

## THE NORMATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: A CONSTRUCTIVIST ANALYSIS

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### Abstract

*This article discusses the normative structure of the European Union (EU) in line with the constructivist framework. This approach drifts from realism and studies international relations under a socially constructed context (norms, culture). It is divided into three sections. The first section elucidates the contours of a common European identity, which has come into being under the auspices of the EU. The penultimate section explains the normative structure of the EU by focusing on the membership negotiations it has had with Turkey, and how these talks between Ankara and Brussels, ultimately, broke down under the pressures exerted by this structure. The last section explores the norms promoted by the EU, and the role elitist rhetoric has played in the process of Europeanization.*

**Keywords:** EU, Normative structure, inclusion, exclusion, Turkey membership

### The European identity

What forms the common core of a European identity is the character of the painful learning process it has gone through, as much as its results. It is the lasting memory of nationalist excess and moral abyss that lends to our present commitments the quality of a peculiar achievement [The European Union].<sup>1</sup>

It is remarkable that the member states in the European Union have ceded some of their sovereignty to a supra national organization without formulating a cohesive transnational identity. For instance, the Germans and French differ in their respective conceptions of a European identity.

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<sup>1</sup> Jurgen Habermas, "Why Europe Needs a Constitution?", *New Left Review* 11(2001): 21.