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Where Turkey stands in Europe and why it should be admitted to the EU

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Jens Alber

**Where Turkey stands in Europe and why
it should be admitted to the EU**

Lecture at the conference "Training
the Young Turkish Leaders of Tomorrow:
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Accession Process"; jointly organized by
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Abstract

Turkey's position relative to Europe is analyzed from three different perspectives, i.e (i) the semi-official perspective of the Copenhagen criteria, the Maastricht criteria and the Lisbon strategy, (ii) the perspective of comparative surveys, and (iii) the perspective of key European worries regarding future strains on cohesion funds and the complex relationship of the Turkish population to European values. It is shown that Turkey's standing in international comparisons of good governance has been improving in recent years and that the country is on a path of convergence with the Maastricht criteria. Turkey falls considerably short, however, of the employment and education goals of the Lisbon agenda. Comparative surveys show the Turkish population to have not only a low standard of living, but also a very low level of satisfaction with life and with public services, to have comparatively little trust in other people and a low level of civic engagement, and to nourish traditional attitudes concerning religious beliefs, women's rights and gender roles. Since Turkey's admission to the EU would enlarge the EU population by 15 %, but economic output by less than 3 %, Turkey's accession would severely strain EU cohesion funds. Despite these reservations, Turkey's admission to the Union is here advocated for three reasons: (1) Risks of a fundamentalist backlash against Europe would considerably increase if the long-standing accession promise were not kept. (2) Given that the country is entering a very favourable demographic phase for about 2-3 decades, there is considerable economic opportunity with a vast growth potential. (3) Since the recent Eastern enlargements have already decided the debate between federalists and inter-governmentalists in favour of the latter, Europe has more to gain than to lose from Turkey's membership which would strengthen the country's ties to the West, and provide a chance of proving to the world that the motto of the European Union "united in diversity" is a better model for the future of international relations than the scenario of a "clash of civilizations".

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1 Turkey in the light of EU policy goals: A semi-official EU perspective

1.1 Turkey and the Copenhagen criteria

Turkey has a long-standing relationship with Europe (see *Table 1*). Being an associate member of the EEC since 1963 and part of a Customs Union with the EU since 1996, it has for a long time had a privileged status as a quasi-member of the Union. In 2005 the European Commission decided to open formal accession negotiations.

Table 1: Historical steps in Turkey's relationship to Europe

19 th century	Osman Empire participant in Paris Peace Conference 1856 and in Berlin Congress 1878
World War I and aftermath	Osman Empire part of German-Austrian alliance (325.000 casualties) Greco-Turkish war 1919-22
1923ff	Atatürk reforms adopting Western script and European legal systems
World War II	Turkey neutral, but joining Allied powers in 1945
Post World War II Period	
1949	Turkey member of Council of Europe
1952	Turkey member of NATO
1963	Turkey Associate Member of European Economic Community
1987	Turkish Application for EC membership
1996	Turkey forms Customs Union with the EU
1999	Turkey obtains official candidate status for EU membership
2000	Galatasaray Istanbul wins UEFA Cup
2003	Sertab Erener wins Grand Prix d' Eurovision de la Chanson
2004	European Council resolution to start EU membership negotiations with Turkey
2005	EU membership negotiations begin

The *Copenhagen criteria* state that a country qualifies for EU membership if it meets three basic criteria:

- a functioning market economy which can cope with competitive pressures;
- stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, and human rights with the respect for and protection of minorities;
- capacity to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union (adoption of the *acquis communautaire*).

In addition the Union's capacity to absorb new members also has to be considered.

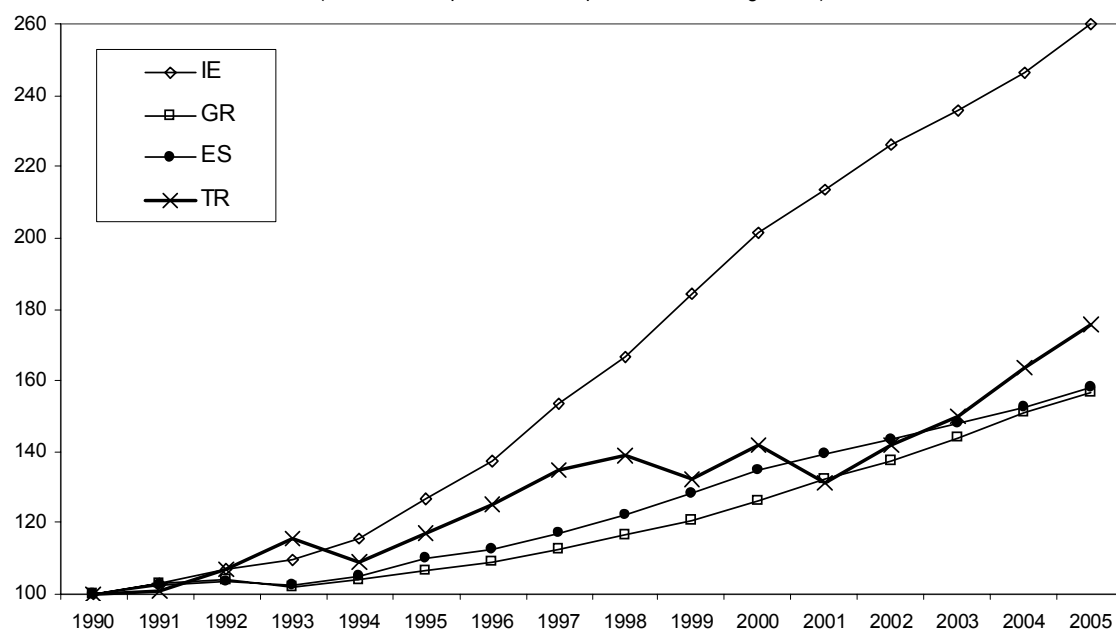
Where does Turkey stand with respect to these criteria? In contrast to the new member states acceding with the Eastern enlargement, Turkey has always belonged to the camp of *market economies*, and it has recently been growing more dynamically than most of the old member states. As shown in *Figure 1*, total economic output increased by 75 % in real terms since 1990. This means that Turkey outpaced the rate of economic growth in countries like Greece or Spain. This massive growth was partly, but not exclusively, a function of population dynamics, because per capita GNP also increased by 25 % in real terms between 1990 and 2004, despite the fact that the country weathered two major recessions in 1994 and around the turn of the century (1999/2001; see Turkish Statistical Institute, 2005, Tables 21.5- 21.6).

The Copenhagen criteria also call for stable *democratic institutions and good governance*. Based on the constitution of 1982, Turkey is a parliamentary democracy with free elections, a multiparty system and separation of powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. The independence of the judicial system is protected within the constitution. Two international nongovernmental organisations - Freedom House and Transparency International - monitor the observance of good governance by gauging the degree to which basic human rights are observed and to which the government and public administration are perceived to be corrupt. *Table 2* shows where Turkey is ranked in both dimensions.

The *Freedom House index* ranks countries in the two dimensions of civil liberties and political rights on an index ranging from value 1 signifying "completely free" to 7 standing for "unfree". Countries with average index values of 1 to 2.5 are classified as "free", those with values from 3 to 5 as "partly free" and those above 5 as "unfree". The average for EU member states is 1, the worst performing country is Romania with an index value of 2. Turkey is rated with 3, a value which is worse than anything found among EU member states, but better than the country's rating ten years ago. In terms of the international rank order Turkey improved from the 68th percentile in 1995 (rank 130 of 191) to the 47th percentile in 2005 (rank 90 of 192). Romania as the worst ranked EU-member state is found on rank 64 or in the 33rd percentile.

**Figure 1: Development of real GDP in Turkey, Greece, Spain, and Ireland
(1990=100)**

(GDP in market prices, at 1995 prices and exchange rates)



Source: based on Eurostat (EDS) 2007.

Table 2: Measures of good governance

CIVIL LIBERTIES/POLITICAL RIGHTS (Freedom House Index ranging from 1-7; lower = better)		
	2005	1995
Turkey	3.0 (47th percentile) (Rank 90 of 192)	5.0 (68th percentile) (Rank 130 of 191)
EU average	1.1	1.5
EU Best	1.0 (14 countries)	1.0 (9 countries)
EU Worst	2.0 (Romania = .33)	3.5 (Romania = .46)

INDEX OF CORRUPTION PERCEPTION (Transparency International Index ranging from 0-10; higher = better)		
	2005	1995
Turkey	4.1 (36th percentile) (Rank 64 of 179)	3.2 (73rd percentile) (Rank 38 of 52)
EU average	6.5	7.0
EU Best	9.4	9.9 (Denmark)
EU Worst	3.7 (Romania = .39)	3.4 (Romania = .71)

Source: Freedom House 2007 and Transparency International 1997 and 2007.

The index of corruption perception ranges from 0 (“totally corrupt”) to 10 (“completely incorrupt”). Hence in this index higher values stand for better performance. In 2007 Denmark and Finland were the best-ranked countries with values of 9.4. The EU average stood at 6.5 (which would have been rank 28 or the 16th percentile in the country rank order). Turkey obtained a value of 4.1 ranking at the 36th percentile (rank 64 among 179 countries). Romania was the only EU-country to rank worse (rank 69 or at the 39th percentile with a value of 3.7). Bulgaria was rated on par with Turkey, and Poland was rated only slightly better (rank 61). Compared to 1997, Turkey improved its rating, moving from the 73rd to the 36th percentile position and from a value of 3.2 to 4.1. In other words, the trend in Turkey is clearly positive, but the country is still quite a step away from Western European standards of good governance.

This is basically also the verdict in the most recent EU Progress Report on the Accession process which lists progress as well as continuing shortcomings (European Commission 2006). Among many other aspects the 93 pages report states that:

- There was progress in the fight against corruption (p. 68), but corruption is still widespread (71), especially since members of parliament are granted very wide immunity rights (11);
- human rights - and especially minority rights - still need to be strengthened as there was only little progress in the protection of minorities (22, 23, 26, 71);
- the revised antiterrorism law with its penalties for “propaganda” and “praise” of terrorism deviates from the definition of such crimes in the Council of Europe Convention for the Prevention of Terrorism and curtails the freedom of the press (6);
- article 301 of the new Penal Code suppresses the expression of free opinion by penalising statements insulting Turkishness, the Republic or the organs and institutions of the state, and restrictive jurisprudence lead, for example, to the confirmation of a suspended prison sentence for the journalist Hrant Dink who was later murdered by a gunman (16);
- the independence of the judicial system from executive control needs further strengthening (66);
- the rights of trade unions and of trade union members remained impaired (21, 22);
- the right to conscientious objection is still denied (69).

After this mixed result concerning the Copenhagen criteria, let us now see how Turkey fares with respect to the economic criteria of the European Growth and Stability Pact, i.e. the so-called Maastricht criteria.

1.2 Turkey and the Maastricht criteria

EU-Member countries which are to adopt the Euro need to meet certain so-called convergence criteria. These are also called the Maastricht criteria, because they were established at the Maastricht European Council of 1993. These include:

- a *low inflation rate* which is no more than 1.5 percentage points higher than the 3 best-performing member states of the EU - which basically means an inflation rate under 3 per cent under present conditions;
- a *low annual government deficit* which must not exceed 3% of GDP;
- a *low accumulated government debt* which must not exceed 60% of GDP.¹

The purpose of setting these criteria is to maintain the price stability within the Eurozone even with the inclusion of new member states.

Table 3 shows to what extent Turkey met the first three of these criteria in the most recent period. The most recent Turkish *inflation rate* was not only higher than the EU target or the EU average, but also higher than in the worst-performing EU member state, which is once again Romania. However, given that Turkey consistently had double digit inflation which ranged above 60 % throughout the 1990s, the recent lowering below the level of 10 % must be considered a major achievement. The public debt situation also improved recently. The *annual government deficit* is even below the EU-27 average, whereas the *accumulated public debt* has been lowered considerably since the economic downturn in 2001 and is now not far above the EU-27 average and lower than in three old EU-member states (Italy, Greece, and Belgium). In sum, Turkey seems to be on a positive path of gradual convergence to the Maastricht criteria.

Table 3: Turkey and the Maastricht criteria

	Turkey (2005)	Threshold	EU-27 (2006)	EU Top (2006)	EU Bottom (2006)
Inflation rate	7.7	3.0	2.2	1.3 (FI, PL)	7.4 (BG)
Annual deficit (% GDP)	-1.2	-3.0	-1.7	4.2 (DK)	-9.2 (HU)
Accumulated public debt (% GDP)	69.7	60	61.7	4.1 (EE)	106.8 (IT)

Source: Berié 2007, p. 579, European Commission 2006, p. 88.

1.3 Turkey and the Lisbon goals

The Lisbon European Council of March 2000 has set the strategic goal for the Union “to become the most dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.” (European Commission 2001: 7). Ever since the European Commission has been committed to the triple goal of developing:

- economic policies ensuring growth and employment,
- educational policies enhancing human capital as Europe’s chief resource and making people fit for the knowledge-economy,
- social policies combating social exclusion and fostering social cohesion.

Later the Gothenburg European Council of June 2001 added an environmental pillar to the list of policy priorities thus underlining the importance of sustainable policies which do not deplete natural resources. Abstracting here from environmental policy issues for reasons of space, I will examine where Turkey stands with respect to some key aspects relating to the first three policies.

With respect to *employment policies*, the Lisbon European Council set the goals to raise the overall employment rate to 70% and to increase the employment rate of women to more than 60 % by 2010. The Stockholm European Council of 2001 then added the goal of 50 % for older workers (as well as some intermediate targets to be reached by 2005). *Table 4* shows where Turkey stands with respect to these goals and how it compares to EU member countries.

By European standards, Turkey has a very low employment rate which is even 7 percentage points lower than the Polish rate that represents the EU bottom. A closer analysis shows that Turkish men have similar activity rates as the average European, but Turkish women only attain about one half of the employment rate of Italian women who are notorious for their particularly low level of formal employment in the old EU-15.² A further breakdown by age-groups shows that men at prime working age work similarly often as their peers in the EU. It is clearly in the group of prime-age women where the gap between Turkey and the EU is greatest.

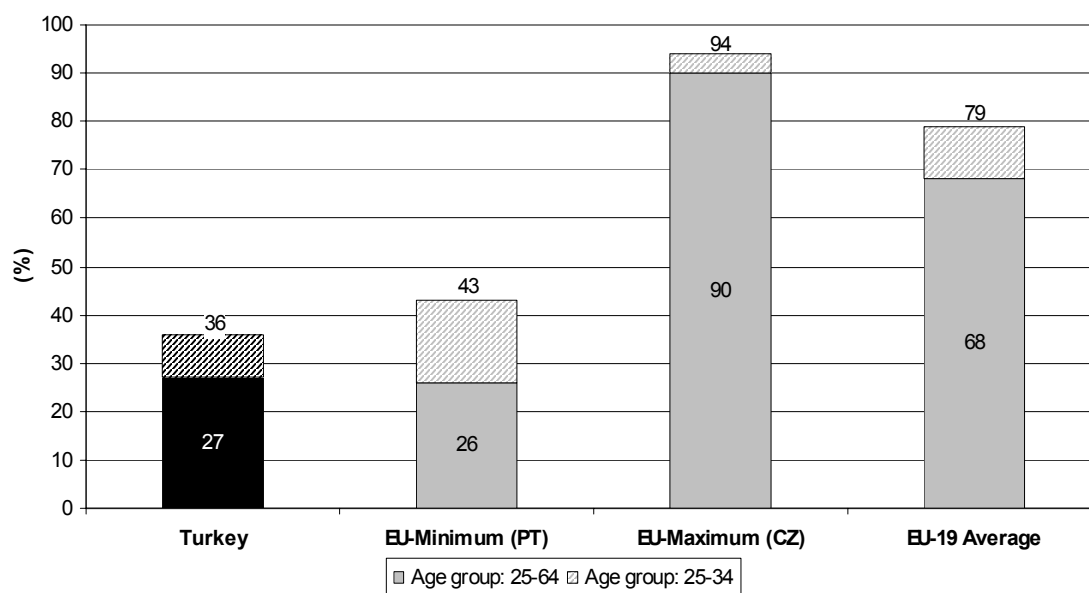
With respect to *educational policies*, one of the official EU targets is to boost the completion rate of upper secondary education among the younger generation (20-24) to at least 85 % by 2010. *Figure 2* shows how Turkey fares in this respect in a comparative perspective. The total adult population (aged 25-64) is still below the 85 % target in all European countries except the Czech and the Slovak Republics. Portugal is the only country beside Turkey where educational poverty in the sense of not having an upper secondary education certificate is still very widespread and where less than one third of the adult population has a degree in higher education. Higher learning is much more widespread

Table 4: Turkey and the employment goals of the Lisbon strategy

	TURKEY	Lisbon goal	EU-25	EU-27	EU Top	EU Bottom
Employment rate	46.0	70	63.9	63.4	75.9 (DK)	52.8 (PL)
Men	68.2		71.3	70.8	79.9 (NL)	58.9 (PL)
Women	23.8	60	56.5	56.2	71.9 (DK)	33.7 (MT)
Age 25-54	54.2		77.3	77.1	84.5 (DK)	62.4 (MT)
Young (15-24)	31.3		36.8	35.9	65.2 (NL)	21.2 (MT)
Old (55-64)	31.0	50	42.5	42.3	69.4 (SE)	27.2 (PL)
Men 25-54	81.5		85.5	85.1	92.8 (LU)	75.7 (MT)
Men 15-24	42.8		39.7	38.8	65.5 (NL)	21.2 (LT)
Men 55-64	45.4		51.8	51.5	72.0 (SE)	35.9 (PL)
Women 25-54	26.3		69.1	69.0	81.1 (SE, SI)	35.4 (MT)
Women 15-24	20.3		33.9	32.9	64.9 (NL)	17.4 (LT)
Women 55-64	17.1		33.7	33.5	66.7 (SE)	12.4 (MT)

Source: Eurostat (EDS) 2007.

Figure 2: Percentage of the population (aged 25-64 and 25-34) that has attained at least upper secondary education, 2005



Source: OECD 2007, Education at a Glance 2007 (Database).

among the younger generation, where even the EU-average already comes close to the official target. Portugal is the only European OECD-country where less than half of the young are in possession of an upper secondary degree. The pace of educational expansion was even lower in Turkey which falls behind Portugal in the younger age-group.

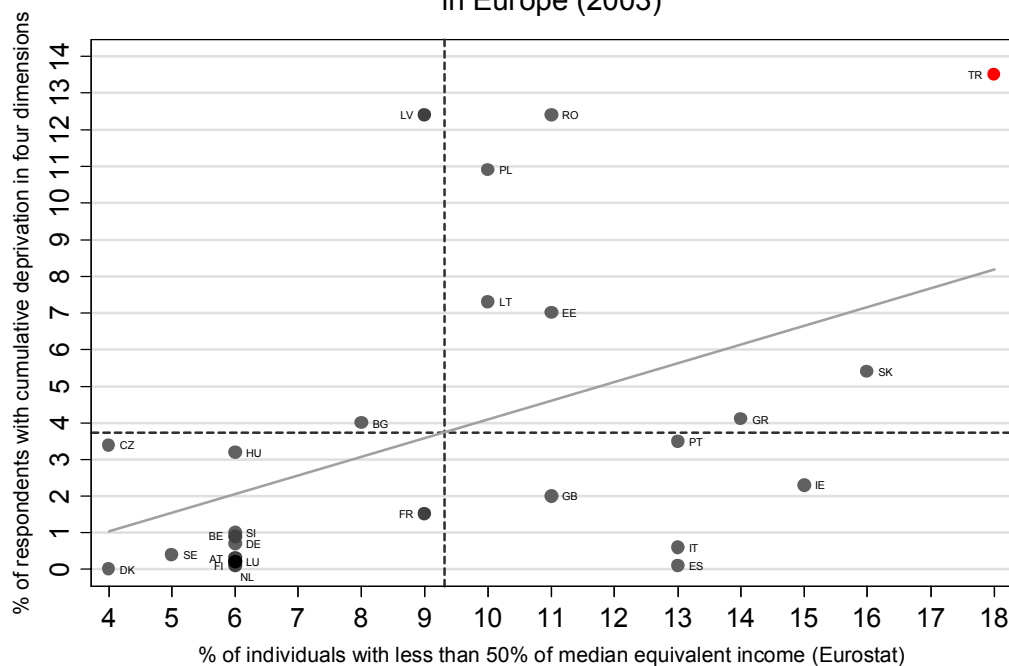
This shows that Turkey must not halt in its attempt to further expand public schooling. It is true that due to the steep decline in birth rates the size of the school age population has already peaked and will remain fairly constant in the next two to three decades. However, school attendance is close to 100 % only in the age cohorts who are subject to the eight years of compulsory schooling. Attendance rates in higher age groups need to be more than doubled if the country is to come close to European standards and to cope with the requirements of the knowledge economy. Hence considerable further increases of the educational budget are clearly in place.

With respect to *social cohesion*, the EU has not set precise policy targets, but it is clearly committed to reducing not only regional differences within the EU, but also social exclusion within member states. One of the classical indicators of social exclusion is the *relative income poverty rate*. It shows the proportion of people who have to live on less than one half of the median equivalent disposable household income of one country (where equivalent means that the household income is weighted by the number of household members). The respective numbers - as well as the proportion of people "at risk of poverty", i.e. having less than 60% of the median income weighted by household size - are regularly published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. The margin of variation in the EU-25 is very large, ranging from 5 % in Finland, Sweden, and the Czech Republic to 14 % in Lithuania and Poland in 2005.

One must bear in mind, however, that these data show only who is under a nationally defined poverty line which may vary widely from country to country. This means that a citizen living at the 50 % national poverty threshold in rich countries like Sweden, Denmark or Luxembourg has several times the income of someone living at the apparently same relative poverty line in a poor country like Estonia, Latvia, Bulgaria or Romania.

Figure 3 illustrates how different the level of actual deprivation connected with relative income poverty is in various countries and where Turkey stands in both respects. Two features are particularly noteworthy. First, in 2003, countries with similar rates of relative income poverty such as France, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland had widely discrepant proportions of people experiencing harsh deprivation. Whereas less than 2 % of French respondents suffered simultaneously from four criteria of hardship, more than 10 % in Poland, Latvia, and Romania did so. Second, Turkey stands far apart from other European countries in both dimensions. Almost every fifth Turkish citizen lived in relative income poverty in 2003, and almost 14 % of Turkish respondents had to cope with very dire circumstances.³ This shows that the Turkish level of living is still far below European standards.⁴

Figure 3: Relative income poverty and material deprivation in Europe (2003)



Source: Eurostat (EDS) and EQLS 2003.

In the absence of more recent data on relative income poverty and the actual level of material deprivation, the Human Development Index published by the United Nations Development Programme (2006) is a useful alternative measure of the absolute level of well-being. It combines a measure of material well-being (per capita GDP) with a measure of health (life expectancy) and another one of education (literacy) in the light of the global distribution of these attributes. According to the United Nations countries with a value below 0.5 belong to the little developed group, countries with values between 0.5 and 0.8 are counted to be at intermediate development, and countries above 0.8 are ranked as highly developed. All EU member states belonged to the group with a highly developed HDI in 2004. The lowest ranking EU-member - Romania - is found on rank 60 with a value of 0.805. Turkey ranks on position 92 with an index value of 0.757. These data show that Turkey still lags clearly behind EU member countries despite its impressive recent record of economic growth. In the next step I will examine how Turkey fits into the European social space based on more sociological data from recent surveys.

2 Conspicuous features of Turkish society from a comparative sociological perspective⁵

2.1 Subjective well-being and concepts of accountability: A dissatisfied population

A few years ago German newspapers reported on the Turkish Quality of Life Survey in 2003 stating that Turks are poor but happy. This is not what our data show. In fact, Turkish citizens are painfully aware of their dire circumstances. As shown in *Table 5a*, their satisfaction with their standard of living is much lower than in all EU-countries with the exception of Bulgaria. Their general life satisfaction is similarly low, ranking closer to the minimum level found in Bulgaria, than in any other EU member state.

If poverty is widespread, a decisive question is how it is interpreted. Is it seen as a result of individual shortcomings or rather as a result of collective processes beyond the individual's control? The remarkable feature about Turkey is that a large majority of its citizens sees "injustice in our society" as the key determinant of living in need.⁶ This means that there is a considerable potential for the political mobilization of discontent.

Compared to the citizens in post-communist countries, Turks are, however, less likely to hold the government responsible for providing for everyone. When given a choice between more government responsibility and more personal responsibility, the average Turkish citizen is slightly more in favour of enhancing individual responsibility. In this respect Turkish respondents resemble the average West European more than the citizens of the new member states.⁷

Even though they do not hold the government responsible for providing for everybody, Turkish citizens have a very unfavourable impression of the quality of public services (*Table 5b*). The poorest rating is given to the quality of the health care system despite the fact that the satisfaction with one's own health is quite high. All other public services are also graded much worse than is the case in Western Europe. The only exception is that Turks have more trust in their pension system than either West or East Europeans. Whether this reflects an awareness of the favourable demographic situation of the country or simply ignorance about the European debates on the future sustainability of pension schemes is not clear - but as we will see below, Turkey does benefit from an extremely favourable demographic situation for the decades to come.

In sum, Turkish citizens are aware of severe hardship and highly critical of the quality of state services. If politically mobilized, this high level of discontent could become a very severe challenge to the political elites, if not to the entire political system. A crucial question then is to what extent civil society networks serve to cushion or channel this discontent.

2.2 Trust, social cohesion, and civic engagement: A weak civil society

The surveys probing into social relations and civic engagement show that Turkish citizens are closely integrated into a web of exchange with family and friends, but are only very loosely related to the larger society around them (*Table 5c*).

Trust in other people - one of the crucial indicators of the social capital of a society - is a conspicuously scarce resource in Turkey. Only Bulgarians display similar levels of distrust in their fellow citizens as Turks. Turks are also more likely than West Europeans or citizens of the new member states to see their society as conflict-ridden and to *perceive strong tensions* between social groups. In contrast to Western Europe, where ethnic tensions are now perceived to be more pervasive than the old conflicts of industrial society between management and workers or rich and poor people, the Turkish population still considers the tension between rich and poor people to be the central conflict. Turkey is also the only country, where all lines of cleavage, including tensions between men and women or old and young people, are perceived as intense.

A weak *civic engagement* is the mirror image of the strong distrust of other people and the perception of society as conflict-ridden (*Table 5d*). The percentage of people engaging in voluntary work or participating in voluntary organisations is distinctly lower than in the old and the new member states of the European Union. Only Bulgaria and Romania display a similar pattern of restraint in civic activities.

The abstention from civic engagement does not mean that Turks are egotists who do not like to co-operate with others. Quite the contrary: They help people living outside their own household even more frequently than all other Europeans with the exception of Romanians.⁸ As their high satisfaction with family life shows, they merely restrict their social life to relatives and friends in their immediate vicinity. In contrast their, satisfaction with social life in general is low and clearly below the European average.

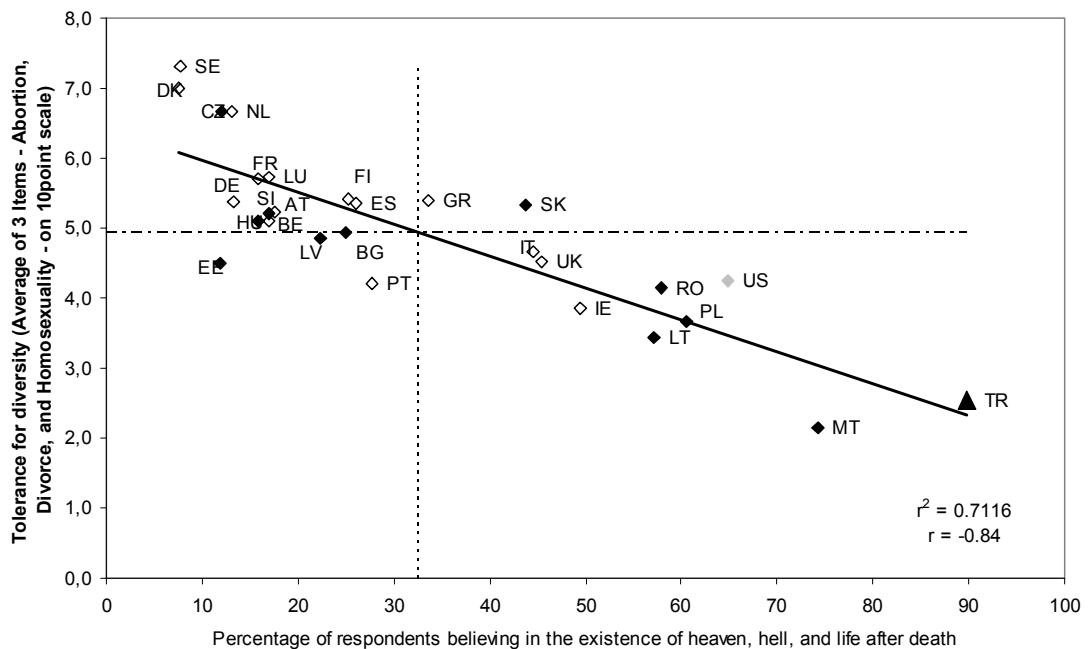
In sum, we see the image of a society where people withdraw into an inner circle of trust, but abstain from more formal social relations and from civic engagements. This is probably also a reaction to strains of anomie accompanying the steep population growth, and the massive migration from the countryside to the cities which characterised Turkish society in the past decades.

2.3 Cultural orientations: Traditional values concerning religion, minorities, and gender roles

To what extent has the urbanization process transformed the cultural orientations of the Turkish population? The answer is: So far remarkably little. With respect to religious beliefs, tolerance for deviant life-styles and gender roles, the Turkish respondents hold much more traditional views than their peers in Western or Central Europe. I can illustrate this by showing how frequently people believe in the existence of heaven, hell, and a life after death on the one side and how frequently they express tolerance for abortion, divorce and homosexuality on the other (*Figure 4*). In both dimensions, the Turkish respondents are far away from Europeans or even Americans who hold the most traditional views in the West. We also see that religiousness tends to be associated with less tolerance for deviant life-styles.

With respect to *gender roles*, Turks are conspicuous for their highly traditional and patriarchic views (*Table 5e*). Nowhere in Europe is the percentage of women who work informally as homekeepers nearly as high as in Turkey. Almost three quarters of Turkish women are daily involved in child care, whereas this is true for far less than one half of

Figure 4: Religious beliefs and tolerance for diverse life-styles, 1999/2000



Source: European Values Study 2000 and World Value Survey 1999.

Table 5: Turkey in the light of comparable survey data

Indicator	Measurement (Source)	TURKEY	EU-15	NMS-10	BG	RO
a) SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING						
Satisfaction with standard of living	10 point scale (EQLS)	4.6	7.2	5.6	4.0	6.1
Life satisfaction	10 point scale (EQLS)	5.6	7.2	6.1	4.5	6.2
Injustice in society as cause of need	% (CCEB)	74	35	50	66	51
State responsibility (1) vs. Self responsibility (10)	10-point scale (EVS)	5.7	6.1	4.6	4.4	4.7
b) PERCEPTIONS OF STATE SERVICES						
Satisfaction with						
- Health services	10 point scale (EQLS)	3.9	6.4	5.0	3.5	5.6
- Own health	10 point scale (EQLS)	7.1	7.5	6.8	6.5	7.3
- Education system	10 point scale (EQLS)	4.4	6.4	5.8	4.4	6.5
- Social Services	10 point scale (EQLS)	4.2	6.2	4.5	3.6	5.6
- State pension system	10 point scale (EQLS)	4.4	5.5	4.6	3.4	5.3
Trust in pension system	% no trust (EQLS)	35	55	49	62	56
c) SOCIAL COHESION						
Trust in other people	10 point scale (EQLS)	4.5	5.8	4.8	4.4	5.4
Tension perception						
- Poor – rich people	% a lot (EQLS)	60	31	51	54	53
- Management and Workers	% a lot (EQLS)	48	34	47	37	49
- Men – Women	% a lot (EQLS)	34	12	8	9	17
- Old – young people	% a lot (EQLS)	33	15	17	17	29
- Different racial and ethnic groups	% a lot (EQLS)	46	46	34	13	33

Indicator	Measurement (Source)	TURKEY	EU-15	NMS-10	BG	RO
d) CIVIC ENGAGEMENT						
Done voluntary work in past 12 months	% yes (EQLS)	3	13	6	2	3
Attended meeting of charitable or voluntary organisation	% yes (EQLS)	4	14	7	3	3
Helping someone outside own household	% yes (EQLS)	39	19	27	31	39
Satisfaction with family life	10 point scale (EQLS)	7.8	7.9	7.6	7.1	8.1
Satisfaction with social life	10 point scale (EQLS)	5.5	7.3	6.3	5	6.9
e) POSITION OF WOMEN						
Economic status homemaker	% women (EQLS)	67	21	6	4	21
Every day involved in child care	% women (EQLS)	72	38	41	31	42
Every day involved in housework (men)	% men (EQLS)	18	39	46	39	63
Women do more than fair share in housework	% women (EQLS)	70	37	30	26	29
f) DEMOCRACY						
Having a strong leader not bothering with parliament or elections	% good / very Good (EVS)	66	23	23	45	67
Democracy is better than any other form of Government	% agree (EVS)	78	87	78	71	66
Having a democratic system is very good	% yes (EVS)	47	49	27	38	33
g) CULTURAL ORIENTATIONS						
Non-believing politicians are unfit for office	% agree (EVS)	62	12	18	25	52
Religious leaders should not influence voters or government decisions	% agree (EVS)	63	64	71	76	69
Self-identification as religious	% yes (EVS)	80	64	70	52	85

the women in the European Union. In contrast, the proportion of Turkish men who say that they spend every day some time on housework is only half as high as in EU-countries. Obviously Turkish women do no longer consider this division of labour fair, as 70 % of them feel that they are doing more than their fair share, a complaint which less than 40 % of the female respondents in EU-countries express. The steep decline in Turkish fertility rates - from 4.4 in 1980 to 2.2 in 2005⁹ - and the fact that Turkey is the only European country where a majority of the women with completed fertility (age 40-64) declare to have had more children than they desired (Fahey 2006: 42-43) is a further indication that Turkish women are no longer willing to accept the old patriarchic order.

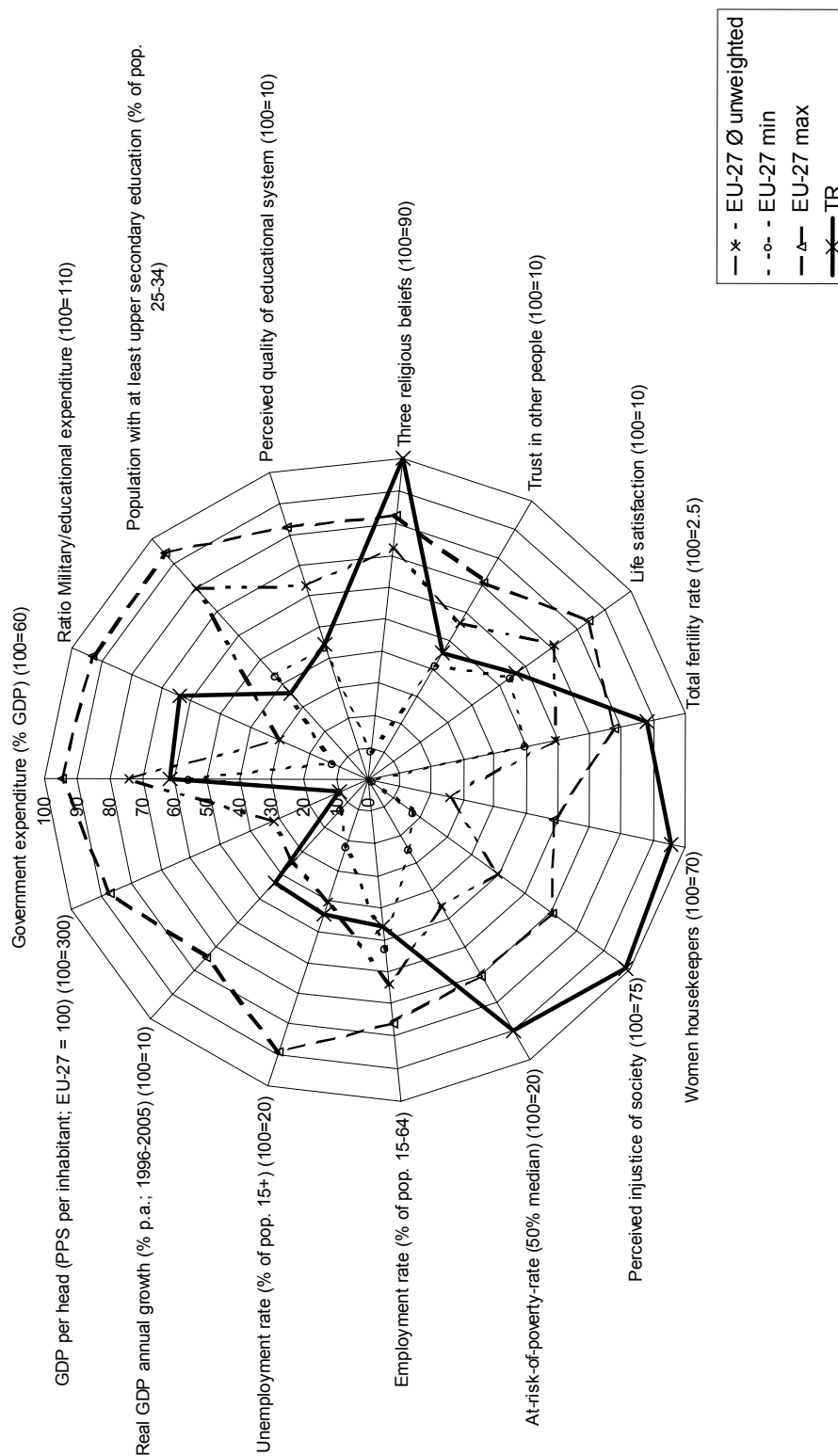
2.4 Empirical summary: Where Turkey stands in the European social space

To summarise the empirical findings, *Figure 5* shows where Turkey fits into and where it deviates from the European social space by comparing Turkey to the average, the minimum, and the maximum value in the European Union. Highlighting the most conspicuous facts, the following points can be made.

Obviously Turkey is the poorest country in the widely defined realm of the EU. However, it recently had above-average economic growth rates. Its employment rate is conspicuously low, and in six more cases Turkey stands out with extreme values far out of bounds of the EU: (1) The poverty rate is higher, (2) the existence of need is more frequently related to injustice in society, (3) women are more frequently confined to the role of housekeepers, (4) the fertility rate is still higher than elsewhere in Europe, (5) religiousness is more widespread, whereas (6) participation in higher education is less frequent.

Now what does all this mean for the question of Turkey's accession to the European Union? Reflecting on this normative question, I will first describe some of the key European worries and then conclude by pointing out why I am nevertheless in favour of Turkey's membership.

Figure 5: The Location of Turkey within the Social Space of the Enlarged European Union (2005)



3 Should Turkey be admitted to the EU despite justified European worries?

3.1 Key European worries

3.1.1 Turkey and the strain on cohesion funds

The first worry is that Turkey's accession would be a major strain on EU structural funds and that this would outrun the capacities of EU cohesion policies which are committed to the convergence of European living standards.

If Turkey were admitted to the European Union, the EU population would increase by 15 % whereas economic output would grow by less than 3 % (European Commission 2004: 38). With its 72 million inhabitants, Turkey would have the second largest population in the EU, but the size of its GDP (in Euros) would only be on rank 8. Measured in purchasing power parities, the Turkish GDP per head would amount to roughly one fourth of the EU-25 average (which is the yardstick frequently used in EU official documents). This means that the gap in the standard of living that separates Turkey from the EU average is about just as big as the gap that separates Mexico from the United States. Hence there are also fears that massive cross-border migration would set in.

I will not deal with the migration issue here but focus on the consequences for EU cohesion policies instead. As all Turkish regions would be below 75 % of the average EU GDP per capita, they would all be entitled to support from EU structural funds. Aid from the structural funds is limited to a maximum of 4 % of the recipient country's GDP. The Turkish GDP was given by Eurostat (2007) as 290.5 bio Euros in 2005. 4 % of this sum amount to 11.6 bio Euros.

Standing at a share of 1.9 %, Greece is currently the country receiving the highest subsidies from EU structural actions relative to the size of its GNI. The highest proportion of all appropriations for structural actions currently goes to Spain and amounts to 17.8 %, or 5.8 bio Euros in absolute terms.¹⁰ It is estimated that if Turkey were now an EU Member State, it would receive about 27 % of Structural Fund appropriations, and that its share in Structural Fund payments would raise to roughly one third (32 %) by 2014 (European Parliament 2006: p. 5; p. 10). By 2025 it would receive 26 billion Euros annually from

Structural Policy measures alone (European Parliament 2006: 5). A European Parliament document concludes that payments of this magnitude would be “politically unrealistic” and claims that the challenges to European Regional Policy would “outstrip the funds available” (European Parliament 2007: 11).

There are two more issues involved here. The first is that an effective channelling of EU structural funds into economic development requires administrative capacities, good governance free of corruption, and an educational infrastructure which would promise synergy effects (Rose and Özcan 2007). It is important for young Turkish leaders to understand that resistance to the country’s accession within the EU will diminish the more progress is made in the realm of good governance.

The second issue concerns the so-called *statistical effect* of enlargements. Since the entitlement to the so-called objective 1 support is limited to regions with less than 75 % of the average GDP per capita in purchasing power parities, hitherto entitled regions lose their claim if poorer countries join and decrease the average GDP per head, thus lifting them statistically above the 75 % threshold. If Turkey and all candidate countries in the Balkans joined, a recent European Parliament document estimated that one third of the current regions eligible for structural funding would lose their objective 1 status (European Parliament 2007: 10).¹¹

Hence there are serious economic reservations. However, there are also worries concerning Turkey’s relationship to democracy.

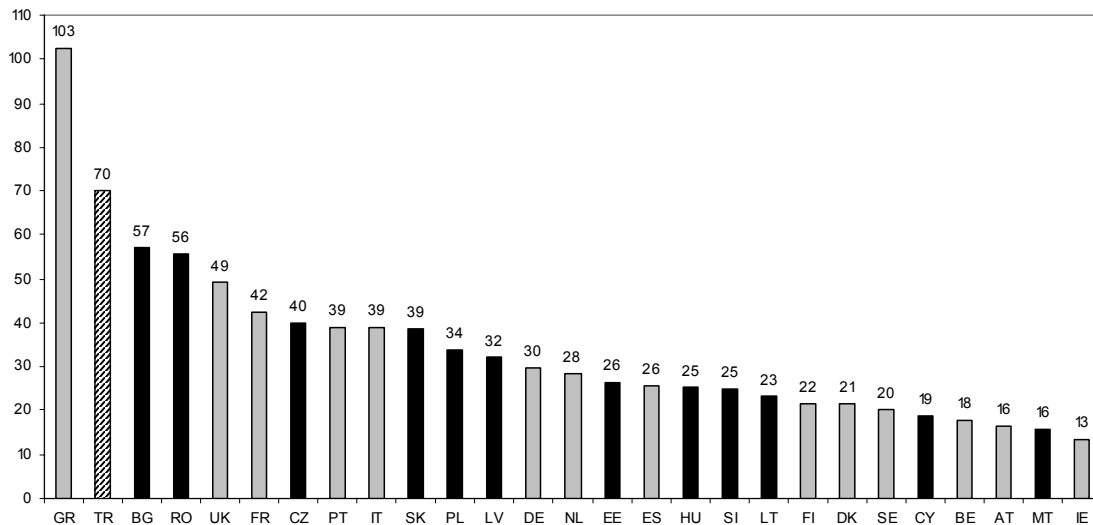
3.1.2 Turkey and its precarious relationship to democracy

We all know that the Turkish military intervened three times - 1960, 1971, and 1980 - to change the course of Turkish politics, and in more moderate and soft form it has done so again this year intervening - unsuccessfully as it seems - into the presidential election.

With more than half a million soldiers, the Turkish armed forces are the biggest army in Europe. In relative terms, only Greece and Cyprus have even larger proportions of their populations under arms. The ratio of military expenditure to education expenditure may be considered a good indicator of the degree of civilianization of the state. There are only four European countries where the military budget is bigger than one half of the education budget. Turkey is one of them, preceded only by Greece (*Figure 6*).

Survey data show that the Turkish population is unique besides Romania in thinking that it would be a good thing to have a strong leader who would not have to bother with parliament or with elections (*Table 5f*). It is true that Turks consider democracy to be the best form of government just as frequently as other Europeans. However, their support is also not more solid than in other European countries, as less than half are ready to say that

**Figure 6: A measure of civilianization of the state:
the ratio of military to educational expenditure, 2005**



Source: own calculations based on Berié 2007, p. 530-537.

having a democratic system is good. Given the high discontent with the quality of public services, Turkish policy makers should take this a serious signal that under adverse economic circumstances the support of their democratic rule might be withering.

Finally, Europeans are concerned to what extent the Turkish population would share the European values of freedom, pluralism and tolerance for diversity.

3.1.3 Turkey and its complex relationship to European values

Cultural reservations about Turkey concern two major issues: (1) Does an Islamic society fit into the Western value community? (2) Can an Islamic society fully subscribe to the EU emphasis on gender equality? Let us quickly examine the empirical evidence on these points.

With respect to religion, the evidence is mixed. We have already seen that Turks are more religious and less tolerant in life-style issues than EU-citizens. They are also less likely to consider non-believing politicians fit for office (*Table 5g*).

On the other hand, we must not exaggerate the differences regarding religion. It may come as a surprise to Turkish readers that there is only one European country - the Czech Republic - where less than half of the population professes to believe in God.¹² Two thirds of EU-citizens declare themselves as being religious, and there are only five countries

Table 6: Indicators of the position of women in society

Indicator	Source	Turkey	EU-Minimum	EU-Maximum	EU-25 (19) - Average
Year of female suffrage	various	1930	1974 (PT)	1906 (FI)	
% seats in parliament (2006)	UNHDR	4	9 (MT)	45 (SE)	
Employment Status: Housekeeper	EQLS	67	1 (DK, FI, SE)	41 (MT)	18
Female employment rate (2005)	OECD	24	45 (IT)	72 (SE)	(56)
At least upper secondary education among 25-64 years old (2005)	OECD	21	29 (PT)	86 (CZ, SE)	(67)
Gender gap in at least upper secondary education among 25-64 years old (2005)	OECD	-11	14 (PL)	-10 (AT)	(-2)
Gender gap in at least upper secondary education among 25-34 years old (2005)	OECD	-13	15 (PL)	-4 (AT)	(4)

(France, the UK, Estonia, and Sweden, besides the Czech Republic) where less than half of respondents do so. Finally, large majorities of Turks and EU-citizens are in agreement that religious leaders should not influence voters or government decisions.

The second cultural divide concerns the social position of women (*Table 6*). The Turkish state granted women the right to vote rather early, but the representation of women in parliament is still far below the EU minimum. On the labour market women are barely visible, as most of them are engaged in informal household work, and only a small minority is found in paid employment. A large proportion of Turkish women lack higher education, and the most disconcerting finding in this respect is that the educational gender gap has even grown larger in the youngest age-cohort according to OECD statistics.

Thus, rather strong cultural differences cannot be denied. My main argument in this respect is, however, that cultural preferences are not constants, but very amenable to changing conditions. The German case makes this particularly clear. After the Second World War, many intellectuals claimed that Germany did not belong to the culture of the West, and there were quite a few survey results to sustain this view (for a summary see Alber 2004). However, when the country was integrated into NATO and the EEC, and prosperity ruled, German attitudes changed rather quickly. By the 1980s, German attitudes had been profoundly transformed and were no longer different from the ones in western neighbour countries. Hence the German example shows that the integration into international

networks of exchange and co-operation - coupled with inner-societal modernization processes - can lead to an evaporation of traditional orientations, and in this sense there is no historical path dependency or historical determinism.

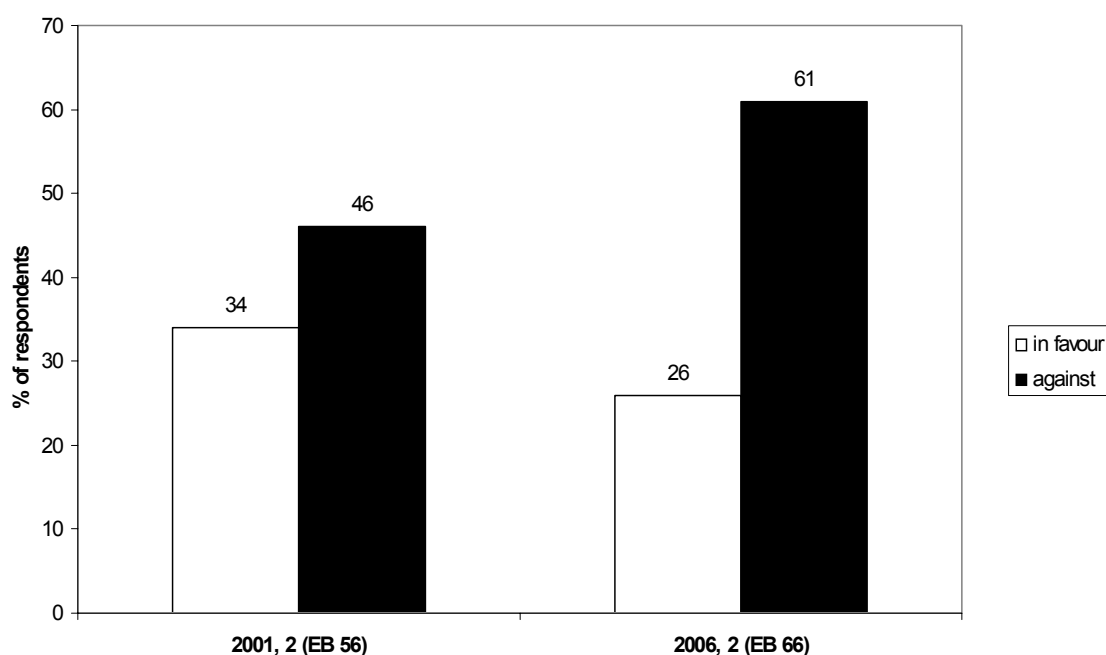
3.2 A personal balance sheet: Why Turkey should nevertheless be admitted to the EU

3.2.1 Backlash potential if promises are not kept

There is no denial that the European attitude on Turkish accession has also been subject to change (*Figure 7*). Europeans are much more against Turkish membership today than a few years ago. In Turkey, on the other hand, there has not yet been a clear backlash so far. Yet the survey data do show that the enthusiasm about EU membership is waning in the Turkish population (*Figure 8*).

A reading of the EU reports on the progress of accession negotiations clearly shows how much the promise to become a Union member has already contributed to a massive transformation of Turkish institutional structures including several modifications of the constitution. If all this would prompt the European Union to deny accession and merely grant a privileged status as associated member, chances are that there would be a fundamentalist reaction against Europe and the West. Hence I think that the European Union would be ill-advised to thwart the accession process.

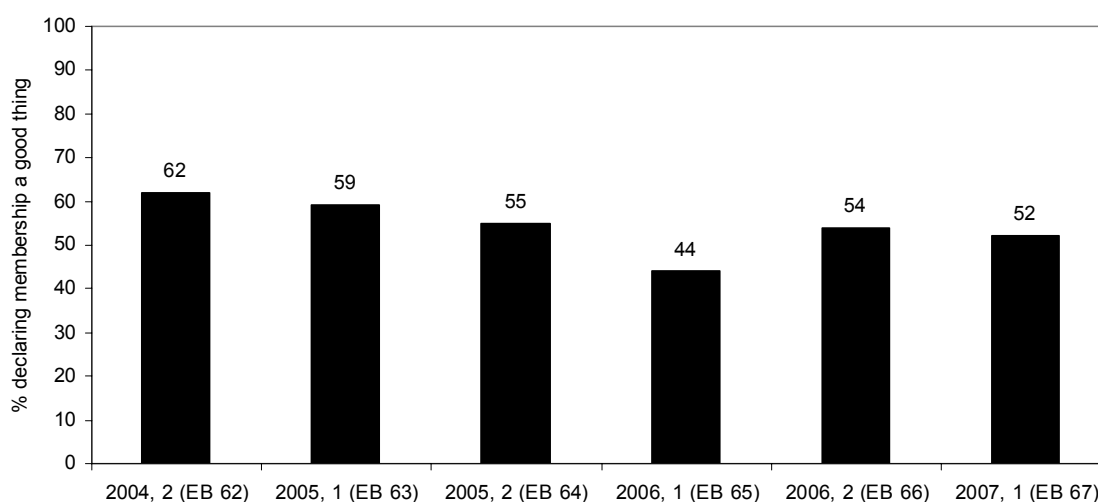
Figure 7: Development of support for Turkey's EU membership in EU-15 countries



Question: Would you be in favour or against turkey becoming part of the European Union in the future?

Source: Eurobarometer 56, p. 78 and Eurobarometer 66, QA33.13.

Figure 8: Approval of EU membership in Turkey, 2004-2007



Question: Generally speaking, do you think that our country's membership of the EU would be...? - A good thing.

Sources: Eurobarometer 62: 70; Eurobarometer 63: 97; Eurobarometer 64: 56; Eurobarometer 65: 76; Eurobarometer 66: 119; Eurobarometer 67 - First results: 16.

3.2.2 Economic chances given a widely open demographic window of opportunity

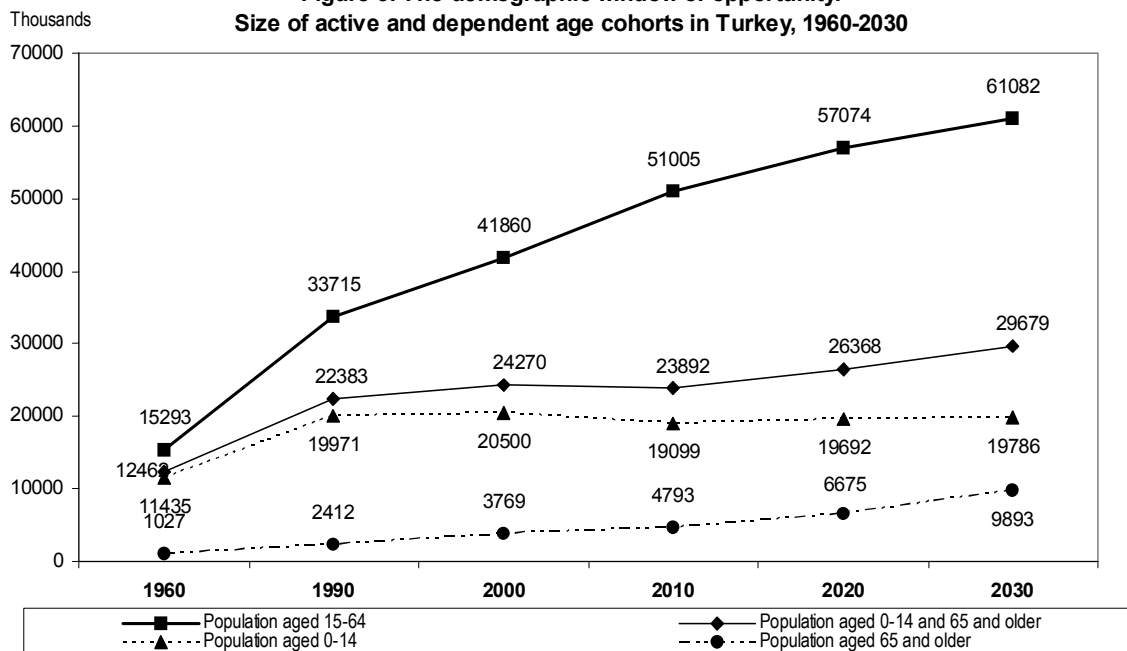
Allowing Turkey to join the Union would also give the EU a chance to benefit from the massive economic growth that can be expected in Turkey for the next two to three decades. For some time to come Turkey is blessed with an almost unique demographic window of opportunity (*Figure 9*). The population at working age will increase steeply, while the size of the dependent population will grow only moderately. This means that the dependency ratio will shrink from 0.66 in 1990 to 0.48 in 2030. In other words more people will be able to produce the economic output needed to sustain the non-working population. This should allow for an economic spurt in which the EU would be wise to participate lest growing proportions of trade go outside the EU.

Three cautioning remarks are in place, however. First, a larger population at working age also requires more jobs. So far, the high economic growth rates have not translated into a job machine, and Turkey experienced jobless growth in recent years (*Figure 10*). This is in stark contrast to developments in the new member states where economic growth recently translated into sizable employment growth (Alber 2007). Why the Turkish economy has such difficulties in creating jobs would require further analyses which are beyond the scope of this contribution.

Secondly, the stagnant number of young people should not be understood as a legitimation to spend less on education. Competitiveness in the globalised world means above all having an educated and hence highly productive workforce. Turkey needs to channel more funds into education and to augment the proportion of people with at least upper secondary education.

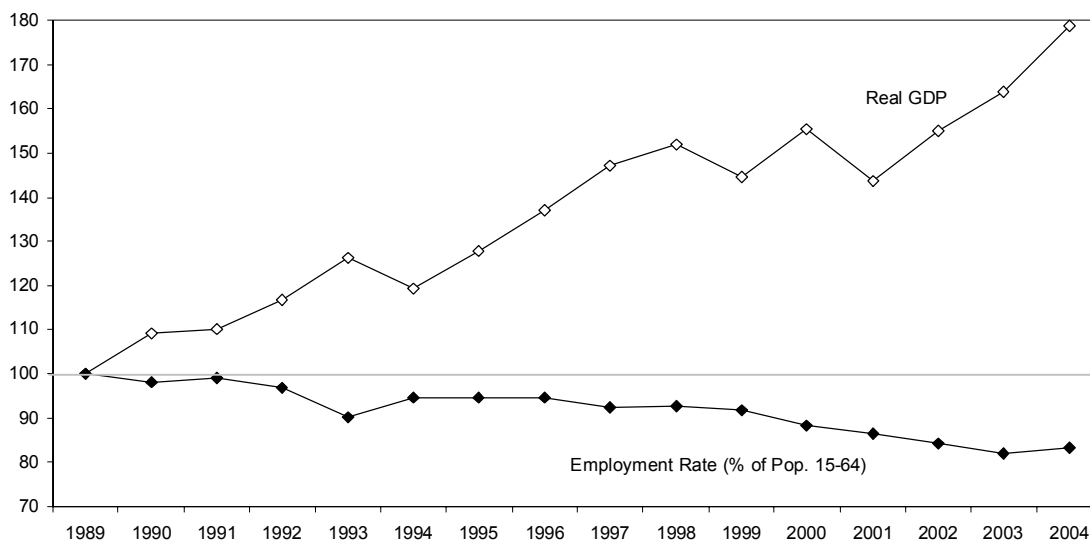
Third, it should not be overlooked that the elderly population is growing at an even faster rate than the population at working age. Between 2000 and 2030 the number of older people will almost treble, and the old age dependency ratio will rise from 0.09 to 0.16. In other words, Turkey will need to spend more on the young population in the education system and on the older generation who will require pensions as well as care services. Yet the demographic window of opportunity allowing some leeway for policy makers and promising a phase of dynamic growth will be wide open for at least two decades.

**Figure 9: The demographic window of opportunity:
Size of active and dependent age cohorts in Turkey, 1960-2030**



Source: based on OECD 1997.

Figure 10: Jobless Growth? Development of real GDP and employment in Turkey (1989 = 100)



Source: based on OECD 2007, OECD Statistics Online v.4.4 and Eurostat (EDS) 2007.

3.2.3 Political chances: United in diversity instead of a clash of civilizations

Finally, the European Union has much to gain politically from a firm integration of Turkey into its ranks. The phase of deepening the Union seems over anyhow, now that the threat of communism has vanished and the memories of the Second World War which fuelled the process of European Unification are fading. After the recent Eastern enlargements, it seems that the debate between federalists and inter-governmentalists has been decided in favour of the latter and that the inter-governmentalists understanding the Union more as a zone of close co-operation among national governments than a new form of supra-national state have carried the day.

If this is so, increasing diversity within the Union must not necessarily be seen as a threat. If Turkey joined the Union, this would be proof that an Islamic society can be part of the West. Turkey could become the vanguard of democracy in the Islamic world, Europeans would for the first time win access to the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the world would get convincing proof that the motto of the European Union “united in diversity” is a better model for the future of a globalised world than the “clash of civilizations”.

Notes

- ¹ In addition there are some other criteria which need not concern us here any further. Applicant countries
- should not have devaluated their currency for 2 consecutive years and should have joined the exchange-rate mechanism (ERM II) under the European Monetary System (EMS);
 - and should have long-term interest rates that must not be more than 2 percentage points higher than the 3 best-performing member states (based on inflation).
- ² In the EU-27 Malta has the lowest rate of female employment (34 %), followed by Italy (45 %).
- ³ The index of material deprivation is a summary measure of cumulative deprivation in four dimensions, stating the percentage of people suffering from the following shortcomings, based on the 2003 European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS):
- cannot afford at least four of six consumption items (Q 20),
 - feels great or some difficulty to make ends meet (Q 58),
 - is in arrears with at least one of two housing payments (Q 59),
 - ran out of money to buy food within past 12 months (Q 60).
- ⁴ At the same time the degree of income inequality in Turkey is very high. The Turkish Gini-coefficient of 0.45 is higher than the EU maximum of 0.410 found in Portugal and 41 % higher than the EU-25 average (0.310) - taken from Eurostat (2007).
- ⁵ This section builds on earlier work published in Alber (2004) and Alber (2006).
- ⁶ The question (no 41) in the Candidate Countries Eurobarometer 2002.1 (as well as Q13 in the Standard Eurobarometer 56.1 from 2001) asked “Why in your opinion are there people who live in need?”, and gave four options: (1) Because they have been unlucky; (2) because of laziness and lack of willpower; (3) because there is much injustice in our society; (4) It’s an inevitable part of modern progress.
- ⁷ In the European Values Study from 1999/2000 respondents were asked (in variable 186) to place themselves on a ten point scale ranging from 1 (“The government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided”) to 10 (“People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves”).
- ⁸ This is based on question no 62 in the 2003 European Quality of life Survey which asked: “In the past year, did your household give regular help in the form of either money or food to a person you know not living in your household (e.g. parents, grown-up children, other relatives, or someone not related)?”
- ⁹ For the development of Turkish fertility rates see Council of Europe (2005: 76), Prime Ministry Republic of Turkey and Turkish Statistical Institute (2006: 79).
- ¹⁰ On the basis of data on the distribution of the total EU budget, Lithuania is the country receiving the highest EU subsidies relative to the size of its GNI (2.35 % of its GNI in 2005, based on net recipient data in Berié 2007: 577). Spain as the country with the highest absolute sum of net receipts drew a net amount of 6.018 bio Euros in 2005 (Ibid).
- ¹¹ Before the Eastern enlargement it was feared that 18 regions with about 21 million inhabitants would fall out of the objective 1 support; hence transitory rules were established in order to avoid a sudden loss of entitlements.
- ¹² For data based on the European Values Study see Gerhards and Hölscher 2005: 68.

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