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Turkey and the European Union: The other side of the coin

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CONTENTS

The Turkish-EU Relationship in Long Term Perspective	6
Turkey is an Interregional Center	7
Projecting power	7
Turkey's Membership: The Economic Dimension	8
Transportation Routes and Systems	10
Energy Links and Energy Security	11
The Demographic Complementarity	12
Cultural Questions: Incompatibility or Richness?	13
Defense and Security	14
Concluding Remarks	15

Turkey and the European Union: The other side of the coin

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The Turkey-EU relationship is again occupying a prominent place on the agenda of some member countries these days. Mr. Sarkozy, the recently elected President of France, had made Turkey's membership of the Union one of the major themes of his campaign, concluding that Turkey does not belong in Europe or in the European Union. Although the question of whether Turkey is a European country was settled a long time ago, it seems that off and on the government of a member country or some other national political actor brings the question back to the table for this or that political end. Faced with these wishes to redefine Europe and the nature of the relationship between Turkey and the EU, the organs of the Union have been steadfast and resisted the reconsideration of questions that have long been settled. Nevertheless, the recurrent desire to reconsider and possibly rescind Turkey's future membership of the Union is expressed frequently enough to warrant attention.

It is understandable that political actors may experience moments of confusion, ambivalence and uncertainty in the advent of important decisions, but indecision or constantly shifting of decisions may not be a permanent state of affairs. I was recently reading in a newspaper that the first decision turned out to be the best decision 85 percent of the time. Such a statistic would imply that the initial decision of the EU to proceed with Turkey's membership is very likely to have been a good one. Further consideration of the matter, nevertheless, is still warranted because, in the final analysis, the fundamental mode through which the EU makes its decisions is by arriving at a consensus among its members. Persuasion is the main instrument of building such consensus. Therefore, continuing evaluation of Turkey's relationship with the EU performs an important function in appreciating the differences Turkey's membership might bring to the Union.

When the relationship between Turkey and the EU is examined, the tendency of the EU publics is to conceptualize the issue in terms of the former seeking membership in the latter. In this framework, Turkey is seen as the actor that would accrue significant benefits from accession whereas the Union would have to incur costs. It does appear that the EU publics generally share this perception. In response to a question regarding who would benefit from eventual membership in the European Union, 52% of the EU-25 public believes that such an entry would benefit mainly Turkey while only 7% think that major benefits will go to the EU. 20% judges that benefits would be mutual. Equally interesting, if not surprising, is the fact that the ranking of percentages are reversed in Turkey where 34% feels that the EU would benefit more with only 13% judging that Turkey would be the primary recipient of benefits. 30% thinks that benefits would be mutual.¹

It is well-known that in international relations it is not the norm of benevolence but reciprocity that prevails and explains best the behavior of actors including states and unions of states. The fact that relations between the EU and Turkey have guided them to agree that Turkey's membership negotiations should commence (and they have, albeit moving slowly) indicate that reasonably balanced mutual benefits were perceived over a long period of time prior to this decision. The somewhat skeptical judgment of the EU publics suggests that there is a communication gap between decision-makers and the publics. Similarly, occasional remarks of some political leaders indicate that they may have failed to find sufficient time to study the relationship between Turkey and the EU. To cite an example, the recent remarks by Mr. Sarkozy that Turkey should be included in a Mediterranean Union that should have close relations with the EU reveals little familiarity

¹ Global Risk Network, the World Economic Forum, "Europe@Risk: A Report by Global Risk Network"; Geneva: World Economic Forum, November 2006), p. 7.

with Turkey, its relations with countries of the Southern Mediterranean, about the countries of the Mediterranean themselves and their relations with the EU.

In view of the preceding observations, the purpose of this paper is to discuss and analyze the benefits that the EU would be expected to derive from Turkey's eventual membership. The fundamental goal of the EU, as can be inferred from the Copenhagen Criteria, is to constitute a regional community characterized by a market economy, high levels of economic prosperity, democratic rule and high regard for human dignity and rights. The central question is whether Turkey's accession will contribute to the achievement of this goal and, conversely, whether exclusion of Turkey will undermine it and expose the community to major unwanted risks. A similar concern applies to Turkey which shares the same fundamental goal. For either side, membership is not an end in itself but a strategy that has been adopted to achieve these overarching goals.²

What will the EU get out of Turkey's membership? How much will Turkey's membership contribute to the EU's achievement of security, prosperity and stability? Or will Turkey mainly be a liability? In order to offer a systematic treatment of the subject, the question will be taken up under several headings. We will start by identifying a dynamic framework for the analysis and the appraisal of the Turkish-EU relationship, and next talk about Turkey as a multi-regional center from where the EU could project its economic, cultural and political presence. We will then turn to considerations of an economic nature, including trade and investment, energy and transportation systems. Next, we will address questions of demography and culture. We will conclude with appraising the strategic-political potentials of the relationship.

The Turkish-EU Relationship in the Long-Term Perspective

In any discussion of the relations between the EU and Turkey, there is a tendency to concentrate on immediate problems rather than conceptualizing the relationship as a long-term project. This is understandable and, to some extent, necessary.

We cannot view a relationship only in terms of its future without paying attention to contemporary problems. Ignoring contemporary problems may in fact stand in the way of preparing for a common future. Furthermore, how problems are solved may have implications for the future. We have a classic case in front of us regarding the EU Constitution. The lack of a constitution makes it difficult for the EU to function properly and deal with many questions facing it. The EU, it appears, cannot move forward very effectively without overcoming the constitutional hurdle. The new constitution, when it is prepared, accepted and takes effect, on the other hand, will influence how relations between the EU and Turkey will develop in the future.

Despite the weight of the contemporary in shaping relations, current decisions need to be made by judging where developments are to lead in the future. To cite an example, a large, relatively poor and young population may appear to be a problem in the contemporary context if Turkey becomes an EU member today and free circulation of labor commences immediately. Such a development would inject new labor into markets where there are no shortages and where needs can be filled by labor from new member countries gravitating toward West European markets. But what appears to be a problem now may develop into a solution two decades later in view of current demographic trends that show that the Western European populations will be aging and population sizes declining. Furthermore, if the Turkish economy keeps its high performance, many Turks who might consider seeking employment abroad under the existing circumstances are likely to be employed at home and not be desirous of making a change.

The example regarding the demographic trends and the labor markets may be replicated in other domains and this will be done in part in the following pages. The point to be emphasized is that in discussing the Turkey-EU relationship and whether and how this relationship may generate benefits for the latter, a dynamic framework of analysis needs to be adopted in order to take into consideration the effects of change and how change may enhance or undermine the achievement of mutual benefits.

² This distinction, though known to the author, is very aptly made by Ozer Ertuna, "Türkiye'nin AB Üyeli i: AB ve Türkiye için Bu Bir Fırsat mı, Tehlike mi?" (Is Turkey's EU membership a danger or an opportunity?) *Muhasebe ve Finansman Dergisi*, 2005 (26), pp. 14-20.

Turkey is an Interregional Center

A passenger arriving at Istanbul's Ataturk airport may discover a number of airlines that s/he has never heard of. Kuban Airlines, Sochi Airlines, Arhangelsk Airlines, Tarhan Airlines, Nalchik Airlines, Flyair are but examples. It is also possible to run into even less familiar airlines that service cities in the Caucasus and other parts of the Russian Federation, the countries of the Caucasus, the Middle East, Central Asia, the Balkans and all other parts of the Former Soviet Union not serviced by larger, internationally known airlines. If one were to travel to some of the major cities in Russia's east, the Caucasus and Central Asia, the most reliable and comfortable way to travel is through Istanbul using Turkish Airlines. Just by looking out of the window of your airplane, you may soon get the feeling that you are at a multi-regional center.

A casual look at the map will confirm the impression developed at the airport. Turkey appears to be at the intersection of several regions of the world. It is at the north end of the Middle East, southwest end of the Caucasus, south end of the Russian Federation, the eastern end of the Balkans, the tip of Southern Europe, and within proximity of Central Asia with which it has close cultural ties.

Constituting a multi-regional center comes with its blessings and curses. To be sure, this is a source of multi-dimensional richness. Located at a crossroads, Turkey possesses resources to establish multi-dimensional links with all neighboring areas. These links may be linguistic, religious, ethnic, cultural and often even familial. It is not for example unusual to run into Turks who have relatives in Georgia, Cherkessia, Abkhazia, Tatarstan or Baskordistan, in Bulgaria, Romania as well as in other neighboring lands. It is possible to survive by speaking only Turkish from the Balkans all the way into Sinkiang in Western China or Yakutia in Siberia. Such relations and affinities have been behind the ability of Turkey to develop closer relations with many of the countries of the FSU earlier than most other countries and its ability to retain a presence in areas where others have found it dif-

Turkey may contribute in a major way to enhancing the military capabilities of the EU. Turkey has demonstrated that it is willing to use its military capabilities in peace keeping, peace building and peace enforcement.

ficult to operate. Let me offer an example. A Turkish-British consortium won the contract to build the airport in the capital city of one of the Central Asian Republics. The agreement was that everything would be shared on a fifty percent basis including employment. Within a short time, having found only one person in Britain who wanted to work on the project, the British company turned to its Turkish partner and asked for its support in finding persons who would staff the positions allocated to it.

Being a multi-regional center provides Turks with an adaptive capacity to different traditions and different ways of doing business. It promotes tolerance for different traditions, preferences and ways of life since otherwise it would be difficult for society to hold together or relate to the neighboring societies. But being a multi-regional center is also a source of problems. This is where the problems of one region become the problems of another. This is where terrorists, drugs, women and weapons move across boundaries. This is where confrontations between regions, nations, cultures and religions take place. What does this mean for EU-Turkish relations? Is this a framework for opportunity or a source of problems that the EU wants to avoid?

Projecting power

Although the EU is an organization that aims for regional integration, the intention (and the expected outcome) is to bring about a union that is one of the major actors in the world. A political union in Europe would be expected to constitute an economic, political and cultural world power. It is

known that, in contrast to the United States, which is willing to employ military power liberally, the EU is inclined to use what it has referred to as soft power that relies on economic means, diplomatic skills and the power of persuasion. Two questions may be raised here: first, is an EU, developing into a political union, able to project its soft power effectively without Turkey's contribution? Second, can the EU become a world power without developing a greater military capability than it has now?

Can the EU as a political union project its powers to the world without Turkey's contribution? The answer, naturally, is neither yes nor no, but that the EU would be able to project more power more effectively if Turkey were a member country. The location of Turkey as an interregional center, which has already been alluded to, is a starting point for evaluating the country's contribution to its economic, political and cultural potential for EU power. In the following pages this contribution will be examined in greater detail.

The enhancement of the military capabilities of the EU does not necessarily imply an enhanced preference for their use, but only for their availability. This would make it possible for the EU to respond to critical developments where it has had to rely on American initiatives and leadership before in such cases as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia. Similar contingencies may arise in the future and the EU can exercise leadership in dealing with them only to the extent that it has the means available to it. In this context, it does appear that Turkey may contribute in a major way to enhancing the military capabilities of the EU. Turkey has already demonstrated that it is willing to use its military capabilities in peace keeping, peace building and peace enforcement activities in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Kosovo.

In the global system, a number of risks lie ahead including those of unacceptably high energy prices, interruptions in the supply of energy, financial crises, major uncontrollable demographic movements, civil wars and wars between states and pervasive terrorism. These are risks that the EU has to counter.³ Would the EU be able to counter

these risks with or without Turkey? It does appear that Turkey as a part of the EU would not reinforce these risks but mitigate them.

Turkey's Membership: the Economic Dimension

Since the EU started initially as an economic union, it may be that economics constitutes the most solid ground on which countries may tie their fate together. Complementarity and mutuality of benefits in other domains may also exist, but without an economic dimension in which all partners perceive some benefits a voluntary union of countries may prove difficult. Therefore, it may be useful to commence a discussion of the beneficial effects of Turkey's membership to the EU by looking at the economic dimension.

Turkey entered a major period of economic expansion beginning with the 1980s. The transformation of the economy from a state-dominated, import substitution-oriented economy to one characterized as a free market economy was a long and cumbersome process that involved several crises, breakdowns, the development and implementation of economic stabilization programs and structural reforms as well the building of the institutions of an international market economy. Since 2001, the Turkish economy has registered significant growth, considerably above EU averages. Turkish exports and imports have boomed with the EU countries constituting the major partners. Similarly, foreign direct investment has begun to grow by leaps and bounds, much of it coming from EU member countries. Turkish and EU member country companies have forged partnerships that have proven not only very profitable but also with extensive potential to expand.

The following tables may indicate the economic potential of Turkey for the EU in the coming years. As can be seen from Table I, Turkey's GDP has been growing significantly above EU averages during the past five years, and exports and imports have been going even faster. Tables II A, B and C indicate that the growth is not concentrated in one geographical region but that Turkey's external trade has been expanding in all directions, pointing to the

³ Global Risk Network, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

potential growth Turkey could add to the EU economies. This may be one of the major reasons behind the rapid expansion of foreign direct investments in Turkey has begun to grow in an explosive manner (Table III). These investments intend to benefit, on the

one hand, from the impressive growth of the domestic Turkish market and, on the other, from the impressive export potential. Table II C testifies that such economic expansion also generates an export potential from which the EU has benefited in a major way.

Table I

Growth of Turkey's Economy (percentages) 2001-2006

Year	GDP	Export	Imports	Volume of Trade (million \$)
2000	7.4	4.5	34	82 278
2001	-7.5	12.8	-24	72 733
2002	7.9	15.1	24.5	87 613
2003	5.8	31.0	34.5	116 593
2004	8.9	33.7	40.7	160 707
2005	7.4	16.3	19.7	190 251
2006	6.1	16.3	18.5	223 769

Source: Turkish Institute of Statistics (www.tuik.gov.tr)

Table II A

Turkey's Exports to Europe, Middle East and Asia (million \$)

Year	Total	EU (27)	Other Europe	Middle East	Other Asia
2000	27 775	15 664	1854	2573	1298
2001	31 334	17 546	2095	3261	1331
2002	36 059	20 415	3440	2607	1790
2003	47 253	27 394	3362	5465	2348
2004	63 167	36 581	4507	7921	2544
2005	73 476	41 365	5855	10184	3029
2006	85 479	47 919	7927	11 312	3941

Source: Turkish Institute of Statistics (www.tuik.gov.tr)

Table II B

Turkey's Exports to the Surrounding Regions (million \$)

Year	BSEC	ECO	CIS	Turkic	ICO
2000	2467	874	1649	572	3573
2001	2932	972	1978	557	4197
2001	3599	1042	2279	619	4725
2003	5044	1569	2963	899	7205
2004	6779	2206	3962	1194	10214
2005	8620	2670	5057	1409	13061
2006	11656	3340	6989	1981	15003

Source: Turkish Institute of Statistics (www.tuik.gov.tr)

Abbreviations: BSEC: Black Sea Economic Cooperation, **ECO**: Economic Cooperation Organization, **CIS**: Commonwealth of Independent States, **Turkic**: Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, **ICO**: Islamic Conference Organization. These groups are not mutually exclusive, i.e. one country may belong to more than one of these groups.

Table II C

Turkey's Imports from The EU, Other Europe, Middle East and Asia (million \$)

Year	Total	EU (27)	Other Europe	Middle East	Other Asia
2000	54 503	28 527	6149	3373	6933
2001	41 399	19 823	5738	3016	4884
2002	51 554	25 689	7487	3186	6530
2003	69 340	35 140	10 341	4455	9644
2004	97 540	48 103	15 757	5585	15 500
2005	116 774	52 696	20 386	7967	20 581
2006	138 290	58 931	25 341	10 515	25 381

Source: Turkish Institute of Statistics (www.tuik.gov.tr)

Table III

Foreign Direct Investments (million \$)

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1137	1752	2883	9801	20 168

Source: Dünya, 26 April, 2007, p. 1

In the preceding tables, several characteristics of Turkish economic growth may be identified. First, growth is sustained and is not the product of passing favorable conditions. Second, exports and imports constitute a major component of economic growth. Third, exports to all neighboring regions have been growing at a significant pace. Fourth, foreign direct investments have been accelerating exponentially. These indicators point to a remarkable growth performance. They suggest that Turkey becoming an integral part of the EU market would constitute an engine that would very likely generate considerable opportunity for the expansion of the EU economies. This would not only derive from the fact that the Turkish economy is itself a large and robust economy that serves a domestic market of more than 70 million but also from Turkey's location which renders it a critical point for reaching other markets in the surrounding regions for commerce and investment.

Transportation Routes and Systems

Goods and services produced in Turkey by EU companies are already reaching the countries of the Black Sea region, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East. This economic advantage is rendered possible in part by geographical proximity to these markets, but the geographical advantages would not

be meaningful unless supplemented by effective transportation systems that have been developing during recent years. In this context, it needs to be remembered that, while air connections are good, bulk shipping of goods is not economical by airplanes, so a combination of sea and land transport is needed. The development and improvement of ports, railroads and highways and plans for new links are promising.

Two of the main arteries for truck and train transportation systems to the Middle East and Central Asia commence in Turkey. Reaching Northern Iraq and Syria is easiest through Turkish ports. European-made goods may be delivered to the Turkish port of Mersin or Iskenderun in containers, generally loaded on trucks since trains do not reach all parts of these countries and delivered to their destination. It is possible to also load containers on trains for some but more limited destinations. The same ports may be used for sending goods and materials to Central Asia on both trucks and trains, passing through Eastern Turkey, Iran on to Turkmenistan and beyond. The rail link between Iran and Turkmenistan was completed in 2002.

Turkey also has good highway and rail connections to European destinations which makes it a bridge between the Middle East and the EU. For example, a significant portion of Iranian and Syrian trade with

Western European countries traverses Turkey mainly on trucks and more rarely on trains. The new railroad tube-tunnel that is being constructed across the Bosphorus will, in this context, bring gains in time and costs to railroad transport since trains will no longer need to be ferried across on boats (trucks already cross the narrow strait through a suspension bridge).

There is a second artery for shipping and receiving goods and materials to/from the Caucasus and Central Asia in addition to the southerly route already mentioned. Goods for Georgia, Azerbaijan and Central Asia may be delivered again to Turkish ports on the Black Sea or be directly loaded on trucks or trains in Turkey or other European ports of origin, to be sent to their destinations. The major highway, recently made into a four lane thoroughfare, goes along the Black Sea coast, branching in Trabzon to go over the mountains to Erzurum and then into Iran. The main route, on the other hand, continues to the border crossing with Georgia at Sarp, then crosses Georgia, reaching the Caspian in Baku, Azerbaijan. Boarding a ferry there, trucks are taken to Turkmenbashi (Krasnovodsk) to continue to other countries of Central Asia. A new rail line will also be opened within the next couple of years, pending the construction of a link between Kars in Northeastern Turkey and the Georgian town of Ahilkalaki. The trains, like the trucks, will also reach Baku to cross the Caspian by ferry for carrying goods and materials to Central Asian republics.

Turkey's role as a transit route to the Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia is likely to grow in future years, especially as the economies of the Caucasus and Central Asian countries develop. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are already beginning to export major amounts of oil and natural gas to the European markets, a subject which we shall take up in the next section under the heading of energy corridors. Energy exports are generating income that will be used for importing goods and materials. More exports destined for the world markets including the EU will inevitably be coming out of these countries. The importance of multiple transportation options for EU trade with the region cannot be overemphasized. Turkey's inclusion in the EU will inevitably facilitate the development and the expansion of these transportation links.

Turkey's becoming an integral part of the EU market would constitute an engine that would very likely generate considerable opportunity for the expansion of the EU economies.

Energy Links and Energy Security

The world demand for energy is growing. Russia, the countries of the Middle East and Caucasus-Central Asia are the major suppliers of oil and natural gas to the EU and to Turkey. As energy needs of the EU and major industrial countries of the world grow, new demands for energy from growing economies like China and India are developing at a geometric pace. The response to the challenge of growing energy needs have been multi-fold. For one, countries are working to achieve higher levels of energy conservation. They are working to diversify their sources of energy. They are also trying to develop alternative sources of energy. Finally, they are working to reduce their reliance on a single or a few suppliers. Adopting measures of energy conservation, diversifying the types of energy used and developing alternative sources of energy are not likely to render the EU or other societies less reliant on oil and gas in the foreseeable future.

Insuring the availability of sufficient oil and gas at reasonable prices is a goal industrialized societies strive to achieve. In this process, the transportation of the commodities to the appropriate markets is as important as the production. Until the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, there was only one transport system to carry Asian oil to Europe through Russia. That is still the case with regard to natural gas. Recent Russian handling of gas shipments to European markets, which brought with it the possibility of supply interruptions for non-technical reasons in the future, has rendered it all the more imperative that oil and gas sources and routes for shipment be diversified. Furthermore, these pipelines cross territories of

states with which Russia has occasional disagreements in which stopping the shipment of gas is employed as a means of eliciting compliance with Russian requests. Turkey seems to be the natural independent energy corridor for sending Kazakh and Azeri oil as well as Azeri, Turkmen and Iranian gas to European markets.

Turkey has also been the export route to the oil that is produced in Northern Iraq. The Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline has been operational for a long time though the flow of oil was interrupted during Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and only partly restored during the food for oil program run by the United Nations. As peace in Iraq is restored and more fields are developed in this country, the capacity of this route will probably be expanded. This is both shorter and more reliable than the Persian Gulf route.

It should be added here that some Russian gas will be sent to European markets through Turkey. A gas pipeline appropriately named the Blue Stream has already been laid at the bottom of the Black Sea from which Turkey receives much of the natural gas consumed in the western parts of the country (eastern parts are serviced by using Azeri and Iranian gas). Another pipeline that runs parallel to the current one is proposed as a way of sending Russian gas to Southern Europe. This shipment route would not only be less expensive but also more reliable.

The promise of Turkey as a third energy corridor, independent of the Middle East and the Russian supply lines can considerably enhance the energy security of the EU. The immediacy of energy needs, it appears, has stood in the way of the EU in devoting resources and attention to the development of an independent third energy corridor. This negligence is making it possible for Russia to exercise greater leverage in regulating the supply and setting oil and gas prices in addition to adding political price tags to its sales. The EU must pursue more closely the idea of Turkey's development as an energy corridor and its incorporation into the Union as a way of insuring its own energy security. Lack of attention to this question has recently permitted Russia to strengthen its position as the key regulator of oil and gas flows from Central Asia by

agreeing with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to ship more gas to Europe through Russia⁴ and striking another agreement with the Kazakhs to increase their shipments of oil through Novorossisk.⁵

The Demographic Complementarity

EU countries are beginning to feel the pains of a demographic problem that their populations are aging and their total size dwindling. The United Nations World Population division has estimated that Turkey's population will continue to grow slowly so that it will reach almost 98 million by 2050 while almost all members of the EU will suffer declines. Table IV shows how the populations of some of the key members of the EU will fare until 2050. The decline in the size of populations combined with a growing percentage in the category of aging will necessitate an adjustment process. If incorporation of new populations to the EU is not entertained, the natural outcome would be a drop in the level of economic welfare, a change most populations would be less than willing to accept. Therefore, expanding the labor pool and bringing about a different age distribution is needed. The most reasonable way to realize this is the completion of the membership process of Turkey so that a demographic structure for longer-term economic prosperity of the EU is insured.

Understandably, there is concern in many EU countries that a significant movement of populations across boundaries may generate multifarious challenges to the populations and governments that are receiving them. Some citizens are concerned that the arrival of foreigners will lead to significant displacement of local labor by cheaper immigrant labor, producing unemployment. Others are concerned that foreigners bring with them customs, habits, values and religions which are alien and, therefore, not compatible with the already existing ones. Some fear that their own culture will be overtaken by foreign elements. Furthermore, they fear that the influx of foreigners in large numbers will generate law and order problems that the local law enforcement authorities will fail to meet. These are legitimate concerns that need to be addressed and the fears of citizens and public authorities allayed.

4 "Nabucco'da Rusya Sıkıntısı," (Russian based unease in the Nabucco Project) *Radikal*, May 30, 2007, p. 13.

5 The long-term importance of the energy supplies and how that reflects on the importance of the Black Sea as a critical region for the EU is analyzed very cogently by Amb. Ozden Sanberk "ABN'nin Geleceğini Karadeniz Tayin Edecek," (Black Sea will determine the future of the EU) in *Kriter*, May 2007, no.11, p. 8.

Table IV

The Expected Populations of Selected EU Countries 2003-2050 (x1000)

Country	2003	2015	2025	2050
France	60 144	62 841	64 165	64 230
Germany	82 476	82 497	81 959	79 145
Italy	57 423	55 507	52 939	44 875
Spain	41 060	41 167	40 369	37 336
Portugal	10 062	10 030	9 834	8 700
Gt. Britain	59 251	61 275	63 287	66 166
Poland	38 587	38 173	37 337	33 304
Romania	22 334	21 649	20 806	18 063
Bulgaria	7 897	7 167	6 609	5 255
Greece	10 976	10 944	10 707	9 814
Turkey	71 325	82 150	88 955	97 759
EU/TR %	2.8	14.4	15.5	17.7

Source: World Population Prospects, 2002

The critical points to be taken into consideration in addressing the question of populations is that a long-term perspective needs to be adopted rather than a short-term approach dictated by immediate problems of unemployment, cultural conflict with immigrant populations and law and order problems. It may not even be necessary to rely on major population movements but to change the location of investments and production in order to achieve a healthy demographic balance within the union. Turkey is in a position to contribute to redressing the balance on the projected demographic deficits of the EU in order to contribute to the continuation of the economic prosperity which has characterized the EU.

Cultural Questions: Incompatibility or Richness?

The Rome Treaty indicates that any European country may apply for membership of the EU but it does not contain a list of these countries. This is probably not an oversight but an ingenious device to retain flexibility for future contingencies. At the time of the signing of the treaty, it should be recalled that Europe at the time was divided into two between the Western and the Soviet blocs; some countries that are independent now, such as the Czech Republic and Slovakia, were united as were the former members of the Yugoslav Federation. After the end of the bipolar world and the very

rapid integration of most of the countries of Eastern Europe into the EU, concerns have begun to be expressed as regards how far the EU could expand and whether such expansion might not "dilute" the "Europeanness" of the Union. In this context, some opinion leaders have tried to give meaning to Europe in terms of religion. The intense debate on the question appears to have been settled at the level of the European constitution that Europe is built on values and not a particular religion.

A central value on which a multi-ethnic and multi religious Europe aspires to achieve integration is viewing cultural differences in positive terms of plurality that enriches the union. Nevertheless, frequent expressions of opinion by a variety of actors that this is a Christian union not only undermines the credibility of the official position of the union that it is not based on religion, but also helps build a framework initially proposed by the Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington that the next fundamental conflict that will give direction to world politics will be the clash of civilizations, civilization loosely employed here to denote religion. The conceptualization that civilizations are in conflict carries with it the potential of turning into self-fulfilling prophecy. If most political leaders begin in fact to conceptualize international politics in those terms and formulate their behavior accordingly, we would move toward a world in which civilizations

clash. Much is to be gained by defusing such an interpretation of the world around us.

That Christianity as practiced in Europe forms a somewhat coherent basis on which EU member countries could unite is erroneous as is the perception that Europe is an exclusively Christian continent. To begin with the first observation, Europe was and, to an extent today, continues to be divided between two main interpretations of Christianity. The way the conflict between Catholics and Protestants was settled after extended wars was by moving religion out of the domain of politics. Orthodox Christianity was a third interpretation of religion which was considered to belong to the East and generally not seen as part of Western European Christianity. Even a summary examination of the commonalities that religion offers within the EU will reveal that suggestions that there is a religion-based common culture are grossly exaggerated. Similarly, the cultural differences attributed to religion are also exaggerated. The political role of religion in lands where the Orthodox Church prevails, for example, constitutes a marked contrast to Western Europe. For example, national and political identity are more and more closely intertwined in lands such as Bulgaria, Romania and Greece than in France and Germany.

Turning to the second observation, there is already a significant Muslim presence on the Continent. These are comprised not only of immigrant communities in France, Italy or Germany but also of indigenous populations in Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Turkey. The demographic trends indicate that the number of Muslims living in member countries of the EU will probably increase in the future.

It does seem that the Muslim residents of the European Continent as well as countries whose populations are mainly Muslim need to be persuaded cogently that the EU does not approach the world in Christian versus non-Christian terms and is not interested in constituting itself as the Christian pillar in a pending clash of civilizations. It does seem that the most convincing way the EU would be able to do this would be to lead Turkey's membership process to completion. The EU has

shown a remarkable ability to incorporate new members to its ranks. Constantly raising questions about the accession to membership of one country, whose right to it was confirmed as early as 1963 with the Ankara Treaty, creates the impression that it is religion that is at issue. The confirmation of the commitment to Turkey and the implementation of steps to complete the process (provided that Turkey also implements its commitments) would constitute a persuasive signal that what is intended is not a clash but a harmonious integration of civilizations.

What kind of benefits are to be derived from such action? We have already identified its broad implications. But more specific observations may also be made. First, the Muslim populations in member countries would feel more confident that they have a future in societies where they live, a feeling that would certainly facilitate their integration. Second, it would make indigenous Muslim populations of several member countries also more confident about their future. Third, it would demonstrate to third parties that the EU is a community of political values and institutions, ridding non-EU actors of the suspicion that much behavior can be attributed to religious motivations. Fourth, it would demonstrate to many societies with Muslim populations that it is possible for them to aspire to become political democracies with market economies, weakening the credibility of alternative models of development. Finally, the presence of Turkey within the EU would facilitate the EU's efforts to reach and engage in mutually beneficial relations with the countries of the Middle East and Central Asia, an outcome that has been alluded to earlier.

Defense and Security

The Turkish Empire had been one of the major actors of European politics for centuries. The republic, on the other hand, developed close relations with Western European countries only after the Second World War when Western defense was organized within the framework of NATO. Although there was some initial resistance to American plans to include Turkey and Greece in Western defense, they were soon overcome in the face of the urgency of defense needs. At the time, it was

expected that the major thrust of a Soviet advance into Europe would come through Germany and Western defense was organized accordingly. The alliance would meet aggression at the central front not only directly but also by attacking Soviet forces on the flanks. Turkey constituted the most important element of the Southern flank. Furthermore, by controlling the gates through which the Soviet Navy entered the Mediterranean, Turkey would be the key to insuring the security of the Southern Mediterranean area along with Greece and Italy.

The details of NATO defense need not be elaborated here. The idea is that Turkey worked closely with Western European countries until the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the demise of the Soviet Union in a defense organization. This experience contributed in numerous ways to the evolution and then sustaining of a sense of community, a sense of shared values and interests which far exceeded those that would emerge in classical alliances. After the end of the bipolar world, there was speculation that the alliance had outlived its usefulness but soon common security concerns of a different nature emerged. Broadly referred to as soft security threats, these included terrorism, the trafficking of drugs and women, unauthorized movements of labor across boundaries, and the production and dissemination of weapons of mass destruction. By redefining its territory and in a sense its mission, NATO adapted itself to the security challenges of the new times. The change has shifted the location of the frontal state from Germany to Turkey. Turkey, in other words, is where the soft security threats are first encountered by the alliance. In the new security environment, the former frontal states now appear to be in the flanks. In this way, Turkey's contribution to European defense has not decreased but has been enhanced. Turkey has assumed defense responsibilities in Afghanistan and more recently in Lebanon, demonstrating that its commitment to Western security continues to remain high.

With the second largest armed forces in NATO, Turkey continues to be in a position that is critical for European defense and has the capabilities to contribute to its achievement. While the old security concerns in Central Europe seems to be so

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distant as to be seen as irrelevant in Western Europe, these traditional concerns seem still to be important for countries in Eastern Europe and even more intense in Baltic states that were part of the Soviet Union. The concerns of the latter can be met only if NATO continues to offer them assurance of defense. The credibility of NATO assurance will be considerably elevated if Turkey is simultaneously a part of the EU defense system.

Turning to other security concerns, it has already been pointed out Turkey is an independent energy corridor for Central Asia and Caucasus oil and gas, as well as for Iranian gas to reach EU markets. It is also one of the major routes for the transport of goods and materials to the destinations where the oil comes from. This makes insuring the security of these transportation systems critical. An EU security system in which Turkey occupies a central part appears to be the best way of insuring energy and transport security in a region in which the EU is the main beneficiary of that security.

Similar considerations hold for other soft security concerns. A Turkey within the cooperative framework that EU membership would contribute in an indispensable way to insuring the security of the EU.

Concluding Remarks

In the preceding pages, it has been argued that when Turkey's EU membership is being considered, it is important to analyze what benefits would accrue to the Union if Turkey were to become a member. Although such a question ought to be standard, often only the benefits Turkey would be

expected to get from becoming a member are addressed without examining the reciprocities involved.

Turkey becoming a member would contribute in significant ways to achieving the security and the prosperity of the union. The EU's opportunities of projecting its soft power to the world and becoming one of the principal actors in world politics, which it currently is not, would be strengthened in major ways with the inclusion of Turkey in the Union.

Countries feel more secure and engage with their environment more easily if their neighbors share their values, cultures and interests. They are less willing to

fight if there are more intense economic relations, more frequent communications and deeper appreciation of the needs and feelings of the other side. Turkey's addition to the EU would help toward the creation of an environment that is more open to EU ideas and visions, more willing to listen to them, more willing to engage in cooperative behaviors and fruitful interactions.

Short-term considerations should not be permitted to produce long-term difficulties in the EU-Turkey relationship. All parties, including the EU, should preserve a vision based on long-term benefits that would accrue from the advancement of the relationship, which are considerable. The EU might want to intensify its efforts to view the other side of the coin.