

# Turkey & Joining to the European Union (EU)

Riyad Mofleh AL-Khlaifat<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> AL-Balqa' Applied University, AL-Huson University College

## ABSTRACT

Since Turkey made its application to join the European Union more than three decades ago, it has been facing with the stalling and the impossible demands. Although Turkey has made great strides in controlling its own laws relating to the rights of minorities and freedoms to conform with the standards, but that the door to the European Union remained closed in front of it, although it has been opened for many countries less committed to the Copenhagen criteria.

**Keywords:** Ottoman Empire, Turkey, UE, European Countries, Middle East, West Asia Or Arab Countries, Kurdish, Part of Muslim Nations, European Commission, Executive Body of the European Union, Copenhagen Criteria, The Rules that Define Whether a Country is Eligible to Join European Union.

## 1. Introduction

Turkey is situated at an important position between the continents of Asia and Europe, at middle of the triangle of the Caucasus and Balkans, and the Middle East. Its area is about 780,000 square kilometers. It doesn't only form a geographical bridge between Europe and the countries of the Middle East, but also it forms a social and cultural bridge. Population reached nearly 70 million people and 99% of the population are Muslims. Turkey depends on the secularism, democracy and the multi-party.

Geographically speaking, Turkey is not a European country with the exception of Istanbul, in addition to the north-east sector of Greece nor in terms of customs, traditions and cultural awareness. Turks are defined as Asian people, whose golden age was at the period of the Ottoman Empire. The official relations between Turkey and the European Union began in 1963 when the agreement of the coalition was signed. Turkey was the first country amongst the group of candidate countries for the European Union membership, where it submitted an application in 1987.

### 1.1. The Aim of the Study

To study and analyze joining Turkey to the European Union and to show the obstacles and effect of that on the region of the territory and the Middle East as well as to provide the recommendations. The procedures of membership to join the European Union:

The procedures of membership to join the European Union began through providing an application from the state willing to that, which is considered as a right for any European state. The agreement of the Council of Foreign Ministers is considered as a condition for giving the states submitted the application the status of candidate for membership. This status means that this state has actually and formally started using the membership, ended in its joining to the European Union at the time of its completion to the conditions of membership that will be discussed later one.

## 2. The Conditions of Joining to the European Union

According to the European Union Law, the standards of acceptance new members to the union are represented within a series of reforms in the political and economic fields, known as the Copenhagen criteria particularly, associated with the democratic development, the rules of the law: respecting the human rights and the rights of minorities, the norms of economic reforms as to reform the methods of the

market economy and achieve transparency, and the accountability and other factors through which, the candidate countries for membership can be measured and evaluated.

The European Commission is institutionally considered as the executive organ of the Federation and it has the responsibility to evaluate the process of reform in the candidate countries for membership, in addition to conduct negotiations on behalf of the European Union, Which indicates that the process of expansion, which has done through the accession of ten countries of Eastern Europe by 2004 is a process characterized by an advanced political consistency dominated by a procedural nature by these countries (Ahmad, 2002).

### **2.1.The Demands of the European Union for Turkey**

The European Parliament and the European Commission imposed conditions on Turkey to start membership negotiations, including (Accession of Turkey to The European Union):

- a- Reduce the control of the army on the freedoms of political life in the country and modify its structure in line with EU standards, and this requires a change in the Constitution of 1980.
- b- Demanding liberties and human rights, especially regarding the rights of minorities such as the Kurdish minority.
- c- Abandonment of self-beliefs such as the abolition of a law that makes adultery a crime punishable by law, passed by the Justice and Development Party. Europe announced clearly that the adoption of this law harms Turkey and delays the process of accession to the European club and does not conform to the values of modern Europe.
- d- Solving the problem of Cyprus, where Turkey has occupied the northern part of it in 1974 under the pretext of protecting human rights.
- e- The necessity for Turkey to be committed to Ankara Protocol which expands its customs union with the European Union, which includes the ten countries which joined the Union in 2004, including Cyprus, but Turkey does not apply this agreement with Cyprus in the sense that it does not allow Cypriot ships and airplanes to enter its sea and air ports.
- f- Negotiations should not necessarily lead to Membership.
- g- Turkey cannot be joined before 2014 until the completion of the financial structure of the European Union.
- h- These negotiations can be terminated or suspended at any time, where the Union notices any clear violations of human rights and democracy.
- i- It is the right of the Union to take a permanent guarantees for the Turkish manpower and related expenses of the agrarian reform.

### **2.2. Turkey's Efforts to Joining the European Union**

Turkey has started with political and economic reforms for the aim of its acceptance at the European club at the top of which are Davidson (1981):

- a- The international supervision on the elections
- b- The adoption of the cultural rights of the Kurds.
- c- Reducing the role of the military in the government.
- d- Turkey received a call by the European Union in order to refrain from dictation the conditions and to begin negotiations with the aim of membership.
- e- Turkey has massed most prominent responsibilities through statements and press conferences in order to tighten the pressure on the European Union, which states that Turkey has already implemented all what it needs to do to meet the political conditions that have been identified by the union.
- f- The approval of the Turkish parliament to hold judicial reforms required by the accession negotiations, which will be conducted in the December this year.
- g- Turkey is ready to take new steps that did not specify what they are and its readiness to meet with Cypriot President at any time. This came through the words of Prime Minister Rajab Tayyip Erdogan.

### **2.3.The Reasons for Rejection of Europe to Turkey's Accession to the European Union**

Europeans consider the secularism in Turkey as an extension of the succession for the Islamic state and this poses a threat to the European Union.

The demographic element for Turkey which is represented by its population that is 70 million people, which gives Turkey the weight from the human level, and leads in the event of its accession to the European Union to take control of the labor market first, and penetration in the European countries that suffer from a lack of population and thus changing the demographic equations to European countries.

The Islamic identity for the Turkish despite of the secularism of the state. this has an effect on the people of the European states , where some studies refer to that there are high increasing by those who professing Islam particularly , in Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Britain, which are main and central countries in Europe (Halman, 1983).

Turkish industry, the current members of the European Union believe that in the case of Turkey's accession to the European Union, the Turkish industries, especially with regard to clothing, drinks, food , games and popular industries will invade European countries as the Chinese industries has already invaded the world . This does not bargained for European countries, because they wanted Turkey to be a market for their products, not a factory for its market.

Turkish rapid development in all aspects, especially the economic and productivity is due to its location that connects the East to the West that may be regarded as a hub to attract European investments at the expense of the countries of Eastern Europe, which suffer from their economic and social situations and this is not conducive to a balanced European development.

The Fear of Turkey to occupy a leading position within the European Union, with its Islamic nature. This can explain the derived contrast in the European standards in dealing with the Islamic case of Turkey (Kinross, 1971).

The European members are convinced to if Turkey joined the European Union ,it would get the biggest share of the number of votes needed for decision-making in the European Union, as a result of increasing its population and which may qualify it to get a one hundred of members in the European Commission.

Joining Turkey to the European union will alter the center of the military weight towards countries whose the majority of their people are from Muslims and that forms a source of concern feared by a group of countries , led by France (Kinross, 1977).

The fear of Islamic expansion and its security impact because of Turkey's accession to the European Union means adjoined the borders of the European Union, for each of Iran, Iraq and Syria at the time, where the Middle East is classified as the focus of conflict and religious violence that Europe doesn't want to occur because it is afraid of transmission that bad circumstances struggles to its territory. The prospective effects for joining Turkey to the European Union on the region and on the territory:

The Turkish joining to the European Union has a positive effect to the Arab central issue; the Palestinian issue, and the establishment of State of Israel in 1948 came as a result of the European support for the Jewish entity and it was a form of conflict between Christian Europe and the Islamic world and that has been very close to the trend of religious , ancient and modern . The Turkey's accession to the European Union may hide the rest of this trend (Lewis, 2002).

The European position on the Palestinian issue currently is somewhat in line with the Arab position on the issue, especially after the initiative of the roadmap. But the Israeli and the U.S. rejection in order to give Europe an active role in this case to the point of harsh criticism of the leaders of the European Union , and the accession of Turkey to the European Union and through its strong ties with Israel and being a member of NATO and a strategic ally of the United States makes the moderate European intervention in this case possible (Lewis, 1974).

Secular Turkish state has a long history of repression of freedoms and ethnic minorities and religious and human rights abuses , but in the case of accession to the European Union and the application of the terms of EU membership , this will lead to the exit of Turkey from its negative image and means at the same time guaranteeing the rights of minorities and the promotion of security and stability as Turkey can become a role model in the region and for the countries where there is an ethnic minority .<sup>14</sup> The European Union is aware of the seriousness of the ethnic and sectarian tendencies both within Europe and in the Middle East, which could be Turkey's accession to the European Union has a positive impact in this field (Shaw and Ezel, 1977).

Turkey is a country dominated by the military dominance and the imperfect democracy and its accession to the EU forces it to be a democratic state. Turkey's accession to the European Union means that its natural for the historical, cultural and geographical conflict between Turkey and Greece on the one hand and Turkey and Armenia, on the other hand to end up and lead to good relations , that its positive effects will be reflected on the region in general.

### **3. Analysis and Conclusions**

Turkey has made great efforts to join the EU; it is a grand strategy of the governments of Turkey in various directions.

The fears and hesitation to accept Turkey in the EU is not due to economic, political or geographical reason, but the main cause is the cause of religion.

EU countries resort to the long style of negotiations and this is considered for the sake of both parties.

Turkey is a land bridge that connects the continent of Asia and Europe and this position has given it special features that are not available in many countries around the world.

26-Turkey's close position to the population centers for each of Asia, Europe, Russia and the Arab world gives it a great importance.

The European Union believes that the reforms that Turkey has taken are still not enough.

The alternative of the Turkish state in the event of the failure of its efforts to enter the European Union may have to resort to regional or international options at the top of which is to set up a Russian Turkish Iranian alliance or to join for the South American countries known as the Organization of NAFTA .

## **4. Conclusion**

Since Turkey made its application to join the European Union more than three decades ago, it has been facing with the stalling and the impossible demands. Although Turkey has made great strides in controlling its own laws relating to the rights of minorities and freedoms to conform with the standards, but that the door to the European Union remained closed in front of it, although it has been opened for many countries less committed to the Copenhagen criteria.

## **5. Recommendations**

To make use of Turkey in the case of it's joining to the European Union and to find an adequate Arab role in order to make use of this membership.

The necessity to establish good political relations with the EU at least to ensure the neutrality of the European Union in the international Arab issues.

Arab diplomacy should be activated either individually or through the Arab League in order to gain Turkey, along with Arab ranks and taking advantage of the unity of religion, the neighborhood and history.

The establishment of cooperative relations with Turkey in all commercial and economic fields and exchange of experiences to be the beginning or a project to an Arabic Turkish joint venture in the future.

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