

New Strategic Questions in European Security and the Aegean Neighbours

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RÉSUMÉ

L'amélioration des relations entre la Grèce et la Turquie a été bien accueillie et a renforcé les positions stratégiques des deux pays. La décision de la Grèce de ne pas bloquer la candidature turque à l'Union européenne lors du Conseil européen d'Helsinki (10-11 décembre 1999) a servi non seulement les intérêts grecs et turcs mais a aussi fait avancer les objectifs de sécurité de l'U.E. C'est pourquoi cet article avance la thèse selon laquelle les relations greco-turques et le degré de rapprochement s'inscrivent dans un nouveau contexte, celui du dessein européen de sécurité. Cependant des priorités différentes de deux voisins au sujet de la candidature turque à l'U.E. peuvent affecter le processus de paix en cours actuellement.

ABSTRACT

Improvement in the relations of the two Aegean neighbours has been widely appreciated and has strengthened the strategic positions of both Greece and Turkey. In addition, Greece's stance in the Helsinki European Council (December 10-11, 1999), not to veto Turkey's inclusion in the group of candidate member-states to the European Union (EU) has served not only Greek and Turkish interests, but also has advanced the evolving security objectives of the EU. For this reason, as will be argued in this paper, Greek-Turkish relations and the degree of further *rapprochement* are becoming gradually intertwined with the new European security architecture. However, different priorities in the rationale of the two Aegean neighbours regarding the salience of Turkey's inclusion in the group of EU candidate members, may affect the eventual outcome of the currently unfolding step-by-step peace process.

The Greek strategic priority to encourage Turkey in its European vocation appears in juxtaposition with Turkey's internal debate regarding the wisdom of the commitments required as an EU candidate and its strategic emphasis on removing all prospects for potential marginalization from the evolving context of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). However, Ankara's strong interest in not

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allowing its voice to be marginalized in the context of the ESDP might offer an additional incentive for Turkey to commit fully to its European vocation.

This analysis begins with an examination of the elements that fostered Greek-Turkish rapprochement in which Greece's stance at Helsinki played a role of central importance. An examination of the difference in emphasis regarding the importance of Turkey's being upgraded as an EU candidate member, as viewed by the two sides of the Aegean will follow. Analysis will conclude with a discussion of the EU's ongoing efforts to establish an ESDP, a fact which has substantially affected Turkey's EU-related priorities.

The Greek-Turkish *Rapprochement*

Relations between the two Aegean neighbours have certainly been improved by the concatenation of events that have taken place since early summer 1999. In the summer of 1999, the newly appointed Greek Foreign Minister, George Papandreou,¹ inaugurated a new approach of reconciliation towards Turkey by investing in an already good relationship with his Turkish counterpart, Ismail Cem.² It should be noted, however, that this followed a previously difficult marked by the Imia crisis in January 1996, whereby Turkey for the first time contested Greek sovereignty over territory in the Aegean thus bringing the two countries very close to a military confrontation.³ Relations deteriorated further in early 1999 during the Ocalan affair in which Turkey accused Greece of being a 'terrorist nation', providing shelter to leaders of Turkish terrorist groups (the Kurdistan Workers Party, PKK).⁴ A Greek response to the unfounded allegations ensued along with a change to the leadership of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The moderate stance of the new Foreign Minister, George Papandreou, despite some domestic criticisms of being too keen to proceed to concessions of questionable value,⁵ facilitated the opening

of a window of opportunity aiming at fostering mutual understanding. This understanding could make decision-makers evaluate reality under a different light. Thus, in late June 1999, Papandreou, in response to suggestions by his Turkish counterpart, Ismail Cem, proposed the development of a co-operative scheme with Turkey which would touch on 'low politics' such as the economy, trade, tourism, environment, organized crime, drug trafficking and illegal refugee smuggling. The initiation of bureaucratic preparations in this direction was enhanced, a few weeks later, by the earthquakes that hit both countries. The devastating experience that Turkey and Greece shared, in mid-August and early September respectively, brought the two countries closer. As Couloumbis and Veremis advocate, the earthquakes "have taught us [Greece and Turkey] that our peoples are capable of sharing in each other's grief."⁶

The natural disaster not only manifested the importance of co-operation in relief and assistance/rescue operations but more importantly also created a genuine atmosphere of sympathy and solidarity on both sides of the Aegean. As it has been noted, "neither side (media, politicians, intellectuals, *et. al*) questioned the sincerity and the motives of the other as rescue squads side by side worked feverishly to pull to safety persons trapped in the rubble of collapsed buildings."⁷ The prevailing perception of compassion, rather than suspicion, partly strengthened Papandreou's hand and bolstered his conciliatory approach. In this light, at the 54th Session of the UN's General Assembly on September 22, 1999 Papandreou acknowledged the importance of Greece's role in "lead[ing] the process of Turkey's accession into the EU."⁸ As will be elaborated below, the strategy that Athens started to pursue involved what Couloumbis describes as a shift from *conditional sanctions* to a strategy of *conditional rewards*.⁹

In addition to developments which directly touched the two countries, regional issues in 1999 had also created a perception of mutual interest between Greece and Turkey. The Kosovo crisis (spring) had fostered a new dynamic manifesting the salience of restraint and co-operation against instability in the region. Specifically, the interests of the two Aegean neighbours converged, perhaps for different reasons,¹⁰

around the need of rejecting fears, voiced mainly by Washington, that the Kosovo crisis would have a spill-over effect thus triggering a crisis among two NATO allies.¹¹ The circumspect approach Greece and Turkey adopted towards the crisis was aimed at remaining helpful but not actively involved thus not compounding the problem. This approach signaled the strategic preference of both countries towards rational and pragmatic behaviour in order to project themselves as reliable regional players.

Finally, the decision by the Helsinki European Council in December 1999 to accord Turkey EU candidate status, a decision which Greece did not oppose, marked the point at which a greater chance for further reconciliation between the two Aegean neighbours was revealed. The healthy climate was further cultivated through the signing of nine agreements by Papandreou and Cem in Ankara and Athens on January 20, and February 4, 2000, respectively. These agreements focused on the series of issues of 'low politics' on which both countries had been working since summer 1999 and which they had been deliberating since 1996.¹²

The first group of agreements, signed in Ankara, provided for co-operation schemes regarding, promotion and protection of investments, tourism, technology and science, environmental issues and co-operation against crime (terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, illegal immigration). The remaining four agreements were signed on 4 February in Athens providing for co-operation on economic matters, customs regulations, cultural issues, and maritime transport. It is worth noting that Papandreou's official visit to Ankara in January was the first visit made by a Greek foreign minister in 37 years.¹³ The positive public opinion of both countries was also reflected by Ismail Cem's visit to Athens.¹⁴ As Hikmet Cetin, a former Turkish foreign minister, rightly commented, "The content of these agreements is not so important... What's important is that people in Turkey, Greece and Cyprus now see that the two governments can deal with each other in a positive way."¹⁵

There should be no doubt that improvement in Greek Turkish relations was appreciated by the countries' fellow NATO allies as well as

by the foreign media. The improved climate certainly enhanced the image of both countries.¹⁶ Perhaps one of the most crucial indications of the improvement in the relations of the two countries was their close co-operation in May 2000 in NATO's multinational military exercise *Dynamic Mix 2000* (20 May-10 June) which took place in Greece, Italy and Turkey under the command of the Commander in Chief Allied Forces Southern Europe (CINCSOUTH), James Ellis Jr. (USN). For the first time since 1972, in this NATO exercise, Turkish jets agreed to submit flight plans before entering the Greek FIR to the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) in Larissa. This was a positive development insofar as Turkish military aircraft previously had hardly respected the Athens FIR.¹⁷ In addition, as commented by *Financial Times*, "The participation of Turkish marines in a multinational wargames 'invasion' of the Greek coast ... was dramatic evidence of the recent *rapprochement* between the two neighbouring countries."¹⁸

It should also be noted that although both countries have resorted to conciliatory rhetoric, in practice, Greece's unilateral reconciliation initiative to welcome Turkey as a candidate EU member in line with all other candidate members, was not followed by a similar gesture from Ankara. As Kupchan and Lesser have advocated, "Greeks justifiably feel that the ball is now in Turkey's court and that it is time for Ankara to reciprocate with a substantial gesture."¹⁹ As the authors argue, Ankara had at least three principal carrots to consider offering Athens: a pledge by the Turkish political leadership that it will work on withdrawing the *casus belli* resolution by the Turkish Parliament;²⁰ an agreement to reopen the Orthodox theological seminary in Halki, (Instabul), — of symbolic importance for Athens — and finally, a public statement by Turkish Prime Minister, Bulent Ecevit, making it clear that Turkey is committed to *rapprochement* and therefore will resolve its disputes with Greece through strictly diplomatic means.²¹ In reality, rhetorical utterances by the Turkish political leadership have hardly been accompanied by substantive reciprocity.²²

At times, various initiatives have been suggested by senior analysts aiming to promote further the reconciliation process between the two

countries. For example, it has been proposed that both countries should commit themselves to moving forward on the issue of delineation of the continental shelf through a joint appeal to the International Court of Justice in The Hague (ICJ), following a brief and specified period of bilateral negotiations.²³ In addition, a thorn could be removed with regard to Cyprus, if the region of Varossia in Famagusta would become a 'safe area' under the protection of the United Nations (UN) and financial assistance by the EU while permitting a number of displaced Greek-Cypriots to return to their homes and properties and work in developing the area for the benefit of all Cypriots.²⁴ Although such initiatives would have proved conducive to further reconciliation, they require political will by both countries and certainly a departure from (a Turkish) reticence to accept the jurisdiction of the ICJ and any gesture, however beneficial, regarding Cyprus.

Indeed, one could argue that although several 'low politics' initiatives have been launched (including also several co-operative programs involving NGOs and public opinion leaders) which aim to strengthen ties between the two countries, fundamental differences remain.²⁵ For this reason, there is a concern, shared not only by Greeks and Turks but also by foreign officials as to how long this improved atmosphere can survive and how much it can be promoted further. Insofar as Greece's stance to promote Turkey's EU vocation seems to be the initiative that culminated in the improvement of the relations of the two countries. An examination of the importance that both countries attribute to Turkey's European perspective is certainly important. This is not to argue that this parameter will exclusively define the level of resilience in their *rapprochement*. However, it provides a key guideline between fulfilled expectations and undertaken commitments.

Greek-Turkish Rationales at Helsinki and Beyond

For Athens, the understanding behind this shift in position, as was soon elaborated by Papandreou, was that it was in the interest of Greece for Turkey to be accorded the status of a candidate for mem-

bership to the European Union (EU). It could induce a set of new developments regarding Turkey's behaviour that could serve Greek interests in several respects, the most important of which would be the 'Europeanization' of Turkey. More specifically, the Helsinki decision created a framework within which Turkish-EU relations would be based. Turkey would be henceforth called upon to undertake the commitment to move towards a European vocation and would be urged to meet gradually its responsibilities at all levels.²⁶

At the international level and from a Greek perspective, largely based on the key premises of democratic theory,²⁷ as long as Turkey begins to commit to the practice of European principles and rules of action, it would likely abandon its diplomatic tactic of threatening war against its neighbours. Instead, Turkey would be encouraged to resort to less forceful modes of diplomacy. Indeed, in the Presidency Conclusions at Helsinki, the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter is particularly stressed while the candidate members are urged to abide by this provision in order to solve any outstanding border disputes and other related issues.²⁸

Perhaps the most crucial development that Helsinki 'offered' Athens is the reality that henceforth Turkey's behaviour would be systematically assessed by the EU authorities according to the principles of democracy, international law and good neighbourly relations. Essentially, it would be expected that by definition the EU would have the responsibility of monitoring Turkey's behaviour and progress, as this would be applied to all candidate members so as to abide by the Copenhagen criteria.²⁹ The latter meant that Turkey's political leadership would be obliged to demonstrate in practice that particular initiatives would be launched in the direction of reforming the institutions and behaviour of the country as to reflect: a) stability of democratic institutions, rule of law, protection of minorities; b) existence of a functioning market economy and the ability to be competitive in the single European market; c) ability to comply with the obligations of membership, including membership of the political, economic and monetary union. In addition, Turkey would be expected to demon-

trate that it is has set up the administrative machinery needed to ensure that European law can be effectively transposed into national law.³⁰

The process of having the EU monitoring and assessing Turkey's Europeanization has been formulated by the establishment of Turkey's Accession Partnership Accord (announced last November). Certainly, the Accord would identify, hopefully in detail, the elements that would define the 'road map' towards Turkey's Europeanisation and for this reason it is regarded as a key document defining the country's relations with the EU and its members.³¹

In addition, Turkey's EU candidacy will outline a new path within the country revealing also the need for substantial internal reforms. Turkish elites are aware that there are specific 'prerequisites such as full democratization, civilian control of the military, and the respect of human rights' to which Ankara needs to demonstrate its commitment.³² For Athens, a genuinely Europeanized Turkey will be a less serious security concern. This is the cardinal rationale behind Greece's stance in promoting Turkey's EU candidacy and European perspective in general. For Athens this is a strategic priority. Namely, to see Turkey in the process of economic and political Europeanization, which in turn will substantiate and multiply reliable practices of regional co-operation. Accordingly, prospects for the use of force would be eliminated. However, it is also acknowledged that this would be a long process. Until then, it seems more plausible that Athens will evaluate its future behaviour in a fashion conducive to Ankara's meeting European commitments by preferring small steps and initiatives towards further *rapprochement*. In the view of Papandreou, as expressed in January 2000,

"We want to move forward in the quickest way possible to solve all issues that divide us. But I would suggest that we proceed with the same caution and sensitivity that we have had in the last two months. Now we have to build on this again with caution, but also with new optimism and dynamism."³³

This new dynamic regarding Greek-Turkish relations as well as Turkey's inclusion in the group of EU candidate members creates a positive image for Turkey internationally. Turkey's candidate status has a twofold effect which interests Athens very much. First, as Larrabee notes, it "weakens the hand of Islamists" who advocate that since the country is unwelcome in Europe, its salvation lies in closer ties to the Islamic world.³⁴ Secondly, Turkey's EU candidate status strengthens its position and therefore facilitates more positive international behaviour. This rationale can be applied to Turkey's behaviour toward Cyprus's accession to the EU as well as toward resolving the Cyprus problem. These issues are more likely to be seen through the lenses of Turkey's inclusion in the group of candidate EU members.³⁵ Indeed, as Gordon has put it,

"Anyone who has followed these issues over the years [Greek-Turkish relations regarding Cyprus and the Aegean] knows how difficult they would be to resolve. But they should also know that, as long as Turkey feels ostracized by Europe and has a hostile relationship with Greece, these problems will never be resolved..."³⁶

Thus, the strategy of *conditional rewards* in all likelihood facilitates a better climate and a win-win relationship for both countries. This means that Greece by taking the initiative to promote the upgrading of Turkey's international status also benefits by the strong prospect of the latter's internal transformation.

Certainly, Greece's stance in Helsinki had additional benefits for Athens. It strengthened its position within the EU. It removed the tarnished image of Athens as the lone European voice against Turkey's accession to the EU. In fact, it is the EU bureaucracy that has now undertaken the responsibility to assess Turkey's progress according to the Copenhagen criteria thus transferring in a sense to the EU the hitherto practice of Athens to remind its EU partners of Turkey's behaviour domestically and especially in the region. Consequently, Athens can concentrate more effectively on its economic interests in light of its accession to the European Monetary Union (EMU) and

advocate its concerns within the framework of the general EU policy towards Turkey.

Although the entire Greek political élite (and public) share the same view regarding the salience of Turkey's European perspective, this sentiment is not consistently shared by all segments of the political élite in Turkey. For Ankara, the Helsinki decision was regarded as an important and long awaited move by Europe.³⁷ It might not be surprising that an Instabul-based newspaper regarded the Helsinki decision, as "the most important event since the founding of [the Turkish] state."³⁸ However, other influential voices have painted a blurred picture as to the willingness of the country, and mainly its leadership, to assume fully the task of conforming to the principles and rules that come with a EU candidacy and, at a later stage, with accession.

As has been commented by Turkish analysts, the debate among the Turkish political elite regarding the real responsibilities that the country is called to undertake as an EU candidate, demonstrates the existence of two different patterns of thought which seem to create serious ambiguities regarding the process of Turkey's European vocation.³⁹ As Kahraman observes, "The EU is willing to further assist Turkey's economic reform and its adoption of the EU legislative program, but it is up to Turkey alone to improve its standards of democracy and human rights."⁴⁰ Regular reports by the European Commission in 1998 and 1999 on Turkey's progress towards accession, note the discrepancy between Ankara's aspiration to join the EU and its ability to meet the relevant obligations.⁴¹

One could argue that even after Helsinki and, on several occasions, even the Turkish Prime Minister, Bulent Ecevit, while arguing that his country would do whatever it takes for full EU membership, is highly skeptical of what he regards as the EU "plan to put [Turkey] under harsher pressure than before."⁴² Against this background, if the rationale of Turkey's political leadership behind its predilection to be an EU candidate is to be delineated, this twofold domestic perspective should not be ignored.

According to the pro-EU perspective, shared by a large portion of the business and the new middle-class élite, Turkey's EU candidacy will bring with it the fundamental changes necessary for society's welfare while the establishment of consolidated democratic institutions could bring some rationality to the political structures of the country including a more transparent administration.⁴³ A growing number of ordinary citizens find themselves in favour of real effort towards Turkey's joining the EU, in the belief that EU authorities and regulations would, in a way, monitor the effectiveness of what they regard as rather incompetent leadership which must not only provide for the people but also offer basic freedoms.⁴⁴ A similar sentiment is shared by minority groups, including the Kurds. It is reportedly argued that the latter "started to become very pro-European when they saw how much moral support they could get for their cause in Europe and how much good work some of the European Commission projects were doing for their people and their region."⁴⁵

On the other hand, the hard-line nationalist parties, such as the Nationalist Action Party (MHP), which is a member of the coalition government with Ecevit's Democratic Left Party (DSP), oppose any concessions to the EU while their approach calls for keeping the EU 'at arms' length'.⁴⁶ More ambivalent appears to be the position of the Turkish military, which holds a large stake in the Turkish economy and political structures. The power of the military has been so starkly intertwined with the Turkish political and economic establishment of the country as to make the Turkish Deputy Prime-Minister, Mesut Yilmaz, comment that "the military cannot be directly challenged; it can only be addressed with the hopes it will listen and take note."⁴⁷

The military establishment considers the expansion of Islamic institutions and secessionist movements as threats to the country's security and unity and secular orientation. Although the military appears to support the pro-European camp, at the same time it is quite intransigent *vis-à-vis* political and economic reforms that could unleash civic forces which would challenge its influence (in fact, its primacy, in the National Security Council.

From the military perspective, “Turkey should participate fully in the European Security and Defence Identity; to become integrated with and influential in Europe; and maintain its access to sophisticated weapons.”⁴⁸ One could argue that while it remains uncertain which of the variables is of particular value in the perception of the military, the second objective finds itself quite at odds with the often expressed position (by the military and the conservatives) that the maintenance of strict laws on freedom of expression and political activity is essential in order to protect the unity of the state and its secular character.⁴⁹ In reality, this position puts the Ankara government at odds not only with its obligations to meet the Copenhagen criteria but, more importantly, to work seriously in this direction. As Yilmaz has reportedly argued, “Certain circles tend to believe Europe took its Helsinki (candidacy) decision with the aim of splitting Turkey. We must persuade these people the opposite is true.”⁵⁰ Indeed, there exists a strong need for an effort by the government to convince the Turkish skeptics that the Helsinki decisions rather than challenging the unity of the Turkish state, call for freedoms and societal changes that promote the country’s development and unity.⁵¹

One element that the military considers of profound importance refers to Turkey’s role within the ESDP. Fears of Turkey’s potential exclusion or even marginalization from the decisionmaking processes in a potential EU-led military operation have led Turkish officials to focus heavily on the evolving ESDP process. The Turkish advocacy and fervent interest regarding developments in the context of ESDP is indicative of the importance Ankara attributes to the military aspect of its European vocation. Certainly the discussion that follows does not exhaust the elements related to the ESDP or the gamut of issues surrounding the Turkish perspective. Rather, it aims to present Ankara’s main arguments with regard to its role in European Security and delineate the importance to Turkish security and defense concerns.

Strategic Questions in the New European Security Architecture

The determination by the EU to develop a meaningful European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI), as was announced in the Franco-German summit in St. Malo (December 1998) and substantiated later by consecutive EU Councils, has prompted various concerns and questions, especially from non EU members which have a stake in European security.⁵² In Cologne (June 1999), it was declared that “the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises without prejudice to actions by NATO.”⁵³ In Helsinki (December 1999), it was announced that the EU plans to develop an EU military force, 60,000-men strong, by 2003, with deployment capability of 60 days and the ability to remain in theatre for at least one year, in order to conduct military and non-military crisis management operations (peace-enforcement, peacekeeping, policing and conflict prevention), known as the ‘Petersberg tasks’.⁵⁴ In Lisbon (March 2000) and later in Feira (June 2000), it became evident that several initiatives were debated so as to help the EU establish both the institutions that would strengthen the Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP) and the mechanisms of collaboration among EU and non-EU members, as well as with NATO.

Strong concerns regarding the NATO relationship have been expressed by NATO members which are not EU members, including Turkey. The latter has voiced serious reservations regarding the mechanisms leading to a CESDP, especially after Helsinki and Feira. For several decades, one of Ankara’s key strategic objectives has been to sustain itself as a key player in European Security through its NATO membership. Ankara has henceforth detected that the role of NATO might not remain decisive at all times and especially in cases when an EU-led crisis management operation would be launched in the future without NATO participation and thus without decision making input by NATO members. Moreover, the gradual incorporation of the Western European Union (WEU) into the EU structures is regarded

by Turkey as a very negative contingency insofar as Turkey loses its status as an observer, which was offering Ankara full information on all ongoing developments in WEU. As the Turkish ambassador to NATO, Onur Oymen, recently put it, "Nothing is done in the WEU without our knowledge. We are there, at the table, when issues are discussed... EU wants to reduce that role to mere consultations with non-EU members."⁵⁵

From the Turkish perspective, the role currently planned for non-EU members of NATO and candidate EU members is certainly less than the prerogatives Ankara enjoyed within the WEU. As proposed by the Feira Conclusions, this role would be reduced to mere consultation and especially "when the subject matter requires it."⁵⁶ Consequently, Ankara perceives its role as becoming largely marginalized by the inability of non-EU NATO members to participate in strategic planning for action in a potential EU-led operation. The offering of some space for participation only in military contingency planning at the phase of an ongoing operation (operational phase) appears no less exasperating for Ankara.

In addition, Turkey advocates that a potentially unsuccessful EU-led operation in the future that would ultimately threaten the security of the EU members (and thus some NATO members), would by default involve article 5 of the NATO Treaty calling all NATO members to provide for a common defence. This would involve Turkey, hypothetically, into a military operation in which it would have had no prior strategic input. Turkey's reaction regarding such unfavourable contingencies has been so fervent that it has threatened to even veto NATO assets being used in a future EU-led operation, if the ambiguity regarding its standing in the European security structures has not been fully contemplated and decided.

Turkish efforts to defend the country's position have taken a particular urgency recently in light of the Capability Commitment Conference that will take place in the context of the EU in November 2000. The conference is expected to elaborate the way in which EU and non-EU members will participate in future EU operations and decision making organs within the ESDP. One could argue that

Ankara's security concerns have understandable merit even if at certain points they have been largely exaggerated. However, the Helsinki decision to grant Turkey EU candidate status was not entirely unrelated to these Turkish fears of exclusion. In reality, Helsinki may prove to be a key element for Turkey inducing it to take into account, on the one hand, its military aspirations in the context of ESDP and, on the other hand, its obligations according to the Copenhagen criteria.

However, recent developments have indicated that Ankara is trying to project a hard-line stance towards its EU candidacy. Specifically, in the wake of the Nice Summit (December 2000) when Turkey became particularly outspoken against the Common European Foreign and Security Policy and the inability of non-EU members to participate in the decisionmaking process in the case of an EU-led peacekeeping mission. In fact, the EU has taken all steps possible not to discriminate against Turkey following an attitude similar to other EU candidates. In early February, the European Parliament approved Turkey's Framework Agreement with the European Union that provides the legal basis for the Accession Partnership document launched by the European Council last November. This evolution also means that some Euro 177 million from the EU budget would be transferred to Turkey on an annual basis in order to augment the country's harmonization process.⁵⁷ Financial assistance regarding the harmonization process would be launched as soon as Turkey follows up the process and presents its National Program, involving the steps and measures to which it will commit itself in order to meet the Copenhagen criteria.

Turkey's substantial delays to submit its National Program to the EU (pending mid-March) indicate its difficulty in attaining domestic consensus. Segments in the coalition government, especially the MHP, demand that certain aspects of the Framework Agreement be stripped out of the document, lest they harm the country's unity.⁵⁸ One could easily conclude, therefore, that if the government considers to undertake serious steps in the direction of meeting its immediate obligations as an EU candidate, it is highly likely to meet a full-scale political crisis that could even lead to the fall of the coalition government. The

EU has offered Turkey all leeway at its disposal in order to facilitate the country's reforms. It is Turkey's turn to demonstrate its willingness to move forward.

At this stage, Ankara presents a hard line position towards the EU, especially regarding its exclusion from decision-making in the context of ESDP. The military has been particularly sensitive to the prospect of losing its prerogatives and power. According to the military perspective, as long as the EU considers Turkey a strategically located country for EU interests, then the European Commission should accept the country's differing circumstances and particularities and thus make concessions that could encourage Ankara (read: the military) to move forward with membership in the EU.⁵⁹ Indeed, even for Turkish analysts, the perspective that is promoted by the military and to which the coalition government appears hesitant to challenge, indicates a very dangerous path for the country. As it has been argued, "Turkey, rather than reciprocating in kind, however, has remained not only unbudged, but added even further demands."⁶⁰ It is one thing for Turkey to work on fulfilling the criteria for full EU membership and to ask for help in the process — or perhaps some understanding from the EU. It is quite another to demand understanding and concessions without Turkey having first demonstrated substantive steps in the direction outlined by the Copenhagen criteria.

In addition, the domestic political crisis of the past few weeks between president Ahmet Necdet Sezer and prime minister Bulent Ecevit,⁶¹ has undermined confidence that a stable government will deal with the serious economic problems of the country. Admittedly this compounds European concerns regarding the ability of the Turkish government to proceed with the much needed economic and other reforms that could bring Ankara closer to meeting the Copenhagen criteria.⁶²

The pending decision from the Turkish political and military leadership to marry in practice the two aspects that define its relations with the EU — aspirations fulfilled *versus* obligations undertaken — would certainly determine the pattern of relations among Turkey, the EU and

Greece. In short, it would be difficult for the EU to ignore the voice of a Turkey that has taken serious steps in meeting the Copenhagen criteria. In effect, further Greek-Turkish *rapprochement* would be enhanced considerably by the level of commitment that Turkey would be willing to undertake in order to substantiate its European vocation. Indeed, Greece's eastern neighbour has great interest in doing so.

NOTES

1. The Ocalan affair led to the resignation of Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos, (and a number of other ministers).

2. Jurgen Reuter, **Reshaping Greek-Turkish Relations: Developments Before and After the EU-Summit in Helsinki**, Occasional Paper 00.01, ELIAMEP: Athens, 2000, p. 1.

3. An insightful analysis on the issue is given by Thanos Veremis, 'Crisis in the Aegean', **Hellenic Studies**, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1996, pp. 19-32. An enumeration of the issues bewildering Greek-Turkish relations since 1973 is given in <http://www.mfa.gr/foreign/bilateral/relations.htm>.

4. In 1 April 1999, the Turkish Representative to the UN, Murat Sungar, officially complained to the UN Human Rights Commission, that Greece deserves to be included to the group of terrorist states because it allegedly supported the PKK terrorist organization. See, '1999 Highlights of Relations with Europe', **Briefing**, 11 January 2000, Issue 1275, p. 34.

5. Interview of George Papandreou, "Why they Attack Me", **Ethnos**, 14 November 1999. (in Greek)

6. Theodore Couloumbis and Thanos Veremis, 'Greek Foreign Policy in a Post-Helsinki Setting', **Athens News**, 18 January 2000.

7. Theodore Couloumbis, 'Dealing with Greek-Turkish Tension', **Athens News**, 6 October 1999.

8. Statement by George Papandreou, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, **54th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**,

General Debate, New York, 22 September 1999, p. 8 (Distributed by the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations).

9. Couloumbis, 'Dealing with Greek-Turkish Tension', **op.cit.**

10. As it has been argued, fears of setting a precedence on the Kurdish issue partly played a role in Turkey favouring, as other NATO members, Yugoslavia's territorial integrity while supporting increased political autonomy — but not independence — for Kosovo. See, Zalmay Khalilzad, Ian Lesser and Stephen Larrabee, **The Future of Turkish-Western Relations: Toward a Strategic Plan**, RAND, 2000, p. 18. For Athens, a challenge to the principle regarding the inviolability of borders would have created a serious precedent of instability in the region. See, www.mfa.gr/foreign/a3en.htm

11. In the view of President Clinton, the Kosovo crisis "will likely reignite the historical animosities, including those that can embrace Albania, Macedonia, Greece, even Turkey. These divisions still have the potential to make the next century a truly violent one for that part of the world...". See, **Press Conference** by the President, Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, 19 March 1999, (4:01 P.M. EST).

12. The resumption of the dialogue between the two countries on a number of bilateral issues (i.e. economic affairs, trade, etc) had been already part of a proposal by Prime Minister Simitis in April 1996 during his visit in Washington aiming to promote a 'step-by-step' policy stance 'as a means to better relations between the two countries.' See, www.mfa.gr/foreign/bilateral/relations.htm.

13. "Relations Warming Between Former Enemies Greece and Turkey", **CNN**, 21 January 2000, www.cnn.com/2000/world/01/21/greece.turkey/index.html.

14. "Ankara extends Warm Welcome to Papandreou", **Turkish Daily News**, 21 January 2000; Stephen Kinzer, "As Relations Warm, Greece and Turkey Sign Series of Accords", **The New York Times**, 21 January 2000.

15. Cited in Kinzer, **Ibid.**

16. Amberin Zaman, “New Agreements Enhance Greek-Turkish Ties”; **Washington Post**, 21 January 2000; Leyla Boulton, “Greece-Turkey: Entente Between Old Foes Starts Small”, **Financial Times**, 20 January 2000.

17. Leonidas Blaveris, “Dynamic Mix 2000”, **Strategy**, June 2000, (in Greek).

18. Leyla Boulton and Kerin Hope, “Greece and Turkey Edge Closer”, **Financial Times**, 5 June 2000.

19. Harles A. Kupchan and Ian O. Lesser, “Turkey Can Strengthen its Ties With Greece”, **International Herald Tribune**, 11 February 2000.

20. To be applied if Greece were to decide to extend its territorial waters to 12 miles.

21. **Ibid.**

22. This is the point at which Greek senior analysts base their criticism to the Greek tactics which should have been conciliatory yet more demanding thus avoiding to allow Ankara to get substantial gains without the latter offering anything in return. See Yiannis Valinakis, “The Helsinki Decisions and EU-Turkey Relations” in T.Couloubis and T. Dokos eds, **Yearbook 2000. Greek-Turkish Relations 1999-2000**, ELIAMEP, Athens, 2000, p. 95 (in Greek).

23. Theodore Couloubis, “Greek-Turkish Relations: Back to the Future”, **Kathimerini**, 1 October 2000.

24. **Ibid.**

25. For insightful analysis for the deterioration of the Greek-Turkish relations after the end of the Cold War see, Van Coufoudakis, “Greek-Turkish Relations in the Post-Cold War Era. Implications of the American Response”, **Hellenic Studies**, Vol.4, No.2, 1996, pp. 167-187.

26. Interview of George Papandreou in the daily, “Only with Rewards Turkey in Europe”, **Ta Nea**, 27 September 1999. (in Greek)

27. The assumption that democratic states do not go to war is based on the premise that economic interests and interdependence appear as strong incentives for states to avoid militant behaviour. Literature on this subject is quite extensive. Indicative works include: Francis Fukuyama, **The End of History and the Last Man**, (New York: Free Press, 1992); John G. Ruggie, “Collective Goods and Future International Cooperation”, **American Political Science Review**, Vol. 66, pp. 349-367; Bruce Russett, **Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World**, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); G. John Ikenberry, “Why Export Democracy?” **The Washington Quarterly**, Vol. 22, No.2, Spring 1999, pp 56-65.

28. Article 4, Presidency Conclusions, Helsinki European Council, 10-11 December 1999. On this issue, and with particular reference to the Aegean disputes, senior Greek experts have argued that in reality the reference to the UN Charter, rather than the respect of international law and treaties, as it was mentioned in previous EU documents, constitutes a shift that favours a commitment to negotiations rather than a respect to the legal *status quo*, as it is determined by existing international treaties. See, Yiannis Valinakis, “The Helsinki Decisions and EU-Turkey Relations” **op. cit.**, p. 99.

29. See, The Copenhagen European Council and the ‘Copenhagen Criteria’, 8 June 1993, www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/phare/wip/copennhagen.htm.

30. **Ibid.**

31. Ankara aims the document not to have any references to relations with Greece, the Aegean neighbours and the Cyprus problem and has pressured for a particular wording that would avoid any references to Kurdish minorities. On the other hand, EU officials have made clear that in the Accord the requirement for Turkey to abolish the death penalty would appear as a priority. See, Selcuk Gultasli, “Ankara

Wants EU Accession Partnership Accord to be Forward Looking”, **Turkish Daily News**, 15 September 2000; Nazlan Ertan, “Turkey Bargains for Membership Negotiations with the EU”, **Briefing**, Issue 1315, 23 October 2000, pp.14-15.

32. “Compass set on European Norms”, **Briefing**, Issue 1275, 11 January 2000, p. 33.

33. Cited in Kinzer, “As Relations Warm,” **op.cit.**,

34. F. Stephen Larrabee, “Turkish Foreign and Security Policy: New Dimensions and New Challenges”, in Z. Khalilzad et al, **op.cit.**, p. 21.

35. With regard to Cyprus, the Helsinki decisions provided that a prior political settlement does not constitute a precondition for Cyprus accession to the EU, while at that time, the Council will take account all relevant factors. Although the latter notice might raise potential obstacles in the future, as some analysts have argued, the general position of the EU towards Cyprus accession was considered a positive element regarding Cyprus’ accession to the EU. For the questions raised on this issue see Valinakis, **op.cit.**

36. Philip H. Gordon, “Post-Helsinki: Turkey, Greece, and the European Union”, **The Strategic Regional Report**, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 16.

37. Sevilay Elgun Kahraman, “Rethinking Turkey-European Union Relations in the Light of Enlargement”, **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 1, No.1, Spring 2000, pp. 1-20.

38. Cited in Stephen Kinzer, “Turks Debate Human Rights and Links With Europe”, **The New York Times**, 23 March 2000.

39. For a particularly informative account of this debate see, “Mutual Understanding’, or ‘Mutual Avoidance’ of Sticky Issues?... or the Tale of Haider, Hizbullah, and Human Rights”, **Briefing**, Issue 1279, 7 February 2000, pp. 13-17.

40. Sevilay Elgun Kahraman, “Rethinking Turkey-European Union...”, **op.cit.**, p. 13.

41. “Enlarging the EU: Regular Report from the Commission on Progress Towards Accession: Turkey,” COM (98) 700 Final, 4 November 1998; and ‘1999 Annual Report From the Commission on Turkey’s Progress Towards Accession’, COM (99), 13 October 1999, p. 15.

42. Kemal Ilter, “Prime Minister Hosts EU Ambassadors”, **Turkish Daily News**, 23 March 2000. Prime Minister Ecevit is quoted in Stephen Kinzer, “Turks Debate Human Rights ...” **op. cit.**

43. Certainly, this does not imply that some wealthy businessmen are not among the leading figures in Islamic politics and institutions.

44. “Mutual Understanding...” **op.cit.**, pp.14-15.

45. **Ibid.**

46. Certainly, differences among the two coalition parties are evident as it was the case regarding the abolition of the death penalty. For example, when Ecevit advocated that the latter strains Turkey’s relations with the EU and should be removed, MHP’s leader Devlet Bahçeli pressed both Ecevit and Yılmaz to declare the primacy of the Turkish interests on this issue. **Ibid.**, p. 17; and Ian Lesser, ‘Changes on the Turkish Domestic Scene and their Foreign Policy Implications’, in Z. Khalilzad et al, **The Future of Turkish-Western Relations...**, **op.cit.**, p. 9.

47. “Turkey Makes some Gestures to Europe, Comes up With a Good Plan, and Scores a Brilliant Victory it Probably isn’t Aware of as Yet”, **Briefing**, Issue 1286, 3 April 2000, p. 12.

48. **Ibid.**

49. Reuters, “Turkish Army Wary over European Future”, CNN, 12 September 2000. <http://www.cnn.com/2000/world/europe/09/12/austria.sanctions.reut/index.html>.

50. Quoted in **Ibid.**

51. **Ibid.**

52. For indicative literature on this issue see, Antonio Missiroli, **CFSP, Defence and Flexibility**, Challot Papers, No. 38, Institute for Security Studies, WEU, February 2000; Francois Heisbourg, **European Defence: Making it Work**, Challot Papers, No. 42, Institute for Security Studies, WEU, September 2000; Francois Heisbourg, "European Defence Takes a Leap Forward", *NATO Review*, Vol. 48, No.1, Summer 2000, pp. 8-11; and Peter Schmidt, "ESDI: 'Separable but not Separate'," *NATO Review*, Vol. 48, No. 1, Summer 2000, pp. 12-15.

53. Annex D, article1, European Council Declaration on Strengthening the Common European Policy on Security and Defence, Presidency Conclusions: Cologne European Council, 3-4 June 1999.

54. Annex E, article 28, II. Common European Policy on Security and Defence, Presidency Conclusions Helsinki European Council 10 and 11 December 1999.

55 Quoted in Nazlan Ertan, "Ankara Uneasy with EU's Defense Plans", **Briefing**, Issue 1313, 9 October 2000, p. 15.

56. For the Feira provisions see, Annex I, part II: C.

57. See, "Is ball in Turkey's court, only to be snatched by MHP?", **Briefing**, Issue 1331, 19 February 2001, p. 14.

58. The MHP insists *inter alia* that cultural and language rights be excluded from the programme, that the death penalty should be lifted 'conditionally' while Turkey should proceed slowly towards fulfilling the two United Nations agreements on Human Rights it signed last November. See, **Ibid.**

59. The military perspective is presented in "EU Debate Flares Again, Military Expresses its 'fears'," **Briefing**, Issue 1326, 15 January 2001, pp. 11-13.

60. **Ibid.**, p. 12.

61. President Sezer's initiative to urge Bulent Ecevit to launch a more firm stance against corruption in government caused a serious political crisis as long as publicity over the issue unveiled the disparity between the two leaders. It must be noted however that public appeal to president Sezer's stance is rising while a growing business sector appear to support the president's cause. See "Sezer's Public Stock Rises Once More", **Briefing**, Issue 1332, 26 February 2001, p. 11.

62. See, Simon Tisdall, "Political Fallout over Reform Threatens to Bury Chances of Joining the EU", *The Guardian*, 23 February 2001.