



University of Cologne (UoC)  
Turkish-German University (TAU)  
Cologne Monnet Association for EU Studies e.V. (COMOS)

## **Joint Conference 2014**

# **New Political Challenges for Germany, Turkey and the EU**

May 29-30, 2014

Istanbul, Turkey

Historical Summer Residence of the German Ambassador to Turkey

Tarabya Mh., 34457 Tarabya, Istanbul

Turkish-German University (TAU)

Şahinkaya Cad. 86, 34820 Beykoz, Istanbul

Financially supported by the Hanns Martin Schleyer-Foundation (Dialog Junge Wissenschaft und Praxis) and the Federal German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and kindly assisted by the German Embassy in Ankara and the German General Consulate in Istanbul.





## Programme

### Thursday, May 29

14h30 – 15h00 **Conference Registration, Reception and Welcome**

15h00 – 16h00 **Key Note Address**  
**'The New Security Agenda for Germany, Turkey and the EU'**

**Eberhard Pohl**, German Ambassador to Turkey

16h00 – 16h30 **Coffee Break**

16h30 – 18h30 **Panel 1**  
**Foreign and Security Policy Priorities**

Chair: **Wulf Reiners**, University of Cologne

**Nicole Koenig**, University of Cologne & Institute European Politics, Berlin

**Prof. Dr. Meltem Müftüler-Baç**, Sabanci University Istanbul

**Dr. Günter Seufert**, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin

18h30 **Dinner at the Historical Summer Residence**



**Friday, May 30**

10h30 – 11h00 **Empfang und Willkommensgruß (German)**

**Prof. Dr. Halil Akkanat**, Rektor der TAU, Istanbul

11h00 – 13h00 **Panel 2**  
**EU(ropa) und die Türkei: Chancen und Grenzen der Partnerschaft**

Chair: **Assistant Prof. Dr. Osman Nuri Özalp**, TAU

**Prof. Dr. Erol Esen**, Akdeniz Universität Antalya

**Dr. Ebru Turhan**, Istanbul Policy Center, Sabanci Universität

**Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wessels**, Universität zu Köln & TAU

**Prof. Dr. Bahri Yilmaz**, Istanbul Policy Center, Sabanci Universität &TAU

13h00 – 14h00 **Lunch Break**

14h00 – 15h30 **Panel 3**  
**The New Turkish Constitution: Democracy and Civil Society**

Chair: **Assistant Prof. Dr. Enes Bayrakli**, TAU

**PD Dr. habil. Gülistan Gürbey**, Free University of Berlin

**Gülsin Harman**, Milliyet Daily Newspaper

**Prof. Dr. André Kaiser**, University of Cologne

**Prof. Dr. Ziya Öniş**, Koc University

15h30 – 16h00 **Summary of Conference Findings**

**Prof. Dr. Hartmut Marhold**, CIFE, University of Cologne & TAU

**Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wessels**, University of Cologne & TAU

19h00 **Dinner in the Framework of a Bosphorus Boat Tour**



## Conference Report

*with contributions from Anita Bethig, Tuğçem Cengiz, Fulden Eskidelvan, Egemen Erdal, Tuğba Güven, Nilüfer Kaplan, Anna-Lisa Lörcher, Lena Mulumulu, Moritz Rau, Wulf Reiners, Katrin Schmermund, Christina Trappe and Can Zengin.*

Due to their long-standing history, Germany and Turkey are not only connected by economic and political but also societal and cultural ties to this day. Taking a look back at the midst of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the emergence of the EC, later the EU, was of great influence for the development of their relations. The 2014 COMOS Conference '*New Political Challenges for Germany, Turkey and the EU(ropes)*' approached this triangle of actors by assessing current political dynamics being of special importance for their long-term evolution. Students from the University of Cologne and the Turkish-German University Istanbul, junior researchers, professors, media representatives and practitioners joined the event that took place in Istanbul on 29 and 30 May, jointly organized by the University of Cologne, the Turkish – German University (TAU) and Cologne Monnet Association for EU Studies e.V. (COMOS).

### **Thursday, May 29**

The conference started with a reception in the garden of the summer residence of the German Ambassador to Turkey in Tarabya, Istanbul. The German Ambassador Eberhard Pohl welcomed the conference participants and opened the event with his key note address on '*The New Security Agenda for Germany, Turkey and the EU*'. He approached the topic from the underlying assumption that the particularities of the Turkish-German relations were the key for understanding the new security agenda for Germany, Turkey and the European Union.

As a first element he emphasised the significance of migration from Turkey to Germany contributing to "close human relations" for more than fifty years between the two countries. It meant, according to the Ambassador, that millions of people continuously interacted with each other fostering a close relationship. He also pointed at the economic dimension of the relations with Germany being trading partner number one and the wide range of German companies making business in Turkey. Besides economic ties, Pohl mentioned cultural ones which were maintained by organizations such as Goethe Institute, German schools as well as professional relations like co-operations in archaeological works.



He continued his speech by highlighting that this closeness was creating (high) Turkish expectations regarding Germany. With a view to EU membership, in Turkey the opinion existed that Germany was strong enough to pressure other EU members in favour of an accession, regardless of the fact that the EU in fact was a “consensus club”.

Seeing that Turkey is partly European and a regional key player in terms of its geographical location, Pohl also stated that Turkey’s key role was to provide security in its European neighbourhood. On the other hand, it belonged to a difficult and dynamic region – with conflicts in Syria, Iraq or Iran – whereas Germany was part of a very stable, peaceful environment. The Ambassador argued that Turkey suffered from these frictions and conflicts. Moreover, other neighbours like Russia became more active in the region. He deduced that due to both inside and outside divisions, Turkey was tied to Europe and that it constituted a key ally for the EU.

In the following, Ambassador Pohl focused on the ‘EU-aspects’ of the relations. He hinted at Turkey’s attempts to become part of any emerging “Security Club” and Turkey’s long-standing relations to Europe and “the West” in more general terms. Yet, Turkey remained outside the institutional mechanisms of the EU which Pohl considered to be one of the most fundamental problems. As he observed it, in the last years a rather big gap emerged between the EU’s and Turkey’s policies and actions. He called the developments to be “going into a wrong direction”, for instance in the framework of the OECD the EU’s and Turkey’s statements were more divergent than in previous years.

In a next analytical step, Ambassador Pohl emphasised several points on the security agenda of the region: Firstly, he concentrated on the topical conflict involving Ukraine and Russia, for which he reminded the audience that Turkey was theoretically fully aligned with the policies formulated in Brussels and Washington, but in practice remained cautious and pragmatic. The reluctance of Turkey had two dimensions, Pohl said: Firstly, integrity and sovereignty were important concepts for Turkey due to its own history. Moreover, Russia was Turkey’s number two trading partner and energy supplier so that there was no other choice than to be on the same page with Brussels and the West but also to care about the relationship with Russia. In addition, Crimea had a special status in Turkish policy as it was also an issue of domestic policy due to the Tatar population in Crimea having Turkish origins.

Secondly, the Ambassador turned to Turkey’s southeast neighbour Syria. He put forward that Turkey was highly involved in the reaction to the crisis in Syria because there were more than one million refugees in camps at common borders and in cities like Istanbul. Drawing



attention to the humanitarian disaster in Syria, he assumed that the situation could not be expected to improve soon posing a permanent problem for Turkey in the years to come.

Pohl considered terrorism in the region to be especially harmful for international security. Since this topic constituted a problem also for Germany and the rest of the world, he highlighted that - despite differences – fundamental interests were shared by both countries. Hence, cooperation and coordination were needed to foster a neighbourhood policy that could promote stability and security in the affected countries. According to Pohl, the Ukraine could be a ‘wake-up call’ for Europe to not only deal with procedures and administrative issues but instead to become more active in the field of foreign policy.

Thirdly, Ambassador Pohl identified the USA, the EU and Turkey as key players in the Israel – Palestine conflict, although the latter could no longer play the role of a moderator following the Mavi Marmara incident. Also the EU's role remained limited compared to the US. In this context Pohl summarised three points: Even though the EU and Turkey were different, they were driven by common and overlapping interests like stability and peace in the region. After all, instability created a security problem having an impact on Europe and the world as a whole. Secondly, even if there were difficulties, all parties could build on a common basis and act together in order to pursue mutual interests. Finally, regardless of occasional difficulties, keeping Turkey as an active collaborator remained a key task in the future following its role as a pivotal partner in the region.

After Ambassador Pohl concluded his speech, Prof. Wolfgang Wessels (University of Cologne, TAU) thanked the Ambassador for hosting the conference on its first day as well as for his contribution and observations which could be helpful to define new projects. He remarked that also academic cooperation was important and that the establishment of the Turkish-German University could be considered as a step towards a ‘European’ education. In this regard, he also called for better links between the political and academic world underlining the importance of deepening and continuing all forms of cooperation with the Turkish-German University.

Consecutively, questions from the audience were addressed. One participant enquired about the relations between the Turkish governing party AKP and German representations in Turkey. Eberhard Pohl referred to the close CDU-AKP relationship but spoke of simultaneous suspicions and rejections the German party was dealing with. Mentioning that the AKP joined the Eurosceptic ECR party group in the European Parliament instead of the conservative EPP, he evaluated this movement as non-comprehensible since it would not support Tur-



key's aspirations for EU-accession. He, however, also reminded the audience of the ambiguous attitude of German conservative politicians towards Turkey.

Another question concerned the improvement of practicalities of academic cooperation, particularly visa facilitations for Turkish academics. The Ambassador answered that current visa politics certainly diminished enthusiasm but that the rules of the Schengen area left little leeway. He was also concerned about populist arguments often used in this context. However, he emphasised that Germany was already trying to be flexible and seemed fully aware that everyone working in human contexts advocated visa facilitations.

The next question from the audience referred to the Christian religion within Turkey as a critical factor for EU-Turkey relations. Pohl explained that the Christian minority was rather small, but that it yet constituted an important factor in political psychology. The AKP was more supportive than the secularists, which had improved the situation of the Christian minority and made the topic less present in public debates.

Another participant addressed the ambassador with a question on Turkey's internal divisions and foreign policy. The Ambassador assessed Turkey's 'zero-problems' foreign policy as a very good approach indeed. Yet, he reasoned that real engagement with its neighbours had not always been successful and mentioned the cold relationship towards Iran and Caucasus countries like Armenia. The persistence of them, he saw to stem from both Turkey-internal and external difficulties.

In the next question from the audience an issue currently discussed in Germany was taken up: Pohl was asked to evaluate the negative reactions by German media on events like Erdoğan's speech in Cologne or the general accession process. Eberhard Pohl hinted at the media's leaning towards scandals and Turkey often offering easy bases for their reporting. He also brought up the often polarised and emotionalised debates in Turkey which quickly spilled over to Germany. He seemed surprised about how emotionalised German media covered Erdoğan's speech in Cologne and called for local politicians to reflect well on their statements as these would easily reach other constituencies.

In reaction to a question on the most important issue in Turkey's accession process, the Ambassador emphasised the relevance of the energy field but said that, of course, all 35 chapters of the *acquis* were important. Finally, the last question enquired whether Germany was actually overestimated in what it could contribute to Turkish accession. Pohl re-stated the criticism of Germany not to put its political weight behind its own statements, so that rhetoric



instead of action pertained. However, he assumed Turkey to misunderstand interior power relations of the EU in this regard not accounting for the EU to be a 'consensus-club'.

**Panel 1: Foreign and Security Policy Priorities (English)**

After a coffee break and a short introduction of the chairman Wulf Reiners (University of Cologne), the conference proceeded with the first round table panel on foreign and security policy priorities.

The first speaker Nicole Koenig (University of Cologne and Institute for European Politics, Berlin) spoke about the cooperation between EU and Turkey in foreign and security policy. According to Koenig an increase of cooperation was needed due to the new security threats and challenges in the shared neighbourhood such as the Arab Spring, Somalia, Dschihad Terror in Africa. The EU could take advantage from Turkey's bridging function because of its Muslim background. Additionally the rise of the Turkish defence budget made it an attractive partner in security cooperation for the EU, whose spending in this sector was decreasing since the Cold War. However, despite these benefits there were still challenges regarding cooperation. Since Cyprus was blocking the security agreement, causing further difficulties for the cooperation with NATO, Turkey remained a secondary partner in decision making processes of security issues. Besides, new developments in Turkish domestic politics made a closer cooperation less likely. Also the elections in EP and Turkey as well as institutional changes in the EU shifted the concentration to internal affairs on both sides.

Concluding the benefits and challenges Koenig gave three policy recommendations. According to her the institutionalization of the cooperation was necessary, i.e. Turkish PM, Turkish Foreign minister and Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs having frequent meetings with their EU counterparts. Koenig advised a pragmatic cooperation concentrating on common interest (e.g. Syria) and hereby enabling continuous cooperation between the EU and Turkey in crisis and conflict management. Finally Koenig stressed the status of foreign and security policy as an important element in EU-Turkey Relations.

The second speaker Prof. Meltem Müftüler-Baç (Sabanci University Istanbul) argued that Turkey and the EU had developed in different directions. Müftüler-Baç suggested that the EU had changed since the start of membership negotiations. Generally the economic crisis slowed down the accession process as the EU concentrated on its internal problems causing the tool 'enlargement' to take a back seat. Additionally the crisis caused a rise in Euroscepticism which also had negative effects in Turkey. Simultaneously, Turkey developed a more





conservative and authoritarian style of government. Apart from the fading political backup, both public and elite support for EU accession declined as well. As the economy and military spending were growing the general attitude shifted. Turkey and its officials put forward that the EU needed Turkey and not the other way round. A consequence of these developments was a lack of interest of the Turkish parliament for the EU as a whole. Therefore Turkey was looking for alternative cooperation and Turkish foreign policy was not as much EU and US oriented as it used to be.

The third panellist, Dr. Günter Seufert (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik), addressed the problems in foreign policy and security in Germany and Europe. He began with using Barack Obama as a starting point for his argumentation: The US president or rather his administration redirected savings occurred from the retreat of US from Afghanistan to other military interventions in Syria or Libya. He indicated that also German foreign policy usually focused on countries with a Muslim background such as Mali, Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. In his point of view, Germany was not only missing a clear strategy in its foreign policy, but was additionally suffering from existing structural problems. Besides Germany many other western countries and also Russia were facing problems with these Muslim countries. There was one remarkable exception within the Muslim countries, Turkey, because of its attachment to the western security system.

According to Seufert, the accession process of Turkey was setting the future path for the relations with the western world. Underlining the potential of Turkey for security cooperation, he remarked that this capacity had to be developed further in order to become a real asset. Seufert made clear that Turkey's accession to the EU would facilitate many actions and problems with the eastern Muslim world since Turkey was serving as a role model for the region. Generally speaking, the probable membership of Turkey was advantageous for both actors: The European Union could diversify its gas routes and Turkey being accepted to the common market would be more attractive for investors. This is why he recommended Germany redesigning its policy towards Turkey.

He also drew attention to the so called "Islamophobia" which was gaining ground in Europe. Also, Turkey should internalize that every new opened chapter does not directly lead to an accession since there was not any automatism in the process. At least, for Turkey the membership process itself was more important than the actual membership – after all the accession would not take place in the near future.

After Dr. Günter Seufert finished his speech, questions were collected and discussed. A Ph.D. candidate of the University of Cologne asked if the readmission agreement between



Turkey and Germany was necessary. Taking this point up, Mrs. Müftüler-Baç explained the visa process Turkish citizens were facing, namely a really long process not only requiring many documents but also associated with many problems. She indicated that these massive problems only arose for the Schengen-Visa but not, for instance, for the Canadian or American visa. Due to these difficulties businessmen faced problem to establish financial ties in Europe. This problem should be overcome quickly because it was making Europe less attractive for well educated Turks. According to Müftüler-Baç this procedure served to be a vital point for the future path of Turkey-EU relations. As far as Turkey's accession to the EU is concerned, Müftüler-Baç pointed out that Turkey should join the EU only in terms of human rights and democratic developments. Dr. Günter Seufert agreed by adding that a better integration of Turkey would change the new vision of Turkey.

With the discussion coming to an end, the panel of the first day was closed by chairman Wulf Reiners and the conference day was concluded with a joint dinner in the garden of the Historical Summer Residence of the German Ambassador.

### **Friday, May 30**

#### **Panel 2: EU(rope) und die Türkei: Chancen und Grenzen der Partnerschaft (German)**

After a reception at the Turkish-German University (TAU), the venue of the second day of the conference, the chairman Assistant Professor Dr. Osman Nuri Özalp (TAU) took the floor and opened the following panel dealing with opportunities and limits of the partnership between Turkey and EU. Özalp introduced the topic by explaining the main motivation for Turkey to become member of the EU: He made clear that Turkish population was interested in the EU as a community of values rather than their monetary union. With regard to that, the guarantees for freedom of opinion and assembly were hopes and major motivations that were strongly tied to Turkey's EU bid.

Nevertheless Özalp was not optimistic about a successful membership process. He alluded to critical aspects regarding the current situation in Turkey. To begin with, the policies of Erdogan's government did not have a focus on progress towards EU. Furthermore a new image of Turkey emerged in western media: The reports often were critical and dominated by illustrations of problems present in Turkey, not highlighting the many achievements made in previous years. According to Özalp this media trend was contributing to a negative image of Germans and Germany in the Turkish society.



In line with Özalp, the first speaker Prof. Dr. Erol Esen (Akdeniz University) started his contribution by outlining the most important reasons for the stagnation of the membership process. In his view there were also antidemocratic actions of the Turkish government during the Gezi Park protests last year, leading to a rising number of people both in Turkey and EU not being interested in a successful membership procedure. Also the difficult guidelines of the EU were making it hard for Turkey to meet the criteria. Nonetheless he was observing some hopeful developments such as the young population of Turkey being eager to visit Europe – however, without facing any major obstacles when applying to visa. Consequently – just as Müftüler-Bac had concluded the day before - developments with respect to entry requirements to EU soil would be a very powerful element promoting a positive attitude towards the EU. Moreover, Esen illustrated progress on the Kurdish conflict which was not only an ethnic issue being present for years but also vital for making a step forward with respect to minority rights in Turkey. As far as other problems were concerned, he also was very optimistic about possible solutions concerning the Cyprus issue. Finally he ended his speech with some critical remarks caused by current events in the EU, in particular the recent elections of the European Parliament with strong results for right wing or conservative parties that objected strong ties to Turkey. According to Esen, developments like this were counterproductive for the relationships leading to a decrease of motivation and negative perspectives on both sides.

The discussion was deepened by the second speaker Dr. Ebru Turhan (Sabanci University) who concentrated on the relationship between Turkey and Germany in more detail. She argued that people in Turkey often were overestimating the role of Germany inside the EU, ultimately leading to high and unlikely expectations. She explained that a part of the Turkish population was assuming that Germany had the power to decide on whether Turkey is able to become a member or not. The EURO - crisis in particular served to be a major reference point for displaying Germany's central role within the EU. In order to solve this misperception Turhan called for more transparency during the membership-process as such. This would be a way to shed light on the functioning of the EU and help the Turkish population to create an understanding of the working mechanisms governing the Union. Hence, the population would be able to relocate Germany's position within the EU.

The following speaker Prof. Dr. Bahri Yilmaz (Istanbul Policy Center) explained that when comparing the recent discussion to previous years he was not able to observe any new aspects. In his view the debates always were dominated by the same principle or rather question, i.e. why does Turkey not become member of the EU. The answers as well as the question as such were not subject to major changes, namely always remaining more or less the



same: “Turkey is different.” “They have another culture, mentality and no spirit of renaissance”. “Membership of Turkey would open doors for many countries like Morocco. Consequently the EU would be boundless.” “A membership of EU would lead to the fact that the poorest and most un-European country would be one of the most powerful countries “. Arguments put forward against these statements were as follows: “EU is not a Christian Community”. “EU could realize European values in Turkey”. “A European Turkey could have a security influence on the middle east”. Yilmaz concluded that even if some of these arguments might be true the continuous repetition of these pro and con statements was not leading to a fruitful discussion since neither answers nor new perspectives emerged.

The last speaker Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wessels (University of Cologne) wrapped up the discussion by engaging in a more general debate about the topic. His primary aim was to focus on the question on how to deal with the different directions the discussion was taking. To do so, it was essential to grasp the content of the discussion as well as the consequences caused by it. An analysis of this kind would help to establish tools for how to approach and manage the situation as a whole. Referring to his previous speakers’ statements concerning the EU perspective on Turkish accession, he explained that historically it was visible that gathering a new member often was motivated by security interests. In case of Turkey the Ankara Commitment also was based on this type of argument. However this changed in 1989 when the necessity of Turkey to guarantee the safety of the EU was not on the agenda anymore. Nevertheless Turkey remained an important partner for security policy with Turkey being able to act as a bridge between Europe and Middle East.

Moreover Wessels pointed out that people in the EU often were arguing that political reality of Turkey did not comply with the Copenhagen criteria. Consequently Turkey was not in the position of becoming a member. In this context Wessels hinted that the importance and relevance of these criteria could change in future, if European society would be in another “mood”. As far as the recent situation was concerned, it was safe to put forward that in light of the EURO crisis European people were not open-minded for new ideas at the moment. In his final statement Wessels emphasized the increasing importance of Turkey for the EU in economic or security questions. Regarding the difficult accession process he concluded the panel by stating that it was necessary to rethink the process as such and be open minded for solutions apart from a full membership.

**Panel 3:** *The New Turkish Constitution: Democracy and Civil Society (English)*



After lunch, Assistant Professor Dr. Enes Bayrakli (TAU) as chairman of the third panel introduced the speakers and encouraged participants to join the general discussions following the introductory statements.

The first speaker PD Dr. habil. Gülistan Gürbey (Free University of Berlin) started her presentation with some general remarks to the very wide topic. She raised three questions: Why is the new constitution so important for Turkey? What is new in this new constitution? How to further the protection of minorities in the new constitution? In regard to the first question she concluded that there was a broad consensus among the leaders and society about the necessity of a new constitution. The debate itself had been running since 2007. In October 2011 the parliamentary consensus commission had started to work for the new constitution. However, the constitution process stopped due the parties having a different understanding on the political system as such, meaning whether they should choose a parliamentary or a presidential system. Another problem was how to implement minority rights in the democracy issue. Turkey was at a turning point and it was rather unclear whether and how the process would continue. Furthermore she mentioned that the constitution of the past was a product of political instability. The current constitution was as well a result of the crisis of 1918 which incorporated not only authoritarian elements but was also an ideological basis, making it ultimately an illiberal constitution. It guaranteed the omnipotence of the state over the individual, the citizen, the civil society and lastly fundamental rights. According to Gürbey, there was a real need for a new constitution to give Turkey the chance to establish a real substantial democracy.

Then she turned to the second question as to what new elements are in the new constitution. The government had to break with the ideological dimension and the omnipotence of state in order to establish a constitution with new values. Regarding this, to establish meant to build a new relationship between citizens and state. The state should be in serve of the citizens. Last but not least she emphasized to implement minority rights into the new legal framework. For her this was one of the key elements of a new liberal constitution because of three reasons: First the protection of minorities was an essential part of liberal democracies; second Turkey was a multicultural society and had ethnic, linguistic diversity. For instance, Kurds were the biggest minority group in Turkey and they were struggling for political rights. After all, the role of the state was to guarantee space for freedom and the right for diversity. In the last years Turkey had made progress with respect to that, yet political parties still were holding different views on how to deal with it and how to implement it into the new constitution. The main disagreement parties were having was related to changes concerning the ideological foundation of the state, with the unchangeable articles leading the way. In addition there



were main differences about the interpretation of Turkish nationalism, centralization of state power as well as state structure between center and local democracy.

The demands of the Kurdish party had increasingly emerged. The first one was the constitutional recognition of Kurdish identity; the second the right of education in Kurdish language; the third the decentralization of state structure and power. Regarding this, they preferred a federal state structure. All in all, these demands affected the traditional foundation of state and nation. With respect to this demand catalogue and its realization, there was a large gap between the political positions of BDP and other Turkish parties including the AKP. All parties wanted to preserve traditional basics, which was making it difficult to build a new constitution. Gürbey added that under AKP rule there was a new relation between state and citizens, also covering a protection of minorities and a multicultural state. To sum up, at the moment there were three problems: The first was the big gap between demand and supply concerning democracy. Second there was a need for new approaches, putting the traditional in the rear. The third was the change within the politics on the normative level, meaning that a mental change in minds and hearts was necessary.

After Gürbey's contribution, the second speaker Gülsin Harman (Foreign policy editor of Milliyet Daily Newspaper) took the floor. She started by mentioning that the Turkish journalist Nedim Şener had won a prize in New York, but according to her he was sad since he had received this award with the aid of being in a Turkish prison for one year. After all, Şener was still risking going to prison up to 15 years for his publication about the AKP government and the Gülen movement. Harman concluded her remarks on Şener by stating that his speech was not covered by Turkish media and used this as a reference point for putting forward that freedom of expression was a difficult situation in Turkey. According to the Turkish Journalist Union, 43 journalists had been in jail on April 25<sup>th</sup> 2014, but the government was claiming the number was only 15. The main discourse of the government was that these persons were not journalists, but robbers and outlaws. During May 2014, thanks to the new constitutional right and court, ten of them were released diminishing the number of prisoners to 33. As far as this statistic was concerned Turkey was the second most common country with jailed journalists - only behind China. Besides, there were more and more systematic campaigns against press freedom in Turkey. With that in mind, Harman stated that talking critical about the government was causing social media threats and the fear of losing one's job. The prime minister himself was making direct calls to the owners of media companies to fire critical journalists.



Considering these occurrences, Harman asked herself how the government was able to gain such leverage over the journalists? She argued that the lack of unions was one of the biggest problems of journalism in Turkey. For her, this was first and foremost a problem of history. However, Harman conceded that Turkish media was not innocent and also to blame: Political parties always were rightfully reminding journalists that during the 1990s they cooperated with the army and therefore lacked objective coverage. Furthermore the mainstream media also turned a blind eye on the human rights violation of Kurdish people around that time. Currently, the main issue at stake was the ownership system since all the heads of the mainstream media sector were engaging in other enterprises as well. For instance, Milliyet's owner had companies in energy and mining causing them to follow government incentives. Even talking about the slightest problems could be identified as an attempt on a coup d'état. As a matter of fact, according to the Turkish Journalist Union, 59 journalists were fired since the Gezi park protests. As a consequence of these wrong-doing of mainstream media, alternative channels were on the rise as especially young people lost confidence.

In addition, the governmental pressure was not limited to cuts concerning freedom of expression of journalists but also reached citizens. The respective bans of YouTube and Twitter were the best prove for showing that governmental actions did indeed touch daily lives. However coming back to journalists, there were positive developments as some of them were trying to be more resistant. Harman stressed once more that the freedom of speech was indispensable for a functioning democracy, otherwise political debates were rendered impossible. Finally, she linked these events to another current issue in Turkish politics, namely the presidential election in August 2014. In this context she underlined that this election would take place at a time when the autocratic tone became stronger in Turkey.

The third panelist was Prof. André Kaiser (University of Cologne) who started his intervention by stating that his views were not those of an expert on Turkey, but of a comparative political scientist. He structured his presentation in two parts, beginning with a part on different concepts of democracy and finishing with two concrete proposals with regard to Turkey's current situation.

According to Kaiser, Turkey was an electoral democracy that was facing several problems. In order to display this line of argumentation, he referred to Arend Lijphart's categorization of two ideal types of democracy, namely consensus democracy and majoritarian democracy. In Turkey, there was a mixture of majoritarian and consensual features. His empirical findings so far did not show that one of the types is superior to the other. Motivated by history, traditions and societal structures, people could choose one of these types of democracy. When



determining the type of democracy, one had to keep in mind that there were preconditions and implications brought along with the choice. Following these statements, Kaiser elaborated on characteristics of both types outlining what distinguishes them.

The first type was the consensus democracy also known as negotiation democracy. Here, deals were made between major political actors, namely with side payments. They are usually established where there are high numbers of political relevant groups. Its primary problem however was that interest groups needed to mobilize their communities in order to bind these interests. What was also problematic was that societies modernized and tended to individualization making it even more difficult to engage to collective action. The reason for that was that ties holding together societies loosen. When taking a look at existing western European consensus democracies, one was observing that they eroded leading to both interest groups and parties having problems to, first and foremost, mobilize these communities and then to commit them to decisions already having been made. It was not by chance that a general polarization was present in the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland. With this in mind it was unsurprisingly that this type of democracy was reaching its limits.

For majoritarian democracy as the other type of democracy, rule of law was even more important as majority held the necessary power to govern for a parliamentary term. Once in power, there were no institutions being able to block this majority. Majoritarian democracy only worked if a credible oppositional party or a camp of parties was present. Taken together, it was vital that two sides were competing got executive offices; otherwise a majoritarian dictatorship could be a likely result. He pointed out that one should be aware that democracy was a “nasty beast” which only worked by the rule of law.

Furthermore, he made clear that the problem at the moment for Turkey was that if it was tending to a majoritarian democracy which was calling for changes on behalf of the opposition parties. First and foremost, Turkey needed to reduce the 10 % threshold since it was the highest in electoral democracies worldwide. Kaiser proposed that 3 - 5% would be the best way to avoid fragmentation since it would cause greater pressure on opposition parties: New parties would have better chances to enter the parliament and political parties consisting of several groups would be able to split from major parties. According to Kaiser, these measures were crucial for realising a change in the landscape of political parties in Turkey.

Kaiser concluded that Turkey was more on the way to a semi-presidential democracy. But since they had the choice, he advised not to take the direction of a presidential democracy since they were clearly inferior in many respects. After all, USA is the only one successful presidential democracy in the world at the moment.





The last speaker Ziya Öniş (Koc University) began by clarifying that there were three different phases of AKP government. The first one from 2002 to 2007, second one from 2007 to 2011 and lastly the current phase that started in 2011. This first period, the golden age, was characterized by good economic, social and democratic reforms and developments. As to the political measures taken by the AKP, he referred to these as “conservative globalism”.

According to Öniş, the end of the third period of AKP was marking the time when everything got worse and fragile: There is an increasing authoritarianism and growing isolation in foreign policy. The reference of AKP is no longer Europe but the rising authoritarian side of the BRICs states (Brazil, Russia, India and China). EU's soft power in Turkey was declining because it lacked credible membership promise causing a decline of the appeal of the EU. On the societal and cultural level, there is a shift away from the European identity in Turkey. There were deep identity conflicts, a constitutional stalemate as well as a deep loss of trust between the segments of Turkish society. Also, there is the fear in the mind-sets of religious conservatives that Kemalists would apply pressure with a ravenous attitude if they would be in power again. With that in mind Öniş emphasized that for the CHP, consisting of old-style Kemalists and hardliners, it was impossible to play a key role in Turkish politics.

He concluded with a view into the future and assumed that a renewed change would less and less rely on EU influences and more on domestic actors. After all, for Turkey the EU was only interesting in economic terms - it was the USA and NATO that had priority.

### **Summary of Conference Findings**

In order to close the conference, Prof. Dr. Hartmut Marhold (CIFE, University of Cologne) and Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wessels presented their views on the conference proceedings and some major findings. Marhold elaborated on Turkey-EU relations from a historical point of view, mentioning that all participants so far had used an analytical approach concerning Turkey's potential EU membership.

On the first day of the conference, for instance, Marhold said, the Ambassador had focused on the Turkish geo-strategic perspective. He argued that when considering all contributions two focuses had been present: First, Turkey had its own history and development; and second, the country faced two crises. He referred to these phases respectively as the “golden age” of AKP on the one hand and its decline on the other.



Due to economic reasons and social structure, there had been a critical situation both in Turkey and the EU for one year. At this point, Marhold saw a potential to “join in crises” as he recognized that they could rule out their differences and even complement each other in collaboration. Also, he had the impression that the presentations focused on the short term view. However relations between Turkey and Europe date back at least as far as 1683 – a long and not very streamlined past. He pointed out that the political agenda of EU integratio should not be skipped on the grounds of short term interests or political tensions. In the end the negotiation had value on its own, therefore this precious communication process should continue on the long run. For him, the master programme jointly organized by the Turkish-German-University and the University of Cologne was the best example of an endeavour to mutually foster such processes. He stated that generally speaking one should seek an understanding of happenings in Turkey and the EU - an understanding that must be generated through analysis. Finally he pointed out that a conclusion should not be drawn in the middle of these crises.

Wessels then emphasized the importance of the cooperation between universities. He suggested that a yearly colloquium should take place to generate further comprehension for each other. Wessels proposed that MA students could use such a conference for presenting their theses. Hereby, the event could be transformed to a workshop serving as a discussion forum. As regards the conference topic, Wessels concluded that the debate evolving around Turkey’s EU membership implied a lot of continuity and – as Yilmaz already hinted at – that not many new arguments were given. However, despite this continuity both the crises and latest developments broadened the perspective on the current as well as prospective situation.

After all, it was not the purpose of the conference to find a final solution for the debate but the meeting between academics and decision makers was very helpful and enlightening. Having the final say, he recapitulated that it was a pleasure to experience such an open and frank debate.



## Evaluation

The evaluation of the conference on the basis of anonymous questionnaires as well as subsequent discussions with the organisers showed that the event was perceived very positively by the participants. The selection of topics, the presentations by the speakers as well as the round table discussions were rated as very valuable. The same assessment holds for the organisation of the conference and the information documents distributed prior to the event. Also, the participants described the working atmosphere as very pleasant. The mixed group constellation of younger participants and more experienced ones was particularly highlighted.

Looking at the topics discussed in the different panels of the conference, the participants stated that they learned a lot about the relationship of Germany, Turkey and the EU as well as Turkey's role vis-à-vis the EU and its member states. They also mentioned that they got additional and new insights in the field of foreign and security politics of Turkey, Germany and the EU. The large majority of respondents said that they gained more knowledge about the consequences of the reform of the Turkish constitution. Although individual participants would have wished to gain more insights, the major part of attendants was very satisfied with the amount of information given.

The organisers and participants would like to thank the Federal German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Hanns Martin Schleyer-Foundation (Dialog Junge Wissenschaft und Praxis) for the financial support. Also, the kind support of the German Embassy in Ankara and of the German General Consulate in Istanbul is very much appreciated.

Photographs and a short summary of the UoC-TAU-COMOS joint conference 2014 are available online at: <http://www.comos-cologne.eu>.