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

NEWSLETTER

No. 12 | March 2019

Dear FEUTURE Friends,

We would like to present you the final issue of the FEUTURE Newsletter.

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

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Best regards,
The FEUTURE Team



FAREWELL FROM THE FEUTURE COORDINATORS

A Glimpse on the F(E)UTURE

Funda Tekin, FEUTURE Project Director, Director of the Institut für Europäische Politik (IEP)



Three years ago, a consortium of 15 partner institutes from the EU, Turkey and the neighbourhood set out to map dynamics in and test scenarios for the future EU-Turkey relationship within the framework of the research project “FEUTURE”, funded by the H2020 programme. Along with the Commission’s funding no crystal ball was provided, and the aim was not to exactly predict the FEUTURE. Instead, we aimed for a **deeper understanding of what drives the relationship apart and what holds it together as well as of what this means for the future of the relationship**. Another aim was to foster (research) dialogue within and between the EU and Turkey as well as the

region.

This task has been both interesting and inspiring as well as challenging and demanding. One of the main questions

single EU member states for suspending accession talks with Turkey, from high chances of solving the Cyprus dispute at the end of 2016 to closing the door on it for the time being in 2017; from acknowledging the mutual need for energy cooperation to rifts over energy drillings off the coast of Cyprus in 2018. Additionally, the EU and Turkey were both facing their own challenges in terms of migration, populism and nationalism as well as the UK's decision to leave the EU and the failed coup attempt and the following crackdown on rule of law issues in Turkey. Last but not least, there were periods in which Turkey's bilateral relations to individual EU member states were severely strained.

I am more than satisfied to be able to say that FEUTURE has been able to live up to its aims – mainly for three reasons:

(1) FEUTURE applied a comprehensive and inclusive approach that within an integrated research design pursued a broad scope of subjects and features. FEUTURE was **intertemporal** in dealing with the past, present and future, **inter-disciplinary** in dealing with six prevalent thematic dimensions of EU Turkey relations in order to tackle the economic, energy, social, political, ideational and strategic narratives, drivers, challenges and opportunities embedded in the relationship, and **international** in dealing with four levels of analysis of EU-Turkey relations: the EU, Turkey, the neighbourhood and the global scene, reflected also in the composition of FEUTURE's consortium and the Scientific and Policy Advisory Board.

(2) FEUTURE did not shy away from **thinking out of predetermined 'boxes' and explored new paths for the future of EU-Turkey relations**. We acknowledged that realities might not only change fast but also in extremes meaning that so-called wild cards (unknown-unknowns; improbable but deeply disruptive events) can materialize and mix-up the entire f(e)uture. We also acknowledged that there are different as well as differentiated f(e)utures ahead, which means that the relationship requires considerations of different models of differentiated integration. There is no such pre-fixed model that one could pick from the shelves for application to the EU-Turkey relationship. But **FEUTURE has developed the framework of "dynamic association"** in which different paths of integration and cooperation are explored in parallel.

(3) FEUTURE did not remain within the ivory tower but **closely engaged with stakeholders in Brussels, Ankara and national capitals in the EU** with two aims: on the one hand the stakeholder community provided helpful insights for advancing our research activities and on the other we were able to test our research results (in so-called Policy Challenge Sessions, for example). Additionally, the project engaged with **the f(e)uture generation of researchers and stakeholders** by organizing a simulation game in Nice and a Young Leaders Conference in Ankara (more information provided in this newsletter).

These past three years have been thought provoking, inspiring, intense, demanding, challenging, eye opening and rich in terms of researching the FEUTURE. You can find our main research results compiled in no less than 32 research papers and one synthesis paper on www.feuture.eu and within an upcoming edited volume. I want to thank all FEUTURE researchers for our collaboration on this highly relevant project. We have been able to establish strong relations and therefore I am sure that there is a f(e)uture after FEUTURE.

The Rocky Road Towards the F(E)UTURE

Nathalie Tocci, FEUTURE Scientific Coordinator, Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)



We're nearing the end of our journey into the f(e)uture. It has been an eventful three years. Three years in which 15 partners, including both universities and think tanks, from Turkey, EU Member States and neighbouring countries joined forces on **the biggest ever EU-funded research project on the troubled relationship between the EU and Turkey**. We started off outlining three possible scenarios for EU-Turkey relations in a 2023 scenario: **conflict, cooperation and convergence**. We never assumed the f(e)uture would map precisely any one of these three stylized scenarios, but in analyzing the drivers within six thematic areas, we did think and expect trends to point towards a possible steady state equilibrium in the EU-Turkey relationship in the

decade ahead.

When we began our work, the f(e)uture looked in some respects more uncertain than it is today. True, Turkey's accession process to the EU had been in dire straits for some time already, and conflictual dynamics certainly characterized the political and identity dimensions of EU-Turkey relations. However, other signals – notably the

As time went by, on the one hand things changed, and not for the best. The EU-Turkey migration statement gave way to a transactional form of cooperation while doing nothing to reactivate accession talks. Cooperation continued in the economic and security domains, but on a whole, the relationship dangerously slid towards greater divergence and conflict. The attempted coup attempt in Turkey in the summer of 2016 followed by an accelerated crackdown on rights and freedoms, alongside the move towards an executive presidency characterized by an unprecedented concentration of power in one man's hands; Russia's ascendance in the Syrian civil war, increasingly dragging Turkey into its fold; a European context marked by the ongoing rise of nationalist, racist and populist forces as well as the specific challenges posed by Brexit; and a global scene bedeviled by the demise of the international liberal order have all, invariably, pitted Turkey increasingly at odds with the EU. Even areas formerly thought to spur convergence between the two sides, such as energy, started moving in the opposite direction. On the other hand, while many, over these three years, often called for an impending disaster – a total breakdown of EU-Turkey relations – such breakdown never happened. And the FEUTURE project, including the very fact that a consortium such as ours has continued its work notwithstanding political trends, holds within it the explanation as to why such breakdown did not happen. And will not happen in future. **No definitive f(e)uture can in fact be painted.** The scenario we outline for the EU-Turkey relationship is **an inherently dynamic one in which no fixed steady state is in fact possible.** We define this as **conflictual cooperation.** The conflictual elements are clear, and some of the key drivers were listed above. These conflictual dynamics notwithstanding, the EU and Turkey cannot but cooperate with one another. This is because irrespective of how positive or negative relations are, the structure of the relationship itself is marked by deep and complex forms of interdependence. Across different thematic domains, Turkey and the EU are and will remain joined at the hip. Hence, while political and identity relations will determine the upper most limits of the institutional relationship – i.e. whether full membership was, is or ever will be a realistic scenario – the intricate interdependence in the economic, energy, migration and security domains is such that cooperation, while at times conflictual, will remain a necessity moving forward determining the lower-most limits below which the relationship simply cannot fall. The EU-Turkey relationship will therefore most likely continue oscillating between these upper and lower most limits, in a perennial dance of conflictual cooperation.

So what to do about this? The question we asked ourselves is how, given this scenario of conflictual cooperation, could the EU maximize the scope for cooperation while mitigating the prospects of conflict? And how can it at the same time embed such cooperation to the extent possible in a rules-based framework thus instilling within the relationship incentives for convergence? Our proposal is that of a **dynamic association**, one which while still considering the sky as the limit – and therefore not advocating a once and for all suspension of the accession process – both seeks to maximize cooperation and **strives to embed such cooperation in a rules-based framework.** A modernized customs union upon which to add further building blocks of cooperation across the energy, migration and security domains, represents to us the most beneficial while not unrealistic way forward.

Are we starry eyed, discarding the concrete political reasons why such proposal is not materializing today? No we are not. On the contrary, we believe that a dynamic association at once **pragmatically reflects the ups and downs and inherent interdependence of the EU-Turkey relationship, as well as the principled conviction that it is in the fundamental interest of both Turkey and the EU to embed the relationship within a rules-based framework.**

Driving the analysis, assessment and advice on EU-Turkey relations

Wolfgang Wessels, FEUTURE Coordinator, Director of the Centre for Turkey and European Union Studies (CETEUS) at the University of Cologne



Looking back at FEUTURE's intensive work my main conclusion is that our project has served and will continue to broaden and deepen our analysis of difficult and complex issues of high political relevance for both Turkey and the EU and their relationship. It has driven a focused debate for giving advice on actions to follow.

Our FEUTURE project had to confront specific challenges: since the application in 2015 the objects of research – Turkey, the EU and EU-Turkey relations – have undergone dramatic changes, which we could of course not predict in our original research design.

We can however be satisfied that our studies documented in over 30 research papers were and are able to produce conceptual offers by which academic observers as well as

stakeholders can analyze and assess this moving target.

Based on the intensive work on six thematic dimensions and narratives, FEUTURE offers a broad variation of relevant insights. Each of us learned from the expertise of the consortium's partners. Thus, the project has deepened our way to analyze the driving forces of this difficult and complex relations.

narrative-based scenarios to a highly controversial and topical debate about the nature and future of this specific relationship.

With the synthesis report and “11 Takeaways from and for FEUTURE” we offer an added value for the academic studies and political debate: in a comparative and comprehensive conclusion our assessment stresses the nature of the relation as a “conflictual cooperation” and proposes for action to pursue a “dynamic association”. Both terms serve as stimulating points of reference, which each of us will further use and further develop in several ways and directions.

I see one more long-term impact of FEUTURE: members of our networks will continue to cooperate on that issue and continue to offer reflected and substantial contributions to this key issue of the future of Europe.

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FEUTURE FINAL PRODUCTS

FEUTURE Synthesis Paper: *The Future of EU-Turkey Relations: A Dynamic Association Framework amidst Conflictual Cooperation*, March 2019



Authors: Beken Saatçioğlu, Funda Tekin, Sinan Ekim and Nathalie Tocci

The FEUTURE final synthesis paper accomplishes two principal aims. First, it synthesizes FEUTURE's research findings. Based on this synthesis, it argues that the scenario of “conflictual cooperation” – where cooperation is likely to endure despite the prevalence of conflictual dynamics mostly emanating from politics – is set to define EU-Turkey relations in the foreseeable future. Second, it develops an institutional design for the future relationship: a “dynamic association” that would be complementary to Turkey's stalled accession process.

[Read the full paper here](#)

FEUTURE Video: *The Future of EU-Turkey Relations - Mapping Dynamics and Testing Scenarios*

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Funded by the Horizon 2020
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LATEST ACTIVITIES

FEUTURE Policy Challenge Session, Istanbul, 25 March 2019



On 25 March 2019, the Center for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies (EDAM) organized a policy challenge session, with the participation of a distinguished audience following EU-Turkey

relations, which included retired ambassadors, journalists and academics. Moderated by EDAM Chairperson Sinan Ülgen, the session started with a brief presentation of the FEUTURE Final Synthesis Paper by Beken Saatçioğlu. Subsequently, Prof. Meltem Müftüler-Baç offered her comments as discussant.

[Read more](#)

FEUTURE Policy Challenge Session, Nice, 5 March 2019



On 5 March 2019, CIFE organized a Policy Challenge Session to discuss the outcomes of the FEUTURE research project and its take-aways with 30 international students. Matthias Waechter, CIFE Director General, and Laurent Baechler,

FEUTURE Policy Challenge Session, Athens, 21 February 2019



On 21 February 2019, the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) organized a Policy Challenge Session on: "EU-Turkey Relations: What Policy

Challenges? Security and Energy". The event was hosted by the Representation of the European Commission in Greece.

[Read more](#)

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



On 14-15 February 2019, the Middle East Technical University (METU) hosted a Young Leaders Conference to foster further intellectual debate and exchange of ideas

among the younger generation of researchers, opinion leaders, representatives of civil society, bureaucracy and business circles. The conference included a public event, which brought together a wide range of participants including bureaucrats, civil society representatives and academic circles, and

with the Master students about the current obstacles to a continued fruitful relationship between the European Union and Turkey. They also addressed the potential areas in which the partnership could be strengthened in spite of the blockage of the accession negotiations.

[Read more](#)

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



The FEUTURE Concluding Conference, jointly organized by TEPSA and CETEUS, brought together academics, political experts and practitioners. Participants discussed the main findings of the FEUTURE project and reflected on a constructive framework for EU-Turkey Relations. Back-to-back with the conference, participants could debate “which F(e)uture for EU-Turkey Relations?” during a Policy Challenge Session with high-level EU officials. The full report is available at the link below.

[Read more](#)

FEUTURE Elite Survey

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The FEUTURE project conducted a vast Elite Survey in 13 countries and within the European institutions. Previous identified stakeholders in EU-Turkey relationship were asked about their assessment of the future, the different thematic drivers, and which framework they hold for the most suitable for moving forward with this complicated relationship.

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[Read more](#)

ELIAMEP event: Briefing on the FEUTURE project, Athens, 27 March 2019



A Briefing on the FEUTURE project took place at ELIAMEP offices at a Closed Door Discussion with ELIAMEP researchers and

Japanese diplomats on 27 March 2019. Dr. Panagiota Manoli and Dr. Thanos Dokos presented the FEUTURE project policy recommendations and led the discussion on how Greece views EU-Turkey relations. Dr. Angeliki Dimitriadi discussed migration aspects of EU-Turkey relationship.

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FEUTURE ANALYSIS, OPINION, VOICES

[FEUTURE publications:](#)

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Online Paper No. 28: [Narratives of a Contested Relationship: Unravelling the Debates in the EU and Turkey](#), by Hanna-Lisa Hauge, Ebru Ece Özbey, Atila Eralp, Wolfgang Wessels, February 2019

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Online Paper No. 29: [Modes of Regional Cooperation and their Political Economy](#), by George Berulava, Panagiota Manoli, Can Selçuki, February 2019

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Online Paper No. 31: [Five Phases of AKP Identity Politics and how it affects Turkey-EU Relations](#), by Jakob Lindgaard, March 2019

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2019

Online Paper No. 32: [Identity Representations in the Narratives on the EU-Turkey Relations](#), by Ebru Ece Özbey, Hanna-Lisa Hauge, Bahar Rumelili, Atila Eralp, March

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Voice No. 6: [What do Turkey-EU Relations Mean in the Eastern Neighbourhood?](#), by Dustin Gilbreath, March 2019

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Voice No. 7: [Allies at Odds with Interlinked Fates: Predicting the Turkey-EU Security Partnership for 2019](#), by Sinan Ülgen, March 2019

Check out the [FEUTURE infographics!](#)

[Partners' publications](#)

Dlawer Ala'Aldeen (MERI) (2019), [EU-Turkey Policies in Iraq & Syria: Challenges & Opportunities](#), MERI Policy Brief, February 2019

Thanos Dokos (ELIAMEP) (2019), ["Greece, Turkey and the EU"](#), in *Kathimerini*, 20 March 2019

Nikolaos Paounis (ELIAMEP) (2018), [Estimation of the Turkish Strategy in North-West Syria. The situation today](#), ELIAMEP Policy Brief #98, November 2018

Beken Saatcioglu (EDAM & MEF University) (2019), ["The European Union's Refugee Crisis and Rising Functionalism in EU-Turkey Relations"](#), in *Turkish Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/14683849.2019.1586542

Theodoros Tsakiris (ELIAMEP) (2019), *Beyond TAP: Expanding the capacity of the Southern Gas Corridor and the future of EU-Turkish gas cooperation*, March 2019

Zenonas Tziarras (ELIAMEP) (2019), ["The 'Two and a half Wars' theory and the Mavi Vatan naval exercise: Strategic Culture and the new phase of Turkish strategy"](#), ELIAMEP paper, 19 March 2019

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

Panagiota Manoli (Research Fellow at ELIAMEP), participated in the VIADUCT Annual Conference (Istanbul, 20-21 March 2019) as a speaker presenting FEUTURE research results on "Power" aspects of EU-Turkey Relations.

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F(E)UTURE AFTER FEUTURE

2019, Istanbul



In the framework of the second [VIADUCT Week](#), VIADUCT's second Annual Conference was organized in Istanbul by Sabancı University. The conference featured

a round table on EU-Turkey relations, a keynote speech by Christian Berger (Head of the EU Delegation to Turkey) and an informal policy debate with Julian Vassallo (EEAS). In addition, VIADUCT researchers split in working groups to reflect on VIADUCT's cross sectorial issues: power, resources, people, and teaching EU-Turkey relations.

[Read more](#)

The VIADUCT PhD school, organized by Prof Meltem Muftuler-Bac (Sabancı University) and Prof Frank

Schimmelfennig (ETH Zurich), took place at Sabancı University on 18 and 19 March 2019 in the framework of the second VIADUCT Week. During the PhD school, some PhD students from all over Europe had the chance to discuss the topic and progress of their thesis with renowned academics from the VIADUCT network.

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