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## Turkey unveiled and the dawn of a new energy opportunity for the EU



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**Why does Turkey resolve to bullying and jingoism? Why Turkey disrespects the rights of its neighbors despite announcing a campaign of “zero problems with its neighbors”? Why does the world allow Turkey to do so? Is this bully-like behavior part of the DNA of the vast majority of Turks or is it just the result of “chronic” brainwashing and practice? Why does the UN remain silent when it comes to Turkey? Why does Turkey threaten with military action against Cyprus and Israel? Can Turkey really provide an example of an Islamic country? Can Turkey provide energy security for the EU? Is Turkey’s EU accession good for the EU? Is Turkey drifting away from secularism toward Islamism? Is Turkey secular? Can ever Turkey become a trusted NATO ally or will remain an unpredictable one?**

Turkey is the world’s 15th and Europe’s 7th largest economy. It is the EU’s fifth largest export and seventh largest import partner; a nonpermanent member of the United Nations Security Council, a G-20 founding member, and current holder of the post of Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Turkey’s potential is vast: The OECD predicts that Turkey will overtake India as the second fastest growing economy by 2017 and will be the second-largest economy in Europe by 2050. Turkey occupies a key position as not only a hub, but also indeed a central player in ensuring the energy security of the whole of the EU. Is it so though? Can Turkey ensure the energy security of the EU? Can Turkey be “entrusted” with the energy security of the EU?

### Minorities in Turkey

Turkey is a land of vast ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. It is home not only to Turks, Kurds and Armenians, but also millions of Alevis, Ezidis and Assyrians (Syriacs). There are also Laz, Caferis, Roma, Rum (Greek Orthodox), Caucasians and Jews. But instead of celebrating this diversity, the history of the Republic of Turkey is one of severe and sometimes violent repression of minorities in the name of nationalism.

Since the foundation of the state, the only protection for minorities has been that set out in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne.

Turkey has been violating the Treaty since it was adopted, not least by restricting its scope to Armenians, Jews and Rum Christians. Minorities excluded from the Treaty of Lausanne rights have been banned from using their languages in schools and in media, and from fully exercising their religious rights. Others have been subjected to policies aimed at homogenizing the population of Turkey and destroying minority language, culture and religion. Only Turkish language, culture and history have been tolerated in education and political life.

Minorities in Turkey as a percentage of population (%)			
#	Minority	2010	1914
1	Kurds	18 - 23	30 - 35
2	Laz	1 - 2	N/A
3	Roma	5 - 7	N/A
4	Alevis	30 - 33	38 - 42
5	Armenians	0.08	8 - 9
6	Assyrians (Syriacs)	0.02	3 - 3.5
7	Caferis	4	N/A
8	Jews	0.03	1 - 1.5
9	Reformist Christians	0.01	N/A
10	Rum (Greek Orthodox Christians)	0.02	7.5 - 8.5

Source: Minority Rights Group International, CIESIN, CRER, CEIFO, CEREN

A 10% electoral threshold prevents minority parties from gaining access to parliament. In the media, broadcasting in minority languages, (having been banned for decades), is severely restricted. Use of minority languages in political life and in public services is still forbidden. School textbooks reproduce negative stereotypes of minorities. There is no effective legal mechanism against discrimination. Generations have therefore been sentenced to lack of access to political participation, illiteracy and denial of their right to freedom of expression, with no recourse to justice. Millions, largely Kurds and Assyrians, remain displaced from their homes.

Violence has been a part of life for many minorities under the Turkish Republic and it has been increasing in the last years despite Turkey’s promises for change. Minorities who differ from the majority on the basis of their ethnicity, denomination and mother tongue remain unacknowledged in the eyes of the law. The number of individuals belonging to various minority groups in Turkey is unknown, since the state does not ask citizens about their ethnic, religious or other origin in censuses. Up to 1990, censuses included a question about mother



tongue, but after 1965 the State Institute of Statistics stopped disclosing this information. Thus, the only official information on minorities in Turkey relates to the number of individuals who declared their mother tongue in 1965. This information is out of date and probably inaccurate because some individuals might not have disclosed their mother tongue, and because mother tongue is more an indicator of the language spoken in the family than the ethnic origin of the individual.

### **Erdogan's Turkey vs. Israel and the U.S.**

The decades-long alliance between Turkey and Israel is in shambles, and U.S. diplomats are working overtime to fix what's broken... Erdogan has led Turkey since 2002 as head of the Justice and Development Party, which is rooted in Islam. Backed by a roaring economy, Erdogan has set vaulting ambitions to expand Turkey's leadership of the Arab world, and strengthen economic and political ties to the East and predominantly with Iran, even while preserving the nation's valuable security relationship with the U.S. But these goals often work against one another. Turkey's ties to the U.S. have been strained by its feud with Israel, which has sent the Obama administration into an unsuccessful scramble to make peace between two U.S. allies who used to be friends

Turkey sees its economic future in the East, having left the issue of European Union membership in its rearview mirror. Since the AKP won re-election handily in June, Mr. Erdogan feels he's in the driver's seat, with an enormous amount of political capital at his disposal. As recently revealed in a Wiki Leaks document, Mr. Erdogan's foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, talked about Turks as the "New Ottomans," the dominant player in the region.

U.S. officials "understand" that Erdogan remains bitter about Israel's May 2010 commando attack on a flotilla organized by activists in Turkey to bring aid to the Gaza Strip, which is under blockade by Israel. Eight Turks and a Turkish American died in the attack. Erdogan threatened recently to dispatch Turkish warships if Israel threatened any Turkish ships headed to Gaza. But it is harder for U.S. officials to accept the way Erdogan has escalated his conditions for normalizing relations with Israel, now demanding an end to the blockade of Gaza as well as a formal apology for the deaths of the Turkish citizens. U.S. officials are nervous about what they see as a populist campaign to build an international reputation on the back of anti-Israel rhetoric.

Already considered the most popular politician in the Arab world, Erdogan thrilled crowds last month during a trip to Egypt, Tunisia and Libya when he stated that Israel was "the West's spoiled child."

Turkey has become outspoken in its opposition to Syrian President Bashar Assad's violent crackdown on antigovernment demonstrators, after begging Obama in July to delay calling for Assad to step down. But though Erdogan has denounced Assad's crackdown as "savage," he has tried to avoid disrupting Turkey's valuable trade and investment ties to Syria. Turkey is expected to soon impose a round of economic sanctions on Syria, but analysts predict they won't go as far as the White House would prefer.

U.S. officials claim they stay in close touch with Turkey, in part to avoid surprises. Last year, for example, Pentagon officials were alarmed to learn that Turkey had conducted military exercises with China, with no advance notice, raising questions about its plans with NATO...

The U.S. has reached out to Turkey during the Erdogan era and received very little in return, starting with Ankara forbidding the U.S. Army's Third Infantry Division to enter Iraq overland through Turkey. Had that force worked its way south toward Baghdad in 2003, history might well have played out differently in terms of the strength of the Iraqi insurgency and its capacity to generate years of unrest and kill thousands of U.S. troops.

With no one willing to call Mr. Erdogan to account, his Islamist regime regularly bashes the press, narrows the parameters of civil liberties at home, and defends terrorists such as Hamas abroad. In return, President Obama traveled 5,000 miles to Ankara in 2009 to extol the virtues of the Erdogan regime...



For a change, when Turkey talks about flexing its muscles in the Mediterranean, the U.S. should remind Ankara that the U.S. has interests in the region, and that the Sixth Fleet is still in business. And Congress once and for all should remind Turkey that there is no statute of limitations on genocides. With Ankara so keen on seeking apologies, it's time we heard Turkey offer apologies for the massacres of a million or more Armenians, a million or more Greeks, hundreds of thousands of Assyrians during and after World War I, as well as an offer of reparation payments for the families of the victims.

Turkey seems to think the U.S. no longer matters, that its own destiny as regional superpower is assured, and that no one can challenge its moralistic stance as it sits grandly in judgment of all its neighbors. Whether the U.S. can succeed in influencing Turkish behavior remains to be seen. But the days of going to the diplomatic table with a basket of carrots and no sticks must end.

Turkey has redirected its strategic thinking away from the United States and the West. The notion that Turkey will only go "so far" and will feel compelled, at the end of the day, to return to the West's fold, reflects wishful thinking...

### **Turkey threatens Cyprus with military action, again**

In December 2010, Turkey reacted furiously after Israel and Cyprus signed an agreement demarcating the border of their endorsed by international law maritime exclusive economic zones. Leviathan is on the Israeli side of the border and Block 12 (or Aphrodite) is on the Cypriot side.

Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974, after a military coup on the island, and subsequently set up the illegal "Turkish Republic of North Cyprus", which controls almost 37% of the island, recognized only by Ankara. There are numerous UN Security Council, UN General Assembly and Council of Europe resolutions calling amongst other for Turkey's withdrawal from Cyprus. The Turkish invasion of 1974 perpetrated a third of its citizens into refugees who are still denied their basic human rights, including right of access to and use of their property. Additionally, the illegal settlement of the occupied areas by settlers from mainland Turkey, the destruction of religious and cultural heritage of the area under Turkish military control and ethnic cleansing against the remaining in the occupied area Greek Cypriot population is systematic... The Turkish military activity in and around Cyprus has been a constant phenomenon in defiance of international law...

In mid September 2011 Cyprus with a consortium consisting of Noble Energy Inc. of U.S. interests and Delek Group Ltd. of Israeli interests commenced exploration drilling. In violation of international law, Turkey has followed its verbal threats by sending a number of naval vessels – frigates, corvettes, gunboats – accompanying the "Koca Piri Reis", a "research vessel," into the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Cyprus. At the same time, there has been an increase in air activity of the Turkish air force south of Cyprus, and air and naval exercises of the Turkish forces.

Despite firm responses to the Turkish threats and allegations, by the United States, European Union member states, and the EU Commission, with clear statements by all aforementioned bodies, that Cyprus is in full compliance with international law and norms and has every justification to exercise its sovereign right, Turkey threatens that it will go ahead with exploration and possible exploitation or extraction activities within exclusive economic zone of Cyprus... the exclusive economic zone of a member of the European Union... and Turkey is a candidate for membership to the Union...

### **Finally, Energy Security for Europe in the "pipeline"**

The vulnerability of the EU to energy supply risks is a fact but this can be no more. If the most conservative data is taken into account in regard to the natural gas reserves discovered in the EEZ of Cyprus, for the first time ever in European Energy History, the EU is guaranteed an uninterrupted supply of a traditional energy source.



The natural gas discovered in Cyprus is not just a Cyprus issue; it is an issue of primary importance for the whole of the European Union that should be tackled jointly by both Cyprus and the EU. For the first time ever the EU is given the opportunity to avoid dependence of energy supply on politically and economically volatile countries and regions such as Ukraine, Turkey, Eurasia and the Middle East!

Cyprus, Israel and the EU should jointly work together to ensure that an appropriate framework and solid plan are in place in order to complete exploration drilling and commence exploitation as quickly as possible. The U.S. as well, world history has proven that stable EU means stable U.S. What is more, the EU and the U.S. must make Turkey understand that it has to conform to international law.



Both the EU and the U.S. have to assist the U.N. to enforce a just solution to the Cyprus problem and not the lukewarm solutions that the U.N. is parading on the Cyprus Talks table the past 37 years, lukewarm proposed solutions that are mediated by UN Secretary General's Envoys that for reasons that can be anybody's guess they are geared to put pressure on the weak side; Turkey, the strong side, is allowed to taunt the U.N. and what it stands for! The oxymoron? The U.N. itself and its representatives seem to enjoy the U.N.'s taunting by Turkey and as odd as it sounds the U.N. seems to promote it!

In regard to Turkey's constant violations of the EEZ and sovereign airspace of Cyprus the international community must give a much stronger message to Turkey. It is to wonder what would the reaction of the U.S., Germany, France or the UK be if another country violated daily their EEZ and sovereign airspace...

Cyprus can become a guaranteed primary natural gas source and transit route to the EU, of the EU!

### What is the legacy that we, Europeans, want to leave behind?

According to EUROPA, the EU's mission in the 21st century is to:

1. Provide peace, prosperity and stability for its peoples;
2. Overcome the divisions on the continent;
3. Ensure that its people can live in safety;
4. Promote balanced economic and social development;
5. Meet the challenges of globalization and preserve the diversity of the peoples of Europe;
6. Uphold the values that Europeans share, such as sustainable development and a sound environment, respect for human rights and the social market economy.

Where does Turkey, an EU candidate country, stand with the above? Has Turkey ever made a sincere effort to meet even with one of the above EU mission statements? What are we going to tell our children? When they ask why Turkey occupies illegally almost 40% of another EU member country! When Turkey threatens with military action against another EU member country! When Turkey repeatedly violates human and minority rights! When we, Europeans, do nothing about it but instead "pamper" and "spoil" Turkey in the name of personal and sovereign power games! What a tragedy not only for us but for our children!

Have we reached our critical point, our point of reasoning? Or is it true that the critical point is only reached at the brink of destruction!

What is really the legacy that we want to leave behind?



### Turkey unveiled – A timeline of key events and human rights in Turkey

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| <p>1908 Young Turk Revolution. The Revolution restores the parliament, which had been suspended by the Sultan in 1878. It was against the absolute monarchy of the Ottoman Sultan.</p> <p>1914 World War I. Pro-German sympathies result to a secret treaty of alliance of Ottoman Turkey with Germany. Turks fight against the Allies.</p> <p>Armenian Genocide. Through wholesale massacres and forced marches from 1914 to 1918 it is estimated that 1.5 million Armenians have been murdered. Thousands other are made into sexual slaves, raped, tortured. Armenians had been living in what is Turkey today (Eastern Turkey) since the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C.</p> <p>Greek Genocide. Through wholesale massacres and forced marches from 1914 to 1923 it is estimated that 1 million Greeks have been murdered. Thousands other are made into sexual slaves, raped, tortured. Greeks have been living in what is Turkey today (Western and Northern Turkey) since the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C.</p> <p>Assyrian Genocide. Assyrians or Syriacs are Christians mostly orthodox but also catholic residing in what is Turkey, Syria and Iran today since the 24<sup>th</sup> century B.C. From 1914 to 1920 an estimated two-thirds of Assyrians (750,000) are murdered by the Ottoman Turks in organized massacres, starvation, disease, and systematic kidnapping and rape.</p> <p>1919 Greek - Turkish war. As per the Treaty of Sèvres between the Ottoman Empire and the Allies at the end of WWI, Greece is allocated territories in Anatolia, such as East Thrace and Smyrni (today Izmir). Nationalist Turks who did not recognize the Ottoman government defy the Treaty. The war lasts between 1919 and 1922 and leads to the Treaty of Lausanne which supersedes the Treaty of Sèvres.</p> <p>1915 Kurdish Ethnic Cleansing. Since 1915 up to present day millions of Kurds have been forced to move out their homeland (eastern and southern Turkey); since 1984 alone more than one million Kurds have been evicted from their homes. Thousands have been murdered, tortured, jailed.</p> <p>1923 Assembly declares Turkey a republic and Kemal Ataturk as president.</p> <p>The Treaty of Lausanne is signed that sets the boundaries of the Republic of Turkey and obliges Greece to return eastern Thrace and the islands of Imbros and Tenedos to Turkey, as well as to give up its claim to Smyrni. Some minority rights are granted to "non-Muslims" in Turkey.</p> <p>1928 Turkey becomes officially secular: clause retaining Islam as state religion removed from the Constitution.</p> <p>1934 Law No. 2510 instructs the transfer of non-Turks to Turkish speaking regions. Non-Turks are not allowed to form more than 5% of the population. Non-Turkish villages and towns are depopulated and Turks settle in non-Turkish areas. "Assimilation" methods are imposed, such as the establishing of boarding schools which were intended to turn non-Turkish children into monolingual Turkish speakers.</p> <p>Mob attacks against Jews and Greeks in East Thrace.</p> | <p>1939 World War II. Turkey remains neutral during most of World War II but enters on the side of the Allies a few months before the end of the war.</p> <p>1947 The Truman Doctrine. A post WWII civil war in Greece and demands of the Soviet Union to set military bases at the Dardanelle Straits prompts the USA to declare the Truman Doctrine which encompasses large scale US military and economic support.</p> <p>1949 Member of the Council of Europe.</p> <p>Law allows state to change names of non-Turkish villages to Turkish.</p> <p>1955 The Istanbul pogrom. Mob attacks against non-Muslims in Istanbul. Mainly Greeks are targeted, churches are destroyed, cemeteries are unearthed, properties are burned to the ground, tens of thousands of Greeks residing in Istanbul are forced to emigrate.</p> <p>1960 Military coup.</p> <p>1963 Turkey bombs Cyprus.</p> <p>1965 State Institute of Statistics stops disclosing information on mother tongue gathered from the census.</p> <p>1971 Military intervenes in politics by 'memorandum' and Prime Minister resigns.</p> <p>1974 Turkey invades Cyprus and occupies almost 37% of the island. One third of its population become refugees in their own country. Numerous UN Security Council and Council of Europe resolutions demand Turkey's withdrawal from Cyprus.</p> <p>1980 Military coup.</p> <p>1982 New constitution restricting fundamental rights and freedoms comes into force. Mandatory religious education (Sunni Islam) is introduced.</p> <p>1987 Turkey applies to accede the European Union.</p> <p>1991 Leyla Zana, a Kurdish parliamentarian speaks her language in Parliament; she is arrested and jailed for 15 years with three other MPs.</p> <p>1992 20,000 Turkish troops enter Kurdish safe havens in Iraq in anti-PKK operation.</p> <p>1994 Constitutional Court closes down the pro-Kurdish Democracy Party (DEP).</p> <p>1995 Major military offensive launched against the Kurds in northern Iraq, involving some 35,000 Turkish troops.</p> <p>1999 The death toll of Kurds killed in Turkish military operations is estimated to be over 40,000. According to the Turkish Parliament, 6,000 Kurdish villages were systematically evacuated of all inhabitants and 3,000,000 Kurds have been displaced.</p> <p>2000 The chairman of the Turkish Human Rights Association, Akin Birdal, is imprisoned under Article 312 for a speech in which he called for "peace and understanding" between Kurds and Turks.</p> <p>2001 Diplomatic row with France after French National Assembly recognizes the killings of Armenians</p> |
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- under the Ottoman Empire as genocide. Constitutional amendments. The adoption of Article 301 which has since been used to prosecute scores of writers, publishers and thinkers for expressing views on the Armenian or Kurdish question that go against the state view.
- 2002 Parliament declares bans on Kurdish education and broadcasting to be lifted.
- 2003 Parliament passes laws easing restrictions on freedom of speech and Kurdish language rights. Kurds are still largely banned from giving their children Kurdish names. The Constitutional Court closes down the pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HADEP).
- 2004 First private course in Kurdish language opens. State TV broadcasts first Kurdish-language program.
- 2005 Expropriation of Roma areas of Istanbul is authorized. Roma treated unfairly.
- 2006 At least a dozen people are killed in clashes between Kurdish protesters and security forces in the south-east. Several people are killed in related unrest in Istanbul.
- Parliament passes new anti-terror law which worries the EU and which rights groups criticize as an invitation to torture. Mob of hundreds attacks Roma family – no one arrested.
- 2007 Journalist and Armenian community leader Hrant Dink is assassinated. More than 100,000 people form a protest march at his funeral. Prime Minister Erdogan says a bullet has been fired at democracy and freedom of expression. Former President and 12 pro-Kurdish politicians are sentenced to six months to one year in prison for making speeches in Kurdish.
- In a press statement, Chief of Staff Yaşar Büyükanıt criticizes the EU and MRG for their activities on minorities in Turkey.
- In a press statement, Chief of Staff states that "Anyone who objects to the understanding... how happy is the one who says she/he is a Turk is the enemy of the Republic, and will always be so" – which has been widely regarded by politicians, media and civil society as a memorandum to the government or a coup attempt.
- Sur Mayor Abdullah Demirbas is sacked and the municipal council is dissolved by the Council of the State for providing multilingual municipal services.
- In the general elections, the AKP wins 341 seats, enough to form the government alone for the second time; 22 pro-Kurdish MPs are elected – the first to enter Parliament since 1991.
- 2008 Turkey is ranked second in the list of countries with the largest number of human rights violation cases open at the European Court of Human Rights, with more than 9,000 cases pending.
- Human Rights Watch (HRW) publishes a 123-page report documenting a long and continuing history of violence and abuse based on sexual orientation and gender identity in Turkey. In most cases, HRW deducts, the response by the authorities is inadequate if not nonexistent.
- 2009 The Human Rights Association states that up to the end of 2008 a total of 2,949 people had been killed by unknown perpetrators and 2,308 people had become victims of extrajudicial executions.
- Annual report Amnesty International stated: "Reports of torture and other ill-treatment rose during 2008, especially outside official places of detention but also in police stations and prisons."
- The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey reported of 39 deaths in prison; in most cases torture was involved.
- 2010 Human Rights Watch releases a report on Turkey based on a review of 50 cases. The report describes 26 cases of individuals prosecuted for terrorism simply for taking part in protests deemed by the government to be sympathetic to the outlawed armed Kurdistan Workers' Party. According to the report, hundreds of Kurdish demonstrators are currently in prison pending the outcome of their trials or appeals against convictions. Others are serving long sentences that have been upheld by Turkey's top court of appeal.
- 2011 Nine journalists and writers in absence of clear reasonable cause are arrested. The nine were accused of links to the alleged "Ergenekon" coup plots against the Turkish government
- Turkey threatens Israel with military action over an Israeli commando attack on a flotilla organized by activists in Turkey to bring aid to the Gaza Strip.
- Turkey threatens Cyprus with military action and mobilizes its navy over oil and gas exploration by the Republic of Cyprus. Turkish naval vessels accompany the "Koca Piri Reis", a "research vessel," into the Exclusive Economic Zone of Cyprus. Increase in air activity of the Turkish air force south of Cyprus, and air and naval exercises of the Turkish forces.



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