



A NEW ERA IN EU-TURKEY COOPERATION
THE SYRIAN CRISIS AND EU-TURKEY DEAL OF
18 MARCH 2016

*THE PERCEPTIONS OF EUROPEAN AND
TURKISH DECISION MAKERS*

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The Centre for Applied Turkey Studies (CATS) at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) in Berlin is funded by Stiftung Mercator and the Federal Foreign Office. CATS is the curator of CATS Network, an international network of think tanks and research institutions working on Turkey.

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The CATS Network research project titled “A New Era in EU-Turkey Cooperation- The Syrian Crisis and EU-Turkey Deal of 18 March 2016: The Perceptions of European and Turkish Decision Makers” studies the -5-year experience of the cooperation between Turkey and the EU within the process called “refugee crisis” with regard to its structural and motivational aspects, as well as its positive and negative outcomes. It also addresses how the 18 March 2016 Statement has impacted Turkey–EU relations more generally. At the center of its analysis, the research aims to uncover whether the EU-Turkey Deal of 18 March 2016 has improved the relations and brought the parties closer together or made the existing problems more complicated and caused the relations to fall further apart. In this context, the study aims to understand the perspectives/ views of the “decision-makers” about the EU-Turkey Cooperation on the refugee crisis in line with the following three pillars; -1EU-Turkey Deal of 18 March -2 ;2016Turkish politics vis-à-vis Syrian refugees in Turkey; -3EU-Turkey cooperation as regards the future of Syria. The main target group for interviews is the “decision-makers”, in other words, the front-line actors who operationalize policies and implement strategies; namely the politicians, bureaucrats, EU Leaders and also “elites” within each society that are in a position to shape the decisions made by the government and other stakeholders and play or played a shaping role within the context of the EU-Turkey cooperation. A team of 5 took part in this research who closely follow-up on both Turkey-EU relations and the issue of migration: Prof. M. Murat ERDOĞAN, Dr. Nihal EMİNOĞLU, Laura BATALLA ADAM, Dr. K. Onur UNUTULMAZ and Friedrich PÜTTMANN.

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Prof. Dr. M.Murat ERDOĞAN, Project Director

OVERVIEW

In Syria, where anti-government demonstrations that started in March 2011 soon turned into a civil war, precipitated one of the largest humanitarian crises and has caused mass displacement, with over 6,5 million Syrians having fled the country, while over 6 million people remain displaced inside Syria. Majority of displaced Syrians fled to neighboring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. Receiving over 3.5 million Syrians, Turkey has become the country with the largest refugee population in the world since 2014.¹ Currently, there are more than 1 million Syrian refugees in EU countries, including 770 thousand in Germany.

At the European level, EU - as an Institution- has also taken a broad approach in its response to the Syrian crisis, focusing its efforts on areas in which it can complement member states' activities. Also, it is the largest donor of humanitarian aid to Syria and the region. Facing these new challenges, Turkey also had a chance to give a momentum to its relationship with the EU and started to collaborate more on migration. The EU-Turkey Statement – also called the “Migration Deal” - signed in March 2016, presents a new orientation of Ankara's approach to migration management.² It is obvious that the Deal fostered the development of bilateral relations between Turkey and EU, however it is debatable whether this new-cooperation will positively influence Turkey's accession process or will it remain only at a “transactional” and “strategic partnership” level.

FRAME OF THE PROJECT

The CATS Network research project titled ***“A New Era in EU-Turkey Cooperation- The Syrian Crisis and EU-Turkey Deal of 18 March 2016: The Perceptions of European and Turkish Decision Makers”*** studies the -5year experience of the cooperation between Turkey and the EU within the process called “refugee crisis” with regard to its structural and motivational aspects as well as its positive and negative outcomes. It also addresses how the 18 March 2016 Statement has impacted Turkey–EU relations more generally. At the center of its analysis, the research aims to uncover whether the EU-Turkey Deal of 18 March 2016 has improved the relations and brought the parties closer together or made the existing problems more complicated and caused the relations to fall further apart. In this perspective, the two main research questions are defined as follows,

- How does the new cooperation between Turkey and the EU on the refugee crisis will reflect on Turkey's relations with the EU?
- How does the Turkey-EU cooperation on the refugee crisis will reflect on Syrian refugees in the region and the future of Syria?

In this context, the study aims to understand the perspectives/views of the “decision-makers” about the EU-Turkey Cooperation on the refugee crisis in line with the following three pillars; -1EU-Turkey Deal of 18 March -2 ;2016Turkish politics vis-à-vis Syrian refugees in Turkey; -3EU-Turkey cooperation as regards the future of Syria.

The main target group for interviews is the “decision-makers”, in other words, the front-line actors who operationalize policies and implement strategies; namely the politicians, bureaucrats, EU Leaders and also “elites” within each society that are in a position to shape the decisions made by the government and other stakeholders and play or played a shaping role within the context of the EU-Turkey cooperation.

The Research is based on both desk review and primary data collection. The desk review is followed by the data collection phase including semi-structured in-depth interviews with key informants that are the target group of the research (decision-makers and elites). Selected key informants provided information about the impact of the TR-EU Deal on Syrian refugees both in Europe and Turkey, as well as about the interpretation of Turkey’s refugee policies on the ground, and the EU’s and Turkey’s role in shaping Syria’s future. The Research team conducted a series of interviews with key informants in four different locations; EU/Brussels, Germany, France, and Turkey. While it would be desirable to increase the number of locations, the main European locations were selected to include Brussels (EU institutions), Berlin (considering both the role Germany played during the EU-TR Deal and the significance of Germany in the context of the Syrian refugee crisis), Strasbourg (European Parliament and Council of Europe), and Ankara and Istanbul (for the second pillar). In total, 70 interviews (20 Turks + 50 EU) were conducted with key informants in reliance on the highest ethical standards, and three types of anonymity were offered to the interviewees: To remain fully anonymous, to be referred to only by the name of the Institution/organization they represent, or to be mentioned by full name and institution. In this respect, the citations in this study and the list of key informants shared at the end of this report conform to the anonymity preferences of the interviewees.

The final report consists of the compilation and analysis of the interview findings and desk review within this framework. In this respect, this study is structured under 3 chapters.

The first chapter gives a background for EU-TR Deal by examining the emergence of the refugee crisis and the impact of the refugee influx on Turkey and the region, also by analyzing the step forwards, i.e EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan, in the process of the EU-Turkey 18 March Statement.

The second chapter particularly focuses on the EU-Turkey Statement itself and spotlights its preambles and examines its implementation on the ground.

The third chapter, the main findings of the research study are compiled under 13 topics, which are;

1. The motivation of the EU and Turkey for the Statement
2. The legal and political framework of the Statement
3. Implementation and Satisfaction of the Statement
4. The discussion on externalization-instrumentalization
5. The readmission agreement based on the “Safe-Third Country” principle
6. Financial Support for refugees (FRIT)
7. Resettlement to the EU
8. Visa liberalization

9. Upgrading the EU-Turkey Customs Union
10. Turkey's EU accession negotiations
11. EU-Turkey cooperation for the future of Syria
12. Turkey's decision on "opening" border to Greece
13. EU's New Pact on Asylum and Migration

The study then concludes with the overall analysis of the main research findings, and with the policy recommendations prepared in light of the research findings and analysis.

SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH FINDINGS

EU-Turkey relations are inherently challenging. It is also clear that strategic priorities play an important role for both parties in these relations. In 1959, Turkey applied, for associate membership to the EEC, in 1963 the Ankara (Association) Agreement was concluded, and in 1970 the Additional Protocol. Following from this, Turkey then applied for full membership to the EU in 1987 and a Customs Union was formed in 1995. In 1999, the EU officially granted Turkey candidate status, with accession negotiations starting in 2005. However, despite all these steps of progress, the past 63 years in EU-Turkey relations have been marked by uncertainty, crises and often misunderstandings. In this context, the 18 March 2016 Statement has a very special place in EU-Turkey relations, which previously had reached a standstill. The new challenge of the Syrian refugees and irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into the EU more generally invites one to think more comprehensively about Turkey's place in the future EU. The new transactional approach that the Statement embodies has revitalized the possibility of a generally transactional relationship between the EU and Turkey as an alternative to Turkey's inclusion in the EU as a potential member. This situation has also led to different understandings of the statement. While many in the EU have regarded the Statement solely as a migration/refugee agreement, many on the Turkish side interpreted it as a renewed commitment to Turkey's EU membership with cooperation on migration being only one element of that.

The nature of the Statement is a type of "emergency cooperation" based on respective gains and an "unofficial and unsigned document". Despite various problems in its implementation, much criticism and mutual accusations on both sides over the past six years, this deal has somehow worked and continues to play an important role in EU-Turkish cooperation. But this cooperation is not without crises. Perhaps the most important crises stem from a serious difference in expectations and thereof resulting misunderstandings, rather than any actual divergence of interests.

In the developed countries of the world, it is known that the need for immigrants on the one hand and the protectionist approach regarding asylum seekers on the other are in conflict with each other. This also applies to the EU. The rejectionist attitude of many EU member states, which receive an average of 2 million immigrants per year and whose needs are growing day by day, caused the Dublin Agreement to fail. The «New Pact on Migration and Asylum» presented by the EU Commission moreover shows that the EU will continue implementing mainly current policy. However, the regions where unstable, poor and authoritarian regimes exist in the immediate vicinity of the EU do not seem to allow the EU to stay away from the refugee crisis completely. Therefore, the EU's refugee policy needs to be rethought in a way to include not only responsibility sharing, but also realistic and sustainable policies.

This need actually became more evident with the 18 March Statement with Turkey. The EU needs to increase its quotas for refugee resettlement. It should be borne in mind that the over four million refugees and the over one million irregular migrants in Turkey constitute a risk factor with regard to the destabilization of Turkey, which would also significantly affect the EU. Cooperation for Turkish democracy and regional stability is also compulsory to preserve EU interests. Turning emerging crises into opportunities for cooperation may be good for both sides, but instrumentalization of humanitarian issues should be avoided.

About the contribution of the 18 March Statement to EU-Turkey relations and the question on whether the Statement has brought the EU and Turkey closer or driven them further apart, it could be said that this may not have a very simple and obvious answer. However, there are serious doubts about the sustainability of this type of cooperation for both parties. In this age of migration, Turkey's expectations from the EU and the EU's interests are, in fact, compatible. In order for these compatible expectations and needs to be reconciled, a Turkey that is more attentive to the rule of law, democracy, and human rights is a clear asset. Therefore, EU needs to develop a holistic and long-term strategy regarding Turkey with this in mind. Meanwhile, Turkey must strive itself for a democratic system in line with EU standards and principles. It is clear here that mutual distrust and misunderstandings significantly complicate the process. Both the generosity and support of the Turkish people for the Syrian refugees and Turkey's half-century-long effort to join the EU should not be overlooked.

It seems that the issue of refugees will always exist in EU-Turkey relations simultaneously as a major challenge and an area of cooperation. However, transactional approaches that are void of real responsibility and burden sharing only trigger the «externalization» and «instrumentalization» of refugees by each side respectively. This concept is a serious problem for both EU-Turkey relations and refugees. However, in the long run, the issue of refugees can create an area of both trust and cooperation for both the EU and Turkey.

EU-Turkey relations should also be maintained on the basis of values and principles. The criticism from the EU side not only regarding the state of democracy and rule of law in Turkey, but also in terms of international relations is understandable. There is no doubt that the rule of law and a stronger democracy will strengthen Turkey in many ways and will contribute in establishing a better and mutually beneficial relationship with the EU. The importance of the EU's role in this matter in Turkey has been sufficiently tested. Turning emerging crises into opportunities for cooperation may be good for both sides, but it is clear that long-term and sustainable policies are needed by moving away from current political problems and interests. So instead of simple and transactional relationships, a more comprehensive vision is now needed. The 18 March Statement shows us how the EU and Turkey can cooperate even on the basis of an “unsigned and unofficial document”. It is a success story for both sides. But the question now is: How can the EU and Turkey continue this cooperation without mutual trust and compatible expectations?

Migration is a permanent phenomenon that will continue to impact our society for years to come. While the number of Syrians and other refugees in Turkey over the last decade has exceeded 4.1 million, the influx of irregular migration into Turkey continues intensely. In the last 10 years, the number of refugee children born in Turkey has exceeded 735.000. Hence the need to continue the cooperation between Turkey and the EU on supporting refugees and managing migration. However, unless the EU develops a realistic and sustainable policy regarding migration and the responsibility is shared, refugees will continue to be instrumentalized by both sides. Although Turkey already instrumentalizes the issue occasionally, it is a fact that it assumes an extraordinary burden of refugees, which citizens believe to be threatening their security and welfare. It is evident that the process becomes more and more political every passing day. In fact, as demonstrated in this study, Turkey's relationship with the EU is an important chance for the EU. If Turkey had not been a country negotiating membership with the EU, instrumentalization would have been stronger. Paradoxically, Turkey is trying to use the refugee trump card not to break away from the EU, but to be closer to the EU. Therefore, Turkey-EU relations cannot be pursued only with the financial support.

Here are some recommendations within the framework of the research findings to make this cooperation more sustainable and resilient:

- Currently, there are more than 4.1 million refugees and more than 1 million irregular migrants in Turkey. However, the influx of refugees and irregular migrants is likely to continue to increase in the future. For this reason, the areas of cooperation on and after March 2016, should be reviewed and developed in a more comprehensive and long-term manner. Considering Turkey solely a “border country” protecting Europe will create short-term solutions but permanent crises. Relations between the EU and Turkey need to be developed in a broader and more comprehensive way for the sake of the relationship.
- EU's little appetite for Turkey's EU membership, especially after the coup attempt and the backsliding experienced in the field of democracy and the rule of law, followed by the tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean, has led to a stalemate in the relationship turning it into transactional cooperation based on common interests. A sustainable EU-Turkey relationship should be conducted in the framework of Turkey's EU accession. In this respect, the objective-based conditionality policy of the EU within the framework of the Copenhagen Criteria can contribute to moving Turkey away from a purely «transactional» cooperation in the medium and long term.
- EU's values and principles, as well as international law and refugee rights, should form the basis for cooperation on migration. EU's minimal resettlement efforts and externalization of its migration policy to Turkey in exchange for financial support are not sustainable. This situation allows for external pressures on the EU and lays the ground for the instrumentalization of migration. The EU should adopt more humane and sustainable policies on migration to avoid this. Increasing resettlement would alleviate pressure on Turkey and create avenues for legal migration. The UN Global Compact on Refugees lays an important ground for responsibility sharing and refugee rights. The GCR should be taken into account when sharing responsibilities between the EU and Turkey.
- A genuine responsibility-sharing would contribute to lessening the anti-Western and anti-European tendencies in Turkey.
- EU-Turkey migration cooperation cannot be only continued in exchange for financial support. At the same time, Turkey cannot expect to have all its demands satisfied just because of the role it plays as a gatekeeper. As a candidate country, Turkey is bound by the Copenhagen Criteria. Without a principled and honest relationship, transactionalism risks becoming the new framework for relations.

- The “instrumentalization” and even the “weaponization” of refugees/refugee- related issues, for example in the Turkish context, will harm Turkey and its relations with the EU. The “humane” way to prevent this is not to further strengthen the EU border, but to cooperate with Turkey more realistically and comprehensively.
- Process management for refugees is both expensive and brings along other security, political, social, and economic risks. Having only 58.000 refugees in 2011, Turkey became the country hosting the highest number of refugees in the world in 2014 until today. The large number of refugees Turkey is hosting has started to create economic and social challenges. Although the EU’s financial support for refugees in Turkey is the largest humanitarian aid in the history of the EU, it does not meet the needs nor cover the costs of refugees in Turkey. It is estimated that the average yearly cost of a refugee in the EU is € 15.000. If all the Syrians in Turkey were in the EU, it would cost the EU more than 400€ billion per year. Considering that the EU provides 1.5€ billion annually to Turkey, this translates into 375€ per refugee per year, i.e. 31€ per month. Moreover, other incalculable risks need to be considered. In this context, it is clear that the continuation of EU-Turkey cooperation on refugees is in the best interest of the EU.
- With the resources coming from the EU, Turkey has made it easier for refugees in Turkey to benefit from public services such as education and health. This support has also created an important sustainable capacity for process management. However, the total support provided by the EU and EU member states corresponds to a small part of the needs of 4 million refugees. The current situation of the Turkish economy further highlights the importance of external financial support.
- Strengthening social cohesion between refugees and their host communities should become one of the EU’s priorities for which further financial support is needed. Support for refugees in Turkey should go beyond protection and basic needs to employment and self-development.
- Albeit insufficient, the support from the EU is significant. Turkish public institutions and NGOs must be eligible to receive EU funds too, with the required supervision and transparency. The EU could set up an independent body, made up of Turkish and EU experts, to monitor and evaluate the progress made by EU-funded Turkish and international NGOs. It is extremely important to strengthen the capacities of NGOs in Turkey, which in turn, would contribute to enhancing Turkish democracy.
- Criticism of the state of democracy and human rights in Turkey is frequently voiced by the EU. It is clear that, for the EU, Turkey is a very problematic state regarding these matters. However, it is also clear that the EU’s policies on refugees are likewise problematic in terms of human and refugee rights. Efforts must be made on both sides to eliminate this contradiction.
- The EU’s problems with the current Turkish government do not necessitate ignoring the huge burden on Turkish society, in particular on the «Turkish taxpayers». How much trust in the Turkish government would be wise for the EU may be a matter of debate. But it is important to thank Turkish taxpayers, just like their European taxpayers.
- Efforts at strengthening social cohesion between refugees and their host society in Turkey also serve the interests of the EU. However, these processes also encourage permanency and leave the burden on the shoulders of Turkey to a large extent. Here, significant financial support is needed. Support for refugees in Turkey should go beyond protection and basic needs to employment and development. For this, the priority of the growth of the Turkish economy is important. Supporting the development of the Turkish economy will have a positive impact on both refugees and their Turkish host community. Otherwise, the aid will quickly lose its effect.
- Steps must be taken to accelerate visa liberalization talks and encourage Turkey to fulfill the remaining 6 benchmarks. The deficiencies in the roadmap for visas can be eliminated in a short time if there is a basis of mutual trust.

- EU policymakers are not capable of distinguishing between the problems they experience with the government of Turkey and the efforts and sacrifices made by Turkish society. It is important in this respect to take into consideration the sacrifices made by Turkish citizens. Just like EU citizens, the fact that Turkish citizens pay taxes and that the Turkish state provides support to refugees with these taxes is not sufficiently taken into account. Expressing the sacrifice of Turkish citizens for the expenditures made in Turkey with the terminology of «taxpayer» will be symbolically an important message for Turkish society.
- Updating the Customs Union is in the interest of both Turkey and the EU. The technical talks that started at the beginning of 2022 are a constructive step forward. Significant progress can be made if political tensions don't derail the process.
- The EU can make special arrangements and reductions in customs tariffs to encourage registered work of refugees in Turkey and to contribute to the Turkish economy.
- Other complex areas in Turkey-EU relations, such as the Cyprus issue, and the position of Greece and France in this respect constitute an obstacle for the revision of the Customs Union. Turkey should be encouraged to take measures to eliminate the financial-economic sanctions or blocks against Cyprus. However, this cannot be expected to happen independently of Turkey's EU membership perspective.
- The countries that suffered the most in the process related to refugees were Turkey and Greece on the side of the EU. Many problems between Turkey and Greece cannot be expected to disappear in a short time. However, the issue of refugees can be a very suitable area for developing common policies and cooperation.
- The role of local administrations in the integration of refugees is critically important. However, local administrations lack the necessary resources to manage the large number of refugees they host. Municipalities receive financial support from the central budget according to their number of citizens. Regardless of their status, there is no financial support for foreigners. In other words, municipalities do not have the resources to serve refugees. More than 4 million refugees in Turkey live in urban areas. Since Turkey does not have a central settlement plan, there are serious numerical imbalances between cities, districts, and neighborhoods. If the EU plans to allocate 120€ per refugee per year and 10€ monthly to municipalities (which translates into 500€ million a year), it would be extremely effective for the provision of services to these refugees. Similar to the ESSN financial support program run by the EU, a project-based financial support program would also contribute to strengthening social cohesion. Last but not least, strengthening local governments would also have a positive impact on Turkish democracy.
- To what extent Turkey could be considered a safe country for some and not for others? It would be wise to ensure that Turkey is not solely responsible for the human rights of refugees.

EU-Turkey Statement, 18 March 2016: Analytical Categories and Evaluation of their Implementation in Practice

EU-Turkey Statement, 18 March 2016	
Analytical Categories and Evaluation of their Implementation in Practice (The gray areas are for cooperation on refugees and immigrants, and the blue areas are for Turkey-EU relations and Visa liberalisation.)	
Statement (original)	Evaluation
<p>Preamble 1¹ :</p> <p>Today the Members of the European Council met with their Turkish counterpart. This was the third meeting since November 2015 dedicated to deepening Turkey-EU relations as well as addressing the migration crisis.</p> <p>Turkey and the European Union reconfirmed their commitment to the implementation of their joint action plan activated on 29 November 2015. Much progress has been achieved already, including Turkey's opening of its labour market to Syrians under temporary protection, the introduction of new visa requirements for Syrians and other nationalities, stepped up security efforts by the Turkish coast guard and police and enhanced information sharing.</p> <p>Moreover, the European Union has begun disbursing the 3 billion euro of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey for concrete projects and (...)</p> <p>On 7 March 2016, Turkey furthermore agreed to accept the rapid return of all migrants not in need of international protection crossing from Turkey into Greece and to take back all irregular migrants intercepted in Turkish waters. Turkey and the EU also agreed to continue stepping up measures against migrant smugglers and welcomed the establishment of the NATO activity on the Aegean Sea. At the same time Turkey and the EU recognise that further, swift and determined efforts are needed.</p> <p>In order to break the business model of the smugglers and to offer migrants an alternative to putting their lives at risk, the EU and Turkey today decided to end the irregular migration from Turkey to the EU.</p>	<p>With regard to this action point, Turkey has done its part and the transits from Turkey to the Greek islands have significantly declined.</p> <p>Refugees and migrants arrived in Greece from Turkey by sea before and after March 2016:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Before the Statement:</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">41,038 :2014 856,723 :2015 173,450 :2016</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Total (Before the Statement): 1.071.211</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">After the Statement</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">21,998 :2016 29,718 :2017 32,494 :2018 59,726 :2019 9.714 :2020 4,331 :2021</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Total (After the Statement): 157.981</p>

¹ Throughout the Statement in the Preamble and even in some of its articles, there is a confusion between the important cooperation on refugees and EU-Turkey relations. Cooperation on migration and EU-Turkey relations were discussed in a complex format (What does that mean?). In order to analyze it better, a thematic distinction has been made in this study, and the subject of EU-Turkey relations in this chapter has been evaluated separately.

<p>Preamble 2:</p> <p>Work has advanced on visa liberalisation and in the accession talks, including the opening of Chapter 17 last December.</p>	<p>Regarding visa liberalization for Turkey, 66 out of 72 criteria were met. However, the expected change, especially in the anti-terrorism law, could not be implemented in Turkey at that time due to domestic political reasons. With the transition to the state of emergency after the coup attempt of 15 July 2016, it was not possible to make the necessary arrangements for visa liberalization.</p> <p>The 17th chapter in the EU-Turkey membership negotiations was opened in December 2015. However, this process could not continue, especially after 15 July 2016.</p>
<p>Action Points 1:</p> <p>All new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into Greek islands as from 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey. This will take place in full accordance with EU and international law, thus excluding any kind of collective expulsion. All migrants will be protected in accordance with the relevant international standards and in respect of the principle of non-refoulement. It will be a temporary and extraordinary measure which is necessary to end the human suffering and restore public order. Migrants arriving in the Greek islands will be duly registered and any application for asylum will be processed individually by the Greek authorities in accordance with the Asylum Procedures Directive, in cooperation with UNHCR. Migrants not applying for asylum or whose application has been found unfounded or inadmissible in accordance with the said directive will be returned to Turkey. Turkey and Greece, assisted by EU institutions and agencies, will take the necessary steps and agree any necessary bilateral arrangements, including the presence of Turkish officials on Greek islands and Greek officials in Turkey as from 20 March 2016, to ensure liaison and thereby facilitate the smooth functioning of these arrangements. The costs of the return operations of irregular migrants will be covered by the EU.</p>	<p>The practice of returning to Turkey for those who crossed to the Greek islands after 20 March 2016, as stated under this action point, has remained limited.</p>

<p>Action Points 2: For every Syrian being returned to Turkey from Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU taking into account the UN Vulnerability Criteria. A mechanism will be established, with the assistance of the Commission, EU agencies and other Member States, as well as the UNHCR, to ensure that this principle will be implemented as from the same day the returns start. Priority will be given to migrants who have not previously entered or tried to enter the EU irregularly. On the EU side, resettlement under this mechanism will take place, in the first instance, by honouring the commitments taken by Member States in the conclusions of Representatives of the Governments of Member States meeting within the Council on 20 July 2015, of which 18.000 places for resettlement remain. Any further need for resettlement will be carried out through a similar voluntary arrangement up to a limit of an additional 54.000 persons. The Members of the European Council welcome the Commission's intention to propose an amendment to the relocation decision of 22 September 2015 to allow for any resettlement commitment undertaken in the framework of this arrangement to be offset from non-allocated places under the decision. Should these arrangements not meet the objective of ending the irregular migration and the number of returns come close to the numbers provided for above, this mechanism will be reviewed. Should the number of returns exceed the numbers provided for above, this mechanism will be discontinued.</p>	<p>This arrangement, which is defined as the -1to1- rule, hardly was implemented. Until the end of 2021, the number of those who returned to Turkey from the Greek islands pursuant to the 1-1 rule was around 2,100. The EU, on the other hand, received 32,182 refugees from Turkey. Although the EU seems to have kept their word more on this issue, its contribution on this matter remains minimal, considering the constantly increasing number of Syrians in Turkey, which exceeds 3.7 million by now. However, the promise of the EU to prevent irregular migration and to allow regular migration has not been fulfilled. While it was foreseen in the Statement that the EU member states would receive 72) 54+18) thousand people from Turkey on a voluntary basis, there was no progress because the EU countries did not reach an agreement among themselves on this issue. If the EU side had fulfilled this promise, it should have taken at least 324 to 432 thousand people from Turkey in the last 6 years. Considering that the number of refugees the EU received from Turkey during this period was 32 thousand, one must conclude that the envisioned burden sharing remained but lip service.</p>
<p>Action Points 3: Turkey will take any necessary measures to prevent new sea or land routes for illegal migration opening from Turkey to the EU, and will cooperate with neighbouring states as well as the EU to this effect.</p>	<p>Before the Statement in 27 Months (20-2015-2014 March 2016), a total of 1 million 71 thousand people passed from Turkey to the Greek islands, while this number remained at 156 thousand in the 68 Months (5.5 years) after the Statement. In other words, it decreased from 40 thousand to 2300 people per month. Turkey has fulfilled its promise on this issue to a very large extent.</p>
<p>Action Points 4: Once irregular crossings between Turkey and the EU are ending or at least have been substantially and sustainably reduced, a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme will be activated. EU Member States will contribute on a voluntary basis to this scheme.</p>	<p>This point is also highlighted in Action Point 2. However, the EU side did not implement it.</p>
<p>Action Points 5: The fulfilment of the visa liberalisation roadmap will be accelerated vis-à-vis all participating Member States with a view to lifting the visa requirements for Turkish citizens at the latest by the end of June 2016, provided that all benchmarks have been met. To this end Turkey will take the necessary steps to fulfil the remaining requirements to allow the Commission to make, following the required assessment of compliance with the benchmarks, an appropriate proposal by the end of April on the basis of which the European Parliament and the Council can make a final decision.</p>	<p>(same as Preamble) Regarding visa liberalization for Turkey, 67 out of 72 criteria were met. However, the expected change, especially in the anti-terrorism law, was not implemented in Turkey at that time due to domestic political reasons. With the transition to the state of emergency after the coup attempt of 15 July 2016, the work on the issues that need to be done especially in the anti-terrorism law was stopped. (Note: While the number of unfulfilled criteria was 6 in 2016, this number decreased to 5 according to the 2021 EU Commission Turkey Report.)</p>

<p>Action Points 6: The EU, in close cooperation with Turkey, will further speed up the disbursement of the initially allocated 3 billion euros under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey and ensure funding of further projects for persons under temporary protection identified with swift input from Turkey before the end of March. A first list of concrete projects for refugees, notably in the field of health, education, infrastructure, food and other living costs, that can be swiftly financed from the Facility, will be jointly identified within a week. Once these resources are about to be used to the full, and provided the above commitments are met, the EU will mobilise additional funding for the Facility of an additional 3 billion euro up to the end of 2018.</p>	<p>Within the scope of FRIT, the EU has done its part in terms of the € 3+3 billion resource planned to be allocated for refugees in Turkey. Although it is the EU's fastest fund transfer project in its history, only 4.2 billion of the 6 billion € from 2016 to 2018 reached Turkey. * While the EU side mentioned that the money was given on a project basis, one of the reasons for the delay was the slow progress of the projects in Turkey. The Turkish side, on the other hand, stated that the need had exceeded 6 billion, that Turkey had spent money on its own since 2011, and that financial support should be more comprehensive and faster. *(EU Delegation Turkey (2021) The EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey (https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/negotiations-status/turkey/eu-facility-refugees-turkey_en))</p>
<p>Action Points 7: The EU and Turkey welcomed the ongoing work on the upgrading of the Customs Union.</p>	<p>Especially due to the developments after 15 July 2016, no progress has been made in updating the Customs Union.</p>
<p>Action Points 8: The EU and Turkey reconfirmed their commitment to re-energise the accession process as set out in their joint statement of 29 November 2015. They welcomed the opening of Chapter 17 on 14 December 2015 and decided, as a next step, to open Chapter 33 during the Netherlands presidency. They welcomed that the Commission will put forward a proposal to this effect in April. Preparatory work for the opening of other Chapters will continue at an accelerated pace without prejudice to Member States' positions in accordance with the existing rules</p>	<p>Although the Statement of 29 November 2015 First Turkey-EU Summit held in Brussels on Turkey's membership negotiations is invoked here, which led to Chapter 17 being opened on 14 December 2015 and Chapter 33 being opened during the Dutch presidency on 30 June 2016, no real progress could be made with regard to this Action Point. In 2018, the European Council still did not agree with Turkey. It was decided not to open or close the chapter.</p>
<p>Action Points 9: :The EU and its Member States will work with Turkey in any joint endeavour to improve humanitarian conditions inside Syria, in particular in certain areas near the Turkish border which would allow for the local population and refugees to live in areas which will be safer.</p>	<p>On the Syrian territory close to Turkey's border, the action plan foresaw a collaboration for the people of that region and the refugees to eliminate the reasons for irregular migration in the first place. This could not be realized. Turkey's operations in 2017 and beyond have generally been described by the EU as a population policy effort against the Kurds and even as an «occupation». However, for the EU, Turkey's presence in Syria is of increasing importance today. It is clear that if the Turkish government plans to withdraw from Syria, this will create a very serious concern for the EU.</p>

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

A total of 70 interviews were conducted in the research. The list below consists of people who have given permission to be named in these interviews.

Alphabetize by last name:

- Meral Açıkgöz, Refugee Integration Consultant
- Sinem Adar, CATS Associate
- Egemen Bağış, Ambassador of Turkey to the Czech Republic, Former Minister for EU Affairs in Turkey
- Natasha Bertaud, Deputy Head of Cabinet Margaritis Schinas
- Anne Brasseur, Former President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE
- Jean-Louis de Brouwer, Director of the European Affairs Program at the Egmont Institute
- Bernard Brunet, Head of Turkey Unit, DG NEAR
- Ercan Demirci, Former Deputy Undersecretary of Ministry of National Education
- Ruud van Enk, Team Leader of the EU Facility for Refugees
- Martin Erdmann, Former German Ambassador to Turkey
- Kaan Esener, Permanent Rep. of Turkey to the CoE
- Thorsten Frei, Member of the German Bundestag (CDU), Spokesperson on Domestic Policy
- Marcin Gabriec, Head of Migration Policy Team, EU Delegation in Turkey
- Nigar Göksel, Turkey Project Director ICG
- Erdoğan İşcan, Former Permanent Rep. of Turkey to the CoE, Member of UN Committee Against Torture
- Omar Kadkoy, Policy Analyst TEPAV
- Ayhan Kaya, Professor at İstanbul Bilgi University (Turkey)
- Fuat Keyman, Professor at Sabancı University (Turkey)
- Kemal Kirişçi, Fellow at Brookings Institute
- Gerald Knaus, Chairman of ESI
- Torsten Moritz, General Secretary of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe, Brussels
- Çiğdem Nas, IKV Secretary General
- Haluk Nuray, IKV Brussels Representative
- Murat Onur, Social Development Specialist, World Bank
- Ömer Önhon, Turkey's Former Ambassador to Damascus
- Nacho Sánchez Amor, MEP
- Jan Schierkolk, Project manager in EU-Turkish cooperation
- Frank Schwabe, German Politician of SPD Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE since 2014
- Drahoslaw Stephanek, Former Special Rep. for Migration and Refugees of the CoE
- Alexandra Stiglmeier, ESI's Senior Analyst in Brussels
- Tineke Strik, MEP

- Murat Şen, Turkish Diplomat
- Hasan Ulusoy, Former Ambassador of Turkey in Brussels
- Calin Ungur, Deputy Head of Turkey Division, EEAS
- Heiko Wimmen, Analyst at International Crisis Group (Beirut)
- Catherine Woollard, Secretary General European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)
- Başak Yavçan, Professor at TOBB ETÜ-University of Economics&Technology (Turkey)
- Selim Yenel, Former Turkish Ambassador to the EU & president of Global Relations Forum
- Murtaza Yetiş, Former Advisor to President (Turkey)

Anonymous Interviews:

- Employee at INGO in Ankara
- EU Diplomat1-
- EU Diplomat2-
- EU Diplomat3-
- EU Diplomat4-
- EU Diplomat5-
- EU Diplomat6-
- EU Diplomat7-
- EU Diplomat8-
- EU Diplomat9-
- EU Diplomat10-
- EU Diplomat11-
- EU Diplomat12-
- EU Diplomat13-
- Case worker at INGO1-
- Case worker at INGO2-
- Case worker at INGO3-
- Case worker at INGO4-
- Policy Officer in International Organization in Ankara1-
- Policy Officer in International Organization in Ankara2-
- Political advisor from an EU Country1-
- Political advisor from an EU Country2-
- Political advisor from an EU Country3-
- Project Officer from an INGO in İstanbul1-
- Project Officer from an INGO in İstanbul2-
- Project Officer from an NGO in İstanbul3-
- Representative from an INGO in Ankara
- Representative from NGO in Ankara1-
- Representative from NGO in Ankara2-

PROJECT TEAM



Prof. Dr. M. Murat Erdoğan

Director of Mülkiye Migration Research Center of Ankara University, Faculty of Political Science (SBF) since February 2022 . He is a fellow at CATS (Centre for Applied Türkiye Studies) of SWP (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik -German Institute for International and Security Affairs) in Berlin since April 2022. Prof. Erdoğan is a member of UNESCO-Turkey Communication Committee, board member of ISC of Metropolis International and the President of IGAM-Academy.

He was between 2022-2017 at Turkish German University. He was also the founder and director of the Migration and Integration Research Center of TAGU between November 2017, May 2021; and Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Center (HUGO) between 2017-2009. He carried out the research of his PhD dissertation from Ankara University -titled “The Relationship between Turkey and European Union after the Cold War: Geo-Strategic Perspective: 2005-1990”- as a Konrad Adenauer Foundation fellow at Bonn and Freiburg universities in Germany in 1999-1994. In 2003-2000, Erdoğan worked at the Press Section of the Turkish Embassy in Berlin, and later as an advisor at the Turkish Grand National Assembly’s Commission on EU Integration (2004), also as an advisor to the president of Turkish Higher Education Council, and to the Rector of Hacettepe University (2016-2012). Prof. Erdoğan carried out studies as a visiting researcher with different fellowships at universities of Duisburg-Essen (2007), Berlin-Humboldt (2010), Oxford University (2012), Johns Hopkins University-AICGS (2014), and Humboldt University (2019).

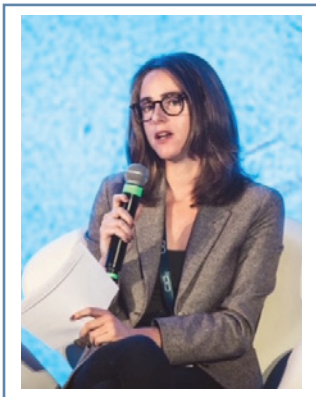
His academic research interests include voluntary and forced migration, refugees, people of Turkish origin living abroad, EU, political cartoons, political behaviour, Islamophobia, and Germany and Turkish foreign policy. He conducts comprehensive public opinion research on a regular basis and publishes particularly the “Euro-Turks-Barometre” on Turkish diaspora in Europe, and the “Syrians Barometer” on Syrians in Turkey.



Dr. Nihal Eminoglu

Dr. Nihal EMİNOĞLU obtained her PhD in political science at Strasbourg University (France) and currently an Assistant Professor in International Relations at Çanakkale 18 March University in Turkey. She is also member of Research Centre on Asylum and Migration (IGAM) in Ankara and coordinator of IGAM Academy. She is appointed as a member of European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) at the Council of Europe (CoE) in respect of Turkey, as from 1 January 2023.

She also worked as an expert in different departments of the CoE, such as Parliamentary Assembly, Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities and Democratic Institutions and Governance Division. Eminoglu has still serving as a consultant for Intercultural Cities (ICC) Programme of the CoE and work with Turkish municipalities to strengthen their relationship with ICC and membership process. She also conducted many international projects on social cohesion of Syrians in Turkey and collaborated with vary international organizations and INGOs, such as UNCHR, UNWFP, ICMPD, GIZ, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, DSP. At national level she is closely working with Presidency of Migration Management on migration related topics, and with Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) on Turkish diaspora in particular in France.



Laura Batalla Adam

Laura Batalla Adam has worked in the European Parliament for nearly a decade advising members on a wide-range of policies and she has established her own initiatives like the EU-Turkey Forum, a cross-party non-partisan platform for high-level discussion and cooperation between Turkey and the EU, of which she is the Secretary General since 2014. Batalla is a leading and well-respected voice in EU-Turkey relations. She speaks in depth about Turkey in conferences and seminars and

writes policy papers and op-eds on EU-Turkey relations, Turkish politics, Turkey's foreign policy and migration. She is part of several expert groups like Mercator's Turkey Europe Future Forum and a member of distinguished leadership networks like the Marshall Memorial Fellowship of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. She holds two Bachelors degrees in Political Science and Journalism and a Masters degree in European Political and Administrative Studies from the College of Europe.

*She is contributing to this research project in her personal capacity.



Dr. K. Onur Unutulmaz

Dr. K. Onur Unutulmaz (M) is an Assistant Professor in International Relations at the Social Sciences University of Ankara (<https://ui.asbu.edu.tr/>). His areas of expertise include international migration, integration of immigrants, migrant education policies, and diasporas and transnationalism. Unutulmaz has received his Masters degree in Migration Studies and doctorate in Anthropology, both from the University of Oxford, in 2009 and 2014, respectively.

He has written extensively on the issues of migration and migrant integration. Dr. Unutulmaz also has an extensive experience in large-scale international and national research projects, which include the Horizon 2020 Project “Adult Education as a Means to Active Participatory Citizenship (EduMAP)”, 2019-2016 (www.uta.fi/edumap); “Global Muslim Diaspora: Muslim communities located in “non-Muslim” countries”, 2018-2016, which was funded by the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), Organisation of Islamic Cooperation; and, “Assisting Turkey in Developing a National Integration Policy”, 2017 -2016, which was carried out by International Organization for Migration (IOM) Turkey Office and Turkish Directorate General of Migration Management.



Friedrich Puttmann

Friedrich Püttmann works as a subcontracted political analyst for Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Ankara. He previously worked in the same role for the Berlin-based think tank European Stability Initiative (ESI) and the Istanbul-based think tank Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) as well as as a project co-ordinator at the arts centre Qendra Multimedia in Pristina, Kosovo. Friedrich holds two Masters degrees with Distinction in Sociology and European Studies

from the University of Oxford and the London School of Economics where he received prizes for the best dissertation and best overall performance. He has published academic articles in the Journal of Muslims in Europe and Südosteuropa Mitteilungen, the journal of the German Southeast Europe Association, and has worked at Boğaziçi University as an editing assistant on books about Turkey that appeared with Princeton and Cambridge University Press. During his studies he also spent time in the Netherlands, France and Turkey, and was a recipient of Germany's most prestigious scholarship from the German National Academic Foundation (Studienstiftung) as well as of scholarships from Hamburg Foundation for the Support of Research & Culture and Rotary Club.



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