

Book Review: An Island in Europe: The EU and the Transformation of Cyprus

May 13 2012

Next month, Cyprus will undertake the Presidency of the Council of the European Union marking a momentous occasion in the country's history. The unresolved dispute between Cyprus's Greek and Turkish constituents, however, continues to overshadow progress made on other fronts. **George Kyris** values the timeliness and well-structured essays featured in *An Island in Europe* although he feels parts of the book would have benefited from an even closer analysis of EU integration from the Turkish-Cypriot perspective.



An Island in Europe: The EU and the Transformation of Cyprus. Lindsay, J. K., Faustmann, H. and Mullen, F. (eds.). April 2011.

Find this book

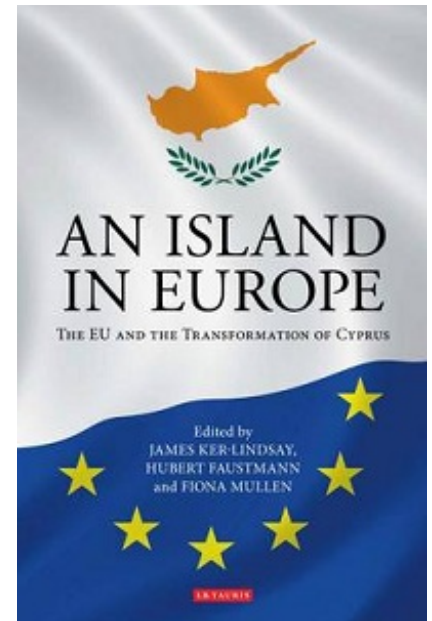
For the first time this upcoming June, Cyprus will undertake the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU). Yet, the Mediterranean island represents a unique case of an EU member state, not least because of the unresolved dispute between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots, which led to the EU accession of a divided Cyprus in 2004. In this context, 'an Island in Europe' by Ker-Lindsay, Faustmann and Mullen is a timely contribution to the literature, which successfully sets out to explore the various ways via which the EU accession has impacted the country.

The book is an informative and well-structured study of the EU's relevance to Cyprus, touching upon a range of issues, from economic and social matters to foreign policy and, of course, the inter-communal conflict. The audience here is anyone who takes an interest in the subject, although experts on the matters discussed will find it easy reading.

The book begins with a narration of the EU-Cyprus relations until 2004, with special attention paid to how the process of accession affected the inter-communal dispute. The following chapter discusses the application (or not) of EU law under the *suis generis* conditions of the country's division, while section four reflects on the economic impact of EU integration. Chapter five is dedicated to the foreign policy of the Cypriot government and how this is shaped by EU membership, followed by an examination of the EU-Turkish-Cypriot relations. The edition concludes with an investigation of the Cyprus issue in the aftermath of EU accession.

A particularly interesting aspect of European integration for Cyprus is the milestone of EU accession in 2004, which makes the pre and post accession periods two rather distinctive eras. Indeed, both the book's title ('an island *in* Europe') and the timing of publication (seven years after EU accession) raise expectations for an exploration of the EU's relevance to Cyprus not only before but also *after* 2004. Certainly, it is mostly the post-accession period that constitutes a 'virgin' territory of research, within a literature that is dominated by accounts of the pre-2004 era (especially in reference to the relation between EU membership and the resolution of the inter-communal dispute).

Along these lines, the parts of the edition that concentrate on the post-accession years are a major contribution to the knowledge. For example, chapter three provides a critical and empirically rich analysis of the economic impact of EU membership. In addition, chapter five offers a very comprehensive overview of



amazon

Google

foreign affairs of the Republic of Cyprus after accession, including a plethora of third actors that are often overlooked (e.g. EU member states from southeast Europe).

On the opposite end, some parts of the book retain an increased focus on the pre-accession period, which has been exhaustively discussed so far, and are therefore bound to limited empirical and analytical value. For example, chapter one exclusively reflects on the EU effect on the Cyprus problem until accession in 2004, a theme which has repeatedly been placed under the microscope of scholars.

One of the most revealing and comparatively neglected stories of Cyprus' European integration explored by this edition is the Turkish-Cypriots and how they fit within EU affairs. A separate chapter is dedicated to examine the EU's significance for the Turkish-Cypriots, on top of various comments made in different parts of the book. Nevertheless, the book as a whole is still characterised by a large focus on the Greek-Cypriot side. Indeed, this is an anomaly of almost every scholar endeavour on Cyprus, which is expected as long as the government of the Republic is monopolised by the Greek-Cypriots.

There are still many matters related to northern Cyprus that invite for more discussion in this edition. For example, what about the economic implications for the Turkish-Cypriot side? This is a question that could have been addressed by either chapter three or indeed chapter two. Instead, attention is solely focussed on the variety of EU actions that target Turkish-Cypriot economic development (e.g. Green Line Regulation, Financial Aid Regulation). The chapters would have benefited from extensive reflections on the actual impact of these EU measures or, indeed, the obstacles to inter-communal reconciliation.

Even chapter seven, which is fully devoted to the Turkish-Cypriots, could be benefited by more extensive remarks on Brussels' dealings to the north side of the 'Green Line' (e.g. institutional links, main actors). Instead, analysis seems to be restricted to the worthy but restricted discussion of the 'politics' of EU- Turkish-Cypriot interaction.

This volume is a welcome addition to the literature on Cyprus. Naturally, the inter-communal dispute does cast its shadow over almost every single chapter of the book, in the same way that it dominates virtually every aspect of social, political and economic life in Cyprus. However, an 'Island in Europe' is a noteworthy effort to bring under one title diverse aspects of EU membership impact, ranging from political to technical matters. This is particularly crucial given that existing works on Cyprus tend to focus either on the politics of European integration or, alternatively, more technical aspects of it. In this context and despite minor flaws, the book addresses its goals in a concise manner and is a rewarding read for those interested in the EU's relevance to the country.

Dr. George Kyris teaches European Politics at the Universities of Warwick and Manchester. His doctoral research investigated the Europeanisation of the Turkish-Cypriot community, as a case of contested state. Current research interests include: European Union politics, particularly enlargement and external relations as well as the EU's engagement in contested states (e.g. Turkish-Cypriots, Kosovo); Europeanisation, southeast European politics, with a specific focus on Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. [Read more reviews by George.](#)

Related posts:

1. [Book Review: Financial Turmoil in Europe and the US: Essays, by George Soros](#)
2. [Five minutes with Georgios Markopouliotis, Head of European Commission Representation in Cyprus – “We need to communicate more and in a smarter, simpler way“](#)
3. [Book Review: The Transformation of Europe's Armed Forces: From the Rhine to Afghanistan](#)

This entry was posted in [European Neighbourhood](#), [George Kyris](#) and tagged [Cyprus](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).