Early eight years ago, Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Tayip Erdogan and his Italian counterpart Silvio Berlusconi stood side-by-side in a crowded hall in Istanbul as they watched the prime minister’s son and future daughter-in-law exchange wedding vows. A few months later, Erdogan repeated the gesture by inviting Kostas Karamanlis, then Greece’s Prime Minister, to witness his daughter’s wedding. Berlusconi’s and Karamanlis’ attendance at both weddings—and not simply as guests, but as witnesses—sent strong signals about Turkey’s chances of becoming a full-fledged member of the European Union (E.U.). To many in Turkey, such high-level representation from two E.U. countries signaled that the E.U. as a whole was finally warming up to the idea that Turkey was a part of Europe. And indeed, much of the credit for these developments belonged to Prime Minister Erdogan’s personal diplomacy and to the proactive stance that his Justice and Development Party (AKP) had taken on Turkey’s E.U. candidacy ever since AKP’s landslide victory in the 2002 elections. AKP’s leadership, which included sweeping reforms making Turkey one of the world’s fastest growing economies, seemed to have finally paid off at the European Council summit on December 16, 2004; shortly after the summit, in October 2005, E.U. leaders agreed to start the accession negotiations.¹

That was then. In the course of the last eight years, Ankara’s relations with the core E.U. members have steadily deteriorated, and public support within Turkey for accession to the E.U. has taken a steep plunge. At the start of the accession talks, nearly 85 percent of Turkish people supported Turkey’s E.U. membership; today, that number has declined to less than 40 percent.² The personal relationships between Turkish leaders and the leaders of E.U. countries that have previously been favorable to Turkish accession
have also weakened. At the beginning of 2011, during a ceremony to launch the Universiade winter games in Turkey, Prime Minister George Papandreou of Greece and Erdogan uttered harsh criticism at each other and blamed one another for the lack of resolution on the Cyprus issue.³ A few days later, Egemen Bagis, the Chief Negotiator and Minister of E.U. Affairs, challenged the E.U. to pull the plug on the negotiations.⁴

What Went Wrong?

A number of explanations have been offered on the deteriorating relations between Turkey and the European Union as well as the connected matter of the Turkish peoples’ waning enthusiasm for joining the European Union. The most popular explanation centers on the fundamentally new orientation that Turkish domestic and especially foreign policy has taken since AKP’s election victory in 2007. This new direction has generated widespread distrust of Turkey and its commitment to liberal democracy in the West. Often referred to as the “axis shift,” Turkey’s new foreign policy under AKP has involved warming relations with many of the oppressive and terrorism-supporting regimes in its neighborhood, including the Islamic Republic of Iran and Syria. Some of these countries were once Ottoman colonies, and they had carried on decades of serious disputes with the Europe-oriented Turkish Republic that emerged in 1923 after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. Nowadays, a prevalent view in the Middle East is that AKP and Turkey’s conservative Muslim elites have forsaken modern Turkey’s Western-orientation and aligned the republic instead with its Muslim neighbors in the East in a bid to resurrect the old empire. The frequent visits to Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and the Gulf States by high-level Turkish government officials, as well as the new strategic framework and visa agreements that Ankara has signed with each of these countries, only serve to reinforce this notion.

Turkey’s improving relations and its dramatically enlarged commercial activity with the Islamic Republic of Iran have been especially alarming to the West, which have sought to diplomatically isolate the Islamic Republic because of its support for terrorism and suspicions over its nuclear program. Turkey, meanwhile, has sought to use its new relations with Iran to position itself as a bridge between Europe and the pariah state. In January 2011, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, plus Germany—also known as “P5+1”—met with the Iranian delegation in Istanbul to discuss Iran’s nuclear program upon Turkey’s invitation. The talks were concluded without a substantive outcome. In a press conference shortly after the first closed-door session, Catherine Ashton, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, expressed disappointment in
Iran’s position. “This was not the conclusion I had hoped for,” Ashton said. “We had hoped to embark on a discussion of practical ways forward, and have made every effort to make that happen.”

The Istanbul talks were intended to build confidence between the parties and to achieve an agreement that Iran would trade some of its low-enriched uranium for nuclear fuel for Tehran’s Research Reactor. Turkey and Brazil were the chief proponents of this plan. In 2010, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu had traveled to Tehran with his Brazilian counterpart to negotiate a deal that would entail Iran storing its spent nuclear fuel in Turkey in exchange for enriched uranium to be used for nuclear medicine and research facilities. The deal failed when the United States and the other involved parties rejected the amount Tehran agreed to transfer to Turkey. The West contended that the amount the Iranian government agreed to release still left sufficient enriched uranium to put together a nuclear weapon. Turkey subsequently protested the West’s decision to use its veto at the UN Security Council meeting in June 2010 on the sanctions proposed for Iran.

Another widely shared explanation for the current worsening relations between the E.U. and Turkey is Europe’s growing skepticism about Turkey’s commitment to European values. The core group of E.U. states, led by Germany and France, are not as optimistic as the other members about Turkey’s desire to comply with E.U. standards and liberal democratic principles. In November 2010, the official progress report once again relayed the commission’s concern over Turkey’s lack of progress in meeting the fundamental *acquis* criteria. It featured, for instance, an ardent criticism of Ankara for the lack of action toward the peaceful resolution of the Cyprus issue. Furthermore, it signaled that the eight key chapters, including energy and foreign relations, are likely to remain blocked unless the government moves forward on the resolution of the Cyprus issue.

More recently, a series of raids by Turkish police on newspapers and the arrests of journalists who had been critical of the AKP government have resulted in a strain of harsh criticism by Brussels. In March 2011, the European Parliament issued an acerbic criticism of the arrests, condemning in particular the apprehension of Nedim Sener, a trustworthy investigative journalist and the recipient of PEN International’s Freedom of Expression Award, for alleged links with an illegal organization intending to topple the government. The European Parliament said it was closely following the cases of Nedim Sener and his colleague Ahmet Sik, as well as other journalists facing police or judicial harassment, and urged Turkish government to respect the freedom of press.

Erdogan subsequently rejected the Parliament’s criticism, claiming the arrests had nothing to do with freedom of press. According to the prime minister, the journalists were behind bars not because of what they had written or reported, but
because of their ties to an illegal terrorist organization. He told the press that the European Parliament’s report was “unbalanced” and that his government need not do anything about it. “Their duty is to prepare the report, and ours is to go our own way,” Erdogan said.

Because of growing concerns over Turkey’s actual commitment to European principles, Germany and France have staunchly opposed Turkey’s admission to the E.U. The coalition led by Germany and France has consistently and unambiguously voiced its concerns over Turkey’s human rights record and its majority Muslim population. Although European leaders do not express it openly, Europe’s experience with its own Muslim immigrant populations reinforces its fear of admitting a large Muslim country to the union. Turkey, if admitted, would have significant political influence over major E.U. decisions on everything from economic to foreign policy. As such, Turkey’s warming relations with the unstable and often oppressive Muslim regimes to its East and South, as well as the increasing suspicion in the West of creeping Islamization within Turkey itself, are important causes of concern for the European capitals.

As an alternative to full Turkish membership in the E.U., France and Germany have suggested that the E.U. and Turkey form a “privileged partnership”—a scheme that would neither completely break the ties between the E.U. and Turkey nor grant the latter the full rights of an E.U. member. During a trip to Turkey in late February 2011, French President Nicolas Sarkozy did not shy away from reaffirming his opposition to Turkey’s accession to the E.U. Visiting Turkey not as a head of state, but as the holder of the rotating presidency of the G20, Sarkozy also remarked that Turkey as “a strong country at the crossroads of the East and West, does not need to join the European Union.” When Sarkozy stated all of this, he was standing only inches apart from his Turkish counterpart, President Abdullah Gul, at a joint press conference. Turkish leaders and public opinion widely interpreted Sarkozy’s insistence on visiting Turkey not as French President and his brief stay in Turkey—less than six hours—as signs of the E.U.’s waning interest in the admission of Turkey. Sarkozy tried in vain to alleviate the Turkish side’s concern by underlining that the close partnership between the E.U. and Turkey will continue regardless of Turkey’s entry into the European Union. He promised as well “boundless cooperation” on Turkish efforts in procuring nuclear technology. Sarkozy also said, “Between accession and [special] partnership, which Turkey says it does not accept, there is a path of equilibrium that we can find.”

The German Chancellor Angela Merkel has joined Sarkozy on more than one occasion in an effort to persuade Turkey to settle for a privileged partnership with the E.U.—and not full membership. However, Merkel’s rhetoric over Turkey has tended to be comparably softer than that of France’s president. This is likely because of her
conservative party’s Social Democratic coalition partner and also due to worries that appearing to be too opposed to Turkey’s belonging to the E.U. might put-off the nearly three million Turkish immigrants living in Germany. Nonetheless, her recent pronouncement on “the failure of multicultural society in Germany” is widely seen in Turkey and elsewhere as a subtle expression of Merkel’s, and her Christian Democratic Party’s, stalwart resistance to Turkey’s entry. Similarly, during the referenda for the E.U. constitution in 2005, the “no” vote cast by French and Dutch majorities also represented popular resentment in each country toward an E.U. enlargement that would include Turkey.

Such statements and demonstrations often provoke strong reactions from Turkish leaders, accompanied by assurances that Turkey is committed to fully joining the E.U. For example, following Sarkozy’s visit last February, President Gul reaffirmed Turkey’s commitment to membership and called on the E.U. to honor its promise. “We expect the entire E.U. to keep the promise they made,” Gul said, “and give us the opportunity to complete the process successfully.” He added that the referendum on Turkish accession that France might potentially hold in the future would not bother Ankara, underscoring that “artificial obstructions must not hinder” Turkey’s potential to join. What the president meant here was that if the French people voted against the Turkish accession, he would respect their decision. However, he is against some European leaders’ efforts to change the negotiation terms or to come up with alternatives to the full membership, such as the “privileged partnership.”

Shortly after Gul’s remarks, in an interview with a German newspaper prior to his trip to Germany in February, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan accused the E.U. countries of discriminating against Turkey. “The course of the membership creates an impression of discrimination. We are treated the same as countries that do not have any E.U. perspective,” Erdogan charged. He also pointed to the strict visa policy to which Turkish citizens are subjected. “Although E.U. member countries impose strict visa procedures on Turkey,” Erdogan complained, “citizens of Balkan countries who even do not have membership status are exempted from visa requirements.” The Turkish Prime Minister criticized as well the countries mentioned earlier for blocking the negotiations on the remaining eighteen chapters for political reasons. In Erdogan’s view, there can be little progress on Turkey’s E.U. entry for as long as certain E.U. members choose to continue to barricade from rather than encourage Turkey to join.

On the same trip, Erdogan repeated his call on the Turks living in Germany not to assimilate. “You must integrate,” Erdogan decreed, “but I am against assimilation ... no one may ignore the rights of minorities.” “Our children must learn German, but they must learn Turkish first,” added the Turkish Prime Minister. While he has been resistant to assimilation and the dilution of Turkish identity in Europe, Erdogan seems to be fine with Turks becoming doctors, professors and politicians in
Germany. Indeed, in his thinking, a Turkish immigrant should learn German and integrate only for the purpose of reaching these professional goals. Erdogan had made similar provocative remarks three years earlier, addressing hundreds of Turkish people at a joint press event with Chancellor Merkel. The prime minister had proclaimed to a large gathering of Turkish nationals in Cologne in March 2008, “assimilation is tantamount to a crime against humanity.” Erdogan’s remarks at the time reflected his own convictions about the integration of minorities into mainstream European societies and coincided with an era of heated internal debate in Europe on integration versus assimilation. To some Europeans, the prime minister’s remarks represented unwelcome meddling in a sensitive debate on Europe’s future, and this has only further soured E.U.-Turkey relations.

Is Europe to Blame?

Erdogan’s accusations about European bias and discrimination are increasingly resonate with the Turkish public. A growing cohort of intellectuals and opinion leaders from across the political spectrum argue that the E.U. has not been honest with Turkey ever since the start of accession talks. Academics, journalists, pundits, and a diverse group of other representatives of Turkey’s emerging civil society, many of them of liberal persuasion, routinely draw comparisons between Turkey and some of the E.U.’s newest members, such as Bulgaria and Romania. They point out that Turkey is more democratic and economically successful than these former Soviet states that are now E.U. members. And understandably, they often come to the conclusion that the reason the E.U. drags its feet when it comes to Turkey joining has very little to do with democracy and economic performance, but that it has much to do with Turkey’s Muslim identity.

An outside perspective, however, demonstrates that this comparison between Turkey and its non-Muslim neighbors who recently joined the European Union is not entirely accurate. A comprehensive investigation in The Economist reveals that in spite of all its strength, the Turkish economy still trails far behind the economies of the E.U.’s youngest members. The Economist points out that Turkey ranks below Russia, Albania and Romania on the UN Development Program’s human-development index. Furthermore, even though inflation has declined significantly in the last decade, it remains a serious factor of instability in Turkey. Worse, unemployment—especially among the young and women—is extremely high by E.U. standards, and there has been little improvement in eradicating corruption. According to the corruption rankings of Transparency International, a Berlin-based NGO that monitors the trends of corruption in the world, Turkey is behind most E.U. countries, ranking...
56, with a score of 4.4 out of 10 (on a scale from ten to zero—ten being the most transparent). While Turkey has better university and health care systems than its neighbors Bulgaria and Romania and E.U. hopefuls such as Croatia, their distribution and the access to these institutions are uneven.

With respect to the emergence of liberal democracy in Turkey, the country has experienced a major transformation in its political climate in the past decade. Mainly because of the pro-E.U. reforms, a new social dynamism has increased concern for human rights, and spectacular economic growth has taken place. However, the erosion of the state’s nearly century-long assimilation policy and its control over the minority-mainstream dynamics have created new tensions. Today, Turkey struggles with the norms and culture of living together in a sociologically diverse and plural social setting.

While it is true that AKP did more than any other government to embrace Turkey’s Kurdish citizens and integrate them into society under the “Kurdish Opening” program (later renamed as “Democratic Opening”), the government fell short of turning these achievements into a concrete, actionable legal framework during the Constitutional reform referendum in September 2010.

The Constitutional reform package that passed after a national referendum on September 12, 2010 mostly contained a number of cosmetic initiatives on judicial reform and allowed for Islamic headscarves to be worn by women on university campuses. Although Erdogan portrayed these reforms as an effort to increase Turkey’s chances to join the European Union, the package lacked key amendments that would have given increased rights to Kurds, secured religious freedoms for non-Muslims and various minority Muslim denominations such as the Alevis, and would have addressed the deficiencies in freedom of speech and press. Mithat Sancar, an eminent Turkish political scientist and human rights activist, has criticized what he sees as the government’s selective attitude with respect to the headscarf on university campuses. In a public declaration calling for enhanced individual freedoms for all, Sancar said there cannot be partial freedoms that only target the headscarf ban on university campuses. Sancar stressed that the government’s reform agenda must be sincere and comprehensive enough to lift mandatory religion courses in public schools and alleviate other challenges faced by Turkey’s religious minorities.

Whether AKP’s constitutional amendments will make the judiciary more transparent remains to be seen. However, the new and improved Turkish judicial system embarrassingly failed its most important test so far, when the top brass of the Turkish Hezbollah—a radical Islamic Kurdish group (it has no ties to Hezbollah in Iran or Lebanon)—was released from prison in early 2011 because of a loophole in Turkish criminal law. The Turkish Hezbollah was created in the 1990s to fight the PKK in southeast Turkey. The group later targeted top Turkish officials and aligned itself more with radical Islam. During the police raids, it was discovered that the Turkish
Hezbollah had tortured and killed hundreds of innocent people in the region and had become a terrorist network of its own.

The group’s leaders had been detained earlier in 2000 after a long and bloody fight with Turkish law enforcement teams. After being imprisoned, the Hezbollah members’ conviction was delayed because of lengthy trials that lasted well into 2010. They were ultimately released from jail in early January due to a law that limits the arrest period for unconvicted people. Amid public pressure, the government instructed the judiciary to make the necessary amendments to its penal code to re-arrest the newly released Hezbollah members. Despite these efforts, the nine top members of the organization have since disappeared, and they are suspected of fleeing Turkey through Syria.

Proving even more worrisome, the AKP government’s ironfisted approach to protest movements and other forms of political dissent raise serious challenges to the rosy picture of liberal democracy that liberal groups try to paint in Turkey. A series of student protests of government officials erupted in the autumn of 2010 over the lack of participatory rights in decision-making processes of public universities. Later, on December 4, 2010, a group of students gathered in Istanbul to demonstrate outside a meeting between the prime minister and university presidents were brutally beaten by the police. During the violent confrontation, a nineteen-year-old pregnant woman miscarried because of the blows she received to her belly. In the aftermath of the clashes, Erdogan defended the police and accused the students of having links to illegal underground organizations. The students who protested Erdogan and other AKP officials at various universities after this event were also subjected to violent crackdowns from the police and harsh criminal penalties. One student who threw an egg at the Chief E.U. Negotiator Egemen Bagis to protest his speech on his university campus will face two years in prison if he loses the court battle.

The government’s clampdown on the press also continues at full-speed. On March 24, 2011, law enforcement teams raided the offices of a popular liberal newspaper, Radikal. The police and the prosecutor’s office claimed that they were acting on a tip that Radikal was hiding the manuscript of Ahmet Sik’s upcoming book, The Imam’s Army, which is reportedly about the emergence of an Islamist faction within the Turkish police force. Sik was one of the journalists who was taken into the police custody with the award-winning investigative reporter Nedim Sener in March. Sik, Sener and the others are accused of being members of a clandestine group called Ergenekon, which was allegedly founded in the early 2000s to engineer a military coup against the AKP government. The courts have yet to reach an official verdict on the real members and planned terrorist activities of the Ergenekon organization, but a number of journalists with dissenting opinions of the government have been behind the bars for years for alleged ties to this organization without an official court
sentence. Ironically, both Sener and Sık have devoted their careers to the investigation of and exposing clandestine organizations such as Ergenekon in Turkey and have written numerous books and articles on the issue.27

During the raid of the Radikal offices, police investigators were seen deleting the manuscript of Sık’s unpublished book from Radikal’s computers after having made copies for themselves. This was rightfully perceived as the suppression of free speech in an environment where the government forcefully interferes with free flow of ideas. The leak of this police action has created a major uproar among the Turkish people and strengthened fears over the AKP government’s willingness to use brute force to silence dissenting voices.

Last month, the police also raided the offices of Oda TV, an online news site with a strongly anti-AKP perspective, and arrested its editors. Soner Yalcin, the editor-in-chief of Oda TV, has been a staunch critic of the government and an author of numerous books known for their fierce anti-government rhetoric. Although Oda TV is infamous for its defamation campaigns, often phony news stories, and hate speech against individuals with whom it disagrees, government prosecutors have yet to bring charges against this media organization and its editors. As has been the trend with the majority of arrests of journalists since 2008, the Turkish public is left in the dark regarding the actual charges facing the suspects.

The Way Forward:
More Civil Society Dialogue

The future of E.U.-Turkey relations looks bleak. Given the divergent perspectives and trajectories of both sides, it appears that Turkey’s E.U. bid is headed for another “train crash”—a popular phrase used in 2006, ahead of the critical Commission report, on the nebulous future of the negotiations. While Turkey continues to affirm its determination to join the E.U., contradictory statements made by the top cadre of Turkish officials as well as Turkey’s new foreign policy direction fuel deep-seated distrust on the E.U. side. Similarly, the persistence of key E.U. countries on achieving a “privileged partnership” with Turkey, rather than full membership, and their veto on vital chapters have led to the rapid deterioration of the Turkish public’s trust in the E.U. Given the approaching Turkish general elections in June 2011, it is reasonable to expect more anti-E.U. rhetoric from Turkey’s elected AKP officials who will seek to drum-up support among Turkish nationalists in particular. Brussels’ discussion of Turkish accession will be cold at best.
Even though intergovernmental relations are hanging by a thread, it is too early to pull the plug on Turkey’s E.U. accession. This is mainly due to the existence of strong ties between the European and Turkish civil society sectors and business communities. With respect to the former, prestigious European policy research institutions have invested significantly in Turkish NGOs and think tanks. European research organizations and foundations such as the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the Robert Bosch Foundation, and the Open Society Foundation are all present in Turkey and represented by a permanent office and country director. These organizations often partner with and sponsor emerging Turkish think tanks and other NGOs. Through exchange programs, workshops, roundtables, and conferences, these organizations contribute to the discourse on the E.U. accession, influence government policy and keep the public engaged. Additionally, think tanks like the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation have received significant funding from various European organizations such as the Open Society Foundation and implemented successful programs contributing to democratization efforts in Turkey via its projects on human rights, social equality and freedom of press. Similarly, Turkey’s E.U. Membership Observatory was launched in 2001 as a joint project between the Istanbul Policy Center and the Mediterranean Programme of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute. The European Institute of the Mediterranean joined as a full partner two years later.

The Observatory project proved an essential nongovernmental initiative that promoted focused research on topics relevant to Turkey’s integration in the E.U. and supported scholarly efforts in this direction. It also brought together policy and opinion makers from Turkey and the E.U. to encourage dialogue at the level of civil society and to foster a common understanding of issues. Finally, it assisted the process of negotiations by providing policy suggestions and improving the understanding of the decision makers, businessmen and active members of relevant nongovernmental organizations.

In addition, the business ties between Turkey and the European Union are the other invisible anchor that keeps Turkey and the E.U. from drifting away from each other. Business associations throughout Turkey are the only link tying the laymen in rural Anatolia and southeast Turkey to the E.U. Konya, one of the most conservative Turkish cities, receives the largest chunk of E.U. grants channeled into Turkey. The Konya Chamber of Commerce is one of the most ardent supporters of Turkey’s E.U. accession because of the positive effects of the E.U. programs on the textile industry and overall competition in the region. Despite the conservative and religious makeup of the city, Konya overwhelmingly supports Turkey’s entry into the E.U., for this will bring education in European standards, accountability, competition, and standardization in industry.
Likewise, overwhelming support for the E.U. can also be found in Kayseri, another Turkish city recognized for the conservative lifestyles of its inhabitants. Kayseri is a leading exporter of home and office furniture, cotton products, rugs and other household products, and the E.U. is the primary destination for these exports. Just as in Konya, the representatives of commerce associations and NGOs stress the importance of joining the E.U. These individuals believe that Turkey can only reach the E.U. standards in all walks of life by becoming a full-fledged member of the European Union. Moreover, Kayseri has one of the top attendance rates in the Training and Information Programs on the E.U. Funds and Project Proposals. Kayseri has been awarded eighty-six projects and received close to 12.5 million Euros in grants. The Kayseri municipality in 2007 received close to 7 million Euros for five of its projects from official E.U. funds.

These examples all suggest that AKP is becoming increasingly detached from its key constituencies. In the words of the sociologist and the founder of the Liberal Thought Foundation, Berat Ozipek, “AKP’s base is way ahead of its party.” The party base, according to Ozipek, is made of four groups: conservatives, Islamists (who are a minority within the party), liberals, and leftists. The conservative majority—namely, the wealthy entrepreneurs from Anatolia with conservative religious values—has reformed itself more rapidly than any other group within the AKP constituency. The conservatives support trade, globalization, and better relations with the West. They learn about other cultures through their commercial interactions with their foreign counterparts. Like secularists, they are equally afraid of AKP’s increasing interference with business practices and free speech. They have valid fears that their assets might one day be nationalized, or that their business deals might be hampered because of major political disagreements with the party management. Moreover, the conservative majority has also become increasingly frustrated with the AKP leadership efforts linking religious conservatives with what are mounting reservations within the party to openness toward Kurdish cultural autonomy and further democratization. The conservative majority is not, in fact, opposed to Turkey becoming a more open and diverse country where people with different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds live in harmony.

Whether the conservative base will ultimately raise its voice in the June elections against AKP’s tampering with free markets and free speech remains to be seen. Odds are the core constituency will continue to vote for AKP in the absence of a strong opposition that also represents conservative religious values. Liberals, on the other hand, are likely to cast protest votes against AKP because of the government’s increasing undemocratic practices.

Finally, amid increasing resentment from key E.U. countries against Turkish membership and declining public support and government commitment to join the E.U.
in Turkey, it is up to the European and Turkish people to pursue this endeavor. Unlike many E.U. governments, European civil society realizes the strong contributions Turkey will make to Europe if it is allowed to join. It also understands the ramifications of a Turkey that is cast aside by Brussels and left with no option but to seek new alliances within the region. Similarly, on the grassroots level, Turkey is increasingly gaining awareness of the advantages of E.U. membership. Therefore, the time is ripe for both European and Turkish publics to engage their governments via strong civic participation, to work in tandem in order to cut the government rhetoric and to give the negotiations a new direction with constructive outcomes.

NOTES

7. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
15. Matthias Beerman, “Erdogan: ‘Erfolgreiche Integration - nur mit uns,’” Rheinische Post, February 26,


24. Ibid.


29. Ibid.

30. Ibid. 52-57.

31. Ibid. 57.