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## Focus: Turkey and Europe



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## Foreword and Introduction

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Nobody could deny that the subject of ‘Turkey and Europe’ involves important and touchy issues. If Turkey were to join the European Union, it would become – with its 74 million inhabitants and still high birth rates – the second largest (after Germany), and eventually the largest, member state. Since the 1960s, there was a strong influx of Turks to virtually all European countries, and especially to Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and France. This trend continues, albeit with ever diminishing size, to the present day. If the records of Turkish-born immigrants and residents of Turkish descent are included, the ‘Turks’ in Germany and Austria account for almost 3% and in the Netherlands almost 2% of the national populations. There are also significant Turkish communities in Denmark and France. In recent years, especially since 2000, there has been an increasing return migration – including some better qualified members of the second generation. Yet this does not equal the rate of immigration to Europe from Turkey so far. The Turkish communities in all European receiving countries are still growing due to continuous reinforcement from the homeland, strong links with home and a still somewhat higher birth rate.

Apart from a lingering image of ‘the Turk’ as arch-enemy of Christendom, these Turkish communities also make ‘Turkey and Europe’ a delicate issue. Turkish migration must be seen in connection and in comparison with other population flows to European Countries since the Second World War, beginning with the expellees and ‘displaced persons’ of the post-war years. Yet migratory patterns have changed in recent times. The bulk of migration from the 1950s and 1960s to the 1970s and 1980s, the Guest Worker (*Gastarbeiter*) migration, consisted of poverty-related movements from rural-agrarian to urban-industrial locations. This has changed now, as have research approaches, moving somewhat beyond the traditional emphasis on ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors from one location to another, and examining diverse mobilities of varying scale and duration, which

characterise the early twenty-first century. The trend toward long-term settlement that implies some form of integration into the host society as well as a withering of links with the society of origin is now replaced by circular forms of mobility, where return to the homeland remains an option. It seems that contemporary mobility is generally more free, less constrained by necessity than before. These developments may also be observed in Turkish migration to Europe over the last half century. Yet they are less pronounced. In other words, Turkish migration to European countries differs significantly from the migration patterns of other countries.

First and foremost, Turks tend to be Muslims. In Germany and Austria they form by far the largest Muslim community. Even if religion and religion-related culture are downplayed by modern secularists, and even if the mere mentioning of these aspects is frowned upon as a form of ‘othering’ by people concerned about contemporary political correctness, they are still there and they still matter. And they matter significantly more to the immigrant Muslims than they do to the European (nominally) Christian majorities. Immigrant Muslim communities have begun to be perceived by Europeans who still identify as Christians as well as by those who disregard or avoid religious themes (and prefer to talk instead about democracy and human rights) as threats to the long-established European identity. There is general concern about social cohesion and the cultural integration of national societies in Europe. Current discussions about the headscarf and veil, ritual butchering, circumcision and the oppression of women are symptomatic of this concern. The cold water now thrown over previous policies of ‘multiculturalism’ has also led to the astonishing success of right-wing parties with a special anti-Muslim or anti-Turkish flavour, which characterises public discourse in countries such as Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France and the Netherlands. In Germany, home of Europe’s largest Turkish community, there is at present no such party, which might be connected with its special political correctness in the wake of the Holocaust. Yet the recent ‘Döner murders’ by a racist terror group cause some worry.

Such developments could yield the impression of an emerging Islamo-phobia or Turko-phobia in the European psyche. Yet they could also have something to do with the behaviour and attitudes of the Turkish communities in Europe themselves. A recent survey of the Turkish community in Germany pointed out that ‘immigrants of Turkish descent are throughout more poorly integrated than other groups of immigrants’.<sup>1</sup> They have, by far, the lowest educational level, the lowest income and professional qualification, the lowest language proficiency and the fewest contacts with the majority population. All this distinguishes them significantly from other immigrant groups – even from other Muslim groups – who sometimes perform even better in some of these respects than the native Germans. Nevertheless, about three-quarters of Turkish immigrants want to stay on in Germany.<sup>1</sup> Thilo Sarrazin in his best-selling pamphlet *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (2010) – the greatest publishing success in post-war Germany – maintains that this can be understood only by realizing that these Turks immigrated not so much to Germany as into the welfare state.<sup>2</sup> *Mutatis mutandis*, it could be said that the stumbling block for Turkish-European relations is the large and still growing Turkish communities in European countries who make use of the social security systems while being reluctant to become integrated, an attitude that is supported by their

religious commitment. The anthropologist Köken Ergun, who worked among Turks in Berlin, the largest Turkish urban community outside Turkey, concludes that its religious and religion-related support structure provide an 'escape from the challenges of integration'. The Turkish 'parallel society', as it has been labelled in the media, aims at a 'perfect family, perfect community' free from all 'foreign' German influences – as may have existed at home in the good old days.<sup>3</sup> If Ergun's diagnosis is correct, and if this can also be borne out for other European countries, it would be all the more important to understand the basis for this reluctance of Turks to integrate into their host European societies.

This *European Review Focus on Turkey and Europe* presents the essays delivered by speakers in a two-day conference on 'Turkey and Europe: Mobility, Creativity and Trajectories' held in Vienna, 15–16 October 2012. As a first attempt on the subject, the conference did not discuss all the themes adumbrated above. It focused on structural aspects and thus on macro-societal issues. A follow-up meeting could deal with cultural aspects and the micro-dimension somewhat neglected here. Nonetheless this event in Vienna did open up fresh avenues of potential dialogue not only among diverse disciplinary perspectives, but also between 'hosts' and 'guests' in migrant situations.

The essays could be grouped into three categories. The first one deals with images of Turks in Europe. It is worthwhile recollecting that Turkish migration to Europe since the 1960s was preceded by a centuries old, frequently warlike, interaction between the Ottoman Empire and European powers. How far the traditional image of 'the Turk' as the 'arch-enemy of the Christian name' (*Erzfeind christlichen Namens*, Martin Luther) still influences the perception of Turkish immigration in the last half century as a menace remains a moot question. Max Haller (Graz) in 'The Image of Turkey in Europe Today' is sceptical. He sees long-lasting repercussions of momentous events (such as the Turkish sieges of Vienna in 1529 and 1683) rather as constructs by 'actors in the public arena' that serve political purposes. His paper is based on social statistics and opinion polls. Thus, he shows that present opinions on the Turks and on Turkey vary with the size and composition of resident Turkish communities. Accordingly, the images of Turks vary considerably among European countries. Nevertheless, the Turks as a people are generally regarded more favourably than is Turkey as a state and a potential EU-member. Haller is the only contributor to this volume who expressly takes issue with Sarrazin, whom he accuses of 'dramatizing' the evidence of an insufficient integration of Turkish migrants in Germany. He compares this strategy to the xenophobic propaganda of some influential tabloids and of right-wing political movements in many European countries. Yet, he argues, this propaganda would not work if negative stereotypes of Turks and Turkey did not exist in the population. Haller ascribes these stereotypes to transitory competition on the labour market and frictions in everyday life rather than to the constructs of intellectuals or politicians – yet both may combine of course. He endeavours to present a hopeful picture instead of the gloom pervading the discussion of Turkish immigration and concludes by advocating Turkish EU-membership.

The Balkan peninsula was for centuries under Turkish domination. Its peoples thus came to know 'the Turk' as a hard master rather than as a migrant worker. The *longue durée* of the Turkish image is thus more obvious in Balkan countries than it is in the rest of Europe. In 'Black Turk – Magnificent Sultan: Turkish Images in the Balkans Today',

Natalia Stagl-Škaro (Dubrovnik) takes up these issues. With data gleaned from linguistics, folklore studies and literary scholarship, she shows that the predominant image of the ‘Black Turk’ in the Balkans does not refer to real Turks. Instead, each ethno-linguistic group refers to its neighbouring enemy as the ‘Black Turk’, even if this enemy is Christian and speaks a Balkan language. This ‘othering’ of one’s enemy as the Turk is the product of age-old infighting, whereby Balkan peoples have manipulated the attributes of ‘Balkanness’, ‘Europeanness’ and ‘Turkishness’ to their own advantage. The dire political-military consequences of these practices surfaced *ad nauseam* in the ‘Yugoslav war’ of 1991–95. This heritage is especially dangerous for minority groups where the dominant identification of ethno-linguistic with religious groups is not applicable, such as in cases of Bulgarian-speaking Muslims (‘Pomak’) in Bulgaria and Greece or Serbian-speaking Muslims (‘Gorani’) in Kosovo. The real Turk in the Balkans, however, is no longer an enemy, but everybody’s friend. Thus, the inveterate resentment against Turkish rule is transferred to various neighbour-enemy groups, whereas ‘the Turk’ is romanticised or even glorified.

These two image-oriented papers are followed by five others, which take stock of Turkish immigration to Europe since the 1960s. In ‘Turks in Europe: Migration Flows, Migrant Stocks and Demographic Structure’ Heinz Fassmann (Vienna) and Ahmet İçduygu (Istanbul) present an overview over the last half century. Turkish immigration, starting in the 1960s was ‘Guest Worker’ migration and intended as temporary; it peaked in the early 1970s with almost 100,000 newcomers per year. After that, recruitment was stopped, yet immigration continued in the form of family re-unification. Thus, stable migrant communities developed, especially in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. Since the 1980s, these communities have been joined by great numbers of asylum seekers, of whom a great if unknown quantity managed to stay on as irregular migrants. Now these three major sources of Turkish migration to Europe are drying up, whereas return migration has set in. Fassmann and İçduygu argue that Turkish communities in Europe are slowly but inevitably taking the road towards integration. Educational levels are improving, some occupational and social mobility has begun. The fertility rate has declined sharply, almost approaching that of the native population. Are thus the apprehensions that ‘parallel societies’ might develop in the core of EU unfounded? Not quite. On the one hand, the majority of Turkish migrants are happy to live in Europe. Even if they find themselves at the bottom of the social scale in most countries, they compare their present situations positively with that at home or with that of their parent generation. On the other hand, they feel excluded and/or exclude themselves from their host societies. Recent forms of transnational mobility rather reinforce their standoffishness.

This overview of Turkish migration to Europe is put into its political context by Yale Ferguson (Rutgers and Cambridge), ‘Turkey and the EU: A Changed Context’, which tackles the thorny question of Turkey’s EU-membership. When Turkey applied for full membership in 1987, the prospects seemed bright. But then a kind of obstacle race set in and today, after a quarter century, it is still doubtful whether the country will achieve full membership or will have to content itself with something called a ‘special relationship’, as suggested by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Over this time, much has changed in Turkey as well as in the EU. Turkey has made ‘astonishing economic progress’ and

has confirmed its status as a reliable ally of the West. Yet its political interests in the Near East diverge from those of the EU (for example, in respect to Cyprus and Israel). The concerns raised by the reluctance of the Turkish communities in Europe to fully take part in the national life of their host countries are raised to another plane by the Turkish state. Its special brand of developmental authoritarianism, its treatment of minorities and dissidents, and its ambiguous attitude towards re-Islamization, have induced many European statesmen to procrastinate. Meanwhile, the EU has also changed significantly. Its recent economico-political crisis makes it easily understandable that Turkey itself is less and less keen to join it. Ferguson is sceptical on the question if a full membership will ever be reached.

Gudrun Biffl in 'The Role of Migration in Economic Relations between Europe and Turkey' shows how Turkey's rapid, albeit volatile, economic growth has changed its migratory patterns. Presently, out-migration to Europe is more or less balanced by return migration from Europe. Out-migration has become, to a large extent, chain migration that involves poorly qualified persons from rural areas. Among return migrants are frequently better-qualified members of the second immigrant generation who make use of the changed economic situation back home. Turkey nowadays invests much in its industrialization and in its foreign trade. The major challenge to this successful policy, however, is the 'insufficient investment in the "productive potential" of its workforce'. Educational levels in Turkey are too low for the rapid modernization of the national economy. This affords opportunities for the better qualified return migrants, whereas the out-migration of poorly qualified persons relieves the labour market and prevents social unrest. Turkish migrants now resident in European countries have mostly settled there for good. In some cases they are already ascending the socio-economic ladder, 'starting up ethnic business and bridging Europe and Turkey through trade'. This formation of resident Turkish minorities is supported by their clinging to the culture of the homeland and by chain migration. Biffl is aware of the problems generated by this behaviour, yet does not discuss them since they remain outside the scope of the primarily economic emphasis in her study.

For many authors, entrepreneurs constitute the segment of Turkish communities most involved in mainstream European society. Tüzün Baycan (Istanbul) deals with this segment in 'Turkish Entrepreneurship in Europe'. It has grown out of the *Gastarbeiter* communities when these realized that they would be spending the rest of their lives in their host countries. Baycan presents statistics from Turkish sources that show the huge part played by Turks nowadays in the European economy. This is mostly the achievement of the so-called 'New European Entrepreneurs' of Turkish descent. Already in the first generation, 'ethnic enterprises' such as snack bars, repair shops, retail stores or agencies for travel to Turkey have been founded. More dynamic and also more numerous were enterprises established by better educated and integrated members of the second generation, who sought to move beyond the 'niche economy'. Statistics are not as reliable as one would wish, yet it can be said that in Europe today there are over 100,000 of these firms active in all branches, even the most advanced ones, of the economy and employing almost half a million people. Employees include others than ethnic Turks, and the firms are increasingly active in other countries besides their country of residence and Turkey. There are, however, some setbacks, such as lack of capital and the rather low

number of female entrepreneurs, aspects that are connected with the special features of Turkish communities. Nonetheless, the 'New European Entrepreneurs' can no longer be labelled as 'migrants'. Holding citizenship of European countries and identifying with Europe, they also enrich the European economy by their ability, *inter alia*, to make use of the Turkish diaspora network.

Pieter Emmer (Leiden) in 'Turkey and Europe: The Role of Migration' relates the reluctance of European politicians to make Turkey an EU-member to the size of the Turkish resident minorities in their respective countries. The most negative attitudes are shown in Germany, the country with the largest Turkish minority. In this respect, the comparison between Germany and the Netherlands is instructive. This comparison has also been made by Baycan with similar results. In the Netherlands, there is a sizeable Turkish minority of over 300,000. Problems in the Netherlands are similar to those in Germany: low incomes, insufficient education, higher rates of unemployment, crime and fertility than in the native population. Yet Turks in the Netherlands are better integrated, they have a better social standing, a higher percentage has achieved citizenship and many have become entrepreneurs. What are the causes of this relative success? It is important that Turks in the Netherlands are not at the bottom of the social scale as they are in Germany, for there are two other even less prestigious migrant groups: Muslims from Africa, especially from Morocco, and Caribbean Dutch. However un-edifying this explanation may sound to some, Emmer draws a positive conclusion: 'the best antidote to (Turko-phobic) sentiments is the flourishing Turkish communities in Europe'.

The last two papers in this Focus on Turkey and Europe discuss special issues complementing the stocktaking papers. Ayse Caglar (Vienna) in 'Turkey and Europe: Locating Homeland Ties and Re-scaling Migration Scholarship' looks at this topic 'beyond the national scale and ethnic lens'. The data used for social-structural comparison are generally collected by statistical offices and other agencies working within the national scale. This 'methodological nationalism' blurs differences between migrant categories and trajectories. Thus, for example, all holders of Turkish passports migrating to European countries are indiscriminately labelled as 'Turks'. Caglar opens up broader horizons on issues of space and place, focusing particularly on cities as the framework for her analysis. This enables her to consider not only the significance of specific local conditions, but also globalization and trans-nationalism in research on migrations. A case in point is the Syriac Christians from Turkey's southern province of Mardin. They began to leave Turkey in the 1980s due to their discrimination by the government. Up to the present, they cared little for their country of origin, but rather related to the Syriac diaspora and to other minority groups. But now some of them are forming associations preparing their return to Mardin. Why could this happen? Apparently the Syriac Christians are now better treated by the Turkish government, which wants to demonstrate to the West a minority-friendly image and to develop this province with the help of money coming from international organizations.

Esma Durugönül (Antalya) distinguishes in 'Turkish Return Migration from Europe' between three basic options facing potential return migrants: either to stay where they are (the option still taken by the overwhelming majority), to return home (the option originally preferred by both 'hosts' and 'guests', but now infrequently taken), or

‘to come and go’ (circular migration). The longer members of the first migrant generation stayed in their host countries, the more they became integrated – even if they remained insufficiently acculturated. But now there is a tendency, especially in the second and third generations, to choose the other two options. The occasion for making this decision comes generally at retirement. Among those who return to Turkey are many who have failed economically or have not been able to adapt to European work ethics, climate or culture. There are also some success stories, as mentioned in other papers, of young, well-educated entrepreneurs. The fastest growing segment is, however, the ‘comers and goers’, who by keeping up a residence in both countries turn into circular migrants. As harbingers of an emergent pattern of trans-nationalism, they are dear to postmodern migration scholarship. Yet behind such decisions hides a multiplicity of frequently conflicting motives that Durugönül disentangles with great care. Her task is not made easier by the comparative scarcity of relevant data. In particular, the ‘comers and goers’ are difficult to pin down. There also seems to be a blank on what the return migrants expect to find in their homeland, which might appear to them to have changed almost beyond their recognition.

The following welcoming addresses by Anne Buttimer, Vice-President of Academia Europaea, and by Arnold Suppan, Vice-President of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, tell somewhat more about the ideas behind this conference and especially thank the persons and institutions without whose help it could not have become such a success. Even if the papers collected here do not make up an exhaustive survey of the half century of Turkish migration to Europe, its side-effects and the problems<sup>4</sup> connected with it, they still hopefully afford a useful introduction into its present situation.

## References

1. H.-H. Noll and S. Weick (2001) Zuwanderer mit türkischem Migrationshintergrund schlechter integriert. Indikatoren und Analysen zur Integration von Migranten in Deutschland. *ISI (Informationsdienst Soziale Indikatoren)* 46 (July), p. 6.
2. T. Sarrazin (2012) *Deutschland schafft sich ab. Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt). Sarrazin was senator for finances in the City Government of Berlin and board member of the German Federal Bank, from which position he had to step back due to the stir his pamphlet has caused in Germany. The expression ‘immigration into the welfare state’ he used in his numerous interviews. The Turkish community in Germany he discusses especially in Chapter 7 on immigration and integration (pp. 255–330). He took special care to present much statistical data that are not easily accessible and which have been, as far as we can see, not discussed with sufficient impartiality by his many detractors.
3. K. Ergun (2011) Nostalgia Overdose. Homesickness in Wedding Ceremonies of the Turkish-German Community in Berlin. *Paragrana*, 20, pp. 121–128.
4. The problem of discussing the problems connected with Turkish migration to Europe is that it is considered bad manners to speak of ‘problems’. This point is also made by Max Haller in his paper. When we applied for funding for this conference, we were advised not to use the term ‘problem’. Literature on Turkish migration to Europe is studded with well-meant euphemisms, safeguarding clauses and a kind of forced cheerfulness. Nonetheless, we uphold that scholarship should not take over the job of politicians to paint *la vie en rose*. This would mean a disservice to both the migrants and their host societies by preventing true-to-fact action.

### **About the Authors**

**Anne Buttimer** has been Emeritus Professor of Geography, University College Dublin since 2003, and Fellow of the Royal Irish Academy, Royal Geographical Society (UK) and Academia Europaea. She served as Council Member of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) 1974–77, of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) 1996–99, and as President of the International Geographical Union (IGU) 2000–2004 – the first female and first Irish person to be elected to this role.

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