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THE FUTURE OF EU-TURKEY RELATIONS:
MAPPING DYNAMICS AND TESTING SCENARIOS

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FEUTURE EU 28 Country Report

Greece

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1. History of EU-Turkey Relations

1.1. Greece's U-turn on EU-Turkey Relations

Despite being both members of the Western, Euro-Atlantic alliance in the post-war period, relations between Greece and Turkey have been conflict prone. Trapped by history (Ottoman occupation, irredentist wars in the 19th and early 20th century), by more recent disputes in the Aegean Sea and by the Cyprus problem, Greece and Turkey would often find themselves in various international fora undermining one another under a zero-sum-game logic. In addition to several periods of high tension, the two countries reached the brink of war twice in the last forty years, namely in 1987 and in 1996. Reacting to what it perceived as an aggressive behaviour by Turkey, Athens had often used its veto power within the then European Economic Community (EEC) to block funding for Turkey and the latter's EEC association throughout the 1980s. The U-turn in Greek policy with regard to Turkey's European Union (EU) aspirations that started in the mid-1990s was linked to the Europeanization of Greek foreign policy, the global systemic changes and the opportunities offered by the enlargement policy of the EU – the latter being of historic magnitude. In March 1995, Greece lifted its veto towards the EU-Turkey Customs Union agreement in exchange for agreement on opening accession negotiations between the EU and Cyprus in 1998. In spite of, or perhaps because of, the Imia (1996), S-300 (1997-98) and Öcalan (1999) crises, a period of step-by-step reconciliation started in the spring of 1999 under the leadership of the then foreign ministers of Greece and Turkey, George Papandreou and Ismail Cem respectively.

Systemic changes might have been accelerators of the bilateral reconciliation but more significantly, domestic changes (liberalization, modernization and Europeanization in domestic politics and the economy) in both countries constituted the driving forces of this process. The instigator of the reconciliation process in 1999 was nevertheless Athens which was expecting that in return for its positive stance on Turkey's EU aspirations, it would gain the decoupling of Cyprus' accession to the EU from the prerequisite of a settlement of the Cyprus problem. Equally important was the strong belief of the political elites in Greece that Turkey's Europeanization would build trust and would result in the peaceful resolution of bilateral problems and the full normalization of Greek-Turkish relations. Indeed, since the 1999 Helsinki Summit, Greece became one of the strongest advocates of Turkey's EU membership and this remains its official position, despite the negative developments of the past few years. At the bilateral level, since 1999, and despite frequent incidents and tension caused by Turkish military activities in the Aegean air space and waters, both sides proceeded with engaging in various functional sectors within a context of increasing interdependencies, active civil society and common economic interests. However, despite the intensification of bilateral diplomatic contacts and the so-called "socialization" policy of Greece as described by Tsakonas none of the bilateral problems have been resolved, and therefore conditions of "controlled tension" were maintained.

The coming into power of Tayyip Recep Erdoğan and the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2002, as well as the fading of political power of the military establishment in Turkey, raised hopes in Athens that the proclaimed Turkish foreign policy doctrine of "zero problems with neighbours" and domestic reforms with regard to human rights and further democratization would have a positive impact on

bilateral relations and would further open up Turkey's Western path on the basis of a "full compliance-full accession" policy. The visit of the then Prime Minister of Greece K. Karamanlis to Ankara – the first official visit of a Greek head of government in 50 years – was indicative of the positive climate However, it was soon understood that Erdoğan's regime would prioritize economic and political links with selected Middle Eastern countries and other emerging powers rather than the EU.

Throughout the period of financial crisis in Greece which started in 2009 and peeked in 2015 and brought into power new political parties and elites (namely the left-wing SYRIZA and the strongly nationalistic Independent Greeks – ANEL), the support of Athens to Ankara's EU membership effort did not diminish. On the contrary, despite the serious problems and obstacles, the Europeanization of Turkey is still considered by Greek political elites as the most effective path for solving the persisting security dilemma. The key parameter in the future relations between Greece and Turkey, however, will be Ankara's own determination to follow decisively the EU accession path and turn into a non-authoritative state that fully adheres to the liberal European values.

Bilateral relations deteriorated after the failed coup attempt in Turkey on 15 July 2016. The Greek Supreme Court rejected the extradition of eight Turkish officers that sought refuge in Greece after the coup attempt, on the grounds that a fair trial was not guaranteed if they were returned to Turkey. The court's decision in January 2017, inexplicably interpreted by Turkey as a "political decision", was followed by Ankara's thinly-veiled threats alluding to the danger for a grave "accident" in the Aegean and the cancellation of the bilateral readmission agreement with Greece, as well as a series of provocative actions. These actions included, among others, hundreds of violations of the Greek flight information region (FIR) and airspace within hours of the Court's decision and the approach of a Turkish warship with the Chief of the Turkish General Staff on board very close to the Greek Imia islets whose ownership is being disputed by Turkey.

1.2. A pendulum between value and interest based narratives

The dominant Greek narrative on EU-Turkey relations is based on identity: Turkey is conceived as the "Other" who constitutes a challenge to European values. As a 2006 Eurobarometer survey indicated 79 percent of Greek respondents believe that the cultural differences between Turkey and EU member states are too significant to allow for Turkey's accession. A significant number of respondents do not consider that Turkey partly belongs to Europe either in terms of its geography (59 percent), or its history (83 percent). Value-based and identity issues, although always present in shaping the context of Greek-Turkish relations, were, however, more dominant in the debate prior to 1999. Since 1999, there has been a shift towards an interest-based discussion targeting economic and political gains for Greece stemming from the improvement of EU-Turkish relations and the Europeanization of Greek-Turkish relations. The result of this interest-based, functional approach in the post-Cold War period was the unprecedented intensification of bilateral people-to-people contacts, economic and energy links and a positive change in the narrative of both sides. However, due to global, regional and domestic trends such as the rise of authoritarianism and religious extremism, the reverse of democratic reforms in Turkey and the economic and refugee/migration crises, the value-based and identity issues have become more visible again in the Greek narrative. Without any improvement in

the solution of bilateral issues, the functional approach seemed to have reached its limits, putting the question on Turkey's European identity imperatively back on the table. As accession negotiations have proceeded and later/currently stalled, the line of argumentation that has been strengthened is one questioning Turkey's genuine intention and ability to domestically reform and adapt to European common policies.

1.3. Prioritizing rule of law and security

A permanent parameter in the Greek debate on EU-Turkey relations defining a precondition for Turkey's EU accession has been the rule of law and the respect for human rights. This includes minority and religious rights that are also linked to the status of the Greek Ecumenical Patriarch.

"Hard" security and "high politics" issues have also dominated the policy debate. Athens' firm position is that without the peaceful resolution of bilateral disputes in compliance with international law, EU's doors will remain closed to Turkey. The list of disputes includes the delimitation of maritime zones such as the continental shelf, territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone in connection with exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons. Added to that is Turkey's dispute on the scope of Greek national airspace, which has seen a number of violations of the Greek airspace and the FIR. Reference should also be made to the threat of war voiced by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (*casus belli* declaration of June 1995) in reaction to what Greece considers as its legal right under the Law of the Sea Convention to extend its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles. The withdrawal of the *casus belli* is one of the basic preconditions set for Turkey's accession to the EU as part of its obligation to fully respect international law and good neighbourly relations. Confidence-building measures to reduce tensions between the two sides increasingly gained importance in the post-1999 era. The Cyprus problem has also occupied a central position in Greek-Turkish bilateral relations for the past sixty years. The Greek view is that a full normalization of bilateral relations and Turkey's EU accession without solving the Cyprus problem would be all but impossible.

One of the new security issues that has featured in the policy debate in the post 1999 era is the role of Turkey and the post-Cold War European security and defence architecture, in particular EU-NATO cooperation as in the case of the "Berlin Plus" agreement reached in 2002. Greece, a NATO member itself, has been among the advocates of building up the EU's military capabilities and has been concerned about Ankara's potential to maintain effective EU-NATO strategic cooperation, and about the danger that the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is held hostage to a non-EU country, namely Turkey.

The relative improvement of bilateral relations which started in 1999 has however allowed for the widening of the bilateral agenda to include more functional ("low politics") issues. Thus, although bilateral security problems and the Cyprus issue have constantly been at the top of the Greek debate on EU-Turkey relations, issues such as energy and economic cooperation have increasingly entered the Greek discourse since 1999 but have not brought about a breakthrough.

Migration, one of the key areas for EU-Turkey relations since 2015, had already been a critical issue of the bilateral Greek-Turkish agenda in the last decade. The conclusion of the bilateral Greece-Turkey Readmission Agreement in 2002, well before the current EU–Turkey Statement on Migration of March

2016, is indicative of the importance of the migration dimension. However, this agreement remained *de facto* inactive for years. The focus has mostly been on border controls and reducing irregular migratory flows from Turkey to Greece through its maritime and land borders. Greece, as one of the key external borders of the EU, has been faced with the challenge of representing an entry point for irregular migrants, including asylum seekers who transit through Turkey. Since 2015, starting with the Joint Action Plan of October 2015 and culminating with the EU-Turkey Statement, migration is also a prominent issue in EU-Turkey relations.

Energy has never been a major policy driver in Greek-Turkish relations on the bilateral level despite the fact that both countries have been cooperating on natural gas since 2007, when the Inter-connector Pipeline linking the two Natural Gas Transmission Systems (NGTS) was commissioned. Although gas supply from Turkey has been relatively stable and unaffected by the quality of Greek-Turkish relations and EU-Turkish relations, in times of supply crises, when Turkey lost part of its imports from Russia due to the breakdown in Russian-Ukrainian relations in 2006 and more importantly in 2008/9, Turkey was shutting down Greek pipeline import routes. It should be noted that – especially after the selection of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) and its link to the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) – the importance of natural gas within Greek-Turkish cooperation is going to be significantly enhanced. However, since both Turkey and Greece will operate as transit states for Caspian Gas to the EU, it is not expected to have a major soothing political impact on the bilateral front. Moreover, there is a major disagreement between Greece and Turkey on how East Mediterranean and in particular Cypriot hydrocarbon resources should be developed. In the oil sector, there is no agreement on the possibility of cooperating for the transportation of Caspian oil via the Black Sea, and many Greek policy-makers saw Turkey's oil pipeline plans in Eastern Thrace and Anatolia (Samsun-Ceyhan pipeline) as in direct competition with the Greek-Bulgarian Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline project that has been frozen since 2010-2011. Turkey’s perceived role as the quintessential transit state for EU energy security was not necessarily welcomed in Greece. Although some aspects of Turkey’s ambition were accepted given the fact that Turkey would offer an alternative source of supply to alleviate Greece’s energy dependence on Russia via Ukraine, Athens was concerned about the way Turkey might use its energy-related geopolitical influence to “cherry pick” which accession obligations it would choose to enforce or to disregard. From a geopolitical point of view, Greece has always perceived Turkey's efforts to use its geographical location in order to emerge as a major transit state for EU's energy supplies from the former Soviet Union and the Middle East with a serious degree of apprehension. Greek policy makers interpreted Turkey's energy significance as an effort by Ankara to gain concessions from major EU member states and EU institutions that would facilitate its accession negotiations. This concern is currently more hesitant as a result of the fact that Turkey's gains as a major transit state for the EU are by and large also shared by Greece since TAP was selected over the Nabucco pipeline consortium. The same would also be true in case a Greek Stream project was implemented, regardless of how unlikely such a prospect may currently look like.

2. Future of EU-Turkey Relations

2.1. "Pacta sunt servanda" in Turkey's EU accession

There is agreement across political and ideological lines in Greek political elites that Turkey is the most important security threat to Greece. However, views among political parties on how to address this threat vary. There are differences across the political spectrum over EU-Turkey relations as well.

With the Socialist Party (PASOK) in government from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, there was a significant change in Greek policy towards Turkey. On 6 March 1995, Greece lifted its veto against the Turkey-EU Customs Union agreement and the release of the Fourth Additional Protocol funds. Consent was given under the condition that accession negotiations between Cyprus and the EU would commence without any prerequisites. Since then, the Socialist Party has been steadily arguing for Turkey's European perspective. The conservative New Democracy party (which took power in March 2004) built on the same strategy in supporting Turkey's accession to the EU, although with a little less zeal. The two partners in the current coalition government, SYRIZA and ANEL, view somewhat differently Turkey's European orientation. SYRIZA while in government has steadily supported Turkey's EU accession. In the past however, as an opposition party it questioned the benefits of Greece's support towards Turkey's accession arguing that there has been no real improvement in the domestic situation in Turkey, regarding among other things freedom of speech and religious rights, as well as in Greek-Turkish relations. ANEL as member of the coalition government (since January 2015) has followed the national strategy of support to Turkey's European perspective. However, at the same time on various occasions they have stressed that Turkey cannot be considered as a member of the European family. Euroscepticism in both SYRIZA and ANEL is also high, thereby questioning the overall impact of Europeanization as a whole. To Potami, a new party formed amidst the financial crisis, is also an advocate of Turkey's EU accession. The common line of argumentation among political elites is that Turkey should be accepted in the EU if it fully abided with all EU criteria and respected the principle of "*pacta sunt servanda*". The Communist Party of Greece (KKE), in line with its overall anti-European stand, does not view Turkey's EU accession positively. The far-right, ultra-nationalistic and anti-European Golden Dawn party is against Turkey's EU accession on cultural grounds.

2.2. An 'all or nothing' approach

No model of a "special relationship" between Turkey and the EU would be supported by Athens. In other words – those of former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece George Papandreou (2006) – "Our position has always been clear and consistent. We say yes to Turkey's European future, yes to full accession, not a special relationship. […] We say yes to the further improvement of relations between Greece and Turkey within the EU framework, as we agreed in 1999.". Options other than full membership would cancel the strategic rationale of Greece's engagement with Turkey. A privileged or strategic partnership would revive bilateral tensions and would impede progress on key issues for Athens linked to EU-Turkey relations such as human rights, the rule of law and good neighbourly relations (including the settlement of any Aegean disputes).

2.3. Increased scepticism on EU-Turkey relations

The years 2015-16 brought about a new turn in the Greek debate on EU-Turkey relations due to the failed military coup attempt in Turkey in July 2016 and the downturn in political liberties in the country, Ankara's role in the Syrian war, the refugee/migration crisis in Greece and in Europe, the Brexit process in the EU and Trump's victory in the United States (US) presidential elections.

First, the authoritarian turn under Erdoğan's rule (especially after the failed coup of July 2016) has provided arguments to those in Greece, especially among the public opinion, who claim that Turkey is not a mature democracy and should not become an EU member in the foreseeable future, if ever.

Second, the "refugee/migration crisis" was at the forefront of the discussion in Greece both regarding bilateral relations with Turkey and EU-Turkey relations. There were 860 000 irregular arrivals through the Greek maritime borders in 2015, with another roughly 204 820 in 2016. This was largely but not exclusively attributed to the overwhelming influx of Syrian refugees in Turkey. It was also interpreted by some politicians and analysts as part of Turkey's foreign policy to put pressure on the EU through the "destabilization" of the external borders (namely Greece's) as well as an exploitation of Turkey's position as a transit country in order to re-energize the visa liberalization process. Two events were of particular importance in this context. The first was the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016 which was largely welcomed by Greece and interpreted as an (imperfect) solution to ending the continuous influx of arrivals from Turkey. Despite the overwhelming burden that continues to be placed on the Greek islands and national asylum system, Greece considers the EU-Turkey Statement to be the reason for the noticeable reduction in arrivals from mid-2016 onwards. The Statement includes a process of returns, which takes place under the framework of the readmission agreement between Greece and Turkey. Thus, the EU-Turkey Statement functions also as a "restart" to the bilateral readmission agreement, which had been dormant for the past years. The second event was the attempted coup in Turkey. From a Greek perspective, the concern focused on border control issues, with the publicly expressed fear that the (partial) removal of Turkish border guards following the attempted coup would allow smugglers to send large numbers of migrants to the Greek islands undetected. The continuous threat by the Turkish government that the Statement hinges on good cooperation with the EU, and especially visa liberalization for Turkish citizens, resulted in repeated calls within Greece to strengthen the Statement and EU-Turkish cooperation. The closure of the Western Balkan route has added more pressure on the Greek government to support and seek to maintain the deal with Turkey.

In the field of energy, apart from the frictions over the development of East Mediterranean hydrocarbon resources and their relation with the resolution of the Cyprus question that continued in 2015/16, the most important policy development of the past months has been the potential emergence of Greek-Turkish cooperation on a pro-Russian project: the extension of the second phase of the Turkish Stream pipeline system to Greece and via Greece to Italy through either the second phase of the TAP project or the previously defunct IGI/Poseidon gas pipeline project. The second IGI option is currently pursued on a business-to-business level between Gazprom, EDF/Edisson and Greece's Public Natural Gas Co. (DEPA) () since February 2016. Unfortunately, this important potential area of bilateral cooperation was overshadowed by Turkey's democratic regression under Erdoğan and

the intensification of military activity in support of Ankara's claims in the Aegean. Therefore, it did not have any impact on Greek debates on Turkey's EU aspirations.

3. EU-Turkey Relations and the Neighbourhood/Global scene

3.1. Questioning the potential for strategic partnership in the neighbourhood

Recent conflicts and political developments in the Eastern Neighbourhood have not changed Greece's views on Turkey's role and its relations with the EU. Turkey's credibility as a strategic partner for the EU has been traditionally questioned. The choice of Turkey not to participate in the Western sanctions regime imposed to Russia since 2014 in the aftermath of the illegal annexation of Crimea has strengthened the view that Ankara is not a fully committed Western ally and prefers a multi-vector policy even at the expenses of its EU links. Similarly, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that re-erupted in spring 2016 did not generate any substantially new views on Turkey's regional role.

Turkey's role in the implementation of the Eastern Partnership is perceived as being very limited as this policy is mainly a tool of developing bilateral relations between the EU and the Eastern partners and advancing the rule of law and good governance. There is, however, potential of cooperation on sectors such as energy (as Turkey is becoming an important transit country for energy supplies, especially from the Caspian Sea to the EU) and transport (improvement of sea routes, railways and highways in the Eastern neighbourhood) and on the implementation of Black Sea Synergy policy which has been nearly abandoned out of lack of political support and interest. At a bilateral Greek-Turkish level, however there could be some room for cooperation in the field of energy in the construction of gas pipelines carrying Russian (Turkish/Greek Stream) gas to Europe via Turkey and Greece. This would primarily link to EU-Russian negotiations at the EU and corporate level. Turkish companies are not likely to be allowed to control part of the pipeline's route inside Greece (as it has been the case with TAP) as shareholders of the consortium that could build such a pipeline. They could however use the pipeline's capacity to reach EU markets via the IGI/Poseidon project or for that matter TAP's Phase 2. The materialization of a Greek-Turkish pipeline to carry Russian gas in the form of Greek Stream would improve the standing of both countries as transit states enhancing EU's security of energy transit and alleviate Greek concerns that a Turkish success in terms of pipeline diplomacy would make Turkey less willing to conform with EU accession requirements.

Greece perceived the ruling Justice and Development Party's (AKP) support for the Muslim Brotherhood forces in various Middle Eastern countries (and especially in Syria) as a destabilizing rather than a stabilizing factor in Europe's Southern Neighbourhood. It is interesting to note, however, that according to the 2014 Ifantis and Triantaphyllou elite survey "the Greek elites are quite indifferent when they are asked to comment on Turkish foreign policy decisions or strategies in relation to Israel and Afghanistan. The argument that can be made in this case is that the Greek elites do not see a correlation between the future course of Greek-Turkish relations and Turkey's relations with its neighbours to the East, or other third countries".

Even though the potential of cooperation is there, the experience of the last few years indicates that due to Turkey's troubled relations with most of the neighbouring countries and due to its own very slow Europeanization process, Ankara's added value to the implementation of EU's neighbourhood policy is perceived to be rather limited. Turkey does not constitute a model of a modernizing Muslim country anymore.

It should also be mentioned that the resolution of the Cyprus problem would have a very positive effect in both bilateral and EU-Turkish relations which would be boosted, and it would improve sub-regional stability and cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

3.2. Too many global 'unknowns'

Major global developments of the last year that are expected to affect the debate on EU-Turkey relations are:

- Brexit and the future of the EU: The unchartered waters which the EU has entered especially after the pro-Brexit referendum in June 2016 has brought the whole enlargement process of the EU to a halt, especially regarding Turkey putting alternative models to full membership to the side-lines.
- New US Administration: The Trump administration has challenged, even if only rhetorically so far, some of the central axes of US foreign policy. Declaratory statements on reassessing the role of NATO, revising US policy towards Russia and the perception of a strong EU as an asset and a major ally for the US, as well as a more dynamic policy to defeat ISIS raise uncertainty on global affairs. The questioning of long-standing foundations of the Transatlantic Alliance by the US administration reaffirm the relevance of a multi-vector (rather than an EU-first) approach in Turkish foreign policy.
- The rise of authoritarian rule in other G20 countries: The appeal of authoritarian rule in key global players such as Russia and China in combination with the rise of populism in some EU member states, raises concerns about the attractiveness of and the commitment to the EU's democratic values. The lack of appeal of Western liberal democracy amidst economic decline, (human) security threats and dissatisfaction of the public against what is labelled as "the establishment" could easily derail Turkey from its long and troublesome modernization and Europeanization path.

The possible increase in the support for a more coherent common European policy and stronger capabilities in the field of security and defence as a result of the Brexit and the Trump election may affect Turkey's relationship with the EU. A common defence policy could mean less outsourcing of European security to third countries such as Turkey.

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ABOUT FEUTURE

FEUTURE sets out to explore fully different options for further EU-Turkey cooperation in the next decade, including analysis of the challenges and opportunities connected with further integration of Turkey with the EU.

To do so, FEUTURE applies a comprehensive research approach with the following three main objectives:

1. Mapping the dynamics of the EU-Turkey relationship in terms of their underlying historical narratives and thematic key drivers.
2. Testing and substantiating the most likely scenario(s) for the future and assessing the implications (challenges and opportunities) these may have on the EU and Turkey, as well as the neighbourhood and the global scene.
3. Drawing policy recommendations for the EU and Turkey on the basis of a strong evidence-based foundation in the future trajectory of EU-Turkey relations.

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The FEUTURE consortium consists of 15 renowned universities and think tanks from the EU, Turkey and the neighbourhood.

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