



Bridge over troubled waters? A New Research and Teaching Agenda on the EU and Turkey-EU Relations

Kick-off Roundtable

of the

Centre for Turkey and European Union Studies at the University of Cologne (CETEUS)

in cooperation with the

Cologne Monnet Association (COMOS)

Thursday, 13 October 2016, Cologne

Alter Senatssaal, University of Cologne, Albertus-Magnus-Platz, 50923 Cologne

17:30 Welcome

Prof. Dr. Werner Mellis, Dean, Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences
University of Cologne

Prof. Dr. André Kaiser, *Cologne Center for Comparative Politics, University of Cologne*

Dr. Funda Tekin, *Vice Director Centre for Turkey and EU Studies, University of Cologne*

18:00 Roundtable Discussion

Chair:

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wessels, *Director Centre for Turkey and EU Studies, University of Cologne*

Input Statements:

Prof. Dr. Atila Eralp, *Middle East Technical University, Ankara*

Javier Niño Pérez, *Head of Division Turkey, European External Action Service, Brussels*

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Johannes Pollak, *Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna*

Dr. Funda Tekin, *Vice Director CETEUS, Project Director FEUTURE, Cologne*

Comments:

Johannes Müller-Gomez, *CETEUS, University of Cologne*

Prof. Dr. Marc Oliver Bettzüge, *Energiewirtschaftliches Institut, University of Cologne (tbc)*

Jun.-Prof. Dr. Béatrice Hendrich, *Orientalisches Seminar, University of Cologne*

Rapporteur of the World Café Workshop

19:30h Reception and CETEUS Poster Exhibition

Dozentencafé, University of Cologne, Albertus-Magnus-Platz, 50923 Cologne

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und Europäische Fragen der Universität zu Köln*



Report

by S. Christian Raphael und Johannes Wolters

The Centre for Turkey and European Union Studies (CETEUS) was officially launched within the context of the panel discussion “Bridge over troubled waters? A New Research and Teaching Agenda on the EU and Turkey-EU Relations” on 13 October 2016. About 50 researchers and representatives of civil society joined the kick-off roundtable which was organized in cooperation with the Coelner Monnet Vereinigung für EU Studien e.V. (COMOS).

The first part of the conference dealt with the topic “Ideas, Networking and Career Development for EU and EU-Turkey Affairs” and discussed four guiding questions within the framework of a so-called World Café Workshop: the future role of the recently launched CETEUS, the future research agenda in EU-Turkey relations, the state of the EU and the United Kingdom in the wake of the Brexit referendum and the consequences and developments of the Bratislava Summit in September 2016. The findings of the workshop were collected and introduced into the following panel discussion.

The second part of the conference was opened by a welcome by Prof. Werner Mellis (Dean of the Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences of the University of Cologne), Prof. André Kaiser (Director of the Institute of Political Science of the University of Cologne) and Dr. Funda Tekin (Vice-Director of CETEUS). All speakers expect the CETEUS to establish a channel for dialogue and communication between Turkey and the EU. Prof. Wolfgang Wessels (Director of CETEUS), reiterating the topic of the panel discussion, emphasized CETEUS’ ambition to build bridges in his inauguration speech.

The actual panel discussion on the state of EU-Turkey relations was joined by Prof. Atila Eralp (Middle East Technical University, Ankara), Javier Niño Pérez (Head of Division Turkey, European External Action Service, Brussels), Prof. Johannes Pollak (Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna) and Dr. Funda Tekin (Vice Director CETEUS, Project Director FEUTURE, Cologne). Furthermore, Johannes Müller Gómez (CETEUS) and Prof. Béatrice Hendrich (Orientalisches Seminar, University of Cologne) commented on the speakers.

The speakers articulated the relevance of EU-Turkey relations, particularly within the present political context. For instance, the EU’s necessity of dedicating itself to the increasing problems in its neighborhood as well as facing up to a controversy of its own values became apparent. New narratives of the neighborhood relations – as a key importance – should be developed together. Furthermore, the increasing challenges of the EU-Turkey relations were highlighted, especially facing the progressively diverging public perception within the EU on the one hand and Turkey on the other. Hence in the future one should especially focus more on talking with one another instead of just talking about each other, to avoid ambivalent behavior patterns and reactions within these relations. A further position emphasized the change of the role of Turkey regarding geopolitical dimensions and energy policies. Thereby, by concentrating on common interests – true to the motto of the evening –, bridges could be built. Finally the increasing role of forms of differentiated integration was stressed, both regarding the pending possible exit of the UK in the form of a future differentiated disintegration that has to be developed and with regard to the outlook of an admission of Turkey.

During the subsequent discussion several commentators raised concerns over the situation of Turkish academics. Difficulties with executing academic exchange programs between the EU and Turkey were mentioned, for example within the framework of the Erasmus program. At the same time, speakers emphasized how exchange networks of European and Turkish academia offer “a space to breathe” for Turkish academics. Furthermore, EU’s foreign policy in its immediate neighborhood was criticized in the context of current political developments. With regard to Turkey, commentators expected both sides to be able to engage in dialogue. Regarding EU-Turkey relations in the context of energy policy, chances were said to have been wasted, since both sides allegedly underestimated the possibilities of cooperation. The same applies to security policy and migration policy.

A vivid debate arose from the effectivity of the EU-Turkey agreement regarding the reduction of the number of refugees arriving via the Eastern Balkan route and the associated human rights violations. Moreover, commentators questioned to what extent EU strategies, such as the foreseeable visa liberalization for Turkish citizens, will have an impact on EU-Turkey relations and could eventually make a positive contribution to the EU’s neighborhood policy. Finally all comments illustrated the potential of CETEUS to have a share in the academic dialogue relating to these relevant topics.

The CETEUS thanks COMOS for the common organization and the Hanns Martin Schleyer Stiftung as well as the Gesellschaft zur Förderung des Instituts für Politische Wissenschaft und Europäische Fragen of the University of Cologne for their financial support of this kick-off roundtable.