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European Union Membership Process of Turkey: Perspective of Rural Area

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Abstract

In the present research⁵, the knowledge level and the perceptions of rural society that would be affected from the EU membership in many ways, basically as the practitioners and beneficiaries, and constitute 30% of the population of the country are investigated. The standpoint of individuals living in rural areas, their expectations from membership and their opinions about the membership are analysed. The study encloses the results of questionnaires administered between the last quarter of 2005 and the first quarter of 2006 with 795 women and 795 men in 18 provinces. In the study 55% of the 1590 individuals surveyed know what the EU means and 67% of these individuals lean towards the membership. It is determined that the level of consciousness of men is higher than for women. The quality enhancement in agricultural production appears to be the most remarkable expectations of both women and men from the membership. Besides it is also determined that the expectations of better employment opportunities and the attainment of an increase in income are higher among women.

Keywords: European Union; candidate country; rural area; social cohesion; common position; territorial cohesion

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Introduction

A new turn in the European Union membership process, which had initiated with the signature of association agreement in Turkey in 1963, was taken with the treaty of Customs Union in 1996 and the accession negotiations undertaken in October 3rd, 2005 have become debatable among all segments of society. The rapid process initiated in 2005 has loosen its pace due to both the changes in economic and political agendas, and the non-legislation barriers of some EU member countries, and the harmonisation program of Turkey (2007 - 2013) to the EU legislation has fallen behind Croatia who departed at the same time⁶.

Even the EU occasionally becomes off the agenda, it is now socially and economically perceived and interpreted differently. While the EU membership is approved by some segments of the society, there are also some segments perceiving the membership as a threat. The social, economic and political changes experienced in the country during the process cause differentiation of the reactions. According to a research made in 2004 autumn it was determined that majority of the Turkish people, namely 62%, thought that EU membership is of value. Moreover, while those who thought membership as harmful had a share of 12%, the share of indeterminate people was quite crucial (20%). If these findings are compared with the survey results of the study performed by the same institution in 2004 spring, it is seen that the idea of EU membership has been losing its popularity (Anonymous, 2005).

The related surveys reveal that with political developments, those people perceiving membership as a resignation and as a threat for religious beliefs with a division, have started to lean towards the subject, on the other hand those circles desiring to become integrated with Europe are becoming more and more reluctant. This, in turn, indicates that the perceptions of EU membership are not clear and are open to change. Among Turkish people although the share of those whose expectations for the EU are positive is quite high, there are also some segments having negative opinions especially in terms of security in the context of the concepts of Cyprus, Aegean and Sevres (Acar, 2001a). It is stated that Islamic groups who previously perceived EU as a threat for their belief, have taken a pro-integration stand as a result of political freedom and the effect of human rights dimension of the EU and those authorities of the EU once perceived as a refused club are becoming the designated authorities for justice (Acar, 2001b).

⁶35 chapters have been opened for Croatia who started her membership negotiations together with Turkey on October 3rd, 2005. In the Intergovernmental Conference held on June 30th, 2011 member states decided to close the accession negotiations with Croatia and to sign a accession treaty until the end of 2011 and projected to realise the membership on July 1st, 2013 (Anonymous, 2011a). 13 chapters have been opened for Turkey, 1 chapter was provisionally closed and opening criterions for 8 chapters have been determined, 8 chapters were suspended prerequisitesly. 9 chapters are being argued at the European Council, 1 chapter at the European Commission and for 2 chapters the negotiations still last (Anonymous, 2011b).

Until the economic crisis (2007-2008) arisen in the USA and spread to Europe, the economic apparel of the EU has been one of the reasons of those people supporting the membership yet the relatively less impairment of Turkey from the crisis has strengthened the discourse of those people economically refusing the membership. The fact that those countries, such as Greece, Spain and Portugal, having similar economic characteristics with Turkey in the pre-accession period and experienced wealth increases, are the most suffered countries from the crisis and the fact that the accessions of these countries have created intra-Union conflicts in terms of EU fiscal policies and new sanctions have supported those who are against to the accession of Turkey. While those who believe that the EU has a strong infrastructure and would not experience economic or political problems and therefore accession to the EU is inevitable are revising their opinions, the societal interest in accession has declined; debates are confined only to political and academic platforms.

While mostly political, legal and economic dimensions were at the forefront for the expansion in the EU, cultural factors have also become crucial together with the candidacy of Turkey and during the negotiation process prevented the probable contributions of Turkey to the EU (Taşkın, 2006). Despite the unfavourable report of the Council and although she was not ready economically Greece was accepted to the Union in 1981 due to political reasons and similarly in 1986 Portugal became one of the leanest members of the Union (Turanlı et. al., 2006). These examples reveal that some member countries oppose the membership of Turkey to the Union and this indicates the probable discrimination in the future. These developments bring about the concerns among Turkish people about the membership.

In the present study, the knowledge level of the rural society constituting 30% of the population about the EU and how they perceive the membership of Turkey to the EU are investigated. In this context, the EU perspectives of individuals living in rural areas, their expectations from the membership and their opinions about membership are analysed. It is thought that the findings would be quite an important source for the researches and specialists as the data is acquired during the EU accession process and encompasses a wide geography.

Methodology

The target population of the study is composed of 15Â year-old women whose core business is agricultural activities. Therefore the share of 15Â women is used in the sampling and accordingly the sample determined, is distributed geographically. Also, in order to make a comparative analysis of the ideas and attitudes of women and men, an interview is performed with a man (usually the husband of

the woman who is the head of the family) as well as a woman from each household randomly determined.

The sample size of the study that could represent the population is accepted to be 800. In order to calculate to what extent this sample size represents the population the error term is also calculated. When the data for the population exists and the population is larger than 100,000 (according to 2001 General Agricultural Census there are 3,408,050 women whose core activity is agriculture and who are 15 years old) the aforementioned error margin is calculated in a certain confidence interval with the following formula (Newbold, 1995).

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times q}{e^2} \quad (1)$$

p: the probability of the unit investigated (female population) to be in the population (In the study, in order to attain maximum sample size of the population and as there is no similar study previously made, this ratio is accepted as 50%).

n: 800

q: 1-p

e: error term

t: confidence interval

p: 0.50

q: 0.50

Z: %95 (the table value for %95 confidence interval 1.96)

Error margin according to Formula 1 is determined to be as follows:

$$e = \frac{\sqrt{Z^2 \times p \times q}}{n}$$

$$e = \frac{\sqrt{1.962^2 \times 0.50 \times 0.50}}{800}$$

$$e = 0.0346$$

Accordingly, it is found that the sample chosen would represent the population with a maximum error margin of 3.46% with a probability of 95%. In the distribution of sample size the following steps are taken:

a. In the sampling, 9 agricultural regions are taken into account and the per-agricultural region-questionnaire figure is determined according to the ratio of female population over 15 years old

- b. In the provinces in each region, the weights of rural female population, that is the target group, are calculated and 2 provinces having the largest weights are selected as the representative provinces. The number of questionnaires to be performed in these provinces is distributed according to the weights of selected provinces in the rural female population.
- c. The villages to be surveyed in each province are determined randomly.

During the office work 5 of the 800 household questionnaires are not assessed due to confidence purposes and the results are estimated based on 795 questionnaires.

In the survey, the women and household heads were asked some questions in order to assess their attitudes towards life in general, their recognition of the EU and their perceptions of the EU membership. In those questions necessitating the measurement of attitudes a three point Likert attitude scale, in which 1, 2 and 3 respectively represents disagree, partly agree and agree, was utilized. In the analysis of the survey data, percentage frequency distributions, and for the questions based on attitude scale, basic arithmetical averages were calculated. The difference between genders with respect to answers to the questionnaire were tested using Chi-Square (χ^2) Test for the count data, and Mann-Whitney U Test for the means of the attitude scale variables.

EU Membership Process and Agricultural Sector

Although the relationship of Turkey with the EU initiated with the Ankara Treaty signed in 1963, the Luxemburg Summit in December 1997 caused the political dialogue between Turkey and the EU to be frozen, in the Summit for the enhancement of the relationship only the “European Strategy” was drawn. Yet, although the Turkish-EU relations have been effected negatively due to the Summit, as the necessity of Turkey to the help of the EU during the harmonisation process to the Common Agricultural Policy was accepted in the agricultural part of the strategy document, crucial progress has been made in the agricultural sector, even an agricultural action plan was included (Yılmaz, 2009). In the Helsinki Summit, December 1999, the candidate status with the same conditions with other candidates was granted to Turkey within the context of Pre-Accession Strategy. The EU membership is going to cause changes in the structure of agricultural production and the development of economic integration with the EU is going to bring about freedom of movement in agricultural trade. Membership is also going to be decisive for and affect the relations with third countries (Erugur and Çakmak, 2007). Agricultural sector shelters a population that the EU displays sensitivity not only in terms of economy but also socially. Therefore it is quite crucial for the policy makers and negotiation process related institutions.

The Accession Partnership Document that encompasses the responsibilities of Turkey during the full membership process was accepted on March 8th, 2001 by the EU Council of Ministers and issued at the Official Journal of the European Communities at March 24th, 2001. At the Brussels Summit, December 2004, it is agreed that the negotiations with Turkey would start on October 3rd, 2005. The years in which the negotiations started, namely 2005-2006, became the period that all the society were interested in the EU, the agricultural sector and the rural population became one of the focuses of debates. Rural population is directly related to agriculture related 3 titles (Chapter 11: Agriculture and Rural Development; Chapter 12 Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Policies; Chapter 13: Fisheries) under 35 Chapters in conjunction with agricultural activities in the EU negotiation process and they would be the group that would be directly affected from the exercises under these titles. However, it would be misleading to approach rural life as a single subject apart from other subjects and to correlate it only with agricultural subjects. Chapter 1: Free Movement of Goods, Chapter 2: Freedom of Movement of Workers, Chapter 4: Free Movement of Capital, Chapter 19: Social Policy and Employment, Chapter 22: Regional Policy, Chapter 26: Education and Culture, Chapter 27: Environment, Chapter 28: Consumer and Health Protection, Chapter 29: Customs Union are the other crucial titles for rural life. For the titles encompassing agricultural sector there is a quite crucial process in front of Turkey as there is a huge agricultural population and a wide geographical distribution in Turkey. Those subjects to be emphasised during the meeting related to agriculture are direct payments, production quotas and other supply guidance tools, government supports, public supplies, normal and over-normal supplies, country ceilings for cultivation area/animal figures, rural development measures (Eraktan, 2006). In the negotiation process the Chapter of Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Policies was opened as of July 2010 but as there a supplementary protocol was brought to the Chapter of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries it was provisionally closed together with 6 other chapters (Anonymous, 2011c). As the application of the conditions of the Customs Union for South Cyprus was set as a condition for the opening of many titles, there is an important dilemma in front of Turkey. The subject of “freedom of movement of workers” which takes the first place among the expectations of rural population is among the titles still being interviewed. The protection of consumer health as a food producer is under the responsibility of rural population; although the Chapter of Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Policies was opened, adequate and widespread development for the producers is difficult. Legislative alignment and the developments in terms of industry are undeniable but when a rural population of 17,500,632 and 4,106,983 people working in 3,076,649 agricultural enterprises having different cultures and educations on a geographically dispersed region (Anonymous, 2011d) is taken into account it is clear that the adaptation and implementation of the changes proposed under the titled concerned will take time.

Research Findings

The EU membership draws more attention in the last 10 years. The study made for revealing the knowledge levels of rural people constituting an important part of population about the EU, their expectations and opinions about the effects of membership on agricultural activities and rural life was realised in 18 provinces (Afyon, Adıyaman, Antalya, Bursa, Çorum, Diyarbakır, Erzurum, İzmir, Kars, Konya, Kütahya, Malatya, Manisa, Mersin, Ordu, Sakarya, Samsun, Şanlıurfa) in 2005-2006 when the subject was on the agenda. In agricultural regions those provinces, intensively hosting 15+ agricultural population, are selected and survey was carried in randomly selected villages in these provinces.

The average household size, average age of women and average age of men are found to be 4.7, 43.7 and 47.6, respectively. At the helm of the fundamental problems of the rural areas is the education. Both poverty and traditional attitudes are obstacles for education. Traditions and the perception of utilisation as workforce hinder the education of particularly the girls. While 5.9% of men are illiterate, this ratio is 27.1% for women (Table 1). If the ratio defined as literate without any formal education is added to the above figure the ratio increases to 41.9%. Average period of study among women is 5.4 years while it is 5.9 years for men.

Table 1. Household Profile (n=1590)

| Descriptive Statistics | | Rate (%) | |
|------------------------|------------------|----------|--------|
| | | Male | Female |
| Age | < 30 | 8.8 | 17.5 |
| | 31-45 | 36.4 | 39.5 |
| | > 46 | 54.8 | 43.0 |
| Educational Background | Illiterate | 5.9 | 27.1 |
| | Literate | 15.8 | 14.8 |
| | Primary School | 62.1 | 52.7 |
| | Secondary School | 9.3 | 3.0 |
| | High School | 5.8 | 2.0 |
| | University | 1.1 | 0.3 |

The agricultural sector is at the helm of the sectors that are expected to be mostly affected from the EU membership due to the population it hosts and its importance in foreign trade. Therefore in the survey, the opinions about and the expectations of producers from the EU and the membership to EU are investigated. As it is one of the important agenda items in the period when the questionnaires are applied the question on whether they recognise the EU flag is asked in order to understand how well producers follow the agenda. 16.6% of women and 51.7% of men recognised the flag (Table 2). The recognition of the EU flag by the producers differs significantly among regions ($\chi^2=157.015$; $df=8$; $p=0.000$). In Table 2 the figures of EU flag recognition for women and men in 9 agriculture

regions in the scope of the study are given individually. The consciousness difference between women and men is found to be significant for each region.

Table 2. EU Flag Recognition (%)

| | Regions ⁷ | | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|-------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | Freq. | % |
| Female | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 19.8 | 40.6 | 25.3 | 5.5 | 15.6 | 3.1 | 9.7 | 18.3 | 25.4 | 132 | 16.6 |
| No | 80.2 | 59.4 | 74.7 | 94.5 | 84.4 | 96.9 | 90.3 | 81.7 | 74.6 | 663 | 83.4 |
| Male | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 63.4 | 73.4 | 72.3 | 47.3 | 51.9 | 13.0 | 70.8 | 54.8 | 54.2 | 411 | 51.7 |
| No | 36.6 | 26.6 | 27.7 | 52.7 | 48.1 | 87.0 | 29.2 | 45.2 | 45.8 | 384 | 48.3 |
| Significance test results for the relationship between EU flag recognition and gender by regions | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pearson χ^2 | 51.043 | 14.059 | 36.672 | 24.772 | 22.763 | 10.711 | 55.891 | 26.797 | 10.219 | 217.700 | |
| df | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| P | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,001 | 0,000 | 0,000 | 0,001 | 0,000 | |

At the helm of the basic behavioural characteristics of rural society is the commitment to traditions. In terms of commitment to traditions there is no difference among genders and the commitment to traditions is quite strong with a point of 2.7 in three point behaviour scale. This finding indicates that there would probably be a high resistance against many new regulations. Both women and men partly agree to the statement that Turkish economy is recovering. On the other hand, the difference between women and men in terms of the level of confidence to national economy is found to be statistically significant. It can be claimed that women are, although slightly, more pessimistic compared to men (Table 3). The differences between women and men in terms of being up to date, contentment of rural life and confidence to public institutions are more remarkable. Both women and men mentioned that they partly follow the agenda. Yet, compared to women the level of following the agenda is higher among men. It may be claimed that this is caused by the utilisation of communication devices by women and men for different purposes. According to the data of Eurodata 2009, the average daily period of TV watching is 232 minutes and it is higher than the world average, 200 minutes. Among 86 countries Turkey ranks 34th in terms of TV watching (Anonymous, 2010). When the newspaper reading figure, approximately 10%⁸ is taken into account it is understood that society prefers TV as the main news source. While the first program preferred by 85% of the men is the news, the first choice of women is the serials with a share of 36.2% and only 20.5% of women primarily watch the news. All this data confirms the finding that

⁷ (1) Aegean, (2) Marmara and Thrace, (3) Mediterranean, (4) North East, (5) South East, (6) Black Sea, (7) Eastern Central Anatolia, (8) Northern Central Anatolia, (9) Southern Central Anatolia.

⁸While the total circulation of newspapers and magazines published in 2009 is 2,266,917,287, 94.4% of this figure is generated by the newspapers (Anonymous, 2011e).

women are behind men in terms of following the agenda. This, in turn, creates the expectation that the knowledge levels of women and men and therefore their perceptions and attitudes would be different.

While men reply the question of “In general, I am content with my life” as “Agree” with a point of 2.6 on average over 3, women reply it as “Partly Agree” with a point of 2.3. The difference between the genders in terms of rural life contentment level is found to be statistically significant.

The public institution in rural life is limited firstly to the army and then to the health and education institutions in the locality. If this narrow scope is taken into account, the level of the confidence to public institutions may be defined as high.

Table 3. Attitudes and Behaviours

| Attitudes | Average Points* | | Mann-Whitney U | p |
|--|-----------------|------|----------------|-------|
| | Female | Male | | |
| I live conventionally. | 2.7 | 2.7 | 307,994.5 | 0.944 |
| I am always up to date. | 1.8 | 2.3 | 211,387.0 | 0.000 |
| The economic situation of Turkey is gradually improving. | 1.8 | 1.9 | 277,042.0 | 0.002 |
| In general, I am content with my life | 2.6 | 2.3 | 249,438.0 | 0.000 |
| I trust in public institutions. | 2.6 | 2.4 | 268,387.5 | 0.000 |

*Whether those people surveyed agree on the subjects (or their degree of agreement) in the table is examined with a three point Likert scale in which 1, 2 and 3 represent disagree, partly agree and agree, respectively, and the answers are assessed via arithmetically averaging the points.

The question of what is the EU is asked to the producers and 37.2% on women and 72.3% of men replied correctly (Table 4). The level of the recognition of the EU is higher than the level of the recognition of the EU flag. However as in the case of EU flag recognition, the differences in terms of EU recognition between regions are remarkable ($\chi^2=173.722$; $df=8$; $p=0.000$). Moreover, the differences between women and men in terms of knowing what is EU are statistically significant in all regions.

Table 4. EU Recognition (%)

| | Regions | | | | | | | | | Total | |
|--|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|-------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | Freq. | % |
| Female (n=795) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 28.2 | 62.5 | 30.1 | 34.5 | 46.8 | 17.4 | 54.2 | 45.2 | 50.8 | 296 | 37.2 |
| No | 71.8 | 37.5 | 69.9 | 65.5 | 53.2 | 82.6 | 45.8 | 54.8 | 49.2 | 499 | 62.8 |
| Male (n=795) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 67.9 | 87.5 | 66.3 | 98.2 | 93.5 | 39.1 | 95.8 | 72.0 | 84.7 | 575 | 72.3 |
| No | 32.1 | 12.5 | 33.7 | 1.8 | 6.5 | 60.9 | 4.2 | 28.0 | 15.3 | 220 | 27.7 |
| Significance test results for the relationship between EU recognition and gender by regions | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pearson χ^2 | 41.343 | 10.667 | 21.715 | 49.889 | 40.174 | 18.765 | 33.333 | 13.851 | 15.526 | 197.633 | |
| df | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| P | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | |

In the survey only those individuals who know what EU means are incorporated and the opinions of these producers about the EU membership of Turkey are asked. In turn, high incidence of the answer of yes is attained. According to the chi-square (χ^2) analysis performed only with the “yes” and “no” answers, it is determined that there are statistically significant differences among regions in terms of the approval of EU membership ($\chi^2= 26.795$; $df=8$; $p=0.001$). Throughout Turkey while 60.8% of women replied as yes, the same figure is found to be 70.1% among men. According to a study made in Ýzmir, it is found that men perceive EU membership more beneficial than women (Suner et. all., 2009). However, if the “No idea” statement that means the individual surveyed does not have adequate knowledge to reply the question is excluded, the difference between women and men in terms of the approval of EU membership is found to be statistically insignificant both for Turkey and regions (Table 5).

Table 5. EU Membership Approval (%)

| | Regions | | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|-------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | Freq. | % |
| Female (n=296) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 67.6 | 72.5 | 60.0 | 73.7 | 52.8 | 60.7 | 46.2 | 47.6 | 76.7 | 180 | 60.8 |
| No | 27.0 | 12.5 | 16.0 | 15.8 | 25.0 | 14.3 | 20.5 | 21.4 | 3.3 | 53 | 17.9 |
| No idea | 5.4 | 15.0 | 24.0 | 10.5 | 22.2 | 25.0 | 33.3 | 31.0 | 20.0 | 63 | 21.8 |
| Male (n=575) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 60.7 | 78.6 | 74.5 | 83.3 | 66.7 | 60.3 | 76.8 | 56.7 | 84.0 | 403 | 70.1 |
| No | 33.7 | 19.6 | 23.6 | 5.6 | 19.4 | 33.3 | 17.4 | 26.9 | 16.0 | 130 | 22.6 |
| No idea | 5.6 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 11.1 | 13.9 | 6.3 | 5.8 | 16.4 | | 42 | 7.3 |
| Significance test results for the relationship between EU approval and gender by regions^b | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pearson χ^2 | 0.565 | 0.399 | 0.072 | 1.946 | 0.927 | 1.973 | 1.641 | 0.011 | 2.126 | 0.241 | |
| Df | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| P | 0.452 | 0.527 | 0.789 | 0.163 | 0.336 | 0.160 | 0.200 | 0.917 | 0.145 | 0.624 | |

^aThe question is asked only to those who know what is the EU.

^bOnly those answers which are “yes” or “no” are taken into account.

Some research has been performed for the membership approval for different social groups and in Turkey-wide. In a study performed with university students in Diyarbakır, while the share of students stating yes is found to be 63.6% (Samur,

2002), in the Eurobarometer performed in Autumn 2005 and Spring 2006, the positive image ratings of the EU in public are found to be 55% and 44% respectively. In the research of Eurobarometer repeated twice a year between the periods from autumn 2004 to spring 2006 the image of EU membership is found to be in an uninterrupted decline trend (Anonymous, 2008). When this data is compared with the research findings, it is seen that rural segment perceives EU membership more positively than the cities.

The general and agriculture sector related expectations of producers from the membership are presented. For that purpose, various possible statements are presented to producers and they are asked for their opinions. In Table 6, the frequency percentage of the answers and the average points of women and men calculated according to the answers given to the three point attitude scale are separately supplied. In the Table the Mann-Whitney test results for determining whether the differences between the average points of women and men for their answers to each statement are statistically significant or not, can be also seen. As in the studies made for candidate countries, instead of the expectations in terms of welfare, peace and democracy enhancements, the belief that there are going to be developments in the food safety and quality comes into prominence. Quality improvements, reliable and health production due to the obligation of the observance of technical regulations, cost increases due to the same reason, widening of the professional sense of work are at the helm of the expectations. On the probable effects of EU membership women and men think quite similarly. However it is seen that in general women tend to be more optimistic. It is also seen that both women and men have expectations that together with the membership agricultural sector will recede, unemployment in agriculture will partly increase and the quantity of the support given to the producer will slightly decrease. On the other hand producers believe that in case of a membership the non-agricultural employment opportunities will increase and the marketing services and the possibility of finding markets will partly improve. Both women and men partly accept that the opportunity to be a worker in the European Union countries will increase. All of the expectations having statistical differences between women and men are related to the effects of membership on the level of income and employment opportunities in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. It is seen that women have more optimistic expectations than men.

It is possible to claim that as male producers follow the agenda; compared to women they are more informed about the developments to be achieved with the EU membership. Public opinion in Turkey states that the EU is going to affect economic welfare (48%), social security (34%), freedoms of labour, education or travel (30%), peace (29%) and democracy (24%) positively (Anonymous, 2005).

Table 6. The Expectations from EU Membership (%)

| Expectations | Female (n=296) | | | | | Male (n=575) | | | | | Significance Test of Avrg. Points | |
|---|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| | Avrg. Point ^b | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Avrg. Point ^b | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Mann-Whitney U | p |
| We will democratise. | 2.4 | 16.9 | 24.7 | 53.4 | 5.1 | 2.3 | 27.1 | 13.7 | 54.4 | 4.7 | 73,959.500 | .297 |
| The freedom and peace environment will enlarge | 2.3 | 20.3 | 22.0 | 53.0 | 4.7 | 2.3 | 26.1 | 15.1 | 55.5 | 3.3 | 77,464.000 | .752 |
| To sell our products, we will find markets more easily | 2.4 | 15.5 | 25.7 | 56.1 | 2.7 | 2.3 | 26.1 | 18.3 | 53.7 | 1.9 | 75,615.000 | .066 |
| As adaptation to technical rules is compulsory, we will produce more safe/healthy products | 2.5 | 10.5 | 23.0 | 60.1 | 6.4 | 2.4 | 19.1 | 20.5 | 58.3 | 2.1 | 72,355.000 | .051 |
| Agricultural sector will recede | 2.0 | 36.5 | 25.7 | 34.8 | 3.0 | 2.0 | 38.3 | 17.2 | 42.8 | 1.7 | 77,888.000 | .313 |
| Unemployment in the agricultural sector will increase | 1.9 | 40.5 | 22.0 | 34.5 | 3.0 | 2.2 | 32.3 | 15.5 | 48.3 | 3.8 | 68,370.500 | .000 |
| The supports given to producers will diminish | 2.0 | 33.8 | 26.4 | 34.8 | 5.1 | 2.0 | 37.4 | 19.0 | 41.0 | 2.6 | 77,297.000 | .656 |
| Imported goods will increase and domestic production will recede | 2.2 | 24.0 | 30.1 | 42.2 | 3.7 | 2.2 | 27.1 | 22.1 | 48.7 | 2.1 | 77,948.500 | .465 |
| Technical obligation and costs will increase | 2.5 | 11.1 | 27.7 | 53.4 | 7.8 | 2.4 | 26.0 | 23.8 | 55.8 | 3.5 | 74,012.500 | .542 |
| The professional sense of work will increase | 2.5 | 10.1 | 25.0 | 59.1 | 5.7 | 2.5 | 14.1 | 18.1 | 64.3 | 3.5 | 75,807.000 | .559 |
| Quality will improve | 2.6 | 9.1 | 17.9 | 69.6 | 3.4 | 2.6 | 14.1 | 14.1 | 70.3 | 1.6 | 79,359.000 | .557 |
| The incomes of farmers will increase | 2.4 | 19.3 | 24.6 | 53.4 | 2.7 | 2.2 | 32.9 | 17.0 | 48.0 | 2.1 | 72,233.500 | .004 |
| Non-agricultural employment opportunities will increase | 2.5 | 13.5 | 23.0 | 60.8 | 2.7 | 2.3 | 21.4 | 23.0 | 52.7 | 3.0 | 72,222.000 | .007 |
| The income level of every individual in the country will increase | 2.4 | 16.2 | 27.4 | 52.4 | 4.1 | 2.2 | 29.2 | 21.2 | 46.8 | 2.8 | 70,377.500 | .003 |
| The marketing opportunities (product assessment, storage, package, transportation etc.) will increase | 2.5 | 8.8 | 31.1 | 54.1 | 6.1 | 2.4 | 18.8 | 24.2 | 54.4 | 2.6 | 73,386.000 | .130 |
| Our chances of being workers in Europe will increase | 2.4 | 18.2 | 21.3 | 58.1 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 33.0 | 16.3 | 49.0 | 1.6 | 70,413.000 | .000 |

^a 1: Disagree, 2: Partly Agree, 3: Agree, 4: No Idea

^bThe answer of “no idea” is not included in the calculation of averages.

Conclusions

Together with the Customs Union process and the recent developments in the relations with the EU the subject of “EU membership” has taken place near the top and since then attracts the attention of all the segments of society. While endeavours for the procurement of EU harmonization with all the sectors in the country and the negotiation process still last, the agricultural sector that is contradictory in the EU and crucial for Turkey has been the centre of interest in all its parts. As the agricultural sector employs quite an important part of the population and is economically important it is expected that it would be affected more than any other sectors during the EU accession process. For the efforts of the harmonisation of agricultural sector, besides many other factors the knowledge, ideas and opinions of the population constituting the sector should be taken into account. Due to the insufficiency of the studies in the field, the view point of agricultural population on the EU is not clearly known.

According to the research data, 37.2% of women and 72.3% of men know what EU means. Another data that is important is that 16.6% of women and

51.7% of men identify the EU flag. In rural areas most important source of information is the TVs. Although the rate of TV watching among women is higher compared to men, those programmes differ in terms of knowledge acquisition. While the first choice of 85% of the men is the news only 20.5% of women primarily chose news. The interest of men in current problems affects the programme choice and information acquisition of them. 60.8% of women and 70.1% of men who correctly identify the EU look the EU membership of Turkey positively. The findings reveal that the consciousness and perception related to the EU membership in rural areas in Turkey are formed under the effect of socio-demographic conditions of people. Thus, although there are people who believe that agricultural sector would recedes there are those who believe that there would be quality increases and progress in food safety and these in turn would increase product costs. Besides, those views that the unemployment in agricultural sector would increase and the support given to the producers would decrease, present the difference, although slightly. The most salient expectation about the full membership is the employment opportunities in the EU countries. Compared to men, women have more positive expectations. Rather than improvements in economic welfare, peace and democracy, improvements in the quality and food safety come into prominence.

The EU accession is a subject that will always be at the agenda of the public owing to the changing expectations and opinions and always preserve its political and social importance. According to the research results rural population that is disadvantageous in terms of accession to knowledge and its usage should be enlightened about the meaning of the EU membership and its expected impacts. The research findings on the perceptions of the rural segments that are decisive in agricultural production process and are the practitioners should be taken into account by all the segments, particularly decision makers and by the researchers. Instead of its application because of the EU criterions, the infusion of the importance of food safety, which is the only chapter opened directly related to agriculture, in the context of the health of consumers and society, and the preparation of regional projects for the formation of consciousness among women who are the concealed power particularly in agricultural production would increase success.

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