Introduction

This chapter focuses on the larger implications of Turkey’s role as alternative pipeline-based energy corridor for bundled gas supplies to Europe. These implications may be viewed from the European Union (EU) and member-state perspectives, ranging from the choice of eventually allowing Turkey into the Union – as the ultimate destiny of its ongoing accession process – to considering energy cooperation as only one element of the myriad bilateral relationships that Turkey has with the EU or each of its member states. Indeed, we see evidence of both linkage and delinking strategies regarding Turkey’s energy role and its accession process in the current political discourse in Europe. Conversely, a prevalent Turkish reading of the implications of Turkey’s increasing energy role is based on the growing assumption of a strong association between these two matters. Thus, overall energy policy discussions have been occurring against a background based on the untested view of ‘Turkey entering Europe through pipelines.’

Obviously, the official Turkish position sides with that faction of European interests that subscribes to the linkage between Turkey’s energy role and its accession to the EU. On the other hand, Ankara suspects that proponents of bilateral energy cooperation wish to dampen Turkey’s expectations on accession in favour of a ‘privileged partnership’ and has shown commensurable resistance on energy policy cooperation with these proponents. All in all, the EU seems ambivalent on the issue, with none of the factions seemingly dominant among member states, thus creating uncertainty on EU policy per se. This also makes the official Turkish positions rather difficult to gauge or at times rather unpredictable. These two contending readings are rooted in two
different interpretations of Turkey’s energy role. One assumes Turkey’s energy role to be simply an alternative transit route for supplies not controlled by Russia, while the other one interprets it as an important contribution to European energy security through the country’s accession to the EU.

In trying to decipher how the EU and Turkey view the implications of Turkey’s energy role, we look at the evolution of the EU–Turkey cooperation on energy. We observe that the EU has attempted to extend its energy regulatory influence over its neighbourhood, which has been depicted as including Turkey. While this has been implemented mostly via the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and bilateral mechanisms, the Turkish case has taken place mostly within the framework of the country’s accession talks since 2005. However, EU policies are not limited to regulatory influence on energy matters. Rather, the Union is also active in the promotion of projects – such as the Nabucco project – that will strengthen its (external) energy position vis-à-vis its prominent dependence on Russian energy and Russian-controlled supply routes. The EU has utilised both market and geopolitical approaches in its energy policies, with implications for the energy role of Turkey and its accession to the EU.

This chapter examines these clashing perspectives through a study of energy policy developments in recent decades and their broader implications for Turkey–EU relations. In doing so, it first evaluates the existing status quo in EU–Turkey energy cooperation. It then turns to the issue of how the EU and its member states have treated their (energy) relations with Turkey and what their current and future expectations are in this matter. This precedes an assessment of the Turkish view of cooperation on energy security and how this is linked to the broader question of Turkish membership in the EU. As is clarified herein, energy-related issues have become tightly intertwined in the broader contours of EU–Turkey relations.

**Turkey–EU relations and cooperation in energy issues**

Turkey and the EU have a long-lasting relationship dating back to the 1950s when the European Communities were set up. The Turkish application for associate membership in 1959 resulted in the Ankara Agreement in September 1963. The Agreement foresaw a Customs Union between the European Economic Community (EEC) and Turkey by the end of 1995, with a stipulation that the parties would discuss the possibility of Turkey’s full membership as the next step. Towards the