

# Greece and Turkey aim to heal rift

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'Wise men' from both countries endeavour to resolve long-standing territorial disputes

By Lionel Barber

Greece and Turkey have agreed to appoint a group of "wise men" to help resolve their territorial disputes in the Aegean Sea.

The European Union welcomed the move as a step towards improving relations between Ankara and Athens and stepping up efforts to end the dispute over Cyprus.

The Aegean initiative was announced at a long-delayed EU-Turkey Association Council in Luxembourg. It softened the impact of Greece's refusal to lift its long-standing veto over Ecu375m (\$424m) of EU financial aid until Turkey stops threatening Greek sovereignty in the area.

The Association Council, the first for 18 months during which EU-Turkish relations have worsened, was highlighted by an impassioned speech by Mrs Tansu Çiller, the Turkish foreign minister.

Mrs Çiller pleaded for Turkey to be put on an equal footing with the 10 central

and eastern European countries whose applications to join the EU will be formally considered in the summer.

"To [treat us] otherwise would undermine these very sentiments of equality, fairness and non-discrimination. Neither of us can allow that to occur, or even for that perception to reappear."

Mrs Çiller's appeal put EU foreign ministers on the spot. Earlier, Mr Klaus Kinkel, German foreign minister, had ruled out Turkish membership of the EU "for the foreseeable future" because of its human rights record, the treatment of the Kurdish minority, and economic imbalances.

Ministers responded to Mrs Çiller by reaffirming Turkey's "eligibility" for membership. With this promise, the EU hopes to assuage Ankara's frustration that neighbours such as Bulgaria are ahead of Turkey in the enlargement queue.

Despite his caution about eventual Turkish membership, Mr Kinkel has put heavy pressure on Mr Theo-

doros Pangalos, the hardline Greek minister for European affairs, to be more forthcoming.

Yesterday's meeting between Mr Pangalos and Mrs Çiller at a conference of Black Sea nations in Istanbul was welcomed as a sign that Greece may be edging toward a resolution of the conflict.

The group of "wise men" will make a report - if necessary of an interim nature - by mid-June.

The recommendations are non-binding, while Greece and Turkey have asked the Dutch presidency of the EU to continue its role as honest broker.

● A Turkish court sentenced 122 Islamist sect members to up to four years in prison yesterday for challenging the official secularist order, Reuter reports from Ankara.

The Islamists, members of the Aczmenli sect, had been charged with forming an illegal group, insulting Turkey's secularist founder, Kemal Atatürk, and breaking a ban



Theodoros Pangalos: softening stance

on Islamic dress.

The court sentenced 113 sect members to three years

each in jail, six to four years, and another three to 20 months.

Εφημέρια τ' Τουρκία εφογέουν να μαζέγουν  
το ρήμα.

- Λογόν τ' αλλοις εν δίο τώρες προσωδόν να ζέουν  
μαυροκρόνιες εδωγινές αγγισθηνέσεις.
- Η Ε.Ε. ηδονήσασε την νύκτα δα έιν βήμα για την βελώνη  
των σχέσεων Αμερικής τ' Αγγλίας.
- Το διπλόζω λινδένος το πρώτο μέγα οηό 18 μήνες  
παρά να δι'άρκειν για οηότις οι σχέσεις Ε.Ε - Τουρκίας,  
εωδενινώθησαν με αμοκρογώμα τον γρομφοζίζω της  
Τ. Aller η οποία γήτρησε 160 μέτα μεταχείριση της Τουρ-  
κίας με τις υφίστατες 10 τώρες της Κεντρικής τ' Ανατολικής  
Ευρώπης.
- Νωρίτερα ο Κ. Κινκελ δήλωσε ότι δεν βλέπει την Τουρκία να γί-  
ναι μέλος της Ε.Ε. στο εγγύ, μέλλον, εφάριας της παραβιάσεων  
των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων, τον Κορδινόν γήτρησας τ' των  
ομορφών προβλημάτων.
- Οι Υπουργοί Εξωτερικών της Τ. Aller εωαναβεβαιώσαντες την  
για την "καταφροζήτωση" της Τουρκίας να γίνει μέλος της Ε.Ε.
- Ο κ. Κινκελ ωίεσε ότι ο Πάριζος του υπεί οφφονή στήση  
να γίνει περισσότερο ενδοτικός.
- Η σελίδα "Logan" δε νοσέζει να γορά σε μέτα λουρίν.
- Η Εφημέρια τ' η Τουρκία γήτρησε αλλοις της Αφάντικης  
Προεδρία να συνευίσει τον πόλο της ως έντονα με-  
σοζωτική.