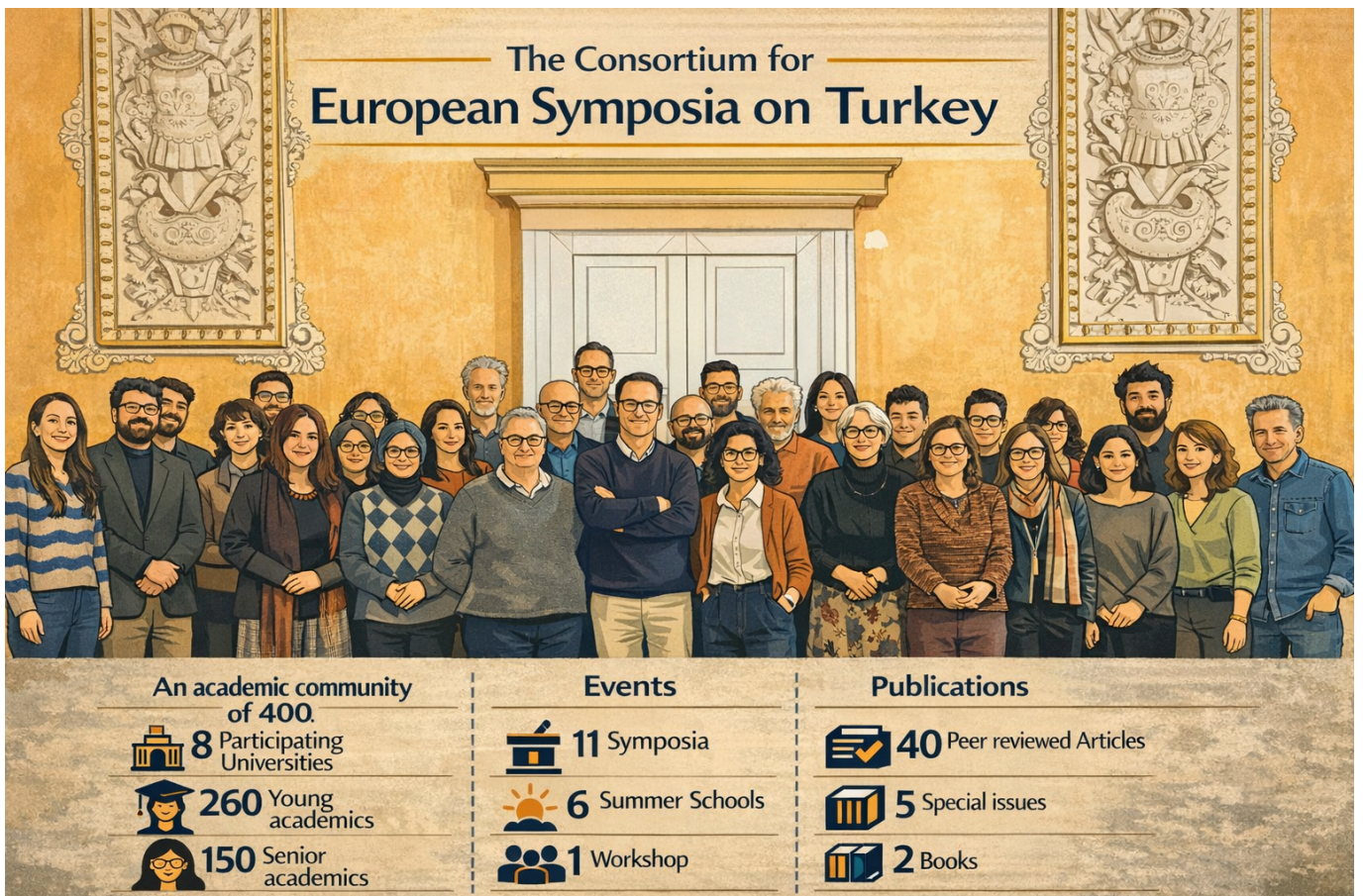


A look back on 10+ Years of **C EST**

The Consortium for European Symposia on Turkey



10+ Years of the Consortium for European Symposia on Turkey

The Consortium for European Symposia on Turkey was established in 2015, at a moment when processes of autocratization in Turkey were already under way, yet a democratic reversal still appeared within the realm of possible futures. At the founding symposium, held in October 2015 at the University of Graz, we set a broad thematic framework that would shape many subsequent events, examining *populism, majoritarianism, and crises of democracy*. Over the decade that followed, the Consortium organised sixteen events dedicated to following Turkey's transformation from a scholarly and critical vantage point, an endeavour made possible by the generous support of Stiftung Mercator and the sustained commitment of the Consortium members. Two further are in preparation for 2026.

Across symposia, summer schools, and workshops, the Consortium examined Turkey and its connected geographies with an interdisciplinary approach, bringing together studies in Politics and International relations, Sociology, Anthropology and History. These encounters focused on how power operates “from below”; how culture shapes and is in turn shaped by political institutions and their transformations; how Turkey relates to different world regions from Europe to the Middle East and from the Balkans to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea; and how it has been reconfigured by domestic autocratization and the broader transformation of the global order. In doing so, the Consortium helped to consolidate a space for a critical engagement with Turkish society and politics as well as with Turkey's evolving relationship to the European Union and an increasingly volatile international environment.

These debates found expression in six special issues published in leading academic journals, including *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, *Anthropology of the Middle East*, and *Third World Quarterly*. In addition, two edited volumes were published with Routledge, further anchoring the Consortium's work in the scholarly literature.

Over the years, the Consortium created a research community of around 400 members, with more than 260 junior scholars and around 150 established academics from universities and research institutes across Europe, and increasingly also from the United States. Cooperation with Northwestern University's Keyman Modern Turkish Studies Program added an important transatlantic dimension, creating concrete opportunities for networking, visibility, and debate for dozens of participants from both European and US institutions. At the same time, the Consortium expanded institutionally, welcoming new members from Italy, Denmark, and Spain—reflecting both the internationalisation of European academia and the growing global interest in Turkey as a critical test case for broader political, social, and cultural dynamics.

Throughout this period, cooperation with Stiftung Mercator proved to be pivotal. Through relatively modest but strategically deployed seed funding, complemented by matching contributions, the Consortium for European Symposia on Turkey consolidated its position as a defining platform within the field of Turkish Studies in Europe.

Our ambition is to deepen and expand this work in the years to come, and to continue providing a protected space of academic freedom under conditions of deepening autocratization—not only in Turkey. As the global environment becomes increasingly unsettled, Turkey's strategic role continues to evolve: whether as a partner within a West undergoing realignment or as a competitor in an increasingly contested international order. Turkey remains a critical test case for many of the central political and societal challenges of our time, making sustained, independent, and collaborative scholarly engagement not only relevant but necessary.

The Consortium Members

Consortium Timeline 2015 - 2026

Year	Month	Event	Title	Place	Convenors
	December	Symposium	New directions in conflict resolution studies	Deusto University Bilbao	Bilge Yabancı Kerem Öktem
2026	September	Summer School	The Politics of the Archive	L'Orientale University of Naples	Lea Nocera, Yavuz Köse, Elise Massicard
2026	January	Symposium	Who Owns the Nation? Imperial Imaginaries and Cultural Resistance in Contemporary Turkey	L'Orientale University of Naples	Lea Nocera, Kerem Öktem, Ipek Yosmaoğlu
2025	August	Summer School	Turkey's Culture Wars — Culture, Politics, and Society Under Autocratization	University of Turin	Kerem Öktem, Chiara Maritato, Ipek Yosmaoğlu
2025	November	Symposium	Turkey, Europe, and the Limits of Liberal Normativity	University of Copenhagen	Joakim Parslow, Paul Levin
2024	May	Workshop	Turkey-EU relations	University of Stockholm	Paul Levin
2023	November	Symposium	State, Party, and Society in Turkey and Beyond	Sciences-Po Paris	Elise Massicard
2023	September	Panel	CEST Panel on Critical Turkish Studies at the Turkologentag: How to do critical Turkish Studies	University of Vienna	Yavuz Köse, Paul Levin, Kerem Oktem, Lea Nocera, Elise Massicard
2023	August	Summer School	Turkey and/in the Balkans: Turkish power projections, transnational Islam, and social linkages	Ca' Foscari University of Venice	Kerem Öktem, Elise Massicard
2022	November	Symposium	Limits of Autocratisation: Actors and Institutions of Democratic Resilience	Ca' Foscari University of Venice	Kerem Öktem, Bilge Yabancı, Karabekir Akkoyunlu
2022	July	Summer School	Cultural Exchange and Heritage	University of Vienna	Yavuz Köse
2021	September/November	Virtual Conference + Symposium	Turkey and the Mediterranean: Linkages, Connectivities and Ruptures	L'Orientale University of Naples	Lea Nocera
2021	October	Summer School	Intersectionality	Uni Duisburg-Essen/Online	Kader Konuk, Imren Borsuk
2019	November	Symposium	The Concept of Culture and its Politicization in Turkey and the Diaspora	University of Vienna	Yavuz Köse, Lea Nocera
2018	November	Symposium	Societal Conflict and Cohabitation in Turkey and Beyond	University of Stockholm	Paul Levin
2018	January	Symposium	Politics of Emotions in Turkey and its Connected Geographies	London School of Economics	Esra Özyürek
2016	November	Symposium	Politics from Below in Turkey and Beyond	Sciences-Po Paris	Elise Massicard
2015	October	Founding Symposium	Populism, Majoritarianism and Crises of Liberal Democracy	University of Graz	Kerem Öktem, Karabekir Akkoyunlu

Consortium Facts

Publications

- ❖ **2025/6 Symposium: Special Issue in progress:** Who owns the nation? (*Journal of Ottoman and Turkish Studies*, 2027)
- ❖ **2022 Symposium: Special Issue:** Limits of autocratisation: Actors and institutions of resistance and opposition (*Third World Quarterly*, 46: 2, 2025) / **Book:** *Contesting Autocratisation Actors and Institutions of Democratic Resistance in a Global Perspective*, Abingdon: Routledge 2026.
- ❖ **2019 Symposium: Thematic Focus:** The Concept of Culture and its Politicization in Turkey (*Diyar Zeitschrift für Osmanistik, Türkei- und Nahostforschung*, 2:2, 2022)
- ❖ **2018 Symposium: Special issue:** Social Coexistence and Violence during Turkey's Authoritarian Transition (*Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 21:2, 2021).
- ❖ **2016 Symposium: Special issue:** Rethinking Power in Turkey through Everyday Practices, *Anthropology of the Middle East*, 13(2), 2018).
- ❖ **2015 Symposium: Special issue:** Exit from Democracy (*Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 16(4), 2016) / **Book:** *Exit from Democracy: Illiberal governance in Turkey and Beyond*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2018

Keynote Lectures

- ❖ Ayşe Kadioğlu (Sabanci University Istanbul)
- ❖ Donatella della Porta (SNS Firenze)
- ❖ Edhem Eldem (Boğaziçi University)
- ❖ Emmanuel Szurek (EHESS, Paris)
- ❖ Hamit Bozarslan (EHESS, Paris)
- ❖ Jenny White (University of Stockholm)
- ❖ Meltem Ahıska (Boğaziçi University)
- ❖ Thomas Diez (University of Tübingen)
- ❖ Zeynep Kezer (University of Newcastle)

Consortium Members

- ❖ Kerem Öktem / CEST Chair / Associate Professor of Politics and International Relations, Ca' Foscari University of Venice
- ❖ Paul T Levin / CEST Director / Director, Stockholm University Institute for Turkish Studies
- ❖ Jenny White / CEST Vice Director / Professor Emerita, Stockholm University Institute for Turkish Studies
- ❖ Lea Nocera / CEST Member / Associate Professor in Turkish Studies, University of Naples L'Orientale
- ❖ Elise Massicard / CEST Member / Research Professor, CNRS/CERI Sciences Po
- ❖ Yavuz Köse / CEST Member / Chair for Ottoman and Turkish Studies, University of Vienna
- ❖ Bilge Yabancı / CEST Member / Ikerbasque Fellow and Ramón y Cajal Fellow, University of Deusto, Bilbao
- ❖ Joakim Parslow / CEST Member / Assistant Professor, University of Copenhagen
- ❖ İpek Yosmaoğlu / Corresponding CEST Member / Crown Professor of Middle East Studies, Northwestern University