

# TURKEY THE HUGE PROBLEM IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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***Abstract:** The aim of this document is: why the European Union has the problem with accepting Turkey as a Member State? The main objections which are taken into consideration with the accession of Turkey into the European Union club are: religion, migration, population and poorness. Turkey's application for EU membership raises important cultural and "civilization" issues.*

***Keywords:** Turkey, European Union, entry of Turkey into the EU*

## INTRODUCTION

In recent times the European Union is a much discussed theme in the way of constitutional compact, the depth of integration of the states in society or the extension of the European Union. The important point can be also the question of the extension of the European Union, but the border is not clear between supporters the other extension and their opponents.

This sensitive problem is difficult, because many countries applied for the entry in to the European Union. These countries have various histories with different religions and many of these areas are not the countries of Europe and have a different geographical conception. The states with low functioning economy and democracy would like to be a part of the European Union, as well.

The main objections which are taken into consideration with the accession of Turkey into the European Union club are numerous for example religion, migration, population and the population in the surrounding countries of Turkey, poorness, dimension of states and with these lacks is connected inwards problems as a power and force. Radical Euro-sceptics focused on entry of Turkey to the European Union point out that this situation is like a "Trojan horse," which is not possible to destroy. This will have dangerous aftermath, because the extension of the European Union will be slowed down or it will be destroyed definitely.

"The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States" (Hemerijck, 2004, pp. 26).

"National laws arising from the obligations imposed by EU membership define basic functions. All other functions, thought important for the functioning of public procurement

are put in additional functions, since they are not defined as a legal obligations in the Member State” (Tešanović B, Petrović R, Dašić, 2011, pp.152)

Views from the European Union on Turkey are very diverse, because Turkey has contrasting and multiple identities. They are big but relatively poor, Muslim but secular, modern but traditional (Becerik, n.d, pp. 5). In my opinion Turkey has difficult way and the different values and identity is an obstacle that is in need to be solved before the accepting by European Union.

The relevant affairs of assessing the Turkish membership in the European Union are values and culture. With this theme are connected factors as the characteristic of population, religion and the attitude of population, as well. One of the possible ways that the more negative than positive attitude towards Turkey from the viewing angle of the European Union can be explained is by the use of social constructivism. Social constructivism, as one of the theories of international relations, focuses on the role of identity and shared ideas of and among states. In this particular case the identity of Turkey as a Muslim state plays a crucial role when it comes to the comparison with the European Union shared identity and ideas about what is “European” and what “the others”.

Even though “officially, Islam cannot play a role in the decision whether to accept Turkey as a member state of the European Union yet, many people wonder if a Muslim country such as Turkey would really fit into the European Union” (Hemerijck, 2004, pp. 5). This is the point where we can see how the definition and interpretation of the European identity (identity as an element of constructivism) plays an important role in the future of the European Union enlargement, specifically the Turkish case. The identity of Europe is a major determinant.

As already stated in the previous paragraph, although the European Union is based on political and civic values of a democratic constitutional state with a parliament with plurality among parties, which Turkey is and potential member states do not declare to specific cultural, historical or religious values it can be observed that cultural norms and values are often translated into verbal statements about expected foreign policy behaviour and action orientation.

One could then argue that Islam and Christianity are historically connected and share some of their great persons in their history; they both had dark times, when they served as an excuse for violent and inhumane acts. But then an age came where their shared ideas split and great disagreements started. It was the time of the Crusades in the middle ages and it continued up to the Ottoman Empires attempts to take over the European continent. Although it is an integral part of Europe, the memories are somehow not pleasing for the Europeans, as they are tightly connected to violence and aggression rather than to peaceful coexistence. Hence, Islam is not seen as common element, on which the fundamentals of the EU can safely be built.

Turkey is the enemy for the group of the Member States because the majority of Turkish population is votaries of the Islamic religion that is often considered as the religion of anger and weapons. “Despite of the formal separation of state and religion and the constitutionally guaranteed religious freedoms, the Turkish state, in practice, still exercises a strong control over religion. Restriction on, and the state intervention in the content of religion go further than what is customary in EU Member States. This explains why European Union is critically monitoring freedom of religion in Turkey” (Hemerijck, 2004, pp. 52).

So the probably most important question which from the constructivist perspective is whether Turkey is compatible with the European identity because as it was proclaimed by many specialist and politicians, “the European Union is not only an economical or political project but also a cultural and civilization construction” (Önis, 1999, pp. 119).

A lot of people believe that the European values come from Christian heritage. If that is true, is there a place for a Muslim country? Preserving this heritage makes the Union effective and something more than just an economic community. The willingness to contribute to regional and global peace and stability is derived from the substantial belief in those values. Actually, those are the values proclaimed by the so-called Western countries, among which we can see even the United States. If any country lives according to those values, it should be clearly recognized by its allies. Turkey has this status in some areas of life, in others it is controversial to be put on the same level as the European Union or the USA

To continue in the same outline of thinking, the slogan of the European Union could be used as well. The motto "united in diversity" basically means that the European Union countries have "the same heritage and identity plus the specie diversity of each state. But this is a negative to the European Union" (Becerik, n.d, pp. 6) and also a big obstacle for Turkey. What I want to say is that the European Union preserves its potential member states on the merits of their similarity with the Western Europe values, norms and traditions. And Turkish identity simply does not appear to be "European" enough.

The trend of secularisation and religion has had still big reactions among the population. The part of European population sees Turkey like something, which does not belong to this kind of organization with the orientation in the Christianity. The attitude of the Islamic religion in Turkey provides rational wide shared fear among European population. This religion is motivated by biases in the result of terrorist deeds.

When talking about the European Union, Christianity is surely an important key element of the common identity of Europe. This element more than in any other cases comes to surface in the European Union relation with Turkey. "After September 11 the "Islam phobia" became even more consolidated and shifted the European politics not in a positive way for Turkey." (Becerik, n.d, pp. 5) If Islam is seen as a marginal belief, and not as equal traditional partner to Christian traditions, then the Islam phobia, xenophobia and the double standards in religious and cultural matters may be dangerous for the European Union, as they might emerge into a deep cultural separation and misunderstandings. The European Union is afraid of Islam religion because it is a huge movement with huge force and the stability in the countries of the European Union could be weakened.

Moreover as we have discussed on our last lecture which dealt with constructivism through out language and its persuasion abilities we can define the state and image of a specific situation in this case the accession of Turkey to the European Union. The general opinion of the public inside of the European Union is not much on the side of Turkey throughout not Islam itself. One of the specific examples how the people in the European Union preserve Islam was visible when "the Jyllands Posten Danish newspaper depicting Mohammed published these caricatures. This insulted the moral values of Islam It is very dangerous to link the Turkish accession with Islamic extremism, but the way Islam is portrayed in the European Medias and politics further complicates the accession process for Turkey" (Becerik, n.d, pp. 5) and its perception among the European Union member states.

„But what has to be said is that culture and identity are not static and actors identities may be changed but this process is not smooth or quick“(Becerik, n.d, pp. 7) and can be only achieved by interaction of the two sides. „Models of behaviour concerning economic or technical development may be easier to alter but culture is transformed much slower. It takes a lot of time and effort to display the negative stereotypes and public opinion, which goes hand in hand with the policies of the national governments inside the European Union.” (Becerik, n.d, pp. 7) And even though it is sure that the gains of the European Union with the accession of Turkey will eventually come into reality (such as more economical or military power in the global scene, more dynamics of the population or

investments) at present there is still this wide spread opinion and collective identity in the European Union member states about who “we” are and who the “Turks” as the “other”.

## CONCLUSION

Every extension of the European Union has brought a great debate and international controversy. One of the aspects is the treatment of Islam, because after accepting Turkey everything could be possible. These arguments are connected with my question, which is necessary to put here: Why the European Union has the problems with accepting Turkey as a Member State?

But it is necessary to proclaim that everything is following from the Islam religion. Religion in Turkey is a quite big problem. “Concerning freedom of religion, the changes introduced by the reform packages have not yet produced the desired effects. Executive bodies continue to adopt a very restrictive interpretation of the relevant provisions, so that religious freedom is subject to serious limitations as compared with European standards. This is particularly the case for the absence of legal personality, education and training of ecclesiastic personnel, as well, as full enjoyment of property rights of religious communities” (Hemerijck, 2004, pp. 30).

Turkey had been sensed as secular Muslim country in the world. The European Union does not incline to the entry of Turkey into the EU. Turkey is an Islam country in which 97% of population confesses to Islam. There is the main problem of rejection of Turkey in the European Union. Turkey is a secular state with moderate form of Islam .The Turkish Muslims do not support the ideas that religion does not have important role in the politics life because this religion is their private life and influence of religion on the policy because at first they are Turkish population and then in the second way they are Muslims .The fear of the Islam’s religion between the European population which is motivated by terrorism which is committee by the religious fundamentalist. This situation is giving the answer in Turkey.. Practise and theory of murdering in the Islamic world has born very row with many discusses about political leadership in Muslim territory. If European Union accepts Muslim country as a member state the view on the European Union will be changed. Europe will not be viewed as a Christian club. But on the other hand it is possible to recommend that if Turkey entry to the European Union, Turkey could be a pattern showing how Islam can coexistent with liberal democracy. But first the people of Europe have to change their attitude and identity towards Turkey and Islam if wanting to deepen the cooperation.

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