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Publisher Routledge

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## West European Politics

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713395181>

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To cite this Article Economides, Spyros(2005) 'The Europeanisation of Greek Foreign Policy', West European Politics, 28: 2, 471 – 491

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/01402380500060528

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01402380500060528>

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# The Europeanisation of Greek Foreign Policy

SPYROS ECONOMIDES

*ABSTRACT* *The Europeanisation of national foreign policy through EU membership is a widely accepted process. How and why this process takes place is more debatable. In the context of Greek foreign policy, the process of Europeanisation has been long and tortuous, and has been primarily driven from within. EU membership has had a Europeanising influence on Greek foreign policy through adaptation to practices, norms and behaviour, and Greek policy-makers have undergone a degree of socialisation. But, for the most part, the Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy has taken the form of the projection of national interests and policy preferences onto the European level in a variety of ways and at a variety of times since Greek accession in 1981. This article suggests that the Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy has taken the form of Westernisation, modernisation, normalisation, rehabilitation, denationalisation and multilateralisation, to suit particular needs at particular times.*

## Introduction

Greece was long considered the black sheep of the European Union (EU) for its economic underperformance – if not mismanagement – and its obstructiveness within the framework of the EU's foreign policy. The second half of the 1990s marked a massive transformation in both areas. By the turn of the century Greece was emerging from a period of international rehabilitation as a full and equally respected EU member and NATO ally. Utilising the most minimalist understanding of the term, that of the impact of EU membership on a member state (Featherstone and Radaelli 2003: 3), it could be argued that this transformation has resulted from a process of Europeanisation. But what does Europeanisation mean in the Greek context and specifically in the field of foreign policy? And why is it that the effects of this process only began to become more apparent almost 15 years after Greek accession?

There is a burgeoning literature on Europeanisation of the domestic sphere, which is beyond the scope of this article.<sup>1</sup> There is also a growth

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industry in the examination of the Europeanisation of national foreign policies (see e.g. Tonra 2001). This builds on extensive and valuable work that has been carried out on national foreign policies in the context of the EU and European foreign policy (Hill 1983; 1996; Manners and Whitman 2000; Wallace and Patterson 1978). For the most part this type of analysis concentrates on the impact that European Political Co-operation (EPC) and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) have had on the formulation and practices of foreign policy within member states: it concentrates on the domestic impact (Smith 2000). Inherent in this argument is the supposition that this type of domestic impact has a distinct effect on both the style and substance of foreign policy. Through processes of adaptation and socialisation it is both practices and values or norms which are being transmitted and result in what is called Europeanisation through the 'top-down' approach.

An extension of this has been promoted through constructivist thought. This suggests that this form of Europeanisation is not simply adaptation or socialisation, nor is it integration or neo-functionalism, but rather the gradual formation of collective identity, which is just as applicable to country-specific foreign policies within European foreign policy as it is in the domestic context.

The third broadly identifiable element of Europeanisation of national foreign policies is commonly referred to as the 'bottom-up' approach. Here national interests and policy preferences are neither usurped nor transformed by a European foreign policy agenda but rather are projected onto it. States use the vehicle of the EU and its weight in the international arena to promote national foreign policy objectives. In this case the impact of membership in the form of Europeanisation comes about through belonging to a particular institution of like-minded states, which collectively could be a more successful vehicle for the attainment of specific goals.

The process of Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy has been lengthy and tortuous. It is more than the attainment of 'Europeanness' or being considered 'pro-European' or 'European-oriented'. It has involved both *Westernisation* and *modernisation*. From the mid-1990s onwards, during a process of rehabilitation from the Papandreou years and the fallout of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, it involved the pursuit of *normalisation*. More recently, in what I call the period of post-rehabilitation, key Greek foreign policy interests have been partly *denationalised* and *multilateralised*. In essence, the real Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy has occurred in the domain of the translocation of Greek foreign policy preferences and interests in at least two key issue areas, Turkey and Cyprus, onto the EU agenda. While Europeanisation has involved features of both the 'top-down' and 'identity formation' processes, it is argued here that the Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy can best be examined and understood through a specific kind of 'bottom-up' approach. While the *style* of Greek foreign policy has

become Europeanised under the impact of EU membership, Greek policy-makers have, at various times and in a variety of ways, Europeanised the *substance* of their foreign policy.

### **Europeanisation as Westernisation**

Europeanisation has not come about solely due to the impact of EU membership. In fact, one could suggest that the origins of the Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy are rooted in the *impulse to join* the European Community (EC) in the late 1970s, rather than stemming from the *impact of joining*. There is a view – albeit controversial – that the primary rationale for the Greek application for full membership, and the desire to achieve it so rapidly after the fall of the colonels' junta in 1974, was in fact not democratic consolidation or economic growth, but rather security. The EC was viewed primarily as a 'system of political solidarity', which could guarantee the external security of Greece especially in relation to its regional tension with Turkey (Valinakis 1994: 200). The longevity of this view is reinforced by the pronouncements of the Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis, a decade after accession, stating that 'Europe offers us security' and when reaffirming that the political rationale for EC membership superseded the economic one, whereby '[O]ur frontiers will henceforth be defended by the united Europe' (Valinakis 1994: 208).

Therefore, the decision to join the EC was driven by significant foreign policy and security considerations, which overshadowed all others. This could be described as a form of Europeanisation in the sense of the projection of national interests onto the Community and its nascent foreign policy-making framework. But it should be considered in conjunction with the drive to Westernisation, which had been the clarion call of the architect of Greek accession, Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis, throughout the 1970s. This is best summed up by Karamanlis' mantra in the 1977 general election campaign: 'we [Greece] belong to the West'. And this drive was one which was derived primarily from the desire to cultivate a sense of identity and belonging, to provide security of frontiers, as much as to adopt the practices and reap the economic benefits of EC membership.

On the level of identity, the Cold War played a defining role in Greece's 'Westernness'. As a result of US intervention in a vicious civil war from 1946 to 1949, Greece emerged on the 'right' side of the Iron Curtain. Belonging to the non-communist European world – though not always governed by democratic regimes – enhanced Greece's Westernness and solidified the perception of Greece's European identity (Economides 1995). Effectively, Greece belonged to the West through its opposition to the Eastern bloc and its membership of key Western institutions and organisations, and not because of a robust democratic tradition or economic qualifications. Accession would add to Greece's portfolio of Western credentials and would seemingly grant security guarantees.

At the level of security, the stability of the European Cold War gave rise to a degree of certainty for Greece. Early NATO membership in 1952 guaranteed its northern borders: as did a working relationship with Tito's Yugoslavia – whose peculiar international role was also partly a product of the Cold War world – which temporarily diminished the importance of the 'Macedonian issue' to Greece's foreign policy. The one area of foreign – and security – policy where certainty did not reign during the Cold War was in the Greco-Turkish relationship (especially after the division of Cyprus in 1974). But even here, and notwithstanding periodic crises in the Aegean, the Cold War played an important mediating role. Both Greece and Turkey owed their membership of NATO to the East–West divide, albeit with differing degrees of strategic significance. NATO provided the institutional setting for ensuring that the two allies would not resort to war to resolve bilateral disputes. A secure identity and sense of belonging, coupled with the particular international order it inhabited, meant Greece had limited room for manoeuvre and for the most part its interests were guaranteed. Where uncertainties did arise they were primarily the function of three factors. Firstly, disputes with Turkey. Secondly, how best to balance relations between the US and Western Europe. Thirdly, a changing domestic political landscape.

Greece's primary security concerns were determined by the difficult relationship with Turkey. While a war with Turkey was narrowly avoided on a number of occasions, arguably due to American pressure, Athens often saw the righteousness of its case undermined by a general Western – and more specifically US – willingness to favour Turkey for strategic reasons.

For Karamanlis this raised the issue of how best to balance Greece's relationship with the US and the EC. In the early Cold War period, and roughly until the mid-1970s, Greece fell solidly into the US camp in the pursuit of its domestic and international objectives. US intervention in the Greek Civil War, through the Truman Doctrine, set the standard for what would always be an uneasy but strong relationship. US-sponsored Marshall Aid in the 1950s and support for early Greek membership of NATO were further indications of this relationship, as was Greece's stalwart anti-communism and the accommodation of extensive US base rights on mainland Greece and in Crete. US influence over Greek domestic politics also played an important part in defining US–Greek relations at least until the late 1960s. It was the tacit support given by the US to the junta (1967–74), and in Greek eyes the insidious role played by the US throughout the Cyprus crisis in the summer of 1974, which tilted the balance towards Western Europe and the EC.<sup>2</sup> Karamanlis, mainly on his own initiative and with support in Western Europe and especially in France, pushed hard for EC membership, which would reduce but not eliminate the influence of the US. As a balancing act it remained uneasy, but one managed admirably by Karamanlis (Stearns 1995). Karamanlis believed that the EC would be a better long-term vehicle for the defence of vital Greek security interests as

well as the provider of safeguards for democracy, and the stimulus for economic growth.

A further reason for this balancing act was a vacillating domestic public opinion. At times vehemently and violently anti-American, it was also pro-European to the extent that EC membership captured wide public support. In the attempt to limit the overbearing extent of US influence in Greece and on its foreign concerns, Karamanlis encouraged the electorate to think of themselves as firmly ensconced in the Western family of nations in terms both of identity and of foreign and security interests. EC membership would enhance Greece's Western credentials, provide a new axis in support of Greek security interests and partially placate anti-Americanism in Greece. It exhorted the Greek public not to differentiate between Western Europe and the US but to consider itself as part of the anti-communist bloc, which could only benefit from its Western links irrespective of the political experiences of the dictatorship, the fiasco over Cyprus and general tensions in the Aegean.

In this context, the long-term Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy has its origins in the drive towards the *Westernisation* of Greece's international role and its security concerns, which had for the most part simply been guaranteed – by default – by its position in the East–West balance of power. Karamanlis' desire for early EC accession was driven by a variety of concerns, both domestic and international, but primarily by the need to Westernise Greece's vital security concerns. In this case, Europeanisation was not the product of EC membership but the cause for the push for swift membership. The EC was seen as a viable and serious balance to the US within the context of inter-Western relations and hence an enhancer of Westernisation. In the longer term, this would evolve into a process of Europeanisation via the projection of Greek security interests and goals.

### **Europeanisation as Modernisation**

Foreign policy is seldom analysed in terms of modernisation. In the case of Greece the contribution of modernisation has strayed beyond the domestic environment and has had a deep impact on the process and goals of foreign policy-making. One could say that modernisation is a key element in the discussion of Europeanisation, especially in the case of a 'small state' such as Greece. In general terms, 'Europeanisation as modernisation' could be said to mean more to small states than economic development or democratic consolidation: 'Membership [for the peripheral countries] has meant opening up to the rest of Europe and the world in more than an economic sense; in other words, greater exposure to modernity' (Tsoukalis 2003: 55). Europeanisation has resulted from the increased perception of and need to pursue devolution of authority from the centre, the promotion and establishment of varied levels of governance in the public and private sectors and what Tsoukalis refers to as 'benchmarking' (Tsoukalis 2003: 55).

But it is a neat corollary to the Westernisation argument presented above in that Europeanisation as modernisation predates the impact of EU membership and indeed can be seen as yet another impulse for accession rather than only a product of it (Tsoukalis 1979; Ioakimidis 2001: 74). In terms of the Greek pursuit of accession, to modernise was to Westernise, and to Westernise was to achieve accession and thus to Europeanise.

This of course does not in any way reduce the argument that the effects or impact of EU membership are the real manifestations of Europeanisation. What it does indicate is that there are a variety of means through which to address the concept of Europeanisation in the case of Greece, which may also have a wider application. To the relationship between modernisation and Europeanisation in the Greek context one has to introduce the differentiation that has been made between 'responsive' and 'intended' Europeanisation (Ioakimidis 2001: 74). Ioakimidis argues that in the first instance Europeanisation is a 'political process, which comes somewhat spontaneously, as a response to the pressures and penetrative impact of European integration upon the political system'. In the second instance, Europeanisation is a conscious effort on the behalf of 'political actors' aimed at 'transforming their systems by making them "modern" which (to them) means "European"' (Ioakimidis 2001: 74-75).

In the sphere of Greek foreign policy we have seen how the drive to accession was a process of intended Europeanisation especially in terms of foreign policy and security interests. Karamanlis' motives can be defined as having both a Westernising and modernising agenda. Equally there is no doubt that there have been significant changes to *how* foreign policy is formulated in Athens, at least on an organisational level.<sup>3</sup> Responsive Europeanisation in the field of foreign policy-making has taken place on a variety of different levels. At the most obvious level, Greece has had to adopt and adapt to practices stemming from the continuous growth in the EU's foreign policy-making capacity and intentions. The COREU telex system; permanent patterns of communication and exchange of views in Brussels and elsewhere where attempts are made to coordinate Europe's foreign policy and reach consensus; regular exchange placements of diplomats in other EU foreign ministries; and the work of the political directors has led to a degree of socialisation which forms part of the process of Europeanisation. In addition, the practical and organisational elements to Europeanisation have been felt in the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where a significant restructuring has taken place at all levels to adapt to the realities of the EU in general and of the foreign policy dimension more specifically (Kavakas 2000: 145-46).<sup>4</sup>

But these are processes to be expected from long-term membership of an institution which necessitates bureaucratic and policy-making adaptation, and they constitute a form of reactive reorganisation and modernisation of practices. But the more important and interesting issue is that of Europeanisation of goals as well as practices, and to what extent this can

be defined as a form of modernisation of foreign policy. In Greece there is a noteworthy case of intended and responsive Europeanisation coming together as a unitary process founded on the very concept of modernisation, which occurred with the onset of the Simitis premiership in the mid-1990s. There is nonetheless a notable hiatus between Karamanlis and Simitis that has to be briefly examined to understand the preconditions for the desire to further modernise/Europeanise and how this affected the field of foreign policy. This hiatus is dominated by the governments of Papandreou with a particular impact in the foreign policy domain.

The coming to power of the Pan Hellenic Socialist Movement (Πανελλήνιο Σοσιαλιστικό Κίνημα, PASOK) in 1981, under the leadership of Papandreou, shook Greece's membership of the West, and hence of the EC, to its very foundations. Both Westernisation and modernisation, and hence Europeanisation, were resisted if not rejected outright (Ioakimidis 1996: 36–38). For Papandreou, foreign policy was the kindling for stoking the fire of public support domestically as part of an expansively populist policy agenda. Rhetorically, at least, Papandreou was vividly anti-American and in public harboured doubts about the honesty of Greece's EC membership. Relations with the US and by extension NATO, which was presented by PASOK as an American tool, Papandreou argued, were both fundamentally unbalanced if not wrong for Greece. Scathing attacks were launched on the history of US policy towards Greece both in the dimensions of domestic politics and of non-support for Greek foreign policy. Papandreou forged links with Yasser Arafat and the PLO; was a founding member of the so-called 'Group of Six Peace Initiative', led by Olaf Palme, which attempted to create a middle ground between the two superpowers; promoted a Balkan nuclear weapons-free zone; was supportive of and well-disposed towards the Sandinista government in Nicaragua; and generally held a host of positions which were at odds with allies and partners alike.

There were more concrete manifestations of anti-Westernism. Demands for the closure of highly visible US bases in the Athens region led to protracted negotiations and bitterness, if not hostility, on both sides. Papandreou's government was prone to resort to flamboyant gestures of foreign policy independence, especially within the context of EPC. The most often referred to and glaring examples of these manifestations of outright awkwardness and uncooperative if not consensus-breaking policies in the European foreign policy sphere were the refusal to condemn the imposition of martial law in Poland and the downing of KAL 007 (Korean Airlines, flight 007), and the refusal to support the UK over the invasion of the Falklands.

To some extent this was gesture politics, a need to maintain domestic popular support by suggesting substantial deviation in foreign policy from the European partners and the US. Internationally, while Papandreou was viewed in certain quarters as a pernicious influence, he was by and large seen as a maverick figure prone to ostentatious and ineffectual foreign policy decisions on marginal issues while not effectively deviating from Greece's



role as defined by Cold War realities. In practice, though, Papandreou's foreign policy actions – especially in the field of EPC (European Political Cooperation) – reflected a greater desire to protect Greece from the impact of EU membership or Europeanisation (Ioakimidis 1996). The vast transfer of funds both from structural programmes and the Common Agricultural Policy were often put to dubious party political domestic uses and blatant electioneering, and had a dampening effect on the process of Europeanisation and modernisation which was sparked off by accession. Certainly, the process of Westernisation, which was so closely linked to accession, was deeply curtailed by actions in the foreign policy field specifically aimed at undermining the practices and interests of European foreign policy.

### *Marginalisation*

While Papandreou's policies had a significant restraining impact on the Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy, two major external developments would intensify Greece's marginalisation in EU terms: the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and, more importantly, Greece's reactions to the initial break-up of Yugoslavia. It was this marginalisation, in conjunction with the assumption of the premiership by Simitis, that would result in the biggest surge of Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy. This Europeanisation would take the general form of a Greek rehabilitation in the eyes of the EU partners, and protracted efforts to *normalise*, *denationalise* and *multilateralise* Greek foreign policy.

The end of communism shattered the carapace of security afforded to Greece by the Cold War. New threats emerged, old ones re-emerged and foreign policy planning was found wanting. Greece's identity and credentials – its very 'Westernness' – largely defined by its Cold War alliances and partnerships, came into question. Strategically and politically Greece was, in an instant, marginalised in Western terms. The certainties afforded Greek foreign policy by the Cold War were lost in an immediate post-1990 international order lacking in definition. Post-communist Central and Eastern Europe rapidly became the dominant factor in European international politics. The focus of economic development and democratic consolidation would shift dramatically away from Greece, Spain and Portugal to Eastern and Central Europe, robbing them of an elevated political status and potentially limiting the flow of EU funds so central to domestic growth and politics in general. It would mean an end to preferential treatment and in the Greek case a lot worse.

While Papandreou's cavalier, and divisive, positions on questions of EPC in the 1980s had previously done untold damage to Greece's standing among its fellow members, post-1990 the economic rationale for Greek membership also came under the microscope. All the indicators pointed to the fact that, despite massive transfers of funds, economic performance was way below par: significant budget deficits, together with inflation rapidly

edging into double figures and the new phenomenon – in the Greek experience – of a worrying growth in structural unemployment quickly relegated Greece to the bottom rung of EU economic rankings (Pagoulatos 2003: 95–100). As the poorest performer in the EU's league table the Greek economy, and the policies of successive PASOK governments, came under close scrutiny. More importantly, other members started questioning the original decision to admit Greece to the EC. The Cold War certainties, which had provided such a safe haven for Greece internationally – and within specific organisations – were now disappearing.

In addition to the changing balance within the EU and its concerns with Eastern Europe, Greece was further strategically marginalised in a different manner. As a result of the Gulf War an imbalance was created in Greece's most significant security relationship, that with Turkey. The latter's strong support for and participation in Operation(s) Desert Shield and Desert Storm resulted in a massive increase of US support for what was seen as a solid ally with the political and military clout to support Western interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. The rewards in political credit, hard cash and military transfers were handsome. As a result Greece took a hard hit in foreign policy terms and its international role was further confused. Its broader *raison d'être* in Western circles was already under challenge and, in turn, its regional interests were now under threat from its major local rival.

Moreover, the wars of Yugoslavia's dissolution triggered a foreign policy disaster for Greece. A growing perception, among its partners and allies, questioning the value and validity of Greek membership of Western institutions such as NATO and the EU, was solidified by Greece's actions and attitudes towards the collapse of Yugoslavia. Greece's recalcitrant, and at times obstructive, policies on the international management of and intervention in Yugoslavia's wars drove its allies and partners to distraction. This proved prohibitively costly in foreign policy terms. These policies were based on both foreign and domestic concerns and in one crucial instance on an interplay of both.

Initially Greece's policy vis-à-vis the break-up of Yugoslavia was formulated and presented in a clear and restrained manner, searching for viable solutions to safeguard Greek interests within the framework of EPC. The key Greek objective was the maintenance of a single Yugoslav state entity. This policy of containment would: protect against probable wars in Yugoslavia spilling over into broader Southeastern Europe; forestall regional realignments and instability as the result of the emergence of new states from Yugoslavia's dismemberment and, most importantly, preclude the possibility of the rekindling of the Macedonian question. It was argued that Greece's geopolitical location afforded it a clearer understanding of the historical and systemic tensions inherent in Balkan international relations, and what was at stake regionally in the context of the Yugoslav wars. The Greek government wished to ensure

that the first-order security implications of these wars for the states of Southeastern Europe were not lost in an EU policy environment dominated by the negotiations on Maastricht or in a US consumed by the aftermath of the Cold War and events in the Gulf. And at the heart of these Greek security concerns lay the Macedonian conundrum.

In domestic terms a delicate political balance in which the New Democracy (Νέα Δημοκρατία) government held an extremely slim parliamentary majority did not provide a solid enough foundation for a forceful foreign policy as the attention of the government was firmly focused on staying in power. Domestic issues prevailed in a sensitive political climate emanating from scandals which had recently resulted in the collapse of the PASOK government of Papandreu and the formation of an 'ecumenical' administration which preceded New Democracy in power.<sup>5</sup> Due to its slim majority this administration was vulnerable to manipulation not only by public opinion but also by individual politicians who could use the government's relative weakness to further their own ambitions.<sup>6</sup>

As tension in Yugoslavia broke out into war and Macedonia joined the ranks of the breakaway republics, foreign and domestic policy came into confluence. A progressively nationalist public opinion precluded the continuation of a rational and low-key policy – emphasising security concerns in the Western European/transatlantic context – towards Yugoslavia's collapse. It was in the handling of the Macedonian issue that the credibility of Greece's foreign policy both regionally and internationally was dealt a stunning setback from which it would take many years to recover. This handling has been written about extensively and most often in the most pejorative of terms.<sup>7</sup> The story does not need to be retold here. Suffice it to say that genuine security concerns, emanating from clauses in the first constitution of the independent Macedonia which were deemed both confrontational and indicative of a potential future claim on Greek territory, were presented to Greece's European partners as potential threats not only to Greece but also to regional stability as a whole and, by dint of Greek membership of the EU and NATO, to those organisations as well. These genuine security concerns were overtaken by a nationalist hysteria, buttressed by the intentional and provocative use of symbols by the new Macedonian regime and hijacked by domestic politicking. The symbols held sway over the reality of the diplomatic issues. The Greek foreign policy agenda came to be swiftly dominated by a public paranoia able to unsettle a weak government into pursuing policies which were irrational in their presentation, which lost sight of the true concerns and dovetailed neatly with the broader identity crisis which had afflicted Greek foreign policy with the end of the Cold War. Long sustained by the Cold War-inspired notion of Westernness, Greeks were now floundering in a crisis of national identity inspired by a desperately poor neophyte neighbour in a fluid international context in which uncertainty reigned. The inability of Greek policy-makers to sustain a position on Macedonia which could be supported and

understood by partners and allies evolved into an external perception that Greek motivations were derived primarily from support of Serbian expansionary aims based on some long-held historical, cultural and religious bond between Greece and Serbia, in what one author has called 'The Unholy Alliance' (Michas 2002).<sup>8</sup>

While the domestic political grip was vice-like, international pressure on Greece grew exponentially. The EU and the US could not comprehend Greece's non-recognition of Macedonia and attitudes towards Serbia. Through gross mismanagement and presentation of Greece's Balkan interests – with the added complexity of the domestic political situation – Greece's international standing was seriously damaged. Marginalised in strategic terms, it was now under the diplomatic hammer. Once considered a stalwart member of the Western European community of states and a pole of stability in the Balkans, it was now perceived as an immature Balkan parvenu in the Western European milieu. Where for so long the central axis for Greek foreign policy was its Western identity and its Europeanised foreign and security policies, it was now painted in terms of its 'Easternness' and belonging to the wrong side of an emerging civilisational fault-line.<sup>9</sup> Whereas EU membership was intended to defend Greek foreign and security interests – the Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy – Greece's first major post-Cold War threat was treated in such an 'un-Europeanised' manner both in formulation and implementation that its very membership of the EU was in question. Europeanisation, at least in the foreign policy field, had been shattered.

### **Europeanisation as Normalisation**

The Dayton Accords brought some respite to Greek foreign policy-making. Discord with Macedonia continued, but in reserved diplomatic fashion and centred on negotiations on hammering out a compromise agreement on the name. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's (FYROM's) economy was increasingly dependent on the inflow of Greek capital and business, and on Thessaloniki for its minimal trade links with the outside world, and as such a measure of normality had returned to the relationship.

The end of the Bosnian war, in general, coincided with the end of the Papandreou era and his replacement by the more pragmatic and technocratic premiership of Simitis. Simitis came to power promising modernisation in the domestic sphere.<sup>10</sup> This programme of modernisation had its complementary policy externally. Having inherited the burden of the calamitous foreign policy of the early and mid-1990s, his task was primarily one of *rehabilitation*: it was necessary to embark on a lengthy process of fence-mending with Balkan neighbours and restoration of healthy ties with the EU. In effect Simitis' intention was to embark on a parallel process of 're-Europeanising' Greek foreign policy while pursuing a modernising domestic reform programme. This would mean yet again

projecting Greek interests onto the EU foreign policy agenda – a bottom-up form of Europeanisation. To achieve this, Greek foreign policy would have to undergo a process of *normalisation*. Only by shedding the tag of the maverick actor by participating squarely in the foreign policy initiatives of the EU – and the international community in general – could Greek foreign policy interests and rights be integrated into the Western European mainstream.<sup>11</sup> This would necessitate a degree of ‘intended Europeanisation’ and adaptation to EU norms of behaviour hitherto unseen in Greek foreign policy. It would also necessitate the *denationalisation* and *multilateralisation* of Greek foreign policy. Key areas of foreign policy, and the key issues which were in need of resolution, would be converted from bilateral issues, which were central to the Greek national interest (εθνικά θέματα), into multilateral issues important to the values interests of the EU.

The clearest manifestation of the Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy, in this manner, is found in the evolution of the relationship with Turkey and the attempts to resolve the division of Cyprus.<sup>12</sup> A corollary to this involves two other significant changes to the substance of foreign policy. First, from 1996 onwards, conscious attempts were made to couch Greek foreign policy – especially in the Greek–Turkish context – in the language of interests rather than rights. Due reference was always made to the rule of law and the resolution of disputes through peaceful means, but the emphasis was shifted to interests. Second was the growth in the playing up and use of soft instruments of power whether in relation to Southeastern Europe or the Aegean.<sup>13</sup>

The first major foreign policy test for the Simitis government was a full-blown crisis with Turkey in the Aegean. In January 1996, Greece and Turkey found themselves embroiled in a quickly escalating crisis, which brought them to the brink of war. The immediate cause for dispute was an outcrop of rocks in the Aegean Sea known as Imia. These were Greek territory, but disputed by Turkey, and fuelled by political tension in Turkey and sensationalist media on both sides of the Aegean. The armed forces of the two countries found themselves on a war footing and their navies at a physical standoff in the waters surrounding this outcrop. War was only averted through the mediation of Richard Holbrooke and US pressure brought to bear on both Simitis and Ciller (the then Prime Minister of Turkey). As an example of crisis management and military preparedness this episode was shown to be disastrous in Greek terms. Nevertheless, in its aftermath the policy of Simitis showed the first signs of the new Greek attitude to its national interests and foreign relations. He embarked on a concerted, and well-orchestrated, diplomatic campaign to convince the EU partners that Greece’s borders were in fact the borders of the Union itself and, irrespective of the size of the territory claimed by Turkey, it was in Greece’s interests (as well as within its rights) to defend itself, and this was indeed in the interest of the EU itself. The attempt here was to present Greek

interests as those of the EU and threats to Greek territory as threats to the territory of the EU. This diplomatic effort went some way in bridging the perceptual divide between Greece and the rest of Western Europe and in undermining the notion that Greece was in fact not a Western state but a Balkan state in the EU.

This was a clear attempt to *multilateralise* if not *denationalise* a crisis which had many precursors in the Greek–Turkish relationship. It also bore a strong resemblance to the Westernisation of Greek foreign policy encountered under Karamanlis and Mitsotakis in the late 1970s and early 1990s, where it was deemed crucial to emphasise that Greek membership of the EU meant a security guarantee for Greece. And this process of *multilateralisation* and *denationalisation* would set the tone and substance of Greek foreign policy with respect to its two most important foreign policy issues, Turkey and Cyprus, to this day.

The tetchy relationship with Turkey is a concrete example of the above transformations. Dogged by decades of impasse and crisis in the Aegean, and over Cyprus, which will be dealt with separately, a dyad of natural disasters set off a transformation in the relationship. In August and September 1999 strong earthquakes struck both Turkey and Greece. Amid the resulting human suffering arose a phenomenon which quickly came to be called ‘earthquake’ or ‘disaster’ diplomacy.<sup>14</sup> In an unprecedented show of ‘trans-Aegean’ goodwill, specialist rescue teams, medical staff and general humanitarian assistance from both states participated in the rescue efforts in each other’s disaster zones. This form of functional cooperation in an emergency rubbed off on public opinion in both countries and was exploited by the respective Foreign Ministers, Papandreou and Cem. They, through a strong personal rapport, embarked on a series of bilateral meetings, which built upon and extended the goodwill shown by both sides during their respective emergencies. The aims of these meetings, not always shared by their cabinet colleagues, were to build up enough of an understanding to set in train economic, political, business and cultural exchanges at a wide variety of levels. Contacts were established and pursued in a rapid sequence of public diplomacy. Regular high-level ministerial meetings were complemented by contacts between senior military staff, formalised economic and business interaction and by cultural exchanges. In concrete terms, the immediate result was agreement on a series of confidence-building measures pertaining to the Aegean whose longer term implications are examined in the next section.

As a result of this *rapprochement*, or strategic *détente*, the gains for Greek diplomacy were immense. A tragic set of circumstances, coupled to a shift in the style and substance of Greek foreign policy (abetted by Cem’s positions), made great inroads into the Aegean stalemate. Furthermore, they engendered change in the tone of relations between Greece and Turkey both in the political and popular domains. For Greece, immense kudos was gained for its proactive policies and good behaviour and this political capital was stored for future use. It was at this stage that the pursuit of bilateral

*rapprochement* was filtered into Greece's membership of the EU and Turkey's desire to gain candidate status and ultimately full accession to the Union.

For many, since 1981, Greece was *the* obvious reason why Turkey would never be accepted into the EU. It was widely held that the Aegean disputes and the division of Cyprus would mean that Greece would always veto a Turkish application for full membership. But as the continuation of *rapprochement* with Turkey and in a clear-cut, if not blatant, decision to Europeanise its paramount foreign policy and security interest, Greece decided not to stand in the way of the consideration of a Turkish application. At the Helsinki Council of 1999, Greece not only lifted its objections to Turkish membership but also encouraged its fellow members to find an early date for negotiating Turkish entry. At a stroke, the burden of Turkey's relationship with Europe was partially lifted from the shoulders of Greek policy-makers and dropped squarely in the lap of the EU as a whole. In addition, conditions were laid down in the Helsinki Council communiqué declaration on Turkey which went beyond the conditionalities laid down by the Copenhagen criteria and involved specific reference to attempting to resolve Aegean disputes within a specified timeframe and according to agreed international standards and practices.

In a short space of time Greece had Europeanised its vital foreign interest in the most practical of terms through both the style and substance of its new foreign policy. Turkey still remained and remains a bilateral issue on one level, but is now firmly tied in with Turkey's path to the EU: arguably for Greece, its relations with Turkey have now been *multilateralised* and partially *denationalised* (Lesser *et al.* 2001: 21 and 109–10). In effect, Greece still maintains a great degree of control and responsibility for its actions and policies with respect to Turkey, but its relationship with Turkey is now firmly embedded in the EU framework of foreign relations. Enlargement to Turkey will inevitably have to include satisfactory resolution of the Aegean disputes; enlargement to Turkey is now a European concern and not only a Greek one.

This pattern of Europeanisation through *multilateralisation* is also encountered in Greece's policy with respect to Cyprus. This is not the place to rehearse the mountains of arguments, or the historical background, to the Cypriot dispute. It was, and remains, a burning issue in terms of Greek foreign policy, and one in which for many years Greek foreign policy-makers found themselves in a quagmire where they felt a sense of abandonment by partners and allies alike. The key evolution in the Cyprus dispute was yet again to be found in the relationship with the EU. Cyprus' formal application and candidacy for full membership was concluded by the round of 'big-bang' enlargement in May 2004. This could be claimed as a foreign policy success for the Republic of Cyprus. But it would not have been achievable without the strong lobbying of Greece within the EU. Greece pushed for Cypriot accession not only because the state fulfilled the

Copenhagen criteria on which its prospective membership would be judged, but also because this was promoted as a means by which a resolution to the division of the island could be secured. The setting down of some – rather loose – conditions at the Helsinki Council in 1999 meant that the two communities in Cyprus, with the addition of Greece, Turkey, the EU and the UN, would have to be involved in a serious effort to reach a settlement for the process of enlargement to flow smoothly.

While enlargement to include Cyprus occurred, the last-ditch diplomatic attempts to press for acceptance of the Annan Plan for the reunification of the island foundered on the objections of the Greek Cypriots, who overwhelmingly rejected it in a referendum on 24 April 2004. This could be seen as a failure of EU conditionality and perhaps a failure of the Greek leadership to sufficiently pressurise the Greek Cypriots into accepting the Plan. Nonetheless, what it means for Greek foreign policy is that, implicitly, the Cyprus question is now as much a European one as an Eastern Mediterranean one. As a manifestation of bottom-up Europeanisation it shares many of the trademarks highlighted previously in the brief discussion of Greek–Turkish relations. While domestically in Greece, Cyprus remains a major foreign policy issue, it now figures centrally on the agenda of the EU as a European matter: in short, as with Greek–Turkish relations, it has been multilateralised and partly denationalised. They remain national interests (εθνικά θέματα), but they have been translated not only into the European consciousness but also the EU policy-making agenda in a particular fashion. As such they are expressions of the Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy from the national perspective.

Although the emphasis in this section on Europeanisation as normalisation has been on the projection of national interests onto the European foreign policy agenda, one has to point to a third key Greek policy during the Simitis era which exhibited a different form of Europeanisation. The handling of the Kosovo crisis in 1999 provides a good example, within the context of rehabilitation and normalisation, of the convergence if not confluence of foreign policy interests and behaviour between Greece and its Western allies

The reopening of the Balkan Pandora's Box in the form of crisis in Kosovo produced not only a regional crisis for Greece but also a re-questioning of its relations with Serbia. The challenge for the Greek government lay in pursuing an internationally acceptable policy while fending off some vociferous domestic claims, which contested the legality of international intervention in Kosovo and clamoured for support of Serbia.<sup>15</sup> At stake for the Simitis government was not only its domestic popularity and the maintenance of regional stability, but also preservation of the diplomatic losses recouped since 1996. It took a form of brinkmanship – brave in domestic political terms – by Simitis to formulate a viable policy to meet these ends. In what could be called a policy of *constructive ambivalence*, Simitis balanced out internal demands and international necessity by



declining Greek military participation in Operation Allied Force, but not opposing the operation and granting NATO forces the right of passage and maintenance of logistics routes through Greek territory. This was more than a gesture as NATO resupply through Thessaloniki was strategically crucial for any land intervention and the ensuing Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission. Politically it was constructive in that it showed support for the European diplomatic effort and the Western effort within the constraints imposed domestically; the ambivalence was produced by non-participation militarily and the questioning of the legality of the operation. While in the short term there was a domestic political cost to be paid, the international plaudits were extensive and in the long term could lead to foreign policy success, which would restore some of the loss of domestic support.

This position adopted by Simitis was light years away from the disruptive, consensus-breaking approach towards European foreign policy of his predecessor Papandreou, or from the myopically ethnocentric stances adopted during the initial stages of Yugoslavia's collapse. Here was a carefully crafted compromise policy which, while acknowledging the domestic constraints on foreign policy, was pragmatic enough to realise that long-term interests would be better served through consensus. It was both the substance and presentation of the policy which signified a degree of Europeanisation in which consensus would not be broken, but a principled point would also be made showing some concern over the intentions and implementation of Western policy. The policy was seemingly calibrated to further Greek interests in the short term by an overt statement of doubt over certain aspects of the intervention both in principle and with regard to the Greek perceptions of Balkan realities. But it also met longer term interests related to Greece's international role beyond the confines of Southeastern Europe and specifically in its standing within the European foreign policy framework and interaction with its EU partners (and the US). To this extent, the policies of *rehabilitation* and *normalisation* were key determinants of a position which was clearly Europeanised and avoided the possibility of marginalisation.<sup>16</sup>

The most important perception garnered by the EU (and individual member states) from the cumulative experiences of Greek foreign policy behaviour post-1996, especially in the cases of Kosovo, Turkey and Cyprus, was that of Greece's international credibility as a European actor. The acid test of this heightened credibility would come with Greek assumption of the Presidency of the EU Council in January 2003. During this Presidency, Greece was faced with the foreseen enlargement process and its political and institutional ramifications (including those on the negotiations for a European Constitution in the Convention on the Future of Europe); questions of economic management of the EU and the furtherance of the Lisbon Agenda; and a series of issues involving the EU's external relations. Of specific interest to Greece was the development of a more coherent and enhanced policy towards the states of the Western Balkans. Nevertheless,

this agenda was for the most part usurped by the Iraq crisis and the deep division this caused within Europe and transatlantically. Greece found itself in a dilemma. While holding the rotating Presidency, and thus representing the interests of the EU, Greece walked the tightrope between satisfying its EU partners – and thus maintaining the credibility and kudos of rehabilitation which had been so hard-won – and ensuring that transatlantic links were not destroyed by divergent positions on Iraq which would be catastrophic both for the EU and for Greece itself (Pagoulatos and Vlavourkos 2004: 122). Despite the tension of the situation and the series of splits that occurred between EU members, and between the EU and the US, Greece was deemed to have achieved a successful Presidency primarily because of its handling of the Iraq issue. Credibility remained intact because of Greek diplomacy in the context both of routine meetings of the General Affairs Council and the emergency summit, which Greece called on 17 February 2003.<sup>17</sup> Policy was affected only to the extent that the Greek Presidency managed to achieve common positions and declarations at a time when it seemed unlikely that it would be possible and despite the fact that the infamous ‘Letter of the Eight’ was agreed and made public without the knowledge of the Greek Presidency. But most important for Greece was that the impression generated by the Presidency – especially in the field of foreign policy with regard to Iraq – reinforced the perception of credibility and Europeaness which had developed since the mid-1990s. In this respect, holding the Presidency at such a crucial time for the EU, and generally being perceived as having performed quite admirably, consolidated the Europeanised nature of Greek behaviour internationally. If expectations of a type of behaviour are considered an important dimension of the process of Europeanisation then this Greek Presidency certainly fulfilled this criterion.

## **Conclusion**

This article has looked closely at the recent changes in the style and substance of Greek foreign policy and analysed to what extent it has been Europeanised. There has been some obvious adaptation, and indeed socialisation, within the foreign policy-making process, which has meant that policy formulation, presentation and implementation have converged with that of the EU as whole. Expectations of behaviour, an important criterion of Europeanisation according to some, are seemingly met. And consensus seeking, cooperative behaviour and policies appear to be becoming the norm rather than the exception, contrary to the experience of much of the 1980s and early 1990s. This is why the shift is more than an opportunistic or shallow one. Rather, there has been a process of Europeanisation from the top down, through which Greek foreign policy-making has adopted the principles and practices of a particular kind of norm-based and consensus-seeking policy formulation process which emanates from EU membership.

One would also have to conclude that the impact of EU membership, the minimalist interpretation of the term Europeanisation, has also created new interests for Greek foreign policy beyond the confines of its regionally based concerns. The main evidence for this is to be found primarily in Greece's increased involvement in international humanitarian, peacekeeping and other types of operations in Southeastern Europe and beyond. However, these forms of Europeanisation are of secondary importance to the primary form of Europeanisation, in terms of Greek foreign policy, that this article has highlighted and that is the projection of national foreign policy preferences and goals onto the European foreign policy-making agenda. This has been a conscious and constant policy evident from the very outset of Greece's drive to membership. Europe has been and is viewed as a 'protector power' (Ioakimidis 2000: 370) or 'security provider' (Tsakonias and Tournikiotis 2003) both in its relationship with Turkey but also in the Balkan context. Europe has also served the purpose of balancing Greece's relationship with the US in the domain of foreign policy and with respect to domestic politics and public opinion. Membership of the EU initially served as an instrument of the Westernisation of Greek foreign policy interests and more recently as the forum and vehicle for the multilateralisation of the key issues in Greek foreign policy. To a certain extent, the promotion of foreign policy goals within a European framework has resulted in a degree of denationalisation of foreign policy interests. A long period of rehabilitation was needed to overcome the legacies of a seemingly anti-Western set of policies pursued by the governments of Papandreou, and the disastrous policies over the disintegration of Yugoslavia and FYROM. This rehabilitation took the form of the normalisation and modernisation of Greece's relations with its European partners and Western allies. But this too was a conscious policy mainly internally generated and not solely resulting from the impact of EU membership. This has been a significant transformation in the style and substance of Greek foreign policy, while still being centred on the pursuit of certain policy preferences and the promotion of certain constant foreign policy goals. Indeed, this transformation seemed to have put paid to an inherent paradox in post-Cold War Greek foreign policy identified in a notable publication in 1997; the paradox raised here was the evident disparity between promise and performance (Allison and Nicolaidis 1997). A state with a consolidated democracy, bountiful economic potential, entrepreneurial and managerial skills, strong allies and partners through membership of NATO and the EU, and geopolitical significance could not harness these attributes into international success. Gradually, and at times fortuitously, Greece began to match performance to promise; or, to put it otherwise, capabilities to expectations (Hill 1993). The rehabilitation into the European mainstream progressed accordingly. It is no coincidence that a second notable publication, in 1999, cautiously argued that Greece was progressively attaining 'Europeanness' – and a sense of normality in its foreign and domestic policies – as a result of concentrated

reform at home and modified behaviour abroad (Tsoukalis 1999). In essence, this transformation is Europeanisation, which at the foreign policy level has for the most part been driven from within and projected outwards.

## Notes

1. For the best recent work, which traces the broad concepts and sets the framework for general discussions on Europeanisation, see Featherstone and Radaelli (2003), especially the introduction.
2. Many of these issues were best treated in Coulombis and Iatrides (1980).
3. For detail on the organisational changes made to the structure and functioning of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs see Kavakas (2000: 145–47). These are significant changes on the organisational level but were not always significant in effect, especially under Foreign Minister George Papandreou, diminished in importance by the appointment of dozens of special advisers attached to his cabinet.
4. Even though this reorganisation did not take place until 1998.
5. This was a ‘grand coalition’ government whose slogan, and political mission, was ‘catharsis’ – the cleansing of the Greek body politic – following the unrest caused by the Koskotas scandals during this Papandreou premiership.
6. The link in the interplay between foreign and domestic policy was provided by the Foreign Minister of the New Democracy government, Andonis Samaras. He saw in the reappearance of the ‘Macedonian question’ an opportunity to assert himself as the unrivalled future leader of his party. By commandeering foreign policy he set a nationalist agenda which would do untold damage to Greek interests, even if it did not work to his own political advantage.
7. For a typical example of the international, and especially British, reaction to the Greek handling of the Macedonian issue see Malcolm (1992). For a good account of Greek foreign policy and the Macedonian Question, in the context of the EU’s external relations, see Tziampiris (2000).
8. The governments of Mitsotakis and Papandreou had to simultaneously deal with a misconceived popular sentiment and the exigencies of regional foreign policy. Mediation with Serbia on the behalf of the EU – and other international actors – such as during the attempts to persuade the Bosnian Serbs to sign up to the Vance–Owen Peace Plan for Bosnia were met not with acclaim but with catcalls of derision; branding Greece an unreconstructed ally of Milosevic’s Serbia rather than a well-intentioned conduit for international diplomacy playing to its regional influence.
9. The boldest and most provocative of these arguments was put forward by Samuel Huntington, who portrayed Greece as not a member of the Western civilisation but inhabiting an eastern world based on Orthodoxy. See Huntington (1997: 126, 162–63, 283–84).
10. It is relevant to note that Simitis and the three other high-ranking PASOK members who formed the so-called Gang of Four, which in effect signalled the end of the Andreas Papandreou era, were commonly referred to as modernisers in public debate and by the media. It was a key feature of their move to take control of the party and government.
11. This maverick tag was not aided by the public pronouncements of George Papandreou’s predecessor as Foreign Minister, Theodoros Pangalos. On numerous occasions he made highly inflammatory and derogatory remarks about a number of other states including Turkey and Germany. Of the former he said that it was ‘dragging bloody boots across the carpets of Europe’ in relation to the treatment of the Kurdish question. Of the latter he referred to it as ‘a giant with a child’s brain’ in the context of its Balkan foreign policy.
12. Other instances are the policy of the Greek government over the Kosovo crisis in 1999, a generally more constructive Balkan policy both in politico-economic terms as well as

- through participation in policing and peacekeeping missions in the region (and beyond), and the style and substance of the Greek Presidency of the European Council in the first semester of 2003.
13. This proactive, conciliatory policy matched the personalities and political characteristics of the main foreign policy decision-makers, Simitis and Papandreou. The former was not prone to the populist rhetorical flourishes of his predecessor, nor was he one to embrace the grand gesture, often cocking a snook at allies and partners alike, as Papandreou had done on numerous occasions. His pragmatic, low-key approach to foreign policy was much in line with the role of the moderniser which he had adopted domestically as he embarked on a series of domestic reforms. Papandreou, while playing on the family name and political heritage, which provided him tremendous popularity at home and publicity abroad, was the most presentable of PASOK's foreign policy team. He too formed part of the party's modernising tendency and he relied extensively, and successfully, on his charisma, international contacts and fluent 'Westernness' in pursuit of diplomatic goals.
  14. While there was an outpouring of goodwill and mutual assistance as a result of the earthquakes, it has been argued that the causal link between 'disaster or earthquake diplomacy' and the Greek-Turkish *rapprochement* must not be overstated. The process of *rapprochement* predated the disasters and the diplomacy which ensued may have helped the process along but was not necessarily the instigating factor. See Ker-Lindsay (2000).
  15. These claims were widespread and were mainly fuelled by a combination of a long-standing anti-Americanism, extremists and anarchists, the Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church in Greece and a mass media, which viewed the conflict through rose-tinted lenses. It was the method of NATO intervention as well as the unstated objectives of the American led operation, which brought these tendencies to the fore.
  16. This policy also bolstered the idea of Westernisation, a key element in long-term Europeanisation.
  17. For details of the two most important meetings, the General Affairs Council of 28 January 2003, and the extraordinary summit in February see, Pagoulatos and Vlavoukos (2004: 123–28).

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