



Trans European Policy
Studies Association

Centre for European
Studies, METU



From Istanbul to Brussels: Dialogue on Turkey's accession to the EU

- Report on the TEPSA/C.E.S. conference on 3/4 March 2009 -

On 3 and 4 March 2009 TEPSA, in co-operation with the Centre for European Studies (CES) of the Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara, organised at the Fondation Universitaire in Brussels the Kick-Off Conference of the project "Mobilizing Local Networks for a better informed Dialogue on Turkey's Accession to the EU" (ACCESS-TR) which aims to promote the active participation of local and regional stakeholders in the process of Turkey's accession to the EU.

Under the title "**From Istanbul to Brussels: Dialogue on Turkey's Accession to the EU**" the Kick-Off Conference gathered in Brussels a number of key multipliers of the ACCESS-TR project and its outreach and brought them together with representatives of the European Institutions, civil society, diplomatic missions, media and stakeholders of Turkish interest representations in Brussels. By this TEPSA and CES seek to obtain sustainable partnerships after the end of the project.



The **first day of the conference** included a short presentation of the project ACCESS-TR, TEPSA's and CES' involvement and role in it and its approach of establishing a better informed dialogue on Turkey's accession to the EU, an Honorary Speech by Ambassador Volkan Bozkir, three thematic panels on the current state of the art of EU-Turkey relations, insights from the 2004/07 enlargement round and the functioning of the enlarged European Union and a dinner speech tried to build a bridge between the two conference days by on the one hand referring to some aspects that were raised on the first conference day, especially with regard to lessons from former enlargements, on the other hand by giving an appetizer to the discussion on effects of media and communication strategies on Turkey's accession to the EU on the second conference day.

Building on the more general discussion on enlargement and the functioning of the EU beforehand the **second day of the conference** then focused more on specific issues related to Turkey's accession to the EU: Turkish insights on challenges and benefits in the EU enlargement process and effects of media and communication strategies on Turkey's accession to the EU.

In the **closing remarks** the highlights of the two day conference were summarized and the follow-up of the ACCESS-TR project was presented.

Following the Kick-Off conference held in Brussels the ACCESS-TR project will comprise **workshops in Samsun, Antalya and Gaziantep** which will each focus on four topics (Single Market; Gender issues across social protection, education policies and regional development strategies; Notions of inclusive citizenship linked to the debates on European citizenship; Ways of conducting foreign policy in the European Union); a **Final conference in Istanbul**; **Virtual Teaching Units**; a **project website**, and **Policy Briefings** (representing summaries of research on "EU-Turkey relations and the functioning of the EU"; "History and key features of EU enlargement rounds"; "Single European Market, Customs Union and consumer protection"; "Gender perspectives: Social protection, education policies and regional development strategies"; "Citizenship"; "Foreign Policy in the European Union and joint interests with Turkey").

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