

Towards The Integration of Turkey with Europe: Customs Union

Emine Tirali, PhD.

Instructor

Boğaziçi University

Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History

TURKEY

Abstract

This paper deals with the historical and political process of the accession of Turkey to the Customs Union which is an important milestone for the EU-Turkey relations. The positive and negative consequences of the Customs Union Agreement in terms of Turkey are not involved in our study. In this study, the manner how this process was executed and conducted is mentioned. The Prime Minister Ciller thought that the most important problem of Turkey was to integrate not only the economically but also politically with the world and Turkey would have an "exceptional" place for the full-membership among other candidate countries and increase its chance for the membership if Turkey completed its Customs Union. How was the history of the integration process of Turkey with the EU? What was the aim of the ruling party of Turkey to join the Customs Union? How did the opposition parties, industrial circles, institutions and trade unions react to the accession to the Customs Union with the EU within this period of time? What kinds of criticism did they made in this regard? How did the academics evaluate this process? Also, how did the international community and the EU-member states evaluate the EU membership of Turkey under the Customs Union? What sorts of problems did they create against Turkey? Did Turkey achieve its targets after the accession to the Customs Union? In this study, these topics will be discussed in detail.

Key Words: EU Process, Full Membership, Customs Union, Opposing Arguments.

Introduction

We can acquire the healthy analyses only if we discuss and examine the expansion and deepening initiatives of the European Union within the framework of the globalization phenomenon during the nineties. The founding members of EU make efforts to be able to transcend the nation states within the organization, while they take the trends of globalization incapacitating the nation states into consideration and deem the organization, which is even transformed, as the safe regional blocking harbour to be able to maintain their nation states even if it seems paradoxical. Apparently, the requirements of globalization, as already indicated by Tekeli and Ilkin, made it necessary to change the nature of the European Community (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000: 557). The European Union, which was adopted in Maastricht in December 1991 and signed in February 1992, would respond to the challenge of the age with the conciliatory and/or synthesizing or unique formula. The model, which has come into existence together with the EU and performs the external (global) functions under the Union by means of "regulatory" state qualification with the collective will, represented a different way, 3rd way, against the nation centred and maybe global governance paradigms. Of course, once the formation of EU is considered to have progressed in the rapidly changing process within the atlas of space / time, it will be figured out in the future whether the organization will emulate a closed-circuit system against the globalization or deemed as a successful regional stage, almost a stop for the final participation in the global community.

1. Historical background of Turkey and EU Relations

Even if it is customary to initiate the attempt of Turkey to integrate with the Europe with Ankara Agreement (1963), this process indeed should be dated back to the government of Democratic Party. As DP adopted a decision to apply for the membership of this organization (1959) shortly after the European Communities completed their foundation (1957) and carried out this decision (Vardar 1998 a: 559). Even, it is told that the leaders of the Democratic Party were discussing about the advantages and disadvantages of the accession of Turkey to the EC as they were transported via the steamboat for the execution (Oke 2001: 89).

The Community and Turkey would be able to make a great progress due to the incompatibility of the internal conditions of the country and the reluctance of the administrators from 1987 until the application of Ozal, who took every opportunity to express that he followed Menderes every time, for the full-membership application. After 1980 military coup in particular, EU would freeze all the ties with Ankara, including the financial protocols. The détente was observed in the attitude of EC in 1986 and ANAP (Turkish acronym for Motherland Party) officially made the application for accession a year later on April 14, 1987. The answer would be given on December 18, 1989: "Turkey is a country eligible for becoming a member, but..." The deficiencies of the human rights regime in Turkey, poor relations with Greece and instabilities of macroeconomic criteria rank among these reasons. In brief, the date was not specified and they said it was early yet. And the relationships with the EC became stagnant (Vardar 1998 b: 222).

DYP (Turkish acronym for True Path Party) under the leadership of Demirel never affirmed the application made by Ozal maybe just because he was in the opposition party. However, the surveys conducted suggested that the decision of becoming a full-member of EC increasingly rallied supporters in Turkish public opinion (Vardar 1998 a: 561). According to Vardar, the socioeconomic agents stood up for the integration. Moreover, the political groups and intellectuals displaying the exclusivist behaviours against the EC prior to 1980 would change their attitudes keeping in mind that joining the Europe would be the lightning conductor against the military coups and be the guarantee in the democratisation path. In spite of it, the rejection of the application for EC by Turkey under the leadership of Ozal would result in the determination of the following tendencies within the society:

"The first prominent feature is the theme representing that Turkey will not be welcomed by the West no matter what Turkey does in this regard, although the request for accession to the EU reflects the general tendency. As it can be seen, Turkey's own deficiencies are mentioned, on the other hand, it is reminded that Turkey is not compatible with the Western Norms in terms of economic, social, political, diplomatic and cultural aspects. On the other hand, the general distrust themes emerge against the West. Within this context, it can be observed that the nostalgic tendencies emerge by way of prompting the social dreams and referring to the history of Ottoman. The difference in the status of today's Turkey making efforts to be admitted to the EU by means of the Ottoman Empire that mentions about the glorious aspects of the Ottoman Period comes out among the topic covered repeatedly and thus, the social imagination taking form such as "nobody loves Turks" or "they are afraid of us" that appears following each disappointment is brought to the agenda once more. Again, the question regarding to the identity problems, one of the main themes appearing on all occasions, which is "Are we Easterner or Westerner?" is covered naturally within the context of this topic." (Vardar 1998 a: 563)

II: Çiller government's attempts for Customs Union Agreement

The "revival" in the relations with Turkey and EC was waiting for Ciller in the environment where the scenarios of Sevres were cited. The target of "establishing the Customs Union within the framework of the application for the full-membership of EC" was incorporated into the government program of DYP-SHP (Turkish acronyms for True Path Party and Social Democratic Populist Party, respectively) which received the vote of confidence on July 5, 1993. Dr. Ali Tigrel, the Advisor to the Prime Minister, assigned to coordinate the preparations regarding to the EC. The harmonization circular letters started to be published. Attending the 30th General Assembly of the Economic Development Foundation (IKV), Ciller explicitly expressed her opinions on the relations of Turkey and EC. The most important problem of Turkey was to integrate not only the economically but also politically with the world. Within this framework, Turkey preferred the EC years ago. So, it would not be possible for Turkey to become a full-member of the EC as Turkey took an active party in NAFTA on the one side and in the Middle East and KEI on the other side. Ciller mentioned that "It is not possible for us to be polygynous. Turkey will be monogamous which is EC. Fulfilling the requirements of it at once and designation our role in the other organizations, we must lay it before the Europe and the world at once (Tekeli/ Ilkin 2000: 294)." Apparently, the Prime Minister thought that Turkey would have an "exceptional" place for the full-membership among other candidate countries if Turkey completed its Customs Union. Furthermore, did not Ankara Agreement envisage the transition to the full-membership from this process?

III. Opposing Arguments about Customs Union

The discussions concerning the protectionism arose as the Customs Union was incorporated into the agenda. The industry sector expressed that it did not oppose to the EC on the basis of principle, however, believed to postpone the accession to the Customs Union as far as possible.

Although Ciller said "It is inevitable for those who would like to swim in the sea to throw into the water;" "It will be in question for us to throw our businessman into the sea, but we will not leave them alone and throw the lifebuoy for them", Koç Group engaging in the automotive industry in particular raised its objections in this regard, Sabancı Group expressed to have supported the government by means of an utterance "the protectionism is cheating the public in the cause of several people." (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000: 294-6). The arguments between Koç and Sabancı would become very severe in the future and Sabancı Group would report that those who only took the domestic market into consideration and failed to head towards the export by improving their technology would miss the opportunity, pointing the necessity for "taking lessons from the crisis instead of crying, yelling..." (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000: 351-2). In those days, Ulsever wrote the following:

"The title of our second homework is the belief of Turkish Businessmen in the Customs Union. Let's be honest, it is obvious that our manufacturers who caught the market behind the customs wall and put the goods into the market over the price higher than the world markets of which quality is maybe lower than the world quality will not lean towards the Customs Union. It is highly probable that large holdings will be among those manufacturers. No one in Turkey can overtly oppose to the Customs Union. However, the counter-lobby which will be secretly and influentially conducted by those corporations may affect the public opinion and also tire the EU" (Ulsever 2000: 93)."

In this way, Turkey witnessed the discussions concerning the determination of "sensitive" sectors in need of protection. On the other hand, the textile businessmen even opposed to the selective protectionism, asserting that this discrimination would yield the results against themselves.

VI: Process of negotiations for Customs Union

In the meantime, Turkey and EC entered into the negotiations for the Customs Union within the framework of the "Steering Committee". Once it became clear that Germany would hold the Presidency of European Community in the second half of 1994; Ciller, as the Prime Minister, would visit Kohl in her second overseas trip on September 20-21, 1993 and asked for the support. On the other hand, the European Community signed the Maastricht Treaty in November 1993 and turned into the Union, therefore, the accession of Turkey to the interwoven Europe as the full-member became more "difficult". Moreover, the "blocking" behaviours displayed by Athens following the developments became clear. Nevertheless, the Association Council was convened on November 8, 1993 and approved the "Work Schedule". This time, the economic globalization gained momentum by the conclusion of Uruguay Round as the negotiations continued between Ankara and EU. With or without the Customs Union, the liberalization of trade virtually became a necessity for the participation in the Global Community. In other words, the Customs Union between Turkey and EU involved majority of the liberalization measures envisaged by the Uruguay Treaty. So to say, there was no way out. Thus, Ankara, as it was after 1998, would strive for keeping pace with the neoliberal flow, by means of abating the customs taxes at the beginning of 1994.

Ciller attended NATO summit at the beginning of 1994. During the formal visits she paid to the officials of EU, she was requested to establish a "safety net" against the structural shocks of Turkey to incur the financial losses with the Customs Union. The bitter prescriptions which were delayed internally would be presented together with the "Stability Programme" and Ciller would be praised due to "her brave decisions" in abroad. Afterwards, the circular letter, signed by Ciller, was issued on May 20, 1994 and thus Turkey shaped the "Preparation Program for the Customs Union". Turkish Patent Institute was established within the framework of this program. However, the CU process was undoubtedly affected by the internal political stability. This turmoil in the coalition partner led to the appointment of Prof. Dr. Mumtaz Soysal, who was considered to prefer pursuing a course other than the Western thinking, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs which was under the responsibility of this party. Stating that the negotiations were not conducted in a "severe" manner, Soysal probably tried to slow down the CU process that he did not adopt in the principle. As soon as Soysal starts holding the ministerial position, he would retaliate against 14 states including the EU member countries requiring a visa from Turkish citizens. Soysal declared to impose the entrance permit for the human rights commissions coming from the West. It was evident that the suspension of the relations with Turkey by the European Parliament in July 1994, alleging the Human Rights, as will be discussed in details later, which must apply a visa for the CU in case of the framework agreement, had a cold-shower effect on Ankara and Ciller, in particular, even if she did not share it with the public.

Ankara lost its negotiation power and even presumably enthusiasm before the CU. So, expressing that "Turkey is advancing at a snail's pace" Tigrel would anonymously accuse the bureaucrats of the foreign affairs at this stage. The proposal supported by the IKV concerning the Under secretariat of the EU to ensure the rapid flow could not be realized due to the opposition of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in any way. Here, at this junction, Ciller had to say that "Do not tell me how the CU cannot be realized; on the contrary, make proposals on how to overcome the obstacles; as the CU will absolutely be realized". In the wide-ranging meeting held in Istanbul that the representatives of private sector and trade unionist attended, Ciller drew attention to the fact that "the great problems" might have been encountered in the accession to the CU and also requested to remember that "it would come at a price if Turkey did not join the CU..." (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000: 372). During her contacts with the press members; Ciller complaint that the lobbies of those opposed to the CU were beyond the attacks targeting her. However, saying that "Turkey will join the customs union in any event. Whenever I said "it will happen in any events", I have fulfilled this promise. I will make sure that Turkey will join the European Union and Customs Union..." (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000 : 378), Ciller made a significant breakthrough in the last week of November in 1994 and instructed not to provide the privileged position and special protection for any sectors during the course of transition to the CU. In the light of this instruction, all of the sectors including the automotive sector would simultaneously join the CU.

The resignation of Soysal from his office as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the appointment of Karayalcin for this office, telling the author of this article that he worked in harmony with Ciller concerning the CU, made great contributions to the optimism of the government against the veto by Greece. The Draft Law on the Protection of Competition was submitted to the Parliament and enacted on December 7, 1994. Turkey-EU Association Council was held in Brussels with the participation of Karayalcin in December 19. The government was partly pleased for holding this council in spite of all of these developments against itself as it meant that the EU did not renounce from the CU. Wall Street Journal, a recognised newspaper in the USA, watching the developments and supporting the initiative of Ankara concerning the EU, defined Ciller as a "leader who would like to see Turkey as interlocked with the Europe by means of foreign economic policies" (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000: 398).

Of course, Athens did not stop within this period of time. Athens wanted to acquire the full-membership of the Greek Part of Cyprus from the EU in return for withdrawing its veto. Tekeli and Ilkin put this vital turning in the GB process into words as follows:

"It was clear that Turkey was in the stage of making a very important decision. Turkey would either renounce from the customs union by opposing to the idea that the customs union was linked to the full-membership of Cyprus or would turn a blind eye to this association and strive for the completion of the customs union. It was evident that Turkey had adopted a political decision to prefer the second option even if Turkey refrained from clearly stating its decision and said the opposite. The failure of Turkey to prevent the progress of the Greek Part of Cyprus for the full-membership was an important - maybe the most important- factor in the adoption of this decision. The EU would not keep the Cyprus waiting at the gate forever, even if Turkey signed the Customs Union Agreement. The decisions adopted in four summits of the EU indicated that the Cyprus would join the EU together with Malta and other Central European countries in due course. Therefore, the acceptance of the formula developed by France would cause that Turkey would condone the development, which was opposed and could not be prevented by Turkey, to ensure the customs union. Moreover, it was thought that the full-membership of the Cyprus might probably extend until 2000 and the Cyprus issue would be solved in the meantime (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000: 401-2)."

The affairs were getting difficult. Karayalcin, as he told us in our special meeting, would set forth his remarks specified in the letter, which he posted to his colleagues deemed as important members of the EU, and then A. Juppe, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, in the 2nd Consultation Meeting, held in the glorious atmosphere in Lancaster House in London on February 2, 1995: "I would like to express that it would be inevitable for my government to prefer the integration between Turkey and the Northern Cyprus, if the EU designated the date and time period in which the negotiations were entered into with the Northern Cyprus and made a statement in this regard (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000 : 403). This attitude would regress the Athens that the Economist Journal of the UK called "veto-mania", for now with the imposition by Juppe. However, as will be seen in the future, the European Parliament had to approve the CU, even if the CU was realized and the Parliament indexed it to the improvements of the human rights and democratization in Turkey.

The Coalition Government reached a consensus on the CU. What about the Parliament of Turkey? Asserting that they were not informed about the developments, the Opposition Party made a request for the general debate in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). In the session opened on March 1, 1995; K. Inan and E. Guner, experienced deputies from ANAP, made severe criticisms for the government, indicating that they did not oppose to the EU, but such accession to the EU. Even, they expressed their reservations concerning the demands of Greece in writing by means of the memorandum of understanding which was signed by the Deputy Chairmen of ANAP, DYP and CHP (Turkish acronyms standing for Motherland Party, True Path Party and Republican People's Party, respectively). Ecevit, speaking on behalf of DSP (Turkish acronym for Democratic Left Party), underlined that Turkey was not ready for the EU. MHP (Turkish acronym for Nationalist Movement Party) shared the same opinion. RP, BBP and MP (Turkish acronyms for Welfare Party, Grand Unity Party and Nation Party, respectively) would indicate that they completely opposed to the CU (GNAT February 21 / March 1, 1995, 315-369).

V. At least The Agreement is signed

The Association Council and Ankara would sign the CU Agreement in the meeting held on March 6/7, 1995, in spite of the opposition in Turkey and in the EU. Karayalcin, signing the agreement, would exercise due diligence to give message implying that "Turkey considered the CU as a stepping stone towards the full-membership". When it came to the reflections of the Agreement in Turkey, Mesut. Yilmaz would assert that "Turkey jumped into the empty pool" and Erbakan would assert that "The country was fastened to the post in the yard of EU like a cash cow". On the other hand, the business environments were prudently pleased with this circumstance. The interesting part was the adoptive attitude exhibited by DISK (Turkish acronym for Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions) in comparison with the opposing attitude of the trade unions. Turkish press was generally positive. Karayalcin made the following determination within this environment:

".... Turkey gained access to the block of the Europe based on the property right and our title deed, thus actually acquired the right of occupancy (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000: 421). On the other hand; starting her evaluation concerning the customs union in the program named "Address to the Nation", broadcasted in Turkish TVs and radios, on the day that the agreement was signed as "I give you a piece of good news concerning the bright country which has solved its great problems and we will bequeath our children, grand children in this historical day", Ciller counted the advantages of the customs unions that she qualified as the beginning of the "integration process" for Turkey as follows: "Our people will be able to acquire the goods, capital and services of high quality for the lower price. Trade will increase and there will be abundance. The selection opportunities of the consumer will increase and the consumer will be protected. The aim is the wealth of our people. Our country will attract more foreign capital. The state of the art technology will take its place in our country. New business areas will be available. Our youths will get new opportunities." Moreover, all of the Turkish institutions would be renewed in terms of the health, justice, the education and financial system. Therefore, Turkey would take its part among the leading countries in the world " (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000: 420-1).

VI. Approval of the European Parliament

Now, it was time to obtain the approval of the EP for the Agreement. Rolling up its sleeves for obtaining the approval, Turkey increased its harmonisation practices. In this way, numerous legislations, including the economic legislations, were enacted in the first half of 1995. Ciller, General President of DYP, which received 35% of total votes in the by-elections held in June, 4, would incorporate the integration with the CU into VII. Five Year Development Plan (1996-2000) as a strategic target. The main purpose of the strategy was to turn Turkey into the country in peace, which is contemporary, shares the incomes fairly and fully exercises the human rights and democratic freedoms . VII. Plan would carry Turkey onto the 21st century and achieve this target by means of "making use of the advantages of the globalization at the highest level". Turkey, in the process of the customs union with the EU in line with the target of full-membership, would grab the advantages of the globalization (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000: 452).

On the road to the approval of the European Parliament, the political mobility in Turkey would terminate the Coalition Government at first and then form the Coalition Government again in spite of the efforts for the minority government. Baykal also perceived the necessity to pay special attention to the CU in terms of the interests of his own party. Thus, Baykal did not abstain from making "persuasion visits" to the Brussels and Bonn on October 17-20, 1995.

The good news was received from the Association Council on October 30: the Council accepted that Turkey had met the necessary requirements for the smooth operation of the CU. Ankara started the lobbying activities to influence the European Parliament just like the mobilization. Within this framework, Ciller took the lead in the lobbying activities by means of the visits she paid to the Spain on November 16 and the United Kingdom on November, 21. In the meantime, the Enlarged Bureau of Assembly of Turkey-EU Joint Parliamentary Commission was convened on December 1. The striking thing was that B. Akarcali, deputy from ANAP, specified in the meeting that the ruling parties used the CU Agreement for their political interests before the forthcoming elections and requested to prevent it. "This topic was brought to the agenda again by the deputy, the member of the main opposition party from Turkey, in the environment that Turkey made great efforts to eliminate such delay." (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000: 498). This proposal which was surprising for the members of the European Parliament, was not accepted. However, the proposal led to the sharp reactions of the coalition parties. Was Turkey be internally stabbed by the domestic policies by means of this proposal? M. Yilmaz would feel obliged to take a step backward due to these reactions.

The European Parliament, in spite of its pluralist view, seemed to have been divided into two camps in terms of tendency. One group, let's say radicals, believed that Turkey would be indulged by this opportunity offered without completing the human rights and democratization, therefore, CU must be delayed; while other group, moderates, defended that Turkey of which accession to the Customs Union was accepted would be encouraged to make a breakthrough in this regard. Ankara was disturbed by the probability of the simultaneous passage of the bill, involving the initiatives concerning Kurds which could not be acknowledged by the Government, by the Parliament. Although Ciller said at the beginning "If they would support the CU with such condition, they should not support it", then she had to grant the approval of Ankara as the lobbying activities performed within the EU were turned into "soft" expressions. Nevertheless; Ciller, probably aiming to play it safe, would post a letter to all members of the European Parliament and say that "Our reputation, making great efforts to ensure the democratization throughout the year, would be damaged, in case of any delays." (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000: 506). The way for obtaining the approval of the EU was paved; however, the financial aids to be extended for Turkey were stipulated by the bill. The CU Agreement was signed under these circumstances. 529 French members of the parliament attended the voting in spite of the strike in the transportation industry. The European Parliament approved the Agreement with 344 affirmative votes against 149 negative votes, as 36 members of the parliament abstained from voting (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000: 512).

The opposition party would qualify the agreement as Sevres Agreement once again. In the academic circles, Prof. Dr. Yahya Sezai Tezel and Prof. Dr. Erol Manisali underlined that they were not fundamentally opposed to the EU, however, defended that the agreement not involving the full-membership aspect would create the great economic and political weaknesses. According to Tezel, the CU was "a certificate of dishonour" (Tezel, 1996) and according to Manisali, the CU was "the guardianship" (Manisali, 1996). Demirel personally tried to eliminate the concerns of Denktas by means of the joint declaration issued following the CU Agreement, but Manisali still believed that the CU would damage TRNC in the future. In the message promulgated after the voting, Ciller underlined that the customs union "was not substitute for the full-membership or a factor delaying the full-membership", on the contrary, would create a stage facilitating the full-membership. She construed this decision as "the first fruit borne" by the efforts for making Turkey the full-member. She thanked those who made contributions for the adoption of this decision from the inside and outside of Turkey. Ciller, put the special emphasis on the USA and Israel among these states. Stating in her message that "A new period starts now....", Ciller said: "Our target is to make our country progress to the highest level of the Europe in terms of the democracy and human rights in particular, and economy, social life and other fields concerning our society. Since Turkish nation deserves the best of everything...." In the speech she delivered in the "Student Club for Policy and Thought" of Bilkent University one day later, Ciller said "I argue that Turkey will become a member of the European Union in the coming years, maybe in three years..." (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000: 515)

It will be beneficial to reiterate the opinions of Tekeli and Ilkin here from whose comprehensive researches we availed ourselves, as these researches are final provisions on the CU. Referring to the political instability and failure to ensure the one-voiced governance in Turkey, the authors mention the restrictions on the bargaining power of Turkey. Such that, Turkey, as already indicated by Ozden Sanberk, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had to sit down at the negotiation table during the period in which the changing world conditions increased the demand for the EC and in the environment where numerous new members emerged.

In this conjuncture, the EU did not want Turkey to join as the full-member and therefore, Turkey entered into negotiations "without having strong bargaining power". However, in the following stages during the period that the negotiations were completed and the agreement was approved by the European Parliament, it became evident that the EU states had considered the customs union as a great opportunity in terms of economy and trade, therefore, supported the customs unions (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000: 545). Taking these factors into consideration, Tekeli and Ilkin says "The customs union has been achieved, that is a compulsory and very important step towards the full-membership in the long term, that is to say, it is an important achievement which must not be disregarded." (Tekeli / Ilkin 2000: 545).

In addition to being the only country which progresses toward the full-membership via the Customs Union in the history of the EU; Turkey succeeded to achieve this target without receiving any aids to cover the losses which will result from the accession to the CU. The following statements are incorporated into VIII. Five Year Development Plan covering the years between 2001 and 2005: "Turkish industry displayed the remarkable performance in the competition from 1996, in which the CU entered into force, until now. The CU did not receive any significant complaints from the industry sector, expect for the automotive sector". (DPT 2000: 44).

Ciller, believing that "the way for the EU target was paved with the Customs Union", would sustain its efforts, although M. Yilmaz said "They create a fait accompli atmosphere. Whereas, there are no events taking place" (Date of Month: 7.iii.1995 : 160)

In the meantime, Welfare Party would demand to interpellate about Ciller on the grounds of the fact that "Ciller led Turkey to the economic devastation with the compromises sustained unilaterally and abandoned the political liberty". Ciller also was accused of taking a step backward in the Cyprus.

"I completely qualify it as a falsified and false news. Since, I completely acted in the opposite manner. I am really sorry to say that one of our newspapers used it as a headline, based on only one single line. It is one-single line, not even the complete sentence, written on TIME journal. Today, It is the headline of one of our newspapers. I have talked to all of the European leaders. During these talks, I have spared the time of the accession of Turkey to the Custom Union for the Cyprus Issue. The Cyprus Issue is a state matter, the matter of the nation. Anybody can neither sell nor dislocate the Cyprus. What I said is that: "It is not possible for the Southern Cyprus to join the European Union without the solution. As it is not possible yet, I will be beneficial to inform them about this situation. Otherwise, I will be a great problem to find a bi-zonal, bi-communal federal and fair solution. Therefore, warn them and talk to them about this issue. I can prove the accuracy of the same. Since all the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were with me when I talked to Tony Blair and during my other talks from beginning to the end, they took officials notes and everything were documented. Do not take it as a topic of the abuse, we now achieve the target which has not been achieved for 32 years. You will make efforts to make sure that the target is not achieved on the one side, you will visit the members of the European Parliament in order for them to delay this target and on the other side, you will use it as a political material in domestic and again give the wrong messages to the foreign public opinion. It is totally wrong. It is not consistent with the government policy. Well! Do I tell the truth? These documents are present in the state archive. You can find my speeches, each words of which were recorded, in all the platforms where I was accompanied by everyone and the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the first minute to the last minute and I said the opposite. Do not lie, do not distort the subject." (Ciller I: 381).

VII. Has the Target of EU been achieved

However, an unexpected development would be encountered in the period following after 1995. Ciller, as already specified herein above, repeatedly reminded the West that the rejection would provoke the "fundamentalist" tendencies in her country, which would bring harm to the Europe in the long-term, unless Turkey joined the Customs Union. Especially, forgetting that Turkey, the member of NATO, defended the West against the communist blocks, Turkey would not accept that the European Union gave the Eastern and Central European countries, which were the former Soviet Republics, the green light.

"This situation was exemplified for the fundamentalism of the Christians and the discrimination against the Turks; as the Bulgaria, Romania and Poland were given priority for the full-membership of the European Union following the collapse of communism one year- two years ago, even though our democratic institutions were more advanced in comparison with these countries, our market initiatives were incomparable and they had no infrastructures similar to our infrastructure. The feeling of exclusion was imprinted on the minds and in the hearts of Turkish nation (Ciller I: 381)"

When it was the case, the leaders of Christian Democratic Party of the EU member states would hold a meeting in Brussels and pass the judgment indicating that "Turkey would not be accepted as the full-member due to the civilisation differences"! As if the obligation to persuade the conservative parties in her country was not enough by itself, the similar foreign sensitivities stood against Ciller in the 2nd anniversary of the accession to the EU. Ciller qualified this decision as "misfortune". According to Ciller, "The civilization expressed by Ataturk is sole and Turkey is an honourable member of the contemporary civilization" (Date of Month: 5.iii.1997: 147). Ciller would take another opportunity to add the following sentence to the speech she delivered addressing the West, which corresponded to the period of Welfare-Path: "You must figure out that the objectors and fundamentalists, implying that the Europe is hypocritical and prejudiced to Turkey, will gain the strength by the "negative" votes to be casted by you. (Ciller I: 745). Progressing further, Ciller would defend the following issues against the EU within this context:

"The integration of Turkey with the Europe will be a great step for the world peace. However, the failure to incorporate the sole secular, Muslim democracy into the European Club would give a wrong message to all of the Muslims around the world. Moreover, the correct message would not be delivered to those taking its part in the fight among the moderation and extremism, secularism and fundamentalism (Ciller I: 747)

In the press statement she made for the Turkish press members, Ciller would underline that the failure to accept the accession of Turkey to the Union would create a new global polarization and the failure to build a new Berlin Wall based on the culture would be a responsibility of vital importance (Date of Month: 6.iii.1994 : 149). The crisis between Turkey and EU would be overcome in two days. Hans Van Mierlo, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Netherlands and Chairman of the EU, came to Turkey. Ciller told him that Turkey must be evaluated in the same statute with the other states about the EU membership. Specifying that he supported the EU-membership of Turkey, Van Mierlo would say that there were numerous politicians thinking just like him (Date of Month: 8.iii.1997: 154)

In the same month, N. Burns, the Spokesman of the Department of State would declare that the embassies in the Europe were mobilized so that Turkey would be accepted to the EU. The important steps concerning the human rights were taken in Turkey and such developments must have been taken into consideration by the EU (Date of Month: 12.iii.1997 : 164). Saying that "It is not only the issue of Turkey whether Turkey is within the boundaries of the Europe. It will become the issue of Europe in terms of security in the upcoming years"; Ciller, returning to the country from Finland, mentioned the probable risks of cultural racism getting off the ground in the West (Date of Month: 15.iii. 1997: 170).

The EU would start giving the signals concerning the fact that the crisis was overcome. Thus, in the meeting of the Council of the Minister of the EU held in Apeldoorn, France; Herve De Charette, French Minister of the Foreign Affairs, would mention that Turkey must not be "excluded". The British colleagues of him would remind to give "hope" to the Turkish Public by means of decision to be adopted in the meeting (Date of Month: 15.iii. 1997: 171). In this way, the consensus concerning the fact that the future of Turkey was in the Europe and the same criteria, implemented to other member states, would be implemented for Turkey would be reached at the end of summit (Date of Month: 16.iii. 1997:172). Ciller would say that "How fast we can progress from now on and how fast we can achieve the target depend on the faster fulfilment of the requirements and criteria" (Date of Month: 17.iii. 1997: 173). K. Kinkel, the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, would explain what the rules in question were at the end of the month. Within this framework; Kinkel, maybe as his personal opinion, would blurt out that it would not be possible for Turkey to become the member of the EU in the near future (Date of Month: 26.iii.1997:196). In this period, France seemed to be optimistic. Herve De Charette, French Minister of the Foreign Affairs, who visited Ankara on April 2 (1997), met with Tansu Ciller, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In the press statement he made before the meeting: Charette said "We have consensus on the EU membership. The coming years would be the restructuring years for the Europe. France explicitly wants Turkey to take its part in the reconstruction process of the Europe in the next years.

" Ciller said "Turkey is on the way of becoming the member of the EU with the steps taken towards the human rights and democratization" (Date of month: 2.iv.1997: 8)

Turkey- EU Association Council would be held in Luxembourg on April 29, 1997. As Ciller would emphasise in the statement she would make later, it was officially confirmed in the Association Council that Turkey was eligible for the full-membership of the EU and the most important conclusion of the meeting was the decision made indicating that the membership of Turkey would be evaluated within the framework of the similar criteria and objective standards which were implemented for the other candidates. Moreover, it was decided in the meeting that the EU Commission would issue a report to strengthen the relations of Turkey and EU. However, this report would not offer any alternative solutions for the full-member of Turkey under any circumstances whatsoever.

The full-membership of Turkey was officially brought to the agenda of the EU by means of these decisions reflecting the official consensus of 15 EU-member states. Once the negative comments and evaluations concerning the full-membership of Turkey, which were made by some circles in the Europe recently, are taken into consideration, it is obvious that the consequences of the Association Council constituted a very important stage. These consequences form official and final response of the EU to the negative comments in question. The adoption of the decision of the Association Council with the participation of Greece, posing a serious obstacle for promoting our relations with the EU since 19981, is critically important. The efforts that Turkey made to normalize the relations with Greece started yielding the results through the contributions by the Netherland, Chairman of the EU. Turkey and Greece declared by means of the Association Council that a group, composed of two person from two parties, had been assigned to address how the problems between two states could be solved. Thus, the important mechanism was established for the solution of the problems between two countries after many years. Moreover, the important decisions were adopted in the Association Council for the resolution of several technical problems concerning the operation of the Customs Union.

These decisions were scheduled within the framework of work programme prepared to improve the association relations of Turkey and EU (Turkhaber, www.byegm.gov.tr). According to Ciller, the Summit meant "Turkey, as the great country with its own democracy, own values and human rights, moral and national values in the region, left its mark on the peace in the region and 21st century"(Turkhaber, www.byegm.gov.tr). Ciller took an opportunity to remind that Clinton and Albright, Secretary of State, accelerated the EU membership processes of Turkey (Date of Month: 7.iv.1997: 173). In the mean time, M. Lake, Turkish Delegation of EU, would state in the EU-Turkey Joint Advisory Meeting held in Gaziantep that "It is highly probably for Turkey to join the EU. (Date of Month: 12.iv.1997:184) On June 17, Ciller would say during the process of the Luxembourg Summit that Turkey and Europe would figure out "who is ally and who is enemy" (Date of Month: 17.iv.1997:195). Welfare Path would resign at the end of the process, a day later. In the EU summit convened in Luxembourg on December 12-13, the membership of the Southern Cyprus was accepted, however, the membership of Turkey was not mentioned at all. It is not easy to figure out if the objective criteria or the reaction in Turkey or February 28 had impact on the decision of the EU; it is not reasonable to render a judgment by means of isolating these factors. However, in the special interview we made with her, Ciller would state that "Give us three more months. We can ensure the accession to the EU within this period of time". We know that this demand was remained unanswered. The acceptance of Turkey as "member" would be delayed two and half year later, Helsinki be held at the end of 199

Conclusion

The integration process of Turkey with the European Union commences with 1964 Ankara Agreement signed between EC and Turkey. The requirements of globalization, made it necessary to change the nature of the EC. The organization setting out as the European Economic Community turned into the political union by the treaty passed in Masstricht in December 1991 and signed in 1992. The Community and Turkey would be able to make a great progress due to the incompatibility of the internal conditions of the country and the reluctance of the administrators until the official application for joining the community in 1987. The EC froze all the relations with Ankara, including the financial protocols, following the 1980 Military Coup.

In the response given for the accession application; the deficiencies of the human rights regime in Turkey, poor relations with Greece and instabilities of macroeconomic criteria rank among these problems. In brief, they said it was early yet (Vardar, 1998:222).

However, the surveys conducted suggested that the decision of becoming a full-member of EC increasingly rallied supporters in Turkish public opinion. From this point of view; we understand that DYP-SHP government made great efforts to be able to complete the Customs Union Agreement which will ensure the economic integration with the EU. As Turkey was far from carrying out the political and institutional reforms required for the membership; signing the Customs Union Agreement would provide Turkey with an opportunity to achieve the economic integration with the EU and carry the relations with the EU one step further (Onis, 2003:33).

In addition the attempts to impede the agreement; the Customs Union Agreement was severely criticized by the miscallenous industrialists, businessmen, academics and the opposition parties in Turkey within this period. It was claimed that Turkey would have to make concessions concerning the Cyprus. It was alleged that such a great agreement not involving the full-membership aspect would create serious political and economic weaknesses (Tezel, 96)(Manisali, 96). Asserting that they were not informed about the developments, the opposition Parties criticised this situation severely (GNAT, February 21 / March 1, 1995: 315-369).

Turkey completed the "Transition Process" lasting 22 years with the EU on December 31, 1995 and commended the last period in the full-membership process (1996) by means of completing the Customs Union process achieved in the industrial products and processed agricultural products. The Agreement was signed without receiving the financial aids from the EU. After the agreement entered into force, Turkey agreed to impose the common external tariffs of the EU against third countries. The EU , in turn ,agreed to eliminate quotas facing Turkish exporters of textiles and clothing. The CU has more serious implications for Turkey compared with other forms of associations such as free trade agreements(FTA)or preferential agreements(PTA)As Turkey's EU membership process continues, it was expected to include service sectors as well as public procurement and agriculture. As such, the EU also entailed harmonization of Turkish competition policies with those of EU.(Yılmaz, 2011:236) Although the European Parliament laid down the severe conditions at the beginning, then the EP approved the aids to be provided Turkey based on the condition that the problems concerning the human rights would be solved at once.

The Prime Minister Ciller and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Karayalçın, believing that the way for the EU target was paved with the Customs Union Agreement, gave messages implying that Turkey considers the CU as the stepping stone. Indeed, the political advantages of the Agreement rather than its economic advantages were important for the Turkish Government. Even though Turkey assumed the "candidate state status" in the Helsinki Summit held on 11-12 December 1999 and entered into the full-membership negotiations on September 3, 2005, the full-membership was very far away for Turkey (Yılmaz,, 2011:236).

When the Customs Union Agreement was signed in 1995, it was believed that Turkey would become the member of the EU soon and be involved in the decision-making processs.(Pamuk,2012:281) However, Turkey would not be able to affect the tariffs implemented for the third countries in particular and had to accept the tariffs as the chance of Turkey to become the member of EU was low and Turkey was not involved in the decision-making processes (Pamuk, 2012 : 281).Therefore, the Turkish government will have no choice but to ask for a revision of the original CU agreement. (Yılmaz, 2011: 236)

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