Quantrade Journal of Complex Systems in Social Sciences e-ISSN: 2687-5098 Vol 4 (Issue 2) Fall 2022
https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/quantrade

An Evaluation of the Impact of the Cyprus Issue on Turkey-EU Relations

Yunus Emre Karaca 0000-0003-3148-3669
PhD., Bingöl University, Political Science and Public Administration, yekaraca@bingol.edu.tr, Turkey

Osman Karacan[1] 0000-0001-8250-1981
PhD., Kastamonu University, Political Science and Public Administration, osmankaracan@kastamonu.edu.tr, Turkey

Fatih Yaşar 0000-0003-3885-6560
PhD Candidate, Dokuz Eylül University, International Relations, ffatihyasarr@gmail.com, Turkey

Article Type: Research Article
Vol 4 (Issue 2) 2022:51-61
10.5281/zenodo.7429388

Received: 25.11..2022
Revised: 09.12.2022
Accepted: 11.12.2022

Cite as: Karaca, Y. E. , Karacan, O., Yaşar, F. (2022). An Evaluation of the Impact of the Cyprus Issue on Turkey-EU Relations. Quantrade Journal of Complex Systems in Social Sciences, 4 (2) , 51-61. Doi:10.5281/zenodo.7429388

Abstract

Turkey has shown great interest in the EU since its creation. However, Turkey's EU accession has become a long and challenging journey. In this journey, various problems and crises have tested the Turkey-EU relationship. The Cyprus Issue is one of them. This study focuses on the impact of the Cyprus Issue on Turkey's EU accession. The study seeks to answer the research question by using primary and secondary sources, including articles, reports, and written and oral statements of government officials. This study pursues an answer to a question: to what extent is the Cyprus issue significant to Turkey's accession negotiations with the EU? The study's main conclusion is that the Cyprus Issue is a significant obstacle to Turkey's EU accession. There are three main supporting reasons for this conclusion. Firstly, the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus (GCASC) (the Republic of Cyprus) and Greece have used the Cyprus Issue as leverage, especially after the EU membership of GCASC in 2004, in the EU accession process of Turkey. Secondly, the EU has not adopted an objective position, although the EU has sometimes tried to find a balance position regarding the desires and demands of Turkey and GCASC-Greece. Finally, in addition to the existing problems in the Cyprus Issue, recent developments like the Eastern Mediterranean Crisis have made the Cyprus Issue a significant factor in the EU accession journey of Turkey.

Keywords: Turkey, European Union, Cyprus Issue

1. Introduction

Turkey has shown great interest in the EU since its creation. Turkey applied for associate membership in the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957. After six years, the Association Agreement was signed between Turkey and the EEC in 1963, which paved the way for full membership. These relations between the two actors, which were started by the Association Agreement, have proceeded with the customs union (1995), candidacy (1999), and eventually through its accession negotiations (2005), which began a new phase in Turkey's relations with the EU (Muftuler-Bac, 2008: 115). However, as Paul (2015) states, it raises the question of whether they will stay engaged forever and never marry. Indeed, although Turkey and the EU's relations have continued slowly, nobody can estimate whether Turkey will be successful in the end, despite the fact that no country to start the accession process has ever failed to become a member.

According to Bogdani (2011), accession negotiations have been affected negatively due to several domestic and external problems. Bogdani (2011: 26–47) analyses these factors influencing Turkey's accession process by dividing them into

[1] *Corresponding Author osmankaracan@kastamonu.edu.tr*

Quantrade Journal of Complex Systems in Social Sciences e-ISSN: 2687-5098 Vol 4 (Issue 2) Fall 2022
https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/quantrade

three groups: 'formal obstacles' including domestic, political and economic factors and the Cyprus, Armenian and Kurdish issues; 'semi-obstacles' including geo-institutional and security factors; and 'informal obstacles' including religious and cultural factors.

However, one of the significant obstacles to Turkey's EU membership has become the Cyprus problem. Although in the twin referendums on 24 April 2004, there was an attempt at a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem by means of the UN reunification plan, which is known as the Annan Plan, it failed when the overwhelming majority of Greek Cypriots voted 'no' despite the fact that the majority of Turkish Cypriots voted 'yes' (Kinacioglu and Oktay, 2006: 269). Furthermore, six days after the twin referendums, the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus (GCASC) (the Republic of Cyprus) joined the EU as a divided country. The Cyprus problem, therefore, was imported into the heart of Europe. As a result, since Turkey does not recognise Cyprus officially, the Cyprus problem has a negative effect on accession negotiations between Turkey and the EU. Because of the Turkish rejection of opening its Port Cyprus, the Council of Ministers decided to freeze eight of the 35 chapters of membership negotiations as a punishment in December 2006 (Bogdani, 2011: 24).

This study aims to evaluate to what extent the Cyprus issue is significant to the process of Turkey's accession negotiations with the EU. Firstly, we will clarify the emergence of the unresolved Cyprus question. Then, we will examine the effects of Greece and GCASC's accession to the EU on Turkey-EU relations by analysing the three periods, the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. In addition, we will deal with the Europeanisation of the Cyprus issue, with Greece and GCASC's accession to the EU. Finally, we will discuss the recent developments regarding the Cyprus problem.

2. Brief Historical Background of Cyprus and Emergence of Unresolved Question

Cyprus is politically and strategically located between the Middle East and Europe. For centuries, its geographical position has attracted the dominant powers' attention, such as the Ottoman Empire (1571–1878) and Britain (1878–1960), and provided an ideal base for the dominant powers in the region. Furthermore, since 1955, the island has led to competition between two NATO powers; Greece and Turkey, which have close cultural relations with the island (Souter, 1984: 657).

Between the years 1571 and 1878, the island came under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Since 1571, the island's population has consisted of two national communities. While the Greek Cypriots are in the majority, the Turk Cypriots are in the minority. In 1878, the ailing Ottoman Empire temporarily permitted Britain to take over Cyprus. When World War II broke out in 1914, Britain proclaimed its annexation of Cyprus. With the Treaty of Lausanne on 24 July 1923, Turkey and Greece officially recognised that Cyprus belonged to Britain (Gürel, 1993: 175).

However, Britain came across two challenges during the second half of the 1950s. While Greek Cypriots aspired to achieve 'enosis' - union with Greece, Turkish Cypriots campaigned for partition. In addition, EOKA (the National Organisation for Cypriot Fighters) waged an armed struggle for enosis against British rule (Souter, 1984: 660). The outbreak of violence in Cyprus brought about Britain's initiation of the Tripartite Conference in 1955, which constituted Britain, Turkey and Greece. As a result, Cyprus became an independent Republic in 1960 with the help of the London-Zurich accords signed by Britain, Greece and Turkey (Gürel, 1993: 176). These accords depended on bi-communal independence and political equality and administrative partnership of the two communities. Three treaties were signed; "the Treaty of Establishment which established a quasi-federal Republic of Cyprus, the Treaty of Guarantee which made Turkey, Britain and Greece the guarantors of the Republic and the Constitution, and the Treaty of Alliance which provided for stationing of troops by Greece and Turkey." (Muftuler-Bac, 1999: 561).

Gürel (1993) claims that the compromise was insufficient to establish a permanent solution. Developments after 1960 proved his argument. The Greek Cypriots argued that the 1960 constitution provided the Turkish community 'a privileged position' in the affairs of Government far exceeding their proportional strength in the Cypriot society. So, Makarios, the Greek Cypriot President of the Republic, submitted the Guarantor powers' thirteen amendments to the Cypriot Constitution. However, this proposal was rejected by Turkey. This is because, it aimed at removing the balance of power

Quantrade Journal of Complex Systems in Social Sciences e-ISSN: 2687-5098 Vol 4 (Issue 2) Fall 2022
https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/quantrade

between the two communities by favouring Greek Cypriots. Consequently, armed violence and civil disorder broke out in December 1963 (Bahcheli, 2000: 205).

In 1974, the tension on the island culminated when Nikos Sampson made a military coup against the regime of Makarios, which was engineered by the Greek military junta in Athens (Nugent, 2000: 135). In the aftermath of the military coup, the Greek junta regime announced the island's annexation to Greece (Muftuler-Bac, 1999: 562). According to Gürel (1993), Turkey considered this military coup a violation of the London-Zurich accords. From Gürel's perspective (1993), to protect the Turkish minority, in 1974, Turkey intervened militarily on the island by depending on these international treaties as a guarantor power.

However, Suvarierol (2003) claims that the island's strategic value is the underlying reason for the Turkish intervention in 1974. In terms of Suvarierol (2003), the island is only 40 nautical miles away from Turkey. The Karpaz peninsula's extension allows Cyprus to threaten Turkey's naval manoeuvrability by blocking the exit from the gulf of Iskenderun. The island is regarded as a 'stationary aircraft carrier', enabling Turkey to control the region. Moreover, the loss of Cyprus to Turkey's historical enemy, Greece, threatens Turkish interests. In other words, if Greece took over Cyprus, the Anatolian coasts would be surrounded by Greek islands. Consequently, these considerations led to this intervention rather than the humanistic pretext of protecting the Turkish minority (Suvarierol, 2003: 56–57). Bülent Ecevit's perspective on the Cyprus issue, who became Vice Prime Minister in 1998, strengthens this argument. "Cyprus is of indispensable strategic interest to Turkey and Ankara would not withdraw its troops from the island even if there were not a single Turkish Cypriot living on it." (Brey, 1999: 111).

After the Turkish military intervention of 1974, Turkey took control of 37 percent of the island. This intervention led to the end of the military regime in Cyprus. In addition, because of this failure, the junta in Greece was ousted (Muftuler-Bac, 1999: 562). In November 1983, the Turkish Cypriots declared the independence of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) (Papanicolaou, 2005: 154). Consequently, Cyprus was divided into two parts: Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot (Bogdani, 2011: 32).

These Turkish actions got many adverse reactions in the international area. Firstly, in 1974, the Security Council condemned the Turkish intervention in Cyprus (Papanicolaou, 2005: 154). Secondly, in May 1983, the United Nations General Assembly, with its resolution 37/253 (16 May 1983), used the term 'occupation' for the first time. Finally, the European Political Cooperation (EPC) expressed its disapproval of these developments. For instance, in 1983, the EPC expressed deep concerns for the declaration of independence of the TRNC and called on all interested parties not to recognise it (Ugur, 1999: 179). In addition, the declaration of the Turkish Cypriot was condemned by the European Parliament (EP). The EP also called upon Turkey to collaborate with the UN for a lasting solution in Cyprus (Arikan, 2003: 157). Thus, while the government of the GCASC is recognised internationally as the sovereign power of the whole of Cyprus, except Turkey, the TRNC is recognised by only Turkey (Yakinthou, 2009: 308).

Furthermore, Greece's membership to the EEC in 1981 and the membership of GCASC in the EU in 2004, respectively, have drawn the EU into the Cyprus conflict. Their memberships have allowed them to gain a better position regarding the Cyprus issue vis-à-vis Turkey (Grigoriadis, 2008: 153–156). So, the conflict and deadlock in Cyprus have gradually harmed relations between the EU and Turkey.

3. The EU Accession of Greece and GCASC and Impacts on Turkey-EU Relations

The origin of relations between Greece and the EEC coincided with the origin of relations between Turkey and the EEC. Greece and Turkey applied for associate membership to the EC in 1959, within a month. In addition, Greece and Turkey signed Association Agreements with the EC in 1962 and 1963, respectively, with a few months' difference (Grigoriadis, 2008: 152). Eralp (1993: 25) argued that their applications coincided with the same date because of "Turkey's concern not to be outflanked by Greece on Western-dominated international platforms." Arikan (2003) shared the same opinion as Eralp. According to Arikan (2003: 147), "the timing of the Turkish application for associate membership can be viewed in the context of Turkey's traditional concerns about Greek diplomacy, in that it feared that Greece would use its association with the EU to its disadvantage."

Quantrade Journal of Complex Systems in Social Sciences e-ISSN: 2687-5098 Vol 4 (Issue 2) Fall 2022
https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/quantrade

However, the parallel paths of Greece and Turkey towards the EEC diverged because of Greece's transition to democracy and the military coup in Turkey in 1980 (Grigoriadis, 2008: 152). For Greece, the Turkish intervention helped to display the bankruptcy of the military regime in Greece. Thus, the democratisation process accelerated in Greece. Eventually, Greece became a member of the EC in 1981. For Turkey, in contrast, the EC-Turkey relations did not advance due to the coup of 1980 (Bogdani, 2011: 26)

Greece's membership of the EEC in 1981 added a new dimension and led to an obstacle to improving EU-Turkey relations. Greece wanted to use Turkey's accession process to the European Union in line with its national interests (Grigoriadis, 2008: 152-153; Arikan, 2003: 148). For instance, The Greek Ambassador to the EU supported this by announcing that "Greece expected that the EC would favour Greece in the event of Greek-Turkish conflict." (Arikan, 2003: 152). At The Hague Summit in 1986, when the EU put the issue of normalisation of EU-Turkey relations on the agenda, Greece opposed the efforts of the normalisation of EU-Turkey relations by urging that Turkey must withdraw its troops from Cyprus and show goodwill to the solution of the disputes (Arikan, 2003: 158). Thus, Greece played a crucial role in blocking Turkey's bid for EU membership during the 1980s and 1990s (Koliopoulos, 2008: 101).

It is argued that the EU's decision-making mechanism concerning external relations enabled Greece to block Turkey's bid for EU membership in order to gain concessions from Turkey, especially regarding the Cyprus issue (Muftuler-Bac, 2002: 83). Therefore, it is necessary to analyse the 1966 Luxemburg Compromise in this context. To protect France's national interests against the European Commission, the French leader caused the Luxemburg Crisis, known as the 'empty chair crisis' in June 1965 (Dinan, 2010: 37). The Luxemburg Compromise overcame the crisis in 1966. According to this agreement, any member states would reserve their rights to veto proposals when 'their national interests are at stake' (Dinan, 2010: 38). As a result of this crisis, the structure of the EU's decision-making transformed qualified majority voting into unanimity voting. Although some treaties, such as the Single European Act in 1987, the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, and the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997, mitigated this agreement that was compromised in 1966, it remains applicable to EU external relations (Muftuler-Bac, 2002: 83).

So, it can be said that Greece significantly benefited from the rule of unanimity in the EU decision using it on Turkey (Muftuler-Bac, 2002: 83). "Greece's consent to any improvement became conditional upon changes in Turkey's position on Greek-Turkish disputes and the Cyprus question." (Grigoriadis, 2008: 153). Since Turkey did not satisfy Greece's demands about the Cyprus issue, the EU-Turkey relations suffered from stumbling blocks. For instance, Barnard (2004) and Grigoriadis (2008) claim that the implementation of the Fourth Financial Protocol of 1981 to provide Turkey with EEC financial aid was vetoed by Greece, referring mainly to the Cyprus issue.

As well as veto power over the course of EEC-Turkey relations, 'Europeanisation of the Cyprus problem' was another of Greece's policies to gain diplomatic leverage vis-à-vis Turkey concerning the Cyprus issue. So, Greek policy-makers raised the question of Cyprus in the EEC/EU (Ugur, 1999: 179). Ugur (1999) argued that increasing the number of Cyprus-related parliamentary questions directed to the Commission, the Council and the EPC indicated this policy. Another indication of this policy was that Greece and GCASC left the 'enosis' policy. The reason why the idea of 'enosis' weakened was that the annexation of Cyprus would mean a violation of the sovereignty of Cyprus, which has been recognised internationally. Such annexation could cause severe damage to the EEC-Greece relations as the EEC has respected the sovereignty of an internationally recognised state. As a result of weakening the idea of enosis in Greece and GCASC, the EEC willingly allowed Greece to Europeanise the Cyprus question. "While the idea of enosis ceased to exist, the occupation of the Turkish army remained." (Suvarierol, 2003: 64). In addition, Greece and GCASC started to perceive the EEC as a new platform for consolidating the Cypriot state (Ugur, 1999: 180). As a consequence, the EEC gradually became involved in the Cyprus problem.

Turkish policy-makers were aware that Greek factor was a significant obstacle in the progress of the EU-Turkey relations. They believed that joining the EEC as a full member would be Turkey's best policy stance to resist Greece's influence in the EEC. In addition, after the military regime of 1980, the tension between the EEC and Turkey started to ease, thanks to the return to civilian government under Turgut Özal in 1983. For these reasons, Turkey applied for full membership in the EEC in 1987 (Arikan, 2003: 159). However, Greece tried to influence the EEC to connect Turkey's membership expectations with the settlement of its disputes, such as Cyprus and the Aegean Sea, with Greece (Arikan, 2003: 159). On December 1989, the commission concluded that "it would not be useful to open accession negotiations with Turkey straight away." (European Commission, 1998). Consequently, "Turkey's EEC membership application met with a polite Commission rejection in 1989, which alongside the 'substantial economic and development gap between the Community

Quantrade Journal of Complex Systems in Social Sciences e-ISSN: 2687-5098 Vol 4 (Issue 2) Fall 2022
https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/quantrade

and Turkey', cited Turkey's bilateral disputes with Greece and the Cyprus issue as obstacles to Turkish EEC integration." (Grigoriadis, 2008: 153).

After the negative opinion of the Commission, the Council required the Commission to prepare a specific proposal to sugar the application rejection pill (Faucompret and Konings, 2008: 31). For this reason, in February 1990, the 'Matutes Package' was adopted to strengthen the EC-Turkey relations, which included the completion of the customs union, the intensification of financial cooperation, and the strengthening of political and cultural ties by the Commission (European Commission, 1998). However, Greece again blocked this package because of bilateral issues and the Cyprus issue (Faucompret and Konings, 2008: 31).

In the 1990s, the Cyprus issue was becoming more and more Europeanised. For the EU, it was hard not to link itself with Greece's disputes with Turkey as Greece became a member of the EU. At Dublin Summit in June 1990, community leaders agreed on a common position by declaring that the future of EC relations with Turkey was tied to Turkish attitudes on GCASC (Gürel, 1993: 181). The EU declared that: "The European Council, deeply concerned at the situation, fully reaffirms its previous declaration and its support for the unity, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of GCASC in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions. Reiterating that the Cyprus problem affects EC-Turkey relations and bearing in mind the importance of these relations" (European Council, 1990). Furthermore, in July 1990, President Georgios Vasileiou applied for full membership in the EC on behalf of the entire Cyprus (Zervakis, 2002: 162). Cypriot application led to further drawing the EU into the Cyprus issue.

After three years, the commission said that GCASC was eligible for membership even though the commission implied that the integration of GCASC into the EU required a peaceful, just and durable solution to the Cyprus issue (Brey, 1999: 114). In addition, in the event of no political settlement, the commission decided to reassess the situation in Cyprus in 1995 (Muftuler-Bac, 1999: 569). However, the EU did not wait until 1995. At the Corfu meeting in 1994, the European Council expressed that 'the next phase of enlargement of the Union will involve GCASC and Malta. Moreover, for the first time, the EU did not connect the Cypriot application to a peaceful settlement of the Cyprus problem at the Corfu meeting (Nugent, 2000: 139). In Zervakis's view (2002: 164), as Greek policymakers intimidated the EU not to approve the accession of Austria, Sweden and Finland, the European Council made such a decision.

In parallel with these developments, despite Greek resistance, the EU wanted to improve relations with Turkey, as Turkey had great economic potential and major strategic importance (Grigoriadis, 2008: 154). The application of GCASC allowed the EU to bargain with Greece to lift its veto against the Turkey-EU customs union agreement and release of the Fourth Additional Protocol funds. After the bargaining processes, Greece lifted its veto against Turkey. In return, the EU committed that accession negotiations between GCASC and the EU would commence within six months - in effect within 1998 (Grigoriadis, 2008: 154). Thus, the customs union agreement between Turkey and the EU entered into force in 1996. Consequently, the fate of the EU-Turkey customs union was linked to the beginning of the negotiations on GCASC's accession (Zervakis, 2002: 164).

At the Luxemburg Summit of December 1997, Turkey was frustrated when the EU rejected the candidacy of Turkey. The EU stated that strengthening Turkey's links with the European Union depended on respect for human rights, protection of minorities, the establishment of satisfactory and stable relations between Greece and Turkey and the settlement of disputes, such as Cyprus (European Council, 1997). It can be seen that the rejection of Turkey's candidacy is linked to both Turkey's disputes with Greece, the Cyprus conflict and the Copenhagen criteria (Arikan, 2003: 168; Zervakis, 2002: 165).

Relations between Greece and Turkey dramatically improved in late 1999. There were three explanations for this. Firstly, instead of Theo Pangalos, a long-standing opponent of Turkey, pragmatic and accommodating George Papandreou became Greece's Foreign Minister. Secondly, two earthquake disasters, which hit Turkey and Greece in August and September 1999, respectively, facilitated this détente attempt. Turkey received emergency assistance from the Greek government after the terrible earthquake in Turkey. These developments led to a wave of mutual sympathy between the Greek and Turkish public. Finally, as Greece wanted to join the Eurozone, the country tried to cut its budget deficit. Thus, a relaxation of tensions with Turkey would provide the prospect of significant savings on defence expenditure (Bache and George, 2006: 556). Furthermore, Germany changed its position against Turkish membership. SPD-Green government under Gerhard Schröder replaced the CDU-CSU government in 1998, which was concerned about Turkish membership in the EU. The new government supported Turkish membership due to domestic politics: consolidating the

Quantrade Journal of Complex Systems in Social Sciences e-ISSN: 2687-5098 Vol 4 (Issue 2) Fall 2022
https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/quantrade

ethnic Turkish vote for the left-of-centre coalition and the need to integrate the Turkish minority, the largest ethnic minority in the country, more securely into German society (Bache and George, 2006: 556). Consequently, at the Helsinki Summit of 1999, the European Council accepted Turkey's candidacy.

Although the European Council awarded Turkey as a candidate state, the council required Turkey to implement its essential conditions in order to start accession negotiations, such as the Copenhagen criteria, Turkish-Greek relations, and a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem (Grigoriadis, 2008: 155). The council demanded that Turkey give 'strong support to the UN Secretary-General's efforts to bring the process to a successful conclusion.' (Arikan, 2003: 171). For GCASC, the council declared that a political settlement would facilitate the accession of GCASC to the European Union. However, this decision did not constitute a precondition for EU membership (Grigoriadis, 2008: 155). According to the Helsinki document, "if no settlement has been reached by the completion of accession negotiations, the Council's decision on accession will be made without the above being a precondition." (European Council, 1999).

According to Muftuler-Bac and Mclaren (2003), the EU did not want to admit a divided country into the community. For example, Yakinthou (2009) argues that some European countries, such as France, the Netherlands and Italy, objected to the accession of GCASC while the problem continued. However, as Greece threatened that it would veto the Central and Eastern European accession if GCASC was not admitted in the subsequent enlargement, the resolution of the Cyprus question was not a precondition for the EU membership (Muftuler-Bac and Mclaren, 2003: 27). Moreover, Greece argued that a candidate would not be prevented from joining the EU if she fulfilled the accession criteria (Suvarierol, 2003: 65).

According to Arikan (2003), the Helsinki outcome was carefully prepared to satisfy both Greece and Turkey. While the Helsinki document gave Greece what it wanted, it advanced Turkey's status from applicant country to candidate country.

4. The Recent Developments Regarding the Cyprus Problem

After the Helsinki Summit, although the UN's negotiation process for a Cyprus settlement was started, there was little progress in the negotiations. However, in the 2002–2004 period, there were important developments in the UN-led negotiations process for a Cyprus settlement and Turkish membership in the EU (Hannay, 2005: 167; Dinan, 2010: 489).

The first significant development was that the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan submitted a comprehensive plan for a peaceful settlement of the Cyprus problem in 2002, later referred to as the Annan Plan. The submission of this plan coincided with the European Council meeting in Copenhagen in December 2002. As a result, the EU supported the UN efforts in its 2002 Copenhagen decisions (Yakinthou, 2009: 312). At the Copenhagen Summit, the Council declared that it completed accession negotiations with GCASC. In the Cypriot section of the Copenhagen document, the council announced that GCASC would become a member of the EU on 1 May 2004 irrespective of the resolution of the Cyprus issue. Nonetheless, it emphasised "its strong preference for accession to the EU by a united Cyprus" (European Council, 2002). So, it set 28 February 2003 as the final date for aiming at a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus conflict based on the UNSG's proposals. (European Council, 2002). According to the Council, these proposals provided a unique opportunity to reach a comprehensive settlement for the Cyprus conflict. With respect to Turkey, "it asserted that the EU will open accession negotiations if the Council decides in 2004, on the basis of a recommendation by the Commission, that Turkey fulfils the Copenhagen criteria." (Suvarierol, 2003: 71).

However, Ulusoy (2008) claims that "the conditionality principle was applied to Turkey by implicitly resolving the Cyprus conflict as a condition for launching the accession negotiations." It is clear that the 2003 regular report of the Commission on Turkey and the strategy paper are examined, which stated that 'the absence of a settlement could become a serious obstacle to Turkey's EU aspirations" (Ulusoy, 2008: 316). So, it can be said that the EU wanted to solve the Cyrus problem by putting pressure on Turkey before the membership of GCASC to the EU on 1 May 2004.

The second significant development was the Justice and Development Party (JDP) came to power in 2002. When the JDP came to power, the JDP leaders saw the EU as a window of opportunity to broaden the political, economic and cultural spaces, which were significantly narrowed, especially by the military wing of the bureaucratic apparatus since the 1990s (Kaliber, 2012: 230). In other words, Europe was perceived as a place to challenge and eliminate the grip of the military and civilian bureaucracy on politics in Turkey (Kaliber, 2012: 231). As a result of this policy, the JDP, under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was committed to reforms because of EU membership (Bache and George, 2006: 557). Within

Quantrade Journal of Complex Systems in Social Sciences e-ISSN: 2687-5098 Vol 4 (Issue 2) Fall 2022
https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/quantrade

a year, the JDP implemented numerous economic and social reforms to attract a warm commendation from the Commission in its 2003 Report on Turkey's Progress towards Accession (Bache and George, 2006: 557).

The JDP 'saw an opportunity in the rapid settlement of the Cyprus issue as a means of strengthening its domestic political power through international success' (Kaliber, 2012: 231). Additionally, a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue could pave the way for accession negotiations. To put it differently, if a solution to the Cyprus conflict is reached before 2004, it would be the key to the start of accession talks and the success of the negotiation process (Kinacıoglu and Oktay, 2006: 262). Furthermore, the JDP leaders assumed that GCASC would be able to sit in judgement on the Turkish membership process and would not clearly tolerate Turkish accession by blocking it if a peaceful settlement of the Cyprus problem was not reached before 2004. Therefore, the JDP declared that it supported the Annan plan.

For these reasons, the new government in Turkey tried to force Turkish Cypriots to accept the Annan Plan. Consequently, in twin referenda on 24 April 2004, while Turkish Cypriots accepted the Annan Plan, Greek Cypriots firmly rejected it. So, the GCASC joined the EU on 1 May 2014 without a settlement of the Cyprus question. After the referenda, the EU pledged to take measures to relax the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots and financial aid worth € 259 million. Nevertheless, the EU efforts to ease the economic isolation were vetoed by GCASC as they would mean the consolidation of TRNC as a separate entity (Kaliber, 2012: 233). Kaliber (2012) argues that the Greek Cypriots turned against the Plan, supported by international society and the EU in particular, as they had already guaranteed EU membership.

In December 2004, the European Council decided to open accession negotiations with Turkey. In addition, the EU welcomed the declaration of Turkey that "the Turkish Government confirms that it is ready to sign the Protocol on the adaptation of the Ankara Agreement prior to the actual start of accession negotiations" (European Council, 2004). This is because its sign was a precondition to starting accession negotiations in October 2005. So, Turkey accepted signing the Additional Protocol on extending the Custom Union Agreement to the new accession states, which includes GCASC, in July 2005. However, Turkey refrained from opening ports and airports to traffic from GCASC. Turkey declared that the signing of a protocol extending its Custom Union to ten new members had not meant the recognition of the GCASC. Furthermore, Turkey stated that she reserved her right to keep her ports closed to GCASC unless the EU lifted the economic isolations on TRNC (Muftuler-Bac, 2008: 125). So, the EU declared that Turkey must recognise GCASC and open its ports and airports to Cypriot ships and plans. At the behest of the Cypriot Government, the Council declared that it froze eight of the 35 chapters of membership negotiations, based on the Commission's recommendations, as a punishment in December 2006 (Dinan, 2010: 490). In the 2008 EC report, the EU stated that the Cyprus issue remains a significant obstacle to improving the accession negotiations with Turkey as Turkey maintained not to implement the Additional Protocol (Bogdani, 2011: 34).

It is necessary to answer why GCASC did not veto the start of accession negotiations with Turkey in 2004. Kaliber (2012) claims that the Cypriot leaders did not block the beginning of accession negotiations with Turkey because they wanted to use Turkey's membership negotiations as leverage to exert pressure on Turkey and obtain Turkey's eventual recognition of the GCASC. Ker-lindsay (2007) states the same idea. According to Ker-lindsay (2007), the Greek Cypriot leaders adhere to 'the old Greek policy', which is such that Turkey's accession process is seen as leverage on Turkey. So, to gain certain concessions over the Cyprus issue, they threaten Turkey with blocking its accession negotiations (Ker-lindsay, 2007: 75).

Discoveries of hydrocarbon resources (mainly natural gas) in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea (East Med) since the 2010s have been another game changer regarding the Cyprus issue. The Island of Cyprus sits on a strategic place in the Eastern Med. These discoveries fuelled an existing problem (maritime jurisdiction) in the East Med among the region's states. Due to the unresolved Cyprus issue, maritime jurisdictions among Turkey, TRNC and GCASC have not been resolved. In addition, Greece's claims on the Aegean Sea and the East Med have made maritime jurisdiction more complicated. In addition, the other East Med states (Egypt, Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Libya) have unresolved problems of maritime jurisdiction among themselves. Even though these states held meetings to resolve these jurisdiction problems, they have not solved the issue yet.

On the one hand, Greece and GCASC relied on the EU to get more bargaining power against Turkey and TRNC regarding maritime jurisdiction problems and to secure possible benefits from discoveries of hydrocarbon resources in the East Med. Since the 2000s, the EU has attempted to analyse and solve maritime jurisdiction issues between Turkey and Greece. To this end, a group of academics prepared a map called the map of Seville through the University of Seville (Cetin,

Quantrade Journal of Complex Systems in Social Sciences e-ISSN: 2687-5098 Vol 4 (Issue 2) Fall 2022
https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/quantrade

2020). Greece has spread the Seville map, which basically leaves almost no maritime jurisdiction for Turkey on the Aegean Sea and tiny maritime jurisdiction for Turkey on the South West Coast of Anatolia. The EU has not officially accepted this map or its claims. In addition, the USA rejected this map and declared it has "no legal insignificance" (BBC, 2020a; Cetin, 2020; Hamit, 2020). On the other hand, Turkey and TRNC declared that they would defend their maritime jurisdiction in the East Med (mfa, 2022a, mfa, 2022b). To this end, the concept of "Mavi Vatan (Blue Motherland)" has become very popular in the circles of Turkish politics, civil and military bureaucracy, and academia. According to Mavi Vatan, Turkey applies various decisions of international courts, examples of bilateral agreements, and principles (like the Principle of Non-Cut Off) that consider the mainland before the island regarding drawing maritime jurisdiction (Erciyes, 2019). These decisions of international courts, principles and agreements were applied by the UK and France on the English Channel and by Spain and the UK on the Gibraltar Strait and by Nicaragua and Colombia on the Caribbean Sea (Erciyes, 2019). Several times, both sides declared NAVTEX (Navigational Telex) on disputed sea zones. All these political moves have increased tension between both sides.

Overall, the East Med energy issue and maritime jurisdiction issue as an outcome of the Cyprus issue have also influenced Turkey-EU relations. In this regard, Greece and GCASC have imposed sanctions on Turkey. Although the EU imposed some sanctions on the Turkish firms and people that allegedly searched hydrocarbon in "disputed" areas (BBC, 2020b), the EU has not imposed large-scale sanctions on Turkey. Turkey and TRNC called these sanctions unlawful and unfair because the EU is not an international court and because the EU is not objective (mfa, 2022b). In addition, Greece and GCASC have not been satisfied. Ulger (2020) argues that through the October 2020 summit declaration of the European Council, the EU aims to create a positive atmosphere and dialogue with Turkey regarding the agreement of the Customs Union, refugees and carrying visa exemption into effect while the EU pursues to threaten Turkey with sanctions. Once again, the EU tried to stay in the middle ground through its policies and actions. However, both sides have not completely satisfied with the EU's moves. On the road to Turkey's EU accession, Greece and GCASC have acquired another leverage, while Turkey has had another problem: The East Med Energy Crisis.

5. Conclusion

The Cyprus issue has played a key role in influencing the developments of Turkey and its EU relations from the 1980s to the 2000s. Especially, Greece's membership has provided a better position for Greece to gain the support of its European partners vis-à-vis Turkey. Thanks to its membership, Greece gained diplomatic leverage over Turkey to make concessions on Cyprus and bilateral issues to strengthen Turkey and EU relations. Moreover, Greece paved the way for the accession of GCASC to the EU. To achieve this, Greece constantly threatened the EU with blocking the enlargement processes by using its veto power in the Council. Thus, the EU has been tied by its decision-making procedure. Because of the Cyprus conflict, Greece used its veto power to prevent Turkey from accessing the EU. As a result of the membership of Greece and GCASC, the Cyprus conflict has been imported into the EU.

Although there was a glimmer of hope with the Annan Plan, which Turkey, Greece and the EU supported, to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue, this hope was lost when the Greek Cypriots firmly rejected it in twin referendums on April 2004. So, the Turkish accession process was negatively affected due to GCASC's membership in the EU in May 2004. When GCASC joined the EU in 2004, it adhered to the old Greek policy to gain concessions on the Cyprus issue against Turkey. Similarly, the Greek Cypriots leaders used their veto power in the Council to block Turkish accession negotiations. Consequently, due to the Cyprus problem, the opening of eight accession negotiation chapters was blocked by the EU.

Given these periods, Cyprus has constituted an obstacle to Turkey's membership in the EU. However, although the Cyprus issue constitutes an obstacle to Turkey's accession, there are equally important obstacles to Turkey's accession to the EU, such as the Kurdish issue, the Armenian issue, and religious and cultural factors. Turkey's hosting of more than three million Syrian refugees after the Arab Spring and the desire of these refugees to cross into Europe illegally has emerged as a new problem in the development of relations between Turkey and the EU in recent years. In addition, even if the abovementioned obstacles are resolved, it cannot guarantee Turkey's accession to the EU. To sum up, as Muftuler-Bac (2008) states, Turkey's accession process to the EU is "a rather rocky road with many ups and downs".

Quantrade Journal of Complex Systems in Social Sciences e-ISSN: 2687-5098 Vol 4 (Issue 2) Fall 2022
https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/quantrade

References

Arikan, H. (2003). Turkey and the EU: An Awkward Candidate for EU Membership? Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate.

Bache, I. & George, S. (2006). Politics in the European Union. 2nd edn. New York: Oxford UP.

Bahcheli, T. (2000). Searching for a Cyprus Settlement: Considering Options for Creating a Federation, a Confederation, or Two Independent States. Publius: The Journal of Federalism, 30(1), 203–216.

Barnard, F. K. (2004). The Role of Turkish Migration and Migrants in Turkey's Relations with the EC/EU. In Bal, I. (Ed.) Turkish Foreign Policy in Post-Cold War Era. Florida: Brown Walker Press (181–196).

BBC (2020a). Sevilla Haritası Nedir?: Yunanistan'ın Tezini Dayandırdığı, ABD'nin 'Hukuki Önemi Yok' Dediği Harita. https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-54244760 (Access Date: 18 July 2022).

BBC (2020b). AB Zirvesinde Türkiye ve Doğu Akdeniz ile İlgili Hangi Kararlar Alındı?. https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-55269631 (Access Date: 18 July 2022).

Bogdani, M. (2011). Turkey and the Dilemma of EU Accession. New York: I. B. Tauris.

Brey, H. (1999). Turkey and the Cyprus Question. The International Spectator, 34(1), 111–121.

Cetin, S. (2020). Seville Maritime Territory Map Is Illegitimate: Expert. https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/seville-maritime-territory-map-is-illegitimate-expert/1983193 (Access Date: 18 July 2022).

Dinan, D. (2010). Ever Closer Union: An Introduction to European Integration. 4th edn. London: Palgrave.

Eralp, A. (1993). Turkey and the European Community in the Changing Post-War International System. In Balkır, C. & Williams, A. M. (Eds.) Turkey and Europe. London: Pinter Publishers (24–44).

Erciyes, C. (2019). Doğu Akdeniz: Deniz Yetki Alanlarının Sınırlandırılması, Türkiye'nin Siyasi ve Hukuki Tezleri, Sahadaki Uygulamaları. https://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/dogu-akdeniz-deniz-yetki-alanlarinin-sinirlandirilmasi.pdf (Access Date: 18 July2022).

European Commission (1998). Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress toward Accession, COM (98), Brussels. http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidate-countries/turkey/key_documents_en.htm (Access Date: 1 August 2022).

European Council (1990). Presidency Conclusions and Annexes, Dublin, 25–26 June, Brussels, http://www.european-council.europa.eu/council-meetings/conclusions/archives-1992-1975 (Access Date: 1 August 2022).

European Council (1997). Presidency Conclusions, Luxembourg, 12–13 December, Brussels. http://www.european-council.europa.eu/council-meetings/conclusions/archives-2002-1993 (Access Date: 1 August 2022).

European Council (1999). Presidency Conclusions, Helsinki, 10–11 December, Brussels. http://www.european-council.europa.eu/council-meetings/conclusions/archives-2002-1993 (Access Date: 1 August 2022).

European Council (2002). Presidency Conclusions, Copenhagen, 12–13 December, Brussels. http://www.european-council.europa.eu/council-meetings/conclusions/archives-2002-1993 (Access Date: 1 August 2022).

European Council (2004). Presidency Conclusion, Brussels, 16–17 December. http://www.european-council.europa.eu/council-meetings/conclusions (Access Date: 1 August 2022).

Faucompret, E. & Konings, J. (2008). Turkish Accession to the EU: Satisfying the Copenhagen Criteria. London: Routledge.

Grigoriadis, I. N. (2008). Greek and Greek Cypriot Views of Turkey's Accession to the European Union: On the Endurance of a Spectacular Paradigmatic Shift. In Muftuler-Bac, M. & Stivachtis, A. Y. (Eds.) Turkey-European Union Relations: Dilemmas, Opportunities, and Constraints. Lanham, United States: Lexington Books (151–167).

Gurel, S. S. (1993). Turkey and Greece: A Difficult Aegean Relationship. In Balkır, C. & Williams, A. M. (Eds.) Turkey and Europe. London: Pinter Publishers (161–190).

Quantrade Journal of Complex Systems in Social Sciences e-ISSN: 2687-5098 Vol 4 (Issue 2) Fall 2022
https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/quantrade

Hamit, D. (2020). US: Seville Map Has No Legal Significance. https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/us-seville-map-has-no-legal-significance/1980947 (Access Date: 18 July 2022).

Hannay, L. (2005). Cyprus: Not Yet a Problem Solved?. In Lake, M. (Ed.) The EU & Turkey: A Glittering Prize or a Millstone?. London: Federal Trust for Education and Research (165–169).

Kaliber, A. (2012). Turkey's Cyprus Policy: A Case of Contextual Europeanisation. In Nas, C. & Ozer, Y. (Eds.) Turkey and the European Union: Processes of Europeanisation. Surrey, United Kingdom: Ashgate (225–242).

Ker-lindsay, J. (2007). The Policies of Greece and Cyprus towards Turkey's EU Accession. Turkish Studies, 8(1), 71–83.

Kinacioglu, M. & Oktay, E. (2006). The Domestic Dynamics of Turkey's Cyprus Policy: Implications for Turkey's accession to the European Union. Turkish Studies, 7(2), 261–273.

Koliopoulos, C. (2008). The Strategic Implications of Turkey's EU membership. In Muftuler-Bac, M. & Stivachtis, A. Y. (Eds.) Turkey-European Union Relations: Dilemmas, Opportunities, and Constraints. Lanham, United States: Lexington Books.

Mango, A. (2005). The Modern History of a Solid Country. In Lake, M. (Ed.) The EU & Turkey: A Glittering Prize or a Millstone?. London: The Federal Trust for Education and Research (15–25).

Mfa (2022a). Dışişleri Bakanı Sayın Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu'nun KKTC Cumhurbaşkanı Derviş Eroğlu İle Birlikte Düzenlediği Ortak Basın Toplantısı, 14 January 2015. https://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-sayin-mevlut-cavusoglu_nun-kktc-cumhurbaskani-dervis-eroglu-ile-birlikte-duzenledigi-ortak-basin-toplantisi_-14.tr.mfa (Access Date: 18 July 2022).

Mfa (2022b). No: 58, 28 Şubat 2020, Doğu Akdeniz'deki Sondaj Faaliyetlerimiz Nedeniyle Avrupa Birliği'nin Aldığı Yaptırım Kararına İlişkin Listenin Onaylanması Hk.. https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_58_-dogu-akdeniz-sondaj-faaliyetlerimiz-hk.tr.mfa (Access Date: 18 July 2022).

Muftuler-Bac, M. & Mclaren, L. (2003). Enlargement Preferences and Policy-Making in the European Union: Impacts on Turkey. European Integration, 25(1), 17–30.

Muftuler-Bac, M. (1999). The Cyprus Debacle: What the Future Holds. Futures, (31), 559–575.

Muftuler-Bac, M. (2002). Turkey in the EU's Enlargement Process: Obstacles and Challenges. Mediterranean Politics, 7(2), 79–95.

Muftuler-Bac, M. (2008). Turkey's Accession Negotiations with the European Union: The Long Path Ahead. In Muftuler-Bac, M. & Stivachtis, A. Y. (Eds.) Turkey-European Union Relations: Dilemmas, Opportunities, and Constraints. Lanham, United States: Lexington Books (115–131).

Nugent, N. (2000). EU Enlargement and the Cyprus Problem. Journal of Common Market Studies, 38(1), 131–150.

Papanicolaou, Y. (2005). Realities and Perspectives: A Greek View on Turkey's European Ambitions. In Lake, M. (Ed.) The EU & Turkey: A Glittering Prize or a Millstone?. London: Federal Trust for Education and Research (151–163).

Paul, A. (2015). Turkey-EU Relations: Forever Engaged, Never to be Married?. https://eu.boell.org/en/2015/07/08/turkey-eu-relations-forever-engaged-never-be-married (Access Date: 1 May 2022).

Sertoglu, K. & Ozturk, I. (2003). Application of Cyprus to the European Union and the Cyprus Problem. Emerging Markets and Finance and Trade, 39(6), 54–70.

Souter, D. (1984). An Island Apart: A Review of Cyprus Problem. Third World Quarterly, 6(3), 657–674.

Suvarierol, S. (2003). The Cyprus Obstacle on Turkey's Road to Membership in the European Union. In Carkoglu, A. & Rubin, B. (Eds.) Turkey and the European Union: Domestic Politics, Economic Integration and International Dynamics. London: Frank Cass (55–78).

Ugur, M. (1999). The European Union and Turkey: An Anchor and Credibility Dilemma. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate.

Quantrade Journal of Complex Systems in Social Sciences e-ISSN: 2687-5098 Vol 4 (Issue 2) Fall 2022
https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/quantrade

Ulger, İ. K. (2020). Türkiye Mavi Vatanı Savunmaya Devam Ediyor. https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/analiz/turkiye-mavi-vatani-savunmaya-devam-ediyor/2004480 (Access Date: 18 July 2022).

Ulusoy, K. (2008). The Europeanisation of Turkey and Its Impact on the Cyprus Problem. Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans, 10(3), 309–329.

United Nations, General Assembly Resolution 37/253, Question of Cyprus, A/RES/37/253 (16 May 1983). http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/37/a37r253.htm (Access Date: 22 July 2022).

Yakinthou, C. (2009). The EU's Role in the Cyprus Conflict: System Failure or Structural Metamorphosis?. Ethnopolitics, 8(3), 307–323.

Zervakis, P. A. (2002). The Europeanisation of the Cyprus Question: A Model for Conflict Resolution?. Politicka Misao, 39(5), 156–173.