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# CONNECTING THE ENLARGEMENT PROCESS WITH THE EUROPEANIZATION THEORY (THE CASE OF TURKEY)

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**Abstract:** *Europeanization is one of the theoretical instruments which had a vital influence on candidate countries for EU membership. Due to its aspirations of becoming member of the European Union (EU) and in its attempt to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria, Turkey is trying to comply with the EU *acquis communautaire*. The aim of this paper is to assess the effects of the Europeanization process on the countries subject to EU enlargement strategy, with a special focus on Turkey, particularly since the country received the EU candidate status in 1999. This paper has been organized in the following way: firstly, it points out how both the traditional Europeanization and the enlargement led Europeanization have been depicted in the work of several important scholars; secondly, by offering a short overview of Turkey's foreign relations vis-à-vis its neighbourhood, especially in the last decade, it examines how the mechanism of Europeanization largely influenced the country's diplomatic culture. Traditionally, Turkey has been attuned to hard security issues and architectures. However, the Turkish foreign policy strategy emphasised in the past years the Venus side of things in many settings in line with EU requirements.*

**Keywords:** Europeanization theory, the European Union, the enlargement process, foreign policy, international relations

**JEL Classification:** Y80

The Europeanization process means “the reform of domestic structures, institutions and policies in order to meet the requirements of the systematic logic, political dynamics and administrative mechanisms of European integration” (Joseph, 2006, p. 2). Europeanization is often seen as a constant “interaction between the national and the European levels” (Risse, Cowles, Caporoso, 2001, p. 2), “as a merger of the top-down and bottom-up perspectives” (Börzel, Risse, 2003, p. 57). The thorough understanding of the domestic environment upon which Europeanization impacts is an essential prerequisite in order to explore the mechanisms of this process. Thus, Ladrech perceives Europeanization as an “incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that European Community political and economic dynamics become part of the organisational logic of national politics and policy-making” (Ladrech, 1994, p. 69). As far as the changes at the national level are concerned, they shape *domestic structures*, specifically “those

components of a polity or society consisting of regularised and comparatively stable interactions (i.e. *institutions, formal and informal, organizational routines and cultures, collective understandings of actors*).” (Risse, Cowles, Caporoso, 2001, p. 2)

In other words, Europeanization consists, according to Radaelli, of “processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion, and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, *ways of doing things*, and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and sub-national) discourse, political structures, and public policies.” (Radaelli, 2003, p. 30)

Despite the diverse meanings that the concept of Europeanization acquires within the literature, all of the aforementioned approaches share the assumption that this process is mainly limited to the EU member states. However, recent contributions to the European integration literature have pointed out that the Europeanization process could be influential even beyond the EU’s geographic boundaries, principally with regards to candidate countries. Thus, the concept of Europeanization differentiates between *traditional Europeanization*, which is mainly limited to the EU member states, and *enlargement-led Europeanization*, which affects candidate countries and is conditionality-driven.

Although Papadimitriou and Phinnemore argue that the new *eastward-looking* Europeanization literature displays little consensus on how the Europeanization process is exported to and is transforming the candidate countries (Papadimitriou, Phinnemore, 2003, p. 9), most researchers agree that the impact of Europeanization is much more visible in the case of candidate countries than in that of member states.

The EU’s imposed conditionality has been the main driving force behind the Europeanization (especially in the case of enlargements from 2004 and 2007). This conditionality could be enmeshed in the so called *Copenhagen criteria* (notably the existence of stable democratic institutions, the functioning of market economy and the availability to adopt the *acquis communautaire*) which now the current candidates – Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) – for EU membership are trying to meet. “The Copenhagen political criteria constitute the leverage that is making Turkish modernisation and democratisation more plural, multi-cultural and consolidated.” (Aydin, Keyman, 2004, p. 1) Besides the main criteria, states wishing to enter the Union also have to provide stable institutions forging the spread of norms on human rights, protection of minorities, respect for the rule of law, good relations with their neighbours, and to align themselves to political, economic and monetary objectives of the union. According to Grabbe, the perspective of joining the EU represents a strong incentive for the

candidate states to meet the requirements for a potential EU membership and to demonstrate their willingness to fulfil the accession criteria. (Grabbe, 2001, p. 1015)

Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier hold that the dominant logic underpinning the EU's conditionality is the bargaining strategy of *reinforcement by reward*: the EU provides external stimuli for a candidate country in order to comply with its conditions. (Schimmelfennig, Sedelmeier, 2004, p. 662) Since the Helsinki Summit from 1999 when Turkey was offered the candidate status, the Turkish Parliament has sought to upgrade Turkish legislation in tune with the European standards. Smith believes that conditionality could be of two types, both with considerable leverage: the EU manages the progress made by the candidates and either offers them the chance of carrying on the negotiations (*positive* conditionality) or it delays the implementation of the following stages (*negative* conditionality). An example of the use of negative conditionality consisted in the delayed agreements on the customs union between the EU and Turkey, due to different irregularities concerning human rights and democracy. (Smith, 1998)

In one of her studies, Grabbe analyses the changes which occurred in the Central Eastern European Countries (CEECs) in the prospect of membership. Her remarks could also be applied successfully to the present applicants for EU-membership which largely undergo the same transformation as the CEECs, because basically "Turkey is subject to the same conditionality regime as the CEECs". (Schimmelfennig, Engert, Knobel, 2003, p. 506) Not only are the means used by the EU to influence the reforms in the candidate countries superior to those used in former cases, but also the applicants can barely contribute to the EU policy making from inside. Neither CEECs applicants nor the group of Turkey, Croatia and FYROM had the possibility of opt-outs from parts of the agenda, such as those obtained by the UK on the Social Chapter, Schengen, or monetary union. (Grabbe, 2003)

Hence, the EU has often used the *carrot and stick* method to put pressure on Turkey to desist from taking norm-violating actions. One striking example could be the bid addresses to Turkey to commute the sentence of the Kurdish Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) leader, Abdullah Öcalan from death to life-long imprisonment.

In terms of foreign affairs, when Turkey threatened to annex Northern Cyprus in November 2001, the then EU Enlargement Commissioner Verheugen warned Turkey that it would irreversibly lose its chance to join the Union. (Schimmelfennig, Engert, Knobel, 2003, p. 507) After Turkey received the candidate status in 1999, the EU conditionality has produced its first significant effects. The legislative package passed by the Turkish Parliament in August 2002 included the abolition of the death penalty in peacetime and cultural rights for the Kurdish minority (the teaching of Kurdish in education and its use in broadcasting). In addition, the prospect of EU membership sparked off

the commencement of a normalised relation between Turkey and its neighbourhood. (Grabbe, 2003, p. 305; Schimmelfenning, Engert, Knobel 2003, p. 508)

According to Grabbe the factors which contribute to a greater convergence with the EU norms would be the speed of adjustment of the applicant countries to the EU standards owing to their ardent desire to join the club and the openness of the candidate states to take over the EU's acquis. (Grabbe, 2003, pp. 306-307) Moreover, it could be underlined that the EU's agenda for Turkey, Croatia and FYROM has become even broader than for previous applicants and this through additional membership conditions tailored to each country's specific. Grabbe identifies five mechanisms through which the Europeanization principles are internalised into the candidate countries: 1) Models: provision of legislative and institutional templates to adopt the existing European laws and norms; 2) Money: aid and technical assistance (to support the costs of the implementation process); 3) Benchmarking and monitoring; 4) Advice and twinning; 5) Gate-keeping. Among these, the latter two are specific to applicant countries: the twinning programme is a mechanism which allows for the interference of the EU in the candidate countries' policy, and gate-keeping gives access to negotiations and further stages in the accession process according to the progresses made. (Grabbe, 2003, pp. 312-314)

Onis underlines that while the external incentive for change remains strong, the primary impetus for the country's transformation stems from domestic actors. (Onis, 2003, p. 9) "Turkey's correct transposition and implementation of the acquis will determine the pace of negotiations." (Joseph, 2006, p. 7) However, in Ugur's assertion, the Europeanization process in Turkey is seen as hard to fulfil, in comparison to the EU-27. Many chapters of the acquis are still unsolved and the transposition into the Turkish legislature is slow, which could still preclude Turkey from accession. This is possible because sometimes Turkish policy-makers have consistently tried to reform the country mainly from a Turkish orientation. As a result, "the country is currently the most economically integrated, yet politically distanced candidate for membership" (Ugur, 2001, pp. 217-218). An explanation could be that Kemalism, the nationalist doctrine of the Turkish state, "is partially based on values alien to western liberal democracy and has engendered domestic political practices in conflict with core European democratic and human rights norms." (Schimmelfenning, Engert, Knobel, 2003, p. 506)

However, "the European perspective proved one of the main incentives for reforms of the political and legal system in Turkey". (European Commission, 2007, p. 8) The candidate status offered to Turkey in 1999 represented a fundamental turning point in Turkey-EU relations and accelerated the momentum of political and economic reforms. Since then, Europeanization has become a strong instrument not only in shaping the country's domestic policies and accelerating the

reforms, but also in transforming Turkey's approach towards foreign affairs issues, as pointed out further.

The post-Cold War European politics has wielded a great influence on Turkey's place in the new European security order and also determined the country's recent political inclinations and decisions. (Howorth, 2007, p. 90) Especially since it was awarded the candidate status, Turkey's stance has changed considerably: the country engagement in a long reform process increased its openness towards the EU *acquis* and the Europeanization mechanisms. From Turkey's perspective, there is no other alternative political goal apart from its full participation in the EU. Membership in the Union is still perceived as the ultimate requirement to fulfil the *Kemalist imperative* of identification with Western modernity. (Grigoriadis, 2006, p. 150) NATO membership alone is sometimes regarded as insufficient to satisfy current political and economic needs and aspirations. Moreover, Turkey considers its inclusion in the EU and in its security framework, the European Security and Defence Policy, also as a possibility of enhancing its own security. (Terzi, 2004, p. 113) As a *civil power* combining trade and aid leverages rather than relying on military competences, and still not an efficient security actor externally, the EU is best seen as a security community than as a security actor. (Park, 2005)

Turkey's quest to join the EU and the conditionality the EU employs with candidate countries are two decisive factors that bring about the emergence of a *new* approach toward foreign policy in Turkey. (Kirisci, 2006, p. 29)

Traditionally, Turkish thinking vis-à-vis international relations has been enmeshed by a *Hobbesian* vision (ideas sprung from Thomas Hobbes' "Leviathan") that depicted the international environment with mistrust, as being both anarchical and unpredictable and therefore creating the urgent need to rely on self-help and military. Opposed to the *Hobbesian* outlook, the *Kantian* culture (Immanuel Kant's "Perpetual Peace") is associated with a world of democratic peace and commitment to seeking *win-win* outcomes to international conflicts. Such outcomes are ensured by the willingness to rely on *soft power* rather than hard power. The *Kantian* state would forge pluralism, cultural and ethnic diversity internally, whereas externally would be linked with the international environment through close cooperation and friendly societal ties, features which generally characterise the EU's image worldwide. (Kirisci, 2006)

From a geographical point of view, Turkey's unique position straddling Europe, the Middle East and Eurasia constitutes one of the most conflict-prone regions of the world. This pivotal position has largely contributed to the way Turkey shaped its security outlook and laid it bare that national security considerations had been a priority on its foreign relations. Not surprisingly, apart from the domestic threats, the Turkish National Security Policy Document identifies Greece and the

South (meaning Syria, Iran, Iraq) as main external threats. (Drorian, 2005, p. 269) “Its close proximity to the former Soviet Union as well as to the potentially unstable areas of the Middle East meant that Turkey had to be vigilant in its security assessments and confident in its military capabilities”. (Drorian, 2005, p. 258) Indeed, Turkey’s attitude towards its unpredictable neighbourhood could be backed up by the offensive Realist theory elaborated by Mearsheimer, who argues that the best path to peace is to constantly increase their power and military capacities owing to the level of uncertainty springing from their proximity. (Dunne, Schmidt, 2008, p. 99) Accordingly, Turkey’s military force outnumbers by far the ones belonging to the countries from its vicinity. It also retains the second largest army in NATO after the US and spends a considerable portion of its national budget on defence. (Drorian, 2005, p. 262)

In the past, Turkey had a propensity to belligerent, *hard* actions such as: the use of military force on Cyprus in 1974, the frequent incursions in northern Iraq in pursuit of Kurdish militants, and the threat of force against Syria in 1998 for sheltering the Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK) leader, Abdullah Öcalan. (Everts, 2004, p. 3) However, since 1999 when Turkey was conferred the candidate status and particularly after the Justice and Development Party (AKP) took the administrative reins in 2002, the Turkish foreign and domestic policy changed significantly, embarking on a milder, balanced Kantian approach. “The EU has succeeded in having an impact on Turkey’s *culture of anarchy* and moving the country out of a Hobbesian world towards a Kantian one”, upholds Kirisci. (Kirisci, 2006, p. 103) Specifically, the AKP awareness that this *hard, Hobbesian* orientation would harm Turkey’s credentials contributed to this new approach towards foreign policy in line with the EU demands.

Accordingly Turkey redefined its foreign policy priorities as follows: firstly, Turkey became much more benign and constructive towards issues which previously were treated very strictly as in the Cyprus and Armenia cases. Secondly, Ankara fostered closer relations with the neighbouring countries, in antithesis with the past when the proclivity to open conflicts was high (the relations with Greece and Syria for instance improved significantly). Thirdly, Turkey’s current government’s *new* foreign policy is a growing move from seeing the world from a *win-lose* realpolitik perspective to a *win-win* one. (Kirisci, 2006)

This progress has also been accompanied by many EU reforms that amplified the role of civil society in the process of defining *national security* offsetting thus the military influence. (Kirisci 2006, 29) Although the army accepts the civilian rule, this control has many times been artificial, the four military coups from 1969, 1971, 1980 and 1997 standing as a proof. (Drorian, 2005)

Hence, when assessing the Turkish foreign policy and its move from a *hard Hobbesian* security mentality to a much *softer, Kantian* one, in line with the EU requirements, it is important to

analyse the transformation of Turkey's foreign policy in relation to its neighbours. Thus, a brief overview of Turkey's present relations with its vicinity will be included.

Throughout the time Ankara's diplomacy has always reflected the complexity and diversity of Turkey's geopolitical circumstances. Turkey is situated in the epicentre of three troubled regions, straddling the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East. Due to its location, Turkey represents an important asset for the West. "In a security environment increasingly characterised by *transregional* problems, Turkey is a transregional partner par excellence", argues Lesser. (Lesser, 2000, p. 1) In the aftermath of the Cold War the expansionist threat has become less salient. However, the attention shifted to other transnational risks that could jeopardise the stability and security of Europe's periphery: spillovers of terrorism, political turmoil, ethnic and religious radicalism, proliferation of WMD. (Lesser, 2000, p. 1)

Owing to its pivotal position, Turkey has been many times regarded as *bridge* in the international relations literature. The country's important role in the promotion of stability, as well as for providing and guarding important linkages of trade and energy routes has always scored high (such as, most recently, the Nabucco project, which involves Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Austria and is meant to supply Europe with gas, most probably from the Caspian Sea, and thus, reduce Europe's dependence upon Russian gas).

In recent years, especially after the terror attacks of 9/11, a geo-cultural dimension has also been added to this geo-strategic position, focusing on Turkey's potential to act as a model for regime transformation and democratisation in this "clash of civilizations" basin (Huntington, 1993, p. 54).

Turkey's effort in fostering stability and security in Europe's proximity has been very useful for the EU. Firstly, this effort concretised through the establishment of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Project (BSEC) in 1992 whose role was to ensure that the Black Sea countries would enhance stability in the region by common understanding of peace, stability, democracy and the spirit of conciliation.

Turkey has also become since the end of the Cold War a more important regional actor in the Middle East. The country's network of contacts corroborated today with the political capital of the AKP government and its long-standing economic connections with the *Arab world* are major assets especially for the EU's south-eastern periphery. (Everts, 2004, p. 4) Turkey's friendly relationship with Israel could be very useful and supportive in breaking the deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Whereas the international community has not come to terms with the Hamas-led government in Gaza, the Turks have maintained favourable relations with them. Both the EU and



Turkey have given priority to the solution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as an important catalyst of problems throughout the Middle East. (Key conclusions of the 4<sup>th</sup> Bosphorus conference, 2007)

Turkey and Syria have had tensioned relations for decades owing to Syria's support for the PKK. But after the Syrians expelled Ocalan in 1998 and especially after the advent to power of the AKP the rapprochement intensified. At the present moment, the EU is working together with Turkey in drawing Syria into a wider web of international cooperation. Together, the EU and Turkey could demonstrate that a *soft* political strategy can achieve better results than America's inclination to aggressive actions. (Everts, 2004, pp. 6-7) As a proof of the better relations, Erdogan has had several meetings with Syrian President al-Assad in which the Turkish mediation of Syria-Israel peace talks and Iran's nuclear programme were discussed. (Hurriyet English, 2008b)

In order to comply with the CFSP's principles, Turkey ceased its military operation against PKK bases in northern Iraq. Contrary to what was presumed, that Turkey had an interest in Iraq's breakdown and in its rich oil sources, Turkey was the most ardent supporter of Iraq's territorial integrity. (Laciner, 2005, p. 45) In March 2003 the Turkish parliament opposed to Washington's request to launch its attacks from Turkey, which gained Arabs' and the neighbouring countries' appreciation. (Everts, 2004, p. 3) Turkey's approach towards Iraq is very much similar to that of the EU, as also emphasised by the Commission. "There is large convergence of views between Turkey and the EU about the need for a stable, predictable and democratic Iraq". (European Commission, 2004, p. 7) Clearly, AKP does not share anymore Turkey's traditional Kemalist tendency to avoid being involved in the immediate neighbourhood, and instead prefers to engage actively and constructively with it. (Park, 2005, p. 130)

Turkish-Iranian relationship has also become more active under the AKP government. Albeit tense since the Islamic revolution in 1979, in the last couple of years Turkey-Iran relations have improved significantly owing especially to a strong cooperation in the business and energetic fields. In past, "Turkey's membership of NATO and its military links with the US were regarded with suspicion in Teheran." (European Commission, 2004, p. 7) This is the reason why, in terms of diplomatic strategy, Turkey's thinking was more in line with the EU's *soft* strategy than with that of the US, which believed, under the Bush administration, that the appropriate way to deal with Iran is through isolation and pressure. Thus Turkey has strongly supported the EU's efforts to obtain long-term guarantees for the implementation by Iran of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty with the International Atomic Energy Agency. (Aydin, Acikmese, 2007, p. 272) The improved relation between AKP and Iranian leaders, coupled with the visa-free travel conditions, the transportation agreement, which would generate a trade volume of 20 billion USD between Turkey and Iran (Hurriyet English, 2009a) are proofs of Turkey's embarking on a constructive diplomatic approach.

(Everts, 2004, p. 6) The completion of the Tabriz-Erzurum gas pipeline confirmed that both countries are seeking a strong economic cooperation. This pipeline is also of great interest to Europe as it should allow Iranian gas – and that of other countries in the Caspian Sea – to reach European markets at a competitive price, diminishing thus the Russian monopoly. Iran could also be one of the future providers of gas for the Nabucco pipeline, the EU-backed project designed to counter Russia's strong influence on European energy supplies.

Georgia is another important neighbour with which Turkey has a special relationship. Moreover, Georgia has a special role in fostering security and stabilisation in the region and this owing to its partnerships with NATO (Partnership for Peace and Individual Partnership Action Plan). For strengthening the economic ties Turkey signed a Treaty on Friendship and Co-operation with Georgia in 1992 and also supported Tbilisi's efforts to entry into the BSEC in 1992.

Regarding the last year Georgian-Russian conflict, Turkey through the voice of its former foreign minister Babacan condemned the violence and advocated the rapid need to reach a peaceful solution. (Hurriyet English, 2008b) In addition, Turkey has proposed the formation of a Caucasian union which could forge future stability in the region. (Hurriyet English, 2008c) This action concretised through the EU's Eastern Partnership scheme that aims at fostering cooperation between the EU and the six ex-Soviet eastern neighbours (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus). (Hurriyet English, 2009b)

Turkey found an opportunity to *use* the crisis in Georgia to alleviate its rocky relationship with Armenia. Turkey began during the war to allow the flights over its airspace both from Armenia to the rest of the world, mainly to facilitate humanitarian assistance to Georgia. This could be one of the first steps towards reconciliation the two countries which have no diplomatic relations owing mainly to the *Armenian genocide* issue. (Turkish Daily News, 2008) A potential rapprochement could also attenuate the tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the dispute concerning Nagorno-Karabakh.

Turkey and Azerbaijan have always tried to achieve a consolidated relationship based on historical and cultural affinities. Turkey has been a staunch supporter of Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Moreover, in line with the policy of supporting the BTC (Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan) route and the Nabucco pipeline as the main ways of exporting natural gas from the Caspian Sea, Turkey has been enhancing its relations with Azerbaijan. In addition, Azerbaijan is considered to be the main source of Nabucco's gas when the pipeline is opened, due by 2014. (BBC News, 2009)

In the past, Turkey's strained relationship with Greece sprung from two sensitive issues: sovereignty and related rights in the area of the Aegean Sea and the dispute on Cyprus. The Aegean

dispute led twice to crises coming close to the outbreak of military hostilities, in 1987 and in early 1996. Since the 1999 Helsinki Summit, Turkey made use of a series of diplomatic measures to improve its relations with Greece. Despite the fact no agreement was reached either on the Aegean border or on Cyprus, this thaw in bilateral relations could be explained by a possible common recognition that a Turkey further anchored in the EU seems the only way to settle the disputes between the two countries. (European Commission, 2007, p. 58; Oguzlu, 2003, p. 48)

In the case of Cyprus, the European Commission expects Turkey to make steps towards normalisation of bilateral relations. (European Commission, 2007, p. 12) The island has two main ethnic communities: Greek 77%, Turkish 18%. (Cyprus-CIA World Fact Book, 2008) The long-standing dispute burst out in 1974, when Turkey sent military forces to the island to protect the Turkish minority after Greek-Cyprus extremists threatened to merge with Greece. The Greek Cypriots have alleged ever since that the Turkish troops are an invasion force, whereas Turkey claimed that it occupied the north part of the island in the effort to protect the Turkish Cypriots. The self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC), established in 1983, has not been recognised by any country apart from Turkey, and the UN declared the action illegal, while the government in Nicosia was regarded as the only legitimate authority. (Toffe, 2003, p. 140) Not even after the intervention in 2002 of the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan with his plan – openly backed by Turkey – for the creation of a federal state on the island was a solution reached. Although in April 2004 TRNC accepted an agreement on unification, at Turkey's pressure, the Republic of Cyprus rejected it considering it as too pro-Turkish. (Smith, 2005, p. 278) Turkey endeavours to break this deadlock, could be explained by the fact that without a resolution, Cyprus could preclude Turkey from a future possible membership of the EU and its ESDP where as a full member the Republic of Cyprus holds veto power. (Arsu, 2008)

Turkey's more constructive and balanced dialogue with Cyprus demonstrates its growing openness towards the EU's policy style. Whereas in the past, the Cyprus issue was treated very strictly and Turkey's tendency was to act without analysing the possible consequences of its moves (for instance when it took the north part of island), today the AKP prefers a more benign, *win-win* approach to reach a favourable agreement.

All things considered, it should be underlined that the aforementioned trends illustrate that Ankara's foreign policy is gradually aligning with the EU's mainstream. This stems mainly from the progressing process of integration into Europe's diplomatic affairs culture and openness towards the Europeanization mechanisms, because what is obvious is that at least under AKP Turkey's approach to establish and maintain a balance regional cooperation is, unlike the past, more in tune with a *soft* mentality.

Turkish politics have long been characterized by the military involvement in shaping the domestic and foreign affairs, in order to preserve the Atatürk's legacy, to protect the country against any threat emanating either from inside or outside Turkey's borders and to inflict order whenever Turkey's secular values seem to be endangered. (Park, 2005, p. 130) This sort of policy matched entirely Turkish approach towards external relations backed up throughout the time by its defence task envisaged by NATO and the US firstly against the Soviet threat and secondly against the risks stemming from its problematic neighbourhood. This task found its expression through Turkey's NATO membership and its close relation to the US. For the Kemalist Turkey with its political system left almost unchanged by the end of the Cold War era, the road-map covered by the *Copenhagen criteria* put the country's chances to join the EU at risk due to its different political culture. (Park, 2005)

Although hard security issues and architectures have not completely gone away, the AKP foreign policy approach shifted from military, coercive means and emphasised the *Venus* side of things in many settings. Turkey realised that its future interests are better served and its Westernization project is better fulfilled by being a part of a more benign *West* (Görener, 2005, p. 7).

As Emerson and Tocci put it, Turkey's importance in the region for the EU could be expressed through the terms *bridgehead* and *spearhead*: the continuing democratisation in Turkey would be a *bridgehead* and a model for its neighbouring countries, whereas its *new* approach towards foreign policy fostered under the Europeanization instruments could serve as a *spearhead* for the EU. Thus, Turkey could contribute even more to the European project of spreading out the zone of stability, peace and prosperity in its vicinity. (Emerson, Tocci, 2004, p. 34)

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