

WORKING GROUP 4: TEACHING EU-TURKEY RELATIONS

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Working Group 4 started with the presentation of the second VIADUCT Teaching paper “Teaching Turkey-European Union relations within the Framework of a Research Methods Class” by the author Damla Cihangir-Tetik. In her paper, Cihangir-Tetik describes a concept to teach an introductory level research methods class using Turkey-EU relations as the main example.

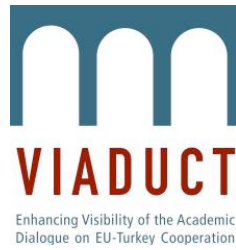
The class taught by Damla Cihangir-Tetik aims at freshmen International relations and Political science students, introducing them to research methods by using Turkey-EU relations as the case study for the whole class. Cihangir-Tetik describes her main goals of the class as applying a learner-centered approach and contributing briefly and implicitly to teaching Turkey-EU relations. The class uses media content and empirical data and articles on Turkey-EU relations. This familiarizes students with both quantitative and qualitative research methods by using academic works on Turkey-EU relations and develops their critical reading and interpretation skills. Student also learn how to collect data sources and how to work with research methods. As part of the class, Cihangir-Tetik also invites a young guest lecturer, who has an expertise in Turkey-EU relations, to present their research. Overall, Cihangir-Tetik presents a unique model of teaching Turkey-EU relations within the framework of an introductory-level research methods class. Through it, students will be equipped with the basic knowledge and skills to conduct research and at the same time it will stimulate students’ interests in EU politics and Turkey-EU affairs.

The Working Group went on to identify the biggest challenges for the teaching of Turkey-EU relations both in and outside of Turkey. In Turkey, the students’ perception is that the EU-Turkey question is always connected to the question of accession. Students therefore see the topic as retrogressive and irrelevant. This is also due to their channels of information, as public information is often biased, distorted and spurious. This kind of media coverage creates a negative tonality toward the EU and facilitates the increase of an anti-western attitude. As for the academic side, there is a substantial decline of courses on Turkey-EU relations or EU Politics and Governance in the curriculums of Political Science and IR departments in Turkey. Moreover, the awareness of funding possibilities is low and the academic brain drain weakens the field of EU-Turkey relations. Outside of Turkey, the biggest challenge seems to be the lack of a personal connection to the topic. The relationship also suffers from the often one-sided and biased knowledge about Turkey and its role. At the same time, there seems to be an “EU-fatigue” among students.

The working group finally discussed how the Teaching of EU-Turkey Relations could help to solve the aforementioned issues. The group agreed that there should be a greater amount and a broader spectrum of courses on EU-Turkey relations, thus deepening the topic and giving it a new perspective. In this way, Student will see that EU-Turkey relations consist of more than the accession question. It should be



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the aim of every course, to make Turkey an aspect of the curriculum in some way, to show different connection points to the students. To develop such personal connections in some way, classes could also include case studies, guest lectures and simulation games, and promote study trips and exchanges like Erasmus. The inclusion of media monitoring would furthermore allow the students to challenge the information they get in the public media.

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