

CONCLUSIONS OF THE SPANISH-TURKISH SEMINAR ON ENERGY SECURITY

Madrid, 18 May 2007

Spain and Turkey are essential pieces in the configuration of a common European interest in the area of energy and, therefore, in the designing and implementation of a strategy shared by the countries on the continent, regardless of whether or not they are members of the EU. This position does not stem from the volume of their production but rather they are strategic areas in the Mediterranean for the transportation, transformation and distribution of hydrocarbons.

In the Mediterranean as well as in Europe, the issues linked to energy are acquiring an ever greater importance on the political agenda, both domestically and in the realm of foreign relations. One of the topics that generates the greatest interest is energy security, in other words, the guaranteeing of secure, regular access to energy resources at reasonable prices.

This is a growing concern in the EU, on the whole of the European continent and in the Mediterranean basin. For this reason, the CIDOB Foundation, the Instituto de Cuestiones Internacionales y Política Exterior (INCIPE) and the Center for European Studies at the Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara, decided to jointly organise a bilateral seminar devoted to these issues from a European and Mediterranean perspective.

This seminar, which was financed by the National Energy Commission and Técnicas Reunidas, brought together a considerable group of representatives from the academic, business, political, military and diplomatic spheres of the two countries on the 18th of May in Madrid. The day before, in the welcoming dinner, the participants were able to hear the impressions offered by the Spanish Minister of Industry, Tourism and Trade, Joan Clos, who insisted on Spain's unwavering support for Turkey's accession to the EU, and those offered by the Turkish Secretary of State, Sami Demirbilek, who emphasised the growing importance of energy issues in Turkey's international projection.

In the inauguration of the seminar, the President of the CIDOB Foundation, Narcís Serra, highlighted the excellent relations that exist between Turkey and Spain and argued that the energy dimension could be an area that provides these bilateral ties with greater content. He asserted that energy, together with water, could become the cement of co-operation between the countries north and south of the Mediterranean, establishing a parallelism with the conception of the European Coal and Steel Community. The other speakers, José Lladó, Chairman of Técnicas Reunidas, Atila Eralp, Director of the Center for European Studies in Ankara, and the ambassadors, Ender Arat and Luis Felipe de la Peña, also coincided in emphasising the harmony between Spain and Turkey and the need to strengthen the energy dimension in their bilateral relations and in Turkey's process of accession to the EU.

The **first round table**, focusing on the role of energy in the international geopolitical context, was moderated by Juan Sancho, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Técnicas Reunidas Internacional, who insisted on the fact that in the area of energy many interests, both national and private, converge in its production and transportation. In the interventions of the two panel speakers as well as in the subsequent debate, it became clear that a reflection on dependence or independence in the area of energy is fundamental.

Meliha Altunisik, a lecturer and Director of the Department of International Relations at the Middle East Technical University (Ankara), spoke about Russia as one of the main actors in the energy field and about its use of energy security as a political weapon for its own interests. The European Union and Turkey, as a country of transit for the energy that Europe consumes, should work together to assert their common interests in front of Russia. One of the questions that this round table generated was how to reconcile the energy security of the EU without alienating Russia.

For her part, Aurelia Mañé, a lecturer in Economic Policy at the University of Barcelona, laid out a theoretical framework for debate, focusing on how we understand energy relations. The dichotomous energy paradigm that governs these relations defines the interests of producers and consumers as being conflicting and dependent. However, Professor Mañé also posed the

existence of relationships of interdependence among the offering agents, the demanding agents and the consumers, which alter the interaction among the actors.

The **second round table**, devoted to both countries' interests in the energy field, was moderated by Luis Felipe Peña, the Spanish Ambassador to Turkey. He stressed that the relations between Spain and Turkey have intensified, and he gave the example of the harmony between the two countries, the absence of problems between them, and the intensification of trade co-operation. Within the European framework, he also reminded the participants that Spain has always defended Turkey's accession to the EU and that, at a global level, the two countries have been able to promote joint initiatives like the Alliance of Civilisations.

In this round table, the two speakers and the subsequent debate placed emphasis on the possibility of co-operation and the exchange of experiences among the public and private agents of the two countries. Yusuf Isik, the former Turkish parliamentary adviser for Energy Affairs in the Ministry of the Economy, highlighted Turkey's increased energy consumption and its high degree of dependence on exportations, and he proposed that Spain, which is in a similar situation, could collaborate with Turkey, sharing its experience and know-how. Likewise, he alerted participants to the fact that security in Turkey is closely linked to its prosperity.

For his part, Vicente González, of Red Eléctrica Española, dealt with the issue of electrical integration in the Mediterranean through projects of MedRing, an electrical ring that would interconnect the Euro-Mediterranean region, and the Turkey-UCTE interconnection. According to him, the main challenges for the electricity sector in Turkey are the country's adaptation to the community regulations, its integration into the European electrical system, attending to increased demand, and finishing the process of transition in the area of electricity.

During the discussion part of this second round table, participants commented on the question of whether or not energy integration is an issue that is more of an economic nature than of a political one, and they underscored the need to establish a common energy policy, since, up until now, each country has established its own energy security policy according to its own problems and interests.

During the seminar lunch, María Teresa Costa, Chairwoman of the National Energy Commission, addressed some words to the participants, in which, in view of the current situation marked by price volatility, high growth in demand and growing instability in the energy-producing countries, she stressed the need to establish a common energy policy based on three axes: security of supply, competition and environmental protection. She gave importance to the fact that through MEDREG, the Mediterranean Working Group on Electricity and Natural Gas Regulation, objectives are established for the exchange of information and experiences, the promoting of the regulating of transparent, non-discriminatory markets and the development of Euro-Mediterranean gas and electricity markets, with the objective of integrating them.

In the afternoon, the **third round table** took place, in which participants tried to answer the question of whether or not a Euro-Mediterranean energy policy is necessary. The moderator of the round table, Ender Arat, the Turkish Ambassador to Spain, emphasised his country's strong desire to join the European Union. He underscored the fact that Turkey is willing to co-operate very actively in the Euro-Mediterranean framework, as long as it is considered a European country. Arat also predicted that this desire to join the European Union will not change after the election that is set for the 22nd of July, 2007, regardless of the outcome.

Juan Prat, an Ambassador on a Special Mission for Mediterranean Affairs in the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, observed that one should not contrast Europe with the Mediterranean but rather create a Euro-Mediterranean region in which energy would be one of the bonds in the union. In this new world stage, where everything is interrelated, security connects several different dimensions, and the concept of it has evolved beyond that of *hard security*. From this point of view, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is a good example of *soft security*. In this new scenario, energy is used as a factor of political control, which makes policies of diversification essential.

Selim Küneralp, Undersecretary of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, spoke about the environmental hazards that are involved in the extraction, transportation and consumption of energy, especially its transportation through vulnerable areas, like the Bosphorus. In regard to this topic, a debate emerged on nuclear energy as a realistic option for future energy needs.

The seminar ended with an intervention by Alberto Navarro, the Secretary of State for the European Union in the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation. Navarro, who knows a great deal about this country, stated that Turkey is a strategic partner and reaffirmed Spain's unwavering support for its accession. In this sense, he pointed out that Spain is already looking at its next term in the presidency of the EU (in the first half of 2010) as a good time to strengthen relations between Turkey and the EU.



The success of this seminar demonstrated, first of all, that the area of energy could be a fruitful one for collaboration between Spain and Turkey. Secondly, it showed that energy is a trump card in the defence of Turkey's accession to the EU, especially from an energy security point of view. Thirdly, it demonstrated that it is necessary to have a European energy policy that makes candidate countries partners. Fourth and finally, it showed that frameworks of co-operation should be found so that this EU energy policy can achieve greater scope: at a pan-European level (including Russia) and at Euro-Mediterranean level (including all of the partners in the Barcelona Process).