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## **EU – TURKEY ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS: STATE OF PLAY**

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### **Abstract**

This working paper aims to put Turkey's accession negotiations with the European Union in perspective. Within this framework, this article first gives a brief overview of Turkey-EU relations starting from Turkey's first application for membership to the European Economic Community in 1959. In this first section, a special emphasis is given on the establishment of the Customs Union between Turkey and the European Union. The course of the ongoing accession negotiations and the problems encountered during this process which are contributing to the current impasse of the negotiations are analyzed in the second part. The article argues that reasons for the slowdown of the negotiations can be found within both parties. Besides Cyprus issue and the political preferences of some EU leaders, the European Union's and Turkey's internal problems, the diversification of Turkish foreign policy in the last couple of years have contributed to lead the negotiations to an impasse. In the article, it is also being debated as to whether this new direction taken in Turkey's foreign policy shifts the country's priority away from the EU membership.

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## Introduction

EU – Turkey accession negotiations will complete its fifth year on October 3, 2010. However, despite yearly declarations on the Turkish side that each new year would be “the year of EU”, negotiations seem to be progressing very slowly and the prospects for their timely completion look dim. In fact, with eighteen chapters out of the picture due to a variety of obstacles and the block on provisional closure of any chapters until Turkey fulfils its obligations deriving from the Additional Protocol, the situation looks grim indeed.

The first aim of this paper is to provide the necessary background for placing accession negotiations with Turkey within a proper context. To accomplish this task, an overview of Turkey – EU relations starting from Turkey’s first application to become a member of the EEC is provided. This overview will hopefully help put things in perspective through providing an account of the relations from the very start and including the establishment of a Customs Union between Turkey and the EU.

Next, the negotiations from their start will be analyzed together with the reasons for the current impasse. In this part, the emphasis is not on putting blame on one side or the other but rather on providing an index of problems contributing to the current impasse. This section also tries to analyze deeper underlying issues through this index.

The slowdown of negotiations on the one hand and new foreign policy initiatives by Turkey on the other has also caused concerns in both Turkey and the EU about whether these new initiatives constitute a foreign policy shift for Turkey and if this shift can be perceived as a danger for Turkey’s EU accession goal. Consequently, a short discourse analysis follows about the future of Turkey’s accession goal as an anchor of Turkey’s foreign policy.

## A Short Overview of Turkey – EU Relations

Turkey’s face has been firmly directed towards the West since the declaration of the Republic in 1923. Europe was adopted as a model since the last years of the former Ottoman Empire. Turkey’s foreign policy record is a clear reflection of this alignment. Turkey is a founding member of the United Nations (1945), a member of NATO (1952), the Council of Europe (1949), the OECD (1960), the OSCE (1973) and was an associate member of the Western European Union (1992).

In July 31, 1959, shortly after the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1958, Turkey made its first application to join the newly established Community. The EEC’s Council of Ministers’ response to Turkey’s application in 1959 was to suggest the establishment of an association with Turkey. The ensuing negotiations resulted with the signature of the Ankara Agreement on September 12, 1963. This agreement, which entered into force on December 1, 1964, marks the beginning of Turkey’s relations with EEC.

The aim of the Ankara Agreement, as stated in Article 2, was “*to promote the continuous and balanced strengthening of trade and economic relations between the Parties, while taking full account of the need to ensure an accelerated development of the Turkish economy and to improve the level of employment and living conditions of the Turkish people*”. Article 28 provides the final target of the Association; “*as soon as the operation of this Agreement has advanced far enough to justify envisaging full acceptance by Turkey of the obligations arising*

*out of the Treaty establishing the Community, the Contracting Parties shall examine the possibility of the accession of Turkey to the Community”.*

The Ankara Agreement envisaged a progressive model of integration with Turkey, namely the establishment of a Customs Union composed of three phases; the “preparation phase”, the “transition phase” and the “final phase”. The first phase, which aimed to reduce economic differences between the parties, started in December 1, 1964, with Agreement’s entry into force.

The “preparation phase” was completed and the conditions of the “transition phase” were set with the signature of the Additional Protocol on January 1, 1973. The Additional Protocol set out the ways on how the Customs Union would be established. It provided that the EEC would abolish tariff and quantitative barriers to its imports from Turkey upon the entry into force of the Protocol, whereas Turkey would do the same in accordance with a timetable containing two calendars set for 12 and 22 years respectively, and called for the harmonisation of Turkish legislation with that of the EU in economic matters. Furthermore, the Additional Protocol envisaged the free circulation of persons between the parties in the next 12 to 22 years.

Turkey-EU relations entered a period of instability lasting from the beginning of 1970s, until the second half of 1980s, due to Turkey’s political and economic conditions. Following the military coup of September 12, 1980 in Turkey, the relations between Turkey and the Community virtually froze. In the first Association Council after the political crisis, in 1986, Turkey stated its intention to apply for full membership. In line with this statement, Turkey applied for full membership on April 14, 1987, on the basis of the EEC Treaty's Article 237, ECSC Treaty’s Article 98 and EURATOM Treaty’s 205. The Council forwarded Turkey's application for membership to the European Commission for the preparation of an Opinion. The Commission declared its Opinion on December 18, 1989, where it basically underlined Turkey's eligibility for membership, yet deferred the in-depth analysis of Turkey's application until the emergence of a more favourable environment. The Commission also mentioned that Turkey's accession was prevented equally by the EC's own situation on the eve of the Single Market's completion which prevented any consideration of further enlargement. The Opinion went on to underline the need for a comprehensive cooperation programme in order to facilitate the integration of the two parties and added that the Customs Union should be completed in 1995 as envisaged.

Under these circumstances, Turkey chose to give priority to complete the envisaged Customs Union with the Community and further strengthened its efforts. Talks began in 1994 and were finalised on 6 March 1995 at the Turkey-EU Association Council with the adoption of the decision 1/95 on the completion of the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU in industrial and processed agricultural goods by December 31, 1995. With this decision, the second stage of Turkey-EU relations was completed and the so-called “final phase” was initiated. With the Customs Union decision, Turkey-EU relations entered a totally new dimension, due to the fact that the Customs Union constituted one of the most important steps for Turkey’s EU integration objective.

Having completed the Customs Union, membership became one of the priority issues in Turkey’s agenda and Turkey attached particular importance to the EU's current enlargement process. Despite all these positive developments achieved, the Commission excluded Turkey from the enlargement process in its report entitled "*Agenda 2000*" which it disclosed on July 16, 1997. While the report highlighted the fact that the Customs Union with Turkey was functioning at a satisfactory level and that Turkey demonstrated her ability to adapt to the EU

norms in many areas, it noted the same political and economic arguments against Turkey and made no reference to Turkey's full membership objective. Following this, in the Luxembourg European Council Summit of December 12-13, 1997, where Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and enlargement issues were discussed, a parallel approach was reflected by and large the contents of the Commission's "*Agenda 2000*". In the document released at the end of the Summit, while Turkey's eligibility was reconfirmed by the Heads of States and Government of EU Member States, the EU decided to set up a strategy to prepare Turkey for accession and to create a special procedure to review the developments to be made. With these decisions, the development of Turkey-EU relations was made conditional on certain economic, political and foreign policy questions, where the Commission was asked to submit suitable proposals to enhance Turkey-EU relations. The reaction of the Turkish Government to the EU's attitude was a critical one where the Government stated that Turkey's goal of full membership and association would nevertheless be maintained, but that the development of bilateral relations depended on the EU's honouring its commitments, and that it would not discuss with the EU issues remaining outside the contractual context of the bilateral relations as long as the EU did not change its attitude.

The Helsinki European Council Summit held on December 10-11, 1999 marked a breakthrough in Turkey-EU relations. At the Helsinki Summit, Turkey was officially recognized, without any precondition, as a candidate state on an equal level with other candidate states. The Presidency Conclusions of the Helsinki European Council clearly stated that Turkey would reap the benefits from a pre-accession strategy to stimulate and support its reforms. This would also include an Accession Partnership, which would be drawn up accordingly, combined with a National Program for the adoption of the *acquis communautaire*. Turkey would participate in Community programs open to other candidate countries and agencies. Turkey would also be invited to the meetings between candidate states and the Union in the context of the accession process. A single framework for coordinating all sources of EU financial assistance for pre-accession would be created. Lastly, the Commission would regularly follow Turkey with its Progress Reports, a procedure which it had already started to implement since 1998.

The recognition of Turkey as a candidate for accession at the Helsinki European Council marked the beginning of Turkey-EU relations with a perspective of membership. As foreseen in the Helsinki European Council Conclusions, the first Progress Report on Turkey was published by the Commission in 1999. This report also constituted the basis of the first Accession Partnership Document.

As noted in the Helsinki European Council conclusions, the Commission started to prepare an Accession Partnership for Turkey, which was declared on March 8, 2001. On the other hand, the framework regulation designed to furnish the legal basis for the Accession Partnership was adopted by the General Affairs Council on February 26, 2001. The regulation combined all EU financial assistance under a single programme. The Accession Partnership was formally approved by the Council on February 26, 2001. With the adoption of these two documents, an important legal procedure concerning Turkey's accession strategy was finalized.

The Accession Partnership for Turkey, an important instrument of the Commission formed in line with its enlargement policy, was prepared within the framework of Turkey's ability to fulfill the Copenhagen political criteria. The document is composed of short-term and middle-term targets that Turkey has to fulfill to comply with the Copenhagen political criteria. The Accession Partnership Document is updated when deemed necessary by the Commission.

After the approval of the Accession Partnership by the Council and the adoption of the Framework Regulation, the Turkish Government announced its first National Program for the Adoption of the EU acquis on March 19, 2001. The National Program was submitted to the Commission on March 26, 2001. It has been produced with a careful appreciation of the short and medium-term priorities to be fulfilled.

The Copenhagen European Council Summit of 12-13 December 2002 marked another important turning point in EU enlargement process. While the accession of ten candidate states to the EU had been declared, the Copenhagen European Council resolved that if the European Council in December 2004, on the basis of a recommendation from the European Commission, should decide that Turkey fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria, the EU would open accession negotiations with Turkey without delay. Meanwhile, the leaders and heads of states of EU Member States agreed to extend and develop the cooperation on the Customs Union and to provide the Turkish government with increased pre-accession financial assistance in the Summit.

Progress towards accession continued along the path set by the National Program in the post-Helsinki period. The most crucial target at this stage was the opening of accession negotiations, which depended on 'sufficient' fulfillment of the Copenhagen political criteria. Turkey took a number of important steps to meet that conditionality clause. The most important among these were a major review of the Turkish Constitution with two Constitutional reform packages and eight harmonization packages that were adopted between February 2002 and July 2004. With these eight reform packages 218 articles of 53 different laws were changed. Compared to this marathon run of legislative change, subsequent reforms were bound to look somewhat limited in scope.

The European Commission's Report and Recommendation in line with the decisions taken at the 2002 Copenhagen European Council were published on 6 October 2004. In 2004, after thoroughly analyzing the steps taken by Turkey, the Commission recognized that Turkey had sufficiently fulfilled the Copenhagen political criteria and advised the Member States to start accession negotiations with Turkey.

The Presidency Conclusions on Turkey in December 17, 2004 constituted an important and historical landmark. Based on this recommendation at the European Council on December 16-17, 2004, the decisions taken in the 1999 Helsinki and 2002 Copenhagen Summits were reaffirmed, as the Council took note of the resolute steps taken by Turkey in pursuing a comprehensive reform process and decided to open accession negotiations in the framework of the paragraph 23 of the Presidency Conclusions. Accordingly, negotiations started with Turkey on October 3, 2005.

## **Negotiations: Impasse?**

The screening process constituted the first step of negotiations but before long it became clear that the process was foundering under serious pressure. Despite the great political and social support for membership in Turkey in early 2006, some major problems which would dominate the following years of accession talks emerged. Instead of blaming one side or the other, this part concentrates on the main reasons that contributed to slowing down of Turkey's accession process by trying to analyze the developments both in Turkey and the EU.

**Cyprus Issue:** On top of the obstacles faced by Turkey is the Cyprus issue. Over the last years, Cyprus problem has harmed Turkey-EU relations, partly due to the actions of member state GASC<sup>1</sup> and largely because other EU member states supported or hid behind this issue to block or slow-down Turkey's accession course. On the other hand, Turkey's accession negotiations which are currently proceeding at a slow pace, risk grinding to a halt in view of the chapters directly or indirectly blocked by the Cyprus conflict. The EU leaders in December 2006 decided unanimously not to open negotiations in 8 chapters and not to provisionally close any chapters until Turkey fulfils its obligations deriving from the Additional Protocol – which basically implies extending the customs union to GASC. However, the situation is further complicated by the fact that Turkey claims that it fulfils the obligations imposed by the Additional Protocol, in the sense that there are no restrictions on goods produced in the south of the island per se. Turkey rather blocks transport originating from GASC ports<sup>2</sup>. The EU, on the other hand, insists that there is no practical difference. The General Affairs Council on 29 April 2004 has recommended establishing a package consisting of the Green Line Regulation, Financial Assistance Regulation and Direct Trade Regulation (DTR) for ending the isolation of Northern Cypriots. The enforcement of Green Line Regulation is being delayed because of political and bureaucratic reasons. As the application of Financial Assistance Regulation which amounted to 259 million Euros could be started in February 2006, and 99 % of this amount has been contracted to beneficiaries by project basis. Regarding Direct Trade, no concrete steps have been taken apart from a mere invitation by the Council to the Commission to bring forward comprehensive proposals to this end, with particular emphasis on economic integration of the island and on improving contacts between the two communities and with the EU. Regarding this most significant part of the package, it can easily be observed that the Greek Cypriot Government is using its status as an EU membership to hinder the process of ending the isolations. The plan proposed by the Greek Cypriots in 2007 which recommended opening Greek Cypriot ports to commercial Turkish Cypriot vessels did not attempt to find a solution for the problem rather than ignoring Turkish Cypriot existence and overlooking Turkish side's interests. In April 2010, negotiations in the Parliament on DTR have been submitted to the conference of the presidents and are currently waiting for consent of EP General Council to get into force.

This brought Turkey to the point of making a choice between taking one-sided steps or not since the EU failed to fulfil its promises to Turkish Cypriots in return for their cooperative attitude toward resolving the conflict under the auspices of the United Nations (Annan Plan). EU's unbalanced approach to the Cyprus issue, as stated by Öniş (2008) reinforced widely-held perceptions among the Turkish public that Cyprus was being used as an excuse to place yet another obstacle before Turkey's membership.

**EU's Internal Problems:** In a parallel process, internal problems of the European Union, such as the failed Constitutional Treaty process, led to increased ambiguity in messages relayed to Turkey. Moreover, these messages were often championed by strong personalities or important leaders such as Nicolas Sarkozy and Angela Merkel. The important point here is that more often than not, the public in Turkey regards the EU as a monolithic entity and negative attitudes of some leaders, member states and/or institutions are perceived as the EU's real and unitary position towards Turkey's accession.

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<sup>1</sup> Turkey contends that since a legitimate government representing the whole island does not exist in Cyprus, Turkey does not recognize the Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus referred as "*Republic of Cyprus*".

<sup>2</sup> Turkey claims that if this block on transport of goods constitute a violation of the obligations of the Customs Union, so does the arbitrarily imposed quotas on Turkey's trucking.

Looking beneath the surface, the negative stance of some member states rest on political concerns, which can be explained by the fear of fragmentation of the Union as a result of Turkey's accession. This is accompanied by economic and cultural fears, massive migration from Turkey resulting in loss of jobs and erosion of European citizenship<sup>3</sup>. In addition to these national concerns, the political weight that Turkey will have in European institutions as a result of its high population is a popular fear being voiced frequently. Moreover, since Turkey is regarded as a poor country, some Member States tend to paint Turkey as a potential burden to the Common Agricultural Policy and structural funds. The recent political and economic crisis (Constitutional deadlock, long approval process of the Lisbon Treaty and financial depression) created the current political environment where opponents of enlargement have become much stronger and more vocal. In this regard, the rise of right-wing populism which maintains that Turkey 'does not belong' in the EU has become a major element for the slowing-down of accession talks. At this point, it should be emphasized that questions related to Turkey's accession are most likely reflections of deeper uncertainties and fears in the EU deriving from the pressures of globalization<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, in the aftermath of the constitutional treaty process some segments of the EU elite tried to cut corners by aiming to accomplish the impossible: namely, determining clear cut borders for European integration. Historically, Europe's borders have always been fuzzy and open to interpretation and such an effort to try and fit Europe into a preconceived geographical space was mainly interpreted in Turkey as an effort to leave Turkey out among other things.

In this framework, another obstacle in Turkey's path to full membership is EU's "enlargement fatigue" as a result of the dramatic increase of the EU member states to 27 from 15 in less than three years. This was the most complex wave of enlargement. Furthermore, the EU may soon find itself in the midst of a new wave of enlargement involving the accession of the Western Balkan countries. However, the responsibility for overcoming the fatigue and improving its "integration capacity" lies with the Union and not with the candidate countries. It is often pointed out that enlargements have tended to strengthen the Union, foster its economic growth and reinforce its role in the world. Nevertheless, when it comes to Turkey's membership, it is often argued that the country's size, large population and economic development would disrupt institutional, financial and political balances within the Union. EU, in order to ensure its integration capacity and to be able to honour its commitments, must first decide on the reforms it should undertake. Constitutional settlement following the coming into force of the new treaty, revision of the financial framework and redefinition of some of its policies are necessary steps that come to mind. Also, efforts by European leaders to communicate enlargement to the public and counter misconceptions should be strengthened if the accession process is to pick up pace once more.

**Turkey's gamut of internal problems:** Since 2005 Turkey also seemed to succumb to lethargy concerning the accession process. There are various reasons for this slow down and all of these could be analyzed at length. However, to do so would fall far beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, the problems can be categorized under several mutually interactive headings.

The first of these concerns the reform and harmonization process itself. Turkey undertook so many reforms in such a short time that the country is still adjusting to the reforms. Therefore,

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<sup>3</sup> Rene Cuperus (2008), **Europe's Revolt of Populism and the Turkish Question: Perceptions and Misperceptions in the EU and Turkey: Stumbling Blocks on the Road to Accession**, Centre for European Security Studies (CESS) and Turkey Institute, Leiden, Holland.

<sup>4</sup> Ziya Öniş (2008), Turkey-EU Relations: Beyond the Current Stalemate, **Insight Turkey**, 10(4), pp.35-50.

a certain lag between the formal adoption of harmonization packages and their implementation is evident. The infamous article 301 about the freedom of expression is a case in point<sup>5</sup>. Thus, it is clear that the reform process in Turkey is a slow process often progressing through trial and error. In addition, such a comprehensive process is bound to create resistance and backlash in the society especially when one considers the polarization of the society on certain issues.

Secondly, as explained in the previous section, ambiguous messages by the EU have affected public opinion. Although public support for EU membership still remains relatively high (down to around 50% from 70% in 2005), most people do not really believe that Turkey will become a member anytime soon. This wane in public faith in EU membership inevitably affected political will of the government. Already facing resistance from parts of the elite, the government downgraded EU accession rhetoric and allowed the accession process to spate into two tracks, namely the political track and the technical track. While the political track has been unmoving since 2006, the technical track has progressed albeit slowly. Moreover, the Turkish Secretariat General for EU Affairs declared its goal to complete harmonisation in all chapters by 2014. With this goal in mind, the National Program for the harmonisation of the *acquis* was revised in 2009, a new chief negotiator was appointed and the Secretariat General itself was strengthened considerably through the recruitment of hundreds of new experts.

Nevertheless, It is clear that Turkey's EU accession negotiations are not progressing effortlessly. In the previous sections a summary of reasons for the slowdown of negotiations were provided. Yet, some commentators, both inside and outside Turkey find these reasons to be insufficient and provide another and more structural factor for the deceleration of the process. It is claimed that Turkey's foreign policy is going through an important paradigm shift, and consequently, EU membership goal no longer has the priority. In the next section, these claims will be analyzed and claims of shifting policy priorities will be assessed.

## Turkey's Changing Foreign Policy and the EU

Since the first half of 2009, the talk of Turkey's changing foreign policy and that EU membership is no longer a priority for the government have intensified. The slowing down of negotiations affected both the public's expectations and the government's rhetoric and this in turn has led to a genuine disaffectedness with the EU. This is certainly reflected in some policy preferences but it is not yet clear that the priority of the EU membership goal has been seriously downgraded.

There is another, more structural reason behind those comments. In May 2009, Ahmet Davutoğlu, a professor of international relations was appointed as minister of foreign affairs. Previously, an advisor to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on foreign affairs, Davutoğlu had long advised that Turkey needed to conduct its relations with other countries through a

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<sup>5</sup> The article was originally a part of the new penal code prepared with the aim of bringing Turkey's standards on par with the EU. However, the article led to some very controversial interpretations by parts of the judicial establishment. Facing both domestic and international criticism the government at first advocated a wait and see policy, claiming that once the necessary case law was established cases against people of opinion would disappear. However, the establishment of a viable body of case law is a lengthy process. On November 5, 2006, government officials and civil society representatives met to discuss article 301. Consequently, several amendments to the controversial article were presented in early 2007. Finally, on 30 April, 2008 article was changed by an amendment to change "Turkishness" into "the Turkish Nation". Also, new amendment makes it obligatory to get the approval of the minister of justice to file a case related with article 301.

multi pronged approach. In fact, in a book penned by himself in 2001, Turkey's new Minister of Foreign Affairs Davutoğlu makes some comments on Turkey – EU relations.

Davutoğlu starts off by providing a framework for EU's general perception of Turkey – with the caveat that a 'single Europe' does not exist<sup>6</sup>:

“[Europe] regards Turkey culturally as part of the Islam-centred East, economically and politically as an extension of the South. Because of this, Europeans regard Turkey as a hard to absorb element, and avoid saying 'yes' to full membership, while keeping relations in limbo by calculating the potential costs of saying 'no'”<sup>7</sup>

Although penned before the start of accession negotiations with Turkey, the subsequent lull in negotiations reinforced this perception of Europe in Turkey. According to Davutoğlu, the remedy is to '*strengthen Turkey's geocultural identity depth and thus create fertile grounds for new opportunities*'<sup>8</sup>

It is thus possible to analyze Turkey's new foreign policy initiatives from a diversification perspective. Consequently, '*while Turkey pursues a policy of constructive engagement in its neighborhood and beyond, full integration with the EU is and will remain the priority*'<sup>9</sup> In other words, it is only through establishing policy alternatives that membership may become possible for Turkey. This is the lens through which Turkey's relations with its neighbors and other countries of the region should be analyzed. Turkey's recent track record of foreign policy initiatives also supports this discourse.

However, it should not be forgotten that Turkey's foreign policy since the end of the Cold War has followed a diversification track. In fact, a late former foreign minister, İsmail Cem summed up this discourse by stressing that "*Turkey's history was molded in Kosovo, Bosnia, Edirne and Manastır, or any other Turkish European center as well as in Bursa, Kayseri, Sivas, Van or any major Turkish city in Asia*"<sup>10</sup>. Previously, much of this diversification went unnoticed because the global system was largely unipolar. The first sign of this change in policy was Turkey's initiatives in former Soviet Central Asian countries and to a lesser extent the Balkans. With recent changes in the global system and the rising importance of the Middle East, Turkey's foreign policy also began to adapt to the new global parameters.

Yet, this diversification of foreign policy cannot be said to constitute a threat to Turkey's European orientation as the renewed effort of the government through the appointment of a chief negotiator and increased frequency of visits to EU capitols by the minister of foreign affairs and the prime minister demonstrate. Moreover, Turkey's new foreign policy initiatives could be considered as an asset for the EU, if they contribute to resolution of crises and conflicts in the region. In this context, Turkey's relations with neighbouring countries may be interpreted as an alternative channel for the EU to reach its objectives in a globalised world such as promotion of peace and stability in different regions as stated by the Commission in 2006.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, good neighbourly relations are often touted as a requirement for Turkey's accession and hence, from the perspective of Turkey's accession negotiations, the diversification of Turkey's foreign policy is a necessity rather than a whim. In line with the Copenhagen criteria, the zero problem policy with neighbours dominating Turkish foreign

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<sup>6</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu (2001), **Stratejik Derinlik**, Küre Yayınları, İstanbul, p. 536

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 549

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 546

<sup>9</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu (2009), Turkish Foreign Policy and the EU in 2010, 8(3), pp.11-17.

<sup>10</sup> İsmail Cem (2000), **Turkey in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**, Rustem, Nicosia, p.16

<sup>11</sup> European Commission, COM 2006 (567) Final, **Global Europe: Competing in the World**, Brüksel, 4.10.2006.

policy in recent years can be assessed as a result of Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy, peculiarly after the commencement of the negotiations.

## Conclusion

This brief paper has attempted to provide an outline of the state of Turkey's EU accession process. Firstly, an account of Turkey's history with the EU has been given and the slowdown of negotiations has been established as a fact, together with the reasons for the said slowdown. The current impasse is a joint production by both the EU and Turkey. The EU, suffering from enlargement fatigue and concerned about the challenges of integrating a big country such as Turkey has been dragging its feet for some time.

Turkey, on the other hand, struggling with reforms and affected by the EU's unwillingness has contributed to the formation of a vicious cycle fed by a mutual lack of political will. In fact the slowdown of reforms in Turkey and its diversification of foreign policy have raised concerns in both the EU and Turkey about whether EU membership is losing its appeal for the Turkish government. This phenomenon, however, is a separate process which has been ongoing since the end of the Cold War. Moreover, this diversification of Turkey's foreign policy does not necessarily constitute an obstacle to Turkey's EU membership goal. In fact, with the right decisions, it could even contribute to the process.

Turkey's geographical position and historical connections to the Balkans, Black Sea, Russia and the Central Asia will endow the EU with greater say in the global arena. Also, regarding its important role in the NATO, Turkey's EU membership will consolidate both the military and the civilian aspects of EU's common policies, especially the CFSP and the newly rechristened CSDP. A European Union including Turkey will be more efficient in tackling global political and economic issues which range from the threat of terrorism to illegal immigration and drug trafficking. Turkey's accession will also enhance EU's position in the balance of powers scale vis-à-vis Russia. In this sense, Turkey's role in diversifying energy sources and connecting different routes to the EU will make a great contribution to meet EU's own global targets. Last but not least, the dynamism which will be brought by Turkey's membership will help balance the EU's internal equilibrium which has at times seemed wobbly after the 2004 enlargement.