

THE DE-EUROPEANIZATION OF FOREIGN POLICY: THE CASE OF TURKEY’S RELATIONS WITH GREECE

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on the external incentives model (EIM), this paper maintains that unlike the favourable conditions for Europeanization between 1999 and 2005, the higher adoption costs, diminished credibility of the EU’s promise and threat, reduced size and speed of accession and problems concerning the determinacy of conditions created a setting that was conducive to the de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy after 2006. It then argues that in this de-Europeanized environment, the July 2016 coup attempt in Turkey acted as a catalyst in the shift of Turkish policy regarding Greece, leading to deterioration in the relations. Drawing on documentary analysis supplemented by semi-structured interviews with experts and taking the July 16 coup as a milestone, this paper contributes to the literature on the de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy and how that affected Turkey’s relations with Greece.

Keywords: European Union - pre-accession countries, Turkey - Greece, conditionality, July 2016 coup, foreign policy.

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DIŞ POLİTİKANIN AVRUPALILAŞMAKTAN UZAKLAŞMASI: TÜRKİYE’NİN YUNANİSTAN’LA İLİŞKİLERİ ÖRNEĞİ

ÖZ

Dış teşvikler modelini kullanan bu makale 1999-2005 dönemindeki Avrupalılaşmayla ilgili uygun şartların aksine 2006 sonrasında yüksek uyum maliyetleri, Avrupa Birliği’nin taahhüt ve yaptırımının inandırıcılığının azalması, üyeliğin hızının ve büyüklüğünün azalması ve koşulların belirliliğiyle ilgili problemlerin Türk dış politikasının Avrupalılaşmaktan uzaklaşmasına müsait bir ortam oluşturduğunu ileri sürmektedir. Bu çalışma, aynı zamanda, Avrupalılaşmaktan uzaklaşmış bir Türk dış politikasının ortaya çıktığı bu ortamda, Türkiye’deki Temmuz 2016 darbe teşebbüsünün Yunanistan’a yönelik Türk dış politikasındaki değişimde bir katalizör işlevi görerek, ilişkilerin kötüleşmesine yol açtığını savunmaktadır. Bu makale, Türk dış politikasının Avrupalılaşmaktan uzaklaşması üzerine var olan literatüre ve Temmuz 2016 darbe teşebbüsünü bir dönüm noktası olarak Türk dış politikasında Avrupalılaşmaktan uzaklaşmanın Türkiye’nin Yunanistan’la ilişkilerini nasıl etkilediği sorusuna bir katkı sağlamaktadır. Bu araştırmanın metodolojisi yarı yapılandırılmış uzman mülakatlarıyla desteklenmiş doküman analizine dayanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Avrupa Birliği - katılım-öncesi ülkeler, Türkiye - Yunanistan, koşulluluk, Temmuz 2016 darbesi, dış politika.

Introduction

From among the various definitions of Europeanization, one coined by Ladrech describes it as an “incremental process re-orienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making”.¹ It is one of the most widely used definitions of Europeanization. In this sense, the Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy connotes the impact of the EU on Turkey’s approach to its foreign relations. Conversely, the de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy means the EU having a lesser effect on this.

As a background concept, Europeanisation, as has been suggested in the literature, can have a wide variety of definitions with some

¹ Robert Ladrech, “Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 32, Number 1, 1994, p. 69.

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fundamentally different connotations.² Focusing on European-level governance, Risse et al. defines it as “the emergence and the development at the European level of distinct structures of governance”.³ It is also used to describe situations where unique European systems of organization and administration have been exported beyond the geographical limits of Europe.⁴ In the literature, it is generally used to refer to the influence of the EU on domestic policies in different states.⁵ According to Exadaktylos and Radaelli, “Europeanisation is a field concerned with the empirical effects of European integration on domestic political structures and public policy, and their normative appraisal”.⁶ Similarly, Buller also defines it as a “situation where distinct modes of European governance have transformed aspects of domestic politics”.⁷ In her study of the Europeanisation literature, overall, Alpan divides the approaches to two groups, one being the first-generation studies conceptualising Europeanisation as a bottom-up process encompassing various political and societal aspects in candidate states and in third countries, while the second-generation studies shifted their focus from membership to the accession context and began to prioritize the domestic sphere by placing the role of conditionality and the Copenhagen criteria at the centre of their analysis, which served as a catalyst for domestic reforms.⁸

As for de-Europeanization, most briefly the “distinguishing criterion of de-Europeanisation is the scale of the challenge... across a wide range of

² Claudio M Radaelli, “Europeanization: Solution or Problem”, *Palgrave Advances in European Union Studies?*, (ed.) Michelle Cini and Angela K Bourne, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2006, p. 58.

³ Thomas Risse, Maria Green Cowles and James Caporaso, “Europeanization and Domestic Change: Introduction”, *Transforming Europe: Europeanisation and Domestic Change*, (ed.), Maria Green Cowles, James Caporaso and Thomas Risse, Cornell University Press, Ithaca 2019, p. 3.

⁴ Jim Buller and Andrew Gamble, “Conceptualising Europeanisation,” *Public Policy and Administration*, Volume 17, Number 2, 2002, p.10.

⁵ Tanja A Börzel and Thomas Risse, “Conceptualizing the Domestic Impact of Europe”, *The Politics of Europeanization*, (1. ed.), (ed.), Kevin Featherstone and Claudio M. Radaelli, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, p. 57-80.

⁶ Theofanis Exadaktylos and Claudio M Radaelli, “Europeanisation”, *Research Methods in European Union Studies*, (ed.) Kennet Lynggaard, Ian Manners and Karl Löfgren, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2015, p. 206.

⁷ Buller and Gamble, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁸ Başak Alpan, “Europeanization and EU–Turkey Relations: Three Domains, Four Periods”, *EU-Turkey Relations: Theories, Institutions, and Policies*, (ed.) Wulf Reiners and Ebru Turhan, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2021, p. 110.

issues [that] would suggest a basic re-orientation of the... state away from European norms”.⁹ This is by reversing the alignment of European formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ways of doing things, and shared beliefs and norms.¹⁰ More precisely,

“de-Europeanization relates to situations where EU foreign policy making runs against the grain of certain Member States’ declared values and interests; where Member States are less willing to engage in collective foreign-policy making at the EU-level, prioritizing other multilateral frameworks or (unilateral) national actions; and where the results of that policy making are, on occasion, explicitly undermined by Member State practice. Such behavior may emerge from within the Union’s foreign policy process and institutions, it may be conducted unilaterally by member states in other multilateral fora (such as the UN), or it may arise in bilateral or mini-lateral relations with third parties”.¹¹

In this context, de-Europeanization occurs where there has been some form of Europeanization before, and hence it reveals ‘the changing relationship of a state with the EU manifested through its ‘progressive detachment’ from the EU’s political or normative influence.¹² In this sense, the thing that significantly sets de-Europeanization apart from “retrenchment” is the standard against which the respective reversal of reform is judged:

“while “retrenchment” refers to a first instance response to EU policy-making, de-Europeanization instead concentrates on the long-term effects of Europe. It goes beyond the initial impact created by the EU and addresses the U-turns of already Europeanized policies by using the level of already achieved “positive” reforms as benchmarks in assessing “negative” changes... In sum, de-Europeanization denotes a

⁹ Patrick Müller, Karolina Pomorska, and Ben Tonra, “The Domestic Challenge to EU Foreign Policy-Making: From Europeanisation to de-Europeanisation?”, *Journal of European Integration*, Volume 43, Number 5, 2021, p. 523.

¹⁰ Alpan, *op. cit.*, p. 107-138.

¹¹ Müller, Pomorska and Tonra, *op.cit.*, p. XX.

¹² Luca Tomini and Seda Gürkan, “Contesting the EU, Contesting Democracy and Rule of Law in Europe. Conceptual Suggestions for Future Research”, *Illiberal Trends and Anti-EU Politics in East Central Europe*, (ed.) Astrid Lorenz and Lisa H. Anders, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham 2021, p. 286.

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setback of domestic reform following an initial adoption of EU norms and standards”.¹³

Lastly, de-Europeanization can also be a progressive disengagement between domestic authorities and EU actors manifested through their discourses.¹⁴ Such discursive disengagement consists of two major aspects: “Discursive opposition between domestic authorities and the EU reflected in their conflicting statements and the intensification of this discursive opposition, whereby the domestic authorities’ discourses shift from defensive to offensive ones”.¹⁵

During the era of Europeanization following the European Union (EU) Helsinki Summit in 1999, Turkey employed soft power, diplomatic and economic policy instruments and acted as a mediator in conflicts in neighbouring countries. In this regard, the EU and its legitimizing effect in the post-Helsinki era served as a significant backdrop for the revival of relations between Athens and Ankara. Under the impact of Europeanization, Turkish-Greek relations blossomed after 1999 - after 2006, however, they were increasingly neglected.

The post-2006 developments led to the emergence of an environment conducive to a de-Europeanization in Turkish foreign policy. The accession of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) into the EU has dampened pro-EU attitudes in Turkey. This process was hardened by the July 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, with Greece’s providing refuge to eight Turkish officers who fled from Turkey. In the post-coup attempt environment, Athens and Ankara increasingly came to see each other through a Hobbesian prism, once again adopting an attitude of mutual recrimination, as in the pre-Helsinki period. Now, Turkey became prone to resorting to bellicose rhetoric and hard power.

This paper analyses the de-Europeanization in Turkish foreign policy after 2006 and demonstrates the relevance of the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey in the deterioration of its relations with Greece against the

¹³ Luana Martin-Russu, *Deforming the Reform: The Impact of Elites on Romania’s Post-Accession Europeanization*, Springer, Cham 2022, p. 27.

¹⁴ Lia Tsuladze, Nino Abzianidze, Mariam Amashukeli, and Lela Javakhishvili. “De-Europeanization as discursive disengagement: has Georgia ‘got lost’ on its way to European integration?”, *Journal of European Integration*, Volume 46, Number 3, 2024, p. 297-319.

¹⁵ Tsuladze, Abzianidze, Amashukeli and Javakhishvili, *ibid*, p. 297.

background of the de-Europeanization. After explaining the de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy drawing upon the external incentives model (EIM), it argues that in such an environment, the attempted coup further aggravated relations between the two countries. In this regard, it is maintained that the EIM as applied to the de-Europeanization of Turkey's foreign policy reveals that the *higher adoption costs, reduced credibility of the EU's promise and threat, problems in relation to the determinacy of conditions and reduced size and speed of accession* together created an environment that was conducive to the de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy.

The higher adoption costs were due to an increase in security threats, anti-Western nationalism and the deterioration in Turkish-EU relations. The reduced credibility of the EU's promise and threat resulted from a shifting power asymmetry in favour of Turkey, an accelerated shift to a multi-polar global system, the availability of alternative global actors for Turkey, problems besetting the EU and a negative EU attitude towards Turkey's EU accession. The problems in relation to the determinacy of conditions in the post-2006 era were due to the political nature of the evaluation of candidates' compliance with conditionality and the increasingly demanding conditions. Finally, the reduced size and speed of accession resulted from Turkey's special treatment by the EU and the suspension of numerous negotiation chapters. It was against the backdrop of this de-Europeanized environment in Turkish foreign policy that Turkey's cooperative policy towards Greece shifted, triggered by the coup plot in July 2016. There was a deterioration in relations between Brussels and Ankara after the coup attempt and the stopping of the Turkish-EU accession process due to the imposition of a state of emergency in Turkey in the weeks and months that followed. The de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy, in turn, negatively impacted Turkey's relations with Greece.

In this framework, a search of the literature that explicitly uses the concept of "Europeanization" in Turkish foreign policy revealed ample studies. These studies emphasize the mechanism of political conditionality as the main driver in the Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy. A few studies¹⁶ explicitly employ rational-choice institutionalism based on a cost-

¹⁶ Tarık Oğuzlu, "Turkey and Europeanization of Foreign Policy?", *Political Science Quarterly*, Volume 125, Number 4, 2010, p. 657-683; Birgül Demirtaş, "Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Balkans: A Europeanized Foreign Policy in a De-Europeanized National Context?", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Volume 17, Number 2, 2015, p.

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benefit analysis as an analytical framework to explain foreign policy change in Turkey in the Europeanization process, while the remaining papers implicitly base their arguments on political conditionality. By contrast, the lack of studies dealing with the de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy after 2006, when the gap between Turkey and the EU started to widen, is quite striking. Employing political conditionality as an analytical framework, like most of the Europeanization studies, the present paper aims to fill this gap in the literature with regard to Turkey's relations with Greece.

Briefly, we show that the de-Europeanization of Turkey's foreign policy was instrumental in the deterioration of Turkey's relations with Greece because of the diminishing rewards for Turkey of EU conditionality. Moreover, we argue, in this environment, the attempted coup in July 2016 further aggravated an already difficult situation between the two countries. Whereas the EU's political conditionality has been subject to previous research from the aspect of Turkey's Europeanization process of 1999-2005, the EU's political conditionality has not been considered from the reverse aspect of the de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy. Furthermore, there is a lack of research into how Turkey's de-Europeanization impacted on Turkey's relations with Greece.

Regarding methodology, this paper draws upon documentary analysis supplemented by semi-structured interviews with experts. We both use secondary and primary sources. Secondary sources are used to help comment on the phenomena while primary sources are used to maintain the originality of the information. Semi-structured interviews were conducted since they provide the author to ask additional questions during the interview depending on the flow of the interview in contrast to structured interviews. We tried to choose interviewees that could provide objective information and complement the topic in a holistic way. The paper is structured into two main parts. The first examines the EIM as applied to the de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy, and the second considers Turkey's relations with Greece, focusing on incidents following the 2016 coup plot. In the first part, we briefly summarize the main assumptions and propositions of the EIM, and we apply the EIM to Turkish foreign policy. In the second part, we discuss the revival of problems between Turkey and

123-140; Esengül Ayaz Avan, "Europeanization of Turkey's Foreign Policy: The Case of Turkey's Mediation in the Israel-Palestine Conflict", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Volume 21, Number 6, 2019, p. 678-95.

Greece after 2016, including bilateral issues, the Cyprus issue, and the gas dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean. In conclusion, we provide a summary of the main conclusions drawn.

I. The External Incentives Model (EIM) as Applied to the De-Europeanization of Turkish Foreign Policy

This paper utilizes the EIM in unpacking the shift in Turkish foreign policy by pointing to the deteriorating cost-benefit balance in the country's EU aspirations. Then, we apply an EIM analysis to the evolving nature of Turkish-Greek relations, especially in the period following the attempted coup of July 2016.

A- The External Incentives Model (EIM)

EIM is a rational bargaining model in which bargaining power is determined by the degree of asymmetric interdependence between the actors. Based on EU conditionality, it works through a bargaining strategy of reinforcement by reward whereby the EU furnishes an accession country with external incentives to fulfil its conditions. These rewards range from aid to institutional ties, such as trade and cooperation agreements, through association agreements and, ultimately, accession to the Union. According to EIM, a state adopts EU rules if the benefits accruing from adopting them outweigh the domestic adoption costs. Four main factors determine this cost-benefit equilibrium: i) the determinacy of conditions, ii) the size and speed of rewards, iii) the credibility of threats and promises, and iv) the size of adoption costs.¹⁷ Below, these factors affecting conditionality are explained in greater detail:

1- Determinacy of conditions: Determinacy signifies clarity in the conditions that target governments (governments applying to the EU for a certain relationship, e.g. membership) need to fulfil to obtain rewards (i.e. succeed in their applications). The EU boosted determinacy for Turkey by detailing the conditions for accession and by providing regular feedback on the accession process. When the EU makes it clear that conditions are

¹⁷ Frank Schimmelfenning and Ulrich Sedelmeier, "Governance by Conditionality: EU Rule Transfer to the Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe", *Journal of European Public Policy*, Volume 11, Number 4, 2004, p. 661-679; Frank Schimmelfenning and Ulrich Sedelmeier "The Europeanization of Eastern Europe: The External Incentives Model Revisited", *Journal of European Public Policy*, Volume 27, Number 6, 2020, p. 814-833.

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essential (for membership, association, etc.), governments are more likely to comply with them.¹⁸

2- *Size and speed of rewards*: The effectiveness of conditionality is likely to be higher if the rewards are tangible or material rather than immaterial. Moreover, the bigger the reward, the more effective the conditionality. Membership, which provides the benefits of larger financial aid and voting power in the EU, is a more effective reward than association. Also, if the date of payment of the reward is near, the likelihood of the target government meeting the conditions is high.¹⁹

3- *Credibility of threats and promises*: Credibility here signifies the credibility of the EU's threat not to give the reward if conditions are not fulfilled and the credibility of the EU's promise to give the reward when conditions are fulfilled. Overall, credibility depends on bargaining power.²⁰

4- *Size of adoption costs*: Domestic institutional, electoral and interest group "veto players" determine the size of the adoption costs.²¹ The cost-benefit evaluation by the target government is a function of domestic veto players. In other words, target governments' compliance with the EU conditions depends upon domestic adoption costs.²²

B- The External Incentives Model (EIM) and De-Europeanization of Turkish Foreign Policy

Unlike in the 1999-2005 period, domestic and external circumstances in the post-2006 era in Turkey were increasingly non-conducive for Europeanized foreign policy behaviour. After 2006, the increasing adoption costs, decreasing credibility of the EU's promises and threats, reduced size and retarded speed of accession, and problems regarding the determinacy of conditions had combined to create a setting

¹⁸ Frank Schimmelfenning and Ulrich Sedelmeier, "The Europeanization of Eastern Europe: The External Incentives Model Revisited", *Journal of European Public Policy*, Volume 27, Number 6, 2020, p. 817.

¹⁹ Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier, *ibid.*

²⁰ Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier, *ibid.*

²¹ George Tsebelis, "Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism and Multipartyism", *British Journal of Political Science*, Volume 25, Number 3, 1995, p. 289-325.

²² Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier, *op.cit.*, p. 817-818.

that encouraged de-Europeanization in Turkish foreign policy. This section discusses these conditions emerging after 2006.

1-The size of adoption costs

Public support for EU accession as well as the government's pro-EU attitude are important factors that reduce domestic adoption costs and encourage governments to pursue Europeanization and progress in the accession process. Turkish public support for the EU saw a steady decline after February-March 2004, when it reached its peak at 71 per cent.²³ while it was the lowest after the coup attempt in July 2016 with 28 per cent.²⁴ The rise in nationalism and anti-Europeanism in Turkey had constituted an obstacle for the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) government in Europeanizing its foreign policy.²⁵

Various factors came into play here. In addition to the floundering EU accession process itself, these included the Syrian refugee crisis, a quarrel over the AKP's electoral campaign in Europe for the April 2017 constitutional referendum, the rise of anti-enlargement right-wing populist parties and the rise in Islamophobia in Europe. Together, these led to a rise in anti-EU sentiment both at the public level, in particular among the supporters of the AKP, and at the AKP leadership level (including the government). The EU's criticism of the AKP government's harsh treatment of the Gezi Park protesters in 2013 and the AKP's counter-allegations of a Western conspiracy in the Gezi Park events injected mistrust and marked a turning point in relations between Ankara and Brussels. Then, suspicions of Western involvement in the 15 July 2016 coup attempt²⁶ and what the AKP government saw as only belated solidarity from Brussels and (other

²³ European Commission, "Public Opinion in the European Union", Standard Eurobarometer 61, Brussels 2004, https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb61/eb61_en.pdf, (21.01.2024).

²⁴ European Commission, "Public Opinion in the European Union", Standard Eurobarometer 86, November, Brussels 2016, p. 78, <https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/79408>, (21.01.2024).

²⁵ European Commission, *ibid.*

²⁶ Jacop Lindgaard, "EU Public Opinion on Turkish EU Membership: Trends and Drivers", *Feuture*, Online Paper, No. 25, 2018, p. 15-16, https://feuture.uni-koeln.de/sites/feuture/user_upload/Online_Paper_No_25_final.pdf, (16.02.2024).

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European capitals) following the coup attempt drove a deep wedge between the parties.

In the post-coup attempt period, EU governments dragged their feet or failed to extradite the followers of Fethullah Gülen, the alleged mastermind of the coup plot (and the US did not extradite Gülen himself), and criticism of the AKP government on the grounds of human rights and democracy violations following the coup attempt further worsened Ankara's relationship with Europe and the West in general.²⁷ These developments not only prompted a nationalist backlash in Turkey, particularly among AKP and right-wing nationalist party supporters, but also led the AKP government to adopt a "siege mentality" in its foreign policy outlook.

The emergence of several security threats in Turkey's neighbourhood also played into the nationalist scenario. These included the Syrian conflict, the rise of ISIS, the growing presence of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê*, PKK)-linked Democratic Union Party (*Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat*, PYD) in Syria and the regional power competition between Turkey and Egypt and the Gulf countries. These further facilitated the securitization of foreign policy, boosting the sense of "existential threat," and justified the accumulation of foreign policy powers in the hands of the president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, following a referendum in April 2017 held in the name of dealing with these security issues effectively.²⁸ This shift – effectively to a presidential system as opposed to parliamentary government – also helped the ruling elite to pursue a more assertive foreign policy. According to some, this was oriented to the increasingly nationalistic domestic audience at the expense of a traditionally prudent and balanced foreign policy (Interviewee no. 4), which was in tension with the EU's foreign policy criteria. Furthermore, the adoption of the presidential system in Turkey made it difficult to pursue a de-personalized foreign policy and thus meet the EU expectations in the field of foreign policy since these required a systemic change.

²⁷ Tulay Karadeniz and Tuvan Gumrukcu, "EU Needs Concrete Evidence from Turkey to deem Gulen Network as Terrorist", *Reuters*, 30 November 2017; Dildar Baykan, "No US Move on Turkish Call to Extradite FETO Terrorists," *Anadolu Ajansı*, 13 July 2020.

²⁸ Kemal Kirişçi and İlke Toygur, "Turkey's New Presidential System and a Changing West: Implications for Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkey-West Relations", *Brookings Institute*, Turkey Project Policy Paper, No. 15, 2019, p. 6-7.

2-Credibility of threats and promises

When it comes to the credibility of the EU's threats to withhold membership if the candidate country does not comply with the EU criteria, power asymmetry plays a significant determining role. The first factor changing the power asymmetry between Turkey and the EU in favour of the former was the fact that Turkey had become relatively more affluent and militarily more powerful during the 2000s.

Although the EU is still Turkey's most important trading partner and its most important source of tourism revenue, foreign direct investment (FDI) and short-term finance. However, when Turkey was declared an EU candidate at the Helsinki Summit in 1999, the proportion of Turkey's volume of trade with the EU in its overall trade had stood at 56 per cent; this had fallen by a quarter, to 42 per cent, in 2018.²⁹ Similarly, while GDP per capita in Turkey was \$3,687 in 2002, it had almost tripled, totalling \$9,126, by 2019.³⁰ During the same period, total Turkish GDP rose from \$240 billion to \$761 billion.³¹ Due to this economic boom, Turkey's military expenditure rose from \$12,302 billion in 2015 to \$20,448 billion in 2019, during which time Turkey increased its assertiveness in external affairs.³² Also, as a result of the development of Turkey's own defence industry, as of 2019, 70 per cent of the arms and military equipment used by the Turkish military had been manufactured at home; Turkey was increasingly self-reliant in this regard.³³

²⁹ Compiled from the TÜİK database, TÜİK, (undated), <https://www.tuik.gov.tr/> and the Turkish Ministry of Trade database at <https://www.trade.gov.tr/>, (10.01.2024).

³⁰ "GDP per Capita", The World Bank, [undated(a)], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=TR>, (26.02.2024).

³¹ "Turkey", The World Bank, [undated(b)], <https://data.worldbank.org/country/turkey>, (26.02.2024).

³² *Military Expenditure Database by Country 1988-2019*, SIPRI, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Solna 2020, [0from%201988%E2%80%932019%20in%20constant%20%282018%29%20USD.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/databases/mexdb/2020/0from%201988%E2%80%932019%20in%20constant%20%282018%29%20USD.pdf), (03.02.2024).

³³ Ferhat Gurini, "Turkey's Unpromising Defence Industry", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 9 November 2020, <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/82936>, (11.02.2024).

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The second factor reducing the power asymmetry between Turkey and the EU was a shift in the global order that favoured emerging powers.³⁴ This gained momentum following the devastating global economic crisis in 2008-09, which primarily hit Western countries. Third, the EU projected the image of an actor with little military power when geopolitical tensions arose in the Middle East³⁵; this stood in sharp contrast to Turkey's military activism there. Fourth, several other existential internal and external challenges, including the Brexit issue, the inflow of Syrian refugees in 2015, a rise of Eurosceptic, "illiberal" populist and far-right parties, the lack of an EU Common Foreign and Security Policy CFSP as well as a growing Russian aggressiveness presented a significant challenge to the external identity of the EU.³⁶

Finally, Turkey's growing involvement in the Middle East after 2007 and its expanding collaboration with Russia, in particular after the coup attempt, provided alternatives for Turkey, thus undermining the credibility of EU conditionality. This was linked to both a US non-committal to major intervention in Syria, which allowed Russia space to regain its Soviet-era influence there - as well as in Georgia and (problematically) in Ukraine - making it a regional player, and also to a more profound drift away from the West of the Islamist AKP leadership with a "neo-Ottoman" imaginary. In short, there was a certain de-coupling of Turkey from the West in international relations, which inevitably distanced it from the EU.

As for the credibility of the EU's promises, the first event that dealt a severe blow to this was the acceptance of the RoC as a full member in May 2004 alongside the continued international isolation of (the Turkish

³⁴ Amnon Aran and Mustafa Kutlay, "Turkey's Quest for Strategic Autonomy in an Era of Multipolarity," *Istanbul Policy Center*, IPC Policy Brief, February 2024.

³⁵ Abdurrahman Gümüş, "Foreign Policy of the European Union towards Arab Uprisings", *Istanbul Gelisim University Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 9, Number 2, 2022, p. 612-627.

³⁶ Patrick Müller, Karolina Pomorska and Ben Tonra, "The Domestic Challenge to EU Foreign Policy-Making: From Europeanization to de-Europeanization?", *Journal of European Integration*, Volume 43, Number 5, 2021, p. 519-534; Münevver Cebeci, "The Implications of Brexit for the EU's Security and Defence Actorness in the World", *Ankara Review of European Studies*, Volume 20, Special Issue, 2021, p. 291-324; Christian Edwards, "Why are Far-right Parties on the March across Europe?", *Cnn.com*, 22 July 2023, <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/07/22/europe/europe-populism-far-right-extreme-intl-cmd/index.html>, (20.02.2024).

Republic of) Northern Cyprus (TRNC) – and this notwithstanding promises to the contrary by the EU officials and even though Turkish Cypriots had accepted the UN-brokered Annan Plan in a referendum in April 2004, which the Greek Cypriots rejected. Then, following the failure of the French and Dutch referendums on the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 following the EU's (2004) “big-bang” enlargement, Turkey fell victim to a loss of direction and enlargement fatigue.³⁷ Subsequently, in December 2006, when Turkey refused to extend the Ankara Protocol, which formalized its relations with the RoC, the EU froze eight negotiation chapters opened as part of Turkey's accession process.

With the subsequent blocking of five negotiation chapters by France (in 2007) and eight negotiation chapters by Cyprus (in 2009), the accession process came to a standstill. In a sense, this demonstrated that there was no uniform voice in the EU regarding Turkey's candidacy. In fact, Turkey became the only EU candidate whose accession process had lasted for more than a decade. These obstacles and the tardiness of progress all led to the dwindling credibility of EU membership as a leverage for change and an associated decline in the adoption of EU rules and norms by Turkey.

Both before and after the official acceptance of its candidacy at the Helsinki Summit in 1999, Turkey was to become the least popular candidate country among EU citizens, with EU public support for Turkish accession declining continuously over the years. While 44 per cent of the EU public was opposed to Turkish accession in 1996, this figure had increased to 59 per cent by 2010 and 76 per cent in 2016.³⁸

The Negotiating Framework exposed Turkey's special treatment by the EU in a way that has not been seen with other applicants. It placed greater emphasis on the EU's “absorption capacity,” which included the possibility of “long transition periods” and “permanent safeguard clauses”. It also pointed out the “open-ended” nature of Turkey's membership negotiations.³⁹ This clear reluctance on the EU side in combination with the

³⁷ Meltem Müftüler Baç, “Turkey's Ambivalent Relationship with the European Union: To Accede or not to Accede”, *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Volume 13, Number 52, 2016, p. 92.

³⁸ Lingaard, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

³⁹ Commission of the European Communities, “Negotiating Framework for Turkey”, Luxembourg, 3 October 2005, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhoodenlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/turkey/st20002_05_tr_framedoc_en.pdf, (24.02.2024).

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dynamics on Turkey's side and the shifting international scene described all led to a decline in conditions favourable to Turkey's membership bid. But it was following developments after the coup plot in July 2016 that the final nail in the coffin of Turkey's EU accession process was driven in.

The EU found that the response to the coup attempt by the Turkish government under Erdoğan led to continued democratic backsliding, so no chapter was opened thereafter.⁴⁰ In April 2017, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) decided to re-impose a monitoring procedure on Turkey given the state of democracy in the country. Brussels was uneasy with the constitutional amendments in March 2017 that would lead to the establishment of an executive presidential system, removing checks and balances and undermining the independence of the judiciary. Pointing to this democratic deficit in November 2017, the European Council reduced Turkey's pre-accession funds, and in March 2019, the European Parliament once more advised the freezing of the accession talks. As a result, the pre-accession aid that Turkey received from the EU for the 2014-20 period fell from €4.5 billion to €3.2 billion.⁴¹ Moreover, given this negative climate, the EU was not willing to update the Customs Union and provide visa liberalization for Turkish citizens. These developments only further increased the uncertainty of the EU's membership promise to Turkey.

3- Determinacy of conditions

The EU guides candidate countries mainly through accession partnership documents where short- and medium-term priorities are highlighted while it monitors the candidate countries through annual progress reports. It has been suggested that continuously amending EU policy adoption requirements can harm the determinacy of conditions.⁴² However, an examination of the EU progress reports through the 2000s gives the impression that the requirements that Turkey needed to fulfil

⁴⁰ European Commission, "Turkey Report SWD (2019) 220 Final", Brussels, 29 March 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-turkey-report.pdf>, (02.01.2024).

⁴¹ Richard Youngs and Özge Zihnioğlu, "EU Aid Policy in the Middle East and North Africa: Politicization and its Limits", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 59, Number 1, 2021, p. 135.

⁴² Paul Kubicek, "Political Conditionality and European Union's Cultivation of Democracy in Turkey", *Democratization*, Volume 18, Number 4, 2011, p. 922.

progressively increased, thus undermining the determinacy of conditions.⁴³ In 2013, the EU toughened its accession conditions by adopting a three-pillar structure, emphasizing the rule of law, economic competence and public administration reform.⁴⁴ This toughening of conditions sent ambiguous signals to Turkey.

The fact that the evaluation of a candidates' compliance is political in nature and open to interpretation by the EU gives considerable leverage to the EU and affects the determinacy of conditions negatively.⁴⁵ Since Turkey's EU accession was highly contested and there was no agreement among the EU members, its compliance becomes subject to each EU member's evaluation based on their own national interests and norms. Clearly, this undermined the effectiveness of political conditionality.

4- Size and speed of rewards

With respect to the size of the reward, Turkey's full membership aspirations became diluted once Turkey started accession talks since its Negotiating Framework suggested the possibility of alternatives to full membership if Turkey did not sufficiently fulfil the accession criteria. Then, various forms of association with Turkey were aired by EU leaders, including Angela Merkel's privileged partnership, Nicola Sarkozy's Mediterranean Union and Emmanuel Macron's strategic partnership. The Brexit saga further strengthened the possibility of alternative integration models for Turkey.⁴⁶ Moreover, Turkey's sustained economic growth in the 2000s in contrast to the economic stagnation in the EU after the 2008-09 financial and economic crisis further diminished the relative size of the reward of EU membership.

Regarding the speed of the reward, neither did the signals sent by the EU to Turkey give any reassurance that accession was possible in the

⁴³ Frank Schimmelfenning and Ulrich Sedelmeier, *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca 2005.

⁴⁴ Meltem Müftüler-Baç, "Turkey's Ambivalent Relationship with the European Union: To Accede or not to Accede", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Volume 13, Number 52, 2016, p. 90.

⁴⁵ Heather Grabbe, "How Does Europeanization Affect CEE Governance? Conditionality, Diffusion and Diversity", *Journal of European Public Policy*, Volume 8, Number 6, 2001, p. 1015.

⁴⁶ Meltem Müftüler Baç, "Remolding the Turkey-EU Relationship", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Volume 17, Number 1, 2018, p. 128.

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foreseeable future. First, the emphasis on the EU's "absorption capacity" and "open-ended" nature of Turkey's membership negotiations in the October 2005 Negotiating Framework for Turkey implied that Turkey's EU accession, if any, might be delayed. Then, in 2006, the EU's freezing of eight accession chapters due to the disagreement over the Cyprus issue followed by the suspension of more than a dozen chapters by France and the RoC further weakened the effectiveness of conditionality from the outset by deferring Turkey's EU accession. Next, given Turkey's distancing from the Copenhagen political criteria in the past decade, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said Turkey would not be able to join the EU within the next ten years.⁴⁷ Finally, criticism of democratic backsliding in Turkey by Brussels in response to the state of emergency declared after the coup attempt in Turkey and then prolonged at three-monthly intervals into the following years further indicated that EU membership was too distant a goal to be achieved by Ankara.

**II. De-Europeanization in the Example of Turkey's Relations
with Greece and the July 15, 2016 Coup Attempt as a Catalyst**

The deterioration in Turkish-EU relations after 2016 coincided with Greece providing refuge to eight Turkish officers who had fled across the border following the coup attempt. This became a milestone in the deterioration of Greek-Turkish relations. President Erdoğan's historic visit on 7 December 2017 as the first Turkish head of state to do so in 65 years thus went ahead amid the tension over the issue of the Turkish fugitives in Greece.

Erdoğan raised what he regarded as the problematic issues with Greece on his visit. He was blunt in his criticism of Greece, holding it responsible for the wide economic disparity between the Turkish minority in Western Thrace and the Greek majority and accusing Greece of failing to provide a proper place for worship for Muslims and not looking after its historical Ottoman remains. He also blamed the Greek Cypriots for the failure to reunify Cyprus. Furthermore, to the dismay of the Greek officials, Erdoğan emphasized the need as he saw it to revise the Lausanne Treaty, which delineates Turkey's borders with Greece concerning the Aegean

⁴⁷ "Turkey won't Be Ready to Join EU even in 10 Years", *B92.net*, (17.03.2016), https://www.b92.net/eng/news/world.php?yyyy=2016&mm=03&dd=17&nav_id=97394, (17.01.2024).

islands. And he demanded the extradition of the eight Turkish military officers held in Greece.⁴⁸ In June 2018, when a Greek court released four of the eight Turkish fugitive officers from prison, Turkey suspended the countries' bilateral readmission agreement. Then, a few months after the presidential visit and apparently in a retaliatory move against the Greek court's decision to grant refuge to the eight officers, the Turkish military arrested and charged with espionage two Greek soldiers who had strayed over the Turkey-Greece border, allegedly due to bad weather conditions.⁴⁹ In the post-coup attempt environment, Athens and Ankara had increasingly come to see each other through a Hobbesian prism of power politics without win-win options and adopting an attitude of mutual recrimination once again. In short, there was a return to the attitudes, tensions and potential flashpoints of the pre-Helsinki period.

The sections below draw attention to the growing impact of de-Europeanization in Turkish-Greek relations after 2016 with respect to bilateral issues, the Cyprus issue, and the gas dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean, all these being contrary to the EU's expectations of Turkey as an accession country to settle any border disputes and other related issues with Greece as well as resolve the Cyprus issue.⁵⁰

A- Bilateral Problems in Turkish-Greek Relations

With the coup plot acting as a catalyst in the deterioration of Turkey's relationship with Greece against the backdrop of the already de-Europeanized environment in Turkish foreign policy in the post-2006 period, traditionally unresolved problems between the two countries resurfaced. In the crisis with Greece after 2016, Turkey's policy towards issues of high politics, such as the Aegean Sea problems, became notably more de-Europeanized than its policy toward other issues.

⁴⁸ Helena Smith, "Confrontational Erdoğan Stuns Greek Hosts on Athens Visit", *The Guardian*, 7 December 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/07/turkish-president-erdogan-to-make-landmark-visit-to-greece>, (03.02.2024).

⁴⁹ "Greek Soldiers Arrested in Turkey on Illegal Entry, Espionage Charges Released Pending Trial", *Daily Sabah*, (14.08.2018), <https://www.dailysabah.com/investigations/2018/08/14/greek-soldiers-arrested-in-turkey-on-illegal-entry-espionage-charges-released-pending-trial>, (11.02.2024).

⁵⁰ The Council of the European Union, "Council Decision of 8 March 2021 (2001/235/EC)", Brussels 24 March 2021, https://www.ab.gov.tr/files/AB_Iliskileri/Tur_En_Realitons/Apd/Turkey_APD_2001.pdf, (05.03.2024).

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For example, Turkey took several steps after 2016 to improve the status of the Greek minority in Turkey, including the appointment of members of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate who came from abroad, the settlement of some problems concerning *vakıf* (charitable foundation) properties, and the opening of the school on Gökçeada (Imvros) island (Interviewee no. 1). Turkey even voiced its intention to reopen the Halkı seminary if a reciprocal step was taken by Greece for the minaret towers of the Fethiye mosque in Athens.⁵¹ This partly stemmed from the fact that Turkey's policies towards the issue of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and Greek minority rights were shaped by the principle of reciprocity (Interviewee no. 1). Likewise, Turkish-Greek economic relations and mutual tourist movements were not affected by the de-Europeanization of Turkish policy towards Greece. After the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, in 2019, the total volume of bilateral trade reached \$3.72 billion, the third-highest volume of trade ever.⁵² Similarly, the total number of Greek and Turkish tourists exceeded 1.5 million in 2017.⁵³

Meanwhile, the development of de-Europeanization in high politics issues stemmed from the fact that it was hard for governments to take a softer, more conciliatory approach due to their high political cost in domestic as well as international politics. Following the coup attempt, therefore, the Aegean issues were highly de-Europeanized, becoming once more a source of confrontation between Athens and Ankara. While there was no major crisis between 1999 and 2015, after 2016, there were frequent incidents, almost weekly in the Aegean, increasing the likelihood of war between the two neighbours.

In this regard, the Aegean issues between Turkey and Greece were intertwined. These issues included the breadth of territorial waters, delimitation of the continental shelf, demilitarization of the Eastern Aegean

⁵¹ "Erdogan will Open Halki Seminary in Exchange for Operation of Fethiye Mosque with Minaret Towers", *Neos Kosmos*, (17.02.2019), <https://neoskopos.com/en/2019/02/17/news/greece/erdogan-will-open-halki-seminary-in-exchange-for-minarets-at-fethiye-mosque/>, (01.02.2024).

⁵² Trading Economics Data Base, <https://tradingeconomics.com>, (23.08.2020).

⁵³ Dimitris Tsarouhas, "Greek-Turkish Economic Relations in a Changing Regional and International Context", *Greece and Turkey in Conflict and Cooperation: From Europeanization to De-Europeanization*, (eds.) Heraclides, Alexis and Gizem Alioğlu Çakmak, Routledge, London 2019, p. 201.

islands, problems concerning airspace, the flight information region (FIR), search and rescue (SAR) and the ambiguous status of rocks and islets. Among these, disagreement over the breadth of the national airspace was one of the more thorny issues for the two neighbours to settle. Turkey claims that Greece cannot have more than six nautical miles of airspace in the Aegean Sea, equal to the extent of its territorial waters, but Greece claims to ten. The four nautical miles of difference is a source of frequent friction between these two countries.

Amid the Turkish-Greek spat in 2016, tensions escalated both at sea and in the air. There were disputes between Turkish and Greek military vessels, while, according to a report released by the Hellenic National Defence General Staff, the number of violations of Greek national airspace by Turkish aircraft in 2019 reached its highest number (4,811) since 1987. Similarly, the number of mock dogfights between Turkish and Greek military aircraft rose from 13 in 2010 to 384 in 2019.⁵⁴ On numerous occasions after 2016, Turkey blamed Greece for militarizing 16 Greek islands.⁵⁵ It was in the post-coup attempt environment that Turkey chose to draw attention to the ambiguous status of 170 small islands, islets and rocks in the Aegean Sea, questioning Greek sovereignty over them.⁵⁶ According to one expert, the delimitation of maritime boundaries in the Aegean Sea would also have helped resolve the status problem of these formations (Interviewee no. 2).

The refugee issue was also affected by the rising trend of de-Europeanization in Turkish foreign policy towards Greece.⁵⁷ After the Syrian conflict broke out, this emerged as a new problematic area between Turkey and Greece when, in February 2020 Turkey finally delivered on its

⁵⁴ Paul Antonopoulos, "Turkish Aggression against Greece Accelerates Despite Coronavirus Pandemic", *Greekcitytimes*, 5 April 2020, <https://greekcitytimes.com/2020/04/05/turkish-aggression-against-greece-accelerates-despite-coronavirus-pandemic/>, (08.03.2024).

⁵⁵ "Greece Issues Counter-Navtex.", *Ekathimerini*, (21.11.2020), <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/259434/greece-issues-counter-navtex-2/>, (07.03.2024).

⁵⁶ "Akar Reiterates Criticism on Militarization of 16 Greek Islands", (31.12.2020), *Ekathimerini*, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/260800/akar-reiterates-criticism-on-militarization-of-16-greek-islands/>, (07.03.2024).

⁵⁷ Angeliki Dimitriadi, Ayhan Kaya, Başak Kale, and Tinatin Zurabishvili, "EU-Turkey Relations and Irregular Migration: Transactional Cooperation in the Making," *FEUTURE Online Paper No. 16*, March 2018. [https://feuture.uni-koeln.de/sites/feuture/user_upload/FEUTURE Online Paper No 16 D6.3.pdf](https://feuture.uni-koeln.de/sites/feuture/user_upload/FEUTURE%20Online%20Paper%20No%2016%20D6.3.pdf), (25.07.2022).

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threat to open its borders for migrants and refugees to cross into the EU, citing the Union's failure to comply with the refugee deal brokered in 2016. Overwhelmed by thousands of refugees at the border, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis accused Turkey of being an official trafficker of migrants to the EU.⁵⁸ The event was framed by the Greek media and Greek political class as an "invasion" of migrants orchestrated by President Erdoğan and the Turkish Government (Interviewee no. 3).

B -The Cyprus Imbrolio

While Turkey's Cyprus policy was Europeanized between 1999 and 2005, it started to de-Europeanize after the suspension of the eight EU accession chapters in December 2006. In response to the failure of the EU to lift the trade embargo on Northern Cyprus, contrary to the EU's promise before the referendum on the Annan Plan in 2004, Turkey did not open its airports and harbours to the RoC. In turn, the EU suspended eight negotiation chapters with Turkey in December 2006, meaning that Turkey's EU accession process was de facto frozen. From that date onwards, Turkey has increasingly emphasized the equal status of what it claims are two sovereign states on the island, returning to its traditional Cyprus policy before the Helsinki Summit in 1999. Also, the Turkish Cypriot centre-right political parties began to voice a two-state settlement for the island along the lines of Eroğlu's "soft divorce" proposal.⁵⁹ In the more strongly de-Europeanized environment after 2016, Turkey advocated a two-state settlement for the Cyprus issue more vocally.

The Europeanization of Turkish policy towards the Cyprus dispute during the post-Helsinki era after 1999 received a severe blow following the accession of the RoC to the EU. With the RoC representing the entire island entering the EU in 2004, it has had little incentive to reach a compromise on the Cyprus dispute. As concisely put by Former British Foreign Minister Jack Straw (2017), "The reality is that no Greek Cypriot leader will ever be

⁵⁸ Matina Stevis-Gridneff, "Vigilantes in Greece Say 'No More' to Migrants", *The New York Times*, 7 March 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/europe/greece-turkey-migrants.html>, (07.01.2024).

⁵⁹ "Cyprus: Reunification Proving Elusive", *Congressional Research Service (CRS)*, CRS Report Number: R41136, Washington 15 April 2019, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R41136?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22%5C%22Cyprus%3A+Reunification+Prov+ing+Elusive%5C%22%2C%22%7D&s=1&r=1>, (10.01.2024).

able to get their electorate behind a deal. The status quo for the south is simply too comfortable”.⁶⁰

Indeed, the accession of the RoC to the EU completely transformed the dynamics of the negotiations. Essentially, the accession of the RoC to the EU made the Cyprus dispute an internal problem of the EU, thus diminishing the impartiality of Brussels on the issue. This has, in turn, dampened the pro-settlement attitude in Turkey and Northern Cyprus alike. As a result, for Turkey, “the internalisation of the Cyprus issue... decreased the clarity of the EU reward, the credibility of conditionality and, therefore, incentives to meet conditions on the dispute”.⁶¹

The de-Europeanization of Turkey’s Cyprus policy was further bolstered by other issues after 2016. Most importantly, Turkey’s reconceptualization of its foreign policy in the region in a more assertive direction and with the aim of projecting power contributed to Turkey’s disengagement from a federal solution (Interviewee no. 3). Also, the failure of negotiations in Crans Montana in early July 2017 once more undermined the belief on the Turkish side in a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation based on the political equality of the Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus and leading Turkish officials to voice a two-state formula for the island more strongly. According to Ankara, the negotiations of over 50 years aimed at the creation of a federal state and spearheaded by the UN, was “a tested and exhausted process”.⁶² And the strained relations between Turkey and Greece after 2016 did not further any settlement of the Cyprus dispute.

Following the October 2020 presidential elections in Northern Cyprus, the Ankara-backed candidate Ersin Tatar, who advocated a two-state settlement, replaced the pro-federalism president, Mustafa Akıncı. Then, as part of so-called “paradigmatic change” in Turkish policy towards the Cyprus issue, Turkey accelerated its efforts to ensure the international

⁶⁰ Jack Straw, “Only a Partitioned Island Will Bring the Dispute between Turkish and Greek Cypriots to an End”, *Independent*, 1 October 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/cyprus-turkish-greek-cypriots-partition-eu-international-community-should-act-a7976711.html>, (07.03.2024).

⁶¹ George Kyris, “Europeanisation and Conflict Resolution: The Case of Cyprus”, *IBEI Working Papers* 2013/39, 1 November 2013, p. 11, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2509894, (09.04.2021).

⁶² “Turkey Rejects European Parliament’s ‘Non-Binding’ Resolution on Cyprus”, *Trtworld.com*, (27.11.2021), <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/turkey-rejects-european-parliament-s-non-binding-resolution-on-cyprus-41842>, (08.02.2024).

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recognition of the TRNC as an independent state. In November 2022, the TRNC was admitted as an observer to the Organization of Turkic States, a pan-Turkic intergovernmental organization comprising Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in addition to Turkey.

Another indication that Turkey had lost faith in the idea of a federal solution in Cyprus was its move to reopen Maraş (Varosha). A deserted resort in the aftermath of the 1974 Turkish military intervention in Northern Cyprus and famous for its luxurious hotels and casinos, Maraş, was partially reopened for public use on 8 October 2020. As Maraş was among the areas to be returned to the Greek Cypriots in the event of a settlement, its reopening by Turkey angered both the EU and Greek Cypriots.⁶³

C -The Gas Dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean

Turkey's policy towards the ownership of the gas resources in the Eastern Mediterranean also displayed moved towards de-Europeanization after 2016. Between 2006 and 2015, Turkish policy there had involved sending diplomatic notes and some exercise of "gunboat diplomacy"; after 2016, though, it increased drilling activities and increasingly relied on vocal assertions of its rights, coming to the brink of open conflict with Greece.⁶⁴ In the post-2016 period, the Turkish Naval Forces often confronted the Hellenic Navy.

The gas finds in the Eastern Mediterranean after 2009 induced Israel, Cyprus and Greece to cooperate to transport the gas through pipelines and establish the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF). Egypt, Jordan, Italy and the Palestinian Authority also joined the Forum, a regional realignment that increased Turkey's sense of isolation and led to a more militarized attitude based on the Blue Homeland (*Mavi Vatan*)⁶⁵ doctrine to safeguard its own and Northern Cyprus' sovereignty rights in the Eastern

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Emre İşeri, "Turkey's Entangled (Energy) Security Concerns and the Cyprus Question in the Eastern Mediterranean, in Greece and Turkey", *Conflict and Cooperation: From Europeanization to De-Europeanization*, (ed.) Alexis Heraclides and Gizem A. Çakmak, Routledge, New York 2019, p. 257-270.

⁶⁵ Mavi Vatan is Turkey's maritime foreign policy ideology that claims for Turkey a larger area in the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea than that foreseen in the unofficial "Seville" map released in 2004; on the basis of this doctrine, Turkey was more inclined to use hard power to safeguard its maritime boundaries in the region.

Mediterranean region. Turkey's sense of encirclement peaked when France and the EU and then the UAE also supported Greece.

In response, Turkey concluded a MoU with Libya's UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) in November 2019: The Delimitation of Maritime Jurisdiction Areas in the Mediterranean Sea (the Memorandum on Delimitation).⁶⁶ The Memorandum on Delimitation was aimed at disrupting the gas pipeline projects of the EMGF countries and making known Turkey's position on its maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean. In exchange for this deal, Turkey committed to providing military support to the GNA against the assault on Tripoli by the insurgent Khalifa Haftar. And in retaliation, in August 2020, Greece signed a similar maritime delimitation agreement to the Turkish-Libyan one with Egypt.⁶⁷

On the subject of the gas dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey objected to the agreements made by the RoC with other states for several reasons. These included Turkey's non-recognition of the RoC and the RoC's controversial claim to represent the whole island. As a result, Turkey maintained that unilateral gas exploration activities by the RoC should be suspended until a permanent settlement on the Cyprus issue was reached.⁶⁸ Turkey sought to counterbalance the unilateral RoC drilling operations by taking "reciprocal steps of equal importance".⁶⁹ It signed the Continental Shelf Delimitation Agreement with Northern Cyprus in September 2011.⁷⁰ and received a licence from the TRNC for the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) to conduct hydrocarbon exploration and

⁶⁶ Daren Butler and Tuvan Gümrükçü, "Turkey Signs Maritime Boundaries Deal with Libya amid Exploration Row", *US News*, 28 November 2019, <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2019-11-28/turkey-and-libya-sign-deal-on-maritime-zones-in-the-mediterranean>, (15.02.2024).

⁶⁷ "Egypt and Greece Sign Agreement on Exclusive Economic Zone", *Reuters*, (06.08.2020), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-greece-idUSKCN252216>, (15.02.2024).

⁶⁸ Sohbət Karbuz, "Geostrategic Importance of East Mediterranean Gas Resources", *Energy Economy, Finance and Geostrategy*, (eds.) André B. Dorsman, Volkan Ş. Ediger and Mehmet Baha Karan, Springer, Cham 2018, p. 249.

⁶⁹ Ayla Gürel and Laura LeCornu, *Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean Hydrocarbons*, *GPoT Center*, İstanbul 2013, p. 14.

⁷⁰ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Press Statement on the Continental Shelf Delimitation Agreement Signed Between Turkey and the TRNC, No: 216", 21 September 2011, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-216_-21-september-2011_-press-statement-on-the-continental-shelf-delimitation-agreement-signed-between-turkey-and-the-trnc.en.mfa, (02.02.2024).

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exploitation activities around the island.⁷¹ Therefore, both the foreign energy firms that had been granted a licence by the RoC (Total, Exxon Mobil and ENI) and the TPAO undertook gas exploitation operations in the seas around Cyprus, resulting in the escalation of tension in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The EU became a party to the dispute since Greece and the RoC were member states and Turkey a candidate country. Brussels supported the Greek and the RoC lines in the disagreement. It described Turkey's drilling operations as illegal and imposed sanctions on Turkey. In 2015, the EU also approved the East-Med pipeline project to ship the gas discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean to Greece via Cyprus and Crete. The scramble between Greece and Turkey came to a head when Turkey declared a Navigational Telex (Navtex) on 21 July 2020 for a seismic survey vessel (the Oruç Reis) to undertake drilling operations in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Greece claimed that the Navtex-defined maritime area fell within the area of its continental shelf and that Turkey's drilling operations there would thus violate international law.⁷² As a result, friction escalated, and the two countries came to the brink of war. This was averted by Germany's mediation. Turkey agreed to suspend its drilling operations in the region and revised its confrontational policy in the Eastern Mediterranean. It withdrew the Oruç Reis on 12 September 2020, and in January 2021, Turkey resumed exploratory talks with Greece that had stalled in 2016.

Conclusion

While Turkey sought to fulfil the EU's non-Copenhagen foreign policy criteria in the post-Helsinki environment between 1999 and 2005, when the conditions were favourable for Europeanization, the post-2006 developments created an environment conducive to the de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy. In this context, this paper has used the EIM as a useful framework for understanding the de-Europeanization of foreign policy in pre-accession countries like Turkey.

⁷¹ Karbuz, *op.cit.*, p. 242.

⁷² Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Ministry of Foreign Affairs Statement on Turkey's New Illegal Navtex", 21 July 2020, <https://www.mfa.gr/usa/en/the-embassy/news/ministry-of-foreign-affairs-statement-on-turkeys-new-illegal-navtex-21-july-2020.html>, (15.02.2024).

Drawing on the EIM, the paper has demonstrated that the increased size of adoption costs, the declined credibility of the EU's promise and threat, the reduced size and speed of accession and the problems associated with the determinacy of conditions in the post-2006 era provided an environment conducive to de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy. In other words, the expansion of adoption costs of EU political conditionality, the rise of security threats and anti-Western nationalism and the worsening of Ankara's relationship with Brussels paved the way for the de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy.

As regards the credibility of the EU's threats to withhold membership, the shifting power asymmetry in favour of Turkey, the hastened drift to multi-polarity and the presence of cross-conditionality as well as the long-term problems plaguing the EU all harmed its credibility. With respect to the credibility of the EU's promises, the problems afflicting Turkish-EU relations, including the Cyprus issue, the EU's indecisiveness over Turkey's EU accession and the deterioration in Turkish-EU relations following the coup attempt in 2016 undermined the credibility of Turkey's EU membership prospects. When it comes to the determinacy of conditions, such factors as the toughening up of the accession criteria and the political nature of the evaluation of the fulfilment of the accession conditions weakened this for Turkey. Regarding the size of the reward, Turkey's special treatment by the EU, the suspension of a substantial number of negotiation chapters and the halting of the Turkish-EU accession process due to the imposition of the state of emergency in Turkey following the July 2016 coup attempt reduced its attractiveness for Turkey.

In this context, Turkish-Greek relations flourished during the 1999-2005 period under the strong influence of the EU but then dampened against the background of a de-Europeanized environment in Turkish foreign policy after 2006, reaching a nadir in 2016. The July 2016 coup attempt acted as a catalyst for the de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy towards Greece. Specifically, the deterioration in Turkish-EU relations after the attempted coup and Greece's granting of refuge to eight Turkish officers linked to the coup attempt constituted a significant milestone in the acceleration of the de-Europeanization of Turkey's external affairs and triggered the start of tense relations between Turkey and Greece.

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Against the background of the de-Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy, especially following the coup plot, it is hard to foresee a re-Europeanization of Turkish-Greek relations. This analysis holds even after the recent “earthquake diplomacy,” which began to dominate relations between Athens and Ankara once more in a way reminiscent of the rapprochement following the 1999 earthquakes in both countries. Although the visit to Greece of President Erdoğan in December 2023 may appear promising for a future rapprochement, in the context of Turkey’s presently de-Europeanized foreign policy, bilateral relations cannot be expected to take a positive, concrete turn so far as high politics is concerned. The EU has the capacity to play a role in the reduction of tension and appeasement of conflicts between Turkey and Greece, but only on condition that Turkey moves towards re-Europeanization, Greek national politics opts for cooperation and that the EU acts as a neutral mediator.

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Appendix 1. Experts Interviewed

Dimitris TSAROUHAS, Political Scientist, Bilkent University, Ankara, 4 March 2021.

Fuat AKSU, Foreign Policy Expert, Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul, 15 March 2021.

Sinan ULGEN, Head of Edam, a foreign policy think tank, Istanbul, 12 March 2021.

Konstantinos TSITSELIKIS, Minority Rights Expert, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, 16 March 2021.