

SCENARIOS FOR THE TURKEY – EU NEGOTIATIONS

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All the countries which have in the past initiated accession negotiations with the European Union have in the end become members of the Union. In the case of Turkey however there is the possibility of another outcome. Turkey's Negotiation Framework contains the provision that the conclusion of the negotiations will not necessarily be accession as a full member. Additionally, four years after the beginning of accession negotiations, almost half of the negotiation Chapters are frozen. And the French and German Heads of Government have repeatedly expressed the view that the conclusion of the negotiations should not be full membership but a different kind of relationship, which President Sarkozy has recently referred to as prescribing being an "associate member of Europe and not a fully fledged member".

Meanwhile, Turkey for its part is adamantly refusing to eliminate the reason for the freezing of eight Chapters, which is its own refusal to implement the provisions of its Customs Union to one of the EU members, Cyprus. And Turkey continues not to recognize this member diplomatically, while occupying part of its territory. If there is no settlement of the Cyprus problem it would be surprising if this situation does not create further issues for the progress of Turkish accession to the EU. It is also noteworthy that in its last three annual progress reports the European Commission, and the European Parliament in its response, have noted that the internal reform process in Turkey has come to a virtual stand-still.

This means that there are substantial deficits in the level of democratic governance and respect of human rights from the level demanded by the EU for candidates on course for accession. Among others there are deficits in freedom of speech, civilian control of the military, respect for minority rights, trade union rights and in gender equality. Turkey has also shown other signs of trying to

impose its own conditions on Europe, as for example in the case of the appointment of the NATO Secretary-General.

If Turkey joins the European Union without having been fully "Europeanized", with a GDP at 27% of the EU27 average, it is possible that if it became one of its two biggest members, and on its way to becoming the biggest member in population terms, it would create frictions in the functioning of the institutions and issues in the future course of European integration. It is arguable that admitting Turkey under such conditions would amount to appeasement.

On the basis of the above logic, the other scenario is supported by some very powerful governments, of a "special relationship" rather than full membership, and sometimes two additional arguments are used by other supporters of this scenario. One argument is that Europe has a common civilization of which Turkey is not a part. Others, though considering that this argument in itself is not apt and probably creates problems for Europe, put forward another argument which is that a Turkish entry would push the borders of Europe to the Middle East (Iran and Iraq), and the Caucasus (Georgia and Armenia) which would risk diluting any meaning for "Europe" as a geographic entity, and would also probably add new strategic divides among members of the Union and create further difficulties for a common foreign and security policy.

There are however serious questions and doubts as to whether a "privileged" or "special" relationship or "associate membership" can be implemented. First of all, any kind of relationship of this kind would need to be acceptable to both sides, whereas the Turkish government has repeatedly stated that it would not accept any relationship other than full membership. Credible analyses argue that a diversion of the Turkish accession process would result in social and political tensions if not upheavals within Turkey, and possibly policy reorientations, including a reinforcement of nationalistic tendencies, and perhaps a strengthening of hard core military thinking, or a reinforcement of an Islamic direction. In any event it is feared that a Turkish exclusion, even if not justified

on overtly religious grounds, would reinforce global tendencies towards a "clash of civilizations".

Given these fears and worries of negative consequences for the interests and orientations of the Union, and particularly for its members neighbouring on Turkey, a third scenario could emerge. Despite the strong current opposition of the Union's most powerful members, France and Germany, to full membership, the long term accession course of Turkey could continue, on the dual outcome basis provided for in its Negotiation Framework. This scenario might involve the continuing Europeanization of Turkey, and the safeguarding of the interests of the European Union with a temporally open accession horizon. In a medium term horizon, the "absorption capacity" of the Union might increase, governments could change and the Union itself might change. One eventuality for the Union is that which was proposed by Guy Verhofstadt. This was that the Eurozone members of the Union would speed up integration and form the "United States of Europe", while the current member states not interested in further integration, and new members like Turkey which are not yet fully Europeanized, could form an outer circle of the Union of European States, until they had both the will and the capacity to become members of the core.