

The Reflection of the Educational Policies of the European Union to Turkish Education System in Terms of Turkey-Eu Integration

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Abstract: The European Union (EU), composed of twenty-eight European countries, is a developing regional integration in which member states solve their problems in common and evaluate their sources, information and technologies. Education which has an important role in enlargement and sustaining continuity of the European Union, plays a vital role in the success of the policies of the Union. Turkey, trying to get involved in such a Union, maintains the relations with EU by fulfilling the regulations required by EU in this process. Especially in recent years, Turkey with the name of a candidate country to the European Union, concentrates on various regulatory activities in the field of education. The purpose of the study is to examine EU education policies and put forward their effects on Turkish educational system.

Key words: European Union Education Policies • Turkish Education System • Education • Turkey

INTRODUCTION

In general sense, the European model is a structure devoted to provide peace with economic integration in international scale and economic and political stability with social consensus in national scale. Undoubtedly, education plays a very important role in this structure. Education is a process that offers individuals a life-long service and effects economic, social, cultural and political developments of the communities. Therefore, the organization of the education in line with modern developments to respond to the needs of individuals and society is among the most important priorities of all the countries in the world. As in all countries of the world, education policies have a very important place in EU since its foundation. One of the prime movers and founders of EU, Monnet stressed the importance of education with these words "If ever the Europe was built again, I would start with the culture".

Relations between Turkey and the European Union has a long historical background. The partnership relationship began with Ankara Treaty in the first half of the 1960s and with 1999 Helsinki Summit, Turkey's candidate status was approved irreversibly. Being in the

process of full membership in the EU, Turkey requires to comply with international norms and standards and fulfill the prescribed conditions. Education has an important place among the norms and standards that EU gives weight. Education plays a critical function in the expansion of the European Union and ensuring its continuity. Because, the attitudes of individuals will be decisive in the success of the projects that the Union tries to fulfill. Education is the most important variable in bringing in these attitudes. Member and candidate countries has focused on the education variable [1]. Therefore, Turkey needs to comply with the norms and standards of the European Union not only in economic but also in social and cultural fields.

There are still significant obstacles that Turkey cannot overcome in its long adventure of EU full membership. To be sure, more than a simple tool for membership process, these are the necessary conditions of being a socially, culturally and economically developed society. In this sense, especially in today's world, which is referred as "information age", education is located in the center/origin of everything. In order to improve the quality in education system, as part of efforts to optimize the social systems in Turkey with EU norms, some

improvement efforts are carried out. In order to understand the scope and purpose of these efforts, it is necessary to analyze the education policies that EU implements and put forward the reflections of these policies to the Turkish education system. Based on this requirement, in this study legal basis and characteristics of EU education policies and their effects on Turkish education system were investigated.

European Union Education Policy: As of the first organization stages of EU, the process of co-operation in the field of education has begun. Albeit short, there exists a provision for vocational training in 56th article of Paris Treaty signed in 1951. The first evaluation of educational policies in the EU was carried out in Rome Treaty in 1957 and arrangements for education were mentioned in articles 41, 57, 118, 125, 128 but it did not go beyond stressing the importance of education within promoting partnership process [2]. In 1963, the ministers responsible for education determined the principles of vocational training policy on the basis of 128th article of Rome Treaty. In the founding treaties there exist reasons for addressing vocational training and leaving out general education. Established for the purpose of creating economic integration, the first objective of the Union towards this goal has been to create a common market. Among the countries in co-operation about creating common market, the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital is essential. Implementing a common vocational training policy is important for the free movement of the above four elements of the common market [3]. Free movement of the persons who got vocational training and their possibility of finding a job contribute to the development of common market.

In 1971, the education ministers of member countries came together for the first time to discuss the future co-operation in the field of education and as a result of this meeting a decision was made. According to this decision, in addition to the above mentioned articles of the Rome Treaty, the co-operation on education was extended to include not only vocational training [4].

With the decision of the Commission in 1974 which constitutes the basis of the EU vocational training policy it was highlighted that the education is a national system and a consensus was achieved on the following points; not standardizing the national education systems of member countries in the integration process and setting up a committee composed of the representatives of the

member states for the coordination of training programs. With the momentum provided by these studies, the Community Education Action Programme was adopted by the Council of Europe in 1976. With Education Action Programme the following principles were recognized; providing education opportunities for the students and adults of community member and non-member countries, achieving a comprehensive cooperation in education systems, collaborating in documentation and statistical studies, achieving cooperation in higher education, foreign language training, providing the possibility of getting education in all of the education fields for all citizens [5].

In addition to the above principles, the development of European Dimension of Education started with this decision. Now then, instead of “Europeanism”, the term “European Dimension of Education” began to be used [6]. The term change also brought about a change in the content of the meaning. While the terms “Europeanism” or “Europe Education” cause the competences in the field of curriculum perceived as a threat to national autonomy by recalling a supra-national formation of a common European curriculum, it can be said that the “dimension” word in the new term minimizes the threat by implying a supplementation to the existing one instead of a complete change [7].

With the Maastricht Treaty adjudicated in 1992, the education has been involved the EU founding treaties [8]. With this treaty, “the responsibility of developing the European Dimension of Education”, “the authority of ensuring compliance in education systems” and “the authority of implementing the vocational training policies special to Europe” have been given to the EU [2]. For the first time, education was located in the center of the economic, social and employment policies of the community in the “White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment” published by the European Commission in 1993. Here, general education and vocational training were stressed clearly for the acceleration of growth [9]. In the same period, to increase knowledge about the different educational systems, three new programs called Sokrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth for Europe were launched. In 1995 the commission identified the two main objectives of the working group established by itself. These are; 1) to work in accordance with White Paper and implementing the year of European lifelong learning 2) to generate ideas and to work on the issue on its own initiative. The basic goal of these studies;

- European citizenship
- Protecting employment by stimulating the competitiveness
- Ensuring social cohesion
- Education and training in information society
- Activating support-education systems for individuals [8].

In the council meeting in Luxemburg in 1997, the European Employment Strategy was launched by the ministers responsible for employment. This strategy is basically related to employment, entrepreneurship and equality of opportunity. With this strategy, educational dimension was added to the employment policies of the member states [1]. Namely, one of the requirements to be employed is having sufficient qualities for the requested power. The tool that will assure such qualities to the people is education.

Bologna Process began with the publication of Sorbonne Declaration in 1998 and then Bologna Declaration in 1999. This process is related to higher education. In 1998, the ministers of education of France, Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom signed Sorbonne Declaration. The declaration focused on the following fields:

- To determine a common degree level system for undergraduate and postgraduate,
- To increase and facilitate the mobility of students and academicians by removing barriers to mobility and improving the recognition of degrees and academic qualifications (Fredriksson, 2003). Apart from these fields, the Sorbonne Declaration emphasized the central role of universities in the development of a European Cultural Dimension. At the same time, it stated that the formation of a European higher education field has a key role in the mobility of citizens, employment and all of the improvements. On June 19, 1999 the European Ministers of Education, consisting of 29 people, signed the Bologna Declaration. With this declaration the ministers stated their wishes about forming a European Higher Education Field until 2010 and promoting the European Higher Education system around the world [9]. With this declaration, five main objectives desired to happen until 2010 were determined;

- Developing an easily readable and comparable degrees system through the implementation of Diploma Supplement. Thus, employment of European citizens and the international competitiveness of European Higher Education system will be encouraged;
- Implementation of a two-grade system including both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Transition to the second degree should require the successful completion of the first degree studies lasting at least three years;
- A credit system like the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) should be established as a tool to promote student mobility extensively;
- Mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff should be encouraged removing barriers to the free movement;
- The European dimension of higher education should be encouraged as necessary [10]. The difference of the Bologna Process in other EU policies is that the country that will become a member of the process does not need to be a member of EU. Education ministers of the countries involved in this process thought that this cooperation should be set up not only with EU member states but also with the third countries [9].

While outlining the period from Maastricht Treaty to the determination of the Lisbon Strategy, the very thing that should be emphasized is including the issue of education to a treaty text for the first time with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty. In this article that encourages Member States to cooperate in this area, policy implementation in the field of education is left to the authority and responsibility of the Member States. During this period, education has been located in the center of the social and employment policies of the Union. Accordingly, it is accepted that, one of the important tools that will allow the power of employment which the Union demands is education.

In 2010, the EU should become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world. With the Lisbon Strategy, lots of targets were set including the education field to revise the EU policies. The Union must carry out some conversions to become a world-leading economy. Accordingly:

- To overcome the various defects of economic field, economy must be seated to a knowledge-based ground.

- To achieve optimal economic growth and quality outcomes, macro-economic policies should be revised.
- The European Social Model should be re-established by putting people at the center and education investments should be increased [11].

With the announcement of the Lisbon Strategy, the Union's objective has been to become the world's most competitive and dynamic economy until 2010. For this, the need to be a knowledge-based society has been frequently mentioned. Therefore, the importance of education has taken place in the first rank in the realization of these objectives. As the legal foundations of the EU who wants to create a European education area leaves the implementation of policy in this area to the responsibility of the member states, new tools for strengthening inter-governmental cooperation have been introduced. Open Method of Cooperation is one of these tools. In this way, intergovernmental processes such as the Bologna and Copenhagen have been created and the cooperation has been tried to strengthen with the participation of a large number of the states in these processes.

The most conspicuous feature of the EU education policies we tried to explain above briefly is that although the EU, neither a state nor an international alliance, brings mandatory regulations in many areas as a supranational union, it foresees a collaborative approach in education policy. The main reason of this approach is that it is difficult for the countries, with different backgrounds especially in education, to make their existing education policies as a single policy only by law. On the other hand the most important feature of the Europe is its regarding the differences as a wealth. The differences are a source of wealth for individuals and they form an important basis for the exploration of the quality and new discoveries [12]. Therefore, taking the advantage of the different education systems and encouraging the communication and cooperation of national, regional and local educators with each other by focusing on the success and the experiences of the member states are among the main objectives of the Union [13]. In short, to create a multi-lingual and multi-cultural Europe, education is one of the priority issues in all of the European countries.

The main objective of the European Union education policy can be summarized as to encourage a common understanding by providing cooperation and solidarity between the member states and to develop a sense of Europeanness; to educate students and teachers in this

process and to ensure their active participation in all research-development areas [14]. Member states are intended to provide job opportunities and to facilitate the transition to the social life by maintaining the originality of the educational systems in harmony and cooperation with each other [13].

The effects of EU Education Policies on Turkish Education System: On 12 September 1963, Turkey took the first step to become a member of the EEC. Up to recognition of Turkey as a candidate country (1999 Helsinki Summit), it is seen that there is no issue related to education in the Treaties and Protocols which are the legal basis for the relations between Turkey and the EU. Following the preparation of the Accession Partnership in 2001, it is seen that within the framework of the calendar and the priorities defined in Turkey's National Programme related to the adoption of the EU Acquis by Turkey, the cooperation and harmonization processes with EU have gained momentum in education field.

Annual progress reports, prepared by the EU in the process of Turkey's EU accession, can be regarded as important documents that determine the developments in the EU candidate countries in areas such as education. In this section we will try to analyse the effects of the EU education policies on Turkish education system in terms of the progress reports prepared from 1998 to the present and the EU education policies described above.

Education is extremely important in terms of Turkey's progress in EU candidacy process and raising the global competitiveness. In this context, the EU process emerges as an opportunity and the driving force for the education reform.

The most comprehensive training program developed for the EU member states, "Socrates" has also affected education programs in Turkey. In Turkey, for the adaption of the new generation to the information society, the skills in training programs called verbal and mathematical skills, basic competences in science and technology, foreign languages, information and communication skills and use of technology, learning to learn, social skills, entrepreneurship, creativity, research, critical thinking, synthesis, problem-solving and general knowledge skills, are considered as the basic criteria in Turkish education system exactly the same as in the EU countries. In the EU accession process, new regulations have been introduced in all aspects of education in Turkey. "Communicative Approach" has been introduced in foreign language education. In this context, the teacher-centered education in old practices gave its place to the student-centered

approach. The role of teachers has also changed as the guide and the facilitator of the learning process. Within the scope of these developments in foreign language education, some changes have taken place at the level of higher education. A new course called "Teaching English to Young Learners", aiming at promoting the language learning characteristics of young learners to teacher candidates, has been added to the program in the Department of English Language Teaching in Education Faculties [15]. In 2005, Turkey's foreign language education program was revised and some changes were made in the aspects of objectives, content, teaching-learning process and evaluation. The changes in this program have been influenced by constructivist philosophy. In this context, in order to make the foreign language education more effective, topic-based language learning such as mathematics, geography, music, cooperative learning, drama practices and performance-based assessment have been encouraged in the programs. In addition, depending on the objectives of the program, textbooks have been renovated and additional hours have been added to the English lessons [15].

In accordance with the information technology policies in the final Lisbon Declaration of the EU, some works are carried out in Turkey to equip the schools with the computer technologies. Within this scope, in the pilot provinces computer labs have been founded in primary and secondary schools, teachers have been given the necessary training, the required software have been sustained and the researches have been carried out on the effects of these studies on students' learning [16].

According to the 2009 progress report, a good progress has been made in the field of education. According to the report, Turkey has increased its performance in terms of early school leavers, completion of secondary education and graduates of mathematics, science and technology. On the strengthening of vocational and technical education, both general and vocational high schools have been extended from three to four years. In the field of higher education, significant progress has been made in implementing the Bologna process in Turkey. In higher education step, ECTS, Diploma Supplement and etc. have been implemented and the studies are carried out on quality assurance in higher education, internal quality assessment and strategic planning processes. Furthermore, participation in Erasmus Programme, that enables the mobility of both students and academicians, has been achieved since 2004. However, in the report published in 2009, developing the

quality assurance systems and increasing the possibilities of entrance to higher education were assessed as the problems to be solved in the future. It was stated in the report that, despite the establishment of 23 new universities in the field of higher education, most of the universities needed appropriate facilities and teaching staff.

Within the framework of lifelong learning policies of the EU, lifelong learning and adult education is becoming increasingly important in Turkey. Within the framework of Socrates (Life Long Learning) program, adult learning (Grundtvig) program has begun to be implemented in universities in Turkey. Moreover, the universities in Turkey has begun to give importance to lifelong learning studies and they provide lifelong learning opportunities for both their own employees and for the people in other parts of society through the units under different names, such as continuing education center, lifelong learning center, academic development unit, personal development unit [17]. In addition, examining the 2009 Bologna Process Stocktaking Report, it is stated that lifelong learning is among five priorities of higher education in Turkey. Although Turkey has performed over the average of Bologna countries in four of the five key priority areas, it has remained below the average of Bologna countries in the lifelong learning area [17]. This result should be considered as an indication of the necessity for reviewing the lifelong learning policies in our country and making the necessary arrangements in these areas.

In the EU candidacy process, Turkey has made great progress in improving the education system particularly at the primary school level in recent years. According to the survey of Turkey Statistical Institute (TSI), net enrollment ratio in primary education during the 2010-2011 academic increased to 99.36%. However, despite this positive development, Turkey has a number of shortcomings in the context of compulsory primary education.

Turkey must first increase the number of pre-school educational institutions. According to 2004 data of Eurostat, while 85% of 4 years old children benefitted from pre-school education, this rate was only about 4% in Turkey. "Lifelong Learning Strategy and Action Plan" which is within the framework of the EU adjustment program and the agenda of the Turkish education system in 2009 and the 2010-2014 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education are described as the documents that will direct the future of the Turkish education system and they are being implemented. Also in the 2012-2013 academic year the enrollment rate in pre-school education in Turkey reached to 70%. (Eurydice, 2013).

Turkey does not succeed enough in basic education school age girls' attendance to school. Within the framework of the EU adjustment law, it is tried to change this situation with the campaigns on the subject. In EU accession phase, some campaigns have been organized in Turkey such as "100% Support for Education" in order to mobilize community support for the investment in education and "Girls Let's Go to School" in order to gain girls' attendance to primary school. Thanks to these campaigns the rates of school enrollment especially of girls have been increased. According to data, in 2007-2008 academic year the difference in the number of male and female students, that is against female students, fell by about half to 1% in primary education and by one fifth to 4% in secondary education. However, large regional disparities still remain in terms of both male and mainly female students. The participation of women to the labor force remains only around 25% in Turkey and this is due to the inequality of men and women and thus the inequality of men and women in utilizing from education. Education seriously affects the participation of women to labor force and with the increase in education level, the proportion of working women has also increased [18]. It is socially and economically worrying that approximately 20% of women are illiterate. Raising compulsory education to 8 years can empower women by extending girls' education process. However, even the 8 year compulsory education falls behind the EU countries. Among the EU countries, compulsory education is between 9-13 years and this education period is 10 years on average.

The social dimension affected by globalization process has gained importance in the EU since 1970 and education has been seen as a means of this dimension. In 2007 progress report, the Council of Europe that determines the general framework of the EU member states' common economic and social policies, pointed out especially Turkey's identity problem and the applications in some subjects in training program such as history, Turkish language and literature and philosophy that focused on single identity and religion and culture subject that foregrounds Islam [19]. Domestic and foreign experts lay down as a condition changing the culture of the Turkish education for eliminating the educational problems [20]. EU experts argue that although many successes have been achieved in the system; they are not enough for EU partnership. In this context, experts emphasize that Turkish education system should be away from a policy based on beliefs and ideas and they accept the new curriculum, developed by the Board of Education

and Discipline, as a major advance in updating the teaching standards and expectations [21-23]. If the application lasts in accordance with all conditions, the classes will move away from traditional approaches and they will turn to an approach that uses analytical skills, expert and creative thinking skills and up-to-date and active learning methods that develops problem solving approaches. In Turkey, studies on removing discriminatory language from textbooks are made. In this context, with the joint project of the EU and the Council of Europe called "Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education", teachers, principals and inspectors are expected to play an important role in promoting democracy and human rights in Turkey.

One of the prominent goals of the EU education programs is the idea to create a European identity. For Europeanness and European citizenship, the individuals in Turkey should have the awareness and responsibility of being European. In the EU accession process, Turkish education system that has a national characteristic, tries to give universal values without losing the core values.

CONCLUSION

Implementation of the EU education policies is one of the priority areas of the EU because it is thought to contribute to the creation of a stronger EU through the strengthening of national education systems. It is observed that the European Union education policies are effective in a variety of ways on the education and training systems of Turkey that is in negotiation process. However, we need to accept that this effect is not systematic in many areas and it is mostly in a developmental nature. Within or outside the Union, the followings should primarily take part in strategic objectives of the Turkish education system; developing the quality and efficiency of education and training systems, ensuring all the citizens' accession to education and training systems and opening the education and training system to the world. To survive and become a developed society in a globalized world, Turkey should continue to perform the related educational reforms.

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