



Who is Who in the debate on Turkey

The Netherlands

22 February 2006

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THE DUTCH EU PRESIDENCY
July – December 2004

Peter Ludlow, chairman of EuroComment [www.eurocomment.be] and founding Director of CEPS:

“The Dutch had known since December 2002 that the Turkish question was likely to be the defining issue during their EU Presidency. They were also aware that the [European] Commission would almost certainly recommend the opening of negotiations. They were therefore well prepared when the Commission report appeared at the beginning of October [2004]. ...

When the Cabinet first discussed the Turkish issue at length in February 2004, for example, only two senior ministers, Ben Bot, the foreign minister, and Laures Jan Brinkhorst the economics minister, came out strongly in support of an opening to Turkey. The skeptics included heavyweight figures such as Gerrit Zalm, deputy prime minister and minister of finance, and Cees Veerman, the minister of agriculture, who came from the prime minister’s own party. The arguments deployed against Turkish membership in the Dutch debate were essentially the same as those that were used elsewhere in the Union. ...

Fifty years of NATO membership had little or no impact on Turkey’s political culture. ... Since EU membership became a definite rather than a theoretical possibility in 1999, by contrast, successive Turkish governments, and most particularly the Erdogan government, have implemented a revolution in politics, economics and society, which is notable by any standards. ...

The decision to treat with Turkey is a dramatic step in the direction of a multi-faith Union, which borders on and must therefore develop entirely new relations with a region that is still the most dangerous part of the world and where religion is a factor of primordial importance. This ... is bound to transform the domestic politics of the Union, its self-understanding and its image in the world at large.”

Quotes from the 45-page report by Peter Ludlow, A View from Brussels - Dealing with Turkey, The European Council of 16 -17 December 2004, Briefing Note Volume 3, N.7. www.eurocomment.be.

The Dutch government coalition since the last legislative elections, on 22 January 2003, is led by Christen-Democratisch Appèl party (CDA; 44 seats) and includes the Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD; 28 seats minus one due to Geert Wilders defection since fall 2004) and the Democraten 66 (D66, 6 seats). The opposition consists of the Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA; 42 seats), the Socialistische Partij SP; (9 seats), the Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF; 8 seats), the GroenLinks (8 seats), the ChristenUnie (3 seats), and the Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP; 2 seats). The second chamber of Dutch parliament (Tweedekamer) has 150 members. Election turnout in 2003 was 80%.

I. POLITICAL PARTIES

1. DUTCH POLITICAL PARTIES – GOVERNMENT

1. CDA - CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (Christen Democratisch Appèl)

Jan Peter Balkenende, Dutch prime minister [Christian Democrats] since 2002. As President of the European Union Council in the second half of 2004 he led the negotiations on the December 2004 European Council resolution on Turkey.

“What is important to me is *fair play*. The European Commission will test in October whether Turkey lives up to the strict rules, in particular concerning the human rights situation. The advice of the Commission is decisive.”

Jan Peter Balkenende, Dutch prime minister,
quoted in Algemeen Dagblad, 31 January, 2004

“The decision [on Turkey] must be arrived at honestly, under the ground rules to which we previously, in 2002, firmly committed ourselves. That means strict application of the criteria laid down, but without inventing any new criteria. ... We cannot change the rules during the game. ... We must not allow ourselves to be guided by fear, for example, of Islam. The raising of barriers to any particular religion is not consistent with Europe’s shared values. Our opposition should be directed not against religions, but against people and groups misusing their religion to get their way by force. Islam is not the problem.”

Jan Peter Balkenende, president of the European Council,
Speech to the European Parliament, 21 July 2004

“The Union’s capacity to absorb is not unlimited. However, agreements are fixed, for the Union as well as for candidate states. ... I emphasise that the European Union has never had stricter conditions for accession to any country than for Turkey.”

Jan Peter Balkenende, Speech to the Dutch Parliament, 22 September 2005

Bernard Bot, Foreign Minister

“The government believes like the Commission that the positive trend of implementation [of remaining reforms in Turkey] can be trusted and that it will be continued if the accession negotiations will be initiated ... The pressure exercised by the European Union therefore has led to great results. ... If the reforms don't go well, the technical negotiations will be slowed down or, by means of the emergency brake mechanism, will be stopped.”

Bernard Bot, Foreign Minister,
Dutch Parliament, Second Chamber, 10 November 2004

Jan Jacob Van Dijk, CDA-fraction spokesman for European affairs in the Second Chamber:

“The AKP is a party which has an identity and ideology that is close to ours, a fact many CDA members are not completely aware of. We concluded from our one-week trip that there were positive developments, but we needed pressure regarding remaining problems. ... Our trip to Turkey played an important role for the ensuing CDA discussion and for convincing our members. “

ESI interview with Jan Jacob van Dijk, 2 February 2005,
The Hague

Camiel Eurlings, a CDA member of the European Parliament since 2004. Rapporteur on Turkey, chairman of the EU-Turkish delegation and member of the Foreign Affairs Committee. From 2002 to 2004, he was the CDA's chief spokesperson on foreign affairs. CDA member of the Dutch parliament from 1998 to 2004:

“A Turkey must arise in which it is just as easy to establish a Christian church as it is to build a mosque in Rotterdam. I say this in favor of the Turks. But I'm also convinced that this new reality makes people think very differently about the accession of Turkey.”

Camiel Eurlings as visiting MEP in the Dutch Parliament,
Second Chamber, 21st Session; Europe debate, 10
November 2004

“Trials like those against Orhan Pamuk, Hrant Dink and Burak Pekdil or against publishers like Fatih Tas and Ragip Zarakolyu are in conflict with the European convention on human rights. A conviction will surely have a negative effect on the accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey.”

CDA press release, “Camiel Eurlings leads delegation to observe Pamuk trial”, 30 November 2005

Arie Oostlander, Dutch MEP [CDA] from 1989 to 2004, and European Parliament Turkey Rapporteur until 2004:

“My approach was, *strict, fair, and open*. There are very humane consequences to Turkish EU membership, if Turkey is really able to change into a constitutional state. And I really believe that people can change. It is very Christian to believe that, and very un-Christian not to believe that. ...

Turkish nationalism, the education of judges and the police, the violation of individual human rights; - all this has to change in Turkey. When Turks told me they were afraid to push the army to the barracks because this vacuum might lead to fundamentalist Muslims taking over, I said, “if you Turks are afraid of Islam, what then should I tell my constituency in the Netherlands? And if you are right, then there is indeed a structural problem between Turkey and the EU.”

ESI interview with Arie Oostlander, 18 November 2005, Arnhem

Hans van den Broek, former Minister of Foreign Affairs [CDA], and a member of the “Independent Turkey Commission”:

“Hans van den Broek thinks that the public discussion in the Netherlands about Turkey has started too late. [...] He thinks the flood of reports is a blessing, if it provides a more ‘informed and objective’ public debate.”

Turkish accession divides, NRC Handelsblad, 9 September 2004

“I terminated my Elsevier subscription [*political weekly*] because of their Europe and Turkey standpoint. In general, the Turkey debate in the media is quite balanced, yet the critical voices – also in my own party – are becoming louder.”

ESI Interview with Hans van den Broek, 30 November 2005. Elsevier magazine has been opposing the prospect of Turkish EU-accession.

Ab Klink, director of the CDA Scientific Council:

“We should be – and have to be - able to persuade the Dutch public that we – Christians, and Muslims, - can all work together. Turkey’s chances to win the popular vote in the Netherlands will only increase once we have come to some conclusion in our ongoing discourses on Islam, the rule of law in Turkey, and human rights.”

ESI interview with Ab Klink, 2 December 2005

Marnix van Rij, a former chairman of the CDA and now a board member of *Trouw*, a daily newspaper which has traditionally appealed most to the Dutch Protestant constituency:

“CDA chairman Verhagen is too skeptical about Turkey’s accession to the EU. He tries to impress scared citizens [...] Doesn’t Maxime Verhagen realize the value of a democratic Turkey in order to warrant peace with Greece forever, just like the European cooperation that also brought the arch-enemies of Germany and France together?”

Marnix van Rij, Verhagen’s Populism is unworthy of CDA member, article in the *Trouw* daily newspaper, 12 October 2004

René van der Linden, President of the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe, a CDA senator in Dutch parliament, and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Maastricht School of Management:

“In 2002, it was my personal decision to help the AKP party become members of the European People’s party [EPP] in the Council of Europe’s parliamentary assembly. ... I had argued in the EPP that parties whose principal behavior includes a respect for values, family, education, and so on, - therefore, parties which can accept our own program – do belong to our movement. Most EPP members were in favor. I also created a working group in the EPP on Islam and Christianity, and I organized a conference. We have to understand each other much better.”

ESI Interview with René van der Linden, 1 February 2006, Maastricht

Jaap De Hoop Scheffer, secretary general of NATO since 2003, Dutch minister of Foreign Affairs from 2002 to 2004 [CDA], a former leader of the CDA, and a senior diplomat before entering parliament in 1986, said shortly before the European Council in Copenhagen in December 2002:

“For the Dutch government the candidate status of Turkey has not being questioned since 1999. The Dutch government will not back track its decision. ... We cannot exclude that Turkey will fulfill the political criteria at one point. We have to work hard to get the country that far. We have to send a positive signal to Turkey in this respect. A lot of things have been achieved during the last couple of months.

Second Chamber, 4 December 2002, 29th Session

2. **VVD - LIBERALS** (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie - People's Party for Freedom and Democracy)

Atzo Nicolai, Minister for European Affairs [which corresponds to the position of State Secretary for Foreign Affairs] since 2002. From 1998 to 2002, he was a VVD member of parliament.

“We can see that religion is not the binding factor and not the decisive value within Europe. You could even say: on the contrary, because tolerance for different religions is crucial and characteristic for Europe. The report “EU, Turkey and Islam” concluded that the secular character which is continuously emphasized and being pursued within Europe, is firmly rooted in Turkey, just like the democratic constitutional state.”

Atzo Nicolai in Dutch Parliament, Second Chamber, 21st Session; Europe debate, 10 November 2004

“Turkish society has modernized enormously during the past years. However, with the Pamuk affair and similar cases it becomes clear that the process of reforms is far from being completed. [...] The Turkish government has always stated to not exclusively view the reforms as a means to become a member of the EU, but also as an aim in itself. If that is the case, then Turkey will be receptive to the pressure by the EU to adjust the article of the penal code on which the charge against Pamuk is based.”

Atzo Nicolai, “EU takes Pamuk Affair seriously”, commentary in the Volkskrant daily newspaper, 20 October 2005

“I am personally a staunch supporter of Turkish accession. ... Our government’s position is to stick to previous agreements. When we tried to identify people’s concrete concerns regarding Turkey, we found it was less Islam, or Turkey’s size. Rather, it was migration of Turks. Thus we were able to combine the international and national discussion by the positive conclusion in the European Council and with Turkey that safeguard clauses on migration can be applied.

ESI Interview with Atzo Nicolai, The Hague, 2 December 2005

Jozias Van Aartsen, leader of the VVD parliamentary faction since 2003, and also the political director of the VVD. From 1998 to 2002, he was minister for foreign affairs:

“We unanimously feel that in principle, there is no obstacle for Turkish membership of the Union. However, we link it to a set of strict conditions. ... We have four conditions for Turkey. Firstly, sharp adherence of human rights, in particular of women and minorities ... Second, maintenance of the secular character of the Turkish state, consequently no introduction of Islamic family law. Third, postponing of free movement of persons after the accession, in order to protect our labor market. Fourth, the pushing back of the Turkish state’s influence [as exerted through the office for religious affairs, Diyanet] on Turkish inhabitants of the Netherlands.

Jozias van Aartsen, “The Ferry Men and the Bosphorus”, commentary in the NRC Handelsblad, 10 September 2004

Hans Van Baalen, a VVD MP since 2003 [and also from 1999 to 2002], who has been very active in European and foreign affairs in his party. He is VVD-fraction spokesman for European affairs in the Second Chamber. Known to have had serious doubts about the prospect of Turkish EU accession, he turned committed to it in the course of 2004:

“The fact that Turkey’s population is Islamic is not relevant. Van Baalen thinks that religious belief has to be kept out of the discussion about a Turkish membership. ... Turkey is far removed from fulfilling the accession criteria. The military still has an influence on politics through the Turkish national security council. Turkey’s leaders do not dare to terminate the occupation of North Cyprus out of fear to offend the military. Also, the jurisprudence in Turkey is not yet fully independent. ... Moreover, not all judges are yet well enough trained. Also, minority rights are not respected well enough in Turkey.”

Marcel ten Hooven, ‘Turkey cannot be excluded from the EU forever’, interview with Mr. Van Baalen [VVD], in the Trouw daily newspaper, 31 January 2004

“The VVD is in favor of Turkish accession in the long run to the European Union, under strict application of the Copenhagen criteria [...] During the European Council in December we should make our vision clear. Free movement of individuals is not automatically included in the accession of Turkey. We should decide this separately and unanimously. It could be possible to include safeguard clauses too.”

Dutch Parliament, Second Chamber, 21st Session; Europe debate, 10 November 2004

“Under the conditions which the Commission has formulated, Turkey is not a 'must', or forced baby, but welcome as a member of the European Union [...] I want to make clear that the task of reform has been addressed to the European Union and in this case not to Turkey. We must reform ourselves. That does not block Turkish membership in the long run. We must ensure that Turkey comes into a functioning Union.”

Hans van Baalen explaining the motion he submitted together with Frans Timmermans on 10 November 2004 in the 21st meeting of the Dutch parliament.

One year later, on 29 September 2005, shortly before the start of accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 October, another motion of Hans Van Baalen – this time regarding Turkey’s ongoing discrimination of the Republic of Cyprus – found a majority of votes. Submitted in the Europe Session in the Dutch parliament, it was adopted by all MPs except the LPF delegates.

Motion of MP van Baalen, 29 September 2005 [adopted]

“The accession negotiations with Turkey must be suspended immediately if Turkey treats the republic of Cyprus differently from other EU member states. For instance refusing Cypriote ships or planes in Turkey. Turkey cannot be a member of the EU as long as it hasn’t recognized the republic of Cyprus according to international law.”

Hans van Baalen in the Europe Session of the Dutch parliament, 29 September 2005

Frits Bolkestein, a VVD member of the Dutch parliament since 1978 and a minister of several Dutch cabinets. From 1999 to 2004, he was the European Commissioner responsible for Internal Market, Taxation, and Customs. He was the only member of the Romano Prodi Commission to oppose the commission’s view on Turkey’s progress on the Copenhagen Criteria in 2004, and has frequently brought his reservations against

further EU accession to the fore. He is now writing books and debating Europe in a civilian capacity.

“In ten to fifteen years’ time, Turkey’s population could be the largest in the EU. It would have a significant impact on both the European Council and the European Parliament. Turkey would also be one of the poorest Member States. In the past, Europe has often made the mistake of promising too much too soon. If Turkey is accepted as a member, the Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova will also have to be accepted. At the end of this road lies a European Union that will be little more than a glorified customs union.”

*Frits Bolkestein in his book, “The limits of Europe”,
Lannoo: Tiel 2004 [also available in Dutch].*

Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a VVD MP since 2003, and an outspoken critic of Islam. She has been producing several movies, and had to live under severe protection for months after the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, who had been collaborating on her movie, “Submission”.

“Does Turkey belong to the EU?” - “Yes, but.” ... I am optimistic about the changes taking place in Turkey. I am sure that like Europe, Turkey will one day move away from gender discrimination and a culture that oppresses women. Until then, it is necessary for the Turkish government, to see to it that any obstacles which limit the fundamental rights and freedom of the individuals are removed. It is also a duty for the EU to see to it that equal rights for women becomes a condition for EU accession, not only for the sake of Turkey, but also for our members and other candidate countries. [...] Dear leaders of Turkey, are you willing to meet the cultural requirements necessary to improve the daily lives of all individuals, and especially of women? What are your ambitions?”

*Ayaan Hirsi Ali at the symposium, Turkey and the EU –
looking beyond prejudice, Maastricht School of
Management, April 4 & 5, 2004*

3. **D66 - DEMOCRATS 66** (Democraten 66)

Laurens Jan Brinkhorst, Dutch minister for Economic Affairs, D66:

“Both our countries are haunted by images of the past and problems of the present. At this particular moment, migration is a sensitive issue in the EU. We struggle with the tasks of integrating new groups in our society while unemployment is on the rise. ... After the accession of Spain and Portugal, we

were surprised to see the large-scale remigration of Spanish and Portuguese workers who were working in countries such as the Netherlands and Germany. Is it unlikely that Turks now living in Germany and the Netherlands consider a return to Turkey?"

Laurens Jan Brinkhorst at the symposium, "Turkey and the EU, looking beyond prejudice", Maastricht School of Management, Maastricht, 4-5 April 2004

"My own view on Turkey changed a couple of years ago for three reasons. First, I realized the importance and permanence of the Muslim community here. Second, Europe`s society should be open and no fortress, and the question is whether you can say "no" to Turkey. Third, the area around Turkey is strategically significant. The impact of a Muslim country within the EU on democracy in the Middle East would be huge."

ESI Interview with Laurens Jan Brinkhorst, 26 January 2006

Louisewies van der Laan, since January 2006 leader of the D66 parliamentary faction in the Second Chamber of the Dutch parliament, and a MP since 2004. From 1999 to 2004, she was a member of the European Parliament.

"Turkey should be treated equally in the accession process, but the Copenhagen criteria are an absolute *sine qua non*. [...] If the Turks do not think they are genuinely welcome in the EU, we risk strengthening the wrong powers in Turkey. We need the Turks precisely because they are Muslim."

ESI Interview with Louisewies van der Laan, 29 November 2005, Amsterdam/The Hague

Boris Dittrich, a D66 member of parliament since 1994, and from 2003 to early 2006 leader of the D66 parliamentary faction in the Second Chamber of the Dutch parliament:

"After the European Summit in December 2004, the government must clearly underline the following: the possible decision on starting negotiations with Turkey has nothing to do with the European constitution about which the referenda will be held. People in Europe may be confused and will think the referendum concerns Turkey."

Dutch Parliament, Second Chamber, 21st Session; Europe debate, 10 November 2004

Boris Van der Ham, a D66 member of parliament. In the party that has for four decades pledged for referendums to be held in the Netherlands, he turned out to remain isolated with his pledge for a referendum on Turkey.

“The last sixty years we didn’t have a decent debate on Europe in the Netherlands. ... With only debating in the parliament, Europe didn’t come any closer to citizens. Let’s not [...] be afraid of taking risks for open debates.”

Dutch Parliament, Second Chamber, Europe debate, 29 September 2005

B. POLITICAL PARTIES – OPPOSITION

1. PvdA – LABOR PARTY (Partij van de Arbeid)

Wouter Bos, a PvdA member of parliament since 1998, and since 2002 the faction leader of the PvdA in the Second Chamber:

“Europe is becoming larger. As long as the criteria are being strictly applied, this is a good thing. It forces countries to transform into democracies and constitutional states. It opens up markets for our economy. ... It is very well thinkable that we form an economic Union together with a large group of countries, while intense political cooperation remains restricted to a smaller group of countries.”

Wouter Bos in his December 2005 bestseller, “Dit land kan zoveel beter.” [This country can do so much better]; in Dutch.

Frans Timmermans, a PvdA member of parliament since 1998, and currently the chairman of the Second Chamber’s Foreign Affairs Committee. Timmermans formerly worked for the OSCE. The PvdA party position [pro Turkish accession talks] was forged in early autumn 2004.

“A positive decision concerning the commencement of the accession negotiations is only conceivable if the recommendations of the European Commission are explicitly incorporated by the European Council in December [2004], in other words, that, “negotiations are immediately suspended if Turkey does not comply with the agreements in the field of human rights, that the free movement of individuals is not automatic with accession, but rather, requires a separate and unanimous decision about the free movement and transition periods, not excluded with a safeguard clause, and the Union must have drastically reformed its agricultural and structural policy and finances to be able to admit Turkey.”

Frans Timmermans [PvdA] and Hans van Baalen [VVD], motion number 13, submitted in the 21st meeting of the Dutch parliament, 10 November 2004. The motion [number 13] had been accepted by the majority of the Second Chamber (Tweedekamer).

“We had to take position on Turkey in 2004. It was almost impossible to communicate to people that negotiations do not mean immediate membership, and that they do not join tomorrow. These two misperceptions have run deep. In 2004, I spoke to our party members in about seven discussion evenings all over the country. [...] I have always said Turkey deserves a chance. I truly believe it is not set but we have to give Turkey the opportunity to comply with the criteria. [...]. Our position is firm.”

ESI Interview with Frans Timmermans, 31 January 2006, The Hague

Nebahat Albayrak, a PvdA member of parliament since 1998 (and the first Dutch Turkish MP of eventually five in 2003), and the chair of the Defense Committee. In the 2003 elections, Albayrak ranked fourth on the PvdA list.

“When I entered parliament in 1998, many Turks said, “this is what we need.” An old man told me he was now confident about his grandchildren’s future in the Netherlands. Besides presenting the whole Dutch electorate, I have done everything in my power to engage with the Turkish community.”

ESI Interview with Nebahat Albayrak, 2 February 2006

Jan Marinus Wiersma, a PvdA member of the European parliament since 1994, Vice-President of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, and a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee. He is a member of the Presidency of the Party of European Socialists [PES]:

“My party is now in a re-assessment period. One conclusion about EU enlargement is that it should not be the casualty of our problems with our own electorate. Turkey is not a hard issue to communicate to people, and it does not really influence people’s voting behaviour. The fact that we are pro Turkey does not affect our voters. ... The PvdA MEPs all share the standard line: membership is the goal, we are strict on conditions and on the absorption capacity of the EU.”

ESI Interview with Jan Marinus Wiersma, 22 November 2005, Brussels

Max Van den Berg, a PvdA MEP since 1999 and the leader of the EP's PvdA delegation. Although he is known to be the only PvdA politician with serious doubts on the Turkish EU perspective, he endorsed the December 2004 Eurlings report on Turkey in the European parliament.

“The accession of Turkey now asks for a serious social debate, discussing the worries of citizens. I don't mean a debate led by professors and chairmen of parties in posh venues. [...] Start debating at schools and community centers. Preferably with Turkish immigrants living in the Netherlands and Dutch citizens ... Start debating at McDonald's ..., include local and regional television.”

Dutch Parliament, Second Chamber, 21st Session; Europe debate, 10 November 2004

2. **SP - Socialist Party** (Socialistische Partij)

Erik Meijer, a SP member of the European parliament since 1999, and until 1996 a politician with GroenLinks:

“Like most other parliamentary parties, the SP would like a Turkey within the European Union which has no political prisoners, does not prohibit parties and newspapers, no vote limit of 10%, no disavowal of the genocide on Armenians in 1915, no neglect, disavowal or oppression of the Kurdish population and no discrimination of religious minorities.”

Dutch Parliament, Second Chamber, 21st Session; Europe debate, 10 November 2004

3. **LPF - List Pim Fortuyn** (Lijst Pim Fortuyn)

Mat Herben, a LPF member of parliament since 2002, and since 2004 the LPF faction leader:

“For the security of Europe, I think that our NATO ally Turkey needs to profile itself in the Middle East as a modern Islamic nation fulfilling a pioneer function.”

Dutch Parliament, Second Chamber, 21st Session; Europe debate, 10 November 2004

“I don't see why offering a privileged partnership would be experienced as a disavowal towards Turkey, on the contrary. I don't want to repeat the debate concerning the Turkish enlargement. However, it annoys me that the minister always refers to 1963. Isn't he aware of the fact that the European Union did not exist in 1963 and was then called the European Economic Community?”

Dutch Parliament, Europe debate, 29 September 2005

4. **The opposition *Green party*** (GroenLinks)

Joost Lagendijk, GroenLinks member of the European parliament and leader of the Dutch GroenLinks delegation there:

“The argumentation of advocates for a ‘membership light’ [...] is rather inconsistent. On the one hand they rightly emphasize that in Turkey many things are not working well when it comes to things as respect for human rights and the constitutional state. At the same time they propose to neglect these things with a further rapprochement between Turkey and the EU, and make do with one common market and the adjustment of foreign policy. [...] This would mean that the EU will not interfere into the reforms in Turkey anymore.”

Turkey: there is no alternative for full membership, October 11, 2005

<http://www.GroenLinks.nl/europa/dossiers/eu-turkije>

Farah Karimi, GroenLinks member of parliament since 1998. She submitted a motion in the Tweedekamer [Second Chamber] before the European Council in Helsinki in 1999, asking the government to oppose the planned granting of an EU candidate status to Turkey. The motion, while supported by GroenLinks, the VVD, the SP, and the SCP MPs, was defeated by the other factions. Three years later, before the European Council in Copenhagen in December 2002, and in light of Turkey’s new government, Karimi stated her support of the so-called “rendez-vous” clause regarding a date-setting on starting negotiations with Turkey:

“A date for a date is a possibility for giving a positive signal towards Turkey. In this context it is of great importance to name a realistic first date.”

Wijnand Duyvendak, a GroenLinks member of parliament since 2002:

“The GroenLinks parliamentary party agrees with the commitment and choices of the government in the discussion concerning the accession negotiations with Turkey. A positive decision must lead in our opinion immediately to a start of negotiations. I emphasize however that after the turn of the year a number of issues in Turkey must be monitored well. I refer to tortures, displaced Turks and freedom of speech. If one notices problems, the government or the EU must dare to intervene.”

Dutch Parliament, Second Chamber, 21st Session; Europe debate, 10 November 2004

“My parliamentary party remains a strong and fundamental proponent of a full membership of Turkey ... refusing Turkey after the negotiations as a normal member of the EU, can end the dynamics of the reforms. It would be a disaster for Turkey, the stability in the region and for the European Union itself”

Dutch Parliament, Second Chamber, 21st Session; Europe debate, 10 November 2004

5. SGP - Political Reformed Party (Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij)

Kees van der Staaij, a SGP member of parliament since 1998:

“My parliamentary party thinks that Turkey is neither geographically, culturally nor religiously able to connect with the EU to further justify its accession.”

Dutch Parliament, Second Chamber, 21st Session; Europe debate, 10 November 2004

6. CU - Christian Union (ChristenUnie)

André Rouvoet, a member of parliament since 1994, and since 2001 the leader of the ChristenUnie faction in the Second Chamber:

“the question whether Turkey does belong to the European Union is no longer relevant. This decision has already been made at the European Summit in Helsinki in 1999.”

“The majority of the population has an opinion about the accession of Turkey. That’s a good thing. I know my parliamentary party won’t agree to a referendum, but I would!”

Dutch Parliament, Second Chamber, 21st Session; Europe debate, 10 November 2004

Johannes Blokland, a ChristenUnie member of the European parliament since 1994:

“I am concerned about the lawless position of Christian churches in Turkey. We need to discuss the presidium of religious matters with Ankara. This extensive state organ checks and promotes Sunni Islam. It is controlled directly by progressive Prime Minister Erdogan. Moreover, the Turkish government refuses to acknowledge the Armenian genocide.

Dutch Parliament, Second Chamber, 21st Session; Europe debate, 10 November 2004

7. The Opposition Group Wilders [Groep Wilders], seats in parliament: 1 [party emerged after Wilders defected from the VVD over Turkey in autumn 2004. He subsequently formed his own party, the Group Wilders.]

“Islam and democracy are fully incompatible. They will never be compatible – not today, and not in a million years.”

Wilders in the Washington Post, February 1, 2005

“I realize that your government was not in favor of the previous referendum. But don’t you agree that one of the lessons would be to involve the nation if Turkey should become a member of the European Union?”

Dutch Parliament - General Political Debate – 22 September 2005

II. DIPLOMATS

Tacan Ildem, Turkish ambassador to the Netherlands since 2003.

“Dutch policymakers and civil actors are better informed about the Turkey dossier than others in Europe. The Dutch government held many debates, had different studies produced, and in general did their homework in a very diligent way. ... In the cabinet, critical voices on Turkey had been numerous. But these critics and their anxieties had been addressed. Now, the cabinet is united around the consensus on Turkey ... In the Netherlands, all the tough questions are asked. they did not make it an easy decision for themselves.”

ESI Interview with Tacan Ildem, 1 December 2005

“The government feels the necessity to move cautiously. [...] I think that some of the sensitivities of the public are exaggerated. [...] Politicians will double think and check every step very cautiously, especially on Turkey. They will still pursue steps which will help Turkish accession process; but without fireworks.”

ESI Interview with Tacan Ildem, 1 February 2006

Sjoerd Gosses, Dutch ambassador to Turkey from 1999 to 2005. He presented both the Dutch and the subsequent Luxembourg presidency of the EU in Ankara in late 2004 and early 2005. From 1995 to 1999, Gosses was Director General for European Integration at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

“Hardly anyone realized some years ago that Turkey was still acting like a post-Soviet republic, and that the centerpiece of change in Turkey is the relation between the state and individual. Turkey is in a revolution between the Nomenklatura and freely elected AKP representatives. This revolution is still underway.”

ESI Interview with Sjoerd Gosses, 3 February 2006

III. CIVIL SOCIETY, ACADEMIA, JOURNALISTS

R.F.M. Lubbers [Chair] and then-members of the Advisory Council on International Affairs [AIV; Adviesraad Internationale Vraagstukken], publishing a 57-page, interdisciplinary report, *“Towards calmer waters: a report on relations between Turkey and the EU”* on 2 July 1999. It tackles the debate on Turkish EU membership, presents a profile of Turkey, and discusses human rights, the economic outlook, geostrategic implications, and a political agenda for Turkey and the EU.

“The Advisory Council notes that there is no convincing reason why Turkey should in principle be rejected as a possible member of the European Union, but it also points out that Turkish membership is still a long way off. ... Like many other commentators the Advisory Council on International Affairs does not share the view that historical and cultural factors have made the gap between Turkey and the European Union unbridgeable. ... The European Union itself consists of Member States whose own differences did not form an obstacle to the creation of the Union. In other words, these gaps could be bridged.”

AIV Report, July 1999, download full report in English, Dutch, or Turkish at www.aiv-advies.nl

Wendy Asbeek Brusse and **Jan Schoonenboom**, authors of the 2004 Netherlands Scientific Council [WRR] report, *“The European Union, Turkey and Islam.”* [Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004]:

“Arguments relating to poverty, migration, and the decision-making capacities of European institutions must be taken seriously. This survey does not cover these aspects. It is merely concerned with the argument [unfounded, in our view] that Turkey could not, or should not, become a member because the large majority of its population is Muslim.

From the WRR report, 2004

“We felt that Turks, Muslims, and all Dutch deserved an honest debate on Turkey since we live in a dangerous situation here with regards to our divisions on Islam. Up to mid-2004, everyone in the core of politics was hesitant towards Turkey, and there was fear to take an open stance. But policymakers were apparently relieved

when we came out with our report. Our ministers have been grateful to receive arguments on the issues at stake.”

ESI Interview with Wendy Asbeek Brusse and Jan Schoonenboom, 2 December 2005, The Hague

Erik Jan Zürcher, professor of Turkish languages and cultures at the University of Leiden since 1997, and author of the widely used book of reference, “Turkey. A Modern History” [1993] and the survey, “Searching for the Fault-Line”, included in the Scientific Council for Government Policy’s report, “*The European Union, Turkey, and Islam*” [2004]:

“In a religious and more general cultural sense, Turkey exhibits a number of characteristics that closely correspond to those present in some parts of Europe. This is not only understandable from its long history of contact with Europe and the deliberate ambition of the Turkish elite to become European, but also from the characteristics of modern-day Turkish society, with its large and mature urban middle class, political pluralism and strong growth of prosperity. The fact that Turkey’s dominant religion is Islam, not Christianity, does not change this, nor does the fact that it tends to have more in common with countries such as Poland or Greece than with, say, the Netherlands or Denmark. ... Turkey’s alleged un-European character is a construction, based on a very shaky definition of a European or “Western” civilization, and on a poor understanding of Turkish reality.”

Erik Jan Zürcher, “Searching for the Fault-Line”, in: The European Union, Turkey and Islam”, Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy. Amsterdam: Amsterdam 2004 [also available in Dutch].

“Turkish Islam is a pragmatic citizen’s Islam”, states Erik-Jan Zürcher, professor of Turkish languages and cultures. “The Turks are not fanatically religious. Only old women pray five times a day.” ... “It’s been recognized for a long time that Turkey belongs to Europe. The country makes part of the Council of Europe and the OSCE, since 1963 it’s a candidate state of the EU. The question whether Turkey shares the European heritage is ‘yes’.”

Froukje Santing, Michèle de Waard, ‘Only old women pray five times a day’, Scientific Council for Government Policy [WRR] states that Islam is no obstacle for EU membership”, NRC Handelsblad, June 24, 2004

Rinus Penninx, professor of Ethnic Studies and director of the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies [IMES] of the University of Amsterdam since 1993, in a speech on “Integration processes of migrants in the European Union and policies relating to integration”, for the Conference on Population Challenges, International Migration, and

Reproductive Health in Turkey and the European Union: Issues and Policy Implications, Istanbul, October 11-12, 2004:

“Perceptions of immigrants turn out to be important in such a process [of integration], often more than facts. ... Diversity will be with us, whether we want it or not.”

Rinus Penninx, 11-12 October 2004, Istanbul

Maurits Berger and Robert van Roijen: Maurits Berger is connected to the Clingendael institute, Robert van Roijer studies history in Groningen:

“Turkey could form the bridge between Europe and Asia as a transit harbour of energy. Three of its neighboring countries – Iraq, Iran and Azerbaijan – are important suppliers of gas and oil. The two other neighboring countries – Syria and Georgia – are in the possession of oil pipelines.”

Maurits Berger, Robert van Roijen, “EU cherishes illusions regarding Turkey - Islamic-democratic domino-effect in region will not occur”, commentary in the daily newspaper NRC Handelsblad, 5 October 2004.

Mendeltje van Keulen and Rob Boudewijn, Clingendael Institute:

“The religious argument is no consideration when it comes to a country like Bosnia, which has a large Muslim minority; there’s no doubt about it belonging to Europe. Therefore, cultural-religious arguments in order to answer the question whether Turkey is European should be considered inappropriate.”

Mendeltje van Keulen and Rob Boudewijn, “Where does ‘Europe’ stop? About Europe’s borders”, commentary in Internationale Spectator, Volume 59, Nr. 7/8, July/August 2005

Paul Schnabel, General Director, Social and Cultural Planning Office of the Netherlands:

“No one believes here that things are not so bad, there is self-depreciation going on now. There is a feeling that the French, the British, or the Germans have tackled immigration and integration issues so much better, and if that is debunked, they point to the United States. It is typically Dutch to point to other countries and see how well they do. In our country, self-congratulation turned into self-flagellation, but not against oneself but rather against “politicians”.”

ESI Interview with Paul Schnabel, 27 January 2006

Bram Boxhoorn, Director of the Netherlands Atlantic Association since 1996:

“I would deplore the high cost of keeping Turkey out of the EU, i.e. the loss of overall and of energy security. Here, the major political parties – the VVD and the PvdA – accept the security argument, also GroenLinks. The CDA is the most sceptical party, and is most afraid to be outspoken, but also they understood political realities in the process of forging points of view in 2004”

ESI Interview with Bram Boxhoorn, 27 January 2006

Paul Scheffer, former member of the European Integration group at the AIV [see above], also a former member of the PvdA Wiarda Beckman Institute, and an internationally renown writer and commentator, who authored the groundbreaking article, “The Multicultural Drama”, in 2000 in the *NRC Handelsblad* daily newspaper.

“The leadership of the PvdA has consistently been in favor of Turkish accession, but the people have been against. [...] Especially from a left-wing point of view, Turkey would be an enormous form of social protection, much more than an EU that showed itself not capable of enlargement. ...

The Orhan Pamuk case receives big headlines in the Netherlands, and people are watching closely what happens in Turkey. The behavior of the Turkish government in the issue of the “Armenian question” is absolutely vital. To the extent that we are capable to deal with the dark chapters of our own history, we can ask for Turkey to deal with the Armenian genocide. We should ask the hard questions of Turkey. But we cannot force the Turks to deal with their history, and we should not make this question a criterion for EU accession.”

ESI Interview with Paul Scheffer, 2 December 2005, Amsterdam

Marc Kranenburg, Brussels correspondent of the centrist-liberal daily paper *NRC Handelsblad*:

“We had a lively and intense debate on Turkey within the editorial team of *NRC Handelsblad* in 2004, but we realized we needed to go deeper. Therefore, one Saturday afternoon, we invited Minister Laurens Jan Brinkhorst and Turkey specialist Erik Jan Zürcher for a background discussion. The editor-in-chief remained ambivalent. The only one opposed to the prospect of Turkish EU-accession was the economics editor. Eventually, in the paper’s editorial on the following Monday, we wrote that Turkey was in our national and in the European interest. Our decisive editorial came out pro-Turkey.”

ESI Interview with Marc Kranenburg, 21 November 2005, Brussels

Froukje Santing, NRC Handelsblad, who has lived and worked for nearly two decades in Turkey:

“Dutch Turks have so far failed to ask themselves what is to be a Turk in the European environment. Turks in Europe are still less modern than Turks in Turkey. In Turkey, their obsession is to become European. In Europe, their obsession is to stay Turkish.”

ESI Interview with Froukje Santing, 18 November 2005

Dirk Jan van Baar has been a regular columnist with the weekly magazine, HP/DeTijd, which has turned from a leftist to what van Baar calls a “libertarian” spirit in the past years, and which has featured both endorsing and critical voices on Turkey and the EU. Van Baar himself remains skeptical.

“Already in the late 1980s, two Turkish friends traveled around Turkey with me, and I have been back there frequently. I am sympathetic to Turkey. But I have my doubts if the Turks are happy as a member of a club of 29 countries rather than as an equal interlocutor to the EU. ”

ESI Interview with Dirk Jan van Baar, 2 February 2006, Amsterdam

“I don’t see how the EU, founded by fundamentally Christian nations, can ignore the Islamic character of Turkey. Everybody feels that Turkey is ‘different’; to suggest that that’s not a problem is a misjudgement of reality and is experienced as absurd. The fact that the Turkish upper class stresses the secular character of Atatürk’s republic, doesn’t change anything. In reality the Kemalists admit themselves that Islam is an obstacle on the way to modernization.”

Dirk-Jan van Baar, “Turkish paradoxes”, article in the weekly magazine, HP/ De Tijd, 14 December, 2002

Syp Wynia, a commentator on European and national affairs with the Elsevier magazine. The magazine has been most staunchly opposed to Turkish EU membership among Dutch print media:

“The *CPB* [Central Planning Bureau] estimated the number of Turks that would come to the Netherlands after receiving Turkish EU accession. In 15 years, it would be 108,000 people. And yes, the *CPB* has to admit that if those people are all poorly educated, the income level of poorly educated people in the Netherlands could decrease. [...] That extra contribution will cost the Dutch tax payers between 0,8 and 1,6 billion euros per year. A high price, especially if you combine it with the little increase in trade and the supposedly large and unprofitable immigration wave that would be generated by the EU membership. Why doesn’t Turkey just become an outside member of the Union?”

Syp Wynia, "Turkey: preferably outside", article in the weekly magazine Elsevier, 3 July 2004

Eric Outshoorn, foreign editor at the left-liberal *Volkskrant* daily newspaper, in his rebuttal against Catholic Bishop Wiertz` opposition to Turkish EU-membership:

“Turkey of course isn’t an exemplary democracy. It’s a shame how badly human rights are being treated. The way religious and ethnic minorities are being hassled is unworthy of the country. Yet hard work is being done for improvements: the watching eye of the EU and the prospect of EU membership are keeping Turkey focused.”

Eric Outshoorn, "Bishop Wiertz must redo his homework", reply to Frans Wiertz [see chapter IV] in the Volkskrant daily newspaper, 29 November, 2005

“Within the *Volkskrant* editorial team, Turkey emerged as a process rather than a single debate. In 1998, I realized, Turkey is a really big country and no one really knows much. I started going to Turkey, and have been back for 3 or 4 times a year since then. In the talks within the newspaper, the paper’s position emerged: Turkey should become an EU member if the Copenhagen criteria are fulfilled.”

ESI Interview with Eric Outshoorn, 30 November 2005, The Hague

Floris van Straaten, a journalist with *NRC Handelsblad*:

“It is slowly being realized that it’s about an issue of great political and geo-political meaning. A ‘yes’ means that the EU will border Iraq, Iran and Syria as well as that suddenly a large Islamic and relatively poor country will join the Union. It might also lead to additional concern among the population of the current memberstates, who already have little trust in the EU. A ‘no’ on the other hand, would mean a slap in the face of the reformers who now are working hard in order to build Turkey into a proper parliamentary democracy.

Floris van Straaten, "Fear of Unknown Turkey", article in the daily newspaper NRC Handelsblad, 31 January 2004

Jan Jonker Roelants, former consul general in Istanbul and chairman of the Netherlands-Turkey Foundation in Rotterdam:

“A positive decision will make an end to the politics of ‘constructive ambiguity’ with which Europe has kept Turkey waiting in exchange for the protection of Europe’s borders with the sovjet states. [...] Given the experiences with Spain and

Portugal, where the gross national income used to be lower than that in Turkey, there is no reason to presume that with Turkey it should work out less favorably.“

Jan Jonker Roelants, “Turkey must join the EU”, in NRC Handelsblad, November 27, 2002. Roelants is former consul general in Istanbul and chairman of the Netherlands-Turkey Foundation.

Thomas von der Dunk, a cultural historian and outspoken opponent to Turkish EU membership:

“Sometimes it’s better to break a promise if the consequences of not breaking it will be unmanageable.”

Thomas van der Dunk, “Nothing speaks for Turkey in the EU. Turkey has never been part of Europe, it has always been ‘hanging’ next to it”, commentary in the daily newspaper NRC Handelsblad, February 4, 2004.

Joanneke Lootsma, Director of the European Centre for Arts and Science, The Felix Meritis Foundation:

“If you stop Turkish accession at the end of the process via a referendum, then why would we have started it? [...] Understanding Turkey and Turks, their work ethos and where they come from, means to prevent violence. You internalize security. You invest in the absence of war. The best way to start this investment in safety are cultural bonds.”

ESI Interview with Joanneke Lootsma, 31 January 2006

IV. BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Antony Burgmans, chairman of Unilever and chairman of the working group Expansion of the European Union of the European Round Table, a think tank of the fifty most important enterprises in Europe:

“Turkey to join the EU.”

Antony Burgmans’ first point on a list of ten action points he presents to the Dutch EU presidency in the NRC Handelsblad, 27 July 2004

Winand Quaadvlieg, Deputy Director for International Economic Affairs at the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers, VNO-NCW:

“Since the early 1990s, we developed ideas on Turkey and its relationship with the EU in the industry confederation. [...] If all the required changes in economic policy and institutions will be implemented there is, from an economic point of view, no reason to be against accession of Turkey to the EU. Turkey in the EU increases the competitiveness of the overall EU economy. And Turkey is a very promising large market.[...]”

ESI Interview with Winand Quaadvlieg, 30 January 2006

Victor Halberstadt, a professor of economics at Leiden University, a board member of Koc University in Istanbul, and a long-standing moderator of the Turkey panels at the World Economic Forum in Davos:

“The irony is that the Turkish government at this stage is a lot more stable than any EU government. I did not expect the AKP to perform so well. ... I have had a political-intellectual disagreement over Europe with Frits Bolkestein for 20 years. I feel the EU should be a rational structure. If it is a political entity, then, over time, it needs to defend its borders. Without Turkey, we are going to be lame ducks.”

ESI Interview with Victor Halberstadt, 25 November 2005

Nout Wellink, governor of the Dutch Central Bank [*De Nederlandsche Bank, DNB*]:

“It is a country balancing on the edge between two different cultures”, said the President, referring to the predominantly Christian culture in the EU and the Islamic culture in Turkey. [...] Wellink realizes that the weighing of whether or not Turkey can join is not in his hands. “It is a political choice.”

Nout Wellink, 31 May 2004, during the presentation of the annual report of the Nederlandsche Bank. [Source is www.abig.org.tr]

The late **Wim Duisenberg**, former president of the European Central Bank, who died of a heart attack in summer 2005. In his last article, written shortly before his death, he pleaded for the EU to welcome Turkey as a member.

“For me, Europe's integration of Muslim Turkey into its political union is the same sort of question of peace that [the founders of the EU] successfully confronted. [...] Today, Europe needs peace between cultures as much as it once needed peace between nations and it is for this reason that we must welcome Turkey into our midst.”

Summary of Duisenberg article from Dutch daily Het Financieele Dagblad in the Financial Times August 4, 2005

V. THE DUTCH CHURCHES AND THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY

Bishop **Frans Wiertz**, since 1993 bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Roermond, one of seven Roman-Catholic dioceses in the Archdiocese of Utrecht:

“In the light of an increasing support for the ‘political Islam’ from populations in Islamic countries and more or less fundamentalist movements, also in Turkey, Turkey’s membership can form a time bomb for the democratic base of the EU. [...] The crucial problem is that far reaching democratization will probably lead to less freedom for non-Islamic minorities and Turkey will change into an Islamic version of a secular illiberal democracy. Turkey’s secular character is not the expression of the people’s will, it’s rather the consequence of oftentimes brute state intervention in the religious domain. ... Islam and Christianity differ in their appreciation of in particular freedom [individual and collective] of religion and the separation between church and state.”

Bishop Frans Wiertz, “Difference between Turkey and the EU too big”, commentary in the Volkskrant daily newspaper, 29 November, 2005

Haci Karacaer, Chairman of Milli Görüs Noordse Holland:

The Moroccans are better integrated in the Netherlands than the Turks. Turks are very self-supporting and they mistake that for self-sufficiency. That is dangerous. There are way more than ten famous Moroccan novelists, journalist, and artists here. But Turkey? We still import Orhan Pamuk, the writer, and if we produce heroes, they go back to Turkey because it is possible and sometimes easier even to break through there.”

ESI Interview with Haci Karacaer, 25 November 2005