

In our final issue of 2003, TPQ is concluding a very important year for Turkey. From the US to Iraq to Cyprus to the EU to terrorism at home, it has been a monumental year for Turkey. However, in this issue we are also looking forward at the major issues of 2004, which of course will include the December 2004 EU summit deciding the fate of Turkish accession negotiations. We focus on the development of a European Union foreign policy doctrine, addressing this topic in light of Turkey's accession process, foreign policy, and regional stability questions. The recent Iraq war demonstrated the cost of the EU's lack of a regional security approach, as well as the urgency in which it must develop one. However, this reality does not just affect Europe. Whatever security and foreign policy understanding reached among the EU member states represents a significant variable for Turkey's foreign policy as well. While the developing notions of a Greater Middle East and a greater EU are being formed, Turkey needs to meanwhile take a good look at its options and available resources in order to define its own vision and pursue a consistent strategy.

Both inside and outside of Turkey, the role and identity of the country are widely debated. Questions of 'how should Turkey define itself in terms of its allies?' and 'to where, if anywhere, should Turkey have an unconditional allegiance?' are commonplace. However, a parallel debate about the identity and role of the EU is simultaneously unfolding in Paris, Brussels, Berlin, London and other European capitals. The EU is asking not only asking itself what its foreign policy manifesto should look like, but also to what ideology and identity it should subscribe.

As December 2004 looms, TPQ is looking backwards and forwards. We tackle the high-agenda discussion of the convergence of the foreign policies of the EU and Turkey head on. Evidenced by the wide spectrum of opinions and solutions advanced by the authors, these questions possess a high degree of complexity and intricacy.

In this issue, the authors assess Turkey's regional role both since the end of the Cold War and in light of changes stemming from September 11th, the Iraq war, and the coming to power of a Turkish government with relatively conservative and Islamic roots, as well as how these realities affect Turkey's EU candidacy.

Suleymanov and Ziyadov argue Turkey has yet to define and consistently pursue a multi-faceted and effective line with the Caucasian and Central Asian republics. If Cagaptay's thesis is accepted, that Turkey's primary asset lies in the role it can play in Central Asia, as opposed to one in the Middle East. Similarly, Turkey has not pursued ambitious policies regarding the Arab world, and inversely has remained passive in initiatives involving the region. As such Turkey is defined by Eduard Soler i Lecha as a 'status quo actor' towards the region in his piece.

Turkey has concentrated on consolidating its Western orientation and recently primarily pursued the goal of EU membership. In part stemming from disagreements with the US in the buildup to the war and in part due to transatlantic tensions, some circles in Turkey now seem to have the conviction that full concentration on relations with the EU is its best option. Faced with the concern of no longer "qualifying" as the strategic partner of

the US, Turkey has felt the powerful need to integrate with the EU. On the other side, the Iraq war led the EU to recognize its own urgent need for an effective EU foreign policy, causing the “Turkey as an asset” argument to come to the fore.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the US and the EU have advanced Turkey as a bridge or model for the Muslim Middle East and Central Asia, causing Turkey to sometimes feel inclined to assert itself as an effective regional player. However, Turkey has long perceived itself as a Western nation-state, rather than a Eurasian or Middle Eastern one. Acting as an economic and political power in these regions presents an interesting and difficult conundrum for Turkey. The more Turkey acts as an active stabilizer and mentor in these regions, the less Turkey appears to the EU as a European country facing European concerns. Turkish intellectuals, divided on how to reconcile these competing domestic and international expectations, are coming to the conclusion that these tensions need not be mutual exclusive. Rather, under a new EU foreign policy doctrine, Turkey can fulfill the role as bridge between East and West while simultaneously fulfilling its duty as a member of the European community.

Along this vein, TPQ asks whether Turkey has neglected these regions for too long and no longer possesses the resources and credibility to play a ‘bridging’ role. And furthermore, if an active role in Central Asia and the Middle East is part of a EU foreign policy doctrine, it is not clear Turkey possesses the capacity to concentrate resources abroad while work remains on the domestic front.

Turkey’s EU candidacy has stimulated much needed reforms. The EU prospect has been an instrumental force for the ongoing civil society and democratization projects. The resistance towards long due reforms in Turkey is now less entrenched than ever in light of the prospect of EU membership. The resulting full fledged democratization is the most important guarantor for sustainable political stability. Whether Turkey fully accedes to the EU or not, the prospect of membership has sown the seeds for dramatic reform in Turkey. A Turkey which conforms further with European standards will be in even better positioned to serve as an inspiration for the Caucasus, Central Asia and Middle East. There is of course the question of whether these states in fact have the will to take secularism and democratization as an example and if so whether Turkey is attractive to them in this sense, for historical and social reasons. Cagaptay, for instance, is sceptical that Turkey is a feasible model for the Middle East or that the elites of the region desire to emulate Turkey.

The question of compatibility between Turkish and EU foreign policies is also a topical issue. It brings fore another aspect of Turkey’s potential contribution to the EU. As noted by Ambassador Demiralp, Turkey attaches great importance to pursuing a foreign policy that is compatible with its membership prospects. Turkey’s heritage and geostrategic position have been utilized constructively and responsibly over the years and as Demiralp underlines, the prospect of the EU launching accession negotiations with Turkey has given the country the incentive to further cooperate with the EU in international issues and align itself with EU positions.

As Ulgen notes, the development of a European security and defense policy may present a particular challenge to Turkey. The security culture of Turkey will need to become more in line with that of the EU for smooth convergence. Naturally the road the EU takes in defining and implementing a foreign policy and security strategy will be instrumental in determining the nature of the commitments this will entail from Turkey. An important step regarding security culture would be making public Turkey's security strategy as Ulgen underlines. Civil society initiatives signify the social need to be informed and included in the security debates of the country. Lecha's contribution notes the need for a 'Europeanization' of Turkey's policies towards neighbouring regions.

It is important that Turkey take advantage of the upcoming NATO Summit to take place in Istanbul in June to clearly communicate a vision of her regional and global goals. What will answer of the question on Turkey's added value to the world be?

Mango advances the notion that the Turkish state and its citizens are more interested in economic well-being and domestic stability, much like other rational developed countries, rather than playing a broad role in Central Asia and the Middle East. Mango argues that these are instead externally imposed assignments on the Turkish state, which should rather spend its energy looking serving domestic needs. Lecha points out that Turkish leaders are also responsible for presenting Turkey as a strategic asset over the years, hoping to sell its geopolitical positioning for the economic and security related benefits of Western friendship. These authors raise the question of whether Turkey really needs to embrace a regional role to be relevant for the West.

While much of the economic and political reforms in Turkey throughout the last decade have been stimulated and prompted by the EU and IMF, the recent empowerment of the Turkish people in the last election and the concurrent burgeoning of a civil society may have rendered international checks and balances more dispensable. It is possible that more time is needed for these developments to settle solidly and the question of when Turkey will be ready to be trusted to act on its own is still out there. If Turkey were to lose its geostrategic significance, and in turn lose the patronage of the EU and US, would the country lose direction and be swept into an identity crisis? Mango believes the Turkish people and state can be trusted to act in their interest, and this will not include adventures.

There is a catch 21 in the prospect of certain rooted changes Turkey is expected to carry out for the beginning of negotiations with the EU for full membership. With the confidence a clear EU membership prospect would imbue the country with, overcoming such challenges is a achievable goal. While heated debate and suspicions as to whether Turkey belongs in the EU or not being are carried out in Europe, the hardliners in Turkey are naturally in a stronger position than they would be if a clear signal for Turkey's accession was given by the EU. Various EU circles charge that these arguments are merely used to promote the cause of Turkey vis-à-vis the Union however as Ozdag's article presents, there are indeed arguments against Turkey's EU membership, that it is not in Turkey's interest to join the EU, nor in the interest of the EU to accept Turkey as a full member. Many circles in Turkey are led to embrace such views in the absence of clear prospects. There are also influential analysts in the US who assert that Turkey will

find its role to the east and south of the country and whose positions find audiences in Turkey.

We believe Turkey's focus in 2004 should be on the work entailed to begin negotiations with the EU. If Turkey is indexed to the EU for the 10 years ahead, domestic checks and balances of a modern, functioning, participatory democracy will no longer be questionable and Turkey's credibility as an effective regional player will be enhanced. Should the EU have embraced the role of a global actor by the time negotiations are finalized, it may be clearer to many Europeans that Turkey is an added value in many respects. What the future will bring for the EU is yet to be known, however, what the reforms entailed by negotiations provide for Turkey and for Turkey's wider periphery is...