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Social Studies pre-service teachers' views on the EU membership process: A multidimensional evaluation

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One of the general purposes of Social Studies is to integrate individuals with the social life by providing accurate knowledge and skills about their environment and society. As well as the role of Social Studies in raising consciousness on EU relations, Social Studies teachers' views about EU membership and the sources of these views are important. By sharing their views, teachers can lead students to have similar views. In this study, it was aimed to identify pre-service Social Studies teachers' views about the EU, Turkey's EU membership process and the effects of this process on Turkey. In the research, descriptive scanning method was used. A hundred freshmen and 100 seniors, totally 200 students, studying at KTU Fatih Faculty of Education, Social Studies Teaching Department were randomly chosen for the study. A semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool. The analysis of the interviews was made according to the categories that emerged from the answers. The data, obtained from the research, indicated that most of the Social Studies pre-service teachers have inadequate information about Turkey's EU membership process. The most common information source is television and 60% of the pre-service teachers are not interested in this topic. Besides, it was found that most of the social studies pre-service teachers do not support Turkey's EU membership with the thought that EU will cause cultural erosion.

Key words: Social Studies pre-service teacher, European Union, Turkey's EU membership.

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation is a concept which has economic, cultural and technological dimensions and emphasizes the inevitability of change and has brought together the convergence of time and space. The unbalanced distribution of sources and population has coupled together countries around economic, political, military and social formations among which are the European Union, the United Nations, NATO, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and OECD by looking after mutual benefits. It is possible to say that these formations, which are also

named as global or regional organisations, play a determining role in world decision-making mechanisms. Turkey takes steps towards ranking among these unions imposed by the global system for political, economic and social reasons as well as its geopolitical position. One of these formations is the EU with which negotiations have been carried out for almost 50 years unevenly. The Union was established as European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) by Germany, Belgium, France, Holland, Italy and Luxemburg signing the Treaty of Paris in 1951, and the

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Treaties of Rome being enforced in 1958 created European Economic Community (EEU) which focused on agriculture mostly. The enlarging structure of the community and establishing partnerships in many topics required the transition from community to “union”. The Treaty of Maastricht, which was enforced in 1993, was the last step to change the community into a union (Dedeoglu, 2003; Avrupa Birliği Türkiye Delegasyonu, 2011). Dedeoglu (2003) resembles the EU to a tree with its root, stem and branches and it is considered as a unique and dynamic integration process. The relationships of Turkey with the Union commenced on July 3, 1959 and the Treaty of Ankara dated December 1, 1964 established the frame. In the 1970s the parties diverged and 1980 Turkish coup d'état resulted in a rupture of the relationship. Although Turkey submitted its application for full membership, the union countries criticised Turkey for democracy and human rights and the application was rejected. Within the frame of Copenhagen criteria, which was signed 1993, define the political and economic criteria for a state to join the union, significant legal regulations were made in Turkey (Morgil, 2006). This application was accepted in the 1999 Helsinki Summit and revealed the necessity of a wide range of reforms to be carried out (Cayhan, 2003; Dedeoglu, 2003; Davutoglu, 2009). Finally, in line with the decision made by the European Union Presidents in the Summit on December 17, 2004 Turkey commenced official negotiations with the EU to join the union on October 3, 2005 and thereby the uneven relationship between the EU and Turkey took yet another twist. It was revealed in the Progress Report on Turkey (2011) prepared by the European Commission that 13 (*Free Movement of Capital, Company Law, Intellectual Property Law, Information Society and Media, Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary, Taxation, Statistics, Enterprise and Industry Policy, Trans European Networks, Environment, Consumer and Health, Protection, Financial Control*) out of the 33 chapters were opened and 1 (*Science and Research*) was temporarily closed (Avrupa, 2011).

The information that presents a short summary of a quarter-century European Union adventure sets forth the significance of the research done and to be done on the related topic. Today, issues such as Cyprus, Armenian Genocide and education in the mother tongue have become current issues in Turkey and caused public controversy with regard to the relationships between the EU and Turkey (Guresci, 2006). A number of studies all of which presented the insufficient knowledge of the public misled by the media and a negative perception of the EU have been carried out (Akpınar, 2006; Guresci, 2006; Şenyuva, 2009; Balkar and Ozgan, 2010; Açıık, 2010). The first cause of this uneven relationship and the negative perception of the public are considered to be the statements of some European policy makers who characterize the EU as a Christian club, the process being considered as the continuation of the European imperia-

lism by the public and distantiation of presidents of some EU member countries (Davutoglu, 2009). Moreover, there is a concern over the fact that EU might destroy our national and religious values since it is becoming a political and cultural union and purports to lead the rising values of our era (Yilmaz, 2007).

When the gains are considered in terms of the member countries, certain benefits of the membership are basic human rights, agriculture, animal husbandry, food, education, environment, regulations regarding the disabled, freedom of movement, and life-long learning programs. Numerous developments such as developments in the fields of health, law and education which have affected individual and social life positively have occurred in Turkey, despite being a candidate country; on account of the steps taken during the EU process (Açıık, 2010). In the field of education, the Lisbon Strategy and the Bologna Process accepted by Turkey brought about applications such as ECTS, diploma supplement, student and academician mobility in higher education. For the purposes of developing information technologies in primary and secondary education, increasing schooling rate and investment support of the community in education, some projects such as “100% Support for the Education and “All Girls to School” have been made and universities of Turkey continue their studies on the same issue (Bayrakci, 2005; Eurydice, 2010b; Sağlam, et al., 2011; Sadioglu, 2013).

One of the most important current issues in Turkey is the European Union (EU) membership process. When the full membership negotiations started in 2004 a road map was determined; however, there are some delays and problems in taking steps towards a strong unity between Turkey and the EU. Therefore, arguments regarding the EU are still in the country's agenda. Turkey's EU membership is a process which has many outcomes on political, economical and cultural life and should be conducted based on a social agreement. Education, also, has been affected by this process which requires many changes in social life. Preparing the society for this process, solving social and cultural problems derived from the unity and introducing shared values are only possible through educational activities. In this context, it is necessary that the courses with a focus on social life serve this purpose. In the EU membership process, one of the important courses to inform the society about the process is Social Studies. Therefore, it is significant to reveal Social Studies pre-service teachers' perceptions and how higher education process affects these perceptions in terms of improving viewpoints regarding the EU.

Purpose of the study

This study aims to determine Social Studies teachers' perceptions and basic knowledge regarding the EU and

Table 1. Pre-service teachers' views on the number of the EU member countries.

Number of the members	Fresher	Senior	Total	
	f	f	f	%
12 and less	6	2	8	4
13-20	11	6	17	8,5
21-26	14	13	27	13,5
27	24	40	64	32
28-30	12	18	30	15
30 and more	16	8	24	12
No answer	17	13	30	15
Total	100	100	200	100

whether higher education causes a change in these perceptions and level of knowledge and answers to the following questions were sought to be answered.

1. What do pre-service teachers know about the number of EU member countries and when full membership application of Turkey was accepted?
2. What are the information sources of pre-service teachers regarding the EU?
3. Do the pre-service teachers want Turkey to join the EU and why?
4. What are the views of pre-service teachers on the possibility of Turkey joining the EU and why?
5. What are the views of pre-service teachers on the outcomes of Turkey not being able to join the EU and why?
6. What are the views of pre-service teachers on the effects of Turkey joining the EU on our cultural and social structure?

METHOD

In this study, it was aimed to reveal, in all its parts, the views of social sciences pre-service teachers on Turkey's EU membership. In accordance with this purpose, document analysis method within the frame of qualitative research approach was adopted. One of the most important goals of qualitative research is that perceptions and experiences of individuals who are included in the study are presented (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). Convenience sampling technique was adopted in the study. Semi-structured interview form was used as the data collection tool. Each interview took an average of 20 min and 20 researchers, each of whom carried out interviews with 10 pre-service teachers, were appointed for the interviews. The research was carried out with freshers (100) and seniors (100) who study at Karadeniz Technical University, Fatih Faculty of Education Social Studies Teaching Department in 2013-2014 academic years. The data gathered through the interviews was analysed through content analysis. First, related themes and codes in literature were determined (Akpınar, 2006; Şenyuva, 2009; Alkan, 2013). Afterwards, the expressions within the interviews were negotiated by three people, and then they were addressed to the themes and categories accordingly. Following the analysis, the data were tabulated in terms of categories and themes in frequencies and percentages. In addition, these categories were

supported with direct quotations from the transcriptions. Nick names such as pre-service teacher 1(PST1) were used in order to provide participants' confidentiality.

FINDINGS

In this chapter, the data obtained from the answers of the questions asked from the pre-service teachers in order to find out their views on the EU and Turkey's membership process are presented.

It was aimed to determine the pre-service teachers' tendency to follow the number of the EU member countries, Turkey's membership process and current issues related to the EU and their views on information sources. The data obtained from the pre-service teachers' answers the question about the number of the EU member countries was presented in Table 1.

As it is seen in Table 1, 32% (f=64) of the pre-service teachers estimated the number of the member countries correctly. The fact that this number is higher in seniors (40) is an outstanding finding, which is thought to stem from the fact that senior students took a related class. 15% of the pre-service teachers did not state a view on this topic. It was also found out that the rates of pre-service teachers who think the number of the member countries in 20 and less or 30 and more approximate.

One of the turning points of Turkey's membership process is the date on which the application was approved. Pre-service teachers' views on the date on which the application was approved are presented in Table 2.

As it can be seen in Table 2 that only 11 (5, 5%) of the pre-service teachers knew the date on which Turkey's application was accepted. It is striking that 31% of the pre-service teachers did not answer this question. The rate of the pre-service teachers who referred to a date between 2000 and 2004 was 15% and the rate for the ones who stated 2005 and on was 30%.

The data regarding the pre-service teachers' interests in the EU and relationship between the EU and Turkey are presented in Table 3.

According to Table 3, 40% of the pre-service teachers stated to follow developments regarding the EU whereas 60% of them stated not to be interested in this issue. Also, 57, 5% of the pre-service teachers wanted to learn about the EU and 42.5% of them had negative views. Moreover, more than half of the pre-service teachers answered negatively as for to add an EU-related course to their curriculum. 53% of the pre-service teachers did not agree with this view while 47% of them answered positively.

The data regarding the information sources of pre-service teachers regarding the EU are given in Table 4.

As it can be seen in Table 4 television is the most widely used source to gain viewpoints about the EU. 38.9% (f=177) of the pre-service teachers referred to television as an information source and the other important source was newspapers (27.1%). Furthermore,

Table 2. Pre-service teachers' views on the date on which the application was approved.

Date	Fresher	Senior	Total	
	f	f	f	%
1950 and before	1	3	4	2
The years between 1951 and 1970	5	4	9	4,5
The years between 1971 and 1990	11	4	15	7,5
The years between 1991 and 1998	1	8	9	4,5
1999	1	10	11	5,5
Between 2000-2004	14	16	30	15
2005 and on	32	28	60	30
No answer	35	27	62	31
Total	100	100	200	100

Table 3. Pre-service teachers' interests in the EU.

Questions	Yes				No				Total
	Fresher	Senior	Total		Fresher	Senior	Total		
	f	f	f	%	f	f	f	%	f
Do you follow the current developments?	35	45	80	40	65	55	120	60	200
Would you like to know about the EU more?	52	63	115	57,5	48	37	85	42,5	
Would you like to have a course related to the EU in your department?	38	56	94	47	62	44	106	53	

Table 4. Information sources of pre-service teachers regarding the EU.

Information sources	Fresher	Senior	Total	
	f	f	f	%
Teacher	23	29	52	11,4
Family	7	10	17	3,7
Friends	15	22	37	8,1
Course books	15	27	42	9,5
Television	87	90	177	38,9
Newspapers	66	57	123	27,1
Internet	6	-	6	1,3
Total	219	235	454	100

almost 70% of the pre-service teachers made use of print and visual media to gain viewpoints about the EU. Some of the pre-service teachers mentioned teachers (11, 4%), course books (9, 5%) and friends (8, 1%) as information source.

The data and justifications regarding whether pre-service teachers who participated in the study wanted the membership of Turkey are given in Table 5.

When Table 5 is examined, it is observed that 68% of the pre-service teachers opposed to Turkey to join the EU for various reasons; whereas 29% of them had positive views. 3% of the pre-service teachers were indecisive or stated some conditions. Moreover, a significant difference was not found between the two

groups of students.

When the categories related to the justifications stated by the pre-service teachers who wanted Turkey to join the EU (29%) are examined, it is seen that they gave answers in conformity with the categories "*The country's level of development and prosperity will increase*" (55, 5%) and "*Economic improvement*" (12, 6%). Some of the statements of these students were as follows:

"If Turkey joined in the EU, people would obey rules more and we would develop more (P-ST,182)", "If Turkey joined in the EU, it would be a more developed country and I believe that Turkey would be a developed world country" (P-ST190)", "Life standards would rise. Turkey

Table 5. Pre-service Teachers' Support of Turkey's membership.

Main category	Sub-categories	Fresher	Senior	Total	
		f	f	f	%
Yes	Economic improvement	2	6	8	12,6
	Visa and freedom of movement	4	2	6	9,6
	Improvement of democracy	3	2	5	8
	Having the right to speak	-	2	2	3,2
	Development and the increase of wealth level	21	14	35	55,5
	Having Privileges	1	1	2	3,2
	Stability	2	-	2	3,2
	No answers	-	3	3	4,7
	Total	33	30	63	100
	The rate of main category			63	29
No	Not necessary (economic, geopolitical, political etc.)	21	25	46	31,3
	Restricts our sovereignty	3	3	6	4,1
	A union of Christians	2	4	6	4,1
	Causes Cultural Erosion	20	15	35	23,8
	Cultural Differences	2	2	4	2,7
	EU's loss of power	2	6	8	5,4
	The loss of national identity	10	-	10	6,8
	Puts our country off, not wanting to bring our country in	5	6	11	7,5
	Has benefits	3	5	8	5,4
	No answer	5	8	13	8,9
Total	73	74	147	100	
The rate of main category			147	67,8	
Conditional I yes	(As long as culture is preserved)	3	1	4	1,8
Indecisive		2	1	3	1,4
Total		111	106	217	100

would make use of the same benefits as the EU countries" (P-ST11).", "People would prosper economically" (P-ST36)", "I believe it would contribute to our economic development" (P-ST102)"

Another justification stated by the pre-service teachers (10%) was the opportunity to travel to the EU countries without a visa. For instance the pre-service teacher 27 said, "In order to benefit from visa-free travel" 8% of the pre-service teachers who supported the membership stated that the membership would contribute to the development of democratic rights. "For a more humane life, for women not to be beaten on the streets, for freedom of thought, for me to be a part of the decision making process in my country" were among these justifications. 3 of the pre-service teachers (4.7%) did not specify a justification.

In the justification categories of the pre-service teachers who opposed to EU membership (Fresher, f=73; Senior, f=74) it can be seen that Turkey being thought to be a socially, politically, economically and geopolitically strong country removes the necessity to join the EU is a prominent idea. 31% of the answers of the pre-service

teachers opposed to the EU membership were in this category and it was emphasized that Turkey was a self-sufficient country. P-ST138 and P-ST55 expressed their views as follows: "I don't think it is necessary. Turkey could increase its capacity to 100%. Instead of joining to the EU, it is more reasonable to integrate with other countries" "The EU is not a useful union for Turkey, they want to colonise us; so, I do not want Turkey to join the EU. We are a self-sufficient country" These are some of the statements of the pre-service teachers. The reason emphasized by the opposing sides most is damaging our cultural values. 23.8% of the pre-service teachers set forth this concern by saying the following: "We are already having difficulty in preserving our values. If we joined the EU, we would live a social disintegration (P-ST48)", "If Turkey joined the EU, this would cause social and cultural deterioration. We would imitate the social and cultural structures of the EU (P-ST52)". Other justifications were the EU putting Turkey off (7, 5%), the EU losing power (5,4%) and interests. Some of the statements regarding these justifications were: "Turkey's membership process is similar to beating the air. We are trying in vain because the EU will not accept us (P-

Table 6. Pre-services teachers views regarding the possibility of Turkey's full membership.

Main category	Sub-categories	Fresher	Senior	Total	
		f	f	f	%
Possible	The EU needs us	3	7	10	18,2
	Turkey has changed and developed compared to the past	11	8	19	34,5
	Turkey's geopolitical position	4	1	5	9,1
	Using Turkey's sources (manpower, underground sources)	4	1	5	9,1
	Positive political developments	3	-	3	5,5
	We have become eligible	3	2	5	9,1
	No justification	3	5	8	14,5
	Total	31	24	55	100
	Rate of the main category			55	26,3
	Not a necessity (economic, geopolitical, political)	2	3	5	3,3
	The EU is reluctant and delays the process	34	28	62	40,5
	We do not conform with the EU culture	3	2	5	3,3
	The EU's religion is different	9	24	33	21,6
	Our population is high	-	5	5	3,3
	Turkey's internal issues (unemployment, education...)	2	2	4	2,6
	Submissive policies (The EU takes what they want)	-	4	4	2,6
	Impossible	They would not want Turkey to be a great partner	8	3	11
Turkey is far from the EU requirements		6	6	12	7,8
No justification		4	8	12	7,8
Total		69	85	154	100
Rate of the main category				154	73,7
Total		100	109	209	100

ST118)", "We want to join the union for economic reasons but there is already a financial crisis in the EU countries (P-ST37)". Besides this, 4.1% of the pre-service teachers stated to oppose to the EU "because of being a Christian union and because of restricting our sovereignty" and 8.9% of the pre-service teachers did not specify any justifications.

Pre-service teachers' views regarding how realistic they think it is for Turkey to be a full member of the EU are presented in Table 6.

As can be seen in Table 6, about 74% of the pre-service teachers believed that it was impossible for Turkey to be a full member of the EU while 26% of them thought that it was possible. It was determined that freshers were more optimistic.

Pre-service teachers who were optimistic about Turkey's membership (26%) tried to support their view by giving various justifications and Turkey's having changed and developed within the last years was the mostly stated view. 35% of the pre-service teachers who found the EU membership realistic gave answers in conformity with the category "Turkey has changed and developed compared to the past". These pre-service teachers articulated the following statements regarding this category: "Turkey is a rising power thanks to its global policies and has become a potentially strong country. Economical problems and some other issues seem to trouble the EU. If Turkey

solved some of its problems, then the EU would accept our application eagerly (P-ST108)", "Turkey influences the world policies. The EU would like to have such a country in their union (P-ST88)" 18, 2% of the pre-service teachers who believed that full membership of Turkey was realistic uttered sentences such as "I think we are one of the most powerful countries of the world. The EU needs us more than we need it (P-ST51)". As it can be seen in Table 6 that the justifications such as "Turkey's geopolitical position", "Making use of Turkey's sources", and "We would comply with the EU criteria" were also explained by 9.1% of the pre-service teachers. "Turkey is an important country in terms of its geopolitical position (P-ST36)", "The EU would accept Turkey's application for only the sake of its youth population (P-ST183)", "The EU would accept us provided that we fulfilled their conditions (P-ST82)". About 15% of the pre-service teachers did not specify a justification although they were optimistic about Turkey's membership.

One third of the pre-service teachers (74%) purported that Turkey would not be a member of the EU and the most common justification for this situation was the EU being reluctant and putting Turkey off for various reasons. 40.5% of the participants gave answers in conformity with the category which reflected this view. Some of the statements of the pre-service teachers were as follows: "The EU hedges Turkey off permanently.

Table 7. Pre-service teachers' views on the outcomes of Turkey not joining the EU.

Main category	Sub-categories	F	S	Total	
		f	f	f	%
Would be at a loss	Exploitation	-	3	3	7,7
	Democratization process would be damaged	1	2	3	7,7
	The relationship between the EU and Turkey would deteriorate	4	-	4	10,3
	Political loneliness, being excluded from making significant decisions	5	3	8	20,5
	We cannot make use of the advantages	-	2	2	5,2
	Economic losses	3	4	7	18
	Development would slow down	5	1	6	15,3
	No justification	-	6	6	15,3
	Total	18	21	39	100
	Rate of the main category			39	19,4
	Our freedom and independence would not be restricted	4	3	7	4,6
	Turkey is already in a good situation	36	23	59	37,6
	They need us	17	5	22	14,1
Would not be at a loss	We are a developing country	6	14	20	12,9
	Culture and values would be preserved	5	5	10	6,4
	The EU is already declining	3	6	9	5,8
	Turkey should unite with Asian and Islamic countries	1	1	2	1,4
	No justification	7	21	28	17,9
	Total	79	78	157	100
	Rate of the main category			157	78,1
No opinion stated	Unanswered	1	1	2	0,99
Indecisive		2	1	3	1,5
Total		100	101	201	100

There are abusing us (P-ST116)", "The EU does not want to accept Turkey. They are delaying the process (P-ST5)". Another element stated by 21.6% of the pre-service teachers was related to religion. "Because we are a crowded and Muslim country, they would not accept us (P-ST103)", "The EU is a Christian union and would not accept Turkey because there is no Muslim country in the union (P-ST3). Besides this, about 8% of the participants emphasized that the conditions were rather aggravated by saying "No, because we have a long way to go before they accept us". Again, the rate of the pre-service teachers who did not specify a justification for the impossibility of Turkey's membership was 21.6%. A few pre-service teachers asserted justifications such as "We don't need the union", "Our culture is different", "our population is high" (3. 3%).

Pre-service teachers' answers to the question "Would Turkey lose anything if it did not join the EU?" are shown in Table 7.

As it is seen in Table 7, 78% of the pre-service teachers thought that Turkey would not lose anything in

case of not joining the EU. The number of the pre-service teachers who share the same opinion is approximately the same (1.S, f=79; 4.S, f=78). The main justifications for this situation were "Turkey already being in a good situation and not needing the EU". P-ST102 said, "We can stand on our own feet." and P-ST129 said, "We will become self-sufficient if we improve a little more." Furthermore, 14 of the participants set forth the idea that the EU needed Turkey by stating the following: "We would not lose anything. I don't think that we should join the union. The EU would be at a loss. They would not make use of a country like ours (P-ST155)". 13% of the pre-service teachers indicated that not joining the EU would not do any harm cause Turkey by mentioning these and other similar statements: "It would not cause any loss. Turkey can establish bilateral relationships with the EU countries; the Turkish economy is developing so fast the whole world is watching use. Thus, Turkey would lose nothing (P-ST 108)" and other similar statements. Some of the participants shared the view that it would be useful for Turkey to join the EU by saying "Our freedom

Table 8. Pre-service teachers' views on the social and cultural effects of joining the EU.

Main category	Sub-category		F	S	Total		
			f	f	f	%	
Yes	Cultural	Cultural values would be degenerated (customs, traditions and values)	74	81	155	64,9	
		Religious beliefs would be destroyed	3	4	7	2,9	
		Life conditions would improve	9	14	23	9,7	
	Economic	New employment opportunities	-	14	14	5,8	
		Freedom of movement	3	7	10	4,1	
		More freedom and individual	1	4	5	2,1	
		Modernization	-	5	5	2,1	
		Education	-	5	5	2,1	
	International Relations	Rise in cultural and international interaction	4	-	4	1,7	
		Be foreign-dependent	1	3	4	1,7	
		No justification	2	5	7	2,9	
		Total	97	142	239	100	
		Rate of the main category			239	94,8	
		We are already affected by others		2	2	15,2	
		No change	4	2	6	46,1	
		Our cultural structure is already strong	2	3	5	38,2	
		Total	6	7	13	100	
	No	Rate of the main category			13	5,2	
	Total				103	149	252

and independence would be unrestricted" (5%), "Our culture and would be preserved" (6%). Also, 18% of the participants said that not joining the EU would not do Turkey any harm without specifying any justification. 6% of the participants base their views on the argument that "the EU is already declining; so, it would not do any harm. However, the reforms made during the adaptation process would be beneficial (P-ST112)".

19% of the pre-service teachers thought that not joining the EU might cause some disadvantages and losses for Turkey. One of these losses was stated to be Turkey being politically lonely (21%): "I think Turkey's not joining the EU would cause loss because the whole world is becoming a bloc. In this case Turkey will be a lonely country in Europe, which will leave Turkey in a difficult position in every aspect (P-ST190)." 18% of the participants believed that not being a member of the EU will affect Turkish economy adversely. One of the related statements was as follows: "Our economy and employment rates would be affected adversely (P-ST159)." Another point made by the participants was that it would affect the development of Turkey negatively. "Turkey is not a fully developed country; thus, this would affect its development adversely (P-ST6)." Similarly 4 pre-service teachers (10, 3%) believed that the relationship between Turkey and the EU would deteriorate. "It would cause a disconnection in terms of the diplomatic relationship with the EU (P-ST70)." Other losses specified by the pre-service teachers were "We would be exploited" and "We

would not become modernized (democratic rights) (8%); "We would not make use of its advantages" (5%). Also, 15% of the pre-service teachers did not mention any specific justification, but stated that Turkey would be at a loss.

Pre-service teachers' answers to the question which was asked to identify their views regarding the social and cultural effects of joining the EU are presented in Table 8.

As it is seen in Table 8, the majority of the pre-service teachers (95%) believed that joining the EU would have social and cultural effects on our lives. Except for the categories "freedom of movement and improved life conditions" specified by the seniors, all pre-service teachers shared similar views. Only 5% of the participants believed that there would not be change if Turkey joined the EU.

64.9% of the pre-service teachers who mentioned a social and cultural change on the society set forth that this change would be more effective on our cultural life. "Definitely, yes. It would change many of our cultural and social structures such as our cuisine, the way we dress, respecting the elderly, etc" (P-ST105). "We would forget our customs and traditions and do what the rest of the world did, which would deteriorate our values (P-ST62)." The pre-service teachers who referred to the positive effect of joining the EU mentioned the following effects: economical improvement (9.7%), new employment opportunities (5.8%) and freedom of movement (4.1%). Some of these pre-service teachers gave the following

answers on this category: *“Apart from cultural degeneration, joining the EU would create positive economical developments (P-ST118)”, “Joining the EU would remove all borders, and there would be maximum cultural and social degeneration; however, the number of investments would rise and unemployment rates would fall. People would prosper. Young people and university graduates would live the fear of unemployment (P-ST102)”, “I believe that there would be great improvements in our social and individual lives and we would have a better future (P-ST60)”*. Few of the participants mentioned improvement in our social and democratic rights.

Some of the pre-service teachers who believed that there would be no change in our social and cultural life (5.8%) stated that there has already been a change in our lives: *“Our people have already started to act like Europeans. We can see this in every area from the way they speak, dress and behave (P-ST51)”*. 5 pre-service teachers who believed that there would not be a change stated similar views: *“We would not change our culture and structure at once. Thank God we have a very strong cultural and social structure (P-ST35)”*.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Since 1987 when Turkey submitted its full membership to the EU application numerous reforms have been made in the fields of education, health, human rights, freedom of expression, economy and politics. Thus, it is of quite importance to evaluate this process of which effects have reflected on our daily lives objectively and scientifically in order to lead the public opinion correctly. Opinions and prejudices regarding the process which is not based on a sound basis affect our views significantly.

The findings of this study reveal that the rate of the pre-service teachers who know the number of the member countries is rather low (32%). It is believed that the reason for referring to the years after 2005 is the fact that this issue has occupied the public agenda for a long time because of the negotiation process that began on this date. Majority of the pre-service teachers (about 90%) do not know the date of Turkey’s membership application. It can also be seen that the main information sources of pre-service teachers regarding the EU are newspaper and television. It is thought that especially seniors referred to teachers and courses more than freshers did because of their course contents. The courses “Introduction to Politics” and “Political Geography” which are taught in 2nd and 3rd years of university include these topics; yet, television being the main source of information is an important issue, which can be explained with the fact that it is presented in television news reports prevalently. Especially senior students are seen to have a keen interest in the EU, which may result from the fact that these pre-service teachers are preparing for the

public personnel selection exam and that their education directs them to this issue.

Study findings show that majority of the pre-service teachers (70%) do not support Turkey’s membership and think that Turkey will not be a full member of the EU, the main reason of which is the idea that the EU puts Turkey off. It is thought that visual and print media sources have influenced these concerns since these justifications and expressions in these sources show parallelism. This finding also shows parallelism with the results of other studies which show that Turkish people’s support rate has fallen below 50% (URL 1; URL 2; Şenyuva, 2009; Alkan, 2013; Karluk, 2015). However, in some studies the rate of the people who support Turkey’s membership is approximately 70% (Aslan and Gokkaya, 2004; Sen, 2005; Akpınar, 2006; ANAR, 2003; cited by; Akpınar, 2006; Samur, 2007). The reason of this difference is thought to be related to the date of these studies (between 2000 and 2006) because during these years the importance of the EU was emphasized by both the government and the media. It is also stated that during and after the Helsinki Summit, which was held in December, 1999, it was thought that Turkey was going to be a full member of the EU (Karluk and Tonus, 2004). Furthermore, the negotiations began in 2005 are thought to have affected these findings. On the other hand, from 2005 till the date this study was carried out the positive atmosphere turned into a tense atmosphere. It is thought that the relationship having paused since 2010, Turkey’s decision of not joining the meetings because of Southern Cyprus’ pro-tempore presidency (Alkan, 2013) and Croatia, which started the full membership negotiations in 2005, joining the EU in 2013 have affected the views of pre-service teachers negatively. Pre-service teachers believe that the EU is putting Turkey off and apply double standards. It is possible to say that despite its economic problems and unemployment problem Croatia being accepted within 8 years is a fact that supports this view (Alkan, 2013). It is also seen that the pre-service teachers have a negative perception of the EU, which is a regional organisation, and these perceptions are shaped by the visual and print media mostly and that pre-service teachers’ EU awareness was low. Also, majority of pre-service teachers (90) believe that joining the EU would cause important changes in the social and cultural life. It is also seen that the perceptions of freshers and seniors are not significantly different; therefore, it can be said that formal education does not shape the views of pre-service teachers because the formal education curriculum does not include an EU-related course. The contents of some courses (2 courses) include 2 h of EU-related topics; however, it is thought that this time does not suffice to create awareness of and information on the EU. With reference to this data, it would be beneficial to add an EU-related course in the curriculum of Social Studies Education Program in terms of examining the issue and creating a correct perception because primary and

secondary education is of importance in terms of mentality change. Social Studies course stands out in terms of gaining children the skills of social adaptation and being a participatory citizen. For this reason, Social Sciences pre-service teachers' being able to make objective evaluation of the issue would only be possible by means of the courses taken during formal education.

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