

FOR Turkey's EU membership

3. ECONOMICS

The Turkish economy is thriving. Growth averaged for 2014 was around 3.5% and it weathered the global financial downturn much better than most EU nations. Its public finances are the envy of southern Europe. Per-capital income has increased six-fold and the average Turk is now better off than his Romanian and Bulgarian counterparts in the EU. Only New York, London and Moscow have more resident billionaires than Istanbul. Bringing in such a dynamo would inject new life into the EU economy, as well as adding 75 million consumers to the single market.

AGAINST Turkey's EU membership

3. ECONOMICS

Despite its recent growth, Turkey remains an underdeveloped economy. Its GDP per capita at €13,000 is less than half the EU average. The entry of a country that poor and that big would place unbearable strains on EU finances. Turkey's wealth is unequally spread, meaning that an army of poor immigrants would head west, joining the estimated 10 million Turks already living in the EU. In addition, though Turkey weathered the economic crisis much better than most, it failed to push through necessary reforms and economic growth is falling while unemployment is rising.

Which side has the strongest argument? Circle it!
Why do you think this is the strongest argument?

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4. HISTORY, CULTURE, RELIGION

Reaching out to this prosperous Muslim democracy would send a clear signal that Europe is open to the Islamic world. EU membership would be symbolic of Turkey's success as a secular Islamic nation and a model for others from Morocco to Indonesia. Turkey has been fully entwined in Europe's history since the Ottomans crossed the Bosphorus in the 14th Century. The country's westward outlook has accentuated under the republic since 1922. Turkey's rich cultural heritage is unique, but it is also undeniably European. EU membership would be a catalyst for resolving the Kurdish issue as well as relations with Cyprus and Armenia.

AGAINST Turkey's EU membership

4. HISTORY, CULTURE, RELIGION

Turkey's historic and cultural roots lay in Central Asia and the Middle East. It missed the shared experiences that bind Europeans together, from the cultural legacy of Renaissance and Enlightenment, to the horrors of the Second World War II which galvanized the drive for united Europe. As an overwhelmingly Muslim nation, Turkey's cultural traditions are fundamentally different from that of Christian Europe. Turkey's historical interaction with Europe has always been as an outside invader. Cyprus is an insurmountable obstacle.

Which side has the strongest argument? Circle it!
Why do you think this is the strongest argument?

Motion: Turkey should join the European Union.

FOR Turkey's EU membership

1. GEOGRAPHY

Istanbul is a great European city that lies at the economic and cultural heart of Turkey. The country is an invaluable bridge between Europe and Asia. As a member, it would re-invigorate Europe's relations with fast evolving regions like the energy rich Caucasus and Central Asia, to the new Middle East that emerging from the Arab Spring. Turkey's unique geo-strategic position, plus the strength of NATO's second-largest army would greatly add to European security.

AGAINST Turkey's EU membership

1. GEOGRAPHY

Turkey is not a European country. 97% of its territory lies in Asia. The EU does not need shared borders with Syria, Iran and Iraq. Agreeing to one non-European member would open the door for candidates from Cape Verde to Kazakhstan. Turkey is too big for the EU to absorb. With a population predicted to reach 91 million by 2050, it will be the dominant member of the EU.

Which side has the strongest argument? Circle it!
Why do you think this is the strongest argument?

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2. POLITICS

Turkey is already a vibrant democracy. The prospect of EU membership has spurred reforms that strengthen pluralistic politics and improve human rights. The passage to membership will provide the incentive to complete those reforms. Turkey is a strong and loyal NATO ally. Leaving it in the cold, could see this growing economic and diplomatic power develop into an uncomfortable rival to European interests in a sensitive region. Having accepted Turkey as a candidate, rejecting it now would undermine European credibility.

AGAINST Turkey's EU membership

2. POLITICS

Turkey is not a mature European-style democracy. Its politics are a tussle between an overbearing military and Islamists of varying hues. Human rights are routinely abused. Dozens of journalists languish in jail. Amnesty International's annual report is filled with accounts of torture, free speech violations, denial of minority rights, unfair trials, failure to protect women. Europe would import the intractable Kurdish issue. Public opinion in the EU is overwhelmingly opposed and the Turks are only lukewarm about joining.

Which side has the strongest argument? Circle it!
Why do you think this is the strongest argument?