Franco-Turkish relations through the prism of lucidity: *How to be more effective*

*Contribution of Alain Delcamp and Didier Billion to the Annual Seminar of Institut du Bosphore*

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Introduction

“Real generosity toward the future lies in giving all to the present”
Albert Camus

It has become popular today to say that Turkey is moving away from the European Union (EU) and for this reason it seems no longer appropriate to consider its integration into the most ambitious economic and political construction of the post-war period.

This standpoint is not understood by Turkey because it sounds like a denial of promises envisaged since 1963 and confirmed in 2005. One of the main reasons given is that this country would move away from the standards of democratic countries, as formulated, in particular, in the European Convention on Human Rights, drawn up in another, more ancient but less integrated European institution, the Council of Europe. But Turkey has also been part of it since its foundation in 1949. It was then a political choice within the framework of a divided Europe by the Iron Curtain. Today this reason has disappeared but it leaves room for another perspective, certainly more attentive to legal criteria than in the past- but not only. It is even less comprehensible for Turkey because it feels that it has made great efforts in the framework of the Customs Union and pre-accession negotiations to integrate important aspects of the “acquis communautaire”.

Turkey has the feeling that there are "hidden" criteria prone to undermine new efforts it can accomplish in the future. The most troubling episode, in this respect, is the attitude of the European countries after the coup attempt of July 15, 2016. Turkey found their solidarity to be too timid at that time and its political authorities did not understand the severity of EU Member States’ judgments with regard to the measures they have taken, which they consider being necessary to ensure the internal security of the country.

On the other hand, it is clear that Turkey, in a world that is now multipolar but above all turbulent with new types of threats, might have been tempted to reconsider its regional situation and to consider new alliances, not to mention internal policy debates likely to have an impact on the choice of its societal model.
European countries, for their part, are not blameless. The Turkish "candidature" has always been a debate among them, although each of them, in turn, may have found it appropriate to hide behind the most explicit opponents, while favoring the Realpolitik deemed necessary for the development of its own bilateral trade. The EU has rarely spoken with one voice to its eastern partner and its enlargement did not make things any better: it has multiplied the points of view and interests, while showing that Turkish enlargement was not its priority.

We believe that a new point of view would be needed today, but we also believe that the EU does not have at the moment the means to state it nor to build it. The new international evolutions and uncertainties point to the discrepancy between its economic potential and its powerlessness as an actor on the international political and strategic arena. Its internal difficulties, both between member countries (Brexit) and with respect to its public opinions (rise of populism), threaten its own cohesion and sometimes even raise doubts about its future. For these and many other reasons, the EU is not in a position to decide strategically on the Turkish file because it is itself subject to hesitation about its own identity.

**France is at the core of these two hesitations:**

After having emerged a while as the most irreconcilable opponent between 2007 and 2012, France was able to renew the ties of a centuries-old alliance, and in the most sensitive areas: culture and law, while remaining a major economic partner. On the other hand, mainly because of the relative downturn of its economy, it has not been able to play the leading role it used to play in the past, notably through the alliance with Germany. It would be reasonable to assume that both on the Turkish side and the European side, after the recent national elections, France will be in a more favorable position and prone to take new initiatives. It is with this near future in mind that it seemed to us necessary to launch a debate that could boost efficiently Franco-Turkish relations, despite - or because of- the greatest apparent complexity of the situation for both partners.

**Meaning and method of the approach**

Following internal debates at the Institute and in order to assess its strategy after eight years of uninterrupted and positive commitment, we had the initiative to draw up a first reflection document. This was presented to the scientific committee on April 12, and on this basis a contact program was organized in Istanbul, Ankara and Brussels. These contacts, particularly interesting, confirmed our initial intuition.
It can be summarized as follows:

The question of Turkey’s candidature to the European Union is today polluted by both mutual rancor and misunderstandings, to such an extent that a reaffirmation of this commitment would only revive just as much ‘debates in responsibility' each more sterile than the other. Whilst not precluding this perspective, we believe that Franco-Turkish relations should be approached for what they are, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses, without denying in any way the developments that have taken place, nor hiding the issues that arise. We intend to make ours the following famous expression of Albert Camus; "Real generosity toward the future lies in giving all to the present".

Relations between Turkey and the EU are paralyzed, if not compromised. We believe that France, and the Institute that is built on this privileged relationship between France and Turkey, are capable of helping for their restart, but this requires several conditions:

- rejecting the debates of principle and liability lawsuits by showing that there have been wrong on both sides,
- putting into perspective all these chaotic years filled with missed opportunities,
- looking for concrete ways of restart without hiding the uncertainties that recent electoral consultations in both parties have accumulated: constitutional referendum in Turkey, general elections in Germany, among others.

We believe that it is possible to open up a few doors once again, on condition of acting pragmatically but also with imagination and will:

- By showing that Turkey, France and beyond, the EU are facing the same challenges: the world’s problems, technological and digital revolutions, and the search for a peaceful and balanced evolution that would benefit everyone, both internally and externally, while keeping each country’s choice of its own path
- By finding a global approach to these relations and by looking for concrete elements, signals and areas that could be used as a basis for a pragmatic restart of the dialogue between the two States and the two societies.
Our approach could therefore be summarized as follows:

**How to contribute to adapt the approach of Institut du Bosphore to make it more effective within the new Franco-Turkish relations’ context?**

But before, it might also be worth, if only to eliminate the rancor, to look back at a story marked by misunderstandings but also, sometimes, illusions, before having a clear look at today’s uncertainties. Indeed, each of them is an issue for both the EU and Turkey themselves, each for their own sake, even before they can reconsider their relations.

We believe that it is through and from this very lucidity that a new horizon could be drawn, indispensable to new initiatives and new voluntarism.
The time of misunderstandings and illusions

We can, without doubt, date the starting point of this period of the so-called Ankara, Association Agreement, signed in 1963, which in its article 28 clearly laid down the prospect of Turkey’s accession, in due course, to the European Economic Community. In 1963, the latter still embraces only its six founding members and, under French pressure, had just refused a first entry attempt of the United Kingdom! This simple reminder helps to measure the extent of the Turkish disappointment of being denied of the prospect of entering a European Union now "strong" with 28 members! It rightly sees it as a sign of growing mistrust of it, or even a sign of some form of distrust. In fact, since that promise, circumstances have changed dramatically.

This Ankara agreement was inseparable from two evidences: from a country largely rejected, mainly, on its Asian shores by the Treaty of Sèvres and who had the courage to build on the lessons learned from its victors, the emergence of the Cold War had turned it, given its geography, into one of the safest pillars of the new Atlantic Alliance and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in formation. Its borders were no longer to the west but to the east. Political and strategic reasons had prevailed over all the others. Only France, perhaps, could give this recognition a special meaning since the Turkish Republic was one of the only countries to take inspiration from its "secular" republican model.

The European Economic Community, although limited mainly to security and economic questions, was unanimously hailed as a unique experience in the construction of a new form of integration, the only way to give back to Europe its lost place due to two fratricidal wars. The privileged path was, however, that of "deepening" more than of "enlargement." The misunderstanding did barely exist and the Turkish perspective was far away. Achieving a higher level of development was an obvious condition, requiring both time and support. Even though the "Turkish prisons" were already feeding the records of human rights violations in the Council of Europe bodies, no mention was
made of possible "conditionalities" and successive military coups could be perceived as the necessary guarantee of a stability of the society and its attachment to the West.

The question of its entry into the Union appeared to its leaders, even after the great alternation of 2002, which saw the first victory of AKP, as the logical continuation of these evolutions, at the same time as a guarantee for its future economic and social development. These times mark nevertheless the beginning of European hesitations: Although the Helsinki Summit of 1999, four years after the Customs Union Agreement became effective, confirmed well Turkey's call to join11 the new European Union, that of Copenhagen, in December 2002 decided to postpone the final decision to open negotiations with Ankara until December 2004. It is thanks to a joint Franco-German initiative - which deserves to be highlighted in the light of the events that have occurred since then - that the "green light" was finally given in 2005. It is however known that since the beginning the road was compromised due to the situation of Cyprus, now a member of the Union, which was in the beginning a stalemate of a large part of the negotiation articles.

A third phase was then open, supervised by two explicit objections: that of Nicolas Sarkozy, after his election in 2007, and of Angela Merkel, who declared themselves to be in favor of a "privileged partnership" and that of the German Chancellor once more, just a few weeks ago, as part of the campaign for the parliamentary elections, which considers purely and simply that the prospect of membership is no longer possible. It was during this period that the misunderstandings, result of the hesitations of European governments, were concentrated on a background of increasing mistrust with regards to political developments in Turkey and the rise of identity concerns related mainly to immigration issues and the feeling of fear about Islamist terrorism, among public opinion of various countries. The friends of Turkey might find this amalgam excessive but it would be irresponsible not to mention it. The idea has gradually been imposed that Turkey could hardly claim full integration and we have witnessed the performance of European leaders or politicians openly discussing a "privileged partnership" at the same time as the accession negotiations were continuing! It is not surprising that the Turkish leaders may have had the impression of what they call a "double standard" or discrimination. It is a fact that the EU has not kept its promises in this respect and seemed to yield to the temptation of changing the rules of the game during the game.

Today, we are in the fourth phase and one can ask whether this phase constitutes a new stage or, on the contrary, the starter of a radical reconsideration. The phase seems to concentrate on the perception of two events: the coup attempt of July 15, 2016 and its

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1 *Its official request goes back to 1987*
consequences and the constitutional referendum of April 2017. In fact, it had begun long before, and the reactions to the coup attempt by the Turkish authorities and the organization of the referendum may have been interpreted by many European observers as a process of accelerating a movement which they foresaw and whose symptoms already existed.

The confusion, however, had reached a peak when the EU, at the initiative of the German Chancellor, suddenly rediscovered another aspect of Turkey: that of an indispensable strategic partner in a world undergoing deep turmoil. This major contradiction between the increasing criticism of the infringement of the rule of law in Turkey and the desperate bargaining over the refugees, has hardly contributed within the EU to address the confidence crisis between the people and their policymakers and every national consultation has lately shown the depth of it. Nor has it strengthened its credibility vis-à-vis Turkish opinion.

We also believe that the Franco (or European) - Turkish debate goes far beyond the question of Turkey's accession to the European Union. It is indicative of existential hesitations affecting each of the two partners and forcing to put the debate into perspective in a more global approach.
The time of questions

Between the EU and Turkey, there are facts, but there are also mutual perceptions, and they should be distinguished:

**The facts speak for themselves:** despite its enlargement and its apparent power, at least on a statistical level (it is considered today economically as powerful as the United States), the EU has not yet reached a sufficient critical mass to speak on equal ground, not only with respect to the United States\(^2\), but especially with respect to China, the emerging power that imposes itself. If Russia is put aside, which no one thinks it has a vocation to join the Union, Turkey is its most powerful neighbor, with its population, strategic position and growing economy\(^3\), despite a recent slowdown.

Conversely, Turkey may appear to be relatively isolated before an increasingly unstable Middle East, in which it sees a threat to its own security, and a Mediterranean network that is slow to emerge. Despite its power, the quality of its population and its workforce and its geographical position, it cannot reasonably hope to be able to foresee the future without secure and close alliances. Turning to the EU is the most obvious solution for it, due to the attractiveness of the "European model", the need to develop its trade\(^4\) with more developed economies, prone to make it cross the threshold it can now consider, and due to the absence of a real alternative of substitution - except to get back to the politics of power relations of the nineteenth century (which were incidentally fatal).

These are the reasoning based on these realities that justify that the issue of relations between the EU and Turkey continues to be valid and are strategic priorities for both parties.

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1. They also have their own approach of Turkey and with little concern for European interests
2. Turkey has had an average economic growth of 5.4% between 2002 and 2016
3. The European Union is its main trading partner and accounts for 41% of its foreign trade.
These realities, however, are now hidden by the biased perceptions that exist in each of the partners. Even better, the apparent difficulties of the Franco-Turkish relationship conceal the fundamental questions that arise within each of them.

The vision of Turkey projected by Europeans is biased by several phenomena, all the more visible as the reality of the world has changed and the perspective of "membership" has become an object of concrete negotiations: what seems desirable like horizon becomes fear as soon as the deadline approaches.

That is due to several phenomena:

The very importance of Turkey, which would become de facto the most populous country of the new group and would have in the institutional arithmetic of European equilibriums, a place equivalent to Germany in all the bodies of the Union except, at first, in the Eurozone.

The question of the social model: the principles on which the Turkish institutions were built did not differ substantially from the principles reigning over most of the European constitutions, even though the designers of the new Turkey had considered that the choice for a strong state was indispensable, not only to build the "unity" of the country but also to preserve it. Religion occupied a "controlled" place and did not inspire legal or political principles.

The fact that Turkey should be the first Muslim majority country to join the European institutions had not been seen as an insurmountable issue in the enthusiasm of the early days, so much that the dominating feeling within the EU was that religion, on the one hand, could remain in the private sphere and that for a growing number it was more a matter of cultural heritage than of belief. The European countries had, moreover, recently shown themselves incapable of agreeing on reference to the religious and Christian roots of Europe.

The question of possible distortions of competition had gradually lost its acuity. More precisely, in addition to the fact that these could be "compensated" by new investment opportunities on the border of the EU, they were receiving less attention than the threats coming from Asian countries. More recently, this kind of debate has invaded the internal affairs of the European Union itself and the Turkish debate has been put in perspective on that.

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5 See in this regard the debates that led to the drafting of the preamble of the European Constitutional Treaty in 2004.
These different parameters have thus been the object of evolving perceptions. However, one might consider that the essential element of distortion in the perception of Turkish accession is largely determined by the evolution of the image of Islam and the "return of the repressed" which had for too long obscured the debate on immigration.

"Islamist terrorism" has triggered, probably unfairly, a mistrust of the entire Muslim community. Turkey, who should have emerged as the trusted bulwark against this form of terrorism, has been perceived in recent years, notably because of the political course that Turkish political authorities have developed about the Syrian crisis, as having quite ambiguous attitude in this respect, more concerned, it seems, with recurrent threats to its own state unity.

The debate on immigration, restricted for too long to extremist movements, has become a major political issue within the EU, perhaps the most important one, because of the link with the economic difficulties and the early stages of the fragilization of universal protection model. In addition to the renewed "millenarian" fears of populations who are now uncertain of their future and not ensuring their own demographic renewal, there has been an increase in awareness of the relative failure of immigrant integration policies. For a long time, Turkish integration has been given as an example, especially in Germany, and it is not irrelevant to note that it was precisely in this country that the reactions were all the more stronger as they were delayed. They have a major part in the recent hardening of the German government with regard to the Turkish candidature.

These elements weigh more heavily on the determination of opinions than on the question of human rights, which are, on the contrary, put forward, and almost exclusively, by public institutions. It is a way for them not to approach topics that they do not feel able to master or even formulate.

These fears might, however, have been overcome if, simultaneously, the Turkish governments had seemed to confirm their "global" commitment to the European model, not only in its institutional aspects but also in its societal aspects, with first the absolute respect for the individual and his "safety". But it is no criticism of these governments to consider that they have sought to give back to religion a space that it had lost after the Kemalist revolution.

Therefore, the argument of Turkey's place in a future European Union has acquired an importance it has never had before.
More than in the past, the question of the Turkish candidature obliges the EU, on its part, to ask itself questions that the EU is just beginning to discuss, questions that concern its very own identity:

- The question of its borders: The European model, strong in its originality (but still essentially economic) had ended up being conceived as indefinitely exportable and without a pre-established strategy. Turkish accession - and, just as the evolution of relations with Russia - raises the question in geographical terms. It is logical in this context that the debate on Turkey's "Europeanness" is re-emerging.

- The question of defending these borders and its positioning beyond it: the defense of borders is a question asked to the European decision-making system, which can never act with one voice, except at the price of bargaining which obscures its image forbidding the subtlety that any diplomatic action worthy of this name requires.

- The question of its homogeneity: cultural, economic and social, beyond all practical "multiculturalism" which now shows its limitations.

Compared to the EU, Turkey has the advantage of being a State, and of being a State, all things considered, built on the model of France. Without doubt it is necessary to seek in this reality the first cause of the attraction exerted by each of the two countries on each other. This means the consciousness of a destiny and the need felt to define and maintain it. All European states - far from it - do not share this view. It is for this reason, no doubt, that France is better placed to understand Turkey than many others. There are structures and language specific to these structures. No need for translation to understand each other.

French history, as General de Gaulle said it, is the history of its State, and in fact, as in Turkey, it is based on traditions spanning centuries. The splendor of the Kings corresponds to the splendor of the Sultans, and still nourishes an original demand for existence. There is a very visible and legitimate Turkish pride. Both countries have known revolutions, but their republics owe much to their monarchies, including the need for identification of power. The concern for unity, even unification, which they have reinforced, justifies a strong power, which is not very open to the recognition of diversity. Both are, however, in an era where they need, whether they want it or not, to change their model. Paradoxically, Turkey is perhaps more capable because is less imbued with "administrative spirit".

France also has "margins" historically more difficult to integrate than the others but no less loyal (Brittany, Alsace, Basque Country...) but it has managed to achieve a relatively
close synthesis ("the Hexagon"). Turkey is a conquest of history by the will of one, subject to tensions arising from its very own geography and home to at least two societies. Its elites have always been looking towards Europe and its "enlightenment". They have also, by necessity, been always open to the world. They were among the most refined ones. The great mass of its population, on the other hand, has lived for a long time in a very traditional way, not far away religion, in often a hostile nature. Atatürk tried to reconcile the two and partially succeeded in disseminating common principles in the farthest village of Anatolia, at the cost of an authoritarian state organization that would be criticized today. Economic development has done the rest, although it is still not adequately shared, consolidating a liberal conception inspired more by the American model than by the European one.

The current policymakers do not originate from the traditional elites and have been able to build their success on a closer contact with the people. They drew from it a strong legitimacy that allowed them to last and contribute to the construction of modern Turkey: the development of Ankara, for example, is impressive of audacity and confidence in the future. They know that the opening towards the EU is a prerequisite for continuing this development, even though a real frustration, which is the consequence of a certain lack of consideration, has led some, minoritarians, though to believe that Turkey could be part of a new world in which the European Union would no longer exist. We know very well in fact that Turkey's development relies in part, on foreign financial investment and Europe remains its most important partner. European hesitations, however, have reinforced the legitimate search of another path, that of diversifying diplomacy in all directions. The latter has encountered the weakness of Central Asia, despite China, and the upheavals following the US military intervention in Iraq.

The hesitation, however, indicates the societal model to be promoted and the replacement, in the political imagination, of references that had disappeared, such as the secular struggle between the West and the Ottoman Empire, during the time of the conquest of Constantinople. This search for another path could not avoid the religious reference, and it is without doubt the great change occurred in the conception that is presiding over the Turkish institutions henceforth.

The resurgence of religious mysticism, in the time of uncertainties of the world and need for identity reaffirmation, was obvious: why should Turkey escape from the fears that torment European societies, themselves suffering from lack of "sense"? This undeniable,

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6 Between 2002 and 2016, Turkey's GDP more than tripled to $ 857 billion, ranking it 17th in the world and 6th in Europe. Public debt - and this is an essential difference with France - is low (26%), the budget deficit also (1%), but the large private debt and the balance of foreign trade are structurally deficient, with exports covering about only 70% of imports.
yet partially accomplished, inflexion is, however, the cause of new concerns within Turkish society itself: and what if the EU does no longer act as a counterbalance to the trends that had always existed and that had been contained thanks to Kemalism? Thereupon, the aspiration for the EU - and for the system of values it embodies - of these more westernized parts of the population is no longer a means for completing Westernization of the Turkish society but to ensure its equilibrium between the East and the West in the long term. This is, somehow, what is at stake today and which the friends of Turkey should take care not to forget when taking a stand.

The disputed outcome of the constitutional referendum of April 16, 2017 revealed that despite these evolutions the Turkish society was exactly divided into two, and it is reasonably impossible to see in it a religious divide. It is a divide between two conceptions of power and democracy, which was expressed all the more significant that campaign weapons were unequal. It will not fail to end up again in the future. It would also be advisable to reflect on the consequences of the dismissals and other purges carried out in a form in which the disproportion and seriousness of the violations of the principles of the democratic rule of law are no longer to be demonstrated, on the future dialogue and future cooperation with the EU, notably in terms of security and counter-terrorism. The importance of repression has undoubtedly led to go much more than was necessary (many say by the way that these repressions spread blindly to people who were far from belonging to academic, administrative or judicial "elites"), and the "skills" thus lost today are at risk of lacking, at least in the short term.

European silences or ambiguities come at a time when Turkey is wondering more than one would think: its policymakers, of course, according to the answer that will be given to their demands. Its people especially and, all considered, isn’t it the most important? The attitude of the EU can be crucial in this respect. Actions from government of Ankara are legitimately hoped for; but the EU cannot continue to behave as a schoolteacher and determine any contact with the respect vital for the criteria elaborated by itself, and shared by all Democrats - and there are many in Turkey. The paradox would be that on behalf of these same principles the EU does abandon them at a time when the desire for membership, according to the polls, still seems to be shared by about half of the population.

In spite of misunderstandings and hesitations, our conclusion is therefore without ambiguity: it is impossible for the EU and Turkey not to have a common destiny. But by excessively favoring form, is not there a risk to miss a historical chance? This is what we would like to avoid and we count on the annual seminar of the Institut du Bosphore in Istanbul to let some light beams emerge from behind the layer of clouds that are gathering on the strait.
How to save the Franco-Turkish relationship?
The time of pragmatism and dialogue

These reflections inspired by the long term do not guarantee a future but show the cost of a possible failure. That is why, despite the resolution of the European Parliament adopted on November 24, 2016 calling for a temporary freeze on the accession negotiations or the recent declarations by the German political authorities, stopping contacts seem to us as the worst solution. It is also likely that the next European Council, which will be held at the same time as Institut du Bosphore Annual Seminar, will find it hard to get a qualified majority to reach such a clear decision.

This does not mean, however, that the objective of accession must be reaffirmed as a short-term imperative. The Institute has already shown its flexibility in this respect and its search for institutional "formulas" that could reconcile the contradictory aspirations that frame the Turkish candidature. Achieving this objective, according the words of the Commissioner for Enlargement, on April 24, 2017, involves a "thorough assessment of relations" and, perhaps even, a "redefinition".

It is therefore urgent not to add to obvious difficulties an unnecessary dramatization. On the contrary, it is necessary to "keep a cool head", while at the same time noting that we cannot claim to be part of a whole without respecting its commitments and values.

This means first of all finding new areas so that the relationship between the EU and Turkey be part of a new positive horizon that can give meaning to new concrete actions.

This imperative comes at a time when France, after years of faint-heartedness or refusal, may be able to play a decisive role again. The tendency of the new French president to rebuild the modalities of European construction might be a positive window of opportunity. It is in this perspective that our meeting in Istanbul must also take place.
and our group should pose itself as a "pathfinder" for the near future of Franco-Turkish relations.

One of the reasons why negotiations should not be interrupted is maintaining Turkey's access to pre-accession instruments (IPAs). These have amounted to nearly 10 billion euros since 2002 and Turkey's share within it has continued to grow, to the point of benefiting from almost half of them over the period of 2007-2013. Even though the question of the use of funds can always be questioned and improved, in order to go more to society than to administrations, one should better promote concrete signs of interest with regard to Turkish public opinion henceforth skeptical. They could have a useful contribution to the habituation of practices of rule of law and to dialogue with civil society as well as to regional development and equal access to education for young men and girls. A specific judicial action is also carried out at the initiative of the Council of Europe. Following these actions and at the same time trying to guide them in a more participatory sense could be positive signs that the current gloom calls for.

The second element of continuity to be promoted and followed up lies in the management of the positive consequences of the agreement of March 16, 2016, though concluded on questionable basis (it was sanctioning the inability of European states to agree on a migration policy) to limit the flow of migrants from Turkey. This agreement was an undeniable quantitative success to the point of almost stemming the flow towards the Greek coasts. The application of this agreement, however, has grey areas:

- from the legal and humanitarian point of view first: every migrant who had arrived illegally had to be sent back to Turkey if he did not benefit from the right of asylum after examination and any migrant who was sent back should be replaced by a Syrian "taking into account of the United Nations' vulnerability criteria." This was only the case for just over 6,000 people (as against 72,000 in the agreement).

- from the point of view of the compensation granted to Turkey:

  • Chapter 33 of the accession negotiations on budgetary and financial provisions was opened,

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7 This recommendation is in line with the Turkey report submitted to the European Parliament in 2017: "use those funds to support Turkish civil society and refugees in Turkey directly, and to invest more in people-to-people exchange programs, such as Erasmus for students, academics and journalists”.

8 It strengthened a first agreement of November 29, 2015.
• The 6 billion package to help Turkey manage its new hosting country situation (rather than transit) has been only partially allocated (about half), but less than 800 million were paid, because of the practical difficulties of managing the problem on the ground. On the other hand, the Turkish authorities appear to have made "significant efforts to provide decent living conditions for the refugees".

• Liberalization of visas for short-term stays. Especially symbolic, the implementation of this regime was dependent upon respect of the 72 criteria according to a roadmap adopted on December 16, 2013. The European Commission considered in May 2016 that only seven criteria had yet to be satisfied, of which the most sensitive, of course, is the review of anti-terrorism legislation, considered by most observers, notably the Venice Commission and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, to be insufficiently precise and protective of fundamental rights.

To a certain extent, it is possible to understand the Turkish position for whom this revision does not seem possible, "at that time" of terrorist threats, but it is a point on which dialogue must be maintained.

The last and most important area - and for which a sign of reciprocal "goodwill" could prove to be the most significant - is the revision and deepening of the customs union agreement, which entered into force in 1996. This would be a hope for the Turkish economic forces fearing that a status quo would turn out to be very harmful to trade and growth, as well as to market orientation. Undoubtedly, the preliminary contacts would make it possible to bring economic relations, beyond the "major contracts" that continue and that expect State-to-State negotiations, in areas likely to increase reciprocal knowledge of the two societies (one can for example consider the field of agro-food industries so essential for France).

While the objective may seem desirable, its implementation is nothing less than obvious, but it is therefore all the more relevant the each of the people anxious to avoid a rupture of the relations strives to reveal its interest for both parties, while showing its understanding that a single-minded focus to the accession process, which is always desirable, should not obscure all other initiatives by its exclusivity.

The request for a mandate exists: it was formulated by the Commission before the Council in December 2016, adding to it however criteria of conditionality relating to the

9 Information report on behalf of the European Affairs Committee of the Senate, No 618 (2016-2017) of July 6, 2017, in addition to the rather positive conclusions of again European Commission's third report.

10 However, new decrees were passed in January following criticism by the Venice Commission, reducing, for example, the police custody period from 30 to 7-day and the presence of a lawyer from the outset.
human rights situation in Turkey, conditionality that was strongly reaffirmed by the representative of the European Parliament met in Brussels on September 27, following the reopening of the monitoring procedure for Turkey by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (in particular after the threat of the reintroduction of the death penalty) adopted by the resolution of April 25.

Moreover, the main areas of this enlargement may, at first sight, bring very difficult questions to solve in the present state of political and economic relations: agriculture is a particularly sensitive area, services and, in particular, transport, as well as public procurement. Agriculture, transport and customs union are three of the accession negotiations chapters that are currently blocked by the EU (11, 14, 29). Financial control (32) is open. Public procurement (5) is blocked by Turkey.

Despite this point of departure, it is clear that we cannot be satisfied with this situation and that, a dynamic should be initiated which can be expected to be virtuous, by taking a clear stand for the opening of this new phase of Franco-Turkish relations.

It is obvious, however, that such a dynamic cannot be considered on the economic ground alone, since apparently the real blockages are found elsewhere, in mutual misunderstandings and ignorance and a growing lack of awareness of civil societies of both countries.

This implies a change of methods and language: it is better to prefer disturbing truths to the "almost"s that can only have a tragic ending, by allowing illusions and misunderstandings to persist.

Yes, today, the prospect of Turkey's accession to the European Union, "a constant EU", is moving away. It is therefore important to be pragmatic while concealing no reality. The EU must show its understanding of Turkey's security challenges while sorting through the dangers facing this country:

- Border Insecurity

- Followings of a coup attempt that could undermine the democratic order which increased a sensation of fragility of power, confirmed by the results of the referendum on constitutional reform

- Permanence of the Kurdish issue, despite the hopes raised by the government's initiatives between 2012 and 2015.
The EU and, if not, France, must maintain a strategic partnership with Turkey (as was the intention of the official visit of the French Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs in September 2017 and that of his Turkish counterpart in Paris in October), which will bring new cooperation, particularly in the field of defense and fight against terrorism. In this respect, European countries must certainly take note of a certain number of developments of the international situation that bring us to have a new look at certain problematics. It is no criticism to believe that the Kurdish question, for example, is widely considered within the EU as a political, and thus justifiable issue of an extensive conception of the right of asylum. It is difficult for the European man in the street to condemn in the same way the terrorism of Daesh or of parent movements with terrorism of PKK, even though it is officially considered by the European Union to be a terrorist organization. However, for the Turkish government, the difference does not exist and the threat of the PKK is even considered as the most immediate one, evidence existing of its involvement in numerous terrorist attacks on Turkish soil.

It is not a question of embracing the government’s thesis in this regard (thesis widely shared by Turkish society, as shown by the vote of the CHP deputies for the waiver of the parliamentary immunity of their colleagues in the HDP party, originally pro-Kurdish but distinct from the PKK), but of becoming aware of it, so as not to trivialize public demonstrations such as those of which the campaign for the German elections has been the theater. This is one of the conditions to be able to hope, even in the long term, a resumption of the political dialogue on this subject in Turkey.

Situations of tension do not prevent from reflecting on realistic solutions to emerge from the crisis as soon as new conditions will allow.

It is also possible without doubt to address the institutional question by avoiding too much of cursive amalgams. In fact, the Turkish constitutional tradition has always given special importance to the executive power. However, the strengthening of the President’s powers in the text arising from the referendum does not seem to be balanced by any other development, as the Venice Commission notes, by comparing

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11 A specialist such as Jean Marcou used the term “constitutional security about Turkish institutions: Constitutional imbroglio in Turkey (2007-2010) at the Nantes-Galatasaray meetings in March 2010. One of the most prestigious Turkish constitutionalists, Ergun Özbudun spoke, for his part, of "mitigated parliamentarism" even before the reform. Turkey’s constitutional reform and the 2010 constitutional referendum.

12 However, this does not preclude its implicit preference for a parliamentary system, which can be discussed: “a presidential regime requires very solid checks and balances. In particular, a powerful and independent judiciary is essential in that the disagreements that are normally settled through the political debate and negotiations in a parliamentary system often end up in court”. CDL-AD (2017) 005, p. 11. All this confirms an authoritarian drift, although the Turkish authorities argue that the reform clearly separates executive and legislative power and makes the president directly accountable to the people - while allowing him to cumulate his function with that of political party leader (measure applicable immediately).
the reform to the American system to which the authors of the reform referred: no bicameralism, no federalism (nor regionalization, even limited), no parliamentary intervention on appointments (although the conditions are fixed by the President and not by the law), nor for the proclamation of state of emergency, discretionary right of dissolution of Parliament, the absence of election of the vice-president or vice-presidents, concomitance of legislative and presidential elections, in a system where the president already appoints 14 of 17 members of the Constitutional Court and in which under the new text he will appoint 6 of the 13 members of the new Council of Judges and Prosecutors.

More deeply, what is at stake is a well-known problem: **should we impose firm demands at the risk of shutting down any kind of dialogue or should we give priority to dialogue at the risk of appearing to be complicit of certain abuses?** Privileging dialogue does not exclude clarity on aspects that are considered unacceptable. To choose the declamatory firmness is to take the risk of sacrificing the very people who share our criticism and hope to stop dangerous developments in the long term and need 4 for this external counterweights. It is the soft power role that the EU has been playing since the beginning in its relationship with Turkey. It must not abandon it at the risk of betraying itself. On the other hand, in order to properly assume this role, it would itself need to change and give less priority to procedures with respect to the strategy. To do this, it needs to modify its internal mode of operation so that its external image does not suffer from its hesitations, its complexity and the impression of general ambiguity that it emits.

Hence, beyond the institutional or official sphere, it is necessary to make an effort to be imaginative in order **to create the conditions for a better communication between two societies that gradually move away from each other.** These actions should therefore reach more and more to privilege a "multiplier effect", either by associating research centers or think-tanks involved in the analysis of Turkish policy and society, within the EU or Turkey or by seeking partnerships with major French or European associations likely to promote an influence beyond Paris, Brussels, Istanbul or Ankara.

This means a more offensive communication policy, valuing Turkish achievements within the EU or Europeans in Turkey (sponsoring visits on the field).

An opening to the economic networks established in the territory of both countries (chambers of commerce, agricultural unions, etc.) so that the exchange action includes more civil societies wherever they are on the territory.

Work with the major associations of elected officials, encourage their exchanges and build partnerships and twinning, but with the concern to allow new contacts between
the populations. Co-founder of the European Charter of Local Self-Government of the Council of Europe in 1985, Turkey has just taken measures after the coup attempt, which has increased an already worrying development (dismissal of elected officials and restrictions on budgetary autonomy).

Reflect on action aiming the youth, penalized by the blocking of academic and university exchanges due to the measures of dismissal or removal of many academics. Perhaps it would be possible in this regard, by relying on embassies or diaspora to obtain a first "thaw", which could become the first positive signal on the part of the Turkish authorities. It is within this context also that a more strong support could be put forward to the University of Galatasaray and suggest that it might serve as a facility for example next year for a major symposium focusing on the renewal of exchanges between the two countries.

All these guidelines, however, only add up to the structuring actions already undertaken at the level of cooperation between French and Turkish companies and to contacts and reflections designed to promote new exchanges, specifically in the field of energy or the digital.
Conclusion

In conclusion, it is not a matter of changing Franco-Turkish relations nor European-Turkish relations, but it is a matter of dissipating the mistrust that prevent them, through ignorance or weakness, from regaining true density.

In this respect, an international situation that has now broken out and become dangerous again, is both the worst and the best: it can encourage the temptation of going alone, the nostalgic return to the nineteenth-century European context's games or the old Cold War, all directions that can only be without future. On the other hand, it is a call to the imagination and an invitation to recreate or rethink the old solidarities to put them on the scale of the planet, the only realistic paradigm today. Reinventing the EU through respect of the diversity of peoples is one of the ways through which a return to a consideration once again attentive of Turkey takes place, avoiding the temptation of condescension or disdain. Both Turkey and France are bigger than their current leaders. Let us bet that the leaders will be able to "speak" and to bring finesse or intuition into relations that hesitate between formalism and anathema on the one hand and the excesses born of the feeling of being underestimated or misunderstood on the other hand.

France, in this respect, has a position that by the chance and for some time has become again capable of allowing a restart and a future. It should not, however, be drawn into a new competition within the Union over Turkey. It must be there to remind the stakes and affirm the need not to break up. If it does not do it for itself, it must do so for all those who still rely on it and who expect from the EU to guarantee that their values will not be lost in the whirlwind of wars, stakes and weakening of the social contract. As for Turkey, its will to help it, is complete, but, as the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, reiterated on his last visit, following the French Ambassador; she needs to have “Turkey help her in order to be able to help her.” It is not really a "give or take" situation, a game in which no one wants to be the first to reveal his cards. Its needs small signs likely to help France to convince the EU and itself that may assist the Turkish authorities in identifying them through dialogue.
We believe that all these considerations advocates that the Istanbul Seminar recalls this original Turkish-French basis that might have seemed limited today, built on history and commitment to common political values. It is probably, in the short term, the most effective tool without betraying the initial objectives of the Institute that tended to go farther, faster. The seriousness of the situation necessitates new initiatives to preserve the essential. In this perspective, the only aim of our report is to encourage the participants to debate and pave the way, far from principle positions, to imagine the concrete actions to be carried out and to support. Despite the difficulties and complexities on both side they should not underestimate their collective ability to convince the leaders of both countries to open a new chapter in Turkish French relations.

Our report has no other purpose than to feed the debate among the participants to bear in mind that Franco-Turkish relations are at a turning point and that it is important to imagine solutions to be the most likely to preserve the essential and convince, if possible, the leaders of the two countries. The seriousness of the situation calls for a strategic adaptation and new initiatives if we want a new phase of Franco-Turkish relations and, more widely European-Turkish relations.

It is with this effort and with this collective reflection on concrete objectives the present report aims to think.
Annexe: List of persons interviewed that the authors acknowledge for their welcome and their contribution during the visit in Turkey from 18 to 20 September and in Brussels on 26 September 2017

**IN ISTANBUL**

**Bertrand Buchwalter**, Consul General of France in Istanbul  
**Stéphan Dubost**, Economic Counselor in Istanbul - Regional Economic Service  
**Pascal Lecamp**, Director of Business France in Istanbul  
**Serge Snrach**, Director, AFD (French Development Agency) Turkey  
**Xavier Guilmineau**, Chairman of CCEF (French Foreign Trade Advisors)

**Zeynep Necipoğlu**, President, CCI France-Turkey  
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**Prof. Dr. H. Gül Günver Turan**, President, TURABDER (Turkey EU Association) and European Movement-Turkey

**As well as the members of the Board of Directors and the Scientific Committee of Institut du Bosphore**  
**Bahadır Kaleağası**, President, Institut du Bosphore; Secretary General, TUSIAD  
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**Haluk Tükel**, Advisor to the President of Sütaş; Member of the Board of Directors, Institut du Bosphore  
**Özlem Özüner**, Managing Director, Euler Hermes Turkey; Substitute member of the Governing Body, Institut du Bosphore  
**Sani Şener**, Member of the Board of Directors & Chairman and CEO, TAV Holding; Member of the Scientific Committee of the Institut du Bosphore  
**Murat Kavvar**, Managing Director, Ekol Lojistik (representing Ahmet Musul, President, Ekol & Member of the Scientific Committee, Institut du Bosphore)
IN ANKARA

HE Mr. Selim Yenel, Ambassador, Undersecretary, Ministry of European Affairs, Turkey

HE Mr. Christian Berger, Ambassador, Head of Delegation of the European Union

HE Mr. Charles Fries, Ambassador of France to Turkey
Daniel Gallissaires, Head of the Regional Economic Service of Ankara

Doç. Dr. Özlem Kaygusuz, Department of International Relations, Ankara University

Güven Sak, Director, TEPAV (The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey)

Gülsün Bilgehan, Member of the CHP (Republican People's Party), Member of the France-Turkey Friendship Group, Turkish Grand National Assembly

DURING THE VISIT IN BRUSSELS SEPTEMBER 26, 2017:

HE Mr. Faruk Kaymakçı, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Turkey to the European Union

Miltiadis Kyrkos, Member of the European Parliament (S & D), Vice-President of the Delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee, European Parliament

On the occasion of the round table co-organized by the Institut du Bosphore and the European Parliament Turkey Forum:

Kati Piri, Member of the European Parliament (APSD), Rapporteur (Turkey), European Parliament

Javier Nino-Perez, Head of Division Turkey, European External Action Service (EEAS)

Jorge Bento Silva, Deputy Head of Unit, Terrorism and Crisis Management, DG HOME, European Commission

Freek Janmaat, Deputy Head of Unit - Turkey, Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission

And, with our thanks to all the participants of this round table.