

E.U. / Turkey : Europe at Crossroad

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It was expected that the new Millennium brings Europe a new exhilaration and several improvements. The required studies were initiated for the institutional reforms brought by Nice Agreement. In order to close the democratic deficit, The Charter of Fundamental Rights getting together the basic rights and liberties of individuals living in the EU geography as a catalogue, was accepted even though it was not binding. Afterwards efforts to build up the draft constitution, aiming to simplify the complicated judicial structure of the EU began. This draft on which there became serious discussions was finally recognized by head of the governments and states in 2004. Right after this phase, the EU has been entered to fear and anxiety tunnel.

Actually those fears and anxieties were not undue. On one hand pro-Atlantic group, who were sided by America in the Iraq War; on the other hand central Europe against the operation came across. EU member states of the Eastern Bloc that sided with America in this process irritated Europe. If recalled, J. Chirac did not hesitate to warn Poland impolitely. Following the disappointment experienced in Balkan States in common foreign and security policy after 1992, the split about the Iraq War began to boost the public distrust towards the EU.

Again, in this process, the most important enlargement wave was also staged in the EU history. The old 15 affixed 10 more states to its body. The public support decreased due to the inflation after the Euro. The enlargement, right after the implementation of Euro, triggered a reaction against the newcomer member states. The 'Polish Plumber' became the scapegoat of EU media.

The uncontrollable immigration to the EU states initially from former Eastern Bloc states, followed by Middle East and primarily Iraq; from entire Africa mainly from northern part countries began to besiege EU inhabitants. As the access is narrowed via legal ways, usage of illegal attempts amplified. The colander-like EU borders led illegal flow of about 1 million people per year. The EU inhabitants, who are not willing to share the wealth and prosperity with others, are directed to extreme edges as a result of the mentioned vogue. This social transformation found reflections in the political arena with the formation and escalation of racist and xenophobic political parties.

The Serbian cruelty commenced in 1992 and encircled the entire Balkans left hundred thousand fatal behind and resulted by millions of refugees streaming to EU states. The EU member states that could not/did not stop the Serbs in Balkans were obliged to bear the consequences. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia investigating the genocide case is ironically appended an odd term to the law literature with "the genocide crime that Serbia is not responsible" statement to conceal the substance from notice. This double standard brought question marks about the plausibility of EU's claims to place protection of basic rights and liberties in the center of legitimacy.

In addition to the reasons mentioned above; the EU public, who was disturbed by the external dissidences like on the Iraq war; and who was not consulted while making modifications deeply affecting daily life like the implication of Euro besides; did not hesitate to blackball the EU Draft Constitution.

With the rejection of the Constitution in France and Netherlands, the institutional structuring to shape the future of the European Union suspended significantly. The rapidly changing global agenda manifested that the EU decision makers have to act more quick. However in the implementation just the reverse happened and due to its bulky bureaucratic structure EU became unable to move in the required pace.

The judicial infrastructure, to correct this flawed structuring is waiting for the results of investigations held by Portuguese Presidency. The Reform Agreement is brought to the final form by the unofficial

October Summit of Head of Governments and States in Lisbon. The Agreement is expected to be signed in the Summit in December. With its acknowledgement, the Agreement will form the judicial and institutional infrastructure to shape the future of the EU. Especially the regulations about EU Presidency on institutional basis about the common foreign and security policy will facilitate to shape the political Europe. At the same time, the Agreement will try to bring a new quality to the search for solutions to the internal security issues of the EU.

Even though the Reform Agreement would bring a certain degree of repose, some other problems await the enlarging and growing EU in the forthcoming years.

First of all, the existing EU structure of 27 countries and 500 million population, is causing serious administration problems. The EU administration shared among the Council and Commission is getting more distanced from public and getting more ineffective. The revisions to eliminate those problems are interrupted due to internal balances and interests of the member states are being sacrificed. Brussels, which lacks an efficient administration, is not able to make an impact in external world with a unified voice. Due to the rise in the number of member states, national interests are gaining importance again. The EU is still running towards nationalism. EU project created to eradicate the problems arose from nationalism is ironically is a race towards the bottom. Each member state is in the pursuit of protecting own interests. This process can be accepted. However, did not the nucleus of the EU appear in 1950s to stamp out those problems?

Secondly, so as to complete the integration with former communist countries, after Central and Eastern Europe, the EU is now trying to add the rest of Balkan countries to its body. Romania and Bulgaria became full members in last New Years Eve and the EU is still carrying on talks with Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Karabag and Bosnia-Herzegovina by trying to exterminate the instability and apprehensions via giving them a vision. It will not be possible for the EU with Balkan integration, to make common decisions, especially in political subjects. Various groups would likely appear within the EU, as it has been in Iraq War.

Thirdly, the changes in leaderships within the powerful states of the EU will affect the future of the EU. Do these changes mean more problems or opportunities? We will see the result in forthcoming months and years. Following Merkel in Germany, Sarkozy in France followed by Gordon Brown replacing Blair in the UK, it is likely to have new problems in the EU.

The relations among the mentioned three leaders may bring opportunities to the EU about common foreign policy, if those relations can be altered to a possible cooperation. The first foreign visit of Gordon Brown was to Germany in July. This may bring new impressions about the UK's EU approach. The visit being to Germany but not to the US or especially to France can be the signs of a new term. However it is important to bear in mind that, there has been a serious rapprochement among Sarkozy and Merkel. But in recent times it is observable that they have not recently been in a consensus over basic policy matters. Hyper Sarkozy taking risks in order to make an impact in the EU may cause troubles among them. Contrary to Sarkozy, who is in pursuit of bringing crucial limitations to the independence of the European Central Bank; Merkel is totally against discussions about the independence of the European Central Bank. Sarkozy is being criticized for taking decisions independent from his technocrats and Germany is disturbed by those expressions.

On the other hand, Sarkozy's attempts to cooperate with Libya about nuclear plants and weapons are worrying Merkel in terms of the CFSP. It is not possible to accept for many of the EU countries that France cooperates with a non-EU country like Libya, for own national interests.

The other difference is the approach towards the Euro. Euro is in existence in world markets as a strong means thus accordingly making negative effects to French economy, however German economy is not affected negatively as it is having its best growth stage since year 2000. The structural differences among French and German economies points out the different parameters of the two countries and their leaders. All three leaders are aware of the fact that it is not enough to consolidate their leaderships by being

successful as the leader of their own country. That's why they have a certain level of aims to capture the EU leadership; shaping and being more effective in the future of the EU. It is possible to evaluate the Mediterranean Union argument of Sarkozy in this context; taking the initiative to set the agenda within the EU. Actually, Sarkozy is having a successful path in this matter.

It is remembered that Chirac formulated the enlargement process by excluding Croatia for the referendum in order to gain points during the election period in France. Even though this decision is in the interest of Turkey, it is seen that there are also other countries to be affected by it.

Lastly, thanks to Sarkozy's talks with President Bush, the stress among the two countries due to Iraq War has been eliminated. It is questioned if the new ally of the US is France in stead of the UK within the EU. It is certain that the historical ties among the UK and the US are so strong to be loosen is a short term. That's why, even though hyper Sarkozy makes efforts, he will not be successful in replacing the UK with France. Still the close ties between France and the USA will affect the balances in the EU.

The Future Vision of the EU

In the light of the aforementioned factors, it is possible to assert that the EU cannot still declare its 21st century targets clearly. The future vision of the EU is unclear or even not existing. Thus, it is impossible for the EU to become a global power. Economic Europe is still resisting to the political Europe and this resistance will persist for a long time. The EU that cannot transform into the political EU will probably lose its accuracy and loose its dynamism. Finally, as the political EU it is also going to be the termination of the expectations on a possible Federal Europe. The best option is not to expect from "A la Carte Europe", with 27 or even 30 members and a strong judicial infrastructure, any other integration models. One of the best tools to be used in this area is an enhanced cooperation. Will this model, which appeared as a solution and lead appearance of various groups within the EU, bring splitting at the same time? Except the central member states, in this integration model, will there be second class third class integration ways? How will be the approach of EU public to this matter? Will there be differences in rights originating from the EU law, between a citizen of a third class EU member state and a citizen of a central EU member state? If yes, then the principle of integrity of the Community law won't be damaged? For instance, why shouldn't a citizen of the UK who doesn't accept to integrate with the Charter of Fundamental Rights enjoy the liberties as a German or an Italian citizen? As those privileges and differences increase, how will be consolidation of the public trust about the entire EU?

I guess the answers of all those questions will be given by the wise men recommended by hyper Sarkozy. Otherwise there is no need to come together a number of wise men to block the future of the EU from Turkish perspective.

Even though Barosso claims that A la Carte Europe understanding may damage the 'unity' spirit, now it seems that the EU has no other choice.

Is the EU Ready for the Turkish Membership?

I believe that it is better to evaluate Turkey while EU's future is being shaped, under a separate title. Because the aforementioned political Europe or Federal Europe dreamers' greatest concern is about realization of the membership of Turkey which would cause to destruct their dreams. Now we better ask this question: Is it possible to call the EU as political Europe now? How far can the political dimension of the Europe; that cannot bear even the smallest attributes to the federalism in the draft constitution, bring it to a federal Europe? Isn't Europe going towards an a la Carte Europe with a stiffen cooperation frame? Or in other words, is Turkey's membership an opportunity or a threat for the realization of Political Europe ideal? The answer is clear for Sarkozy and radicals in similar ideology. A Europe with Turkey means the end of the EU. Then it is better to ask them; how will be the EU without Turkey? As it can also be seen in the report declared on November 6, neither Europe not Turkey is willing to stop the continuing recession. Even though the EU tried to implement a careful style, it is seen that it is not possible to carry out healthy negotiations with Cyprus question. We do not expect the problem to be solved with an EU member Southern Cyprus. The only thing to be done is the EU persuading its members for solving the

problem under the UN frame. Other than this, the main element in the rest of the relations is Turkey accelerating the reforms. But for this, a vision has to be placed before Turkey. Without a vision it doesn't look easy to dispense the recession atmosphere in Turkey. The EU must make some efforts to bring Turkey, doing reforms since 2002, taking new steps. The latest statements about terror are perceived as positive steps. If this clear attitude of the EU is taken serious by the member states and if they stop helping the PKK, like stopping the broadcasts of PKK supporting terror, or if the PKK top leaders living in the EU states are detained and sent back to Turkey, those steps can be taken more accurate by Turkey and lead to new reforms.

In this stage the EU-Turkish relations are on three parameters:

The future structure of the EU and Turkey's place in it
a fair solution to be found under the UN and
a sincere cooperation among Turkey and member states about terror.

The first of those issues is a matter on which political leaders of the EU seek solutions. Possible steps to be taken will be discussed by EU leaders, intellectuals, media, NGOs and universities. About the Cyprus issue, there hasn't been the reflection of the solution within Annan Plan frame not accepted by Turkey. And on the terror issue, the positive statements recently made by the EU institutions and representatives is expected to find any reflection on the side of member states.

If there are any improvements on the aforementioned issues, it will not then be hard to speed up the reform process and to revitalize a European enthusiasm once again.

Sources

[Source](#) : « The Journal of Turkish Weekly », 10 novembre 2007