

Butterfly Effect in Turkey-European Union Relations: Turkey's Candidacy Process

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Abstract

From the beginning up to now, Turkey – European Union (EU) relations have been quite problematic. With the Ankara Agreement signed in 1963, the relations were set on a legal basis and continued within the framework of this agreement. However, then-Prime Minister Turgut Özal applied for full membership on April 14, 1987 before reaching the final chapter and the EU-Turkey relations entered a new dimension. After the application for full membership, the EU adopted a partnership model in its relations with Turkey rather than full membership, arguing that it would be useful to sustain relations with this model in the fields of Customs Union, technical area, trade and industry. In this process, when the decision was taken at Agenda 2000 and Luxemburg Summits to negotiate with the former Eastern Bloc countries, Turkey could not even obtain candidacy status. However, Turkey suddenly gained the status of candidate country with the Helsinki Summit held in 1999. Although the capture of Abdullah Öcalan in Kenya embassy of Greece, the US pressures and many other factors such as the 1999 earthquake are stated to be effective in obtaining the candidacy status, the main factor was the correspondence between Bülent Ecevit and Gerard Schröder. After obtaining the candidacy status, the relations between the two parties considerably improved and negotiations between the EU and Turkey started on October 3, 2005. In that vein, this study is designed to elaborate on the EU-Turkey relations from the application for full membership to the process of negotiations. The study is tackled by means of the Butterfly Effect Theory and it will be revealed that simple correspondence has had a major role in the development of the relations between the two sides.

Key Words: Turkey, EU, Relations, Foreign Policy, Butterfly Effect, Candidacy Process.

Türkiye-Avrupa Birlięi İliřkilerinde Kelebek Etkisi: Türkiye'nin Adaylık Süreci

Öz

Türkiye-Avrupa Birlięi (AB) iliřkilerinde bařından sonuna kadar çeřitli sorunlar yařanmıřtır. 1963 yılında imzalanan Ankara Anlařması ile iliřkiler hukuki bir zemine oturmuř ve bu anlařma çerçevesinde iliřkiler devam etmiřtir. Ancak 14 Nisan 1987'de dönemin Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Bařbakanı Turgut Özal, son ařamaya geçmeden tam üyelik bařvurusunda bulunmuř ve iliřkiler farklı bir boyuttan devam etmiřtir. Tam üyelik bařvurusundan sonra AB, Türkiye ile iliřkilerinde tam üyelikten çok ortaklık iliřkisi üzerinden devam etmiř ve Gümrük Birlięi, teknik, ticari, sanayi alanlarında iliřkilerin sürdürülmesinin daha faydalı olacaęını söylemiřtir. Bu süreçte Gündem 2000 ve Lüksemburg Zirvelerinde Eski Doęu Bloku ülkeleri ile müzakerelere bařlama kararı alınırken Türkiye adaylık statüsünü bile alamamıřtır. Ancak 1999'da yapılan Helsinki Zirvesi ile Türkiye bir anda aday ülke statüsünü kazanmıřtır. Bu durumla ilgili olarak Abdullah Öcalan'ın Yunanistan'ın Kenya Büyükelçilięinde yakalanıřı, ABD'nin baskıları, 1999 Depremi gibi birçok unsurun adaylık statüsünün elde edilmesinde etkisi olduęu söylene de, esas unsur, Bülent Ecevit ve Gerard Schröder arasındaki mektuplařmalar olmuřtur. Adaylık statüsünden sonra da iki taraf arasındaki iliřkiler önemli ölçüde geliřmiř ve Türkiye ile AB arasında 3 Ekim 2005'te müzakereler bařlamıřtır. Bu anlamda, bu çalıřma, tam üyelik bařvurusundan müzakere sürecine kadar Türkiye-AB iliřkilerini ele almıřtır. Çalıřma, Kelebek Etkisi Yaklařımı ile ele alınmakta ve basit bir mektuplařmanın iki taraf arasındaki iliřkilerin geliřmesinde büyük rol oynadıęı ileri sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye-Avrupa Birlięi İliřkileri, Dıř Politika, Kelebek Etkisi, Adaylık Süreci

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Introduction

Starting on July 31, 1959, Turkey-EU relations were set on a legal ground with the *Ankara Agreement* signed on September 12, 1963 and thereby, official partnership relations commenced between the parties. Actually Turkey acted within the framework of Western-style foreign policy since it was founded. Turkey which has membership in international organizations such as NATO, United Nations, also want to join the EEC. Because Turkey to Western-style foreign policy has come to mean a modernization (Dedeoğlu, 2005, p. 26). In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Ankara Agreement, first a preparatory period started to regulate the relations between the parties followed by a transitional stage by means of an *Additional Protocol* (European Parliament, 1963). Starting from the last chapter, Turkey did not complete the necessary period and applied for full membership on April 14, 1987 (Sanverdi, 2010, p. 48)

After the application for full membership, the European Commission published its report related to Turkey in December 1989. Accordingly, it was stated that Turkey was not yet ready for full membership since the country was evaluated to lack adaptation to the Community in economic and political terms. In addition, it was reported that the European Union endeavored to complete its own structuring and was not prone to expansion until 1992. After this report, the EU suggested cooperation with Turkey in technical and commercial fields by means of *Customs Union* and the relations were managed under the title of partnership rather than expansion until the candidacy status was obtained. In the *Agenda 2000* report issued in 1997 and final declaration of the *Luxembourg Summit*, it was stated that Turkey was eligible for full membership, yet it was not granted the candidacy status since it was reported that the country was not ready (Aksu, 2012, p. 12).

Approximately two years after these summits, Turkey gained the status of candidate country to the EU at *Helsinki Summit* held on December 10-11, 1999. It has been propounded that Turkey obtained the candidacy status due to several reasons. Among these reasons are the fact that socialist parties came to rule in EU countries, an earthquake took place in Turkey in 1999, terrorist leader Abdullah Öcalan was arrested in Kenya Embassy of Greece, the United States (US) put pressure on the EU with regard to Turkey's membership and Ismail Cem exhibited diplomatic efforts as the Minister of Foreign Relations. On the other hand, the main determining factor here was the correspondence between Turkish and German prime ministers, Bülent Ecevit and Gerhard Schröder. While Ecevit often stated in his letters that he would take the necessary actions in order to ensure Turkey's harmonization with the EU and remove the obstacles in front of full membership, he requested non-discriminative approaches by the European countries towards Turkey. In response to Ecevit, Schröder stated that it was important to be constructive in the solution of the problems in the south-eastern part of the country as well as Cyprus issues, promising to do his best for eliminating the stagnation in the relations between the two sides. After the correspondence and mutual promises, Turkey obtained candidacy status and rapidly initiated reforms for alignment with the EU acquis. On October 3, 2005, negotiations with the EU started (Çakır, 2011, p. 68).

In this vein, this study tackles the candidacy and negotiation processes of Turkey with the EU. Within this framework, the reasons for granting candidacy status to Turkey at the Helsinki Summit will be evaluated through the butterfly effect approach. In this context, it will be demonstrated in the study that the secret correspondence between Bülent Ecevit and Gerhard Schröder paved the way for the candidacy status, and the relations developed by creating *butterfly effect* by means of such simple correspondence, lead to the initiation of the negotiation process in 2005

The Butterfly Effect Approach

Related to the *Chaos Theory*, one of Edward Norton Lorenz's studies, butterfly effect is that small changes in the initial data of a system can have large and unpredictable results. This approach by Lorenz is famous with his example about weather conditions. Accordingly, a butterfly flapping wings in the Amazon Forests might lead to a storm breaking in the United States or the formation of a tornado that can travel half of the world (Harpern, 2019). The reason that butterfly effect is named after this expression is due to the fact that the shapes and graphs prepared by Lorenz related to his mathematical analyses resemble a butterfly. This theory, which is a hypothesis of physics, is rarely applied in social sciences. Based on human beings, social sciences have a different set of application areas evaluating impact mechanisms in individual, cultural and social areas than that of mathematical sciences where impact mechanisms are filtered through different processes. However, natural events can be explained by individual observation

and experimentation and social sciences might bear certain similarities with mathematical sciences at this stage, while these two processes can meet in common ground through quantum mechanics (Ghys, 2019).

Although this approach advocates the use of mathematics and physics to understand the increasingly complex structure of international relations, it is often discussed in practice through social phenomena. Not being used in social sciences, this theory can be beneficial, though, in explaining the internal changes in countries within different power blocs. Yet, there are not many studies on this subject in the field of international relations, which accepts human and social sciences as its main research area with its content. According to this approach of butterfly effect, the existence of many different variables can cause an event, while small effects can lead to major changes as the outcome of events (Kissane, 2010, p. 18).

In this line, this theory is based on economic imperialism and asserts that the main purpose of the aid to underdeveloped countries is to get the poor nations into the economic grip of the country that provides the aid. In accordance with this argument, it is based on the view that the US and the European Union member countries have not lost their force that has been providing them with colonial power. As a matter of fact, there is great political control of the colonial states over the independent Latin American, African and Asian countries today. Colonial states do not establish such a control by announcing their political decisions publicly but by applying economic pressure and using their superior marketing power in favor of rich countries in international trade. From this perspective, many unrelated or meaningless events and indicators in the international arena can be explained by this theory which can be called as chaotic dependence as well. In the light of this information, chaotic dependence theory suggests that systematically created irregularity and confusion will ultimately produce a result that will serve the interests of the institution or country that made the initial impact. This is defined as the order-making power of chaos, resulting in interdependence that ultimately favors the creator of the chaos (Brooking Institute, 2011, p. 23).

In this context, it can be observed that the highly integrated world financial system has increased the importance of the economic dimension in international relations. However, foreign aid such as economic program support provided by the developed Western countries to developing countries with political and humanitarian purposes cause chronic foreign trade deficits and short-term foreign fund influx among many irregularities while providing economic benefits to the related country. This can have an impact on the borrowing country as well as the lending or investing country. The results of process analysis in this regard indicate that these developments may have an impact on developed countries with the butterfly effect in the global international relations system. Indeed, relations between countries in the global area have moved out of the conventional socio-economic area and started to include the internet-based social media as well. By the effect of this development, the concept of citizenship has also moved out of the limitations of cultural codes organized within country borders and turned into an understanding of individuals endowed with common political and cultural thoughts in the world. Thus, any citizen of any Western country can express their thoughts, opinions and actions about the developments in developing countries. As a matter of fact, new communication technologies inside and outside the country have opened a new window, especially in countries that are affected by the Arab Spring. As the control of the means of conventional media in countries such as Egypt and Tunisia prevented them from performing their traditional democratic functions, the use of social media and particularly Facebook and Twitter as well as video call by mobile phones enabled sharing of the developments in these countries with thousands of people. Indeed, authoritarian governments that had ruled these countries for many years were overthrown for the first time by movements that originated from social media to bring democracy (Schattle, 2012, p. 54; İkiz, 2015, p. 60).

In this context, the wave of changes in the Arab world that emerged from the movements beginning in Tunisia in November 2010 is referred to as the Arab Spring. In fact, a discourse saying that 'spring would arrive in Europe' in Marxist writings by a revolutionary content can also be attributed to the developments in the Arab world with a rapid change across these countries. From this perspective, this process generally arose in the regimes governed by the republican mode and democracy. This interaction, which may well be called as power dissemination, can be used to explain the social media-supported radical changes in Arab spring countries. Nevertheless, this quantum mechanics developed in the opposite direction with butterfly effect and influenced culturally and economically hegemonic states as well (Ramadan, 2010, p. 18).

A similar example can be seen in the US-China relations. In that, President of the United States in 1968, Richard Nixon changed the country's Asian policy and he said that dialogue should be established with China in his first statement on the new Asian strategy. This constructive approach by Nixon was welcomed in China and the Beijing government invited the American table tennis team to Beijing in 1971, which was later referred to as *ping-pong diplomacy* in the history of international relations. Furthermore, the relations between the two countries gained momentum with the American team participating in the tournament in April 1971 (Hong and Sun, 2010, p. 432).

The American team was received on April 14 by Chinese Prime Minister Chu En Lai. In addition, Nixon announced that "he lifted the trade embargo that had been applied against China for 20 years". Thanks to these developments, the relations between China and the US became milder. On the other hand, while the People's Republic of China was admitted to the UN on October 25, 1971, Taiwan (nationalist China) was removed from membership. President Nixon's visit to Beijing was the most important development after the start of ping-pong diplomacy between the US and China. Nixon went to China in 1972 and opened a new chapter in international politics. Nixon's meeting with Mao Tse-Tung in Beijing was also important in terms of the balances formed during the Cold War. As matter of fact, this situation meant disruption of balances for the bipolar world order that was dominant during that time. Zhaohui and Sun explained this with a butterfly effect and stated that a small ping-pong ball contributed greatly to the development of relations between the two countries (Strother, 2016, p. 4).

Within the framework of these developments, it is also possible to explain the relations between Turkey and the EU as well as Turkey's obtaining of candidacy status through the butterfly effect approach. In this regard, the relations were evaluated within the scope of partnership rather than membership after Turkey's application for full membership in 1987. Rather than membership, cooperation in the fields of Customs Union, technical area and trade was prioritized. It was therefore stated in the Agenda 2000 Report in 1997 and the Luxemburg Summit that Turkey was eligible for candidacy, yet the country was not yet ready. In response, Turkey suspended its political relations with the EU for a year. Later, Turkey obtained candidacy status at Helsinki Summit held on December 10-11, 1999 following the correspondence between Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. Upon this development, the relations between the two sides unexpectedly improved and negotiations with Turkey started on October 3, 2005. The following chapter of the study will further elaborate on the negotiation processes between Turkey and the EU

Turkey-EU Relations from the Application for Full Membership to the Customs Union

Turkey applied for full EU membership after a letter was signed by Turgut Özal on April 14, 1987 and submitted by the Minister of State Ali Bozer to the EU term president Leo Tindemans and President of the Commission Jacques Delors. From an economic point of view, full membership was regarded to be the solution for revitalization of the ruptured relations by the effect of the adoption of the fourth financial protocol and free movement of workers. From this perspective, Özal aspired to benefit from the advantages of the EU by applying for full membership. From political point of view, on the other hand, full membership of Turkey to the EU was deemed important as a natural consequence of the country's Westernization efforts. Furthermore, Greece was a full member to the union and was involved in the decision-making mechanism of the EU. By this effect, Greece was observed to carry the bilateral problems with Turkey to the EU. Therefore, full membership was necessary for Turkey to ensure equality. As a result, Turkey applied for EU membership as per Article 237 of the *Treaty of Rome*. Özal aimed with this application to re-develop the relations and eliminate the trade imbalances in the country by joining the *Single Market* (Kunilholm, 2001, p. 27). Although he did not welcome this movement, the European Commission President Leo Tindemans accepted the application and confined himself to state that Turkey applied for full membership in accordance with Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome, Article 98 of the *European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) Agreement* and Article 205 of the *European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) Agreement*. Indeed, the EU believed it was too early for Turkey to apply for full membership as there was a need to accelerate the democratization efforts within the framework of lifting political bans and promoting human rights in order to consider full membership application (Usul, 2011, p. 72). In this context, the EU Council of Ministers referred the application to the European Commission to express its opinion on the matter on April 27, 1987. Thus, the process officially started in accordance with the procedures. However, the initiation of the official process brought along deep debates on whether Turkey would be accepted as a full member to the EU. Even if the process started in official

terms, it clearly revealed a contrast due to economic, cultural and religious differences. Delors stated that he was against Turkey's full membership due to economic reasons in addition to cultural and religious differences, making the relations enter into a stalemate (Kabaalioglu, 1999, p. 115). Moreover, the EU public opinion exhibited negative attitudes towards Turkey's full EU membership despite varying approaches. While countries such as Greece, Denmark and Germany viewed this application as unfavorable, those who did not take such a clear attitude as United Kingdom and France found the application timeless and did not provide direct support to Turkey in this process (Aybey, 2004, p. 23).

In the meantime, Özal stated that the Ottoman Empire followed a Western policy as of its last period and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk also adopted a foreign policy understanding oriented towards the West after establishing the Republic of Turkey. Further uttering that Turkey put great efforts to sustain its foreign policies based on the West by means of numerous reforms and amendments, Özal argued that although there were deficiencies and gaps, Turkey was ruled by a democratic regime, had a secular system, adopted liberal economy in the 1980s, prepared itself for the competition conditions of the EU and thus, the EU should accept Turkey as a full member. According to him, Turkey was an indispensable country for Western Europe's security due to its geopolitical location as well as possession of important sea areas, rich oil and natural gas resources (Ataman, 2002, p. 130).

While debates continued around these issues, the European Commission announced its opinion on Turkey's application for full membership on December 18, 1989. According to this opinion announced by Abel Matutes, the Commission welcomed Turkey's application positively, yet it believed that Turkey would bring a considerable burden to the EU's organizational, political and economic structure and this would lead to a major obstacle for the EU's efforts to become a complete union. Furthermore, he stated that Turkey's large geographical area and growing population would complicate the already-complex structure of the EU decision-making mechanism. At the same time, he said that Turkey was not ready to grasp full membership to the EU while uttering that a new expansion movement would harm the EU before becoming a fully-fledged union until the year 1992. On the grounds of this argument, Abel Matutes explained that neither Turkey nor the EU was ready for such an expansion, exhibiting a negative attitude towards Turkey's application. He, also, stated that Turkey needed support in order to prepared for full membership to the EU in political and economic terms, therefore the EU would provide the necessary support in the preparatory process. In other words, the EU neither opened nor closed the door to Turkey for full membership with this report, and the process was left to open-ended negotiations that would take place over time (Commission of the European Communities, 1989). Moreover, the report had expressions promoting partnership relations rather than Turkey's full membership. From this perspective, the EU projected Turkey as a partner who would be half inside, half outside, implementing the relevant EU policies but not having a place in the EU decision-making mechanism. In this sense, the report underscored certain steps to improve Customs Union relations, technical exchange and financial relations between the two sides rather than promoting full membership. While the EU did not want to accept Turkey as a full member, they were hesitant to directly admit this to Turkey (Bolkestein, 2004, p. 241). So far, such a proposal has not been formally offered to Turkey by any institution of the EU. Although not any official report or document referred to such an offer, Turkey was never evaluated under the title of expansion by the EU starting from the early 1990s up to 1999 when Turkey obtained approval for its candidacy status. Instead, Turkey was always evaluated under the title of foreign relations rather than expansion and under this title, only several formulas to develop partnership relations with Turkey were elaborated (European Commission, 1997).

In this context, Abel Matutes was assigned to prepare another report and on June 12, 1990, the "Matutes Package" was published. This package envisioned implementation of the fourth financial package, cooperation in the fields of industry and technology as well as politics and culture and ensuring Customs Union between Turkey and the EU (Arıkan, 2006: 72). In this sense, the Matutes Package could not go beyond repeating the Commission's view given in 1989 (Faucompret and Konings, 2008, p. 31).

In the meantime, the Cold War started to end throughout the world and the Eastern Bloc began to disintegrate. This development increased Turkey's geopolitical significance as Turkey was regarded as a model with its democratic and liberal economy for the states escaping communism and seeking a new order. Furthermore, Turkey's stance during the Gulf Crisis and the US intervention in August 1990 made it an indispensable ally for the US at the very least. The US had even stated that it would provide Turkey the necessary support for its EU membership negotiations (Aliřoglu, 2012, p. 4).

However, the EU did not show much of a positive attitude towards developing relations with Turkey other than the development of the Customs Union. The EU did not provide economic aid to Turkey, either. Nevertheless, Özal made great effort to revive the partnership relations with the Union. For instance, he mentioned Turkey's role during the Gulf Crisis at the Western European Union (WEU) meeting in Paris, underlying that the EU needed Turkey (Danforth, 2008, p. 86). In addition to this, he stated that the EU needed to be understanding while admitting that Turkey had certain deficiencies and a long way to go. As a matter of fact, he emphasized that Turkey had been a member to all the European organizations established after 1945. Hence, he argued that Turkey should also be a full member to the EU. In fact, it can be purported that Turkey thought the Gulf Crisis would yield similar results to those of the Korean War. As Turkey was granted membership to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) after the Korean War, it was expected to become a full member of the EU after the Gulf Crisis. In spite of this expectation, no results were obtained after the crisis since the EU did not want to expand towards the Middle East. In this sense, the Gulf Crisis weakened its hand compared to the Korean War (Kirişçi, 2006, p. 11).

After the Gulf Crisis, elections were held in Turkey and the Anavatan Party lost the ruling power, while Süleyman Demirel came to power again. In the new government program, the role of Turkey in Central Asia and Caucasus was underlined, and it was stated that the relations with the EU would continue and no other option than full membership would be considered (Martin, 2015, p. 23). Since the new government knew that full membership was not possible in a short time, they preferred to reach full membership by improving the existing relations with the EU. At the same time, the new Turkish government asked for help from the EU in terms of not leaving Turkey in uncertainty. Upon this development, Great Britain, France and Germany took a positive approach towards this call by Turkey since they accepted that Turkey was an important country for Europe, realizing Turkey's effort to be European and its new role in international relations. As a matter of fact, Turkey became a model country for the Middle Eastern countries. Thus, it was considered wiser to improve relations rather than freezing them in order to eliminate the deficiencies in the fields of democracy and human rights (Öniş, 2014, p. 117). In this regard, an association council meeting was held on September 30, 1991, where the Customs Union was brought to the agenda, and it was decided to establish sub-committees to solve the existing problems between the parties. Furthermore, on January 21, 1992, the European Commission submitted a work program to Turkey. This report included policies necessary to actualize the Customs Union as well as steps to be taken to establish cooperation in the fields of industry, technology, communication and social policies (Kunilholm, 2001, p. 28).

Meanwhile, the *Maastricht Treaty* was signed on February 7, 1992 after the Maastricht Summit held on December 9-10, 1991 and the name of the Community changed to the EU, while it expanded its field of activity. In addition, the EU adopted a new political structure including common policies in the areas of monetary union, foreign policy, security, justice and domestic affairs among the member states. At the same time, Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome was amended with this treaty and the approval of the European Parliament was started to be sought for membership. On the other hand, the Western European Union (WEU), which was not a part of the EU in the past, became an implementer of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Yet, in this case, Turkey was left out of the decision-making process of the WEU (Arkan, 2006, p. 75).

On the other hand, Turkey was at the top of the agenda at the Lisbon Summit in 1992, which resulted in a final declaration with a decision to establish the highest level of political relations with Turkey. For this purpose, it was decided to establish Customs Union in order to build solid relations with Turkey, however, financial aid was removed from the agenda due to the Greek veto (Hillion, 2010, p. 20-22). When it came to March 18, 1993, the *Customs Union Steering Committee* was established in order to discuss negotiations pertaining to the Customs Union as well as its implementation. As mentioned before, Turkey was not evaluated under the title of expansion, but under the title of foreign relations, while full membership was not referred at all. Rather, an approach was adopted to develop and sustain relations within the scope of a partnership model. This summit paved the way for an expansion that would include Central and Eastern European countries. Moreover, Copenhagen Criteria were accepted at this summit to determine the economic and political conditions stipulated for countries that applied to the EU for membership in addition to harmonization criteria to the *acquis* (European Commission, 1993). Although this summit yielded negative results for full membership of Turkey, it paved the way for positive developments for the formation of the Customs Union. While dealing with Central and Eastern European

countries on the one hand, the EU included Turkey in the Customs Union on the other hand aiming at keeping Turkey within Europe but excluding it from the decision-making mechanism of the EU. By this means, the EU endeavored to prevent any structural problem that could have been posed by Turkey. Therefore, the union aspired to develop the Customs Union instead of granting Turkey full membership and spread the partnership relations. Upon these endeavors, the Association Council decided on November 8, 1993 to establish the Customs Union by the end of 1995. At the 36th meeting of the Association Council held in Brussels on March 6, 1995; it was decided to establish the Customs Union with the adoption of Decision 1/95 (SPO, 1993).

Turkey-EU Relations from the Customs Union to the Candidacy Process

The establishment of the Customs Union (Eralp, 2000, p. 1) was welcomed with great enthusiasm in Turkish public opinion, stating that the Turkish society was European and therefore, positive pictures were drawn for the future of the society. In this vein, scholars mostly referred to revival of the relations which were interrupted in the 1980s as well as togetherness with the West rather than signing a treaty. Indeed, the Customs Union was considered important for Turkey to revive the relations with the EU since there had been no progress in the relations after the Commission Report in 1989, while the Customs Union manifested a certain level of revival in Turkey-EU relations (Kramer, 1996, p. 68-70). Additionally, Turkey believed that the Customs Union was a formula to accelerate its process of full membership. However, the decision did not contribute to the Ankara Agreement, the Additional Protocol or the 1989 Commission Report. In all resolutions, it was stated that Turkey was capable of full membership, yet the issue remained vague. In other words, the related decision was limited to the Customs Union only. Nobody regarded the Customs Union as an instrument for the EU. For instance, the President of the European Parliament, Klaus Hansch, saw the Customs Union as neither the last destination of relations nor as a step towards full membership (Maresceau, 2006, p. 330).

On January 29, 1997, a meeting was held with Turkey, Germany, Italy, Great Britain, Spain and France where Turkey demanded full membership to the EU, while other EU member countries asserted that it would be challenging for the EU to expand at that moment, thus they recommended developing the relations with Turkey within the framework of the Customs Union. Similarly, there was an objection to Turkey's candidacy in the meeting held with Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Belgium and Luxembourg Christian Parties on March 4, 1997. According to the participants of this meeting, Europe had a Christian tradition. Thus, they did not want Muslim Turkey and Asian Russia in this structure (Archick, 2004, p. 3-4). They argued that the EU would be harmed in case Turkey and Russia joined the union. Although it was stated in the report entitled "Communication on the Further Development of Relations with Turkey" published on July 15, 1997 that Turkey was capable of full membership to the EU having the same standards with the other applying countries, it was concluded that there were close relations with the EU and Turkey by means of the Customs Union, thus, it was necessary to sustain the Customs Union, which would increase political and economic development. Other than this, there was no mention of full membership. However, the EU was reluctant to leave Turkey completely outside Europe due to the importance of economic relations established by the Customs Union with Turkey (Rumford, 2002, p. 38). In this vein, it is observed that this supra-national structure sometimes takes decisions parallel to the states, which determine a foreign policy according to their internal political structure, leaders' attitudes, economic factors and the public opinion. In other words, states have sometimes influenced the supra-national structure with their decisions. This can be seen, for example, in a report of the EU Council of Ministers on July 16, 1997, referred to as the "Agenda 2000" as a result of a meeting on the future of European enlargement (Rumford, 2002, p. 38).

The report envisaged the Central and Eastern European countries and Cyprus to become full members in the 2000s in two groups (Narbone and Tocci, 2005, p. 5-6) according to their ability to comply with the Copenhagen Criteria (European Commission, 1997). According to the Agenda 2000 report, Turkey was left out of these groups and pushed aside due to the political situation in the country. For this reason, Turkey was given space under the title of Foreign Relations instead of enlargement. In this line, although Turkey made great achievements in terms of the EU acquis, problems continued in economic and political areas, thus it was to be excluded from the EU's expansion policy. This report was also discussed at the Luxembourg Summit on December 10-12, 1997 and the conclusion was that Turkey was eligible for full membership, yet the country needed to follow a different method to prepare for full membership (Archick, 2004, p. 4). Correspondingly, a new chapter was opened entitled "European

Strategy for Turkey". Accordingly, Turkey was invited to the European Conference where the member countries were to participate, however, it was stipulated for participation in the conference to fulfill the obligations of solving inter-country problems via peaceful methods at La Haye International Court of Justice, compliance with the principle of good neighbor relations, solving problems in accordance with international law and respecting each other's territorial integrity and political independence (European Parliament, 1997). In this context, Turkey was excluded from the Luxemburg Summit due to the Imia or Kardak Crisis with Greece in 1996. Greece claimed within the scope of the Kardak Crisis that Turkey followed expansionist policies in the Aegean Sea and moved this issue to the EU organs. As a matter of fact, Greece paved the way for the decision at the EU Council of Ministers' meeting on July 24, 1996 that Turkey was responsible for the crisis and that the two countries needed to apply the La Haye International Court of Justice (ICJ) for the resolution of the problem. Furthermore, Greece used its veto power at every opportunity after this decision in order to hinder any progress in Turkey-EU relations. On the other hand, Turkey stated on December 14, 1997 that it found the EU's stance biased and discriminatory, reiterating that Turkey's aim was full membership and in case the EU did not fulfill its obligations required by the nature of bilateral relations, not any issue would be raised in the EU process except the relations with the EU. In other words, Turkey underscored the fact that problems with Greece and particularly the Cyprus issue were in the sphere of its domestic affairs, therefore, they would not be taken on the agenda with the EU (Müftüler-Baç, 2000, p. 493). At the same time, Turkey notified that it would not participate in the European Conference, which was to be held on March 12, 1998 in London, emphasizing that whether the relations would revive depended on the EU's efforts (Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 1997). Hence, it can be stated that Turkey shaped its attitude towards the EU in accordance with its capacity and gains.

Following the Luxemburg Summit, the EU-Turkey relations entered a period of stagnation and no other institution in Turkey than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was interested in the EU. In the same vein, nothing had been made by the EU except the decisions taken at the Luxembourg Summit. An important development during this period was the "*European Strategy for Turkey*" prepared on March 4, 1998 with an objective to develop relations with Turkey and deepen the work of the Customs Union. Besides, Turkey wanted to participate in various EU programs and re-regulate the *Financial Report IV* which was prevented due to the Greek veto in the 1980s, yet it could not achieve any success (Commission of the European Communities, 1998).

After the Luxemburg Summit, a softer approach was exhibited towards the participation of Turkey to the EU expansion process at the Cardiff Summit held on June 15-16, 1998. In that, instead of the concept of "*eligible for membership*", the concept of "*candidate for membership*" was started to be used (European Commission, 1998a) In the meantime, the Commission published a Progress Report on Turkey referring to criticisms in terms of political criteria due to deficiencies in human rights (European Commission, 1998b) On the other hand, Turkey stated that the relations with the EU started to improve since the union saw Turkey among 12 candidate countries and that the developments were satisfactory. After the Cardiff Summit, other summits were held in Vienna and Cologne, yet Turkey's candidacy was not approved in either of these summits.

While Great Britain and France exhibited positive approach in these summits towards forming a draft resolution pertaining to Turkey's candidacy, the result was negative due to the effect of countries such as Greece in addition to the lack of any positive result in the Progress Report published in 1999. Hence, Turkey maintained its attitude adopted after the Luxemburg Summit. However, in the overall conclusion of the summit, the Commission evaluated every point with regard to Turkey and the EU Council of Ministers also advised granting Turkey the candidate status. As a result, Turkey became a candidate country at the *Helsinki Summit* held on December 10-11, 1999 (G7 Information Centre, 1999).

Turkey's Candidacy Process and Relations with the EU

Many different reasons are put forward for the acceptance of Turkey as a candidate country for the EU. It is argued that since the Greens and Social Democrats came to rule in Germany after Christian Democrats lost power affected this process as the new partners of the governing power were leaning towards Turkey's full membership in the EU. In addition, some purport that the earthquake on December 17, 1999 was effective in obtaining this status, while others state it was with the effect of arresting Abdullah Öcalan at Greek embassy in Kenya. Some advocate the idea that there were various reasons for this candidate status such as realizing the importance of Turkey in terms of the conflicts in the Balkans and the US support to Turkey for full membership (Kubicek, 2001, p. 40). However, these claims are

completely unrealistic. The real reason underlying the acceptance of Turkey as a candidate for full membership in 1999 is the correspondence between Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. In this correspondence starting on May 26, 1999, Ecevit uttered for the first time that Turkey was aware of the conditions for full membership and *Copenhagen Criteria*, he thanked to Schröder for Germany's supports to Turkey. Ecevit stated that if Germany supports to Turkey's candidacy process, he promised democratic and social reforms as well as correction of the relations with Greece. On the other hand, In addition to 'candidate', Ecevit requested the Cologne Summit to have a 'road map' addressed by Finland during the presidency. At the same time a new beginning could be realized in this way between the EU and Turkey it underlined. Ecevit stressed that Turkey does not accept the EU's discriminatory behavior and has sought support. Ecevit letter, giving him a clear perspective if Turkey, which fulfills the criteria for membership in the EU is open to inspection is the manifestation. In addition to meeting these conditions, Ecevit stated that the relations between Turkey and the EU would normalize only when the EU took certain steps. In response, Schröder primarily mentioned important points for Turkey. According to Schroeder, Turkey is ready to fulfill the conditions of membership. For this, he wants a road map from the EU. And it should be studied on the spirit of trust between the EU and Turkey. In addition, the quest to solve problems in Southeast Anatolia is very important. Schröder found significant that Turkey explained that it is ready with the softening in Greece. He stated that he hopes that this approach will have a positive impact on Cyprus and the Aegean. He promised that he would do the best as he could in order to overcome the bottleneck in case Turkey ensured improvement in these important areas (Hürriyet, 1999) In line with these mutual promises, Turkey was granted the candidate status at the Helsinki Summit (Tanlak, 2002, p. 4-5).

Despite occasional problems, Turkey's candidacy was approved at the summit. Following the Helsinki Summit, the "Millennium Declaration" was published, which included new steps in enlargement, new EU institutions that were effective and reformed, a strong CFSP and a competitive economy. In addition, it was stated that all candidates were equal, and disputes would be solved peacefully in accordance with the UN Treaty. Article 12 of the Declaration was related to Turkey. Accordingly, the EU Council of Ministers stated that they were satisfied with the positive Progress Report on Turkey published by the Commission, referring to various reforms as well as the good-faith attitude exhibited by Turkey. Therefore, the Council decided that Turkey became a candidate to join the EU, like other candidates. In this regard, Turkey would benefit from the Pre-Accession Strategy, as the other candidates, and this strategy included human rights and compliance with the political criteria given in paragraph in the fourth and ninth articles. Besides, Turkey would participate in EU programs and meetings, and prepare to comply with the economic obligations and the *acquis* (Tanlak, 2002, p. 6).

After acquiring the candidate status, on March 8, 2000, Turkey prepared an "*Accession Partnership Document*" for compliance with the EU as its homework, and this document was approved by the EU Council of Ministers at the summit held in December 2000 in Nice (Official Journal of the European Communities, 2001). The aim of the Accession Partnership Document (APD) was to determine the priority areas for compliance with political and economic criteria and the EU *acquis* in its preparation process as well as the financial and technical support to be provided by the EU in harmonization processes. This document divided obligations into three periods as short, medium and long-term priorities.

A "*National Program*" was prepared in Turkey on March 26, 2001 in accordance with this document and Turkey endeavored to fulfil the necessary obligations. For instance, seven "*Harmonization Packages*" were drafted between 2002 and 2004. However, it was stated in the 2001 Progress Report that Turkey needed to get over more ground although the country showed improvement in certain areas. Meanwhile, the government changed in Turkey on November 3, 2002 and the Justice and Development Party came to rule. This government continued the implementation of new harmonization packages. On the other hand, the Copenhagen Summit was held in December 12-13, 2002 and it was stated that Turkey was not yet ready for full membership. Nevertheless, the EU uttered that Turkey should continue its reforms and if the Commission decided in its report and advised that Turkey met the political requirements of the Copenhagen Criteria, the EU would start the accession negotiations with Turkey without delay (European Commission, 2002). At the Copenhagen Summit, it was also decided to develop and deepen the Customs Union. Besides, the EU prepared a new Accession Partnership Document on April 14, 2003 which was adopted by the Council of Ministers on May 19, 2003 (Official Journal of the European Union, 2003). In this line, the developments and harmonization studies identified in the Progress Report with the

Accession Partnership Document were tried to be updated. Subsequently, a National Program was discussed in the Council of Ministers on June 23, 2003 and came into force on July 24, 2003 (Official Gazzette, 2003).

While Cyprus was referred to as a major obstacle to Turkey's full membership to the EU, three documents were prepared and submitted on October 6, 2004 with regard to Turkey: "*Recommendations*", "*Progress Report*" and "*Impact Report*" (Eur-Lex, 2003). Stating according to the Recommendations that Turkey exhibited significant progress in the last five years comprehensive constitutional and legal changes, the Commission concluded that Turkey met the necessary political criteria for accession and recommended opening of the negotiations (Eur-Lex, 2004).

In the 2004 Progress Report, on the other hand, it was stated that there would be permanent regulations with regard to free movement of persons and the process of negotiations would be ambiguous and open-ended for Turkey (European Commission, 2004a). The Impact Report (*Issues Arising from Turkey's Membership Perspective*), on the other hand, was essentially demanded by the European Parliament (EP). This report was prepared by the Commission upon the recommendation of the EP in March 2004 to conduct a study on the possible effects of Turkey's accession in the EU. It was accepted in the report that Turkey was a country that should not be neglected in the global system although it had certain problems and it was suggested that the EU should not underestimate Turkey if it aspired to become a global actor (Commission of the European Communities, 2004). Upon all these developments, the EU convened on December 15, 2004, giving a positive decision on Turkey with its recommendation to start negotiations. At the summit held on December 16-17, 2004, it was decided to determine the starting date of the negotiations as October 3, 2005 (European Commission, 2004b) Therefore, it can be clearly observed that the relations between the two sides developed unexpectedly after the correspondence between Bülent Ecevit and Gerhard Schröder.

Conclusion

From the onset of the relations between Turkey and the EU, there have always been certain fluctuations between the two sides. Following several efforts, the relations were set on a legal ground with the Ankara Agreement. However, the bilateral relations between Turkey and the EU have been significantly affected by the inadequate Turkish economy as well as military coups and political instabilities in the country. Coming to power after the elections held following the coup on September 12, 1980, Turgut Ozal believed that Turkey should be an EU member and applied for full membership on April 14, 1987. After this application, on December 18, 1989, the European Commission reported that Turkey was not yet ready for full membership and therefore, it would be more useful to enhance cooperation in technical and commercial fields as well as the Customs Union.

From this date until when the candidacy status was granted, no document issued by the European Union evaluated Turkey under The title of expansion. Rather, Turkey was tackled under the title of foreign relations in several documents. Furthermore, the European Union emphasized partnership relations rather than full membership. According to the Agenda 2000 Report prepared in 1997, EU candidate countries shall adopt democracy and the rule of law as a basis; accept political pluralism, the right to vote and to be elected, freedom of expression, freedom of religion at the constitutional level; be a party to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; remove obstacles in front of individual application to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR); be a party to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and form economic structures that are compliant with the EU's competition, economic and financial policies. The report also envisaged the Central and Eastern European countries and Cyprus to become full members in the 2000s in two groups according to their ability to comply with the Copenhagen Criteria. However, Turkey was excluded from this scope due to its political and economic situation. This report was also discussed at the Luxembourg Summit on December 10-12, 1997 and it was concluded that Turkey was eligible for full membership, yet the country needed to follow a different method to prepare for full membership. Therefore, a new chapter was opened under the title of "European Strategy for Turkey".

Although the relations between the two sides deteriorated during this process and Turkey was excluded from several initiatives, the country gained the candidate country status at the Helsinki Summit held on December 10-12, 1999. Although various reasons have been propounded for Turkey's obtaining of candidacy status such as the fact that an earthquake took place in Turkey in 1999, Ismail Cem exhibited

great diplomatic efforts as the Minister of Foreign Relations, the US put pressure on the EU with regard to Turkey's membership, and socialist parties came to rule in EU countries, the real reason was the correspondence between Bülent Ecevit and Gerhard Schröder. In this study, this process was tackled with the Butterfly Effect approach. In that, a small piece of paper led to unexpected and unforeseen events in the process of Turkey's full EU membership at a time when the desired result could not be obtained. As a matter of fact, the relations between the two parties started to improve after the concerned correspondence and Turkey became a candidate country for the EU. In the following periods, it was seen that Turkey met the majority of the political requirements in the Copenhagen Criteria by means of several reforms and practices, paving the way for setting a starting date for the negotiations as October 3, 2005. Starting the negotiations, it can be concluded that the correspondence between Ecevit and Schröder created butterfly effect and triggered a new period in the relations between the EU and Turkey.

Ethical Declaration

In the writing process of the study titled "*Butterfly Effect in Turkey-European Union Relations: Turkey's Candidacy Process*", there were followed the scientific, ethical and the citation rules; was not made any falsification on the collected data and this study was not sent to any other academic media for evaluation.

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TÜRKÇE GENİŐ ÖZET

Edward N. Lorenz'in alıřmalarından birisi olan Kaos Teorisi ile ilgili olan kelebek etkisi, bir sistemin bařlangıç verilerindeki küçük deęiřikliklerin büyük ve öngörülemez sonuçlar doğurabilmesidir. Lorenz'in bu yaklaşımı Amazon Ormanlarında bir kelebeğin kanat çırpmasının, ABD'de fırtına kopmasına, bir kelebeğin kanat çırpması, Dünyanın yarısını dolařabilecek bir kasırganın oluşmasına neden olacağına dair sözlerle literatürdeki yerini almıřtır. Kelebek etkisinin bu isimle anılmasının nedeni Lorenz'in bu alıřması esnasında matematik özömlerle ilgili hazırladığı Őekil ve grafiklerinin bir kelebeęe benzemesindedir.

Uluslararası İliřkiler alanında ok fazla kullanılmayan Kelebek Etkisi, Őu ana deęin Arap Baharı, in ile ABD arasındaki iliřkileri, küresel ekonomik krizi açıklamak için kullanılmıřtır. Türkiye ile AB arasındaki iliřkilerin gelişmesini ve Türkiye'nin adaylık statüsünü elde etmesini de kelebek etkisiyle açıklamak mümkündür. 14 Nisan 1987'de Türkiye, AB'ye tam üyelik başvurusunda bulunmuřtur. Ekonomik açıdan bakıldığında dördüncü mali protokolün kabulü ve işilerin serbest dolařımı nedeniyle tıkanan iliřkilerin yeniden canlandırılmasının tam üyelik başvurusuyla olacağı düşünölmüřtür. Tam üyelik başvurusuyla Özal, AB'nin avantajlarından faydalanmak istemiřtir. Siyasi açıdan ise Türkiye'nin Batılılaşmasının doğal sonucu olarak AB'ye tam üyelik önemli olmuřtur. Diđer yandan Yunanistan'ın tam üyelięi ve AB'nin karar alma mekanizmasında yer alması, Yunanistan'ın ikili sorunları AB'ye taşınması eřitlięi saęlamak için AB'ye tam üyelięi gerekli kılmıřtır.

18 Aralık 1989'da Avrupa Komisyonu Türkiye'nin tam üyelik başvurusuna iliřkin görüşünü açıklamıřtır. Bu görüşe göre Komisyon, Türkiye'nin başvurusunu olumlu karřlamakla birlikte, Türkiye'nin AB'nin kurumsal, siyasi ve ekonomik yapısına önemli bir yük getireceęi ve bu durumun AB'nin tam bir birlik olma yönünde yaptığı alıřmalara ve abalara büyük oranda engel olacağı, Türkiye'nin geniş coęrafi alanı ve büyüyen nüfusu yüzünden zaten karmařık olan AB karar-alma yapısında daha fazla karmařaya sebep olacağını belirtmiřtir. Aynı zamanda AB'nin Türkiye'nin tam üyelięini hazmedecek durumda olmadığını söylemiş ve 1992 yılına kadar tam anlamıyla bir birlik olmadan yeni bir genişlemenin AB'ye zarar vereceęi gerekçesiyle ne Türkiye'nin ne de AB'nin böyle bir genişlemeye hazır olduğunu söyleyerek Türkiye'nin başvurusu geri çevirmiřtir.

Bu raporda Türkiye'nin tam üyelięine yönelik ifadelerden ok ortaklık iliřkisi üzerinden iliřkilerin devam etmesi yönünde bir durum ortaya çıkmıřtır. Yani Türkiye, yarı içeride yarı dıřarıda söz konusu politikaları uygulayan ama karar alma mekanizmasında yer almayan bir ortak olarak düşünölmüřtür. Bu anlamda tam üyelikten ok Gümrük Birlięi, teknik ve mali iliřkileri geliştirme yönünde adımlar atılması üzerinde durulmuřtur. Yani AB bir yandan Türkiye'yi tam üye olarak kabul etmek istememiş diđer yandan ise bu durumu Türkiye'ye doğrudan söylemekten de ekinmiřtir. AB'nin hiçbir kurumunda Türkiye'ye yönelik resmi olarak böyle bir öneri teklif edilmemiřtir. Hiçbir resmi rapor ya da belgede öneriye dair bir atf bulunmamasına rağmen 1990'ların bařından 1999 yılında Türkiye'nin adaylık statüsünün onaylanmasına kadar geen süre içinde Türkiye hiçbir belgede genişleme bařlıęı altında ele alınmamış, dıř iliřkiler bařlıęı altında yer almıřtır. Türkiye de tam üyelik için Gümrük Birlięi'ni bir basamak olarak görmüş ve Gümrük Birlięi'ni gerçekleřtirmeye odaklanmıřtır. 6 Mart 1995'te yapılan 1/95 Sayılı Ortaklık Konseyi Kararıyla Gümrük Birlięi gerekleřtirilmiřtir.

Gümrük Birlięi Türk kamuoyunda büyük cořkuyla karřılanmış ve olumlu tablolar çizilmiřtir. Ancak karar ne Ankara Anlaşması'na ne Katma Protokol'e ne de 1989 Komisyon Raporu'na bir Őey katmamıřtır. Bütün kararlarda da Türkiye'nin tam üyelięe ehil olduęu ancak tam üyelik konusunun muęlakta kaldığı görölmüřtür. 1997'de yayınlanan Gündem 2000 Raporu da iki taraf arasındaki iliřkileri etkilemiřtir. Gündem 2000 Raporu'na göre Türkiye siyasi durumu nedeniyle bu grupların dıřında bırakılmış, bir kenara itilmiřtir. Genişleme bařlıęı yerine Dıř İliřkiler bařlıęında Türkiye'ye yer verilmiřtir. Buna göre Türkiye, AB ile müktesebat konusunda büyük bir başarı saęlasa da ekonomik ve siyasi alanda hala sorunlar devam etmekte bunun içinde genişlemenin dıřında olmalıdır. Bu rapor 10-12 Aralık 1997'de yapılan Lüksemburg Zirvesi'nde de ele alınmış, Türkiye'nin tam üyelięe ehil olduęu ancak tam üyelięe hazırlanması için farklı bir yol izlenmesi gerektięi söylenmiřtir. Türkiye ise 14 Aralık 1997'de AB'nin tutumunu yanlı ve ayrımcı bulduęunu söylemiş ve AB yükümlölüklerini yerine getirmezse AB ile iliřkilerine iliřkin konular dıřında hiçbir konunun Birlik sürecinde gündeme gelmeyeceęini açıklamıřtır. İliřkiler bu Őekilde devam ederken 10-11 Aralık 1999'da yapılan Helsinki Zirvesi ile Türkiye AB'nin aday ülkesi olarak kabul edilmiřtir.

Türkiye'nin aday ülke olarak kabul edilmesinin Almanya'da Hıristiyan Demokratların iktidarı kaybedip Türkiye'nin AB'ye tam üyelięine sıcak bakan Yeřiller ve Sosyal Demokratların iktidar olması, 17 Aralık

1999'da Türkiye'de yaşanan deprem, Abdullah Öcalan'ın Kenya'da Yunanistan Büyükelçiliğinde yakalanması, Balkanlarda yaşanan çatışmalarda Türkiye'nin önemini fark edilmesi ve ABD'nin Türkiye'nin tam üyeliği hususunda verdiği destek gibi değişik sebepleri olduğuna dair pek çok şey ortaya atılmıştır. Ancak Türkiye'nin AB'ye 1999 yılında tam üye olarak kabul edilmesinin altında yatan esas neden Bülent Ecevit ile dönemin Almanya Başbakanı Gerhard Schröder arasındaki mektuplaşmalarda gizlidir. 26 Mayıs 1999'da başlayan bu mektuplaşmalarda Ecevit ilk kez Türkiye'nin tam üyelik koşullarının ve Kopenhag Kriterleri'nin farkında olduğu söylemekle birlikte demokratik ve sosyal reformların da yapılacağı, Yunanistan ile olan ilişkilerin düzeltileceği sözünü vermiştir. Bu şartların yerine getirilmesi yanında Ecevit AB'nin de bazı adımlar atması halinde Türkiye ile AB arasındaki ilişkilerin normale dönebileceğini söylemiştir. Buna karşılık Schröder de Türkiye'nin öncelikli olarak önemli bulunduğu noktalardan bahsederek bunların gerçekleşmesi halinde ilişkilerdeki durağan noktayı aşılması için gereken her şeyi yapacağını vaat etmiştir. Bu vaatler doğrultusunda da Helsinki Zirvesi'nde adaylık statüsü kazanılmıştır.

Türkiye'nin adaylık statüsünü elde etmesinde 1999'da Türkiye'de yaşanan deprem, İsmail Cem'in girişimleri, ABD'nin AB'ye baskısı, AB ülkelerinde Sosyalist partilerin iktidara gelmesi gibi pek çok neden olduğu söylene de esas neden Bülent Ecevit ile Gerard Schröder arasındaki mektuplaşmalardır. Çalışmamızda bu süreç Kelebek Etkisi Yaklaşımı ele alınmaya çalışılmıştır. Türkiye'nin AB'ye tam üyelik sürecinin istenen sonucu vermediği bir dönemde küçük bir kağıt parçası ilişkilerde hiç beklenmedik ve öngörülemeyen olaylara sebep olmuştur. Bu olaydan sonra iki taraf arasındaki ilişkiler düzelmeye başlamış ve Türkiye, AB'nin aday ülkesi olmuştur. Sonraki dönemlerde Türkiye'nin yapmış olduğu reformlar ve uygulamalarla Türkiye'nin Kopenhag Kriterleri'nin siyasi kriterlerini büyük ölçüde gerçekleştirdiği görülmüş ve müzakere tarihi verilerek 3 Ekim 2005'te müzakerelere başlanmıştır. Bu anlamda Ecevit ile Schröder arasındaki mektuplaşmalar kelebek etkisi yaratarak ilişkilerde yeni bir sürecin yaşanmasına neden olmuştur. Yani iki taraf arasında gerçekleşen mektuplaşmalar ve bu mektuplarda geçen vaatler, Türkiye'nin adaylık statüsünü elde etmesine imkan tanımıştır. Adaylık statüsünün elde edilmesinden sonra Türkiye'nin söz konusu mektupta yer alan vaatlerini gerçekleştirmesi/gerçekleştirme gayreti Türkiye'nin 2004'te müzakere tarihi almasına 2005'te ise müzakerelere başlamasına neden olmuştur. Bir anlamda iki taraf arasındaki mektuplaşmalar Türkiye'nin AB üyeliği yolunda önemli dönemeçlerden kolaylıkla geçmesine neden olmuştur.