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**THE EU AND GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS**

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Document presented at the Research and Development Center, Intercollege  
Nicosia, 5 November 1996

IAI9635

**ISTITUTO AFFARI INTERNAZIONALI**

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A number of EU members have bilateral disputes with neighbouring (or even distant) countries. For example, fishing in the Atlantic and Central Mediterranean is a source of disputes between Spain and Canada, Spain and Morocco, Italy and Tunisia. More recently, a dispute arose between Italy and Slovenia over properties lost by Italians when expelled from the then Dalmatia as a consequence of the Second World War.

These disputes involve the Union only in so far as the jurisdiction of the Union itself is involved. So, fishing involves the EU, for example, but questions of sovereignty -- such as in the delimitation of the continental shelf -- do not pertain to the Union.

The policy of the Union with respect to bilateral disputes can be seen as an early example of implementation of the principle of subsidiarity (by those who like this tricky principle). Unlike fishing, foreign policy is not institutionally embedded in the Union; foreign policy is shared by the EU member states through **inter-governmental** consultations only. This is basically the reason the EU is not involved in extra-Union national disputes.

Since the veteran European Political Cooperation mechanism has been replaced by the Maastricht-enforced Common Foreign and Security Policy, the aim of reaching a truly common policy with respect to foreign relations, national security and (perhaps) defence has been ideally strengthened. But whether and to what extent the CFSP will become a full-fledged reality remains to be seen. For the time being, only few common actions have been set out and the members vote essentially on the basis of unanimity.

The situation of the Union with respect to external bilateral disputes has not fundamentally changed.

To be sure, this policy of non-interference into members' bilateral disputes is primarily functional to the need of preserving the Union's stability and its cohesion in a political and institutional framework in which foreign policy is not (yet) shared by the EU members and, therefore, not capable of sustaining the weight of the considerable number of external disputes it would have to take up from member states.

Regardless of its formal jurisdiction, the Union is very careful in keeping aloof of bilateral disputes and normally it does its best to prevent these disputes from interfering with the Union's functioning. This was very clear, for example, in the arrangements related to Spain's accession to the EC with respect to Spanish disputes with the United Kingdom and Morocco. It was also clear in the thornier case of the relations between West and East Germany during the Cold War.

Nonetheless, despite the lack of institutional jurisdiction and the praxis of political prudence, bilateral external disputes **do** have an impact on the Union. A recent example is provided by the very marginal dispute between Italy and Slovenia mentioned before: for some time, this dispute prevented the Union from starting negotiations for associating this young country. Other cases may not involve the Union as such but the interests of other member states, thus affecting intra-EU political relations and the EU cohesion with respect to external events. A case in point was the Greek policy toward the FYROM which was perceived by other members of the EU as a further risk in the conflict of former Yugoslavia.

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Beside external disputes, one has to consider internal disputes as well. So far there have been no major political disputes between EU members. The democratic nature of the political regimes which prevailed in Europe after the Second World War has not eliminated bilateral disputes, but the latter are negotiated and regulated by peaceful means. The EU may be marginally involved in negotiations and settlements whenever its jurisdictions are involved, but the point worth stressing here is that bilateral disputes have never affected the Union's cohesion. The Union has not been involved, for example, by the outstanding violent dispute between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland and Northern Ireland, by the question of Gibraltar or by the controversy in Alto Adige/South Tyrol.

As we have already noted, the political regime prevailing in Western Europe is definitely a major factor in maintaining the EU's cohesion despite internal disputes. Another important factor, however, is that the Union is not a full-fledged political entity. Consequently, it is only indirectly affected by internal political disputes. If it were a federation, disputes arising from minorities, like the one mentioned before and other intra-union political disputes, would involve central authorities to some degree.

One has to note on this point, that in view of the possible adhesion of the Eastern European and Baltic countries, the argument was made (for ex., at the time the Pact of Stability was instituted within the OSCE) that candidates countries had to solve their minorities problems before entering the Union to prevent the latter from being affected by related disputes. This shows that present EU members are concerned by possible intra-Union disputes coming from new members, though the experience of the old members has so far worked the other way round.

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Let me point out a first conclusion. The weak political and security identity of the EU makes it only slightly vulnerable to extra- and intra-Union political disputes for the time being. Its involvement is also minimized by the *de facto* democratic nature of its member states' regimes: they do not use force to solve differences and this has permitted the EU to avoid major and violent crises which would have severely tested its cohesion. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to believe that the EU and, most of all, its members are not affected and concerned by such disputes. The case of the Pact of Stability with the Eastern and Baltic countries suggests that the EU states are concerned by possible disputes among incoming members, so much so that their democratic experience is regarded by present EU members less as an outstanding reality than as a more or less difficult aim to be attained.

John Redmond, a well known expert on Cyprus' issues, has successfully maintained that the EU could well cohabit with the dispute between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. But he cannot maintain - and has not tried to do so- that EU members are not concerned by the dispute. Though the dispute in itself has not ruled out Cyprus' candidature, there is no doubt that it will play a major role in the decision about Cyprus' accession to the Union.

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The last point may help us to introduce our topic: the EU and Greek-Turkish relations. Obviously, these relations cannot be reduced to a dispute, but it is true that from the point of view of the EU and its member states, what is relevant today is definitely the Greek-Turkish dispute.

Greek-Turkish relations include a set of minor and major disputes, which have always annoyed the more distant allies of the two countries and have exceedingly concerned and displeased their closer friends. Let me try to list these disputes:

- the delimitation of territorial waters and continental shelves in the Aegean Sea (according to Turkey, the Greek islands are not part of the Greek continental shelf);

- the delimitation of the jurisdiction on controlling the air space over the Aegean Sea and the extension (or definition) of the national air space over the same area;
- the sovereignty over a highly variable number of islets and islands in the Aegean Sea (from usually less than 100 to ca. 3,000 in recent times); in 1995 the Turkish side also indirectly questioned Greece's sovereignty over the island of Gavdos, south-east of Crete;
- finally, the most contentious issue, namely Cyprus, its partition and the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

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According to conventional wisdom, of the various issues which make up the Greek-Turkish dispute, only the likely consequences on European security and foreign policies which would come from Cyprus' membership should be taken into consideration. In other words, the impact of Greek-Turkish relations on the Union would be reduced to the implications of Cyprus accession to EU; the other disputes -- those related to the Aegean area -- would not involve the EU to a significant extent, from either a legal or a political point of view.

In this sense, the issues to be taken into consideration would be those related to (a) the impact on EU cohesion and internal security that would derive from the inclusion of a partitioned country; (b) the implications on the making of the CFSP and, most of all, on the functioning of the WEU that would stem from Cyprus' non-alignment or neutrality status; (c) the implications of Cyprus' accession on EU-Turkey relations.

Though it is true that the substance of the implications of the Greek-Turkish relations for the EU are linked to Cyprus' accession to the Union, I won't follow this approach. It seems to me that one has to start from a broader consideration of the relations between the Greek member of the EU and Turkey. All in all, one has primarily to account for the fact that these relations are "bad". As obvious as it may be, this is an important fact in itself, because it is primarily this overall bad character of relations that is bound to influence the EU interests and policies, not necessarily Cyprus or the Aegean or whichever. Let's start therefore by considering Turkey in the perspective of the EU's foreign relations.

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The fundamental dilemma of the EU stems from the difficulty in finding a firm balance between the solidarity due primarily to Greece's membership in the Union, on the one hand, and the security interests represented by Turkey internationally, on the other. Of course, this dilemma goes beyond the case of Turkey, as emerged very clearly during the violent stage of the conflict in former Yugoslavia, but there is no doubt that Turkey deserves special consideration in the EU perspective. So, the relevant questions are: How important is Turkey for EU security? What kind of Turkish policy should Europe conduct to be able to improve Greek-Turkish relations and reconcile its Turkish interest with the cohesion of the Union?

There is no doubt that Turkey is very important for EU security. The importance of Turkey today stems from the role it can play in a number of important and sometimes related regional theaters, in which the EU also has a stake: essentially, the Middle East and the Gulf; the Caucasus area and Central Asia; Southeastern Europe.

The reasons Turkey is central with respect to these various regions are its historical and cultural links with them and its multidimensional character, as a country which includes both secular and religious, Western and Oriental traditions, economic backwardness but also a proven ability for high-speed development and industrialization, authoritarian trends as well as the ability to develop democratic institutions and pluralism. This multidimensionality favours Turkish contact and influence in the adjoining regions. This makes Turkey an important ally for the EU.

However, while a democratic, pluralistic and economically viable Turkey may act as a positive example and as a factor of stabilization in situations where the same job would be difficult for the EU, an authoritarian and economically backward Turkey may add instability to regions where instability is already a serious risk and certainly an economic minus for the EU. Consequently, the EU is --yes-- interested in Turkish alliance, but it is also strongly interested in shaping Turkey's orientation towards a democratic identity and a modern economy so as to make this country more consistent with Europe's interest in stabilizing the Middle East, Central Asia and the other regions here in question.

If this point of view is accepted, it is evident that the central point in EU relations with Turkey is this country's ability to upgrade the democratic character of its political regime.

My personal view is that too little attention has been paid by both Europe and the US to Turkey's democratic development and that a number of pernicious Western misconceptions about the Turkish polity and society have hindered full democratic development and social modernization in Turkey. The West has drawn advantage from its strong support for the Kemalist nationalist trend and its hard-core, the Turkish Army, both in the Cold War and in the aftermath of the Gulf war of 1990-91. But this support has weakened the more authentic liberal trend included in Turkey's westernization. Besides, the West -- like Kemalism in its extreme version -- looks at the development of political Islam in Turkey as a factor which would work against Turkish democratization and modernization. Today, despite a number of shortcomings and fallacies in Turkish political Islam, the latter seems much more suited to introducing pluralism and respect for human rights in the country than the obsolete Jacobin trend represented by the inflexible Kemalist and military tradition.

The EU's rejection of Turkey's membership has been the result of many complex factors. Ultimately, of an objectively bad performance by this country in the realm of democracy and, most of all, human rights. It is now too late to wonder whether the best opportunity to push Turkey towards democracy -- i.e. inclusion in the EU as a full member -- has been lost forever. If including Turkey in the Union is excluded, the problem remains of how to direct Turkey towards democracy so that it can be associated to Western and European interests.

From another angle, it can be said that Turkey can play a positive role towards its adjoining regions, but it needs strong Western and European support -- as was clear from the weak performance in Central Asia where Turkey was supposed (by the Americans) to be able to act as a great power. If Turkey is pushed to act alone in these regions, looking for the identity of a lonely great regional power, this may cause serious damages. For this reason, the EU cannot limit itself to accommodate Turkey while keeping it increasingly at arm's length -- yesterday because of human rights and today because of its religious leadership. Turkey needs to act in concert with Europe and Europe requires Turkey to act in concert with itself. Turkey must be directed to democratization with sincere European support.

A second conclusion which I would like to point out is therefore that European policy towards Turkey should try to trade a privileged relation with the EU against progress towards democracy in Turkey. This policy should start by giving today's Islamicist government in Ankara more confidence and the opportunity to encourage solutions inside the country that the Kemalists have been -- and will continue to be -- unable to introduce.

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Let me stress that I have the pleasure of sharing this conclusion with an old friend of mine, the eminent Greek historian Prof. Thanos Veremis. In a recent article in a Spanish journal, he writes: "Greece has a vital interest in the democratization [of Turkey]" **and** "the true obstacle to democracy is not fundamentalism but the survival of the late [Turkish] nationalism". I believe,

therefore, that EU's and Greece's vital interests towards Turkey coincide perfectly. In this sense, I must say that, while there is no doubt that the Greek response to Turkey (and other issues affecting national security perceptions) is sometime poisoned and (weakened) by demagogic and chauvinist trends, the reaction of the Greek partners in the Union is always arrogant and ungenerous. It may be that both parties are somehow myopic in that they fail to recognize that their interests fully overlap. But this can be overcome and I am sure that it will be shortly.

An improvement in EU-Turkey relations and a European effort to direct Turkish policy towards a more convincing democratic regime would have the effect of improving and smoothing Greek-Turkish relations as well. The improvement -- from "bad" to "good" -- in Greek-Turkish relations would in turn downsize or eliminate the concern of the EU members for this longstanding dispute and would make a strengthening of EU cohesion possible.

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The improvement in Greek-Turkish relations would most of all ease EU concerns about Cyprus' accession to the Union. As this improvement is not imminent, however, a discourse about the impact of Greek-Turkish relations on EU must be completed by some remarks on the impact of such relations -- as they are **today** -- on Cyprus' candidature to enter the Union.

The most favourable Cyprus package from the point of view of the EU would be the admission of a Cypriot federation including the TRNC as a full member of the Union and the admission of this Cypriot federation to the WEU as an observer. The entry of Cyprus without a previous arrangement with the northern part of the island is also feasible, as repeatedly shown by many analyses (especially by John Redmond), both from a legal and political point of view. It would not involve the EU, and eventual crises -- even violent in character -- could be sustained by the Union without seriously interfering with its security and cohesion.

But this remains a second-best solution. This solution is consistent with the Union's evolution the more such evolution is guided by variable geometry. But, if the EU's next inter-governmental conference strengthens CFSP -- a result that cannot be excluded -- in addition to economic and monetary union, the need would arise for stricter control over external disputes, with Cyprus looming as one of the most important cases in point.

Furthermore, one has to take into consideration that accommodating Turkey remains an important goal of EU member policies and of the policy of the EU itself. This policy is today pursued in a confused way and -- as argued before -- is not well directed towards its natural and effective purpose of democratization. However, there is an awareness in the Union that Turkey should not be alienated, or at least completely alienated.

In the absence of an understanding with Turkey and the TRNC, these factors can hinder the negotiations for Cyprus' accession in the EU or -- more likely -- put off their conclusion to a more distant time.

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Let me try to summarize the most important points I have made in this presentation:

- First, while it is true that the EU can survive the internal and external disputes of its member states without necessarily being involved, one should not overlook the simple fact that this is true up to a point; this point changes in relation to the evolution of the EU process of political (and I would say also monetary and economic) integration -- it is less true the more political integration proceeds. As a general rule, the Greek-Turkish dispute does not interfere with the functioning of the Union today and, in particular, cannot in itself prevent Cyprus from entering the EU; but this conclusion remains to be checked by negotiations and events and may even become very uncertain if the inter-governmental conference gives way to a reinforced Union with a strengthened CFSP;

- Second, there is no doubt that the Union and its members face a difficult dilemma with respect to Turkey and the Greek-Turkish dispute: rightful solidarity towards Greece, as a member of the Union, is often challenged by the changing strategic importance of Turkey;
- Third, a more proactive EU policy toward Turkey can help solve the Greek-Turkish dispute; this policy should be based on a firmer EU stance towards democratization and pluralism in Turkey, i.e. it should start by identifying the weak democratic development of Turkey as the key factor in the dispute and its resolution as well as in international alliance with this country;
- Fourth, one important element in supporting the reinforcement of democracy in Turkey today, after having lost the opportunity of full Turkish membership in the EU, should be a more open stance towards the Islamic component of the Turkish political arena; this component may prove more amenable to democratization and negotiations than the obsolete and ultra-nationalist Jacobins that ran the country in the enshrined and inflexible memory of Kemal Ataturk;
- Fifth, while the redirection of European relations with Turkey and the eventual strengthening of democracy in the country need time, in the shorter run a moderate attitude of the Cypriot parties in preparing the stage on which negotiations with the EU will take place may be very helpful, perhaps indispensable: a federation, as loose as it may be, coupled with the simple status of observer in the WEU would favour a quick and stable solution of the Cyprus issue in itself (and start a positive evolution in the wider Greek-Turkish dispute); other configurations may well allow for Cyprus' membership but may delay accession considerably and -- according to the political evolution in the EU -- even make it less certain than it seems today.