

TURKEY AND EUROPE: THE WAY AHEAD

Europe Report N°184 – 17 August 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	i
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. A EUROPEAN VOCATION.....	1
III. PLATFORMS FOR PROGRESS.....	4
A. ECONOMIC CONVERGENCE.....	4
B. TURKEY’S SECURITY CONTRIBUTION.....	5
1. The golden years.....	5
2. EU-Turkey tensions undermine security cooperation.....	6
C. AN EU ENERGY CORRIDOR.....	7
D. THE REFORM REVOLUTION.....	9
1. Legal reforms.....	9
2. Women’s rights.....	10
3. Education reforms.....	11
4. Civil society.....	12
E. THE KURDS.....	12
F. THE TURKISH MODEL.....	15
1. Turkish Islam.....	15
2. Bridge or hub?.....	16
IV. THE CHALLENGES AHEAD.....	17
A. CYPRUS – SYMPTOM OR CAUSE?.....	17
1. The 2004 turn-about.....	17
2. EU responses.....	18
3. The Greek example.....	20
B. KEMALISM.....	21
1. The Turkish Armed Forces.....	22
2. The new nationalism.....	24
C. STALLING ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.....	24
D. THE ARMENIAN QUESTION.....	26
1. Genocide or massacre?.....	26
2. Turkey-Armenia relations.....	27
E. EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION.....	27
F. THE EURO-TURK ENIGMA.....	28
G. NORTHERN IRAQ.....	29
V. RELAUNCHING THE PROCESS.....	30
A. TURKEY’S PRIORITIES.....	30
B. EUROPE’S PRIORITIES.....	33
1. Cyprus.....	34
2. A need for positive consistency.....	34
3. Privileged partnership.....	36
VI. CONCLUSION.....	37

APPENDICES

- A. MAP OF TURKEY39
- B. CHRONOLOGY OF EU-TURKEY RELATIONS.....40
- C. ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP41
- D. INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP REPORTS AND BRIEFINGS ON EUROPE.....42
- E. INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP BOARD OF TRUSTEES.....44

TURKEY AND EUROPE: THE WAY AHEAD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The pro-reform AK Party's resounding victory in the July 2007 parliamentary elections gives both it and the European Union (EU) a chance to relaunch Turkey's accession process, which has floundered since 2005 due to Europe's enlargement fatigue and a neo-nationalist backlash in the country. That process, pursued with real application, has the capacity to help both sides. Popular opinion may show fatigue but leaders and diplomats need to keep avenues open for when political confidence returns, as past experience with the enlargement process suggests it can.

There is no need for Europeans to fear the membership goal. All in Turkey acknowledge the country is not yet ready. The earliest possible date for membership is a decade away, by which time it will be much changed. Turkey can only join if it has fulfilled the stiffest conditions applied to any candidate; any EU government can veto membership at the end of the road, and the French people can vote on it in a referendum. By then the Turks, too, may have second thoughts about the last step.

Pointing, as some European leaders now are, to Turkey's current political, economic, social and demographic challenges to support arguments for its exclusion underestimates the transformative potential of the reform process. It is a short-sighted view that ignores earlier integration success stories in Western and Eastern Europe. The debate should be about joining a reformed Turkey to a reformed EU.

Europeans who attack the prospect of Turkish membership of the EU underestimate the damage they do to European interests. The mistrust generated already has caused Turkey to reduce its contribution to Europe's common security policy. Ankara is showing signs of independent military policies over which Europe has diminishing leverage. Europe's energy security is not being advanced. Mistakes by all sides over Cyprus are causing the dispute to poison what should be unrelated areas of the EU-Turkey relationship.

The way forward is, on the Turkish side, for Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to use his new mandate to step forward with a bold further reform program,

catching Europe's imagination with some sweeping new gestures, like repeal or overhaul of the notorious Penal Code Article 301. On the European side, it is a matter of full, serious and continuing engagement in the accession process and not excluding the possibility of Turkey's ultimate membership if there is full compliance with EU norms.

The present environment is not an easy one in this respect. Prejudices from the past, unrelated events in Iraq, bad timing in Cyprus and misreading of intentions have driven a wedge between the West and its long-time ally, the most successful secular democracy in the Islamic world. Politicians on both sides have irresponsibly attacked the EU-Turkey relationship as a populist proxy for domestic worries about immigration, welfare or national security.

In November 2005 the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) came to power in Germany pledging to downgrade the goal of Turkey's EU negotiations to "privileged partnership". In December 2006, the EU froze the opening of eight of 35 negotiating chapters because it was unable to overcome an impasse with Turkey over Cyprus. In May 2007, France elected President Nicolas Sarkozy, who campaigned, *inter alia*, to end Turkey's hope of membership. France then blocked the most important of three negotiating chapters that were to be opened in June.

The EU-led reform process has slowed in Turkey. Public support for membership has shifted from overwhelmingly positive to sceptical, and a new nationalism has arisen. Human rights abuses and prosecutions of writers have increased. The military has sought to reverse the course of the EU-bound political process. Anti-EU slogans merged with anti-American ones to become some of the loudest chants in massive secularist rallies in the months before the election.

The EU is not responsible for all Turkey's tensions with the West. The U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and the presence of Turkish Kurd rebel bases in U.S.-protected Iraqi Kurdistan are major reasons why public opinion has soured. But EU states need to be more sensitive to Turkey's legitimate grievances about Kurdish attacks,

especially bombings of civilians, and certainly if there is evidence they are being supported from Europe.

It needs to be better recalled on the European side that it was the start of negotiations with the motivating goal of EU membership that provided the stimulus for a golden age of Turkish reform in 1999-2004. The process brought stability, five years of 7.5 per cent economic growth, unprecedented foreign investment, legal and educational improvements, a blooming of civil society, critical Turkish contributions to EU peacekeeping projects, an alleviation of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict and a fleeting chance to solve the frozen Cyprus conflict. Despite the increasingly negative atmosphere since 2005, technical work on EU reforms continues in Ankara. In April 2007, the AK Party (AKP) drew up the country's most intensively researched action plan for convergence towards EU standards.

EU-Turkey convergence has slowed before, and opportunities to speed it up will come again. If the results of the February 2008 elections in Greek Cyprus signal a new opening towards the UN's bicomunal, bizonal plan for a solution, the EU should seize the chance to remove this roadblock. After all, mutual trust and an EU umbrella since 1999 have now smoothed problems that once seemed insoluble between Turkey and Greece.

Even European politicians sceptical of Turkey's European vocation seek the reforms in Turkey that only the motivation of the membership process can bring. French-led objections once held up the candidacies of Spain and the UK for reasons some of which were similar to those heard today. Like Turkey, those countries had former non-European empires and ambivalence about a centralised EU. Turkey can contribute as much to the EU as other "unwanted" candidates have in the past – both during the accession process and, if the two sides agree, as a member.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the European Union:

1. Keep engaged in Turkey's convergence with the EU, doing nothing to undermine the promise that full compliance with EU norms will ultimately mean membership.
2. Focus on rational, legal aspects of the conditions for Turkey's EU membership in order to attract support from reformers in Turkey and avoid making judgements on subjective cultural and religious ideas.
3. Rebuild and support the structure of the UN's bicomunal, bizonal peace deal for Cyprus – the only idea tolerable to the populations of both sides – and work hard at explaining to Greek Cypriots

the benefits of having Turkey within the EU framework.

To the Governments of EU Member States:

4. Form a group of friends of north Cyprus to reassure Turks there of their connection to Europe and consider new steps to intensify contacts in the framework of the EU-backed UN settlement process.
5. Emulate the model of successful outreach programs to Turkey by countries like Sweden and the UK and do more to explain the benefits of EU-Turkey convergence to their own populations, rebutting scaremongering.
6. For leaders of countries and opinion-makers in favour of Turkey's accession, speak up in European forums, doing more to explain the mutual benefits that will flow from the accession process and ultimate membership.

To the Government of Turkey:

7. Resume with real commitment the reform process aimed at adapting Turkish laws to EU norms, in particular removing Article 301 of the penal code or redrafting it in a way that prevents its use in a manner incompatible with EU norms, and maintain technical work on the European *acquis communautaire*.
8. Use the new mandate from the Turkish electorate to build a strong, pro-reform political consensus that can marginalise secularist and nationalist scaremongers.
9. Take advantage of the presence of a broad cross-section of ethnic Kurdish politicians in parliament to launch a new Kurdish policy compatible with European norms.
10. Show more readiness to debate Turkey's European vocation with all comers, including by inviting all kinds of EU opinion leaders to Turkey, not just those who are sympathetic, and create and sustain programs with European think-tanks.
11. Take on proactively more multilateral responsibilities that underline Turkey's role as a strategic asset to the EU and serve Turkish national interests, like the engagement in Afghanistan.
12. Reduce as far as possible overflights, mock dogfights or other symbolic military threats to Greece or the Republic of Cyprus so as to help foster Greek support for Turkey's EU candidacy.

13. Continue recent progress in bringing school textbooks in line with EU norms, especially in treating all religious traditions fairly, encouraging children to take a universal outlook and reconsidering their emphasis on a Turkey surrounded by enemies.
14. Expand the freedom of Kurdish-language broadcasting based in Turkey so as to give Kurds an alternative to pro-PKK satellite stations.

To the Government of Greece:

15. Educate Greek Cyprus about the advantages of supporting Turkey's EU membership, including reduced defence expenditures, lower tensions and mutual economic advantage, and try to bring the Greek lobby in the U.S. into line with mainland Greek thinking on Turkey.

To the Government of Cyprus:

16. Set out realistic political goals that acknowledge a compromise with the Turkish Cypriots will require sacrifice by the Greek Cypriots as well.
17. Recognise that reunification of the island is only possible through the UN bicomunal, bizonal process and explain this to the Greek Cypriot population.
18. Welcome EU initiatives to bring Turkish Cypriots closer to the EU, so as to help close the gap between the people on the island and increase the room for political manoeuvre of pro-reform, pro-solution politicians in Turkish Cyprus and Turkey.

To the Government of the United States:

19. Continue to reward the Turkish community and administration on Cyprus economically and politically for pro-reunification actions, so as to help allay a feeling in Turkey that the West is irrevocably prejudiced against it.
20. Do more to convince Turkey that there is no American plan to support Kurdish separatist movements in the Middle East and continue to work behind the scenes in Europe to supply evidence about the activities of the PKK and persuade governments to end any toleration of financing and organisation by that rebel movement.

Istanbul/Brussels, 17 August 2007

TURKEY AND EUROPE: THE WAY AHEAD

I. INTRODUCTION

Turkey's convergence with Europe has always had two interlocking sides. One is the practical, day-to-day political relationship with the European Union (EU), formally in progress since the 1963 Ankara Agreement. The other, as important, is a philosophical debate about the Turks' own identity, history and vocation.¹ Symbols are as important as technical details. This is why senior Turkish officials' belief that it is critical to maintain the full membership goal can co-exist with open doubt whether, if and when – in a decade or more – the country is fully ready for membership, it would agree to surrender extensive sovereignty to a highly centralised EU.² No approach to the EU-Turkey relationship should ignore the psychology of EU-Turkish history.

This first Crisis Group report on Turkey outlines the background to its relationship with Europe and the recent achievements in convergence with the EU. It illustrates the economic, legal and social transformations that have taken place, outlines the risks the EU faces if it rebuffs Turkey's interest in accession and proposes ways and means to restore the current troubled relationship to a healthier footing. Subsequent reporting will analyse more narrowly key aspects of Turkey, the challenges of its turbulent neighbourhood and its growing regional role.³

II. A EUROPEAN VOCATION

The history of the Turkish peoples over the past 1,000 years has been largely a journey towards the West.⁴ After the takeover of the Byzantine Empire with the conquest of Constantinople/Istanbul in 1453 – accompanied by assimilation of Byzantine institutions, populations, political customs, architecture and even cuisine – the European Balkans became the richest and most favoured provinces of the Ottoman Empire for four centuries. In 1856, after joining Britain and France in the Crimean War against Russia, that empire was considered enough of a European player to be taken briefly into the pan-continental diplomatic system, the Concert of Europe. Indeed, as the empire lost territory to resurgent national states in the nineteenth century, Europeans spoke of “the sick man of Europe.”⁵ The destruction of the Ottoman regime in the First World War was due not to a non-European religious or ethnic identity but to a catastrophic alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary.

After the victors of that conflict occupied Istanbul, representatives of the Ottoman sultan signed the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, foreseeing the carving-up of the empire's core territory, Anatolia. But it was never ratified, and the Turks never accepted defeat. A group of Ottoman army officers rallied nationalist forces in the countryside, leading to the 1919-1922 war of liberation that defeated invading British, French and Greek forces. The Treaty of Sèvres was torn up, to live on only as a Turkish byword for European plots to dismember the country. That attempt to take the land of modern Turkey has never been forgiven. Nor has Europe's conquest of the richest Balkan and Middle Eastern provinces in the last century of the empire, including the transfer of Kirkuk to Iraq, been forgotten. Turkey takes pride in the fact that, like European countries,

¹ Andrew Mango, *Atatürk* (London, 2004) and *The Turks Today* (London, 2005); Marvin Howe, *Turkey Today: A Nation Divided over Islam's Revival* (Boulder, Colorado, 2000); Nicole Pope and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: a History of Modern Turkey* (London, 1997).

² Crisis Group interview, Turkish officials, Ankara, April 2007.

³ Initial reports will include studies of Turkey's growing role in international peacekeeping operations, the Cyprus dispute, the rebel Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Turkish-Armenian relations.

⁴ Ergün Çağatay and Doğan Kuban (eds.), *The Turkic-Speaking Peoples: 2,000 years of art and culture from western China to the Balkans* (Munich, 2007); Carter Vaughn Findley, *The Turks in World History* (Oxford, 2004); Hugh Pope, *Sons of the Conquerors: the Rise of the Turkic World* (New York, 2005).

⁵ The extent to which the Ottoman Empire was really sick is disputed by modern historians. See Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream, the Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923* (London, 2005).

it was never colonised. With the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, the leader of the nationalist forces, Mustafa Kemal, later dubbed Atatürk (Father of the Turks), founded the Republic of Turkey.

Atatürk decided his new republic would have to copy Europe to catch up with it, an idea based on an important strand of European-style modernisation present in Turkey since the last century of the empire. Atatürk replaced the fez for a flat cap, just as the reformist Sultan Mahmut II had changed the turban for the Greek fez. Atatürk's Europeanisation was modelled in many ways on the values of the French Revolution. He threw out the Ottomans' mix of common and Islamic law and copied into Turkish statutes the Swiss civil code, the Italian penal code and the German commercial code. He deliberately drank alcohol in public, and the first factory he founded in his new capital, Ankara, was a German-designed brewery. Even though Muslim solidarity played a major role in the war of liberation, and the empire had a strong tradition of what would now be called Islamic civil society organisations, he disbanded all the Muslim brotherhoods as reactionary and espoused a new ideology of secularism.

Engagement with Europe and the West speeded up during the Cold War. After staying neutral for almost all the Second World War, Turkey came under pressure from the Soviet Union in 1946 and the U.S. stepped in to support (the Truman Doctrine). Turkey responded by sending troops to fight with the West in Korea and was rewarded with membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1952. Turks zealously guarded one third of NATO's front line with the Warsaw Pact for 40 years, consider they played a full part in securing the EU from the threats of those days and feel slighted at the difference in how the EU reacted to its membership applications and those from the states of the ex-Soviet bloc. As veteran Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel put it, "when the defence of European civilization [against Soviet communism] was at stake, they didn't call us Turks and Muslims".⁶

Turkey was strongly pro-U.S. and pro-Europe in the 1950s and in 1959 sought an association agreement with the European Economic Communities (EEC), the EU's forerunner. In 1963, it signed an association accord, the Ankara Agreement, acknowledging its eventual right of accession.⁷ Though Turkey had a military coup in 1960

and in 1961 hanged three former leaders, including Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, EC President Joseph Luns said, "the originality of Europe is in its variety. I assure you that Turkey will have in the community a partner that is ready to make its task easier...in recognition...of the sacrifices it has made in defending our shared ideal".⁸

In 1975, the EC itself informally suggested Turkey apply for membership. Despite its 1974 invasion of Cyprus, some statesmen wanted to head off an imbalance resulting from Greece's application. Ankara rebuffed the idea, lest an application split its fragile coalition.⁹ When President Turgut Özal finally applied in 1987, the EC put Turkey off, mainly due to the excesses of the 1980-1983 military coup, which froze bilateral relations. Subsequently, all EU-Turkey transactions have been complicated by Greek and later Cypriot membership.

Once it joined, Greece used the EU to advance its position in conflicts with Turkey over Cyprus and the air, sea and continental shelf borders in the Aegean Sea. It blocked Turkish access to EU funds, development of the EU-Turkey Association and joint initiatives, and vetoed Ankara's EU candidacy.¹⁰ In 1993, the EU accepted the Republic of Cyprus's candidacy, infuriating Turkey and Turkish Cypriots since the application was in effect on behalf only of the ethnic Greek part of the divided island.¹¹ Turkey kept its EU vocation alive by securing a Customs Union in 1995, a stage envisaged in the Ankara Agreement. Greece agreed, but only after a date was set to begin membership talks for Cyprus.¹² In December 1997, the Luxembourg summit put Cyprus but not Turkey on the list for the next expansion round. Greece was not solely responsible, since a number of member states were disturbed by Turkish hardliners' repeated threats of war

⁸ Speech of J.M.A.H. Luns, EC President and Foreign Minister of the Netherlands, on the occasion of the signing of the Ankara Agreement, 1963.

⁹ In April 1975, the Secretary General of the European Commission informally approached the Turkish Ambassador in Brussels to inform him of the imminent Greek membership application and suggested Turkey might wish to do likewise. The ambassador, understanding the need for prompt action, returned to Ankara to speak to the foreign minister, who rejected the idea for domestic political reasons, namely, the fear that the anti-Western, Islamist party would pull out of the governing coalition. Information provided to Crisis Group by email from Ambassador Temel Iskit, 1975 deputy head of mission, Turkish embassy Brussels, 31 July 2007.

¹⁰ Dimitrios Lucas, "Greece's Shifting Position on Turkish Accession to the EU Before and After Helsinki (1999)", MA Thesis, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium.

¹¹ Unless otherwise noted, reference to the Cyprus government or Nicosia in this report is to the Greek-led Republic of Cyprus government.

¹² "Greece's Shifting Position on Turkish Accession", op. cit.

⁶ *Turkey Unveiled*, op. cit.

⁷ Article 28 of the Ankara Agreement reads: "As soon as the operation of this Agreement has advanced far enough to justify envisaging full acceptance by Turkey of the obligations arising out of the Treaty establishing the Community, the Contracting Parties shall examine the possibility of the accession of Turkey to the Community".

against Greece, near civil war in the Kurdish south east and triple-digit inflation.

Athens's policy began to change in 1996, under a prime minister, Kostas Simitis, committed to Europeanisation of its foreign policy and reduced military spending to enable participation in the eurozone. He also believed that Greek leverage was greater over a Turkey linked to an EU process, though bilateral crises postponed implementation for three years.¹³ The Greeks became more convinced their policies were out of line when it was revealed in 1999 that the Turkish Kurd rebel leader, Abdullah Öcalan – the head of an organisation regarded as terrorist by the EU and U.S. – had been protected by Greece and even sheltered in the ambassador's residence in Kenya. Turkey, seeking a breakthrough for its EU candidacy, was also reaching out to Greece with a sympathetic foreign minister, Ismail Cem.

When earthquakes struck Istanbul and Athens in the summer of 1999, officially killing 145 people in Greece and at least 18,000, and more probably 45,000, in Turkey,¹⁴ the stage was set for what Greece calls the "great realignment". Greeks and Turks have long been closer to each other than their leaders.¹⁵ Televised coverage of the devastation and rescue teams crossing the Aegean in both directions swept old nationalistic ideologies aside on a tide of compassion and common frustration with slow-responding governments. After more than a decade of tensions on both sides of the Aegean, Greece finally adopted the Simitis idea that it was better for Greece that Turkey be part of Europe than excluded from it.

The EU offer of candidate status in 1999 filled the Turks with new enthusiasm for European reforms. Javier Solana, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and Günther Verheugen, the Enlargement Commissioner, captured the country's heart by flying the invitation from Helsinki to Ankara in the French presidential jet. This well-judged appeal to sentiment helped win the acceptance of veteran Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, whose resistance to market reforms is one reason Turkey has taken so long to reach EU living standards. Ecevit's coalition was replaced in 2002 by the Justice and Development Party (AK Party, AKP) government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip

Erdoğan, who took the new spirit further with unprecedented constitutional and penal code reforms – and in 2004 had Greek Prime Minister Costas Caramanlis as a witness at his daughter's wedding.

Nevertheless, when Greece lifted its veto to allow full Turkish candidacy in 1999, it won an important concession: that Cyprus could join the EU in return for a verbal promise that it would go along with UN-led plans for a bicomunal solution to the island's division (see below). That proved to be too little incentive for Greek Cypriots to make the painful compromises a peace settlement would have to involve.

¹³ Greece and Turkey went to the brink of war over the uninhabited Aegean islets (Imia/Kardak) in 1996; in 1997 Turkey threatened war after Cyprus purchased ground-to-air Russian missiles.

¹⁴ Vasile I. Marza, "On the death toll of the 1999 Izmit (Turkey) Major Earthquake", www.esc.bgs.ac.uk/papers/potsdam_2004.

¹⁵ See Renée Hirschon, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe: The Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus* (Oxford, 1989), and Bruce Clarke, *Twice a Stranger: How Mass Expulsion Forged Modern Greece and Turkey* (London, 2007).

III. PLATFORMS FOR PROGRESS

Since long before the 1999 EU candidacy decision, Turkey has been a full member of all major European institutions except the European Union and the now mostly defunct Western European Union (WEU).¹⁶ More than half its nineteen million tourists in 2006 came from Europe, making it Europeans' third biggest tourist destination.¹⁷ Turks are the most numerous third-country nationals in the EU – officially more than three million and possibly more than five million. More than half Turkey's trade is with EU countries, and its share of EU trade is between 3 and 4 per cent.¹⁸ Despite the recent upsets in the relationship, the post-1999 achievements provide platforms for continued convergence.

A. ECONOMIC CONVERGENCE

The easiest measure of Turkey's transformation is the economic resurgence since a financial crisis halved its currency's value in 2000-2001. This is not just due to the EU. Turkey embarked in 1999 on an International Monetary Fund (IMF) program, one of many in its history but the only one to work over a long term. Growth between 2002 and 2006 averaged 7.5 per cent, among Europe's highest, while gross national product nearly tripled, to \$401.4 billion. Inflation, out of control for three decades, fell from an annual 29.7 per cent to 9.7 per cent.¹⁹

Nevertheless, the EU still classifies Turkey as a "poorer lower middle income country". In 2003, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was only a quarter of the EU average and half the average of the ten countries in the 2004 enlargement. Under current rules, Turkey's whole area and population would qualify for "substantial" EU support payments.²⁰ Millions in less well-off regions of Europe would no longer get that support as a result.²¹

¹⁶ These include joining the Council of Europe in 1949, NATO in 1952, as well as the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) in 1962 and the Eurovision Song Contest in 1975. Turkey was a founding member in 1960 of what is now the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and in 1973 of the Conference (now Organization) for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE/OSCE).

¹⁷ State Institute of Statistics, www.turkstat.gov.tr/Veri_Bilgi.do.

¹⁸ "2004 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession", European Commission, November 2004.

¹⁹ Public Information Notice, International Monetary Fund, 18 May 2007.

²⁰ European Commission Staff Working Document, 6 October 2004.

²¹ To qualify for support payments, a region must have an average income per capita 75 per cent lower than the EU average. If Turkey joined, it would pull the average lower.

Turkey would add only 2 per cent to EU GDP but 14.5 per cent to its population²² – a major objection to its membership.²³

EU documents predict Turkey will take "several decades" to reach EU income levels.²⁴ But between 2002 and 2006, the first single-party government in more than a decade and prospect of an EU anchor helped double per capita GDP from \$2,642 to \$5,482.²⁵ Adjusted for purchasing power, that is half way between new members Romania and Poland.²⁶

The EU had long criticised technical obstacles that kept foreign investment around \$1 billion a year. Reforms moved forward with agreement to international arbitration in 1999. Laws pushed through by the economy minister, Kemal Derviş in 2001-2002 deregulated government monopolies in electricity, natural gas and tobacco and set new public procurement, banking, taxation and consumer protection guidelines. Turkey scrapped its 1954 investment law in June 2003. After the EU decision in principle to open negotiations in 2004, foreign investment jumped to \$10 billion in 2005 and \$20 billion in 2006.²⁷ German companies in particular have led the way in opening superstores and taking over banks, food companies and insurance concerns.²⁸ Privatisations such as Turk Telekom, many delayed for decades, raised \$20 billion. Commitment to openness was shown by their continuation even during severe political turbulence in 2007.

Turkish markets are still vulnerable if foreign capital turns elsewhere. With \$80 billion invested in the country, international funds are major holders of government debt as well as of 80 per cent of the shares traded in the top 30 Turkish companies on the Istanbul Stock Exchange.

Hence some regions would no longer qualify.

²² "Turkey: More than a Promise?", Report of the Independent Commission on Turkey, British Council/Open Society Institute, Brussels, September 2004.

²³ Crisis Group interview, member of the European Parliament (MEP) Renata Sommer, May 2007.

²⁴ "Issues arising from Turkey's Membership Perspective", staff working document, European Commission, 6 October 2004.

²⁵ "Monthly Strategy (Turkey)", Deutsche Bank, May 2007.

²⁶ In the year before the start of accession negotiations, Turkey's GDP par capita (at purchasing power parity) was €6,256. Poland's was €7,410 and Romania's €4,980. "Turkey: More than a Promise?", op. cit.

²⁷ Refik Erzan, "Windfall Gains of the EU Membership Process", speech to the Turkey-EU Observatory, Istanbul, 15 June 2007.

²⁸ EU-based companies with new or additional major investments in Turkey in recent years include Fiat, Aviva, Vodafone, Cadbury's, ING Bank, Unicredito, Dexia and the National Bank of Greece. Since 1980, German companies have invested over \$5.2 billion in Turkey, www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/en/Laender/Tuerkei.html.

But family groups still control most companies, and any sell-off is unlikely to destroy underlying economic strength.

The EU has become more important to the overall economy. Whereas in 1980 just one third of Turkey's trade was with EU states, it was half on the eve of the 1995 Customs Union and has stayed that way, while overall trade has quadrupled.²⁹ Over the ensuing decade Turkey has been the EU's sixth or seventh biggest partner. Germany, whose exports to the country have risen 54 per cent since 2003, is usually Turkey's biggest customer and supplier.³⁰

When the Ankara Agreement was signed in 1963, trade with Europe was dried figs, hazelnuts and sultanas. Now agricultural exports have been eclipsed by manufactured goods, led by the textile and automotive sectors. Thanks to preferential trade arrangements and the Customs Union, Turkish companies manufacture half of Europe's television sets and two thirds of its television tubes.³¹ Automotive exports shot up ten times from 1995 to 2005, mostly to Europe.³² A Turkish company now controls luxury ceramics maker Villeroy and Boche. Another owns Grundig, an icon of German electronic engineering, controlling its patents, organising its pan-European service network and designing and manufacturing its television sets.³³ Turkish engineers no longer just copy. The European Commission in 2004 awarded its top prize for energy efficiency to a Turkish-designed refrigerator-freezer.³⁴

B. TURKEY'S SECURITY CONTRIBUTION

Turkey's importance to Europe withered when the Soviet Union collapsed but in the 1990s and early 2000s it found a new mission, offering troops, air lift and command

structures to peacekeeping operations critical to the EU and wider international community. In 2005, the start of negotiations on EU membership coincided with a nexus of new Cyprus problems. These triggered mutual institutional boycotts where Nicosia could use its EU advantage and Turkey its NATO advantage. This has complicated the EU's European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), the military component of its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), with problems surfacing in the strategic dialogue between the EU and NATO.

1. The golden years

Turkey began its peacekeeping contributions modestly after 1988, sending officers as ceasefire monitors to East Timor, Georgia, the West Bank and Iraq's borders with Iran and Kuwait. When it first made a major offer to help a UN peacekeeping effort, in Bosnia in 1992, it had to wait six months before being allowed to join.³⁵ Turkey went on to earn its spurs as a trusted ally with significant contributions in Somalia, where it briefly commanded the operation, and elsewhere in the Balkans, particularly Kosovo. In 2002, it was lead nation in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan for eight months, contributing one third of the 4,500 troops. Former Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin was NATO's senior civilian administrator in Afghanistan from 2004 to 2006. With the biggest military in NATO after the U.S. – 600,000 men, the largest in Europe – and a long military tradition, Turkey was increasingly in demand. It created an élite peace-keeper brigade, as well as a logistical support unit and a humanitarian brigade.

“We rely more and more on Turkish peacekeeping troops”, a European official said. “The airlifting of French troops to Congo was done by the Turkish air force because we couldn't do it... We were begging them to send police to Kosovo”.³⁶ A Turkish general commanded ISAF again in 2005, Turkey offered 500 troops to UNIFIL after the Israel-Hizbollah war in 2006, and Turkish staff officers are now in charge of ISAF's Regional Command Capital in Kabul. On 29 May 2007, Turkey took charge for one year of Multinational Task Force South (MNTF-S), one of the five regional KFOR commands in Kosovo. Turkey is also important to the EU as its first line of defence against illegal immigrants from the Middle East and opium and heroin from Afghanistan. There is debate in Brussels whether full Turkish membership is an advantage given the difficulties and expense of watching over long, mountainous borders with unstable Middle East states.

²⁹ Statistics from the Turkish Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade at www.dtm.org.tr. Before the 1995 Customs Union, Turkey's trade was only equivalent to 30.6 per cent of its gross national product; ten years later it was 55.2 per cent. Turkish exports were \$23.2 billion in 1995, \$85.1 billion in 2006.

³⁰ Statistics from the Turkish Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade. Germany bought 11.4 per cent of Turkey's exports in 2006. Its exports to Turkey were \$9.5 billion in 2003, \$12.5 billion in 2004, \$13.6 billion in 2005, \$14.6 billion in 2006, www.dtm.org.tr.

³¹ Comments by Marc Pierini, European Delegation to Turkey, VIIth EU-Turkey Conference, Barcelona, 12 January 2007.

³² From \$1.2 billion in 1995 to \$12 billion in 2005. Figures from Ali Koç, speech, World Economic Forum, 24 November 2006.

³³ “Turkish Surprise: A Business Blazes Path for Nation to EU's Doorstep”, *The Wall Street Journal*, 7 September 2004.

³⁴ The EU Commission's top Energy+ award for efficiency in a two-door refrigerator-freezer was given in 2004 to a Turkish-made Arçelik model sold in Europe under the Blomberg brand. See www.energy-plus.org/english/news/.

³⁵ “Turkey's Value as U.S. Ally Rises with Afghan Role”, *The Wall Street Journal*, 19 June 2002.

³⁶ Crisis Group interview, European Commission official, Ankara, April 2007.

What is not in doubt is that full Turkish cooperation is in the EU's interest. That cooperation has typically improved during periods of goodwill in the membership negotiations.³⁷

For decades, Turkey perceived its security interests as identical to Europe's. Even though many of the peacekeeping operations joined by Turkey were run by NATO, they were part of EU strategy. According to a European Commission official, the Turks "adopt 90 per cent of the CFSP".³⁸ Turkey has regularly underlined its wish to be an internationally responsible player in presenting its candidacy for a seat on the UN Security Council in 2009-2010. At the peak of its reform process, Ankara allowed NATO-EU relations to move forward by agreeing to the "Berlin-plus arrangements" of March 2003, a carefully framed compromise on non-EU European ally involvement in ESDP, and ESDP access to NATO assets. The AKP government also grew closer to EU democracy-promotion policies, even joining in EU criticism of Uzbekistan, an authoritarian ethnic cousin in Central Asia.³⁹

2. EU-Turkey tensions undermine security cooperation

The sense of a community of security purpose with Europe and the West came under growing pressure after 2003. Turkey increasingly feels threatened by the U.S., supposedly its main NATO ally, because of the chaos in Iraq and the way it contributes to rising violence in its Kurdish south east. Turkey is far closer to these troubles than Europe, and its reaction exposes still-substantial differences in approach towards national diversity and Kurdish freedoms.

Still, the main problem has been the Cyprus dispute, especially after 2005.⁴⁰ Potentially serious implications came into the open in 2007, affecting both EU-NATO strategic dialogue on security and Turkish involvement in ESDP. The EU has planned ESDP police projects in

Afghanistan and Kosovo⁴¹ but sparring between Cyprus and Turkey has blocked strategic dialogue between the EU and NATO regarding both missions. Turkey has announced withdrawal from the EU's "2010 Headline Goal", aimed at improving rapid reaction capabilities – mainly due to the listing of the Turkish brigade as supplementary, rather than in the main catalogue of contributions.⁴² An EU-Turkey Security Agreement and Turkey's quest for administrative arrangements with the European Defence Agency (EDA) remain stalled, primarily due to Greek Cypriot opposition.⁴³

The sides disagree on who is to blame for the breakdown. The Turks argue that they only ask the EU to honour its commitments. They emphasise that the EU Nice Implementation Document clearly lays out the contours of their inclusion in ESDP and that Turkey contributes more personnel to ESDP-related missions than some EU member states. Plans to include Cyprus in the ESDP mission to Kosovo, they say, violate the terms of the agreed framework for strategic cooperation with NATO.⁴⁴ In addition, they point to the blocking of security cooperation agreements as proof of Greek Cypriot intransigence. Cyprus argues the planned ESDP missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan are not covered by the "Berlin-plus"

³⁷ European officials reported a decline in illegal immigrants apprehended by Turkey between 2001 and 2003, attributing it to joint initiatives for better policing of borders. Training resulted in a near-doubling of detection of forged documents by border police. "2003 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession", European Commission, 2003.

³⁸ Crisis Group interview, European Commission official, Ankara, April 2007.

³⁹ "With [the] new government we have a more democratic agenda in the region. Over Andijon [in Uzbekistan], we took sides with the West. We're not soft on the new governments as in the past". Crisis Group interview, Turkish official, Ankara, 19 April 2007.

⁴⁰ Crisis Group interview, EU official, Brussels, May 2007.

⁴¹ EUPOL Afghanistan began deployment in June 2007.

⁴² The 2010 Headline Goal, agreed in June 2004, states that "building on the Helsinki Headline and capability goals and recognising that existing shortfalls still need to be addressed, Member States have decided to commit themselves to be able by 2010 to respond with rapid and decisive action applying a fully coherent approach to the whole spectrum of crisis management operations covered by the Treaty on the European Union. This includes humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking". See "Headline Goal 2010, approved by European Council 17-18 June 2007", at <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/2010%20Headline%20Goal.pdf>.

⁴³ While both Turkey and Norway were to sign agreements, only Norway has. The Turks note this is a step back in defence cooperation, since the EDA has taken on much of the role of the Western European Union, of which Turkey is an associate member. Deputy Chief of General Staff General Ergin Saygun says Turkey is treated as a "third-class country" in ESDP: "The EU should provide the same rights to non-EU members as NATO does to non-NATO members countries. But it seems that is not possible", quoted in *Turkish Daily News*, 1 June 2007.

⁴⁴ While the EU maintains Cyprus cannot be treated differently from any other member state, Ankara argues the EU knew the implications when it entered into agreements excluding Cyprus prior to accession. They point to a 2002 North Atlantic Council decision: "NATO-EU strategic cooperation and the implementation of Berlin Plus arrangements will be confined to NATO members and those non-NATO EU members that have subscribed to the Partnership for Peace (PfP) Framework Document, thus becoming a party to the PfP, and that have concluded bilateral security agreements with NATO". Annex to SG(2002) 1357, December 2002, paragraph 3.

framework, because they are civilian missions and because the EU Council has not unanimously applied to NATO for strategic cooperation. It blames Turkey for blocking EU-NATO strategic dialogue, resulting in a progressive downgrading of meetings between the EU Political and Security Committee and the North Atlantic Council in the last year.⁴⁵ Until Turkey normalises relations (see below), Cyprus says there will be no movement on the EU-Turkey Security Agreement⁴⁶ and administrative arrangements with the EDA.⁴⁷

The semantics of “strategic cooperation” that both sides employ reveal the concept’s ambiguity and the genuinely varied interpretations of how existing agreements frame EU-NATO relations.⁴⁸ There is also the added complication that member states with their own interests in EU-NATO cooperation may be hiding behind the Turkey-Cyprus dispute.⁴⁹ While EU-NATO cooperation touches on much bigger questions about the future of NATO and the evolution of a defence and security dimension to European integration, immediate steps are needed to resolve the crisis with Turkey. It is essential to restore the balance foreseen with the Berlin-plus arrangements: NATO support of ESDP on the one hand and the inclusion of non-EU European allies in ESDP missions where appropriate on the other. The EU and Turkey need to talk openly and directly to each other about their understandings of the framework.

In view of the importance of cooperation in this sphere, however, the EU should sign the Security Agreement and grant Turkey the administrative arrangements it seeks with the EDA. Both Turkey and the EU should also stick to the original spirit in which the framework for EU-NATO cooperation was formulated. Cypriot EU membership should not be allowed to undo carefully formulated compromises on the much bigger matters of European security and the NATO and EU roles. Turkey would be

wise not to use the issue to pressure Cyprus, which only causes EU states to rally around their fellow-member. Turkey must also recognise the limits of its involvement in ESDP matters: there can be no fast-track inclusion in ESDP before full EU membership, given the policy area’s sensitivity even within the EU.

C. AN EU ENERGY CORRIDOR

Turkey’s geography straddling East and West suits it to act as an ally in the EU quest for energy security. It already provides crucial transit of oil by pipeline from Azerbaijan and Iraq, as well as for tankers of oil loaded at Black Sea ports and passing through the Bosphorus, with the total amount in excess of four million barrels per day. Potentially, it may also aid the EU to reduce reliance on Russian natural gas, by allowing the transport of gas from alternative sources.⁵⁰

Energy infrastructure has been growing since a first pipeline from Iraq through Turkey to the Mediterranean and onward shipment to mostly European refineries opened in 1976. Once considered impossible, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean opened in 2006, and a gas pipeline feeding the Turkish grid from Azerbaijan is in operation along the same route. A westward natural gas pipeline, the Turkey-Greece connector, is due to open in 2007 and may be extended to Italy. Construction on another, Nabucco, from Turkey through the Balkans to Austria and the rest of the European grid, the EU’s first coordinated step towards increasing energy security, may begin in 2009. In July 2007, Turkey announced a plan to bring new gas from Iran and from Turkmenistan via Iran, though details remain vague, particularly financing and the Turkmen source.

Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn said some 15 per cent of Europe’s energy needs could one day transit Turkey,⁵¹ and “Turkey has a key role to play in the diversification of energy supply routes to Europe”.⁵² However, few argue that Turkey can significantly decrease EU dependence on Russia. Most gas reserves available for transit to Europe are in that country, which has ensured it has alternatives to trans-Turkey routes. Turkey itself relies on Russia for two thirds of its own natural gas needs.

⁴⁵ Greek Cyprus points out that the last informal meeting, on Kosovo, was in February 2007 and that even an informal “coffee between secretary generals and their friends” on Afghanistan was not possible in May. It insists it does not want to question agreed arrangements but also does not want those from which it is excluded to “have meat added to their bone”. Crisis Group interview, Republic of Cyprus diplomat, Brussels, July 2007.

⁴⁶ Currently blocked also by Malta.

⁴⁷ Currently blocked also by Greece and Malta.

⁴⁸ Some NATO members [like Turkey] understand every EU-NATO interaction as “strategic cooperation”, to which only states with security agreements can be invited; some EU members believe the concept applies only when the EU wants to use NATO assets. See “EU-NATO Relations: Time to Thaw the ‘Frozen Conflict’”, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, SWP Comment, June 2007.

⁴⁹ Crisis Group phone interview, Eva Gross, senior research fellow, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, July 2007.

⁵⁰ For more detailed discussion of many of the issues dealt with in this section, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°133, *Central Asia’s Energy Risks*, 24 May 2007.

⁵¹ “EU warns France on Turkey debate plans”, *Financial Times Deutschland*, 6 July 2007.

⁵² “Why Turkey and the EU need each other: cooperating on energy and other strategic issues”, speech, Olli Rehn, European Commissioner for Enlargement, Istanbul, 5 June 2007.

Central Asia is a gas source that might one day involve Turkey as a transit route of significant new value to the EU but existing infrastructure necessitates that much of its known gas be exported through Russia.⁵³ Moreover, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan agreed with Moscow in May 2007 to build a new pipeline through Russia.⁵⁴ A U.S.-backed alternative for Central Asia – building a Trans-Caspian pipeline under that sea to join an Azerbaijani pipeline to Turkey – faces the hurdles of finding available gas, ecological problems in the Caspian and Russian opposition. In the best case scenario, it would only transport from Central Asia the equivalent of 4 per cent of the EU's 2004 needs.⁵⁵

Another possible source of EU gas is Iran, which is already linked to the Turkish grid. Turkey and Iran have also agreed to explore Turkish involvement in the development of the South Pars field in the Persian Gulf, which could eventually fill a pipeline through Turkey.⁵⁶ However, politics are not the only problem. Supplies to Turkey are frequently interrupted in winter due to Iranian domestic demand, although Turkey can usually make up any shortfall from Russia. Given slow investment in new projects and its population growth, Iran is already warning that it will be a net energy importer within fifteen to twenty years,⁵⁷ though this is mostly a problem on the oil side, not gas.

War in Iraq makes that country's huge reserves an unlikely short-term source, despite a 1996 Turkish agreement with the old regime. Still, the U.S. at least is keen to restart talks on developing Iraqi gas and linking it to the emerging trans-Turkey system to Europe.⁵⁸

The Austrian-led, EU-backed, \$6 billion Nabucco project had seemed set to open a new route through Turkey to Central Europe. But Nabucco may have trouble finding supplies of gas east of Turkey. Since building a pipeline under the Caspian Sea is hard, and Azerbaijan has little more gas to give, its greatest hope may be gas from Iran and Turkmenistan via Iran. Indeed, the Turkey-Iran deal in July allows for the transit of 20 to 30 billion cubic metres of Iranian and/or Turkmen gas via Iran.⁵⁹ Russia's Gazprom has no interest in Nabucco's success, however, and the deal announced by Russia in May was in part an attempt to undercut support for a trans-Caspian pipeline that could feed it.⁶⁰ In June 2007 Gazprom announced a potentially competing line taking Russian gas under the Black Sea to Bulgaria in partnership with the Italian state energy company ENI.⁶¹

The Turkish government also created problems for Nabucco by linking it to political issues. As part of the political grandstanding around the French parliament's move to criminalise denial of the 1915 Armenian massacres as genocide, Turkey blocked the participation of France's Gaz de France.⁶²

A broader question is how far Turkey is willing to merge its energy interests with the EU's. Commissioner Rehn has repeatedly invited it to join the EU Energy Community, in which it has been an observer since November 2006.⁶³ Committing itself further would be a key step to full integration with the EU internal market. Though Turkey's EU membership would not guarantee Europe's energy supply – the EU's concerns lie primarily with problematic producer countries – Russia, Iran and several Central Asian Republics – a Turkey rejected by the EU would mean less energy security.

⁵³ There is a small-capacity pipeline from Turkmenistan to Iran. This pipeline and the fields that supply it would require large-scale investment and could not quickly bring gas from Turkmenistan to Turkey to transit to Europe.

⁵⁴ "Europe, U.S. Sidelined by Russia in Caspian Deal", Reuters, 15 May 2007.

⁵⁵ See Crisis Group Asia Report N°133, *Central Asia's Energy Risks*, 24 May 2007.

⁵⁶ A preliminary memorandum of understanding was signed by the Turkish and Iranian ministers of energy on 13 July 2007 to hold detailed talks on a \$3.5 billion deal for Turkey to develop phases 22, 23 and 24 of the large South Pars field. "Turkey/Iran: Gas Deal Marks New Stage in Energy Cooperation", Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 19 July 2007. The U.S. has expressed its political opposition, and many commercial obstacles remain. "Difficulties Await Turkey in Filling Gas Deal with Tehran", *Today's Zaman*, 19 July 2007.

⁵⁷ Statement by Deputy Iranian Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs Ali Reza Attar, World Economic Forum, Istanbul, 24 November 2006.

⁵⁸ "Iraq Gas Could Use Azeri-Turkish Route: U.S.", Reuters, 6 June 2007.

⁵⁹ David O'Byrne, "Turkey, Iran Agree to Historic Gas Transit Deal; Boost for Planned Nabucco Line; 20-30 Bcm/year to Come from South Pars", *Platts Oilgram News*, 17 July 2007.

⁶⁰ However, the Russian deal does not really affect a potential trans-Caspian gas pipeline, except in terms of political perceptions. For more on this, see Crisis Group Report, *Central Asia's Energy Risks*, op. cit., Section VI.

⁶¹ Gazprom has denied that this pipeline, called South Stream, is a possible alternative to Nabucco. "Bulgaria/Russia Industry: Gazprom and Eni to Build Black Sea Gas Pipeline to Bulgaria", Economist Intelligence Unit – ViewsWire, 3 July 2007. South Stream could potentially undercut support for Nabucco, at least in the short run, but it is questionable to call it an alternative when it is just an alternative route for Russian gas, but not new supply as Russia's gas production has been stagnant.

⁶² "Turkey aims to pressure Europe over gas pipeline", *International Herald Tribune*, 5 April 2007.

⁶³ "Why Turkey and the EU need each other", op. cit.

D. THE REFORM REVOLUTION

The EU's official acceptance of it as a candidate for full membership in 1999 triggered one of the most intense periods of legal reform in Turkey's history.⁶⁴ In the current pessimistic climate, it is easy to forget how much political consensus the 2001-2004 reform period had in Turkey and what a strong endorsement it was of the EU's soft power to improve its neighbourhood. Despite relative stagnancy in the accession process today, technical work on translating the laws of the EU *acquis communautaire* and screening work done by the EU continue on a broad front.⁶⁵

With so much more to be done, it is possible to lose sight of what has been accomplished. A visit to, say, the interior ministry shows how far down EU-inspired change has trickled. Whole floors have doors with office names devoted to aspects of integration. Many mid-ranking officials have been on more than one familiarisation tour of an EU country, a process that has done much to remove suspicions and persuade by example. Years of effort were needed to rein in a sensitive, military-dominated institution like the National Security Council. The government first changed the governing law, then promulgated regulations, then added civilians, then extracted soldiers entrenched in places like the Supervision Board of Cinema, Video and Music and the Board of Higher Education.

1. Legal reforms

The reforms began with the 3 October 2001 change of the constitution drawn up under military rule in 1982. A 474-16 vote amended 33 articles. The preamble, which once banned "thoughts and opinions" contrary to Turkey's national interest, now covers only "actions". Article 26, which in effect banned the Kurdish language outside the home, was removed. Other articles dealt with new rights for prisoners, privacy, freedom of movement, better trials, limitations on capital punishment and equality between husband and wife.⁶⁶ A second constitutional amendment

in May 2004 moved further towards eradicating the death penalty, stated that men and women had equal rights, broadened press freedom and aligned the judiciary with European standards.

These changes were integrated into the criminal and other legal codes in three "reform packages" in February, March and August 2002. A further four packages in January, February, July and August 2003 dealt with torture, restrictions on expression, prison conditions and limits on cultural rights. An eighth in July 2004 harmonised other laws with the new constitutional requirements. A modest ninth package in January 2006, dealing with the property of religious minorities and other rights, concluded the main series. Many other laws in this period brought more openness to everything from foreign land purchases to registration of associations.

In November 2001, the parliament also undertook the first major revision of the civil code since Atatürk imported it wholesale from Switzerland in 1926. This gave new fundamental rights to women in marriages registered after 2003, including equal shares of assets, easier divorces and removal of the man as the automatic head of the family and the requirement that he approve his wife's job. Among 1,030 changes were new rights of association, child equality, sex change and inheritance.⁶⁷ In September 2004, parliament promulgated a new Penal Code, further formalising EU standards. This was revolutionary in two domains. First, the input of an emboldened civil society, mainly women's groups, eliminated the patriarchal, traditionalist mentality of the first draft. Secondly, it was passed by consensus with the Kemalist opposition. A last-minute attempt by Prime Minister Erdoğan, backed by some in the opposition, to revert to the pre-1998 criminalisation of adultery failed due to the outcry not just in Europe but in Turkey itself.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ "2001 and early 2002 have perhaps been two of the most important years in recent history for Turkish law reform. While 1995 saw a raft of laws and decrees passed in anticipation of Turkey's Customs Union with the European Community, the changes of 2001 were arguably more far-reaching in terms of the basic structure of law as it potentially affects the lives of Turkish citizens on the one hand, and its foreign relations (most notably with the EU) on the other". Virginia Brown Keyder, *The Jurist*, 3 July 2002.

⁶⁵ Crisis Group interview, European Commission official, Ankara, April 2007.

⁶⁶ The changes gave important rights for detainees (Art. 19), protection of privacy, domicile and secrecy of communication (Arts. 20-22 respectively), freedom of movement (amended Art.

23 provided citizens may no longer be prevented from leaving the country on national economic considerations), freedom of thought and expression (fifth preamble and Art. 26), association (Art. 33), demonstration (Art. 34), right to a fair trial (Art. 36), and the right to exclude illegally obtained evidence (Art. 38). Article 38 also provides that no one may be incarcerated solely for civil liability in a contract. Article 41 provides "the equality of the spouses". Similarly Article 66 allows citizenship to be passed equally by a Turkish mother and father. An important provision in Article 74 gives non-citizens the right to petition the government. Keyder, *op. cit.*

⁶⁶ Crisis Group interview, European Commission official, Ankara, April 2007.

⁶⁷ For the full text, see www.byegm.gov.tr/on-sayfa/new-civil-code.htm

⁶⁸ "Sex and Power in Turkey", European Stability Initiative, 2 June 2007.

The judicial system, used to cases proceeding piecemeal over several years, and law-enforcement agencies, used to methods that gave detainees few rights, had trouble catching up.⁶⁹ Much of Turkey's problem with new penal code Article 301 – whose wording on “insulting Turkishness and state institutions” was informally agreed with European diplomats⁷⁰ in Ankara – has derived from the nationalist militancy of individual prosecutors. Implementation of reforms, especially in contested areas like freedom of expression, has remained vulnerable to political influence. The constitutional reforms had exceptions to protect the “indivisible integrity of the state”. The 2002 broadcasting law included draconian restrictions on Internet websites and the right to cancel the licenses of those targeting national unity and transmitting “subversive and separatist propaganda” – that is, Kurdish nationalist issues.

International covenants on political rights signed in 2003 included derogations on minorities, and Turkey did not sign other charters that might benefit non-Muslim, heterodox or non-ethnically Turkish communities.⁷¹ Granting legal status to the previously banned Union of Alevi and Bektaşî Associations broke a taboo but was not followed by their integration into the main Directorate of Religious Affairs. The right to broadcast in Kurdish and other regional languages was blocked until 2004. EU reports noted the persistence of restrictions on trade unions, continuation of child labour, prosecutions against writers and the military's continued dominance in the National Security Council.

The government also signed a series of international agreements to demonstrate commitment to better governance.⁷² After years of delays, in 2004 it began

respecting payments ordered by the European Court of Human Rights. By 2007, 9,400 cases were pending against Turkey in the court.⁷³

EU figures show a steady decline between 2001 and 2006 in associations or centres closed down (from 145 to six), such places raided by police (216 to 48), publications seized or banned (341 to 21) and freedom of expression cases (3,473 people put on trial to 1,013).⁷⁴ The courts still treated prosecuted torturers lightly but more government and media attention seemed to produce better security force behaviour.⁷⁵ There was little change in torture cases – 862 in 2001, 1,202 in 2003, 708 in 2006⁷⁶ – and apparent extrajudicial killings, though far fewer than in the 1990s, rose from 55 to 130, apparently due to increasing unrest in the Kurdish-populated south east.

2. Women's rights

Atatürk's early republican regime gave women the vote, banned polygamy and encouraged removal of the veil. But courts continued to turn a blind eye to religious second marriages, were indulgent towards honour killings of women and left the patriarchal system intact.⁷⁷ By one measure of gender equality, Turkey's performance is 105th in the world, twenty places below any EU country, let down especially by low ratios of females in school, the labour force and representative government.⁷⁸

Women had to wait for the EU reform process after 2001 to win equal rights in marriage, divorce, education and property. Family courts have now been set up. A

⁶⁹ “Burglaries are out of control. The police now has an attitude that, if you think you can catch thieves with these kinds of laws, do it yourself”. Crisis Group interview, former member of Turkish parliament, Istanbul, June 2007.

⁷⁰ Crisis Group interview, EU official, Ankara, April 2007.

⁷¹ Turkey has not signed the Optional Protocol to the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the Revised European Social Charter or the Statute of the International Criminal Court. “EU General Report 2003”.

⁷² The following list contains a selection of Turkey's treaty accessions. In August 2001, it adopted the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, against the trade in child labour, and in June 2002 it ratified the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights. In January 2002, it removed its derogation from the European Convention on Human Rights, which had allowed lengthy detention periods in the Kurdish south east. In March 2002, the Constitutional Court recognised the European Convention on Human Rights as a source on which courts could base decisions. Turkey signed the UN Convention against Corruption in December 2003 and the European Convention on the Fight against Corruption in March 2004. In

April 2002, parliament accepted the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. In January 2002, it set out an Action Plan on Enhancing Transparency and Good Governance in the Public Sector. In June 2002, the directorate general of security promulgated a circular calling for vigilance against mistreatment of detainees, forbidding black-painted interrogation rooms and practices like shining light in suspects' faces. In June 2003 parliament ratified the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

⁷³ Turkey was third in outstanding cases, after Russia and Romania. France had 4,200 of 96,200 total cases, *BIA*, 26 June 2007.

⁷⁴ EU figures made available to Crisis Group, March 2007.

⁷⁵ “The use of torture methods such as suspension by the arms and electric shocks is now very rare”. “Turkey 2005 Progress Report”, European Commission, Brussels, 9 November 2005.

⁷⁶ EU figures made available to Crisis Group, March 2007.

⁷⁷ In the eastern, Kurdish-majority province of Van, one organisation found that in 1996 11 per cent of women lived in polygamous marriages, and 20 per cent were outside the protection of the law because they had only had religious marriages. “Sex and Power in Turkey”, op. cit.

⁷⁸ “The Global Gender Gap Report 2006”, World Economic Forum, 2006.

determined government-led campaign pushed for school enrolment. These reforms were started by a broad-based, Kemalist-right wing coalition government in 2001 and continued strongly by the AKP, which is a paradox for those in the Kemalist establishment who suspect that party of a reactionary, Islamist agenda. A recent report on Turkish women by the European Stability Initiative (ESI) said:

There are some who fear that Turkey may be turning its back on its secular traditions. Some of the loudest voices come from Kemalist women, who insist that the rise of “political Islam” represents an acute threat to the rights and freedoms of Turkish women. There have even been calls for restrictions to Turkish democracy, to protect women’s rights. Yet such an “authoritarian feminism” is out of touch with the reality of contemporary Turkey and the achievements of recent years.⁷⁹

A similar paradox surrounds women’s use of the headscarf, which emerged as a paramount symbol in the debate about whether Abdullah Gül, whose wife wears a headscarf, was suitable to become president of Atatürk’s republic. Kemalists tend to view the headscarf as a symbol of reaction, while the newly urbanised part of the population that supports the AKP sees it more as a symbol of identity, mobility and independence.⁸⁰ The Kemalist secularists could claim a more general success: the proportion of Turkish women appearing with no head covering increased from 27 per cent in 1996 to 37 per cent in 2006.⁸¹ The 22 July 2007 election also doubled the number of women in the 550-seat assembly to 49, most from the AKP.

The ESI report suggested the future for Turkish women could be brighter than the low world ranking implies and that change is a matter of time and prosperity, not culture. It noted that Spain and even Sweden lagged behind in various indicators until two decades ago. While not minimising the still great distance between law and implementation for women’s rights, it concluded:

There are those in Europe who see the low status of Turkish women as a reflection of an alien culture that has no place within the European Union. Yet patriarchy was also an integral part of European culture, not so long ago...Is there any reason why Turkey should not follow in the footsteps of Spain, Ireland and the rest of Europe, towards a truly post-patriarchal society? It is clear that the vast socio-economic changes underway in Turkey have

created some of the conditions for a radical change in the status of women.⁸²

3. Education reforms

There is no EU *acquis* on education curricula but education is a key area where Turkey has been trying to catch up. Compulsory education lasts for eight years, compared to ten in France, eleven in the UK and twelve in Germany.⁸³ Illiteracy is about double European averages. During the years of EU convergence, Turkey relaunched reform efforts, starting with basic school attendance. Notable was the “Let’s Go to School!” collaboration between the education ministry, UNICEF and volunteers. Between 2003 and 2006, it identified 273,444 girls deprived of primary school education, chiefly in traditional eastern areas, and brought 81 per cent of them into the education system.⁸⁴

Civil society has also become more actively involved in education issues, arguing this is the one area above all that will make Turkey “European”. The education system includes one aspect that would be peculiar in the EU, a one-hour lesson weekly on national security, taught by a serving military officer. Its religion class is not progressive either, focusing on an authorised Turkish version of Sunni Islam. The right of recognised non-Muslim communities (Jews, Armenians and Greeks) to sit out this class does not necessarily apply to significant sects like the heterodox Alevis.⁸⁵ This contravenes the European Convention on Human Rights. The focus on one rite, however, is similar to the situation in EU states like Roman Catholic Ireland and Eastern Orthodox Greece.

Indeed, reformers work from the understanding that the gap between the EU and Turkey is more in implementation than structure, and in teaching methods than in subject matter, with issues requiring attention all the way from counting “dead enemy soldiers” in arithmetical problems to abandoning rote-learning. Motivation and readiness for change in official education ministry structures is closely

⁸² “Sex and Power in Turkey”, op. cit.

⁸³ “National Education at the beginning of 2002”, ministry of national education, Turkey.

⁸⁴ See the campaign website www.haydikizlarokula.org.

⁸⁵ Alevis have no single doctrine and have emerged only in the past decade as a publicly recognised community, or group of communities. Their practices mix elements of ancient Turkic shamanism with early Shia worship, including veneration of Ali and other descendants of the prophet Mohammed. Most see themselves as a school under Islam’s broad umbrella, although this is contested by a few Sunnis and some Alevis. In a recent poll, Turks identifying themselves as Alevi were about 5 per cent of the population but 11.4 per cent of the population prioritise Shia/Alevi personages in personal beliefs, *Milliyet*, 22 March 2007.

⁷⁹ “Sex and Power in Turkey,” op. cit.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Binnaz Toprak and Ali Çarkoğlu, “Religion, Society and Politics in a Changing Turkey”, TESEV, November 2006.

linked to the political atmosphere with Europe. Frustrations can run high among those trying to organise these efforts, even as they find that Turkish companies and individuals are increasingly ready to direct philanthropy into this domain.⁸⁶ Objections to change are often contextual, not ideological. Thus, despite the historical ties of schools to mosques in Ottoman times, most Turks now see mosques exclusively as places for prayer. Hence, there is resistance to European-style transfer of religious education to places of worship. But change is possible. In Europe, Turkish mosques are both places of education and social centres.

The EU recognises that better education of Turkey's young population develops workers who may offset the ageing of EU societies.⁸⁷ Initiatives such as the Leonardo, Erasmus, Youth and Jean Monnet programs have had a major motivational impact on individuals and perceptions, especially in EU-oriented universities. Still, to get past the present blockage in general education reform, a sense of EU-Turkey partnership is vital. "The EU should avoid the attitude that they are the white man, bringing civilization to the natives. They must try to listen a bit", said a reformer. "Right now, everything involving the EU or the West delegitimises you and damages your projects".⁸⁸

4. Civil society

Civil society was arguably a major casualty of the end of the Ottoman Empire and the building of the Turkish republic as a one-party state on the 1920s European model. The government closed Muslim religious brotherhoods, clamped severe restrictions on the surviving non-Muslim minorities and took over many social functions formerly dealt with at the neighbourhood level. The modern urban economy became entirely state-dominated. The army was

the supreme institution, whose hierarchical world view reinforced traditional society's patriarchal tendencies.

Democratisation of civil society began with the economic liberalisation and internationalisation brought in by Turgut Özal in the 1980s, following which young businessmen became one of the more progressive and enlightened social groups. Turkish NGOs first began to feel strength in numbers when they met on the margins of the UN Habitat conference in Istanbul in 1996. EU engagement then led to more liberal laws and the shift in responsibility for associations in 2005 from the general directorate of security to the interior ministry. By July 2007, more than 76,000 associations had registered, only 35 per cent of them in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir.⁸⁹

E. THE KURDS

The golden years of the EU accession process, 2001-2004, had a striking impact in calming the relationship between the government and Turkish Kurds, who are about 15 per cent of the population (11.4 million people).⁹⁰ The 1980s saw severe repression, especially the years of the 1980-1983 military coup, when the Kurdish language was strictly banned and even the word "Kurd" was taboo. The 1990s included periods of near civil war. Armed clashes faded after the 1999 capture of Öcalan, the PKK leader.⁹¹ In August 2000, the PKK declared the first of a series of unilateral ceasefires. Kurdish hopes for improvement rose

⁸⁶ One leading group, the Education Reform Initiative attached to Sabanci University, says it has obtained enough funding to foresee five-year budgets. It reports a dramatic change in classrooms and excited sense of liberation among teachers that it has been able to reach with its open-minded teaching techniques and efforts to dismantle the old mantra that "there is one truth, in the text book and in the mouth of the teacher". But much self-confidence is needed to accept changes to dogmas about history that are often based on a suspicion of Christianity and European powers entrenched in text-books for decades. "The accession process gave the atmosphere that allowed change. We now face a rising neo-nationalist and isolationist current... Turkey has always felt the need for anchor. I wish they [Europeans] could forget about the ultimate membership issue. Let's finish the process and not be a member". Crisis Group interview, Neyyir Bertay, Education Reform Initiative, 25 April 2007.

⁸⁷ "2004 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress towards Accession", European Commission, Brussels, 6 October 2004.

⁸⁸ Crisis Group interview, Batuhan Aydagül, Education Reform Initiative, Istanbul, 22 April 2007.

⁸⁹ For details, see the Turkish government associations homepage at www.dernekler.gov.tr.

⁹⁰ While speakers of the main Kurdish dialects, Kirmanci and Zaza, are the overwhelming majority of the population in several south eastern provinces, perhaps half of all Kurds live in big cities in the west. Some sources put Kurds at twenty million, or even 20 per cent of the population, but there is no evidence for this. A poll of 50,000 people published in March 2007 found that ethnic Kurds were 15.6 per cent of the population (about 11.4 million people). It revealed significant social indicators showing Kurds to be more tolerant of religious and ethnic diversity, poorer, with much larger family groups and nearly half as likely to go to university. *Milliyet*, 22 March 2007.

⁹¹ The Marxist-Leninist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), founded in the 1970s, launched a guerrilla campaign for an independent Kurdish state in 1984, with Syrian support and occasional tolerance for its political activities by powers like the Soviet Union, Russia and several EU states. Since Öcalan's 1999 capture, the public aim has shifted towards autonomy within Turkey, although the group retains a strong pan-Kurdish ideology. It now says the PKK is its political wing, the HPG (Popular Defence Forces) its military wing. Names like Kadek and Kontra-Gel appear to be disused. It is unclear how close the PKK is to TAK (Kurdistan Freedom Falcons), which has claimed responsibility for terrorist attacks on tourists and others in Turkey. It has a pan-Kurdish membership and an affiliated organisation in Iran, PJAK (Party of Free Life for Kurdistan).

with the advent of more liberal laws as part of the EU *acquis*, including permission for language broadcasts and schools. A decline in the death toll in clashes with Kurdish rebels mirrored the years of strongest convergence, and casualties have risen since the 2005 EU-Turkey divergence.⁹²

Kurds began to feel more secure as Turkey increasingly accepted international legal oversight. Turkey began paying settlements awarded to Kurds by the European Court of Human Rights. Following ratification of the European Convention of Human Rights, courts began to use its principles in the legal process. Villagers were allowed back to mountain areas cleared of inhabitants during the worst fighting in the 1990s.⁹³ Celebrating festivals like the 21 March solar New Year became easier, even if officials, citing the same festival among Central Asian Turkic peoples, tried to turn it into a Turkish rather than a Kurdish and Persian occasion. EU pressure to lift the death penalty was a major reason why Öcalan was not executed. In 2004, Turkey released a group of Kurdish ex-MPs jailed since 1994 on charges of PKK membership. They included Leyla Zana, the recipient of several awards as a prisoner of conscience, including the EU's Sakharov Prize in 1995.

By 2005, Turkey had achieved a tolerance of Kurdishness unimaginable ten years before. Over-zealous prosecutors still opened cases on use of the language and nationalist symbols. But the word Kurd, and more importantly an acceptance of a legitimate concept of Kurdishness, has become common in the media. The use of the language and culture has become far more widespread and confident, from minibus bumper stickers to music and politics. The Kurdish question is far more readily debated, and Kurdish intellectuals are freer to travel. In the July 2007 election campaigns, independent Kurdish nationalist candidates for parliament spoke in Kurdish as girls in the once-banned Kurdish red, green and yellow colours danced before their podiums. Illustrating a gap that still exists between official discourse and the streets, the crowds waved flags with the face of the imprisoned Öcalan and chanted his name.

Turkish and Kurdish leaders still need to work harder to provide new channels for political expression and put the old PKK-Turkey conflict behind them. Istanbul's main Kurdish nationalist daily newspaper, *Gündem*, successor of a line of papers banned, closed and bombed in the 1990s, should find a broader use for its new freedom than simply publishing Öcalan statements, criticism of the army and memorials to dead PKK rebels on the front page.

Legal harassment does still plague Kurdish broadcasters, who, for example, must include Turkish subtitles on all programs, including live chat shows.⁹⁴ This is self-defeating, since it means a generation has grown up watching pro-PKK, Kurdish-language broadcasts from Europe and northern Iraq. Since similar ones were closed in 1999 and 2003 in the UK and France due to open PKK links, the most popular television station is Roj, broadcasting from Denmark since 2004. While clearly airing material from PKK sources, it is more cautious than its predecessors, even including a weekly broadcast on "the principles of the European Union, the problems and perspectives for expansion". Danish authorities in May 2007 rejected Turkish complaints that its coverage of Turkish Kurd demonstrations incited to hatred or violence. If the new AKP government broadens freedoms for Kurdish broadcasters, it will win twice. The EU would see it as a major commitment to reform, and the larger Kurdish audience for Turkey-based programming would diminish the influence of the PKK.

However, the opportunity created by Öcalan's capture and the subsequent convergence with the EU never turned into a process of peace and resolution with the Kurds. A more open-minded approach to the Kurdish issue by the AKP was never formalised, partly thanks to nationalist criticism.⁹⁵ Despite unilateral ceasefires, the PKK did not give up the armed struggle. For the establishment, Öcalan's capture was the template for a solution: PKK surrender. Amnesties offered have been half-hearted. A 2003 law on "social reinsertion" had little impact.⁹⁶

⁹² In the past six years, the death toll in clashes has mostly been rising: 92 (2001), 30 (2002), 104 (2003), 240 (2004), 496 (2005), 345 (2006). Human Rights Association annual report, Ankara, 2006. The toll for the first half of 2007 is estimated at about 250.

⁹³ Since January 2003, 124,218 internally displaced persons have returned to their villages, about one third of the official total of 350,000 displaced. Other estimates of the displaced are double that or more. Some Kurds complain returnees are obliged to support the "village guards" government militia. See "Still Critical": Prospects in 2005 for Internally Displaced Kurds in Turkey", Human Rights Watch, March 2005.

⁹⁴ EU states do not necessarily encourage minority radio stations either. The OSCE criticised a Greek law in 2005 for "unnecessarily rigid requirements". News channels had to have a minimum staff of twenty, pay a minimum deposit of €100,000, broadcast 24 hours a day and with Greek as the main language. OSCE press release, 27 July 2007, at www.osce.org/fom.

⁹⁵ "Ethnic identities are subsidiary identities. Our overall identity is the one which binds us all together, and that is the bond of Turkish citizenship". Prime Minister Erdoğan, speech in Diyarbakir, November 2006.

⁹⁶ The law provides for a partial amnesty and reduction in sentences for persons involved in the activities of an illegal organisation. It excludes the leaders of the organisation and those who have committed crimes. According to official figures 4,101 applications were made, including 2,800 from individuals in

As the EU-Turkey relationship deteriorated, tensions rose in the south east. In November 2005, the authors of a deadly bomb attack on a Kurdish nationalist bookseller in the south eastern town of Şemdinli were discovered to be linked to the armed forces. The pro-reform AKP initially seemed keen to prosecute, but the military and judicial establishments blocked the case.⁹⁷ An elected district mayor and council in Diyarbakir were removed in June 2007 for trying to introduce multilingual public services. At least half of eight bomb attacks in 2006 that hit civilian targets and foreign tourists were claimed by a separatist Kurdish splinter group called TAK (Kurdistan Freedom Falcons),⁹⁸ which in the summer of 2007 has threatened action specifically aimed to set back EU-Turkey convergence.⁹⁹

The new violence in the south east has been exacerbated by the deteriorating situation in Iraq after the U.S.-led invasion of 2003. Explosives from Iraq were used in bombings. The PKK started imitating the road-side explosive techniques of Iraqi insurgents. The increasing autonomy of Iraqi Kurdistan began to seem more attractive as a model to a nationalist minority of Turkish Kurds, at least compared to being part of a Turkey that appeared on the point of being excluded from the EU.¹⁰⁰ The unilateral PKK ceasefires became increasingly ragged, and casualties rose, including 64 Turkish soldiers in the upsurge of fighting from January to June 2007.¹⁰¹

The deaths were an unwelcome reminder of the overall casualties, including nearly 5,000 soldiers and police, since the rebellion broke out in 1984.¹⁰² Emotional media

prison. Only 1,301 persons applied spontaneously. "EU Regular Report on Turkey's Progress towards Accession, 2003".

⁹⁷ "Turkey: Court convicts two in Semdinli bombing case, but questions remain unanswered", Amnesty International, 20 June 2006.

⁹⁸ Known also as the Kurdistan Liberation Hawks.

⁹⁹ "The European States...have shown their duplicity and unprincipled character afresh...the Kurdish people have taken shelter in these states which are always talking about democracy and human rights, because of genocide and pressure. [We will] never forgive the states which use the Kurds as the subject of a bargain, and we will deal a blow to them". Kurdistan Freedom Falcons statement, 5 March 2007. The group also wants an end to crackdowns on PKK activities in Europe, which have included drug-running and racketeering in the past. "The PKK 'taxes' ethnic Kurdish drug traffickers and individual cells traffic heroin to support their operations". Rand Beers, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, testimony in the Senate, 13 March 2002. See www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/rm/2002/8743.htm.

¹⁰⁰ Crisis Group interview, Turkish Kurd intellectual, May 2007.

¹⁰¹ News conference, General İler Başbuğ, commander of Turkish land forces, Isparta, 27 June 2007.

¹⁰² The total killed by the PKK includes 4,749 soldiers, 205 police, 1,302 temporary village guards (pro-government

coverage of soldiers' funerals and fiery speeches by army officers revived a 1990s sense that the country was back on a war footing. To counter public questioning of the casualties in its conscript army, the armed forces announced that professional commandos would do the work from May 2008. Turkey estimates that the PKK has about 5,000 active fighters but their location is controversial. The army, which presents the Kurdish problem as an external provocation, estimates that most are in northern Iraq, with 500-1,900 in Turkey.¹⁰³ Prime Minister Erdoğan said he believes most are inside Turkey.¹⁰⁴ Öcalan released a statement from his jail cell warning of worse fighting unless the new government changes its approach.¹⁰⁵

The Kurdish problem is complex and different from the situation of other minorities. Kurds and Turks largely share the same Sunni Muslim religious tradition. As among the Turks, a small number of Kurds follow Alevi religious traditions. Inter-marriage is common. There is substantial overlap in history, cuisine and customs. Differences, like the higher Kurdish birth rate and higher incidence of "honour" crimes in the east where Kurds are the majority, can be attributed to slower development. About 180 members of the 550-seat parliament elected in 2002 were of Kurdish origin. According to a survey, 80 per cent did not feel there was a "Kurdish problem".¹⁰⁶ The 23 Kurdish nationalists elected in July 2007 campaigned for equal rights within Turkey, not separatism.¹⁰⁷ The AKP won

Kurdish militia), 5,595 teachers and villagers. *Hürriyet*, 22 June 2007. The number of PKK rebels killed is unclear. Official figures claim 26,128, but this includes unsubstantiated, round figures from Turkish incursions into northern Iraq.

¹⁰³ The latest figure given by Turkish land forces commander İler Başbuğ was 1,800-1,900 inside Turkey, and 5,150-5,650 in northern Iraq. News conference, *Isparta*, 27 June 2007. Prior to that the official figure had been 500 inside Turkey.

¹⁰⁴ "Has the fight with terrorism inside Turkey ended so that we can think about the luxury of dealing with 500 people in northern Iraq?" Erdoğan later said the figure of 500 was "random". *Today's Zaman*, 13 June 2007.

¹⁰⁵ "If no solution comes after the election, there will be war. This war will be terrible for Turkey...let's get together and draw a democratic road map. We are ready to take any step for a solution...you are only saying, 'we will wipe it out, we'll finish it this way'. No, you must understand. You can't wipe out the Kurds...Try just doing a deal with them! That's what will take Turkey forward". Statement by Abdullah Öcalan, *Gündem*, 12 July 2007.

¹⁰⁶ İbrahim Kalin, president of SETA, commenting on data collected by SETA think-tank, EUISS Roundtable on Turkey, Paris, 29 June 2007.

¹⁰⁷ Ahmet Türk, one of the group of Turkish Kurd nationalists elected to parliament in 1991 and jailed in 1994, made clear that they would try to be constructive. "We made mistakes and must learn from them. Today the politics of [official] denial [of the Kurdish problem] are gone. Instead we have a lack of solution.

nearly 54 per cent of the vote in the south east, indicating a Kurdish will to work within a Turkey-wide framework.

F. THE TURKISH MODEL

There is debate over whether Turkey is an asset or a liability for the EU's relations with the Middle East and the Islamic world. Some, notably the new government of France, believe it has minor influence there and that the Middle East has little interest in its fate. Those who think Turkey would be an asset see it as an agent of the EU's soft power in the region. Chief among their arguments is the pragmatic example of its practice of Islam.

1. Turkish Islam

Atatürk and his Kemalist heirs have long fought against traditional Islamists to forge their secular Muslim tradition, which, for instance, promotes scientific rationalism and tolerates public consumption of alcohol. They face a new rival in the more observant current represented by the AKP, founded in 2001, whose pragmatism expresses itself more in tolerance of religious and ethnic diversity.¹⁰⁸ Kemalists, pointing to the radical Islamist past of some of its leaders, accuse it of having a secret Islamising agenda. AKP leaders insist they have changed and are in no way standard-bearers for Islamic law, an idea that has rarely had more than 20 per cent support in Turkey.

While the AKP sympathises with Middle East Muslims, it shows no sign of wanting to merge with them. The headscarves of women in this newly urbanised group coexist with bright, tight, fashionable clothes unthinkable in Saudi Arabia. One study found that throughout Turkey, observant Muslim opinions were being liberalized by rising wealth, stability, education and urbanisation – all benefits that can also be linked to the EU convergence process. The number of women wearing the headscarf decreased in the seven years to 2006, and support for Islamic law fell to 9 per cent from 21 per cent.¹⁰⁹ As a

senior Turkish republican official said, “Turkish Islam is different.”¹¹⁰

In the wider Islamic world, Turkey is a modernising pioneer, introducing women into the religious hierarchy and mosques and even allowing them as whirling *mevlevi* dervishes. But despite talk of Islamic unity, every national jurisdiction in the Islamic world has a different practice of the Muslim faith and does not readily accept “models” from outside its own traditions. There is new Muslim interest in this “different” Turkey but it is only indirectly linked to Islam. The main spark is the turn-about in Turkey's economic and political fortunes. The attention-grabbing moment was the recognition of Turkey in 1999 as a full candidate to join the rich countries' club of the EU. Five years later, when the EU was to decide whether it would recognise a Muslim state as an equal and start accession negotiations, 250 correspondents from the Islamic world went to Brussels to report.

Turkey's success with the EU is what made its modernisation of Islam a staple subject for commentators in the Middle East. Many want to find a new way after nationalist and Islamist ideologies have failed to provide progress, peace or prosperity. They see an example in how former Islamists moved from simplistic slogans like “Islam is the solution”, still heard in the Arab world, compromised with modernity and formed a successful, democratic party of government.¹¹¹ Commentators admire the coexistence of observant and secularist schools of thought.¹¹² The observant manners of AKP leaders reassure those brought up with the prejudice that Turkey was a militarist, atheist Western stooge. Turkey's success legitimised the idea of pro-Europe policies for Muslims and even a critical engagement with Israel. New parties in Egypt and Morocco explicitly followed the AKP's democratic but observant model. In 2006, the Arab world – once the keenest critic of any Turkish enterprise in the Middle East – joined Europe and others in welcoming the AKP decision to send a major contingent of peacekeepers to the UN force in Lebanon.

In parliament we'll be working for a solution that can be embraced by the people of Turkey”, interview, *Sabah*, 6 July 2007.

¹⁰⁸ When a German national with a Christian bible publishing house in Malatya was murdered along with two Turkish converts from Islam on 18 April 2007, the German ambassador in Ankara received spontaneous calls from AKP politicians expressing horror, regret and condolences. No other party figures called. Crisis Group interview, German diplomat, Ankara, April 2007.

¹⁰⁹ The study found that only 1 per cent of Turkish women, mostly rural and elderly, wore a full, black body covering and that 81 per cent of Turks condemn suicide bombing as un-Islamic under any circumstances. Ali Çarkoğlu and Binnaz Toprak, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁰ Crisis Group interview, Turkish official, Ankara, 19 April 2007.

¹¹¹ “What advantages we would gain if we broadened our interest in the Turkish scene and moved from being mere spectators to trying to derive a lesson or two from it”, Fahmi Houeidi, moderate Egyptian Islamist, *al-Safir*, 1 August 2007. In 2002, another Egyptian commentator thought the first AKP victory “may have brought within reach a solution to the problem of religion and the state in the Arab and Islamic world”, Abdel-Monem Said, *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 27 February 2003.

¹¹² “The Turks have succeeded brilliantly at differing, while simultaneously keeping their [political] life cycle healthy”, Mahmoud ar-Rimawi, *al-Rai* (Jordan), 24 July 2007.

The AKP has not repeated the mistake of its forerunner, the Refah Party, which in the 1990s tried to substitute Middle Eastern and Islamic countries for Turkey's partners in Europe and the U.S. Under the AKP, however, Turkey has forged new ties with Iran, Syria and the Arab world, departing from a traditional policy of siding with the West or standing to one side in Middle East disputes. It is emerging as an important diplomatic actor.¹¹³ Most of these Middle East contacts are based on pragmatic interests, not Islamic dogma. Turkey's new business generation also enjoyed a huge upsurge of construction contracts, as high oil prices enriched Middle Eastern countries.¹¹⁴ A million Iranians relax annually on the beaches of Turkey's anything-goes Mediterranean holiday coast.

2. Bridge or hub?

Debates are as old as Turkey about whether it is a bridge between East and West or the hub of its own self-contained universe. EU Commissioner Rehn calls it a Muslim pioneer with the soft power to project EU values eastward in an Islamic context, whose accession is the "defining issue of the 21st century...the greatest challenge of our time is the relationship between Europe and Islam, or more widely between the West and Islam".¹¹⁵ Other EU officials are outspoken that Turkey's diplomatic and military weight is indispensable if the EU is to influence its Middle Eastern backyard.¹¹⁶ Former Commissioner of External Affairs Chris Patten thinks Turkish membership would symbolise a public embrace of the Islamic strand of modern European culture. "We seem to have done

everything possible to make Samuel Huntington's prediction come true. We have to do what we can to prevent his grim prediction", he said. "Overlapping civilizations don't have to clash and can become something bigger".¹¹⁷

Some European officials believe Turkey overstates its influence in the Middle East. While the pro-membership UK believes its relationship with the region makes it a useful watchman of an eastern border, France considers it a liability precisely because it would push that border to Iraq, Iran and Syria.¹¹⁸ Still others fear Turkey, far from projecting EU ideas and influence eastwards, might become a Trojan horse for an Islamic takeover of the old continent.

Turkey's deep historical links to the Middle East are not necessarily a negative. In previous EU enlargements, worries were expressed and then forgotten about Britain's former empire and Spain's ties to Latin America. Prime Minister Erdoğan has spoken of Muslim leaders telling him they would welcome Turkish EU membership not because they wanted this for their countries but because it would give the Islamic world a voice at last in European councils.¹¹⁹ Reformist Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif has no ambition for Egypt to join the EU but says he envies the motivational force for change this perspective gives Turkey.¹²⁰

¹¹³ "Turkey's recent focus on the Middle East...does not mean that Turkey is about to turn its back on the West. Nor is the shift evidence of the "creeping Islamisation" of Turkish foreign policy, as some critics claim. Turkey's new activism is a response to structural changes in its security environment since the end of the Cold War. And, if managed properly, it could be an opportunity for Washington and its Western allies to use Turkey as a bridge to the Middle East", F. Stephen Larrabee, "Turkey Rediscovered the Middle East", *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2007. See also Hugh Pope, "Turning to Turkey", *Prospect*, November 2006.

¹¹⁴ Of \$9.3 billion in contracts won in 2005, more than half, worth \$5.65 billion, were in the Middle East. The total for 2002 was just \$1.2 billion. *Türkiye*, 12 December 2005.

¹¹⁵ EU Commissioner Olli Rehn believes "Turkey is an anchor of stability in the most unstable region of the world, in the wider Middle East. It is a benchmark for democracy for the Muslim world from Morocco to Malaysia...Turkey is, not only in rhetoric but in reality, a bridge between civilizations. With the accession process, and with a successful accession process, of Turkey to the EU, she can become a sturdier bridge of civilizations". Quoted in "Turkey Snub Warning", *The Daily Telegraph*, 11 June 2007.

¹¹⁶ "The question is, do we want to bear with some weight on the Caucasus, Middle East and the Gulf, or not?", Crisis Group interview, European official, Ankara, April 2007.

¹¹⁷ Speech, EU-Turkey Seminar, Sabanci University, 31 May 2007. Patten (Lord Patten of Barnes) is co-chair of the Crisis Group Board.

¹¹⁸ Crisis Group interviews, Paris, 2 July 2007.

¹¹⁹ "It's not because the rest of the Islamic world wants to get into Europe. They want to see Islam represented in Europe. For global peace, this is very important...if Turkey gets in, the alliance of civilizations is possible", Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, speech at the World Economic Forum, Istanbul, 24 November 2006.

¹²⁰ Comments at press conference, World Economic Forum, Istanbul, 24 November 2006.

IV. THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

The EU and Turkey are so closely linked that while a positive atmosphere seems to move all areas of discussion forward, the opposite happens when distrust prevails. EU leaders have put the blame on Turkish foot-dragging over reforms, particularly in human rights and freedom of expression. On the whole, however, the tone and tempo of the relationship has been set by the wealthier and more powerful party. Since 2002, a combination of short-term factors, mostly internal matters like immigration, enlargement and unemployment worries, has caused politicians in several EU states to voice public doubt about the EU's often-repeated promise of accession in the long term. Turkey's disillusionment began later, from 2005. The blockage with the EU was made worse by Turkey's new strategic concerns after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Turks again feel a sense of being under siege. Laid on a base of sometimes xenophobic education and prejudice, isolationist nationalism has revived.

In the EU-Turkey relationship, the virtuous circle of the 1998-2004 period had by 2006 turned into a self-reinforcing vicious circle of ill will. Many of the policy areas that had shown positive possibilities – joint peacekeeping operations, Turkish reinforcement of EU priorities in the Middle East, Turkey's adoption of educational and legal reforms – froze or went into reverse. This is not the first time Turkey has hit bumps on its road to the EU. Pauses, sometimes accompanied by bitter rhetoric, followed the 1974 Cyprus invasion, the 1980-1983 military coup and the 1989 and 1997 rebuffs of other stages of Turkey's membership quest. Careful management is needed, as it was then, to keep the relationship from going off the rails.

A. CYPRUS – SYMPTOM OR CAUSE?

The most important wedge between the EU and Turkey is the frozen Cyprus conflict.¹²¹ Many EU governments,

¹²¹ See Crisis Group Europe Report N°171, *The Cyprus Stalemate: What Next?*, 8 March 2006. Cyprus won independence from Britain in 1960 under a complex arrangement that gave the 17 per cent Turkish minority communal representation and included a guarantee by Britain, Greece and Turkey. In December 1963, the Greek Cypriot leadership demanded change from a bicomunal to a unitary state. The Turks withdrew from government. Intercommunal strife and massacres erupted, forcing the minority into ghettos. After the Greek Cypriot National Guard staged a coup in 1974, aiming for union with Greece (*enosis*), with the support of the junta then ruling Greece, Turkey invaded, invoking the 1960 guarantor arrangements. By August 1974 it occupied 37 per cent of the island amid an ethnic cleansing that separated the communities.

even anti-Turkish membership ones like France, now believe it was a mistake to have admitted a divided country in 2004.¹²² With Cyprus a member, represented by the Greek Cypriot government in Nicosia, the EU is inherently a party to the dispute. The EU and all international actors backed the lengthy UN peace process based on a bicomunal, bizonal solution, most recently known as the Annan Plan. In 2004, 76 per cent of Greek Cypriots rejected it and 65 per cent of Turkish Cypriots accepted.¹²³ Greek Cypriot politicians say that plan is now dead,¹²⁴ an attempt to restart UN-led talks in 2006 has stalled.

1. The 2004 turn-about

The dispute has a long history, and the current difficulties for the EU cannot be understood without reference to the political upheavals of 2004. For many years, the most important impediment appeared to be the Turkish Cypriot leadership's refusal to accept less than the maximum degree of independence. President Rauf Denktash, the veteran leader whose hard-line determination since the 1950s forged the autonomous Turkish Cypriot administration, rejected a version of the Annan Plan in March 2003. In December of that year, however, he lost power in an election to the pro-reunification Mehmet Ali Talat. When the international community insisted that both sides hold a public referendum in April 2004 – the first

The Greek Cypriot government retained international recognition. Turkish Cypriots were forced into an ever-closer relationship with Turkey, the only country to recognise their 1983 declaration of independence as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. After failure of the Annan Plan in 2004, Cyprus – in effect the Greek Cypriot entity – joined the EU. It is represented in the European Parliament by seven Greek Cypriots and no Turkish Cypriots. A Turkish Cypriot diplomatic mission in Brussels enjoys semi-diplomatic status.

¹²² Crisis Group interviews, Paris, 2 July 2007.

¹²³ The first version of the plan named after then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was presented in 2002, with 182 pages of main articles and finalised laws and 9,000 pages of attached draft laws and treaties. It foresaw a bicomunal, bizonal, federal United Cyprus Republic, comprised two constituent states, a Greek south and a Turkish north. At the federal level would be a presidency that would rotate between the communities, which would have political equality. A presidential council of nine, of whom at least three would be Turkish Cypriots, and an upper and lower house of parliament would have complex checks and balances. The Turkish Cypriot territory would be reduced from 37 per cent of the island to 28.5 per cent. The majority of Greek Cypriot refugees could return under this adjustment; the rest would be compensated. Some 74,000 of the 200,000 north Cyprus residents would have to move. Turkey's 35,000 troops would gradually be reduced to 950, as would Greek troops. Donors had pledged to meet most of the estimated \$2 billion cost of the settlement.

¹²⁴ "The Annan Plan is now out". Crisis Group interview, Greek Cypriot diplomat, Brussels, 7 May 2007.

time people on either side in Cyprus had been directly asked their opinion – the Turkish Cypriot people accepted virtually the same deal.

Enlargement Commissioner Verheugen declared that the Greek Cypriot side had cheated on a 1999 Helsinki summit pledge not to hinder a solution.¹²⁵ Commissioner Patten was equally blunt: “There was a gentlemen’s agreement that we would accept Cyprus in the union provided that Cyprus sorted out [the dispute] based on the UN process before membership. We discovered we were not dealing with gentlemen”.¹²⁶

The keys to the Turkish Cypriot “yes” vote were the appeal of EU accession, strong security guarantees and the drive for EU convergence by the AKP government in Ankara. The Greek Cypriot “no” was due to a sense that EU membership was just a month away, post-colonial mistrust of solutions imposed by outsiders and a hard-line president, who rejected the plan from the start.¹²⁷ The main political force on the island traditionally sympathetic to reunion, the communist party Akel, joined the “no” campaign to keep its place in the coalition government.¹²⁸

The two sides remain rooted to their main preoccupations. The Turkish side fears the Greek majority and wants the reassurance of a Turkish military guarantee. The Greek side fears the Turkish military and can afford to remain intransigent on legalistic details since it has international legitimacy, a public unwilling to share power with Turkish Cypriots and no urgent incentive to compromise. As a European Commission official put it, “every step is dogged by 40,000 Turkish soldiers and 40,000 Greek Cypriot lawyers”.¹²⁹

The stalemate that brought down the Annan Plan in 2004 was faithfully reproduced even after the sides bowed to international pressure to restart talks, in what became known as the July 8 Process, named after the day in 2006 that the presidents of Greek Cyprus (Papadopoulos) and Turkish Cyprus (Talat) met.¹³⁰ It has not gone beyond meetings about meetings. The Greek side prioritised the question of Greek Cypriot properties in the north. The

Turkish side rejected this as too divisive for preparatory talks at a technical level and sought talks on day-to-day matters. The Greek Cypriots wanted a two-track approach and insisted on addressing the property question. Within four months the Turkish Cypriots began to view the process as doomed.¹³¹ The Greek Cypriots blamed resurgent Kemalist conservatives in Ankara,¹³² while the Turkish Cypriots saw suggestions for academic studies of problems exhaustively negotiated over decades as a stalling tactic to get beyond the 2007 German EU presidency, which was considered likely to be the most insistent on a UN-sponsored solution in the near future.

The Greek Cypriots say the Annan Plan is finished but have come up with no new ideas. From its position of EU membership, Nicosia appears to be pursuing a policy known unofficially as “osmosis”, in which it would gradually absorb Turkish Cypriots into a unitary state by offering individual social, economic and political benefits.¹³³ The Turkish side remains determined to preserve the internationally agreed, bicomunal, bizonal solution reached in the Annan Plan over decades of talks.

2. EU responses

The EU finds itself in a dilemma. Turkish Cypriots are cut off from it because the Greek Cypriots say their elected representatives are illegitimate “separatists”, though it was the Turkish Cypriots who voted for the EU-backed, UN-brokered reunification plan while the Greek Cypriots refused it. EU room for manoeuvre is further limited by the fact that Nicosia, a party to the dispute, is an EU member with a veto on much action. The fortunate side of the frozen conflict is that it rarely involves bloodshed. The unilateral easing of border controls by the Turkish side in 2003 reduced tensions further.¹³⁴ Still, Cyprus remains a

¹²⁵ “Cyprus Split on Annan Plan”, *Guardian*, 29 April 2004.

¹²⁶ Comments at seminar on Turkey and Europe, Sabanci University, 31 May 2007.

¹²⁷ “There’s a steady 70 per cent of Cypriots still opposed to the Annan plan. There’s a besieged mentality, a feeling that the world is against us. This prevented a full debate”, Crisis Group interview, Greek Cypriot official, Brussels, 7 May 2007.

¹²⁸ See Crisis Group Europe Report N°171, *The Cyprus Stalemate: What Next?*, 8 March 2006.

¹²⁹ Crisis Group interview, European Commission official, Brussels, May 2007.

¹³⁰ It is also sometimes known as the Gambari process, after Ibrahim Gambari, ex-UN Under Secretary-General.

¹³¹ “It’s a technical process. Nothing has been set up in practice on the ground. How healthy is it to force it and to let it block other initiatives? It’s like a dead horse that we continue to beat”. Crisis Group interview, Turkish Cypriot Official, Brussels, 13 June 2007.

¹³² “Nothing has happened. Ankara doesn’t want anything to happen. They have refused to discuss property”. Crisis Group interview, Greek Cypriot diplomat, Brussels, 7 May 2007.

¹³³ For instance, Greek Cypriot officials note that their government has issued 65,000 passports to Turkish Cypriots, *ibid.*

¹³⁴ Since the checkpoints opened in 2003, about 40 per cent of Greek Cypriots have never crossed to the north. About half say they have crossed once or a few times but no longer do so. About 10 per cent of Greek Cypriots still cross the checkpoints. About 30 per cent of Turkish Cypriots have never crossed, about 25 per cent have crossed once or a few times in the past but no longer, while about 45 per cent still do so with some regularity. The conclusion is that almost all Turkish Cypriots who had the right and opportunity to cross did so. “The UN in Cyprus: An Intercommunal Survey of Public Opinion by UNFICYP”, United Nations Peacekeeping Forces in Cyprus, 24 April 2007.

daily EU problem, with a potential for real conflict. Talk of Turkish naval deployments accompanied a dispute over oil prospecting rights that briefly flared in March 2007.

As happened previously with Turkey-Greece disputes, the Cyprus dispute is spreading to areas of EU activity far from the island and its one million inhabitants. Both sides use diplomatic advantage when they can. Turkey chiefly uses its NATO membership, the Greek Cypriots their EU membership. But proxy battles block business everywhere, from key EU priorities on the future of joint security matters, detailed above, to tit-for-tats about membership of organisations like the OECD or the European weather forecasting agency.¹³⁵

After the Turkish Cypriot change of heart in 2004, which prompted calls for the lifting of economic barriers on them by the UN Secretary-General, U.S. leaders and the EU Council of Ministers, Europe sought to offer some direct support to the community.¹³⁶ In April 2004, the Council of Ministers adopted the Green Line Regulation, aiming to give native Turkish Cypriots full EU rights and access at least to export routes through Greek Cyprus. In July 2004 the European Council started to disperse funds from the €259 million package for Turkish Cypriots it had approved in 2002 in the event of unification. UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and others hinted at the possibility of direct flights to the main Turkish Cypriot airport, Ercan.¹³⁷ The European Commission proposed that the existing taxed trade from the Turkish north be given normal EU preferential treatment.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ A full list can be seen by following the link “International Organisations”, at www.mfa.gov.cy.

¹³⁶ On 26 April 2004, two days after the twin referendums, the European Council stated: “The Turkish Cypriot community have expressed their clear desire for a future within the European Union. The Council is 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”. It “invited the Commission to bring forward comprehensive proposals to this end, with particular emphasis on the economic integration of the island and on improving contact between the two communities and with the EU”. General Affairs Council Conclusions, at www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/gena/80142.pdf.

¹³⁷ All flights to Ercan must stop at a Turkish airport first. Nicosia has taken strong actions against countries whose planes make a direct flight, even threatening to block a major EU initiative in Central Asia unless the EU reprimanded Kyrgyzstan for doing so. The Greek Cypriot government has absolute power over any airport on its internationally recognised territory, according to the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation. Crisis Group interview, EU official, Brussels, May 2007.

¹³⁸ EU officials say that even though the economic impact of the Direct Trade Regulation on Turkish north Cyprus would be

None of this bore much fruit. The Green Line Regulation was stillborn because of unpopularity with Turkish Cypriots reluctant to entrust more than 3 per cent of their trade to Greek Cypriots. The aid package was delayed as Greek Cypriot authorities picked over its legality. It was finally passed in February 2006, nearly two years late. Twenty EU officials now work on the island on Turkish community projects but their activity is strictly circumscribed by the Greek Cypriots.¹³⁹ Nicosia declined to consider direct flights to Ercan, and its objections blocked the Commission’s proposed Direct Trade Regulation entirely. In effect, the EU broke most of its pre-referendum promises to the Turkish Cypriots, many of them after intergovernmental bargaining in which other members respected the Nicosia claim of a “vital national interest”. A sense of injustice in EU policies has set back the trust Turkish Cypriots placed in the EU with their 2004 vote.¹⁴⁰

Greek Cypriot defiance in 2004 made for a poor start in the EU.¹⁴¹ But just as some EU states used Greece’s disputes with Turkey to slow the convergence process in the 1990s, they have begun to cite the Cyprus problem as the one matter that must be solved before any other accession issue can advance.¹⁴² A key demand is that

minor – the territory lives off tourism and its universities – the Commission wanted this to be the main EU effort to reward Turkey for trying to solve the dispute. Some 70 per cent of Turkish Cypriot exports are agricultural products, and the extra tax cost of routing them through Turkey is 14 per cent. This mainly applies to oranges, which can be relabelled and tested in Turkey. Carrots and potatoes cannot be exported without testing in Cyprus. Crisis Group interview, EU officials, Brussels, 8 May 2007.

¹³⁹ The EU team aims to support urban infrastructure like water supplies and waste disposal, help small business, finalise de-mining in the buffer zones along the Green Line and support work on the 2,500 missing persons from the conflict between 1963 and 1974. The European Commission controls funding. Work is hampered because there can be no formal agreements with Turkish Cypriot administrative bodies, and bilateral financing would imply recognition of a separate entity. Bids for contracts go through a Brussels address. But EU officials accept this money in practice supports a separate Turkish Cypriot existence. “The Greek Cypriots saw it as a way to open up Turkish Cyprus to their influence. The Turkish Cypriots saw it as a way of having some kind of relationship with the EU”, Crisis Group interview, EU official, Brussels, May 2007.

¹⁴⁰ “They have done nothing...but they have given money. We live in isolation, while they have relations with countries like Libya. We don’t have any rights, we are non-persona. The EU should say, you are Europeans, so you have rights!” Crisis Group interview, Turkish Cypriot official, Brussels, May 2007.

¹⁴¹ “Cyprus was not welcomed by the EU in a friendly manner. We came under pressure”, Crisis Group interview, Greek Cypriot official, Brussels, 7 May 2007.

¹⁴² An official from France, which until recently was almost absent on the question, now calls Cyprus a major problem

Turkey recognise the Greek Cypriot government as the legitimate representative of all Cyprus and open its ports to the substantial Greek Cypriot merchant fleet. Turkish proposals were formalised in a 24 January 2006 action plan, accepted by the European Commission, the UK and U.S. as a basis for new negotiations but rejected by Nicosia.¹⁴³ A Turkish offer in late 2006 to open one airport and port for a year in exchange for the same privileges for Turkish Cypriots came to nothing, due partly to Greek Cypriot objections and partly to Ankara making it too close to an EU summit for proper consideration.

3. The Greek example

In some ways, the Cyprus standoff is reminiscent of the pre-1999 stalemate, when Greek objections and Ankara's intransigence poisoned almost every EU-Turkey policy area, but there are major differences. Most importantly, Greece is now playing a different role. Although the government still supports Greek Cyprus at key points, it has argued in favour of the Annan plan and not blocking Turkey's path to the EU. The political elite in mainland Greece was arguably more in favour of the compromise bicomunal Annan plan in Cyprus than its Turkish counterpart.¹⁴⁴

An opportunity for change in Greek Cyprus may emerge if presidential elections in February 2008 produce a more pro-reunification president than the current hardliner, Tassos Papadopoulos. It is worth remembering that the hostility between Ankara and Athens dissolved when a new Greek government decided its strategic interest was to bring Turkey into Europe. Some Greek Cypriot officials say they believe the same.¹⁴⁵ For now, however, there are few signs of impatience in Greek Cypriot society for reunification with neighbours who are three times poorer and one fifth their number, yet demand political equality.¹⁴⁶

whose solution requires concessions by Turkey. Crisis Group interview, French official, Paris, 28 June 2007.

¹⁴³ The Action Plan on Cyprus proposed to open Turkish sea ports to Greek Cypriot vessels and Turkish air space to Greek Cypriot air carriers in return for the opening of the sea ports and airport in northern Cyprus, the inclusion of northern Cyprus in the Customs Union with the EU and participation for Turkish Cypriots in international sports, cultural and other social activities.

¹⁴⁴ Ziya Öniş, "Greek-Turkish Relations and the Role of the European Union," in Christos Kollias and Gülay Günlük (eds.), "Greece and Turkey in the 21st Century: Conflict or Cooperation" (New York, 2003).

¹⁴⁵ Crisis Group interview, Greek Cypriot official, 7 May 2007.

¹⁴⁶ By 2003, GDP per capita was €15,400 in the Greek south, €5,240 in the Turkish north. Willem Noe and Max Watson, "Convergence and Reunification in Cyprus: Scope for a Virtuous Circle". ECOFIN Country Focus, vol. 2, issue 3, European Commission, Brussels, 2004.

New Greek Cypriot leadership, nevertheless, could allow Cyprus to follow the Greek example. The Cypriot communists, Akel, urged a "no" in 2004 because they were locked in a ruling coalition with Papadopoulos. They split with him in July 2007 and may field a candidate with a new approach in 2008. AKEL, the largest Greek Cypriot party, polls about one third of the vote and is traditionally the most receptive to Turkish Cypriot concerns.

Turks still support a bicomunal, bizonal solution, Greeks a unitary one, but compromise is possible. Most Greek Cypriots do regard a bicomunal, bizonal plan as at least tolerable, and only one third of Turkish and Greek Cypriots reject a federal solution outright.¹⁴⁷ Only small minorities on both sides feel comfortable with the status quo; majorities want more inter-communal contact. Yet, the status quo continues, and 90 per cent have no contact with the other community, subtly hardening the division of the island as the years go by. While younger Turkish Cypriots tend to be more hopeful of a reunified solution, younger Greek Cypriots show no interest in a common future.¹⁴⁸ Overall, neither side is optimistic about a settlement.¹⁴⁹

The Greek Cypriot idea that "osmosis" can produce a unitary state is unlikely to work. Turkish Cypriots are applying for Nicosia's passports to take advantage of EU privileges, not to embrace the Greek Cypriot state. The new settlers, probably half the Turkish Cyprus population, are mostly excluded and have little ability to integrate into the unitary state.¹⁵⁰ The longer the stalemate lasts, the more the balance of the Turkish Cypriot population shifts towards newcomers. Similarly, the longer it lasts, the

¹⁴⁷ According to the UN poll, 47 per cent of Greek Cypriots view a bicomunal, bizonal plan as "tolerable", and 19 per cent as "satisfactory". Each community seems to misperceive the intentions of the other with regard to the preferred type of settlement. Turkish Cypriots believe Greek Cypriots would reject any Federal solution outright, while in fact the majority would tolerate a federal solution as a "second best" alternative. Greek Cypriots believe the Turkish Cypriots would consider a unitary state satisfactory, in fact the majority say they would reject it outright. "The UN in Cyprus: An Intercommunal Survey of Public Opinion by UNFICYP", United Nations Peacekeeping Forces in Cyprus, 24 April 2007.

¹⁴⁸ See Crisis Group Report, *The Cyprus Stalemate*, op. cit.

¹⁴⁹ 57 per cent of Greek Cypriots and 70 per cent of Turkish Cypriots believe "the problem will not be solved in the foreseeable future". "The UN in Cyprus: An Intercommunal Survey of Public Opinion by UNFICYP", United Nations Peacekeeping Forces in Cyprus, 24 April 2007.

¹⁵⁰ Greek Cypriots claim that settlers (around 120,000 from Turkey) now outnumber the Turkish Cypriots. Turkish Cypriots play down these figures, saying there are no more than 40,000 to 60,000 settlers in the north. The Annan Plan would have allowed 45,000 outsiders on each side to gain citizenship and a further 5 per cent of the population on both sides to be residents.

more likely is an expansion of the creeping international recognition of the self-declared Turkish Republic of North Cyprus.¹⁵¹ Both these long-term outcomes are exactly what the Greek Cypriots say they wish to avoid.

B. KEMALISM

Kemalism has been the guiding ideology of Turkey since 1923, taking its name from republican founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The symbol of Kemalism is six arrows, representing republicanism, populism, secularism, revolutionism, nationalism and statism. Broadly, these translate as a clean break from the Ottoman Empire, an end to Islamic precepts in any core definition of the state and law, pride in nationhood rather than sultanate and a centrally guided bureaucracy and economy.

The definition and quantification of Kemalists are more difficult, since the great majority of Turks have been educated with these Kemalist tenets and view themselves as supporters of Atatürk. Nevertheless, in July 2007, only one fifth of voters chose the Republican People's Party (CHP), which claims the Kemalist banner and was founded by Atatürk himself. The newspaper *Cumhuriyet* (The Republic) reflects the most orthodox Kemalist viewpoint but has only a small circulation.¹⁵² Kemalist ideas are also defended by NGOs led by former military officers, like the Atatürk Thought Association. Top jobs in the judiciary have traditionally been the preserve of Kemalists. The most powerful, prestigious and disciplined Kemalists, however, are the officer corps of the Turkish Armed Forces. Taken together, this elite is referred to in Turkey as the Kemalist establishment.

For Kemalists, the main ideological battlefield today is secularism, opposition to any party or group that explicitly bases its policies on religion. Appeals to Islamic sentiment have been a common theme of the right-wing parties that opposed Kemalist republicans after the advent of multi-party politics in Turkey in 1950. In the 1970s, a party emerged that based its appeal entirely on Islamism, partly financed and inspired by groups that developed out of the confusing guest worker experience in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s. The Kemalist generals of the 1980-1983 military coup sought to counter this party, rural superstition and pro-Soviet Marxist thinking by boosting

teaching of a pro-state version of the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam into which most Turks are born.¹⁵³ Religious-minded parents were then able to send more children to *imam hatip* schools, supposedly set up for preachers.

The new approach helped institutionalise Islam for a more observant segment of society. On the one hand, this was a disappointing outcome for the secularist planners; on the other, better education did help modernise Islamist politics. The AKP, whose cadres include many graduates from religious schools and children of newly urbanised rural migrants, split from the Islamist traditionalists in 2001.

Kemalists, however, do not believe AKP leader Erdoğan's repeated statements that the party is now simply a conservative, democratic party and that he has now abandoned the Islamism of his youth. They also resent that the AKP wants to dilute their ideology's role as the guiding doctrine of the state.¹⁵⁴ They doubt the sincerity of EU promises of full membership and see the EU embrace of the AKP as a rebuff forcing the country back into the arms of the Islamic world.¹⁵⁵

Kemalists have found it hard to shrug off the heritage of the one-party state era from 1923 to 1950, when the Kemalist establishment enjoyed an exclusive guiding role. The actions of the Kemalist establishment that led to the derailing of the first presidential elections in April and May were a reminder of past coups and other direct interruptions of politics in the name of Kemalism – reassuring for some, worrying for others.¹⁵⁶ One independent Kemalist who just missed winning a seat in parliament in July 2007 said that in essence the political tensions of 2007 were mostly about the soul of the

¹⁵¹ The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was a pariah after declaring independence in 1983. Turkish Cypriot officials were rarely granted an audience outside the UN before 2004. Now its president has been received by the president of the European Commission, the U.S. secretary of state and the UK, Russian, German, French and Dutch foreign ministers.

¹⁵² In audited sales, *Cumhuriyet* ranks sixteenth among Turkey's newspapers, with about 80,000 of the five million sold daily. www.sonsayfa.com, 30 April 2007.

¹⁵³ "These bigots think that being a Muslim simply comes from putting on a fez or a turban, believing in those who cure by breathing on the sick... veiling their women and leaving them ignorant", General Kenan Evren, leader of the 1980-1983 military regime and president of Turkey 1982-1989, *Kenan Evren'in Anıları* (Istanbul, 1991).

¹⁵⁴ Zafer Ülkül, a constitutional lawyer and AKP member of parliament, has proposed that the new constitution promised by his party's election manifesto remove references to Kemalism: "We have to have a constitution without ideology... Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is one thing, Kemalism is another", interview, *Sabah*, 27 July 2007.

¹⁵⁵ "Why are the U.S. and the EU so in favour of the AK Party? I believe it is because this draws Turkey away from the EU and pushes it towards the Middle East. Paradoxically, they are pro-AK Party also because they think that they can get the AK Party to accept their demands. According to their view, Turkey has to move away from secularism, and it has to be preserved in reserve, as a moderate Islamic country. The AK Party is very suitable for that purpose". Yalçın Doğan, *Cumhuriyet*, 1 August 2007.

¹⁵⁶ "I can define Turkey as the last totalitarian state in Europe", Ragıp Zarakoğlu, left-wing publisher, speaking on *NOS Journaal*, 16 July 2007.

republic, “whether Turkey should imitate the Europe of the 1920s or the 2000s”.¹⁵⁷

But it would be too simplistic to say that all Kemalists are anti-European and that the AKP is universally pro-European. It was the Kemalist establishment that delivered the crucial reforms of the 1998-2002 period, which set the stage for the AKP’s ability to bring Turkey closer to the EU. And when the European Court of Human Rights ruled against the wearing of Muslim headscarves in Turkish universities in 2005, it served as another factor cooling AKP enthusiasm for EU liberal reforms it had believed would provide support against Kemalist-style secularism.

1. The Turkish Armed Forces

Any dilution of Kemalism threatens the armed forces, which share with Kemalism a network of laws that protect their patriarchal role.¹⁵⁸ In the past, they could sometimes exercise this power politically through ex-military or Kemalist figures in the presidency, which has a veto power on laws similar to that of an upper house of parliament. Failing that, the 1982 constitution and other laws drawn up during military rule also gave substantial powers to the armed forces in the National Security Council, education and policing.

There is strong distrust of and antipathy for the EU in the current military leadership. This is due to EU hostility to the political role that the military has historically assumed in Turkish public life, EU states’ apparent support for Kurdish and other ethnic nationalist causes and what is

seen as many years of EU tolerance of the PKK.¹⁵⁹ EU reform packages constantly cut back military powers, opened up the defence budget to inspection and reduced military dominance of policy through the National Security Council.

Resentment of the EU also reflects the experiences of a new generation of officers. Until 1991, top generals had spent their formative years in step with Europe, dealing with NATO’s defence against the Soviet Union. Since then, most have been occupied by threats on the border of Iraq and fighting the PKK in the south east. In these efforts, the army has been more often the subject of EU criticism than support.¹⁶⁰ The Turkish people also now view the U.S. as the main military threat.¹⁶¹ A retired Turkish admiral said, “we saw ourselves as a Western country. After the Cold War, things drastically changed. The EU started to enlarge. A red carpet was laid for former Warsaw Pact countries. Whenever it came to Turkey, they’d say, ‘it’s not for you’. You belong to another world. It made us wonder, who am I now?”¹⁶²

The military’s actions before and during the events of April-July 2007 recalled political interventions in 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997. First came rumours that a group of retired generals had urged General Büyükanıt to “take steps” against “a situation whereby an anti-secular person” becomes president.¹⁶³ In December and January, the military repeatedly made clear that it opposed the AKP’s EU-oriented Cyprus policy. Then came a 12 April news conference by Büyükanıt, his first as chief of staff, in which he in effect blamed the government for continued violence in the south east, gave implicit approval to pro-Kemalist demonstrations planned that month and said the president should be a secularist “not just in words, but in essence”.

¹⁵⁷ Independent candidate Baskın Oran, *NOS Journaal*, 17 July 2007. The Turkish Armed Forces are sensitive to the accusation of being out of date: “The Turkish Republic is faced with an approach that thinks its national and unitary structures are from another era. Our nation should and must become aware of this dangerous approach”. Press release, Turkish General Staff website, 8 June 2007. See also Sabrina Tavernise, “Alliances Shift as Turks Weigh a Political Turn”, *The New York Times*, 20 July 2007.

¹⁵⁸ Columnist Cüneyt Arcayurek echoed widespread Kemalist fears: “A religious president at Cankaya, a religious head of parliament and a religious prime minister at the Prime Ministry! With this triangle holding the country in its hands, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the high-level cadres of the AK Party will gradually change the laws and members of some state institutions, such as the High Education Council, and make the Constitutional Court reflect their views. Nobody should have any doubt that they will also put the army into an ineffective position, out of politics! All the changes they plan for the state will be materialised by means of this triangle”. *Cumhuriyet*, 28 July 2007. Analyst Walter Posch put it as follows: “A weakening of the Kemalist ideology is the first step to weakening and/or to delegitimising the role and influence of the armed forces – which is just another point that brings Kemalism into conflict with the EU-imposed reform package”. Posch, “Crisis in Turkey”, op. cit.

¹⁵⁹ Chief of General Staff Büyükanıt, speech in Istanbul, 30 May 2007, accused the EU of “inventing” ethnic minorities and demanding that Turkey recognise them, which could break Turkey apart. He indirectly accused the West of being behind “dark wars” and undesirable “coloured revolutions”, such as the Rose (Georgia, 2003), Orange (Ukraine, 2004) and Tulip (Kyrgyzstan, 2005), in which pro-Western local organisations played roles in toppling leaders in former East Bloc countries.

¹⁶⁰ “While anticipating international cooperation in dealing with a terrorist organization, we have difficulty in understanding the lack of response”. Chief of General Staff Büyükanıt, speech at NATO conference, Antalya, 3 July 2007. The EU listed the PKK as a terrorist organization in 2002.

¹⁶¹ 63 per cent of Turks are very or somewhat worried that the U.S. is a military threat. Pew Global Attitudes Project, 14 March 2007.

¹⁶² Crisis Group interview, retired admiral, Istanbul, 25 April 2007.

¹⁶³ European diplomats, AKP officials and Turkish newspapers reported seeing copies of such a letter in December 2006.

On 13 April unusually severe police raids, on a military prosecutor's instructions, crippled a weekly magazine, *Nokta*. The magazine had published an article alleging links between the military and NGOs promoting anti-government rallies, as well as diaries of an admiral revealing how senior officers wanted to seize power almost from the time the AKP came to office.¹⁶⁴ The raid sent a message to all media to hold back articles critical of the military.¹⁶⁵

The main organiser of a series of protests after 14 April was a retired general who once commanded the gendarmerie, although other, mainly Kemalist organisations took part. The unexpected and unprecedented hundreds of thousands who turned out for the "rallies for the republic" showed how fears of an AKP threat to secularism were genuinely widespread, especially among young, urban middle-class women. They also showed opposition to the idea that an AKP loyalist should become president of the republic.

Nevertheless, the protests failed to persuade the AKP to withdraw Foreign Minister Gül as its presidential candidate. When he was clearly about to win the vote in parliament under the normal rules, the Armed Forces General Staff published a memorandum warning of the danger to secularism on its website on 27 April.¹⁶⁶ That sent a strong message to another Kemalist stronghold, the Constitutional Court, which on 2 May annulled the election on a quorum technicality never previously invoked.¹⁶⁷ This triggered parliamentary elections four months before their November due date.

¹⁶⁴ "Turkey: Human Rights Concerns in the Lead up to July Parliamentary Elections", Human Rights Watch, July 2007.

¹⁶⁵ "Military influence in this period may have had a chilling effect on free speech and press freedom". "Turkey: Human Rights Concerns in the Lead up to July Parliamentary Elections", Human Rights Watch, July 2007.

¹⁶⁶ "The problem that comes to the fore in the presidential election process is focused on a debate about secularism. This situation is being watched with concern by the Turkish Armed Forces. It must not be forgotten that the Turkish Armed Forces are a party to these debates and the definitive defender of secularism. Moreover, the Turkish Armed Forces will take a definitive stand against these debates and these negative interpretations [of secularism], and, if necessary, will openly display its reaction. Nobody should be in any doubt about this... in brief, anyone who goes against our national republican founder and great leader Kemal Atatürk's saying 'Happy is he who says he is a Turk' is an enemy of the Turkish republic and will remain so. The Turkish Armed Forces preserve their unshakeable determination to carry out their duty, openly given to them by law, to guard these values". Website of the General Staff, Turkish Armed Forces, 27 April 2007.

¹⁶⁷ The court ruled that a quorum of 367 deputies, not merely a majority of 367 votes was needed in the first two of four rounds of balloting in parliament. According to an internal European

The EU was quick to underline its antipathy to a continued military guardianship role over politics and its support for the democratically-elected government.¹⁶⁸ A researcher pointed out, however, that "the military could only muster public support once 'Euro-fatigue' increased in Turkey".¹⁶⁹ Still, from the longer perspective of Turkish convergence with the EU, an optimistic view is possible. The military did not achieve its main objective. Even in the demonstrations in support of secularism in the major cities, participants voiced ambivalence towards the generals with the slogan, "no Islamic law, but no coup either!" And although many in the old republican, urban middle class welcomed the armed forces' shot across the AKP's bow, more than 500 intellectuals and academics published a letter supporting the democratic process.

Despite the significant number expressing fear of a threat to modern lifestyles, no one "secular" party could channel the energy of the demonstrations. The armed forces went a step further with a statement on 8 June seeking to keep the mass protests going. This time the target was "separatist terrorism" – following General Büyükanıt's implied criticism of AKP policies on the Kurds and Iraq – but there was almost no reaction.¹⁷⁰ In the July 2007 parliamentary elections, the Kemalist CHP, the party that most faithfully echoed the military line, won only 20.8 per cent of the vote, while the AKP won 46.7 per cent, 13 points more than in 2002. The AKP also took advantage of the crisis to launch a constitutional change that will be

Commission judgement, the ruling did "appear indeed to...[apply] artificial theories directed towards stepping up the pressure on the government". Human Rights Watch concluded: "The court's decision upholding the CHP's petition was disputed by most jurists who commented on it in Turkey, who pointed out that no such quorum requirement could be found in the Turkish constitution. The timing of the military's message created a perception of inappropriate influence on the court and, given Turkey's long-standing problems with the independence of the judiciary, lends credence to suggestions that the court's decision was not arrived at in an impartial or independent way". "Turkey: Human Rights Concerns", op. cit.

¹⁶⁸ Engagement Commissioner Olli Rehn warned that Turkey needed the "supremacy of democratic civilian power over the military", interview in the *Financial Times*, 3 May 2007. European Parliament Turkey Rapporteur Ria Oomen-Ruijten said, "Prime Minister Erdoğan shows that he is not afraid of the army who threatened to intervene in the selection of the President of Turkey. He therefore deserves our respect". 32 European policy-makers published a letter calling on European governments to sustain "Turkish democrats". *International Herald Tribune*, 16 May 2007.

¹⁶⁹ Posch, "Crisis in Turkey", op. cit.

¹⁷⁰ Only the marginal Workers' Party tried to organise a new rally in the army's name; the army put out another statement saying that it was not associated with any political party, press statement, General Staff website, 9 June 2007.

voted on by referendum, probably in October, for an eventual popular election of the president.

The AKP has used its strengthened mandate to revive the Gül candidacy for president, defying military objections and the advice of some supporters who believe it should compromise. It will need to be cautious, since the armed forces remain one of the country's most respected institutions, their political weight reinforced by the absence of a credible, mainstream political opposition party. They are also the most potent representative of another contemporary Turkish phenomenon not necessarily sympathetic to the AKP, a neo-nationalist upsurge.

2. The new nationalism

Kemalists focused much attention on the creation of a homogenous, new Turkish national identity after the end of the multi-ethnic, multi-religious Ottoman Empire. Since the EU accession process stumbled and a sense of an EU double-cross on Cyprus developed, Turkey has seen the emergence of a new nationalism. It differs from the nationalism of the 1970s, which is still represented by smaller far-right parties that mix Islam, fascism and an ethnic pan-Turkism. These groups have also become more active and are associated with an upsurge in anti-foreigner and anti-Christian violence.¹⁷¹ But the broader phenomenon has a new name, *ulusalcılık*, a patriotic-sounding term that distinguishes it from the usual word, *milliyetçilik*, which has racist overtones. It has roots in Atatürk's vision of a self-sufficient nation state and was a key element bringing hundreds of thousands onto the streets in the April-June demonstrations. The neo-nationalist world view was summed up by a crowd slogan: "neither the U.S., nor the European Union, but a completely independent Turkey".

This neo-nationalism is an obstacle between policy-makers and EU reforms. The debate continues as to whether it is a reaction to EU coldness, whether the new nationalism is itself what slowed the reforms, whether it is the same backlash to EU reforms seen in other accession countries or whether it is the Turkish counterpart of neo-nationalist reactions to globalisation found in EU states. Some view it as connected to anti-Americanism, in which "the main view is that the U.S. is out there to get Turkey".¹⁷² An opinion maker formerly in the air force and now an AKP deputy says, "the neo-nationalism resonates across party lines, across rural-urban lines. It is suspicious of the EU, and quite anti-American and anti-globalisation. This tendency is very apparent in web chat rooms".¹⁷³

The phenomenon can be seen easily. Turkish flags flap everywhere, some so huge that they can be distinguished on hilltops from planes at 10,000 metres. The omnipresent pictures of a stern, elegant Atatürk have been joined by a popular and emblematic picture from the Turkish campaign against the British at Gallipoli: two sunburned Turkish conscripts, covered in dust, their uniforms in rags, yet standing to attention. The rising sense of Kurdish identity and demands for rights under the EU umbrella have prompted a new wariness of Kurds and Kurdishness, sometimes leading to discrimination.¹⁷⁴ But the new nationalism is an advance on the earlier Kemalist denial of the Kurds' existence. Even leaders of the far-right MHP now address "our Kurdish brothers".

No leader – other than the armed forces – has yet emerged to distil these sentiments into a political ideology. The CHP should have been able to in alliance with the small Democratic Left Party but was let down by its old, discredited leadership. President Sezer's speeches and actions are often critical of the West and in tune with the new spirit but his dour style has not caught on. The populist, right-wing Genç Party tried to win this constituency with colourful nationalist slogans but failed, probably due to the prosecution of its leader's family for fraud. The Kemalist *Cumhuriyet* tries to vocalize the new nationalism but sometimes sounds confused as it speaks of the world's hostility.¹⁷⁵

C. STALLING ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Human rights groups in Turkey and abroad have noted that improvements in human rights and the behaviour of the security forces have stalled since 2005. According to Amnesty International, despite a genuine earlier reduction in systematic torture in police stations, "victims of human rights violations perpetrated by the police and gendarmerie in Turkey continue to face an entrenched culture of

relations, 16 May 2007.

¹⁷⁴ In the city of Antalya, for instance, Kurdish migrant workers are increasingly asked their place of origin and are finding it harder to land jobs. Crisis Group interview, Kurdish worker, Antalya, May 2007.

¹⁷⁵ "Russia is happy with the AK Party's policies and says 'It is great that they have retreated from Asia'. Greece is happy and says 'It is great that they are ready to make concessions over Cyprus'. The Greek-Cypriot government is happy and says 'It is great that they will do anything to downgrade the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus...'. The U.S. is happy and says 'Through secret agreements, we can make them do what we could not achieve in an open way...'. The EU is happy and says 'Even if we had appointed a commissioner to Turkey, he could not have done better than the AK Party'". Mustafa Balbay, *Cumhuriyet*, 12 July 2007.

¹⁷¹ "Turkey: Human Rights Concerns", op. cit.

¹⁷² Prof. Ersin Kalycioğlu, rector of Isık University, comments to panel on U.S.-Turkish relations, 16 May 2007.

¹⁷³ Suat Kınıklioğlu, comments to panel on U.S.-Turkish

impunity". Debate continues about whether Turkish or EU foot-dragging is responsible, but the two go hand in hand. According to Human Rights Watch, "Faltering support for Turkey's accession among some EU states has arguably undermined the reformists in Turkey. This may have strengthened the hand of those opposing reforms.... Keeping Turkey's EU candidacy on track is a critical spur for human rights reforms in the country".¹⁷⁶

Prosecutions of non-violent criticism of state policies on secularism, Kurds, the armed forces and state-sanctioned interpretations of history are again on the rise. Monitoring by the BIANET news service shows prosecutions of journalists, publishers and activists are up to 293 in 2006 from 157 a year before. A June 2007 law restored to the police some of the stop-and-search powers they lost during the EU reform process. Most alarming, however, were apparently nationalist-inspired murders of Christians.

Insults, intolerance, hate speech and attacks on religious and ethnic minorities have been a persistent irritant in EU-Turkey relations. While not dissimilar to some situations in Europe's recent past, such as racist attacks on Turks in Germany in the 1990s, the problem in Turkey is entrenched at a higher level and has worsened since the downturn with the EU. This was acknowledged in a June 2007 interior ministry circular noting that "these attacks spread fear, panic and frustration among citizens who have different ways of life, belief and opinions".¹⁷⁷

The tip of the iceberg has been a series of murders: Italian priest Andrea Santoro in February 2006; the Turkish Armenian editor and human rights defender Hrant Dink in January 2007; and three protestant workers for a bible publishing company in Malatya, two Turkish converts from Islam and a German in April 2007. Each time police rapidly caught the suspects, who appeared to be youths from radical right-wing groups. The Islamic fundamentalist fringes did not appear to be involved, although some of those arrested said they acted on behalf of their interpretation of Islam. In the case of the Armenian editor, there is strong evidence of links to a group within the security services.

There is also a pattern of vandalism of churches, gunfire in churchyards and telephone threats to minority leaders. The authorities are reluctant to allow new church construction or registration of churches for new Christian communities, even those that primarily serve expatriates. History books still treat minorities as potential or actual traitors. Turkey refuses to acknowledge the ecumenical

status of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch based in Istanbul, or to allow the reopening of the Greek Orthodox seminary on Halki Island, closed in 1971. The EU has repeatedly sought changes in these policies as tokens of the candidate country's good faith.

President Sezer's veto in December 2006 of the latest law on religious foundations – which do have legal status, unlike the religions themselves – perpetuates a sense that Turkey sometimes does not live up to its claim of being a "tolerant mosaic of cultures". A Turkey that continues to fear organised religions will always have problems with EU convergence. It should give legal status to religions, including Muslim sects, and honour title deeds owned by religious foundations, many of which have tortuous legal histories because of discriminatory laws.¹⁷⁸ Many properties have been taken by state decree and sold in non-transparent ways. Here, as elsewhere, it is EU convergence that offers some hope of change. The European Court of Human Rights ruled in January 2007 that Turkey should be fined for arbitrary confiscation of a Greek school building. Similarly, it has persuaded Turkey to reach a friendly settlement on confiscated property with an Armenian foundation.

The religious issue is not a superficial one for EU relations, and, as shown above, plays out against a background of republican and Islamist suspicion of the intentions of powerful foreigners, usually taken to be the Christian West. The AKP tries to counter this defensive thinking, following the centre-right heritage of the Democrat Party in the 1950s and the Motherland Party in the 1980s. History explains the difficulty of this question in Turkey, whose population includes the descendants of millions who were forced by the advance of Christian states from their birthplaces as the empire retreated from the Balkans. During the slow-burn ethnic cleansing in the last century of the empire, millions of other Turks and Muslims died.¹⁷⁹ The refugees often settled in Anatolian towns that had just lost their substantial non-Muslim populations, including Greeks, Armenians and others, many of whom took refuge in the West. The worst of these still-undigested traumas is the duel over whether the Ottoman regime's First World War actions against the Armenians constituted genocide in the modern sense of the word.

¹⁷⁶ "Turkey: Human Rights Concerns", op. cit.

¹⁷⁷ The circular, sent to all provinces, called for new measures to prevent the attacks, investigate, act against threats and encourage meetings that further social tolerance.

¹⁷⁸ With no legal recourse, Armenian and Greek foundations have even resorted to trying to protect their properties by registering them in the name of the Virgin Mary or Jesus Christ.

¹⁷⁹ A pro-Turkish academic puts the figure at five million, Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922* (London, 1996). Other scholars estimate the figure to be half that. Modern Turks are reminded of this by later waves of refugees, including 330,000 ethnic Turks who departed Bulgaria for Turkey in 1989 and 800,000 ethnic Azeri Turks who fled Armenian advances into Nagorno-Karabakh from 1988-2004.

D. THE ARMENIAN QUESTION

Despite the efforts of Armenian lobbyists and others, there is no official EU requirement making Turkey's accession dependent on its characterisation of the Armenian massacres but there is no doubt that the Armenian question is a major element in broader European judgements and is moving up the agenda. Asked if he thought Turkey should recognise the massacres as genocide before it was admitted into the EU, former French President Jacques Chirac replied, "Honestly, I believe so. All countries grow up acknowledging their dramas and their errors".¹⁸⁰ Some EU states also want it to open its border and establish diplomatic relations with Armenia before it can join.

1. Genocide or massacre?

Turks and Armenians agree many Armenians died in the Ottoman Empire during deportations and massacres that occurred during the First World War – at least 300,000 according to Turkish official accounts, 1.5 million according to the Armenian version. The most important difference is whether what happened was genocide. Turkey vehemently rejects the term, fearing it would entail massive loss of honour and perhaps expensive compensation. Armenian diaspora lobbies around the world vehemently insist upon it.

Turkish thinking about the Armenian question became more open in the early 2000s, partly due to rising trust in Western intentions brought by the promise of full EU membership. At its peak in 2005, 50 Armenian and Turkish scholars held an Istanbul conference, "Ottoman Armenians during the Demise of Empire: Responsible Scholarship and Issues of Democracy". Art shows honoured the Armenian community's memory, and leading novelists wrote or spoke out. The nationalist, mass-circulation paper *Hurriyet* quoted Atatürk as disapproving of the massacres and their perpetrators. A leading Turkish academic published a book with a title using the word "genocide", which is on sale in some Istanbul bookshops.¹⁸¹ The subject became so common that television newsreaders – accidentally – sometimes even began to omit the qualifier in what Turkey terms the "so-called genocide".

Each liberalisation was contested at some level, sometimes by a die-hard group of right-wing nationalist lawyers, but initially to little effect. Then in 2003 the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq began to sour the Turks' view of the West, and the

EU process hit roadblocks over Cyprus and European enlargement fatigue. Nationalism rose, and pro-reform politicians ran for cover. Orhan Pamuk, who later won the Nobel Prize for literature, was prosecuted for "insulting the republic" for comments to a Swiss newspaper about "a million Armenians killed in this land". Another major writer, Elif Shafak, was put on trial for "insulting Turkish identity" for her novel lamenting the lost Armenians. At the same time, the Armenian diaspora began to lobby again for national legislatures to pass motions attesting to a genocide. At least 22 have obliged to varying degrees over the decades, including nearly a third of the EU states, as well as 40 U.S. state assemblies. In 2006, the French lower house of parliament proposed to criminalise denial of the Armenian Genocide with the same penalties as for denial of the Jewish Holocaust.¹⁸²

Such outside pressure had the opposite effect on official thinking as the liberalizing influence of the early 2000s. AKP reformers, who are generally more open to re-examining the past if not to admit to genocide, adapted to the new nationalist wind. Pamuk and prominent Turkish Armenians like Hrant Dink said political interventions in the history debate were counterproductive. Similarly, if the goal is a new Turkish approach to the question, any link between the Armenian genocide question and the EU process will likely backfire.

The unresolved nature of this great stain on Turkish history is not going away, however, and the country pays a heavy price. In Western intellectual circles, almost nobody takes Turkey's side of the argument. Even when they call simply for a meeting of historians to discuss the problem, Turkish newspaper advertisements have little impact.¹⁸³ Amid all the other issues of operational significance, the Turkish embassy in Washington often is preoccupied with demands from Ankara to track down Armenian genocide recognition efforts.¹⁸⁴ The social stigma attached to the issue helps make the job of the Turkish ambassador to Paris "the loneliest post in the world".¹⁸⁵

Turkey is correct that since the Armenian side feels it has already won in the court of world public opinion, it has

¹⁸⁰ Jacques Chirac, speech in Yerevan, Agence France-Presse, 30 September 2006.

¹⁸¹ Taner Akçam, "A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility", Metropolitan Books, May 2006.

¹⁸² The bill passed, 106-19, although a majority of the chamber did not appear. The government has not sent the bill to the Senate.

¹⁸³ Prime Minister Erdoğan invited Armenia in 2005 to solve differences by a committee of historians. The last round of advertisements in major U.S. newspapers in 2007 offering dialogue in a joint historians' committee "did not resonate" with the American public and had no perceptible reaction from the media, policymakers or the Armenian lobby. Dana Bauer, Washington lobbyist for Turkey, comments at Sabanci University's Istanbul Policy Centre meeting on U.S.-Turkey relations, 16 May 2007.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Crisis Group interview, French analyst, Paris, July 2007.

no incentive to respond to requests for meetings. In at least one instance when the two sides have talked, the Turkish side brought constructive, new ideas to the table, while the Armenian side repeated long-held views.¹⁸⁶ Turkey does not have a history of openness but it can make a case that it is doing better in making archives accessible, perhaps better than some on the Armenian side. It may even find a hearing for some of its arguments in mitigation of what it calls the “tragic events”, like wartime conditions, the uncontrolled role of Kurdish militiamen and an Armenian rebellion in league with the Russian enemy.

To bring Turkish and Armenian views closer will take time, effort and the sense of international trust generated by the EU convergence process. It will doubtless also need continued assurances from the Armenian side that reparations and territorial claims are not its goal. The rewards for Turkey of simply acting to close the file could be great. Just as the Armenian issue can poison many unrelated areas, a perception of Turkish readiness to deal with its past honestly would do much to help its arguments in many other domains. Armenians should join such efforts, since honest, joint academic work establishing a common set of facts to work from is the only process through which Turkey may eventually accept change to its state-sanctioned version of history. The Turkish position has advanced considerably in past decades, and there is no reason why Turkish views should not advance more.

2. Turkey-Armenia relations

Turkey was one of the first states to recognize the newly independent republic of Armenia in 1992, but it closed the border in 1993 when Armenian forces overran Azerbaijan territory in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave. Turkey had hoped this would put pressure on Armenia to make peace with Azerbaijan, whose population is mostly Turkic-speaking.¹⁸⁷ Since a ceasefire in 1994, however, no way has been found to settle the frozen conflict. Turkey says it wants to improve relations, and officials point out that they allow 70,000 Armenian citizens to work in the country. Direct flights between Istanbul and Yerevan have been possible for a decade. Officials note that in practice Turkey deals with Armenia through its Tbilisi embassy, and substantial trade flows through Georgia unhindered. One official explained: “They understand we want a face-saving formula. But we can’t

work with them if government representatives are working at the same time on genocide resolutions. They should refrain from direct hostility to Turkey”.

E. EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION

As Turkey became a more credible candidate in the early 2000s, EU public opinion, in particular that of the fifteen older member states, became more cautious about enlargement. Recent polling data shows support for more enlargement at 46 per cent and opposition at 42 per cent. There is more opposition to the membership of Turkey, however, than that of the Western Balkan states. When asked in 2006 whether they favoured membership once Ankara complied with all conditions, only 39 per cent of EU citizens said they did, while 48 per cent were against.¹⁸⁸

More work is needed to understand what EU citizens base these judgements upon. Significant fluctuation in public opinion on Turkish membership in recent years suggests more information on the transformation of Turkey as it fulfils accession conditions could make a difference.¹⁸⁹ One study indicates supporters of membership mostly are those with a post-national vision of the EU, while those opposing it are more likely to do so on the basis of national or religious concerns. Utilitarian views based on interests appear to be the least significant determinant.¹⁹⁰

EU experts and officials frequently lament that EU citizens are uninformed about enlargement and reluctant to consider best interests. A March-May 2006 poll indicated that over a third felt they were not “well informed about enlargement issues” and less than a third that they were.¹⁹¹ Polls suggest a majority knows more about the problems associated with enlargement than the benefits.¹⁹² Enlargement is considered as primarily benefiting new, not existing members, despite the evident collective benefits

¹⁸⁸ “Public Opinion in the European Union First Results”, Eurobarometer 66, European Commission, December 2006. Polling was conducted from September-October 2006. The polls showed the following views on enlargement with respect to Balkan states: Macedonia, 49 per cent support/36 per cent against; Albania, 41/44; Bosnia-Herzegovina, 48/37; Serbia and Montenegro, 47/33; Croatia, 56/30. “Attitudes towards European Union Enlargement”, Special Eurobarometer 255, European Commission, July 2006.

¹⁸⁹ See overview of expert evidence and survey evidence indicating fluctuations in “European Union: Fifty-Third Report”, UK House of Lords, 7 November 2006.

¹⁹⁰ Antonia Ruiz-Jimenez and Jose Torreblanca, “European Public Opinion and Turkey’s Accession: Making Sense of Arguments For and Against”, European Policy Institutes Network Working Paper, 16 May 2007.

¹⁹¹ 68 per cent and 29 per cent respectively.

¹⁹² Special Eurobarometer 255, op. cit., p. 16. People in the new member states know more about benefits than those in the EU-15.

¹⁸⁶ Crisis Group interview, American historian of Ottoman Turkey who attended a Turkish-Armenian meeting in the U.S., Barcelona, January 2007.

¹⁸⁷ See Crisis Group Europe Reports N°167, *Nagorno-Karabakh: A Plan for Peace*, 11 October 2005 and N°166, *Nagorno-Karabakh: Viewing the Conflict from the Ground*, 14 September 2005.

of each previous wave.¹⁹³ Polling specifically on Turkey suggests a majority sees accession as primarily in Ankara's interest, a fifth as in the mutual interest and just 7 per cent as primarily in the EU's interest.¹⁹⁴ Joost Lagendijk, chairman of the European Parliament-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee, believes "people don't know. Broadly 25 per cent are strongly against Turkey in the EU, 25 per cent committed to the idea, and 50 per cent in the middle are wavering. Those votes can be won".¹⁹⁵

In Denmark, Spain, Ireland, Malta, Portugal, Bulgaria and the UK a plurality of those polled in 2006 favoured accession. In the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden, and Romania majorities were positive. The Baltic states, Italy and Hungary showed pluralities against, while there were majorities in opposition elsewhere, including Austria (81 per cent), Luxembourg and Germany (69 per cent), Greece (67 per cent) and Greek Cyprus (68 per cent).¹⁹⁶

French President Sarkozy regularly justifies his negative stance based on polls. The pro-Turkish Euro-parliamentarian Lagendijk argues that well-informed politicians should educate their electorates. In sum, however, reluctant, uninformed and apparently confused public opinion constitutes a substantial challenge to Turkey-EU relations.

F. THE EURO-TURK ENIGMA

One of the enigmas of Turkey's quest for acceptance by Europe is the role played by, and European perceptions of, the large Turkish minority on the continent. Officially there are 3.7 million Turks in Europe,¹⁹⁷ although the real total may be substantially more. Even the official figure is comparable to several existing EU nationalities. They contribute €80 billion to the EU economy, about 0.75 per cent of its output,¹⁹⁸ the equivalent of about one quarter of the potential contribution of Turkey itself. Two thirds of these Euro-Turks live in Germany,¹⁹⁹ descendants of guest workers who were invited between 1961 and 1973 to supply labour for its post-war economic miracle. Most

Euro-Turks will stay whether or not Turkey joins the EU. Most have residency rights; the number of full EU nationals of Turkish origin grew rapidly after 1999, particularly in Germany, where 700,000 are now citizens.

The Euro-Turks are, nevertheless, a controversial bridge between Europe and Turkey. The governments of those countries with the largest Turkish minorities – Germany, France, Netherlands, Austria and Belgium – are the most sceptical about membership. This is linked to the arrival in power of more right-wing governments that reflect popular concerns. German Christian Democrat European Parliamentarian Renata Sommer cites local attitudes in explanation of her Turkey-sceptic stand. In her Rhineland constituency, 15 per cent are Turks, and in her home town 50 per cent of the children in early schooling are of Turkish origin. Popular prejudices she cites include "Turks are taking over the country"; they are "lazy"; a majority are supported by the social system and "we [Germans] pay"; if Turkey becomes an EU member, "the rest of the Turks will come"; and Turkish youth is poorly educated. Additionally, Sommer says, "Europeans are afraid of Islam. They mix it up with fundamentalism".²⁰⁰

Some governments taking a newly Turkey-sceptic stand explain it as part of their need to restore public confidence in the core European project,²⁰¹ a lack of confidence symbolised by the referendums that defeated the EU constitution in France and the Netherlands in 2005. Particularly in France, officials attribute the surprise failure of the constitution to concern the EU was rushing forward with the unpopular Turkish membership. However, polling data show that others factors were in play in those votes.²⁰² One study found: "Public disaffection toward Turkey's accession is due more to general disaffection with enlargement of the EU. The real discontent and confusion seems tied more to migration and identity issues... than to any specific aversion toward Turks and Turkey".²⁰³

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ 52 per cent, 20 per cent and 7 per cent respectively, *ibid.*, p. 69. Overall, "the majority (53 per cent) of EU citizens who claimed to feel well informed about enlargement are – when compared to the general average of support (45 per cent) – in favour of this process; meanwhile, 41 per cent oppose it", *ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁹⁵ Crisis Group interview, Brussels, 11 May 2007.

¹⁹⁶ For full data see Special Eurobarometer 255, *op. cit.*

¹⁹⁷ "Turkey: More than a Promise?", report of the Independent Commission on Turkey, British Council/Open Society Institute, September 2004.

¹⁹⁸ Speech by Bahadır Kaleağası, representative of the Turkish business association TUSIAD in Brussels, to the VIIth EU-Turkey Conference, Barcelona, 12 January 2007.

¹⁹⁹ See www.auswaertiges-amt.de.

²⁰⁰ Crisis Group interview, Brussels, 9 May 2007.

²⁰¹ "When I was in my lycée years, everyone was for Europe: it was a given. Now public opinion is 80 per cent against enlargement. This is a dramatic change for France. Europe is weak. As we saw at the weekend [EU summit at which Poland held strongly to idiosyncratic positions], we have hardly absorbed the last enlargement", Crisis Group interview, French official, 28 June 2007.

²⁰² Only 3 per cent of Dutch respondents and 6 per cent of French said they voted "no" because they did not want Turkey in the EU. Eurobarometer 2005, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/constitution_en.htm. A smaller poll found 18 per cent linked their "no" vote to Turkish membership. TNS Sofres/Unilog poll, cited in the *International Herald Tribune*, 31 May 2005.

²⁰³ See Sarah Schaefer, Greg Austin, Kate Parker, "Turks in Europe: Why are we afraid?", The Foreign Policy Center, 2005.

According to Bahadır Kaleağası, the long-serving representative in Brussels of Turkey's most powerful business association, TUSIAD, many Europeans consider assimilated, well-integrated and successful Turks no longer as Turkish immigrants but as Europeans. At the same time, they see un-integrated holdouts – typically stereotyped in the media by women wearing rural headscarves and men with gruff beards and baggy trousers – as representatives of the whole Euro-Turk community. Another mistaken presumption is that these same “typical” Turks in the poorer suburbs of Europe represent the whole of Turkey. “Half of Turks are assimilated but are then not seen as Turks. It's a pivotal group to be gained, but [if Turkey is denied membership] they will feel excluded and hated”, he said.²⁰⁴

Fuller EU support for Turkey's accession process would show the world there is no anti-Islamic animus in the European project. This, in turn, might make the EU's Muslim minorities feel more fully included. This seems to be true for Turkish minorities. However, there is not much evidence of “Muslim” group solidarity in Europe. In France, for instance, “no specific survey allows...definite conclusions on the feelings of immigrants from North African origin concerning Turkish matters, but our intuition is that it would probably be rather indifferent, if not tainted with occasional hostility”.²⁰⁵

The Turks settled in France, in particular, have been conspicuous by their absence from the critical debates there.²⁰⁶ A strand of self-segregating nationalism is strong among Turks in Germany, often reflected in the nationalist tone of Europe-based Turkish media columnists, in the practice of bringing religious leaders, teachers and brides from Turkey and in the way satellite media has kept the Euro-Turks under the umbrella of their mother country.²⁰⁷

There have also been positive changes. In Germany, where three quarters of the Muslim population is of Turkish origin, the reality of immigration and permanent settlement has been recognised since 2000, although the onus of adjustment is put entirely on the new population.²⁰⁸ Germany reached out to a broader representation of Turks

and other Muslim immigrants with its German Islam Conference, first convened in 2006. In France, Sarkozy, as interior minister, prevailed over the dissensions of Muslim politics in 2003 to start the French Council of the Muslim Religion. Its president is from the dominant Algerian minority but, symbolising a potentially moderating role for Turkish Islam, a Turk became secretary general, and an early official visit was to Turkey.

G. NORTHERN IRAQ

The situation in northern Iraq is a wild card with potential to interrupt EU-Turkey relations, particularly as the conflict between Turkish troops and the PKK rebels continues. A spark could trigger Turkish military intervention. Tens of thousands of troops are stationed along the 331km border, and public opinion has been stirred up by television images of funerals for dead soldiers, distraught mothers and grim fathers. If Turkey invades in any strength or makes good any of its officials' repeated verbal threats against Massoud Barzani, the northern Iraq leader, the EU seems sure to suspend the negotiation process.

Turkey has launched innumerable small raids and a few dozen major ones into northern Iraq in the 23 years of conflict with the PKK.²⁰⁹ These may have scored tactical successes, but the mountain ranges of the region are ideal terrain for hardened rebels. Many Turkish commentators warn that the negative consequences of raids outweigh the advantages but others reflect vengeful, public frustration.²¹⁰ Many doubt that military action can be undertaken without a degree of U.S. approval. Some foreign commentators believe the issue is increasing on-the-ground Turkish military coordination with Iran.²¹¹

The brinkmanship over a military operation sometimes appears as an extension of the intense struggle for power in Ankara between the AKP and the Kemalist establishment, mainly the armed forces. Both sides want to show

²⁰⁴ Bahadır Kaleağası, speech, op. cit.

²⁰⁵ Dorothee Schmid, “The Franco-Turkish Relationship in Turmoil”, EDAM (Turkish foreign policy research think-tank), January 2007.

²⁰⁶ Reasons for the “invisibility” of these 400,000 French Turks include embarrassment of the Turkish embassy and Franco-Turkish elites about the working class, French Turk majority, lack of integration of French Turks and negative nationalist reaction to the troubled EU-Turkey relationship. Dorothee Schmid, “The Franco-Turkish Relationship in Turmoil”, EDAM, January 2007.

²⁰⁷ Pope, *Sons of the Conquerors*, op. cit.

²⁰⁸ See Crisis Group Europe Report N°181, *Islam and Identity in Germany*, 14 March 2007.

²⁰⁹ Ironically, the biggest, involving 50,000 Turkish troops in May 1997, was conducted in alliance with Barzani.

²¹⁰ “Turkey has to hold the EU and democracy strings tightly together. It has to continue its reformist line that will allow it to adapt to global competition. While carrying on its rightful fight against terrorism and violence, and within the framework of a democratic state with the rule of law, it also has to stay away from foreign adventures like Northern Iraq”, Hasan Cemal, *Milliyet*, 29 June 2007. Other commentators wanted war. “For weeks now, Turkey's agenda has been set by martyr funerals. The government is weak. Its hands and arms are tied by the U.S. and the EU. It keeps watching what is happening while it has entrusted foreign countries with Turkey's security. Let us ask once more: ‘Where is the prime minister when the martyrs are in their coffins?’” Emin Çölaşan, *Hürriyet*, 12 June 2007.

²¹¹ Crisis Group interview, Walter Posch, European Union Institute of Strategic Studies analyst, Paris, July 2007.

themselves as hawks, who can deal with terrorism at its source, but neither wants responsibility for what commentators suggest would have ruinous international consequences.²¹²

There is debate about the idea, recommended in the West, that Turkey could best secure its interests by making common cause with Iraqi Kurdistan. The AKP fitfully espoused this, partly due to business engagement with the region that involves more than 500 Turkish companies and \$2 billion in investments.²¹³ The Kemalist establishment remains resolutely opposed, partly due to a deep distrust of Barzani, its former ally against the PKK.

There is also reluctance to embrace Iraqi Kurdistan because many fear it would hasten the advent of an independent Kurdish state in Iraq, which many Turks believe is a deliberate Western goal.²¹⁴ A rash of films and novels predicated on the assumption of armed conflict with the U.S. over northern Iraq has achieved major success in Turkey since 2005.²¹⁵ Another reason for hostility to Iraqi Kurdistan is fear that the break-up of Iraq would create war and instability in the Middle East. Both scenarios are viewed as deeply threatening.

²¹² Despite opening up to Iraqi Kurds earlier, Prime Minister Erdoğan told Turkish television he would never talk to Barzani, a “tribal chieftain”. But he said he had received no “written request” for action from the military. NTV/MSNBC 6 June 2007. Chief of General Staff Büyükanıt spoke to reporters of the impending raid: “The targets will be set by political authorities. Are we just going to go in and fight the PKK or will there be something with Barzani as well?”, *Today’s Zaman*, 1 June 2007.

²¹³ *Habertürk*, 15 June 2007. Walfango Piccolo, a Turkey expert at the Eurasia Group, notes that northern Iraq depends on Turkey for food, cement, refined fuel, 20 per cent of its electricity and 15-20 per cent of its water, Reuters, 7 June 2007.

²¹⁴ In 1991, as Western protection was first extended over Iraqi Kurdistan after the Gulf War, ex-President and Chief of General Staff Evren said, “today they call it a security zone. Tomorrow they will be calling it a Kurdish state”. Pope and Pope, op. cit.

²¹⁵ Audiences stood and applauded at the end of the film “Valley of the Wolves – Iraq”, when a lone Turkish hero plunged a dagger into the heart of the villain, a U.S. army officer and missionary.

V. RELAUNCHING THE PROCESS

The pro-EU AKP’s resounding victory in the July 2007 parliamentary elections gives both it and the Europeans a chance to relaunch Turkey’s accession process, which, when believed in mutually, has the capacity to help both sides as much as it has done in the past. European companies have not stopped trusting in the benefits of the convergence story. Popular opinion may show fatigue, as has happened before, but leaders and diplomats need to keep avenues open for the time that political confidence returns, as it is likely to do again.

The terms of the debate over Turkey’s future EU membership are frequently misrepresented by both proponents and opponents. Confusion abounds.²¹⁶ An unprepared Turkey in an unprepared EU is not and should not be the aim of policymakers on either side. Pointing to Turkey’s current political, economic, social and demographic challenges to support arguments for its exclusion underestimates the transformative potential of the reform process. It is a short-sighted view that ignores earlier integration success stories in Western and Eastern Europe. The debate should be about joining a reformed Turkey to a reformed EU.

A. TURKEY’S PRIORITIES

In April 2007, the AKP set out in well-researched detail a plan for Turkey to reach EU standards by 2013. This was a rare exercise in bottom-up bureaucratic involvement, in which more than 200 government departments, think-tanks and NGOs were asked to discuss and submit their visions of what was needed to converge with the EU *acquis*.²¹⁷ Turkey’s chief EU negotiator, Ali Babacan, has vowed to get that process back on track:

We know where we are heading. Approximately 200 laws, 600 secondary laws, will be passed. We will be continuing at full speed ahead vis-à-vis our domestic reforms. Whenever the political situation is more supportive in the EU, then the formal pace will speed up. Whenever there are difficulties, things could slow down. This will be in the nature of our

²¹⁶ “The truth is that the EU simply cannot decide what it wants where Turkey is concerned... the EU has reeled from one crisis to the next [and] keeps sending out contradictory signals”. Heinz Kramer, head of the EU External Relations Research Unit, “EU-Turkey Negotiations: Still in the Cyprus Impasse”, German Institute for International Security Affairs, January 2007.

²¹⁷ Crisis Group interview, Turkish official, Ankara, 19 April 2007.

negotiation process. All of us must be ready for a long and a narrow road.²¹⁸

Given that EU support is vital, Turkey has to catch Europe's imagination with some sweeping new gestures. The present period involves uphill work, amid enlargement fatigue in Europe and with major EU governments looking for any excuse to freeze or derail Turkey's progress towards membership. Ankara should seize genuine offers of multilateral cooperation with the EU over visa, defence or energy policies to prove its intrinsic ability to contribute, not hold every issue hostage to headline political strife. Turkey still has friends in the EU, and it should be giving them arguments, particularly ahead of the annual November progress report. Enlargement Commissioner Rehn has suggested these should be in fundamental freedoms "of expression and of religion". The focus on religious freedoms reflects a dominant concern in European public opinion.²¹⁹

A good place to start would be repeal or overhaul of the notorious Penal Code Article 301 on "insulting Turkishness and state institutions", which has been abused by over-zealous prosecutors to drag Turkey's best-known intellectuals into court. Next could be the re-opening of the Halki Greek Orthodox seminary, possibly as part of a package that allows real liberalisation for members of all faiths.²²⁰ This would also be a gesture to Greece, which is a vital potential ally for bringing the Nicosia government back to the UN-based plan for resolving the Cyprus dispute. Hüseyin Çelik, education minister in the previous AKP government, has said it is simply the right thing to do: "I'd open it within 24 hours. In Europe, there are 5,000 mosques; in Rotterdam there's a university run by a Turk where 500 students study Islamic theology. This is not because the EU wants it...I'm a Muslim. This is what my religion, my culture dictates. Members of other religions have the right to express themselves".²²¹

²¹⁸ Interview with Ali Babacan, BBC World Service, 16 July 2007.

²¹⁹ Crisis Group interview, European parliamentarians, Brussels, May 2007. In response to questions on what Europeans want from Turkey, 43 per cent cited human and minority rights, 31 per cent reconciliation/cooperation with neighbouring countries, 30 per cent democracy and 27 per cent adoption and implementation of EU norms and standards. Special Eurobarometer 255, op. cit.

²²⁰ Teaching at the seminary ended in 1971, meaning that Turkey's 3,000-strong Greek community and the Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate, which must choose a Turkish citizen as patriarch, cannot train their priests in Turkey. (Armenians, Syrians and other minorities have no such possibility either). The closure was legally questionable and contravened treaties signed by Turkey. Elçin Matar and Mehmet Ali Gökaçti, "Discussions and Recommendations on the Future of the Halki Seminary", TESEV (independent Turkish policy think-tank), December 2006.

²²¹ *Milliyet*, 6 October 2005.

Gestures need to be followed by a coherent strategy if Turkey is to win over European public opinion and Turkey-sceptical EU leaders. The issues are hard – Cyprus, the Armenian massacres, security force abuses, Kurdish nationalism – but if it wishes to be part of a globalised world, Turkey will have to formulate more progressive positions on all. It need not give up its vital interests but should try to create at least positive momentum. As seen above, it has tried this at times with the Armenian question, and, when genuinely pursued, the result has given more credibility to its arguments. Obsessive pursuit of preventing perceived negative outcomes like the Armenian genocide resolutions can crowd out other business, devalue credibility and deter would-be friends.

On Cyprus, its electoral victory allows the AKP to play a long game. It should seek allies on the Greek side of the island and give them arguments in the hope they may support the UN bicomunal, bizonal settlement after President Papadopoulos leaves office. Since it is the proximity of its army that Greek Cypriots fear,²²² Turkey should avoid provocations like overflights and minimise the visibility of the contingent on the island. The Turkish Cypriots have voted for reunification, and Turkish voters have endorsed the AKP policy of keeping "one step ahead" of the Greek Cypriot side. That policy was adopted too late to make the 2004 referendums the break-through to a solution but it has forced a revision in favour of Turkey in long-held international perceptions. Turkey should keep finding ways of advancing this, as with the attempt to open the Ledra Street crossing point. Similarly, it should learn from the failure of the compromise it offered in December 2006 on opening ports and airports to Greek Cypriot traffic. Brinkmanship at EU summits ought to be only a weapon of last resort.

To make certain EU states understand Turkey is an asset, Ankara should also develop policy ideas that both match its own interests and help the EU. It has already had success in demonstrating the benefits of Istanbul's role as the regional commercial centre. It joined the EU in criticising ethnic cousins in Uzbekistan for the Andijon massacre and has begun to take on more responsibility in the Middle East. Its lead role in Afghanistan proved much about what it has been trying to say to the EU about its security significance.

The government should also communicate its successes with the EU to its own people better and counter the syndrome "if they don't want us, we don't want them 1,000 times".²²³ Officials should not keep silent when

²²² 73 per cent of Greek Cypriots feel "very insecure" at its presence. "The UN in Cyprus", UNFICYP, 24 April 2007.

²²³ Crisis Group interview, Bahadır Kaleağası, TUSIAD representative, Brussels, May 2007.

emails race through Turkish web sites with phoney EU resolutions for an independent Kurdistan or an EU ban on Atatürk portraits. They ought not to give up hope in Europe because of polls; not all show anti-EU majorities.²²⁴ More generally, politicians need to communicate that the very nature of EU accession requires endurance and patience.

Turkish communities in Europe have a special responsibility to reach out and highlight their own constructive contributions to their countries of residence, or, increasingly, their new native countries. If resistance to Turkish cultural presence is met – for instance, in European reluctance to see minarets on the skyline – they should seek imaginative solutions, such as competitions for a minaret design that fits in with that particular European district.

Turkey should choose its arguments in Europe with care. Emphasising that millions of Turkish workers may one day be needed on an aging continent may provoke counter-reactions, since past immigration has helped turn opinion against membership. In France, lectures about the similarities between Turkish republican ideology and that of the French nation state are embarrassing to some French officials, who want to adopt a more post-nationalist approach to politics.²²⁵ Threats such as “punishing” France for its Armenian genocide stand by blocking Gaz de France from joining the planned Nabucco natural gas pipeline can backfire: Nabucco is not only the first major step in the EU’s new search for energy security, but also one in which Turkey is being offered a major role.

Convincing Europe will take sophistication. A Turkey-centric world view, hectoring speeches and embassy agents with intimidating video cameras at sensitive meetings can lose the argument from the outset.²²⁶ Ministers should not “punish” the EU for perceived slights by boycotting influential forums like EU meetings.²²⁷

²²⁴ A Bilgi University/Kapa Research poll found that in a referendum 63.1 per cent of Turks would support EU membership, even though half believed the EU was trying to split Turkey and 71.3 per cent believed Turkey had no natural friends. 54.5 per cent of Greeks believed they were also alone in the world. “Different nightmares of the neighbours”, *Radikal* newspaper, 11 June 2007.

²²⁵ Dorothee Schmid, “The Franco-Turkish Relationship in Turmoil”, EDAM, January 2007.

²²⁶ “The cameraman focuses in on everyone who sits near people seen as ‘enemies’ of Turkey. All it does is remind everyone of the film ‘Midnight Express’”, Crisis Group interview, French analyst, Paris, July 2007.

²²⁷ For instance, Abdullah Gül’s absence from the foreign ministers meeting in Germany on 30 March 2007, which Turkish media presented as a protest against Turkey’s non-invitation to the EU’s 50th birthday celebrations in Berlin.

Visits to Turkey have changed many Europeans’ minds about the country but Turkey also needs to reach out to European capitals and meet its opponents. It is crucial to find ways to persuade Berlin, where the present government, unlike its predecessor, is not interested in developing French support for the accession process. Typical of what can help is Prime Minister Erdoğan’s statement that all Turkish prayer leaders in Germany must speak German.

Turkey has begun to discuss new, non-Western foreign policy options in recent years. Such ideas gained traction after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, which made Washington look like a military threat to Turkey rather than the ally it has long been, and the stalling of the EU process after 2005. One of the most often mentioned is a supposed new common cause with Russia.²²⁸ There is no historical precedent for a Russian-Turkish alliance – Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century was the last person to unite the geography – but there is surprising warmth in commercial areas of the relationship.

Trade has boomed for a decade on the back of large Russian energy deliveries and Turkey’s supply of contracting, commercial and other services.²²⁹ Turkey has also come to a more realistic assessment of its opportunities in the Turkic world, where its inroads in Azerbaijan and Central Asia disturbed Moscow in the 1990s. Some two million Russian tourists are expected in 2007. Ankara and Moscow share an aversion to what they consider destabilising U.S. actions in the Middle East, especially the war in Iraq and confrontation with Iran. Meanwhile, Turkey’s main Cold War interest in the U.S., protection from the Soviet Union, has disappeared, and it does not feel especially threatened by such U.S. preoccupations as North Korea, Iran and Iraq. Both Turkish and Russian works of fiction explore elements of an Ankara-Moscow alliance – including a novel that foresees a joint attack on the EU.²³⁰

For some Turks, a bond with Russia is an alternative to the one not yet managed with the EU. “Russia is the relationship. We have the same Tatar-Mongol state tradition. We share the same hatred of America. Then we look at the U.S., fully contradicting our national interest, putting the seeds of separatism in areas around us”, a think-tank president in Ankara said.²³¹ The concept has unusually

²²⁸ See Fiona Hill and Ömer Taşpınar, “Turkey and Russia: Axis of the Excluded?”, *Survival*, spring 2006. Suspicion was worsened in 2006 by reports that the U.S. was actively supporting a PKK sister organization, PJAK, against Iran. See Seymour Hersh, “The Next Act,” *The New Yorker*, 27 November 2006.

²²⁹ Two thirds of Turkey’s natural gas and one quarter of its oil come from Russia.

²³⁰ Burak Tuma, “Üçüncü Dünya Savaşı”, *Timaş Yayınları*, 2005.

²³¹ Crisis Group interview, Ankara, April 2007.

broad political support, including Prime Minister Erdoğan and President Putin, who meet far more often than leaders of their respective countries ever have before; a group of Istanbul businessmen and their centre-right political allies, who have managed the core work in the Russian gas pipelines and commercial contracts; and, more surprisingly, the Turkish military. It was a Turkish general in 2002 who set off alarms in the West by wondering if Turkey would not be better off building ties with Russia and Iran than being kept in the EU waiting room. When Putin raised eyebrows with an assertive speech against U.S. unilateralism in Europe in February 2007, the General Staff posted the text in Turkish on its website.

Time will tell if this is just a coincidence of frustration with the West or a new friendship with deep mutual interests. Most of Turkey's new ideas still come from the West, which remains its most sophisticated trading partner. Recent Russian energy policy appears to have gone against Turkey: lost interest in a major refinery investment; a push for an alternative to the Nabucco natural gas pipeline; and an end to support for an oil pipeline through Anatolia from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean in favour of one through Bulgaria and Greece. While a far cry from the dozen wars Russians and Turks fought over three centuries, there is still some competition for access to resources in Central Asia, where Turkey's interests coincide with those of the U.S. and EU. Moreover, Turkey's present interest in the Russian relationship has little fundamental political substance; it is largely fuelled by the desire to get a share of Moscow's oil and gas wealth.

With its strong element of commercial opportunism, Turkey's new interest in Russia shares something in common with the other alternative to the EU that is sometimes suggested: partnership with the Islamic world. The AKP leadership, however, remembers this proved a dead end during the brief period in power of the party's predecessor, the anti-Western, pro-Islamic Refah Party, in 1996-1997. It was one reason that party split, with the AKP taking a pro-Western line. Trade with some countries in the oil-rich Arab world is soaring but the AKP treats this as an optional extra, not a new foreign policy option. A Turkish diplomat concluded:

The EU is the choice, the vocation towards the West. The other fundamental pillar is the U.S. The third pillar is not Russia. It includes Russia but not always. It won't be a substitute. But they are all complementary.²³²

B. EUROPE'S PRIORITIES

If the EU finds it hard to agree on how to plan its future with Turkey, it is worth considering briefly what might become harder without Turkey. Even greater mistrust and reluctance to cooperate in Ankara would be the probable consequence of dropping the goal of full membership, the main driver of the relationship for half a century. Indeed, this is more or less what is happening now, given France's policy to allow negotiation on some 30 chapters but not on five it judges would put Turkey in line for accession.²³³

The great bond between Turkey and Europe since the Second World War was always a military alliance but this threatens to go into reverse. Ankara's warnings on northern Iraq indicate its determination to become a more assertive military player. If the estrangement with the West goes too far, it may even seek to develop its own nuclear weapons to defend itself against what it sees as potentially threatening weaponisation in Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East.²³⁴ The U.S. may keep it in check but Europe risks giving up all leverage. The loss would be commercial as well as strategic. For now, Ankara is turning its back on Europe's Typhoon Eurofighter program in favour of a completely U.S. solution for its next generation of attack warplanes. The arms sale office in the French embassy has closed due to Turkish unwillingness to give business to a Turkey-sceptical government.

EU goals in Turkey, even for those who do not want it as a member, usually include more human rights and freedom of expression, a better situation for religious and ethnic minorities, a more democratic place for the armed forces and a Cyprus solution. Yet, it is precisely those areas that have been worst hit by the slowdown in convergence since 2005 and would be crippled if the goal of full membership were removed.

More generally, EU downgrading of the negotiation process would greatly damage Turkey's prestige in the Islamic world. This matters because it was the EU blessing which, above all, made it appear that the moderate, ex-Islamist AKP had found a new model for internal prosperity, progress and eventual equality for a Muslim country with the West. Especially if it appeared to be based on subjective criteria like geography or culture, an EU rejection would fuel Islamist arguments that the West was irredeemably biased and determined on a clash of

²³³ Crisis Group interviews, French officials, June-July 2007.

²³⁴ "Behind closed doors, everyone says it. If Turkey doesn't have a European perspective, it has to develop non-civilian nuclear capacity. Iran's missiles can touch us; let's get ready for it. Turkey will have to do it", Crisis Group interview, Bahadır Kaleağası, permanent representative of the TUSIAD business association, Brussels, 7 May 2007.

²³² Crisis Group interview, Ankara, April 2007.

civilizations. Of course, there have been bumps in the road to EU convergence for Turkey before, somewhat as there were for the UK and Spain in the past. EU officials should be the key link in maintaining a minimum of progress until kinder political winds prevail. Although much less per capita than what was done for earlier candidates, the EU spends €500 million a year to promote its standards in Turkey. Its €2.2 billion program is the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development's largest. The European Commission's Ankara delegation is its largest diplomatic mission. The work is important if the EU is to win over doubters and neo-nationalists in Turkey. Many who voted for the far-right MHP in July 2007 were young people angered by the EU's treatment.²³⁵

1. Cyprus

Cyprus is the biggest and most obvious obstacle to any EU attempt to relaunch its Turkey relationship. Just as a calming of Turkey's conflicts with Greece had to wait until nationalist, old-guard leaders left the stage, the Cyprus conflict's resolution may require not just the departure of veteran Turkish Cypriot hardliner Rauf Denktaş, who has already stepped down, but also Tassos Papadopoulos, who above all persuaded Greek Cypriots to vote against the Annan Plan in 2004 and has announced he will stand for president again in February 2008. There seems little chance in the short term that Greek Cyprus will genuinely discuss bicomunal, bizonal arrangements. As governments forget the initial shock of how the Greek Cypriot government broke its promise to accept the UN plan, the chance of real EU pressure on Nicosia to compromise is lessening.

One reason for the 2004 refusal from Cyprus was a sense that great powers were trying to impose a bad compromise, so overt EU pressure in any event would seem unlikely to change public opinion. Greek Cypriots must be persuaded that it is in their best interest and that the EU can indeed guarantee Turkey's good faith, something which, once again, will need a fully operational negotiating process. The best interlocutor could be Greece, which made a good start at peace with Turkey in 1999 and stands to lose a great deal from increased military spending and tourist-season tension if Turkey returns to the more hostile behaviour seen in the 1980s and 1990s.

With the dispute damaging several other areas of European relations, interim measures will also be needed to persuade Turkish Cypriots that their vote for reunification has not been forgotten and to reassure Turks that the EU is not biased. It will be up to individual EU governments to take unilateral steps to bring the Turkish Cypriots closer

to the EU, whether through cultural programs or more invitations to EU capitals for leaders. Ways should be sought to make sure the €259 million European Commission program for Turkish Cyprus can be funded after the end of the current fiscal cycle in 2009.

The EU may not be able to mediate, since the Nicosia government is now a full member, but it must not turn its back on the Turkish side. It should explore any new and realistic proposals from Ankara along the lines of the January 2006 Action Plan for Cyprus and maintain or increase its bilateral contacts with Turkish Cypriot politicians. The quasi-accreditation of Turkish Cypriot representatives in Brussels could pave the way to other measures like observer status in the European Parliament. Aid should be given to sustain the north's development, including refurbishment of Famagusta's port and other infrastructure.

Although this conflict has been frozen for 33 years, there is no reason to despair. The EU project as a guarantor of peace and stability has helped calm frictions that twice threatened war between Turkey and Greece in the 1980s and 1990s. Trust has now risen enough for combat to be unthinkable. The EU has also played a part in ending decades of internal conflicts that plagued ethnic Turkish communities in northern Greece and Bulgaria. It did this with its soft power alone: all sides began to feel more secure; all communities could see that as a last resort, third party justice was available; for the Turkish minorities, the advantages of EU citizenship outweighed the old dependence on their former sole protectors in Ankara. Turkish Cypriots' vote for the reunification plan shows they felt the same. Historians note that the only time the eastern Mediterranean has known real peace has been when the same empire – in this case, arguably, the overarching power of the EU – has controlled both sides of the Aegean.²³⁶

2. A need for positive consistency

Just as accession is as much about process as ultimate goals, so the EU-Turkey relationship is often as much about presentation as substance. The Turkish media can react ferociously to statements that sound banal in Europe. Commissioner Rehn has understood the need for caution, even if this sometimes disappoints "democrats" in Turkey. The EU should avoid involvement in Turkey's debates on domestic ideology, which are often highly political. Day-to-day reaction to Turkey's many crises is not required. As one analyst put it, "the best thing Europeans can do is remain firmly on course, neither panicking nor

²³⁵ Interview, Dutch-Turkish member of the European Parliament Emine Bozkurt, *NOS Journaal*, 23 July 2007.

²³⁶ Stéphane Yerasimos, "Les Rapports gréco-turcs: Mythes et réalités", *Cahiers d'Etudes sur la Méditerranée Orientale et le Monde Turco-Iranien*, 1986.

downplaying the situation in Turkey but accepting the crisis for what it is: just another bump on Turkey's road to Europe".²³⁷

To rebuild a pro-EU consensus – vital if new laws are to be implemented as well as passed – the Kemalists must be engaged as much as the AKP government should be supported. One way is to include anti-EU voices as interlocutors for European officials and diplomats. Another is to take care in using expressions that raise images in Turkish minds different from those intended in Europe. Applying the word "minority" to the Kurds, for instance, implies to Kemalists a European attempt to create a new group with special rights that will eventually split the country. When Westerners describe Turkey as a "moderate Islamic state", Kemalists take it to mean they see Turkey as part of the Middle East and reject the 80-year effort to build a secular European state.²³⁸

Arguments that cultural and religious differences are a reason to exclude Turkey are often subjective, or simply self-fulfilling prophecies. French officials' informal proposals to charge a body of wise men with drawing Europe's eastern frontier should be treated with caution. For those truly seeking Turkish progress, it is more effective to criticise any failure to attain EU norms for human rights, business practices or freedom of expression that are both easily measurable and supported by a wide body of Turkish opinion. Turkey presents some unusual enlargement challenges but ideas like a European Commission-sponsored booklet pointing out the major difficulties that previous applicants faced can help persuade public opinion it is not being uniquely targeted.

All involved in the EU-Turkey relationship report that one of the most effective ways of advancing mutual understanding and trust is to choose good EU interlocutors and have frequent personal contact. An EU-sponsored visit to Turkey by ethnic Turkish parliamentarians from Europe was a particular success in communicating European views on democracy and human rights that typically sound condescending from northern Europeans.²³⁹ Bringing Turkish bureaucrats on training programs to EU states has had a major impact in diminishing suspicion of Europe and helping implementation of reforms. Another successful

form of outreach has been Stockholm's policy of sending administrators and intellectuals to open meetings in medium-sized towns in provincial Turkey and bringing Turkish counterparts to Swedish towns.²⁴⁰ Voluntary work by a Dutch student group in disadvantaged areas of Turkey attracted unusually positive media coverage. EU-sponsored academic exchange programs are also highly effective.

The EU should also ease the constant irritant of visa difficulties imposed on some of the EU's best friends in Turkey, such as bona fide business travellers, academics and impressionable students. Documents and attestations required by some member states can be intrusive and, when repeated constantly, humiliating.²⁴¹ They reflect perceived national fears of a migration flood, not the reality of a constant coming and going.²⁴² Multiple entry visas into the Schengen area for such people should more often be given for the maximum five years, not the presently common one year or less.

Open, multi-faceted discussion of Turkish membership is also needed within the EU.²⁴³ The European Parliament's latest accession report emphasised that "unlike in previous negotiations, in the case of Turkey it would be necessary to inform the European public continuously and intensively about the negotiations themselves and Turkey's progress in this regard".²⁴⁴ The European Commission has argued "that in the case of Turkey, a dialogue aiming at improving mutual knowledge and encouraging a debate on perceptions regarding society and political issues on both sides is particularly necessary".²⁴⁵ Responsibility for generating, encouraging and leading the much needed discussion of the benefits, challenges and drawbacks of Turkish membership should not be just the Commission's

²³⁷ Posch, "Crisis in Turkey", op. cit.

²³⁸ "Why are the U.S. and the EU so in favour of the AK Party? I believe it is because this draws Turkey away from the EU and pushes it towards the Middle East. Paradoxically, they are pro-AK Party also because they think that they can get the AK Party to accept their demands. According to their view, Turkey has to move away from secularism, and it has to be preserved in reserve, as a moderate Islamic country. The AK Party is very suitable for that purpose". Yalçın Doğan, *Cumhuriyet*, 1 August 2007.

²³⁹ Crisis Group interview, European official, Ankara, April 2007.

²⁴⁰ Crisis Group interview, Ingmar Karlsson, Swedish Consul-General, Istanbul, April 2007.

²⁴¹ Some embassies require application in person for each trip from even seasoned travelers and up to 25 separate documents ranging from credit card details to title deeds. Turkey is raising the visa difficulties at high-level EU meetings. Crisis Group telephone interview, Turkish official, August 2007.

²⁴² "Turkish complaints are often exaggerated, but we need a change in mentality in our national capitals. Our ministry of economy had to intervene to get visas flowing, it was becoming a political problem". Crisis Group interview, European diplomat, Istanbul, August 2007.

²⁴³ Crisis Group interview, European Commission official, Brussels, May 2007.

²⁴⁴ "Turkey's Progress Towards Accession", European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs, Rapporteur Camiel Eurlings, 13 September 2006.

²⁴⁵ "Civil Society Dialogue between the EU and Candidate Countries", Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 29 June 2005.

responsibility. European publics think national governments should be responsible for informing them of enlargement issues.²⁴⁶

Finally, the EU should take Turkish complaints seriously, if it wants its own complaints to be listened to. Often these relate to matters rarely mentioned in European media or policy circles. Europe's reputation in Turkey was damaged by the repeated sight of the suspect in the 1996 murder of a leading Turkish businessman repeatedly flashing victory signs in a Belgium courtroom. The suspect won release on charges of bearing arms in Belgium, and after Turkish extradition requests were rebuffed, disappeared from house arrest.²⁴⁷ Recently, Austria refused to detain a suspect in the PKK's European financing network. Due to appear in a French court on terrorism-related charges, he was allowed to board a flight to northern Iraq. Such an event is seen as validating assumptions about European plans to destabilise Turkey. France's July 2006 crackdown on a major PKK financing ring helped but better EU coordination is needed to convince Turkey of EU good will. The EU should give Turkey's terrorism concerns the same respect it would expect if its terrorists were found based in Turkey.

3. Privileged partnership

The idea of substituting "privileged partnership" for full membership was first proposed by Germany's Christian Democratic Union in 2004, when it was in opposition. As chancellor, Angela Merkel has dropped it, saying prior treaties with Turkey cannot be unilaterally changed, but the idea, never really defined, has found a new advocate in French President Sarkozy. "The United States and Mexico are very close. They have NAFTA [the North America Free Trade Agreement], but nobody is asking for Mexico to become part of the United States", said a French official.²⁴⁸ Privileged partnership – rejected by Foreign Minister Gül as "illegitimate and immoral" – is basically what Turkey feels it already has. These include obligations to comply with EU regulations in whose formulation it has no say, ranging from determining whether Kuwaiti visitors must have a visa to rules that have multi-million euro implications for how Turkish

companies register chemical products for export to Europe. The concept, Turkish leaders and European commentators agree, provides no motivation for large reforms Turkey must still carry out.²⁴⁹

When the idea was indirectly introduced as a fall-back in the 2005 EU document on the negotiating framework, a Chatham House Paper decried it as an "ill-considered, unimaginative policy conferring neither privilege nor true partnership. Such a partnership could lead to a potentially irreversible and dramatic rupture in EU-Turkey relations...this partnership implies that the candidate country is nothing more than a land of merchants and consumers with a strong military, and ignores its maturing democracy, vibrant media, flourishing civil society and its prospective demographic, socio-economic and cultural contributions to Europe".²⁵⁰ Turkey would lose such membership benefits as agricultural subsidies, structural policies and free movement of persons. The EU would integrate it into its internal market and common foreign policy but drop its insistence on the chapters that Turkey finds difficult, like human rights, environmental standards and recognition of Greek Cyprus.

Privileged partnership is a version of the European Neighbourhood Policy, endorsed by the European Council in 2003 for countries from Russia to Libya that have no history of convergence with the EU. The same can be said for another idea floated by France and dismissed by Ankara, of a Mediterranean Union in which Turkey's relationship with the EU might be anchored. This appeared to be a reformulation of the 1995 Barcelona Process for the twelve EU neighbours sharing the Mediterranean basin. French officials have described it as voluntary and complementary to existing processes, not a substitute for accession negotiations.²⁵¹ But Barcelona also lacks much of a motivational goal and has achieved only modest progress towards either human rights improvements or trade convergence.

²⁴⁶ In response to the question "who should have the main responsibility to inform you about the enlargement of the European Union?", 59 per cent said national government, 38 per cent news broadcasters, 24 per cent European Parliament/MEPs, 15 per cent European Commission, 14 per cent regional/local authorities, 12 per cent members of national parliaments, 12 per cent educational institutions and 10 per cent political parties or organisations. Special Eurobarometer 255, op. cit.

²⁴⁷ A good account of this episode can be found at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fehriye_Erdal.

²⁴⁸ Crisis Group interview, Paris, 2 July 2007.

²⁴⁹ "History will not judge us kindly if we fail to treat Turkey with respect, and – in so doing – signal to our own ethnic minorities that we have little faith in their capacity to integrate, or of others to follow them. Translated from political rhetoric into social reality, 'privileged partnership' is a shabby offer to make to the millions of Turks that already live in Europe. What will future generations say about us if we turn our backs now, with so much at stake, and so much to gain, on the best Muslim friend we have?" Stephen Twigg, director of London's Foreign Policy Center, in preface to Schaefer, et al., "Turks in Europe", op. cit.

²⁵⁰ Fadi Hakura, "Partnership is No Privilege: the alternative to EU membership is no Turkish delight", The Royal Institute of International Affairs, September 2005.

²⁵¹ Jean-Pierre Jouyet, French Minister of State for European Affairs, briefing, European Policy Centre, Brussels, 16 July 2007.

VI. CONCLUSION

By treaty, history, institutional engagement, security orientation and ideological ambition, Turkey is a European country. Since 1963, and especially since the mid-1990s, it has used the prospect of EU accession as its primary motivational tool for modernising reforms. It would have the EU's largest population by 2015 and politically be one of its most significant members. However this ambition has floundered since 2005 because of an impasse over Cyprus, EU enlargement fatigue, and Europeans' wariness of Turkey's relative poverty and disapproval of its democratic shortcomings. On the Turkish side, there has been a neo-nationalist backlash and backsliding in legislating and implementing reforms.

This has damaged EU interests in Turkey and the region. Turkish politicians are avoiding pro-EU stances, and the military has slowed purchases from Europe. French companies, in particular, have suffered losses. Religious and ethnic minorities in Turkey have come under renewed pressure. Europe's good faith towards the Muslim world has been questioned. Cyprus has become a contentious issue increasingly damaging diplomacy in unrelated areas. Turkey is threatening to withdraw its contributions to the new European defence structure.

The pro-EU AKP's landslide victory in parliamentary elections in July 2007 offers both sides a new opportunity, returning Prime Minister Erdoğan to power with a strong mandate to relaunch the reform process. If the AKP does so in good faith, Europe should be ready with a response that goes beyond more to-do lists and offers strategic vision and leadership. All sides in Europe share the goals of Turkey's reformers, and the tone and outlook of the relationship will determine at what speed modernisation continues. Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn has said, "Turkey and Turkey alone sets the rhythm of reforms. It can be a quick samba, it can be a slow waltz – but the band and the music must not stop, otherwise the process will lose momentum and credibility".²⁵² It takes a partner, however, and several factors originating in the richer, more powerful EU are critical to Rehn's dance.

Aggressive statements by European leaders, including members of the European Parliament, can have great impact in Turkey, just as deliberately provocative actions by short-sighted Turkish state prosecutors have negative effects on European opinion. It is not, as at least one French politician has portrayed it, a breakable flirtation or engagement, implying that the relationship can somehow

be dissolved, with both sides then moving into new worlds.²⁵³ This is being blind to reality. Turkey and Europe are old neighbours, once distinct, but, like two towns that grow into each other, they now overlap to an extent that cannot be undone.

Above all, the membership goal is critical to the Turkish perception of EU sincerity. It was enshrined in the 1963 Ankara Agreement, and EU states have unanimously reaffirmed it many times. At heart, this is an acceptance that Turks and Muslims are equals to Europeans. This message is heard not just in Turkey but in the Middle East and in Muslim immigrant communities within the EU as well. These are all places where Europe is looking for and needs leverage, and an unfair snub to Turkey would put its moral authority at risk. There is neither precedent nor need to take away the goal of membership with constructs like privileged partnership or Mediterranean Union.

At least 22 of the 27 governments in today's EU say they favour membership once Turkey fulfils all conditions.²⁵⁴ This does not mean membership is inevitable. Turkey must satisfy the stiffest criteria ever set for a candidate, and a single government can black-ball it. France, at least, is legally committed to holding a referendum. Doubts about whether Turkey will join are also subtly present in

²⁵³ "The process of EU membership negotiations with Turkey constitutes a major error. European leaders undertook obligations in 1999 that they are incapable of honouring today. At the time, they consulted nobody: neither their parliaments, nor their governments, nor their public opinion. Now they are discovering how much Europeans oppose this idea. This hostility showed itself in the Netherlands and in France during the referendum debates about the [EU] constitution, and forms the only common reason in these two countries for the rejection of that text. A reading of the press and observation of public debate... [indicates] the same spirit pertains in Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Greece, Cyprus, Denmark, and in Ireland. True, in the meantime, negotiations have started. But in cases of this type, experience shows that it is easier to break a flirtation than an engagement, an engagement than a marriage, a marriage without children than a marriage with children. In his election campaign, Nicolas Sarkozy said he would break negotiations with Turkey if he was elected. He will do it". Alain Lamassoure, European Parliamentarian and Sarkozy adviser, "Relaunching Europe, Nicolas Sarkozy's priority", www.euractiv.fr, 6 May 2007.

²⁵⁴ The prominent sceptics in mid-2007 were France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria and Cyprus. However, in all cases except Cyprus, other governments in those countries had been supportive of Turkey in the past decade. French officials believe a majority secretly opposes Turkish membership. Crisis Group interviews, French officials, Paris, June-July 2007. However, the new French foreign minister, Bernard Kouchner, said in his first official interview he is for Turkish membership, although "the process we have started will take a long time". *Le Monde*, 18 May 2007.

²⁵² "Why Turkey and the EU need each other: co-operating on energy and other strategic issues", Olli Rehn, speech, Istanbul, 5 June 2007.

the Turkish elite. Senior Turkish bureaucrats openly say they are unsure that, once Turkey achieved the parity necessary for accession, they would sign a membership agreement.²⁵⁵ For them, the negotiations are as much about process and motivation as destination. The EU process has been an agent of positive change for 50 years, and they want it to continue for another decade at least.

Debates about membership are premature, in any event. Turkey cannot join for a long time. In terms of the EU budget, it is impossible before 2014. Turkish leaders have rarely demanded a clear time frame for accession; they are asking for a credible goal and anchor for their policies. Europe has nothing to lose, and everything to gain, from extending a hand to the new AKP government to help Turkey regain its Europeanising momentum.

Istanbul/Brussels, 17 August 2007

²⁵⁵ Crisis Group interviews, senior Turkish officials and bureaucrats, Ankara, April 2007.

APPENDIX A

MAP OF TURKEY



Courtesy of The General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin

APPENDIX B

CHRONOLOGY OF EU-TURKEY RELATIONS

- 1959 Turkey applies for membership in the European Economic Communities (EC), forerunner of the European Union (EU).
- 1963 Turkey signs an association accord (The Ankara Agreement), providing the prospect of eventual membership.
- 1974 Turkey intervenes militarily in Cyprus after diplomacy fails to resolve the decade-long Turkish-Greek Cypriot crisis.
- 1975 EC informally suggests Turkey apply for membership at the same time as Greece. Turkey declines.
- 1980 Turkish armed forces overthrow government. Relations with EU are frozen.
- 1987 Turkey applies for EC membership on 14 April.
- 1989 EC says Turkey is eligible to join but not yet ready.
- 1996 EU-Turkey Customs Union enters into force.
- 1997 EU leaders say Eastern Europeans can begin negotiations to join, but not Turkey. Ankara freezes relations with EU.
- 1999 EU leaders declare Turkey a candidate for membership.
- 2001-2004 Turkish parliament adopts major constitutional amendments, human rights reforms, new penal code, new civil code and equal status for women; broadens freedom of expression and bans death penalty.
- 2004 In twin referendums in April, Turkish Cypriots approve long-discussed, EU-backed, UN plan for bicomunal, bizonal solution to Cyprus dispute. Greek Cypriots reject it by two-thirds majority. Even so, Greek Cyprus joins EU in May.
- 2004 In December, EU decides Turkey has fulfilled Copenhagen Criteria on basic democratic and free market rights and declares membership negotiations will open.
- 2005 EU launches accession talks with Turkey after overcoming objections from Cyprus and Austria but Turkey comes under pressure to recognise Cyprus.
- 2006 In June, the EU and Turkey open and close the first and shortest of the 35 policy area “negotiating chapters” of the EU *acquis communautaire*, on Science and Research.
- 2006 The EU freezes the opening of eight of the 35 negotiating chapters over Turkey’s refusal to open its ports and airports to traffic from Cyprus.
- 2007 In January, the EU and Turkey open the negotiating chapter on Enterprises and Industrial Policy.
- 2007 In April, the AKP adopts its own seven-year national action plan to move towards adopting the EU *acquis*.
- 2007 In June, two more chapters of the EU *acquis*, Statistics and Financial Control, are opened for negotiation, bringing the total opened to four. France blocks the expected opening of the chapter on work towards European monetary union, in line with new President Sarkozy’s determination to block five chapters that would pave the way for Turkey to become a member of the EU.
- 2007 In July the AKP wins parliamentary elections with 46.7 per cent of the vote and vows to relaunch the EU convergence process.

APPENDIX C

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Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a twelve-page monthly bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in all the most significant situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

Crisis Group's reports and briefing papers are distributed widely by email and printed copy to officials in foreign ministries and international organisations and made available simultaneously on the website, www.crisisgroup.org. Crisis Group works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

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