

## Turkey's Potential as Future Energy Hub – Economic Developments and Political Options

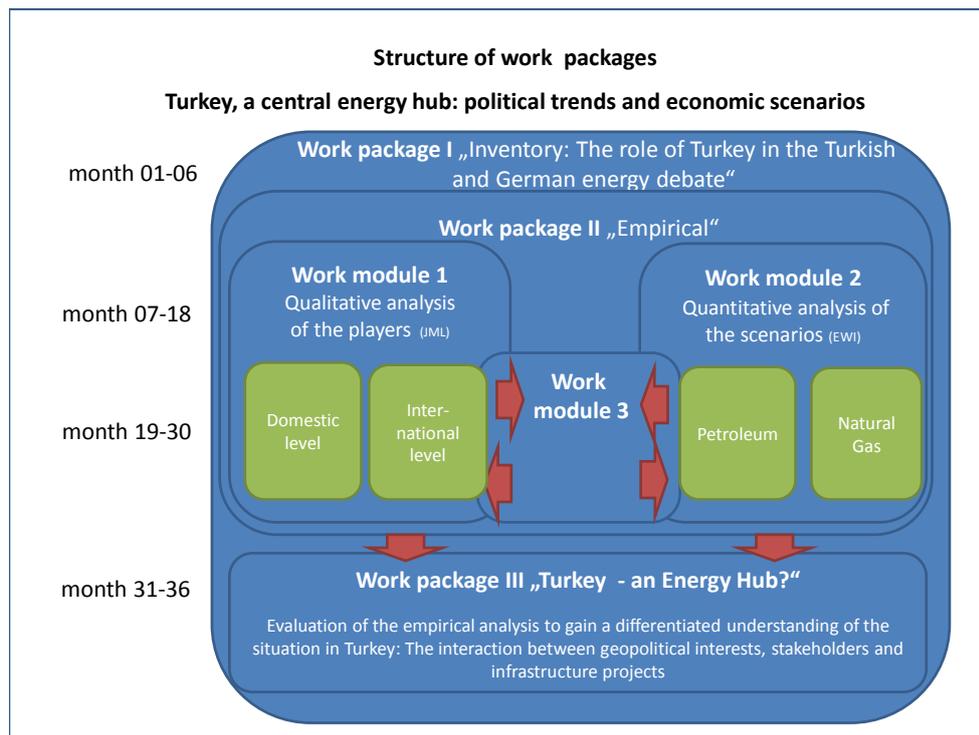
“Turkey's Potential as Future Energy Hub – Economic Developments and Political Options” is an interdisciplinary, multinational research project that intends to develop a reliable prediction about Turkey's long-term role as European energy supplier.

The Cooperation between different disciplines allows for the unique possibility of examining the subject from multiple angles: a political-scientific analysis of involved actors is combined with an economic analysis of the raw materials market. Geopolitical and geostrategic factors are considered together, as their interaction often results in complex market responses. Economical natural gas and oil models help to map these processes. Only in this way can Turkey's role in energy politics be assessed within the network of relationships between politics, public-private interests, and infrastructure investments.

This project touches on a very topical and controversial subject: Recurring gas crises in Eastern Europe trigger the fear of an escalating gas dispute with Russia that might mean the end of stable energy relationships. Facing this threat, the EU decided to find alternatives to the Russian partner. Therefore, the European Commission identified Turkey as an “essential strategic partner” for energy security.<sup>1</sup> Turkey declared its intention to take this position, meaning to act as an energy hub while simultaneously covering its own growing demand.

It is still uncertain if and to what extent Turkey can live up to this self-established claim. The interdisciplinary research team will examine which conditions must be fulfilled and which economic consequences could arise from this role as energy hub for global and especially European markets.

The project consists of three essential phases:



The first step is a collective review of already existing research findings followed by an empirical study. Political scientists will identify and analyze the involved actors, including their interests and perceptions, while the energy economists will deal with the modeling of energy markets in and around Turkey. Interview findings can help to modify the economic model calculations accordingly, while the initial results of the energy models will be incorporated into further expert interviews.

The research design is based on the assumption that energy supply depends on economic factors as well as on political-strategic considerations.<sup>ii</sup> The theoretical background of the analysis consists of the Governance-concept.<sup>iii</sup> Unlike conventional theories, this concept pursues an innovative research approach in order to include all the actors that form a diffuse network of decision-makers in energy politics. It is not only the interests of European and Turkish actors that have to be considered, but also the various geopolitical situation. The specific

focus on Turkey and its neighbors requires a political interpretation of the results of the models.

The interdisciplinary approach of the research project is based on an existing network of experts at the Jean Monnet Chair for Political Science and the Institute of Energy Economics, both at the University of Cologne. The cooperation with the Center for European Studies at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara provides direct access to a broad network of public and private economic actors in Turkey and its geographical surrounding.

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<sup>i</sup> Europäische Kommission (2006): Grünbuch. Eine europäische Strategie für nachhaltige, wettbewerbsfähige und sichere Energie, Brüssel, 8.3.2006, KOM(2006) 105 endgültig, [http://europa.eu/documents/comm/green\\_papers/pdf/com2006\\_105\\_de.pdf](http://europa.eu/documents/comm/green_papers/pdf/com2006_105_de.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> Winrow, Gareth (2009): Problems and Prospects for the „Fourth Corridor“: The Positions and Role of Turkey in Gas Transit to Europe, Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, 06/2009.

<sup>iii</sup> Benz, Arthur (Hg.) 2004: Governance – Regieren in komplexen Regelsystemen. Eine Einführung, Wiesbaden.