

Reflections on the EU Strategy Paper 2003 – two approaches, moving conditions and a new juncture

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An analysis of the Strategy Paper 2003 shows that there is a growing divergence between the approach of the Union towards Turkey and the latter's desire to be integrated. The overall stance of Brussels towards Turkey is at the heart of this divergence. Brussels is treating the issue of Turkey's inclusion into the EU as a simple foreign policy matter. Turkey, as demonstrated during the Helsinki Summit and since then, has revealed her genuine intention of being incorporated into the Union.

At the Helsinki Summit, the EU pursued a tactical retreat policy over the issue of Turkey's inclusion. It was left to Turkey to shoulder the burden of pursuing the issue. This created an imbalance in the relationship between Turkey and the EU member states, which has continued since the Helsinki Summit. Turkey cannot live with being kept at arms length from acceptance, nor cope with 'moving conditions'. At this juncture, the relationship has to be given a new face. Otherwise, the relationship between the two will lead to a new juncture.

Introduction

This paper¹ attempts to analyse the Strategy Paper produced by the EU Commission on 5 November 2003². First, it argues that the Strategy Paper reveals a growing divergence rather than convergence between the approach of the Union towards Turkey and the latter's desire to be integrated. Second, it points out that while, from the Helsinki Summit of 1999 until November 2003, Turkey has worked hard to meet the conditions of acceptance and to enhance relations with the Union, the Union has not attempted to create a favourable climate for Turkey. The Union treated Turkey's proposed acceptance as a foreign policy issue and thus the Commission pursued a strategy of focusing on the concessions and changes it required from Turkey and closely monitoring how change was implemented, without addressing the promises which had been made to Turkey.

There is a growing sense in Turkey that the country has been deceived by the Union. The Union seems to have been disappointed with half-fulfilled foreign policy objectives; and the fact that the Union failed to reshape Turkey

¹ Please note that this article was written in December 2003.

² For the text of Strategy Paper and Regular Reports see;
http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report_2003/index.htm.

in contrast to the other cases. It is appropriate to state that there are two different clearly definable approaches, objectives and strategies by the parties concerned, which entered into a new phase of building up of tangible tensions. Third, this paper demonstrates that the Strategy Paper is full of contradictions as to its own claim that the EU acts in accordance with its general principles, particularly its own merit principles and criteria. As shall be extensively discussed, the assertive inclusion of Croatia within the Strategy Paper is not only the most illustrative example of the self-defeating argument of the Commission, but it also reveals the contingency plans of the EU on the so-called 2007 enlargement.

It is argued here that the Commission refutes its own arguments and thus undermines its own credibility. Finally, the paper poses the question of how long Turkey can live with being kept at arms length and cope with the ‘moving conditions’, as revealed in the Strategy Paper. Recent EU jargon has labelled relations between the candidate countries and the EU as a ‘moving target’; with the Strategy Paper of 2003, it may well be labelled as ‘moving conditions for Turkey’.

Is it a sign that the EU is likely to revise its decision that Turkey is a candidate for full membership? Is it possible to speculate that the EU is likely to shift its strategy and to offer Turkey ‘conditional membership’ after May 2004? It is by no means an exaggeration to assert that the Strategy Paper reveals early signs of a chilly winter and a very hot summer in the short-term.

Points Made by the Previous Studies of EU - Turkey Relations

Most of the studies of EU-Turkey relations³ have focused on institutional aspects of the relationship, drawing attention to the lack or weakness of institution building, democratic and human rights deficiencies on the part of Turkey, and religious and cultural prejudices on the part of the EU members. Many tended to link Turkey’s quest for membership to the EU as part of her long lasting westernisation, backing their argument with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s indicative target of catching up with contemporary civilisations,. In contrast, the European Parliament Rapporteur, Arie M. Oostlander stated that ‘the underlying philosophy of Kemalism is a barrier to

³ For the sake of brevity, instead of listing different categories of studies, unless otherwise required, we would like to limit ourselves to giving several reference books in which plenty of representatives of the below-noted views can be found. *Türkiye - Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri Bibliyografyası* (A Bibliography of Relations between Turkey - European Union) - Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 2001; *Türkiye-Avrupa Topluluğu Bibliyografyası II* (1990-1992) (Turkey-European Community Bibliography II (1990-1992)), Ankara 1992; *Türkiye-Avrupa Topluluğu Bibliyografyası* (1957-1990) (Turkey-European Community Bibliography (1957-1990)).-Ankara 1990.

EU membership'⁴, implying that membership depended on the philosophy being disregarded in modern Turkey.

Trying to understand and comment on the role of Kemalism, without understanding or taking into consideration the historical context from which it sprang, suggests that at best, the EU policy analysts are poorly qualified for their role and at worst, there is a deliberate EU strategy to undermine Turkey's accession bid. Some commentators have gone beyond this, attempting to analyse EU-Turkey relations within the context of changing aspirations and social forces in Turkey. Some began with the conclusion that; 'Europeans will never admit Turkey', others went on to say 'provided that Turkey meets the Copenhagen Criteria she will be accepted as a full member.'

Other commentators have placed their analysis within the context of European history, pointing to the continuity of the strategies developed and implemented by the major European actors. One has to acknowledge that historical evidence highlights the major European actors' aloofness to Turkey since the mid-eighteenth century. Turkey was kept at arms length in European affairs unless Turkey was required to provide an indispensable service. However, there have been few events in the last 200 years, which on analysis, would suggest that Turkey was not a relevant player in European affairs. The only exception was the process of the creation of the USA, where the Ottoman state played no part.

European history is full of events taking place between Turkey and the European powers. 'Europeanness' was defined in relations with and/or as opposed to Turkey and Russia until the twentieth century. A study of history may show the starting point for a dividing line between Europe and Turkey, and yet at the same time, that study will show that neither Europe, nor Turkey could exclude each other from any international context, given the complexity of the capitalist system. The writers of this paper believe that Europe and Turkey are interconnected by history, economics, politics, culture and geography and the current EU-Turkey relationship is yet another episode in the long history between the two.

Many previous studies and interpretations have made a valuable contribution to the subject in question. Here, we draw attention to a significant point which has until now, been overlooked. In this paper, it is argued that in the present stage of the relationship between Turkey and the EU there are, on the one hand, elements of rapprochement and substantial intermingled relations, and on the other hand a growing tension between the two which has come about as a result of the differing approaches and stances between the EU and Turkey.

⁴ See Draft Report of Arie M. Oostlander , <http://www.oostlander.net/reports.html> on Turkey's Application for membership of the EU, 12 March 2003.

Two Approaches by the Parties Concerned, Culminating in a New Juncture

What are the two widely different approaches and strategies adopted by the parties concerned? The EU's approach towards Turkey has been to view the Turkish application for membership, as a simple foreign policy matter, while Turkey, particularly from the Helsinki Summit (1999) until November 2003, believed that by enhancing her relations with the EU a date would be given for negotiations for full membership to start. A careful examination of the earlier Strategy Papers shows that the EU did not intend to embrace Turkey's integration into the Union, and limited itself with treating Turkey as a matter of foreign policy. The latest Strategy Paper 2003 further reveals that the EU intends to consolidate this approach. This is yet to be properly discussed in Turkey. Here, we will analyse the content of the Strategy Paper of 5 November 2003. For the sake of brevity and clarity, the scope of analysis has been narrowed down to the text and content of the Strategy Paper 2003, at times referring to the Regular Report for larger explanation of the points in question.

First and foremost, in the Strategy Paper, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, the three candidates, are told what they need to do to play the 'only external game in town'. Second, as regards the Cyprus problem, the Commission reveals that in the end of a years-long process Cyprus has now become a problem to be worked out between Turkey and the Union. Following the chronology of the documents, one can clearly recognize the piecemeal changes which ended up with this particular sentence: 'the absence of a settlement could become a serious obstacle to Turkey's EU aspirations.' The question to be asked at this particular juncture should be 'why now?'

At the start of the talks the strategy of the Union was 'settlement first, membership next'. No reference has been given to the letter, dated 10 December 1999, of Lipponen, the Prime Minister of Finland and the Term-President of the Union⁵. In that letter he gave a guarantee to Bülent Ecevit, the then Prime Minister of Turkey that the Cyprus issue would not be linked with Turkey's accession to the EU⁶. Now, the Commission links the two issues,

⁵ Neither the EU web pages, nor Finland's Foreign office or the web page of the Helsinki Summit, shows any document or the letter itself. One cannot refrain from asking whether the letter was removed or not. The moral burden of publishing the original letter is on the shoulders of the then Prime Minister of Finland and the Term-President of EU, Lipponen.

⁶ This particular issue became a hot debate between the Turkish and Greek media: while the Turkish media viewed the letter as binding, since it was signed by the Term-President of the EU, the Greek media, argued that since it was signed in the capacity of the Prime Minister of Finland, the letter was not binding. For this discussion see, 'Lipponen letter to Ecevit not binding for EU', Athens News Agency: Daily News

Bulletin in English, Athens, 17/12/1999. According to Daily Hürriyet, 'The Finnish Prime Minister, Paavo Lipponen, personally cleared up the confusion and declared that he wrote the letter which had caused polemics between Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit and his Greek colleague Kostas Simitis, under his title of the 'Current EU Chairman'. During his speech at the European Parliament, Lipponen said that following the EU's decision over Turkey's membership, they had held meetings with Ankara and, in addition to that, he had sent a letter to Ecevit in his roles as Current EU Chairman. So, with his declaration, Lipponen denied the Greek Prime Minister's assertion that he had sent the letter as the Finnish Prime Minister.' <http://www.turkey.org/news99/e121699.htm>, accessed on 20 November 2003. In the Press Release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, dated 8 November 2000, No: 211, it was reinstated that Turkey viewed the subject in question as within the following framework ' a) The press conference of our Prime Minister on 10 December 1999, b) The letter dated 10 December 1999, being an integral part of the EU acquis and addressed to our Prime Minister by the Prime Minister of Finland Mr. Lipponen, in his capacity as President of the Helsinki European Council Summit. c) The statement made at the European Parliament by Mr. Lipponen on 14 December 1999, again in his capacity as the President of the European Council d) The clarifications made to our Prime Minister by Mr. Solana and Mr. Verheugen on 9 December 1999 in Ankara. Our Prime Minister, in his written reply to Mr. Lipponen and in his press conference of 10 December 1999, had already pointed out that Turkey adheres to the Helsinki conclusions in the light of Mr. Lipponen's letter and statement, as well as the clarifications of Mr. Solana and Mr. Verheugen made in Ankara. Turkey has never accepted any linke between the efforts to find a solution to the Cyprus issue and its candidacy to the EU. The Cyprus issue is a subject between the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus on the island. The observations contained in the Accession Partnership document concerning the Cyprus issue will be taken into account by Turkey to the extent that they are compatible with this basic attitude. Turkey, in this context, will continue to consider itself to be committed only to the Helsinki European Council Conclusions and the relevant correspondence and discussions between Turkey and the EU concerning the acceptance of these Conclusions.' <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/EU/Press211.htm>. A recent commentary shows that the subject in question is to be a hot issue for the present Erdogan government too. It reads that 'A letter which was taken out of the Prime Ministry archives showed those comments that the EU was preparing to stab Turkey in the back were right. The letter dated Dec. 10, 1999, had been signed by the period's EU term president Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen. Former Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit had described the letter, 'a part of the EU law.' An EU mission consisting of EU Council Deputy Chairman responsible for joint foreign and security policies Solana, EU commissioner responsible for enlargement Verheugen, Solana's assistant Nabaro, Finnish Foreign Ministry political director Blumberg and Finnish expert responsible for Europe Hallonen, came to Turkey on the night of December 9, 1999. They held a meeting with Prime Minister Ecevit and leading ministers of the tripartite coalition. Depending on the verbal pledges and Lipponen's official letter, Ecevit had announced that Turkey would start full membership negotiations with the EU at equal conditions

stating that ‘the absence of a settlement could become a serious obstacle to Turkey’s EU aspirations.’ How are we going to read this? Is it a simple denial of what had been promised? Is it cheating? Is it a sign of a shift of policy?

Until the Helsinki Summit, Brussels referred the issue to the United Nations, putting a distance between itself and the Cyprus problem. This was a convenient step in terms of the international presence of the EU as a union of stability. This strategy had a short life until the duration of the 1999 Helsinki Summit. Following the Helsinki Summit, the settlement of the Cyprus problem was deprived of its entirety and transformed into a precondition for membership.

This move by Brussels was an indication of the fact that the EU had lost the previous distance with the Cyprus issue and had already internalised the problem. Taking into account the Helsinki episode together with the Letter of Lipponen, and the following numerous double messages, it is appropriate

with the other candidates. The process that brought EU officials to Turkey at midnight started at the Luxembourg Summit on December 13, 1997. The EU administration had decided to launch accession negotiations with the Greek Cypriot Administration representing the entire island at this summit. Turkey had shown strong reaction to this decision and froze all political relations with the EU. However, the EU administration showed the courage to push Turkey into a corner on the Cyprus issue by benefiting from the Customs Unions agreement that Turkey signed in 1995. As Turkey did not take a backward step regarding its relations with the EU, the latter accepted Turkey as a candidate for membership in the Copenhagen Summit in 1999. However, Turkey came to the point of turning down this full membership invitation as the EU put preconditions such as a solution to the Aegean problem with Greece by 2004 or taking the issue to Court at The Hague in case of a lack of a solution by that date. The EU officials thus sent top EU officials to Turkey with Lipponen’s special letter at midnight in order to recover relations with Turkey. If EU Enlargement Commissioner Gunther Verhaugen is not suffering from ‘Amnesia,’ he should be remembering the night of December 10, 1999. He does not seem old enough to forget that he tried to convince Bulent Ecevit who at the time was the Prime Minister of Turkey that the letter of Lipponen was not an executive one, despite, it was reflecting the official law of the EU and it was binding. His move to declare Turkey as an invader in Cyprus was his ‘welcome’ surprise to Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Erdogan may be viewed as an inexperienced politician and EU countries may view it as an opportunity, but after these statements, Erdogan has to follow the state’s official policy and manner of the Turkish Armed Forces on this issue. The EU, once more, preferred not to promote those who are supporting the idea of boosting democracy in Turkey and helped the emergence of a stronger environment. The EU’s statement is proof that it can neglect the legal rights of Turkey which is one of the guarantor states together with Britain and Greece in case of real political benefits. After such a move, Erdogan can never trust the words of an EU countries leader or U.S. President. He has to ask the written guarantees of every single word, every single pledge’ Kemal Balci, ‘Erdogan to step into a mine-field’, *Turkish Probe* No: 529, 16 March 2003.

to say that the Union pursued a policy of tactical retreat in the Helsinki Summit of 1999 in order to get Turkey back to the negotiating table and ensure that Turkey softened her position on security related issues where Turkey had the prerogative right not to give her consent if she did not wish so. Analysing the content, style and assertiveness of the statements in the present Strategy Paper and the Progress Report, it is possible to argue that the Union decided to accelerate the pressure on Turkey, forcing her to make an actual retreat on the Cyprus question. This is a new phase in the episode of the Cyprus question.

In last year's Strategy Paper under the title 'Conclusions and Recommendations', the Commission stated its hope to see a re-united Cyprus acceding to the European Union on the basis of a comprehensive settlement. The difference now is that the burden of the solution is put solely on the shoulders of the Turkish Republic.

Now we must turn to a specific dynamic which led to this particular situation. Being a member country since 1981, Greece has pursued a strategy of tackling the problems between Greece and Turkey on one by one basis; Europeanizing each issue separately. Being desperate to incorporate the energy corridor leading to Russia and making the most use of the favourable international circumstances not to leave a grey zone between Western Europe and its outer zone, the Union did not hesitate to make a deal with Greece. Internalizing Greece's own dispute with Turkey the EU wanted to make sure that in return Greece would not use her veto power on the issue of the Eastern enlargement. EU hoped that Turkey would be an easy partner to be brought into the line; that she would not resist too much to settle the Cyprus problem in line with the Greek claim and as by product Turkey would in the meanwhile be reshaped as the other candidates.

The question is then if Cyprus is the emphasized issue at this juncture, in the coming time period, will Greece bring another issue to the agenda of the EU? This point is of particular importance since so far, Greece's agenda-shaping role paved the way for internalisation of problems in the context of the Union.

A second set of questions is to be asked at this stage; will the Union continue to let its agenda be shaped by Greece after the ratification of Eastern enlargement? This is yet to be tested. It is likely that Greece will continue to link all the unsettled problems with her neighbours to the EU structures as well as making the most use of her current position as a member in order to capitalize on regional policies of the Union. Here is the question that has to be posed by the members of the EU:

For how long will the other members of the EU live with the Greek burdens and cope with the assertive demands of Greece? No single power of the EU has yet been as free a rider as the Greeks. It is likely that after May 2004, Greece will not have that much room for manoeuvre. However, Greece

will still have the power to make trouble for the Union, not to mention certainly for Turkey and her neighbours, if she wishes to do so.

The main argument of this paper deserves a particular emphasis as the overall stance of Brussels towards Turkey is at the heart of the matter. Since the initiation of Turkey's relationship with the Union, Brussels has continued to view Turkey as a foreign policy question. Turkey, on the other hand, particularly during the Helsinki Summit and its aftermath, has revealed her genuine intention of being incorporated into the Union. This unbalanced and unfair relationship has been going on since then. However, at this juncture, this relationship has to be given a new face. The particular time period we are in necessitates such a change.

We, in no way, intend to imply that the Union has no specific strategy for Turkey. Yet, it is an undeniable fact that Brussels has to date, refrained from revealing it. The Union wants to integrate Turkey, but only after reshaping her as it likes.

The European Union has been unable so far to answer this particular question; does the EU wish to continue considering Turkey as a third party? In the Strategy Paper 2003, the Commission gives place to its Communication on a new framework for relations with the Union's eastern and southern neighbours. The point here is that Turkey's eastern or north-eastern neighbours are not mentioned within these lines. There is no mention of Trans-Caucasia or of Iran and nothing about the Central Asian Republics. This very fact, inevitably leads us to question the stance of the Union and the place of Turkey within this context. As seen in this example too, the Union seems far from internalising Turkey. Of course, one has to acknowledge that it is not fully externalising Turkey either. That is a repetition of keeping Turkey at arms length.

Moreover, it is obvious from the example of Croatia that the Union has no problems with encouraging a country for integration when it so wishes. As clearly seen in the Croatian example, the Commission, by putting emphasis on Croatia's application for membership within the Strategy Paper 2003, reveals its strategy towards this country; that big brothers in the Union wanted to see Croatia among its member states. This type of encouragement however was never realized when addressing Turkey.

Now, there is a question to be asked; how long can this relationship survive as it is? That is to say, if the Union continues to conceive Turkey solely as a question of its foreign policy; if it refrains from making its strategy explicit and does not make any encouraging attempts, unlike the case of Croatia, for how much longer can Turkey strive for membership?

There is still another point to be paid specific attention. It goes without saying that the European countries conceive Cyprus as the Republic of Cyprus. Looking from this perspective, Europe does not consider Cyprus issue as a type of border dispute. This assumption leads to considering Turkey

as an occupying power on the island. Thus, the demands of Turkey do not even deserve to be considered. That is also a clear sign of the denial of the Turkish Cypriots. Furthermore, it was revealed by the Annan Plan that Northern Cyprus would be granted 206 million Euros for two years and the same plan made it clear that Southern Cyprus was in charge of bringing Northern Cyprus' level of development to the average EU level⁷. That said, the EU does not intend to provide any funds for Northern Cyprus as part of the regional policy. The Strategy Paper furthermore makes it clear that there is no fund effectively available until 2007 and after that date, in any case, the regional policy of the EU will radically be revised.

This is a further sign of the fact, that there will be no substantial amount of funds available for the use of the Turkish population of Northern Cyprus. This time treating the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as a foreign policy object; either you accept the terms evolved into the present situation as a result of negotiations undertaken with Greece and then put before you, or you would be given no further chance. There is a saying which goes something like this: 'the worst lie is the lie which is based on half of the truth.' This saying reflects the actual policy of the Union towards the Cyprus issue. The offered sum of 206 million Euro's for two years for Northern Cyprus in the case of the settlement of the problem is an open immoral and cheap political bribery.

What is more is that with this strategy it is certain that if the settlement is reached in accordance with the current Annan Plan, there will be no fund from the EU (except 206 million Euro for two years) and no further grants from Turkey because any attempt by Turkey to provide financial aid will be regarded as a violation of international law and thus the Turkish people of Northern Cyprus will be left at the mercy of the Greeks of Southern Cyprus. That means a clear strangulation of the people of Northern Cyprus. The repeated official advice given to Greeks who have visited Northern Cyprus since 23 April 2003 shows the fact that they were encouraged to do nothing to support the economy in Northern Cyprus. Indeed, they were told 'not to buy much to eat in Northern Cyprus, but take sandwiches with you.'

The current neo-liberal policies implemented in Eastern Europe have made minorities, particularly the Roma community, an underclass, and with this strategy, it is highly likely that the Turkish people of Northern Cyprus will soon be subjected to the same outcome unless a real sea change takes place.

In a similar fashion, the EU extended 12 million Euro's to three of the municipalities in Northern Cyprus, giving a message to the remaining two

⁷ See an economic analysis and indeed a proposal of Vassiliou. George Vassiliou, 'The Economics of the Solution Based on the Annan Plan', September 2003. http://www.edi.org.cy/annan_plan_eng.pdf_

municipalities that either they give in or get nothing. Is the Union not treating Northern Cyprus Turkish people as a matter of foreign policy? Similarly, though with a qualitative difference, Turkey is also treating the people of Northern Cyprus as a matter of foreign policy. At the same time, the EU is arrogantly trying to undermine (if possible to destroy) the political establishment in Northern Cyprus, as well as squeezing the opposition parties to end the TRNC. Turkey has been trying to preserve it, relying on the skilled diplomatic manoeuvring of the President Rauf Denktaş. It is clear that the people of Northern Cyprus are pushed to the corner on the issue of whether to use their present semi-legal and quasi-actual sovereignty rights or to hand them over to the mercy of the Greek Cypriots - whom the Turkish Cypriots have never wholeheartedly trusted. An enduring settlement in Cyprus requires rationality, better calculation and even wisdom, which is lacking in the EU-backed initiatives and the Annan Plan⁸.

What is clear is that the strategy pursued by the Union towards Turkey is different to that of a simple double-standard. The problem arises right from the beginning, that is, the Union and Turkey have different perspectives in considering the Cyprus problem and the things on the ground. To put it another way, the solution to this problem should first of all be sought within the minds of the policy-makers, particularly among the major EU powers.

Another issue in connection with Cyprus is the presence of two British military bases on the island, which are there on the basis of the Guarantee Agreement. Until now, no arguments have been put forward regarding these two bases either in the context of the EU or any other international platform.

Taking this fact as a basis, does this mean that the Union intends to make use of the island as a bargaining chip in its relations with the United States? What will happen to the security of the Eastern Mediterranean? It may be argued that the Union wishes to become involved in the security of the Eastern Mediterranean by dragging itself into the complexity of relations in

⁸ The Annan Plan has three parts: in the first part it recognizes some significant demands of the Turkish Cypriots; however, it is the fact that all those mentioned rights are nullified in the second part, the constitution. Evidently, the constitution is designed for the Turkish Cypriots not to exercise the mentioned rights in the first part. The third part is the maps. Here again, this time the whole idea is based on the obsessive Anglo-Saxon belief that private property is the essence of the life. Here again, this time, it is designed not to settle the problem, but to lead to a deadlock. It may be argued that the constitution might have been written by a British official, the maps, worked out by de Soto and the first part might have been worked out with a deal between Annan, Secretary General of the UN, and Simitis, Prime Minister of Greece. Does this style of diplomacy lead to an enduring settlement in Cyprus? Neither the Greek, nor the Turkish Cypriots accepted the plan.

that region between the US and Britain on the one hand and Greece and the EU on the other. What is more is that Turkey is expected to leave the complex web of security considerations. The Union may well ask its own member, Britain, to give up her bases in Cyprus before raising any question about the Turkish presence in Northern Cyprus. The best solution would be the demilitarisation of the whole of Cyprus and the Aegean islands once and for all. Does the EU have the courage to initiate such a civic and humanitarian approach?

Inner Contradictions - Refuting Its Own Arguments

In the preface to the Strategy Paper 2003, the Commission asserts that Turkey's progress will be judged according to the same accession criteria as the other countries. However, in the following pages, the Commission refutes its own argument in certain cases.

The first issue to be considered as an example of this, is the Cyprus issue. While Turkey is given an obligation to solve the Cyprus problem, Southern Cyprus was assured that the very same dispute would not form an obstacle on its way to the Union. This simple differentiation makes clear the above-mentioned argument that the EU does not consider Cyprus as a border dispute. If so, why was Southern Cyprus not asked to carry out a referendum on the membership issue? Will it not be the case that following May 2004 the EU may fall into the trap of being an occupant? What will this growing tension evolve into? It remains to be seen.

Secondly, in the third page of the Strategy Paper, the Commission notes about the Croatian application: 'The Western Balkan countries have been given a European perspective. Among them, Croatia has recently submitted an application for membership.' In the seventh page, it reads: 'On 20 February 2003, Croatia presented its application for accession to the European Union. At its meeting on 14 April 2003, the Council decided to implement the procedure foreseen under Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union, and requested the Commission to submit to the Council its opinion on this application. A series of questions was transmitted to the Croatian authorities in July, aimed at obtaining an accurate picture of the situation, to which the Croatian authorities replied in October. The opinion of the Commission is under preparation and is expected to be delivered in spring 2004.'

The placing of such a statement within the Paper is a significant encouragement for Croatia. However, there is a point that the Commission has missed: while Turkey's accession to the Union is linked with the settlement of the Cyprus problem, Croatia which also has unresolved border disputes with

Slovenia⁹, the returnee problems with the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro¹⁰ and longstanding interference by the Croatian political figures in the domestic affairs of Bosnia-Herzegovina, is given an explicit 'roadmap' and the Commission explicitly reveals its positive stance towards Croatia. Is this not a contradiction? It is a clear contradiction with what is assumed as its own merits principle, but fits into the context of foreign policy treatment. Above all, it shows that the Union is overburdened with the political leadership and hegemony of certain actors within the Union.

This will constitute one of the near-future disputes in the Union: the major powers are unwilling to share the political leadership within the Union. Similarly, the major powers are not willing to incorporate medium and small sized powers into the defence structure: it was recently clarified by the term 'Structured Cooperation', meaning that 'the EU's more militarily advanced countries can choose to push ahead with defence co-operation without the others'¹¹.

We now turn to the case of Romania. In the mid-1990s, Romania signed certain basic treaties on good neighbourly relations. The net beneficiary of these agreements was Hungary. Thus, Romania was not included in the first wave of enlargement, but nevertheless, was given a date for negotiations to start, despite unresolved problems with her eastern neighbours¹². Once again, it is a clear example of inner-contradiction with the assumed principle.

⁹ It is interesting to note that Slovenia recently appealed to the EU to be a mediator over the border dispute between Croatia and Slovenia. See the news, 'Slovenia is facing the most difficult situation to date in its relations with Croatia, the head of the parliamentary European affairs commission Alojz Peterle said Thursday [20 November 2003]. He warned of another 'fiasco' such as the failed agreement between the prime ministers of the two countries on the border' BBC Monitoring / STA News Agency, Ljubljana 21 November 2003.

¹⁰ A report indicates that 'since the Operation Storm victory over rebel Serbs in the hilly Krajina region, UNHCR says only 100,000 of the 280,000 Serbs who left Croatia have returned. A recent Human Rights Watch report said there had been progress but that obstacles remained. The spokesperson for the OSCE mission in Croatia, Alessandro Fracassetti, said, 'Unless the atmosphere improves, the choices refugees have to make will continue to be affected.' Iwpr's Balkan Crisis Report, No. 469, November 20, 2003.

¹¹ See 'A Lull between the Storms', Economist, 25 September 2003.

¹² The 2003 Regular Report for Romania states that 'In June 2003, Romania and Ukraine signed the Treaty on the State Border Regime and agreed to continue negotiations in order to find a mutually acceptable solution for the delimitation of the continental shelf. Romania has also improved its relations with the Russian Federation and a Romanian-Russian Treaty on Friendly Relations and Cooperation was signed in July 2003. Romania continued efforts to improve relations with the Republic of Moldova...'

In the light of these examples, it can be concluded that the claim of the Union to take an equal stance towards all the candidate countries does not reflect the bare facts. This very situation also gives rise to the problem of credibility and falsifies specifically all the assertions that ‘Turkey is judged according to the same accession criteria as the other countries.’ Equally significant is the fact that the above-noted examples refute any argument that the beginning of negotiations with the EU is subjected to solving the external problems of a country.

Registering the Useful Items: The Best of Opportunism

Within the Strategy Paper 2003 and the regular Report on Turkey, an apparent intention of the Union reveals itself on several occasions. The Commission, by capitalising on any possible chance, pursues a strategy of registering each and every statement made by Turkish officials. The statements expressed as a symbol of good intentions have been repeatedly registered by the Union within the Strategy Paper and the regular Report. The mentioned paragraphs are those concerning the Aegean disputes (with special emphasis on the continental shelf), and the Cyprus issue.

The expression ‘explanatory contacts on Aegean between the two foreign ministries continued’ within the Strategy Paper was widened in scope in the Regular Report also to include the specific emphasis on the continental shelf: ‘there have been several meetings at the level of high officials between the Foreign Ministries of both countries in the framework of the exploratory talks on the Aegean, in particular on the delimitation of the continental shelf.’

This very sentence gives rise to suspicions about the possibility of the continental shelf issue becoming the next Cyprus case. To put it another way, will the Union, as in the Cyprus case, internalise the continental shelf problem and link Turkey’s membership with this particular dispute? Thus, another question can be raised: What is the long-term objective of the Union?

Moreover, the Union intends to register these speeches of good intention, especially as regards the bilateral negotiations between Turkey and Greece, as proof of concessions on the Turkish side and as justified rights of the Union. However, this strategy can only be a minor one when compared to the major strategy that surrounds it. The EU, by registering these statements on an incremental basis, may have an implicit intention to reach an objective of placing these statements in the prospective treaty to be signed between 2004 and 2007. As a result of this, Turkey will be squeezed by the so-called concessions it gave that will take place within the treaty putting forward new preconditions for Turkey.

Another significant point can be made about the Cyprus issue. In the Regular Report, the Commission continued its intention to register Turkey’s attempts of good-intention, this time as regards Cyprus. Various examples of

this can be provided: ‘... the Turkish government expressed the hope to see a settlement before May 2004.’; ‘Turkey has indicated that an agreement aiming to establish a customs union with the northern part of Cyprus will not come into effect.’

Apart from the above noted intentions of the EU in registering these expressions, in the Cyprus case, there is another objective; to set the government against the proponents of a customs union with Northern Cyprus; therefore rendering the government much more dependent on the EU.

By the same token, the Union reflected its overall strategy in the case of Turkey-NATO-EU relations. Through a randomly placed paragraph in the Strategy Paper and a more detailed explanation in the Regular Report, the Union registers what it wishes to. It says that ‘Turkey decided to give its agreement as a NATO member to the modalities of participation of non-EU European allies in EU-led operations using NATO assets. This has solved a problem which had hitherto hindered the effective launch of the European Security and Defence Policy

This very expression has the intention of abrogating Turkey’s prerogative in the context of NATO and of putting political pressure on Turkey to make the approved case as valid for all and for good. The fact is that the NAC of NATO¹³ decided on 13 December 2002 to give its consent to

¹³ See the EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP, Press Release (2002) 142 , 16 December 2002. <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-142e.htm> It reiterates the Washington Summit decisions and then declares that ‘the relationship between the European Union and NATO will be founded on the following principles: Equality and due regard for the decision-making autonomy and interests of the European Union and NATO; Respect for the interests of the Member States of the European Union and NATO; To this end: The European Union is ensuring the fullest possible involvement of non-EU European members of NATO within ESDP, implementing the relevant Nice arrangements, as set out in the letter from the EU High Representative on 13 December 2002; NATO is supporting ESDP in accordance with the relevant Washington Summit decisions, and is giving the European Union, inter alia and in particular, assured access to NATO’s planning capabilities, as set out in the NAC decisions on 13 December 2002; Both organisations have recognised the need for arrangements to ensure the coherent, transparent and mutually reinforcing development of the capability requirements common to the two organisations, with a spirit of openness.’

Solana, the EU High Representative for CFSP went beyond what was stated in the EU-NATO declaration. He remarked on 16 December 2002 that ‘I am very pleased that we have agreed the EU-NATO framework for permanent relations.’ <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom>, accessed on 20 November 2003. Here, the text of declaration does not specify a clear sign of Turkey giving her consent for all and for good. Unless there is an unpublished and unpublicized deal between the two, it appears that the Commission is trying to transform what Turkey agreed to participate in the two cases (BiH and Macedonia) as valid for all. There is also an ongoing

this particular modality in two cases, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia. Turkey, thus, agreed to take part within this particular modality¹⁴. This cannot be viewed as Turkey giving her consent for all cases and for good. There are two agreements signed between Turkey and the EU on these two particular cases. Legally, these two specific agreements do not abrogate Turkey's prerogative right to consider each future case separately.

The NATO Washington Summit 1999 decision is still valid because the decision making process is in the hands of the NAC of NATO. However, the statement of the Commission shows the best of its opportunism to view Turkey's consent on this modality as valid for all cases. Moreover, this again shows that Turkey is seen as an object of foreign policy by the Union and a further sign not to embrace Turkey.

A Comparative Analysis

The Strategy Paper commences by glorifying the hard work, which the European Union has undertaken to successfully conclude its enlargement with the inclusion of the ten new members. The so-called European identity will be consolidated by May 2004. The Strategy Paper gives the impression that the reunification of Continental Europe is almost complete. This raises a question, on the time frame for the next round of enlargement and even leads to a suspicion that the Union may be willing to postpone the next round of enlargement, and perhaps an additional criterion of referenda in each and every members.

Next heading is 'Bringing Bulgaria and Romania into the Union'. Warm and encouraging though it may seem, what follows does not mark a great progress in terms of the performance of these countries and a difference with last year's Strategy Report.

It goes without saying, that Bulgaria and Romania are anxious to receive positive news that they are on course to complete their entry negotiations next year (2004) and join the European Union in 2007. Looking from this perspective, one can say that the Strategy Paper does not fully meet the expectations of the two laggards.

dispute between the EU and the US on the issue of strategic partnership between the EU and the USA. For this see; Rob de Wijk, 'European Military Reform for Global Partnership', *The Washington Quarterly*, 27/1, Winter 2003-04, pp.(197-210).

¹⁴ An agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Turkey on the participation of the Republic of Turkey in the European Union Police Mission (EUPM) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) was signed on 20 December 2002, and a second agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Turkey on the participation of the Republic of Turkey in the European Union-led Forces (EUF) in the Republic of Macedonia was signed on 4 September 2003. See, <http://ue.eu.int/accords/default.asp?lang=en>, accessed on 22 November 2003.

Like last year's Report, Bulgaria is criticised for corruption and the failure to implement administrative reforms. Treatment of the Roma minority and living conditions of children and mentally disabled people are some of the other issues where Bulgaria received criticisms.

As regards the economic criteria, the status of Bulgaria being a 'functioning market economy' was reiterated and a slight but significant amendment in terms of the timeframe was added. In the Strategy Paper of 2002, Bulgaria was told that she would be ready to cope with the competitive pressures and market forces within the Union in the *medium* term; medium now being replaced by the phrase *in the near term*. However, she was reminded that the flexibility of product and labour markets should be further enhanced. A reference was also made to the necessary completion of the privatisation programme.

In terms of the adoption of the *acquis*, Bulgaria was reminded of the need to make sustained efforts to develop sufficient administrative and judicial capacity to implement and enforce the *acquis* and to apply the *acquis* in areas such as agriculture, environment and regional policy. A special reference, hinting a condition, is made for the Kozloduy power plant: 'Bulgaria must continue to respect its commitments on nuclear safety, notably as regards closure commitments for Kozloduy nuclear power plant and to ensure a high level of nuclear safety in its installations.'

Although Bulgaria has been dragging its feet over some reforms, the Commission seems to reserve its more serious criticisms for Romania. Romania was severely criticised for a continuing gap between progress in legal transposition and the limited overall capacity of the public administration to implement and enforce the newly adopted legislation. This was presented as 'a major constraint on Romania's accession preparations.' As mentioned above, Bulgaria was declared for the first time to be a functioning market economy; a status which is still not extended to Romania in the Strategy Paper of 2003.

Romania was again criticised for corruption and was reminded of the need to implement the initiatives launched to reform public administration and the judiciary.

Although the European Union refrains from labelling Romania as a functioning market economy, it still granted the same time frame to her. The phrase 'near term' was also used for Romania. This calls into question the real meaning of the 'near term'. How near is it, if a country with a functioning market economy and another yet to be given the same status are placed under the same classification? Frequently repeating its 'own merits principle', the European Union falls into the trap of the very terms it utilises. If the own merits principle really applied to all the candidate countries, it would not be fair to grant the same status and time framework for these two countries. This approach of the European Union raises suspicions about its sincerity in the

own merits approach and paves the way for searching for some hidden motives in the minds of European Union policy makers.

Again with reference to the Strategy Paper, the line dividing Bulgaria and Romania is not only drawn in the sphere of economics; there are differences between these two neighbours in terms of the progress they have made in the sphere of alignment with the *acquis*. So far Bulgaria has closed 26 chapters, Romania has closed 20. Romania is still negotiating on a further 11 chapters, whilst Bulgaria has only 5 chapters still under negotiation.

To sum up, although there are visible differences between Bulgaria and Romania, it seems that the roadmap drawn by the European Union will keep these two neighbours together and will not differentiate their road to the Union, though in contradiction with its own merits principle. Thus any pleasure Bulgaria takes in doing better than Romania will be offset by worry that slower progress in Romania could hold both countries back. Although the European Union repeats its efforts to avoid dividing Europe, this strategy can only pave the way for Bulgaria's disillusionment with the process, raise problems between the two countries and more importantly may thwart Bulgaria's eagerness to comply with the conditions for membership.

Another point of concern for these two candidate countries is the application of Croatia for membership. The Commission, by repeatedly referring to this application within the Strategy Paper, revealed its positive attitude towards membership for Croatia. This assertive intrusion of Croatia in the queue may well result in a delay in Bulgaria's and Romania's dreams of accession in 2007.

We would now like to turn to the above-mentioned possibility of an implicit plan of European policy makers. For many observers, EU governments, struggling to accommodate 10 new countries, may grasp at any reason to postpone the next round of enlargement, perhaps until 2010. This scenario seems to be a likely one in terms of explaining the Union's insistence to treat these two countries on an equal basis.

Turning to the third candidate country, Turkey, things begin to get even more complicated. However, by considering the overall stance of the EU towards Turkey, the Strategy Paper 2003 and the regular Report, it can be concluded that the date for starting the negotiations talk will not be determined very soon. Thus, Turkey will be spending more time in the waiting room.

The European Council in Copenhagen in December 2002 concluded that 'if the European Council in December 2004, on the basis of a report and recommendation from the Commission, decides that Turkey fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria, the EU will open negotiations with Turkey without delay.' According to the Strategy Paper 2003, Turkey does not fully meet the Copenhagen criteria. Moreover, according to the Paper, a clear framework for guaranteeing political, civil, economic, social and cultural

rights is not fully established and more efforts are needed to enhance the coherence of legal provisions and practice. Turkey was also told to strengthen the implementation of the reforms. Moreover, the Commission stated that it would take ‘time’ before the spirit of the reforms is fully reflected in the attitudes of executive and judicial bodies.

As regards the economic criteria, Turkey was ‘encouraged’ by stating that decisive steps toward macro-economic stability and structural reforms will enhance the Turkish capability to cope with the competitive pressures and market forces within the Union. The ‘near term’ phrase, as it seems, disappeared leaving nothing behind to substitute it.

The Strategy Paper also emphasized that the alignment with the *acquis* has progressed especially in areas where other international obligations exist which are similar to the *acquis* and in chapters related to the EC-Turkey Customs Union, but remains at an early stage for many chapters.

Turkey was dismayed that the Commission linked its membership to a settlement of the Cyprus dispute. This came as a surprise to many in Turkey, but this reaction also surprised many observers, since this statement did not come out of the blue. In the Strategy Paper of 2002, the Commission had expressed its sensitivity on the Cyprus issue. In last year’s Strategy Paper under the title Conclusions and Recommendations, the Commission stated its hope to see a re-united Cyprus acceding to the European Union on the basis of a comprehensive settlement. More importantly, the Commission indicates that it urges all parties concerned and, in particular Turkey, to lend full support to efforts to reach a comprehensive settlement. The only difference is that now all these statements have been combined and transformed into one irritating but expected sentence: ‘the absence of a settlement could become a serious obstacle to Turkey’s EU aspirations.’

Last but not least, on the seventh page of the Strategy Paper, concerning the EU’s relations with eastern and southern neighbours¹⁵, the Commission put forward that ‘it proposed to take an ambitious new vision: the creation of an enlarged area of peace, stability and prosperity encompassing the neighbours to the east and to the south that currently do not have a perspective of EU membership. The Commission proposed to take a differentiated, progressive, and benchmarked approach in implementing the initiative, and to develop country-specific action plans.’ One can read this statement indicating an ad-hoc strategy towards the countries as well as towards the regions, outer-zones of the EU. Yet, there is no mention of the EU

¹⁵ ‘Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament – Wider Europe Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours, 11 March 2003 (COM (2003) 104 final). This framework applies to the following countries: Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia.’

vision for Turkey's eastern and north-eastern neighbours. This poses a question mark whether the Union has any vision for internalising Turkey within the EU, and considering the creation of an area of peace and stability to the eastern and north-eastern neighbours of Turkey. Perhaps the Union has not yet digested Turkey's candidanship as eventually leading to full membership and thus still views Turkey as a third party. Even worse, one may suspect that the Union is yet to work out new conditions for Turkey that fit into the framework for relations formulated as 'country-specific', indeed an ad-hoc, strategy.

Overall, on 5 November 2003, the Commission issued a sharp reminder to the three candidate countries that their job is in no way easy and more importantly does not depend solely on their efforts and willingness, but there are other considerations within the Union itself. This shows the fact that the EU membership is a matter of political decision, rather than simply a matter of meeting even the 'moving conditions'.

Conclusion

The overall argument of this paper is that the Strategy Paper and the Regular Report on Turkey will play an enormously significant role in future EU-Turkey relations. These very documents can be evaluated as forming a milestone in this particular relationship. Certain statements taking place within these papers will pave the way for a change in the nature of Turkey's connection with the European Union, a connection which stretches back over forty years.

The growing divergence of the objectives, (revealed clearly in the Strategy Paper and the Report), of the two parties concerned is likely to pave the way for disenchantment, repercussions and even a rapid watershed. It is, in turn, a new vicious circle for relations between the EU and Turkey, undermining the potentiality of the EU to appear as a reliable, consistent, promising and inclusive international actor, and on the part of Turkey, leading to a reproduction and renewed implementation of a defensive strategy of a medium size power.

The end of the year 2004 may lead to a new bifurcation. Unless the EU re-examines its whole strategy, it seems likely that the EU-Turkey relationship will accelerate towards a turning point. Examination only of this point, compared with the Croatian case, will reveal the fact that the last 40 years of relations between Turkey and the Union has not led to a mutual trust between the parties.

Hypothetically speaking, what will happen if Croatia, which has not solved her border disputes, as well as other problems, is given a negotiating date and Turkey is still kept at arms length? How would it be possible, in such

circumstances, for any politician in Turkey to believe or EU actors to state that the same criteria are applied to all?

Because the EU does not pursue a clearly-defined strategy to integrate Turkey, Turkey cannot demonstrate the contributions she can make on the way of the Union to be a global foreign policy actor. If Turkey is not integrated within the EU, the EU's presence as an international actor will remain limited and troublesome. That the EU has shown a great interest in internalising Greece's disputes with Turkey, moving them to its own agenda and thus has become a hostage of Greece is an indicator of the weak capability of the EU in playing a role as a global actor.

Both the Union and Turkey seem to have exhausted their efforts. Both are so disappointed with half-success in their approaches; Turkey received a candidanship without even a date for negotiation and the Union persuaded Greece not to veto the embracing of East-Central European countries to the EU. Greeks were the best traders of the Ottoman Empire and currently performed well to link two irrelevant issues for their own negotiations and the burden has been shouldered by the 15-1 and Turkey.

If we turn to the Turkish side, we can see a two-dimensional situation. First of all, it goes without saying that the linkage made between Turkey's membership of the EU and the Cyprus issue is a significant impasse in Turkey's desire to be a member of the Union. However, there is an implicit opportunity to which this particular situation has given rise. Since Turkey was told in the Strategy Paper to work out the Cyprus problem by May 2004, Turkey has a chance to channel the situation for her good as well as for the good of the Union; the Turkish officials can propose the Union to solve *all* the standing problems between Greece and Turkey until that specific date. To put it another way, Turkey may well propose to deal with all the problems in a package deal style, including the Aegean disputes, demilitarisation of the Dodecanese Islands, etc.

However, one point remains as a question mark; who will be the other corresponding party in the course of the negotiations; Greece or the EU? Finding an avenue to get out of such a tension building process and transforming it to a constructive and productive settlement requires rationality, better calculations and even wisdom. Here, in this particular juncture the ball is in the hands of both the EU and Turkey.

Overall, certain questions remain to be asked: are we approaching the end of a dream for Turkey? Would it be possible for any government to base its strategy on a vague EU promise of membership? More importantly, is it possible for any government to target a moving objective with the moving conditions?

The year 2004 may bring enormous opportunities for both parties that cannot and should not be postponed or missed. It is an undeniable fact that

both the EU and Turkey will have to redefine and refine their priorities from 2005 onwards.

Last but not least, the last election results in Turkey showed that the political parties which committed their election campaigns to membership of the EU failed even to pass the threshold. This situation carries the risk of turning into a vicious circle. While the Union puts forward all the above-noted moving conditions as a precondition for Turkey's membership, the very strategy pursued by the EU may lead Turkey to a process of increasing political authoritarianism. This risk may not be considered as vital for the EU policy-makers, but it is enormously important for the citizens of Turkey.

