EU TOURISM POLICY AND TURKEY’S SITUATION DURING THE ADAPTATION PROCESS

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Abstract

European Union includes both tourism centred countries and tourism outgoing countries with high level of income. According to international tourism indicators, European Union is the world’s biggest tourism market with the 50% - 55% market share. Thus, tourism plays a vital role for EU and it accounts for 5.5% of the Union’s GNP.

European Union has recognized tourism’s role in creating new jobs and regional development until 1990’s, however, EU did not follow a sectoral approach. EU has tried to promote tourism with transport, social policy, environment, taxation, education, competitiveness, government subsidies, consumer protection, regional development, employment policy, research and statistics, SMEs and inception of the Single Market, although it hasn’t set up any tourism policy on union level. However, in the beginning of 90’s, with the pressure of institutional organizations, EU has started to follow a sectoral approach. The European Commission, the Council, the European Parliament play an important role in tourism activity.

As an EU candidate country, EU’s tourism policy is closely related with Turkey. Moreover, European Union countries are the largest market for Turkey. Accession process and economic factors affect Turkey’s tourism policy and legislation. Thus, Turkey has to harmonise its national tourism policy and legislation with the EU.

EU’s tourism policy is not obligatory and it is run by sub commission and committees which are related with tourism. Subjects may be divided into five categories:

- Knowledge
- Education
- Quality
As a result, EU does not have an obligatory tourism policy in a legal manner. On the other hand, regulation, decision, directive and recommendations on tourism largely take part in EU acquisition and they will form new obligations on Turkish tourism sector. Turkey’s cohesion to EU’s consumer protection, information technology, environment and sustainable development policies, also will facilitate cohesion of Turkey’s tourism sector to Union’s tourism sector.

Consequently, in this paper, European Union’s tourism policy has been generally examined and the progresses have been arranged in order chronologically. By researching EU tourism policy, relations with other policies, factors influencing demand for tourism and the situation of Turkish tourism in the accession process will be investigated with sub sectors. According to analysis results, suggestions will be made.

1. Tourism in the European Union and Tourism Policy

1.1 Tourism in the European Union

Tourism is an essential element for the integration of the European countries' economies. It is a growing and dynamic industry. European Union is the world’s largest economic bloc and biggest trader accounting for more than 38% of world exports by value.

Although EU is the world’s largest economic and political integration it is also one of the most attractive tourism regions in the world. Considering tourism statistics 455.9 million tourists visited EU in 2006 and based on number of tourists EU has 54.3 % of market share in the world. EU countries have high level of tourism income. In 2006 EU achieved 377.6 billion dollars with 51.3 % market share. The reasons of this demand are; significant increase in individual and independent travel according as decreasing costs (growing expansion of low-cost airlines like Ryan Air, Easyjet and Sterling), a decrease in weekend travel costs depending on decreasing airport costs. Moreover, Europeans enjoy their free time by travelling apart from their annual

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4 y.a.g.e.
regular vacations. In general, free movement of goods, services, and people, single currency (Euro), development funds, international business growth have helped the growth and development of tourism in European Union\textsuperscript{5}.

Tourism activities have a huge potential to support economic growth and employment in the EU. Tourism currently contributes some 4\% to EU GDP, varying from about 2\% in several new Member States and 12\% in Malta. Besides, its indirect contribution to GDP creation is much higher, tourism indirectly generates more than 10\% of EU GDP and provides about 12\% of all jobs\textsuperscript{6}.

Considering international standards EU countries have 9.5 million beds and they account 33\% of world’s total hospitality capacity\textsuperscript{7}. European Union includes both the most incoming and outgoing countries in the world\textsuperscript{8}. Tourism support EU countries’ level of GNP between 2.5\% and 6.5\%. Spain has the highest tourism market share and the second one is Austria. In Denmark’s tourism has a minimal contribution to GNP. Besides, Austria’s market share on hotel and restaurant establishments is between 4.1 and 18.6 in the EU. Austria has the highest proportion of hotel and restaurant establishments among total establishments\textsuperscript{9}. Greece, Luxembourg and France come next. Denmark has the lowest percentage.

In 2007, 1.578 million nights were spent in hotels and similar establishments in the EU, which is an increase of 3.1\% compared with 2006. 855.5 million people are residents in the Union and the left of it -722.4 million people- are non-residents.

\textsuperscript{7} Avrupa Birliği Turizm Sektörü, “Turizm Sektörüne Ait Büyüklükler ve Sektörün AB Ekonomisindeki Yeri”, Access: 27.10. 2006, \url{http://www.bisohbet.com/form/arsiv-baslik16338.0.html}.
\textsuperscript{8} TÜRSAB, “Avrupa Birliği ve Turizm”, Access: 15.08.2006, \url{http://www.tursab.org.tr/content/turkish/home/ab/abturizm.asp}.
\textsuperscript{9} European Foundation of Improving Living and Working Conditions, Access: 12.10.2006, \url{http://www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/files/EF0398EN.pdf}. 
Highest number of hotel nights spent in Spain and fastest growth is in Poland. International visitors are less than EU visitors.

1.2. Historical Review of EU’s Tourism Policy

European Union started integration firstly with European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951. In 1957 six European countries Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Luxemburg signed the Treaty of Rome creating European Economic Community (EEC). Since Rome Treaty, EU has been trying to establish common policies on some areas. Union’s enlargement processes widen borders and importance of tourism in member country economies are unlike. Thus, competition level is diverse and the value of tourism is dissimilar in every country. Considering, chronology of EU, tourism industry become significant step by step in Union level.

Importance of tourism in the Union Economy had been recognized in 1980’s in cooperation with the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. In 1986 the Tourism Advisory Committee was established to assist exchange of information, consultation and cooperation on tourism. The Council of Ministers announced the year 1990 'The European Year of Tourism'. In 1992, 'Action Plan to Assist Tourism' was prepared in the Union. Green Paper (1995) emphasises the role of the Union in tourism. Between 1997 and 2000 Philoxenia First Multiannual Programme was set up to assist EU Tourism. Also, in 1997 a conference on 'Employment and Tourism: Guidelines for Actions' was organized in the European Union.

The Communication from Commission on 'Working together for the future of European tourism’ 2001 aims to develop the European tourism sector's competitive potential. Another Communication is prepared in 2003 on 'Basic orientations for the sustainability of European tourism'.

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14 y.a.g.e.
This Communication put emphasis on the need to coordinate different the Community policies together and measures influencing the sustainability of tourism and the competitiveness of industry\(^\text{15}\).

In 2005, the Commission projected a new start for the Lisbon Strategy. Lisbon Strategy aims to improve competitiveness of the EU with sustainable, long-term growth and create more and better jobs. Additionally, Lisbon Strategy aims to make ‘the European Union the most competitive economy in the world and achieving full employment by 2010’\(^\text{16}\).

EU’s demographic structure has been changing and this influence tourism trends. For recent years, the number of older people (65 and upwards) has been continuously growing. European people enjoy better health, high life expectancy and purchase power. Therefore, the number of people over fifty increases much more\(^\text{17}\). Consistent with, changes in demographic structure of EU, health tourism, cultural and natural heritage tourism are expected to endure the most significant growth. As a result, the approval of tourists and to sustain the position of Europe as the world’s top tourist destination, a competitive tourism industry and sustainable destinations are needed\(^\text{18}\).

By these changes and requirements, European Union Commission launched a new tourism policy; ‘A renewed EU Tourism Policy: Towards a stronger partnership for European Tourism’ in 2006. The main aim of renewed tourism policy is to improve the competitiveness of the European tourism industry and create more and better jobs. Moreover, this policy aims to achieve the sustainable growth of tourism in Europe and in international area. The Commission, Member States’ authorities and the stakeholders in the EU tourism industry evaluate a partnership for implementing this policy\(^\text{19}\).

European Regional Development Fund (2007-2013) aims to reduce differences between regions and sustain economic and social cohesion within regions. ERDF (2007-2013) include three parts; convergence, regional competitiveness and employment, European territorial cooperation. Projects about tourism, environment, investment in culture, investment in transport, investment in education, innovation and entrepreneurship, better accessibility and sustainable

\(^{15}\) y.a.g.e.


\(^{17}\) European Commission, a.g.e.

\(^{18}\) y.a.g.e.

\(^{19}\) y.a.g.e.
urban development will be financed by ERDF\textsuperscript{20}. Environment and transport infrastructures are also financed by the Cohesion Fund. Tourism has a huge employment creation potential. Therefore, European Social Fund's (ESF) supports and finances tourism development in the Union. Financed projects are educational programmes and training to improve quality of employment and services in the tourism sector. The new proposed European Fisheries Fund (EFF) aims to support “the sustainable development of fisheries areas”. Also, the new European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development will provide support for improving the environment and the countryside\textsuperscript{21}.

Furthermore, sustainability plays a major role in EU tourism activities. To sustain continued growth and competitiveness of EU, economic, social and environmental development in EU tourism is essential. Therefore, the Commission generated European Agenda 21 for Tourism. Sustainable tourism in EU maintains protection and enrichment of the cultural and natural heritage, varying from arts to local gastronomy, preservation of biodiversity\textsuperscript{22}.

2. EU and Turkey Tourism Relations

For Turkish tourism, EU countries are essential\textsuperscript{23}. In 2005, 11.5 million EU citizen visited Turkey and EU visitors have 54 % of market share in total visitors\textsuperscript{24}.

EU opened accession negotiations with Turkey on October 3, 2005. Process starts with the adoption of a negotiating framework for candidate countries. In the document, an exact definition of EU accession is provided, which was referred to as the acceptance by the candidate country of the acquis communautaire\textsuperscript{25}. Emphasis has been put on the need for candidate countries to ensure that the acquis was duly implemented at the time of accession, and on the

\textsuperscript{21}EU Commission, a.g.e.
\textsuperscript{22}European Union, “Tourism”, Access: 15.03.2008, \url{http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/services/tourism/index_en.htm}.
\textsuperscript{23}Mehmet Özdemir, Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği'ne Girişi Konusunda Olumlu ve Olumsuz Görüşler, Türk Ocakları Genel Merkezi ve Ankara Ticaret Odası, Türkiye -Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri, 16-17 Mart 2001 tarihlerinde düzenlenmiş olan sempozyumun bildirileri, soruları ve cevapları, Ankara, s. 100.
necessary institutional reform process, which must inevitably take place in order to implement the relevant rules.\textsuperscript{26}

As an EU candidate country Turkey, under articles of Helsinki European Council 1999 must adopt its national regulations with EU acquis communautaire.\textsuperscript{27} The acquis communautaire subject to the negotiations ought to be examined within 35 different chapters. Today, some chapters related with tourism enterprise and industrial policy, consumer and health protection are opened.\textsuperscript{28}

Tourism plays a major role on develop and strengthen Turkish-EU economic and social relations. On December 1995 between EU member states and Southern Mediterranean partners established the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Barcelona Process) which is a wide framework of political, economic and social relations.\textsuperscript{29} This partnership aims economic and financial partnership, establishment of free trade area, to improve political and security dialogue, strengthen social, cultural and human cooperation.

MEDA programme is the main financial instrument for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. From 1995 to 2003, MEDA financed € 5,458 million in co-operation programmes, projects and other supporting activities, the regional activities comprising around 15% of this budget.\textsuperscript{30} Also, MEDA financed Medtour for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (1997-2000). All partners made contribution to research statistics in tourism area. EU financed vocational training programme in addition to regional cooperation in Turkey.\textsuperscript{31}

Moreover, a renewed EU tourism policy closely related with Turkey. More than 50% of visitors come from EU countries. Turkey competes with EU destinations in the world tourism market. Therefore, EU tourism policies have impacts on Turkish tourism industry. Movements in Turkish tourism sector, considering improvements in tourism services quality and diversity of

\textsuperscript{26} İKV, a.g.e.
\textsuperscript{30}y.a.g.e.
tourism activities, will influence demands for Turkey. Parallel with progresses, it is estimated that Turkey has to play an active role in EU tourism.

2.1. Requirements for Turkey in the Adaptation Process

For recent years, with regard to incessant change in world tourism trends, Turkey takes growing attention. As a consequence, Turkish tourism sector is greatly considerable for the EU membership cohesion process. Sea, sand and sun (3 S) are three elements have influences on Turkey becoming a tourism country in the Mediterranean region. Notwithstanding, 3 S’s have been loosing their comparative meaning and value, absolute magnitude remain identical. Moreover, new elements have been developed for instance country’s history, culture, folklore, gastronomy, flora, fauna, termal facilities and most important one is ability of hosting young population. Instead of mass tourism, world tourism has been varying to tourism type with the implication of local characteristics. Turkey is an ordinary Mediterranean country with sea, sand and sun possibilities, despite that, has vital potential for new trends. Turkey has to move close to these new trends

According to tourism industry representatives, Turkey has to fulfill economic, legislation, organization and coordination conditions within the EU integration process. In all areas of tourism, EU policies need to be followed closely and carefully, cohesion with EU legislation needs to be taken seriously and quickly. Cohesion process embraces;

- Taking into consideration developing and changing trends, highly competitive and coherent tourism products have to be created,
- Targeted, well coordinated promotion and marketing politics need to be developed,
- Tourism transportation, environment, local governments have to be taken into account seriously,
- An efficient incitement system needs to be established related to EU norms.

New regulations have to be established in tourism the same as reforms. A close relationship between Turkish tourism sector and Europe will influence EU’s perceptions about Turkey and

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33 Ünlü, a.g.e., http://www.altso.org.tr/makale.asp?mID=10.
will support EU membership. In addition to this, improvements about competition, environment, and consumer rights will support tourism industry.\footnote{AB Turizm Politikası, “İş dünyası, İstihdam ve Gelişme”, Access: 14.10.2007, \url{http://www.adanato.org.tr/dok/turizm.htm}.}

2.2. Turkish Tourism Industry and Cohesion with EU

Lodging Industry

Lodging industry is continuously growing and the number of lodging and hospitality enterprises has been increasing. Thus, having qualified employees in tourism industry is a problematic area. Especially those employees working in big enterprises may move to small enterprises with high promotion possibilities. This causes a high level of personnel movement. Employees working in cities may stay in the same enterprise long years without moving another. Above all, advantages such as dormitory, food, overtime, allowances etc. can not resolve the unemployment problem related to tourism season. As a result, personnel turn over is high in tourism industry and the attraction to business diminish.

Apart from knowledge and skills required in the business, also consumer satisfaction, appearance, cleanliness, success in human relations, realibility, speaking and understanding foreign languages has become more and more important. More over, technologic knowledge, getting the idea of serving, quality conscious, service and quality relations, perceiving host expectations, adaptability to changing working environment and having skills and ability to manage human are main issues in today’s world. In recent years, conferences, trade expositions and exhibitions, special conference hotels are key topics in hotel business. By the rising quality levels in hotels, the number of small and single star hotels is decreasing.\footnote{İşkur, Access: 10.09.2007, \url{http://www.iskur.gov.tr/mydocu/standart/124.html}.}

Although, there isn’t any standart policy on hotel industry and business in European Union, some specific practices may be observed\footnote{Access: 20.03.2005, \url{http://www.ttyd.org.tr/trmain.htm}.}. Member countries take the advantage of diminished taxes for passenger transportation and hotel accommodation.

This possibility is not available for non-EU country Turkey. Other measures related to consumer and passenger protection, also include conditions for hotel and transportation vehicles safety and food hygien.
Council of Ministers recommendation decision on fire safety in hotels (22 December 1998) aims to organize and coordinate fire measures in hotels as in decision paper. Moreover, Recommendation Decision includes fire escape, building structure, decoration, electricity, lightning and heating, air conditioning, fire alarms, warming signs and other safety instructions technique guiding principles. Also in Turkey, same criterias are required for building licence and Tourism Ministry Document.

According to sector representatives employed in hotel business, Turkish tourism service producers have required infrastructure and equipment to survive and compete in EU market, even though some challenges related to practicing foreign country legislation and regulations are faced by hotel sector in Turkey.

Tour Operators and Travel Agents

Recently, in tour operators business related with type of tourism, such as trekking, spor, climbing, convention and congress tourism etc. topics specialization trends are be observed. Tourism industry benefits technological developments in communication technologies, online promotion and reservation possibilities increase and with less people more work are produced\(^\text{38}\).

With the increase in purchase power, middle class prefer airline transportation. According to statistics, 60% of Union population travel at least one time in a year. European travelers create 65% of inward tourism movements in the Union. At least six of ten European travelers prefer memberstates for a vacation and 32% of them choose package tour, hence they buy service from a travel agency or tour operator. This indicates the weight of inward Europe tourism (from EU to EU). Another indicator shows 30% of EU population chooses outward tourism (from EU to non-EU countries) with package tours\(^\text{39}\). Today Europe’s biggest tour operators are in England, Germany and France. On account of large companies, independent small agencies loose their competitiveness\(^\text{40}\).

Recently short time vacation concept enlarged market and created new marketing techniques. This kind of travel is mostly popular in Germany and Italy and composes a major part of market for specialized travel agencies.

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In the future independent travel will be growing faster than package tours. Intense competition in airline transportation and last minute sales affect independent travel, the growth expectation for this area is about 5.5% per year. Business travel is another progressive area. On the other hand, inadequacy of travel agencies replying business demand can be observed. Even though, by specialization and out of mass tourism, attracting customer groups with desire to create their own travel, planning special travel and vacation tours, finally working on convention and congress tourism having a place in market is possible

Yacht Tourism

Technological developments in yacht production increase in level of life standards increase the number of yachts about 15% per year. The number of yachts visit Turkey has been increasing year by year. In 2000, 1905 number of commercial and private Turkish and foreign yachts with yellow flags entered Turkish harbours. In 2001 and 2002 the number of yachts entering Turkish harbours increased by 80%. Compared with number of yachts in European countries, this ratio remains low. On the other hand, quality of marinas and yachts almost reach European standards.

In the cohesion period, yacht personnel training has to be considered into account with several ways. Also, coordination between yacht and marine tourism institutions has to be maintained. Burocratic barriers have to be removed and standardization procedures need to be considered for putting into action projects.

Employment possibilities in yacht industry are expected to grow. The reasons are; growing importance of service industry, changes in travel and vacation habits and styles, enlarge in yacht tourism services parallel with Turkey’s development, rise in number of foreign tourists coming Turkey. Working in yacht industry like all tourism sectors requires consumer satisfaction, appearance, cleanliness, success in human relations, realibility, speaking and understanding foreign languages.

2.3. Challenges in EU Membership Period

Infrastructure and Human Resource Problems

Turkey still faces with infrastructure problems in tourism industry. In tourism seasons regions host tourists more than 4-5 times of their population. Local governments are usually inefficient. In tourism regions superstructure develops fastly, in consequence infrastructure remains inadequate. As well infrastructure problems enhance.

Marketing, Promoting and Managing Problems

Turkey’s marketing and promotion shortages need to be identified properly. In the process of EU full membership period, properly marketing and promotion becomes even more important. For long years government has the authority. These funds are directed by Ministry of Tourism and may not used effectively. Although, for a few years private sector-travel agency and tour operators has been guiding usage area of funds. This is a huge progress.

Marketing and promotion depends on financial possibilities and strength, even though this strength has to be run in the right time and place. Marketing research and consumer trends are main instruments and unfortunately Turkey is lack of these kinds of researches. So target markets need to be addressed by marketing research and consumer trend analysis43.

Turkey’s marketing approach is still ‘sea-sand-sun’ (3S), instead of the new approach ‘event-education-entertainment’ (3E). There isn’t any marketing approach for EU countries. Another, urgent situation is cheap marketing of Turkey. The reasons are imbalance between tourism goods and services’ prices, political tensions, economic instability, incoordination between related units, failure and inefficiency of destination management organizations.

Investment, Incentive, Fiscal Regulation and Environment Problems

To 1980’s incentives related to tourism aimed to increase supply as to build hospitality facility. After 1980’s the amount of credits and inducements were reduced. Taking into consideration superstructure investments prevent strength and improvement of other areas.

European Competition Policy includes enterprises and relies on EC Treaty articles between 81 and 8644. European Competition Policy aims free and fair competition45, therefore, takes action against business practices which restrict competition, prevents abuse of dominant position, examines mergers not to reduce competition, open up competition in areas previously

44 TÜRSAB, Avrupa Birliği ve Turizm, 2001, Boyut Matbaacılık, İstanbul, s. 75.
controlled by state-run companies, financial support is given by EU member states, cooperates with other competition authorities around the world.\textsuperscript{46}

Financial regulations reinforce competitiveness of industry, but aren’t revealed yet. For example, credit interest rate is high and time is short.

For cohesion with EU,

- restrict competition,
- prevent dominant position in the market,
- to control state aid are essential topics.\textsuperscript{47}

EU member states benefit reduced taxes for passenger transportation and hotel accommodation. As a non-EU member country Turkey cannot take the advantage of these reduced taxes. Turkey’s competitors in Mediterane Region have value added tax rate between 5% and 10%. Thus, Turkey has a disadvantage about 11%.

Enterprises may voluntarily join Community’s eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS). Related with European Parliament and Council of Ministry Regulation date 19 March 2001, number 761/2001 many tourism enterprises like hotels and restaurants voluntarily attend this system. EMAS affect enterprises indirectly such as reducing costs, increasing credibility, and reducing waste. This regulation established in June 1993 and depended on volunteering principal, even though after April 1995 system transformed to EU environment responsibility and became obligatory for EU member states in a legal manner.\textsuperscript{48} This regulation is not valid in Turkey. There are some efforts on environment protection; however efficiency and participation may not be clearly evaluated today.


Job security and safety and Health in Tourism

EU considers seriously job security and safety regulations and practices. Workers in tourism industry like waiter and waitress, chefs, tourist guides, trainers, animators have to adapt to seasonal characteristic of tourism, different working time and conditions. Community measures on employment and social policy interest more than nine million people employ in tourism industry. Community Act includes workers’ main social rights. According as the Community Act, EU set guidelines about labour market and improvement working conditions. Some EU regulations on social area directly affect tourism. Related with temporary and part time workers some regulations are established on health and safety in working place, working shifts, minimum break time and conditions, improvement in living and working conditions49.

These kinds of regulations are launched in Turkish labour market, even though practices are questionable.

Applications about disabled people

Applications about disabled people are vital topics in EU’s tourism policy and affect lodging industry. Travel is much harder for disabled and elderly people. For elderly and disabled people evaluating their free time depend on conditions and accession. For that reason, wheelchair access, special eqipments in bathroom and toilet, care and medical support are some kinds of implements help disabled and elderly people benefit tourism50.

European Union published a handbook for the tourism industry ‘Making Europe Accessible for Tourists with Disabilities’ in 1996. Handbook aims to demonstrate that existing facilities can be without difficulty adapted to suit disabled tourists. The handbook stresses that research and satisfactory expenditure would allow most of Europe's tourism firms to offer suitable levels of service to disabled people.51

Cooperation between tourism and culture and protection of cultural values

This approach shapes lodging facilities. European heritage and European culture is known as one of the oldest and most important tourism creators. According to a Community decision, Community action aims to stress meaning of cultural heritage for tourism and support promotion of European culture, life style and tradition. Historical buildings are transformed to hotels or other accommodation facilities in this context\textsuperscript{52}. As in Turkey, some historical buildings are changed into hotels. Hence, protection of cultural values are essential aspects, there is not any policy transferring cultural values as an accommodation facility to protect cultural values in Turkey.

2.4. Requirements for Turkish Tourism Enterprises in the EU Adaptation Process

Travel Agencies
According to TURSAB’s research, working with a foreign colleague and a partner is not common in Turkey. This could indicate that in forthcoming days travel agencies may face with some problems while working with European travel agencies. Hence, competitive conditions and globalisation require the need of strength management instead of powerful financial structure. Sector, depends on travel agencies’ management and adaptation skills.

Need for Planning
Consumers take totally private and emotional decisions in tourism sector. Therefore, firms can sustain in business by long term planning and creating new products and marketing strategies.

Research New Trends
Creating new products based on changing trends, broaden the market and increase sales. For that reason, new consumer-tourist trends have to be correctly determined and new products have to be developed under changing trends. So, this requires efficient effort and sufficient knowledge about human.

Improvements in Transportation Systems

There is need for improvements in transport systems, air transport needs to be developed by supporting national enterprises and railway transport needs to be reconstructered and strengthen. European Union does not support road transport and tries to reduce this kind of transportation type. So, railways and air transport have to be developed.

Transport issues may be considered with two aspects; economic growth and international. As a result of economic growth, consumers have products and services with high quality and low prices. As a result of internationalization process, free trade and common EU transport policy have become crucial. EU common transport policy include economic growth, infrastructure, free market and easy Access, environment protection, price strategies on road transportation, transform from road transport to railway and maritime transportation issues. Working conditions, safety standards and public transportation are main issues in social aspects of EU transport policy. Social standards, safety regulations and standards, techniques for speed limit and digital tachographs are short term changes which occur in EU adaptation process. Important issues on maritime adaptation process are infrastructure investments in container terminal, government control on harbours and free harbours.

Applications about disabled people

Disabled people and applications about them are essential topic in EU, related with big market, social responsibility. Not just hospitality sector, all sub sectors of tourism sector are responsible. Considering this, travel agencies and tour operators have to give information to disabled people in information desks and countries have to discuss this issue on national perspective. Besides, barriers and difficulties for disabled people need to be removed.

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53 İzmir Ticaret Odası, Avrupa Ortak Taşımacılık Politikası, Avrupa Birliği “Türkiye’ye Köprü Projesi”, İzmir, 2007/a, s. 54.
Sectors Cooperation

Turkish tourism sector employees and enterprise owners think that foreign tour operators and structural problems of government cause selling tourism products with very low prices. So, they need to change their perspectives and develop some strategies and solutions for Turkey’s internal problems and work with cooperation in the sector. The EU regulates this in the cohesion process. Also, if associations, destination management and marketing organizations work efficiently and coordinate together create some helpful solutions.

Social Security and Rights

Labour law and workers’ health are critical topics in the EU cohesion process. Social security is one of the important problems of Turkey, also important for tourism employees. Like in abroad, employee turnover is really high in Turkish tourism sector. Inexperienced employees work in any tourism region seasonally and without social security, because of working seasonally, tourism employees are lack of experienced and this reduces service quality in the sector.

New Technologies

There is a rapid increase in new technologies usage in Turkish tourism sector. This affects industry in a positive way. Today, most of the hotels, car rental enterprises and travel agencies have internet Access and web pages. Following new technologies closely and practicing them strengthen competitiveness of tourism enterprise in business.

Consumer Rights

Evolution of European Union closely affected consumers and producers. Removal of barriers (custom tariff rates etc.) caused free movement of goods and services which let to increase in products and services, free competition. EU’s tourism policy coordinates together with consumer policy and protects tourists in Europe. Thus, there are actions including more information about tourists’ rights and legislations on consumer protection improvements.

In Turkey, Consumer Protection Act came into force in 1995. Related to this act, special legislation work was done and positive efforts were made on ‘consumer rights and safety’. There are some European Commission decisions on tourism rights protection. These are: to inform consumers about their rights and education, European consumer information centers, fire safety in hotels, integration of disabled people, unequal conditions which are not negotiated in agreements, consumers and justice, White Paper about food safety. The European Commission strongly emphasizes fire safety in hotels (1986) and package tours (1990).

Consumer and tourist protection and rights are main topics in the EU membership process. Travel and tourism insurance are early steps in this process. Moreover, they need to be enlarged and improved related to changing conditions.

Sustainable Tourism

In this century, sustainability concept has been recognized very well in the world. Also, sustainable tourism and environment are main elements of EU tourism policy. Environment standards such as air, water, emission standards, waste mangement, land usage are closely related to tourism sector. Planning and managing mass tourism better, sustainable tourism development, increase awareness of environment are key topics in EU tourism policies. Extending environmentally friendly alternative tourism products like Green hotels and plateau tourism and planned development in tourism regions are major issues. Two examples might be given in Europe for Travel and Tourism; Agenda 21 and Blue Flag projects.

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59 Ito, a.g.e., ss. 40-42.
Examples for sustainable tourism in Europe are volunteer camps, environment summer schools, alternative accommodation and ecological certificate for tourism. Sustainable Project examples in Turkey are Local Agenda 21, National Agenda 21, National Environment Strategy and Action Plan\textsuperscript{61}.

To start new projects finance problems have to be solved firstly. Plenty of rules and regulations cause problems in practice. So, these rules and regulations have to be added together in one framework\textsuperscript{62}.

**Cohesion between EU tourism policy and Turkey**

Instead of presenting a single policy, the EU supports tourism within scope of different Union policies. It is hard to establish a common policy in the European Union level with different income levels of memberstates and imbalances between regions. As an EU candidate country, Turkey faces with some problems about economic development and legislation system. Therefore, the EU’s efforts on implementing a common tourism policy have to be followed closely and with awareness. In addition, without waiting for full membership, intellectual contributions need to be added. Learning EU’s tourism programs, researching fund resources and participation in Tourism Action Plan will be beneficial and also needed for a strong cohesion between Turkey and EU.

Hotels, tour operators and agencies play key role on specifically issues stressed in the Action Plan such as expanding tourism season, developing tourism in less developed regions, sustainable tourism-protecting environment, nature tourism, tourism products diversity. Tourism diversity is important issue in the cohesion period, although EU’s view on tourism as to establish and develop Europeanisation concept need to be regarded as.


\textsuperscript{62} Zengin ve Uluer, a.g.e., ss. 106-136.
Conclusion

European Union does not follow a direct tourism policy because of multidicipliner characteristics of tourism, it is guided by EUs environment consumer rights health regional development employment competitiveness taxation education and research policies.

European Unions tourism policy is not enforced legally it is run by sub commission and committees that are related with tourism. Subjects may be divided into five categories:

- Knowledge
- Education
- Quality
- Sustainable Development
- New Technologies

Tourism has been raising as an attracting sector within the priority policies such as supporting entrepreneurship SMEs single market education vocational education taxation policies environment consumer rights social policy transportation information technology policies. Consequently even if EU does not have an obligatory tourism policy in legal manner directives decisions recommendations will bring new obligations to Turkish tourism sector.

During negotiation period, private sector has to consider these provisions:

- Adequate knowledge on EU’s common policies,
- Having ability to practice EU system parameters,
- Protection of private sectors and developing cohesion strategies,
- Increasing knowledge points, capacity and resources.

Europe is a crucial market for Turkey. Hence, decisions about tourism on Union’s level have to be followed closely and required measures for full cohesion need to be taken. Unblanced regional development may be reduced by tourism incentives. Projects like job security and safety, health, consumer rights, environmental protection, cultural cooperations support sustainable tourism and applying these projects may become uncomplicated.
Turkey’s cohesion to Union’s policies such as consumer protection, information technologies, environment and sustainable development, all at once will simplify cohesion of Turkish tourism sector to EU tourism sector.

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