

**Turkey and Europe: a Multifaceted relationship:  
Migration, Citizenship und Civil Society**

*Migration* is one of the key issues in Turkey-EU relations. The presence of Turkish communities in Europe and the prospects of further immigration to Europe have traditionally been prime issues influencing Turkey's accession process and the EU's visa policy towards Turkey. In the meantime, however, Turkey became a country of net immigration, with dramatic changes in its migration, asylum and visa policies in recent years. In sharp contrast to the EU, Turkey's liberalized visa policy has led to a stark increase in the number of people entering Turkey from the neighborhood. The Syrian crisis is adding a new twist to this story, in view of the constantly mounting numbers of Syrian refugees entering Turkey. Turkey's approach towards migration has been transforming alongside (and as part of) its evolving approach towards *citizenship and civil society*. Turkish civil society has changed immensely in the past decade and new avenues for Turkish-European civil society collaboration are emerging. At the same time, a new strand of populist euroscepticism is on the rise in EU and Turkish public opinion, notably also in the wake of the Eurozone crisis. Are new forms of populism in Europe and Turkey impacting on Turkey's accession process and if so what can be done to reverse this trend?

To discuss these issues the Stiftung Mercator, the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), and the Istanbul Policy Center (IPC) organized a conference which was attended by about 45 participants and characterized by a lively discussion.

The first panel, chaired by Senem Aydin-Duzgit from the Istanbul Policy Center, delved into the issue of migration. Ahmet Icduygu from Koc University argued that Turkey has changed its migration profile from the massive emigration of the 1960s and 1970s to extensive immigration during the 1990s and 2000s. The transformation of Turkey's migration policies has been greatly affected by the country's exposure to globalization and its integration into the European migratory system. At the same

time, Turkey's migration transition has also had repercussions on this transnational space. As Turkey undergoes migration transition, the asymmetric relationship between the EU and Turkey tends to evolve towards relatively symmetrical relations as reflected in the readmission agreement and the launching of the "visa liberalization dialogue". Juliette Tolay from Pennsylvania State University compared Turkish and EU asylum policies, highlighting that Turkey's newly adopted law on foreigners contrasts with the EU's slow-paced moves towards standardizing asylum policies and its restrictive approaches towards Syrian refugees. Unlike the EU's de facto closed-door policy for many Syrian refugees, Turkey has applied so far an open-door policy towards Syrian citizens seeking refuge at its southern borders, welcoming about one million since June 2011. Moving forward, there seem to be many ways in which Turkey and the EU could work together on refugee policy in general, and on the Syrian refugee crisis in particular. At the core of this reassessment of asylum practices is the need to take seriously the concept of solidarity, meaning solidarity among EU member states, solidarity with countries hosting large numbers of refugees in the region, and, most importantly, solidarity with the refugees themselves. Gerald Knaus from the European Stability Initiative focused on the visa roadmap and the importance for Turkey to develop a strategy to make sure it gets the necessary votes for a qualified majority, taking the recent success case of Moldova as an example.

This first session was followed by a lunch talk by Ali Carkoglu from Koc University and moderated by Meltem Muftuler-Bac from the IPC, which focused on the election years 2014/15 in Turkey. Ali Carkoglu dissected the 30 March local elections highlighting the extent of the AKP's victory, the modest gains of the CHP and the remarkable rise both of the MHP and BDP. He then analyzed the implications of these results for the upcoming presidential elections, suggesting that given that many CHP votes were transferred to the MHP, Kurdish votes are likely to have a significant effect on the election results.

The second panel on citizenship and civil society was chaired by Nathalie Tocci from the Istituto Affari Internazionali. Raffaele Marchetti from LUISS University dealt with the Europeanization of Turkish civil society through three frames developed by civil

society organizations in Turkey with regard to the Europeanization process since the 1999 Helsinki Summit of the European Union: Euro-enthusiastic, Euro-sceptic and critical Europeanist attitudes generated by different civil society actors as a response to the changing political, social, economic and cultural climate between Turkey and the European Union as well as within Turkey itself. Kerem Öktem, St Antony's College Oxford and Mercator-IPC Fellow, talked about the role of the Diaspora community and the institutionalization of Diaspora politics under the prime ministry's office as a tool of control and foreign policy projection. His presentation was followed by Eduard Soler Lecha from CIDOB who pointed out that with the economic crisis in Europe and political tensions in the background, Turkey and the EU will hold crucial elections. With the rise of anti-establishment and populist forces, the number of MEPs that vehemently oppose Turkey's membership in the EU will increase. This could have an unexpected effect: if they employ an aggressive Islamophobic discourse regarding Turkey, mainstream parties could be forced to reaffirm the need for a fair treatment of Turkey's candidacy. Yet, European politicians and EU institutions will think twice before making any gesture that could be interpreted as supporting or rewarding the Turkish government, unless there is a consistent effort to reduce domestic political polarisation and to bring the reform process back on track. Finally, Bahar Rumelili from Koc University looked at the Europeanization of Turkish civil society arguing that this has been deep but narrow in scope, focused basically only on professional NGOs.

The event was part of the Global Turkey in Europe project, a paper and conference series, which aims to give a new impetus to the debate on the relations between Turkey and the EU, exploring areas of common interest and concern and going beyond Turkey's problematic EU accession negotiations. The project is funded by the Stiftung Mercator in cooperation with the Istituto Affari Internazionali and the Istanbul Policy Center.

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