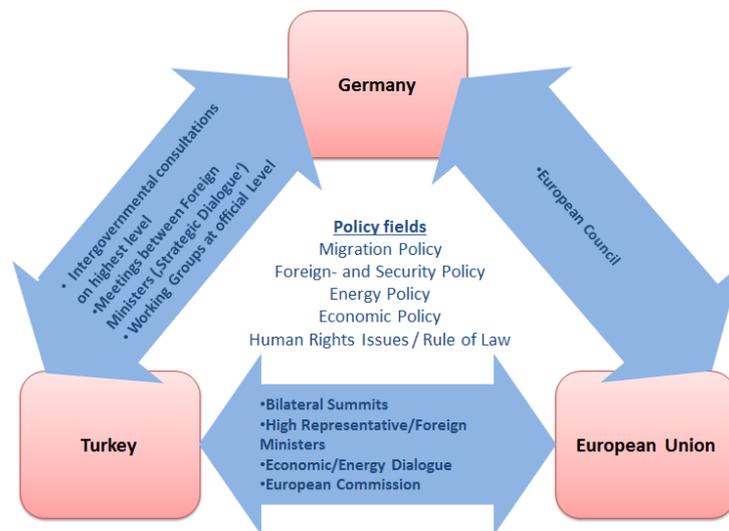


TRIANGLE - Blickwechsel in EU/German-Turkish Relations Beyond Conflicts: Towards a Unique Partnership for a Contemporary Turkey?

EU/German-Turkish Relations have always, and notably within the period from autumn 2015 to spring 2016, experienced significant change. The refugee crisis increased Turkey's relevance as the EU's strategic partner for European foreign-, and security policy in late 2015. The intensified relations quickly cooled off when the so-called Boehmermann affair, the resolution of the German Bundestag on the Armenian genocide, and finally Brussel's and Berlin's reluctance to clearly condemn the failed coup d'état in July 2016 added to the rising resignation towards the EU and Germany in Ankara. Although EU/German-Turkish relations are currently dominated by uncertainty and mistrust, Turkey plays and will continue to play a crucial role for both the EU and Germany in multiple policy areas such as foreign, security, migration, energy, and trade policy. Thus, an observation of fundamental institutional and structural patterns of the relationship, the assessment of conflict constellations, and an analysis explaining the formal 'perceptions' of each other are of high significance.

Against this backdrop, the research project TRIANGLE, a cooperation between the Centre for Turkey and European Union Studies (University of Cologne) and Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara, aims at assessing and analysing these relations by adopting a distinct academic approach focusing on institutions and narratives. The project assumes that a fundamental restructuring of EU/German-Turkish relations would require 'critical junctures' in the institutional structure that entail 'Blickwechsel' in terms of narratives. With regard to this restructuring, Germany is considered one of the key drivers.



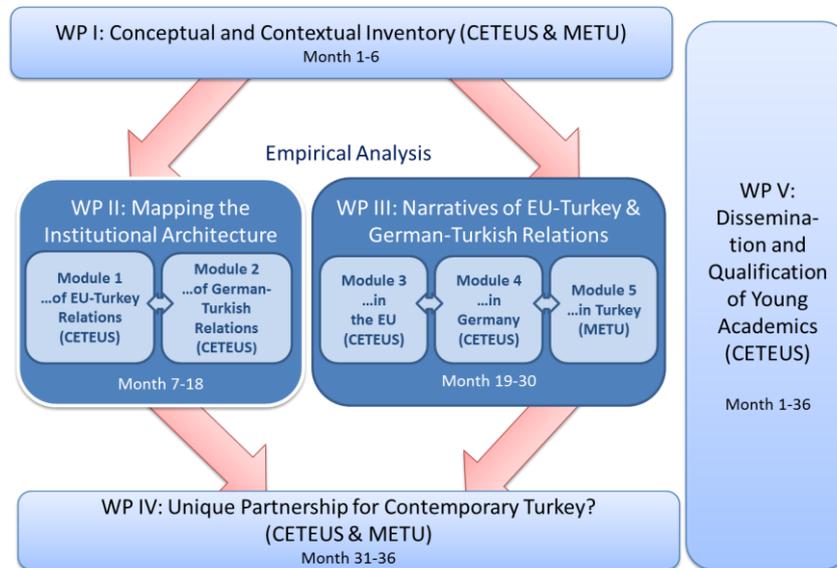
The guiding research questions of TRIANGLE are:

- Confronted with changing policy contexts as well as conflict constellations, how do EU, German and Turkish actors restructure and use the institutional architecture of their relations?
- How – if so – do related narratives of EU-Turkey and German-Turkey relations change in Germany, the EU, and Turkey, or are old patterns simply reborn or revisited?
- Which development constitutes a ‘critical juncture’ in the institutional architecture and/or a ‘Blickwechsel’ in the narratives, and to which scenario of EU-Turkey relations does this correspond?

In order to answer these questions during the three years of the project’s lifetime, TRIANGLE pursues the following research aims in the empirical analysis, structured within five work packages:

1. Mapping the institutional architecture of EU-Turkish and German-Turkish relations.
2. Tracing the narratives of EU-Turkey and German-Turkish relations in the EU, Germany and Turkey.
3. Assessing scenarios of EU-Turkey relations:
 - a) (re)energised accession process

- b) unique partnership with privileges specific for Turkey
- c) stagnating and increasingly conflictual relations with a difficult partner.



Major target groups of the project are the academic community, notably young researchers; political stakeholders in the EU, Germany, and Turkey; and a German society interested in the EU/Turkish-German relations. Mediators for dissemination are the project’s website, publications, newsletters and social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Storify. TRIANGLE offers a comprehensive information package for regular up-dates on EU/German-Turkish relations consisting of three main elements available at the website:

1. Fact sheets on latest meetings and institutional developments
2. Storylines capturing the latest news coverage and official statements through Storify
3. Annual reports assessing the state of play of EU/German-Turkish relations

TRIANGLE will provide this information in German, English, and Turkish.

Additionally, research results of each of the five work packages will be summarized in several working papers and a concluding edited volume. In order to further reach out to academia, an expert workshop will take place in Ankara, and a concluding conference will be organized in Berlin.