



Policy Department

Migrants of Turkish origin in the EU

NOTE

Abstract:

This note gives a brief description of the history, current situation and possible future developments of Turkish migration to the EU, including figures on the main countries of destination. It also gives an overview on the status and rights of Turkish migrants under Community law as well as on principle problems in terms of integration and identity.

The note is intended for European Parliament Members of the EP delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee.

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I. Turkish migration into the EU

Turkey experienced significant outward migration after the early 1960s, when some European countries actively recruited workers. Net outward migration reached its peak in the first half of the 1960s, with about 80.000 net-migrants per year, or about 0.5 % of the Turkish labour force. In the early stages of the migration to Germany, for example, Turkish migrants were mainly men between the ages of 20 and 39, relatively skilled and educated in comparison to the average working population in Turkey, and from the economically more-developed regions of the country. The proportion of rural migrants at this stage was just 17.2%. In the second half of the 1960s, recruitment primarily consisted of rural workers.

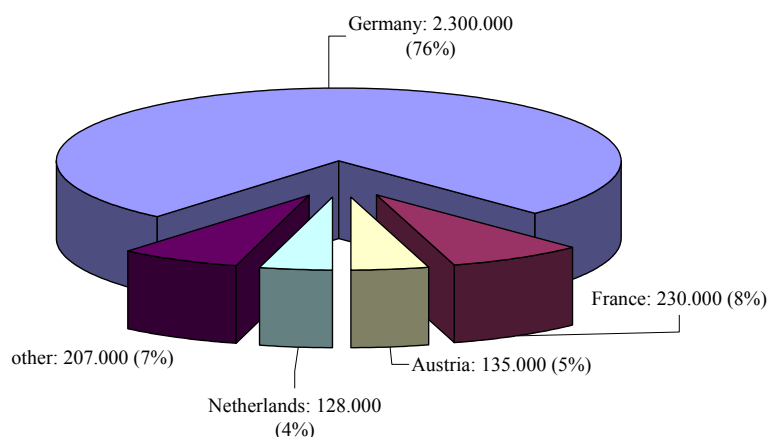
With declining labour demand in Europe in the second half of the 1970s and the closing of channels for legal migration for employment, this first wave of migration came to an end. Since the 1980s, the flow of net-migration leaving Turkey amounts to some 40.000 - 60.000 persons per year, which is about 0.2% of the current labour force; almost all of this migration takes the form of family reunification.

In 2002, about 3 million Turkish nationals were officially registered in the EU-15. Turkish nationals constitute by far the largest group of third-country nationals in the EU (**about 25 % of all third-country nationals**). The main recipient countries were Germany (2.3 million persons) and France (230.000).

Turkish nationals officially registered in EU-15 (2002)

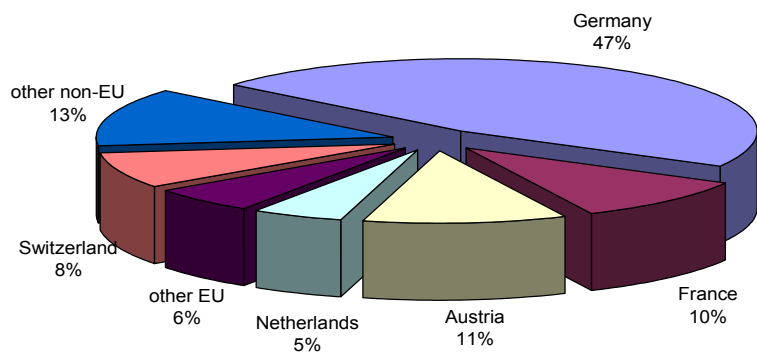
Data source: European Commission, COM (2004) 656

Total: ca. 3.000.000 = 25 % of all third-country nationals in EU-15



Overall destination of Turkish migration

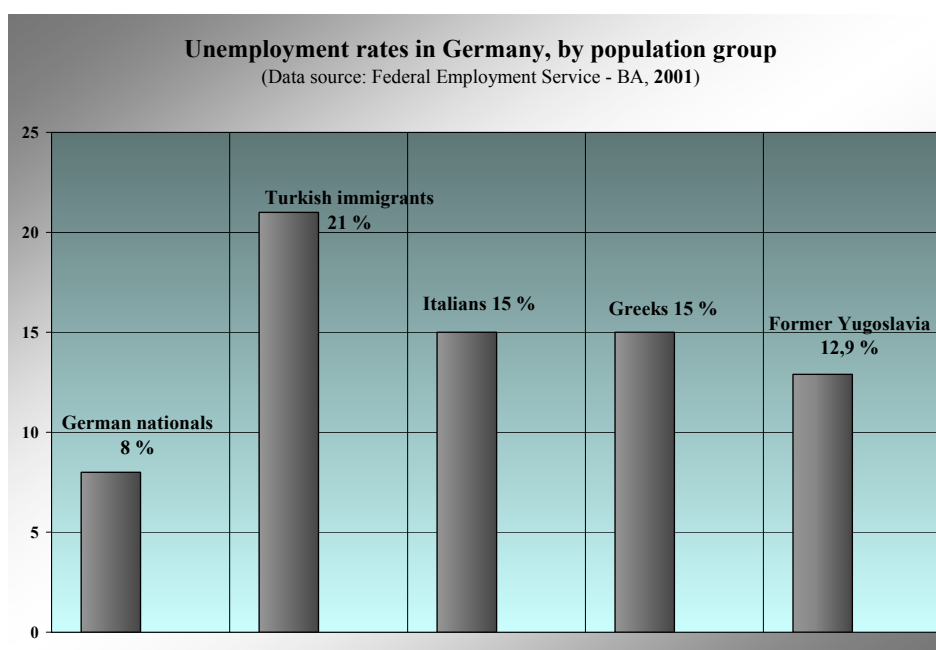
(Data source: NIDI / Eurostat, May 2000)



Migration of workers from Turkey to the EU has thus become a well-established phenomenon, and in many cases Turkish nationals live in their host countries already in their second or third generation. However, difficulties with integration persist (see below).

At the same time, it needs to be noted that migrants of Turkish origin and their descendants constitute a rather **heterogeneous group** of persons in Europe with respect to their recent economic, political, cultural, ethnic and religious dispositions. This has been shown also by a comprehensive study, published in January 2005 by the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels on "Euro-Turks, A bridge or a breach between Turkey and the European Union?"¹ (See below for further details.)

Taking into account the background of the original Turkish migration flows into the EU and the perceptions and various discussions on future developments, it may be interesting to look at the situation of Turkish migrants on the labour market in Germany (data from 2001), as the main country of destination:



II. Expected future migration

There are perceptions that a possible substantial and uncontrolled increase in migration to the EU could lead to serious disturbances in the labour markets of some of the present Member States. Some recent studies have proposed estimates of the potential future migration from Turkey to the EU. Most estimates concern in fact the forthcoming decade (until 2013) and are based on the continuation of existing trends and factors in the pre-accession period. Estimates for the long term impact, i.e. by 2025/2030, based primarily on expected income differences, tend to give very varying figures (**ranging from broadly 0.5 to 4 million potential Turkish immigrants to EU Member States**). Other studies emphasise the relative stability of overall migratory pressures independently of potential or real accession or recall the developments observed over time in **Spain and Portugal**, where **initial emigration was subsequently reversed**. Based on the experience that Turkish workers tend to migrate alongside networks of

¹ A.Kaya, F.Kentel: Euro-Turks, A bridge or a breach between Turkey and the European Union? - A comparative study of German-Turks and French-Turks, January 2005 (CEPS, EU-Turkey Working Paper N°14);

already established relatives, the biggest share of additional migrants to the EU would most likely again go to Germany, France, Netherlands and Austria.

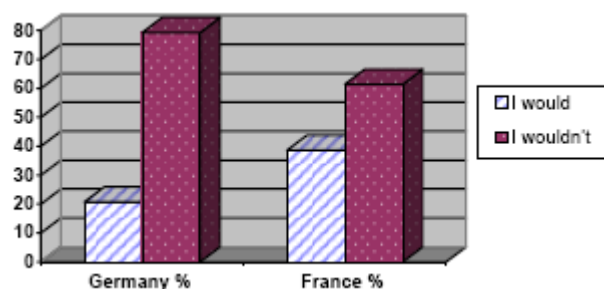
In addition to the general conditions for economic growth and employment, the actual migration flows are influenced by pull factors such as wage differentials between Turkey and the recipient countries but also by push factors, such as the labour market situation in Turkey itself. In this respect, if appropriate labour market policies are put in place to integrate the young population into the labour market, the migration potential in Turkey will probably decrease. In particular, sustained progress by Turkey in areas such as social policy, employment, health and education could reduce the pressure for migration.

As regards demographic developments, it should also be noted that population growth and fertility rates are in decline and estimated to fall to 1.05 % and 2.0 children per woman in the period 2010-2015 (UN World Population Prospects 2002 Revision).

III. Position of Turks living inside the EU on future migration from the "homeland"

The qualitative and quantitative research conducted by A.Kaya and F.Kentel for the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels (Fn. on previous page) revealed a contrasting picture on the expectations of those **Turks living already in Germany and France**, on migration perspectives. In the first place, the interviewed interlocutors stated that they would not recommend that Turks in Turkey migrate to EU countries if Turkey were to enter the European Union (79%). The reasons cited were the difficulties they face in the EU: rising unemployment, homesickness, low wages, disciplined working conditions, lack of tolerance and depreciation of moral values (see figure below).

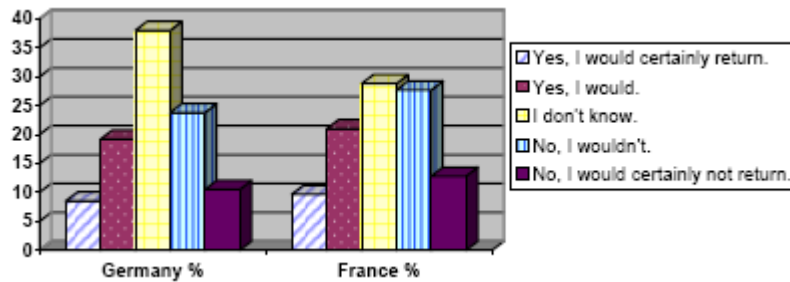
*Question: Would you recommend immigrating to Germany/France to those in Turkey?
Answer given by Turks living already in these countries:*



Nevertheless, there was apparently a strong belief among the interviewed interlocutors that huge migration from Turkey to EU countries would occur, echoing a commonly held belief in the EU. Hence, the experiences of Euro-Turks should be clearly communicated to Turks in Turkey. On the other hand, previous experience from the integration of Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece to the Union did not result in great flows of migration. In these cases (see above), even reverse migration occurred.

It seems that the same kind of reverse migration could occur in the Turkish case. Around 30% of Euro-Turks reported that they would consider returning to Turkey if it were to join the Union (See figure on next page). This is indeed an important challenge to the more stereotypical standard judgment of increasing migration.

*Question: Would you consider returning to Turkey if it joins the EU?
Answer given by Turks living already in these countries*



IV. Status and rights of Turkish migrant workers under Community law

The status which Turkish workers at present enjoy under Community law lies **between** that of **European Union citizens** and **third-country nationals**. Their status is determined for a large part by the decisions taken by the EC-Turkey Association Council following the **1963 Association Agreement** between the EC and Turkey, and their interpretation given by the European Court of Justice. The Agreement provides for the parties to **progressively establish free movement of workers**; the relevant provisions of the Agreement do not, however, have direct effect. So far, the Association Council has not yet adopted all necessary measures for free movement.

While the entering into force of the **Customs Union**, on **1 January 1996**, has basically removed all barriers to **trade** between the EU and Turkey, enhancing the **free movement of goods**, it did **not include freedom of movement for persons**. As a result, Turkish nationals do not, until present, have the right to move to an EU Member State or between the EU Member States in order to take up employment. Looking at the implications of the Decisions of the relevant meeting of the EU-Turkey Association Council of March 1995, regarding the Customs Union, all that one could find concerning the situation of Turkish immigrants is a single paragraph under the heading "**co-operation on social matters**," in the form of a resolution. Section 5 of this resolution states that: "*A regular dialogue will be set up on the situation of Turkish workers in regular employment in the Community and vice versa. The two parties will explore all possibilities for a better integration of such workers.*"

Migration between Member States will however **in future become possible** on the basis of Directive 2003/109 concerning the status of third-country nationals who are **long-term residents**. By **23 January 2006** at the latest Turkish workers of this category will be able to obtain, **under strict conditions**, the guarantee to **move to another EU Member State for the purpose of taking up employment**.

Already at present, once duly registered as belonging to the labour force of a particular Member State, Turkish workers enjoy a considerable number of **individual rights** in that host Member State under Decision No. 1/80 of the EU-Turkey Association Council:

Taking into account the abundant case-law, these can be summarised as follows:

- a) equal treatment as regards working conditions and remuneration;
- b) a right to extension of work permit for the same employer if a job is available and corresponding residence permit in the host Member State after one year of lawful employment;

- c) after three years of employment, under certain conditions, the right to respond to another offer of employment for the same occupation;
- d) after four years of employment free access to all employment and a residence right in that host State while looking for other employment;
- e) access to employment and education for the second generation in the host State;
- f) a general non-discrimination clause and limitations to the right of expulsion. A standstill clause ensures that existing treatment cannot be withdrawn or reduced.

V. Integration and Identity

There is still a common belief in western European countries that migrants of Turkish origin and their children do not integrate into the social, political, economic or cultural life of their settlement countries. According to the same common belief, the political motivations of Turks in their countries of settlement are primarily shaped by their homeland. Recently, however, much academic work and many other indicators have come to reveal an alternative picture. Contemporary migrants of Turkish origin and their descendants in Western Europe can no longer be considered simply as temporary migrant communities who live with the ‘myth of return’ or passive victims of global capitalism who are alienated by the system and swept up in a destiny dominated by the capitalist West. Rather, they have become permanent settlers, active social agents and decision-makers.

For instance, today’s German-Turks have little in common with the old ‘guest-worker’ stereotypes of the past. They are a recognised and highly active section of the population. Around 5.000 Turkish businesses in Berlin currently employ approximately 20.000 workers in 90 differing areas of activity. Only 30% of Berlin’s Turkish businesses now work in the restaurant and catering field, 37% are involved in trade and 18% in the services sector.² They form a dynamic and flexible business sector that benefits the whole country. There is sufficient evidence that German-Turkish intellectuals who have recently appeared in the German public space have a great impact on the formation and articulation of these active roles and identities.

There is also a lack of awareness in both the homeland and ‘host-land’ concerning the characteristics of migrants and their children. It is still commonly believed in Turkey that migrants of Turkish origin and their descendants in the West are *gurbetci*,³ with a strong orientation towards the homeland that will someday bring them home. On the other hand, they are also called ‘*Almanci*’, a term that depicts such individuals as being rich, eating pork, having a very comfortable life in the West, losing their Turkishness and becoming increasingly Germanised, Anglicised or Frenchified, etc. They are also stereotypically called ‘foreigner’ in their own countries of settlement. A common stereotypical labelling of ‘Turk’ in the West strongly indicates that Turks are conservative, religious, veiled, poor, nationalist, nostalgic for their homeland, non-integrative and violent. An objective look and serious research reveals, however that "Euro-Turks" are highly diversified and have very little in common with the *Almanci*, guest-worker or foreigner stereotypes of the past.

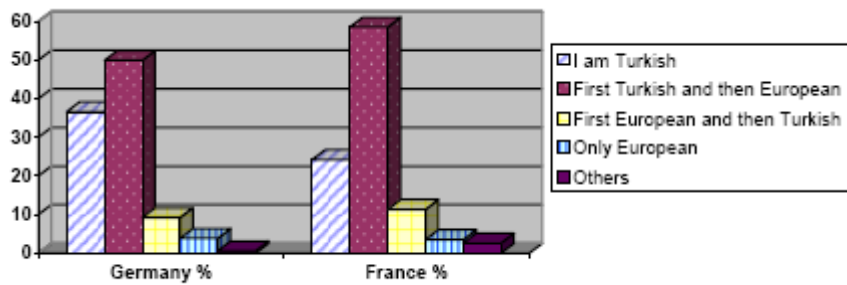
The following three figures, based on representative interviews with Turks living in Germany and France, show the self-identification of the relevant groups in both countries:⁴

² A.Kaya, F.Kentel

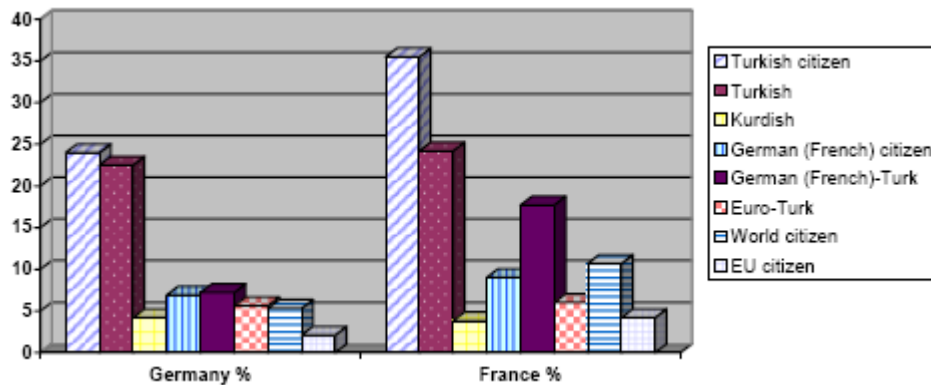
³ The term *gurbetçi* refers to someone in *gurbet* (diaspora), which is an Arabic word deriving from *garaba*, to go away, to depart, to be absent, to go to a foreign country, to emigrate, to be away from one’s homeland, to live as a foreigner in another country.

⁴ A.Kaya, F.Kentel

Which identifications suit you most?



Which one of the identities below defines you most (multi-response)?



The research published in January 2005 by the Centre for European Policy Studies finally came to the conclusion that there are three major groups of "Euro-Turks" emerging in the migratory process to the EU:

1) **Bridging groups** (more than 40%)

- those who are equally affiliated with both the homeland and 'host-land' – young generations with cosmopolitan cultural identities (multilingual);
- those who are also affiliated with both the homeland and host-land, and who construct a dynamic trans-national space combining Turkey and Germany/France, such as the "Euro- Muslims" (e.g. *Cojepiennes* in France and MUSIAD in Germany);
- those who have "hyphenated" and multiple identities without essentialising any particular political, religious, ethnic or racial definition;

2) **Breaching groups** (around 40%)

- those who still have a strong orientation to the homeland, including extreme religious, nationalist and laicist persons/groups (the latter comprising less than 40%);

3) **Assimilated groups** (around 20%)

- those who have assimilated into the majority societies (who are also usually more prosperous).

According to the CEPS study, "Euro-Turks" would demonstrate the fact that "Europeanness" was not a prescribed identity, but an ongoing process of being and becoming. Thus, "*Euro-Turks would contribute to the redefinition of the EU and being European with their own social, political, cultural and economic identities.*"⁵

The CEPS research also revealed that there are quite a number of migrants of Turkish origin in the West who do not fit into the category of a stereotypical 'Turk'. The proportion of Euro-Turks in this category is around 40%. But it has also been concluded that the majority of "Euro-Turks" have become politically, socially, economically and culturally integrated and active agents in their countries of settlement. Around 20% have actually assimilated into the receiving society. On the other hand, 40% have generated a way of life embracing both the homeland and host-land in a manner that forms a bridge between the two.

The CEPS research also strongly suggests that Euro-Turks do not pose a threat to the political and social systems of their countries of settlement, but rather are willing to incorporate themselves into the system. While Western European states, generally speaking, have the tendency to regard Islam as a threat to their national security, the research shows that orientation towards Islam among the "Euro-Turks" could also be regarded as a "*simple quest for justice and fairness*"⁶, leading in the end to the proposal that EU states should set aside the security discourse and become engaged in a justice discourse in their responses to minority claims. On the same line, it should be avoided to systematically categorise migration together with drug trafficking, human trafficking, international criminality and terrorism.

The research and interviews conducted by the CEPS team, also came to the conclusion that "*communitarianism*" in contemporary Germany seems to provide the German-Turks with a more liberal ground whereby they can politically, socially, culturally and economically integrate into mainstream society. The data gathered by the structured interviews indicate that German-Turks, generally speaking, are more communitarian, religious and conservative than French-Turks. Compared with French-Turks, German-Turks seem to be less in favour of integration, as they are content with their ethnic enclaves, religious archipelagos and traditional solidarity networks. Other findings in the research, however, indicate the converse. Although when compared with German-Turks, French-Turks seem to engage more in the modern way of life, orienting themselves towards integration, French language, secularism, laicism and the French media on the one hand, they are less engaged in French domestic politics, political parties, the Internet, theatres and cinemas. Nevertheless, German-Turks seem to generate more cosmopolitan, hybrid, global and reflexive identities in a way that redefines being European, which is actually subject to constant change. Thus, the experiences of German-Turks actually seem to indicate that Islam does not necessarily contradict being European nor the concepts of cosmopolitanism, modernity or globalism.

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Sources:

- *European Commission, COM (2004) 656*
- *European Commission's 2004 Regular Report on Turkey's progress towards accession*
- *Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), EU-Turkey Working Paper N°14: A.Kaya, F.Kentel: Euro-Turks, A bridge or a breach between Turkey and the European Union? - A comparative study of German-Turks and French-Turks, January 2005*
- *European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC),*
- *Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) / Eurostat: "Push and pull factors determining international migration flows, March 2001*
[\(<http://www.nidi.knaw.nl/web/html/pushpull/index.html>\)](http://www.nidi.knaw.nl/web/html/pushpull/index.html)

⁵ A.Kaya, F.Kentel: Euro-Turks, A bridge or a breach between Turkey and the European Union? - A comparative study of German-Turks and French-Turks, January 2005 (CEPS, EU-Turkey Working Paper N°14);

⁶ A.Kaya, F.Kentel