

THE APPROACHES OF TURKISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TO THE
EUROPEAN UNION

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ABSTRACT

THE APPROACHES OF TURKISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

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The relations between Turkey and the European Union and the current developments concerning this process are important issues which have direct and indirect effects on the economic, political and social dynamics in Turkey. In this context, the European Union has also become an important subject of political debates in Turkey. This thesis analyses the roles and approaches of the political components within the framework of Turkish Social Democratic Movement in the process of the determination of the Turkey-European Union relations. This thesis will provide a chance to conceive how the European Union and the relations between Turkey and the European Union are considered and assessed by Turkish Social Democrats who are one of the most important components of Turkish politics that have also submitted significant contributions to the Turkey-European Union relations.

Key Words: Social Democracy, European Union, Turkey

ÖZ

TÜRK SOSYAL DEMOKRATLARININ AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ'NE YAKLAŞIMLARI

Erdem, Seçil

Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

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Türkiye ve Avrupa Birliği arasındaki ilişkiler ve bu süreci ilgilendiren güncel gelişmeler Türkiye'deki ekonomik, siyasal ve toplumsal dinamikler üzerinde doğrudan ve dolaylı etkileri olan önemli konulardır. Bu bağlamda Avrupa Birliği, Türkiye'deki politik tartışmaların da önemli bir konusu haline gelmiştir. Bu tez, Türk Sosyal Demokrasi Hareketi çerçevesi içindeki politik unsurların Türkiye-Avrupa Birliği ilişkilerinin belirlenmesi sürecindeki rolleri ve yaklaşımlarını analiz etmektedir. Bu tez, Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye-Avrupa Birliği ilişkilerinin Türk siyasetinin, aynı zamanda bu ilişkilere önemli katkılarda bulunmuş en önemli unsurlarından biri olan Sosyal Demokratlar tarafından nasıl kavrandığı ve değerlendirildiğini anlama şansı sağlayacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Demokrasi, Avrupa Birliği, Türkiye

To My Dear Mother

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

British Labour Party: LP
Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey: DISK
Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions: TURK-IS
Democrat Party: DP
Democratic Left Party: DLP
European Central Bank: ECB
European Coal and Steel Community: ECSC
European Economic and Monetary Union: EMU
European Economic Community: EEC
European Trade Union Confederation: ETUC
European Union: EU
French Socialist Party: PS
North Atlantic Treaty Organisation: NATO
Party of European Socialists: PES
Populist Party: PP
Republican People's Party: RPP
Single European Act: SEA
Social Democracy Association: SDA
Social Democracy Foundation: SODEF
Social Democracy Party: SDP
Social Democratic Party of Germany: SPD
Social Democratic People's Party: SPP
Social Democratic Populist Party: SPP
True Path Party: TPP
Turkish Labour Party: TLP

1. INTRODUCTION

The development that brought Turkey to candidate status for membership in the European Union (EU) is the final point for Turkey which has been reached after a long process of “westernisation” which has lasted for more than two hundred years. It is such an important process in the sense that in Turkey ‘modernisation’ is frequently used in the same sense with ‘westernisation’ (Çulhaoğlu, 2002: 171).

The relationship between Turkey and Europe has evolved into a new stage since the end of the Second World War which includes many political, social and economic problems, contradictions, and struggles. The ongoing relations have usually been tense. Although many problems have not yet been completely overcome, today it is possible to argue that Turkey is in a newly emerging consensus with the European Union.

The relations between Turkey and the EU and the recent developments concerning these relations revolve around important issues which have direct and indirect effects on the economic, political and social dynamics in Turkey. Especially in the last couple of years Turkey-EU relations have become one of the most important items of the Turkish political agenda. In fact, the relations with the EU have not been in such a serious and determined stage before because the membership of Turkey to the EU has not been as probable as it is today. In this context, the European Union has also become an important subject of political debates. These ongoing debates both have a social basis and have power to influence the recent and coming developments with respect to the relations between Turkey and the European Union.

In light of the actuality of these developments, it is of great importance to grasp the standing of Turkish social democrats *vis a vis* the European Union. In this study, the approaches of the social democrats who have been important actors in Turkish political life toward the EU are investigated. The social democrat parties, the organisations and the outstanding personalities of the social democratic

movement in Turkey are termed “social democrats”. The roles and approaches of the political components within the framework of social democracy in Turkey in the process of the determination of Turkey-European Union relations are problematised in this study.

To grasp the stances of Turkish social democrats with respect to the European Union is significant because of several reasons. First of all, the social democratic movement has been representing an important component of Turkish political life. In this context, analysing the approaches of social democrats toward the European Union will aid in understanding how the European Union is being considered in Turkey.

Moreover, as an important component of Turkish political life, the social democratic movement has also been a significant part of policy making processes in determining the policies concerning the future of Turkey.

On the other hand, it should be stated that the European Union is not merely an economic and political union. The idea of ‘Europe’ in the modern sense has appeared to maintain a lasting peace in the Continent after the experiences of World War I and World War II. The anticipated order in the context of the European Union would be based on the interests and values the peoples and nations of Europe shared together (Fontaine, 2004: 2). Today, the European Union symbolises a total of these shared values including democracy, the rule of law, human rights and market economy. In this respect it is important to comprehend the Turkish social democrats’ perception of the meaning the European Union symbolises.

It is known that the social democrats in Turkey are generally in favour of the EU. However, they also hold various reservations concerning the ‘unitary state’, ‘national sovereignty’, ‘indivisible integrity’, ‘national interest’ and so on (Aktar, 2002: 274). The main motives for their sensitivity, which influence their approaches toward the EU need to be investigated. To undertake such a study it is crucial to examine how they understand and explain the EU and the relations between Turkey and the EU; at which points they advocate and/or oppose the EU; what their main hesitations are with respect to the EU membership; what their future visions are about Turkey-European Union relations and whether there are any similarities or dissimilarities between their perspectives.

The study will start by making the definition of the European Union. It is required to place this study on a significant basis. For that reason a brief definition of the European Union will be carried out.

On the other hand grasping the approaches of the European social democrats to the European Union is of great importance for comparing and comprehending the social democratic counterparts in Turkey much better. For that reason, it is important to understand how the social democratic left in Europe comprehend the EU and the integration process before searching their Turkish counterparts. It is possible to argue that although some of them are critical on various issues of the integration process; the social democrats in Europe are generally in favour of the European Union. Comprehending their European policies will make it possible to reach significant analyses about Turkish social democrats. The social democratic parties of Germany (Social Democratic Party of Germany- SPD), France (Socialist Party- PS) and Britain (Labour Party- LP), the Party of European Socialists (PES), the Parliamentary Group of the Party of European Socialists in the European Parliament (Socialist Group) and the Socialist International (SI) will be analysed in the context of their approaches to the EU and the enlargement process.

The history of the relations between Turkey and the European Union is older than the history of social democratic movement in Turkey. In this context, it is necessary to discuss the historical background of the ongoing relations between Turkey and the European Union. This overview will also address the roles and policies that social democrats had pursued in the past.

Before starting to evaluate the recent policies and discourses of Turkish social democrats with respect to the European Union, it is necessary to define the social democratic movement in Turkey. A brief overview to the historical relations that have generated the social democratic thought in Turkey will enable one to better grasp the stances of the Turkish social democrats with respect to the Turkey-EU relations.

In the current political conditions of Turkey, the social democratic political parties are not the mere representatives of the social democratic view. There are also significant agents both as organisations and as figures independent from the party and organisation structures. In this context, the Republican People's Party (RPP),

the Democratic Left Party (DLP) and the Social Democratic People's Party (SPP) are included as Turkish social democratic parties within the scope of this study. Additionally, the Social Democracy Foundation (SODEF) and the Social Democracy Association (SDA) are the social democratic civil society organisations that will be analysed in the scope of this study. Moreover, the approaches of the leading figures of social democratic understanding will be evaluated in the context of their assessments with respect to the relations between Turkey and the EU.

The approaches of the Turkish trade unions to the Turkey-EU relations are also included within the scope of this study. The approaches of the trade unions with respect to the European Union are considerably important. The trade unions have been one of the significant components within the social democratic movement in the world. In the West, the histories of social democracy and trade unions are common because both of them originated from the working class movement. The trade unions have been struggling both for the improvement of the life conditions of the working class and for the institutionalisation of democracy and the social state (Karakaş, 2003: 50). The trade unions and working class have generally been pursuing their political struggles within the leftist parties. Trade unions are also important civil society organisations for improving democracy and organised society. For similar reasons, the trade unions are also important for social democracy, too.

The interests of the trade unions and social democracy overlap in many respects. As Ercan Karakaş states, both social democracy and trade unions put forward that maintaining economic democracy is crucial for the continuity and stability of political democracy. On the other hand, social democracy defends the rights of unionisation, collective agreement and right to strike which are crucial for trade unions (Karakaş, 2003: 50).

The trade unions are as well important for Turkish social democracy. Although there are basic differences between the Western social democracies and Turkish social democracy with respect to the relations with the working class and trade unions, there have been significant relations between social democrats and trade unions in Turkey. After the transition to the multi-party system, the Turkish political parties have usually strived to establish strong ties with the trade unions in order to

influence political stances. It is possible to argue that the relations between political parties and trade unions became apparent after the establishment of the multi-party system. Many unionists elected deputies of various political parties. This is an important sign of the close ties between the trade unions and the political parties in Turkey.

On the other hand, the organisation of a political movement is not solely composed of a political party. It is necessary to consider a political movement with trade unions, chambers and civil society organisations. Hence, it is also important to investigate the approaches of the trade unions with respect to the European Union. In this context the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (TURK-IS) and the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DISK) are the trade unions of which the views with respect to the European Union will be examined.

This study has been conducted by means of document analysis and in-depth interviews. The analyses of the documents and the in-depth interviews provide an opportunity to examine the general framework in which the social democratic parties, organisations and social democrat figures shape their basic approaches and policies with respect to the European Union. The tendencies that are observed in the approaches of the social democrat representatives can also provide an opportunity to understand how an important component of the Turkish society defining itself as 'social democrat' perceives Turkey-EU relations.

In this context the relevant documents have been analysed in order to carry out the brief overviews on the advent of the European Union, on the course of the relations between Turkey and the European Union and on the development of the social democratic movement in Turkey. In the same manner the approaches of the European social democrats with respect to the European Union have been analysed by means of relevant documents.

In the last part of the thesis which is the core of the study, both the document analyses and the in-depth interviews are included in order to analyse the approaches of Turkish social democrats toward the European Union. The existing documents about the approaches of Turkish social democrats toward the European Union are mostly composed of the party documents, declarations and statements of the representatives of the parties and organisations. Also, the statements of the

personalities who do not have direct connections with the parties and organisations are important sources of information. To complement the existing documents, some in-depth interviews have been undertaken with the representatives of the Turkish social democratic movement. These interviews have been carried out in order to delineate how Turkish social democrats conceive of the European Union, how the relations between Turkey and the European Union are perceived, what kind of problems Turkish social democrats consider to be present in Turkish-EU relations, and finally how they foresee the future of these relations.

2. THE APPROACHES OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TOWARD THE EUROPEAN UNION

2.1. THE ADVENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union defines itself as a family of democratic “European countries, committed to working together for peace and prosperity” (Avrupa Komisyonu, 2002). It is not claimed to be a State intending to replace the existing states, but it is stressed that the European Union is more than just another international organisation. The EU Member States have delegated some of their sovereignty so that decisions on specific matters of joint interest can be made democratically at the European level (Avrupa Komisyonu, 2002).

Guiding the European countries to establish a Community were the destructive effects of World War II. The idea of the ‘European Union’ was first proposed by the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman in a speech on 9 May 1950 (Gillingham, 2003: 4). The main aim behind such an attempt was to prevent the recurrence of such a tragedy.

The establishment of an organisation that can overcome the national conflicts in Europe had resulted from the resistance movements that fought against totalitarian regimes. People who had resisted totalitarianism during the war were determined to put an end to international hatred and rivalry in Europe and to build a lasting peace between former enemies. (Fontaine, 2004: 3)

On the other hand, the Cold War, contributing to increasing tension between the “communist world” and the “capitalist world” had been forcing these European states to establish such an integration which would also provide a reconciliation of former enemies, promoting prosperity, and strengthening Western Europe’s resistance to communism (Dinan, 2002: 5).

On May 1950, French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman suggested an idea originally conceived by Jean Monnet which advised the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) to be founded (Gillingham, 2003: 4). Schuman was suggesting France and Germany to leave the management of their coal and steel production to a High Authority which they would form the basis of a federation that would keep its door open to other European states. After a long preparation period, the ECSC was founded with the Paris Treaty by Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The establishment of European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 was the first step for the European Union. It was the start of more than half a century of co-operation between the member states of the European Communities (Coşkun, 2001: 46). The task of the ECSC was to found a common market which was compatible with the general economic conditions of the member states and to contribute the member states for economic enlargement and for advancing employment and life standards. Later in 1957, the European Economic Community was established by the Treaty of Rome and changed to the European Community (Bozkurt, 2001: 86).

The first enlargement of the Community was realised with the joining of Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom in 1973, after twelve years from the Treaty of Rome. In 1981 Greece became an EEC member. Portugal and Spain followed Greece in 1986 (Smith&Wallace, 1994: 430-431).

As Dinan (2003) mentions the launch of the European Monetary System (EMS) in 1979, the precursor to the single currency was a significant development in the process of European integration. The integration progress gained speed with the emergence of the single market program for the free movement of goods, services, capital and people as a result of collaboration between big business, the commission and national leaders in the early 1980s (Dinan, 2003: 33). Also, as Dinan (2003) mentions, the Single European Act (SEA) of 1986 brought environmental policy into treaty, strengthened community policy in research and technological development, and included a section on foreign policy cooperation. In the same direction, France and Germany agreed in 1984 to press ahead with the abolition of border checks and this led to the Schengen Agreement for the free movement of people. This agreement

gradually included most other member states and formally became part of the EU under the terms of the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty (Dinan, 2003: 34).

The end of the Cold War has brought the Community into a new stage. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, West and East Germany united on 3 November 1990. The Central and Eastern European countries have been 'quitted' from Soviet control. Finally, in December 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed (Smith, 2000: 437). This development has fully changed the political structure of Europe. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Central and Eastern European countries became the immediate subject of the European agenda. The membership of the Central and Eastern European countries, which were previously behind the Iron Curtain, were required for the sake of lasting peace and stability in the Continent. This necessity directed the Union towards both an economic and political integration and enlargement process.

The European Union was established by the Treaty of European Union which is known as the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. New foundations and principles of the current European structure have been established by the Maastricht Treaty (Coşkun, 2001: 66). The Maastricht Treaty prepared a program to be realised until 1999 including the improvement of monetary union, new common policies, European citizenship, diplomatic cooperation, and common defence and internal security (Fontaine, 2004: 9). In 1993, at the Copenhagen European Council, some certain criteria to define the rules for membership to the European Union have been determined by the member states which would directly influence and determine the following developments. These criteria concern:

- the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities (political criterion);
- the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the European Union (economic criterion);
- the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union (criterion concerning adoption of the Community *acquis*) (Fontaine, 2004: 12).

The number of the members of the Union reached fifteen after Finland, Sweden, and Austria joined to the Union in 1995. Nine years after from the last enlargement, the European Union welcomed ten new countries in 2004: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. The membership negotiations with Bulgaria and Romania were started in 2000. These two countries are expected to be members of the EU in 2007 (Fontaine, 2004: 64). The membership negotiations with Croatia started in 2005. The EU decided to start the membership negotiations with Turkey on 3 October 2005. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's application for candidacy was accepted and it gained candidate status in 2005.

On the way to European integration, eleven of the countries in the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) decided to give up their own currencies and adopt the Euro currency in 1999 (Cowles & Dinan, 2004: 1). Recently the Euro is the sole currency in twelve EU Member countries. However, the process of accession to the single currency has not completed yet.

The last important development in the history of the European Union that should be mentioned here is the European Constitution. The European Constitution is one of the most important steps which is considered to be taken for a European integration. The process of preparing a European Constitution started with the Treaty of Nice signed in 2001. On 16-17 June 2004, the text of the Constitution was accepted at the Brussels European Council and the process of "ratification procedure of the Constitution by Member States" started¹. The ratification process is planned to be completed in 2006. The main aim of the European Constitution is to replace the existing treaties that have formed the European Union.

Here it is necessary to consider the approaches of the European social democrats to the EU in light of the above-mentioned brief historical information about the EU.

¹ More information about the European Constitution can be obtained from http://europa.eu.int/roadtoconstitution/chronology/index_en.htm.

2.2. THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Social democracy is a way of political thinking which has been influential both as an intellectual orientation and as a political process. It was originated from the industrialised or industrialising societies of Western Europe (Kahraman, 2002: 157). The basis of the European social democracy is Marxist theory.

The historic aim of the social democracy was to fight back the most oppressive aspects of capitalism and even to overthrow the liberal-capitalist order prevailing in all European societies at the end of the nineteenth century... [However] from its origins as a revolutionary political movement which aimed to free the working class from the exploitation of the capitalist system, social democracy has gradually become a force integrated within the capitalist order. (Marlière, 1999: 1)

In this respect, Sungur Savran (1986) underlines two important characteristics of social democracy. The first one is that Western European social democratic parties were historically originated from within the universal movement of the proletariat. Secondly, these parties have gradually become more inclined to compromise with the bourgeoisie with a moderate attitude towards the capitalist social framework and class struggle (Savran, 1986: 85). It is possible to argue that this inclination of the social democratic parties had already become the main trajectory of these parties in 1990s. As of late, there are not many alternatives that they can present against the neo-liberal policies. Today, the European social democratic movement “can no longer rely on theoretical instruments, such as Marxism or Keynesianism, enabling it to find a way out of the present impasse” (Sassoon, 1998: 3).

As İsmail Cem (1998) asserts the European social democratic parties ceased to be class parties and evolved as representatives of larger social sections of the society in time. However, they still have close ties with the trade unions and their social bases mostly consist of the working class. They do not reject market mechanisms and the free economy while aiming to ensure equality and social justice in a secure socio-

economic model. To realise this aim, the social democracy stressed the role of the state (Cem, 1998: 37).

However, there has been a transformation of social democratic parties that has been particularly influential since the 1980s (Yalman, 1999: 56). The transformation of these parties has been rendering the social democratic parties more compatible with the neo-liberal policies. In this context, the theory of the 'Third Way' which defines a 'new' position for the social democrats between a 'statist social democracy' and neo-liberalism more or less overlaps with the recent position of the European social democracy. The Third Way posits that it is possible and necessary for the social democrats to combine social solidarity and a dynamic economy (Giddens, 2001: 3).

Within the historical development process major differences have occurred in the social democratic ideology and movement. There are also different conceptions and practises of social democracy in Europe according to the historical, social, economic and political differences between the countries. In this context, as Hix and Lord (1997) state, it can be argued that the socialist family is historically divided on the question of European integration. According to Hix and Lord, in the 1950s, the socialist parties in the original six member states were less reluctant than the other party families to approve the Paris and Rome treaties (Hix and Lord, 1997: 36). However, when the 1960s and most of the 1970s are considered, some socialist parties, for instance in Britain, Ireland, Denmark and Norway, were officially opposed to their countries becoming members of the European Economic Community (Hix and Lord, 1997: 36). Significant divisions occurred on certain issues among the European socialists. The inner balances in each country determined the approaches of the socialist parties to some extent. It can be said that the socialist parties in Europe are generally in favour of European integration but this attitude does not prevent the crises that sometimes occur.

The level of the support also differs from country to country. For instance, according to Hix and Lord, by 1997, "there was a vast difference between the high levels of support for the EU among socialist voters in Ireland, Portugal, and the Netherlands, and the low levels of support in Denmark, Britain, Greece, and even among the francophone Belgians" (Hix and Lord, 1997: 36).

According to Ladrech (1999), the impact of the European integration on social democratic party policies and identities since the launch of the Single Market program and EMU has been profound. “The generally regarded neo-liberal thrust of the Single Market programme and the drive to meet the convergence criteria for monetary union represent more of a challenge to traditional social democratic agendas than to parties for whom these European policy agendas actually complement national policy positions” (Ladrech, 1999: 218-219).

As Ladrech (1999) states, the welfare state and other public services have always been important factors considered in the policy making process for social democratic parties over the course of the twentieth century. Yet, the competition policy of the EU and the efforts towards the achievement of the Monetary Union became issues that confront the social democrats’ traditional political line because the practice of these newly emerging economic developments showed itself as privatization of some important public services and gradual reduction in the role of the welfare state (Ladrech, 1999: 219). The social democrats have had “relatively more interventionist economic policy orientation”, but the reduction of the influence of the state on economic issues by the applications such as the creation of a single currency or European Central Bank brought about a difficult situation for social democrats (Ladrech, 1999: 219).

Also, with the political developments occurring in the process of the European Union, the wide scope of action of the national governments has been reduced. Narrowing of the authority and the scope of action of the state is also a tenuous situation for national parties such as the social democratic ones. However, European social democrats have tended to come together in supranational organisations to be able to widen their scope of action (Ladrech, 1999: 219).

When considered in a historical course, it is seen that over the past forty years social democrats voted for the construction of the European Community. However, as Robert Ladrech (2001) mentions, it is not very plausible to claim that social democrats could put forward a social democratic social project to influence the ongoing process that would serve the interests of the disadvantaged in this process.

As Ladrech states “the neo-liberal policy orientation of the EU, especially assertive since the 1986 Single European Act; the end of the Cold War and with it the

disappearance of counter capitalist models; the inroads made into national economic policy-making by globalisation” have been the issues forcing a transformation of social democratic parties (Ladrech, 2001: 37). These impacts have brought the social democratic parties in the EU to a closer point regarding the union and integration.

A brief inquiry into the stances of major European social democratic parties on a country by country basis will be helpful to understand the approaches of European social democrats toward the EU in further detail.

2.2.1. THE FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY (PS)

France is one of the founders and leading members of the European Union (EU). The process of European integration has therefore been an integral part of French modernisation after the Second World War (Ladrech, 2001: 37).

The French Socialist Party was founded in 1969, but the party has existed in France under various names since 1880. The French Socialist Party is now the main opposition party in France. When the European integration process is considered in terms of the French Socialist Party (PS), it can be observed that the relations of the PS with Europe have generally been problematic. However it is possible to argue that by the 1980s the relations with the EU was began to be seen not simply as a platform for traditional French foreign policy manoeuvring, but as a complementary dimension in achieving domestic policy goals (Ladrech, 2001: 40).

The most important measures that were required for the integration with the EU such as the decision to pursue the EMU project were mostly taken in the years when socialist François Mitterand was the president of France and when the PS was often the biggest party in the parliament. Although certain factions within the Socialist Party were suspicious about particular issues, such as the liberalisation measures aimed at public utilities, they did not explicitly oppose the EU policies (Ladrech, 2001: 40). The most explicit opposition within the Socialist Party was related to the Maastricht Treaty referendum in 1992.

The EU debate was not only focused upon the liberalisation measures. Alastair Cole (1996) mentions about the ambivalence of French socialists with respect to the ‘concept of Europe’:

The French socialist concept of Europe has been marked by a measure of ambivalence. Historically Europe was valued insofar as it prolonged the internationalist traditions of French socialism, but it was feared because of the diminution of national sovereignty it implied. (Cole, 1996: 71)

It can be said that the ongoing tension between these tendencies has often been characteristic feature of the French socialists’ attitudes toward the EU.

The economic and political requirements of being a member of the EU have been a challenge for the French socialists. This challenge has caused some constraints on traditional French politics and policies but the PS did not step back from supporting the EU process. According to Ladrech (2001:45-46), the PS aims at expanding the competencies of the EU in the area of social policy, enlarging the co-ordination and influence of the national governments in the area of monetary and economic policy. It can be argued that the French socialists support the EU and European integration and aim to place their ideas in the EU agenda.

[The government of Lionel Jospin, the former French president, that came to power in 1997] responded these developments by extending state activism to the European level by calling for improved economic policy coordination, joint reflationary economic strategies, the creation of an interventionist European employment policy, the loosening of the EMU constraint, the reinforcement of EU social policy and fiscal policy harmonisation to prevent perceived tax competition by certain EU member states. (Howarth, 2002: 357)

The notions of the free market and monetarist European Union still are the conflictual issues for the PS. It is obvious that a more interventionist Europe, protectionist European social policies, and the notion of ‘social Europe’ in the context of employment are the major issues concerning the PS in the EU process.

Another dimension of the European integration within the EU process is common security and defence policies. The French socialists stress the importance of these policies. For the EU to be an internationally effective power, France has always

pointed out the importance of maintaining its security and active military force, with French socialists supporting these policies. It can be argued that the main aim in their insistence on the importance of EU's military capacity is to diminish the influence of NATO and the USA on Europe (Howarth, 2002: 355-356).

With respect to the European constitution, there is a deep division in the French Left. The PS is divided within itself. Although the party secretary François Hollande and Lionel Jospin supported the constitution, some important figures such as the former PS Prime Minister Laurent Fabius campaigned against it (Nicolaidis, 2005: 13). The major factors of their opposition are mostly related with the neo-liberal content of the constitution. The constitution was rejected as a result of French referendum in May 2005. It can be said that behind the No votes of the French citizens, there were various reasons such as anti-globalisation, opposition to the government and the enlargement of the EU including the accession of Turkey. Whatever the reason for rejection, the referendum is still a point of contention within the PS (Nicolaidis, 2005: 13).

France supported a smaller and inter-governmental European integration in the past. Therefore, it was reluctant to support enlargement of the EU. However, an enlargement of the EU encompassing Central and Eastern Europe has been considered by the PS as a necessity for peace, security and stability of the continent. (Howarth, 2002: 355). In this context, the membership of Turkey to the EU has not been opposed by the PS. Although the French socialists mention that Turkey has various deficiencies, they state that the PS is not against Turkey's membership on principle. However, despite the support on principle, there have been various demands that the French socialists have given voice to. For instance, in 2004, the leader of the PS demanded that Turkey recognise that the Ottoman State committed genocide against Armenians in 1915. This demand was mentioned as a condition for membership of Turkey. These kinds of attempts strain the relations between Turkey and the EU. Other issues that the PS emphasises for the full-membership of Turkey are laicism and the role of the military in Turkish political and civil life. As a result, it can be argued that the inner contradictions of the PS on major issues such as the European constitution and the deepening cleavage between the French people and the Party will

cause many difficulties for the PS to display a clear approach on the enlargement process.

2.2.2. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF GERMANY (SPD)

Germany is another founding and key figure of the European integration. The size of its population and its economic strength qualify it as a major player in the European integration process especially after the reunion of the Country in 1990 (Frevert, 2005: 87).

The Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), one of the oldest political parties of Germany, was founded in 1863. The German SPD is recently the junior partner in the coalition with the CDU/CSU. The leader of the party is Matthias Platzeck.

According to James Sloam (2003), the European policy of SPD is mainly characterised by two dynamics: 'Pragmatism' among the party leadership, which allows a 'freer' interpretation of German interests within a changing 'policy context' and a conceptual change in the SPD elite that eventually elevated EU policy to the forefront of a multi-level program for political governance (Sloam, 2003: 61). Similarly, Richard Moeller (1996) argues that the German Social Democrats have held a broad spectrum of attitudes and policies with regard to Europe. Under the direction of distinctive leaders, the party has maintained approving as well as disapproving viewpoints of European integration for numerous reasons (Moeller, 1996: 33). Yet, in general, the policies of the SPD have shifted from a negative to a positive view of European integration.

The important issues that influence the approach of the SPD towards the EU are counted by Sloam (2003) as the electoral trajectory of the SPD, German Unity and the progress of the European integration. These developments led the SPD to display positive attitudes towards the EU. According to Sloam, the more the SPD came close to power, the more it established closer ties with the EU (Sloam, 2003: 61). For instance, when the party was in opposition in the 1990s, its European policies were usually sceptical especially on the issues concerning EMU, EU budget and Euro. In

this point the impact of the tendencies of the German electorates towards the major EU issues on the SPD policies can not be disregarded.

The major issue concerning the SPD today is to reduce the payments of Germany in the EU budget. The party considers that Germany should not pay more than 1 % of its gross national income to the EU (Social Democratic Party of Germany, 2005). While working on its policies, the SPD is told to try to find a balance between the domestic interests of Germany and common European interests (Sloam, 2003: 67). In search of finding such a balance, the SPD did not put much social democratic effort on the issues such as employment policies and social Europe. The former leader of the SPD, Oskar Lafontaine, should be mentioned here. Lafontaine, who was elected chairman of the SPD in 1995, became the minister of finance in 1998 and left the SPD in 2005, was one of the most noteworthy names that pointed out the importance of a social democratic EU.

When historically considered it is seen that the SPD backed the signing of the Maastricht Treaty and supports the Economic and Monetary Union. However, there was a limited objection within the Party against the Maastricht Treaty. The opposition was considering that the economic union before realising and regulating political union on a democratic base would harm Germany. So, the initial realisation of political union was prior to the economic union for the German social democrats (Moeller, 1996: 45). Although there were various hesitations concerning some points of it, the project of the EU as a whole has been supported by the SPD.

Compared with the national sensitivity of the French PS, the SPD has not represented similar sensitivity. According to Moeller, “regions and their competence in democratic participation were seen to be of prime importance to the future of European integration, and the transfer of state functions to Brussels was to prepare EC members for the future in a world society” (Moeller, 1996: 46). It can be observed that a similar approach is still present in the policies of the SPD.

The Joint Paper, dated 28 October 2005, declared on the official website of the SPD that the European integration is explained as one of the most important issue for peace, freedom and security as well as for a policy that fosters democracy and social justice (Social Democratic Party of Germany, 2005). In the same paper, it is declared that the European Union provides a guarantee for political stability, security and

prosperity in Germany and Europe. The SPD declares that despite the recent problems of the EU, the SPD has responsibility for maintenance and development of European integration.

The SPD stands by the European Constitutional Treaty. According to the German social democrats, the constitution “comprises significant progress towards a value-oriented and socially just Europe, more civil rights, a clearer differentiation between the responsibilities of the Union and those of the member states, a reduction of excessive regulation and bureaucracy, and the closer involvement of national parliaments” (Social Democratic Party of Germany, 2005). The party asserts that the constitution makes the EU more democratic, efficient and transparent.

The SPD principally points to the competitiveness of the European economy before the importance of social cohesion. The party emphasises the importance of balancing economic efficiency and social cohesion. This balance is thought to be achieved by enforcing the principles of the social market economy at the European level. According to the party, the social market will progress due to the improvement of the competitiveness (Social Democratic Party of Germany, 2005). Similarly, a single currency is seen as a positive and significant step on the way to a modernised Europe. On the other hand, the SPD underscores the necessity of the European Security and Defence Policy for the continuity of peace and stability in Europe while pointing out the accordance and cooperation with NATO.

In the Joint Paper, it is declared that the party is in favour of a circumspect enlargement which will contribute to peace and stability of Europe. In this context, the approach of the SPD towards the membership of Turkey overlaps with the general approach of the EU. It is declared that to link Turkey to the EU is of great importance but the negotiations will be open-ended and do not guarantee membership at the end of the process (Social Democratic Party of Germany, 2005). It is clear that the SPD is not against the membership of Turkey but displays various hesitations originated from the opposition against the membership of Turkey in Germany.

2.2.3. THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY (LP)

Britain is one of the most important and influential countries of the EU. The relations of this country with the EU process have historically displayed a changeable character. In the beginning, Britain did not prefer to be a part of the European Community. Its late application was vetoed twice by France. Finally, in 1972 Britain became a member of the EEC.

The British Labour Party is the social democratic party of Britain. It was founded in 1900. Today, it is the party of government and the leader of the party is Tony Blair.

The stance of the British Labour Party toward the EU has displayed a differential character. The generally accepted feature of the British Labour Party is its traditional difference from the European socialist thought. Here George and Haythorne (1996) state that the national history of Britain made it difficult for the Labour Party to adjust to the EC. They argue that there are several reasons why the party was less than enthusiastic about the EC. According to George and Haythorne the “British working class were fully imbued with the spirit of imperialism: a sense of national superiority, and an assumption of a privileged position and a duty to spread enlightenment to others” (George&Haythorne, 1996: 112). They argue that these attitudes express themselves within the Labour movement in four ways:

First in a strong sense of nationalism; second in the form of an attachment to the British and their kith and kin in the Commonwealth; third in a sense that Britain could show the way to others less fortunate; and fourth in attachment to a wider internationalism than was implied by the ideal of a united Europe. (George&Haythorne, 1996: 112-113)

The traditional heritage of the Labour Party reinforced a negative view of the EC in the past. The questions such as membership to the EC and European integration became internal, political debates within the Labour Party because there were different views within the party concerning these issues. The differentiations about the EC closely coincided with general left-right positions within the party (Webb, 1999: 106). Yet it can be observed that by 1984, with the leadership of Neil Kinnock, there

occurred a steady adaptation of accepting the EC as a positive factor and an opportunity that could help the Labour Party to achieve its objectives (George & Haythorne, 1996: 119).

The recent attitude of the British Labour Party towards the EU is positive. The Labour Party officially supported the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. The Labour Party is officially in favour of the European Monetary Union and has little hesitancy about the loss of sovereignty. However, as Webb points out, it is stated by the Party that British entry will come only if the economic conditions are appropriate (Webb, 1999: 107). Because of this general precondition, Britain did not enter the EMU in the first wave in 1999 and remains outside it at the start of 2002. As a result it can be said that the Labour Party is in favour of entry to the 'Euro zone' in principal, but it considers that the economic conditions must be appropriate (Carter, 2003: 2).

The Labour Party also welcomes a co-ordinated strategy for fighting unemployment across Europe and the widening of the European Union to include new members (Webb, 1999: 107). Here it should be mentioned that the British Labour Party is one of the most important components in the EU that support the membership of Turkey.

Today, although Britain is currently a member of most EU institutions, it is not a member of the European Monetary Union and out of the single currency arrangement (Williams, 2005: 56). Concerning the security and defence policies, the Labour Party supports the European Defence and Security Policy and states that it will enable the EU to play its full role on the international stage by enhancing its military capabilities for peacekeeping, humanitarian and crisis management operations where NATO as a whole is not engaged (Labour Party, 2004).

It can be said that the Labour Party has urged less regulation about social issues and fewer restrictions on businesses and the labour market. According to the Party, the full benefits of industrial and commercial integration can only be achieved through a more open system (Gelb, 2005: 16).

The debate on the major issues concerning the "proper extent of British membership" in Britain continues. However, it can be said that the British Labour Party supports the extent of British membership. With respect to the European constitution, the Labour Party also displays a supportive attitude but after the French

and Dutch referendums which were negatively resulted, the Labour Party as the British government postponed holding a referendum for the constitution.

Considering the three important social democratic parties of the EU Member countries, it is possible to argue that they are in favour of the EU despite the differences between them and the hesitations they have with respect to the various components of the EU integration. Moreover, these parties have either led their countries or been the biggest opposition parties during the integration process. Here it is useful to assess the organisations that these parties come together with other social democratic, socialist and labour parties in order to reach a significant perspective with respect to the relation of the EU and the European socialists.

2.2.4. THE PARTY OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS (PES)

The Party of European Socialists (PES) was founded in 1992 following the Treaty on European Union and the recognition of the importance of political parties at a European level in Article 191 of the Treaty. It succeeded the Confederation of Socialist Parties of the European Community, which had been set up in 1974 (Party of European Socialists, without date). The main aims of the PES are counted by the Party as strengthening of the socialist and social democratic movement in the Union and throughout Europe; the development of close working relationships between the national parties, the national parliamentary groups, the Parliamentary Group of the PES, PES Women, Young European Socialists (ECOSY), and other socialist and social democratic organisations; the definition of common policies for the European Union; and the adoption of a common manifesto for elections to the European Parliament (Party of European Socialists, without date). There are 33 full member parties from the 25 EU member States, Norway, Romania and Bulgaria in the PES. In addition, there are five associate and five observer parties. The president of the PES is Poul Nyrup Rasmussen from Denmark.

The PES has two interlinking organisations which are the PES party federation and the Group of the PES in the European Parliament (Hix, 1999: 207). The European Parliament has 732 members who were directly elected in the 25 member states of the

European Union. The MEPs work as the representatives of 457 million citizens of the EU (Fontelles, 2006). Most of the MEPs are also members of a political group established in the European Parliament.

The Party of European Socialists (PES) is one of the party groups in the European Parliament. The PES group dates from 1953 and was known as the Socialist Group until the formation of the PES in 1993 as a supranational grouping of the European member parties of the Socialist International (Day, 2000: 232). Simon Hix states that the roots of PES can be traced back to the Socialist International of 1950, and even to the First International of 1864. More recently, the PES is the present incarnation of two organisations linked to the first institutions of the European communities: the Socialist Group in the Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community, established in 1953, and the Liaison Bureau of the Socialist Parties of the European Community, established in 1957 between the Socialist International parties in the Communities (Hix, 1999: 204). The Group of PES in the European Parliament is named the Socialist Group. The Socialist Group has 201 members from 23 member states in the European Parliament. The current president of the Socialist Group is Martin Schulz from Germany.

The party groups such as the PES are important components in the European integration process because they have the chance to prepare the ground for producing common policies to influence the EU process. It is clear that the PES supports the EU integration. The PES is already a product of the EU project.

The PES supports a single currency and an independent European Central Bank (ECB) (Hix, 1999: 215). With regard to the EU Single Market, the PES insists on the 'social Europe' with an emphasis on producing effective employment policies to be pursued parallel to the deregulatory aspects of the single market. The 'social Europe' policy of the PES predicts various regulations on social policy, employment policy and on economic and social cohesion (Hix, 1999: 215).

It can be said that tension generally occurs between the priorities of the socialist family represented by the PES and the national interests. This dilemma becomes more important when the social democratic parties come to power. There might be no consensus between the national party positions on some issues. For instance, on employment, the British Labour Party and to some extent the Netherlands Labour

Party and Spanish Socialist Workers' Party stress "flexibility, modernisation, and fiscal prudence" while the French Socialist Party and to some extent the Social Democratic Party of Germany insist on rather more welfarist policies (Lightfoot, 2003: 227). It is possible to argue that these kinds of contradictions negatively influence the PES.

In the 'A Europe of Progress' Report discussing the political agenda of the PES between 2005 and 2009, it is declared by Pascal Lamy that the EU undertakes various responsibilities with the enlargement process. For that reason, the EU "should strengthen its capacity to promote human rights, democracy, and the rule of law as well as its capacity to focus on the fight against poverty, both in its neighbourhood and through its multilateral and bilateral policies" (Lamy, 2004).

On the other hand, the PES expresses its support for the European Constitution. At the Manifesto of the Party of European Socialists for the June 2004 European Parliament Elections, it was declared that the European socialists played a key role in shaping the draft Constitution and ensured that it included key values and rights. It was mentioned that the Constitution, which is crucial to the success of an enlarged Europe, must make the EU institutions more transparent, accountable, and relevant to the EU citizens (Manifesto of the Party of European Socialists for the June 2004 European Parliament Elections, 2004).

The PES states that it supports Turkey's 'European aspirations' and displays its will to help Turkey to complete this process successfully. It is argued that the PES will be looking for Turkey's progress in freedom of expression, the rights of women, workers, trade unions, and minorities. The Party underlines that these reforms should not be considered as a series of concessions to the EU because they stem from unchangeable rules of entry (Lipponen, Papandreu, Rasmussen, 2005). The PES also declares its views on major issues concerning Turkey-EU negotiations:

Turkey's record on human and minority rights and the inordinate power of the military are big obstacles to membership. A peaceful political solution that takes into account Kurdish rights is needed to bring stability to south east Turkey. Good neighbourly relations are an important step in Turkey's European direction. Turkey must fully implement the customs union agreement with all EU member states, including Cyprus. Turkey must recognise the Republic of Cyprus... A viable solution in Cyprus, within the framework of United Nations resolutions and in line with the

principles on which the EU is founded, will ensure that both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots can enjoy the full benefits of EU membership. Both Cypriot communities must contribute to reaching a solution at an early date. (Lipponen Lipponen, Papandreu, Rasmussen, 2005)

It is clear that the PES is in favour of the political and economic integration of the EU. Here it is necessary to consider the stance of the Parliamentary Group of the PES with respect to the EU.

2.2.5. THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP OF THE PARTY OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS (SOCIALIST GROUP)

The Parliamentary Group of the PES at the European Parliament (Socialist Group) supports and promotes the notion of ‘social Europe’. In the PES Group Position Paper on Social Europe adopted on 17 September 2003, it is stated that the PES Group is committed to strengthening the EU economic and social model. It is argued that the Lisbon Summit held in 2000 indicates the objective of making “the EU the most competitive, knowledge-based economy in the world, based on full, quality employment and with increased social cohesion. This means that economic and social progress must go hand in hand” (Parliamentary Group of the Party of European Socialists, 2003: 1). This objective also displays the trajectory of the PES Group in the EU. According to the Socialist Group, social rights are integral part of European citizenship.

The Socialist Group approves of the draft European Constitution in general. It is argued that although the Group’s ambitions have not been completely fulfilled, it is crucial that the draft Constitution takes into account the “notions of ‘equality’, ‘social market economy’, ‘full employment’, ‘social justice’, ‘equal opportunities between men and women’ (Parliamentary Group of the Party of European Socialists, 2003: 2).

Richard Corbett, the Co-ordinator and Spokesperson on Constitutional Affairs for the PSE Group, declares that the Socialist Group of the European Parliament firmly believes that the Constitution allows the Union to make significant

improvements and that the Constitution gives fuller commitment than all previous treaties to the defence of the European social model; hence it will reform and modernise the EU (Corbett, 2004:1-3).

It is explained in the Policies of the Socialist Group which have been determined for the 6th Parliamentary Term that the Socialist Group also supports the single currency in the EU. According to the Group, the Euro benefits travelling, price stability, low interest rates, shelter from external shocks, elimination of exchange rate fluctuations, price transparency and so on. The Socialist Group considers that “the single currency also implies a joint monetary policy supervised by the European Central Bank and its introduction should, in the view of European socialists, lead to increased co-ordination of the economic policies of the participating countries and to an efficient information policy on the euro and its introduction” (Parliamentary Group of the Party of European Socialists, 2004a). As a result it is stated that in the view of the European Socialists, the Euro is indispensable to achieving the European Single Market and to the development of sustainable growth, high-qualified jobs and social cohesion for European citizens.

The PES Group adheres to the principles of common security, based upon co-operation; sustainable security, concentrating on taking away the causes of insecurity; and democratic security, democracy in all its forms and expressions as the best guarantee for security, in the EU. It is declared by the Group that the EU should have a credible military option additional to the other foreign policy instruments. In this context, within the scope of the notion of ‘crisis management’, the PES Group supports the European Security and Defence Policy (Parliamentary Group of the Party of European Socialists, 2004b: 1).

With respect to the enlargement of the EU, the Socialist Group declares that it supports the enlargement process for the historical opportunity to reunite Europe and heal past divisions. The enlargement of the EU is important for the Group to guarantee security, stability, and prosperity in the candidate countries and the existing Member States (Parliamentary Group of the Party of European Socialists, 2002: 2). The Socialist Group states that Enlargement must be used to strengthen the Common and Foreign Security Policy and enhance Europe’s impact on global affairs. In this context, Martin Schulz states that the membership of Turkey means the strengthening

of the EU. He states that although there have been various hesitations about the Turkish membership among the Socialists, they evaluate the process of Turkey's membership on political, economic and social bases unlike the Conservative's stress on culture (Schulz, 2004). However, as Jan Marinus Wiersma, member of the PES Group at the European Parliament points out, the Socialist Group takes the position that the issue of the recognition of Cyprus by Turkey has to be resolved as soon as possible. Wiersma states that failing to do so would definitely weigh on the progress in the negotiating process. "Turkey has to realize that recognition of all EU member states is non-negotiable. It is an absolute precondition for membership" (Wiersma, 2006).

2.2.6. THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL AND THE EU

The Socialist International has existed in its present form since 1951, but in fact its origins go back to the early international organisations of the labour movement in the world. The Socialist International is the worldwide organisation of social democratic, socialist and labour parties (Socialist International, without date). The European social democratic and socialist parties are also members of the Socialist International and the Party of European Socialists is an associated organisation of the Socialist International.

The Socialist International is officially defined as an association of political parties and organisations which seeks to establish democratic socialism with a purpose of strengthening the relations between the member, consultative and observer parties and to coordinate their political attitudes by consent. It brings together 161 political parties and organisations from all continents. George Papandreu, the President of PASOK is the current President of the Socialist International (Socialist International, without date).

In the General Resolution of the Twentieth Congress of the Socialist International in 1996, it is declared that European states cannot deal with the structural problems such as the threat of war, rising extreme nationalism, and

unemployment in isolation. In this context the Socialist International considers that the European Union not only represents an opportunity but also has a responsibility to ensure peace, welfare and justice within society (Socialist International, 1996).

The European Union is considered an open form of regionalism which the Socialist International supports and considers being the most appropriate way of meeting the challenges which cannot be met efficiently by nation-states acting on their own. It is stated in the Declaration of Paris that a sovereignty which is shared regionally in Europe by the European Union enhances its position (Socialist International, 1999).

Furthermore, the Socialist International expresses its support to the European socialists who work together within the framework of the Party of European Socialists as a political power that can produce solutions to the major problems in Europe (Socialist International, 1996). The Socialist International declares its approval and support on developing a common foreign and security policy in Europe, with a view to promote international peace and development. It also displays its commitment to the Economic and Monetary Union that should be “accompanied by an improved co-ordination of economic, budgetary, fiscal, employment and social policies, with a view to ensuring that the EMU is socially compatible and that the common criteria can be maintained on the basis of economic re-organisation” (Socialist International, 1996). The Socialist International states that it is essential to promote sound economic and social relations between the states which join the EMU and those which do not.

In the Declaration of the Socialist International Committee on Peace, Democracy and Human Rights which met in İstanbul on 25-26 June 2004 it is declared that the enlargement of the EU and the preparation of the European Constitution were of great importance. With the İstanbul Declaration, the Socialist International reaffirmed its support both for the European integration and enlargement process and the membership of Turkey (Socialist International, 2004).

It is clear that the European social democrats are in favour of the European Union. The EU is considered as an opportunity for ensuring peace, welfare and justice within Europe. On the other hand, influencing the European Union policies on behalf of the priorities of the ‘European people’ is a generally accepted trajectory for the European social democrats. However it is a gradually weakening trajectory. To such

an extent that the European social democratic parties and organisations integrate with the neo-liberal policies. Recently, the main component of the ‘Social Europe’, which can also be considered as the reflection of the social democratic consideration about the EU, is ‘full, quality employment with increased social cohesion’.

The orientations of the social democratic parties sometimes become controversial with the priorities that have been raised by the party groups that these parties have established and the international organisations that these parties have been included. The PES, the PES Group at the European Parliament and the Socialist International display more pro-European stances that almost every step taken for the integration is approved while the social democratic parties put various reserves on the issues such as the monetary and economic policies of the EU and display different stances on the social policies and the role of the governments. With federative and international organisations the social democratic, socialist and labour parties have established, there is no reluctance with respect to the EU project. They support the European Monetary Union. They are in favour of the European Defence and Security Policy. They think that the European Constitution should come into force. They also consider the Enlargement of the EU as a necessity of peace and stability.

Considering the stances of the European social democrats in terms of parties, they are in favour of the European Union as well. However, it should be noted that there are historical differentiations within the social democratic movement represented by the parties which are also the reasons of divergent approaches on various major issues. In this context, the main controversy occurs between two tendencies: the one which is more protectionist on the social and economic rights and freedoms and the other which favour more liberal economic and monetary policies. In general, it is possible to argue that the European social democrats have evolved through a more pro-European position in time and now they are the major components of the European project.

Conceiving the stance of the European social democrats with respect to the European Union is beneficial to understand the similarities or dissimilarities with the stance of the Turkish counterparts. Here it is necessary to analyse the approaches of Turkish social democrats toward the European Union.

3. TURKEY-EUROPEAN UNION RELATIONS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TURKISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

3.1. THE RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Turkish candidate status for membership to the European Union (EU) is the point that had been reached after a long process of “westernisation” which has lasted for more than two hundred years. It is such an important process that in Turkey ‘modernisation’ is frequently used in the same sense with ‘westernisation’ (Çulhaoğlu, 2002: 171).

Throughout the history of the Turkish Republic, the end of the Second World War signifies a turning point for Turkey in its relations with the West. Integration with the West in all areas gained more importance for Turkey during the Cold War. The most evident symbol of the ‘alliance of the West’ against the Soviet Union in the Cold War period was the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Turkey became a member of NATO in 1951 (Koçak, 2002: 211). Additionally Turkey applied for membership to the EEC in July 1959 after the application of Greece. However, the 1960 military coup in Turkey interrupted the negotiations. As a result of the negotiations that restarted few years after the military intervention, the Ankara Agreement (Association Agreement) was signed between the EEC and Turkey on September 1963 (Çakmak, 2005: 95). The aim of the Agreement was to encourage the commercial and economic relations between two sides. Also, constructing strong ties between the Community and Turkey and facilitating the membership of Turkey by contributing to the development of the Turkish economy were counted among the principles of the Agreement. An important point which should be mentioned here is that full membership of Turkey to the EEC was accepted as the final aim with the Ankara Agreement (Çakmak, 2005: 97). It is argued that the framework of the integration of Turkey and the Community was drawn by the Ankara Agreement.

The economic and political conditions of Turkey have usually negatively influenced its relations with the EEC. Turkey has been economically weak and unstable. Moreover, the political instability of the country has often interrupted its relations with the EEC. The coup d'état in 1960, the Military Memorandum in 1971, the interference of the Turkish armed forces in Cyprus in 1974, the military coup in 1980 have also been the signs of an intermittent relation between Turkey and the EEC.

Turkey applied for membership to the EEC again in 1987. The Community rejected the application of Turkey in 1989 for the reason that it was not possible for it to accept a new member before completing the market process within itself and also stated that Turkey was in need of an enlargement in economic, political and social areas (Canbolat, 2002: 303). The Commission suggested completing the customs union when the Community completed the process of deepening within itself and getting ready for a new enlargement. This was a sort of rejection for Turkey. Yet, Turkey started the preparation process to complete the customs union in 1995 as was anticipated at the Additional Protocol. The Customs Union came into force in January 1996 under these conditions (Coşkun, 2001: 183).

The Customs Union was an important step for the integration of Turkey and the European Union. However, it has usually been a controversial issue. First of all, Turkey is the single third country that joined the Customs Union with the EU without being a member of it. This means that Turkey has been accepting various sanctions that have been determined by the Customs Union, without having a right on the process of deciding them because it is not a member of the EU. Secondly, it is also a question in dispute of whether the Customs Union is beneficial for Turkey. The main reason for such a question is the 'controversial' effect of the Customs Union to the rising deficit in foreign trade (Bozkurt, 2001: 329-330). The Customs Union relation between Turkey and the European Union has brought about various debates many of which are still on the political and economic agenda of Turkey.

Turkish candidacy to the EC membership was rejected once again at the Luxembourg European Council on 12-13 December 1997. However, on 10-11 December 1999, it was decided at the Helsinki European Council that Turkey was a full candidate for membership of the European Union but that it would have to meet

the Copenhagen criteria. It was decided by the Council that Turkey would benefit from a pre-accession strategy to support its reforms like all other candidate countries (Demokratik Sol Parti, 2004a: 32). This was an important turning point in the relations of Turkey and the Union.

The Accession Partnership, which “is the main instrument providing Turkey with guidance in its preparations for accession” was established in 2001. Later “it has been revised twice, once in 2003 and again in 2006” (European Union, 2006).

Turkey prepared the National Program in accordance with partnership for accession. In this Program, the approaches and attitudes of Turkey to internal and foreign affairs have been explained. In other words, the National Program is a document that explains how Turkey will carry out the conditions explained in the partnership for accession.

After the decision of the Helsinki Summit, both the Coalition Government of the Democratic Left Party, Nationalist Movement Party and the Motherland Party under the leadership of Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit which was established in 1999 and the latter Justice and Development Party Government which was established in 2002 have accelerated their efforts in order to ‘meet the Copenhagen political criteria as well as moving forward on the economic criteria and alignment with the *acquis*’ (European Union, 2005). Finally, it was decided at the Brussels Summit, which was held on 17 December 2004, to start the negotiations with Turkey for membership on 3 October 2005. A Negotiating Framework Document² setting out the method and guiding principles of the negotiations between Turkey and the EU was approved by the Council of Ministers on 2-3 October 2005 and the negotiations were started.

Today, the relations of Turkey and the EU and the recent developments concerning this process are important issues which have direct and indirect effects on the economic, political and social dynamics of life in Turkey. Especially in the last couple of years it has become the main issue that sets the political agenda in Turkey. In fact, the relations with the EU have never been at such a serious and determined

² The Negotiating Framework Document has caused many debates in Turkey because of its ‘rigorous’ structure. There are many controversial conditions and expressions for Turkey in this document including the ‘open-endedness’ of the negotiations which is often interpreted as an offer for a ‘special statute’ instead of full membership; namely ‘privileged partnership’. The full text of the Negotiating Framework can be reached from http://ec.europa.eu/comm/enlargement/docs/pdf/st20002_en05_TR_framedoc.pdf.

stage before because the membership of Turkey has never been as probable as it is today.

3.2. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT IN TURKEY

In Turkey the history of social democracy is not as old as it is in the Western European countries. In addition to its being a newly emerging political formation, the Turkish social democratic movement has also entirely different sources and origins from its Western European counterparts.

The social democratic movement in Turkey was originated from the Republican People's Party. Today, the political parties and other formations that locate themselves on the social democratic line are the structures that share the same historical heritage as the Republican People's Party.

The Republican People's Party (RPP) was founded in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who was the commander of the Turkish Independence War (Bila, 1999: 40). It can be said that the RPP was the founding party of Turkish Republic. It was the continuation of the Association of the Defence of the Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia which played a major role in the War of Independence. The 'Six Arrows' that determine the principles of the RPP also express the major principles of the new Turkish Republic. These six principles are republicanism, nationalism, statism, popularism, secularism and reformism.

The Republican People's Party was the single party of the new Turkish Republic until 1945. Two short experiences of multi-party system that had occurred between 1923 and 1945 failed. However, this single party system was subjected to radical transformations by the end of the Second World War (Eroğul, 1990: 113).

In 1945, the multi-party system was officially accepted in Turkey. This was a big step for the establishment of a democratic regime. However, the transition to the multi-party system was realised under the control of many restrictive laws. The 'National Chief' and the president of the Republic İsmet İnönü placed much effort in limiting such an expansion in a narrow class structure (Eroğul, 1990: 115). This

implies that the legal opposition to the RPP could only be one that was not ideologically much different from the RPP. Thus, it was thought that the RPP could both eliminate the reaction against the single party regime by constructing the multi-party regime and control the opposition at the same time. Nevertheless, the predictions of the RPP failed. The Democrat Party which was founded in 1946 displayed a major success (Bila, 1999: 116).

3.2.1. THE CONCEPT OF THE 'LEFT OF CENTRE' AS A STARTING POINT FOR SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

With the transition to the multi-party system, the Democrat Party (DP) which garnered a large amount of mass support of the dominant classes came to power by organising the reactions from different sections of society against the single party regime. The bloc of the dominant classes that the RPP had united within the party during the single party process left the RPP. The RPP lost its major functions within the system as a result of this process. Thus, the need to change became inevitable for the RPP.

As a result of accumulation of the industrial capital that began to accelerate by the end of the 1950s, a new political power, the working class, emerged as a candidate of social power that the RPP could rely on (Aktükün, 1999:23). It could be a chance for the RPP to reconstruct itself as a social democratic party but that kind of political transformation required a major rupture from its statist past which could not be sufficiently achieved.

The RPP lost the 1950, 1954, and the 1957 general elections. However, it became an organisation that organised the rising opposition from different sections of the society against the Democrat Party, which was becoming more despotic. The RPP became the symbol and the pioneer of democracy with the impact of the rising social complaint against the rule of the Democrat Party (Eroğul, 1990: 131). This can be counted among the many reasons of the RPP's choosing social democracy as the trajectory of the party. For instance in 1959, the RPP accepted the 'First Principles Declaration' (İlk Hedefler Beyannamesi) which represented the common democracy

program of the opposition movement against the Democrat Party. Years after this declaration, İsmet İnönü explained that it was one of the sources that the concept of the 'left of centre' was based on (Bila, 1999: 178, 214-215).

The military coup on 27 May 1960 was triggered by the economic trouble that influenced various sections of society including the officers, the despotic attitudes of the DP against the opposition, and the party staff's abusing the power of the party for their interests. Although the 1960 coup paved the way for continuous military interventions through political issues, this military coup also brought political refreshment through the creation of the 1961 Constitution. Class revival and political mobilisation gained power within the society. Here the rise of the Turkish Labour Party (TLP) should be considered. The Turkish Labour Party was founded in 1961 by a group of trade unionists. The TLP which was founded in the libertarian atmosphere of the 1960s aimed to associate the 1961 Constitution with socialist theory (Özdemir, 2002: 255). In the 1965 elections the TLP got approximately three per cent of the total votes and constituted a Parliamentary Group composed of fifteen deputies (Özdemir, 2002: 256). It is possible to argue that the rise of the Left in Turkey forced the RPP to reconsider its main political approaches. The concern of the RPP was both to benefit from the rising leftist movement and to block the extreme leftist currents (Bila, 1999: 211-212).

The concept of the 'left of centre' became an officially accepted trajectory of the RPP in the Party Assembly on 9 April 1965. It was stated by İsmet İnönü that there would be an effort to give the party a social democratic identity (Dağıstanlı, 1998: 16). However, it is difficult to argue that the decision for such a transformation is collectively taken as the result of the Party consent.

Although the RPP officially defined itself as 'social democrat' in 1965, its signals can be observed before 1965. For instance, the first arrangements through the protection of the working class were made in 1953 by recognizing 'the right to strike'. Likewise, the manifesto of 1954 elections included comprehensive promises for the working class (Aktükün, 1999:23). Also, the First Principles Declaration that was accepted at the Fourteenth General Assembly in 1959 contained some expressions that would later become one of the symbols of the 'left of centre' movement (Aktükün, 1999:23).

İsmet İnönü identified the concept of the 'left of centre' with the principles of secularism, statism and popularism in 1965 (Bila, 1999: 214). This statement explains an important dimension that the RPP defined social democracy within the limited scope of the principles of Kemalism.³ In 1966, the Secretary General of the RPP Bülent Ecevit tried to enlarge the same concept by the demands of land reform, right to strike and nationalisation of oil (Alpay, 1986: 1242).

The concept of the 'left of centre' was defined by Ecevit as a barrier against the rise of the extreme left or communism. Communism was seen as a threat by the defenders of the 'left of centre' and it was viewed that problems such as injustice and poverty could lead the people to communism. In this context, Ecevit constructed the 'left of centre' movement as a barrier to communism (Aktükün, 1999: 24). It is understood from the statements of Bülent Ecevit that the concept of 'left of centre' and the movement relying on it take part beside the capitalist class and completely against the class basis of universal social democratic movement.

Bülent Ecevit became the leader of the RPP in 1972. The RPP under the leadership of Ecevit aimed to expand the basis of the party by the approach of the 'left of centre'. The party gained large support of the working class and trade unions in this process. Its relations with the people were more successful than they were in the past. In this context it can be evaluated as a successful social project. The RPP gained 33 percent of the total votes in 1973 elections. A modification specifying that the RPP was a 'democratic left' party was performed at the Statutes Congress performed on 28 October 1974 (Tuncer, 1999: 16).

The RPP officially defined itself as 'democratic left' in the 1976 Party Program. In the 1976 Statutes, the RPP added universal principles of social democracy such as freedom, equality, solidarity, primacy of labour to the principles of the Six Arrows (Tuncer, 1999: 16).

³ Hasan Bülent Kahraman states that the Turkish Social democracy has related itself with the principles of the French Revolution rather than a social democratic comprehension in a Marxist conception. However the principles that the Turkish social democracy has related itself with do not necessarily express a Leftist perspective. They are rather liberal values. Thus, the values that have been defended by the RPP and its successors overlap with the 'progressive liberal comprehension' rather than a leftist one (Kahraman, 2002: 201). This point is important because Turkish social democracy has not been able to overcome this dilemma yet.

The RPP's social democratic character was internationally recognised in 1977 by the acceptance to the Socialist International which is the solidarity organisation of the social democratic, democratic leftist or labour parties (Alpay, 1986: 1241).

Compared to the European social democratic movement, it is obvious that the historical origins of these movements and the RPP are completely different. The RPP has never been inspired by the Marxist theory. The perspective of reaching a socialist society by reforms which has been a matter of the programs of many European social democratic parties has never been an object of the RPP.

3.2.2. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT AFTER THE COUP D'ETAT ON 12 SEPTEMBER 1980

Considering historical developments, the 1980 Military Coup deeply influenced and interrupted political life in Turkey. The beginning and development process of social democratic movement in Turkey was also interrupted like all other political structures. The RPP was closed in 1981 like all the political parties by the military rule (Bila, 1999: 356).

After the transition to a democratic regime was shaded by various restrictions of the former military rule, the political parties were allowed to be refounded in 1983. The Populist Party (PP) and the Social Democracy Party (SDP) that defined themselves as 'social democratic' were founded in 1983 (Bila, 1999: 367-368). In 1985, the Democratic Left Party (DLP) was founded (Bila, 2001: 165). Rağsan Ecevit, spouse of Bülent Ecevit, was the leader of the DLP from 1985 to 1987 because Bülent Ecevit was forbidden to take part in politics. The PP and the SDP were conjoined and formed the Social Democratic Populist Party (SPP) in 1985 (Bila, 2001: 162). The RPP was re-opened in 1992. Thus, the social democratic movement started to be represented by three social democratic parties. In 1995 the RPP and the SPP conjoined within the RPP. The Social Democratic People's Party (SPP) which was founded in 2002 by Murat Karayalçın was the third political party that define itself as a social democratic party.

It should be mentioned here that the DLP has preferred to name itself as ‘democratic left’ rather than social democratic. The main argument of the DLP’s decision is that the origin of the party is obviously different from the social democratic parties in Europe and also the conditions and needs of Turkey are different from the ones in Europe (Demokratik Sol Parti Programı, 2003: 36).

It is important to understand the structure and the conditions of the social democratic parties to be able to consider their attitudes on important issues in detail. Relying on the statistical studies of the results of various elections, it can be said that today two social democratic parties, the DLP and the RPP, that were present at the previous national elections were not successful in the more impoverished regions of Turkey such as the East Anatolian and Southeast Anatolian Regions. On the contrary, the social democratic parties have been more successful in the developed western regions of Turkey (Tuncer, 1999: 18). This demonstrates that the social democratic parties in Turkey have not been considered as an alternative by Turkish people. Moreover, the picture does not change within the big cities. The underdeveloped parts of big cities in which mostly the working class, poor and unemployed people reside have been the regions that the social democrats and the Left movement in general got less support. It is possible to argue that the social democratic parties have not been able to embrace large masses.

After giving a brief historical background it is necessary to define the social democratic parties and organisations within the scope of this study before examining their recent approaches towards the European Union. Three social democratic parties and two social democratic organisations have been included in this context.

The Republican People’s Party defines itself as a modern, democratic leftist political establishment that is devoted to the principles of republicanism, nationalism, statism, popularism, secularism and reformism and relying on the values of freedom, equality, solidarity, priority of labour, supremacy of law, stable development, welfare, protection of nature and environment, collectivist and participatory values of democracy and human rights that are the values of universal social democracy in the statutes of the party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Programı, 2001).

In the Program of the Party, it is mentioned that the RPP has been a representative of a movement that gained a democratic left content and social

democratic quality since the 1960s. It accepts the universal values, truths and traditions of the left and integrates the basic principles, theory and practises of social democracy with the realities of Turkey (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Programı, 2001).

The second Turkish party considered as social democratic in this study is the Democratic Left Party. In the Program of the Democratic Left Party, it is mentioned that the DLP interprets the comprehension of modern social democracy as ‘democratic leftist’ in its Program and statutes that were prepared by considering the heritage and characteristics of the Turkish society. It is expressed that in the modern Western countries, the concept of ‘social democracy’ includes political, social, economic and cultural democracy. The movement in Turkey takes place within the social democratic formation; but the historical origins and conditions peculiar to the country make such a specific appellation possible (Demokratik Sol Parti Programı, 2003).

Lastly it is pointed out by the DLP that in the ‘democratic leftist’ understanding, democracy is seen as a totality of its political, social, economic and cultural dimensions.

The third Turkish political party considered as social democratic is the Social Democratic People’s Party (SPP). In the Program of the SPP, the historical origin of the party is explained in relation to the Independence War under the command of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and to clarify the principles and revolutions of the Republic. The political origin of the SPP is recognised as both the universal and national values of the Left and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk “who has been the greatest revolutionary that these lands have ever seen” (SHP, 2002). The SPP declares in its Program that it endeavours to be an honoured member of the universal social democratic movement (Sosyal Demokrat Halk Partisi Programı, 2002).

In the Statutes of the SPP, the Party has adopted the principles of social democracy that have been enriched by the decisions of the Socialist International (Sosyal Demokrat Halk Partisi Programı, 2002).

The social democratic movement in Turkey does not only consist of the political parties. The social democratic civil society organisations also have a significant importance. In this context the Social Democracy Foundation (SODEF) and the Social

Democracy Association (SDA) are considered to be the social democratic organisations in the scope of this study.

The Social Democracy Foundation was founded in 1994. The aim of the SODEF is the development and propagation of the social democratic 'ideal' within the Turkish ideal (Sosyal Demokrasi Vakfı, without date).

Other aims of the SODEF are fostering pluralist and liberalist democracy within the society with all its concepts, rules and institutions, with respect to labour, human and nature, and adoption of the values as freedom, equality, solidarity, justice, peace and honesty as a common understanding of all the people and working for the development of social state and democracy (Sosyal Demokrasi Vakfı, 2005).

The Social Democracy Association was founded on 25 November 1998. In its Charter, the aim of the SDA is explained as to work for evaluating the social democracy within the conditions of Turkey and generalising of it through wide sections of the society. The SDA also points out in its Charter that it works to contribute the development of the participant democracy in light of the principles and reforms of Atatürk (Sosyal Demokrasi Derneği, 2005).

3.3. TURKISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS' SHARE OF "RESPONSIBILITY" IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Turkish social democrats played a significant role in the relations between Turkey and the European Union. When historically considered, it can be seen that the social democrats were actively involved in Turkey-EU relations when the most important agreements were signed between the EU and Turkey.

The first official relation was constructed by the Ankara Agreement in 1963 which was signed by İsmet İnönü who was the founding father of the concept of 'left of centre' that would later be the basis of the idea of social democracy in Turkey.

In 1995, Murat Karayalçın was the Minister of Foreign Affairs from the Republican People's Party and contributed to the preparation of the Customs Union and signed it in the name of Turkish Republic. In the same year, Deniz Baykal became the leader of the RPP. Baykal also became the Minister of Foreign Affairs

when the coalition government was re-established on 30 October 2005. Baykal worked diligently during the approval process of the Customs Union by the European Parliament.

Turkey was officially recognised as a candidate state on an equal footing with other candidate states at the Helsinki European Council on 11-12 December 1999 when Bülent Ecevit was the prime minister.

That they had approved almost every step bringing the European Union and Turkey closer to each other does not necessarily mean that the Turkish social democrats were unconcerned about these relations. Although the social democrats played important roles in Turkey-EU relations, their stances have not always been supportive. It can be argued that a hesitancy and doubt with respect to various issues about 'Europe' have generally been felt in their attitudes. When İsmet İnönü declared that the RPP was in favour of the integration with the European Economic Community in 1961 in the government program of his cabinet (Bozkurt, 2001: 267) there was a considerable opposition within the party against the EEC. The still fresh memory of the experiences about the capitulations, the collapse of the Ottoman State and the occupation of the country by European countries and finally the experiences of the Independence War had caused a serious sensitivity about the independence of the country (Bozkurt, 2001: 269).

The main argument that had been developed against the EEC originated from the fear of 'being dependent on other countries' in the 1960s and 1970s. On the other hand the opposition to the EEC influenced by the rising extreme leftist and rightist currents had also affected the attitudes and the policies of the RPP especially in the 1970s. The Party Assembly Report prepared for the Twentieth Congress of the RPP on 3 July 1970 mentioned that the relations between Turkey and the EEC should closely be controlled and that the party should be careful about that relation so as not to go against the independence, industrialisation and the national interests of the country. It was stated in the same report that "Turkey should not be a member of the EEC unless it completes its industrial revolution, realise its 'independent industrial society' and have a strong industrial structure" (Uyar, 2004: 2). These explanations of the RPP stem from the same national concern mentioned above and explain the hesitation of the RPP.

The relations between Turkey and the EEC displayed a fluctuating character after 1973. This fluctuation can be explained by some key events which occurred when the RPP was in the government and Bülent Ecevit was the prime minister. In the 1973 elections, the RPP gained 33 percent of the total votes and the party leader Bülent Ecevit became the prime minister. One year later, the Cyprus Intervention of Turkey in 1974 seriously strained the relations between Turkey and the EEC.

The responsibilities of Turkey stemming from the Additional Protocol were suspended in 1978 when Bülent Ecevit was the prime minister. The decision of suspension caused Turkey and the EEC not to perform their responsibilities noted in the Ankara Treaty and the Additional Protocol (Çakmak, 2005: 106-107). The ongoing economic crisis and political problems were already detaining Turkey from fulfilling the requirements to progress the relations with the EEC.

The suspension of the relations between Turkey and the EEC by the Community after the military intervention in 1980 displayed another rupture in the process. In 1982, the EEC decided to suspend its relations with Turkey because of the military intervention.

An important year for the social democrats was 1991 because they got the chance to be the partner of the government. A Coalition Government was founded between the True Path Party (TPP) and the Social Democratic Populist Party (SPP) in 1991. In 1995, the Social Democratic Populist Party and the Republican People's Party were conjoined within the Republican People's Party. The Customs Union between Turkey and the European Community was signed in 1995 when the RPP was in the Government as the coalition partner of the TPP. Murat Karayalçın had many contributions on the preparation of the Customs Union and signed the Customs Union Agreement as the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs (Çakmak, 2005: 117).

In 1997, the Motherland Party, the Democratic Turkey Party and the Democratic Left Party established a Minority Government which was supported by the Republican People's Party from the outside of the government. In the same year, it was decided at the Luxembourg European Council to start the membership negotiations with ten European countries and Cyprus. Although the competence of Turkey to full membership was accepted, its application was rejected by the European Council. This was an important point in the history of Turkey-EU relations because

Turkey decided to suspend its political relations with the EU after its exclusion. The Minister of Foreign Affairs was İsmail Cem from the DLP when this decision was taken.

When it was decided to recognise Turkey as an applicant country at the European Council which was held in Helsinki, Finland on 11-12 December 1999, the Democratic Left Party under the leadership of Bülent Ecevit was in the Government as a Coalition Partner of the Motherland Party and the Nationalist Movement Party. Bülent Ecevit was Prime Minister and İsmail Cem was the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Turkey had been asked to improve its human rights record and to abolish the death penalty at the Helsinki Summit. Additionally, disputes with Greece on Cyprus and the Aegean continental shelf and contested islands in the Aegean were to be resolved in the International Court of Justice. It had been stated that if no settlement was reached in the Cyprus question by the completion of accession negotiations, the Council's decision on Cyprus' accession would be made without the above being a precondition (Demokratik Sol Parti, 2004a: 24-25). This situation caused a serious problem for the Government led by the DLP. However, the DLP approved the conclusion of the Helsinki Summit after it was stated by the president of the Council of the European Union that the solution of these problems would not be considered as a precondition for Turkey's membership. Interestingly, the DLP-led government accepted that Cyprus could be accepted as a member by the EU even if its border debates remained unsolved.

The Government led by the DLP under the leadership of Bülent Ecevit made significant contributions to Turkey's relations with the European Union. Many reforms and regulations required for the adaptation of the Maastricht Criteria were realised in this process. In this context, the government made important contributions at the start of Turkish negotiation process.

The social democrats have contributed to the relations between Turkey and the EU. Neither the political efficiency of the social democrats displayed a continuous character in Turkish political life nor did their supports to the EU membership be unconditional and free from various hesitations however the role they played in Turkey-EU relations can not be disregarded. Although they occupied strategic

positions at the important turning points in Turkey-EU relations, it can be said that both the relations between Turkey and the EU and the approaches of the social democrats to these relations display problematic characteristics.

4. TURKISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

In this study seeking to inquire into the stance of Turkish Social Democrats vis a vis the EU, it was quite interesting to note, as seen from the above historical overview, that the Turkish Social Democrats bear the larger share of responsibility and/or take the initiative of leading the relations between Turkey and the EU. It is time, here, to probe into the viewpoints of Social Democratic political forces and leading personalities of the Turkish social democratic movements and organisations. In this respect, firstly, the answer to the question as to how the Turkish Social Democrats conceive the European Union and the Turkish membership to the Union will be addressed. Secondly, the viewpoints of Turkish Social Democrats as to the discordant issues in the relations between Turkey and the EU will be discussed. Finally, the last section of this chapter will elaborate on how the Turkish Social Democrats foresee the future of relations between Turkey and the EU.

4.1. HOW THE TURKISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS CONCEIVE THE EUROPEAN UNION AND TURKISH MEMBERSHIP

The social democrats in Turkey support Turkey's full membership to the European Union; however, they have basic hesitations with respect to the actual issues concerning Turkey in the relations with the European Union. Before considering their approaches to these actual issues in detail, it is necessary to evaluate the general assessments of the social democrats with respect to the European Union and Turkey's membership.

The Republican People's Party (RPP) does not stipulate the approach of the party to the European Union in its Program. However the approach of the party to the European Union is explained in several party documents. In this context, the

declarations of the party representatives are also important components that constitute the party view.

In the Party Manifesto prepared for the 2002 National Election, the RPP declares that the European Union is the prior aim of the party to obtain the values of modern civilisation, information, development and technology (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2002: 92). The leader of the RPP Deniz Baykal has declared that the Party considers full membership of Turkey to the European Union an important component of the efforts aiming to reach the level of modern civilisations which was an aim of Atatürk (Baykal, 2005a: X). That the Ankara Agreement, striving for the full membership of Turkey to the European Community, was signed by İsmet İnönü⁴ is mentioned by Baykal as one of the most significant signs representing the basic approach of the RPP with respect to the European Union (Baykal, 2005a: X).

The Republican People's Party states in the Party Manifesto that Turkey is a part of Europe with its history and geographic location and the EU membership under equal conditions like other applicant countries, which will bring strength and profundity to its social peace and political stability is the right of Turkey which has stemmed from the international agreements (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2002: 92). In this context Deniz Baykal states as the leader of the RPP that the party is in favour of 'full membership' to the EU (Baykal, 2005a: 9).

The interviews carried out with the representatives of the RPP were also of the same tone as the official explanations of the RPP. The Vice-Chairman of the RPP, Onur Öymen⁵ states that the RPP considers the issue of full membership of Turkey to the EU as a national matter. As such, he implies that the relations of Turkey with the EU are viewed as a national policy by the RPP. Öymen attributes the support of the RPP for the EU process to İsmet İnönü who signed the Ankara Treaty in 1963 and implies that the RPP was the pioneer of Turkey-EU relations. He underlines the national character of the aim of EU membership:

⁴ İsmet İnönü was the prime minister and the leader of the Republican People's Party when the Ankara Agreement was signed in 1963.

⁵ Onur Öymen was also an important bureaucrat of Turkish foreign affairs. He had worked as under-secretary at the Nicosia, Prague and Madrid Embassies of Turkey. He was the ambassador of Copenhagen from 1988 to 1990 and of Bonn from 1990 to 1995. He was elected Istanbul deputy of the Republican People's Party in 2002. He is the Vice-Chairman of the RPP.

Full membership to the European Union is a national project that concerns the national interests of Turkey; so the components of it have been determined by considering the national political interests. For that reason, the European Union policy as a matter of Turkey's foreign affairs should not become a subject of internal policy and should not be used by any political formation to gain short term political advantages. (Interview with Onur Öymen, 2005)

Similarly, the Deputy Secretary General of the RPP Oğuz Oyan⁶ declares that he is also in favour of full membership of Turkey to the EU in equal conditions with other members and approves the Ankara Treaty which was signed in 1963 and started a preparation process for Turkey for the membership to the Community (Interview with Oğuz Oyan, 2005).

A member of the Party Assembly of the RPP, İsmail Cem is an important social democratic figure who also made significant contributions to the relations between Turkey and the European Union. İsmail Cem states that the EU membership is the most important project bringing positive external dynamics to Turkey's development and accelerating and facilitating its progress (Cem, 2004).

The European Union is a significant organisation for the Republican People's Party and in this context the party is in favour of Turkey's membership to the EU. The party displays its support for the EU in its publications. The leader of the party represents the positive tendency of the party to the issue in his speeches. Moreover, the interviews which have been carried out both with the Vice-Chairman and the Deputy Secretary General of the RPP support the positive stance of the Party to the European Union and Turkish membership.

The Program of the Democratic Left Party too does not have a separate section in which the approach of the party with respect to the European Union is explained. Still, it is declared in the Presentation of the Program written by the former leader of the DLP Bülent Ecevit that Turkey should not be content only with the European Union so as not to become a captive of globalisation and the European Union (Demokratik Sol Parti, 2003). Although he relates the aim of EU membership with that of modernisation advocated by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and declares his support

⁶ Oğuz Oyan was elected İzmir deputy of the Republican People's Party in 2002. He is the deputy secretary general and a member of the Central Executive Committee of the RPP. He is also an instructor at the Gazi University Faculty of Political Sciences.

with respect to Turkey's EU membership, Ecevit does not fail to explain his hesitancy with respect to the European Union even in the party program.⁷ While Ecevit is not the leader of the DLP any more, his views still represent the party policies.

With this said, the basic approach of the Democratic Left Party (DLP) with respect to the European Union and Turkish membership to the EU resembles the RPP's approach. In the Party Manifesto prepared for the 2002 National Election the DLP states that it accepts the European Union membership as one of the main aims of the Turkish foreign policy in accord with the general policy of forming and developing a modern and prosperous Turkish society (Demokratik Sol Parti, 2002). The DLP states in the Party Manifesto that the EU membership which was originated from Atatürk's thought aiming to reach the level of modern civilisations also overlaps with the basic principles of the Constitution of Turkish Republic.

The interview which was carried out with the leader of the DLP Zeki Sezer⁸ also displayed a supportive perspective in this context. Sezer states that Turkey has been trying to be a member of the European Union for more than forty years. He says that the DLP is in favour of Turkey's EU membership and has made great contributions in this process (Interview with Zeki Sezer, 2005).

The Social Democratic People's Party (SPP) also clearly explains its support for Turkey's EU membership. The SPP expresses its views with respect to the European Union under a chapter called "Our View Regarding the European Union" in the Party Program. In the 2002 Program of the Party it is stated that the SPP considers the European Union not as a component of globalisation but as a shield that can be used against the negative impacts of globalisation. Founding the Turkish Republic at the end of the National Independence War and establishing democracy by the constitution

⁷ Bülent Ecevit is the former leader of the Democratic Left Party. He is one of the most important social democratic figures with respect to Turkey's relations with the European Union. The most depicted effect of Ecevit to the relations between Turkey and the EU has often been the suspension of Turkey's responsibilities stemmed from the Additional Protocol by Turkey in 1978 when Bülent Ecevit was the prime minister. It is mentioned that Turkey could be a member if this suspension had not been decided by Bülent Ecevit. In this context, this decision has usually been attributed to Ecevit's false policies and unwillingness with respect to the membership. However, Bülent Ecevit definitely objects to these claims. He states that the main reason of the suspension of the relations was the serious economic depression Turkey was suffering in the 1970s. He states that he has always cared about and worked for the EU membership (Demokratik Sol Parti, 2004c).

⁸ Zeki Sezer has been in the Democratic Left Party since 1988. He was elected Ankara deputy from the DLP in the 1999 General Elections. He has been the leader of the DLP since 2004.

of multi-party system have provided important social developments according to the SPP. The Party asserts that the EU membership will be the third spring of Turkish society (Sosyal Demokrat Halk Partisi, 2002).

The interview carried out with the leader of the Social Democratic People's Party displays the supportive perspective of Murat Karayalçın⁹ with respect to the EU as well. Karayalçın thinks that the European Union is a project of developing common life standards in a geographical area called Europe and suggests that everyone who is in favour of enlightenment and modernisation in Turkey should support Turkish European Union membership (Interview with Murat Karayalçın, 2005).

It can be said that the European Union is a significant and necessary organisation for Turkish social democratic parties. All social democratic parties associate the EU membership of Turkey with the ideas of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his aim of 'reaching the level of modern civilisations'. It is clear that social democratic parties are in favour of Turkish membership to the EU.

Considering the social democratic organisations in the scope of the Social Democracy Association and Social Democracy Foundation as other important components of social democratic movement in Turkey, it is seen that both of them are in favour of the EU and supporting Turkey's membership.

The Social Democracy Foundation has published two books directly related to the European Union. The prefaces of both "Turkey on the Way to the European Union" (Avrupa Birliği Yolundaki Türkiye) which was written by Faruk Şen and Çiğdem Akkaya and "The European Policies of the Political Parties in Turkey" (Türkiye'deki Siyasal Partilerin Avrupa Politikaları) which was written by Onur Bilge Kula were penned by Ercan Karakaş who was the former leader of the SODEF. It is clear that the SODEF is closely interested in the European Union and Turkey's membership process. Similarly, the leader of the SODEF Aydın Cıngı has mentioned in the interview that have been carried out with him in the scope of this study that the SODEF is in favour of Turkish membership to the EU (Interview with Aydın Cıngı, 2005).

⁹Murat Karayalçın was elected the Mayor of Ankara from the Social Democratic Populist Party in 1989. He became the leader of the same party in 1993. He served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the 50th Government between 1994 and 1995. Murat Karayalçın is the leader of the Social Democratic People's Party now.

Erol Tuncer, the leader of the Social Democracy Association, states that the EU is a peace and prosperity project in which Turkey should be included:

Turkey will be stronger than now when it becomes a member of the EU. EU membership is the requirement of the will of Atatürk. In other words the EU membership is a requirement for Turkey to go beyond the level of modern civilisations. (Interview with Erol Tuncer, 2005)

The stances of independent social democrat personalities who do not have direct relations with any political parties or organisations and can be called as ‘independents’ are also crucial. In this context, the approaches of two social democratic personalities, Fikri Sağlar¹⁰ and Uluç Gürkan¹¹ have been analysed. The interviews carried out with Fikri Sağlar and Uluç Gürkan demonstrate that both Sağlar and Gürkan are in favour of the EU and Turkey’s EU membership.

Fikri Sağlar states that for Turkey it would be better to be a member of the EU:

The EU should be considered as the appearing of most advanced life standards that the human kind has ever reached. Turkish people deserve to live in these standards...The EU membership is the second great project of Turkey after founding of the Republic in 1923. (Interview with Fikri Sağlar, 2005)

Uluç Gürkan supports the EU membership of Turkey as well. However he argues that there is a need for a philosophical approach that should be developed with respect to the European Union. He thinks that the main trajectory of this philosophical approach should be ‘to benefit from the advantages of the EU; but to control the dangers that stem from the EU integration process’ (Interview with Uluç Gürkan, 2005).

The European Union is an important issue for the trade unions as well because it brings important regulations to working conditions. It is seen that the working class in

¹⁰ Fikri Sağlar is an important figure in the social democratic movement. He was elected deputy from the Social Democratic Populist Party in 1991. He was the Minister of Culture from 1991 to 1996. In 2001 Sağlar was expelled from the RPP. He was one of the founder members and the Secretary General of the Social Democratic People’s Party. He resigned from the SPP in 2004.

¹¹ Uluç Gürkan was elected deputy from the Social Democratic Populist Party in 1991 as well. In 1995 and 1999 General Elections Gürkan entered the parliament as a member of the Democratic Left Party. In 2002 he resigned from his party.

the EU member countries has been involved in the policy processes and has been trying to influence the labour policies for its own sake. In this context there have been close relations between the political parties and trade unions in the EU. The leftist political parties consider the rights of the working class in their policies. Considering this relation, it is important to examine the stance of the Turkish trade unions which are close to the social democratic movement with respect to the European Union. This evaluation will also give the chance for comparing the approaches of the political parties and organisations with the approaches of the trade unions towards the European Union.

It is acceptable that most of the labour and capital organisations in Turkey generally consider the European Union membership as one of the most serious alternatives to solve the structural problems that they cannot overcome by their inner dynamics (Doğan, 2003: 20). However, it is important to keep in mind while considering the approaches of the trade unions that these organisations have not developed a stable and influential perspective with respect to the European Union which can influence the ongoing process for many years. Turkish trade unions have started to deal more seriously with the issue for the last few years. The main reason for this 'belated' concern is the progress in Turkey-EU relations in the recent years.

When the largest trade union confederation of Turkey, the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (TURK-IS), is considered in the context of its stance with respect to the European Union, it is observed that there is a significant transformation in the approach of it to the European Union. This significant transformation can be simply derived from two different reports prepared by the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions with respect to the European Union. The first report was prepared in 2001 and submitted to Ahmet Necdet Sezer as the official view of the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions with respect to the European Union.

The 2001 Report named "What does the European Union Wants From Turkey on the Issues of the Cyprus, Armenian Genocide Allegations, Minorities-Separatism, the Aegean Question, the Patriarchate, the Heybeliada Religious Seminary, IMF Policies?" (Avrupa Birliği Kıbrıs, Ermeni Soykırımı İddiaları, Azınlıklar-Bölücülük, Ege Sorunu, Patrikhane, Heybeliada Ruhban Okulu, IMF Programları Konularında Türkiye'den Ne İstiyor?) exhibits that the Confederation has many hesitations with

respect to the EU. The report displays that the hesitations of the TURK-IS are mostly on national issues rather than the conditions of the working class. The TURK-IS states in the report that ‘the demands of the European Parliament which are contradicting with Turkey’s national interests can be interpreted as that the European Union does not approve Turkey’s membership’ (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, 2002: 13).

The TURK-IS explains that it is in favour of Turkey’s full membership to the EU; however, it highlights that the approaches and the decisions of the EU with respect to the Cyprus question, the Armenian genocide allegations, minorities, the Aegean question, the Ecumenical character of Fener Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, proposals for the reactivation of the Heybeliada Religious Seminary and IMF policies go against Turkey’s national interests.

The TURK-IS puts forward in the 2001 Report submitted to Ahmet Necdet Sezer that Turkey will disintegrate if it fulfils the requirements required by the ‘Copenhagen Criteria’ (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, 2002: 24).

It is understood from the 2001 Report that the demands of the EU are perceived as threats against Turkey’s national sovereignty by the TURK-IS. Moreover, it is stated that the ulterior motive behind the Copenhagen Criteria with respect to ‘democratisation’ is to raise the Treaty of Sevres again. The TURK-IS argues in the 2001 Report that the European Union has been damaging the rights and life conditions of Turkish working class by supporting the IMF policies and privatisation (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, 2002: 57-63).

After almost four years from the previous report, the TURK-IS prepared another report explaining its approach towards the European Union. In the 2005 Report, “Turkey-EU Relations: The View of TURK-IS” (Türkiye-AB İlişkileri: Türk-İş’in Görüşü), the TURK-IS states that it is pleased with the recent developments with respect to Turkey-EU relations. It declared that the regulations and reforms being realised by Turkey in this process are the necessities of modern democracy and are in favour of Turkish people. In this context, the TURK-IS declares its full support for Turkey’s EU membership (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, 2005: 1). This explanation displays a clear change of the negative approach of TURK-IS to the European Union. Moreover, Salih Kılıç, the leader of the TURK-IS, states that the

role of TURK-IS as a civil society organisation is to contribute to creating a positive approach within the society for the European Union. In the same direction, Kılıç states that the TURK-IS wants to take part in the ‘negotiating committee’ as a representative of civil society (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, 2005: 1).

The TURK-IS is much more in favour of the European Union today in comparison to its previous statements. The differences between the two reports are clear. It should be stated that the leader of the TURK-IS was Bayram Meral who was later elected deputy for the RPP in 2002 National Elections when the 2001 Report was prepared. Bayram Meral, the responsible of almost an anti-EU report, was elected deputy of a social democratic party which expresses its support for Turkey’s EU membership. This is a significant point expressing the inconsistency of both the political structures and figures with respect to the European Union.

The 2005 Report was prepared under the leadership of Salih Kılıç who had been explaining his support for the European Union membership. The previous report was almost against the EU and underscored the points threatening Turkey’s national unity. The latter report highlights the TURK-IS’s support for the EU. Today, the TURK-IS is in favour of the EU; however, it is understood that the TURK-IS does not have a stable and consistent approach towards the European Union. The main reason of this inconsistency is the lack of institutionalisation, for there is no institutionalised perspective with respect to the European Union. Yet, the approach of the TURK-IS has been changing depending on the perspectives of the leaders, advisors and general course of Turkey-EU relations.

Here to evaluate the approaches of the representatives of the TURK-IS who are also working as advisors in this confederation can be helpful to conceive the basic tendencies in the Confederation.

Hasan Tahsin Benli¹² admits that the labour movement is in a regression period in Turkey. He thinks that the EU membership can improve the recent conditions of trade unions and the working class in Turkey:

The trade unions which are already weak are also under pressure and the rights of organisation and unionisation are limited by the ruling class.

¹² Hasan Tahsin Benli is advisor to Salih Kılıç who is the Chairman of the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions.

Moreover that Turkish working class lacks a class consciousness has been making things more difficult for the trade unions. In this context the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions is in favour of the EU membership because the living standards of the working classes in the EU member countries are desirable for the Turkish working class, too. (Interview with Hasan Tahsin Benli, 2005)

On the other hand Aziz Konukman¹³ underlines that the European Union is a project of the ‘European capital’. He states that if the recent conditions do not change, it is not very important for Turkey to be or not to be a member of the EU. The membership will not have any good or bad effect for Turkey if the conditions remain the same. According to Konukman:

The Turkish economy has been directed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). If Turkey becomes a member the control of these organisations will end; however the problem will continue because the project of EU membership does not anticipate that kind of emancipation. It has been stated in the 2004 Regular Report on Turkey’s progress towards accession that the recent macroeconomic situation of Turkey programmed by the IMF and the WB has been successful. It is unacceptable. This macroeconomic program is not sustainable for Turkey. (Interview with Aziz Konukman, 2005)

Therefore, Konukman implies that what is more important than the membership for Turkey is to solve the ‘real problem’.

Yıldırım Koç¹⁴, who is both the Chairman of the Training Department of the Trade Union of Road Construction and Building Workers and the advisor to the Chairman of the TURK-IS, is much more critical on the EU issue. He states that the European Union is an “imperialist bloc” which resembles the USA in this manner. Koç thinks that the EU is a new type of state under the leadership of Germany and France. He argues that the imperialist character of the EU has also been determining the framework of its relations with Turkey.

Although the official view of the TURK-IS is in favour of the EU and Turkish membership to the EU, it is difficult to argue that there is a consensus in the TURK-IS

¹³ Aziz Konukman has been working as advisor at the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions. Associate Professor Dr. Aziz Konukman is also an instructor at the Gazi University.

¹⁴ Yıldırım Koç has been working as advisor at the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions. He is also a part-time instructor in the Middle East Technical University at the Department of Business Administration on current issues in industrial relations.

on this issue. Aziz Konukman and Yıldırım Koç display various hesitations with respect to the EU while Hasan Tahsin Benli is expressing his supportive views. Here Yıldırım Koç represents an almost anti-EU wing of the TURK-IS. This view was dominating the TURK-IS when the 2001 Report was written because Yıldırım Koç was advisor to Bayram Meral.

On the other hand the Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DISK) is in favour of Turkey's European Union membership and has been working toward this aim within the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).¹⁵

The 'social model' of the European Union which is explained by the Union as "the promotion of employment, better living and working conditions, an adequate level of social protection, social dialogue, the development of human resources so as to ensure a high and sustainable level of employment, and the fight against exclusion" is significant for the DISK. As Erhan Doğan states, the Confederation thinks that the European Union as a political project includes more than an economic integration and for that reason it offers a chance for improving "human rights and freedoms, democratic participation on every level of social and political life and social justice" (2003: 31).

The leader of the DISK, Süleyman Çelebi, who has also been the co-chairman of the EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee¹⁶ states that the DISK supports the negotiation process started on 3 October 2005 and argues that the negotiation process between Turkey and the EU can provide a progress in the trade union rights (Yetkin,

¹⁵ ETUC was established in 1973. "At present, the ETUC has in its membership, 74 National Trade Union Confederation from 34 countries and 11 European Industry Federations with a total of 60 million members. The ETUC seeks to influence the European Union's legislation and policies by making direct representations to the various institutions (Commission, Parliament, Council), and by ensuring trade union participation...in areas such as employment, social affairs and macro-economic policy" (European Trade Union Confederation, 2003). In the context of European integration the European Union has been playing a growing role in areas of relevant interest for the working people. For "the trade unions can no longer confine their work to national level" the ETUC aiming to speak and act collectively at European level has existed (European Trade Union Confederation, 2003). The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DISK), the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (TURK-IS), the Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions (KESK) and Confederation of Turkish Real Trade Unions (HAK-IS) are the members of ETUC. Moreover DISK, KESK and HAK-IS have established Turkey-EU Trade Union Coordination Commission. This Commission explains its aim as informing all social parts in Turkey with respect to Turkey-European Union relations. The Commission attributes great importance to participate the European Union project in order to influence the process.

¹⁶ The EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee seeks to facilitate the involvement of the economic and social partners in the process of consolidating relations between the EU and Turkey.

2005b). That Turkey will start to negotiate with the EU for membership is defined by Süleyman Çelebi as a fruit of the modernisation of the Turkish Republic and a success of the struggle given for free, democratic and secular Republic (Çelebi, 2005).

The DISK does not perceive the European Union as a monolithic bloc. Moreover, the DISK argues that the EU has a social dimension which can and should be improved for the benefit of the working class. It is stated that the common purposes of the European civil society organisations and trade unions are parallel with the purposes of the DISK. For that reason the DISK gives credence to solidarity of the working classes of the EU members and Turkey (Doğan, 2003: 31). Süleyman Çelebi states that the negative effects of globalisation have been increasing the importance of international solidarity. The leader of the DISK argues that the ‘Turkish working class should involve in this process and take an active role rather than being exposed to these negative effects’ (Doğan, 2003: 33). In this context the struggles of the European workers to improve their rights are precious and noteworthy for the DISK.

Here Yücel Top,¹⁷ the representative of the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey in Europe, states that the European Union is a good model for humanity:

There is not any alternative for Turkey in the world which is better than the EU; so it will be better for Turkey to be a member of the EU. The main reason behind this desire is the peace and stability that the EU membership will bring to Turkey. The geopolitical and strategic concerns require Turkey’s EU membership. (Interview with Yücel Top, 2005)

On the other hand Tayfun Görgün¹⁸ underlines the capitalist character of the European Union and warns the working class while appreciating the struggle of the working class within the EU: “...that is why the labour movement should be careful.

¹⁷ Yücel Top is the representative of the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey in Europe. He is also the coordinator of the Turkey-EU Trade Union Coordination Commission which was formed by the Confederation of Turkish Real Trade Unions (Hak-İş), the Confederation of Public Employees’ Trade Unions (KESK) and the Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DİSK) to collaborate with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). Yücel Top is also a member of the Party Council of the Social Democratic People’s Party (SPP).

¹⁸ Tayfun Görgün is Deputy Chairman of the Progressive Mineral Research and Treatment Workers Trade Union of Turkey (Dev-Maden Sen). He is also Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey’s representative for Ankara.

However, there is also a working class struggling for its rights within this union. This struggle makes the EU process significant and important” (Interview with Tayfun Görgün, 2005). Görgün argues that Turkey’s EU membership was a decision which was taken by the ruling elites without taking into consideration the views and preferences of Turkish society and its organisations:

The EU process of Turkey is a project from above. Anyhow to involve in this process is important and necessary for trade unions. Reaching the level of current social rights which are valid at the EU is the aim of the Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey and the EU membership is being supported by it in this context. (Interview with Tayfun Görgün, 2005)

While approving the EU membership for Turkey Görgün also states that the EU should be considered as a “struggle process” in which the working class should struggle for its rights.

Considering the rights and freedoms of the working class and Turkish people in general, the DISK is in favour of the EU and Turkish EU membership. It is noteworthy that the struggle of the working class in the EU for better living and working conditions and the ‘possible’ solidarity of that class with its Turkish counterpart are considered significant by the DISK. On the other hand for the recent conditions of the working class in the EU are better than the ones in Turkey; being in the EU and continuing to struggle in it are desirable for the DISK.

The social democratic movement in Turkey shares the heritage of the Republican People’s Party of which Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was the leader. In this context Turkish social democrats embrace the principles and reforms of the Republican Revolution. As is known the will of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk for Turkey was to reach and go beyond the ‘level of modern civilisations’. The European Union is generally considered the most advanced example of ‘modern civilisations’ by the Turkish Social Democrats. That is why, in a sense, Turkish membership to the EU is accepted as the will of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. As a conclusion it is seen that Turkish Social Democrats are in favour of the EU and Turkish EU membership.

Turkish Social Democrats manifest their supports to the EU membership of Turkey however they also identify various problems in the relations between Turkey and the European Union. The problems that have been depicted stem both from

Turkey and the European Union. These can be categorised mainly as economic and political problems which are also regarded as difficulties on the way to Turkish EU membership. The so-called difficulties are also the main reasons of Turkish social democrats' hesitations with respect to the European Union.

4.2. DISCORDANT ISSUES IN TURKISH-EU RELATIONS AND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

It is possible to argue that Turkish social democrats portray a hesitant stance with respect to the European Union membership because there are various issues that they do not approve of or are critical about both Turkey's recent EU policies mostly because of the Justice and Development Party government and EU's policies on Turkey. Their critiques are especially related to the content of the framework for negotiations with Turkey which was approved by the European Council on 3 October 2005. The European policies of Turkish social democrats are mostly influenced by the debates on the 'privileged partnership' which has been offered to Turkey by various components of the EU instead of full membership, the structural and agricultural funds that Turkey may not benefit from, the disputes on the Cyprus question, the so called Armenian Genocide allegations and debates on minorities. Moreover the European policies of the Justice and Development Party government has been criticised by the social democrats as well.

The dominant idea behind all the critiques of the social democrats is that the European Union has been prejudicially approaching Turkey in this process. Many of the social democrats believe that the European Union tries to benefit from Turkey by forcing it to make concessions on various issues concerning national interests. That the Justice and Development Party contributes to the policies of the EU by its biased policies is another dominant view among the social democrats. However, it should be stated that although most of the social democratic parties, organisations and figures share the dominant view with respect to the European Union including various hesitations and mistrusts, it is not possible to agree that there is a consensus on these

issues. There are also some efforts to overcome these deep-rooted views even if they are not influential.

4.2.1. DISSATISFACTION WITH THE EU'S POSITION REGARDING TURKISH MEMBERSHIP

That the European Union is reluctant with respect to Turkey's membership by virtue of various reasons is often depicted as a problem by different sectors of Turkish politics. As such, it is necessary to analyse the viewpoints of Turkish social democrats as important components of Turkish politics with respect to the position of the EU regarding Turkish EU membership.

It is understood from its official declarations that the Republican People's Party is in favour of the EU and Turkish membership. However, the representatives of the Republican People's Party state that there are important problems negatively influencing Turkish EU membership. The Vice-Chairman of the RPP, Onur Öymen, states that the approach of the EU to Turkish membership has been negatively changing. He gives the transformation of the European Christian democrats with respect to the enlargement of the EU as an example to support his idea. Öymen recalls that it was Conrad Adenauer, one of the founding fathers of the German Christian democrats, who signed the Ankara Treaty anticipating Turkey's membership to the European Economic Community. However, "the recent unwillingness of German Christian democrats with respect to the membership of Turkey designates a mentality change within the EU" according to Öymen (Interview with Onur Öymen, 2005).

On the same direction the RPP's Deputy Secretary General Oğuz Oyan underlines that there are various problems within the EU making the membership difficult for Turkey. Oyan thinks that the EU has been in an economic and political cessation process. Since the economic resources such as structural funds have been limited since the EU has completely defined itself within the neo-liberal policies, it is more difficult for the Union to accept a relatively big and poor new member such as Turkey according to Oyan. He thinks that there are also important problems with

respect to the construction of the political union within the EU which will also complicate the situation for Turkey's acceptance (Interview with Oğuz Oyan, 2005).

The economic hesitations of the members of the European Union with respect to the membership of Turkey are mostly determinative in this process. Onur Öymen relates this hesitancy of the EU stemming from economic conditions with the overpopulation of Turkey. First of all, voting on the issues that do not require unanimity depends on the populations of the member countries in the EU. So the overpopulated countries have weight on voting. Yet, the overpopulated countries in the EU are also, at the present, the most prosperous countries. At this point, what causes doubt for these countries is that Turkey, as an overpopulated but a relatively poor country, will gain power in the EU if it becomes a member. Öymen thinks that this is an important point which causes reluctance about Turkey's membership (Interview with Onur Öymen, 2005).

Another economic issue concerning the EU with respect to Turkey is its power of competition in various sectors such as service and agriculture according to Onur Öymen. Such a power causes a doubt about the free movement of Turkish people. Öymen states that the belief that the free movement of Turkish people will raise unemployment which has already been one of the major problems of the EU causes a doubt about Turkey's membership. That the inner economic balance of the Union will negatively change if Turkey becomes a member of the EU is the reason deepening the hesitancy of the members of the EU according to Öymen (Interview with Onur Öymen, 2005).

It is arguable that the representatives of the RPP identify serious problems with respect to Turkey-EU relations. Here, an explanation of Onur Öymen is very conspicuous. Öymen states that although it is reluctant about Turkish membership, the EU can not openly declare that it will not accept Turkey. Öymen identifies two reasons behind this situation: "...If the EU declares that it will not accept Turkey firstly, it will contradict with its official theses and secondly it can not achieve any concessions from Turkey" (Interview with Onur Öymen, 2005). Öymen thinks that the EU has been getting some concessions from Turkey by promising it a full membership. He implies that the EU has been detaining Turkey by the membership process. The main aim of the EU is to keep Turkey's hope of membership alive and to

get concessions especially on Cyprus according to him (Interview with Onur Öymen, 2005).¹⁹ On the same direction Oğuz Oyan thinks that the EU proposes unacceptable conditions from Turkey for membership instead of explaining the real reasons of its unwillingness (Interview with Oğuz Oyan, 2005).

It is seen that the representatives of the RPP think that there are various obstacles on Turkey's way to the EU membership. The EU does not want Turkish membership because of those problems; but does not utter this unwillingness because of various reasons. Both Öymen and Oyan think that the EU has been taking refuge behind pretexts instead of addressing the real reasons. It is seen that both Öymen and Oyan do not believe the EU's sincerity in its policies with respect to Turkey. The hesitancy of the representatives of the RPP about the EU's position also displays disunity with the official declarations of the party which are implying hope about the EU membership of Turkey.

The leader of the Democratic Left Party represents the general belief in his party about the unwillingness of the EU with respect to Turkish membership. Zeki Sezer underlines that there are still many 'prejudices' that shape the ideas about Turkey in Europe and that these prejudices have been dominating the Turkey-EU relations. Sezer considers these prejudices as reasons for the unwillingness of the EU. Sezer also asserts that many European politicians are uneasy about Turkey's deviation from laicism and he considers that laicism is an important issue in the relations with the EU (Interview with Zeki Sezer, 2005).

The Democratic Left Party considers that the EU has been detaining Turkey by various pretexts in the membership process. This becomes clear when the titles and contents of the party news and speeches are considered. For instance, the titles of the news and speeches in the official website of the DLP including the explanations and interpretations of the party leader and other party representatives about the developments with respect to Turkey-EU relations are very conspicuous: "The EU is Cherishing Delaying Tactics" ("AB Oyalama Taktiği Gündüyor", bearing the date of 09.04.2003), "The EU Door will not be Opened Even the Cyprus Question is Solved" ("Kıbrıs Sorunu Çözülse Bile AB Kapısı Açılmaz", bearing the date of 23.02.2004),

¹⁹ Onur Öymen expresses that there are various countries in the EU such as Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Italy and Sweden supporting Turkey's membership. However, he thinks that the dominant tendency of the EU is against Turkish membership.

“The Government Should Not Fall into the ‘Privileged Partnership’ or ‘Neighbour Membership’ Trap of the EU” (“Hükümet AB’nin ‘İmtiyazlı Ortaklık’ ya da ‘Komşu Üyelik’ Tuzağına Düşmemeli”, bearing the date of 01.10.2004), “The EU is Imposing Preconditions to Turkey Despite the Reforms” (“AB Reformlarına Rağmen Türkiye’nin Önüne Koşul Dayatıyor”, bearing the date of 20.11.2004), “The EU is in Pursuit of an Improper Game” (“AB Çirkin Oyun Peşinde”, bearing the date of 03.09.2005). Considering the intent of the explanations and interpretations under these titles it can be said that the Democratic Left Party thinks that the EU drags its feet on Turkish full membership. Here the leader of the Party explicitly displays the ‘mistrust’ of the party to the EU with respect to Turkish membership: “...the ‘special statute’ which is defining a different statute from membership is the real thought of the EU behind the discourse of full membership” (Interview with Zeki Sezer, 2005). It is clear that the DLP is dissatisfied with the EU’s position regarding Turkey.

On the other hand, the leader of the Social Democratic People’s Party does not agree with most of the critiques which are raised with respect to the EU. Karayalçın thinks that the referendums which were carried out in the Netherlands and France with respect to the European Constitution denoted that although the European elites are in favour of a political union in which the national identities of the member states will disappear the European people are not supportive of this project. The leader of the SPP argues that the European people are in favour of an economic union rather than a political union.²⁰ Karayalçın thinks that the results of this kind of a tendency strengthen the relations between Turkey and the European Union:

If the European Union is becoming an economic union which does not have a political dimension then it will be easier for Turkey to become a member of it; because the customs union which is the mere relation form that has already been functioning as an official channel between Turkey and the European Union will facilitate the integration process. Moreover the political hesitations that have been expressed by various components within the EU and Turkey with respect to Turkey’s membership lose significance in the recent tendency...Both sides have various hesitations

²⁰ Nowadays, it is widely accepted that the project of political union of Europe has failed with the rejection of the European Constitution. In fact, there are many reasons of the rejection of the European Constitution. One of the most important reasons of the rejection is the neo-liberal character of the Constitution. The hesitancy of the European people with respect to the elimination of the nation-states to some extent in order to form a supra-national union is another reason. However, Murat Karayalçın interprets the rejection of the constitution as the latter.

concerning national sovereignty; however the tendency of the EU to be an economic union will overrule these hesitations. (Interview with Murat Karayalçın, 2005)

Unlike other social democratic party representatives, Murat Karayalçın thinks that the recent developments are in favour of Turkey in its progress towards EU membership. He commits that Turkey is a candidate that has some difficulties for the EU but he does not imply that these difficulties will hinder Turkey's membership.

On the contrary, the social democratic organisations in Turkey fix various problems with respect to the position of the EU regarding Turkish membership as well. The leader of the Social Democracy Association underlines the refusal of the European constitution as an expression of various problems within the EU which will also negatively influence Turkey's membership process. Erol Tuncer states that this refusal should be interpreted as a sign of disappointment of the European people with respect to the expected prosperity:

Although the EU is a peace and prosperity project; it has not provided an outstanding prosperity yet. Globalisation has been unfavourably affecting the EU members on various issues. In this context rising unemployment is the major problem of the EU. For that reason the enlargement of the EU is controversial within the EU. The controversies within the EU also mean risks for Turkey with respect to the membership. (Interview with Erol Tuncer, 2005)

Erol Tuncer points out that there is an opposition to Turkey's membership in the European public opinion. Tuncer thinks that this opposition has been rising and the governments of the EU members are directly influenced by this negative tendency. Tuncer states that the main reason behind such reluctant approaches of the EU members is the effect of this opposition. He thinks that there are various reasons that cause this opposition: "For Turkey is a Muslim, Turkish and poor country the EU members are uneasy with each of these characteristics to some extent" (Interview with Erol Tuncer, 2005).

The leader of the Social Democracy Foundation points out 'the loose structure of the political union of the EU which was basically founded as an economic organisation at the beginning' as a problem. Aydın Cıngı thinks that "...the looseness in the decision taking processes is the major problem of the EU. The EU is not a

politically institutionalised union. For that reason, the formation of political will and declaration of that will depend on the conjuncture” (Interview with Aydın Cıngı, 2005). For reckoning on major issues between the members is permanent within the Union this problem is/will be directly influencing Turkey’s membership process according to Cıngı.

Well-known social democratic figures who do not have direct ties with any political party or organisation are not satisfied with the recent conditions influencing the EU’s position in view of Turkish membership as well. Here Fikri Sağlar states that the EU has been in a difficult situation to pursue its stability since the second enlargement process. The referendums that were held in Holland and France displayed that the great countries of the EU got tired in the integration process according to Sağlar. The political and economic problems that the EU should solve within itself have been complicating the membership process for Turkey according to Sağlar. In this respect, Sağlar thinks that it is dubious that either the EU will respond to the needs of Turkey with respect to the membership or not (Interview with Fikri Sağlar, 2005). Sağlar maintains that although Turkey has been sincere in its efforts for the membership since its application in 1987, the same sincerity has not been seen in the EU policies (Interview with Fikri Sağlar, 2005).

Similarly, Uluç Gürkan thinks that there are various problems negatively influencing the EU’s policies on Turkish membership. Gürkan states that the enlargement of the EU has reduced the average per capita income in the EU. Such an economic regression is one of the reasons of the EU’s hesitancy about Turkish membership. On the other hand, he thinks that the EU does not want to border Iran and Iraq after the 9/11 Attacks. Gürkan also states that the cultural differences are important factors that cause reluctance in the EU with respect to Turkish membership (Interview with Uluç Gürkan, 2005).

Various representatives of the trade unions criticise the position of the EU with respect to Turkey as well. The advisor of the leader of TURK-IS states that the Turkish trade unions are hesitant with respect to the European Union’s being the union of the European capital. Hasan Tahsin Benli argues that “it is widely believed that the EU does not want the development of Turkish trade unions and the advance of class consciousness because it considers Turkey a paradise of cheap labour”

(Interview with Hasan Tahsin Benli, 2005). That the EU has not displayed a tendency to support the Turkish trade unions and to strengthen their situation yet has been strengthening such a negative view according to Benli. In Turkey, the right to unionise is under constraint. The workers who enrol in trade unions are under threat of losing their jobs. Only few of the Turkish workers have been organised in the trade unions. That the EU is not doing anything for such a situation is criticised by Benli.

On the other hand, the Chairman of the Training Department of the Trade Union of Road Construction and Building Workers states that the EU will not accept Turkey as a member. Yıldırım Koç puts forward that the main aim of the EU is to use Turkey as a 'back garden' for its imperialist interests (Interview with Yıldırım Koç, 2005). Koç does not believe the sincerity of the EU in its relations with Turkey. On the contrary, he thinks that the aim of the EU is to exploit Turkey. In this context, Koç clearly displays his negative views and opposition to the EU and Turkey's EU membership.

Most of the representatives of the Turkish social democratic movement think that the EU is not very desirous about Turkey's membership. They think that the reluctance of the EU with respect to Turkish membership depends on various economic and political reasons. Thus, as the above indicates, it is not possible to claim that all social democrats are of the same opinion. Some important figures of Turkish social democratic movement do not agree with the dominant perspective of the EU having various economic and political reasons for not wanting Turkey's membership. However, it is difficult to argue that the political tendency claiming that the recent developments will not make Turkish membership process difficult is putting forth influential and persuasive arguments. In this respect although all of them are not of the same opinion, the dominant view among the Turkish Social Democrats in the context of the EU's position regarding Turkish membership is that of dissatisfaction.

4.2.2. CONUNDRUM POSED BY "OPEN-ENDED" NEGOTIATIONS

The Negotiating Framework Document organising the principles of the negotiations between the EU and Turkey was accepted on 3 October 2005. However,

the main outline of this document was known since the Brussels European Council which was held in 2004. This framework has caused serious debates among different sectors of Turkish politics. The Framework has been approved and criticised by different entities in Turkey. Various conditions and expressions in the Document were criticised and counted as unacceptable. Here it is necessary to mention these expressions and conditions. The Framework states that the “negotiations are an open-ended process, the outcome of which can not be guaranteed beforehand” (The Negotiating Framework, 2005). This is the most controversial principle of the negotiations. Additionally the expression, ‘the absorption capacity of the European Union’ with respect to Turkish membership is also an important issue of the debates. ‘The requirement of the normalisation of the relations of Turkey with the EU member states’ including the ‘Republic of Cyprus’ and “the fulfilment of Turkey’s obligations under the Association Agreement and its additional protocol extending the Association Agreement to all new EU Member states” (The Negotiating Framework, 2005), which implies the recognition of the ‘Republic of Cyprus’ by Turkey, is another reason for the rising disturbance of Turkey. It is stated in the Negotiating Framework that the EU may consider long transitional periods, derogations, specific arrangements or permanent safeguard clauses in areas such as freedom of movement of persons, structural policies or agriculture (The Negotiating Framework, 2005). This kind of possibility engenders limiting or preventing the free movement of Turkish people and the use of structural and agricultural funds. Such a possibility causes a serious reaction in Turkey.

The Turkish Social Democrats have considerable and serious concerns about the Negotiating Framework as well. The interviews carried out with the representatives of the social democratic movement in Turkey have shown that they all oppose, to one degree or another, many principles of the Negotiating Framework.

The Republican People’s Party explicitly expresses its disturbance with respect to the discourses on and the connotations of the ‘open-endedness’ of the Turkey-EU negotiations. The speech of the leader of the RPP in the Gathering of the Parliamentary Group of the RPP on the 3rd legislative year of the 22nd Turkish Parliament exhibits this disturbance. Deniz Baykal states in his speech that the ongoing developments are distressing for Turkey. That the EU has been insistently

emphasising the ‘open-ended’ character of the negotiations with Turkey is considered as the ‘disrespect of the European Union’ (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2005b: 253). He argues that the open-endedness of the negotiations and implications about a ‘special statute’ different from the statute of full membership are unacceptable for Turkey. In this context, the Republican People’s Party had advised the Justice and Development Party not to accept any implications in this direction and to stop the negotiations if the EU offered such a statute before the Brussels European Council in 2004 (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2005b: 254). As such, the RPP is ready for the interruption of Turkey-EU negotiations instead of accepting an unequal procedure.

The leader of the RPP declares in the party journal ‘Halk’ that the Negotiating Framework document is not supported by the Republican People’s Party because it is not in favour of Turkey’s ‘full and honourable membership’²¹ (Baykal, 2005c: 4). Here, the RPP criticises the Justice and Development Party for approving such a framework.

In the same vein, the Deputy Secretary General of the RPP Oğuz Oyan states that the recent condition appeared in the Negotiating Framework document on 3 October 2005 is not defining a status that Turkey should reach at the end of the process started with the Ankara Treaty in 1963 (Interview with Oğuz Oyan, 2005). Oyan clearly expresses his dissatisfaction about the recent Turkey-European Union relations. He argues that the special statute offered in the Negotiating Framework is unacceptable.

Here, the Party Assembly Member of the RPP İsmail Cem states that the ‘open-ended’ character of the negotiations is unacceptable and that this statement contradicts the previous decisions of the EU (Cem, 2005: 293). The approach of the EU with respect to Turkish membership is considered to be ‘discrimination’ by Cem. He states that Turkey has been exposed to a ‘great injustice’ by the European Union. İsmail

²¹ It was stated on 17 December 2004 in the Presidency Conclusions by the Brussels European Council with respect to Turkey that ‘long transition periods, derogations, specific arrangements or permanent safeguard clauses, i.e. clauses which are permanently available as a basis for safeguard measures, may be considered. The Commission will include these, as appropriate, in its proposals for each framework, for areas such as freedom of movement of persons, structural policies or agriculture’. This matter was also accepted on 3 October 2005 as a principle of the Negotiating Framework. It has been one of the most irritating statements of the European Union for Turkish social democrats.

Cem thinks that the negotiating framework constructed for Turkey is discriminatory, humiliating and a characteristic example of ‘...bonne pour l’Orient’.²²

Similar to the RPP, the Democratic Left Party is of the opinion that the process that began on 3 October 2005 is not in favour of Turkey as well. The statement of the DLP, which was published the day after 3 October 2005, displays the disturbance of the party. The statement explained by the leader of the DLP Zeki Sezer declares that the Negotiating Framework indicates for Turkey a ‘privileged partnership’ instead of full membership. Sezer underlines that the Negotiating Framework is not a success for Turkey (Demokratik Sol Parti, 2005).

The leader of the DLP Zeki Sezer puts forward that there were no preconditions on the way to EU membership when Turkey was accepted as a candidate at Helsinki in 1999. For that reason, the recent conditions that have been demanded by the EU should not be accepted by Turkey according to Sezer. Thus, the open-endedness of the negotiations that will start between Turkey and the EU which was declared at the Brussels Summit in 2004 is unacceptable according to the leader of the DLP (Interview with Zeki Sezer, 2005).

The Social Democratic People’s Party criticises the EU about the inaccuracies in the Negotiating Framework like other social democratic parties. The leader of the party expressed in his speech at the Party Assembly meeting of the SPP gathered after the Negotiating Framework Document was announced on 3 October 2005 that although starting of the negotiations between Turkey and the EU is favourable the SPP did not approve the Framework Document because of the negativity of the Document with respect to the important details. The restrictions on agricultural funds and free movement of Turkish people were considered as the most unfavourable parts of the Framework (Karayalçın, 2005b). The leader of the Social Democratic People’s Party thinks that the statement of the EU expressing that the negotiations between Turkey and the EU are open-ended is a very negative development. He states that negotiations are naturally open-ended processes, but emphasising this open-endedness is not a friendly manner (Interview with Murat Karayalçın, 2005).

²² ‘...Bonne Pour l’Orient’ was an old concept used by the colonialists in the past. In French the concept approximately means ‘...enough for the Oriental’ (Cem, 2005: 298). The concept implies that the ‘Oriental’ does not already deserve the better.

Two important social democratic organisations of Turkey are disturbed with respect to the aforesaid ‘open-ended negotiations’ as well. The interviews with the leaders of the Social Democracy Foundation and the Social Democracy Association demonstrate that disturbance. The leader of the Social Democracy Foundation Aydın Cıngı states that the suggestion of ‘special statute’ for Turkey, which has been voiced by some components of the EU, is unacceptable. “It contradicts with the eligibility of Turkey for full membership that has been recognised by the EU” (Interview with Aydın Cıngı, 2005). Cıngı states that it displays an unethical situation for the EU. The EU has stated that the “negotiations are an open-ended process, the out come of which can not be guaranteed”. Moreover, it is stated by the EU that “...if Turkey is not in a position to assume in full all the obligations of membership it must be ensured that Turkey is fully anchored in the European structures through the strongest possible bond” (The Negotiating Framework, 2005). Such an expression can be interpreted as a reference to the possibility of a ‘special statute’ for Turkey. In this context, it can be said that the leader of the SODEF evaluates such an expression as unethical.

Similarly, the leader of the Social Democracy Association criticises the expression underlying the open-endedness of the negotiations. Erol Tuncer thinks that it is not possible to reconcile such an expression with a friendly attitude (Interview with Erol Tuncer, 2005).

Considering the evaluations of Uluç Gürkan as an ‘independent’ social democratic figure with respect to the definition of the negotiations, he has critical remarks as well. Gürkan states in his article, “The EU Negotiation Framework Document”, that all guidance in the Framework Document indicates a ‘special statute’ for Turkey. According to Gürkan, the above-mentioned expressions of the EU with respect to Turkish membership exhibit that negotiations should be concluded with a ‘special statute’, which will mean a ‘privileged partnership’ rather than a ‘full membership’ (Gürkan, 2005). Gürkan thinks that such a purpose is a double standard of the EU which has nothing to do with the Copenhagen Criteria.

It is clear that Turkish Social Democrats are not satisfied with the Negotiating Framework Document because of its various statements and ‘conditions’ some of which will be considered in the later parts of this study. One of the most conspicuous objections of Turkish Social Democrats is to the expression of the ‘open ended

negotiations'. Turkish Social Democrats are of the same opinion that such an expression is mentioned by the EU in an unfriendly manner. Most of the representatives of Turkish social democratic movement tend to consider that focusing upon the open endedness of the negotiations is the expression of the EU's intention with respect to the 'special statute' of Turkey. They think that the EU wants to offer Turkey a 'privileged partnership' instead of full membership. That the EU does not fairly conduct its relations with Turkey as it does with other applicants is an idea that finds acceptance among Turkish Social Democrats.

4.2.3. THE CYPRUS QUESTION

The Cyprus question between Turkey and Greece has been one of the most problematic issues of Turkish foreign affairs. The tense relations between Turkey and Greece gained a more important dimension after Greece became an EEC member in 1981 and became a more important and crucial problem for Turkey after the membership of the South Greek Cypriot Administration as the Republic of Cyprus to the European Union in 2004. The Republic of Cyprus was accepted as the representative of the entire island of Cyprus with the EU membership. The issue became complicated at this point because although the island has been an EU member the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as one part of the Cyprus has not been included by the EU. Moreover, the sanctions on the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus continue. Additionally, the presence of Turkish military on the island can cause problems because the whole island started to be considered as a part of the EU territory. The EU wants Turkey to solve its problems with Greece which firstly requires the recognition of the South Greek Cypriot Administration as the Republic of Cyprus. However, the Republic of Cyprus was accepted as a member although it still had border disputes. Turkey is determined not to recognise the Republic of Cyprus before a fair solution is found for this issue.

On 29 July 2005 Turkey signed the Additional Protocol adapting the EC-Turkey Association Agreement to the accession of ten new countries [including the Republic of Cyprus] on 1 May 2004. At the same time Turkey issued a declaration stating that signature of the Additional Protocol did not amount to recognition of the Republic of Cyprus. On 21 September 2005, the EU adopted a counter-declaration indicating that Turkey's declaration was unilateral, did not form part of the Protocol and had no legal effect on Turkey's obligations under the Protocol. (Turkey 2005 Progress Report, 2005)

It is clearly stated by the EU that "recognition of all Member States is a necessary component of the accession process" (Turkey 2005 Progress Report, 2005). Thus, Turkey should recognise the Republic of Cyprus to be a member of the EU.

The Cyprus question has been given much attention in the Negotiating Framework as well. Turkey is required to solve its border disputes "in line with the principles on which the EU is founded," to normalise its bilateral relations with all EU Member States, including the Republic of Cyprus and to fulfil its 'obligations' under the Association Agreement and its Additional Protocol extending the Association Agreement to all new EU member states, in particular those pertaining to the Turkey-EU customs union (The Negotiating Framework, 2005).

The Cyprus question is being debated among the social democrats as well. It is observed that the Cyprus question is one of the most important issues for social democrats in the EU process. There is a deep sensitivity with respect to Cyprus among the social democrat environments. It is seen that the 'nationalist perspective' has been dominating the approaches of Turkish social democrats.

The Party Assembly Report of the Republican People's Party prepared at the Thirty-first Ordinary General Assembly expresses the Party's deep disturbance with respect to the recent developments about the Cyprus question. The RPP criticises both the European Union and the recent Turkish government in terms of their stances in the Cyprus question. First of all according to the RPP that the membership of the Republic of Cyprus was accepted by the EU despite its border disputes is a grave mistake. It is stated in the Party Assembly Report that such a membership has made no contribution to peace and stability in Cyprus. According to the RPP, it is absolutely wrong for the EU to give place to its demands concerning the South Cyprus and its

impositions aiming de facto recognition of that region without solving the Cyprus question as a whole by including the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in the Negotiating Framework document and to make these demands and impositions the preconditions of Turkish membership (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi 31. Olağan Kurultayı Parti Meclisi Raporu, 2005: 67).

The RPP is clearly against the recognition of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey before reaching a fair solution for the Turkish Cypriots in the Cyprus question. It is stated in the Party Assembly Report that signing the Additional Protocol by Turkey means 'de facto recognition' of the Republic of Cyprus. The RPP sharply criticises the Justice and Development Party Government for signing such a protocol. The RPP is very anxious, for the Turkish Government has not expressed any reservations to the Additional Protocol ensuring that Turkey does not recognise the Republic of Cyprus. Turkey issued a declaration explaining that signing the Additional Protocol does not mean that Turkey has recognised the Republic of Cyprus. However, this declaration was responded to by the EU through a counter-declaration explaining that the Turkish declaration has no legal effect. At this point, the RPP thinks that Turkey will have to recognise the Republic of Cyprus in the negotiation process because the EU will oblige Turkey to make such a recognition in order to continue the negotiations. According to the RPP, the EU tries to push Turkey into a corner. It is stated in the Party Assembly Report that if the EU really desires a solution to the Cyprus question, it should force the Republic of Cyprus into reconciliation rather than making Turkey squeal by manipulating the Cyprus question (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2005d: 74).

In his speech at the General Assembly of the Grand National Assembly, the Vice-Chairman of the RPP stated that the membership of the Republic of Cyprus is the contravention of the international agreements. However, Turkey could not duly respond to such contravention according to Onur Öymen (Öymen, 2003). The interview that has been carried out with the Vice-Chairman of the RPP displays that Öymen thinks that a recognition of the Republic of Cyprus that does not rely on a fair solution is being imposed on Turkey by the EU. Öymen argues that both the 'South Greek Cypriot Administration' that became the member of the EU in 2004 as the Republic of Cyprus and Greece try to achieve various advantages in the Cyprus question by using the advantages of the membership. Turkey is being demanded to

recognise the Republic of Cyprus before reaching a fair solution in the Cyprus question as a result of the influence of Greece and the South Greek Cyprus Administration in the EU according to Öymen (Interview with Onur Öymen, 2005). He states that “the Ankara Agreement Protocol extending the customs union to ten new members of the EU including Cyprus is not a necessary concession for Turkey; however, the Greeks strive to be recognised by using this tool against Turkey” (Interview with Onur Öymen, 2005).

The Cyprus question is one of the most important issues of the EU membership process for the Democratic Left Party as well. The DLP is very sensitive with respect to Cyprus. The DLP criticises the Cyprus policies of the EU. It is stated in the Party Manifesto prepared for the 2002 National Election that the DLP considers the ‘affirmative approach of the EU in favour of the Greek Cypriots’ an unfortunate approach which is far from international law and truths (Demokratik Sol Parti 2002 Seçim Bildirgesi, 2002). It is seen that the DLP thinks that the EU is not fair in its approach to the Cyprus question. The DLP published a book *Ecevit, Cyprus and the Reality of Helsinki on the Way to Turkish EU Membership (Türkiye’nin AB Üyeliği Yolunda Ecevit, Kıbrıs ve Helsinki Gerçeği)* in which the developments on the Turkey-EU relations and the Cyprus question which had occurred during the presidency of Bülent Ecevit between 1999 and 2002 is explained. It was stated in that party publication that the EU should accept that there are two states in Cyprus for the solution of the Cyprus question. On the contrary, it is stated that the membership of the South Greek Cypriot Administration to the EU before the solution will be a mistake (Demokratik Sol Parti, 2004a: 95-96).

Zeki Sezer states that the impositions of the European Union on Turkey for the Cyprus question cannot be accepted. Sezer thinks that the EU made a great mistake on the Cyprus question. By accepting Cyprus as a member, the EU did not respect the referendum held in North Cyprus and fell into a contradiction with its values according to him. Sezer declares that Turkey cannot relinquish Cyprus at the cost of EU membership (Interview with Zeki Sezer, 2005).

Bülent Ecevit, the former leader of the Democratic Left Party, has many reservations about the European Union on the Cyprus question as well. He asserts that only Turkey, Greece and Britain can and should be involved in the Cyprus question

(Demokratik Sol Parti, 2004c). Ecevit complains about the involvement of the EU to the Cyprus question as if it has been a part of the problem. He implies that Cyprus should not be EU's concern. Moreover, he underlines the importance and necessity of Turkey's military existence in Cyprus for peace and stability. In 2002, Bülent Ecevit declared that the South Greek Cypriot Administration was illegitimate and the membership of it to the EU would be an illegitimate action (Demokratik Sol Parti, 2002). Ecevit argues that it is not acceptable for Turkey to make any concessions with respect to the vested rights of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Demokratik Sol Parti, 2006).

Although Ecevit has been very sensitive with respect to the Cyprus question in Turkey-EU relations, he approved the Presidency Conclusions of the European Helsinki Council in 1999 which declared about the membership of the Republic of Cyprus that if no settlement was reached in the Cyprus question by the completion of accession negotiations, the Council's decision on accession would be made without the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem being a precondition.²³ This gave the impression that the Republic of Cyprus would be a member of the European Union even its border disputes remained unsolved. Ecevit criticises what he had approved when he was the head of the government. This can be seen as a sign of the tendency of conjuncture-based policy making.

It can be argued that the approach of the Social Democratic People's Party is rather different from most of the other social democratic parties. The SPP explains in its Program that there are two independent states which exist with all their institutions in Cyprus. The possibility of a union which can be established by these two states can be a solution to the Cyprus question (Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti Programı, 2002). The SPP considers the EU membership of the Republic of Cyprus before a fair solution is found to the Cyprus question as a mistake. However, the Social Democratic People's Party argues that there is nothing that Turkey has already lost in the Cyprus case. The explanations of the leader of the SPP during an interview that has been carried out with him support this view:

²³ More information about the 1999 Presidency Conclusions of the European Helsinki Council is available from the official web site of the European Union: (http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99_en.htm).

The European Union forces Turkey to find a solution in the Cyprus question; but it does not impose any way for the solution. The difference between the two is significant and should be well considered. The same attitude is relevant for the Aegean question as well. The EU demanded from Turkey and Greece to solve their problems with respect to the Aegean continental shelf and to bring the case to the International Court of Justice if necessary. But the EU did not impose a way of solution on the Aegean problem. (Interview with Murat Karayağın, 2005)

However, the leader of the SPP states that the EU made a mistake by approving the membership of Cyprus for which border disputes continue. That the EU accepts all of Cyprus as its member while the *Acquis Communautaire* is not valid in the half of this land is a contradiction of the EU according to him. He states that the EU is also repentant for its Cyprus decision (Interview with Murat Karayağın, 2005).

The leaders of the social democratic organisations exhibit discontent of the organisations they represent regarding the approach of the EU with respect to the Cyprus question. The leader of the SODEF Aydın Cıngı states that the Greece and the Republic of Cyprus as EU members are not urgent with respect to finding a solution to the Cyprus question. That Turkey will have to recognise the Republic of Cyprus as the representative of the whole island at any point of the negotiations forms a guarantee for these two states according to Cıngı (Interview with Aydın Cıngı, 2005). He states that the continuation of a deadlock on the Cyprus question which has been pursued in the earlier times by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, has already become a policy of these two countries:

The membership of Cyprus is a great mistake of the EU. Because of the deep sensitivity of Turkish public opinion on this issue it is not possible for any Turkish government to recognise the South Greek Cypriot Administration as the Republic of Cyprus before finding a fair solution to the problem. For the legitimacy of the Turkish government depends on pursuing the official policy on the Cyprus question the EU should not demand the recognition of Cyprus from Turkey. (Interview with Aydın Cıngı, 2005)

As a starting point for the solution of the Cyprus question, the leader of the SODEF states that Turkey should demand lifting of the embargos which have been placed upon the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in return for the opening by

Turkey of its ports and airports to Cypriot vessels and planes (Interview with Aydın Cıngı, 2005).

The leader of the SDA Erol Tuncer is another important figure who also does not approve the policies of the EU on the Cyprus question. He states that the Cyprus policies of the EU display a double standard.

The approach of the EU with respect to Turkey's membership is full of double standards. It is clearly observed in the approach of the EU to Turkey's relations with Greece. The Cyprus question can be fairly solved only when Turkey becomes an EU member. That Greece is an EU member makes the situation unfair for Turkey because the EU supports the interests of its members. (Interview with Erol Tuncer, 2005)

Tuncer especially criticises the 'wrong decision' of the EU concerning the EU membership of the South Greek Cyprus Administration. "Turkey is said to solve the problems on Cyprus question to be a member; but South Greek Cypriot Administration has become an EU member before solving its border disputes. It is a double standard of the EU" (Interview with Erol Tuncer, 2005).

The policy of the EU on the Cyprus question is also the outstanding component of Fikri Sağlar's reservations about the EU. He thinks that the membership of Cyprus without solving its problems has displayed a double standard of the EU. Fikri Sağlar proposes two ways for the solution of the Cyprus question:

The solution of the problem should be left to Turkey and Greece as two sides of the problem; or the EU should fairly contribute to find a solution which will be acceptable for both sides. The EU should not make the Cyprus question a precondition for [Turkish] membership if it is really in favour of a solution. (Interview with Fikri Sağlar, 2005)

Uluç Gürkan is another social democratic figure who expresses his displeasure with the handling of the Cyprus question. Gürkan states that the membership of the Republic of Cyprus has been realised despite the written subscription of the EU stating that it would not happen. Gürkan implies that the approach of the EU to the Cyprus question is precarious. Gürkan thinks that Turkey is at fault for not duly seeking its remedy with respect to the Cyprus question (Interview with Uluç Gürkan, 2005).

The Turkish Social Democrats are uneasy with how the Cyprus question is being dealt with by the EU. It is widely believed that the EU has made a mistake by approving the membership of the Republic of Cyprus while its border dispute with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus continues. The Turkish Social Democrats consider the membership of the Republic of Cyprus as an injustice to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and a sign of the double standard policies of the EU. Turkish Social Democrats think that the recognition of the Republic of Cyprus should not be a condition for Turkish membership. The Social Democrats think that Turkey should not recognise the Republic of Cyprus before a fair solution is reached on the Cyprus question. Turkish Social Democrats think that the EU should change its Cyprus policies.

4.2.4. RIDDLE ABOUT THE STRUCTURAL POLICIES AND AGRICULTURAL FUNDS AND THE PROBLEM OF FREE MOVEMENT

That Turkey may not benefit from the structural policies and agricultural funds of the European Union and that the free movement of Turkish people may be prevented as mentioned in the 17 December 2004 Brussels European Council Presidency Conclusions and in the Negotiating Framework approved on 03 October 2005 form three outstanding problems for Turkey. It is generally accepted that these conditions do not overlap with the understanding of full-membership. It is also widely believed that the EU offers Turkey a special statute rather than membership by putting such conditions to the principles of the Negotiating Framework.

The Republican People's Party is very disturbed with respect to the above-mentioned conditions. After the Council of the European Union approved a framework for negotiations with Turkey on its accession to the European Union on 3 October 2005, the Republican People's Party explained its views on the issue in the party journal *Halk*. The RPP states that the EU proposes a 'second class statute' by the Negotiating Framework which may also cause negative effects on the "national unity and national existence" in the future (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2005c: 2). That the EU will prevent the free movement of Turkish labour and that it will not avail

Turkey of the agricultural and structural funds of the Union both refer to any other situation different from the full membership according to the Party. The Republican People's Party argues that the Negotiation Framework document contains unacceptable conditions to which Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's Turkish Republic cannot consent.

The authorised representatives of the RPP have expressed their displeasure with the conditions aiming to limit the rights of Turkey that will stem from its membership. The leader of the RPP Deniz Baykal emphasises the 'unequal' approach of the EU with respect to limiting free movement of Turkish labour and agricultural funds and structural policies that Turkey may not benefit from. These conditions refer to a limited membership which can never be accepted according to Baykal (Baykal, 2004).

On the same direction the Vice-Chairman of the RPP Onur Öymen states that the expressions of the EU such as 'long transitional periods, derogations, specific arrangements or permanent safe-guard clauses can be considered in areas such as freedom of movement of persons, structural policies or agriculture' display that a conditional negotiation has been imposed to Turkey which may eventuate in a special statute rather than a full membership (Öymen, 2004a).

The Deputy Secretary General of the RPP Oğuz Oyan is another important figure in the RPP who displays his critical views with respect to the mentioned conditions. Oyan states that the free movement of Turkish people, the structural/regional funds and agricultural aids head the advantages that Turkey can hope to get from the EU membership. In this context Oyan states that the negative attitude of the EU with respect to all these rights is the sign of a 'special statute' (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2005b: 392-393).

It is seen that the Republican People's Party considers the restriction oriented decisions of the EU with respect to the rights stemming from the EU membership as unacceptable conditions displaying a 'special statute' for Turkey.

The Democratic Left Party is against the 'unequal' applications of the EU with respect to the rights stemming from the EU membership as well. In this context the DLP criticises the EU for attempting to prevent Turkey from benefiting the advantages of the membership. The Party Assembly of the DLP issued a statement on 24 October 2004 explaining the evaluations and expectations of the DLP with respect

to Turkey-EU relations. It is stated in the statement that the EU should be fair to Turkey in its relations. The Party Assembly argues that if the EU is sincere about desiring Turkish membership, it should not adopt such restrictive conditions with respect to the free movement of Turkish people and the agricultural funds (Demokratik Sol Parti, 2004b).

The structural and agricultural funds compose important issues which is criticised by the leader of the DLP as well. In his speech broadcasted on television, Zeki Sezer states that although the European farmers have become stronger and more productive than in the past as the result of the great support of the EU, the right of Turkey to support its farmers has been prevented in the name of a free market economy. Sezer deems that double standard as a great inequity for Turkey (Sezer, 2004b). He argues that Turkish farmers have been both barred from improvement while being expected to compete with the farmers of other EU member countries. That Turkey may not benefit from the agricultural funds as stated by the EU is unacceptable according to him (Sezer, 2004b). Similarly, Sezer argues that the EU aims to isolate Turkey by preventing free movement of Turkish people. In this context, these conditions are “unacceptable concessions” for Turkey (Sezer, 2004b).

The Social Democratic People’s Party criticises the preventive conditions with respect to the membership rights and freedoms of Turkey. In the Party Assembly Study Report prepared for the Second Ordinary General Assembly of the SPP, it is stated that it is a serious problem that the EU has taken permanent measures concerning the free movement of Turkish labour and the usage of structural and agricultural funds by Turkey (Sosyal Demokrat Halk Partisi, 2005).

That the EU may consider the inclusion of long transition periods, derogations, specific arrangements or permanent safe guard clauses in its proposals in each framework during the negotiation process implies many problems according to the leader of the SPP Murat Karayalçın (Interview with Murat Karayalçın, 2005). He argues that the attitude of the EU is unfair in this respect:

If the EU prevents the free movement of Turkish labour and does not avail Turkey of the agricultural and structural funds of the Union; the membership will be better reconsidered by Turkey. If the Union does not contribute Turkey to adapt its agriculture or environment to the EU criteria for membership before the negotiations start on these issues; then

EU membership does not make sense for Turkey. (Interview with Murat Karayalçın, 2005)

The leader of the SPP considers the conditions of free movement and the EU funds as the signs of injustice. In his opening speech of the Party Assembly that gathered after the Negotiating Framework for Turkey had been presented by the EU and approved by Turkey Karayalçın stated that Turkey should leave the negotiations if these conditions remain unchanged (Karayalçın, 2005b).

Free movement of people is the right which directly concerns the Turkish trade unions as well because free movement of labour is one of the rights that is crucial to trade unions. In this context, “that temporary or permanent restrictions will be put into practice with respect to the free movement of Turkish labour closely interests” the TURK-IS as stated in the Report prepared to explain the view of the TURK-IS. The Additional Protocol of 1971 foresaw that Turkish workers would gradually obtain their right of entrance to the manpower market of the Community until 1986. However, it has not been realised yet. On the contrary, it is stated by the EU that the restriction of the right of free movement may be considered. Here, TURK-IS states that such a restriction is unacceptable (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, 2005: 4). The Confederation declares that this is a sanction that the EU imposes only upon Turkey. In this context the TURK-IS states that it cannot accept that the EU operates a different negotiation process with Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, 2005: 5).

Any critical stance of the DISK with respect to the prevention of the freedom of free movement of Turkish people or about the agricultural fund and structural policies have not been observed. However, the leader of the DISK Süleyman Çelebi states that there are three important issues on the agenda of the trade union movement in the context of the European Union. First of all, removing the obstacles on the way of social issues, trade union rights and freedoms is of great importance according to Çelebi. Secondly, Turkish rural regions should be developed and employment conditions should be improved. Lastly, the labour organisations should participate in the negotiation process about the employment and social issues (Yetkin, 2005a).

Turkish Social Democrats are very sensitive with respect to the conditions determining the ‘limits’ of Turkish membership. That the EU may consider long

transitional periods, derogations, specific arrangements or permanent safe guard clauses in areas such as freedom of movement of persons, structural policies or agriculture is unacceptable for Turkish Social Democrats. They argue that it is incompatible with the philosophy of the EU. Turkish Social Democrats consider these conditions as signs of a 'special statute' offered by the EU to Turkey. It is so disturbing for even the most moderate figures supporting Turkish EU membership that the EU membership should be reconsidered if any improvement cannot be provided in these conditions.

4.2.5. THE QUESTION OF MINORITIES

One of the most controversial issues of Turkey-EU relations is the question of minorities. The Copenhagen Criteria, which were determined in 1993 as the rules defining whether a nation is eligible to join the European Union, includes a requirement of 'respect for and protection of minorities'. The EU demands from Turkey to protect and improve the rights of minorities in Turkey. The demands of the EU with respect to the Turkish minorities have often caused both confusion and reaction in Turkey. There are various reasons for Turkey's reactionary responses. There are three criteria of minority: ethnic, religious and linguistic. The minority definition of Turkey which was established in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne includes only the non-Muslims. In this context, only Jews, Armenians and Greeks are accepted as minorities in Turkey. The main controversy between Turkey and the EU results from such a difference in the definition of the concept of minority because the EU accepts the ethnic and religious and also linguistic groups as minorities.

In the 2004 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress towards Accession it was decided while in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne that "minorities in Turkey consist only of non-Muslim communities," "there are other communities in Turkey, including the Kurds." It was also stated in the Regular Report as a deficiency of the Turkish state that "Alevi are still not recognised as a Muslim minority" (European Commission, 2004: 46, 165). Additionally it is stated in the 2005 Progress Report that "there are other communities in Turkey which, in light of the relevant international and

European standards, could qualify as minorities” (European Commission, 2005: 35). Contrary to the 2004 Regular Report on Turkey’s Progress towards Accession, Alevis and Kurds are not directly defined as minorities in the 2005 Progress Report. For instance, Alevis are defined within the scope of non-Sunni Muslim communities (European Commission, 2005: 31). It can be argued that the European Commission aims to proceed cautiously with respect to the concepts it uses in the Report. However, for the European Commission states that these communities could qualify as minorities it can be said that the ‘minority question’ between Turkey and the EU continue.

The European Union defines the Kurds as an ethnic minority and Alevis as a religious minority of Turkey in addition to the non-Muslims. The EU is concerned about the rights and freedoms of these ‘groups’ in the context of minority rights. The EU makes such a definition on the basis of its own definition of ‘minority’. This approach of the EU has been an irritation to Turkish state. Many political groups in Turkey are also very disturbed by the minority question. Any attempt of the EU to discuss minorities is mostly perceived by these groups as a threat against the national unity and integrity of Turkey. Most of the representatives of the social democratic movement in Turkey are also very disturbed with respect to the minority question.

The Republican People’s Party clearly states that it does not accept the minority definition of the EU. The EU is criticised by the RPP due to its imposing upon Turkey its own definitions. The RPP adheres to the minority definition made in the Treaty of Lausanne.

The leader of the RPP Deniz Baykal, stated in his 12 October 2004 dated speech at the General Assembly meeting of the Party Group that the EU is in an effort of creating contrived minorities in Turkey (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2005b: 129). In another General Assembly speech on 26 October 2004, Baykal asserted that the citizens defined by the EU as minorities do not perceive themselves as minorities. In this context, Baykal argues that the ‘so-called’ minority question which does not have any ‘tangible basis’ is the effort of creating discrimination in Turkish society in the name of democracy (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2005b: 143).

The Vice-Chairman of the RPP, Onur Öymen, gives voice to his annoyance with respect to the minority question in his declaration published in a newspaper as

well. He states that the minority question is one of the mines laid on the way of the EU membership process. Defining the Kurds and Alevis as minorities is against the realities of Turkey and is unacceptable for that reason according to Onur Öymen (Öymen, 2004b).

Öymen declared in the name of his party at the EU- Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee that the expectation of the EU regarding the recognition of various ethnic and religious groups as minorities is not compatible with the legal obligations stated in the Treaty of Lausanne (Öymen, 2006). Öymen states that there is not a standardised rule with respect to the recognition of the minorities in the EU Member states. As Öymen argues, there is no decision in the *Acquis Communautaire* mentioning the recognition of the ethnic and regional minorities. Moreover, the states that the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities leaves the issue to the free will of the national governments (Öymen, 2006). As such, the RPP implies that the EU does not have a legal basis to force Turkey to recognise the minority statute of various regional and ethnic groups in Turkey.

The RPP's party assembly member and former minister of foreign affairs, İsmail Cem, states in his book *The 'Union' of Europe and Turkey (Avrupa'nın 'Birliği' ve Türkiye)* that it is contrary to the European Community law for the EU to make new minority definitions for Turkey and try to estimate special positions to these minorities. Cem argues that the main aim of the EU behind these efforts is to keep Turkey under its control by using the 'minority question' as a trump card (Cem, 2005: 301). However, he states that this does not mean that the EU tries to divide Turkey. The EU tries to control the power of Turkey according to Cem. The minority question is considered by Cem to be among the most important issues that should be considered in the Turkey-EU relations. Cem underlines four important issues that Turkey should be aware of: First, "the membership process should be reliable and irreversible." Secondly, "the equality between the candidates should be maintained and protected." Thirdly, "the Cyprus question should not become a precondition for Turkey's membership." Lastly, "a 'minority question' that does not have a ground in the European Community law should not be created" (Cem, 2005: 292).

The RPP states on every occasion that Turkey's minority definition has been determined by the Treaty of Lausanne. The RPP argues that Turkey should be devoted

to that treaty. According to the RPP, the EU is not entitled to impose upon Turkey any minority definition different from Turkey's.

The Democratic Left Party assumes a critical approach to the minority question raised by the EU as well. The DLP often evaluates the minority debates as threats against the national unity of Turkey. The minority question is considered by the leader of the party as an effort to create discrimination.

Like the RPP, the Democratic Left Party is very disturbed by the minority question that the EU has been forcing Turkey to recognise. In a press statement of 20 November 2004, the leader of the DLP Sezer stated in the name of his party that the question of minorities is one of the preconditions of the EU which is imposed to Turkey for membership. Sezer states that the DLP does not accept the imposition of the EU on recognising the Kurds and Alevis as minorities. Like the representatives of the RPP, Sezer claims that such a minority definition is made against the will of these 'essential components' of Turkey (Sezer, 2004a). The DLP points out that the minority definition of Turkey, which was determined by the Treaty of Lausanne, should be respected by the EU.

Additionally the interview carried out with the leader of the DLP has also shown that the minority question is considered by the DLP as a threat directed by the EU against Turkey's national unity. Sezer states that the "unity of Turkey is much more important than the unity of Europe" (Interview with Zeki Sezer, 2005). Sezer implies that Turkey can quit the aim of EU membership in order to protect its national interests which are under threat. Besides the leader of the DLP stated in a speech on 25 August 2005 that "they [the EU] want to disturb our unity by designating our Kurdish and Alevi brothers as minorities" (Sezer, 2005).

The minority question is debated by the DLP representatives in the periodical of the party, *Güvercin*, as well. The Secretary General of the Democratic Left Party, Tayfun İçli, evaluates the 'efforts for creating religious and ethnic minorities' in Turkey as a piece of a puzzle game which will portray a 'divided Turkey' when various pieces of it come together. İçli accuses the EU of trying to undermine the rights of Turkey outlined in the Lausanne Treaty. It is seen that the DLP is very reactive toward the minority question.

Here it is significant to consider the views of Bülent Ecevit. Ecevit was the former leader of the DLP. He was the leader of the DLP until 2004. His political approaches are still dominant on the party policies. Besides he is the honorary chair of the DLP. One of the most critical approaches with respect to the minority question belongs to Bülent Ecevit. The ‘minority problem’ depicted by the EU ‘conceals an ulterior motive’ according to Ecevit. He puts forward that some of the EU member countries and the United States of America (USA) want to divide Turkey in order to found a Kurdish State in Northern Iraq. Ecevit thinks that these countries have been trying to separate Alevis and Kurds from Turkey in order to realise this aim. Ecevit states that these are efforts to revive the Treaty of Serves (Ecevit, 2005).

Ecevit perceives the notion that the EU member countries as having a direct responsibility on the ‘threat of division’ that Turkey has been facing today. He implies that the EU has a harmful effect on Turkey’s national unity in this context. However, despite this ‘devastating effect’ of the EU, Ecevit does not insist on relinquishing the membership project, as he foresees that ending the relations with the EU may cause different negative outcomes (Ecevit, 2005).

The Democratic Left Party has a strong nationalist consideration with respect to the minority question. The representatives of the DLP express the deep concern of the party with respect to the national unity of Turkey.

The Social Democratic People’s Party does not agree with the minority definition of the EU as well. However, it can be said that the approach of the SPP is rather different from other social democratic parties. The SPP is against handling the issue on the basis of minority comprehension. The SPP considers that there should be no minorities in a democratic state. Considering the recent situation in Turkey with respect to the debates on minorities, the SPP claims that the disagreement stems from the difference between Turkey and the EU of terminologies with respect to the definition of ‘minority’.

At the First Extraordinary General Assembly Meeting of the SPP which gathered on 24 December 2004, SPP leader Murat Karayalçın stated that the SPP is against creating new communities based on minority rights. Karayalçın declares that the SPP is rather in favour of constitutional citizenship based on human rights (Karayalçın, 2004).

In his speech at the Second Ordinary General Assembly meeting of his Party, Karayalçın argues that ethnic and regional differences are the realities of Turkey. However, he states that the ‘minority statute’ of these differences is unacceptable for Turkey. Even the minority statute that was defined in the Treaty of Lausanne should be removed. Karayalçın argues that a democratic state should not have minorities (Karayalçın, 2005c).

Karayalçın thinks that the major problem with the minority question stems from the difference of the terminologies of the EU and Turkey. Murat Karayalçın states that the concept of ‘minority’ is used by the EU for numerical minorities within a whole which is distinct from the minority definition of Turkey:

Minority is a concept used for non-Muslims in Turkey. In this context the terminologies [of Turkey and the EU] should be adapted to each other...On the other hand Turkey responded as required when Kurds and Alevis were defined as minorities in the Progress Report of the European Commission in 2004. The EU can not impose its own definition of minority to Turkey and Turkey should be able to say “No” if it does so. However the EU did not impose its own definition and the requirements of this definition to Turkey. (Interview with Murat Karayalçın, 2005)

Despite the difference between their reactions it can be argued that the Turkish social democrat political parties are disturbed by the debate of the minority question that the EU has started. The social democratic parties do not accept defining different ethnic and religious groups in Turkey as minorities. They consider these groups as essential components of Turkish society. Moreover, they argue that these groups refuse the minority status. The RPP and DLP argue that Turkey and the EU should be devoted to the minority definition which was included in the Treaty of Lausanne. The critiques of the DLP are sharper than the RPP and the SPP. Both the recent representatives and the former leader of the DLP invoke national unity which is threatened by the EU’s minority debate. On the other hand, the SPP does not prefer to consider the issue in the context of national unity. Rather, the SPP thinks that Turkey should have no minorities because there should be no minority in a democratic state.

Here it is necessary to consider the approaches of the representatives of social democratic civil society organisations with respect to the minority question. The leader of the Social Democracy Association Erol Tuncer argues that the disagreement

of Turkey and the EU on minorities stems from the diversity in the definition of the concept. He argues that the EU has assigned itself a mission of rescuing the oppressed minorities in Turkey. Tuncer acknowledges that there have been deficiencies with respect to democratic rule in Turkey; yet he states that the way of solving the problem is to improve democracy not to enlarge the official minority definition (Interview with Erol Tuncer, 2005).

Uluç Gürkan expresses his discontent with the minority question as well. Sharing the view considering that the European Union is unjust in its relations with Turkey, Gürkan argues that although the EU offers various advantages on democratisation, social and economic improvement for Turkey, it also displays some reservations to the Turkish nation-state. He states that these reservations concern the ‘founding philosophy’ of the Turkish Republic (Interview with Uluç Gürkan, 2005). What he seriously considers is the protection of the “holy territorial integrity” against the threats that the EU membership can bring. In the context of the ‘minority problem’, Gürkan claims that the EU imposes upon Turkey a federation on the basis of ethnicity and religion (Interview with Uluç Gürkan, 2005). This is an unacceptable imposition according to Gürkan. He thinks that the EU membership both presents possibilities for improvement and includes threats to Turkey’s national sovereignty. Gürkan implies that Turkey should be careful for the latter possibility while benefiting from the former.

Here the approaches of the trade unions also need to be considered. The Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions has made critical assessments with respect to the minority question. The Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions held a press conference after the European Commission’s 2004 Regular Report on Turkey’s Progress towards Accession had been issued. The leader of the TURK-IS, Salih Kılıç, explained at that press conference that “minorities and cultural rights of the minorities” are the foremost issues about which the TURK-IS is very sensitive. The TURK-IS leader states that all the ethnic and religious formations in Turkey which are not defined as the minorities in the scope of the official minority definition of Turkey determined by the Treaty of Lausanne are the essential components of the Turkish Republic. In this context, it is not possible to consider these essential components within the scope of minorities for the TURK-IS. The leader of the TURK-IS declares

that Turkey should not accept such an imposition even for the ideal of the EU membership (Kılıç, 2004).

On the other hand the deputy chairman of the Progressive Mineral Research and Treatment Workers Trade Union of Turkey Tayfun Görgün states that the Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey agrees that the criteria of the EU that Turkey has been trying to adapt are not harmful to the national interests. The main harmful issue is ‘poverty’ according to Görgün (Interview with Tayfun Görgün, 2005). Likewise, Yücel Top states that the major problems of Turkey which causes serious hesitations with respect to the national sovereignty can be fairly solved only when Turkey becomes an EU member. He states that there will not be such a problem in a place which has become a part of European territory (Interview with Yücel Top, 2005).

It is clear that the minority question which is ‘created’ by the EU generally causes discontent among Turkish Social Democrats. Most of them associate the minority debates with the ‘national unity’ of Turkey. Moreover, the minority question is considered as a direct threat against the national unity of the country by some representatives of the social democratic movement. On the other hand, it can be argued here that there is a more moderate tendency in the social democratic movement aiming not to analyse the issue in a ‘nationalist’ consideration. Although all representatives of Turkish social democrats criticise the demands of the EU with respect to minorities, only some of them argue that the EU is threatening Turkey’s national unity with the minority question.

What should be stated here is that the minority question is generally discussed together with some other issues that the EU has broached for various reasons. The Armenian genocide allegations, the Ecumenical character of Fener Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, proposals for the reactivation of the Heybeliada Religious Seminary compose important issues that some of the representatives of Turkish social democratic movement express their disturbance with respect to the EU. All these problems are generally attached to the debate of ‘national sovereignty’ because the approach of the EU is often considered as a ‘corrupt intended’ intervention of the internal affairs in Turkey. However, it is not possible to argue that there is a consensus on the comprehension of national sovereignty.

The RPP associates the debates on the minority question with other issues concerning the national interests of Turkey that the EU discusses. The leader of the RPP is disturbed with respect to the approach of the EU to Turkey's national interests as well. The disputes on Cyprus, the Armenian Genocide allegation, demands for the international control over Euphrates and Tigris and on minorities have all been the signs of the unequal approach of the EU according to Deniz Baykal (Baykal, 2005c: 4). Vice-Chairman of the RPP, Onur Öymen, states that the demands on the issues of minorities, the Ecumenical character of Fener Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, proposals for the reactivation of the Heybeliada Religious Seminary are directly against the Lausanne Treaty and are unacceptable for that reason (Öymen, 2005). On the other hand, the Armenian genocide allegation is considered as an allegation that does not correspond to historical realities and could not be proved by documentary evidence by Öymen (Öymen, 2004a). He argues that these allegations which are, in a sense, counted as the conditions of Turkish membership can not be accepted by Turkey.

It is seen that the RPP considers the above-mentioned issues as impositions to Turkey. After confirming that Turkey has fulfilled the requirements stemming from the Copenhagen Criteria the EU should not demand anything more with respect to the issues in question which consider Turkey's national interests. To fulfil the demands of the EU is considered by the RPP as making concessions.

The Armenian Genocide allegations that is imposed to be a precondition for Turkish membership by some EU components is strongly criticised by the DLP as well. The leader of the DLP Zeki Sezer thinks that Turkey is not able to pursue an active foreign policy on national interests of the country because of the 'passivity of the JDP government' (Interview with Zeki Sezer, 2005). Similarly Sezer also underlines the drawbacks of the demand of international control over Euphrates and Tigris. He evaluates that kind of a demand as interference to the national sovereignty of Turkey and considers it a great problem (Interview with Zeki Sezer, 2005).

The stance of the Secretary General of the Democratic Left Party is remarkable in order to comprehend the sensitivity of the DLP. As stated above the Secretary General of the Democratic Left Party Tayfun İçli argues that the 'minority question' is highlighted by the EU to realise the aim of 'dividing Turkey' (İçli, 2005: 3). The Secretary General of the DLP considers the EU membership of South Greek Cypriot

Administration as the Republic of Cyprus, public administration draft law, the Ecumenical character of Fener Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, the Armenian genocide allegations, proposals for the reactivation of the Heybeliada Religious Seminary and ‘efforts for creating religious and ethnic minorities’ as pieces of this puzzle game (İçli, 2005: 3).

On the other hand, the Social Democratic People’s Party aims to display a different stance with respect to national sovereignty. The leader of the SPP, Murat Karayalçın, argues that the wide-spread perspective claiming that “the European Union is going to divide Turkey” is an invalid argument: “There is no country in Europe which was divided after being an EU member. On the contrary, the European Union is a uniting project rather than being separatist” (Interview with Murat Karayalçın, 2005).

Murat Karayalçın considers the national sovereignty within the scope of globalisation. Karayalçın argues that a nation state should share its power within the context of globalisation to protect itself from the negative impacts of it. He defines three dimensions that a nation state should transfer some of its power. These are local governments, supra-national organisations and people.²⁴

Similarly, the leader of the Social Democracy Association, Erol Tuncer, does not agree with the hesitations in Turkey with respect to the national sovereignty. He thinks that there is no ‘absolute independence’ for any of the countries in the modern world. With respect to national sovereignty, Tuncer states that Turkey will give as much as the other members have given to join the European Union. He thinks that there is not much reason to worry about national sovereignty in this context (Interview with Erol Tuncer, 2005).

In the same manner, Fikri Sağlar underlines the ‘extreme’ sensitivity on national sovereignty in Turkey. He criticises the arguments that the RPP and the DLP have been referring to defend national sovereignty. Sağlar states that the meaning of

²⁴ Karayalçın expresses his support to the report presented by Felipe Gonzales to the Socialist International which was summarising the studies of the Global Progress Commission in 1999. This report formed the basis of the closing declaration of the 21st Socialist International Congress on November 8-9 1999. More information can be had from the official web site of the Socialist International.

‘sovereignty’ that these parties consider is different from the recent meaning of this concept:

Recently it is possible to consider the world as a global village and it is necessary to re-evaluate the concepts such as ‘national sovereignty’ in this direction. The current situation in the world is ‘inter-dependency’ rather than ‘independency’. Hence it is necessary for Turkish social democrats to discuss the issue in the light of the recent developments. (Interview with Fikri Sağlar, 2005)

In this context Sağlar considers the EU as a union in the context of ‘inter-dependency’. What is important according to him is to have equal rights under the rules of such a structure.

As is the case in the minority question the representatives of the Turkish social democratic movement do not display common attitudes with respect to the relation between national sovereignty and the EU. It is clear that all representatives of social democrats of whom the views have been referred within the scope of this study reject the EU’s minority definition. They criticise the EU on the grounds that it wants Turkey to expand its minority definition which was made in the Treaty of Lausanne. However, only some of the representatives argue that the EU attempts to demolish the national unity of Turkey by imposing its minority definition. The representatives that can be defined as a more moderate wing highlights the difference of the terminologies that the EU and Turkey use. However, they do not think that the EU threatens the national unity of the country.

It is clear that there is disunity among the Turkish social democrats concerning the comprehension of national sovereignty. The representatives who associate the disputes between Turkey and the EU on various issues with the national unity and sovereignty of Turkish state are hesitant with respect to the ‘faith’ of the national sovereignty as well. On the other hand, some of the representatives of Turkish social democrats tend to reconsider the meaning and the scope of the national sovereignty in the context of the recent conditions. They are not hesitant about national sovereignty of Turkey in its relations with the EU.

4.2.6. CUSTOMS UNION

The Customs Union is an important component of the Turkey-EU relations the foundation of which was laid in the 1960s. The framework of the Customs Union was drawn by the Ankara Agreement in 1963. The Customs Union was completed in 1996 with the decision of EU- Turkey Association Council decision (Coşkun, 2001: 183).

The Customs Union includes the reciprocal elimination of the customs duties between Turkey and the EU, adoption of the EU's common customs tariff for imports from the third countries by Turkey and adoption of Turkey to the legislation of the EU (Çakmak, 2005: 118). The Customs Union covers only the industrial and processed agricultural products.

The Customs Union is an important step for the integration of Turkey and the European Union. But it has always been a problematic issue. Turkey is the first and only country that entered into the Customs Union without being a member of the EU. This means that Turkey has accepted various sanctions that have been determined by the Customs Union without having a right in the process of making the sanctions of it due to not being a member of the EU. It is generally accepted that the Customs Union was rather a political decision for Turkey. The Customs Union has often been accepted as a political process that would carry Turkey to full membership rather than an economic aim (Özcan, 2004). More importantly whether this kind of a union is beneficial for Turkey or not has often been examined. It is stated as a critique that although some sectors in Turkish economy have developed after the Customs Union, the deficit of Turkey in foreign trade has increased (Bozkurt, 2001: 329-330). That the Customs Union is to the detriment of Turkey is the leitmotif of these critiques.

There are generally two approaches determining the framework of the debates with respect to the access of Turkey to the Customs Union. According to the first one, the Customs Union, which has brought Turkey and the EU closer to each other, is necessary and useful for Turkey on the way to membership. According to this perspective, with the economic integration of Turkey and the European Union having been realised by the Customs Union, the membership procedure has been eased. On the other hand, the second approach claims that if the EU can take everything it needs

from Turkey by the Customs Union; then it does not have to accept Turkish membership which will be a burden to it.

The entrance of Turkey to the Customs Union caused many debates many of which are still on the political and economic agenda of Turkey. It has also been one of the issues that Turkish social democrats evaluate in the context of Turkey-EU relations. Today, it is seen that the Customs Union does not occupy a very important place in the EU debates as much as the above-mentioned issues. Still, it is significant to understand the assessments of Turkish social democrats about the Customs Union in order to conceive their approaches to the EU as a whole. Before analysing the approaches of Turkish social democrats, it is necessary to remember the role of social democrats in the Customs Union process. As mentioned before, Turkish social democrats were actively involved in the process when the Customs Union was signed between Turkey and the EU. After the 1991 Elections, the True Path Party and the Social Democratic Populist Party established a coalition government (Dağıstanlı, 1998: 206-207). Thus, the social democrats were involved in the relations between the EU and Turkey during the coalition government. The ministers of foreign affairs in this process, Hikmet Çetin and Mümtaz Sosyal, were from the Social Democratic Populist Party. They conducted the talks with the EU and contributed to the preparation of the Customs Union. Murat Karayalçın became the Minister of Foreign Affairs on 12.12.2004 (Dağıstanlı, 1998 266). Karayalçın signed the Customs Union Agreement on 6 March 1995 as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Erdal İnönü and Deniz Baykal successively became the Minister of Foreign Affairs from the Republican People's Party after Murat Karayalçın. Deniz Baykal strived for the approval of the Customs Union agreement by the European Parliament. Baykal also signed the decision text providing the Customs Union's coming into force as the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Çetin, 2005) on 30 December 2005.

Considering the approach of the Republican People's Party, the RPP considers the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU as a necessary step that should be taken for membership. It is stated in the Central Executive Committee Report of 1 June 2005 that Turkey is one of the countries that had established the oldest relations with the EU. It is also stated in the Report that Turkey is the first and only country that had performed the Customs Union with the EU without being a member.

However, the EU is criticised by the RPP for detaining Turkey for membership despite the efforts of Turkey including the Customs Union (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2005a).

In the Central Executive Committee Report of the RPP it is mentioned that the EU imposes a relation of 'special statute' to Turkey instead of full membership in which Turkey cannot benefit from any rights and freedoms of the EU membership, but will benefit from being kept in NATO, defence cooperation and the Customs Union (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2005a).

The RPP thinks that the relations established by the Customs Union should bring Turkey to the EU membership. However, the RPP is hesitant with respect to the intent of the EU. That the EU benefits from the Turkish market by the Customs Union without giving its right of membership is the idea which disturbs the RPP. It is stated in the party journal *Ekonomi Bülteni* that with the Customs Union membership Turkey proved that it can compete with the European economy. In this context, it is stated that Turkish membership to the EU can provide economic advantages as well as political, social and cultural advantages to both sides (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2004).

In this context the leader of the RPP states that Turkey signed the Customs Union with hope for full membership. Deniz Baykal argues that the main reason behind Turkey's signature was to prove that the Turkish economy can carry the burden that will stem from the Customs Union. Baykal implies that Turkey signed the Customs Union to be a member of the EEC; however, this burden will be unnecessary if Turkey is not accepted as a member. Baykal states that if Turkey does not become an EU member, it will remain as a country offering its market to the EU (Baykal, 2002).

Baykal underscores that the RPP is not responsible for the intent of the Customs Union agreement despite his disagreement with the critiques claiming that the Customs Union has caused great external deficit (Baykal, 2002). The leader of the RPP stated that the RPP was not in any legal affair with the Coalition Government that had made the Customs Union Agreement. Baykal claims that the coalition government of the TPP and the SPP from which Baykal and his friends had separated in order to found the RPP was responsible for the Customs Union Agreement. However, it is known that the SPP and the RPP had conjoined within the RPP on 18

February 1995 before the Customs Union Agreement was signed on 6 March 1995 (Bila, 1999: 400-401). Accordingly, Murat Karayalçın was the minister of the RPP when he signed the Agreement as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. So it is clear that the RPP was in power as a coalition partner when the Customs Union Agreement was signed. Moreover, Baykal himself had striven for the acceptance of the Customs Union at the European Parliament as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Here it can be argued that the leader of the RPP aims to avoid the criticism raised against the Customs Union by denying the RPP's responsibility in the making process of the Customs Union. In fact, it can be said that if the RPP had had any objection with respect to the intent of the Customs Union it already did not accept to strive for its acceptance at the European Parliament. It is seen that various political worries have been influential on the RPP's stance with respect to the Customs Union.

On the other hand, the Democratic Left Party both supports and criticises the Customs Union because of various reasons. The DLP Declaration prepared for the 1999 Elections includes a chapter "EU- Turkey Relations and the Customs Union Policies." Although there is not a clear assessment made for the Customs Union, it is stated in this chapter that the DLP had striven for bringing the foreign trade policies of the European Community and Turkey closer during their government (Demokratik Sol Parti, 1999: 46). Since the DLP was in government before the 1999 Elections, the Declaration also seems like a report of what had been achieved during the DLP rule. In this context, the DLP states that the issues that have special importance for the development of the Turkey-EU relations beyond the Customs Union such as free circulation of services, free circulation of agricultural products, the harmonisation of the Turkish industry to the rivalry conditions that the Customs Union had brought has begun to be taken on and become a priority (Demokratik Sol Parti, 1999: 47).

The DLP considers the Customs Union to be a dimension of the Turkey-EU relations which needs to be deepened and developed. The former leader of the DLP Bülent Ecevit stated in his speech at the meeting of the Party Group on 22 November 2000 that "Turkey is in multi-dimensional relations with the European Union" including the membership of the Council of Europe, membership of the NATO and the relation of the Customs Union with the EU. These relations were considered as the components proving that Turkey was a European country and the EU membership

was the right of Turkey (Ecevit, 2000). In this context it is possible to argue that the DLP is in favour of the Customs Union.

However, the recent approach of the DLP with respect to the Customs Union is rather critical. The leader of the DLP Zeki Sezer often criticises the EU for not keeping its promises with respect to Turkish membership despite Turkey having undertaken the Customs Union. Sezer states that the EU Member countries have been exporting their products as they wish and the deficit of Turkish foreign trade increases because of the Customs Union relationship. In this context Sezer, states that it is gross injustice that Turkey cannot get what it deserves from this relationship (Sezer, 2004b).

The interview that has been carried out with the leader of the DLP displays the hesitations of the DLP with respect to the Customs Union as well. Sezer puts forward that it has been an economic concession for Turkey to sign the Customs Union Agreement. According to Sezer, the Customs Union has damaged the Turkish economy. In fact, Sezer depicts a general critique in Turkey which has been directed to the Customs Union from various political surroundings. He states that the European Union has been achieving economic advantages from Turkey since the Customs Union Agreement was signed and for that reason it is not necessary for the EU to accept Turkey as a member (Interview with Zeki Sezer, 2005). This claim implies that the EU does not need to accept Turkey because the EU has already been getting what it wants from Turkey. Sezer thinks that the Customs Union agreement which was signed before the membership weakened Turkey's importance for the European Union project.

The explanations of the DLP from past to present demonstrate that the DLP is more moderate with respect to the Customs Union when it is in power. However, the recent explanations display that the DLP is rather critical with respect to the Customs Union.

On the contrary, the Social Democratic People's Party considers the Customs Union as an important and necessary step in the Turkey-EU relations. The Customs Union has been criticised for causing a deficit in Turkish foreign trade. The leader of the SPP does not agree this argument. Karayalçın argues that the deficit of Turkey stemming from its trade with the EU Member countries had already existed before the Customs Union. Moreover, the leader of the SPP argues that not only the one with the

EU Members also the trade of Turkey with the third countries cause foreign trade deficit (Karayalçın, 2005a). In this context, he does not agree the critiques concerning the foreign trade deficit.

In the interview carried out with the SPP leader, after repeating his response with respect to the foreign trade deficit, he explains his reaction to the approach claiming that the EU exploits Turkey by means of the Customs Union. Such a claim is generally completed by the idea that the EU will not accept Turkish membership because it has been getting everything it wants by the Customs Union. Karayalçın does not agree with the arguments of exploitation. The leader of the SPP states that although the share of EU market in Turkey's exportation is 60 percent; the share of Turkish market in the EU's exportation is 1 percent. Karayalçın argues that no one can exploit any body with a share of 1 percent (Interview with Murat Karayalçın, 2005). In other words, he does not accept the assertion that the Customs Union has been damaging Turkish economy and that the EU is trying to exploit Turkey.

Murat Karayalçın argues that the Customs Union has been the only channel running between the EU and Turkey for many years. In his speech at the Second Ordinary General Assembly of the SPP, the leader of the SPP states that the recent developments such as the rejection of the European Constitution, which is considered as an important step for the political integration of the EU have shown that the dimension of economic integration of the EU will be more important. Since Turkey has already had a running economic relation with the EU by the Customs Union, the integration of Turkey to the EU will be easier according to Karayalçın: "In this context the Customs Union should be assessed as a great opportunity for Turkey" (Karayalçın, 2005c).

The social democratic parties are not of the same opinion about the effect of the Customs Union to Turkish economy and the Turkey-EU relations. Moreover, it is possible to argue that the parties which define themselves as social democratic defend opposite arguments with respect to the Customs Union.

Considering the social democratic organisations, it is possible to argue that the Social Democracy Foundation and the Social Democracy Association do not occupy critical positions with respect to the Customs Union. The interviews that have been carried out with the leader of the Social Democracy Foundation and the leader of the

Social Democracy Association have shown that the leaders of two important social democratic organisations do not agree that the Customs Union has been harmful to Turkey and its relations with the EU.

The leader of the SODEF approves the Customs Union relation between Turkey and the EEC. Aydın Cıngı says that although he is not in favour of a neo-liberal world view he believes that the Customs Union has been necessary for Turkey. The Customs Union is considered by the leader of the SODEF as Turkish expansion through the EU (Interview with Aydın Cıngı, 2005).

The leader of the SDA, Erol Tuncer, concurs with the leader of the SODEF. Tuncer argues that the Customs Union has raised the standards of Turkish economy. In this context, Tuncer thinks that the Customs Union is helpful in order to reach the standards of the EU. On the other hand, he states that although it was stipulated in the Customs Union Protocol the EU did not transfer any substantial funds to Turkey to compensate its loss stemmed from that process. He is quite critical in this context. Except the 'grudged' EU funds Erol Tuncer does not think that the Customs Union is harmful for Turkey (Interview with Erol Tuncer, 2005).

It is also important to consider the approaches of two large trade union confederations of Turkey with respect to the Customs Union. The decision taken by the Eleventh General Assembly and underscored again at the Twelfth General Assembly of the DISK states that the EU is essentially a capital organisation. Thus, the Customs Union is assessed as a key step which was taken on the way to the economic integration of Turkey to this capital organisation. In this context the DISK considers that the Customs Union has not provided any advantage to the Turkish working class. It is stated by the DISK that without the intervention of the working class organisations, the EU would not be to the economic advantage of the working class either (Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, 2000). In the Twelfth General Assembly decisions the DISK highlights both the importance of the solidarity of the Turkish working class with the European working class and struggle of the two for the 'Europe of Labour' (Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, 2004). In this context it is possible to argue that the DISK does not reject the EU project despite its capitalist character and the 'negativities brought by the Customs Union.' However, the DISK underlines the importance of the solidarity and struggle in the ongoing

process for the improvement of the working class conditions. It is not possible to argue that the DISK offers any concrete solution about the Customs Union.

As is mentioned before, the approach of the TURK-IS to the EU has positively changed. The TURK-IS has become more pro-European in time. However the TURK-IS sharply criticises the Customs Union. It is stated in the 2001 Report prepared to explain the assessments of the TURK-IS to the EU that the Customs Union has damaged the Turkish economy. The TURK-IS states that Turkey lost its biggest edge with the relation of the Customs Union. The TURK-IS argues that the economic collapse of Turkey will gain speed after the agricultural products and the service sector are included by the Customs Union (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, 2002: 26-27). Similarly, it is stated in the 2003 Chairmen Council Declaration of the TURK-IS that the Customs Union which has been damaging the Turkish economy should be converted to a free trade agreement (Türkiye Yol, Yapı, İnşaat İşçileri Sendikası, 2003). However, the critical assessments of the TURK-IS with respect to the Customs Union does not influence its support to the EU membership.

It is possible to argue that there is no consensus among the social democrats on the Customs Union. Some of them consider the Customs Union as an agreement that has been damaging the Turkish economy and also a factor in making Turkey's membership difficult. The main reason behind such an evaluation is that the European Union has already been getting what it wants from Turkey by the Customs Union. On the other hand, some of the social democrats think that the Customs Union has been a necessary development for the relations with the EU and will facilitate Turkey's membership.

As a result it is seen that the representatives of Turkish social democratic movement state that they approve the EU project. They also argue that Turkey should be a member of the EU. However, the social democrats determine various problems concerning Turkey-EU relations despite their support to the Turkish membership to the EU. They criticise the EU's approach to Turkey. The Turkish social democrats do not approve its policies concerning Turkey's membership. They consider many of the demands and decisions of the EU with respect to Turkey as 'unacceptable' and even as interventions against Turkey's national unity and sovereignty. These objections and critiques can be considered as the basis of the hesitancy of Turkish social democrats

about the EU membership. It is possible to argue that most of the social democrats are hesitant with respect to the EU because of the mentioned reasons despite their explanations on their support to the EU membership.

Here, it is important to consider how the Turkish social democrats conceive the future of Turkey-EU relations in the light of their assessments about the recent situation. This consideration can also provide a chance to see how the social democrats assess their position in the future of Turkey-EU relations.

4.3. HOW THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS FORESEE THE FUTURE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE EU

After analysing the approaches of Turkish social democrats to the discordant issues in Turkey-EU relations, it is necessary to consider their views with respect to the future of these relations.

The Republican People's Party is in favour of Turkish membership to the EU. However, the RPP is also very critical with respect to the EU because of various reasons. It is clear that the RPP argues that some EU Member countries and some important leaders in the EU try to prevent Turkish membership under the pretext of various reasons. The representatives of the RPP often tend to conceive and reflect this unwillingness as the general attitude of the EU. Moreover, it is seen that the RPP conceives most of the problems that has occurred in this process as threats to the national interests of Turkey. However it is seen that the RPP still considers the EU membership important despite all negativities. It is stated in the book published by the RPP in order to explain the Party's approach to the EU that the RPP continues to believe that Turkey can get into the EU on equal terms as a full member by protecting its rights and interests. The RPP declares that the RPP is determined and experienced to fulfil this aim (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2005b: 9).

The leader of the RPP states that the reasonable reactions of the Republican People's Party against some demands of the EU do not mean that the party is not in favour of the EU membership. Deniz Baykal thinks that approving every demand of the EU without considering in detail for the benefit of national interests estranges

Turkey from full membership. He states that the RPP carefully considers every phase with respect to the relations with the EU (Baykal, 2005b). In this context, Baykal implies that the RPP will be considering Turkey-EU relations for the benefit of Turkish national interests in the future.

Considering the future relations between Turkey and the EU the RPP expresses its support for a political struggle for full membership on equal terms without making any concessions from Turkey's 'red lines' and national values and sensitivities in the Party Assembly Report prepared at the Thirty-first Ordinary General Assembly (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2005d). The RPP argues that Turkey should struggle in order to overcome the injustices, double standards which are imposed by the EU.

The interviews carried out with the representatives of the RPP have also displayed the RPP's future consideration with respect to the Turkey-EU relations. The Vice-Chairman of the RPP, Onur Öymen, states that the RPP defends the perspective of full membership to the EU and declares that Turkey should keep on struggling for full membership despite all the difficulties. However, as Öymen states, the RPP argues that Turkey should say "no" to any condition that the EU demands to be fulfilled by Turkey except the legal regulations that the full membership necessitates (Interview with Onur Öymen, 2005). Öymen states that the RPP will pursue this approach with respect to the relations with the EU. Similarly, the Secretary General of the RPP Oğuz Oyan expresses his support to the trajectory of 'full membership' to the EU despite his hesitations on various issues. However, he underlines that being in favour of the EU membership should be carried on with a critical perspective in order to inform the society about the handicaps of the process (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2005b: 398).

On the other hand the RPP's Party Assembly member and the previous Minister of Foreign Affairs, İsmail Cem, likens the Turkey-EU relations to a logical marriage. He argues that both sides have interests in this relation:

The EU membership is not only for the benefit of Turkey. The EU will also benefit from Turkey's membership. The EU will provide a qualitative development with Turkey's membership. This will facilitate the EU's being a strategically world-wide 'player'. In this context only Turkey can provide a strategic profundity to the EU. (Cem, 2005: 286)

With respect to the future of Turkey-EU relations, Cem thinks that Turkey should work for starting a debate in the international arena on the ‘negative and unjust’ approaches of the European Union to Turkey while continuing the negotiations (Cem, 2005: 304).

It is clear that the RPP is not satisfied with the recent situation of the relations between Turkey and the EU. The RPP argues that the conditions of the negotiations display that the negotiations that have already started are pursued for a ‘special statute’ not for a full membership. However, the RPP argues that Turkey should not relinquish the full membership perspective. The RPP declares its will that is equipped with national consciousness for a struggle to realise this perspective.

The Democratic Left Party considers the EU as a project of civilisation and argues that Turkey should take part in this project. The DLP expresses its support to Turkish membership to the EU; however, it criticises many aspects in the ongoing relations. The DLP has many reservations for its support to the EU membership. It is clear that the concern about the national unity and national sovereignty often dominates the reservations of the DLP. Various assessments and critiques of the DLP also indicate a loss of confidence about the EU. Still, the DLP argues that Turkey should not lose its perspective for the ‘full membership.’ In this context, the DLP underlines the importance of pursuing an understanding of ‘rationalist foreign affairs regarding the national interests’ (Demokratik Sol Parti Seçim Bildirgesi, 2002).

It is seen that the outstanding concern of the DLP in the membership process is protecting the national interests. The DLP declares that it will continue to strive for Turkish membership to the EU by taking care of the national interests (Demokratik Sol Parti Seçim Bildirgesi, 2002).

The interview carried out with the leader of the DLP has shown that the DLP is in favour of pursuing the struggle for the EU membership. Zeki Sezer argues that instead of relinquishing from the struggle for the EU membership because of the negative developments; the membership should be seen as a ‘motivation’ for Turkey’s development (Interview with Zeki Sezer, 2005). In other words, the improvement of the country in light of the motivation of membership is more important than the EU membership itself.

The leader of the DLP thinks that Turkey has been in a troubled process with respect to the EU membership from which it can recover from by maintaining its own development not by making concessions to the EU. Such development can be maintained by improving democracy and human rights and by restoring the economy as a social justice based structure which is both open to production and also to competition according to Sezer (Interview with Zeki Sezer, 2005). In this context Sezer thinks that Turkey should work for these purposes in the future.

It is the Social Democratic People's Party which gives the clearest support to the EU membership among the social democratic parties. The SPP unconditionally submits its support to the Turkish membership. Considering its approaches to the discordant issues it is possible to argue that unlike other social democratic parties, the SPP avoids to assess these issues by means of various nationalist arguments. This does not mean that the SPP defends solutions with respect to the Cyprus question or the minorities which are different from the ones of the state policies. This argument also does not deny that the SPP criticises the EU on various issues such as the 'open-endedness' of the negotiations. However the SPP does not prefer to discuss these issues in a nationalist discourse. The SPP does not consider the EU as an integration process that often counters Turkish national interests by imposing Turkey various demands. Unlike most of the other social democrats the SPP is not hesitant with respect to the EU. The leader of the SPP, Murat Karayalçın, does not think that the EU has malicious intentions with respect to the division of Turkey. On the contrary it is possible to argue that the SPP aims to assess the EU in the context of recent debates on globalisation and tries to establish a relation with the arguments of the international social democratic movement.

The leader of the SPP, Murat Karayalçın, argues that social democrats have the responsibility of removing the hesitations with respect to the EU rather than fuelling them. Here, Karayalçın attributes a 'future mission' to Turkish social democrats. Karayalçın argues that there are many fears and prejudices with respect to the European Union which Turkish social democrats have a responsibility to overcome:

The Turkish people have a fear of division with respect to the EU membership. This fear stems from many historical developments occurred in the past. That this country has lost its lands for the last 100-120 years

caused that fear...Social democrats have an important mission to explain the realities and to convince the people that the EU is a uniting project; not a dividing one. (Interview with Murat Karayalçın, 2005)

Moreover, the leader of the SPP thinks that Turkish social democrats do not consider the EU in light of social democratic arguments:

The arguments that the social democrats handle to criticise the EU such as Cyprus question are not social democratic arguments; but are rather national arguments. In this context the role of the Turkish social democrats should not be instigating the sensitive issues...Social democrats should support and become pioneers of the EU which is all in all a social democratic project. (Interview with Murat Karayalçın, 2005)

Finally, Murat Karayalçın argues that Turkey should try to adjust the basic inaccuracies which have been previously stated to have a fair negotiation process. As a result, it is possible to argue that despite his critiques of some issues the leader of the SPP is hopeful for the future of Turkey-EU relations.

The representatives of two social democratic organisations think in the same manner with respect to the future of Turkey-EU relations. They consider that Turkey should continue its efforts for the EU membership. Aydın Cıngı argues that Turkey will be an EU member because it has been fulfilling all its commitments (Interview with Aydın Cıngı, 2005). Similarly Erol Tuncer thinks that Turkey's motto should be "trying every way for the EU membership, but not in spite of every thing" (Interview with Erol Tuncer, 2005).

On the other hand, both Cıngı and Tuncer mention that the achievements of Turkey in the fields of democratisation and human rights are important developments for Turkey even it will not able to be an EU member. They consider the achievements of Turkey during its relations with the EU more important than the EU membership itself. It is implied here that the EU is a motivation for Turkey's development. Finally, both Erol Tuncer and Aydın Cıngı assert that also the EU needs Turkey's membership for the continuation of stability and peace in itself.

Here, it is also important to consider the assessments of the independent social democrat personalities with respect to the future of the Turkey-EU relations. In this context Fikri Sağlar underscores the importance of the improvement of democracy,

human rights and economic development as more significant achievements than the EU membership itself. Sağlar considers the EU membership as a reward that Turkey wants to get at the end of the political, social and economic developments. Sağlar states that EU membership will not be that important for Turkey when it becomes a wholly advanced country. Yet Fikri Sağlar believes that Turkey will become a member of the EU (Interview with Fikri Sağlar, 2005).

On the other hand, Uluç Gürkan thinks that Turkey should produce alternatives that will accompany the EU membership project. In this context he attributes a mission to the social democrats to produce and pursue such a grand project that will also include the EU membership:

The EU is the only future project of Turkey. The situation of lack of an alternative for Turkey except the EU membership is the issue that social democrats should take into consideration. The EU membership should be removed from being the only future project of Turkey. In this context Turkey should have a main project that the EU will be a sub-project within it. (Interview with Uluç Gürkan, 2005)

As many other representatives of Turkish social democracy, Gürkan also argues that the aim of the major project ought to be improving Turkey. It is seen that Uluç Gürkan is uneasy with being wedded to the EU membership project without an alternative. That Turkey seems very desirous for the EU membership also harms Turkey's position according to Gürkan. In this respect, Gürkan implies that it would be better for Turkey to increase its alternatives to strengthen its position in the negotiation process with the EU.

Considering the assessments of the TURK-IS and the DISK, it is possible to argue that although they criticise the EU in many respects these Confederations are in favour of Turkish membership. The TURK-IS and the DISK aim to intervene the ongoing relations as the civil society organisations in order to influence the process for the benefit of the working class.

The DISK considers itself as a part of the European labour movement. Thus, the DISK states in its Twelfth General Assembly that the Confederation is determined to raise the struggle against the policies that the EU imposes in accordance with the interests of capital, against the attacks to the acquired rights of labour and against the

attempts aiming to eliminate the social state. Moreover, the DISK states that it is determined to strive for the assurance of the union rights and freedoms in the European Constitution and for the Europe in which the labour has a voice in the power (Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, 2004). These decisions also explain the approach of the DISK to the future of the EU. The DISK considers itself within the struggle which is pursued by the European labour movement within the EU.

On the other hand the TURK-IS expresses its support to the EU membership of Turkey. The TURK-IS expresses its mission in the future of the Turkey-EU relations as contributing as a civil society organisation to the creation of positive opinion in the society about the EU. The TURK-IS states that it will work for the elimination of the prejudices in the society with respect to the EU. In this context the TURK-IS aims to take place in the negotiations committee (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, 2005: 1).

The TURK-IS expresses its support for the EU and demands from the EU authorities not to disregard the problems of the Turkish workers (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, 2005: 3). The TURK-IS particularly emphasises various conditions that should be taken into consideration during the negotiations with Turkey. The most important issue highlighted by the TURK-IS is the problems of Turkish workers. The TURK-IS states that the right of free movement of people should not be limited for Turkish workers. The Confederation declares that a negotiation process including differences from other negotiations can not be accepted (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, 2005: 5).

Additionally, the TURK-IS states that 'accelerating privatisation' in Turkey as offered by the EU is also unacceptable. The Confederation states that the situation of Turkish macroeconomics has become unsustainable because of the IMF and World Bank programs. The TURK-IS remarks that the European Union should support Turkey to improve its own macroeconomic policies rather than the ones imposed by the IMF and the World Bank (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, 2005: 5). The TURK-IS implies that the reforms and regulations for the EU membership provide a chance to improve trade union rights, industrial democracy and social rights.

Here, the interviews carried out with the representatives of two large trade union confederations of Turkey should also be considered with respect to their assessments on the future of Turkey-EU relations in addition to the official views of the TURK-Is and the DISK.

The Advisor of the leader of the TURK-IS Hasan Tahsin Benli argues that despite both the general unsuitable conditions that the trade unions encounter and the strengthening negative views with respect to the EU in the Confederation, the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions is still hopeful for the contribution of the EU to the improvement of the conditions of the working class in Turkey. Benli states that the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions is hopeful for the Turkish working class to achieve its rights and freedoms during the process of conformity to the EU (Interview with Hasan Tahsin Benli, 2005).

Associate Professor Aziz Konukman, who has been working as advisor at the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions, underlines the importance of the ‘Europe of Labour’ with respect to the future of the Turkey-EU relations. He states that the European working class encounters the same problems as the Turkish working class do. He thinks that it is possible for the European and Turkish working classes to come together to struggle for their rights. Therefore, what is more important than the EU membership itself is the solidarity and struggle of the working classes that have class consciousness according to Konukman. “To struggle for the rights of the working class is the most important issue. In this context just being a member of the EU does not change any thing if a significant struggle does not accompany this membership” (Interview with Aziz Konukman, 2005).

On the contrary, the Chairman of the Training Department of the Trade Union of Road Construction and Building Workers and the advisor to the Chairman of the TURK-IS Yıldıırım Koç states that the EU can not bring any positive regulations to improve the situation of the working class in the context of labour processes. It is known that Koç is not in favour of Turkish EU membership. Yıldıırım Koç argues that the EU is an imperialist organisation the aim of which is the disintegration of Turkey (Koç, 2004: 84). Koç thinks that the EU is not sincere with respect to Turkish membership. Yıldıırım Koç thinks that Turkey will not be an EU member. Moreover, Koç does not believe in the sincerity of the “solidarity of the working classes of

Turkey and the EU” as well. Koç states that “both the trade union movement and the working class of the EU member countries are in agreement with their capitalist system. The working class and trade union movement of the imperialist European Union is capitalist and has not been at the side of Turkish working class” (Interview with Yıldırım Koç, 2005). In this context, Yıldırım Koç considers the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) as a “capitalist organisation” which collaborates with the capitalist class. He expresses his disbelief with respect to the “Europe of labour” as well. “For the European labour has been seeking for its interests in collaboration with its imperialist capitalist class; the so-called ‘Europe of labour’ has no reality” (Interview with Yıldırım Koç, 2005).

In yet another view, the Deputy Chairman of the Progressive Mineral Research and Treatment Workers Trade Union of Turkey (Dev-Maden Sen) and the Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey’s representative for Ankara Tayfun Görgün underlines the importance of the notion of social Europe. He implies that struggling for the rights of the working class from within the EU will make the struggle both significant and stronger. Görgün also underlines the difficulty of Turkish working class in constituting solidarity with the working classes of the EU member states. However he states that it is significant and necessary for the Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey to strive for this aim (Interview with Tayfun Görgün, 2005).

Similarly, the representative of the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey in Europe and the coordinator of the Turkey-EU Trade Union Coordination Commission Yücel Top considers that the EU membership will be beneficial for the Turkish working class. Top argues that globalisation has been eroding the acquired social rights of the working class. Yücel Top puts forward that it is possible to consider the EU as a project that can stop this erosion in a certain region:

The relative prosperity that the EU presents is an opportunity to stop the loss of the social rights on the national scale. On the other hand although the EU is a project of the European capital; the working class can intervene to change the negative sides. The structure of the EU is available for these kinds of interventions. For that reason the Turkish working class should be involved and struggle for its rights in this process. (Interview with Yücel Top, 2005)

In general, it is possible to argue that Turkish social democrats are of the same opinion that Turkey should continue its consistency with respect to the EU membership. Here it is seen that some of the social democratic parties and personalities are disturbed with respect to the approach of the EU to the national problems of Turkey. Thus, they are in favour of a more careful relation which should be more sensitive to national values and interests. The national concerns are dominant in the approaches of these parties and personalities. There are also significant assessments that aim to approach to the future of the Turkey-EU relations from within the social democratic thinking rather than the nationalist one. Thus, it is possible to argue that the owners of these assessments are more in favour of the EU membership. In this context, it can be said that there are two main stances with respect to the future of the Turkey-EU relations within the social democratic movement. The first one considers that Turkey is suffered wrongs on many issues within its relation with the EU. This wing is also sensitive with respect to the national interests of the country. Thus they assess the future of the relations from within this perspective. For that reason they think that the relations with the EU should be pursued in a more attentive attitude on national issues. However, this hesitancy does not keep them from supporting full membership. The second one considers that the social democrats should embrace the EU project rather than being hesitant about it. This more pro-European wing of the social democratic movement argues that social democrats should lead the EU project in the future. Being more sensitive and attendant with respect to the national interests and establishing the EU policies in light of this approach has nothing to do with the social democratic thinking according to the representative of this approach.

It is generally accepted that the improvement of Turkish democracy and economy is more important than the EU membership itself. It is largely believed by the social democrats that the efforts of Turkey will develop the democracy and economy even it will not be an EU member.

Although both of them are in favour of the EU membership, two different views are dominant in the assessments of the trade unions about the future of the Turkey-EU relations. The DISK is in favour of Turkish membership. The DISK highlights the struggle and solidarity in the EU for the aim of Europe of labour. The DISK is

determined to struggle for the rights and freedoms of the working class in a solidarity relation with the working classes of the EU Member countries. The TURK-IS is in favour of Turkish membership as well. The TURK-IS aims to play a more active role in Turkey-EU relations in order to positively influence the public opinion about the EU. However, despite the official views of the trade unions, the representatives of the DISK and the TURK-IS are not of the same opinion with respect to the future of the Turkey-EU relations.

5. CONCLUSION

In this study, the approaches of Turkish social democrats to the European Union have been analysed. This analysis has been considered as a chance to grasp how the European Union is being considered by one of the most important components of Turkish politics which has also submitted significant contributions to the Turkey-EU relations. It has also been considered as a chance for comprehending how they understand and explain the EU and the relations between Turkey and the EU. This study has aimed to analyse at which points Turkish social democrats advocate and/or oppose to the EU, what their main hesitations with respect to the EU membership and how they foresee the future of the relations between Turkey and the European Union. Another aim has been to see whether there are any similarities or dissimilarities between the perspectives of Turkish social democrats and if do what their common and differing sides are.

The European Union is the most important supranational organisation the foundation of which was laid in the midst of the previous century. The major concerns of the European countries after the end of the Second World War were to establish a lasting peace in the Continent and to provide economic stability and development in the Cold War conditions. At the beginning, the task of the Community was to found a common market which was compatible with the general economic conditions of the Member States and to contribute the Member States for economic enlargement and for advancing employment and life standards. The principal objective of the Community was to realise the economic integration among the Member States. In time, the European Economic Community has aimed to realise the political integration as well. Today, the EU is a regional integration project with the major principles of lasting peace, democracy, human rights, rule of law and efficient market economy.

The European Union is considered by the European social democrats as an opportunity for ensuring peace and cultural plurality, securing and improving

democracy, increasing social prosperity, welfare and justice within the Europe. These are also the main aims of the European social democrats.

The European social democrats highlight the ‘Social Europe’ including qualified employment policies to prevent unemployment and to protect and improve the life conditions of the European people. It is possible to say that the European social democrats regard adding a social dimension to the European Union project by the improvement of the social and economic rights of the working people.

The PES, the PES Group and the Socialist International as the federative and international organisations that the social democratic, socialist and labour parties have established have no reluctance with respect to the EU project. They are in favour of the European integration. They support the European Monetary Union. They are in favour of the European Defence and Security Policy. They consider the European Constitution as a significant and necessary component of the European integration. They also consider the Enlargement of the EU as a necessity of lasting peace and stability. However, the approaches of the social democratic parties on the various major issues considering the European integration such as the European monetary and economic policies conflict with each other. The main controversy occurs between two wings: the one which is more protectionist on the social and economic rights and freedoms and the other favouring more liberal economic and monetary policies. Such a controversy has displayed itself in the debates of the European Constitution. The European Constitution is criticised by various components of the European social democrats, as seen in the debates continuing in the French Socialist Party, for the reason that the Constitution would enforce neo-liberal economic policy. However, the European Constitution is widely supported by the European social democrats. It is seen as a significant part of European integration.

Despite the existence of different approaches and various critiques, the major components of the European integration are generally welcomed by the European social democrats. The existence of the controversial issues does not cause a withdrawal of their support from the EU. Rather the European social democrats prefer to pursue their policies within the institutions of the European Union. They aim to influence the policy processes through the direction of their political priorities. In this

respect, the PES and the Socialist Group of PES at the European Parliament are considered as important tools.

Turkey has been trying to be a member of the EU for more than forty years. The EU has become a more important issue of the Turkish agenda since the membership candidacy of Turkey was declared by the EU. In this context, it is important to analyse how an integration project such as the EU which has economic, political, cultural and philosophical dimensions is discussed by the political forces in Turkey. In this study, the approaches of the Turkish social democrats to the EU have been analysed. The Turkish social democratic movement has entirely different sources and origins from its European counterparts. The social democratic movement in Turkey originated from the Republican People's Party, which is the founding party of the Turkish Republic. Today, the political parties and other formations calling themselves social democrats are the structures that share the same historical heritage of the Republican People's Party. The principles of the RPP, being symbolised by the Six Arrows, have also been the principles of the Turkish Republic. Turkish social democrats share the heritage of these principles as well. For that reason, Turkish social democrats have usually been one of the social forces that are very susceptible with respect to the Republican Revolutions. It is seen that the characteristics of Turkish social democrats determine their approaches to the Turkey-EU relations as well.

When historically considered, it is seen that the social democrats have made important contributions to the relations between Turkey and the EU. Turkish social democrats have occupied strategic positions at the important turning points in the Turkey-EU relations. They have contributed to Turkey-EU relations in the course of the relations. However it is seen that this support is conditional and includes various hesitations.

Turkish social democrats relate Turkish EU membership with the goals of the Turkish Republic. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's will of 'reaching the level of modern civilisations and going beyond it' is accepted by Turkish social democrats as the motto of their support to the EU membership because the EU is considered as the most advanced example of the modern civilisation. Turkish social democrats consider the EU membership as a national goal. They manifest their support to the EU membership however they do not put much effort to explain and systematise their

views. The RPP and the DLP, two big social democratic parties, do not give place to their views about the EU in their Programs. Only the SPP explains its approach to the EU in its Program.

Two large Turkish trade union confederations are in favour of the EU as well. However, it is difficult to argue that the TURK-IS and DISK have completely achieved establishing institutionalised and consistent perspectives with respect to the EU. There is no consensus within the biggest trade union confederation of Turkey TURK-IS with respect to the EU. The advisors of the leader of the TURK-IS display their objections while the leader of the TURK-IS is explaining the support of the TURK-IS to the EU.

Unfortunately, Turkish social democrats are not able to develop specific perspectives with respect to the EU which is peculiar to social democratic thinking. Rather, they adopt the general approach which has also been accepted as the state policy of Turkey.

While analysing the approaches of Turkish social democrats to the Turkey-EU relations it has been observed that six main issues are highlighted by the Turkish social democrats as discordant issues in Turkish-EU relations. These issues also compose the main reasons of the hesitations of Turkish social democrats with respect to the EU.

The first one is the EU's position regarding Turkish membership. Most of the social democrats are dissatisfied with the EU's position regarding Turkish membership. That the European Union is reluctant with respect to Turkish membership by virtue of various reasons is the argument which is supported by most of the Turkish social democrats. They think that the recent economic and political conditions of the European Union make Turkish membership difficult. These are also considered as the reasons of the EU's unwillingness with respect to Turkey's membership. Moreover, it is considered by the RPP and the DLP that the EU detains Turkey in the membership process to get some concessions instead of expressing the reasons of its unwillingness. Thus they display their disbelief with respect to the EU.

However, it is difficult to argue that there is a consensus among the Turkish social democrats on the idea that the recent conditions are making Turkish membership difficult. Unlike other social democratic parties, the SPP considers that

the recent developments orienting the EU through economic integration rather than political integration are in favour of Turkey in its progress towards the EU membership. It is argued by the SPP that the foundation of such an economic integration has already been laid by the Customs Union relation.

The second one is about the 'open-endedness' of the Turkey-EU negotiations. Turkish social democrats sharply criticise the Negotiating Framework because of this expression. Most of them consider such an expression as a sign of the EU's unwillingness about Turkish membership. They esteem it as an offer for a 'special statute' and reject this inequality. Turkish Social Democrats are of the same opinion that such an expression is mentioned by the EU in an unfriendly manner. Turkish social democrats consider that the EU should treat Turkey on equal footing with other candidates.

The third important issue highlighted by the Turkish social democrats with respect to the Turkey-EU relations is the Cyprus question. The Turkish social democrats are very disturbed about the approach of the EU with respect to the Cyprus question. Turkish social democrats qualify the demand for the recognition of the Republic of Cyprus as a demand for an unacceptable concession. The Turkish social democrats argue that the recognition of the Republic of Cyprus should not be a condition of Turkish membership. They argue that Turkey should not recognise the Republic of Cyprus before a fair solution is reached. However, it is seen that although most of them share the similar perspective the SPP esteems that the EU is not imposing a way of solution rather forces Turkey to find a solution.

The fourth issue which is underlined by the Turkish social democrats is about the restrictive conditions concerning Turkish membership which are mentioned in the Negotiating Framework. Essentially, there are three important points that Turkish social democrats underline. That Turkey may not benefit from the structural policies and agricultural funds of the European Union and that the free movement of Turkish people may be prevented after the membership form three outstanding problems for Turkish social democrats in the Turkey-EU relations. Turkish social democrats consider these restrictive conditions as unacceptable conditions limiting the right of full membership.

The fifth important issue that Turkish social democrats consider a problem with respect to the Turkey-EU relations is the question of minorities. The Turkish social democrats argue that the expectation of the EU about the recognition of various ethnical and religious groups as minorities is not compatible with the legal obligations stated in the Treaty of Lausanne. In this context, they all display their loyalty to the Treaty of Lausanne.

They all express their displeasure with respect to the minority question. Yet, some components of Turkish social democratic movement such as the DLP carry their criticism too far. The DLP clearly gives voice to its concern about the EU's desire of 'dividing Turkey' by using the minority question. The RPP shares such a concern to some extent by arguing that 'the minority question is the effort of creating discrimination in Turkish society by the name of democracy'. However, it is seen that other components of the Turkish social democratic movement such as the SPP and the SDA call attention to the 'difference of the terminologies and definitions' of Turkey and the EU rather than highlighting it as a threat. Although all representatives of Turkish social democrats criticise the demands of the EU with respect to minorities, only some components of them argue that the EU is threatening Turkey's national unity with the minority question.

The representatives of Turkish social democratic movement who associate various disputes between Turkey and the EU with the national unity and sovereignty of Turkish state are hesitant with respect to the 'faith' of the national sovereignty as well. On the other hand, some of the representatives of Turkish social democrats tend to reconsider the meaning and the scope of the national sovereignty in the context of the recent conditions in the world. The latter is not hesitant with respect to the Turkish national sovereignty as well as the former one. It is seen that there is disunity among the Turkish social democrats with respect to Turkish national sovereignty.

The last important issue highlighted by Turkish social democrats is the Customs Union. It is seen that Turkish social democrats generally argue that the Customs Union relation with the EU is an important and necessary step taken for Turkish membership. However they argue that the Customs Union will be an unnecessary relation if it does not bring Turkey to the membership. There is not a consensus within the social democratic movement about the Customs Union as well. The DLP and the

trade union confederations argue that the Customs Union is an economic concession which has been damaging Turkish economy.

In light of the assessments of Turkish social democrats with respect to the discordant issues in Turkish-EU relations, there are two basic tendencies in the Turkish social democratic movement determining their approaches to the EU. These tendencies sometimes overlap on some certain issues. The first and the dominant one which is led by the RPP and the DLP is more sensitive about the national interests. The representatives of this tendency are much concerned about the national unity and national sovereignty. Thus they are more hesitant with respect to the EU. It is seen that they keep the state interests in the foreground more than any thing while assessing the EU and Turkish EU membership. The second and the weaker tendency which is represented by the SPP and to some extent by the social democratic civil society organisations is explicitly in favour of the EU with less hesitancy about national unity and national sovereignty. They do not tend to doubt the 'intent' of the EU about Turkish national unity and sovereignty on every occasion even they do not approve its various approaches or decisions about Turkey. These two approaches characterise the social democratic approach to the EU in Turkey.

It is clear that the axis of the debates of Turkish social democrats about the Turkey-EU relations has been grounded mostly on Turkish national interests. The EU membership which is already considered as a 'national goal' is discussed by the Turkish social democrats within the framework of national unity and national sovereignty. Thus, almost every demand or decision of the EU is esteemed by at least one part of the Turkish social democrats as an object of concern, or a direct or indirect threat against the national interests. It is widely believed that the EU is unfair to Turkey. On the other hand, it is seen that other part of the Turkish social democratic movement which is more moderate and less hesitant about the EU discusses the Turkey-EU relations within the framework of the above-mentioned issues which concern the national interests of Turkish state as well. However the representatives of the moderate wing are in favour of assessing the approach of the EU from within a wider perspective by considering various conditions rather than being suspicious about it.

With regard to the future of Turkey-EU relations, Turkish social democrats argue that Turkey should carry on its struggle for EU membership. It is largely believed that the most important thing is the improvement of Turkish democracy and economy rather than the EU membership itself. Thus they argue that these efforts will have developed the democracy and economy even if Turkish membership is not achieved.

There are two main stances with respect to the future of the Turkey-EU relations within the Turkish social democratic movement. The representatives of Turkish social democratic movement who are more concerned about Turkish national interests are in favour of a more careful relation with the EU which should be more sensitive on the national values and interests. They consider that Turkey has been exposed to unjust treatments on many issues in its relation with the EU. For that reason, they think that the relations with the EU should be pursued in a more attentive attitude on the national issues. However, it is seen that this hesitancy does not keep them from supporting the full membership.

On the other hand, the second approach which is represented by the SPP, considers that the social democrats should embrace the EU project rather than being hesitant about it. This more pro-European wing of the social democratic movement argues that social democrats should lead the EU project in the future. The representative of this approach argues that social democrats have a mission to explain that the EU is a project of 'union' rather than 'division'. In this context being more sensitive and attendant with respect to the national interests and establishing the EU policies in light of this approach has nothing to do with the social democratic thinking according to the representative of this approach.

As a result, Turkish social democrats assess the Turkey-EU relations from within a considerably limited perspective. This perspective lacks comprehending the EU project as a totality that has economic, political, cultural and philosophical dimensions. None of these dimensions is duly discussed within the social democratic organisations in order to develop a comprehensive approach with respect to the integration. Rather, Turkish social democrats tend to consider the EU as a part of Turkish foreign affairs which does not have much difference from the relations with other foreign countries. The Turkish social democrats consider the national interests

of the Turkish state as the most important component. Their major concern is to ensure that the relations with the EU will not damage Turkish national unity and national sovereignty. In this context, the European policies of the Turkish social democrats are mostly formulated in the face of the events and they are reactionary because of the same reason.

Compared with the approaches of the European social democrats, Turkish social democrats display almost totally different stances with respect to the EU. The European social democrats consider the EU as an opportunity for ensuring peace and cultural plurality, securing and improving democracy, increasing social prosperity, welfare and justice within the Europe which are also the main aims of the European social democrats. On the other hand the EU is considered by the Turkish social democrats as a national goal which will bring Turkey to the level of modern civilisations.

The European social democrats are not very hesitant with respect to the EU unlike their Turkish counterparts. The European social democrats adopt and support the EU project. However, most of the Turkish social democrats are hesitant about the EU. Although they all manifest their support for the EU, the assessments of the major components of Turkish social democratic movement indicate their mistrust and hesitancy stemming from national concerns.

On the other hand, the major concern of the European social democrats is preventing unemployment and protecting and improving the life conditions of the European people. These purposes also determine the framework of the social democratic comprehension of the EU which is called the 'Social Europe'. As a matter of fact, what should be expected from a social democratic formation in the context of the EU is to concern about the arrangements carried out by the EU with respect to the living and working conditions of the people. The European social democrats establish their European policies on this concern. However, Turkish social democrats do not assess the Turkey-EU relations in terms of social rights. This is a great deficiency for a political movement defining itself on the left of the political spectrum. Rather Turkish social democrats consider the Turkey-EU relations in the context of national interests. Moreover, it should also be noted that the Turkish social democrat parties and civil society organisations have not established relations with the trade unions as

required in order to compose efficient policies on the EU. There is not much conformity between the demands of the trade unions and the approaches of social democrat parties, organisations and personalities with respect to the Turkey-EU relations.

The European social democrats consider the European Constitution significant for the future of the European integration. Most of them argue that the European Constitution is a chance to guarantee the rights and freedoms of the European people. On the contrary, some other components of the European social democrats criticise it because of its neo-liberal quality. The European Constitution is an important component of their European policies. However, the Turkish social democrats are not properly concerned with the European Constitution. The Turkish social democrats are interested in the effects of the rejection of the European Constitution rather than the content of it.

As a result, it can be argued that the Turkish social democratic movement lacks a perspective which may help to produce comprehensive policies with respect to the EU. In fact, the insufficiency of the Turkish social democrats in assessing the Turkey-EU relations has to do with their general political stalemate. Turkish social democrats are unable to produce comprehensive social projects in which they ground their European policies.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS OF THE INTERVIEWS

1. How do you perceive the European Union?
2. What kind of problems do you see regarding the recent situation of the European Union?
3. What do you think about Turkish membership to the European Union?
4. What do you think about the process that has brought Turkey to the period of starting to the negotiations with the EU? Do you think that there are any false steps taken by Turkey or the EU during this process?
5. How do you perceive the position of the European Union with respect to the issues concerning Turkish membership?
6. How do you foresee the future of Turkish-EU relations in the light of the recent developments?