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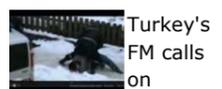
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Religion-based differences keep Turkey out of EU's cultural circle

Turkish rof said that the most important argument for those who culturally do not want Turkey in EU is that religion.

Sunday, 24 January 2010 11:21

Young Europeans back Turkey's EU bid more when compared to elder ones, according to results of a new survey.

The survey on "how Turkey's EU bid was seen in five European countries --France, Britain, Germany, Spain and Poland--" is a joint project of Istanbul Bogazici University's Center for European Studies, the Autonomous University of Madrid and the University of Granada.

The results showed that the most significant variable was age and generation when it comes to Turkey's EU accession.

"Support grows as age goes down, and it becomes less as age rises," Professor Hakan Yilmaz, who is also the project coordinator, told a news conference on Saturday.

Yilmaz said half of university graduates support to Turkey's EU bid but support diminishes as education level reduces.

"When we look at the countries, support is over 50 percent in Spain and Poland, and around 46 percent in Britain. However, it is quite less in Germany and France," he said.

"Culture is one of the most important factors that defines perception of Turkey," Yilmaz said. "The most important argument for those who culturally do not want Turkey in EU is that religion and religion-based differences keep Turkey out of Europe's cultural circle."

Another remarkable result of the survey was the perception of Istanbul, Yilmaz said.

"Istanbul is the first thing to flash in Europeans' minds when asked about Turkey," he said. "Then comes Troia, Galatasaray, Antalya, Ataturk, Ephesus, Tarkan, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Hadise, Yasar Kemal, Fatih Terim, Orhan Pamuk and Nazim Hikmet."

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