

SOME “PICTURES IN OUR HEADS”: TURKEY IN THE EUROPEAN MEDIA

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The expected adhesion of Turkey to EU, not realized, creates emotions that are represented by rhetorical and symbolic medial constructions. Consequently, we find ourselves in a situation where the experience remains a potentiality: an experience which has begun, but which is not completely actualized. This might be the general condition for all (media) events; always in transition, waiting for the integration, creating a scene of complex and insecure emotions. The difficulty of this situation resides on the fact that on the one hand it is dominated by a potential, and on the other hand it is ruled by differentiation. The potential state, in our context the one created by the printed media, becomes an unknown field of experience for the new applicants as well as for the member countries.

The present paper proposes a panoramic analysis of French and Romanian journals and their discourses concerning European integration of Turkey. How the press presents the integration process of Turkey? Certainly, our analysis has its limitations; however, our aim in this study is not to judge editorial transformations, but to reveal emotional implications and stereotypes via discursive constructions. Our study is framed by several theoretical premises, primarily based on discourse analysis, and will integrate and discuss fundamental concepts of stereotypes and emotions creating “pictures in our heads”, as a result of the predictability marking the EU-Turkey diplomatic relationships and also of fears and emotions of the European citizens.

Keywords: Media representations, stereotypes, European Union, Turkey, European integration.

1. INTRODUCTION: EUROPE AND TURKEY

“Predictability is a notion that runs through many dimensions of Turkey–EU relations. Being anchored in the integration process gives Turkey a predictable course to follow, which is very important for business and society at large.” (Göksel 2009: 31). However, this perspective does not help to transform easily the European public perception on Turkey’s candidacy to the EU.

A bibliographical study on the national stereotypes reveals important facts linked to the historic repertoire of states, and also about the statute of strangers

with reference to the national experiences with strangers. For instance, H el ene Duccini notes: “D’une part, on est toujours l’ etranger de quelqu’un et les nations telles que nous les identifions aujourd’hui ne se sont constitu ees autour d’une communaut e nationale que progressivement, les particularismes provinciaux ne s’effacent que tr es lentement. D’autre part, l’identit e des nations s’est le plus souvent forg ee dans des conflits sanglants et des guerres incessantes entre voisins.” (Duccini 2004: 67).

Talking about the image of the Turkish people in Europe, Professor Nedret Kuran-Bur o glu tries to explain the controversy around Turkey’s insertion to the EU by affirming that there is a considerable negative “impact of Turkish people on the decisional mechanisms in Europe” (Kuran-Bur o glu 2002: 67–68), even if the political and historical evolution of this country had often registered positive moments for its image. It is the case of the declaration of the Republic of Turkey, in 1923, by Mustafa Kemal Atat urk, that aimed “a complete transformation of the image of the Turkish people in Europe, perceived then as the «Others of Europe»” (cf. Kuran-Bur o glu 2002: 75). This approach reveals a certain *European* perception on Turkey, which disturbs European public opinion: “Turkish candidacy, which crystallizes so many negative connotations and subconscious fears, lies precisely in overcoming these fears and images through the integration of Europe’s archetypal figure of the Other, the *t ete de Turc*, the scapegoat, a figure that brings to Western minds, pell-mell, the Muslim, the Oriental and the barbarian” (Aktar 2009: 223).

N. Kuran-Bur o glu concludes his study in a way that circumscribes the context of Turkey adhesion to the EU: “Dans les p eriodes de fortes tensions politiques et diplomatiques entre la Turquie et les autres pays europ eens, l’image n egative de ce pays et de son peuple gagne en primaut e strat egique. Ces st er eotypes sont souvent d’un part m el es   divers autres excuses pour essayer de maintenir la Turquie hors de l’Europe (...) et d’autre part instrumentalis es par des strat egies et des m ecanismes de pouvoir, qui sont alors r epandus dans le monde entier par toutes sortes de m edias” (Kuran-Bur o glu 2002: 81).

Turkey was accepted as a legitimate candidate in 1999, at the EU Summit in Helsinki, and, in October 2004, the European Commission published a new report on the actual state of development of this country, in order to open the official negotiations in 2005. And so they did. However, no other candidate state waited so long to open pre-accession negotiations. Considered as a part of New Europe (including all ex-communist countries), “Turkey, as a substantial part of the future political Europe, has benefited considerably from the enlargement dynamics, despite all odds. But so has Europe, despite a deep disregard for those achievements which paved the way, for the first time in recent history, for a common future with a country –Turkey – that has otherwise been considered as the role model for Europe’s perennial ‘Other’” (Aktar 2009: 222). In this time,

Europeans accused the "Enlargement fatigue" and "European policymakers have begun to consider the Turkey dossier as a crisis management case" (Aktar 2009: 222).

Integrating a predominant Muslim country, nevertheless the only secular state in the region, reveals a pack of identity difficulties into the emerging European public sphere. Different cultures, different traditions, different religions, and different values seem to be referential to this controversial initiative. In the same time, European policymakers are divided and often they elude an assumed position on this question. In this context, "Turkey appears as a significant test case since it embodies a number of values that are allegedly in contradiction with European values" (Aktar 2009: 223).

However, the progressive accession process regarding Turkey started with a series of important legislative and social transformations, especially between 2002–2004, and now, again, with the Referendum for a revised Constitution in September 2010. And we should not forget also that Turkey is an EU associate member since 1963. The economic crisis that traverses Europe and its historic experience too favors both a strategic European view on a potential accession of Turkey, inasmuch, "If Europe wants to be a global player with an influence beyond its borders, it has to find a way to integrate a variety of traditions including, first and foremost, moderate Islam as best represented by Turkey" (Keridis 2009: 154).

We know that no wave of enlargement had a positive impact on the West European public opinion, but that did not hinder the enlargement process to become one of the most successful EU policies; "In other words, Turkey's accession is a great strategic gamble that will, to a great extent, determine the future of Europe. In the meantime, it is worth remembering that no EU enlargement has been popular; public instinct has often favoured avoiding the mental changes and discomfort that the newcomers bring. Neither the Greeks in 1981 nor the Poles in 2004 were particularly welcomed. And yet enlargement has been Europe's most successful policy for the transformation of the continent into a model of cooperation, democracy and prosperity. If that was the case with southern Europe in the 1970s and Eastern Europe in the 2000s, it can be so with Turkey in the 2020s. It is precisely because the EU is more than free trade, it is such a great historical, transformational and political project, that Turkey's accession is necessary. With Turkey as a member in her own right, Europe will be more than a white, Christian, inward-looking club. It will be able to project a powerful positive influence on the Muslim world and beyond" (Keridis 2009: 154–155).

2. THE PICTURES IN OUR HEADS

Turkey's accession process to the EU reiterates a series of negative stereotypes which creates a turbulent atmosphere on this subject. Historical reference points such as the genocide against Armenians, Kurds' issue, the unstable

relations with Cyprus, corruption, violation of human rights, questionable democracy, and weakness of Turkish economy, are doubled by the well-known imperial tradition of Turkey. In this context, contemporary Turkish people that we often discover in the European media discourse are threatening, invading, bloody and cruel Strangers, having a different and too religious culture, and a national Muslim tradition. These are some references that put limits to the pictures in our heads. The phenomenon is detailed by Lippman in a way that helps us to clarify the intrusion of these negative perceptions into the usual informative vocabulary of the media discourse: “The world that we have to deal with politically is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind. It has to be explored, reported, and imagined. Man is not Aristotelian god contemplating all existence at one glance. He is the creature of an evolution who can just about span a sufficient portion of reality to manage his survival, and snatch what on the scale of time are but a few moments of insight and happiness. Yet this same creature has invented ways of seeing what no naked eye could see, of hearing what no ear could hear, of weighing immense masses and infinitesimal ones, of counting and separating more items that he can individually remember. He is learning to see with his mind vast portions of the world that he could never see, touch, smell, hear, or remember. Gradually he makes for himself a trustworthy picture inside his head of the world beyond his reach. Those features of the world outside, which have to do with the behavior of others human beings in so far as that behavior crosses ours, is dependent upon us, or is interesting to us, we can roughly public affairs. The pictures inside the heads of these human beings, the pictures of themselves, of others, of their needs, proposes and relationship, are their public opinions. Those pictures which are acted upon by groups of people, or by individuals acting in the name of groups, are Public Opinion with capital letters.” (Lippman 1954: 29).

According to Lippman, we argue that “the pictures inside people’s heads do not automatically correspond with the world outside” (Lippman 1954: 31), in order to identify the reference points of the European scene confronting with the Turkish demand for accession. These references are the actors of the media discourse and their declarations that media present as information on Turkey’s accession. The lack of editorials on this topic, as witnessed by the last ten years in the French and Romanian printed press corpus, leaves the playground to the political actors (institutions and politicians), which dominate the informative media discourse of both countries.

The classic approach of the public opinion offered by Walter Lippman establishes a new dimension of stereotypes and the way they act in the contemporary world. According to Lippman, “the analysis of public opinion must begin, then, by recognizing the triangular relationship between the scene of action, the human picture of that scene and the human response to that picture working itself out upon the scene of action.” (Lippman 1954: 16–17). This kind of reconstruction of reality by the human mind takes the shape of “the pictures in our

heads", as a response to the human interaction with the scene that Lippman called "the world outside". This is the first category of stereotypes that interests our study, in order to identify the European representations about Turkey aiming its accession to the EU. The second category of stereotypical "pictures" circulating into the European public sphere concerns all the different forms of positive and negative representations on the main subject that the European media vehicle reinforce and even legitimate as "information" on European matters. This perspective points out the same perspective, knowing that, for Lippman, the "analysis of the nature of news and of the economic basis of journalism seems to show that the newspapers necessarily and inevitably reflect, and therefore, in greater or lesser measure, intensify the defective organization of public opinion" (Lippman 1954: 31).

We shall assume that each and every human being has a certain symbolic universe that reproduces his perception of reality. Living within the contemporary society supposes the invasion of a series of exterior representations, perceptions, or so called "currents of opinion", as well as a pack of images or "pictures" that the social psychology calls "stereotypes". They define the Other, or the Others, as developing certain "pictures in our heads", with dimensions generally defined by the social experiences borrowed from the members of the society/community we are part of. It is all about a certain perception on Europe, on the one hand, about its member states' citizens which seem to be relatives, members of a large family, and on the other hand, about the Others, the Strangers, the aliens living beyond the actual frontiers of the EU. The Strangers called Turks have an entire symbolic history of differences of all kinds – cultural, traditional, geographic, religious, territorial, that transfer a multitude of social emotions even to the mediatic discourse. The aim of this study is to see how the pictures in our "European" heads are becoming information, resetting information and equalizing information regarding the adhesion of Turkey to the European Union, by identifying some categories of stereotypes that circulate in the French and Romanian media discourses. About the pictures we create in our heads, Lippman notes: "They are the artificial censorships, the limitations of social contact, the comparatively meager time available in each day for paying attention to public affairs, the distortion arising because events have to be compressed into very short messages, the difficulty of making a small vocabulary express a complicated world, and finally the fear of facing those facts which would seem to threaten the established routine of men's lives" (Lippman 1954: 30).

3. MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE "TURKISH CHALLENGE"

With regards to the media coverage of the EU public affairs, there is a constant interrogation that traverses every study on this matter, interesting an instable unity of the European media debate in the terms of a "European public

sphere". We noted a lot of negativist approaches as "the logics of the treatment of this actuality, rather common to different countries, is so much divergent that European citizens do not share the same terms of a debate that could never take place" (Baisnée 2003: 150).

In this context, we can quickly find out that the national media approaches on European matters are largely preferred to the search of a common European perspective. For instance, the "Turkish challenge" and the Treaty for an EU Constitution point out to the existent divisions that marked this "European public sphere". This perspective serves us also as a fundamental framing procedure in studying the printed press discourses and the various positions of the actors on the media scene on this matter.

A major premise to our study on the French press is provided by Mouna Mejri in a research article analyzing the Turkish candidature to the EU across the French press in 2004: "Partagée en deux, l'opinion publique française fait apparaître ... les «turco-sympathisants... et les turco-sceptiques». Les uns comme les autres utilisent les mêmes arguments pour défendre leurs positions" (Mejri 2004: 105). The same arguments for defending opposite positions on a potential accession of Turkey... These arguments are always focused on geographic belonging, demographic magnitude, history, culture and religion heritage of Turkey, and they are subject of new interrogations every time public debates about Turkey's accession are reopened. with respect to these common basic arguments, Jane Hevé argues that they are due to the fact of having always conceived the relations between EU and Turkey "across a play of deforming mirrors" (Hevé 1997: 263).

The French and Romanian printed press discourses on Turkey's accession were subject of numerous studies we undertook in the last seven years, and this is reason we can argue that we have already a coherent view on the media coverage in both countries. Looking behind on the information coverage of this theme in Europe, our interest is also focused on how stereotypes and the intrusion of negative emotions in the information discourse reveals virulent reactions and debates in the media: "This 'objective' position, which is, as discussed before, not quite objective as it seems to be, changes if you take a closer look at the way Turkey is presented. There are not only political divergences inside the EU. Countries like Austria, Slovenia, Hungary, and Slovakia would like to discuss the potential admittance of Croatia at the same time with Turkey. Furthermore, different national matters of dispute, appearing in the member countries, can be noticed. In Germany and France for instance, political parties are not able to find a compromise, and even in Turkey there are voices against the admission to the EU" (Niemeyer Pricopie 2007: 207).

This is the reason why we consider a further presentation in this paper of a simplified version including the categories of actors of media discourses and the lists of the most used stereotypes we could identify in the printed press on this

subject. Various other matters could and should be analyzed, such as the already mentioned disagreements, and the actual situation concerning Turkish democracy, but as our major interest concerns stereotypes, we will concentrate on the way discursive actors are helping stereotypes against Turkey to circulate in the European media.

3.1 FRENCH MEDIA DISCOURSE

The most quoted actors in the French printed press are the European officials, the French and Turkish politicians, the Turkish writers and the public opinion (French, Turkish and European). All French media discourses focus on a national approach to the question of Turkey’s accession. It becomes difficult to find a general *European* perspective on this matter, and the daily French press often presents the image of a *divided* Europe living a new *shock of civilizations*. The European public opinion is not defined and that becomes a discursive argument against Turkey’s accession to the EU. French printed press talks about this ambiguous concept in terms of a superior entity that judges Turkey’s initiative as a European social issue. National and European political references support the negative perception, and there is no assumed negative position in the French media discourse. Editorials are scarce and they present a positive stand on the matter. French editorials on Turkey’s accession are also the only media discourses that explain the two positions with the arguments involved: the positive, and the negative one. For instance, *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde diplomatique* refer in this context to Orhan Pamuk, the Turkish Nobel Prize for Literature in 2005. An exception registered in July 2004 that proclaims the so called “étrangeté de l’Autre”, that could become comprehensive across Turkish literature.

Turkey in the eyes of French politicians and linked stereotypes:

Valéry Giscard d’Estaing¹ (ex-president of France, President of the Convention on the Future of Europe in 2002–2003)

«La capitale de la Turquie n’est pas en Europe, elle a 95 % de sa population hors d’Europe, ce n’est pas un pays Européen»	Geographic stereotype (non apartness of the territory of Turkey to the European continent)
«Ce serait le plus grand état membre de l’Union Européenne»	Demographic stereotype (with reference to the representative desk in the European Parliament according to the total number of inhabitants per European member state)
«On ne peut pas étendre les discussions sur la législation interne de l’Europe sur des points extrêmement sensibles de la vie quotidienne à des pays	Cultural stereotype

¹ “Pour ou contre l’adhésion de la Turquie à l’Union européenne”, in *Le Monde*, 11 January 2002.

ayant une autre culture, une autre approche, un autre mode de vie»	
«Ceux qui ont le plus poussé à l'élargissement en direction de la Turquie sont les adversaires de l'Union Européenne»	Argument of authority

Gabriel Robin, French Ambassador to NATO²

«La Turquie est un grand pays. Par son territoire. Par sa population. Par son histoire. Et même par le poids de son économie dont l'essor est récent mais rapide».	Geographic stereotype
«Qu'elles se considèrent toutes deux avec une attention sympathique, qu'elles veuillent se rapprocher l'une de l'autre, il n'y a rien là que de naturel. (...). Doivent-elles et peuvent-elles se fondre au sein d'une entité unique où l'une deviendrait partie de l'autre, c'est la question qui est posée (...) ?»	Cultural stereotype of difference
«Le cas de la Turquie pose à l'Europe la question de son identité mais il n'y a pas à espérer qu'il lui apporte une réponse».	Identity stereotype

It seems that the specific quoting strategy that the French daily press prefers is the fragmented reproduction of the political discourse. For instance, a general information article in *Le Monde* registers the most significant number of political references, also printed in Italics in order to clearly differentiate the political assertions from the rest of the content of the article: «*Le président de la Convention regrette que l'on ait...*», «*M Giscard d'Estaing précise*» «*Joshua Fischer a rappelé...*». (*Le Monde*, 08/11/02).

The French media discourses seems to be more preoccupied to point out the differences that separate Turkey from the other member and candidate states of the EU, than to consider the unique identity of Turkey's tradition among Islamic countries. An entire symbolic discursive universe of difference invades the information about Turkey's accession, the concept of the *Other* (*l'Autre*) practically being an obsessive omnipresence in the French media and political discourses, referring to this strange alien as an outsider of Europe. In this stereotypical category we can include an entire list of concepts pointing out the dubitable and even skeptical perspective of all actors of that discursive scene: dysfunctions, difficulties, late, turning points, democracy, totalitarianism, women, veil, liberty, Islam, sense of Europe, identity, culture, population, territory, European apartness, mistakes, domination, empire etc. The attributes defining Turkey are: big, Muslim, instable, troubled, Asian, non-European, "lay", "secular".

² Gabriel Robin, "L'Europe avait un sens, elle l'a perdu et n'en a pas retrouvé", in *Géopolitiques*, 69/2000, pp. 2-3.

The editorial discourse having a positive position, favorable to Turkey is conceived exclusively on a generalized strategy of justification: the most relevant dimension of the editorials is to resume the negative arguments in order to prove their lack of pertinence.

Referring to the issue of European identity, the vast majority of journalists lances in a debate on the diplomatic relations between EU and Turkey, only to finally frame the information to a national level, transposing a European subject to the French public scene. The consequent journalistic conclusion on this perspective is that the European Union has *to reconsider the European identity* before continuing negotiations with Turkey. This formula is very often reiterated by media discourse as a major expectation of the European public opinion.

In October 2005, *Le Monde* is concerned about the *insecurity*; which is a reference to the problems of terrorism. Turkey presents a *danger*, a *risk*, and a *problem* for the European equilibrium. The relevant emotion here is dominated by fear. The filings of skepticism and doubts are now inverted. Turkey is disappointed and feels discriminated and rejected by the EU.

Finally, one emotion emerges as predominant: the feeling of being for or against the entry in the EU. You are PRO-European, COUNTER-European, PRO-Turk or ANTI-Turk, and there seems to be no grey zone allowing the reflection on the state of facts. This *Black and White* effect seems to invade the discourse and leaves no place for a common overcoming of the mental perceptions.

3.2 ROMANIAN MEDIA DISCOURSE

The history of cultural and political relations between Turkey and Romania is very rich. Some historical stereotypes about the conquests of the Ottoman Empire still exist, functioning as symbolic pictures that divide Romanian public opinion. This could be the reason why Turkish people are often called Muslims or Pagans by the media discourse in Romania.

Usually, before and after Romania's European integration as well, the informative discourse of the Romanian media about Turkey resumes an inventory of the most significant political European positions on this matter, quoting the reactions of the EU member states favorable or not to Turkey. Before Romania's European integration in January 2007, the media coverage of Turkey's accession is framed by two different dimensions allowing a definition of a *comfortable* position for Romania: the first "advantage" was that of being secondary in the context of the "Turkish challenge" which means that this fact allowed Romania and Bulgaria to avoid the hard criticism concerning the negotiation criteria, and the second "advantage" was the of being part, along Bulgaria, and contrarily to Croatia, of the "last wave" of the European enlargement process. In this context, the Romanian position is presented as *European*, thus avoiding implicitly the assuming of a national stand.

In October 2004, the European officials are re-launching the debates on the “special” conditions of a potential accession of Turkey, which change the climate that prepared the entry of a unique Constitution for the European Union. The European scene is transformed and the circulation of stereotypes is the job of journalists, which present them as sequences of European reality. For instance, the daily newspaper *România liberă* is the only Romanian publication considering the implications of a potential accession of Turkey with respect to an emerging European identity. This paper anticipates “a political, economic, and cultural revolution which will also affect the frontiers of Europe”³, advancing a detailed analysis on the impact of the power that such a member state would have in Europe if “the new European Constitution is ratified”: “its power is equivalent to Germany in the European Council of Ministers”⁴. Another national representative newspaper, *Evenimentul zilei*, chooses to present the enthusiasm of the Turkish people versus the reactions of the European officials. In the same time, the paper seems to assume a favorable position on the subject, according to all informative contents about Turkey proposed in 2004 and 2005.

The most popular daily paper in Romania, *Adevărul*, qualifies as “too audacious” Brussels’ decision to open negotiations with Turkey, because it would imply “assuming a country of 68 million inhabitants, extending the present frontiers of the European continent with an important slice of Asia”⁵. The European Commission document is considered a “masterpiece of diplomacy”⁶, transforming the maximal transition period of seven years in a larger waiting period, and the essential value of the EU – the free circulation – in a “ominous precedent for the Community relations”, by the exception applied to Turkish people.

In October 2005, when the official negotiations for Turkey’s accession to the EU opened, the “historical adhesion” of Turkey is presented by the national newspaper *Ziua* in the general European context of crisis. Turkey’s demand is defined as a European “compromise” that “will allow the acceptance of a Muslim country in the great family of Europe” (*Ziua*, 04.10.2005). The religious stereotype is the most frequent one; it is often quoted and is not the effect of the editorial position. Those “evident difficulties” to integrate Turkey are presenting the image of a non-unitary Europe, of a Europe that “hesitates”. That attitude had some suggestive effects in Turkey, where “thousands of nationalist and communist Turks protested against their country’s adhesion to the EU”. Another stereotype, the political one, refers to nationalism and communism and has a negative perception in Romania. The single political argument that cannot be considered as a stereotype

³ In “The possible adhesion of Turkey and the question of European identity”, *România liberă*, 9.10.2004.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ In “According to the permanent safeguard clause, Turkish people will be never allowed to work freely in the EU”, *Adevărul*, 8.10.2004.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

refers to the accomplishment of the Copenhagen criteria. The informative articles reproduce the European "arguments" concerning the "Turkish challenge".

An editorial campaign started on October 5 is relevant for this study. Some editorials present the torment of the Turkish history regarding the Kurds and the Armenians, and link these facts to a positive journalistic attitude to the adhesion to the EU. These editorials reaffirm the Romanian support⁷ for the European integration of Turkey.

"Only a good collaboration of all parts representing the EU, which benefit from the open expression of Romania's support, could generate stability, progress and prosperity. For everybody" (*Ziua*, 5.10.2005).

The editorial tradition of this paper integrates an "evaluative" issue concerning the situation of each country at the moment of the national holiday. That is why on October 29 a special supplement of this journal approaches the present social context of Turkey and presents the final decision of the EU to integrate Turkey as the "major media event" of the month. This is a pretext for referring, once again this year, to the partnership existing between Turkey and Romania. Defining the EU as a "world wide actor", that issue of *Ziua* already recognized the Turkish accomplishments as real "democratic transformations", and the paper integrates cultural and religious stereotypes in a "strategic European decision". We could also quote some positive political declarations coming from the Romanian officials; the emotion seems to be forced: *entire satisfaction, historical moment*. This expression of emotion is an argument for the "good bilateral relations" between Turkey and Romania: "the enlargement process represents one of the most successful politics of the EU, which could contribute to the transformation of the Union" (*Ziua*, 29.10.2005).

Usually, the most present actors in the Romanian media discourse concerning Turkey are the EU member states. Their diplomatic reactions on this matter are transmitted by the journalists via the official declarations of their politicians. France and Germany are the most popular protagonists of this media scene. The favorable position of Greece is reiterated in the last years by the Romanian media discourse. For instance, *Ziua* presents in October 2004 an editorial signed by George A. Papandreou, ex-Minister for the Foreign Affairs of Greece; the article resumes the Greek support, largely quoted by the Romanian printed press: "To deny the European future of Turkey or religious grounds means to deny the existent diversity of the European Union. Democracy is a universal value and it is not the property of certain regions. As a Greek, which has known democracy and dictatorship also, I argue that such an affirmation is not only racist, but also false"⁸.

On the other hand, Cyprus is always the protagonist which menaces to block EU negotiations with Turkey. Croatia is presented as a potential victim of this

⁷ The journalists of *Ziua* had already detailed this attitude in October 2004.

⁸ George A. Papandreou, "Let negotiations begin", in *Ziua*, 12.10.2004.

European troubled scene, because it finds itself in a risky position regarding EU integration if the officials decide to put Croatia and Turkey together in the same future wave of enlargement.

4. CONCLUSIONS: OLD PICTURES, NEW PERSPECTIVES?

This contribution to the Turkish issue, which tried to show the emotional perspective constructed by the media discourse, cannot propose absolute solutions in order to overcome the stereotypes and the negative emotions, and is not our intent to establish here a moral statement. At the same time, our results are a hint, a kind of indicator pointing to new mental frontiers, which are due to a stereotyped construction of the *Other*.

Sometimes, you can get the sensation of confusing and bizarre circumstances creating an emotional atmosphere of insecurity and commonplaces; however, this atmosphere is also positively disturbed by social and political events that media transmit as major events. It is the case of the constitutional Referendum in Turkey held on this 12th of September. A day before, Jonathan Head, from BBC News Istanbul, argues that “It is difficult to find an issue on which most people agree in Turkey's divisive political culture, but the need to change or replace the authoritarian 1982 Constitution, drafted right after a military coup, is probably one. So, why is Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan facing so much opposition to his package of reforms, many of which have been applauded by the European Union? Trust, or the lack of it, is one reason”⁹. CNN quotes Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan who “hailed the passage of a wide-ranging package of constitutional amendments as a ‘milestone for democracy’ after voters approved the measures in a Sunday referendum”¹⁰.

These are the two most quoted references on the subject within Romanian and French daily newspapers in September 2010, and the history repeats: some stereotypes are transmitted as information that European media reiterate by reinforcing *the pictures in our heads*.

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⁹ Jonathan Head, “Why Turkey’s constitutional referendum matters”, *BBC News*, 11/09/2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11263302>, last on line consultation on 13/09/2010.

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