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## THE EUROPEANIZATION OF TURKEY'S NATURE PROTECTION AND BIODIVERSITY POLICY

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### Abstract

European Union (EU) is one of the leading actors in the environment policy field. The leading role of the EU partially comes from its aim to protect the environment from the negative effects of the mankind and partially due to the nature of borderless environmental problems. Nature protection and biodiversity is an important part of the environment. As a leading actor the EU affects the policies of the candidate states. These states have to be in line with the EU policies if they want to be part of the EU. Turkey, as a candidate state, has to be in line with the EU policies, as well. This research focuses on nature protection and biodiversity in order to see the Europeanisation of Turkey in this field. So, this research specifies "misfit"s between EU and Turkish nature protection and biodiversity policy as a need of Europeanization and observes the outcomes of Europeanization process. As a result, it can be seen that the effects of EU on Turkish nature protection and biodiversity policy are not at the desired level.

**Keywords:** *Europeanization, nature protection, Biodiversity, Misfit.*

### TÜRKİYE'NİN DOĞA KORUMA VE BİYOLOJİK ÇEŞİTLİLİK POLİTİKASININ AVRUPALILAŞMASI

#### Öz

Avrupa Birliği (AB), çevre politikası alanında önde gelen aktörlerinden biridir. AB'nin öncü rolü, kısmen çevreyi insanlığın olumsuz etkilerinden koruma amacından ve kısmen de sınırsız çevre sorunlarının doğasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Doğanın korunması ve biyolojik çeşitlilik, çevrenin önemli bir parçasıdır. Önde gelen bir aktör olarak AB, aday devletlerin politikalarını etkiler. Bu devletler, AB'nin bir parçası olmak istiyorlarsa, AB politikaları ile uyumlu olmalıdırlar. Türkiye de aday ülke olarak AB politikalarına uyumlu olmalıdır. Bu araştırma, Türkiye'nin bu alanda Avrupalılaşmasını görmek için doğa koruma ve biyolojik çeşitlilik üzerine odaklanmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu araştırma, Avrupalılaşmanın bir gereği olarak AB ve Türkiye doğa koruma ve biyolojik çeşitlilik politikası arasındaki "uyumsuzlukları" ortaya koymakta ve Avrupalılaşma sürecinin sonuçlarını gözlemlemektedir. Sonuç olarak, AB'nin Türkiye'nin doğa koruma ve biyolojik çeşitlilik politikası üzerindeki etkilerinin istenilen düzeyde olmadığı görülmektedir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** *Avrupalılaşma, Doğa koruma, Biyolojik çeşitlilik, Uyumsuzluk*

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## **1. Introduction**

Biodiversity is an important term and before looking at this term in the context of Europeanization, it would be useful to know what biodiversity means. In the Convention on Biological Diversity, the biological diversity is described as *“the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part: this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems”* (UN, 1992: 3). The European Union (EU) gives nearly the same definition for biodiversity, as it is noted that it is the variety of life on Earth, and they are defined as natural capital which provide *“ecosystem services”* such as cleaning the water, purifying the air, regulating the climate, recycling nutrients and providing food (European Commission, (n.d.) a). The definitions are quite broad, and they include all living organisations.

Anub Shah drew attention to the importance of biodiversity by referring to the Convention about Life on Earth. According to him, *“at least 40 per cent of the world’s economy and 80 per cent of the needs of the poor are derived from biological resources. In addition, the richer the diversity of life, the greater the opportunity for medical discoveries, economic development, and adaptive responses to such new challenges as climate change.”* (Shah, 2014). So, biodiversity has vital importance for humanity and its continuation. It has effects in long term on human life, but it is not given due importance. However, nature protection and biodiversity are the areas that have an important place in EU policies. There are regulations, directives and strategy on these areas.

Nature protection and biodiversity are important in terms of Turkey’s accession to the EU, as well. Environment constitutes the crucial part of the EU legislation and the EU is regarded as an effective international environmental actor even it is criticized and questioned in the last decade. Biodiversity is one of the areas that constitute the environment, for that reason Turkish biodiversity legislation as a part of its accession process should be in line with the EU’s legislation.

This paper aims to analyse and explain the impact and effectiveness of the EU on Turkish nature protection and biodiversity policy according to Europeanization. In this context to achieve this aim, the Europeanization of Turkish nature protection and biodiversity policy is analysed according to the progress reports. Analysing the progress reports is useful for finding out misfits and outcomes of the process in domestic legislation within a certain period of time. It is also useful in seeing areas that can be considered as success or failure. In this analysing process, some questions are addressed: Has the EU affected Turkish nature protection and biodiversity policy? If so, how has the EU affected Turkish nature protection and biodiversity policy?, Is there any kind of changes?, What has changed?.

The answers to the questions give information about what Börzel (2003: 1) calls *“mechanisms of domestic change”* and *“outcome of domestic change”*. The argumentation of this paper is that the EU has slight effects on Turkish nature protection and biodiversity policy. Because before announcing the candidacy status of Turkey in 1999, Turkey had some steps in nature protection and biodiversity. After 1999, even if there have been improvements or Europeanization in this policy area, it is not enough or effective.

In the first part, theoretical and conceptual frameworks are explained and then, in line with the purposes of this research, the concepts used to explain the process are clearly defined. In the second part, some of the related EU regulations, directives, and international conventions are stated to see the general state in this area. Then misfits between EU’s and Turkey’s nature protection and biodiversity policy are specified according to progress reports and the outcomes of Europeanization process are noted according to the degrees of change. The last part is conclusion.

## **2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

Europeanization is one of the most popular research areas in the EU integration process. There are many different definitions of Europeanization but there is no specific one. T. Börzel, C.M. Radaelli, Heritier, and Ladrech are some of the scholars who define the Europeanization.

T. Börzel (2002: 6) defines Europeanization “as a process by which domestic policy areas become increasingly subject to European policy-making”. This definition can be seen as a departing point for this research. However, it is important to see other definitions to be aware of the general content. One of the most referred definition is C. M Radaelli’s definition and according to him, this process is a “construction, diffusion and institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ways of doing things and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies” (Radaelli, 2000: 4). Heritier (2001: 3) defines Europeanization as a “process of influence deriving from European decision and impacting member states’ policies and political and administrative structures.”. Ladrech’s Europeanization is “an incremental process reorienting the direction and the shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become a part of the organisational logic of the national politics and policy makings” (Ladrech, 1994: 69).

As it can be seen in all the definitions there is an influence, development or change. Even if it is defined in many different ways this is a process and so there may be a change. The change may not be evaluated in the same way, but the outcome of the process will be the same even though it has different names. In this paper, Europeanization of Turkish nature protection policy is evaluated generally according to T. Börzel and Panke’s definition. It aims to explain if domestic policy areas become increasingly subject to European policymaking and if so, to what extent.

Börzel and Panke use ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ perspectives in analysing Europeanization. Top-down Europeanization is generally described in the context of domestic change in its member states and in third countries (e.g., in candidate countries) which is triggered by the EU (Börzel and Panke, 2010: 409). ‘Downloading’ and ‘taking’ are terms which are generally used to express “the response of member and third states to the European Union” (Börzel and Panke, 2010: 410). In top-down Europeanization the EU starts the action and has effects on the member states or third states. In this process it is important to see how the EU affects other countries, it is also important to see if there is any change and if it occurs, to what extent this change occurs.

In order to talk about any change in domestic level there should be ‘misfit’. As Börzel and Risse (2000: 1) state “Europeanization must be ‘inconvenient,’ i.e., there must be some degree of ‘misfit’ or incompatibility between European- level processes, policies and institutions, on the one hand, and domestic-level processes, policies and institutions, on the other.” So, to analyse the Europeanization process of Turkish nature protection and biodiversity policy, we should focus on the misfits and observe the change which occurs in time.

In bottom-up perspective states take the leading role. In this process, it is analysed how states affect the EU and upload their domestic preferences, policies to the EU level (Börzel and Panke, 2010: 412). “Uploading” and “shaping” are the terms used in bottom-up Europeanization literature (Börzel and Panke, 2010: 412). Misfit is also a necessity in bottom-up Europeanization. So, it is important to state that misfit or inconvenience is needed to talk about any kind of change at the EU level or at the domestic level. Here, it should be noted that within the relations of the EU and its member states, bottom-up perspective which is related with the member states’ effects on the EU is about the European integration while top-down perspective is about Europeanisation of the member states (Börzel, 2003:2).

In the Europeanization process, mediating factors are important elements that can cause or stop domestic changes. Börzel and Risse (2000: 12) draw attention to this point by noting “mediating factors enabling or prohibiting domestic change and accounting for the empirically observable differential impact of Europe” are requirements. Mediating factors may be numbers of veto points, formal institutions, norm entrepreneurs and cooperative informal institution (Börzel, 2003: 18). The outcomes of Europeanization can be different in degrees and Börzel referring to Heritier et al. (2001), Radaelli (2000), Cowles, Caporaso and Risse (2001) evaluates outcomes within five groups: retrenchment, inertia, absorption, accommodation and transformation. Retrenchment includes active resistance of domestic actors and sometimes increasing in misfits and this is called negative change, as well; inertia includes resistance to change which often causes no change, absorption includes low degree of change without substantial modifications of existing structures and political behaviour,

accommodation includes medium degree of change without changing the underlying understanding and transformation includes high degree of change (Börzel, 2003: 15-16).

In this research, the influence of the EU on Turkish nature protection and biodiversity policy after 1999 is analysed mostly according to Börzel and Panke's definition of Europeanization. Especially "*the top-down approach*" is used to describe the condition of Turkey as a candidate state because candidate states usually download the EU's policy and adapt it to their national policies but here, there can be differences at the degree of change. The outcomes may vary from no change to high level of change. Also, it is focused on misfits between the EU and Turkish nature protection and biodiversity policy as a need of Europeanization. To determine the misfits, the progress reports which have been published since 1999, are analysed and policies, directives, rules, standards that Turkey has to be in line are presented. Finally, the outcomes are evaluated as stated above.

### **3. General State in Nature Protection and Biodiversity**

EU is an important actor, and its environment policy supports its leading passion. Since the 1970s, environment related issues have been gaining importance in the world. Environment legislation has developed since then. The EU has developed its environment policy since the 1970s and biodiversity relate legislation is part of it. The importance of environment and biodiversity can be realised from the World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2021. According to this report, environment related risks and threats covered the top 5 of the top global risks by likelihood and biodiversity loss was the 4<sup>th</sup> risks in 2020 and in 2021 it became the 5<sup>th</sup> as infectious diseases entered to the list (World Economic Forum, 2021: 14). This shows how crucial environmental issues and biodiversity are.

There are many regulations directives and conventions related with nature protection and biodiversity at the EU and international level. This shows that nature protection and biodiversity policy have importance in global level. Some of the regulations related with nature protection and biodiversity in the EU are CITES Regulation, Cetaceans Regulation, Ivory Derived from the African Elephant Regulation, the Use of Leg hold Traps Regulation, the Protection of the EU's Forests Against Atmospheric Pollution Regulation and the Protection of the EU's Forests Against Fire Regulation (Çörtoğlu, 2009: 80-85). There are also directives which are part of EU nature protection and biodiversity legislation. These are Habitats Directive, the Birds Directive, the Seal Pups Directive, the Freedom of Access to Information on the Environment Directive, the Public Participation Directive, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive and the Environmental Liability Directive (Çörtoğlu, 2009: 80-85). This massive legislation shows the importance attributed to this area.

There are also conventions which were signed internationally. Çörtoğlu (2009: 80) also noted internationally signed conventions and some of these conventions are the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Berne Convention, the Bonn Convention, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC or FCCC), the Ramsar Convention, the Whaling Convention, the Washington Convention (CITES) and the European Landscape Convention. Turkey is not a party to the Bonn Convention and the Whaling Convention. Some of the Member States are not party to the Whaling Convention, either. Germany and Austria haven't signed European Landscape Convention, yet. Estonia, as the latest EU member state, ratified it in 2018 (Council of Europe, 2021). Even though, they are not compulsory, most of the member states became part of these conventions. This also shows how crucial environment related issues, in general, and nature protection and biodiversity related issues, in particular, are.

According to Çörtoğlu (2009: 80-85) the Habitat Directive, the Bird Directive and the CITES Regulation are the basic legislation and directives such as the Freedom of Access to Information on the Environment Directive, the Public Participation Directive, the EIA Directive, the SEA-Directive, the Environmental Liability Directive are the horizontal legislation that regulate the EU nature protection and biodiversity policy. In this research, the analysis is made according to these regulations and directives. However, all these conventions and directives are not explained in detail and are not classified whether they are basic or horizontal legislation so as to prevent extending the context of the research.

#### **4. Misfits in Turkish Nature Protection and Biodiversity Policy**

Turkey first applied for associate membership to the European Economic Community in 1959. However, in 1987 Turkey decided to become member of the European Community and applied for membership. But the process did not go as expected and Turkey had to wait until 1999 when the candidacy of Turkey was declared. Even though its candidacy was declared and in 2005 the negotiations for membership started, Turkey is still not a member of the EU. The process is going on, but it is not at the desired speed. Tocci (2011: 4-5) evaluated this process as moving at a snail's pace in 2011. It is really difficult to note that there has been satisfactory progress since then. Nevertheless, EU prepares national progress reports to note the progress and mismatch according to chapters of the negotiation process every year since 1998, except 2017. With these reports, the EU tries to see if the candidate states are on the track. In this research, these reports are used to see the problems and progress between the EU and Turkey's nature protection and biodiversity policy.

Nature protection related issues have been mentioned in all of the progress reports since the beginning. However, in the first two reports it was just mentioned as a phrase. In 2000 Regular Report (2000: 61), it was drawn attention to Turkey's richness in terms of biodiversity and mentioned that *"Turkey will need to make significant efforts to align its legislation with the Community nature protection legislation"*. This shows that there are misfits between two legislations, and they are needed to be aligned if membership is on the agenda. In the following years, nature protection and biodiversity took more place within the progress reports. Each year the progresses were noted; defined and explained with *"no progress"*, *"limited progress"*; and *"some progress"* phrases.

As stated above, there must be inconvenience or incompatibility between European level processes and domestic level processes to be able to talk about Europeanization. In this part, progress reports are analysed to find out the misfits of this policy area. The progresses and problems in this policy area can be regarded as the misfits of this policy area because if there were not any misfits, there would not be progresses or problems. So, both the progresses and problems are indicators of the misfits of this policy area. The misfits according to the progress reports are the CITES Convention, the European Landscape Agreement, wildlife conservation and wildlife enhancement, the RAMSAR Convention, protected areas, establishment and management of zoos, the EIA Directive, ratification of Kyoto Protocol, the Environmental Liability Directive, the INSPIRE Directive, the Birds and Habitats acquis, the SEA Directive, the National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan, the Draft Law on Biodiversity and Nature Conservation, Natura 2000 sites related issues, building large water and energy infrastructure, privatisation of degraded forest habitat, the Nature Protection Law, investments in hydropower and mining, and lastly decisions and development in wetlands, forests and natural sites.

Some of the misfits stated above have changed positively in short time and some of them in long time, some of them haven't changed yet and some of them have changed in a negative way. Within this research all the titles, which are listed above, are not mentioned separately. Just the titles which can be regarded as examples of positive changes, no changes and negative changes are evaluated. So, the titles which have been evaluated are the CITES Convention, the Ratification of Kyoto Protocol, Natura 2000 sites, the National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan, and the RAMSAR Convention. The CITES Convention is an example of positive change in a short time, the Ratification of the Kyoto Protocol is an example of positive change in a long time, Natura 2000 sites is an example of limited change in a long time, adoption of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan is an example of no change, the RAMSAR Convention is an example of negative changes.

The CITES Convention is a convention about the international trade of endangered species of wild fauna and flora and it was signed in 1973. The aim of the Convention is *"to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival"* and it has three appendices which listed covered species (European Commission, (n.d)b). Turkey became the party of the Convention on 22 December 1996 and in 2001 implementation was issued as it is an important Convention for Turkey. The management authority which prepares the allowance and documents for the species included in the CITES are the Directorate General of Nature Conservation and National Parks, the Directorate General of Forestry, the Directorate General of Fisheries and Agriculture, the Directorate General of Plant Production and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of

Turkey (Tarım ve Orman Bakanlığı, n.d.). The CITES Convention was mentioned in the progress reports of 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2011. It was first mentioned that the Convention was adopted in 2001 (2002 Regular Report, 2002: 111). In the following years, there were amendments and in 2011 it was noted that the Convention was not “sufficiently enforced” (Turkey 2011 Progress Report, 2011: 100). But after that date there was no mention about the Convention, so it can be said that there has been no significant misfit in terms of the Convention since then. If there had been misfits, it would have been mentioned again and again. Here, it must be stated that Turkey became the party of the Convention before 1999, so this shows that Turkey was willing to adopt this Convention without any pressure. There were developments after 1999 but the process started before the candidacy status of Turkey. Even though it was stated that the CITES Convention on the international trade in wild animals and plants was not sufficiently enforced in 2001, the regulations of the Convention were generally adopted in short time and it has not mentioned again within the progress reports. Therefore, it can be regarded as this Convention and the issues related with this Convention were changed positively in a short time.

The Kyoto Protocol was adopted in 1997 and it entered into force in 2005. The Protocol aims to “limit and reduce greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions in accordance with agreed individual targets” and it “binds developed countries and places a heavier burden on them” (UNFCCC, n.d.). The ratification of the Kyoto Protocol could be seen as a progress in the process even though it took a long time. This issue had been on the progress reports since 2002 and there it was noted for the first time that it was not ratified (2002 Regular Report, 2002: 112). In the following years it was noted again and again that Turkey did not ratify it and finally, the Protocol was ratified in 2009 by Turkey (Turkey 2009 Progress Report, 2009: 80). Turkey became party of the Protocol, but it was ratified in more than 10 years. There were different reasons for not ratifying the Protocol. First of all, Turkey was not party of UNFCCC, as well. It became party of both the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol after their ratification. So, Turkey did not have any obligations in the first period of Kyoto Protocol (TC Dışişleri Bakanlığı, n.d.). Erdoğan (2009: 12) noted that Turkey refused to ratify the Protocol because of “its expected implementation costs and consequently the fear of degrading her competitiveness unfairly in international trade”. Finally, Turkey couldn’t resist the growing public pressure. Although it took a long time to ratify the Protocol, it was ratified, and this can be seen as an improvement that happened in seven years’ time which can be regarded as a pretty long time when the urgency of the climate change thought.

The list of potential Natura 2000 sites that should be compiled is an example of having limited progress in a long time. Natura 2000 is a network which aims “to ensure long term survival of Europe’s most valuable and threatened species and habitats, listed under both the Birds Directive and the Habitat Directive” (European Commission, (n.d.)c). The Birds Directive is a directive adopted in 1979 and amended in 2009 which aims to protect 500 wild bird species in the EU (European Commission, (n.d.)d). It also has a network called Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and they have been part of Natura 2000 since 1994 (European Commission, (n.d.)d). Another directive, which is part of Natura 2000, is Habitat Directive and it was adopted in 1992 and aims to protect 1000 animal and plant species and 200 habitat types (European Commission (n.d.)e). Member States of the EU contribute to the network, so as a candidate country Turkey should also contribute to the network. For that reason, the Natura 2000 sites has taken place in the progress reports for more than ten years. The Nature 2000 sites was first mentioned in 2008 (Turkey 2008 Progress Report, 2008: 77) but before that in 2005, there was a statement related to the birds and habitats legislation which is quite related to the Natura 2000 sites (Turkey 2005 Progress Report, 2005: 120). However, this statement was also related to the law on nature protection, so it is difficult to separate these issues from one another. In 2019, there was progress in terms the Habitats and Birds Directives as it was noted the lists of habitats and species detected in Turkey were prepared (Turkey 2019 Report, 2019: 94). However, it was also stated that “the institutional framework for managing future Natura 2000 sites needs to be streamlined and adequately resourced” (Turkey 2019 Report, 2019: 94). Although progress has been made, there are still things to do, and this progress came after more than ten years.

The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan was first mentioned in 2008. In progress report, it was noted that Turkey prepared a national biodiversity strategy and action plan but did not adopted it (Turkey 2008 Progress Report, 2008: 77). In terms of this strategy and action plan, “not adopted” was mentioned many times and it was mentioned in 2020 (Turkey 2020 Report, 2020: 101), as well. This means that adoption of the National

Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan is still being waited. For that reason, it is an example of no change, no progress within this research field in more than ten years' time.

The RAMSAR Convention, which was adopted in Iran, in 1971, is related with *"the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources"* (Ramsar, n.d.). Turkey became party of the Ramsar Convention in 1994 and guaranteed to protect its Ramsar sites (WWF, 2008:10). This happened before the candidacy status of Turkey. So, it can be said that this development happened before the EU's effect. Conservation of wetlands took pace in the progress reports in 2002. There, it was noted that a regulation was adopted related to the conservation of the wetlands (2002 Regular Report, 2002: 111). The Ramsar Convention was mentioned directly just in 2005 and it was noted that a national park and three wetlands were established (Turkey 2005 Progress Report, 2005: 120). This shows that there was a progress related with this Convention, it was not just adopted and put aside. There was no other direct mention to the Ramsar Convention, but wetlands were noted many times. There was an important set back in the progress reports of 2010 and 2011. According to these reports, *"An amendment to the by-law on the protection of wetlands has weakened the protection status of wetlands, which are protected under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance"* (Turkey 2010 Progress Report, 2010: 90). In the following years, the issue related to the wetlands referred five times with the forest and natural sites together. In the reports it was noted that there were *"... a series of law allowing investments in wetlands ..."* (Turkey 2014 Progress Report, 2014: 68), *"regulations allowing developments in wetlands, ..."* (Turkey 2015 Report, 2015: 76; Turkey 2016 Report, 2016: 87), and *"regulations allowing planning and construction in wetlands, ..."* (Turkey 2019 Report, 2019: 94; Turkey 2020 Report, 2020: 101) and it was added that they were not in line with the EU acquis. Even though Turkey took first steps of development related to the wetlands and their protection before the EU's effects there were some changes in time and regulations related to the wetlands fell short of the requirements.

The titles which were listed above are the misfits between the European level and the domestic level. The progress reports show the developments from the beginning of the process and how these misfits have changed. Here, the process is generally assumed to be triggered by Europe so the process can be evaluated from the top-down perspective which Börzel and Panke state. In the accession negotiations process, Turkey doesn't trigger any kind of changes in the EU, so the bottom-up perspective cannot be used in this research. But it should also be stated that here just slight effects of the EU can be observed. Turkey adopted the CITES and the Ramsar Conventions before the EU negotiations started. Moreover, it is difficult to talk about positive changes according to the progress reports. The progress in terms of nature protection is defined with *"some progress"*, *"limited progress"* or *"no progress"* in the reports. Some progress was noted in 2005 (Turkey 2005 Progress Report, 2005: 120), limited progress was noted in 2007, 2008 and 2012 (Turkey 2007 Progress Report, 2007: 69; Turkey 2008 Progress Report, 2008: 77; Turkey 2012 Progress Report, 2012: 82) and no progress was stated in 2009, 2010 and 2011 (Turkey 2009 Progress Report, 2009: 81; Turkey 2010 Progress Report, 2010: 90; Turkey 2011 Progress Report, 2011: 100). After 2012 there was no specific phrase related to progress, in the following years just the regulations which were not align with the acquis or development needed points are noted. Here, it is important to notice that after 2006 there was a slowdown related to developments. 2006 is an important date as that year the Council decided *"to suspend negotiations on eight chapters"* and not to *"close the other chapters"* (European Commission, 2006). Therefore, it can be said that this decision affected the negotiations and the desire to change or alignment with the acquis. In 2009, the Greek Cypriot blocked 6 chapters in negotiations (Directorate for EU Affairs, 2019). After this date no progress was noted in the progress reports related to nature protection and biodiversity in the following few years. The reason, for such limited progress, may be the problems between Greek Cyprus and Turkey. As the negotiations have been slowed down with the suspended and blocked chapters, the Europeanization process has also slowed down. So, Greek Cyprus can be seen as an indirect mediating factor in Europeanization of Turkish nature protection and biodiversity policy. However, it is difficult to claim that it is the only reason, there have been many other developments which caused slowdown in the process.

When it is looked to the latest progress report, it can be seen that *"Turkey has some level of preparation on nature protection"* and there were developments such as *"the lists of habitats and species detected in Turkey"* but many other issues, which needed progress, were noted, as well (Turkey 2020 Report, 2020: 101). Therefore, it should be noted that there are still misfits between Turkey and EU's nature protection and biodiversity

legislation. So, further steps should be taken to be align with the EU acquis in terms of nature protection and biodiversity.

According to the progress reports in general, different degrees of change can be observed. As mentioned before, five different outcomes are used to evaluate the degree of Europeanization literature and they are inertia, retrenchment, absorption, accommodation and transformation (Börzel, 2003: 15-16). If the outcomes of the Europeanization process of Turkish nature protection and biodiversity policy are evaluated from this scope, it can be remarked that there isn't transformation in this policy area. The degree of changes takes place between the inertia and accommodation. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan can be given as an example of inertia because there is a resistance in this area, the adoption of this legislation has been delayed and it cannot be adopted. The RAMSAR Convention can be given as an example of retrenchment as there are setbacks in changes. There is a positive change in terms of Natura 2000 sites. This may be evaluated as absorption or accommodation but to be able to decide whether it is an absorption with low degree of change or an accommodation with medium degree of change, time is needed. However, it is clear from the progress reports that there are just slight changes in this area. In this context, the EU cannot be evaluated as an effective actor because of its inability to cause successful changes in this policy area.

## **5. Conclusion**

This paper assesses Europeanization of Turkish nature protection and biodiversity policy. Firstly, the theoretical and conceptual information are explained and then the general state is given. Thirdly, misfits are determined according to the progress reports and these misfits are observed in order to find the changes that have occurred since 1998. The changes that occurred are evaluated as positive changes (the CITES Convention and the Kyoto Protocol), negative changes (the RAMSAR Convention) and as no change (the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan). Then the outcomes of the Europeanization are evaluated according to the degree of change. But there isn't any transformation in this policy area and the changes are at low level. Examples of inertia and retrenchment can be seen more than absorption and accommodation.

If the questions which were stated in introduction should be answered, it can be said that the EU affected the nature protection and biodiversity policy just slightly. The Europeanisation is not at a desired level. There are changes and progress as stated above but this change did not occur as transformation. So, it is difficult to talk about effective pressure which can cause changes at domestic level.

The argumentation of this paper is that EU has slight effects on Turkish nature protection and biodiversity policy. Because before 1999, Turkey had some steps like adopting the CITES and the RAMSAR Conventions in nature protection and biodiversity and after 1999, even if there have been improvements or Europeanization in this policy area, it is not enough or effective. The examples that are given in this paper confirmed this argumentation. The process cannot be regarded as a success.

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