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## THE ZAFER PARTY'S DISCOURSE ON THE EUROPEAN UNION AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE EUROPEAN TYPE RADICAL RIGHT PARTY IN TÜRKİYE

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**Abstract.** This study examines the Türkiye-European Union relations of the Zafer Party, which was recently established in Türkiye and has been on the agenda with its discourses. The study consists of three chapters. In the first chapter, the definition of the Radical Right Party is made conceptually, and its general discourses are put forward. In the second chapter, the Radical Right Parties in Europe are examined and their discourses about the European Union are discussed. In the third chapter, the Zafer Party's view of the European Union and Türkiye-EU relations is examined. In this study, the program of the Zafer Party, its manifesto and the Ümit Özdağ's discourses were examined. In the Zafer Party, both the discourses of Chairman Ümit Özdağ and the discourses of other party members were examined and an evaluation was made with the claim that the Zafer Party was the first example of the Radical Right Parties in Europe in Türkiye. Both the discourses of Ümit Özdağ and the discourses of other party members were examined and an evaluation was made with the claim that the Zafer Party is the first example of the Radical Right Parties in Europe in Türkiye.

**Keywords:** *Zafer Party, The European Union, Radical Right Party, Discourse, Türkiye.*

**Rezumat.** Studiul examinează relațiile Turcia-Uniunea Europeană ale Partidului Zafer, care a fost recent înființat în Turcia și a fost pe ordinea de zi cu discursurile sale. Studiul constă din trei capitole. În primul capitol, definiția Partidului Dreapta Radicală este făcută conceptual, iar discursurile sale generale sunt prezentate. În al doilea capitol, sunt examinate partidele de dreapta radicală din Europa și sunt discutate discursurile lor despre Uniunea Europeană. În cel de-al treilea capitol, este examinată viziunea Partidului Zafer cu privire la Uniunea Europeană și relațiile Turcia-UE. În acest studiu au fost examinate programul Partidului Zafer, manifestul său și discursurile Ümit Özdağ. În Partidul Zafer, au fost examinate atât discursurile președintelui Ümit Özdağ, cât și discursurile altor membri de partid și s-a făcut o evaluare cu afirmația că Partidul Zafer a fost primul exemplu de partide de dreapta radicală din Europa în Turcia. Au fost examinate atât discursurile lui Ümit Özdağ, cât și ale altor membri de partid și s-a făcut o evaluare cu afirmația că Partidul Zafer este primul exemplu de partide de dreapta radicală din Europa în Turcia.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *Partidul Zafer, Uniunea Europeană, Partidul Dreptatei Radicale, Discurs, Türkiye.*

## 1. Introduction

A political party, which is the name of the structure formed by individuals who share similar political views to govern a country is one of the sine qua non for countries governed by democracy. Political parties, whose aim is to seize political power, try to raise the awareness of the people living in the country against the problems, to form public opinion, to convey the demands, demands and criticisms of the society to the political decision-makers. The most important element in political parties is the party leader and sympathizers. Because people in the political party enter all levels of society and influence them. For this reason, political parties, regardless of which system and type they are, are one of the main elements in the political mechanism in a country [1].

The Zafer Party, which was founded in Türkiye in 2021 and influenced Türkiye's agenda, is the first European-style radical right party in Türkiye in terms of its discourses and method. The Zafer Party, founded by Ümit Özdağ on August 26, 2021, aims to carry Türkiye to power along the lines of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Turkish nationalism [2]. The Zafer Party, which criticizes both the government and the opposition for its policies, says that it has emerged as a third option for Türkiye, that Türkiye is facing invasion as in the period of the National Struggle because of the presence of eight million refugees and fugitives, so these people will be sent back to their countries as soon as possible [2]. The Zafer Party, which has Ataturkist, nationalist, anti-immigrant, Turanist, nationalist and Idealist ideologies, has begun to be characterized as the representative of the radical right party in Türkiye in the European style.

The Zafer Party, which describes itself as the voice of society because of its view on the migrant problem, also sees the European Union and Türkiye's relations with the European Union differently from other political parties in Türkiye. The aim of this study is to examine the perspective of the Zafer Party, a radical right-wing party in the European style, on the European Union and Türkiye-EU relations. The study consists of three parts. In the first part, radical right parties are examined conceptually and discursively. In the second part, some of the radical right parties that are influential in the political platform in Europe and their discourses on the EU are examined. In the third part, first of all, whether it is a radical right party through the discourses of the Zafer Party is examined and the Zafer Party's view of the European Union and Türkiye-EU relations is discussed. In this study, the program of the Zafer Party, its manifesto and the discourses of Ümit Özdağ were examined. In the Zafer Party, both the discourses of Chairman Ümit Özdağ and the discourses of other party members were examined and an evaluation was made with the claim that the Zafer Party was the first example of the Radical Right Parties in Europe in Türkiye.

## 2. Radical Right Party Conceptually and Discursively

Radical right parties, which have been seen in almost every period of world political history, are the parties that are at the far right of the political spectrum and represent extremists, defend xenophobia on the basis of racism, which has anti-social justice policies, and oppose all discourses of other political parties, especially political and economic. Radical right parties, which are called extreme right, populist radical right, extreme right and new right, are known as parties that accept homogeneous structure in society, defend parliamentary democracy, oppose liberal democracy and are xenophobic [3]. When examined the studies, there is no consensus on what exactly the ideologies of radical right parties are. A large number of definitions and ideological features related to radical right parties are

revealed. In general, the prominent features related to radical right parties are populism, nationalism, radicalism, racism, xenophobia [4].

Radical right parties first emerged as a philosophical idea after the French Revolution. It continued to exist by showing changes in the following processes [5]. In the 19th century, Radical Right parties emerged as an alternative to liberalism, with an idea opposed to the ideas of liberals and socialists [6]. In the 20th century, radical right parties acted with nationalist ideas and were seen as fascism, especially in countries such as Italy and Germany [7]. The radical right parties, which were hit hard after the Second World War, lost their influence in the new order. Because nationalism lost its influence with the European Economic Community (EEC/EU), which was established in the process of restructuring Europe after the war. Over time, the problems in the EU and its inability to respond to the problems in Europe caused radical parties to approach the EU with suspicion and they began to increase their influence. Especially since the 1980s, radical right parties that have re-emerged have chosen to act with discourses such as xenophobia, racism, nationalism and anti-immigrant sentiment [8].

It is not easy to find the common features of radical right parties. Because the characteristics of these parties vary according to the countries where they are located. On the other hand, it is not correct to say that radical parties do not have similar characteristics. In this sense, the first similar feature of radical right parties is that they are against the current conjuncture. Radical right parties develop themselves by criticizing the discourses, actions and policies of the ruling and opposition parties operating in the current order [9].

The second of the radical right parties' main characteristics is nationalism. Radical right parties, which emphasize their own national identity in every situation, also oppose the idea of pluralism put forward by the centrist parties by saying that the individuals who make up a nation are always a priority [10]. Because in radical right parties, which argue that the idea of pluralism will cause separation in society and that this structure will harm the nation-state and national sovereignty, nationalism has an understanding based on xenophobia [11]. Therefore, radical right parties want the people who make up the state to be members of that state, and perceive people and ideas that are outside the group as a threat. When radical right parties make such a distinction, they feed on the religious or cultural values of these elements rather than their biological characteristics [12]. However, in doing so, rather than revealing the superiority of national identity over other national identities, it carries out a discourse based on the preservation of national identity and culture [13]. In this sense, radical right parties that argue that the national identities and cultures of immigrants should be protected emphasize that different cultures and identities should not be confused with each other, otherwise cultures and identities will weaken and disappear. For this reason, although radical right parties are in favor of the preservation of other identities and cultures within a state, they hold the country's own culture and identity above everything else [14].

The third characteristic of radical right parties is xenophobia. Radical right parties see everyone and everything that is not from their own nation as a foreigner and perceive it as a threat. In this sense, radical right parties perceive the disappearance of internal borders as a threat with the formation of European integration [15]. Although racism has changed throughout history and has been perceived in different ways, what is important is that racism creates another. For radical right parties, the creation of the other is cultural rather than biological and occurs through exclusionary definitions and methods [16]. From this point of view, it is seen that the discourses of radical right parties threaten the security of the country

because foreigners are controlled by foreign powers, individuals in society take away their jobs, they are a great burden on the economy, they cause crimes such as extortion, harassment, theft and rape [17, 18].

Fourthly, it is seen that radical right parties have a fascist character. Centre parties, in particular, define radical right parties as illegitimate fascist parties. However, in the new period, it is seen that the radical right parties, even if they are against the existing order, have ended their opposition to the bourgeoisie and accepted parliamentary democracy and free market economy. On the other hand, it is seen that these parties have developed an opposition towards immigrants, asylum seekers and foreigners [19].

Fifth, radical right parties see themselves as populist. Radical right parties with this populist discourse, which states that the people are one, that they have a single representative and that the administration should not be divided, say that the political structure should go in direct proportion to the will of the people [20]. In populist discourse, it is the elite that makes them stronger, enriches them and ignores the demands of the people. Radical right parties, which say that the elites act against the demands of the people, say that power should be given to the people [21]. These parties, which characterize other parties as immoral in the process of coming to power, try to legitimize their radicalism by saying that the people only represent them [22].

Sixth, leadership is at the forefront in radical right parties. It is said that for radical right-wing parties, which have a highly hierarchical structure, a rapid change in society is only possible with a charismatic leader. Finally, there is a zero-sum perspective in radical parties. Since radical right parties are exclusive, they deal with the policies they are trying to carry out with a zero-sum perspective. In this sense, this situation causes some of the people living in a country to increase their earnings and the loss of earnings of another part [23].

### **3. Radical Right Parties in Europe and Their Discourse on the EU**

Because of the stagnation in the economy after the oil crisis in 1973, the suspension of the recruitment of guest workers in European countries and the steps to return existing migrants caused a number of disputes and xenophobia. In other words, the increasing social tensions after the 1973 oil crisis led to anti-foreigner and anti-immigrant sentiment and business migration was ended in Europe. Radical right parties, which saw this environment as an important opportunity for themselves, began to show their presence and increase their vote share [24]. While the EU was seen as an important actor for the solution of crises in European society, the ineffectiveness of the EU shook the belief in the EU and radical right parties started to develop a discourse through anti-EU sentiment [25]. Especially with the impact of the global economic crisis that seriously affected Europe, Euro-scepticism increased and the vote share of the parties against the EU and the Euro began to increase [26]. In the countries affected by the crisis, the implementation of austerity policies and the ineffectiveness of the EU in order to recover from the impact of the crisis have shaken the trust in the EU and the vote share of radical right parties that are anti-EU has increased [27].

Almost all of the radical right parties in Europe take a stance against the EU and say that they will get rid of the EU when they come to power and withdraw the country's EU membership. For example, the Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs-FPÖ), founded in Austria in 1956, says that they are in favor of a developing Europe throughout history and emphasizes that Europe is not so simple that it can be reduced to a political project like the EU [28]. Acting with the slogans of Austria and Europe of the

Motherland, FPÖ has developed a policy against the EU and foreigners [29]. Over time, however, this discourse has softened. While the party's leader, Norbert Hofer, initially supported Austria's departure from the EU, he softened his rhetoric over time. Hofer said that leaving the EU now would hurt Austria economically, adding that leaving the EU could be reconsidered if Türkiye joined the EU or the EU was centralised [30]. The Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti-DF), known in Denmark for its Euro-scepticism policies, also pursues a Euro-scepticist policy, both because of the preservation of European culture and its anti-immigrant stance. The Danish People's Party, which is a harsh critic of the European Union, does not pursue a policy of Denmark's exit from the EU. The Danish People's Party, which is anti-federalism, advocates an intergovernmental EU. Because it firmly supports the sovereignty of the country [31]. According to the party's work programme for 2008, the Danish People's Party said that Denmark would remain a sovereign state and that nothing was more valuable than that (Danish People's Party 2008). The party's leader, Morten Messerschmidt, said that the EU is a fragmented, dysfunctional institution, that it needs reform, and that the EU would be better if the necessary reforms were made [32].

The Finns Party (Perussuomalaiset-PS), which was founded in Finland in 1995 and became the second largest party in Parliament in the 2015 elections, is a serious critic of the EU in its foreign policy discourses. The party, which has been a harsh critic of both NATO and the EU, has said that NATO is less bad than the EU, if one had to choose. In this sense, the Finns Party, which opposes EU integration, also opposes Finland's membership in the Eurozone. Because the Finns Party defends the national sovereignty of Finland [33]. That is why Laura Huhtasaari, a member of the Finns Party, said in a speech in 2017 that she would support leaving the EU if elected President in 2018 [34]. The party's leader, Riikka Pura, also adopts a policy both against the EU's migration policy and against the EU. Purra, who opposes the foreign workforce, stated that Finland should also exit the Euro [35].

The Front National-National Rally (FN), founded in 1972, was renamed Rassemblement National (RN) in 2018. The Front National initially likened the EU to a tyranny, saying that the EU bureaucracy did not meet the demands of the people and that they would leave the EU when they came to power [17]. Because it thinks that a federal Europe harms their national identity and national sovereignty [36]. With the inclusion of Eastern European countries in the European integration process, migration from these countries to Western Europe has begun, which has increased the unemployment problem in Western Europe. A similar situation took place during the Arab Spring and the results that emerged brought about anti-immigrant and xenophobia. In 2002, Jean-Marie Le Pen, the founder of the Front National, campaigned to remove France from the EU and reintroduce the franc as the country's national currency [37]. In the early 2000s, the party criticized the Schengen, Maastricht and Amsterdam agreements as the foundations for a supranational existence that would damage to France. The Front National opposed the EU because this would harm Europe's values [38]. Then the Front National opposed France's exit from the EU, the Eurozone and the Schengen area, but stressed the need for fundamental changes in these institutions [39]. While the party's current leader, Marine Le Pen, does not want France to leave the EU, she has been making speeches that she will break the EU's rules and tear the EU apart from within. It is feared that this situation will harm the EU more than the Brexit process [40].

Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid-PVV) which was founded in 2006, is a right-wing populist nationalist party. The party, which opposed the EU because of the transfer of

sovereignty to the superstructure and the accession of poor countries to the EU, opposed the EU Constitution on the grounds that the Netherlands abolished national sovereignty [41]. Because, according to the Party, if the EU Constitution is adopted, the decisions about the Netherlands will be made by EU bureaucrats, not Dutch politicians. For this reason, he wanted to leave the EU and return to the national currency. The Party for Freedom, a Eurosceptic party, opposes European integration on migration grounds. So much so that when their promises during election periods are examined, it is seen that workers coming from the new member states of the EU have discourses such as preventing them from working in the Netherlands, being against Türkiye's EU membership, leaving the EU, using the national currency, not participating in any EU activities, abolishing the European Parliament and removing the Dutch star from the EU flag [42]. Party leader Geert Wilders also said that the EU had come to an end, especially after the Brexit process [43].

National Democratic Party of Germany (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands-NPD), which was founded in 1964 and acts with a radical nationalist and populist discourse, says that Germany has a strong economy, that the EU has an unnecessary economic burden on Germany and that Germany should leave the Eurozone and use its national currency again. The party, which is constantly critical of the European Union, argues that Germany is unnecessarily part of the EU [44]. The party's leader, Frank Franz, says that he is not normally anti-EU, but only against the existing EU order and the Euro bailouts. In such a case, he states that he does not want Germany to be in the EU [45]. Another party in Germany, Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland-AFD), was founded in 2013 and has been at the forefront with its opposition to immigration, refugees and Islam. The Euro-sceptic Party, although initially not anti-EU, rejects the idea of a United States of Europe and advocates Germany's transition to a national currency and Germany's separation from the Eurozone [46]. Alice Weidel, one of the party's Co-Chairs, supports Germany's continued membership in the European Union, but calls for economically weak states such as Greece to leave the country and expresses her belief that Germany should withdraw from the Euro [47].

The radical right party in Greece, the Golden Dawn Party (Χρυσή Αυγή), is known as anti-immigrant, xenophobic, anti-Marxist and anti-Neo-Liberalism. The Golden Dawn Party, which fundamentally opposes the EU, says that Greece should leave the EU [48]. Greece, which was particularly seriously affected by the global economic crisis in 2008, asked for help from organizations such as the EU and the IMF. However, because of the fact that austerity policies were included in the aid packages of these organizations, the Greek people reacted harshly and their perspective on the EU changed. While for Greece at the beginning the EU was an important organization for the prosperity level of Greece and the development of democracy, the image of the EU for Greece has changed negatively with the recent events [49]. This negative situation against the EU in society has also found itself in the discourses of the Golden Dawn Party. The party, which opposes the bailout, said the EU was punishing Greece. At the same time, after the economic crisis, the leader of the Golden Dawn Party, Nikolaos Michaloliakos, criticized the EU and said that Greece should leave the euro and return to its national currency [50].

The Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna-SD), founded in 1988, is also known as a right-wing populist party. The Party, which favors close cooperation in the Nordic region, is skeptical of Europe, opposes further EU integration, enlargement and the transfer of Sweden's national sovereignty to the European Union. The party opposes the EU's regulations on Swedish tax and internal affairs, calls for minimisation of the EU's influence in local political

decision-making and stresses that the national sovereignty and cultural identity of European nations should be given more priority than the EU's political ambitions [51]. However, the Party refuses to join the Economic and Monetary Union by opposing the euro currency and prefers the krone. It also aims to reduce Sweden's financial contributions to Brussels, renegotiate Sweden's membership in the Schengen Agreement, and opposes Türkiye's accession to the European Union [52]. Swedish Democrats support cooperation with the EU to combat cross-border organised crime, illegal immigration, Islamism, terrorism and environmental challenges, while opposing the creation of a federal United Europe. So much so that the Party stated that because of the EU's failure to reform and seek to transform itself into a Super-state, Sweden should immediately reconsider its membership through a referendum [53]. Party leader Jimmy Akesson also declared his party's willingness to call a referendum on EU membership and criticized the EU as a major corruption network [54].

Italy's Northern League (Lega Nord-LN), was founded in 1991, is also known as a radical right party. The party criticizes and opposes the European Union. In fact, the Northern League Party is the only party in the Italian Parliament that opposes the EU Constitution. The party supports the Europe of the Regions more than the United States of Europe and argues that Italy should leave the Euro. According to Roberto Marini, the Party is not a Eurosceptic, but a new Europe. The party argues that a policy would be better within the framework of the Europe of regions and peoples [55]. In this context, the Party has been in favour of the direct election of the President of the European Commission by the people and the granting of more powers to the European Parliament. Party Chairman Umberto Bossi, who took a harsh stance against the EU in the first period of its establishment, softened this attitude over time and demanded that reforms be made within the EU and that EU policies should not be imposed on the member states [56].

In Poland Law and Justice Party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość-PIS), founded in 2001, barely supports European integration. The party, which is adamantly opposed to a federal Europe and the Euro, has emphasized in its discourses that the European Union should benefit Poland [57]. In this sense, the Party, which holds the national sovereignty of the states above everything else, argues that everything in the EU should be done by the national authorities of the member states instead of the EU. The European policy of the Law and Justice Party, which states that creating a Europe of nations would be more beneficial for both the EU and the member states, is not fundamentally negative towards the EU. For the Law and Justice Party, the Euro project benefits only the strongest economies with a flexible labour market, modern export structure and sound public finances. Therefore, Poland is not currently ready to join the Eurozone and it is unlikely that it will happen in the coming years. For this reason, it opposes Poland's inclusion in the euro [58]. Party leader Jarosław Kaczyński rejects the EU's founding agreements, opposes the euro and argues that it will disappear if the EU does not make fundamental reforms [59].

The Hungarian Civic Alliance (Magyar Polgári Szövetség-Fidesz), a right-wing populist party in Hungary, is a party that is often critical of the EU and skeptical of the EU. Party leader Victor Orban claimed that although he could not agree with the EU institutions, he was not against EU values and was compatible with EU values. Over time, the EU's inability to intervene early and constructively in emerging crises hardened its rhetoric and seriously criticized the EU [60]. Another party in Hungary, Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobboldali Ifjúsági Közösség-JOBBIK), is known as a radical right party. While the party, founded in 2002, initially described Hungary's EU membership as a failure and developed a discourse against

the EU because it saw it as contrary to Hungary's national interest, since 2014 the party has not used the concept of the radical right and has changed its policy against the EU. According to Party Leader Peter Jakab, he said that if the necessary institutional changes and reforms are made in the EU, the EU will be beneficial for everyone and Hungary can soon join the Eurozone [61].

The Flemish Interest Party (Vlaams Belang-VB) is a Flemish nationalist, right-wing populist political party in Belgium that is Eurosceptic, criticizing multiculturalism and prioritizing Flemish interests and the confederal structure within the country. Pro-European in order to preserve European cultural identity and cooperation between European states in order to ensure and secure peace, the Party is opposed to a federal European Union. Prioritizing the Europe of nations, the Party stressed that the Union should have a loose structure that includes free trade agreements between states, saying that the EU lacks democratic accountability and transparency. In other words, the Party has developed a policy in favour of an EU of sovereign states that respects national sovereignty. Arguing that Belgium should leave the Schengen area and the euro, which has become dysfunctional and reduces the purchasing power of peoples, since the Schengen area increases crimes such as smuggling, banditry, and eliminates border security, the Party said that Türkiye is not European, that it is a different civilization and that it can never become a member of the EU [62].

The assessment of radical right parties in Europe is shown in Table 1. Accordingly, it is seen that some radical right parties that are effective in the political platform in Europe are generally anti-EU, Euro-sceptic, against the Euro and supporting the national sovereignty of the member states. Apart from this, it is seen that each party has a number of different discourses. According to Table 1, the Freedom Party of Austria, the Danish People's Party, the Northern League, the Law and Justice Party and the Flemish Interests Party are opposed to a Federal EU, do not want and do not want the EU to be centralized, and support an intergovernmental EU. However, Table 1 shows that the Flemish Interests Party and the National Unity Party are also against the Schengen area. It is found in their discourse that the Party of True Finns and the Freedom Party are opposed to European integration, unlike other parties. In addition, the National Unity Party has said that it does not want to leave the EU and that they want to divide the EU from within with its policies. In Germany, the anti-EU National Democratic Party of Germany says the EU is an economic burden for Germany, while the Alternative for Germany Party says it wants to stay in the EU, albeit a Eurosceptic. Poland's Law and Justice Party, Italy's Northern League and Hungary's Right-wing Youth Party have said they are not against the EU if the necessary reforms are made within the EU. Another party in Hungary, the Hungarian Citizens' Party, has said that although it is a Eurosceptic, it is not against EU culture and EU values. The Northern League Party in Italy, the National Unity Party in France and the Freedom Party in the Netherlands have said that they are against the EU Constitution, unlike other parties. In addition, in France, the National Unity Party stated that the EU was insufficient to meet the demands of the people. The Freedom Party of Austria, the Swedish Democrats Party and the Flemish Interests Party have stressed in their discourse that they are against Türkiye's EU membership. Among these parties, the sharpest discourse on the EU was made by the Freedom Party in the Netherlands. Unlike other political parties, the Freedom Party has stressed that poor countries are against EU membership, that the European Parliament should be abolished and that the Dutch star should be removed from the EU flag.



Table 1

**Radical right parties in Europe and the EU discourses**

<b>Party Name</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Discourse on the EU</b>
Freedom Party of Austria	Austria	Opposite the EU Promotes national sovereignty Opposite the centralisation of the EU Opposite Türkiye's EU membership
Danish People's Party	Denmark	Eurosceptic Promotes national sovereignty Opposite a federal EU Supports an intergovernmental EU
The Finns	Finland	Opposite European integration Promotes national sovereignty Wants to leave the EU Wants to leave the Euro
Front National	France	The EU does not meet the demands of the people Opposite the Euro Opposite the EU Constitution Opposite the Schengen area It does not want to leave the EU, but it aims to break up the EU from within.
Party for Freedom	Netherlands	Opposite the EU membership of poor countries Promotes national sovereignty Opposite the EU Constitution Euro-sceptic Opposite European integration Opposite the Euro The European Parliament must be abolished Dutch star should be removed from the EU flag
National Democratic Party of Germany	Germany	EU is an economic burden for Germany Promotes national sovereignty Opposite the Euro Opposite the EU
Alternative for Germany Party	Germany	Does not want to leave the EU Opposite the Euro Euro-sceptic Promotes national sovereignty
Golden Dawn	Greece	Opposite the EU Opposite the Euro Promotes national sovereignty
Swedish Democrats	Sweden	Euro-sceptic Promotes national sovereignty Opposite the Euro Wants to leave the EU Opposite Türkiye's EU membership

Continuation Table 1

Northern League	Italy	Opposite a federal EU Opposite the EU Constitution Opposite the Euro Promotes national sovereignty Supports the intergovernmental EU EU must reform
Law and Justice	Poland	Opposite the Federal EU Opposite the Euro Promotes national sovereignty The party doesn't want to leave the EU if reforms are made in the EU
Hungarian Civic Union	Hungary	Euro-sceptic Criticises EU institutions Supports the EU culture and values Promotes national sovereignty
The Hungarian Civic Alliance	Hungary	it opposed the EU (Changed) If the necessary reforms are made, it is not against the EU Promotes national sovereignty
Flemish Interests Party	Belgium	Supports Europe of Nations Opposite the Federal EU Opposite Türkiye's EU membership Opposite the Euro Opposite the Schengen area

### 3. The Zafer Party as a Radical Right Party in Türkiye

The Zafer Party, founded by Ümit Özdağ on 26 August 2021, is a political party represented by one deputy in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA). The Zafer Party which was founded with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's understanding of Turkish nationalism [63], acted with the claim that the ruling and opposition party was not effective enough in terms of asylum and migration policy, corruption, economic policies, criticized them and was established to find solutions to these problems [64]. The Zafer Party, which said that it would defend the freedom, bread cause and sovereignty of the Turkish nation to the end, emphasized that Türkiye should be united on the path shown by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk [2].

The Zafer Party, which has influenced Türkiye's agenda since its inception, is seen as an example of radical right parties in Europe with its anti-refugee and xenophobia. According to İlker Aytürk, academician at Bilkent University in Türkiye, the Zafer Party is the representative of the radical right in Europe in Türkiye. According to Aytürk, although there are extreme parties such as Islamists and nationalists in Türkiye, an extreme party similar to the one in Europe has never been established. The Zafer Party has become an important example in Türkiye [65]. Similarly, Berk Esen, academician at Sabancı University in Türkiye, says that the Zafer Party is both a radical right and a populist party. According to him, the Zafer Party puts the government and the opposition on the same side and criticizes them, and on the other hand, it puts the people on the other side and presents itself as a savior for the solution of the people's problems. It shows that it is a radical right party with its anti-

immigrant and nationalism [66]. In Europe, the radical right parties in the Netherlands and France and Germany are racist, anti-immigrant, xenophobic, anti-Turkish and anti-Islamic, while the party's chairman Ümit Özdağ is also anti-Arab and anti-Syrian. So much so that the founding manifesto of the party is based on xenophobia and anti-refugee sentiment. In this sense, Özdağ and his party are compared to the Front National in France, the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands and the Alternative for Germany Party in Germany [67].

However, Murat Somer, academician at Koç University in Türkiye, says that the Zafer Party is similar to the radical right parties in Europe in terms of issue (refugee problem) and method (fear and threat) [65]. Baki Laleoğlu, researcher in Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), also says that the Zafer Party is a radical right-wing party taken from Europe and that it has taken their discourse and methods. Especially because of its rhetoric on the immigrant problem, the Zafer Party acts like the radical right parties in Europe, accusing the government and the opposition of acting together and criticizing them for not finding solutions to the people's problems [68]. For example, he accused Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the leader of the Republican People's Party, the main opposition party in Türkiye, who said he was cheaply racist on the immigration issue, of being feudal-minded like Saddam Hussein [69]. İdil Karşıt, freelance journalist and researcher based in Istanbul, also states that the Zafer Party uses the migrant problem especially like the Golden Dawn in Greece and the Front National in France, and says that it is the representative of Türkiye's migrant problem like the radical right parties in Europe [70]. Laura Pitel from the Financial Times on the Zafer Party, which has influenced the agenda especially with its discourses on the immigrant issue, has also stated that the Party is a far-right party [71].

While the radical right parties in Europe are dealing with the migrant problem, on the other hand, they are acting with a Euro-sceptic and anti-EU policy, saying that the problems in Europe stem from the non-functionality of the EU. The Zafer Party similarly acts like the radical right parties in Europe on the issue of EU and Türkiye's EU membership. According to Ümit Özdağ, leader of Zafer Party, the EU is not an organization to be simplified. A united Europe and EU is a project that Europe wants to realize especially after the fall of the Roman Empire and that it was only after the Second World War. He stated that the EU, which is an important project for Europe, is experiencing economic, political, cultural, institutional and social problems within itself and that it is facing difficulties in becoming a strong actor in integration because of these problems [72]. For the Zafer Party, which examines Türkiye-EU relations as well as the European Union, Türkiye-EU relations are as important for the EU as they are for Türkiye. At the same time, according to the Zafer Party, it states that the ongoing relations in the current situation are damaging both sides and that this situation is because of the EU's own internal problems rather than Türkiye's failure to fulfill the necessary criteria [2]. Moreover, according to Özdağ, the EU says that it is in favor of establishing an alternative relationship with Türkiye that is not a full member because it is worried that Türkiye, which has a different culture and identity, will disappear from its European identity if it becomes a full member of the EU [72]. According to Özdağ, who does not believe in Türkiye's full membership to the EU and does not want the full membership process, Türkiye-EU relations should operate on a healthy basis [73]. In a sense, Türkiye's EU membership goal should be considered as a means for the realization of strategic goals rather than an objective [72]. If this environment is provided, it will provide advantages not only for Türkiye and the EU, but also for other regions. For this reason, Türkiye-EU relations should be removed from the

current situation and put on a new ground, and instead of full membership, an economic-based relationship that will benefit both sides should be established [74].

The Zafer Party says that no matter what happens, Türkiye will not become a member of the EU. Özdağ, the leader of the party, says that Türkiye was deceived and stalled about full membership after it became a candidate country for the EU in 1999 [75]. At the same time, Özdağ states that he does not believe that Türkiye will become a member of the EU, that problems such as the Kurdish problem, economic problems and migration problems are put in front of Türkiye, that Türkiye is a buffer country for the EU [76] and that everyone who is honest knows this [77]. Because if Türkiye joins the EU, Türkiye may cause decisions to be taken that will seriously affect the EU decision-making mechanism and institutional structure with the effect of population density. In fact, this will harm the policy of federalization of the EU that the EU has been trying to establish since the beginning. For this reason, the EU will have a negative view of Türkiye's EU membership without becoming a federal superpower and without taking Türkiye under its control within this structure [72]. Özdağ, who stated in a program that the EU has a despicable policy towards Türkiye and that Türkiye will never become a member of the EU, states that those who claim that Türkiye will become an EU member by making concessions especially in Cyprus are betraying the country and that saying that Türkiye will become a member of the EU is nothing but deceiving the public [78]. Özdağ said that Türkiye, which has a very long history, does not need the EU and should raise its standards, and that Türkiye should introduce itself to Europe and the EU, and for this reason, it needs a strong public diplomacy [79].

Table 2

### Zafer party's discourse on the EU

Discourses
Not a keen Euro-sceptic
The EU is not a simple organisation
An important organization that integrated Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire
Recently, the EU has started to lose its former importance because it is experiencing problems within itself
Rather against the current Türkiye-EU relations
Türkiye's inability to fulfill the necessary criteria for EU membership stems from the EU's internal problems
Türkiye's full membership to the EU is impossible
Türkiye does not need the EU
Instead of full membership, an economically-based relationship should be established that benefits both sides.

#### 4. Conclusions

From the 1980s onwards, radical right-wing parties increased their influence in Europe and towards the end of the 1990s, they increased their vote share and acted under the pretense of being the people's spokesperson. Radical right-wing parties, which generally say that they are opposite the European integration, the EU and a federal EU, have developed anti-foreigner and anti-immigrant policies and stated that if they come to power, they will take their countries out of the EU. The fact that these parties have increased their vote share both within their countries and in the European Parliament over time, although they are

insufficient on their own to change the decision-making mechanism of the EU, has led center-right parties to develop policies that include the discourse of radical right parties in order to increase their vote share and come to power. Because of this situation, in the EU, which was established after World War II and achieved great success, it has brought with it the concern of the deterioration of harmony and the dissolution of the EU.

Although it is known that negative discourses about the EU in Türkiye are also voiced by some conservative and leftist political parties, the recently established Zafer Party in Turkish political life has put forward similar discourses with radical right parties in Europe. The Zafer Party, a nationalist party, has acted with a different discourse on the immigrant problem in Türkiye with its anti-foreigner and anti-immigrant rhetoric, and has said that it is the spokesperson of the people in Türkiye, just like the radical right parties in Europe.

The Zafer Party, which does not have a discourse directly opposite the EU, acts on a discourse on Türkiye-EU relations. Saying that the values of the European Union and the EU are important for both Türkiye and European countries, the Zafer Party opposes the ongoing Türkiye-EU relations. Stating that such a relationship harms both the EU and Türkiye, the Zafer Party says that Türkiye can never be a member of the EU no matter what, that the EU has deceived and stalled Türkiye, and that if they come to power, they will propose a relationship model based on economic basis instead of Türkiye's full membership to the EU. The Zafer Party believes that such a model of relations would be more beneficial for both Türkiye and the EU.

With the program, statute, manifesto and speeches, discourses and policies of the party's Chairman Ümit Özdağ, it is seen that the Zafer Party is the first example of radical right parties in Türkiye. It is seen that the Zafer Party has been on Türkiye's agenda in a short time with these discourses and policies. Although it states that it is not racist and does not oppose foreigners and immigrants, it is seen that the Zafer Party follows an anti-immigrant and anti-foreigner policy, just like the radical right parties in Europe, and that this opposition is cultural rather than biological, and that it disrupts the harmony and order in Türkiye because of immigrants. In the general elections to be held in Türkiye in 2023, it is also curious how many votes it will receive and how successful it will be.

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