the foremost advocates of Turkey’s EU membership. The European domicile, Atatürk’s political goal, has the widest opposition from those institutions – the army and the Republican People’s Party (CHP) - that Atatürk himself created in the first place to reach this political goal.

It may therefore be said that the reform process means that the Ottoman Empire strikes back. The pillars that it was based on; religion, ethnic diversity and imperial heritage which Kemalism tried to cast off, are again becoming prominent. Developments are now moving from the Turks’ Republic to the Republic of Turkey where you can feel welcome and at home as a Sunni, Alevite or a Kurd and where the various identities complement one another. This is something which orthodox Kemalists and secular fundamentalists, usually referred to as the deep State - the army and the bureaucracy - consider a threat to Atatürk’s nation building perspectives.

4 Salami tactics, also known as the salami-slice strategy, is a divide and conquer process of threats and alliances used to overcome opposition. For more see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salami_tactics.

III. PACTA NON SUNT SERVANDA?

The basic principle of Roman law – *pacta sunt servanda*⁵ – is a part of the European cultural heritage. Anyone who ignores this principle with regards to Turkey loses political credibility and flouts official EU policy, according to which Turkey is to be treated like any other candidate.

For more than 45 years Brussels has assured Turkey that it will one day belong to the European community. Turkey entered into the Customs Union in 1996 and its candidacy for EU membership was confirmed in Helsinki in 1999. Moreover, on 3 October 2005, EU member states agreed to start formal membership negotiations with Turkey.

When the confirmation was made in Helsinki, Turkey was in a deep economic and political crisis. It seems that many member states at the time thought the promise to open negotiations could be given since Turkey would not be able to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria. Those who are opposed to Turkey's membership were obviously surprised by the reform policy of the new AKP government. The opposing member states now talk less about the country's "EU maturity" and the fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria. Instead they argue that the EU cannot absorb a new member of the size of Turkey, that Turkey is not a European country, that a Turkish membership would cause serious geopolitical and strategic problems and, last but not least, that EU is a community based on Christian values.

IV. THE ABSORPTION CAPACITY OF THE EU

With 27 members, the EU is said to be an over-extended structure, and that further geographical expansion can only take place at the expense of deepening of political cooperation. This line of argument – that Europe is not powerful enough to absorb Turkey – can only be described as a political tactic. If there was any truth in it, it should have been deployed more than 15 years ago when the EU's eastward enlargement process started. In those days the main opponents of Turkish membership, like the CDU/CSU in Germany, were the keenest advocates of enlargement.

The project of building a strong United States of Europe on the American model is no longer on the political agenda especially after the accession of ten new members in May 2004, and even more so when Bulgaria and Romania became members in January 2007. With the eastern enlargement, the European Union in fact chose to become an all-European commonwealth and not a European super state. The new enlarged EU will for the foreseeable future be a political and economic union with varying geometry, concentric circles and different speeds. What objection is there to Turkey's incorporation into such a union, particularly in view of the fact that, with its geographical location, its size and its decades-long NATO membership, Turkey is an important strategic partner which by itself would enhance the role of Europe in global politics more than the twelve new members combined?

According to demographic prognosis, Turkey will have a population of 82 million in 2015 and be almost as big as Germany. Ten years later Turkey will be the largest member state with 87 million or 15,5 % of the population of the EU while Germany's share will be 14,3 % compared to the 18,1 % today. The Turkish part of the population will thus be smaller than that of Germany today. Demography is furthermore one of the most serious problems facing the EU, not least in Germany, and Turkey with its large youthful population could help to solve this problem.

In a system where the decisions are taken with double majorities – 55 % of the member states and 65 % of the population – a Turkish membership will, in spite of the size of the country, not have a dramatic influence on how the union functions. A Turkish membership will imply changes in the European Council and the European Parliament but not in the Commission where Turkey will have one post and become part of the same system of rotation as the other members.

Turkey will of course be an important actor. It will increase the possibilities for the other member states to make alliances in order to block or carry through decisions. Like other member states, Turkey will enter into alliances to promote its own national interests.

If the number of seats in the European Parliament is limited to 750, Turkey and Germany would get at most 82 seats in an EU with 29 members against Germany's 99 seats today. Similar reductions will also apply for the other big member countries. Such a scenario implies long and difficult negotiations where at least we might expect the smaller member states, fighting for their present number of seats.

⁵ *Pacta sunt servanda* is Latin for "agreements must be kept. For more see Black's Law Dictionary (8th ed. 2004).

V. THE GEOGRAPHIC ARGUMENT

It is often said that Turkey is in Europe but that it is not of Europe. Yet is there a European history without Turkey?

Just to take a few examples, there are more Greek ruins in Turkey than in Greece. Herodotos, the father of history, as well as Strabon, the first geographer were born in today's Turkey. It was in Antakya that the followers of Jesus first called themselves Christians. Saint Paul was born in Tarsus and made his first travels to spread the new faith in Anatolia.

Europe cannot be defined with absolute geographical, religious, cultural or historical criteria. The Treaty of Rome states that any European country can become a member of the community and not that hundred percent of the territory must be situated on the European continent. The Turkish territory on the European continent, 24 000 square kilometers, is substantially larger than EU-members such as Malta, Cyprus, Luxembourg and Slovenia; only marginally smaller than the Baltic states, the Netherlands and Belgium, and its population on the European continent is greater than that of Sweden and many other member states.

Giscard d'Estaing, one of the most pronounced opponents of Turkish membership, never gets tired of pointing out that Anatolia belongs to Asia. President Sarkozy is using the same argument, but at the same time he fails to mention that he was elected to French presidency by votes from the French Guyana in South America, Tahiti in the Pacific ocean, Reunion in the Indian ocean, Guadeloupe and Martinique in the Caribbean Sea and the islets of Saint Pierre and Miquelon off the Canadian Atlantic coast.

Voilà les frontières de l'Europe!

Furthermore, Ankara lies west of the member state Cyprus, similar to how Malta lies south of Tunisia. In this context comments made by the French Foreign Minister Kouchner during the armed conflict between Russia and Georgia over South Ossetia are also worth nothing. He stressed that the EU could not tolerate an attack against another European country.

In his argument Giscard d'Estaing states that Turkish is not an Indo-European language. This argument also applies to Finnish, Estonian and Hungarian which are closely related to Turkish than to the Indo-European, Germanic and Slavonic languages. Maltese, another official European language, is furthermore Semitic and thus closely related to Arabic than to any European language.

VI. SECURITY AND GEOPOLITICAL ARGUMENTS

On the other hand, the geopolitical and strategic arguments that were used in favour of the accession of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and the Baltic states are also valid for Turkey. In fact, those arguments are even more valid for the Turkish case than is for the cases in Central and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s.

Some day the enlargement process will come to an end, but terminating it without admitting Turkey in would be a serious mistake and an unwise policy. Those who are opposed to Turkish membership seem to think of the EU as an "island in the sun"; a Switzerland surrounded by good, friendly neighbours. But Europe's geostrategic location is far from idyllic. Europe must stabilize its own periphery to ensure that it is not affected by the problems that exist there. Turkish membership to the EU will strengthen Europe on its most vulnerable front.

Turkey has three geostrategic choices now: affirmation of its European identity, rapprochement with the Arab and Muslim world and integration with the Turkic-speaking peoples of Central Asia.

There is no doubt that the present Turkish government has chosen the first of these three options and that the country's political and economic elite are playing the European card. If this fails because the EU defers its decision or refuses to admit Turkey into the Union, the other two options will become more feasible. In that case, the friends of modernization in Turkey would probably not be able to persist in their pro-European stance.

Both the pro-Islam and the pan-Turkic option would entail serious consequences for the stability of Europe. Even though Turkey is not likely to achieve a dominant position in the Central Asian Republics, the mere attempt to do so would have a destabilizing effect and also exacerbate the existing problems in the Caucasus. It is in Europe's vital interests to see to it that the problems in the Middle East, including Iraq, and the southern periphery of the former Soviet Union do not converge. Turkish membership of the EU would have a stabilizing effect and open the doors to Europe not only for Georgia and Armenia but also for Azerbaijan. Thus, Turkey's EU membership will not only solve

the bilateral Turkish-Armenian problems but will also contribute to the solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in a European context.

The second option, i.e. rapprochement with the Arab and Muslim world, too would have an adverse effect on Europe. One argument against Turkish membership is that part of the EU's external frontier would abut on the most crisis-ridden and troubled region in the world if Turkey becomes a member and that Europe should at all costs keep away from the problems of the Muslim world and the Middle East in particular.

However, we cannot escape this part of the world and its problems. Therefore, the opposite conclusion is the most credible one, i.e. a rapprochement between Turkey and this region will bring its crises closer to us. The idea that a Turkey excluded from the European Community could be a firewall against the crises in the Middle East is politically naïve. All the conflicts in the Middle East so far have directly affected Europe, and they will affect us even more in the future. If Turkey was to become a member, this would increase the EU's opportunities for pursuing a proactive policy in the Arab world. This is not without risks, but if Turkey remains outside the Union, this will have serious consequences. A stable democracy in a Muslim society, on the other hand, could stand as a model for a Muslim world that badly needs such examples. The Turkish membership of the EU would demonstrate the falsity of the argument that Islam and democracy cannot co-exist and would help to bring about favourable changes in the Islamic world's attitude towards Europe.

A 'no' to Turkey would, on the other hand, have a radicalizing effect both in the Muslim world at large and within Turkey itself. It will strengthen the argument of the fundamentalists that the Muslim world must turn inwards because the rest of the world conspires against it. It will also strengthen those in Turkey who question the reform policies of Prime Minister Erdoğan.

VII. THE IDENTITY FACTOR – IS EU A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY?

The resistance to Turkish membership is not only motivated by fears about the EU's lack of absorption capacity and about the risk of importing problems and disturbances, but also by vague qualms about a culture that is regarded as alien. One argument that is now gaining ground, especially in Catholic Europe, is linked to identity, namely Europe's Christian values, which are mentioned as a reason for keeping Turkey out. In that case, it might just as well be argued that Greece should not have been admitted to the EU because of its Eastern Orthodox roots, "semi-Oriental" such as Romanians and Bulgarians should have been kept out and that Albania and Bosnia are forever doomed to be Muslim ghettos in Europe.

What will happen if the secularization process in Europe continues? Where will the limits of identity go? Will a secular country such as Sweden have to leave the EU in the not too distant future when the number of Muslims who go to mosques for Friday prayers is larger than the number of churchgoers on Sundays?

The Justice and Development Party (AKP) has emerged as a result of the transformation of Turkish political Islam, and has come to power in free elections. Turkey is now undergoing a historical reform process that is mainly motivated by the prospect of EU membership. Prime Minister Erdoğan wants to transform the AKP into a modern European party – a Muslim version of a Christian Democratic Party – and he needs Europe's support for this process.

There have never been any religious criteria for membership to the EU. To refuse Turkey's admission on religious grounds would send a false and dangerous signal, especially after 11 September, 2001. Such a decision would ignore the fact that Islam is a mainstream religion in Europe today. As late as the end of the 1960s, Europe was a net emigration area. But nowadays 10-15% of the populations in most of the Western European countries are born outside their present home country and a growing percentage of them are born outside of Europe. More immigrants arrive to Europe every year than to the USA. There are today at least 15 million Muslims in the EU, which is more than the number of Protestant Scandinavians and this number will increase as immigration continues.

The trend towards a multiracial and multi-confessional Europe is therefore inevitable. This trend will be further strengthened by current demographic trends in Europe. Today, the birth rate among Muslim immigrants in Europe is three times higher than in the non-Muslim population. If this trend continues the Muslim population will, given current immigration patterns, be doubled by 2015, while Europe's non-Muslim population will decrease by 3.5%. Some estimates of the number of Muslims in Europe in 30 years time are as high as 65 million.

Thus, Islam today is already an integral part of Europe, it has become a European religion and soon we will be talking about Western Islam the same way that we have been talking about Eastern Christianity. Islam must therefore be recognized and regarded as a "domestic" European religion.

Only a depoliticized and liberal Islam can be integrated into Europe, and such integration is only possible if it is paralleled by economic and social integration. A future Europe with a flourishing Muslim presence and an open European identity must therefore be based on self-criticism, a permanent and open dialogue and a respect for diversity. We must realize that Muslims can make a positive contribution to the construction of a new Europe. Their presence should be seen as a source of enrichment and not as a problem. Europe cannot define itself against another identity called "Islam". Europe does not have a religious Christian essence, but the formation of Europe and European values is an open historical process.

A 'no' to Turkey on religious and cultural grounds will be disastrous for Europe since it will send an immediate and strong message to the fastest growing segments of the European population that they will always be considered unwelcome and second class citizens even if they chose a secular way of life.

Sending such a message could, before we know it, lead to an emergence of a ghetto Islam in Europe instead of a modern tolerant European Islam. Radical mullahs all over Europe are already doing their best to exploit Muslim immigrants' psychological, cultural and material problems for their own purposes, and this message would only make their work easier.

If this happens, we might soon witness a 'clash of civilizations' in Western Europe, not in the form of a military showdown between the West and the Islamic world, or as envisaged by Samuel Huntington - the proponent of the clash of civilizations theory, but in the form of a continuous guerilla warfare in ghettoized suburbs of our cities.

A Turkish membership in the European Union, therefore, will facilitate a necessary integration process and counteract a development fraught with momentous consequences for Europe. In an increasingly globalized world, it is not possible to draw borders based on a static view of history and a constructed identity decided from above by politicians. Europe is tantamount to democracy, rule of law, separation of state and church, equality between sexes, freedom of speech, dissociation from ideological salvation doctrines and a functioning market economy. A membership in the European Union is therefore not predestinated and given by nature, but a result of a social, political, cultural and economic process that brings together peoples who see themselves as Europeans.

Now two things have to be ensured. Turkey must implement the ambitious reform program in order to meet the Copenhagen Criteria not only on paper and the public opinions of many member states such as France, Germany and Austria must be prepared to accept Turkish membership.

The negotiations that have started now will result in an increasing and ever broader areas of contact and as a result of this process prejudices on both sides will decline. More and more Europeans will return from Turkey with the same experience as a French traveler in 1652:

"There are many in Christendom who believes that the Turks are great devils, barbarians and people without faith, but those who have known them and talked to them have a quite different opinion. It is certain that the Turks are good people who follow very well the commandment given to us by nature, only to do to others what we would have done to us".

Author Biography

INGMAR KARLSSON

Ingmar Karlsson is the former Consul General of Sweden in Istanbul. Currently working with Lund University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Dr. Karlsson had previously, from 1967 onwards, been employed at the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Karlsson has published several books on a variety of subjects including Turkey-EU Relations, Kurdish question, Islam and Europe.

