

conference report

South East European Studies
at Oxford

New directions for Turkish-Greek engagement in the Middle East and the Balkans

January 2012



St Antony's College
University of Oxford

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South East European Studies at Oxford

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NEW DIRECTIONS FOR TURKISH-GREEK ENGAGEMENT
IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE BALKANS

Report based on the proceedings of a conference which took place in
Istanbul on 27-29 September, 2011, organised by
Bahçeşehir University
and
South East European Studies at Oxford (SEESOX)

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Introduction

On 20 September 2011, the two lead headlines of the *New York Times* read: ‘New Challenges for Obama and Turkey’s Premier’ and ‘Greece Nears the Precipice, Raising Fears of Default.’ The newsworthiness of Turkish and Greek concerns testifies to the global importance of tectonic changes occurring in and around the two countries. The time is therefore ripe to assess the state of Turkish-Greek relations after a decade of rapprochement that has yielded important results at the level of ‘low politics,’ but during which outstanding issues - above all the Cyprus question - have continued to fester. This presents grave challenges as we stand at the cusp of a new era. For, today, ties are conditioned by domestic developments in the two countries including unprecedented economic challenges and opportunities, and the complex Turkish-Greek relationship within the EU/EU-accession framework. At the same time, they are embedded in a dynamic landscape in which orientations are being reconfigured in the Arab world, as Balkan states pursue uneven pathways to stabilization and normalization.

Recognizing that the emerging regional context entails both complex challenges and may offer windows for fruitful collaboration, South East European Studies at Oxford (SEESOX) and Bahçeşehir University, with the support of the Strategic Research Institute (SAM) of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, brought together a group of distinguished experts to explore the new realities on the ground at a three-day conference in Istanbul entitled ‘New Directions for Turkish-Greek Engagement in the Middle East and Balkans.’ Held on 27-29 September 2010, the event brought together scholars and policymakers, including some of the original architects of Turkish-Greek détente, to take stock of the current state of bilateral relations and their respective relationships with their neighbours. At the same time, participants were asked to reflect upon how the transforming regional context, especially the Arab revolutions and evolving relations with Israel, may shape Turkish-Greek ties. We further posed the questions: What is the impact of the current economic crisis in Greece on the wider political economy of the South East European region, including Turkey? How does the growing problem of illegal migration affect bilateral relations? And how might Turkey, Greece, and the EU work together to further the cause of democracy and human rights in their neighbourhoods?

The answers participants brought to bear reflect three broad and crucial insights. The first is that a *paradigm shift* is in the making in the Eastern Mediterranean in light of the Arab uprisings on one hand, and the on-going crisis in Europe on the other. In other words, a new balance of power is emerging, the dynamics of which have yet to crystallize. Second, within this context, there has been a shift in the structure of Turkish-Greek relations *from reciprocity to asymmetry*. Thus, previous habits of thinking and acting, are being challenged by the growing differential between the two countries as Greece braces to weather its economic crisis, while Turkish economic wherewithal is underwriting intensive engagement across the region. As the cards are reshuffled, the danger is that the advances in bilateral relations of recent years are squandered and new antagonisms engendered. The challenge then is one of *conversion*, of identifying fields – from migration to energy - in which the potential for zero-sum dynamics is mitigated and strategies elaborated for maximizing cooperation. This report draws on the presentations and debates of the three-day event by presenting a synopsis of the conference proceedings. It represents an interpretation of the discussions during the conference and does not purport to reflect the views of any of the participants. The author of the report, Nora Fisher Onar, is grateful to Anastasia Kouri for her diligent editorial assistance, as well as to rapporteurs Karabekir Akkoyunlu, İrem Güçeri, and Başak Kale.

I. Taking stock, looking ahead: How to move the Turkish-Greek agenda forward?

Prominent scholars and policymakers, many of whom contributed to the launching of Turkish-Greek rapprochement in the era following the 'earthquake diplomacy' over a decade ago, took stock of achievements registered to date, contemplated the implications of the rapidly changing domestic and regional contexts for bilateral relations, and identified avenues for pursuing cooperation given the transforming environment.

On balance, it was felt that the rapprochement process to date has yielded considerable gains, particularly at the level of civil society in fields like academic exchanges, business initiatives, and collaboration between activists groups. The normalization of bilateral relations in many areas at the official level was also noted, such that the Turkish Foreign Ministry, for its part, predicates its policies towards Greece on four driving principles: 1) high level strategic dialogue, 2) comprehensive security, 3) economic interdependence in the neighbourhood through bilateral and multilateral relationships, and 4) multicultural co-existence.

Yet, the participants were worried that the gains of recent years have led, paradoxically, to a loss of momentum on the part of civilian interlocutors, and a lack of political will among policy makers to address the hard questions. Nowhere is this more evident than in the well-worn discourses and dynamics surrounding the Cyprus issue – with the recent tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean cited as an instance of disturbing *déjà vu*. The outstanding danger, it was noted, is that under conditions of rapid change in the region, unresolved issues could become re-ignited, taking on a life and logic of their own. At least three dramatic developments of recent years - the Greek economic crisis, Turkey's economic dynamism, and the upheavals across the Arab world - could contribute to such a situation. That said, there was consensus on the part of all the panellists that each of these developments presented as many opportunities as challenges – the key being the ability to 'think together.'

Several areas were identified as sites for collaboration. First, it was noted that the current crisis in Greece will lead to a transformation in the country. A number of participants felt that this could, 'open up a series of conversations between Greeks and Turks' on topics like the benefits and drawbacks of the Eurozone, and their respective relationships with Europe, as Greece struggles with its increasingly marginal position within the EU, while Turkey grapples with its role as an important but problematic candidate. Second, a reinvigorated Turkish-Greek relationship could serve as an example for countries confronting the spectres of past, present, and future conflict in the region, as testified to by the joint visit of the two states' foreign ministers to the Middle East in 2002. To synchronize efforts, however, requires thinking hard about the merits of joint versus independent but complimentary strategies. Above all, panellists felt that pursuit of a common Mediterranean agenda requires shaking off introversion to develop a regional vision that is, furthermore, in tune with global dynamics. In other words, the challenge is to 'think globally and act locally, rather than think locally and not act at all.'

In terms of concrete *recommendations*, many of the speakers felt the onus was upon increasingly complacent academia and civil society – with their freedom to critique both sides - to 'deconstruct' persistent pockets of enmity both by taking on tough technical questions (e.g. delimitation of the Aegean), and persistent prejudices at the societal level. Policy makers too could explore ways the dramatic situation in Greece could enable innovative gestures, such as grounding fighter planes for a day or longer, sending a powerful message across the Aegean on one hand, and permitting the Greek authorities to channel the resources to much needed social policy instruments on the other.

II. Turkish-Greek dynamics in the Middle East and Israel

Experts unpacked the implications of the rapidly changing geopolitical terrain in the Middle East for Turkey, Greece, and their relations with one another. There was consensus that in the wake of the Arab revolutions a power vacuum has emerged in the region alongside a race for leadership between Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, and Turkey. The old games of power politics, however, are circumscribed by new developments such as a more pronounced role for civil society and public opinion.

Turkey's potential to serve as a 'model' and reservations about this claim infused much of the discussion. With regard to its rivals in the region, there was considerable consensus that Saudi Arabia is in no position to become a hegemonic actor in the Middle East, and that Egypt is far away from consolidating its experience and projecting it to the region, while Iran is unlikely to appeal to important constituencies. Turkey's niche, one panellist observed, may be the unique ability 'to represent the interests of the religious Sunni Muslim middle class entrepreneurial strata in the region.' The claim was contested by some participants; yet, it revealed that there are two novel dimensions to Turkey's potential relevance for the region. The first regards the emphasis on economic and other liberal foreign policy instruments in pursuit of soft regional power. The second regards a new normative dimension to Turkish foreign policy which operates in tandem – but also oftentimes in tension - with Ankara's pragmatism. The overlap between Turkish normativity and Turkish pragmatism is evident in attempts to serve as a mediator in the region in recent years. The goal is to become an 'order-instituting country' in the neighbourhood. However, in the aftermath of intervention in Libya and with the prospect of civil war in Syria, the regional environment is far less permissive and the prospect of reversion to realism is palpable. As one speaker concluded, Turkish policy makers must think hard about how best to balance soft and hard power to pursue a constructive role in the region through 'smart' power.

Greece, for its part, is faced with grave crisis at home and in its relations with the EU. Nevertheless, it has the potential to play a meaningful role on the Middle Eastern stage where it is an old hand. In fact, Greece's position today could be compared to that of Turkey in the early 2000s in terms of ability to serve as bridge and broker between the Arab world and Israel. This is because with the downturn in Turkish-Israeli relations, Israel has felt increasingly isolated and has turned towards the sea – towards Greece and above all Cyprus. This orientation has yielded enhanced trade ties such that Greece has been Israel's largest trade partner in the Eastern Mediterranean since the early 2000s. Israeli analysts, as one participant argued, perceive Turkey as having turned its back on Europe and as enmeshed in a process of reconsidering its role within NATO. Others draw attention to a possible warming of relations between Turkey and Israel, as a result of an emerging common threat perception vis-à-vis Iran's projection of power in the region, something Greece should bear in mind as it pursues relations with Israel.

Several *recommendations* emerged from the discussion. First, it was suggested that Turkey should think through the tensions embedded in its new normative perspective (i.e., between 'universal' and Muslim/cultural values). At the same time, it should reflect on the interplay of normativity and pragmatism. This may enable Ankara to more meaningfully pursue the deft balance of soft and hard power that the volatile situation in the region demands if the current situation is to be shaped into a positive rather than zero-sum game. It would also mitigate charges of double standards. Second, it was suggested that Turkey and Greece draw upon their respective comparative advantages and relationships in the region to jointly initiate an Organization for Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean or an OSCM. Such an entity could provide a forum for – *inter alia* – Turkey, Greece, and Israel to explore their parallel interest in cooperating over issues of mutual concern while bracketing, to the extent possible, other outstanding bilateral questions.

III. Turkish-Greek relations in the Balkans

Turkish-Greek relations in the Balkan region were said to display at least three overlapping features. The first regards symmetries and asymmetries in Turkish and Greek initiatives towards the region; the second regards how these symmetries and asymmetries align differently over time; the third regards how these processes are circumscribed by European/EU presence in the region. On balance, participants were optimistic that these dynamics could be leveraged into multiple areas for cooperation in the region today.

With regard to symmetries and asymmetries, it was noted that both Turkey and Greece feel familiar with the history of the region, envisaging its geography and culture as parts of their identity. Both have also been dominant powers in the Balkans in different eras. In the recent period, there has been competition for influence in the 1990s, a period of multi-lateral cooperation in the 2000s, followed by Greek withdrawal due to its economic crisis and unilateral Turkish engagement in recent years empowered by its economic boom. Turkish activism is based on an interest in restoring cultural, economic, and political relations with the Balkans, as well as facilitating the renewal of ties between the Balkan states themselves. Meanwhile, the Balkan countries have managed the ebb and flow of Turkish and Greek presence in the region by displaying pragmatism, not becoming involved in Turkish-Greek disputes, and successfully attracting investments from both, as economic engagement is a rational choice for all the players.

Participants further stressed the importance of the EU context in shaping Turkish and Greek activism in the region. After all, the period of heightened Greek salience was also one of a strong European environment, while Turkey's resonance today reflects the diminished power of attraction of an EU reluctant to move forward with enlargement. Yet, recent Turkish engagement also appears to have piqued something of a 'jealous reaction' in the EU, not least from actors looking to reassert their presence in the region (e.g. Germany). This has exacerbated tensions with Turkey though there is congruence in Turkish, European, and Greek interests in a region where everybody wants stability, security, and prosperity.

Change, it was asserted, must emanate from a spirit of cooperation that is currently lacking as the Balkan countries seek to overcome the legacies of the past. *Recommendations* as to how this might transpire included calls to reinvigorate the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) for a forward-looking as opposed to a reactive and crisis-oriented approach to the region. Steps could entail restructuring the SEECP, the appointment of a wise men's group under the SEECP, and the organization of summits and workshop on the occasion of the 100-year anniversary of the Balkan Wars. Improvements in bilateral relations would also open the door to multilateral initiatives. Turkey and Greece could draw, for example, on the experience of their own rapprochement to facilitate budding efforts at reconciliation across the region. That said, Turkey may be better equipped at the present moment for such a task than Greece. Meanwhile, it was observed that Turkey and Greece must display commitment to their own processes of economic and political reform if they are to become credible partners for the Balkan countries. In this respect, one speaker asked whether there is a way to promote a *modus vivendi* in which both countries, as regional players, can promote European values and norms, while assuring that their interests are advanced in the Balkans.

IV. New political economy of Southeast Europe

The political economy of the region was thought to offer a venue for cooperation, not least when it comes to energy politics which, by definition, display the logic of interdependence. Yet there was concern that a competitive dynamic may prevail, especially given the ways energy politics can engender complex zero-sum games in a region characterized by cleavages.

The panel focused primarily on energy politics with one participant pointing out that there will be a radical rise in demand for gas and renewable sources in Europe by 2030. This opens the door to complimentary pipeline projects. Extent arrangements in any case necessitate some degree of cooperation between Greece and Turkey, as testified by the move in 2007 to launch the operations of the interconnector pipeline which links the Turkish and Greek gas grids at Karacabey to Komotini, a moment which could be characterized as a sort of ‘Aegean Spring.’ The entry into the market of Israel and Cyprus as new alternatives for supplying natural gas will affect the energy map in the region. The Leviathan gas field in the Eastern Mediterranean will be able to attract massive projects, provided that the anticipated levels of gas are found in the proximity. These explorations have created problems in the Eastern Mediterranean because of disputed maritime boundaries among the countries in the region and divergent interpretations of the International Law of the Sea. Turkey and Greece will experience a rise in the demand for gas and renewable sources, which makes both countries attractive destinations for investors in the energy sector.

Another speaker, however, expressed reservations at the prospect of energy yielding peace dividends. He noted that the positive climate of the past decade had been based on economic cooperation between stakeholders (e.g. domestic and international capital, managerial elites, successive governments) that could become antagonistic in the context of energy politics. Cooperation during the 2000s was also embedded in positive-sum regional dynamics that were a function of the friendly environment for investment offered by the EU. This had enabled Greek investment in the Balkans and engagement of Turkey, culminating in acquisition of *Finansbank*, Turkey’s fourth-largest, in 2006, by the National Bank of Greece. Today, by way of contrast, the economic crisis in Greece has shattered the pro-engagement alliance, such that ‘the legitimacy of economic interdependence with Greece’s neighbours and historical rivals, and with Turkey in particular, has been diminished.’ In this context, the issue of gas exploration is increasingly being viewed as a way of reasserting the country’s sovereign rights and recovering from the crisis, giving rise to extreme nationalist rhetoric on the part of both political figures and the media. Thus, as long as the Greek crisis persists, populist politicians may present the question of exclusive economic zones in zero-sum terms to the detriment of pursuing mutually beneficial interdependencies with Turkey.

Several *recommendations* emerged from the discussion. First, the privatization of the Greek state-owned energy company, DEPA, was seen as an opportunity for improving Turkish-Greek ties which would help Greece to become a European gateway for Caucasian and Middle Eastern gas. Second, ongoing joint investment in the Balkans was cited as vital for the preservation of good neighbourly ties in the region because without capital inflow and interdependency there is no incentive for actors to refrain from bellicose stances with regard to gas exploration.

V. Turkey and Greece as gateways to Europe- the case of migration

The role of Turkey and Greece as 'gateways' to, but also as 'gatekeepers' for Europe was discussed with reference to migration, a field said to exemplify many of the dilemmas facing the two countries, their neighbourhood, and Europe more broadly. The need for a more humanistic as opposed to security-oriented approach was emphasized.

All the speakers shared a view of migration as a complex and profound phenomenon that reflects one of the most basic aspects of human existence: movement. The impulse to stop and regulate movement, it was argued, is invariably counter-productive as people, like water, will flow from one place to another. In today's context, migration encompasses security concerns, the economic demand for labour, social policies, and human rights. It is also a phenomenon which compels Turkey and Greece to confront the ways their respective national projects have been founded in opposition to one another, and to seek ways to transcend such oppositions. Similarly, it embodies EU dilemmas with regard to the future enlargement of the Union, its foreign relations, and its future identity.

A core dilemma in this context is the perceived trade-off between security concerns and the economic benefits that accrue from accepting migrants. In a post-9/11 context, the former typically trumps the latter, though some in the EU worry that the prevailing emphasis on security is discordant with the work of Vienna-based human rights agencies. This trend towards securitization of migration has led to infringement of the principles upon which EU asylum policies are founded. The upshot is that the EU pressures Greece to prevent transitory migration, turning a blind eye to questionable policies such as the recent construction of a security fence on the border with Turkey.

Speakers further invoked the fence as a symbol of Turkey and Greece's role in serving not so much as gateways to, but gatekeepers for the EU. One noted the irony of this conundrum, since Turkish immigration to Europe has long weighed negatively upon Turkey's EU prospects and compelled Turkish authorities to discipline the migration of Turks, as well as nationals from third countries. This is misconceived, it was argued, in light of Turkey's socio-economic transformation which has changed the immigration patterns of Turks, but gone largely unnoticed by Europeans. In short, Turks today are not so eager to seek employment abroad, and in the cases that they do, Europe is no longer their sole or preferred destination. Nevertheless, as observed, there is a 'pyramid of desirability' when it comes to who is a legal and who is an illegal migrant. The market is the most important indicator of desirability, followed by ethnicity, with skin colour, blood, or origin determining levels of accessibility. Finally, there is heavy resistance in countries, including Greece, against the nationals of numerous Muslim countries. This reminds us that Greece, as well as Turkey, not only have reason to question their role as gatekeepers, but must also revisit their own attentiveness to the human rights of immigrants, a test both countries were said to 'fail' insofar as Greece grants asylum and refugee status to only 1% of applicants while Turkey does not yet extend the right to asylum to refugees coming from non-European states and hence its Eastern neighbours.

Recommendations: Panellists accordingly urged the authorities to revisit and reform refugee law and the right to asylum in both Turkey and Greece in favour of inclusivity as both countries are borderlands and cannot prevent the movement of peoples in the long term. In terms of the study of migration, it was suggested that there should be more focus on transit migrants who seek to enter the European Union via Turkey and Greece, as well as on the new wave of 'circular migration,' i.e., short-term movements of people seeking seasonal or intermittent employment in informal labour markets in Europe. Such studies could help us to understand and reframe debates on migration steeped in fear and ignorance. Information should also be collated and disseminated regarding cooperative efforts on the part of Turkish and Greek NGOs, not least to facilitate a debate on the thorny relationship between migration and integration. Overall, it was argued that migration is a promising field for cooperation between Turkey and Greece, and one in which there is ample room to demonstrate added-value for the EU.

VI. Stalemate in Cyprus?

Convening in the wake of brinkmanship in the Eastern Mediterranean and on-going endeavours to hammer out a solution to the Cyprus question in the UN context, the Cyprus panel focused on the newfound role of oil in perpetuating the stalemate on one hand, and the persistence of negative attitudes on the other.

Throughout the conference, Cyprus was cited as ‘a source, a playing field, and a potential solution to some of the region’s problems.’ As one participant noted, despite its small size, Cyprus has long embodied outstanding issues in international affairs from decolonization, Cold War rivalries, and ethnic politics, to the heightened salience of energy politics in our globalizing world. Most recently, it is at the epicentre of controversy regarding the budding Cypriot-Israeli energy partnership which maps onto tensions that have emerged in recent years between Turkey and Israel on one hand, and the United States on the other. In this context, a speaker cautioned the Cypriot leadership from overplaying its hand vis-à-vis anticipated support the part of the Israel lobby in the United States.

The heightened salience of Cyprus at this juncture was described as a ‘result of the failure to synchronize [negotiations] so that at the right time everyone is on the same frequency,’ a sentiment corroborated by one speaker of the panel with specific reference to the Greek Cypriot leadership at the time of the Annan plan. The upshot is that today, Cyprus has managed to bring together strong players to the energy game. Sharing reserves with Israel has given it considerable advantages, especially in the current constellation of Israel’s relations with Turkey. If the current estimates are confirmed, Europe would be able to diversify its energy supplies, and obtain gas that neither originates from Russia nor passes through Turkey, adding value and geopolitical significance to the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus in particular. Yet, such an eventuality would also mean that Europe needs responsible and credible partners in the region, including a resolution to the stalemate on the island. The prospect of both communities enjoying oil wealth could facilitate such an outcome. Nevertheless, as observed, momentum regarding reserves does not automatically correspond to resolution of political problems. It is imperative, therefore, that both communities come to understand ‘that regardless of the games of power and influence, they no longer have the luxury of not reaching a solution.’

Others noted, the lack of interest in tackling the Cyprus problem among governments and NGOs. If energy politics are a new spoke in the wheel, a longstanding obstacle is the attitudes of parties to the conflict. This is apparent in the narratives of both communities on the island which tend to demonize one other. Actions on both sides have hindered the process of reunification, such as the declaration of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and the current decision of the Greek-Cypriot leadership to escalate the situation by going ahead with drilling for oil. Also stressed was the role of ignorance and lack of empathy between the two communities, with one participant noting that the Greek-Cypriot perception is one of terror and fear. In a similar vein, another speaker surveyed the evolving positions of the two communities on the sharing of sovereignty to suggest that today the Greek-Cypriots are increasingly internalizing the partition of the island. This *de facto* situation is becoming embedded in mentalities and reinforced by facts, such as the growing presence of settlers from Turkey in the north of the island. The cautious hope that changes in Europe which, for a period at least, had been developing a novel approach to sovereignty steeped in inclusive and overlapping rather than exclusive and binary logics, may empower the right actors on the island. According to this perspective, the search for exclusive sovereignty over Cyprus is ‘an anachronism and nothing more.’

In terms of concrete *recommendations*, it was argued that Turkey could help to normalize relations by presenting itself as ‘a responsible, predictable regional player. This could create circumstances over the course of several years in which ‘public opinion will be ready to move towards something that Turkey says it wants, which is reunification of the island in a loose federation.’ This in turn, could enable Turkey to ‘start working towards what [it] needs, which is to get the EU negotiations back on track.’

Conclusion

The conference ended on a note of cautious optimism epitomized in the keynote address delivered by Mayor Boutaris of Thessaloniki on the imperative of mutual recognition in times of turbulence – a task which requires transcending old reflexes to build, slowly perhaps, but surely, a common foundation for engagement of the past, present, and future. Today, there are clear challenges posed by the transforming regional context in light of the Greek and broader Eurozone crisis on one hand, and the emerging paradigm in the Eastern Mediterranean on the other. Participants nevertheless were hopeful that the normalization of bilateral relations over the past decade will provide a sufficient basis for Ankara and Athens to weather troubled waters – indeed the conference itself served to renew that sense of commitment for many of the speakers. It was felt that both the Balkans and the post-Arab revolution Middle East present sites where Turkey and Greece can bring their respective relationships with regional actors to the table to help broker a positive-sum regional grand bargain. The outstanding challenge will be to ensure that the prevailing nexus of zero-sum attitudes and energy politics when it comes to the Cyprus-Israel-Turkey triangle is navigated via level-headed negotiations rather than brinksmanship and populism. There is a major role here for Greece as well as the EU and the United States. This is particularly so now that Turkey's rapprochement with Iran has become less pronounced, and the prospect of a new regime in Syria has become more salient. Ultimately, there is a far less permissive regional context than in any time in the past decade. As such, the costs of a relapse into antagonism over high political issues – squandering the gains of rapprochement over soft issues of the past decade - will be intolerably high for both Greece and Turkey as democratic trading states in a sea of uncertainty.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 27 September

Welcoming remarks: Nora FISHER ONAR (SEESOX/Bahçeşehir University); Othon ANASTASAKIS (SEESOX, University of Oxford)

Roundtable: Taking Stock, Looking Ahead: How to Move the Turkish-Greek Agenda Forward?

Speakers: Bülent ARAS (Turkish MFA); Fuat KEYMAN (IPM); Umut ÖZKIRIMLI (Bilgi & Lund Universities); Alex RONDOS (SEESOX, University of Oxford); Harry TZIMITRAS (Bilgi University)

Chair: Kalypso NICOLAÏDIS (SEESOX, University of Oxford)

Wednesday, 28 September

Panel I: Turkish-Greek Dynamics in the Middle East and Israel

Speakers: Şaban KARDAŞ (TOBB University); Sotiris ROUSSOS (University of Peloponnese); Ebru Canan SOKULLU (Bahçeşehir University)

Chair: Karabekir AKKOYUNLU (LSE)

Panel II: Transitions: Implications of the Arab revolutions

Speakers: Reem ABOU-EL-FADL (St Peter's College, Oxford); Kerem ÖKTEM (SEESOX, University of Oxford); Alex RONDOS (SEESOX, University of Oxford)

Chair: Sabri SAYARI (Bahçeşehir University)

Panel III: Turkish-Greek Dynamics in the Balkans

Speakers: Othon ANASTASAKIS (SEESOX, University of Oxford); Dimitar BECHEV (ECFR); Bülent ARAS (Turkish MFA); Dimitrios TRIANTAPHYLLOU (Kadir Has University)

Chair: Ayşe KADIOĞLU (Sabancı University)

Panel IV: New Political Economy of Southeast Europe

Speakers: Mert BİLGİN (Bahçeşehir University); Antonis KAMARAS (Mayor's Office, Thessaloniki); Çağlar KEYDER (Bosphoros University)

Chair: Contantinos FILIS (Panteion University)

KEYNOTE SPEECH: Yiannis BOUTARIS, Mayor of Thessaloniki

Thursday 29 September

Panel V: Turkey and Greece as Gateways to Europe – the Case of Migration

Speakers: Sema ERDER (Bahçeşehir University); Despina SYRRI (Navarino Network, Thessaloniki); Konstantinos TSITSELIKIS (University of Macedonia)

Chair: Başak KALE (Middle East Technical University)

Panel VI: Stalemate in Cyprus?

Contantinos FILIS (Panteion University); Dimitris KERIDIS (University of Macedonia); Niyazi KIZILYÜREK (Cyprus University); Hugh POPE (ICG)

CHAIR: Cengiz AKTAR (Bahçeşehir University)

ECFR Report: What Does Turkey Think?

Speakers: Hakan ALTINAY (Brookings), Şahin ALPAY (Bahçeşehir University); Atila ERALP (Middle East Technical University); Mehmet KARLI (SEESOX/Galatasaray University); Gerald KNAUS (ESI)

CHAIR: Dimitar BECHEV (ECFR)

ABOUT SEESOX

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South East European Studies at Oxford (SEESOX) is part of the European Studies Centre at St Antony's College, Oxford. It focuses on the interdisciplinary study of the Balkans, Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. Drawing on the academic excellence of the University and an international network of associates, it conducts policy relevant research on the multifaceted transformations of the region in the 21st century. It follows closely conflict and post-conflict situations and analyses the historical and intellectual influences which have shaped perceptions and actions in the region. In Oxford's best tradition, the SEESOX team is committed to understanding the present through the *longue durée* and reflecting on the future through high quality scholarship.

SEESOX has the following objectives:

- To support high-quality teaching and research on South East Europe;
- To organise conferences, workshops and research seminars;
- To promote the multi-disciplinary study of the region within the University of Oxford (e.g. politics, international relations, anthropology, sociology, economics) working in collaboration with other Centres and Programmes within the University, including student societies;
- To spearhead intellectual exchanges and debate on these issues among networks of individuals and institutions beyond Oxford;
- To foster cooperation between the academic and the policy making communities.

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