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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International Seminar

"Turkey and the EU: Crucial choices ahead"

12th-14th October 2005

Antalya, Turkey

Introduction

The Luxembourg Institute for European and International Studies (LIEIS) and the Economic Research Center on Mediterranean Countries, Akdeniz University, organised an international seminar on the future of the EU and on the fate of 'the wider European' on 12th-14th October in Antalya. In the course of two days, about 30 participants – academics from EU countries and from Turkey as well as graduate students from a variety of Turkish universities – discussed the state of the EU and the possible shape of a European political project after the failure of the proposed EU Constitutional Treaty, as well as the challenges for Turkey and its possible contribution to the Union.

The context of this seminar made some of the issues even more pressing. Not only had both France and the Netherlands rejected the Constitution and all the member states still not resolved the persistent row over the budget. But on 3rd October the EU finally agreed to open formal accession negotiations with view to Turkey's accession – even though the Austrian government threatened to use its veto to derail a process which had started in 1987 when Turkey first applied for full membership. Whatever the historical importance of this date, what is clear is that Turkey and the Union can no longer ignore a number of fundamental problems. Turkey must ask itself how it will cope with the possibility of rebuttal after 10 to 15 years of painful adjustment and harmonisation. The EU must ask itself how to reform institutions and policies in order to expand to the borders of Syria and Iraq while not jeopardising an ever-closer union for those countries which seek further integration.

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In line with previous seminars and summer schools, the emphasis of the discussions was placed upon the need to formulate new ideas that avoid conventional wisdom and go beyond the established consensus. Instead, the approach was deliberately critical, provocative and strategic, not in order to defend or to advocate any particular position but in order to consider a balanced view of some of the most complex problems of the European integration and enlargement process.

I. The present and future of the EU as a political and socio-economic model

1) The EU in 2005: political disarray, social and economic turmoil?

In his introductory presentation, Armand Clesse, Director of the LIEIS, raised a number of questions which the EU needs to confront urgently if it is to overcome the current crisis and constitute a genuine alternative to American unilateralism. First, he argued that the EU is marked by profound political disarray, which is evinced by the inability to ratify the Constitutional Treaty and after its failure to engage in a fundamental debate on the finalities of the European integration and enlargement process. Socially and economically, the EU is also in dire straits, as France and Germany suffer from historically unprecedented high unemployment and sluggish growth, and poverty, inequality, xenophobia and racism are all on the rise. Secondly, given this disorientation and violent backlash, it would need an exceptional turn-around in order for the current EU member states to admit Turkey by 2020 or 2025. Thirdly, Romania and Bulgaria may just slip through in 2007 or 2008, but this round of enlargement will take place largely against popular will and public opinion and may further delay both Croatia's and Turkey's accession. Fourthly, on crucial issues like immigration and openness towards foreigners, the EU and its institutions perpetuate and exacerbate national tendencies rather than resisting and challenging them: for example, the European Commission encourages a tough stance on immigration, illustrated by its reactions to Spain's brutal polices in the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. The wider problem is that the EU has become an elite-driven project which the national populations no longer embrace but blame for their insecurity and instability.

Other participants, like Kemal Kirişçi, Jean Monnet Professor of International Relations at Bilkent University in Ankara, remarked that Turkey was not a decisive factor in the French and Dutch referenda and that genuine political leadership would drag public opinion along and push through votes not only on the Constitution but also on Turkey. There is also evidence to suggest that many individual EU countries are not in crisis but are witnessing a period of (moderately) strong growth and development, especially in Eastern Europe and in Spain. Despite the severe crisis in some of the founding member states, it is crucial for the future not to forget the tremendous achievements of the EU, especially the peace, stability and prosperity it has hitherto provided.

Christopher Coker, Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science, argued that there is a divorce between the political elite and the people at the national and the EU-level, resulting in a loss of confidence in politics generally and a low esteem of national and European politicians in particular. Europe also faces an ideological void, as social democracy is in terminal crisis and thus leaves the neo-liberal consensus unchallenged.

But the biggest problem is perhaps multiculturalism, as it has produced an unsustainable situation where parallel cultures live side-by-side, refusing to integrate with one another and becoming increasingly ghettoised, hostile and violent. This casts a long shadow over the prospects for assimilating new Europeans and generating the quality and level of progress which is necessary to sustain the European integration and enlargement process. Already in the nineteenth century, Tocqueville had warned that mediocrity of ambition is fatal to the future of any political project. According to C. Coker, the specific problem for Turkey is that it does not and cannot know how the EU will be evolving and what sort of organisation it may join.

This point led A. Clesse to call for a more candid assessment of the EU's current predicament and to raise the question as to whether it is the best possible choice for Turkey to strive for membership in something like the Union, which faces one of its worst crises since the rejection of the European Defence Community by the French National Assembly on 30th August 1954.

Mario Hirsch, editor in chief of *d'Lëtzebuerger Land,* argued that things can always – and perhaps only – get better, not least because it is difficult to imagine quite how they can get worse. For more than 10 years, real unemployment has stood on average at 15-16% in the EU. Both the economy and the welfare state in their current configuration seem unable to generate sufficient jobs and get people back into work. Only far-reaching liberal reforms will cure this disease and thereby make the Union both able and willing to admit further countries, from the Balkans, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, in particular the Ukraine and Turkey.

In addition to the current socio-economic crisis, the EU suffers from an acute lack of political vision and leadership. K. Kirişçi explained that Europeans are insufficiently mobile and thereby fail to make the best use of the single market and that there is no common identity. This is because the EU continues to lack a proper European *demos* and the concomitant structures and institutions such as EU-wide political parties, EU-wide debates and EU-wide elections. Enlargement and immigration are seen to be a threat because they are thought to undermine narrowly conceived national values and standards, whereas the nature and extent of cultural diversity within and across the Union could – and should – be a source of identity and a basis to welcome more members.

Seyfi Taşhan, Director of the Turkish Foreign Policy Centre at Bilkent University, agreed with the proposition that the EU is in crisis but blamed it primarily on excessive social security like high unemployment benefits and on a lack of economic competitiveness. Contrary to its own rhetoric, the EU is not open to people, goods, services and capital. Not unlike Turkey after the First World War and the subsequent rise of Atatürk, the current crisis requires more than simple reforms; it requires leadership and a genuine vision in order to set the EU on a path of modernisation. However, Adrian Pabst, Research Fellow at the LIEIS, contended that the mantra of modernisation is meaningless because it does not explain what modernisation is or why it might be good. He quoted John Gray who wrote that "We are all modernisers today. We have no idea what being modern means. But we are sure that it guarantees us a future" (*Straw Dogs*. *Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals* [London: Granta, 2003 {orig. pub. 2002}], p. 173).

Various Turkish participants wondered about the extent to which Turkey is affected by the EU's current problems. Some, like Can Baydarol, lecturer at Istanbul Bilgi University, argued that many political and socio-economic problems and interests are international and as a result have a transnational impact. It is this interconnection which explains why Turkey is caught in the tension between the UK on the one hand and France and Germany on the other hand. However, participants such as Murat Erdoğan, an economist who teaches at Hacettepe University in Ankara, contended that the source of problems lies with Europe and that Turkey is not engulfed by the same crisis, even though Turkey participates in European institutions and 4 million ethnic Turks live in EU member states. Yet others, like Claire Visier, currently a lecturer at Galatasaray University in Istanbul, spoke of a widespread malaise across the EU and thus a hostile diplomatic stance vis-à-vis Turkey, as public opinion interferes significantly at the national level, e.g. in France where prospective Turkish membership did play an important role in the No vote.

2) Can the EU be kept on track? Or will it slowly fall apart?

In response to the initial discussions, A. Clesse highlighted the current paradox whereby the European elite deals with a Union in paralysis through slow and incremental change. This included the Constitution, which for most part would have reformed the EU at the operational level without giving it any genuine substance or content beyond a declaration of fundamental rights which can be interpreted in all sorts of ways. The question then is what, if anything, can provide a necessary and sufficient stimulus to induce the Union to engage in radical transformation – enlargement might be an example borne out by empirical evidence but it makes such transformation no more rational. Instead, the EU could – indeed should – have internal resources to deal with its current predicament.

But according to C. Coker, there are few signs for a real economic renewal, never mind a political re-configuration. Germany is export-dependent (because its economy is largely based on manufacturing goods, not as much on services as the UK) and is therefore even more threatened by China and India. Moreover, when – not if – the UK and the USA descend into recession in the next 1-3 years, there will be no model to overcome the crisis. The absence of any equivalent anchor like the 'American Dream' means that Europe will continue to see itself as being under siege – especially the spectre of immigration branded by populists on the left and the right alike.

A. Pabst contended that the neo-liberal model which is predominant in the Anglo-Saxon world and being adopted elsewhere is already in crisis because it has led to historically low growth (an average of about 1.5% p.a. since 1973/80, compared with more than 3% in the period 1950-1973/80) and investment, and the highest levels of unemployment since the 1930s. Even the much-vaunted productivity growth is largely nominal, mainly as a result of creating low-skilled jobs and failing to invest in education, research and development that benefits not only the upper middle classes but other members of society too. For France and Germany to abandon some of their educational policies and investment in vocational skills and instead to adopt neo-liberal structural reforms could make their situation worse, not better.

A. Clesse also referred to the resurgence of nationalism inside and outside the EU, which can lead to an upward spiral of increasing exclusiveness and threatens the very foundation of

building a common project. In the face of such and similar tendencies, it seems as though the EU had decided to scale down its ambitions by embracing a sober, functionalist approach, instead of pursuing a more idealist vision. At the same time, it is important to recognise that people are disaffected and feel profoundly alienated vis-à-vis the EU, which is resented for being an elite project imposed top-down. But even though it is easy to criticise the Convention and the whole process which led to the Constitution, the question remains as to what a genuine alternative could look like.

In the light of earlier remarks on the lack of a European demos, S. Taşhan argued that state-building and identity-building are not synonymous and that there is a dangerous tendency to define oneself in relation to common enemies, for example the Ottomans in the Middle Ages and modernity, or Communism after the Second World War. This, in turn, engenders an excessive idealisation of friends and allies, for example the Americans as the universal saviour who liberated Europe from Nazism and will protect us from global terrorism. Instead what is required is an autonomous European political project, defined positively and clear about what it presents and seeks to achieve. Turkey's refusal to allow US troops to launch the invasion of Iraq from Turkish territory testifies to a greater sense of pride and autonomy than most EU countries could claim for themselves.

According to Behice Ertenü, a graduate student at the Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, the mark of Europe is a certain sense of inclusivity, not exclusivity, a certain inclusive mindedness – *versus* an exclusive mindedness – vis-à-vis other cultures and civilisations. Until recently, economic integration was a necessary pre-condition for political integration, so the European unification process was a success, but the return of nationalism threatens the fundamental basis and underlines the need for a common project that can defeat it. Such and similar reflections on commonalities raised questions about identity. A. Clesse wondered what link there might be between the national and the European dimension of identity and whether there is anything like a 'we-feeling' in Europe? Or has the EU given up on a more idealist vision and for essentially pragmatic reasons embraced definitely and definitively a more sober functionalist approach? Is it not paradoxical that the EU needed Turkey to come up with common standards?

But S. Taşhan objected to some of these points, repeating his earlier point that there is a risk of confusing state-building with identity-building and that identity is frequently constructed in opposition to an external enemy, including a perceived common existential threat, such as Turkey to Europe, the Soviet Union to the Western 'free world' and America to the Muslim world. In turn, this triggered a debate on some of the paradoxes connected with religion. A. Pabst argued that nationalism was the logical consequence of secular liberalism because secular liberalism destroyed any trans-national commonality and broke down any limits imposed by religion on violence and other forms of transgression. To be true, the values of modernity and the Enlightenment were portrayed as universal, but only ever enforced and secured by national power which despised any limits other than itself.

C. Coker remarked that by the 1970s, peace was no longer the driving force of European integration and that thereafter national sovereignty became again the main logic that structured this process, not least in the aftermath of Britain's entry in 1973. However, including as a result of economic problems, Europe recognised the need to pool resources and power in order to maintain sovereignty in the face of increasingly global forces. A

transnational distribution of risks served to mitigate the effects of a loss of national sovereignty upon each and every member states. But this tendency was by no means irreversible, as the return of the state after the events of 11 September 2001 has illustrated.

II. The EU as a political project

The second part of the discussions turned to wider implications of the current crisis for the EU as a political project. A. Clesse wondered whether the EU can succeed in the long term without a strong political foundation or dimension, which has been absent since the beginning: the abandonment of the European Defence Community in 1954 and the subsequent establishment of the European Economic Community in the 1957 Rome Treaty inaugurated an evolution which was always lob-sided, biased or imbalanced in favour of economic integration based on a largely functionalist approach. Though complemented with the beginnings of a social dimension and other areas of 'high politics', this fundamental orientation has not been challenged by any of the Treaties and would not have been altered by the Constitution. A number of fundamental questions arise: first, was this simply an original deficiency which can be corrected or does it represent a constitutive weakness? Secondly, is there any chance, under the contemporary conditions of heterogeneity, to build a common political project? Thirdly, is there still something like a Franco-German axis or does it merely constitute an 'odd couple'? Fourthly, is there a strong tension or perhaps even a diametric opposition between high and low politics? Finally, what is the real risk of a dissolution into an increasingly loose entity which disintegrates into a free-trade zone? Concretely, to what extent are member states prepared to surrender national sovereignty? And is the Common Foreign and Security Policy selective (*à la carte*) or comprehensive? These questions arise, not least because neither the UK nor France – by far the most important military powers within the EU – are ready to give up their nuclear force for a common one.

S. Taşhan warned that bureaucracy has always undermined efforts to 'Europeanise' foreign policy. But equally many individual achievements point to the trans-economic nature of the EU, e.g. social policy, environmental protection and the success of the ESDP in Balkans and in Afghanistan. It is also clear that further integration cannot be based on the Franco-German alliance, the so-called 'E-8' or the 'Euro-' or 'Schengen-land' but needs to emerge on the basis of a collective project of the 25 member states. C. Coker argued that the CFSP is about security, not defence, and that after 1989 the EU was forced to deal with the chaos of the Post-Communist aftermath. There are basically three different projects to secure a common European future: configured around sustainable development, multilateral institutions, or accountable governments. 'Privileged partnerships' are likely to be an increasingly popular option in order to combine trans-national cooperation with national sovereignty. However, A. Clesse objected that it is a misnomer to call something a common policy if the shared underlying premise is to say that the EU should not be a political community. There seem to be two opposite logics: the inductive method (British inter-governmentalism) *vs*. the deductive method (Franco-German federalism). Moreover, no one in the EU appears willing or able to provide any genuine resistance or alternative to American unilateralism.

According to K. Kirişçi, trade relations and economic cooperation have many political and other spill-over effects. In this respect, the West European experience is significant and is being replicated in many parts of the wider Europe and the rest of the world. One of the

greatest challenges is to come to a fair agreement on 'burden-sharing', whether in terms of the budget or sensitive questions like asylum-seekers. M. Hirsch argued that the question of means needs to be resolved before a common stance on security and other issues of 'high politics' can be adopted. For example, the EU's Rapid Reaction Force is still not in place. Secondly, there are no serious attempts to forge a common diplomatic service. Thirdly, asylum and immigration require common solutions and effective 'burden-sharing', as some countries such as Spain and Italy are more affected than others.

C. Coker emphasised the importance of the difference between security and defence, arguing that European collective security had received support from the UK since the Venice Declaration and the European Middle East Policy. However, such and similar initiatives have been rendered virtually meaningless because of the actual situation that dominates the Middle East. But the change in the nature of power away from military towards civilian power and a more multi-dimensional approach strengthens the EU's influence, compared with the heavy-handed method deployed by the USA. All the same, the EU is not and might never be a collective defence community and a substitute of NATO. A. Clesse drew the distinction between collective security which is inward-looking and collective defence which is outward-looking (though, as A. Pabst pointed out, the so-called global war on terror tends to cut across these two dimensions). The USA has enemies because it stands for something, a certain way of life, while the EU may not have enemies because it does not really defend anything distinctly European – values, ideals, etc.

There was also a debate about the evolution of common policies within the EU institutional architecture. Some participants, like A. Clesse and M. Hirsch, asserted that the European Commission has ceased to embody the common interest and that commissioners tend increasingly to serve national interests, which undermines any efforts to consolidate a shared project. Others, like A. Pabst, contended that the whole European architectural setting reflects a concentration of political and economic power at an abstract level which is removed from ordinary European citizens and their needs and concerns. Far from representing anything truly common and European, the Commission, especially since the creation of the single market, has dis-empowered localities and amassed competencies at the expense of autonomous institutions. This has led to a centrally orchestrated drive for harmonisation and destroyed local and regional autonomy and difference. Far from serving a shared European interest, this approach has alienated the citizenry and made the EU less, not more, competitive because local standards and forms of excellence have been erased. The only alternative is to empower localities and also 'Europeanise' those areas which are best dealt with at the Community-level, not only foreign and security policy but also an over-arching strategy in the field of science, research and development, as well as military cooperation in order to avoid duplication, and pool scarce resources.

In response to this debate, C. Coker referred to the idea of two entropic principles, in connection with enlargement and the Euro. The first instance of entropy is the idea of securing yourself, which leads to an over-extension and an over-stretch, thus creating a security dilemma: as the case of the USA illustrates, the more insecure the empire feels, the more insecure everyone else feels too. The second instance of entropy is the inner over-ambition of integrating further in more and more areas, like the Euro and tax harmonisation. C. Visier argued that the EU's lack of democracy gives rise to a dilemma whereby more

democratisation might involve – or indeed require – increasing (re-)nationalisation, not Europeanisation.

III. The importance of religion in Turkey and the EU

1) The idea of Europe and the Islamic world

The discussions on the future of the EU as a distinct political and socio-economic model revealed a profound agreement among the participants from both EU countries and Turkey on the failure of the proposed Constitution to address the fundamental questions, for example, how to produce a true consensus on the finalities of the European integration process and how to build a genuine common identity and polity. In the context of defining the essence of a European project, C. Coker invoked Denis de Rougemont and his idea that Europeans only know themselves through dialogue with the outside world, namely with the USA and the Islamic world. Already in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Napoleon invaded Egypt in order to 'civilise' the Islamic world. For the novelist Milan Kundera, Europe is engaged less in a dialogue than a monologue, which continues today by trying to impose secular norms onto Islam and make it compatible with western societies. Indeed, some Turkish students argued that the imposition of 80,000 pages of – at least in part – arbitrary legislation amounts to a new form of colonisation, and that the acceptance by Turkey is little more than a form of self-colonisation. Europe's approach to Islam has been somewhat Napoleonic: wage war first and then see what happens.

However, nowadays, the situation has evolved, especially in the face of the decline of traditional religion across Europe. This evolution means that Muslims will not face anything like Christian crusaders but post-Christian cultures, where the belief in God is an individual right but where the language of religion is privatised and religion plays no significant public, political role. Even though, as both M. Hirsch and C. Coker pointed out, there is a resurgence of religious extremism and sects across the world (e.g. Pentecostalism in Latin America), in Europe people join religions but they are interested in spirituality, not normative behaviour. S. Taşhan asserted that Christianity and Islam share a natural morality but that the privatisation of Islam in Turkey after 1923 has led to a situation where during the Second World War there was support for Imams and Muezzins and there continues to be state control over Mosques. What is more, there is a clear tendency towards something like post-Islam, a popular religion predominantly practiced by workers, artisans and peasants who are conservative and defend a rural culture, not a religion embraced by the elite, which is urban, secular and progressive. Moreover, in the USA, hardly any second-generation Turks are practicing Muslims. In Germany, Netherlands, France and other EU countries, Turks are treated as foreigners, not as Muslims. But many participants objected, contending that Turks are not only regarded as Muslims but also excluded on the basis of their distinct faith and culture.

A. Clesse and B. Ertenü also argued that nationalism and so-called Muslim radicalism are fallback positions which Turks and other Muslims in Europe adopt as a result of not being integrated into western societies on an equal footing. Faced with a hostile society which shows more and more signs of xenophobia and racism, they are alienated and pushed into exclusion and extremism. C. Coker disagreed, saying that fundamentalism and suicide bombings are the consequence of a religious extremism that preaches puritanism and

inculcates a sense of guilt in those Muslims who are westernised – a fatal sinfulness which only martyrdom can redeem. In turn, A. Pabst contended that Islamic fundamentalism is not so much a modern or contemporary invention as a strand of Islam which goes back to the imperial conquest in the name of *jihad* and above all to Wahhabism in the eighteenth century – a tribal sect which developed independently of any western imperialism and became allied with the House of Saud.

2) Religion in EU member states and in Turkey: a political, social or cultural force?

These reflections sparked intense debates about religion and politics in connection with Turkey's accession. Some participants defended a secular project whereby religion is a matter of personal belief and private practice and has no place in the public sphere. S. Taşhan went as far as advocating that the EU countries learn from the Turkish experience where the secular state monitors what is being preached in mosques and thereby controls Islam. C. Coker recognised the role of religiosity as a response to the end of ideology – the end of the belief that ideas can change the world and the lapse into an age of consumerism and managerialism. But revealed religion and traditional religious practices are dead, or at least dying: for example, in the Czech Republic, less than 50% belong to any church at all. What Europeans reject is moral injunctions and enforced normative behaviour. He also argued that the UK is by far the most secularised and materialistic society in Europe and that the nation-state – though not nationalism – does have an important future, as it continues to be the main point of political reference.

Other participants, like A. Pabst, rejected this account and pointed to the revival of traditional forms of religion across Europe, not only in the East and the South but also in the North and West, as evinced by the mobilisation of the Catholic World Youth Day which brought together over one million young people in Cologne in August 2005. Most statistics on church attendance at Sunday mass are biased and fail to reflect further religious practices and the rejection of secular values by the younger generations. More fundamentally, it is difficult to see quite how atheist or secular humanism would be compatible with spirituality and religiosity. What is clear is that religious fervour in many parts of Europe exceeds emotions and extends to the level of beliefs, values and practices that are public and political in nature because they are about forming individuals and communities.

This is perhaps a more accurate description of many Muslim communities who want to preserve the family and refuse to embrace a secular western culture that worships pleasure and power. According to A. Pabst, many Christians are conformist and fail to challenge this consensus. In contrast, Islam offers in practice a more radical vision of the limits which religion places on absolute economic and political power, for example the refusal to charge interest and the widespread practice of solidarity and lending among communities who are denied access to the formal banking sectors. This sort of understanding of the importance of religion for politics and economics is nonetheless shared by some Christians, not least Pope Benedict XVI who in his homily during his inaugural mass said that "All ideologies of power…justify the destruction of whatever would stand in the way of progress and the liberation of humanity".

Yet other participants explained that Islam in Turkey is not at all the threat which it is made out to be by the army or the secular elite. Instead, Laurent Mignon, a scholar from Luxembourg teaching Turkish literature at Bilkent University, explained that there is a large part of Alevi within the Turkish Muslim communities across Western Europe and that Sunni and Sufi communities have coexisted peacefully over several centuries in Turkey. C. Visier remarked that the Alevi community is recognised as a religious community in Berlin because there is no other way to attain public recognition and minority rights. A. Clesse argued that the contempt for Turks in Germany means that self-esteem and dignity are constantly under threat and that as a result religion provides a sense of belonging and identity.

Turkish participants like M. Erdoğan, said that Islam is less a political than a social reality because it has come to the fore in Turkish politics as a result of the exodus of a largely rural conservative population towards the major cities. This constituency tends to vote for conservative parties such as the Freedom and Justice Party AKP led by the current Prime Minister who himself is a practising Muslim. Even conservative governments tend to be pragmatic, not ideological, as they do not seek to instrumentalise religion for political purposes or in order to challenge the constitutional settlement. L. Mignon described the electoral success of the AKP in terms of Turkey's Anatolian revolution, because it marks a profound reaction against the Istanbul bourgeoisie. The political and economic elite in Ankara continues to exert extraordinary control and pressure on other parts of Turkey: for example, the Director of Religious Affairs keeps mosques under surveillance and there are no rights for the Alevi culture, which is practiced by about 1/5 of the Turkish population. Recently, there was an official conference with representatives from the Christian and Jewish minorities in the presence of this Director but no representatives from the Alevi. S. Taşhan responded that there is nothing in the law to prevent the Alevi from engaging in their practices and that all religious groups can seek state support. That failing, they could always go to the courts and ultimately to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

This discussion raised the question of whether Turkey can be a model for other Muslim countries which pursue economic modernisation and political reforms. Some Turkish participants argued that Turkey will be no such model because other Muslim countries in the Middle East and beyond simply do not view it as such. Asked about whether the Turkish approach fits with the American promotion of religion and democracy, other participants responded that this is true because the Turkish state is secular and thus Islam does not shape political decisions and cannot undermine the pro-Atlanticist consensus. Yet others claimed that only some watered-down version of Islam is accepted by the USA who tolerates little, if any, dissent. In this sense, the refusal of the Turkish parliament to grant US troops the right to invade Iraq from the North was historic and caused serious strains in the bilateral relations.

Şükrü Erdem, Vice-Director of the Economic Research Center on Mediterranean Countries, explained that Islamism helped bring about the AKP and raised the question as to whether the success of the AKP will make radical Islam stronger or create a bridge between a secular regime and Islam. He said that if the AKP manages to mediate between different factions and segments of the multi-ethnic multi-religious Turkish society, then it could be a model for the rest of the Islam world. On the other hand, the AKP represents the rise of Islam and the increasing mobilisation of the poor: as it looks towards the urban bourgeoisie to remain in power, it could loose the support of the poor, which could trigger radicalism. The accession process will have a direct influence on this.

IV. The impact of the accession process on Turkey and on the EU

1) The aftermath of 3rd October 2005

Some participants, like M. Hirsch and S. Taşhan, declared that the accession process poses certain threats because of the implications of neo-liberal structural reforms and the adoption of the *acquis communautaire* – no less than 80,000 pages of legislation. However, Turkey has been used to a tough regime of reforms since 2001, when it had to implement IMF policies. The success of the AKP was in part the result of disavowing fundamentalism and Racep Erdoğan's popularity as Mayor of Istanbul, and partly the consequence of corruption which tainted virtually all other parties. But the fact is that AKP only gained 35% of the popular vote and that unpopular policies could swing the balance back in favour of other parties. The point is that this process is a long-term one and has a highly uncertain outcome. Yavuz Tekelioğlu, Director of the Economic Research Center on Mediterranean Countries, argued that the AKP's election result is itself questionable because on less than one-third of the total votes, it got more than two-thirds of the seats and the threshold for entry into the national parliaments was 10%. The EU imposed the respect of minority rights but chose to ignore these two democratic anomalies. Beyond the fate of the AKP, S. Taşhan said that now after the opening of accession negotiations there are two distinct yet related dangers, which make good will, determination and hard work even more necessary on both side. The first danger is that the EU may drag its feed on opening, closing and processing chapter negotiations. The second danger is that vested interests in Turkey may resist the current reform drive and that this may bring more Euro-sceptic parties back into power in Ankara.

In his presentation, Selim Yenel, Deputy Director of the Directorate General for the European Union in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who has been closely involved in the negotiation process, said that for Turkey the opening of accession talks marks a historical moment which will define Turkey irrespective of the final outcome. This is because the path of reform has now become irreversible and will benefit the Turkish economy independently of whether Turkey actually becomes a full member. The Turkish government is under no illusions about the nature of the requirements or the attitude of some member states. The run-up to the 3rd October 2005 when the EU finally offered to start negotiations reinforced the awareness that the trajectory towards Europe is fraught with obstacles and last-minute objections, fuelled by populist attitudes and narrow self-interest on the part of those who are already inside the club.

Indeed, ever since the European Commission recommended to the Council to begin talks on 6th October 2004, various EU member state governments have repeatedly tried to undermine the process: the Greek-Cypriote government last year over the issue of Cyprus and Austria this year over the possibility of a 'privileged partnership'. The document that sets out the terms of negotiation is equally problematic from a Turkish point of view because it gives the EU exclusive ownership: derogations for the free movement of Turkish goods, services and people and stringent conditions about opening and closing the approximately thirty chapters that cover the *acquis communautaire*, the totality of common EU legislation to be transposed into Turkish law.

The same document also imposes unprecedented conditions upon an accession candidate: the final decision over Turkey's entry is conditional on the EU's 'absorption capacity' – a term so vague that it could serve as a pretext for existing member states to oppose Turkey's entry in the interest of the Union as a whole. There is also mention of 'anchoring Turkey within the existing European architecture', which is all the more surprising since Turkey already is a full member of all European institutions, except the EU.

Moreover, as S. Yenel admitted, the EU has changed the rules of the games for Turkish accession. For example, Turkey will be given € 1 billion per year for the next 10 years, which amounts to just € 7 per person, as compared with € 37 per person in the case of Poland when it was an accession country in the 1990s. But he argued that the benefits of modernising Turkey politically and economically by far outweigh the costs of adopting the *acquis*. The importance of outside pressure became clear when Turkey suffered a serious economic crisis in 2001 and accepted IMF conditions in order to adopt structural reforms aimed at making a number of sectors more efficient and competitive in the global economy. Domestic political instability in the past has hampered Turkish efforts to drive forward reforms and render accession a realistic goal. Now the biggest single obstacle seems to be not so much to maintain popular support in Turkey for the painful adjustment process but to persuade governments and public opinion in the EU, explained S. Yenel, who will shortly become Turkey's Ambassador in Vienna.

2) Turkey's possible contribution to the EU's ESDP

According to S. Taşhan, Turkey has already made a substantial contribution to the EU since Oslo, when it started to participate in the ESDP, which replaced the moribund CFSP by encompassing activities that NATO used to engage in and that the WEU promised to do, e.g. soft security, organised crime, peace-enforcement and -keeping, etc. To be sure, there was friction between Turkey and the ESDP, when the latter wanted to deploy NATO assets but Turkey objected. However, in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan, Turkish troops are serving under European forces, and while cooperation is limited, it can and will expand. There are two issues of contention – the status of Cyprus and the alleged Armenian genocide but there is fundamental agreement about Syria, Iran and other sensitive cases. Turkey is in some ways involved in the long-standing problems of the region, like water, territory and foreign military presence but it maintains good relations with all countries concerned, which could be a crucial asset for the EU as a whole.

3) The costs of harmonisation and the possibility of a popular backlash in Turkey

A. Clesse disagreed with the suggestion that the accession process is somehow benign and mutually rewarding. He argued that Turkey might face a situation where after 10 or 15 years of submitting to the demands of the EU it is rebuffed at the last hurdle. Would not such a scenario raise the question of the potentially enormous social and cultural costs of harmonisation and the possible frustration of not being admitted? It seems improbable that the Turkish population would put up with the increasingly severe and unilateral demands and resign itself, if ultimately it were to be denied the symbolic and concrete advantages of full membership.

More fundamentally, Turkey would do well critically to assess the wider implications of pursuing membership. First of all, the EU is in great danger of becoming an obsolete model, which is incapable of addressing the current socio-economic turmoil and political disarray – unprecedented levels of unemployment in France and Germany, a concentration of poverty and inequality in Britain, the failed Constitution and growing xenophobia and racism.

Secondly, European society in general refuses to acknowledge the nature and extent of the crisis which it has faced for some time, especially an inability to say what it stands for, how it intends to live up to the principles it requires from others and what to do in the face of a widely felt spiritual and moral decline. Concomitantly, Europe is losing the respect and adherence from potential or actual candidate and accession countries, which feel betrayed because their efforts to join are met not by support and solidarity on the part of the Union but instead by hypocrisy and double standards. The result is increasing frustration and lasting alienation.

This is particularly significant for Turkey where Islam remains an important political force which refuses to accept the social and cultural loss associated with the accession process. For Turkey itself, this means nothing less than to question the legacy of Atatürk and the status of the military. Is not the personal cult of the founder of the Turkish secular Republic as reflected in history books and *de facto* restrictions to the freedom of speech incompatible not just with the Copenhagen criteria but with Turkey's own culture too? Does not the secular regime secured by the military violate the separation of power and create an elite that is increasingly disconnected from the rural population which is predominantly Muslim, conservative and stands to lose most in the adjustment process? Would Turkey not be well advised to come up with a Plan B in case that a single member state vetoes full membership? Is there not an alternative to the *status quo*, namely envisioning a socio-economic and political strategy of development that preserves and enhances Turkey's cultural specificities?

At the end of the seminar, A. Clesse asked the participants to say whether they thought Turkey might be a full member of the EU by 2020. 7 said yes, while 9 said no. S. Yenel reported the findings of a poll conducted in 2004, when 75% of the Turkish population supported accession but the same proportion thought that it would not happen. The question is how this might change after the recent decision to open formal negotiations. Public opinion in both Turkey and the EU will pay close attention to the next steps in the integration and enlargement process. Support for the Union will depend on whether the establishment in member states and at the EU-level is able to respond to the genuine needs and desires of the European citizenry, above all socio-economic security, a clearly defined political project and a cultural identity that includes rather than excludes religion.

By way of conclusion

During his stay in Antalya, A. Clesse also gave the inaugural speech at the opening of the academic year at Akdeniz University, in the presence of several hundred students and faculty. He emphasized that the EU should no longer sidestep fundamental issues like the finality of integration and enlargement as well as the spiritual and moral decay of Western societies. It should also question the assumption that Europe's future is - or ought to be - secular. Turkey

should adopt a more critical attitude vis-à-vis the legacy of Kemalism, in particular the unbroken power of the army, the personal cult of Atatürk and the marginalisation of Islam as a societal force.

The response of the students to the seminar and to the inaugural speech was overwhelming and prompted the organisers – the LIEIS and Akdeniz University – to start thinking about the possibility of future events. A conference on the Turkish societal model is envisaged for the autumn of 2006, with the participation of senior academics, policy-makers but also young scholars, intellectuals and graduate students from both Turkey and some EU member states.

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