

# INT 426

**TURKEY-EU RELATIONS FROM THE  
EUROPEAN COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS OF  
DECEMBER 2004 UP TO THE PRESENT**

-In the course of January-July 2003, **Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Reform Packages.**

- The comprehensive and ambitious set of reforms includes the following:
- the State Security Courts are abolished;
- the presence of military representatives in public institutions such as the Higher Education Council and the High Audio Visual Board come to an end;
- civilians are granted greater representation in the National Security Council with a reduced role for the Council in the Turkish political system;
- defence spending is put under civilian scrutiny; the scope for freedom of expression is widened; the tight grip on endowments belonging to non-Muslims is loosened; Article 8 of the Anti-Terror Law is dismantled.

# In the Cyprus negotiations of March 2003

- ... in the Hague, Rauf Denktaş, the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, rejects the Annan Plan out of hand, although its terms are rather favourable to the Turkish side.
- Naturally he is internationally blamed for failure to reach a peaceful settlement about this protracted conflict. This removes the last hurdle which the Greek Cypriots had to overcome in order to sign the accession treaty with ten other candidate states in Athens on 16 April 2003. Henceforward, the Greek Cypriots, as EU members, would be in a position to enjoy the safety of EU support against Turkey and Turkish Cypriots.
- **-The referendums are held in Cyprus on 24 April 2004.** 65 percent of Turkish Cypriots endorse the plan, while Greek Cypriots reject it with a clear majority (76 percent).

# ***Before Starting to the Negotiations***

- -Turkey issues the **Eighth Reform Package** on 14 July 2004 which gets over some deficiencies about human rights and democracy.
- -The EU **Commission Progress Report** of 6 October 2004 on Turkey recommends the granting of a timetable for accession negotiations with Turkey on the eve of the EU summit.
- -On 15 December 2004, the **EU Parliament** votes by 407 to 262 to express its consent for the opening up of accession negotiations with Turkey.

# 2004 BRUSSEL SUMMIT

# The eve of the EU Brussel Summit

- On the eve of the EU Summit of 16-17 December 2004, **Turkey got the first signals about the expectations and demands** which the member states asked of Turkey.
- During the debates in the COREPER where permanent representatives of member states, *inter alia*, form a working group drafting the upcoming summit conclusions, **the view that membership negotiations with Turkey should be open-ended prevailed**; besides, **Turkey was expected to extend the Ankara Agreement (including Customs Union) to the 10 new member states, including Cyprus**, before negotiations began.

# The list of suggestions

- the Summit Conclusion should contain a reference about the **future of Kurds in Turkey**;
- **permanent restrictions** should be imposed on Turkey **regarding free movement of workers, structural policies and agriculture**;
- the final text should contain a provision about the **suspension of membership negotiations** with Turkey in the likelihood of Turkey backtracking from ***the Copenhagen Criteria***;
- a clause should contain a reference to the settlement of the **Aegean problem** between Turkey and Greece.

# ***TURKEY'S RED LINES***

- -Turkey, for its part, likewise expressed certain **red lines** from which no backtracking was conceivable. They were the following:
- Turkey should be given an explicit timetable for the start of membership negotiations;
- the final goal should be nothing other than full membership;
- no clause should the Conclusion contain which suggests the granting of a “special status” (and not membership) to Turkey;
- the final text should not speak of “permanent” restrictions;
- the EU should not impose Turkey conditions which do not fall into the scope of the Copenhagen Criteria;
- no mention of the Cyprus problem should be made in the Summit Conclusion.



# The Summit Begins...

- That Turkey would obtain a **clear date for the start of membership negotiations** was announced the first day.
- That was good news for Turkey. **However** it was also made known that **negotiations would be open-ended.**
- Besides, major restrictions and special arrangements would be made in regard to some major issues.

- On the night of **December 16**, Holland, the holder then of rotating presidency, asked Turkey to initial the text concerning the extension of the Ankara Agreement (including Customs Union) to the new member states before the summit ended.
- The Turkish negotiation team was appalled at this demand.

- In the morning of **December 17**, the Dutch Foreign Minister, Bott, informed the Turkish side that some changes were made in the proposal which the EU was submitting to Turkey:
- the final document would speak about “permanent right of restriction” instead of “permanent restrictions”;
- instead of the EU deciding that Turkey was incapable of meeting the Copenhagen Criteria, the decision about it would be left to Turkey.
- Some other provisions were also reformulated to make them palatable to Turkey.

- **However**, with regard to the sensitive issue of Cyprus, the EU was apparently not prepared to compromise, and on top of it, it was said that the extension of the Ankara Agreement would mean the recognition of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey, an indiscreet dictate which no Turkish government could afford to accept.
- This final point brought the negotiations to the breaking point. The Prime Minister and his entourage considered a possible return to Turkey.
- However some prominent EU states, such as Britain and Italy, intervened to salvage negotiations and avoid a fiasco. As a result, the EU decided to offer Turkey a more acceptable formula about Cyprus.

# 2004 Brussels Summit Decisions

- **Paragraph 19:** “The European Council welcomed Turkey's decision to sign the Protocol regarding the adaptation of the Ankara Agreement, taking account of the accession of the ten new Member States. In this light, it welcomed the declaration of Turkey that 'the Turkish Government confirms that it is ready to sign the Protocol on the adaptation of the Ankara Agreement prior to the actual start of accession negotiations and after reaching agreement on and finalising the adaptations which are necessary in view of the current membership of the European Union'”.
- **The extension of the Ankara Agreement would not however imply the recognition of the “Republic of Cyprus” by Turkey.**

- **Paragraph 20:** “The European Council...reaffirmed its view that **unresolved disputes having repercussions on the accession process, should if necessary be brought to the International Court of Justice for settlement.**”
- **Paragraph 22: Membership negotiations with Turkey would start on 3 October 2005.**

- **Paragraph 23:**

\*“The Council, acting by unanimity on a proposal by the Commission, will lay down benchmarks for the provisional closure and, where appropriate, for the opening of each chapter; depending on the chapter concerned, these benchmarks will refer to legislative alignment and a **satisfactory track record of implementation of the *acquis*** as well as obligations deriving from contractual relations with the European Union.”

- \* “**Long transition periods, derogations, specific arrangements or permanent safeguard clauses**, i.e. clauses, which are permanently available as a basis for safeguard measures, may be considered. The Commission will include these, as appropriate, in its proposals for each framework, for areas such as freedom of movement of persons, **structural policies** or **agriculture**. Furthermore, the decision-taking process regarding the eventual establishment of freedom of movement of persons should allow for a maximum role of individual Member States.”



- \* “Accession negotiations yet to be opened with candidates whose accession could have substantial financial consequences **can only be concluded after the establishment of the Financial Framework for the period from 2014** together with possible consequential financial reforms.”
- \* “The shared objective of the negotiations is accession. **These negotiations are an open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed beforehand.** While taking account of all Copenhagen criteria, if the Candidate State is not in a position to assume in full all the obligations of membership it must be ensured that the Candidate State concerned is fully anchored in the European structures through the strongest possible bond.”

- The use of the phrase “**open-ended process**” did not mean to taint the goal of full membership for Turkey. This was simply a reference to the fact that **the consequence of negotiations could not be predicted at that stage**. This meant that, the parties, in particular, Turkey, could face such problems that the negotiation process could not possibly proceed further.
- \* “**In the case of a serious and persistent breach in a candidate state of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law** on which the Union is founded, the Commission will, on its own initiative or on the request of one third of the Member States, **recommend the suspension of negotiations and propose the conditions for eventual resumption**. The Council will decide by qualified majority on such a recommendation.”



## What are the major arguments of those in Europe **who are opposed to the Turkish membership of the EU?**

- A) **Turkey is too big** to be absorbed by the EU considering its population of 76 million (in 2013). Turkish population is constantly growing.
- B) **Turkey is a Muslim country** which suggests that its identity is not compatible with the Christian roots of European identity.
- C) The GNP per capita in Turkey is well below the EU average.
- D) **Freedom of movement for workers** is a major cause for concern. EU states cannot confer on the Turkish workers freedom of movement in Europe which will eventually lead to the uprooting of scores of indigenous workers from the labour market to be replaced by Turkish migrant workers.
- E) The standards of democracy and human rights in Turkey, despite many advances, **still fall short of the Copenhagen criteria.**

- F) **The regional inequalities** in Turkey are alarmingly high, which means that the lion's share of the regional fund would have to be channelled into Turkey after its membership of the EU. This is unacceptable.
- G) Contrary to most of the EU members, **Turkey shows some characteristics of an agricultural country**. Nearly a third of all workforce in Turkey is employed in agriculture. Naturally, after membership, by far, Turkey will be the largest recipient of the agricultural fund.
- H) **Turkey is geographically situated in Europe**; only 3 percent of the Turkish territory lies in the European continent.

# Turkey's counter-arguments against the rejectionist views in Europe about Turkish membership

- A) Contrary to the exaggerated views about the population growth in Turkey, the growth of population in Turkey was 1,2 percent in 2010. Based on the current trend, it is predicted that this figure will decline to 0,76 percent in 2030. Besides, **one should not forget that the European population is aging, which means that the Turkish accession would be an 'injection of youth' into Europe.**
- B) **EU is a secular international organization. There is no reference to Christianity in the official EU documents.** There are large numbers of people in Europe from different religious faiths ranging from Hinduism to Judaism. In any case, as the EU supports cultural pluralism, there is no sensible to reason to leave out Turkey on grounds of religion.
- C) The GNP per capita in Turkey will in all probability approach to the EU average if Turkey's current economic performance persists in the next 10 to 15 years. Let us not forget that the standard of living in **Turkey is better than some EU members such as Bulgaria and Romania.**

- D) Turkey does not object to the temporary freeze on the free movement of workers even after Turkish accession to the EU. When considering the fall in the Turkish population growth and increasing prosperity in the country, **it is most likely that the Turkish nationals seeking employment in the EU member states are going to decline in the next decade.**
- E) The ambitious set of reforms which have been launched, *inter alia*, in the last decade in order to bring Turkey in line with the **Copenhagen Criteria** has brought **Turkey closer to the benchmarks set by the EU**. Besides, we should not forget that Greece, Spain and Portugal as well as the Central and Eastern European members of the EU set about the goal of membership also for democratic consolidation and human rights advances. These motives are also valid for Turkey.

F) The current **government in Turkey is working hard to reduce the disparities between reasonably developed and less developed regions** of Turkey. Ambitious projects have been put in place. The current peace process which is intended to satisfy Kurdish demands within a democratic framework has effectively put an end to the armed confrontation between the PKK and Turkish security forces. This has brought about an ideal atmosphere for uplifting poverty-stricken parts of Turkey.

G) **The agricultural population in Turkey is constantly decreasing.** Besides, the Turkish agricultural reforms accompanying the negotiation process for Turkish membership will lead to the eventual flow of rural population into cities. With the financial support from the EU agricultural fund, Turkey will be able to establish market principles in the agricultural sector and more rational organizational structure which will trigger an increase in productivity.



H) Turkey's 'Europeanness' was already reaffirmed when the Ankara Agreement was signed of 1963. That is why Turkey was able to launch an application for associate membership of the Community in reliance of Article 238 of the Treaty of Rome which holds that such an arrangement can be made with the European states only. That Turkey is today negotiating for the 'membership' of the EU is further evidence for Turkey's credentials as part of Europe. Finally, let us note that the 3 percent of the Turkish territory situated in Europe hosts 7 million people and a land mass of 24 thousand km<sup>2</sup> both of which are larger than the populations and territories of many existing member states of the EU.

**What are other assets and advantages referred to by Turkey to reassure the European circles about the aptness of Turkish membership?**

- A) Turkey can act as a 'bridge' between Europe and the Middle East,** reduce misunderstandings between the parties and contribute to dialogue and even to the forming of alliance among civilisations.
- B) Turkish membership of the EU would give the world a clear signal about the compatibility of Islam, on the one hand and democracy, human rights and secularism, on the other. Besides, once a member of the EU, the 'Turkish model' could have a better chance of emulation by the rest of the Muslim world.**

- C) Turkey is a growing market with its young population and high consumption patterns. The EU's unhindered access to this market will put it at an advantage in comparison to its archrivals, such as China, Japan and the USA.
- D) If the EU is joined by Turkey, it will gain a very significant geopolitical and political advantage on its way to becoming a global political actor.
- E) Turkey is a pole of attraction for foreign investors on account of cheap labour and developed infrastructure.

## **What are the main arguments of the 'nationalist' circles in Turkey against the Turkish membership of the EU?**

- A) Turkey will be converted into a semi-colony of the EU after accession. The 'Turkish nation' has all along lived in freedom. Thanks to this free will, the Turks have played a major role in the history of humanity, such as being founders of great states. Once sovereignty is shared with others, it is no longer sovereignty but dependence.
- B) European will continue to treat Turkey as a second-class member state, because they have never abandoned their hatred of the Turks.

- C) The EU will not shed its lack of generosity towards Turkey even after membership. Neither the Additional Protocol nor the Customs Union has served Turkish national interests. In other words, it is the EU that gains through an economic partnership with Turkey. Neither the historical habits of Europe nor the ruthless precepts of capitalism permit the beneficial treatment of Turkey.
- D) The EU was, is and will always remain as a 'Christian Club' in which there is no place for 'Muslims'.

- E) Since the Turkish people are short of true knowledge about the EU, the majority seems to support membership.
- F) The Turks have played no role in the construction of the European or Western civilisation. Therefore, the two worlds cannot possibly fuse like olive oil and water.
- G) The 'nationalist-conservative' sections of Turkish society have turned into EU supporters following their subjection to maltreatment and repression during the February 28 (1997) process which saw the ousting from power the coalition government by the army and its collaborators. Advocacy of membership simply as a 'reaction' to a temporary deviation in Turkish politics is hardly a sensible posture to adopt.

H) Europe has always closed itself to the influence of other cultures and civilisations. Western civilisation is prone to marginalising the 'others'. European states have sought to assimilate immigrant Muslim communities and other non-Western groups living in Europe. Therefore, it is sheer ignorance to claim that Muslim Turks will play some role in the shaping of European identity in the future.

J) Turkey is in possession of the necessary assets and requirements for development. It has a sizeable geography, large population with the youth as the largest segment, with considerable human capital and mineral sources. This suggests that Turkey does not lack alternatives to integration with Europe. If Turkey remains itself and pursues an independent development strategy based on its own needs and priorities, it could go through a developmental breakthrough along the lines of Japan and China.