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**Turkey and Greece:  
Friends or Enemies**

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## **Turkey and Greece: Friends or Enemies**

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### **Abstract**

In the political life and also in the academic circles the Greco-Turkish relations are generally perceived as problematic. However, as this study shows this is not completely true. Some primary sources show that Greco-Turkish relations have seen ups and downs. Publicly or secretly, time to time these two countries have developed friendly relations, even as a surprise to the international circles. The aim of this paper is to examine the background and the reasons of the changes in the relations between Turkey and Greece.

After the formation the Republic of Turkey the countries had strained relations for a short period. However, from the end of 1920s to 1950s Turkey and Greece successfully formed good relations. It was the Cyprus problem (then also Aegean) that poisoned their relations. Even when Cyprus became a major problem and effected their relations negatively, Turkey and Greece were able to maintain “moderate” relations. As the primary sources show, even during the armed conflicts the countries were able to continue the dialogue.

During the Cold War the United States endeavored to develop warmer relations between Greece and Turkey. This was of vital importance for the southeastern flank of NATO and for Greece and Turkey in the struggle against the Soviet Union. The geography has bound them to live as neighbors, and preferably friendly. After the collapse of the Soviet Union (SU) instability in the region hindered the two countries to design their future policies effectively. However, during last decade, Greece and Turkey have overcome difficulties by putting core problems aside and by focusing on low politics to develop better relations.

**Key Words:**

**Corresponding Author:**

## **Introduction**

Relations between Greece and Turkey are generally perceived as being problematic. For example, for Poulton Greece and Turkey were the traditional enemies.<sup>1</sup> However, as this study shows this is not completely true. Some primary declassified sources of US and other sources show that the Greco-Turkish relations used to have ups and downs. In this context, although there have been obstacles and problems, time to time the parties have developed friendly relations, even as a surprise to the international circles.

It is a reality that the Hellenic Republic was established with the independence war against the Ottoman Empire (1821-1829) and the Republic of Turkey was formed after a war against Greece in Asia Minor (1919-1923). After 1923 the two countries have had strained relations for a period.

Yet, since the end of 1920s the relations between Greece and Turkey had developed so positively that Kemal Atatürk, the President of Turkey, was nominated as a candidate for the “Nobel Peace Prize” by the leadership of Greece. Until the Cyprus problem evolved the parties had good relations. Actually, the leaders of two countries have tried hard until mid-1950s not to allow Cyprus to poison their relations. However, many domestic factors of both countries negatively influenced the Greco-Turkish relation later in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet, although Cyprus was a major problem which effected their relations negatively, they were able to construct moderate relations.

During the Cold War the United States had endeavored to develop warmer relations between Greece and Turkey and they were determined to survive as friendly neighbors. The containment policy of the US against the SU required closed relations within NATO. The US had to make Turkey and Greece to live in peace. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union disturbances in the region did not help the two countries to produce concrete plans for their future. It was after the Öcalan incident when Greece and Turkey overcame the difficulties by putting core problems aside and by focusing on low politics to develop better relations.

## **Tensioned Relations between Greece and Turkey in 1920s**

With the heritage of the Greek War of Independence and the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1923, the identities of the peoples in Greece and Turkey were constructed on otherness. For the Greek the Turk was the other, or the foe, and vice versa, and for both nations the enmity was a central part of their identity. The population exchange between the two countries after the Peace Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 made the situation worse, and hatred between them was accepted as “normal”. In both countries the exchange created big traumatized émigré populations. Also, the Turkish efforts to create a national bourgeoisie increased the pressure on the non-Muslims - including the Greek

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<sup>1</sup>Poulton, H. (1997), 295.

minority in Turkey - who controlled most of the commerce in Istanbul. As a consequence many non-Muslims emigrated from Turkey.<sup>1</sup> It is a “usual” phenomenon that during the nation-building process the dominant ethnic group ignores or even pushes the minority groups to the margins. Under these circumstances it was not possible for the leaders of the countries to have friendly relations. In the end, it was the threat of revisionist parties which pushed them to work for better relations.

### **The First Period of Friendship (1928-1939)**

In the end of 1920s Turkey was willing to solve all its problems with Western countries. The Turkish aim was to have peaceful and pro status-quo foreign policy with its neighbors. On the other hand, in Greece in 1928 Eleftherios K. Venizelos was able to form a majority government and put an end to instability.<sup>2</sup> Also Greece wanted to settle the problems with the neighbors. The reason of the first rapprochement between the two countries was their common enemies. To confront revisionist Italy and Bulgaria they needed each other's support. Accordingly, Turkey and Greece agreed to settle the political and economic questions caused by the exchange of populations.<sup>3</sup> The Greek Prime Minister Venizelos visited Turkey in 1930 and the Turkish Prime Minister İnönü Greece in 1931.<sup>4</sup> In 1933 Turkey and Greece signed in Ankara the ‘Cordial Agreement’ for military and security matters for ten years. Furthermore, in 1934 they signed agreements to strengthen the cooperation and trade. To remove the psychological barriers between two countries it was important that Venizelos proposed Atatürk for Nobel Peace Prize. Here we have to remember that during the 1919-1923 war Atatürk was the commander of the Turkish army that defeated the Greek army in Asia Minor. In 1934 Greece and Turkey signed the Balkan Entente Pact in which also Yugoslavia joined.

In 1936 Greece gave its support to the new arrangements for the Turkish Straits. In 1937 İnönü visited Greece again. In his personal message to Metaxas Atatürk wrote that the “frontiers of Balkan Allied States constitute one single frontier: Those who threaten this frontier shall meet with the burning rays of the sun. I advise them to beware.”<sup>5</sup> This clearly reflects the warm relations between Turkey and Greece. Besides these friendly relations in the 1930s there was a major improvement in the Turkish treatment of the Greek-speaking minority living in İstanbul and the Aegean islands of Turkey.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Tragedy of population exchange is explained in detail in Gökaçtı, M. A. (2004); and in Clark, B. (2006). For the roots of tensions between Turkey and Greece see Volkan, V. D. and N. Itzkowitz, 1994; A Turkish nationalist view towards Greece can be seen in Türsan, N. (1987).

<sup>2</sup>Fırat, M. (2006), 207.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>The information of official visits of Greece and Turkey's representatives are from Oran, B. (2006).

<sup>5</sup>Oran, B. (2006) from *Ayın Tarihi* (1937), 42, May1-31, 226.

<sup>6</sup>Atatürk and Venizelos relations are explained best in Demirözü, D. (2007).

## Second Period of Friendship (1950-1955)

The alliance between Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia in the 1940s and NATO membership of Turkey and Greece contributed to the development of better relations between Greece and Turkey. However, Greece was critical to Turkey that it failed to carry out its obligations during the Second World War. For Greece Turkey disregarded its commitments by staying out of the war and it also suspended its relations with the government of Greece in exile. Moreover, Turkey imposed the Wealth Tax to the non-Muslims. The Greek minority of 0.55% paid 20% of the Wealth Tax. In general, the tax was a big disaster for all minorities.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, it can be said that the Turkish actions damaged the confidence between Greece and Turkey.

When Greece and Turkey became members of NATO in 1952 and parts of capitalist world their worldviews were reformed. The US was the major contributor to warm relations between Turkey and Greece. As in 1930s, in 1950s Greece and Turkey had common enemies. According to the US any problem could have poisoned the relations between Greece and Turkey.<sup>2</sup> The US was to prevent any clash between the two NATO partners on Cyprus and the Aegean Sea. When differences between the US and the SU emerged, Washington saw it necessary to bring Ankara and Athens closer together in pursuit of its Balkan and Middle East policies.

The rapprochement started in 1947 with the Truman Doctrine. Yet, Turkey and Greece had to wait until 1950 (the end of the Greek civil war and the Democrat Party rule in Turkey) to strengthen their relations. One good example of the rapprochement between Ankara and Athens and of Washington's contribution is the collaboration in the election process of the new patriarch of Phanar (Fener). Both parties agreed on Spuru Athenagoras, the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of North America.<sup>3</sup> This was a major improvement because relations between patriarch of Phanar and Ankara usually had been problematic.

Throughout the 1950s in both Turkey and Greece right-of-center parties were in power.<sup>4</sup> The top officials of Greece and Turkey had reciprocal visits and they strengthened the friendship. In 1952 Greek Prime Minister Sophocles Venizelos visited Turkey. During the visit, Permanent Turkish-Greek Joint Committee was established to achieve greater political and economic cooperation and promote trade. During the visit the Turkish Foreign Minister Fuat Köprülü emphasized that the visit of Venizelos "was the reflection of undivided friendship between Turkey and Greece." For Köprülü the "visit was a chance for him to show the devotion of the Turks to the heroic Greeks." Venizelos declared that he was proud of being "the friend of the Turks" and happy for close relations between Turkey and Greece."<sup>5</sup> Also in 1952 Prime

<sup>1</sup>Clogg, R. (1990) 12-13; Zürcher, E. J. (1995) 290-291.

<sup>2</sup>Stearns, M. (2001), 239.

<sup>3</sup>Firat, M. (2006), 349.

<sup>4</sup>Oğuzlu, H. T. (2004), 462.

<sup>5</sup>Available at <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/ayn-tarihi2-detay.aspx?y=2>. [4 September 2013].



Minister Adnan Menderes and President Celal Bayar separately visited Athens and King Paul and Queen Frederica visited Turkey. Agreements on reciprocal and joint fishing rights in certain parts of the Aegean Sea were signed and also visa requirements were lifted in 1952.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to note that although the peoples of both countries were displaying an interest in the question of Cyprus, their governments were avoiding the subject in order not to damage the atmosphere of friendship and the NATO interests.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the rapprochement led to the Balkan Pact in 1954. However, in the following period the internationalization of Cyprus problem caused growing differences between Athens and Ankara. Generally speaking, the friendship continued even under the shadow of the Cyprus question.

### **Decolonization, Domestic Developments and Their Effects on Bilateral Relations (1954-1974)**

In postwar period two important developments reshaped the international order and the Greco-Turkish relations: the Cold War and the decolonization process. The process did not only affect the colonial powers but also damaged the Greco-Turkish relations. The US intervened in the Greco-Turkish problems and they seemed to be settled and the NATO's interests protected.<sup>3</sup> The outcome was that the Republic of Cyprus was established with nationalist powers of both parties in power. The Republic could only live with the goodwill of the local leadership. However, the leaders of Cyprus were Turkish and Greek nationalists and their struggles destroyed the bi-communal structure of the Republic and since 1964 the Turkish Cypriots were out of the state organs.<sup>4</sup>

From 1964 to 1967 Greece and Turkey aimed to solve the Cyprus problem under the US-NATO mandate. In 1968 they both supported intercommunal talks to solve the Cyprus problem and the talks continued until the end of 1973. Since 1968 there was a ceasefire in Cyprus between the two communities. From 1964 to 1967 there were strained but moderate relations between Greece and Turkey. After 1967, the relations between Turkey and Greece were always not perfect. Yet, even during the war situation the communication lines between Turkey and Greece were open. The parties met mainly on the ministerial level during the NATO meetings.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fırat, M. (2006), 213, from *Ayın Tarihi* (1952), 42, February, 276.

<sup>2</sup>Aslım, İ. (2010), 20.

<sup>3</sup>Acheson, Deptel to Athens 236, 18.7.52, FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol. VIII, p. 674-675; The US mediation in Cyprus to solve Cyprus explains in Belcher, Airgram from Nicosia G-35, 12.12.58: doc. 747C.00/12-958, box 3285, NARA; NSC Report: "Statement of US Policy toward Cyprus" (NSC 6003), 9.2.1960, Vol. X Part 1. Doc. 347. Available at: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v10p1/d347>. [22 September 2013].

<sup>4</sup>Joseph, J. S. (1999), 38; Kızılyürek, N. (2008).

<sup>5</sup>Aslım, İ. (2010), 128.

The military coup of Greece in 1967 did not change the relations and Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize the Junta in Athens. In the same year when the relations between Athens and Nicosia became strained, Greece asked Turkey to treat the issue “as a Greek internal matter and not intervene.”<sup>1</sup> Turkey accepted it. If we compare the relations between Athens-Nicosia and Athens-Ankara with the state-level relations we can say that the latter were better. Thus, it is not surprising to learn the report of the US Ambassador Henri Tasca. He informed Washington that Foreign Minister Panayiotis Pipinelis had reaffirmed the desire of his government to work with Turkey instead of President Makarios to settle the problems.<sup>2</sup>

In the middle of 1972 the rapprochement between Greece and Turkey reached a level where they showed their secret cables to each other. The most important point here was that they also agreed to keep the cables related with Cyprus secret from the Government of Cyprus.<sup>3</sup>

### **Cyprus-Aegean Questions and Strained Relations (1974-1990)**

In November 1973 Brigadier Dimitrios Ioannides displaced the Papadopoulos administration. However, his position was not strong and he tried to get sympathy of the public by running tough policy against Turkey. Ioannides' tough policy changed the Greco-Turkish relations dramatically. The tension reached its highest level due to the Aegean continental shelf and its possible oil resources. Oil became more valuable with Yom Kippur war and the Arab oil embargo in the Fall of 1973. Greece began exploratory oil drilling in the northern Aegean in 1973. In November Ankara also declared oil exploration rights in the area which Greece regarded as its own. Tension increased in the end of March 1974 when Athens claimed that Turkey's bombers were violating Greek air space. On the other hand, Turkey's Foreign Minister Turan Güneş declared that Turkey would not allow the Aegean to become a Greek lake. Turkey sent a survey ship supported by 32 warships into the disputed area to study the feasibility of oil drilling.<sup>4</sup> Once again the relations between Turkey and Greece became strained.

In 15 July 1974 Ioannides and the Greek-Cypriot National Guard staged a coup against President Makarios and five days later Turkey responded with a landing on Cyprus.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the island became *de-facto* partitioned.<sup>6</sup>

In Greece Ioannides was removed from power and Constantine Karamanlis returned from exile and became the new Prime Minister. One of

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<sup>1</sup>Handley, Embtel Ankara 975, 10.2.1972: POL 27 CYP, box 2228, NARA.

<sup>2</sup>Tasca, Embtel Athens, 1065, 6.3.1970: POL 27 CYP, box 2225, NARA.

<sup>3</sup>Handley, Embtel Ankara 3597, 18.5.1972: POL 27 CYP, box 2228, NARA.

<sup>4</sup>O'Marley, B. and I. Craig, (1999), 152.

<sup>5</sup>Davies Embtel Nicosia 1338, 15.7.1974: Records of Joseph Sisco, 1951-76, Chronology of Cyprus issue and other Documents, Entry 5405, box 24, NARA.

<sup>6</sup>Deptel to White House 157175, 19.7.1974: Records of Joseph Sisco, 1951-1976, Chronology of Cyprus issue and Other Documents, entry 5405, box 24, NARA.

the major changes in the Greek foreign policy was now the reorientation toward Europe and the membership in the EEC.<sup>1</sup> Cyprus had been the core of the Greco-Turkish relations since the 1950s. After 1975 the Aegean question turned to a bad headache for Greece. The dispute was over the sharing of both territorial waters and the continental shelf. To decrease tension and to improve the relations, on 17 April 1976 Karamanlis made an offer to Turkey to abandon the arms race, sign a nonaggression pact, and settle all questions in a peaceful manner. Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel responded first positively. But when the opposition parties claimed that Greece was now able to shift the balance in the Aegean and that Demirel was damaging the national cause, Demirel sent research vessel *Hora* to the area which Greece considered as its own. Once again Turkey and Greece landed to the brink of war. Again it was the United States that eased the confrontation.<sup>2</sup>

After the military operation of Turkey in Cyprus in 1974 Greece was out of the NATO military structure and since 1975 the US tried to lift the veto of Turkey to allow Greece to return there. In 1980 when Europe protested the military coup in Turkey its foreign policy shifted towards the US. General Kenan Evren lifted the veto when NATO's supreme commander General Rogers gave "word as a soldier", that once Greece is back, the two countries would settle the issues of command and control of the Aegean Sea through bilateral relations. The American pressure toward Turkey had resulted in a success and Greece was now back as a full member of NATO.

In 1983 elections Turgut Özal, a neoliberal gained power in Turkey. Özal was a politician whose political vision was based on economic relations. For him the Cyprus problem and the quarrel with Greece hampered Turkey's relations with the West and they had to be solved immediately.<sup>3</sup> After an escalation in the Aegean, Turkey and Greece decided to start a dialogue process of to overcome the problems.

Özal and Papandreou met on 30 and 31 January 1988 in Davos and decided to establish two committees for promoting cooperation and to identify the obstacles for the lasting solutions. Özal, accompanied with a delegation of 170 people, mostly businessmen, visited Athens in June 1988.<sup>4</sup> However, it became clear that the goodwill and initiatives of the leaders was not enough. Adequate technical preparations were absolutely necessary.

### **Volatile Relations (1990-1995)**

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War changed the international politics. Naturally, the Greco-Turkish relations were influenced,

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<sup>1</sup>From Sisco to Secretary, Athens 4658, 19.7.1974: RG 59, Record of Joseph Sisco, 1951-1976, Cyprus Crisis, July 1974, Entry 5405, box 26, NARA, Doc. 99. Available at <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v30/d99>. [22 September 2013].

<sup>2</sup>Clogg, R. (1991), 16; Firat, M. (2006), 455.

<sup>3</sup>Birand, M. A. (1991), 28-33.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, 33-34.

too. The regional conflicts in the Balkans pushed Turkey and Greece to further the relations. Andreas Papandreou's tough policy towards Turkey from 1993 to 1996 strained bilateral relations. Imia (Kardak) crisis, the S-300 Missile Crisis of Cyprus and the Öcalan crisis were the obstacles in preventing better relations between Turkey and Greece. Greece and the Republic of Cyprus also signed an agreement of "Common Defense Doctrine" and tried to exploit the Kurdish conflict in Turkey. As expected, Turkey retaliated and signed an Autonomy Treaty with the Turkish Republic of Northern Republic (TRNC) that was formed in 1983. With this treaty TRNC was joined with the Turkish foreign relations and defense.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, Papandreou's hard line policy had damaged the image of Greece and it had to invest heavily on military with a negative impact on the Greek economy.

### **From Crisis to Friendship (1996-2013)**

The first sign of a new friendship appeared in the meeting of Turkey-EU Association Council on 6 March 1995. There, the Custom Union was formally approved and Athens did not use its veto against Turkey. Next year when Konstantinos Simitis gained power he decided to follow a more moderate but cautious policy towards Turkey. As Greece was an EU member its policy was to let Turkey deal directly with Brussels and not Athens. Simitis and the new Foreign Minister of Greece, Georgios Papandreou realized the necessity of the dialogue and tried to find a way to restore it. Ankara's approach was positive and Papandreou met with İsmail Cem, the Foreign Minister of Turkey. The meeting gave green light to the dialogue and established a new personal friendship between the two men. Turkey and Greece firstly decided to improve their relations in low politics and track-II diplomacy and focus on high politics later.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the earthquake on 17 August 1999 in the Istanbul region accelerated the process and the Greek citizens spontaneously provided assistance to the victims.<sup>3</sup>

The year 1999 started the shift to the détente between Greece and Turkey. The earthquakes that struck Greece and Turkey in 1999 changed the climate of the bilateral relations. Greece and Turkey began to redefine the political and strategic interests as well as the identity perceptions. The earthquakes allowed the political elites in both countries to claim support for, and gain legitimacy in their policy transformation. Accordingly, the negative images and stereotypes, the chronic enmity mentality began to change in both countries.<sup>4</sup> Keridis is right when he points out that the citizens of Greece "are no longer hostages to the memories of 1949 or 1965."<sup>5</sup> This was also true in their foreign policy visions. They were less nationalistically oriented and saw their future in

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<sup>1</sup>Firat, M. (2006), 791-804.

<sup>2</sup>Tzimitras, H. G. (2008), 111.

<sup>3</sup>Firat, M. (2006), 814.

<sup>4</sup>Tzimitras, H. G. (2008), 112.

<sup>5</sup>Keridis, D. (2001), 9.

Europe. Of course, the European Union has promoted the civil society and NGO initiatives in both countries, has facilitated the promotion of conflict reduction and has served as a framework for the legitimization of new policies.<sup>1</sup>

The international conditions altered domestic calculations in both countries. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union “the emerging regional instabilities in the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East posed major security concerns”.<sup>2</sup> The position of Greece was not different and it also faced the instabilities in the region. Again the external factor has given impetus to the warm relations between Turkey and Greece. Cyprus-EU negotiations offered a new path towards the normalization of relations between Greece and Turkey.<sup>3</sup> However, the EU negotiations and membership of Cyprus changed the Cyprus issue from a bilateral one into a multilateral one.<sup>4</sup> In conclusion, Simitis policy was successful and the disputes in the Aegean and Cyprus were linked to Turkey’s membership in the EU.

After the collapse of the junta in 1974 foreign policy of Greece aimed to put Europe at the center of its policy. The Europeanization of the foreign policy of Athens successfully led Greece the EU membership. Since 1999 the EU candidacy of Turkey altered its foreign policy dramatically.<sup>5</sup> The domestic reforms of Turkey to meet the Copenhagen criteria had an enormous impact on its foreign policy.

On 28 May 2004, in a speech at Oxford University, Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, declared that “if Turco-Greek rapprochement is possible today, it is because we have a common ground through which mutual perceptions are most accurate. That common ground is the EU.”<sup>6</sup>

Erdoğan’s government used to run the “zero problem policy” with the neighbors. However, since 2012 there are a low number of neighbors that Turkey has zero problems with. In 2004, the questions that Athens was called to deal with were: “What if there is no short-term resolution of the impasse in Cyprus? And how does Greece meet the challenge of rapprochement with Turkey if there is a deadlock in EU-Turkish relations?”<sup>7</sup> Today, these questions continue to be relevant. However, although there is a deadlock in EU-Turkey relations and Turkey’s “zero problem with neighbors’ policy” collapsed, the rapprochement between Greece and Turkey continues. For Dayioğlu, the relations between Turkey and Greece are transforming from “fragile détente to durable partnership”.<sup>8</sup> Dayioğlu finds out that after 2000 Greece and Turkey signed many bilateral treaty agreements. This is important because the last trade agreement was signed on 7 November 1953. The positive

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<sup>1</sup>Tzimitras, H. G. (2008), 114.

<sup>2</sup>Oğuzlu, T. (2007), 85.

<sup>3</sup>İlter, T. and B. Dilek. (000II ), 475-476.

<sup>4</sup>Kalaitzidis A. and D. Feslen. (2007), 230.

<sup>5</sup>Aydın M. and S. A. Acikmese. (2007), 263.

<sup>6</sup>Available at <http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/esc/docs/Erdogan1.pdf>. [3 September 2013]

<sup>7</sup>Triantaphyllou, D. (2005), 333.

<sup>8</sup>Dayioglu, A. (2013), 4-5.

trend of trade relations only decreased in 2009 and 2010 because of the economic problems of Greece. In the tourism sector the Greek revenues from Turkey increased thirteen fold from 1999 to 2006 and the Turkish revenues from Greece even twenty fold. After 1999 the investments of the businessmen also have increased. In mid-July 2013 Foreign Minister of Greece, Evangelos Venizelos paid a visit to Turkey and met his colleague Ahmet Davutoğlu. They reaffirmed their pleasure of economic integration of the two countries. Foreign Minister Davutoğlu stressed the importance of the Greek EU-Presidency in 2014, when Turkey-EU relations would accelerate and become closer.<sup>1</sup> Recently on 9 August 2013, Greece and Turkey signed two important agreements on agriculture and navigation as common projects.<sup>2</sup>

It seems that relations between Greece and Turkey are not dependent on Prime Minister Erdoğan's tough domestic and foreign policy in the Middle East. The reason is that the relations between two neighbors are institutionalized in several sectors and are not much dependent on the will of the leaders.<sup>3</sup> Of course, it is true that the leaders can make positive effect in bilateral relations.

## Conclusion

Firat is right when she writes that “the policies of nation-states that had been stressing differences for 200 years had been able to obliterate the friendship between peoples, which drew its strength from 1000 years of coexistence in the same region and the shared culture and memories that bound them together.”<sup>4</sup> The Greco-Turkish relations used to have ups and downs. As it is explained above, 1928-1939, 1950-1955, (although with Cyprus problem) 1960-1973, 1990-1993 and from 1996 forward they have had “friendly” relations. The relations between Greece and Turkey are institutionalized in numerous areas and not very dependent on the will of the leaders. Of course the leaders can further either hatred or friendship but since 1999 both the citizens of Greece and Turkey are showing respect and friendship to each other. The European Union is also a good mediator to help the leaders of Turkey and Greece. If the Europeanization of the two countries policies continues not only in the secondary issues, but also in the core issues (as Cyprus and the Aegean), they can be solved in near future. The public opinion is ready for solutions and since 1999 the citizens gradually freed themselves from the control of their leaderships and the leaders are not anymore under the

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<sup>1</sup>Available at <http://www.haber7.com/dis-politika/haber/1051695-yunan-bakan-ile-davutoglu-ne-gorustu>. [19 July 2013].

<sup>2</sup>Dayıoğlu, A. (2013), 4-5.

<sup>3</sup>Government of Turkey's hegemonic and warrior policy in the region and its affect at domestic politics as pressure and violence on democratic opposition is explained in Kaboğlu, İ. Ö. (2013).

<sup>4</sup>Firat, M. (2006), 814.

pressure of nationalist public opinion. Consequently, there is the public support for the positive steps of the leaders as never before.

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