

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

Perspectives from Turkey in the New Millennium

University of Exeter – 27-29 May 2010

In the past decade Turkey has experienced significant economic, social, and political change. These developments are reflected in the more ambitious role the country has taken in regional and international affairs, its emergence as a presence in the global economy, in the marked expansion of its economic middle-class, and in a noticeable falling away of enthusiasm towards the goal of EU membership. With a broad focus on processes of identity formation, the aim of this conference is to come to a more informed understanding of how Turkey's self-image has been shaped by both domestic and international factors in the first decade of the 21st century. The conference will bring together a diverse range of prominent voices from within Turkey, each offering a critical analysis from the perspective of their own field of expertise. Through this inclusive approach, we hope to reach beyond our core academic audience and appeal to a range of broader ones. Conference papers and discussion will be based upon the following four panels:

Politics: The main focus for this panel is on how Turkey's political self-image has evolved in light of recent important developments, such as internal processes of political reform, and EU accession candidacy. Questions to be addressed include: how have these and other developments affected Turkey's political centre, and where has it moved to? What tensions exist between these developments and have been created as a result of them?

Economy and Society: From near economic meltdown in 2000, Turkey has grown into the world's 16th largest economy. How has its successful integration into the global economy affected its image of itself? Related to this process of economic liberalization, what tensions and opportunities exist in Turkey's increasingly open society, where issues relating to the country's pluralist social make-up are becoming more prominent than ever before? How has this contributed to the self-image of Turkey's population?

Media and Culture: The Turkish media sector has grown significantly in the last decade and discussion of subjects hitherto considered taboo has become commonplace. How have these developments served to inform the way Turkey's diverse communities view themselves in the 21st century? In that sense, what impression exists in Turkey of the way contemporary culture channels address crucial debates of identity that affect society?

The Past and the Present: What role does the past, distant and more recent, play in the formation of Turkish identity today? The country is the custodian of an extraordinary cultural heritage built up over the past five thousand years: how does this affect how society views itself in the contemporary world? How has memory been influenced by political processes?