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- B. Pekesen: Nationalismus, Türkisierung und das Ende der jüdischen Gemeinden in Thrakien 1918-1942 Ch. Voß / J. Telbizova-Sack (Hrsg.): Islam und Muslime in (Südost)Europa im Kontext von Transformation und EU-Erweiterung M. Ersen-Rasch: Türkisch für Fortgeschrittene. Grammatik – Texte – Übungen B1–C1/C2
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Sehr geehrte Leserin, sehr geehrter Leser,

in einer Periode des anhaltenden Niedergangs stellt es für Griechenland und vielleicht auch für die europäischen Partner eine Schicksalsfrage dar, ob die milliardenschweren Hilfspakete der Europartner und des IWF endlich eine Trendwende herbeiführen können und Hellas wieder auf einen Wachstumspfad finden kann. Unser Autor Heinz-Jürgen Axt ist diesbezüglich wenig optimistisch: Schon seit dem Beitritt zur Europäischen Gemeinschaft 1981 flossen hohe Netto-Zahlungen in das Land – trotzdem verlor es immer weiter an Wettbewerbsfähigkeit. Dass die großen Transfer-Summen wenig Wirkung zeigten, liege, so der Autor, an Korruption und Klientelismus im Land, aber auch an der nicht zielführenden Förderpraxis der EU, die diesen Lastern teils sogar Vorschub leiste. Entsprechend fundamental sieht Axt den Reformbedarf: Nur eine grundlegende Neuorientierung der Agrar- und Strukturpolitik der EU auf einzelne Staaten und auf tragfähige Wachstumskerne lasse bessere Ergebnisse erwarten.

Bekanntlich soll Kroatien im Juli 2013 der EU beitreten. Die Politikwissenschaftlerin Sabine Willenberg wirft ihren Blick auf den „Endspurt“ Kroatiens zur EU-Mitgliedschaft. Trotz verbleibender Probleme habe die neue Koalitionsregierung in Zagreb seit Ende 2011 auf dem Feld der Außenpolitik durch eine konsistente und glaubwürdige Politik gegenüber Europa und vor allem gegenüber den post-jugoslawischen Nachbarn überzeugt.

Ein besonderer Themenschwerpunkt ist in diesem Heft der Türkei und ihrer Außenpolitik gewidmet. Die revolutionären Wandlungen in der arabischen Welt und die Wirtschafts- und Finanzkrise in der Europäischen Union mit einer sich ausbreitenden „Erweiterungskepsis“ stellen die Außenpolitik einer wirtschaftlich prosperierenden und zunehmend selbstbewussten Türkei vor neue Herausforderungen. Mit der sich wandelnden Rolle der Türkei gegenüber dem Westen und den Nachbarn befassen sich in unserem englischsprachigen Schwerpunkt führende Experten aus Think Tanks, Medien und Politik. Vorangestellt ist diesen Beiträgen eine deutschsprachige Analyse von Gülistan Gürbey über die Syrien-Politik der Türkei in der Situation des dortigen Bürgerkriegs. Die heutige Feindschaft Ankaras gegenüber dem Regime in Damaskus gilt als exemplarischer Fall für das Ende der viel gepriesenen Außenpolitik der „Null Probleme“ der AKP-Regierung. Syrien sei „ein Stolperstein für die Türkei“ auf dem Weg zu einer regionalen Führungsmacht, so die Autorin.

Übrigens: Auch unsere Rubriken „Berichte“ und „Rezensionen“ greifen den Türkei-Schwerpunkt unseres Aufsatz-Teiles auf und wollen so eine sinnvolle und informative Ergänzung dazu bieten.

Eine anregende Lektüre wünscht Ihnen

Ihre Redaktion

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Heinz-Jürgen Axt

Greece: Not Competitive in Spite of European Subsidies The EU Must Rethink Its Cohesion Policy

The Euro partners and the International Monetary Fund provided Greece with three financial packages amounting to 289 billion Euros in order to overcome the debt crisis which culminated in 2009.

Sometimes it is overlooked that Greece has benefitted from European Union transfers for years, in fact since its accession to the former European Community in 1981. From that date till 2008 Greece received net transfers which totalled to 133.5 billion Euros. As Greece obviously has not become competitive in the last decades it must be analysed, why these transfers did not show more positive results.

The article will reveal that corruption and clientelism played an important role in preventing Greece from performing better. On the other hand, one should keep in mind that not only the agricultural policy but also the structural policy pursued by the European Union provide sub-optimal results only. For this reason it is essential to review the European Union's structural policy as well. As the European Union prefers financial assistance to less developed regions in the member states and as this approach does not support competitiveness sufficiently the alternative would be to concentrate on growth clusters.

Sabine Willenberg

“Kukuriku” or “Not without My Neighbors”: Croatia on the Final Rush to EU Accession

After having signed the Accession Treaty with the European Union on 9 December 2011, Croatia is going to enter the EU in July 2013. Until then, the new government, the so called “Kukuriku Coalition” lead by Zoran Milanović (SDP) and Vesna Pusić (HNS), elected in December 2011, has to do a lot of homework.

The relations to the Post-Yugoslav neighbors turn out to be crucial, as open bilateral questions can hamper the EU enlargement process seriously. This article critically analyses, whether the newly elected government in its first year managed to break with old patterns of Croatian foreign policy and implement a “new”, consistent “European” foreign and good-neighborhood policy. It argues that the “Kukuriku” government showed a new foreign policy style of patience, conviction and pragmatism, thus managing to keep on the European course and the neighborly relations vivid – despite serious external irritations and internal skepticism towards neighbors and the EU.

Nevertheless, the fact that Croatia will enter into the European Union with a package of open questions concerning the neighbors will bother the EU and challenge Croatia in the medium and long term.

Gülistan Gürbey

From Friend to Foe: Turkey's Syria Policy in the Context of Civil War in Syria

Syria played a key role in the “strategic depth” foreign policy pursued by the Turkish AKP government and was considered a model example of “zero problem policy” with the neighboring states. The civil war in Syria, however, shattered not only the “zero problem policy” and turned the “old friend” to the “new foe”: It above all affected strategic calculations and the Turkish claim to become regional and global leader.

Moreover, the Syrian civil war has both economic as well as domestic implications concerning Turkey's unsolved Kurdish conflict and the PKK question, thus increasing the already existing domestic polarization. Finally the civil war influences the power structure in the region and the relations to the neighboring states, above all to Iran, Russia and Iraq. The AKP government so far responded flexibly to the challenges of adjustment with a policy mix of pragmatism and commitment. Nevertheless, its influence is limited, requiring a stronger cooperation with the regional allies, the USA and the EU.

Main Focus

Turkish Foreign Policy: Challenges and Chances

Heinz Kramer

The Future of Turkish-Western Relations

The basic structural pattern of Turkish-Western relations is characterized by a dominance of Turkey-U.S. relations and a diminishing importance of Turkey-EU relations. The uncertainties about future developments in the Middle East, especially the political fall-out of the Syrian civil war, demand close political coordination between Ankara and Washington. This coordination will most likely persist in spite of numerous issues that could have negative impacts on the relationship, such as Turkish-Israeli confrontations, Turkish-U.S. differences over the Iranian nuclear program, or Turkish-Armenian conflicts.

Relations between Brussels and Ankara will hardly go beyond (intensive) political dialogue given the inability of the EU to develop comprehensive strategic foreign policies in the framework of its Common Foreign and Security Policy. Furthermore, EU-Turkey relations will be severely constrained by the continuing deadlock of accession negotiations. Turkey's ability to make full use of the potential of the AKP's “strategic depth” foreign policy approach will be strongly influenced by the government's ability to bridge the serious domestic political divides as well as by regional developments. The less conducive these are for the continuation of Ahmet Davutoğlu's “zero problem” approach to relations with neighboring countries the more will Ankara be in need of cultivating the existing bonds with its Western allies.

Dimitar Bechev

Is Turkey Pivoting Back to the West?

Under the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) Turkey's foreign policy has gone through various stages: Europeanisation, the quest for autonomy (marked by the now famous "zero-problems" doctrine) and most lately a swing back to the West.

The tectonic shifts in the Middle East and North Africa triggered by the "Arab Awakening" have presented both opportunities but also challenges for Ankara. In the civil war tearing apart Syria, Turkish foreign policy has encountered the most formidable obstacle in projecting its soft power across the neighbourhood. On the contrary, violence has threatened on occasion to spill over into Turkey itself and has furthermore exacerbated existing political tensions. Turmoil in the Middle East has pushed Turkey closer to its long-standing allies in the West, particularly NATO and the U.S. But the constraints facing Ankara's neighbourhood strategy, coupled with the short and long term challenges with respect to economic development and especially democratic consolidation, are also a welcome reminder of the crucial role played by the EU in shaping Turkish politics and society.

Günter Seufert

Internal Driving Forces for Turkey's Middle East Policy Potential and Limits of Turkey's Policy in the Region

The moaning about Turkey's purported "shift of axis" has given way to the complacent assessment that Turkey is "again in the Western fold". As Turkey has closed ranks not only with the U.S. but also with Qatar and Saudi Arabia, it is seen as the mere member of a Sunni-Muslim coalition in the region today.

Ankara is deprived of its nimbus of being a uniting power in the Middle East, able to bridge the sectarian divide – the main threat for all states in the region. Reasons for this development, the article argues, are not only the effects of the "Arab Spring" but also Turkey's limited understanding of democratization that, for a great deal, until now exhausted in the integration of conservative Sunni-Muslim actors in the realms of politics, economy and education.

Semih İdiz

What Determines Ankara's Foreign Policy?

Turkey has attained political, strategic and economic critical mass over the past decade, elevating its status on the international arena, and placing itself at the centre of issues important to the West. But this does not mean that Turkey has attained the capacity to be the principal player in the region; at least not in the way the Erdoğan government envisaged initially.

Meanwhile the "Arab Spring" not only caught Ankara off-guard, but also made a sham of the government's much touted "zero problems with neighbours" policy, leaving Ankara with strained ties with almost all of its immediate neighbours. The fact that Turkish foreign policy has become an extension of domestic politics, which in Turkey can be abrasive, has also blurred well defined lines in Ankara's traditional

foreign policy approach.

The picture that has emerged clearly indicates that it are the events which continue to be the principle determinant in Turkey's foreign policy orientation, and not visionary plans drawn up in Ankara which have little to do with the situation on the ground.

Yavuz Baydar

Turkish-European Relations and the Importance of Visa Liberalisation

The latest Progress Report of the European Commission rightly addresses the major flaws in Turkey's reform process. Domestically, Prime Minister Erdoğan in his strive to consolidate his personal power is following a new "Realpolitik" that endangers the ongoing process of creating a new constitution. The EU with an incoherent and ineffective policy towards Turkey has heavily contributed to the stagnation. More specifically, two countries, France and Cyprus, have shown a destructive and hostile attitude towards Turkey's EU aspirations.

The author calls for a clear and coherent policy, mainly of Germany, towards Turkey. Such a policy should encompass the adoption of a straight and honest language, giving Turkey a timetable or deadline for accession, and, most importantly, take clear steps to visa liberalisation, enabling visa-free access for Turkish citizens to the EU. Baydar proposes concrete steps for visa liberalisation. Failure to achieve a solution will further frustrate the affluent Turkish middle class who will turn their backs on the EU.

Uta Zapf

Turkey and the European Union: A Complicated Relationship

The author, SPD member of the German Bundestag, reflects on the stagnation of EU accession negotiations and the inconsistent policy of German political forces towards Turkey. The EU's recent "positive agenda" and the opening of a visa dialogue are seen as appropriate steps to overcome the standstill in EU-Turkey relations. On the other hand, rage in Turkey is rising over the bad treatment by the EU that eventually, with the crises in Syria escalating, needs Turkey as an ally. Turkey for its own interest should better cooperate with NATO.

Roderich Kiesewetter

Enhancing Turkey's Relations with the EU

The author, CDU member of the German Bundestag, appreciates Turkey's function of a role model for other Islamic states. He calls for an enhanced participation of Turkey in CSDP structures. The EU should make better use of Turkey's understanding and comprehensive approach in the region, with an intensified cooperation in EU and NATO structures. Kiesewetter is also in favor of a religious dialogue of the German churches with the Islamic community and of offering discussions on visa liberalization.