focus MIGRATION

COUNTRY PROFILE
Turkey
No.5 April 2009

Turkey

With the exception of the influx of the Turkish Muslim populations of the Ottoman Empire who were left out of its newly established borders in 1923, Turkey has largely been considered a country of emigration throughout much of the 20th century. Emigration that began in the early 20th century with the outflow of non-Muslim populations from Anatolia as a part of the nation-building process, continued in the 1960s and 1970s in the form of labor migration by Turkish nationals, mainly to Western Europe and especially to Germany. It continued until recent times in the form of family reunification and asylum applications, resulting in the establishment of a large Turkish community within the borders of the European Union.

However, the last quarter of the 20th century witnessed a significant change in Turkey's role in international migration regimes as it transformed into a transit and immigration country. Migration patterns involving Turkey have been changing constantly since then. International events, such as the 1973 oil crisis, the Iranian Revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, the end of the Cold War, the Gulf War, the break-up of former Yugoslavia, and the recent conflict in Iraq, have affected migratory movements to and from Turkey. The geographical position of the country as a bridge between the politically and economically unstable East and the prosperous West also adds to the complexity of the migratory movements. Turkey has become a country of transit for irregular migrants from Asian countries, such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan, who are attempting to reach the West. In the meantime, it is turning into a country of immigration for EU professionals and retirees. There are also regular and irregular migrants from former Soviet Bloc countries arriving in the country. Additionally, Turkey is becoming a safe haven for asylum-seekers originating from neighboring countries of the Middle East and beyond.

Turkey's transition from being a predominantly migrant-sending country to a migrant-receiving country, and its ongoing effort to become a member of the European Union, are generating pressure to reform Turkish immigration policies, a big challenge that Turkey has to face in the very near future.

Background Information

Capital: Ankara

Official language: Turkish

Area: 783,562 km^2

Population (2007): 70,586,256

Population density (2007): 90 per km^2

Population growth (2006): 1.3%

Foreign nationals as percentage of population (2006): 0.3%

Labor force participation rate (2008): 45.2 %

Unemployment rate (2008): 11.7 %

Religions (2005): 99.8% Muslim, 0.2% Orthodox Christians, Catholics, Protestants and other non-Muslims

Historical Trends in Emigration and Immigration

1923-1960s: Creating the Turkish nation-state

The Republic of Turkey is the successor to the Ottoman Empire, which was partitioned by the Allied Powers after World War I. The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire began with the Young Turk Revolution that reversed the suspension of the Ottoman parliament by Sultan Abdul Hamid II, marking the onset of the Second Constitutional Era. It ended with the aforementioned partitioning, which prompted the establishment of the Turkish national movement for independence under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in 1919. What followed was the War of Independence that ended with the signing of

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HWWI Hamburgisches WeltWirtschafts Institut

the Treaty of Lausanne and the establishment of the Republic in 1923.

During the first years of its existence, the new Republic of Turkey became a landscape for two parallel international migratory movements: the mass departure of non-Muslim minority populations (e.g., Greek Orthodox Christians to Greece) and the influx of those Turkish Muslim populations from the Ottoman Empire (especially the Balkans) that were left outside of the borders of the Republic. Not only in Turkey have policies aimed at nation-building been the cause of international migratory movements; the first half of the twentieth century was very much marked by state and nation building, generating large waves of forced migrations and deportations:[1] Thus, these initial population transfers were the result of the independence movements and the nation-building efforts of the new states emerging from the Ottoman Empire. This was a trend that began with the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, which resulted in mass departures of Muslim populations from the Balkans to Anatolia and the exodus of Christians in the opposite direction. Within this context, two notable movements were the deportation of the Armenians during 1915/16, which led to the loss of many lives among the Armenian population in Anatolia, and the population shift between Turkey and Greece in 1922/23, which resulted in the exchanging of a large proportion of Anatolia's Christian population for Muslims in Western Thrace.

Table 1: Muslim and non-Muslim populations in Turkey, 1914-2005 (in thousands)

Year	1914	1927	1945	1965	1990	2005
Muslims	12,941	13,290	18,511	31,139	56,860	71,997
Greek Orthodox	1549	110	104	76	8	3
Armenians	1204	77	60	64	67	50
Jews	128	82	77	38	29	27
Others	176	71	38	74	50	45
Total	15,997	13,630	18,790	31,391	57,005	72,120
Percentage of non-Muslims	19.1	2.5	1.5	0.8	0.3	0.2

Sources: From 1914 to 1965, Ottoman and Turkish censuses and statistical abstracts; from 1990 to 2005, personal communication of representatives of non-Muslim communities to the author

During the final days of the Ottoman Empire and the first twenty years of the Republic of Turkey, the country's non-Muslim minority populations were driven out. The majority of the members of non-Muslim communities migrated to a range of countries in the world. To illustrate, while there were almost 1.5 million Greek Orthodox Christians living in Turkey in 1914, their number had decreased to 104,000 by 1945; a large number presumably had moved to Greece (see Table 1). Similarly, the Armenian community declined from 1.2 million to 60,000 persons between 1914 and 1945 (see Table 1). Successively, large numbers of Muslims belonging to a range of ethnic groups arrived in Turkey from the Balkans. Between 1923 and 1939, approximately 400,000 Muslims emigrated from Greece to Turkey. As a consequence of this process of ethnic homogenization, the demographic structure of the population of the Republic was considerably altered: the percentage of non-Muslims among the population dropped from 19% before World War I to 2.5 % thereafter. While non-Muslims composed approximately 3 % of the total population of Turkey in the 1920s, their number had decreased to 0.2 % by 2005 (see Table 1).

At the same time, exclusive priority was given to encouraging and accepting immigrants who were either Muslim Turkish speakers, or who were officially regarded as belonging to ethnic groups that would assimilate into a Turkish identity without difficulty, i.e., Bosnians, Circassians, Pomaks, and Tatars from the Balkans.[2] From the foundation of the Republic in 1923 until 1997, more than 1.6 million such immigrants arrived and settled in Turkey and were readily accepted into society.

The early years of the Republic of Turkey were a period of homogenization of the population within its borders into a Turkish-Muslim identity. This process was consolidated by the state policies in the early 1930s. The *Law on Settlement* of 1934 is the major piece of legislation that sustains this conservative state philosophy even today. The law contains terms on who can immigrate, settle, and acquire refugee status in the country, giving notable preference to immigrants and refugees of *'Turkish descent and culture'*.

1950s-1970s: Labor emigration to Western Europe

Turkish emigration to Western Europe dates back to the economic boom of the 1950s and the resulting high demand for manual labor in Western European receiving countries. In signing labor migration treaties, sending countries such as Turkey saw an opportunity to decrease their rate of unemployment and develop their economies through emigrant remittances. Turkish immigrants were late in joining this post-World War II flow of workers. There were three main reasons for this delay. First, Turkey lacked the colonial ties (such as those between Morocco and France) that many of the labour-supply countries had with the labour-recruiting countries of Western Europe. Second, other labour-supply countries were geographically closer to the recruiting countries. Finally, Turkey did not have an established tradition of emigration like other labour-supply countries such as Italy and Spain. Nevertheless, people from Turkey now comprise the largest immigrant community in Western Europe.

The first bilateral agreement that allowed Turkey to export labor to Western Europe was signed with Germany in 1961 and was followed by agreements with Austria, the Netherlands, and Belgium in 1964, France in 1965, and Sweden and Australia in 1967. Similar agreements were also signed with the United Kingdom in 1961, Switzerland in 1971, Denmark in 1973, and Norway in 1981. The underlying hope was that these 'guest workers' would come back to Turkey with new skills and help transform its agricultural economy into an industrial one. Despite this hope, many of the guest workers chose to

settle in their host countries, and many brought their families to live with them. Moreover, it was mostly those with vocational training and skilled laborers that chose to emigrate rather than the unskilled ones, although they were often joined by largely unskilled female migrants.

Turkish labor migration to Western Europe peaked in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and lost momentum with the economic decline that followed the 1973 oil crisis, and especially with Germany's decision to end its guest worker program. In the following era, emigration from Turkey to Western Europe instead took place via family reunification and marriage, and, later, also asylum-seeking.

1960s and 1990s: Diversification of labor emigration and Turkish asylum-seekers

When the 1973 oil crisis induced an economic downturn in Western Europe that led to a decline in Europe's intake of migrant labor, oil-rich Arab countries became destinations for Turkish workers who were looking for opportunities abroad. Migration between Turkey and the Arab countries can be grouped into three stages: from 1967 to 1980 there was an increasing influx of Turkish migrants into Libya and Saudi Arabia; from 1981 to 1992 the range of destination countries expanded to include Iraq, Kuwait, Yemen, and Jordan; and from 1993 onwards there was a steady decline in the number of Turkish migrants heading to the region.

This migration pattern was largely a result of global political and economic developments. Similar to the effect of the 1973 oil crisis to Europe, the Gulf Crisis of 1991 caused a decline in migration movements to the Arab world. At the same time, with the end of the Cold War, the break up of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), new destinations emerged for Turkish migrants.[3] Initially there were contract-based migrations to Russia, Ukraine, and the Turkic Republics, where Turkish construction companies had been awarded contracts for renewing infrastructure. Later, Romania and Poland became destination countries for contract-based Turkish migrants. In 1995 the number of Turkish emigrants admitted by the CIS countries was almost double the number received by Arab countries.

In the 1960s, the national economic situation and the policies of the Turkish state had caused the emergence of a new migration pattern. Under pressure due to growing unemployment in the country, Turkey had embarked on a search for new markets to carry on with its labour-exporting activities. In fact, the timing of the bilateral labor recruitment agreement with Australia in 1967 was a part of the Turkish emigration strategy of "falling back on another country if one showed signs of saturation and diminished absorption ability".[4] By the end of the century, Turkish immigrant communities in traditional immigration countries, such as Australia, Canada, and the United States, had grown considerably.

Yet, emigration from Turkey has not always been in the form of labor migration. Since the early 1980s, the intervention of the Turkish military in civilian politics and the escalation of violence resulting from the efforts to subdue the PKK,[5] a separatist Kurdish movement in south eastern Turkey, have caused many Turkish citizens to seek asylum in Western Europe. Movements related to asylum and refuge are an important aspect of Turkish migration and are dealt with in detail below (see Refuge and Asylum).

Since 1979: Becoming a country of transit and destination

Apart from the influx of Muslim populations in the earlier years of the Republic, the first wave of migrants to Turkey arrived from Iran in 1979, following the regime change in that country. Emigration to Turkey was a temporary arrangement for most of the Iranians, who subsequently departed for Europe or North America. This was followed by the arrival of Iraqi and Bulgarian citizens, who also sought refuge in Turkey (see Refuge and Asylum).

While many migrants have come to Turkey seeking protection from political persecution and violence (see Refuge and Asylum and Irregular Migration), Turkey has also received many economic migrants, especially from the former Soviet Republics. Recently, Turkey has even been attracting an increasing number of immigrants from Western Europe. There are several reasons for this change. Firstly, on the macro level, the transition to democracy and the liberalization of the economy after the military coup of 1980, as well as the general impact of the entire globalization process, has turned Turkey into a more desirable place for immigrants. Secondly, since the second half of the 1980s, Turkey has become an attractive vacation destination for Western European tourists who later chose to come back for longer periods.[6] Thirdly, the start of accession negotiations with the EU has played a role in making Turkey an acceptable choice for long-term residence among EU nationals.[7] All in all, in addition to being a country of origin and transit, Turkey is becoming a country of destination for a considerable number of foreign nationals, through both regular and irregular channels.

Immigration and Integration Policy

Although Turkey has rather conservative policies on the permanent settlement of foreigners, migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees, the visa system of the country has been somewhat liberal. The *Turkish Passport Law* that outlines the conditions under which foreigners can obtain entry visas states that those who want to live in Turkey must enter the country legally. Additionally, some foreign citizens must possess an entry visa. However, until recently, citizens of more than 40 countries did not need to obtain a visa to enter the country, and nationals of more than 30 countries could obtain one at the border. Moreover, regardless of their continuing participation in irregular migration, citizens of Iran, Morocco, and Tunisia still enjoy three-month visa exemptions.[8]

The major legal instrument that decides the residence and working status of foreigners in Turkey is the *Turkish Law on Foreigners* (Law No. 5683, dated 15 July 1950). It states that foreigners must apply for a residence permit that is issued by the local police department after a detailed investigation. There is also the *Law on the Residence and Travel Activities of Foreigners* (Law No. 7564), which regulates the conditions for the residency and settlement of foreigners. Frequently, a work

permit or proof of sufficient financial resources is a prerequisite for a residence permit. In addition, the applicant must demonstrate hat he/she has no intention of disturbing public order in the country. Only after the fulfillment of these conditions may a residence permit be issued. It is valid for one year, then renewable for a period of three years and then again for a period of five years.

The new *Law on Work Permits for Foreigners* (Law No. 4817, dated 15 March 2003) is the most important legislative change regarding the economic activities of foreigners. The new Law nullified the discriminatory *Law on Activities and Professions in Turkey Reserved for Turkish Citizens* (Law No. 2007, dated 16 June 1932) that barred foreign citizens from practicing certain professions. The new Law reflects the attitude that work permits for foreigners be allocated on the basis of labor market demands, not nationality. It gives foreigners easier access to work in Turkey by allowing work permits to be issued to individuals rather than companies, and institutionalizes the process by making the Ministry of Labor and Social Security the only authority in charge.[9]

Local authorities in some municipalities where migrant communities are clustered, such as Zeytinburnu in Istanbul, have begun to develop integration policies and practices towards migrants, but their impact has been rather negligible without backing from Ankara, the capital. At the national level, integration policy is not yet on the political agenda.

Citizenship

In Turkey, citizenship is granted in three main ways. In *ex lege* acquisition of citizenship, children of Turkish mothers or fathers are automatically granted citizenship, whether the child was born in Turkey or not. If they cannot acquire the citizenship of their parents, children born in Turkey to non-Turkish citizens are also granted citizenship automatically (*ius soli*). Turkish citizenship can also be awarded on other grounds at the discretion of the authorities.[10] The *Citizenship Law* (Law No. 403, dated 11 February 1964) is the main piece of legislation on citizenship. Recent amendments to the Law have had important implications for protecting the rights of immigrants and reflect changes in Turkey's approach to migration management.[11] Prior to one amendment in 2003, female foreigners could obtain Turkish citizenship immediately by marrying a Turkish national. Many female irregular migrants obtained permits this way via arranged marriages. At the same time, it was rather hard for male foreigners to obtain Turkish citizenship through marriage. Now the conditions for citizenship through marriage have been standardized for both genders. The amended law states that foreigners who are married to Turkish nationals can become citizens of the Republic on the condition that their marriage continues over three years. Children of such couples are immediately granted Turkish citizenship.

In an effort to maintain ties with Turkish migrants abroad, who increasingly opt for permanent residence in their host countries and choose to renounce their Turkish citizenship, the Turkish state amended its citizenship law to legalize dual citizenship in 1981. The large number of Turkish citizens living abroad and their economic importance for Turkey explain why tolerance of dual citizenship has increased in the country. A variety of émigré Turkish organizations, especially in Germany, have worked hard to persuade policy-makers in Turkey to assist integration into their host countries without having to renounce their inheritance rights in Turkey.[12] However, such openness in Turkey's citizenship law and perception of dual citizenship has not changed the fact that many Turkish migrants living abroad still have problems acquiring the citizenship of their host countries.[13] Yet, this lack of recognition on the part of host states does not prevent them from becoming involved in political activities. In Germany, where dual citizenship has been a controversial issue, migrant community associations are encouraged. Accordingly, there are a total of 2,014 active Turkish-migrant associations in Germany.[14] While 668 of these can be defined as religious associations, 670 are involved in socio-cultural, 343 in athletic, and 333 in other activities. A significant number of these associations have a connection with Islamic movements, and a considerable number of them represent the Kurdish diaspora.

Refuge and Asylum

Since the turbulence of the early 1980s, including a military coup in 1980 and the rise of the Kurdish conflict, Turkey has increasingly become a source of asylum-seekers looking for refuge in other parts of the world. According to statistics made available by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), between 1981 and 2005 over 664,000 Turkish citizens applied for asylum, mostly in various European countries. Refugee recognition rates have differed from country to country, but generally have been low, as many have tried to use asylum channels as a means of emigrating for other purposes. Since the conflict between the Turkish armed forces and the PKK grew less intense in the second half of the 1990s, and with the political reforms that were initiated at the same time, asylum applications by Turkish citizens have decreased.

On the other hand, Turkey has always been a country of destination for asylum-seekers looking for a safe haven. As stated earlier, the *Law on Settlement*, which was adopted in 1934 (Law No. 2510, dated June 14, 1934) is the main legislation that sets the terms on who can immigrate, settle, and acquire refugee status in the country. As part of the new Republic's nation-building project, the law demonstratively gave, and still gives, preference to immigrants and refugees of Turkish descent and culture. Asylum-seekers with such backgrounds are permitted to stay in the country on an unofficial basis, settle, work, and acquire Turkish citizenship once they have resided in Turkey for five years without any interruptions. The new Settlement Law of September 2006, which amended the 1934 Law, still upholds this bias.

One group of 'Turkish descent and culture' that has received protection is Bulgaria's minority Turkish community. During the last years of the communist regime in Bulgaria, harsh assimilation policies were directed towards the Turkish and Pomak minorities. Among other things, these policies forced members of these minority groups to change their names and banned

use of the Turkish language. Ethnic conflicts between the Bulgarian security forces and the Turkish minorities ensued. To reduce these tensions, in 1989, the Bulgarian government expelled 300,000 Turks and Pomaks, who then sought shelter from this political persecution in Turkey. Following the regime change in Bulgaria in 1990, a third of these refugees returned, while the rest remained and acquired Turkish citizenship. With Bulgaria's recent accession to the EU, an increasing number of these Turks of Bulgarian origin have again applied for Bulgarian citizenship so as to attain the right to travel to Bulgaria and other EU countries without a visa.

Similarly, around 20,000 Bosnians were granted temporary asylum in Turkey during hostilities in the former Yugoslavia that occured between 1992 and 1995. Since the adoption of the Dayton Peace Agreement, many of these refugees have returned to Bosnia. Likewise, in 1998 and 1999, about 18,000 Kosovars escaped to Turkey and enjoyed protection from the ethnic strife in their homeland. A majority of them returned with the lessening of the conflict.[15]

The 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees is the second main legal document that has implications for refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey. By becoming a signatory of the Convention in 1962, Turkey accepted international obligations concerning asylum and refugees, but maintained a geographical limitation on the origin of persons seeking protection. It did not assume any obligations with regard to asylum-seekers and refugees from outside Europe. As it did not have specific regulations regarding the status of non-European asylum-seekers, Turkey applied its domestic laws to foreigners entering the country. According to the law, foreigners are expected to possess valid identification upon their arrival in the country and must depart within the permitted period of stay. Turkish authorities considered non-European asylum-seekers as people under temporary protection who would leave the country one way or another: either to resettle in a third country, if their asylum applications to UNHCR were accepted, or to return to their country of origin, if UNHCR rejected their applications.

In recent times, Turkey has become a major country of asylum for people escaping the mayhem caused by the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War, and the current conflict in Iraq. Turkey has also been under pressure to align its asylum system with that of the EU. This would require Turkey to lift its geographical limitation on the origin of asylum-seekers and introduce a fully-fledged national asylum system. Turkish authorities are uneasy about lifting the limitation, fearing that Turkey could become a buffer zone for the EU, which is making its own asylum system more restrictive. Moreover, in response to growing refugee pressures from Iraq, Somalia and Sudan, Turkey has been tightening its asylum policy.

In November 1994 Turkey adopted the 'Regulation on the Procedures and Principles Related to Mass Influx and Foreigners Arriving in Turkey or Requesting Residence Permits with the Intention of Seeking Asylum from a Third Country'. This was done in an effort to handle the large inflows of asylum-seekers from the Middle East and, to a certain extent, to limit the engagement of UNHCR in determining the status of refugees. The regulation imposed a number of preconditions for filing asylum applications, which were arbitrary, restrictive and unrelated to the merits of the claims. Therefore, it was highly criticized by the international community. According to Turkish government statistics, more than 50,000 asylum applications were received between 1995 and 2007, and about 25,000 of the applicants were recognized as refugees (see Table 2).

In March 2004, Turkey, in cooperation with Denmark and England, embarked on an Asylum-Migration Twinning Project in the context of accession negotiations with the European Union. The project's goal was to bring Turkey's asylum and migration procedures in line with those in the acquis communautaire of the European Union. The final result of the Twinning Project was a 'National Action Plan on Asylum and Migration (NAP)'. A new asylum law is being prepared as part of the NAP, but Turkey has not designated a clear-cut timeframe for the adoption and implementation of the law.

Table 2: Applications under the 1994 Asylum Regulation, 1995-2007

Country	Applications	Accepted cases	Rejected cases	Pending cases	Withdrawls and Secondary protection
Iraq	16,972	5,919	5,209	4,707	1,137
Iran	28,963	18,316	3,225	6,048	1,374
Afghanistan	1,480	312	280	860	28
Russia	80	15	43	15	7
Uzbekistan	231	70	76	73	12
Azerbaijan	36	3	24	1	8
Other Europe*	125	53	59	3	10
Other**	2,467	339	369	1,676	83
Total	50,364	25,027	9,285	13,393	2,659

* Includes Albania, Belgium, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Macedonia, Romania, Switzerland, Ukraine and Yugoslavia

** Includes Algeria, Bangladesh, Burma (Myanmar), Burundi, China, Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, India, Israel, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Malaysia, Moritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United States of America, Yemen, Zaire.

Source: Foreigners Department of the Ministry of the Interior

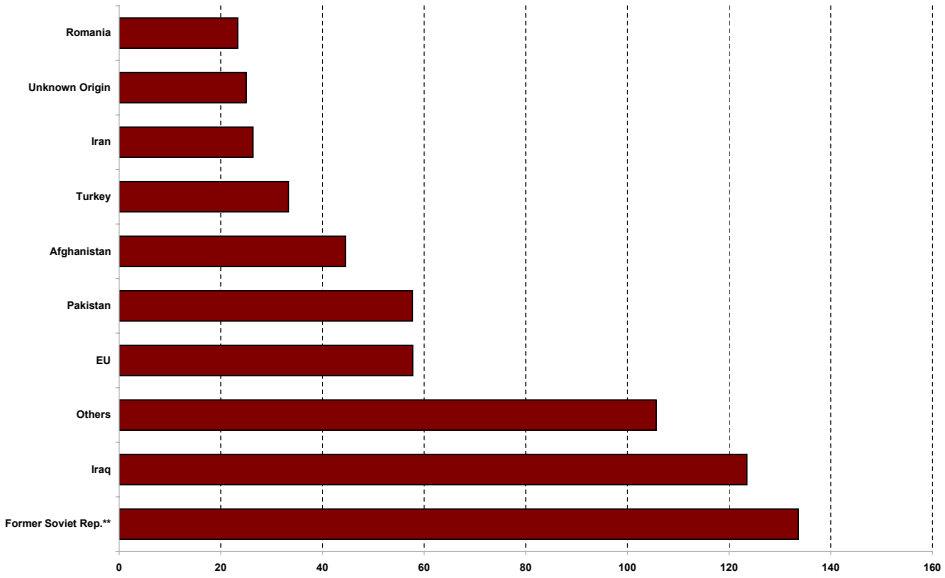
Meanwhile, the living conditions for asylum-seekers and refugees in Turkey are unfavorable. Asylum-seekers and refugees are usually allocated to one of thirty 'satellite cities' scattered across Turkey, which limits their ability to develop personal networks and find informal working opportunities. Although they receive a residence permit, they receive no support from the state, being expected to support themselves. Their residence permit, which is valid only for the municipality its holder is assigned to, has to be renewed every six months, at a fee of around 150 euros per person.

Moreover, despite laws on patient rights and emergency health assistance that do not differentiate between

citizens and non-citizens, access to health services is still one of the most serious problems confronted by migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, and especially rejected asylum-seekers who remain in the country undocumented. In case of emergency, they are dependent on either the assistance of non-governmental organizations or the kindness of a doctor who will overlook their illegal status. Few hospitals provide treatment without requiring legal identification.

There are no specific public assistance programs for migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. Although the Social Assistance and Solidarity Fund must offer services to everybody within the borders of Turkey who have financial troubles, their services are restricted to those with residence permits. The same problem exists with regard to education opportunities for migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. Provision 42 in the Turkish constitution grants everyone the right to education, without discrimination on the basis of race, religion or nationality, but again, the person must be able to present a residence permit.

Figure 1: Breakdown by nationality of irregular immigrants arrested by Turkish security forces, 1995-2007 (in thousands)



** Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Belarus
Source: Data obtained from the Foreigners Department of the Turkish Ministry of the Interior (MOI)

Foreign Population

In 2006, according to figures provided by the Directorate of General Security, there were over 187,000 foreigners residing in Turkey with residence permits (see Table 3 for ten main countries of origin). While 18% of them were people with work permits and 13% were students, those remaining were mostly dependants of working and studying foreigners.

Table 3: Ten main countries of origin of foreigners in Turkey with residence permits, 2006

Country	Residence Permits	Work Permits	Student Permits	Total
Bulgaria	47,746	495	3,276	51,517
Azerbaijan	7,963	902	2,014	10,879
Germany	7,351	1,532	269	9,152
United Kingdom	5,388	1,656	185	7,229
Russian Federation	4,787	1,562	834	7,183
USA	3,829	2,157	395	6,381
Greece	3,787	326	2,078	6,191
Iraq	4,800	604	523	5,927
Iran	4,193	877	766	5,836
Moldova	4,157	262	255	4,674

Source: Bureau for Foreigners, Borders and Asylum of the Directorate of General Security of the Ministry of Interior.

The number of foreign-born people in Turkey is much larger than the number of foreign residents. As of 2000, approximately 1.3 million persons, or 2% of the entire population, were born abroad. The group consists of the children of returning migrants, so-called second generation migrants, largely from Germany, as well as immigrants from the Balkans, especially Bulgaria.

Despite the fact that Turkey has always been a destination for international migration, it is just now developing a 'real' foreign population comprised of ethnically non-Turkish immigrants. As a result, public awareness of and attention to Turkey's transformation into a country of immigration has been somewhat slow to emerge, and there is not much room for dialogue between migrants and the host community. Border controls and security are still the main issues debated around the topic of migration, and integration policies and practices aimed at migrants are at a very marginal stage.

Recently, a growing number of EU member-state citizens, professionals as well as retirees, have been settling in Turkey, particularly in Istanbul and some of the Mediterranean resorts.[17] Their numbers are estimated at around 100,000 to 120,000.

Irregular Migration

The geographical position of Turkey makes it a major route for irregular migrants from its politically and economically unstable eastern neighbors aiming for better lives in the West. Moreover, the country's rather lenient visa system (see above) helps make it a major destination and transit country for irregular migration. It is very hard to estimate the number of irregular migrants in Turkey. Although figures cited range from 150,000 to 1,000,000 persons, more reliable estimates put the number of irregular migrants around a couple of hundred thousand.

These figures do not necessarily reflect the stock of irregular migrants in the country, however, as many may be in transit. Trafficked persons, particularly women, are not included in these estimates. Between 1995 and 2007, the Turkish authorities apprehended more than 336,000 citizens of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq and Syria for being in Turkey without a permit.

In its effort to counter irregular migration, Turkey has taken several legal measures and pursued international collaborations. In August 2002, the government introduced new articles to the Penal Code criminalizing human smuggling and trafficking. It established stricter controls at borders and ports. Meanwhile, a project was implemented in cooperation with an NGO to provide social assistance for victims of trafficking. Presently, there are two shelters for victims of trafficking located in Istanbul and Ankara. In May 2005, the police, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), initiated an awareness campaign and introduced a telephone hotline for victims of trafficking.

As for its other international efforts, in March 2003, the Turkish Grand National Assembly accepted the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Additional Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air and began to take legal measures in accordance with the agreement. The Law on Work Permits for Aliens (see above) enacted in 2003 authorized the Ministry of Labor and Social Security to issue all types of work permits for foreigners, in order to ensure better management and control over the process and to avoid illegal employment of foreigners. The Law on the Amendment of Turkish Citizenship enacted in 2003 (see above) requires a probation period of three years for acquiring Turkish citizenship through marriage to limit the inflow of irregular migrants through arranged marriages.

Furthermore, legislation was adapted specifically to tackle the issue of human smuggling. For example, if a person is sentenced for migrant smuggling, his/her transportation permits cannot be renewed for three years and the vehicle used is seized by the Turkish authorities. Article 79 of the new Turkish Penal Code Law No: 5237, which was put into force in 2005, defines migrant smuggling and provides for penalties of three to eight years of imprisonment and 10,000 days judicial fines (i.e. a fine amounting to a daily rate multiplied by 10,000). If an act of human smuggling is proven to be part of organized crime, the penalty to be imposed is increased by 50%. Article 79 also provides for punitive measures (confiscation of assets, etc.) against legal entities involved in human smuggling.

Besides taking domestic legal measures, Turkey has also signed readmission agreements with source countries in order to prevent and balance out illegal migration. Such agreements have been signed with Syria, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Ukraine and Greece; negotiations with Pakistan are still continuing. The European Commission has been pressuring Turkey to negotiate and conclude a readmission treaty with the EU.

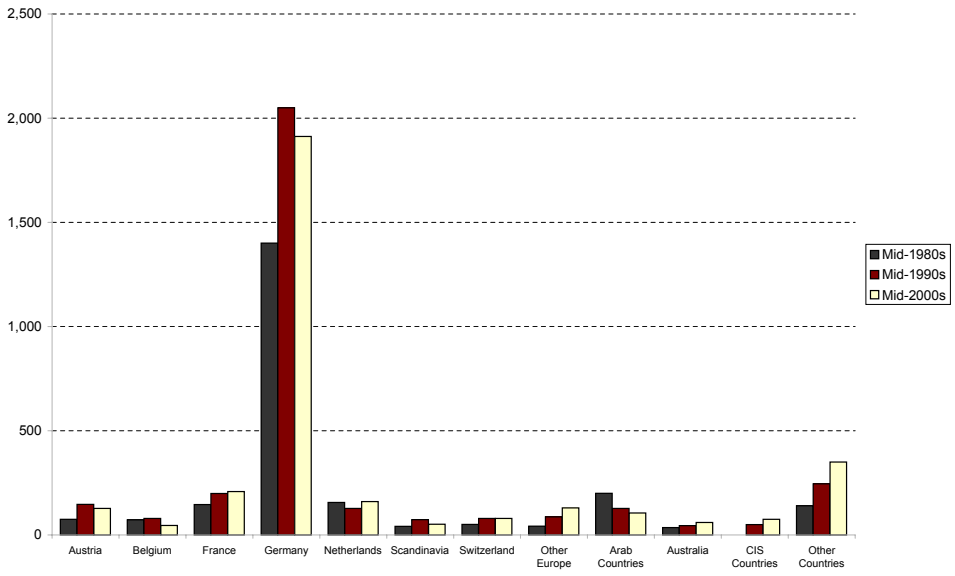
In terms of international cooperation, Turkey became a member of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2004. Together they are working to combat human trafficking specifically, in addition to addressing migration issues in general. Moreover, in January 2006, Turkey assumed the Presidency of the Budapest Process, which is an unofficial forum for inter-governmental cooperation and dialogue involving fifty governments and ten international organizations. The forum aims to prevent irregular migration and establish sustainable mechanisms in the field of migration management.

Current Developments and Future Challenges

Based on projections, there are about 3.3 million Turkish nationals living outside the country, of whom approximately 2.7 million are in European countries (see Figure 2). This is a considerable increase from 770,000 in the mid 1970s.[19] There are also some 100,000 Turkish workers in Arab countries, 60,000 immigrants in Australia, and over 75,000 workers in the CIS countries (see Figure 2). Furthermore, there are more than a quarter of a million Turkish migrants in Canada and the United States. Based on the figures provided by the OECD and Eurostat, there are also roughly 800,000 Turkish nationals who acquired the citizenship of their host countries between 1991 and 2005.

Today, Turks are the largest immigrant community in Europe. As such, they are becoming an easy target for anti-immigrant feelings and xenophobia. Many people fear the influx of additional immigrants from Turkey if the country becomes a member of the EU. This anxiety within the EU is exacerbated by the

Figure 2: Turkish migrant stock abroad in the mid-1980s, mid-1990s and mid-2000s



Source: Figures compiled by the author from OECD and Eurostat sources

social and cultural problems that Turkish immigrants confront while integrating into their host societies. A large percentage of second and third-generation Turkish immigrants perform badly, particularly in the areas of education and employment. Yet, as stated earlier, there is an expanding Turkish immigrant civil society in Europe that addresses the integration problems of the Turkish communities in major European countries.[20] Host countries themselves are also becoming more aware of the need to pursue policies supporting integration.

On the other hand, there are econometric studies suggesting that the number of Turkish citizens who would actually migrate to EU countries if Turkey became a member and full freedom of movement was allowed is much less than the general public fears.[21] Besides, demographic research demonstrates that by the year 2025, the economically active stratum of the Turkish population (15-64 years of age) will begin to decrease in proportion to the rest of the population.[22] The average age of this group will also rise. Consequently, it can be expected that, in a growing Turkish economy, a substantial number of these people may be unwilling to migrate. In addition, those who choose to migrate will almost certainly be among the better educated. Lastly, as in the cases of Greece and Spain, by the time Turkey becomes a full member of the EU, it will probably have finished its 'migration transition' and will have become a net immigration country.

The possibility of an influx of Turkish migrants into the EU is not the sole problem that the members of the Union are concerned about. There is an ongoing debate among experts regarding the irregular migration flows between Turkey and neighboring states such as Russia, Ukraine, Iran and Iraq. Turkey's current migration regime concerning these countries is considered very liberal, and there is continuous pressure from the EU to tighten it. However, there are no changes on the horizon, due to the political unwillingness of Turkish authorities. Given the political and economic problems within these countries, their migration potential is likely to remain strong in the near future, which could lead to conflict between Turkey and the EU.

Still, in order to respond to the fears of the EU, Turkey has embarked on the large-scale project of establishing a migration-management regime. However, Turkey is doing the right things for the wrong reasons. In general, the migration agenda in Turkey is set by its EU counterparts, but it is problematic to link migration-related issues with EU accession negotiations, as this overshadows the fact that these issues are imperative in their own right, and need to be treated as such. A deceleration in the negotiations has also delayed migration policymaking in Turkey. Given that Turkey is a very important actor in migratory movements within its region, it requires an adequate migration management-regime for its own sake, not for the sake of the EU.

As stated earlier, the relationship between the recently arrived 'ethnically non-Turkish' migrants and the host community is very limited, and Turkey's role as a country of immigration and transit has not yet become a public issue. Debates regarding migration still revolve around the themes of border control and security, while integration policies are not being addressed on the state level. Unless Turkey accepts its role as a country of immigration and transit and tackles the issue of integration, it could face serious internal problems in the future. This is another example of why the development of a migration-management regime is in Turkey's best interest, not just the EU's.

Endnotes

1 See Marcus (1985), Zolberg (1983).

2 See Kirişci (1996, 2000).

3 With the end of the Cold War, there were also migration flows into Turkey in the form of luggage-trade. For further information on this form of migration, see Yükseker (2003).

4 Bahadır (1979).

5 'Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan' (Kurdistan Workers' Party).

6 Kaiser (2007).

7 Ibid.

8 For more information on Turkey's visa requirements, see the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: http://www.mfa.gov.tr

9 See İçduygu (2007b).

10 See Kadirbeyoglu (2007, 2007b).

11 See İçduygu (2007b).

12 See Kadirbeyoğlu (2007, 2007b).

13 See Kaya (2005).

14 See Abadan-Unat (2002).

15 Kirişci (2001).

16 See Kirişci (1996).

17 For a detailed study of the retirement migration to the Mediterranean resorts in Turkey, see, for instance, Unutulmaz (2007), and Kaiser and İçduygu (2005).

18 The Road Transportation Law (2003) and the Road Transportation Regulation (2004).

19 The number was cited by Abadan-Unat (2002: 48).

20 See Erzan and Kirişci (2006); see also Kaya and Kentel (2005).

21 See Erzan, et. al. (2006).

22 See Behar (2006).

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- Ministry of Justice:
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- Ministry of and Social Security:
  http://www.calisma.gov.tr
- Secretariat General for EU Affairs:
  http://www.euturkey.org.tr/
- State Statistics Institute (D_E):
  http://www.die.gov.tr
- State Planning Organization (DPT):
  http://www.dpt.gov.tr
- General Department of Police:
  http://www.egm.gov.tr

Research Centers and NGOs

- Migration Research Program at Koç University:
  http://www.mirekoc.com
- Centre for Migration Research, Istanbul Bilgi University:
  http://www.goc.bilgi.edu.tr
- Helsinki Citizens Assembly:
  http://www.hyd.org.tr

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