

Turkey's Place in the 'New Europe'

Paul Kubicek*

Introduction

With the May 2004 accession of ten new members just behind it, the EU is turning its attention to further expansion. For many, the most problematic case will be Turkey, which also has stood longer than other states in the membership queue. This article explores what Turkish membership would portend for the 'New Europe.' It discusses Turkey's 'European' credentials, various reforms that have occurred in Turkey since the Helsinki decision of 1999, and how Turkish membership would affect the EU's self-identity. It argues that the fears of those who want to exclude Turkey are misplaced or exaggerated, that Turkey largely meets EU requirements, and Turkish membership has much to offer the EU. It concludes by suggesting that the inclusion of Turkey would affirm the EU as a 'rights-based' community.

The primary and most essential factor in the situation is the presence, embedded in the living flesh of Europe, of an alien substance. That substance is the Ottoman Turk. Akin to the European family neither in creed, in race, in language, in social customs, nor in political aptitudes and traditions, the Ottomans have for more than five hundred years presented to the European powers a problem, now tragic, now comic, now bordering almost on burlesque, but always baffling and paradoxical. J.A.R. Marriott, 1919. ¹

Its capital is not in Europe, 95% of its population lives outside Europe, it is not a European country (Turkish accession to the EU) would be the end of Europe. Former French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing, 2002.²

The idea of 'Christian Europe' belongs to the Middle Ages. It should be left there. There should be no doubt that Turkey's full membership will re-enforce the desire and will for co-habitation between Christians and Muslims. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 2004.³

* Paul Kubicek is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan

¹ J.A.R. Marriott, *The EastEastern Question* (Oxford: Calrendon Press, 1919), p. 3.

² *Le Monde*, 8 November 2002.

³ Erdoğan, "Why the EU Needs Turkey," Speech at Oxford University, 28 May 2004, available at <http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/areasteastudies/lectures/Erdoğan.pdf>.

On 1 May 2004, the European Union (EU) added ten new members in its most ambitious expansion to date. Although some aspects of this expansion were contentious and accession did not come fast enough for some, this expansion was commonly portrayed as a reunification of Europe, as countries that had been excluded from the European project because of the Cold War now 'returned' to Europe. Few questioned these states' 'European' credentials and, once they met the political, economic, and legal requirements of the Copenhagen Criteria, it was very difficult to deny them admission to the EU.⁴ Although some of the countries of 'New Europe' have caused consternation in 'Old Europe' on questions such as the Iraq War, the EU has worked to ensure that the accession of ten new states would not fundamentally threaten its economic, political, and foreign policy goals.

The 2004 expansion, of course, will not be the final one for the EU. Bulgaria and Romania have moved to the front of the membership queue, and, although problems remain with their applications (particularly Romania's), they will be likely to join the EU shortly. Accession talks will soon begin with Croatia, Macedonia is advancing a membership application, and other countries such as Bosnia and Albania aim to join the EU one day. These countries, however, are small and, for the most part, are considered natural candidates for the EU. The same cannot be said for Turkey, which, for many, is the most problematic of all countries aspiring to join the EU. It is too big⁵, too poor⁶, too agricultural⁷, too Muslim, too authoritarian, too nationalistic, some would claim, to fit into today's EU. As indicated in the prefatory quotes, some fear its accession to the EU would be the 'end of Europe.'

Turkey, however, has long aspired to join the EU. In 1963, its eligibility on geographic grounds was affirmed by the then European Economic Community (EEC), in an Association Agreement it concluded with Brussels. Despite the fact that its membership bid was rejected out of hand in 1987, Ankara persevered with its European ambitions, which were again squashed by Brussels in 1997. However, in December 1999, the EU agreed that it would consider Turkish membership, if

⁴Some would argue, however, that the requirements of Copenhagen and political conditionality are not so clearly defined or self-evident. See Heather Grabbe, "European Union Conditionality and the Acquis Communautaire," *International Political Science Review* 23:3, 2002: 249-268.

⁵With a population of approximately 70 million people, Turkey is almost twice as large as Poland, the largest state to join the EU in 2004. If current trends hold, Turkey would become the largest country in the EU within a generation.

⁶According to the World Bank, in 2002 the per capita income in Turkey (Atlas method) was \$2500, about one-tenth of the current EU average. In comparison, Slovenia was the richest post-communist state (\$9810), with Hungary (\$5820), the Czech Republic (\$5560), and Slovakia (\$3950) further behind. Romania, at \$1850 per person, was poorer than Turkey. Data available at <http://www.worldbank.org>.

⁷The EU reports that 35.4% of employment is in agriculture in Turkey compared with 19% in Poland, which had the largest agricultural sector of the ten states that joined in 2004. For data see Commission of the European Communities, 2002 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress towards Accession, (Brussels, 9 October 2002), 156, available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report2002/tu_en.pdf.

Turkey could meet the Copenhagen Criteria, and in December 2000 Turkey was finally granted an Accession Partnership with the EU. These decisions spurred a wave of reform in Turkey, spearheaded most recently by the decidedly pro-EU Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi, AKP)⁸. Now, with reforms in place, past opponents of Turkish membership, such as Germany and Greece, are now in favour of Turkish accession, and the October 2004 European Commission report that endorses negotiations with Turkey on membership. Turkish membership seems increasingly likely, something that opponents - such as France - arguably cannot reject on principle.⁹

Given this background, this article suggests what Turkish membership in the EU would mean for Europe. It focuses on two main questions. The first concerns Turkey's "Europeanness," broadly defined. The second discusses what the offer of membership to Turkey says about how the EU defines itself as a political entity. With respect to the latter, the question revolves around the evolution of the EU, from a "problem solving entity", into either a "values-based" or "rights-based" community. Indeed, one writer suggests that "the case of the Turkish candidature is perhaps particularly crucial in terms of discussing what enlargement can tell us about various conceptions of the EU."¹⁰

Turkey's European Credentials

Turkey's status within Europe has always been a bit ambiguous. During the heyday of the Ottoman Empire, there was little question that the Sublime Porte was an important player in the European state system, but Turks tended to remain aloof from Europe, viewing it as an inferior and corrupted civilisation from which they could gain little. By the 1800s, as the Ottoman Empire began to weaken, this view changed, and European ideas began to be used to bring about various reform projects, and trade with Europe became increasingly important to the Ottoman economy. After the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Mustafa Kemal

⁸In addition to numerous works on Turkish-EU relations that have been published in this journal, one might also consult Meltem Müftüleri-Baç, *Turkey's Relations with a Changing Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); Mehmet Uğur, *The European Union and Turkey: An Anchor/Credibility Dilemma* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999); Paul Kubicek, "Turkish-European Relations: At a New Crossroads?" *Middle East Policy Journal*, 6:4, June 1999: 157-173; Ziya Öniş, "Luxemburg, Helsinki and Beyond: Towards and Interpretation of Recent Turkey-EU Relations," *Government and Opposition* 35, Autumn 2000: 463-483; Gamze Avcı, "Putting the Turkish EU Candidacy into Context," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 7, 2002: 91-110, and Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin, eds., *Turkey and the European Union* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).

⁹For discussion of the rationales given by major powers on Turkish membership, see Jesper Bejer, "The Decision on Turkish EU Accession in December 2002: The logic of anarchy, collective action problems, and rhetorical action," *Observatory of European Foreign Policy*, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Working Paper 57, March 2004.

¹⁰Helene Sjursen, "Introduction—Enlargement in perspective," in Sjursen, ed. *Enlargement in Perspective* (Oslo: ARENA, 2005), p. 8. See also Sjursen, "Why expand? The question of legitimacy and justification in the EU's enlargement policy," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40:3, 2002, pp. 491-513.

Atatürk pushed Turks to adopt European ways. In the words of Ziya Gökalp, a leading voice of Turkish nationalism, "There is only one road to salvation...to adapt ourselves to Western civilization completely."¹¹ Atatürk and his followers proceeded to press numerous attributes of western civilisation (e.g. legal codes, education, science and technology, dress, alphabet, etc.) so that "the whole nation had turned its skin inside out."¹² At the societal level, Atatürk's reforms had mixed success, producing what one observer called a "nationalist schizophrenia" divided between traditional and modern ways.¹³ Internationally, however, Turkey clearly aligned itself with the west. After World War II, Turkey joined NATO and, as noted, in 1963 became an Associate Member of the EEC.

Despite these efforts, Turkish entry into the EU remains problematic. Aside from some of the more "objective" economic factors mentioned above, an overarching concern has been that Turkey is not truly European. True, EU documents have repeatedly affirmed that Turkey meets the geographical requirements of membership - although some today question this judgment - but there is a widespread perception that Turkish history and culture - often used as shorthand for religion - are just outside the boundary of Europe. While Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, and Greeks have no problem claiming a European heritage (in Central Europe the mantra was "Return to Europe"), Turks were, and to some extent continue to be, the "Other" (to invoke a favoured term in contemporary discourse).¹⁴ They are at best on the periphery of Europe, and, so the stereotype holds, don't look European, don't dress like Europeans, don't pray like Europeans, and don't think like Europeans, caught as they are in "traditional" and "nationalistic" ways that seem incongruent with the ideals of today's Europe. One Turkish critic conceded that Turkey has some historical baggage of statist habits rooted in a Kemalist ideology that emphasised "republicanism over democracy, homogeneity over difference, the military over the civilian, and the state over society."¹⁵ One could contend, of course, that focus on Kemalist ideology understates or ignores the challenges to the Turkish state from within Turkey itself.¹⁶ Moreover, while one can use the fact that millions of Turks already live in EU member countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden to highlight that Turks are or can be

¹¹ Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp, ed. and trans. by Niyazi Berkes (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 276. Gökalp was careful, however, to make a distinction between civilization, which was universal in scope, and culture, which was defined locally.

¹² Paul Gentizon, quoted in Paul Dumont, "The Origins of Kemalist Ideology," in Jacob Landau, ed. *Ataturk and the Modernization of Turkey* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), p. 26.

¹³ Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf, and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), p. 322.

¹⁴ See Ziya Öniş, "Turkey, Europe, and Paradoxes of Identity: Perspectives on the International Context of Democratization," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 10:3, 1999, p. 111.

¹⁵ M. Hakan Yavuz, "Turkey's Fault Lines and the Crisis of Kemalism," *Current History*, January 2000, p. 34.

¹⁶ For an examination of Turkish civil society, see Paul Kubicek, "The Earthquake, Civil Society, and Political Change in Turkey: Assessment and Comparison with EastEastern Europe," *Political Studies* 50:4, 2002, pp. 761-778.

European, one could just as easily maintain that encounters with Turks in Europe may make some Europeans even less likely to want to incorporate the Turkish state in the EU. In the words of one Turkish scholar, "Ironically, in opening up to the European system of states [e.g. through tourism and emigration] in order to gain recognition as a European country, Turkey has revealed aspects of its identity which are incompatible with European culture."¹⁷

Examples of what might be dubbed Turkophobia abound. German Chancellor Helmut Kohl put it bluntly in 1997 when he said that the EU is a "civilisational project" in which "Turkey has no place."¹⁸ Giscard d'Estaing's comments that Turkish entry into the EU would be the "end of Europe"¹⁹ provoked outrage in many circles, but similar sentiments are still expressed publicly. For example, in 2004, Dutch EU Commissioner Frits Bolkestein argued that Ukraine and Belarus were more 'European' than Turkey and that Europe, with prospective Turkish membership, now risked becoming predominantly Islamic.²⁰ Eurobarometer surveys in 2002 revealed that only 31% of Europeans favour Turkish membership in the EU, the lowest result for an aspiring EU member²¹ The Economist, noting Brussels's view of impending expansion toward several countries, tersely commented about Turkey, "Good grief, do we have to?"²²

Turks themselves recognise this, and many deride the EU as a "Christian club." Over half of those in a 2002 survey agreed that there was no place in the EU for a Muslim country like Turkey and that the EU will not let Turkey in, regardless of what it achieves with political and economic reforms. Nonetheless, the same poll revealed that approximately 64% of Turks would vote to join the EU in a hypothetical referendum, which is a higher figure than that found in several east European countries. True, few Turks (and few Europeans for that matter) really understand all the complexities of the EU, but when asked why they favour membership - economic benefits, social benefits (e.g. decreased corruption), and political benefit (e.g. improvements in democracy) - are cited as the most popular reasons.²³ For the elite - who are widely in favour of EU membership - Turkish

¹⁷ Müftülier-Bac, *Turkey's Relations with a Changing Europe*, 1997, p. 23.

¹⁸ *The Guardian*, 7 March 1997.

¹⁹ See footnote 2.

²⁰ *Turkish Daily News*, 8 September 2004.

²¹ Faruk Şen, "The Way Europe Sees Turkey and Turkey Sees Europe," *Zaman* (Istanbul), 10 June 2003. Slovenia, at 56% approval, ranked the highest. Respondents in Luxemburg (12%), Austria (14%), Denmark (16%) and Germany (18%) were least enthusiastic about Turkish membership. Those in Mediterranean countries (Spaniards [48%], Portuguese [45%], and Italians [41%]) were the most supportive, and Greek support was at 28%.

²² *The Economist*, 17 November 2001, p. 47.

²³ See results of 2002 poll conducted by TESEV (Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation) at www.tesev.org/eng. A formal analysis of the data is provided by Ali Çarkoğlu, "Who Wants Full Membership? Characteristics of Public Opinion Support for EU Membership in Turkey," in Rubin and Çarkoğlu, 2003, pp. 171-194.

membership in the EU would, in addition to bringing about likely material benefits, cement Turkey's European identity.

Some might say that this debate on Turkey's "Europeanness" is tiresome, but nonetheless it goes to the core of the matter. Turkey is NOT being treated the same as other countries, and this goes beyond the matter of the Cyprus dispute.²⁴ Again, no one questioned the 'European' credentials of Czechs, Hungarians, Slovenes, etc. Prospective Turkish membership has generated heated debates in Europe, colouring the 2004 campaign for the European Parliament. Put in slightly more flattering terms, the question might be, will Turkey prove to be a good European citizen? Or, more simply, will it fit in?

Advocates of Turkish membership point to a slew of reforms adopted since 1999, which, among other things, have abolished the death penalty, expanded freedom of expression, curtailed the power of the military, released political prisoners, and granted more freedom for the use and study of Kurdish. Moreover, these reforms coincided with a break in fighting between the Turkish military and the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which helped improve Turkey's human rights situation, particularly vis-à-vis the Kurds. Much of the debate over Turkey's application is over whether Turkey has done enough to meet the political criteria of Copenhagen, but, from Ankara's point of view, Turkey has made more progress on political reforms in the last five years than it had in the previous two decades. As one observer noted, if past years witnessed a "vicious circle of delayed reforms and slow progress toward full membership," recent EU pressure has helped foster a "virtuous circle" conducive to wide-ranging reform.²⁵

Two important issues remain, however, and will likely linger throughout the negotiation process with Brussels. The first is implementation, meaning that reforms may exist on paper but may not yet be reflected in Turkish society. In particular, problems have been noted on elimination of torture and illegal detentions, access to Kurdish language courses, and limits on freedom of expression.²⁶ Others note that the military remains too powerful a force, a "state within a state" and that "Europeans will want Turkey to move towards a political system that resembles their own, in which parliament, and not generals, decide on the size of the defence budget."²⁷ Secondly, one could argue that Turks are merely following

²⁴ For more on how the Cyprus conflict has impinged on Turkey's EU bid, see Christopher Brewin, *The European Union and Cyprus* (Huntingdon UK: The Eothen Press, 2000).

²⁵ Ziya Öniş, "Diverse but Converging Paths to EU Membership: Poland and Turkey in Comparative Perspective," *EastEast European Politics and Societies* 18:3, August 2004: 481-512.

²⁶ See, for example, report by Mazlum-Der in *Turkish Daily News*, 16 September 2004.

²⁷ Giles Merritt, "Turkey's Generals May be the Real Obstacle," *International Herald Tribune*, 18 September 2004. Öniş concedes that reforms will take a while to take hold and "cannot be achieved solely by institutionally limiting the presence of the military in executive circles." See Z. Öniş, "Domestic Politics, International Norms and Challenges to the State: Turkey-EU Relations in the post-Helsinki Era," in Çarkoğlu and Rubin, *Turkey and the European Union*, 2003, p. 15.

orders and have not internalised the values underlying political liberalisation. Indeed, in 2000, one Turkish writer suggested that Turks were like students doing their homework, doing it because the teacher told them to and not aware that it might actually be good for them.²⁸ To put this in theoretical terms, Turkish leaders may be responding more to the "logic of consequentiality", (do X because you will get Y) than a "logic of appropriateness" (do X because it is the right thing to do).²⁹ While some might suggest that this has changed since 1999 due to processes of learning and socialisation, as well as elections that produced a new government fully committed to EU integration, one could also point to debates over the new Turkish Penal Code in September 2004, during which Prime Minister Erdoğan pushed a proposal to criminalise adultery, which made many in Europe suspicious about Turkey's ability to embrace European values.³⁰ While this proposal was scrapped, one might argue this was only because Ankara succumbed to EU diktat and went ahead and rushed through the passage of the Penal Code just in time to have this reform in place, prior to the October 6 Commission report on Turkey.

Turks may argue that the EU should accept them "just as they are,"³¹ but the fact remains that the EU wants to re-make Turkey, and, by extension, re-make Turks. Frits Bolkestein was explicit on this point. In his view, "It is clear that before Turkey can enter it will certainly have to go through a transformation. At the time of its accession it will have to possess a completely different identity."³² Put bluntly, the EU has embarked upon a social engineering project, one that is far more ambitious and intense than in previous enlargements, because of Turkey's differences. Not surprisingly, such a prospect makes some in Turkey nervous, they fear that the Turkish state may somehow collapse under the weight of EU mandated reforms or at least lose too much of its sovereignty and geo-political power.³³ For example, as recently as 2000, members of the Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) - which was in the government at that time - were equating the EU's demands with those of "terrorist organisations" and the military's Chief of Staff suggested that the EU was intent upon an independent Kurdish state and the dismemberment of Turkey.³⁴ Since AKP's elevation to power, anti-EU forces are on the defensive, but those sceptical of Turkey's EU credentials would maintain that is premature to admit Turkey, and that a not-yet fully

²⁸ Cüneyt Ülsever, "What kind of country do we want?" Turkish Daily News 18 July 2000, p. 4.

²⁹ Frank Schimmelfennig, "Introduction: The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and EastEuropean States—Conceptual and Theoretical Issues," in Ronald Linden, ed. *Norms and Nannies* (Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002).

³⁰ Turkish Daily News, 27 September 2004.

³¹ New York Times, 24 November 2003, p. A3.

³² Turkish Daily News, 8 September 2004.

³³ H. Tarik Oguzlu, "How to Interpret Turkey's Accession Process with the European Union? A Clash of Discourses," *Perceptions* 7:4, December 2002-February 2003, pp. 51-83.

³⁴ Reported in Kubicek, "Turkish Accession to the EU in Comparative Perspective," Occasional Paper, Oxford University South EastEuropean Studies Programme, May 2004, pp. 20-21.

democratic Turkey could be troublesome within the EU.

These concerns do have some validity, although, since all observers concede that Turkey is not likely to be admitted to the EU for perhaps a decade, one would imagine that they would grow less serious over time. In addition, the EU would probably want to wait through a couple of election cycles to ensure that the commitment to reform continues and Euro-sceptical (to put it modestly) parties such as the MHP do not return to power. Significantly, present Turkish leaders are already engaging in what might be called the broader European discourse, with Prime Minister Erdoğan proclaiming that the EU is a 'union of values' and that he aims to make "European values Ankara's values."³⁵ While this is not conclusive proof that Turkey is now responding to the "logic of appropriateness," there is no doubt that the accession of the AKP to power in November 2002, has produced a whole new, and generally far more accommodating Turkish position to the demands of Brussels.

One could suggest, however, that the issue goes beyond democratic consolidation. In other words, even if Turks become good democrats, this need not imply that they will be 'Europeans' in the fullest sense of the word. Most obviously, there is the supposed civilisational divide between Christians and Muslims, which, although it can easily be overblown, would matter on important symbolic issues such as the inclusion of reference to religion or a common culture in an EU constitution. The success of the EU, one might argue, rests on the cultural and historical similarity of member states; the EU, despite being composed of several states, is not, in a basic sense, very heterogeneous. Turkey's relative poverty and large agricultural sector add more problems, as they could drain the EU's regional development funds and Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) subsidies. Millions of Turks already live in Europe. Turkish membership in the EU and free labour mobility for Turkish workers could lead to a flood of new immigrants in existing EU countries. Turkey's sheer size (about a sixth of the EU total) may become a problem as the EU moves toward double-majority voting,³⁶ and continued unanimity requirements on some key issues may make some balk at including a big, poor country that is so 'different,' particularly given the perception that Turks are more nationalistic than existing EU members and stand outside of a new, post-national European identity that is developing among longstanding EU members.³⁷ Turkish accession, critics suggest, could thus paralyse Europe. Lastly, Turkey's longstanding ties with the US could also be an issue, as those who favour

³⁵ Erdoğan, "Why the EU Needs Turkey," 2004.

³⁶ Giscard, the father of the EU's draft constitution, conceded that changes in the voting procedure may 'kill' Turkey's chances for entry. See Turkish Daily News, 14 September 2004. Of course, these changes have yet to be approved by the 25 members of the EU.

³⁷ Ziya Öniş, "An Awkward Partnership: Turkey's Relations with the European Union in Comparative-Historical Perspective," *Journal of European Integration History* 7:1, 2001, pp. 105-119, and Meltem Müftüleri-Bac, "The Impact of the European Union on Turkish Politics," *EastEast European Quarterly* 34:2, June 2000, pp. 159-179.

a more independent European foreign policy, especially France, would not want Turkey to become a means for the US to exercise greater power over the EU.³⁸

These fears, however, can be easily overblown. Other states - particularly those in the 2004 expansion (a.k.a. 'New Europe') - have a more pro-US foreign policy orientation than France or Germany (a.k.a. 'Old Europe'), and one saw real schisms between Ankara and Washington in the run-up to the war in Iraq. One writer suggests that 'Europeanisation' in Turkey - on political, economic, and security issues - means that Turkey is "more concerned with pleasing Paris rather than Washington."³⁹ Other east European states are also poorer and more agricultural than longstanding EU members, and combined, they had a population larger than Turkey's, and this was not an intractable barrier to their membership. One would expect that the EU would put restrictions on Turkish labour mobility and access to CAP funds, as was done with east European states. True, Turkey is large, but by itself this is no reason to reject membership, and even with Turkish membership, the richer and more established members of the EU would still have a majority of votes in the Council of Ministers as well as a majority of the EU population. As for Turkey's nationalist traditions, which will supposedly hamper EU decision-making, one might remind the French of Charles de Gaulle, whose machinations did not destroy the EC. With respect to the military, many of the most strident anti-EU voices within the military have been 'retired,' and the military has to date gone along with reforms - led, moreover by a party with an Islamist orientation - that would have been unthinkable less than a decade ago.

In the end, however, there is no denying that Turkey is different and that its inclusion will do more for diversity than any previous expansion. While this is worrisome for some, one might need to recognise that the definition of 'Europe' is not set in stone or defined by purely objective criteria, but is instead a social construction. This issue is taken up more below, but suffice to say, echoing the claims of Erdoğan, that the EU is more and more a union of values, not "a narrowly-defined geography or a union of rigidity."⁴⁰ Certainly, by expanding to the east, the EU is now including countries that until recently lacked the most basic requirements of EU membership, whereas since World War II, Turkey has had a market economy and tried many times (with mixed success) to establish a democratic government. While critics would point to a wider cultural fault line between the EU and Turkey, there are just as many in the EU who speak of Turkey's 'European vocation' which makes it 'fundamentally different' from other

³⁸ Bejer, "The Decision on Turkish EU Accession," 2002.

³⁹ Barry Rubin, "Turkey's New Direction," 24 August 2004, available at http://gloria.idc.ac.il/columns/2004/08_24.html.

⁴⁰ Erdoğan, "Why the EU Needs Turkey," 2004.

Muslim countries, and that recently, Turkey has made 'unprecedented reforms' that merit negotiation talks for eventual membership.⁴¹ Turkey's membership bid has won converts in Berlin, London, and even Athens, where political elites reject arguments about Turkey's intrinsic unsuitability for membership. Even the Vatican - which had previously expressed staunch opposition to Turkish membership on cultural grounds - concedes that "Islam belongs to European tradition and history."⁴²

This is not to say that the accession of Turkey will be as easy as that of Slovenia. It will not be. However, one must weigh the pros and cons. In the words of Timothy Garton Ash, "if Europe is mainly about creating a coherent political community we should stop this side of the Bosphorous. However, if it is "more urgent to promote democracy, respect for human rights, prosperity and therefore the chances for peace in the most dangerous region in the world, we must step boldly on to that bridge [and accept Turkish membership]."⁴³

This last statement alludes to what is the trump card for those advocating Turkish membership: Turkey occupies an important geo-strategic position and therefore the EU cannot afford not to extend to it membership. The metaphor of Turkey as a bridge between east and west has a long history, but since 11 September 2001 Turkey has a new importance as a veritable poster-child as an example of a secular, western-oriented, and relatively democratic Muslim state. To reject Turkey, some (especially in the US) argue, would send the wrong signal to the broader Muslim world and encourage anti-liberal and anti-western groups in Turkey and beyond. Ash makes this point most forcefully.

The case for accepting Turkey is strong, especially in the post-9/11 world. It has everything to do with the 'war against terrorism' if you are going to address the deeper causes of Islamist terrorism you need to show people in the Middle East the benefits that can flow to Muslims who accept the basic standards of democratic modernity. What better example could there be than the moderate Islamist party [AKP] which just swept power in free and fair elections in Turkey [and] which accepts the secular state.⁴⁴

Thus, above and beyond the requirements of the Copenhagen Criteria, the pressure to include Turkey is considerable. In the end, the instrumentalist arguments elaborated above over the tangible pros and cons of Turkish membership

⁴¹ Report of several European leaders, including former Finnish President Martti Shtisaari, former French Prime Minister Michel Rocard, and former Spanish Foreign Minister Marcelina Oreja, reported in Turkish Daily News 8 September 220

⁴² Zaman, 15 May 2003. One might retort, of course, that the Islamic role in much of European history was that of invader, so invocations of history may not be wholly convincing to many Europeans.

⁴³ T. G. Ash, "A bridge too far?" The Guardian, 14 November 2002.

⁴⁴ Ibid

may be beside the point. As Tony Blair has noted, the accession of Turkey would be proof that Europe is "committed not just in word but in deed to a Europe of diverse races, cultures and religions all bound together by common rules and a sense of human solidarity and mutual respect."⁴⁵

Turkish Accession and Europe's Identity

Ultimately, then, one of the more interesting aspects of Turkish accession is what it says about Europe itself. European Parliament President Pat Cox succinctly declared, "This (Turkey) is the most difficult question of all...It's about how we define Europe."⁴⁶ The matter is much more than geography, although that too is obviously one aspect of the question.⁴⁷ Rather, the issue is about the very identity of the EU: what sort of institution is it?

Discussions of this sort emerged before the question of Turkish membership took centre stage. Thinking about ideal types of international organisations, Helene Sjursen suggested three competing models.⁴⁸ The first would be a mere problem-solving entity, based on economic 'citizenship' and material economic interests. Arguably, this was the main basis for legitimacy in the formative years of the European Union. Another model would be a value-based community, based upon social and cultural citizenship and would draw a firm line between 'Europe' and other states and actors. From this perspective, the EU would be a geographically defined entity that seeks to revitalise traditions and memories of 'European' values, to forge a 'we-feeling' as a basis for integration. Lastly, a more inclusive model would be a rights-based post-national union, based upon political citizenship and appeals to universal standards and rights.

Clearly, in recent years, with the expansion of its responsibilities and its promotion of democracy for would-be members, the EU has become more than just an economic club, and expansion cannot be explained with reference to economic, cost/benefit criteria alone.⁴⁹ Values (e.g. 'we are Europeans') and rights (e.g. 'respect democratic norms') comprise more and more of the 'discourse' of the EU. Of course, there may be an overlap of sorts between values and rights (e.g. 'We are European because we respect democratic norms'), but it is the Turkish case, which

⁴⁵ Statement by Blair on 24 March 2004, reported on <http://www.eubusiness.com>.

⁴⁶ 'Turkey's EU Bid: Resistance is on the Rise,' *Business Week*, 9 February 2004.

⁴⁷ For example, Italy's Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi supports Turkish membership as part of a 'Great Europe' which, he claims, should also include Russia.

⁴⁸ Sjursen, 2002 and 2005. Her work is a theoretical guide for the Citizenship and Democratic Legitimacy in Europe (CIDEL) project, "Justifying Enlargement," coordinated by ARENA (Advanced Research on the Europeanisation of the Nation-State) in Oslo. For more, see www.arena.uio.no/cidel/

⁴⁹ Frank Schimmelfennig, "The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the East/Eastern Enlargement of the European Union," *International Organization* 55:1, 2001, pp. 47-80, and Jose I. Torreblanca, *The Reuniting of Europe: Promises, negotiations and compromises* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001).

lacks the appeal to past traditions and memories of 'Europeanness' that stretches the conceptual boundaries and identity of the EU. Indeed, the arguments invoked to Turkish membership differ substantially from those employed in the 2004 expansion, where, as mentioned, the refrain 'return to Europe' played a prominent role and the prevailing belief was that Europe "had to" to expand to the east, if for no other reason that a moral obligation to write the final chapter in the story of liberal democracy's victory over communism.⁵⁰

While Turkey does not fit into the 'return to Europe' narrative, its inclusion into Europe is increasing being viewed as a responsibility and a political necessity. Kalypso Nicolaidis declared that EU membership for Turkey would be the most powerful signal yet that the EU is indeed a new kind of global normative power in the making which instead of banishing the Muslim world as Europe's 'other' is capable of taking on the challenge of having a Muslim country as its biggest single member one day. Europe is an idea, not a tribe to be defined in ethnic or religious terms.⁵¹

Indeed, a "rights-based" conception of the EU, focusing as it would on the political criteria of membership (as opposed to cultural prerequisites), will be a powerful force to help promote Turkish accession. As one writer noted, to the extent that the EU has defined itself as a "beacon" to "spread the democratic light to less fortunate corners of the globe," it will be hard to deny admission to a country that meets the political and geographic criteria for membership.⁵² Erdoğan makes a similar argument to press the Turkish case, noting that "the EU is neither a union of coal and steel, nor of geography, nor only of economies. It is a community of political values."⁵³

While there is certainly some evidence that the EU is becoming a "rights-based" union (and here one also should mention the movement for a European constitution), the Turkish case will prove to be extremely trying and will encounter resistance from those who envision Europe as a more exclusive, "values-based" community. French Prime Minister Jean Marie Raffarin recently asked, "We do not doubt the good faith of Mr. Erdoğan, but to what extent can

⁵⁰ Asa Lundgren, "Priorisations in the enlargement process: are some candidates more 'European' than others?" Paper presented at the CIDEL Workshop, "Justifying Enlargement," Avila Spain, May 2004.

⁵¹ Introductory remarks for Prime Minister Erdoğan at Oxford University, 28 May 2004, at <http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/areastea/studies/SEESP-newsletter2004.pdf>.

⁵² Suzannah Verney, "Creating the democratic tradition of European integration," in Helene Sjursen, ed. *Enlargement and the Finality of the European Union*, ARENA Report no. 7, 2002, p. 98. This ties into what Schimmelfennig calls "rhetorical entrapment." See Schimmelfennig, "The Community Trap," 2001.

⁵³ *New York Times*, 3 October 2004, p. 13.

today or tomorrow's government make Turkish society embrace Europe's human rights values? Do we want the river of Islam to enter the riverbed of secularism?"⁵⁴ The Christian Democrats in Germany suggest that Turkey be offered a "privileged partnership" in lieu of full membership, and a host of right-wing parties in Europe remain vehemently opposed to Turkish membership, primarily on cultural grounds.

Erdoğan has already suggested that any conditional or special membership offer would be "ugly,"⁵⁵ and, ultimately, it may be true that these arguments cannot be publicly invoked as an official reason to reject Turkey's membership bid.⁵⁶ In addition, due to "rhetorical entrapment" the pressure to admit Turkey will mount as progress is made in accession negotiations. However, it may be the case that some member states will change their procedures for accepting new EU members, which will allow them to circumvent any "entrapment" that might tie elites' hands. For example in October 2004, President Chirac suggested that French voters should be able to vote on whether France will ultimately approve Turkish membership.⁵⁷ Given the fact that no referendum took place in any EU member to approve the expansion in 2004, one can see quite clearly that Turkey may end up being treated differently and, of course, French voters, who at present are against Turkish membership, will not have to account for their reasoning if and when they were to reject Turkey. If this comes to pass, it would be safe to say that the EU will have opted for a more values or cultural-based identity, as, assuming the accession negotiations go well this would be the primary grounds for excluding Turkey. As can be seen, however, this debate over Europe's essential identity, in which Turkey plays a key role, will not be definitely settled any time soon since, as noted, membership for Turkey is likely to be at least a decade away.

Before concluding, it may be fair to ask why these debates matter. What is at stake in arguments over whether Europe is a problem-solving, values-based, or rights-based community? Let me make a few suggestions about why this matters. First, EU states are already culturally diverse (and the need for immigrants will grow in several states in the coming years), so narrower definitions of the EU as a cultural-based entity will poorly serve a dynamic, multi-cultural Europe. Second, as noted, to exclude Turkey on cultural or economic cost/benefit grounds - criteria that were not applied to those states admitted in 2004 - would send a dangerous signal to reformers in Turkey, the broader Muslim world, and states like Ukraine and Russia, where many political forces have European aspirations. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, a rights-based identity would best serve those interested

⁵⁴ Turkish Daily News, 27 September 2004.

⁵⁵ New York Times, 3 October 2004, p. 13.

⁵⁶ Bejer, "The Decision on Turkish EU Accession," 2002.

⁵⁷ Turkish Daily News, 1 October 2004.

both in "deepening" (meaning greater political integration such as a constitution for the EU or re-structuring of EU institutions to involve European publics) and "widening" to include more states. If Europe is primarily about economics or culture/values (the latter narrowly defined), then expansion for the EU may be essentially over and the "European project" complete with Europe's "re-unification" in 2004. If, however, there is to be a broader, more ambitious European political project, then the EU should advance a more political or rights-based identity for itself. As Thierry de Montbrial of the French Institute of International Relations noted, the core concepts of the EU are democracy, rule of law, human rights, secularism, market economy, security, and solidarity. "What we want to achieve in Europe," he claims, "is a new kind of political unit, whose identity is based on these concepts."⁵⁸ To the extent that Turkish membership fits into this vision, it would be a "crucial case," demonstrating that Europe has overcome a more parochial, narrower self-identity in favour of a broader, political identity. Turkish membership could thus have a transformative impact, far more than the 2004 expansion did, on Europe itself.

⁵⁸ Thierry de Montbrial, "Debating the borders of Europe," *International Herald Tribune*, 21 May 2004.