MEMBERSHIP PERSPECTIVE OF EUROPEAN UNION FOR BALKAN COUNTRIES AND MEMBERSHIP PROBLEM OF TURKEY

S. RIDVAN KARLUK

Corresponding author: Turgut Ozal University, Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences 06010 Ankara, Turkey. E-mail: rkarluk@turgutozal.edu.tr

AND SEVILAY KÜÇÜKSAKARYA

Abstract

2014 is important for Balkans. Because, 1 May 2014 is the tenth year of the membership of ten countries, eight from the former Eastern Bloc and two from Balkans, to EU and of the Eastern Enlargement or of the Big Bang Enlargement where EU expanded from 15 members to 25. In the Expansion Strategy and Main Challenges Report submitted by the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, EU has explained the comprehensiveness of its policy aimed at the Western Balkans consistent with 2003 Thessaloniki Summit which approved that the future of Western Balkans lays within EU. The Commission has the opinion that the accession of Croatia functions as a promotion and catalyst for more rapid progress of the rest of the region on the path to accession to EU rather than establishing a dividing line in the Balkans. The undertaking of EU is that, when the necessary conditions are fulfilled in the scope of the history and geography of the region, all Western Balkans may be members to EU probably before Turkey.

INTRODUCTION

European Commission has determined 2014 expansion policy as handling fundamentals first. In the scope of the new approach which prioritises the supremacy of law, the Commission will closely monitor the developments in the Balkans and promote the process of EU enlargement towards the Balkans. Deepening the integration and enlargement is interconnected and the future of enlargement policy may not be determined without discussing what the future of EU should be. Besides the enlargement policies, necessary political and institutional framework should be established within EU for the integration of new member countries with EU on the basis of values and principles. Establishment of a flexible and multi-layered EU which will reply different needs of the member countries is needed. There will not be further enlargement process in EU in this time period when the words “there will not be an enlargement in the coming five years” by Jean Claude Juncker, new president of European Commission, is evaluated.

Differences Between Europe Agreements and European Neighbourhood Policy, Black Sea Synergy and European Union Eastern Partnership

Purpose of Europe Agreements is to provide full membership of these countries to European Communities. For this, customs taxes and other restrictive precautions in trade will be cancelled by the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) within maximum 10 years (transition time). Europe Agreements are different from European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) of European Union. European Neighbourhood Policy covers 16 close neighbours of EU which don’t have candidateship status. With regard to Korosteleva (2011), these countries are as follows: Israel, Transjordan, Moldova, Morocco, Tunisia, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, Lebanon, Algeria, Syria, Libya and Belarus.
Association Agreements are signed with CEE countries and then Action Plans are prepared in the scope of these agreements. Neighbourhood Policy foresees the benefiting of neighbour countries from EU enlargement with regards to stability, security and welfare. This aim is emphasized in the European Security Strategy approved in 2003. Strategic aims which are indicated in the European Security Strategy Document of 12 December 2003 forms the basis of European Neighbourhood Policy. Broader Europe: A New Framework For Relations with Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood was prepared by the Commission in March 2003 and European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy Document was published on 12 May 2004. According to Ledge (1993), through this document, EU has put forth how close links may be provided with the countries qualified as neighbours.

Purpose of European Neighbourhood Policy is to deepen the relations of EU with its new neighbours following the fifth enlargement wave and to prevent the formation of border lines which divide the continent of Europe (EC, 2013). Therefore, Neighbourhood Policy is established for the purpose of reinforcing the links between the new neighbours, but not a new enlargement goal. Kratochvil (2006) remarked that Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED) which has replaced Barcelona Process maintains close relations with Eastern Partnership and Black Sea Synergy countries in the scope of the European Union’s European Neighbourhood Policy.

Black Sea Synergy covers 8 countries in the Black Sea basin with which European Union has cooperation. These countries are Turkey, Bulgaria, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Ukraine and Greece. While the assistance provided to Turkey in the scope of Synergy Programme from European Union budget by IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance) funds, it is transferred by the means of ENPI (European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument) for the other 7 countries (EU, 1995).

EU and Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries in the scope of the Black Sea Synergy have started the Synergy by the decision taken in Kiev meeting of 2008. The countries will in this scope realize democratic economic reforms, support economical stability and development, promote the projects which concern all countries, endeavour for peaceful settlement of regional disputes. The Synergy aims stronger regional cooperation and partnership and stronger and sustainable development in the countries in the Black Sea region. European Union Council has asked the European Commission to perform a study for Eastern Partnership in June 2008 for the purpose of reinforcing the relations between EU and its eastern neighbours and developing a special strategy for these countries in the scope of European Neighbourhood Policy.

The declaration titled Eastern Partnership (EaP) prepared and submitted to the Council and Parliament by the Commission on 3 December 2008 is approved by the European Council in the Summit of 19-20 March 2009. European Union’s Eastern Partnership Strategy is commenced by Eastern Partnership Summit which has gathered the leaders of EU associated countries on 7 May 2009. It was brought to the agenda on 26 May 2008 in the General Affairs and Foreign Relations Council in Brussels by the proposal of Radoslaw Sikorski, Foreign Affairs Minister of Poland, and support of Sweden.

As discussed by Tiede and Schirmer (2009), Eastern Partnership Strategy aims to deepen communication with Azerbaijan, Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, support stability and welfare in those countries, reinforce cooperation and joint attitude between the parties. Thus, development of eastern leg and enlargement to Eastern Europe and Southern
Caucasia and balancing of European Neighbourhood Policy by the policies of Union for the Mediterranean and Transatlantic Cooperation is aimed (Council of the European Union, 2013, 2015).

By this way, increasing the mutual interaction, trade and welfare between the parties by converging the standards to EU in political, social and economical fields is taken as a target. The strategy covers conclusion of new association agreements, creation of a more advanced economic integration between the EU and countries, reinforcement of cultural interaction by gradually increasing free circulation of people, deepening cooperation between EU and member countries in the field of energy, supporting economical and social policies to reduce the regional variations in the member countries.

Any provision regulating full membership to EU is not included in the Europe Agreements signed with CEE countries and the regulations concerning full membership are made after Europe Agreements. Following the signing of Europe Agreements, a new dimension is gained to the relations of EU with CEE countries in the Copenhagen Summit of June 1993. CEE countries will be able to be members to EU by providing certain conditions in accordance with the decision taken. Membership of such countries has become the joint goal of the contracting parties by the decision taken in the Copenhagen Summit.

With reference to Karluk (2013), the criteria which are taken as prerequisite of the membership and which should be met are determined, however, a date concerning the realization of the membership is not foreseen. Following Copenhagen Summit, Hungary has applied to EU for membership on 31 March 1994, Poland on 5 April 1994, Romania on 22 June 1995, Slovakia on 27 June 1995, Latvia on 27 October 1995, Estonia on 27 November 1995, Lithuania on 12 December 1995, Bulgaria on 16 December 1995, Czech Republic on 17 January 1996 and Slovenia on 10 June 1996.

Starting with the membership applications of CEE countries in 1994, a Pre-Accession Strategy to European Union is determined for the candidate countries in the decisions of Corfu Summit in the EU Summit held in Essen on 9-10 December 1994. This Strategy aims to create an environment of trust by establishing regular and planned political relations with the candidate countries which became party to Europe Agreements. Here, the purpose is to provide harmonization to the Single Market application of EU of the candidate countries.

Pre-Accession Strategy included in the Essen Summit decisions depends on three bases. Preparation to Domestic Market: Partner countries will be a part of the domestic market of EU in case they become a member to EU. Supporting Reforms Continued in Partner Countries in the Scope of PHARE Programme: The most important function of the backing provided to the partner countries in the framework of PHARE Programme will be the preparation of the markets of partner countries for harmonization to the community legislation and membership target.

Structural Dialogue: Establishment of a structural dialogue is foreseen to gather the countries member to EU and partner CEE countries in any level. Accession Partnership of CEE countries is accepted in December 1999, Cyprus and Malta in March 2000, Turkey in 2001. These countries have stated their National Programmes adopting the EU legislation and determined their accession priority. All countries have updated their National Programmes in 2001 (NPAA, 2001).
Expansion Strategy Documents of EU and Enlargement to Balkans in the Scope of Flexible Integration

European Union has started to publish the Expansion Strategy of the Union in 1998 together with the Progress Reports. In 2006 Strategy Document of 8 November 2006 concerning enlargement, it is put forth that public opinion support should be provided for effective operation of the Union, taking lessons from the fifth enlargement, handling the problems concerning enlargement, supporting the candidate countries in the membership process and continuation of enlargement within the existing strategy framework of EU (COM, 2006, 649 final). According to the document; the existing enlargement agenda contains Western Balkan countries and Turkey. The following opinions are expressed in the Document under Pre-Accession Strategy Title: Basic elements of of the pre-accession strategy are Accession Partnership and European Partnership. According to Korosteleva (2012), these documents determine the priorities required for the countries to provide progress towards their EU membership target on the basis of the findings included in the progress reports of EU and draw the frame of EU support given for the fulfilment of the priorities.

It is indicated in the paragraph of the Expansion Strategy Document concerning the Enlargement Process that it depends on three principles of the next expansion policy. This strategy is called “Three C”: consolidation, conditionality and communication. In the scope of consolidating the Union, EU member countries have agreed upon the requirement that the union which member number increased to 27 with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania should clean first its home before accepting new members.

Conditionality, which is the second C policy, is full implementation of the rules for the members. EU had given a date first to 10 countries including Cyprus too, then to Romania and Bulgaria for EU membership while the negotiations continued. Some deficiencies of the candidate countries were overlooked in order to observe this date and action was taken with the opinion that such deficiencies might be completed following the membership. A final date will not be given beforehand on the subject of accession of the candidate countries to EU in the framework of the rule of completely fulfilling the conditions. Even if the candidate country fulfils all conditions, it will be regarded if EU will be able to digest the new members. The main duty belongs to the member governments of EU in the scope of communication which is the third C policy. EU members undertake to endeavour more from now on to make their people ready on the subject of the membership of candidate countries (EC, 2010).

Flexible Integration Approach adopts a different method to realize integration. According to this approach, the levels of countries in the integration process of their level of realizing the foreseen policies lose importance. The approach separates EU policies to two groups. The first group is composed of policies compulsory for each country. These policies are the common ground of EU. On the other hand, the second group is composed of optional policies. The member and candidate countries will be able to adopt any one of the policies in this group and establish free cooperation (free partnership). The countries are not obliged to be engaged in free partnership.

Probable structure of EU will be as follows in 21st century: a system which has a single institutional frame and members integrated in different sizes, where it is possible to abandon or be dismissed from membership temporarily, where four basic circulations (goods, services, persons and capital) is free, where the joint foreign trade and joint competition policies are also applied to the non-member countries. Here, it is required to clarify a subject which is not
included to the agenda since 1958 when Rome Agreement has come into effect. How the voting rights (membership) of the member countries which have serious problems on the subject of human rights may be suspended in the European Council is clearly put forth in Amsterdam Agreement (EC, 2013).

**Process of Enlargement to Western Balkans and Candidate Countries**

European Union has excluded Western Balkan countries, i.e. Serbia, Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia Herzegovina from the scope of “external relations” and included into the “enlargement” process. The enlargement of 6 November 2007 including Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo in the scope of Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) is included in 2007 Strategy Document. This event is approved also in the EU Summit of December 2007 and 2009 Community Strategy published in 13 February 2008 (Todorova, 2009).

Macedonia of Western Balkan countries has gained the status of candidate country on 17 December 2005 and Montenegro on 17 December 2010. The country which applied to the European Union for membership, but was not given candidature status is Albania. Two countries which don’t apply for membership are Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo. Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAA) are signed with Macedonia on 9 April 2001, Albania on 12 June 2006, Bosnia Herzegovina on 16 June 2008, Montenegro on 15 October 2007, Serbia on 29 April 2008. Stabilisation and Association Agreement negotiated with Bosnia Herzegovina is terminated on December 2007 (Korosteleva, 2012).

Bosnia Herzegovina is currently the potential candidate country with regards to EU in the status of “associate”. It follows Serbia and Croatia among the Western Balkan countries. Announcing its independence on February 1992, Bosnia Herzegovina is recognized by USA and other Western countries on 7 April 1992. Its membership application to United Nations is accepted on 22 May 1992. It is an independent country since 1 March 1992. It is re-structured in two large regions as Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Republika Srpska as a result of Dayton Peace Agreement which ended the civil war between 1992-1995.

When Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia gained its independence in 1991, it applied to EU on 22 March 2004 for membership. Stabilisation and Association Agreement is signed with Macedonia on 1 April 2004; visa for the citizens of the country is removed in entrance to the Schengen Zone on 19 December 2009. The Commission has assented the membership application of Macedonia on 9 November 2005 and this country has gained the status of candidate country on 16 December 2005.

Sharing a common fate with Serbia for a time following the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Montenegro has gained its independence on 28 June 2006 and become 192nd member of United Nations. After the independence of Montenegro is approved on June 2006 in European Council, it is approved to give European Perspective to the country. Stabilisation and Association Agreement is signed with Montenegro on 15 October 2007. The Council has approved the candidature of Montenegro on 17 December 2007. Montenegro has applied for membership on 15 December 2008. The Council asked on 23 April 2009 for the preparation of a report from the Commission for the membership application.

In its opinion expressed on 9 November 2010, the Commission has indicated that this country might start accession negotiations. EU Council has decided to start the negotiations on December 2011, the negotiations are started on 29 June 2012 and the Science and Technology
topic is closed temporarily on 18 December 2012. Visa applied to Montenegro citizens is removed on 19 December 2009. Montenegro has progressed to “Jurisdiction and Basic Right” and “Justice, Freedom and Security” topics which would be first handled in the negotiations in accordance with the “new approach” developed by EU after especially the membership of Romania and Bulgaria in EU despite their deficiencies in the area of superiority of law.

When the potential candidateship to EU of the countries in Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) is accepted in Feira Summit of 1 June 2000, Serbia is also covered. In Thessaloniki Summit of 1 June 2003, SAP process is adopted as basic principle in the integration of Western Balkan countries to EU and SAA negotiations are started with Serbia on 7 November 2007. Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreement is effected on 1 January 2008, SAA and Trade and Temporary Agreement Concerning Trade are signed in Luxemburg on 29 April 2008. Visas for Serbian citizens travelling to the Schengen Zone are removed on 19 December 2009.

Serbia has applied for membership to EU on 22 December 2009, but is criticized for the reason of not cooperating with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The obstacle before Serbia is eliminated by the capture of Ratko Mladic held responsible for Srebrenica massacre on May 2011 and Goran Hacic responsible for the massacres of Krajina region of Croatia on July 2011 and delivery of them to Den Haag. In its opinion of 14 October 2011 concerning the membership of Serbia, European Commission has proposed to give membership status to Serbia as this country has cooperated with ICTY. However, the Commission has set conditions of normalizing the relations with the non-recognized Kosovo and providing progress in Beograd – Pristina dialogue which is carried out between Serbia and Kosovo in the mediation of EU.

Candidateship of Beograd which expected to get the status of candidate country in December 2011 EU Leadership Summit is postponed due to the reason that it has delayed to implement the agreements and provoked the Serbians in north Kosovo. As a result of providing an agreement on the subjects of representation of Kosovo in the regional platforms and integrated border management prior to March 2012 EU Council meeting, European Council has approved the candidateship of Serbia on 1 March 2012.

The Commission has proposed in the Expansion Strategy stated on 10 October 2012 to start the accession negotiations with Serbia as soon as the priority of normalizing the relations with Kosovo. Beograd – Pristina dialogue started between Serbia and Kosovo in the mediation of EU on March 2011 for the purpose of facilitating the life of both countries’ people is raised to Prime Ministers level on October 2012.

EU Council has stated that the decisions concerning the commencement of accession negotiations with Serbia will be given in the EU Leadership Summit of June 2013 in the light of the report to be prepared in the spring of 2013 jointly by EU Foreign Affairs and Security Policy High Commissioner and European Commission. In the tenth meeting of Beograd – Pristina dialogue by Serbia and Kosovo Prime Ministers on 19 April 2013 in the mediation of EU, the agreement of the management of Northern Kosovo which refused the authority of Pristina and governed by parallel institutions financed by Beograd and normalisation of the relations is initialized.

Upon this, Ashton has indicated in the joint report submitted together with the Commission on 22 April 2013 that Serbia has successfully fulfilled the only key priority and recommended
the commencement of accession negotiations with Serbia. The decision of starting accession negotiations with Serbia is taken in the EU Leadership Summit realized on 27-28 June 2013. While the subject of Kosovo is handled in topic 35 in the accession negotiations with Serbia, this topic which is preferred by EU to be the last one in the negotiations is expected to be opened in the first stage in the accession negotiations with Serbia. Closure of this topic will be possible in the normalization of relations.

**Potential EU Candidate Countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo**

Potential candidateship of Albania is accepted in Thessaloniki Summit of June 2003. Stabilisation and Association Agreement and *Interim Agreement* are signed with this country on 12 June 2006 and made effective on 1 April 2009. Free visa agreement negotiations with Albania are started on 1 December 2010. Albania has made membership application to European Union on 1 April 2009 and the Commission has approved the application on 1 November 2010 and indicated on 1 February 2011 that Albania is required to perform the necessary reforms in 12 areas of priority in order to be a member to the Union [17].

Parliament boycott of the opposing socialist party following the elections of June 2009 in Albania has significantly delayed the reform agenda required for the progress to EU. In the argued decision of the Central Election Board in the local elections of May 2011 in the direction of re-counting of the votes for the election of Tiran Mayoralty due to the reason that the votes were put into wrong ballot boxes has caused the questioning of the democratic structure of the country. Upon providing a compromise between the government and opposition at the end of 2011 to end the political crises which prevent EU membership process, a new action plan is prepared on March 2012 to realize the recommendations of the Commission.

European Commission has indicated in its Expansion Strategy declared on 10 October 2012 that Albania fulfilled most of the 12 priorities and proposed to give the status of candidate country to Albania in case the jurisdiction and public administration reform and review of procedural parliamentary rules are completed. EU Council has assigned the Commission to prepare a report when a progress is recorded in the remaining areas of priority, also assessing the performance of the country in the area of fighting against corruption and organized crimes. Albania is required to fulfil its reform undertakings and complete the reforms in the areas of priority to be able to start the accession negotiations.

The parliament elections realized on 23 June 2013 is an important test in terms of the operation of democratic institutions and progress of the country on the way to EU. International observers have declared that the elections were made in an environment in which basic rights were respected compared to the previous elections. The subject of giving the status of candidate country by EU to Albania which was successful in 12 areas of priority which it should fulfil to start negotiations is decided on June 2014 by considering the report of the Commission which assessed the progress of the country concerning fighting with corruption, jurisdiction reform and fighting with organized crimes. The possibility of non-visa travelling is provided to Albanian citizens.

Bosnia-Herzegovina is accepted as potential candidate country in Thessaloniki Summit of June 2003, but hasn’t applied for EU membership yet. Negotiations are started on 25 November 2005 to sign a Stabilisation and Association Agreement. Stabilisation and Association Agreement and Temporary Agreement Concerning Trade are signed with this country on 16 June 2008 and made effective on 1 July 2008; Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreement is signed on 18 September 2007 and made effective on 1 January.
2008. Non-visa entry of the country’s citizens having a biometric passport to the Schengen Area is provided on 15 December 2010.

European Commission has commenced High Level Dialogue on the Accession Process (HLDAP) with Bosnia-Herzegovina on 27 June 2012 and submitted a road map which contains the conditions to be fulfilled to effect the Stabilisation and Association Agreement to be able to apply for EU membership. Despite, according to the road map, that Bosnia-Herzegovina should amend its constitutional law in the direction of Sejdi-Finci decision by European Court of Human Rights in 2009 to enable the election of the ethnic groups other than Bosnians, Serbians and Croatians who are the three founder people to top level public services, a compromise can’t be provided between the politicians (EU, 2009).

European commission has declared that progress might not be possible in the process of integration with EU as long as Bosnia-Herzegovina doesn’t amend its constitutional law in the direction of ECHR and indicated that 2014 elections would not be regarded as realized in compliance with the international standards. Complex administrative structure created by Dayton Peace Agreement which ended 1992-1995 War and political instability in the country is the greatest obstacle in the process of membership of Bosnia-Herzegovina. A government couldn’t be established for 16 months after 2010 elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina and this has delayed the reforms required on the way to EU.

Bosnia-Herzegovina has to amend its Constitutional Law in the direction of Sejdi-Finci decision by European Court of Human Rights in order that Stabilisation and Association Agreement which is accepted as a prerequisite to apply for membership to EU can be made effective. Bosnia-Herzegovina couldn’t take a significant part of the funds foreseen in 2009 in the scope of the instrument prior to the accession (IPA) as it didn’t fulfil the requirements on this subject.

European Union has started Stabilisation and Association Process on 1 May 1999 with 5 Southern-Eastern Europe countries and implementation of SAP in these countries is started in Zagrep Summit of 1 November 2000. Kosovo Parliament has announced independence from Serbia on 17 February 2008 and USA, England, France, Germany and Turkey have recognized the independence of Kosovo. European Council has assessed the independence of Kosovo sui generis on 18 February 2008. The Constitutional Law is accepted on 15 June 2008, the Commission has declared on 14 October 2009 that Kosovo has fulfilled European Perspective, International Court of Justice has taken an advisory jurisdiction which accepts the independence of Kosovo on 22 July 2010, the Commission has started the visa liberalization dialogue with Kosovo on 19 January 2012.

European Commission has approved feasibility study directed to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement on 27 March 2012 with the opinion of starting the Stabilisation and Association Agreement negotiations in the future. Declaring the results of the study in the scope of 2012-13 Expansion Strategy, the Commission has indicated that Kosovo is ready to start negotiations directed to the Agreement and declared that it will present the negotiation directives in case sufficient progress is provided in short term priorities.

An agreement is provided on the subject of management of Northern Kosovo and normalization of the relations in the dialogue carried out on 19 April 2013 between Kosovo and Serbia Prime Ministers for the purpose of the normalization of the relations between two countries in the mediation of Catherine Ashton, EU Foreign Affairs and Security Policy High
Commissioner. High level negotiations are started on 19 October 2012 between Kosovo and Serbia. In the report submitted by the Commission and High Commissioner on 22 April 2013, Kosovo is indicated to fulfil the determined priorities and proposal is made to start the negotiations with Kosovo directed to the Agreement. The Commission has presented an offer to enable Kosovo to participate in EU programmes. EU leaders have approved the commencement of negotiations for the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Kosovo on 27-28 June 2013.

The greatest problem in the relations of Kosovo with EU is non-recognition of Kosovo by five EU member states (Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Greece and Cyprus) and that EU doesn’t have a common opinion concerning the status of Kosovo. It is accepted that Kosovo is ready to start negotiations with EU directed to SAA following the agreement signed between Kosovo and Serbia on April 2013 concerning the normalization of bilateral relations and SAA negotiations are started on October 2013. SAA will be submitted to the EU Council and European Parliament for approval after its draft text is initialized in the summer of EU. Solution of the problems in the area of organized crimes and corruption by Kosovo is a prerequisite for progress in the process of membership (Tuhina, 2014).

**EU Membership Process of Turkey**

The Commission has declared the Progress Reports of the candidate and potential candidate countries including Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, as well as Turkey, on 8 October 2014. On the other hand, in 2014-2015 Expansion Strategy, the Commission’s approach of “fundamentals first” accepted in October 2013 and included in 2013-2014 Expansion Strategy is approved.

In this scope, superiority of law, economical governance and public administration reforms are listed as the subjects of priority in the Expansion Strategy, and performance of the candidate and potential candidate countries in the integration with EU in the last one year is evaluated in the scope of the Enlargement Pack. Turkey is being waited for 56 years since 1959 at the door of the European Union different from 22 European countries which became EU members in the enlargement process.

The reason for this is the continuing arguments on the subject of Turkey’s Europeanness. The arguments are not new. This phenomenon continues in Europe for the last 200 years. Wimmel (2006) denoted that European Union process continuing for more than half a century in the European Union Strategy of Turkey is the most important modernization project after the announcement of the Republic (Wimmel, 2006).

Non-considering the membership of Turkey in 2014-2020 budget period planning of EU puts forth that the Europeans don’t see Turkey as a member in 2014-2020. EU Minister Volkan Bozkır has said that EU wouldn’t have a luxury of refusing the membership of Turkey by looking at its correct picture in case Turkey attains a level for membership, but this opinion is too challenging.

Contrary to the discourses of some European leaders, Turkey is a de jure European country since 30 March 1856. Paris Peace Agreement entered between Russia and Ottoman Empire, England and France who won the war. One of the most important articles of the Agreement was that Ottoman Empire was accepted as a member of European community of states. Although 159 years passed, arguments by some Europeans if Turkey is an European makes no sense. Lucius Annaeus Seneca says “One who doesn’t know to go to which door may never
find the correct wind”. Turkey endeavours for almost two centuries to catch this wind (Karluk, 2013).

While Turkey changes, the West’s perception of Turkish foreign policy also changes. After the membership to NATO, Turkey is sensed as an important ally of the Western World. Turkey has determined and applied some principles in foreign policy in the last years and this has caused different assessments by USA and European Union. These developments doesn’t mean that there is an axial dislocation in Turkey and Turkey gets away from the European Union.

Although the EU membership of Turkey is a “contractual obligation” in terms of international law, the proposal of a “privileged partnership” for Turkey by the Chancellor Angela Merkel who came into power in Germany on November 2005, and then, privileged partnership brought forward by Nicolas Sarkozy, elected President on May 2007, first during his election campaign, then during his service as President, and Sarkozy’s opposition of the membership of Turkey has played an important role in the decrease of support given in the European Union to the membership of Turkey [16]. Merkel and, in the past, Sarkozy have ignored the rule of “pacta sunt servanda” valid in the international law. Sarkozy is no more ruling, but the new French President Hollande has not removed the vetoes on the negotiation process of Turkey yet.

There isn’t a definition called “privileged partnership” in Ankara Agreement and Additional Protocol. Turkey has already the status of “privileged partner” in a sense since it has realized customs union with EU. Excluding Greece, no other country which gained access to EU later on has become a member first entering to the customs union. If it becomes in question that a status of privileged partnership is given to Turkey contrary to the EU legislation, amendment of Lisbon and Ankara Agreements and Additional Protocol emerges as a legal obligation. More important, then “A new world is constituted, and Turkey takes its place there” as said by İsmet İnönü, the Prime Minister of the period.

Continuously questioning the membership of Turkey makes no use other than reinforcing the prejudices in Turkey about EU. The detection “Everyone was talking and writing the subjects that, especially in the last years, the relations between Turkey and EU started to cool down and very great obstructions were faced during negotiations on the matter of opening and closing the chapters and the support of Turkish public opinion to EU process gradually and relatively was weakened” by Bülent Arınç, Deputy Prime Minister and Government Spokesman, in his speech published by AA on 15 September 2014 is appropriate. Because, the support given to EU membership by the public opinion has rapidly decreased due to double standard applied to Turkey.

As a matter of fact, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of the period, has talked about the membership of Turkey to Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a reaction to this case. According to Karluk (2014), if the support given to EU by the Turkish public opinion due to BOBON criteria (BO: one of us, BON: not one of us) which is the double standard applied to Turkey, some other alternatives may come up in the future (Karluk, 2014). In this case, no government in Turkey will be willing about EU membership, relations between Turkey and Western world will weaken and an axial dislocation will be realized in Turkey.

Adverse developments arising from the European Union has caused decrease in the trust to EU in Turkey. Third annual conference by Insight Turkey periodical is realized in Brussels on
25 March 2013 with the title “Turkey and EU: Disengagement?” Thomas Diez has declared in his speech in the conference that European public opinion has opposed the membership of EU since the concepts of Turkey and Islam are assessed in the framework and this case has influenced the approach of the politicians for the membership of Turkey.

Jack Straw, Labour Party MP and Foreign Affairs Minister of the period in England who broke the resistance of the Austrians on 3 October 2005 when the European Union started negotiations with Turkey, has spared section 18 of his book of 456 pages published in 2013 to the European Union and Turkey. In the section titled “Sick Man Responds: Europe and Turkey”, Straw reminded that European politicians such as Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy had opposed the membership of Turkey to EU since the negotiation process started and links the unwillingness of these two politicians for the membership of Turkey to Turkey’s being a Muslim country (Straw, 2013).

Even if Turkey completes the negotiation process for 35 topics, EU membership is not guaranteed. Cyprus, France and probably Germany may veto the membership of Turkey. In addition, European Parliament may not approve the membership of Turkey too. Because the Parliament has five decisions concerning the acceptance of Turkey the so-called Armenian genocide. Furthermore, extreme rightist parties which suspect Euro and oppose the European Union have increased their votes in the European Parliament elections made in France, England, Greece, Denmark, Austria and Hungary on 22-25 May 2014. National Front (FN) led by Marine Le Pen who defends the separation of France from the European Union has become the first party with 25 percent of votes.

Marine Le Pen, the leader of National Front, says “Turkey’s EU membership must be voted” in her statement to news channel BFM TV on 27 May and replied the questions of the journalist Jean Jacques Bourdin as follows: “We first want the immediate cancellation of Trans-Atlantic Agreement predicting commercial free exchange between America and EU. Second, we want vetoing of Turkey’s membership to EU.” “No to Turkey’s membership to EU” was written on the election banners of the National Front.

Although the accession negotiations continued in the areas of political reforms, harmonization with the legislation, dialogue in foreign policy, participation in EU programmes, fighting with terrorism, trade, energy, visa and immigration in the scope of Positive Agenda started with EU in 2012, no advance is provided in EU accession negotiations starting on 3 October 2005. Opening of only 14 topics out of 35 and temporary closure of only one topic, France and Cyprus freezing a total of 10 topics has almost put out the hope of Turkey to enter EU. Nikos Hristodulidis, spokesman of Cyprus, is able to block the membership of Turkey by himself by showing the intervention of Turkey in the natural gas search activities around the island as reason and saying that they will never permit the opening of any new topic in Turkey’s negotiations of accession to the European Union.

European Union has started to publish the Expansion Strategy of the Union in 1998 together with the Progress Reports. In 2006 Strategy Document of 8 November 2006 concerning enlargement; effective operation of the Union, taking lessons from the fifth enlargement, supporting the candidate countries in the candidateship process and provision of support of public opinion for the continuation of enlargement in the framework of the existing strategy of EU is put forth. According to the Document; Western Balkan countries and Turkey are in the agenda of the current enlargement, but negotiations with Turkey are blocked.
One of the ten priorities within the programme of Jean-Claude Juncker who is elected as President of European Commission for 2014-2019 period reinforces the global role of EU. Turkey is an important strategic associate for EU despite the problems experienced in the accession negotiations. An EU without Turkey becomes a candidate of weak global force. Therefore, EU Council must revoke the decision of 11 December 2006 (Turkey Progress Report, 2014).

Turkey will not break away from the Western world which it faced since Paris Agreement and continue to proceed in its way for some more time by suffering the double standards not applied to any other candidate country in the enlargement process. EU Strategy of Turkey will reflect its large existing potential to the accession process in the best manner. As emphasized in the Government Programme, EU membership of Turkey is a strategic target and will be continued resolutely. However, the last period in the Ankara Agreement should not be an infinite period. Open ended negotiation process should be completed in a reasonable time period, a membership date must be given to Turkey after 2020, and Turkey must fulfil its share of liabilities in the light of the progress reports.

Conclusion
Balkans have priority for Turkey in geographic, political, economical aspects, as well as, historical, cultural and humane links. Because, Turkey is regarded a Balkan country, too. Balkans are the only land connection to the West, transit route of the energy transmission lines passing over Turkey, has an important place with regards to economical relations. Furthermore, a significant Turkish population lives in the Balkans. Balkans were subject to wars and ethnic cleansing in 1990s and today's environment of peace and stability could be provided only as a result of international responses. Protection of peace and stability in the Balkans is important for Turkey. 7 independent states have emerged from the former Yugoslavia as a result of disintegration of Yugoslavia, balances in the Balkans are shaken down, instability has reached to dangerous sizes regionally.

Turkey overemphasizes the development of cooperation mechanisms in the Balkans. Turkey-Croatia-Bosnia-Herzegovina and Turkey-Serbia-Bosnia-Herzegovina triple advisory mechanisms realized by the initiative of Turkey in the scope of good neighbourhood relations and regional cooperation are established. On one side, endeavour is made to consolidate peace, stability and welfare in Bosnia-Herzegovina and, on the other side, endeavour is shown to make Balkans more stable through these cooperation mechanisms. Turkey continues to support these countries by considering that integration of the regional countries to the European and European-Atlantic institutions in terms of providing permanent peace and stability in the region.

Turkey provides support and assistance to the regional countries in areas other than political relations. This assistance is realized in the framework of bilateral agreements and within the spirit of solidarity by the concerned state organizations and cover numerous areas such as economy, culture, joint historical heritage, education, military and security.

European Commission has determined the priorities of 2014 enlargement policy as fundamentals first. In this scope, it will closely follow the developments in the Balkans in the scope of the new approach which gives priority to the superiority of law. Western Balkan countries will submit to the Commission their economy reports containing their reform programmes to prevent falling behind of the developments in the process of overcoming the economic crisis in EU, and give priority to the operation of democratic institutions, freedom of expression and media, human rights and protection of minorities, and good neighbourhood
relations and, most important, implementation of the reforms. Because, EU attaches importance to implementation more than legal regulations on paper.

56 years have passed over Turkey’s application to be a member associate to EU (31.07.1959), 28 years over its application for membership on 14 April 1987 to so-called European Economic Community at that date, 20 years over the realization of the customs union (31.12.1995), 16 years over gaining the status of candidate (12.12.1999), 10 years over the commencement of the negotiations (3 October 2005). In this time period, the number of EU members has increased from 6 to 28. Western Balkan countries are on the line, but Turkey is probably not.

Not making a budget planning which pays attention to the membership of Turkey in 2014-2020 budget period puts forth that the Europeans don’t consider Turkey as a member in 2014-2020. Determining 2023, 100th year of the foundation of Republic of Turkey, as a membership date of Turkey is a benchmark in terms of putting forth the approach of European Union to Turkey’s membership.

The leaders who oppose the membership of Turkey will miss a great opportunity similar to the communist leaders who were left under the collapsed Berlin Wall and the coming generations will cite these leaders as the persons which prevented the integration of Europe. A metaphor is often made for Turkey as “the country running Eastwards on board a ship going Westwards”, but the incorrectness of this is proved by the economical, military and political European institutions to which Turkey is a member.

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