

EU ENLARGEMENT AS A MORAL MISSION: DEBATING CYPRUS' ACCESSION IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

By Susannah Verney

Department of Political Science & Public Administration

University of Athens, 19 Omirou Street

Athens GR 106 72, Greece

E-mail: deplan@otenet.gr

**Paper prepared for presentation at the 3rd Paneuropean Conference
of the ECPR Standing Group on European Union Politics,
Bilgi University, Istanbul, 20-23 September 2006**

Abstract

The decision to admit the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) to the EU appears to present a puzzle, given that it entailed importing a conflict and hence appears difficult to reconcile with EU interests. A traditional realist explanation, based on states' interests, might focus on the activist role of the Greek government. Instead, this paper suggests that the collective identity of the EU as a community of values, shaping a perception of EU Enlargement as a moral mission, made it inappropriate to reject or postpone the accession of the RoC, despite the absence of a settlement. An empirical study of plenary debates of the European Parliament finds that within the EP, an insistence on a solution before accession was seen (a) as a denial of justice for the RoC and hence incompatible with EU values, and (b) as undermining the potential of the RoC's accession process to act as a catalyst for peace. Faced with these two moral dilemmas, the admission of Cyprus can therefore be seen as a decision taken by a community of values in order to preserve its own identity.

THE CYPRUS PUZZLE

As Ulrich Sedelmeier has commented, rationalist approaches can only provide a partial explanation of decisions on EU Enlargement.¹ This would certainly appear to be true of the May 2004 admission of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) as a full member of the Union even though the Cyprus conflict remained unresolved. This decision seems hard to reconcile with EU interests. It resulted in the EU admitting a divided island, part of which was governed by a regime which was not recognized internationally. With Cyprus' accession, the Union had formally expanded to include territory on which EU law could not be applied, a decision which might be considered as less than beneficial for its credibility. Above all, the long term presence of Turkish troops in northern Cyprus, in contravention of repeated UN resolutions, had been transformed into an internal EU problem. The admission of the RoC thus added an additional complication to the EU's already troubled relationship with Turkey, an important strategic partner and candidate for membership. Among other issues, the fact that Turkey did not recognize the RoC was to prove a serious problem for the functioning of the EU-Turkey Customs Union in the context of the enlarged EU. The upshot of all this was to undermine, rather than enhance, the EU's role as a strategic actor in the Eastern Mediterranean. On the face of it, therefore, importing a problem of this kind might seem a surprising decision for any international entity to make.

It will be argued in this paper that the political culture of the European Union was a significant contributory factor in this outcome. In particular, the paper aims to show that the collective identity of the EU as a community of values, shaping a perception of European Union Enlargement as a moral mission, made it inappropriate to reject or postpone the accession of the RoC, despite the absence of a settlement. This argument will be supported by an empirical study of the debate on Enlargement to Cyprus within one EU institution, the European Parliament, from the time when the RoC essentially gained the green light for the opening of accession negotiations in March 1995 until EU entry in May 2004.

The EP's plenary sessions were chosen as the object of our analysis, firstly because its power of assent has turned the EP into a potential veto-player on

¹ U. Sedelmeier, Constructing the Path to Eastern Enlargement: The Uneven Impact of EU Identity (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005), 183.

Enlargement and secondly, because of the plenaries' role as a forum for debate, in which it is possible to follow the unfolding of a process of argument and counter-argument. In contrast, in the case of the other major EU institutions, the European Council, the Council of Ministers and the European Commission, decision-making takes place behind closed doors, with only the results announced to the public. Hence, it is not possible to gain a full picture of the type of arguments which have been put forward or on what basis consensus was finally reached.

A further advantage of the EP is its pluralism. In the Council and the Commission, each member-state has one representative. The Council consists of members of the national governments, while the Commissioners are appointed by the government of the member-state, with the result that they usually belong to the governing party. In contrast, the EP includes multiple representatives of each member-state, representing a number of political parties and not just an 'official' national position. Indeed, it has been a characteristic of the European Parliament that it often includes small opposition parties which are not even represented in the national parliaments.² Hence, EP plenary debates reflect a multiplicity of viewpoints, including positions held by a small minority. They also serve as a meeting point between the European parliamentarians on the one hand and the Council and Commission on the other in the context of parliamentary control. Thus, the plenaries include dialogue with representatives of the other two EU institutions when they participate in debates and answer parliamentary questions. The assumption is therefore that the EP plenaries will provide a more representative picture of the range of perceptions in the intra-EU debate than the official documentation from the other institutions might be able to do.

The paper will begin by briefly considering an alternative, rationalist explanation for the admission of Cyprus to the EU. It will then investigate how the perception of the ethical imperative of Enlargement has evolved within the European integration process, before proceeding to examine the case study.

² A particularly striking example is provided by Greece, where ever since the first European election in 1981, there have consistently been more parties represented in the European in the national Parliament. The greatest discrepancy occurred in the period 1981-4 when six parties held seats in the EP and only three in the national *Vouli*. However, this has also been the case in other member-states. In the UK, for example, the European election of 2004 saw the UK Independence Party (UKIP) win 11 seats.

THE ROLE OF GREECE

When the EU initially assessed the RoC's application for accession, it was suggested that a settlement or at least significant moves towards one was necessary for the RoC's accession process to move forward. Thus, the European Commission's 'Opinion', issued in 1993, stated that 'Cyprus' integration with the Community implies a balanced, peaceful and lasting settlement of the Cyprus question' and that accession negotiations would begin 'as soon as the prospect of settlement is surer'. But step by step this position was abandoned. An incremental process, whereby the opening of negotiations was followed by the declaration that their outcome would be judged without making a settlement a prerequisite, concluded with the decision to admit the divided island, while suspending the *acquis communautaire* in the northern part. The first step was the 1994 Corfu summit statement that the next round of Enlargement would include Cyprus and Malta. This was followed by the decision at the General Affairs Council in March 1995 to open negotiations with Cyprus six months after the conclusion of the Intergovernmental Conference which was due to open the following year. The formal decision to include Cyprus in the group of 'fast track' candidates, with whom negotiations would be opened the following year, was taken at the European Council meeting in Luxembourg in December 1997. With negotiations under way from 1998, the next major landmark was the Helsinki European Council in December 1999, which declared that although a settlement would 'facilitate' accession, 'if no settlement has been reached by the completion of accession negotiations, the Council's decision on accession will be taken without the above being a precondition'. When that moment came in December 2002, the European Council at Copenhagen, while expressing 'its strong preference for accession to the European Union by a united Cyprus', decreed that 'as the accession negotiations have been completed with Cyprus, Cyprus will be admitted as a new Member State to the European Union'.

What led to this shift in stance? In her study of the role of the EU in conflict resolution in Cyprus, Nathalie Tocci has highlighted the lack of a consistent EU policy regarding the relationship between the Enlargement process and the resolution of the Cyprus conflict has been highlighted by Nathalie Tocci.³ Tocci's focus is on the consequences for the Union's failure to play an effective role in the promotion of a

³ N. Tocci, *EU Accession Dynamics and Conflict Resolution: Catalysing Peace or Consolidating Partition in Cyprus?*, Aldershot and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2004.

Cyprus settlement. But the absence of a clear and unequivocal commitment to ensuring a settlement before accession seems to have been equally important in facilitating the incremental process which resulted in Cypriot EU entry. At the same time, as Tocci shows, although the EU as an entity did not take a consistent position, there was one member-state with a clear strategy. Greece had a strong vested interest in enhancing its own security by ‘Europeanizing’ the Cyprus problem through the EU accession of the RoC.

The role of the Greek government, acting as the internal sponsor of the RoC’s accession application within the Union, is clearly a significant factor in explaining how the RoC was ultimately admitted to the Union. For example, it was the Greek presidency which pushed for – and obtained – the Corfu summit declaration in 1994. This was followed by the March 1995 ‘trade-off’, whereby Greece lifted its veto on the EU’s customs union with Turkey in exchange for what was, in effect, the granting of a date for the opening of accession negotiations with the EU. Greece again played a highly significant role at the 1999 Helsinki Council, where there was another ‘trade-off’, entailing Greece agreeing to the recognition of Turkey as an official accession candidate in exchange for the statement that a settlement of the Cyprus conflict would not be a precondition for the RoC’s accession. In the late 1990s, Greek government representatives, particularly Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Yannis Kranidiotis, prior to his death in 1998, periodically uttered threats that Greece was prepared to veto any Enlargement of the EU that did not include Cyprus.

But does the activism of the Greek government provide a full explanation of the process which led to Enlargement to Cyprus? If so, it would suggest that a lone EU member-state has the capability to determine the decision-making outcome on such a major issue as Enlargement, by pushing its partners into accepting an outcome apparently against their collective interest. This would have interesting implications for the debate on the nature of EU decision-making, supporting a traditional realist interpretation, based on states’ interests. This interpretation may appear appealing for its simplicity. But when examined closely it appears to leave significant questions unanswered.

In particular, it leaves us with the question why other EU actors – including not only the member-states but also the Commission and the European Parliament – were prepared essentially to concur with the wishes of a single state. The puzzle becomes even more perplexing given that Greece on its own did not have a significant

weight in EU decision-making processes. Greece is not only relatively small – in terms of population, it was the seventh state in the EU-15 - but is also normally regarded as a rather weak player in EU politics. How could a state with such a weak power profile impose its wishes on the EU institutions? It could perhaps be hypothesized that other member-states might be prepared to concede on an issue which one of their number regarded as such a vital national interest, in order to gain corresponding concessions on issues of particular interest to them on other occasions. But even if it was assumed that this could have been the case in Council, it cannot explain, for example, the outcome in the European Parliament, which has the power of assent in EU Enlargement and hence the possibility to block the whole process. The Greek Members constituted such a small minority in Parliament (just 25 out of 626 EP seats or 4% of the total before the Treaty of Nice came into force in 2003) that it appears unlikely that they could have forced an outcome which was not supported by a broad coalition of MEPs.

The starting point for the present paper, therefore, is the argument is that while the role of the Greek government was clearly important, it does not supply the whole story. Instead, the paper aims to demonstrate the existence of a political climate within the EU which delegitimated opposition to the admission of Cyprus, even without a settlement. At the very least, this climate facilitated the Greek government's strategy, by allowing the justification of Cypriot accession in the name of values considered central to EU identity.

THE LOGIC OF APPROPRIATENESS AND ENLARGEMENT

The framework for the analysis is provided by the concept of 'the logic of appropriateness' proposed by March and Olsen. According to these two authors, rather than following a 'logic of consequences' based on pursuing their self-interest, social actors try to behave in a way which 'they see as appropriate for themselves in a specific type of situation'. Rules are followed because they are seen as 'natural, right, expected and legitimate' for the circumstances. What makes them so is determined by the ethos and expectations of the particular roles or identities which actors are fulfilling at any given moment. Institutions play an important role in this process: they 'guide behaviour and stabilize expectations'. Thus, 'specific institutional settings ...

provide vocabularies that frame thought and understandings', defining what kind of arguments are regarded as legitimate to use in a particular situation.⁴

Adopting the 'logic of appropriateness' as the basis of his approach, Sedelmeier (2005) has shown that the EU's collective identity played an important role in the process of Enlargement to the Central and East European states (CEECs). As he notes, from the late 1980s, EU discourse had constructed a particular role of the EU as having a 'special responsibility' towards the CEECS. This responsibility was concerned with healing the wounds of Yalta, embracing the European countries which had been excluded from the integration process by the Cold War split, and supporting their political and economic transformation. This climate, in which Enlargement was deemed to fulfill a high ethical purpose, made it inappropriate to publicly oppose the CEECs' accession process on the basis of narrow self-interests. Ultimately, this made it impossible to veto the advance of Eastern Enlargement. As a result, during the process which led the CEECs from Association to EU entry in the period from the early 1990s to 2004, the ethical role which the EU had projected for itself in relation to Central and Eastern Europe functioned to silence dissent, allowing the accession process to move ahead.⁵

It will be argued here that what happened with the CEECs was neither an isolated case nor a new departure for the EU. In a case study of the Second Enlargement, I found a very similar dynamic at work.⁶ Indeed, the perception of Enlargement as a moral mission has been a wider phenomenon, which has evolved historically and shaped the course of EU Enlargement. This perception has been intimately connected to the attempt to construct an identity for the European integration project as a community of values - a process which dates back to the beginning of integration.

⁴ J. March and J. Olsen, 'The Logic of Appropriateness', Arena Working Paper No 9 (Oslo: Arena, 2004). See also Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics (New York: Free Press, 1989) and Democratic Governance (New York: Free Press, 1995).

⁵ It should be noted that Sedelmeier also examines the differential impact of the EU's collective identity across specific policy sectors in the accession negotiations, showing that the collective identity was more important in the case of some groups of policymaking actors than of others. But this part of his analysis goes beyond the concerns of this paper, which is concerned with the macro-decision to proceed with Enlargement, rather than with the dynamics of the sectoral negotiations. It could also be argued that this differentiation might be at least partially explained by the different types of decision-making involved. By their nature, sectoral negotiations raise issues of interests and usually in an intense form, whereas it could be argued that at the level of this macro-decision, it is easier to place greater emphasis on values.

⁶ S. Verney, 'Justifying the Second Enlargement: Promoting Interests, Consolidating Democracy or Returning to the Roots?' in H. Sjursen (ed.), Questioning EU Enlargement: Europe in Search of Identity (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2006)

IDENTITY AND ENLARGEMENT

The original European Communities began as a transnational enterprise bringing together countries whose national identities had been shaped by centuries of war and confrontation with each other. Lacking a territorial or ethnic basis, the Communities were unable to invoke the ties of blood and soil employed in most nation-building processes. Instead, from its earliest days, the European integration project employed an appeal to common values as the conceptual cement to shape a sense of collective identity and create ‘unity within diversity’. This began with the Treaty of Paris, which essentially conceptualized European integration as a peace project.⁷ Subsequently, the role of the EC as a defender of democracy was added to the initial formulation of a promoter of peace, becoming an explicit and central element of the EC’s self-perception from at least the early 1970s.⁸

In the context of this identity-building process, Enlargement was presented as much more than a matter of expanding markets. In the discourse of EC/EU institutions, perhaps its central role is as a means of promoting values. This factor also helps to explain the exceptionally open nature of the Enlargement process. The Preamble to the Treaty of Rome, declaring that the founders of the European Community are ‘resolved... to preserve and strengthen peace and liberty, ... call[ed] upon the other peoples of Europe who share their ideal to join in their efforts’. This general statement of principle was reinforced by Article 237, which declares that ‘any

⁷ It is worth citing the multiple references to peace in the Preamble, which declared that the High Contracting Parties, ‘Considering that **world peace** can be safeguarded only by creative efforts commensurate with the dangers that threaten it, Convinced that the contribution which an organized and vital Europe can make to civilization is indispensable to the maintenance of **peaceful relations**, ... Anxious to help ... to further **the works of peace** ... [are] Resolved to substitute for age-old rivalries the merging of their essential interests; to create, ... the basis for a broader and deeper community among **peoples long divided by bloody conflicts**; and to lay the foundations for institutions which will give direction to a destiny henceforward shared’. After this grand rhetoric, it appears somewhat of an anticlimax when the passage concludes that the signatories have only decided ‘to create a European Coal and Steel Community’. In similar (but less extensive) vein, the Preamble to the Treaty of Rome refers to the ‘pooling of resources’ projected in the Treaty as a means ‘to preserve and strengthen peace and liberty’. Meanwhile, the Preamble to the Euratom Treaty begins by declaring that nuclear energy is not only important for industry, but will also ‘permit the advancement of the cause of peace’.

⁸ Thus, the ‘Declaration on the European Identity’, issued by the Foreign Ministers of the Nine in December 1973 as a kind of founding manifesto for the new project of European Political Cooperation, characteristically declared ‘the principles of representative democracy, of the rule of law, of social justice... and of respect for human rights’ to be ‘fundamental elements of the European Identity’. However, the European Parliament’s 1962 Birkelbach Report may be regarded as the official founding document of this strand of EC identity. Warning against bringing a ‘foreign body’ within the Community, the Report recommended limiting membership to democratic states which met the criteria for entry to the Council of Europe. This recommendation, while not formally adopted at the time, subsequently shaped the course of EC/EU Enlargement, beginning with the unenthusiastic response to the request for an Association from Franco’s Spain.

European state may apply to become a member of the Community' without reference to any other criteria or membership conditions. This is usually regarded as an appeal to the then communist states of Central and Eastern Europe, indicating that the door would be open for their participation if they changed their political and economic systems. Thus, as early as the 1950s, the conceptual basis of the then European Communities as a peace project seems to have shaped perceptions of the role of Enlargement, while defining its inclusive character.

Subsequently, in the 1970s debate on Mediterranean Enlargement, EC expansion was assigned an explicit mission as a mode of democracy promotion. Particularly significant was the case of Greece, which had been an EC Associate from the early 1960s. Following the military coup of 21 April 1967 in Athens, the EC unilaterally limited the functioning of the Association Agreement to its 'current administration',⁹ while official statements by Community institutions stressed that the Agreement's proclaimed aim of future full Greek EC entry could never be fulfilled while the country remained under military rule. After the Junta's fall, the linkage established previously between Greece's political system and Greek-EC relations encouraged a widespread conviction that EC entry would consolidate Greek democracy.

Rather intriguingly, it never seems to have been explained how EC entry was supposed to act as a democratic stabilizer. There appears to have been no discussion of the mechanisms through which EC entry might be expected to impact on the political system, the elites or public opinion. However, that this was an article of faith rather than a clearly substantiated argument is beside the point – the latter being that such a linkage became established in the minds of policy-makers and opinion leaders and more generally, in the political culture of the EC. This is apparent, for example, in the European Commission's 'Opinion' on the Greek accession application, which declared that 'the consolidation of Greece's democracy... is intimately related to the evolution of Greece's relationship with the Community'.¹⁰

The result was to further consolidate the open nature of the Enlargement process. Greece, for example, although a significant strategic partner for those EC

⁹ Meaning the implementation only of those articles of the Agreement which had binding legal effect, principally the programme for tariff disarmament, and not those which required negotiations between the two sides, such as the harmonisation of agricultural policies and the free movement of labour. For details, see G. Yannopoulos, 1975.

¹⁰ Commission of the European Communities, Opinion on Greek Application for Membership, Bulletin of the ECs, Supplement 2/76, p.9.

member-states who were also NATO members, was an economically weak candidate whose entry threatened the interests of major national producer groups (French and Italian farmers, West German labour unions) and entailed importing the Greek-Turkish conflict within the EC. Yet as I found in my study of the Greek accession debate, once the question of EC membership had been framed in terms of promoting democracy, it became extremely hard to argue against it. 'Potential opposition to Greek accession was thus transformed into a negation of the country's democratic prospects. And how could any serious actor vote against democracy, one of the Community's most cherished ideals and an integral element of its developing identity?'¹¹

In this vein, official EC documents relating to Southern Enlargement justify the acceptance of the candidates on the basis of shared values, suggesting this makes it inappropriate to reject them. The experience of Enlargement to Southern Europe thus operationalized an idea inherent in the Treaty of Rome and especially in the open-ended formulation of Article 237. This was that Enlargement was an entitlement of the candidate rather than a gift of the EC\EU to be granted or withheld according to circumstances. For example, the 'Fresco' on Enlargement issued by the European Commission in 1978, deeming the accession applications by Greece, Spain and Portugal 'an act of faith in a united Europe' which reflected their concern to stabilise their democracies, proclaimed that 'The three countries have entrusted the Community with a political responsibility which it cannot refuse, except at the price of denying the principles on which it is itself grounded'. The shared ideal of 'peace and liberty' enshrined in the preamble to the EEC Treaty 'requires the Community to give a positive answer'.¹²

How did this 'logic of appropriateness' with regard to Enlargement play out with regard to the accession of Cyprus? This is the subject of the case study.

¹¹ S. Verney, 'Justifying the Second Enlargement', op.cit. (fn. 6).

¹² Commission of the European Communities, 'Enlargement of the Community: General Considerations', Bulletin of the European Communities 1/78, p.6 In similar mode, see the Commission's 'Opinion' on the Portuguese application for membership, which begins by declaring that 'the Treaties of Rome and Paris signify the clear intention that other European States sharing the democratic ideal of the European Community's Member States should be able to accede to the Community', and continues a few lines later with the statement that 'the Community cannot leave Portugal out of the process of European integration' Commission of the European Communities, 'Opinion on the Portuguese Application for Membership', Bulletin of the European Communities, Supplement 5/78, p.7.

A WELL QUALIFIED CANDIDATE

The era when the RoC's application seriously entered the EU's agenda coincided with the establishment of formal EU entry criteria.¹³ These may be regarded as consolidating what we might call the 'Acquis of Entitlement' with regard to Enlargement, i.e. the practice, mentioned above, of regarding accession more as a right of the candidate than as something in the EU's gift. The implication of the Copenhagen Criteria was that states who were deemed to meet the three basic conditions (democracy and human rights, the existence of a market economy capable of withstanding the competitive pressures within the EU, and the ability to assume all the obligations of membership) could only be legitimately excluded on the basis of the fourth criteria, which concerned the EU's own 'absorption capacity'. Past experience would suggest that, even in cases where the fourth criterion might be cited, it would have to be justified in terms of a 'logic of appropriateness' consonant with prevailing EC/EU perceptions of the role of Enlargement. In 1989-91, for example, the EC decided to postpone any consideration of further Enlargement until it had concluded the process of institutional and sectoral deepening under way in the 1990-91 IGC. In this instance, asking the applicants to wait was justified in terms of serving a higher good of the integration process – although even in this case, the argument was framed in terms of making the EC better able to face Enlargement subsequently. In the Commission's 2005 'Opinion' on the accession application by the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, it was recommended that this state could be recognised as a candidate but that accession negotiations should be delayed for the good of the candidate, as it was not yet ready to undertake the burdens of membership. It might be assumed that an argument in favour of rejecting a candidate or delaying the opening of negotiations on the sole grounds of the material interest of the EU would not have the same legitimacy.

In terms of the formal membership qualifications, right from the start the RoC was deemed by Europarliamentarians to be an excellent candidate. In a July 1995 debate, the RoC was described by the parliamentary rapporteur as 'a well functioning democracy', while a number of MEPs spoke enthusiastically about the flourishing Cypriot economy, deemed to be the envy of some of the existing member-states. It

¹³ Although the RoC's application had been submitted in 1990, it had been put on ice during the 1990-91 IGC. The Commission only issued its 'Opinion' on the application in 1993, shortly before the Copenhagen summit which defined the formal entry criteria.

was even remarked that the RoC would have no problem in entering the third stage of Economic and Monetary Union.¹⁴ This positive picture did not change over the course of the decade. For example, in October 2000 the parliamentary rapporteur commented that, apart from some delays in transposing the *acquis communautaire* into national law, the RoC fulfilled all the Copenhagen criteria.¹⁵ It was also noted that the RoC had become the frontrunner in the negotiation process, ahead of all the other candidates in terms of closing negotiating chapters.¹⁶

The first point, therefore, to emerge from the examination of the EP debates is that the internal division of the island was seen as the only real problem faced by the RoC's candidacy. This meant that the fundamental question facing the EP was whether the best qualified candidate in the ongoing round of Enlargement should be excluded because of the unsettled conflict. At the beginning of the decade 1995-2004 examined in this paper, there were certainly some members of the European Parliament who were prepared to state openly that it should.¹⁷ However, right from the start the argument that the RoC's accession application should not be dependent on a solution was clearly the majority viewpoint. Over the next few years it appeared to become the basis of a broad consensus in the EP. Indeed, one of the interesting things to emerge from examining the debates is the extent to which a 'predominant view' emerges, in which the majority of the members of the EP appear to be thinking along very similar lines.

EP PERCEPTIONS OF THE CYPRUS CONFLICT

The key to understanding how Parliament moved towards this conclusion lies in the EP's perceptions of responsibility for the unresolved conflict. In the period which concerns us – before the Annan Plan referenda of April 2004 produced a change in perceptions – no responsibility appears to have been attributed to the Greek Cypriots, either for the events leading to the division of the island in 1974 or for its subsequent perpetuation. Extrapolating from the positions expressed by speakers in the plenary debates, the Cyprus conflict appears to have been seen as a problem

¹⁴ EP Debates, 11 July 1995, Bertens (ELDR, NL) p.18; Cassidy (PPE) p. 20; Daskalaki (UPE, EL), p. 21; Rothe (PSE, DE) p.26; Lambrias (PPE, EL), p. 26. All the citations come from the formal record of the EP plenary debates.

¹⁵ Poos (PSE, FR) 3 October 2000.

¹⁶ Alavanos (GUE\NGL, Gr) 13 March 2001; Collins (UEN) 4 September 2002.

¹⁷ E.g. 11 July 1995 Berthu (EDN, FR) p.22 and Van der Wall p. 25; Fabre-Aubrespy 10 October 1995. p.35.

entailing a lone external actor on the one hand and the relations between the two communities on the island on the other. It should be pointed out that throughout the decade under study, there was never an occasion on which the EP held a debate focusing specifically on the Cyprus conflict as such. Instead, it was referenced as an issue in debates on Enlargement and specifically in terms of whether the conflict could be regarded as an obstacle to accession for either Cyprus or Turkey. Moreover, as a political institution rather than an academic debating society, the emphasis in debates in the EP was on the here and now. As a result, Cyprus appeared as a conflict with a present but no past. This had clear consequences for the way in which the issue was presented and, in particular, for the identification of the key actors and who was to blame.

The picture that emerges from reading the debates is that of a local conflict involving a triangle of actors: the Greek and Turkish Cypriots and the Turkish government. The role of other external actors, notably Greece and Great Britain before 1974, is not mentioned at all. With regard to the two communities on the island, I found only one reference to events prior to 1974. In 1991, the British Liberal MEP, John Davies, declared that

In discussing this issue, it is not acceptable simply to say that the problems of Cyprus started with the Turkish invasion in 1974 without mentioning the division of the island from 1963 when Greek Cypriots murdered Turkish Cypriots. If there is to be true reconciliation between these peoples, then true complete objectivity is needed.¹⁸

But this was an isolated example. In retrospect, following the Greek Cypriot rejection of the UN's Annan Plan in the 2004 referendum, it appears obvious that one of the characteristics of the EP debates is the absence of any discussion of the specific problems dividing the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, either in the past or in the present. Hence, there is no assessment of the extent to which they might genuinely seek reunion. For example, during this decade, there does not seem to have been any discussion in the EP of the question of both sides' missing persons, an issue which was not only guaranteed to inflame emotions, but which has also, as Paul Sant Cassia has shown, helped to perpetuate the conflict by serving as a metaphor of difference between the two communities.¹⁹ Nor did the EP engage with other 'nuts-and-bolts'

¹⁸ Davies (ELDR), 4 September 2001, p.185.

¹⁹ P. Sant Cassia, 'Guarding Each Other's Dead, Mourning One's Own: The Problem of Missing Persons and Missing Pasts in Cyprus', *South European Society & Politics*, 10\1, pp. 111-128.

issues of a settlement, such as the rights of refugees and questions of property ownership. Instead, the claim made by an Irish MEP – that ‘a solution to the Cyprus problem ... might be more accurately described as a solution to the Turkish problem’²⁰ - often appeared to be the prevalent view in the EP.²¹

The European Parliament certainly did not endorse the Turkish interpretation of the military intervention of 1974 as a ‘peace operation’ following the Athens-backed Greek Cypriot military coup. Its members were unequivocal in their characterization of the Turkish ‘invasion’ and ‘occupation’. This terminology seems to have been universal. No speaker in the EP – whether from the Commission, the Council, or MEPs from any national delegation or parliamentary group – appears to have referred to it in any other way. Thus, from the EP Debates, the Turkish presence on the island emerges as the fundamental component of the problem – meaning that Turkey was also seen as the party to the conflict which had to change its position if there was to be a resolution. This view was expressed with particular clarity by Pauline Green, who as Leader of the EP’s Socialist Group during the 1994-99 term was one of the most influential members of Parliament:²²

For 20 years the Turkish state has occupied one third of the sovereign territory of the island of Cyprus with 35,000 Turkish troops. They and they alone sustained the illegal, unrecognised regime in the north of Cyprus. They and they alone have the ability to do what Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat or Mr. De Klerk and Mr. Mandela did and walk the mile for peace. At a stroke they could demonstrate their courage, their vision, their leadership, and break through 20 years of tired old propaganda and the ritual routine of name-calling and apportioning blame. They and they alone can make a real difference on Cyprus.²³

Thus, Turkey was not only seen as the main cause of the problem. It was also regarded as the major obstacle to a solution. Particular events – most notably the episodes on the Green Line in 1996 in which two Greek Cypriots were killed on

²⁰ Cassidy (PPE, Eire), 11 July 1995.

²¹ For more on this and in particular a discussion of why this should have been the case, see S. Verney, ‘Rights and Values Versus Interests: Perceptions of the Cyprus Conflict in European Parliament Debates, 1995-2004’, paper presented at the ECPR workshop, ‘Cyprus – A Conflict at the Crossroads’, Intercollege, Nicosia, 25-30 April 2006. This paper provides more detail on perceptions of the conflict and a more nuanced discussion than is possible here.

²² Pauline Green represented a North London constituency with a rather high proportion of Greek and Turkish Cypriots among its population. Her book is a revealing source of the way the Cyprus problem was perceived: P. Green with R. Collins, *Embracing Cyprus: The Path to Unity in the New Europe*, London and New York: I B Tauris, 2003.

²³ Green (PSE, UK) 13 December 1995, p.44.

camera²⁴ – reinforced this view. Parliamentary speakers also identified the Denktash regime in northern Cyprus as another guilty party. The failures of all past attempts to solve Cyprus were attributed to the latter's 'entrenched attitude',²⁵ making it co-responsible with Turkey for the lack of a solution.²⁶ The Turkish Cypriot government was also criticized for its attitude towards the current rounds of negotiations. In 1997, for example, it was unambiguously declared to have 'sabotaged' the UN peace talks and 'slammed the door' on the UN negotiators.²⁷

MORAL DILEMMAS ON CYPRUS

The consequence of this was that the RoC was essentially presented in the EP debates as an innocent party to a conflict which constituted the only significant obstacle to its EU entry. This resulted in the dilemma being framed by some speakers in the EP in rather stark moral terms. For example, in July 1995, a German socialist MEP declared that

The reunification of Cyprus must not be a precondition for accession... for Cyprus must not become a hostage to Turkey and Turkey must not be granted any right of veto on this question. Cyprus must not be penalized twice over.²⁸

While some speakers saw this as a matter of justice for the RoC, others deemed it a question of principle concerning the sovereignty of the EU itself. For instance, it was declared completely unacceptable for a non-EU member – and 'a foreign occupant' to boot – 'to dictate the date and pace of accession negotiations' between the Union and its applicants.²⁹ On another occasion, a Greek MEP declared that proceeding with the accession process constituted 'a message to all quarters' that the European Union would 'proceed on the basis of its own principles and perceptions ... without allowing anyone to dictate how issues relating to human rights, democracy, international standing and international law are to be handled'.³⁰

The analysis of the debates therefore seems to suggest a possible explanation what otherwise appears as the EU's incremental drift away from its initial position in

²⁴ To understand the impact which these events had on perceptions of the Cyprus conflict, see the EP plenary session of 18 September 1996 [CHECK DATE].

²⁵ Rothe (PSE, DE), 16 February 2000.

²⁶ Rothe (PSE, DE), 11 July 1995, p.26.

²⁷ 18 September 1997, Wolf (Greens, DE) and Bertens (ELDR, NL).

²⁸ Rothe (PSE, DE), 11 July 1995, p. 26.

²⁹ Cars (ELDR), 3 December 1997, p. 175.

³⁰ Souladakakis (PSE, EL), 4 September 2001. This Greek socialist MEP was acting as a rapporteur on the progress of all the candidate states.

favour of accession after a solution. This was that the way in which the Cyprus conflict had been framed and understood in the EP made such a position incompatible with notions of justice and fairness.

BRINGING PEACE TO CYPRUS

Meanwhile, reinforcing the dilemmas raised by the politics of exclusion was another powerful argument related to the potential of Cyprus' accession process to promote a solution to the conflict. After years of UN talks which appeared to have gone nowhere, the accession application by the RoC was hailed by MEPs as a 'window of opportunity',³¹ and was expected to act as 'a catalyst and driving force' in the search for a solution.³² This was not of course because the EU planned to get involved in mediation – for the simple reason that it did not. Rather, two types of argument were put forward. The first was that the advance of the RoC's accession process would put pressure on Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots to adopt a more constructive line in the context of the UN negotiations. In particular, this was the line taken by the European Commissioner for Enlargement, Gunther Verheugen, who argued in an EP plenary debate that making accession conditional on a solution would be counterproductive for the conflict resolution process, as it would take the pressure off Turkey.³³ The second line of argument was that the accession process would provide a way to sidestep the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot governments by appealing directly to Turkish Cypriot society in order to promote a change in intercommunal relations. This concept of accession as a 'carrot' for the Turkish Cypriots was expressed, for example, in the prediction that EU entry would contribute to the economic development of the whole island.³⁴ References were also made to EU membership as a guarantee for the security and cultural identity of the Turkish Cypriots.³⁵ In addition, there appear to have been high expectations of the potential effects of EU-funded programmes as a way of bringing the two communities together.³⁶ The upshot of both these lines of argument was a perception that moving the RoC's accession process forward would help to promote conflict resolution.

³¹ Green 16 September 1996. See also Green 2003.

³² Poos (PSE, FR) 3 October 2000.

³³ Commissioner Verheugen, 3 September 2002.

³⁴ E.g. Melo (ELDR, PT), 11 July 1995, p.21.

³⁵ Poos (PSE, FR), 3 October 2000, p.204.

³⁶ E.g. Poos (PSE, FR) 16 February 2000, Rothe 16 February 2000.

Hence, in the case of Cyprus, Enlargement, after the democratic detour of the South and Central and East European cases, had returned to its original mission – the promotion of a peace project. Similar to the dynamic we have seen earlier with the example of Greek democracy after the dictatorship, this had the result that turning away the RoC would have been tantamount to saying no to peace.

CONCLUSIONS

As in the Greek case study mentioned above, it appears that, in the case of Cyprus, the concept of the moral purpose of Enlargement contributed to overcoming objections to the process. As we saw in the earlier part of the paper, the origins and evolution of EU Enlargement had created an ethic of inclusiveness. This is the essential starting point for understanding the dynamics of the debate on the admission of Cyprus – or arguably indeed, of any other case of EU expansion as well. The historical record shows that a positive outcome has been the ‘default drive’ response to Enlargement.³⁷ The outcome of this dynamic has been the expansion of European integration from the original grouping of six northwest European states to the post-2004 diversity of the EU-25, due to increase to 27 members in 2007 or 2008.

From this viewpoint, it appears clear that rejecting or delaying the RoC’s application would in itself have been an unusual outcome. This exceptional case would then need to be justified in terms of a ‘logic of appropriateness’ consonant with the political culture of the EU. But as our analysis of the EP debates has shown, prevailing perceptions of the nature of the Cyprus conflict and the way to resolve it militated in an opposite direction. Citing the EU’s own security interests as a justification for postponing the accession of the RoC might have been regarded as a sensible and pragmatic policy. But it would not have been appropriate in the context of the two moral dilemmas of ‘no accession without a solution’ identified earlier. The first dilemma was that pursuing such a course was seen as excluding the innocent party to a conflict and hence was incompatible with notions of justice and fairness. The second moral dilemma concerned the belief that pushing forward the accession process without a solution would actually help the latter to come about. Viewed from

³⁷ There have been only two cases in which the EC/EU has responded negatively an official membership application, the first being the UK in the 1960s and the second, Turkey in 1989. Arguably, these two states, each in its own way a difficult case, could be regarded as the exceptions that prove the rule. Even in these two examples, the rebuff was only temporary. The UK entered the EC in 1973 and Turkey began accession negotiations in 2005 (although at the time of writing, shortly before the critical juncture of October 2005, it is unclear how the latter will progress.)

this perspective, ‘no accession without a solution’ would have been a denial of the EU’s mission as a peace project.

Excluding the RoC would thus have been incompatible with the EU’s traditions and the precedents of the moral missions entailed in the previous South European and simultaneous Central and East European Enlargements. As a result, the option of ‘no accession without a solution’ would have seriously undermined the credibility of the EU’s collective identity as a value-based community. The latter in turn served as the legitimating discursive cement on which the European integration project was based. Thus, while the admission of the RoC held risks for EU interests, as indicated in the opening paragraph of this paper, the alternative option held a different kind of danger for the moral standing of the EU.

To return to the alternative argument about the activism of the Greek government mentioned earlier in the paper, it now becomes clear that the Greek arguments in favour of allowing the accession process of the RoC to move ahead fell on willing ears. This was because they resonated with values held to be central to the EU identity. In our EP case study, it was apparent that Greek MEPs played an active role in debates on Cyprus. But their views were very much part of the parliamentary mainstream.³⁸ The essential point was that excluding the RoC on the grounds of the unresolved conflict would have been a morally untenable position in the context of the value-based perceptions of EU Enlargement analysed above. In this respect, the admission of the RoC may be seen not as something which happened by accident, the result of an incremental slide towards Cypriot accession, but as a decision taken by a community of values in order to preserve its own identity

Acknowledgements

The research for this paper was conducted as part of the Cidel project (“Citizenship and Democratic Legitimacy in the European Union”). The project was financed by the Directorate-General for Research and Technology (K3 Socio-economic Knowledge Base) of the European Commission (contract number HPSE-CT-2002-00144) under the Fifth Framework Programme. I would like to thank Sophia Michalaki for research assistance on the European Parliament case study.

³⁸ With the exception of the three Greek communist party MEPs who argued consistently against the accession of Cyprus, not of course because of the conflict on the island and its potential implications for the interests of the EU, but because as a hard eurosceptic party, the KKE was opposed to all European Union Enlargement as a matter of principle.