To what extent can the European Union influence as an external actor on Turkey's integrated water management policy? In particular with regard to the Euphrates-Tigris river basin'

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Figure 1 (Gilbert, 2011)

1 Photo showing the Turkish and European Union flags flutter over Nuruosmaniye Mosque in Istanbul.
Content

Abstract........................................................................................................................................... 3
Summary........................................................................................................................................... 4
Introduction........................................................................................................................................ 5

1. Background of the Case Study........................................................................................................ 6
   1.1 Turkey’s existing water policy........................................................................................................ 6
   1.2 The geography of the Tigris-Euphrates River Basin....................................................................... 6
   1.3 The Turkish Government’s behaviour and position........................................................................ 7
   1.4 The European Union’s behaviour and position............................................................................. 7
   1.4.1 The EU Water Framework Directive......................................................................................... 8
   1.4.2 EU and Sustainable Development............................................................................................. 8
   1.5 A definition of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)................................................ 8

2. Methods of this paper ....................................................................................................................... 9
   2.1 Literature review method............................................................................................................... 9
   2.2 Scope and limitations.................................................................................................................. 9
   2.3 Central questions....................................................................................................................... 9
   2.4 Structure of the Paper................................................................................................................. 9

3. Discussion on the extent of the EU’s influence on Turkey’s Integrated Water Management Policy.................................................................................................................. 10
   3.1 Strengths of the EU’s influence.................................................................................................. 10
      3.1.2 The Water Framework Directive......................................................................................... 11
   3.1.3 The EU’s previous experience with managing international river basin districts.................. 16
   3.1.4 Turkey’s current efforts towards WFD compliance (2011)....................................................... 16

   3.2 Weaknesses of the EU’s influence............................................................................................. 17
      3.2.1 EU candidacy process for Turkey.......................................................................................... 17
      3.2.2 Differing conditions for WFD compliance in Northern and Southern European Countries .......................................................................................................................... 18
      3.2.3 Monitoring of Turkey’s waters.............................................................................................. 18
      3.2.4 Costs of WFD compliance.................................................................................................... 19

   3.3 Opportunities available to the EU to influence.......................................................................... 20
      3.3.1 The importance of the willingness of Turkey to join the EU................................................ 20
      3.3.2 Opportunity for transboundary river Cooperation greater than risk of conflict.................... 20

   3.4 Threats that could undermine the EU’s ability to influence...................................................... 21
      3.4.1. Other actors that could threaten the influence of the EU....................................................... 21
      3.4.2 The risk of the EU withdrawing the offer of full EU membership........................................ 21
      3.4.3 A third way accession solution? ............................................................................................ 22
      3.4.4 The Euphrates – Tigris river basin seen as a Security Issue................................................ 23

4. Conclusion and Recommendations................................................................................................. 24
   4.1 Conclusion.................................................................................................................................... 24
   4.2 Recommendations..................................................................................................................... 25

5. Acknowledgement.......................................................................................................................... 26
6. References......................................................................................................................................... 26
7. Appendix.......................................................................................................................................... 27
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*Master thesis in Sustainable Development at Uppsala University, No. XX, 2012 pp, 30 ECTS/hp*

**Abstract:** Research focus: This paper asks to what extent the European Union (EU) can influence as an external actor Turkey’s integrated water management policy. In particular, this paper focuses on the case example of the water conflict arising over the usage of the transboundary Euphrates-Tigris river basin and what extent the EU can bring to bear its influence on Turkey to bring a resolution to the management of this river basin.

Method: This paper consists of a comparative literature review of recent journals, academic articles, official publications and website content as well as respected news website material. The research method used consisted of an analysis assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the EU’s influence on Turkey’s water policy. Whilst this analysis tool is fairly straightforward to apply to assessing the EU’s influence on Turkey’s broad national water management policy, assessing how the EU can encourage Turkey to cooperate further on the International river basin of the Euphrates-Tigris is far more difficult, owing to the controversy and importance of the river to all three countries sharing it; Turkey, Iraq and Syria.

Findings: Through using a comparison of literature this paper has found that the main strength of the EU’s influence on Turkey’s integrated water management policy is through the very definite obligations Turkey must fulfil under the WFD as a candidate member for the EU. Secondly, this paper submits that the EU’s strong river management experience through large river cooperation projects, for example that of the Danube river basin, further enhances the ability of the EU’s credibility in its influence. The weakness the EU’s influence faces is the difficulty associated with Turkey’s candidacy process to the EU which if hampered could quickly reduce the EU’s influence on Turkey. Opportunities for cooperation on the Euphrates–Tigris are also looked at positively in this paper especially in the light of a new Middle Eastern politics even though considerable uncertainty remains as to the full outcome. Lastly a threat that could face the EU’s influence is the results that a third way relationship between the EU and Turkey could have on limiting the EU’s influence with regard to integrated water policies.

The main conclusion: This paper has concluded that the EU’s influence through the WFD is very strong on Turkey’s water policy, owing largely to Turkey’s desire to obtain eventual full membership of the EU. Should the candidacy process fail, this could have a quick and damaging impact on the EU’s influence. This paper has also found that the EU has a strong potential influence in pushing Turkey towards further cooperation on the Euphrates-Tigris, however Turkey’s progress has to date been slow and remains a major challenge.

This paper recommends that Turkey uses the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to open up dialogue with lower riparian river states towards cooperation, that the EU suggest setting up a ‘commission’ as a means of achieving improved transboundary river cooperation and the need for a research network or center to bring together efforts towards cooperation on the Euphrates-Tigris river basin.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development, European Union, Turkey, Euphrates-Tigris, Water Framework Directive, Water Security

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Popular Summary: This paper asks to what extent the European Union (EU) can influence as an external actor Turkey’s integrated water management policy. In particular this paper focuses on the case example of the water conflict arising over the usage of the transboundary Euphrates-Tigris river basin. And to what extent the EU can bring to bear its influence on Turkey to bring a resolution to the management of this river basin.

This paper consists of a comparative literature review of recent journals, academic articles, official publications and website content. The research method used consisted of an analysis assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the EU’s influence on Turkey’s water policy. Whilst this analysis tool is fairly straightforward to apply to assessing the EU’s influence on Turkey’s broad national water management policy, assessing how the EU can encourage Turkey to cooperate further on the International river basin of the Euphrates-Tigris is far more difficult, owing to the controversy and importance of the river to all three Countries sharing it; Turkey, Iraq and Syria. Owing to the difficulty in assessing the EU’s influence, this paper has attempted to assess critically recent papers on this subject.

Through using a comparison of literature this paper has found that the main strength of the EU’s influence on Turkey’s integrated water management policy is through the very definite obligations Turkey must fulfil under the WFD as a candidate member for the EU. Secondly, this paper submits that the EU’s strong river management experience through large river cooperation projects, for example that of the Danube river basin, further enhances the ability of the EU’s credibility in its influence. The main weakness the EU’s influence faces is the difficulty associated with Turkey’s candidacy process to the EU which if hampered could quickly reduce the EU’s influence on Turkey. Opportunities for cooperation on the Euphrates–Tigris are also looked at positively in this paper especially in the light of a new Middle Eastern politics even though considerable uncertainty remains as the outcome. Lastly a threat that could face the EU’s influence is the results that a third way relationship between the EU and Turkey could have on limiting the EU’s influence with regard to integrated water policies.

This paper has concluded that the EU’s influence through the WFD is very strong on Turkey’s water policy, owing largely to Turkey’s desire to obtain eventual full membership of the EU. Should the candidacy process fail, this could have a quick and damaging negative impact on the EU’s influence. This paper has also found that the EU has a strong potential influence in pushing Turkey towards further cooperation on the Euphrates-Tigris, however Turkey’s progress has to date been slow and remains a major challenge.

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List of abbreviations

EC – European Commission
EU – European Union
EWA - European Water Association
IRBD - International River Basin District
IWRM - Integrated Water Resources Management
MoEF – Turkish Ministry for the Environment and Forestry
RBD – River Basin District
RBMP - River Basin Management Plans
WFD - Water Framework Directive

Introduction

This paper will explain to what extent the EU can influence an integrated water management policy with Turkey. This paper argues that the EU’s influence could become particularly important to break the deadlock on an integrated water management approach for the Euphrates-Tigris river basin that runs through Turkey, Syria and Iraq.

The EU’s influence through the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and accession process to the EU is looked at in depth in this paper as well as critically exploring the strengths, weaknesses, future opportunities and potent threats to the extent of the EU’s influence. To start, this paper examines the influence of the EU more broadly on Turkey’s National Water Policy before going into depth when it comes to analyzing the issues concerning cooperation of the Euphrates-Tigris river basin.

This paper will explain why the usage and exploitation of the Euphrates-Tigris River Basin is an important issue for all three Countries for food security, energy security, power production, internal stability and economic development (Akanda, 2007: 3-4). The overall aim of this paper will be to analyze the broad influence of the EU on Turkey’s National Water Policy and whether the extent to which the EU as an external actor could influence the negotiation of an integrated water management policy between all three riparian states.
1. Background of the Case Study

1.1 Turkey's existing water policy

To understand the EU’s influence on Turkey on the issue of the Euphrates-Tigris, it is necessary to first understand the influence of the EU’s influence more broadly on Turkey’s National Water Policy. Turkey’s existing National administrative and legislative structure in the field of Water is described as complex by Moroglu (Moroglu, 2008: 273). Moroglu describes water management as being ‘generally organized according to sectoral groups,’ with decision making being ‘strongly decentralized,’ (Moroglu, 2008: 273). The main Governmental actors at a National level are the Ministry for the Environment and Forestry, the General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works, the Ministry of Health, Bank of Provinces, State Planning Organization, Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Tourism (Moroglu, 2008: 273). A full list of these organizations and their responsibilities is included in Appendix 1 of this paper (Moroglu, 2008: 274). The Ministry for the Environment and Forestry is an important Governmental Department regarding water policy and is the ‘leading Ministry for the planning’ of WFD implementation, ensures ‘active-involvement of other institutions, local authorities and stakeholder representatives,’ (Sümér, 2011: 19). Implementation and changes required for WFD compliance will be looked at in detail in this paper.

1.2 The geography of the Tigris-Euphrates River Basin

The Tigris-Euphrates river basin crosses three Countries, Turkey, Syria and Iraq. Turkey is the upper riparian State with the rivers first running through Turkey before passing through to downstream riparian states Syria and Iraq as shown in figure 2 (below).
The Euphrates River receives more attention in analysis of the river basin as the longest river in the Middle East. Approximately forty per cent of the Euphrates river lies in Turkey whilst in the downstream Countries twenty five per cent lies in Syria and thirty five per cent in Iraq. When it comes to the Euphrates water the flow of the Euphrates is highly seasonal creating additional difficulty in reaching a negotiated agreement on water usage of the river (Akanda, 2007: 1-2).

An agreement on water usage and management of the Euphrates river is important to moving the riparian States towards greater cooperation. Problems to reach agreement have been exaggerated due to the large number of development works Turkey, Syria and Iraq have been carrying out along the river. These projects include building ‘water reservoirs, agricultural works and hydropower construction[s],’ (Akanda, 2007: 1). Turkey’s large hydropower construction project along the Euphrates commonly referred to as ‘GAP’ is the ‘largest effort to date’ this causes great tensions with both Syria and Iraq and will be the comment of greater discussion in this paper.

1.3 The Turkish Governments behaviour and position

The Turkish Government largely claims autonomy over the Tigris-Euphrates River Basin, this in river management has legally been termed ‘the Harman of absolute doctrine,’ (Kliot, 2001: 232). Under this doctrine Turkey as the upstream riparian state can claim absolute freedom to utilize the waters of the Tigris-Euphrates regardless of the effects of its actions on downstream riparian states (Kliot, 2001: 232).

Tensions over the Euphrates-Tigris are 'likely to worsen in the future' particularly over the issue of water allocation to the downstream riparian Countries (Akanda, 2007: 1). In the past 'twice in 1975 and 1998 War has been narrowly averted only by external mediation,' this reinforces the need for improved water management of the river to improve regional security (Akanda, 2007: 1). The resolution of these issues is made all the more difficult by a clear lack of communication between the Three Riparian Countries (Akanda, 2007: 1) and by differing interpretations of water usage rights to the rivers (Akanda, 2007: 2).

1.4 The European Unions behaviour and position

For the EU’s part, the EU as an external actor has an interest in seeing a secure and stable neighbor in Turkey now and in the future. Turkey as a candidate Country to the EU has given the European Commission (EC) the ability to assist Turkey to make changes necessary for accession. In the past the EU’s assistance with regard to the issue of integrated water management has been limited, however at current is growing as Turkey is working towards becoming a full member of the EU meaning Turkey falls under the 'very definite obligations of the Water Framework Directive' (Kaya, 2009: 134).

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2 Map showing the Euphrates-Tigris River basin running through Turkey, Syria and Iraq.
1.4.1 The EU Water Framework Directive

The WFD was brought about to ensure improved coordination of Water regulations among all EU members (Sümer, 2011: 8). Previous to the adoption of the WFD in the 1970’s a ‘significant member of water related directives,’ were adopted (Sümer, 2011: 8). By the ‘late 1990’s’ it became clear that a new European framework on legislation on water was required (Sümer, 2011: 8). Thus began a ‘long process of preparation’ and consultation on a new EU water framework with integration between all members at its heart (Sümer, 2011: 8). Stakeholders included ‘public authorities’, Member State representatives, EC as well as NGO’s like the WWF (Sümer, 2011: 8). The resultant legislation adopted in ‘October 2000’ and entered into law by ‘December 2000’ had a clear aim of achieving high ecological quality in all EU surface waters (Sümer, 2011: 8). According to Sümer the WFD focuses on improving ‘water quality (ie. Water pollution)’ in the EU. The WFD therefore gives the goal to each EU State to achieve at least “good status” in ‘all types of waters’ by 2015 (Sümer, 2011: 10). It is this requirement in law and the Commissions remit to enforce the requirements of the WFD in all EU Member States and Candidate Countries that makes the WFD such a powerful influential tool for the EU to influence integrated water policies throughout the EU. Therefore this paper will analyse how the EU is influencing Turkey’s water policies including the Euphrates-Tigris and whether the WFD is a strength or weakness for the EU’s overall influence with Turkey.

1.4.2 EU and Sustainable Development

Additionally for the EU, the importance of providing a sustainable water supply to developing Countries is cemented in the EU's commitment to integrate and promote sustainable development in all its policies and governance (EC, 2006: 5). The issue of Sustainable Development of the Euphrates-Tigris is important in the case of both Syria and Iraq as they would be included as developing Countries arguably in need of assistance towards a sustainable water supply and adding to the EU’s justification to intervene with the aim of improved cooperation on the Euphrates-Tigris river basin (European Commission, 2002: 3-4) (European Commission, 2006: 2).

1.5 A definition of Integrated Water Resources Management

It is important to have an understanding of IWRM as this method is integrated into the EU’s WFD which will feature largely in this paper. Currently integrated water management is defined by the UN Water report 2011, the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach that has now been accepted internationally as the way forward for efficient, sustainable development, management of the world’s limited water resources and for coping with conflicting demands. The most widely accepted definition of IWRM is that given by the Global Water Partnership; “IWRM is defined as a process that promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems.” (Gersetter, 2011: 9). The IWRM approach is integrated into the WFD with the purpose of creating a ‘framework for integrated water management’ across the European community (Kaya, 2009: 126).
2 Methods of this paper

2.1 Literature review method

This paper will use a literature review of available journals, scholarly articles, official websites (e.g. EUROPA) as well as other relevant sources of information (e.g. established news websites). The method of a literature review was chosen to best answer the research question and is ideal as a means to bring many research documents together for analysis and discussion in this paper.

2.2 Scope and limitations

The scope of this paper is to find and analyze literature relevant to the research question. The scope should include primarily academic research papers and official governmental websites and reports. Consideration will then also be given to NGO reports and respected website content.

A limitation apparent from the paper carried out is the importance of understanding a wide range of complex issues that arise in the hydropolitics of the Euphrates-Tigris river basin. Complex issues that arise include; the history of river basin treaties between all parties, the importance of US influence in the region, support for EU membership in Turkey and understanding hydrological factors that affect the Euphrates-Tigris river basin. To answer the research question this paper cannot go into a deep analysis of all these issues, however seeks to gain a broad and critical understanding of the issues relevant to answer the research question. Additionally discussions and analysis is focused on producing critical conclusions that would assist an observer assessing the EU’s influence on these important issues.

2.3 Central questions

This paper will limit itself to literature that primarily assesses the extent of the EU’s ability to influence Turkey’s water management policy in particular with regard to the Euphrates-Tigris river basin. To this end literature chosen will either be relevant (i) to EU policy and activities, (ii) Turkey’s Governmental policy and behaviour, (iii) data and reports on the Tigris-Euphrates river basin (iv) Syria and Iraqi Governmental policy and behaviour and (v) the ability of other third party actors to resolve the problems presented.

Priority will be given to academic articles and journals as well as prioritizing the most recent material and information available. More recent reports and articles offer an idea of where research and investigation is directed and which questions still remain to be explored in more depth.

2.4 Structure of the Paper

This paper will have a clear structure analyzing the (i) strengths of the EU’s influence, (ii) the weaknesses of the EU’s influence, (iii) opportunities available to the EU to influence, and (iv) threats that could undermine the EU’s ability to influence.
3. **Discussion on the extent of the EU’s influence on Turkey’s Integrated Water Management Policy**

3.1 Strengths of the EU’s influence

The candidacy of Turkey to joining the EU is the main factor that allows the EU to influence Turkey’s water management policy. Membership of the EU is a goal of the current Turkish Government even if the process of joining so far may have proved prolonged and difficult (Çarkoğlu, 2003: 1). Being a candidate Country the EU and thus the EC is able to legally influence Turkish integrated water management policy from the remit provided by the WFD, as explained below;

3.1.1 The Water Framework Directive

As a candidate Country to fully joining the EU, Turkey falls under the ‘very definite obligations’ of the WFD (Kaya, 2009: 134). Including the obligation to ‘improve water quality, prevent pollution and to set up mechanisms on a basin wide scale,’ (Kaya, 2009: 134). The WFD takes a holistic approach to river management including International Rivers running through Member States/Candidate Country’s. The WFD lays down an additional obligation to ‘set up an international river basin district (IRBD) […] for the management of river basins that lie within more than one State,’ (Kaya, 2009: 126). Furthermore to achieve the environmental aims of the WFD ‘member States are obliged to secure coordination’, that should consider the whole of the river in the IRBD (Kaya, 2009: 126). To fulfill these goals the Commission may also play a ‘facilitating role on the request of one of the states involved,’ enhancing the extent of the EU’s and EC’s influence (Kaya, 2009: 126). This legal and administrative capacity to influence Turkey’s water policy will be argued in this paper as overall a strength for the EU’s influence.

Current EU behaviour

Currently the EU has diverged from the narrow terms of the WFD by already making a ‘number or determinations and recommendations concerning Turkey’s transboundary rivers,’ (Kaya, 2009: 134). Previously this has included; EU parliamentary statements and European Commission (EC) papers on these issues as elaborated on below. These statements suggest wide EU support for the EC to use its influence to encourage Turkey towards greater cooperation on its transboundary rivers including the Euphrates –Tigris.

EU parliament statement 2003

The EU Parliament has stated in a report in May 2003 that “Turkey [is recommended to] arrive at a settlement, based on the findings of the UN General Assembly’s International Law Commission, of the disputes with its neighbours Iraq and Syria concerning water” (paragraph 50), (Kaya, 2009: 129). Further reports in December 2004 from the European Parliament again stress the importance of Turkey to be ‘sensitive’ to the ‘water requirements’ of Iraq and Syria, as well as the impact the ‘Ataturk Dam’ has on water supplies to downstream riparian’s and requests Turkey set up ‘working groups’ on these issues with its neighbours (Kaya, 2009: 129). These reports show the importance the institution of the European Parliament has for Turkey
taking a responsible role in sharing the Euphrates Tigris river basin equitably between her neighbours.

According to Kaya, these statements also highlight how the EU is taking a divergent path by issuing separate statements to Turkey on its Water Policy rather than advocating the requirements of the WFD guidelines for improved coordination on international rivers with Turkey’s neighbours. These statements could also illustrate the limits the EU has to influence transboundary rivers in Turkey, as the WFD guidelines have by some commentators been seen as weak on the issue of promoting transboundary cooperation (Kaya, 2009: 129).

EU Security Strategy

Another more recent EC report in October 2004 stated the ‘strategic issue’ that water will become in the Middle East and how water cooperation in this regard, ‘could become a major issue for the EU,’ (Kaya, 2009: 130). These reports do not however suggest the European Parliament is putting weight on the Commission to do more explicitly with Turkey; however they certainly apply pressure on Turkey to be a responsible upstream river state with regard to its water obligations with its neighbours.

3.1.2 The EU’s previous experience with managing international river basin districts

The EU’s influence with Turkey this paper submits is strengthened by its extensive experience of managing the EU’s river basins through the WFD. According to a study carried out in 2004 the EU has around ‘96 river basin districts,’ (Nilsson, 2004: 7). Of these districts 29 (or 30%) are international districts (Nilsson, 2004: 7). And as a proportion of areas, international river basin districts ‘constitute 66% of the total area of the prospective river basin districts,’ (Nilsson, 2004: 7).

It is also notable in a study by Nilsson on river management that within the EU both Member States and Candidate Countries (thus these bound WFD requirements) are regarded as the ‘most cooperative’ when it comes to river district management. With those river basin districts usually being ‘shared by three of more Countries’, (Nilsson, 2004: 10). In addition, ‘in four cases (Elbe Oder, Scheldt and Meuse) the districts are shared only between Member States/Candidate Countries, while in two cases (Danube and Rhine) the districts are also shared by non-EU Countries,’ (Nilsson, 2004: 10).

This good level of cooperative management should bode well for (and thus strengthens) the EU’s influence, illustrating that EU member and Candidate Countries generally will perform better at Integrated Water Management through the regulations of the WFD over time. In addition it should keep Turkey interested in the EU’s role to bring long term stability to its river usage and in time to its relations with non-EU neighbours.

The EU’s experience shows that for ‘most cooperative’ river management either an ‘independent commission’ or River Basin Management Plan is required (Nilsson, 2004: 10). The role of water commissions in these districts is broadly a ‘coordinating role for producing [a] joint river basin management plan,’ (Nilsson, 2004: 10). According to Nilsson the role of water commissions and their intention to produce
River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) is important to better river basin management. With river basin districts ‘with or without international water commissions and with plans of producing separate RBMP’s only for [their] own part of the [river basin] district’ being ‘classed as “least cooperative” are found on the Eastern (future) border of the EU’, (Nilsson, 2004: 10). The study does not cover Turkey however we could draw from the analysis in this paper, that illustrates the lack of cooperation with her neighbours that Turkey would likely fall under the ‘least cooperative’ category (Nilsson, 2004: 10).

These study results show the role the EU has to, (and is) playing already to work towards greater river basin district coordination on its Eastern border. The results of this study would suggest that Turkey may benefit from the EU’s experience coordinating the response of Member and Candidate Country’s from implementing the requirements of the WFD for an improved integrated river management approach. And for how Turkey can open admittedly difficult negotiations with its non-EU neighbours.

Case Study of the Danube

To further illustrate the EU’s experience in river management (and thus strengthen the EU’s influence from successful experience) the EU could draw on its role in encouraging greater cooperation on the River Basin District of the Danube. According to a study by the European Water Association (EWA) the Danube is ‘the most important transboundary river basin in the World in terms of intersected Countries,’ (Nilsson, 2004: 15). The Danube has eighteen Countries contributing to the international river basin district. With ‘three of them being EU Member States, seven being Candidate Country’s and eight being non-EU Countries,’ (Nilsson, 2004: 15).

Therefore in the case example of the Danube, Article 3 (3) of the WFD, that addresses ‘assignment of international river basin districts,’ obviously applies (Nilsson, 2004: 15). The Countries concerned have assigned the international river basin district status and set up the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR),’ this body is the institution for ‘Danube Basin Wide Cooperation,’ (Nilsson, 2004: 16). The main stated goal of this body is to implement the requirements of the WFD which the ICPDR is told to give the ‘highest priority’ by all participating States in the river basin district (Nilsson, 2004: 16).

The ICPDR also forms the ‘platform for the coordination necessary to develop and establish a joint RBMP’ for the whole Danube river basin district (Nilsson, 2004: 16). It may be noteworthy that ‘coordination and competent authority structures’ for the Danube river basin district are split between (i) existing bilateral/multilateral agreements between States and (ii) National Countries agencies and authorities for implementation (Nilsson, 2004: 16). The Danube example is only one and it is shown in the study by the EWA that other States will take differing approaches to the implementation of the WFD for example in the case of Estonia (Nilsson, 2004: 13).

However focusing on the example of the Danube river basin management to date can illustrate the EU’s strong experience in dealing with very complicated river basin districts. Furthermore it could be argued that the EU’s WFD experience with the Danube offers a structure from which Turkey could learn from, as Turkey implements
a future WFD implementation plan that addresses its own transboundary rivers, as in the case of the Euphrates-Tigris river basin;

(i) The first step for Turkey with regard to transboundary river management as set out in Article 3 (3) of the WFD, to ‘ensure that a river basin district covering the territory of more than one Member States is assigned to an international river basin district,’ (Nilsson, 2004: 3). Following this Turkey should ensure that ‘appropriate administrative arrangements, including the identification’ of appropriate competent authorities, ‘for the application’ and implementation of the WFD, particularly within ‘the portion’ of the Euphrates-Tigris ‘river basin district lying within’ Turkey’s territory (Nilsson, 2004: 3).

Turkey is already taking steps in this direction with the establishment of the ‘National Platform for Water Management’, reports and studies have also been carried out into dividing Turkey’s rivers into river basin districts. So far river basin identification shows that the ‘international river basins of Turkey cover an extremely large area,’ (Kaya, 2009: 132).

(ii) The second step presents more difficulty for Turkey. Under the EU WFD Article 3 (5); ‘where a river basin extends beyond the territory of the Community,’ as in the case of the Euphrates-Tigris then Turkey should ‘endeavor to establish appropriate coordination with the relevant non-member States,’ in the case of the Euphrates-Tigris river; Syria and Iraq (Nilsson, 2004: 3).

It is therefore surprising, as this paper has briefly commented on, to find that of the relevant bodies on Turkey’s ‘National Platform for Water Management’ according to Kaya the ‘Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ is ‘absent’ (Kaya, 2009: 132). The National Water Platform was set up ‘in order to coordinate activities which have to be performed at a national level,’ (Kaya, 2009: 132). The body was set up in 2002 and its full name is “the National Platform for Water Management,’ (Kaya, 2009: 132). It is therefore hard to see how Turkey could use the National Platform for Water Management to provide the aforementioned required ‘appropriate coordination’ with Syria and Iraq without utilization of Turkey’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Nilsson, 2004: 3).

This lack of effective communication between Turkey, Syria and Iraq over the Euphrates-Tigris is noted on frequently for the purposes of this paper as well as in many papers and reports on this subject, as a major obstacle to Turkey fulfilling the requirements of Article 3 (5) of the WFD. As previously mentioned this behaviour of the Turkish Government may be explained in many ways, by Turkey’s claim to exclusive sovereignty to the Euphrates-Tigris within its own territory (Akanda, 2007:2) to Turkey’s need for energy security compared to the relative energy security of its oil rich neighbours (Akanda, 2007: 3), to Turkey’s intentions to bring economic development through its Dam projects and in turn bring internal stability to South Eastern Turkey (Akanda, 2007: 4). These varying factors individually or combined could have prevented Turkey coming to the negotiating table successfully in the past. Understanding these obstacles is important in learning how the EU can use its influence effectively to enable a negotiated settlement.
Other attempts in the past at transboundary cooperation; to provide accurate river flow data reports of the Euphrates-Tigris through the ‘Joint Technical Committee’ established in 1983 by Turkey, Iraq and Syria had disintegrated by 1993 ‘without making much headway’, (Akanda, 2007: 4). It is therefore clearly difficult from studied literature for parties to even take part in sustained ‘trilateral talks about water use’ without frequent extra obstacles appearing, owing in part to the fast moving nature of Middle Eastern politics (Akanda, 2007: 1).

Even with these extra difficulties considered Turkey is required under the WDF to attempt to open negotiations and the inclusion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the National Platform for Water Management would arguably contribute positively to this effort.

(iii) Step three from the Danube transboundary experience looks to formalizing the cooperation between the riparian Countries. This step thus follows on from (i) identifying the RBD’s and competent authority and (ii) establishing the need for cooperation. Learning from the RBD Danube this formalization of river cooperation can take the form of the Danube Convention which was ratified by the Danube parties in 1998 (Nilsson, 2004: 16). The formalization of international relations for the cooperation over the Danube’s river management allows for institutional bodies to be established to carry out the requirements of the WFD including the creation of an International river basin management plan required under Article 13 (2) of the WFD. From the RBD Danube’s experience the Danube Convention allowed for the establishment of the ICPDR which as previously stated aims to give the necessary platform to ‘develop and establish a joint RBMP for the Danube Basin (Nilsson, 2004: 16).

Therefore if Turkey was to follow the Danube’s transboundary cooperative example, once having established trilateral talks, agreements would be formed on the basis of fulfilling the requirements for the WFD, with the goal of producing an International RBMP based on the hydrological and not political considerations of the Euphrates-Tigris river. These formalized and later ratified agreements are likely (and it seems anticipated by the European Commission, WFD Annex I, (vi)) to require new institutional bodies whether they be river basin district wide or national (for example Turkey’s National Platform for Water Management) to oversee the implementation of the WFD requirements (Nilsson, 2004: 3). For example the ICPDR in the Danube’s case may not be possible in the short term, owing to the history of mistrust between Turkey, Syria and Iraq. However, a formalized agreement perhaps with the assistance of relevant United Nations bodies to set up an independent institutional RBD Commission, could reduce mistrust on all sides and enable all parties to better coordinate their actions together, as seen with the similar case example of the RBD Danube.

An alternative and much more likely step for the time being is that Turkey could establish an international RBMP covering just the parts of the Euphrates-Tigris that fell within its territory. This is clearly stated in the WFD under Article 13 (3) in the case of an international river basin district extending outside the boundary of the ‘Community Member State[s] shall endeavor to produce a single river basin management plan, and where this is not possible the plan shall at least cover the
portion of the International river basin district lying within the territory of the Member State concerned,’ (Nilsson, 2004: 3).

In this case, for Turkey the establishment of the National Platform for Water Management should be used to produce and coordinate a single RBMP that covers the Euphrates-Tigris within Turkey’s borders for the purposes of fulfilling the Integrated Water requirements of the WFD. Of course a preferable option is that trilateral talks could also be started which would take Turkey to a better level of cooperation and improved classification for transboundary river management (Nilsson, 2004: 10).

This alternative scenario involving Turkey implementing the WFD only within its borders does appear to be borne out by a paper on the current WFD implementation efforts in Turkey by Moroglu (Moroglu, 2008: 271). According to Moroglu Turkey has many challenges and obstacles in implementation, these include; the high cost of implementation owing to the large size of Turkey, the technical challenge, lack of sufficient environmental infrastructure and of course as explored previously the difficulty of sharing transboundary rivers with its Middle Eastern neighbours (Moroglu, 2008: 271).

For the purposes of this paper, Moroglu’s WFD study describes ‘an EU 2006 Progress Report on Turkey as describing ‘the development of transboundary water cooperation, in line with the WFD and international conventions to which the Community is a party, being at a very early stage (Moroglu, 2008: 272). This report illustrates the predicted difficulties Turkey will have in fulfilling regional basin cooperation with Syria and Iraq. The more current 2007 WFD implementation progress report by Moroglu states the difficulties Turkey is having with implementation whilst also stating that Turkey overall is making ‘very fast’ progress in meeting certain regulations and directives (Moroglu, 2008: 278). This rapid improvement in part clearly bodes well for the EU’s influence and shows how serious Turkey is taking the WFD.

Worryingly the study by Moroglu also does not comment like Akanda on the continuing absence of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs from the list of ‘Turkish Governmental Organizations and their tasks in Water Management,’ (Moroglu, 2008: 274). This would seem to suggest that Turkey intends only to establish an international RBMP covering just the parts of the Euphrates-Tigris that fall within Turkey’s territory as stated in the WFD under Article 13 (3). A full list of ‘Turkish Governmental Organizations and their tasks in Water Management,’ from the study by Moroglu is listed under Appendix 1.

From this list we could suggest that the Turkish Ministry for Foreign Affairs under Article 3 (5) of the WFD could be included in future. This paper could anticipate that the Ministry would have responsibility;

To ‘endeavour’ to create sufficient coordination with relevant non-member States, with the goal of accomplishing ‘the objectives of the WFD throughout the whole river basin district’, (Sümer, 2011: 11).

This responsibility is the bare minimum expected from Turkey under the WFD and would allow considerable flexibility. As it would not legally commit Turkey to any
deadline to achieve cooperation with non-member States or have to result in any clearly set goal being achieved.

Moroglu’s paper also includes a Turkish Governmental timetable for implementing the WFD, which is intended to be met by ‘reasonable delays,’ (Moroglu, 2008: 275-276). Therefore despite the intention to meet the WFD requirements by 2015,’ it is likely compliance will be achieved at a much later date (Moroglu, 2008: 276). This will be elaborated on further in the next section.

3.1.3 Turkey’s current efforts towards WFD compliance (2011)

Adding to the work by Moroglu a recent report by Sümer published in 2011 gives an updated look at Turkey’s current efforts towards WFD compliance. The report by Sümer analysed the ‘draft National Implementation Plan’. This plan is important to this paper as it is intended as a National reference paper to be used to assist public authorities put together the necessary plans for WFD compliance (Sümer, 2011: 7).

The paper by Sümer described most of the work being done towards WFD compliance in Turkey as remaining to be carried out (Sümer, 2011: 7). It is also unsurprising to find Sümer state that ‘the rights associated with the transboundary aspects of water management as embedded in the WFD are being largely ignored,’ (Sümer, 2011: 7). This would suggest that Turkey predictably intends only to carry out the bare minimum when it comes to water management on the Euphrates - Tigris river and for now only intends to implement a river basin management plan for the parts of transboundary rivers that run through Turkey’s territory.

The 2011 paper by Sümer shows the current seriousness Turkey is giving to the implementation of the WFD with Turkey stating time deadlines for compliance at different stages. The first stage as previously mentioned of labelling all river basin districts including international river basin districts and assigning responsible competent authorities to each river basin district which should have been achieved by the end of 2003 (Sümer, 2011: 9). The rest of the paper by Sümer goes on to detail in depth the current implementation efforts of Turkey for improved water quality, improved water efficiency, implementing the polluter pays principles, public participation and relevant programmes to achieve these objectives (Sümer, 2011:11).

Again with regard to transboundary rivers Sümer’s findings reflect a lack of ambition from the Turkish Government to cooperate on transboundary rivers and repeats the need under the WFD that all is required from Turkey is ‘only an “endeavour” to establish appropriate coordination with non-Member States, with the aim of achieving the objectives of the WFD throughout the whole river basin district,’ (Sümer, 2011:11). With the goal of promoting ‘transboundary cooperation’ for the following of ‘rules and procedures’ beyond the territory of the EU, where rivers extend ‘beyond Community borders,’ (Sümer, 2011:11). This has already been established, therefore showing the increasing pressure Turkey could come under to cooperate further with her neighbours.

The study by Sümer includes a table of current goals towards WFD implementation including the date the goal is to be achieved by. The next key goals include publishing first river basin management plans for each river basin district including
environmental objectives and programmes of implementation; this was meant to be achieved by December 2009 although this paper has come across no evidence of analysis of any publicly available river basin management plan for the Euphrates - Tigris river as of yet (Sümer, 2011:12). The next two most recent goals include the goal of publishing interim reports detailing progress on implementing the program of measures required to meet WFD regulations by December 2012. And the last goal of achieving the main environmental objectives of the WFD (Article 4) by December 2015 (Sümer, 2011: 12). This last and most important goal looks extremely difficult to achieve without what Sümer describes as ‘reasonable delays’ in implementation (Sümer, 2011:7). The last goal listed as the main environmental objective of the WFD (Article 4) is for all types of waters in Turkey to reach the aim of “good status” ‘by the end of 2015’ (Sümer, 2011: 10). Bearing in mind that the draft plan ‘illustrates that currently, only 22% to 30% of surface waters in Turkey’ comply with the “good status” norm, its clear that Turkey has a long way to go (Sümer, 2011: 11).

The rest of Sümer’s paper goes on to describe the current efforts of Turkey towards WFD compliance, this includes a step by step approach that Turkey is and should be taking towards full implementation although little mention again is given to the need for cooperation on transboundary rivers (Sümer, 2011: 16-20). Other issues the paper brings up includes again the large cost of WFD compliance and monitoring of rivers. This paper will analyse include both of these factors as possible weaknesses of the EU’s influence on Turkey’s water policy (Sümer, 2011: 16-20). Overall Sümer’s paper has shown that the EU’s influence through the WFD on Turkey’s water policy is very strong and guiding a great deal of improvement and programs on Turkey’s water policy even though there is still little evidence of action towards cooperation on transboundary rivers as of 2011.

3.2 Weaknesses of the EU’s influence

This section will analyze potential weaknesses to the EU’s influence on Turkey’s water policy.

3.2.1 EU candidacy process for Turkey

Turkey’s accession process to joining the EU is recognized by the European Commission as remaining to be ‘the most effective framework for promoting EU-related reforms’ on ‘foreign and security policy issues, strengthening economic competitiveness and diversifying supply of energy sources’ with Turkey (EC, 2011:3). This official statement illustrates the great strengths again of the EU’s influence through the candidacy process however the EC in its enlargement strategy report for 2011-2012 states its ‘regret’ that some challenges have stalled the progress from reopening ‘for over a year’. The EC further states the need for ‘a new constructive phase in the relations with Turkey’ that in the Commissions eyes should be based on ‘areas of common interest’ (EC, 2011:3). This is clearly a weakness for the EU, reluctance or delaying the candidacy process weakens the EU’s water policy influence.

Turkey as an EU future member is described by the Commission primarily in terms of the security benefits it can bring the EU (EC, 2011:18). Followed by the benefits of further economic integration of Turkey’s economy with the EU (EC, 2011:18). The
Commission states that the importance of Turkey’s contribution to the EU in ‘crucial’ areas will only be ‘effective with an active and credible accession process.’ Which ‘must’ respect the EU’s ‘commitments and the established conditionality’ (EC, 2011:18). Thus to prevent the weakness of the candidacy process affecting the EU influence both parties need to find common ground to move forward.

The path for Turkey to join the EU

Thus Turkey’s ability to join the EU rests on an accession process that requires Turkey to make ‘reforms’ the EU deem as ‘necessary’ for further accession talks to progress (EC, 2011:18). Emphasis is particularly placed on ‘political’ reforms as well as solving ‘open bilateral issues’ which include a settlement on Cyprus and respect of territorial borders of Greece (EC, 2011:19) as well as implementation of the requirements of the WFD. There are many other reforms and changes Turkey is required to make to join the EU; however for the purposes of this paper an overview discussion on Turkey’s EU bid is sufficient in answering the research question.

Weaknesses in Turkey’s WFD compliance

3.2.2 Differing conditions for WFD compliance in Northern and Southern European Countries

The paper previously cited by Sümer on Turkey’s Implementation efforts towards Compliance with the WFD describes like many other commentators the controversy and added difficulty that Southern European Countries face in implementing the WFD compared to their Northern counterparts. The controversy is aimed at the European Commission, some state that the European Commission did not pay adequate regard to the specific needs of ‘water scarcity’ in Southern European Countries whilst Northern European States generally have an abundance of water with completed water infrastructure (Sümer, 2011: 9). This comment does not take into account the numerous existing transboundary agreements Northern European States have with each other and generally the better coordination that WFD Countries have, compared to those States that are outside or bordering the EU and WFD requirements. This comment therefore appears as a small weakness of the EU’s influence; however it illustrates the careful diplomacy and approach required from the European Commission in considering the very different river environments in Northern and Southern European Regions.

3.2.3 Monitoring of Turkeys waters

Important to WFD compliance is to have good standards of data collected on the quality of the waters in Turkey to judge their ecological and chemical status as well as monitoring any improvement or degradation. At current Sümer states that monitoring efforts are dispersed in Turkey ‘among a number of public authorities and that the collected and measured data’ does ‘not comply’ with the current WFD rules,’ (Sümer, 2011: 16).

This is clearly a worry for the EU and Turkey, having stated this, the Turkish Government is acting to improve ‘monitoring activities in Turkey’, including launching a “Twinning Project on Capacity Building on Water Quality Monitoring’
which started in ‘late 2010,’ (Sümer, 2011: 16-17). Clearly improved data in accordance with the WFD is important to show what improvement Turkey is making towards WFD implementation. However again the steps that Turkey is taking to improve this data and bring it up to the appropriate standard reflects the seriousness Turkey is giving to this part of the WFD and thus should not weaken the EU’s influence in this regard.

3.2.4 Costs of WFD compliance

Another potential weakness for the EU’s influence is the high cost of WFD implementation which could dissuade Turkey from WFD implementation and thus lessen the EU’s influence. Costs for Turkey to comply with the WFD are widely cited as high, Sümer’s 2011 implementation review paper stated that ‘since there is no sufficient and coherent body of data and information in Turkey’ with regard to financial and economic analyses, the total costs of complying with the WFD is ‘only “estimated” based on “expert judgment” and extrapolation of the costs of the program of measures calculated from the Büyük Menderes river basin,’ (Sümer, 2011: 11). As Sümer concludes this leaves a ‘certain degree of uncertainty with the costs mentioned in’ the Draft National Plan (Sümer, 2011: 11).

Sümer’s paper describes the ‘total cost’ in the Draft National Plan at around ‘6 billion USD […] this is a substantial amount,’ which should Sümer argues be spent gradually over a carefully calculated ‘time schedule …’ (Sümer, 2011: 11). However this total figure cited in the Draft National Plan does not ‘include other WFD related directives…’ meaning the ‘costs mentioned’ in the Draft National Plan ‘comprise only a small fraction of the overall costs required for the implementation of the WFD and its directives,’ (Sümer, 2011: 11).

These high costs mean Turkey is rightfully carefully assessing how to move forward with the necessary improvements. Sümer explains how Turkey is moving forward with these improvements according to a careful timetable of improvements. An important document in this regard entitled ‘Plan for Setting up Necessary Administrative Capacities at National, Regional and Local level and Required Financial Resources for Implementing the Environmental Acquis’ sets out strategic guidelines for implementation of the WFD and other water related legislation and significantly sets also a date for achieving the objectives of the WFD in Turkey by 2027. A date also mentioned in the Draft National Plan and repeated ‘with a possibility of extension into 2033,’ (Sümer, 2011: 13). This careful financial and strategic planning shows a positive commitment towards WFD compliance and resultantly a strong influence of the EU on Turkey’s water policy.

As mentioned earlier the high costs of WFD implementation could persuade Turkey away from full implementation and weaken the EU’s influence. However as has been shown from Sümer’s research paper, the Turkish Government with careful planning and a clear commitment from Official Public documents, appears to plan to meet both the high costs and regulations required from the EU’s WFD, thus showing that cost has thus far not dissuaded Turkey from implementation and shows the strength of the EU’s influence on directing Turkey’s National Water Policy.
3.3 Opportunities available to the EU to influence

This paper will now look at opportunities available to the EU to influence Turkey’s water policy, in particular with regard to the Euphrates-Tigris river basin.

3.3.1 The importance of the willingness of Turkey to join the EU

To begin the European Commission officially recognises the willingness of Turkey to join the EU and encourages reforms towards this goal. This includes recognising the recent ‘creation of a specific Ministry for EU affairs’ and Turkey’s recently created laws on ‘Religious Foundations facilitating the recovery of confiscated property of religious foundations’ as significant steps forward (EC, 2011:18). As this paper has shown with regard to water policy, Turkey is making great legislative and administrative reforms, that there is a political commitment to the WFD and accession process and the commitment to meet the high costs of the EU. Thus the importance of the willingness of Turkey to join the EU is proving to be a huge opportunity for the EU to assert a great deal of its own influence through the accession process.

3.3.2 Opportunity for transboundary river cooperation greater than risk of conflict

Due to the ‘vital nature’ of water many commentators have argued that States are more likely to cooperate over transboundary water resources for example the Euphrates Tigris river, than turn to conflict (Gersetter, 2011:1) (Akanda, 2007: 4) (Molen, 2005: 140). This is clearly positive for the EU’s (and the WFD) influence which encourages transboundary cooperation and thus the strengthening of the case of cooperation over conflict should strengthen the EU’s influence.

Akanda has asserted that the ‘scarcity of water’ in the Middle East region has brought global attention to the ‘possibility of water wars, but reality has shown that water is, in fact, too important to be left to the uncertainties of forceful interventions,’ (Akanda, 2007: 4). This is a view echoed by a paper on this very question by Molen who asserts that ‘water appears to pose a reason for transboundary co-operation rather than for War, often preventing escalation instead of causing it,’ (Molen, 2005: 140).

Akanda does add that ‘a given conflict must have to reach a state of urgency, or ripeness in order for a resolution to be feasible.’ According to Akanda ‘a conflict is ripe when the involved parties feel that they will be worse off if no deal is struck.’ However ‘a third party can alter perception’ to ensure that a situation is ripe; this paper will discuss third parties that could achieve this ripeness in the next section. However it’s clear that the EU can apply significant pressure through the EU candidacy process to ensure that the situation of the Euphrates-Tigris for example is ripe for cooperative deals to be struck and this opportunity acted on.
3.4 Threats that could undermine the EU’s ability to influence

Finally this paper will look at important threats that could undermine the EU’s influence. These include;

3.4.1. Other external actors that could threaten the influence of the EU

Several other actor States/global organizations could threaten the position of the EU as an external mediator, and thus potentially threatening the influence of the EU on Turkey’s water policy. Primarily the aim of external mediation is to bring the three States into communication and to direct all parties to a solution (Akanda, 2007: 5). Potential external State/International Organization mediators cited in a 2007 academic paper exploring this question, could include Saudi Arabia, Egypt or the World Bank. To be a successful mediator the organization requires a necessary level of ‘legitimacy, technical and financial resources,’ as will be shown and from which the EU can learn from (Akanda, 2007: 5).

Saudi Arabia
Saudi Arabia is a strong external mediator having previously resolved a conflict between the parties in 1974-75 over the flow of the Euphrates. Additionally it has the financial resources to ‘finance irrigation and reforms’ to incentivize parties (Akanda, 2007: 5).

Egypt
Egypt also has significant legitimacy and experience in resolving water conflicts from its experience managing the Nile river basin (Akanda, 2007: 5-6). It has also brought Turkey and Syria to political settlements recently concerning the PKK in 1998 however recent political events in Egypt may make this possibility at least in the short term more difficult.

The World Bank
Lastly, the World Bank also has significant financial and technical resources as well as past experience. Turkey at Akanda’s time of writing also requires access to finish its GAP project, whilst the World Bank can also provide funding for irrigation reforms (Akanda, 2007: 6).

These case examples illustrate the importance for the EU to; develop and learn from its previous experience in water management and bring to bear financial and technical resources to improve irrigation especially for Syria and Iraq. Furthermore to gain the necessary legitimacy through successful interventions in the eyes of all the three parties involved. Accomplishing these feats might give the EU more influence over Turkeys water policy with regard to the Euphrates-Tigris as it could play a greater regional actor role in bringing river riparian Countries to a negotiated solution.

3.4.2 The risk of the EU withdrawing the offer of full EU membership

The EU’s ability to successfully influence Turkey’s water policy, as has been previously mentioned in this paper, could largely rest on achieving Turkey’s eventual goal of full membership of the EU.
The history of EU-Turkish accession relations show that when Turkey feels the EU is recognizing its efforts towards accession, relations generally improve. However, if Turkey views its efforts are being looked down on, dismissed or rejected by European leaders, relations can deteriorate quickly and with it the EU’s influence. This point is illustrated all too clearly in December 1997. At the Luxemburg summit the European Council excluded Turkey from a list of ‘formal candidates’ to EU membership, ‘effectively “rejecting” Ankara’s request for accession,’ (Çarkoğlu, 2003: 6).

Turkey responded to the declaration by ‘partially suspending’ Turkey’s dialogue with the EU. Additionally, Turkey announced an intention to go ahead with ‘plans to integrate Northern Cyprus,’ if the EU launched accession talks with the Island Greek Cypriot Government. It was not until the ‘Helsinki Summit’ in December 1991 that the EU Council recognized Turkey as a ‘candidate for membership,’ (Çarkoğlu, 2003: 6). This case illustrates the importance to the Turkish Government of keeping accession talks alive whilst it also shows the great threat that the EU influence faces should it fail or withdraw the offer of accession.

3.4.3 A third way accession solution?

There is much literature on EU-Turkey relations and in particular commentary on the Turkish dream of being accepted as a European Westernized State. As one author stated ‘to be a “full” member of Europe’ would result in Turkeys ‘total irrevocable acceptance as a Western State,’ (Çarkoğlu, 2003: 1). However after the partial diplomatic suspension in EU-Turkey relations in 1999 there was discussion of a third way status for EU-Turkish relations. A third way (or middle) solution would for the most part involve seeing Turkey no longer obtaining ‘full’ membership but becoming instead part of an outer ‘zone of association’ with a more ‘flexible’ relationship to the EU (Buzan, 1999: 52).

This would allow the EU to continue to influence Turkey on a diplomatic and strategic front without social conflict issues arising (Buzan, 1999: 52). Whilst Turkey would benefit from playing an ‘independent’ regional actor role (Buzan, 1999: 53) and remaining part of European institutions and transatlantic organisations without the need for full membership (Buzan, 1999: 55). Real questions however remain unanswered in this analysis. How would the EU’s influence change? Would Turkey begin to regress on large economic and political reforms as many commentators fear? Would the EU look inward to its existing inner core members and not look to Turkey as key to expanding its external relations influence? How would Turkey feel if the EU economically races ahead of Turkey in the long run? And how will the Turkish public and in particular pro-European liberals take to being sidelined as a non-European or even un-Western State. These are important deep questions that remain unanswered.

Much of this analysis could be seen as being confirmed or denied by political events since. To confirm this analysis Turkey does seem to be playing a greater regional role by strengthening ties with pro-democratic States and opposition groups (BBC News, April 2012). However Turkey is also moving away from a stronger relationship with Israel which could possibly cause friction with Israel’s ally the US and thus affecting Turkey’s transatlantic relationship. If Turkey’s relationship with the US was to
deteriorate then the EU accession bid would become plausibly more important as a key Western ally. What this brief example illustrates is the fast moving nature of Turkish politics and how Turkey territorially being at the centre of so many regions has to be careful how it positions itself to have strong and peaceful relationships with all its neighbours (Buzan, 1999: 51-52).

Therefore, a third way solution for these purposes would likely threaten the EU’s ability to influence Turkey’s integrated water thinking. If Turkey was to leave the full member accession process the European Commission might reasonably no longer have the authority to encourage and monitor the integrated and sustainable use of river basins under the WFD.

However, a third way solution would allow Turkey to play a greater independent role in issues that matter as a security issue to Turkey and yet may be constrained by membership of the EU. For example Turkey’s ‘tensions with Syria and Iraq over water supplies arising from Turkey’s dam-building projects on the upper reaches of the Euphrates river,’ (Buzan, 1999: 51). Remains a controversial and unsustainable use of the river which as explored in this paper, could threaten the EU’s influence on resolving this problem, whilst on the other hand giving Turkey a freer hand to act in its own interest.

Another third way may still allow Turkey to fully join the EU however opt out of key institutions. This would be similar in some regards to the position of the United Kingdom which is ‘outside’ the EU ‘in some important areas (monetary Union, the Schengen Agreement reducing border controls) as are several others,’ (Buzan, 1999: 53). Although the EU requires the UK to follow the WFD directive and no literature I have found excludes an EU member State from the requirements of the WFD. This solution may plausibly allow Turkey to remain part of the EU (including under the provisions of the WFD) whilst retaining the freedom to opt in and out of key areas of national interest. Analysing a third way option for Turkish-EU relations is important to gaining an understanding of how the EU’s influence on Turkey’s water policy would be reduced or limited should Turkey’s goal of eventual full EU membership not be met.

3.4.4 The Euphrates – Tigris river basin seen as a Security Issue

A further threat to EU influence could be shaped by how Turkey views the Euphrates – Tigris river basin. Does the Turkish Government see control of the Euphrates – Tigris river basin as an area of strategic national interest or is it one where the EU could reasonably argue that cooperation would deliver a more stable and sustainable situation. The difficulty with the cooperation argument lies in the perceived strategic importance of the Euphrates-Tigris river and as previously cited the economic development they bring Turkey. Although not a pressing threat to the EU’s overall influence, the strategic status of the Euphrates-Tigris river basin could allow Turkey in the case of a third way solution as discussed a greater deal of autonomy to defend its position on the Euphrates-Tigris and thus threaten the EU’s own influence.
4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

This paper asked to what extent the European Union (EU) can influence as an external actor Turkey’s integrated water management policy. In particular this paper has focused on the case example of the water conflict arising over the usage of the Euphrates-Tigris river basin and what extent the EU can bring to bear its influence on Turkey to bring a resolution to the regional management of this river basin.

Through using a comparison of available literature this paper has found that the main strength of the EU’s influence on Turkey’s integrated water management policy is through the very definite obligations Turkey must legally fulfil under the Water Framework Directive as a candidate member for the EU (Kaya, 2004: 134). The WFD has been explored in depth in this paper, it has been shown that the WFD (and thus by extension the EU) is having a strong influence over Turkey’s National water policy. The WFD aims primarily to achieving ‘good’ status in all its waters by 2015 however the WFD also aims to promote transboundary river cooperation which should apply in the case of the Euphrates Tigris (Sümer, 2011: 10).

Secondly this paper submits that the EU’s strong river management experience through large river cooperation projects, for example the management of the Danube river basin, further enhances the ability of the EU’s credibility in its influence (Nilsson, 2004: 16). Furthermore the ability of the EU to bring to bear this strong influence, in particular with regard to transboundary river experience as well as creating the appropriate environment for improved river management on the Euphrates-Tigris is the challenge that the EU should strive towards.

With regard to weaknesses, the main weakness the EU’s influence faces is the difficulty associated with Turkey’s candidacy process to the EU. This paper has shown from previous accession difficulties that accession delays or rejection from the EU could quickly limit and reduce the EU’s influence on Turkey.

Opportunities for cooperation on the Euphrates – Tigris are also looked at positively in this paper especially in the light of the 2011 Arab Spring leading to a potential new more democratic (it is hoped) Middle Eastern politics. Even though considerable uncertainty remains as to how the region will look like when current political unrest has calmed. Lastly a threat that could face the EU’s influence is the results that a potential third way relationship between the EU and Turkey could have on limiting the EU’s influence with regard to integrated water policies (Buzan, 1999: 52).

Overall this paper has shown that the EU’s influence is very strong on Turkey’s water policy. This influence comes in the form of the EU WFD which creates a legal obligation on Turkey to achieve certain “good” standards in all its waters by 2015 (Sümer, 2011: 10). Turkey is compelled legally to implement these reforms as a candidate Country for full membership of the EU, a goal of which the EU’s influence rests on heavily (Kaya, 2009: 125). Should the candidacy process fail or be delayed, this could have a quick and damaging negative impact on the EU’s influence on Turkey’s water policy.
This paper aimed to also look at the Euphrates Tigris river basin case study to assess if the EU’s influence on Turkey’s water policy could enable the EU to influence a settlement on better management of this strategic river. Overall this paper has found that the EU could be in a good position to push Turkey towards a compromise solution on the Euphrates Tigris. This is primarily again due to the WFD that aims to promote transboundary cooperation and again Turkey’s goal of joining the EU as a full member. This process is not without its challenges however, despite current efforts, literature used in this study does not show any inclination at present on the part of the Turkish Government to move towards improved talks on the future management on the Euphrates-Tigris river basin. Whilst steps towards using the Turkish Ministry for Foreign Affairs as a means of opening up dialogue on cooperation with lower riparian river states, is strongly argued for by several studies as a means by which to open dialogue on an eventual future International River Basin Management Plan (IRBMP) for the Euphrates-Tigris river basin.

4.2 Recommendations

Recommendations from this paper will reflect comments from the comparative literature review. Comments will thus focus on the issue of improving transboundary river cooperation, as an area this paper deems as deserving of most current attention.

Firstly, with regard to transboundary river cooperation, there is a clear need from several studies, for Turkey to use its own Ministry for Foreign Affairs to open up dialogue with lower riparian river states, especially concerning the strategic rivers basin of the Euphrates-Tigris (Moroglu, 2008: 274).

Secondly, the EU could suggest setting up a ‘commission’ as a means of achieving improved transboundary river cooperation between the three riparian states. This could be achieved by learning from the EU’s previous experience involving the creation of commissions to implement WFD requirements as illustrated in the case example of the Danube river basin district (Nilsson, 2004: 16). The EU could therefore be one external actor among others that could assist towards making this a possibility.

Thirdly, owing to the strategic importance of the Euphrates-Tigris this paper submits that there is a growing need for a permanent research network or center to oversee reports into the Euphrates-Tigris river basin as a whole, giving a more coordinated approach to the many sources of information on the river basin district, a hub for data sharing on monitoring of the waters and an organization to assist with improving water efficiency throughout the river basin district. Already the UN assists in initiatives towards this goal⁴ and could be a vehicle through which a more permanent research center or network could be established.

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⁴ for example a UN organized research collaboration initiative entitled ‘The Euphrates-Tigris Initiative for Cooperation’ (ETIC) (UN Water Activity Information System, 2005).
5. Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Professor Ashok Swain (Director for the Centre for Sustainable Development) at Uppsala University for his research guidance and support on this paper.

6. References


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7. Appendix 1. Turkish governmental organizations and their tasks in water management

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Main tasks and responsibilities</th>
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| Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) | • Water resource pollution prevention  
• Ensure coordination and cooperation for overall development and implementation of environmental policies  
• Develop and approve of environmental plans and ensure implementation  
• Ensure establishment of laboratories  
• Ensure implementation of the national EIA regulation  
• Designate Ramsar sites  
• Ensure the coordination of harmonization of the Turkish Water Legislation with the EU Acquis  
• Determine the classification of the quality of water resources  
• Determine the quality criteria related to water resources  
• Issue water discharge permits for installations, monitoring discharges and wastewater treatment plants |
| State Hydraulic Works             | • Water resource investigations  
• River basin development  
• Planning, construction and financing of water and wastewater management |
<table>
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<th>Agency</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
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| (SHW)  | Treatment plants  
|        | - Water management with 25 regional directorates  
|        | - Investigation, planning, design, construction and operation for irrigation domestic water supply, hydroelectric energy and environment  
|        | - Responsible for protection of surface water and groundwater  
|        | - Responsible for allocation and registration of groundwater  
|        | - Responsible for flood control  |
| Ministry of Health (MoH) | Drafting drinking water legislation, setting drinking water standards, implementation and monitoring of these standards  
|                        | - Plays an important role in certain aspects of environmental protection through its responsibilities for public health. In the water sector, it has certain responsibilities for drinking water quality and bathing water quality and certain responsibilities for urban wastewater collection and treatment  
|                        | - Drafting drinking water legislation, setting drinking water standards, implementation and monitoring of these standards  
|                        | - Plays an important role in certain aspects of environmental protection through its responsibilities for public health. In the water sector, it has certain responsibilities for drinking water quality and bathing water quality and certain responsibilities for urban wastewater collection and treatment  |
| Bank of Provinces (BoP) | Affiliated with the Ministry of Public Works and Settlement as well as public works relating to drinking water supply and treatment, sewage systems and urban wastewater treatment and solid waste disposal for municipalities  |
| State Planning Organization (SPO) | Overall planning for investment for water resources (e.g. dams, reservoirs, water supply) and pollution control (e.g. sewerage and sewage treatment)  |
| Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) | Fishery and Aqua Culture legislation  
|                        | - Protecting the resources of water, plants, animals and fisheries as well as the products therefore  
|                        | - Control of wastewater discharges in fish production areas  
|                        | - Monitoring of nitrate parameter of parameters in freshwaters and groundwater  
|                        | - Pesticide control and monitoring  
|                        | Having 40 Provincial Control Laboratories which measures quality of inland waters, marine environment and all wastewaters  |
| Ministry of Tourism (MoT) | Building wastewater infrastructure systems in touristic areas  |

Figure 4 (Moroglu, 2008: 274).

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