

# With or Without Turkey? The Many Determinants of the Official German Position on Turkey's EU Accession Process<sup>1</sup>

*Ebru Turhan*

## 1. Introduction

Germany and Turkey are unique partners which are tied to each other by means of a complex interdependence in economic, political and societal spheres. This spans from trade and direct investment partnership and regular collaboration under the umbrella of many international organizations and alliances such as the Group of Twenty (G20), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the anti-IS coalition to efforts to eliminate shared concerns related to cross-border terrorism and the multidimensional consequences of the refugee crisis as well as joint actions within the framework of the EU's various military and civilian missions. Official German position on Turkish membership in the European Union (EU) and its prolonged accession process constitutes an important aspect of German-Turkish relations, as well, and nurtures the already complex state of bilateral dialogue between both countries, as each dimension serves as a setting for the exchange of diverging and converging German and Turkish preferences and interests. Germany's official standing on Turkey's EU accession process has been of key importance for both Turkey and the member states of the EU as a result of the institutional engineering of the EU's enlargement politics. Important decisions concerning a candidate country's accession process are taken by the European Council and the Council of the EU,

---

1 This chapter partially builds on Turhan, Ebru. The European Council Decisions Related to Turkey's Accession to the EU: Interests vs. Norms. 2012, Baden-Baden; Turhan, Ebru. Turkey's EU accession process: do member states matter?. In: Journal of Contemporary European Studies, 2016, Vol. 24, No. 4, pp. 463-477; Turhan, Ebru. Europe's Crises, Germany's Leadership and Turkey's EU Accession Process, 2016, CESifo Forum, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 25-29; Turhan, Ebru. Türkiye-Almanya Ekonomik ve Siyasi İlişkilerinin Türkiye'nin AB Üyelik Süreci Bağlamında Analizi İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Maliye Araştırma Merkezi Konferansları Dergisi, 2016, Vol. 59, No. 1, pp. 48-71. Please refer to these studies for more data on relevant parts of the analysis.

which is also known as the Council of Ministers.<sup>2</sup> Although the European Council and the Council of the EU are “obliged to act in the general interest of the EU”<sup>3</sup> and thus, serve a rather supranational purpose, the inter-governmental drive suppresses to a great extent the supranational components within these two EU institutions as a result of the most direct and upfront representation of national governments, and hence, domestic preferences by the European Council and the Council of the EU.

The European Council and the Council of the EU have indeed always been at the forefront of the EU’s decisions with regard to Turkey’s EU accession process. While the European Council gave the political decisions on the confirmation of Turkey’s candidate status and the launch of accession talks with Turkey in October 2005 during its 10-11 December 1999 Helsinki and 16-17 December 2004 Brussels gatherings, respectively, based on the criteria defined by the European Council in Copenhagen in 1993, the Council of the EU played a critical role in Turkey’s accession negotiations rather than the pre-negotiation phase and has served as “the master of technicality of the accession negotiations”<sup>4</sup> by unanimously deciding on the opening and closing of negotiation chapters based on the recommendation of the European Commission (EC). Between 2005 and 2019 the Council of the EU opened 16 chapters in Turkey’s accession talks with the EU and temporarily closed one negotiation chapter. The Council of the EU has likewise got the right to take interim decisions on the progression of a candidate’s accession process and suspend the opening of particular chapters if it detects a significant and persistent breach in the candidate state of the opening benchmarks of these chapters. On that note, the Council of the EU decided in December 2006 to suspend negotiations with Turkey on eight chapters and not to close any chapters as a result of problems with regard to Turkey’s fulfilment of its responsibilities stemming from the Additional Protocol, which is related to its extending of its Customs Union (CU) with the EU to ten new member states including Cyprus.<sup>5</sup>

- 
- 2 Turhan, Ebru. Turkey’s EU accession process: do member states matter?. In: *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 2016, Vol. 24, No. 4, pp. 463-477; Turhan, Ebru. *Europe’s Crises, Germany’s Leadership and Turkey’s EU Accession Process*, 2016, CESifo Forum, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 25-29.
  - 3 Puetter, Uwe. *The European Council & the Council: New intergovernmentalism and institutional change*. Oxford, 2014, p. 41.
  - 4 Turhan. Turkey’s EU accession process: do member states matter?, p. 465.
  - 5 Council of the European Union. Press Release. 2770th Council Meeting General Affairs and External Relations

Although the majority of decisions concerning the EU's widening are taken under unanimity rule, and thus provide each member state with veto power, economically and politically more powerful member states of the EU serve as leading players in the decision-making processes of the inter-governmental institutions of the EU and suppress the veto power of smaller member states, as the latter incline towards "bargaining in the form of 'package deals' where they can give priority to a few issues of importance, setting aside others."<sup>6</sup> In this vein, various studies have shown that as a result of being the top economic power in the EU and commanding a high level of administrative as well as political stability, Germany has been acting both as a leading initiator as and key shaper of the majority of strategic decisions taken in the realm of the European integration process.<sup>7</sup>

The EU's enlargement politics vis-à-vis Turkey, which has been mainly determined during the gatherings of the European Council and the Council of the EU, has been to a great extent shaped by the preferences of successive German governments, as well. The shift from a conservative-liberal coalition government to a more Turkey-friendly social democratic-green coalition government in 1998 and the German federal government's strong insistence on the launch of accession talks with Ankara during the British presidency on 3 October 2005 despite the French objections played a key role in the confirmation of Turkish candidacy at the 1999 Luxembourg European Council and the 2004 joint decision of the European Council to launch of accession talks with Ankara in October 2005.<sup>8</sup> Throughout the negotiation phase the German influence in the Council of the EU has been particularly evident in its temporary veto on the launch of talks in Chapter 22 related to regional policy and coordination of structural instruments in 2013, and more recently, in Germany's call to cut the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) provided to Turkey within the framework of its EU accession process as a result of Berlin's complains about

---

General Affairs Brussels, 11.12.2006, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_PRES-06-352\\_en.htm?locale=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_PRES-06-352_en.htm?locale=en) [18.09.2018].

- 6 Thorhallsson, Baldur. How Do Little Frogs Fly? Small States in the European Union. NUPI Policy Brief, 12/2015, p. 3.
- 7 See for instance, Moravcsik, Andrew. The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht. 1998, New York; Tallberg, Jonas. Bargaining Power in the European Council. In: Journal of Common Market Studies, 2008, Vol. 46, No. 3, pp. 685-708; Jannig, Josef/ Möller, Almut. Leading from the centre: Germany's role in Europe. ECFR Policy Brief, July 2016, [http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR\\_183\\_-\\_GERMAN\\_LEADERSHIP2.pdf](http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR_183_-_GERMAN_LEADERSHIP2.pdf) [15.09.2018].
- 8 Turhan, Ebru. The European Council Decisions Related to Turkey's Accession to the EU: Interests vs. Norms. 2012, Baden-Baden.

Turkey's adherence to democratic procedures and fundamental rights as well as the detention of German citizens in Turkey.<sup>9</sup> The call eventually culminated in the 20 October 2017 decision of the European Council to task the EC to elaborate on whether to cut and re-orient the IPA<sup>10</sup> and the subsequent 18 November 2017 verdict of the EP and the Council of the EU to cut the funds by 105 million euros and freeze the use of another 70 million euros.<sup>11</sup>

What are the leading determinants of the official German attitude towards Turkey's EU accession process? Relying on the key premises of rationalism and constructivism - two important theoretical approaches to the study of the EU's widening - this paper defines efforts for pursuit of interests (PI) and norm compliance (NC) as the explanatory variables applicable to the study of German preferences with regard to Turkish membership in the EU. In terms of PI, the paper makes a distinction between the pursuit of "security and power" related interests and "absolute welfare" related ones. As far as NC is concerned, drawing on Habermasian thought<sup>12</sup>, a differentiation is made between compliance with "moral" norms and "ethical" norms affecting official German position on Turkish accession process. Following this introductory part of the paper, the second part lays out key premises of rationalism and constructivism and defines the explanatory variables applicable to the study of German preferences with regard to Turkish membership in the EU, in general and Turkish accession process, in particular. Focusing on both the pre-negotiation phase and the official negotiation phase, the paper then scrutinizes the explanatory power of PI and NC in justifying positive and negative German attitude towards Turkey's EU accession process through the careful examination of the official statements, press releases and public speeches of leading representatives of successive German governments. Here, attention is also directed at the internal dynamics of both Turkey and Germany as well as the implications of more recent developments such as the Eurozone crisis and the

---

9 Paul, Amanda/ Schmidt, Juliane. Turkey's relations with Germany and the EU: Breaking the vicious circle. EPC Policy Brief, 2 October 2017.

10 European Council. Remarks by President Donald Tusk on the European Council meetings and the Leaders' Agenda. Speech 608/17, 20.10.2017, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/10/20/tusk-final-remarks-european-council/> [01.09.2018].

11 Deutsche Welle. AB'den Türkiye'ye „siyasi“ kesinti, 18.11.2017, <https://www.dw.com/tr/abden-t%C3%BCrkiye-ye-siyasi-kesinti/a-41434651> [01.09.2018].

12 Habermas, Jürgen. On the Pragmatic, the Ethical and the Moral Employments of Practical Reason. In: Jürgen Habermas (Ed.). *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics*. Cambridge, 1993, pp. 1-17.

European efforts to manage the flow of refugees for the formation of Germany's Turkey policy. The final part of the paper discusses the explanatory capability of PI and NC in elucidating the construction of Germany's preferences pertaining to Turkish membership in the EU.

## *2. Theorizing the formation of official German attitude towards Turkish accession to the EU*

The rationalist-constructivist dichotomy and the contribution of these two theoretical approaches to understanding the widening process of the EU have played a central role in debates in the field of European studies.<sup>13</sup> Whereas a paradigmatic dispute exists between rationalism and constructivism due to the application of two different logics of social action - logic of consequences vs. logic of appropriateness<sup>14</sup> - recent research emphasizes the need to view these two approaches as “complementary rather than contradictory.”<sup>15</sup>

Rationalism relies on the illuminating capability of PI in order to explain interstate cooperation in the international system. The application of a differentiation between realism / neorealism and neoliberalism / liberal intergovernmentalism (LI) to the study of rationalist approaches brings along a distinction between “power and security” maximization and “absolute welfare” maximization. The classical realists argue that states are rational and unitary actors, who define their interests in terms of power through the evaluation of the position they acquire in the international system in comparison to other states. Morgenthau underlines the primacy of the maximization of states' security-related interests arguing that “the

---

13 See for example Torreblanca, Jose I. Accommodating interests and principles in the European Union: The case of the Eastern Enlargement. In: Helene Sjursen (Ed.). *Enlargement and the Finality of the EU*. Oslo, 2002, pp. 7-34; Checkel, Jeffrey T. Norms, Institutions and National Identity in Contemporary Europe. In: *International Studies Quarterly*, 1999, Vol. 43, No. 1, p. 108; Schimmelfennig, Frank/ Sedelmeier, Ulrich. Theorizing EU enlargement: research focus, hypotheses and state of research. In: *Journal of European Public Policy*, 2002, Vol. 9, No. 4, p. 508.

14 “Logic of appropriateness refers to actors' efforts to “do the right thing”; while according to rationalism's “logic of consequentialism” actors tend to maximize their preferences.

15 Adler, Emanuel. Constructivism in International Relations: Sources, Contributions and Debates. In Walter Carlsnaes/ Thomas Risse/ Beth A Simmons (Eds.). *Handbook of International Relations*. London, 2013, p. 133.

survival of a political unit, such as a nation, in its identity is the irreducible minimum, the necessary element of its interests vis-à-vis other states.”<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, realists lean towards a rather cynical view of interstate cooperation. The formation of alliances, i.e. the establishment of interstate cooperation, could just be realized, “when two or more competing nations seek either to increase their own strength by adding the power of the other nation to their own, or by withholding the power of other nations from their enemy.”<sup>17</sup> The classical realism has been later amended by the neorealist school. Neorealism provided the study of international relations with the concept of anarchy, which relates to the lack of a dominant authority in the international system, leading to states’ counting on their own resources for survival and their fixation with their sovereignty, security as well as with how much power they possess compared to other states in the international system.<sup>18</sup>

Regarding German attitude towards Turkish membership in the EU, main assumptions of classical realism and neorealism imply that German efforts for the pursuit of security and power related interests would play a key role in the formation of official German position pertaining to Turkish accession process. Successive German governments are likely to support Turkey’s EU bid, if the acceleration and successful finalization of Turkish accession process would foster German power position in the international system, eliminate security threats, and / or counterbalance the power of an external competitor.

Whereas realist approaches to the study of international relations place strong emphasis on the presence of security and survival-related conflicts at any time in the international system, another strand of rationalism, neoliberalism, rather deals with the existence of issue-specific, and in particular, economic interdependence among the states in the international system.<sup>19</sup> According to the neoliberalist thought, globalization trends bring along rapid growth of international trade and foreign direct investments (FDIs)

---

16 Morgenthau, Hans J. Another ‘great’ debate: the national interest of the United States. In Andrew Linklater (Ed.). *International Relations: Critical Concepts in Social Science*. London, 2000, p. 288.

17 Turhan. *The European Council Decisions Related to Turkey’s Accession to the EU: Interests vs. Norms*, p. 42.

18 Grieco, Joseph M. *Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism*. In: *International Organization Foundation*, 1998, Vol. 42, No. 3, pp. 485-507

19 Keohane, Robert O./ Nye, Joseph S. 1st Edition 1977. *Power and Interdependence: World politics in transition*. New York, 1989.

as well as extraordinary flow of information among states and societies. These trends lessen the effectiveness of states' national monetary and financial policies. Accordingly, the coordination of policies between the states, namely, interstate cooperation, becomes inevitable<sup>20</sup>, throughout which states seek to maximize their absolute gains remaining mostly indifferent to any economic gains made by other states.

Another rationalist approach to studying international relations and EU enlargement, liberal intergovernmentalism (LI) also focuses on the issue-specific (and, in particular, economic) interstate interdependence in the international system to explain policy coordination and cooperation among states. What differentiates LI from the neoliberalist school of thought is its strong emphasis on the impact of domestic politics on the formation of states' preferences and interests. By offering a sequential analysis of a liberal theory of domestic preference formation and an intergovernmental study of interstate strategic bargaining, LI defines the demand and supply aspects of international cooperation.<sup>21</sup> According to LI while the demand for interstate cooperation is determined by the governmental preferences that are above all shaped by the interests and preferences of the most powerful and influential societal actors, the supply of integration (i.e. final outcome with regard to policy coordination) takes shape following a strategic interstate bargaining process. Neoliberalism and LI have differing views on the role of domestic politics in the formation of states' preferences. However, both theoretical approaches regard cooperation as a means for states to maximize their issue-specific absolute gains. According to both approaches, survival still remains the most fundamental goal of all states.<sup>22</sup> However, in case of absence of any threat to states' security, welfare related motives are likely to define the scope, conditions and limits of interstate cooperation.

When transferring the main assumptions of neoliberalism and LI to the study of the key dynamics behind German attitude towards Turkish membership in the EU, German economic interests emerge as a key factor, which are likely to shape official German position on Turkey's EU accession process. In the absence of any threats to Germany's security, the con-

---

20 Cooper, Richard N. Economic Interdependence and Foreign Policy in the Seventies. *World Politics*, 1972, Vol. 24, No. 2, pp. 177-179.

21 Moravcsik, Andrew. Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 1993, Vol. 31, No. 4, pp. 473-524.

22 Austermann, Frauke. *European Union Delegations in EU Foreign Policy: A Diplomatic Service of Different Speeds*. New York, 2014.

tribution of Turkish EU membership / the acceleration of Turkish accession process to the maximization of Germany's absolute welfare gains is likely to determine the German support for the process. Here, particularly, influential societal actors such as the business interest groups are likely to put pressure on the German federal government for the formation of official policies in accordance with the preferences of German business world.

While rationalist approaches put emphasis on the role of PI in international relations, social constructivist studies argue that political behaviour and preferences are shaped by various norms. In this vein, constructivists refer to global politics as a continuous social construction founded on varying as well as shifting perceptions, understandings, ideas and values of agents.<sup>23</sup> As such, normative interpretations and understandings about life construct social reality from which interests originate. To put it in Adler's words: "the manner in which material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world"<sup>24</sup> Thus, constructivists handle norms as independent variables and highlight their major role in the formation of actors' interests and preferences.

By making a cherished and widely cited distinction between "moral" and "ethical" norms, Habermas contributes to a more concrete classification of norms affecting preference formation. Moral norms are regarded as universalistic principles founded on the objective interpretations about lifeworld and involve universal principles of democracy, human rights and rule of law. Ethical norms, on the other hand, address subjective observations of the world based on collective identities stemming from various components such as religion, ethnicity, nationalism, history and memories.<sup>25</sup> Thus, whereas actors who go with ethical discourses are usually making use of a "logic of appropriateness", and attach great value to "the right thing to do" based on "their social environment and its collectively shared systems of meanings ("culture" in a broad sense)"<sup>26</sup>, participants in moral discourse disconnect themselves from all perceptions of a socially constructed ethical reality focusing on universal values like human rights,

---

23 Ulbert, Cornelia. Social Constructivism. In: Siegfried Schieder/ Manuela Spindler (Eds.). *Theories of International Relations*. London, 2014, pp. 248-268.

24 Adler, Emanuel. Seizing the Middle-Ground: Constructivism in World Politics. In: *European Journal of International Relations*, 1997, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 322.

25 Habermas. On the Pragmatic, the Ethical and the Moral Employments of Practical Reason.

26 Risse, Thomas. Let's Argue!?: Communicative Action in World Politics. In: *International Organization*, 2000, Vol. 54, No. 1, p. 5.



democracy and rule of law, when defining their preferences with regard to a particular situation. The Habermasian distinction between moral and ethical interpretations of lifeworld lead to the classification of the EU either as a “value-based” or a “rights-based post-national” community.<sup>27</sup> The EU as a “value-based” community would regard the collective identity as the basis of its existence and evolution. In a “rights-based post-national” union, on the other hand, the attention is directed at the members’ application of universal principles.

In light of their key assumptions and premises, social constructivists regard enlargement of the EU as a response to member states’ efforts for / attention to NC. Drawing on the Habermasian distinction between moral and ethical norms, it could be argued that in a socially constructed world order, Germany would support Turkey’s EU accession process, if Turkey complies with the liberal democratic values of the EU and/or if Germany would regard Europe’s “collective” identity compatible with the one of Turkey, i.e. if it would perceive Turkey a natural part of Europe.

### *3. Germany and Turkey’s EU accession process: power and security maximization*

Germany and Turkey have been exceptionally close partners for decades in regard to foreign policy and security matters. In an attempt to study the impact of Germany’s pursuit of its security and power related interests on the formation of official German attitude towards Turkey’s EU accession process this chapter analyses the official statements, press releases and public speeches of leading representatives of successive German federal governments on Turkish accession process with a particular focus on their timing and relation to important security threats and changes in the structure of the international system and the regional settings. The chapter takes a close look at the pre-negotiation phase in EU-Turkey relations, thereby focusing on the confirmation of Turkey’s candidacy status and the decision to launch accession talks with Turkey, and scrutinizes also the negotiation phase by analyzing the shift in German position on Turkish accession process in view of the Arab Spring and the refugee crisis.

---

27 Sjursen, Helene. *Enlargement in Perspective: EU’s quest for identity*. ARENA Working Paper, 2008, No. 5.

### 3.1 From Luxembourg to Helsinki

The European Council rejected Turkey's candidacy status and its inclusion in the then enlargement wave together with the Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) at its December 1997 Luxembourg Summit. German Chancellor Helmut Kohl had acted as one of the leading opponents of Turkish candidacy during the Luxembourg gathering of the European Council.<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz deemed Kohl responsible for the EU's decision<sup>29</sup>, which took bilateral relations between Turkey and Germany to a particularly low level by the start of 1998. In the weeks and months leading to the Luxembourg European Council, the German government representatives had not made any statements, which had pointed to the potential contribution of a Turkish candidacy to European / German PI in security and power maximization terms. This is not surprising, given that despite the rise of severe security threats in the European periphery with the Bosnian crisis, until the outbreak of the Kosovo war in 1999, Germany and the remaining member states of the EU did not pay much attention to their role as a security provider in the immediate neighbourhood of the EU and to the development of the EU's own crisis management and prevention operations, particularly by means of access to NATO assets and capabilities and cooperation with key partners in the region.<sup>30</sup> Thus, throughout the Bosnian war and ahead of the 1997 Luxembourg European Council, Turkey's significance for the promotion of stability in the European periphery and its central role in the delivery of NATO assets to EU-led operations – as a non-EU NATO member – remained largely undiscovered.

The 1998-1999 Kosovo crisis and the subsequent NATO intervention pointed out that the EU needed to advance its geopolitical agency and its defence capabilities for the accomplishment of peace and stability in the European periphery. The eruption of the Kosovo conflict despite conventional prevention measures taken by the EU including press releases and economic sanctions on former Yugoslavia and the containment of the crisis following the US-led NATO intervention in the EU's backyard pointed to

---

28 Nachmani, Amikam. *Turkey: Facing a New Millenium: Coping with intertwined Conflicts*. Manchester, 2003.

29 Cohen, Roger. *Crisis in the Balkans: The Continent, Europe's Aim: Arms Parity*. In: *The New York Times*, 15 June 1999.

30 Ehrhart, Hans-Georg. *Prevention and Regional Security: The Royaumont Process and the Stabilization of South-Eastern Europe*. *OSCE Yearbook*, 1998, Vol. 1998, pp. 327-346.

the need to enhance security and defence policy related coordination among the EU's member states. Europe's experience with its immediate neighbourhood alarmed the EU leaders about the need for autonomous defence capabilities and a more effective coordination of both policies and operations with the NATO as "the Kosovo episode proved devastating to Europe's continental dignity and pride Europe – and the EU in particular – was humbled, even humiliated. As the crow flies, Kosovo is a mere few hundred miles from Italy, Greece and Austria."<sup>31</sup>

In the aftermath of the Kosovo crisis, the EU's efforts to become a more effective and influential actor in the promotion of peace and security in the European periphery accompanied by the initiation of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) to effectively combine European civilian and military capabilities for crisis situations, on the one hand, and cooperate with the NATO, on the other, fostered Turkey's role as a crucial strategic partner. As a non-EU NATO member, Turkey's consent to the EU's use of NATO's assets and capabilities in crisis management situations seemed to be the key to the successful application of the ESDP.<sup>32</sup> Then German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, who acted as one of the leading proponents of the acknowledgement of Turkish candidacy at the December 1999 Helsinki European Council, highlighted in his official statements Turkey's significance for the promotion and safeguarding of peace, security and stability in Europe as a key NATO partner, while linking this particularity also to the strengthening of Turkey's EU perspective. A few days ahead of the Helsinki Summit, Schröder, for instance, stressed that "we cannot on the one hand keep stressing Turkey's strategic significance for Europe, placing great burden on it within NATO, [...] if on the other hand we are not also ready to offer it a clear European perspective going beyond the simple customs union."<sup>33</sup> In a similar vein, the German Chancellor pointed out following the announcement of Turkish candidacy that although the country had a long way to go in regard to full membership in the EU, Turkey's EU path would be vital for stability in the region.<sup>34</sup>

---

31 van Ham, Peter. The EU's War over Iraq: The Last Wake-up Call. In: Dieter Mahncke/Alicia Ambos/ Christopher Reynolds (Eds.). *European Foreign Policy: From Rhetoric to Reality?*. Brussels, 2004, p. 209.

32 Turhan. *The European Council Decisions Related to Turkey's Accession to the EU: Interests vs. Norms*, p. 353.

33 Agence France Presse. *Germany wants Turkey to become EU candidate*, 3 December 1999.

34 *Die Welt*. *Türkei-Entscheidung empört die Union; Glos spricht von einem Bären-dienst - Gerhard Schröder verteidigt Beitrittskandidatenstatus*, 13 December 1999,

### 3.2 *Changing understanding of security post September 11*

Following the confirmation of Turkey's candidate status at the 1999 Helsinki Summit, Turkish accession process ran smoothly without any major hitches. In contrast to the pre-Helsinki era, on the eve of the December 2004 Brussels European Council, which confirmed the launch of official accession talks with Turkey in October 2005, security-related motives dominated official German statements in regard to Turkish membership in the EU.<sup>35</sup> Ahead of the Brussels Summit key representatives of the German federal government made regularly reference to Turkey's increasing value as a security provider for Europe and its wider periphery. The testimonials took particular account of changing systemic conditions following the September 11, 2001 attacks against the United States (US). The attacks had indeed led to the rise of a more multifaceted concept of threat perception by the EU and its member states, which pointed to the likely implications of global security risks for the internal security of the states, and highlighted the need for enhanced dialogue between Europe and the Muslim world. Europe's changing perception of the security challenges and their elimination was above all reflected in the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) of the EU. The ESS spoke of future security threats as the products of globalization, which diminishes the well-defined barriers between internal and external dimensions of security.<sup>36</sup> The need for the enhancement of dialogue between the EU and the Muslim communities for the minimization of the negative externalities of regional security risks, on the other hand, was underlined in the conclusions of the extraordinary European Council gathering post September 11: "...the fight against the scourge of terrorism will be all the more effective if it is based on an in-depth political dialogue with those countries and regions of the world in which terrorism comes into being"<sup>37</sup>

Changing perception of security threats and the maintenance of Europe's security in the post September 11 era nurtured Turkey's valuable position at the crossroads between the East and the West in political, econo-

---

<https://www.welt.de/print-welt/article592563/Tuerkei-Entscheidung-empuert-die-Union.html> [16.05.2019].

35 Turhan. The European Council Decisions Related to Turkey's Accession to the EU: Interests vs. Norms, pp. 333-338.

36 European Council. A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy. Brussels, 12 December 2003

37 European Council. Conclusions and Plan of Action of the Extraordinary European Council Meeting. SN140/01, 21 September 2001, p. 3.

mic and social terms. It did so by fostering Turkey's role as a potential-bridge builder between the Western and Muslim communities, which would contribute to the improvement of the dialogue between the two societies and to the transfer of universal democratic values embraced by the West to the Middle East, in particular by means of Turkey's own EU accession process.<sup>38</sup> Turkey's enhanced value as a security provider for Europe post September 11 and the significance of its accession process for the maintenance of security in Europe and its wider neighbourhood was emphasized in German statements ahead of the December 2004 Brussels European Council. On the eve of the Brussels Summit, Schröder referred to Turkey as "an anchor of stability in the region"<sup>39</sup>, while then German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer stated that Turkey's EU membership would strengthen the Union against international terrorism.<sup>40</sup> According to Fischer, the diffusion of liberal democratic values to the Muslim world by Turkey was only going to happen following Turkey's own reform process: "...If the modernization process in Turkey is successful, Turkey's much-cited function as a bridge towards the Central Asian states and to the Middle East could become a reality."<sup>41</sup> Thus, German support for the official launch of accession talks with Turkey overlapped to an important extent with Germany's efforts for security-related PI in the post-September 11 era.

### *3.3 Arab Spring and the refugee crisis*

The linkage between German support for the acceleration of Turkey's EU accession process and efforts for PI in regard to security concerns has been also evident following the start of accession talks with Ankara in 2005, and particularly after the rise of the regional turmoil in the European periphery with the social uprisings in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), which kicked off in 2011 and came to be known as the Arab Spring. Following the onset of the Arab Spring Turkish and German

---

38 Turhan. The European Council Decisions Related to Turkey's Accession to the EU: Interests vs. Norms, p. 242.

39 Associated Press Worldstream. Turkish, German leaders confident of EU green light for Ankara, 3 October 2004.

40 Associated Press Worldstream. Fischer: Turkey's EU membership would strengthen the block against terrorism, 20 October 2004.

41 Fischer, Joschka. Turkey's European Perspective: The German View. Turkish Policy Quarterly, 2004, Vol. 3, No. 3, p.4.

foreign ministries signed the German-Turkish Strategic Dialogue Mechanism in May 2013 that aims to foster bilateral dialogue on key international issues including the turbulence in the Arab world and the Middle East, fight against international terrorism and organized crime as well as supply of energy security in Europe. The bilateral strategic dialogue, which seeks above all PI in security terms, referred to Turkey's EU accession process as "beneficial for both sides."<sup>42</sup> The joint emphasis of Turkish and German foreign ministries on the significance of the Turkish accession process on the occasion of the launch of the bilateral dialogue mechanism came in fact a few months after the German Federal Foreign Office had stressed in February 2013 that the EU needed to resume talks with Turkey without losing further time.<sup>43</sup>

The support of the German Federal Foreign Ministry for Turkey's accession process was also backed by similar PI-related statements of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union's (CDU) high-level members and CDU-near experts following the outbreak of the regional turmoil in Europe's periphery.<sup>44</sup> For instance, Hans-Georg Pöttering, former President of the European Parliament (EP) and then Chairman of the CDU-near Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) emphasized in a statement he made in February 2013 the likely opening of two new chapters in EU's accession talks with Turkey in the coming months, while making reference to PI related goals in the same statement such as bilateral cooperation opportunities in the resolution of the conflict in the Middle East and the adoption of a common successful development policy vis-à-vis Africa.<sup>45</sup> In line with this statement, Chancellor Merkel announced her support for

---

42 Auswaertiges Amt. Joint Declaration between the Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey on the establishment of a Strategic Dialogue Mechanism, 12 May 2013, p. 1.

43 Anadolu Agency. Germany Warns EU over Turkey, 21 December 2012.

44 See for a more detailed analysis Turhan, Ebru. Germany's Leadership Role in the Eurozone Crisis and its

Implications for Turkey's EU Bid: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach. Paper presented at the 44<sup>th</sup> UACES Annual Conference, 1-3 September 2014, Cork; Turhan, Ebru. Türkiye-Almanya Ekonomik ve Siyasal İlişkilerinin Türkiye'nin AB Üyelik Süreci Bağlamında Analizi. In: İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Maliye Araştırma Merkezi Konferansları Dergisi, 2016, Vol. 59, No. 1, pp. 48-71.

45 Cevik, İsmail. Die Türkei erlebt eine außergewöhnliche Phase der politischen Stabilität. In: DTJ, 22 February 2013.

the opening of a new chapter in Turkey's accession talks with the EU at the end of February 2013, despite her personal reservations.<sup>46</sup>

German federal government adopted a similar policy in 2015 vis-à-vis Turkish accession to the EU taking into consideration the escalation of the unprecedented influx of refugees to Europe as a result of the escalation of the Syrian conflict. Despite her personal sceptical stance towards Turkey's full membership in the EU accompanied by her reluctance to make any official declarations on this issue at all between March 2014 and September 2015<sup>47</sup> and notwithstanding the de facto frozen status of accession talks with Turkey<sup>48</sup>, German Chancellor Merkel granted her sudden support for the acceleration of Turkish accession process during a visit to Turkey in exchange for stronger collaboration between Turkey and the EU in regard to the management of refugee influx to Europe.<sup>49</sup> While Germany had become the prime destination for Syrian refugees, Turkey had gained popularity as a transit and destination country since the onset of the Syrian War, as well.<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, Turkey emerged as a crucial actor for the management of the refugee influx to Germany, particularly after it became clear that the majority of the EU's member states were reluctant to "show solidarity with regard to the implementation of an EU-wide relocation and resettlement procedure"<sup>51</sup> and thus, demonstrate willingness to share burden with frontline member states such as Greece and Italy for an EU-wide management of the refugee crisis within the Union's own borders.

The member states' reluctance to take solid responsibility to handle the crisis culminated in Germany's search for external partners for the man-

---

46 Hudson, Alexandra. Merkel Backs New EU Talks for Turkey but has Doubts. In: Reuters, 23 February 2013.

47 Following her February 2014 statement that emphasized her skeptical position on Turkey's full membership in the EU, the German Chancellor did not make any official declaration on Turkey's EU accession process until October 2015. See for the 2014 statement, Zeit Online. Merkel verweigert Erdoğan die volle Unterstützung, 4 February 2014, <http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2014-02/merkel-erdogan-eu-mitgliedschaft-tuerkei-wahlkampf> [01.09.2018].

48 The last chapter in EU-Turkey accession talks was opened in November 2013.

49 Deutsche Welle. Germany ready to support Turkey's EU accession process, says Merkel, 18 October 2015, <http://www.dw.com/en/germany-ready-to-support-turkeys-eu-accession-process-says-merkel/a-18789797> [01.09.2018].

50 Turhan, Ebru. German-Turkish cooperation on irregular migration a must, In: Hürriyet Daily News, 30 November 2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/Default.aspx?pageID=238&nID=91844&NewsCatID=396> [01.09.2018].

51 Turhan, Ebru. The Implications of the Refugee Crisis for Turkish-German Relations: An Analysis of the Critical Ebbs and Flows in the Bilateral Dialogue. In: Marmara Üniversitesi Öneri Dergisi, 2018, Vol. 13, No. 49, p. 196.

agement, containment and reduction of irregular migration flows outside the EU's borders. In light of Berlin's evident dependence on Ankara in regard to the management of the refugee crisis Merkel suddenly acted as the leading proponent of opening new chapters in Turkey's accession talks with the EU<sup>52</sup>, which came into reality with the conclusions of November 2015 EU-Turkey Summit and March 2016 EU-Turkey Statement (also known as the "refugee deal") within the framework the "package deal" between Turkey and the EU concerning cooperation on the handling of the refugee crisis. In view of her eagerness to develop a containment strategy for the crisis it should not come as a surprise that Merkel also played a crucial role in the formation of the "refugee deal".<sup>53</sup>

In a nutshell, in view of German efforts for the pursuit of (particularly security related) interests official German attitude towards Turkey's EU accession process experienced a temporary, yet clear shift, once again, just as it did following the emergence of the Arab Spring.

#### 4. *Germany and Turkey's EU accession process: absolute welfare maximization*

Economic relations between Germany and Turkey have been quite at the forefront of the bilateral dialogue between both countries. Germany serves as Turkey's leading trading partner and as the second biggest foreign direct investor in Turkey after the Netherlands with the operations of more than 7000 German companies or companies with German capital in the country. On the other hand, Turkey acts both as an important export market and a base for the regional operations of German companies, particularly in the MENA region. The economic relations between Germany and Turkey were above all boosted following the start of accession talks with Turkey in October 2005, which consolidated Turkey's economic stability due to Turkish efforts to implement the Copenhagen economic and political criteria. In this vein, it makes sense to study the impact of Germany's economic interests and preferences on the formation of official German attitude towards Turkey's EU bid by examining the shifts and continuities in Germany's position in view of changes and continuities in Turkey's level of adherence of Copenhagen economic criteria, Turkish-German economic relations and the overarching status of Turkish economy.

---

52 Turhan. Turkey's EU accession process: do member states matter?.

53 Ibid.



#### *4.1 Turkish economy and German position on Turkey's EU accession process throughout the pre-negotiation phase*

As far as German support for the approval of Turkey's candidate status at the 1999 Helsinki European Council, just two years after its rejection at the 1997 Luxembourg European Council, is concerned, a comparison of 1998 and 1999 European Commission Progress Reports on Turkey in regard to Turkey's fulfilment of the Copenhagen economic criteria<sup>54</sup> reveals that German efforts for absolute welfare maximization did not play a key role in the formation of German preferences regarding the Helsinki conclusions. According to the key findings of the reports, during 1998-1999, Turkey did not make any significant progress in various key indicators related to the existence of a functioning market economy such as economic policy essentials, currency stability, real GDP growth rate, sufficiently developed financial sector and liberal trade regime.<sup>55</sup> The 1995-1999 era in Turkey was particularly characterized by continuous early elections and weak coalition governments<sup>56</sup>, which prevented the implementation of much needed economic reforms and effective fight against key challenges including increasing public deficit-to-GDP ratio, constant currency fluctuation as well as an unstable growth model in Turkey. According to the Progress Reports, Turkey's capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces, was not fostered either during 1998-1999. In regard to key indicators such as structural transformation of Turkish economy, sufficient investment in human and physical capital as well as state interference in the economy, the reports indicated critical deficiencies, lack of progress and the need for urgent improvement.<sup>57</sup>

In September 1997, a few weeks prior to the Luxembourg decision concerning the rejection of Turkish candidacy, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel had referred to the vulnerable condition of the Turkish economy as

---

54 The existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union.

55 Turhan. The European Council Decisions Related to Turkey's Accession to the EU: Interests vs. Norms.

56 Ercan, Metin R./ Önis, Ziya. Turkish Privatization: Institutions and Dilemmas. In: Turkish Studies, 2001, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 110-111.

57 European Commission. 1998 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession, 1998, [https://www.ab.gov.tr/files/AB\\_Iliskileri/Tur\\_En\\_Realitons/Progress/Turkey\\_Progress\\_Report\\_1998.pdf](https://www.ab.gov.tr/files/AB_Iliskileri/Tur_En_Realitons/Progress/Turkey_Progress_Report_1998.pdf) [05.09.2018]; European Commission. 1999 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession, 1999, [https://www.ab.gov.tr/files/AB\\_Iliskileri/Tur\\_En\\_Realitons/Progress/Turkey\\_Progress\\_Report\\_1999.pdf](https://www.ab.gov.tr/files/AB_Iliskileri/Tur_En_Realitons/Progress/Turkey_Progress_Report_1999.pdf) [05.09.2018].

one of the leading hurdles to Turkish membership in the EU<sup>58</sup>, and, thus, linked German objection to Turkey's candidate status to economic considerations. Ahead of the 1999 Helsinki Summit, on the other hand, where Germany acted as one of the leading proponents of approving Turkey's EU candidacy, key representatives of the German federal government did not make any statements pertaining to Turkish economy. This is surprising given that during 1997-1999 Turkey did not make any significant progress in the fulfilment of key benchmarks related to the Copenhagen economic criteria. This indicates that other considerations must have triumphed over German economic considerations in Helsinki.

Contrary to the 1999 decision, German considerations for PI in economic terms, played an important role in the formation of the official German position on the opening of the accession talks with Turkey, which was decided at the December 2004 Brussels European Council. Ahead of as well as throughout the summit, key representatives of the German federal government put strong emphasis on the significant progress achieved in Turkey's fulfilment of the Copenhagen economic criteria since the acknowledgement of the Turkish candidacy, praised the dynamism of the Turkish economy and highlighted the welfare-related benefits of Turkish full membership in the EU both for Germany and the remaining member states.<sup>59</sup> Chancellor Schröder, for example, stated that Germany had more to lose than gain from Turkey's exclusion from the EU, emphasizing that Germany had already acted as Turkey's foremost trading partner<sup>60</sup> and that a credible EU membership perspective was going to further foster the bilateral trade relationship between both countries.<sup>61</sup> In a similar vein, Foreign Minister Fischer expressed, just a few days ahead of the summit, it was in the interest of the EU to start the accession negotiations with Turkey in light of the progress it had made, referring to the economic and political reforms Turkey had accomplished following the confirmation of its candidate status.<sup>62</sup>

---

58 Agence France Press. Turkish PM Yilmaz to visit Germany: EU discussions expected, 9 September 1997.

59 Turhan. The European Council Decisions Related to Turkey's Accession to the EU: Interests vs. Norms, pp. 339-340.

60 Agence France Press. Germany's Schroeder happy at go-ahead for Turkey's EU talks, 17 December 2004.

61 Associated Press Worldstream. Schroeder to raise exchange rate issue at G-8 summit, 30 December 2004.

62 Agence France Presse. Germany warns against watered-down EU offer to Turkey, 13 December 2004.

German support for the acceleration of Turkey's membership process following the acknowledgement of Turkey as a candidate country for EU membership at the 1999 Helsinki European Council is not surprising given that just during 1999-2004, the German-Turkish trade volume increased from € 11.5 billion to € 19.8 billion<sup>63</sup> as a result of the deep economic reforms undertaken by Ankara, which culminated in enhanced economic growth, domestic demand and fostered Turkey's status as a location for direct investments. These reforms have also been praised by the European Commission in its 2000-2004 Progress Reports on Turkey.<sup>64</sup> Ahead of the 2004 Brussels Summit, the German business world acted in concert with German political circles and demonstrated clear support for the opening of accession talks. This was for instance reflected in the joint press release by the Federation of German Industries (BDI) and its Turkish counterpart, Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSIAD). The joint press release emphasized that the December 2004 European Council needed to act in accordance with the earlier commitments, if Turkey met the Copenhagen political criteria.<sup>65</sup>

#### *4.2 Germany's Turkey policy during the Eurozone crisis*

The linkage between German efforts for pursuit of economic interests and German attitude towards Turkey's EU accession process was in particular evident during the Eurozone crisis, which broke out in late 2009 and triggered substantial losses in European economies. Although the German economy was not hit at its core by the Eurozone crisis, it did not remain unaffected by the Eurozone's problems, either, due to the complex economic interdependence among the member states of the Union. Germany has been for many decades realizing most of its trade with the member states of the Union.<sup>66</sup> Most of these member states had been quite negative-

---

63 Destatis. Aus- und Einfuhr (Außenhandel): Deutschland, Jahre, Länder, [https://www-genesis.destatis.de/genesis/online;sid=912476923B1CC8CFD0609535B4B45481.GO\\_1\\_2?operation=previous&levelindex=2&levelid=1538072632726&step=2](https://www-genesis.destatis.de/genesis/online;sid=912476923B1CC8CFD0609535B4B45481.GO_1_2?operation=previous&levelindex=2&levelid=1538072632726&step=2) [27.09.2018].

64 Turhan. The European Council Decisions Related to Turkey's Accession to the EU: Interests vs. Norms.

65 TÜSIAD. BDI-TÜSIAD Joint Declaration: BDI and TÜSIAD call for dependable steps to support the European perspective of Turkey, 21 April 2004.

66 European Commission. Intra EU exports of goods compared with Extra EU exports of goods by Member State, 2015, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-ex>

ly affected by the crisis and their citizens' purchasing power had immensely decreased, which had important implications for German export volume and, thus, economic growth rates. The Eurozone crisis effect was particularly evident in the later stages of the crisis. While the German economy recorded 4.1 percent and 3.7 percent growth in 2010 and 2011, respectively, it grew only at an unimpressive 0.5 percent both in 2012 and 2013. Turkish economy, on the other hand, grew at 4.8 percent and a remarkable 8.5 percent in 2012 and 2013, respectively.<sup>67</sup> During the first quarter of 2013, German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited Turkey, accompanied by a high-level business delegation. One day prior to her visit to Ankara as well during bilateral talks in Turkey, Merkel highlighted her support for the opening of a new chapter in EU-Turkey relations after three-year hiatus, despite her personal doubts about Turkey's full membership in the EU.<sup>68</sup>

Merkel's statement was accompanied by the call of the German industry for a quick decision on Turkish membership in the EU in light of the debates on the future of the EU.<sup>69</sup> For the German industry, Turkey had become an essential market following the outbreak of the Eurozone crisis. While German exports to the Eurozone had dropped from €420.9 billion in 2011<sup>70</sup> to €401.9 billion in 2013<sup>71</sup>, the total value of German exports to Turkey had increased during the same period from €20.1 billion to €21.4 billion despite the global financial crisis.<sup>72</sup> Germany's Mercedes-Benz

---

plained/images/8/8d/Intra-EU\_trade\_in\_goods\_-\_recent\_trends-FINAL-02-02-2017.xlsx. [24.09.2018].

- 67 The World Bank. GDP growth (annual %), <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2013&locations=DE-TR&start=2006> [12.09.2018].
- 68 Bundesregierung (2013), *Report of Turkey-Visit: Germany/Turkey: The people are a bridge between our two countries*, [http://www.bundesregierung.de/ContentArchiv/EN/Archiv\\_17/Reiseberichte/2013/2013-02-25-merkel-tuerkei.html](http://www.bundesregierung.de/ContentArchiv/EN/Archiv_17/Reiseberichte/2013/2013-02-25-merkel-tuerkei.html)
- 69 BDI. Grillo: German industry supports continuation of negotiations on membership, 25 February 2013, [http://www.bdi.eu/BDI\\_english/568\\_959.htm](http://www.bdi.eu/BDI_english/568_959.htm) [12.09.2018].
- 70 DESTATIS. German exports in 2011: +11.4% on 2010, Press Release 044, 8 February 2012, [https://www.destatis.de/EN/PressServices/Press/pr/2012/02/PE12\\_044\\_51.html](https://www.destatis.de/EN/PressServices/Press/pr/2012/02/PE12_044_51.html) [15.09.2018].
- 71 DESTATIS. German exports in 2013: -0.2% on 2012, Press Release 040, 7 February 2014, [https://www.destatis.de/EN/PressServices/Press/pr/2014/02/PE14\\_040\\_51.html](https://www.destatis.de/EN/PressServices/Press/pr/2014/02/PE14_040_51.html) [12.09.2018].
- 72 DESTATIS. Aus- und Einfuhr (Außenhandel): Deutschland, Jahre, Länder. See for a detailed analysis on the impact of the Eurozone crisis on German-Turkish Relations, Turhan, E. *Türkiye-Almanya Ekonomik ve Siyasi İlişkilerinin Türkiye'nin AB Üyelik Süreci Bağlamında Analizi*. İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Maliye Araştırma Merkezi Konferansları Dergisi, 2016, Vol. 59, No. 1, pp. 59-61.

recorded in 2013 a Europe-wide sales growth in Turkey with a 57.3 percent annual sales growth despite the sovereign debt crisis.<sup>73</sup> In a similar vein, in the middle of the Eurozone crisis, leading German companies such as E.ON or Metro called Turkey one of their essential countries for investment.<sup>74</sup> Hence, the support of the German political elite and the business circles for the revitalization of accession talks with Turkey, coincided with the German efforts for absolute welfare maximization in the crisis era.

### *4.3 German position throughout the 2018 economic turmoil in Turkey*

The apparent interdependence between Germany and Turkey in economic terms and its impact on the formation of German-Turkish dialogue has been particularly evident following the rise of an economic turmoil in Turkey late July 2018 in view of the transformation of the political tensions between Turkey and the US into significant economic afterquakes. As a result of economic sanctions imposed by US President Donald Trump on Turkey doubling tariffs on Turkish steel imports to 50 percent and aluminium imports to 20 percent<sup>75</sup>, pessimistic expectations about the economy accompanied by the continuous weakening of Turkey's EU perspective, Turkish Lira had fallen almost 25 percent against dollar in only four days throughout August 2018.

In the wake of unprecedented currency slide in Turkey, German Chancellor Merkel made a swift public statement in which she emphasized Germany's interest in having an economically prosper Turkey while also indicating the need for a politically independent central bank in the country.<sup>76</sup> Germany's interest in preserving economic stability in Turkey in view of the strong economic interdependence between both countries particularly as a result of high trade volumes and the operation of more than 7000 German companies in Turkey most of which also run their regional operations

---

73 Daimler. 2014. Mercedes-Benz on record course, <https://media.daimler.com/mars-MediaSite/en/instance/ko/Mercedes-Benz-on-record-course.xhtml?oid=9916847> [15.09.2018].

74 Financial Times. Eon pushes into Turkey with Enerjisa deal, 4 December 2012; Bild Zeitung. Türken hängen China ab, 15 October 2011.

75 Gall, Carlotta. / Ewing, Jack. Tensions Between Turkey and U.S. Soar as Trump Orders New Sanctions. In: The New York Times, 10 August 2018.

76 Yetkin, Murat. An important detail in the Turkish currency crisis. In: Hürriyet Daily News, 14 August 2018, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opinion/murat-yetkin/an-important-detail-in-the-turkish-currency-crisis-135760> [10.09.2018].

from Turkey. This interdependence and German economic interests culminated in a cautious rapprochement between both countries starting from September 2018 which has been reflected in the realization of various official visits led by the heads of state or government or relevant ministers accompanied by high-level business delegations. However, it should be stated that the rapprochement did not lead to the emergence of a positive official German attitude concerning Turkey's EU accession process. In fact, key representatives of German federal government refrained from making any explicit statements on Turkey's EU accession case. That the German position on Turkish accession process did not experience any temporary shift despite converging interests just like previous times points to the increasing importance of non-utilitarian, normative factors in the formation of German-Turkish dialogue on Turkey's EU perspective. It shows that the divergence between Turkey and Germany in the definition and perception of key moral norms reached such a critical level that interests could not act as the dominant variable (just as they did in the past) in the formulation of Germany's stance towards Turkey's EU accession process.

##### *5. Germany and Turkey's EU accession process: ethical norms compliance*

Turkey's compatibility with Europe's collective identity, which is in fact not fixed and described by a leading European organization, Council of Europe (CoE), as "a constantly shifting kaleidoscope"<sup>77</sup>, has been an important aspect of the debates on Turkey's EU accession process within German political circles. Throughout the Cold War, Europe's dialogue with Turkey had been mainly identified within a geostrategic context<sup>78</sup> and by making use of a *raison d'état*, which constructed a European identity based on the safeguarding of Western Europe's existence and the promotion of liberal democratic values. Thus, throughout the Cold War era, the Western bloc took mainly into account Turkey's active participation in the European security architecture, while leaving ethical norms related parameters rather aside. The end of the Cold War era, on the other hand, reminded the Western block of the existence of ethical norms-related parameters such

---

77 Council of Europe. European identity - a constantly shifting kaleidoscope, 19 April 2001, <http://www.coe.int/NewsSearch/Default.asp?p=nwz&id=389&langue=2> [20.10.2018].

78 Eralp, Atila. Turkey and the European Community in the changing post-war international system. In: Canan Balkir / Alan M. Williams (Eds.). Turkey and Europe. London and New York, 1993, pp. 24-44.

as history, culture, traditions and religion in order to define European-ness.<sup>79</sup> While throughout the evaluation of Turkey's first membership application in 1987 by the then EEC, discussions on Turkey's compatibility with the European identity in view of ethical norms did not widely happen<sup>80</sup>, in the post-Cold war era, Turkey's 1997 application for full membership in the EU culminated in the rise of both European and German discussions on Turkey's European credentials, which took into account various parameters such as ethnicity, history, traditions and religion.

### *5.1 The shift from the "Black-Yellow" to the "Red-Green" coalition: implications for the perception of Turkey's "Europeanness"*

Particularly, ahead of the December 1997 Luxembourg European Council, it became apparent that German considerations for identity-related NC acted as an important dynamic for the formation of the official German attitude towards Turkish candidacy. In March 1997, the European People's Party (EPP), a dominant member of which has been then German Chancellor Kohl's CDU, announced its strong objection to Turkish candidacy after an assembly. During the EPP meeting, Kohl convinced the remaining EPP leaders about the rejection of Turkey's candidate status in Luxembourg with the following kinship-related argument: "From my geography lessons at schools, I cannot recall being told that Anatolia was part of Europe."<sup>81</sup> Following the EPP assembly, it was declared that "Turkey is a not a candidate to become a member of the European Union, short term or long, because of the fundamental civilizational difference of Turkey."<sup>82</sup> The statement seemed to have confirmed the EU's perception as a "Christian club" by conservative European political circles and pointed to the formation of the Kohl government's official position on Turkey's EU membership in view of the assumption that Turkey was never going to be compatible with the so-called European collective identity.

While the shift from Christian democratic / liberal to Turkey-friendly social democratic / green coalition government in 1998 brought about sig-

---

79 Turhan, The European Council Decisions Related to Turkey's Accession to the EU: Interests vs. Norms.

80 Ibid.

81 Paterson, T. Germany shuts door to Europe on the Turks, In: The European, 3 April 1997.

82 Usul, Ali R. Democracy in Turkey: The Impact of EU Political Conditionality. 2011, New York, p. 81

nificant changes in the official German attitude towards Turkish membership in the EU, it is interesting to observe that the compatibility of Turkey's identity with Europe's collective identity was still questioned by the key representatives of the social democratic / green coalition government, however, this time, often inexplicitly. Ahead of the 1999 Helsinki European Council, which provided Ankara with candidate status with the strong support of the then German federal government under the leadership of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, successive statements of key German government representatives neither put emphasis on Turkey's belonging to Europe as an inherent member nor on a sense of kinship that linked Europe to Turkey. The statements rather included the significance of Turkey's transition to a European country as well as its anchorage to Europe and its collective values.<sup>83</sup>

On the eve of the Helsinki Summit Chancellor Schröder underlined the importance of Turkey's EU accession process for Turkey's transformation into a European country by stating "we want a European Turkey, we therefore want to offer Turkey a credible European perspective."<sup>84</sup> While Schröder and his Foreign Minister Fischer referred to the accession of the CEEC to the EU as the reunification of Europe<sup>85</sup>, and thus regarded the CEEC as Europe's integral part, they rather supported Turkey's "Europeanization" and rapprochement with Europe through the medium of the accession process. Schröder government repeatedly made use of similar statements ahead of the 2004 European Council pointing out the significance of Turkey's changeover to a European country and its anchorage to the European model of democracy for the maintenance of security in Europe and its wider periphery post September 11. Statements like "we cannot do without a European Turkey to fight international terrorism"<sup>86</sup> or "a European Turkey will be a different Turkey"<sup>87</sup> regarded Turkey still as the "Other", which needed to be transformed into the "Self". What differentiated the red-green coalition from the Kohl government was the assumption

---

83 Turhan, *The European Council Decisions Related to Turkey's Accession to the EU: Interests vs. Norms*, p. 230.

84 Agence France Presse. Germany wants Turkey to become EU candidate, 3 December 1999.

85 Milzow, Katrin. *National Interests and European Integration: Discourse and Politics of Blair, Chirac and Schröder*. 2012, New York.

86 Agence France Presse. Turkey's EU membership may be 10 to 15 years away: German FM", 2 September 2004.

87 Associated Press Worldstream. Turkey moves closer to opening membership talks with EU after dispute resolved over penal code reform, 23 September 2004.



that Turkey's compatibility with Europe's collective identity could be achieved by means of the accession process.

### *5.2 Germany's perception of Turkish identity throughout the official negotiation phase*

Following the launch of the accession talks with Turkey in 2005, German federal government continued to perceive Turkey as Europe's "Other" that should be closely linked to the "Self" through enhanced dialogue by means of the accession process. Gradually, Turkey was going to resemble the "Self": German perception of Turkey's compatibility with the European identity post 2004 was reflected in the new coalition agreement that was signed by the CDU and its coalition partner, Free Democratic Party of Germany (FDP) following the 2009 federal elections. The coalition agreement stated that if the EU was not going to be capable of absorbing Turkey as a new member or if Turkey was not going to fulfil the obligations for full membership in the EU, then Turkey needed to be "tied in as closely as possible to European structures in a way that further develops its privileged relationship with the EU."<sup>88</sup> If Turkey was to be 'anchored' to the European structures, there must have been significant doubts over its European identity. Following his first months in the office, then Foreign Minister and FDP leader Guido Westerwelle hinted at Germany's continuing doubts over Turkey's natural compatibility with the European identity throughout the accession process when he stated during an official visit to Turkey that "Turkey's direction is Europe."<sup>89</sup>

When the European refugee crisis reached its peak in late 2015 and Turkey's role in its management became vital both for German and European leaders, temporary shifts have been observed in the perception of Turkey's Europeanness by some conservative German politicians. Peter Altmaier, then Chief of Staff of the German Chancellery and official coordinator of Germany's refugee policies as part of his position as the Federal Minister for Special Affairs, for instance, stated that Turkey had been behaving more European than some EU member states.<sup>90</sup> Altmaier's testimonial is in line with the strong link between the foreign policy making and

---

88 The Daily Star. German FM urges Turkey to continue EU reforms, 8 January 2010.

89 BBC Monitoring Europe. Turkish paper questions British, German support for Turkey's EU bid, 2 August 2010.

90 Poschardt, Ulf. Türkei verhält sich europäischer als manches EU-Land. In: Die Welt, 10 March 2016.

the constant re-construction of the identity. Foreign policy contributes to the framing of the difference, i.e. the “Other” and, thus, the diagnosis of the key features of the “Self”, while also defining how to approach the “Other”.<sup>91</sup> Throughout the refugee crisis and the European efforts for the conclusion of a “deal” between Turkey and the EU in handling irregular migration flows, a foreign policy related rapprochement had been observed between Turkey and Germany, which was reflected in a temporary and partial shift in the definition of the “Other”, Turkey, by some German Christian Democrats.

## 6. *Germany and Turkey’s EU accession process: compliance with moral norms*

The careful examination of official statements, press releases and public speeches of leading representatives of successive German governments reveals that Turkey’s compatibility with moral norms (i.e. its adherence to universal principles of democracy, human rights and rule of law) had habitually affected the formation of the official German attitude towards Turkey’s EU accession process. Yet, throughout Turkey’s extended EU accession process, there has been times when Germany called for the acceleration of Turkish accession process despite having criticized Turkey’s adherence to the Union’s liberal democratic principles.

### 6.1 *From Luxembourg to Helsinki to Brussels: The fluctuating impact of moral norms on the German position*

German federal government acted as one of the leading opponents of Turkey’s candidate status in 1997, while it served in 1999 as a leading supporter for granting Turkey the candidate status. However, both during 1997 and 1999 key representatives of German federal government harshly criticized Turkey’s level of compliance with the moral norms promoted by the EU. Germany took a critical stance above all towards the issues of human rights and the peaceful settlement of conflicts with other member states. Ahead of the 1997 Luxembourg Summit, Foreign Minister Kinkel for instance stated that “the EU cannot bring countries with territorial dis-

---

91 Campbell, David. *Writing Security. United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*. 1998, Minneapolis, 2nd edition, p. 71.

puts into the union”<sup>92</sup> pointing to Turkey’s existing problems with Greece. In a similar vein, in September 1997, he referred to human rights, Kurdish question and economic challenges as key hurdles to overcome for Turkey’s complete integration into the EU.<sup>93</sup>

Although the succeeding red-green coalition government served as one of the leading supporters of Turkish candidacy at the 1999 Helsinki Summit, it followed in the footsteps of the Kohl government in criticizing the situation of democracy, human rights and rule of law in Turkey. Prior to the Helsinki Summit, Foreign Minister Fischer criticized Turkey’s adherence to the Union’s moral values during a visit to Turkey by referring to human rights as “the most important among the EU’s common values”<sup>94</sup>, whereas Chancellor Schröder argued only few weeks ahead of the European Council gathering that Turkey needed to take more steps to improve its record in regard to human rights.<sup>95</sup> That the German government significantly changed its position on Turkey’s EU accession process between 1997 and 1999 despite its enduring concerns about Turkey’s respect for the Union’s moral norms hints at the existence of other key dynamics behind the German support for Turkey’s candidacy at the Helsinki Summit.

Whereas in 1999 Turkey’s level of compliance with the moral norms praised by EU appeared not to have played a significant role in the formation of the official German attitude towards Turkey’s EU accession process, the significant progress Turkey made in the fulfilment of the Copenhagen political criteria - i.e. adherence to democracy, rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities - during 2000-2004 seems to have acted as an important dynamic behind the German support for the 2004 December European Council decision to open the accession negotiations with Turkey in October 2005. Statements such as “[I]t is in all our interests to decide on starting negotiations in the light of the progress which Turkey has made”<sup>96</sup> and “if this dynamism is maintained, if there is a breakthrough on Cyprus and if there is progress in implementing the most

---

92 Associated Press Worldstream. Difficulties remain in Turkey’s bid for EU membership, 29 January 1997.

93 Agence France Presse. Turkish PM Yilmaz to visit Germany: EU discussions expected, 9 September 1997.

94 Associated Press Worldstream. German foreign minister stresses human rights issues on visit to Turkey, 22 July 1999.

95 Associated Press Worldstream. AP Photos ATH110 to ATH114, 4 October 1999.

96 Agence France Presse. Germany warns against watered-down EU offer to Turkey, 13 December 2004.

important reforms, then things will develop positively”<sup>97</sup> indicate the link between German position on Turkish membership in Helsinki and Turkey’s increased level of NC.

## 6.2 *Official negotiation phase: moral norms, the German veto on Chapter 22 and the bilateral relations post-coup attempt*

Turkey’s level of adherence to the Union’s moral norms have been utilized as a justification for the official German attitude towards Turkish accession process throughout the official negotiation phase, as well. Perhaps one of the best examples for the employment of moral NC-oriented arguments to legitimize Germany’s position on Turkish membership in the EU has been Germany’s fluctuating attitude towards the opening of Chapter 22 in Turkey’s accession talks with the Union. In February 2013, one day prior to the start of her visit to Turkey, Chancellor Merkel had declared her support for the opening of a new chapter in EU-Turkey relations.<sup>98</sup> In a similar vein, Foreign Minister Westerwelle had called for the acceleration of Turkish accession talks stating that “[I]f we don’t pay attention, the time will come when Europe will be more interested in Turkey than Turkey is interested in Europe.”<sup>99</sup> In light of Germany’s positive attitude towards the progression of accession talks with Turkey, both Ankara and European capitals expected a smooth opening of Chapter 22 in June 2013 during the EU-Turkey Intergovernmental Conference. However, on 20 June 2013 Germany conveyed EU leaders that it was going to block the launch of talks on Chapter 22.<sup>100</sup>

Berlin’s veto coincided with the German-Turkish divergence on Ankara’s dealing with the Gezi Park demonstrations, which had started in late May 2013. According to Merkel, Ankara’s response to the protests had not been in line with Germany’s idea of moral norms and values.<sup>101</sup> In accordance with this statement, a spokesperson of the German Foreign Affairs Min-

---

97 Agence France Presse. Denial of EU accession talks would be huge blow for Turkey, Erdogan warns; 22 January 2004.

98 Hudson, Alexandra. Merkel backs new EU talks for Turkey but has doubts. In: Reuters, 23 February 2013.

99 Hürriyet Daily News. Merkel favours 'new chapter' in Turkey’s EU-bid talks, 23 February 2013.

100 Financial Times. Germany blocks Turkey’s bid to join EU, 20 June 2013.

101 McElroy, Damien. Angela Merkel hits out at 'harsh' response to Turkey protests. In: Daily Telegraph, 17 June 2013.

istry underlined that the timing of this chapter's opening was a 'technical issue' and not directly related to the German-Turkish dispute over the handling of the protests. Nevertheless, he added, "[t]here is of course an overall political context, and as is always the case in life, everything is ultimately connected with everything else."<sup>102</sup> Following unilateral talks Germany, Turkey and the EU found the middle ground agreeing on the launch of the talks on Chapter 22 in the aftermath of the presentation of the Commission's progress report on Turkey in October 2013. Despite the normative argumentation of the German federal government, it should not be forgotten that Merkel government changed its position on the opening of the Chapter 22, only a few months ahead of the German federal elections, the polls on which had not provided a clear picture in regard to winners and possible government constellations.

Following the attempted coup of 15 July 2016, key representatives of the German federal government have increasingly made use of NC-related arguments when stating their position on Turkey's EU accession process. Severe differences between German and Turkish governments' positions on the actions needed to be undertaken after the coup attempt have deteriorated the relations between the two countries. In the post-coup era, former German Foreign Minister and current President Frank-Walter Steinmeier has been one of the most active voices in the EU in openly discussing Ankara's post-coup policies. Between 16 July 2016 and 15 December 2016 Steinmeier made more than 20 official statements (press releases or press conferences) on the post-coup developments in Turkey in front of cameras and under the watchful eyes of the public and the media.<sup>103</sup> Whereas his remarks during the first couple of weeks in the aftermath of the attempted coup have been quite cautious, Steinmeier later increased his criticism of Ankara's post-coup actions by regularly making recourse to NC oriented arguments, and relating those to the future of Turkey's EU accession pro-

---

102 Sattar, Majid / Busse, Nikolas. Berlin erbst über Kritik Ankaras an Merkel, In: FAZ, 21 June 2013, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/europa/tuerkei/tuerkischer-botschafter-einbestellt-berlin-erbst-ueber-kritik-ankaras-an-merkel-12239199.html> [01.08.2017]. See for a detailed analysis on the involvement of German veto on Chapter 22, Turhan, Germany's Leadership Role in the Eurozone Crisis and its Implications for Turkey's EU Bid: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach; Turhan, Europe's Crises, Germany's Leadership and Turkey's EU Accession Process.

103 Turhan, E. The Struggle for the German-Turkish Partnership: Preventing the 'Train Crash'. In: *E-International Relations*, 2016, <http://www.e-ir.info/2016/12/04/the-struggle-for-the-german-turkish-partnership-preventing-the-train-crash/> [01.08.2018].

cess. For instance, he emphasized in November 2016 that Ankara needed to decide which path it was going to follow while keeping in mind what this choice was likely to mean for Turkish EU accession process.<sup>104</sup>

As a result of the growing divergence between Turkey and Germany with regard to the definition and perception of moral norms and ideals the German federal government lately emerged as a visible and leading veto player in the formation of EU-Turkey dialogue, in general, and Turkish accession process, in particular. Germany's veto role was reflected in its veto on the launch of negotiations on the update of the CU between Turkey and the EU until the improvement of Turkey's compliance with the Union's moral norms and principles<sup>105</sup>, its call for the reduction of the pre-accession assistance funds (IPA) provided to Turkey<sup>106</sup> and the 2018 coalition agreement of the recent CDU/CSU-SPD government which emphasized the government's clear and strong reluctance to the opening of any new chapter in Turkey's EU accession negotiations until the situation regarding democracy and rule of law was going to be improved in the country.<sup>107</sup>

## 7. Conclusion

The relations between Turkey and Germany are dynamic and multidimensional. The complexity of the bilateral dialogue between the two countries brings along the need to examine the impact of various factors on the formation of official German position on Turkey's prolonged EU accession process. This paper drew on the key assumptions of rationalism and constructivism and examined the explanatory capacity of various types of PI and NC in elucidating the formation of Germany's preferences pertaining

---

104 Die Welt. Steinmeier droht der Türkei indirekt mit Abbruch der EU-Beitrittsverhandlungen, 4 November 2016.

105 Daily Sabah. Merkel rules out improving Customs Union, opposes EU-Turkey divorce, 16 August 2017, <https://www.dailysabah.com/eu-affairs/2017/08/16/merkel-rules-out-improving-customs-union-opposes-eu-turkey-divorce> [01.08.2018].

106 Deutsche Welle. Turkey: Angela Merkel calls for reduced EU funds, 19 October 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/turkey-angela-merkel-calls-for-reduced-eu-funds/a-41038798> [01.08.2018].

107 CDU. Ein neuer Aufbruch für Europa. Eine neue Dynamik für Deutschland. Ein neuer Zusammenhalt für unser Land: Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und SPD, [https://www.cdu.de/system/tdf/media/dokumente/koalitionsvertrag\\_2018.pdf?file=1](https://www.cdu.de/system/tdf/media/dokumente/koalitionsvertrag_2018.pdf?file=1) [10.08.2018].

to Turkish accession to the EU. The findings of the paper indicate the need to view the German efforts for PI and NC as complementary rather than conflicting ways of understanding the construction of official German attitude towards Turkey's prolonged EU accession process. They reveal that all four explanatory variables that guide rationalist and constructivist schools in their research into EU enlargement, i.e. security and power maximization, absolute welfare maximization, ethical norms compliance and moral norms compliance, have played to a significant extent a role in the construction of Germany's Turkey policy, as far as Turkish accession process has been concerned. In this vein, both rationalist and constructivist schools prove to be useful for the elucidation of the key dynamics behind the German preferences pertaining to Turkey's EU bid.

Yet, the study has had two particularly noteworthy findings which may prove valuable when conducting prognoses on the future of German-Turkish relations, in general, and the formation of official German attitude towards Turkey's EU bid, in particular. Firstly, the analysis has demonstrated that throughout Turkey's extended EU accession process there have been times, when the German position experienced sudden and sharp U-turns and when the federal government started to support the acceleration of Turkey's EU accession process despite its concerns over Turkey's compliance with the Union's liberal democratic norms and despite missing statements about the compatibility of Turkish identity with the one of the EU / Europe. German support for the confirmation of Turkey's candidate status at the 1999 Helsinki European Council and its call for the acceleration of Turkish accession process throughout the refugee crisis and the Eurozone crisis despite the lack of NC related argumentation in these periods show that there have been many times in the contemporary history when German efforts for PI have gained momentum and trumped normative dynamics and considerations. The findings of this study indicate the primacy of Germany's security and welfare related interests over normative considerations as far as the construction of Berlin's policies concerning Turkey's accession to the EU are concerned. They have shown that successive German governments supported the acceleration of Turkey's accession process or took a positive stance towards the issue mainly at times when enhanced cooperation and relations with Turkey proved to be useful for the pursuit of German interests and preferences. Thus, Germany's enlargement policy vis-à-vis Turkey actually lacked a certain degree of normative consistency as its support for Turkish accession process did not always emerge at times when Turkey's level of NC with the EU demonstrated improvements.

Having said that, the study also has another interesting finding. The analysis demonstrated that in recent times and particularly throughout the

German-Turkish rapprochement following the rise of economic turmoil in Turkey, the German position on Turkish accession process did not experience any temporary shift despite converging interests and an improvement of bilateral relations, and German government representatives refrained from giving statements on Turkish accession process. This development accompanied by the negative tonality of the German federal government's coalition agreement concerning Turkey's EU bid indicates the increasing importance of non-utilitarian, normative factors in the formation of German-Turkish dialogue on Turkey's EU perspective. It shows that the discrepancy between Turkey and Germany in the definition and perception of universal values and principles reached such a decisive level that interests could not act as the dominant variable (just as they did in the past) in the making of Germany's position on Turkey's EU accession process. Thus, normative considerations are likely to play the key role in the evolvement of the EU's attitude towards Turkey's accession process, in general, and the formulation of official German position, in particular.