

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORY AND POLICY BACKGROUND OF TURKEY'S RELATIONS TOWARD EUROPEAN UNION

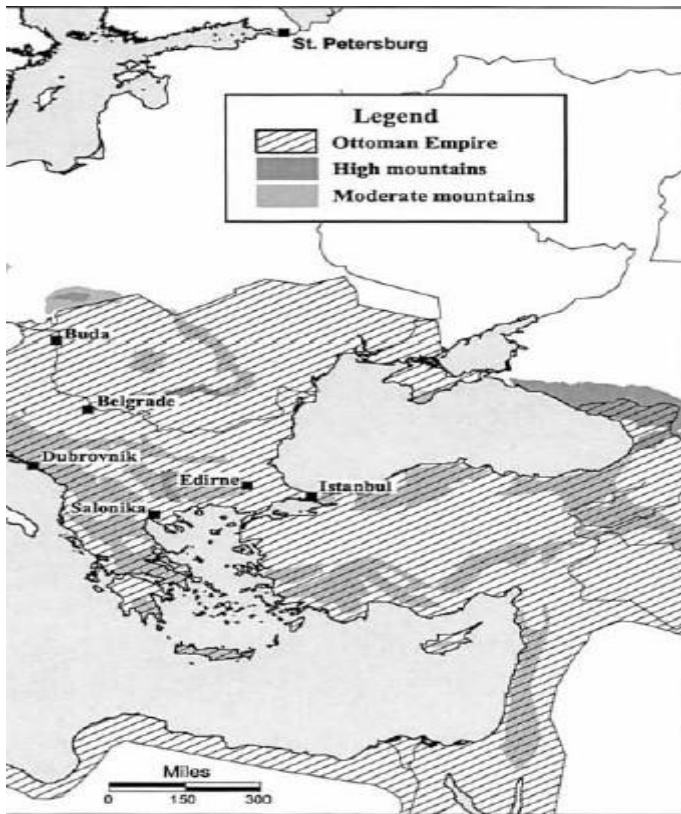
Within such long history between Turkey and European Union, we have to analyze the historical perspective of Turkey's foreign policy towards EU. In retrospect, myriad of phenomenon have flooded the continuity of EU-Turkey relationship ranging earlier from ottoman era until in the modern time which is Turkey's application of membership. It is of substantial matters to talk about as it will lead our analysis to a more comprehensive approach to understand the dynamic influence of Turkey's accession into EU which is shaped from Turkey's identity and characteristic as a country.

#### **A. Ottoman Empire Relations to Europe in History Era**

In hindsight, the Ottoman Empire relation to that of Europe started with their massive and dominant expansion in the continent. It is interesting to analyze the work by Geoffrey Woodward entitled "The Ottoman in Europe". It is started with a quote sounded with:

*'Now shalt thou feel  
the force of Turkish  
arms Which lately  
made all Europe  
quake for fear.'*  
(Marlowe, 1826)

The Ottoman Empire was superior compared to small kingdoms in Europe. It was signed by the expansion of Constantinopel. The Ottoman army was the largest in Europe, its navy ruled the shipping lanes of the eastern Meditteranean, and its capital Istanbul was five times the size of Paris. Its resources seemed limitless, and its capacity to sweep aside opposition in the name of Islam gave the Turkish Empire an awesome presence (Woodward, 2001). After taking control of Constatinopel, they renamed it to Istanbul in 1453 and they also took over Black Sea and main routes to the Balkans up to the driving route in the eastern part of Adriatic Sea.



*Image 1 1.1 Ottoman Empire Expansion*

Suleiman ‘the Magnificent’ was the main figure behind the superiority and influence of Ottoman Empire in Europe, particularly at the eastern part of Europe. In 1521, he seized Belgrade and, upon capturing Rhodes, evicted the Knights of St John and removed the last remaining obstacles to his domination of the eastern Mediterranean (Woodward, 2001). Europe was made chaotic by him until it made. It was not, however, exceptional in its militarism, in its brutality, or as other have claimed, in its misogyny or its sexual appetites, and it simply buys into Christian and Western legends to proclaim that such characteristics were somehow distinctly Ottoman (Goffman, 2002).

In the second half of the century, the Hapsburg emperors strengthened their frontier defenses in anticipation of further Ottoman attacks and, apart from desultory fighting between 1552 and 1568, Austria was spared (Woodward, 2001). By the time of the end of Suleiman’s regime, the Ottoman put their focus more on their defense part of the war. Like other European states, they were feeling the strain of administering their massive empire, a fact reflected by the state debts recorded every year after 1552. Indeed, peace would have probably lasted longer if Emperor Rudolf had not refused to continue paying his tribute. When Murad retaliated, war began again (Woodward, 2001). The unsuccessful peace consulted by both sides failed because the refusal by Emperor Rudolf, by then a war was imminent and then The Long war, it was called, broke out in Europe.

The Long War started badly for the Ottomans with revolts occurring in their own vassal states. Dnieper Cossacks pillaged their supply lines and, worst of all, Persia invaded Anatolia in 1559 (Woodward, 2001). The Ottoman Empire was faced with difficult times post Suleiman ‘the Magnificent’ death. One by one their vassal states were undertaking revolts as a form of dissatisfaction towards the new regime whereas at the same time, they still had to face war in the eastern hemisphere in Europe. Hungarian troops demonstrated superior

firepower and inflicted upon the Turks their first military setback for over a century (Woodward, 2001). After war prevailed between both sides, a treaty was signed in 1686. The Hapsburg were confirmed in their possession of western Hungary, their tribute was annulled and Transylvania granted its independence. The Austria-Turkish frontier had not moved since 1529 and it was now apparent that the western limit of the Ottoman Empire had been reached (Woodward, 2001).

The truth is that such portrayals of Ottoman expansion to the West not only a privilege a single aspect of rich and varied world, but also could describe virtually any state in early modern Europe. Did the early modern Hapsburg state, the French state, or the English state somehow not live for war? Were the sheriffs of England not also both policemen and soldiers? Were Peter the Hermit, who led a group of peasants against seasoned delis, others who led Christian children on suicidal crusades, and numerous Christian extremists not just as fanatically committed to their faith as were frenzied Ottoman soldiers? Bayezid I may or may not have proclaimed “For this was I born, to bear arms (Goffman, 2002). It was evident that there were strong and powerful engagements in the early times of Ottoman empire and that the form of engagement at this era is a war. Suleyman ‘the Magnificent’ showed Europe that power from middle-east was rising and is starting to threaten Europe.

The existence of most famous Holy Roman Empire at particular era was at the same time to that of Ottoman Empire. It is described that more or less, the Ottoman Empire had given huge impact to the Unity of Roman Empire, its location in the Western part of Europe started to be threatened by Ottoman expansion in the eastern part of Europe towards more civilized part which is the West. The Ottoman were intent on a holy war against Christianity and the Western Empire looked to Charles V to counter them, but his political commitments consistently distracted him and forced him to confine his efforts to stemming the Turkish advance in North Africa (Woodward,

2001). The engagements of Ottoman Empire towards the Holy Roman Empire had strong religious sentiments in it. Charles V, who was considered 'the Most Catholic King', took the threats coming from very seriously.

Charles himself later admitted that the Turkish threat had forced him to put aside religious issues. Indeed, at times of greatest peril in 1527, 1532, and 1541 Charles compromised religion to attend to the Turks, and significantly his only triumph against the Lutherans in 1547 was secured in the knowledge that Suleiman was engaged in wars against Persia. Charles had very little victory given the powerful threat coming from Ottoman Empire (Woodward, 2001). He triumphed his only battle because at the time Suleiman was distracted by the Persia which tells us quite so much about Ottoman Empire invasion power at that time. The strong and vital role of religious influence was seen clear on this war brought by these two parties between Christians and Muslims. The Turks also received considerable help from France. It was Francis I who first encouraged them to attack the Hapsburgs and allowed them free access to the Ports of Marseilles and Toulon to reduce the Emperor's power. Indeed, it can safely be said that the Ottoman Empire's western expansion owed a great deal to the political and religious disunity of Europe (Woodward, 2001). There is a reason why we can see these days there are lots of French possess Islam as their religions. The Turks and the French has long established relations to help Ottoman's expansion Europe at that time. The Ottoman also managed to propagate Islam quite well in the country.

Associations between the Ottoman Empire and the other states of Europe extended beyond commercial exchange and military campaign. The territories, indeed the very institutions, of the Ottoman Empire and were in some ways successors to the Byzantine Empire, which, as an heir to Rome, was the most revered of European states (Goffman, 2002). By which, it is safe to say that there was quite a strong influence of Ottoman in the Rome and vice versa by descendants.

Historians viewed that the wars of Europe states with the Turks played an important role for the development of the ‘military revolution’ of western states. There were some important differences between European and Turkish military developments. One lay in the line of fortifications built by several Christian towns in the 1520s which were modeled on the trace Italienne: these were earthen ramparts, low-walled bastions, and strategically located cannons which could repel the main Turkish assaults whether human or artillery. A second important difference was that European armies placed more emphasis on drill and discipline, on practicing defensive infantry formations of squares of pikes and arquebusiers, and of combining infantry, artillery, and cavalry, confident that they could repel a Turkish cavalry and infantry attack. Third, the Turkish navy never developed the flexibility in ship design or strategy achieved by its European counterparts (Goffman, 2002). This has proven again that the influence of Ottoman Empire to that of Europe encompassed up to their military revolution. The Turks had made Europe to be more creative and innovative in advancing their military aspect.

In analyzing about the part where we are talking about the decline of Ottoman, it could be said that the decline of Ottoman Empire occurred in the seventeenth century although not necessarily that significant at that time. The collapse was started by small portions of their area. But, we also must realize that ever since the seventeenth century the Turkish had been expanding. As it did so, it became a military state geared for conquest and holy war. Under Suleiman, who fought 13 successful campaigns and some 40 battles, they had a leader capable of putting the fear of Allah into all Christians (Woodward, 2001). Suleiman possessed the best field artillery, 87,000 devoted cavalry (known as *sipahis*) and 16,000 highly disciplined infantry (janissaries), whose sole objective was to wage war (Woodward, 2001). Suleiman, under the name of Islam, is one of the best successful leaders to spread Islamic teachings in Europe. That in itself, sure with a lot of obstacles faced by him along the way. Europe is the home base to all

Christians in the world, thus Suleiman's effort to propagate Islam is doubled with that fact. While he finally managed to conquer some of the eastern Europe countries, the popular leader and its empire like any other empires had to finally come to end.

The Ottoman Empire's strengths, nevertheless, hid long-term weaknesses. First, the Sultans Selim, Murad, and Mohammed, who followed Suleiman, began a line of ineffectual rulers whose authority was seriously undermined by a series of palace revolts. Second, by fixing Istanbul as the administrative capital, the Ottomans had unknowingly established limits to their western and eastern empire. This reduced the campaigning season to a few months at best, and made communications and supply lines difficult to sustain. Third, the Ottomans were beginning to fall behind western Europe in naval and military technology and tactics. In fact, it can be argued that only the lack of political and spiritual unity within Europe prevented western states from exploiting Ottoman weaknesses (Woodward, 2001). From 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the Great Ottoman Emperor failed to survive amidst the increasing power of their enemies. The last descendants of Ottoman Empire which was under the rule of three Pashas entered the World War I and was ultimately defeated.

## **B. Reformation on Ataturk's Administration: Secularization and Modernization Foreign Policy Towards Europe**

After the end of Ottoman Empire reign, the new Republican Parliament took control in 1922. It transformed the nation into Republic of Turkey. This form of government began their journey by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk as its first President. He is very well-known for his dedication towards secularism and modernism in Turkey that until nowadays have become the foundation of cultural and social life in Turkey. The ideology of Kemalism is a non-stop, dynamic, and

forward-looking idealism for Turkey. Actually, it was Mustafa Kemal's formula for Turkey to continuously adapt itself to advanced civilization levels; but anyone who wants to use this ideology must be used and renewed forever, because Mustafa Kemal's goal of reaching a contemporary modern level is an endless process.

However, most Turkish people today do not understand what must be done to attain membership in the EU. Struggling against democracy and secularism in the name of Kemalist Turkey cannot be an option for Turkish people. If we hear that kind of contradiction, then it will be necessary to re-examine Turkey's educational levels. (Karakus, 2005) Under such circumstances, the people of Turkey need to realize the potential benefit if they can get into Europe and first thing to do about it is to shift their ideology into values like non-stop, dynamic, and forward-looking idealism.

One of the prominent values in Ataturk administration is Turkey's modernization. The process of modernization in Turkey is not smooth and without obstacles. Reactions against the modernization process of Mustafa Kemal both during those early days and today generate the same kinds of problems for the Turkish Republic. (Karakus, 2005) Most of these reactions were coming from the extremist and conservative of Muslims and some of who opposed the modernization movement besides the religious sentiments are those who were not well educated, and reacted from a mob psychology led by an ignorant person.

Most Turkish people do not understand the meaning and all the implications of Kemalism, because it is not accurately and thoroughly studied and taught to the current and coming generations. The Turkish education system fails to explain to the nation the reasons for and the main goals of the political, social, educational, and cultural reforms, in short, the principles of Kemalism. (Karakus, 2005) The conservative that time played an important role to keep Turkey from being



openly secular and open to the West. Religious sentiments are also one of the main factors that kept it from being modernized.

The foreign policy implemented by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is massively progressive to engage those of European states. However at this particular moment, Europe was not stable. The power rising in Germany had been predicted as the beginning of another world war. Mustafa Kemal knew it well that he was fighting against the most powerful countries of his age. Turkey was the only Islamic country in the continent of Europe. For many centuries on end, the Christian West had tried-in the words of the Gladstonian Liberals- “to kick the Turks bag and baggage out of Europe.” Therefore, for the Turks to keep themselves in Europe, they had to reach a compromise with the West. First, the Turks had to show that they had to make themselves look like the West if they wanted to keep themselves in the West. Here lay Atatürk’s basic difficulty. Turkey had come under the military invasion of the West. He had to fight against the West first, to be able to turn into friends later. (Kurkcuoğlu, 1976)

Anatolia movement was a contributing factor to the fact that Tsarist regime fall in Russia. Indeed, if the Russian government, which had signed the 1915 Agreement concerning the annexation of the Turkish Straits had remained in power, it would be even more difficult for the Turks to fight yet another victor of the World War. However, Mustafa Kemal’s relations with the new regime in Russia were not without any problems. What is more, by fighting against the West, which was the Bolsheviks common enemy that had intervened in the Civil War in Russia. Also, the Anatolian movement aided the Soviet regime was based on equality, namely on mutual benefits. (Kurkcuoğlu, 1976) The relations between Republic of Turkey to Russian Tsarist are interesting case to analyze through its relation in Anatolia and that the Turks were highly dependent on it.

Other factors which needed to be taken into consideration is the fact that those who criticize Mustafa Kemal's adoption of a system on Western lines. Indeed, it is not to be forgotten that there was in Europe in those years, a general trend towards the Right. Prior to and particularly after the coming into power of Mussolini's Fascist Party in Italy in 1922, many rightist military dictatorships were being established in many countries in Europe. In countries like Britain, where democracy had taken root, mostly the Conservatives were in power. That is why I think there should be no room for criticisms that Atatürk's system was more to the Right than to the Left. In fact, Atatürk's system was neither a Rightist nor a Leftist model. Indeed, it was a *sui generis* model. He said at the National Assembly on December 1st, 1921: "... Gentlemen, we must be proud of not being like... others. Gentlemen, because, we look like ourselves." He also said that it was not possible to develop a nation by imitating others. If that is done, a nation imitating another will not only be unable to succeed, but will also lose its own character. This will be, he said, a grand mistake, and that "Turkey is -and will, God willing, developing line with its own character." (Kurkcuoğlu, 1976)

One other factor that made Turkey feel the influence of Europe was the fact that the League of Nations was established again in the continent of Europe in Geneva. The League of Nations, the General-Secretariate of which was mostly British -the other two being French and Irish was under British influence to such extent that even the stationery material used were British. Thus it was inevitable that Mustafa Kemal's Turkey, which was entering into such an international arena would come under the influence of the West. What is more, French "mandate" rule in Syria and that of the British in Iraq; together with the Italian presence in the Dodecanese, all meant that Turkey was encircled by the major powers of Europe. This denoted further embroilment with European affairs. (Kurkcuoğlu, 1976) Atatürk finally breathed his last air at 9:05 on November 10, 1938 — and every year, all of

Turkey still mourns in a minute of silence at 9:05 on that day to honor the man they regard as the greatest Turk ever to walk this earth. For decades and many generations, many young Turkish women actually worried that they would never be able to really love a man because of their love for the father of their country. For Atatürk only, millions of Turks today have a flag — and reason to wave it.

After the death of Atatürk, the tensions in Europe rose and İnönü was elected President by the Grand National Assembly which was previously Atatürk's chief lieutenant. Celal Bayar who had replaced İnönü as prime minister in 1937, remained in that position. Hedging its bets, the government concluded a nonaggression treaty with Nazi Germany on June 18, 1941, just four days before the Axis invasion of the Soviet Union. The early military successes of the Axis forces contributed to increased pro-German sentiment, even in some official circles. However, İnönü seems never to have wavered from his position that the Axis powers could not win the war. Despite German pressure, Turkey at no time permitted the passage of Axis troops, ships, or aircraft through or over Turkey and its waters, and the Montreux Convention was scrupulously enforced in the straits. (Chapin, 1995) Turkey seemed to have broken diplomatic relations with Adolf Hitler's government which was made in August 1944. On February 1945, Turkey declared war on Germany which was a necessary prerequisite for the participation in the Conference of International Organization which later made Turkey become one of the fifty-one original members of the world organization.

### **C. Multi-party Politics in Turkey's Political System and post-Ataturk relations to European Union**

On August 1945, the Grand National Assembly launched The UN Charter, however the debate over the measure during the summer brought about Turkey's first major post-war in domestic scope conflict. A proposal was

entered by former Prime Minister Bayar, Adnan Menderes, and two additional CHP deputies calling for changes in Turkish law to assure the domestic application of the liberties and rights to which the government had ostensibly subscribed by accepting the principles of the UN Charter. (Chapin, 1995) When the proposal was disallowed, its four proponents left the CHP and resigned their seats in the assembly. However at that certain time, the proposal was disallowed resulting in four proponents walked out of the CHP and resigned their seats before the assembly.

Although the rejection seemed absolute, the government managed to cool down lots of wartime situations and agreed in advancing democratization process in Turkey. It is evident within January 1946, Democrat party, which on that time headed by Bayar and Menderes, was enrolled. As the result, it became the main focus of opposition to the CHP. On July 1946, the general elections gave DP sixty-two seats from 465 seats available in the assembly. Although the DP represented the interests of private business and industry, it also received strong support in rural areas. (Chapin, 1995) Democrat Party, which represented democratic values managed to succeed in the upcoming election as well as its electability increased over years.

The general election that was held on May 1950 was a plain evidence that Democrat Party gained huge majority seats. Approximately, about 88 percent of an electorate or around 8.5 million went straight up to the polls. In the assembly, 408 seats wen to the DP and only sixty-nine to the CHP, whose dominance lasted ever since the founding of the Republic but suddenly ended. In the end, Bayar was made President by the assembly, replacing İnönü, and put Mendes as Prime Minister. (Chapin, 1995) With DP as winning parties, it is crystal clear that people of Turkey demand of modernization and secularization as the essence of Kemalism.

Atatürk had always believed that military forces as a national instrument on partisanship and factionalism should not be mixed up with politics. At the same time, military had subscribed to this very stand-point. They also believed that a major role of the armed force was to act as guardian of the constitution and Kemalism. (Chapin, 1995) Having separated military power from politics is a sign of clean and healthy democratization and therefore the idea to join and establish relations to European countries was open up in the air. However, this was not without struggles. On 1960, the military was engaged in political affairs involving senior politicians because the government use of martial law to enforce its policies. Exactly on May 27, 1960, Turkish military forces even caused chaos when they seized the principal government buildings and communication centers and they also arrested President Bayar, Prime Minister Menderes and most of the DP representatives in the Grand National Assembly with other public officials. Military from the outset had been out of reach by that particular administration.

In the aftermath of that event, the new bicameral legislature elected General Gürsel as the President of the Republic. On taking office, he asked seventy-eight-year-old former President İnönü to form a government. İnönü, who had first been named prime minister by Atatürk in 1923, attempted to reach an agreement with the AP for a coalition in which that party would share an equal number of cabinet posts with the CHP, but party leaders failed to resolve their differences concerning amnesty for those convicted in the Yassıada trials. (Chapin, 1995) This administration ended in 1966 leaving dynamic process of political power until finally it came down to the hand of marginal rightist and ended up by AKP in recent years.

Turkey's relation to United States as its foreign policy grew even stronger in the 1960s where it was started in the aftermath of World War II. Turkey was pro-Western in the late

1940s to 1950 by residing with West in the cold war with the same exact time. Turkey once also delivered an infantry brigade to the Korean Peninsula to serve under the UN command. As the effect of World War II, Turkey also received aid from post-war by the United States as a form of economic reconstruction and development and to provide military training which was called 'Marshall Plan' back then and furthermore made Turkey participate to that aforementioned European Recovery Program. As explained quite repeatedly here, Turkey gained membership in the Council of Europe and in 1959 applied for EC or European Community and the application was approved in 1964, regardless of the occurring coup in 1960. It went to show that there was a process of ups and downs in the recognition made by Turkey to be part of European Community and at that time, the process was at its peak.

Turkey was also a member of NATO or North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1952 along with Britain, Iraq, and Pakistan in Baghdad pact. Turkey had a vital diplomatic and strategic role as the bridge between NATO and CENTO alliance systems. However, Turkey's membership was complicated by Cyprus situation where there was a regional dispute between Turkey and Greece on its ownership. The Greek-speaking Cypriots sought an end to British rule and many favored enosis (union) with Greece (Chapin, 1995) The conflict between the two countries was escalated in 1964 and again in 1967 during which both of these members of NATO were in the brink of war.

Özal after elected Prime Minister recognized this potential of Greece to block Turkish admission to the EC even before his government formally submitted its application. Their discussions resolved an immediate crisis over oil drilling in the Aegean and established channels for further diplomatic discussions. (Chapin, 1995)

#### **D. AKP Party Administration and Recent Development on Erdogan's administration and Its Foreign Policy on European Union**

AKP Party or *Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party) came to power in 2002. There was a dichotomy of concern in Turkey's foreign affairs when this party came to power. It created a sphere of the space of the self (domestic) and the space of the other (international). The boundaries between inside (self) and outside (other) are drawn according to this identity. (Aslan, 2012) That is, it has to be grounded on the basis of a *political project* which fills the empty place of nation in the domestic realm. The AK Party, as a hegemonic political force, came to the scene with a specific political project – “conservative-democracy.” (Aslan, 2012) The foundation of AK Party foreign policy was to that of in line with EU agenda, however that view was shifted from 2007 onwards quite significantly. While the object of their attentions was the European Union, the endless and unresolved Cyprus situations got in the way of Turkey entering the permanent membership in the EU. A number of the leading members of the party had previously been prominent within the Welfare Party, a more explicitly Islamist Party, that headed a coalition government in the mid of 1990s. (Robins, 2007)

We will divide the timeline history of AK Party based on two phases according to Aslan, the first phase is called ‘Europeanization’ and the second phase is called ‘the civilizational discourse’.

The first term of the AK Party was imprinted by its attempt of “Europeanization”: “the EU membership, for us, is the most ideal and effective political instrument to renovate and update our dearest Republic's foundational principles in this period of history (Aslan, 2012). Under such circumstances, the notion of gaining permanent status as permanent member of the EU was at its highest peak. It was

signed in Helsinki Summit and considered as Turkey's political agenda at that time. On 3 August 2002, the parliament passed an important package of reforms, with the support of the AK Party's parliamentary group, including the abrogation of the death penalty, new permission to learn and broadcast in local languages, the granting to religious minorities of the right to buy real-estate and dispose of them, all in order to bring Turkey more in line with the Copenhagen criteria (Aslan, 2012). The adjustment to Copenhagen Criteria was rather important as an intention to advance the process of Turkey joining European Union.

The process towards the goal was continuously progressing when quite exactly in 2003, AK Party took a huge step to adjust to the Copenhagen Criteria and pursue invitation from the EU to open negotiations. The fourth and fifth reform packages came into force respectively on 11 and 23 January. These were followed by the sixth and seventh harmonization packages of democratic reforms, which were passed in Parliament in July 2003 despite the adamant opposition of the Kemalist political parties (Aslan, 2012). The seventh package, which reformed civil-military relations, was labeled as 'revolutionary' in terms of the consolidation of democracy in Turkey and applauded by the EU. (Aslan, 2012). This event was later followed by issues in EU Summit in Brussels on 12-13 December 2003 stating that Turkey has made significant progress in adjusting and harmonizing its relations with the EU and on the other hand, EU also promised to continue working on the progressive relations with Turkey. Furthermore, the EU has undeniable impacts on Turkish foreign policy. Turkey has started to develop good relations with the regional countries, to play a mediator role in conflicts, and to use soft power in its foreign policy. (Dogangil, 2013) That is, so to say, a good form of act in terms of harmonizing the relations with the European Union on account of entering to be the permanent member. Conflict should be avoided at any rate, however, with Cyprus issue is still in hand and on its



brink of conflict Turkey had to manage this problem from reoccurring to keep stabilizing the relations.

However, as Turkey took steps to meet the Copenhagen criteria and to remove barriers to integration, conservatives in the EU, especially in the countries such as Germany, Austria, and France that had opposed Turkey's membership by politico-cultural reasons, began to put forward the idea of giving Turkey 'privileged partnership' instead of 'full membership' (Aslan, 2012). Within what-so-called as 'privileged partnership', Turkey is given an open-ended process of negotiations without promising a final result of membership. It is sufficient to say that it is the nicest way of saying 'no' to Turkey. Beside the rise of these conservative views, the Cyprus situation was still got in the way and made things more complicated than ever. Furthermore, Turkey was pressured to give Cypriot-registered ships and aircraft access to Turkish harbors and airports since it had to sign an additional protocol to the existing customs unions agreement after 3 October 2005. (Aslan, 2012)

On the second phase of Turkey-EU relations, many factors from the previous phase had decreased the hope for the membership in Turkey's society. In this lucrative socio-political environment, the AK Party has gradually increased the tone of civilizational (conservative) discourse in Turkey's relations towards the EU in order to expand the conservative-democratic hegemony in the domestic political space, establish a 'conservative' society (Aslan, 2012). The result of the conservative views from European sides had simultaneously made similar accounts in Turkish society. Turkey established conservative society views under the basis of religious sentiments which is always the key point of the endless process of the accession. Erdogan, who was recently elected, argued that: "If Turkey becomes a full-member of the EU, the alliance of civilizations will be achieved. If that does not happen, clashes between civilizations will continue and also the EU will turn into a Christian club. Turkey is not a

primitive tribal community; the EU should view Turkey as a bridge between civilizations as much as Turkey sees the EU membership as necessity.” In this context, Turkey has strived to establish itself as a leader of the Islamic world. Accordingly, within the scope of the United Nations (UN), in 2005 Turkey and Spain started the project of an “Alliance of Civilizations” (Aslan, 2012). Within years, the tensions have risen again and this time went so badly. In April 2009, Olli Rehn, the European Commission member responsible for the Union’s expansion, threatened Turkey by stating that if Turkey vetoed Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who stood as candidate for the General Secretary of the NATO, Turkey’s membership would be jeopardized (Aslan, 2012). The threats coming to the Turkey has angered Turkish society as the tensions rose. Once again for many times in history, the Turkey and European relations worsened.

Subsequently, the level of self-confidence and of civilizational discourse has gradually continued to rise in AK Party’s relations with the EU. In March 2011, Erdogan contended:” If you reject us, we would rename the Copenhagen political criteria as the “Ankara political criteria” and would keep walking our way. In the place of Maastricht economic criteria, we would introduce the “Istanbul economic criteria” and would keep walking our way. We have the necessary preparations to do that. We do not have any concerns. Turkey is now a strong and self-sufficient country. Among 27 countries in the EU, there are countries which cannot even be compared with Turkey as regards to their political and economic indications; yet, the EU gave them full-membership due to political reasons. In our personal meetings, they are bound to confess this fact. Alas, one day, the EU will have to ask Turkey to become a EU member (Aslan, 2012). In addition to those statements, Turkey’s policy behaviours have become more divergent from the EU. There have been three important foreign policy preferences which led to the foreign-policy shift debates of Turkish foreign policy from the EU (Dogangil, 2013). From here up until these days, tensions still

can be detected and it is crystal clear than ever the accession is a dynamic and complex process.

Following 2016 Turkish *coup d'etat* which failed to take place after the re-elected President Recep Tayyip Erdogan took charge of the presidency, the relations between EU-Turkey are said to be trembling. However, that did not stop the Turkish government from having engaged to the accession despites nasty comments keep coming in. The agreements are still made although a lot of those are being hold by the EU. Under the currently prevailing circumstances, no new chapters are considered for opening. Reforms and developments in Turkey continue to be monitored by the bodies set up under the Association Agreement. The Association committee met in November 2017, while subcommittees kept being held throughout the reporting period (European Commission Report, 2018). The reports will be described as concrete evidences on recent developments regarding to Turkey's accession into EU.

The Commission, jointly with the European External Action Service, has maintained EU-Turkey relations in all key areas of joint interest based on broad strategic engagement (European Commission Report, 2018). High Representative/Vice President Mogherini and Commissioner Hahn took part in a High-Level Political Dialogue with Minister Cavusoglu and Celik on 25 July 2017 in Brussels, prepared by a political dialogue at directors' level in June 2017 (European Commission Report, 2018). A High Level Economic Dialogue was held in December 2017 in Brussels, where both parties discussed macroeconomic and investment developments and engaged with business community (European Commission Report, 2018). Turkey and the EU continued to improve their sectorial cooperation; a High Level Dialogue took place on transport in November 2017 and a technical dialogue on energy in February 2018 (European Commission Report, 2018). Regarding the Customs Union, the Commission adopted a recommendation for opening of negotiations with Turkey on the modernization of the Customs

Union on 21 December 2016 (European Commission Report, 2018). In the area of visa, immigration, and asylum, the implementation of the March 2016 EU-Turkey Statement has continued to deliver concrete results in reducing irregular and dangerous crossings and in saving lives in the Aegean Sea (European Commission Report, 2018). Regarding financial assistance, in 2017, the Commission further reoriented funding towards the rule of law, fundamental rights and civil society and recentralized the management of support to civil society (European Commission Report, 2018). Turkey participates in the following EU program: Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, Customs 2020, Fiscalis 2020, COSME (Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) and EASI (Employment and Social Innovation) (European Commission Report, 2018).

The historical background up to its recent developments of the accession between the two sides has been pictured. As mentioned above, there are lots of debate over this accession given the fact that both sides still have their own perspectives in looking up for the matter. There is still not a single concrete progress in the recent days beside several comments of contradictory which leads to the regressing of the process. We will analyze the distinction of the views on the following chapter as we will comprehend deeply the actual reason of the problems based on these distinctively dual perspectives.