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ARTICLE

The European Union's Accession Negotiations with Turkey from a Foreign Policy Perspective

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ABSTRACT The opening of accession negotiations between Turkey and the EU is a historic turning point for the European Union's foreign policy. This paper proposes that the EU needs to accept Turkey as a member — subject to Turkey's ability to meet all the accession criteria — for the realization of its foreign policy objectives. The opening of accession negotiations with Turkey is a foreign policy decision for the EU with the aim of bringing about a transformation in Turkey as well as guaranteeing stability in the EU's borders in the region where Turkey is located. The paper argues that Turkey's accession is critical for the credibility of the EU's foreign policy and its enlargement process. In addition, Turkey's accession would significantly add to the EU's hard and soft power capabilities, enhancing its role as an international actor.

KEY WORDS: Turkey, European Union, foreign policy, security, 2nd pillar development

Introduction

A historic turning point was reached for the European Union's foreign policy on 3 October 2005 when the European Council formally and unanimously opened accession negotiations with Turkey. This is a revolutionary step for the EU's foreign policy since Turkey's accession would drastically change the EU geographically and culturally. This paper proposes that the EU needs to accept Turkey as a member — subject to Turkey's ability to meet all the accession criteria — for the realization of its foreign policy objectives. The opening of accession negotiations with Turkey is a foreign policy decision for the EU with the aim of bringing about a transformation in Turkey as well as

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guaranteeing stability in the EU's borders in the region where Turkey is located. The paper argues that Turkey's accession is critical for the credibility of the EU's foreign policy and its enlargement process. In addition, Turkey's accession would significantly add to the EU's hard and soft power capabilities, enhancing its role as an international actor. Turkey's role in EU foreign policy was reflected by Jack Straw, British Minister of Foreign Affairs, when he declared that "We owe this to Turkey ... It's going to be a long road ahead but bringing Turkey into the EU is a prize worth striving for" (Beunderman 2005).

On the one hand, Turkey's accession is critical for its probable impact on the EU's 2nd pillar integration. On the other hand, Turkish accession to the EU would demonstrate the strength of the enlargement policy as a civilian tool in achieving the foreign policy objectives of the Union. This is why the symbolic importance of Turkey's negotiations with the EU for European foreign policy is high. One needs to keep in mind that the EU has relied on the policy of enlargement as one of its most powerful tools for promoting its foreign policy (Manners 2002, Sjursen 2002, Müftülier-Baç and McLaren 2003, Smith 2004). Turkey's inclusion into the enlargement process in 1999 with the Helsinki European Council and the subsequent opening of accession negotiations in 2005 need to be evaluated in this light of EU foreign policy making. It is through the accession process that the EU would bring about a diffusion of European norms to Turkey, thereby triggering a socio-political transformation. In addition, the European Union with Turkey as a member would have a different weight in world politics due to the added value that Turkey would bring in terms of capabilities. As for the normative power of the EU, it would be strengthened with Turkey's accession where a democratic country with a Muslim population would serve as a key player in projecting European values and norms to the EU's southern borders. Turkey's relations with the Middle Eastern, Mediterranean and Caucasian countries concern the EU's foreign policy objectives as defined by the 2003 Security Strategy Document.

This said, Turkey's accession to the EU is a major challenge for the EU's foreign policy. The internal divisions within the EU over Turkey's accession highlight the limits of enlargement policy when utilized as a foreign policy tool. Similarly, if Turkey becomes a member, the EU would then have a different set of foreign policy issues to deal with, such as the tensions in the Middle East, the Kurdish problem, the ongoing war in Iraq and the conflicts in the Caucasus. Turkey's accession to the EU would bring the borders of the EU to Iraq, Syria and the Caucasus. This has two implications, the EU would become party to the conflicts in the region where Turkey is located and it would need to adopt new tools to deal with these conflicts. The European Neighbourhood Policy might need to be rethought and further expanded to deal with the new neighbours. Thus, Turkey's accession to the EU could be viewed in different lights: on the one hand, one could argue that Turkey's accession is too costly in pushing the limits of European integration and bringing in major conflict areas into the European agenda. The French President Nicolas Sarkozy (2007), for example, claims "he wouldn't want to

be the one who was going to explain to French pupils that Europe's borders were with Syria". On the other hand, one could argue — as in this paper — that Turkey's accession to the EU has clear benefits for European foreign policy and that "Turkey is both a spearhead and a bridgehead for European interests" (Emerson and Tocci 2004, p. 4).

There are three main factors that one could stress in that equation; Turkey's unique character as a secular democracy with a Muslim population that sees itself as part of Europe — this would enhance the diffusion of European norms into the European periphery; and Turkey's geographical location and military capabilities would contribute to European hard power. Despite the current close degree of cooperation between Turkey and the EU, these are additional benefits that the EU would incur when Turkey becomes a member. This is to say that the current degree of close cooperation between Turkey and the EU should not be taken for granted and expected to continue even if the accession process fails — not because of Turkish inability to meet the accession criteria but due to internal conflicts in the EU. Equally important, if Turkey does not become a member, this would constitute a failure in the EU's enlargement policy where the EU's capacity to project its normative power and bring about political and economic transformation would be greatly undermined.

This article evolves with an analysis of the EU's enlargement policy as an instrument of foreign policy in its relations with Turkey and the possible repercussions it carries for the EU's foreign policy in general. Secondly, the paper discusses the Turkish membership from the viewpoint of the EU's soft power role and from that of EU capabilities. In this analysis three areas constitute the key focus: Turkey's role in diffusing European norms into the EU's periphery, namely the Middle East; Turkey's impact in advancing the EU's hard power capabilities through its military might and past experience; and the Turkish role in the EU–Black Sea region cooperation. The Middle East and the Black Sea region, along with the Balkans, would be areas where Turkey's impact on EU foreign policy would be most widely felt. That does not mean that other issues, such as Turkey's role in Transatlantic relations, the EU's relations with Russia and global trade, are less important but these issues are beyond the remit of this paper.

The EU's Enlargement Policy as a Foreign Policy Tool and Turkey's Accession

The EU's main foreign policy tool has been its enlargement policy and the promise of economic and political rewards to the countries in its periphery (Smith 2004). On the other hand, the EU does not aspire to develop significant military capabilities but relies on its civilian tools to promote its interests in world politics (Manners 2002). The EU's main power lies in its projection of its norms and its ability to bring about political change in the countries in its periphery (Diez 2004).

An important note here is that the EU has relied on the policy of enlargement as a major foreign policy tool, however, "the offer of membership is a

foreign policy tool nearing its sell-by date” (Smith 2004, p. 1). This means that the EU needed to develop and diversify its foreign policy tools to trade agreements, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and association agreements. (Smith 2004, Diez and Stetter 2006) This is why the concerns on stability and security in its neighbours led the EU to adopt such tools as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) in 1995 and the ENP in 2004. These tools targeted the elimination of causes of conflict rather than creating hard power mechanisms to suppress them. In the post-9/11 international environment, this became particularly important as the most important challenge to European security comes from terrorism, which happened to have Islamic fundamentalism at its root. Thus, the EU aims at eliminating the background within which security threats emerge with its civilian power tools. The terrorist attacks on European soil since 2003 further illustrate the need to establish new venues of understanding and tools between the EU and the Islamic world. In December 2003, the European Council adopted the European Security Strategy Document, which identifies new risks to European security and stresses the tools for promoting comprehension between different cultures. The EU aims to stabilize the countries in its periphery — in the Mediterranean, the Black Sea region, the Caucasus and Africa — through variety of soft power tools. Consequently, the ENP aims to bring stability and security to the countries on the borders of the EU without necessarily giving them the prospect of membership. These two documents and policies are soft power mechanisms and tools that intensify the EU’s role as a civilian power. The EU’s most effective foreign policy tool is enlargement and/or the potential for accession. The countries in the EU periphery are open to the EU and its criticisms because of the possible material and also ideational gains. That is why the EU is an effective civilian power where it could induce and impact change in areas where hard power alone might fail (Sjursen 2007). Consequently, Turkey’s accession to the EU is important for the success of the EU’s enlargement policy as a foreign policy tool. In addition, it would increase the EU’s hold in the troubled regions to which Turkey belongs.

This is not to argue that the foreign policy dimension is the most important and, therefore, the determining factor for Turkey’s accession. In order to fully accede to the EU, Turkey needs to complete its talks over the 35 chapters of the *acquis*, remain firmly committed to political reforms and democratic principles. However, even if Turkey meets all the accession criteria, there is the probability that it might not become a full member of the EU. There is ongoing divide inside the EU over Turkey’s accession. The French and Austrian decisions to hold referenda on Turkey’s accession for the ratification of its Accession Treaty might very well lead to that result. This reluctance towards Turkey’s accession is also reflected in the French President, Nicolas Sarkozy’s (2007) declaration, “I am in favour of signing a contract with Turkey. I am in favour of a joint market with Turkey. But I am against Turkey’s integration into Europe. Turkey is a small Asia. And there is no reason for it to be a part of Europe. In 25 years, Turkey’s population will be 100 million. Turkey is a great civilization; but not a European one”.

The EU member states, despite the opening of accession negotiations unanimously, have diverging preferences over Turkey's accession and the EU's internal dynamics play an important role in determining the pace and nature of negotiations. What is important here is that this divide inside the EU implies that even if Turkey meets all the accession criteria, it might never succeed in becoming a full member. This possibility carries a risk for harming the EU's soft power capability. According to Enlargement Commissioner, Olli Rehn (2007), "there often seems to be an assumption that there is no cost to questioning the commitments that the EU has made. Unfortunately, this is not true. Every time that countries gain the impression that the process may not lead to membership, it diminishes the power of our conditionality".

This is precisely why the EU's ability to promote its foreign policy and security interests through soft power tools is dependent on its credibility. The EU's transformative power and its ability to secure its borders via its civilian tools depend on the EU's compliance to its commitments. This is illustrated in the Turkish accession negotiations process: with the internal disputes in the EU reflected onto Turkey and the EU's mixed signals, the Turkish incentives to adopt the EU democratic criteria and harmonize its laws to the EU *acquis* diminish. When the EU drifts away from the Turkish accession talks because of internal disputes and not due to the Turkish failure in adopting the criteria, then this jeopardizes the EU's international credibility. When accession negotiations began with Turkey upon Turkey's fulfilment of the political aspects of the Copenhagen criteria, the European Council stated: "the shared goal of negotiations is accession". If Turkey's accession to the EU becomes problematic due to EU-related factors, rather than Turkey's non-compliance with the accession criteria, then this would deliver a significant blow to the European Union's foreign policy making. In other words, Turkey's accession to the EU is not only important in terms of its material and ideational contribution to the EU's foreign policy, but also in terms of its symbolic impact on EU foreign policy if the EU fails to honour its commitments. Thus, a failure to honour its commitments towards Turkey would greatly weaken the EU's most potent foreign policy tool: its enlargement policy. This is why the Turkish chief negotiator, Ali Babacan, declared "The European Union will continue to be strong so long as it keeps its promises" (Mahony 2007a).

This is not to argue that there is no debate inside Turkey over the merits of membership. The Turkish governing elites and society are composed of different social groups which have diverging preferences on the issue of EU membership. Currently in Turkey, there are "continuing debates between pro-EU and Eurosceptic circles that still constitute an important domestic factor shaping the dynamics of Turkey's candidacy process. The interaction between these circles is characterized by cleavages on political and economic aspects such as compliance with the Copenhagen political criteria and the obligations of the customs union" (Eylemer and Tas 2007, p. 1). However, the Turkish government has made EU membership a priority foreign policy goal since 2002 and is working towards meeting the accession criteria. This is reflected by Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan as "Turkey's EU accession process

is the country's indispensable foreign policy target and that Turkey continues to take required steps for EU full membership" (TNN Haber, 2008). The adaptation process to the EU norms and criteria deepen the cleavage between the reformers and the reactionaries in Turkey and the hands of the reformers are weakened in Turkey when the EU projects its own internal disputes into the negotiation process. The opposition leader, Deniz Baykal, reflects this position by his arguments that the "EU demands political reforms in Turkey but has no intention of accepting Turkey as a member" (*Haber Alemleri* 2006). As a result, the support for Turkey's EU membership has declined in the last two years from 70 per cent to about 40 per cent. This decline, in turn, weakens the hold of the EU on Turkey and impacts its leverage in bringing about change. The complexities posed by the internal fractions inside the EU and their reflection into the social divides in Turkey need to be noted in the accession process. The interplay of the intra-EU bargaining over Turkey and intra-Turkey debates shapes the EU's transformative power through the enlargement policy. Since enlargement policy is a key civilian power instrument for the EU, its possible failure in the Turkish case could harm the EU's overall objective of promoting a zone of peace and stability. It is within this background that Turkey's accession to the EU has to be analysed.

Turkey's Role in Enhancing the EU's Civilian Power

Turkey is the only candidate country for the EU which is both a member of NATO, the Council of Europe and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Turkey has a unique place in Europe: it is both a European country and, at the same time, is part of the Middle Eastern subsystem of states. It has been secular since 1923 and a functioning democracy since 1946. It has a predominantly Muslim population; however, its path of modernization has inspired many other Middle Eastern countries where it was seen as a model demonstrating secular democratic values could co-exist with a population that might choose to practice Islam in their private life. The pro-European forces in the Middle East perceive Turkey's membership to the EU as a key development in bringing stability to the region. This is why some analysts in the Middle East, such as Fares Braizat, argue that: "for the Arabs, it [Turkey's accession to the EU] means that Turkey could play a significant role in the EU regarding the EU policies towards the Arab and Muslim regions ... the Arabs look up to Turkey as a model for bringing modernization and democracy" (Hakim 2005). Its EU membership might foster a better understanding between the European and Muslim civilizations. This is reflected in Syrian Prime Minister Naji Otri's declaration "Turkey will prove the counter argument of the civilization clash scenario. Turkey's entrance to the EU as a Muslim country will serve to tell the problems of Islamic world to the West. We see Turkey as representative of the Islamic world in the EU" (*ibid.*). It is, therefore, expected that "the Turkish project aims to prove that marriage between Islam and democracy, bound by European vows, can prosper" (*Financial Times* 2006).

Turkey's EU accession could anchor Europe and the Middle East together and that might decrease the lure of fundamentalism in the region. That is

why it is stressed that Turkey's inclusion into the EU would make Huntington's (1993) clash of civilizations argument — Western civilization versus the Islamic civilization — less valid. Turkey's unique role in that aspect is illustrated by its active participation in the United Nations project of Alliance of Civilizations. Interestingly, the Alliance of Civilizations was a project initiated and co-sponsored by the Turkish government in 2005, which was then taken over by the UN upon the suggestion of the Spanish. The initiative demonstrates Turkish willingness to reconcile Islamic and European values and is defended by the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, as "Turkey's European Union membership will be an opportunity to promote an alliance of civilizations and every hurdle put before Turkey out of religious and cultural motives will be stones in a wall blocking the way to daylight, harmony and tolerance" (Erdoğan 2008).

Turkey's unique role in Europe of bringing together different cultures around a common understanding is important if one considers the fact that one of the sources of the current crisis in international politics comes from a lack of understanding between different cultures and religions. Turkey's endorsement of the European stance in world matters could bring legitimacy to the EU's position in the eyes of non-Europeans. In addition, Turkey acts as a factor of stability within its region basically because it can talk credibly to all the parties, the Europeans and the non-Europeans. This latter role was, for example, illustrated greatly during the NATO campaign in Afghanistan when NATO's Civilian Representative in Afghanistan from 2003 to summer 2006 was a former Turkish Foreign Minister, Hikmet Cetin. Turkey's effective presence in the NATO campaign in Afghanistan illustrates that one of the most important roles that Turkey plays is in aiding communication with the two culturally different sides because both sides trust the Turkish interference. This is particularly important given that one of the main aims in international politics in the twenty-first century is to erode causes of violence and military confrontation rather than just suppress them militarily.

A recent illustration of the role that Turkey could play was provided in November 2007 when the Israeli president Shimon Peres and Palestinian President Mahmoud Assad visited Ankara prior to the Annapolis meeting in the USA. In the Ankara meeting, Peres became the first Israeli president to give a speech in the parliament of a Muslim country and the three Presidents, Perez, Assad and the Turkish President Abdullah Gul, signed an agreement to set up industrial zones in the West Bank. The Turkish Chambers of Commerce will be key organizer of the project and enable new economic ties to flourish between the Israelis and the Palestinians. This new cooperation platform demonstrates the leadership role played by Turkey in the region on the one hand, and demonstrates the credibility that Turkey has in the eyes of both parties as an objective mediator, on the other. It is precisely through such a role that Turkey's accession to the EU would enable the diffusion of European norms to the Middle East region and enhance the EU's soft power capabilities. A similar role was played by the Turkish government in the Lebanese presidential elections in 2007 and by the Turkish stance on nuclear weapons in the Middle East. Turkey is actively promoting a solution to the

Iranian nuclear weapons crisis through diplomatic measures and, for that purpose, Turkish President Abdullah Gul met with Egyptian President Husnu Mubarak in January 2008. Gul's claim: "We don't want to see weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and we believe that these issues should be sorted out via diplomatic means" (*Zaman* 2008) sent a strong message to all the parties involved in the crisis.

The second region where the Turkish impact on the EU's foreign policy would be critical is the Black Sea region. In 1989, Turkey became the main architect and leader of a new initiative, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and this organization has become a main forum for discussion among the Black Sea countries. The main developments in 2006–2007 brought the Black Sea into the forefront of the EU's foreign policy priorities; the energy security issues and the accession of Bulgaria and Romania as full members to the EU on 1 January 2007. On 11 April 2007, the European Commission prepared a package to foster cooperation between the EU and the BSEC, with the stated aim of bringing stability to the Black Sea region and to secure the EU's access to energy resources in the area. According to the European Commission, "the Black Sea region, a major transit route for oil and gas coming to Europe from Russia and Central Asia, is of strategic importance for EU energy supply security" (*EUObserver* 2007). Turkey is the key player in the Black Sea region as it is through the Turkish Straits that the Black Sea countries gain access to the Mediterranean. In addition, Turkey is the main transit country for multiple energy pipelines from Central Asia to the Caucasus to the Mediterranean ports. Turkey's role as an energy corridor for the EU is an important consideration in its membership negotiations.

EU imports approximately 60 percent of its energy needs from Turkey's neighbouring regions and attaches utmost importance to secured access to these resources. Thus Turkey's location at the crossroads of major new energy transport projects, long-established Iraqi oil pipelines to İskenderun, as well as the Turkish Straits linking the Black Sea and Mediterranean elevates Turkey to a vital position in the Union's energy strategies (Aydın and Açıkmış 2004, p. 54).

Thus, Turkey plays a critical role for the security of Europe's energy needs and the EU needs Turkey's participation in its energy politics and security.

However, it is not only the material impact but also the related aim of bringing stability to a region that is marked by high volatility which the European Union wants to deal with. In that aspect, the proposals to deepen cooperative ties between the EU and BSEC fit very well with the goals of the ENP. Since Turkey acts as the leading country in BSEC, with the main headquarters located in Turkey, Turkey's participation would enhance the EU's success in building an institutional arrangement between the EU and BSEC. Equally important, if Turkey does not become a member of the EU, its exclusion from the EU might complicate workable arrangements between the EU and BSEC. This does not mean that Turkey would block cooperation, but

that an EU with Turkey as a member would have a greater role in the Black Sea region than an EU without Turkey.

Turkey's critical role in securing energy supplies for the EU was enhanced in July 2006, when the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan (BTC) Pipeline, which runs from Baku (the Azeri Caspian port that goes through Azerbaijan and Georgia) to Ceyhan (the Turkish Mediterranean port), became operational. There are two additional projects that would make Turkey an integral part of the EU's security policy: one is the project on Nabucco that is planned to become operational in 2013, spanning 3,400 km, carrying thirty-one billion cubic tons of natural gas per year from Turkey into Austria, passing through Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary. This is a very important project because it would decrease the EU's dependence on Russia for gas, similar to the Baku–Ceyhan pipeline. However, a major problem in that area is that the EU has not yet convinced Turkmenistan to use the pipeline, which leads to the continuation of the EU's dependency on Russia. It is highly likely that the EU would need Turkey's support in its relations with Turkmenistan. The second such project is in line with the Commission's Communication on the Black Sea of April 2007, where another pipeline is being built between Samsun (Turkish port in the Black Sea region) and Ceyhan (Turkey's Mediterranean port) in order to complement the Baku–Ceyhan pipeline. The construction of that pipeline began on 25 April 2007. These pipelines all play an essential role in putting Turkey into a critical position for the EU's energy security policy. What is more important, they aim to reduce the European dependence on Russia — an important European foreign policy goal — and contribute to regional stability and welfare, which is a critical objective for the EU's foreign policy in line with the ENP and its civilian power tools.

In short, Turkey's accession to the EU would bring the EU's borders to the Middle East, the Caucasus and enable the EU to exert a greater influence in these regions. This is not to say that there are no costs for this involvement: a number of foreign policy issues in the Middle East, such as the Iraqi crisis, the Arab–Israeli conflict, the Kurdish question, would become part and parcel of EU foreign policy making. These additional costs make certain groups in Europe wary of Turkey's accession. However, these are issues and problems that the EU needs to deal with anyway and, with Turkey as a member, it might be easier to tackle these problems. This is illustrated by the British Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, as

If Turkey can play a role as a member of the European Union, engaged in shared projects, promoting shared values, the prize for Turkey, for Britain and for Europe as a whole is immense: to witness an age where the world is not only more connected, and more interdependent, but also more at ease with the different identities that Turkey bridges, and, as a result, more secure (Miliband 2007).

Making the EU more secure is also an important consideration behind the EU's Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP) where Turkey has the potential to play a critical role, thus increasing its value to the

EU's foreign policy. However, as noted above Turkey's accession would also bring new challenges to the EU's CESDP. These are addressed in the next section.

Turkey and the EU's CESDP

Turkey has been a reliable NATO ally for the European states since it became a member in 1952. It was the main security provider in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Cold War and, since the end of the Cold War, has been a critical player for European security in the volatile region where it is located. Turkey's strategic importance for Europe is based on Turkey's military assets and its gate-keeper position to the main problem areas for European security (Cayhan 2003, Müftülier-Baç 2007). For the EU's strategic interests, Turkey's contribution and inclusion to the 2nd pillar is essential. For example, according to the European Commission's Staff Working Document on Turkey, its geopolitical significance for the EU is as follows: "Turkey is situated at a regional crossroads of strategic importance for Europe: the Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia, Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean; its territory is a transit route for land and air transport with Asia, and for sea transport with Russia and Ukraine. Its neighbours provide key energy supplies for Europe, and it has substantial water resources" (Commission of the European Communities 2004, p. 6).

Turkey's geostrategic position and military capabilities are the keys to its power in international politics. Turkey's EU accession would make NATO-EU cooperation more likely, credible and increase its workability in the complex security environment. Turkey's critical role was illustrated by its participation in the NATO- and EU-led operations in the post-Cold War period. In the Bosnian crisis of 1992–1995, Turkey actively campaigned for international intervention and participated in UNPROFOR with 1,450 troops in 1995, and in NATO's IFOR and SFOR with 1,200 troops. In the 1998–1999 Kosovo conflict, Turkey participated in the NATO mission with ten F-16 aircraft and in NATO's KFOR with 940 troops. Turkey is also an active participant in NATO's ISAF force in Afghanistan, where it participated with 1,450 troops and has resumed command of the NATO force three times since 2003, for periods of eight months. As for the EU-led operations covered under the 'Berlin-plus' arrangements, Turkey participated in Operation Althea in Bosnia with 300 personnel and in the operation in Kosovo with 400 personnel. Turkey also contributed to the EU-only operation in Congo with a C-130 air cargo plane and seventeen personnel. Since 2003, Turkey has provided significant assistance to the EU's CESDP with its voluntary contribution in the Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) operations. Turkey's military contribution in terms of troops and equipment has been substantial and its geographical proximity to the areas of conflict has enhanced its role in strengthening EU-led operations. In addition, Turkey agreed to establish a European Battle Group with Italy and Romania to become operational in 2009.

On 5 September 2006, the Turkish Parliament approved the government bill for Turkey's participation in the UN mission in Lebanon adopted by UN

Security Council Resolution 1701. This meant that for the first time since World War I, Turkish military personnel — 1,000 troops — were part of a mission in a military operation in the Middle East. Even though Turkey participated in the UN embargo against Iraq in 1990 and tied down Iraqi troops at the Turkish–Iraqi border, it refrained from sending troops as part of a multilateral force (Müftüler-Baç 1996), despite the approval of the governmental bill to do so in 1991. Thus, the Turkish government's decision in September 2006 demonstrates a departure from that stance and illustrates the changing Turkish position on the Middle Eastern conflicts. Turkey's involvement in the UN force in Lebanon is in accordance with the ENP as well, where the EU would be engaged in peacekeeping operations in its bordering countries.

However, Turkey's contribution to the EU's CESDP should not be taken for granted. When the European Council, in its 1999 Helsinki summit, took the steps to adopt the RRF and the measures to realize EU-led operations, there was almost the automatic assumption that Turkey — as a long-time, loyal NATO ally — would willingly contribute to the EU-led operations as well. Turkey, on the other hand, felt cheated out of its hard-won place in European security (Müftüler-Baç 2000). The 1999 NATO Washington summit decision to allow the EU to have case-by-case access to NATO assets was overridden by the EU's demand to automatic access to NATO forces. Turkey had significant reservations about the EU's automatic access to NATO assets without giving Turkey the full participation rights it has enjoyed under the Western European Union (WEU) *acquis*. Thus, the institutional cooperation between NATO and the EU became tied to Turkish and, to a certain extent, US reservations. The emergence of the CESDP necessitated a new venue of cooperation between NATO and the EU. In its December 2002 summit, the European Council declared “the Berlin-plus arrangements and the implementation thereof will apply only to those EU member states which are also either NATO members or parties to the ‘Partnerships for Peace’ and which have consequently concluded bilateral security arrangements with NATO” (European Council 2002). This arrangement owed much to the Turkish concerns over the implications of Cyprus' EU membership on Turkish security interests. As a result, Cyprus — neither a NATO member nor party to the Partnerships for Peace (PfP) programme — was kept out of NATO–EU cooperation.

What is important to note here is that Cyprus and Malta would be out of the EU's 2nd pillar as long as they were not included in NATO's PfP programme. Turkey plays the critical role here; since Cyprus acceded to the EU on 1 May 2004 as a divided island, the Cyprus problem became an EU problem. An additional complication is that the UN plan for the unification of the island was approved by Turkish Cypriots in the referendum in April 2004 by a majority and rejected by the Greek Cypriots by a majority. Despite the Turkish Cypriots' approval of the UN plan, the island was not united because the Greek Cypriots rejected the plan, yet they were rewarded with EU membership.

The Cyprus problem constitutes one of the most important foreign policy headaches for the EU and it would decidedly impact the EU's political

integration in terms of its CESDP. Turkey would never approve of Cyprus' inclusion into the NATO framework as long as the Greek Cypriots reject the UN plans and Cyprus continuously blocks the Turkish accession talks by vetoing screening reports for chapters of the *acquis*. This means then the solution of the Cyprus problem is essential, not only for Turkey's accession but also for the future operability of EU-led operations using NATO and Turkish assets. This is why when NATO General Secretary Jaap de Hoop Scheffer visited Turkey in June 2007, Cyprus' demands for participating in NATO–EU missions were discussed. Cyprus currently vetoes Turkey's inclusion into the European Defence Agency as an associate member and Turkey does not approve Cyprus's inclusion into strategic cooperation arrangements between NATO and the EU because Cyprus is not part of NATO and is not included in the PfP either.

The above discussion demonstrates the close cooperation between the EU and Turkey in security matters, which would most likely be reinforced if Turkey becomes a member. However, a question that begs an answer to Turkish involvement in the EU's CESDP is 'what would happen if Turkey does not become a member?' The preview of that has been provided by the crisis in June 2007. On 4 June 2007, the Turkish government withdrew its pledge from the EU's Headline Goals and future operations. However, Turkey did not withdraw its troops from ongoing EU-led operations where it is participating. Turkey has pledged to contribute 6,000 troops, aircraft and ships for the EU's Headline Goal of 2010, making it the fifth-largest contributor to the EU force of 60,000. However, when the EU decided to list Turkey's contribution as a reserve force, the Turkish government announced its withdrawal from the EU force in June 2007. According to the Turkish government, "We cannot accept being a substitute force. This private brigade is a well-equipped one. We warned them, we gave them time but they did not give us a place in the basic list" (Guvenc 2007). "Turkish Defence Minister Vecdi Gönül has confirmed that Turkey has decided to withdraw the commitment to provide a battalion that it had prepared for the independent EU missions when the union failed to place this Turkish force among the main military elements of the headline goal plans, recognizing it instead as an auxiliary unit." (Sariibrahimogulu 2007).

According to EU analysts, the decision "is a setback to the union's sluggish effort to assemble the rapid-reaction forces it needs, an effort called the European Union's headline goal for 2010 and beyond" (Tigner 2007). This is why the Turkish decision to withdraw from the EU's RRF is very critical. This is a very important turning point reached in June 2007 for NATO–EU cooperation on the one hand, and Turkey's contribution to European security on the other hand. If there is no progress made on NATO–EU cooperation arrangements, the EU plan to take Kosovo policing over from the UN, as decided in 2006, would become almost impossible to carry out. Turkey has reservations over the participation of the Greek Cypriots in the EU force to be deployed in Kosovo if the UN passes the resolution allowing the EU to take over from UN. According to the Turkish position, this is an operation covered under Berlin-plus arrangements where Greek Cyprus has no place,

according to the 2002 Copenhagen deal. That is why the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, Abdullah Gul declared:

Parameters were already set in 2002. You shouldn't expect further flexibility from Turkey, a country that has introduced major contributions to NATO as an ally, on this issue. It shouldn't solely be Turkey that is expected to be flexible. Like NATO does in these kinds of situations, the EU should find a solution to this issue itself, without using its form of a decision mechanism as an excuse (Simsek 2007a).

It seems that an EU-led operation is becoming difficult to realize following the operationalization of the Copenhagen deal due to the Cyprus conflict. In addition, Turkish participation in EU-led operations is no longer taken for granted. Turkey, in response to the very mixed signals it receives from the EU, despite the fact that it is currently negotiating the chapters, is putting a distance between itself and the EU in the CESDP. However, this development could also be taken as an opportunity to develop a venue of cooperation between NATO and the EU under the 2002 Copenhagen deal. According to Turkish Deputy Chief of Staff General Ergin Saygun: "We should put an end to duplications and competition between the NATO and EU. The two blocks should understand that their future existence relies on the existence of the other. Our future cooperation should be based on a re-defined transatlantic link, with a transparent, well balanced, non discriminatory and complementary basis" (Simsek 2007b). This is a critical juncture for European security and the EU's CESDP. The ongoing disputes in the EU over Turkey's membership caused the Turkish government to question its readiness to contribute to the EU's CESDP prior to accession. Thus, what was discussed above as the potential contributions that Turkey brings to the EU could also be elaborated as the potential losses for the EU if Turkey never joins the EU. This seems to be the juncture where Turkish involvement in the EU-led operations currently sits; unless Turkey becomes a full member, Turkey's contribution to the EU's material capabilities might be at stake. It should not be taken for granted that the current Turkish contribution to the EU's CESDP will continue even if Turkey does not become a member; it would most likely decrease in the case of non-membership.

On a final note, since the 1999 Helsinki summit where Turkey was declared a candidate country, a process of Europeanization in Turkish foreign policy has begun. Turkey has been going through a change in its key interests, such as the Cyprus problem, the Iraqi war and transatlantic relations, which in turn have led to a convergence of Turkish foreign policy objectives with those of the EU. This is highly interesting in terms of the increased social and domestic debate on Cyprus and the military's role in shaping the foreign policy objectives, which were previously taboo subjects. This increased domestic debate also led to a harmonization between Turkish foreign policy interests and the EU (Aydin and Açıkmeşe 2007). As negotiations unfold, there is a radical change in Turkish foreign policy making, both in terms of a change in discourse and a harmonization of interests between

Turkey and the EU. The Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy could be perceived as an additional benefit that Turkey's EU accession would bring and it could be expected to continue as Turkey comes closer to the EU.

Conclusion

This article has argued that Turkey's accession to the EU is both a challenge and an opportunity for the EU's foreign policy. The EU's enlargement policy is a major tool for its foreign policy making and the Turkish accession constitutes one of its most important test cases. In addition, this paper has argued that Turkey carries a significant weight for the EU's foreign policy because Turkey has a significant contribution to make to the EU's military muscle and it plays a unique symbolic role in bringing together European and Middle Eastern cultures. This might be even more important than projecting a military might, as it could go down to the root of the problems confronting Europe today, namely terrorism and intercultural clash. By increasing cultural understanding and communication, Turkey could play a substantial role in securitizing Europe. At the same time, Turkey contributes to European foreign policy in terms of its military capabilities and geostrategic location, which are tangible assets that Turkey brings to the EU with its eventual membership. In short, if Turkey accedes to the EU, it would significantly add to the EU's hard power capabilities and enhance its civilian power tools. At the same time, the Turkish accession would be an important step for EU foreign policy as it would bring the borders of the EU to the Middle East and bring new challenges to European foreign policy making. None the less, it would be a prized addition to the EU, advancing the EU's ability to secure and stabilize its periphery in line with the objectives of the 2003 Security Strategy Document. Turkey's close ties with its neighbours in the Middle East and its ability to influence its immediate neighbours would bring added value to the EU's foreign policy, increase the EU's ability to foster change in the region while, at the same time, its exclusion would carry costs for the EU. This is why for example, Javier Solana claimed "Turkey is simultaneously situated in the Middle East, Caucasus and Balkans, and it has had a great influence on the region and could help to establish stability ... Keeping Turkish favour would also strengthen the EU's security and otherwise Turkey will seek other partners" (Info-Prod Research 2007, p. 1).

The EU's negotiations with Turkey are important for the credibility of the European foreign policy which has relied largely on the policy of enlargement. The EU's main message is that if a candidate remains committed to its political reforms, adopts all the EU *acquis* and proves itself to be a dynamic economy — in other words, fulfils the Copenhagen criteria — then it would become a member of the EU. This was the main tenet of the EU's foreign policy throughout the 1990s towards Central and Eastern Europe. However, in the Turkish case, this seems no longer to hold true. Turkey fulfils the political and economic aspects of the Copenhagen criteria, as declared by the Commission in 2004 and 2006 Progress Reports on Turkey. Since 2005, the opening of negotiations, Turkey completed its obligations under the

screening process in all 35 chapters, opened and provisionally closed one chapter in June 2006, and is currently negotiating the five chapters that are opened. However, there are still EU governments who declare that even if Turkey meets all the accession criteria, they would still oppose Turkey's accession. That is why Turkey's accession negotiations carry significant implications for the EU's foreign policy. If the EU drifts away from Turkey's accession, not because Turkey is failing to fulfil its obligations — that would be a legitimate reason for the EU not to continue talks — but due to internal disputes and second thoughts, then this would harm the EU's foreign policy and its credibility as an international actor. That is why the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Luis Amado, declared "Cutting membership negotiations will raise a great deal of problems for Europe" (Mahony 2007b).

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