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## Europeans confused about Turkey accession

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A new survey reveals that 47% of Europeans back Turkey's EU accession and 47% are opposed to it. But when the same respondents were asked how would they vote in a referendum on Turkey's membership, 52% say that they would vote against it and only 41% in favour.

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The survey was conducted by Bogaziçi University in Istanbul and two Spanish institutions: the University of Granada and the Autonomous University of Madrid.

The apparent discrepancy in the survey's findings is explained by the fact that "if people are forced to decide at a referendum, they are reluctant to change things, and [tend to] bend to the status quo," according to Hakan Yilmaz, a professor at Bogaziçi University.

People "are more audacious when they are asked on a simple position, with nuances such as 'are you in favour' or 'somehow favourable'," Yilmaz added.

The survey was conducted in five EU countries - France, Germany, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom - in August and September 2009, and was presented in Istanbul on 23 January.

According to the survey, 62% of Germans and 64% of French people would vote 'no' to Turkey if referenda were held. The 'no' vote would be weaker in the UK at 46%, the poll said. Poland and Spain would vote 'yes', with support of 54% and 53% respectively.

### Generation factor

When asked about the arguments against Turkish accession, 39% of respondents agreed with the statement that Turkey is "a Muslim country [...] incompatible with the common Christian roots" of Europe.

The survey also showed that the most significant variable was age and generation. "Support grows as age goes down, and it decreases as age rises," Yilmaz said.

### Spanish overtures

Meanwhile, Miguel Angel Moratinos, foreign minister of Spain, the current holder of the EU's rotating presidency, strongly advocated Turkey's accession to the Union. In an interview with Germany's *Welt am Sonntag* newspaper, Moratinos said "Turkey is part of the European family of nations".

"It's better to have [Turkey] inside the EU than to leave it standing outside," said Moratinos. "It would bring Europe more advantages than drawbacks. There may be a difference of opinions between EU member states [over Turkish membership], but all have agreed to wait and watch the negotiations," he added.

Moratinos also reiterated Spain's promise to try and open four more negotiating chapters in the accession talks during its six-month EU presidency, meaning by the end of June.

So far, only 12 out of 35 chapters have been opened during Turkey's accession bid (see [EurActiv LinksDossier](#)).

## Links

### Press articles

- AFP: [Les Européens partagés sur l'entrée de la Turquie dans l'UE, voteraient non](#)
- Reuters: [Turkey belongs in Europe - EU President Spain](#)
- Die Welt: ["Die Türkei gehört zu Europa"](#)
- Today's Zaman: [Young Europeans back Turkey's EU bid more, poll](#)