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Images of Turkey in ANZAC media: past imperfect, present continuous, future indefinite?

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Four researchers are the members of the cross-national research project "*Public, Elite and Media Perceptions of the EU in Asia Pacific Region - Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Thailand: a comparative study*" which aims to identify, measure and raise public awareness and extend knowledge of the European Union within the four countries of the Asia-Pacific region.

**Images of Turkey in ANZAC media:
past imperfect, present continuous, future indefinite?**

Natalia Chaban, Jessica Bain, Katrina Stats, Fiona Machin

‘Trojan horse of Islam in Europe’? A ‘crucial geopolitical player’? A ‘poor and crowded Muslim nation clamouring on the doors of the Brussels’ club’? A ‘friendly voice at the table of the world’s largest consumer bloc’? Images of Turkey in New Zealand (NZ) and Australian media are as diverse and intricate as the patterns of a Turkish carpet.

A country with an overwhelming population of 71 million people, a key strategic position, Muslim heritage, and a 40-year history of accession talks with the European Community, Turkey is currently stealing the limelight in worldwide media coverage of EU enlargement. This paper employs the results of the trans-national research project “Public, Elite and Media Perceptions of the EU in the Asia-Pacific”, to survey the images of Turkey (in the context of its relations with the EU) in NZ and Australian media. The portrayals of Turkey are traced in the daily coverage of the EU in 2004 in ten newspapers and four primetime television news bulletins in the two countries. The collected imagery is discussed in terms of its pragmatic implications for the dialogue between the ‘ANZAC’ community, Turkey, and the expanding EU.

Turkey’s renewed prospects of accession into the EU stirred a wave of media attention towards the country. In 2004 Turkey was found to be the second most visible EU enlargement candidate, ahead of all countries (except Poland) that eventually acceded to the EU on May 1, 2004. The ‘ANZAC’ media framed Turkey’s quest for EU membership as a string of ‘on-going battles’ -- be it defending its positions in Cyprus, struggling against a great anxiety amongst the public in a number of European countries, or fighting for reforms guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and protection of minorities.

Arguably, the depictions of Turkey as a potentially large consumer undergoing democratic transformations and having an audible voice within the EU (if the EU agrees to its accession), give a new, more positive, taste to the negatively-flavoured images of Turkey in ‘ANZAC’ media discourse -- tragic legacies of the past keep feeding prejudices on both sides.