



TURKEY'S EUROPEAN ACCESSION AND THE PUBLIC OPINION

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MAIN ISSUES

- Turkish public opinion towards the EU membership
 - The debate prior to accession negotiations
 - The current state of the debate (post 3 October)
- European public opinion towards Turkey's accession
 - Old Member States
 - New Member States

Turkey's European Integration

- **Indispensable objective of Turkish history of modernization and westernization**
- **The “will to civilization”**
- **Ankara (Association) Agreement - 1963**
- **Application for membership - 1987**
- **Start of negotiations – 3 October 2005**
- **Membership – 2015 ?**

Turkish Public Opinion and EU Accession

- **Widespread public support from divergent stratas**
 - **Business community (Industrialists, SMEs, Trade unions)**
 - “Hand in hand towards the EU”
 - **Political Class**
 - The new dividing line > nationalists vs. globalists
 - **Army**
 - “Trapped in between”
 - “The men on the street”
 - The magical stick?
 - **Media**
 - **Academia**
 - **The Third Sector**

Turkish Public Opinion and EU Membership

- **“Swinging between Eurosupportiveness and Euroscepticism”**
- **Field work: May – June 2002**
- **Published: September 2005**
- **3060 people**
 - **% 64 in favour**
 - **% 30 opposed**
 - **Support lower than previous research (%70 - % 75)**
 - **Nationalists-led campaign against the costs of membership:**
 - **Cyprus**
 - **Death penalty**
 - **Lifting of language restrictions (teaching and broadcasting)**

Turkish Public Opinion and EU Membership

- **Common characteristics of “High EU supportiveness” (above 70 %):**
 - **Centre-left; centre-right**
 - **Low to moderate religious inclination**
 - **Middle to high income levels**
 - **Higher education levels**
 - **Related to Kurdish identity and culture (who voted for HADEP 82 %; who speaks Kurdish 72 %)**
- **Common characteristics of “Low EU supportiveness” (between 50% and 64%):**
 - **Right**
 - **High religious inclination**
 - **Lower income groups**
 - **Very little formal education**

Why the support?

- **Economic benefits (higher economic growth; lower inflation and unemployment) : 27 %**
- **Decreasing corruption: 19 %**
- **More advanced democracy and wider participation: 17 %**
- **Free movement of Turkish citizens: 11 %**
- **Turkey's rising power in the world: 10 %**
- **Increasing social stability and peace: 6 %**
- **Fairer treatment of the people by public authorities: 6 %**

Dimensions of Euroscepticism

- **“Do we really need the Copenhagen criteria?” > EU membership means or an end in itself?**
- **“After all we have seen, can we still consider the EU as a credible, fair and desirable partner?”**
- **“Even if Turkey does everything to fulfil EU’s conditions, they will never let us become a member”**
- **“At what cost?”**

Turkish Public Opinion and Euroscepticism

- **Other factors:**
 - **Threat of cultural degeneration**
 - **EU viewed as a Christian Club**
 - **Sharing of sovereignty (49% say unacceptable in areas of defense and foreign policy)**

- **Yet very low levels of EUROREJECTIONISM ...**

European Public Opinion and Turkish Accession

	France	Germany	Italy	Poland	Spain	United Kingdom	ALL 6 COUNTRIES	Ukraine
Definitely in favour	8	9	14	10	19	17	13	9
Rather in favour	28	24	28	34	30	26	27	14
Total in favour	36	33	42	44	49	43	40	23
Rather against	29	30	20	19	15	14	22	13
Definitely against	28	31	21	14	17	21	24	15
Total against	57	61	41	33	32	35	46	28
Don't know	7	6	17	23	19	22	14	49
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Public opinion: An obstacle or a facilitator?

- The enlargement fatigue and the falling rates of Eurosupportiveness at the European level
 - [L'Europe vue par les Européens](#) (3 October 2005)
- The rising Euroscepticism in Turkey
 - Spring 2005 Eurobarometre 63:
 - 59 % “EU membership would be a good thing” (62% in 2004)
 - 20 % “EU membership would be a bad thing” (12% in 2004)
 - Yet still 68 % see it as advantageous

The Road Ahead...

- A long and tiresome negotiation process...
- Key role for civil initiatives > enhanced cultural and political dialogue
- Key role for leadership > vision and prudence

Why the public opinion in New Member States Important for Turkey?

- At the European level:
 - Lack of information vs. Disinformation
 - New Member States vs. Old Member States
- At the domestic level:
 - Shared experiences & observed transformation
 - The enlargement process as a motor of change >
The EU as an anchor



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