



Contemporary Perspectives on Turkey's EU Accession Process: A Reluctant European?

A Reluctant European?

Edited by Catherine MacMillan

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Reviewed by Egemen BAGIS
Former EU Minister and Chief Negotiator of Turkey
Chairman of Western Studies, Istanbul Aydın University



urkey's EU accession process is discussed from different angles in *Contemporary Perspectives on Turkey's EU Accession Process: A Reluctant European?* edited by Catherine MacMillan (Associate

Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at Yeditepe University).

The book not only deals with the theoretical discussion of Europeanisation with top-down and bottom-up dynamics but also covers the concept of de-Europeanisation. The subtitle of the book "A reluctant European?" is quite debatable taking into consideration the resistance of some member states against Turkish accession. In any case, "What happened to Turkey's motivation towards EU accession?" is a million dollar question containing various aspects and perspectives.

Comprising of nine chapters, many of which originated as presentations at various academic conferences, the book endeavors to present the current state of Turkey's relations with the EU, through the broad lens of Europeanisation and de-Europeanisation.

Essays written by Turkish and European scholars focus on discursive and policy (de)Europeanisation within Turkey. The pieces examine official EU statements and European right-wing Eurosceptic discourse on Turkish accession, as well as approaching the Turkish accession process through comparative perspectives with Western Balkan countries and post-war Germany.

In Chapter One, Alper Yurttaş and Selma Şekercioğlu analyze the European Commission's Country Reports (former Progress Reports) with a special focus on civil society. They underline that thanks to the EU accession process, civil society flourished across the country. However, the lack of attention paid to the NGOs became an issue of criticism over the years.

In Chapter Two, Elçin Karana and Sevilay Kahraman dwell on a more specific subject; rising far-right in the Netherlands and its impact on the Turkish accession process. It is important to realize that accession process is not only a political and technical issue

but also an issue between societies. In this sense, Netherlands emerge as an important case as it had strained relations with Turkey in the last years.

Jörg Baudner from University of Osnabrueck in Chapter Three focuses on the dynamics of party competition in the domestic debate regarding European integration. He compares the post-war debate in Germany with that of the early 2000s of Turkey underlining that AK Party and the early Christian Democrats show a resemblance for the adherence of European integration. Meanwhile, dominant left-wing opposition parties- CHP in Turkey, SPD in post-war Germany- took a similar stance against EU.

The comparative study of Western Balkan countries and Turkey in Chapter Four by Ivana Bozic Miljkovic claims that the two are different in economic and historical levels, while sharing the same level of unwillingness considering their EU accession voyage.

The last chapter of the Part One is on Europeanisation of Minority Rights, specifically the case of Roma Education Policy in the Czech Republic and Turkey. This chapter elaborates on minority policies and draws attention to the Roma people. It is noteworthy to underline that the Turkish minority regime defines only non-Muslims (Greek, Armenian, and Jews) as minorities. Therefore, according to the Lausanne Peace Treaty, the Roma population of Turkey are not regarded as minority and enjoy all the rights of the majority. As equality for all citizens is enshrined in the Constitution, every citizen enjoy the rights regardless of his/her religious, ethnic and sectarian background in modern Turkey.

The second section of the book, comprised of final four chapters, examines the (de)Europeanisation and Euroscepticism in Turkey. In Chapter Six, Damla Aslı Altan discusses the Bologna Process and its impact on Turkish higher education system by taking into account changing dynamics and new challenges. In Chapter Seven, Nilüfer Nahya elaborates on Euroscepticism especially focusing on Turkish students' perspectives. She concludes that Turkish students perceive European countries as colonial powers. In Chapter Eight, Catherine MacMillan

explores Turkish national identity and the EU under the AK Party by using policy discourse analysis based on Foucault's conception of discourse. Similar to the Nahya's discussion in Chapter Seven, the last chapter by Alaaddin Paksoy analyzes Euroscepticism in the Turkish Media. Paksoy picks five leading newspapers with different political inclinations and concludes that Eurosceptic stance is strong generally all over Turkish press.

In short, by elaborating on critical topics and cases with regard to Turkish accession to the EU, the book contributes to the literature on Turkey-EU relations. Yet, it shall be underlined that if a reluctance in the Turkish side has emerged, the EU and Member States have had their share in this.

As I have reiterated many times in my earlier articles, Turkey's EU journey could easily be included in the Guinness book of records since no other country has waited this long in order to join any international organization. European Union's approach to Turkey has been perceived as insulting to our citizens at times especially during the last several years.

I have always argued that Turkey should perceive EU as a dietician. We all know that we should watch what we eat and we should exercise regularly in order to lead a healthy life. However, following a tested and proven prescription of a reliable dietician who monitors you regularly always helps. This fact would not change even if the dietician herself is overweight or has a few clogged arteries. On the other hand if a dietician starts insulting his or her client, that individual would be inclined to either look for another dietician or totally give up the program.

Although this collection of essays has evaluated almost every aspect of the relationship between Turkey and the EU, this very analogy is what this book lacks to mention. It is my sincere hope that the biggest question in Brussels during the upcoming years would not be; "who lost Turkey?"