Reshaping Greek-Turkish Relations:

Developments before and after the EU-summit in Helsinki

by Jürgen Reuter[1]

1. Greek-Turkish Dialogue in 1999

In the beginning of 1999, when it came to light that the PKK leader Öcalan was being provided shelter at the Greek Embassy in Nairobi, the Greek-Turkish relationship sank to a record low. Turkey threatened to bring Greece to trial at an international level, charging her on two counts: first, that she was acting as a "terrorist state" and second, that she was refusing to declare that she is not a supporter of the PKK. The Öcalan-affair led to a crisis in the Greek government and hence to the resignation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pangalos. As a result, Georgios A. Papandreou, the former deputy foreign minister, became head of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with him came a noticeable change in the Greek foreign policy towards Turkey. Not only was he able to build on his already good relationship with his Turkish counterpart Ismail Cem, but also he became inspired by the experience of fruitful co-operation between Greece and Turkey established during the Kosovo-crisis in the Spring 1999.

As recently as the Summer of 1999 both Ministers agreed to establish bilateral committees on a high-ranking administrative level to work on so-called low politics issues of mutual interest in order to build mutual confidence. The so-called "high politics issues", such as Cyprus and the Aegean, remained intentionally excluded from the agenda of this incremental dialogue. Instead, the talks concentrated on improving co-operation in economics, tourism, environmental protection, cultural exchanges, and, last but not least, in the control of organised crime

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(smuggling and terrorism). The committees have so far worked successfully in four rounds and have produced several treaties which are being signed sequentially. The diplomatic denonement was made possible following an atmospheric change among the Greek and the Turkish people when both countries became victims of two devastating earthquakes in August and September of 1999. These natural catastrophes created a wave of compassion and spontaneous assistance across the borders, and doubtlessly strengthened the spirit of neighbourly good will in both countries.

Despite these positive steps, it could not be ignored, that it was to be at the EU summit in Helsinki, where this new quality of the Greek-Turkish relationship was put to the test.[2] It was there, that the European Union was to decide whether Turkey would be offered the status of a candidate for membership. Ankara made it unmistakably clear that it would put this warmer diplomatic climate at stake should Athens continue with its negative position towards the issue of candidacy. This threatening behaviour, prior to the summit, illustrated the nervousness of the Turkish government, and at the same time it was not very helpful to the reconciliation process.[3]

2. Greece and the Discussion of Turkey's EU candidacy for membership

Papandreou's widely acknowledged speech at the 54th. UNO General Assembly on September 22, 1999, reflects the atmospheric change in the Greek-Turkish relationship. Without ignoring the existing divergent

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[2] See „Springt Griechenland über den eigenen Schatten?", in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 9.12.1999, p.10.
[3] Ντεμιρέλ: Ελληνικό βέτο για την Τουρκία στο Ελσίνκι θα σημάνει επιστροφή στην ένταση, in: http://www.in.gr/ειδήσεις/κόσμος (7.12.1999) (Αθηναϊκό Πρακτορείο Ειδήσεων, 6.12.1999); Η Άγκυρα προκαλεί λίγο πριν από τη σύνοδο κορυφής, in: Καθημερινή, 7.12.1999, p.5.

positions on Cyprus and the Aegean, he used encouraging words when referring to the current state of the Greek-Turkish relationship:
"If the road to peace is indeed made up of 'a collection of moments' then I also dare hope for our relations with Turkey. My Turkish counterpart, Ismael Cem, and I have been engaged in careful diplomacy for many months. We recently inaugurated discussion committees to address a number of bilateral concerns, including trade, tourism and the environment, where we feel our two countries have much to gain from mutual cooperation. Peoples' aspirations for the principles of democracy, security and prosperity can overcome historical strife. In this democratic spirit, we believe that our security is bound by the stability in the region; that our neighbors' strength is our own strength." Further on he declared the willingness of his country to support Turkey's way to Europe: "From the outset, Greece shared with Turkey the vision that one day Turkey will become a worthy member of a United Europe. But we recognise today that our role needs to load the process."[4]

Through Papandreou's new, dialogue-centred policy over the issue of Turkey's candidacy, Greece is beginning to take on a new, far more rational and quite possibly less 'emotional' role. In the past, Greece's attitude towards Turkey's candidacy has been characterised by sensitivities and veto-threats, thus making it easy for other members of the EU to keep Turkey at a distance.

With his new policy Papandreou can now ensure that Greece is no longer being used as a convenient scapegoat to justify EU's hesitant policy towards Turkey. On the contrary, this policy now appears to have a beneficial influence on other EU members. However, this was not a new idea [5], but it was Papandreou who first converted it into successful policy. On previous occasions he pointed out that, "the EU must now address this

[4] Speech of Papandreou UN General Assembly, 54.Session, http://**www.mfa.gr/whats**new (13.11.99)
[5] Veremis and Couloumbis wrote in 1994:"Σκόπιμο ... θα ήταν να μην κλείνουμε εμείς λεκτικά την πόρτα της Ε.Ε. στους Τούρκους. ... Το να αποδεχόμαστε εμείς τον ρόλο του αποδιοπομπαίου 'υπεύθυνου' για τον τουρκικό

issue as a whole, with greater openness and honesty. All the member states must now take a clear position about whether or not they want Turkey in Europe." And he added that, "Greece supports the acceptance of Turkey as a real, rather than a "virtual" EU candidate at Helsinki. We have to be honest about what we expect from Turkey, and likewise Turkey has to accept her responsibilities." He explained that Turkey will have to carry out democratic reforms, change its foreign policy perspectives, and rid itself of fears. Once these changes are made, Turkey will be equipped to seek solutions to disputes and problems, including bilateral relations with Greece. [6] With these annotations Papandreou refers to the preconditions for EU-membership, which were agreed to, at the European Council in Copenhagen in June 1993.

These so-called "Copenhagen criteria" demand of any given candidate to implement "institutional stability" in order to guarantee democratic and constitutional structures, the preservation of human rights and the protection of minorities. Furthermore the candidate is obliged to commit himself to any duties which result in these criteria, and to pursue the aims of the Union as well as the EMU.[7] It is obvious that controlling the true application of the Copenhagen Criteria in any country, is a political rather than a legal matter. These criteria are fundamental principles of the EU. Hence, they, for the most part, can be found in the EU-Treaty, which makes them essential for the accession of any country. Originally the Copenhagen Criteria were only designed for the Middle- and East-European countries, later, at the European Council in Luxembourg, they were explicitly extended to include Cyprus and Turkey among others.[8] The European Commission now uses the Criteria when addressing EU-related issues. Most recently this was seen in a Commission report discussing the relationship between the EU and Turkey: „Recent developments confirm

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αποκλεισμό είναι λάθος.» (Βερέμης, Θ/Κουλουμπης, Θ, Ελληνική εξωτερική πολιτική, Προοπτικές και προβληματισμοι, Αθηνα 1994 (Σιδέρης), Σ.49 και στην δεύτερη και ενημερωμένη έκδοση (1997), Σ.56.)

[6] Interview with Papandreou in: Die Tageszeitung, 1.11.1999, S.3.

[7] Europäischer Rat in Kopenhagen, Tagung der Staats- und Regierungschefs der Europäischen Gemeinschaft am 21. und 22. Juni 1993, in: Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung, Bonn , Nr. 60, 8. Juli 1993, p. 629-640 (p. 632).

that, although the basic features of a democratic system exist in Turkey, it still does not meet the Copenhagen political criteria. There are serious shortcomings in terms of human rights and protection of minorities. Torture is not systematic but is still widespread and freedom of expression is regularly restricted by the authorities. The National Security Council continues to play a major role in political life. Although there have been some improvements in terms of the independence of the judiciary the emergency courts system remains in place."[9]

In March 1999, the Prime Minister of Turkey, Bülent Ecevit, made clear that, in the foreseeable future, his country will not be (and does not want to be) in the position to meet the Copenhagen Criteria.[10] Yet, the Turkish government is determined to join the EU, and the Union itself moderated its concerns at the recent EU-summit of Helsinki.

The question to examine is, what exactly happened within the EU in that two year period from the Luxembourg summit, December 1997, to the Helsinki-summit, December 1999?

3. From Luxembourg to Helsinki

First of all we must learn a lesson from Brussels: A status of candidacy can be set up on a long-term basis to such an extent that in the end it might remain nothing but a vision.

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[8] Europäischer Rat in Luxemburg vom 12./13.12.1997, Schlußfolgerungen des Vorsitzes, Ziffern 10 und 31.

[9] Regular Report from the Commission on Progress towards Accession Turkey - October 13, 1999. C. Conclusions. http://www.europa.eu.int/enlargement (28.11.99)

[10] President Ecevit in an interview with "Die Zeit" remarked the following:
ZEIT: "Does Turkey accept the criteria for candidacy laid down by the European Council, in June 1993? Which implies institutional stability, guarantee of a democratic system and a state under the rule of law, the keeping of the human rights as well as the protection of minorities and a working market economy." **ECEVIT:** To apply these criteria to Turkey, one has to consider the special characteristics of the Turkish society as well as their different situation in general. Which implies the restriction of certain freedoms in the sight of separatist terror – as the Britons did in North-Ireland, the Spanish in the Basque Country and like the French dealt with the seperatist Corses. We can not argree to the Copenhagen minority concept. There is no minority in that sense, we only know of Turkish citizens. ('Die Zeit', Hamburg, Nr. 13/99, 25.März 1999 – *translated by the author*)

The EU-Presidency of Luxembourg in 1997 tersely drew the conclusion, that political and economic preconditions were not sufficiently present in Turkey to even consider the possibility of accession talks (paragraph 31). Furthermore the strengthening of the relationship with Turkey would be dependent on a satisfactory and stable relationship between Ankara and Athens, as well as on a Turkish support of the UNO talks over Cyprus. Turkey was explicitly required to contribute "to the settlement of the disputes, particularly on a legal basis which would imply addressing the International Court of Justice."[11] With this perspective on the issue the EU followed the Greek position. At that time Turkey responded with disappointment and irritation; the government even considered breaking off, or at least, freezing its relationship to the EU.

From the German government one could hear similar statements even before the Luxembourg summit. In March 1997, the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, along with six other Christian-Democratic leaders, claimed that Turkey could not be admitted to the EU because a Muslim country had no place in an European 'Christian-Occidental civilisation'. This statement led to outcry in Turkey and to a dramatic deterioration of the diplomatic relations. The United States reacted by applying pressure, on Germany in particular, since Washington, for strategic reasons, supports the Turkish demands for accession.[12]

Almost two years later, the European Commission published a new report on the future relations of the EU with Turkey. This paper, written with reference to the Helsinki summit, presents a more positive outlook on Turkey's acquiring the state of a candidate for membership. However, the paper, in fact did not make any reference to the commencing of accession talks. As far as the Commission is concerned, such discussions can only start, once the political criteria for the membership are fulfilled. In other

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[11] See Luxembourg European Council 12 and 13 December 1997, Presidency Conclusions, in: http//www.eupres.etat.lu/uepres/textes/conseil/13dec003eng.htm (16.12.1997)

[12] See 'Europa nicht nur für Christen', in: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 3.12.1999, p.1.

words: The EU appears to be treading water between the exclusion and the inclusion of Turkey.

A closer examination of Brussels relationship with Ankara is now needed: The EU apparently would prefer economic and strategic-military relations with Turkey as opposed to political integration. In particular the much feared stream of work force from Anatolia to the European Market (already troubled by a high unemployment rate) seems to make accession in the foreseeable future, rather unlikely. The German political magazine "Der Spiegel", usually well informed on Brussels' intentions, is aware of sentiments within the Commission that accession of Turkey would cause significant imbalance within the Community. One concern appears to be that the rapidly growing population in Turkey would shortly lead to an equal number of Turks and Germans within the EU; the consequence of which would be an equal number of seats in the various EU-institutions. It seems plausible, that Ankara for internal political reasons (modernizers versus traditionalists/ Islamic fundamentalists) seriously needs and wants the status of candidacy. On the other hand, however, the Turkish government is realistic enough to know that full membership will take at least one generation.[13]

Britain's Foreign Minister Robin Cook made a statement to the effect that he wanted Turkey to be only loosely connected with the EU: „Speaking for Britain, we believe that it would be right to recognise Turkey as a candidate for membership of the European Union, because we should be supporting and encouraging those progressive forces within Turkey who look to Europe for their orientation. They need the encouragement of Europe if they are to succeed in making the changes in human rights in Turkey that are necessary and which would be wished by all friends of Turkey." At the same time Cook pointed out that, "...however, *a decision to recognise Turkey as a candidate for membership of the European Union is by no means the final decision in a process, it would only be the first*

decision in a long path. It would not be possible to make progress down that path in terms of negotiations for membership until Turkey meets the Copenhagen criteria on human rights, democracy, and recognition of minority rights."[14]

France's Foreign Minister was of a similar opinion, when he emphasised the fact that a status of candidacy would certainly not mean the start of accession talks with Turkey in the near future.[15]

The new German government now appears to be more supportive of Turkey's desires. During a recent parliamentary debate on the subject of "Europe", Chancellor Gerhard Schröder declared: " We want a European Turkey and therefore we want to open up plausible prospects for Turkey." At the same time he made unmistakably clear that Turkey would have to meet the admission criteria, such as the guarantee of human and minority rights. No compromise would be possible.[16]

The President of the EU-Commission, Romano Prodi, appealed that Turkey should be given the official status of a candidate for membership. In his speech at the European Parliament he said that if granted this status Turkey would be given an incentive to meet the so Copenhagen Criteria. However, accession talks with Turkey could only begin once the Criteria were already fulfilled.[17]

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[13] See ‚Tückische Brücke' in: Der Spiegel, 18.10.1999 (No. 42/1999), p. 206f. (207)

[14] Cooks Discussions with Greece Foreign Minister edited transcript of a doorstep interview given by the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, and the Greek Foreign Minister, George Papandreou, London, Monday 18 October 1999 (http://www.mfa.gr/whatsnew/ (14.11.99) (Emphasis JR)

[15] Σε κρίσιμη καμπή οι διαβουλεύσεις για την Τουρκία, Καθημερινή, 2.12.1999, p 5.

[16] ‚Bundestag über Europa-Politik weitgehend einig', in: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 4.12.1999, p.5.

[17] Prodi: ‚Kandidatenstatus für Türkei', in Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2.12.1999, p.8.
In an interview with 'Der Spiegel', the EU-Commissioner for Foreign Affairs,Chris Patten, quite unmistakably commented on the issue over an accession of Turkey:
SPIEGEL: For 35 years now Turkey was led to believe, that they could become a full member of the EU, and yet in Helsinki the story continues. Why doesn't the EU frankly tell Turkey that they will never become a full member - knowing that 63 Million Turks would destroy the balance within the EU - even if they met the corresponding criteria a hundred percent?
Patten: That is a way to ask the malicious question: When did you stop beating up your wife? – The Commission suggested to recognise Turkey as a candidate for membership. But before negotiation-talks can start, there have to be made a lot of political changes. Over and above that I cannot and I don't want to say anything.
SPIEGEL: Why doesn't the EU leave things as they are and simply promote the implementation of a Mediterranean economic zone with Turkey in a leading role?

On November 29, 1999, the government of Greece presented the Finnish Presidency with a memorandum outlining the Greek position on Turkish candidacy for membership.[18] The memorandum suggested that the conclusions of the Finnish Presidency at the Helsinki-summit should contain the following:

1. The unsolved problem of Cyprus should not prevent the accession of the Republic of Cyprus (at least the de facto accession of the unoccupied part – JR).
2. Any candidate for membership must be willing to recognise the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice in The Hague, within a certain time-frame (approximately until the end of 2000). Although this demand could be already found in the Agenda 2000, it, at the time, was not legally binding. Clearly, Greece demands greater clarity of terms defined by the European Council.
3. The Greek government also wants the Turkish candidacy to be seen as a real and not just a 'virtual' option. In other words, there should be a realistic road-map for Turkey, where the rights as well as the duties of the candidate are enacted.

The first topic was in particular of great importance to the Greek government at Helsinki. Athens knows all too well that the EU is concerned that along with the accession of Cyprus the Union could "inherit" its conflict. Several EU countries had already made clear that they wished no accession of a divided Cyprus. However, should the position (that Cyprus' accession is dependent on its prior unification) become official EU-policy, then Ankara would control the EU accession

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Patten: Until the year 2010 we aim to settle up a free trade zone in the Mediterranean. But you won't find many politicians, who think of that as realistic. I want to contribute to this aim to become at least more realistic. ('Die Erweiterung begrenzen', in: Der Spiegel, No. 49/1999, 6.12.1999 – *translated by the author*)

[18] See also: Υπόμνημα τριών σημείων για Ελσίνκη, Καθημερινή, 30.11.1999, p.5; Σε κρίσιμη καμπή οι διαβουλεύσεις για την Τουρκία, Καθημερινή, 2.12.1999, p.5; Το ,,ναι" στη σκιά των εκλογών, Καθημερινή, 5.12.1999, p. 10.

outcome. Athens is aware if these interdependencies and tries to avoid to be put into such a disadvantageous position.

Independent of Greece's position stated in the above mentioned memorandum, we can still identify sources where Greece is accused of preventing the Turkish candidacy for membership. The German newspaper "Süddeutsche Zeitung" i. e. writes: "Within the European Union it is *only* [author's emphasis] Greece, which objects to the plans [of Turkey's status of a candidate for membership] and has insisted on linking the Cyprus question..." with Turkey´s accession planes vis-a-vis the EU. "Indeed, the arguments over the divided island have been going on for a long time. Greece wants to block Turkey's admission as long as the issue over Cyprus remains unresolved. Crucial talks on this subject are to begin this Friday at the United Nations in New York."[19]

Greece's intention to untangle the process for membership from the issue of the divided Cyprus, as the memorandum clearly states, was radically misinterpreted by the "Süddeutsche Zeitung". Their misinterpretation erroneously portrayed Greece as wanting to block the admission process as long as the problems in Cyprus remain unsolved.

4. Greece and the EU-Council in Helsinki

How does one evaluate the results concerning Greek-Turkish relations at the Helsinki-summit?

The Presidency Conclusions in Helsinki, approved by the European Council, commented on the Copenhagen Criteria, the International Court of Justice, Cyprus' accession to the EU as well as on the issue over Turkey's candidacy. They are as follows:

[19] „Europa nicht nur für Christen", in: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 3.12.1999, p.1.

Paragraph 4: „The European Council reaffirms the inclusive nature of the accession process, which now comprises 13 candidate States within a single framework. The candidate States are participating in the accession process on an equal footing. They must share the values and objectives of the European Union as set out in the Treaties. In this respect the European Council stresses the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter and urges candidate States to make every effort to resolve any outstanding border disputes and other related issues. Failing this they should within a reasonable time bring the dispute to the International Court of Justice. The European Council will review the situation relating to any outstanding disputes, in particular concerning the repercussions on the accession process and in order to promote their settlement through the International Court of Justice, at the latest by the end of 2004. Moreover, the European Council recalls that compliance with the political criteria laid down at the Copenhagen European Council is a prerequisite for the opening of accession negotiations and that compliance with all the Copenhagen criteria is the basis for accession to the Union."

Paragraph 8. „The European Council notes with satisfaction the substantive work undertaken and progress which has been achieved in accession negotiations with Cyprus, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia."

Paragraph 9 (a) „The European Council welcomes the launching of the talks aiming at a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem on 3 December in New York and expresses its strong support for the UN Secretary-General– his efforts to bring the process to a successful conclusion."

Paragraph 9 (b) „The European Council underlines that a political settlement will facilitate the accession of Cyprus to the European Union. If no settlement has been reached by the completion of accession negotiations, the Council's decision on accession will be made without the above being a precondition. In this the Council will take account of all relevant factors."

Paragraph 12. „The European Council welcomes recent positive developments in Turkey as noted in the Commission's progress report, as well as its intention to continue its reforms towards complying with the Copenhagen criteria. Turkey is a candidate State destined to join the Union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to the other candidate States. Building on the existing European strategy, Turkey, like other candidate States, will benefit from a pre-accession strategy to stimulate and support its reforms. This will include enhanced political dialogue, with emphasis on progressing towards fulfilling the political criteria for accession with particular reference to the issue of human rights, as well as on the issues referred to in paragraphs 4 and 9(a). Turkey will also have the opportunity to participate in Community programmes and agencies and in meetings between candidate States and the Union in the context of the accession process. An accession partnership will be drawn up on the basis of previous European Council conclusions while containing priorities on which accession preparations must concentrate in the light of the political and economic criteria and the obligations of a Member State, combined with a national programme for the adoption of the acquis. Appropriate monitoring mechanisms will be established. With a view to intensifying the harmonisation of Turkey's legislation and practice with the acquis, the Commission is invited to prepare a process of analytical examination of the acquis. The European Council asks the Commission to present a single framework for co-ordinating all sources of European Union financial assistance for pre-accession."[20]

[20] The official EU position on Cyprus, Turkey and the ICJ, Athens News 12.12.99, p. 4

Greece seems to have achieved its strategic goal at Helsinki of transforming many elements of the Greek-Turkish dispute into a problem for Euro-Turkish relations. The EU now accepts that a solution of the Cyprus issue is desirable, but not a prerequisite for the accession of Cyprus to the EU. As for the question of The Hague Court, the EU sets 2004 as the deadline for referring border and other disputes to the International Court of Justice. The European Council has undertaken responsibility for this, which will give Ankara less room to manoeuvre. This clause directly urges the two sides into bilateral negotiation, and only if there is no result will the European Council look into the matter. On the other hand, however, there is an inherent danger that the EU-term 'bilateral differences' rather than 'unilateral Turkish claims' (which reflects the Greek view) could become a topic for EU diplomacy. Prime Minister Costas Simitis stated that the only formal difference between Greece and Turkey is the delineation of the continental shelf, rejecting any broader interpretations Ankara might attempt. This view is not shared by every Member State. The German media i.e. interpret paragraph 4 of the Helsinki Conclusions in that way, that "disputes over borders between Athens and Ankara should be solved by political means."[21] Furthermore the term "territorial disputes in the Aegean" is in use.[22] These terms do not correspond with „unilateral Turkish claims"!

And, what is more, it must be pointed out that commitments made by the EU Member States have only relative significance, since they may be revised at any future summit meeting.[23]

5. Conclusions

[21] ‚Sechs neue Beitrittskandidaten zur EU – Zusage an die Türkei ohne Termin', in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 11.12.1999, p. 1.
[22] ‚In Helsinki leicht getrübte Blicke über die Grenzen Europas', in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 11.12.1999, p. 3.

For various reasons it was time for Greece to rethink her policy on Turkey. We recall that the German government, during the time of its own EU-Presidency, spoke in favor of a revision of the Luxembourg agreements, and supported the idea of Turkey's recognition as a future EU-member.[24]

Prior to the Helsinki-summit, Foreign Minister Papandreou feared that Turkey would avoid committing herself to certain standards, such as the Copenhagen Criteria. His primary goal was to ensure that the issues mentioned above, would become part of *Euro*-Turkish rather than just Greek-Turkish dialogue. For this reason Greece - unlike earlier times - did not wish Turkey to make specific concessions in return for Greek support on the question of candidacy. This position taken by Greece obliged the EU as a whole to engage in the process of candidacy.

The fact that Greece intends to apply for entry into the Economic and Monetary Union in March 2000 most certainly also played a role in determining Athens' change of diplomatic stance rendering it inadvisable to veto Turkey. And, last but not least, a report published by the Turkish Foreign Ministry immediately prior to the European summit appears to have made an impact on Greece's decision. This document confirmed that Turkey acknowledged that the way to settlement of the border disputes would follow the Agenda 2000 guidelines. According to the Agenda EU-candidates must endeavour to solve such issues on a bilateral basis or with the assistance of a third party. In case of failure, the matter has to be brought to the International Court of Justice at The Hague.[25]

Whenever Turkey's accession will eventually become negotiable, the indisputable precondition is deeper dialogue between the aspirant and the EU, as well as co-operation and agreement on every detail of the

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[23] See: Η χθεσινή απόφαση, in: Καθημερινή, 11.12. 1999, p. 2.

[24] For the German initiative, see: FAZ, 5.6.1999, p.2; 24.6.1999, p.2 and Axt, Heinz-Jürgen, „Der Ägäis-Streit – ein unlösbarer griechisch-türkischer Konflikt?", in: Südosteuropa-Mitteilungen 2/1999, p.137ff. (p.147).

[25] See: Springt Griechenland über den eigenen Schatten?, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 9.12.1999, p.10.

accession process itself. Such a "road-map" would not only be essential but would give Greece the opportunity to voice her concerns within the European framework. In this context, a Greek veto against the Turkish candidacy would not make sense, it would even be counter-productive to Greek interests.

Panos Kasakos remarks quite rightly that a veto from Athens would give those EU countries, who in fact, do not relish the idea of Turkish membership in the EU, the opportunity to hide behind the Greek "No". Subsequently the EU could insist on a delay of Cyprus' accession, using the argument that the veto had caused negative reactions from Turkey and North-Cyprus, and would therefore bring the Cyprus issue, in an intensified form, into the EU. The scenario would then be that Turkey's accession would have been considered blocked by the Greeks. Equally, Cyprus' accession was off the EU agenda for quite a while and Greece was again viewed as the scapegoat in the well-known role of "accession-blocker" and "Turk-hater".[26]

The nomination of Turkey as a candidate will very probably lead to an expanding dialogue with Greece. Also, the revival of the "Council of the Wise persons", which was founded in 1997 under the Dutch EU-Presidency, is likely to be reimplemented. Furthermore, immediately prior to the Helsinki summit, the Turkish Foreign Minister Cem announced that a positive outcome would promote co-operation with Greece in verifying Turkey's "European perspective".

At this point it would be worthwhile to draw a picture of the future Turkey, once she has met the Copenhagen Criteria. That would not only mean meeting the economic criteria, which would be – on the grounds of Turkey's tradition in market economy – the easier part, but satisfying the political criteria as well.

The German MP Ruprecht Polenz[27], wrote a remarkable article about such a different Turkey. Future Turkey would be entirely different from the present one. It would have developed a stable, civil society. A rational, national conscience would be ready to accept a transfer of sovereign elements to the EU. The military would have retreated from political power, would have given way to a fundamental reform of the constitution, and would have joined those supporting the primacy of a democratically legitimised government.

This would be a completely different situation compared with today, where the military plays the role of guardian in the background, does not place itself under civil control, and acts autonomously. The independent position of the head of the General Staff, as well as the composition and the role of the Turkish National Security Council, underline this fact. To explain the dominant role of the military as 'culturally specific' cannot be accepted by the EU.

Once Turkey lives up to the Copenhagen Criteria, democratic discourse over different political opinions will be self-evident. Naturally this implies an open discussion about the situation of the Kurds. The hypothetical Turkey of the future, would be mature enough to join the EU, would protect minorities and, simultaneously, recognise that people regard themselves as minorities for reasons other than religion. The Kurds are such an ethnic group, and the term "minority" may be somewhat inappropriate given the millions involved. The Copenhagen Criteria evolved from an obligation to respect human rights. In the case of Turkey this means that those carrying out illegal acts such as torture must be brought to fair trial.

The author wishes to emphasise the fact, that such a Turkey, would be hardly a threat to Greece's security or territorial integrity.

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[26] Καζάκος, Πάνος, Η νέα κινητικότητα στις σχέσεις Ε.Ε. – Τουρκίας και η Ελλάδα, Καθημερινή, 28.11. 99, p.14

In the future, it would be wrong if the EU were to remain in a passive role, to merely judge, at some future point, Turkey's observance of the Copenhagen Criteria. Supportive action by the EU must be energized. Embedded in this is the rapprochement between Greece and Turkey. Adequate EU-programmes addressing internal policy and law must assist Turkey in finding its way to meet the Copenhagen Criteria.

The future has to show whether Ankara will be able and willing to move further in the direction, mentioned above. It cannot be judged, yet, whether it is the European-modernists who really hold the power in their hands.

[27] For the following, see: Der Weg zum EU-Beitritt wird lang und mühsam sein, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 9.12.1999, p.12.