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Literature Review on the relations between the EU and Turkey

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This paper is framed within the project [EUPROX](#) -Coordination, Internationalisation and Europeanisation in the proximity of the European Union- being carried out by the Observatory of European Foreign Policy. The objective of this project is to evaluate and explain the varying impact of EU policies on its neighbouring countries as related to the observed patterns of relationship between the EU and said countries. The project covers the cases of Morocco, Algeria, Turkey, Croatia, Ukraine, Russia and Georgia, in the following issue areas: trade, energy, environment, migration, good governance, and foreign and security policies. This paper offers the state of the art of the research in the case of Turkey. It starts presenting an overview of the specificity of the literature about the country. The next section, evaluates the literature on the general relations between the EU and Turkey. The third section reviews the literature on each issue area. Finally, the review closes with some concluding remarks and a bibliography of some of the most relevant sources organised by themes.

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1. Introduction¹

Compared with other enlargement rounds Turkey's accession process to the EU has produced and is still producing a significant amount of literature. Among the many books and articles devoted to this issue, almost every significant aspect is being tackled. Particular attention has been paid, on the one hand, to the impact of this accession process, and, on the other hand, to the motivations of Turkish and EU actors to push for the start of the accession negotiations or, in some cases, to oppose and hamper this process.

However, one of the characteristics of this rich literature is its weak connection to the studies devoted to European integration and enlargement policy. Too often, authors analyse EU-Turkish relations as a *sui generis* case and, consequently, little attention is paid to the overall dynamics of the enlargement policy ([Kahraman, 2000](#)). Another characteristic of this literature is that due to the controversy that this case provokes both in the EU and in Turkey, an important amount of the books and articles adopt a "pro" or "anti" accession approach.

Although there are remarkable and informative works in other languages (particularly in Turkish and German) this "state of the art" report will mainly focus on English-written books and articles. In fact, as said by Meltem Müftüler-Baç ([2003: 660](#)), EU-Turkish relations, and to some extent International Relations and other Social Sciences, is one of the few topics in which Turkish academics tend to publish in English instead of in Turkish. Prominent Turkish academics in European Integration and International Relations have often focused on "Turkish subjects" where their *autoritas* is undisputable. Thus, there is an important amount on Turkey-EU relations in English written by them.

This article starts by explaining that EU-Turkish relations literature is very much linked to the context in which it has been produced. Secondly, it presents a selection of articles and books that have strong analytical depth and that can inspire future work on EU-Turkish relations. Thirdly and finally, it analyses which subjects and which actors have attracted the attention of the academic community. This section is particularly focused on the topics that constitute EUPROX's research agenda.

2. The literature on the EU's relations with Turkey

2.1. A literature marked by context

Until the mid-nineties, the literature on EU-Turkish relations had not attained its current critical mass. Before then, the European Community Studies Institute in Istanbul's Marmara University and the European Community Research and Application Centre (ATAUM) in Ankara carried out some research on the economic and legal implementation of the Ankara Association Agreement. However, the entry into force of the Customs Union in 1996 and, above all, the 1999 Helsinki European Council's decision to give Turkey the candidacy status, dramatically increased the interest of both Turkish and international academics in EU-Turkish relations.

¹ The author thanks the comments and suggestions of Frederic Misrahi, Rana Izci, Münevver Cebeci and Ayhan Kaya.

It is worth-mentioning that during that period, a considerable emphasis was put on the strategic dimension of these relations. Thus, EU-Turkish relations became a fundamental element in Turkey's foreign policy studies ([Fuller & Lesser, 1993](#); [Eralp, 1999](#); [Kramer, 2000](#); [Hale, 2002](#); [Robins, 2003](#)). Most of this literature reflected a strong interest in the effects of the Cold War on the international system and how its effects reinforced the attractiveness of Turkey's EU membership. After the Helsinki decision, aspects related to human rights and democratization gradually became more relevant in the analyses.

However, once accession negotiations became more feasible and, simultaneously, once the debate on Turkey's membership in some European countries (mainly France and Germany) became more visible, the literature on EU-Turkish relations boomed. Some of these works carefully analysed the costs and benefits of this accession process while others clearly campaigned for or against this integration.

2.2. General references for in-depth studies on EU-Turkish relations

As Turkey, and particularly its accession process to the EU, has become a fashionable and very much debated topic, there has been an inflation of literature tackling this issue. In that respect, Müftüler-Baç's ([1997](#)) book and the edited volume by Çarkoglu and Rubin ([2003](#)) are key references, giving a general perspective of these relations and covering a vast number of topics. Alessandro Missir di Lusignano's ([2004](#)) article, Kristy Hughes' ([2004a](#), [2004b](#)) reports, Ziya Önis' ([2007](#)) article, the co-authored book by Keyman and Önis ([2007](#)) and the book by the former Swedish ambassador, Ann Dissmor ([2008](#)), complement the aforementioned books, giving further information on recent evolutions both in Turkey and the EU.

Unfortunately, the literature on European integration, including the literature devoted to the enlargement process, has paid little attention to Turkey. In parallel, works on EU-Turkish relations have rarely been framed in the general context of EU dynamics and few are the books or articles which refer to the theoretical and analytical frameworks that have been used when analysing other enlargement rounds or other major transformations of the EU integration process.

However, there are some exceptions which deserve to be underlined. The first is the classical book by Mehmet Ugur ([1999](#)) which explains the evolution of EU-Turkish relations in light of EU integration dynamics and its decision-making mechanisms. This author considers that there is a tension between the EU's capacity to consolidate reforms in Turkey and the credibility of the EU to keep its promises. This is what Ugur defines as an anchor/credibility dilemma. Ugur's book provides case studies such as Cyprus and Trade issues and it also analyses how the aforementioned dilemma is conditioned, on the one hand, by the existence of state-society interactions both in Turkey and in EU member states and, on the other, by commitments achieved in the past.

Meltem Müftüler-Baç and Lauren McLaren's ([2003](#)) article is one of the few with a strong focus on European integration theories to explain the evolution of EU-Turkish relations. According to these authors, constructivist theories may be useful for understanding the reasons behind the Eastern enlargement, while historical

institutionalism explains path-dependence processes in different enlargement rounds. However, in order to explain some juncture moments in EU-Turkish relations, like the 1999 Helsinki decision, these authors consider that it becomes necessary to combine different analytical frameworks and to take into account the national preferences in key member states.

Finally, it must also be acknowledged that Europeanisation processes are increasingly being studied. A good example of this increasing interest is Nathalie Tocci's (2005) article. The following section, which highlights the actors and issues that have been the objects of detailed research, also includes references to several articles which analyse Europeanisation processes in fields like foreign and security policies, environment and trade, which constitute some of the focal points of the EUPROX research project.

3. Literature addressing specific issue areas

3.1. Actors

A great variety of specific actors and issues have been researched in the literature of EU-Turkish relations. As for the actors, we can see that, traditionally, there was more in-depth analysis on Turkish actors' approaches to EU-Turkish relations than similar analysis for European actors. Among the first, it is worth mentioning contributions on the roles of parliamentarians ([MacLaren & Müftüler-Baç, 2003](#)), the military ([Cizre, 2004](#); [Tank, 2001](#)), the political parties ([Avci, 2004](#); [Önis, 2007](#); [Rodríguez, 2007](#)), public opinion ([Çarkoglu, 2003](#); [Yilmaz, 2005](#)), economic actors ([Atan, 2004](#)), the religious milieu ([Fokas, 2004](#)) and the media ([Latif, 2004](#)).

Nevertheless, more recently the positions of member states have been attracting further attention and in that respect, the edited volumes by Angelos Giannakopoulos & Konstadinos Maras (2005) as well as the one coordinated by Nathalie Tocci (2007) are particularly useful. It is worth mentioning that both of them include analyses on the European Institutions. Needless to say, as debate on EU-Turkish relations grew, some useful articles on particular debates also appeared. Among them, Dorothee Schmid's (2007) analysis on the French debate is remarkable as well as Ruiz Jiménez and Torreblanca's (2007) study on public opinion trends in the EU, to give few examples.

3.2. Trade

Economic and particular trade aspects have been the objects of attention by scholars. Some general works present analyses on the costs and benefits of Turkish accession although these analyses are often biased due to a pro-accession ([Dervis et al, 2004](#)) or anti-accession approach ([Quaisser & Wood, 2004](#)). There are other articles like Togan (1997) Eder (2003, 2004), Sinan Ülgen & Yannis Zahariadis (2004), Gros (2005), Togan (2005), Hadjit & Moxon-Browne (2005); Martinez, Escribano & Lorca (2006) as well as the book compiled by Hoeckman & Togan (2005), which have a strong academic focus and provide valuable information on the process of convergence of the Turkish economical system with the structures, priorities and norms of the EU in different fields and particularly in trade and investment.

3.3. Energy

Energy is a topic which has started to attract considerable attention, both in the EU and Turkey. This is due to Turkey's strategic position at the crossroads of several existing and projected pipelines and the increasing shared concern on energy security. In that sense, we can see articles focused in Turkey's energy policies and assets ([Yazar & Erkaya, 2007](#); [Yilmaz, 2007](#)) and also articles that analyse different aspects of EU-Turkish relations in this domain ([Roberts, 2004](#); [Isik, 2004](#); [Barysch, 2007](#)). However it is worth mentioning that, comparatively, more articles can be found on energy issues linked with the relations with Russia ([Arinç, 2007](#); [Jensen, 2007](#)), China and Central Asia ([Ögütçü and Ma, 2007](#)) or referring to the West in a broader conception than just the EU ([Pala, 2007](#)). In fact, this topic is one of those that have been under-researched by both Turkish and international scholars working on EU issues, particularly as far as technical convergence is concerned.

3.4. Environment

In environmental issues we observe that there are two books written in Turkish by Sevim Budak ([2000](#)) and Nuran Talu ([2007](#)) which discuss the differences and similarities between the environmental policies of the EU and Turkey, also tackling problems of the implementation and financing of the projects in Turkey. Among English-speaking literature, Adaman & Arsel's ([2005](#)) book on environmentalism in Turkey, which contains an article on the EU by Rana Izci, stands out. Algan and Mengi's ([2005](#)) article also provides some information on Turkey's Sustainable Development Policies in the path of the EU Accession Process. Despite the existence of these contributions, environmental policy convergence is a topic which is still under-researched.

3.5. Migration

On migrations one has to differentiate the enormous variety of aspects which are contemplated in the literature. Particular attention has been given to euro-turks ([Kaya & Kentel, 2005](#); [Amiriaux, 2004](#); [Kastoryano, 2003](#), [Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003](#)). However, two main aspects attract our attention in the EUPROX framework. The first concerns the impact of Turkey's membership perspective on the increase or decrease of Turkish migration into the EU ([Erzan, Kuzubas & Yildiz, 2004](#)). Another topic, which is even more relevant in the framework of this research, is the degree of Turkey's adaptation to EU standards in migrations and particularly in terms of border control ([Kirisçi, 2003](#); [Apap, Carrera & Kirisçi, 2004](#); [Kirisçi, 2007](#); [Içduygu, 2007](#)). This aspect is particularly crucial as it stands as one of the fears of a significant amount of opponents to Turkey's EU membership and because of Turkey's strategic position at the crossroads of clandestine international migrations routes.

3.6. Foreign Policy

As said before, since Turkey's EU membership process has been analysed as an issue of foreign and security policy, both in the EU and in Turkey, there exist considerable contributions on the ability of Turkey to comply with the external priorities and instruments of the EU ([Tocci, 2003](#), [Emerson & Tocci, 2004](#), [Soler i Lecha, 2007](#), [Kirisçi, 2006](#); [Aydin & Acikmese, 2007](#)). Many articles could also be

found analysing specific aspects of foreign policy but especially relevant is the literature on Greek-Turkish relations ([Keridis & Triantafyllou, 2001](#); [Rumelili, 2003, 2007](#); [Bertrand, 2004](#); [Önis & Yilmaz, 2008](#)); Particular attention has been paid in matters relating with ESDP ([Müftüler-Baç, 2000](#); [Missiroli, 2002](#); [Terzi, 2004](#); [Türkes & Gökgöz, 2004](#); [Bağcı & Yildiz, 2004](#); [Ojanen, 2007](#); [Gasparini, 2007, Ülgen, 2008](#)) and, before that, on issues related with the Western European Organisation ([Cebeci, 1999](#)). In general terms, these analyses point out that security issues have been a bargaining asset for Turkey in the process of persuading the EU to start accession negotiations and that this is a domain in which Turkey's EU membership could considerably contribute to the EU's global 'actorness'. However, some authors have been more sceptical in this respect like the much-quoted article by Barry Buzan & Thomas Diez ([1999](#)) and the less known but equally inspiring article by Dietrich Jung ([2001](#)).

3.7. Good governance

Turkey's political reforms have been one of the issues most discussed in the last few decades. The consolidation of its democratic system, aspects such as the electoral code and civil-military relations, Kurdish cultural rights, the situation of religious minorities and human rights respect have been extensively analysed both by official documents (such as the Commission and Parliament reports) as well as by the academic milieu. Among others, Paul Kubicek ([2002](#)), Chris Rumford ([2001, 2002](#)), Saban Kardas ([2002](#)), Harun Arikian ([2002](#)), Jonathan Sugden ([2004](#)), Anne Duncker ([2006](#)), Keyman & Aydin ([2007](#)) Hande Eslen-Ziya ([2007](#)), Vladimir Spidla ([2007](#)), Kassimeris & Tsoumpanou ([2008](#)) and Grigoriadis ([2008](#)) have tackled Turkey's reforms in line with the Copenhagen Criteria covering different issues such as human rights, gender issues and minority rights. Broader political reform has also been analysed ([Sofos, 2000](#); [Batum, 2002](#); [Müftüler-Baç, 2005](#)) and civil-military relations is one of the topics that is attracting increasing attention ([Tank, 2001](#); [Cizre, 2004](#); [Güney & Karatekelioğlu, 2005](#); [Soler i Lecha et al.: 2006](#)).

4. Concluding remarks

As we have seen in this short article, there exists a critical mass of studies on EU-Turkish relations. It is, provably, one of the accession rounds that has generated (and will continue to generate) a larger amount of literature. We have also seen that each and every one of the issue-areas addressed in the EUPROX project, has already been researched and that several articles and books contain detailed and valuable information on the general and sectorial evolution of EU-Turkish relations.

Nevertheless, it has also been shown that literature on EU-Turkish relations is weakly framed in broader European integration theories. Despite the existence of some contributions focusing particularly on the potentialities and limits of the Europeanisation process, the aforementioned theoretical and analytical vacuum proves that the EUPROX framework can be useful in order to provide a more sophisticated analytical framework to the already existing literature.

Table 1. Literature on the analysed issue areas

Policy	Literature on Turkey			Literature on EU-Turkey relations		
	Under-researched	Some degree of research	Highly researched	Under-researched	Some degree of research	Highly researched
Trade		X			X	Impact of the Customs Union
Energy		X	Geopolitics of energy	X	Geopolitics of energy (pipelines)	
Environment		X		X		
Migrations		X			X	
Good Governance			X			X (particularly human rights)
Foreign and Security Policies			X			X (particularly in ESDP matters)

Source: Author's own elaboration

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