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

NEWSLETTER

No. 11 | January 2019

Dear FEUTURE Friends,

We would like to present you a brand new FEUTURE Newsletter.

We sincerely hope you will find this issue interesting and beneficial! In this Newsletter you will find:

- [EDITORIAL EU-Turkey policies in Iraq and Syria: Challenges and opportunities for convergence and cooperation](#)
- [PAST ACTIVITIES](#)
- [UPCOMING EVENTS](#)
- [FEUTURE ANALYSIS, OPINION, VOICES](#)

Best regards,
The FEUTURE Team



EDITORIAL

EU-Turkey policies in Iraq and Syria:

Challenges and opportunities for convergence and cooperation

Turkey is in every way ideally placed to bridge the EU with its **southern neighbours** and together tackle their common challenges and myriad business opportunities. The question is, can they align priorities and policies to make the most of the opportunities? The answer is: not easily. Given the complexity of and uncertainty in Turkey and Iraq, as

While Iraq has lost its state monopoly over legitimate violence and is incapable of securing its borders, Turkey often takes matters into its own hands by invading or intervening in Iraq, both directly and indirectly (through proxies). Of course, the Iraqi government considers Turkey's interventions as acts of aggression and violations of its borders, but is

interest is unlikely in the foreseeable future.

Although both Turkey and the EU have adopted multifaceted foreign policies vis-a-vis the Middle Eastern countries, yet they have converged only on specific issues, such as **dealing with the Iran nuclear deal**. Both sides consider the US withdrawal from the deal as a “matter of concern”, believing that maintaining the deal and keeping Iran engaged through diplomatic and economic means instead of sanctions or military threats is crucial even after the US withdrawal. Otherwise, **Turkey and the EU diverge on the overall approach to the most troubled neighbours, namely Iraq and Syria**, which have been sources of grave concern to all.

Iraq continues to be a fragile country, struggling to keep its integrity. The country was at the brink of failure between 2014-2017 after the emergence of the so called Islamic State (IS), and further threatened by the Kurdish referendum for independence in 2017. Iraq was pulled back to survival, mainly by international assistance. Interestingly, in 2018 Iraq saw two transformative general elections, one for the Federal and the other for the Kurdistan Region's Parliament. The outcome of these elections brought about a degree of change in the political landscape, a sense of optimism for future recovery and a clear promise for creating new business opportunities for international partners. However, in keeping with the past, the formation of government in both Baghdad and Erbil became protracted and problematic. These features indicate that the Iraqi leaders remain ill focused on the country's priorities in terms of state-building and provision of services or addressing the root causes of its fragility.

Turkey and the EU share the objectives of accessing Iraq's market and energy supply, and prevent onward migration of the displaced populations. Of course, **the EU is to a large extent dependent on Turkey to achieve its goals**. Therefore, it would make sense for the two sides to converge and cooperate on these issues. However, Turkey's foreign policies in the southern neighbourhood are driven primarily by its own domestic and border security considerations and - importantly - Turkey sees the economic, political and security issues as inextricable.

neighbour. It has control over part of Iraq's oil exports, water supply and trade routes. The EU, on the other hand, considers Turkey's interventions as acts of self-defence but frowns upon them as destabilising factors, adding to the fragility of Iraq.

In Syria, the political landscape and security dynamics are very different from Iraq, but the EU-Turkish policies follow similar patterns. Syria remains a failed state with its regime struggling to secure survival and regain control over its territories. Meanwhile, Turkey has become increasingly interventionist in Syria via direct military invasion and through proxies, culminating in the occupation of a significant area west of Euphrates, and threatening to occupy the Eastern side too. Turkey has put extreme pressure on the USA for permission to remove the Syrian Democratic Front (SDF) and its lead organisation (Democratic Union Party, PYD) from governing North East Syria (also referred to as Rojava). However, the EU and USA consider the SDF and PYD indispensable in the fight against IS and fear the Turkish interventions may have grave consequences. Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission recently emphasised that “Turkey is a key partner of the EU”, and that the EU expect the “Turkish authorities to refrain from any unilateral action likely to undermine the efforts of the Counter-IS Coalition”. Therefore, **EU-Turkey divergence or even conflict with some EU Member States is possible over Syria**.



*Dlawer Ala'Aldeen,
President of The Middle East
Research Institute (MERI).*

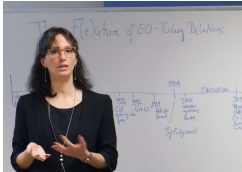
FEUTURE Simulation Game, Nice, 9-10 January 2019



On 9 and 10 January 2019 CIFE organised a simulation of a Summit of the European Council tackling the future of Europe with a special focus on EU-Turkey relations. 36 participants represented 12 key players (the Presidency of the European Council and 11 Member States) and engaged in a lively debate about the future of relations between the European Union and Turkey in particular.

[Read more](#)

FEUTURE Lecture by Dr Funda Tekin, "The F(e)uture of EU-Turkey Relations", Nice, 8 January 2019



On 8 January 2019, FEUTURE Project Director Funda Tekin gave a lecture at Centre international de formation européenne (CIFE). This FEUTURE Lecture "The F(e)uture of EU-Turkey Relations" was aimed at preparing master students for their participation in the FEUTURE simulation on 9 and 10 January 2019 in Nice.

[Read more](#)

FEUTURE Lecture by Prof Wolfgang Wessels, Cologne, 27 November 2018



On 27 November 2018, FEUTURE Coordinator Prof. Wolfgang Wessels together with Ebru Ece Özbey held a lecture about German, European and Turkish narratives on Turkey-EU relations. Jointly organized by FEUTURE and [TRIANGLE - Blickwechsel in EU/German-Turkish Relations Beyond Conflicts](#) the lecture shed light on the ever-changing turbulent relations between Turkey and the EU, and on how they are perceived in Berlin, Ankara and Brussels.

[Read more](#)

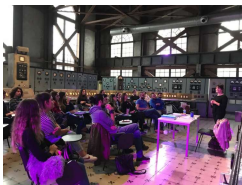
MERI Forum 2018: Visions for Stabilising the Middle East, Erbil, 22-24 October 2018



The report of the 2018 MERI Forum is now available! The event brought together decision-makers, academics and opinion-leaders on 22-24 October 2018 to discuss a range of social, economic, and political issues.

[Read the report](#)

Bilgi University Seminar: Public Diplomacy, Nation Branding in Turkey and the EU, Istanbul, 19 October, 2018



On 19 October 2018, the Istanbul Bilgi University - International Relations Club held a talk on "Public Diplomacy, Nation Branding in Turkey and the EU" with the participation of Dr. Ayşe Tecmen.

[Read more \(in Turkish\)](#)

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UPCOMING EVENTS

FEUTURE Final Conference and Policy Challenge Session, Brussels, 28 February-1 March 2019

FEUTURE Young Leaders Conference, Ankara, 14-15 February 2019



On 14-15 February 2019, the Middle East Technical University (METU) will organise the FEUTURE Young Leaders Conference in Ankara.

The conference will gather future decision-makers and opinion-shapers in order to discuss future prospects of the EU-Turkey relationship.



Of successful collaboration and joint research, the FEUTURE consortium will present its results to political decision makers, practitioners, fellow researchers and the interested public in Brussels. Within the framework of a "Tour de Bruxelles" the programme will contain a combination of closed-door meetings, public panels and keynote speeches, as well as split sessions in which the FEUTURE consortium will break up into smaller (work-package) delegations and visit different EU institutions for discussing research results in a targeted manner. [REGISTER HERE!](#)

Sabancı University event: 2nd VIADUCT Week, Istanbul, 18-21 March 2019



This event is organised in the framework of the project "VIADUCT - Enhancing Visibility of the Academic Dialogue on EU-Turkey Cooperation". It will include a PhD workshop and VIADUCT's mid-term conference. More information will soon be available on the [VIADUCT website](#).

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FEUTURE ANALYSIS, OPINION, VOICES

[FEUTURE publications:](#)

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December 2018

Online Paper No. 27: [Greek-Turkish Relations and the Cyprus dispute: impact on Turkey-EU scenarios](#), by Thanos Dokos, Nathalie Tocci, Anja Palm and Can Kasapoğlu,

[Check out the FEUTURE infographics!](#)

[Partners' publications](#)

Jakob Lindgaard (2018), [Turkey's security pivot towards Russia runs deeper than we think](#), DIIS, 10 October 2018

Seçil Paçacı Elitok (2018), [Turkey's Migration Policy Revisited: \(Dis\)Continuities and Peculiarities](#), IAI Papers 18, October 2018

Eduard Soler i Lecha (2018), [The World in 2019: Ten Issues that will Shape the Global Agenda](#), CIDOB, December 2018

[Nation Branding in Turkey](#), working Paper 10, European Institute, Istanbul Bilgi University

The International Spectator, Vol. 53, No. 4, December 2018: [External and regional powers in the Middle East](#)

[FEUTURE researchers' announcements, presentations and other activities](#)

FEUTURE partner The Middle East Research Institute (MERI) was [ranked as Iraq's leading think tank](#) for the fourth year running and among the top 7% in MENA countries.



FEUTURE video: Eduard Soler i Lecha (CIDOB) presents the [FEUTURE Online Paper No. 17](#) "It Takes Two to Tango: Political changes in Europe and their Impact on Turkey's EU bid"

[Find many more FEUTURE videos here!](#)

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