

Is a New Opening Possible in Türkiye-EU Relations?

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ABSTRACT *Türkiye's positive relations with the European Union (EU) in the early 2000s and its enthusiasm for the membership process started to weaken after 2006-2008. The downward spiral in Turkish-EU relations intensified after the failed July 15 coup attempt in Türkiye. Despite the joint strategic interests in many regional issues, including the Black Sea, the MENA Region, the Balkans, security in the Eastern Mediterranean, hydrocarbon projects, the fight against irregular migration, creating the middle corridor with Asia, European energy security, and counter-terror measures, parties can hardly find opportunities to cooperate, frankly. The way those issues of joint interest are managed shall play a crucial role in the future of Turkish-EU relations. The positive atmosphere that emerged after the May 2023 elections could potentially generate more constructive momentum in Türkiye's relations with the European Union and the U.S. There are, however, some hurdles that should be overcome by building mutual confidence by working on shared agendas.*

Keywords: EU-Türkiye Relations, Turkish Accession to the EU, EU, Türkiye

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Many foreign policy analysts referred to Türkiye's May 14 and 28, 2023 general elections as the most important elections of 2023. Experts, journalists, politicians, and communities from across the world, starting with the West, followed the election very closely, and it resulted in yet another victory for President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the People's Alliance, and the AK Party. President Erdoğan's re-election was considered an unexpected development in Europe and many Western countries. That surprise stemmed from the fact that decision-makers and the public opinion in Türkiye and the West were misled or misinformed by "experts" and "pollsters." Having been caught by surprise in the presidential election's first round, local and foreign circles concluded that Erdoğan would win the second round by a comfortable margin. Accordingly, we witnessed a barrage of congratulatory messages as soon as Erdoğan's victory became a certainty.

Erdoğan missing the first-round victory by a tiny margin and his ability to clinch re-election despite facing a broad coalition of rivals earned the respect of international observers. It is important to recall that many Western analysts had speculated that the Turkish president would not consent to a peaceful transfer of power if he were to lose. Yet the election took place in a transparent and peaceful manner. The calm that was witnessed during and after that election served to bust negative myths about Türkiye and President Erdoğan. At the same time, the West's democratic

reservations about strengthening its relations with Türkiye and negative perception of Erdoğan's personality weakened due to the Turkish leader's post-election statements and the professionalism of his new cabinet.

Indeed, the members of Erdoğan's new cabinet have the necessary background to develop a more balanced and more positive political and economic relationship with the West within the context of foreign policy and the economy. Türkiye's Western counterparts, too, have made that observation. Specifically, the assignment of Hakan Fidan and İbrahim Kalın as leaders of foreign policy and intelligence was a welcome development by Western diplomatic circles. Likewise, international economic and financial circles welcomed the tasking of Cevdet Yılmaz, Mehmet Şimşek, and their teams including the governor of the Central Bank Hafize Gaye Erkan with the economy's management. Some media outlets and think tanks in Europe and the U.S., too, have already signaled their optimism regarding this new chapter with Türkiye. It is possible to expect those parties to disseminate such messages more strongly as the relevant relationships translate into practice.

Türkiye's disagreements with the U.S. and the European Union over counter-terror measures and particularly the PKK/PYD presence in Syria persists. Furthermore, there are ongoing problems linked to migration, the Eastern Mediterranean (including Cyprus and Greece), and the suspension of Türkiye's EU membership

process. The way those issues will be managed shall play a crucial role in the future of relations. The positive atmosphere that emerged after the May 2023 elections could potentially generate positive momentum in Türkiye's relations with the European Union and the U.S.

This study analyzes the reasons behind problems that occurred in Türkiye-EU relations over the last two decades and discusses the steps that may be taken to overcome the above-mentioned challenges after the May 14 and 28 elections as well as potential future scenarios.

A New Era in Relations with the West?

The Turkish elections were highly relevant to the country's relations with the West as well as Europe and the European Union. Over the previous two years, the relationship had reached a standstill that hurt the interests of both sides. It is necessary to analyze Türkiye's relations with the West by focusing on four main pillars: relations with the Euroatlantic front, relations with the European Union and bilateral relations with European countries. Those relationships collectively determine the nature of Türkiye's relations with the West. The fourth pillar consists of Western-oriented international organizations, treaties, and norms. The U.S., the European Union and prominent European states previously reacted and responded in different ways within the context of their relations with

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Türkiye. In recent years, however, those three players or groups have grown similar to each other. It goes without saying that the U.S. has been the main architect of that approach under President Joe Biden. After all, the U.S. continues to play a defining role in the Euroatlantic security axis—which includes NATO. In the past, it was possible for Türkiye and the European Union to keep a lid on their disagreements thanks to the strategic visions and constructive contributions of the U.S. and the United Kingdom. In this regard, those two countries stepped in and addressed disputes with their strategic approaches. Yet the U.S. and the European Union (except member states like Hungary, Poland, and Romania) have largely aligned their respective perspectives. That development largely yielded negative results for Türkiye, whose policies have occasionally differed from its Western partners within the context of NATO and other international organizations.

The West's relations with Türkiye and attitude toward the country became much more coordinated since Joe Biden's election as U.S. president.

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Since 2020, Türkiye's relations with the West have taken a negative turn under Washington's coordination. Moreover, the West's dream of an "Erdoğan-less Türkiye" has kept its relations with the country extremely shallow and stagnant. In the end, that situation created a lose-lose scenario for Türkiye and the West. It is highly likely that Erdoğan's re-election as president on May 28 with impressive popular support shall reverse the downturn of relations with the West that began in 2013. Initial signals from Washington and European capitals indeed support that claim. The main reason behind that shift was not that the West instantly came to think of Erdoğan as a positive figure. Instead, it was the number of mutually important issues that must be resolved. Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, tensions in the Balkans, security in the Eastern Mediterranean and hydrocarbon projects, the fight against irregular migration, creating the middle corridor with Asia, European energy security, counter-terror

measures, and NATO's enlargement are among the many issues that the West cannot address without Türkiye's constructive contributions. Over the last decade, European political stakeholders and decision-makers have become aware of that fact. Which is why they will no doubt support speedy normalization with Türkiye on the basis of mutually important issues and functional matters.

Why Türkiye's Relations with the EU Deteriorated

Although the AK Party governments initially made progress toward EU membership, their enthusiasm and motivation faded over time. From 2006 on, the Union's various moves and attempts by some European politicians to exploit the debate over Turkish accession¹ slowed down the negotiations and even brought talks to a standstill in certain areas. Furthermore, Europe witnessed economic turmoil ahead of the 2008 global financial crisis and the political repercussions of such developments rendered the continent more inward-oriented and ultimately less enthusiastic about enlargement. At the same time, Europe's emerging political leaders began to distance themselves from the continent's liberal values as right-wing and left-wing populism gained ground in the political arena.² Accordingly, the vision for value-based expansion encountered certain political obstacles. Certainly, the least expected outcome of that process was Britain's decision to leave the European Union. It is important

to note that Brexit deprived Türkiye of a major supporter within the Union.

Türkiye's post-2010 foreign policy and domestic political preferences deepened its disagreements with the European Union. The accession talks, which had slowed down in 2008, approached a complete standstill by 2016. Specifically, structural changes worldwide and the difference in how EU members and Türkiye responded to them pushed the Union and Türkiye further away from each other.

The positive momentum that Türkiye's relations with the European Union gained in the early 2000s and following the AK Party's rise to power was gradually reversed by the 2008 global financial crisis and the Arab Spring that erupted in late 2010. Those structural changes and related developments changed the priorities of Türkiye and the European Union alike. Unable to receive due support for its membership bid and feeling betrayed, the Turkish government launched new foreign policy initiatives including rapprochement with Russia, normalization with Middle Eastern nations, and reaching out to Africa and Latin America.

Whereas Türkiye's relations with the European Union followed an upward trajectory between 2003 and 2005, that progress slowed down after 2008 and was reversed after 2010. One could argue that the relationship was largely suspended between 2012 and 2016 when Türkiye faced a threat of terrorism stemming from Syria and FETÖ. Furthermore, the relationship

suffered almost irreparable damage in the wake of the July 15, 2016 coup attempt and the declaration of a state of emergency in Türkiye. In this sense, the positive momentum rooted in the March 18, 2016 agreement underwent a structural change after July 15. Accordingly, Türkiye's membership talks have been practically frozen since 2016.³ It is possible to describe the post-2016 period as an uncertain time when Türkiye and the European Union tried to chart a new course. That period might go down in history as the lost years in Türkiye-EU relations. Despite the multitude of negative developments, the need for Türkiye and the EU to work together has been more significant.

Technical Factors Preventing the Development of Türkiye-EU Relations

As a candidate country, Türkiye's membership bid and all related engagements have been shaped by the principle of conditionality –as all other candidate countries.⁴ Within that context, abiding by the Copenhagen criteria remains key. The European Union also cares deeply about values like democracy, transparent and institutionalized functioning, accountability, the rule of law, civil society, and press freedom. Furthermore, the productive infrastructure of a liberal market economy as well as the harmonization of banking and trade regulations are practical requirements for EU integration. Türkiye's membership process evolved in line with various steps it has taken in those regards.



Turkish President Erdoğan met with Michel, President of the European Council, in Brussels, in March 2020.
MURAT KULA / AA

That is not unique to Türkiye. Even countries that enter into membership talks with the European Union and successfully join it conduct their relations with Brussels on the basis of conditionality. The functioning of those conditions, in turn, are monitored by periodical reports. What was unique about Türkiye's membership bid, however, was the EU's unprecedented attempt to introduce new and more restrictive criteria.⁵

In this regard, Türkiye encountered several exceptional situations that no other candidate country had experienced. Specifically, the relevant documents introduced concepts like open-endedness,⁶ absorption capacity,⁷ lengthy derogations⁸ (exceptions), and lasting restrictions,⁹ hinting that the country might be subject to some double standards. Despite

those exceptional ideas and practices, however, Türkiye refused to be pessimistic about its EU membership bid.

The conclusion of a membership framework document and the start of membership talks with Türkiye maximized the Turkish government and people's interest in and support for EU membership. Indeed, the AK Party's initial term was characterized by enthusiasm for joining the Union.¹⁰ It is important to note that popular support for EU accession extended beyond traditional advocates and also stemmed from the AK Party's conservative and Islamist voters. That support remains intact among key social groups today.¹¹

Against the backdrop of such strong support for EU membership in Türkiye, two major developments elimi-

nated and reversed that momentum in Türkiye-EU relations. First and foremost, right-wing parties came to power in Germany and France – the Union’s founding members. On November 22, 2005, the Christian Democratic Party won the parliamentary election and Angela Merkel became German chancellor. Her political views empowered an approach that excluded Türkiye from the EU. She also pledged to halt membership talks with the Turkish government. Although Merkel’s tone softened over time, her governments remained committed to Türkiye’s exclusion through a “privileged partnership.”¹² Indeed, Angela Merkel visited Ankara in February 2004 as Germany’s main opposition leader to announce that she opposed Türkiye’s EU membership and favored a privileged partnership.¹³ Although Germany and Türkiye experienced temporary tensions during her term, Merkel attempted to adopt a balanced stance and act with common sense.¹⁴ Nonetheless, she refrained from taking any steps that might revive the membership talks. Over the course of her sixteen years in power, Merkel sporadically adopted a more positive stance toward Türkiye. Specifically, some positive developments took place after the March 2016 refugee deal and the commitment to promote a positive agenda with Türkiye in 2019. Yet those changes did not result in the opening of additional chapters in membership talks with the European Union.¹⁵

Another development in Europe, which brought Türkiye’s accession process to a standstill, was Nicholas

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Sarkozy’s election as French president on May 16, 2007. The French leader’s Islamophobic views as well as anti-Turkish attitude and rhetoric made him seem more hostile than Germany’s Angela Merkel. It is important to recall that Sarkozy often argued in his political remarks that Türkiye did not belong in Europe and insisted that he opposed that country’s EU membership.¹⁶ In turn, he asked Türkiye to join the Union for the Mediterranean (an organization he invented) instead of the European Union.¹⁷ Although the French president attempted to account for his rejection of Turkish membership with reference to geography, arguing that Türkiye was not part of Europe geographically,¹⁸ yet experts agreed that his opposition actually stemmed from ideology. By contrast, French President Emmanuel Macron has been opposing Türkiye’s accession with reference to values.¹⁹ It is necessary to stress that both leaders’ policies were ideologically motivated.

Both Merkel and Sarkozy’s opposition to Turkish membership reflected their narrowly-defined political inter-

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ests yet the two leaders exported their views to the entire European Union. In the end, opposing Türkiye's EU accession became part of the right-wing populist discourse in many European countries.²⁰ Indeed, the sheer possibility of Turkish membership became the subject of public debate in Britain ahead of Brexit –an issue that the EU's opponents exploited.²¹

The special emphasis on the open-endedness of membership talks with Türkiye at the Brussels Summit on December 16-17, 2004, the multitude of derogations and permanent protective measures, the call for the resolution of border disputes with neighboring countries by appealing to the International Court of Justice if necessary and the reference to long transition periods reflected the European Union's intention to restrain Türkiye uniquely. It is important to recall that other candidate countries, which successfully joined the organization, were not subjected to the same conditions. Yet the European Union put in place special requirements for

Türkiye that it could utilize as needed. At the time that those decisions were made, some countries attempted to add a footnote to the Turkish membership bid. That France and Austria, among others, brought up the possibility of putting Türkiye's admission to a vote (even if that country were to successfully meet all criteria) was perceived as a unique attempt to restrain Türkiye.²²

Türkiye's membership process and negotiations became the subject of domestic political debates in many countries including Germany, France, Britain, the Netherlands, and Austria. That development was among the main reasons behind the deterioration of Türkiye's relations with the European Union. It is important to recall that such debates often featured an insulting tone and political rhetoric targeting Türkiye's citizens and political leaders as well as Turks living in Europe. All those restrictive approaches and efforts to highlight the open-endedness of Türkiye's accession process took a toll on the Turkish government's drive to join the European Union. Accordingly, the AK Party governments (and their predecessors) repeatedly complained about double standards in their dealings with the European Union. That the AK Party governments responded to such steps by occasionally lashing out at European leaders and senior EU officials –another factor that contributed to strained relations.

A combination of political and bureaucratic obstacles brought Türkiye's membership process to a standstill.

Meanwhile, the country prioritized counter-terror measures and the elimination of security threats during the turmoil that followed the July 15 coup attempt and effectively put reforms and EU harmonization on the back burner. The European Union and Türkiye's diverging goals also weakened their resolve to strengthen their relations. For Türkiye's membership bid to regain momentum in the future, the European Union must overhaul its medium- and long-term strategic vision.

Cyprus and Greece as Obstacles

Another development that stood in the way of Türkiye's EU membership negotiations was the admission of the Greek Cypriot administration despite having voted against the Annan Plan.²³ That decision was made in the absence of a solution in Cyprus due to Greece's threat to veto Türkiye's recognition as a candidate country. Although the Greek government did not veto that decision in exchange for the admission of Greek Cypriots, that administration's membership brought the Turkish membership bid to a halt.²⁴ The admission of the Greek Cypriot administration, which Türkiye does not officially recognize, suspended membership talks in many fields.²⁵ Offering an academic analysis of what happened, Hüseyin Işıksal points out that the Greek Cypriot administration's admission into the European Union contradicted all post-Westphalia international treaties that European states recognized as well as the principle of the rule of

law.²⁶ Following the Greek Cypriot administration's admission, the European Union became a party to the Cyprus conflict together with Greece and the Greek Cypriots and unilaterally placed the burden of the lack of a solution on Türkiye. Since the Turkish government did not recognize the Greek Cypriot administration and the European Union's perspective rested on the framework of holistic negotiations, Türkiye's accession process approached a standstill. Furthermore, various bureaucratic obstacles placed on Türkiye's path with reference to the Greek Cypriot administration's admission indirectly pushed the Türkiye-EU relations away from Turkish membership. It is also important to note that Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis attempted to transform his country's bilateral problems with Türkiye into disputes between the European Union and Türkiye. It is possible to argue that the Mitsotakis government has succeeded on that front.²⁷ Yet his meaningless achievement does not serve the interests of Türkiye, Greece, or the European Union. The current situation only serves to poison the Turkish-Greek and Türkiye-EU relations and to prevent the parties from taking any joint steps.

The New Chapter in Türkiye-EU Relations and Its Guidelines

Türkiye's relations with Europe reached a standstill after the July 15, 2016 coup attempt. By extension, it was no longer possible to implement the March 18, 2016 agreement. Al-

though the parties created a roadmap in 2019 to pursue a positive agenda, tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean, the hope of European stakeholders that Erdoğan might lose power after the 2019 municipal elections and Joe Biden's victory in the U.S. presidential election resulted in the shelving of that roadmap. Under the Biden Administration's influence, Türkiye was subjected to exclusionary, alienating, and dominantly critical treatment. Indeed, the Europeans even refrained from taking constructive steps in areas where mutual interests were at stake. They also attempted to put pressure on Türkiye with the help of Greece. In the end, the positive agenda gave way to bad blood. Efforts by the European Union to meddle in the court cases involving Osman Kavala and Selahattin Demirtaş, which were intended to influence Turkish politics from within, further strained Türkiye's relations with that organization.

Over the last year, European countries effectively suspended their relations with Türkiye due to the May 2023 general election. Their plans rested on the assumption that the Table of Six would come to power. That belief grew stronger as the AK Party lost metropolitan municipalities to opposition candidates in 2019. At the same time, Europe began to dream of "Türkiye without Erdoğan" more passionately. It is important to note that the Türkiye-EU relations took a positive turn in the wake of the February 6, 2023 earthquakes as donation campaigns, the genuine support of Europeans, and efforts to stand in

solidarity with the Turkish people had a somewhat positive impact on Europe's perception among Turks. Yet the country faced growing pressure over Sweden and Finland's NATO membership applications. There were no additional initiatives launched or steps taken to unfreeze that relationship before the Turkish elections.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's re-election as Turkish president as well as the transparency of the electoral process and its compatibility with democratic standards encouraged Europeans to promptly congratulate the leader of Türkiye, a country whose support they needed, and to come to terms with the outcome. Accordingly, various European media outlets and think tanks adopted a more balanced stance toward the Turkish president after treating him like their enemy for the previous six months. That development also offered insights into the new chapter in Turkish-European relations. Nonetheless, Europe's attitude shall be in sync with Washington as long as Joe Biden remains in the White House. In this sense, one might project that the frozen relationship could regain momentum in some functional areas. Such momentum may be generated especially in various areas where mutual interests remain at stake. It is highly likely that a transactional relationship shall persist. As such, it would be unrealistic to expect a new initiative in Türkiye's relations with Europe or any positive momentum regarding the country's membership process. Yet Türkiye's functional relations with Europe shall gain momentum vis-à-

vis mutual interests. Overcoming the current standstill with Europe would have a positive impact on Türkiye in many ways. Over the next months and years, Europe's investment and economic relations as well as defense partnerships and diplomatic contacts with Türkiye shall gain further momentum.

Sweden's NATO membership application, in turn, remains at the top of Europe's agenda. It is important to recall that Türkiye and Hungary stood in the way of Sweden's admission by refusing to approve that request. Yet European leaders have been trying to secure the approval of Sweden's application before the NATO Summit on July 11-12, 2023 in Vilnius, Lithuania. Specifically, the Alliance wants to create a stronger deterrent and display unity against Russia at the Vilnius Summit –which is blurred by the unclear fate of Sweden's membership bid. Still, Türkiye expects that country to live up to its responsibilities under the Madrid memorandum. Furthermore, the memory of shameless attacks against Türkiye, Islam, Muslims, and President Erdoğan in Sweden remain fresh among Turks. To make matters worse, the reckless attitude of Swedish officials caused a crisis of confidence on the Turkish side. At this time, the Swedish government must implement confidence-building measures to address that crisis of confidence. Positive steps that the European Union and the U.S. might take within that context would also be crucial for Ankara since Sweden's stance cannot be isolated from the rest of NATO.

It is possible to argue that a new chapter has begun in Türkiye's relations with the European Union and the U.S. with the most recent elections

There is no reason to expect a miracle to happen in the short term in Türkiye's relations with the European Union. That relationship has been strained and worn down over the last decade as both parties lost faith. There are still dozens of unresolved issues, yet the approach toward those issues and finding solutions should take a positive turn. Neither Türkiye nor Europe nor the U.S. can afford to waste five more years. It is possible to argue that a new chapter has begun in Türkiye's relations with the European Union and the U.S. with the most recent elections. One might expect frozen problems to be addressed gradually over the next days and weeks. Yet it seems unlikely that the EU membership process will regain functionality anytime soon. Still, initial steps might include easing the Schengen visa restrictions on Türkiye and holding talks on updating the customs union.

Western leaders congratulating Erdoğan on his election victory reflected their eagerness to take coordinated steps with Türkiye over the next five years. It remains to be seen whether that enthusiasm shall have a structural impact on Türkiye's relations with the West. A closer look at

Türkiye's relations with the European Union and the U.S. over the last decade would reveal that it would be unrealistic to expect the relationship to undergo structural change and improve in the short run. Yet resuming the relationship, which hasn't moved forward in ten years, on similar terms would entail a lose-lose scenario for the relevant parties. There are many areas where the parties have similar concerns and interests and where they should work together. Under the current circumstances, it is highly likely that a transactional and pragmatic relationship shall regain momentum in Türkiye's dealings with the West on the basis of shared interests. As that approach yields positive results, the relationship shall gradually improve and the possibility of cooperation will shift toward strategic domains. Yet the main short-term issue is to strengthen the strained relations between the parties and to re-establish trust among them. For Türkiye's relations with the European Union (and more broadly the West) to improve in a structural sense, the relationship must be analyzed with a more comprehensive strategic vision. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of that kind of strategic perspective at this time. ■

Endnotes

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5. Catherine Macmillan, "Privileged Partnership, Open Ended Accession Negotiations and the Securitisation of Turkey's EU Accession Process,"

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8. Under EU laws, derogation refers to the temporary non-application or different application of EU legislative decisions to individuals, groups or organizations by member states for specific reasons, see, A. Aslı Bilgin, "Derogasyon," *Avrupa Birliği Ansiklopedisi*, (İstanbul: İktisadi Kalkınma Vakfı Yayınları, 2021), p. 472. Derogations pertaining to potential members are made vis-à-vis the accession timeline at the accession stage. The EU has stated that it can subject "permanent derogations" on future members with regard to agriculture, the free movement of people and structural policies, see, Didem Buhari Gülmez and Diğdem Soyaltın Colella, "Avrupa Bütünleşmesi Çalışmalarında Derogasyonlar Meselesi," *Ankara Avrupa Çalışmaları Dergisi*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (2019), pp. 437-468.

9. The following section of the Negotiation Framework Document for Türkiye entails various kinds of ambiguity with the potential to impact Türkiye's accession process: "Long transitional periods, derogations, specific arrangements or permanent safeguard clauses, i.e. clauses which

are permanently available as a basis for safeguard measures, may be considered. The Commission will include these, as appropriate, in its proposals in areas such as freedom of movement of persons, structural policies or agriculture. Furthermore, the decision-taking process regarding the eventual establishment of freedom of movement of persons should allow for a maximum role of individual Member States. Transitional arrangements or safeguards should be reviewed regarding their impact on competition or the functioning of the internal market." See, "Türkiye için Müzakere Çerçeve Belgesi ve İlgili Diğer Belgeler," *Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı Müsteşarlığı*, (2005), retrieved October 27, 2022, from https://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Turkiye_Icin_Muzakere_Cerceve_Belgesi_ve_Ilgili_Diger_Belgeler.pdf, p. 6.

10. Support for EU membership reached 65 percent (2002), 67 percent (2003) and 71 percent (2004) in the initial years of AK Party rule. That number dropped to 59 percent in 2005. "Candidate Countries Eurobarometer Public Opinion Analysis," *European Commission, 2002-2004*. The European Union's unfair treatment of Türkiye was largely responsible for that drop, see, Moria Goff-Taylor, "The Shifting Drivers of the AKP's EU Policy," *Wilson Center*, (Summer 2017), retrieved October 27, 2022, from <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/the-shifting-drivers-the-akps-eu-policy>.

11. According to a 2022 study on Türkiye by the German Marshall Fund, 58.6 percent of Turkish citizens continue to support EU membership. That number reached 72.8 percent among participants between the ages of 18 and 24. Özgür Ünlühisarcıklı, Kadri Taştan, and Ceylan A. Canbilek, "Turkish Perceptions of the European Union 2022," *The German Marshall Fund*, (April 14, 2022), retrieved October 15, 2022, from <https://www.gmfus.org/news/turkish-perceptions-european-union-2022>.

12. Gerhard Schröder's social democratic government, which supported Türkiye's membership bid, was in power between 1998 and 2005 – as the country became a candidate country and subsequently entered into membership talks. Yet Angela Merkel, a critic of Turkish membership, came to power in 2005 and effectively suspended the accession process. For details, see, Yılmaz Kaplan, "Germany's Role in Turkey's Accession to the EU," *E-International Relations*, (August 18, 2011), retrieved October 17, 2022, from <https://www.e-ir.info/2011/08/18/germanys-role-in-turkeys-accession-to-the-eu/>.

13. "Angela Merkel 16 Yılda Türkiye'nin AB'yle İlişkilerinin Seyrinde Nasıl Kritik Rol Oynadı?" *BBC Turkish*, (October 16, 2021).

14. "Angela Merkel 16 Yılda Türkiye'nin AB'yle İlişkilerinin Seyrinde Nasıl Kritik Rol Oynadı?" *BBC Turkish*.

15. Tuncay Şahin, "Turkey's EU Relations during Angela Merkel as Chancellor," *TRT World*, (October 18, 2018), retrieved from <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/turkey-s-eu-relations-during-angela-merkel-s-rule-as-chancellor-11452>.

16. "Türkiye'nin AB Tam Üyeliğine Karşıyız," *İHA*, (July 3, 2009); "Sarkozy ve Juppe: Türkiye Avrupa Birliğine Ait Değil," *BBC Turkish*, (November 18, 2016), retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-38022391>.

17. "Sarkozy Türkiye'ye Akdeniz Birliğini Önerdi," *Hürriyet*, (February 8, 2007), retrieved from <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/sarkozy-turkiye-eye-akdeniz-birligi-onerdi-5915034>.

18. Tevfik Karpuzcu, "Macron ve Sarkozy'nin Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği Üyeliği Konusunda Söylemlerinin Karşılaştırmalı Analizi," *Academic Review of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (2020), pp. 245-266.

19. Karpuzcu, "Macron ve Sarkozy'nin Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği Üyeliği Konusunda Söylemlerinin Karşılaştırmalı Analizi," pp. 256-258.

20. For a study of the use of anti-Turkish views in Europe within the context of the presidential system referendum in Türkiye, see, Kemal İnät, "Anti-Turkey Sentiment in Europe during the Referendum Process," *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (2017), pp. 43-62.

21. James Ker-Lindsay, "Turkey's EU Accession as a Factor in the 2016 Brexit Referendum," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2017), pp. 1-22; Steven Erlanger, "Britain's 'Brexit' Debate Inflamed by Worries that Turkey Will Join E.U," *The New York Times*, (June 13, 2016).

22. "2004-09-28 Fransa - Türkiye'nin AB Üyeliği," *T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı Avrupa Birliği Başkanlığı*, (July 4, 2007), retrieved October 27, 2022, from <https://www.ab.gov.tr/p.php?e=32720>; "Avusturya Türkiye'ye Referandumdan Yana," *CNN Türk*, (August 23, 2008).

23. For a detailed analysis regarding this dilemma, see, Hüseyin Işıksal, "Dilemmas of the Contradictory EU Membership of the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey-EU Relations," *Gazi Akademik Bakış Dergisi*, Vol. 12, No. 24 (2019), pp. 119-133; Arthur Adamczyk, "Cypriot Presidency in the Context of the Cyprus Question and EU-Turkey Relations," *Yearbook of Polish European Studies*, Vol. 15, (2012), pp. 107-123.

24. For example, Greece lifted its veto over the Customs Union agreement with Türkiye on 6 March 1995 in exchange for the launch of accession talks with the Republic of Cyprus/Greek Cypriot administration within six months. Likewise, on December 10-11, 1999, the Helsinki Summit stated that a political solution in Cyprus was not among the prerequisites of the Greek Cypriot administration's EU membership. Greece lifted its veto over Turkish candidacy in return. Finally, in response to Greek threats to veto the admission of Central and Eastern European states if the Greek Cypriots were excluded from the first round of enlargement, the Copenhagen Council announced on December 12-13, 2002 that the Greek Cypriot administration would join the Union regardless of the organization's solution for the Cyprus problem. Işıksal, "Dilemmas of the Contradictory EU Membership of the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey-EU Relations," p. 123.

25. Yunus Turhan, "Pendulum Swings in the Cyprus Issue: Between Internationalisation to Europeanisation," *Türkiye Siyaset Bilimi Dergisi*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2021), p. 32; Meltem Müftüler-Baç and Aylin Güney, "The European Union and the Cyprus Problem 1961-2003," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (2005), pp. 281-293; Özlem Tan, "Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği Sürecinde Kıbrıs Sorunu," *Balkan Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Vol. 5, No. 10 (2016), pp. 40-47.

26. Işıksal, "Dilemmas of the Contradictory EU Membership of the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey-EU Relations," p. 122.

27. Tevfik Durul, "Yunanistan Başbakanı Miçotakis: Türk-Yunan Anlaşmazlığını, Türkiye-AB Anlaşmazlığına Çevirmeyi Başardık," *Anadolu Agency*, (December 7, 2020), retrieved from <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/yunanistan-basbakani-micotakis-turk-yunan-anlasmazligini-turkiye-ab-anlasmazligina-cevirmeyi-basardik/2068836>.