PART II

ANALYSIS

Edited by Samim Akgönül and Christian Moe
The European Union (EU) project has recently attracted the support of a large portion of the Turkish public. The public polls register ongoing public support for the EU in the range of 60%–80%. Public support is likely to fall during times when EU circles become harsh on Turkish Cypriots, who actually said “Yes” to a federal Cyprus in the 2004 referendum, or when European countries, express their opposition to Turkey’s full membership, as France and Austria have done, and their support instead for the ambiguous proposals for a “privileged partnership” and “Mediterranean Union”. Such debates also prompt the Turkish public to see the EU as a ‘Christian club’, and harsh criticisms of its policies on minorities encourage some Turks to believe that the EU is actually willing to divide the country. However, rising political, social, economic and cultural interaction between the EU countries and Turkey has already begun to dismantle prejudices and stereotypes on both sides. For example, emerging European Studies programmes in Turkey have come to grips with the actual meaning of the EU project, and are disseminating this information to the Turkish public.

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3 Several graduate and undergraduate EU programmes have recently been established in Turkey. For example, a BA programme in European Union Relations aims to train experts needed for the negotiation process. EU Institutes at Marmara University and Istanbul Bilgi University also host specialized graduate programmes on the Union, and several other universities have graduate programmes and research and documentation centres.