

The European Union, Turkey and the Cyprus problem

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CHAPTER 1

EUROPEAN UNION, TURKEY AND THE CYPRUS PROBLEM: THE FAILURE OF A CATALYST

GEORGE KYRIS

Introduction

The Cyprus problem has always been a 'cornerstone' of Turkish foreign policy. For years, Ankara followed a rather inflexible stance towards the prospects of solution. The solution is understood here as the compromised form of a negotiated solution for a united Cyprus as a bizonal, bicomunal federation that both communities and the international world are formally committed to. However, the recognition of Turkey as a candidate for EU membership in 1999 meant to profoundly impact the country's position towards the inter-communal dispute in the island. With the resolution of the Cyprus problem included in its accession conditionality, Turkey made a spectacular shift of policy and supported the 'Annan Plan', the United Nations (UN)-proposed blueprint for the reunification of the island based on a loose federation. Despite the support of Turkish-Cypriots, who saw reunification and European Union (EU) integration as the way out of their international isolation, Annan Plan was rejected by the Greek-Cypriots, who had safeguarded their EU entry as the Republic of Cyprus (RoC). As a result, Cyprus acceded to the EU as a divided country. After that, the impact of the EU on Turkey's strategy towards Cyprus has changed significantly. Due to a variety of issues related to the EU and most importantly its less clear EU accession prospects, Turkey has displayed less flexibility compared with the pre-Annan era. This investigation of

the 'Europeanisation' of Ankara's Cyprus policy in this post-2004 era is the aim of this chapter.

The first part of this chapter introduces the conceptual framework of Europeanisation. The second part reflects on the importance of the Cyprus problem for Turkey; and on how Brussels affected Ankara's stance towards the dispute in the years leading up to the EU accession of Cyprus. In the third and main section, the various issues that shape the EU's influence on Turkey's position on the problem are discussed: these include the outcome of the Annan Plan referendums, the Greek-Cypriot stance towards the dispute and Turkey, Turkey's progress in EU accession and, lastly, rising Turkish Euroscepticism. Finally, a conclusion summarises the main arguments of the chapter, which largely draws on the analyses of official documents, policy discourse and elite interviews.

Europeanisation and foreign policy: a conceptual framework

Notwithstanding the suggested 'many faces of Europeanisation' (Olsen 2002), the majority of the literature seeks to explain Europeanisation as a process via which the EU impacts domestic setting. In a seminal work, Ladrech terms Europeanisation as a:

'process re-orienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that European [Union] political and economic dynamics become part of the organisational logic of national politics and policy-making' (1994: 69).

Indeed, this chapter follows the widespread understanding of Europeanisation as the process via which the EU impacts domestic politics, policy and polity (Ladrech 1994; Börzel 1999; Wallace 2000; Hix and Goetz 2001; Töller 2010). With an increased focus on change (Featherstone 2003), Börzel and Risse (2002) have attempted a useful categorisation of the

degree of change produced at the domestic level between absorption (minimal degree of change), accommodation (modest degree of change), and finally, transformation (large degree of change). This chapter focuses on policy change and, in particular, the impact of the EU on the Cyprus issue as a major foreign policy matter for the EU candidate Turkey.

Indeed, EU enlargement constitutes a fast-growing branch of the Europeanisation literature, which aims to investigate how the process of accession has impacted candidate countries, with an added focus on conditionality (e.g. Grabbe 2001; Vachudova 2003; Glenn 2004). An important difference in conceptualising Europeanisation in the context of enlargement is that the process of EU-induced change has a much more 'top-down' character: when discussing the situation of the EU members states, Europeanisation is better understood as both a 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' process (Dyson and Goetz 2003: 20): a 'circular' rather than a unidirectional phenomenon (Goetz 2002), whereby EU member states can 'upload' and 'download' policies at the same time (Connolly 2008); and shape and adapt to EU policy outcomes (Börzel and Risse 2002). In contrast, EU accession is better conceptualised as a predominantly top-down process, since the power asymmetry in favour of Brussels does not allow candidate countries to affect EU decision-making or the conditionality that becomes an avenue of their 'Europeanisation'.

This rather asymmetrical power equilibrium is also obvious in conditionality via which the EU might cause domestic change. Sedelmeier (2011) draws attention on the variable of the credibility of conditionality, which has two sides: on the one hand, candidates must be sure that meeting conditionality will bring the reward of EU membership ('carrot' of membership). On the other hand, the EU should also be explicit that failure to satisfy conditionality will lead to suspension of the promised reward ('stick'). Besides, the credibility of EU membership

prize is also very important for the public support for EU accession, which seems to provide governments with additional room for Europeanisation-induced reforms (Agh 1999: 841; Lippert et. al. 2001: 1001-1002).

Finally, the experience of EU enlargement is also very relevant to the so-called 'goodness of fit' thesis (Cowles et al. 2001; Börzel and Risse 2002; Featherstone and Radaelli 2003), which suggests that the bigger the 'misfit' between EU and national policies or structures the greater the degree of Europeanisation-induced change is. For example this was the case for the CEECs that joined the EU in the 2004 and 2007 enlargements as well as Croatia that is about to become an EU member in July 2013. Discussing foreign policy, which lies at the centre of our investigation, Tsartsanidis and Stavridis (2005: 220) suggest that Europeanisation is best tested in 'difficult cases', in which foreign policy aims contradict the EU's agenda; and that Europeanisation is best conceptualised as a transformation of past national foreign policy priorities.

Hereby, Europeanisation is deployed to investigate the EU's impact on the foreign policy of Turkey as a candidate for EU membership and, in particular, the Cyprus issue. Until now, the literature has extensively discussed how the promise of EU membership triggered a radical shift in Turkey's policy on the Cyprus front, mostly manifested in more flexibility and support for reunification based on the Annan Plan (e.g. Çelenk 2007; Suvarierol 2003). Although there is indeed evidence of significant Europeanisation of Turkish foreign policy in this regard, research seems to concentrate on the years leading-up to the referendums on the UN-proposed plan. However, more recent years have seen a variety of new developments, not least the failure of reunification plan and the EU accession of the RoC, coupled with a decreasing momentum in Turkey's EU accession. For that reason, the post-Annan era

becomes particularly significant in understanding to what extent the 'Europeanisation' of Turkish foreign policy continues in the same way and degree. The pre- and post-Annan eras are addressed respectively in the next two sections.

The Pre-Annan era: the European Union catalyst

Undoubtedly, the Cyprus problem has been a 'totemic' issue of Turkish foreign policy agenda. For years, the government of Turkey had been rather inflexible towards the prospects of a solution (e.g. Kazan 2002). After Cyprus gained independence as RoC, the partnership state between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots, ongoing inter-communal conflict led to the gradual division of the island into two administrative and territorial zones: the once bi-communal RoC is monopolised by the Greek-Cypriots in the south, while Turkish-Cypriots retired in the north under their secessionist state of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which was self-declared in 1983. Until today, the international community does not recognise the Turkish-Cypriot administration and continues to regard the now Greek-Cypriot-led RoC as the legitimate government of the country. In contrast, Ankara has showed a continuous support to the autonomous existence of Turkish-Cypriots. This position often implicated the efforts for reunification based on a federative basis, as agreed by the two communities of the island and supported by the international community¹. Despite this historical inflexibility, the prospects of EU membership led to a profound 'Europeanisation' of Turkish policy towards the Cyprus issue.

¹ In 1977, the two communities signed the 'four point agreement', which set the basic principles for negotiations: any solution should be based on a federal, bi-communal and non-aligned state, where the territorial division should not be strictly based on population ratio (Fisher 2001: 315).

The EU's influence on Ankara's policy towards the Cyprus issue began with the application of the RoC, as represented by the Greek-Cypriots³, for EU membership in 1990. In those early stages of Cyprus' accession, the EU seemed to (indirectly) strengthen Turkish intransigence. The application of the Greek-Cypriots in the name of the country as a whole frustrated both Ankara and north Nicosia and hardened their position (see Çelenk 2007: 350; Suvarierol 2003: 58). In 1998, the opening of EU accession negotiations for the RoC but not for Turkey pushed Ankara to further intransigence; and it resulted in the signing of a joint declaration by Turkey and ~~the Turkish-Cypriots TRNC~~ that provided for greater integration between ~~them Turkey and Turkish-Cypriots~~ and attacked the legitimacy of Cyprus' EU accession process:

Comment [A1]: I corrected that because it seemed a bit odd to me. In any case, let's make sure that any reference to 'TRNC' is referred to as 'self-declared TRNC' to avoid a politically charged text.

'...the EU membership of Cyprus can be taken up in discussions once the final political settlement is reached [...] as stipulated by the 1959 Zurich and London Agreements, Cyprus cannot join international political and economic unions to which Turkey and Greece are not members (Republic of Turkey 2008).'

Until that moment, the role of the EU in Turkey's policy towards Cyprus was rather peripheral, given the low intensity of relations between Ankara and Brussels and the limited intentions of the latter to actively affect Turkey's foreign agenda. However, the EU began to play a role in Ankara's policy towards Cyprus, when Turkey was recognised as a candidate for EU membership (European Council 1999) subject to its contribution to the resolution of the Cyprus problem. This set the stage for a transformative process of Europeanisation of Turkish foreign policy.

Turkey's 'ticket' for EU membership was meant to change the role of the EU in Ankara's stance vis-à-vis the Cyprus problem. Initially, Turkey stayed defensive. In reaction to the outcome of the Helsinki Summit, the then Turkish Prime Minister (PM) Bülent Ecevit stated that 'existence of the TRNC is inevitable not only for Turkish-Cypriots, but also for Turkey's security' (Anatolia, 1999). This support of the self-declared Turkish-Cypriot state contradicted international efforts for reunification based on a compromise and a federal formula. Even after the start of fresh UN-supported negotiations between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots in 2002, the Deputy PM Mesut Yılmaz reconfirmed Ankara's mantra that 'there exist two different nations and two sovereign states in the island' and reiterated that Turkey's EU membership could not be associated with a settlement of the Cyprus Problem (Turkish Daily News, 2002a; 2002b). Nevertheless, a series of developments would put a dramatic end to this inflexible policy.

Comment [FC2]: I couldn't see these in the bibliography. Could you double check all references are in the bibliography, please? **Done**

First of all, the rise of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi - AKP) in late 2002 changed Turkey's view of the Cyprus problem in relation to the EU. The new government put EU accession high on the list of its priorities and, therefore, supported resolution of the inter-communal dispute in Cyprus, which was included in the conditionality of EU accession. Indeed, this was a policy choice that yielded extensive public support, given the appeal that EU membership enjoyed (European Commission 2004b). As a result, shortly after the formation of the first AKP government, PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan set the tone for a more flexible position declaring that '[he was] not in favour of the continuation of the policy that [had] been maintained in Cyprus over the past thirty to forty years' (The Independent, 2003).

Comment [FC3]: It is because his election was a bit complex and he was initially not officially elected as the PM due to his previous prison sentence. **OK**

In addition to the significance of EU accession for the newly elected government, a series of other factors contributed to a change in Ankara's policy towards the Cyprus problem, some of which still directly relate to the EU. Firstly, the clear parliamentary majority that the AKP secured allowed the party to make radical policy choices. A more flexible strategy was also welcome due to the strategic interest of Turkey in preventing a Greek-Cypriot-dominated state's accession to the EU that could damage the country's own European aspirations (Suvarierol 2003: 66) ~~but also due to the growing as well as spreading Turkish-Cypriot pro-~~ solution attitudes (see also Christophorou 2005). At the same time, domestic scepticism against AKP's potentially Islamic agenda led Erdoğan to prioritise Cyprus settlement in order to gain international support and, through that, fortify his domestic position (Oktay and Kınacıoğlu 2006: 264). Finally, Turkey's improving ties with the EU member state Greece also played a positive role, as Ankara recognised that better relations between the two sides of the Aegean would contribute to its EU ambitions (Barkey and Gordon 2001; Ker-Lindsay 2007). No matter how diverse, what lies behind all these developments was the strategic choice of Turkey to meet EU conditionality and fulfill its European aspirations.

Comment [FC4]: I don't understand what you mean by this. Could you formulate it as a separate sentence please. Thanks! **Done**

Along these lines, the prospects of EU membership and the accession conditionality led to a remarkable 'Europeanisation' and a major shift in Turkey's position towards the Cyprus dispute. The prioritisation of EU accession at both public and elite levels resulted in a change in the foreign policy towards Cyprus, largely in accordance with the conditionality imposed. In Europeanisation terms, the large 'misfit' between the long-standing inflexible policy towards the Cyprus problem and the flexibility that EU conditionality asked for facilitated the 'transformation' of Turkey's foreign policy. As a result of Ankara's support and the pro-solution/EU trend expressed in north Cyprus, Turkish-Cypriots favoured the Annan Plan in the referendums of April 2004. However, the rejection of the plan by the Greek-Cypriots put an end to

any hopes for reunification and Cyprus acceded to the EU as a divided island later that May, *de facto* represented by the Greek-Cypriots. The failure of reunification in turn had a significant impact on the trajectory of the Cyprus problem, Turkey's EU aspirations as well as Ankara's position *vis-à-vis* the inter-communal dispute.

The Post-Annan era: the failure of a catalyst?

In the post-Annan era, a series of issues have shaped the Europeanisation of the Cyprus question in the foreign policy agenda of Turkey: The most important EU-related factors that impacted Turkey's policy are analysed below. These include: the Annan Plan referendums in both Cypriot communities and their outcome; the Greek-Cypriot position particularly towards Turkey's EU accession as expressed by the government on the RoC; the slow-down in Turkey's EU accession process; and finally, the rising Euroscepticism in Turkey.

The Annan Plan referendums

The Annan Plan was the most thorough effort to resolve the inter-communal dispute to date. In this regard, the outcome of the referendums sent waves of disappointment to the international community. The Greek-Cypriot side, which was traditionally seen as more flexible, voted against resolution, while the Turkish-Cypriots favoured reunification. Here, prospects of EU integration impacted the two Cypriot communities in very different fashions: for Greek-Cypriots, disapproval of the plan was regarded an instrument to secure accession to the EU alone and to strengthen their diplomatic position. On the contrary, Turkish-Cypriots backed the plan, also because for them it meant the realisation of their European integration, which could provide a series of advantages for the isolated community.² However, the

² This is based on interviews that I conducted in 2009 with a member of Turkish-Cypriot Chamber of Commerce and with a member of the Communal Democracy Party.

rejection of the Plan by the Greek-Cypriots led to an unexpected wave of sympathy to the Turkish-Cypriots as a result of their positive stance towards reunification and their unfulfilled aspirations for a future in the EU (General Affairs Council 2004). Simultaneously, the referendum results triggered wide frustration with the Greek-Cypriot side that was even considered to have 'cheated' the EU (EUObserver, 2004). This resulted in a new balance of power that was recognised by Ankara and by PM Erdoğan:

'New conditions have emerged in the island after the referenda [...] this new tableau [...] has made our country the advantageous side for the first time during the history of [the] Cyprus question [sic].' (*Anatolia News*, 2004)

Consequently, Turkey took the opportunity to harden its position towards the Cyprus problem and very often underlined that it was now the turn of the Greek-Cypriot side to show goodwill (NTV 2004). In the midst of numerous calls for ending the isolation of northern Cyprus, Turkey also suggested that the Turkish-Cypriots should be rewarded for their positive stance on the Annan Plan, mainly via a lift of international economic embargo against them (*Turkish Weekly* 2005a; 2005b). Lastly, Ankara repeated the argument that Greek-Cypriot rejection of the Plan meant the continuation of the status quo in Cyprus, an anomalous EU accession of a divided island and an administration (i.e. the RoC) that did not represent the Turkish-Cypriots. In comparison to previous Turkish governments references to the self-declared TRNC were still scarce. Nevertheless, there was now a clearer advocacy of the separate existence and self-determination of the Turkish-Cypriots. Indeed, the Annan Plan provisions of two equal states actually seems to have informed Ankara's argument about the political equality between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots (*Anatolia* 2005).

Comment [FC5]: Could you make sure all names of media outlets in brackets are italicized? Also the dates should not be stated in brackets for news outlets. You can distinguish them as e.g. *Anatolia News* 2004a, 2004b etc. Thanks!
Done

Comment [FC6]: Could you also adjust the bibliography? Thanks!
Done

In this regard, the aftermath of the Annan Plan has contributed to a continuation of the 'Europeanisation' of Turkey's policy on Cyprus, however, in the rather opposite direction. The EU, by failing to trigger pro-solution attitudes in both sides of the 'Green Line' and welcoming a divided island to its circles, led to a hardening of Turkish policy towards Cyprus. This was also due to the loss of international credibility that the Greek-Cypriot side suffered from and the contrasting trend of understanding towards the Turkish-Cypriots. Although, initially, Turkey's policy on the inter-communal problem continued to be rather compromising, each side's voting behaviour on the Annan Plan became a source of increased Turkish confidence, and, in a way, allowed Ankara to claim that they have met the conditionality related to the Cyprus problem by supporting the resolution plan. Many years after, the referendums continue to inspire Ankara's rhetoric: Turkey's less compromising policy towards the inter-communal dispute is often linked to the Greek-Cypriot rejection of the Annan Plan and the then contrasting flexible position of Turkey and the Turkish-Cypriots (eg. *Turkish Press*, 2008; *The Sunday Times*, 2012).

The Greek-Cypriot position

The EU accession of Cyprus in 2004 caused a fundamental change in the relations between RoC, Turkey, Turkish-Cypriots and the EU. In effect, Brussels' neutrality in the Cyprus problem has ceased to exist, since one major party to the dispute – Greek-Cypriots as represented by the RoC – is now part of the EU itself, with important leverage over EU's position through participation in the EU decision-making mechanisms and the potential exercise of the veto power in a number of issues. This added to the deterioration of relations between the RoC and Turkey; and to the EU-influenced hardening of Turkish stance against the Cyprus problem.

One of Ankara's greatest concerns was that the EU accession of Cyprus in the administrative face of the RoC would significantly increase the Greek-Cypriot diplomatic power and pose hermetic barriers to Turkey's own EU accession. Indeed, the RoC has played an important role in the staggering accession process of Turkey. A few months after joining the EU, Greek-Cypriots presented a 'shopping list' of demands that expected to be addressed by Turkey before opening of accession negotiations (Faustmann 2011). Although this exhaustive list of requirements was eventually dropped after peer-pressure from other member states, the ratification of the Additional Protocol, which extends the Turkey-EU custom union to all EU member states, including the RoC, was linked to the opening of EU accession negotiations with Turkey (European Commission 2005: 6).

Ankara signed the Protocol but issued a declaration that the signature did neither amount to recognition of the RoC nor the opening of Turkish ports to it (Republic of Turkey 2005). Despite the Greek-Cypriot objections, accession negotiations with Turkey were opened in 2005 but the RoC has continued to pose challenges to Turkey's EU road throughout the negotiations process. Most importantly, in 2006, the EU decided not to open eight chapters to negotiation and not to conclude the negotiation of any chapters before Ankara implements the Protocol (Council of the EU 2006). At the same time, the Greek Cypriots have used their membership power to affect Turkey-EU relations beyond the strictly-speaking accession process. For example, in 2011, the RoC tried to veto Turkish participation in EU-Syrian talks on the Syrian crisis (*Today's Zaman*, 2011). Moreover, the RoC has often deployed their leverage over Turkey's EU accession negotiations to force Ankara to take a more flexible stance on many other matters, such as the Greek-Cypriot efforts for gas exploitation (*Reuters*, 2011). However, instead of leading to flexibility, the Greek-Cypriot efforts were matched with Turkish exploratory oil drills in northern Cyprus (*BBC News*, 2012).

Another issue that informed the inflexible Turkish position towards the Cyprus problem has been the Greek-Cypriot efforts to veto greater integration between the EU and Turkish-Cypriots. After their positive vote on the Annan Plan, the EU suggested that it would be unfair to leave the Turkish-Cypriots 'out in the cold' (European Commission 2004c). Therefore, the Council declared its determination:

'to put an end to the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community and to facilitate the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging [their] economic development' (General Affairs Council 2004)'.

Following the 'Green Line Regulation' (Council of the EU 2004), which aims to regulate movement of goods and persons across the 'Green Line' and promote Turkish-Cypriot economy, the European Commission proposed two instruments for the assistance of Turkish-Cypriots: the Direct Trade Regulation (European Commission 2004d), which aims to foster trade between the EU and northern Cyprus, and the 'Financial Aid Regulation' (Council of the EU 2006b), which broadly targets development and preparation for implementation of the EU law in the Turkish-Cypriot community. Although the Financial Aid Regulation was adopted in 2006, the Direct Trade Regulation remains on the table due to opposition by the Greek-Cypriots, who suggest that implementation equals to recognition of the self-declared Turkish-Cypriot state. This Greek-Cypriot position has been a long-lasting source of frustration both in northern Cyprus and Turkey.³ Indeed, Ankara very often conditions the full application of the Additional Protocol on the implementation of the Direct Trade Regulation (*BBC News*, 2006).

³ This is based on interviews conducted in 2009 with a member of the EU Coordination Centre and with a Turkish-Cypriot Leadership Representative.

In this context, Turkey's policy towards the Cyprus problem has hardened also due to the Greek-Cypriot strategy to push towards stricter EU conditionality and other concessions. Although the EU has managed to partially mediate the assertiveness with which Greek-Cypriots have deployed advantages of membership, RoC has still informed a stricter EU conditionality. Besides, the EU entry of the RoC has created more practical challenges for Turkish foreign policy that go beyond the previously relatively abstract political conditionality merely calling for Turkey's support to the resolution process in Cyprus (e.g. Helsinki 1999). In contrast, now Turkey is specifically asked, for instance, to implement the additional Protocol. As a result of this accelerating linkage between Cyprus problem and Turkey's EU accession conditionality, the Europeanisation of Turkish Foreign policy takes the form of further inflexibility *vis-à-vis* the Cyprus problem, most prominently reflected in the refusal to fully implement the Additional Protocol. Despite causing short-term inflexibility, the diplomatic stance of the Greek-Cypriots contributes to the credibility of conditionality as a 'tool' of Europeanisation: the 'stick' here is particularly explicit and it is clear that in absence of a contribution to the resolution of the Cyprus problem, the EU, under the pressure of the RoC, will not allow Turkey to enter the EU. However, this is only one aspect of conditionality. As discussed below, the 'carrot' of membership is not as clear anymore, thus undermining the overall credibility of conditionality in the post-Annan era Europeanisation process.

Slow-down in Turkey's EU accession process

Ankara's position towards the Cyprus problem has also been mediated by the overall slow-down of Turkey's EU accession process. In addition to Turkey's indeed very important refusal to implement the Additional Protocol, a range of other issues has erected barriers in

Turkey's path towards EU accession. First of all, the enlargement strategy as a whole has seen a decrease in importance as a result of various crises that have tarnished the EU in recent years. Indeed, the expansion policy itself suffered an important fatigue, following the accession of twelve new states in 2004 and 2007. Naturally, the biggest victim of this crisis was Turkey, which constituted the most challenging enlargement case at this point (Eralp 2009). In addition, the crisis on constitutional reform, the Lisbon Treaty and the more recent Eurozone crisis have shifted the EU's attention to internal matters and have made enlargement a less important matter in the agenda.

All together, the rise of European scepticism towards Turkey's accession at both public and elite level, especially in front-line members of French and German politics has also slowed down the accession process (Reuters 2007). Indeed, Germany has repeatedly proposed 'privileged partnership' as an alternative to Turkish EU membership (Hürriyet Daily News, 2010). Similarly, French ex-President Nicolas Sarkozy has opposed to Turkey's EU membership and controversially claimed that: 'Europe has been lying about its borders. Turkey is in Asia Minor and not in Europe' (*Euractiv*, 2011). The recently elected new French President Francois Hollande raised expectations for less resistance to Turkey's EU accession but the position of the new leadership remains unclear (Huf Post World 2012). Lastly, other influential EU figures are also thought took sceptical positions towards full EU membership of Turkey. For example, despite abstaining from inflammatory rhetoric after his election to the post of Presidency of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy had previously fervently opposed Turkey's EU accession suggesting that:

'Turkey is not [...] and will never be part of Europe [...] The universal values which are in force in Europe, and which are fundamental values of Christianity, will loose vigour with the entry of a large Islamic country.' (*Telegraph*, 2009)

At the same time, public attitudes also recorded rising reservations towards Turkey's EU membership. For example, the referendums on the constitutional Treaty in 2008 were dominated by issues related to Turkey's EU accession; and it showcased a lot of scepticism towards the country (European Commission 2010). Lastly, the Cyprus problem itself and the related Greek-Cypriot effort to push for concessions from Ankara have posed a very large barrier against Turkey's EU aspirations and a fast-track progress of integration.

Consequently, the momentum created in Helsinki in 1999 has been reversed and so have the incentives provided to Ankara for a decisively contributing position towards solution of the Cyprus problem. In an era in which the EU needs to address several domestic matters before pursuing further expansion, the entire enlargement strategy has been hit. But, more specifically, Turkey's EU aspirations have further been damaged by rising scepticism towards the country's accession. In this regard, the decreasing importance of Turkey within EU enlargement and numerous calls for alternative ways of association between the two sides has resulted in limited Turkish motivation to fast act with regard to conditionality as a whole, let alone the sensitive Cyprus problem. Indeed, the decreasing ability of the EU to promote change in the absence of a clear 'reward' is most indicative of the importance of conditionality's credibility for the process of Europeanisation.

Turkish Euroscepticism

This slow-down in Ankara-Brussels relations has also had an impact on domestic Turkish politics and Turkish public attitudes towards the EU. Largely as a result of the staggering accession progress, the public has lost their early zeal about a European future: the support for EU membership has dropped from 62 percent in 2004 to 37 percent in 2012 (European

Commission 2004 and 2012 respectively). Consequently, domestic eurospectic elites have obtained more power and this, in turn, makes EU accession a gradually costly option for the *AKP* government (Hannay 2006), especially if it means more concessions in the sensitive Cyprus problem. Accordingly, the arguments for 'privileged partnership' have not been well received by the governing Turkish elites. For example, chief EU negotiator Egemen Bağış has stated that 'such a thing as privileged partnership does not exist [and] I feel insulted for being offered something which does not exist' (*BBC News* 2010), while Turkish President Abdullah Gül has reiterated that full EU membership continues to be the main objective of Ankara (*Today's Zaman* 2011).

In this regard, the diminishing public support to the EU has further limited the government's room for flexible positions in the name of EU accession. The extensive pro- Europeanism that prevailed in the aftermath of the Helsinki summit and the credible European future of Turkey together provided flexibility for concessions on the Cyprus problem that facilitated the EU accession objective. However, the decreasing positive image of the EU, which directly relates to the failure of Brussels to sustain a clear accession promise, limits the options available to the Turkish government for compromises in the Cyprus problem. Indeed, Ankara has obtained more intransigent positions vis-à-vis the inter-communal dispute and this is an EU effect on the country's strategy towards Cyprus.

Conclusions

The process of EU accession has significantly impacted on Ankara's foreign policy and position towards the Cyprus problem. The recognition of Turkey as a candidate for EU membership in 1999, the election of the *AKP* three years later and the extensive public support altogether cultivated in the EU's becoming a policy objective of paramount

importance for Turkey. In this regard the EU triggered a top-down 'transformation' of Turkey's foreign policy in the form of more flexibility towards the Cyprus problem, which was included in the conditionality of Turkey's EU accession. Indeed, the 'misfit' between the long-standing inflexible Turkish policies towards Cyprus and the contribution to the resolution of the dispute that EU conditionality asked for resulted in the significant Europeanisation and shift in Turkish foreign policy.

The post-Annan era represents a different picture, mostly defined by a decrease in the clarity of the EU membership reward and, therefore, less credible conditionality. 'Europeanisation' of the Turkish Foreign Policy continues but a variety of reasons have led to a less flexible position towards the inter-communal dispute, which does not resemble the pre-Annan degree of 'transformation' of policy. Albeit the Turkish foreign policy still continues to be more flexible than what it used to be before the start of accession process, there is a notable hardening of rhetoric compared with the compromising positions adopted in the process leading to the Annan Plan. In this regard, although the staggering negotiations on the Cyprus problem do not allow for a full revelation of Turkey's position, examples of inflexibility include Ankara's refusal to implement the Additional Protocol and its increasingly hostile rhetoric that blames the Greek-Cypriot side for the pending division of the island.

A first source of this inflexibility is the Greek-Cypriot entry to the EU despite their rejection of the Annan Plan in contrast to the Turkish-Cypriot support for reunification. Furthermore, the Greek-Cypriot efforts to use EU membership in order to impose strict conditionality and to secure Turkish flexibility over many matters have further hardened Ankara's position. Nevertheless, this more explicit and, therefore, credible conditionality might set the stage for the long-term Europeanisation of Turkish foreign policy towards more flexible positions,

since it makes the 'stick' much more explicit: it is now clear that a failure to normalise relations with the RoC and a failure to contribute towards a compromised resolution of the Cyprus conflict could stop Turkey's EU accession process altogether.

the credibility of conditionality, there are other factors in place that diminish the credibility of conditionality. Firstly, the momentum in the relations between Turkey and the EU has been lost, due to various crises that Brussels have been facing and due to growing scepticism against Turkey's EU accession. In this regard, the credibility of conditionality has been reduced: although the conditions that need to be met remain very explicit, the decreasing clarity of the reward of EU membership has unavoidably led to a decline of the EU's influence on Turkey's agenda and, equally, less motivation to pursue policies. EU objective. Secondly, the staggering process of EU accession has led to a loss of EU popularity amongst Turkish society, which makes EU-informed concessions on the Cyprus problem all the less favourable. Here, the contrast between the early pro- Europeanism amongst Turks and their post-Annan Euroscepticism is evident ~~from~~ for the mediating power of public support in the process of Europeanisation.

Therefore, in the post-Annan era, the Europeanisation of Turkey's foreign policy towards the Cyprus problem does continue to, more or less, the same degree, but in a rather different way. In recent years, the EU has not provided enough incentives to Ankara to contribute to a compromising solution. However, this does not mean that the EU does not continue to influence Ankara's position towards the inter-communal dispute. On the contrary, this chapter has reflected on a range of EU-related factors that have triggered a less flexible position of Ankara. Indeed, with the negotiations on the Cyprus problem lacking momentum compared with the pre-2004 era, Ankara does not need to take a very clear stance in this issue.

Comment [FC7]: I don't understand this sentence. Do you mean the low public support for EU results in diminished government incentives for Europeanisation? **Yes.** There was a typo: instead of **from**, it should write **'for'**.

Likewise, although Turkey's policy towards Cyprus is more flexible than before the beginning of its EU accession process, Ankara's rhetoric does not reflect the level of compromise adopted just before to the Annan Plan referendums.

It is, thus, challenging to comment on whether the stance and rhetoric of Ankara will stay as inflexible if and when resolution of the Cyprus problem will become a more realistic prospect towards which all sides of the dispute will need to 'show their cards'. Moreover, this will depend on a variety of factors, some of which do not fall within the scope of this chapter. Indeed, peripheral security matters, like the Arab Spring or the Syrian war, have reduced the importance of the Cyprus problem in Turkish foreign policy agenda. Nevertheless, it is certain that the European future of Turkey will continue to be directly linked to the inter-communal dispute in the Mediterranean island, especially after the EU accession of the RoC. If Turkey continues to aspire to a full EU accession, Ankara will have to realise that Turkey's way to Europe passes through Cyprus. As a result, a significant degree of compromise needs to be displayed during any potential future negotiations on the Cyprus problem, such as the full implementation of the Additional Protocol. In this regard, conditionality continues to be an instrument by which Brussels can promote flexibility of Turkey towards the Cyprus problem. However, this chapter has debated the several factors that might mediate EU conditionality and decrease its effectiveness or, actually, trigger results in the opposite direction (i.e. further inflexibility). Therefore, at the opposite end of this peculiar 'security dilemma', the EU should draw lessons from the pre-Annan period and recognise that, the only tool in their search to affect Turkey's position towards Cyprus is a credible promise for EU accession. And since the recent decrease in the clarity of the EU reward relates to factors beyond the Cyprus problem (e.g. wider Turkoscepticism), it is perhaps the EU that should take the first step and address the deadlock in its relations with Turkey. Despite the

challenging road ahead for both sides, it is this investigation of the differentiated EU impact on Turkish foreign policy in both the pre and post-Annan eras that is suggestive of an, indeed, ongoing and exceptional process of Europeanisation.

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Comment [FC8]: Could you make sure that you use the referencing style provided in the author guidelines? **Done.**

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