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Mass Media and the Europeanization of Greek-Turkish Relations: discourse transformation in the Greek press 1997-2003

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the discourse on Turkey in the Greek press, focusing particularly on the reaction of the press to the transformation – or Europeanization– of Greek foreign policy that took place in the years following 1997. The paper examines the perceptions and representations of Turkey in the Greek printed media, by identifying the narratives referring to Turkey either as an enemy or as a candidate state for EU membership, and by looking at the evolution and transformation of these narratives in the period between 1997 and 2003. It then extracts observations regarding the nature of the discursive changes observed and proposes that - to a larger or lesser extent - these changes may be linked to the Europeanization of Greek society and politics and can be directly or indirectly attributed to the EU's ability to influence non-state actors, such as the mass media

Keywords: Europeanisation; Mass media; Foreign Policy; Greek-Turkish relations; Discourse

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1. Introduction

Media and communication studies are a fairly recent area of research in Greece and as a result very little work exists on the relation between foreign policy and mass media, unlike in other EU member-states. Until the late 1990s, academic interest in the influence of the Greek media on either the formulation of public opinion or on policy-making was almost non-existent. Nevertheless, contrary to what this lack of interest would suggest, the history of the Greek media, and particularly the press, are closely linked to the history of the modern Greek state and its identity[1]. During the Greek Revolution, the spirit of the Greek fighters was captured in a number of papers that appeared at the time and remained in print after the declaration of the first independent Greek state in 1831. As early as the late 19th century, political reporting had become an established profession and 56 political papers were being printed in Athens out of 131 in the whole country (Mayer 1960). Throughout the tumultuous history of the Greek state, which included, among other things, Italian and German occupations and two dictatorships (1936-1940 and 1967-1974), the press was often the sole carrier of ideas and principles that were otherwise outlawed, including the fundamental values and perceptions that held the Greek nation

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[1]In fact, the first Greek newspaper, the *Ephimeris*, which was published in Vienna, was founded in order to assist the fight for national independence from the Ottoman Empire and develop a sense of national identity.

together and provided a basis for Greek national identity. Thus, the press became an indispensable part of Greek political life with significant power.

The relationship between Greek press and politics is manifested on two different levels. On the one hand, the press has traditionally served as a 'mouthpiece' for political parties to reach a large audience and has thus functioned as a mechanism for the reinforcement of political beliefs, through what has been described as an "incestuous relationship between press and political parties" (Paraschos 1995). On the other hand, Greece has been described as one of the states in which journalists and writers in the press have significant power in forming public opinion (Giallourides, 2001:18), but also, in setting the public policy agenda (Panagiotou 2003:4). This interdependence between the Greek press, policy-making and public opinion suggests that the analysis of the press is an indispensable variable in the study of policy change, and, consequently, in the analysis of the reconsideration of Greek foreign policy and Greek-Turkish relations that took place in the late 1990s.

This paper hypothesises that, given the nature and function of the print media in Greece, the transformation of Greek foreign policy towards Turkey, which was manifested in the Greek decision to lift the veto on Turkey's accession in 1999, should also be reflected in the transformation of the discourse on Turkey in the Greek press. This hypothesis is tested through the systematic comparative analysis of the framing of this discourse in the mainstream Greek newspapers in 1997, 1999 and 2003, and specifically in the months of the

European Councils which reached significant decisions on Turkey's application for membership. The study of narratives regarding the Turkish state aims to shed light on the role of the press in Greek foreign policy, and particularly to understand whether the reconsideration of Greek-Turkish relations in Greece was linked to a more positive discourse on Turkey in the Greek press. Finally, the analysis also examines whether any observed transformation of the discourse in the press was guided by policies, beliefs, identities and principles emanating from the EU through the process of Europeanization, which has been credited as the driving force for the transformation of Greek foreign policy towards Turkey (Tsakonas 2003; Economides 2005).

2. Greek-Turkish Relations and the Greek Press

Until recently the scholarly literature has concurred that by and large the Greek press has contributed to the perpetuation of the turbulent relationship between Greece and Turkey by emphasizing nationalism in the Greek public space and by representing Turkey as the 'Other', along with the negative connotations that this entails. Thus it has been argued that the mass media have played a significant role in the process of reproduction and reinforcement of ethnocentric and nationalist discourses (Ozgunes & Terzis 2000) and that the conflicts in the Aegean and in Cyprus may have been resolved a long time ago, had it not been for the consistent presentation of hostile images, prejudices and national stereotypes by the mass media (Giallourides 2001).

The analysis of stereotypes has, in fact, been used as the main method to understand the way in which the media - in the wider sense - perform their role in Greek-Turkish relations (Hadjidimos 1999; Giallourides 2001; Millas 2001; Panagiotou 2003; Kostarella 2007; Ozkirimli & Sofos 2008). In these studies, there is a general consensus that the Greek mass media have served to reproduce the established stereotypes regarding Turkey, that is the stereotypes derived from history and literature, and have sometimes reformulated these stereotypes in order to match particular circumstances. In their conclusions it is observed that negative stereotypes of the Turks, which promote the abstract idea of Turkey as the 'eternal enemy', are abundant and constant across time: "This coverage works towards the continuation of the dispute, since it constructs a negative image of the 'Other'" (Panagiotou 2003: 3). As the two countries have been historically posited as the 'Other' in their respective nationalist imaginaries, "engaged in parallel monologues in which each is seen as the 'opposite' to the survival of the other" (Ozkirimli & Sofos, 2008), the mobilisation of such feelings by the press brings life to the historically ingrained images and creates an environment susceptible to conflict. On the other hand, these deep-rooted perceptions of Turkey are also seen to limit the press's options to introduce varying discourses:

> The public is prepared to embrace explanations dominated by stereotypes that have been long ingrained by institutions such as school, church and family. Therefore it is very difficult for the press to escape from this process and adopt new approaches (Kostarella, 2007: 30).

Negative stereotypes of Turkey have traditionally involved images of the Turks as (a) barbarian (often referred to as Asian) and inferior in terms of civilisation;

(b) untrustworthy and not hesitating to go back on their word (c) fanatical, conservative, as well as fearful of progress and insecure against the West, and (d) anti-Christian and unholy tyrants (Millas 2001). Therefore, direct or indirect allusion to these representations in the contemporary mass media is perceived as detrimental for societal support for rapprochement. Focusing on the perpetuation of these images, the literature tends to attribute a rather negative role for the press in Greek-Turkish relations, and perceive the Greek-Turkish case as an example of "how media promote the oppositional schema of us versus them, when defining national 'Others'" (Kostarella, 2007: 27), and thus perpetuate conflict.

It can be argued that this one-sided claim is a result of the lack of comprehensive and balanced studies of the media in this function. Until recently, the overarching majority of studies have focused on the attitudes of the media in moments of crisis between the two states, the most obvious example being the abundance of scholarly articles on the media discourse surrounding the Imia/Kardak crisis (for example Giallourides 2001; Panagiotou 2003). Given that nationalist discourses become more pronounced in moments of perceived crisis, studies which are limited to timeframes involving episodes of conflict are bound to discover discursive manifestations of pronounced nationalism.

The emergence of a new research agenda, guided by the assumption that non-governmental actors, including the media, have acted as promoters of the post-

1999 rapprochement, has begun to reverse these potentially erroneous findings. Scholars who have engaged consistently with the image of Turkey in Greece, analysing the media in times of both turmoil and stability in bilateral relations, detect a shift towards abating the negative references to the 'Other' (Ker-Lindsay 2000; Millas, 2001; Rumelili, 2005). In fact, it has been observed that, while the Greek media had traditionally legitimated hardliner policies against the 'Other', since the earthquakes in 1999 their influence has turned toward a progressive support of rapprochement (Rumelili 2005). However, the tendency to focus on the reporting of the 1999 earthquakes in order to deduce wider conclusions regarding the stance of the press errs on the opposite side of the studies that have focused on the Imia events. The climate of compassion and friendship brought about by natural disaster may have enabled the media and the public to overlook the historical disputes and the relevant stereotypes, but only temporarily. In order to assess whether a more permanent discursive change has taken place there is a need for a more in-depth analysis of discourses and narratives on Turkey in the mass media across time and events.

Attempting to make up for this gap, this paper examines the evolution of the 'Turkey' discourse in the Greek press at selected regular timeframes throughout the rapprochement period. In the following sections the representations of Turkey in the Greek press at specific 'time points' between 1997 and 2003 are compared in order to deduce general conclusions about the discursive trends that accompanied the foreign policy transformation of 1999 and its follow-up. These 'time points' include three periods, namely:

a. Before and after the December 1997 European Council in Luxembourg, at which the EU leaders refused to endorse Turkey's candidacy. The Greek veto featured as one of the main obstacles to Turkish accession and caused strong reactions in Ankara which led to a renewal of security concerns in the Aegean. This, among other factors, led the Greek government to reconsiderations of its strategy towards Turkish accession.

b. Before and after the December 1999 European Council in Helsinki, where the EU leaders agreed to endorse Turkey's candidacy under certain conditions. The Greek official policy was to lift the veto and stress the importance of rapprochement, marking a definite reorientation of its foreign policy premises. The transformation of the Greek strategy as manifested in Helsinki was accompanied by strong Euro-enthusiast rhetoric on the governmental level.

c. The European Council meeting in Thessaloniki in June 2003 which was considered as the moment of emancipation for Greece as a European state. The Council also made significant decisions for the future enlargement of the EU in which the Greek Presidency displayed support for reform in Turkey which would lead the country to its future accession to the EU.

The study of narratives begins roughly from the 1996 Imia crisis, the most critical near-war incident between Greece and Turkey in the 1990s, and ends with the 2003 Greek Presidency. The newspapers examined are the leading dailies, *Ta Nea, Eleftherotypia, Kathimerini and To Vima,* which accounted for

the majority of readership in the periods examined[2]. The sample of newspapers is comprised of the two leading morning newspapers (*Kathimerini* and *To Vima*) which account for approximately 83% of the morning press circulation; the two leading evening newspapers (*Ta Nea* and *Eleftherotypia*, in this order) which account for 46% of evening circulation, while the rest of the evening papers account for less that 10% each. Finally, the sample includes the Sunday editions of *To Vima (To Vima tis Kyriakis), Eleftherotypia (Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia)* and *Kathimerini (Kathimerini tis Kyriakis)[3]*, which led the Sunday market throughout the period of time examined in the paper accounting for approximately 60% of Sunday circulation.

3. The 1997 Discourse: Turkey as the 'Enemy'

The events leading up to the Luxembourg Summit, where Greece vetoed the Turkish application to join the EU, had a detrimental impact on the perception of Turkey in the Greek mass media. The memory of the Imia/Kardak crisis had left a deep scar which led bilateral relations to one of their all-time lows. At the same time, developments in EU-Turkey relations had begun to unfold. With the 1995 Customs Agreement signed and implemented, the Turkish state was now moving to its next goal: acquiring EU candidate status along with the

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[2] Statistics drawn from the Greek Daily Newspaper Union databases (www.eihea.gr) and the European Journalism Centre.
[3] Note that *Ta Nea* is not published on Sundays.

Eastern European applicant states, Malta and Cyprus, in the December 1997 Summit in Luxembourg.

The process of political and national antagonism between Turkey and Greece up to this point and the events generated by this antagonism, as well as the developments on the European level, constitute the backdrop of the analysis of the 1997 Greek media, in which the discussion of Turkey, broadly defined, focused on its representation as the archetypal 'Other', emphasizing competing identity discourses and opposing the idea of Turkey as part of Europe. The representations of Turkey in December 1997, may be broadly summarized in the discursive categories - or narratives- which follow.

3.1. Turkey as a military adversary

Maintaining the narratives which have traditionally characterised Greek-Turkish relations, the 1997 press continued to frame bilateral relations within a discourse of conflict and animosity, suggesting that war between the two countries should not be treated as an unlikely event. The press based this on three basic arguments, namely the frequency of Turkish violations of the Greek airspace; the general direction of Turkish foreign policy, and particularly the alliance with the USA and Israel; and finally, near the end of the month, the provocative Turkish reaction to the European Council's decisions. As a result, the sense of imminent conflict permeated the print media.   This was particularly noticeable in the language employed in reports on the Luxembourg European Council, which was described at times as "a grand Greek victory"

(Eleftherotypia 14/12/1997) or as "the battle of Luxembourg" (To Vima 14/12/1997), using metaphors such as the battle of Salamis, where the "small and fewer" Greeks defeated the "powerful and vast" Persian empire (Eleftherotypia 14/12/1997) or Greece as David triumphing over the "Turkish Goliath" (To Vima 21/12/1997) . In addition, violations of the Greek airspace were mentioned with noteworthy frequency and were referred to as "the usual provocation" (Ta Nea 11/12/1997), "the familiar tactics" (To Vima 14/12/1997) and similar terms denoting recurrence. It was also suggested that Turkey's provocation was based on stirring up "non-existent" and "outrageous" issues in Greek-Turkish relations (Eleftherotypia 11/12/1997).

Some commentaries blamed the consistency of Turkish provocation on the unstable and turbulent domestic situation faced by the 'shaky' Yilmaz-Ecevit government (*Ta Nea* 31/12/1997), which was confronted with insurmountable problems including the Kurdish issue, the Islamists, corruption and an unhealthy economy. Thus, the emphasis on the critical state of Turkish political and socioeconomic affairs was incorporated in the discourse on the state of Greek - Turkish relations. At the same time, reports on Turkish military expenditure were accompanied by apprehension about Turkish imperialism. This sentiment was captured in a characteristically cautious commentary in *To Vima*:

> Only those unaware of history cannot see, or pretend that they do not see where Ankara 'is going' with all of this: simply, it aims to reverse everything, which will enable it to revive the infamous Ottoman Empire. […] The '*homme malade*' as the Europeans referred to the Sultan's Empire, has now become the most

dangerous source of infection for the whole Mediterranean and Middle Eastern area (*To Vima* 21/12/1997).

Heated scenarios were also produced on the basis of Ankara's negative reactions to the Council's conclusions. Reports of any movement of Turkish military units, and particularly of the reinforcement of the Turkish military power in Cyprus, were regarded as "the cause for this preoccupation" (*To Vima* 14/12/1997: A23) in most dailies. Headlines such as "[Turkey] Strikes again in the Aegean" (*Ta Nea* 30/12/1997) and reports that "some of the scenarios that are circulating in international diplomatic circles do not exclude the possibility of a military episode" (*To Vima* 14/12/1997: A23) recurred increasingly in the Greek press. The idea was that Ankara would attempt to create a "heated episode by intensifying provocation in the Aegean in an effort to show its dissatisfaction with the decision of the Luxembourg Summit" (*Ta Nea* 31/12/1997). At the same time the statements of the Defence Minister did little to disperse the perception of war as likelihood as, in a major press conference near the end of the year, Akis Tsohatzopoulos characteristically stated that "the Greek Armed Forces are in a position to confront anything that might happen and any challenge" (*Ta Nea* 29/12/1997).

3.2. Turkey as the 'Other'

The discursive construction of Turkey as Europe's 'Other' permeated the Greek press which emphasized that Turkish policy making, societal values and dominant attitudes clashed with the basic premises of what was understood as

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'European'[4]. This idea was promoted by the consistent publication of statements by politicians and experts who spoke of "Turkey's insistence on disregarding all the values which form the contemporary European civilization" (*To Vima* 21/12/1997) and emphasized the existence of a wide-spread European belief that Turkey was not European or, as *Ta Nea* phrased it, "a perception on a Pan-European level that this state does not belong to the core of Europe" (21/12/1997).

This 'labelling' of Turkey was often attributed to its refusal to endorse the ideas and principles on which the EU had based its construction. As argued in *Ta Nea,* "while many EU states wish for closer ties with Turkey, they are however particularly annoyed with Ankara's denial to take a step back and to accept principles that are taken for granted in any civilized western country" (*Ta Nea* 11/12/1997). In this context, the view held by the press was that becoming part of Europe would be up to the Turkish state itself. Repeating the words of the Greek Commissioner, *To Vima* explained:

> It is up to Turkey itself to prove with actions that it is interested in a close relationship with the EU, to actively prove that it respects the basic values of European society. Turkey must realize that good neighbourly relations and cooperation with Greece are a fundamental condition for the upgrading of its relations with the EU (*To Vima* 14/12/1997; A20).

The suggestion deriving from this statement was that better relations with Greece, would make Turkey more 'European' and vice-versa, that a more European Turkey would pursue rapprochement. Consistent with this view was

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[4] For more on the notion of Turkey as Europe's 'Other' see Diez, T. (2004); Neumann, I. (1996); Neumann, I. (1999); Triandafyllidou, A. (1998); Robins, K. (1996).

the papers' criticism of Ankara's manner of rejection of the Luxembourg Conclusions: "in essence what Ankara rejected was not the stabilization of its relations with Athens on the basis of Greek terms, but the acceptance of the general principles which guide the European states" (*To Vima* 21/12/1997).

While this constructivist approach to Turkey's 'otherness' left open the possibility of change towards a more European Turkey, elsewhere in the papers more essentialist arguments for Turkey's ideational misfit with the EU found their way into the public discourse. These arguments drew on history, but also on the Islamist and Kemalist traditions of the Turkish state, in order to accentuate the divide marked by the Aegean and disperse the idea that Turkey held a rightful place among European states. Indicatively, soon after the European Council, one op-ed argued that:

> Neither the Ottoman Empire previously, nor Turkey during the twentieth century has been accepted by the West as 'west'. They do not belong in what Voltaire called the 'Big Democracy'[…] For Westerners Turkey is a foreign, 'different' place, a culturally, socially, institutionally, but also geographically 'exotic' place (*Ta Nea* 19/12/1997).

Turkish Islam also featured in the discussion of the country's western identity in the Greek papers, which commented on the clash between "the Muslim tradition and the western way of life that many in Turkey have adopted" (*Ta Nea* 31/12/1997) as a problematic situation. The antagonism between Islamists and the military establishment in Turkish politics was heavily criticized as a non-European phenomenon and was used to argue that Turkey did not resemble a European state guided by the principles embedded in the EU Treaties: "They have generals, they have the National Security Council and they have

Islamists" (*Eleftherotypia* 24/12/1997) was the general idea repeated often. *Eleftherotypia* spoke of a Turkish "inability to adapt to western standards" (22/12/1997). Further commentary concluded that "Turkey cannot change its organisational 'philosophy' and the way the state is run without serious and radical social, political and economic reforms; only then would there be a completely 'European Turkey'" (*Kathimerini* 15/12/1997).   On a less optimistic note, *Eleftherotypia* suggested that even the strengthening of ties with Europe would not prevent Islam from threatening Turkey, which justified "Huntington's view that Turkey [would] remain a divided country" (*Eleftherotypia* 22/12/1997).

The human rights issue also featured prominently in the discourse on an uncivilized, non-Western Turkey.   The striking antithesis between the principles and values that Europe was considered to represent and the violation of those principles in Turkey was used to accentuate the perceived 'otherness'. The revelation of the methods of torture used against Turkish leftwing journalists in *Ta Nea* was accompanied by the comment "at the same time that Turkey claims a place in Europe, the journalist Ilan Karatepe reveals: in the Turkish prisons they are crucifying people!" (*Ta Nea* 23/12/1997).   The conclusion, once again, repeated this exclamation from another paper: "How in the world can the medieval regime of Ankara ask to be accepted in the club of well-mannered Europeans?" (*Ta Nea* 20/12/1997). A "military establishment which, more and more openly, holds the power" (*Kathimerini* 29/12/1997), "an increasing wave of religious fanaticism" (*Ta Nea* 30/12/1997) and an unstable

political, economic and social situation were recurring phrases which captured the construction of Turkey as an 'Other' to the idealised notion of Europe.

3.3. Turkey's special relationship with the USA

Preoccupations regarding the restructuring of NATO and the related implications for Greek-Turkish relations often appeared in the 1997 Greek press, framing the bilateral relations within a NATO/USA[5] discourse. Conveniently playing up the anti-American sentiment of the time, which was caused by the manner of American intervention in the Imia/Kardak crisis and the suspicion surrounding the restructuring of NATO, the portrayal of Turkey as the USA's 'favourite' became a recurring theme.

In the aftermath of the European Council in Luxembourg, suspicion towards the bond between Turkey and the US increased in the press. The Washington talks between President Clinton and the Turkish Prime Minister, Mesut Yilmaz, were given particular attention on the daily agenda, and were often presented as possible conspiracies against Greece given the critical timing for NATO. American indifference towards issues of vital national importance for Greece was highlighted as, for example, in an *Eleftherotypia* article characteristically entitled "The Aegean and Cyprus are details" (20/12/1997). In the article, the minimal inclusion of Greek-Turkish problems in the agenda of the Yilmaz-Clinton meetings was attributed to the fact that Turkey served more significant American purposes. "The problems in Cyprus and the Aegean", the article

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[5] In Greek Anti-American discourse NATO and the US tend to be treated as one and the same (see Tsakona 2006).

concluded, "were sacrificed on the altar of greater American geopolitical interests which are served by Turkey's geographical position" (*Eleftherotypia* 20/12/1997). Various commentaries emphasized that Turkey itself was aware of its significance within NATO and its special bond with the USA and was using that to its advantage. Indirectly this enhanced the belief that, in case of a military conflict, the US would side with Turkey against Greece, feeding an already heated climate. This fear was reinforced by the belief that the USA's 'soft-spot' for Turkey would affect NATO's new command structures in the Aegean. Indicatively, in early December 1997 *To Vima* exclaimed that "with the new Confidence Building Measures and the new air command administrative system, in the end the Turks will invade the Aegean with NATO's blessings and seal of approval" (*To Vima* 07/12/1997).

It is noteworthy that, at the time, NATO and the US were mentioned as significant factors in the majority of reports and editorials on Turkey's potential EU accession. The narrative behind this was that the US were pursuing closer bonds with Turkey through what the Greek press referred to as the "Eurasia'" project (*Eleftherotypia* 02/12/1997), a plan to westernize Turkey by putting pressure on the EU for an early Turkish accession, and then to use Turkey as a model for the reform of the more central Asian Muslim states, as well as a military asset in the region. This belief was characteristically reflected, for example, in *Ta Nea* which reported that "the American side is expressing in every way possible the fact that it considers Turkey to be very important for the West" (*Ta Nea* 31/12/1997). The idea that the EU could be used by the US to

serve the latter's interests, sacrificing its own independence, caused considerable discomfort in the Greek media, which repeatedly quoted government officials statements that "it is the Europeans who should decide about European institutions" (Kostas Simitis in *Eleftherotypia* 02/12/1997) and that "The USA is an important partner. But it is not Europe's custodian" (Christos Papoutsis in *To Vima* 14/12/1997).

This manner of reporting constituted a break with the Greek media's tradition of referring to Europe and the US as one, as the 'West' or the 'great powers', a remnant of the country's history of having its fate decided by external powers (Tsakona 2006). This time, however, a clear distinction was made between the US and the EU in terms of their interests and intentions. In this context, one paper maintained that Turkey would have two options: "either it [could] remain with the support of Washington and basically become an agent of American interests in the region; or it [could] try and conform to the principles that guide the European states and later become a member of the European family" (*To Vima* 21/12/1997).

3.4. Turkey's lack of respect for International/European Law

A final narrative regarding Turkey, which was cultivated strongly in the press, especially after the negative Turkish reactions to the Luxembourg Conclusions, was that of the "law-defying" state. Turkey's refusal to abide by international and European legal conventions was repeatedly pointed out by commentators who juxtaposed the Turkish stance to the idea of the EU as a community of

rules and norms. The Greek newspapers gradually endorsed the government's position that Turkey's candidacy would not be out of the question if signs of respect for the legal system that governed the EU, and particularly for "democratic institutions, good neighbourhood, use and acceptance of the jurisdiction of the Hague, respect for external borders and territorial sovereignty of states, endorsement of the UN decisions" (*Kathimerini* 15/12/1997) were shown by the neighboring state. Yet, it was repeatedly emphasized that so far Turkey had given very few indications of its willingness to comply.

The Greek Prime Minister's concern over Turkey's lack of respect for the international legal system was reflected in all major Greek newspapers, which maintained that it was "inconceivable that [an applicant] state would create difficulties and objections" (*Eleftherotypia* 02/12/1997) to the EU's conditions. Within this context, the Greek-Turkish disputes were framed as only one of many manifestations of Turkey's disregard of European conventions and 'ways of doing things':

> Turkey doubts the existing borders of the EU and is demanding a reconsideration of the European legal order which has become institutionalized after World War II. Therefore, it is wrong to regard the issue as a matter of bilateral relations since it concerns the generally accepted rules of Europe (Kostas Simitis in *Eleftherotypia* 13/12/1997).

This approach reflected the "our problems are Europe's problems" discourse, according to which the dissatisfaction with the Turkish attitude towards international/European conventions reflected a wider European concern. In order to support this claim, the Greek press quoted various EU leaders and

officials, such as Danish PM Rasmussen's statement that "Turkey is not in a position to be in the same category as other candidate states and it is definitely not allowed to have territorial claims over an EU member-state" (*To Vima* 21/12/1997); EU Commission President Jacques Santer's exclamation that "Turkey's refusal to recognise the jurisdiction of the ICJ will not be tolerated" (*To Vima* 21/12/1997); as well as Luxembourg PM Jean-Claude Juncker's conviction that "representatives of states where human torture is taking place cannot be sitting around the same table with the EU" (*Ta Nea* 13/12/1997). The latter alluded to Turkey's refusal to abide by international conventions on human rights. Two major papers referred to the Belgian Prime Minister's statement that "Turkey must realise that we are not a Christian Club, but a club with principles and rules that it ought to respect, if it aspires to be a member" (*Eleftherotypia* 18/12/1997; *Ta Nea* 18/12/1997).

Particular attention was given to the continuing violation of human rights in Turkey, which was in direct contrast to the Copenhagen criteria. The Greek press maintained that while the Turkish government was attempting to create fake images of change, it was secretly continuing to engage in the same practices that had been condemned. *Ta Nea*, for example, reminded its readers that:

> Turkey [had] repeatedly announced a series of democratization measures on the eve of discussions of its application for accession in the Community. Similarly in 1995, when the Customs Union was about to be decided, a number of imprisoned journalists had been freed among other measures; they were arrested again on other charges soon after the agreement was signed (*Ta Nea* 05/12/1997).

Particular emphasis was given to the Kurdish issue, which was viewed as an indicative example of disregard of the criteria. As commented in *Eleftherotypia*:

> the waves of Kurdish refugees that arrive in Europe persecuted by the inhuman Turkish policies widen the distance between Ankara and Brussels. Not only does that justify the recent decision of the European Council to set preconditions for Turkey's inclusion in the list of candidate countries, it also alienates Turkey from the European public opinion (*Eleftherotypia* 30/12/1997).

This image of Turkey was juxtaposed to the simultaneous representation of Greece as a crusader for international law. This was illustrated, for example, in a *To Vima* interview which emphasised that "Greece must continue to demand consistently that Turkey respect International Law […] We must make clear that Greece is interested in the creation of relations of peace, stability and cooperation in the whole region" (14/12/1997).

4. The 1999 Discourse: A Sceptical Rapprochement

As a follow-up to the process launched in Luxembourg, the European Council met in Helsinki in December 1999 to discuss enlargement within the wider scope of the European Union' future. Following intense debate regarding the approach that the Luxembourg Council had taken towards the Turkish accession, the EU overcame the long-lasting ambiguity over the Turkish case. In the Helsinki Conclusions reference was made to thirteen and not twelve candidate states, with Turkey. clearly situated in the enlargement process along with the other candidates. According to Atila Eralp "these conclusions regarding Turkey were drastically different from Luxembourg: they were more open, inclusive and less discriminatory. As a result, the Turkish élite viewed

the Helsinki conclusions quite positively as correcting the mistakes of Luxembourg" (Eralp, 2000: 8).

Agreement to these conclusions marked a significant shift in the Greek stance towards Greek-Turkish relations which had been particularly unstable during the previous years[6]. The negative climate had been accentuated by the Greek as well as the Turkish media. In the time between the Luxembourg and Helsinki Councils, in the Greek press Turkey was often depicted as uncivilised and its claim of 'belonging to Europe' as baseless and ridiculous. In May 1998, *Kathimerini* referred to Turkey as a "pseudo-democracy, […] supervised by a military leadership playing a 'guarantor's role", while *Eleftherotypia* openly opposed Turkey's potential candidacy for EU membership referring to the "anti-democratic militarist regime in Ankara […], the massacres of Kurds, the violation of human rights, the permanent presence of Attila[7] in Cyprus and the contempt of International Law" (22/05/1998).

In early 1999, Greek-Turkish relations deteriorated still further after the arrest of the persecuted leader of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), Abdullah Ocalan, in Nairobi in February. Shortly after the arrest, the revelation that Ocalan had found refuge within the Greek embassy in Kenya triggered a

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[6] According to Tsakonas "the decisions of the Councils in Luxembourg and Cardiff rendered the bad climate between Greece and Turkey even worse, as the postponement of the debate on Turkish candidacy was linked - once more - with the conscious Greek choice to keep the EU door closed to Turkey" (Tsakonas, 2003: 51).

[7] Attila was the code-name given to the Turkish military invasion of the island of Cyprus in July 1974 in response to a Greek-inspired coup d'etat which sought to unite the island with Greece.

disruption of Greek-Turkish ties as Turkey leaked reports that Ocalan had "confessed" during interrogation to receiving substantial aid from Greece for the PKK. In reaction, the Greek newspapers maintained that Turkey - with the USA'a assistance - was using the Ocalan case to stigmatise Greece's image by depicting it as a state harbouring terrorism. It was emphasised that, in the wake of the affair, the Turkish Foreign Minister, Ismail Cem, had stated that "Turkey will not talk with Greece about the Aegean, Cyprus or any other important problem" (Reuters 05/03/1999) and the Turkish government was often accused of using the Ocalan case as an excuse for its inflexibility in the resolution of bilateral problems.

Shortly after the Ocalan affair had calmed down, the Kosovo war and the air campaign launched by NATO in former Yugoslavia (March-June 1999) took over the headlines in the Greek press. The collective fear of an escalating war spreading across the Balkans and Southeastern Europe seemingly appeased the hostile climate in Greek-Turkish relations to some extent. The governments of the two countries agreed not to allow the war in the neighbouring Balkans to provoke an armed combat between them. There had been plausible fears of such a consequence, since, in addition to the traditionally difficult bilateral relations between the two countries, their views on NATO's military campaign differed. The countries' mutual concern about the stability of the region and their relations with the EU eventually led to a non-conflict agreement which had a profound impact on the cultivation of a positive climate between Greece and Turkey, leading the Greek President to remark: "I had never thought that

a way to avoid the possibility (of a war between Greece and Turkey) would be the bombing of Serbia" (*NET* 24/03/1999). This initial rapprochement was linked to the Greek change of policy regarding Turkey's EU membership, or so it would seem from the writings of the Foreign Minister, George Papandreou, who in December 1999 wrote:

> With the harrowing war in Kosovo still fresh in our memories, the Greek people are critically aware of the importance of good neighborly relations. We believe that our neighbor's strength is our strength. To exclude a country from the full benefits of international society is a sure path to the kind of crises we have faced for too long in South-Eastern Europe (International Herald Tribune, Kathimerini English Edition 10/12/1999).

The devastating earthquakes in Greece and Turkey in 1999 took this sentiment further in the public consciousness. Greek aid to the Turkish people was accompanied by extensive press reports focusing on community-building between the two nations. This spirit of solidarity was captured in the mass media on both sides of the Aegean (Ker-Lindsay, 1999: 219) and allowed for more positive narratives to surface. The gradual rapprochement was reflected in official relations between the two states. One *New York Times* editorial strikingly captured the change by suggesting that Greece had now become Turkey's strongest supporter in the EU and that "Turkey is hoping that Greece will help persuade the 15-nation Union to add Turkey to the list of prospective members" (13/11/1999). The manifestation of this change came in 1999 at the European Summit in Helsinki, where the Greek government expressed its decision to no longer block Turkish candidacy. As the official policy line underwent a significant transformation, the discourse on Turkey in the mass media was restructured around the narrative categories analysed here.

4.1. Turkey and military conflict

While the depiction of Greek-Turkish relations in the Greek press remained rather consistent in the years between the Luxembourg and Helsinki European Councils, it is, however, possible to discern some elements of a more positive discourse on Turkey in the 1999 press in contrast to that of 1997. This change was manifested through the endorsement of the position that, by withdrawing the veto on Turkish accession and engaging Turkey in pre-accession negotiations, Greece would open up the path for stability, development and peace in the Balkans. In contrast to the narrative cultivated in the previous years, this proposition was as groundbreaking as the Foreign Ministry's policy change itself. However, it ran the risk of not appealing to public opinion and appearing unconvincing when juxtaposed to centuries of cultivation of the narrative of Turkey as an enemy.

One mechanism employed by the press to moderate this problem was to transform Greek perceptions of Turkish intentions, with a particular focus on Turkish politicians. Thus, the papers highlighted the positive efforts of certain Turkish government officials, and particularly of the Turkish Foreign Minister, as well of particular Turkish *milieus* which *Eleftherotypia* described as "the Europhile powers of the neighbour and all those who wish to escape the control of the armed forces and to build a democracy, as we know it in the West" (13/12/1999). This acknowledgement was captured in the words of the Greek Foreign Minister which were reported in most Greek news sources in the week before the European Council: "If things go well in Helsinki and Turkey

becomes a candidate state, this will be to a great extent thanks to Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ismael Cem" (*Ta Nea* 08/12/1999). *Eleftherotypia* described Cem's upcoming visit to Athens as initiating a 'new era' (13/12/1999) and spoke of a 'historic turn' (12/12/1999) in the Turkish establishment, while *To Vima* welcomed Papandreou's statement that "whatever the result of Helsinki, I hope that we will continue in this new course, this new opportunity, the new climate that has evolved between the two countries" (*To Vima* 08/12/1999) and *Kathimerini* made reference to 'new horizons' opening up for the country after Helsinki (*Kathimerini* 12/12/1999).

As a consequence of this shift, the war-related narrative of Turkey as the archetypal 'Enemy' changed fundamentally from 1997 to 1999 and the idea that Turkey could attack at any minute was slowly abandoned. Nevertheless, it would be naïve to suggest that suspicion of Turkish intentions evaporated from the Greek media discourse. It would perhaps be safer to claim that such attitudes were less pronounced, or that they were addressed alongside the suggestion that through the EU Turkey's 'comportment' could be controlled. Thus, conditionality acquired increased significance. *Ta Nea*, for example, emphasised that "the inflexible stance held by Turkey on the issue of bilateral relations with Greece […would] be maintained with greater stubbornness in case the EU [recognised] Turkey as a candidate state for accession without first witnessing the realization of the conditions that have been set" (*Ta Nea* 04/12/1999). These conditions referred to the criteria agreed upon by the

European Council in Copenhagen and Luxembourg[8], but also to the demands that Greece was about to put forth in the Helsinki Council in exchange for the withdrawal of its veto, namely agreeing on a specific roadmap for Turkish accession, getting the candidate states to recognise the jurisdiction of the ICJ in bilateral disputes (so as to take the matter of the Aegean to that level), and securing Cypriot accession without the prior resolution of the Cyprus problem as a precondition.

4.2. Turkey as the 'Other': Emphasis on Human Rights

In spite of the more positive climate, the persecution of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan and the events following his flight had a strong impact on the negative perception of the Turkish state and offered the Greek press a chance to highlight the contradictions between conditions in Turkey and in Europe, particularly in the area of human and minority rights. Consequently, the Kurdish issue became an important part of the discourse on Turkey as the 'Other', but in a more 'EU-specific context' this time. Turkey's stance towards the Kurdish minority was treated as an indication of Turkey's inability to comply with EU norms, as well as with the legal demands of the European Court of Human Rights not to execute the PKK leader. It was also framed as an incompatibility of principles and values between Turkey and Europe.

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[8] The Copenhagen Criteria and excerpts from the Luxembourg Conclusions were repeatedly cited in the press, even without commentary, in way of a reminder of what the collective EU stance was on the Turkish issue. All four major dailies published the criteria in one form or another on the weekend of the 11th and 12th December 1999.

The main communication technique which was employed was the frequent reference to multiple credible sources with 'high authority'[9], such as opinion makers and commentators from other EU members and EU institutions, condemning Turkey's human rights record and indirectly emphasising the 'otherness' discourse. On the eve of the European Council, for example, *Ta Nea* published a piece on the European Court of Human Rights verdict condemning Turkey for banning the pro-Kurdish party of Freedom and Democracy (OZDEP) in 1993. "Amnesty International", it reported, "is calling for the EU to put pressure on Turkey for Human Rights issues and the Ocalan execution as conditions for accession" (*Ta Nea* 10/12/99). *Eleftherotypia* drew on the Belgian press's condemnation of the state of human rights in Turkey. *To Vima* (10/12/99) made reference to a Human Rights Watch organisation report which stated, among other things, that "the Council of Europe [condemned]Turkey for serious human rights violations, the treatment of minorities and the lack of control over the army. It is underlined that these are the main reasons why Turkey remains out of the EU enlargement process".

While the human rights issue received particular attention, due to the recent events surrounding the Ocalan 'fiasco', other narratives on Turkey's 'Otherness', such as religion, were noticeably absent in the 1999 press, particularly when compared to two years earlier. This observation suggests that the acceptance of Turkey as a potential EU member on the state-level was -

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[9] According to media studies one of the variables affecting news construction and effects is the selection of sources as "messages that are attributed to more credible sources will be associated with heightened persuasion" (Perse 2001:89).

to an extent - reflected in the public communicative discourses in the mass media.

4.3. Turkey's special bond with the USA

As in 1997, in 1999 the Greek press continued to link Turkey's relations with the EU to its bond with the USA of which it remained highly critical. In the run-up to the European Council in Helsinki, the press often alluded to the American stance being biased in favour of Turkey and its accession to the EU, consistent with the belief that Turkey remained under the wing of the USA. The decisive - according to the Greek press - role of the US in the negotiations in Helsinki and their outcome was greeted with discontent and disappointment with the EU's weakness to stand up to the superpower. It was felt that such a degree of external pressure contradicted the EU's *raison d'être* and the rules guiding its existence. Apprehensive commentators detected an increasing submission of European policy-making to the 'American hegemony' and its geopolitical concerns in the Helsinki Conclusions. In *Ta Nea,* for example, Panayotis Ifaistos wrote:

> Turkey's position is being continuously upgraded due to its geopolitical importance and its exceptional diplomacy. [Turkey's] candidate status is only the beginning of a great Turko-European and Euro-American bargain in which Greece, due to its small political weight […], is condemned to stand in the sidelines and watch as an opponent whose hegemonic behaviour continually increases, is granted upgraded status (15/12/1999).

Elsewhere, in *Eleftherotypia*, the EU was described as a "satellite" of the US on the Turkish issue (14/12/1999).

Suspicion of the USA's motives generated talk of a 'greater American scheme', in which Turkey would hold the part of the "democratic Muslim state which would 'attract' the other states of the region" (*Eleftherotypia* 05/12/1999:10) and extend western influence to the crucial regions of the Middle East and the Caspian. Some commentators believed that for the sake of this scheme the US would be willing to overlook the violation of principles which were integral to the EU and to Greece. These sentiments were particularly pronounced in the commentaries on US President Clinton's address to the Turkish Parliament on the occasion of his visit to Turkey for the OECD Summit in Istanbul.[10] The Greek press maintained that "the President of the USA made clear in various ways that for his country the priority is the recognition of Turkey as a candidate state for EU membership by the EU states" (*Ta Nea* 04/12/1999). *Eleftherotypia* characterized Clinton's stance as hypocritical, since, on the one hand, he had refused to meet with representatives of the Turkish military establishment because of the 'undemocratic' nature of the institution, yet on the other, he applauded Turkey's important military role, and commended Turkey on its role as a pillar of democracy and peace in a region "surrounded by neighbors that are actively hostile towards democracy" (06/12/1999: 8-9).

Criticism was also directed towards Turkey for using Clinton's discourse on democracy in order to justify the existence of institutions in Turkey that the EU deemed undemocratic. This was in -part - a reaction to the Turkish Prime

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[10] This visit had been preceded by a visit to Athens with the purpose of initiating the invitation towards the two communities of Cyprus to discussions.

Minister's position that, neither the Turkish Constitution as it stood, nor the role of the National Security Council, should constitute problems for Turkish accession as "there [were] similar mechanism in place in the USA" (*Eleftherotypia* 14/12/1999). Further criticism regarded Turkey's allegiance to Washington and the conviction that Ankara only conformed when instructed to do so by the US administration. The suggestion by many Greek journalists was that, in the final stages of the Helsinki Council, the Turkish government would not have accepted the conditions under which it had been granted candidate status, had it not been for the intervention of the United States. They pointed out that "crucial in Mr. Ecevit's 'turn' was his telephone communication with Bill Clinton, […], during which the American President said 'Congratulations Mr.Prime Minister. Your country is a candidate for EU membership and we consider that very positive progress'" (*Ta Nea* 11/12/1999:14-15 & *Eleftherotypia* 11/12/1999: 7).

4.4. Turkey's lack of respect for the European 'way of doing things'

Consistently with earlier narratives, Turkey continued to be depicted as lacking respect towards the international and European legal systems. The view of Turkey communicated through the Greek press was that of a state refusing to accept the norms governing the EU and its relations with potential candidate states.   While other applicant and candidate states were portrayed in a constant effort to comply with the EU criteria and to adapt their internal and external policies to what was considered 'EU standard', thus becoming players in a game set out and refereed by the EU, Turkey was depicted as wanting to

enforce its own rules by pursuing a strategy of threats, a strategy that it had consistently followed in its relations with Greece. The words 'threat' and 'blackmail' found their way into the discussion on the Helsinki negotiations frequently, as in *Ta Nea,* which reported that:

> The spirit of … civilised negotiations within the EU is now being threatened by Ankara. The Turkish President Suleyman Demirel in his crudest blackmail up to now warned that 'if Greece adopts a negative position [in Helsinki], the current climate of rapprochement will come to an end and our relations will be characterised by tension (*Ta Nea* 07/12/1999: 5).

By suggesting that both Europe and Greece constituted recipients of Turkey's threats and disrespect, the Greek media constructed two mutually reinforcing narratives: on the one hand, the conflict was represented as a European rather than a bilateral one; on the other, the 'Us' (Europe) vs. 'Them' (Turkey) idea was accentuated, depicting Turkey as incompatible with the EU 'way of doing things'.

The image of Turkey as a 'bad player', relying on a strategy of defiance, arrogance, threats and demands, was maintained in the reports and commentaries on Ankara's reception of the Helsinki Conclusions. The Turkish discontent with the conditional offer was elaborated in all four major daily newspapers. This reaction was treated with surprise and disbelief at Ankara's ingratitude and unwillingness to compromise. *To Vima*'s front page set the tone: "Ankara's reaction to the EU's decision to characterise it as a candidate country was numb. For a moment, one almost thought that Ankara would reply that it would not accept the Conclusions" (*To Vima* 11/12/1999). At the same time, it was brought to the public's attention that this would not be the first

incidence of Turkish refusal to conform to EU Council conclusions. In 1997, Ankara had rejected the Luxembourg Conclusions as unacceptable and had cut off its relations with the EU for that reason. "After that Turkish…thriller, it was obvious to the European diplomats that Ankara was either attempting a last renegotiation effort or was playing 'games' to serve some kind of internal negotiation" (*Ta Nea* 11/12/1999).

This repeated indifference to EU decision-making structures and processes implied that perhaps the country was not suitable to be an EU member; it was also linked to the usual depiction of Turkey as arrogant and lacking respect for the rules governing the EU. In contrast to the Union's dedication to the rule of law, Turkey was depicted as possessing an overall disrespect towards rules, refusing to resolve disputes through the internationally accepted legal institutions, such as the ICJ, and to endorse the *acquis communautaire* and the conditionality of enlargement.

5. The 2003 Discourse: A New Era

On 1ˢᵗ January 2003 Greece took over the European Council Presidency for the fourth time. The Greek government viewed the Presidency as an opportunity to enhance Greece's new image as a stable European state and strong regional actor (Panayotis Ioakimidis, Interview 06/06/2003). Alongside Simitis stood Foreign Minister George Papandreou, widely credited with transforming Greek foreign policy towards Turkey. With regards to Greek-Turkish relations, the

Presidency maintained a low profile. In his speeches the Greek Prime Minister emphasised the Greek support for its neighbour's European aspirations, adding that "one of the goals of the Presidency will be to help Turkey find its place in the European family and grasp the opportunity to implement the reforms which will bring it closer to the EU" (*Kathimerini* 15/01/2003). As the papers reported, the Presidency Conclusions emphasised the EU's support for the Turkish government, welcoming its commitment "to carry forward the reform process, in particular the remaining legislative work by the end of 2003, and [supporting] its on-going efforts in order to fulfil the Copenhagen political criteria for opening accession negotiations with the Union" (Council of the European Union, Presidency Conclusions, June 2003, Paragraph 38). In this spirit, the discourse on Turkey in the Greek press marked a significant departure from its traditional narrative lines.

5.1. War Discourse & Turkish provocation in the Aegean played down

Reports of bilateral hostility declined steadily in June 2003. In the sample of newspapers studied - with the noticeable exception of *Kathimerini* - a significantly smaller number of reports and editorials produced by the keyword 'Turkey' made reference to the Turkish airspace violations in the Aegean, in spite of the fact that the first semester of 2003 was characterised by an increase in violations of the Athens FIR (*To Vima* 08/06/2003). It would appear that the press, alongside the government, engaged in a consistent effort to downplay hostility and promote other approaches to the resolution of disputes in the Aegean, in particular, that of 'Europeanising' bilateral relations.

While war and aggression were presented as a fatal strategy for Greece, the resolution of bilateral issues through the EU was encouraged now more than ever, with *To Vima*, for example, advising that:

> The Greek side must not fall into the trap of engaging in heated scenarios that the Turkish military are setting up in the Aegean […] The real battle must be given in Europe with the aim of cultivating the perception that Turkish aggression in the Aegean and in Cyprus will ultimately close the door of accession for Turkey (*To Vima* 18/05/2003).

This conviction, which reflected the government's stance, was even supported by the more conservative Kathimerini which highlighted the Minister of Defence, Ioannis Papantoniou's statement, that "any policy which would push Turkey to the margins of the International Community and of the EU would enhance Turkey's defensive reflexes and would render the neighbour even more dangerous than it is today" (11/06/2003).

The press emphasised that Turkey's provocative behaviour towards Greece could hinder its European course and that Greek policy-makers should use this as a negotiating card in the resolution of the bilateral dispute on the airspace. "Athens", concluded one commentary, "must make clear that it will never consent to Turkish accession to the EU, if it continues to exhibit - and increase - its hostility" (Kathimerini 10/06/2003). At the same time, and in contrast to previous years, the provocative Turkish acts in the Aegean were interpreted as "an indication of internal conflicts between the political leadership and the military establishment" (Ta Nea 14/06/2003). The escalation of the clash between government and military in Turkey was captured in the titles of the leading Greek dailies, such as "The civil war continues in Turkey"

(Eleftherotypia 01/06/2003); "The clash for power in Turkey" (Eleftherotypia 09/06/2003); "What are the generals after?" (Ta Nea 18/06/2003); "Intensification of the 'Cold war' in Ankara" (Kathimerini 03/06/2003). It was reported that "the Turkish military establishment does not even inform the Minister of Defence about the moves, targets and strategy that the armed forces are pursuing" (To Vima 18/06/2003) and that the Turkish Minister of Defence "does not have absolute control of the military movements of his state and in most cases is not even informed about the flights of military aircraft" (To Vima 11/06/2003). These headlines echoed the statements of the Greek government spokesman who, in an interview regarding the provocation of the Turkish air force, stated that "there is [in Turkey] a government which declares the principles of peace and friendship, and a military establishment which is pursuing polarisation, inflexibility and fanaticism" (Kathimerini 11/06/2003).

The evidence of a strong domestic clash in Ankara, led the majority of Greek journalists to endorse the view that the Turkish military, and not the government, was the actor behind the increasing provocation in the Aegean. This was captured in To Vima, where one report concluded:

> The study of the list of FIR violations leads to the undoubted conclusion that they have increased significantly since the new government under Tayyip Erdogan came into power, thus reflecting the intense domestic dispute between the familiar military establishment, which is resisting reform, and the new government which wishes to implement reform (*To Vima* 18/06/2003).

At the same time the military establishment was perceived as the main obstacle to pro-Europeanism in Turkey, and thus, to opportunities for rapprochement. These two narratives intensified feelings of solidarity and sympathy for the

AKP government, thus moving the discourse away from the traditional perception which held the Turkish state as a military adversary, and instead isolating the animosity in the discourse pertaining to the military establishment alone. As a result, a new positive discourse developed regarding the new Turkish government's[11] European orientation and reform effort, in direct contrast to the condemnation of the military establishment.

5.2. Turkish Reform Efforts linked to a 'New Era' in Greek-Turkish Relations

The Greek press's attitude towards the Turkish reform efforts was consistent with the recommendation and support captured in the Council Conclusions, viewing the reforms implemented by the AKP government as a necessary step towards initiating a 'new era' in Turkish politics and consequently in Greek-Turkish relations, an era which would bring democratisation and westernisation to Turkey and, hence, limit the military's intervention in policy making. In this light, the Greek press on several occasions painted the picture of the AKP government as the key player in bringing democracy to Turkey after almost two decades, emphasising that "the realisation of these ambitious reforms will give a definitive end to the military rule over politics which was established with the 1980 coup" (*To Vima* 25/05/2003). The Greek encouragement of Turkish reform efforts was grounded in the conviction that a neighbouring democratised and Europeanised Turkey would also enable negotiations and lead to an amelioration in bilateral relations.

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[11] Recep Tayyip Erdogan's AKP Government

Upon assumption of the Presidency of the EU this belief became explicitly linked to open support for Turkish accession. Turkish integration into Europe was presented as a possible *panacea* for its foreign policy towards Greece. As one political commentator wrote:

> Greece, faced daily with the provocation of the Turkish military in the Aegean, has a great interest in helping to guide events towards an eventual Turkish Europeanisation […]. As long as this is postponed, there will be no credible counterpart on the other side of the Aegean with who we can discuss the resolution of the familiar issues (*To Vima* 08/06/2003).

The commentaries echoed the conviction of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was reported stating that "if the Turks start seeing us as EU partners, then we will find solutions" (*Ta Nea* 12/06/2003).

At the same time, several analysts expressed concern about the possibility of Turkey not succeeding in opening accession negotiations, which they perceived as potentially destructive for Greek-Turkish relations. *Eleftherotypia's* Michalis Moronis discussed the Erdogan government's problems in implementing the sixth package of reforms, which included the amendment of article 8 of the Anti-Terrorism law, in this light. He concluded that "under these circumstances, any optimism regarding the resolution of Greek-Turkish issues in 2004 must be moderated […] as the Turkish accession becomes less and less certain" (*Eleftherotypia* 25/05/2003). Similarly, *To Vima* reported that the greatest worry for Greece should be "the prospect of this crisis between the moderately Islamic government and the military turning into an open confrontation [and] becoming an obstacle for the country's European prospect" (*To Vima* 08/06/2003).

This type of reasoning, also encountered in Kartalis's piece, reinforced the 1999 representations of the 'no-veto' policy followed in Helsinki as the way towards a successful future for Greek-Turkish relations. It also constituted a recommendation that the public should support Turkish accession, mirroring the government's official policy. On the one hand, the depiction of 'official Turkey' as grateful counterbalanced the stereotype of Ankara as provocative and uncompromising. On the other hand, the Greek interest in seeing the problems in the Aegean resolved was specifically linked to Turkish Europeanization, to Turkish reform and, consequently, to supporting the AKP government. The domestic problems in Turkey, which could potentially function as obstacles on the road of accession, were described as 'worrying', suggesting that in turn they were also obstructing Greek interests (*To Vima* 08/06/2003).

5.3. The United States and NATO in the Discourse on Turkey

As far as relations between the US and Turkey were concerned, two key events figured prominently in the Greek press in 2003. On the one hand, the new NATO Command structure of spring 2003 generated debate as to whether the Alliance had favoured Turkey more than Greece in the region. At the same time, the launch of the war in Iraq led to a reconfiguration of relations between Turkey and the US as the Turkish government did not endorse the US demands for material and political support at once and in full. The Greek press treated the disruption of traditionally friendly ties between them as a possible indication of the new Turkish government's European rather than American

orientation. The discourse on Turkey and the US shifted from treating Turkey

as America's protégé towards more positive depictions of the neighbouring

state, as in this excerpt:

> The war in Iraq has had unexpected consequences for Turkey. [...]Throughout
> the Cold War, the USA considered the Turkish military forces as their primary
> counterpart in discussions, as the factor that helped Turkey stay in the 'western
> orbit'. This view collapsed grandiosely on the eve of the war in Iraq. […]
> Turkey's failure to live up to the expectations of the American Pentagon has had
> other beneficial consequences: it has reversed its image as a satellite of the
> American military, an image which did not help the Turkish EU accession effort
> (*To Vima* 29/06/2003).

The alignment of the Turkish state and public with the Greek public and press

on the condemnation of the war in Iraq, brought about sympathy for Turkey.

The perception of the US as an uncontrollable dictator, "arbitrarily exerting its

power in the global order which had been fortified with the bombings of

Kosovo in 1999, the counterattack in Afghanistan in 2001 and now with the

invasion in Iraq" (Tsakona, 2006: 67), appeared to find the Turkish side in

agreement, as reported by Kourkoulas who wrote from Ankara:

> From President Cezer to the nationalists of the governing party, and from former
> President Suleyman Demirel down to the last citizen of the country, everyone
> feels that the 'big brother' has taken it too far. President Demirel characterises
> the [American] intervention 'grotesque' and 'extreme' and expresses his
> disappointment (*To Vima* 11/06/2003).

Certain commentators viewed the transformation of Turkey's relations with the

USA as an indication that a Turkey with a less powerful military would be of

less interest to the American administration. Some voices in the press even

suggested that the more 'European' Turkey became through its government's

reforms, the less influential it would be with its American allies. This

reasoning linked the military vs. government discourse with a new Greek

perception of US-Turkey relations and of Turkey's potential accession to the EU:

> The generals know very well […] that the Americans do not need Turkey as they did in the past. After the war in Iraq, Washington has been creating new allies and bases in the region. They also know that the Europeans will never accept Turkey unless the role of the military is reduced significantly (*To Vima* 18/06/2003).

As NATO and the US occupy very similar positions in Greek public debates (Tsakona 2006), a second element of the Turkey-US narrative in June 2003 was the criticism of NATO's new structure and the relative positions of Greece and Turkey. A week before the European Council in Thessaloniki, NATO's Council of Foreign Ministers convened a meeting to decide on the future of the Alliance's Combined Air Operations Centres in Europe (CAOCs). It was agreed that 11 out of 21 CAOCs would be terminated in light of the upcoming NATO enlargement. Favourably for Greece, one of the CAOCs in Greece, Tyrnavos, was to be maintained and upgraded under the leadership of a newly appointed Greek commander. The Greek press reported that the Greek case was an exception as other CAOCs, including that of Eski Sehir in Turkey, would continue to operate under American commanders. For some commentators this hinted to a slight shift of NATO preferences from Turkey to Greece[12]. The outcome of the new structure was described as "a loss for Ankara - at least in points" (*Ta Nea* 13/06/2003), "an upgrade of the Greek status in relation to the previous structure" (*Eleftherotypia* 15/06/2003) and an

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[12] This came as a result of Turkey's reluctance to cooperate with the USA during the launch of the war on Iraq, and, in particular, the refusal to allow use of the Incirlik military base. Along with the change of command, the June 2003 NATO reforms also terminated the Combined Air Operation Centres (CAOC) in Ismir.

indication that "NATO has shown its trust to Greece and its disappointment with Turkey, which lately appears not to be so cooperative with the USA" (*Eleftherotypia* 13/06/2003).

American disenchantment with Turkey led to a significant decline in US involvement in Greek-Turkish affairs. This was welcomed by the Greek press, which emphasised, for example, US Ambassador Thomas Miller's affirmation that "the difference is that in the past we used to be in the middle sometimes, whereas now the two countries are in direct dialogue, which is a much healthier situation" (*To Vima* 15/06/2003). Miller was also quoted saying that "the Aegean and Cyprus are both part of Turkey's agenda with the EU" (*To Vima* 15/06/2003). This was regarded as a positive development, whereby the USA admitted to the existence of new conditions in Europe, under which Greek-Turkish disputes would be 'uploaded' to the level of European foreign policy and enlargement in particular. Consequently, in contrast to previous years, the Greek media adopted a less aggressive stance towards the US on the issue of relations with Turkey.

6. Conclusion

The transformation of Greek foreign policy with respect to Turkey has often been treated as one of the main manifestations of Greek foreign policy Europeanization. Briefly summarised, this refers to the Greek decision to embrace Turkey's effort to join the EU as part of the resolution of the bilateral

disputes between the two states, and to adopt a 'soft', diplomatic, approach towards the resolution of these disputes. It has been suggested in this paper that the Greek press functioned as a mediating factor in the realisation of this transformation and the promotion of the relevant discourses. While traditional studies of the Greek media portray them as cultivating hostility against the 'Other', most often represented by Turkey as a result of historical and cultural reasons, the picture derived from the cases analysed in this paper studies is that of an institution promoting discourses of rapprochement, consistent with the 'Europeanised' Greek foreign policy of the late 1990s.

The discursive transformation in the press seems to have occurred gradually and subtly, more often following than leading government policy change. Essentially, the discursive categories through which issues related to Turkey and the EU were discussed remained similar throughout the seven year period studied. However, in spite of the persistence of the general 'framing' of the discourse, its content, including the way in which the narratives evolved, was subject to the processes taking place on the EU level, both in terms of language and sources. Nowhere was this more visible than in the war-related narrative. In the earliest case-study, matters of military and national defence featured prominently in the press where relations with Turkey were discussed. The frequent references to statements by the Minister of Defence and his military counterparts in Turkey suggested a 'readiness' on both sides to resort to elements of 'hard power' for the resolution of bilateral disputes. These references, coupled with the representation of Turkey as 'provocative',

'threatening' and 'uncompromising', contributed to the treatment of the possibility of war as a justifiable fear. While the imposition of conditionality, through the Luxembourg Conclusions, set in motion a process where resolution at the EU level gradually replaced the climate of tension, nevertheless, the sense of animosity, hostility and rivalry remained evident in the language employed to describe the conclusions as a 'victorious battle'. By the time of the Greek Presidency in 2003, the war discourse had become significantly downplayed and had been replaced by recommendations not to engage in 'heated scenarios' which would involve confrontation with the Turkish military establishment. Instead, the press had begun to call for the cultivation of relations with the official Turkish government, and to encourage the government's support for Ankara's European orientation. The involvement of the Ministry of Defence in Greek-Turkish affairs was significantly downplayed and the dominant voices of authority were expanded to include EU decision-makers and leaders across European states.

Most significantly, the case studies have shown that the recognition of Turkey as a candidate state in the European Council's Helsinki Conclusions in 1999, conveniently following the emergence of 'earthquake diplomacy', established an entirely new basis for the reporting on Turkey in the Greek press. The hostility discourses were replaced by what might be described as 'assistance discourses', or, in other words, by discussions on the ways in which the EU, and Greece as a key EU member in the Balkan region, could assist in Turkey's effort to 'import Europe'. It can be argued that the press endorsed the EU-

derived discourse of 'exporting Europe' to the candidate states by means of promoting democratisation, respect for human rights and international law alongside with economic prosperity. Within this context, the press promoted a new role, and thus a new identity discourse for Greece and for its foreign policy, whereby the state's mission was to support the Europeanization of its neighbour, rather than pursue the policy of military antagonism of the past.

It is also noteworthy that, whereas initially Turkey's human rights record was only referred to as an indication of its unsuitability to be part of Europe, gradually the discourse on human rights also became part of the narration on the neighbouring state's effort to reform. Similarly, Ankara's initial depiction as 'arrogant', 'uncompromising' and 'disobedient' in its reactions to international and European agreements was transformed. By 2003, the press reports on Turkey's attitude towards international and EU law had evolved along two separate narratives: on the one hand, they described the military establishment in the traditional context of provocation and defiance attributed to Turkey; on the other hand, they also expressed strong support for the Turkish government's effort for change and for adaptation to the *acquis communautaire* and to the EU's criteria on democracy, rule of law and human rights. Thus, on a discursive level, the conflict between Greece and Turkey was projected onto a conflict between European principles and the Turkish military order. In this context, in the last case study, the Erdogan government began to be perceived in the narrative as an ally on the European/Greek side. In essence, the elevation of the conflict to the level of principles on the basis of the EU

enlargement criteria reduced the significance of the military, hard conflict, consistently with the EU-wide discourse on Europe as a soft-power and a normative power which appears to have permeated the Greek media approach to Greek-Turkish relations.

It is, therefore, possible to argue that the analysis in this paper indicates that the Greek press has acted as a mediator for new foreign policy discourses stemming from the European-level approach to the Turkish case and from the Europeanised discourses on national foreign policy adopted by the Greek governments gradually after 1997. It was perhaps as a result of these discourses and their effect on public opinion during the same period, that by 2003 the Greek public came highest in support of EU enlargement among EU members and candidate states - not excluding Turkey - with 71% of the population favouring the accession of new states[13]. This data could justify the position that rather than just reporting the gradual shift in government policy towards Turkey - or even by so doing - the press contributed to transforming the public perception of relations with Turkey.

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[13] Eurobarometer 59 (Spring 2003).

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