



# Utrecht University

## **Greek thoughts on the Turkish accession negotiations from 2005 to 2018**

An analysis of the European Parliament records with a focus on Greek politicians and the impact on the accession process



Source: <https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/turkeys-eu-accession-more-important-than-ever-deputy-foreign-minister-says/>

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# TABLE OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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|      |                                                                                          |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| APK  | Turkish: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, English: Justice and Development Party <sup>1</sup> |
| AT   | Austria                                                                                  |
| BE   | Belgium                                                                                  |
| CY   | Cyprus                                                                                   |
| DE   | Germany                                                                                  |
| EEC  | European Economic Community                                                              |
| EEZ  | Exclusive Economic Zone                                                                  |
| ES   | Spain                                                                                    |
| EU   | European Union                                                                           |
| FR   | France                                                                                   |
| GR   | Greece                                                                                   |
| IT   | Italy                                                                                    |
| MEP  | Member of the European Parliament                                                        |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization                                                       |
| NL   | The Netherlands                                                                          |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development                                   |
| OEEC | Organization for European Economic Cooperation                                           |
| UK   | United Kingdom                                                                           |
| UN   | United Nations                                                                           |

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<sup>1</sup> The political party of which Erdogan is a member.

# ABSTRACT

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Turkey expressed a desire to join the European Union in the early stages of the EU's establishment. The accession negotiations started in 2005 and were halted in 2018, leading to thirteen years of fruitless negotiations and reforms. This research studies the impact Greece and Greek members of the European Parliament had on the negotiations process. To do so, it utilizes the Greek politicians' motives and the written questions addressed by the politicians to the Commission and the Council, the other two institutions involved in the EU's enlargement process. Politicians act on the public's opinion will and on national interests. The main argument is that Greece used the process to fulfil national interests, through the European Parliament. This pressure exertion incommoded the process, thus leading to its longevity. The results indicate that the Greek politicians tried to raise concerns regarding Turkey's incompatibility and Greece's national interests and pressure the Commission and the Council to investigate and act by addressing 631 questions, the one-fourth of the total questions.

Keywords: Turkey, Turkish accession, European Union (EU) enlargement, European Parliament, Greece, negotiations process

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

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In 1987 Turkey applied to join the European Union (then European Economic Community). In 1999 it was announced eligible to join, and the accession negotiations started in 2005. After thirteen years of negotiations, the EU decided to halt the accession process due to events in the Turkish political arena regarding democracy, law, and fundamental rights violations.<sup>2</sup> Some chapters still remain open, holding the membership status of Turkey to a candidate country.

Since 1987, Turkey has been a valuable key associate for Europe in matters of security, migration, energy, environment, and economy. Nevertheless, the relations between the two associates fluctuated from time to time. Ambivalences, intricacies, and independencies have occurred on multiple occasions. Thus, the relations are rather complex, with moments of close partnership and moments of cold rapprochement.<sup>3</sup> In the past decade, mistrust and unreliability have characterized the EU-Turkey relationship. Europe perceives Turkey as a hostile neighbor who induces conflict and fails to adjust to its principles and norms. In contrast, Turkey resents Europe's Liberalism and its meddling in the affairs of the Eastern neighbors, namely, Syria, Libya, and Cyprus.<sup>4</sup>

The Greek-Turkish relations follow the same pattern. The Cypriot dispute, even though it is a point of conflict, it is not the sole reason for the arguments. The two went a thread away from declaring war on two occasions: during the 1987 Aegean crisis, the controversy over oil drill rights in the Aegean,<sup>5</sup> and the 1996 Imia incident, the conflict over the sovereignty of the Imia islets.<sup>6</sup> In 1999, after the Helsinki summit, Greece strongly supported Turkey's accession to the EU, with the hope that the modernization of the Turkish state would provide solutions to

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<sup>2</sup> 'European Commission, *'TURKEY'*, European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations> Enlargement> Negotiations status>Turkey, [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/negotiations-status/turkey\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/negotiations-status/turkey_en).

<sup>3</sup> Ebru Turhan and Wulf Reiners, *'UNPACKING THE NEW COMPLEXITIES OF EU–TURKEY RELATIONS: MERGING THEORIES, INSTITUTIONS, AND POLICIES'*, 2021, p.1–35, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-70890-0\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-70890-0_1).

<sup>4</sup> Turhan and Reiners. *'UNPACKING THE NEW COMPLEXITIES OF EU–TURKEY RELATIONS'*, p.34.

<sup>5</sup> Alan Cowell, *'GREEKS AND TURKS EASE AEGEAN CRISIS'*, The New York Times, 29 March 1987, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/03/29/world/greeks-and-turks-ease-aegean-crisis.html>.

<sup>6</sup> GreekReporter *'1996: WHEN GREECE FACED WAR IN THE AEGEAN'*, GreekReporter.Com (blog), 26 January 2018, <https://greekreporter.com/2018/01/26/1996-when-greece-faced-war-in-the-aegean/>.

the ever troubles between the two countries. The rise of Erdogan in power in 2002 enhanced those beliefs, as the Turkish state seemed to be becoming more secular and abandoning the militaristic exercise of power.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, Greece supported the Turkish accession hoping that Turkey would become more western-oriented and, thus, more capable, and willing to resolve the problems between them. The rise of Erdogan in 2002 indicated that the Turkish society and political arena were already undergoing reform, transforming into a less theocratic state. Nevertheless, the accession process was fruitless.

This study attempts to delve into Turkish-European affairs in the 21st century and the accession negotiation process. It explores the factors affecting the process and its portrayal in the European Parliament, with a focus on the Greek politicians. It also delves into how the Greek-Turkish relations have affected the longevity of the Turkish accession process and the perpetration of the Greek-Turkish dispute. At the same time, the study will present how other European politicians referred to the matter and their thoughts and concerns. According to the Public Choice Theory,<sup>8</sup> the politicians would try to implement the public's will. Therefore, the public opinion on Turkey's accession is an important factor to be discussed.

Therefore, the research questions can be summed up as follows:

Main question:

- **What impact did Greek members of the European Parliament have on Turkey's accession process from 2005 to 2018?**

Sub-questions:

- **What are the Greek views and the Greek official policy on Turkey's accession?**
- **What is the development of the European and especially the Greek public opinion on a possible Turkish accession?**
- **How do politicians refer to the Turkish accession in the European Parliament?**

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<sup>7</sup> Nathalie Tocci and Thanos Dokos, 'GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS AND THE CYPRUS DISPUTE: IMPACT ON TURKEY-EU SCENARIOS', FEUTURE Online Paper No. 27, IAI Istituto Affari Internazionali, 4 July 2019, p.2, <https://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/greek-turkish-relations-and-cyprus-dispute-impact-turkey-eu-scenarios>.

<sup>8</sup> It is presented in the 'Theoretical Framework' chapter.

- **What is the narrative of the Turkish accession through the eyes of the Greek European Parliament's members from 2005 to 2018?**

The main hypothesis is that since the European public, especially the Greek public, did not favor Turkey's accession, the politicians would reflect that will when referring to the matter. In addition, if a member state has a dispute with a candidate country, it will try to use the accession to fulfill its national interests. Therefore, the country, the politicians, and the institutions will try to promote those national interests. Given the possibility of a veto, the member state can halt the accession. Nevertheless, the veto power is rarely used because of the consensus culture; member states are morally and institutionally obliged to support European policies.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the member state will try to promote its national interests in a different manner. This case study argues that the Greek politicians will push the advance of national goals through the European Parliament, resulting in the longevity of the negotiations process. In other words, Greece affected the accession process through the exertion of pressure by the Greek politicians.

This research is highly relevant to the current world. Due to the Russo-Ukrainian war, the EU has initiated the accession process of Ukraine, leading to claims by the Turkish government to restart its negotiations process. The historical relevance of the research lies in the examination of the EU enlargement process, specifically in the case study of Turkey. Simultaneously, the study elaborates on the factors that can affect the accession; what makes a candidate country a member. There is a broad historiographic debate, which is presented in detail below, regarding the EU's enlargement. The debate utilizes case studies to make a point about the process, the factors that affect it and the countries allowed to join. At the same time, it delivers an idea about the thoughts of European politicians on the possibility of enlargement to the East. Thus far, there is research regarding the reasons for the longevity of the unsuccessful Turkish accession process, but it did not focus on the politicians' stance.

The chosen timeline of the study is 2005-2018. This timeframe includes the beginning and the halting of the negotiations. During that period, the EU-Turkey relations fluctuated.

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas König and Dirk Junge, 'WHY DON'T VETO PLAYERS USE THEIR POWER?', *European Union Politics* 10, no. 4 (1 December 2009): p.507–34, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116509346780>.



## 1.2 HISTORIOGRAPHY AND ACADEMIC RELEVANCE

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Literature regarding the Turkish-EU relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century deviates. One debate is dedicated in exploring the key policies implemented in the process and how the EU is enlarged and what it considers important. The second debate explores the result of these policies to the Turkish environment and the transformation process to align with European policies and norms. Another part of the literature is concerned with the aspects that affected the prolonged Turkish accession, thus explaining why Turkey failed to enter the EU. This debate intends to locate and elaborate on why Turkey's negotiations lasted so long and ended before it reached membership status. The core of this debate revolves around the specific environment of Turkey's accession that resulted in thirteen years of fruitless negotiations and the reasons behind the process's failure. This research belongs to the latter historiographic debate.

Natalie Martin (2019)<sup>10</sup> argued that the Turkish accession showed signs of containment in cycles; before the migration crisis, the negotiation process was following slow progress, followed by full speed negotiations during 2015/16, when the first migrants reached Europe, and ended with the halt of negotiations after the coup of 2016, suggesting that Europe uses the political arena to fit its needs. Thus, that the negotiations process highly depends on it. Turkish Policy Quarterly (TPQ, 2018)<sup>11</sup> stated that the EU felt obliged to protect its credibility after the coup and attempted to explore new paths of collaboration. Arikan (2003)<sup>12</sup> contemplated whether the Turkish candidacy was doomed from the beginning: through historical references like the Ankara Agreement in 1963, he argues that the EU has ever treated Turkey differently and that by starting negotiations, the EU challenged its identity and institutions. Gerhads and Hans (2011)<sup>13</sup> researched the public opinion in 27 countries and stated that it is harder to

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<sup>10</sup> Natalie Martin, 'FROM CONTAINMENT TO REALPOLITIK AND BACK AGAIN: A REALIST CONSTRUCTIVIST ANALYSIS OF TURKEY-EU RELATIONS AND THE MIGRATION ISSUE', *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 57, no. 6 (2019): 1349–65, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12947>.

<sup>11</sup> Meltem Muftuler-Bac, 'REMOLDING THE TURKEY-EU RELATIONSHIP', *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 2018 <http://turkishpolicy.com/article/913/remolding-the-turkey-eu-relationship>.

<sup>12</sup> Harun Arikan, 'TURKEY AND THE EU: AN AWKWARD CANDIDATE FOR EU MEMBERSHIP?' 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Routledge 2003, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315199085>.

<sup>13</sup> Jürgen Gerhards and Silke Hans, 'WHY NOT TURKEY? ATTITUDES TOWARDS TURKISH MEMBERSHIP IN THE EU AMONG CITIZENS IN 27 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 49 (1 July 2011): 741–66, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2010.02155.x>.

achieve membership status if the EU's citizens disagree. Ugur (2010)<sup>14</sup> foresaw the suboptimal outcome of the process, claiming that the change of the European institutions in 2004 to include open-ended negotiations would result in inadequate coverage of the prerequisites. Yilmaz (2008)<sup>15</sup> elaborated on the counterarguments of Turkish membership, such as the claim of cultural differences, the geopolitical stance, the shift of power in the EU's borders, the possible increase of Turkish population in other European countries, and the economic impacts on member states that would have to bear the accession costs, and made an accurate prediction of the future: if the negotiations did not advance promptly, the Turkish government would seek support in the East. Tekin (2021)<sup>16</sup> concluded that the economic devaluation of the Turkish currency plus its political pivot to the East and the close ties with Russia are of significant importance. This research also stated that some member states were going through electoral campaigns during the negotiations' closing. Combined with the need to please the public, this could have resulted in a diplomatic deadlock with Turkey.

At the same time, research has shown the factors that affect the EU accession process. Richardson (2015)<sup>17</sup> stated that enlargement occurs if both the EU and the candidate country have cost benefits of the accession. Schimmelfennig (2015)<sup>18</sup> indicated that the norm of accepting enlargement drives the member to agree to other countries' accession, even if the public opinion suggests otherwise, but in the case of Turkey, the Turkish noncompliance to the EU directives and norms gave them a getaway to stop supporting the candidacy. Jano (2022)<sup>19</sup> collected case studies on the enlargement of the EU and concluded that the accession is a matter

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<sup>14</sup> Mehmet Ugur, 'OPEN-ENDED MEMBERSHIP PROSPECT AND COMMITMENT CREDIBILITY: EXPLAINING THE DEADLOCK IN EU-TURKEY ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS', Greenwich Papers in Political Economy (University of Greenwich, Greenwich Political Economy Research Centre, 12 August 2010), p.985 <https://ideas.repec.org/p/gpe/wpaper/2997.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Bahri Yilmaz, 'RELATIONS OF TURKEY WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION A CANDIDATE FOREVER?', Center for European Studies Working Paper Series #167, 1 January 2008, p.15-23 <https://t.ly/F8qX>

<sup>16</sup> Funda Tekin, 'DIFFERENTIATED INTEGRATION: AN ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF EU-TURKEY RELATIONS', Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2021, p.157-81, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-70890-0\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-70890-0_7).

<sup>17</sup> Jeremy Richardson, 'EUROPEAN UNION: POWER AND POLICY-MAKING', 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Routledge, 2015 p.265 <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315735399>.

<sup>18</sup> Frank Schimmelfennig, 'RHETORICAL ENTRAPMENT IN EU-TURKEY RELATIONS', In: Reiners, W., Turhan, E. (eds) EU-Turkey Relations, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2021, p.147-153, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-70890-0\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-70890-0_6).

<sup>19</sup> Dorian Jano, 'EU ENLARGEMENT ROUNDS AND DILEMMAS: THE SUCCESSFUL, THE RELUCTANT, THE AWKWARD, AND THE LAGGARDS', In: Ferreira Costa, B., (eds) Challenges and Barriers to the European Union Expansion to the Balkan Region, IGI Global, 2002, p.18-38, <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-9055-3.ch002>.

of “timing,” “temporality,” and “tempo,” meaning that the time of the initiation of the negotiations, the pace, and the measures implemented are important to determine whether the candidate country will receive membership status. Türkeş-Kılıç (2020)<sup>20</sup> implied that European right-wing parties believed in the existence of a European identity, and Turkey was considered the identity other, thus, full membership was not possible. Icoz and Martin (2021)<sup>21</sup> suggested that internal and external progressions in the political arena are structured through institutions to affect whether a candidate country will be granted membership, giving the example of vetoes and the political agenda, and presented the incidents in the EU, Turkish and Global political arena that have affected the outcome.

Furthermore, research has focused on the influence Greece had, or even tried to have, on Turkey’s accession and the EU-Turkish relations. Nathalie Tocci and Thanos Dokos (2018)<sup>22</sup> placed the Cyprus dispute in the center of attention as the most prominent reason for the conflict between Greece and Turkey. They researched the impact possible scenarios of Greek-Turkish relations could have on the EU-Turkish relations. In a conflict scenario, even though Greece could prevent the building of maximum cooperation between the EU and Turkey, it could not stop them from being associates. This study concludes that Greece would fear the non-western Turkish orientation, as it would make the environment more hostile. Ebru Turhan (2016)<sup>23</sup> studied the role of some member states, among which was Greece, in the Turkish accession process, and concluded that even though Greece influenced the pre-accession period, after the 2004 EU’s enlargement, the Cypriot accession replaced it. The Cyprus dispute was still a central point, but a more involved player undertook its promotion.

This research will contribute to the debate in two ways: it will explore whether the public opinion opposition to further EU enlargement is essential to the outcome. The Public Choice Theory suggests that the politicians try to make that will priority and pressure in that direction.

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<sup>20</sup> Selin Türkeş-Kılıç, ‘JUSTIFYING PRIVILEGED PARTNERSHIP WITH TURKEY: AN ANALYSIS OF DEBATES IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT’, *Turkish Studies* 21, no. 1 (1 January 2020): 29–55, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2019.1565941>.

<sup>21</sup> G. Icoz and N. Martin ‘HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONALISM AND EU–TURKEY RELATIONS: PATH DEPENDENCE AND CRITICAL JUNCTURES IN THE ACCESSION PROCESS’, In: Reiners, W., Turhan, E. (eds) *EU-Turkey Relations*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2021, p. 90- 97 <https://www.springerprofessional.de/en/historical-institutionalism-and-eu-turkey-relations-path-depende/19222858>.

<sup>22</sup> Thanos Dokos, ‘GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS AND THE CYPRUS DISPUTE’, p.7&33.

<sup>23</sup> Ebru Turhan, ‘TURKEY’S EU ACCESSION PROCESS: DO MEMBER STATES MATTER?’, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 24, no. 4 (1 October 2016): p.463–77, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2016.1198693>

The focus is turned on Greek society. At the same time, it serves as an example of a member state trying to influence the EU-Turkish relations and the negotiations and use the process for national gains. It will add to the debate related to the Greek influence on Turkish accession, the reasons for it and the means, and demonstrate part of the results on the process. In other words, member states do matter in the enlargement process; the relations between states, good or bad, can affect the accession.

## 1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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When researching the enlargement process of the EU, it is essential to keep in mind that it is a political matter; politicians make the choices that can be proved crucial for the outcome. Therefore, it is important to understand what drives their decisions before diving into their statements.

Generally, it is hard to explain human motivation regarding making a choice and forming a path. The **Public Choice Theory** is a political science theory based on economic principles. Economic researchers developed the theory to explain people's actions in the marketplace and concluded that it is mainly self-interest oriented.<sup>24</sup> The same principles are applied to the political arena. Therefore, people in politics act in self-interest, whether that is politicians, bureaucrats, or voters.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, as all stakeholders involved, voters will base choosing on their perspective of the right choice. In terms of a clear-cut situation, it is relatively easy to determine the right path. When choosing governmental representatives, it is more challenging to decide what the right choice is through various political parties. Thus, voters will make a choice depending on the information they have. Since individuals have little information or interest in developments in the political arena, the politicians will try to consider the public's opinion and act accordingly, especially when the public is firmly against or in favor of a choice, to boost their chance of reelection.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time, the **institutional structure** of the EU enlargement process provides great powers to member states. All stages of the process require the European Council's approval, from the candidacy acceptance to the opening of negotiations to the grant of full membership. The European Council consists of the member states' prime ministers and is considered the most powerful policy tool for European enlargement, as stated by Olli Rehn in 2005, European

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<sup>24</sup> Jane S. Shaw, '*PUBLIC CHOICE THEORY*', The Concise Encyclopaedia of Economics, Library of Economics and Liberty, <https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc1/PublicChoiceTheory.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Gordon Tullock, '*PUBLIC CHOICE*', Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2008, p.1–8, [https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-349-95121-5\\_1400-2](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-349-95121-5_1400-2).

<sup>26</sup> Jane S. Shaw, '*PUBLIC CHOICE THEORY*'..

Commissioner for Enlargement, during a speech in the German Marshall Fund of the United States, that safeguards and cultivates national interests.<sup>27</sup>

A collective bargaining process within the European Council begins, where member states aim to express their **national interests** and make the most out of a situation presented. Aspects that can affect the power of a state are based on numerous points, like population, economic strength, legitimacy, and military capacity.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, even the countries with the least power can have a massive impact on the outcome, given the possibility of a veto. A single veto can halt a decision.<sup>29</sup>

The European Parliament acts as a supplement to the European Council with a consulting role. Its members are politicians from each member state, elected through the electoral system of their respective country to represent it. The decisions of the European Parliament can affect the European Council.

Another important EU institution involved in the enlargement process is the European Commission. This institution is set to promote the EU's interest, enact legislation, and implement policies. It is also responsible for the EU budget.<sup>30</sup> It consists of twenty-seven members, one from each European country, and is led by the Commission President. The European Commission implements the decisions made by the two other important institutions: the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. During the enlargement process, the Commission oversees the candidate country's reform to match the criteria and issues the pre-accession funding to help the alignment with the European institutions and policies.

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<sup>27</sup> Jonas Tallberg and Karl Magnus Johansson, 'PARTY POLITICS IN THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL', *Journal of European Public Policy* 15, no. 8 (1 December 2008): 1222–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760802407755>.

<sup>28</sup> Ebru Turhan, 'TURKEY'S EU ACCESSION PROCESS: DO MEMBER STATES MATTER?', p.463-77...

<sup>29</sup> European Council, 'HOW THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL WORKS', <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/european-council/how-the-european-council-works/>.

<sup>30</sup> European Union, 'EUROPEAN COMMISSION', Institutions, law, budget> Institutions and bodies> Institutions and bodies profiles> European Commission, [https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/institutions-and-bodies-profiles/european-commission\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/institutions-and-bodies-profiles/european-commission_en).

The accession process has three main stages.<sup>31</sup> The first stage consists of the acceptance of the candidacy of a member state. Once a country is pronounced a candidate, it is vital that the EU Council unanimously decides the framework for opening of negotiations. Then, the candidate country adopts EU law and goes through reforms to meet the accession criteria, the *acquis*.<sup>32</sup> The negotiations include the issue of a report regarding the degree of readiness to open chapters and implement reforms. The opening of the chapters is decided by the Commission, which also publishes reports on the progress made. The chapters close when all member countries deem that the candidate country has reached the goal set and has aligned its legislation and policies to the EU. When all the chapters have been opened and closed, the accession treaty is composed, which is only valid when supported by the EU Council, the Commission, and the European Parliament, and signed and ratified by all member states.

Therefore, it is evident that the member states and their representatives hold great power in relation to a candidate's accession. Thus, it is important to investigate the opinions that are expressed in the European Parliament. At the same time, it is essential to analyze the documents used in the correspondence of the three institutions, vis a vis the written questions of the European Parliament to the Council and the European Commission. Since using the veto power is considered a taboo and members prefer not to use it to conform to European standards,<sup>33</sup> it is possible to locate through these documents the standing points of a member state and the ways they attempted to affect the negotiation process. The focus of the study will be Greek politicians.

To conclude, the historical **Greco-Turkish dispute** that continues up to the present could be a factor that affects the Turkish accession to the EU since, by default, the member states, and in this case Greece, have powers over the negotiations process. At the same time, this dispute has affected the Greek public opinion on the matter. The Public Choice Theory reaffirms that the politicians would try to carry out the public opinion's will and try to halt the accession and achieve national gains.

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<sup>31</sup> European Commission, '*STEPS TOWARDS JOINING*', European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations> Enlargement> Steps towards joining, [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/steps-towards-joining\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/steps-towards-joining_en).

<sup>32</sup> See Annex I.

<sup>33</sup> König and Junge, '*WHY DON'T VETO PLAYERS USE THEIR POWER?*'...

An example of the impact of public choice theory combined with the EU structural institutions on the accession process is the case of North Macedonia. The latter state, then officially called the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, applied to join the European Union in 2004. North Macedonia and Greece had an unsettled dispute over the country's official name. Greece showed its intention to halt North Macedonia's accession when it vetoed its accession to NATO in 2008.<sup>34</sup> North Macedonia's accession process was halted until 2018, when a bilateral agreement was signed that finalized the name,<sup>35</sup> resulting in 2020, sixteen years after the accession application, the announcement of North Macedonia as an EU member. During the voting of the agreement, more than 100 public protests were organized in Greece and abroad,<sup>36</sup> which indicates the massive opposition of the public to the agreement signing. The result was that the political party that signed the agreement did not reelect in 2019 and nowadays stands 11% below the ruling party.<sup>37</sup>

This example demonstrates how Greece affected the accession negotiations process of North Macedonia, and it indicates that Greece uses the enlargement process to fulfil its national interests. At the same time, it shows the importance of public opinion in the political arena: the public opinion was not pleased; thus, the political party's influence has dropped. Therefore, politicians who want to reelect will follow the public opinion suggestions.

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<sup>34</sup> GR-NEWS '2 ΑΠΡΙΛΗ ΤΟΥ 2008, ΤΟ ΒΕΤΟ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΑΣ ΣΤΑ ΣΚΟΠΙΑ ΓΙΑ ΤΟ ΝΑΤΟ!', trans: '2<sup>ND</sup> OF APRIL 2008, THE VETO OF GREECE TO FYROM FOR NATO!' *GR-NEWS* (blog), 2 April 2019, <https://www.gr-news.de/2-aprili-tou-2008-veto-tis-elladas-sta-skopia-gia-nato/>.

<sup>35</sup> BBC News, 'MACEDONIA AND GREECE: VOTE SETTLES 27-YEAR NAME DISPUTE', BBC News, 25 January 2019, sec. Europe, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-47002865>.

<sup>36</sup> Αντίβαρο 'ΟΛΑ ΤΑ ΣΥΜΜΑΛΗΤΗΡΙΑ ΓΙΑ ΤΗ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑ ΤΟ 2018.', trans: 'LIST OF PROTESTS FOR MACEDONIA IN 2018' Antivaro (blog), 5 February 2018, <https://www.antivaro.gr/article/18421>.

<sup>37</sup> POLITICO Poll of Polls, 'GREEK POLLS, TRENDS AND ELECTION NEWS FOR GREECE', POLITICO, 16 February 2022, <https://www.politico.eu/europe-poll-of-polls/greece/>.



## 1.4 STRUCTURE AND METHODOLOGY

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Historical context is crucial to understanding the narrative during the accession process. The first part of the research will present the historical developments and EU relations with Turkey in two different periods: before and after the starting of the accession negotiations. A special reference to Greco-Turkish relations will be made. This reference is essential to understanding the degree of cooperation in the EU-Turkish arena and the Greek-Turkish arena. In other words, it is crucial to locate whether the EU is committed to cooperating with Turkey and offering full membership status in comparison to the Greek opposition.

The European public opinion on the accession will be discussed with a focus on Greek society to understand the intentions of the public and try to trace whether the politicians' behavior matches the public's will. The first chapter will also present the development of public opinion, as both topics set the basic knowledge needed to understand the developments. Furthermore, an analysis of the Greek national policy towards Turkey and its candidacy will be presented to determine Greece's goals.

Thus, the first chapter will present the historical context before and after the negotiations' opening, the public opinion progress, and the Greek thoughts on Turkey's accession.

To find the politicians' stance on the matter, thorough research of the European Parliament records will be conducted, primarily through the written questions to the Commission and the Council. There is a broad archive that refers to the matter.<sup>38</sup> While going through the archive, the study will code the patterns that emerge and present them.

The research will utilize the **thematic analysis** method to analyze the data. This method is used to analyze qualitative data, meaning texts like interviews, transcripts, handbooks, and emails. In this method, the researcher tries to identify repeated patterns and present their occurrence times. Thematic analysis is used to identify views, opinions, experiences, and values.<sup>39</sup> The most significant advantage of this method is the flexibility allowed to process the data. The

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<sup>38</sup> European Parliament, Public Register of Documents, Document Search Page, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegistreWeb/search/simpleSearchHome.htm?typesDoc=QECR&fulltext=turkey%20accession&languages=EN&startDate=1130972400000&endDate=1648076399999&sortAndOrder=DATE\\_DOCU\\_ASC](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegistreWeb/search/simpleSearchHome.htm?typesDoc=QECR&fulltext=turkey%20accession&languages=EN&startDate=1130972400000&endDate=1648076399999&sortAndOrder=DATE_DOCU_ASC).

<sup>39</sup> Jack Caulfield, 'HOW TO DO THEMATIC ANALYSIS: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE & EXAMPLES', Scribbr, 2019, <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/thematic-analysis/>.

analysis should be demarcated and demonstrated. Braun and Clarke (2006)<sup>40</sup> presented the steps the researcher needs to take to conduct complete scientific research. These are as follows:

1. Data familiarization (getting to know the data)
2. Initial coding (understanding what the important information is)
3. Themes identification (sorting the codes into themes)
4. Themes Review (review if the themes are overlapping or are not well-supported, for example, if their appearance is not common and consistent)
5. Definition and naming of the themes (clear description of the themes and their content)
6. Writing the results

The trouble with this method lies in the difficulty of identifying the nuance of the view expressed. Therefore, the researcher should closely examine the texts for hidden meanings.

Therefore, it is vital to provide a detailed presentation of how data was processed and coded. The second chapter will consist of the research design and the explanation of the coding. A subchapter will present and analyze the findings.

Then the conclusive chapter follows with a further analysis of all findings, which leads to answering the main question. The final chapter will present the connection to the existing literature, the explanation of limitations, and the proposal for further research.

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<sup>40</sup> Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, 'USING THEMATIC ANALYSIS IN PSYCHOLOGY', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, 2006: p.15-24, <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.

## 2. TURKEY IN THE EUROPEAN POLITICAL ARENA

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### 2.1 FROM THE END OF WORLD WAR II TO 2005 AND THE BEGINNING OF THE ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS

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#### 2.1.1 THE EU-TURKISH INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

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At the end of WWII, the ramifications of the war became apparent. Nations around the world coordinated their efforts to prevent conflict, ensure international peace and security, and create a framework through which the international law would be maintained, and conflict could be resolved. In June 1945, the charter of the United Nations was signed in San Francisco,<sup>41</sup> with Turkey being one of the founding members, alongside eleven European countries.

Turkey's participation in European initiatives is extensive. On 16 April 1948, the establishment of the Organization of the European Economic Co-operation (OEEC, later OECD) was decided.<sup>42</sup> Its initial function was to regulate the Marshall Plan and provide economic sanctuaries to the countries devastated by WWII. Seventeen European countries and Turkey were listed as founding members.

By 1954, Turkey was part of major European and international institutions; its accession to the Council of Europe and NATO was decided in August 1949 and February 1952, respectively. In addition, Turkey's ratification of the European Convention on Human Rights in 1954 shows that Turkey was trying to align with the European standards.

In 1958, the treaty of Rome entered into force, thus establishing the creation of the EEC (later EU). The EEC's external relations are defined in the treaty of Rome; article 238 defined the association criteria, the rights and obligations of the states, and the institutional structure

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<sup>41</sup> United Nations Treaty Collection, '*CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS*', San Francisco, 26 June 1945, [https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=I-1&chapter=1&clang=\\_en](https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=I-1&chapter=1&clang=_en).

<sup>42</sup> Historical Archives of the European Union, '*ORGANISATION FOR EUROPEAN ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION*', 16 April 1948 (Paris, France)-1 September 1961 (Paris, France), <https://archives.eui.eu/en/isaar/39>.

through which the association points would be discussed, and articles 111 to 116 contemplated the criteria for the creation of commercial trade agreements.<sup>43</sup> Turkey's association application with the EEC came in 1959, just a year after its establishment.

The result of Turkey's association application, the Ankara Agreement, came into life in 1963. This agreement marked the creation of a framework in EU-Turkish relations, still used as a referral point nowadays. In 1970 an additional protocol was added to the agreement to regulate the movement of goods and the customs union and determine the alignment of Turkey to the European economic and agricultural practices. It also focused on its integration with the Common Customs Tariff.<sup>44</sup> In 1996 the final phase of the Customs Union was achieved, and it entered into force.<sup>45</sup> This decision is marked as a milestone in EU-Turkish relations, as it was the first Customs Union to exist between the EU and a non-member state.

The accession criteria were not clearly set during the creation of the EEC. In 1962, Willi Birkelbach, a politician of the Socialist Party in the European Parliament, presented a report that discussed the political democratic conditions of candidate member states.<sup>46</sup> A clear framework for accession was adopted three decades later, in 1995, by the European Council, referred to as "Copenhagen criteria." Once these criteria are met, it is possible to enact accession negotiations. The Copenhagen criteria are defined as the existence of democratic institutions and human rights protection, the presence of a market economy that can compete

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<sup>43</sup> EUR-Lex, '*TREATY ESTABLISHING THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY*' (1957'), Document 11957E/TXT, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/teec/sign/eng>.

<sup>44</sup> International Law - Treaties '*ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE EU-TURKEY ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT (THE "ANKARA AGREEMENT")*', Brussels, 23 November 1970, <https://www.dipublico.org/110832/additional-protocol-to-the-eu-turkey-association-agreement-the-ankara-agreement-1970/>.

<sup>45</sup> European Commission, '*TURKEY: CUSTOMS UNIONS AND PREFERENTIAL ARRANGEMENTS*', Taxation and Customs Union> Turkey: Customs Union and preferential arrangements, [https://ec.europa.eu/taxation\\_customs/turkey-customs-unions-and-preferential-arrangements\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/turkey-customs-unions-and-preferential-arrangements_en).

<sup>46</sup> '*RAPPORT DE WILLI BIRKELBACH SUR LES ASPECTS POLITIQUES ET INSTITUTIONNELS DE L'ADHÉSION OU DE L'ASSOCIATION À LA COMMUNAUTÉ (19 DÉCEMBRE 1961)*', Texte, CVCE.EU by UNI.LU (CVCE.EU by UNI.LU, 20 February 2014), [https://www.cvce.eu/obj/rapport\\_de\\_willi\\_birkelbach\\_sur\\_les\\_aspects\\_politiques\\_et\\_institutionnels\\_de\\_l\\_adhesion\\_ou\\_de\\_l\\_association\\_a\\_la\\_communaute\\_19\\_decembre\\_1961-fr-2d53201e-09db-43ee-9f80-552812d39c03.html](https://www.cvce.eu/obj/rapport_de_willi_birkelbach_sur_les_aspects_politiques_et_institutionnels_de_l_adhesion_ou_de_l_association_a_la_communaute_19_decembre_1961-fr-2d53201e-09db-43ee-9f80-552812d39c03.html).

with the competitive market forces, and the ability to assume full member obligations, including the use of the Euro as a monetary system.<sup>47</sup>

The road towards the accession negotiations started in 1987, with Turkey's first application for full membership. Internal and external factors led to the rejection of the application in 1989. Turkey was going through an internal crisis after the Turkish Military Memorandum in 1971 and the coup of 1980. At the same time, the coup in Cyprus and the unilateral recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus blunted the relations between Turkey and the EU.

Due to the circumstances, the EU decided to establish the Customs Union in 1995 but rejected Turkey's candidacy in 1997, thus demonstrating it pursued economic relations and not political.

In 1999 the Group of Twenty (G20) was formed; the EU states and Turkey were among the first signees. Turkey's candidacy was accepted three months later during the Helsinki European Council's meeting. The Helsinki meeting was the starting point of the alignment of Turkey to EU standards. By 2005, the Copenhagen criteria were met, thus opening the negotiation process. The rise of the AKP in power encouraged the expectations of a democratic transformation; the road to Europeanization was open.

The evidence suggests that the degree of cooperation between the EU and Turkey is high. The two have become associates in the international arena since the end of WWII, and Turkey has indicated on multiple occasions its desire to tighten the relationship and join the EU. On the other hand, the EU has demonstrated the will to enlarge in that direction if Turkey aligns its interests and policies. Thus, the EU is committed to promoting the accession of Turkey and will accommodate and support the Turkish reform and EU policy alignment process.

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<sup>47</sup> OECD, '*OECD GLOSSARY OF STATISTICAL TERMS - COPENHAGEN CRITERIA DEFINITION*', Source Publication: European Central Bank Annual Report, 2013, accessed 30 May 2022, <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=3048>.

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## 2.1.2 GRECO-TURKISH RELATIONS: FRIENDS OR ENEMIES?

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The historical relations of Greece and Turkey are brimmed with tension: from the Byzantine-Ottoman dispute to the fight over the sovereignty of the Aegean Sea and the Cyprus problem.

Both countries approached the EEC during the first years of its creation; the Greek membership was achieved in 1981, while the initial Turkish rapprochement revolved around constructing a framework to map out the relations and achieve an ideal association state with benefits for either participant.

Nevertheless, the Greco-Turkish relations until 1999 seem to deteriorate. During the last decade of the millennium, the two countries were on the verge of declaring war on multiple occasions. The Imia crisis in 1996 over the sovereignty of Imia, a small island in the Aegean Sea, which resulted in the death of three Greek military personnel, the S-300 case in 1997, after the announcement of the purchase of military equipment in Cyprus, and the grant of political asylum to Ocalan, a Turkish political prisoner in 1999, are points of reference in the Greco-Turkish dispute. At the same time, the Turkish military operation in Cyprus and the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus mark years of diplomatic turmoil.

A natural disaster and the resulting diplomatic rapprochement were the factors that led to better relations. The earthquake of 1999 brought the two countries together through the offering of aid, and the ministers of external affairs, G. Papandreou and I. Sem of Greece and Turkey, respectively, met to discuss and coordinate operations.

The Greek influence in accepting the Turkish candidacy is apparent: Greece halted the candidacy before 1999. It lifted the veto in 1998 after being promised that the EU would intervene to find a diplomatic solution to the Cyprus problem.

These historical references present some of the conflict points during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are times when Greece and Turkey have fallen into diplomatic turmoil and maintained hostile behavior, while during other periods, the relationship tightened to become associates and find diplomatic solutions to problems. Therefore, when researching the Greco-Turkish relations, the response to the “friends or enemies” question depends on the timeframe studied.

The evidence from historiography seems to agree with that statement. Researchers have examined the relations between the two stakeholders during different periods. A 2015 study

regarding the relations in the 1930s revealed that the hostilities of the past made way for a friendship.<sup>48</sup> The friendship was soon replaced by hostile behavior leading to the 1999 rapprochement and the reestablishment of cordial relations.<sup>49</sup> The most recent studies contemplate the focus points and the downward trend in cooperation and friendship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>50, 51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Çağdaş Lara Çelebi, 'END OF HOSTILITY, RISE OF FRIENDSHIP: TURKISH-GREEK RELATIONS IN THE 30'S', International Journal of Arts & Sciences, 2015, [https://www.academia.edu/44850542/END\\_OF\\_HOSTILITY\\_RISE\\_OF\\_FRIENDSHIP\\_TURKISH\\_GREEK\\_RELATIONS\\_IN\\_THE\\_30S](https://www.academia.edu/44850542/END_OF_HOSTILITY_RISE_OF_FRIENDSHIP_TURKISH_GREEK_RELATIONS_IN_THE_30S).

<sup>49</sup> Ioannis Rentzos, 'GEOPOLITICS AND EARTHQUAKES IN CITIES: FROM THE LONG TIME GREEK- TURKISH CONFLICT TO THE SUDDEN FRIENDSHIP', ACADEMIA Journal, [https://www.academia.edu/35579658/Geopolitics\\_and\\_earthquakes\\_in\\_cities\\_From\\_the\\_long\\_time\\_Greek\\_Turkish\\_conflict\\_to\\_the\\_sudden\\_friendship](https://www.academia.edu/35579658/Geopolitics_and_earthquakes_in_cities_From_the_long_time_Greek_Turkish_conflict_to_the_sudden_friendship).

<sup>50</sup> Leonidas Karakatsanis, 'TURKISH-GREEK RELATIONS: RAPPROCHEMENT, CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE POLITICS OF FRIENDSHIP', Routledge, 2014, London <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315848228>.

<sup>51</sup> Alexis Heraclides and Gizem Alioğlu Çakmak, (eds.), 'GREECE AND TURKEY IN CONFLICT AND COOPERATION: FROM EUROPEANIZATION TO DE-EUROPEANIZATION', Routledge, 2019, London <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203732151>.

## 2.2 THIRTEEN YEARS OF ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS

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### 2.2.1 THE EU PERSPECTIVE

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The accession process is divided into three stages: from candidacy to negotiations to the grant of membership. The second stage cannot start without the unanimous acceptance of all EU member states. Once the EU governments have agreed, the negotiations of the thirty-five chapters (referred to as ‘acquis’)<sup>52</sup> start to regulate the alignment with the EU laws, policies, and perspectives.<sup>53</sup> It is important to underline that the negotiations were characterized as ‘open-end’ by the EU, indicating that the grant of membership status is not guaranteed.

The beginning of the negotiations was not smooth; the in tandem EU’s enlargement to ten new member states, among which was Cyprus caused a diplomatic impasse. Turkey refused to extend the 1963 Ankara Agreement to Cyprus, sign the relevant Protocol, and, thus, extend the Customs Union. The EU had to repeatedly remind the Turkish government to comply with EU standards.

Under the circumstances, the Commission advised the Council in its 2006 report on Turkey’s assessment not to open any new chapter of the acquis.<sup>54</sup> This recommendation was adopted by the Commission, which additionally decided that no chapter could be provisionally closed until the signing of the Protocol.<sup>55</sup>

From 2007 to 2009, the EU recognized the Turkish progress and introduced the opening of negotiations on ten chapters. Nevertheless, the progress was slow, especially regarding

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<sup>52</sup> See Annex I.

<sup>53</sup> European Commission, ‘*CHAPTERS OF THE ACQUIS*’, European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations> Enlargement> Conditions for membership> Chapters of the acquis, [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/conditions-membership/chapters-acquis\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/conditions-membership/chapters-acquis_en).

<sup>54</sup> European Commission, ‘*COMMISSION PRESENTS ITS RECOMMENDATION ON THE CONTINUATION OF TURKEY’S ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS*’, Press release, 29 November 2006, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_06\\_1652](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_06_1652).

<sup>55</sup> European Commission, ‘*2770TH COUNCIL MEETING GENERAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS GENERAL AFFAIRS BRUSSELS, 11 DECEMBER 2006*’, page 7, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/PRES\\_06\\_352](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/PRES_06_352).



freedom and civil rights. At the same time, the Turkish inability to establish neighboring relations with Cyprus remained a dark spot in all diplomatic correspondence.<sup>56</sup>

Gradually, the reports and resolutions expressed stronger opinions regarding the Turkish progress. In 2010, the report condemned the lack of freedom in Turkey and its inability to conform to EU standards.<sup>57</sup> The breach of trust was manifested through institutional documents.

Until the migration crisis of 2015, the following years are characterized by slow-paced progress and mistrust among the parties. The Turkish Foreign Affairs minister, Davutoglu, and the Turkish Prime minister, Erdogan, expressed that the EU is drifting away from Turkey, while other Turkish representatives reaffirmed the solid Turkish position on the Cyprian matter.<sup>58, 59</sup> For example, EU Turkish Minister Bagis threatened to ignore the Cyprian EU Council presidency.<sup>60</sup>

The 2015 report followed the same pattern,<sup>61</sup> congratulating Turkey on the significant progress toward democratic representation and underlining the need to promote the rights of the minorities and the fundamental freedoms. The non-recognition of the Republic of Cyprus remained a critical issue.

The migration crisis of 2015 tightened the relations between the two parties. As of March 2018, they agreed on an Action Plan to regulate the issues rising in the aftermath of the Syrian Civil

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<sup>56</sup> Vincent Morelli and Carol Migdalovitz, *'EUROPEAN UNION ENLARGEMENT: A STATUS REPORT ON TURKEY'S ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS'*, CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research service, 2013, Library of Congress Washington DC, page 5, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA511416>,

<sup>57</sup> European Parliament, *'TEXTS ADOPTED - 2010 PROGRESS REPORT ON TURKEY - WEDNESDAY, 9 MARCH 2011'*, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-7-2011-0090\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-7-2011-0090_EN.html).

<sup>58</sup> Turkey & Macedonia *'TURKEY'S EU MEMBERSHIP TALKS DEADLOCKED, FM DAVUTOĞLU SAYS'*, Turkey & Macedonia (blog), 20 April 2011, <https://turkeymacedonia.wordpress.com/2011/04/20/turkeys-eu-membership-talks-deadlocked-fm-davutoglu-says/>.

<sup>59</sup> Atlantic Council *'ERDOGAN: EU WILL LOSE TURKEY IF IT HASN'T JOINED BY 2023'*, Atlantic Council (blog), 31 October 2012, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/erdogan-eu-will-lose-turkey-if-it-hasnt-joined-by-2023/>.

<sup>60</sup> Szymon Ananicz *'CYPRUS PRESIDENCY AND TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION'*, OSW Centre for Eastern Studies, 26 June 2012, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2012-06-26/cyprus-presidency-and-turkeys-relations-european-union>.

<sup>61</sup> European Commission, *'20151110\_report\_turkey'*, Commission Staff Working Document, Brussels 10.11.2015, [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2018-12/20151110\\_report\\_turkey.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2018-12/20151110_report_turkey.pdf).

war.<sup>62</sup> Both participants had clear gains; the EU tried to regulate the numbers of the refugees passing through its borders, and Turkey received financial support, valuable to its vitality.

The 2016 report was issued after the attempted coup in Turkey during the same year. As a result, a big part of the report refers to the matter and its impact on the Turkish political system. The report mentioned the serious backsliding in human rights and administrative management, as well as the mobilization and the rights of civil society. It was the first report to mention the deterioration of every aspect related to fundamental rights and freedoms.<sup>63</sup> This pattern continued until the closing of the negotiations in 2018.<sup>64</sup>

The analysis of the reports is part of the debate revolving around the accession process and the focus points from the EU perspective. This evidence suggests that the EU adhered to the prerequisites it considered important, even during periods when tight cooperation was necessary, like during the 2015 migration crisis. At the same time, Turkey seemed to be making minimum progress on the resolution of the points raised by the EU, as they seem to be reflected in all years' reports. Thus, Turkey was either uninterested in conforming or failed to grasp the problems. This argument is also supported by the recurring provocative statements by the Turkish officials; the rejection of the Cypriot presidency, even though the reports focused on the need to recognize Cyprus and establish neighboring relations.

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<sup>62</sup> European Commission, '*EU-TURKEY JOINT ACTION PLAN*', Press release, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO\\_15\\_5860](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_15_5860).

<sup>63</sup> European Commission, '*20161109\_report\_turkey*', Commission Staff Working Document, Brussels 09.11.2016, page 5, [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2018-12/20161109\\_report\\_turkey.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2018-12/20161109_report_turkey.pdf).

<sup>64</sup> European Commission, '*Turkey 2018 Report*', Commission Staff Working Document, Brussels 17.04.2018, page 5-6, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018SC0153&from=EN>.

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## 2.2.2 THE CASUS BELLI IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY FROM THE GREEK PERSPECTIVE

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Turkish candidacy was accepted in 1999 at the Helsinki summit when the Greek side lifting its hesitations because it foresaw that the Turkish accession could stop the perpetuation of the problems;<sup>65</sup> a new cycle of cordial Greco-Turkish relations could begin.

At the initial stages of the negotiations process, Greek officials expressed their support for the Turkish accession. In 2006, the Greek minister of foreign affairs, Giannis Valinakis, underlined the importance of engaging in international and European affairs as a means to promote national interests.<sup>66</sup> The minister stated that the Turkish adjustment to the European standards leading to its national reform could turn the diplomatic turmoil to trust. At the same time, it provides a time and a place to discuss bilateral issues in a protected environment, with Greece being in the seat of power as a member of the EU and a lawful judge of the reform.

In 2010, the then Greek foreign affairs minister, Dimitris Droutsas, in a conference regarding the relations between the two countries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century stressed that Greece supports the reforms implemented as they lead to the enhancement of cooperation, but also that Turkey would join the EU after undergoing structural changes and democratic reform.<sup>67</sup> According to the Greek official, the goal was the solution to the Cyprus issue without occupation and the protection of the Greek minority and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Any act against that direction would destabilize the region and downgrade Turkey's efforts and position.

This view of the Greek approach to the accession of its neighboring country was often expressed to the point that it became the official policy towards Turkey; Greece openly expressed the will to find diplomatic solutions to the problems with its neighboring country.<sup>68</sup> For Greece, Turkey's accession is possible through the consummation of its reform to abide by

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<sup>65</sup> EUCE, 'TURKISH QUEST FOR EU MEMBERSHIP', *European Union Center of North Carolina EU Briefings*, March 2008, p.3, [https://europe.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/314/2016/11/Brief\\_Turkey\\_Quest\\_EU\\_Membership\\_2008](https://europe.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/314/2016/11/Brief_Turkey_Quest_EU_Membership_2008).

<sup>66</sup> ELIAMEP 'ΕΛΛΑΔΑ – ΤΟΥΡΚΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΗ ΈΝΩΣΗ', trans: 'GREECE - TURKEY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION', *Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy*, 5 September 2006, <https://www.eliamep.gr/event/greece-turkey-and-the-european-union/>.

<sup>67</sup> Greek Reporter, 'GREECE - TURKEY IN 21ST CENTURY', *GreekReporter.Com* (blog), 28 February 2010, <https://greekreporter.com/2010/02/28/greece-turkey-in-21st-century/>.

<sup>68</sup> Hellenic Republic - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'ISSUES OF GREEK - TURKISH RELATIONS', *Hellenic Republic - Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, accessed 31 May 2022, <https://www.mfa.gr/en/issues-of-greek-turkish-relations/>.

the accession criteria and the *acquis*, including the adoption of a neighboring cooperation policy and the conformity to EU official texts, like treaties, resolutions, and policies. The status of the rights of the Greek minority, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and the Cyprus dispute resolution is of high importance. According to Greece, this is the only way to stabilize the region and avoid conflict in the Mediterranean.

This view is explained by the cultural consensus among European members to support regional cooperation and avoid conflict in the EU's internal affairs. The Greek claims coincide with the reasons for the dispute in the Mediterranean; the Greek-Turkish relations are the main reason for conflict in the region. Therefore, once the points are resolved, the region's stabilization is secured, and the cordial relations between the member state and the candidate country are guaranteed. The Greek provisos are buckled, and, thus, the Turkish accession is supported.

In that spirit, meetings were arranged between the Prime ministers of the two countries to discuss possible ways of cooperation. In 2008 Kostas Karamanlis, the Greek Prime minister, in an official visit to Ankara,<sup>69</sup> raised the matter of the unification of Cyprus and the recognition of the religious rights of the Greek minority and the Patriarchate. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's Prime minister, committed to open discussions for solutions. This visit was the first official visit of a Greek prime minister to Turkey after 49 years.

Two years later, Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Athens to tighten the relationship and augment cooperation efforts.<sup>70</sup> According to Greek and Turkish officials, improving cooperation ties is beneficial for the economy of both countries, as the economic activity could increase and expenditure on weaponry decrease.<sup>71</sup>

From the Greek perspective, the main points of friction were related to the questioning of the Greek sovereignty over multiple matters.<sup>72</sup> Turkish noncompliance to the Law of the Sea, meaning the right to extend jurisdiction for 12 nautical miles, thus questioning the Greek sea

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<sup>69</sup> Sabrina Tavernise and Anthee Carassava, *'IN A 49-YEAR FIRST, GREEK LEADER VISITS TURKEY'*, The New York Times, 24 January 2008, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/24/world/europe/24turkey.html>.

<sup>70</sup> Helena Smith, *'TURKISH PRIME MINISTER IN "REVOLUTIONARY" VISIT TO GREECE'*, The Guardian, 13 May 2010, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/may/13/turkey-greece-crisis-erdogan-visit>.

<sup>71</sup> Megan K. Stack, *'TURKISH LEADER BEGINS GOODWILL VISIT TO GREECE'*, Los Angeles Times, 15 May 2010, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2010-may-15-la-fg-0515-greece-turkey-20100515-story.html>.

<sup>72</sup> Hellenic Republic - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *'ISSUES OF GREEK - TURKISH RELATIONS'*....

territory and the consequent violation of its airspace and the sovereignty over the Aegean islands are high on the cause of controversies and threat of war lists. The constant demand by the Turkish side to demilitarize the Greek Mediterranean islands, the non-conforming to air traffic regulations, and the dispute over Greek jurisdiction in internal affairs pile up to the *casus belli*.

The situation in the Aegean, often referred to as the Aegean dispute, is the most prominent cause of hostile behavior between the two countries. Throughout the years 2005 to 2018, the situation seemed to somewhat deteriorate than improve: the sea and air violations of Turkish vessels in the Aegean, according to the Hellenic Army General Staff, are constant and increasing,<sup>73, 74</sup> while Turkey's officials, including its Prime minister, proceeded to make provocative statements frequently, especially during the second decade of the negotiations. More specifically, Erdogan and Cavusoglu questioned the validity of the Lausanne treaty,<sup>75, 76, 77</sup> which regulated the relations in 1923. In addition, the Turkish Prime minister expressed his intention to involve himself in the Greek internal affairs by stating that the Greek Muslims in Thrace are Turkish descendants, and that Turkey needs to protect them.<sup>78</sup> Before and after the

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<sup>73</sup> Βαγγέλης Τριαντής, 'ΟΛΕΣ ΟΙ ΤΟΥΡΚΙΚΕΣ ΠΑΡΑΒΙΑΣΕΙΣ ΣΤΟ ΑΙΓΑΙΟ ΑΠΟ ΤΟ 1995: ΤΙ ΔΕΙΧΝΟΥΝ ΚΑΙ ΠΩΣ ΕΞΗΓΟΥΝΤΑΙ', trans. Vangelis Triantis, 'ALL TURKISH VIOLATIONS IN GREECE SINCE 1995: WHAT DO THEY SHOW AND HOW ARE THEY EXPLAINED' HuffPost Greece, 20 May 2016, [https://www.huffingtonpost.gr/entry/koinonia-nato-filis-grivas\\_gr\\_10003074](https://www.huffingtonpost.gr/entry/koinonia-nato-filis-grivas_gr_10003074).

<sup>74</sup> Niall McCarthy, 'TURKISH JETS VIOLATED GREEK AIRSPACE OVER 2,000 TIMES LAST YEAR [INFOGRAPHIC]', Forbes, 2015, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2015/11/26/turkish-jets-violated-greek-airspace-over-2000-times-last-year-infographic/>.

<sup>75</sup> Naftemporiki, 'ERDOGAN: TURKEY GAVE AWAY AEGEAN ISLANDS IN 1923', Naftemporiki, 29 September 2016, <https://www.naftemporiki.gr/story/1153625/erdogan-turkey-gave-away-aegean-islands-in-1923>.

<sup>76</sup> Ekathimerini, 'ERDOGAN DISPUTES TREATY OF LAUSANNE, PROMPTING RESPONSE FROM ATHENS', Ekathimerini, 2016, Ekathimerini.Com, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/212433/erdogan-disputes-treaty-of-lausanne-prompting-response-from-athens/>.

<sup>77</sup> Ekathimerini, 'TURKISH FM DISPUTES LAUSANNE TREATY', Ekathimerini, 2016, Ekathimerini.Com, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/220905/turkish-fm-disputes-lausanne-treaty/>.

<sup>78</sup> Ekathimerini, 'ERDOGAN'S TALK OF "KINSMEN" IN THRACE RAISES CONCERNS IN GREECE', Ekathimerini, 2016, Ekathimerini.Com, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/212931/erdogans-talk-of-kinsmen-in-thrace-raises-concerns-in-greece/>.

closing of the negotiations process, Turkey stated that it would claim back the Aegean islands, as they belong to them.<sup>79, 80</sup>

Other tensions revolve around the rights of the minorities<sup>81</sup> and the exploitation of cultural heritage,<sup>82</sup> such as monasteries and churches, the management of the migration crisis and the Turkish intention to use it to apply pressure on the EU.<sup>83</sup> After the coup of 2016, Turkey accused Greece of providing asylum to its state enemies, as military personnel involved in the coup fled to the Greek territory,<sup>84, 85</sup> thus creating another diplomatic turmoil.

Therefore, it is evident that the Greek stance towards Turkey's accession turned into a policy that aimed to maximize national goals; Greece attempted to utilize the process for its benefit. This assumption is the logical consequence of the events described; two Greek foreign affairs ministers, one serving from 2004 to 2009 and the other from 2010 to 2011, expressed this will during official conferences regarding the relations between the two stakeholders. The stance of Greece towards the Turkish accession is also conspicuous on the official Greek website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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<sup>79</sup> Kocaeli 'CHP HEAD SLAMS GREEK DEFENSE MINISTER, VOWS TO TAKE BACK 18 ISLANDS "OCCUPIED BY GREECE" IN 2019', *Hürriyet Daily News*, 2017, <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/chp-head-slams-greek-defense-minister-vows-to-take-back-18-islands-occupied-by-greece-in-2019-124635>.

<sup>80</sup> Ahval, "'GREECE SHOULD NOT TEST OUR PATIENCE" - TURKISH OPPOSITION PARTY', Ahval, 21 December 2017, sec. News, <https://ahvalnews.com/greece-turkey/greece-should-not-test-our-patience-turkish-opposition-party>.

<sup>81</sup> Ali Dayioğlu and İlksoy Aslım, 'RECIPROCITY PROBLEM BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY: THE CASE OF MUSLIM-TURKISH AND GREEK MINORITIES', *ATHENS JOURNAL OF HISTORY* 1, no. 1, 31 December 2014, p.37–50, <https://doi.org/10.30958/ajhis.1-1-3>.

<sup>82</sup> *Hürriyet Daily News*, 'TENSION BETWEEN TURKEY, GREECE FLARES UP WITH ROW OVER GENOCIDE, SÜMELA', *Hürriyet Daily News*, 2016, <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/tension-between-turkey-greece-flares-up-with-row-over-genocide-sumela-102902>.

<sup>83</sup> Thomas Seibert, 'AS REFUGEE NUMBERS RISE, GREECE AND TURKEY FACE NEW BORDER CHALLENGES | Thomas Seibert', *AW The Arab Weekly*, 2019, <https://theArabweekly.com/refugee-numbers-rise-greece-and-turkey-face-new-border-challenges>.

<sup>84</sup> Helena Smith, 'TURKISH SOLDIERS IN COURT AFTER FLEEING TO GREECE AMID COUP ATTEMPT', *The Guardian*, 18 July 2016, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/18/turkish-soldiers-in-court-after-fleeing-to-greece-amid-coup-attempt>.

<sup>85</sup> Daily Sabah, '7 PRO-COUP SOLDIERS, 1 CIVILIAN SEEKING ASYLUM ARRESTED IN GREECE', *Daily Sabah*, 16 July 2016, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2016/07/16/7-pro-coup-soldiers-1-civilian-seeking-asylum-arrested-in-greece>.

The meetings between the two Prime Ministers, especially the one arranged in Ankara, reconfirm the assumption. In his statements, the Greek Prime Minister expressed the will to resolve the conflict.

These points are expressed by the officials in all related circumstances and are best described on the Ministry's website. Even though it is mainly believed that the resolution of the Cyprus dispute is the most prominent reason for conflict, this research argues that the Aegean dispute and the violation of the Law of the Sea are of greater importance for Greece. It has attracted the attention of the Hellenic Army General Staff and the Greek and International media. Other points are the rights of the Greek population in Turkey, the protection of the symbol of the Orthodox Church, the Patriarchate, which is based in Istanbul, and the exploitation of cultural heritage monuments by the Turkish state.

As time went by, with the change in Turkish foreign policy, the tension points increased. After 2010, the provocation statements by Turkey's officials pulled matters to the limit, leaving the relations hanging up by a thread, and the Greek national interests unsatisfied. The migration crisis of 2015 caused more friction between Greece and Turkey, even though the EU used it to tighten the relationships. The diplomatic deadlock is, thus, reestablished.

## 2.3 THE PUBLIC OPINION PARAMETER

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### 2.3.1 IN EUROPE

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Examining public opinion is essential for locating the motives behind the politicians' stance. Since this research is studying if and how the politicians affected Turkey's accession process, it is vital to identify their reasoning. The presentation of European public opinion is used to provide a better context to the focus of the research: the Greek members of the European Parliament.

The progress of the support among the European citizens to Turkey's accession should be studied in relation to historical developments. The support levels, even though they were low during the initial negotiation stages, seem to deteriorate throughout the years, especially after the coup of 2016 and the backsliding in the defense of human rights.

The 2005 Eurobarometer survey revealed that EU citizens' support for Turkey is 35%, while the vast majority of 55% were against Turkish membership.<sup>86</sup> Interestingly, the countries most opposed to the Turkish accession were Austria, Cyprus, France, Germany, and Greece.<sup>87</sup>

Figure 1 suggests,<sup>88</sup> the Europeans' main concern was the respect for Human Rights and the economic impact Turkey's accession could have on the EU, with the overflow of immigrants to more developed countries. At the same time, they noted that the cultural differences are of great importance, while the people's beliefs that the Turkish accession would increase the mutual understanding between the EU and Turkey remained controversial, with the people being divided into half and half. In addition, the majority of the people did not believe that Turkey's accession would increase security and that Turkey's bid for accession derives more from its geographical stance than its historical.

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<sup>86</sup> Nicholas Watt, 'EUROPEANS REJECT TURKEY, POLL SHOWS | WORLD NEWS', *The Guardian*, 2005, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/jul/19/turkey.eu>.

<sup>87</sup> Jan Repa, 'ANALYSIS: EU VIEWS ON TURKISH BID', BBC News, 30 September 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4298408.stm>.

<sup>88</sup> 'Standard Eurobarometer 63 - Spring 2005 - July 2005 - Eurobarometer Survey Publications Report' p.161, n.d., <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/505>.



Figure 1.

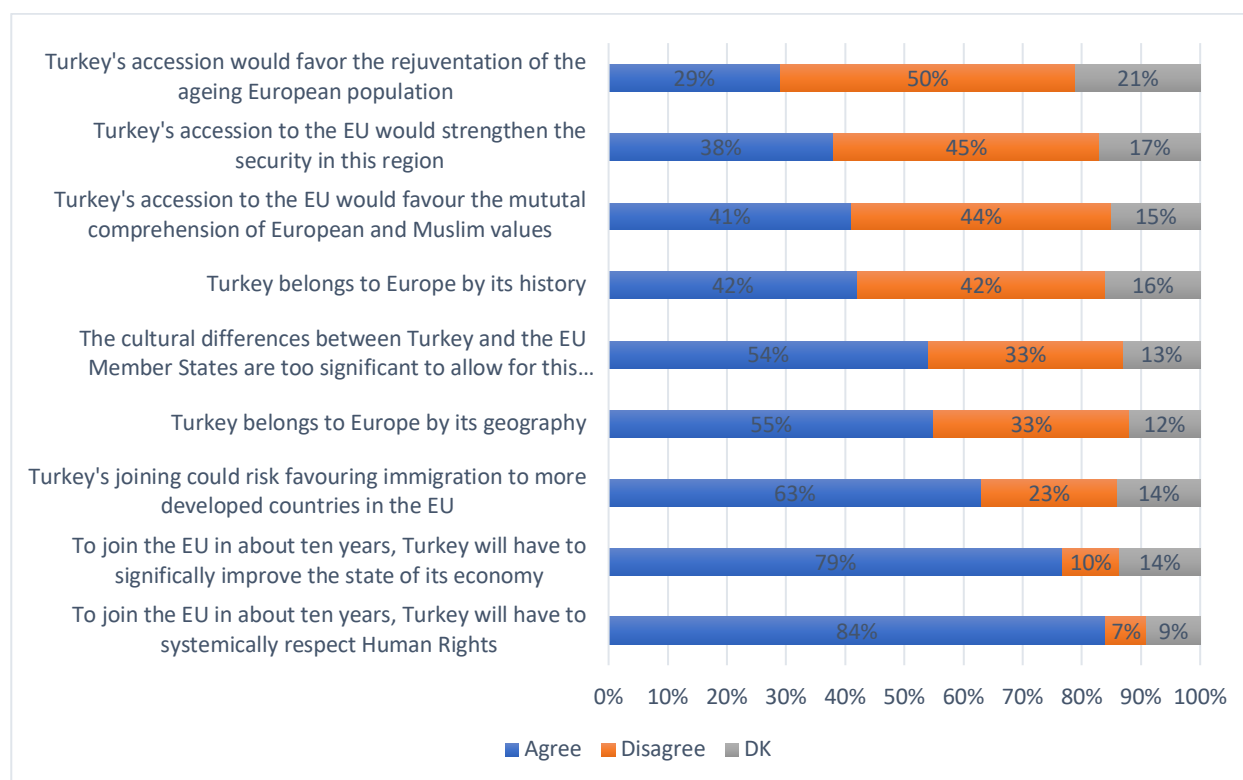


Figure 1 presents the degree of agreement or disagreement of the European public to statements related to Turkey's accession (Source: Standard Eurobarometer 63 – Spring 2005 – Publication Reports p161 <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/505>)

In 2008, an opinion poll conducted in some of the EU's countries revealed that the support for the Turkish accession seemed to deteriorate: the countries opposed the accession by 13%-29% more than in the 2005 Eurobarometer survey.<sup>89</sup>

Between 2016 and 2018, the public opinion seemed to deteriorate even more: 76% of the Europeans were against a possible Turkish accession to the EU, with countries like Austria, Germany, Cyprus, Greece, and Belgium leading the board. At the same time, surveys focused on which country is more compatible and should enter the EU suggested that Turkey should not be allowed to join the EU, as it ended last in preference.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>89</sup> European Parliament, 'OPINION POLL ON THE ACCESSION OF TURKEY TO THE EU', Parliamentary questions, 2008, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-6-2008-4999\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-6-2008-4999_EN.html).

<sup>90</sup> Jakob Lindgaard, 'EU PUBLIC OPINION ON TURKISH EU MEMBERSHIP: TRENDS AND DRIVERS', Trans European Policy Studies Association, FEUTURE Online Paper No. 25, 2018, <https://www.tepsa.eu/feuture-online-paper-no-25-eu-public-opinion-on-turkish-eu-membership/>.

## 2.3.2 IN GREECE

Due to the tension in Greek-Turkish relations, it is expected that the Greek public would not be supportive of the Turkish accession to the EU. A more detailed analysis of the Eurobarometer surveys confirms this expectation.

In 2005 74% of the Greek public was in favor of further European enlargement, a number that is the highest compared to the EU average, which was 49%.<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, Greeks did not support the Turkish accession, as 79% believed its neighboring country had no place in the EU.

Figure 2 presents the reasons behind the rejection:<sup>92</sup>

Figure 2.

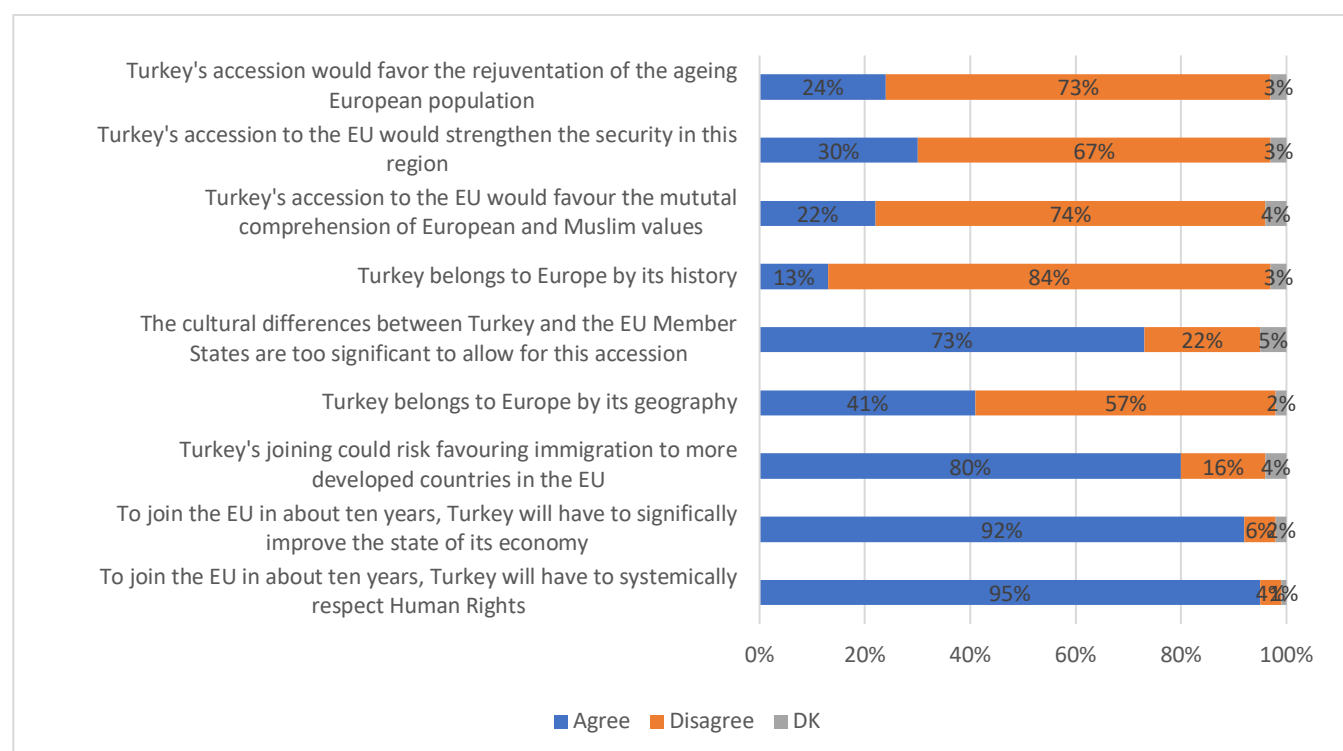


Figure 2 presents the degree of agreement or disagreement of the Greek public to statements related to Turkey's accession (Source: Standard Eurobarometer 64 - Autumn 2005 - December 2005 - - Eurobarometer survey National reports, Greece p59)

<sup>91</sup> 'Standard Eurobarometer 64 - Autumn 2005 - December 2005 - - Eurobarometer Survey National Reports, Greece p57', accessed 8 June 2022, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/833>.

<sup>92</sup> 'Standard Eurobarometer 64 - Autumn 2005 - December 2005 - - Eurobarometer Survey National Reports, Greece p59'.

The comparison of figure 1 to figure 2 indicates that the Greek population had more radical opinions regarding Turkey's accession; the Greek public opinion saw fewer advantages of the Turkish accession while believing that Turkey was incompatible with the EU. Per the Public Choice Theory, the Greek politicians will have more radical opinions than the politicians of other ethnicity and would try to promote that more consistently. The 2010 and 2018 Eurobarometer surveys revealed that the Greek public maintained this stance towards Turkey's accession.<sup>93</sup>

Due to the use of standard questions for all member states, it is difficult to grasp whether the national interests and policy reflect and source the public's negativity towards the Turkish accession. Nevertheless, according to the Public Choice Theory, this negativity would flame the politicians to pursue the halting the negotiations.

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<sup>93</sup> Jakob Lindgaard, *'EU PUBLIC OPINION ON TURKISH EU MEMBERSHIP: TRENDS AND DRIVERS'*, p7-8'...

## 2.4 CONCLUSIONS

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International law and global multilateral treaties are some of the factors that have affected the relationship between Turkey and Europe. Turkey tried to engage with the international community ever since World War II ended. It participated in organizations and conventions like the UN, NATO, and the G20, interacting with the EU and Europe's member states. Through this participation, it legitimized its position and proved its western orientation.

The chronic cooperation of the EU and Turkey suggests that both are committed to enhancing the cooperation degree and willing to take the next step in their relationship, which is no other than Turkey becoming an EU member state. Nevertheless, it failed to achieve membership status.

The Greco-Turkish tension has existed in the international arena since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, excluding the Ottoman Empire occupation of Greece. During the accession negotiation process, Greece openly pointed out its expectations from the Turkish accession: national gains. It expected that the Turkey allowed to enter the European Union was the one that respected the EU standards, policies, and treaties, which aligned with the ways to fulfilling the national interests. Thus, Greece supported the accession and the attached institutional democratic reform in exchange for fulfilling its interests.

At the same time, the tension in the bilateral relations affected the public opinion; the levels of the support of the Greek public for the accession were among the lowest. The research on its development indicates that the piling up of not-solved problems, which seem to multiply over the years, maintained the low support levels. This fact influenced the Greek politicians' behavior.

# 3. THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RECORDS AS A WITNESS: POLITICIANS IN THE ACT

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## 3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

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The research utilizes the European Parliament records to present the narrative of the Turkish accession through the eyes of the Parliament's members (MEPs) with a focus on Greek politicians from 2005 to 2018. This immense archive contains official documents issued by the European Parliament, like Comitology, reports, SWD/SEC documents, amendments for resolutions, Parliament minutes, incoming and outgoing mail, press release, and written questions by the MEPs to the Commission and the European Council and their written answers. This research analyses the written questions.

These official documents can provide valuable information regarding the points that the MEPs raised in relation to the Turkish accession, the concerns, and the objections to the EU's enlargement in that direction, and the minimum obligations Turkey had to fulfill to be granted full membership. The records assign a unique number to each question; thus, it is easier to code, revisit and refer to them.

The first step of the thematic analysis method dictates the familiarization with the data. During this step I identified the type of information that was relevant.<sup>94</sup> For complete research, six types of information were needed:

1. the time of the question, to understand the timeline
2. the name of the MEP
3. the political party that the MEP belonged, to understand the political orientation
4. the country of origin
5. the central theme or point of each question<sup>95</sup>
6. the code that was assigned to the question, to revisit the information and check the results if needed

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<sup>94</sup> This is the second step of the analysis.

<sup>95</sup> This information is the third step of the analysis.

The country of origin was not included in the written question documents; therefore, further research was conducted to determine this important information.

The software program that was used to process the information was excel. It contained six columns with the important information, and each line provided knowledge regarding one question. For example:

| Date       | Political party | Name                  | Country of origin | Theme                         | Coding name      |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 08/02/2005 | IND/DEM         | Georgios Karatzaferis | Greece            | Religious and minority rights | P6_QE (2005)0386 |

This process was used for all written questions related to Turkey and its accession process, regardless of the MEPs' country of origin, even though this the focus were Greek politicians. The reason behind this decision is that it is more critical to include the information in its environment. For example, if out of a thousand written questions, only ten belonged to Greek MEPs, it is safe to say that they did not try to impact on the Turkish accession. At the same time, this process provided knowledge regarding the thoughts of the European politicians as a unity and can serve as a starting point to analyze the behavior of politicians from a different country of origin or a specific political party.

Thence, a review of the themes was conducted, and eleven categories were made to match the most common topics.<sup>96</sup> The categories are as follows:

1. Accession Process / Copenhagen criteria / EU compatibility / Institutions / Policies
2. Human Rights
3. Migrants / Immigrants / Refugees
4. Financial concerns / Financial related matters / Impact on EU
5. Animal Rights
6. Greco- Turkish dispute / Sovereignty over the Aegean
7. Environmental and Archaeological concerns

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<sup>96</sup> The fourth step of the analysis.

8. Cyprus dispute
9. Public opinion opposition
10. Turkish foreign policy / Anti-western orientation
11. Other

The first category contains various elements. It includes doubts about Turkish eligibility to join the EU and inquiries regarding the accession process and the opening of the *acquis* chapters. Furthermore, it contains concerns over whether Turkey meets the Copenhagen criteria as all members should. The doubts could be of intellectual nature, whether Turkey's cultural identity is compatible with joining the EU, or more practical, like geographical eligibility and political compatibility. At the same time, it includes information on the compatibility of Turkish institutions and policies with the ones of the EU and the proliferation and respect of treaties. Therefore, some of the prominent themes are the cultural and religious differences, the agricultural practices, the situation in the Turkish political arena and its reform, security issues and tension created, and the gradual desecralization of the Turkish state.

The "Human Rights" category contains multiple information regarding the respect for the human rights in Turkey and their deterioration. More specifically, it refers to the violations of the minorities' rights and the rights to practice religion freely. It also contains parts regarding the protection of the property of the minorities. Some concerns revolve around the rights of women and children and the degradation of their rights, while others express the rights of the LGTB community in Turkey. Emphasis is given to the freedom of expression. Gradually freedom of expression in Turkey was limited; people were arrested over expressing opinions opposite to the political form, media was controlled, and a lot of websites were under state control or blocked. Furthermore, the category contains rights violations and hostility towards two considerable minorities: the Kurds and the Armenians. The Kurds were deprived of their human rights on multiple occasions, specifically regarding freedom of expression, political representation, and language rights. Turkey also conducted military operations in Iraq to expel the Kurdish element. The most crucial part of the relations with the Armenian minority is the nonrecognition of the Armenian genocide.

The "Migrants / Immigrants / Refugees" category expresses issues related to migration, immigration, and refuge. At the early stages of the negotiations process, before the mass population movement from the East to the West, some politicians mentioned the problems that might occur in the Turkish accession, naming that a large population of Turkey would migrate

to more developed European countries. Some noted that some people of Turkish descent were already legally or illegally trying to find a way to European countries. When the Syrian war emerged, and people slowly but gradually were asking for refuge in neighboring countries, a large part of the concerns was the Action Plan, its terms and conditions, the Turkish failure to honor it, and concerns about the future in case the plan collapsed. At this point, Turkey was using the immigration issue to pressure for gains and, on multiple occasions, expressed threats of opening its borders and releasing refugees on European grounds if it was not granted the proliferation of the Visa.

The “financial concerns / financial related matters / impact on EU” category refers to the impact the grant of full membership would have on the EU. Mostly, this category revolves around the economic impact, the pre-accession funds to Turkey and how they were used, and the status of the economic relations between the two associates at any given point through the Customs Union.

The “Animal rights” category refers to the violations and the mistreatment of animals in the Turkish area. In addition, there are some references on the transportation of live animals by EU countries to Turkey and the poor conditions of their transfer and treatment once reaching the borders.

The “Greco- Turkish dispute / sovereignty over the Aegean” is mainly raised by Greek politicians, expressing the rights violations towards the Greek population in Turkish territory, the inability to honor the Lausanne treaty, which regulated the relations between the two countries, and the constant questioning of the Aegean sovereignty and the exploitation of its resources. It also contains air and sea violations by Turkish vessels and the inability to honor the Law of the Sea treaty.

The “Environmental and Archaeological heritage” category refers to the protection of the environment and the cultural and archaeological monuments of non- Turkish past. The environmental aspect is a result of the construction of a Dam that destroyed the environment and the construction of a nuclear energy factory, which could turn into a security issue, and the respect of minority monuments. An important element is the exploitation of the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, and other churches and monasteries.

The “Cyprus dispute” category includes all the issues revolving around Cyprus and the relationship between the two states. It contains issues from the past and present, since the 1974



Turkish invasion and occupation of the Northern part of the island and the exploitation of the natural resources in the Cypriot EEZ. In addition, Turkey did not recognize Cyprus as a member of the EU, and it failed to extend the Ankara Protocol to this member state. As a result, issues were raised and discussed in the European Parliament.

The “Public opinion opposition” category presents the opposition of the population in the EU and Turkey to the possible Turkish accession. Even though the issue was not raised multiple, it is essential to present it was discussed to stop the negotiations process.

After 2009, a shift in Turkish foreign policy was noticed; Turkey turned to the East to tighten relations with Eastern countries or involve itself in disputes. The members of the Parliament discuss this shift and its results to express concerns. The questions that fall under this category are found in the “Turkish foreign policy / Anti- western orientation” category.

The last category includes some inquiries that were irrelevant to the other categories. It consists of some questions regarding the US involvement in the initiation of accession negotiations, accusations of espionage, provocative statements by Turkish officials, and the opposition France had at the outburst of the accession negotiations. Nicolas Sarkozy openly expressing his contradiction to Turkey and its compatibility with joining the EU. Some MEPs were concerned about the impact of the French opposition since France is an important member of the European Union and one of the founder states.

Some important notes are that some of the written questions were submitted by multiple people that occasionally were members of different political parties. In that case, all countries of origin and political parties were noted. In the case of two people from the same origin or political orientation, the country and the party were noted once.

In addition, it is possible to review a question that raised concerns related to two categories. In that case, both categories were noted. An example:

**Question for written answer E-000929/2011**

**to the Commission**

Rule 117

**Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)**

Subject: EU funding for Turkey for the return of migrants

Can the Commission indicate whether Turkey has received EU funding to authorise the return into its territory of illegal migrants from Europe? If so, how much funding was given and how effective does the Commission consider this measure to have been?

This question submitted by a Greek member belonging to the PPE political party referred to the immigration issue from a financial aspect. The question was placed under the “Migrants / Immigrants / Refugees” category and the “Financial concerns / Financial related matters / Impact on EU” category.

Furthermore, it is essential to note that most of the written questions expressed the concerns and the incident that caused them, intending to inform the institution receiving the document and concluded by asking what the impact on the accession process would be. As moving forward to the closing of the negotiations, MEPs openly requested the freezing of the negotiations in reference to the developments.

## 3.2 EUROPEAN POLITICIANS

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The European Parliament archive provides valuable information regarding the narrative of Turkey’s accession negotiations and the instances that caught the attention and affected the accession process. At the same time, it informs about the concerns of the European Parliament members.

The total number of written questions regarding Turkey and its accession process from 2005 to 2018 was 2570. The content of the questions is as follows:

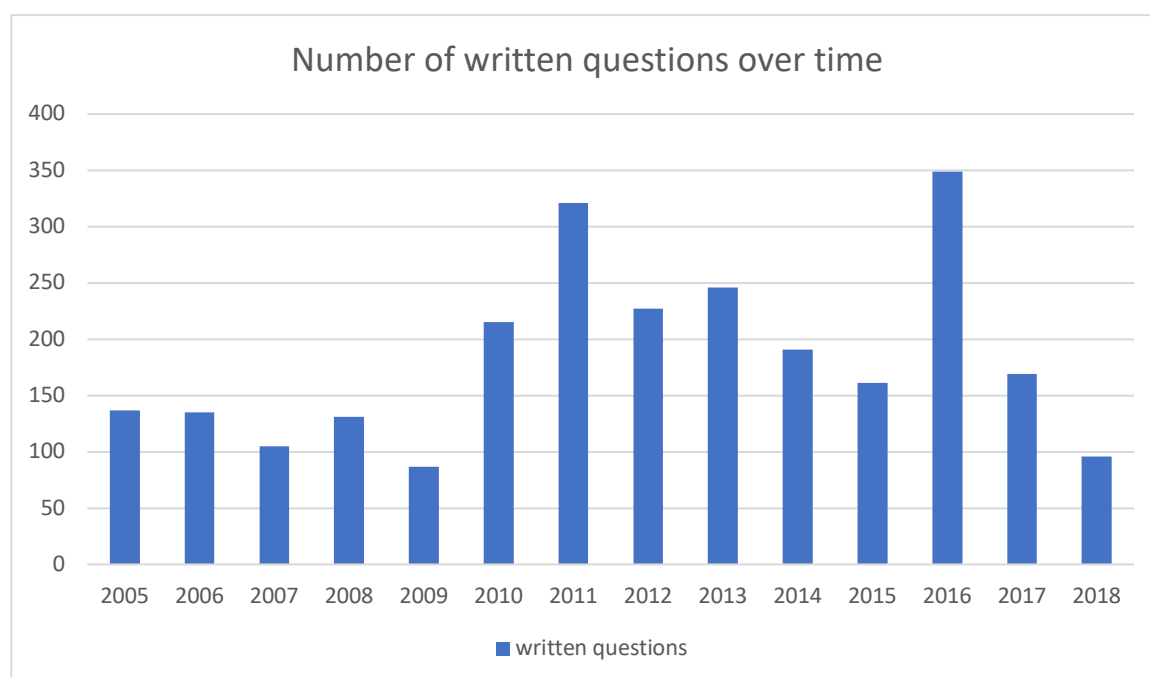
Figure 3.

| <u>Category</u>                                                                      | <u>Sum of questions addressed</u> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Human Rights                                                                         | 926                               |
| Accession process / Copenhagen criteria / EU compatibility / institutions / policies | 454                               |
| Cyprus dispute                                                                       | 381                               |
| Migrants / Immigrants / Refugees                                                     | 258                               |
| Financial concerns / Financial related matters / Impact on EU                        | 264                               |
| Greco- Turkish dispute / Sovereignty over the Aegean                                 | 149                               |
| Turkish foreign policy / Anti-western orientation                                    | 119                               |
| Environmental and Archaeological concerns                                            | 97                                |
| Animal Rights                                                                        | 33                                |
| Other                                                                                | 39                                |
| Public opinion opposition                                                            | 12                                |

*This table presents the allocation of the written questions in the categories.*

In addition, while the accession process moves over time and more matters rise, more and more questions were addressed to express the concerns. The allocation of the questions over time is as follows:

Figure 4.



*This graph presents the progression of written questions over time.*

Regarding the topic of discussion, human rights have been the center of attention throughout the years. At the beginning of the negotiations process, politicians were focused on the state of human rights in Turkey. The questions varied; some presented general concerns and some focused on specific topics or incidents.

The most prominent themes were the general minority rights, women and children's rights, and freedom of exercising religious rights. Some queries focused on the state of the Kurdish minority rights. The questions were focused on the freedom to use the Kurdish language in school and in public, with the ban on the use of the letters Q and W since they are not part of the Turkish alphabet. At the same time, the Kurdish minority was gradually but steadily stripped of its political representation rights, with Kurdish politicians being accused of plotting against the Turkish state and being imprisoned or murdered. The politicians did not fail to mention the Iraq invasion, which had the goal of extinguishing the Kurdish element of the area.

The other prominent topic was the freedom of expression. Politicians discussed the arrest and conviction of people in Turkey that voiced their opinions regarding the political arena, tactics, human rights violations, and preferences. The article 301 of the Turkish penal code was targeted; this article forbids people to insult Turkey in any way, from the Turkish institutions and government to the insult of its national heroes. Some presented the inhuman state of the

imprisoned. At the same time, gradually, Turkey tried to censor the media; books were banned, YouTube and Twitter were censored, and newspapers that were not aligned with the Turkish government were closed, with editors and writers being captured.

In 2016, the inquiries regarding human rights increased; the reason was twofold: politicians were concerned about the situation after the coup when a lot of people were charged with treason and plotting against the state, and the rights of the immigrants and refugees that reached Turkey. The questions revolved around their living conditions, their rights to education, and their illegal exploitation in Turkish clothes factories.

Regarding the Cyprus dispute, at the beginning of the negotiations process, politicians were concerned regarding the non-recognition of Cyprus as a European member and the non-extension of the Ankara Protocol of 1963. Politicians of multiple nationalities brought up this question. When it was decided that no chapter of the acquis could be provisionally closed until the recognition of Cyprus, politicians were eased.

Then, the Cypriot politicians raised matters that revolved around the past, like the capture and the execution of Cypriots in 1974, and the present, like the exploitation of the churches and monuments in the Northern part of the island, the property of the people that were expelled and their inhabitation of Turkish people, illegally brought to colonize the island. In addition, some politicians were concerned about the rights of the minorities in the Northern part of the island.

In 2011, the statements made by Turkish officials to ignore the Cypriot presidency of the Council caught the attention of the European Parliament members; politicians were expressing incompatibility with the EU and wondered about the impact of such statements on the process.

After 2014, politicians, primarily Cypriots, were concerned about the exploitation of oil and gas extracted by Turkey within the Cypriot EEZ, demonstrating that this activity violates the Cypriot sovereignty and damages the Cyprian economy and, therefore, the EU.

The compatibility with EU institutions and policies and the eligibility to join the EU were brought up a lot. At the beginning of the negotiations process, politicians expressed concerns regarding the cultural differences, the agricultural practices, and institutional practices that did not match the EU standards; Turkish institutions were not aligned with the EU. At the same time, politicians presented policies and treaties that Turkey had not implemented, like the Energy policies, the Law of the Sea, and the treaty regarding nuclear energy. Some were

concerned about whether Turkey was ready to join the EU and, thus, were worried about the opening of the negotiations process, the progress of the process, and the state of the political reform in Turkey.

In the years before the closing of the negotiations, as Turkey was becoming more radical and democracy and human rights were deteriorating, politicians were concerned regarding Turkey's eligibility to join the EU and were openly asking to reevaluate whether the accession process should continue; some politicians were openly demanding the freezing of the negotiations, which led to the Parliamentary vote to freeze the negotiations in 2016. Politicians were concerned about the impact this vote would have on the accession process.

The financial concerns were increasing as time went by. In the first years of the accession negotiations, MEPs were occupied with the impact on the EU of the Turkish accession, mainly financially, expressing concerns regarding the Customs Union and the adaptation to the EU's economy. As time went by, more and more politicians were concerned about the pre-accession funding given to Turkey, its amount, and its use. During the end of the process, Europeans asked for the restriction on pre-accession financing and expressed concerns about its misuse: EU funds that were meant to fight the refugee issue were used to purchase armaments for the Turkish Eastern wars.

Regarding the migration/ immigration questions, during the initial stages, the questions were few; most of them revolved around the regulation of Turkish people illegally transferred to the EU, both through the Greek borders and to colonize the Northern part of Cyprus. Questions also revolved around the regulations of the Turkish people that would travel to the EU once the borders were unified.

The inquiries increased in 2010. Most of them were from Greek members of the European Parliament addressing the illegal transportation through Turkey, stating that Turkish people and vessels were the ones transferring the immigrants.

After 2015, when the ramifications of the Syrian war reached the EU borders, politicians were concerned regarding the terms and the conditions of the Action Plan, meaning that they addressed financially related matters and unmet obligations by Turkey, and they foresaw the collapse of the plan and wondered what the next step is. Turkey used the Syrian refugee question to apply pressure and openly threaten to open the borders to the EU, thus not follow the Action Plan, in exchange for progress in the accession process and the liberation of the

Visa, so that Turkish people could freely travel and migrate in the EU. Furthermore, MEPs were concerned regarding the use of funds allocated for Syrian refugees and the rights violations of the refugees in Turkey.

The problem of the orientation of Turkey seems to be occurring after 2009, which marks Turkey's change in foreign policy and its involvement in Eastern affairs. The building of closer ties with the East and the participation in the Eastern crisis was addressed. Politicians also commented on provocative statements that targeted the EU, thus expressing the anti-western orientation of Turkey.

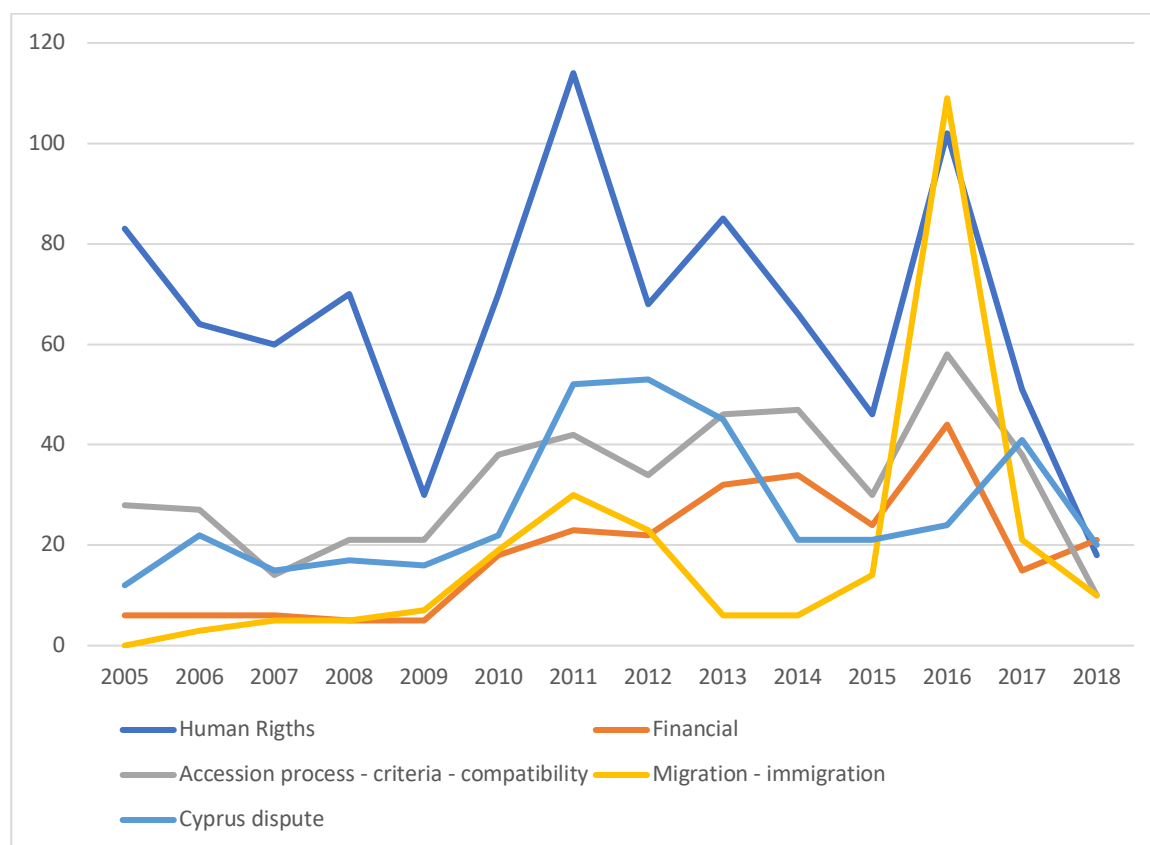
The public opinion opposition concerns were mostly expressed at the beginning of the negotiations due to the publication of Eurobarometer surveys regarding the public opinion on Turkish accession. The opposition attracted the interest of some MEPs, mainly to demonstrate Turkey's incompatibility with the EU and to confront about the impact it would have on the accession process.

Furthermore, during the first years of the negotiations process, politicians were concerned about the French opposition to Turkey's accession. Nevertheless, French politicians actively started to address questions after 2014; French inquiries from 2005 to 2013 were only 19.

The Greek dispute category includes views of mainly Greek politicians and revolves around the questioning of Greek sovereignty. Most specifically, it refers to Turkish vessels' air and sea violations and the exploitation of the Aegean resources. Before 2010 the category did not include many inquiries; the peak was in 2010-2011.

The following graph presents detailed information regarding the 5 categories with the most inquiries:

Figure 5.



*This graph shows the development of the 5 most common categories over time, presenting the content of the questions addressed each year.*

Interestingly, the most prominent categories reflect the European public’s opinion, proving that the public impelled the politicians to consider its demurs and express them in the institutional context. The biggest claim of the public was the need to respect Human Rights, which is reflected in the research, the impact of the economic entanglement, immigration, and cultural, geographical, and historical eligibility to join the EU and the Turkish compatibility.<sup>97</sup>

The nationality of the members of the European Parliament that are mostly involved and attempt to communicate with the Commission and the Council is an interesting topic that provides insight into the national thoughts regarding the Turkish European accession process.

Most inquiries were made from politicians of Greek origin, followed by Cyprus, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK, Austria, France, Germany, and Spain.

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<sup>97</sup> More information in the “The public opinion parameter” chapter.



The countries of the former Soviet Union, some of the small central countries of the EU, and the Scandinavian countries made zero to little reference to the matter: Hungary, Latvia, Slovenia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Croatia, Bulgaria, Malta, Finland, Romania, Luxemburg, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Ireland, Estonia, and Portugal. The following tables present the findings:<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> The countries listed are 28, the matter was raised before BREXIT.

Figure 6.

| <u>Country</u>     | <u>Sum of questions addressed</u> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Greece             | 631                               |
| Cyprus             | 418                               |
| Italy              | 314                               |
| Belgium            | 245                               |
| The Netherlands    | 208                               |
| UK                 | 203                               |
| Austria            | 127                               |
| France             | 124                               |
| Germany            | 119                               |
| Spain              | 90                                |
| Denmark            | 53                                |
| Portugal           | 35                                |
| Slovakia           | 30                                |
| Sweden             | 25                                |
| Romania            | 22                                |
| Malta              | 15                                |
| Poland             | 14                                |
| Finland            | 12                                |
| Bulgaria           | 12                                |
| Ireland            | 10                                |
| Croatia            | 9                                 |
| The Czech Republic | 7                                 |
| Lithuania          | 4                                 |
| Estonia            | 3                                 |
| Luxemburg          | 2                                 |
| Slovenia           | 1                                 |
| Latvia             | 1                                 |
| Hungary            | 0                                 |

*This table presents the questions made in relation to MEPs' countries of origin.*

Figure 7.

| Category                                       | The ten most active countries |     |     |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|                                                | GR                            | CY  | IT  | BE  | NL | UK | AT | FR | DE | ES |
| Human Rights                                   | 166                           | 127 | 142 | 141 | 78 | 81 | 46 | 35 | 35 | 40 |
| Financial                                      | 34                            | 15  | 50  | 14  | 13 | 46 | 24 | 22 | 10 | 12 |
| Environmental<br>Archaeological                | 47                            | 26  | 10  | 6   | 2  | 3  | 8  | 2  | 6  | 0  |
| Greek dispute                                  | 132                           | 7   | 4   | 14  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 1  |
| Public opinion<br>Opposition                   | 2                             | 1   | 1   | 4   |    |    | 1  |    |    |    |
| Accession<br>process criteria<br>compatibility | 88                            | 50  | 67  | 52  | 56 | 36 | 20 | 31 | 18 | 16 |
| Turkish<br>foreign policy                      | 21                            | 16  | 18  | 5   | 24 | 3  | 11 | 7  | 1  | 3  |
| Migration<br>immigration                       | 94                            | 18  | 14  | 15  | 13 | 19 | 7  | 32 | 8  | 15 |
| Animal Rights                                  | 4                             | 0   | 1   | 1   | 3  | 7  | 4  | 2  | 7  | 0  |
| Cyprus dispute                                 | 98                            | 184 | 22  | 21  | 15 | 14 | 12 | 5  | 2  | 3  |
| Other                                          | 9                             | 7   | 3   | 5   | 7  | 1  | 0  | 3  | 0  | 0  |

*This table presents the allocation of questions in categories in relation to the ten most active countries.*

Remarkable is also the fact that most of the inquiries by the least active countries were expressed after 2014, when the immigration issue was imperative, and the problems in EU-Turkey's cooperation were prominent.

From the second semester of 2018 and thereafter, the inquiries about Turkey dropped significantly due to the closing of the negotiations; MEPs had no interest in involving themselves in Turkish affairs.

### 3.3 THE GREEK PHENOMENON IN RELATION TO TURKEY: THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S RECORDS EVIDENCE

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The Greek members of the European Parliament addressed 631 questions to the Commission and the Council from 2005 to 2018. This result represents almost one fourth of the total questions. The following table presents the allocation of the questions to the categories:

Figure 8.

| <u>Category</u>                              | <u>Number of questions</u> |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Human Rights                                 | 166                        |
| Greek dispute                                | 132                        |
| Cyprus dispute                               | 98                         |
| Migration – immigration                      | 94                         |
| Accession process - criteria - compatibility | 88                         |
| Environmental Archaeological                 | 47                         |
| Financial                                    | 34                         |
| Turkish foreign policy                       | 21                         |
| Other                                        | 9                          |
| Animal Rights                                | 4                          |
| Public opinion opposition                    | 2                          |

*Table of the allocation of the questions to the categories.*

From 2005 to 2009, Greek MEPs addressed 131 questions, most of which were related to human rights violations in Turkey. The inquiries revolved around the guarding of religious and minority rights; some addressed the rights of the Greek minority.

From 2010 to 2018, the activity of Greek politicians increased dramatically: 500 questions were addressed to the Commission and the Council. A change in Turkish foreign policy marked the first years of the decade, and Turkish officials were expressing provocative opinions that questioned the sovereignty of Greece and proceeded to exclaim threats of war. Greek politicians grasped the change, addressed the problems, and demanded solutions. More specifically, the Greek MEPs focused on addressing provocative behavior and statements by Turkey's officials, sought a mediation to resolve the disputes, and wondered whether this behavior would impact the accession process.

The disputes revolved around the air and sea violations of Greek territory and claims about the sovereignty of the Aegean islands. Another topic commented on by the politicians was the threats of war by Turkey. During the last years of the negotiations, politicians mentioned the Turkish claims of the natural resources between the Greek and Cypriot EEZ.

The Cyprus dispute and its resolution are topics of interest for Greek MEPs throughout all negotiation years, while the immigration crisis of 2015 rekindled the dispute; the management of the refugee flows and the threat to open the Turkish borders attracted attention.

The following table sums the results:<sup>99</sup>

Figure 9.

| <u>Category</u>                              | <u>Two different time periods</u> |                    |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
|                                              | 2005-2009 (131 q.)                | 2010-2018 (500 q.) |
| Human Rights                                 | 50                                | 116                |
| Greek dispute                                | 16                                | 116                |
| Cyprus dispute                               | 20                                | 77                 |
| Migration – immigration                      | 9                                 | 85                 |
| Accession process - criteria – compatibility | 25                                | 63                 |
| Environmental Archaeological                 | 12                                | 35                 |
| Financial                                    | 6                                 | 28                 |
| Turkish foreign policy                       | 0                                 | 21                 |
| Other                                        | 3                                 | 6                  |
| Animal Rights                                | 1                                 | 3                  |
| Public opinion opposition                    | 2                                 | 0                  |

*This table presents the topics and the questions addressed in two time periods: 2005-2009 and 2010-2018.*

The fission to these two time periods was opted because the relations between the two stakeholders seem to be turning in 2010 and following a downward trend. The increase of the Greek MEPs’ involvement in the process and exertion of pressure to resolve matters that, in the Greek opinion, are crucial to the accession process is explained by the narrative of the

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<sup>99</sup> The sum of the question and the sum of the themes represented differ; there are questions that reflect more than one topic as explained in the “*Research design*” chapter.

increasing tension between Greece and Turkey in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as described in the previous chapter.

The matter of Human Rights is important for the Greek MEPs, even though it represents only 18% of the total questions related to this topic addressed. As the findings suggest, Greek politicians focused on fulfilling national interests by attracting attention to the Aegean, the Cyprus dispute, and the immigration crisis while occasionally expressing concerns about Turkey's eligibility and EU alignment. The financial matters seem to be of minor importance, with the Greek questions representing 9% of the total, even though Greece's economic crisis was born and peaked during the studied period. In other words, Greek politicians reflected the public opinion while expressing the policy toward the Turkish accession, which is no different from the fulfilment of national interests.

The findings regarding the Greek politicians do not fully agree with the narrative of the European politicians on the accession. The latter group focused on different topics than the former, which is another indicator of the differentiated motives of the two groups. The Greek narrative is unique.

### 3.4 CONCLUSIONS

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The more profound analysis of the written questions addressed to the Commission and the Council by European Parliament records revealed the narrative of the European and the Greek attitude towards the Turkish accession.

Firstly, the politicians intend to inform and be informed. The MEPs presented situations that attracted attention and challenged Turkey's eligibility. Simultaneously, the politicians were concerned about the state of the accession process and the details of the cooperation thus far.

The points of focus match the public opinion; thus, the European politicians tried to satisfy the Europeans and carry out their will. The topics most raised were the Human Rights violations, the alignment with the EU and the *acquis*, the Cyprus dispute, the management of the immigration crisis, and financial concerns related to Turkey and its accession. These findings match the public opinion's concerns.

The Greek inquiries were 631 out of 2570, representing almost a quarter of the findings. Considering that 28 member states were participating in the European Parliament, the proportion of the Greek inquiries is significant.

Further research of the Greek politicians revealed that the focus points are different: even though human rights (166 out of 926 questions, 18%) and the alignment with the EU (88 out of 454 questions, 19%) remained a priority, Greece focused on discussing its disputes with Turkey (132 questions), the Cyprus dispute (98 out of 381 questions, 26%) and the immigration issue (94 out of 258 questions, 36%); Greek politicians followed the public's will and tried to promote their national interests.

In addition, the historical developments, and the deterioration of the Greco-Turkish relations in the second decade of the 21st century, which highlighted the unfulfilled Greek national interests, are reflected in the narrative. The questions and concerns of the Greek MEPs almost tripled after 2010, suggesting that Greece foresaw that its national interests would remain unfulfilled and, since it would only support the Turkish accession in return for national gains, felt the need to influence the accession in the opposite direction.

## 4. CONCLUSION

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The European Union and Turkey have a long history of institutional cooperation: the UN, NATO, the G20, and the Ankara agreement with the enclosed Customs Union creation, which regulated their relationship. In the initial stages of the EU formation, Turkey expressed its desire to become a state with full membership. After years of rejection due to Turkey's incompatibility, the EU decided at the Helsinki summit to start the negotiations process as soon as Turkey abided by the Copenhagen criteria. The negotiations began in 2005.

At the same time, Greece and Turkey's relations are characterized by tension and diplomatic turmoil: the two countries came on the verge of declaring war, especially during the last decade of the past century.

Nevertheless, Greece agreed to the opening of the accession negotiations hoping that it would promote the establishment of cordial relations and the resolution of the disputes. Greece developed a national policy regarding Turkey's accession: conflict resolution would be achieved through the EU's institutions, and the Turkish abide by them. Turkey had to undergo a democratic reform. After all, Greece could be part of the transition process, as the institutions encharged with the EU's enlargement allowed members' influence. Greek officials and institutions supported that policy and expressed the Greek focus points in detail.

In the most recent years, the *casus belli* from the Greek perspective revolved around the questioning of the Greek sovereignty, the Cyprus dispute, the protection of the Greek minority's rights and the Patriarchate, and in the latter studied years, the management of the migration crisis.

The European public, particularly the Greek society, did not support Turkey's accession. In a 2005 survey, 55% of the EU public versus 79% of the Greek public suggested that the EU should not pursue enlargement. The support seems to deteriorate as time went by.

As a member of the European Union, Greece could affect the negotiations process. The institutions concerned with the enlargement process and the process itself allow high EU member states' involvement. The Council consists of the member states' Prime ministers and provides the ability to veto the accession, while the European Parliament has an advisory role to the Council. The Commission is encharged with enacting and implementing policy and the



decisions of the other two institutions. In addition, the negotiations process requires the homophonous consensus of the member states in its initial and final stages.

Nevertheless, member states are morally and institutionally obliged to follow European policies, such as enlargement; any direction to the opposite, like the veto power, is a sign of non-alignment with European standards and contrary to the consensus culture.

Due to that and the public opinion opposition, politicians obliquely pursued their interests. Greek MEPs had the most dynamic behavior regarding Turkey's accession by addressing questions to the Commission and the Council, the other two institutions involved in the accession process. The analysis of the questions indicated that they intended to inform, enact thought and impact the accession process. The Greek narrative of the questions suggests that it is slightly differentiated from the European in the pursuit of the fulfillment of national interests.

This whole activity affected the accession process. By addressing questions, the Greek MEPs enacted the Commission and the Council to investigate to reply and informed about their concerns that the two institutions had to consider. The Commission's reports on the accession negotiations progress reflected the problems discussed: the human rights violations, the non-conformity to EU standards, and the hostile Turkish behavior to its neighbor states, mostly Cyprus. Therefore, it is concluded that the Greek presence in the European Parliament affected the longevity of the Turkish accession.

## 5. RELATION TO EXISTING LITERATURE, LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

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The research complements existing literature: the public's opposition is a factor that can affect the accession process per the theoretical framework, as Tekin (2011),<sup>100</sup> and Gerhads and Hans (2011)<sup>101</sup> suggested. At the same time, the enlargement process facilitated exogenous developments in the political arena to affect the process, as Icoz and Martin (2021)<sup>102</sup> proposed, meaning the Greco-Turkish relations. Furthermore, existing literature, like Ebru Turhan (2016)<sup>103</sup> and Tocci and Dokos (2018),<sup>104</sup> focused on Greece's intention to influence the Turkish accession, possibly through the way the EU's institutions were structured. Still, it focused on the Cyprus dispute as a driver. This research argues that, indeed, Greece tried to influence the process for national gains, but these gains are translated as the Aegean dispute and the protection of its sovereignty primarily, the Cyprus dispute, and the protection of the rights of the Greek minority and the Patriarchate secondarily. Furthermore, it makes a step further to reveal the impact on the accession process; the result was the longevity of the negotiations.

The limitation of this research lies in the non-consideration of the political party of the MEPs addressing the questions, as it could provide a clearer view of the people that wanted to affect the negotiations process. Nevertheless, the research outcome is the same regardless of the political hue: Greek politicians still address 631 questions that address national wills, follow the public opinion, and affect the process.

In addition, this research does not enlighten on whether the fulfilment of national interests is reflected and motivates the opposition of the Greek public opinion. It only focuses on the fact

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<sup>100</sup> Funda Tekin, 'DIFFERENTIATED INTEGRATION: AN ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF EU–TURKEY RELATIONS'...

<sup>101</sup> Jürgen Gerhards and Silke Hans, 'WHY NOT TURKEY? ATTITUDES TOWARDS TURKISH MEMBERSHIP IN THE EU AMONG CITIZENS IN 27 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES'...

<sup>102</sup> G. Icoz and N. Martin 'HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONALISM AND EU–TURKEY RELATIONS: PATH DEPENDENCE AND CRITICAL JUNCTURES IN THE ACCESSION PROCESS'...

<sup>103</sup> Ebru Turhan, 'TURKEY'S EU ACCESSION PROCESS: DO MEMBER STATES MATTER?'

<sup>104</sup> Thanos Dokos, 'GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS AND THE CYPRUS DISPUTE'..

itself: the public had a negative stance, and the politicians promoted it. Therefore, future research could provide information on the true motives of Greek society.

Further research on the topic could focus on other factors that might have affected the Turkish accession process and the narrative of the politicians of other European countries—for example, Cyprus's impact or the impact of a specific political party.

At the same time, this research fails to examine Greece's impact on the freezing of the negotiations in 2018 or how much its claims affected other member states' politicians through lobbying. Thus, this could be a topic that requires further enlightenment.

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## ANNEX I<sup>105</sup>

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- Chapter 1: Free movement of goods
- Chapter 2: Freedom of movement for workers
- Chapter 3: Right of establishment and freedom to provide services
- Chapter 4: Free movement of capital
- Chapter 5: Public procurement
- Chapter 6: Company law
- Chapter 7: Intellectual property law
- Chapter 8: Competition policy
- Chapter 9: Financial services
- Chapter 10: Information society and media
- Chapter 11: Agriculture and rural development
- Chapter 12: Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy
- Chapter 13: Fisheries
- Chapter 14: Transport policy
- Chapter 15: Energy
- Chapter 16: Taxation
- Chapter 17: Economic and monetary policy
- Chapter 18: Statistics
- Chapter 19: Social policy and employment
- Chapter 20: Enterprise and industrial policy
- Chapter 21: Trans-European networks
- Chapter 22: Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments
- Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights
- Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security
- Chapter 25: Science and research
- Chapter 26: Education and culture
- Chapter 27: Environment
- Chapter 28: Consumer and health protection
- Chapter 29: Customs union
- Chapter 30: External relations
- Chapter 31: Foreign, security and defence policy
- Chapter 32: Financial control
- Chapter 33: Financial and budgetary provisions
- Chapter 34: Institutions
- Chapter 35: Other issues

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<sup>105</sup> This Annex presents an overview of the *acquis*, it serves as a description of the 35 chapters of the negotiations process as presented in the official EU website [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/conditions-membership/chapters-acquis\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/conditions-membership/chapters-acquis_en)