

# Cyprus Dispute Towards A Solution

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**Abstract:** Cyprus negotiations have entered into a new phase with the recent discovery of huge hydrocarbon resources in the East Mediterranean and the election of two pro-settlement leaders in the island; Nikos Anastasiades and Mustafa Akıncı as Presidents of their countries and leaders of their communities. However, Cyprus Dispute is a historical problem that also involves some other important actors such as Turkey, United Kingdom, Greece and the European Union. Moreover, energy projects designed for the future of the region also include some countries in that region such as Israel and Egypt. Thus, Cyprus Dispute should be analyzed from a multi-dimensional perspective by including all these actors and factors.

**Keywords:** Cyprus Dispute, Cyprus Negotiations, Cyprus Republic, TRNC, Nikos Anastasiades, Mustafa Akıncı, Alexis Tsipras, Ahmet Davutoğlu, Greece, Turkish Foreign Policy, Turkey, Turkish-Greek Relations, United Kingdom, Energy Politics, East Mediterranean.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Negotiations that have been going on for a settlement in Cyprus for many decades have come to a promising point recently due to new geopolitical developments related to energy politics as well as the election of two pro-settlement politicians on both sides of the island. The discovery of new natural gas resources in the East Mediterranean around southern Cyprus, Israel and Egypt necessitates new plans for the safe transportation of these hydrocarbon resources through Turkey towards Europe, which severely lacks alternative energy resources due to ongoing tension between European Union and Russian Federation related to the Ukrainian crisis. Thus, a new period of settlement seems inevitable in Cyprus. This paper will focus on several subjects; it will first define the Cyprus Dispute and then analyze Cyprus Dispute as a barrier for Turkey's EU membership. Thirdly, the paper will seek to analyze Cyprus Dispute as a triangle between Turkey, Greece and United Kingdom. Fourthly, the paper will look for the potential consequences of energy projects over the Cyprus Dispute due to newly discovered hydrocarbon resources in the East Mediterranean region. The paper will lastly focus on some details related to the negotiation process between two sides (Turkish Cypriots vs. Greek Cypriots) in Cyprus.

## 2. CYPRUS DISPUTE: WHAT IS IT?

Cyprus Dispute refers to the ongoing conflict between the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey, over the Turkish controlled northern part of Cyprus, known as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Initially, with the annexation of the island by the British Empire, the "Cyprus Dispute" was identified as the conflict between the people of Cyprus and the British Crown regarding the Cypriots' demand for self-determination. The dispute was shifted from a colonial dispute to an ethnic dispute between the Turkish and the Greek islanders in time after the emergence of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 following the British colonial rule. The international complications of the dispute stretch far beyond the boundaries of the island of Cyprus itself and involve the guarantor powers (Turkey, Greece, and the United Kingdom), along with the United States, the United Nations and the European Union. With Turkey's military intervention into the island (Cyprus Peace Operation) in 1974 following a fascist military coup aiming the annexation of Cyprus with Greece and attacks towards Turkish Cypriots starting from 1963, Turkey occupied the northern part of the internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus and later upon those territories, Turkish Cypriot community unilaterally declared independence by forming the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in 1983, a sovereign de-facto state that lacks international recognition with the

exception of Turkey with which TRNC enjoys full diplomatic relations. United Nations' Resolution 544 on 15 December 1983 called all states not to recognize any state other than the Republic of Cyprus and until now no other state recognized TRNC.<sup>1</sup>

After the two communities and three guarantor countries have committed themselves in finding a peaceful solution over the dispute, the United Nations have since created and maintained a buffer zone (the "Green Line") to avoid any further inter-communal tensions and hostilities. This zone separates the Greek Cypriot-controlled south from the Turkish Cypriot-controlled north. In 2004, with a settlement plan for the unification of the island called the Annan Plan (It as prepared by UN Secretary General of the period Kofi Annan and thus was named after him), a new roadmap to revive the divided Cyprus Republic was put into referendum on both sides of the island. The United Kingdom (as a guarantor power) and the United States came out in favor of the plan. Turkey also clearly signaled its support for the plan. The Greek government decided to remain neutral. On 24 April, Turkish Cypriots endorsed the plan by a margin of almost two to one (% 64.90). However, the Greek Cypriots voted against the plan, by a margin of about three to one (% 75.83) in a way to prove the difficulty of the problem because of ultra-nationalism.

On 1 May 2004, a week after the referendum, Cyprus Republic joined the European Union. Under the terms of accession, the whole island is considered to be a member of the European Union. However, the terms of the *acquis communautaire*, the EU's body of laws, have been suspended in the Northern Cyprus. After the referendum, in June 2004, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus became an "observer member" country in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) under the name of Turkish Cypriot State. Despite initial hopes that a new process to modify the rejected plan would start by Autumn, most of the rest of 2004 was taken up with discussions over a proposal by the European Union to open up direct trade with the Turkish Cypriots and provide €259,000,000 in funds to help them upgrade their infrastructure. Promises given by the European Union before the referendum about the lifting of economic sanctions against TRNC in return to "yes" vote were not met and this decreased the credibility of the EU. In addition, Greek Cypriots with the name of Cyprus Republic began to represent the whole island in the EU and started to use this issue in order to block Turkey's accession to EU. In October 2012, TRNC became an "observer member" country of Economic Cooperation Organization again under the name of Turkish Cypriot State.<sup>2</sup> Negotiation for the solution of the problem have been going on for decades and recently with the election of two pro-solution leaders (Presidents) Nikos Anastasiades and Mustafa Akıncı, there are now high hopes for realizing the long-awaited settlement in the island.

### 3. CYPRUS DISPUTE: A BARRIER FOR TURKEY'S EU ACCESSION

With the membership of first Greece (1981) and then Cyprus Republic (2004) into the European Union, Cyprus Dispute has gradually transformed into a problem between Turkey and Europe instead of an international disagreement concerning only Turkey, Cyprus, United Kingdom and Greece. Cyprus Dispute not only prevents Turkey's ability to open 8 chapters and conclude all chapters in its EU full membership accession talks, but also creates an anti-Turkish political atmosphere within the EU due to successful lobbying activities of Greece and Cyprus Republic. In the last few months, Turkish government tries to rekindle hopes for the country's EU membership process due to chaos in the Middle East and hostile relations emerged with Russia because of the confrontation in the Syrian civil war and the jet crisis as well as the severe critics against the Turkish government on the basis of "axis shift" discussions related to Turkey's high involvement into Middle Eastern politics in recent years. EU membership idea still seems the most attractive policy option for Turkey due to serious problems and risks around this country. However, in order to realize this, Turkey should first get rid of the Cyprus Dispute and negative Greek and Greek Cypriot approach to its bid.

<sup>1</sup> "Resolution 544", Official Documents System of the United Nations, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/454/02/IMG/NR045402.pdf?OpenElement>.

<sup>2</sup> Summarized from Ozan Örmeci (2015), "Cyprus Dispute in terms of Energy Politics", in Ozan Örmeci & Hüseyin Işıksal (eds.), *Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Millennium*, Peter Lang, pp. 329-331, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from [https://www.academia.edu/15570691/%C3%96rmeci\\_Ozan\\_2015\\_Cyprus\\_Dispute\\_in\\_terms\\_of\\_Energy\\_Politics\\_in\\_Turkish\\_Foreign\\_Policy\\_in\\_the\\_New\\_Millennium\\_edited\\_by\\_Ozan\\_%C3%96rmeci\\_and\\_H%C3%BCseyin\\_I%C5%9F%C4%B1ksal\\_Peter\\_Lang\\_pp.\\_325-335](https://www.academia.edu/15570691/%C3%96rmeci_Ozan_2015_Cyprus_Dispute_in_terms_of_Energy_Politics_in_Turkish_Foreign_Policy_in_the_New_Millennium_edited_by_Ozan_%C3%96rmeci_and_H%C3%BCseyin_I%C5%9F%C4%B1ksal_Peter_Lang_pp._325-335).

Turkey's adventure for realizing the "Blue Apple"<sup>3</sup> and becoming a full member of EU started with the 1999 Helsinki Summit. Negotiations began in 2005 and 15 chapters were opened so far, though only one could have terminated. Cyprus Dispute (Additional Protocol issue) is a condition for the opening of 8 chapters and the closure of all chapters according to the decision of General Affairs & External Relations Council on December 11, 2006.<sup>4</sup> Looking from the perspective of EU supporters in Turkey, thus, Cyprus Dispute is a critical issue that should be handled as soon as possible. EU circles that support and encourage Turkey's membership to the club also support settlement in Cyprus since it will open the road for progress in Turkey's bid. Revitalization of Turkish-EU relations will not only mean Turkey's higher chances for membership, but also a confidence given to international capital that looks for new investments in the emerging markets. In addition, Turkey's role-model position in the Islamic world as a country having nearly all Muslim population but adopting a secular and democratic system will be stronger and more attractive with the progressing EU membership process.

However, Cyprus Dispute is also an instrumental issue for groups that are against Turkey's EU membership. These groups might think that if Cyprus Dispute is solved, it might be very difficult to prevent Turkey's full membership since there will not be a valid pretext for them to object to Turkey's bid. Moreover, Turkey also might not want to leave Turkish Cypriots to the mercy of Greek Cypriots and Europeans, which resulted in massacres taking place between 1963 and 1974 in the recent past. Even the Turkish Cypriots, who voted in favor of Annan Plan in 2004, might try to avoid an unfair solution without Turkey's guarantee in the island. It should not be forgotten that, it was not the United Kingdom or Greece (two other guarantor countries of the Cyprus Republic), but only Turkey that supported Turkish Cypriots against EOKA attacks in the near past. Considering EU's ineffectiveness during the Bosnian genocide and the increasing Islamophobic and racist tendencies in EU countries, Turkish Cypriots and Turkey might avoid a solution without strong legal protections for the status and safety of Turks living in the island. However, the foreign policy stagnation of Turkey in recent years forces this country to get along better with its European allies and to find a solution for Cyprus.

#### 4. CYPRUS: TURKEY-GREECE-UNITED KINGDOM TRIANGLE

Cyprus Dispute has always been a very important issue in the last few decades between three guarantor powers of the 1960 Cyprus Republic; Turkey, Greece and United Kingdom. Three countries work more closely in recent years for the solution of Cyprus Dispute by trying to get rid of their past hostilities.

##### A-) British Position

In the renewed Strategic Partnership Document of 2010, Turkey and United Kingdom governments stated that "they are in favour of a bicomunal and bizonal federational solution based on political equality" for the Cyprus Dispute.<sup>5</sup> However, here it should be added that, Cyprus, often defined as an "unsunk aircraft carrier", is also a very important country for UK concerning its military/security policies towards Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean. For example, British military bases, which are secured by international agreements, are used in British attacks toward ISIS targets in recent months.<sup>6</sup> There are also thousands of British people living on both sides of the island. Their safety and status is very important for the British government. In relation to popular Brexit discussions, here it should be stated that Britain's EU membership provides better conditions for the British people living in Cyprus especially in the south side of the island due to EU membership of Cyprus.

<sup>3</sup> It is a symbolic term used in order to make reference to Turkey's modernization efforts for becoming a European country after the Republican Revolution and in recent years an EU member country as an alternative to pan-Turkist "Red Apple" and Islamist "Green Apple".

<sup>4</sup> "Katılım Müzakerelerinde Mevcut Durum", *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Avrupa Birliği Bakanlığı*, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from <http://www.ab.gov.tr/index.php?l=1&p=65>.

<sup>5</sup> Ali Balcı (2011), "Türkiye-İngiltere İlişkileri 2010", Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from <http://works.bepress.com/alibalci/19/>, p. 357.

<sup>6</sup> "Britain carries out first Syria airstrikes after MPs approve action against Isis" (2015), *The Guardian*, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/02/syria-airstrikes-mps-approve-uk-action-against-isis-after-marathon-debate>.

In recent years, it is seen and also felt that Britain does not want to act as a barrier for the solution of Cyprus Dispute. British indifference for the solution of Cyprus Dispute in the recent past created a more hawkish Greek and Greek Cypriot reaction to UK within and outside the EU and caused diplomatic problems for UK in the international arena due to successful Greek lobbying activities. British Foreign Minister Philip Hammond recently said that they are ready to give up from the half of their territories in the island if a new federal and united Cyprus state could be established.<sup>7</sup> Later, Hammond also said that they could give up from their guarantorship rights as well if both communities agree on this.<sup>8</sup> Mr. Hammond came to Cyprus in 2015 and met with Greek Cypriot leader Nikos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akıncı. It seems like UK is concentrated in recent years more on the protection of its legal rights in the island especially on the basis of the continuity of its military bases and leaves the decision to two communities in Cyprus and other guarantor powers. This new position for sure reduces the power of nationalist political groups on both sides of the island that are against a diplomatic solution. Current position of the UK is to support the peace process and even to encourage it by not getting involved into the internal affairs of the two sides.

## B-) Turkish Position

Turkish military bases in Cyprus, unlike British military bases, were established after the 1974 intervention and are not backed up by the international law. Cyprus military bases are Turkey's only overseas military settlements and important for this country's Eastern Mediterranean policy. Turkey also has large economic investments mostly concentrated in tourism, entertainment, food and beverages and education industry in TRNC. In addition, Turkey recently achieved to realize an impressive water pipeline project (Can Suyu)<sup>9</sup> to TRNC in order to solve the problem of the lack of water in the island and to support agricultural activities. Turkey is at the same time an important contributor to TRNC budget due to economic problems of this country related to economic sanctions implemented by the rest of the world. As a response to Greek Cypriot government's agreements with energy companies, Turkey sent its ship Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa to northern shores of the island for searching oil and gas.<sup>10</sup> This was not welcomed by the Greek Cypriot administration and President Nikos Anastasiades left the table for negotiations. As a gesture of good-will and for helping negotiations to resume, Turkey later decided on the return of its vessel.<sup>11</sup>

Until the Justice and Development Party (AK Parti) government<sup>12</sup> (2002-), Turkey pursued a nationalist foreign policy line and supported the independence of the TRNC by making reference to ethnic tensions and Greek Cypriot attacks in the past. However, in recent years, Turkey began to change its historical policy for the official recognition of TRNC and started to push for a diplomatic solution to the dispute. By doing this, Turkey also wants to get rid of Greek and Greek Cypriot opposition to its foreign policy and its EU membership bid by establishing better relations with its two neighbors. For instance, in 2004, Turkish government encouraged Turkish Cypriots to vote in favor of the Annan Plan and thus, was accused with "treason" by the nationalist circles and pro-military groups within the country.

Turkish then Foreign Minister and current Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu recently made a statement and by making reference to the "either death or partition" (Ya Taksim, Ya Ölüm) slogan of Turkish nationalists in the past, he said "either solution or partition" (Ya Çözüm, Ya

<sup>7</sup> "İngiltere'den, Kıbrıs'taki Üssü Devretme Önerisi" (2015), *Star Kıbrıs*, 24.11.2015, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from <http://www.starkibris.net/index.asp?haberID=217271>.

<sup>8</sup> "İngiltere garantörlükten vazgeçmeye hazır" (2016), *Kıbrıs Gazetesi*, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from <http://www.kibrisgazetesi.com/?p=761064>.

<sup>9</sup> "Sayılarla 'Can Suyu' projesi" (2015), *Hürriyet*, 17.10.2015, Date of Accession: 29.02.2016 from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/mersinin-suyu-1-6-milyar-tlik-projeyle-kktcy-30333644>.

<sup>10</sup> "Turkish vessel's oil exploration work off Cyprus extended, defying Greek objections" (2015), *Hürriyet Daily News*, 07.01.2015, Date of Accession: 29.02.2016 from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-vessels-oil-exploration-work-off-cyprus-extended-defying-greek-objections.aspx?pageID=238&nID=76593&NewsCatID=348>.

<sup>11</sup> "Kıbrıs'ta petrol arayan 'Barbaros' geri dönüyor" (2015), *Dünya*, 30.03.2015, Date of Accession: 29.02.2016 from <http://www.dunya.com/ekonomi/ekonomi-diger/kibrista-petrol-arayan-barbaros-geri-donuyor-257268h.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> In fact, Turkish position in Cyprus and in its relations with Greece began to change with the three party coalition government (DSP-MHP-ANAP) between 1999 and 2002 when İsmail Cem was the Turkish Foreign Minister.

Taksim) showing Turkey's positive approach for the solution of the problem although Turkish Cypriots faced with the unethical and unequal treatment of European Union in regards to the Cyprus Dispute only few years ago.<sup>13</sup> Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu went recently as far as to say that “we have a common approach with Greece to contribute positively to the talks”<sup>14</sup> in order to show that three guarantor powers are close for a deal. Turkey's current Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu also stated that their urgent priority is a settlement in Cyprus and they could turn Cyprus into an “island of peace”.<sup>15</sup> However, here it should be added that, until now, Turkey never gave a positive signal for the abandonment of its guarantorship rights over the Cyprus Republic. Giving up from military bases also might be problematic for Turkey in some ways in case of a settlement plan. In addition, it is also highly suspicious whether Turkish Cypriots will accept a solution without an official Turkish guarantee.

### C-) Greek Position

Greece has always been the strongest supporter of South Cyprus government in the international arena and reflected the establishment of TRNC as Turkish invasion of the island. Greek lobbying has been very successful until now, because it was based on UN decisions. Greece also used this issue as a political tool to affect and direct Turkish-EU relations after becoming a member in 1981. Although there were official declarations made by European Economic Community (EEC) before Greek entry into the club about following a neutral foreign policy between Turkey and Greece concerning the Cyprus Dispute<sup>16</sup>, Greece immediately and skillfully began to use Cyprus Dispute as a key factor in punishing Turkey. Relations became even worse after the unilateral declaration of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983. European Parliament declared its decision not to recognize TRNC as a state and also invited Turkey to change its decision in a declaration.<sup>17</sup> The self-proclamation of TRNC directed Greece to adopt a new defense doctrine in which Turkey was targeted as the dominant security threat.<sup>18</sup> As a response, Greece has always supported anti-Turkish groups in the international arena including some extreme left-wing militants and members of Kurdish secessionist terrorist organization PKK. This shows that a settlement in Cyprus might also help Turkey to gain more Greek support in security issues.

However, Greek approach to Turkey began to change after 1999. Solidarity feelings emerged between two sides after the terrible earthquake in Turkey on that year. With the positive public relations methods implemented by Turkish Foreign Minister İsmail Cem and his Greek counterpart George Papandreou, two neighboring nations began to empathize with each other and develop better diplomatic and economic relations.<sup>19</sup> Turkish textbooks were rearranged and rewritten in order not to portray Greece and Greek nation as an enemy to Turkish State and Turkish nation. In this conjuncture, Greece also began to support Turkey's EU membership process in order to solve the Cyprus Dispute and help its neighbor to become a member of the elite club. However, due to slowing down of the reform process in Turkey and the stagnation of the country's EU membership process because of the Cyprus Dispute, Turkish-Greek relations are now balanced but far from the “golden days” of the Cem-Papandreou period. It

<sup>13</sup> “Davutoğlu: Ya Çözüm, Ya Taksim”, *Uluslararası Politika Akademisi*, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from <http://politikaakademisi.org/davutoglu-ya-cozum-ya-taksim/>.

<sup>14</sup> “Our View: Why the timing is right for a Cyprus deal” (2015), *Cyprus Mail*, 22.11.2015, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from <http://cyprus-mail.com/2015/11/22/our-view-why-t-a-cyprus-deal/>.

<sup>15</sup> “Kıbrıs'ı barış adası yapalım” (2015), *Kıbrıs Gazetesi*, 15 January 2015, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from <http://www.kibrisgazetesi.com/?p=612437>.

<sup>16</sup> Constantine A. Stephanou & Charalambos Tsardanidis (1989), “EC Attitudes and Policies towards the Greek-Turkish Conflict and the Cyprus Problem”, International Conference on Greek-Turkish Relations, Athens, 3-5 March 1989, pp. 2-10.

<sup>17</sup> Harun Arıkan (2003), “Avrupa Birliği Türkiye İlişkilerinde Yunanistan Faktörü”, *İ. Ü. Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*, March 2003, No: 28, p. 121.

<sup>18</sup> Panayotis J. Tsakonas (2001), “Post-Cold War Security Dilemmas: Greece in Search of Right Balancing Recipe”, in Christodoulos K. Yiallourides & Panayotis J. Tsakonas (eds.), *Greece and Turkey After the End of the Cold War*, New York and Athens: Aristide D. Caratzas, p. 145.

<sup>19</sup> For a detailed study on the legacy of İsmail Cem, see; Ozan Örmeci (2011), *Portrait of a Turkish Social Democrat: İsmail Cem*, Lambert Academic Publishing.

should not be forgotten that Turkey and Greece have also some problems related to the ownership of Aegean islands and Aegean Sea continental shelf issue.

Concerning the Cyprus Dispute, current Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias recently said that “guarantees are not required as part of settlement” in Cyprus.<sup>20</sup> This shows that among the three guarantor countries, two of them (UK and Greece) are ready to give up from their guarantorship rights. This puts Turkey into more difficult position. Moreover, Greek position - similar to Greek Cypriot position- on the presence of Turkish military in the island is very strict and without any conditions or qualifications they do not accept Turkish soldiers in Cyprus. This is primarily caused by the high military capacity and the population size of Turkey and is perceived as a security threat looking from Athens or Nicosia.

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras visited Cyprus in February 2015 and became the first Greek Prime Minister to engage in diplomatic talks with Turkish Cypriots.<sup>21</sup> Tsipras gave positive messages concerning Turkish-Greek relations and Cyprus negotiations immediately after his election victory.<sup>22</sup> Tsipras recently said that Cyprus Dispute could be solved in 2016 with the removal of 40.000 Turkish soldiers from the island and upon the UN parameters (previous UN decisions).<sup>23</sup> Tsipras and his party’s (SYRIZA) left-wing rhetoric is welcomed by the Turkish left and Kurdish national movement and this creates a perfect ground for a new Turkish-Greek rapprochement period starting from Cyprus. Tsipras visited Izmir on 8-9 March 2016 for the fourth session of the Turkish-Greek High-Level Cooperation Council and continued to give positive messages concerning bilateral relations and Cyprus Dispute.<sup>24</sup> In the joint press conference, Tsipras and Davutoğlu both gave warm messages about bilateral economic and political relations, cooperation for the Syrian refugee crisis and the Cyprus Dispute.<sup>25</sup>

## 5. ENERGY POLITICS AND CYPRUS DISPUTE

Recent natural gas discoveries around the Mediterranean Sea including Cyprus and South Cyprus government’s agreements with some energy companies created a new dynamism in Cyprus Dispute and added an economic motivation to the solution efforts.<sup>26</sup> It is also a fact that the economic situation in South Cyprus is worsening in recent years and new energy projects might help this country to do better economically. However, this issue did not become a dominant factor in Cyprus negotiations until now since some other problems related to land, property ownership, power division and guarantees still dominate the negotiation process. It is also stated by some experts that Cyprus resources will be sufficient to Cyprus only and without establishing a larger hub to Turkey together with Egyptian and Israeli gas resources, this might

<sup>20</sup> “Guarantees not required as part of settlement-Greek FM” (2015), *Cyprus Mail*, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from <http://cyprus-mail.com/2015/10/27/guarantees-not-required-as-part-of-settlement-greek-fm/>.

<sup>21</sup> “Kıbrıslı Türklerle Temas Kuran İlk Yunanistan Başbakanı Tsipras, Mağusa’ya Davet Edildi”, 3 February 2015, *Gazetada Kıbrıs*, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from <http://www.gazetadakibris.com/kibrisli-turklerle-temas-kuran-ilk-yunanistan-basbakani-tsipras-magusaya-davet-edildi>.

<sup>22</sup> “Yunanistan Başbakanı Çipras’tan Türkiye’ye mesaj”, *Sputnik Türkiye*, 30 January 2015, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from <http://tr.sputniknews.com/avrupa/20150130/1013720741.html>.

<sup>23</sup> “Tsipras 2016’da Kıbrıs’ta çözüm için bir umut görüyor” (2016), *Kıbrıs Postası*, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from [http://www.kibrispostasi.com/index.php/cat/58/news/182661/PageName/GUNEY\\_KIBRIS](http://www.kibrispostasi.com/index.php/cat/58/news/182661/PageName/GUNEY_KIBRIS).

<sup>24</sup> “95 yıl sonra İzmir’e gelen ilk Yunan Başbakanı Çipras oldu” (2016), *Radikal*, 08.03.2016, Date of Accession: 08.03.2016 from <http://www.radikal.com.tr/dunya/95-yil-sonra-izmir-e-gelen-ilk-yunan-basbakani-cipras-oldu-1524847/>.

<sup>25</sup> “Davutoğlu: Avrupa ile vize muafiyeti haziran ayında başlayacak” (2016), *Sputnik Türkiye*, 08.03.2016, Date of Accession: 09.03.2016 from <http://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/20160308/1021361188/davutoglu-avrupa-vize.html>.

<sup>26</sup> For a detailed analysis, see; Ozan Örmeci (2015), “Cyprus Dispute in terms of Energy Politics”, in Ozan Örmeci & Hüseyin Işıksal (eds.), *Turkish Foreign Policy in the New Millennium*, Peter Lang, pp. 325-335, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from [https://www.academia.edu/15570691/%C3%96rmeci\\_Ozan\\_2015\\_Cyprus\\_Dispute\\_in\\_terms\\_of\\_Energy\\_Politics\\_in\\_Turkish\\_Foreign\\_Policy\\_in\\_the\\_New\\_Millennium\\_edited\\_by\\_Ozan\\_%C3%96rmeci\\_and\\_H%C3%BCseyin\\_I%C5%9F%C4%B1ksal\\_Peter\\_Lang\\_pp.\\_325-335](https://www.academia.edu/15570691/%C3%96rmeci_Ozan_2015_Cyprus_Dispute_in_terms_of_Energy_Politics_in_Turkish_Foreign_Policy_in_the_New_Millennium_edited_by_Ozan_%C3%96rmeci_and_H%C3%BCseyin_I%C5%9F%C4%B1ksal_Peter_Lang_pp._325-335).

not turn into a very profitable/efficient energy project for the EU. East Mediterranean energy resources, thus, can be best analyzed from a larger Mediterranean perspective. Greek, Greek Cypriot, Egyptian and Israeli officials' recent diplomatic activism<sup>27</sup> prove the importance of energy politics for the future of that region.

Large resources discovered in Israel and a new huge gas field discovered in Egypt<sup>28</sup> can play a constructive role in the emergence of new geopolitical designs and political and economic agreements in the Eastern Mediterranean. Economic gains, by creating win-win situations, can become a strong leverage for the solution of difficult political problems. Recent rapprochement between Turkey and Kurdistan Regional Government is a perfect example for this. Israeli-Greek-Cypriot-Egyptian-Turkish cooperation might help these five countries to prosper more by establishing a large energy hub together that will realize the diversification aim of the EU concerning its energy policy. By doing this, EU will have higher chances against its main gas supplier Russia in case of aggressive military policies such as in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine in 2014. However, due to reactions against Turkish foreign policy in Syria and Cyprus, until now, Turkey is not included to the picture and diplomatic initiatives take place between Greece, Israel, Cyprus and Egypt. Although there are alternative projects such as LNG transportation in the Mediterranean or previous Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras' proposal of East Med Pipeline<sup>29</sup> project, experts claim that the economic rational is forcing these countries to cooperate with Turkey. It is clear that Turkey has been transforming into an energy corridor in recent years by developing new projects with neighboring countries such as Iran and Azerbaijan. Recently proposed Russian project "Turkish Stream" also includes both Turkey and Greece. Thus, with Turkey's inclusion, these projects might be easily realized. Moreover, Turkey also officially and clearly stated that it will not accept a Mediterranean deal between Greece and Egypt without being a part of it.<sup>30</sup> This means Turkey has to develop its relations with Egypt and Israel in addition to its Greek neighbors for realizing the Mediterranean energy cooperation. Otherwise, energy projects might lead to serious confrontation between Turkey and these other countries.

However, if both sides in Cyprus will realize that they cannot solve their political problems in the short-run due to lack of trust caused by the ethnic tensions of the recent past, they can focus on economic projects and partial political solutions. Here, the opening of Varosha (Maraş region), the extension of Turkey's water project to South Cyprus and even to Israel and most importantly, energy projects for the transportation of Mediterranean gas resources to Europe via Turkey might be attractive issues for deepening cooperation between two communities as well as other Mediterranean countries. But for sure, during the negotiations, the main motive and aim should be to find a final solution to the Cyprus Dispute in a way that will not create new security risks or political instabilities. If this is not realized, economic projects and partial political solutions can be spoken separately/independently from the negotiations. That is because progress in political disagreements and economic cooperation might help all sides to find a solution maybe not now but in the future and thus, is better than the status quo.

## 6. NEGOTIATION PROCESS

The current President of the Cyprus Republic (Greek Cypriot administration), Nikos Anastasiades, repeatedly showed his belief and will in the solution of the problem by his

<sup>27</sup> Nikolaos Stelya (2015), "Doğu Akdeniz'de yeni bir ittifak doğuyor", 29.07.2015, *Sputnik Türkiye*, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from

[http://tr.sputniknews.com/dogu\\_akdeniz/20150729/1016831113.html](http://tr.sputniknews.com/dogu_akdeniz/20150729/1016831113.html).

<sup>28</sup> For an analysis on this issue, see; Sina Kısacık (2015), "Mısır, Doğu Akdeniz Enerji Jeopolitiğinde Yeni Yıldız Olabilir Mi?", *Uluslararası Politika Akademisi*, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from <http://politikaakademisi.org/2015/09/05/misir-dogu-akdeniz-enerji-jeopolitiginde-yeni-yildiz-olabilir-mi/>.

<sup>29</sup> For details, see; Ozan Örmeci (2014), "Kıbrıs'ta Kızırgan Pazarlık ve Eastmed Pipeline Projesi", *Uluslararası Politika Akademisi*, Date of Accession: 29.02.2016 from <http://politikaakademisi.org/2014/11/22/kibris-ta-kizirgan-pazarlik-ve-eastmed-pipeline-projesi/>.

<sup>30</sup> "Turkey 'would not accept' Greece-Egypt Mediterranean deal" (2014), *Hürriyet Daily News*, 09.12.2014, Date of Accession: 29.02.2016 from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-would-not-accept-greece-egypt-mediterranean-deal-----.aspx?pageID=238&nid=75390>.

speeches and articles.<sup>31</sup> Anastasiades is one of the rare Greek Cypriot politicians who supported the Annan Plan in the past and is known as a pro-settlement leader. Anastasiades and his Turkish counterpart Mustafa Akıncı recently attended to a special session in World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2016 and gave positive messages about the future in their speeches.<sup>32</sup> In addition, Anastasiades recently made an official request for the inclusion of Turkish language into EU's official languages in order to show his goodwill for Turkish Cypriots.<sup>33</sup> He is a respected leader on both sides of the island and he does not try to provoke Turkish Cypriots or Turkey. His counterpart Mustafa Akıncı is also an experienced and respected politician known with his pro-settlement views for long years. Coming from a socialist and municipal presidency background<sup>34</sup>, Akıncı is the perfect choice for a diplomatic solution to the ongoing conflict.

Two solution-minded leaders, Greek Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot President Mustafa Akıncı, resumed UN brokered negotiations in May 2015 following the "vessel crisis". So far, there have been numerous meetings between the two leaders and their teams (negotiators) in order to find a fair and equitable solution. Apart from the formal talks, two leaders have come together on various informal occasions, such as taking a stroll in the streets of Nicosia on May 23, 2015 or most recently preparing a joint televised New Year greeting both in Turkish and Greek on December 24, 2015.<sup>35</sup> There are some critics in both sides about the confidentiality of negotiations since people and press were provided little information so far. However, until now, two leaders have shown an excellent performance reminding Cem-Papandreou days of the past and convinced the majority of their people about the workability of a federal state composed of Turks and Greeks. TRNC Foreign Minister Emine Çolak also pointed out this and said that "There has never been an atmosphere where the two leaders have been so compatible and with so many confidence building initiatives. Therefore, an opportunity which we have not seen since the Annan Plan has risen. We hope that this opportunity will materialize".<sup>36</sup> However, there are still some issues to be solved during the talks.<sup>37</sup>

A-) EU Integration: Although Cyprus Republic is a member of the EU, TRNC is still incompatible with EU laws (*acquis communautaire*) in some ways. That is why; TRNC government has been making political reforms and preparations for transition into euro<sup>38</sup> in recent months. This seems to be the least problematic issue concerning negotiations since TRNC is making necessary preparations for the European integration.

<sup>31</sup> "Anastasiadis: "Evet, 2016'da başarabiliriz"", *Kıbrıs Postası*, 23.01.2016, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from

[http://www.kibrispostasi.com/index.php/cat/58/news/181389/PageName/GUNEY\\_KIBRIS](http://www.kibrispostasi.com/index.php/cat/58/news/181389/PageName/GUNEY_KIBRIS).

<sup>32</sup> "Reuniting Cyprus", World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 20-23 January 2016, Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from

<http://www.weforum.org/events/world-economic-forum-annual-meeting-2016/sessions/reuniting-cyprus>.

<sup>33</sup> "Anastasiadis'ten "Türkçe" jesti!" (2016), *Gündem Kıbrıs*, 19.01.2016, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from <http://www.gundemkibris.com/anastasiadisten-turkce-jesti-162113h.htm>;

"EU confirms Anastasiades Turkish language request" (2016), *in-cyprus*, 29.02.2016, Date of Accession: 01.03.2016 from <http://in-cyprus.com/eu-confirms-anastasiades-turkish-language-request/>.

<sup>34</sup> Ozan Örmeci (2015), "Turkish Cypriots Elect Mustafa Akıncı as Their New President of the Republic", *Uluslararası Politika Akademisi*, Date of Accession: 01.03.2016 from

<http://politikaakademisi.org/2015/04/26/turkish-cypriots-elect-mustafa-akinci-as-their-new-president-of-the-republic/>.

<sup>35</sup> Mustafa Aydın (2016), "Yet another glimmer of hope in Cyprus", *Hürriyet Daily News*, 21 January 2016, Date of Accession: 28.02.2016 from

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/Default.aspx?pageID=238&nID=94116&NewsCatID=468>.

<sup>36</sup> "The first big opportunity in Cyprus since the Annan Plan" (2015), *Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, Date of Accession: 29.02.2016 from

<http://mfa.gov.ct.tr/the-first-big-opportunity-in-cyprus-since-the-annan-plan/>.

<sup>37</sup> For details, see; Örmeci, Ozan (2014), "Kıbrıs Müzakerelerinde Yeni Dönem: Enerji Jeopolitiği ve Akdeniz Birliği Olgusu", *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, Vol. 7, Issue: 31, pp. 376-385.

<sup>38</sup> "KKTC, TL'den Euro'ya geçecek!" (2015), *Gazete Vatan*, 13.10.2015, Date of Accession: 29.02.2016 from <http://www.gazetevatan.com/kktc-tl-den-euro-ya-gececek--873479-ekonomi/>.



B-) Power Division: 1960 Republic envisaged a Greek Cypriot President and a Turkish Cypriot Vice President. However, now the Turkish side insists on rotational Presidency. Anastasiades and his team seem to agree on this, although no clear information was given to the press so far. Other technical details can be easily handled if Greek Cypriots will not object to the rotational Presidency and this will be another easy part of the negotiations.

C-) Property: This is one of the most problematic aspects of the negotiations unless an economic resource is created from outside. It seems like different methods such as trade (clearance), compensation and restitution will be employed for people who lost their houses during the war. If these people, most of them are Greek Cypriots, will ask for the restitution of their houses, this will mean there will a rapid flow of Greek Cypriot population to the north which will cause new security risks. Thus, it will be a wiser decision to choose compensation and trade methods. In any case, people's property rights should be respected on both sides and the money should be provided from outside. It must not be forgotten that there are thousands of people who live in these houses for nearly 40 years. EU funds and developing energy projects might play a constructive role here. However, without enough economic funds, this will be the most difficult issue to solve since EU and especially Turkey already spent a lot of money for Syrian refugees and the global economy is not in the best times.

D-) Land: Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akıncı recently said that there should be a reasonable perspective on the land issue.<sup>39</sup> Turkish Cypriot side seems like ready to give some portion of its lands starting from Varosha (Maraş) region to Greek Cypriots. However, since the new federal state will be based on bicomunal and bizonal principles, the amount and the location of this land will be very important and might create problems in negotiations. But with both sides acting rationally, this could be solved as well.

E-) Citizenship: Since the demography of the both sides have changed dramatically after the 1974 military intervention due to migrants coming from Turkey and Greece as well as some other countries, the citizenship issue will be very important and difficult to solve. Turkish media previously claimed that Akıncı and Anastasiades already agreed on 4 to 1 formula (800.000 Greek Cypriots and 220.000 Turkish Cypriots) for citizenship.<sup>40</sup> This is not good news for the Turkish side since the demographic ratio and the representative power (3 to 7 in the 1960 Republic) of the Turks was higher before 1974. However, both sides can work on this and find a middle ground easily if all sides act in a constructive and rational manner.

F-) Guarantees: This will be the most difficult aspect of the negotiations. Turkish side wants to leave the guarantees issue to the last and plans to negotiate and solve it in an international conference that will include all guarantor powers after overcoming all other problematic aspects. As it was shown before, Greece and UK seem to agree on abandoning their guarantorship rights whereas Turkey is highly skeptical in doing this. Turkish Cypriots' decision will be important for Turkey here. One of the previous Foreign Ministers of Turkey, Murat Karayalçın, recently made an interesting proposal and said that "Turkish guarantee over Cyprus might continue until Turkey becomes an EU member".<sup>41</sup> This might be a good idea to work on if Greece and Greek Cypriots are not willingly to continue to prevent Turkish accession to EU after a settlement in Cyprus. Greek Cypriot President Nikos Anastasiades on the other hand, claims that in an EU member country, the classical guarantee system will not work.<sup>42</sup> Contrary to Anastasiades, Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akıncı asserts that unless there is a new guarantee agreement, Turkish guarantee will continue for the protection of Turkish Cypriots.<sup>43</sup> Akıncı reminds Greek Cypriots that "this will be the last chance for

<sup>39</sup> "Akıncı: Toprak konusunda makul bir çerçevede anlaşmak lazım" (2016), *Zaman*, 25.01.2016, Date of Accession: 29.02.2016 from [http://www.zaman.com.tr/dunya\\_akinci-toprak-konusunda-makul-bir-cercevede-anlasmak-lazim\\_2340249.html](http://www.zaman.com.tr/dunya_akinci-toprak-konusunda-makul-bir-cercevede-anlasmak-lazim_2340249.html).

<sup>40</sup> "Kıbrıs'ta dört Rum'a karşı bir Türk" (2015), *Milliyet*, 07.12.2015, Date of Accession: 29.02.2016 from <http://m.milliyet.com.tr/kibris-ta-dort-rum-a-karsi-bir/dunya/detay/2159440/default.htm>.

<sup>41</sup> It was stated during a private conversation and used here with the courtesy of Mr. Karayalçın.

<sup>42</sup> "Anastasiadis: "Garanti sistemi AB üyesi devlet sıfatına uymaz"" (2016), *Gündem Kıbrıs*, 14.02.2016, Date of Accession: 29.02.2016 from <http://www.gundemkibris.com/anastasiadis-garanti-sistemi-ab-uyesi-devlet-sifatina-uyamaz-164894h.htm>.

<sup>43</sup> "Akıncı: 'Garanti sistemi devam edecek'" (2015), *YeniDüzen*, 03.05.2015, Date of Accession: 29.02.2016 from <http://www.yeniduzen.com/Haberler/haberler/akinci-garanti-sistemi-devam-edecek/50950>.

solution” and he never said that “guarantees will stay as the same”.<sup>44</sup> Here, all sides should be flexible and creative to overcome the difficulty. Turkish insistence on guarantees seems very plausible because of the experiences in the recent past. However, this guarantee right might be formulated in a new manner in order not to make Greek Cypriots afraid of another Turkish military intervention in the future. Karayalçın’s temporary guarantee formula is also very logical and can constitute a basis for negotiations.

In any case, the real problem is the lack of trust between two communities and the potential of new ethnic-based conflicts. Recent attacks made towards Turkish Cypriots by far-right Greek Cypriot groups organized in ELAM party prove the risky situation.<sup>45</sup> In case of unification, what is needed is to reestablish the police and intelligence units in the island in a way that they will act as preemptive actors against racist groups. Prevention of hate speeches and ethnic (racist) motivated crimes by tremendously severe punishments and the banning of far-right, ultra-Orthodox or Islamic fundamentalist groups (not moderate Islamic groups) might be other policy alternatives in order to reduce the ethnic tension in the island. Since the new federal state will be bizonal and bicomunal, social integration should be realized in time gradually. To do this, education system must be regulated in a way to teach empathy and strengthen positive feelings for Turks and Greeks on both sides. Greek, Turkish and English should be three official languages of the country so that everyone will have chance to find jobs and integrate into the system.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Discovery of new natural gas resources in the East Mediterranean around southern Cyprus, Egypt and Israel necessitates the safe transportation of these hydrocarbon resources through Turkey towards Europe, which severely lacks alternative energy resources due to ongoing tension between European Union and Russian Federation related to the Ukrainian crisis. Thus, a new period of settlement seems possible in Cyprus. However, until now, efforts shown by Greek Cypriots, Greece, Egypt and Israel did not include Turkey concerning energy projects. This position could be changing in the months to come, if Turkey could reassess and change its foreign policy preferences and contribute to the solution of Cyprus Dispute in a fair manner. Other than this energy dimension which necessitates the inclusion of Turkey, Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots should work together to make a fair deal that will not be short-lived and will not lead to political instabilities as it was in the 1963-1974 period. The key to success here is to make empathy and always find the middle ground for divergent positions. It seems like Anastasiades and Akıncı could really achieve this with the help and contribution of three guarantor powers as well as the United Nations, European Union and United States.

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<sup>44</sup> “Akıncı: "Çözüm için son fırsat... Rakip değil ortak olmak istiyoruz"” (2016), *Kıbrıs Postası*, Date of Accession: 06.03.2016 from [http://www.kibrispostasi.com/index.php/cat/35/news/184645/PageName/KIBRIS\\_HABERLERI](http://www.kibrispostasi.com/index.php/cat/35/news/184645/PageName/KIBRIS_HABERLERI).

<sup>45</sup> See; Örmeci, Ozan (2014), “A Slap to Peace Process in Cyprus”, *Uluslararası Politika Akademisi*, Date of Accession: 29.02.2016 from <http://politikaakademisi.org/a-slap-to-peace-process-in-cyprus/>; “Güney Kıbrıs'ta Türk plakalı araçlara şok saldırı” (2015), *Milliyet*, 16.11.2015, Date of Accession: 09.03.2016 from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/guney-kibris-ta-turk-plakali-gundem-2148913/>.

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