



Funda Tekin | Anke Schönlau [Eds.]

The EU-German-Turkish Triangle

Narratives, Perceptions and Discourse
of a Unique Relationship



Nomos

EU-Turkey relations have a long historic trajectory. Turkey is in future likely to remain, despite political tensions, an important country for the EU in economic, political and geostrategic terms. On the one hand, recent developments affecting the EU have motivated the Heads of State or Government to rediscover Turkey's relevance as 'key strategic partner'. On the other hand, prospects of Turkey's accession to the EU have reached an all-time low in the light of Turkey distancing itself from the political accession criterion as well as the multiple internal crises the EU has been confronted with. This renders EU-Turkey relations a highly topical issue for academic research.

The Centre for Turkey and European Union Studies (CETEUS) aims at providing a framework for publications dealing with Turkey, the European Union as well as EU/German-Turkish relations regarding multiple thematic dimensions as well as geographic contexts including the neighbourhood and the global scene.

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edited by

Funda Tekin
Ebru Turhan
Wolfgang Wessels

Volume 4

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List of Abbreviations

AAPD	Acts on the Foreign Policy of the Federal Republic of Germany
AKP	Justice and Development Party
CATI	Computer Aided Telephone Interview
CDU/ CSU	Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union
EC	European Communities
EEC	European Economic Community
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
FDP	Liberal Democratic Party
FEUTURE	The Future of EU-Turkey Relations: Mapping Dynamics and Testing Scenarios
GMF	The German Marshall Fund of the United States
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SPD	Social Democratic Party
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TTS	Transatlantic Trends Survey
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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The EU-German-Turkish Triangle: A Conceptual Framework for Narratives, Perceptions and Discourse of a Unique Relationship

Funda Tekin, Anke Schönlau

1. Introduction

“Turkey has been moving further away from the European Union (EU)”.¹ This narrative has been driving relations between the EU and Turkey for the past years. Yet, considering the complexity and interdependencies that determine these relations, such an assessment falls short of providing a full picture of this relationship. Ever since the Association (Ankara) Agreement of 1963, which aimed at establishing a Customs Union (Article 4) and referred to examining Turkey’s possible accession to the Community² (Article 28), relations have grown deeper and become subject to multifaceted institutionalisation and formalisation.

Today, in general terms three frameworks structure the overall relationship. Firstly, the Association Agreement frames EU relations with Turkey, which is seen as a key partner in economy and trade. The Customs Union was successfully established in 1995. Secondly, in 1999 Turkey became a candidate country for accession to the EU, with accession negotiations starting in October 2005. However, this second framework of Turkey as a candidate for accession began to weaken almost from the outset, with negotiations starting to stagnate almost immediately following initiation, eventually culminating in a complete standstill with the Council’s conclusions of June 2018, which consider “no further chapters [...] for opening or closing”.³ Thirdly and finally, the EU engages with Turkey as a strategic

1 Council of the European Union. Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process. Council Conclusions. ELARG 41,10555/18. Brussels, 26.06.2018, p.13, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/35863/st10555-en18.pdf> [20.07.2022].

2 The Accession Agreement was signed between Turkey and the European Economic Communities. The European Union was established only by the Maastricht Treaty in 1993.

3 Council of the European Union. Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process, p. 13.

partner in multiple areas of mutual interest such as security, migration, counter-terrorism and energy. Institutionally, this third framework is structured most prominently by so-called ‘High Level Dialogues’. Hence, the relationship between the EU and Turkey can be classified as ‘unique’ in the sense that it ranges from a rules-based integration perspective and association to purely interest-based transactional cooperation.

That being said, EU-Turkey relations have grown increasingly conflictual over the past years reaching an all-time low in 2020⁴ for various reasons, ranging from the process of de-democratisation in Turkey, together with rising nationalism and populism on both sides to bilateral conflicts between Turkey and individual EU Member States such as Germany and the Netherlands in 2017 as well as Greece, Cyprus and France in the Eastern Mediterranean region during 2020. Yet, significantly such developments have not brought about a complete breakdown in relations. What we see instead is the EU considering targeted measures including sanctions against Turkey⁵ and launching “a positive political agenda [...] provided constructive efforts to stop illegal activities vis-à-vis Greece and Cyprus are sustained”⁶ by Turkey, at the same time. Accordingly, the concept of “conflictual cooperation” best characterises the current state of EU-Turkey relations in which conflictual dynamics within certain dimensions such as politics and security are contained by demands and interests for cooperation in others such as the economy, trade, migration and energy.⁷

4 Cf. European Commission. Turkey 2021 Report. Commission Staff Working Document. SWD (2021) 290final/2. Strasbourg, 19.10.2021, p. 2, <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2021-10/Turkey%202021%20report.PDF> [20.07.2022].

5 Cf. Council of the European Union. Outcome of the Council Meeting. Foreign Affairs. 3720th Council meeting, 13066/19. Luxembourg, 14.10.2019, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/41182/st13066-en19.pdf> [20.07.2022]; European Council. Press release. European Council conclusions on external relations, 1 October 2020. Brussels, 01.10.2020, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/10/01/european-council-conclusions-on-external-relations-1-october-2020/> [20.07.2022].

6 European Council. Conclusions. Special meeting of the European Council, 1 and 2 October 2020, EUCO 13/20. Brussels, 02.10.2020, p. 8, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/45910/021020-euco-final-conclusions.pdf> [20.07.2022].

7 For a complete elaboration of this concept cf. Saatçioğlu, Beken/ Tekin, Funda (Eds). Turkey and the European Union. Key Dynamics and Future Scenarios. Turkey and European Union Studies. Vol. 3. Baden-Baden, 2021.

Among EU Member States, relations between the EU and Turkey are more relevant to some than others⁸ depending on: the size of a country's Turkish diaspora, the largest of which is in Germany; security interests in counter-terrorism, which is the case in France and Belgium; economic ties that are particularly strong with Germany and Bulgaria; as well as the degree of impact created by refugees from Syria and the middle east, most prominently the case in Greece currently, but previously crucially relevant for Germany in 2015.⁹ Considering such structural factors, bilateral relations between Germany and Turkey are particularly close: Germany is Turkey's most important trading partner and source of Foreign Direct Investment, thus constituting a fundamental pillar of the Turkish economy. In 2020, bilateral trade volume amounted to EUR 36.6 million, with an estimated 7,400 German companies as well as Turkish companies with German partnerships being active in Turkey. Germany is the third largest importer of Turkish goods after Russia and China. Social and cultural ties are equally relevant with almost 3 million people of Turkish background living in Germany. Germany is thus home to the greatest share of an estimated 5.5 million people with Turkish roots living in Western European countries, followed by the Netherlands with just under 400,000 people. Those strong structural factors are one reason why Germany's Turkey policy has so far been able to exert influence over EU-Turkey relations.¹⁰ Furthermore, motivated by the comparable size of Germany and its experienced leadership during the Merkel-era, Turkey's political elite tends to perceive the German government as a key access point to Brussels and any decisions taken there. This partial misconception was even enhanced somewhat when former German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, took "refuge in leadership" during the EU's negotiations for EU-Turkey statements on migration in November 2015 and March 2016, with Turkey's leaders apparently increasingly understanding Germany as representing the EU vis-à-vis Turkey at a political level.¹¹

8 Cf. FEUTURE EU 28 Country Reports. H2020 project. The Future of EU-Turkey Relations: Mapping Dynamics and Testing Scenarios. Cologne, March 2017, www.feuture.eu [15.06.2022].

9 For more details cf. Aydıntaşbaş, Asli. The discreet charm of hypocrisy. An EU-Turkey power audit. European Council on Foreign Relations. March 2018.

10 Paul, Amanda/ Smith, Julianne. Turkey's relations with Germany and the EU: Breaking the vicious circle. Policy Brief. European Policy Centre. Brussels, October 2017.

11 Reiners, Wulf/ Tekin, Funda. Taking Refuge in Leadership? Facilitators and Constraints of Germany's Influence in EU Migration Policy and EU-Turkey Affairs

The German General Election in September 2021 brought about a change in government from the ‘grand coalition’ of Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD), that had governed the country for eight years, to a so-called ‘traffic lights coalition’ of the SPD (red), the Alliance 90/The Greens (The Greens) and the Liberal Party (FDP) (yellow). This triggered a debate on what the new traffic lights shining on EU-Turkey relations would entail for the future.¹² The main question in this context is whether or not we can expect a change in Germany’s Turkey policy and with this also a change in Germany’s stance towards EU-Turkey relations. Considering the structural factors explained above, no fundamental change in Germany’s political interests should be expected.¹³ Yet, the Greens’ influence can be expected to make a difference when it comes to narratives in policy-making, following their take-over of the Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry of Economics and Climate as well as the head of the European Affairs Committee in the German Bundestag. They have introduced the climate issue as a cross-cutting element in the German government linking climate dossiers to the Ministries of Economics and Foreign Affairs. More importantly, the Greens’ foreign policy approach is generally strongly values-based. They were the only party whose manifesto in the electoral campaign referred to the possibility of re-activating the EU’s accession procedure with Turkey.¹⁴ They formulated this prospect as a lever for motivating Turkey to return to democracy and the rule of law, as this was the condition for bringing accession back on the table.

To provide a solid assessment of EU-Turkey relations and its future prospects, this volume focuses on the triangular relationship between the block and Turkey on the one hand, coupled with bilateral relations between Germany and Turkey on the other hand. Informed by historical institutionalism, it builds on the assumption that a fundamental restruc-

During the Refugee Crisis (2015–2016). In: *German Politics*, 2019, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 115–130.

12 Referring to the colours of the three political parties that form the new government, it is referred to as ‘traffic-light coalition’; Tekin, Funda/ Toygür, Ilke. A traffic-light shining for Europe. Prospects after Germany’s general elections. Berlin Perspective No. 9. Berlin, October 2021.

13 Tekin, Funda. EU-Turkey Relations and general elections in Germany – Headwinds for Turkey? In: Policy Brief Series. Berlin Bosphorus Initiative, April 2021.

14 The Alliance 90/The Greens. Deutschland. Alles ist drin. Bundestagswahlprogramm 2021. June 2021, pp. 230–231.

turing of EU-Turkey relations requires “critical junctures”¹⁵ that entail a ‘paradigm shift’. The term ‘critical juncture’ refers to a significant turning point in path-dependent institutional relations,¹⁶ whilst a ‘paradigm shift’ constitutes a fundamental change in the dominant narratives detailing how EU-Turkish relations are perceived and described by political actors. There is a comprehensive and substantial body of literature tracing EU-Turkey relations in institutional and policy terms.¹⁷ Literature on narratives, though, is rather scarce. Our volume, therefore, contributes to filling this research gap by deconstructing the political discourse on EU-Turkey relations, in order to identify, analyse and assess the main perceptions and narratives not only in Germany and Turkey, but also at EU level in Brussels. We build on a contextualised definition of political discourse by considering texts and speeches of political actors, their recipients as well as the contexts to which those texts and speeches relate.¹⁸ Consequently, we identify narratives on EU-Turkey relations by analysing (political) statements made by politicians, political institutions and stakeholders relevant for the relationship as well as public opinion in Turkey.

Narratives are understood as ‘mental maps’ that can provide an analytical grid for assessing the state of EU-Turkey relations. This can help structuring the analysis of the relationship that, in reality, represents a ‘moving target’ witnessing repeated fundamental changes in its scope and pace. This volume assembles a number of analytical contributions that within the framework of a research project on the triangle of EU/German-Turkish relations¹⁹ aimed to answer the general questions of whether and at what point in time a paradigm shift can be identified; if so, what are the driving

15 Cf. Capoccia, Giovanni/ Kelemen, Daniel R. The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism. In: *World Politics*, 2007, Vol. 59, No. 3, pp. 341–369; Pierson, Paul. The path to European integration. In: *Comparative Political Studies*, April 1996, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 123–163.

16 Ibid.

17 E.g. Schröder, Mirja/ Tekin, Funda. Institutional Triangle EU-Turkey-Germany: Change and Continuity. In: Ebru Turhan (Ed.). *German-Turkish Relations Revisited. The European Dimension, Domestic and Foreign Politics and Transnational Dynamics. Turkey and European Union Studies*. Vol. 2. Baden-Baden, 2019, pp. 31–58.

18 Cf. van Dijk, Teun. What is Political Discourse Analysis? In: *Belgian Journal of Linguistics*, 1997, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 11–52.

19 „Blickwechsel in EU/German-Turkish Relations Beyond Conflicts – Towards a Unique Partnership for a Contemporary Turkey?” (TRIANGLE), funded by the Stiftung Mercator from 01.01.2017 to 31.12.2020.

factors of such a shift; and do narratives of EU-Turkey relations change over time or are old patterns simply reborn or revisited. Consequently, the general research question of this volume is what impact narratives have on this relationship between the EU, Turkey and Germany including its institutional set-up.

In what follows we will briefly outline the research gap that this volume addresses and elaborate the concept of narratives together with its relevance for political science. Additionally, this chapter sets out the basic parameters that make an analysis of narratives on EU-Turkey relations relevant and conceptualises three different scenarios for future trajectories, depending on the scope of a narrative-induced paradigm shift. We conclude with an overview on how the individual chapters of this volume contribute to answering the general research question.

2. *A Narrative Approach – A New Perspective in Analysis of EU-Turkey Relations*

There is a very broad body of literature on relations between the EU and Turkey that is as rich and multifaceted as the relationship itself. This varied range of work includes: analysis of the institutional relationship including aspects of the EU's enlargement and alternative forms of differentiated integration or association; Europeanisation or de-Europeanisation in Turkey; geostrategic aspects of EU-Turkey relations in the realms of trade, migration, security and energy; as well as identity related issues.²⁰ Recently, the European Commission funded one of the largest research projects explicitly dealing with "The Future of EU-Turkey Relations: Map-

20 Cf. among others Adyın-Düzgit, Senem/ Kaliber, Alper. Encounters with Europe in an Era of Domestic and International Turmoil: Is Turkey a De-Europeanising Candidate Country? In: *South European Society and Politics*, 2016, Vol. 21(1), pp. 1–14; Müftüler-Baç, Meltem. Turkey's future with the European Union: an alternative model of differentiated integration. In: *Turkish Studies*, 2017, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 416–438; Nas, Çiğdem/ Özer, Yonca. Turkey and the European Union. Processes of Europeanisation. 2012, Routledge; Reiners, Wulf/ Turhan, Ebru (Eds.). EU-Turkey Relations – Theories, Institutions and Policies. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020; Saatçioğlu, Beken. The European Union's refugee crisis and rising functionalism in EU-Turkey relations. In: *Turkish Studies*, 2020, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 169–187; Schimmelfennig, Frank et.al. Enlargement and the integration capacity of the EU. Interim Scientific Results. Maximizing the Integration Capacity of the European Union, No. 1, May 2015.

ping Dynamics and Testing Scenarios” (FEUTURE).²¹ Although not as comprehensive or extensive, there is also a body of literature dealing with the bilateral relationship between Germany and Turkey. It analyses and assesses the European dimension of that relationship, the German-Turkish dialogue from the perspective of foreign and domestic politics, as well as the transnational space such as issues of election campaigning, media and education.²²

However, regrettably there is very little literature dealing with narratives covering EU-Turkey relations outside of the main reference source which is rooted within FEUTURE’s research. Hanna-Lisa Hauge, Ebru Ece Özbey, Atila Eralp and Wolfgang Wessels have compiled a comprehensive dataset on narratives from EU institutions and Turkey since the 1960s. Within a comparative approach both across time and geographical borders they have arrived at three main conclusions. Firstly, narratives are different in nature, meaning that Turkish and European narratives vary considerably. The former all share the same goal of full membership, albeit subject to changing plots and different lines of argumentation. Another work by Gözde Yılmaz, though, traces a change from EU-phoria to EU-phobia in Turkish narratives on EU-Turkey relations.²³ By contrast, EU narratives differ both in terms of their plot and the *finalité* of EU-Turkey relations. Secondly, it is clear that since the 1960s there has not only been a gradual increase in the number of narratives concerning Turkey and the EU, but the various debates have also become more divergent. Thirdly, narratives confirm that conflictual rhetoric is a recurring pattern and not new to debates on EU-Turkey relations, albeit over recent years the level of escalation on both sides has increased considerably.²⁴

Narratives make up one significant factor that helps us periodise the EU-Turkey relationship. Wolfgang Wessels, for example, traces shifts in

21 FEUTURE was funded by the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 programme and ran from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2019; its publications can be accessed here: www.feuture.eu.

22 For a concise overview cf. Turhan, Ebru (Ed.). *German-Turkish Relations Revisited. The European Dimension, Domestic and Foreign Politics and Transnational Dynamics*. Baden-Baden, 2019.

23 Yılmaz, Gözde. From EU-phoria to EU-phobia? Changing Turkish Narratives in EU-Turkey Relations. In: *Baltic Journal of European Studies*, June 2019, Vol. 9, No. 1.

24 Ebru Ece Özbey et.al. Narratives of a Contested Relationship: Unravelling the Debates in EU-Turkey Relations. In: Beken Saatçioğlu/ Funda Tekin (Eds.). *Turkey and the European Union. Key Dynamics and Future Scenarios. Turkey and European Union Studies*. Vol. 3. Baden-Baden, 2021, pp. 31–56.

narratives since the beginning of European integration by referring to important milestones of that process, the EU's enlargement and EU-Turkey relations themselves.²⁵ Furthermore, narratives can shed light on the relevance of the three key institutional frames of EU-Turkey relations outlined above, namely accession, association and transactional cooperation, by identifying Turkey as an accession country, a key partner or a strategic partner for the EU respectively.²⁶ When negotiating the EU-Turkey statement on migration in November 2015 the then-German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, referred to Turkey as both an "accession candidate" and a "strategic partner" in the very same press conference,²⁷ perfectly reflecting the duality and ambiguity of a rules-based framework and the transactional character of this relationship. EU institutions in Brussels have also continued to produce various parallel narratives. The European Parliament's (EP) narrative on EU-Turkey relations is clearly linked to Turkey being an accession candidate. Its resolutions, statements and decisions, therefore, have a very strong focus on the accession criteria – particularly in regard to democracy, the rule of law and human rights issues. In 2016, the EP recommended "freezing of the accession negotiations"²⁸ for the first time. Thereafter, the tone has gradually hardened with the EP starting to call for the "suspension of accession negotiations" whilst emphasising that human rights and the rule of law must remain central within EU-Turkey relations. However, these issues are almost entirely absent from the European Council's conclusions. Since 2015 only two conclusions have contained references to the rule of law, with the latest mentioning this issue merely

25 Wessels, Wolfgang. Narratives Matter: In search of a partnership strategy, IPC-Mercator Policy Brief, April 2020; Suratlı, Harun/ Wessels, Wolfgang. The EU's Attitude towards Turkey – Shift of Narratives with Limited Actions? An Analysis of the Leaders' Narratives. VIADUCT Policy Paper. Issue No 5. Cologne, December 2020.

26 Wessels, Wolfgang/ Suratlı, Harun. How to understand the EU's Policy towards Turkey? A dual track strategy without effective results? An Analysis of the Leaders' Narratives. Policy Brief. Track – Teaching and Researching the European Council. Cologne, May 2021.

27 Merkel, Angela. Pressekonferenz von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel beim EU-Türkei-Gipfel am 29. November 2015. Brussels, 29.11.2015, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2015/11/2015-11-30-merkel-bruessel.html> [30.03.2016].

28 European Parliament. EU-Turkey relations. European Parliament Resolution of 24 November 2016 on EU-Turkey relations, (2016/2993(RSP), 24.11.2016, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0450_EN.pdf [20.07.2022].

as a “concern”.²⁹ The European Council’s narrative is strongly driven by geostrategic considerations. On the one hand, this dual narrative-approach mirrors the relationship’s multidimensionality and complexity. It also allows for a balanced approach vis-à-vis Turkey in which each institution is attributed a clear role – the EP being the values-watchdog versus the European Council and the Council being the interest-based actor open for package deals in areas of mutual interest. On the other hand, those two different approaches undermine a comprehensive and coherent strategy being adopted by the EU for framing EU-Turkey relations in the future.³⁰ This has contributed to postulating a new EU narrative of Turkey as the “distant and increasingly hostile neighbour”.³¹ Regarding the ‘moving target’ nature of EU-Turkey relations, Russia’s invasion into Ukraine has actually changed geopolitical considerations, including those on Turkey’s geostrategic relevance. Hence, without in-depth analysis it is difficult to assess whether or not this new narrative already constitutes a paradigm shift in EU-Turkey relations. By contrast, one analysis postulates that the EU is oscillating between various narratives with inclusively interlinked elements and a trend towards “a limited partnership with partial forms of cooperation [...] [instead of] a master narrative for a fundamental, global and stable relationship in form of an upgraded partnership”.³²

To date, German narratives on EU-Turkey relations or German-Turkish relations respectively have been subject to very little analysis. Poststructuralist works identify different visions of Europe that are created in debates on Turkey’s accession to the EU among German politicians.³³ Others have chosen an identity-related approach, analysing German discourse according to the concept of ‘othering’ and hence the question of whether or

29 Cf. European Council. Press release. European Council conclusions, 17–18 March 2016. 143/16. Brussels, 18.03.2016, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/european-council-conclusions/> [20.07.2022]; European Council. European Council meeting (24 and 25 June 2021) – Conclusions. EUCO 7/21. Brussels, 25.06.2021, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/50763/2425-06-21-euco-conclusions-en.pdf> [20.07.2022].

30 Cf. also Toygür et.al. Turkey’s foreign policy and its consequences for the EU. In-depth analysis requested by the AFET committee, European Parliament, 2022.

31 Suratlı/ Wessels, *The EU’s Attitude towards Turkey*, 2020, p. 3.

32 Suratlı/ Wessels, *How to understand the EU’s Policy towards Turkey*, 2021, p. 2.

33 Cf. Aydın-Düzgit, Senem. A Poststructuralist Approach to EU-Turkey Relations: Foreign Policy and Discourse Analysis in the Case of Germany. In: *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, 2011, Vol. 8, No. 29, pp. 49–70.

not Turkey belonged to Europe.³⁴ For the sake of completeness, it should be noted that there is also work on the issue of ‘othering’ in France³⁵ and, vice-versa, in Turkey towards Europe.³⁶ Specifically in the early years of the European integration process after the end of the second world war narratives on the bilateral relationship between Germany and Turkey were more prominent than on relations between Europe and Turkey. Multilateral institutions were still in the making and therefore including narratives of German-Turkish relations in historical narrative analysis can facilitate our understanding of the matter.

We identify two main factors impacting the development of German narratives on EU-Turkey relations. Firstly, to some extent German narratives relate to milestones in EU-Turkey relations and the European integration process. The massive movements of refugees in 2015 when Angela Merkel underlined Turkey’s dual character as accession country and key strategic partner is one example; another is the United Kingdom’s (UK) exit of the EU, the so-called Brexit, when the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, Sigmar Gabriel, considered the new relationship between the EU and the UK as a potential blueprint for EU-Turkey relations.³⁷ Developments in bilateral relations between Germany and Turkey, though, might have even greater relevance. The years 2016 and 2017 mark a period in which those relations were heavily strained by diplomatic tensions over various issues: a resolution by the German Bundestag which declared that the killings of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire during 1915 should be regarded as a genocide for which the German Empire as closest ally

34 Cf. Erkem, Gul Pinar. Identity Construction of Europe by Othering: A Case Study of Turkey and the EU Relations from a Cultural Perspective. In: *Europolis. Journal of Political Analysis and Theory*, Vol. 5/2009, pp. 489–509.

35 Cf. Tekin, Beyza Ç. Representations and Othering in Discourse. The construction of Turkey in the EU context. Amsterdam, 2010.

36 Cf. Aydın-Düzgit, Senem. Foreign policy and identity change: Analysing perceptions of Europe among the Turkish public. In: *Politics*, 2018, Vol. 38, No. 1, pp. 19–34.

37 Gabriel, Sigmar. Der Brexit-Vertrag als Modell für die Türkei-Beziehungen. In: *Die Zeit*, 26.12.2017.

must assume joint responsibility;³⁸ the so-called ‘Böhmermann-affair’;³⁹ the aftermath of a failed coup-attempt in Turkey, during which German nationals were arrested in Turkey; and finally the question of Turkey’s extra-territorial campaigning for the constitutional referendum in 2017. This increased the relationship’s politicisation as well as brought about modification in both sides’ rhetoric.

Secondly, changes in government can potentially impact German narratives on EU-Turkey relations. Traditionally, the SPD has enjoyed strong support within the Turkish diaspora. Most Turkish citizens initially came to Germany with the so-called *Gastarbeiter* programme in the 1960s and had therefore strong links with trade unions,⁴⁰ hence political affinity with the more left-leaning SPD. Links between the Turkish diaspora and the CDU/CSU are less straightforward. It was the CDU/CSU that coined the concept of “privileged partnership” for EU-Turkey relations;⁴¹ furthermore a change from the Christian democratic and liberal democratic government to that of the SPD and Greens in 1998 is said ultimately to have contributed to granting Turkey the status of accession country in 1999 following its previous denial in 1997.⁴² Currently, it is too early to tell, whether or not the new German government of SPD, Greens and FDP, that took office in December 2021, will mark yet another shift in Germany’s narratives on EU-Turkey relations. The Greens place a strong focus on issues of democracy, rule of law and human rights. During her time in opposition, Annalena Baerbock, who became the Greens’ *Spitzenkandidat* in Germany’s 2021 general elections, took a highly critical

38 Deutscher Bundestag. Erinnerung und Gedenken an den Völkermord an den Armeniern und anderen christlichen Minderheiten in den Jahren 1915 und 1916. Antrag der Fraktionen CDU/CSU, SPD und Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, Drucksache 18/8613, 31.05.2016, <https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/18/086/1808613.pdf> [16.06.2022].

39 The Guardian. The Guardian view on the Jan Böhmermann affair: no joke, 22.04.2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/apr/22/the-guardian-view-on-the-jan-bohmermann-affair-no-joke> [16.06.2022].

40 Reichhold, Clemens et al. Migrantische Organisationen und Gewerkschaften in den 70er und 80er Jahren. Das Beispiel Frankfurt am Main. In: Hans Böckler Stiftung (Ed). Working Paper Forschungsförderung, No. 208, March 2021, p. 41.

41 Guttenberg, Karl Theodor. Preserving Europe: Offer Turkey a ‘privileged partnership’ instead. In: New York Times, 15.12.2004.

42 For more details, cf. Schönlau, Anke/ Schröder, Mirja. A Charged Friendship: German Narratives of EU-Turkey Relations in the Pre-accession Phase, 1959–1999. In this volume, p. 57-77.

stance towards Turkey and EU-Turkey relations.⁴³ The coalition agreement gives evidence of some continuity as well as some changes that might be less evident, albeit still noteworthy. Regarding the wording, the current coalition agreement uses almost the exact wording as the agreement of the previous coalition government by stating that “we will [therefore] not close any chapters or open any new ones in the accession negotiations”.⁴⁴ It is interesting to note, though, that relations with Turkey are not part of the section dealing with the European Union Policy, but of chapter 7 “Germany’s Responsibility to Europe and the World” in the section “bilateral and regional relations”. The narrative communicated by the coalition agreement references Turkey as an “important neighbour of the EU and a partner in NATO”.⁴⁵ Additionally, it applies a constructive approach to the relationship by aiming to “breathe life into the EU-Turkey dialogue agenda and expand exchanges with civil society and youth exchange programmes”.⁴⁶ It seems as if Germany is still struggling to come up with an alternative narrative for EU-Turkey relations at times when the accession narrative is patently not an option.

In Turkey, changes in government cannot have had an impact on narratives on EU-Turkey relations since the early 2000s. Instead, during the Justice and Development Party’s (AKP) long time in office it has been more relevant to analyse and assess which political actor or person made what kind of statements in front of which audience in order to identify narratives and their potential changes. Additionally, we can also view a high degree of politicisation in Turkish debates on various issues of EU-Turkey relations. One constantly repeating narrative in Turkish discourse, for example, links with the EU’s Refugee Facility and Turkey’s accusation that the EU is not keeping its financial promise of paying a total of EUR 6 billion. Discussing the validity of this statement would exceed the scope of this chapter, but such a narrative breeds on the country’s general frustration regarding the stagnating accession procedure.

43 Güzeldere, Ekrem Eddy. Germany’s New Government Coalition: A Red, Yellow or Green Light for German-Turkish Relations? In: Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy. Eliamep Policy Paper, No. 90, December 2021.

44 Cf. CDU/ CSU / SPD. Ein neuer Aufbruch für Europa. Eine neue Dynamik für Deutschland. Ein neuer Zusammenhalt für unser Land. Coalition Agreement 2018; SPD/ Alliance 90/The Greens/ FDP. Mehr Fortschritt wagen. Bündnis für Freiheit, Gerechtigkeit und Nachhaltigkeit. Coalition Agreement 2021.

45 SPD/ Alliance 90/The Greens/ FDP. Coalition Agreement 2021, pp. 154–155.

46 Ibid.