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**Whatever Happened to North-South?**

**Obstacles, Obsessions and Prospects of Turkey's EU Membership**

Dr. Sylvia Tiryaki & Dr. Mensur Akgün

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## 1 Abstract

Turkey has aspired to become a member of the EU since 1959 and has managed to accomplish several significant milestones toward that goal. However, the accession talks are progressing rather slowly and Turkey still seems to be far away from full membership. The authors argue that obstacles delaying the process can be summarized into two primary categories: cultural differences, which are often reduced to the notion of religion, and impediments linked to the Cyprus problem. The paper will assert that without a settlement of the problem on the Mediterranean island, Turkey's membership prospects are likely to remain uncertain. Following this line of reasoning, it will be claimed that a strategic vision of the EU can bring an end to the existing conundrum in the accession talks. Such an active move forward is in the interest of the EU, especially as Turkey becomes a more active player in the arena of international relations. Some indicators show a change in that direction, such as Lady Ashton's comment in her capacity as High Representative: "We welcome the increasingly important role of Turkey in the region. In this context we will also look at the ways in which the EU and Turkey can enhance cooperation." The issues that the EU tries to tackle are within the problem-solving vision of Turkey. Therefore it will be argued that if Turkey firmly establishes itself as a major regional player, it would likely play a crucial role in the success of the EU's foreign policy, if admitted to the EU.

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## 2 Introduction

On September 12, 1963, Turkey signed an Association Agreement with the European Economic Community (EEC), the predecessor of the EU. Ten years later an Additional Protocol to regulate the potential customs union between Turkey and the EU came into force. It took another 26 years for the EU member states to accept the candidate status of Turkey and yet another six years to start negotiations with the would-be member. In the remaining five years, between 2005 and 2011, only 13 chapters could be opened. By the end of 2010, there were only three chapters left with the possibility to be opened as all of the other chapters were being blocked<sup>1</sup>, and the snail-paced accession process was effectively suspended.

There is no doubt that in the earlier phases of engagement Turkey had no real appetite for EU membership. She was preoccupied with political and economic problems ranging from civil war between leftists and rightists to bankrupt public finances. Weak coalitions, petty minded politicians and power seeking generals littered the 1960s and 1970s. The military coup of 1980 left its thumbprint on the decades to come. Turkey certainly did not match any democratic criteria let alone what would later be called the Copenhagen Political Criteria.

However, as the Turks discovered to their dismay, the lack of progress was not only their fault. Satisfying political criteria was not enough for progress on the accession front. They were hardly welcomed in Europe due to cultural, specifically religious, reasons. Belonging to a different faith was the main stumbling block before their accession. Particularly those EU member states that were relying on common religious background for deepening their integration were explicitly against Turkey's membership. Despite the political commitments, several hurdles were erected to stop Turkey's further integration, and the member countries blocked several chapters in the so-called accession negotiations under different pretexts.

On the UN Security Council agenda since 1964 and the subject of numerous failed attempts of settlement by successive UN Secretary Generals, the Cyprus problem also provided ample opportunities for Turkey sceptics in the EU. Despite the fact that Turkey and the Turkish side supported the most recent comprehensive UN plan in 2004,

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<sup>1</sup> In December 2006, the Council of the EU suspended the negotiations in eight chapters due to Turkey's reluctance to comply fully with the provisions of the Additional Protocol. In addition to this, the Republic of Cyprus is unilaterally blocking the opening of six chapters, and France continues to veto five chapters. In total, 17 out of 35 chapters are being blocked.

Turkey's accession has been tied to the solution as envisaged by the Greek side of the island. Turkey's reluctance to fulfill the requirements of the customs union, epitomized by the opening of the Turkish ports and airports to the Republic of Cyprus flagged vessels, unless the EU delivers on the promises it has made to Turkish Cypriots further complicates the picture.

This paper takes the Cyprus problem and cultural bias as twin obstacles before Turkey's EU accession. However, it assumes that the latter is beyond the scope of this paper since cultural bias towards Turkey elevated its socio-psychological status into an obsession among Europeans. It will only briefly touch upon the resistance shown against Turkey by countries like Germany and France, focusing instead more on the concrete problem of Cyprus. Although unconventional for an academic paper, it will also try to put forward some ideas for those who would be interested in surmounting the problem.

Needless to say, like all papers this paper is also biased. The authors of this paper support a solution on the island on the basis of the UN parameters and have been extensively engaged with proposing solutions and supporting the one currently under negotiations by the parties.<sup>2</sup> They can hardly be considered as impartial observers. Moreover, they favour Turkey's accession to the EU. Yet, considering the affluence of writing on the subject, they believe that their political engagement and their bias can be their asset. They hope that the audience of this paper presented will pardon their explicit positioning.

Beyond this introductory section, the paper is divided into three analytical parts. In the following section we condense Turkey's legendary accession course into a few pages by relating it to cultural bias. We then proceed to the section in which we focus on Cyprus problem. The final section is reserved for our legal and political suggestions. We state at the onset that nowhere in the paper do we attempt to legitimize the political behaviour of any of the actors. Moreover, conscious of our bias, we also chose to rely on official accounts as much as possible.

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<sup>2</sup> See Akgün, M., & Tiryaki, S. (2010). Ending the Isolation of Turkish Cypriots. *Insight Turkey*. 12(1), 23-36.

Brus, M., Akgün, M., Blockmans, S., Tiryaki, S., Hoogen, T.V.D., & Douma, W. (2008). *A Promise to Keep: Time to end the international isolation of the Turkish Cypriots*. Istanbul: TESEV Publications.

Akgün, M., Gürel, A., Hatay, M., & Tiryaki, S. (2005). *Quo Vadis Cyprus?* Istanbul: TESEV Publications

Akgün, M., & Tiryaki, S. (2004). Annan Plan: A Missed Opportunity. *World Security Network*.

### 3 EU-Turkey and Cyprus

Turkey was one of the first countries to apply for association with the EEC on 31 July 1959.<sup>3</sup> After the formal acceptance of the EEC Council of Ministers of Turkey's application in less than three months despite the summer recess, the negotiations leading to association agreement started on 28 September 1959, but resulted with the signing of the Agreement Creating an Association Between the Republic of Turkey and the European Economic Community only on 12 September 1963. According to official Turkish narrative, this agreement, which entered into force on 1 December 1964, "aimed at securing Turkey's full membership in the EEC through the establishment in three phases of a customs union which would serve as an instrument to bring out integration between the EEC and Turkey".<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, Article 28 of what would be later be called the Ankara Agreement envisaged "the possibility of the accession of Turkey to the Community" as soon as the operation of this agreement had advanced far enough. The advancement on the other hand was thought to be measured with the progress towards meeting customs union requirements. According to the Additional Protocol of 13 November 1971 signed between the ECC and Turkey, EEC would abolish almost all tariff and quantitative restrictions to exports from Turkey, whereas Turkey would have in effect 22 more years to do the same. The Protocol required harmonization of Turkish economic legislation with the ECC while the ECC member countries committed themselves to free circulation of natural persons.

The Customs Union was established with a short delay of three years in 1995. In the mean time, Turkey applied for full membership on the basis of the ECC Treaty's article 237 in 1987. The Council confirmed Turkey's eligibility.<sup>5</sup> The Commission's Opinion was issued on 18 December 1989 and endorsed by the Council on 5 February 1990. It basically reconfirmed Turkey's eligibility for membership, yet deferred the in-depth analysis of Turkey's application until the emergence of a more favorable environment. It also mentioned that Turkey's accession was prevented equally by the EC's own situation on the eve of the Single Market's completion, which prevented the consideration of further enlargement. It went on to underpin the need for a comprehensive cooperation program aiming at facilitating the integration of the two sides

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<sup>3</sup> Only second after Greece which applied two months before Turkey. For a detailed account of Turkey's application in 1959 see Çalış, Ş. H. (2004). *Formative Years: A Key for Understanding Turkey's Membership Policy towards the EU*. Perceptions, Autumn, p. 85-86.

<sup>4</sup> See Republic of Turkey - Prime Ministry: Secretariat General for EU Affairs. (2007). History of Turkey - EU Relations. Retrieved from <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=111&l=2>, February 14, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Almost at the same time, an application by Morocco was turned down by the Council on the grounds that Morocco is not a European country. See Ibid.

and added that the Customs Union should be completed in 1995.<sup>6</sup>

As put onto the webpage of Turkey's Secretary General for EU Affairs, Turkey's application despite the postponement of the final verdict revived the relations and "efforts to develop relations intensified on both sides, the Association's political and technical mechanisms started meeting again and measures to complete the Customs Union in time were resumed".<sup>7</sup> Talks began in 1994 and were concluded on 6 March 1995 at the meeting of Turkey-EU Association Council with the adoption of its decision 95/1 with which EU and Turkey completed the customs union in industrial and processed agricultural goods by 31 December 1995.

Despite the decision, there had been multitude of problems in relations, and most of the financial packages were blocked usually by Greece for various reasons. Yet at the Association Council of 29 April 1997, the EU recognized Turkey's eligibility of membership and asked the Commission to prepare recommendations to deepen relations. After several attempts to exclude Turkey from the accession process at different levels and structures, the breakthrough in the EU-Turkey relations could be achieved during the Helsinki European Council held on 10-11 December 1999. The Helsinki Council, while endorsing Turkey's candidacy ostensibly without any preconditions other than the ones demanded from the other candidates, entitled Turkey to receive the benefits from a pre-accession strategy to stimulate and support reform process.

The reform process was indeed supported and Turkey under most unlikely circumstances took bold steps to improve its obsolete legal and political structures.<sup>8</sup> However, it took another six years to start to negotiate 35 chapters for Turkey's adoption of the membership responsibilities. Since the EU Council's Decision of 3 October 2005, more than five years after, only 13 chapters have been opened and only one of them have provisionally been closed. The rest of the chapters have been frozen.

The Republic of Cyprus has clogged six of the negotiations chapters, 8 have been blocked because of the Cyprus issue<sup>9</sup> itself and France is responsible for the jamming of

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> While the nationalist MHP (National Movement Party) was a coalition partner in the government, Turkey abolished the capital punishment in order to fulfil Copenhagen political criteria.

<sup>9</sup> In December 2006, the Council of the European Union released the following statement: "The Council decided in particular to suspend negotiations on eight chapters relevant to Turkey's restrictions with regard to the Republic of Cyprus, and will not close the other chapters until Turkey fulfills its commitments under the additional protocol to the EU-Turkey Association Agreement, which extended the EU-Turkey customs union to the ten member states, including Cyprus, that joined the EU in May 2004." (Council of the European Union. (2006). General Affairs and External Relations, 16289/06 (Presse 352), p. 2.)

another five. France interestingly argued that the opening of those chapters would bring Turkey “closer to Europe<sup>10</sup>” as if the intention of the negotiations was not bringing Turkey closer to the EU. In addition to freezing all these chapters, it has been decided that none of the negotiated chapters – even those that have been opened – can be closed prior to the implementation of the Ankara Protocol, implicitly requiring the opening of Turkey’s ports and airports to Republic of Cyprus flagged vessels.<sup>11</sup>

Some EU leaders, like German Chancellor Angela Merkel, whose internal politics are largely based on shaming Turkey for not being European, exploit this issue further.<sup>12</sup> Without mentioning (maybe without knowing)<sup>13</sup> other aspects of the whole Cyprus problem, these European leaders portray non-compliance with the Protocol as Turkey’s political whim. However, the reality as always is much more complicated than reflected in the European political narrative and requires a deeper analysis as well as a historical perspective.

#### **4 An obstacle called Cyprus problem**

Like most of the problems persistently prevailing on the international agenda, the definition of Cyprus problem is inherently difficult. For those who do not follow the conflict in detail, the problem could have started with Turkey’s intervention on July 20, 1974. As such, it can be seen as a problem of invasion and occupation and once the occupation is over, the problem would be settled. Therefore, the logic follows; solution can be achieved by putting pressure on Turkey aspiring to become a member of the EU. The remedy, although not admitted publicly, is simple; the restitution of the status quo ante, to the pre July 20, 1974 times.

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<sup>10</sup> During an interview broadcasted by TF 1 and France 2 television, Mr. Sarkozy said: “I do not believe that Turkey belongs in Europe, and for a simple reason, which is that it is in Asia minor.” Quoted in: Turkey does not belong in Europe: Sarkozy. (2007). *EUbusiness*. Retrieved from <http://www.eubusiness.com/europe/turkey/1190317621.45>, January 27, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> This issue will be elaborated in further details in the following pages.

<sup>12</sup> “We greatly appreciate your courage, creativity shown and initiative taken to solve the problem. We see that you are taking many steps and we also see that the Turkish side is not responding adequately to your steps,” Merkel said during her official visit to RoC at a press conference. (Evrpidou, S. (2011). Merkel gives full support to president. Cyprus Mail. Retrieved from <http://www.cyprus-mail.com/state-visits/merkel-gives-full-support-president/20110112>, January 27, 2011.)

<sup>13</sup> For quite some time only one side of the Cyprus conflict issue had been available to the majority of the EU audience. Greek Cypriots, being the sole representatives of Cyprus in the EU, nourished the political and public opinions of the EU member states with their narrative.



Seen from this angle, there is no virtue in the efforts of the successive UN Secretaries Generals to find a solution to the problem. The Annan Plan was a farce with a price tag of 3.148.500 USD. 30 trips to Greece and Turkey by the UN team preparing the plan were only for touristic purposes. 72 rounds of direct talks were designed to satisfy Secretary General's intellectual curiosity. 1506 flag designs and 111 anthem entries were reviewed for a TV talk show. The 9000 page document containing 1134 treaties, 131 laws, organizational charts, list of buildings was not produced as a result of long and relentless inter-communal negotiations mostly on the island but was a result of an academic exercise on some other place and had nothing to do with the problem.

When simplified this much, one can hardly attribute any meaning to the mediation efforts of the successive UN Secretaries Generals and good offices missions. If the problem were merely the problem of invasion and occupation, existence of two major communities on the island would have lost its relevance and the international treaties guaranteeing the rights as well as the sheer existence of the communities could have become obsolete. The principle of bi-zonality would become a trivial detail in the annals of history. The issues of power sharing, property, security guarantees would disappear from the established diplomatic discourse of Cyprus negotiations. If the Cyprus problem were only about the invasion and occupation, the solution would magically come with the removal of troops from the island.

Such a judgment would dictate that the so-called TRNC, the de-facto constituent state of the potential future federal entity<sup>14</sup> on the island could be only a proxy of Turkey. It would not take into account the collective will of the Turkish Cypriots but only the 'national interest' of Turkey.

The Turkish Cypriots could then continue living under the embargo despite the promises made by the EU and the international community after they voted in favor of the Annan Plan in April 2004. We tend to forget what the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, said after the referenda on the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots as well as the undelivered promises of the EU.

As the observers of the Cyprus question would remember, five days before the Accession Treaty for Cyprus entered into force, the General Affairs Council declared that the EU was "determined to put an end to the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community and to facilitate the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community."<sup>15</sup> This call for ending the isolation imposed on the

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<sup>14</sup> According to the Annan Plan, the future unified Cyprus, the United Cyprus Republic, was to be composed of two constituent states, the Greek Cypriot State and the Turkish Cypriot State. See Annan Plan: The Comprehensive Settlement of Cyprus Problem. (2004). Article 2.1.a. Retrieved from [http://www.bbc.co.uk/greek/Annan\\_plan\\_31\\_march.doc](http://www.bbc.co.uk/greek/Annan_plan_31_march.doc), February 14, 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Council of the European Union. (2004). Council Meeting – General Affairs, C/04/115, 8566/04 (Presse 115). Luxembourg. Retrieved from

Turkish Cypriots was followed by the call of the UN Secretary-General, expressed in his Report of his mission on good offices in Cyprus.<sup>16</sup>

Unlike what can be found in most of the literature on Cyprus available to the wider international audience, the beginning of the isolation of Turkish Cypriots can be in fact traced back to the years after the effective dissolution of the RoC in 1963.<sup>17</sup> Since that time the isolationist treatment by the Greek Cypriots towards the Turkish Cypriots has been modified by various measures and has gone through different phases. During the first phase, which began in 1963, immediately after the RoC collapsed as a bi-communal partnership State, the isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriots did not have an international character. Rather, it was the consequence of the unilateral decisions of the Cypriot government, composed then already from the Greek Cypriots exclusively, that subjected the Turkish Cypriots to political, social and economic hardship.<sup>18</sup>

On September 10, 1964, the UN Secretary-General had concluded that: "... the economic restrictions being imposed on the Turkish community in Cyprus, which in some instances have been so severe as to amount to a veritable siege, seek to force a potential solution by economic pressure as substitute for military action."<sup>19</sup> As a result of the mentioned embargo, Turkish Cypriots could not import and transport any 'strategic' materials. "Most of these goods, however, have extensive civilian use, such as building materials and automobile replacement parts. In addition, other items .... are often subjected to seizure at Cyprus [Greek Cypriot] police checkpoints..."<sup>20</sup>

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<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=PRES/04/115&format=HTML&aged=0&lg=sl&guiLanguage=en>, February 14, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> The UN SG Kofi Annan: "In the meantime, I believe that the members of the Council should encourage the Turkish Cypriots, and Turkey, to remain committed to the goal of reunification. In this context and for that purpose and not for the purpose of affording recognition or assisting secession, I would hope they can give a strong lead to all States to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development, deeming such a move as consistent with Security Council resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984)." (United Nations Secretary General. (2004). Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus, S/2004/437, para 93. Retrieved from [www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/.../BMGS28Mayisraporu.doc](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/.../BMGS28Mayisraporu.doc), February 14, 2011.)

<sup>17</sup> See Brus et al. (2008), p. 25-26.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations Secretary General. (1964). *The Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council, September 10, 1964.*

<sup>20</sup> United Nations Secretary General. (1966). *The Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council, June 10, 1966.*

The economic sanctions towards the Turkish Cypriots lasted until 1968 and included the ban on items such as clothing, wool, timber, telephones, stone, iron, cement, batteries or fuel in large quantities. This economic hardship added to the existing physical segregation of the Turkish Cypriot community, of which a majority had sought refuge from violent and sometimes lethal attacks in the enclaves encompassing only 3 percent of the island's territory.<sup>21</sup>

The beginnings of the conflict itself was very much tied to the concerns and confrontation of the two distinct ethnic national and religious identities with strong ties to their mother countries on a relatively small island. It started already in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Hellenic nationalism emerged on the former territories of imperial Turkey. While one side, represented by the Greek Cypriots, was claiming the entire territory for its own cause, the Turkish Cypriots demanded part of it. The 'invasion' and subsequent 'occupation' of one third of the island by Turkey in 1974 was not the cause of the conflict but it was one of its many results.

It is sometimes neglected that the partnership republic that was created in 1960 had a very short life span, a bloody history with lots of human tragedies and it was not effectively dissolved because of the Turkish intransigence but because of deliberate action by the Greek Cypriots and Greece. Already on the very day of the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios, then President of the Republic of Cyprus, had declared his intention as uniting with Greece, and not having independence from Britain.<sup>22</sup> There is abundant evidence that the Republic of Cyprus derailed due to Greek Cypriot aspirations to unite with Greece.

The dream of Enosis (uniting with Greece) in Greek Cypriot collective mindset has a long history. It started with the Greek war of independence against Turkey in early 1820s, accelerated after the British takeover of the island in 1878 and peaked during the 1950s. In January 1950, for instance, in a referendum organized by the church, 95.7 % of the Greek adult population of the island voted for the union with Greece. On 16 August 1954, despite the alliance relationship with Britain, Greece applied to the UN General Assembly to register the island's right of self-determination. Less than a year later, on 1 April 1955, EOKA (Ethniki Organosis Kypriou Agoniston/National Organization of Cypriot Fighters) led by a Greek Colonel of Cypriot descent, George Grivas, initiated a military dimension into the problem with the extensive support of Greece, affecting Turks of the island as well as Turkey.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Brus et al. (2008), p. 25.

<sup>22</sup> Akgün et al. (2005), p. 14.

<sup>23</sup> Stavrinides, Z. (1976). *The Cyprus Conflict: National Identity and Statehood*. Nicosia, p. 24-30.

A seemingly permanent solution was found in February 1959, when a formal agreement was signed between Turkey and Greece in Zurich and shortly after endorsed by Britain as well as the leaders of the two contenting communities on the island. In December 1959, Greek Cypriot Archbishop Makarios was elected president and Turkish Cypriot Dr. Fazıl Kucuk vice-president of the emerging Cyprus Republic. The members of the House of Representatives were determined in July 1960. On August 1960, Cyprus Republic became independent with an internationally guaranteed constitution. The 48 Basic Articles of the Constitution could not be amended unless by mutual agreement between the two communities. Under the Treaty of Guarantee, Britain, Greece and Turkey undertook to ‘recognize and guarantee the independence, territorial integrity and security of the Republic of Cyprus, and also the state of affairs established by the Basic Articles of its Constitution.’ Article IV of the Treaty of Guarantee stated that:

In the event of a breach of the provisions of the present Treaty, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom undertake to consult together with respect to the representations or measures necessary to ensure observance of those provisions. In so far as common or concerted action may not prove possible, each of the three guaranteeing Powers reserves the right to take action with the sole aim of re-establishing the state of affairs created by the present Treaty.<sup>24</sup>

According to Article 181 of the Constitution, the Treaties of Guarantee and Alliance were to ‘have constitutional force.’ The Republic was to have a presidential regime, with a Greek Cypriot president elected by the Greek Cypriots and a Turkish Cypriot vice-president elected by the Turkish Cypriots. The executive power was vested in the Greek Cypriot President and the Turkish Cypriot Vice-President, both enjoying veto power. The constitution and its administration were based on the principle of bi-communality, employing a 70:30 ratio of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.<sup>25</sup>

There was to be a ten-member Public Service Commission, with seven Greek Cypriots and three Turkish Cypriots. Certain decisions of the Commission were subject to the approval of at least two Turkish Cypriot members. Three out of ten ministers were to be chosen by the vice-president, of whom one was to be given one of the three major portfolios (in practice, this turned out to be defense), and the remaining seven by the president.

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<sup>24</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus - Appendix B: Treaty of Guarantee. Retrieved from <http://www.cyprus.gov.cy/portal/portal.nsf/0/ccc569ef4784fc63c2256fd500323fcc?OpenDocument>, February 14, 2011.

<sup>25</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus. Retrieved from <http://www.cyprus.gov.cy/portal/portal.nsf/0/C44572D7363776ACC2256EBD004F3BB3?OpenDocument>, February 14, 2011.

Decisions in the Council of Ministers were to be taken by absolute majority. The president and the vice-president each had an absolute veto over decisions on matters of defense, foreign affairs and internal security and a delaying veto on other matters. Of the 50 seats in the House of Representatives, 15 were to be held by Turkish Cypriots. Legislative decisions were to be taken by absolute majority, except modification of electoral law, or of laws concerning municipalities, or taxation, which required separate majorities.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, there were also two Communal Chambers elected by the respective communities. With responsibility for religious, educational, cultural and other similar matters, the Chambers in practice gave the two communities extensive cultural autonomy. The separate municipalities in five major towns established during British rule were to remain in place. The judiciary consisted of the Supreme Constitutional Court and the High Court of Justice. Each would have a non-Cypriot President who would not be from Britain, Greece or Turkey. The Supreme Constitutional Court was to have one Greek Cypriot judge, one Turkish Cypriot judge, and the High Court of Justice two Greek Cypriot judges and one Turkish Cypriot judge.

There was to be a Cypriot army consisting of 1,200 Greek Cypriot and 800 Turkish Cypriot soldiers. The police force would comprise of 1,400 Greek Cypriots and 600 Turkish Cypriots. Under the Treaty of Alliance, a tripartite headquarters of the three guarantors would be established, and a Greek contingent of 950 soldiers, and a Turkish one of 650 would be stationed in Cyprus to defend the Republic of Cyprus and also to train the Cypriot army.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the fact that all sides had agreed on the terms of this settlement, as early as 1961 a Greek Cypriot secret army was organized under the leadership of Polycarpus Yorgadjis, the Minister of the Interior of the Republic.<sup>28</sup> The weapons and the cells of the ostensibly banned EOKA were transferred to the new organization.<sup>29</sup> The Greek Cypriot leadership agreed on a political and military strategy in the so-called Akritas Plan to amend the 'negative' parts of the 1960 constitution, to abrogate the Treaties of Guarantee and Alliance forbidding enosis and justifying armed intervention of Britain and Turkey to restore the 1960 constitution, to gain international support for the Greek Cypriot community's rights to self-determination and to legitimize Enosis by means of plebiscite

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> See Akgün et al. (2005), p. 21.

<sup>29</sup> Patrick R. in Kyle, K. (1997). *Cyprus In Search of Peace, Minority Rights Group*. London.

based on the right of self-determination.<sup>30</sup>

Archbishop Makarios, President of the Republic, entrusted Greek Cypriot military preparations for the future conflict to Glafkos Clerides, President of the House of Representatives, Tassos Papadopoulos, then Minister of Labour, and Polycarpus Yorgadjis, Minister of the Interior. The military strategy prepared by them envisaged a quick Greek Cypriot victory. Once inter-communal fighting was triggered, Greek-Cypriot forces would concentrate in Nicosia and over-run the Turkish Cypriot quarter. These forces would then move on to neutralize other Turkish Cypriot centers in turn. Meanwhile, Turkish-Cypriot villages and quarters would be blockaded until sufficient Greek-Cypriot forces became available to disarm and occupy them. The whole operation was to be completed within a few days so that a fait accompli would baffle any attempt by Turkey or Britain to restore the 1960 status quo.<sup>31</sup>

It didn't take too long before the clashes started. On 31 November 1963, President Makarios sent Vice President Küçük a proposal for constitutional amendments, which he said would "remove obstacles to the smooth functioning and development of the state", but in effect amounting to the dissolution of the bi-communal structure of the state.<sup>32</sup> Two weeks later, Turkey as the guarantor of the constitution rejected this proposal. Three weeks later inter-communal violence erupted. By 25 December 1963, the Greek Cypriot forces were close to taking control of the Turkish quarter of Nicosia as envisaged in the Akritas Plan.

Turkey's threat to intervene and the flying of Turkish jets above Nicosia forced Makarios to accept a cease-fire first in Nicosia and then in Larnaca. Yet on 1 January 1964, Makarios announced that he had unilaterally abrogated the Treaties of Alliance and Guarantee, but upon warnings from the British government that such an abrogation would almost certainly provoke a Turkish invasion, quickly changed his declaration to a statement of intention to terminate the Treaties by the appropriate means.

After the failure of a conference convened in London with participation of the two communities and the guarantor powers on January 10<sup>th</sup>, Greek Cypriots could not abrogate the treaties but amended them effectively through a decision of the UN Security Council in which Government of Cyprus presumed to be represented only by one community. Despite the relevant articles of the 1960 Constitution pertaining to bi-communality, for the sake of a historical compromise among themselves, members of the

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<sup>30</sup> See Akritas Plan. (1980). Retrieved from <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/akritas-plan.en.mfa>, February 14, 2011.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus. (2006). *Historical Review*. Retrieved from [http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2006.nsf/cyprus01\\_en/cyprus01\\_en?opendocument](http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2006.nsf/cyprus01_en/cyprus01_en?opendocument), February 14, 2011.

Security Council empowered the Greek side beyond their all-possible original intentions by tasking the government of Cyprus with the UNSCR 186, “to take all additional measures necessary to stop violence and bloodshed in Cyprus”,<sup>33</sup>

With this decision at their disposal, the Greek Cypriot leadership was able to claim jurisdiction over the entire island and over its entire population notwithstanding the fact that the internationally recognized constitution was violated. Makarios had immediately interpreted the UNSCR 186 as recognition of ‘unfettered independence’ and as ‘establishment beyond doubt of the legality of Government of Cyprus,’ which since 25 December had been wholly under the control of the Greek Cypriot community.<sup>34</sup>

Between the passing of the resolution on 4 March and the day the UNFICYP<sup>35</sup> became operational in August 1964, there was more fighting in Cyprus as the National Guard forces tried to secure their holdings before the arrival of the UN troops. During that period, 191 Turkish Cypriots were killed and an additional 209 of them reported missing. The corresponding figures for the Greeks were 133 fatalities and 41 missing. The events of this period also led to the displacement of an estimated 25,000 Turkish Cypriots and a few hundred Greek Cypriots. Turkish Cypriots from 96 villages (of these 24 were wholly Turkish Cypriot villages while the rest were mixed), fearing attacks by the Greek Cypriot paramilitaries, sought refuge in guarded enclaves in not more than 3 percent of the island.<sup>36</sup>

The end result was the total separation of the two communities. The Turkish Cypriot members of the government and the House of Representatives set up a ‘General Committee’, headed by Vice-President Küçük, as a provisional administrative body for the Turkish Cypriot community. Five District Committees and other levels of regional administrative organizations were also formed. This structure was maintained until 1967; later it was transformed into the Provisional Cyprus Turkish Administration.<sup>37</sup>

Neither the UN peacekeeping force (UNICYP) nor the mediation attempts by the UN and other actors were able to bridge the differences between the two sides. Inter-

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<sup>33</sup> United Nations Security Council. (1964). *Resolution 186 (1964)*. Retrieved from <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/5042895.67470551.html>, February 14, 2011.

<sup>34</sup> Makarios quoted in Akgün et al. (2005), p. 25.

<sup>35</sup> UNFICYP was established by the Security Council Resolution 186 (1964) and the mandate of the peacekeeping mission is being renewed on 6 month basis. Its primary goal is the prevent fighting between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities.

<sup>36</sup> Patrick, A. R. (1976). *Political Geography and the Cyprus Conflict: 1963-1971*. Ontario: University of Waterloo, p. 45-76.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 82-84.

communal violence continued almost unabated until 1974 and the UN was unable to hinder shipment of arms from mother countries to the island. Turkey's threat of intervention pulled the US into a debacle and forced them to be creative. President Johnson, uneasy for the possibility of Turkish intervention due to the fragile balance in the southeastern wing of NATO, came up with a plan named after the US Special Representative and former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, for the division of the island between two allies. According to this plan Karpas / Karpaz peninsula was to be given to Turkey, the rest of Cyprus would be united with Greece, the island would be divided into a number of districts, two or three of which would have a Turkish Cypriot majority and would be under Turkish Cypriot administration, those Turkish Cypriots wishing to emigrate to Turkey would receive compensation and finally Turkey would receive a territorial compensation in the Aegean; the Greek island of Kastellorizon / Meis were to be given to Turkey in exchange for Enosis, as well as a strip of territory in western Thrace.

Turkey and Greece initially accepted the plan in principle. However, further deliberations on the plan were interrupted by the events in Tylliria on 6 August 1964 as the Greek Cypriot forces led by commander Georgios Grivas launched an attack on Tylliria (a region in the north-west of the island with a cluster of five Turkish Cypriot villages). Makarios later announced his rejection of the plan, describing it as partition pretending to be Enosis. Because of Makarios' opposition, Greece also ended up rejecting the plan. Turkey later rejected a revised version of the plan, too. Another attempt to find a settlement to the problem by the UN also shared the same fate and was rejected this time by the Turkish Cypriots as it is was based on the denial of their constitutional rights. But in the mean time, inter-communal clashes continued and even led to Turkey's aerial intervention on August 7, 1964 in response to Greek Cypriot attacks in Tylliria.<sup>38</sup>

Another turning point in the long ominous history of the Cyprus question was July 20, 1974. On July 15, Archbishop Makarios was ousted in a Greek-supported coup, which was followed by an outbreak of violence within the Greek Cypriot community by the Greek junta. Fearing potential unification of the island with Greece, on July 17, the Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit flew to London to invite Britain to cooperate in launching the intervention through the British bases in order to avoid bloodshed. But Britain declined to cooperate with Turkey. One day later, on July 18, Ecevit called upon the junta in Athens to dismiss Sampson; withdraw the Greek officers in the Cypriot National Guard and to restore the constitution of the Republic of Cyprus. The junta, apparently confident that US would, as before, prevent Turkey from using force, responded vaguely.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Chandra, S., & Chandra, M. (2006). *International Conflicts and Peace Making Process: Role of the United Nations*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications, p. 272.

<sup>39</sup> Akgün et al. (2005), p. 32.



The transparent intervention of the Greek government was soon confirmed by Makarios himself. On July 19, having arrived in New York, he declared to the United Nations Security Council that the military régime of Greece had callously violated the independence of Cyprus. As a result of all these events, Turkey intervened to the island on July 20, 1974 and created a new status quo there.<sup>40</sup>

Since then, numerous efforts have been undertaken to reunite the island under one political administration. The United Nations have sought to bring about a comprehensive settlement and, when this proved difficult, to engage the parties in confidence-building measures in order to prepare the ground for such a settlement. Although the negotiations concerning a settlement of the conflict have been carried out on an inter-communal basis, without the direct participation of Greece and Turkey, both communities closely coordinate their policies on the Cyprus conflict with their respective motherlands.

The most notable UN-led attempt came in 2004 under the leadership of the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. The Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem, often referred to as the “Annan Plan”, envisaged unification of the island and was put to simultaneous referenda in both parts of Cyprus on April 24, 2004. While Turkish Cypriots approved the proposed peace dividend by a vote of 64,9 percent, 75,8 percent of Greek Cypriots rejected it.<sup>41</sup> Since the referenda were designed to serve as a constituent act, the Annan Plan could not be implemented. On May 1, the Republic of Cyprus became a new member state of the EU, but the *acquis communautaire* was suspended in areas that are not under the effective jurisdiction of the Greek Cypriot government.

## 5 Culture as an obsession

In spite of what has been said so far, the Cyprus issue is not an unsurmountable obstacle before Turkey’s EU accession. As it will be analysed in the concluding section, if worse comes to worst, through unilateral political action Turkey can become a member of the EU sometime in the future. Concessions mutual or unilateral are an indispensable part of politics and diplomacy. However, Turkey can hardly do anything to change its identity.

As any cursory observer of Turkey would know, after the arguments against democratic, political or economic readiness of Turkey were exhausted, the question of Turkey’s ‘Europeanness’ emerged. Contrary to the conclusions of the 1993 European

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<sup>40</sup> Clerides, G. (1997). *Cyprus: My Deposition, Volume 3*. Nicosia: Alithia Publishing, p. 349-357.

<sup>41</sup> Numbers retrieved from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus. (2008). *Latest Developments*. Retrieved from [http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2006.nsf/cyprus02\\_en/cyprus02\\_en?opendocument](http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2006.nsf/cyprus02_en/cyprus02_en?opendocument), February 14, 2011.

Council, whereby the European Union claimed that it was open to any European country fulfilling the democratic, political and economic criteria for membership, some member countries began to demand an identity criterion.

However, the answer to the question of whether Turkey is a European country or not, was given *stricto sensu* on October 3, 2005, when the decision to start the accession negotiations was taken. The same answer *lato sensu* can be predated to 1963 when the Association Agreement (Ankara Agreement) with European Economic Community (EEC) was signed. Yet, when it became clear that Turkey took its EU membership seriously, this question re-emerged and set off a whole debate about Turkish “Europeanness” and the European identity *per se*.

Under normal circumstances, if the rule of law is respected in its clarity, including the principle of *pacta sunt servanda*, such debate should not have much political repercussion. Even if conducted, it should stay in a domain of popular discussions. The case of Turkey, though, has been many times referred to as a *sui generis* case and the debate started in political circles, only later being transferred into the wider sphere. The idiom in this context has become very much ‘domesticated’ in the European language thus suggesting that Turkey itself bares *sui generis* features, i.e. it is so unique or incompatible that it cannot be included into any categorization or wider frame.<sup>42</sup>

This wouldn’t be the first time that a constructed Europe or European culture was used in order to support political interests. The concept of civilized Europe, used for the first time by the French physiocrat Abbe Nicolas Baudeau in 1766<sup>43</sup> and characterized by evolution, development and progress, became an elitist concept, a part of European identity building based on the existence of the ‘other’, an uncivilized one, the barbarian.<sup>44</sup> It was used for instance after the series of revolutions among the Slavic nations of Europe in 1848, when the so-called pan-Slavic expansion of Europe started being perceived as a threat, especially by the Germanic population. This fear resulted in ‘restricting’ the civilized part of Europe to the so-called Inner Europe, i.e. the German Territories, Great

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<sup>42</sup> Tiryaki, S. (2006a). Sui Generis. *Turkish Daily News*. Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/h.php?news=sui-generis-2006-10-09>, February 11, 2011.

<sup>43</sup> See Boer, P. (1995). Essay 1: Europe to 1914: The Making of an Idea. In K. Wilson & J. van der Dussen (Eds.), *The History of the Idea of Europe* (13-78). New York: Routledge.

<sup>44</sup> The expression ‘barbarians’ has its origins in Ancient Hellenes. The ancient Hellenes referred this way initially to the Persians, whose language they did not understand and later to all non-Greeks as to people who could make only unintelligible ‘bar-bar’ noise. The designation did not have at first negative connotation.

Britain, France, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy and the German speaking parts of Austria.<sup>45</sup>

And it was not a long time ago when Europe was divided into ‘civilized’ and ‘uncivilized’ parts during the Cold War era. Even the revolutions that changed Central and Eastern Europe in the wake of ‘1989/90’ did not have an impact on the perception. It was only the membership of those countries to the EU that made them Europeans in the eyes of others.<sup>46</sup> Today, it seems more than ever that membership in the EU determines who is *homo europeus* and who is not. It also has become clear that it is not the unmistakably defined Europe that serves as a criterion for EU membership. On the contrary, it is the political entity of the EU that classifies and labels certain countries as European.

This is why European leaders should be very careful when making decisions about the issues of EU enlargement and integration. Europeanization is becoming increasingly an elitist concept. Moreover, due to the populist rhetoric of some politicians, European *integration* has been turning into European *exclusion*. Sometimes implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, European culture is presented as something superior and at the same time unreachable for many. This part is particularly tricky, as the category of democracy has been known to be the central pillar of the concept of European culture.

As acknowledged in Article 128 (1) of the Lisbon Treaty, European culture lies in its multicultural diversity.<sup>47</sup> Europe has always been a mixture of cultures spilling over each other rather than a monolithic body.<sup>48</sup> Yet, the European identity building has ignored many awkward facts, and the historical myths of shared common history have

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<sup>45</sup> H. Kaelble in Brendel, T. (2006). The Historical Approach to European Identity. *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*,15(1), p 20.

<sup>46</sup> Yet even today, continuation of this popular perception can be felt in some countries in the EU, for instance Austria. As of 2011, some of the car rental companies in Austria do not rent cars if they are to be used in territory of ‘Slovakia or such countries’. They do this as a matter of policy despite of the existence of free movements of goods, persons, services and capital within the EU borders and the existence of Schengen zone for three years.

<sup>47</sup> Article 128 (1) of the Lisbon Treaty [former Article 128 of the Maastricht Treaty] states: “The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the member states, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.”

<sup>48</sup> In 1996 Spanish economist Dr Pedro Schwartz expressed his views about the EU in following words: “The Germans want the Union to stop them from falling into Nazi ways. The French wanted to be cured from an inferiority complex. The Italians want to become nation. The Spaniards want to burry Franco... I sometimes think that the Common Market should have been founded not in Rome but in Vienna, on Dr Freud’s couch.” See Euroknow. (2011). *The European Idea*. Retrieved from: <http://www.euro-know.org/dictionary/e.html#Europaidentity>, January 27, 2011.

usually served as border delineators, invoking a divine homogeneous origin of those living inside the borders.<sup>49</sup>

Especially while following the debates on Turkey's EU accession process, one might be made to believe in the collective past of the current 27 EU members and their natural European heritage. What seems natural, however, is a matter of memory. Things ancient enough, that no one can remember, are believed to have almost a biological origin. Moreover, as Iver. B Neumann puts it: "When an elite has formulated a political program, which hinges on the existence of some nation [here the Community], it is always possible, admittedly with more or less difficulty, to construct a prehistory for it, and thus embody it in time as well as in space. This is done... on a geographical area which is already, in a number of respects, heterogeneous."<sup>50</sup>

There is undoubtedly enough of common history between Turkey and the current EU member states. The cultural spillovers can be measured not only through the similarities among languages spoken in the territories of the late Ottoman Empire. Both Ancient Greece and Rome were Mediterranean civilizations with centres in Anatolia. Great Greek philosophers were educated in the East before they became great. On a lighter note, 'European natural heritage' is not as natural as might be believed. For example, the plane trees lining the national routes of France arrived from the East in the 1700s and the tulip, the symbol of Ottomans, arrived from Turkey to Netherlands in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>51</sup>

Obviously, it is becoming increasingly difficult to hinder Turkey's accession process on economical, geographical, political and even demographical grounds.<sup>52</sup> It is also difficult to draw a clear line of cultural distinction between Turkey and other European states. In this light, it is challenging to understand how and why Turkey's

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<sup>49</sup> Tiryaki, S. (2006b). European Identity 2006. *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, 15(1), pp. 47.

<sup>50</sup> Neumann, I. B. (1992). *Regions in International Relations Theory: The Case for a Region-Building Approach*. Research Report No. 162. Oslo: Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt, p.14.

<sup>51</sup> Hill, R. (2002). *We Europeans*. Brussels: Europublic, p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> When it comes to demography, the picture after couple of years will be probably much different than it is now. The EU working population will decrease about 40 million by 2050, i.e. there will be two people working for a pension of every European over 65. Trying to catch up with the ambitious Lisbon agenda and having on board a state [Turkey] whose population is expected to reach 80 million in 2015, can also be an asset for the EU. However, since 1970 the fertility rate [in Turkey] has dropped from 3.5 to 2.5 children per woman and the population at the productive age decreased from 50 per cent to 40 per cent. Thus, as Turkey also starts suffering from an aging population, just like the rest of Europe, the demographical size of Turkey as one of the strongest arguments both for and against Turkish membership, can soon become a non-issue. See Tiryaki, S. (2004). Europe Cast Away? *Turkish Daily News*. Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/h.php?news=a-birds-eye-view-2004-08-29>, February 11, 2011.

accession would represent a threat to European identity. Statements like ‘... finally we have to tell the Turks that they don’t belong to Europe...’ do not bring us any closer to a deeper understanding.<sup>53</sup>

All this is true, of course, unless the answer is Islam. Even though it was only in the course of the 15<sup>th</sup> century that Europe became linked with the word Christendom, some of us still might remember attempts to make a reference to the ‘Christian tradition’ as a unified European force in the preamble of the EU constitutional draft. Moreover, Christianity has never been especially European, and it was often source of schism rather than unity even within today’s EU borders.

Turkey’s EU accession period came about in a time when Islamophobia<sup>54</sup> had started flourishing, especially after September 11, and anti-immigration feelings were high among many EU member states. Moreover, recent remarks by British Prime Minister David Cameron on the West’s policy and multiculturalism at the international conference in Munich are rather disturbing.<sup>55</sup> It is even more worrying that his blaming of multiculturalism for fostering Islamist extremism came out as echoing an earlier, similar view voiced by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel.<sup>56</sup>

Culture is a dynamic category open to the process of mutual influence of spillovers and interactions. Locating it within strictly defined boundaries is a fundamentally artificial construct. Thus, attempts to define European culture with the absolute certainty bring the definition itself *ad absurdum*.<sup>57</sup> In this light, calls for stronger [U.K.] national identity and hailing the failure of multiculturalism might not be the correct way out. Or, as Amin Maalouf puts it in his *On Identity*, it is precarious that “on one hand there is a religion – Christianity – destined forever to act as a vector for modernism, freedom, tolerance and democracy, and on the other hand there is another religion – Islam –

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<sup>53</sup> Tiryaki. (2006b). p. 49.

<sup>54</sup> “Baroness Warsi, the chairman of the main party in Britain’s governing coalition, has said that anti-Muslim prejudice has “passed the dinner table test” and become socially acceptable in the UK.” See Viewpoints: Anti-Muslim prejudice in Europe. (2011). *BBC*. Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-12240433>, February 6, 2011.

<sup>55</sup> Prime Minister Cameron’s remarks also instigated a debate on a nature and definition of multiculturalism. It seems there is little consensus on the meaning of the word. For more, see for example Multiculturalism: What does it mean? (2011), *BBC*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine/>, February 8, 2011.

<sup>56</sup> British PM: Multiculturalism has failed. (2011). *MSNBC*. Retrieved from: [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/41444364/ns/world\\_news-europe/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/41444364/ns/world_news-europe/), February 6, 2011.

<sup>57</sup> Tiryaki. (2006b). p. 49.

doomed from the outset to despotism and obscurantism... Such a notion throws a cloud over the future of a large part of the human race.”<sup>58</sup>

The Maastricht Treaty’s objective that the EU should ‘assert its identity on the international scene’ and the European Constitution’s reference to the universal values make the debate on European culture and values incomprehensible. There is no logical reason to assume that values that are universal and at the same time European cannot be adopted – or have not been adopted and put into practice – by a country like Turkey.<sup>59</sup>

Having said all this, it is important also to state the obvious: Turkey is not only one of the largest members of NATO, but also a member of European organizations like OSCE, OECD and moreover a founding member of the Council of Europe, where it currently holds a Chairmanship [of the Committee of Ministers], already for the seventh time since the Council of Europe’s inception.

Regardless, EU is too heterogeneous of a unit to provide for a social identification for an individual member. It is up to states to identify themselves with the Community, and for this type of identification the EU has set up a very clear set of rules. Identity is a concept rather than a real entity. As such, it is too ambiguous to serve as an explanatory tool. As Brubaker and Cooper note, the constructivist approach ‘softened’ the meaning of the term [identity] to the extent that it has lost its explanatory potential.<sup>60</sup>

## 6 Instead of final words

Even though the basic rule of the accession negotiations is their being open-ended, it was believed that once full alignment with the *acquis* was achieved, a country could become a full EU member since the candidate country would fulfill the so-called Copenhagen Criteria before starting accession negotiations according to the conclusions of the 1993 European Council. Undisputedly, no one can guarantee the outcome of any negotiation. Yet, we traditionally tend to believe that negotiations must be subject to certain rules and that such rules must be observed. Hence, the principle of *pacta sunt servanda* has happened to be taken for granted for already a couple of millennia.

In the case of Turkey, it seems that some EU member countries, perhaps trying not to be seen as violating the norms and practices of their own, are erecting a phony obstacle in the form of the Cyprus problem. Ignoring its historical legacy, denying the reality on

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<sup>58</sup> Maalouf, A. (2000). *On Identity*. London: The Harvill Press, p. 47.

<sup>59</sup> Tiryaki. (2006b). p. 49.

<sup>60</sup> Brubaker, R., & Cooper, F. (2000). Beyond identity. *Theory and Society*, 29(1), pp. 1-2.

the ground and predicting that the Cyprus question would be resolved in the foreseeable future, they try to put pressure on Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots. The EU, by forgetting its own commitments<sup>61</sup> expects a unilateral action from Turkey, which is highly likely to be detrimental to the solution of the Cyprus problem on the basis of the UN parameters.

If Turkey unilaterally fulfils its obligations stemming from the Customs Union, it would mean nothing in terms of the solution of the problem. Even if Turkey withdraws its entire military contingent from the island, the EU would have to face the dilemma of finding a just and viable settlement to the Cyprus problem, with outstanding unresolved issues of power-sharing, territorial adjustment and property between the two communities.

In this paper we tried to address some of the associated difficulties by elaborating the history of the Cyprus problem. It is our conviction that cultural bias prevailing against Turkey obscures the Cyprus problem and leads to oversimplifications. Without debating and facing in all respects the irrational nature of its Islamophobic obsession, the EU can hardly contribute to the solution of the Cyprus problem, let alone to Turkey's membership.

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<sup>61</sup> On April 26, 2004 the Council of the EU “determined to put an end to the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community and to facilitate the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community”. (Council of the European Union. (2004). Council Meeting – General Affairs, C/04/115, 8566/04 (Presse 115). Luxembourg. Retrieved from <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=PRES/04/115&format=HTML&aged=0&lg=sl&guiLanguage=en>, February 14, 2011.)

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