



# RESOLUTION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE GREEK- TURKISH CONFLICT

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## Chapter A: Introduction

The Greek Turkish Conflict has endured for several decades ever since the 1930s between the two countries. This dispute has been the most important aspect of Greek foreign policy, as the borders of Greece are openly challenged. Therefore, it is important to study a period whereby the relations between the two countries took a positive turn i.e. in the late 1990s up to today. After decades of conflict between the two countries the relations between the two countries took a new turn with the signing of the Helsinki agreement in which a solution of the conflict was promised and as a result a new period of rapprochement started. This study analyses this new period as well as the future prospects of the relations of the two countries.

The conflict between the two countries concerns mainly the boundaries of each neighbor. First, ever since the signing of the International Law of the Sea Turkey has refused to recognize it in its sea borders with Greece. This is because the International law of the sea sees that 12 miles off the coast of an island belongs to the sea border of the island. Second, there is a clash over the air space border in its relations to the sea borders of the country. Third, there is claim made by Turkey about the existence of a grey zone between the border of the Dodecanese islands and Turkey. This has resulted in the claim that the islands that are named in the treaty overseeing the relations between the two countries belong to Turkey. Lastly, Turkey claims that the status of the Dodecanese islands should be a demilitarized one something that Greece disagrees.

As a result of the continued conflict between the two countries the question arises: Is there a prospect for the solution of the dispute? This question is especially important after the hot incident of Imia crisis whereby the Greek government adopted a new strategy of engagement with Turkey in finding a definite resolution to the conflict. This was done within the jurisdiction of the European Union (EU), as the European prospect of Turkey resulted in cooling down the relations. Moreover, the negotiations for a resolution to the conflict continued up until 2004 without though a definite solution. Therefore, this essay will examine whether there is a prospect for a resolution today or in the near future for a definite solution to the conflict.

The method used for the examination of the aforementioned question will include several chapters. In the first chapter there will be an analysis of the dispute between the two countries since 1974 and the factors that led close to the resolution of the conflict both in 1999 and in 2004. In the second chapter the analysis will include the factors that resulted in the lack of achieving a resolution to the talks in both cases. The last chapter will examine the reasons as to why there is not prospect for a resolution since 2004. Conclusions will follow that entail a set of criteria that are deemed necessary for the resolution of the conflict.

## Chapter B: The Road to Helsinki Summit and the Helsinki Summit

This chapter will examine when and under which conditions there have been prospects for the resolution of the Greek-Turkish conflict in the past. In the past there was a prospect for the resolution of the conflict in the 1999 European Union (EU) Helsinki summit as well as in the talks leading to 2004. Both cases were accompanied by intense negotiations for the resolution of the conflict starting with low politics issues. This was accompanied by the willingness of both states to solve the conflict as well as the option of European membership for Turkey. Lastly, there was civil society cooperation amongst the two societies as well as increased communications amongst the governments of both countries. The structure followed first analyses the road to Helsinki, then what was agreed in the talks followed and what were the consequences of the talks.

### **The Road to Helsinki**

This subchapter will examine the climate that existed between Greece and Turkey before the Helsinki summit. It is striking that since the emergence of the Cyprus issue the conflict issues between the two countries increased dramatically while no instances of resolution were offered by any side. Meanwhile, the chosen foreign policy by Greece seemed to increase the conflictual character of the bilateral relations rather than giving an opportunity for a resolution.

The 1974 invasion of Cyprus by Turkish forces signaled a new period of antagonism between Greece and Turkey, after a period of good relations in the 1950s. What led to the reorientation of Greek foreign policy in post 1974 was the rising aggression of Turkey following the Greek sponsored coup in Cyprus (Onis & Yilmaz, 2008: 124). This incident played a vital role in Greece's foreign policy as it decided to re-examine its stance vis-à-vis Turkey. Therefore, leading to a more defensive role on the Greek part against what was deemed as Turkey aggression. In essence, Turkish aggression as shown by the 1974 invasion of Turkey in Cyprus led to the revised Greek foreign policy that was more defensive in nature.

The new strategy combined military and diplomatic deterrence towards Turkish aggression in the Aegean Sea. The policy adopted after 1974 saw that Turkey could be scared off through the increased militarization of Greece as it was deemed that militarization would deter Turkish aggression (Kairidis, 1999: 98). This strategy was combined with deterrence in the diplomatic level as Greece tried to bring its problems with Turkey in various international organizations such as NATO in order to hinder its aggression policies in the Aegean Sea (Tsakonas, 2010: 41). Meanwhile, this strategy entailed the veto on Greek part for future membership of Turkey in the EU. Therefore, the strategy adopted by Greece included the deterrence of Turkish aggression in the Aegean by the isolation of Turkey in the international stage.

In the period following 1974 Turkish aggression was manifested in the Aegean in small scale incidents that were leading to the worsening of the relations between the two countries. This was shown by the incident of 1987 when a Greek ship was to perform exploratory works out of Thassos to find oil reserves while Turkey openly questioned Greek continental shelf by sending

the Sismik exploratory ship to the location along with warships (Onis& Yilmaz, 2008: 124). Also, Turkish revisionism was shown in 1996 with the Imia incident whereby Turkey openly questioned the sovereignty of a Greek islet by capturing it. Therefore, Greek-Turkish relations had taken a particularly bad turn in the period following 1974, as Turkey openly questioned Greek sovereignty in the Aegean.

These incidents were followed by small scale agreements for the endurance of small-scale co-existence between the two countries, yet no permanent solution was found. The 1987 incident ended with both countries agreeing not to engage for exploration of oil and in a Davos summit the Greek Prim-Minister Andreas Papandreou and the Turkish Prime-Minister Turgut Ozal initiated talks for the grand problems in the Aegean such as tension reduction and confidence building measures, yet the negotiations failed (Onis & Yilmaz, 2008: 124). Similarly, in 1996 both countries agreed not to engage in Imia in the future. Therefore, Greece seemed to back down to every Turkish move as it could not confront the Turkish aggression.

Meanwhile, in the 1970s Turkey moved a step further and it challenged the Greek airspace in the Aegean. This challenge to Greek sovereignty of the airspace took the form of an arbitrarily crossed line that divided the western Aegean islands from the eastern ones and required Turkish permission for the landing to the eastern islands (Tsakonias, 2010: 33). Thus, the Greek airspace was openly challenged by Turkey which seemed to validate the fear of aggression and revisionism which called for the adoption of a new defensive strategy. In essence, Turkey aggression as manifested in the airspace led to the Greek adoption of a new deterrent-based strategy in the 1970s.

Other issues that have arisen in the 1980s include the refusal to accept the 12-mile continental shelf of the Greek islands on the Turkish part as well as the status of the Dodecanese islands. According to the international law of the sea Greece has the right to extend its sea borders 12 miles off the coast of its islands, yet Turkey has stated that it would be a cause for war if something like that happened (Papasotiriou, 1999: 187; Kariotis, 2011: 55). In addition, Turkey has openly challenged the status of the Greek Dodecanese islands as it refuses to allow their militarization (Sirigos, 1999: 403). Therefore, Turkey claims the existence of a grey zone between Turkey and Greece (Heraclides, 2010: 210). This manifests the rising Turkish revisionism in the Aegean.

These disagreements have resulted in both sides in the building of their national armies. In the 1980s Turkey launched a massive program of military modernization as well as the launch of various military exercises in the eastern Mediterranean (Tsakonias, 2010: 34). This move on the Turkish part has led to increasing uncertainty in the region and the response by Greece for further militarization of the country. Thus, a security dilemma has been created between the two countries as both enemies do not trust the other. In essence, the military build up in both countries has been a cause for further distrust and the worsening of the two countries' relations.

What increased the prospect of military incidents in the region was the fact that Turkey turned down the peaceful engagement of Greece with Turkey. Turkey did not accept the non-use-of-force-pact that Greece proposed something that increased the fear that Turkey when it has the chance will not hesitate to attack Greece (Tsakonas, 2010: 34). This stance on the Turkish part resulted in the increased suspicion by Greece which feared that for Turkey, military engagement is not out of the hook. Particularly Greece is afraid of the seizure of an island or an islet in the Aegean, as the Turkey navy is fully operational and equipped in the eastern Mediterranean (Tsakonas, 2010: 35). Therefore, the situation between the two countries was particularly troublesome in the pre-Helsinki period.

Meanwhile, the Greek foreign policy in dealing with the Turkish threat seemed to be introvert in its orientation. This introvert xenophobia of foreign cooperation in its foreign policy led to the wide isolation of Greece when dealing with Turkey. There seemed to be no other major power that Greece can rely on when dealing with Turkey apart from Cyprus. This meant that Greece was widely on its own when it had to face Turkey as there was no one to support Greek action other than domestic capabilities. Therefore, the introversion of Greek foreign policy had left Greece on its own to deal with Turkish aggression and it had to rely on its capabilities.

In essence, since 1974 the pre-Helsinki climate was characterized by the increasing conflicts amongst the two countries. Ever since the Cyprus problem came into being other issues started coming into the surface including the airspace conflict, the continental shelf, the status of the Dodecanese as well as the various military episodes in the Aegean. The policy with which Greece answered was the one of deterrence which led to the existence of a security dilemma between the two countries. Thus, the increasing militarization of the two countries had led to a very unfavorable climate between the countries, while resolution did not even seem like an option.

### **The Helsinki Summit**

The Helsinki summit was the first instance where the two countries came to deal effectively with the dispute, as an agreement was reached that the two states would solve their conflict. The preconditions that led to this outcome included a variety of factors such as the cooperation of both states in low politics issues, the willingness of both states to solve the dispute, as Greece wanted to solve the dispute after the catastrophe of the Imia crisis, while Turkish willingness to join the EU contributed to this outcome. Also, the civil society partnership along with cooperation at the foreign ministers level as well contributed to the willingness to find a solution to the dispute. However, other factors are examined such as the economic factor and the United States (US) and NATO role.

Prior to the Helsinki summit the European Union and primarily Greece opposed the membership of Turkey in the Union, yet this situation changed in the Helsinki summit in 1999. Greece had historically adopted the policy of deterrence towards Turkey since the 1970s i.e. Greece adopted military power in order to deter Turkey from adopting aggressive policies in

the Aegean Sea (Kairidis, 1999: 98). This was translated in the European Union level by consecutive vetoes for Turkish membership in the Union. However, after the Imia crisis a new foreign policy was adopted by Greece which allowed for Turkish membership (Tsakonias, 2010: 65). Meanwhile, Greece was no longer the scapegoat for other European countries to blame for the lack of willingness for Turkish membership (Yallourides, 1999: 112) Therefore, the EU was forced to consider Turkey as a candidate state for the EU project in the Helsinki summit.

The Helsinki summit in December 1999 resulted in giving a candidacy status to Turkey as well as being closer to than ever to the resolution of the Greek-Turkish conflict. The EU acted as the mediator between the two countries in the Helsinki summit (Notis, 2001: 43). In the summit four agreements were made with regards to the Greek-Turkish conflict. First, it was agreed that a peaceful resolution of the conflict would have to be reached (Celik& Rumelili, 2006: 217). Second, the two states agreed to a commitment for the resolution of the conflict (Celik& Rumelili, 2006: 217). Third, if the efforts failed the dispute would be brought to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague (Celik & Rumelili, 2006: 217). Last, 2004 was agreed to be the last possible date for the resolution of the conflict i.e. the last date for the review of the repercussions on the accession process (Celik& Rumelili, 2006: 218). These were the agreed proposals relating to the Greek-Turkish conflict, while overall Turkey acquired a candidate status.

The summit signaled the initiation of a period of rapprochement between the two countries as a series of agreements of friendliness were signed. By 2002 the rapprochement between the two countries was evident in the cooperation in “low politics” issues in which agreements were signed, including in the areas of tourism, finance, technology and science, sea transport, culture, customs, protection of investments, environmental issues, terrorism and illegal immigration (Koukoudakis, 2015 :85). Meanwhile, the largest step towards the resolution of the Greek- Turkish conflict was the signing of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs). These measures included prior alert for NATO exercises in the Aegean as well as the establishment of a direct phone line between the foreign ministers of the two countries (Onis& Yilmaz, 2008: 128). The cooperation in national security issues signaled a new period of cooperation and it brought the solution of the differences of the two countries to be solved closer than ever.

The preconditions for such a close cooperation to occur included a number of issues such as the willingness of both countries to solve the issues at hand. The Greek willingness to solve the border disputes with Turkey arose from the need of wanting to build a new constructive way to solve its dispute after the catastrophe of the Imia crisis. This willingness was manifested in the new socialization strategy that was adopted by Greece immediately after the Imia crisis. The new policy adopted by Greece overall aimed at making the Greek-Turkish conflict into an EU-Turkey one. Thus, socialization within the framework of the EU was accepted with Turkey which was expected to lead to reconciliation (Tsakonias, 2010: 82). In essence, the altering of Greek foreign policy from mere deterrence to socialization led to the coming to a solution to the conflict.

What led Turkey to the coming to the table of negotiations was its willingness to join the EU. Turkey before agreeing to come to the table of negotiations with Greece had no interest in finding a solution with Greece. It was the willingness of Turkish leadership to join the EU that led to agreeing inf finding a solution to the dispute with Greece which allowed the changing of its foreign policy from aggressive one to a more passive one. Therefore, Turkish willingness to join the EU played a vital role in achieving agreements in low politics issues with Greece prior to the Helsinki summit as well as during and after it.

It is important to mention the civil cooperation that had initiated since the earthquakes of 1999. Images of catastrophe in the summer of 1999 by both countries created a climate of empathy between them in the societal level (Heraclides, 2004: 77). This cooperation strengthened the willingness of the political leaders for cooperation in the political level and it made both societies to forget their difference in the Aegean. Therefore, rapprochement was made possible through societal cooperation which later led to the possible solution of the dispute.

What also led to increased cooperation and dialogue were the meetings and consultation between the foreign ministers that created a positive climate amongst the two countries. Prior to the Helsinki summit the two foreign ministers, George Papandreou and Ismail Cem had signed numerous agreements concerning various policy areas such as combating crime and dealing with terrorism (Onis & Yilmaz, 2008: 128). Meanwhile the setting of goal in various policy areas was the content of the communication amongst the two foreign ministers (Evin, 2004: 8). The communications set a positive environment for the creation of a positive environment for both cooperation and the solution of the Greek-Turkish conflict.

Economic cooperation does not seem to be a precondition for the solution of the conflict prior to the Helsinki summit. Economic partnership between the two countries only became evident after the Helsinki summit, as the trade volume increased in the early 2000s as well as the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) (Onis& Yilmaz, 2008: 132). Therefore, economics does not seem to be a part of the problem between the two countries, yet cooperation in this field helps lubricated the environment of cooperation between Greece and Turkey.

The US and NATO involvement have played a dual role. First the USA through NATO did not want the escalation of the conflict between the two countries. However, NATO was not able to hinder the small-scale disputes that arose in the Aegean (Tsakonas, 2010: 58). Therefore, NATO was the forum through which the two countries came into dealing with each other, yet not effectively (Dokos, 1999: 201). Thus, the EU seemed to a breakthrough in the conflict between Greece and Turkey as for the first time the two countries came to deal with the dispute effectively. In essence, NATO and the US were unable to deal with the dispute something that was left to the EU.

In sum, the first instance for the finding of a possible solution to the conflict was the Helsinki summit and the period that followed. The preconditions for such a solution were the



willingness of both states to find a solution as well as the cooperation in civil and political level prior to the summit. Meanwhile, the economic factor as well as the influence of the US and NATO do not seem to have any impact on the resolution of the Greek-Turkish conflict.

### **The consequences of the Helsinki Summit up to 2004**

This subchapter will examine the talks between the two countries up to 2004 and the preconditions that led to it. The 2004 talks are chosen as the year the talks between the two countries reached an apex of cooperation and agreement. Amongst the factors discussed are the role of economics, the role of the military, the defense expenditures, NATO and low politics cooperation. The concluding remarks highlight that the preconditions that played a role is the economic influence of the EU, the role of the military, NATO and low politics cooperation in reaching the apex of finding a solution to the conflict in 2004. Meanwhile, the defense expenditures are considered in influencing the specific outcome.

By 2004 the exploratory talks that had initiated between Greece and Turkey in 2002 in order to outline where each country stood in relation to its interests in the Aegean reached a conclusion (Bahcheli, 2004: 101). With the end of the exploratory talks Greece and Turkey had agreed on most low politics issues which was expected that agreements in high politics issues would also be agreed (Tsakonas, 2010: 136). These moves were considered as an important move towards reaching a compromise in the Aegean dispute, as it was agreed that with the conclusion of the talks, new negotiation rounds on high politics issues would initiate. Meanwhile, procedural issues, technical issues as well as obstacles that could arise had been examined and were agreed between the two states (Yanitsis, 2006: A23). This instance presented the reaching of the climax of Greek-Turkish resolution of the conflict, as after this the negotiations were revised for the future which never occurred (Celik& Rumelili, 2006: 220). Therefore, the end of the exploratory talks presented the highest point that a resolution of the conflict would be found.

The negotiations took a new turn with the changing of the Greek government in the elections of 2004 and its adoption of reformed foreign policy towards Turkey. The new government under Konstantinos Karamanlis leadership saw that the talks would continue, yet it was decided that the Greek government would buy time for other processes to occur in Turkey that would allow the creation of a positive climate for Greece (Tsakonas, 2010: 143). This development led to the gradual decomposition of the negotiations, as the 2004 Brussels European Council meeting expressed its satisfaction with the progress already made without though making concrete promises towards the future resolution of the conflict other than possible inclusion of the ICJ for resolving the dispute (Celik& Rumelili, 2006: 220). These developments highlighted the end of the need for finding immediately a resolution to conflict, while cooperation in low politics issues continued without though high politics negotiations following.

The preconditions for the high point that the negotiations reached in the talks prior to the Greek elections of 2004 were primarily the economic cooperation that had initiated. The new measures brought by the adoption of policies supported by the EU had created a division within

the Turkish leadership (Kazakos, 2001: 262-263). The EU used economic cooperation as a stick to manage Turkish aggressiveness in the region (Tsakonas, 2010: 121). The division that was created was characterized by the pro-militarists and those that supported the new measures (Gulnur, 2006: 529). Therefore, the leaning over the pro-reformists group led to the reformation of the economy and to a less aggressive stance towards Greece which made agreement more likely to occur.

The role of the EU both as a player and as a framework for solving the dispute allowed the use of conditionality (Celik& Rumelili, 2006: 206). Conditionality entails the adoption of political and economic policies according to the model presented by the EU member states (Smith, 2015: Abstract). Through conditionality Turkey had to adopt the *acquis communautaire* of the EU i.e. the Copenhagen criteria. The adoption of these criteria did result in the further democratization of Turkey as the army's influence was decreased which resulted in the strengthening of the civil society actors that were in favor of good relations with Greece (Rumelili, 2005: 46). This was shown by the assistance that Greece offered in the diplomatic level, as it consulted Turkey in how to adopt the European *acquis*. Therefore, through the adoption of EU like policies, Turkey increasingly became friendlier towards Greece which resulted in the coming closer to the solution of the conflict.

It is important to mention that the dominance of pro-EU atmosphere was the immediate result of continued pro-EU policies at the political level. The fact that Turkey adopted pro-EU policies was the result of continued policies that aimed at entering the EU. On the Greek part the fact that it agreed to assist Turkey in joining the EU was the result of continued support for its Europeanized bottom up policy of socialization i.e. solving its dispute with Turkey in the European level (Economides, 2007 :473). Therefore, the pro-EU atmosphere by both sides of the Aegean led to the maintenance of pro-EU policies which led close to the resolution of the conflict.

Also, cooperation in the military level led to the fruition of rapprochement and to the possible solution of the conflict between the two countries. The cooperation in the military level was evident in with the creation of regime control as a result of the agreeing of a joint task force in the Aegean as well as the signing of numerous CBMs (Tsakonas, 2010: 140). In addition, another high point of cooperation was the agreeing to cancel military exercises in the Eastern Mediterranean in the context of "Euro-Mediterranean Forum" in 2003 (Tsakonas, 2010: 138). Therefore, cooperation in the military level allowed for progress towards the solution of the Greek- Turkish conflict in the Aegean.

Cooperation in low politics amongst the two foreign ministers of Greece and Turkey allowed for the possible solution of the conflict. As mentioned above the signing of cooperation in low politics issues in 2002 led to increased trust between the two countries. This cooperation led to the fruiting of the closest cooperation that was ever reached between Greece and Turkey. Therefore, low politics cooperation was a precondition for finding a compromise in high politics

issues. The reaching of deals in this level taught the leaders of the two countries how to survive with differences in high politics.

However, there were certain limits to the cooperation which included the excessive investments in armaments. The talks between the two sides was not enough to influence the amount spent on military arms which had initiated decades before and had led to the creation of a security dilemma (Tsakonas, 1999: 45). Apart from some cuts due to fiscal considerations in arms spending by both sides there does not seem to be considerable cuts in defense expenditures even though they are costly for both sides. For instance, a Turkish newspaper calculated that Greece spent 15 million euros monthly just for the use of fuel in its airplanes for the “dogfights” with Turkey in the Aegean (Cumhuriyet, 2006: 6). The military expenditures did not seem to have altered after the talks between the two countries, thus not being a precondition for cooperation.

Meanwhile NATO continued not to influence the cooperation, yet it did play role as a supporting institution of the cooperation. NATO played a crucial role in the negotiations prior to 2004 as within the framework of NATO the two countries agreed to additional CBMs (Tsakonas, 2010: 138). This cooperation under NATO manifests the dual relationship of the organization which was unable to solve the conflict yet able to increase cooperation between the two countries and strengthened the option of solving the dispute.

In sum, the highest point towards the solution of the conflict was reached in 2004. The preconditions that led close to the reaching of a solution to the Greek-Turkish conflict were cooperation in the military level, in the economic level, in low politics and in NATO. The cooperation and the reaching of deals in these levels were the main aspect that led close to the end of the conflict between the two countries. Meanwhile, distrust continued to exist amongst the two countries shown by the amount of money spent of arms.

Overall, the two points that there seemed to be a solution to the conflict between the two countries was first in the 1999 Helsinki summit and in period leading to 2004. The common preconditions the led to the reaching these high points of almost resolving the dispute between the two countries were agreements in low politics issues, common pro-EU policies, as Greece Europeanized its foreign policy while Turkey sought to join the EU. Also, to a lesser extent what also influenced the specific outcomes were societal cooperation in 1999, as well as the political cooperation in adopting the European acquis in the early 2000s. Lastly, cooperation in the military level in 2000 sand economic agreements at the same period played its role.

## Chapter C: The Reasons for the End of the Negotiations

This part will examine the reasons why the Greek-Turkish conflict was not solved when it had the chance in Helsinki and in the following period. In the first part the reasons as to why the two countries did not seek the final solution of dispute will be analyzed. The factors that will be analyzed include the fact that the Helsinki summit signaled the opening of the talks while also the fact that low politics cooperation and communication amongst the foreign ministers did not require the solution of high politics issues. In the second part the reasons as to the failure of the period prior to the 2004 talks to initiate a discussion in high politics will be examined. The reasons that will be analyzed include the changing of policy by the Greek government, the rise of Euroscepticism by the Turkish side as well as the learning to live with their differences

### **Why did the Helsinki summit fail to solve the Greek-Turkish dispute?**

The failure of the Helsinki summit to solve the dispute between Greece and Turkey will be examined in this section. The issues that are analyzed include the lack of the common interests to solve the dispute at the specific summit, while the only common interest was the appearance of a common interest in solving the dispute in order for Turkey to have access to the EU candidacy.

The Helsinki summit signaled the initiation of the negotiations between the two sides, thus there was no prospect for solving the dispute within it. Even though, the summit presented a large step between the two sides' relations as the solution of the enmity between the two countries was related with Turkish membership in the Union there did not seem to be a prospect of solving the dispute within the framework of the summit. Rather Greece hoped for the externalization of its socialization policy with Turkey. Therefore, the summit failed to find a solution because the two states had not common interests in the specific summit other than the initiation of talks.

The low politics cooperation between the two sides prior to the Helsinki summit was a period for both states to make public both their commitment and interest in Europeanizing their foreign policies. The rapprochement that was initiated after the failure of the Imia crisis may indeed help in the starting of cooperation in low politics, yet it was not enough to initiated cooperation in high politics issues. Therefore, the two states seemed to want to achieve a period of lesser conflict, yet without though to come into a conclusion of the conflict due to their conflictual interests. This situation manifests the superficiality of the cooperation which was ready to destroy the cooperation, while this situation did not erupt due to the common interests of appearing a European like foreign policy based on discussion and cooperation.

Meanwhile, the lack of agreement in various areas that would help lubricate the cooperation were not present at the time in the negotiations. The lack of cooperation in armaments reduction or the almost complete lack of economic cooperation manifest the fact that the two countries were not close enough in achieving an effective agreement. The fact that there was no agreement in the aforementioned areas highlight the fact that the relations of the two

countries lacked cooperation in vital areas, thus making cooperation more difficult to occur. Therefore, for an agreement to be reached it needed time in order to reach inclusive agreements for various policy areas.

In essence, Turkey and Greece were not interested in solving the dispute but rather in appearing that they will do served both countries' interests while also they both agreed for the initiation of talks. Meanwhile, cooperation between the two countries was not ready to be achieved as it lacked the existence of agreements in various policy areas.

### **Why there was no agreement by 2004?**

The failure of the 2004 to produce a permanent resolution to the conflict was due to a combination of factors. The factors that will be examined in order to understand this outcome include the rise Euroscepticism in Turkey and its loss of willingness to join the EU while also the loss of interest by the EU to allow Turkey to join in. Meanwhile, the reform of the Greek socialization strategy in 2004 and Greece's stop supporting the immediate Turkish membership in the Union. Lastly, factors such as the lack of resolution in high politics due to cooperation in low politics, the instrumental thinking on the part of both sides, the disinterest by Turkey from the beginning in finding a solution and military expenditures will be further discussed.

The loss of interest by both the EU and Turkey for the latter's accession was the result of the lack of willingness by the European side and the rise of Euroscepticism on the Turkish side. By 2004 the EU accepted 10 more states in the Union, the fatigue and the lack of willingness for further expansion was popular in the public of many European countries and specifically for Turkey (European Commission, 2005, 2006). Therefore, the issue at hand was no longer whether Turkey will adopt the *acquis* or not but whether the EU public opinion wanted Turkey to join the EU or not. This situation was combined with the rise of Euroscepticism on the Turkish part as the measures adopted had created an anti-reformist feeling amongst the Turkish public opinion (Duzgit, 2011: 602). Thus, the rise skepticism on both sides for the accession of Turkey in the Union resulted in the cooling off the willingness and the need to solve the Greek-Turkish conflict, as European membership stopped being a prospect.

On the Greek part the reformation of the socialization strategy by the newly elected government of New Democracy in 2004 did not require the immediate solution of the conflict. The Karamanlis government reformed the socialization strategy of the Simitis government by allowing more room for dialogue between the two sides only after certain democratization preconditions were met (Tsakonas, 2010: 143). Consequently, the Karamanlis government withdrew from the Helsinki requirements for the solution of the conflict (Tsakonas, 2010: 152). Therefore, the new policy adopted by the new government in 2004 resulted in the lack of the need for the solution of the conflict as a required by the Helsinki summit.

The climate created by the rapprochement between the two countries managed to bring together in the discussion table, yet it did not create the need for the final solution in high politics. Koukoudakis (2013: 158) argues that the cooperation in low politics issues has taught

the two countries to live with their differences in high politics as the cooperation in low politics issues do not require the solution in high politics. This is shown by the increased economic and political relations that were initiated in the period between 2000 and 2004. Therefore, there was no interest on the Greek or Turkish part to solve the issue after cooperation was agreed in low politics and especially after the rise of Euroscepticism.

It is interesting to mention the explanation of Tarik Oguzlu (2010) for the lack of a permanent resolution in the dispute as he argues the existence of instrumental thinking behind the talks that led to 2004. The fact that Turkey wanted to join the EU, while Greece wanted to improve its image in the international stage highlight the strategic and instrumental thinking behind the talks (Oguzlu, 2010: 54). Therefore, what led to the lack of results in the talks was the lack of a motive in finding a definite solution for the conflict. This is shown by the adoption of a reformed policy by the New Democracy government in 2004, while in Turkey there was not any clue pointing towards compromise. Thus, there was lack of willingness by both in permanently solving the dispute while the talks were seen instrumental for short term gains rather than finding a permanent solution.

Even though the willingness of Turkey to join the EU played a vital role in coming to the negotiating table, the policies that it had to adopt were not promising for a lasting *détente* with Greece. The Europeanisation of Turkish foreign policy may indeed play a role in pacifying it, yet Turkey did not consider the resolution of the conflict as a required step (Oguzlu, 2010: 338). This resulted in the lack of willingness for a definite solution to the dispute, as shown by the breakup of the negotiations in 2004 with no results. Therefore, the fact that the EU had no definite influence in whether the dispute would be solved or not resulted in the lack of achieving a solution.

The lack of willingness by both sides for a definite solution was seen by the continued expenditures on arms. The fact that the two countries did not reduce significantly the military expenditures, as it has stayed persistently around 5 % of their GDP highlights the fact that talks did not go deep enough in solving the conflict (Onis & Yilmaz, 2008: 142). Thus, the talks of 2004 were not in a position to have an impact on the policies of the countries as there was not agreement on important issues such as the arms race that existed between them.

In sum, the 2004 talks failed to find a solution to the conflict due to the general lack of interest by all sides for Turkish membership in the EU and by extension to the finding for a solution to the conflict. Other factors did influence the lack of results in the talks such as the not agreeing in high politics as well as the lack of agreement in armament reduction. Therefore, a combination of factors resulted in the lack of finding a permanent solution to the conflict.

Overall, the examination of the failure of the two talks in 1999 and by 2004 to bear fruit over the solution of the dispute led to certain prerequisites for the solution of the conflict. The 1999 Helsinki summit signaled the initiation of talks while not itself having a prospect for solving the dispute. Meanwhile, by 2004 a solution was expected to be reached, yet the lack of conclusion

was due to a combination of factors including the rise of Euroscepticism, the new Greek strategy that did not put primacy over the solution of the dispute as well as numerous areas that remained unsolved such as reduction in armaments. Thus, the failure of the 2004 talks can be summarized by the lack of willingness to solve the dispute at that moment.

## Chapter D: Whether there is a Prospect for the Solution of the Dispute or Not

This chapter will analyze the prospects for the solution of the Greek-Turkish conflict. This will be done through the examination of the relationship since 2004 and the things that have changed since then. The second subchapter will discuss the reasons as to why there cannot be a prospect for the solution of the crisis in the future. Lastly, the future prospects will be discussed from now on i.e. whether there is a prospect for the conflict being solved at some point in the future or not. Conclusions will follow.

### **Is there a prospect for the solution of the conflict?**

Certain prerequisites for the solution of the conflict are not fulfilled after the end of the negotiations of 2004 up until today. The cornerstone of the cooperation is portrayed in the High-Level Cooperation Council (HLCC) founded in 2010 which has the role of bringing an institutional aspect in the negotiations between the two countries as well as bringing the two countries closer economically. However, the European prospect for Turkey is somewhat grim as well as the interests are weak on both sides for a final solution to the conflict. This subsection will analyze point by point the prospects for a permanent solution to the conflict.

Low politics cooperation has been sustained after the end of the negotiations in 2004 as shown by the establishment of High-Level Cooperation Council in 2010 and the continued meetings between the leaders of the two countries. The HLCC that has met numerous times up to 2018 in both Greece and Turkey is responsible for sustaining an institutional aspect of the talks between the two countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Relations between Turkey and Greece). Despite, though the maintained good relations there has not been an evolution to the solution of the conflict. Therefore, despite the increased communication between the two countries low politics cooperation has not led to the solution of high politics discrepancies.

The European prospect of Turkey has been sustained over the past decade as numerous chapters for the entering of Turkey into the Union have been opened. The main chapters that have been discussed after the opening of the accession talks in 2005 between the EU and Turkey concern Science and Research, Economic and Monetary policy and Financial and Budgetary provisions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Turkey-EU Relations). However, it is important to mention that relations between the EU and Turkey are strained due to the refugee crisis that took place in 2016. Despite, the signing of the deal between the two sides Turkey is a cause of frustration amongst many European countries. Therefore, the negotiations with EU have kept alive the prospect of the Turkey joining the Union, yet there does not seem to be a near future prospect for Turkey joining the EU.

The rapprochement between the two countries has continued yet the common interest for the solution of the crisis exist within the context of HLCC. The Greek-Turkish relations have taken their own turn outside the EU jurisdiction. The HLCC manifests the common interests by both countries for the solution of the conflict. However, the fact that the HLCC has not been very effective in dealing with the solution of the conflict is a manifestation of the lack of strong



supported interests by both sides to solve the dispute immediately. Therefore, despite the existence of an institutional body aiming at the solution of the conflict the fact that there are no strong interests by both sides for the solution of the crisis has left it to deal with low politics issues.

The defense spending has remained high in both countries and there does not seem to be an attempt by the government to halt it. The defense spending in Greece in 2014 was a bit higher than 2% i.e. higher than the required defense spending of NATO with the excuse being the fear of Turkey (Waszkiewicz, 2016: 35). Meanwhile, in Turkey it has consistently stayed up a bit more than 2% in the early 2010s again due to the national security concerns in the region (Waszkiewicz, 2016: 33, 35). Therefore, there does not seem to be a definite solution in the horizon as the need for the reduction of defense spending has not been expressed by either side.

The economic relations between Greece and Turkey have been improved dramatically since 1999 and have continued to be good after the end of the 2004 talks. The HLCC has improved commercial relations, as trade volume doubled between 2010 and 2014, while it underwent a small crisis in 2015 and 2016, while it returned to normal levels in 2017 (Ministry of Foreign Relations: Relations between Turkey and Greece). Stock investments have also increased on both sides of the Aegean as well as there is increased planning for railroad, plane and ferry communication amongst the two countries. Therefore, the betterment of political relations has led to increased economic relations.

Lastly, civil society cooperation has remained open between the two societies something that has allowed economic and political cooperation to occur. According to Dimitrios Triantaphyllou the societies' cooperation has been limited to economic cooperation and more specifically to tourism (2013). Tourism on both sides has been strong as hundreds of thousands visit the other country. Other than that cooperation is evident as many Greeks have sought to find work in Turkey, yet the breakthrough of the relations that was evident in 1999 due to the earthquakes has been lost (Triantaphyllou, 2013). Therefore, civil society cooperation may be evident in some areas such as tourism, yet the strong relations that were evident in 1999 have been lost.

In essence, there might be a prospect for the final solution of the dispute if the two countries commit to find a solution as the two countries would find common interest for compromise. Meanwhile, the European prospect for Turkey is not strong enough to allow the solving of the dispute within the limits of the EU, reduction in armaments seems completely unlikely. However, it is obvious that cooperation in other fields such as, low politics has allowed for cooperation and coexisting between the two countries not though for a solution to the conflict.

### **Why is it for the two countries unlikely to find a permanent resolution since 2004?**

The reasons as to the unlikely future solution of the Greek Turkish conflict include various factors. These factors include the lack of willingness by both countries for a permanent solution of the conflict, the instrumental thinking behind the existing negotiations rather than solution-

based thinking, while Turkey is not eager to join the EU. Also, cooperation in low politics does not include a prerequisite for cooperation in high politics, while NATO does not appear willing to interfere for the solution of the conflict, also economic cooperation is not enough to provide for the solution of the conflict. These factors will be further discussed.

One of the reasons for not being a prospect for cooperation in high politics is the lack of willingness by both sides to find a definite solution. The lack of a strategy on the Greek part that would allow the socialization of the issues at hand manifests the lack of willingness to find a solution that would bring Greece to the negotiating table with Turkey. Thus, a safer path is followed, the one of cooperation in low politics. Therefore, the lack of willingness on the Greek part to go to the negotiating table with Turkey has resulted in the endurance of the conflict.

Meanwhile, the lack of strategic thinking on both sides for the definite solution of the crisis has led to the dominance of instrumental thinking which has allowed the maintenance of the conflict. Instrumental thinking on both sides is manifested by the fact that small scale moves are made to improve the relations of the two countries, yet there does not seem to exist in either side the prospect for a strategy that would solve the crisis. Therefore, the lack of a strategy that would solve the crisis has led to the endurance of the conflict.

Cooperation in low politics through HLCC has resulted in the two countries being able to coexist without solving the dispute. The solution of many issues in low politics as well as the increased communication amongst the foreign ministers of the two countries has managed to make clear where each country stands. However, the fact that neither side has moved on from that point highlights the fact that both sides have learned to live without finding a permanent solution to the conflict. Therefore, the cooperation between the two countries has managed to achieve cooperation in low politics without necessarily solving high politics issues.

On the Turkish side the prospect of joining the EU was used as a way for the ruling party, the Justice and Development party, to reduce the army's power rather than genuine reforms that would enable it to join the EU. The fact that president Erdogan used his power to overthrow his enemies in the military as shown by the various reforms adopted in the 2000s did not lead to genuine reforms that would render the country more European. Rather Erdogan wanted to reduce his enemies' influence in the country, thus not pushing further the European prospect of Turkey. Therefore, Erdogan was not interested in reforming the country in fitting with European standards but rather he wanted to overthrow his enemies.

As shown by the traditional line of NATO which is the one of neutrality it is not interested itself in achieving a solution but rather short-term cooperation between the disputants. Traditionally, NATO has played the resort of last hope as shown by the Imia crisis, thus not really interested in solving the crisis but rather in simply achieving some kind of cooperation that would not hinder the functioning of the institution. Therefore, the lack of finding of a solution under NATO limits also has to do with the institution's lack of initiatives to solve the conflict.

The lack of willingness in achieving some kind of cooperation in reducing armaments in use in the Aegean highlights the lack of trust between the two countries. Behind the HLCC, the talks of 2004 and Helsinki what truly underpins the relations of the two countries is the lack of trust that exists as both countries have not even expressed the chance of reducing the use of armaments in the Aegean. Therefore, the fact that no achievement has been made in reducing aggressiveness in the Aegean is due to the lack of trust between the two sides.

Lastly, economic relations may be increasing, yet they are unlikely that they will take primacy over the political differences. It is difficult for the economic relations of the two countries to be able to erase the difference between them. On the contrary some improvements in the relations could be made due to economic cooperation yet the differences will remain as they are. Therefore, it is difficult for economic relations to take primacy over the differences existing between the two countries which renders them not influential enough for the solution of the conflict.

In sum, the combination of lack of willingness for the solution of the conflict, the short-term instrumental thinking and lack of high politics cooperation has led to stalemate. Meanwhile, the lack of EU oriented reforms on the Turkish side as well as the lack of cooperation under NATO or in reducing armaments results in the lack of finding an immediate solution to the conflict. Therefore, it is unlikely that a solution will be found to the Greek-Turkish conflict in the immediate future.

### **Future Prospects**

This subsection will discuss the prospects of cooperation in the future between the two countries. The future prospects for cooperation in the field of low politics, economics and civil society are strong. Meanwhile, what is not likely is cooperation under EU framework and NATO as well as reduction in armaments and cooperation in high politics through HLCC due to the absence of strong interests. Therefore, the future prospects of the relations between the two countries present a variety of options as they may improve or more likely they are probably to stay as they already are.

Cooperation in low politics is promising in the future through the HLCC. The HLCC manifests that the communication between the two countries will continue to be strong in the future. This communication, however, will not require the solution to the conflict as the way for coexisting without finding a permanent solution is found through HLCC. Therefore, it is likely that low politics cooperation will continue to exist through an effective HLCC.

The interest of Turkey in joining the EU has not been rejected, yet it is not strong enough to initiate negotiations for the solution of the conflict. The fact that negotiations re-initiated in 2015 only after pressures by the refugee crisis on the part of Turkey highlights the loss of interest on the EU to allow negotiation talks to initiate. Therefore, the loss of interest for EU membership of member-states of the EU does not allow the reheating of the negotiations for Turkish membership that could allow the Greek-Turkish conflict to be solved.

As for the common interests of the two countries in order to solve the dispute they do not seem that they will arise in the future. Negotiations within the limits of HLCC do not point towards the solution of the conflict but rather on cooperation on low level issues. Thus, the lack of strong common interests between the two governments does not allow for the final solution to the conflict. Therefore, if there are no strong common interests for a common solution to the dispute, the conflict will continue to exist.

The lack of evidence for a reduction in armaments required for the peaceful coexistence in the Aegean seems unlikely for the future. The fact that there have not been any agreements regarding the amount spent on arms on both sides or an agreement regarding the conflict reduction in the Aegean point that it is unlikely that it will be achieved in the future. This kind of cooperation can only be done if both countries agree to reduce the use of armaments something that there is no evidence that can support it for the future. Therefore, the lack of agreement or the willingness for an agreement controlling the use of armaments in the Aegean point towards the endurance of aggressive incidents in the future.

Cooperation under NATO does not seem a farfetched idea between the two countries as numerous CBMs have already been signed between them. The fact that there is an existing framework for cooperation between the two countries under NATO manifests that there can be future cooperation and agreement again. This time, though, agreements for tension reduction and respect for each other's borders must be definite something that seems difficult considering the lack of willingness on both sides for such a solution. Therefore, cooperation under NATO is feasible if the willingness on both sides arises in the future.

Economic cooperation is promising for the future, as it has succeeded in maintaining a friendly relationship between the two countries. Future economic cooperation seems to increase in the future as the commerce between the two countries has risen since 2017 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Relations between Turkey and Greece). Cooperation may develop in different economic areas such as ferry, airplane and land transportation. Therefore, economic relationships may play a significant role in easing the relations in the future.

Civil society cooperation may not continue to be as strong as in 1999, yet the economic cooperation has allowed cooperation among the people of the two countries. Today civil society cooperation is expressed through economic initiatives that bring closer the two countries such as Greeks working in Turkish universities. This continued cooperation in these fields is evidence for the endurance of the civil society bonds in the future. Therefore, there are strong evidence supporting civil society cooperation in the future between the two countries.

In essence, the prospects of cooperation in the future amongst the two countries present certain positive aspects, as in low politics through HLCC, economic cooperation as shown by the increasing trade volume and in civil society relations. However, what seems to hold back the relations of the two countries is high politics issues as there is no interest in solving by either side, the fact that the EU is not interested in supporting the solution of the conflict openly and

lastly cooperation under NATO or reduction in armaments in order to secure peaceful co-existence is not likely in the future.

Overall, there does not seem to be a prospect for the solution of the conflict as many things have changed towards the worse since 2004. The reasons as to why the criteria for a resolution are not met include a variety of factors that may be solved in the future, yet not as the relations currently are. Meanwhile, the future prospects for the solution of the conflict seem grim as the two sides have not agreed to initiate further talks for the solution of the conflict. The following part will discuss the conclusions drawn from the whole study.

## Chapter E: Conclusions

The above examination leads to certain criteria that were lost by 2004 in the search for finding a permanent resolution to the conflict. It is expected that if the following criteria were met the two countries would be closer in finding a permanent resolution.

First, cooperation in low politics is vital for the overall cooperation in high politics as well due to the need for establishing communication. For effective communication to be formed, the leaders of the two countries or their foreign ministers is necessary to come into contact for fruitful communication to be achieved. Therefore, a prerequisite for the solution of the conflict is the agreement and communication in low politics for each country to make clear its interests and where it stands in relation to the conflict.

Second, the prospect for Turkey joining the EU is important for the solution of the conflict with Greece. The Turkish prospect for join the EU creates a common interest with Greece and allows for the prospect of solving their differences under the EU umbrella. Therefore, the Turkish interest in joining the EU allows for the solution of the conflict, as it brings Greece, a member of the EU close to the negotiation table.

Third, the adoption of socialization strategies i.e. engagement that lead to negotiations is a prerequisite for the solution of the conflict. The delay in 2004 in finding a solution on the Greek part allowed for the breakdown of the peaceful negotiations, thus highlighting the need for the endurance of common interests for the solution of the dispute throughout the negotiations i.e. a strategy of continued engagement (Ifantis, 2001: 260). Thus, common interests for finding a solution to the dispute is necessary for peaceful negotiations to be achieved as well as pro-socialization strategies.

Fourth, there needs to be a decreased spent on armaments as well as confidence building measures by both sides for any peaceful resolution to endure over time. The fact that there has not been an agreed reduction in armament spending over the rapprochement period in order to halt the deterrence policy by both sides had an effect on the negotiations as they did not have a lasting effect and both countries have maintained high spending on arms (Ayman, 2001: 224, Kollias, 2004: 101). Therefore, for any resolution of the conflict an agreement over the reduction in armaments must be first agreed.

Fifth, for an effective resolution there needs to be an agreed solution to the border dispute under the NATO jurisdiction. Within the limits of NATO the two countries should agree on common sea borders and military exercises. Meanwhile, the neutral position of NATO should endure for not of any of the two countries to feel offended by its stance. Therefore, for a solution to be broad and everlasting the two countries should agree within NATO jurisdiction to respect each other's border and military exercises.

Sixth, economic cooperation though not a prerequisite for the solution seems to make cooperation easier to occur. Economic cooperation in terms of trade has lubricated the contact

between the two countries. Despite the fact, that increased economic cooperation may not take primacy over the political dispute it does play a role in hindering incidents of extreme aggressiveness as the two countries want to continue having beneficial relations with one another (Papadopoulos, 2008: 2).

Seventh, what also lubricates cooperation without being a definite factor for the solution of the conflict is civil society cooperation. Civil society cooperation is necessary for an interest to exist for the improving of the relations between the two countries.

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