

## EU Turkey Relations the Context of Migration Case

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**Abstract:** Turkey and EU relations have more than 50 years history. It started when applied for membership of the European Economic Community. Turkey is always one of the most important country for the European Union. Relations between two countries has effected by different issues. Migration issue is one of the issues that effects relations. It can be clearly said that Turkey is a location for the transition of the immigrants who want to reach to Europe safely. Therefore migration case is the most important problems for EU countries, Turkey and all transit countries. Because of this reason cooperation between Turkey and EU has critical importance for manage the migration flow. In light of this, this paper aims at analyzing Turkey and EU relations in the context of migration case and its implications on Turkey-EU relations. And Readmission agreement which is important point of relations will also discussed. The study will help us to understand how future of the relations will be shape by migration case.

**Keywords:** Turkey; EU; Migration; Relations; Readmission Agreement

### 1. Introduction

Turkey and EU relations are not new phenomenon. They have more than 50 years of history. After signing the Ankara agreement in 1963, Turkey gain the associate member of the European Economic Community (İçduygu, 2015). Ankara Agreement also enables Turkish citizens to work in EU countries (Sozen, 2014, p. 55).

Turkey and EU has signed Customs Union on 6 March 1995. By this way Turkey has become the first country which signed this agreement without being a full member. Within the Helsinki Summit in 1999, relations between Turkey and EU have gained new form with the decision to declare candidate country on the way to membership (Hale, 2000, pp. 174-179). After that Turkey has to carry out some standarts such as political, economic, juridical and administrative which determine

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by EU (Yılmaz, 2014, p. 2). EU leaders decided that if Turkey fulfills the Copenhagen political criteria, European Union will open accession negotiations with Turkey at Copenhagen Summit in 2002 (Copenhagen European Council, 2002). Turkey has started to come into force some economic reforms and take positive results (Paul, 2015). Then accession negotiations was decided to open for Turkey by EU on October 2005 (European Commission, 2008).

Even Though Turkey and EU has over the 50 years relations, the ends point of the relations is still unknown. But other candidates which applied before or after Turkey, they have already get full membership. You can see in table 1, comparative perspective of Turkey's membership status with some European countries. It shows us that some countries even they applied after Turkey, They has gained membership status. It also proved that future of the relations between Turkey and EU is still unknown.

**Table 1. Stages in the EU Accession Process - Turkey in Comparative Perspective**

Stages	Spain	Austria	Poland	Turkey	Croatia
Application submitted	1977	1989	1997	1987	2003
Commission Opinion	1978	1989	1997	1989	2004
Candidate status	1978	1989	1997	1999	2004
Accession talks start	1978	1993	1998	2005	2005
Accession talks end	1985	1994	2003		2013
Accession	1986	1995	2004		2013

*Source: (Tocci, 2014, p. 3)*

Migration is one of the most important issue that effects the relations. It's is also current issue and it has effect wide scope of area. Therefore analysing this issue will help us to understand how migration can dominate relations. Especially Readmission Agreement is important factor that affects Turkey's EU membership.

## **2. Reality of Migration and EU-Turkey Relations**

Migration case that exist as of human history is most important issue of the international politics. Migration arises from different types all over the world and

mostly related to political, economic, social and cultural life (International Migration Report, 2014). Number of migrants has continue to increase whole world. It was 244 million in 2015, 222 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000. It shows that how its growing rapidly over the fifteen years. Twenty countries are mostly favored country by migrants in the world. 67 percent of all migrants were living these countries. USA, Germany, Russia and Saudi, Arabia are mostly favored countrie among them (United Nations, 2016, pp. 1- 6). As it seen different types of migratory movements have affect almost all of the countries across the world, it can clearly said that Europe is best destination for migrant flows. 76 million international migrants were living in Europe in 2015 (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, 2014).

Researches showed that EU countries have 20 million immigrants its land and with 4 million Turkish citizen consist one of the largest immigrant group in EU states. Eventhough immigration is factor that affects Turkey-EU relations, it's not only factor. Because since the beginning of the 1980s, Turkey's role has changed in migration case (İçduygu, 2007, p. 24). Turkey has different role about migration system. Firstly, Turkey is seen as an emigration country. Turkey was a major emmigrant country, when EU accepted migrants as a guest worker between 1945 and 1973 (World Bank, 2013). Quite number of Turkish nationals migrated to Western European countries starting from the 1960s till 1970s in order to meet need in labour. Especially Germany was the first immigrant country that Turkish nationals invited to work (Kaiser, 2003). Guest workers accepted temporarily and they were expected to return Turkey, when the agreement expired. Therefore migrants was alone and they couldn't bring their families with them (Abadan-Unat, 2002).

After the economic crises in 1973, family reunification flows has started through Europe (Garson & Loizillon, 2003, p. 4). Even EU didn't accept migrants, the number of Turkish living in Europe continued to increase, because of family reunification. Western Europe accepted almost 1 million Turkish workers until 1973 (Gitmez, 1983). Because of incresing unemployment in Germany, Turkish workers and their families started to back to Turkey in 1980. German government try to convince Turkish workers to back Turkey (Tezcan, 1989).

Now, over the 5 million Turkish citizen are living abroad. Around 4 million of which live in Western European Countries. Especially, economic situation and political instability in 1980s and 1990s, People wanted to migrate one of EU

countries. This factors pushed also Turkish people to migrate into EU (Icduygu & Kirişçi, 2009).

Secondly, Turkey is seen as an immigration country. Especially after 1990s, Turkey became immigration and transit country for irregular migration (Kirişçi, 2014, pp. 1-29). This means that Turkey has received increasing number of migrants from different countries such as Germany, Russia, Ukrainia, Azerbaijani, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Armenia, Georgia and many other Middle East and Asian countries (Turkish Statistics Institute, 2013). Turkey has accepted million of migrants throughout the history. People migrate to Turkey some reasons such as Turkey's geographical location, political issues arising in some countries (Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Pakistan and China), culturel ties and gain better life condition. Especially increased economic and political power and stability, Turkey has become center of attraction for migrants in the last years (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, 2014). Most of migrants want to reach Europe, therefore they countinue their travel to Europe. But some others want to stay Turkey, because of gain better life condition.

Thirdly, Turkey is seen as a transit country for migrants seeking to reach European Countries (Kaytaz, 2006; İcduygu, 2003). Turkey has a strategical geographic condition for migrants. Since 1980, Turkey is a transit zone between Asia, Europe and Africa for all kind of migrants such as transit asylum seekers (Icduygu, 2003). Because conflicts in international relations attract migrants to Turkey. (Icduygu, 2007, p. 24). In addition restrictive entry measures and increased immigration controls of European States turn into position of Turkey as a transit country (İcduygu, 2003, pp. 8-90). It clearly said that, EU has to take into account Turkey's this position, if successful migration policy constitutes with Turkey (Icduygu, 2007, p. 24). In sum it can be said that Turkey and EU relationship is based on mutual benefits (Cem, 2004, pp. 74-75). Therefore EU requests to keep the refugees and asylum seekers coming to Europe from Turkey borders. For EU, Turkey should strengthen border controls and agree return treaties in order to revert illegal migration. Because Turkey is a tampon region for Europe (Johansson & Zeybekoğlu, 2003, pp. 57-58; Özdemir, 2011, p. 262). In addition, EU Justice and Home Affairs commission stressed that Turkey has to take some precautions and improve immigration regulations. EU demands several regulations such as make visa rules and application in accordance with the EU standards, prevent illegal immigration to Turkey, work to join the Schengen Information System (SIS) and Europol (Ozdemir, 2011, p. 265).

As a country of immigration and transit Turkey, has difficult position that has to tackle together with EU. Especially the most important position regarding migrants flow who are coming from third countries using Turkey as a transit, and generally entering Greece (Frontex, 2007, 2008, 2009). EU and Turkey has to work together on this issue. The solution requires different action, policy, programs. Both sides have different argument when trying to work on irregular immigration issue. From EU's side, EU thought that Turkey is not able to get over the problem. From Turkey side, Although there is need for receiving more resources and broader cooperation, Turkey couldn't receive enough resources and possibility of cooperation is not quite effective. (Kirişçi, 2007; İçduydu, 2011). Therefore Turkey worries about economic and social and political impact of migration (Akdağ, 2007, p. 167).

Turkey received more than 2 million Syrian refugees. EU is willing to keep these migrants and refugees in Turkey and send back to irregular migrants who reached to Europe using illegal way from Turkey. Eventhough Turkey is not exactly safe country for them. Because Turkey is the one country which accepted a geographical limitation in the 1951 Geneva Convention. It means that Turkey is not able to protect anyone not originally from a European states. For examples this year 90 percent of people came from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Turkey doesn't protect any of these nationals according to Geneva Convention (Human Right Watch, 2016). There will be no protection for them. Therefore it can be clearly said that in light of human rights readmission agreement between EU and Turkey seem problematic.

### **3. Readmission Agreement and Future of the EU Turkey Relations**

Migration is kind of phenomenon for European history. EU realise that immigration problem related with third countries as well. Especially increasing number of immigrants compel EU to cooperate with origin, transit and host countries together. Because of that EU started to co-operate with those countries signing readmission agreement (Kirişçi, 2014, p. 1). Readmission agreement is quite important tool for transferring responsibility to third countries (Kruse, 2006, pp. 115-115). Especially with neighborhood ones (Kirişçi, 2014, p. 1). Cooperation with neighboring countries are essential to provide significant improvement (Sozen, 2014). Therefore without cooperation with neighboring countries, EU can not fight against irregular migration. It is necessary to border control and take some

precourios together with neighboring and third countries. Because of that readmission has been formulated by EU to sign with third countries and offer Access to the single market, free trade agreement, visa liberalisation and etc. (Sozen, 2014). Countries which signed this agreement adapt their reform according to EU acquis (Kirişçi, 2014, p. 1). Readmission agreement regulate to resend illegal immigration to country of origin or last transit country.

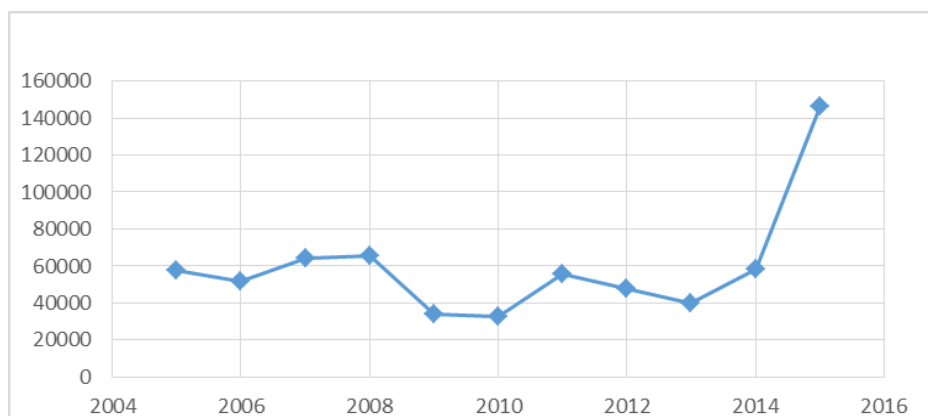
Turkey gives importance to enter into a readmission agreement with origin, transit and host countries regarding to repatriation of migrants. Therefore, Turkey was one of those country which signed Readmission Agreement with EU. Actually, negotiation on readmission agreement between Turkey and EU has started in 2003. At that time Turkey was not willing to sign readmission agreement. Because of Turkey don't find interesting while full memship negotiations are still continue. But in the time full membership negotiations came to a stopping point and readmission agreement is added to the agenda. Since Turkey is a quite important transit country for irregular immigrants, Agreement started to discusses between Turkey and EU (Ulusoy, 2016). In this context the result of studies carried out, Turkey has signed readmission agreement with 13 country and EU since 2001 (Republic of Turkey Minisrty of Interior Directorete General of Migration Management, 2015, pp. 68-69). EU and Turkey have signed the readmission agreement on 16th December 2013. Agreement came into force 1st October 2014 (Economic Development Foundation, 2016). Agreement aims to readmit of people whouse Turkish territory arrive to the EU by illegal way and Turkey will be responsible for repatriating these irregular migrants to their home country (Elitok, 2015).With this agreement EU also enables to the signing countries "mobility partnership", and visa liberalisation. In other word, the agreement is part of the Roadmap for a visa-free regime which will enable Turkish citizen to travel freely in Schengen countries (Kirişçi, 2014, p. 2; Economic Development Foundation, 2016). Since 1 October 2014, Turkey has started to admit its citizen to the country. But readmission of third country nations who reached the EU territory coming directly fromTurkey will expected to start a three years after the readmission agreement has come into force (Official Journal of the European Union, 2014).

EU has published the report about visa free regime for Turkey on May 2016. The report stressed that Turkey has made impressive progress and fulfilled 67 benchmarks of the Roadmap in a two week. Volkan Bozkır who is the Turkey's Minister of European Union Affairs stressed that visa-free agreement can be completed by the end of June and believed that Turkey will be meet all 72 criteria

which has to implement. The Roadmap is included 5 group of subjects, document security; migration management; public order and security; fundamental rights and readmission of irregular migrants. When the rest 5 requirements fulfill, it will be possible to visa free regime for Turkish Citizen. But, still some of EU countries continue opposition to visa free regime for Turkey (RT News, 2016).

It can be clearly said that this agreement will be important step to create a mutual trust environment. On the one hand, when we look from EU perspective, readmission agreements is good opportunity to contend with migration problem into EU, on the other side, from Turkish perspective, the situation is quite confusing. Since Turkey is important and one of the most utilized transit countries by irregular immigrants, it can be easily said that the cost of signing this agreement seems to be high. With this agreement, Turkey will be obliged to receive irregular immigrants who left from their home countries because of instable condition. Because of Turkey's EU membership is problematic issue, If Turkey really wants to be EU membership, and readmission agreement is one of the most important requirements for that. Even If, EU guarantee of the Turkey's EU membership, Turkey has to perform EU's demand during this process (Bürgin, 2012, pp. 883-884). By signing readmission agreement, Turkey aims to enable EU membership and copes with irregular migration.

Table 2 shows us number of irregular migrants intercepted in Turkey by year. The irregular immigration rate is rapidly increase last years. Turkey has give quite importance to readmission of irregular migration and sign agreement with countries. Even Turkey intercept irregular migration in its own land, irregular migration issue must evaluate separately by home, host and transit countries. Cooperation with all related countries is important point to manage irregular migration.



**Figure 1. Number of irregular migrants intercepted in Turkey by year**

*Source: (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, 2016)*

Signing this agreement doesn't mean that visa free regime will be also go in effect at the same time. Implementing visa liberalisation will depend on how Turkey makes progress in Roadmap and fulfil the conditions which signified in readmission agreement (Traunerand & Manigrassi, 2014, p. 129; Eralp, 2014, p. 5). The Roadmap include four blocks such as documents security, migration and border management, public order and security, and fundamental rights (Sözen, 2015, p. 60). Turkey don't want to accept some condition which is written on the Roadmap. Firstly, Turkey has signed 1951 Geneva Convention that is the key legal document regarding the Status of Refugees (The UN refugee Agency, 2001).

This documents was only include the events which occurred in Europe. Therefore, Turkey accepted geographical restriction. According to geographical restriction, Turkey is only recognize refugee status only, if the people come from EU countries. Even if this geographic restriction change in 1967, Turkey insist on its decision. Secondly, when Turkey becomes member of EU, Turkey will accept the application of the EU visa policy to non EU countries.

For EU, Turkey has to carry out requirement mentioned above regarding visa policy. Even if Turkey fulfil this hard obligations final decision will be issued by EU institutions (Eralp, 2014, p. 5).

If Turkey don't fulfil the obligation regarding readmission agreement or Although Turkey fulfil the all obligation, EU institutions don't start visa liberalisation in Turkey. Relations between Turkey and EU will be affected negatively. Especially



accession period of Turkey will be damaged (Eralp, 2014, p. 6).

#### **4. Conclusion**

This paper examined the future of the EU and Turkey Relations in the context of migration case. As already mentioned above migration is one of the most important issue that effect EU and Turkey relations since 1960, when Turkish nationals has been accepted to reside as a guest worker by EU countries. Effect of this issue on relations has grown rapidly and now within the Readmission Agreement have come to an important turning point. Readmission Agreement has two dimension for both side. Firstly it's important for migration and border policy of EU for third country nations. Secondly it's important for Turkey's membership status. Agreement shows us migration issue will be contunie to shape EU and Turkey Relations in the future.

Managing migration flow is one of the most important priority within all EU countries beyond Turkey. Especially fight against illegal migration flow is a problem that take into consideration both immigration, transit and home countries as well. Although EU carry into effect polics, rules and new procedures, it is difficult to say that EU is successful. People are still dying on the road of Europe by illegal ways. Only EU or only one country is not able to manage this kind of international problem. Therefore, cooperation between Turkey and EU has critical importance for manage the migration flow.

In light of all this, 3 possibility might be occur in the future of the EU and Turkey relations: Firstly, conflicts and competition would continue. At this senerio Turkey wouldnd't be membership of the EU. EU would countinue to pretend membership status of Turkey. Secondly, Turkey and EU would expand their cooperation. They agree to remain good friends. Cooperation about migration asylum and visa policy would be succesfully managed. Afterwards, Turkey would obtain visa free entry into EU. Finally, Turkey would accepted as a full membership into EU. Turkey would transit from emigration to an immigration country (Tocci, 2014, pp. 5-11). Regardles of which senario occurs migration issue will remain important mutual field of study area between Turkey and EU in the future as well.

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