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Turkish Immigration Politics and the Syrian Refugee Crisis

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Content

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Executive Summary (Deutsch)

Die türkische Immigrationspolitik befindet sich derzeit im Wandel. Seit 2014 gibt es ein neues Immigrationsgesetz und eine neue Behörde, unter deren Dach alle immigrationspolitischen Belange vereint werden sollen.

Die syrische Flüchtlingskrise hat die Türkei, die erst seit den 90er Jahren größere Flüchtlingszahlen verzeichnet, vor nie dagewesene Herausforderungen gestellt. Während es in den ersten Jahren (2011-2014) vor allem um die Organisation von Nothilfe ging, müssen nun Maßnahmen zur langfristigen Integration von Syrern ergriffen werden. Insbesondere gilt es, die Beschulung von syrischen Kindern zu verbessern (derzeit bei geschätzten 20-25%) und den Zugang von Syrern zum Arbeitsmarkt zu regeln. Hierfür wurde im Januar 2016 ein Gesetz erlassen, wonach Syrer nach sechs Monaten Aufenthalt eine Arbeitserlaubnis erhalten können. Die Auswirkungen dieser wichtigen Neuerung sind noch abzuwarten. Gleichzeitig wurde eine Visumspflicht für Syrer, die über Drittländer einreisen, eingeführt. Die offizielle „open door" Politik der Türkei gegenüber Syrern muss auch dahingehend qualifiziert werden, dass Grenzübergänge nach Syrien während der zweiten Jahreshälfte 2015 weitestgehend geschlossen blieben und türkische Sicherheitskräfte die meisten Schmuggelrouten zwischen der Türkei und Syrien geschlossen haben.

Etwa 85% der geschätzten zwei Millionen Syrer in der Türkei leben nicht in Lagern, sondern in selbstständig gemieteten Unterkünften. Der türkische Katastrophenschutz AFAD leitet 26 Lager; weitere sollen nicht hinzukommen. Innerhalb der Lager ist die Notversorgung, inklusive Schulen, zentral organisiert. Außerhalb findet die Versorgung dezentral statt, durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Organisationen (türkische und internationale). Insgesamt entwickelt sich die türkische Flüchtlingspolitik entlang zweier Achsen: a) durch pragmatisches Improvisieren lokaler Akteure und b) durch zentrales Management nationaler Behörden. Dabei folgen die Letzteren häufig den Fakten, die durch Erstere geschaffen wurden. Diese Balance zwischen „lokaler Autonomie soweit wie möglich" und „nationalem Steuern soweit wie nötig" hat bisher insgesamt recht erfolgreich funktioniert.

Die Lebensumstände von Syrern in der Türkei sind vor allem abhängig von deren Ausgangssituation. Die rechtlichen Rahmenbedingungen hinsichtlich Zugang zu Bildung, Gesundheitsvorsorge, Wohnrecht, Nothilfe und Freizügigkeit sind gut, aber praktische Hürden wie Armut, die Sprachbarriere, fehlende Informationen und Transportmöglichkeiten verhindern häufig ihre Nutzung. Besonders in der Grenzregion im Südosten und in den großen Städten sind Anzeichen von akuter Verarmung der syrischen Bevölkerung zu beobachten: Kinderarbeit und ausbeuterische, illegale Arbeitsverhältnisse sind verbreitet.

Bisher erhält die Türkei keine bedeutenden bilateralen oder multilateralen Gelder aus der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit; tatsächlich ist die Türkei ein Geberland. Seit Oktober 2015 gibt es einen gemeinsamen Aktionsplan der EU und der Türkei, der finanzielle Hilfe vorsieht, um die Türkei bei der Integration der syrischen Flüchtlinge zu unterstützen. Aber dieser explizit politische Aktionsplan ist nicht mit einer Maßnahme der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit zu verwechseln (er verfolgt das Ziel, die Zahl der Syrer, die in die EU weiterreisen, zu verringern). Aufgrund der besonderen Situation der Türkei bedarf es partnerschaftlich ausgehandelter Programme, die sowohl finanzielle und technische Hilfe umfassen, evtl. mit einem Augenmerk auf Erfahrungsaustausch, wie in europäischen Ländern z. B. die Integration von Kindern ohne einheimische Sprachkenntnisse erfolgt. Interviews mit Entscheidungsträgern in der Türkei ergaben, dass eine „Lastenteilung" mit der EU hinsichtlich der Syrienkrise stark gewünscht wird. Mehr noch als Finanzhilfe erwarten türkische Entscheidungsträger von Seiten Deutschlands und der EU diplomatisches Engagement zur Beendigung des Syrienkonflikts sowie die Aufnahme einer größeren Zahl der zurzeit in der Türkei ansässigen Flüchtlinge als bisher.

Introduction

The Syrian war created an unprecedented situation in Turkey. In the space of three short years, two million Syrian refugees arrived. Turkey never before witnessed such a large influx of people. The fact that Syrian immigration has not led to a moral panic in Turkey, and has in fact not even become a particularly salient issue in domestic politics, is remarkable. This report presents a description and a critical analysis of Turkey's reaction to Syrian immigration.

Turkey's policies are currently in flux and this report risks being rapidly outdated. In January 2016, two important changes were announced: first, Turkey introduced a visa requirement for Syrians arriving from third countries via air or sea; and second, a work permit regulation for Syrians, who have lived over six months in Turkey, was announced. According to the Turkish government, Syrians crossing directly into Turkey to flee the conflict will still be allowed entry without visas. But human rights organisations have reported growing restrictions and pushbacks of Syrian asylum seekers arriving across the south-eastern border.

These recent policy changes should be considered as at least connected to – if not as a direct result of – the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan, which was agreed upon between Turkey and the EU in October 2015. In summary, the complex plan announces a transfer of EU funds and technical assistance to Turkey, and an acceleration of EU accession procedures, in exchange for better border controls and more effective bureaucratic restrictions on illegal migration from Turkey to Europe.

The biggest challenge that is now confronting Turkey with regard to Syrian migration is developing a strategy for the long-term integration of Syrians into the labour market and education system. Currently, aid directed towards Syrians is still largely designed as short-term projects, which, as the Syrian presence enters its 5th year and no signs of peace in Syria are on the horizon, have become inadequate. But long-term integration is a much thornier issue to address than emergency aid, and raises much more difficult policy questions. Who wins and who loses from the integration of Syrians? And what kind of structures and systems are necessary to smooth the process? Countries across the EU are struggling with the same questions, and EU governments may well benefit from learning about Turkey's experiences so far. Vice versa, Turkey can learn from those EU countries with decades-long experience of how to integrate long-term migrants into existing public infrastructure and administrative systems.

Turkey's policy making towards Syrian refugees has been characterized by a mix of unplanned pragmatism on the local and regional level, and calibrated legal and political steering by national policy makers. Much innovation has happened spontaneously in those areas with a large Syrian population; this process was helped by a flexible application of the law, autonomy for municipal actors, a well-organised, national disaster response, and an effective cooperation between state organisations and civil society actors. The ability of Syrians to self-organise and create new civil society organisations in exile, and the fact that they have been given the space to do so, has been an important, constructive factor in the emergency response.

Syrians have, overall and so far, benefitted from Turkey's open door policy and aid provision. Their situation inside Turkey is highly varied, reflecting the diversity of class and education levels present in Syria before the war. The poorest Syrians in Turkey face harsh poverty and social exclusion. As exile wears on, Syrians need to be able to develop opportunities, especially with regard to education and legal work, to avoid becoming increasingly destitute. Unfortunately, according to several human rights reports, it appears that throughout 2015, Turkey has gradually limited Syrian access to Turkish territory. In response, thousands of Syrians now live in growing refugee camps on the Syrian side of the border. Reportedly, Turkish and international organisations are tending to these camps, but the exact situation is unclear. Should Turkish authorities indeed be preventing Syrian war refugees reaching Turkish territory, or be engaged in deportations, this would be against international law. Syria's horrific war and the mass flight of its people require much better and stronger international cooperation to ensure that Syrians have safe passage and can access asylum abroad. More and better foreign aid to assist Turkey, which has spent over USD 8 billion on

the Syrian refugee effort, would be an important step in this direction.

Over the past year, the Turkish government has increased its authoritarian persecution of opposition figures, including journalists, academics, and Kurdish politicians. Germany and its European partners should in no way fall into the trap of turning a blind eye to this dangerous development, in exchange for Turkish cooperation on the question of Syrian refugees. Instead, EU partners should reaffirm that an acceleration of Turkey's accession process depends on the maintenance of democratic politics in Turkey.

Research Methods and Report Structure

The research upon which this report is based consists of semi-structured interviews and desktop research.[1] The interviews were conducted mostly with Turkish government and non-government actors working in the refugee and immigration field. A full list of interview partners is found at the end of this report. Interviews were conducted in Turkey's capital city Ankara and in Gaziantep, a regional capital in South-east Turkey, in November 2015. Gaziantep has developed into a hub for organisations assisting Syrian refugees, and many of Turkey's 26 refugee camps are close by. Desktop research consisted of a wide-ranging study of academic, expert and newspaper reports concerning Syrian immigration in Turkey as well as the wider Turkish context.

This report has four main parts. The first part analyzes Turkish immigration policy and how it has evolved with the arrival of the Syria crisis. The second part describes the living conditions of Syrian refugees in Turkey and the legal framework that governs them. The third part of the report focuses on the question of how foreign aid donors may assist Turkey in addressing the long-term integration of Syrians, and the final part presents some lessons learned and policy recommendations.

[1] Semi-structured means that interviews were conducted on the basis of a set of prepared questions; however, new questions and topics could be added according to the knowledge and expertise emerging during the interview.

Turkish Immigration Politics and the Syrian Crisis

Background

Turkey's legal and political framework for handling asylum and immigration matters has been undergoing important changes since 2014, when a new law called "Law on Foreigners and International Protection" came into force. This law includes the establishment of a new government agency called "Directorate General of Migration Management" (DGMM). Today, the DGMM is the sole institution officially responsible for asylum matters. In practice, the DGMM will gradually take over a variety of tasks related to immigration that have been handled by the UN and various non-government organisations in the past years. As the DGMM is being built up and professionalised, a situation of "hand-over" between the DGMM and the UN is in place.

Until the 1990s, Turkey had no reason to consider itself an immigration country. Instead, Turkey was primarily a sending and a transit country, for both asylum seekers and labor migrants traveling to Europe (Icduygu, 2000; Kirisci, 2007).[2] Changing political circumstances and escalating conflict in the Middle East however, meant that since the mid-1990s, thousands of refugees primarily from Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan began to arrive and remain in Turkey. This situation led to the realization that Turkey's refugee legislation, based primarily on Turkey's incomplete ratification of the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention, was insufficient to handle the registration and management of refugees.[3] Thus, in 1994, a revised regulation governing asylum matters was adopted, which was, however, criticized for making it very difficult for non-Europeans to claim asylum.

Turkey maintains the so-called "geographical" limitation on its adoption of the Geneva Convention. This means that in Turkey, only "persons who have become refugees as a result of events occurring in Europe" can be accepted as full refugees under the convention ('convention refugees'). This restriction has to be understood in the Cold War context and Turkey's role as a 'buffer state' between East and West: the limited Convention was designed for Europeans fleeing communist repression.

Thus, since the 1990s, Turkey has seen a steady growth in arrivals of refugees, mostly from Iran and Iraq. In 2014, together with the massive arrival of Syrians, Turkey also witnessed an unprecedented increase in asylum applications from Afghans, Iraqis, and Iranians. Growing violence in Iraq in particular led to an arrival of around 80,000 Iraqis in the mid-2000.[4] For the past decade, UN refugee agency UNHCR has conducted registration and status-determination services in Turkey, with the help of a number of partner NGOs. Thus, for such non-European asylum seekers, UNHCR was responsible for registration and conducting interviews to decide whether they should be considered as refugees under UNHCR's mandate ('mandate refugees'). Should someone be found to have a legitimate refugee claim, UNHCR would try to resettle this person to a third country; however, in practice, this was rarely the case.[5] This meant that, according to interviews with NGO workers, most non-European refugees, even if they were recognized by UNHCR, faced an extremely precarious existence in Turkey, with no access to a permanently legal and stable livelihood. As the numbers of such people were rising in Turkey, the government faced growing pressure, both from Turkish civil society and the EU accession process, to reform and streamline its asylum and immigration laws. The 2014 "Law on Foreigners and International Protection" is the result of this long-planned reform process.

It was in this context that in 2011, the Syrian refugee crisis began.

[2] Kirisci, Kemal. "Syrian Refugees and Turkey's Challenges: Going beyond Hospitality". Washington, DC: Brooking Institution, May 2014.

[3] The Geneva Refugee Convention is the international law, upon which international refugee law is based. Countries, which have adopted the convention, are required to implement corresponding national legislation. Most countries in the Arab Middle East have not signed the convention; Yemen is a notable exception.

[4] UNHCR. "UNHCR Country Operations Profile—Turkey". Accessed December 21, 2015. http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e48e0fa7f.html.

[5] Interview with a former employee of one of Turkey's largest NGOs working on migration, 3.12.2015.

Syrian Migration to Turkey

The Syrian uprising began in March 2011, and as early as April 2011 several hundred Syrian refugees, fleeing government reprisals, arrived in Turkey's border province Hatay.[6] Shortly after, the Turkish government announced an open door policy towards Syrian refugees, which, at least officially, continues to this day.[7] By mid-May 2011, thousands of Syrians began arriving every month. By September 2011, Turkey's new national disaster response agency AFAD (founded in 2009), together with the Turkish Red Crescent, had built half a dozen refugee camps across three different provinces, each hosting several thousand Syrians.

> *"Turkey has to accept that its sociology has changed. There is a population between 2 and 3 million of Arabic background. They are mostly unemployed and most of them have very low incomes. They have health problems and psychological problems. Most of them are kids. This needs to be recognized and infrastructure should be strengthened because there is no other way to solve this problem".*
>
> *Programme coordinator at a leading Turkish NGO, November 2015.*

By the end of 2012, Turkish authorities had registered ca. 170,000 Syrians; in 2013, ca. 400,000 Syrian arrived, in 2014 ca. one million and in 2015, ca. 600,000.[8] Today, AFAD's official figures state that around 2.2 million registered Syrians live in Turkey. With this, Turkey is the country hosting the largest Syrian refugee population, compared to Lebanon (official figure ca. 1 million), Jordan (ca. 700,000), Iraq (ca. 250,000) and Egypt (ca. 130,000). Turkey's refugee 'emergency' is now already stretching into its fifth year and, as Syria's crisis deepens, there are no signs that it will be over soon. More than 53% of the Syrians in Turkey are below 18 and an estimated 60,000 Syrian babies were born in Turkey in the past four years. According to government statements, Turkey spent over USD 4.5 billion in the first 4 years of the crisis, of which only 200 million were covered by foreign aid.

Syrian displacement to Turkey followed a pattern determined by the dynamics of the unfolding violence, as well as geography. The main border crossings used by Syrians are those along Turkey's 400 km land border with Syria, located in Turkey's south-east. A very small minority of wealthy Syrians arrives in Turkey by airplane, directly in its urban centres. As northern Syria, including areas very close to the Turkish border, has been highly contested territory between the different warring parties, the border region has developed not only into a hub of refugee movement, but has also become the safe 'hinterland' of humanitarian organisations delivering aid into Syria, of journalists, fighters and smugglers, all involved in Syria's war 'business' in one way or another.

The first Syrians to arrive in Turkey were smaller groups of political activists, who were the first targets of government reprisals. These people fled to avoid arrest, imprisonment, and torture. With the escalation of Syrian government attacks on entire neighbourhoods in 2012, and the development of an armed opposition, the large-scale arrivals from 2013 onwards reflect worsening humanitarian conditions inside Syria and the destruction of entire cities. Now, people were – and are – fleeing because their houses and livelihoods had been destroyed, because their lives were at risk from daily bombardment, and because of a lack of food and drinking water. The reasons for flight from Syria to Turkey moved from specific fears, due to political activism, to fear affecting huge swathes of the population. The seeking of health treatment, especially during times of heavy conflict close to the border, also became a primary reason for (temporary) migration to Turkey.[9]

In 2013 (no newer figures available), displaced Syrians in Turkey largely came from Syria's northern provinces, all of which border Turkey: Latakia, Idlib, Aleppo, Raqqa, and Hassakeh. Reflecting the overall religious make-up of Syrian

[6] Özden, Senay. "Syrian Refugees in Turkey". Florence: Migration Policy Centre, European University Institute, 2013.

[7] In November 2015, Human Rights Watch reported that Turkey had largely closed its border to Syrian refugees and was using increasingly draconian measures to keep Syrians out. More information about this is provided below.

[8] UNHCR. "Syria Regional Response Inter-Agency Information Sharing Portal". http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php. Accessed 21st January 2016.

[9] Özden, 2013.

society, the majority are Sunni Muslims; however, all other groups are also present. Ethnic-religious identity politics have not surfaced as a major issue of Syrian immigration, but has played a small role in Hatay province, which is home to a sizeable Turkish-Alawite community.[10] In general, large-scale population shifts are sensitive in parts of the border region, which are claimed by a variety of contenders (Syria, Turkey, and Kurdish authorities). Most Syrians have stayed close to the Syrian-Turkish border, in the Turkish provinces Hatay, Kilis, Gaziantep, and Sanliurfa, where, up until 2014, a total of 25 refugee camps for Syrians were built. But the majority of Syrians lives outside of camps and are spread across all of Turkey's 81 provinces, but concentrated in urban centres. Research states that Istanbul has received 330,000 Syrians, followed by Gaziantep with 253.000; Şanlıurfa with 240.000; and Hatay with 204.000 people. Kilis hosts 86.000; Mardin hosts 78.000; Adana hosts 61.000; and Kahramanmaraş hosts 60.000 Syrians.[11] In Kilis, a Turkish town located directly on the border with Syria, the number of local residents has been eclipsed by that of Syrians: "In Kilis, the local community has become the minority now", stated the director of one local NGO in Gaziantep. A Syrian employee of an international NGO working in the area observed: "In Kilis, there are 120,000 Syrians and 90,000 Turks".[12] According to estimates, the population of Gaziantep, the urban hub of Turkey's border with Syria, is to one third Syrian.

Turkey's effective and rapid erection of relatively high quality refugee camps received international praise. The 26 camps are located in ten cities (Gaziantep, Kilis, Hatay, Osmaniye, Mardin, Malatya, Adana, Adiyaman, and Maras) and house just over 260,000 people.[13] They differ significantly in size and context. As one NGO worker, until recently employed with one of Turkey's leading refugee-aid NGO, stated: "What I admired about Turkey's response was the pragmatic, 'can-do' attitude. Without much debating and prevaricating about the perfect response, the focus was to simply go out and quickly set up something at least". According to AFAD, no additional camps are currently planned, partly because of a reduction in arrivals, but possibly also due to the realization that camps may be detrimental to the social integration of Syrians.[14] One AFAD employee stated: "The ones outside the camps adapt more easily. They have more social integration in comparison with those in the camps".[15] However, an important qualification to this decision not to build any more camps in Turkey is the fact that AFAD is actively involved in the provision and possibly building of new camps on the Syrian side of the border, on the outskirts of the Syrian town Azaz. As Turkey's border has been largely closed to new Syrian arrivals for much of 2015, thousands of Syrians arriving in the border area have ended up in these new IDP camps, which receive cross-border humanitarian services from Syrian, Turkish, and international NGOs. Thus, while no new camps are being built in Turkey, new camps, which are harder to reach and in a much more precarious situation close to the frontline, are developing.

Turkey's approach to the Syrian refugee crisis has differed from that of all of Syria's other neighbours in one important point: the government has kept close control over all aspects of aid delivery to Syrians, and it has only recently allowed the UN and other non-government aid providers a more central role. Although UNHCR, as mentioned above, already maintained important operations in Turkey, acting as a partner to the government, its involvement in managing Syrian migration remains limited compared to other contexts. Primarily, this is due to the fact that compared to other states hosting Syrian refugees, Turkey commands highly effective, national disaster management agencies and national NGOs. Second, it must also be understood as a sign that the Turkish government continues to consider Syrian immigration as an element of sensitive, regional, and international politics, which is far too important to relinquish to a powerful, international organisation such as UNHCR. In particular, the

[10] Eichler, William. "Turkey's Arab Alawites and the Syrian Conflict". *Open Democracy*, November 4, 2014. https://www.opendemocracy.net/arab-awakening/william-eichler/turkey%e2%80%99s-arab-alawites-and-syrian-conflict.

[11] Erdogan, M. Murat. "Syrians in Turkey: Social Acceptance and Integration Research". Ankara: Migration and Politics Research Centre, Hacettepe University, 2014.

[12] Interview with NGO director in Gaziantep, 23 November 2015.

[13] Interview with two managers at AFAD, 10 November 2015.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Interview with AFAD official, 10 November 2015.

refugee camps continue to be managed as a controlled space. The camps are under the overall management of AFAD and the Turkish Red Crescent and initially only one NGO, IHH, was allowed to work in the camps, to which access remains limited. Today, in response to a degree of 'normalisation' as the crisis as well as the exploding costs continue, other organisations, under the leadership of UNHCR, are also providing humanitarian services inside and outside the camps.

Since 2004, when Turkey and Syria signed a free-trade agreement, there was a deepening economic integration between the two areas. Cross-border trade and investment boomed, and existing business and social ties deepened. This factor eased aspects of economic integration of Syrians, who appear to have brought significant investments into the region (on the other hand, according to some interviews, Turkish businesses, who had built up assets in northern Syrian, lost them fully). Apart from such cross-border contacts, which also include a degree of family contacts through intermarriage, it should be noted that Turkish and Syrian societies are not particularly similar culturally (as far as such things can be assessed!). Arabic is not widely spoken in Turkey and it is important not to confuse adherence to the same religion with being culturally similar. For example, a survey among 1,500 Turks found that while 52.9% agreed that 'religious fraternity' was among the reasons why Turkey should admit Syrians, only 17.2% agreed with the statement "We are culturally similar to Syrians".[16]

The matter of onward travel from Turkey to Europe did not emerge as an important or widely discussed matter during our research. When prompted, interview respondents (government and non-government alike) agreed that it was primarily the more educated Syrians who sought to travel to Europe, due to lacking work opportunities in Turkey. The director of the Gaziantep office of one of Turkey's biggest aid NGOs stated that the "middle class" preferred to go and that "the engineers, academics and doctors are leaving for Europe".[17]

[16] Erdogan, 2014.
[17] Interview with regional director of large Turkish NGO, 23rd November 2015.

Turkish Policy Making in the Context of the Syrian Refugee Crisis

Turkish policy-making has been guided by a mix of pragmatic 'muddling through' and strategic policy development / implementation, in which frequently, the latter has followed facts created by the former. While the broad policy parameters for the national environment have been set in Ankara, much of the actual policy 'making' happens on a regional or even city level. Provinces and district authorities have had significant autonomy in handling the Syrian refugee response, and have also received money from the national budget to use as they see fit. However, in cases when national authorities have wanted to push things through across all regions, they have been effective in doing so. Among the most significant Turkish 'implementing actors' that were identified during research for this report are the national disaster response agency AFAD, the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC), the Turkish NGO IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), the Ministry of National Education (MONE), the DGMM, and the Ministry of Family and Social Policies.

On the regional and city level, provincial governorate authorities and district 'muhtars' (the broad equivalent of mayors) play an important role in deciding how and whether to implement policies. Turkish, Syrian, and international NGOs, as well as UN agencies such as UNICEF, are involved in proposing and developing new policies at the local and national level, and according to our interviews, at least in some districts and provinces, there is a remarkably open and effective communication between state and non-state actors regarding the Syrian aid response. The following quote from the regional director of a large international NGO in Gaziantep regarding the employment of Syrians, which is officially banned, is exemplary of the practical, goal-oriented, improvisational approach practiced in regions with a large Syrian population. "The funny thing is, we have partners, municipalities, that are employing refugees, even though they are not allowed to do it. There are some ways around, for example Syrians work as volunteers and get some support in exchange. It means that the government is not a solid block – it's like, we do this, because everybody does it. There are independent people and independent actors. On the local level, they are coming up with very creative solutions", he

stated.[18]

Turkey's strategic goals regarding the Syrian refugees appear to be in flux. The openly discussed strategic priorities are: 1) ensuring that more Syrian children go to school, 2) issuing a labour policy for Syrians, 3) addressing the question of long-term presence of Syrians, 4) achieving more international involvement in the management of Syrian migration, and 5) maintaining a decent standard of living for Syrians in Turkey. Of these, only the issue of education has been squarely addressed, via the Ministry of National Education's 2014 circular (more on its content below). Regarding the three other matters, the government appears to remain indecisive and currently prefers to remain at the improvisational level. For example, regarding the question of Syrians' long-term presence, there appears to be a disagreement about whether to aim for 'integration' – which is by some actors perceived negatively as 'assimilation' – or 'harmonization', which is the preferred term of DGMM. 'Harmonization' here means a form of integration, where the migrant group can keep its cultural identity but live in 'harmony' with the host society. The negative reaction to the word 'integration' (understood as 'assimilation') is on the one hand shaped by a particular perception of the historical experience of Turkish migrants to Europe; interestingly, Turkish policy makers' attitude to Syrian migration appears to be significantly influenced by this experience. It is perceived that Europe applied a policy of integration / assimilation to Turkish migrants, and that Turkey wants to take a different approach. This approach is reflected in the Turkish Ministry of National Education's remarkable education policy for Syrians (discussed below). On the other hand, interview partners associated 'harmonization' positively with Turkey's Ottoman imperial history, which is somewhat peculiar, given that from the Syrian perspective, the Ottomans may still today be considered as the colonial oppressors of the past. In another example of continuing indecisiveness, with regard to the labour market access for Syrians, there appears to be a lack of decision over how to integrate the competing interests present in Turkish society. In response to the lack of decision making at the centre, the provinces and districts are finding their own, spontaneous solutions, which are, for the moment, working to a satisfactory degree, with winners and losers.

Among the less openly discussed strategic priorities guiding Turkish policy towards Syrian immigration are: 1) restrict and / or control better the flow of migrants arriving from Syria (as opposed to a rhetorical commitment to an 'open border' policy) and 2) handle the increasingly dangerous and messy foreign-policy fallout from the Syria quagmire. While an analysis of Turkey's foreign policy priorities goes beyond the scope, in summary, the key points are a) the Turkish government is opposed to Asad, b) always seeks to control / repress Kurdish autonomy, and c) has seen its earlier Middle East policy of 'zero problems' with neighboring countries catastrophically fail. These two 'veiled' strategic priorities are, of course, connected. They are visible in particular from the increasingly well-documented border closures as well as from the support that Turkish agencies are providing to camps built just across the border inside Syria, which may be considered a way to 'contain' displaced Syrians outside of Turkey. For example, when research was carried out for this report in Gaziantep in November 2015, the Turkish-Syrian border crossings in the area were closed.

The growing border closures during 2015, and an increasing crackdown on smuggling routes have heavily restricted the arrival of Syrian migrants to Turkey. For example, in October 2015, Human Rights Watch could only identify a single, still-open smuggling route for Syrians; the organisation has also documented that Turkish authorities have been aggressively pushing back Syrians in need of asylum, with disastrous humanitarian consequences.[19] Such pushbacks of asylum seekers back into a war zone are illegal under international humanitarian law. In an even more disturbing development, in November 2015, Amnesty International published a report, which documents a growing practice by Turkish security forces, since September 2015, of unlawfully imprisoning Syrian asylum seekers, effectively giving them the choice of staying in prison or returning to Syria.[20] The immigration

[18] Interview with regional director of large international NGO operating in and around Gaziantep.

[19] Human Rights Watch. November 23, 2015, "Turkey: Syrians Pushed Back at the Border".

[20] Amnesty International. "Europe's Gatekeeper Unlawful Detention and Deportation of Refugees from Turkey". London: Amnesty International, 2015. https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/EUR44

prisons have reportedly been at least partially built with EU-funds, and according to the Amnesty report, more such prisons are being planned under the EU-Turkey Action plan agreed on in November 2015.

Also, the Turkish government, via AFAD, is contributing to the development of refugee (or rather 'idp'—internally displaced peoples') camps, just on the other side of the border of the Turkish town Kilis, on the outskirts of the Syrian town Azaz. These camps are run by Syrian NGOs, but with significant support from Turkish and international organisations. One interview partner explained that when fighting escalated in Aleppo in November 2015, AFAD approached international and national NGOs requesting tents and other items required for building a new camp, clearly destined for camps on the Syrian side. He commented: "What is happening now is that they are in a way already establishing the safe zone that they have been talking about".[21] Once again, this is a good example of an improvisational approach to policy making, essentially creating facts on the ground that are broadly in line with the Turkish government's approach, but at the same time not explicitly decided upon. Clearly, there appears to be an unacknowledged policy of containing Syrians inside Syria, rather than allowing them to access Turkey.

All interview partners agreed that the Arab uprisings took Turkey by surprise and did not expect the Syrian refugee crisis to last long. The initial open door policy was accompanied by the expectation that refugees would return home soon. "When Turkey started dealing with the refugees, they did not foresee that they would be here for ten years. Nobody anticipated that at the time", stated the regional director of a large international NGO in Gaziantep. Still, on the official side of things, the central-government actors responsible for refugee policy, the Turkish ministry of the Interior and the Prime Minister's Office, reacted quickly to create new national structures to focus on the issue. For example, in 2012, a deputy prime ministership "Prime Ministry General Coordinatorate for Syrian Refugees" was created as well as a coordinating governorship in Gaziantep Province. The relevant ministries have opened departments that operate in the regions with heavy Syrian concentration. All in all, thus, in addition to spending billions of dollars on the humanitarian relief effort, Turkey reacted quickly to create new organisational structures to handle the crisis. After the issuance of the new Foreigner's Law and the Temporary Protection Regime for Syrians, different ministries were charged with issuing so-called circulars, to outline the specific policies to be taken in their area. However, as mentioned above, as these policies are unevenly implemented in practice, Syrians and organisations working for them, "may therefore have different operational constraints from one province to another", as one research report commented.[22] Currently it appears as if actual policy implementation is rather resulting in a more favourable humanitarian space for the Syrians than a strict application of the official rule; however, given the recent reports of a growing crackdown, this situation could quickly reverse.

While a full analysis of the role of domestic and foreign politics in Turkish refugee politics goes beyond the scope of this report, it is important to note that clearly, such considerations are important. For example, domestically, opponents of the ruling party AKP worry that President Erdogan is seeking to establish the Syrian community as a grateful – thus loyal – constituency for the future, especially in areas that have been traditionally home to the opposition (such as Kurdish areas in the south-east, but also in traditional centres of opposition, such as academia, where 'loyal' Syrian professors could replace critical Turkish staff). Internationally, refugee politics have now become a crucial issue in EU-Turkey relations, but have since the beginning played into Turkey-Iraq relations, Turkey-'Kurdistan' relations as well as, of course, Turkey-Syria relations. Turkey's 'revolving door' policy towards anti-Asad fighters from various militant groups, for example, must be considered in this light.

As an example of Turkish policy making, the following paragraphs analyze the education policy (primary and secondary) on Syrians, first, as this policy is relatively well developed; second,

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[21] Interview with regional director of large international NGO operating in and around Gaziantep.

[22] Watenpaugh, Keith David, Adrienne Fricke, and James King. "We Will Stop Here and Go No Further – Syrian University Students and Scholars in Turkey". Davis, California: Institute of International Education, University of California, Davis, 2014.

because significant, open-source information is available on it; and third, because it is exemplary of several Turkish policy 'attitudes' outlined above.

In an example of spontaneous pragmatism, the largest hospital in Gaziantep has hired translators to be on stand-by in hospital corridors. The director of a Syrian NGO remarked: "The translators are always in the corridors of the hospitals and they are called when there is a need for them. We have given them some training on medical terminology and will continue this type of training".

The governments' improvisational approach has also drawn important domestic criticism for its lack of strategy and unintended results. The director of a large aid organisation, which is considered to be politically close to the government, stated: "There is nothing systematic or structurally planned. Syrians were allowed to arrive without any checks—but women, elderly, children and sick people should have been the priority—there were no criteria". She observed that while Turkey was evidently "doing a lot to help", better planning from the start, particularly in education and the health service, would have resulted in a much better situation now, in particular with regard to the lack of doctors in the border regions.

As will be set out further below, the biggest challenge confronting Turkish policy making on the refugee issue now is moving from a humanitarian-emergency response to a strategy of long-term integration.

Syrians in Turkey: Living Conditions and the Legal Framework

Living conditions of Syrians in Turkey are highly varied, reflecting the variety of Syrian society: wealthy, educated Syrians naturally have better opportunities to develop successful, long-term strategies than do impoverished farmers, who have lost everything. The following section describes the social and legal framework that Syrians encounter in general in Turkey, and the humanitarian and integration challenges most frequently mentioned by interview partners and in other research reports. It should at this stage be noted, that there are numerous examples of Syrian 'self-help' organisations in Turkey, in which Syrians in exile have set up NGOs and centres to make a positive counter-point to their difficult situation. However, these are not the focus of this report.

Living Conditions

Syrians in Turkey face a mixed situation, which is characterized, on the one hand, by relatively good provisions to ensure their basic needs, but on the other hand, also by the lack of long-term livelihood opportunities. In this, their situation is, in fact, comparable to the situation of many refugees in Western Europe, especially as some of the challenges, such as the language barrier, labour market issues and temporary resident permits, are quite similar to those in Europe.

Syrians who arrive in Turkey are registered by local authorities, in a process that in 2014 was streamlined into a national system by DGMM, with some technical assistance of UNHCR.[23] It should be noted that the successful and standardised registration of such a large group of people is itself a significant success, especially as none of the interviewed experts reported problems regarding access to registration. Before the intervention of DGMM, registration was conducted in different, rapidly developed registration centres in Gaziantep, Kilis, and Urfa, where local residency cards where issued, and non-electronic data could not be fed into the national database.[24] Now, the database is electronic and uses biometric registration data. As services are provided to registered Syrians only, registration of Syrians is now considered as largely complete and efficient by government and non-government figures.

Upon registration, Syrians receive a residency card, which gives them access to a range of services. Within their area of registration, Syrians have freedom of movement and can choose to settle in one of the camps or seek housing on the open market. Only around 10% of all Syrians live in camps (ca. 260,000, according to AFAD), where accommodation is free. In general, all interview partners agreed that living in a camp is the least preferred option among Syrians, unless the person or family has no other choice due to lacking financial resources. According to a manager at the DGMM, the current camps are not at full capacity, especially during summer. "We do not force people to stay in the camps, like in Morocco or Jordan. It depends on their own will, and there are not so many who want to stay in the camps", this manager added.

Registered Syrians have access to health services, which they can seek out in public hospitals. All interview partners considered Syrians' access to health services as the least problematic and most smoothly functioning area. As even one highly critical NGO worker stated: "Actually, Syrians can reach a lot of health services, I think the state has solved things. Syrians are benefiting from most of the health services that Turkish citizens are benefitting from. Health is where integration is relatively well realized". A government official in Kilis stated: "Apart from everything else, the health sector is working well. Anyone who goes to the hospital, benefits from healthcare". One reported challenge concerns the language barrier, as Turkish health personnel generally do not speak Arabic.

The 26 refugee camps are concentrated in 10 of Turkey's 81 provinces, all close to the Syrian border in Turkey's south-east, i.e., on the periphery of Turkeys' territory. According to AFAD, the camps are located in Gaziantep, Kilis, Urfa, Hatay, Osmaniya, Mardin, Malatya, Adana, Adiyaman, and Maras. This south-eastern area has historically been an area of conflict between the Turkish government and the Kurdish opposition. This conflict is currently continuing to 'bubble' underneath the surface, but has not

[23] Erdogan, 2014.

[24] Özden, 2013.

had any significant impact on the hosting and managing of Syrian refugees.[25] The camps offer all key facilities, such as health services, schools, various vocational training courses, and children's activities. AFAD is the key institution responsible for the camps, and they only provide services inside the camps: outside of the camps, it is the Ministry of Social Policies and the DGMM in charge of managing aid deliveries.

Some Syrians, in particular, those living in the camps, receive food and cash assistance; outside of the camp, humanitarian assistance is provided by various international humanitarian organisations. In many municipalities, local officials called 'muhtars' are involved in distributing food to Syrian families. Also outside of the camp, some cash assistance in the form of vouchers or electronic chip cards is taking place. However, outside of the camps no systematic welfare provisions for Syrians exists, which leaves Syrians dependent on using up their savings and finding work, which is theoretically illegal but widely tolerated. This situation has led to the impoverishment of thousands of Syrians, which is most apparent in the sudden, massive appearance of child labour in areas where many Syrians live (see section below).

The most pressing livelihood issue confronting Syrians is paying rent. Due to the sudden population influx from Syrians and humanitarian organisations, rents in the south-east have rapidly risen. One director of a Syrian NGO active in Gaziantep stated: "The rents increased so much. They are living in small houses paying very high rent". While higher rents are also affecting the Turkish population, as is usual in such situations, Turkish landlords are also benefitting from renting out accommodation at inflated prices.

Syrians officially have freedom of movement only in the area where they are registered. In practice, however, this restriction is not enforced and Syrians can move across all of Turkey and settle freely. "They don't implement it, but legally Turkey can restrict the movement of the refugees and tell them you are only allowed to stay in the governorate that you are registered, you are only able to access free health in that city", the director of an international NGO stated. This was confirmed by the director of a Syrian NGO: "There is a new regulation now, the ones who are registered to one city cannot move to another city without permission from the DGMM in that city. But in each city implementation is different".

According to interviewees and desktop research, Syrians are currently not returning to Syria from Turkey in significant numbers.

The two most worrying and pressing livelihood issues which clearly emerged from research are *access to education* and *work permits* for Syrians.

Primary and Secondary Education

Since September 2014, legally, Syrians have access to all levels of education in Turkey. However, there are several barriers that are preventing, in particular, the schooling of children. Nearly all interview partners, government and non-government officials alike, referred to this problem as urgent. According to different reports, only 15% to 20% of all Syrian children are in school (IOM reported the absolute figure of 230,000 children outside of school; Human Rights Watch reported 400,000).[26] With regard to the unclear numbers, one government official stated: "The Ministry of National Education needs more reliable statistics".

Schools in the south-east were not equipped to handle the sudden growth in pupil numbers, and there was no experience with how to educate children without any knowledge of Turkish. In reaction, ad-hoc measures and self-organisation by the Syrian community resulted in an uneven system of schooling, inside and outside the camps, undertaken by non-governmental organisations. Eventually, in 2014, the Turkish ministry of education issued circular 2014/241 to detail how Syrian children should be educated in Turkey. According to an interview with a senior UNICEF official in Turkey, UNICEF was significantly involved in developing this policy. The circular came after the issuing of the new Foreigner's Law, which includes the formalized temporary protection system for Syrians, and

[25] According to unconfirmed information picked up during research in Kilis, some Kurdish villages are currently under curfew.

[26] Interview with IOM official, 10th November 2015; Interview with NGO in Gaziantep, 27th November; Erdogan, 2014; Human Rights Watch. "When I Picture My Future, I See Nothing". New York: Human Rights Watch, November 2015.

stipulates that all ministries are responsible for issuing precise circulars for their policy areas.

From a European perspective, what is remarkable about the circular is that it sets up a system to formalize and accredit Syrian-run, so-called 'temporary education centres', which teach a Syrian curriculum in Arabic. Syrian parents have the option of sending their children to a Turkish public school or to such a centre. This means that, in theory, the Turkish state is officially sanctioning the development of a parallel education structure for Syrians, which is regulated by Turkish authorities. It is of interest that the UNICEF official interviewed for this report welcomed this development, and that UNICEF was "very happy that the Turkish government took a flexible approach".[27] Reportedly, UNICEF covers an important part of the costs of the temporary education centres, such as teacher's salaries. Reportedly, there are 7,000 Syrian teachers on the payroll – officially, they are employed as 'volunteers', due to the official labour ban for Syrians.

The ministry of education's circular also established education commissions in the provinces, thus decentralizing education policy making. Further, it confirmed that a temporary registration document (rather than a full residency permit) was sufficient to register in the Turkish public school system. This development demonstrates how national policy making follows improvisation at the periphery, as well as the interplay between a specific Turkish approach ('harmonisation' instead of assimilation) and international humanitarian standards.

Our interviews confirmed that Syrian children are being taught different curricula. For example, research in Gaziantep found that some schools had mostly Syrian curricula, but added some Turkish history and Turkish literature. Classes were mainly taught by Syrian teachers and, in effect, it appears that a "hybrid" system of education is developing spontaneously. While this might be a good 'better than nothing' interim solution, it appears questionable whether this is a wise long-term strategy. Given that the long-term residency in Turkey of many Syrian children is increasingly likely, ensuring Turkish literacy and skills relevant for life in Turkey should perhaps be considered a priority, argued by one recent Turkish research report.[28]

As mentioned above, the confusion over curricula is also connected to the fact that Turkish public schools have only been able to provide access to a fraction of all Syrian children. According to reports, public schools in areas with a large Syrian population have resorted to teaching in a two-shift system, in which Syrian children attend school between 15:00 and 19:00. There are not enough Turkish teachers who can communicate in Arabic, so in part, this gap is covered by Syrian volunteers, who are not actually trained as teachers.[29] But the language barrier remains an important obstacle, and there is no system in place through which Syrian children receive special help to learn Turkish in public schools. In other words, it appears as though public schools are being forced to react and organise as best they can to the directive that they must accept Syrian children. According to several of our interview partners, Syrian children are no longer accepted by public schools when the number of Syrian children becomes larger than Turkish children.

Other factors that are complicating the school attendance of Syrian children is the fact that older children arriving from Syria have often only received interrupted schooling for several years, so their level of education does not match their age-cohort. While a range of civil society / NGO activities have sprung up to address such issues, there does not seem to exist a system in the public school system for how to help migrant children with no Turkish skills to enter Turkish schools. This is a potential area where the Turkish education system could benefit from the experience of European schools with this issue (in particular, the UK, Scandinavia, and Germany).

Related to the issue of schooling is the fact that child labour is reportedly widespread in the Syrian community. This should be regarded as a result of, as well as a cause for, Syrian children not attending school. "Syrians are making their children work at a young age, even at the age of 5

[27] Interview with UNICEF official in Ankara, 13th November 2015.

[28] Erdogan, 2014.

[29] Interview with a Syrian social worker, who studied commerce in Syria and was now teaching music and sports to Syrian children in Kilis, 25th November 2015.

to 10, mostly as apprentices in small businesses", stated a government official in charge of labour market issues in Kilis, who added that this was something that the Turkish state opposed. Newspaper reports speak of a massive rise in child labour in Turkey's south-eastern border towns, where child labour was not completely unheard of, but not on such a scale and not by children of primary school age. Now, reports indicate that even the fulltime employment of children as young as seven, earning far below the minimum wage, is regularly seen.[30] Istanbul has reportedly also seen a marked rise in child labour and of destitute, unemployed children roaming the streets.[31] Apart from working in shops, children work as street vendors and in all forms of odd jobs. This form of child exploitation was very rare in pre-war Syria, where school enrolment at primary school was nearly 100%. The appearance of large-scale employment of Syrian children must thus be seen as a strong indicator of extreme cash-shortage and impoverishment among the Syrian refugee community. A social worker from a local NGO in Gaziantep stated that economic hardship prevented children from continuing their education, and was driving them to earn money. "Children from the sixth grade onwards are all working", he stated. He believed that families needed to be given money so that the children could continue school. In fact, international NGOs provide cash vouchers to Syrian families on the condition that they send their children to school. One Syrian employee at an international NGO working in Kilis stated: "Children work in bakeries and local shops. They sell chewing gum on the streets and clean car windows. There is a whole generation out of school". Government officials in interviews expressed awareness of the matter; however, they stated that the informal economy in Turkey was simply too large to crack down on, and that there were not enough personnel and resources to address the issue. Also, it must be noted that a simple crackdown on child labour, which does not address its root causes, would not be an effective measure to prevent it.

[30] Letsch, Constanze, "Syrian refugees trigger child labour boom in Turkey". *The Guardian,* 2nd September 2014. http://www.theguardian.com/law/2014/sep/02/syria-refugees-child-labour-turkey.

[31] Köksal, Nik, "Syrian refugees spark child labour boom in Istanbul". *CBC News*, 21st July 2015. http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/syrian-refugees-spark-child-labour-boom-in-istanbul-1.3161611.

Turkish government officials expressed awareness of the urgent need to improve access to education for Syrian children. "We are trying to increase the level of school attendance and are trying to incorporate Syrian teachers", said one official of the DGMM. The National Ministry of Education has stated that it aims to have 270,000 Syrian children in school by January 2016, and 370,000 by the end of the 2015/16 school year.[32] It appears that the question regarding education for Syrian children is strongly linked to the question of moving from emergency aid to long-term integration programmes. This overall structural challenge confronting Turkey's migration management is further discussed in sections below. Thus, improving school access to impoverished Syrian children probably requires a broader intervention than simply building more schools, especially if their wages are crucial to family survival.

Labour

In January 2016, the Turkish government issued a new labour regulation for Syrian refugees, called 'Regulation on Provision of Work Permits for People under Temporary Protection'. According to the new law, registered Syrian refugees, who have lived in Turkey for six months, are able to apply for a work permit in the province where they are registered. Employers have to maintain a 10% quota for the Syrian refugees employed in their workplaces. Seasonal workers, who mostly work in the agricultural sector, are to be kept outside of the quota.[33] Further details about the application and functioning of the law have yet to emerge.[34] As this report was finalized before the appearance of the new law, some paragraphs in the following section may still refer to the previous situation.

Currently, the informal – i.e., technically illegal, but tolerated – participation of Syrians in the

[32] Human Rights Watch, 2015.

[33] Celik, Mehmet, "IOM praises Turkey's new regulation granting work permits to Syrian refugees". *Daily Sabah*, 16th January 2016. http://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2016/01/16/iom-praises-turkeys-new-regulation-granting-work-permits-to-syrian-refugees.

[34] UNHCR, "High Commissioner welcomes Turkish work permits for Syrian refugees". UNHCR Website, 18th January 2016. http://www.unhcr.org/569ca19c6.html.

Turkish labour market is widely occurring. Syrians are working in low-skilled sectors, such as agriculture, textile production, and as shop employees; however, also in higher-skilled jobs in the humanitarian aid sector and other office jobs. Turkey's economy comprises a large 'informal' or 'grey' market, which essentially refers to economic activity that is not fully registered with state authorities, and where labour regulations are only weakly upheld.[35] Thus, this 'informal' integration of Syrians into the economy does not present a surprising rupture in the Turkish context.

Several studies have assessed the impact of Syrian migration on the labour market of the south-eastern border region. Contrary to what might be expected, Syrian migration has led neither to a net-increase of Turkish unemployment nor to a net-reduction of wages. In fact, overall unemployment figures have remained largely unaffected and average Turkish wages have increased, due to a greater availability of better-paid, formal jobs, which have arisen out of the refugee influx.[36] However, a recent disaggregation of these figures by a World Bank study found that the arrival of Syrians has led to a large-scale displacement of informal, low-educated, female Turkish workers in the agricultural sector.[37] It should also be noted that growing child labour, which is occurring generally at the 'bottom rung' of the labour market, is also not properly counted in unemployment figures. Thus, the labour market effect of Syrian refugees does not just appear heavily gendered, but is also having an impact on an already disadvantaged social group. This observation matches a recent survey finding that it is particularly Turkish women in the south-east, who are opposed to Syrians staying for the long-term. The overall rise in employment figures suggests that Syrian migration has resulted in greater economic dynamism, in addition to the transferal of capital and investments by Syrian businesspeople to Turkey.[38] They also indicate the benefits that an under-regulated economy can hold for migrants, as under-regulation can sometimes make spontaneous integration easier than a complex set of rules.

Still, interview partners from both government and civil society considered the ban on Syrian work permits as one of the biggest obstacles to improving Syrians' lives in Turkey, and one of the possibly most contentious issues. This is because, as described above, the Turkish public is divided into 'winners' and 'losers' with regard to Syrian labour: while business owners tend to welcome the greater pool of workers, certain types of Turkish employees face a downward pressure on wages. "The availability of a Syrian who will work for 300TL monthly in a bakery, instead of a local person who will ask for 1000TL for the same job increases the social tension", commented a recent Turkish research report. Interviewees confirmed such downward pressure on wages, and a government official in Kilis also reported complaints from local artisan businesses (as opposed to larger industries), about Syrian attempts to establish shops. A large survey on Turkish perceptions of Syrians found that within the south-east, 68.9% of respondents agreed with the statement "Syrians take our jobs"; however only 44% agreed with the statement that "work permits should never be granted". Instead, there was a large agreement with the provision of temporary and / or sector specific jobs.

Both government and civil society figures showed that there is a need for legal clarity and better regulation of Syrian labour (which is occurring in any case). The illegality of Syrian labour also heightened the danger of Syrian employees to be exploited. While on the one hand, it was reported that certain highly skilled sectors, such as the health services, would benefit from permitting Syrian doctors to work, on the other hand, it was reported that it was especially low-skill sectors, such as agriculture and manufacturing, that could benefit from legal work permits for Syrians. The government's position is possibly divided or evolving on the matter. While in August 2015, Turkey's labour minister, Faruk Celik, announced that that the government would not grant work permits for Syrians, in November 2015 he stated that "a certain number of work permits" would be granted.[39]

[35] Interview with Turkey expert in Istanbul, November 2015.

[36] Akgunduz, Yusuf Emre, Marcel van den Berg, and Wolter Hassink. "The Impact of Refugee Crises on Host Labor Markets: The Case of the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Turkey". 2015.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Erdogan, 2014

[39] Afansieva, Dasha. "Turkey Will Not Give Syrian Refugees Right to Work - Labour Minister". *Reuters*, July 8, 2015;

Access to University

Turkey has taken several proactive steps to help Syrians access university, and in principle, Syrians have the right to attend university in Turkey. Since 2012, they can do so without paying any fees (at state universities). Syrians can apply to study for all higher education degrees: bachelor, master, and PhD programs.[40] As long as they can meet the entrance and language requirements (either English or Turkish, depending on the university) and the general living costs associated with attending university, Turkish universities are open to them. Usually, foreign students are required to pay fees in Turkey, but in 2012, the Turkish government waived this requirement for Syrians in some areas; as of the academic year 2014/5 all state universities nation-wide will accept Syrians without fees.[41] The key administrative government actor for higher education in Turkey is 'YÖK', the Central Higher Education council, made up of various stakeholders from government and universities, which in recent years has aimed to centralize and standardize higher education in Turkey. An excellent and detailed overview of the opportunities and challenges facing Syrians accessing higher education in Turkey is provided in a 2014 report titled, "We Will Stop Here and Go No Further: Syrian University Students and Scholars in Turkey", the reference to which is provided below.

As in other areas of policy, there exist regional variations on how and whether rules are implemented, and there is a lack of coherence, especially as Turkey's higher education system is in itself highly complex. While on the positive side, the Turkish government has issued several regulations designed to help Syrians access universities, there are important practical hurdles, especially the language barrier. Problems exist with regard to the acceptance of Syrian documents (i.e., proofs of learning), or in the case when Syrian students do not have any documents. There does not appear to be a standard way of examining Syrian students' knowledge-base and admitting them to courses. As a result, university departments create their own, individual system of admitting Syrian students – which seems to be appropriate, as different universities teach subjects according to different curricula. For example, a Syrian woman working as a volunteer at an international NGO in Gaziantep, who was also studying civil engineering at Gaziantep University, explained: "Each department applies their own rules, there is not a general rule on the acceptance and entrance to universities". In her case, she was a third year student in Syria, but entered into the second year in Turkey, as the curricula differed. In Gaziantep, she had to take an English exam, as this is the teaching language. Sometimes, however, lecturers also used Turkish, which made it harder for the Syrians. She was not required to take the so-called YÖS exam, a standard entrance-examination for foreign students, although UNHCR documents state that according to national regulation, Syrians do have to take this exam. Thus, an element of practical rule-making on the spot appears to prevail, which, according to interviews, appears to work relatively well, but also creates a complicated situation that is difficult to understand for Syrians and international partners.

Still, despite this overall favorable institutional and legal framework, only a tiny fraction of Syrian youth attend university – as little as two percent.[42] Although the numbers of enrolled Syrians have been rapidly rising, according to a Turkish newspaper article, the overall number of Syrian students at Turkish universities in 2014 stood at just over 4,500.[43] This is far lower than in other major host countries such as Lebanon and Jordan. Estimates based on Syria's high university-enrolment rate and the overall demographics of the Syrian population in Turkey state that there should be around 20-30,000 young "university-qualified" Syrians in Turkey. And of course, every year, many more reach

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-2833158/Turkey-grant-Syrian-refugees-work-permits.html.

[40] Interview with the Syrian director of a Syrian NGO in Gaziantep, 23rd November 2015.

[41] UNHCR, "Syrian refugees get chance to attend Turkish universities". UNHCR Website, http://www.unhcr.org/50dda9f69.html; UNHCR, "Syrian Refugees in Turkey. Frequently Asked Questions". https://www.fluechtlingshilfe.ch/assets/hilfe/syrien/faq-syrians-in-turkey-english.pdf .

[42] Watenpaugh et al., 2014.

[43] Today's Zaman, "Number of Syrian students in Turkish universities quadruples". Today's Zaman, June 27th 2015. http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_number-of-syrian-students-in-turkish-universities-quadruples_392069.html.

university-entrance age. Women are at a particular disadvantage: according to a detailed study of Syrian university attendance in Turkey, "of the total population of university-age Syrian women in Turkey, we estimate than less than 1% were attending an accredited university in the 2013-2014 academic year".[44]

The most important access barrier is, unsurprisingly, language. Without either Turkish or English language skills, Syrians are unable to attend university in Turkey. And even though instruction is increasingly carried out in English, general information about entrance requirements etc., are much more readily available in Turkish. While some universities offer one-year language preparation courses for foreign students, once again, there is no standardized system to ease Syrian universities into Turkish higher education. Further, new regulations, even when they present a positive step, have in the past been issued without effective communication, meaning that it is very difficult for Syrians to understand what opportunities they can actually pursue. Another obstacle is the foreign-student quota operated by Turkish universities, which limits the number of foreign students admitted to departments (the Turkish university system, while expanding, still remains heavily oversubscribed). While nationally, this quota has not been filled, it may limit Syrian access in areas where Syrians are concentrated, such as Istanbul and the south-east.

Avenues for Syrians to Apply to Turkish Universities

Avenue of application	Type of institution	Advantages	Limitations
As regular international students	Private universities	• Potential flexibility with academic and identification documents • Higher international student quotas	• Tuition costs • Individual institutional requirements
As regular international students	Public universities	• Free tuition • Can transfer at all levels	• Must have all academic and identification documents • Must pass a Turkish or English language exam (depending on field of study) • International student quotas apply
As special students	Public universities	• Free tuition • Flexibility with academic and identification documents • Do not need Turkish • International student quotas do not apply	• Do not receive credit or result in a terminal degree • Cannot matriculate until able to produce official documents
Through the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB)	Public universities	• Free tuition • Flexibility with identification documents	• Only first-year students are eligible • International student quotas apply • Limited to specific universities • Limited to specific academic fields
Through the Türkiye Burslan program	Public universities	• Free tuition + supplementary support • Flexibility with identification documents • Turkish language training • International student quotas do not apply	• Only first-year students are eligible • May be limited to specific universities

Source: "We Will Stop Here and Go No Further: Syrian University Students and Scholars in Turkey"

[44] Watenpaugh et al., 2014.

There exist for Syrians a small number of bursaries, i.e., scholarships that provide students with money for daily living costs while attending university. First, Syrians can apply to the general bursary competition for foreign students wishing to study in Turkey, for which no Turkish skills are required. In 2014, 4,000 such bursaries were offered; reportedly a very small number went to Syrians. These bursaries include a one-year Turkish language course, housing, and other benefits. Second, a small number of scholarships are offered via UNHCR. Reportedly, the Turkish government is planning a range of further measures to help Syrians access university, including specific, additional admissions quotas and thousands of scholarships. Improving higher education access may be an important area for international collaboration, and a good way to support Turkey in hosting the Syrian refugee community.

Social Acceptance

Overall, social acceptance of Syrians in Turkey has been smooth. As mentioned above, the Syrian presence was hardly remarked upon during the national election campaigns in November 2015. This is a strong indicator that Syrian migration has not resulted in large social disturbances or public dissatisfaction. However, occasional protests and even small, violent outbursts against Syrian immigration have occurred in the south-east. Also, according to a large, nation-wide survey of Turkish public opinion on the issue, there exists a wide-spread stigma that associates Syrians with begging and unwelcome social and moral destitution.[45] Further, there is a very strong opposition against awarding Syrians Turkish citizenship, and significant opposition to allowing them full access to the labour market (moderate support exists for the awarding of limited or regulated access).

In summer 2014, several small riots broke out in Istanbul, Gaziantep and Hayat following claims that Syrian men had molested Turkish women. Each event involved several hundred protestors, who clashed with police. However, since then, no significant incidents have been reported. Clearly, the biggest socio-cultural effects are being felt in the towns and villages in the south-eastern border regions. Two interview partners, one Syrian, the other Turkish, believed that there were more Syrians now in Kilis than Turks – the town had a population of around 100,000 before the war. A government official in Kilis, who focuses on the labour market, stated "The Syrians are trying to establish businesses. This is disturbing local artisans, and when you disturb the artisans in a place like this, all the dynamics are being unsettled".[46]

> *"There is stigmatization that Syrians are beggars. Their burdens are being talked about, but their contributions are not mentioned."*
>
> *Professor of Migration Policy, Ankara*

Interviews in Ankara and Gaziantep confirmed the existence of low-level discrimination against Syrians, and exploitation of Syrian workers due to their more precarious situation. Also, a low-level degree of discrimination against Syrian children attending Turkish schools was mentioned; however, it was not at a systematic level.

The Legal Framework

The vast majority of Syrian refugees in Turkey are governed under a temporary protection regulation (the TPR), which was initially developed as a reaction to the mass influx of Syrians, and then regularized by a legislative act on 22nd October 2014. The TPR formalises the previously existing, ad-hoc temporary protection regime.[47]

The TPR means that Syrians do not fall under the international protection of UNHCR, and have no right to make a claim to international protection. Similar to, for example, the situation of refugees in Western Europe, temporary protection is considered to provide enough protection for refugees so that the intervention of UNHCR is not necessary any more. In Turkey, this means that Syrians are not entitled to approach UNHCR to become 'mandate refugees' and, e.g., seek resettlement in a third country. However, it also means that Syrians do not hold a full-fledged

[45] HUGO report.

[46] Interview with government official, Kilis, 25th November 2015.

[47] Asylum in Europe. "Introduction: Turkey's Temporary Protection Regime For Refugees From Syria". http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/introduction-turkeys-temporary-protection-regime-refugees-syria.

refugee status, in the sense that they can expect to reside in Turkey in the long-term and eventually obtain citizenship.

The central features of the TPR framework as it is applied to Syrians are non-refoulement (i.e., non-deportation back to Syria and the right to remain in Turkey) and non-punishment of illegal entry or presence in Turkey. Importantly, the TPR does not include an unconditional open border policy and does not guarantee Syrians the right to access Turkish territory. The TPR includes the provisions that a) people without valid travel documents are admitted to Turkey at the discretion of the provincial governorates and b) that Turkey can take 'additional measures concerning the mass movement of people' on its borders. Analysts understand this to mean that the government can close borders temporarily or indefinitely due to security considerations. Indeed, Turkey has operated occasional temporary border closures in the south-east, and reports published in late 2015 indicate increasingly drastic measures to prevent Syrians from reaching Turkish territory. While human rights organisations and the UN are urging Turkey to maintain an open border, Turkey is thus not violating its national law by closing the border.

Interview partners from civil society and government agencies expressed awareness throughout that Syrians are not considered 'full' refugees and that this situation limits their rights. The explanation and justification for the temporary protection regime offered by the government, which was echoed by interview partners, is that the massive arrival of Syrians made it impossible to assess each case individually, i.e., to make individual status determinations about refugee claims. To ensure that no one without such a claim would receive refugee status, but at the same time acknowledge the protection need of most Syrians, the temporary protection regime was a compromise. "We know that the temporariness of the legal status is being criticized", stated a manager at the DGMM, "but when there are such massive numbers, temporary protection is provided to all of them rather than individual statuses".

The growing criticism regarding Syrians' temporary status concerns the perceived mismatch between the temporariness of status and the evident long-term nature of Syrian migration to Turkey. The temporary status is considered to prevent Syrian integration and prevent them from rebuilding their lives in Turkey. An apparent lack of clarity about the conditions, which would lead to withdrawal of temporary protection and potential forced returns to Syria indeed create significant uncertainty about Syrians' future in Turkey.

> *"EU leaders can help in several aspects. The first aspect is to provide the financial help to Turkey to respond to the crisis and sustain services. And the second is on the political decision to stop the war. And the third is to ensure a new migration management, and new asylum frameworks, to cope with the changing world, and the fact that migration is not something to prevent but something to manage".*
>
> *Senior manager at IOM Turkey, November 2015*

Syrians, who arrive in Turkey with a valid passport still have the option to apply for a regular residency permit, benefiting from the visa-free travel regime that Turkey and Syria agreed upon in 2004. However, apparently only a small number of Syrians arrive with valid passports. According to the AIDA database (www.asylumineurope.org), at the end of 2014, only around 100,000 Syrians held such residency permits, under which they have access to the same rights as any other legally residing foreign national in Turkey.

Can Development Aid Help?

The Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey presents a complicated case for development aid for several reasons. In summary, the main reasons are: first, refugee aid is 'normally' classified as emergency aid, which falls under a different donor / policy regime than development aid. Second, Turkey has not, in recent times, received development aid (apart from the EU-adjustment funds), and has not warmly embraced cooperation with the main multilateral development agencies of the UN, let alone cooperation with international NGOs. Third, Turkey is a middle-income country, and, more importantly, operates a formidable and relatively effective state apparatus. These factors make a 'usual' approach to development aid (as far as this exists) unlikely to impossible. In short, to find effective long-term ways to support Turkey, donor countries and Turkey need to develop a tailored approach that can meet, on the one hand, donors' requirements of transparency and accountability, and on the other, Turkey's requirement to maintain independence and its individual policy response to the refugee crisis. UNICEF's cooperation with the Turkish education ministry to develop a strategy to increase Syrian enrolment may serve as a good example. However, as set out above, this strategy is not without controversy. Especially given Turkey's currently deteriorating domestic political environment, donors risk becoming embroiled if they are regarded as supporting, or damaging, for example, development projects regarded as beneficial to the ruling party, AKP. Worse, they could unwittingly support the government's growing use of authoritarian oppression in various forms.

Still, donor states should also remember that Turkey's formidable and in many ways constructive handling of Syrian immigration contains many 'lessons learned' from which EU countries, only recently affected by large-scale Syrian arrivals, can benefit. This means that it is in their own interest to regard Turkey as a 'partner country' in the true sense of the word. Indeed, one recommendation to come out of this last report section is that closer cooperation, and exchange of knowledge, between operational as well as mid-level strategic staff involved in migration-relevant government agencies and civil society organisations in Turkey and the EU could produce a strong base for the challenges confronting both actors for the next years ahead.

Research for this report produced one overwhelming consensus: the most significant, current challenge confronting Turkey with regard to Syrian migration is moving from an emergency-based approach to a long-term integration approach. Given that long-term integration of migrants is a much more difficult political issue than providing short-term measures, such as blanket and tents, it cannot come as a surprise that Turkish authorities still appear undecided about what kind of overall policy measures to pursue. Moving towards long-term strategies requires a range of new policies and projects in all areas affecting Syrian livelihoods. The economic and political challenges relating to Syrian integration are primarily threefold: a) distribution of resources / winners and losers of Syrian migration, b) social cohesion, and c) security. All are, evidently, interrelated.

At the same time, numerous interview respondents noted that 'immediate needs', i.e., the provision of everyday welfare to the poorest Syrian families remains important, especially as long as Syrians cannot legally work, and large obstacles to integration remain in place. "For sure, the short-term needs still retain their importance and place", one NGO worker commented. Ideally, it appears, it would be a solution that would integrate Syrians into state welfare systems as they already exist in Turkey, albeit in a situation requiring reform. Rather than 'outsource' the provision of refugee-benefits to NGOs, in Turkey's case, it seems to make sense for public social-service agencies to provide them directly. Foreign states could, in this case, provide Turkey with direct budget support to help cope with the costs. This would clearly require a significant administrative build-up, but given that the new agency DGMM has just been created, the integration of Syrian welfare into existing structures could become part of the agency's mandate. Turkey has embarked on a path to create significant state structures to manage migration, and such an approach, as it is used in Western European states, would make sense.

Turkey has not, in recent history, been a recipient of foreign aid in the sense of classic overseas development assistance. In fact, Turkey has in the past decade become a major international donor itself, and today, there are several large Turkish aid organisations that work

internationally. This means that there are no established channels for delivering and receiving this aid. Also the attitude in Turkey towards such aid is complex. Receiving foreign aid, especially via highly autonomous international organisations, may be regarded as a loss of sovereignty, an unwelcome intrusion, and a security risk. Turkey has received significant external assistance funds from the EU as part of its preparation for an eventual candidature and membership.

Turkey's complicated attitude towards receiving foreign aid is expressed in two contradicting positions: first, a constant emphasis by Turkish actors on the international community sharing a greater burden of the Syrian refugee crisis and an expressed eagerness for more international partnerships. Second, it is expressed by an implicit strategy of making life difficult for foreign aid providers to participate in delivering assistance. During research, the first attitude was found in the frequent comments that the EU was not fulfilling its responsibility towards the Syria crisis and its effects. The phrase 'burden sharing' was frequently used by interview partners; for example, by the regional director of a Turkish NGO: "In terms of burden sharing, the EU should assist Turkey materially", and by a government official in Kilis: "Burden sharing is crucial. Those in particular need should be resettled to third countries", and by an AFAD official in Ankara: "The EU is not sharing the burden sufficiently and is not taking the responsibility that it should have taken".[48] Importantly, every interview partner who spoke on this topic mentioned financial assistance as only one among other, crucial measures that the EU should take. Most urgently, the EU's failure to play a major foreign policy role in the effort to end the Syrian conflict was often referred to. "The EU should do more than bandaging the scars. There has to be a political solution. By sending aid, you cannot solve problems", a Syrian lawyer working for an NGO in Gaziantep, stated. A professor at Yildirim Beyazit University, who directs a centre on Turkish migration policy, said: "The EU should play a bigger role in providing assistance, but also a political role. The EU is looking at the Middle East blindly". Similarly, the emergency coordinator of IOM Turkey argued: "To solve the issue is not a financial matter. Only a political decision to solve the war in Syria can put things on the right track. As long as that is not the case, foreign aid is mandatory and necessary for the Turkish government to continue what they are doing." Similarly, the failure to accept and accommodate more Syrian refugees, and the fact that Europe considered itself to be in crisis, even though Turkey had already accepted many more Syrians, was often mentioned.

> *"There should be more collaboration and help between the EU and Turkey. Burden sharing should be at the highest level".*
>
> *DGMM Official, Ankara*

Yet, international observers and aid managers also reported that their attempts to deliver aid have been restricted by (unofficial) Turkish policy and restricting bureaucratic procedures. While there is evidence that Turkey has begun to cooperate with established international aid mechanisms, especially via UNHCR, there is similar evidence that Turkey by far is not operating an 'open door' policy towards the international aid 'market'. In 2014, for the first time, Turkey worked together with UNHCR to be part of the organisation's Syria Regional Response plan.[49] Still, compared to Jordan and Lebanon, the UN agencies are kept at arm's length in Turkey, reflected in the fact that they operate in an 'advisory' capacity and that all the 'heavy lifting' of the crisis, such as registration, document provision, the building and maintaining of camps, education, and health provisions, is all conducted and / or managed by Turkish state agencies. Access by international aid providers to the Syrian camp populations is highly restricted, and international NGOs operating in Turkey's south-east face long delays in getting projects approved.[50]

> *"The best solution would be to end the war. That is the most important factor. Nobody would leave their countries and houses unless they have to".*
>
> *Official at the Directorate of Migration Management, Ankara*

Restricting the number of aid providers may be a wise policy decision. The endemic problems of

[48] Kim Som Yuk, Labour Agency, AFAD Interview , 10th November.

[49] UNHCR Regional Response Plan 2014.

[50] Interview with the regional director of a large international NGO in Gaziantep, 24th November 2016.

humanitarian aid, such as a chaotic arrival of hundreds of organisations, and a lack of coordination and oversight have thus far apparently been largely avoided in Turkey. In fact, several aid providers stressed that the coordination of aid via the Turkish Red Crescent, and AFAD, were strong points, and should continue. Given Turkey's highly developed state apparatus, it may be a far more effective strategy to build on existing administrative, state processes to deliver aid to Syrians rather than manage a growing international aid sector. As one aid provider commented: "What kind of aid should it be? It is not about money, but it is about structures. Immediate needs should be met by strengthening existing systems".[51] It is true that better cooperation with the 'UN family' would make it much easier for international donors to provide money, given its established, multi-lateral processes to channel and account for money. But it is also true that the UN delivers aid according to a relatively entrenched system of beliefs and mechanisms, which, especially in the refugee field, is far from politically neutral and could create its own problems in Turkey's domestic situation.

Nevertheless, for foreign donors, who frequently have their own policies regarding who should receive aid and how it should be accounted for, these restrictions complicate the field. It is an open question, and currently appears rather unlikely, whether Turkish authorities would allow international organisations to implement multi-year, multi-million dollar development projects without significant involvement of state authorities – which again, may run against these organisations' own policies. A number of other structural bureaucratic hurdles to extending long-term ODA to Turkey also exist, such as the fact that UNHCR, as an 'emergency' organisation, only makes short-term, annual (sometimes bi-annual) funding appeals. As long as aid to Syrians in Turkey is classified as emergency aid (which aid to refugees always is), many donors will face regulatory restrictions to release development aid. In practice, these hurdles can be overcome if the political will is there; however, they cannot be discounted entirely.

Examples of Existing Aid Programmes

As referred to above, most aid projects to Syrians in Turkey are currently designed as emergency-aid projects, which implies that they are run on short-term budgets and time-frames. The following paragraphs portray several of such projects, to outline, why and how they will probably remain necessary in the mid-term, while long-term integration strategies are developed. Given that most Syrians live outside of camps, the focus lies here. Another aim of this portrayal is to show how and where long-term development aid could find useful starting points to support the integration of Syrians.

Several international NGOs (among them, Danish Refugee Council, Welthungerhilfe, and Kimse Yok Mu) are implementing cash assistance projects in south-eastern Turkey. These projects provide monthly cash payments to particularly vulnerable Syrian families, who receive payments via an electronic chip card, for a limited period, such as six months. Currently, Welthungerhilfe provides around EUR 15 per household member to vulnerable families, to around 54,000 families. This form of assistance is currently very popular in countries hosting Syrians (Jordan and Lebanon), where the crisis is characterised by urbanity (i.e., 'urban refugees'), the context offers the necessary infrastructure of banks and ATM machines, and there is availability of relatively large amounts of donor cash (while quick to implement, cash assistance is expensive). Cash assistance is designed to be a short-term emergency measure to help vulnerable families settle in, while they identify long-term coping strategies. In practice, at least in the Syrian crisis, cash has served as one of a range of tactics through which Syrians have managed to pay for rent and food – while no significant long-term strategies have emerged. Cash assistance is currently considered as a better form of aid than handing out goods, because it does not require organisations to handle large stocks, provides aid recipients with more independence, and supports local businesses. To identify families who meet the criteria, international organisations recruit local actors considered to have relevant knowledge; these can be local government officials or organisations such as the Red Crescent. Cash assistance can be 'unconditional', only tied to certain criteria of vulnerability, or 'conditional'. According to our research, in Turkey, currently most cash assistance is conditional, which means that recipients are requested to 'do' something in return. For example, Welthungerhilfe provides cash

[51] Ibid.

assistance on the condition that recipient families send their children to school. Another, popular form of cash assistance is called 'cash-for-work' – a euphemism for job-creation programmes by NGOs, which, however, are not tied to any labour rights, which should be considered problematic in the long-run. Currently, cash assistance in Turkey should be regarded as an important humanitarian measure through which donors can continue to help Turkey provide for the Syrian population.

As mentioned above, education and various forms of training are another important component of the emergency response. Unlike cash assistance, education / training projects are run by a large variety of actors. These include exiled, Syrian civil-society actors, Turkish organisations large and small, UN agencies, and the Turkish state. Education projects offer important platforms for long-term strategies, as they naturally tend to 'merge' towards something that looks more like development than emergency aid. The dynamic efforts to enrol more Syrian children are relatively widely discussed above, so will not be repeated here. But beyond children's schooling, a range of other educational projects exist, including the provision of training to translators working in sectors requiring highly specialised vocabulary, re-training of Syrians to give them skills needed in certain sectors of the Turkish labour market (and for which, hopefully, work permits will be forthcoming), language courses, and a form of 'integration' courses, in which civil society actors inform Syrians about Turkish society and the services they can access. Service and information provision has emerged as an important area of the aid sector. Organisations such as Malumat and Minbar Sam have established community centres through which they provide a range of advice and information to Syrians and run cultural activities through which Turkish and Syrian families can meet. Minbar Sam, which cooperates with the Turkish Ministry of National Education and several NGOs, and has issued translations of key Turkish regulations and law, is establishing a library and runs a multi-lingual radio service and other activities. Several organisations have installed 'hotlines', through which Syrians can gather information as well as voice concern. Thus, while still lacking in scope, strategy, and structure, both state and civil-society actors in Turkey are actively working to offer a range of education services to Syrians.

Donors should support these efforts both financially as well as via technical support; for example, by diffusing lessons such as the system of 'welcome classes' that German schools use for children who require intensive German training or by funding additional, relevant training for Turkish teachers to work with Syrian children.

A range of projects designed to help Syrians who face a particularly extreme life-crisis also form part of the emergency response. In hegemonic humanitarian jargon, these are classified as 'protection' projects for the 'most vulnerable'. In practice, they can be regarded as perhaps the most classic forms of charity, i.e., helping people such as orphans, families in crisis, homeless people, people with extreme medical needs such as the war-wounded and / or amputees, disabled people, and so forth. Similar to the education sector, a large variety of actors offer such projects, which include soup kitchens (Kimse Yok Mu provides hot meals to 4,000 people in Kilis), orphanages, one-off deliveries, e.g., of winter items such as blankets, and so forth. Contrary to in the education sector, there appears to be less strategic, government-led effort involved. This may well be because the scale of the problem is smaller. However, as the results of a large survey on Turkish and Syrian public opinion found, the growing – and largely invented – association of Syrians with extreme destitution, child-beggars, and prostitution is having a destructive effect on both communities. Thus, apart from the humanitarian imperative, with regard to long-term integration, extending assistance to charity organisations that offer such protection, and / or drawing them into the orbit of DGMM, would be an important step.

Broadly, donors should currently engage in three interrelated activities: 1) continue to fund the emergency response; 2) diversify their funding to include Turkish and Turkish-Syrian aid organisations; and 3) work together with Turkish state and civil-society actors to develop long-term 'development' projects and policies that will support the mid / long-term integration of Syrians in Turkey. In other words, before rushing in with large-scale development funding, donors need to identify, together with Turkish partners, where and how development money could be usefully deployed. It is quite likely, that the initial investment will have to focus on extending existing administrative and aid-delivery structures, so that these can constructively

distribute and use development money.

With regard to more specific ideas, where long-term partnership, knowledge-exchange, and support to Turkey may find good starting points, research for this report identified two broad areas.

Policy development. As mentioned above, Turkey confronts a wide range of areas that require new policies and administrative structures. These include the development of the DGMM, the question of how to provide long-term welfare to Syrians, the question of the labour market, integration of Syrians into the education sector, and many more. Donors may themselves benefit from a programme of knowledge-exchange and technical support for Turkish government and civil society actors. This could, for example, take the form of facilitated workshops for DGMM officials, regional officials, and civil-society actors, perhaps bringing them together with relevant actors from the EU, to exchange on lessons learned and existing policy tools.

Infrastructure upgrading. The benefit of infrastructure upgrading is that it tends to benefit both refugee and citizen communities, and is a long-term measure. The most frequently mentioned infrastructure requirements arising out of the Syrian presence in Turkey are schools, in terms of buildings, but also in terms of staffing, books, transport, and training. However, other infrastructure, such as in the health sector and in public administration, are also under strain, and may offer good starting points to develop long-term support projects.

One question that donors will confront if and when long-term aid projects materialise in Turkey, is that of whether these projects should also address poor Turkish citizens. Helping impoverished members of the host society is today a staple approach in international refugee-aid, as it is considered to reduce the potential for envy and social tensions. However, extending international funds to parts of the citizenry is, of course, an inherently political matter. As one aid manager summed it up: "It is basic know-how that if you support only refugees, the resident population will get angry. But it is difficult, because the Turkish state provides social services to its citizens and does not like foreign actors interfering in that".[52] Unsurprisingly, interview partners were divided on this question. Interview partners working for large humanitarian organisations, such as UNICEF, echoed the sentiment that aid should also be extended to the host population: "Absolutely, help should also be for vulnerable Turkish citizens, it is important for social cohesion".[53] Other observers offered a more nuanced view, stating that financial reward would not necessarily remove prejudices, and that the Syrian presence had in itself also created economic opportunities for Turkish people. "Gaziantep has benefited from Turkish labour, since most of the vocational schools were closed here, there is a need for labour in these industries", one NGO manager stated.[54] Overall, despite the 'automatic' assumption that aid should also be extended to Turkish citizens, there is currently no significant information about this question (apart from the specific forms of labour market displacement mentioned above).[55] Organisations focused on cultural and social activities already extend their services to all communities, as a manager of Malumat explains: "Turkish mothers and children also come to our centres and food distributions. We also see very poor Turkish families".[56]

Also, an open debate exists with regard to the question whether foreign aid should rather be channelled via government or non-governmental organisations. Interview partners offered diverging opinions on this, however, in general agreed that coordination and a channelling of aid via a few large organisations had proved beneficial in the past few years. "What matters is that they work in a coordinated and organised manner. For instance, it can be through AFAD. They have achieved a lot of good projects in the last years", the director of a Syrian NGO stated. A social worker from the same NGO agreed that aid should be channelled via public institutions: "The aid should be made via the government, so that it is juster [sic]. The NGOs need to be monitored".[57] Overall, despite the existing

[52] Ibid.
[53] Interview with UNICEF official in Ankara, 13th November 2015.
[54] Interview with regional director of large Turkish NGO, 23rd November 2015.
[55] Regional Response Plan UNHCR.
[56] Interview with director of a Syrian NGO, Gaziantep, 23rd November 2015.
[57] Director and social worker of a Syrian NGO, 23rd

however not virulent – fears and accusations that the government is using its aid organisations for political ends, there is a domestic and international consensus that organisations such as AFAD and the Turkish Red Crescent have worked effectively. In addition, the interviews conducted in Gaziantep and Kilis indicate that there is a relatively well established and open dialogue between regional government officials and local and international aid providers, which has enhanced the effectiveness of the aid effort.

November 2015.

Lessons Learned and Policy Recommendations

Lessons Learned

Can German policy makers learn any lessons from Turkey's approach to Syrian migration? Both countries are facing similar challenges, and Turkey has at least three years more experience with mass immigration from Syria. So a brief look at some elements that Germany may be able to copy – or avoid – does appear valuable.

Central Management by National Agencies Versus Autonomy of Municipalities

One important lesson relates to the relationship between central migration management at the national level and decentralised management at the province (in Germany: federal state / city) level. As in Turkey, in Germany, many migration-related tasks fall under the responsibility of local authorities. This has, in Germany, resulted in the existence of myriad migration-management systems at the state and city level, which are not able to 'talk' to each other. While this has worked well enough during 'normal' times, it has quickly become apparent that in the case of a mass arrival, the absence of national guidelines and no help from national authorities has had a negative, sometimes disastrous effect. In Turkey, this was quickly recognised, and the government very quickly sent in national agencies and ministries to help local authorities with the creation, for example, of a unified registration database, or with the setting up of mass shelters and humanitarian services.

In Germany, this chance is until now largely being missed – with the result that even large cities are not only operating their own, individual migration databases, but may not even have an electronic database with which to manage the sudden, massive caseload of new files! This means, of course, that important information can neither be gathered nor exchanged. The absence of any significant form of central / national migration management also means that where constructive solutions are found on a local level, these are not systematically shared. Highly diverse regulations regarding labour market or education integration are also creating confusion. To find a better balance between necessary local pragmatism and equally necessary central steering from nation-wide actors, German policy makers may well wish to look at Turkey's experience.

Aid Dependency Versus Labour Market Integration

The second broad lesson that German policy makers may perhaps take from Turkey concerns the balance between aid, dependency, and employment of refugees. To put it crudely, in Germany, despite many reports to the contrary, the approach to Syrian refugees is: you receive sufficient aid to survive, but accessing the labour market / vocational training / university access is very difficult. In Turkey, the approach is: you can come in, there is hardly any aid, but you can semi-legally work to make a living – and if you speak the language, university access is easy. Clearly, both approaches have pros and cons: the most obvious drawback of the Turkish approach is that it carries the risk of creating labour exploitation and poverty wages among Syrian refugees. The results of the German approach – visible in the experience, in particular, of Lebanese refugees, who did not receive work permits for years – are aid dependency and lacking integration. Evidently, German politics and society does not allow for the flourishing of a 'grey' economy of the type Turkey has (and which, when it comes to migrant integration, can carry some benefits!). But considering the Turkish situation may well provide food for thought about what kinds of programmes in Germany would allow refugees rapid access to employment, and how the start-up costs of such programmes would weigh against the long-term costs of 'warehousing' refugees.

Policy Recommendations

Research for this report identified the following recommendations for German policy makers.

1. The primary, strategic goal of German policy towards the Syria crisis should be ending the conflict and finding a sustainable political solution for Syria.

2. With regard to the cooperation with Turkey on the matter of Syrian refugees, the overall strategic goal should be the provision of

asylum to Syrian refugees and the maintenance of international refugee law.

3. With regard to supporting Turkey in its efforts to host Syrian refugees, German policy makers should pursue the following goals:

   a. Support and urge the Turkish government to uphold its publically stated aim to maintain an open-door policy to Syrian refugees. Monitor for signs that Turkey is closing its borders to war refugees, is engaging in refoulement or any other violations of international refugee law.
   b. Support the Turkish government, financially and via technical expertise, to implement long-term integration strategies for Syrian refugees; in particular, with regard to education and employment.
   c. Continue and, if necessary, increase the funding of humanitarian emergency aid to Syrian refugees in Turkey.

4. Maintain pressure on the Turkish government to uphold democratic values and criticise its growing oppression of opponents. A strong partnership with Turkey on the matter of Syrian refugees should by no means result in the EU turning a blind eye to the growing authoritarianism of the AKP. The EU must make it absolutely clear to Turkish partners that an acceleration of the EU accession process is fully dependent on the observance of democratic and human rights principles in Turkey, which is thus in the long-term interests of Turkey.

5. Together with Turkey, work on developing forms of legal and safe passage for Syrians wishing to leave Turkey towards Europe. The deadly smuggling of people across the Mediterranean is a disgrace. Deterrence via Frontex and the Turkish Coast Guard alone will not stop all migration from Turkey to Europe. Thus, the goal must be to develop, together with Turkish partners, safe, legal and humane options for this migration to occur. This might be a difficult policy option for EU countries to accept. However, EU policy makers should realise that as long as this migration remains fully illegal, not only do they have little chance to influence it, but they also give Turkey the opportunity to 'blackmail' the EU with the threat of opening / closing the smuggling routes. Developing legal migration routes from Turkey means moving the management of this migration, which is currently nearly fully in Turkey's hands, into the sphere of influence of the EU.

6. German policy makers should begin a dialogue with Turkey about policy plans for the 'day after' the Syria crisis, i.e., when stability returns to the country. Both Germany and Turkey are currently providing temporary protection to Syrian refugees, which, in theory, ends with the conflict. While the exact future circumstances cannot be foreseen, it would be useful to think through different options and scenarios of what will happen with Syrian refugees in Turkey and Germany at this point, in order to avoid a chaotic reaction – as has happened in the past; for example, after the fall of the Saddam Hussein government in 2003, when the situation of Iraqi asylum seekers in Germany was highly inconsistent and unclear. Creating clarity on this matter would also benefit potential employers of Syrians.

List of Abbreviations

UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Main UN agency through which humanitarian aid to refugees is provided.
AFAD	Turkey's national disaster and emergency management authority, a state organisation. Turkish name: Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı
DGMM	Directorate General for Migration Management. Forms part of Turkey's Ministry of the Interior and is Turkey's central migration authority. A state institution. Turkish name: Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund. Humanitarian agency focused on children's rights, and important player in the management of refugee crises.
IHH	IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation. A large Turkish NGO, considered close to the AKP government. Turkish name: İHH İnsani Yardım Vakfı.
TRC	Turkish Red Crescent.
MONE	Turkish Ministry of National Education.
ODA	Overseas Development Aid.