

IN CELEBRATION OF THE 60TH BIRTHDAY OF PROF. HAGEN LICHTENBERG

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It is always difficult to write introductory articles of this kind. The reason is clear: is the personality to be introduced reflected on paper well enough, is his identity explained properly? It depends sometimes on the ability of the writer, and sometimes on the power of the words chosen. It becomes even more difficult when the person in concern is a man of science with as many abilities as Prof. Hagen Lichtenberg.

I have known Prof. Lichtenberg of Bremen University since the 1970's. When I was a student in the department of economics of Bremen University, I used to see Prof. Lichtenberg quite often despite the fact that our departments were different. We used to greet each other with great friendliness and talk briefly if he wasn't in a hurry. Besides, I had the opportunity to attend many international conferences and seminars in which he participated. His papers and speeches on "Social policy, labour law, labour market and the free movement of workers in the European Community" were read and listened to carefully by many Turkish students including myself.

As the inclination of Turkish workers in Germany to return home decreased in the 1980's, many topics concerning migrant workers became the subject of discussion. The most important of these was whether or not Germany should be considered a country of migrants, whether or not migrants should be able to bring their families freely from Turkey, whether they should be able to stay in Germany after having worked in Germany for a certain number of years.

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Within this framework, Prof. Lichtenberg has been an academician who provided foreigners with all kinds of academic support on the one hand, and struggled as a lawyer against infringements of the rights of foreigners – on the other hand. The fact that he was among the lawyers who defended Kazım Kuş in the European Court of Justice is the best example of his efforts in this context. In the aforementioned action, a Turkish citizen (Mr. Kuş) was to be deported unlawfully and this action would have constituted a basis for many subsequent actions. Prof. Lichtenberg's observations contributed importantly to the judgement in this action, which was favourable to the Turkish plaintiff.

Furthermore, Prof. Lichtenberg kindly devoted time, despite his intensive working program in Germany, to lecture in the EC Institute of Marmara University during the 1980's. I am grateful to the founding director of the Institute, Prof. Haluk Kabaalioglu, for his efforts in ensuring Prof. Lichtenberg's contributions to the Institute. As a consequence, Prof. Lichtenberg contributed to the education of hundreds of students in the Institute. He also introduced me to the founding director of the Institute and contributed to my employment therein after my return to Turkey. Furthermore, after Turkey was granted the status "candidate country" in 1999 Prof. Lichtenberg and I collaborated on many significant projects together. In April 2000, an "Academic Cooperation Agreement" was signed by Bremen and Marmara Universities and Prof. Lichtenberg and I were entrusted with its coordination on behalf of our respective universities. Within the framework of this agreement, many academicians and students in different fields from Germany and Turkey are being exchanged.

And together, we must try to develop this cooperation further. We also undertook the first series of conferences on "EU and Turkish – German Relations" together. We thought that it was necessary to start this series at once, because the EU required Turkey to meet the political criteria, which were adopted in Copenhagen. These criteria contained elements such as "a consistent institutional structure in which democracy is endowed with guarantees, rule of law, respect for human rights and minority rights." Most of the speakers in the conferences were academicians, but representatives of business, press, political and non-governmental organizations also could express their views and fruitful discussions took place. The main target of the conferences was to inform German participants and encourage their consideration of the great reforms realized in Turkey recently, and to learn

their ideas about Turkey. In this context, we thought that a compilation of the speeches would be very fruitful and made the first publication.

In the Helsinki Summit of December, 1999 Turkey was granted the status of "candidate country". Nevertheless, discussions about whether or not Turkey is part of Europe were still being conducted among certain influential groups especially in Germany which is the critical country as far as Turkish accession is concerned and we had both agreed that such publications were even more necessary in this context. Antagonists of Turkish accession keep ignoring the fact that Turkey has been part of Europe for centuries and additionally, that Turkey has been a member of almost all European organizations since World War II. Turkey and Europe confirmed the reality that Turkey was a European country once more in 1963, by signing an Association Agreement as an outcome of the application made in 1959.

Prof. Dr. Walter Hallstein, who was then the president of the European Commission, expressed this fact very clearly in the signing ceremony of the Association Agreement in Ankara on September 12, 1963.

"Today we are witnessing an event of great political significance. Turkey belongs to Europe. The deepest meaning to the event may be expressed as follows: This is the endorsement of a fact rather than the abbreviated expressions of a geographical evaluation or a historical determination, which has been valid for the last couple of centuries. Therefore what could be more natural than the identification of Turkey and Europe – which means free self-expression- with each other in their military, political and economic actions and reactions?"

The same groups ignore the fact that Turkey applied for full membership in 1987 pursuant to Article 237 of the Rome Treaty, which enabled only European countries to apply. Turkey's application was accepted and the European Commission thus admitted that Turkey was eligible for membership. Turkey was granted the status of "candidate country" in 1999 at the Helsinki Summit. Despite all these facts, some groups argue, "if Turkey becomes a member, Morocco and Tunisia will apply, too". However, these groups ignore the fact that these countries are not members of any significant European organization. In fact, Morocco had previously applied, but was rejected because it was not a European country

geographically. Furthermore, the fact that Turkey constitutes an important centre of Europe's cultural heritage is being ignored, too.

Today, Turkey – EU relations are at a stage where accession negotiations must be started. We believe that Turkey has adapted its political and legal system to meet the political Copenhagen criteria. However it would constitute an unfair approach towards the Turkish people to explain reforms aiming at the fulfilment of the criteria just by saying that “the EU wants them”, because the values adopted by Europe are universal values and the Turkish people are trying to bring their country up to that level. It would also be an approach, which ignores the fact that the EU itself made an important contribution to the realization of these reforms. The influence of the EU clearly accelerated these reforms. For its part, the EU has admitted that these reforms have been achieved satisfactorily, but insists on witnessing their application. When one compares this approach with the attitude of the EU towards the other candidate candidates, it raises serious doubts about whether the EU is behaving in a just fashion towards Turkey. At any rate, as supporters of Turkish accession and unprejudiced European academicians such as Prof. Lichtenberg have stated, accession negotiations will take several years and there will, therefore, be plenty of time to supervise the application of the new laws. Above all, the Turkish people are very sensitive on this point.

Unfortunately, expectations of starting negotiations with Turkey in the December 2002 Copenhagen Summit ended with disappointment. In the final stage, the above-mentioned decision was postponed to December 2004 as a result of the common position of Germany and France. I always keep in mind remarks by Prof. Lichtenberg in this regard. He has been encouraging us to work more and more in a spirit of cooperation but not to give up because of the decision made by France and Germany. In this sense, Professor Lichtenberg, has been a source of strength for us. Consequently, Professor Lichtenberg's efforts in the holding of the conference on ‘the analysis of the EU's strategies on political, economic and legal approximation of Turkey to the Union’ held in Bremen in October 2003 with the collaboration of Bremen and Marmara universities is much appreciated.

Of particular note is the fact that this conference was held under the tutelage of Edzard Reuter whose father had moved to Turkey during the Nazi dictatorship and who witnessed at first hand the reforms being put in

place by Kemal Atatürk. There is also an ongoing study to publish the papers of this conference, which involved many political scientists, journalists, NGO representatives and politicians from Turkey and Germany. Apart from this, I must extend my special thanks to Mrs. Anja Lichtenberg, the Turkish minority and the students involved.

As a conclusion, the role of Professor Lichtenberg and his responsibility as a social scientist has played an important role in guiding Turkey in the EU membership process and not only in terms of supporting us, but also in raising our awareness of the necessities of reform and Turkey's deficiencies.

While Turkey -EU relations have become increasingly complicated, each passing day reveals the necessity for consultation with European social scientists like Professor Lichtenberg. Once again, I would like to express my warmest congratulations on the 60th birthday of Professor Lichtenberg. Unfortunately, although it was planned, I could not attend this surprise party arranged by Mrs. Lichtenberg. However, I was represented by my friends. I wish both him and his lovely wife Mrs. Lichtenberg long and healthy lives.