**Research Turkey Public Conference with Dr. Alper Kaliber, “Europeanization of Public Debates and Civil Society in Turkey: The Kurdish Question and Secularism Debates Revisited”, 4 July 2014, SOAS**

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We are pleased to announce **Centre for Policy and Research on Turkey (Research Turkey)**’spublic conference entitled**“Europeanization of Public Debates and Civil Society in Turkey: The Kurdish Question and Secularism Debates Revisited”** in which **Dr. Alper Kaliber,  Marie Curie Research Fellow at European Institute, Istanbul Bilgi University** will give a talk**.** This event will take place on **Friday,** **4 July 2014** between **6:30 p.m.** and **8:00 p.m.** at **Main College Buildings, Room** **116, SOAS, University of London, WC1H 0XG.** This event is co-sponsored by the Department of Development Studies, SOAS, Neoliberalism, Globalisation and States Research Cluster. **Bezen Balamir Çoşkun,** Associate Professor at the Department of International Relations, Zirve University (Gaziantep, Turkey) will kindly chair the event**.**

**You may find the synopsis of the talk and a short biography of Dr. Alper Kaliber below.**

This event is free and open to public but it is a ticketed event that requires pre-registration. A ticket does not guarantee a seat. Please register using the link below.

[http://rt-dralperkaliber-soas.eventbrite.co.uk](http://rt-dralperkaliber-soas.eventbrite.co.uk/)

**Synopsis of the talk**

**Europeanization of Public Debates and Civil Society in Turkey: The Kurdish Question and Secularism Debates Revisited**

Contemporary Turkish politics is characterised by fierce ideological, political and economic public debates flourishing in every segment of the society. These debates, which have been re-shaping both Turkey’s domestic politics and the trajectory of Turkey’s relations with the EU/Europe, have mainly revolved around such issues as the rise of political Islam, authoritarianism, and the Kurdish question and the peace process. Civil society organizations (CSOs) from all segments of the political spectrum have been heavily involved in these public deliberations dominating Turkish politics and polarising the society. These debates have been informed by distinct perceptions and representations of Europe: Europe either as a source of democratization and improvement of civil and political rights or as a source of insecurity threatening Turkey’s territorial integrity, the core characteristics of the regime and the ‘national will’.

This seminar aims to discuss the impact of the European norms, policies and institutions (particularly the EU) on the politically mobilised civil society organizations in Turkey. It focuses on the CSOs vocal on the Kurdish question and political Islam/secularism debates and on their distinctive perceptions of EU/Europe. It assesses to what extent and in what ways the CSOs formulate their political demands and deliberative positions by making reference to specific European norms, policies and institutions, in order to justify and express their political agenda and deliberative positions. The views of civil societal actors on the current peace process and the potential roles of the European actors in the process would be another focus of the seminar.

Against this background, I suggest a clear analytical distinction between EU-ization as an EU-induced process of legislative, institutional and policy engineering, and Europeanization as a wider socio-political and normative context. The impact of Europeanization is heavily conditioned by the extent of and the ways in which Europe is used as a context by domestic actors to promote their political/social projects. Civil society actors often support EU-ization reforms and consolidation of Europeanization as a political-normative context only when they think that this best serves their causes or deliberative positions. In such cases, they strategically emphasize norms and values which they consider resonate with those of Europe. When CSOs do not support Europeanization, they either ignore or make negative references to European norms and values. They try to explain how these roles conflict with the interests of the social groups that they claim to represent. Therefore, to get a better insight into the multi-layered impact of Europeanization, one needs to look at how Europe is politically and discursively constructed and used by domestic societal and political actors.

**Short Biography of Dr. Alper Kaliber**

Alper Kaliber currently works as a Marie Curie research fellow at European Institute, Istanbul Bilgi University and conducts a research project titled ‘Europeanisation of Public Debates and Civil Society in Turkey’. He completed his PhD in Political Science at Bilkent University, Turkey. Dr. Kaliber served as a research fellow at the University of Birmingham and he worked as a consultant and researcher in the SHUR project ‘Human Rights in Conflicts: The Role of Civil Society’, funded by the European Commission’s 6th Framework Programme. He previously taught on European security, European Integration, Turkey and the European Union relations, foreign policy analysis and international relations theories at Sabanci, Yaşar, Istanbul Bilgi universities and at the University of Birmingham. His areas of interest include Critical and Regional Security Studies, European security, the Cyprus conflict, Europeanisation, civil society and conflict transformation and Turkish foreign policy. Among his recent publications are ‘Contextual and Contested: Reassessing Europeanisation in the Case of Turkey’ in *International Relations*, ‘Turkey’s Cyprus Policy: A Case of Europeanisation’, in “Turkey and the European Union: Processes of Europeanisation”, Çiğdem Nas and Yonca Özer (eds.), (Ashgate, 2012); and ‘Human Rights, Civil Society and Conflict in Turkey’s Kurdish Question’, in “Civil Society, Conflicts, and the Politicization of Human Rights”, Raffaele Marchetti and Nathalie Tocci (eds.), (United Nations University Press, 2011). He was recently awarded with Young Scientist Award by Turkey’s Science Academy (BAGEP).

ACCESSIBLE AT: <http://researchturkey.org/research-turkey-public-conference-with-dr-alper-kaliber-europeanization-of-public-debates-and-civil-society-in-turkey-the-kurdish-question-and-secularism-debates-revisited-4-july-2014-soas/>