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# The Return of the Sick Man of Europe: A study of the political, economical and cultural grounds for/against the entrance of Turkey to the European Union as viewed by Turkish Immigrants and Germans living in Berlin

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**The Return of the Sick Man of Europe: A study of the political,  
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Turkey to the European Union as viewed by Turkish  
Immigrants and Germans living in Berlin**

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**Central Europe 2004: Culture, Ethnicity and Nationalism**

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### **X. What Turkey's Membership to the EU Means for Europe**

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On 17 December 2004, the European Council will decide whether to enter into membership negotiation with Turkey. In the following sections the political, economical and cultural reasons for and against Turkey's accession will be examined. The views of both Germans and Turks living in Berlin will be discussed. Following this synopsis, it will be argued that the underlying grounds for not welcoming Turkey into the EU are cultural. Consequently, the study of the Turkey-EU debate will be indicative of the issues that the EU as a supranational organization has.

### **The Beginnings of the European Union**

In a speech in Zurich on 19 September 1946, Winston Churchill spoke of the "tragedy of Europe" which gave rise to a "series of frightful nationalistic quarrels, originated by the Teutonic nations in their rise to power." Churchill's solution to this paramount issue was to, "recreate the European Family...to provide it with a structure under which it can dwell in peace, in safety and freedom... to build a kind of United States of Europe."<sup>1</sup> From Charlemagne, to Napoleon I to Adolf Hitler, efforts have been made to unite Europe and each of these efforts failed. Yet after the World Wars that wrecked havoc on Europe, Churchill was not the only one to see the benefits of a united Europe as a means of ensuring peace among the "frightful nationalistic quarrels" of 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe.

Many of the supranational organizations created after the World Wars were formed on the notion that, "by establishing an economic community, the basis for a broader and deeper community among people long divided by bloody conflicts" would be

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<sup>1</sup> Winston Churchill, "Tragedy of Europe," 19 September 1946 [online]; available from <http://www.peshawar.ch/varia/winston.html>; Internet; accessed 3 December 2004.

created.<sup>2</sup> In 1948, the Benelux Custom Union was formed between Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, which provided for a free trade area between the signing members under a common tariff. Even with this early example of a supranational organization, one can see an attempt at promoting prosperity through economic institutions. This idea was furthered in 1951, when a major step towards European integration was taken with the forming of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).<sup>3</sup> Similar to the Benelux Custom Union the ECSC attempted to further European integration through fostering economic relations by removing barriers to trade. In 1957, the ECSC signed two treaties that created the European Atomic Energy Community (Euroatom) and the European Economic Community (EEC). The EEC was similar to the ECSC, except that it promoted the elimination of import duties and quotas on *all* trade and worked towards implementing common policies on transportation, agriculture, social insurance, and free movement of people and funds.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the most relevant change in supranational organization in Europe following the World Wars was the creation of the European Community (EC). The EC, which in July of 1967 combined the EEC, ECSC, and Euratom into one, worked towards fully implementing the tenants of the EEC treaty as well as removing all tariffs between the member states. Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of the EC was the decision in December 1969 to implement a framework for foreign policy cooperation among the member states and in doing so foreshadowed the

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<sup>2</sup> William Wallace, "Introduction: the dynamics of European Integration." in William Wallace, ed. *The Dynamics of European Integration* (London: Pinter Publishers Limited, 1990), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Karlheinz Neunreither, "Citizens and the Exercise of Power in the European Union: Towards a New Social Contract?" in Rosas, Allan and Esko Antola, eds. *A Citizens' Europe: In Search of a New Order*. (Cambridge: University Press, 1995), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Robert O. Keohane and Stanley Hoffman. "Institutional Change in Europe in the 1980s." in Robert O. Keohane and Stanley Hoffman, eds. *The New European Community: Decisionmaking and Institutional Change*. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc., 1991), 3.

move towards political and social integration that became a paramount tenet of the European Union. Therefore, the creation of the EC was, “political institutional-building as a strategy; to promote economic integration, in the expectation that social integration would follow.”<sup>5</sup> The EC experienced cycles of success and failure during the 1980s, ending in 1989 with the creation of a series of agreements that became the Treaty of the European Union. These treaties, also known as the Maastricht Treat, were first accepted in December 1991 but not inaugurated until November 1993. The decision that was reached during these intergovernmental conferences during 1989, laid the foundations for the current European Union (EU) as an institution that sought European unity through political, social, and economic integration among the member states.

### **European Union’s Policy of Enlargement**

One of the policies of the European Union is enlargement, meaning the acceptance of other states into the EU. Günter Verheugen of the European Commission, states that the joining of these new member states, “brings the post-war division of Europe to a peaceful conclusion.” Further nothing that, “enlargement lays the foundations for lasting peace, stability and prosperity for future generations.”<sup>6</sup> The requirements for enlargement are stipulated in article 49 of the Treaty on the European Union:

Any European state which respects the principles set out in Article 6(1) [i.e. “liberty, democracy, respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law”] may apply to become a Member of the Union...Accession will take place as soon as an associated country is able to assume the obligations of membership by satisfying the economic and political conditions required.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Wallace, “Dynamics” 1.

<sup>6</sup> European Commission, *Enlargement of the European Union: An historic opportunity*. (Brussels: European Commission, Enlargement Directorate-General, 2003), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid 7.

## Turkey's Application to the EU

Under these terms of enlargement, Turkey is one such state that has applied for EU membership. One of the preludes to EU membership is signing the Association Agreement. This agreement covers trade-related issues and urges the candidate country to establish a customs union with the European Community. Turkey signed the Association Agreement in September 1963 and entered into a Customs Union Agreement in 1995.<sup>8</sup>

Turkey formally applied for EU Membership on 14 April 1987. In 1989, the European Commission recommended against Turkey's application, but the application still remained in effect. In 1997 the Luxembourg European Council recommended an enhanced pre-accession strategy for the ten candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe; Turkey was, "pointedly left off the list of candidates."<sup>9</sup> It was not until 1999, that the Helsinki European Council decided to prepare a pre-accession strategy for Turkey.<sup>10</sup> In December 2002, the Copenhagen European Council decided to strengthen the accession strategy for Turkey and invited the Commission to submit a revised Accession Partnership for Turkey.<sup>11</sup> At the Copenhagen summit, December 2004 was the date given to decide whether to open EU accession negotiation with Turkey, depending on Turkey's fulfillment of the accession criteria. As of yet, this date is set for 17 December 2004. The European Council bases this decision in part on the EU Commission Report on Turkey. This report, which was released 6 October 2004, stated that Turkey had made sufficient

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<sup>8</sup> 2003 Enlargement, 6.

<sup>9</sup> "Special report: Turkey and the EU: The impossibility of saying no." *The Economist*, 18-24 September 2004, 31.

<sup>10</sup> 2003 Enlargement, 11.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

progress in fulfilling the political requirements for EU membership.<sup>12</sup> If on December 17<sup>th</sup>, the European Council decides that Turkey meets the political criteria, the European Union will open accession negotiations with Turkey.

### **The Historical Bonds between Germany and Turkey**

In the following three sections the political, economical and cultural grounds for and against Turkey's membership to the EU will be examined. The viewpoints expressed are limited in scope because they deal with only one EU member's views out of 25, but nonetheless, this German viewpoint is an important one due to the historical ties between Germany and Turkey.

Although one can speak of the historical relations between Turkey and Europe starting with the Ottoman Empire's raids during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Century, and then continuing on to the efforts of Turkey to remain neutral in the face of the German Nazi war machine, what is more pertinent to the following study is the immigration of Turkish workers to Germany following WWII. Due to the shortage of workers in 1955, Germany was forced by necessity to open the borders to Italians, Spaniards, Greeks, Portuguese, and Turks to come work in Germany. At first these *Gastarbeiter*, came on three to five year contracts, expected to return home after their contract ran out, but over the years the workers never went home and this accounts for the 2.7 million Turks in Germany, 180,000 of which live in Berlin.<sup>13</sup> Only in understanding the historical connection

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<sup>12</sup> European Commission, "Commission of the European Communities 2004 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress towards Accession." 6 October 2004 [Online]; available from <http://europa.eu.int/comm>. Internet; accessed 1 December 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Kenan Kolat of TBB. Arno interview. Berlin. 29 November 2004.

between Germany and Turkey, is one able to truly examine viewpoints of Turkish immigrants and Germans on Turkey's entrance to the EU.

### **Political Requirements of EU Membership**

On 13 December 2002, at the Copenhagen European Council it was decided that the goal of the EU was to, "make Europe a continent of democracy, freedom, peace and progress."<sup>14</sup> One of the ways the European Union insures that its' member states can promote this goal is by fulfilling the Copenhagen Criteria prior to EU accession. The membership criteria are as follows:

- stability of institution guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
- the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union;
- the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims

Alongside the Copenhagen Criteria, candidate countries are required to complete the Chapters of the *Acquis*, as defined by the Madrid European Council in December 1995. These requirements insure that the candidate country has the, "legal and institutional framework," to implement the legislations given by the European Community. It is necessary to understand these requirements when discussing Turkey's progress on fulfilling these membership prerequisites.

### **Views of German Political Parties**

In the following section, the viewpoints of German politicians on Turkey's EU membership will be examined. After a general view on Turkey's membership to the EU

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<sup>14</sup> 2003 *Enlargement*, 46.

is presented, the following three aspects will be addressed: the advantages/disadvantages of Turkey's EU membership, Turkey's fulfillment of the political requirements, and finally Turkey's shortcomings on political reforms. Lastly, the opinion on the CDU's proposal of a privileged partnership and the role of religion in the EU will be discussed.

The opinions of the following German political parties will be examined: Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Social Democratic Party (SPD), Free Democratic Party (FDP), Green Political Party (*Bündis 90/ Die Grünen*) and the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS). These political parties were chosen on account of their political validity and their representation in German government.

The PDS's view on Turkey's entrance to the EU is a qualified yes, meaning that the PDS supports Turkey's full membership to the EU *only* when certain political requirements are fulfilled. Representative Sayan of the PDS party noted that membership for Turkey would only be acceptable if Turkey was able to increase rights for minorities, maintain a democracy and improve their human rights record. Acknowledging the need for reforms, the PDS would specifically like to see improvements in the following four areas in Turkey: improvements in women's rights, the ability for Kurds to have radio and television stations in the Kurdish language, the resolution of the Cyprus conflict, and a unified tax system. Furthermore, it is necessary for the EU to continue accession negotiations because without the goal of EU membership Turkey will lose its' motivation for implementing and maintaining political reforms.<sup>15</sup>

The PDS's support for Turkey's entrance to the EU is due in part to the advantages that this will have for both the EU and Germany. One of the advantages that the PDS sees in Turkey's EU membership is in combating Islamic Fundamentalism.

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<sup>15</sup> Giyasettin Sayan of PDS. Arno interview. Berlin. 1 December 2004.

Sayan commented that Turkey's government has experience combating Islamic Fundamentalism and can use this experience to teach the EU. Such an advantage is certainly high on Europe's priority list, especially since the murder of the Dutch filmmaker, Theo van Gogh, in Amsterdam on 2 November 2004. Van Gogh, who had recently made a film critical of Islam, was believed to be killed by a Moroccan Muslim who attached a note to Van Gogh's body threatening those who criticized Islamism.<sup>16</sup> And even though some note that, "most Muslims in Germany are from Turkey (2.6 m) or Bosnia (170,000) and espouse a more moderate form of Islam,"<sup>17</sup> perhaps the more telling view is that, "had the assassin [of Van Gogh] been Turkish, then the [EU Membership prospects for Turkey] would be over."<sup>18</sup>

Another advantage that the PDS's sees in Turkey's membership to the EU is the geographical location of Turkey. In a discussion with Rep. Sayan, he commented that,

300 to 400 years ago, the Islam Empire was attempting to islamize Europe. For this reason, Islamic countries were a nightmare for Europe. But now that Turkey wants to take on European values [through their membership to the EU], Europe has an opportunity to integrate the Islamic world. Turkey's EU membership will be a bridge between Europe and the near East, between Europe and Islamism...The EU would be able to promote its value system in the Islamic world thru the vector of Turkey.<sup>19</sup>

The PDS is therefore aware of the geopolitical advantages of Turkey's EU membership, mainly that by bordering the problem prone area of the Middle East, Turkey will be able to offer Europe a sense of security.

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<sup>16</sup> Marlise Simons, "Dutch Filmmaker, an Islam Critic, is killed." *The New York Times*, 3 November 2004. [online]; available from [www.nytimes.com/2004/11/03/international/europe.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/03/international/europe.html); Internet; accessed on 8 November 2004.

<sup>17</sup>"Islamic terrorism in Europe after van Gogh." *The Economist*, 13-19 November 2004, 33.

<sup>18</sup> Harry Mulisch. "Jetzt haben alle Angst." *Der Spiegel Magazine*, 15 November 2004, 94.

<sup>19</sup> Sayan. Arno interview.

Similar to the PDS, the SPD supports Turkey's membership to the EU only when certain political criteria are fulfilled. This *ja, aber* answer means that the SPD would like to leave the negotiation process with Turkey as an *Ergebnisse offen*, meaning that Turkey should not be automatically accepted to the EU, but rather the outcome should remain open. In a discussion with SPD Berlin Representative Frank Zimmermann, it was noted that the question of Turkey's membership to the EU was a hard question to answer because this debate in the government is so controversial; even within the SPD there is a divide in opinions.<sup>20</sup> Zimmermann later noted that this division can be categorized into two groups. The one side of the SPD believes that the EU should not seek a policy of enlargement because the EU already has difficulties with political cohesiveness among its current members. The other side of the SPD argues that Turkey should become a member of the EU because, as a secular Islam state, Turkey will be a stabilizing force in the Middle East. Similar to the views of the PDS, Zimmermann argues that the ability to promote "democracy, cooperation, freedom and transparency, is in part due to the efforts of the EU to stabilize problem prone areas."<sup>21</sup> This viewpoint is reflected in the legislation of the SPD, where it is noted in a proposal put forth by the SPD in conjunction with the Green party, that one of the grounds for accepting Turkey to the EU, are the national security and geo-strategic benefits of Turkey's entrance to the EU.<sup>22</sup>

Although the SPD is divided on the advantages of Turkey's accession to the EU, the SPD's views on Turkey's political reforms are generally unanimous. Representative

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<sup>20</sup> Frank Zimmermann of SPD. Arno interview. Berlin. 17 November 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Zimmermann. Arno interview. Berlin. 24 November 2004.

<sup>22</sup> Franz Muenteferig, Kartin Goerig-Eckardt, and Krista Sager, "Antrag der Fraktionene SPD und Buendnis 90/Die Gruenen: Der Tuerkie-Politik der EU verlaesslich fortsetzen und den Weg fuer die Beitrittsverhandlungen mit der Tuerkei freimachen." 27 October 2004. [online]; available from [www.spdfraktion.de](http://www.spdfraktion.de); Internet; accessed 29 November 2004.

Zimmermann noted that Turkey currently did not have all of the necessary reforms needed to join the EU but expected these reforms to be fully implemented by 2012. A similar view was expressed by Dr. Lale Akgun, an SPD representative of the German Federal Government, (*Bundestagsabgeordnete*).<sup>23</sup> In a forum on Turkey's entrance to the EU, she noted that Turkey has done exceedingly well with setting the grounds for implementing reforms, such as those to human rights and minorities, also in abolishing the death penalty. Also Dr. Akgun was impressed with the speed at which Turkey has implemented its political reforms; noting that for a country as large as Turkey it was noteworthy that these political reforms could happen so fast, attesting to the commitment of Turkey to become a member of the EU.

Similar to the SPD and the PDS, the FDP supports the accession of Turkey to the European Union under the condition that Turkey fulfills the political criteria of membership. The FDP acknowledges the reforms that Turkey has already implemented: primarily the removal of the death sentence, improving the position of women in society, measures taken against torture, and allowing minorities to use their mother tongue in public structures and institutions. The FDP emphasizes that these reforms are not expectable only on paper, but rather must be fully implemented. Further reforms that the FDP demands of Turkey are the resolution of the Cyprus conflict and the conflicts with minorities in southeast Turkey, primarily the Kurds.<sup>24</sup>

The Green Party's views on the entrance of Turkey to the EU do not differ significantly from those expressed by the previously discussed German political parties. Generally, the Green Party supports the entrance of Turkey to the EU when the political

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<sup>23</sup> Dr. Lale Akgun SPD. Arno interview. Frankfurt (Oder). 30 November 2004.

<sup>24</sup> FDP Party. "EU-Beitritt der Tuerkei." Beschluss des 54. Ord. Bundesparteitages der FDP. Bremen. 16-18 May 2003. [online]; available from <http://www.parteitag.fdp.de>; Internet; accessed 29 November 2004.

criteria are fulfilled. The Green Party recognizes the same reforms in Turkey that the previous parities have also recognized. Concerning the membership of Turkey to the EU, the Green Party, is against an automatic membership for Turkey, but is in full support of the beginning of entry negotiations for Turkey starting in the 2005. The benefit of Turkey's membership to the EU, as seen by the Green Party, is the stabilizing effect that Turkey will have in the Middle East region.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the Green Party recognizes that to accept a country with a predominantly Muslim population, would be to show that Islam, democracy, and human rights can all be part of one value system.<sup>26</sup>

Whereas the PDS, SPD, FDP, and the Green Party are in general support of Turkey's entrance to the EU ("*ja, aber*"), the Christian Democratic Union has a different stance on Turkey's entrance to the EU. The CDU argues that Turkey will not be able to function successfully as a full- EU member state, and therefore proposes the concept of a *privilegierte Partnerschaft* or a privileged partnership. Peter Hintze, the speaker for the CDU, noted that although the party recognizes the reforms of Turkey concerning torture, women rights, democracy and a competitive market economy, the CDU recommended a privileged partnership in order to "strengthen the traditional European orientation of Turkey, as well as create a foundation for a trustful relationship between Turkey and the EU."<sup>27</sup>

In a podium discussion on Turkey's entrance to the EU, CDU member of the *Bundestag* Michael Stuebgen, continued to promote the idea of a privileged partnership.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Green Party. "Ja zur Tuerkei." 7 October 2004. [online]; available from <http://www.gruene-fraktion.de; internet>; accessed 29 November 2004.

<sup>26</sup> Rainder Steenblock, "Debatte: EU-Erweiterung: Die Tuerkei gehoert zur EU." 7 October 2004. [online]; available from <http://www.bundestag.de/archiv; Internet> accessed 2 December 2004.

<sup>27</sup> Peter Hintze, "Operation Tuerkei-Beitritt gefaehrlich." 6 October 2004. [online]; available from <http://www.cdu.de/archiv.html; Internet>; accessed 1 December 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Stuebgen of CDU. Arno interview. Frankfurt (Oder) 30 November 2004.

During this discussion he gave three reasons why a privileged partnership was a needed alternative to full EU membership. The first reason was that Turkey did not share a common history and culture with Europe, and would therefore have difficulties reaching a political consensus on legislation and ruling. Stuebgen noted that the EU already struggles with reaching common political policies, and that the membership of Turkey to the EU would only exacerbate this problem. Secondly, Stuebgen argued that Turkey had not sufficiently fulfilled either the political or economic criteria of EU membership. If the EU was to accept Turkey, without ensuring that the political and economic criteria was fully met prior to accession, than this would be an example to other potential members that the prerequisites to EU membership are not taken seriously. Lastly, Stuebgen argued that, the EU would not be able to finance Turkey with the current 2000-2006 budget, and that by 2030, the EU budget would be seriously depleted in making Turkey a functioning member of the EU. Later in the discussion, Stuebgen reiterated that a privileged partnership allowed Turkey to slowly adjust to EU membership and that if Turkey was given full membership from the beginning, the EU would have to waste tedious time and efforts monitoring Turkey's progress and noting its' shortcomings.

### **Political Parties Views on CDU's Privileged Partnership**

The CDU's proposal of a privileged partnership for Turkey is not accepted by the majority of the German political parties. The Green Party noted that a privileged partnership would be no alternative for Turkey and that the only way to create a political tie to Turkey would be through a full membership.<sup>29</sup> Representative Zimmermann of the SPD, commented that Turkey was *already* a privileged partner, in its' membership to the

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<sup>29</sup> Green Party, Ja zur Tuerkei, 1.

Customs Union.<sup>30</sup> Dr. Akgun, also of the SPD, noted that without the prospect of full EU membership Turkey would lose interest in implementing reforms and regress on its' current reforms. Although Dr. Akgun supports an *Ergebnisse offen* option for Turkey, she argues that a privileged partnership would turn Turkey into a second class citizen which would damage the relationship between Europe and Turkey; a relationship that needs to be maintained because in the coming years Europe, with an aging population, will need the young workers of Turkey.<sup>31</sup> Representative Sayan mimicked these views, saying that the CDU arose at the idea of a privileged partnership out of the historical relationship between Turkey and Germany. Noting that in 1895, Turkey and Germany had Arms Pacts that bound Turkey to fighting on the German side and therefore weakening the Islamic Empire. Consequently the CDU wants to have Turkey guard the door to the East but not enjoy any of the benefits of being member of the EU.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, there is a general lack of support for the acceptance of Turkey into the EU as a privileged partner.

### **German Political Parties view on the role of Religion in EU**

In a democratic, market economy, where church and state are separated one would not think to associate politicians with theologians. Yet one of the factors that distinguish Turkey's EU application from that of the membership of the 25 current EU member states is that Turkey has a mainly Muslim population. Therefore in asking politicians their views on the compatibility of Islam and democracy, one is addressing one of the central arguments of Turkey's Membership to the EU.

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<sup>30</sup> Zimmermann. Arno interview

<sup>31</sup> Akgun. Arno interview.

<sup>32</sup> Sayan. Arno interview.

Interestingly there emerges a pattern in this part of the argument: mainly that the political parties that generally support Turkey's membership to the EU, also believe that religion plays no role in the EU. Therefore the PDS, SPD, FDP, and the Green Party all made it clear that the Islam/Muslim factor of Turkey would not affect its membership to the EU. Zimmermann of the SPD noted that religion has no role in the accession of Turkey to the EU and that the variety of religions within the EU is acceptable as long as these religions do not hinder the acceptance of the political criteria that the EU promotes.<sup>33</sup> The SPD and the Green Party, addressed religion in a joint motion saying that the EU is based on a common value system and not a common belief system, and that the EU should welcome all varieties of culture and religion.<sup>34</sup> Representative Sayan of the PDS believes that Turkey will have no trouble adapting its Muslim society to the rules of the EU.<sup>35</sup> The official PDS viewpoint supports Sayan's opinion, noting that the EU is not a Christian club but an institution based on "the values of humanity and freedom" and that Turkey, with a long history of secular traditions, should have no problem adapting to these values.<sup>36</sup> The FDP also believes that Europe should be a place of religious freedom, and that even though the values of the EU are similar to the values of the Christian faith, this does not mean that the two are connected.<sup>37</sup>

The CDU on the other hand, argues for an increase in the importance placed on Christian values in the EU. A member of the CDU-Fraction in Berlin, argued for the reference in the new EU constitution, "to the traditional Christian, occidental values that

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<sup>33</sup> Zimmermann. Arno interview.

<sup>34</sup> SPD-Bundestagsfraktion, "Die EU ist eine Werte- und keine Glaubensgemeinschaft." 29 October 2004. [online]; available from <http://www.spdfraktion.de>; internet; accessed 29 November 2004.

<sup>35</sup> Sayan. Arno interview.

<sup>36</sup> Sylvia-Yvonne Kaufmann. "Europa ist kein christlicher Club-Der Tuerkei eine klare Perspektive eroeffnen." 19 December 2002. [online]; available from <http://sozialisten.de/politik/publikationen/pressediens.html>; internet; accessed 1December 2004.

<sup>37</sup> FDP Beschluss des 54. Ord. Bundesparteitages, 2.

until now have been missing.”<sup>38</sup> Although Christian values and the values of the EU are often similar, if one was to officially recognize Christian values in the constitution of the EU it would lead to discrimination against other non-Christian religion. But, perhaps that is what the CDU is after. CDU *Bundestag* Representative, Michael Stuebgen, commented in a podium discussion that, “Islam was a strange and aggressive religion that was hostile towards women and other religions.”<sup>39</sup> In viewing these comments of the CDU, it would not be a stretch to argue that the CDU is against Turkey’s entrance to the EU on the simple grounds of religion. Therefore when examining the German political parties’ viewpoint on the role of religion in the EU, there surfaces a correlation between opposing Turkey’s entrance to the EU and believing that Christianity should have a role in the European Union. This offers considerable support for the claim that religion plays a large part in Turkey’s accession to the EU.

### **Consensus of German Political Parties on Turkey’s Entrance to the EU**

The consensus among the German political parties is that Turkey should be accepted to the European Union *only* when Turkey has fulfilled the political criteria of EU accession. The main advantage that the political parties see in Turkey accession to the EU is the geopolitical advantages of Turkey in combating Islamic Fundamentalism. On the other side, there seems to be a general consensus that it will be difficult to integrate the political voice of Turkey into the EU when already the current members struggle with finding a consensus on political policies. Despite this, with the exception of the CDU, the

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<sup>38</sup> Stephan Tromp, “Berlin und die EU-Erweiterung.” 25 November 2004. [online];available from [www.cdu-fraktion.berlin.de](http://www.cdu-fraktion.berlin.de); Internet; accessed on 25 November 2004.

<sup>39</sup> Michael Stuebge of CDU. Arno interview. Frankfurt (Oder). 30 November 2004.

German political parties see more advantages than disadvantages for Europe in Turkey's accession to the European Union

### **Views of Turkish Political and Social Organizations in Berlin**

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of dealing with the theme of Turkey's entrance to the EU in Germany is the presence of Turkish immigrants. Around 180,000 immigrants of Turkey live in Berlin, making it the largest immigrant population of Berlin.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, when studying the German political arguments, it is also necessary to get the viewpoint of Turkish organizations that work with Turkish immigrants and are aware of the multi level connections between Turkey and Germany. For this reason, Cengiz Goemuesay, of Kumulus, and Kenan Kolat of the Turkish Union in Berlin-Brandenburg (TBB), were contacted and asked their political views on Turkey's entrance to the EU.

Goemuesay's organization, which helps non-Berliners complete their education and find jobs, is funded by both the EU and the German Senate. In a conversation with Goemuesay, it was made clear that he could only offer support for Turkey's membership to the EU when Turkey was accepted as a full, equal member of the EU and not a 2<sup>nd</sup> class member. This, he argued, was also the common viewpoint of Turkish immigrants living in Berlin. Furthermore, a long drawn out negotiations process when no set outcome was guaranteed would not be acceptable for Turkey. In fact, Goemuesay said that Turkey would need to get full EU membership in the next 10 years, or Turkey would lose interest in EU membership.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Elke Pohl of Center for Immigration/Integration. Arno. Berlin. 8 September 2004.

<sup>41</sup> Cengiz Goemuesay of Kumulus. Arno interview. Berlin. 11 November 2004.

Given the history of Turkey, particularly its early application to the EU combined with its move away from Islam towards democracy in the early twenties, Goemuesay was dismayed that Turkey was not already a member of the EU. Yet, perhaps on a level Goemuesay can understand where the reservation for Turkey's membership comes from. Goemuesay commented that,

The picture that Europeans get of Turkey is by examining their neighbors, their city cohabitants. This is a false presentation of the real Turkey. Kreuzburg<sup>42</sup> is not how Turkey is. Many conclude that Turkish culture can not fit with the EU's culture only when viewing this.<sup>43</sup>

Prof. Buchenau of the Free University in Berlin agrees with this statement saying that, the Turkish immigrants living in Berlin are, "bad ambassadors for promoting Turkey's entrance to the EU."<sup>44</sup>

Kolat of the TBB, shares Goemuesay opinion that Turkey should only enter the EU as a full, equal member. Kolat noted that Turkey is already a privileged partner with the EU, mainly through its associated membership and membership to the Customs Union, and therefore should either enter as a full EU member or not at all. Kolat believes that 99% of Turkish immigrants in Berlin support Turkey's membership to the EU, mainly because it will increase the benefits that they will be able to enjoy as European citizens, especially the right to vote and have double citizenship.<sup>45</sup>

### **Advantages/ Disadvantages of Turkey's EU Membership**

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<sup>42</sup> Turkish Immigrant area in Berlin

<sup>43</sup> Goemuesay. Arno interview.

<sup>44</sup> Klaus Buchenau of FU. Arno interview. Berlin. 10 November 2004

<sup>45</sup> Kenan Kolat. Arno interview. Berlin. 29 November 2004

When speaking with people from the Turkish community about Turkey's entrance to the EU, often without being prompted the conversation gravitates towards the interviewee listing the advantages of a Turkey-EU membership. Goemuesay noted that the EU will benefit from Turkey's EU membership because of its land mass and the young population of Turkey. Of course, the demographics of Turkey should be among the forerunners of the advantages that Turkey can provide for the EU. In statistics put out by the European Union, the population in the EU lands of those under 49 will be decreasing, while those over 49 will be steadily increasing, and by the year 2020, there will be 56.7 million more people aged over 50, than there will be those less than 24 years of age.<sup>46</sup>

Another advantage, that both the German political parties and the Turkish social organization are aware of, is the geopolitical advantage of Turkey. Goemuesay noted that Turkey will act as a stabilizing force in a region amidst the ex-communist states and the Middle East. Kolat also acknowledged this advantage, saying that an EU membership for Turkey would improve the dialogue between Muslims and Europeans. When asked to speak on the disadvantages of Turkey's membership to the EU, Goemuesay simply replied that Spain had similar problems before its EU accession and currently Poland, Greece and France have economic and social problems. Nobody can be perfect right?

The consensus among the Turkish political side is that the entrance of Turkey to the EU will only work if Turkey is accepted as a full, equal member. Without full membership, no other alternative will be accepted. Both organizations agree that the

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<sup>46</sup> European Commission. *Key facts and figures about the European Union*. (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2004), 15-20.

advantages of Turkey's membership far exceed any perceived disadvantages and that the EU will benefit significantly with Turkey as an EU member.

### **Comparison of German/Turkish Political on Migration and Integration**

In comparing the Turkish and German political viewpoints, some noteworthy connections arise. One of the concerns of the CDU is that following the acceptance of Turkey to the EU, the number of Turks migrating west will increase significantly. Interestingly every Turkish organization in Berlin that was interviewed believes that if Turkey was to join the EU, there would not be a mass exodus of Turks moving towards Europe. In fact, many argued that there would be a reverse in the immigration patterns of the last decade and many Turkish immigrants currently living in Europe would return back to Turkey. Of course this makes logical sense. Most of the migration patterns occur between politically unstable, poor countries towards politically stable, rich countries and if one wants to stop immigration, than it makes sense to improve the living situation of the country where the migration originates from. Therefore one way to stop immigration from Turkey to Europe is to improve the situation of Turkey and one way to do this is to accept Turkey into the EU. Interestingly, those who oppose Turkey's entrance to the EU are often the very same people who are against the influx of Turkish immigrants to Germany. For instance the far-right political parties of Germany, who are against the presence of Turks in Berlin, are also in extreme opposition to the entrance of Turkey to the EU.<sup>47</sup> To put it simple, if one is *against* the presence of foreigners in Germany, they should be *for* the entrance of Turkey to the EU.

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<sup>47</sup> Dr. Helga Ernst of SPD. Arno interview. Berlin. 8 November 2004.

Perhaps one of the largest debates in Germany today is how to affectively integrate Turkish immigrants. Many people argue that the Turkish immigrants form *Parallelgesellschaften*, or parallel societies, where they wall themselves off from German society and continue speaking Turkish, watching Turkish television, and not making any contacts to their surrounding German environment. Some people fear that once Turkey is accepted into the EU, parallel societies will form all over Europe and resist any attempts to be integrated into European society. In a statement put out by the CDU, it was noted that, “with the discussion of the entrance of Turkey to the EU, one can not forget the current integration deficit by the current Turkish migrants living in Germany.”<sup>48</sup> These views are not limited to the CDU. When speaking with a former member of the SPD, she declared that when walking through Kreuzburg she does not know if she is in Germany or Istanbul.<sup>49</sup>

Here, the views of the German political parties and the Turkish political and social organizations are at complete odds with one another. Goemuesay noted that if Turkey is accepted into the EU, Turkish immigrants would have a better sense of belonging to European society. Furthermore, this increased sense of belonging would have a positive effect on immigrant education and integration. Kolat also believes that if Turkey is accepted into the EU as a full member Turkish immigrants will feel more at home and as a result integration into European society will improve.

### **Economic Requirements of EU Membership**

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<sup>48</sup> Hartmut Koschyk, “Beim EU-Beitritt der Türkei Integrationsdefizite nicht vergessen.“ 29 September 2004. [online]; available from <http://www.cdu.de/archiv.html>; Internet; accessed 1 December 2004.

<sup>49</sup> Ernst. Arno interview.

Before examining the German and Turkish economic institution's viewpoints on the entrance of Turkey to the EU, it is first necessary to understand what the economic requirements are to join the EU. Furthermore, an overview of the current trade relationship between Turkey and the EU, as well as how Turkey's economy compares with the other EU member states, will be discussed.

The economic requirements, as put forth by the European Commission, are the "existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union."<sup>50</sup> Turkey is currently at 24% of the EU's GDP average. Turkey's trade with the EU states in 2003, was up 11.5% from 2002, and accounted for 54.7% of Turkey's overall trade. Foreign Direct Investment has improved, two-thirds coming from the EU. Turkey has significantly reduced its inflation; inflation rate of 1999 was 65%, currently this rate has dropped to 11%. Unemployment rates (2004, 12.4%) remain high in part due to the large working age class. Liberalization and deregulation have improved significantly, especially in the areas of banking, electricity, tobacco, and petroleum. There has been an overall decline in the importance of the agriculture sector, with a respective increase in the service sector.<sup>51</sup> From these statistic, it appears that Turkey has an improving economy and perhaps more important, a well developed economic relationship with the European Union.

### **Opinion of German Economic Institution's on Turkey's EU Accession**

Where as the political viewpoint of Germany on Turkey's accession to the EU is one of 25 voices, the economic viewpoint of Germany holds more weight because

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<sup>50</sup> *2003 Enlargement*, 8.

<sup>51</sup> *Commission 2004 Regular Report*, 37-45.

Germany is Turkey's largest trading partner. Germany receives 13.2% of Turkey's imports and exports 17.2% of its goods to Turkey, making it the highest among the EU-25.<sup>52</sup> Therefore in speaking with German trade and business organizations, one gets a valuable insight into the economic aspects of Turkey's entrance into the EU.

One of the supporters of Turkey's entrance to the EU is the *Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund Berlin-Brandenburg* (DGB), which is a trade union for the Berlin-Brandenburg area. In an interview with Safer Cinar,<sup>53</sup> it was made clear that the DGB fully supported Turkey's membership to the EU. Furthermore, Cinar argued that most businesses and business organizations in Berlin supported Turkey's EU membership.

Cinar believes that the economic advantage of Turkey's EU membership would be to further improve the historically based trade relations between Turkey and Germany. Noting the currently well developed integration between Turkish and European markets, Cinar commented that with EU-Membership for Turkey, the already present investment connections between Europe and Turkey will increase. Furthermore, with the accession of Turkey to the EU, Cinar believes that the trade relations will improve and consequently offer many benefits for Europe. Turkey, he says, has the possibility of an 80 million strong market that will be an interesting, dynamic market for the EU to do business with. Therefore, the DGB believes that Turkey would be a good investment for the EU.

The DGB believes that the accession of Turkey to the EU will only bring advantages for the European market. When asked to speak of the reasons why Turkey's accession to the EU would fail, Cinar provided the following reasons: the unemployment

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<sup>52</sup> Anton F. Boerner, "Die Türkei-ein willkommener Wirtschaftspartner." 28 September 2004. [online]; available from <http://www.bga.de/article/html>; Internet; accessed 1 December 2004.

<sup>53</sup> Safer Cinar of German Trade Union. Arno interview. Berlin. 30 November 2004.

rate in Turkey, the failure to implement the necessary political reforms, and the ability for Turkey to resolve its foreign policy issues, mainly the Cyprus conflict. Cinar believes that the unemployment rate of Turkey will improve with the influx of EU pre-accession funds and the continued improvement of the Turkish economy. When asked about the possible disadvantage of Turkey costing the EU excessive funds, Cinar commented that this was only a political tool of the CDU in an effort to deter Turkey's accession to the EU. Although, the price of Turkey's accession to the EU is ultimately a question of negotiating, Cinar believes that it will not be unusually high.

The *Bundesverband des Deutschen Gross- und Aussenhandles E.V.*<sup>54</sup> (BGA) is also in full support of the membership of Turkey to the EU. In a discussion with Mueller of the BGA,<sup>55</sup> three reasons were given why the EU needs to accept Turkey. The first reason was that in order to further the current economic growth of Turkey, it is necessary to continue the positive economic relations between Turkey and Europe. Mueller noted that Turkey's economic growth expanded significantly with its membership to the Customs Unions. The BGA believes that Turkey will have similar success once it is accepted to the European Union. Mueller believes that this long economic growth process in Turkey will have significant and tangible benefits for Germany. The second reason why the BGA supports Turkey's entrance to the EU is the strategic benefits that Turkey can offer the EU. Mueller believes that the EU will have more ease promoting Western values in the Islamic lands of the Middle East, once Turkey becomes a full member of the EU. And lastly, Mueller argues that Turkey and the EU are already strongly connected with one another on economic grounds and that this convergence is on a steady track

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<sup>54</sup> German Federal Government Association for Wholesale and Foreign Trade

<sup>55</sup> Hans-Juergen Mueller. Arno interview. Berlin. 6 December 2004.

forward. Through Turkey's associated membership, the BGA believe that Turkey has gained valuable economic experience in dealing with the EU as a trading partner. In a memoranda published by the BGA on 28 September 2004, the president noted that,

Through Turkey's associated membership with the EU, Turkey has gained valuable experience. Turkey is now familiar with the EU-regulations on trade, and which quality of product the EU is willing to accept. Furthermore, the ability of Turkey to compete with the EU market increased significantly during Turkey's associated membership to the EU.<sup>56</sup>

This ability to compete with the EU market is one of the two economic requirements for Turkey to join the EU.

The second economic requirement of EU membership is the existence of a functioning market system. The BGA, in the same memoranda, notes that Turkey has made significant improvements on implementing a market economy, as seen through the privatization of the central bank and the decrease in the inflation rate. Therefore, according to the BGA, Turkey has little economic risks for the EU and furthermore has many advantages for Germany, as the largest trading partner of Turkey. In fact, the BGA, warns tax payers that, "the long term financial consequence of not accepting Turkey to the EU can not be counted in Euros or cents, but rather the risk of not accepting Turkey to the EU, will be in many cases higher than the expected cost of preparing Turkey for EU membership."<sup>57</sup>

Yet despite the BGA's overall support for Turkey's membership to the EU, the BGA still recognizes reforms that need to be implemented before Turkey can become a fully functioning member of the EU. Mueller listed the following reforms as being fundamental to Turkey's EU membership: protecting minorities' rights, ensuring the role

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<sup>56</sup> Boerner, 2.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 3.

of the military did not disrupt a democratic government, and guaranteeing that the Turkish businesses be completely deregulated from state control. The privatization of Turkish businesses is naturally the top concern for the BGA. Mueller notes that this along with the modernization of the agricultural sector in Turkey, are the main economic priorities. Yet the BGA believes that Turkey will certainly be able to fulfill these necessary reforms in the next 10 years.

The consensus among the economic organizations in Berlin is a strong support of Turkey's membership to the EU, with very little reservations. Both the *Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund Berlin-Brandenburg* (DGB) and the *Bundesverband des Deutschen Gross- und Aussenhandels E.V* (BGA), recognize the advantages of Turkey's membership to the EU for both Germany and the European Union. Unlike the German political parties, the disadvantages of Turkey's accession to the EU were either absent or, when present, had foreseeable solutions.

### **Turkish Business Organization's Opinion on Turkey's Accession to the EU**

The views on Turkey's accession to the EU, as expressed by Turkish business or trade organizations in Berlin, were very similar to the views that the German business and trade organizations had. The views of the *Bund Tuerkisch-Europaeischer Unternehmer* (BTEU)<sup>58</sup> and the *Tuerkisch- Deutsche Unternehmervereinigung Berlin-Brandenburg e.V* (TDU)<sup>59</sup> will be considered. Following a discussion on their views, including the economic advantages and disadvantages of Turkey's EU membership, a

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<sup>58</sup> The Union of Turkish-European Businesses

<sup>59</sup> The Turkish German Business Union of Berlin-Brandenburg

consensus will be reached among the Turkish business/trade organizations. This consensus will then be compared with the German economic viewpoint.

In a podium discussion on Turkey's entrance to the EU, Ahmet Yilmaz of the BTEU noted that the BTEU was one of the many business organizations that support Turkey's accession to the EU. Yilmaz gave the following reasons for why Turkey belongs in the European Union. First, he noted that the EU was Turkey's biggest trading partner, accounting for half of Turkey's overall trade; also noting that Turkey was in the top ten exporters of cement, glass, and textile. These statistics illustrate the strong economic relationship between Turkey and Germany. Yilmaz gave the example of Turkey's membership in the Customs Union, as evidence that Turkey was able to function in a market economy without outside financial assistance. This, Yilmaz claimed, showed that Turkey was able to both operate a market system and compete in the EU market, the two economic requirements of EU membership.

Secondly, Yilmaz said that Turkey would provide the EU with economic benefits. One of which would be the access to natural resources and cheap sources of energy. Therefore, the BTEU fully supports Turkey's entrance to the EU. Furthermore, the BTEU believes that the potential of the Turkish market can only be reached through a fully membership and that an alternative, such as privileged partnership, will not produce the desired economic results in Turkey.

On the topic of the disadvantages of Turkey's membership to the EU, Yilmaz of the BTEU noted that the advantages of Turkey's EU accession far exceed the disadvantages. Yilmaz acknowledged the concern about Turkey's fulfillment of the political criteria of EU membership, but only in saying that Turkey was making sufficient

progress on implementing these changes, particularly those concerning the Cyprus conflict. On the treatment of women in Turkish society, Yilmaz stated that the treatment of women is not as bad as the TV or the newspaper depicts it. Yilmaz implied that it is no coincidence that as the 17<sup>th</sup> of December nears magazines are printing more articles on the mistreatment of women, like the one printed in *Der Spiegel*, about how Muslim daughters run away from their abusive fathers who try to arrange marriages for their children.<sup>60</sup>

Like the BTEU, the TDU fully supports Turkey's membership to the EU. In a discussion with a representative of the TDU<sup>61</sup>, it was made clear that the TDU, as a business minded organization, supports the accession of Turkey because it would further eliminate the barriers of trade that exist in Turkey and therefore promote free trade. The TDU sees many economic advantages for the EU in Turkey's accession; mainly that Turkey is a favorable market with an economically active population. Once Turkey is accepted to the EU, the EU will enjoy the benefits of having direct access to the market of a country with a large population. Also, if Turkey is accepted into the EU, the TDU believes that more Turkish business will invest in Europe. In doing so, the economic relationship between the EU and Turkey will be further intensified. The TDU did not offer any disadvantages of Turkey's membership to the EU.

### **Consensus among German and Turkish Economic Viewpoints**

Unlike the varying voices of the political side of the argument, both the German and the Turkish business and trade organizations agreed that Turkey's membership to the

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<sup>60</sup> "Fuer uns gelten keine Gesetze." *Der Spiegel Magazine*, 15 November 2004, 60-88.

<sup>61</sup> Ahmet Ersoez of TDU. Arno interview. Berlin. 18 November 2004.

EU would only offer Germany and Europe increased benefits. Although the German economic side did acknowledge a few of the shortcomings of Turkey, most of these shortcomings were political rather than economic problems and were addressed as resolvable issues. The Turkish economic side, on the other hand, only offered its complete support of Turkey's accession to the EU.

### **Cultural Requirement? The Official Role of Religion in the EU**

Whereas the European Union has set economic and political requirements to join the EU, there is no cultural or religious requirement to join the EU. Despite the acquisition that the EU is a "Christian Club," the EU does not officially recognize any affiliation with a particular religion. In a brochure published by the EU, one of the proposed fundamental rights of an EU citizen is, "freedom of thought, conscience and religion," as well as, "respect for cultural, religious and linguistic diversity."<sup>62</sup> Therefore, where economic and political requirements play a role in the accession of a new state to the EU, religion and culture play no official role. How is it then that in a report on Turkey and the EU, *The Economist* declared that, "the biggest issue [in the entrance of Turkey to the EU] is Islam."<sup>63</sup> If religion and culture have no official role in the EU, then the religion of Turkey should have no influence on its' accession to the EU.

The current role of religion in Turkey is difficult to define. Officially, Turkey's religious make up is 99.8% Muslim (Sunni) and .2% Jews and Christians.<sup>64</sup> Yet this statistic is somewhat misleading. Although the registered majority of Turks are Muslim,

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<sup>62</sup> European Communities. *A Constitution for Europe*. (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2004), 5.

<sup>63</sup> Special Report, 34.

<sup>64</sup> "Turkey." *World Factbook*. *STAT-CIA*. 2003. STAT-CIA. 1 December 2004. [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov).

since the early 1920s Turkey began a process of separating church and state, and in doing so weakened the role of Islam in Turkish society. Much of this secularization of Turkey arose from the attempts of Mustapha Kemal to modernize his country by riding his people of their Islamic traditions.<sup>65</sup> This move towards a secular society has continued into present day where the Turkish Prime Minister, Erdogan, fights the label of Turkey as an Islamic state. In fact, Erdogan has taken many measures to insure that despite the importance of religion to the citizens of Turkey, the government and its institutions remain strictly secular.<sup>66</sup> Therefore in spite of the overwhelming majority of Muslims in Turkey, the government is pushing for a secular, liberal society, enforced through governmental policy.

### **The German View of the Role of Religion in Turkey's Accession to the EU**

To better understand why “the biggest issue of all is Islam,” it was necessary to get the viewpoint of church leaders of Germany on the role of religion in the EU. The two major religions in Germany are Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. These religions each have a central organization which monitors the affairs of its respective member churches. The central organization for the Protestant church in Germany is the *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*<sup>67</sup> (EKD) and the catholic equivalence to the EKD is the *Kommissariat der Deutschen Bischoefe* (KDB). These organizations were chosen because they represent the major religions in Germany as well as in Berlin.

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<sup>65</sup> “Turkey 1939 Archives,” Encarta Reference Library Computer File: On Compact Disc [CD-ROM] (1993-2002 Microsoft Corporation).

<sup>66</sup> Special Report, 34.

<sup>67</sup> Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)

In a discussion with Dr. h.c. Volker Faigle of the EKD,<sup>68</sup> it became clear that similar to the German political parties, the Protestant church's response to Turkey's accession to the EU was *ja, aber*. In an interview, Faigle noted that the EKD was not against EU membership for Turkey just because Turkey is an Islam state; this, to the EKD was "not important."<sup>69</sup> Faigle followed this comment with two main issues that the EKD saw in Turkey's accession to the EU. The first issue was the current role of religious minorities in Turkey. In an attempt to thwart Islamic Fundamentalism, Turkey refuses to register religious minorities and as a result Christian's living in Turkey face religious discrimination. If Turkey was to join the EU, the EKD worries that this discrimination against non-Islam religions would transfer to areas outside Turkey. Secondly, the EKD is concerned with the continued human rights violations in Turkey. These include: a lack of rights for the Kurdish population, violence against women, including arranged marriages and honor killings, and torture. Faigle believes that, "these types of human rights violations happen all over Europe where there is a Turkish population," noting that it is a, "part of their [the Turkish] culture to act this way."<sup>70</sup>

Before the EKD can offer its' support for Turkey's accession to the EU, four requirements need to be fulfilled by Turkey:

- human rights violations need to be amended
- verification that the economic and social systems of the current EU-members would not be affected by the accession of Turkey to the EU
- Turkey's official acknowledgement of the genocide towards Armenians and Kurds
- evidence that the richer EU member states will not have to financially support a weak Turkish economy

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<sup>68</sup> Dr. h.c. Volker Faigle of EKD. Arno interview. Berlin. 26 November 2004.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 26 November 2004.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 26 November 2004.

After listing the prerequisites that the EKD had for Turkey's EU membership, Faigle noted that even if Turkey fulfilled these requirements the negotiating with Turkey must remain *Ergebnisse offen*, meaning EU accession negotiations can cease at any moment during the negotiations process. And if Turkey is unable to fulfill the requirements to become a full EU member, Faigle notes that, "they have the 2<sup>nd</sup> option of a privileged partnership, one that will give Turkey time to adjust to the EU slowly."<sup>71</sup> Therefore, even when Faigle began his discussion with the claim that the EKD was not directly opposed to Turkey's membership to the EU, after mentioning this, he listed reasons why Turkey should not be a member of the EU and then proceed to point out the shortcomings of Turkey. Hence, it appears that like the German political parties, the EKD can not outwardly oppose Turkey's entrance to the EU, but has many reasons why the Turkey is not suited to become a member of the EU.

Despite the EKD's well developed critique of Turkey as an EU candidate, Faigle still believes that Turkey is ultimately compatible with the EU as a political and economic institution. Faigle agrees that the Muslim people have the necessary values to be part of a democracy. Yet, he argues, the people of Germany are still fearful of a demographic takeover by Muslims because of the decreasing birth rate of Europeans compared with the increasing growth rate of Muslims. Germany, he sates pragmatically, can not be an Islam Republic of Germany. From these comments, it appears that Faigle recognizes that Muslims can be a part of a European, Western political system, but at the same time acknowledges his fears that Muslims will influence European's politics. Of course this concern is well based. *The Economist* predicted that by 2020, Turkey would

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 26 November 2004.

have the largest population of the EU and under the “double-majority” voting system would have weight equivalence of 14%, compared to Germany’s 18%.<sup>72</sup>

When asked about the role of religion in the EU, Dr. Faigle noted in the past two decades the role of religion in Europe has changed significantly. He gave the following three reasons why. The first change has to do with the internal changes in religion in Germany; following the Cold War era, 80% of East Germans were atheist, which was a considerable change from Germany during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Secondly, Europe and Germany are becoming more secular, among both the governmental organizations and the general population. And lastly, the influx of Muslims to Europe puts a strain on the existing population to accommodate and integrate a “new world religion.”<sup>73</sup> Yet with publications such as, *Islam verstehen* and *Zusammenleben mit Muslimen in Deutschland*,<sup>74</sup> the Protestant Church hopes to foster a peaceful coexistence between the two religions.

Although Faigle evaded labeling the direct role of religion in the EU, in comparing the secularization of Europe with the increased influx of Muslim believers, one can infer that Faigle is aware of the strain that an Islam country will put on an increasingly secular institution. Juergen Gerhards of the Free University also agrees that this phenomenon will make it difficult for Turkey to be a member of the EU. He notes that, whereas the “majority of EU citizens do not place much value on religion in their

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<sup>72</sup> Special Report, 34.

<sup>73</sup> Faigle. Arno interview.

<sup>74</sup> Understanding Islam, A life together with Muslims in Germany

everyday life, in comparison Islam is important for Muslims in their every day life as well as for making political decision.”<sup>75</sup>

The Catholic *Commissariat of the German Bishops* (KDB) had a similar response as the EKD on Turkey’s membership to the EU. In a series of phone calls with Kristina Moll of the KDB, it became clear that the Catholic Church in Germany did not have an official opinion on the matter. Moll noted that the accession of Turkey to the EU is a hard question to answer and that Turkey’s entrance to the EU is not beneficial for Christians due to the lack of religious tolerance in Turkey.<sup>76</sup>

Although Moll was unable to give me the official viewpoint of the Catholic Church, she did send three articles on the KDB’s views on Turkey’s EU membership. Two articles were titled, “More Rights for Christians in Turkey; The Catholic Bishop Conference has reservations against Turkey’s EU accession,”<sup>77</sup> and “Erdogan has injured the feelings of Millions of Christians.”<sup>78</sup> In these articles, the KDB argued against the entrance of Turkey to the EU and, like the CDU, supported a privileged partnership for Turkey. The number one reason why the KDB was against Turkey’s membership to the EU was the very same reason the EKD was opposed: the discrimination against Christians and other non-Islam religions in Turkey.

In one of the articles sent by Moll, Karl Lehmann, the head of the KDB, noted that the, “fundamental human rights, particularly religious freedom, are only guaranteed on paper, but not implemented. The Christians living in Turkey have problems with

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<sup>75</sup> Marion Juestel, “Passt die Tuerkei in die EU?: Eine Studie ueber kulturelle Unterschiede der heutigen, kuenftigen und potenziellen EU-Laender.“ *Freie Universitaet*, 20 November 2004, sec. B7 p.1.

<sup>76</sup> Kristina Moll. Arno interview. Berlin. 2 December 2004.

<sup>77</sup> D.D. Fulda, “Mehr Rechte fuer Christen in Tuerkei: Katholische Bischofskonferenz hat Vorbehalte gegen EU-Beitritt.“ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. 24 September 2004, sec C2, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> Karl Lehmann, “Erdogan hat die Gefuehle von Millionen Christen verletzt.” *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 23 October 2004. sec F1, p.4.

exercising their rights as citizens, particularly that to buy land.”<sup>79</sup> Further into the article Lehmann related the following story illustrating the discrimination of Christians in Turkey:

When I visited a Christian leader in Istanbul, I was warned against standing for long periods of time in the courtyard of his office because often stones were thrown from the neighboring mosque. Also, the church leader was weary of eating in public with me, because he was afraid of mobs. Such reasons as these are why Christians leave Turkey.<sup>80</sup>

The consensus among the literature that Moll sent was that the most important issue with Turkey was religious freedom for non-Islam religions; noting that, “the religious freedom that Muslims living in Germany enjoy, should also be provided for Christians living in Turkey.”<sup>81</sup>

In listing Turkey’s difficulties with implementing religious freedom, the KDB did not mention any of the benefits of Turkey’s EU membership. In fact to the contrary, the KDB argued against the stabilizing affect that Turkey would have in the Middle East region. As a combination of failure to implement religious freedom coped with no tangible benefits in Turkey’s accession to the EU, the KDB argued that “an exit to the negotiations process must remain open and during this process the Catholic Church will continue to draw the EU’s attention to the problems that Christians face living in Turkey.”<sup>82</sup>

The battle between Christianity and Islamism has historical roots that date back to the days of the Crusades and the reign of the Ottoman Empire; yet even today in modern Germany society, it appears that the battle of religions has failed to find a resolution.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 23 October 2004.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 23 October 2004.

<sup>81</sup> *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 24 September 2004.

<sup>82</sup> *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 23 October 2004.

Although neither the Catholic nor the Protestant Church will admit that they are against the entry of Turkey to the EU because of Turkey's Muslim population, both have many reasons why Turkey can not be a member of the EU. Both argue that the lack of religious freedom in Turkey will transcend Turkey's borders and pollute the Christian communities existing in the 25 EU lands. Whereas the EKD is willing to consider Turkey's entrance to the EU when certain demands are fulfilled, the KDB would much rather accept Turkey as a privileged partner. Therefore, the German religious side, compared with the German political and economic side, has voiced the most concern with Turkey's accession to the EU and has presented the highest ratio of disadvantages compared to advantages of this proposal.

### **Turkish Immigrant View on the Role of Religion in Turkey's Accession to the EU**

In order to balance the view of the German religious side, it was necessary to seek the viewpoint of a Mosque in Berlin. For this reason, Midik of the *Tuerkische-Islamische Union der Anstalt fuer Religion e.V.*,<sup>83</sup> was contacted and asked questions about the role of religion in the EU and the compatibility of the Islamic belief system with the founding principles of the EU.

In a discussion with Midik it was enclosed that the Mosque in Berlin supports the entrance of Turkey to the EU; noting that this could not be a "bad thing." The membership of Turkey to the EU would need to be a full, equal member and a privileged partnership was no viable alternative. If Germany or any state in the EU was against Turkey's full accession to the EU, it is only due to "prejudices and ignorance of the

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<sup>83</sup> Tuelay Midik of the Turkish-Islamic Institution for Religion. Arno interview. Berlin. 18 November 2004.

Muslim population.”<sup>84</sup> Midik believes that Christianity should not play a role in the EU. If religion were to play a role in the EU, with such a variety of religions in the EU member states, Midik asks why not Hinduism or Judaism could be the founding religions of the EU constitution- why only Christianity? Furthermore, Midik argued that if religion needs to be part of the EU, why not use religion as a positive roll. Different religions, he said, must not have a separating role in society. For example, one of the positive outcomes of Turkey’s accession to the EU would be to set an example for other Islamic states, that Islam is welcomed into Western society.<sup>85</sup> When asked about the compatibility of Islam and democracy, Midik simply noted that Turkey was a prime example of where democracy and a predominantly Muslim society were already functioning.

In viewing Midik’s comments abstractly, it seems logical that Islam and Western values can cooperate with one another. Yet the EU is not operated by machines, but rather by human beings with human fears and emotionally influenced opinion, all of which transcend to the political realm of EU decision making. In saying that the “biggest issue of all is Islam,” perhaps one is aware of opinions that the everyday citizen of the EU has. Like the opinion of a German high school economics teacher that,

The main problem with Turkey as an EU candidate is that it’s Islam. On a logical level, it makes sense to accept Turkey to the EU on political and economical grounds, but on an emotional level, I am against the accession of Turkey to the EU. As an educated person, I know that it is illogical to not accept Turkey to the EU on the simple grounds of differences in religion, but as I noted, this opinion is emotionally charged.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 18 November 2004.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 18 November 2004.

<sup>86</sup> Ute Reinhart. Arno Interview. Berlin. 6, 16 November 2004.

This viewpoint of an EU citizen not connected with a political, economic or religious organization was similar to the opinion expressed by the head of a foreign language school in Berlin:

Turkey to the EU! Maybe in 150 years. This [Turkey's accession to the EU] would be like the USA accepting Pakistan into a supranational organization. Russia is a more culturally acceptable candidate than Turkey. And if Turkey, why not Morocco or Iran. You can change political and economic structure, but you can not change a culture.<sup>87</sup>

In both of these comments, made by unaffiliated German citizens, the concept of a cultural or religious requirement for the EU is readdressed.

Yet how can a population be against the entrance of Turkey only because of a difference in culture or religion? I consider myself a fairly open-minded person. I am accepting of different cultures and am always interested in learning a new way of looking at things. While conducting research for this project I wanted to contact a mosque in Berlin. My German adviser warned against this, saying that no Islam religious organization would speak with me, but being the cosmopolitan, open minded individual that I am, I contacted the Turkish-Islamic Institute for Religion in Berlin and set up an appointment. After almost four months in Berlin, one would think that a general since of how long it takes to get from *Krumme Lanke* to *Kottbuser Tor* would be developed, but alas, I came 10 minutes late to my meeting with Mr. Midik. When I arrived I was not sure where Mr. Midik's office was, so I went to the only room with a light on. I looked in the window and saw a group of about 35 men in prayer position and heard sounds coming from a loud speaker that had a mixture of the sing-songiness of French and the sharp undertones of Japanese. Before I could turn to leave, a man came up behind me and took

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<sup>87</sup> Irmgard Geyer of Die Neue Schule. Arno personal conversation. Berlin. 18 November 2004.

of his shoes. “*Kommen Sie rein*” he told me, and before I knew it I had taken off my shoes and was inside a mosque during a religious service.

All at once my worldliness and my ability to embrace different cultures fell to the floor and in its place came a strange feeling, which in retrospect was fear of the different. As I stood awkwardly by the shoe rack, trying to melt into the floor, I glanced around the room at rows of men going through their prayer rituals. I was the only woman in the room and this fact became painfully clear when the prayer rotation came towards my direction. All at once 35 Muslim men were staring directly at me, the blue eyed, blonde haired American trying to find anywhere to look but in their eyes. Before the service was over, I had left the mosque to seek comfort in the corridor outside the room. As the men filled out of the mosque, I hid awkwardly in the shadows hoping that they would not see me. Embarrassing as it, on a level I was afraid that they would study the features of my face and give this information to an Islamic Fundamentalist group that was out to harm blue eyed, blonde haired American students that observed their “secret religious services.” Yet this was just it, there was nothing “secretive” or “diabolic” about the ongoing in the mosque and the very fact that I was invited in shows that, despite my unease, there was no opposition to my presence.

When I arrived back to my house in Wannsee, my house among blue eyed, blond haired rich, Western Germans, I found on a desk a note that I had written before I went to the mosque in Kreuzberg. On it was written the date, time, and a message that said, “I went to a Mosque in Kreuzberg. I plan to be back tonight.” I never leave notes when I visit German politicians in *Potsdamer Platz*, or German economists in *Friedrichstrasse*.

If you would have asked me prior to this experience if I was afraid of Islamic Fundamentalism or if I was prejudiced towards Muslims I would have given a definite no. Yet this is precisely the point; the fear and distrust of Islam is so engrained in Western society that it has become part of our enculturation. Without directly saying that Islam is something to prevent from entering Western civilization, we have created a culture that is apprehensive towards Muslims and their religion. Perhaps the feeling that I got when 35 Muslim men were facing me, is the same feeling that citizens of Europe get when they think of the possibility of Turkey joining the EU. It is the fear of the other, of another culture, of another religion, that is behind the opposition of Turkey to the EU. In fact, Gerhard of the Free University believes that the cultural assimilation of Turkey to the EU will be the biggest obstacle in Turkey's entrance to the EU.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, in the coming years, as the political and geographical borders between Muslims and Europeans disappear, it will be necessary to open dialogue between the differing cultures. Or at least start by visiting an Islam religious service.

### **Outcome of 17 December 2004 Decision**

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of December, 2004, the European Council will decide whether to open EU negotiations with Turkey. In reading through various sources on Turkey's entrance to the EU, one of the concerns that the EU-citizens have is what will happen with Turkey if it is denied EU membership; the fear being that Turkey will regress on all of its reforms and in turn form a parallel coalition with other Islamic states in the Middle East. The majority of those interviewed, both Turkish immigrants and Germans, believe that this is not a viable option. Prof. Buchenau of the Free University in Berlin notes that the

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<sup>88</sup> *Freie Universitaet*, 20 November 2004.

likelihood of Turkey forming an alliance with other Islamic states is null. Buchenau says that in Turkey there is a strong sense of nationalism, and this combined with the fighting between Arabs and Turks would prevent any supranational organization built on Islam.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, if Turkey is not accepted into the EU, the likelihoods of Turkey forming an alliance parallel to the EU are doubtful. On the other hand, many of those interviewed argue that Turkey will not advance on its current political and economical reforms if barred from the EU.<sup>90</sup>

### **What the Turkey- EU Debate Says about the EU as a Supranational Institution**

*A day will come when you France, you Russia, you Italy, you Germany, you all nations of the continent, without losing your distinctive qualities and glorious individuality, will be merged within a superior unit.*

*-Victor Hugo, 1849<sup>91</sup>*

At the start of this research, I set out with one question to answer: What are the grounds for/against the membership of Turkey to the EU has provided by Turkish immigrants and Germans living in Berlin. In examining the political, economical and cultural viewpoints of both Turkish immigrants and Germans in Berlin, certain trends began to immerge. The majority of the German political side is willing to support Turkey's entrance to the EU, but only under the condition that certain political prerequisites are fulfilled. Whereas the German political side's response is a qualified yes, insuring that the outcome remains open, the German economic side completely supports the entrance of Turkey to the EU and sees far more advantages than

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<sup>89</sup> Buchenau. Arno interview.

<sup>90</sup> Sayan, Akgun, Arno interview.

<sup>91</sup> "European Unity: The History of an Idea." *The Economist*, 30 December 2003. [online]; available from [www.globalpolicy.org/nations/sovereign/integrate/2003/1230history.html](http://www.globalpolicy.org/nations/sovereign/integrate/2003/1230history.html); internet; accessed 2 December 2004.

disadvantages to such an occurrence. The German political and economic sides are both far more open to Turkey's accession to the EU, than the German religious organizations. Although the EKD is open to the idea of Turkey's EU membership, it has made it clear that without fulfilling certain requirements the EKD will remain in opposition to Turkey's accession to the EU. The Catholic KBD, on the other hand, is far more vocal in noting that due to the discrimination that non-Muslim citizens in Turkey experience, a privileged partnership is a better option than full EU membership. Therefore, minus the German economic side, the consensus among German organizations in Berlin on Turkey's accession to the EU is a *ja, aber* response coped with an *Ergebnisse offen*.

This viewpoint comes in sharp contrast to the full support that the Turkish organizations in Berlin gave for the accession of Turkey to the EU. Although most are aware of a few of the deficiencies of Turkey in fulfilling the Copenhagen Criteria, the consensus was that these shortcomings could easily be solved in the next few years. Also, each one of the Turkish organization was entirely against a privileged partnership for Turkey.

In the midst of analyzing these trends among the Turkish and German population living in Berlin, a further realization was made on the European Union as a supranational institution. In the debate on Turkey's entrance to the EU, the economic side is in full support, the political side is divided, and the religious side is primarily against this proposal. These viewpoints of German's living in Berlin are indicative of the overall ability of the European Union to function on different levels.

The European Union has the most success with functioning as an economic institution. As shown earlier, the European Union started as an economic institution and

from its success evolved into a political institution. Currently, the European Union is economically very successful, as shown by the strength of the Euro and an annual income of around \$11 trillion.<sup>92</sup> Also, the economic strength of the EU is demonstrated in its process of enlargement; the European Commission estimates that joining the Union will add up to one per cent extra growth each year for the first 10 years of membership.<sup>93</sup> Here the connection can be drawn between the EU-Turkey debate in Berlin and the institution of the EU; the support for Turkey's entrance to the EU is the highest among the German viewpoints and, contrarily, the EU currently has economic success coped with little difficulties in function as an economic institution.

Whereas the EU's ability to function as an economic institution is fairly successful, the EU has less success with functioning as a political institution. One of the main problems of the EU<sup>94</sup> is finding a consensus on issues of politics, especially foreign policy. Many attribute this to varying national wishes that are in conflict with the goals of the EU. *The Economist* notes that, "EU countries show a marked tendency to talk European but to act national...making attempts at a common foreign policy a big goal of the EU."<sup>95</sup> Each of the German politicians noted that in the coming years, one of the problems of the EU will be reaching a consensus on political decisions, especially as the EU grows larger. Mueller and Zimmermann, predict that in the future the EU will be divided into two groups; the first group being the *Kern* or core of Europe, will consist of the old-timers of the EU, and will reach decisions at a faster pace than the second group

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<sup>92</sup> "Turkey and the European Union: To Brussels, on a wing and a prayer." *The Economist*. 9-15 October 2004, 27-28.

<sup>93</sup> European Commission. *More unity and more diversity: The European Union's biggest enlargement*. (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2003), 7.

<sup>94</sup> Zimmermann, Mueller. Arno interview.

<sup>95</sup> *The Economist*, 13-19 November 2004, 33-34

of new EU members. Therefore, German politicians are aware of the difficulties of the EU to function as a political institution. This conclusion corresponds with the EU-Turkey debate in Berlin: that the lack of unconditional support among the German politicians for the entrance of Turkey to the EU, is part due to the problems that the EU faces as a political institution and therefore one of the biggest concerns is the ability to assimilate Turkey on a political level.

Finally, whereas the EU is able to function most effectively as an economic institutions, and less so as a political institution, the European Union will have the most problems in function as an institution that brings together different cultures. As made clear earlier, the EU does not have an official policy on cultural and religion, but regardless, these two traits play a large role in the politics of the EU, especially among the current efforts of enlargement. *The Economist* notes that one of the influences of culture in the EU arises during decision making on international crises, noting that, “ancient national rivalries within Europe lurk beneath the surface,” similar to the “frightful national quarrels” that Churchill identified in 1946<sup>96</sup> This parallels the EU-Turkey debate in Berlin; that although there is outward support for Turkey’s entrance to the EU, mainly for geopolitical reasons (i.e. to guard the door to further eastern Muslims), beneath the surface lurks the cultural opposition to Turkey’s entrance to the EU, this cultural opposition is primarily due to differences in religion. If the European Union plans to become a superpower in the next 20 years,<sup>97</sup> it will need to learn to integrate the varying cultures of Europe into a workable European identity. The EU’s

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>97</sup> Ahmet Yilmaz of BTEU. Podium Discussion on Turkey and the EU. Arno interview. Frankfurt (Oder). 26 November 2004.

dealing with Turkey will show just how much the EU is able to integrate different cultures into a unified political system; an aspect that the current hegemony is able to do with relative ease.

In the study of Turkey's potential accession to the EU, an original plan of finding the political, economical and cultural reasons for and against Turkey's membership to the EU as expressed by both Germans and Turks living in Berlin, transformed into dealing with the larger issue of European integration in the coming years. The EU has the most success with economic integration, varying success with political integration, and little success with cultural integration. These difficulties of European integration are reflected in the debate of Turkey's entrance to the EU; full economic support, varying political support and little culture support. One of the biggest issues that the EU will have to deal with is how to integrate varying cultures into a cohesive supranational identity. In doing so, the EU will be able to more efficiently function as a political institution. The ability of the EU to accept Turkey into a political institution with a predominately non-Islam population will be a large task that if fulfilled will put Europe one step closer to the superior unit of Hugo's dreams.

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