

TOWARDS A ‘EUROPEAN SOLUTION’ OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM: FALSE PROMISE OR REAL OPPORTUNITY?

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Abstract

The existing academic literature argues that the EU’s enlargement policy provides for peace and democracy among applicant states. Central and Eastern European countries are cited as recent examples of such a process following the historic events of 1989-1991. Previous examples include Greece and the Iberian countries in the 1970s. Now that the Republic of Cyprus has joined the EU and that Turkey has begun its accession negotiations, this article argues that in both cases (Cyprus and Turkey), the EU has not acted in such a positive way, especially in failing to bring the Turkish occupation of the north of Cyprus to an end. This study then moves on to the new context of a possible future ‘European solution’ to the Cyprus Problem. It deals with this question both from a general perspective and from a specific angle: the views of Cypriot MEPs. As for the time being there are only Greek-Cypriot MEPs because of the ongoing division of the Island, this article only addresses their concerns, ideas and suggestions. The article concludes that when taken within its diachronic evolution, the EU’s record has not been that positive. Therefore, it seems at this stage at least, that a ‘European solution’ to the Cyprus Problem is more a ‘false promise’ rather than a ‘real opportunity’. This piece does not discuss what a European solution would look like all the same. Another conclusion of this study is that the EU as a whole, but also the European Parliament, may be using the Cyprus situation as a means to block, or at least delay, Turkey’s accession, but without having any real interest in finding a solution to the ongoing Turkish occupation of nearly 40 per cent of Cyprus’ territory. The wider implications are important not only for the credibility of the EU as an international actor but also for the impact of its enlargement policy in the future.

Introduction

Two very important developments in the European Union (EU)’s policy towards the Eastern Mediterranean occurred in 2004: first, in May, the Republic of Cyprus joined the Union in what has been its biggest expansion to date;¹ second, in December, the European Council decided to begin accession negotiations with Turkey on 3

October 2005, negotiations which have now formally begun. In light of these recent developments, it is important to assess the role the EU has played in that region. The bulk of the academic literature argues that enlargement is the best foreign policy tool that the Union possesses for expanding peace, stability, democracy and prosperity. EU enlargement policy since the end of the Cold War, and more especially since the 1995 enlargement, is widely regarded to be a means to 'widening the zone of stability, democracy and prosperity that the EU stands for' (Nas, 2005, p. 2).² Although some authors claim that such a result does not necessarily imply that this is a policy by design (Vachudova, 2005), it remains clear that enlargement to the former Communist states in Central and Eastern Europe has been a major foreign policy success for the EU. A 'Europeanisation through enlargement' (or enlargement prospects) may be a good guide as to the 'power of attraction' that the EU represents for third countries.³

In contrast to this positive assessment, one needs to consider why the EU has failed in its efforts to use the 'catalytic effect' (another way of putting 'the power of attraction' argument) of accession in order to facilitate a solution to the Cyprus Problem. Moreover, why is it that the Union has decided to begin accession negotiations with Turkey at a time when this country does not even recognise the Republic of Cyprus, let alone continue with its illegal occupation of nearly 40 per cent of its territory? These two questions deserve particular attention not only from the enlargement policy perspective but also from that of a vast (and expanding) literature on the international role of the EU.⁴ However, this article will not address these important dimensions as such, nor will it deal with the Cyprus Problem itself, (Brewin, 2000; Chiclet, 1997; Drevet, 2000; Fouskas and Richter, 2003; Pieridis 2001; Savvides 2002; Stavridis 2005a; Theophanous et al. 1999; Theophanous 2004).⁵ Instead it will concentrate on the following questions:

- show the extent to which the EU has not been active in trying to find a solution to the Cyprus Problem. In fact, that it has conveniently hidden behind a general rhetorical support of UN efforts in the past.
- emphasise how negative the reactions of most EU states and institutions to the 2004 Greek-Cypriot referendum result were, thus creating a very hostile environment for Cyprus when it joined the EU in May 2004. This hostility was clearly visible in the European Parliament.
- conclude that despite a slight improvement in the overall approach to the Cyprus Problem, in part due to the active role of Cypriot MEPs, there is still a clear reluctance to deal with the issue on its own merits. Instead, it appears that the Cyprus Problem has become hostage to the future fortunes of Turkey's accession negotiations. Therefore, the possibility of a 'European solution' to Cyprus' ongoing occupation of part of its territory may not be so much a real opportunity but rather a false promise. Although, this article will not discuss any 'European solution' as such.

EU Policy towards the Cyprus Problem

It could be argued that, overall, the EEC/EU's past record is not satisfactory. The EU took a backseat position over the Cyprus Problem at least until the late 1990s. Although its stance on not linking a solution to the island division with its eventual accession is commendable, it resulted more from Greece's threat of vetoing the whole enlargement process than from the application of any general principle. In brief the current situation represents, to use Jean Catsiapis' words, une 'passivité européenne'.⁶

In particular, this section will dismiss the claim that the lack of a solution to the Cyprus Problem in April 2004 was solely due to the Greek-Cypriot referendum result. Instead, it will present a critical assessment of how the EU has failed to contribute to a solution to the Problem over the years. This perspective shows that the 2004 failure represents just yet another example of such a policy. More worryingly for the future, the article will also try to show that since Cyprus' accession to the Union, the EU has continued to act in the same pattern by accepting to begin negotiations with Turkey without demanding an end to its illegal occupation and its non-recognition of the Republic of Cyprus. There were at least three opportunities to do so: first before granting a date for accession negotiations in December 2004;⁷ second, in the leading-up to the extension of the EU-Turkey customs union agreement; and third, in the summer of 2005, before formally starting negotiations in October 2005.

From non-existence to the need to come off the fence once Cyprus applied for membership

In order to show how many missed opportunities to find a solution to the Cyprus Problem there have been to date, there follows a chronological review of key events in Greece, Cyprus and Turkey, and the way the EU did – or did not – react to them. At the time of the Turkish invasion, the EU was still the EEC and the CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy) was only a coordinating mechanism called European Political Cooperation (EPC).⁸ Still, there is enough evidence to suggest that the Europeans did not offer more than verbal support to the invaded Republic of Cyprus. All this occurred in spite of their general condemnation of military interventions in third countries. EPC repeatedly claimed that:

“there are no ‘justified’ interventions or ‘good’ occupations, regardless of the validity of the motives invoked”.⁹

Even when it only amounted to words (and no action), there were cases where the EPC states abstained during a vote on a UN resolution on Cyprus in November 1978, on the spurious ground that:

“this passage may be interpreted as referring to the adoption of sanctions, whereas the Nine (...) consider direct negotiations the best way of resolving the problem on Cyprus”.¹⁰

During the 1980s, the same EPC absence of real active involvement continued, simply consistently calling for the withdrawal of those troops,¹¹ and a return to an independent and united Cyprus. Thus, EPC condemned the Turkish-Cypriot Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1983 and the so-called ‘presidential elections’ in the north of Cyprus in 1985 because both were considered to be attempts made to establish an independent state within Cyprus.¹² The EPC states also backed the many relevant UN resolutions and the role of UNFICYP.¹³

But at the end of the day, it must be stressed that the EPC’s role on the Cyprus issue was limited “to moral support for attempts of the United Nations Secretary General to mediate and bring the parties together in meaningful negotiations”. The fact of the matter was that on most UN resolutions on Cyprus there was not even a common EPC vote.¹⁴ To a large extent, such a policy results from the foreign policy of the ‘big powers’, within and without the EEC/EU, and particularly that of the United Kingdom, but also the USA (see Güney, 2004), Greece and Turkey, (see Couloumbis, 1996). It is not exaggerated to argue that Cyprus represents an extreme case of interference in the internal affairs of an independent state, despite the supposed existence of the Westphalian principle of non-interference in internal affairs.¹⁵

It is revealing that when some European action took place, it was not over Cyprus but related to Turkey’s internal developments. As Aylin Güney argues:

“[t]he military rule during 1980-1983 in Turkey led to a suspension of EC-Turkey relations until the political situation and respect for human rights were improved. The resumption of the Association Agreement came only after the 1987 referendum that lifted political restrictions in the 1987 elections” (Güney, 2001, p. 203).

During the 1990s, especially over the Turkey-EU Customs Union saga, there was a revealing quid pro quo: Greece lifted its veto in exchange for the acceptance by all other EU member states that Cyprus could begin accession negotiations irrespective of whether or not there was going to be a solution to the island’s division before accession. This development is problematic in itself because, first, it meant that the decision to begin accession negotiations with Cyprus could be seen as a ‘favour’ to Greece (and Cyprus) and not as a matter of principle. Second, the Turkish side came out strengthened in its position on Cyprus because it de-linked it from the question of Turkey’s accession to the EU, hence needing new efforts at re-establishing that specific link later on. Third, it gave the EU the means to add

pressure on the Greek Cypriots to accept a solution before enlargement. That particular 'stick' remained in practice irrespective of the many declarations to the contrary (see in particular one relevant 1998 British Presidency declaration to that effect).¹⁶ Thus, during months the question of how the 2004 enlargement deal would be eventually ratified led to serious concerns in Cyprus. This became particularly clear when several EU states, and/or their respective national parliaments, showed signs of dissent from the EU official line of not linking membership to re-unification. The Dutch Parliament became notorious in Cyprus because, only a few days after the 1999 Helsinki decisions, it had passed a resolution which stated that it was undesirable to allow a state with UN troops on its soil to join the EU. Cyprus was specifically mentioned.¹⁷ This example is mentioned here just to show that the formal de-linking of the accession prospects from the reunification question did not necessarily play as positively in favour of Cyprus, as it has been argued elsewhere (Diez, 2000; Tocci, 2004a, 2004b).

Over the Customs Union ratification saga, just to add that a smokescreen of decency was offered when the European Parliament postponed its assent vote for a few months and finally gave its formal agreement a few days before the December 1995 elections in Turkey. The argument was that, by backing the Customs deal, it would have prevented an Islamist victory (thus facilitating the election victory instead of a pro-Western, modern, secular Tansu Ciller – a woman too, thus also gratifying the feminist lobby). No particular attention was given to the fact that Ciller eventually joined the Islamists in a coalition government (with a first half of the tenure under her leadership, and the second under that of Necmettin Erbakan), or the fact that Erbakan was eventually removed in a 'soft coup' in 1997. So much for democracy in Turkey.¹⁸ When faced with a similar argument in late 2004 (to grant or not a negotiations date), and again in September-October 2005 (to begin or not accession negotiations), the European Parliament supported once more the Turkish request. Each time, the many MEPs – a majority – who voted in favour announced they were 'proud' of their decision (for details of the 2004 vote, see Soler, 2005).

Another such example can be found during the S300 missiles crisis.¹⁹ Although the objective of the missiles purchased by Cyprus was to strengthen both the credibility of the defence of the Island and the 'Common Defence Doctrine' between Greece and Cyprus (which then had just been recently launched), there was a shower of criticisms from most EU countries, and in particular the UK, and Germany. The then British Defence Secretary George Robertson used vitriolic terms about the Cypriot decision to buy the S-300s, arguing that some states simply do not have the right to decide on their own defence. Interestingly enough, only a few days later, he used a totally different discourse about the sales of British weapons to Turkey. Those particular sales were made in the name of "self-

defence”, he said. He also assured that there was “of course” no risk of those weapons being used for internal repression or external aggression.²⁰ The absence of any EU support for the Republic of Cyprus continued. In particular, the lack of response to Cyprus’ proposal for a complete de-militarization of the island in exchange of the non-deployment of the missiles did not find any echo in the EU states and institutions.

Not such a ‘catalytic effect’: accession but no solution (or ‘the failure of the Annan Plan’)

Such discrepancy between words and actions becomes all the more striking when one takes into consideration the Association Agreement (later Customs Union) that exists between the European Community/Union and Turkey. There were some early signs about a logical linkage between Turkey’s accession aspirations and the Cyprus Problem. Thus, the June 1990 Dublin European Council meeting final communiqué declared that:

“the political leaders of the Twelve warned that ‘the Cyprus problem affects EC-Turkey relations’ and called for the ‘prompt elimination’ of obstacles to intercommunal talks”.²¹

In the period up to Cyprus’s EU accession, there was an additional fear in Cyprus of a freeze in the existing division of the island, therefore turning the northern part of Cyprus into a permanent occupation. Such a prospect should not be regarded as unrealistic. There were also a series of efforts, including those by academics and think tanks (for details see Stavridis 2005b, pp. 20-22), who questioned whether Cyprus would join as the ‘Republic of Cyprus’ or as something short of that. For instance, one must mention the Javier Solana interview in an Athens Sunday newspaper on 21 April 2002 where ‘Mr CFSP’ stated quite categorically that “if there is no agreement, then the Greek-Cypriot part will join [the EU]”. When pressed to clarify his position, he continued: “The whole Island will not enter the Union unless there is an agreement. One part of Cyprus will enter and the other part will have to wait”.²² Despite a number of subsequent clarifications by Solana himself, and by a number of Commission officials, the damage had been done.²³ It led to the ‘institutionalisation’ of a political term on the island: ‘Euro-partition’, that is to say Cyprus’ EU accession with a permanent division of the island. In other words,

“there is a danger that Greek Cypriots might face the dilemma: accession and solution or no-solution and no-accession, and be forced to accept a ‘bad’ solution in order to join the Union” (Savvides, 2002, p. 45).

The key point here is what was mentioned above about the unnecessary EU pressure on the Greek Cypriots to find a solution before accession, and the

question of how bad a solution could they possibly accept (see the Annan Plans, below).

The above is mentioned to show how sensitive a subject the whole issue of Cyprus reunification and its entry to the EU were at that time. It provides a context to the debate over the Annan Plans but it also confirms that there were many doubts about whether the EU would really go ahead with its membership commitment in case a solution to the island division was not found. Finally, one should also mention that during the concluding stage of the negotiations on the final Annan Plan in Switzerland in early 2004, the EU had been included as one possible actor in case of difficulties: if there was no agreement between the two communities (as it happened), then Turkey and Greece would intervene. In case of further failure (as it also happened), the EU should then become involved. But at Turkey's request, this did not happen. Hence, there were clear signs as late as in 2004 of the divisions among EU member states on the subject.

'Blessed ambiguity': how to blame the Greek Cypriots on the failure of the Annan Plan and create a general hostility towards Cyprus within the context of Turkey's 'rush' to join the EU

After having openly supported the Annan Plan,²⁴ EU institutions and member states' governments tried to make sure that in order to avoid future problems with Turkey, they would blame solely and exclusively the Greek Cypriots for having rejected the UN plan. Shoot the messenger and ignore the message: how bad the Plan was did not matter at all.²⁵ What mattered was to show that the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey had done everything possible to reach an agreement and therefore should be rewarded. This stance was consistently taken by politicians, parliamentarians, commissioners, academics, and other observers (journalists and think tanks):²⁶ Oliver Richmond criticises the Greek Cypriots, and in particular President Papadopoulos, for taking an 'ethno-nationalist' position (Richmond 2005, p. 160). An International Crisis Group (ICG) Report claims that the President "play[ed] upon the public's fears and anti-colonial sentiments" (ICG, 2006, p. 6). In the wake of the May 2006 parliamentary elections results, Euronews TV repeated in its morning news programme (22 May 2006) that the parties that had supported the 'Reunification Plan' in 2004 had lost ground in favour of those that had opposed it. There was no mention of the fact that it was only 'one' possible plan, not 'the' only possible one, thus contributing to efforts at presenting the Greek Cypriots as the main culprits.²⁷ The (then) EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Germany's Günter Verheugen, attacked personally President Tassos Papadopoulos²⁸ by claiming that the Greek Cypriots had "cheated" their way into the EU.²⁹ In France, journalist Niels Kadritzke described the Cypriot President as "an old school Greek nationalist", and the referendum result as "saying 'no' to the future".³⁰ In Britain, Oxford-based historian Timothy Garton Ash called for President Papadopoulos to

be received “coolly as he deserves” by his June 2004 Dublin European Council counterparts.³¹ (Then) Nicosia-based UK political analyst James Ker-Lindsay said that “Cyprus could end up being the most disliked new member”.³² In Spain, Professor Francisco Veiga lamented what he called “the arrogance of the Greek Cypriots.”³³ In Greece, academic Alexis Heraclides made a very strong personal attack on President Papadopoulos, and to a large extent on most Greek Cypriots, if one considers that nearly 80 per cent of them turned down the Annan Plan (Heraclides, 2004, pp. 38-42, 44-50).³⁴ Similarly, Mehmet Ali Birand argued that there is “disappointment, furthermore [a sense of] betrayal” (Birand, 2004, p. 105). Finally, there were plenty of ‘prophets of doom’ both prior and after the referenda who argued that was the end of any chance of a future solution.³⁵

Considering the EU’s poor past record (see above), those reactions simply represent a continuation of a not very supportive stance towards Cyprus. It is also important to note that contrary to claims (including by EU Commissioner Verheugen) that Greek-Cypriot public opinion had been ‘manipulated’, in particular by Papadopoulos’s 7 April 2004 ‘speech to the nation’, a recent study has clearly shown this not to be the case. This survey’s findings confirm that nearly 95 per cent of those polled considered they were aware of the Plan, but that only 5.8 per cent declared no awareness at all (Lordos, 2004, p. 26). Lordos therefore concludes that

“[t]he proposition that the understanding of the Plan by Greek Cypriots is distorted and partial and that the responsibility of such distortion lies with the Greek Cypriot leadership does not appear to be supported by the evidence” (Lordos, 2004, p. 75).

The Lordos survey (2004, pp. 37-64) also identifies clearly the reasons why the NO vote won (in decreasing order of importance): (1) there should be a withdrawal of Turkish troops much sooner than was foreseen in the Plan (76 per cent); (2) Turkey should pay compensation for those who do not get their property back (75 per cent); (3) A greater number of Turkish settlers should go back to Turkey than the figures provided for by the Plan (75 per cent); (4) the overall cost of reunification should be more equally shared by all parties, and not just by the Greek Cypriots (73 per cent); (5) there should be solid international guarantees for the implementation of a final agreement, with serious consequences in case of any future violations (72 per cent); (6) the new state should be the legal successor to the current Republic and not a totally new state (66 per cent); (7) the future influx of Turks should be limited (64 per cent); (8) the return of property should be greater than provided for by the Plan (63 per cent); (9) guarantor powers should not have the right to unilateral intervention (61 per cent); (10) all Turkish and Greek troops should eventually go (58 per cent). This represents a detailed list of clear demands, confirming the high degree of information and awareness of the Greek-Cypriot

community. As an observer on the ground during February-May 2006, I can only confirm this view.³⁶

Towards a 'European solution' after all?

In 2006, with Cyprus an EU member and with accession negotiations with Turkey already launched, there is little doubt that there is a clear 'European responsibility for peace in the Eastern Mediterranean' (Brewin, 2004). There is now a totally different context. This is the view taken by the President of Cyprus:

"We have always held the view that a solution of the Cyprus problem will be under the umbrella, the aegis, of the United Nations, we don't change from that position. But of course the situation has changed because since the 1st of May, 2004 the Republic of Cyprus is a full member of the EU. Many of the issues which are involved in a possible solution of the Cyprus problem touch upon provisions of the *acquis communautaire*, which are the directives or rules of the EU. It is therefore inevitable that in any new round of talks the EU should have a more active role in the discussion. I think they could be most helpful in guiding the parties as to what would be compatible or in agreement with the *acquis communautaire*, which the Republic of Cyprus will have to apply after a solution. After a solution both communities in Cyprus, both sides, will have to comply with the regulations of the *acquis communautaire*".³⁷

There are now much stronger laws and principles to take into account (and to apply), and there exists a European Court of Justice whose role it is to make sure that the *acquis communautaire* is fully respected and implemented. All legal and political instruments for human rights protection have gained strength. Even though in the past Cyprus had obtained plenty of legal support from the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), the power of European legislation within the Union is far more effective than the ones offered by Strasbourg. The reason is simple: EU decisions are legally applicable. Council of Europe ones, including those of the ECHR, depend heavily on the good will of the party condemned, as the *Loizidou Case* has clearly shown. Although that particular initial Court decision was taken in 1994 and Turkey repeatedly refused to comply with it for years, it was only when the question of Turkey's EU accession negotiations became a real possibility that the Turks finally decided to comply with it.³⁸

Hence, the current debate about a 'European solution'. As noted in the introduction, this article does not purport to deal with any specific European solution as such. It simply takes the view that there is now a new context following Cyprus' EU accession. For instance, there is one press report³⁹ linking the Greek government to a number of possible confidence-building measures that would make the most of this new situation. They would include the EU administration of the

ghost city of Famagusta (Ammochostos) where Greek-Cypriot refugees could return home. This approach would build on the EU's experience in the Balkans (e.g. Mostar). Such a zone could be named the 'European Region of Ammochostos', and be patrolled by a European police force. There would be EU funds for restoring the city's basic necessities, and there would be no agreement over its final status until a global solution to the Cyprus Problem is found. Such a development would be accompanied by other measures, such as a 'customs union'-type relationship between the two communities on the island, and some compensation settlement for lost properties. This arrangement could be used as a 'prototype' for reunification according to the same press report. Furthermore, at the time of writing, another press report quotes Greece's new foreign minister Dora Bakoyannis as proposing what she calls a "Plan for a United European Cyprus". This Plan would, among other things, recognise the 'European reality that Cyprus has been experiencing in the past two and a half years' as a EU member.⁴⁰

An International Group of Legal Experts (International Expert Panel Report 2005)⁴¹ has also presented an alternative solution scenario to the island's division based on International and European Law. Its main objective is to show that the Plan did not respect fundamental international law, European law, and Human Rights law. Thus, the Report intends to set the wider parameters for future political negotiations, but it does not present an alternative solution to the Annan Plan. The Report also suggests the setting up of a Constitutional Convention on the issue, whose work would be followed by two simultaneous referenda, but without the participation of Turkish settlers this time round. Using the new context to the full, the Report also calls for the European Parliament to adopt a resolution confirming the need to respect International and European rules in support of the set of basic Fundamental Principles that the International Expert Panel Report proposes (2005, p. 15).

In Cyprus itself, there are plenty of examples of such a discussion to date.⁴² For instance, EDEK's President Giannakis Omirou has repeatedly called for the appointment of a EU Special Representative for the Cyprus Problem during his electoral campaign (to the May 2006 parliamentary elections). Omirou stressed that such an envoy should also be responsible to the UN Secretary-General.⁴³ Similarly, on a TV programme on the last day of the electoral campaign (19 May 2006), EURODI President Prodromos Prodromou argued that EU human rights protection provisions go much further than anything that was provided for in the 1960 Zurich agreement. He reminded the viewers that for the first time the Cypriot Parliament had allowed (following a constitutional amendment) Turkish Cypriots who reside in the non-occupied part of the island to vote for Greek-Cypriot electoral lists.⁴⁴ Similarly, for the first time a Turkish Cypriot stood on a Greek-Cypriot list (the woman poet Nese Yiasin on the EDI list). These developments clearly contradict the 1960 arrangements with their strict distinction between Greek Cypriots and

Turkish Cypriots and might be a harbinger of future things to come as a result of European membership. A recent poll also confirms this general trend in favour of a 'European solution', or at least a European dimension to any future solution. To the question "should a solution to the Cyprus Problem now be based on the UN or the EU, or both?", 69 per cent answered both the UN and the EU, 22 per cent the EU, and only 5 per cent the UN (and 5 per cent did not know/answer).⁴⁵

At this stage, it is also important to ask, as Keith Kyle has done, whether it is the case that "a bizonal, bicomunal federation does not sit well with the principles of European law" (Kyle, 2004, p. 112). This point is important because it would mean that the whole compromise agreed in principle by the two communities on the island is fundamentally flawed, but also because the EU has consistently reiterated that it would accommodate any solution between the two parties. By applying the *acquis communautaire* in a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation, any basic restrictions would have to be removed eventually.

However, all of the above needs to be contrasted to events since May 2004 when the Republic of Cyprus joined the Union. What follows will clearly show that perhaps there is unfortunately more 'false promise' than 'real opportunity' because many EU states and institutions simply continue with their, at best, 'ambiguous' stance on the Cyprus Problem, thus favouring Turkey in this matter. Such a bias can be seen clearly over the question of Turkey's continued refusal to recognise Cyprus. In brief, there has been no real pressure by the EU for Turkey to formally recognise it. Again, we can see many verbal statements but no real action. As was illustrated above, such a lack of pressure is not new. There have been more examples recently.⁴⁶ Similarly, there was initial EU enthusiasm about 'rewarding' the Turkish Cypriots with 259 million euros as promised by the Commission prior to the referenda. The real question is why? In other words, the content of the Plan was what really mattered, not who voted what? Despite a large number of efforts by many EU governments and politicians, such a process has not materialised because it involves legal considerations that cannot be ignored (because of the numerous Council of Europe European Court of Human Rights decisions against Turkey and because of the opinion of the European Commission's own Legal Service). This dimension is important for what follows, namely that the EU is now offering a new legal context that could not be used in the past. The Council of Europe's decisions and especially those of its ECHR are important but they miss the 'teeth' of European legislation. However, there is still a long way to go before many actors are convinced of the above. Thus, there are many more examples of a lack of strong EU pressure on Turkey to recognise the Republic of Cyprus. Note that, interestingly enough, the removal of its occupation forces does not even appear to be on the agenda any longer, if it ever was beyond mere rhetorical condemnation. I will concentrate on three such examples:

First, during the summer of 2005 there were declarations and counter-declarations about the need for Turkey to sign an extension of its Customs Union with the EU to all new EU members.⁴⁷ The real issue here is whether this would mean recognition of Cyprus or not. For instance as the then European Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy put it:⁴⁸

“The fact that Turkey has not yet implemented the belonging of Cyprus to this customs union is a problem. We understand that it is a tricky problem but a tricky problem remains a problem. At the end of the day it has to be resolved in a clear-cut mode. It has to be resolved with Cyprus being a member of the customs union” [emphasis added].

There was also the question of whether a de facto recognition would be acceptable if, as it was clear from the official Turkish declarations, that a de jure one would not be forthcoming. Again, interestingly there was no pressure to demand such recognition. All that was said was that according to the EU it was understood that an extension of the Customs Union to the new members would represent a de facto recognition of the Republic of Cyprus. Immediately, the Turkish government announced that it would not accept such an interpretation. Finally, when Turkey extended its Customs Union agreement with the new EU member states on 29 July 2005, it attached a declaration denying any recognition of Cyprus. The EU issued its own counter-declaration. No further practical action was taken. The situation is currently stalled as Turkey has yet to ratify the extended Protocol. Cyprus’ planes and ships (the eighth commercial fleet in the world) continue to be unable to use Turkish airports and ports.

Secondly, in the run-up to the ‘magic date’ of 3 October 2005, when accession negotiations were scheduled to begin, there was added pressure to ensure that Cyprus would not block the beginning of those negotiations. Again, there was no real EU pressure beyond a token opposition by Austria which had more to do with its own desire to see the start of negotiations with Croatia⁴⁹ rather than any real interest in postponing the negotiations with Turkey. Thus, it does not come as a surprise to the critical observer that the Principles governing the negotiations as spelled out in the Negotiating Framework for Turkey,⁵⁰ do not even mention the military occupation of the northern part of Cyprus. Its Point 6 refers to the fact that among other criteria, progress will be measured against:

“Turkey’s continued support for efforts to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem within the UN framework and in line with the principles on which the Union is founded, including steps to contribute to a favourable climate for a comprehensive settlement, and progress in the normalisation of bilateral relations between Turkey and all EU member states, including the Republic of Cyprus”.

The fact that the UN Plan was not accepted in 2004 has not been addressed either – that is to say that the Plan in itself is a problem. As long as any future plans on offer do not consider the needs of the majority of the Cypriots, Turkey can claim it supports them knowing very well that they could not possibly be implemented. This is a fact that has bedevilled UN efforts, mainly due to the US and the UK position on the matter. Furthermore by using the phrase “all EU member states, including the Republic of Cyprus”, it remains clear that the occupation of the island is no longer particularly important nor different from other relations and problems that Turkey may have with other EU states, including Greece. All this is declared in spite of the fact that Cyprus continues to be the only EU member state that Turkey refuses to even recognise. What such a framework pretends to do is to render banal the current situation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The real issue remains the continuing de facto support of the Turkish position by a vast number of EU governments, including those of the ‘big states’.⁵¹ There are also many recent British declarations about how it is impossible for Turkey to continue not to recognise Cyprus, but which really amount to mere rhetoric. For instance, Britain’s Minister for Europe Denis MacShane declared that “the sooner this happens the better, but it is not a precondition” [emphasis added].⁵² Similar mind-boggling statements appear in the press, for instance in Spain (El País: “Blair apoya que Turquía negocie con al UE sin reconocer a Chipre [Blair supports Turkey’s EU accession negotiations without it recognizing Cyprus]”⁵³). To confuse the average reader more, one of the two journalists who had written the just-mentioned article, Carlos Yáñez, then argued that Turkey had ‘recognised’ Cyprus.⁵⁴ A stance that is surprising because one must contrast it to his excellent coverage of other EU issues, especially his coverage of the Nice European Council meeting on 7-9 December 2000. But perhaps this is less surprising in light of the systematic effort being made in Spain to present Turkey in a positive light (see for instance PM Zapatero’s much vaunted Alliance of Civilizations, a project co-chaired with Turkey PM Erdogan).

Thirdly, the 9 October 2005 European Commission Turkey Progress Report offers ‘interesting’ reading in that respect. This ‘epilogue’ is divided into two subsections, one showing positive signs, and the other negative ones. Only time will tell which one of the two will prevail, but the past record clearly tends to favour a rather pessimistic prediction.

The ‘pluses’

On the plus side, the democratisation of Turkey has now firmly been placed under the EU’s ‘watchful eye’. The Commission Report now offers a very detailed and comprehensive analysis of the situation in Turkey. The overall principles governing the negotiations are robust, including numerous specific criticisms.⁵⁵ As this article

is concerned with political issues, it will concentrate on the political criteria mentioned in the Report. Two important conclusions can be drawn: first, there is time and time again reference to the discrepancy between the legislation adopted in the past three years and the reality on the ground. That is to say that there is still no serious implementation of the policies introduced in the fields of democratisation, respect for human rights, minorities and the like. Second, on the international front, there is still no improvement in neighbourly relations with the notable exception of Greece. Similarly, Turkey's recognition of Cyprus is demanded once again. These can be seen as minimum demands that have to be satisfied in the future.

The 'minuses'

On the negative side, it is possible that more rhetoric without substance is being repeated. There is no timetable for the implementation of these or other demands made in the Report. Neither are Turkish violations of Greek air-space mentioned (a 'non-issue' in the Western media except in Greece). The frequency of such violations has increased dramatically over recent years. When combined with the long-standing Turkish Parliament declaration that an extension of Greek territorial waters would amount to *casus belli* (reiterated most recently in late October 2005, i.e. after the beginning of Accession negotiations), the whole issue is made potentially explosive. The Report does not even demand the withdrawal of Turkish occupation troops from Cyprus. This has now been replaced by the 'user-friendly' phrase that:

“over the last year Turkey has continued to support efforts for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus Problem within the UN framework and in line with principles on which the Union is founded”.

Surely, the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus is consistently condemned by the UN, and, surely, the EU does not accept military invasions and occupations as part of its principles. Similarly, although poor relations with others of Turkey's neighbours, especially Armenia, are mentioned as obstacles, its even worse relations with Cyprus appear not to really matter any longer.

Moreover, the Report begins with a complete inaccuracy. It says that one of the demands⁵⁶ to begin accession negotiations is for Turkey

“to sign the Adaptation Protocol extending its existing Association Agreement with the EU to all new Member States, including the Republic of Cyprus. Fulfilment of these requirements by Turkey resulted in the opening of accession negotiations on 3 October 2005 as planned” (emphasis added).

As shown above, this simply is not the case. Turkey issued a declaration where it clearly stated that it did not recognise the Republic of Cyprus. In response, all the

EU did was to say that it did not accept such a declaration. In brief, there is no real pressure on Turkey once again over Cyprus. Again, as a famous song goes: paroles, paroles, paroles!

Now that this rather hostile context has been clearly presented, the article turns to the role that Cypriot MEPs have played over the last two years.

Greek-Cypriot MEPS' Views towards the EU

The main purpose of this section (for details see Stavridis, 2006c, pp. 16-31) is to present and assess the views of the Greek-Cypriot MEPs who have been sitting in the EP since June 2004.⁵⁷ The reason for doing so is to try and find out if these parliamentarians believe that parliamentary diplomacy has played (or, is playing, will, can, or should, play) a substantial role in efforts at finding a solution to the ongoing division and occupation of the island. The paper is empirical and does not try to add to the very small existing theoretical literature on parliamentary diplomacy, which has yet to attract the academic interest it deserves (Stavridis, 2002).⁵⁸

Before doing that, it is important to begin with a cursory analysis⁵⁹ of recent EP resolutions and other documents (e.g. reports) on Cyprus (but also on Turkey) in order to show what the Parliament's overall approach to the Cyprus Problem is:

1. The first thing that strikes the observer is the amount of resolutions, debates, questions, reports dedicated to Cyprus and Turkey.
2. In the midst of the above plethora of documentation and other data, it is possible to identify a pro-Cyprus strand and an anti-Cyprus (meaning Greek-Cypriot) strand. Overall, the Right PPE-DE⁶⁰ and the United Left GUE-NGL⁶¹ are more pro-Cyprus, and the Socialist PSE⁶² less so. Similarly, the PPE-DE (European People's Party – Right) is anti-Turkish accession and the PSE is much more pro-Turkish accession. The Greens (Verts-ALE)⁶³ as a bloc, and the majority of the Liberals ALDE/ADLE,⁶⁴ especially those from the UK, are particularly anti-Greek Cypriots and pro-Turkish/Turkish Cypriots. These divisions within the EP were confirmed by the interviews with MEPs that were conducted for this piece (see below).
3. Despite, or perhaps because of, the above divisions, even what could be called 'positive' resolutions for Cyprus are not as 'positive'⁶⁵ as they may look at first (the same is true of converse resolutions). Often, a slim majority only approves 'positive' resolutions. That is to say that there is no clear support for Cyprus in the EP – or at least, not as clear as it is often presented in Cyprus. The same is true of other European-wide shows of 'support' (see the recent EPP resolution, below).

4. All of the above means that the overall atmospherics in the EP are not too positive for the Cypriot MEPs. The fact that the EP had consistently and overwhelmingly supported the 2004 Annan Plan makes this situation all the more difficult for them. Only one week before the April 2004 referenda, the EP had qualified the Annan Plan as a “shining example of handling equally difficult international issues”. More clear expressions of support to the Plan are found in the 21 April 2004 EP debates. EP President Borrell claimed that “[t]he presentation of the contents of the plan to the public has not always been equally balanced”, sharing “the concerns expressed by the UN Secretary-General in that regard”. MEP Jacques Poos, a rapporteur on Cyprus, argued that “C’est une illusion que d’espérer qu’en cas de rejet du plan, les problèmes difficiles du retour des réfugiés, de la propriété, des troupes turques, etc. pourront trouver une solution. Le contraire est vrai. La situation actuelle sera verouillée. Pas un seul réfugié de part et d’autre ne retournera dans son village natal et pas un seul soldat turc ne quittera la zone occupée”. In particular, the Liberals, and especially MEPs Watson, Ludford, and Davies, were very critical. Very few MEPs rejected such claims and centred their comments on the fact that the current situation was the direct result of an illegal invasion, an illegal occupation and an illegal colonisation of the north of Cyprus (Greek United Left MEP Alysandrakis; British EPP MEP Tannock).

But this paper is not about the EP and the Cyprus Problem per se.⁶⁶ In the 2004 elections, the following six candidates were elected as the first Cypriot MEPs: Ioannis Kasoulides (DISY); Panayotis Demetriou (DISY); Adam Adamou (AKEL); Kyriakos Triantaphyllides (AKEL); Marios Matsakis (DIKO); Yannis Matsis (‘For Europe’). The two Cypriot MEPs from the DISY and the one from ‘For Europe’ have joined the EPP, the two from AKEL have joined the United Left, and the one from DIKO the Liberal Democrats. This part covers 2004-2006 in an effort to assess the impact of the presence of six Cypriot MEPs in the EP. This section consists of the results of research carried out by the author in March-April 2006, thanks to a number of interviews with Cypriot MEPs,⁶⁷ together with a number of party officials or candidates to the May 2006 national parliamentary elections. There was also use of other primary sources (especially EP verbatim debates and resolutions), as well as secondary sources (academic work but also media coverage).

What follows in this section is a detailed study of how Greek-Cypriot MEPs address the Problem.⁶⁸ I have concentrated on four of the six MEPs. It represents two-thirds of them. Ideally, I would have liked to interview all six of them, but real life (my own time constraints) meant that it was not possible to interview one of them (MEP Adamos Adamou). The reason for not interviewing MEP Marios Matsakis is totally different. Matsakis has become involved in a national and

international political-judicial saga. First, Matsakis is accused of arts trafficking and there is an ongoing debate now as to whether to remove his parliamentary immunity with regard to his alleged involvement.⁶⁹ Second, in late October 2005, he entered the Green Line no-entry zone and removed a Turkish flag; when he attempted to return it, the Turkish-Cypriot 'authorities' arrested him. The Cypriot government subsequently condemned Matsakis' 'Turkish flag affair',⁷⁰ and DIKO has now kicked him out of the Party. The charges against him regarding the flag incident were eventually dropped,⁷¹ but the saga is far from over. In April 2006, Matsakis staged a demonstration outside the British Base of Akrotiri (near the city of Limassol), claiming that British troops had 'pointed guns at him'. In early May, British police arrested him outside the Episkopi police station (again near Akrotiri), where only a couple of days earlier he had sprayed the acronym 'EOKA' on a car.⁷² I, therefore, concluded that this was neither the best time nor the right person to interview for an academic study on the Cyprus Problem. This is not to say that his role is less important (see below). It simply means that his is a special case.

From the interviews, the following findings can be made:

First, all four MEPs agreed that there was a particularly hostile environment in the EP following the rejection of the Annan Plan. A particular incident sums up perfectly well what the situation was: MEP Demetriou said that in a chance chat he had with (then) EU Commissioner for Enlargement Verheugen in the European Parliament Hemicycle on 21 April 2004, that is to say three days before the referenda,⁷³ Verheugen told him almost verbatim (in Demetriou's own words):

"You cheated me, you will pay for it, there was an agreement for both accession and a solution, Papadopoulos had agreed at The Hague about the Annan Plan; do you have a democracy in Cyprus? Who are you to prevent me from addressing the Cypriot people on TV? I will kill Tassos Papadopoulos for what he did" (emphasis added).

In brief, the Greek Cypriots were perceived as a 'nuisance' (MEP Triantaphyllides). Therefore, the main priority of these first ever Cypriot MEPs was to try and change this negative situation. To a certain extent, they all agreed that they had achieved some degree of success. Now the European Parliament is not as critical of Cyprus as it has been in the recent past. The MEPs also confirmed the division that exists overall between the pro-Cypriot EPP and United Left, and the anti-Cypriot Greens and Liberals (especially MEPs Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Joost Lagendijk, and Cem Özdemir). The Socialists stand somewhere in between with some 'improvement' in recent years, especially as far as the very critical EP President Josep Borrell is concerned (although MEP Demetriou claims that Borrell remains unconvinced of the Cypriot President's genuine commitment to a 'feasible' solution; he also sees MEPs Schultz, Wiersma and Swodoba as particularly

unconvinced). They also made clear that their 'job' can only be productive if their colleagues are willing to listen to them. Thus, they all argued that some MEPs, in particular but not exclusively the Greens and the Liberals, are simply not interested in their views (according to Demetriou, this list includes again MEPs Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Joost Lagendijk, and Cem Özdemir).

Second, they all agreed that a future solution of the Cyprus Problem is needed because it represents a vital interest for the survival of the Republic of Cyprus. MEP Matsis stressed that the Annan Plan had compelled him to stand for MEP. At his age, he said (he has just turned 72), there was no other reason. He believed that the 'salvation' of Cyprus would come through the EU (and NATO) membership. MEP Kasoulides said that now that Cyprus has joined the EU, its 'political security is guaranteed'. Most agreed that the Annan Plan was a bad plan. Those who did not are from DISY, the main party that had supported the Plan (it is interesting to note that with the passing of time, even if MEP Kasoulides continued to be rather uncritical of the Plan, his colleague MEP Demetriou appeared much less inclined to do the same). Most agreed that there is a 'before' and there is an 'after' in EU-Cyprus relations that is defined by this Plan and its impact (MEP Triantaphyllides).⁷⁴ All agreed that they must act as Cyprus' ambassadors because of the importance of the subject. Kasoulides argued that they need to show that they are 'good parliamentarians' on many other issues in order to gain credibility and trust among their colleagues. Visibility is also important considering they are only six Cypriot MEPs out of 732 Euro-parliamentarians. The 'trick' in the EP (as in the rest of the EU) is to build coalitions. Matsis stressed the need to reverse the Turkey-isation of the northern part of the island, the urgency to "convince the Turkish Cypriots of the need to help us [the Greek Cypriots] to save ourselves in order to help them save themselves". He also emphasised how important it was to stop and reverse the cultural destruction in the northern part of Cyprus that has been taking place for some time now.⁷⁵

Third, they all agreed that their presence in the EP means that parliamentary diplomacy must play an important role in the search for a solution to the Cyprus Problem, and that the EP is particularly suited to such an effort. MEP Matsis perceives the EP vis-à-vis other EU institutions and especially the Commission has increasing clout; MEP Kasoulides considers parliamentary diplomacy to be easier than traditional diplomacy as there exist fewer constraints, especially over double standards on human rights; MEP Demetriou thinks that for smaller countries it represents their only weapon; and MEP Triantaphyllides sees the EP as the best forum because of the way it works: it is not a traditional parliament, in that it does not have a government and an opposition. Compromise among all political groups is always needed. The EP is an important forum for political debate not only because it is where senior Commissioners and other Commission officials answer

questions (he stressed current Commission President Barroso's regular presence), but also where heads of states from third countries make important addresses.

They all also welcomed the fact that contrary to the PACE where Turkish-Cypriot members have now been given 'observer status', such a development was successfully blocked within the EP: only a 'contact group' with 'representatives' from the north of Cyprus has been set up (and not with 'elected representatives', as some had intended). The Contact Group consists of MEPs from all eight parties represented in the EP who must deal with civil society (and not Turkish-Cypriot 'institutions' as some had intended), and report to the Conference of Presidents (and not to the Plenary, as some had intended). Both Demetriou and Triantaphyllides stressed how important this development is because it makes it clear that it does not represent in any way the recognition of the occupied territories as an independent entity, let alone an independent state.

Fourth, they identified a number of problems in their daily relations with Cyprus and in particular with their Cypriot colleagues in Nicosia. The political system in Cyprus has yet to understand how important the EP is in general and in particular the Cypriot MEPs. MEP Kasoulides said that "institutionally speaking in Cyprus Cypriot MEPs do not exist". There are also practical problems as they cannot meet with Cypriot MPs on a regular basis considering that they spend Monday-Thursday in Brussels/Strasbourg, and therefore only two-three days in Cyprus, usually over week-ends. They also complained about travel connections between Larnaca⁷⁶ and Strasbourg (sometimes it takes fourteen hours to reach the Hemicycle in Strasbourg, and sometimes they must stay overnight in Athens airport).

Fifth, on the possibility of a 'European solution' to the Cyprus Problem, most agreed that this was now vital for the future of the country. The only one to disagree with this view was MEP Kasoulides who argued that there are far too many different opinions within the EU over that subject for it to be able to play any significant role. They were, however, all in agreement that the main reason why the EP is now slowly taking a more critical view of Turkey has more to do with Turkey's behaviour than with the Cyprus question.⁷⁷ Obviously this development worried them as they were unanimous that fundamental International and European principles and values are being trampled in the occupied north of the island and that the Cyprus Problem should, therefore, be important in its own right. But they welcomed the growing rejection of Turkish behaviour. In spite of this, they would all welcome Turkey in the EU provided it respected all the 1993 Copenhagen democratic criteria, as well as the 1999 Helsinki requirements to solve peacefully its territorial disputes with both Greece and Cyprus (meaning of course the withdrawal of Turkish occupation troops). This belief in a European future for Turkey is not limited to the Cypriot MEPs of course and reflects official Cypriot policy.⁷⁸ Therefore, all Cypriot MEPs

agreed that Turkey held the keys to a solution because it is the occupying force in Cyprus.

Sixth, it also stems from the current research that one of the weaknesses of the existing Cypriot presence in the EP is the fact that there is no Greek-Cypriot representative in the Socialist Group, the second largest political grouping in Strasbourg/Brussels. Moreover, the current EP President belongs to the Socialist Group, and the Group is one of the strongest backers of Turkey's accession to the Union. It is possible (but only possible) that a merger between EDEK and DIKO⁷⁹ takes place some time after the May 2006 parliamentary elections. Such a development would allow DIKO politicians to join the Socialist Group in the EP and the Socialist International worldwide. Such a lack of influence is further compounded by the particular problem of MEP Matsakis, who appears to be suffering serious personal problems. There seems to be general agreement that Matsakis represents a serious embarrassment for his party, the President of Cyprus, the Cypriot government, Cypriot parliamentarians, and for Cyprus itself.⁸⁰ As for the remaining two MEPs, they belong to the United Left Party, a group that had voted against EU enlargement in 2004.⁸¹ The three remaining Cypriot MEPs, as noted above, belong to the EPP, but even they possess a limited influence if only because of their small numbers. Thus, the recently much vaunted (in Cyprus) EPP resolution on Cyprus only contains five positive elements versus four rather more negative ones.⁸²

Seven, and as a final point, it must be stressed that because there are so few MEPs for Cyprus (due to its demographics), it is perhaps the country where parliamentarians are also very active in other inter-parliamentary assemblies. Something that could be seen as a drawback if only for reasons of time, but that could also be regarded as an advantage because of the 'communicating vessels' principle⁸³ that previous work on parliamentary diplomacy (Stavridis, 2002) has identified as a possible positive development (both in terms of parliamentary control – scrutiny – and in terms of information and knowledge in international affairs – parliamentary diplomacy).

Conclusions

It is still possible to argue that the EU has contributed to stability in the region because Turkey's official position has moved from a negative, obstructive stance on Cyprus to one that would accept a reunification of the island. The initial Turkish position that the Cyprus Problem was solved in 1974 is no longer valid. Thomas Diez reproduces the famous Ecevit statement: "The Cyprus problem no longer exists, it has been solved". Ecevit also characteristically claimed in 2001 that there was no difference between "sacrificing the TRNC or a part of Turkish territory".⁸⁴ As

late as July 2002, on the 28th anniversary of the Turkish invasion, whilst on a visit to the occupied territories, the then foreign minister of Turkey, Sukru Sina Gurel, went as far as to 'joke' about whether Turkey would go ahead with its threat to annex the north of the island if a divided Cyprus joined the EU. His reported answer to a journalist's question was "[b]y annexation, do you mean the north or the whole of the island?"⁸⁵ The idea of annexing the 'TRNC' has now also finally been dropped.

Thus, by sticking to its initial position that a solution to the island division was not a precondition for Cyprus accession, and then by sticking to it until May 2004 (despite the failure of the Annan Plan), the EU has had a 'catalytic effect' at least in keeping the EU together. However, the question of whether this is a real contribution to solving the Cyprus Problem per se remains open. Indeed, what kind of result is it if, as Philip Gordon had noted as early as in 1998, the end product would mean a permanent division of the island⁸⁶ (the so-called 'Euro-partition', see above)? It is a position that is gaining ground all the same. See for instance the recent EU-25 Watch study of the Institut für Europäische Politik and nearly thirty other associated research institutes in Europe: there is only one reference to Cyprus under the heading "Are there any special interests and concerns [in your specific country] with regard to the continuation of the enlargement process towards (...) Turkey". With the exception of Cyprus, there is only one political party that expresses reservations over Turkey's accession roadmap for reasons which include the situation in Cyprus: Sinn Fein in Ireland.⁸⁷

As to the question asked in this article's sub-heading (is a 'European solution' a real opportunity or a false promise?), the answer will largely depend on what the EU decides to do. The means are there, the possibilities too. What is clearly lacking is the political will to act. Everything to date seems to point to such a negative conclusion: the EU's past record; the negative reaction to the 2004 referendum result in the Greek-Cypriot community; the current EU policy to engage and to continue accession negotiations with Turkey whilst its military occupation of the island continues;⁸⁸ the current rhetorical demand to extend the Turkey-Cyprus Customs Union by opening up Turkish ports and airports to Cyprus, but without even mentioning the wider problems of recognition and of occupation; the EP as a microcosm of EU politics and its apparently exclusive 'use' of the Cyprus Problem vis-à-vis the question of Turkey's eventual accession, and not as an important issue in its own right. It is therefore difficult to be optimistic on this matter.

Are there any positive signs all the same? In October 2006 the European Commission will produce its now regular assessment Report for Turkey. The 15-16 June 2006 European Council has just given Turkey until the end of 2006 to open its ports and airports to Cyprus transport (but it revealingly used the neutral term of "the

fulfilment of Turkey's obligations under the Association Agreement and under its Additional Protocol"; there is no mention of Cyprus by name or of Turkey's ongoing occupation).⁸⁹ It will become almost impossible for President Papadopoulos not to use Cyprus' right of veto after all those times he did not do so (December 2004, October and December 2005, June 2006) especially in light of the 2006 parliamentary elections in Cyprus which confirmed the negative vote to the Annan Plan in 2004. Will there be a crisis with Turkey then? Possibly, but what counts is that, to a large extent, it is the absence of political will to tackle the Cyprus Problem until now that would lead to that situation. What also appears to be missing is a 'Plan B'. What happens if Turkey's accession negotiations stall? As with the European Constitutional Treaty, there seems to be no will to deal with the issue at stake and instead blame everything on "populism, egoism, chauvinism and stubbornness".⁹⁰ This ostrich-like attitude has been possible for a long time thanks to a 'permissive consensus' among the public opinions of the member states. Following the double rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands, this is clearly no longer the case. The well-documented democratic deficits in the EU, together with the growing democratic disjuncture between elites and public opinions will have to be addressed if European integration is to continue (see Stavridis, 2006a). Considering the rather overwhelming public opposition to its accession to the EU,⁹¹ Turkey is an important test case for that matter. It would help everyone, including Turkey, to show how important it is to respect values and principles in Europe. To demand and obtain the recognition of Cyprus by Turkey as a matter of principle would be a good place to begin. There are some encouraging signs, such as the proposed establishment of a Human Rights Agency to cover all EU states but also candidate countries, or the emerging debate about more stringent accession conditions in the future (which would cover Turkey's accession process).⁹² But not surprisingly, considering the EU's past record, Turkey does not appear to respond. As Erdogan himself has recently stated: "Tant que les Chypriotes turcs resteront isolés, nous n'ouvrons ni nos ports ni nos aéroports. Tant pis si les négociations [avec l'UE] s'arrêtent".⁹³ Will there be a 'European solution' to the Cyprus Problem? For the time being, it appears to be more of a false promise than a real opportunity. Only time will tell.

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electoral period and the elections to the Cypriot Parliament in May 2006. Special thanks go to the four Cypriot MEPs interviewed for this particular piece, as well as to: Costas Apostolides, Prof Van Coufoudakis, Dr Hubert Faustmann, Harris Georgiades, Dr Christos Iacovou, Prof Peter Loizos, Nicos Peristianis, Dr Marios Sarris, Prof Andreas Theophanous, Yannis Tirkides, and Christos Yiangou. The author would also like to thank two anonymous referees for their useful comments. The usual proviso about the author's sole responsibility applies here too.

Notes

1. Former Cypriot President and Chief Accession Negotiator (Cyprus-EU) George Vassiliou described the 2004 enlargement as 'certainly the most important political event of post-WW2 history in Europe', during his Stein Rokkan Lecture delivered to the 25-30 April 2006 ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Nicosia, 27 April 2006.
2. The latest European Council meeting conclusions also make this claim: 'Enlargement has proved a historic opportunity contributing to ensure peace, security, stability, democracy, the rule of law as well as growth and prosperity in the European Union as a whole', European Council Presidency Conclusions, Brussels, 15-16 June 2006, p. 17 [www.europa.eu], accessed 19 June 2006.
3. To use Gabriel Munuera's claim that the EU's 'power of attraction' worked with Slovakia over its dispute with Hungary and also on its treatment of minorities (Munuera, 1994), as quoted in Christou (2002).
4. For a review see Stavridis and Fernández (2005).
5. On Turkey and especially on EU-Turkey relations, see Basri Elmas (1998); Font (2005); Hughes (2004); Insel (1999); Kirisci (2004, 2005); Lorca et al. (2006); Moutsoglou (2000); Müftüler-Bac and McLaren (2003); Oguzlu (2003); Robins (2003); Tezcan (2004); Turunc (2001); Vaner (2004). See also Chislett (2004); Fisher (2005); Ülgen and Zahariadis (2004).
6. Catsiapis (1996, p. 156) makes this assessment on the EU stance over the 1996 Imia incident between Turkey and Greece but it can be used more generally.
7. See the 16-17 December 2004 European Council Presidency Conclusions (Doc 16238/04), Brussels [www.eu2004.nl], accessed October 2005.
8. What follows draws from Stavridis (1991), Chapter 5 ('EPC reactions to military interventions'), pp. 162-219, and esp. pp. 171-174.
9. "Statement by the Presidency on behalf of the Ten on Cambodia at the 36th session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 19 October 1981", in EPC, Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, Bonn, 1982, p. 286.
10. "Answer (of 6 April 1979) to written parliamentary question No. 868/78 on the position of the Nine at the UN on Cyprus, Strasbourg, 7 December 1978", in EPC, 1982, pp. 152-153.

11. See “Communiqué by the Nine Governments on the Situation in Cyprus (16 July 1974)”, in EPC, 1982, p. 71.
12. Respectively: “Statement by the Ten on Cyprus (Athens, 16 November 1983)”, in EPC, 1988, p. 172; “Declaration by the Ten on Cyprus (Rome, 10 June 1985)”, *ibid.*, p. 198.
13. For instance: “Statement by the Foreign Ministers on the Situation in Cyprus (Dublin, 13 February 1975)”, in EPC, 1982, p. 75; “Statement by the Dutch Ambassador on the situation in Cyprus at the 31st General Assembly of the UN (New York, 3 November 1976)”, *ibid.*, p. 99.
14. The quote and information is from Tsardanidis (1984).
15. The 1960 Treaties and Accords also represent extremely tough powers for external actors (including the right of military intervention, collectively or individually).
16. Tony Blair, Press Conference, London, 8 January 1998.
17. For details, see Stavridis (2003, p. 348).
18. See Rouleau (2000); Turkey’s current PM Erdogan has also recently complained of the lack of democracy in his own country, according to one of his declarations to CNN on 7 June 2005, in-news: [www.in.gr].
19. See Hadjiantoniou (2000); see also Güney (2004, pp. 35-37).
20. [In Greek] NET TV ‘News’ (16 September 1998) and BBC1 ‘Nine o’clock News’ (22 September 1998) respectively.
21. Cyprus News, No. 13, 1-30 June 1990, p. 1.
22. To Vima, [in Greek] interview with Anny Podimata, a respected Greek journalist.
23. See Kathimerini – English edition; [in Greek] Eleftherotypia; [in Greek] To Vima; all on 23 April 2002.
24. For the EP’s clear expressions of support to the Annan Plan, see below. The European Commission did so by confirming that it would amend the Cyprus Accession Treaty without any problem if a solution was to be found before 1 May 2004. Similarly in the name of the Irish Presidency of the EU Council, Irish PM Bertie Ahern commended the Annan Plan: “I would like to commend the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his colleagues for their tireless efforts in seeking to bring about a settlement to the Cyprus problem. The European Union has all along expressed its strong preference that a united Cyprus enter the Union on 1 May and has indicated its readiness to accommodate the terms of a settlement in line with the principles on which the Union is founded. The decision on the Plan for a settlement that Mr. Annan presented yesterday to the parties now rests ultimately with the people of Cyprus, who are to vote in separate simultaneous referenda on 24 April”, Ahern commends Annan and colleagues for “tireless efforts” in seeking Cyprus settlement, Press Release, 1 April 2004 [www.eu2004.ie], accessed November 2005.
25. For excellent critiques of the Plan, see Palley (2005); Coufoudakis (2004); Theophanous (2004b). See also Melakopides (2004, 2006, pp. 84-90). Both Andreas Theophanous (2004a, pp. 81-90, 2004b,) and Van Coufoudakis (2004, pp. 74-75) dissect the many problematic dimensions of the Plan (from security concerns, to economic problems, to political constitutional complications). As for Palley she shows how biased towards

- Turkey the negotiations for the Plan(s) were. As Coufoudakis put it: “‘Annan 5’ was a Christmas tree loaded with gifts for everyone but the Greek Cypriots” (2004, p. 75). See also Keith Kyle who offers a critique of the way the Plan was set up to bypass Denktash’s traditional obstructionism without thinking about the wider implications of such a decision, and by taking for granted the Greek-Cypriot electorate (Kyle, 2004, p. 111), although he also puts some blame on President Papadopoulos.
26. For details, see Stavridis (2005b, pp. 24-27, 2006c, pp. 9 -11).
 27. These attacks were not limited to European actors. UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan blamed the Greek-Cypriot President as the man responsible for it. See Report of the UN Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus (2 June 2004). See also the Cyprus President’s reply (Letter by the President of the Republic, Mr Tassos Papadopoulos, to the UN Secretary-General, Mr Kofi Annan, dated 7 June, which circulated as an official document of the UN Security Council, 9 June 2004), Press and Information Office, Republic of Cyprus [www.moi.gov.cy], accessed 19 October 2004.
 28. In-news, 21 April 2004 [www.in.gr].
 29. International Herald Tribune, 26 April 2004 [www.iht.com], accessed on that day.
 30. In the May 2004 issue [www.mondediplo.com], accessed 15 October 2004.
 31. El País, 1 May 2004. See also Soler (2004).
 32. The Star, 26 April 2004 [www.star.co.za], accessed 15 October 2004. See also Ker-Lindsay’s more recent academic article (2006).
 33. El País, 5 October 2004.
 34. For milder critiques see Veremis and Savvides (2004), but also Faustmann (2004) and Loizos (2005). Especially the latter two are torn between, on the one hand, what one sees as important reasons for rejecting the Plan (security considerations) and what the other sees as an important fact (there is an overwhelming opposition to it and therefore it cannot be ignored), and, on the other, the fact that they both really think that the Plan was not as bad.
 35. For such Greek and Greek-Cypriot academic views, see [www.eliamep.gr] (Opinions throughout 2004, especially those made on 12 March 2004, 17 March 2004, 3 April 2004, 29 May 2004).
 36. I also noticed plenty of resentment among Greek Cypriots for being accused of not knowing what they were voting for. This ‘foreign’ arrogance is greatly resented and, considering Cyprus’ past and recent history, it is not difficult to see why.
 37. Press Conference by the President of the Republic Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos in New York, 19 September 2005 – in New York after his participation to the UN Annual Assembly.
 38. The wider international context has also changed drastically since 1974. Human rights and other democratic principles in the world have now gained prominence, especially in the post-Cold War era.
 39. Taki Miha, [in Greek] ‘Ammochostos under European administration’, Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia, 28 May 2006.
 40. In-news, 18 June 2006 [www.in.gr], accessed on that day.

41. Professor Andreas Auer, Switzerland, Professor of Constitutional Law, University of Geneva; Professor Mark Bossuyt, Belgium, Professor of International Law, University of Antwerp; Professor Peter Burns, Canada, Former Dean of the UBC Law Faculty, Professor of Law, University of British Columbia, Vancouver; Professor Dr. Alfred De Zayas, USA, Geneva School of Diplomacy, Former Secretary, UN Human Rights Committee; Professor Silvio-Marcus Helmons, Belgium, Emeritus Professor of Université Catholique de Louvain, Public International Law and Human Rights; Professor George Kasimatis, Greece, Emeritus Professor of University of Athens, Constitutional Law, Honorary President of the International Association of Constitutional Law; Professor Dr.h.c. Dieter Oberndorfer, Germany, Professor Emeritus, Political Science, University of Freiburg; Professor Malcolm N Shaw QC, UK, Sir Robert Jennings Professor of International Law, University of Leicester.
42. See Andreas Theophanous, 'Two years after: 10 fundamental guidelines for a Cyprus solution', *The Cyprus Weekly*, 12-18 May 2006; see also his [in Greek], *The Next Step: what should we do after the Annan Plan?*, Intercollege, Nicosia, July 2004; see also Andreas Siamarou, [in Greek] 'A solution through the harmonization of the European *acquis*', email distributed in the spring of 2006 by its author, a professor at Intercollege, and a EUOKO parliamentary candidate in the May 2006 parliamentary elections.
43. Various TV programmes during the electoral period.
44. PIK 1 TV programme 'Vouleftikes 2006', 19 May 2006.
45. PIK TV, 3 April 2006. The poll was carried out after the 28 February 2006 Paris meeting between President Papadopoulos and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.
46. For instance the October 2004 incident when Turkey invited the 'TRNC' as an independent state and forced the EU states to withdraw from that particular session of the joint UE-OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) meeting. It is strange that the whole EU bowed to Turkey's intransigent position when one of its own member states was concerned. The total boycott of the event was surely of little concern to Turkey, *El País*, 2 October 2004, see also *Communiqué de Presse au sujet du Forum commun UE-OCI* [www.eu2004.nl], accessed 1 October 2004.
47. What follows draws from TV news reports, newspaper articles (mainly from *Le Monde*, *El País*, *International Herald Tribune*), as well as news websites, in particular [www.in.gr], but also the *Fondation Robert Schuman Newsletter*, and the *Joint University of Athens Politics Department and EKEM Newsletter*; both available respectively at [www.robert-schuman.org] and at [www.ekem.gr].
48. *Kathimerini*, supplement in English to the *International Herald Tribune*, 23 July 2004, p. 2.
49. Although Austria objected to the beginning of Turkey's negotiations without the addition of the magic phrase "privileged partnership" mainly due to public opposition at home (and the holding of local elections on the week end prior to Monday 3 October 2005), the main reason for its objection was its effort to get a *quid pro quo* for the beginning of the delayed accession negotiations with Croatia. Accession negotiations with Croatia had not started as scheduled in March 2005 because Zagreb showed no cooperation with the *International Tribunal on Yugoslavia* in The Hague.
50. [www.europa.eu.int].

51. For instance Italy: see [www.in.gr] 6 September 2005, [in Greek] "Italian 'yes' to the beginning of accession negotiations with Turkey without a recognition of Cyprus". The Italian position was reiterated by the Italian foreign minister Gianfranco Fini at a meeting in Athens with his Greek counterpart, Petros Moliviatis.
52. "Turkey must recognise Cyprus before joining the EU-UK's MacShane" [www.afxpress.com], 22 October 2005. See also Le Monde, 22 October 2005.
53. W. Oppenheimer, C. Yárnoz, in El País, 28 May 2005.
54. El País, 30 July 2005: "Turquía 'reconoce' a Chipre al firmar un acuerdo de la UE".
55. See the 9 October 2005 European Commission Turkey Progress Report; see also The Negotiating Framework for Turkey [www.europa.eu.it].
56. The other was to bring in a number of pieces of legislation on human rights and on the judiciary.
57. Such a study falls in the growing tradition of work based on elites-perceptions. The interviewing of elites is important, not only for their expert knowledge, but also as 'opinion shapers' and decision-makers. For a similar approach to the current study, but this time applied to Turkish parliamentarians and their views on the EU, see Müftüler-Baç and McLaren (2003).
58. For a practitioner's view see Spanish Senator Elorriaga's book (2004).
59. There is growing interest in the subject but overall it remains an under-studied area.
60. Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats.
61. Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left.
62. Socialist Group in the European Parliament.
63. Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance.
64. Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe.
65. I owe this point to Harris Georgiades.
66. For such a preliminary assessment, see Stavridis (2006d).
67. All interviews took place in Nicosia: MEPs Matsis, 31 March; Kasoulides, 3 April; Demetriou, 12 April; Triantaphyllides, 13 April. They lasted 70, 60, 40 and 55 minutes respectively. Special thanks to Kyriakos Georgiou for arranging two of the four MEPs interviews and to Harris Georgiades for organising the other two.
68. There are no MEPs from the occupied territories. Moreover, parliamentary input needs to be conducted under democratic conditions. The current political situation in the north of the island does not satisfy these conditions. The mere presence of Turkish troops is surely an impediment to a more assertive Turkish-Cypriot policy on the issue of reunification (see Bahcheli, 2004, pp. 58-59).
69. [www.in.gr/news] 1 November 2005.
70. Ibid.; see also [www.in.gr/news], 1 January 2006.
71. The Cyprus Weekly, 10-16 March 2006.
72. The Cyprus Weekly, 7-13 April 2006; [in Greek] O Fileleftheros, 1 May 2006; The Cyprus Weekly, 5-11 May 2006.
73. In the presence of Greek MEP Ioannis Marinou.

74. There is little doubt that the impact of the Annan Plan on current Greek-Cypriot domestic politics is here to stay. See for instance its impact on the May 2006 parliamentary elections (Stavridis, 2006b).
75. He characteristically referred to the 1994 PACE Cucó Report. See also the book published by the Greek Parliament to that effect (Cyprus- A Civilization Plundered, Athens, 1998).
76. Larnaca airport is the main airport on the island as the Nicosia airport has been closed to civil traffic since the 1974 Turkish occupation and is only used by the UN. For more about the problems faced by Cypriot MEPs in their daily life, see also Kosta Pavlowitch, "Who want to be an MEP? A gruelling brief" [incorrect spelling in the original text], Sunday Mail, 2 April 2006 [www.cyprus-mail.com], accessed 3 April 2006.
77. In Triantaphyllides' view, it only represents one of the three main dominant issues on Turkey, the other two being human rights violations within Turkey, and the way Turkey deals with its Kurdish population.
78. For the most recent statement on this question, by President Papadopoulos in Larnaca on his way to the Brussels European Council meeting of June 2006, see [www.in.gr], 15 June 2006.
79. DIKO parliamentary candidate Christos Yiangou (Nicosia, 31 March 2006).
80. This came out quite clearly in all interviews, and also in other informal meetings.
81. It is interesting to note that during the pre-2004 enlargement phase, Greek Communist MEPs had differentiated their position from that of their fellow MEPs by abstaining on Cyprus. However, in the very last vote they joined the bloc's opposition to enlargement on the traditional communist ideological grounds that the EU is an economic arm of US imperialism. Officially, the final vote was justified on the grounds that the Greek Communist Party had also opposed Greece's accession to the (then) EEC (Kathimerini-English Edition, 15 April 2003). It is, however, equally important to note that after having initially opposed Cyprus' candidacy for EU membership, the Cypriot AKEL (Communist) Party later agreed to support it in a bid to facilitate a solution to the island's division. So it is even more surprising that the Greek Communist MEPs do not agree with their Cypriot counterparts.
82. On the rather positive side, one could list points 1-4-6-7-8; on the rather negative side, points 2-3-5-9. See the EPP Resolution presented by DR (Cyprus) [Democratic Rally or DISY], EPP Congress, 30-31 March 2006, Rome [www.eppcongress2006.org], accessed 16 May 2006.
83. Thus, during the 2002 Cyprus-EU JPC (Joint Parliamentary Committee) meeting in Nicosia, MEP Pere Esteve had been invited to attend in order to organise a meeting between Israeli and Palestinian parliamentarians on its fringe. Due to unforeseen circumstances (the 'Bethlehem Church' siege), the event did not take place, despite Esteve's presence in Nicosia, but it shows how the 'communicating vessels' principle might work in parliamentary diplomacy.
84. Respectively in Diez (2000, p.5), and in Le Monde, 4 December 2001.
85. In-news, 15 July 2002 [www.in.gr].
86. "A great irony [would be] that the European Union, having set out by offering Cyprus EU

- membership to provide incentives for the reunification of the island, would have succeeded in making permanent its division" (Gordon, 1998, p. 44).
87. EU-25 Watch No.1, Institut für Europäische Politik, Berlin, December 2004 [www.iep-berlin.de], especially p. 112.
88. MEP Kasoulides enjoyed telling the author that on a recent visit to the occupied north, the EP's Contact Group led by MEP Grossetête had asked the Turkish Cypriots they met, what was the need for the continued presence of thousands of Turkish troops when the Green Line can be crossed so easily nowadays.
89. European Council Presidency Conclusions, Brussels, 15-16 June 2006, p. 19.
90. This is the way one political analyst describes the main reasons for the current opposition to the Constitutional Treaty, see José Ignacio Torreblanca, 'Niebla en el Canal', *El País*, 4 June 2006.
91. As reported in [www.in.gr], 20 December 2005, most EU public opinions are opposed to Turkey's accession. The EU's average against membership now stands at 55 per cent. In countries where there is a relative majority in favour (that is to say the positive view is larger than the negative one), it does not even reach 50 per cent (Spain, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden). In Greece 79 per cent oppose Turkey's accession. See also Jan Repa, 'Analysis: EU views on Turkish bid', BBC News, 30 September 2005 [www.newsvote.bbc.co.uk], accessed 15 June 2006.
92. "La UE estudia endurecer las condiciones para nuevos miembros", and "La UE debatirá crear un organismo de derechos humanos", *El País*, 29 May 2006 and 12 May 2006 respectively. See also "La France plaide pour un élargissement 'maîtrisé' de l'Union européenne", *Le Monde*, 16 June 2006 [www.lemonde.fr].
93. Turkey's PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan as quoted in *Le Monde*, 16 June 2006 [www.lemonde.fr], accessed 17 June 2006.

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