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THE FUTURE OF EU-TURKEY RELATIONS:
MAPPING DYNAMICS AND TESTING SCENARIOS

FEUTURE Concluding Conference

Report on the Public Conference "Back to the F(e)uture: Discussing Scenarios for EU-Turkey Relations"

28 February – 1 March 2019, Fondation Universitaire, Brussels



[The FEUTURE Consortium (FEUTURE Partners, FEUTURE Scientific and Policy Advisory Board, FEUTURE Coordination Office)]



This project has received funding from the *European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme* under grant agreement No 692976.

On 28 February and 1 March 2019, after three years of successful collaboration and joint research, FEUTURE held its final conference in Brussels hosted by the Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA) and organized together with the University of Cologne (UoC). This event provided many opportunities to discuss FEUTURE’s scientific output with the Consortium, Members of the Scientific and Policy Advisory Board, Stakeholders, Diplomats, and the interested public – a total of 81 participants.

During many interesting panels, closed-door meetings, and roundtable discussions, the FEUTURE researchers engaged in close exchange about the project’s main output, scientific analyses, and the finalization of the FEUTURE Synthesis Paper – which was to be published by the end of March 2019. All FEUTURE publications are available at: www.feuture.eu.

In addition to the exchanges with the public, FEUTURE held its final administrative meetings of the Steering Group, the General Assembly, and the Scientific and Policy Advisory Board (SPAB), setting the path for the successful conclusion of the largest project on the EU-Turkey relationship ever funded by the European Commission. Further, the FEUTURE Consortium engaged in internal debates to finalise its key-synthesis publications (Syntheses Paper, 11 Takeaways from FEUTURE) in close scientific exchange with the SPAB members, the FEUTURE Consortium, and invited guests.

28 February 2019

<p>13:00-13:15</p>	<p>Introduction and Welcoming Remarks <i>Funda Tekin, CETEUS, University of Cologne</i> <i>Michael Kaeding, Trans European Political Studies Association</i></p>
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The public conference was opened with a short introduction by TEPSA Chairperson Michael Kaeding and FEUTURE Project Director Funda Tekin. Michael Kaeding encouraged all FEUTURE partners and external participants to stay in contact even after FEUTURE has ended. Emphasizing the importance of dissemination as well as the contact with other research projects, networks, and partnerships, he highlighted the importance of FEUTURE’s research.

FEUTURE Project Director Funda Tekin, after having welcomed the audience on behalf of the FEUTURE consortium, reminded the audience of the objectives and the milestones of the project. The difficult task of analyzing a moving target such as the EU-Turkey relations required a joint effort of researchers from many different fields of research, interest and regions. By developing scenarios for the future of EU-Turkey relations and identifying “conflictual cooperation” as the most likely scenario for the near future of 2023, the consortium had delivered on this challenging task. This was possible only by taking into account six thematic dimensions (politics, economics, energy, security, migration, and identity), based on a historical analysis of the major narratives of EU-Turkey relations, and including the different levels of FEUTURE’s analysis; the EU, Turkey, the neighborhood and the global sphere.

However, the future development of the EU-Turkey relationship remains in the realm of uncertainty, as this moving target changes quickly and certain wild cards, which represent events that would have a high impact on the relationship while being highly unlikely, have the potential to change the state of the relations quickly. Yet, the intensive FEUTURE research provided a sound understanding of the main drivers for the relationship, allowing us to make well-informed assumption about the f(e)uture.



Keynote Speech

13:15-14:15	Opening Keynote <i>Nathalie Tocci, Istituto Affari Internazionali</i>
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FEUTURE Scientific Coordinator, Nathalie Tocci (IAI), started her opening keynote address by explaining the three possible ideal-type scenarios for the future of EU-Turkey relations – conflict, cooperation, and convergence – that have guided FEUTURE's research. The project however had not expected that the future of EU-Turkey relations would resemble exactly one of these three ideal-type scenarios. In fact, the f(e)uture was very unclear at the beginning of the FEUTURE Project. The accession process was already not going well, but there were signs of deeper cooperation on migration and promises of a fresh start. Currently, the future of EU-Turkey relations became clearer, due to many different drivers and the political circumstances leading the relationship to more divergence. The analysis of recent events, such as the rising clash between liberalism and illiberalism, the aftermath of the failed Coup attempt and the shift towards an executive presidency made clear that the EU and Turkey diverge in various areas.

In this context, the question could be raised, why there has not yet been a complete breakdown of EU-Turkey relations. The question might be justified but the multi-dimensionality of the relationship must be taken into account. Different dimensions facilitate various forms of relations. In most fields, conflict-laden forms of cooperation were analysed, whereas the politics dimension contains the most conflictual dynamics.

This many fields of cooperation lead to a high degree of interdependence between the EU and Turkey. Yet, the relationship has never been in a steady state. Rather, it has been characterized by moments that were more conflictual and others that were based on more cooperation. However, this inevitability of conflicts in EU-Turkey relations lead to the importance of conflict for characterisations of the relationship – and hence FEUTURE is looking at “conflictual cooperation” to represent the most likely scenario for the f(e)uture.

To find a way forward, FEUTURE researchers have come up with the concept of “Dynamic Association”, which does not rule out accession, yet argues for more differentiation in the short-term accession process, strengthening areas of cooperation between the EU and Turkey, embedded in a rules-based framework. As the economic relationship is marked by drivers of cooperation, this thematic dimension might be a good place to start revitalising the accession process under the frame of dynamic association.

In the Q&A session, the audience raised several questions about the concept of dynamic association and the general framework of research. For example, the influence of the Brexit, which is closely monitored by Turkish stakeholders, was discussed as well as the influence of the human rights situation in Turkey. The European Union would need political leverage and a certain political conditionality for influencing rule of law developments in Turkey. This would again lead back to a revitalisation of the accession process, to strengthen the political leverage.



Moderated Debate

<p>14:30-17:00</p>	<p>Towards a Constructive Framework for EU-Turkey Relations <i>Moderated Debate with André de Munter, Work Package Leaders and additional FEUTURE Researchers:</i> <i>Chair: Funda Tekin, CETEUS, University of Cologne</i></p>
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In the moderated debate, the 11 Takeaways from FEUTURE were introduced to the audience to highlight the major research findings of the FEUTURE Project in a condensed way and to discuss FEUTURE’s work with the broad field of experts, including FEUTURE’s Work Package Leaders as well as other FEUTURE Researchers and the audience.



[l.t.r.: Funda Tekin, Nathalie Tocci, Michael Kaeding, Sinan Ülgen, André de Munter]

The FEUTURE researchers wrapped-up their joint efforts by explaining the work of the work-packages of the thematic dimensions in relation to the 11 Takeaways from FEUTURE:

The field of identity is deeply rooted in the history of politics, yet, despite its long-term background, identity does not play a uniform role. The identity drivers however, were especially important in cases of full-fledged conflict in EU-Turkey relations. Identity drivers increased and deepened the conflicts, on the contrary, in fields of cooperation identity drivers support cooperation drivers from other fields. From special importance are the rise of populism in the EU and the rise of religious aspects in the Turkish national identity debates. Further, Turkish nationalism discourses have undertaken an anti-European turn. Thus, the identity drivers favour the prospects for a pragmatic relationship.

The underlying narratives of EU-Turkey relations support the understanding and explanations of the EU-Turkey relationship. The geopolitical relevance of Turkey is recognized on both sides, which leads to a certain limitation of the conflictual nature of the relationship. The findings of the analysis of underlying narratives further indicate, that the issue of membership has always been an endpoint in the relationship – mostly on the side of Turkish officials –, prevailing a major deadlock. To break this deadlock, a discussion about differentiated integration which do not impose terms on Turkey is necessary in the European Union. Turkey has to be part of the future of the EU itself.



The political dimension found the analysis leaning towards political developments in Turkey, rather than a balanced of assessments between Turkey and the EU. This one-sided view paired with the migration crisis of 2015 and the above-average number of elections led to a period of increased fragmentation and complicated the EU-Turkey relations.

FEUTURE's analysis identified economic drivers as the ones among the highest potentials for further cooperation between the EU and Turkey. The mutual beneficial relations and exchange of goods and services were supported by both parties. Yet, it became clear in the discussion that other – more conflictual – drivers could interfere with the good economic relationship.

Within the Work-package on security, different aspects created a diverging picture of the future relationship. Whereas fields of high importance for both actors – the EU (and its Member States) and Turkey – lead to ever closer cooperation, other conflictual topics where the security interests differ limit the sustainability and level of cooperation.

The energy dimension indicated a Turkish turn, from a mutual relationship of shared interests, towards a more national orientation of Turkish energy politics, where European energy security is no longer guiding principle in Ankara. Following, Turkey developed different bilateral relations, ranking from Convergence towards Conflict, in its neighbourhood.

FEUTURE Researcher from the migration work package introduced the potential of further cooperation and pragmatism in the field of migration management between Turkey and the EU. The need for cooperation is acknowledged by both actors, however, the high politicization of migration in the recent years has led to more conflictual pitfalls for a sustainable cooperation.

Following the extensive introduction of the FEUTURE research findings, the FEUTURE researchers discussed their findings with André de Munter, who introduced the European Parliament's updated point of view, also highlighting the procedural aspects of the recent decisions taken (and to be taken) by the European Parliament regarding the future of the accession process of Turkey.

In the Q&A session, different members from the Audience took the chance to ask questions and enrich the discussion. Further aspects discussed were possibilities for a more pragmatic relationship between the EU and Turkey, FEUTURE's concept of "Dynamic Association", the influence of the newly discovered gas field in the Mediterranean in the energy dimension, and the political developments in Turkey regarding the Copenhagen criteria.



1 March 2019

10:00-12:00	<p>Keynote Discussion on FEUTURE Scenario(s)</p> <p><i>H.E. Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay, Permanent Delegation of Turkey to the EU</i></p>
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The FEUTURE consortium had the great honour to meet with His Excellency Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay, Head of the Permanent Delegation of Turkey to the EU, in a closed door setting to discuss FEUTURE's research, the analysis of "Conflictual Cooperation" as the most likely scenario for the future of EU-Turkey relations, and the concept of "Dynamic Association".

Further, the discussion touched upon the public opinion(s) towards a Turkish EU Membership, the strategic situation of Turkey in the neighbourhood, the trade and energy relations of Turkey with the European Union as well as in the region, and Turkey's role as a regional power.

In addition, the potential for different forms of cooperation, depending on the policy field, which might offer the chance to revitalise the EU-Turkey relationship and the accession process were assessed by the discussants.

Overall, His Excellency engaged in close exchange with the FEUTURE consortium, answered many questions and participated in a controversial debate, which offered new insights to the FEUTURE researchers and benefitted the research of the Consortium.

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13:00-14:30	<p>FEUTURE Synthesis Paper Discussion</p> <p><i>Work Package Leaders and FEUTURE Researcher</i></p>
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Following the exchange with the Ambassador, the FEUTURE Consortium came together in another closed-door meeting to discuss and finalise the FEUTURE key-publications (focussing on the Synthesis Paper) and get into close exchange with the members of FEUTURE's Scientific and Policy Advisory Board. The board members gave extensive comments on the Synthesis paper draft, together with the members of the FEUTURE Consortium.

The authors took duly note of all comments and will incorporate these comments in the final version of the FEUTURE Synthesis paper.



15:00-16:30	<p><i>Policy Challenge Session: Which F(e)uture for EU-Turkey Relations?</i></p> <p><i>Chair: Nilgün Arisan Eralp, EU Director, Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey</i></p> <p><i>Maciej Popowski, Deputy Director-General, DG NEAR</i></p> <p><i>Thomas Mayr-Harting, Director for Europe and Central Asia, EEAS</i></p> <p><i>Discussant: Beken Saatcioglu, Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies</i></p>
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In the Policy Challenge Session, the speakers from European Institutions touched upon many issues of the current state of EU-Turkey relations, assessing pitfalls and challenges, and thus deducing possible future(s) for this long lasting, yet contested relationship.

FEUTURE's most likely scenario of Conflictual Cooperation was introduced to the discussion by the chairs opening statement and taken up by the speakers and the discussant. Whereas EU-Turkey relations were described as "too big to fail", the speakers acknowledged conflict potentials, foremost in the political developments within Turkey after the Coup Attempt. The Coup Attempt posed major challenges to the Turkish society, whereas the aftermath is seen to challenge the accession process and the Copenhagen criteria. Following, the calls for the suspension of accession negotiations had been raised extensively. However, the suspension was seen as coming at the potential cost of losing those parts of society in favour of the Turkish membership in the European Union, losing political leverage on the European side.

As the agenda and political guidance of the next Commission President and the enlargement Commissioner could not be foreseen, the participants argued for dealing with the current forms of partnership, cooperation, and institutions. However, the speakers touched upon the different stumbling blocks for reforms of the Customs Union, visa liberalisation, and the distribution of pre-accession assistance funds.

The speakers analysed different fields with cooperation potentials, such as security and economy relations, whilst also addressing possible obstacles for further convergence despite transactional relationships – namely the rule of law and the ever more complex geopolitical environment of Turkey.

Depending on the self-depicturing of Turkey, European values could be applied more drastically, but there is no immediate need to do so, if the accession process would stay on hold. However, even if the European Union had been more vocal on the interest side of the argument, values would always play a role in this relationship, in different levels of emphasis.



16:30-17:00	<p>Concluding Remarks</p> <p><i>Funda Tekin, CETEUS, University of Cologne</i></p> <p><i>Wolfgang Wessels, CETEUS, University of Cologne</i></p>
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In the final session, the FEUTURE Project Director Funda Tekin and the Project Coordinator Wolfgang Wessels gave a conclusive overview about FEUTURE's research activities and findings, summing up three years of research in major takeaways.

The future of EU-Turkey relations stays, even after years of extensive research, in the muddy waters of uncertainty, as the relationship could be described as a moving target, rather than in a steady-state. However, the different drivers, which were identified by the FEUTURE project can help to conceptualise the current state and gives an overview of influences on the relationship.

Taking the different drivers into account, the scenario of "Conflictual Cooperation" came up as the most likely – conflictual most in the sense of politics and identities, and cooperative in other fields such as energy, economy and migration. However, both speakers highlighted the importance of both actor's sides, the Turkish situation as well as the European side.

Given the divergent picture of EU-Turkey relations, regarding the different thematic dimensions and institutional settings, it became clear, that there are many faces of the future of EU-Turkey relations. Different areas developed different potentials for Conflict and/or Cooperation. Following, FEUTURE developed the concept of "Dynamic Association", which argues for more differentiation in the accession process, to use the cooperative potentials and strengthen areas of partnership.



[FEUTURE Policy Challenge Session]



Based on the experience of three years of FEUTURE, the speakers raised the awareness of “Wild-Cards”, unknown unknowns that have the potential to change and challenge the relationship. Those possibilities and uncertainties require scientific and analytical creativity, to deal with these challenges and imagine the effects, both in negative and positive senses.

As the future of EU-Turkey relations will unveil over time, the FEUTURE project facilitated future research by identifying drivers, accessing the scenario of “Conflictual Cooperation”, drafting research based policy recommendations, and conceptualising “Dynamic Association”. The Project Coordinator and the Project Director therefore see the strong need for further research based on the findings of FEUTURE and encourage all partners, whom are thanked for their contributions, to further engage in research on EU-Turkey relations.



Annex I – Programme of the Public Conference

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FEUTURE Final Conference

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EU-Turkey Relations

Programme

Thursday, 28 February 2019

Venue: *Fondation Universitaire, Room F. Cattier, Rue d'Egmont 11, Brussels*

12:00-13:00	<i>Lunch and Registration</i>
13:00-13:15	Introduction and Welcome Remarks <i>Funda Tekin, CETEUS, University of Cologne</i> <i>Michael Kaeding, Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA)</i>
13:15-14:15	Opening Keynote <i>Nathalie Tocci, Istituto Affari Internazionali</i>
14:15-14:30	<i>Coffee Break</i>
14:30-17:00	Towards a Constructive Framework for EU-Turkey Relations <i>Moderated Debate with André de Munter, Work Package Leaders and additional FEUTURE Researchers:</i> <i>Chair: Funda Tekin, CETEUS, University of Cologne</i>
17:00-18:30	Cocktail Reception



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FEUTURE Final Conference

Back to the F(e)uture: Discussing Scenarios for EU-Turkey Relations

Programme

Friday, 1 March 2019

Venue: Fondation Universitaire, Room A, Rue d'Egmont 11, Brussels

14:30-15:00 *Coffee and Registration*

15:00-16:30 **Policy Challenge Session: Which F(e)uture for EU-Turkey Relations?**

Chair: Nilgün Arısan Eralp, EU Director, Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey

Maciej Popowski, Deputy Director-General, DG NEAR

Thomas Mayr-Harting, Director for Europe and Central Asia, EEAS

Discussant: Beken Saatcioglu, Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies

16:30-17:00 **Concluding Remarks**

Funda Tekin, CETEUS, University of Cologne

Wolfgang Wessels, CETEUS, University of Cologne



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ABOUT FEUTURE

FEUTURE sets out to explore fully different options for further EU-Turkey cooperation in the next decade, including analysis of the challenges and opportunities connected with further integration of Turkey with the EU.

To do so, FEUTURE applies a comprehensive research approach with the following three main objectives:

1. Mapping the dynamics of the EU-Turkey relationship in terms of their underlying historical narratives and thematic key drivers.
2. Testing and substantiating the most likely scenario(s) for the future and assessing the implications (challenges and opportunities) these may have on the EU and Turkey, as well as the neighborhood and the global scene.
3. Drawing policy recommendations for the EU and Turkey on the basis of a strong evidence-based foundation in the future trajectory of EU-Turkey relations.

FEUTURE is coordinated by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wessels, Director of the Centre for Turkey and European Union Studies at the University of Cologne and Dr. Nathalie Tocci, Director of Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome.

The FEUTURE consortium consists of 15 renowned universities and think tanks from the EU, Turkey and the neighborhood.

Coordination Office at University of Cologne:

Project Director: Dr. Funda Tekin
Project and Financial Manager: Darius Ribbe
Email: wessels@uni-koeln.de

Website: www.feuture.eu

 facebook.com/feuture.eu

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