

# The Cyprus Challenge in the Turkey-EU Relations: Heading towards the Defining Moment

AHMET SÖZEN

*Eastern Mediterranean University*

[ahmet.sozen@emu.edu.tr](mailto:ahmet.sozen@emu.edu.tr)

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## ***Introduction***

The Cyprus conflict occupies a very important place in Turkey-EU relations. Turkey's accession negotiations with the EU severely curtailed due to the irresolution of the Cyprus conflict. There is an indispensable dilemma here. On the one hand, the Greek Cypriot led Republic of Cyprus (ROC) would veto Turkey's EU membership if Turkey does not recognize the ROC or give the concessions ROC demands. On the other hand, why would Turkey be cooperative on the Cyprus conflict if Turkey's EU perspective is not clear? In this paper, I argue that the current Justice and Development Party – the AKP - government of Turkey wants to solve the Cyprus conflict independent of its EU membership bid. In this paper, I analyze the important developments in the Turkey-EU relations and the Cyprus conflict in the past few years in order to set out the background. I then analyze the current peace negotiations, the public opinion in both sides of the UN divide in Cyprus, as well as Turkey's current Cyprus policy so that they give us the opportunity to be able to talk about future probable scenarios in the concluding remarks.

## ***Important Developments in the Past Few Years***

When AKP came to power after the November 2002 election a new dynamism was kicked into the Cyprus peace negotiations. During the election campaign, the AKP suggested that 'no solution is the solution' policy that the previous Turkish governments had followed was smashed on the wall and that the Cyprus problem should be solved through the 'Belgian model' – that is through a federal system. However, the AKP government failed to meet the crucial deadline of April 2003 when ten acceding countries, including the Greek Cypriot led Republic of Cyprus, signed the Treaty of Accession that made them full members of the EU on 1 May 2004. This failure to meet this crucial deadline in 2003 was due to a few valid reasons: (1) the AKP government was very new and inexperienced in the statecraft, as well as still not too well organized due to the fact that the real leader of the party, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was then still banned from politics where the AKP government was headed by the caretaker PM Abdullah Gül; (2) Turkish government was busy with a hot potato, namely the negotiations with the Americans and preparation for the failed parliamentary bill regarding the usage of the Turkish soil to start the invasion of Iraq; and (3) the AKP government miscalculated its influence – rather control – on the veteran Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş who walked away from the UN sponsored negotiation table in the Hague leaving the Greek Cypriot hardliner opponent Tassos Papadopoulos look like the 'good guy' despite clear instructions from Ankara that he should not be the one to walk out of the negotiations. Hence, it was Tassos Papadopoulos who signed the EU's Accession Treaty on behalf of the whole Cyprus in 2003. The rest until 1 May 2004 was just a formality where the Treaty would be ratified by the then 15 member states.

Although the Greek Cypriot led Republic of Cyprus guaranteed entry into the EU in April 2003 and then on had very little motivation to be cooperative in the Cyprus negotiations, nonetheless Turkish government picked up the pieces and started pushing for a solution with the newly elected pro-solution CTP-led coalition government that came to power after the December 2003 election.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile PM Erdoğan publicly stated many times that Turkey is interested in a 'win win' solution in

Cyprus and that for that reason the Turkish side – including the Turkish Cypriots would always be ‘one step ahead’ from the Greek Cypriot side in the negotiations.

Pro-active policies of the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot sides motivated the international community – specifically the UN – to be more active facilitator and forced the Greek Cypriot side to – at least – stay on the negotiation table, though genuinely with a low motivation to negotiate after guaranteeing the EU membership. It was clear to many observers that the real intention of the Greek Cypriot leadership was to become a member of the EU and then use the EU as leverage to wring concessions from Turkey who has a strong aspiration to become an EU member. Nonetheless the negotiations that started in New York in February 2004 and then transferred to Bürgenstock, Switzerland in March yielded a UN comprehensive solution plan, known as the Annan Plan. This was the first comprehensive solution plan that came out from the inter-communal negotiations that started in 1968 between the two Cypriot communities. The plan was put to separate, simultaneous referenda in the two sides of Cyprus on 24 April 2004. The solution failed to come into life since the plan was rejected by 76% of the Greek Cypriots, despite 65% support by the Turkish Cypriots in the North. The Greek Cypriot led Republic of Cyprus, despite its rejection of the UN plan, officially became a member of the EU on 1 May 2004, while the EU *acquis communautaire* was suspended on the Northern Cyprus where the Turkish Cypriots supported the UN plan. To put into layman’s terms, the EU rewarded the side who opposed to the EU endorsed UN plan, while it kept on punishing (isolating) the side that supported the very same plan.

Nevertheless, the Turkish support of UN plan resulted in the earning of the moral superiority, the moral high ground for the Turkish side on international platforms. According to the EU Commission, “the results indicate a clear desire of the Turkish Cypriot community to continue preparations for their full integration into the EU.”<sup>ii</sup> Furthermore, “the results also show that the Turkish Cypriots are committed to the reunification of Cyprus.”<sup>iii</sup> The Greek Cypriot political leadership under President Papadopoulos, however, had neither the intention nor the motivation to accept a compromised solution based on power sharing with the Turkish Cypriots. Alvaro De Soto, the then UN representative to Cyprus, confirmed the Greek Cypriot position by arguing that the Greek Cypriot economic position and their EU membership left no motivation for them to accept a compromised solution such as the Annan Plan.<sup>iv</sup> Even Greek Cypriot former Foreign Minister, Nikos Rolandis, indicated that the then Greek Cypriot political leadership was not interested in a solution in Cyprus.<sup>v</sup> The UN Secretary General’s 28 May 2004 report on Cyprus was quite laud and clear:

The decision of the Turkish Cypriots is to be welcomed. The Turkish Cypriot leadership and Turkey have made clear their respect for the wish of the Turkish Cypriots to reunify in a bicomunal, bizonal federation. The Turkish Cypriot vote has undone any rationale for pressuring and isolating them. I would hope that the members of the Council can give a strong lead to all states to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies, to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development.<sup>vi</sup>

After the October 2004 EU Commission’s Progress Report that stated that Turkey had fulfilled the necessary Copenhagen criteria to start the accession negotiations, the decision to open the accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 October 2005 was taken at the EU’s December 2004 Brussels Summit. However, a serious rift between Turkey and the EU due to the Additional Protocol in July 2005 between Turkey and the EU is poisoning the Turkey-EU relations. The EU expects Turkey to

fulfill its legal obligations by extending the Customs Union to the Republic of Cyprus where Turkey would open its sea ports and airports to the vessels carrying (Greek Cypriot) Republic of Cyprus flags. However, the Turks want to see a step taken by the EU to actualize its moral, political and legal commitments of lifting the isolations on the Turkish Cypriots which the EU Council promised on 26 April 2004, only two days after the referenda on the UN blueprint to unite Cyprus and make the united Cyprus member of the EU.<sup>vii</sup> On 29 July 2005 Turkey made a declaration that adopting the Additional Protocol did not imply that Turkey recognizes the Republic of Cyprus and it refused to open its ports to Republic of Cyprus vessels.<sup>viii</sup> Instead, Turkey announced an action plan where Turkey would open its sea ports and airports to Republic of Cyprus vessels in return for the lifting of isolations on the Turkish Cypriots.<sup>ix</sup> The action plan was rejected outright by the hardliner Greek Cypriot leader Tassos Papadopoulos. Consequently, the EU partially suspending the accession negotiations with Turkey on 8 chapters in December 2006 due to Turkey's refusal to open its sea ports and air ports to Greek Cypriot vessels. This coupled with unfriendly messages from Sarkozy and Merkel regarding prospects of Turkey's EU membership, as well as the domestic tensions in Turkey regarding the Kurdish issue and the relations with the secular establishment sufficed to annoy the Turkish government and slowed down the government's reforms towards more harmonization with the EU.

Meanwhile the Turkish government continued to maintain its 'one-step-ahead' policy in Cyprus and actively supported the pro-solution Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat who was elected President by 55% votes of the Turkish Cypriots in April 2005. As soon as elected, Talat called on the Greek Cypriot leadership "to take our hand which we are extending in peace to them. We will continue to put our best effort for reconciliation and a solution to the Cyprus problem."<sup>x</sup> However, Tassos Papadopoulos was not interested in negotiating with the Turkish Cypriot leader. Instead, he was interested in using the title of the internationally recognized government of the Republic of Cyprus and its EU membership in order to pressure Turkey to make concessions on Cyprus. However, he was unsuccessful in this endeavor since the international community became more aware that it was actually Papadopoulos himself who was not interested in a federal solution based on the established UN parameters rather than Turkey who supported the UN peace plan in 2004 referenda.<sup>xi</sup>

The moral superiority of the Turkish side since the 2004 referenda as well as the growing isolation of Papadopoulos in the international community due to his ridiculously intransigent stance finally forced the Greek Cypriot side to tactically go back to the negotiation table in July 2006. The two sides agreed in July 2006 to: (i) establish technical committees to deal with daily issues; (ii) to form working groups to deal with the substantive issues of the Cyprus problem; and (iii) to implement confidence building measures to improve the atmosphere in Cyprus.<sup>xii</sup> However, although the representatives of the two leaders met more than a few dozen times, they even failed to come up with the names of the technical committees and the working groups in a year and a half time.

By 2008 it was clear in the international community as well as in the Greek Cypriot community that Papadopoulos is driving Cyprus to permanent division and that he was the last person to work for the establishment of a federal state in line with the established UN parameters. Fearing of the permanent division of the island, the Greek Cypriot voters sent Papadopoulos home in the first round of the February 2008 presidential election and elected communist AKEL's leader

Demetris Christofias who put the federal solution of the Cyprus problem at the center of his election campaign as the next Greek Cypriot leader.

### ***State of the Current Peace Negotiations in Cyprus***

Once elected, Christofias accepted his 'comrade' Talat's open invitation and the two leaders met on 21 March 2008. In this meeting, they decided to ask their respective advisers to set up a number of working groups to deal with the substantive issues of the Cyprus problem and technical committees to deal with the daily issues, as well as their agenda. The agreed upon idea here was to use the results of the groups and the committees three months later and start the talks on the leaders level under the auspices of the UN Secretary General.

Meanwhile the two leaders came together on 23 May and 1 July and issued joint declarations where they announced principles that they agreed upon which the future settlement of the Cyprus problem would be based on. According to the 23 May Joint Statement, "They reaffirmed their commitment to a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality, as defined by relevant Security Council resolutions. This partnership will have a Federal Government with a single international personality, as well as a Turkish Cypriot Constituent State and a Greek Cypriot Constituent State, which will be of equal status."<sup>xiii</sup> The mention of 'constituent states' as well as their being 'equal status' in this joint statement created a big problem for Christofias where he was brutally criticized at home by even his government's junior coalition partners. For them Christofias gave 'too much' concession to the Turkish Cypriots and that these were beyond the established agreed upon UN parameters of 1977 and 1979 High Level Agreements between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders. On 1 July, the two leaders announced that "They discussed the issues of single sovereignty and citizenship which they agreed in principle. They agreed to discuss the details of their implementation during the full-fledged negotiations."<sup>xiv</sup> This time it was Talat's turn. He was very harshly criticized in the Turkish Cypriot side by the nationalist camp. The right wing nationalist media as well as his political opponents – later Derviş Eroğlu, in particular, who ran against Talat and won the presidential election on 18 April 2010 - attacked Talat arguing that his acceptance of 'single sovereignty' meant a mortal blow on the Turkish Cypriots' rights on the negotiation table. Some even went further to claim that by accepting single sovereignty Talat bowed to the Greek Cypriot dominance in the future state to be established.

In late July the working groups finalized their work and presented their reports to the two leaders. The reports consisted of the areas of convergence and divergence of the positions of the two sides on each topic of the working groups. On 3 September 2008, the two leaders started full-fledged negotiations on the six substantive issues on which the working groups had prepared the ground.<sup>xv</sup> By 30 March 2010 the two leaders had met 71 times before they paused for the presidential election in the Northern Cyprus that took place on 18 April. The two sides mainly focused on the three topics – (1) governance and power sharing, (2) economic matters and (3) EU matters - during the past 71 meetings among which 'governance and power sharing' got most of their time, since it is regarded as the mother of all issues where the structure of the future federation

was designed. By and large, the two sides made significant progress on these three dossiers. On 31 March, the UN Secretary General “congratulates the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders ... on their joint statement issued today 30 March 2010. The statement highlights the two leaders’ stronger than ever commitment to a settlement and notes that important progress in the chapters of governance and power-sharing, European Union matters and the economy has been achieved.”<sup>xvi</sup> However, it is clear that there has been very little progress on the remaining three dossiers: (1) territory, (2) property, and (3) security and guarantees. It is quite obvious and that it is admitted openly by many diplomats in Cyprus that the reason for the slowness of the peace negotiations and the amount of convergence since 2008 being under the expected level are due mainly to the Greek Cypriot leader Christofias.

Christofias dragged his feet from the very beginning where he refused in his own words ‘suffocating deadlines’ as well as mediation and arbitration in the negotiations.<sup>xvii</sup> All along he preached for a ‘Cypriot solution’ but never gave up on seeking external help – such as the protocols with UK and Russia,<sup>xviii</sup> as well as frequent letters to and lobby activities in the EU member states – to put pressure on Turkey to make unilateral concessions in Cyprus.

The 18 April presidential election in the Northern Cyprus is definitely an important interruption in the negotiation process. No matter what it means precious time was lost. Now that pro-solution Talat lost the election to veteran nationalist hardliner Derviş Eroğlu, there is now concern for the future of the peace negotiations.<sup>xix</sup> However, contrary to many observers’ analysis, Eroğlu continued the negotiations in late May 2010 from where Mt. Talat left. So far, the two leaders have met more than 100 times.

Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan’s preference is that the peace negotiations would be concluded by a comprehensive solution as soon as possible (possibly before 2012 when the Greek Cypriot side takes the EU presidency). He is well aware that due to the general elections in Turkey in 2011, no Turkish government can afford to look like it is giving out concessions on a very important foreign policy – rather a national – issue, the Cyprus problem, during a time when the country is in the election atmosphere. Therefore, it seems like that the window of opportunity in Cyprus is open until the end of the first quarter of 2011 (before the election season starts) and maybe re-opened after the election.<sup>xx</sup>

### ***Public Opinion on the two Sides of the Divided Island***

Judging from the joint statements made by Talat and Christofias on 23 May and 1 July 2008 as well as the progress in the negotiations so far, it is fair to say that the two leaders had - at least on paper – agreed on the basic parameters of the Cyprus settlement: i.e., *establishing a federal state that would be bi-zonal with regard to the territorial aspects and bi-zonal with regard to the constitutional aspects. The federal state would have a Turkish Cypriot Constituent State and a Greek Cypriot Constituent State of equal status as well as the state having one sovereignty and one international personality.* However, one crucial question is how much are the two communities – the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots – ready to endorse the basic parameters of the future

solution? For that purpose, I closely analyze the “2009 - Cyprus 2015 – Research and Dialogue for a Sustainable Future” survey designed by Cyprus 2015 team (Sözen, Kaymak, Lordos and Christou).<sup>xxi</sup>

Majorities of both communities agree that the Cyprus problem should be solved through a mutually acceptable compromise (75% GCs and 55% TC), while majorities admit that both communities made mistakes in the past (87% GCs and 53% TCs). Likewise, majorities in both communities oppose to the idea of resorting to violence as a means to solve the Cyprus conflict (84% GCs and 75% TCs). The poll results confirm the fact that a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation remains the only mutually acceptable settlement arrangement – though as the second choice for both communities. When one looks at the poll results on the preference of the solution models, it is clear that the Greek Cypriots ideally prefer a unitary state. In case it is not possible, they would accept a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation (see Figure 1). In contrast, Greek Cypriots undeniably reject a two state solution, a confederal solution as well as the continuation of the status quo as a solution model. Turkish Cypriots, on the other hand, ideally prefer a two state solution (see Figure 2). However, in case it is not possible, they would be prepared to agree on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation. Other solution models, such as two states or confederation, receive lower levels of support among Turkish Cypriots without being completely rejected.

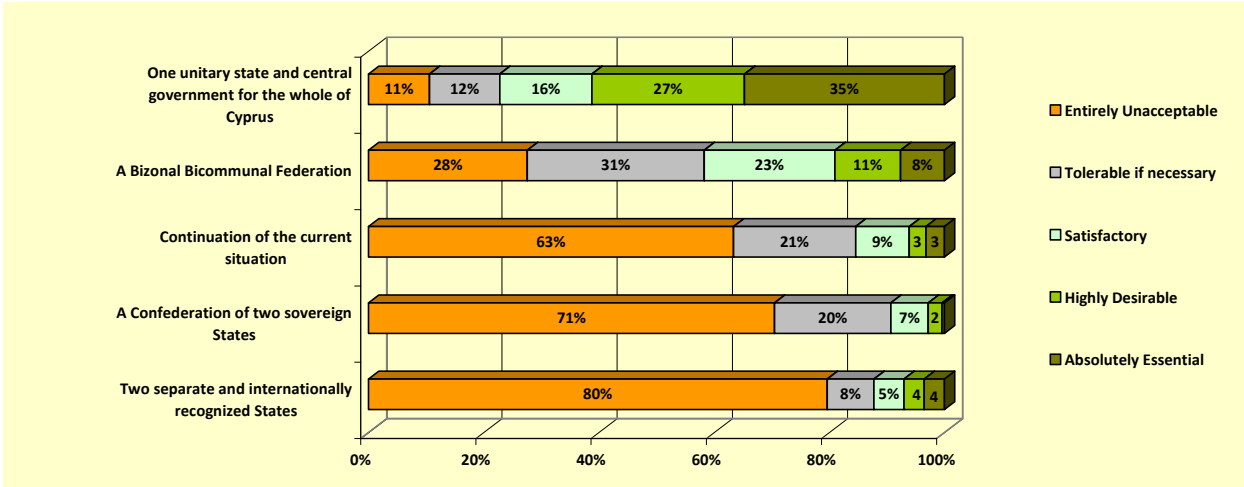


Figure 1: Regarding the overall framework of a Comprehensive Settlement, and considering each of the alternative settlement models presented below, how acceptable or unacceptable, in principle, do you consider each of these models? (Greek Cypriots).

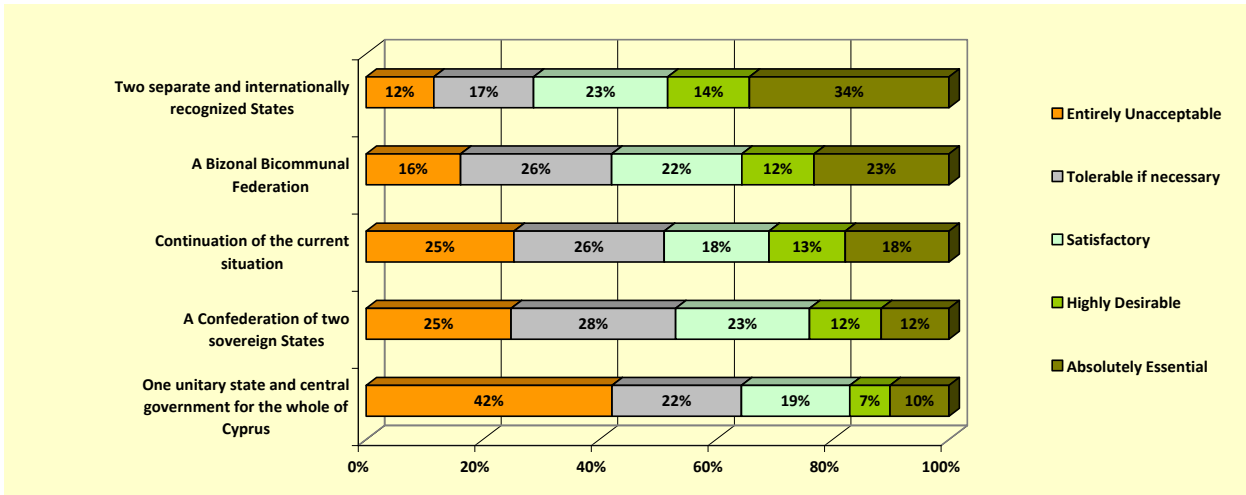


Figure 2: Regarding the overall framework of a Comprehensive Settlement, and considering each of the alternative settlement models presented below, how acceptable or unacceptable, in principle, do you consider each of these models? (Turkish Cypriots).

Regarding the agreed upon parameters of a solution by the two leaders – namely that the settlement should constitute a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality, as agreed in UN Security Council resolutions, with two constituent states of equal status and a single international personality, sovereignty and citizenship – both communities express ambivalence without being outright negative about them (see Figure 3).

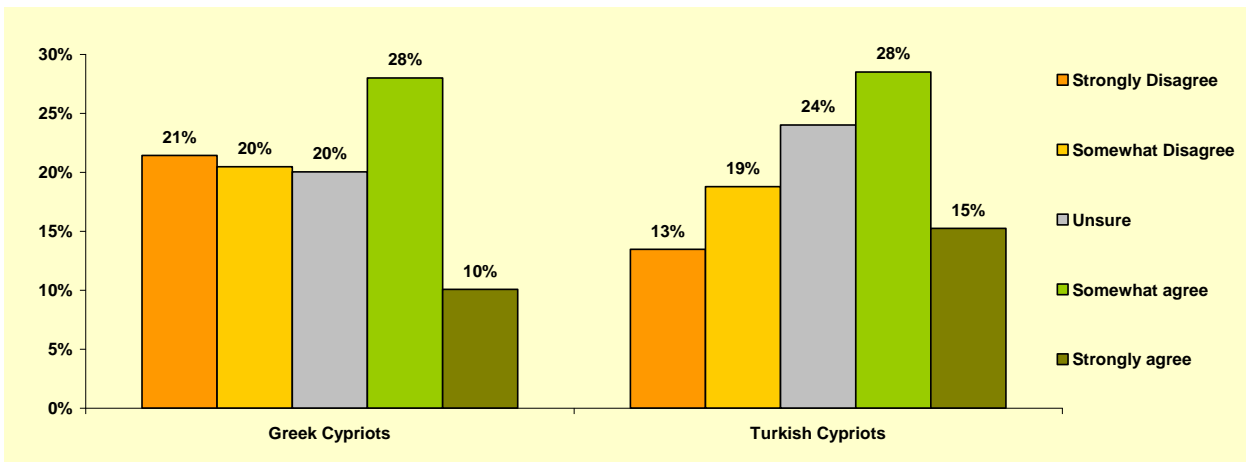


Figure 3: Degree of acceptance of the principles agreed by the two Leaders for the Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus problem (i.e., “a Bizonal Bicomunal Federation with Political Equality, as agreed in UN Security Council Resolutions, with two constituent states of equal status and a single international personality, sovereignty and citizenship”).

When one looks closer on the acceptability of each of the components of the future solution model agreed upon by the two leaders, the Greek Cypriots are most positive over the principles of single sovereignty, single citizenship and single international personality. However, they are unsure over federalism, political equality and bi-communality. Furthermore, they are very skeptical on bi-zonality and on the notion that there would be Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot constituent states of equal status (see Figure 4).



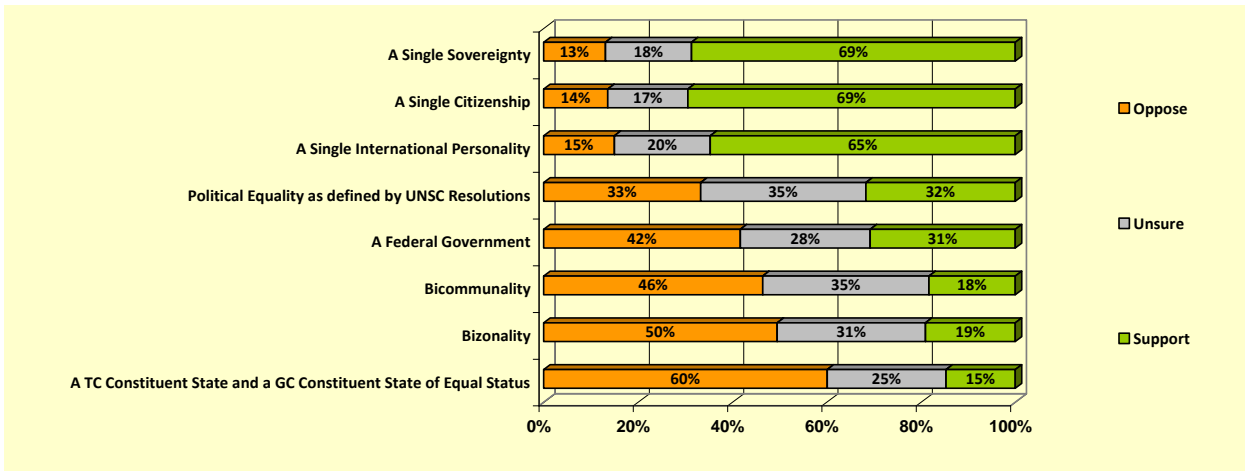


Figure 4: How acceptable or unacceptable do you consider each of the following elements of these agreements? (Greek Cypriots).

Turkish Cypriots, on the other hand, strongly support the principles of bi-zonality, bi-communality, political equality, and the notion that there would be Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot constituent states of equal status. In addition, the Turkish Cypriots are ambivalent over federalism and the principle of a single international personality. They are, however, somewhat negative over the principles of a single citizenship and a single sovereignty (see Figure 5).

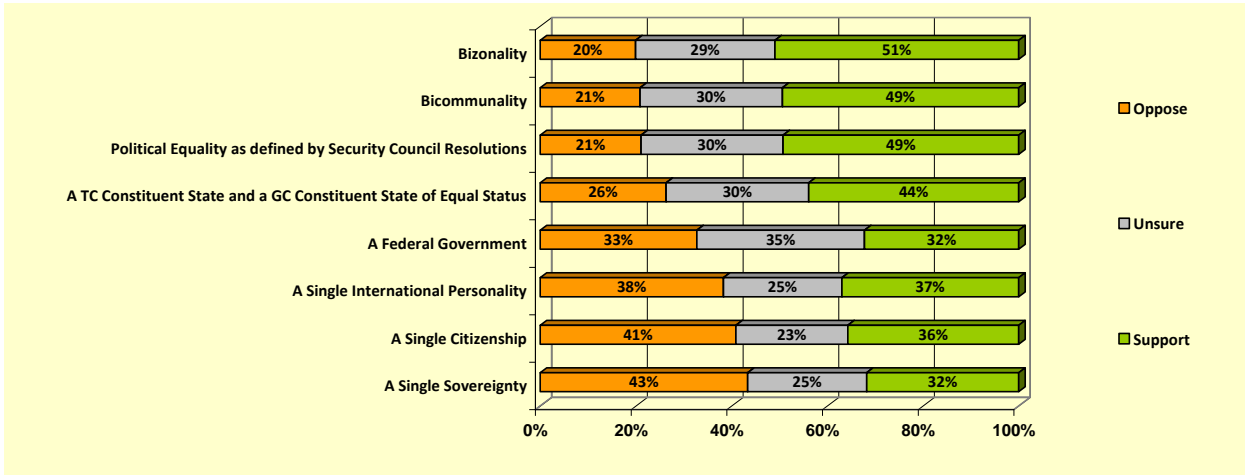


Figure 5: How acceptable or unacceptable do you consider each of the following elements of these agreements? (Greek Cypriots).

To the question of what they would vote in a future referendum, in case the two leaders reach a settlement plan, the two communities show somewhat similar responses. 18% of Greek Cypriots and 16% of Turkish Cypriots are seen as committed 'Yes' voters, 23% of Greek Cypriots and 31% of Turkish Cypriots are seen as committed 'No' voters. However, the rest – 59% of Greek Cypriots and 53% of Turkish Cypriots – are swing voters who probably want to see the content of the settlement and/or the positioning of the opinion leaders.

Finally, a large majority of Greek Cypriots (69%) as well as a big chunk of the Turkish Cypriots (42%) wish that the peace process would lead to a final settlement, whereas 17% of the Greek Cypriots and 34% of the Turkish Cypriots prefer that nothing comes of the peace process. However, it is also notable that majority of people on both sides lost hope on the possibility of the current peace process leading to a comprehensive solution: 61% of the Greek Cypriots and 58% of the Turkish Cypriots have no hope at all, despite their high desire for a solution to the Cyprus problem.

In short, the Turkish Cypriots who voted in support of the UN plan in 2004 have been disappointed by firstly the 'resounding NO' vote from the Greek Cypriots and secondly by the fact that the international community failed to deliver its promises of lifting the isolations on them. Hence, they became less supportive of the federal solution and instead move towards two state solution. Furthermore, the Greek Cypriots are not ready – that is, they are probably not prepared by their political elite - for the established UN parameters, such as bi-zonality, bi-communality and political equality, in the future federal solution where they would be required to share power with the Turkish Cypriots.

The disappointment of the Turkish Cypriots coupled with the image that the Greek Cypriots are not interested in a federal solution naturally reflected first to the 19 April 2009 general elections in the Northern Cyprus where the UBP – National Unity Party of Derviş Eroğlu had a clean victory which made the UBP the government and Derviş Eroğlu the Prime Minister.<sup>xxii</sup> Furthermore, Derviş Eroğlu – known as a nationalist hardliner and a staunch supporter of two state solution in Cyprus – became the undisputed winner of the 18 April 2010 presidential election in the Northern Cyprus. This automatically as an accustomed tradition made Eroğlu the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community and the negotiator in the UN sponsored peace negotiations. Although Eroğlu stated many times that he would continue the peace negotiations from where Talat left, nonetheless due to his hardliner track record many observers have doubts about the future of the Cyprus peace negotiations.<sup>xxiii</sup>

### ***The Turkey Factor***

Where does Turkey stand in the equation? Since 1977 Denktaş-Makarios High Level Agreement which became the basis of all future negotiations – namely, solving the Cyprus conflict through a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation – Turkish governments officially supported a federal solution to the Cyprus problems. However, it is also known that most of the Turkish governments until the end of 2002 when AKP came to power, had been quite happy with the status quo on the island – that is the existence of *de facto* two states.<sup>xxiv</sup> However, the intensification of Turkey-EU relations undoubtedly motivated Turkey to move away from supporting the status quo on the island – which started to be perceived as unsustainable. Turkey's EU vocation seriously started first in the 1999 Helsinki Summit where Turkey was declared a candidate country and later in 2004 Brussels Summit where the Union acknowledged that Turkey fulfilled the Copenhagen political criteria and decided to open the accession negotiations on 3 October 2005. Hence, the later period also coincided with a new foreign policy orientation under the AKP rule where a paradigm shift in Turkish foreign policy has been experienced.<sup>xxv</sup>

For AKP the moral superiority that Turkey, together with the Turkish Cypriot side gained in the international community by actively supporting the UN comprehensive peace plan in the 2004 referenda is invaluable. This was due to Turkey's moving away from supporting the status quo on Cyprus and instead being the party that actively supports a solution based on the established UN parameters. Here, Erdoğan's policies of 'no solution is not the solution (in Cyprus),' (always) one-step-ahead (of the Greek/Cypriot side),' and 'win-win solution' became the tactical guidelines of Turkey's new Cyprus strategy that nicely and comfortably complemented Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's 'zero-problem-with-neighbors' principle.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Beyond the immediate impulse of maintaining the moral superiority with regard to the Cyprus issue, the AKP government genuinely wants to solve the Cyprus conflict since this is in accordance with its long term strategic calculations:

1. Unlike many previous Turkish governments' perceptions, the AKP government calculated that the status quo in Cyprus cannot continue indefinitely and that time is not always in the benefit of the Turkish side.
2. It is clear that Turkey cannot be a member of the EU before recognizing the legitimate government of the member state Cyprus. This means that it has to either help solve the problem or recognize existing Greek Cypriot led government of Cyprus which no Turkish government would ever do. Hence, the AKP government perceives that the amount of concession that the Turkish side has to give away in solving the Cyprus conflict now is much less than the amount of concession immediately before Turkey's entering the EU.
3. The AKP government is aware that when the Cyprus conflict is solved, the anti-Turkey EU political elites would lose their 'Cyprus toy' – that is, the Cyprus trump card that they use in order to block Turkey's EU accession process.
4. New Turkish foreign policy principles, such as the 'zero problem with neighbors' are taking roots in the policy making and that Cyprus is not an exception.
5. The AKP government who has been engaged in democratic reforms at home where the domain of individual rights and freedoms as well as the sphere of cultural rights are broadened naturally cannot follow a 'no-solution' policy in Cyprus, since this would mean a big blow on its credibility.
6. Foreign Minister Davutoğlu genuinely desires to turn the Mediterranean basin into a basin of stability, cooperation and prosperity which necessitates the resolution of the Cyprus problem.
7. Turkey's active engagement in solving the Cyprus conflict would boost its prestige and credibility in becoming a mediator in solving other regional conflicts and becoming a global actor in line with Davutoğlu's *Strategic Depth* doctrine.<sup>xxvii</sup>

However, in solving any conflict it takes – at least - two to tango. In other words, both the Turkish/Cypriot and the Greek/Cypriot sides have to have the necessary desire and the motivation to solve the Cyprus problem. Nonetheless, it is clear that Turkish government's immediate tactic as part

of its bigger strategy in Cyprus is to push the Greek Cypriot side to a solution based on established UN parameters. If that fails, the AKP government wants to see the Greek Cypriot side being exposed in the international community as the side who walked away from the negotiation table – in which case alternative solution models can be legitimately put on the table.

### ***Conclusion: Probable Scenarios***

Given the critical turning point in the Cyprus peace negotiations in relation to Turkey's uneasy EU vocation due to the irresolution of the very Cyprus conflict, what are the prospects of finding a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus conflict and what are the probable future scenarios? Many observers, including the UN itself who sponsor the current peace negotiations, admit that the current status quo in Cyprus would not be sustainable for a long time. Currently, the irresolution of the Cyprus conflict has taken the Turkey-EU relations hostage and shut them into an extremely slow pace destined to be doomed any time in the foreseeable future. Hence, there is a feeling that the Cyprus problem is reaching to its finality. This finality can be captured in three possible scenarios:

Scenario 1: This is the scenario where the two sides in Cyprus genuinely or due to tactical reasons do not leave the negotiation table and finally reach a comprehensive solution based on the established UN parameters and that the plan passes from the simultaneous, separate referenda in both North and the South parts of Cyprus. This scenario can lead to two potential results: *Belgium-ization* or *Czechoslovakia(n) - ization* of Cyprus.

If the two communities are ready for power sharing, that they got their lessons from the history and do not want to experience past mistakes in the future, then they can co-exist on the same island in a civilized manner under the EU umbrella – similar to the arrangement between the Walloons and the Flemish in Belgium. Just like in Belgium, the two communities in Cyprus do not mix up much but maintain a civilized level of cooperation and run the federal state in a power-sharing manner.

The other possible result of a negotiated solution in Cyprus is the velvet separation of the future federal state of Cyprus just like former Czechoslovakia. This is the case where some time after the establishment of the federal state in Cyprus, the two communities decide on a civilized manner that it is not efficient or possible for the two communities to share the common state, or rather not desirable by the two communities to have a common state.

Scenario 2: This is the scenario where the Turkish side maintains its pro-solution stance and forces the Greek/Cypriot side to walk out of the negotiation table or where a future referenda end with a result similar to the one in 2004 where the Greek Cypriots votes down a federal solution plan again. In this case, it is natural to expect that the Northern Cyprus – the TRNC<sup>xxviii</sup> - will increase its ties and relations – sort of normalize - with the rest of the world. Under this circumstance there will be three dynamics at work simultaneously:

(i) *Taiwan-ization* of North Cyprus: means intensification of the links of North Cyprus with the rest of the world, including unhindered trade and direct flights to North Cyprus from different cities in the world without North Cyprus being formally recognized – similar to Taiwan.

(ii) *Kosova-ization* of North Cyprus: represents a special case where similar to Kosovo some countries finally recognize North Cyprus as an independent state, but it never becomes a member of the UN since some countries, such as Russia and/or France, refuse to ever recognize it.

(iii) *Hatay-ization* of the North Cyprus: implies that due to more immigration from Turkey to North Cyprus, the demography of North Cyprus will be more Anatolian-ized where North Cyprus will become more and more like Turkey and its ties with and dependence on Turkey will increase. Hence, maybe never formally (officially) but at least in *de facto* terms, North Cyprus will be a province of Turkey, just like Hatay.

Scenario 3: This can be regarded as the ‘dark scenario’ where Turkey-EU relations – more specifically Turkey’s accession negotiations - come to a stop due to Turkish side’s walking out of the Cyprus peace talks or Turkey’s decision to unilaterally end the EU accession negotiations. Although this is a highly unlikely scenario, nonetheless it is theoretically possible. In such a scenario one can expect that Turkey becomes more Middle Eastern-ized where Islamist-ization and nationalist-ization of Turkey and deterioration of the democratic reforms in the areas of human rights and fundamental freedoms taken in the past several years become probable trends. In such a case where Turkey ‘stops talking to the EU,’ it loses its chance to become a global actor *a la* Davutoğlu’s strategic depth doctrine, let alone an influential regional power. Needless to say, in this scenario, isolations on North Cyprus continue, as well as pressures on Turkey from such international organizations like the European Court of Human Rights regarding the pending court cases against Turkey due to its “occupying” position in Cyprus.

Scenario 3 is the least likely one while the other two scenarios look more realistic to take place. However, one thing is clear: There is a small window of opportunity still open in Cyprus until the end of 2010 or beginning of 2011 when Turkey itself enters into the election atmosphere for its general election. When the election atmosphere starts no government can afford to look like it is making concessions on an important foreign policy issue, such as the Cyprus conflict. Hence, it is likely that the pro-solution stance of the AKP government might disappear during the election atmosphere in 2011 in which case one would need to wait to see the election result to be able to make future projections on the Turkey-EU relations, as well as the Cyprus peace process – if it still continues.

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i See Ali Çarkoğlu & Ahmet Sözen (2004) ‘The Turkish Cypriot General Elections of December 2003: Setting the Stage for Resolving the Cyprus Conflict?’, *South European Society & Politics*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 122–136.

ii *Kıbrıs Daily Newspaper*, 21 February 2005.

iii Commission Statement, 21 February 2005, <http://www.delcyp.cec.eu.int/en/news/050221a.htm> (accessed 24 April 2010).

iv For more information see NTV 7 March 2005, <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/news/312443.asp> (accessed 24 April 2010).

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<sup>v</sup> Sunday Mail, 27 February 2005.

<sup>vi</sup> S/2004/437.

<sup>vii</sup> For more information,

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/04/857&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en> (accessed on 24 April 2010).

<sup>viii</sup> See the Turkish declaration, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/declaration-by-turkey-on-cyprus\\_-29-july-2005.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/declaration-by-turkey-on-cyprus_-29-july-2005.en.mfa) (accessed 24 April 2010).

<sup>ix</sup> See details of the Turkish action plan, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/new-initiative-by-turkey-on-cyprus.en.mfa> (accessed 24 April 2010).

<sup>x</sup> Kibris Daily Newspaper, 21 February 2005.

xii It was clear that Tassos Papadopoulos negotiated the UN plan in 2004 for tactical reasons – just to be seen on the negotiation table. On 7 April 2004, he asked his community to say a resounding ‘NO’ to the Annan Plan in the referendum: “Taking up my duties, I was given an internationally recognized state. I am not going to give back ‘a Community’ without a say internationally and in search of a guardian ... I urge you to defend the Republic of Cyprus, saying NO to its abolition.” See the text of his TV speech ,

<http://www.hri.org/news/cyprus/cna/2004/04-04-08.cna.htm/#01> (accessed 24 April 2010).

<sup>xiii</sup> On 8 July 2006, Ibrahim Gambari, Kofi Annan’s political adviser succeeded to bring the two leaders together where they agreed on some basic principles of a future solution, such as political equality; bi-zonal, bi-communal federation in addition to the establishment of technical committees to deal with daily problems. For more information, [http://www.uncyprustalks.org/news/Press/2006\\_08July\\_%20Gambari%20reads%20statement%20by%20two%20leaders.htm](http://www.uncyprustalks.org/news/Press/2006_08July_%20Gambari%20reads%20statement%20by%20two%20leaders.htm) (accessed 24 April 2010).

<sup>xiii</sup> 23 May Joint Statement, [http://www.uncyprustalks.org/nqcontent.cfm?a\\_id=2831](http://www.uncyprustalks.org/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=2831) (accessed 24 April 2010).

<sup>xiv</sup> 1 July Joint Statement, [http://www.uncyprustalks.org/nqcontent.cfm?a\\_id=2575](http://www.uncyprustalks.org/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=2575) (accessed 24 April 2010).

<sup>xv</sup> The six working groups are: (1) Governance and Power Sharing, (2) Property, (3) EU Matters, (4) Economic and Commercial Matters, (5) Territory, and (6) Security and Guarantees.

<sup>xvi</sup> See the 31 March 2010 UN Secretary General’s statement,

[http://www.uncyprustalks.org/nqcontent.cfm?a\\_id=2924&tt=graphic&lang=l1](http://www.uncyprustalks.org/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=2924&tt=graphic&lang=l1) (accessed 24 April 2010). For the last joint statement of the two leaders dated 30 March 2010,

[http://www.uncyprustalks.org/nqcontent.cfm?a\\_id=2921&tt=graphic&lang=l1](http://www.uncyprustalks.org/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=2921&tt=graphic&lang=l1) (accessed 24 April 2010).

<sup>xvii</sup> For more detail, <http://www.hri.org/news/cyprus/cna/2009/09-08-29.cna.html> (accessed 24 April 2010).

<sup>xviii</sup> For more detail, <http://news.pseka.net/index.php?module=article&id=9357> (accessed 24 April 2010).

<sup>xix</sup> For an election analysis, <http://www.euronews.net/2010/04/19/reunification-doubts-after-turkish-cypriot-vote/> (accessed 24 April 2010).

<sup>xx</sup> For a post-election analysis,

[http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=10&categ\\_id=2&article\\_id=114108#axzz0lur62PgF](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=10&categ_id=2&article_id=114108#axzz0lur62PgF) (accessed 24 April 2010).

<sup>xxi</sup> Sample Size: 1,000 Greek Cypriots and 1,000 Turkish Cypriots; Sampling Process: Multi-stage Random Stratified Sampling; Method of Data Collection: Face to Face Interviews with a Structured Questionnaire at Homes of Respondents and in their Native Language; Period of Data Collection: 06th October – 06th November 2009; Field Work: Symmetron Market Research for Greek Cypriots and KADEM Cyprus Social Research for Turkish Cypriots. Ahmet Sözen, Erol Kaymak, Alexandros Lordos and Spyros Christou, “Investigating the Future: An In-depth Study of Public Opinion in Cyprus,” Cyprus 2015: Research and Dialogue for A Sustainable Future (December 2009). For the survey results, [http://www.cyprus2015.org/index.php?option=com\\_phocadownload&view=category&id=1%3Apublic-opinion-poll&Itemid=34&lang=en](http://www.cyprus2015.org/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&id=1%3Apublic-opinion-poll&Itemid=34&lang=en) (accessed 24 April 2010).

<sup>xxii</sup> For an indepth analysis of the 2009 election, see Sözen, Ahmet (2009) ‘The Turkish Cypriot Legislative Election of April 2009: Towards the ‘Last Roll of the Dice’ in the Cyprus Conflict?’, South European Society & Politics, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 337–350.

<sup>xxiii</sup> For further analysis on this, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601085&sid=aBTnbO5hHJCw> and <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=hardliner-president-elect-assures-cyprus-talks-will-continue-2010-04-19> (accessed 24 April 2010).

<sup>xxiv</sup> For a detailed account on how Turkish foreign policy on the Cyprus issue evolved since the 1950s, see Ahmet Sözen “The Cyprus Question in Turkey-EU Relations” in Lucie Tunkrova and Pavel Saradin (eds.) The Politics of EU Accession: Turkish Challenges and Central European Experiences (Routledge 2010).

<sup>xxv</sup> For a detailed analysis of the paradigm shift in Turkish foreign policy under the AKP government, see Ahmet Sözen “A Paradigm Shift in Turkish Foreign Policy: Transition and Challenges” in Barry Rubin and Birol Yesilada (eds.) Islamization of Turkey Under the AKP Rule (Routledge 2010).

<sup>xxvi</sup> Ibid.

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xxvii For an in-depth account on Davutođlu’s proposed vision for Turkey, see his famous work Ahmet Davutođlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye’nin Uluslararası Konumu* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2004).

xxviii TRNC: Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.