1. INTRODUCTION
The issue of the Republic of Turkey's accession to the EU is an issue that has been discussed for many years. While many positive and negative opinions on this subject continue to be expressed, it has been commented that Turkey, whose origins are tied to the Ottoman Empire, was actually included in the European Club much earlier with the 1856 Paris Agreement signed during the Ottoman period. In addition, while there are those who support the newly established Turkish state's entry into the EU with a modern and modernist line, there are also those who see the EU as a Christian club and find it unnecessary for Turkey, which is predominantly Muslim, to join the EU. However, the general opinion in Turkey; It has modernization parallelism that makes Turkey's EU membership equivalent to development.

In Turkish political history, since the Tanzimat Era, Turkish modernization developed in the course of the center-periphery relationship; social manifested as a one-dimensional conflict stemming from the disconnection. The idea of "Westernization", which was based in the 18th century, was shaped by bureaucracy group in the Ottoman Empire and progressed with the Tanzimat intellectuals. The political modernization, which was born as a result of the Young Turk epiphenomen and continued with the Constitutional Monarchy regime declared by the Union and Progress Society, resulted in the Republic being declared after the National Struggle. The Turkish nation declared the Republic as a result of its military victory and crowned its victory. It also took its new place on the modernizing world stage. The proclamation of the republic meant the political legitimacy of the Turkish nation's struggle and the process that continued with revolutions formed the construction of modern Turkey.

Turkey, which has taken western democracies as an example since its establishment, has shaped its domestic policy in the appearance of a modern state and carried out its foreign policy in the same parallel. The Republican People's Party, which declared the Republic and was Mustafa Kemal Atatürk\(^2\)’s party, has always displayed a progressive attitude in domestic and foreign policy, defending one of its principles, revolutionism, since the first day it was founded. Atatürk's goal of "Reaching the Level of Contemporary Civilization" It is one of the most fundamental aspects of Turkish foreign policy. Agreements and alliances made before the Second World War, such as the

\(^{1}\) Ankara University, Institute of Turkish Revolution History, History of the Republic of Turkey, PhD Program, Ankara/TURKEY

\(^{2}\) The founder of the modern Turkish Republic, the first President, and the first Chairman of the Republican People's Party.
Baghdad Pact, the Sadabat Pact, and the Mediterranean Alliance, prove the peaceful stance of the Republican People's Party, especially in foreign policy, during its rule. The Republican People's Party continued its progressive and peaceful attitude in the post- Atatürk period and did not break its foreign policy despite the changing political conjuncture. (Balcı, 2017, p.68-69-70.)

England, which was not warm to the European Economic Community, which was established on March 25, 1957, applied for full membership to the community with its increasing popularity. With the participation of Greece, whose economic and social indicators deteriorated, the European Economic Community gained momentum. Turkey applied for membership to the society on 31 July 1959. There were three reasons for this application; The first was to consolidate the orientation to the West, the second was to develop the economy, and the third was to not fall behind in the competition with Greece. (Balcı, 2017, p.146.) Afterward, as a result of the negotiations that started as a result of Turkey's application for associate membership to the Community by following Greece, the Ankara Agreement partnership agreement was signed between Turkey and the European Economic Community on 12 September 1963. The Ankara Agreement, which was signed in 1963, created the first step of the goal for Turkey to go to the European Union and the new route of foreign policy. While the goal of full membership to the European Economic Community, which started with the Ankara Agreement, became one of the important agenda items of domestic and foreign policy, the Republican People's Party included this goal in its election manifestos, party programs and discourses. It has been supported in line with the contemporary perspective and civilization goal of. However, the Turkish economy, which implemented import substitution policies in the 60s and 70s and was afraid of competition with Europe, was reflected in the attitudes and discourses of the Republican People's Party, as in other parties, and led to the development of a pragmatic economic understanding. (Balcı, 2017, p.147-148.)

According to the party program adopted at the 4th Grand Convention of the Republican People's Party, It was underlined that we will act together with contemporary societies. (Republican People's Party’s Program, 1935.) Joining international organizations such as the League of Nations during the interwar period and contributing to regional and world peace with its status quo policy, Turkey contributed to peace in Europe with alliances such as the Balkan Entente and the Mediterranean Pact. However, the emergence of peace-oriented cooperation in Europe took place after the end of the Second World War. After the Republican People's Party came to power again after the 1960 military coup, İsmet İnönü3 presented a government program to the parliament on 27 November 1961 and stated that she would carry out activities for the Council of Europe in the program. The Republican People's Party, which was the primus inter pares of the ruling coalition between June 25, 1962, and December 25, 1963, stated in the coalition protocol that Turkey should make political, social, and market partnerships with Europe. (tbmm.gov.tr.) Established by the Ankara Agreement, signed in Ankara on 12 September 1963, which initiated a three-stage process towards the establishment of a Customs Union that would help secure Turkey's full membership in the EEC, the Association Council committed to controlling the development of the process. (Official Journal of the European Communities 1973, p.2.)

1964 was not an easy period for the Republican People's Party, which was the major partner of the government. Especially in foreign policy, various difficulties arose. First, the Cyprus crisis exploded. Then, US President Johnson sent an ultimatum letter to İnönü. Because the USA was advocating an opposite view to the Turkish thesis on Cyprus. İnönü replied to Johnson's letter, “A new world will be established, and Turkey will take its place there." In other words, a lonely and complex turning point was entered in foreign policy. (Bila, 2020, p.95.)

In the election manifesto of the Republican People's Party in 1965; It has been stated that thanks to the Ankara Agreement, which the government considers as one of its greatest international

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4 The second President of the modern Turkish Republic, the second Chairman of the Republican People's Party and Atatürk's comrade in arms.
achievements, Turkey will not only participate in the European economy early but also benefit from European standards in exports. However, since the potential of both public and private economic power in Turkey cannot compete with Europe, it has followed a path with the aim of being protected from competition for reasonable periods. In addition, it was stated that the Republican People's Party, which represents the common principles of Western Europe, will give the greatest support to the work of the Council of Europe, and it was emphasized that thanks to the Republican People's Party, Turkey had the chance to join the Council of Europe and sign the partnership agreement with the EEC. (Efe, 2018, p.6-7.)

2. THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY AND POLITICAL METAMORPHOSIS IN THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY

Before the 1960 coup, the Republican People's Party was the main focus of opposition to the despotic DP government on behalf of the urban elite. The party was influenced by the progressive reformist political movements that brought significant winds in this period. The new regime established after the 1960 coup promised a stable political regime and economic development with its new constitution. Reform was the key point for this phase. However, the failure of three coalition governments in the early 1960s, in which the Republican People's Party was a major partner, was a clear rejection of this reformist program. (Emre, 2011, p.175.) After this period, the search for a new identity began with the reformist movements within the party.

A distinctive renewal initiative with the start of multi-party life while the search for an ideological identity of the Republican People's Party, which could not achieve this goal, continued for many years, the Republican People's Party continued this search and its brought its fundamental practice to life with the “Left of the Middle” movement. After all, the Republican People's Party, which confronted the society with new rhetoric and a new leader like Bülent Ecevit⁶, became the new name of hope in the eyes of the people in the 1970s, and this political transformation succeeded in gaining serious support among the people. Because in the manifestation of the aforementioned situation, the popularity of the left faction while the wind blowing across the world and Turkey in those years was also effective, the party's current it is another fact that he can correctly evaluate the political conjuncture. The 1973 elections were held under the general presidency of Ecevit and the results of studies conducted since 1965 are clearly are the first choices. the name "White Days" before the elections an election manifesto is prepared below. To the White Days 1973. It is the main motto of their election. “Left of the Middle” nameless “Social Democracy” and “Democratic Left” has started to be used more.

The Republican People's Party does not see the EEC as just a big market. Aware of the fact that the EEC has a significant economic impact on Turkey, it also supported EEC membership due to its value system. Because Turkey has adopted contemporary systems since its establishment. Turkey believed that if it became a member of the Community, the system of EEC values such as democracy and human rights would settle in Turkish society. (Erhan, 2011, p.46-47.) In the 1973 Election Declaration when the Republican People's Party approached the left faction: It was stated that Turkey should take its place in the integration movement in Western Europe, and it was stated that Turkey's future and security depended more on cooperation and solidarity with Western Europe than before. However, in the declaration, the Community to Turkey; It was also emphasized that Turkey should not be a burden to the Community. In the statement stating that the situation that emerged due to the wrong attitudes and practices of the Justice Party Governments and the governments after 12 March 1971 is worrying, it was also stated that if this situation continues, the European Economic Community will create a burden that Turkey cannot bear. The reason why

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⁵ The concept of Left of the Middle was first mentioned by İsmet İnönü in a party organ. Chairman of the Republican People's Party İsmet İnönü, the position of the Republican People's Party in the spectrum of parties is to the left of the middle stated that. The concept of the Left of the Middle is the line that opened the doors of social democracy in the Republican People's Party it has the character of a political doctrine that also sprouts the seeds of the democratic left.

⁶ He is the third chairman of the Republican People's Party. He assumed the duties of Prime Minister, Minister of Labor and Social Security, Minister of State and Deputy Prime Minister in the Republic of Turkey.
Turkey's perspective on the EEC was generally economic in this period; The reason is that the EEC is more concerned with issues such as economic problems, customs unions, completion of the internal market rather than democracy and human rights. Issues such as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law came to the fore with the establishment of the European Union in the post-Cold War era. In the 1973 election manifesto of the Republican People's Party, it was stated that full membership did not come to the fore in its relations with the EEC during the integration process and that the concessions Turkey received from the Community were far behind the concessions that other states gained from the Community. In this context, by emphasizing the inadequacy of the concessions made in the export of agricultural products, it was underlined that the concessions made to Turkey's industrial products exports to the EEC were also insufficient and that exports in sectors where Turkey was advantageous were excluded from the scope of these concessions. In addition, it was pointed out that the concessions made by Turkey to the EEC in the field of industry harmed Turkey's industrialization efforts and that Turkey's trade with the EEC was against Turkey. (Efe, 2018, p.7-8.)

In the 1973 election report, it was stated that in terms of mutual concessions with the EEC, the excesses and inadequacies in terms of the Turkish economy would be tried to be eliminated; Turkish industry should be protected at a certain level; that agriculture should also be supported in order to compete with Community member states; It is aimed to access trained manpower in order to prepare for full membership to the European Economic Community. In addition, it was stated that efforts to integrate with the EEC should not lead to Turkey's independence and sacrifice of economic development opportunities, and that large industrial enterprise would be needed to compete with the EEC in the field of industry. In the 1973 election manifesto; It is underlined that Turkey's ability to take its place in the EEC is not only by fulfilling the economic conditions, but also by political conditions such as the widest possible democratic freedoms. In addition, a commitment has been made to realize in Turkey the democracy and freedoms practiced in EEC and Council of Europe countries. The Republican People's Party emerged victorious from a general election for the first time in many years. The Republican People's Party was the first party with 33.3 percent of the votes in these elections, but it became a government partner because it did not have enough majority to be in power alone. (ysk.gov.tr)

Due to the disagreement in the coalition government, the government had to resign. This time, the Republican People's Party, which renewed itself with a leftist-popular identity, organized the 28 June 1974 Grand Statutes Congress. In this congress, changes were made in the party charter in line with the "Democratic Left" discourse put forward in 1970. (Bila, 1999, p.288.) Ecevit, stated that Turkey is primarily a Balkan, Middle Eastern, and Eastern Mediterranean country in terms of its historical and geographical features. Therefore, he emphasized that his main interest in foreign policy covers these regions. However, this new perspective in foreign policy did not mean breaking relations with the West. (Balci, 2017, p.159.) The early 1970s were a difficult period for Ecevit and the Republican People's Party, especially in the field of foreign policy. The arms embargo decision taken by the US Congress after the 1974 Cyprus Operation and Turkey's increasing foreign dependence in the field of energy after the 1973 Oil Crisis put Turkey in a difficult situation. (Balci, 2017, p.160.)

3. FRACTIONAL INTERIM PERIOD AFTER THE COUP

As a result of the increasing political chaos and ideological conflict in the country, a military coup took place on September 12, 1980. After the military junta took over the administration, all political parties, including the Republican People's Party, were closed. After the closure of the Republican People's Party, the Social Democracy Party was founded in order to continue its mission. Social democrats in 1983 while establishing their party, instead of building the future of the party on the legacy of the CHP, they clearly preferred to emphasize social democracy. Establishment in its declaration stated that the Social Democratic Party, which aims to establish "A social democratic
party in the Western sense", will be the party of the workers in the party program.(İnönü, 1984, p.306-307.)

Under the heading "Foreign Relations" in the election manifesto of the Social Democratic Party, Turkey was defined as a country with an important position between the Middle East and Europe. Therefore, the Social Democrat Party, which believes that Turkey should develop close economic, political, and cultural relations with both regions, stated that Turkey is the cornerstone of Europe politically and that staying out of Europe will not benefit anyone. The Social Democratic Party stated that it is in favor of a gradual accession to the European Economic Community (EEC) without hindering the country's economy.(Social Democracy Party Election Declaration, 1984, p.30.) In this direction, even in the 1970s, it is seen that there is still some uneasiness among the social democrats about joining the EU.

4. DENIZ BAYKAL ERA: NATIONAL OPPORTUNIST ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE EU

On November 3, 1985, the Social Democratic Party and the Populist Party merged. After the merger with the Populist Party, "Six Arrows" was used again in the emblem and ideology of the party, and this time social democracy was combined with Kemalism. A political understanding that tries to blend this has come to the fore. When the Social Democratic Party and the Populist Party merged, the name of the new party became the Social Democrat Populist Party. The European Community rejected Turkey's application for membership in December 1989. The European Community, which does not want to completely break relations, published a package with Turkey in 1990, stating that it will focus on the Customs Union in order to improve relations in the new period.(Balçi, 2017, p.239.)

In the 1991 election manifesto of the Social Democratic Populist Party, very little space was given to the European Union and it was underlined that Turkey's prestige and interests would be protected in international organizations such as the Council of Europe and the European Union.(Social Democratic Populist Party Election Declaration, 1991, p.19.) The “Customs Union Agreement” dated 7 March 1995, signed with the Association Council Decision No. 1/95 during the Prime Ministry period of Tansu Çiller, has been an important turning point in Turkey-EU relations. The signing of the Customs Union Agreement has created the image that Turkey is approaching EU membership due to the rhetoric of the government of the period. In the 1995 election manifesto issued by the Republican People's Party in this period, the “We will carry our country to full membership to the European Union by carefully protecting our rights and interests.” phrase is included. This phrase also emphasized that integration with the democratic world is the main target. In addition, in the 1995 election manifesto of the Republican People's Party, it was stated that the Republican People's Party attaches importance to "Pluralist Democracy", "organized, competitive, labor and environment-friendly market economy" and integration within the European Union.(Efê, 2018, p.10.) It is underlined that the European Union and the West see society with their democratic values and knowledge as a social democracy project that means sharing their knowledge and catching up with the era.(Republican People's Party’s Election Declaration, 1995.) The aforementioned declaration, unlike the previous election declarations, devoted more space to the European Union issue and supported membership in the European Union with clearer expressions. The emphasis on pluralist democracy by emphasizing the social democratic structure of the party also revealed the change in the Republican People's Party's view of the European Union. With the 1997 Luxembourg Summit, Turkey-EU relations regressed as never before in their history. The fact that the EU saw Turkey among the twelve candidate countries in the Progress Report dated November 4, 1998, published after this summit, was an important step for the re-warming of

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1 The Populist Party was founded by Necdet Calp and her friends, who served as the prime minister's undersecretary after the closure of the Republican People's Party after the September 12, 1980 coup d'état and served as the chief of staff of İsmet İnönü.

2 The ideology of the Republican People’s Party; At the same time, the political doctrine that forms the basis of the political, social, cultural and economic life of the Republic of Turkey and consists of the principles of republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, secularism and revolutionism.

3 Kemalism; It is a modernization movement within the framework of free thought that adopts the principle of reaching the level of contemporary civilizations with the route drawn by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the new Turkish state established after the war of independence.
relations. In this period, the institutional initiatives of the Foreign Minister İsmail Cem changed the negative decision of the EU in Luxembourg. Thus, after the 1999 Helsinki Summit, hope was reborn for Turkey. (Balci, 2017, p.267.)

In the 3 November 2002 election manifesto of the Republican People's Party, it was stated that the Republican People's Party was ready to carry Turkey to the European Union with its historical mission responsibility and rich experience. In the section titled European Union of the election declaration, it was stated that Atatürk's Turkey model, established by its Muslim people and secular democracy, will reach the level of contemporary civilization by applying EU criteria as a model country for many countries and will play a bridge role between eastern and western civilizations. (Republican People's Party's Election Declaration, 2002.) Emphasizing the importance of being a member of the European Union is targeting the values of contemporary civilization, democratic development, and technology, the Republican People's Party stated that full membership to the European Union is the most important condition for a Turkey that protects individual rights. (Efe, 2018, p.11.) Stating that the EU is the most important threshold on the path towards the goal of contemporary civilization, the Republican People's Party defended the idea that Turkey is actually an ideal partner for the EU geographically. The Justice and Development Party won the 2002 elections, and a long-lasting conservative ruling period began in Turkey with a new process. The Justice and Development Party, whose origins are based on the definition of Political Islam, was defined as a sociological change by its founding staff and tended to renew its cathartic understanding of religious identity politics. (Selim, 2002, p.491.) The Justice and Development Party, which was careful not to politicize the religious imagery in the early days, stated that it handled the issue of belief within the framework of fundamental rights and freedoms in order to please its own base while keeping an eye on the balance of power in the country. The main factor that made the Justice and Development Party in power alone was that it separated from radical Islamic discourses and transformed its conservative structure into a moderate one with its democratic identity. In addition, during this period, Turkey's EU membership process was seen as one of the important steps of the Justice and Development Party's democratization efforts, while the party, which has been in power for nearly 20 years, could not achieve success in this regard, and from time to time, it was drawn to be included in alternative alliances instead of the EU. It also experienced deviations from its western route.

When the Justice and Development Party was in power, Deniz Baykal was the Chairman of the Republican People's Party. Deniz Baykal agreed with the Justice and Development Party's full membership policy to the EU. (Republican People's Party, 2005, p.19.) However, In the 2004 party program of the Republican People's Party, it was stated that the party aims for full membership on the condition that the country's interests are carefully protected at every stage of Turkey's relations with the European Union. In this period, the Republican People's Party emphasized that the red line in relations with the EU was the interests of the country, and acted more cautiously due to the foreign policy of the Justice and Development Party. (Republican People's Party's Party Program, 2004.) With the start of the negotiation process on October 3, 2005, the relationship between Turkey and the EU gained a new dimension. Accordingly, in the "Relations with the European Union" section of the 2008 party program of the Republican People's Party, it has been stated that as a party, membership to the European Union has been supported since the beginning. It was also emphasized that full membership in the EU is a natural extension of Atatürk's goal of contemporary civilization. During this period, it was noted that the Republican People's Party adopted an attitude that embraced the founding values of the republic and embraced an honorable membership on equal terms in its relations with the EU. In addition, the Republican People's Party, which stated that it would not accept special status membership other than membership, requested the implementation of the Copenhagen and Maastricht Criteria. (Efe, 2018, p.13.)

In the party program, it was emphasized that the European Union should support Turkey in terms of visa-free movement, regional development, and agricultural support and that the free trade agreements made by the Union with third countries should also cover Turkey. The Republican
People's Party stated that if Turkey is excluded from full membership or if Turkey is given a special status, it will act as a revisionist in all of Turkey's commitments to the EU, especially the Customs Union. One of the controversial issues regarding Turkey's membership in the EU has been the Cyprus issue. The Cyprus issue has special importance in the history of the Republican People's Party as well as Turkey. Because, during the military operation called "Cyprus Peace Operation" organized by Turkey on 20 July 1974, the major partner of the government was the Republican People's Party. Therefore, the Republican People's Party has always maintained its sensitivity on the Cyprus issue, whether in power or in opposition. Pointing out the mistake of associating the Cyprus problem with membership in the European Union, the Republican People's Party stated that it would not be acceptable to try to conclude membership to the Union with unilateral concessions. (Republican People's Party's Party Program, 2008.)

The Republican People's Party opened the European Union Representation of the Republican People's Party in 2008 in order to improve its relations with the EU. Representing the Republican People's Party in the institutions of the European Union; Kader Sevinç has been appointed as the European Representative of the Republican People's Party, which was established to support Turkey's EU membership, to take Turkey-EU relations beyond bilateral relations, and to participate in discussions and activities at the European level such as the information society. She has previously been involved in EU research projects and civil society work and has worked as a political adviser to the European Parliament. Stating that she formed a good team as the European Union Representative of the Republican People's Party, Sevinç follows every negotiation chapter in the Turkey-EU negotiations and presents the developments as a briefing to the leader of the party. (chp-avrupabirligi.org.)

5. THE PERIOD OF CONSTRUCTIVE-PRAGMATIST ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE EU BEGINNING WITH KEMAL KILIÇDAROĞLU

After Deniz Baykal, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu became the Chairman of the Republican People's Party on 22 May 2010. The Republican People's Party brought a more active initiative towards the EU during the Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu era. The Republican People's Party, headed by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, believed that Turkey's EU membership would be the best and most effective solution to the intercultural conflict. During her visit to Brussels in September 2010, Kılıçdaroğlu stated that the goal of full membership to the European Union is important in terms of reaching the level of prosperity, democracy, and modernity aimed at within the country and increasing Turkey's effectiveness in the region. Stating that the main problem in EU-Turkey relations is the lack of mutual trust, Kılıçdaroğlu stated that the European Union should show loyalty to Turkey's membership and that Turkey should fully fulfill the Copenhagen criteria.

Published by the Republican People's Party and “A Land of Freedom and hope. The study titled "Everyone's Turkey, CHP 2011 Foreign Policy" has drawn the route that the party will follow in foreign policy. In the aforementioned study, it was stated that among the foundations of the party's foreign policy dynamics, especially the goal of full membership to the EU. In order to achieve the intended goal, it is aimed to develop cooperation and dialogue with allied countries and to follow a line based on Atatürk's foreign policy. In the section titled Our Approach to Some Foreign Policy Issues, the following statements are included in the section on EU membership:

'Republican People's Party favors Turkey's EU membership and considers this as a social transformation project, which is an extension of Atatürk's revolutionary and modernization vision. Our aim in relations with the EU is an honorable full membership with equal membership conditions without digressing from the foundational values of our Republic. Republican People's Party approves Turkey's embracing the Copenhagen and Maastricht Criteria, as well as EU law, like all other members. On the other hand, Republican People's Party refuses the imposition of unilateral conditions against Turkey, which have not been asked of other members. Republican People's Party demands the lifting of restrictions imposed by the EU on free travel, agricultural
subsidies, and regional development. Republican People's Party refuses the attachment of Turkey's EU membership to the Cyprus issue, pre-conditions, and unilateral concessions. Similarly, Republican People's Party stands against the imposition of arbitrary conditions that conflict with the Lausanne Treaty. Republican People's Party underlines that decisive steps will be taken according to our national interests on all present regulations between Turkey and the EU, including the Customs Union if certain EU countries prejudiced approach of offering a special status due to geographical and cultural differences in lieu of full membership becomes official EU policy. With this understanding, Republican People's Party strongly supports the acceleration and the conclusion of the reform process in line with EU acquis chapters and the implementations of other member countries. Republican People's Party sincerely believes that Turkey's EU membership will be the best and most effective solution to the inter-cultural clash, which is already at a disturbing level and has an alarming potential in the foreseeable future of turning into a major conflict. (chpforeignpolicy.pdf)

The party, which was preparing for the November 2015 elections, criticized the government and drew attention to the EU membership process by saying in its election manifesto that "Turkey is moving away from the west to which it has turned throughout history". The Republican People's Party underlined that being a part of Europe, which it says is based on the understanding of human rights, democracy and social state, is the primary goal in foreign policy. Claiming that Turkey has regressed in terms of human rights, the Republican People's Party stated that it aims to establish an integrated democratic environment with the principles of the European Union and the European Convention on Human Rights. The Republican People's Party, which blamed the Justice and Development Party's government for the failure of EU membership, stated that the government gave priority to the Middle East region in foreign policy, disrupting the delicate balance between Europe and the Middle East and moving away from the basic values of the EU. Stating that Turkey should be a part of the EU's energy and migration policies by taking part in the newly started enlargement process, the party argued that the Republican People's Party would ultimately contribute to the EU's reform breakthrough together with the left-wing and social democratic circles.

Claiming that as the party that started Turkey's relationship with the European Union on September 12, 1963, it will conclude the candidacy process with membership, the Republican People's Party stated in the November 2015 Election Declaration that Turkey will contribute to the creation of a new Europe on the way to modern civilization. Under the sub-title of "Negotiations with the EU", it was stated that the negotiation process will continue and negotiations will be carried out effectively in the fields of agricultural supports, visa, regional development, trade and economy until the negotiations are completed. It was emphasized that in the European Union countries, Turkey will be stronger with the European Union and the European Union will be stronger with Turkey. In the efforts to establish the Trans-Atlantic Trade Partnership between the European Union and the USA, it is aimed to protect Turkey's interests and to strengthen all official institutions and non-governmental organizations, especially the Ministry of the European Union.

In the "Foreign Policy" section of the declaration published by the Republican People's Party for the 2018 election; He underlined that they were the party that started the European Union process with the Ankara Agreement signed on September 12, 1963, and that they carried Turkey to a respectable position among democratic countries. In the declaration underlining that the government has moved away from the European Union target and has experienced crises with EU member states that have not been experienced before, it is stated that such crises negatively affect Turkish citizens and cause them to lose some of their previous gains. (Efe, 2018, p.15)

In the declaration, it was stated that Turkey's relations with organizations such as the European Union and NATO would be re-normalized and the European Union negotiation process would be
revitalized. It was also stated that without waiting for the European Union to open a new chapter in the accession negotiations, those reforms would be made by Turkey. In the statement, it was stated that effective negotiations with the European Union that prioritize visa liberalization, agricultural supports and scientific cooperation will be conducted, and customs union practices that are not in favor of Turkey will be corrected. (Republican People's Party’s Election Declaration, 2018.) In addition, the Republican People's Party declared that it does not find it appropriate to use the Syrian refugees who took refuge in Turkey as pressure and threat in relations with the European Union. For the Republican People's Party, the most basic approach regarding refugees is to send Syrian refugees to their homes in peace within the framework of human rights. Saying that it is also a defender of the rights of the Turkish Cypriot people, the Republican People's Party aimed not to compromise the country's interests in the name of EU membership. While exhibiting a principled stance that does not compromise on interests, as in the case of Deniz Baykal, regarding EU membership, it also aimed to increase cooperation and solidarity with social democratic parties in Europe by displaying a dialogical approach.(Republican People's Party’s Election Declaration, 2018.)

On the official website of the Republican People's Party EU Representation, under the title of “The EU Membership Vision of the Republican People's Party”, it was stated that the Republican People's Party is a permanent defender of Turkey's European Union membership and that legal and social reforms should be made in this regard. It is underlined that a successful Turkey in the EU membership process will contribute to the EU's playing a larger geopolitical role, its young population, the economic dynamism, natural, historical, and cultural richness, and energy security of the EU.(chpbrussels.org.) While the Republican People's Party argued that Turkey's future is in Europe and that the Turkey-EU negotiation process should be revived, it underlined that the EU could not express its contradictions regarding the unfair suspension of negotiation chapters due to the Southern Cyprus government and France.(Efe, 2018, p.18.) The Republican People's Party argued that Turkey's EU process should be reconsidered with a renewed approach that avoids political calculations and promotes broader political and social consensus. The party emphasized that the public should be better informed than the EU process will increase the social standards, economic conditions, and quality of life of Turkish citizens, and will raise the standards of democracy and human rights and that EU politicians should support Turkey in these efforts. (chpbrussels.org.)

Kılıçdaroğlu, who wrote a letter to the Presidents of the “PES” member parties and the Turkish Ambassadors of the European Union member countries, expressed her perspective on the EU with the following sentences:

"İsmet İnönü, the second Chairman of our party, who was the Prime Minister at the time the Ankara Agreement was signed in 1963, defined European integration with these words: 'It is the most courageous work of human intelligence throughout the history of humanity.' İsmet İnönü is one of the two founders of the modern Turkish Republic, together with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and this concise statement is based on a very important experience distilled from her long political life. İnönü, who lived the first of two world wars as an officer who fought on the fronts, and the second as a head of state trying to keep her country out of the war, was aware of what a brave attempt to keep the peace. Today, as the Republican People's Party, we are of the same opinion. As a country, we want to both contribute to this 'Bravest Work' and benefit all humanity from the results of this 'Bravest Work'. Europe and Europeanism are based on the universality of democracy, the rule of law and human rights principles. The road to 'Permanent Peace' envisioned by Immanuel Kant brings up the vision of a cosmopolitan civilization that provides the formation of a holistic and universal human order without destroying the respect for national loyalties. For this reason, as democrats, and progressives seeking 'permanent peace' and relying on the tradition of enlightenment, it would be a lack to consider the concept of Europe and Europeanness from purely
national and religious perspectives. The principle of "Permanent Peace" was one of the most important principles for the founder of our Republic, Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and has become the cornerstone of our republic's traditional foreign policy. The foreign policy we have followed puts the responsibility of carrying our country to the European Union on us as the representatives of this traditional foreign policy. Therefore, we see Turkey's membership in the European Union as a fundamental goal for our country.

Today, I am deeply saddened by the fact that Turkey is only on the agenda in the context of foreign policy at the EU Summits and the candidacy process is not mentioned at all. Turkey's taking its place in the European Union requires the formation of a general political consensus both in Turkey and in EU member states. Even though the democracy problem Turkey is facing is brought to the agenda on many platforms, I know that our nation's democracy accumulation is at a level that will overcome all our problems with the participation of the people. The democratization program we envision for Turkey is basically based on the principle of placing Turkey in a respectable place as a member of the family of Western democracies. Today, I think that the solution to the problems of democracy created by authoritarian populism is not to close inside countries. On the contrary, all democrats of the world should come together on the basis of democracy, rule of law and human rights. We will be pleased if you create an opportunity for the right political discussions to take place regarding Turkey's rightful place among the Western democracies, that is, if you oppose the views that exclude Turkey from European integration, on the contrary, contribute to the expansion and completion of this integration.

We are all members of the great human family. Our nations are bound together by strong historical ties. It is our duty to carry this deep-rooted relationship to the next level and to make Europe the pioneer of the world in global politics, economy, science and culture as in the past. I wish you success in your struggle with the hope that a new era will begin where our progressive values shape the world.” (chp.org.tr)

Turkey's EU membership has been a subject of debate for many years that has never been extinguished. In the light of these discussions, the Republican People's Party has supported Turkey's EU membership from the very beginning. According to the Republican People's Party; Turkey's goal of full membership in the EU is a social change project that is the natural extension of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's modernization revolution and modernization vision. The main expectation of the party in its relations with the EU is an honorable full membership framework that respects the founding values of the Republic. The Republican People's Party does not favor any other option for membership other than this framework. The party agrees to abide by the Copenhagen and Maastricht criteria as well as the conditions accepted and applied by all other members and the adoption of EU law for Turkey's EU membership with equal rights. The Republican People's Party sees the European Union as a system of values that represents democracy, human rights, freedoms, independence of the judiciary, secularism, modernity, equality and therefore supports Turkey's membership in the European Union. However, supporting EU membership does not mean that injustices will be tolerated under all circumstances.

The Republican People's Party, which is the architect of Turkey's European adventure that started with the 1963 Ankara Agreement, followed a policy that wanted to complete this ultimate goal that it had started over time. While the Republican People's Party is extremely eager for Turkey's EU membership, it has also been sensitive about ensuring that national interests are not harmed. Emphasizing this issue in party programs and election declarations, the Republican People's Party displayed a more cautious approach to EU membership during the Ecevit period and a national opportunist attitude during the Baykal period. Because the moment in the display of these approaches has taken shape according to the conjunction of the period. The perception that the Republican People's Party is distant from the EU started to change during the Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu
period. While defending the improvement of relations with the EU, Kılıçdaroğlu adopted a moderate, structural, and pragmatic policy in favor of completing the road covered.

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