

## From the Desk of the Editor

This issue of Turkish Policy Quarterly (TPQ) focuses on the geopolitical contests and clashes of visions in the common neighborhood of the EU, Russia, and Turkey. Besides featuring critical analysis on the divergence of identity conceptions and political values within this wider region, various dimensions of ongoing power struggles are assessed, including energy security, cyber security, elections, and revolutions.

The Eastern Partnership summit of the EU in November 2013 in Vilnius and the subsequent crisis in Ukraine have brought the schisms in the EU's Eastern Neighborhood to the top of the global agenda. The six post-Soviet countries of this region –Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan– are to different extents torn between the various “integration tools” of Brussels and Moscow. This issue therefore explores the following topical questions: what can European soft power and hard pressure achieve? What do the people and the leaderships across the region want? How far will Russia go to maintain the *status quo* in its “near abroad?” And, where is Turkey in all of this?

In an interview with TPQ, Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves underlines the importance of maintaining a strong transatlantic bond in today's international environment. Puzzled by Moscow's threat perceptions *vis-à-vis* the EU, he expresses concern about Russia's intimidation of its peaceful neighbors. The President also emphasizes Estonia's sense of solidarity with the aspiration for Europeanization among Eastern Partnership states. Culture, history, and religion do not determine a nation's political civilization, he underlines. He expresses his conviction that democratic institutions, rule of law, and respect for fundamental rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of assembly are a *choice*. Within this framework, we discuss Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Turkey in depth.

Recent events in Kiev have shown us that peace and stability in Eastern Europe should not be taken for granted, as Romania's Secretary of State for European Affairs George Ciamba emphasizes. He stresses that frozen conflicts are being used as a tool to shape the internal developments and foreign policy options of the countries in this region, and that Europe needs to play a decisive role in breaking this vicious cycle. The European integration of Moldova is Romania's main priority in the Eastern Neighborhood, and Bucharest will provide full support toward this end, he states. Moldova's achievement of visa liberalization with the EU –anticipated this year– will generate tangible benefits, rewarding Moldova for its remarkable progress in implementing reforms. Noting that energy politics have been in the forefront

of disputes in Eastern Europe, he argues that European actors should think beyond short-term commercial interests and keep socioeconomic impact in sight when connecting energy markets in the Eastern Neighborhood. Ciamba, who was Romania's Ambassador in Ankara in the early 2000s, believes that Turkey has a positive role to play in strengthening European policy towards this neighborhood.

General Philip Breedlove, NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe, focuses on “change” as a consistent feature in NATO, yet also emphasizes the unchanging aspects of the Alliance – such as its dedication to securing its members, shared values, and role as a bedrock of democracy. Pointing out that NATO's mission in Afghanistan will end in 2014, General Breedlove takes stock of what the Alliance has accomplished there. He also explains the desire of Allied leaders is to build trust, reciprocal transparency, and predictability in the relationship with Russia. The General highlights that Russia and NATO collaborate on issues such as combatting terrorism, while acknowledging that on missile defense, for example, the two have differing views.

Pavel Baev, Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) in Norway, argues that while the geopolitical interests of Ankara and Moscow over regional conflicts and energy politics have diverged in the last few years, “ideological congruence” has emerged. He explains that both countries have now taken the position of repressing domestic discontent and viewing revolutions in the region as threats. Baev also points out that new supply sources have transformed the global energy market, rendering the energy agenda relatively less important in Turkey-Russia relations than in the past.

A number of these global changes in the energy sector are illuminated by Gal Luft, co-director of the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security. Luft presents an overview of the American shale oil and gas boom, analyzing its potential effect on U.S. foreign policy. Luft, who is also Senior Adviser to the United States Energy Security Council, argues that the U.S. will remain engaged in hydrocarbon-rich geographies such as the Middle East to ensure the global price stability of energy resources. Luft counters speculations that the shale boom will lead to shifts in U.S. foreign policy orientation, stating that: “America's experience with nonconventional hydrocarbons is too fresh to make such assertions, and there are too many question marks about the economic, geological, and environmental characteristics of the new resources to allow the U.S. to peg its foreign policy to their development.”

Simone Tagliapietra, researcher at *Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei*, engages the energy theme while taking up Turkey's aspiration to become an energy hub – a topic

we also covered extensively in TPQ's Summer 2013 issue. Tagliapietra, who is currently based in Istanbul as a visiting researcher at the Istanbul Policy Center, argues that Turkey will not be a regional gas hub in the mid-term, while he leaves the door open for the long-term.

In a conversation with Gerald Knaus, Founding Chairman of the European Stability Initiative (ESI), we discuss EU policy and leverage in its Eastern neighborhood. Knaus argues that the EU should support the democratization of all of its eastern neighbors. For the people of these countries to be able to choose their future, the EU should oppose Russian interference in and blackmail of its neighbors, he says, while arguing against "clash of civilizations"-based theories. Knaus recalls that defending "civilization" was a rhetorical device used by autocrats and nationalists of all ethnic groups and religions in the Balkans to justify ethnic cleansing, the repression of minorities, and the suppression of basic rights of their citizens.

Russia's Customs Union/Eurasian Union conceptions take various EU integration tools as a model, offering an alternative that does not require democratic reforms. In analyzing this neighborhood's tug of war, Amanda Paul, based in Brussels as Policy Analyst at European Policy Centre (EPC), focuses on the highly topical case of Ukraine. She notes that Ukrainians took to the streets following the decision of their government to freeze the signing of an Association and Trade Agreement with the EU. These protests, still ongoing but clearly creating conditions for change, have turned into a standoff demanding democracy, freedoms, and human rights from the Kiev authorities, she explains. Ukrainian, Russian, and EU dynamics all contributed to the government's refusal to sign the agreement, according to Paul. Ukrainians are fighting under the EU flag, and this crisis was sparked as a result of EU integration. Therefore, she warns, if the EU fails to react adequately to the crisis in Ukraine, the future of democracy in the entire region will be in serious jeopardy, as will the EU's credibility both as a flag bearer of democratic values and as a foreign policy actor. Ukraine, she says, is the backbone of the region.

Oktay Tanrısever, Professor of International Relations at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, takes stock of the achievements and failures of the Vilnius Summit that precipitated the Ukrainian crisis. While highlighting the frontrunner status of Georgia and Moldova, he analyzes the reasons behind the low-profile positions of Belarus and Azerbaijan at the summit, and the withdrawal of Yerevan and Kiev from EU integration. Tanrısever attributes the failures of the Vilnius Summit to Moscow's determination to obstruct Association Agreements between EU and EaP countries. He points out that Putin's idea of a Eurasian Union reflects Moscow's desire to restore its hegemony in the post-Soviet space. As Professor

Tanrisever argues, Moscow views the dynamics in the overlapping neighborhood of Russia and the EU as a zero-sum game, and will use all instruments of power at its disposal to win.

In a two-part paper published jointly by the ECFR Warsaw Office and demosEUROPA, Adam Balcer and Dimitar Bechev look into the role of Turkey as a key player in the post-Soviet region. The analysis is based on a discussion held in Warsaw in October 2013, in which I represented TPQ. One of the dynamics this policy paper points out is how the withdrawal of the U.S. has played into the increasing antagonism in relations between EU and Russia over countries torn between them. While the Kremlin previously viewed the U.S. as its principal rival and NATO expansion as the greatest threat, the EU has now risen to the top of Moscow's list of adversaries. One of the main beneficiaries of the tectonic shifts in the balance of power between key players in the post-Soviet region could be Turkey, they explain. A concluding point is that, despite political constraints, the EU and Turkey should find ways to align policies towards Eastern Partnership countries.

Marine Manucharyan, who heads a nongovernmental organization in Yerevan, explores the impact of the decision announced by the Armenian president in September 2013 for Armenia to join Russia's "Customs Union." Armenia's increasing dependence on Russia is creating resentment in the country, she explains. She argues that the decision to join Russia's Customs Union offers Armenia little –if any– benefits, while it weakens pro-Western reformers in the Armenian government and threatens to deepen Armenia's isolation. She also asserts, however, that it is not clear that Armenia will actually join the Customs Union. In the meantime, she explains the need for a new framework for Armenia's relations with the EU that is short of an Association Agreement.

One fundamental difference that has set Turkey apart from its neighborhood in the past is its track record of holding free and fair elections. However, Liberal Democratic Party Chairman Cem Toker claims there are reasons to doubt the continuance of this precedent. Toker emphasizes the highly polarized political environment Turkey faces in the run up to three elections over the next 18 months. He argues that, given the high stakes involved, the conduct of elections –voter registries, ballot irregularities, and the software used in counting votes, in particular– deserve scrutiny, and invites the relevant institutions of the OSCE and the Council of Europe to pay attention to the upcoming local elections in Turkey.

Isabelle Langerak covers Azerbaijan in the context of the "fourth wave of democratization" in a piece written during her internship at the Georgian Foundation for

Strategic and International Studies in Tbilisi. She argues that energy resources have enabled the establishment of Baku to set up a system that is relatively less vulnerable to dissent – at least for the time being.

On the geopolitical front, the intensifying trilateral relationship between Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey is a significant dynamic in the region. Though this trilateral integration is driven by the capitals themselves, primarily with Baku's initiative, ultimately it also serves the interests of the Euro-Atlantic community. The Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP), which will carry Azerbaijani natural gas to the border of Turkey with the EU (and is expected to be joined by gas from other countries in the southern neighborhood), is important for European energy security and the strategic relevance of the three countries on a global scale. The ongoing Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad –as well as the integrated port, highway, and logistics centers across these three countries– all contribute to the making of a significant infrastructural network. The *path dependence* that is emerging is locking in these three countries, creating political, economic, and strategic interdependence. The extent to which the related projects will lead to the emergence of a common sense of destiny and shared values between the three societies is yet to be seen. On 17 February, at an event in Baku organized by the Center for Strategic Research, implications of this trilateral integration were discussed in depth. Beyond creating tightly knit infrastructure on Europe's eastern edge and tilting the power balances of the region toward Europe, the potential of this corridor to link continental Europe more substantially to the Middle East, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia were debated.

Turkey and the wider eastern periphery of the EU are braced for what is bound to be a difficult year ahead. Consumed with its own internal political crisis, Turkey may not be able to become meaningfully involved in the debates and dynamics spanning the neighborhood. However, the direction in which Turkey heads, and whether it internalizes European principles and ideals, is in and of itself critical for the common neighborhood. As the articles of this issue of TPQ also elucidate, whether the EU can step up with credible and substantial policies and promises is a crucial determinant for the future of Turkey –a candidate country– as well as for the aspirants in the Eastern Partnership.

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The main corporate sponsor of TPQ's Winter issue is Beko. With this issue, we are happy to welcome ABC Detergent among our corporate sponsors. We appreciate the continuing support of Finansbank, Turcas Petrol, Akbank, Odea Bank, İş Bank, and BP Turkey. As a journal that depends primarily on the advertisements of prestigious Turkish companies to sustain itself, we are grateful for their support. In fact, the dedication of the Turkish private sector to the advancement of intellectual discussion in Turkey and its neighborhood is relatively unique in the region, and we are proud to play a role in bringing forth this potential.

Looking forward to feedback from readers across our shared neighborhood and from global followers as well,

Diba Nigâr Göksel