

How to Overcome the Crisis in Relations between the European Union and Turkey

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Abstract

There has been a slowdown in the accession negotiations due to the blockage of negotiations chapters by the European Council since 2006. EU bid have lost its past lure in Turkey. And, Turkey decided to freeze its relations with the Presidency of the Council of the EU during the second half of 2012 and not to attend meetings chaired by the Southern Cyprus EU Presidency. But this problem is not sole problem between Turkey and the EU, there are many problems especially relating to the Customs Union. Although, the Customs Union makes significant contributions to the Turkish economy, but it has causes many problems in the EU-Turkey relations.

Main purpose of this study was to demonstrate the problems within the scope of the EU-Turkey Customs Union and to propose solutions to these problems. Despite these negative developments, the enhanced political dialogue between the EU and Turkey has continued. In this framework, the European Union has initialized a new positive agenda in order to enhance Turkey-EU relations and promote reforms in Turkey. The aim of this process is to keep the accession process of Turkey alive and bring a new momentum into Turkey-EU relations. But, at present, serious efforts are needed to revive the negotiation process with a new impetus and overcome many problems between Turkey and the EU which are faced.

Keywords: Turkey-EU relations, accession negotiations, European Union, Customs Union

Introduction

Turkey's relations with the EU/EC started in 1959. This year is the 50th year of Turkey's signing Ankara Agreement with the Union. Since then Turkey has carried out many reforms, raised the standards of its democracy, despite the shortfalls and fulfilled the Copenhagen criteria. Indeed, Turkey's goal of the EU membership provides an incentive to undertake comprehensive reforms in Turkey. In this context, advances in the fields of democracy and human rights in Turkey are closely related to its EU accession process. Turkey's accession process has contributed to overall improvement of democratic standards of Turkey.

Turkey share same values and principles such as democracy, human rights and free market. With the strong economic potential and important geostrategic location Turkey is an indispensable country for the EU. But, it is difficult to say that there is a common vision and integrated approach about the enlargement of the European Union. Also, the European Union is not only going through a serious crisis but also is an enlargement fatigue. Currently, Turkey's EU accession negotiations have been restrained by the Cyprus issue. But this reason is apparent reason; real reason is a lack of consensus among members of the European Union. In this context, there is not a consensus about Turkey's EU membership. They are divided regarding on whether Turkey belongs to Europe. Italy, Spain, United

Kingdom and Sweden support Turkey's membership. On the other hand, Germany, Sarkozy's France and Austria oppose Turkey's EU membership. Because, with a population of seventy five million will be greater representation in the EU institutions than many big countries such as France, United Kingdom and Spain. Sarkozy and Merkel are opponent of Turkey's full membership and they propose "privileged membership" i.e. partnership but not full membership. They see the EU as a Christian club and see Turkey as all Middle Eastern. France's former president Nicolas Sarkozy has proposed that Turkey be included in the creation of a "Mediterranean Union" but not part of the EU.

At the same time, Turkey has strengthened its economy, nowadays it is a sixth largest economy in Europe. But, liberalization and rapid progress in Turkish economy are also closely related in Turkey's EU bid. Turkish accession process and the Customs Union have also contributed to the economic development of Turkey and have positively affected Turkish economy. Besides, especially, the Customs Union has also contributed the reinforcement of Turkish industry. In recent decade, Customs Union has given the competitiveness to Turkish economy in the competition with the rival countries.

But, many problems in Turkey-EU relations within the scope of Customs Union also originate due to the lack of an integrated approach in the EU. Currently, these problems affect Turkish economy negatively therefore they must be solved. Firstly, Customs Union must be based on four freedoms: Free movement of goods; freedom of movement for workers; freedom of provide services and free movement of capital. But, Turkey- EU Customs Union does not cover agriculture, services and public procurement. Turkish workers could not circulate freely in the EU. More importantly, nonexistence of the free circulation of Turkish businesspersons in Europe is a big problem. Besides, according to Customs Union Agreement, Turkey has to accept all decisions of the European Union in other words, it has no right to reject these decisions because Turkey is not a member state of the EU; therefore, it does not have a vote in the EU's decision making mechanism. For example, Turkey has to accept all acquits related to Customs Union and decisions of the Courth of Justice of the European Union that there is not any judge from Turkey.

Furthermore, Turkey has to accept the EU's Free Trade Agreements signed with third countries. The EU does not include Turkey to EU's FTA's signed with third countries. But, these countries do not want to sign FTA's with Turkey. Besides, the EU authorities conducted anti-dumping investigating to Turkish exporters. Another important problem is a transport quota which constitutes barriers to Turkish export goods. These afore mentioned problems and others which we are faced are serious and they must be solved immediately.

The Problems within the Scope of the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU

Although, the Customs Union makes significant contributions to the Turkish economy and has contributed to the reinforcement of Turkish industry which is capable of competing in global markets? Thanks to the Customs Union, open economy principle has become Turkey's economic model. Currently, the EU is Turkey's first import and export partner, on the other hand, Turkey ranks 7th in the EU's import and 5th in the export markets. Turkey's export to the EU are mostly manufactured goods, machinery and transport equipment.

Currently, there are many important problems which originated from the Turkey-EU Customs Union. Customs Union is based on Association Agreement also known as Ankara Agreement between Turkey and the EU. Ankara Agreement was signed on 12 September 1963 in Ankara and came into effect 1 December 1964. Since then Turkey has been an associate member of the European Union.

In Ankara Agreement, article 2 said that "*A Custom Union shall be progressively established*" in order to attain the objectives of the Ankara Agreement. Also, Association

shall comprise a predatory stage; a transitional stage (in these two stage the EU/EC has already eliminated tariffs on Turkish industrial products) and a final stage. *“Final stage shall be based on the customs union and shall entail closer coordination of the economic policies of the Contracting Parties”* (Ankara Agreement, 2013).

After, in November 1970, in order to initialize the second stage (transitional stage) an Additional Protocol was signed and it came into effect 1 January 1973. Its aim was establish a timetable for abolition of tariffs and quotas on Turkish industrial goods traded between Turkey and the EU/EC.

After end of the transitional stage which lasted 22 years, since on 1.1.1996, the completion of Customs Union Agreement between Turkey and the European Union, final stage which was planned in Ankara Agreement, began. It is a milestone in Turkey-EU relations and integration of the Turkish economy with EU. Turkey agreed to implement Common Customs Tariff (CCT) which applies to the import of goods across the external borders of the EU.

Import and export duties and charges having equivalent affectwholly abolishedbetween the Community and Turkey on date of entry into force of this decision. The Community and Turkey agreed to introduce no new customs duties on imports and exports or any chargeshaving effect from that date (Article 4). More over quantitative restrictions on imports and export and all measures havingequivalent effect shall be prohibited between the Community and Turkey (article 5 and 6). (Decision No 1/95 The EC-Turkey Association Council, www.avrupa.info.tr , 2013) Customs Union Agreement was planned and presented by the EU on a large scale and Turkey signed this agreement without negotiating advantage and disadvantages carefully. But, it contained many liabilities for Turkey than classic Customs Union agreement.

Turkey is a sole country in the Customs Union with the EU without being a member of the EU. For this reason, Turkey cannot attend decision mechanisms of the European Union. Besides, Customs Union Agreement gave Turkey many liabilities. In this context, Turkey shall align its commercial policy with the EU's common commercial policy and has to carry out to the EU's Common Trade Policy completely and it also has to adopt every decision of the European Union in the field of Common Trade Policy.

Member states of the EU couldn't negotiate trade agreements with third countries by itself. Therefore, the European Commission negotiates Free Trade Agreements with many third countries on behalf of the EU. *“Turkey also accepted the EU's trade regime as it was, and was not able to persuade the EU to include a clause that would force the EU to consult with Turkey before signing FTA's with third countries. The EU negotiated andsigned FTA's with third countries without any involvement of Turkey”* (Yılmaz, 2011: 242). For this reason, although Turkey has successfully implemented the EU-Turkey Customs Union more than 17 years, there are many problems related to Customs Union. Currently, most serious problem between Turkey and the European Union in the field of Customs Union is non-inclusion of Turkey to the EU's Free Trade Agreements.

The EU's negotiations with Canada, India, Malaysia, Deep and Free Trade Area as a part of Association Agreements Georgia, Armenia and Moldova, Economic Partnership Agreements with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) continue currently. On the other hand, the EU's finished but not entered into force free trade agreements are with Singapore, Columbia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guetamala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, Ukraine, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Southern African Development Community, Ghana Eastern African Community. (*“The EU's free trade agreements – where are we?”* <http://europa.eu> ,2013) Besides, it also signed many Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) already in force with Turkey's rival countries such as South Korea (2011), Peru (2013), Mexico (2000), South Africa (2000) and Chile (2003). (*“The EU's free trade agreements –*

where are we?”, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-282_en.htm, 2013) The EU does not include Turkey in these free trade agreements with third countries. Therefore, Turkey has to negotiate on its own with these third countries. Moreover, most of these countries which signed agreement with the EU, are not eager to conclude same Free Trade Agreements with Turkey. Because, these countries are Turkey’s economic competitors. So, Turkey has disadvantage to compete with these states and this situation has had a negative impact on Turkey’s trade interests. “Goods of these third countries are subjected to tariffs by one party but not by the other part of this customs union”. This situation creates unfair competition and put Turkish industry disadvantageous position (Dedeoğlu, 2010).

Furthermore, the European Union also plans to negotiate a FTA (Transatlantic Trade and Investments Partnership) with the USA which is the fourth country in Turkey’s import. “A trade pact between the USA and the European Union would encompass half the world’s economic output and a third of world trade, be most ambitious trade accord since the 1995 formation of the World Trade Organization (“France threaten to block start of EU/US free trade talks”, <http://www.reuters.com>, 2013). It is an important opportunity for both sides. But, Turkey worried about this plan. If the EU will sign this agreement with the USA which does not be included Turkey, Turkey will become disadvantage completely. In this situation, unfair competition created by these FTA’s will affect adversely Turkey’s foreign trade gap (Onaner, 2013: 25). In this context, Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, touched upon this free trade deal which negotiate between the EU and the USA and its negative effects to the Turkish economy. He said “For Turkey, since you are part of the Customs Union with the EU. This trade deal (EU-USA FTA) will have important consequences too. That’s why the European Union is looking into the best way to keep Turkey involved in the process” (Speech by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy, <http://www.abhaber.com>, 24 May, 2013).

Another important problem within the scope of the Customs Union is the free movement of Turkish workers in the EU. The European Union has not fulfill its obligations stemming from Ankara Agreement and Additional Protocol toward Turkey. In addition to the free movement of goods, the Ankara Agreement also includes progressively securing the free movement of workers “*Contracting Parties agreed to be guided by Articles 48, 49 and 50 the Treaty establishing the Community for the purpose of abolishing restrictions on freedom of establishment between them*” (article 12), the abolition of restrictions on freedom of establishment between them (article 13) and the abolition of restrictions on freedom to provide services between them (article 14) (Ankara Agreement, 2013).

The Additional Protocol, signed in 1970 and entered into force on 1 January 1973, Article 36, titled “Workers” provided “Freedom of movement for workers between Member States of the Community and Turkey shall be secured by progressive stages in accordance with the principles set out in Article 12 of the Agreement Association between the end of the twelfth (1976) and the twenty second (1986) year after the entry in to force of that agreement” (Additional Protocol, 1977).

According to the Additional Protocol, Association Council would decide the rules of free movement of Turkish workers in the EU/EC. (Article 36) In this context, Association Council agreed on three decisions on more detailed rules on the status of the Turkish workers in the EU/EC: In the Association Council decisions no 2/76, no 1/80 and no 3/80 (Karluk, 2007: 490).

The Association Council Decision No 1/80, Article 8 provides if a job offered by the Community, was not be able to provide for by citizens of the member states, the Community would make an effort recognize the Turkish workers’ rights of second priority (1/80 Ortaklık Konseyi, Kararı, 1980). But, this decision has not fulfilled by the EU and Turkish workers has not been granted the right of second priority which apply for a

job if the EU citizens do not apply. Finally free movement of Turkish workers has not been materialized in 1986.

Within the context of freedom to provide services of Turkish citizens, principle of standstill is very important. The article 41 of the Additional Protocol “provided for a standstill clause: The contracting parties shall refrain from introducing between themselves any new restriction on the freedom of establishment and the freedom to provide services” (Groenendijk and Guild, 2012: 11). So far, all EU member states have not implemented this principle fully in spite of a decision of the European Union Court of Justice.

One of the main problems is visa for Turkish citizens within the scope of Customs Union. But, recently, Turkey has become transit gate for illegal human migration. Especially, Turkish-Greek border (Meriç River) is the main gateway to the EU for illegal migrants. Turkey is a transit country for migrants from Asia and ports of Africa such as Afgans, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Algerians and Moroccans. In 2010, according to Frontex, approximately 80 percent detected illegal crossings in to the EU, took place by the Turkish-Greek border (Stiglmayer, 2012: 101). This situation causes concerns to EU members and they do not accept the lifting of visa restrictions. But, “this visa restrictions and requirements have been an important problem for Turkish citizens since 1980 and create unfair competition”. Especially, because of the long visa procedures, most adversely affected group is Turkish businessmen. Turkish goods can freely circulate in the Custom Union, but their producers or owners cannot goto EU freely. For this reason, they have lost many business contacts. Visa restrictions “constitutes not only a technical barrier but also a psychological obstacle for foreign trade” (“Visa exemption ‘accelerated’ Turkish exports” www.hurriyetdailynews.com, 2013) Moreover, current visa requirements violate Turkey-EU Customs Union Agreement and the principle of free movement of goods as it is declared in the Association Council Decision 1/95 as well as the Article 41 of Additional Protocol (Yazıcı, 2012: 37). There should be progress in talks oneasing visa restrictions for Turkish citizens travelling to the EU.

The EU has been using visa liberalization as a tool for influencing reforms in the neighboring countries instead of enlargement (Özler, 2012: 122-123). After granting visa-freedom to the Western Balkan Countries – Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania the EU wants to give visa-free travel for Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus (Özler, 2012: 127). But, “same political support does not exist in the case of Turkey. Turkey remains the only state without an official EU roadmap towards visa-free travel among all the candidate and potential candidate countries”. According to Özler, “Visa liberalization for Turkey has been presented by European officials as a threat to the EU’s internal security since it would increase the crime rate in the EU countries” (Özler, 2012: 122-123).

On the other hand, ‘Imposition of visa requirements for Turkish nationals violates the Additional Protocol. “As from entry into force of that protocol of a requirement that Turkish nationals must have visa to enter the territory of a member state in order to provide services there on behalf of an undertaking established in Turkey, since, on that date, such a visa was not required. In this context, Germany’s visa practice was deemed unlawful given that, starting from July 1980, Germany introduced a visa requirement for all Turkish national seeking entry in to Germany” (Özler, 2012: 123-124).

The European Union Court of Justice has played an important role in interpreting rules based on the Association Agreement. Soysal Case of the European Court of Justice (2009) has been a milestone in the field of visa liberalization of Turkish citizens. TwoTurkish lorry drivers Mr Soysal and Mr Savatlı who were refused visas in order to drive to

Germany. They appealed against the refusal to the administrative court in Berlin on the basis of that under the agreement it was unlawful for Germany to require them to obtain visas to travel to Germany at all (Groenendijk and Guild, 2012: 11).

In this Case, German authorities claimed that “visa requirement for Turkish service providers was a requirement of EU law as Turkey is on the black list of the EU’s Visa regulation 539/2001”. European Union Court of Justice confirmed its constant jurisprudence that international agreements of the EU take priority over secondary Community legislation. According to the European Union Court of Justice, visa requirements for Turkish service providers restrict economic freedoms and Additional Protocol must be applied and the Visa Regulation dis applied as regards Turkish service providers. Finally, “Soysal judgment gives a personal right to any Turkish national who wishes to come to the EU to provide services to enjoy access to the territory of any member states on the basis of same conditions which applied either in 1973 or on the date when the relevant member state joined the EU” (Groenendijk and Guild, 2012: 18).

For this reason, German authorities changed the mandatory visa requirement to reflect the position as it was in 1973. Some of the groups of Turkish nationals such as lorry drivers, worker servicing installations, important artists, researchers and sportsman who were not subject to the visa requirement then were removed from the visa list. (Groenendijk and Guild, 2012: 33-36). In addition to, the European Commission announced it would lift visa requirement for Turkish citizens who provide service to Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark asking that the booklet handed out to border officials in those countries be changed accordingly. The new change allows for Turkish citizens providing service to stay for two months in Germany and three months in Netherlands and Denmark without holding a visa. According to this Commission statement the visa exemption for Turkish citizens applies only to Germany, Netherlands and Denmark among the 26 Schengen countries (“EU lifts visa for Turkish...”www.hurriyetdailynews.com, 2013).

European Union officials are reluctant to sign agreement and stipulate to sign the readmission agreement in order to sign visa exemption agreement with Turkey. In this context, Filori said that “as soon as Turkey signs the readmission agreement, the visa liberalization dialogue would be started by the European Commission but did not give any date for visa free travel”. In June, 2012 Council authorized the European Commission, to begin talks with Turkey on visa liberalization. The Commission presented a roadmap to Turkey for a visa free regime at the end of November 2012. “The roadmap outlines specific areas where Turkey should implement a series of reforms, laws and directives such as security, migration management, public order and fundamental rights. Moreover, the progress on the roadmap will be monitored by the Commission” (“EU won’t ask Turkey to...”, www.todayszaman.com, 2013).

Turkish authorities said that it will not ratify the readmission agreement that it sees practical visa facilitation measures for Turkish citizens. Because, Turkey is worried that the agreement will impose a heavy burden on Turkey when it has to take back a large number of irregular immigrants from third countries that use Turkey as a transit point to enter the EU (“EU won’t ask Turkey to...”, www.todayszaman.com, 2013). In the latest development in this regard, President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy was in Ankara in 23 May 2013 and held meetings with Turkish officials. Rompuy said on visa at the meeting *“I trust that an early signature by Turkey of a so called readmission agreement with the European Union would allow us to advance quickly through the*

roadmap, progress can be swift. Visa free travel would give our relationship a new impetus."(Speech by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy, <http://www.abhaber.com> , 2013) As a conclusion, visa liberalization process would improve EU-Turkey relations, adding new momentum to the accession negotiations and increase the EU's soft power in the international arena.

Another important problem is that Turkey-EU Customs Union does not cover agricultural products. Customs Union covers only industrial goods and processed agricultural products. Therefore, Turkish farmers cannot export their agricultural products to the EU. So, Customs Union must include agricultural products.

On the other hand, Turkish exporters were affected adversely from the EU's anti-dumping investigations and to Turkish products. Besides, transport quotas to Turkish transport sector that have been imposed by the EU must be removed. Finally, the Customs Union envisioned that Turkey received assistance from the EU, but the EU did not allocate support as much as Turkey expects (Yazıcı, 2012: 32-35).

All in all, Bureaucratic and administrative obstacles continue and Turkish firms have not had equal opportunities as EU firms. The EU's goods and services come to Turkey more easily than Turkish goods and services go to Europe. In this framework, Turkish economy minister Zafer Çağlayan said that "If the current situation continues, we may have to put the Customs Union with the EU on the table for reassessment as it is now working against Turkey" (Minister says Turkey to "reconsider" EU Customs Union, <http://www.todayszaman.com> , 25 March 2013)

Cyprus Issue

Another important problem in the Turkey-EU relations is a Cyprus Problem. This issue affects negatively not only Turkey's whole accession negotiations, but also affect the Customs Union with the EU. But, according to Dedeoğlu, Cyprus problem is an apparent reason within the context of Customs Union issue. Customs Union issue must not only be understood as a side effect of the Cyprus problem. This problem is bigger than this (Dedeoğlu, 13 March 2010)

Wrong policies implemented by the European Union have because Cyprus Issue becomes more complex. On the referendum of Annan Plan, aims to reunite the divided island in April 2004, Turkish Cypriots said "yes" but Greek Cypriots said "no" with large majority. The European Union accepted a part of a divided island as a sole representative of the island, member state to the EU. On the other hand, isolation on Turkish Cypriots who want to a solution to the Cyprus Issue and said "yes" to the Annan referendum.

Since 3 October 2005, Turkey and the EU has begun the accession negotiations for Turkey's EU membership, so far, the EU could opened with Turkey only 13 of the 35 chapters and has only completed one chapter. Main reason of slow pace of accession negotiations is suspension of many chapters at the Turkey's accession negotiations due to the Cyprus issue.

After Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus's become EU member, the European Union demand to extend Additional Protocol of the Ankara Agreement and Customs Union to 10 new members which joined the EU in 1 May 2004. But Turkey refused to open its ports and air space to Greek Cypriots's vessels and airplanes. At this point, "the EU sent mixed signals, extending its one hand the carrot of accession talks and waving a stick in the other hand warning that negotiations could be suspended at any time" (Patton, 2007: 344).

In 2006, the EU Council froze the Turkey's accession negotiations in eight chapters. These chapters are free movements of goods (1), right of establishment and freedom to provide

service (3), agricultural and rural development (11), fisheries (13), transport policy (14), Customs Union (29) and external relations (30).

In 2007, France has declared that it will not allow the opening of 5 chapters as they are directly related with full membership. These chapters are Agriculture and rural development (11) (this chapter already blocked in 2006), economic and monetary policy (17), regional policy and coordination of structural instruments (22), financial and budgetary provisions (33), and instructions (34).

And in December 2009, Greek Administration Southern Cyprus blocked six chapters of Turkish accession negotiations. These chapters are freedom of movement of workers (2), energy (15), judiciary and fundamental right (23), justice, freedom and security (24), education and culture (26), foreign security and defense policy (31) (Turkey-EU relations, mfa.gov.tr, 2013).

As can be seen above many chapters are related Customs Union in addition to the Customs Union chapter (29). Therefore, in order to solving the problems in the field of Customs Union and related subjects such as free movements of goods, freedom of movement of workers and right of establishment and freedom provide service, accession negotiations must be alive as soon as possible.

Especially, in order to solve the problems within the scope of Customs Union, accession negotiations should be started. Therefore, opening new chapters in Turkey's accession process will be a strong and a clear signal demonstrating that the process is moving forward.

Last year, Southern Cyprus took up EU presidency, during the Greek Cypriots' presidency, Turkey refused to have anything to do with a country it does not recognize. Turkey froze diplomatic relations with the Greek Cypriot's presidency but not EU's other institutions such as Commission and High Commissioner for Foreign Policy. One of the main reasons for the introduction of the "positive agenda" was to overcome this issue.

Turkish Foreign Minister said that if any EU country will break the embargo on Turkish Cypriots, as promised before the 2004 referendum, then Turkey will open its ports and airspace to Greek Cypriot vessels which is the apparent reason behind blocking EU accession negotiations (Yetkin, 2013). In this context, Turkey demands the EU to lift the isolation of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) as it promised to in April 2004 before Ankara will open its ports to Greek Cypriot vessels and its air space to Greek airplanes. In this framework, there is a positive signal that Anastasiades won the election in the Southern Cyprus who backed a 2004 UN plan to reunite the island. Turkey welcomed the election of Nicos Anastasiades but his first priority their ongoing economic crisis. Therefore, he had not met with the Turkish counterpart Derviş Eroğlu (Paul, 2013).

Despite being frozen Turkey-EU relations, today Turkey continues to see EU membership as a strategic goal. Turkey's goal of the EU membership provides a win-win situation for the two sides. Because, Turkey and the European Union needs each other. As expressed by Egemen Bağış "A European Union without Turkey is poor, plain and simple one...the sun of Europe rises from İstanbul every morning" ("Europe's sun rises from İstanbul", hurriyetdailynews.com).

The Importance of the Negotiation Process to Revive

Accession negotiations are the main subject in the Turkey-EU relations. Turkey's recent progress in the direction of democratic consolidation must also be counted as a important achievement of the EU's policy of enlargement (Zucconi, 2006:94). Because "the EU enlargement process continues to offer an instrument by which non-democratic and other negative tendencies can be checked. It also continues to act as an "anchor" and a "disciplining factor" so that instable Turkey would affect EU's European

Neighborhood Policy". Eventually, there is not any progress in the Turkey-EU relations will reduce EU's influence Turkey and would undermine the EU's international credibility in the eyes of other countries aspiring to membership (Alessandri, 2010: 97). Turkey's ambassador to the EU said that "in the absence of any clear perspective of accession, there is no reason why Turkey should align its legislation toward narrow EU standards. To put it simply the EU has lost its leverage on Turkey" ("EU has lost its leverage on Turkey", <http://euobserver.com>, 2013).

The quest for EU membership acted as a disciplining factor on Turkey. The "EU anchor" also fostered democratization and supported Turkey's reforms undertaken in the 1990s to gain candidate country status (Alessandri, 2010: 88). One reason of the European Union's win the Nobel Peace Prize is the EU's contributions to the human rights and democracy standards in Turkey. In this context, in 2006, Turkey-EU negotiation process stalled thereafter pace of reforms achieving the EU standards slowed down considerably. The reform process has never fully regained momentum since then support for EU membership has declined among the public (Alessandri, 2010: 91).

But, Turkey's accession process remain deadlocked for last five term Council Presidency consequently. Since, June 2010, no chapter has been opened. In this context, in Turkey's Accession Process 17 chapters are blocked. However, it becomes very positive developments recently. The European Parliament's General Assembly adopted a 2012 progress report on Turkey providing a potential catalyst for the opening of new chapters for Turkey after years of deadlock between Turkey and the EU. Member of the European Parliament called on the European Council to open negotiations on the judiciary, fundamental rights and home affairs (justice, freedom and security) to accelerate the reform process ("New EU Chapters to give pace to Turkish reforms", hurriyetdailynews.com). On the other hand, Finland's foreign minister said that Finland regrets the political blockade that has been applied to Turkey for Ankara's EU accession process. He also said they thought Turkey's negotiations should proceed normally and "there will be some chapters opened" ("Finland regrets block on Turkish bid", hurriyetdailynews.com).

In France, Sarkozy, staunch opponent of Turkey's EU membership lost the election and François Hollande who have more favorable view of Turkey's EU membership. After Hollande become president, France's foreign policy towards Turkey will change likely. France's new government give signals it could reconsider its position with regard to the negotiation chapters that had blocked in 2007. After Sarkozy, France's new president François Holland decided to let one of five chapters that it had blocked under Sarkozy term. The recent decision by France to lift its blockage on 22. chapter, "Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments" is a promising first step. France's blockage on the remaining four chapters should be also come to end in the near future. According to Flautre, lifting the block on chapter 22 is just the first stage showing France's positivity towards Turkish membership and signals that French government may lift their block of other chapters. She emphasized opening of chapter 23 "Judiciary and fundamental rights" and chapter 24 "Justice, freedom and security" are also very important for Turkish democracy (Donat, 2013).

On the other hand, Turkey is seen as a model country by the Muslim nations. Turkey's long lasting ties with the EU and the USA, secular state structure, especially, Turkey's experience with secularism and bid of EU membership are very important (Kahraman, 2010: 704). So Turkey is the unique country which compatible of Islam and democracy. Therefore, peoples of the Arab countries aspires to the lifestyle in Turkey. At the same time, Arab countries also take as an example Turkey's liberal economy. Turkish economy has grown and become more open continuously since 1980's. Its liberal economy is a

good model for development for Arab countries. Therefore, with European Neighborhood Policy, the European Union, who want to create democratic and economically strong countries in its vicinity, needs Turkey as an unique partner with its positive image in the Middle East (Kahraman, 2010: 708). For this reason, starting accession negotiations again will make a positive impact not only Turkey-EU relations but also relations between Turkey and Muslim countries.

Positive Agenda

In order to overcome this impasse at the accession negotiations, the EU tries to finding a new way to regain momentum to the Turkey-EU relations: "positive agenda". It started of the talks on 17 May 2012. Main aim of the "positive agenda" process is to keep the accession process alive and make progress in the field of Turkey's accession negotiations which seventeen chapters have been blocked by the European Council because of the Cyprus dispute.

Positive agenda process is new way of work to support Turkey's accession process to the EU, but it is not alternative to the accession process. "It covers a broad range of areas such as intensified dialogue and cooperation on political reforms, visa, mobility and migration, energy, fight against terrorism, further participation of Turkey in EU programmes as well as Customs Union and trade in the negotiations and free trade agreements" (Enlargement Strategy 2011-2012, 2011: 19).

Conclusion

There are many problems in the relations between Turkey and the EU and future of relations between the EU and Turkey looks very unclear. At first, there is no consensus about Turkey's membership to the EU and accession negotiations are stalled. Therefore, there are a lot of problems such as the EU's FTA's with third countries and visa exemption of Turkish citizens within the scope of Customs Union. These problems should be solved and all trade obstacles should be removed. For this reason, accession negotiations should be initiated as soon as possible. Chapter of the Customs Union is one of the most successful subjects in the accession negotiations. Because, Turkey has 17 years of experience in this field. Progress achieved in the accession negotiations in the framework of the Customs Union chapter, will contribute to Turkey-EU relations and affects all accession negotiations positively.

If the EU wants to be global actor and economically competitive power in the changing world, in the near future, after three years without any significant progress in the Turkey's accession negotiations should pay attention and resume Turkey's accession negotiations and improving ties with Turkey in the coming period. In this context, Turkey's membership of the EU should be accepted. Not to accept Turkey's membership to the EU is contrast to the principles founded on the Union. Turkey hopes for the opening of one chapter in the accession negotiations and open a new page in Turkey-EU relations during the Irish rotating presidency of the European Union. Therefore accession negotiations must go on. Because, Turkey's EU membership will add dynamism to the European Union.

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