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***Introduction par Didier Billion, Directeur adjoint de l'IRIS et
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**Brefs commentaires sur le IV^e séminaire annuel de l'Institut du
Bosphore : de nouvelles perspectives pour les relations franco-
turques**



Par le nombre et la qualité des participants, par la richesse, la densité et la variété des interventions et par l'atmosphère de liberté dans les échanges, le quatrième séminaire annuel de l'Institut du Bosphore, réuni à Istanbul les 8 et 9 novembre, a constitué un indéniable succès.

Ce séminaire s'est tenu au moment d'une réelle modification de climat dans les relations entre la France et la Turquie, induite par le changement de majorité politique en France, ce que la quasi-totalité des participants a souligné. Ces relations sont pourtant encore profondément dégradées et on peut craindre qu'il faille déployer de nombreux efforts pour remonter les ressorts qui ont été cassés par cinq années de tensions, d'initiatives maladroites et de postures parfois méprisantes, exprimées par l'ancien président de la République. Quelques responsables politiques français ne sont pas sortis grandis de cette situation en instrumentalisant les relations bilatérales pour de médiocres enjeux de politique intérieure. Certes, nous savons que dans la vie politique rien n'est jamais irréversible, il n'empêche, la nécessaire fluidification des relations bilatérales prendra du temps tant les incompréhensions se sont multipliées, tant l'amertume est vive parmi de nombreux citoyens turcs.

C'est pour ces raisons que nous pouvons nous féliciter du contenu des échanges entre les responsables de premier plan des deux pays. François Hollande et Abdullah Gül tout d'abord qui, lors du sommet de l'OTAN réuni à Chicago en mai 2012, sont convenus qu'il était nécessaire d'écrire une nouvelle page des relations bilatérales. Ahmet Davutoglu et Laurent Fabius ensuite qui, au début du mois de juillet, ont affirmé souhaiter dépasser les difficultés des dernières années. Ces éléments sont autant d'indicateurs positifs que nous sommes entrés dans une nouvelle séquence politique.

La question réside toutefois aussi dans les décisions et l'agenda qui doivent être mis en œuvre. Les mois passent en effet et les décisions concrètes tardent à venir. Nous pouvons parfaitement comprendre, d'une part, l'ampleur des défis que doit saisir à bras-le-corps la nouvelle majorité politique française et, d'autre part, l'hypothèque liée à la présidence chypriote grecque de l'UE du deuxième semestre 2012. Nous savons certes que l'impatience est souvent mauvaise conseillère, mais le risque existe cependant que le dossier sur les relations franco-turques soit relégué au deuxième rang des préoccupations. Pourtant, des gestes tangibles sont souhaitables dans les meilleurs délais. D'autant que nous bénéficions d'une fenêtre d'opportunités qu'il ne faut pas dilapider par d'inutiles hésitations. Jusqu'en 2014 nous nous trouvons en effet dans une période sans échéances électorales, lesquelles, nous le savons par expérience, sont souvent période d'instrumentalisation négative et de surenchères contre-productives dans les relations entre la France et la Turquie. En outre, il faut intégrer dans cet agenda que 2015 sera probablement une année au cours de laquelle de nombreuses organisations arméniennes seront à l'offensive politique et multiplieront les initiatives, créant de nouveaux points de tension.

Deux décisions rapides sont possibles qui indiqueraient un véritable changement d'orientation.

Il s'agit tout d'abord que la France lève dans les meilleurs délais le veto qui avait été apposé par Nicolas Sarkozy sur cinq des chapitres des pourparlers d'adhésion turco-européens. Non seulement rien n'a jamais justifié sur le fond une telle décision discriminatoire, mais elle contredit, de plus, dans la forme, un fonctionnement raisonnable et raisonné des institutions européennes. On ne peut en effet imaginer que chaque Etat impose ses volontés dans le mépris du point de vue de ses partenaires, ce qui constituerait un paramètre négatif supplémentaire dans l'édification européenne.

Il s'agit ensuite que le président François Hollande concrétise la perspective d'une visite d'Etat en Turquie au cours de la première partie de l'année 2013 comme cela a été évoqué. Le plus tôt sera le mieux et c'est d'une véritable visite d'Etat dont il est question. Rappelons que la dernière eut lieu à l'initiative du président Mitterrand il y a plus de vingt ans, en avril 1992, délai qui n'est pas digne des relations séculaires qui existent entre les deux pays. En outre, il serait le bienvenu que le président Hollande ne se contente pas de quelques heures à la sauvette comme son prédécesseur l'avait si inélegamment fait en février 2011.

Prenant appui sur ces décisions, il s'agira alors de mettre en œuvre des initiatives visant à créer un, ou des, succès commun(s). Des champs de coopération communs devaient pouvoir se décliner rapidement entre les deux pays sous peine de rester dans une situation de blocage en ressassant sans cesse les mêmes arguments. Ont ainsi notamment été évoqués lors des débats du séminaire les problématiques de défense-sécurité, les dossiers concernant les domaines culturels et enfin ceux qui relèvent du multilatéralisme.

Chacun comprend assez aisément que le cours de la construction européenne nécessite d'être repensé et modifié. La crise économique qui affecte l'UE, son incapacité à s'affirmer comme un acteur politique influent et écouté impose une nouvelle architecture et de nouveaux projets pour sortir par le haut d'une situation qui nous affaiblit collectivement. La nécessaire intégration à part pleine et entière de la Turquie ne se pose toutefois plus dans les mêmes termes qu'au moment où les pourparlers d'adhésion ont débuté.

Il faut désormais réfléchir à une Union susceptible d'être plus réactive, plus efficace et capable de peser positivement sur son environnement géopolitique. Non pas d'une Union à plusieurs vitesses, mais d'une Union au sein de laquelle il ne faudrait pas forcément attendre d'être d'accord à 27 pour prendre une décision importante. Une UE au sein de laquelle des coopérations diversifiées et renforcées pourraient se multiplier sans porter atteinte au projet commun qui unit ses membres, tout en respectant le rythme contrôlé de chacun d'entre eux. Il est d'ailleurs loisible de constater que c'est *de facto* déjà la voie qui a été empiriquement empruntée sur de nombreux dossiers. C'est au sein de cette nouvelle architecture que la Turquie devra prendre toute sa place.

Il n'y a rien de plus urgent que de sortir de l'impasse dans laquelle se trouvent à la fois la construction européenne et le processus de pourparlers turco-européen. D'ores et déjà il existe divers modèles d'intégration au sein de l'Union européenne. Il est par exemple loisible d'imaginer des cercles concentriques : le premier serait constitué des Etats formant une union politique et fiscale ; le second de ceux qui, comme le Royaume Uni et la Turquie, adhèreraient au projet européen et feraient partie d'institutions refondées sans obligatoirement appartenir à ce que l'on pourrait qualifier de noyau central.

De ce point de vue, la Turquie doit s'engager de façon proactive dans un tel processus et ne pas attendre passivement que les décisions soient prises à Bruxelles, Paris ou Berlin. D'autant que si l'engouement des Turcs à l'égard de l'Union européenne n'est plus aussi fort qu'il y a une dizaine d'années, il n'en demeure pas moins que les enquêtes sur les évolutions de l'opinion publique indiquent que légèrement plus de la moitié d'entre eux est encore favorable à la perspective de l'intégration européenne. On conviendra qu'au vu des années difficiles qui viennent de s'écouler dans la relation turco-européenne ces données constituent un fait politique majeur.

Ces éléments positifs s'expliquent probablement par le fait qu'en dépit des violentes turbulences que traversent l'Union européenne, l'économie de marché et les niveaux de protection économique et sociale restent des éléments d'appréciation positifs en Turquie. Inutile de se leurrer, l'impressionnant taux de croissance dont fait preuve l'économie turque depuis plusieurs années ne se poursuivra pas de façon linéaire. Ainsi, par exemple, dans une perspective de dix à quinze ans, le pays devra faire face au problème d'une population vieillissante et se doit donc de réfléchir dès maintenant aux problématiques de santé et de sécurité sociale. Qui ne comprend que ces réflexions, et les décisions qui devront en découler, seraient plus efficaces dans un cadre européen.

La crise européenne sera-t-elle ou non porteuse d'opportunités nouvelles ? La réponse n'est pas écrite à l'avance. Pour être positive, les responsables politiques devront faire preuve de volonté, voire de volontarisme. La crise doit être un électrochoc susceptible de mettre en œuvre un processus de réformes économiques et politiques visant à réorienter les objectifs et le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne.

C'est dans ce cadre que la perspective de l'intégration de la Turquie doit être pensée. Elle constitue potentiellement une opportunité économique pour l'Union européenne et le degré d'imbrication économique est tel que les avantages seraient largement supérieurs aux inconvénients.

Si la dimension économique reste essentielle, d'autres domaines de coopération semblent à la fois nécessaires et prometteurs. Plusieurs pistes ont été évoquées.

La construction d'une politique énergétique intergouvernementale. Chacun s'entend à constater que la France, l'Union européenne et la Turquie doivent faire face à d'immenses défis énergétiques qui sont de même nature : demande énergétique en hausse, compétition de plus en plus vive pour accéder aux ressources, investissements nécessaires pour le développement des énergies nouvelles colossaux. Non seulement il est urgent d'ouvrir enfin le chapitre énergie dans le processus de pourparlers, mais il faut dans le même mouvement repenser en commun les problématiques de transition énergétique.

La nécessaire refondation d'un partenariat méditerranéen digne de ce nom. L'onde de choc qui traverse les pays arabes depuis maintenant deux ans rend caduc les formes organisationnelles antérieures prises par le partenariat méditerranéen (Processus de Barcelone, Union pour la Méditerranée...). Or, si nul ne remet en cause le formidable potentiel économique, culturel et humain de cette région, il devient impératif d'inventer de nouvelles formes de coopération qui repensent à la fois la méthode de construction et le périmètre d'un tel projet.

L'édification graduelle d'une Europe de la Défense et la mise en œuvre d'initiatives de politique extérieure qui rassemblent le maximum d'Etats européens. La France, l'Union européenne ou la Turquie n'ont ni les moyens militaires ni les capacités diplomatiques capables de résoudre, chacune dans son coin, les nombreux conflits

non réglés qui persistent et se développent dans les régions de préoccupations et d'intérêts communs. Notre environnement stratégique commun est en pleine transformation et nécessite des réponses collectives qui prennent appui sur des expériences nationales irremplaçables.

Qui ne comprend que, dans chacun de ces quelques exemples (la liste est loin d'être exhaustive), la Turquie pourrait non seulement prendre toute sa place mais que ces initiatives seraient en outre des multiplicateurs de puissance pour les différentes parties.

Kemal Derviş, dans une récente livraison^{*}, nous livre des pistes qu'il s'agit de débattre et d'approfondir. Elvire Fabry fait de même dans le texte que nous vous soumettons aujourd'hui. Ces textes, ces réflexions, sont des jalons pour alimenter le nécessaire débat que l'Institut du Bosphore doit animer avec d'autant plus d'allant que le nouveau climat entre la France et la Turquie, évoqué précédemment, est favorable à la réflexion commune.

C'est pourquoi le texte qui suit est le premier d'une série qui s'insérera dans une collection que nous lançons sous le vocable de **Bosphorus Debates : Future of Europe**. Souhaitons que de multiples contributions enrichiront cette nouvelle initiative.



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^{*} "Turkey and Europe, a New Perspective", Kemal Derviş, Policy Brief, Istanbul Policy Center, "Global Turkey in Europe" Series, November 2012



DESPERATELY LOOKING FOR MORE EU-TURKEY GEO-POLITICAL AND GEO-ECONOMIC COOPERATION¹

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¹ The author thanks Sami Andoura (Notre Europe) and Chiara Rosselli (Notre Europe) for their most useful comments and suggestions

"It is not enough to think in terms of power over others.

We must also think in terms of power to accomplish goals that involves power with others.

On many transnational issues, empowering others can help us to accomplish our own goals."

Joseph Nye,
The Future of Power, 2011

The history of EU-Turkey relations is one of turbulent episodes. Much has been said about the missed opportunities for a constructive win-win cooperation that paved EU-Turkey relations in the past decades. But while negotiations on Turkey's accession to the EU have remained basically blocked for the past two years, **the current deadlock now portrays a strong anachronism**: the firm posture of the two parties remains the same despite the **depth and pace of transformations affecting both the EU and Turkey over the past four years**. The general context itself has changed, both in their **common neighbourhood and in the world, with major new regionalisation trends**.

Such a rapid evolution calls for a review of the EU's and Turkey's respective long term strategies and consequently of their current relations, allowing them to look upon each other in a new way, instead of risking to exacerbate a long lasting negotiation fatigue.

Yet the publication in October 2012 of the hardest-hitting of the fifteen Progress reports addressed to Turkey by the European Commission, and the fierce reaction of Ankara, are a new illustration of growing **discrepancy between, on one hand, frozen relations and increasing distrust** and, on the other hand, **more evidence of new convergence of strategic interest**.

Focused on its internal turmoil **while its influence on the global scene is progressively shrinking, the EU is in urgent need to think more strategically about its own role regionally and globally**. The question of finding a place for the EU-Turkey relationship within this strategic thinking should urge Europeans to adopt a new stimulating approach towards closer cooperation with Turkey.

This paper thus proposes to explore the challenges that the EU and Turkey are facing in their neighbourhood and new fields of cooperation that may help fostering dialogue, convergence of views, and give a new momentum to the enlargement negotiation.

I – REVIEWING THE EU AND TURKISH STRATEGIES IN A REGIONALISED WORLD

1.1. Assessment of Turkey's membership negotiation process

Old and new reluctances in membership perspectives

Turkey's membership negotiations are described as slow. They could almost be considered as blocked from their incipient. Since the opening of negotiations in October 2005, the only chapter closed is chapter 25 (Science and Research). Among the total 35 chapters, none of the further 12 chapters opened to negotiation has been closed and for the past two years no new chapter has been opened.

The reasons are well known. On one hand, the failure to come to an understanding regarding the application of Turkey's Association agreement, and the ensuing extension of the EU-Turkey customs union to Cyprus, induced a blockage from the Council and Cyprus of a total of 15 chapters. On the other hand, there is deep

reluctance of some Member States (MS) towards Turkey's membership. France blocked the opening of 8 chapters when President Nicolas Sarkozy was elected in 2007 and endorsed with Germany privileged partnership over membership, a perspective refused by Turkey. In addition France has established the legal obligation to hold a national referendum on Turkey's accession, and Austria intends to do the same.

Used on both sides for domestic electoral purposes, **the deadlock of negotiations has caused a dramatic slowdown of EU-Turkey talks** as well as dampening enthusiasm on the part of the Turks towards accession. Turkish President Abdullah Gül warned in May 2011 that the Turkish people may say "no" to EU membership. The "Positive Agenda" launched in May 2012 by the Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Štefan Füle, and the Turkish Minister for European Affairs and Chief EU negotiator, Egemen Bağış, was thus set to avoid a breakdown of EU-Turkey relations, and to inject new momentum into the negotiation. Eight working groups aim at supporting accession negotiations through increased cooperation on areas of joint interest². The setting of benchmarks and creation of a platform for increased communication and information sharing between Turkey, the Commission and MS are expected to support Turkey's alignment with the *acquis*. **So far, despite intensive work, the "Positive agenda" seems however to delivered few concrete results.**

Reframing the deepening and enlarging dilemma

Since its inception, the European Union has been framed around two main principles: deepening and enlarging. On the one hand, the EU has always extended to new MS, with the aim to reconcile the continent. Simultaneously, it has been animated by heated debates over the extent of integration and the possibility of differentiation, enabling a coalition of willing member states to integrate quicker and deeper. **Yet the two phases have rarely been successfully synchronised.**

Failing to properly anticipate the widening of the EU to twelve new countries, Europeans had to wait for the Lisbon Treaty for new internal restructuring. Meanwhile, the EU launched a new wave of negotiation processes with new potential entrants and Turkey being granted candidate country status. **The internal debate over deepening and enlarging was relaunched at the time, back in 2005, but then with particular attention to the notion of absorption capacity of the EU.** The framework of Turkey's negotiation accession, engaged in October 2005, contains thus conditions that are more restrictive than those imposed to former acceding countries. It mirrors the fear of certain MS that the EU is not able to integrate Turkey, because of specific potential impacts on EU institutions, policies and internal political dynamics as well as geopolitical and geostrategic implications. Turkey is larger and more populous than any previous candidate country. It lies in a strategically important but complex and sensitive geographical location. It is a secular state with a large Muslim population. Perceptions that may be negatively magnified by the current crisis.

But despite the economic and political development of the EU and Turkey being more uncertain than ever before, **their respective recent and profound evolutions impact the debate on the EU's capacity of absorption and Turkey's membership.**

² Political reform, alignment with the *acquis*, dialogue on foreign policy, visas, mobility and migration, trade, energy and counter terrorism.

1.2 Where is a more differentiated EU heading?

The European Union is facing its biggest crisis ever, fighting in order to save one of its core *acquis* - the Euro. Yet the crisis is political as well as economic and financial. The way out of the crisis passes by further integration at the political level. The EU is engaged in a process of further integration in four major pillars: economic Union, banking Union, fiscal Union, and last but not least a political Union.

Again, the debate over differentiated integration is taking place, but on new footing.

This time, the main question is about enhanced cooperation within the Treaty framework. As the crisis comes from the discrepancy between a supranational single currency and policies defined at the level of the nation states, focus is on whether the euro zone should serve as the basis for the enhanced cooperation of some MS.

The European Commission has its own plan for a Federation of nation states, inspired by Jacques Delors' vision of Europe. Germany has advocated a federal Union, which is going even further in terms of integration. Meanwhile, the UK is discussing repatriating some of its competences and stopping any further share of sovereignty. On the contrary, it sees its future place within a minimal European Union which would mainly encompass the internal market. France has set its own vision, advocating a policy of concentric circles where all EU countries could fit at their own place and pace.

It is not clear on which path the EU will engage, but what is sure is that the status quo will not be maintained. In any case, the EU is progressively engaging in a more differentiated fashion. Whatever solution is found, it might have an impact on the enlargement process itself. A Union of concentric circles would be more easily accessible to any candidate country, and the issue of absorption capacity would be different than is presently perceived.

If the center becomes more integrated, it will inevitably have an impact on the periphery. It would, on the one hand, be difficult for any country outside the EU to join the inner core group of "further integrated" MS while it would be easier for these same countries, applying to the EU, to join the European Union as a whole, along with the UK and other more reluctant towards integration. The issue of absorption capacity would become less accurate, but perhaps even more problematic for a country like Turkey if joining the core is envisaged. Turkey and other candidate countries could therefore expect prospects for change in the enlargement process, provided that conditions set by the EU are fulfilled by candidates.

A shrinking European influence: how to remain attractive and credible?

While the slow and complex process of differentiation is settled, the feeling of a loss of credibility and attractiveness outside Europe calls for more long term strategy in order to avoid a progressive marginalisation of Europeans³.

The well established phenomenon of multipolarisation of power and influence, with Asia's economic rise and other emerging powers developing self-interested agendas and demanding better representation in international bodies, is challenging European influence.

³ *European Influence: the need of a paradigm shift*, E. Fabry, Notre Europe – Institut Jacques Delors, October 2012.

But the problem is less the geographical shift of power in itself than the lack of an accurate assessment of this new reality across Europeans leaders. There is a pressing need for Europeans to **anticipate what will be ruling this multipolarised world** and how they can weigh in the new global order.

European's capacity to provoke an internal economic rebound will be of course a major factor. But **their management of the close vicinity may be the litmus test for Europe as a global actor. The neighbourhood has gained in strategic importance and the EU will need to prove it is able to operate successfully in the region, reducing risks of conflict and attracting neighbours to the EU's values and its single market.**

The bigger picture on the EU neighbourhood emerges as deeply challenging: in addition to the profound bottom-up evolution of some Arab countries, the EU is now competing in influence against **alternative strategic circles becoming ever more appealing to its neighbours, in particular, Turkey.**

Serious changes have begun in the Eurasian region. Turkish business men are open to the perspective of Black sea market integration, as well as a more extensive central Asian big market. In addition to the Customs Union between Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia (January 2010), the idea launched in October 2011 of a Eurasian Union (EAU), designed as an economic and political union of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and other Eurasian countries, in particular the post-Soviet states, is giving Turkey the prospect of a potentially attractive integrated market.

Europeans need thus a clearer vision of their interests and of the role they want the EU to play in the medium and the long run. The context of member states' decreasing funding capacities calls for more prioritisation of European external actions; whether it is by an acute assessment of the areas within which the EU can have a real added value or by focusing on the outcomes of more integration in the vicinity. The EU would demonstrate a far-reaching capacity of innovation if it was able to involve regional actors, and in the first place a key actor such as Turkey, in real strategic partnerships allowing for more integration in the neighbourhood.

1.3 Turkey's recent evolutions viewed from a crisis-ridden Europe

Do Europeans consider that Turkey alone has a role in international politics "as important as the whole EU" as was stated by Turkey's President, Abdullah Gül? They are probably not yet ready for such a paradigm shift. They could however ask themselves why Turkey is now mentioned as being part of the so-called TIMBIs (Turkey, India, Mexico, Brazil and Indonesia). These economies are set to shake up the world over the next decades because of the combination of three main factors: favorable demographics, democracy and large diversified economies. Their capacity to develop entrepreneurial cultures, increase education levels and increase their labor forces are important assets progressively expanding the power of those regional powers⁴.

Demographic complementarity and a strategic and resilient economy

Turkey's demographic dynamism is indeed in contrast with European's worrying demographic decline and increasing need for immigrated labor-force in specific economic sectors. The current 74 million Turks should

⁴ "Rise of the TIMBIs. Forget the BRICs. The real economies that will shake up the world over the next few decades need a new acronym", Jack A. Goldstone, Foreign Policy December 2, 2011.

reach 94,6 millions by 2050⁵, with a median age of about 28,9 years in 2012 (compared to 44,3 in Germany) which should be around 40,2 in 2050. While Turkish demography is thus showing gradual convergence with trends in Western countries, **Europeans could consider this reserve of young labor force with progressively higher levels of education as a means to help answer the EU demographic challenge in the long term.**

Turkey's economic and trade dynamism is even more striking. Compared to European economic stagnation, Turkey's economy is resisting well to the crisis and to a certain loss of investment in the region due to the Arab Spring (particularly in Libya and Syria). Despite the slowdown of its growth rate in 2012 (almost 4% versus 8,5% en 2011, and a potential average of 5% over 2010-2030) partly due to the decrease of its exports towards the EU, Turkey is maintaining the growth speed of an emerging economy which will markedly shift its position in the broad region.

There are worrying concerns, like inflation (10.4% in March 2012, well above the inflation rates of most other emerging-markets) and **growing dependence on foreign capital** (with an average current-account deficit of 10% of GDP in 2011). Yet this dependency can also be viewed by Europeans as **a strong incentive for Ankara to maintain a peaceful social environment**, based on democracy, the rule of law and freedoms, in order to remain attractive for foreign investment.

The only EU neighboring country included in a customs union with the EU and exceedingly integrated within the European single Market, **Turkey is a major market in the EU's vicinity⁶ and increasingly a regional trade actor.** It has successfully developed an efficient geo-economy: strengthening Turkey's position as a regional player and creating more opportunities for Turkey's businesses, are driving forces behind Turkey's policies in the neighbourhood. Diplomatic engagement and business contacts are viewed as complementary and closely interconnected⁷.

Turkey has thus taken advantage of its strategic geographic situation at the fulcrum of Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. The result is an increasing consumption of Turkish products in the region, going from agro-food products to the soap operas.

After signing an agreement for a free trade zone with Egypt in 2007 (no more than 3 years later trade tripled from 1 billion US dollars to 3,2 billion US dollars), Turkey signed a similar agreement with Syria, Lebanon and Jordan in 2010. Following the Arab Spring Turkey boosted economic relations with Egypt (almost twofold increase of Turkish export between 2010 and 2012) and the Gulf states. Turkey's trade with Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates , taken as a bloc, has equalled the importance of Turkey's main trading partner - Germany. This allows it to put less pressure on the need to export towards the EU and currently compensates the effects of the EU crisis on the Turkish economy.

Compared to oil economies, like Iran and Saudi Arabia, focused on rent, Turkish open trade policy is viewed positively by neighbouring countries which also benefit from increasing relations.

⁵ Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), 2012.

⁶ *Trade Policy in the EU's Neighbourhood. Ways Forward for the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements*, Iana Dreyer, Notre Europe, 10 Mai 2012.

⁷ *The EU and the East: too ambitious in rhetoric, too unfocused in action*, Lucia Lucia Najšlová, Věra Řiháčková, Olga Shumylo-Tapiola, *Think Global – Act European. Thinking Strategically about EU's external action*, dir. par E. Fabry, Notre Europe – Institut Jacques Delors, forthcoming March 2013.

Foreign policy: a new convergence of strategic interests?

Turkey's stable but less Brussels oriented government is worrying Europeans⁸, as they fear the erosion of the Kemalist modern secular Muslim country, and criticise Ankara's refusal to conform with human rights and democracy criteria enshrined in the *acquis communautaire*. The issue of the numerous journalists in prison and growing number of court cases against journalists and writers is not moving in the right direction. In addition, an increasing problem is the Kurdish issue teased by Damascus' initiative to leave more autonomy to the northern Kurdish communities of Syria. This problem is seen as a litmus test for the stabilisation of Turkish democracy.

But recent new foreign policy convergences and interdependences appeared between the EU and Turkey since the Arab Spring; forcing Europeans to reassess their perception of Turkey as drifting to the East.

The end of Turkey's traditional foreign policy alignment to the EU and Transatlantic community policies - initiated in 2008 by the well-known "zero problems" principle of Foreign Affairs Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu - had a strong negative impact on EU and Turkey relations. Needless to mention again EU critiques addressed to increased openness towards Syria and in regards Iran (opposing international sanctions in UN in 2010); refusal to increase Turkish soldiers in Afghanistan; or Turkey's offensive attitude against Israel (Cast Lead operation between December 2008 and January 2009); etc.

But challenging the EU as much as it has Turkey, the Arab Spring urges a new foreign policy dialogue *via* regular talks at the highest level between the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security, Catherine Ashton, and Minister Davutoğlu; an annual meeting of the two with EU Enlargement Commissioner Štefan Füle, and Turkish Minister for European Affairs Egemen Bağış; participation of Ahmet Davutoğlu to some EU's Gymnich meetings.

On one hand, Ankara's condemnation of Bashar El-Assad's attacks on the Syrian population and increasing worries concerning Iran's confrontational policy are also **distancing Turkey from Russia and Iran, and bringing it closer to its traditional occidental partners**. On the other hand, **Turkey's rising leverage in the Arab world, even before the Arab Spring, could usefully complement a European initiative.**

In a study conducted by TESEV⁹ in September 2010 in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Palestinian territories and Iran, 66% of the people questioned acknowledged that contemporary Turkey is the positive result of a successful marriage between Islam and democracy and that it could inspire Middle East countries. More than 70% consider that Turkey has increased its role in the region and could further increase it in the coming years, in particular in the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

The countries of the so-called Arab spring, experiencing the transition from autocratic regimes to democracy, see Turkey as a successful combination of a conservative traditional Islamic society with a modern economy open to the outside world and democratic institutions. But it is less the secular Turkish model in itself that is celebrated than the fact of a Muslim country with independent foreign policy becoming an economic power.

⁸ *Turkey-EU relations: time to rebuild trust*, Amanda Paul, Commentary, EPC, 19 October 2012.

⁹ *The perception of Turkey in the Middle East*. TESEV, TESEV report, 2 February 2011.

If on one hand Turkey bolsters Muslim pride, this form of appeal should however be mitigated. Ankara is wary of giving credibility to the idea of a neo-ottoman aspiration, provoking distrust from regional actors like Iran and comparing itself to the EU's transformative capacity. It favors instead investment in development projects (particularly in the African horn), business and NGO networks. Ankara is not in a position to bring about a successful modernisation and democratisation of the Arab world by itself and requires active support from the EU and the US¹⁰. **The Arab spring is thus sending Turkey back towards the Western sphere.**

In addition, Turkey's geopolitical leverage in the region depends to a large degree on the course of events in Syria. The war could cause Turkey to lose its main advantage in the region, namely a capacity to cross sectarian divisions within the Muslim community.

Turkish internal and external recent evolutions could therefore represent more of an asset than a liability for Europeans and bring new horizons to the EU's doorstep. There is a growing feeling that the EU's response to its neighbourhood's deep transformation may not be adequate and falters under the continuous evolutions of the area. Focused on internal turmoil, **the current inward-looking EU is wasting precious time not developing more strategic and long term sustainable relations with its neighbours.**

1.4. The limits of the EU's neighbourhood policy

A major revision of the EU's neighbourhood policies (ENP) has been launched during the spring of 2011 in order to adapt the European response to the demands of the protest movements¹¹.

Three principles enshrined in this strategy represent a clear shift from the previous EU's neighbourhood policies launched in 2003¹²: deep democracy (going beyond formal electoral processes and the respect of fundamental liberal principles), people partnerships (to foster pluralistic civil societies and engage with the diverse new spectrum of civilian actors in the Mediterranean) and finally inclusive growth (to guaranty a sustainable development and greater socio-economic equality). **But this adjustment is incomplete:** while the EU's democracy promotion remains confused, its relations with faith-based and traditional parts of civil society is awkward, and adding a few social investment projects on top of the EU's established agenda of market liberalisation, trade-opening and regulatory adjustment may not suffice to create inclusive growth¹³. The EU is offering new incentives (i.e. mobility partnerships, Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements - DCFTA). But their leverage is challenged by the influence of new actors in the region: the Gulf and its funding capacity, China, South-Korea...

While Europeans have been effective in supporting the improvement of democratic electoral processes, their leverage may be more limited if they were to be confronted to the scenario of a country opting for free elections combined with an illiberal domestic agenda. While liberal and western-style civil society actors benefit from the EU's support, distrust and disregard for Islamic and traditional parts of civil society may as well be counterproductive and deepen social divide in some parts of the region. Europeans need a more acute

¹⁰ "The EU and Turkey in the Southern Neighborhood: a new opening?", Adam Balcer, *Think Global – Act European. Thinking Strategically about EU's external action*, dir. par E. Fabry, Notre Europe – Institut Jacques Delors, forthcoming in March 2013.

¹¹ *Partnership for democracy and prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean*, COM(2011) 200 final, mars 2011; *A new response to a changing neighbourhood*, Commission and HR, May 2011; *A new European Neighbourhood Policy*, May 2012.

¹² *Wider Europe— Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, European Commission, Brussels, 11.3.2003, COM(2003) 104 final

¹³ "The Missing Spring in the EU's Mediterranean Policies", Haizam Amirah & Timo Behr, *Think Global – Act European, Thinking strategically about EU's external action*, dir. by E. Fabry, Notre Europe – Institut Jacques Delors, forthcoming in March 2013.

understanding of current trends of evolution of Islamic movements and to be more innovative when engaging with these. They need to diversify their channels of communication and cooperation in neighbours' civil societies (emerging social movements, civil organisations and economic actors...) without taking the sole criteria of Islamic display.

In addition the EU may not be sufficiently anticipating the impact of growing diversity in the region, while it is itself less attractive and credible.

Concerning the Eastern neighbourhood of the EU, it is striking to observe as well the failure to date of what the revised Eastern Partnership (Eap) refers to as a 'more for more and less for less' approach. Except for Moldova which is willing and able to reap the benefits of 'more for more', 'less for less' seems unappealing to the other Eastern countries and scarcely implemented, highlighting the failure of conditionality in the area.

In other words the EU's neighbourhood policy may be too short sighted to contribute significantly to the stability of the region, in the South as well as in the East. The EU needs a more long term vision for the neighbourhood and short term concrete outputs to respond to the day to day rapid evolutions of the region.

The reluctance of the Member States to engage with the neighbourhood is increased by the enormous uncertainties that characterises the region. **But the latter should be seen not only as a worry but also as a potential area of opportunities for EU Member States' economies and EU economic rebound.** It would incentivise Europeans to develop more ambitious long term projects supporting the neighbourhood's democratisation, stabilisation and integration. A more democratic and prosperous Mediterranean may offer investment opportunities, greater trade, transfer of knowledge, joint projects and other economic advantages and complementarities.

In this respect the Euromed region could offer a specific opportunity for EU-Turkey cooperation on long term integration of the region.

1.5 Relaunching bilateral dialogue by addressing neighbourhood challenges

EU-Turkey relations cannot remain hostage of negotiation deadlock. This inertia does not benefit either partner. Independently from the negotiation process that needs to be continued without anticipating the final result, **Europeans should start taking new initiatives allowing rebuilding trust and injecting new momentum back into their relations.**

The establishment of the cooperation through backdoor means may not seem highly likely as the CFSP constitutes an integral and important part of the accession negotiations. But if a quick relaunch of the negotiations doesn't seem to be on the table, it is realistic to envisage **a more constructive framework for negotiations. This could be achieved by transforming concrete interdependence into strategic cooperation** on the grounds of common interests beyond the enlargement process.

To anticipate the potential attractiveness of the Eurasian custom Union for the EU's Eastern neighbours, as well a more diffused shift of interests of the Middle East towards Eurasia, the EU needs to **explore more innovative projects allowing the establishment of the Mediterranean region as a hub for sustainable economic growth.**

The Arab Spring has revealed both weaknesses of and opportunities for Turkish foreign policy as well as for the EU neighbourhood policy, hence incentivising **leveraging the EU and Turkey's comparative advantages**. An effective response to the shift of tectonic plates underway in the neighborhood would thus be the establishment of a comprehensive strategic cooperation between Turkey and the EU in the Southern neighbourhood. Turkey would thus be seen by the EU as a strategic partner for co-management of the region.

This initiative would request **restoring confidence**. A renewed EU approach towards Turkey would request **to engage and consult Ankara rather than inform it**. A precondition for any further step would therefore be to sit at the same table. **Turkey would be seen and treated as a partner and not only as a candidate to membership.**

More broadly there is a strong need for a paradigm shift in European strategy in its vicinity, avoiding patronising attitudes and "donor mentality". The old tools and policies don't have the same impact. Europeans should be looking for more confidence, partnerships at different levels of society and co-management with other regional actors. If the EU has a clear idea of its interests, it can consider the empowerment of its neighbours as contributing to its own empowerment. As Joseph Nye puts it **"On many transnational issues, empowering others can help us to accomplish our own goals."**¹⁴

In a time of tightened fiscal budgets, any substantial increase in ENPI funding for the region beyond the current Commission proposal appears unrealistic. There is much room for upgrading EU support when it comes to trade and mobility. The EU should thus look for more cooperation from Turkey in an active economic, social and political integration of their neighbours in the global economy. They could together **design a package of major projects contributing to integrate the region allowing stimulating trade and trust between neighbours while serving Turkish and Europeans interests.**

Different projects could therefore be explored to pave the way to a new cooperation dialogue between the EU and Turkey.

II - REVIVING EU-TURKEY COOPERATION VIA AN INNOVATIVE POLICY FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Fostering the EU as a global actor means first it being an efficient actor regionally and adopting a more long term ambitious policy for its neighbourhood. The following sectorial proposals are thus meant to stimulate innovative strategic thinking for EU neighbourhood policy and more specifically for EU-Turkey cooperation rather than assessing their short term political feasibility. Certain grounds (security or democratisation) are more likely than others (energy, trade, mobility) to benefit from a new impetus in the short term, but long term perspectives remain a necessary precondition for political innovation.

2.1. Collective management of security issues

The EU needs a more comprehensive regional strategy for security issues.

While the Arab Spring has been disconnected from issues such as the Middle East peace process, the failure of the EU to re-think its approach towards this and other regional issues is dangerous. The potential for spillover is considerable (expansion of the Syrian civil war to the region, Iran, Israel-Palestine, protracted conflicts in the Caucasus and nearby, ...). And clinging to old realities does not seem to make much sense in the new context.

¹⁴ *The future of Power*, Joseph Nye, PublicAffairs, NY, 2011, foreword p. XVI-XVII

One way forward to encourage a more comprehensive strategy that goes beyond the “transitional paradigm” could be to rethink its relationship with the “new” regional actors such as Turkey and external actors such as China.

Seen as a security and regional influence provider, Turkey represents a new challenge for Europe. On one hand, while Turkey is on the front stage of the growing conflict between Israel and the Arab world -, it is also one important actor of European security in the Middle East. Turkey stands in fact at the crossroads of a series of challenging issues for the EU and more broadly for the transatlantic community: proliferation of nuclear weapons, containing conflict in the Middle East, dealing with Russia, ensuring a stable energy supply, etc.¹⁵

On the other hand, the so-called « American pivot », consisting in redeploying part of the US diplomatic and military resources away from Europe towards the Pacific, requests Europeans to shoulder their responsibilities and stop being “consumers of security”, free riders on the back of America’s security policy, to become active producers of this collective asset¹⁶. The end of an American guarantee over the security of the region is asking therefore for more responsibility from the other NATO partners present in the region.

Turkey’s mediation capacity could be usefully complementary to the EU action in the Middle East and in protracted conflicts of the Eastern neighbourhood and South Caucasus. Alignment to the EU policy shouldn’t be viewed as a preliminary condition for Turkey’s foreign policy.

Cooperation on the Syrian issue may be a useful precedent for further cooperation between Turkey and the EU – as well as the US – on other new crises (humanitarian intervention, support to the Syrian opposition, effort to develop international consensus on solutions...). The EU and Turkey could as well develop *ad hoc* participation at the highest level in decision-making in areas that are vital to Turkey’s interest. A Euro-Turk strategic defense Council to deal with the Middle East issues could also be envisaged.

Other initiatives as to how to unlock Turkey’s observer status to the European Defense Agency and allowing an observer role to Turkey at the Military committee of the EU (EUMC) would give a strong political signal that the EU is genuinely willing to consider Turkey, its natural NATO ally, as a key partner in security issues. Turkey could be associated to new armament programmes. The training field offers additional possibility of cooperation (creation of a joint training center for air-ground fights - which is lacking in the EU because of the density of population – for tactics and operational exercises with a common head quarter for the EU and Turkey).

Europeans, Turkey and the US could create in the Caucasus a regional military structure for cooperation allowing to rationalise training, practice and arm supply for Georgia and Azerbaijan. Combating organised crime, and maritime security continue as well to warrant multilateral solutions.

¹⁵ *Getting to Zero: Turkey, Its Neighbors and the West*. Ahmet Evrim, Kemal Kirisci, Ronald Linden, Thomas Straubhaar, Nathalie Tocci, Juliette Tolay, Joshua Walker, Transatlantic Academy, 2009-2010.

¹⁶ *4 Years with president Obama development and future prospects of transatlantic relations*. Bertrand Rioust de Largentaye, Policy Paper, Notre Europe – Institut Jacques Delors, 22 October 2012, p5.

2.2 Democratisation and support to civil society

Europeans may not be comfortable with the idea of criticising the lack of improvement in the respect of democratic principles in Turkey itself while simultaneously acknowledging that there could be a possibility for more coordination and cooperation in multilateral fora to support ongoing democratic transitions and joint measures to put further pressure on regimes using brutal repression against peaceful demonstrators (as in the urgent case of Syria).

Both Turkey and several EU member states have an expertise in joint actions to support security sector reform in post-authoritarian contexts. Turkey could have a complementary role to the EU's support of civil society democratic initiatives as Turkey's political parties and civil society organisations have different and complementary contacts in Arab countries. This is particularly obvious if the EU acknowledges that there is a need to deal with Islamist movements. Turkey could thus be involved in the design of new instruments that are already on the table, such as the Civil Society Facility or the European Endowment for Democracy.

EU and Turkey's development policies could also benefit from regular dialogue between DEVCO-EuropeAid and TIKA (Turkish Cooperation Agency), both at the level of Policy Planning Units and in specific countries where TIKA and the European Commission pursue or are planning to develop actions¹⁷. And finally, bilateral EU-Turkey action on governance support, by bringing Turkey into EU twinning and Taixex programmes (administration training) in the neighbourhood, and EU-Turkey action on political party support in the neighbourhood could be an additional base of cooperation and dialogue¹⁸.

2.3 Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Energy Community

With the global growing pressure over natural resource access, Turkey is gaining increasing political leverage over its partners in the EU and elsewhere out of its well known transit corridor position for energy resources – as it is located at the doorstep of an area representing 68 % of global oil reserves and 75 % of global gas reserves. **It is above all strategic to EU's diversification objectives, but not only. Turkey is also key to the EU's long term project of creating a pan-European energy block - i.e. market-, which would encompass both the South Eastern Energy Community as well as a potential Euro-Mediterranean Energy Community.**

The European Union is increasingly importing energy from abroad, with particularly high rates of import dependency for fossil fuels. Security of supply is thus one of the major pillars of EU energy policy, together with competitiveness and sustainable development, and it will remain extremely important in the years to come. As a result of the reduction of European oil and gas resources and the increasing demand until at least 2030, the import dependency of the EU will increase in the short and medium term.

While in 2007, the EU already imported 53% of its energy consumption with natural gas accounting for 60% of these external needs, its energy import dependency should reach 59 % in 2030 with natural gas dependency representing 83% and oil almost 95%.

¹⁷ *The EU, Turkey, and the Arab Spring: From Parallel Approaches to a Joint Strategy?*, Eduard Soler i Lecha, *TU Turkey and the Arab Spring: Implications for Turkish Foreign Policy from a Transatlantic Perspective*, Nathalie Tocci, Ömer Taşpınar, Henri J. Barkey, Eduard Soler i Lecha, and Hassan Nafaa, *Mediterranean Paper Series*, October 2011, GMF- IAI, p32.

¹⁸ *The Prospects and Meaning of a Strategic EU-Turkey Dialogue on the Neighborhood*, Nathalie Tocci, GMF Analysis, September 2012. p3.

Moreover, the supply of natural gas to the EU is mainly dominated by three main suppliers (79% of EU total gas imports), namely Russia, Norway and Algeria. Most of this gas is delivered through pipelines and traded under long-term contracts linked to the price of oil. Moreover, as an economically attractive option for investors, a potential backup source for renewables and the cleanest of fossil fuel, natural gas is expected to play an important role in the European transition towards a low-carbon economy by 2050.

At the end of the day, **Turkey and the EU have in some respects quite similar energy profiles, mainly the one of consumer actors, strongly dependent on energy imports, and relying on some key suppliers** such as Russia, and increasingly Central Asia and Middle Eastern countries.

In view of all these challenges, it is crucial for the EU and Turkey to further enhance their cooperation in the field of energy in the aim of improving security of supply and developing Turkey's role as an energy hub for the entire region.

However, the EU and Turkey are still missing a comprehensive energy partnership, given that the energy chapter of the accession negotiation process has not been opened so far. It is therefore one of the numerous areas where bilateral cooperation should be developed without waiting for further accession talks.

First of all, Turkey is a potential key strategic energy hub for the EU gas markets through the Southern Corridor.

To secure their supply Europeans need to diversify their energy sources, both in terms of suppliers and transit countries. The key project in this regard is the Southern Corridor which aims at bringing natural gas and oil from both the Caspian basin and the Middle Eastern reserves to the EU markets through Turkey, in order to decrease EU's dependency from its three main suppliers.

Turkey is already a key transport corridor with the oil pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (operating since 2006) and the gas pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (operating since 2007). But there are various competing major projects for diversification of gas through the corridor (Nabucco, TAP...). The flagship of the Southern corridor is the Nabucco pipeline which has been facing huge difficulties from its inception, as well as strong competition from Russia with the South stream pipeline. Yet whatever project succeeds at the end, or whether it is a combination of parts of several of them, Turkey is involved in all these projects as a transit country and will remain involved in the Southern Corridor. It has a financial and political interest (autonomy *vis à vis* Russia, and enclosure of Armenia) in organising the transit of Azerbaijan petrol and gas through its territory.

Whereas the EU expects to open its Southern Corridor in the long term to energy imports from the Caspian reserves, mainly through the building of the Nabucco gas pipeline, it needs to conclude the necessary agreements and align its economic, technical and political means in order to complete this project in due time. Both the EU and Turkey need to remain committed to the process of concluding these binding international agreements and energy partnerships with producer and transit countries, as well as with other key international actors.

Second, Turkey could play its role as energy hub not only for the Southern corridor but more broadly for the whole eastern Mediterranean region

Turkey would thereby connect European markets to those of Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Iran and Azerbaijan in order to connect the Mediterranean, the Caspian, the Black Sea and the Gulf. Such a grand project, initially supported by the EU, has the potential to integrate Mashreq energy markets through regulatory harmonisation and the development of infrastructure networks (interconnections, pipelines and LNG terminal), and to be ultimately connected with EU markets via the planned Southern Corridor, Nabucco pipeline and Mediterranean ring.

The advantages for Turkey itself as a major gas hub to Europe would be significant: improving its own energy security; coping with its growing internal consumption; and granting it lucrative transit revenues. However, no concrete steps have yet been undertaken, and prospects that this project would move forward have been frozen since the political turmoil on the MENA region started, and is unlikely to resume before any change takes place and long term stability is restored.

Third, Turkey is called to play an increasing role in the expansion of the EU energy market to its neighbors.

Indeed, Turkey's role cannot only be limited to the Southern Corridor. The EU intends to expand its own energy markets to its neighbors and thereby exporting the EU *acquis communautaire* in the field of energy, independently from the enlargement process with the countries involved (mainly from the Balkans). The instrument, vector of integration, for such a purpose is the Energy Community Treaty for South-Eastern Europe.

Last but not least, Turkey has an important role to play in developing the vast renewable energy potential from Eastern and Southern Middle East, with the longer-term goal to export electricity to the EU.

The main channel for cooperation in that field is the Union for the Mediterranean. It represents a unique opportunity for the region to develop and exploit its energy potential in a sustainable way. The Southern Mediterranean Region and the EU could build together an industrial policy based on the development and production of renewable energy in order to cover local energy needs and to export renewable electricity to the EU.

For this to occur, several elements need to be in place, such as regulatory harmonisation, policy cooperation, R&D and transfer of technology, education and training, the necessary infrastructures to both produce and transport this electricity, etc.

In all these stages, the EU and Turkey have a role to play. Ultimately, such enhanced and structured cooperation on energy could lead to a fully-fledged Euro-Mediterranean Energy Union, based on the *acquis communautaire* on one side, and on cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean on the other.

2.4 Opening the EU-Turkey customs union

A more effective response to the Arab spring than the new ENP would be to establish a wide Euro-Mediterranean Economic Area, in which goods, services and capital could move freely. The development of

trade in the EU's neighbourhood is a factor of stabilisation for the neighbourhood and has the potential of kick-starting growth in Europe and stimulating growth in Turkey. These would continue developing their trade and investment on an EU-Turkish bilateral basis while developing them in the neighbourhood.

Different bilateral agreements have already been settled between the EU and its neighbours in the framework of the European Union-Mediterranean Free Trade Area (EMFTA), based on the Barcelona Process (planning the setting up of a Free Trade Area - FTA - for the Mediterranean Region and the Middle East by 2010) and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). But the FTAs signed with the EU have encouraged European imports towards the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries, and less the contrary.

In addition, agreements across the MENA countries themselves are lagging, exception made for the establishment of GAFTA (Greater Arab Free Trade Area) and the Agadir Agreement¹⁹ that establishes a free trade agreement compatible with EU rules. The result is that trade amongst the MENA represent only 10% of intraregional trade²⁰. South-South integration remains limited by a lack of political commitment and serious structural obstacles²¹. In the absence of political support, globalisation has increased regional fragmentation. Movement towards deeper integration remains therefore primarily limited to a bilateral level. **To prevent further fragmentation of the Mediterranean region and to help Southern Mediterranean countries to overcome structural barriers to integration, more EU and Turkish support in interregional cooperation and South-South integration is desirable.**

The EU has developed a new model of association agreement, the "Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement" (DCFTA) to anchor neighbouring countries to the EU's single market. It is deeper than a simple tariff reduction and it intends to remove all barriers to free trade, *via* the harmonisation of laws, rules and standards of each country with those of the EU. The European Council of 18th October 2012 has thus requested to accelerate the start of negotiations of DCFTAs with the Southern partners.

In addition to the heavy condition of allying with the *acquis communautaire*, if the aim is to create a matrix of Free Trade Agreements between each of the partners and the others and ultimately form a single free trade area inclusive of the EU and Turkey, this method would take a long time before achieving a completed EU-Mediterranean Free Trade Area.

Among different proposals that are currently designed to improve regional economic integration²², one may deserve more serious consideration by Europeans, namely **shifting from an FTA model to a customs union**. The idea would be to extend the EU-Turkey's custom Union progressively to other MENA Countries. A single agreement would be necessary as opposed to multiplying separate bilateral agreements which are needed at present²³.

The feasibility of the customs union extension to the MENA region should be explored. It could allow the Turkish and EU policymakers to engage in a substantive dialogue on the project and to formulate a proposal

¹⁹ The Agadir agreement, signed in 2004, concerns Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

²⁰ *Economic Integration in the Mashreq*, the World Bank, 2010.

²¹ *Regional Integration in the Mediterranean Moving out of the Deadlock?*, Timo Behr, Study n°77, Notre Europe, May 2010.

²² *Trade Policy in the EU's Neighbourhood. Ways Forward for the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements*, Iana Dreyer, Notre Europe, 10 May 2012.

²³ *A Faster, Better Route to Economic Integration across the Mediterranean*, Sinan Ülgen, International Economic Bulletin, Carnegie Europe, October 13, 2011.

aiming at encouraging the Mediterranean countries to join the EU-Turkey customs union. **Turkey could play an active role as it is a successful example of a customs union extension increasing competitiveness towards the rest of the world.** The 1996 EU-Turkey custom Union (CU) has indeed been a major instrument of integration for the Turkish economy into the EU and global markets, offering powerful tools to reform the Turkish economy²⁴. Turkish producers of industrial goods are protected by tariffs from external competition to exactly the same extent as EU producers, and they face competition from duty-free imports of industrial goods from world-class pan-European firms. In return, Turkish industrial producers have duty-free market access to the European Economic Area (single market 27+3). Trade liberalisation achieved through the CU has thus successfully encouraged the evolution of the Turkish government-controlled economy to a market-based one, and Turkish producers of industrial goods have performed remarkably well. The CU also offered Turkey the opportunity to establish new institutions, modernise and upgrade rules and disciplines required for the elimination of technical barriers to trade, and for the implementation of the EU's competition, industrial property rights, and contingent protectionism policies. This successful experience could be a strong incentive for neighbouring countries.

2.5 Euromed mobility

Visa liberalisation is a litigated issue between Turkey and the EU. Turkey is very critical of the EU's management of visa liberalisation, which has been favoring non candidate countries (i.e. the Western Balkans which concluded talks on visa-free travel between 2008 and 2010, none being candidates at the time, or currently Moldova and Ukraine). This critique is reinforced by the fact that visa requirement creates a competition bias in the application of the EU-Turkey Customs Union.

The recent relaunch of talks for a roadmap for granting visa liberalisation to the Turks has delivered few results, as Ankara is unwilling to sign a readmission agreement which does not include an explicit commitment towards offering visa liberalisation for Turkish nationals. The negotiation of a readmissions agreement has been ongoing since 2003. A text was finally approved in the Justice and Home Affairs meeting of 24 February 2011, and initiated on June 21st 2012. It explicitly stated that this dialogue does not constitute a negotiating mandate for visa liberalisation. The general feeling on the part of the Turks is that too little is being done too late.

Progress has however been achieved on Asylum and irregular migration border control²⁵, which is a growing worry with more Middle East and Central Asia illegal migration using Turkey as a corridor towards the EU. Turkey has devoted growing attention to border management issues since 2008 (modernisation of visa procedures through the implementation of online processing, introduction of biometric security measures, implementation of EU integrated border management, establishment of a coordination board for integrated border management although no roadmap has been approved...). A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Frontex and the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in May 2012. It includes participation in training activities, joint operations, and deployment of FRONTEX experts to Turkey, organised exchange of information and risk analysis. Enhanced financial and operational support could thus be granted to Turkey if EU expects compliance.

²⁴ *The EU-Turkey Customs Union: A Model for Future Euro-Med Integration*, Sübidey Togan, MEDPRO Technical Report No. 9/March 2012

²⁵ *International migration Outlook 2012*, OCDE, p278.

Europeans are however uncomfortable with Turkey's visa liberalisation policies in 2009 towards their Muslim neighbours. Whilst the EU wishes Turkey would align its visa requirements with its own, Turkey uses migration policy to further its domestic and foreign policy goals. The EU remains designed as a fortress while Turkey is presenting itself as a platform for circular movements.

The EU might need to reconsider its unrealistic expectations of Turkey in the light of the protracted and contested nature of accession talks.

The EU will need to compensate its demographic deficit by increasing in the medium term its labor force with immigration. Migration and mobility are indeed highlighted in the Europe 2020 strategy as able to contribute to the vitality and competitiveness of the EU. While countries like the US or Canada have ambitious high qualified migration policies, the EU has just started developing a more attractive policy for selective immigration (Blue card, mobility partnership, ...). But while mobility partnership are still based on the cherry picking logic of the few Member States willing to participate, the number of bilateral agreements between neighbouring countries and MS remains very limited.

High EU unemployment and growing pressure of illegal migration call for more efficient border control. **But a forward looking analysis of the EU's future labor force needs could lead Europeans to envisage a migration policy more oriented toward a regional mobility strategy** rather than remaining largely engrained in the current security logic. The EU would approach its cooperation with Turkey – currently a zero net migration country - on the matters of Migration and Mobility as a mutually beneficial strategic priority.

In addition to the current Global Approach to migration and mobility (GAMM), **the EU could develop a more ambitious long term vision of selective mobility in the neighbourhood (Euromed mobility)**, in which cooperation with Turkey would be welcome in areas of mutual interest in the region such as illegal migration and labour force mobility.

The EU could therefore consider sending a positive sign to Turkey by resolving the visa liberalisation deadlock for specific categories of the population (businessmen, students ...), which is becoming increasingly politicised. Informal dialogue and exchange of ideas and practices would be a priority for the constructive relationship with Turkey in this field. The positive agenda is a step in the right direction and could be a fruitful platform for advancement, although it too might suffer from political resistances given its close correlation with the accession process.

Conclusion

This stimulus package of initiatives could allow taking a distance from various sectorial deadlocks in negotiations and avoid limiting the EU-Turkey relations to the exclusive institutional channel of the accession process. Such a revisited EU-Turkish cooperation would be coherent with a membership perspective without necessarily anticipating the result of the negotiation.

Identifying which elements of a joint initiative would bring the highest added value and maximum visibility would allow restoring a more constructive logic between the two partners. Interesting outputs may also be obtained via a bundling method. If the political feasibility of the different projects in the short term is

questionable, the priority remains that of giving purpose to renewed dialogue, bringing together the two partners around the table and providing a new ground for cooperation.

Engaging more closely with Turkey in the neighbourhood demands confidence and boldness on the European side. But in the midst of global uncertainties and shifting tectonic plates, Europeans need more forward looking policy and a narrative telling the citizens where the EU will be heading; and as Tommaso Padoa Schioppa used to say, "long-term issues are urgent ones".²⁶

About Bosphorus Institute / Institut du Bosphore :

Conceived as an organization fostering ongoing, free and objective dialogue, Institut du Bosphore tackles the full range of geopolitical, economic, societal and cultural issues, in order to highlight Turkey's involvement in the international fabric of society, the G20 and in particular its proximity to France and integration to the European Union.

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²⁶ *Contre la courte vue*. Tommaso Padoa Schioppa, President of Notre Europe - Institut Jacques Delors from 2005 to December 2010 and former Minister of Economy and Finance of Italy; Odile Jacob, 2009