

Towards Peace in Cyprus: Incentives and Disincentives

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DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS IN CYPRUS WERE re-launched in January 2002 after a turnaround in the Turkish Cypriot position. Between the failure of negotiations in the summer of 1997 in Glion, Switzerland and 2002 the Turkish Cypriot leadership rejected direct negotiations. The very accession process of the Republic of Cyprus was cited as a reason, by the Turkish Cypriots, to reject direct talks. The initial objective of the 2002 talks, first proposed by the Turkish Cypriot leadership, was to reach an agreement by June of that year. The deadline would have allowed the December 2002 Copenhagen Council to invite the whole island to join the Union. Yet as successive rounds of talks proceeded, a growing mood of pessimism pervaded negotiations. The principal parties appeared to do little more than exchange position papers on the major elements of the conflict settlement agenda, without effectively engaging in substantive negotiations.

The UN Secretary General's distribution of a comprehensive settlement plan in November 2002 injected new life into the process. The plan represented the most comprehensive attempt to reach a settlement, certainly in the last decade, and probably since the 1974 division of the island. The objective was to reach an agreement between the parties by or at the Copenhagen Council on 12-13 December 2002.

Yet, on the eve of the Copenhagen Council, chances of a breakthrough looked slim. Both parties were cautious about the compromises entailed in the Plan. The Turkish Cypriot side, in particular, loudly voiced its objections and was deemed responsible for delaying negotiations. The illness of Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash following heart surgery in October further complicated matters. Indeed, on 12-13 December, Denktash was in a hospital in Ankara rather than in Copenhagen negotiating the reunification of the island. Sadly, the Council ended without an agreement.

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Nonetheless, the Cypriot president's conclusions encouraged the continuation of negotiations with the aim of reaching an agreement by 28 February 2003.

The 28 February deadline was also missed, despite the publication of a third and final version of the 'Annan Plan'. This was followed by a failure to reach an agreement at a meeting on 10 March at The Hague. Negotiations continued throughout the night and on 11 March UN Secretary General Kofi Annan announced, "regrettably these peace efforts were not a success. We have reached the end of the road."¹ Annan also announced that the office of UN mediator de Soto in Nicosia would be closed down. What explains the evolution and the dramatic turn of events of the last year?

THE TURKISH CYPRIOTS AND TURKEY

Did the Turkish Cypriot leadership, merely engage in yet another round of unsuccessful talks at Turkey's behest or did they truly seek to reunify Cyprus and concomitantly allow the whole island to join the Union? A peaceful resolution was both ostensible and real depending on which actors in Turkey and northern Cyprus one focuses on at any point in time.

By the autumn of 2002, both in Turkey and in northern Cyprus there was a growing realization that the accession of Cyprus, to the EU in the near future was inevitable. The intensification of statements by European leaders supporting Cyprus' accession irrespective of a political settlement, Greek determination not to ratify the eastern enlargement without the island's inclusion, and the general European impatience with Turkey's Cyprus policy was slowly yet unwillingly being appreciated in Ankara and Lefkosa. Both Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots understood that a policy shift was necessary. The perceived Turkish Cypriot intransigence was neither helping the Turkish Cypriot cause in its attempts to prevent the Republic of Cyprus' (RoC) unilateral accession, nor was it contributing to secure a settlement reflecting Turkish Cypriot concerns. It was also harming Turkey's EU accession process, as evidenced by the reprimands in the 2001 Commission Progress report and the successive European Parliament (EP) reports on Turkey's Cyprus policy.

The "stick" of Cyprus' forthcoming EU accession induced a change in Lefkosa and Ankara. Yet some pursued negotiations only within the logic of a tactical change, which did not entail commitment to settlement. But if change was purely tactical, what could have been the factors inducing direct talks? The Turkish/Turkish Cypriot sides, concerned about Cyprus' EU membership before Turkey's, may have hoped that the re-launch of negotiations would delay the accession of the island. If European leaders appreciated that Cyprus' membership would have interrupted inter-communal talks, they could, accounting for "all relevant factors," postpone Cyprus' accession.

Behind this logic lay the Turkish/Turkish Cypriot unawareness that by 2002 the RoC's accession was inseparable from the eastern enlargement. Apart from the postponement of Cyprus' accession,

Turkish officials also hoped that a peace process would contribute to Turkey's EU accession process.

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The direct talks indeed reverberated positively in terms of EU-Turkey relations as evidenced by the conclusions of the December 2001 Laeken Council and the June 2002 Seville Council, which brought forward the prospect of opening accession negotiations with Turkey

A second explanation could be that the Turkish Cypriot leadership sincerely engaged in direct talks as an effective last-ditch attempt to secure a reunification of the island within the EU. The first important factor justifying this narrative was the deteriorating economic situation in the north: the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' (TRNC) isolation and growing dependence on Turkey. Since the late 1990's, the Turkish Cypriot public as well as the Turkish Cypriot leadership increasingly appreciated the costs of the status quo. However, what appeared to lie at the heart of the Turkish Cypriot public's concern (more so than its leadership) was not simply the fear of poverty accentuated by the allure of EU-prosperity. Rather, it was the fear that economic ills and isolation would lead to their disappearance from northern Cyprus through emigration. As the RoC within the Union would make EU passports available to Turkish Cypriots (and not to Turkish immigrants), emigration trends would accelerate and Turkish Cypriots would disappear as a well-defined community with communal rights on their land.

Linked to these realities and concerns was the waning support for the nationalist camp in the TRNC and Denktash in particular. Evidence of mounting Turkish Cypriot opposition increased during and after the summer of 2002. At the 30 June municipal elections, opposition Republican Turkish Party (CTP) gained a significant share of the vote by winning five of the twenty-eight municipalities which included the three largest cities of the country. With the publication of the UN Plan, Turkish Cypriot opposition to Denktash increased. On 1 December 2002, 10,000 Turkish Cypriots, organized under the NGO umbrella group "Common Vision," demonstrated in favor of the Plan. Their numbers increased to 30,000 in a mass demonstration on 26 December 2002. They rose to unprecedented levels on 14 January 2003 when between 45,000-70,000 Turkish Cypriots demonstrated in Nicosia in favor of a solution and Denktash's resignation. While anti-UN Plan movements also existed (e.g. on 11 De-

cember 2002, 10,000 Turkish Cypriots demonstrated against the Plan) the pressure by the Turkish Cypriot people to alter the status quo was clearly mounting.

A second important factor was the appreciation by the Turkish Cypriot leadership of the EU's willingness to accommodate the details of a settlement, and thus not force upon the Turkish Cypriots an agreement on Greek Cypriot terms. In a meeting in the European Parliament in January 2002, Turkish Cypriot negotiator Ergun Olgun stated: "the assurance that the terms of the agreement between the two parties would be

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taken on board by the EU has helped to ease some of the concerns that the Turkish Cypriot party had."² For the first time the Turkish Cypriot leadership interpreted Commission statements as being genuinely willing to meet their concerns

rather than simply forcing on them a settlement along Greek Cypriot lines through "economic bribes" and "blackmail on Turkey."

Perhaps most important, particularly since the 3 November 2002 general elections, was the growing strength of genuinely pro-EU forces in Turkey. Since the effective initiation of Turkey's EU accession process in December 1999, views in Turkey over the question of EU membership developed and shifted. Turkey's candidacy meant that it was no longer sufficient to pay lip service to the goal of membership. If Ankara was serious in its aspirations to join the Union, it had to demonstrate that it was equally committed to respect the Copenhagen political and economic criteria.

The slow albeit present process of reform since 2000 led to growing schisms within Turkey's political establishment. Yet despite rising political turmoil, particularly since the summer of 2002, the Turkish Parliament succeeded in passing the most extensive pro-democracy reform package of recent decades on 3 August 2002. The amendment package also initiated de facto an electoral campaign focused to a large extent on attitudes towards EU membership. The 3 November elections then dramatically tilted the balance in favor of the reformists. The AKP won a landslide victory with 34 percent of the vote. The only other party to pass the 10 percent threshold and enter parliament was the center-left and pro-EU CHP, with 19 percent of the vote. The elections led to the first single party government in fifteen years. The results were defined as an effective popular coup, not intended to challenge the country's secular system, but rather to express dissatisfaction with the old political establishment's handling of Turkey's political, social, and economic ills.³

The coming to power of the AKP led to a change in the rhetoric of the Turkish government's Cyprus policy. The AKP government appeared favorable to an early settlement that both protected Turkish and Turkish Cypriot needs and interests and re-

moved an important obstacle in Turkey's EU path. The new government also appeared willing to acknowledge the link between Turkey's accession process and a Cyprus settlement. This link had been fiercely denied by the previous coalition government. Prime Minister Gul explicitly broke the taboo in stating that, "if a concrete date is given to Turkey this will definitely create a positive environment which will also facilitate the settlement of the Cyprus issue."

The Copenhagen offer was insufficient to entice Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots to sign a deal on the 13 December 2002. Whether a deal would have been reached if Turkey had received an earlier and firmer 'date' or if the EU had formulated a coherent policy towards Turkey before 12 December, allowing for effective negotiations on the UN Plan on the margins of the Council, will remain unknown. But what was clear was the Turkish logic behind its demands in Copenhagen. These were not only driven by bargaining tactics with the member states, but were fundamentally linked to Turkey's mistrust of Europe. A more resolute European decision or an earlier and firmer 'date' was considered by the Turkish government as the minimum assurance to hedge against this prevailing mistrust. Pressure alone would be insufficient to clinch an agreement.⁴

The re-launch and conduct of negotiations was the product of both tactical and substantive shifts in the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot positions. Trends thus oscillated over the course of the year. Denktash considered that the negotiation process could at the very least delay Cyprus' accession and further Turkey's accession process and at most secure a settlement which could satisfy the basic needs of his impoverished people and the survival of his state within the EU. As time elapsed and both the Greek Cypriots and the international community displayed little sympathy for its positions, the leadership's views hardened. The political crisis in Turkey created the vacuum necessary to retain the status quo. Up until the summer of 2002, the more conservative elements of the Turkish establishment retained the upper hand. This situation persisted until the electoral victory of the AKP and the publication of the UN Plan, when pressure on the Turkish Cypriot leadership both within northern Cyprus and from Ankara mounted.

The Turkish/Turkish Cypriot side resisted an agreement at the Copenhagen Council, while accepting to pursue negotiations until 28 February 2003. After the Copenhagen Council, trends continued to oscillate on almost a daily basis as the product of an ongoing battle between elements pushing for or against a settlement. Different positions and logics were continuously aired. Those skeptical of Turkey's future in Europe persisted in their effective opposition to Cyprus's EU membership and consequently their opposition to the UN Plan.⁵ Some in favor of Turkey's EU membership but unsatisfied with the Copenhagen decision proposed a delay in the implementation of a settlement until Turkey's EU prospects were clearer.⁶ Other pro-Europeans instead pushed for an early settlement based on the UN Plan, as they appreciated the difficulty

of reaching a settlement following Cyprus' EU membership, understanding that in the future the international burden would be placed predominantly on Turkey's shoulders.⁷

With the ultimate failure of The Hague negotiations, for which the Turkish Cypriot side was predominantly blamed,⁸ the conservative elements in Turkey and northern Cyprus appeared to win the day.⁹ However, while The Hague meeting may have sealed the fate of the Annan Plan it did not entail an ultimate resolution of the ongoing debate in Turkey. The ongoing "battle" in Turkey stretches far beyond Cyprus, dealing with questions of the essence, concerning the nature of the nation-state and its development path. Given the fundamental nature of these questions, it appears unlikely that they will be resolved in the very near future.

THE GREEK CYPRIOTS AND GREECE

Turning to the Greek Cypriot side, what lay behind their acceptance to re-engage in direct talks? The Greek Cypriots could have participated in the talks primarily for tactical reasons. One narrative of the Greek Cypriot side could be that the RoC government engaged in the talks because of the remaining uncertainty concerning their EU accession. They could have done so without a real willingness to compromise because they assessed that after EU membership, they could negotiate a more favourable agreement from a position of increased strength. The Turkish Cypriots, watching the RoC on the other side of the green line, would have become more aware of the benefits of membership. Turkey, as a candidate striving to join the Union, would instead have felt increasing pressure to reach a settlement. It would no longer be able to use Cyprus as a bargaining chip to further its own accession process.

On the other hand there are strong reasons why the Greek Cypriot side may have engaged in the direct talks with a genuine commitment to reach an early settlement. Throughout 2002 and certainly up until the November elections in Turkey, there were good reasons to believe that negotiations would have ended if the Copenhagen Council admitted a divided island. While Greek Cypriot officials gave little importance to Turkish threats of annexation, they did appreciate that the international as well as domestic momentum generated in 2002 could have evaporated in 2003. As such, although Greek Cypriot potential bargaining strength would increase post-membership, this could remain latent given the absence of inter-communal talks (at least if and until Turkey's accession prospects became closer).

Connected to this was the reality that Greek Cypriots would also gain from a settlement. Their gains would neither be in terms of status nor in terms of economic development. Any agreement would inevitably entail extensive power-sharing, where the RoC would not be considered the only legal government of the island. An agree-

ment would also have called for some degree of economic redistribution in an attempt to equalize living standards between the communities. Yet the Greek Cypriots had much to gain in terms of territory (a settlement would include significant territorial redistribution to approximate the demographic balance) and, connected to this, refugee return.¹⁰ It would have also eased security concerns irrespective of a continuation of the Guarantee Treaty, both because of the reduction of Turkish troops in the north and a peace settlement with Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots.

A last factor was the role of Greece. The Simitis government in Athens marked a historic turn in Greek attitudes towards Turkey, advocating a policy of European inclusion rather than exclusion. Foreign Minister George Papandreu was the most pivotal figure spearheading the Greek-Turkish rapprochement since the summer of 1999. Given the Greek commitment to closer EU-Turkey relations, which went beyond its interests to see Cyprus within the Union (as appeared to be the case up until the mid-1990s), Athens genuinely pushed for settlement prior to Cyprus' EU membership. Such a settlement would remove one of the most important obstacles on Turkey's European path. It would also eliminate all chances of a serious rift in EU-Turkey relations, effectively threatened by Ankara up until the November 2002 elections. Indeed Greece spoke immediately in favor of negotiations based on the UN Plan while reiterating its support for the RoC irrespective of its positions on the draft. Its support for the Plan also bolstered the position of then President Clerides, vis-à-vis his domestic opposition which hinted at the Greek Cypriot negotiating team's readiness to "sell Cyprus off."¹¹

Both tactical and strategic considerations played into Greek Cypriot official thinking and ensuing action. A good test of the relative balance between different considerations was the willingness to reach a settlement after the Copenhagen Council and before the signature of the Accession Treaty on 16 April 2002. The question of delaying a settlement until after accession was openly discussed in southern Cyprus. To the extent that the 2002 talks were carried out for predominantly tactical reasons to secure EU membership, Greek Cypriot goodwill in the continuing negotiations would have faltered. According to this logic, the RoC, while committed to a settlement, preferred an agreement that reflected more closely Greek Cypriot demands. Even more so given that the UN Plan was viewed with skepticism by Greek Cypriot public opinion.¹² The Greek Cypriot proponents of delaying an agreement argued that post-accession the RoC's bargaining strength would rise. In addition, the derogations provided for under the UN Plan would no longer be feasible given they would not be incorporated in Cyprus' Treaty of Accession determining the implementation of the *acquis* on the is-

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land. The objectors of this course of action appreciated that time could work against the Greek Cypriots and that a missed opportunity could entail a delay in a settlement until Turkey's uncertain accession.¹³ By then, most Turkish Cypriots may well have left the island, being replaced by Turkish mainland immigrants.

On the whole, evidence suggests that the former Greek Cypriot team was more inclined to sign an early agreement. The extent of genuine commitment to sign the UN Plan in Copenhagen cannot be known. However, some of the former president's remarks suggest that this hypothesis cannot be wholly discounted.¹⁴ Eighty-three-year old Clerides's last minute decision in early January 2003 to stand for re-election in February 2003 with a fourteen month mandate to conclude negotiations also pointed towards the president's willingness to seal a deal.

Yet Clerides lost the elections on the first round to DIKO-AKEL backed candidate Tassos Papadopoulos on 16 February 2003. Although Papadopoulos toned down his rhetoric during the election campaign, he was known as a nationalist on the Cyprus conflict. On his electoral victory night he stated that he would, "fight for the right of all displaced persons to return in conditions of safety."¹⁵ Prior to the publication of the third and final UN Plan, the newly elected president reportedly called for radical changes to the Plan including the elimination of derogations and restrictions to the full implementation of the three freedoms.¹⁶

At The Hague on 10-11 March 2003, the extent of Greek Cypriot willingness to refer the Plan to popular referenda was unclear. Given the Turkish Cypriot outright rejection of the Secretary General's request, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the new RoC government was committed to the Plan. When citing the reasons for failure, other than the Turkish Cypriot insistence on sovereign equality, Kofi Annan also cited Papadopoulos' demand for more clearly defined central government competences and provisions for the return of refugees.¹⁷

THIRD PARTY ROLES IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS: THE EU AND THE UN

Third parties, most notably the UN and the EU, also affected the incentives of the principal parties to reach a negotiated settlement. To what extent did the rhetoric and actions of these two principal external actors affect the negotiating process and create incentives for a settlement of the conflict rather than merely for negotiations driven by tactical considerations?

EU actors

Throughout 2002, the Commission and the member states continued to play a relatively passive role in bi-communal negotiations, leaving all mediation activity to the

UN. The Commission set for itself the role of informing rather than influencing the UN process. Yet with the looming prospect of accession, EU statements and actions affected the conduct of the talks as well as the substance of proposals.

By and large, the Commission and the member states persisted in their policies of conditional sticks and carrots. On the one hand, the Commission repeated the position that Cyprus' EU accession would take place irrespective of a political settlement. Fearing that the Turkish Cypriots had engaged in direct talks in order to delay Cyprus' EU membership, the Commission in its last lap of accession negotiations with ten candidate countries was adamant to warn against this possibility. One-hundred and ten million people in the CEECS would not await a settlement in Cyprus. This constant repetition had a negative effect on the Turkish Cypriot leadership, who interpreted such "threats" as attempts to bolster the Greek Cypriot negotiating position.

On the other hand, the Commission went further in its presentation of "economic carrots" to the impoverished Turkish Cypriot community. On 30 January 2002, the Commission published its proposals for the financing of enlargement. A special section devoted to Cyprus stated that northern Cyprus could receive •206 million (•39 million in 2004, •67 million in 2005, and •100 million in 2006) under a reunification scenario.¹⁸ As statements of the past, this proposal was intended to mobilize the Turkish Cypriot public to exert greater pressure on its leadership. The mounting pressure on Denktash in the winter of 2002/2003 suggested that potential economic gains did generate incentives among the Turkish Cypriot public. However, as in the past, the presentation of economic carrots was snubbed by Turkish Cypriot officials as a cheap bribe to turn the people against their government.

However, there was also some change in the Commission and the member states' approaches towards the conflict, which played a far more positive role in the initiation and conduct of negotiations. These changes generated a gradual increase in Turkish Cypriot support for Cyprus' EU membership before Turkey's. They also provided valuable input to the UN's proposals.

Since the Denktash-Verheugen meeting in Zurich on 28 August 2001, the Commission explicitly endorsed the idea of EU accommodation of the terms of an agreement. During President Prodi's visit to the RoC in October 2001 he stated that, "I am confident that the EU can accommodate whatever arrangements the parties themselves agree to in the context of a political settlement. As an EU Member State, Cyprus will, of course have to participate in the Council of Ministers with one voice."¹⁹ In other words, the Commission clarified that EU membership, other than the thin requirement of being able to speak with one voice and commit the entire country to EU decisions, would accept any constitutional arrangement freely negotiated and agreed by the principal parties. By late, 2001 the Commission also specified that, within lim-

its, a Cyprus settlement could include exemptions from the implementation of the *acquis*. The position was also publicly announced during Romano Prodi's visit to southern Nicosia, in which the Commission President announced that "the EU, with its *acquis* will never be an obstacle to finding a solution in Cyprus."²⁰ In the 2001 Cyprus Progress report, the Commission also clarified that EU membership would not impinge upon the security arrangements freely agreed to by the Cypriots.

Moving on to the EU's conduct of its relations with Turkey, the overall picture emerging from 2002 was one of persisting mixed signals towards Turkey's EU membership prospects. Following the effective stalemate in negotiations during the summer

and autumn of 2002, Turkey was again under intense pressure by European, UN, and US officials over the Cyprus impasse. But Turkey felt that unless it had a realistic prospect to begin accession negotiations, a Cyprus settlement within the EU would amount to

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losing Cyprus. Yet EU policymakers rejected the link between Cyprus and Turkey-EU relations as presented by the AKP government. To EU leaders, Cyprus was but one of the conditions affecting Turkey's membership.

The European conception of the Turkey-Cyprus-EU link may have been greeted with less resistance in Ankara had the Union had a clear-cut policy toward Turkey. Yet the member states both resisted a clear conditional signal to Turkey and refrained from taking any collective position on Turkey up until the eleventh hour in Copenhagen. The absence of a unified EU position was due to the apparent schism between the Franco-German axis supported by Austria and the Scandinavian countries on the one hand, and Greece, Italy, Spain, and the UK, on the other.

The UN's mediation

The UN's role over the course of 2002, supported by the diplomatic activity of British Special Representative Lord David Hannay, was arguably the most significant positive external influence over the conduct of negotiations, particularly in view of the publication of the UN proposals for a comprehensive agreement in November 2002. According to this author, the proposals (revised in December 2002 and February 2003) went a long way towards fulfilling the basic needs of the two communities, Greece and Turkey.

Constitutionally, the Plan endorsed several aspects of the confederal Swiss constitution as well as the Belgian federal constitution. Sovereignty would be shared and would not lie exclusively in one level of government. Rather, both levels would sover-

eignly exercise the powers attributed to them by the Constitution in a non-hierarchical fashion. Most powers would be devolved to the component states, which would coordinate their policies on most matters. Many of the components dealing at common state level would instead be devolved to the supra-national EU level. As far as relations with the EU were concerned, the Plan explicitly endorsed the Belgian mode of representation allowed for under article 146 of the Treaty of the EU. The Plan's preamble states: "component states shall participate in the formulation and implementation of policy in external and EU relations on matters within their sphere of competence in accordance with Cooperation agreements modelled on the Belgian example."²¹

Common state institutions would be marked by effective political equality between the parties. There would be a rotating presidency, a presidential Council including six members (of which at least two were Turkish Cypriot) which would strive to reach decisions on the basis of consensus, and a common state parliament where decisions would require the approval of both chambers by simple majority. The Supreme Court would be represented by an equal number of Greek and Turkish Cypriots and serve as a dispute-resolving mechanism if common state institutions were deadlocked.

The constitutional aspect was counterbalanced by territorial proposals which provided for a reduction of the northern zone to approximately 28.5 percent of the land (in the third version of the Plan this included the transfer of approximately 50 percent of the territory of the British sovereign bases predominantly to the Greek Cypriot state), in turn allowing around 90,000 Greek Cypriot refugees to return to their properties under Greek Cypriot administration. In the third version of the Plan, the remaining Greek Cypriot refugees wishing to return to the north would instead be subject to quota restrictions. These restrictions would be phased over time. While freedom of residence and property would thus be restricted, freedom of movement would be fully liberalized.

In terms of security, Greek and Turkish contingents would be scaled down to 6,000—a figure that would be reviewed in 2010 and would be scaled down to complete demilitarization once Turkey joined the EU (third Plan). UN peace-keeping forces, empowered by a new mandate, would monitor the implementation of agreement. The Treaty of Guarantee would remain in force and the guarantors would not only defend the constitutional status and territorial integrity of the common state, but also those of the two component states. In line with the agreement over Turkey's participation in ESDP (European Security and Defense Policy), the UN Plan stipulated that Cyprus would not put its territory at the disposal of international military operations without the consent of Greece and Turkey or the consent of both component states.

The Plan also went far in reassuring Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots that the external balance (i.e., between Greece and Turkey) would be respected despite Greece's

and Cyprus' EU memberships and Turkey's temporary exclusion. The retention of equal numbers of Greek and Turkish troops (until Turkey's EU membership), the continuation of the Treaty of Guarantee, and the effective exclusion of Cyprus from possible ESDP operations created a balance in the security/military sphere. In the economic sphere, the agreement stipulated that Cyprus would apply the rules of the EU-Turkey customs union. The Plan also attempted to retain a balance in the spheres of property acquisition, residence and movement of persons, proposing an effective permanent derogation concerning the freedom of EU nationals to reside and acquire property in Cyprus.²²

CONCLUSIONS

Both tactical and strategic changes lie behind the re-engagement in direct talks of the two principal parties. The approaching deadlines set by Cyprus EU accession generated important incentives for negotiations rather than for a settlement. Yet new factors emerged or were appreciated by late 2001, which also created some degree of real willingness to reach an early agreement. Many of these factors related to the internal developments in northern Cyprus and in Turkey, such as the position of the AKP government in Ankara and the increasing visibility of the Turkish Cypriot public's support for a settlement. In southern Cyprus, the appreciation that a settlement after membership could have had to wait for the uncertain day of Turkey's own accession may have also generated incentives for an agreement, in which immediate territorial and security gains could be secured. The role of Greece vis-à-vis the Greek Cypriots was also important, not least by providing the RoC government with the necessary backing against possible accusations against domestic Greek Cypriot opposition.

In terms of third party involvement, the UN's role together with that of the British Foreign Office was pivotal, in particular by presenting a comprehensive settlement plan which neither side could easily dismiss (although the Turkish Cypriot side ultimately did). In presenting the substance of the plan, the drafters of the proposals made extensive use both of the EU framework within which to cast the new Cyprus and of the deadlines imposed by the EU's enlargement timetable. The EU framework and the enlargement process were thus used extensively by UN and British mediators to formulate a plan which addressed as much as possible the basic needs of all principal parties and maximized incentives to reach an early agreement.

Yet the EU as an actor remained largely passive throughout the process. Some positive changes in the positions and actions of EU institutions did occur over the course of 2002. However, neither the Commission nor the Council actively engaged in the peace process in order to gain the confidence of the Turkish Cypriot and Turkish

sides. Their relative passivity was justified on the grounds of the existing UN mediation and Turkish skepticism of the EU's role in Cyprus. Yet this passivity also entailed that little was done to deconstruct the logic that had motivated the hardening of Turkish Cypriot positions during the 1990's. Whether such a change in the EU's policies and positions would have facilitated or even have led to a settlement cannot be ascertained. Yet, there are good reasons to believe that greater pro-activeness, consistency and coherence in EU foreign policy activity towards the conflict could have contributed to a positive outcome. Had this been the case, the Union could have partly substantiated its claims and aspirations to have acted as a catalyst to the settlement of the conflict prior to accession. 

NOTES

1. "Cyprus Talks Collapse Casts EU cloud," *Turkish Daily News*, 12 March 2003.
2. European Centre of International and Strategic Studies, Meeting held in the EP, Press Release, 9 January 2002.
3. Soli Ozel, speech at CEPS, Brussels, 11 October 2002.
4. Mehmet Ali Birand, "A Major Rendez-Vous with the EU Today," *Turkish Daily News*, 16 April 2002.
5. Such as Rauf Denktash and Mumtaz Soysal, some elements in the military and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
6. Such as retired ambassador and commentator Gunduz Aktan and possibly Chief of Staff Hilmi Ozkok, AKP Parliament Speaker Bulent Arinc as well as President Ahmet Necdet Sezer. The CHP opposition was also in favor of a rejection of the Plan, arguably more in view of its role as opposition to the ruling AKP.
7. Including leaders of the AKP such as Abdullah Gul, Tayyip Erdogan, and Yasar Yakis and the liberal press.
8. See for example: Jean Christou, "Hannay: Denktash Rejected Everything," *Cyprus Mail*, 13 March 2003.
9. Mehmet Ali Birand, "Denktash Wins Again," *Turkish Daily News*, 12 March 2003.
10. William Wallace (2002) *Reconciliation in Cyprus: the window of opportunity* (EUI, Florence).
11. "America Welcomes Cyprus' Accession," *Cyprus Weekly*, 20 December 2002.
12. The Greek Cypriot daily *Politis* reported that in late November 2002 opposition to the Plan in southern Cyprus stood at 64 percent. The results were quoted in: "Greek Cypriot Opposition to UN Plan Grows," *Cyprus Weekly*, 29 November 2002.
13. See Andreas Hadjipapas, "Greek Cypriots Call for Radical Changes to Annan Plan on Rights and Freedoms," *Cyprus Weekly*, 11 February 2003.
14. Clerides: "If I listen to some fools then I should not sign a settlement. If I listen to others and think rationally, then I must think about it seriously." Also suggests that serious consideration was given to the possibility of a settlement quoted in George Psyllides, "Crunch Time in Copenhagen," *Cyprus Mail*, 12 December 2002.
15. Jean Christou, "What Chance of a Solution Now?" *Cyprus Mail*, 18 February 2003.
16. Andreas Hadjipapas, "Greek Cypriots call for radical changes to Annan Plan on rights and freedoms," *Cyprus Weekly*, 11 February 2003.
17. "Cyprus talks collapse casts EU cloud," *Turkish Daily News*, 12 March 2003.
18. Commission of the EC (2002a) *Commission Offers a Fair and Solid Approach for Financing EU*

Enlargement (IP/02/170).

19. "Cyprus Will Join," *Cyprus Weekly*, 30 October 2001.

20. "Cyprus Will Join" *Cyprus Weekly*, 30 October 2001.

21. For a discussion of the workings of this system see Michael Emerson and Nathalie Tocci, "Cyprus as Lighthouse of the Eastern Mediterranean," CEPS, Brussels, 2002.

22. UN Secretary General *Basis for an Agreement on a Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem*, second draft, 26 November 2002, Appendix E.