

MONTEUS Dossier

EU-Turkey Relations

(Winter Term 2017/2018)

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Background knowledge: EU-Turkey relations

Turkey has been a candidate country for EU membership since 1999, along with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2005), Montenegro (2010), Serbia (2012) and Albania (2014). Turkey's aspirations to join the European Community are however much older and stand for long, yet troubled relations with the EU. In a historic perspective, this follows the similarly close but unsteady relations of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire with today's EU member countries in earlier centuries.

The Beginning of EU-Turkey relations

Turkey's official application for membership of the European Economic Community marks the beginning of formalized and close relations between Turkey and the Community in 1959. While today, in 2017, recent relations are under close scrutiny due to the latest developments within both the EU and Turkey, the picture of Turkey as a possible member state was far more positive at the early stage of the European Communities (see Document 1).

Document 1: Speech of Walter Hallstein 1963 in Ankara

Walter Hallstein
12 September 1963, Ankara

[...] Turkey is part of Europe. That is really the ultimate meaning of what we are doing today. It confirms in incomparably topical form a truth which is more than the summary expression of a geographical concept or of a historical fact that holds good for several countries. Turkey is part of Europe: and here we think first and foremost of the stupendous personality of Ataturk, whose work meets us at every turn in this country, and of the radical way in which he recast every aspect of life in Turkey on European lines. It is an event without parallel in the history of the influence exerted by the European culture and politics. I would even say that we sense in it a certain kinship with the most modern of European developments: the unification of Europe. [...]

Source: <http://aei.pitt.edu/14311/1/S77.pdf>.

Milestones in EU-Turkey relations

Since 1959, EU-Turkey relations have been both moving forward and conflicting. Below, you will find an overview on the most important historical milestones in EU-Turkey relations (based on Bedir et al. 2016: 11-21).

Phase 1 (1959-1970): The Ankara Agreement – Economy and Security as Main Drivers

Date	Milestones
September 1959	Turkish application for associate membership of the European Economic Community (EEC)
March 1960	Military coup in Turkey
September 1963	'Ankara Agreement': Association Agreement between Turkey and EEC is signed

Phase 2 (1970-1989): Growing Conflict – the Political Dimension Gains Ground

Date	Milestones
November 1970	Additional Protocol and 2nd financial protocol to the Association Agreement are signed
March 1971	Military Memorandum in Turkey
July 1974	Sampson Coup and Turkish intervention in Cyprus
September 1980	Military Coup in Turkey
December 1987	Application for formal membership (rejected in 1989)

Phase 3 (1989-1999): Post-Cold War Europe: a Marginalized Turkish Application

Date	Milestone
November 1989	Fall of the Berlin Wall
January 1993	Establishment of the European Single Market
June 1993	European Council Copenhagen (accession criteria)
January 1996	Customs Union between Turkey and EU comes into force
December 1997	Luxembourg Summit: European Council decides against candidate status of Turkey

Phase 4 (1999-2005): Turkey Becomes Accession Candidate – a Positive Turn with Geopolitical Motivations?

Date	Milestones
December 1999	Helsinki Summit of the European Council: candidate status is granted to Turkey
September 2001	Terror attacks in USA
December 2002	Copenhagen Summit: European Council agrees to start negotiation process if Turkey fulfils Copenhagen criteria
May 2004	Cyprus becomes EU member
December 2004	European Council decides to open accession negotiations
October 2005	Accession negotiations begin

Phase 5 (2005-2013): Between Stagnation and Growing Tensions

Date	Milestones
July 2005	Turkey signs Additional Protocol extending the Ankara Agreement
December 2006	European Council decides to suspend negotiations on eight chapters due to dispute over Cyprus
December 2010	Protest in Tunisia mark the beginning of the 'Arab Uprisings'
May 2012	European Commission launches 'Positive Agenda' to overcome stagnation
July-December 2012	Turkey freezes relations with EU during Presidency of Cyprus

Phase 6 (since 2013): Migration as a Driver Forward and Political Change in Turkey

Date	Milestones
November/December 2013	Opening of new chapter on regional policy, start of dialogue on visa liberalization
2015	More than 1 million refugees try to make the journey to Europe
November 2015	EU-Turkey Summit: Joint action plan is activated
March 2016	EU-Turkey Summit: "Refugee deal"
July 2016	Failed Military Coup in Turkey
April 2017	Referendum on the Turkish constitution

EU-Turkey Summits and Recent Developments

In light of the refugee crisis, the EU and Turkey decided to resume negotiations and deepen their relations in areas of common interests. Document 2 presents the joint statement of Turkey and the EU from 29 November 2015.

Document 2: EU-Turkey Statement, 29 November 2015

EU-Turkey Joint Statement

1. Today the Leaders of the European Union met in Brussels with their Turkish counterpart. Turkey has been a candidate since 1999 and negotiating for accession since 2005.
2. Turkey and the EU discussed the importance of overcoming the common challenges ahead. In line with the conclusions of the European Council of 15 October, they agreed that the accession process needs to be re-energized. They are committed to carry further their existing ties and solidarity and adopt result-oriented action to prepare their common future. They are determined to confront and surmount the existing risks and threats in a concerted manner to reinforce the European Project. Recalling the final declaration of the last G20 in Antalya, as well as the 2249 UNSC resolution, Turkey and the EU reaffirm that the fight against terrorism remains a priority.
3. For this purpose it was agreed that a **structured and more frequent high-level dialogue** is essential to explore the vast potential of Turkey-EU relations, which has not been realised fully yet. In this framework, both sides agreed to have **regular Summits twice a year**, in an appropriate format. Regular summits will provide a platform to assess the development of Turkey-EU relations and discuss international issues. Regular discussions and cooperation on foreign and security policy should be enhanced including on counter-terrorism against the background of serious security challenges notably the rising threat of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. In this context, the two sides agreed to have comprehensive regular political dialogue meetings at Ministerial/High Representative/Commissioner level. These will be in addition to the regular Association Council meetings. High level dialogues should also be conducted on key thematic issues.
4. Both sides welcomed the announcement to hold the Intergovernmental Conference on 14 December 2015 for **opening of chapter 17**. Furthermore, they noted the European Commission's commitment to complete, in the first quarter of 2016, the preparatory work for the opening of a number of chapters without prejudice to the position of Member States. Preparatory work could subsequently begin also on further chapters.
5. The EU welcomed the commitment by Turkey to accelerate the **fulfilment of the Visa Roadmap benchmarks** vis-à-vis all participating Member States. The European Commission will present the second progress report on the implementation by Turkey of the visa liberalisation roadmap by early March 2016. Both sides agree that the EU-Turkey readmission agreement will become fully applicable from June 2016 in order for the Commission to be able to present its third progress report in autumn 2016 with a view to completing the visa liberalisation process i.e. the lifting of visa requirements for Turkish citizens in the Schengen zone by October 2016 once the requirements of the Roadmap are met.
6. The EU will provide immediate and continuous humanitarian assistance in Turkey. It will also expand significantly its overall financial support. A **Refugee Facility for Turkey** was established by the Commission to coordinate and streamline actions financed in order to deliver efficient and complementary support to Syrians under temporary protection and host communities in Turkey. The EU is committed to provide an initial 3 billion euro of additional resources. The need for and nature of this funding will be reviewed in the light of the developing situation. As

Turkey hosts more than 2.2 million Syrians and as it has spent 8 billion US Dollars, the EU thus underlined the importance of burden-sharing within the framework of Turkey-EU cooperation. In this context, they underlined the contribution by Member State and existing EU resettlement schemes and programmes.

7. Turkey and the EU have decided to activate the Joint Action Plan that had been agreed until now ad referenda on 15 October 2015, to step up their cooperation for support of Syrians under temporary protection and migration management to address the crisis created by the situation in Syria. Results must be achieved in particular in stemming the influx of irregular migrants. The EU and Turkey agreed to implement the **Joint Action Plan** which will bring **order into migratory flows and help to stem irregular migration**. As a consequence, both sides will, as agreed and with immediate effect, step up their active cooperation on migrants who are not in need of international protection, preventing travel to Turkey and the EU, ensuring the application of the established bilateral readmission provisions and swiftly returning migrants who are not in need of international protection to their countries of origin. Equally, they welcomed the intention of Turkey to adopt immediately measures to further improve the socio-economic situation of the Syrians under temporary protection. Both sides underlined their shared commitment to take decisive and swift action to enhance the fight against criminal smuggling networks.
8. As stipulated in the European Council Conclusions on Enlargement of December 2014, Turkey and the EU have been working on the establishment of a **High Level Economic Dialogue Mechanism** which will contribute to further enhancement of economic relations and create a business platform to bring business circles together. They agreed to launch it in the first quarter of 2016.
9. They welcomed the establishment of a **High Level Energy Dialogue** and Strategic Energy Cooperation, which had been launched in Ankara on 16 March 2015. A regular exchange of information on energy cooperation at the global and regional level serves to the benefit of both sides. They agreed to hold the second meeting of this kind in the first quarter of 2016.
10. They took note of the launching of preparatory steps for upgrading the **Customs Union**. After completion of this preparatory work by both sides, formal negotiations could be launched towards the end of 2016.
11. All these elements will have to be taken forward in parallel and monitored closely. Turkey and the EU are determined to advance together the widespread spectrum of their actual agenda to ensure that this fresh impetus yields concrete results.

Source: Emphasis added by the author, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/11/29-eu-turkey-meeting-statement/>.

In March 2016, there has been a second EU-Turkey summit, which produced the so-called “Refugee deal”. Document 3 provides an overview on the main points agreed between the Heads of State or Government of the EU and Turkey regarding the management of irregular migration flows from Turkey to the EU.

Document 3: EU-Turkey Statement, 18 March 2016

**EU-Turkey Statement
Brussels, 18.03.2016**

[...]

1) All new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into Greek islands as from 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey. This will take place in full accordance with EU and international law, thus excluding any kind of collective expulsion. All migrants will be protected in accordance with the relevant international standards and in respect of the principle of non-refoulement. It will be a temporary and extraordinary measure which is necessary to end the human suffering and restore public order. Migrants arriving in the Greek islands will be duly registered and any application for asylum will be processed individually by the Greek authorities in accordance with the Asylum Procedures Directive, in cooperation with UNHCR. Migrants not applying for asylum or whose application has been found unfounded or inadmissible in accordance with the said directive will be returned to Turkey. [...]

2) For every Syrian being returned to Turkey from Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU taking into account the UN Vulnerability Criteria. A mechanism will be established, with the assistance of the Commission, EU agencies and other Member States, as well as the UNHCR, to ensure that this principle will be implemented as from the same day the returns start. Priority will be given to migrants who have not previously entered or tried to enter the EU irregularly. [...]

3) Turkey will take any necessary measures to prevent new sea or land routes for illegal migration opening from Turkey to the EU, and will cooperate with neighbouring states as well as the EU to this effect.

4) Once irregular crossings between Turkey and the EU are ending or at least have been substantially and sustainably reduced, a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme will be activated. EU Member States will contribute on a voluntary basis to this scheme.

5) The fulfilment of the visa liberalisation roadmap will be accelerated vis-à-vis all participating Member States with a view to lifting the visa requirements for Turkish citizens at the latest by the end of June 2016, provided that all benchmarks have been met. To this end Turkey will take the necessary steps to fulfil the remaining requirements to allow the Commission to make, following the required assessment of compliance with the benchmarks, an appropriate proposal by the end of April on the basis of which the European Parliament and the Council can make a final decision.

6) The EU, in close cooperation with Turkey, will further speed up the disbursement of the initially allocated 3 billion euros under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey and ensure funding of further projects for persons under temporary protection identified with swift input from Turkey before the end of March. [...]

7) The EU and Turkey welcomed the ongoing work on the upgrading of the Customs Union.

8) The EU and Turkey reconfirmed their commitment to re-energise the accession process as set out in their joint statement of 29 November 2015. They welcomed the opening of Chapter 17 on 14 December 2015 and decided, as a next step, to open Chapter 33 during the Netherlands presidency. [...]

9) The EU and its Member States will work with Turkey in any joint endeavour to improve humanitarian conditions inside Syria, in particular in certain areas near the Turkish border which would allow for the local population and refugees to live in areas which will be more safe. [...]

Source: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18-eu-turkey-statement/>.

The years 2016 and 2017, however, have highlighted changes in EU-Turkey relations including differentiation in the EU, migration, democratic values, the Cyprus conflict and other problems in the neighbourhood. Albeit the progress report by the European Commission in 2016 has become more critical towards recent developments in Turkey (see Document 4), Turkey remains a “key partner for the European Union” (European Commission 2016: 4).

Document 4: European Commission: Turkey Progress Report 2016

**Turkey 2016 Report
Brussels, 9.11.2016**

[...] In the wake of the post-coup measures, the EU called on the authorities to observe the highest standards in the rule of law and fundamental rights. While a relationship of trust and loyalty should exist between civil servants and the state and measures can be taken to ensure that, any allegation of wrongdoing should be established via transparent procedures in all individual cases. Individual criminal liability can only be established with full respect for the separation of powers, the full independence of the judiciary and the right of every individual to a fair trial, including through effective access to a lawyer. Turkey should ensure that any measure is taken only to the extent strictly required to the exigencies of the situation and in all cases stands the test of necessity and proportionality. The measures taken under the state of emergency are undergoing scrutiny by the Council of Europe. Turkey should urgently address the recommendations of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe of October 2016. [...]

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_turkey.pdf.

The constantly changing issue of EU-Turkey relations is the starting point for many interesting and relevant research topics. For a first overview, we recommend the following literature:

List of Literature

Online Sources

The European Commission provides information on its enlargement policy with Turkey:
https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/turkey_en (Last access: 14.03.2017).

Official homepage of the European External Action Service:
https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en (Last access: 14.03.2017).

The homepage of the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) provides analyses on security policy issues and gives an overview on relevant documents of the CFSP:
<http://www.iss.europa.eu/> (Last access: 14.03.2017).

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<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2017:2025:FIN>

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Wiener, Antje; Diez, Thomas. 2009. *European Integration Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yorulmazlar, Emirhan and Ebru Turhan. 2017. Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Arab Spring: Between Western Orientation and Regional Disorder. In *Turkey, the Arab Spring and Beyond*. Eds. Bülent Aras and E. Fuat Keyman. London: Routledge.

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