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BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY
PLURIVERSAL EXCELLENCE IN EU STUDIES (PLURIEX)
JEAN MONNET CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
PROJECT NO: 101240978

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**From Bean to Cup and Beyond: Rethinking Europe as a Relational Space through
Coffee Culture and Blue Anatolianism**
A PLURIEX World Café Workshop
in collaboration with the Babel Initiative
5 March 2026
15:00-17:00
A205

Event Description

This interactive workshop brings together undergraduate researchers from the Babel Initiative, and students and scholars affiliated with the PLURIEX Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence, hosted at the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Bahçeşehir University, to explore how Europe can be rethought through everyday practices, cultural narratives, and Mediterranean perspectives. Designed as a rotating World Café session, the event ensures that all participants engage with multiple thematic lenses while working within a shared PLURIEX analytical framework. In this framework, Europe is approached not simply as a fixed geographical or institutional unit, but as part of a wider Europe–Mediterranean–MENA space shaped over time by movement, exchange, and shared cultural and political histories. Turkey plays a central role in this perspective, serving as a historical bridge and active participant in the circulation of people, ideas, commodities, and cultural practices linking Europe with the wider Mediterranean world. The session begins with a short historical framing intervention on Turkey–Europe relations, offering participants a narrative entry point into this relational understanding of Europe. Drawing on a long historical perspective and interdisciplinary reflections on cultural, diplomatic, and everyday interactions, this opening contribution highlights the long-standing permeability and mutual exchanges between Turkey and Europe, providing the conceptual foundation for the workshop’s thematic discussions.

The workshop is then anchored in two complementary academic interventions, identified as underexplored topics in the Mediterranean. The first draws on research into the rise of specialty coffee culture in Turkey, using coffee as a lens to examine global value chains, cultural capital, standardisation, and invisible labour. The second introduces Blue Anatolianism, a Turkish intellectual movement from the mid-20th century that highlighted part of Mediterranean, especially Western part of Anatolia, as a crossroad of civilisations and cultures rather than a boundary between civilizations. Using this perspective, the session explores how historical narratives from the region can challenge fixed ideas about where Europe begins and ends, and how cultural belonging is defined. Together, these perspectives invite participants to see Europe not as a fixed institutional and geographical entity, but as a historically connected and continuously negotiated space that is produced, experienced, and contested through everyday practices and cultural narratives. This perspective aligns directly with the mission of the PLURIEX Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence to diversify EU Studies by foregrounding underrepresented sites of knowledge production and by decentring Brussels-centric approaches to Europe.

The World Café format strongly support active participation, collaborative learning, and intercultural dialogue as well as critical reflection. Participants will rotate between thematic tables, working with short prompts, visual materials, and guiding questions to identify concrete examples, tensions, and connections. Insights will be recorded on shared discussion sheets, ensuring inclusive participation and peer-to-peer exchange between BAU and Science Po Students. By the end of the session, participants will have developed a more plural, grounded, and critically informed understanding of Europe’s cultural, economic, and civilizational entanglements extending across Turkey and the Mediterranean region. The workshop contributes simultaneously to student capacity-building, the international dimension of EU Studies, and the Erasmus+ objectives of participation, inclusion, and intercultural learning.

Learning Objectives

- Understand how everyday products such as coffee reveal connections between Europe, Turkey, and global economic networks.
- Explore how historical and cultural narratives from Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean shape how Europe is imagined and debated.
- Recognise how global production chains involve standards, inequalities, and different forms of visible and invisible work.
- Discuss how heritage, archaeology, and storytelling influence ideas about identity and belonging in Europe and its neighbouring regions.
- Practice intercultural dialogue and collaborative discussion with students from different institutions and backgrounds.
- Reflect on how studying Europe through Mediterranean and Turkish perspectives broadens traditional EU-focused approaches.

World Café Structure

Participants will rotate across three thematic tables.

- **Table 1 — Europe-Mediterranean-Turkey in Pluriversal Perspective**
- **Table 2 — Coffee, Value Chains and Europe**
- **Table 3 — Blue Anatolianism, Heritage and Imagining Europe**

Programme (Approx. 2 Hours)

1. Welcome and PLURIEX Framing (10 minutes)

Opening remarks situating the workshop within PLURIEX and Babel priorities, highlighting the need to diversify EU Studies through Mediterranean perspectives.

2. Opening Historical Framing: Turkey–Europe Relations in Perspective (10 minutes)

Selcen Öner: Short invited talk introducing the historical interconnectedness and mutual exchanges shaping relations between Turkey and Europe.

- Öner, S. (2024). *Ne Seninle Ne Sensiz - Osmanlı'dan Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'ne Avrupa ile İlişkilerin Hikayesi*. İmge Kitabevi.
- Öner, S. (2011). *Turkey and the European Union: The Question of European Identity*. Lexington Books.

3. Guest Input: Specialty Coffee in Turkey (10 minutes)

Deniz Ünan Gökten: Short expert presentation based on the featured coffee sector article:

- Deniz Ünan Gökten & Tanyeri Uslu (2022). Examining the prominent components of the emerging specialty coffee sector in Turkey, *Food, Culture & Society*, 25:1, 126-148, DOI: 10.1080/15528014.2021.1884441.

4. Guest Input: Blue Anatolianism and Alternative Civilizational Imaginaries (10 minutes)

Elif Gençkal-Eroler: Short expert presentation based on the Blue Anatolianism article:

- Eroler, E. G. (2023). An 'alternative' imagination of national identity in Turkey: the blue Anatolianists' perception of culture, civilization, and the west. *Turkish Studies*, 24(5), 788–808. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2022.2138752>.

5. Student-led World Café Round 1 (15 minutes)

Participants work in small groups at their first thematic table.

6. Student-led World Café Round 2 (15 minutes)

Groups rotate to the second thematic table.

7. Student-led World Café Round 3 (15 minutes)

Groups rotate to the third thematic table.

8. Plenary Harvest and Discussion (15 minutes)

Participants identify key insights, tensions, and implications travelling between Mediterranean and Europe.

9. PLURIEX Reflective Closing (10 minutes)

Final reflections on how Europe might be studied differently from the Mediterranean ground level.