

Scenarios for the EU's Future and Their Implications for Turkey

DR. OLE FRAHM

*Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Ph.D. in Political Science
University of St. Gallen, Postdoctoral Researcher*



GLOBAL RELATIONS FORUM YOUNG ACADEMICS PROGRAM
ANALYSIS PAPER SERIES No.4

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January 2019

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ISBN: 978-605-83113-9-8

Publisher Certificate No: 22780

Printed in Turkey
Gren Agency, Istanbul. www.grenajans.com
Please direct inquiries to:

GLOBAL RELATIONS FORUM
Yapı Kredi Plaza D Blok Levent 34330
Istanbul, Turkey
T: +90 212 339 71 51 F: +90 212 339 61 04
www.gif.org.tr | info@gif.org.tr

This publication can be downloaded at gif.org.tr

CONTENTS

About GRF	iv
About the GRF Young Academics Program	v
About the Author	vi
Abstract	viii
1. Introduction	1
2. The Contemporary Crises of the European Union	2
3. Challenges Ahead and a Likely Scenario for the Future of the European Union	5
4. The Implications for Turkey of an EU in Crisis	9
5. Conclusion	12
References	15
GRF Young Academics Program Publications	20

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This paper, entitled “*Scenarios for the EU’s Future and Their Implications for Turkey*” is authored by Dr. Ole Frahm as part of the *GRF Young Academics Program Analysis Paper Series*. GRF thanks him for his contribution and commitment to this effort.

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Fusun Türkmen

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GRF is grateful to all members who participated in the evaluation commission for their invaluable insights and informed guidance, as well as for the time and effort they dedicated to the program.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Ole Frahm is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of St. Gallen, where he works as part of the European Union-funded EU-STRAT project analyzing Turkey's relations with the wider Black Sea region. Prior to moving to Switzerland, he was a research fellow at Edinburgh University and Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. Ole has studied philosophy, politics, economics and European studies at Oxford, Bath, Sciences Po Paris and the Berlin Graduate School of Social Sciences. He completed his PhD at the Humboldt University of Berlin, where his thesis developed a novel typology of statebuilding and nationbuilding in Sub-Saharan Africa and focused in detail on the anomalous case of South Sudan. Ole Frahm has teaching experience in Germany, Algeria and Turkey and also worked at the Berlin-based political think tank Das Progressive Zentrum. His research interests include foreign policy analysis, statebuilding, transitional justice, nationalism, conflict studies and democratization.

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Dr. Ole Frahm

*Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Ph.D. in Political Science
University of St. Gallen, Postdoctoral Researcher*

info@olefrahm.com

Abstract

Turkey and the European Union are facing several crises that have turned both into more fragile and unpredictable international actors. This policy paper on Europe and Turkey and the road ahead highlights the salience of thinking afresh about the nature and conduct of the relationship between the European Union and Turkey. Based upon an inductive stock-taking of the current state of the European Union as well as the likely scenario of where it is headed in the near to mid term, this paper points out how the EU's evolution is likely to impact Turkey and Turkish policy options in a number of geographical and topical areas. At the same time, the paper contemplates the areas in which EU-Turkey relations might improve or might take a further turn for the worse.

1. Introduction

Neither Turkey nor the European Union are strangers to crisis, but the contemporary period does stand out for the multiplicity and the severity of the crises that both actors have been plunged into. A series of EU crises, starting from the financial and public debt crisis of 2008 and coming to a head in the Brexit vote in June 2016, have been met on the part of Turkey by a polarized political arena, culminating in the failed coup attempt of July 2016 and its aftermath. Turkey's foreign policy, which for decades was a hallmark of stability and reliability as part of NATO and the West writ large, has veered towards independence and become increasingly volatile. As a result, both Turkey and the European Union find themselves at decisive forks in the road, as actors that used to be characterized by a degree of continuity and stability, but that have since shifted towards the fragile and unpredictable.

This policy paper on Europe and Turkey and the road ahead highlights the salience of thinking afresh about the nature and conduct of the relationship between the European Union and Turkey. It depicts the current state of the European Union in as comprehensive yet concise a fashion as is reasonable and feasible. First of all, I will take a look at the crises that have shaped and changed the composition and outlook of the European Union in the last few years. Based upon an inductive stock-taking of where I believe the European Union to currently stand as well as where it is likely headed in the near to mid term, this paper will point out how the EU's evolution can be expected to impact Turkey and Turkish policy options in a number of geographical and topical areas. At the same time, the paper will contemplate the areas in which EU-Turkey relations might improve or might take a further turn for the worse given the EU's shifting identity and outlook.

EU-Turkey relations is arguably one of the most over-researched subject areas in political science, with countless papers, books and research projects devoted to specific aspects of this complex dyad. Therefore, directing attention away from an analysis of the direct interaction between the two actors and placing the emphasis on potential areas of conflict and cooperation due to shared interests is a welcome step back from the focus on highly complicated direct bilateral links. This is especially true given that rhetoric at the echelons of high politics has escalated to such a degree that there remains little prospect of fruitful change at that level in the near to mid term. The reason for placing the primary focus on the European Union is that while the EU's position on a range of issues has certainly been dynamic in recent years, Turkey's domestic politics and foreign relations have been so volatile that it is nearly impossible to predict the country's outlook.

2. The Contemporary Crises of the European Union

The history of the European Union can most conveniently be retold as a succession of crises, so saying that the EU is in a state of crisis is stating the obvious. However, there are a number of reasons why this time the circumstances are different. The following section sketches out in great brevity eight interrelated contemporary developments that characterize the turmoil in which the EU finds itself in 2018.

First, Germany's strong economic performance during this decade, driven by export-driven production, has overshadowed the fact that the Union as a whole lacks a convincing and sustainable economic growth model. Growth in Germany and a number of other high-tech powerhouses like Sweden and the Netherlands comes to some extent at the expense of and even cannibalizes countries that are not as competitive. As a leader in global trade and commerce, the EU is increasingly challenged by China and other developing economies, while its share of global trade and production is slowly decreasing.¹ Most recently, in 2018, the trade wars launched by the US against China and the European Union fundamentally threaten the EU's business model and – as evidenced by selective US overtures to the European car industry – may well undermine unity and further expose the rift between states and industries that are globally competitive and those that are not.²

Second, instability in Southern Europe remains an important challenge to the EU's institutional mechanisms. The economies, societies and political systems of Southern Europe (Portugal, Greece, Spain and Italy) have been severely affected by the fallout of the global financial and economic crisis as living standards have dropped, (youth) unemployment has soared and party systems have been upended. The case of Greece's near-exit from the Eurozone is particularly telling, as the country was compelled to disregard the result of a popular referendum in 2015 and thus sacrifice national sovereignty in exchange for bail-outs and austerity programs provided for and imposed by the troika.³ The Greek experience with de facto international trusteeship is also emblematic of the failure of technocratic "expertocracies" as the preferred governance model of a post-war (Western) Europe deeply mistrustful of the people and of popular democracy.⁴

¹"The EU Has Shrunk as a Percentage of the World Economy." *Full Fact*, February 13, 2017. Accessed January 27, 2018. <https://fullfact.org/europe/eu-has-shrunk-percentage-world-economy/>.

²Afhüppe, Sven, Thomas Sigmund, Markus Fasse, Dana Heide, Jan Hildebrand, and Till Hoppe. "Pakt Gegen Autozölle – Ein Unwiderstehliches Angebot." *Handelsblatt*, July 4, 2018. Accessed July 25, 2018. <https://www.handelsblatt.com/unternehmen/industrie/handelsstreit-pakt-gegen-autozoelle-ein-unwiderstehliches-angebot/22766850.html?ticket=ST-2133624-TyAqvwxG2jA14S6NcuVM-ap3>.

³Kampourakis, Ioannis. "Political Disillusionment in Greece: Towards a Post-political State?" *Open Democracy*, June 16, 2017. Accessed January 26, 2018. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/ioannis-kampourakis/political-disillusionment-in-greece-toward-post-political-state>.

⁴Müller, Jan Werner. "The Party's over." *London Review of Books*, May 22, 2014. <https://www.lrb.co.uk/v36/n10/jan-werner-muller/the-partys-over>.

Third, like the rest of the world, the EU is faced with the intellectual bankruptcy of neoliberalism. The neoliberal dogma that has been the anchor of European political economy since the end of the Bretton Woods system, bent on the notion that deregulation and privatization of markets and industries will inevitably lead to growth for all, has not delivered upon its promise to provide widespread welfare, employment and social cohesion.⁵ Instead, income inequality has reached an all-time peak and “the most vulnerable are no longer the elderly, but rather young people and families with children.”⁶ Yet, in its wake, no alternative model has sprung up to take neoliberalism’s place and provide guidance to policymakers and political cleavages.

Fourth, the resurgent far-right parties and return of nationalism raise further question marks about the EU’s effectiveness as an anchor of peace and stability. Disaffection with economic inequality, immigration and a perceived sense of overreach by Brussels have resulted in the rise of anti-system parties on the political right that challenge the very foundations of democratic polities.⁷ These stand in stark contrast to new political phenomena on the political left, like Syriza in Greece or Podemos in Spain, which want to reform rather than abolish corrupt political and social systems. Crucially, the rightward shift in political discourses occurs not only in countries where far-right parties are part of, or even at a leading position in the government (Poland, Hungary, Austria, Italy); they change the rhetoric and policies of mainstream parties wherever they arise, from France to the Netherlands to Germany to Sweden.⁸

Ethnically exclusionary and openly racist forms of nationalism had always been a latent feature of European public discourses, but they had remained shunned by the vast majority of society and, most importantly, by public opinion-makers such as mainstream parties and the press. The fusing strands of anti-immigration and anti-Muslim movements vying for an imagined past of cultural and ethnic homogeneity have become accepted by parts of the political center ground, not only in Western Europe but increasingly so in the former Central-Eastern European members of the Warsaw Pact.⁹ For these movements, the so-called refugee crisis of 2015 was not a trigger, but rather a growth opportunity to be seized.

⁵ Even the IMF conceded as much: Ostry, Jonathan D., Prakash Loungani, and Davide Furceri. “Neoliberalism: Oversold?” *Finance and Development*. June 2016. Accessed January 27, 2018. <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2016/06/pdf/ostry.pdf>.

⁶ Understanding the Socio-economic Divide in Europe. Background Report. Centre for Opportunity and Equality, OECD. January 26, 2017. Accessed January 27, 2018. <http://www.oecd.org/inclusive-growth/about/centre-for-opportunity-and-equality/cope-divide-europe-2017-background-report.pdf>.

⁷ Shuster, Simon. “European Politics Are Swinging to the Right.” *TIME*, September 22, 2016. Accessed January 27, 2018. <http://time.com/4504010/europe-politics-swing-right/>.

⁸ This even affects the traditionally strongly Social Democratic countries of Scandinavia. Heinze, Anna-Sophie. “Strategies of Mainstream Parties towards Their Right-Wing Populist Challengers: Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland in Comparison.” *West European Politics* 41, no. 2 (2017): 287-309. doi:10.1080/01402382.2017.1389440.

⁹ Connelly, John. “Europe’s Other Migration Crisis.” *The Nation*, July 13, 2016. Accessed January 27, 2018. <https://www.thenation.com/article/europes-other-migration-crisis/>.

Fifth, Brexit should be understood within this context. The Brexit vote in June 2016 has clearly shown that integration into the supranational body can in fact be reversed – in spite of all of the benefits that accrue to nations on the aggregate and their citizens individually. In a way, Brexit marks the natural endpoint to a culture of political maneuvering in cahoots with tabloid media in demonizing the EU and blaming its overreach for each and every ill afflicting the motherland.¹⁰ On a more fundamental level, however, the vote to leave the European Union is a decisive turning point in that it is the first time a country has decided to leave the bloc, thus taking away the aura of inevitable progress that had characterized the history of EU integration.¹¹ On the other hand, as Brexit's negative fallout on the United Kingdom's economy, political culture and global influence becomes ever more apparent, the EU's popularity has seen a modest surge. Seeking to capitalize on the upswing, mainstream European parties have again turned to pro-European messaging in an attempt to shift the terms of debate on Europeanization back towards integration.

Sixth, the European Union still has no solution to the growing strength of separatist movements within its borders. After a close call with the officially recognized Scottish referendum in 2014, the EU's inability to have any decisive influence either in the run-up to or in the aftermath of the unofficial Catalan referendum in 2017 shows that the supranational body is ill-equipped to cope with subnational strife.¹² Alas, the issue is unlikely to go away anytime soon, as separatism in Northern Italy, parts of Romania and in the Baltic states is a latent threat waiting to erupt. The same holds for territorial border conflicts such as the one between Slovenia and Croatia.¹³ As for the Cyprus issue, the latest high-level initiative for a permanent resolution failed in July 2017.

Seventh, another challenge to the European Union is the demise of the Atlantic axis in an era witnessing the return of geopolitics. Europe's close orientation towards and coordination with the United States in political, economic and military matters survived the end of the Cold War, but suffered immensely during the presidency of George W. Bush, whose tenure included the invasion of Iraq and the reintroduction of torture.¹⁴ Now, the election of Donald Trump, an economic nationalist whose protectionist rhetoric and penchant for authoritarian

¹⁰ Bennhold, Katrin. "To Understand 'Brexit', Look to Britain's Tabloids." *The New York Times*, May 2, 2017. Accessed January 27, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/02/world/europe/london-tabloids-brexit.html>.

¹¹ Barber, Tony. "Europe Starts to Think the Unthinkable: Breaking up." *Financial Times*, March 2, 2017. Accessed January 27, 2018. <https://www.ft.com/content/0b7b1616-ff3d-11e6-8d8e-a5e3738f9ae4>.

¹² Youngs, Richard. "EU Needs a Smarter Response to the Catalan Crisis." *Politico*. November 3, 2017. Accessed January 27, 2018. <https://www.politico.eu/article/catalonia-mariano-rajoy-eu-needs-a-smarter-response-to-the-catalonia-crisis/>.

¹³ Ernst, Andreas. "Kroatien und Slowenien markieren Härte in der Adria." *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, December 28, 2017. Accessed January 27, 2018. <https://www.nzz.ch/international/kroatien-und-slowenien-markieren-haerte-in-der-adria-ld.1343129>.

¹⁴ Jones, Erik. *The New Transatlantic Relationship: Between Continuity, Change, and Disillusionment*. Working paper no. 64. ISPI. July 2016. Accessed January 27, 2018. https://www.ispionline.it/sites/default/files/pubblicazioni/wp_64_2016.pdf.

strongmen make him diametrically opposed to the European Union's own stance, has wrecked the Atlantic axis just as global challenges mount, from climate change to North Korea. The Trump administration's decisions to pull out of the Paris Agreement on climate change and to unilaterally abrogate the 2015 nuclear deal that sought to normalize the West's relations with Iran have underscored this increasing transatlantic alienation.

Eighth, this transatlantic rift becomes especially crucial given Russia's international conduct in recent years. The Russian state's foreign policy has reintroduced military aggression, territorial conquest and deliberate misinformation campaigns into the European arena, in which Moscow has positioned itself as squarely antagonistic to the European project. Based upon the pseudo-theory of geopolitics, the Russian leadership conceives of "international relations in terms of a never-ending struggle for dominance and influence among a few powerful countries" and sees relations with the EU as a zero-sum game.¹⁵ Brussels and the major European states have had to grapple with the task of finding a coherent Russia policy in the wake of the occupation of Crimea and the undeclared invasion of Ukraine's Donbas region by Russian irregulars.

3. Challenges Ahead and a Likely Scenario for the Future of the European Union

Based on these observations of the defining internal and external challenges to the European Union, this section will present a scenario for where the EU is headed in the coming years. This scenario is based on six distinct but interconnected hypotheses of what I consider the most likely trajectory in different policy fields.

1. German leadership of the bloc is cemented: For better or worse, the predominance, if not hegemony, of Germany over the rest of the European Union is set to continue, with Brexit looming and a lack of political and economic dynamism in other major countries. These include France under the government of Emmanuel Macron, who, despite blustering pro-European rhetoric and high-profile vision speeches, pursues a domestic program that is a carbon copy of Germany's Agenda 2010 more than a dozen years after the fact. The program is destined to run into even more severe societal opposition than in Germany and will limit French activism on the European and international level.¹⁶ After a year in power, Macron's uncompromising governing style and

¹⁵ Trenin, Dmitri. "Looking out Five Years: Who Will Decide Russian Foreign Policy?" Carnegie Moscow Center. August 17, 2017. Accessed January 27, 2018. <http://carnegie.ru/commentary/72811>.

¹⁶ Ross, George. "Emmanuel Macron Is Facing the 'Mother of All Battles.'" *Foreign Policy*, June 20, 2017. Accessed January 27, 2018. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/06/20/emmanuel-macron-unions-labor-reform-cgt-france/>.

mostly right-wing policies have already eroded much of his support from center-left voters.¹⁷ The very fact that not a single important decision in the EU can be taken against German opposition presents a limit to more radical attempts at reform.¹⁸ For although German Chancellor Angela Merkel remains politically weakened by the election of 2017 and the strife within her governing coalition, she is still in charge and her political legacy of refusing to have a program – let alone a vision – is highly likely to outlive her tenure as Chancellor.¹⁹

2. Not one but several different Europes: Given that the concept has existed for almost as long as the European Union itself, emphasizing either the need for or the imminent emergence of a European Union of different speeds or of different circles has a stale taste of *déjà vu*. Hence why European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's white paper on the EU's future was greeted with skepticism: it explicitly allows groups of countries that strive for further integration – unfortunately worded as “coalitions of the willing” – to plough ahead irrespective of opposition from less enthusiastic member states.²⁰ However, this time it appears that this path of differentiated integration is likely to prevail and cover more areas than just the Eurozone or Schengen, as the idea is championed by powerful actors like Emmanuel Macron.²¹ While allowing more leeway in further integration is in part a measure to stem a potential spillover of Brexit to other strongly Eurosceptic countries, it should not be forgotten that the relative homogenization of laws, norms, rules and institutes – boring though it may sound – is one of the core strengths of the Union, and it would be lost if differentiated integration were to be adopted. As such, a multi-speed approach may in fact contain the kernel of the EU's dissolution into a Europe of different destinations.

3. A militarizing union: The perfect example for the disparate effects of differentiated integration can be observed in the area of military cooperation. Efforts to supplement or outright replace NATO as the cornerstone of (Western) Europe's security architecture date back to before NATO was founded in 1949 – the Western European Union was founded just one year prior. Still, in the recent past the only time when a European army seemed in reach was in the aftermath

¹⁷ Malingre, Virginie. “La Popularité De Macron S'érode à Gauche Comme à Droite.” *Le Monde*, July 7, 2018. Accessed July 25, 2018. https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2018/07/07/la-popularite-de-macron-s-erode-a-gauche-comme-a-droite_5327668_823448.html.

¹⁸ Grant, Charles. *Macron, Merkel and the Future of the Euro*. Bulletin No. 114. Center for European Reform. June/July 2017. Accessed January 28, 2018. http://www.cer.eu/sites/default/files/bulletin_114_cg_article2.pdf.

¹⁹ Hill, Jenny. “Merkel's Bavarian Ally Threatens Mutiny on Migrants.” BBC. June 27, 2018. Accessed July 26, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44614735>.

²⁰ *White Paper on the Future of Europe: Reflections and Scenarios for the EU27 by 2025*. White Paper. European Commission. March 1, 2017. Accessed January 23, 2018. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/white_paper_on_the_future_of_europe_en.pdf.

²¹ Maurice, Eric. “Macron Revives Multi-speed Europe Idea.” *EU Observer*. August 30, 2017. Accessed January 26, 2018. <https://euobserver.com/institutional/138832>.

of the establishment of a common security and defense policy in 1997 and the Franco-British Saint Malo Declaration of 1998, which called for an autonomous EU military force.²² President Trump's open disdain for NATO and Europe's lack of trust in the American partner has, however, ushered in a new sense of urgency for developing the European defense forces beyond the existing Rapid Reaction Force into a genuine security pillar. The necessity for a relaunch of the EU's defense pillar had in fact been triggered by Russia's annexation of Crimea. While there is little appetite for military involvement in Syria, the fact that only those countries with boots on the ground (Russia, Iran, Turkey and the US) have a genuine say in devising the shape of postwar Syria has brought home the understanding that hard power is essential if the EU is to maintain a stake in global governance. Defense spending has been rising across the EU and, in December 2017, the EU signed PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation), whose objective is "to fund, develop and deploy armed forces together."²³ While France has customarily taken the lead in such ventures and Macron appears to embrace the French Fifth Republic's tradition of willingly resorting to military means, German opposition – as in the case of Libya in 2011 – may limit the scale and ambition of a military union.

4. Energy matters: Presently, much of especially Eastern and Central Europe's supply of gas and oil comes via Russia. Due on the one hand to fears that Russia might employ its well-tested policy of issue linkage and use its energy supplies as a bargaining chip in its geopolitical games – Russia temporarily suspended gas supply to and through Ukraine in 2006, 2009 and 2014 to punish what it deemed adverse political decisions – and on the other hand due to the commitment to a reduction in carbon emissions in order to fight climate change, a reorientation of the EU's energy policy is underway.²⁴ As nuclear energy is politically not an option in a large range of countries, this shift will first and foremost require more diversified supply routes from North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia.²⁵ In addition, fuels with more flexible forms of transport like liquefied natural gas (LNG) may make up a larger share of imports to avoid the risk, inherent in fixed pipelines, of "structural dependencies that can

²² Andréani, Gilles, Christoph Betram, and Charles Grant. *Europe's Military Revolution*. Report. Centre for European Reform. February 14, 2001. Accessed January 24, 2018. https://www.cer.eu/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/pdf/2011/p22x_military_revolution-1955.pdf.

²³ Emmott, Robin. "Bad News for Our Enemies: EU Launches Defense Pact." Reuters. December 14, 2017. Accessed January 24, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-defence/bad-news-for-our-enemies-eu-launches-defense-pact-idUSKBN1E82BA>.

²⁴ For suspension of gas supplies, see Kanter, James. "Europe Seeks Alternatives to Russian Gas Imports." *The New York Times*, February 16, 2016. Accessed January 26, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/17/business/energy-environment/european-union-seeks-to-reduce-reliance-on-russian-gas.html>. For the reorientation of the EU's energy policy, see "Building the Energy Union." European Commission. Accessed July 26, 2018. <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/energy-strategy-and-energy-union/building-energy-union>.

²⁵ Müller, Wolfgang C., Paul W. Thurner, and Christian Schulze. *The Politics of Nuclear Energy in Western Europe*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2017, 286-323.

underpin the emergence of potentially unfriendly security alliances.”²⁶

5. Fortress Europe: The one element that both unites and divides the European Union more than almost any other issue is the collective hesitancy and indecision on how to treat the millions of migrants and refugees that venture towards its shores. Given the success of anti-immigrant parties and movements across the continent, but especially in Central and Eastern Europe, and the deafening silence that greeted the extreme right-wing Freedom Party of Austria’s (FPÖ) joining the Austrian government in December 2017, it appears likely that the EU will fully securitize the discourse and reality of migration and strive to fortify its borders and immigration regimes.²⁷ As the flawed resettlement deal for refugees in Greece and Italy has shown, European solidarity cannot be counted on in this area, and a reform to the Dublin system, wherein an asylum seeker must seek asylum in the EU country where he or she first sets foot, is not to be expected in the near future.²⁸ The Italian government’s cynical decision to prevent ships bearing migrants from docking in its ports shows that the failure of multilateral solutions can bring forth national approaches that make a mockery of human rights.²⁹

6. Quo vadis values? The professed ideal of the European Union to pursue a values-based rather than a purely interest-based foreign policy has long been in doubt, considering on the one hand its regressive immigration and trade policies towards much less developed neighboring regions, and on the other its securitization of foreign policy discourses after the terrorism scare in the period since 2001.³⁰ The substantially altered regional and international environment of 2018, above all with an openly antagonistic Russia, may further erode even the pretense of being a normative actor on the international stage. The US president has openly expressed admiration and even adulation for authoritarian strongmen, like the Philippines’ Rodrigo Duterte, who openly disregard their citizens’ civil, political and economic rights. And the UK government’s acquiescence to human rights abuses in countries it is trying to negotiate trade deals with is a reminder that even a country that historically has been at the forefront of the defense of

²⁶ Karakullukçu, Memduh. “EU Energy Policy: Sustained by Fragile Solidarity, Indispensable for Eurasian Security.” *Prism* 6, no. 2 (July 12, 2016): 107-24, p.122. <http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/resources/docs/NDU-Prism Vol 6 No 2.pdf>.

²⁷ Oltermann, Philip. “Muted Protests in Vienna as Far-Right Ministers Enter Austria’s Government.” *The Guardian*, December 18, 2017. Accessed January 26, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/18/thousands-protest-as-far-right-ministers-enter-government-in-austria>.

²⁸ Dearden, Lizzie. “EU Plan to Relocate 160,000 Refugees from Italy and Greece by September Failing Despite Record Deaths at Sea.” *Independent*, May 16, 2017. Accessed January 25, 2018. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/eu-refugee-quotas-160000-italy-greece-failing-european-commissioner-legal-cases-obligations-a7739396.html>.

²⁹ “Migrant Ship Row: Italy-France Ministers’ Meeting Postponed.” BBC. June 13, 2018. Accessed July 26, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44465152>.

³⁰ For a poignant realist critique of the allegedly normative basis of EU foreign policy see Hyde-Price, Adrian. “Normative’ Power Europe: A Realist Critique.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (August 19, 2006): 217-34. doi:10.1080/13501760500451634.

human rights can compromise its principles.³¹ As a matter of fact, the EU has already lost clout in Africa as its policy of aid-conditionality loses out to less fussy actors like China or India.³² A planned but temporarily tabled refugee deal with Libya, even as the country is embroiled in a multi-front civil war, as well as the Khartoum Process, which foresees a “burden shift of the physical management of Europe’s borders to African countries” in exchange for cash, are two indications of a disreputable but altogether possible way ahead for the EU’s foreign policy.³³

4. The Implications for Turkey of an EU in Crisis

Based on the hypotheses outlined in the previous chapter, this section will identify the topical, geographic and temporal areas where Turkey and the European Union might collaborate or clash in the coming years.

1. German leadership means indecision will prevail: As accession talks have ground to a halt and diplomatic rhetoric between Turkey and the EU oscillates between animosity and open hostility – the latter most visible during election campaigns, for example in Germany and the Netherlands in 2017 – the concept of functional cooperation has re-emerged. Particularly popular with center-right parties, functional cooperation is to serve as either a bridge towards or an alternative to Turkey’s full integration into the Union.³⁴ This could take the shape of Angela Merkel’s old formula of a “privileged partnership,” or approximate whatever future deal the UK agrees to, and would presumably center on a reworked and expanded customs union as well as selective cooperation in other fields of joint interest, from transport to migration to climate change.³⁵

³¹ Smith, Tom. “Liam Fox’s Visit to the Philippines Shows How Low Brexit Britain will Stoop for a Deal.” *Independent*, April 5, 2017. Accessed January 26, 2018. <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-liam-fox-trade-visit-philippines-president-rodrigo-duterte-human-rights-nhs-nurses-a7667711.html>.

³² Grimm, Sven, and Christine Hackenesch. “China in Africa: What Challenges for a Reforming European Union Development Policy? Illustrations from Country Cases.” *Development Policy Review* 35, no. 4 (October 19, 2016): 549-66. doi:10.1111/dpr.12195.

³³ “EU’s policy of helping Libya intercept migrants is ‘inhuman’, says UN.” *The Guardian*. November 14, 2017. Accessed January 24, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/14/eu-libya-coastguard-detention-centres-migration-mediterranean-un-zeid-raad-al-husseini>. For the Khartoum Process, see Grinstead, Nick. “The Khartoum Process: Shifting the Burden.” *Clingendael Magazine*, February 22, 2016. Accessed July 26, 2018. <https://www.clingendael.org/publication/khartoum-process-shifting-burden>.

³⁴ Tharoor, Ishaan. “The Spat between Turkey and the Netherlands is All about Winning Votes.” *The Washington Post*, March 13, 2017. Accessed January 27, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/03/13/the-spat-between-turkey-and-the-netherlands-is-all-about-winning-votes/?utm_term=.5100c8d39db1, and see for example Tocci, Nathalie. *Turkey and the European Union: Scenarios for 2023*. FEUTURE Background Paper. September 2016. Accessed January 25, 2018. http://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/feature_1.pdf.

³⁵ One such possibility would be a form of continental partnership as sketched out by a Bruegel paper in 2016. Pisany-Ferry, Jean, Norbert Röttgen, André Sapir, Paul Tucker, and Guntram B. Wolff. *Europe after Brexit: A Proposal for a Continental Partnership*. Report. August 25, 2016. <http://bruegel.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/EU-UK-20160829-final-1.pdf>. For more on selective cooperation, “Außenminister Gabriel und Çavuşoğlu wollen Dialog stärken.” *Zeit Online*. January 6, 2018. Accessed January 27, 2018. <http://www.zeit.de/politik/2018-01/tuerkei-deutschland-sigmar-gabriel-mevluet-cavusoglu-strategischer-dialog>.

Such a partnership at arm's length would be not only compatible with the selective integration model favored by proponents of a multi-speed Europe, but also consistent with German plans to place Turkey (and Ukraine) in the same camp of close neighbors as post-Brexit Britain.³⁶

2. Fortress Europe means cooperation will continue: Preventing refugees from Syria, Iraq and further afield from reaching Europe via Turkey in exchange for financial assistance is the essence of the EU-Turkey refugee agreement of early 2016.³⁷ However, this agreement is unlikely to win much traction or improve relations in other areas. The number of Syrian refugees has dropped significantly from its high-point in 2015, as the Balkan route has become securitized and therefore much harder to travel.³⁸ At the same time, the implicit threat that Turkey would suddenly open its borders to allow all refugees to make their way towards Europe is not deemed credible. The Turkish government has persistently pointed out the wealthy West's hypocrisy in claiming to defend human rights but refusing to welcome refugees from Syria.³⁹ Suddenly opening its borders would undermine this argument and detract from Turkey's standing as a very generous host nation, even if domestically the mood has begun to turn against the large refugee population.⁴⁰ As such, one potential area of cooperation is crisis prevention, and specifically the use of development policy as a means of preventing migration towards Europe, a concept that has become *du jour* in European capitals.

3. Turkey will oscillate between Moscow and Brussels in matters related to energy: Another area with potential for cooperation between the European Union and Turkey is energy security. Turkey functions as a transit bridge for energy between the Middle East and the Caspian Sea/Central Asia and Europe. Fittingly, following the successful construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline in 2005, as well as the parallel gas pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum in 2006, Turkey has signalled its ambition to become a global energy transit hub.⁴¹

³⁶ Uras, Umut. "Germany: Brexit Deal could be Model for EU-Turkey Ties." *Al Jazeera*. December 27, 2017. Accessed January 27, 2018. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/germany-brexit-deal-model-eu-turkey-ties-171227091749043.html>.

³⁷ European Commission. *EU-Turkey Statement One Year On*. March 17, 2017. Accessed January 28, 2018. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/eu_turkey_statement_17032017_en.pdf.

³⁸ Jakešević, Ružica, and Siniša Tatalović. "Securitization (and De-Securitization) of the European Refugee Crisis: Croatia in the Regional Context." *Teorija in Praksa* 53, no. 5 (May 2016): 1246-264. https://www.fdv.uni-lj.si/docs/default-source/tip/jakesevic_idr.pdf?sfvrsn=2.

³⁹ Turkey's stance appears to be shifting as Human Rights Watch found that authorities had stopped the registration of Syrian refugees and forcibly returned some refugees to Syria. "Turkey Stops Registering Syrian Asylum Seekers." Human Rights Watch. July 16, 2018. Accessed July 26, 2018. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/07/16/turkey-stops-registering-syrian-asylum-seekers>.

⁴⁰ *Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions*. Europe Report No. 248. January 29, 2018. Accessed July 26, 2018. <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/248-turkey-s-syrian-refugees.pdf>.

⁴¹ Aras, Bülent, and Hakan Fidan. "Turkey and Eurasia: Frontiers of a New Geographic Imagination." *New Perspectives on Turkey* 40 (Spring 2009): 193-215. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0896634600005276>.

This goal is currently not very realistic given the lack of trading infrastructure and growing domestic demand, but the situation may evolve with the wave of LNG capacity due to enter the market in the coming years.⁴² With work started on the project in 2015, the Trans Anatolian gas pipeline (TANAP) was completed in 2018. TANAP connects Azeri gas fields via Georgia and Turkey to Greece, where it connects with the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) that ends in Italy and thus supplies European markets.

On the other hand, Turkey also works closely with Russia in this area. Not only is Russia's Rosatom about to start building Turkey's first nuclear power plant in Akkuyu, which will be staffed and run primarily by Russians due to the lack of Turkish nuclear engineers; after Russia initially abandoned the South Stream project of delivering oil through the Black Sea to Bulgaria because of EU sanctions over the annexation of Crimea, the project was brought back to life in 2016 under the new name of Turkish Stream.⁴³ Turkey's turn towards Russia – which goes against the professed aim of diversifying Turkey's energy supplies – may also be conditional upon the future of oil and gas drilling in the Eastern Mediterranean. If Turkey (and Northern Cyprus) were to be excluded from a consortium and its territory bypassed – as envisioned by a joint Israeli-Greek-Cypriot gas pipeline – this might drive Ankara even closer towards Moscow, whereas an arrangement that includes and passes through Turkey could have a significant impact on other policy areas as well.⁴⁴

4. Security cooperation has potential in the common neighbourhood:

Traditionally, Turkey and the European Union have both been very much in favor of maintaining the territorial status quo. That still appears to be by and large the case, as the mutual stance towards Russia's aggression in Crimea, whose Tatar population Ankara claims to protect, highlights.⁴⁵ Likewise, Turkey firmly supports Georgia's territorial integrity against separatists in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as Azerbaijan's rights to Nagorno-Karabakh. As the EU is newly focusing on military security, there is indeed potential for cooperation between Ankara and Brussels in creating a new security architecture in the Eastern Mediterranean, Black Sea and parts of the Middle East. The fate of these regions has a direct impact on both the EU and Turkey, and the US, as the traditional interventionist actor in the region, can no longer necessarily be

⁴² *Gas 2018: Analysis and Forecasts to 2023*. Market Report Series. 2018. Accessed July 26, 2018. <https://webstore.iea.org/download/summary/1235>.

⁴³ Erşen, Emre. "The Transatlantic Dimension of Turkey's Strategic Rapprochement with Russia: The Turkish Perspective." In *Turkey and Transatlantic Relations*, 203-16. Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations.

⁴⁴ Geropoulos, Kostis. "Israel, Cyprus, Greece to Push EastMed Gas Pipeline to Europe at May Summit." *New Europe*. April 6, 2018. Accessed July 26, 2018. <https://www.neweurope.eu/article/israel-cyprus-greece-push-eastmed-gas-pipeline-europe-may-summit/>.

⁴⁵ "Inaugural Speech." Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Ninth Ambassadors' Conference, Turkey, Ankara. January 9, 2017. Accessed October 20, 2017. http://www.mfa.gov.tr/inaugural-speech-by-h_e_mr_mevlut-cavusoglu-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey_at-the-ninth-ambassadors_conference_9-january-2017_-ankara.en.mfa.

relied upon – a trend that predates Donald Trump and goes back to the Obama administration’s unwillingness to become embroiled in Syria.⁴⁶ However, the wars in Turkey’s immediate vicinity have slightly altered the potential for convergence. In spite of encirclement by Russian forces, from a militarized Black Sea coast to troops permanently stationed in Armenia and Syria, the West is perceived within Turkey to be an antagonistic actor more frequently than Russia. This manifests itself most clearly in the way that Ankara has embraced the Russian-led Astana process, whereas the European Union continues to focus on the Geneva talks.

5. Conclusion

It is certainly too early to spell out with certainty whether or not Turkey is in a process of de-Europeanization.⁴⁷ Conversely, the EU’s vacillating between condemnations and overtures towards Ankara leaves a wide range for interpretations of the future of bilateral ties from the European vantage point.⁴⁸ Unfortunately, the widespread belief that contacts outside of the limelight of high politics can keep the flame of Turkey-EU relations alive until everything blows over and integration intensifies once again is almost certainly misguided. Moreover, on the part of the EU, relying primarily on technical and lower-level bureaucratic and civil society and business contacts is a testament to Brussels’ inability to devise a coherent policy that reflects its values.

The underlying reason for the failure of this line of thinking is that it relies on a resource that is sorely missing from Turkey-EU relations: trust. Trust, however, is only won over time, as international relations between states or regional organizations are a form of long-term game in which past behavior conditions future relations. Hence, actions are at least as indicative as formally signed declarations and treaties in building trust. Therefore, a lack of reliability is much more damaging to institutionalized forms of inter-state relations than the occasional public spat, something that applies as much to Turkey as to the European Union.

⁴⁶ Tierney, Dominic. “Syria and the Cycle of American Intervention.” *The Atlantic*, October 24, 2016. Accessed January 28, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/10/syria-washington-obama-iraq-middle-east-intervention-assad-isis/505202/>.

⁴⁷ Aydın Düzgüt, Senem, and Alper Kaliber. “Encounters with Europe in an Era of Domestic and International Turmoil: Is Turkey a De-Europeanising Candidate Country?” *South European Society and Politics* 21, no. 1 (2016): 1-14. March 23, 2016. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13608746.2016.1155282>.

⁴⁸ See for example these two contradictory statements by the French president made in the span of four months: Irish, John. “France’s Macron urges continued EU ties with Turkey.” Reuters. September 7, 2017. Accessed January 27, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-turkey/frances-macron-urges-continued-eu-ties-with-turkey-idUSKCN1BI0SQ>; and “Macron tells Erdogan: No chance of Turkey joining the EU.” BBC. January 5, 2018. Accessed January 27, 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-42586108>.

In order to fulfill its ambition to become one of the world's ten leading economies in the near future and to have a seat at the table in global governance, Turkey will have to collaborate in larger multilateral bodies, as its size and strength – in spite of impressive economic growth since the 2001 economic crisis – do not allow it to assume a role that is greater than that of a regional power.⁴⁹ And when it comes to integration into a regional or supra-regional body, Turkey does not – in spite of occasional Turkish overtures towards organizations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Eurasian Union or the BRICS – have any attractive alternative to the European Union.⁵⁰ The same continues to be true for the European Union. If the EU is serious about overcoming its multiple crises as a strengthened political and economic power that takes an active role in shaping the emerging multi-polar world, then engagement and close collaboration with Turkey is inescapable. Whether or not this rationale has any chance of overcoming the considerable political obstacles currently in its path is anyone's guess, but given the unpredictability of the last couple of years, it is certainly not out of the question.

⁴⁹ "Turkey's Foreign Policy in 2012 and Future Horizons." Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Strategic Thinking and Research Foundation's Conference, Ankara, December 27, 2012. Accessed October 20, 2017. http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-sayin-ahmet-davutoglu_nun-stratejik-dusunce-arastirma-vakfi_nin_2012_de-turk-dis-politikasi-ve-gelecek-ufku_-k.tr.mfa.

⁵⁰ Wang, Lina. "Will Turkey Join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Instead of the EU?" *The Diplomat*, November 24, 2016. Accessed January 27, 2018. <https://thediplomat.com/2016/11/will-turkey-join-the-shanghai-cooperation-organization-instead-of-the-eu/> and "Economy Minister: Turkey eyes Eurasian Customs Union." *Daily Sabah*, August 18, 2017. Accessed January 27, 2018. <https://www.dailysabah.com/economy/2017/08/19/economy-minister-turkey-eyes-eurasian-customs-union>.

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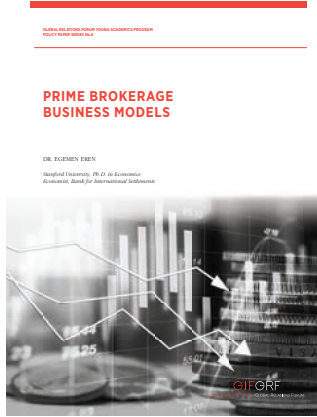
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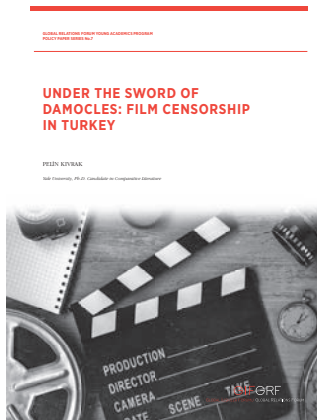
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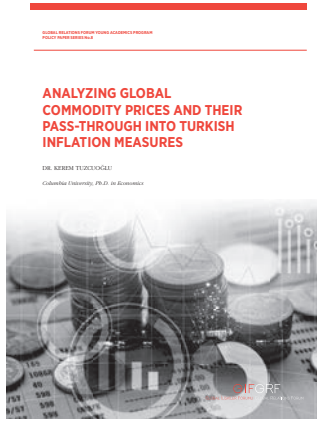
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Economist, Bank of International Settlements



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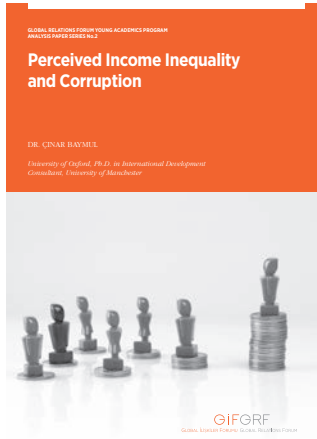


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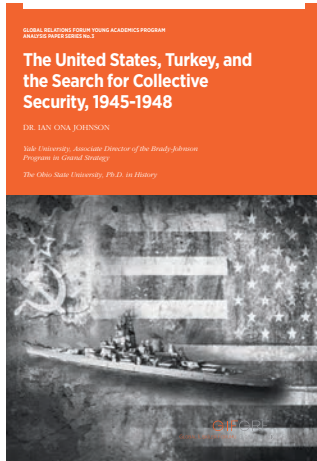
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Dr. Ole Frahm is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of St. Gallen, where he works as part of the European Union-funded EU-STRAT project analyzing Turkey's relations with the wider Black Sea region. Prior to moving to Switzerland, he was a research fellow at Edinburgh University and Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. Ole has studied philosophy, politics, economics and European studies at Oxford, Bath, Sciences Po Paris and the Berlin Graduate School of Social Sciences. He completed his PhD at the Humboldt University of Berlin, where his thesis developed a novel typology of statebuilding and nationbuilding in Sub-Saharan Africa and focused in detail on the anomalous case of South Sudan. Ole Frahm has teaching experience in Germany, Algeria and Turkey and also worked at the Berlin-based political think tank Das Progressive Zentrum. His research interests include foreign policy analysis, statebuilding, transitional justice, nationalism, conflict studies and democratization.

Global Relations Forum
Yapı Kredi Plaza D Blok
Levent 34330 Istanbul, Turkey
T: +90 212 339 71 51
F: +90 212 339 61 04
www.gjf.org.tr

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