Vedat Yorucu and Özay Mehmet: The Southern Energy Corridor: Turkey's Role in European Energy Security.

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"Turkey is like a hamburger, on the upper ban Russia gas, on the lower ban east Mediterranean and Caucasian gas and in the middle Southern Gas Corridor (...) [sic]" (p. 79). This quote represents the heart and soul of the reviewed book, in which Professors Yorucu and Mehmet aim to defend the capacity of the Turkish Republic to become a hub in the Southern Energy Corridor between the energy-rich regions in the South-East and Europe. The authors, however, forget that a hamburger does not necessarily pose a tasty bite for everyone.

Vedat Yorucu is a Lecturer in Economics at the Eastern Mediterranean University in Cyprus. He deals with energy security and trade-issues. Özay Mehmet is a Professor Emeritus of International Affairs at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. He specializes in the economic development of the Asian Tigers, Turkey and Cyprus. The economic background of the co-authors is clearly visible throughout the book, which focusses especially on the economic aspects of hydrocarbon transportation such as infrastructure, market, and prospects of monetisation.

The main point their book makes is that due to the increasing energy needs of both the EU and Turkey, the two players should cooperate in order to find the most economical way to satisfy their rising demand. The main goal of the book is then to explore – or, more precisely, defend – the role Turkey could play as a transit country for the European Union. To reach this objective, the book very well presents the existing Turkish energy infrastructure, the local energy market, and an empirical pricing model of the domestic gas demand. Then the reader is introduced to several hydrocarbon sources (the Caspian basin, Russia, the East Med, Iraq, Iran, and the Red Sea) that could be potentially connected to the European market via Turkey. Later, using the economic "level of risk analysis", the authors examine these sources from an economic as well as a geopolitical perspective.

Altogether, the monograph consists of ten chapters organised into four parts. The first and second part are focussed on the role of Turkey in the energy security of Europe and its possible role as an energy hub. They highlight the country's dual position as a rapidly growing consumer and a future transiter. The third part deals with the energy potential of the Eastern Mediterranean, and also with boundary disputes powered by the discoveries of hydrocarbons in this area. It also identifies and evaluates specific national and trans-national pipeline projects as well as economic and engineering details of the possibly emerging Turkish hub. Finally, the fourth part is devoted to EU-Turkey relations. It highlights the importance of the Southern Energy Corridor in securing Europe's future energy requirements, and calls for a more rational energy partnership between the two players.

The most important contribution the monograph brings is its overview of the recent state of affairs at the Southern Energy Corridor, which, at some time in the future, could possibly connect the EU with the energy-rich regions in the South-East. The authors, with their "level of risk" classification, suggest that Turkey, given its existing energy infrastructure, offers the most appropriate and cheapest way to enhance European energy security, provided that the EU strengthens its interconnection with Turkey, and drops its "pipedream" of establishing an undersea pipeline between Cyprus, Greece and Italy (pp. 130–131). In fact, the Turkish Republic is currently connected to Russian, Azerbaijani,

Iranian, and Iraqi hydrocarbon sources. In the future, it could also serve as a transit country for the gas originating in Egypt, Israel and Cyprus.

This is an impressive potential, but there are some issues that need to be discussed in this regard. First, offering an alternative route for the Russian gas is welcomed, but the European energy security would be best enhanced by searching for different suppliers rather than different routes.[1] Second, these days, the transportation of Iranian and Iraqi hydrocarbons still faces severe security and political obstacles. And third, the Azerbaijani option is so far foreseen to provide only a limited amount of gas for Europe (specifically 10 bcm, p. 31).

This is why the authors prominently devote attention to the question of the East Med gas piping. The so-called Levantine Basin is a hydrocarbon-rich, mostly offshore area located between Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and Cyprus with significant natural gas reserves exceeding the Algerian reserves by almost one third (p. 103). So far, only Israel and Egypt are drilling the East Med gas, and only for domestic consumption (Ministry of Energy 2013; Eni 2018). But prospectively, a surplus of the gas could be exported. On several occasions the authors highlight that transporting these resources to Europe in any other way than via Turkey (e.g. via the Israel-Cyprus-Greece-Italy undersea pipeline or an LGN terminal) would be economic nonsense. Although this claim is probably true, the economic considerations do not always prevail when the actors involved are confronted with the (geo)political realities, especially in sectors deemed strategic.[2] In this context, a proposed solution that would involve exchanging Cypriot gas for water (p. 131) would be quite cheap when viewed from a purely economic perspective, but incredibly costly in terms of selling it to the Greek Cypriot public due to both strategic and legal concerns.[3]

Additionally, another questionable issue is whether the EU believes that its energy security would truly be enhanced by piping all South-Eastern hydrocarbons only via Turkey, given the Turkish internal political and security development (Austvik and Rzayeva 2016). This point now gains an even bigger importance because in August 2018 the Caspian states – after more than twenty years of disputes over the status of the Caspian Sea – finally reached an agreement that could allow for building an undersea gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Azerbaijan, Turkey and Europe (Soukup 2018). It is to be noted that the authors of the book considered this deal unlikely (pp. 48, 52).

The monograph also argues that in the long term perspective, economic forces (labelled as "rational choice") sooner or later prevail over bilateral disputes – and the authors then serve as advocates of this idea throughout the rest of the book. The authors admit that it is written not with the intention to neutrally evaluate the pros and cons of Turkey serving as a possible regional energy hub, but in defence of Turkey's role as such. As the Professors themselves put it, *"This monograph is dedicated to the idea that Europe and Turkey are obliged to become energy partners"* (p. 1). From my perspective, this is an unfortunate approach. Although in many of the points they make, they might be right, at least the cover-box of their "burger" should have been made in a more appealing form. For a reader, it is always better to think that they are allowed to form their own opinion instead of being forced to accept someone else's view.

Amidst the monograph's other weaknesses I can point out its rather short length of 146 pages, which didn't allow the co-authors to evolve a deeper argumentation in support of their perspective. For example, the description of Turkey's view on the delimitation of its exclusive economic zone in the Mediterranean is underdeveloped. In my opinion, it would be interesting to read a more thorough discussion of the Greek/Greek Cypriot and Turkish argumentation, but – true enough – such a discussion would probably exceed the scope of the econocentric focus they have chosen. Finally, I have to note that there are also several inconsistencies (for example, the name of the Syrian president Assad is sometimes spelled "Esad" and at other times "Asad", pp. 65, 116–117), typing errors ("peace-peaking" mission, p. 140), and mistakes ("the European Court of Justice" is mentioned

in place of "the International Court of Justice", p. 95) that skipped the attention of the editors.

The monograph represents the 60th contribution to the Springer series "Lecture Notes in Energy", which aims to cover new developments in the study of energy, and is meant to provide a bridge between advanced textbooks and the forefront of research. Its model readers, according to Springer, include those *"wishing to gain an accessible introduction to a field of research"*, and those *"with a need for an up-to-date reference book on a well-defined topic"* (Springer 2018). I can sum up that the book indeed fits these criteria, and I would recommend it for everyone interested in the energy security of the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as those focussing on Greco-Turkish/Cypriot-Turkish relations. It offers a concise overview of the current state of affairs in the field of energy security in the region, and a brief Turkish glimpse of it. However, readers hungry for a thorough analysis of the possible Turkish role in the Southern Energy Corridor should address themselves not only to this "fast food", as it would be appropriate to supplement it with another dish.

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[1] See, for example, Starr (2017).

[2] For example, Poland plans to cut itself off from its oldest natural gas supplier, and also its biggest rival, Russia, after 2022, following a massive investment in energy infrastructure (an LNG terminal, a new pipeline from Norway). See Martewicz (2018).

[3] Although the Turks repeatedly offered to supply water to the Republic of Cyprus, these calls remain unheard for the associated water pipe is regarded as illegal and sometimes even addressed as "the third Turkish invasion" of Cyprus. See Kathimerini (2015); Demir (2017).

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