

Turkey's E.U Membership: Perception, Brexit, Implications and Possibilities

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Abstract

Turkey's attempt to join the European Union has remained as controversial as ever, even at this point when countries like U.K are leaving the EU, Turkey's membership to the Union has remain a concern and is being discussed in many circles. This paper tries to analyze Turkey's attempt at becoming an EU member, and looks at the chances of Turkey's membership and the implications that may accompany it, for Turkey and for Europe or the world. The research contends that membership for Turkey cannot be completely ruled out irrespective of what consequences it would have for Turkey or Europe. The change in perception on both the side of Turkey and the EU justifies such a position. The paper it is expected will contribute to the existing debate about the EU and its expansion, Brexit and its implication for Europe, the world and Turkey, and how countries like Turkey might fit.

Keywords: Turkey, E.U, Perception, Brexit, Implications, Possibilities

1. Introduction

The history of Turkey has led many to view and consider it a Muslim country. The history of a nation and its destiny always move hand in hand, though dynamic changes could always occur. Turkey's Ottoman roots makes it difficult for country create a new identity separate that obtained in its history and that is known to the world. It is a past alive, and which kept hunting the advances that Turkey has constantly been making in recent times to be part of the EU, amongst many other reasons. It was difficult for many people to understand why Turkey should be in the EU. And the reason is Turkey's history and links to the Ottoman Empire, which was known to be an Islamic Empire. This helped form a perception about Turkey and its peoples in the eyes of the world and not just Europe. Turkish citizens have sometimes found themselves confused when confronted with the question of Turkey's identity and whether it is a European State or not. Africans, Europeans, Arabs and many other peoples could not completely come to terms with the idea that Turkey is a European State, despite the fact that the location of the country is claimed to be in Europe. going to the EU. This more than anything else echoes and re-echoes and re-echoes each time the issue of Turkey's membership to the EU is mentioned, it remained unsettled in the minds of many.

The Arab media from the early times consistently criticized Turkey for attempting to be a member of the European Union. Such attack is mainly due to the fact that many people including Arabs did not properly understand the concept of the European Union, and as such Turkey's 1987 application for membership could not be comprehended and as such came to have what the media called a "bombshell" effect on the Arab world. To many Arabs and Muslims, it was impossible for Turkey to be in the EU, seeing the EU membership as amounting to accepting Christianity, and or betrayal of the Islamic world or heritage. And there is no doubt that this perception exists with regards to Turkey's EU membership, and may have contributed in a way to many of the fears of Turkey being in the EU, despite the fact that religion isn't part of the conditions for membership. The membership application of Turkey seemed to have raised the issue of identity in the debate for accession, though not openly. It is mainly the complex

history of Turkey that is making its candidature controversial though not impossible, and has generated reactions from every part of the world, from leaders of nations in Africa, the Middle East to Europe, which tended to preserve the status quo, owing mainly to reactions from the Middle East. Reactions continued to come from scholars and even from ordinary people across the globe, with different opinions mainly negative regarding the issue. While many disagreed with Turkey's bid, yet others supported the bid of Turkey, and another group remained indifferent, but yet followed the development; the membership bid with keen interest, contemplating its reality or not.

However, no matter the controversy the membership bid may have provoked, as well as the reactions it generated, the Turks have indicated their interest to be part of the EU long before now, and have taken concrete steps which demonstrated their commitment to actualizing their long term ambition of becoming members of the EU. And though there is significant change in perception over the years regarding the issue, and many people and nations came to understand what membership of the EU actually means to member nations. In 2005 when Turkey renewed its bid, the negative reactions could not be compared with that of 1987, and today there is a lot of improvement in the way many nations and people both within and outside Europe think regarding Turkey's EU membership and many seemed to have come to terms with Turkey's ambition in this globalised world. Turkey's attempt in 2016 has remained somewhat quiet, but has not received much criticism as its previous attempts, the last being in 2010. Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan was quoted saying "we will not be the side which gives up", saying Turkey no longer had the need for EU membership but that it refused to walk away from discussions on the membership. Tom Batchelor [2018]. Although certain developments like the attempt by the UK to exit the EU in recent times have sometimes made Turkey's attempt appear more controversial and difficult, it is believed that Brexit may have implications for Turkey's membership to the union somehow, economically and politically. And what is important at this critical stage now is to look at how far Turkey has progressed on the march towards its ambition over many years and why it has not yet become a member, despite several years of relationship with Europe, and at present despite many years of negotiation with the European Union. There are some of the questions we should be asking, and if we are able to find answers, then probably more may come up, which may be futuristic in nature, such as; will Turkey become an EU member and when? This is apart from many other questions which we may not want to discuss in this paper. Many have wondered why Turkey wants to join the EU, and on the other many wonder why it is still not a member? The two questions cannot be dismissed easily, because just as many argue that the Turks haven't a place in Europe, others argue that the Turks have a prominent role and not just a place in the EU. While many see Turkey as having much to offer to the EU, others see nothing at all. The former US president Barack Obama was quoted by Yasser Abu Hilale of Jordan's Al-Gad newspaper in April 2009 as saying "Turkey must be part of the EU and that Turkey's geo-strategic importance, its culture and its influential foreign policy will enrich Europe show his greatness". Open Society [2009]. It is for these reasons that we as scholars must dig into the reasons and be able to come up with a concrete position on why Turkey is aspiring to become a member of the EU, and then look at the possibility of membership despite whatever problems we may have discovered in the process of our study, that may have been staining the relationship between Turkey and the EU and take a look at the future of this relationship.

2. Membership Bid of the Republic of Turkey

Turkey first applied to join the European Commission in 1959. Turkey, since its founding in 1923, followed a policy of westernization under Mustapha Kemal [Ataturk] with the intention of re-organizing their society to change their position in the world politics. Turkey had applied to be a member of EC at that time. However, it should be known that the Turks have had relations with Europe even before the founding of the republic. Turkey's relations with Europe flourished since Ottomans times. The Ottoman Empire was part of the Paris peace conference of 1856 and the Berlin conference of 1878 respectively. It is significant to note that the two conferences were attended only by European states. Alber Jens [2007]. Not only that, during the First World War the Ottomans were part of an alliance that Germany and Austria belonged to, in the aftermath of the war between Turkey and Greece. Part of the explanation for Turkey's application to join the EC in 1959, was to check Greek influence in the region, it was a move that was necessitated by modern international politics. And in 1963, though membership was not granted to Turkey, an agreement was signed in Ankara, regulating Turkey's association with the European Commission. The Ankara agreement as it came to be known dealt mainly with trade and financial matters. The prospect of full membership was offered during the agreement, but without any specified date. This was surely a milestone in the history of Turkey's relationship with the European Commission, then the EU had not been formed. Turkey's intentions of joining Europe had been clear right from the beginning. It would appear that the Turks have journeyed long to become part of the European community and have sacrificed their culture and identity by embracing that of

Europe, all in an effort to be accepted. The Greek concern led Turkey to join the European community, as the country is surrounded by European nations. Apart from the Ankara agreement, in 1970 an additional protocol establishing a twenty two year transition leading to a customs union was signed between Turkey and the European Commission. However, at this time relations between Turkey and the EC began to witness some problems as a result of Turkey's intervention in Cyprus in 1974, following a coup that was alleged to have been backed by Greece. It was much after the tensions had gone down between Turkey and the EC that in 1987, Turkey made a new attempt to be a member. Turgut Ozal, who was then the Turkish Prime Minister, felt uncomfortable with the membership of Greece to the EC and believed that it was unfavorable to Turkey and for such reason tried to re-establish Turkey's position as a stable country and hoped membership to the EC or EU at the time will help promote trade and Turkish products in the Mediterranean area. E.U Center [2008] The 1987 bid did not succeed for a number of reasons; among such reasons was the fact that the EC was occupied with the creation of a European single market and as a such could not accommodate new membership. The issue of human rights and rights of minorities, that include the Kurdish people in the southern Anatolia, did not favor Turkey. The EC was also concerned about the ability of Turkey to implement the reforms required for membership. Enlargement had also been suspended at the time until 1993. It was not until the Copenhagen summit of 1993 that Turkey became hopeful of aspiring for membership. It was at the summit that the decision to accept central and eastern European countries was taken since end of the Cold War in 1991. It was at that time that a blue print containing economic and political criteria for membership was produced. In 1997, Turkey's membership was not accepted by the European council summit in Luxembourg, negotiations came to a halt during the summit. The reason being the Cyprus problem. Turkey, on its part believed religion and culture were reasons its membership was rejected. Turkey's belief may have been influenced by certain remarks, such as one made by the European Christians Democratic Union to the effect that "The European Union is in the process of building a civilization in which Turkey has no place". E.U Center [2008]. The European Union soon changed its position at the summit that held in Helsinki in 1999. It was the summit that Turkey was again recognized as a candidate for membership. Turkey only need to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria of 1993 and bring to an end its conflict with Greece regarding Cyprus to be a member.

A lot of changes took place between 1991 and 2002 that appeared to have favored Turkey's attempt to be an EU member. These include among others a change of government in Germany that led Germany to support Turkey's membership, the support of the United States, and in general, improvement in the relations between Turkey and Greece. And within Turkey, factors such as the emergence of new party to power and its pledge to continue the implementation of the EU reform program, as well dealing with the Kurdish issue and human rights also favored Turkey's bid. Turkey during this period accepted a UN plan known as the Anan plan to deal with the dispute over Cyprus. As a result an agreement was made in 2002 at the Copenhagen European council that accession negotiations could start in mid 2005, if Turkey could abide by the Copenhagen criteria that included the following three major areas;

1. A functional market economy with competitive pressures.
2. Stability of institutions, guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, good governance and human rights with respect for and protection of minorities.
3. Capacity to take obligations of membership, including adherence to aims of political, economic and monetary union.

Turkey had followed a policy of reform years before the Copenhagen summit. Many believe that reforms began since the founding of the republic under Mustafa Kemal, and those governments that came after Mustafa Kemal followed such reforms diligently and in all areas. The reforms and policies embarked upon made it easy for Turkey to fit into and adapt itself to the requirements of the criteria. This is because Turkey had already emerged in the group of market economies. A lot of the new members of the EU did not have a better market functional economy than Turkey, including Greece and Spain. With regards to the second criteria, which concerns good governance, Turkey operates a parliamentary system of government and a multi party democratic system with checks and balances. Two international nongovernmental organizations; Freedom House and Transparency International monitored the observance of good governance and human right and corruption in Turkey. And the ratings of these organizations show that Turkey improved its rating year after year, steadily even though it was yet to meet the European standards of good governance. The progress Turkey was making was also recorded in the EU progress report on the accession process in 2006. The report indicated that there was a progress in the fight against corruption, though it faulted issues of human right and minorities, including freedom of press, independence of the judiciary and rights of trade unions which it said remained impaired, and wanted Turkey to consider changes in

those areas before full membership can be considered. It was however argued that there were countries which are members of EU whose rating in terms of political rights were far below that of Turkey, a country like Romania was rated as the EU worst by the Freedom House in 2007 and Transparency International in 1997 and 2007. Alber Jens [2007].

Turkey's most recent attempt in 2016 after that of 2010 is also receiving similar fate as a result of many problems both within and outside Turkey. According to the Financial Times of September 20, 2017, Turkey's 2016 membership bid is in serious trouble, the poor relations, was explained to be the result of factors within and outside Turkey. On the outside, changing mood across Europe; the rise of nationalism, populism etc and the growing aversion to globalization, mass immigration is seen to strain the social and political fabric of Europe, these were also compounded by the decade financial crisis of 2008 and all these were to affect the enlargement process of the EU. Within Turkey on the other hand, deterioration in politics at least since 2013 have affected Turkey's relations with the EU. The Gezi park protests, the July 2016 coup attempt and Erdogan's general attempt to concentrate power around an executive president that was affirmed by a referendum in April, 2016, are all factors that have helped in creating a difficult process for Turkey's membership to the EU. Indications are that Turkey's membership bid may eventually fail and those opposed to Turkey's bid continue to capitalize on the political situation in Turkey. Turkey on its part believed that the EU had never considered Turkey's accession serious and said its membership is constantly being vetoed by France, Germany, Austria and others that always sight geo-political tensions along Turkey's border and polarization within Turkey as issues of concern on Turkey's membership to the union. Timothy Ash [2017].

3. Brexit, Turkey and the EU

In general, the exit of the UK from the EU according to analysts is expected to have or affect UK's power on world politics, UK's economic relations with European states and with regards to Turkey, Brexit comes along with severe consequences for both UK and Turkey. Politically, Brexit may likely help strengthen Russian influence in world politics, despite the fact that NATO may help check such influence. The relations between the UK and the United States viz a viz Europe, no doubt served as a counter balancing force against the growing influence of Russia in world politics, and Brexit may see to the wanning of such power against the Russians. UK may after the exit may not be able to intervene in crucial matters in Europe and as such a Europe without the UK will appear more vulnerable. Economically Brexit will mean the UK will have to re-negotiate its economic relations with other European states. Imports and exports of goods between Europe and the UK will greatly change and new tariffs may now apply since the UK will no longer be part of the common market that has been envisaged, and is among major reasons that the union was created for. Polat Urundul [www.bitaf.org].

Brexit has been subjected to different analysis and interpretations as seen above, and specifically regarding Turkey's membership to the EU. However, from whatever angle one looks at it, perception with regards to Turkey's membership to the EU and trade relations between the two remain important issues. Turkey is concerned that Brexit may have a negative effect on its membership bid to the EU. Though it is still not clear how the exit of the UK will enhance Turkey's chances of the joining the EU or ruin it on the other hand. Britain had been a supporter of Turkey with regards to its membership bid, and may lose such support among other European states that are opposed to its membership. Many argued however, that Turkey's attempt to join the EU in 2016 did help swing the votes in the UK referendum to exit the union to up to 52%. The swing as explained was despite the fact that the chances of Turkey joining the Union even by 2030 were very remote. As matter of fact Turkey's membership to the EU at a point dominated debate in the UK as to whether or not the UK should exit the union. James Ker-Lindsay [2018]. The issue of immigration according several sources is largely responsible for the decision of the UK to exit the union. A video circulated in 2016 by the UKIP claimed that Turkey would be part of the EU by 2020 and that about 15 million of its population will move to EU states in its first 10 years of membership. Such claims led Boris Johnson, a member of the Parliament to write a letter to the Prime Minister asking for his guarantees that Turkey would never join the EU. However, after the referendum Boris Johnson began and continued Turkey's membership to the EU. James, Ker-Lindsay [//blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit]. It is for such reasons that many believe that Turkey's membership bid may suffer lack of support due to Brexit. And it is here that the issue of perception has become clear regarding Turkey's membership to the union. It is believed that Brexit may have social effects on public opinion in Europe. Brexiters were said to have abused Turkey's membership process and referred to the Turkish people as "devils" in their campaigns and many see the spread of such information as a setback for Turkey's

membership bid and that it may influence opinion of other EU states in accepting Turkey's membership. Polat Urundul [www.bitaf.org].

4. Consequences of Turkey's Membership for the EU

Many writers and political observers both within and outside Europe that have been following Turkey's accession process into the EU see another side regarding the reasons why Turkey has failed to become a member of the EU. Many mention the fears other EU nations concerning Turkey and tended to look at the issues of reforms as mere excuses to stop the Turkey from becoming a member. It is reported that many countries did not understand why Turkey wants to be in the EU, and it is generally agreed by many analysts that these fears do exist but the EU has never formally accepted and presented these reasons formally, but has constantly used non full compliance with the Copenhagen criteria as a formal reason with other informal reasons hidden or underneath. Some analysts see such criteria as deliberately crafted to block the membership bid of Turkey and for this many have wondered as to the actual reasons why Turkey is not considered in the EU, what are the fears if they really do exist? And the speculations are that

1. Size: Turkey's population stands at about 70 million, and may likely be 100 million by 2020. Turkey will become second to only Germany of 25 EU states, it may become the largest EU member state in future if it becomes a member.
2. Economic development: The Turkish economy is not considered very good and is seen as far below that of any 10 of the new EU states that became members in 2004. The GDP of Turkey is just 2% of the EU25 GDP PER CAPITA which is 28.5%.
3. Geographical location: Turkey is geographically located in Asia, and has long borders with states that are potentially unstable or unfriendly to the EU.
4. Islamism: Turkey is overwhelmingly an Islamic country, Turkey's membership will increase the EU's Islamic population from 3% currently to around 20%. Nugent Neil [2005]

Turkey's threat to the EU is seen from different perspective by different analysts and political observers. They argue that Turkey's accession would have a great impact in the EU and its institutions, it would have great effect also on other EU member countries, and many countries will lose presence in the EU. In fact even the decision making process in the EU is seen to change due to the influence of Turkey if it becomes a member state. It is also thought that the size of Turkey and its economic under development will result in Turkey becoming the major beneficiary of EU's funding program. But also the nature these of concerns vary among the individual EU states, though it is generally agreed that there is stiff opposition to Turkey's membership among the relevant actors within the EU. Germany has been traditionally opposed to Turkey's bid until recently, while France till now remains opposed to Turkey joining the EU, Sarkozy openly showed his strong opposition to Turkey's membership. The UK and the U.S. have shown strong support for Turkey. Whereas Greece was opposed to Turkey's membership, but recently took a turn to support Turkey, following pressure from UK and US. Austria is also opposed to Turkey's membership, and the current Chancellor Angela Merkel was quoted as saying "Turkey in the EU would mean the end of EU". Nugent Neil [2005]

But even as these fears are raised by EU member countries, of the threat of Turkey, yet many analysts see the positive aspects of the implication of European integration of Turkey. It is argued that, the population of Turkey, which is about 70 million, is a large market for the EU, and as a result of the customs union, all barriers to trade have long been eliminated. Yet another advantage is seen in terms of labor market. The Turkish population is seen to have much younger work force population than the EU 25. The Commissions projections shows that the EU 25's total population will increase by 2% [449-458 million] between 2005 to 2025, its working population falling by 21%, from 2005 to 2030, the number over 65 years will rise by 52.3%, while 14 -64 age group will decrease by 6.8% resulting in the ratio of dependent and old people. In Turkey the working age group will increase from 49% in 2005 to 66% in 2030 [European Commission]. The Turkish work force can complement human resource in many of the EU 25 nations in different fields. Even the issue of Islamism is viewed from another perspective. The UK's support for Turkey stems from the thinking that admitting an Islamic populated country like Turkey to the EU will serve to demonstrate that Islam, democracy and western capitalism can mix, to encourage moderate Islamism, and may also help EU member countries have softer influence and understanding for other Islamic populated countries.

5. The Future of Turkey's EU Membership

The article published by the European Commission in its progress report on Turkey, on 10 October, 2012 by Stefan Fule, quoted Fule from the beginning saying "Orhan Pamuk said that Turkey's EU project has fallen apart. These words coming from a Nobel Prize winner and a writer of books I admire made a big impression on me. As European Commissioner responsible for enlargement policy, I deal on daily basis with various aspects of EU-Turkey relations and I can certainly say that our joint project has not been abandoned; on the contrary, important initiatives have injected new energy and new hope. But I do think Pamuk's words reflect the mood often felt on both sides and they come at the right moment. I see them as a wakeup call, at a time when the EU and Turkey are at crossroads and need to take decisive steps forward on their common path". Stefan went on to highlight many of the challenges facing the EU and Turkey, but at the same time insisting that a lot of progress has been made in many areas and what remains to be finished should be finished saying "When I ask my Turkish partners where they see Turkey in five, ten, twenty years from now, they all say anchored in Europe. When I put the same questions to my interlocutors and politicians in the EU, the answer is the same; they see Turkey's future as a modern European state. Mr. Stefan concluded his article with the following words "When I first came to Turkey as EU Commissioner nearly three years ago; I believed Turkey can become a member of the European Union. We have a joint commitment towards this goal". Fule Stefan [2012]

Based on the above, one can say with some confidence, that Turkey becoming a member of the E.U is a possibility that cannot be ruled out, despite whatever problems that may exist. And many agree unlike before, that the resistance to Turkey's membership has reduced drastically over the years. In the pre 2000 period, many reasons including Islamism were given, and there were stiff oppositions from all sides. As mentioned in the introduction a very strong perception was formed about Turkey with regards to the EU, which many tried to see from a religious perspective. Even among Muslim nations, Turkey's membership of the EU could not be entirely understood.

An article by the Tribune Media Services titled "Does Europe Want Turkey? Posted on the internet in 2005, was quoted as saying "The Paris October 11, 2005 European Union's decision to open talks with Turkey is another act of polite duplicity, another social lie, so to speak, in the EU's dealings with Turkey". And in another part, it said "That is why it was no service to Europe or to Turkey for EU leaders to have encouraged a Turkish bid for membership in a Europe that does not want Turkey. Why not? Turkey is not Europe. It is intimately involved in Europe's history, but the defining qualities of Europe derive from Artic Greece and Christianity, to both which Turkey is foreign. This clearly expresses such negative perceptions regarding Turkey and the EU over the years. Tribune Media [2005].

Yet, another graduate student of Mathematics, from Idaho state University in U.S., back in 2005 posted an article on the internet titled "The real reasons why Turkey is not allowed in the EU". In the article, this graduate student appeared to be attacking one Mr Guaugliardo, who had earlier written an article on the 1st of October, 2004 giving reasons for Turkey's non admittance into the EU to include religion. But the graduate student in his article on www.math.isu.edu, dismissed the issue of religion and insisted that Mr Guaugliardo's article was misleading, and maintained that the Cyprus dispute and human right issues remain the only stumbling blocks to Turkey's membership in the EU. Aristidou Michael [2004].

And today everything looks different. Even in the Arab world today Turkey's bid is seen in a positive light, and likewise in Europe, considering the recent support from Germany, UK and the U.S. as well as Greece, the ancient old rivals, are now all in support of Turkey's membership. The negotiating framework has made it clear that candidates whose accession could have substantial financial consequences [i.e. Turkey] the talks could only be concluded after 2014, which is the date for the establishment of EU's new financial framework. This also gives more hope to the EU-Turkey joint membership project. There are about four scenarios analyzed regarding the future of Turkey and the EU. The first scenario sees popular disenchantment with enlargement ceding, and demographic pressure could convince EU member states to admit Turkey. EU Center [2008]. The second is that poor economic projections in Europe in the future will lead to strong opposition from EU member states that Turkey be admitted. Third, is that Turkey implements in full all reforms, which may lead it to qualify for membership, economic reforms lead to a boom in Turkey's economy and it becomes a regional power, with its neo-Ottoman tendencies, rejects the EU membership. The final scenario is the rejection of the European project from the Turkish society, arising from what it perceives as anti Muslim discrimination and chooses to no longer pursue EU membership.

6. Conclusion

As things stand now, there is no indication that in this time scenario four could happen, it appears that scenario four had already passed when Turkey was turned down in 2004 that was when popular support for the membership dropped from within the Turkish society, but that has not made the Turks to abandon the project. If any of the scenarios will come to play, it may likely be scenario one or three. Scenario four can only be possible if another attempt is made by Turkey and it receives a negative response from the EU, then it will be almost certain that the entire Turkish society will withdraw from the membership project, but even this may not happen if we remember Erdogan's comments in 2018, that; "Turkey is no longer in need of the membership to the EU, but Turkey will not be the side to give up". This simply means that Turkey will remain in talks and is willing to be part of the union now or in the future. However, it is clear from Erdogan's statement that the Turks have become somewhat indifferent to their aspiration and have kept an open mind to whatever may be the outcome at any time, now or in the future. Again as discussed in the introduction, the issue of perception and Turkey's identity has remained a problem for its acceptance whether one likes it or not. Europe sees Turkey as more to the East than the West, and even non Europeans too, and have become critical of Turkey, though such perception is changing. However, the recent claims by Brexiters that Turkish people are "devils" still brings us back to the issue of perception. The fact that such campaigns helped swing votes during the referendum at a time when Turkey was renewing its bid to join the EU says a lot, and is seen as a factor that may likely influence other European states to refuse Turkey's bid. Many believed the Turkey's 2016 bid is among major reasons that led the UK to exit the union. Here, we see two perceptions about Turkey among Europeans and non Europeans. One regarding its Muslim traditional ties and its Ottoman past, which is shared by Europeans and non Europeans, and another as voiced by the Brexiters, that the Turks are devils. Though such may not be true, but it means this is how the Brexiters perceive the Turks. The EU stands a better chance of making changes inside Turkey if it is a member of the Union, and all outstanding issues, including that of Cyprus and the Kurds could be resolved within the framework of the EU, but then it is highly unlikely for the republic of Turkey to cooperate in resolving both the Kurdish issue and that of Cyprus once it becomes a member of the EU. New dimension has been added to the issues hindering Turkey's membership apart from the Cyprus issue and that of the Kurds. In 2016, shortly after Turkey opened talks with the EU, relations between the EU and Turkey turned sour after the crackdown by Turkey's Erdogan in the aftermath the July 2016 coup in which hundreds of people were arrested in Turkey. The EU maintains that the arrests made were unconstitutional. Reuters [2016]. There are indications however that Turkey might likely become a member of the EU by 2030, considering all the obstacles and issues, including that of Brexit, even though the chances were described as slim, however, this does not rule out a possibility of membership now or in the future.

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