

**RESPOND**

## **Working Papers**

### **Global Migration: Consequences and Responses**

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## **Reception**

### **Turkey Country Report**

**Ayhan Kaya**

Istanbul Bilgi University

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at: [ayhan.kaya@bilgi.edu.tr](mailto:ayhan.kaya@bilgi.edu.tr)

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**Leading Partners** : Istanbul Bilgi University (Ayhan Kaya) and University of Göttingen (Alexander K. Nagel)

**Focus:** WP 4 focuses on **reception policies, practices and humanitarian responses to the current refugee crisis**. Despite efforts to achieve harmonization (especially promoted by the 2016 CEAS and by the ENP), relevant differences exist in this field in the countries that are the object of research (**Austria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Sweden, UK, Turkey and Lebanon**). WP4 will map the policies and practices of reception and humanitarian responses of 11 countries, and migrants' perceptions, actions and reactions to policies and practices. The main objectives of the WP4 to be achieved are as follows: a) to develop a mapping of policies and practices of reception in the countries being researched; b) to develop a typology of these policies, practices and responses; c) to assess the coherence of these policies and practices with respect to international and EU standard; d) to study migrants' perceptions, actions and reactions to policies and practices; and e) to provide basic information in the area of reception for the development of all subsequent WPs.

**Queries:** For any queries on the guidelines or the reports, please contact Ayhan Kaya ([ayhan.kaya@bilgi.edu.tr](mailto:ayhan.kaya@bilgi.edu.tr)) and Alexander K. Nagel ([alexander-kenneth.nagel@sowi.uni-goettingen.de](mailto:alexander-kenneth.nagel@sowi.uni-goettingen.de)).

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>AFAD</b>	Disaster and Emergency Management Authority
<b>AKP</b>	Justice and Development Party
<b>APD</b>	Accession Partnership Document
<b>ASAM</b>	Association for Solidarity with Migrants
<b>DG</b>	Directorate General
<b>DGMM</b>	Directorate-General for Migration Management
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FRONTEX</b>	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
<b>LFIP</b>	Law on Foreigners and International Protection
<b>IGOs</b>	Intergovernmental Organizations
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>ILO</b>	Immigration Liaison Officer
<b>IOs</b>	International Organizations
<b>MfA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>MoI</b>	Ministry of Interior
<b>MoFLSS</b>	Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services
<b>MSs</b>	Member States
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>NMS</b>	Non-member States
<b>NPAA</b>	National Action Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis
<b>PDMM</b>	Provincial Directorate of Migration Management
<b>PKK</b>	Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê)
<b>RA</b>	Readmission Agreement
<b>RESPOND</b>	Multilevel Governance of Migration in Europe and Beyond
<b>TAC</b>	Temporary Accommodation Centre
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

# About the project

RESPOND is a Horizon 2020 project which aims at studying the multilevel governance of migration in Europe and beyond. The consortium is formed of 14 partners from 11 source, transit and destination countries and is coordinated by Uppsala University in Sweden. The main aim of this Europe-wide project is to provide an in-depth understanding of the governance of recent mass migration at macro, meso and micro levels through cross-country comparative research and to critically analyse governance practices with the aim of enhancing the migration governance capacity and policy coherence of the EU, its member states and third countries.

RESPOND studies migration governance through a narrative which is constructed along five thematic fields: (1) Border management and security, (2) Refugee protection regimes, (3) Reception policies, (4) Integration policies, and (5) Conflicting Europeanization. Each thematic field is reflecting a juncture in the migration journey of refugees and designed to provide a holistic view of policies, their impacts and responses given by affected actors within.

In order to better focus on these themes, we divided our research question into work packages (WPs). The present report is concerned with the findings related to WP4, which focuses specifically on reception policies, practices and humanitarian responses to the current refugee crisis. Despite efforts to achieve harmonization (especially promoted by the 2016 CEAS and by the ENP), relevant differences exist in this field in the countries that are the object of research (Austria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Sweden, UK, Turkey and Lebanon). WP4 will map the policies and practices of reception and humanitarian responses of the afore-mentioned countries and migrants' perceptions, actions and reactions to policies and practices. The main objectives of WP4 are as follows:

- to develop a mapping of policies and practices of reception in the countries being researched;
- to develop a typology of these policies, practices and responses
- to assess the coherence of these policies and practices with respect to international and EU standard
- to study migrants' perceptions, actions and reactions to policies and practices
- to provide basic information in the area of reception for the development of all subsequent WPs.

The last point will be achieved through an additional comparative report that will be based on the data from individual country reports.

## Executive summary

WP 4 Turkey report focuses on reception policies, practices and humanitarian responses to refugee immigration between 2011 and 2017. Turkey is different from the EU Member States in the sense that it does not grant refugee status to the forced migrants entering the country from its non-European borders. Turkey introduced the Law on Foreigners and International Protection in 2014 together with the Temporary Protection Regulation, which was based on the example of the EU Temporary Protection Directive practiced during the Balkan refugee crisis between 1992 and 1995, and officially adopted in 2001. The definition and scope of 'reception' in Turkish legislation includes various *material conditions* including *housing, food and clothing* provided in kind, or as *financial allowances* or in vouchers, or a combination of the three, and a daily allowance. Reception also covers matters of *education, basic health care* and accommodation which ought to be provided during the period of reception. Similar to the EU legislation, the time frame of 'reception' is not clearly defined in the Turkish legislation. However, there is an implicit definition: reception starts as soon as the border of a given state has been crossed (WP 2) and an application for international protection has been made (WP 3). It ends either with the "effective expulsion", "repatriation", "forced/assisted return" of unsuccessful applicants or with the acceptance of their request for protection which, in the terminology of RESPOND, makes them subject to 'integration' (WP 5).

Under normal circumstances, reception refers to the liminal period between arrival and application for asylum and the decision about the asylum application. However, in the Turkish case, it refers to the liminal period between arrival and the moment when the refugees decide to spend their efforts to integrate into the social, economic and cultural spheres of life of the receiving society. The WP 4 Turkey national report concentrates on measures and experiences of reception in Turkey. Syrian refugees mostly avoided central accommodation centres since their capacity was not enough to host millions and they were given the right to self-settlement options in cities of their choice upon their arrival in Turkey.

The WP 4 Turkey national report includes a detailed analysis of reception policies, practices and humanitarian responses from state actors and non-state agencies. Data on policies were retrieved through desk research on policy papers and documents at national and sub-national levels, building on the international and EU framework defined earlier in WP1. The analysis of secondary data includes the elaboration of maps of reception policies, practices and humanitarian responses and new typologies of these policies, practices and responses. Evidence on existing practices and responses at the grassroots level have been gathered through interviews and roundtable discussions with key-informants and gatekeepers such as national/local authorities, and NGO representatives. The report also includes the analysis of migrants' perceptions, actions and reactions to reception policies and practices in Turkey. For this task, the interviews conducted with migrants were analysed in accordance with the guiding principles formulated by the consortium members.

The main framework of reception regulations in Turkey is drawn by the Law on Foreigners and International Protection and the Temporary Protection Regulation, both of which were put into force in 2014. Both documents include provisions about housing, education, labour market, allowances, health services and information/counselling services. Temporary Protection Regulations were designed on the preceding idea of the Temporary Protection Directive of the European Union, adopted in 2001 after the experience of the EU Member States to resolve the refugee crisis during the Balkan War between 1992 and 1997. During that war, all asylum seekers were offered temporary protection for the duration of one year with the possibility of renewal and were provided with accommodation, access to healthcare, social services and employment. In 1997, Germany lifted the temporary protection status and repatriated 300,000 people to Bosnia. The temporary protection mechanism was invoked again during the 1999 Kosovo war and NATO bombings. Repatriation was even faster than that back to Bosnia, and in the summer of 2000 a total of 841,000 of asylum seekers residing in the region and western states were returned to Kosovo. Compared to the volume of asylum seekers during the war in

the Balkans, the volume of Syrians escaping from the war is much bigger and the period of stay much longer.

As of March 2019, Turkey's Temporary Protection regime has granted 3,641,344 Syrian nationals the right to legally stay in Turkey as well as some level of access to basic rights and services, except for political rights. The large majority of Syrians live outside camps, mainly spread across cities at the Turkish border provinces of Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Hatay and Kilis as well as other major cities in Turkey. 140,078 Syrians live in 13 Temporary Accommodation Centres (TACs) that are also located in the provinces close to the Syrian border such as Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis as well as in other major cities such as Osmaniye, Adana, Malatya, and Kahramanmaraş.

Political discourse about the Syrian refugees was primarily mainstreamed around the category of guesthood, which was later coupled with a Islamic terminology of Ansar spirit. As a metaphor, *Ansar* refers to the people of Medina, who supported the Prophet Mohammad and the accompanying Muslims (*muhajirun*, or migrants) who migrated there from Mecca, which was under the control of pagans. The metaphor of Ansar originally points at a temporary situation as the Muslims later returned to Mecca after their forces recaptured the city from the pagans. Hence, the Turkish government has used a kind of Islamic symbolism to legitimize its acts on the resolution of the Syrian refugee crisis. This culturalist and Islamic way of reception of Syrian refugees by the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP from here on) government was also shared by the majority of the Turkish population in the first years of mass migration. However, this has changed along the way while Turkish political life became more complicated and polarizing due to the authoritarian, populist and Islamist governance of the leading elite. Turkish society was also divided in the meantime not only because of political polarization but also because of worsening economic conditions. Although cultural and religious intimacy between the Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees is no longer a matter of distinction for the majority of the Turkish citizens to embrace the Syrians, it is still a comforting mechanism for the Syrians to come to terms with the difficult realities of everyday life.

In the first years of the mass migration, the discourse of guesthood and Ansar spirit as well as the rhetorics of Islamism, neo-Ottomanism and populism made it easier for the Syrians to be received and to be offered all the basic provisions such as housing, education, health services, accommodation and allowances in the border cities (Şanlıurfa, Kilis, Hatay, Gaziantep) as well as in the temporary accommodation centres (Kaya, 2019). Big cities such as Istanbul, Izmir, and Bursa became their cities of resettlement in the following years to find better education, accommodation, health and employment conditions. The Turkish case demonstrates that there are strong regional variations as far as the refugees' access to the labour market is concerned. The field research conducted in Şanlıurfa, an agrarian province, reveals that agrarian economies facilitate early access to the labor market in comparison to the industrial cities such as Istanbul and Izmir. In the big cities too, it was the cultural and religious intimacy which prevented them from seeking options to move on to Europe.

However, recently a radical shift in the political discourse adopted by the AKP government and the state actors can be observed. Rather than emphasizing guesthood and the Ansar rhetoric, emphasis is now on the return of the Syrians either to their home cities or to the safe zone, which is in the process of being constructed by the international forces at the Turkish-Syrian border.

Material reception conditions are outlined in the report ranging from housing to allowances, and from healthcare and education to social assistance. All these conditions are explicitly framed by the relevant legal regulations. These regulations also specify the conditions of removal and reduction of reception facilities. Special reception needs of vulnerable persons such as children, unaccompanied children, women, people with physical disabilities, and LGBTI groups have been specified in the report.

Municipal policies and regulations are also scrutinized in the report with great detail. Article 13 of the Municipalities Law (No. 5393) clearly states that everyone living in the municipal territory needs to be granted the same rights and services irrespective of their being Turkish citizen or not. The principle of “fellowship” framed by Article 13 is a very comprehensive principle, which is based on the idea of treating all the residents including foreigners equally. However, the data show that this principle is not very well embraced by most of the municipalities when reaching out to the Syrians under temporary protection.

Practices of reception are detailed in the report with respect to the ways in which such practices are perceived by the refugees themselves as well as by the other stakeholders such as relevant NGOs, local actors, and municipal actors. Foremost difficulties were expressed by the Syrians under temporary protection with regard to access to labour market, education, health services, services, allowances, food and hygiene, substance, and domestic mobility. It has been found that many of the interlocutors interviewed in Turkey are not willing to apply for official work permit and/or Turkish citizenship as they would lose all the financial and in-kind assistance they receive such as from the EU’s Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) Program. Hence, most of the Syrians’ precariousness still continues since they came to Turkey. Another highly important problem, which has lately become upsetting, is the growing hatred, Arabophobia, racism and xenophobia against all kinds of people coming from the Middle East including the Gulf region.

## Introduction

WP 4 Turkey national report focuses on reception policies, practices and humanitarian responses to refugee immigration between 2011 and 2017. The report is composed of two main parts: In the first part, based on an extensive desk research about relevant secondary literature on reception policies, laws and discourses in Turkey, as well as legal documents, policy documents, officials' speeches and archival resources, the report first reveals the current state of the art. In the second part, the report draws from structured interviews with Syrian migrants under temporary protection in Istanbul, Izmir and Şanlıurfa to understand the ways in which the refugees perceive reception policies, regulations and practices [i.e. micro-level interviews]. In the second part, the report will also refer to the semi-structured interviews with politicians, administrators and executives who are concerned with different dimensions of reception such as education, labour market, housing, allowances, health services and social services [i.e. meso-level interviews].

## Methodology and Sources

The report compiles data from different sources in order to provide comprehensive insights to policies, regulations, practices and experiences of reception in Turkey. The part on politics and legal regulations is based on a document analysis of policy and legislative documents. In a broad sense, *policy documents* can be position papers or resolution proposals and all other forms of written political intervention in debates concerning the reception of refugees. *Legislative documents* comprise relevant acts of international, supranational, national law, but also jurisdiction and authoritative administrative orders, such as statutes on the protection of vulnerable populations. In addition, the report draws from semi-structured interviews with politicians, administrators and executives who are concerned with different dimensions of reception such as education, labour market, housing, allowances, health services and social services [*i.e. meso-level interviews*]. These interviews are also used to account for the institutional implementation of reception. They are complemented with public statistical data sources on reception as far as these are available. The Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) in Ankara offers detailed information on general and particular allowances for those subject to temporary protection regulation.<sup>1</sup> It is integral to this report to critically analyse reception policies and institutional practices of reception in the light of subjective experiences of reception.

This analysis is based on 81 semi-structured interviews conducted with different meso level stakeholders other than refugees. The meso level analysis is based on 29 border-related meso level interviews in Izmir, 4 in Ankara, 17 in Istanbul, and 33 in Sanliurfa. The interviews were conducted in four cities by members of the Turkish research team (Ela Gökalp-Aras in Izmir and Ankara, Zeynep Şahin Mencütek in Şanlıurfa, Susan Rottmann, Aslı Aydın and Ayhan Kaya in Istanbul) between July 2018 and November 2018. Interviews include those with high level state officers including the representatives from ministries, and directorates, local government bodies (municipalities, city councils), law enforcement agencies (Izmir Gendarmerie Department of Anti-smuggling and Organised Crime Unit, Izmir Provincial Directorate of Security Department of Combating Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking), provincial civil servants, experts from international organizations (IOM, UNHCR), representatives of international, national, local non-governmental organizations and lawyers dealing with cases about migrants.

The micro level interviews were conducted by the same research team in İstanbul, İzmir, and Şanlıurfa to understand the ways in which refugees respond to the policies, regulations and practices of reception at local and national levels. 104 refugees of mostly Syrian origin, Iraqis and Afghans were interviewed in the summer of 2018. 40 micro level interviews were held in İzmir, 24 in Şanlıurfa, and 40 in İstanbul. The gender ratio of the interviewees was equal between male and female participants. The ratio between early and later arrivals was also equal (arrivals between 2011-2014 was 50 per cent, arrivals between 2015-2018 was 50 per cent). The age ratio was as follows: 18-24, 40 per cent; 27-50, 40 per cent; and 50 +, 20 per cent.

The data has been analysed on the basis of a qualitative content analysis approach which combines deductive and inductive elements. The software, NVivo 12 Pro, was used as an essential tool in the study for the processing of data. This was done mainly because of the amount of information gathered from the semi-structured interviews in the fieldwork, and the diversity of themes that we were interested to investigate in the meso level and micro level interview transcriptions, which was impossible to cover by hand. In a deductive fashion

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<sup>1</sup> For the text of the Temporary Protection Regulation (No.2014/6883) see <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/10/20141022-15-1.pdf>. For more information on the Temporary Protection Regulation see [https://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida\\_tr\\_2017update.pdf](https://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_tr_2017update.pdf)

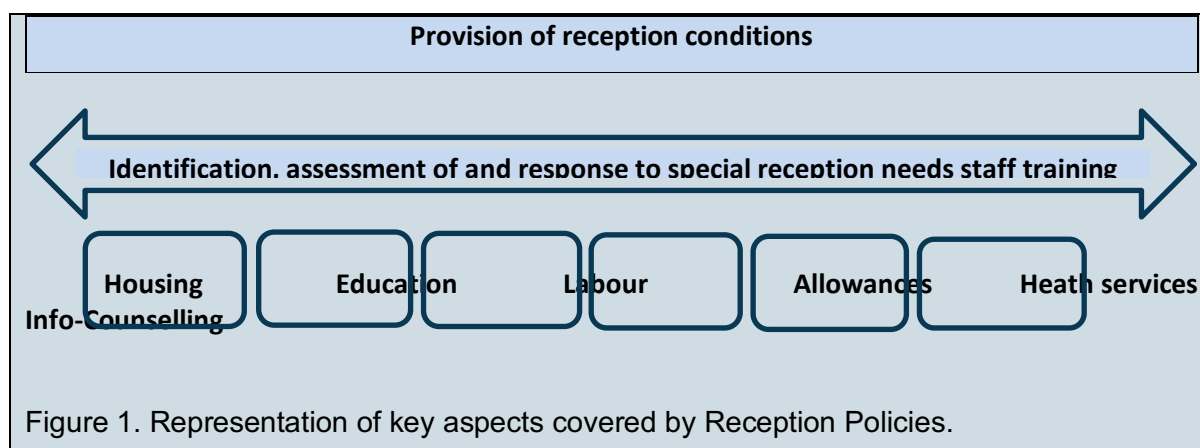
categories of analysis were derived from the overarching research question about the match, or mismatch of reception policies and practices across various levels of governance (e.g. EU, national, federal, municipal, see Annex III for more details) as well as from the EU reception directive which distinguishes different dimensions of reception, such as allowances, accommodation, healthcare, such as allowances, accommodation, healthcare, access to education, legal counselling). In an inductive fashion interviews with decision makers and executives as well as with refugees were examined for additional themes and categories which have proved to be meaningful for a holistic understanding of the multilevel system of reception. Regarding the interviews, it should be noted that both interviews with decision makers and with refugees were conducted in a context of significant social desirability: executives have a motivation to portray 'their' measures of reception as appropriate and effective and refugees may feel the urge to resort to biographical narratives which support their claim to asylum and protection.



## Policies and Legal Regulations of Reception: A Multi-level Perspective

The definition and scope of ‘reception’ in EU legislation can serve as a common point of departure and a heuristic assumption to grasp various possible dimensions of ‘reception’. For instance, Directive 2013/33/EU points out a number of “material conditions” of reception including “*housing, food and clothing provided in kind, or as financial allowances or in vouchers, or a combination of the three, and a daily expenses allowance*” (Article 2 (g)). The directive also touches upon matters of *education* (Article 14) and basic *health care* which ought to be provided during the period of reception, and formulates criteria for proper accommodation (e.g. an adequate standard of living, protecting vulnerable populations, qualified staff, see Article 18). Even though the time frame of ‘reception’ is not clearly defined in EU legislation, there is an implicit definition: *reception starts as soon as the border of a given state has been crossed and an application for international protection has been made. It ends either with the “effective expulsion” of unsuccessful applicants or with the acceptance of their request for protection*, which, in the terminology of RESPOND, makes them subject to ‘integration’.

The Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 (2013/33/EU) laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection specifies that standards for the reception of applicants that suffice to ensure applicants for international protection a dignified standard of living and comparable living conditions in all Member States should be laid down.<sup>2</sup> The Directive leaves a remarkable degree of discretion to define what constitutes a dignified standard of living and how it should be achieved. Though the Directive tries to harmonize the reception regimes of the member states, national reception systems differ greatly in setup and modalities for the provision of reception conditions. The European Agenda on Migration has also underlined the importance of a clear system for the reception of applicants for international protection as part of a strong common European asylum policy.<sup>3</sup> The European Agenda on Migration refers to the need for further guidance to improve the standards on reception conditions across EU Member States.



<sup>2</sup> EU Reception Conditions Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013L0033>

<sup>3</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, “A European Agenda On Migration”, COM(2015) 240, 13 May 2015

Turkey has adopted its Temporary Protection Directive from a similar European experience implemented during the Balkan refugee crisis in the 1990s – during a period when there was no Common European Asylum System, harmonised asylum rules, or structures such as the European Refugee Fund, Frontex and a European Asylum Support Office. During the Balkan refugee crisis, member states had to rely on ad hoc measures to provide an adequate humanitarian response. Bosnian refugees between 1992 and 1995 and Kosovar refugees in 1999 were offered protection. These practices were later standardised and embedded in the Temporary Protection Directive.<sup>4</sup>

The outbreak of war in the former Yugoslavia led to the displacement of over 3.2 million people within and outside of its borders causing the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. Germany admitted 350,000 refugees from Bosnia. To respond to a sudden arrival of thousands of people fleeing prosecution, western European governments introduced temporary protection schemes between April 1992 and December 1994.<sup>5</sup> These schemes successfully functioned as an emergency response to the situation when individual processing under the 1951 Refugee Convention was not possible due to the number of asylum claims. All asylum seekers were offered temporary protection for the duration of one year with the possibility of renewal and were provided with accommodation, access to healthcare, social services and employment. In 1997, Germany lifted the temporary protection status and repatriated 300,000 people to Bosnia. Although the UNHCR announced that conditions were not conducive enough for return, the other countries followed Germany, resulting in the overall return of 700,000 people to Bosnia (Mitrovic, 2015). The temporary protection mechanism was invoked again during the 1999 Kosovo war and NATO bombings. Repatriation was even faster than that to Bosnia and in the summer of 2000 a total of 841,000 of the asylum seekers residing in the region and western states had been returned to Kosovo (Mitrovic, 2015).

Following the experience from the 1990s, the EU started working on the creation of the Common European Asylum System. After the 1999 Treaty of Amsterdam, which institutionalized development of common binding EU legislation in the area of asylum, the first Directive that was adopted was Temporary Protection Directive in 2001. This legal instrument was to serve as principal framework in the event of a major refugee crisis and it envisaged a series of necessary measures that enhance the protection of asylum seekers during their stay in host countries (Mitrovic, 2015). Turkey followed the same experience and introduced the Temporary Protection Regulation in 2014.<sup>6</sup>

At the very beginning of the Syrians' migration to Turkey in April 2011, the Turkish state had provided Syrians with temporary protection consisting of three elements: an open-door policy for all Syrians; no forced returns to Syria (non-refoulement); and unlimited duration of stay in Turkey. They were previously framed as "guests" by the state actors, a political discursive frame which was later complemented with the religiously-loaded discourse of "Ansar Spirit". The framing of Syrian refugees as "guests" is no longer sustainable, neither in terms of accommodating their urgent needs, nor in coming to terms with the increasing resentment among the local populations vis-à-vis the refugees. Turkey first introduced a Temporary Protection Directive for the refugees in 2014, based on Articles 61 to 95 of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection which came into force in April 2014. The directive grants Syrians almost the entire spectrum of social and civil rights that refugees enjoy in western societies.

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<sup>4</sup> For the Council Directive of European Temporary Protection see <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2001:212:0012:0023:EN:PDF> accessed on 8 August 2019.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed Account of the implementation of temporary protection schemes in the World during the Balkan refugee crisis in the 1990s see <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3300.html>

<sup>6</sup> For the text of the Turkish Temporary Protection regulation see <https://www.refworld.org/docid/56572fd74.html>

Gökalp-Aras and Mencütek (2015) eloquently explain the ways in which the Justice and Development Party (AKP) administration reacted towards the reception of Syrian refugees in the very early days of the armed conflict in Syria. Turkey's innovative approach towards Syrians still seems to be a novel approach in comparison to the worldwide trends in the international refugee regime and to Turkey's past responses to similar refugee movements that explicitly involved a securitization discourse and burden-sharing (Kirişçi and Karaca 2015). Turkey's shift from a security-centred approach to a rather humanitarian approach seems to be related to its more assertive foreign policy as well as to the AKP's religious drive in the region. This approach allowed Turkey to present itself as a model country in its neighbourhood, to play a regional mediator role and to contribute to the solution of humanitarian problems through diplomacy. However, the diplomatic initiatives of Turkey failed unexpectedly. After the failure of Turkish foreign policy in the region became obvious, Turkey invested in the possibility that the Syrian opposition could gain power soon, but the opposition was very fragmented and unable to overcome the Syrian regime forces. Turkey mistakenly assumed that the Assad regime would soon collapse and refugees would return to Syria. Regarding their numbers, 100.000 were mentioned as the welcomed population; but upon the dramatic rise in numbers, this threshold was re-determined as a psychological one.<sup>7</sup> This also shows the miscalculation of the AKP leadership with regards to the size of the refugee population, which would hit Turkey drastically soon after the armed conflict started in Syria in 2011.

The first group of Syrian nationals found refuge in Turkey by crossing into the province of Hatay on 29 April 2011. Initially, the AKP government expected that the Assad regime would soon collapse and it estimated that at most around 100,000 Syrians would stay in Turkey for 2-3 weeks (Erdoğan, 2014). Following the escalation of domestic conflicts in Syria, the AKP government declared an open-door policy for the Syrian refugees in October 2011. Accordingly, Turkey has allowed Syrians with passports to enter the country freely and treated those who may have entered without documents in a similar way; it has guaranteed the principle of non-refoulement, offered temporary protection and committed itself to providing the best possible living conditions and humanitarian assistance for the refugees (İçduygu 2015a; Kirişçi 2014). In the period prior to the introduction of the Temporary Protection Regulation in April 2014, the state actors followed various circulars to respond to the rapidly changing mass migration environment (Özden, 2013).

**Table 1:** Changing Number of Syrian refugees in major cities between November 2014, 21 July 2017 and 12 August 2019.

City	November 2014	21 July 2017	12 August 2019	City	November 2014	21 July 2017	12 August 2019
<b>İstanbul</b>	330.000	495.027	547.943	<b>Batman</b>	20.000	20.181	22.392
<b>Gaziantep</b>	220.000	336.929	445.748	<b>Şırnak</b>	19.000	15.080	15.019
<b>Hatay</b>	190.000	397.047	432.436	<b>Kocaeli</b>	15.000	34.957	57.745
<b>Şanlıurfa</b>	170.000	433.856	429.735	<b>İzmir</b>	13.000	113.460	145.123
<b>Mardin</b>	70.000	96.062	87.507	<b>Osmaniye</b>	12.000	46.157	50.295

<sup>7</sup> Turkish foreign minister of the period Ahmet Davutoglu mentioned that Turkey's "psychological threshold" would be 100.000 refugees in 2013, <http://www4.cnnturk.com/2013/dunya/10/26/davutoglu.siginmacilar.konusunda.kirmizi.cizgi.asildi/728654.0/>, accessed on 7 November 2015.

<b>Adana</b>	50.000	165.818	240.376	<b>Antalya</b>	10.000	458	1.786
<b>Kilis</b>	49.000	127.175	116.317	<b>Kayseri</b>	9.500	62.645	79.161
<b>Mersin</b>	45.000	153.976	201.887	<b>Diyarbakır</b>	5.000	30.405	33.245
<b>Konya</b>	45.000	79.139	108.419	<b>Adıyaman</b>	2.500	27.084	25.549
<b>Kahramanmaraş</b>	44.000	93.408	90.073	<b>Samsun</b>	1.230	4.540	5.852
<b>Ankara</b>	30.000	80.279	93.120	<b>Niğde</b>	1.100	3.848	4.674
<b>Bursa</b>	20.000	114.498	174.865	<b>Aydın</b>	1.000	8.806	7.922

**Source:** Ministry of Interior, Directorate General of Migration Management, [http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma\\_363\\_378\\_4713\\_icerik](http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik).<sup>8</sup>

As of March 2019, Turkey's Temporary Protection regime grants 3,641,344 Syrian nationals the right to legally stay in Turkey as well as some level of access to basic rights and services. The large majority of Syrians live outside of camps, mainly spread across cities at the Turkish border provinces of Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Hatay and Kilis as well as other major cities in Turkey. 140,078 Syrians live in 13 Temporary Accommodation Centres (TACs) that are also located in the provinces close to the Syrian border, as well as in other major cities such as Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Osmaniye, Adana, Malatya, and Kahramanmaraş.<sup>9</sup>

In Turkey, Syrians were first registered by the camps authorities under the surveillance of AFAD in collaboration with the Directorate General of Migration Management. From the very beginning of the Syrian civil war Turkey had a state-centric model of reception. Turkey is a signatory state to the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention. Turkey expressly referred to using the temporary protection in 2011 and institutionalized it in 2013 and 2014 as a result of its collaboration with the EU since 1999. All Syrian nationals, Palestinian refugees, and stateless persons living in Syria are under the temporary protection regime in Turkey.<sup>10</sup> Turkey has established camps for the most vulnerable groups and has generally supported self-settlement. It adopted a flexible (but controllable) approach by making residence permits tied to a certain province.

Many countries have received large numbers of refugees since World War II. However, the on-going conflict in Syria continues to be by far the biggest driver of mass-migration along with ongoing violence in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, and human rights abuses in Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Nigeria and other parts of the world. A major source region for forced migration at the present is the Middle East, and in particular Syria. With the

<sup>8</sup> Source: Ministry of Interior, Directorate General of Migration Management, [http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma\\_363\\_378\\_4713\\_icerik](http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik). For a detailed account of the number of the Syrian refugees in Turkey see the website of the UNHCR, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224>. According to the figures of 21 November 2015, the total number of the registered Syrian refugees in Turkey was 2,181,293. The number of those living in the 22 refugee camps around the Turkish-Syrian border is more than 220.000 people. Today, according to the same UNHCR sources, the total number of registered Syrian refugees is 3,079,914.

<sup>9</sup> See [https://turkey.iom.int/sites/default/files/sitreps/Q1\\_quarterly-jan-feb-mar-19.reduced.pdf](https://turkey.iom.int/sites/default/files/sitreps/Q1_quarterly-jan-feb-mar-19.reduced.pdf) access date 6 May 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Geçici Koruma Yönetmeliği [Temporary Protection Regulation], Oct. 22, 2014, <http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/20141022-15-1.pdf>, archived at <https://perma.cc/H8PQ-QUQL>, English translation available at <http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/temptemp.pdf>, archived at <https://perma.cc/9V29-HQZ5>.

intensification of violence in Syria, but also in several other parts of the Middle East, massive numbers of civilians, forcefully uprooted from their communities, have fled and continue to flee conflict zones, seeking shelter both in the region and in the European Union. In 2015 alone, more than one million refugees crossed EU borders (UNHCR, 2015). The EU and its member states were faced with the enormous challenge of coping with this partly ‘unexpected’ mass migration, which created new divisions and political fissures among the Member States (MS) over how best to deal with resettling people. One of the most popular routes to Europe is the one which starts in Egypt and Libya and ends in Malta and Italy (Lampedusa and Sicily). This route is favoured mostly by sub-Saharan Africans. Mass migration routes often shift in relation to the political changes in and around the Mediterranean basin. For instance, this kind of shift was also observed from the Balkan route towards Africa when the EU-Turkey Statement sealed off the Turkish borders after March 2016 (Karaçay, 2017).

However, it has also recently been used by Syrians in the aftermath of the EU-Turkey Statement put into force on 18 March 2016 when Germany and the Netherlands took the lead to make a deal with Turkey to seal off the Turkish borders not to let the refugees go on to the Greek islands.<sup>11</sup> The Statement also included financial terms committed by the EU to help Turkey accommodate and integrate Syrian refugees as well as to relocate them in the EU. Prior to the Arab Spring in 2011, the African route was less commonly used than the Eastern Mediterranean route. The Eastern Mediterranean route simply refers to the sea crossing from Turkey to Greece.<sup>12</sup> In 2012, it became the second most popular route by a small margin, only to witness a surge in 2013-14 due to the civil conflicts in Eritrea and Syria (Frontex Annual Risk Report, 2015). Even though migration of refugees to Turkey has recently become less, and more than 350 thousand Syrians have already returned to Syria as of May 2019 since 2016,<sup>13</sup> Turkey is still by far the leading country in the world with more than 3,5 million refugees hosted.<sup>14</sup> Historically and geographically speaking, Turkey is known to be one of the leading destinations for refugees. Being located in-between different continents, having an imperial legacy, and having experienced a turmoiled nation-building process, Turkey has always been exposed to different forms of massive migrations and emigrations (Erdogan and Kaya, 2015). Hence, it has also been inevitable that the state actors have continuously been engaged in formulating policies and laws of migration and asylum since the late Ottoman Empire (Kale, 2015).

## National Policies and Regulations

Collaboration with other countries as well as with international, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations is a further significant step in managing irregular migration. Since the late 1990s, the Turkish authorities have been working with other actors with a view to conclude readmission agreements with several countries of origin, and of destination. The

<sup>11</sup> For the text of the EU-Turkey Statement see <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18-eu-turkey-statement/> accessed on 25 June 2017.

<sup>12</sup> For more information about this route see <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/migratory-pressures/eastern-mediterranean-route/> accessed on 21 August 2018.

<sup>13</sup> The numbers are mostly not consistent. For the press conference of the Turkish Minister of Interior about the number of Syrians who returned to Syria see <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/bakan-soylu-450-bin-suriyeli-ulkelerine-geri-dondu-168834.html> accessed on 5 May 2019. For the number of returns in 2018 see also <https://www.haberturk.com/icerileri-bakanligi-ulkesine-donen-suriyeli-sayisini-acikladi-2282947> accessed on 5 May 2019. For instance, the UNHCR informs that 71.151 Syrians returned to Syria between 2016 and 2019, see [https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria\\_durable\\_solutions](https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria_durable_solutions) accessed on 30 September 2019.

<sup>14</sup> As of August 2018, the number of foreigners subject to temporary protection was 3.545.293. For the latest figures see the official website of the Directorate General of Migration Management, [http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma\\_363\\_378\\_4713\\_icerik](http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) plays an important and significant role, especially in Turkey's current asylum policy. During the Cold War period, it was the main agency overseeing Turkey's asylum policy and ensuring resettlement of refugees from Turkey. Moreover, it was responsible for providing basic assistance and accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees in Turkey. During the period of 1980s, the UNHCR could continue this practice in respect to growing number of asylum seekers arriving from non-European countries, especially from Iran and Iraq.

However, after the massive entry of refugees into Turkey following the end of the Gulf War in 1991, relations between Turkey and the UNHCR have gradually worsened. The deteriorating security conditions in south-eastern Turkey resulting from the activities of the PKK adversely influenced Turkish officials' attitude towards particularly asylum seekers who had entered Turkey illegally and were present in Turkey illegally (Kirişçi, 2004: 6). The 1994 Asylum Regulation reflected such concerns. The government ceased cooperation with the UNHCR and an initial implementation of the Regulation led to criticisms from human rights and refugee advocacy circles. Nevertheless, the UNHCR and Turkish Interior Ministry officials could rebuild their partnership in 1997. Closer cooperation has also developed between the Turkish government and intergovernmental organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). A good example of such collaboration was the program to help the return of stranded irregular migrants from Turkey to their homelands, under which over 550 irregular migrants received return assistance between 1995 and 1997 (İçduygu, 2003: 62). However, the most influential anchor for the development of Turkish migration and asylum laws was its European cause, which began to deepen in the late 1990s.

Officially recognizing Turkey's candidacy status, the Helsinki Summit held in December 1999 gave an impetus to EU-Turkey relations. The EU adopted an "Accession Partnership" (AP) strategy for Turkey in 2000, followed by the "National Program for the Adoption of the *Acquis*" (NPAA) accepted by the Turkish government.<sup>15</sup> The NPAA is a detailed, multi-annual plan for the alignment of domestic legislation with EU regulations. These two documents were subsequently renewed in 2003 and 2008.<sup>16</sup> The NPAA also detailed infrastructural tasks ranging from the establishment of reception and accommodation centres as well as the construction, or acquisition, of a building to house a specialized administrative unit to deal with asylum applications. The NPAA also envisages the development of a country of origin information data base. The NPAA notes that the lifting of the "geographical limitation" will be taken up during accession negotiations, a point which will be revisited at the time of writing. It also acknowledges that it would be lifted. However, it requires the lifting of the geographical limitation on the condition that it should not encourage large scale refugee inflows to Turkey from the East, upon the completion of the necessary legislative and infra-structural measures in line with the sensitivity of the EU Member States on the issue of burden sharing (Kirişçi, 2005).

The Accession Partnership preparing Turkey's entry to the EU was prepared by the European Commission, adopted on 8 March 2001, and subsequently revised on 26 March 2003. It sets out the following objectives for migration and asylum policy to eradicate the relevant misfits between Turkey and the European Union: (a) to pursue alignment of visa legislation and

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<sup>15</sup> Commission of the European Communities. *Turkey: 2000 Accession Partnership*, online at <http://www.deltur.cec.eu.int/english/turkey2000ap.rtf> and National Program for the Adoption of the *Acquis* 2001. *Avrupa Birliği Genel Sekreterliği Avrupa Müktesebatının Üstlenilmesine İlişkin Türkiye Ulusal Programı*. Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 2001. [http://www.tesev.org.tr/eng/ab\\_izleme/abdokumanlar/turkish\\_national\\_programme\\_for\\_the\\_adoption\\_of\\_the\\_acquis.pdf](http://www.tesev.org.tr/eng/ab_izleme/abdokumanlar/turkish_national_programme_for_the_adoption_of_the_acquis.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> For the three separate NPAA texts see the official website of the Directorate of EU Affairs at the Turkish Foreign Ministry [https://www.ab.gov.tr/national-programmes-for-the-adoption-of-the-acquis-npaa-194\\_en.html](https://www.ab.gov.tr/national-programmes-for-the-adoption-of-the-acquis-npaa-194_en.html)

practice with the *acquis*; (b) to adopt and implement the *acquis* and best practices on migration (admission, readmission, expulsion) with a view to prevent illegal immigration; (c) to continue alignment with the *acquis* and best practices for border management in preparation of full implementation of the Schengen Treaty; and (d) to start alignment of the *acquis* in the field of asylum including lifting the geographical limitation to the 1951 Geneva Convention, strengthen the system for hearing and determining applications for asylum, and developing accommodation facilities and social support for asylum-seekers and refugees.

The 2003 NPAA promised legislative changes in migration and asylum laws in Turkey such as establishing reception centres for asylum seekers, strengthening the database for keeping track of countries of origin of refugees and asylum seekers, and developing social support mechanisms for refugees in the fields of education, health, interpretation services and employment.<sup>17</sup> The revisions made in the NPAA in 2008 included the continuation of the efforts by Turkey to implement the National Action Plan on Asylum and Migration such as the adoption of a roadmap for the adoption of a comprehensive asylum law in line with the EU Acquis, and the establishment of an asylum authority to increase the capacity for combating illegal migration in line with international standards. The revisions also included promises for the establishment of an Asylum and Immigration Unit under the Ministry of Interior and employment of personnel to work in this field with an expertise status, which later led to the foundation of the Directorate General of Migration Management in 2014. The Turkish state also promised to establish reception centers as well as an Asylum Training Curriculum for the alignment of treatment of asylum applicants along with the EU *acquis*.<sup>18</sup>

The regime governing entry and residence in Turkey is more liberal and flexible in comparison with the EU *acquis* as it currently stands, and Turkey faces a problem of balancing its interest in accession to the European Union, which asks Turkey to tighten its entry regime with the demands of its growing tourism industry for a liberal visa policy. For instance, by the year 2002, there was a disagreement between Turkey and the EU regarding the citizens of third countries in need of visa. There were 21 countries contained in the EU negative visa list, but not require visa for Turkey. Consequently, Turkey introduced visa requirements in 2002 for six Gulf countries including Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, which are also subject to visa requirements according to the EU regulations. In 2003, an additional group of thirteen countries was listed for visa requirements.<sup>19</sup> In Turkey's 2004 Progress Report the European Commission deposed that Turkey has continued alignment with the EU negative visa list and introduced a visa requirement for citizens of Azerbaijan in November 2003. Furthermore, in 2005 Turkey introduced visa requirement for Marshall Islands and Micronesia, and by the end of the same year, the discrepancy between EU visa obligations list and that of Turkey was only six countries. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the EU has managed to get Turkey to impose visa requirements for more than twenty countries in its black list. However, the Turkish visa regime remained liberal due to the possibility to obtain sticker visa at the borders (Tokuzlu, 2007: 3-4).

In the accession process, Turkey is asked to rearrange its visa policy in accordance with EU legislation, especially with the Schengen visa regime (Gökalp-Aras and Şahin-Mencütek, 2019). Therefore, Turkey needs to apply a uniform policy towards all the EU citizens regarding the visa obligation, and to adopt the Schengen negative list. The EU also requires Turkey to tighten its borders with countries such as Armenia, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. In 2003, Turkey certified to open negotiations on a readmission agreement with the EU. Later, in

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<sup>17</sup> For more detail on the 2008 NPAA see the official text [https://www.ab.gov.tr/196\\_en.html](https://www.ab.gov.tr/196_en.html) accessed on 22 August 2018.

<sup>18</sup> For more detail on the 2008 NPAA see the official text [https://www.ab.gov.tr/42260\\_en.html](https://www.ab.gov.tr/42260_en.html) accessed on 22 August 2018.

<sup>19</sup> These countries were Indonesia, Republic of South Africa, Kenya, Bahamas, Maldives, Barbados, Seychelles, Jamaica, Belize, Fiji, Mauritius, Grenada and Santa Lucia.

collaboration with the EU, Turkey implemented Integrated Border Management Strategy in 2006 to comply with the EU *acquis* on tackling irregular migration and trafficking in human beings. In regard to visa requirements, aliens must have an entry visa affixed to their mandatory passport or substituting documents to enter Turkish territory. Generally, a visa is issued by the Turkish consulates and embassies in the country of origin or permanent residence and citizens of countries subject to visa requirements must apply to Turkish missions abroad.

A new law put into force on 1 February 2012 makes it more difficult for foreigners to continue living and working in Turkey without a residence and work permit.<sup>20</sup> It seems that the new law will prompt thousands of Georgians and Armenians to leave the country very soon. Until now, many foreigners used to run to the nearest country to officially exit Turkey after their 90-day visa expires, and then immediately to re-enter with a new 90-day visa. However, the new law prepared by the Labour and Social Security Ministry will only allow foreign citizens entering the country with a tourist visa to stay in Turkey for three months, and they will not be allowed to re-enter for the following months.<sup>21</sup> Prior to the enactment of the new law no. 5683 as of 1 February 2012, the Turkish state enforced a similar law in 2007 to regulate the entries and exists of the Bulgarian and Romanian citizens in Turkey. 90 days + 90 days' rule was first implemented for these new European citizens, who used to have strong economic links with Turkey through different kinds of trading activities including suitcase trade. Following the legal barriers set for the Bulgarian and Romanian citizens, the nationals of other countries, such as those from the Middle East, Armenia, Georgia, Central Asian Turkic Republics and the South Mediterranean countries started to fill in the gap in the informal market, mainly care-taking, house-cleaning, suitcase trading etc. Though such forms of migrations are circular in normal circumstances, the new law (No.5683) is more likely to increase the number of undocumented migrants who have nothing else to illegally stay in Turkey since they cannot afford to give 90 days' break in between their visits to Turkey.

The EU's impact is very visible in the field of readmission agreements signed by Turkey with, for example, Syria (2001), Greece (2001), Kyrgyzstan (2003), Romania (2004) and Ukraine (2005). Turkey continues to negotiate readmission agreements with Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, China, Romania and Bulgaria (Özçürümez and Şenses, 2011). It has also drafted and submitted agreements to Egypt, the Russian Federation, Belarus, Georgia, Israel, Sudan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Mongolia. Moreover, a report of EU experts on issues within the area of Justice and Home Affairs was completed with the collaboration of the Turkish authorities in July 2001. It included several conclusions and recommendations for future reforms, as well as financial assistance programs relating to the Justice and Home Affairs. Despite the ongoing asymmetrical character of Turkey-EU relations, Turkey has transformed its migration and asylum system in the last decade and harmonized it with the EU *acquis*. The ideas of combating against irregular migration have become a part of the EU-based harmonization process. The engagement of Turkey to the readmission agreement with the EU, which was later signed in December 2013, could be seen in the context of the country's efforts to become a member of the Union, and consequently it is directly linked to the country's aim to have a visa-free regime for its citizens visiting the EU Member States. One could also interpret the process revolving around the readmission agreement as a result of the EU's lowering of its international protection standards for (and pressure on) third countries as part

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<sup>20</sup> For the revision of the Law 5683 dated 15 July 1950 see the website available at <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/Metin.Aspix?MevzuatKod=1.3.5683&MevzuatIliski=0&sourceXmlSearch=>

<sup>21</sup><http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/foreigners-leave-turkey-amid-new-residence-law.aspx?pageID=238&nID=12391&NewsCatID=339>. For the law 2011/2306, see the Official Gazette <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2011/10/10111024-9.htm>



of its containment and externalization-based policies of international protection (Okyay, 2018; Paçacı-Elitok, 2019).

EU Readmission Agreements (EURAs) are based on reciprocal obligations, and are concluded between the European Union and non-EU countries to facilitate the return of people residing irregularly in a country to their country of origin, or to a country of transit. They are negotiated in a broader context where partner countries are usually granted visa facilitation and other incentives such as financial support for implementing the agreement or special trade conditions in exchange for readmitting people residing without authorisation in the EU. The EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement was signed on 16 December 2013 in parallel with the commencement of the Visa Liberalisation Dialogue. The agreement was meant to be another key driver for alignment of Turkey with the EU *acquis* within the context of migration and asylum. Both sides committed themselves to international burden sharing, solidarity, joint responsibility and common understanding. Accordingly, the EU would start the visa liberalization process in six months after the Readmission Agreement be put into force at the end of the next three-year-period, 16 December 2016, as a part of its plans on the externalization of international protection (Okyay, 2018; Paçacı-Elitok, 2019). The visa liberalization is subject to the condition that the EU will observe for six months if Turkey is going to operate it properly. The two sides also agreed on the removal of Turkey's geographical derogation in the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees. Turkey accepted to remove this restriction upon the completion of the accession negotiations to become a full member.<sup>22</sup> The determination of both sides to make sure that the Readmission Agreement successfully operates and that the Turkish citizens could have the right to visa-free travel was reassessed by the EU-Turkey Refugee Statement signed on 18 March 2016. However, the failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016 followed by the state of emergency law lasting for two years until 18 July 2018 interrupted the process of visa liberalization process. On 22 July 2019, the Turkish government officially announced the suspension of the RA. This was explained as a response to the EU sanctioning Turkey's gas drilling operations in Cypriot waters (Gökalp-Aras and Şahin-Mencütek, 2019). Prime Minister Cavusoglu said that "this was not only due to the EU's recent sanctions. The decision was also taken as the EU still had not introduced the agreed-on visa-free regime for Turkish citizens".<sup>23</sup>

## Legal Regulations

Until the enforcement of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) in 2014 (Law No. 6458), refugee protection in Turkey was used to be regulated by secondary legislation, mainly by administrative circulars. This has led to the *ad hoc* implementation of different practices towards asylum seekers in different cities by the police at an informal level since these rules were non-binding. The new Law on Foreigners and International Protection put into force in 2014 is actually the first domestic *law* regulating practices of asylum in Turkey. The new law represents a vast step forward towards the transformation and regulation of asylum and migration for Turkey since the ratification of the 1951 Refugee Convention. As an extension of the NPAA in 2003 and 2008, the new law regulates the entry, exit and the stay of migrants in the country, along with the scope of international protection for those who seek asylum in Turkey. The new law is practically the most evident illustration of Europeanization in Turkey. Despite the fact that it combines together within one text the matters related to fundamental rights, residence permit and work permit, it is still far from including relevant articles on naturalization of foreigners. The main body of the current foreigners' law has

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<sup>22</sup> For the official version of the Readmission Agreement signed between Turkey and the EU, see <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0239:FIN:EN:PDF>, last accessed on 28 June 2017.

<sup>23</sup> TRT, "Turkey Suspends Readmission Deal with Greece", <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/turkey-suspends-readmission-deal-with-greece-cavusoglu-18063> accessed on 11 September 2019.

completely changed. On the other hand, the Law on Sojourn and Movement of Foreigners in Turkey was abolished, and the Passport Law is now largely invalidated.<sup>24</sup> This law has also brought changes to the Law on Work and Residence Permits for Foreigners.<sup>25</sup> The new law certainly marks the end of a period in which asylum was regulated by secondary legislation. The current body of secondary legislation requires referring to different laws with regards to the rights of applicants, which often leads to contradictions and misinterpretations in practice. Under the new Law, the management of the Turkish asylum system will be taken over by a civil authority under the Ministry of Interior and a standardized practice will be ensured across the country. Prior to the enactment of the new law, the police officers working under the authority of local Departments of Foreigners, Passport, Borders and Asylum dealt with asylum applicants in every city.<sup>26</sup>

The new Law is composed of five parts: Part 1 is entitled as Aims, Definitions and Prohibition of Removal (Articles 1-3). Part 2 is entitled as Foreigners, and it regulates the issues regarding visas, residence permits, stateless individuals, and the removal of foreigners (Articles 4-60). Part 3 concentrates on International Protection, and it sets out the rules on the definition of types of international protection, rights and liabilities of refugees, and the temporary protection of illegal migrants (Articles 61-95). Part 4 frames the common regulations on foreigners and international protection (Articles 96-107). Finally, Part 5 gives a detailed account of the newly established Directorate General of Migration Management under the Ministry of Interior (Articles 108-127). The LFIP essentially regulates the rules regarding the rights to family union, long-term residence, education, health services, and labour market mobility of regular and irregular migrants. The Directorate General of Migration Management is going to have a special section concentrating on the integration of migrants of any kind.<sup>27</sup> However, it does not specifically regulate the rules regarding political participation, access to nationality, and anti-discrimination.<sup>28</sup>

Based on the Article 91 of the LFIP, details of the status of temporary protection were to be specified by a separate Regulation No. 2014/6883 on Temporary Protection. On 8 April 2014, a draft was introduced to 53 public institutions and organizations (Directorate General of Migration Management 2015). Eventually, a Directive on Temporary Protection was issued by the Council of Ministers on 22 October 2014. This directive aims to resolve the unclear status of those living under temporary protection as the law refers only to this status with a sole definition, according to which temporary protection may be provided to foreigners who have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the country that they have left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Turkey in a “mass influx” situation seeking immediate and

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<sup>24</sup> For the relevant Laws see *The Law on Sojourn and Movement of Foreigners in Turkey*, Numbered 5683, 15.07.1950, *The Official Gazette*, No. 7564, 24.07.1950; *The Law on Work Permits for Foreigners*, Numbered 4817, 27.02.2003, *The Official Gazette*, No. 25040, 06.03.2003; *The Passport Law*, Numbered 5682, 15.07.1950, *The Official Gazette*, No: 7564, 24.07.1950; and *The 1994 Regulation on Procedures and Principles related to Mass Influx and Foreigners arriving in Turkey either as Individuals or in Groups wishing to seek Asylum either from Turkey or requesting Residence Permits with the Intention of seeking Asylum from a Third Country*, No: 94/6169, *The Official Gazette*, No. 22127, 30 November, 1994.

<sup>25</sup> For a detailed analysis of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection see Soykan (2013).

<sup>26</sup> For a detailed analysis of the legal regulations see the RESPOND WP1 Turkey Country Report prepared by Cetin et al., 2018.

<sup>27</sup> The Integration Unit of the Directorate General of Migration Management convened an expert meeting to discuss the details of possible policies of integration of the Turkish state in Ankara on 12 November 2015.

<sup>28</sup> For a detailed analysis of the state of integration policies of the Turkish Republic see the website of the Migration Integration Policy Index (<http://www.mipex.eu>) based in Brussels. MIPEX measures integration policies in all European Union Member States plus Norway, Switzerland, Canada and the USA up to 31 May 2010. Data from Australia and Japan was collected up to September 2010, in Serbia in January 2012, and in Turkey in 2013. For further information on MIPEX see <http://www.mipex.eu>.

temporary protection (Article 91/1). Although this directive is about all the refugees, its provisions are applied to Syrians as they are currently protected under the Temporary Protection Regime (Gümüş and Eroğlu, 2015). Accordingly, people under temporary protection have the right to remain in Turkey (Article 25) and access to free healthcare (Article 27). Among other positive features, the Directive also prohibits people for being punished for irregular entry and stay (Article 5); prohibits refoulment (Article 6); provides for an identity card that can be used to access state schools as well as in applications for work permits (Article 22); makes it more straightforward to obtain work permits (Article 29); provides for free translation services (Article 30).

While the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) does not employ the term of “reception conditions” as such, Art 88 and 89 of the LFIP commit a set of rights, entitlements and benefits for international protection applicants ranging within the scope of the EU Reception Conditions Directive.<sup>29</sup> Articles 88 and 89 of the LFIP regulate the level of provision and access granted to international protection applicants and status holders in the areas of education, health care, social assistance and services, access to labour market, financial allowance. According to Article 95 of the LFIP, Turkey does not commit the provision of shelter to international protection on applicants, but authorizes DGMM to extend, on a discretionary basis, state-funded accommodation to international protection applicants under the auspices of “Reception and Accommodation Centres”. At present there are seven Reception and Accommodation Centres in operation, located in the following cities: Erzurum, Gaziantep, İzmir, Kırklareli, Kayseri, Van and Yozgat.

Article 70 of the LFIP states that DGMM is required to provide information to all international protection applicants regarding the asylum process, rights and obligations during the registration interview. Article 67 of the LFIP makes special provisions concerning the reception of unaccompanied minor applicants and other “persons with special needs”. The LFIP also makes sure that rights and benefits granted to international protection applicants and status holders may not exceed the level of rights and benefits afforded to the Turkish citizens (Art 88-2).

International protection applicants are entitled to the reception conditions from the moment they make a request for international protection and continue to be eligible until the international protection procedure ends with a final negative status decision that cannot be appealed onward. Article 3-1-d of the LFIP defines an international protection applicant as “a person requesting international protection in Turkey. Persons are considered as applicants of international protection from the time they approach state authorities and express a request to international protection. The actual registration of an applicant by DGMM may follow later.

Holding a “Foreigners ID Number” is an essential prerequisite for all foreign nationals in procedures and proceedings regarding access to basic rights and services. International protection applicants are not assigned a Foreigners ID Number until they are issued an “International Protection Applicant Registration Document” after the registration interview takes place. In practice, interview takes place within a month or more following the application. Reception conditions cannot be accessed before the registration interview.

Those applicants who are not given international protection have the right to appeal to a higher court. The appeal mechanisms available to applicants are different: In the case of an applicant appealing a negative status decision taken under the regular procedure, the final decision by the Council of State (*Danıştay*) would be the final decision, where by all available domestic remedies would have been exhausted. In the case of an applicant appealing either a negative status decision taken under the accelerated procedure in accordance with Article 79 of the

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<sup>29</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013L0033>

LFIP, or an inadmissibility decision in accordance with Article 72 of the LFIP, the decision by the competent administrative court would be the final decision.

International protection applicants are subject to the same level of rights and benefits with regards to information and counselling; provisions for family unity; and provisions for vulnerable persons. However, there are differences in level of reception conditions committed to applicants processed in the regular procedure and those processed in the accelerated procedure with regards to documentation; freedom of movement and accommodation; material reception conditions such as housing, social assistance and benefits, financial allowance; healthcare; vocational training; schooling and education for minors; and employment. Furthermore, Article 68 of the LFIP indicates that applicants who are detained during the processing of their application, and processed under the accelerated procedure, including those detained at border premises, are subject to specific reception modalities. Finally, applicants about whom an inadmissibility decision is taken – whether their application was being processed under the regular procedure or the accelerated procedure – will continue to be subject to the same reception regime as before, until the inadmissibility decision becomes a “final decision”.

### **Discursive Political Frames of Aliens: “Migrants”, “Guests”, and “Foreigners”**

The process of de-aligning Turkish migration and asylum policies with the EU norms is also visible in the political discourses generated by the state actors towards the reception of Syrian refugees. The reception of Syrian refugees in Turkey is mainly based on a discourse of tolerance and benevolence driven from path-dependent ethno-cultural and religious premises dating back to the Ottoman Empire of the late 19th century as well as to the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1920s. The vocabulary, which has been used to identify the Syrian refugees, represents a kind of continuity with regards to the naming of “migrants”, “guests”, and “foreigners” since the early days of the Republic. For instance, the Law on Settlement (1934) is one of the foundational legal texts defining the ways in which the Turkish state has identified the newcomers. The Law on Settlement was adopted in regards with the arrival of ethnic Turks in the early years of Republic.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, it continued to be the main legislative text dealing with immigration, and it determines who can enter, settle and/or apply for refugee status in Turkey. However, it also provides the individuals of Turkish descent and culture with the opportunity to be accepted as “immigrants” and refugees in Turkey (İçduygu, 2015b). For instance, Uzbeks, Turkomans, Bulgarian-Muslims and Uighurs migrating to Turkey from different parts of the world are named as “migrants” (*göçmen* in Turkish) in the official documents as well as in everyday life as they are ethnically of Turkish descent. In this regard, there are two other terms which need to be elaborated further: “guest” (*misafir*) and “foreigner” (*yabancı*).

In the official literature, the term “guest” has been hitherto used to refer to the refugees with Muslim origin but without Turkish ethnic origin coming from outside the European continent. Kurdish refugees in 2000s and Syrian refugees in 2010s were named as “guests” since Turkey officially does not accept refugees coming from outside its western boundaries. Bosniac and Kosovar refugees seeking refuge in Turkey in 1990s set up an exception as they were coming

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<sup>30</sup> *İskan Kanunu* (Settlement Law), Law No. 2510 of 1934, provides that only migrants of Turkish culture, with an objective of settling in Turkey, can obtain immigrant status (Article 3), and that those of non-Turkish origin will not be accepted as immigrants in Turkey (Article 4). This Law has been reformed in 2006 but its main understanding of who can be an immigrant has not been substantially altered. See the reformed Law No. 5543 on Settlement (*İskan Kanunu*) of 26 September 2006 at [http://www.nvi.gov.tr/Files/File/Mevzuat/Nufus\\_Mevzuati/Kanun/pdf/IskanKanunu.pdf](http://www.nvi.gov.tr/Files/File/Mevzuat/Nufus_Mevzuati/Kanun/pdf/IskanKanunu.pdf) last visited 17 August 2019.

from the western borders of Turkey, and had the right to apply for asylum in Turkey according to the geographical limitation clause Turkey decided to keep together with Congo, Madagascar, Monaco in the 1967 Additional Protocol of Geneva Convention on protection of refugees removing the geographical limitations. On the other hand, the term “foreigner” is often used in the official texts as well as in public to refer to those who are not neither Turkish nor Muslim. These groups are also not able to be incorporated into the prescribed national identity, which is mainly based on what one might call the holy trinity of Sunni-Muslim-Turkish elements. Accordingly, not only the non-Muslims coming from abroad but also autochthonous groups such as Greeks and Armenians are named as “foreigners”, or “local foreigners” in legal texts (Çetin, 2002).

To this extent, a more recent metaphor to qualify the role that the Turkish state and the pious Muslim-Turks should play for Syrians in Turkey has been the *Ansar spirit* (Arabic for helpers). As a metaphor, *Ansar* refers to the people of Medina, who supported the Prophet Mohammad and the accompanying Muslims (*muhajirun*, or migrants) who migrated there from Mecca, which was under the control of the pagans. The metaphor of *Ansar* originally points to a temporary situation as the Muslims later returned to Mecca after their forces recaptured the city from the pagans.<sup>31</sup> Hence, the Turkish government has used a kind of Islamic symbolism to legitimize its acts regarding the resolution of the Syrian refugee crisis. Turkish government leaders have consistently compared Turkey’s role in assisting the Syrian refugees to that of the *Ansar*, referring to the Medinans who helped Muhammad and his entourage. Framing the Syrian refugees within the discourse of *Ansar* and *Muhajirun* has elevated public and private efforts to accommodate Syrian refugees from a humanitarian responsibility to a religious and charity-based duty (Erdemir, 2016).

Prime Minister at the time, Ahmet Davutoğlu, in his speech in Gaziantep, one of the most popular destinations for Syrian refugees at the Syrian border, publicly stated that the inhabitants of Gaziantep are a city of *Ansar*: “Gazi[antep] is an *Ansar* city now. God, bless you all.”<sup>32</sup> Similarly, President Erdoğan used the same discourse in his speeches in 2014 and afterwards: “In our culture, in our civilization, guest means honour, and blessing. You [Syrian guests] have granted us the honour of being *Ansar*, but also brought us joy and blessing. As for today, we have more than 1,5 million Syrian and Iraqi guests.”<sup>33</sup> The discourse of *Ansar* has continued until recently, Deputy PM, Numan Kurtulmuş, referred to the same rhetoric when he introduced the right to work granted to the Syrian refugees under temporary protection: “The reason why the Syrian refugees are now settled in our country is hospitality and *Ansar* spirit that our nation has so far adhered to. There are other countries that cannot do anything when encountered with a few hundred thousand of refugees. But contrary to what the rich and prosperous countries could not do for the refugees, our country did its best for the refugees as a generous host, friend, brother and neighbour.”<sup>34</sup> The main common denominator of the ruling political elite is that the Syrian refugees are being portrayed and framed by means of an act of benevolence. Hence, the assistance of the state to the refugees is accomplished based on charity, rather than universally recognized rights that are supposed to be granted to refugees fleeing their homelands. But the problem is that Turkey is far from naming the Syrian refugees as “refugees”. Therefore, the state actors tend to cope with the issue not through

<sup>31</sup> *Haber7*. 2014. “Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Bizler *Ansar* sizler muhacir” (The President Erdoğan: We are *Ansar* you are muhacir), <http://www.haber7.com/ic-politika/haber/1208342-cumhurbaskani-erdogan-bizler-ansar-sizler-muhacir> accessed on 4 August 2017; For a detailed discussion on this topic also see Korkut (2015).

<sup>32</sup> *Akşam*, 28 December 2014, <http://www.aksam.com.tr/siyaset/davutoglu-gazi-sehir-artik-ansar-sehirdir/haber-367691> accessed on 7 June 2019.

<sup>33</sup> *Hurriyet*, 8 October 2014, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/erdogan-suriyeli-siginmacilara-seslendi-27342780> accessed on 7 June 2019.

<sup>34</sup> *Ajans Haber*, 11 January 2016, <http://www.ajanshaber.com/bakanlar-kurulu-sonrasi-kurtulmustan-aciklama-haberi/325379>, accessed on 8 June 2019.

universal law, but through the customs of religious charity and benevolence. Such a religious-based discourse with regards to the reception of Syrian refugees in Turkey has also been embraced by the bureaucrats working in the migration sector as well as local authorities and civil society actors.

The use of the discourse of Ansar spirit by the AKP government and the President also goes in parallel with the use of an Islamist, neo-Ottomanist and populist rhetoric by the same political actors. Essentializing the Islamist and Ottoman heritage has made it easier to control and discipline the Turkish population that is largely of Sunni-Muslim origin as well as the Syrian refugees who have similar religious credentials (Kaya, 2019).

Although the Turkish state was partly successful in implementing the rules of the Temporary Protection Regulation (No. 2014/6883) aligning with the EU *acquis*, the discursive frames used by the AKP government and relevant state actors in approaching Syrians residing in Turkey were leading to the de-Europeanization of migration and asylum processes. The framing of the refugee reality by state actors as an act of benevolence and tolerance has also shaped public opinion in a way which has led to the exposure of some racist and xenophobic attitudes vis-a-vis these refugees. Increasing economic and financial crisis in Turkey in the aftermath of the failed coup attempt of 15 July 2016 created further societal and political divides and polarization in a way that has led to the scapegoating of Syrian refugees by many native groups as well as to the birth of Arabophobia, the origins of which may go back to the World War I (Houry, 1983). Therefore, based on the past experiences stored in the collective memory of Turkish citizens as well as on the political discourse of the Turkish government constantly underlining the temporariness of the Syrians, it is not a surprise that Turkish society has witnessed several lynching attempts, as well as the prevalence of stereotypes, prejudices, communal conflicts and other forms of harassment against Syrians (Gökay, 2015). The massive increase in the number of refugees outside of camps and the lack of adequate assistance policies toward them has aggravated a range of social problems. Refugees experience problems of adaptation in big cities and the language barrier has seriously complicated their ability to integrate into Turkish society. There are several problems Syrians have been facing in everyday life. There is now a growing concern about underage Syrian girls being forced into marriage with Turkish men, as well as fears that a recent constitutional court ruling decriminalizing religious weddings without civil marriage will lead to a spread of polygamy involving Syrian women and girls (Kirişçi and Ferris, 2015). The sight of Syrians begging in the streets is causing resentment among local people, especially in the western cities of Turkey. There have also been reports of occasional violence between refugees and the local population. In turn, this reinforces a growing public perception that Syrian refugees are associated with criminality, violence and corruption. These attitudes contrast with the observations of local authorities and security officials that criminality is surprisingly low among refugees and that Syrian community leaders are very effective in preventing crime and defusing tensions between refugees and locals (Kirişçi and Karaca, 2015).

## **Reception and Cultural Intimacy**

Since the beginning of the migration of Syrian refugees to Turkey, the cultural intimacy discourse has played a very important role in the reception of Syrian refugees by the local communities in Turkey. As stated above, the political discourses of guesthood, Ansar spirit and religious brotherhood were successfully formed and displayed by the AKP leadership to Syrian refugees are mostly reporting that they are relatively content with their residence in Turkey. However, after eight years of mass migration of Syrians, the political discourse of cultural intimacy is not really socially reciprocated by the majority of the Turkish citizens any longer. Recent studies reveal that ethno-cultural, religious and historical ties between most of the Syrians and native Turkish citizens have been reported by the Syrian interlocutors to be the main source of comfort for their stay in Turkey. This is what Michael Herzfeld calls cultural intimacy, which is a kind of reassurance for Syrian refugees to stay in Turkey despite social-economic difficulties, deprivation of rights, exclusion and exploitation in the labour market as

well as in everyday life. It seems that such cultural intimacy prevents most of the Syrians from generating a willingness to go to Europe. An extensive study conducted by Kaya and Kıraç (2016) in Istanbul revealed that only 1,6 per cent of the interviewed Syrians are willing to go to Europe, while 79 percent expressed their willingness to go back, and around 20 per cent stated their willingness to stay in Turkey when the war is over. Similarly, Fabbe, Hazlett and Sinmazdemir (2017) have also revealed a similar tendency among the Syrian refugees surveyed in Gaziantep, Urfa, Hatay and Istanbul. In their survey, it was around 5 per cent who were willing to go to Europe. Their hesitation to go to Europe can be explained through various factors: cultural intimacy with Turkey, ethnic and religious affinity with the natives in Turkey, most of the Syrians being Sunni-Muslim-Arab who have communal, religious and ethnic ties in Turkey (especially in the Southeast Turkey as well as in Istanbul), growing anti-refugee sentiments in Europe, the absence of safe passage to Europe, obvious risks at sea, economic burden of the journey, and the news with regards to the deadly journeys circulated in the social and mainstream media.

In his path-breaking ethnographic book, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State*, Michael Herzfeld (1997- Second Edition 2005) elaborated on what he called “cultural intimacy” generated by the Greeks, which is a strong sense of difference between what they presented to the outside and what they know about themselves on the inside. Herzfeld defines cultural intimacy as “the recognition of those aspects of a cultural identity that are considered a source of external embarrassment but that nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality” (Herzfeld, 2005: 3). However, he later draws our attention to the fact that the term “cultural intimacy” was often perceived in the literature as the simple idea of acquaintance with a culture (Herzfeld, 2013: 91). Arabic-speaking Sunni-Syrians have already created comfort zones in various districts of Istanbul as well as of some other cities in Turkey, based on a cultural intimacy with local communities in regard to religious, moral, architectural, urban, and sometimes linguistic similarities originating from the common Ottoman past of the Turks and Arabs.

Herzfeld’s notion of cultural intimacy does not only refer to ‘the sharing of known and recognizable traits’ with the ones inside, but it also refers to those traits ‘disapproved by powerful outsiders’ (Herzfeld, 1997: 94; Byrne, 2011: 148). It could be argued that this second component of cultural intimacy comes into play when Syrian refugees residing in Istanbul as well as in other parts of Turkey, especially in the South-eastern parts of the country, are asked to express their opinion about migrating further away to the European Union countries. The Syrian refugees interviewed in both studies are predominantly willing to stay in Istanbul, Gaziantep, Urfa and Hatay, and not willing to go to Europe (Kaya and Kıraç, 2016; and Fabbe, Hazlett and Sinmazdemir, 2017). Their hesitation to go to Europe seems to be deriving partly from their strong belief that they are disapproved of by the Europeans, and partly from the life-threatening nature of the journey, which has already led to the death of thousands of people *en route*. It was often put forward by the interlocutors during the research that the tragedies that their Syrian fellows had to go through during their exodus from Syria to Greece have left very negative marks on them. The traces of the heart-breaking images of Ailan Kurdi, whose dead body was laying down on the Aegean shores of Bodrum, Turkey,<sup>35</sup> were still fresh in the minds of the interlocutors when interviewed. When asked why they came to Istanbul a year ago and if they did not want to continue the journey to Europe where her husband is waiting for them for the last three years after he was smuggled to Germany, a 28-year-old mother with two children from Damascus residing in Istanbul expressed her fear of death with the following words:

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<sup>35</sup> H. Smith. 2015. “Shocking images of drowned Syrian boy show tragic plight of refugees,” *The Guardian* (2 September), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/02/shocking-image-of-drowned-syrian-boy-shows-tragic-plight-of-refugees>, accessed on 20 April 2019.

We first stayed in something like a studio. It was me and my brother's wife, she also has a girl [crying]. We stayed for a period, trying so that we would be able to continue our way through smuggling, to Greece. They scared us too much about the way. Death and no death, like that we kept hearing stuff like that a lot [crying], we... Whenever we went to see a smuggler, and talked, so that we would continue. I don't feel comfortable. [Smothered cry] We got scared. We cancelled the idea. So that we would stay here, and wait until family reunification happens, that was it (Interview, İstanbul, Zeytinburnu, 27 July 2018, 9\_Bilgi).

Another woman (23-year-old Kurdish person from Afrin, married with one son) whom we interviewed in İzmir, at the Aegean coast, expressed similar concerns when asked if they are planning to continue their journey to Europe:

No, we did not try to cross the sea. I was always planning to return, to go to my family [in Afrin]. We do not want to go Europe, one of my sisters-in-law is in Germany, we communicate with her, their conditions are very good, she has a baby now, they crossed through the sea. ][However,] we see their pictures after they arrived in the other side [Greek islands], they looked like they were dead, their faces had turned yellow, they had three kids, they got very scared, this scaring will impact them in their entire life. It is like they were rescued from dying, it was like they saw death. Many people go and die on the way, in Greece many Syrians were killed, they did not want Syrians to come there anymore. A week after our arrival in here, they migrated to Greece, they paid a lot of money to the smuggler... You are not able to go, you are killed, you are paying for all of these things. Why do they go? They should not go, some of our relatives went away, they got sick a lot, they consumed all of their money, why do they go? (Interview, İzmir, 17 August 2018, 13\_SR11)

Herzfeld's notion of cultural intimacy includes various acts and attitudes repeated by members of a group of people, which lead to the formation of a Manichean understanding of the world divided between "us" and "them". These acts and attitudes may range from essentializing culture and past, practicing various stereotypes in everyday life, performing persuasive acts of resemblances, ordinary acts of embarrassment kept as intimate secrets of the group, and different forms of *iconicity*<sup>36</sup> such as mythical, visual, musical and gastronomic images bridging a sense of resemblance with the other members of the group at large (Herzfeld, 2016). According to Herzfeld, essentialization and reification of the past and culture is not only an ideological element instrumentalized by political institutions and states to control and manipulate the masses, but also an indispensable element of social life (Herzfeld, 2016: 33). Hence, ordinary individuals also tend to essentialize and reify the past for their own use to come to terms with the hardships of everyday life. Essentializing the past partly makes it possible for private individuals to create the semiotic effect of what Herzfeld calls *iconicity*, the principle of signification by resemblance, which contributes to the formation of a Manichean understanding of the world divided between "us" and "them" (Herzfeld, 2016: 33). Mythical, visual, musical, heroic, even gastronomic iconicities are all likely to contribute to the formation of this Manichean world. In this report, it will also be claimed that the Syrian refugees residing in İstanbul and İzmir at large, and in conservative neighbourhoods where there are many internally displaced people and internal migrants from southeast Turkey and elsewhere, are likely to construct bridges between themselves and the members of the majority society by means of visual, musical, religious, gastronomic, and even linguistic iconicities, which create a space of intimacy with the host communities. During the field research, we asked our

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<sup>36</sup> The term *iconicity* derives from the Greek word, *eikôn*, which literally means likeness conveying the imitation of the divine. However, in modern usage, the term *icon* carries a misleading meaning, which is often interchangeably used with "emblem". Michael Herzfeld's use of the term *iconicity* derives from its original meaning, which has something to do with resemblance. For further explanation on the term see Herzfeld (2016: 93).



interlocutors about their future plans as far as their geographical mobility is concerned such as willingness to go to Europe, stay in Turkey, or return. We have received various answers changing in accordance with the gender, age, economic status, education, and location of the interlocutors. When asked about her choices of living here, Europe or somewhere else, a literature graduate 34-year-old mother with one daughter from Damascus said the following to express her preference to stay in Turkey:

No, my husband from time to time says let us try to go to Germany, but for me I always wanted to come to Turkey. Even before going to Egypt when we were in Syria and packed our bags, we were thinking about going to Turkey, but then we heard that it is difficult to find a job here, and if you find one, the salary wouldn't be enough, and at the same time my brothers-in-law were in Egypt and they said the situation is good there, so we travelled to Egypt. After that, when we came to Turkey, I found it to be like my dreams. From the beginning of my marriage, I was telling my husband that I dreamed of travelling to Turkey. *I love Turkey because it is an Islamic country firstly, and a developed country. Secondly, although the language is a bit difficult, at least I am living in a place where I am not afraid for my daughter. Wherever we go, we find a comfortable environment similar to ours. So, I don't want to leave it. I hope to get citizenship and stay here. Also I hope to complete my studies here, even if the study was in Turkish, because it is better for work if you speak the language of this country.* And I hope to improve this centre until it gets a big name (Interview, Istanbul, Fatih, 25 July 2018, 9\_OzU, italics mine).

Cultural and religious similarity is certainly an essential element, which creates comfort zones for some of the Syrians. One could find other reasons which make some other Syrians prefer to stay in Turkey rather than trying to go to Europe. When asked the same question whether he considered to continue his journey to Europe, a 54-year-old man with two spouses and 11 children from Damascus, said the following:

Actually we were thinking of going to Europe in the beginning, but then we changed our mind; living there is hard. I wouldn't have control over my kids and wife there. There, the rule is on their side. I couldn't control them anymore. I heard a lot of stories about women who arrived there and threw away their man and stayed with only their children. Just 10 percent are living there normally as a family. If a man wants to live there, he has to let the woman act like she wants (wearing a scarf or not, praying or not), but we aren't like that. We like to live the ancient Syrian life in which the man is in control of the house). Another thing is, I thought about leaving Turkey because of its restrictions, because of the Turkish people's treatment. I thought seriously about going to Egypt, but unfortunately the Arab countries closed their doors in our faces. (Interview, Istanbul, Fatih, 29 July 2018, 14\_OzU)

The patriarchal cultural structure of the host community in Fatih, a rather religiously conservative district of Istanbul, seems to offer a safe zone for this man who is afraid of losing his control over his family members in Europe, despite the fact that he complained in the rest of the interview about the ways in which the Turkish neighbours showed their jealousy against his entrepreneurial activities.

Another reason why some of the Syrians want to stay in Turkey is because they already had very difficult experiences while escaping from Syria to reach the Turkish border in the first days of the war. A 37-year-old man married with four children living in the Balat district of Istanbul explained his tragic story with the following words:

We were smuggled out of Raqqa, they took us from home and they made us sleep in Raqqa, they made us sleep in a home in Raqqa for two days, smuggling. And then after two days they came and took us to Tabqa, and from there, the smugglers took the women, they took them in a [bus] van together with the children, a "servis" a "van" like the "dolmus", to Al Bab. And my son and I took a motorcycle, and we met at the smuggler's home in Al Bab. And from Al Bab we left to the areas, of olive groves and

farming. Of course... we arrived at night something like 8 at night, they collected all the people, something around 200 people, they collected us to cross the areas which were controlled by the ISIS, [to] the areas which were controlled by the Free [Syrian] Army, we walked for like 25 km, at night with the children, and the women and the children who are 4 months old, they no longer had milk or food or water to drink, they had an anaesthetics drug, we gave them an anaesthetic drug to let them sleep, the kids are only 4 months old, so they would sleep. So they wouldn't cry and wake up from hunger. Anyways, in the morning we slept at the olive groves, in the morning, the smugglers left us and told us those are the areas of the Free Army, something like 500 meters, we walked the 500 meters and we went to them, the area controlled by the Free Syrian Army, they received us nicely, they knew that we are fleeing from ISIS. They gave us food, they gave us water, they gave us everything, they gave us cars, of course we paid for the cars for wherever we wanted to go, most of the people went to Azzaz. In Azzaz we stayed in a hotel and it was for almost a week, and then we went to contact a smuggler, we went to Sarmada, in Idlib, of course we passed through Afrin, which was controlled by the Kurds, they took from us for every person, 2000 Syrian Liras. Of course, I didn't tell you that from Al Raqqa, to Al Bab they took from me 850,000. Even for the kids they took money. At the end we stayed in Azzaz, from Azzaz where we stayed for a week we went to Sarmada, the smuggler came and he took us, tried to take us through, but it didn't work out, we stayed for something like 15 days, and then it worked out and we entered by smuggling, they took for each person \$600 dollars, to the – Turkish village, and from the Turkish village they collected the people in one home and they distributed for every smuggler he would transfer a group, we took a taxi and we arrived at the bus station, in an area, I don't know what it is called. A border area, we went to the bus station. Ah! The Taxi also took for each person 100 dollars, so it became 700, so that they would deliver us to Urfa (Interview, 1 August 2018, Istanbul, 13\_Bilgi).

During the field research several testimonies such as these were expressed by our interlocutors. It is certainly a relief for them to stay somewhere near their homeland so that they could stay connected with it as well as with their remaining relatives whom they could visit at least from time to time during the religious Eid seasons twice a year.

## **Changes in political discourse: temporariness, permanency and return**

Soon it turned out that framing the refugees as “guests” was not sustainable in terms of accommodating their urgent needs as well as of coming to terms with the increasing resentment among the local populations vis-à-vis the refugees. Turkey first introduced the Temporary Protection Directive for the refugees in 2014, based on Articles 61 to 95 of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, which came into force in April 2014.<sup>37</sup> The directive grants almost all of the social and civil rights that refugees enjoy in western countries that are signatories of the Geneva Convention.<sup>38</sup> Accordingly, Turkey has provided Syrians with temporary protection which consists of three elements: an open-door policy for all Syrians; no forced returns to Syria (non-refoulement); and unlimited duration of stay in Turkey.

Following the implementation of the Temporary Protection regulation, which still frames the refugees with a state of temporariness, some discursive shifts were witnessed in the media with regard to the state actors' changing position on the permanent character of at least some

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<sup>37</sup> For the full text of the Temporary Protection Regulation see <http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/dokuman28.pdf> accessed on 6 May 2019.

<sup>38</sup> For the text of the Geneva Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees see <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10>

of the Syrian refugees in Turkey. These discursive shifts have so far mainly emphasised the permanent nature of the issue - introduction of work permits in early 2016, incorporation of pupils into public schools, creating quotas for Syrian students in higher education institutions, granting citizenship to the Syrians, and some statements from political figures such as President Erdoğan and Deputy PM Numan Kurtulmuş. Comparing the Turks living in Germany and the USA with the Syrians living in Turkey, in a meeting with journalists, President Erdoğan referred to the need for granting citizenship to the Syrian refugees residing in Turkey:

Today, a Turk can go to Germany and become a German citizen; [a Turk] can go to the U.S. and become an American citizen; why can't the same be possible for people living in our country?"<sup>39</sup>

This statement brought about a big commotion in Turkey making Turkish citizens to conclude that all the Syrians will be granted citizenship immediately. Due to the disturbance of the public in general, Deputy PM Kurtulmuş had to announce that the Ministry of Interior was working on a proposal, implicitly meaning that the government considers granting citizenship to those with cultural and economic capital:

Our citizens should be comfortable. We have not yet completed the proposal about granting citizenship to the Syrians. The Ministry of Interior is working on the proposal. There are so many skilled people [among the Syrians] who can make contributions to Turkey. To this effect, we can propose some criteria. When there is nothing concrete, some oppositional groups are trying to create chaos for the sake of opposition; and these groups are gossiping about the uncertain things as if everything is clearly laid out by the government. These are all incorrect.<sup>40</sup>

However, it is still not clear what the Turkish state actors mean by granting citizenship. Anecdotal evidence indicates that those Syrians with economic and cultural capital are more likely to be granted citizenship than those precarious ones, who seem to be instrumentalized by the ongoing neoliberal forms of governance for the establishment of a model of precarious work for non-citizen workers (Canefe, 2016; and Baban et al, 2016). As of 8 March 2019, the total number of Syrians who have been granted Turkish citizenship was 79,894 persons.<sup>41</sup> This number rose to 92,280 on 2 August 2019.<sup>42</sup>

The field research findings indicate that Turkish citizenship is mostly granted to those who are young, educated, skilled, employed, multi-lingual, Turkish-speaking, and with a lower or upper middle-class background. It is also a common practice to be granted Turkish citizenship through marriage with a Turkish citizen. However, those of Kurdish origin, old age, unemployed, working-class background and no qualifications are much less likely to be granted citizenship. A middle-class 19-year-old Arabic and English-speaking male working as a translator in the private service sector in Izmir explained his experience of being asked by the local authorities in Izmir whether he wants to be granted Turkish citizenship:

I did not apply for citizenship but they called me in my working place for appointment one day, and they said that I was eligible to be granted citizenship. We went to get it, prepared the documents, and now we are waiting for the Turkish ID cards to come. No one in my family applied, but it was granted to all of us. Maybe because of my father's

<sup>39</sup> For news coverage about President Erdoğan's discourse on the Syrians being granted citizenship, or dual nationality, see *Hurriyet Daily News* (11 July 2016), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/erdogan-details-dual-citizenship-for-syrians.aspx?pageID=238&nid=101428&NewsCatID=341>.

<sup>40</sup> For the Deputy PM Numan Kurtulmuş's speech on granting citizenship to the Syrians see *Sabah* (15 July 2016), <http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2016/07/14/hukumetten-suriyelilere-vatandaslik-aciklamasi>

<sup>41</sup> See <https://multeciler.org.tr/turkiyedeki-suriyeli-sayisi/> access date 6 May 2019.

<sup>42</sup> See <https://t24.com.tr/haber/suleyman-soylu-vatandaslik-verilen-suriyelilerin-sayisini-acikladi.833262> access date 10 August 2019.

job. He works in an insurance company. Though he is not a university graduate person, he works in a good company (Interview, 5 August 2018, İzmir, Karabağlar, 5\_SRII).

Another young person from İzmir told a similar story about her experience of being granted Turkish citizenship. This middle-class 24-year-old Arabic, English and Turkish speaking female working in a migration related NGO in İzmir said the following:

First we got residence permits in İzmir. A year later, we were given ID cards [temporary protection status]. Now, we are Turkish citizens. We were granted citizenship like 8 months ago. As my father is a teacher working here, they permit such qualified Syrians like teachers, doctors, engineers to become citizens. My father applied for citizenship, and the whole family became Turkish citizens (Interview, İzmir, 30 July 2018, 9\_SRII).

In Sanliurfa, 5 out of 22 interviewees reported that they have recently been granted Turkish citizenship, while 4 reported their applications are in process. They are mainly university graduates and those having financial and cultural capital such as teachers, dentists, engineers, and businessmen. During the field research, we came across some others who have received, or heard about others, receiving phone calls from authorities asking them whether they wanted to return to Syria. Our experiences in the field show that there is a group of Syrians with a particular ethnic profile that is expected to return to Syrian, i.e. Kurds. A Kurdish-origin 23-year-old married woman with a son from Afrin residing in İzmir, said the following when asked about what makes life meaningful for her:

We do not have any future [here], some went abroad, they were able to succeed. My sister-in-law told me that they received a phone call from someone asking them whether they want to return to Syria. I am saying there is no house, no job, no equipment. Where could we go? How can they call us to ask whether we want to return to Syria? I give you our property over there, just you go, how can you go, how can you work there? If you are young, you cannot go there at all, if you are a woman, you may be captured on the way, even before arriving in Afrin, they would be raped. In fact, I want to go, return, all of us want to go back, why do I pay such a high rent here, only 100 TL remains for us from our salary, unfortunately, there is no savings left for us. I do not know what we would do, we do not have a future, we are not able to move back or forth, we are stuck here (Interview, 17 August 2018, İzmir, 13\_SRII).

The feeling of 'being stuck here' was expressed with such strong words by one of our female interlocutors, whose ethnicity makes things even more difficult in her country of residence.

The discourse of return has become more widespread in 2018 and afterwards as the hostility against the Syrians escalated in Turkey due to the increasing socio-economic and political unrest. This discursive shift also became visible in the speeches of the Minister of Interior, Süleyman Soylu, who started to give detailed account of Syrian returnees in his monthly organized press conferences in 2018 and 2019.<sup>43</sup> The discursive shift of the government became even sharper in the aftermath of the local elections held on 23 June 2019 when the ruling party lost metropolitan cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, İzmir, and Antalya. For instance, following the loss of elections in Istanbul, the governor of Istanbul announced that Syrians under temporary protection residing in Istanbul without proof of document showing Istanbul as their city of registration would be deported to the cities where they were originally registered, or to Syria.<sup>44</sup> These changes in policy practices show that what is happening to the Syrians is

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<sup>43</sup> For an example of such press conferences of the Minister of Interior see <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-granted-citizenship-to-over-92-000-syrians-145480> accessed on 11 August 2019.

<sup>44</sup> See <https://www.pri.org/stories/2019-08-07/it-kills-you-waiting-syrians-live-under-threat-deportation-turkey> accessed on 11 August 2019.

not only a discursive shift, but also an actual transformation of policies from guesthood to return (Şahin-Mencütek, 2019; Gökalp-Aras and Şahin-Mencütek, 2019).

## Forms and levels of material reception conditions

While the LFIP does not employ the term of “reception conditions” as such, Articles 88 and 89 of the LFIP commit to a set of rights, entitlements and benefits for international protection applicants, which fall within the scope of the EU Reception Conditions Directive.

**Housing:** The LFIP does not commit itself to providing shelter to international protection applicants. Article 95 of the LFIP states that “as a rule, international protection applicants and status holders shall secure their own accommodation by their own means”. Article Art 95-2 authorized the DGMM to set up “Reception and Accommodation Centres”.

Turkey’s previous domestic law framework for asylum was not providing state-funded accommodation to asylum applicants. Asylum seekers used to be dispersed to ‘the satellite cities’ in the country and expected to secure their own self-financed accommodation in the assigned province. Asylum seekers were obliged to stay in their assigned province for the duration of their asylum proceedings in Turkey. The LFIP has introduced limited improvement in this respect and notably fell behind EU standards. The lack of support for accommodation to Syrian refugees under temporary protection has been the most important economic impediment to their subsistence. Article 95 of the LFIP establishes that international protection applicants and status holders shall secure their own accommodation by their own means. However, Article 95-2 authorized the DGMM to set up “Reception and Accommodation Centres” for the accommodation, nutrition, healthcare, social and other needs of international protection applicants and status holders. Previously, Turkey did not have any legal provision of EU-style reception facilities to house asylum applicants.

At present, there are seven Reception and Accommodation Centres in operation, located in the following cities: Erzurum, Gaziantep, İzmir, Kırklareli, Kayseri, Van and Yozgat. These Centres, referred to in Article 95 of the LFIP, should not be confused with large-scale camps in the south of Turkey that accommodated refugees from Syria subject to the “temporary protection” regime. There are recently 7 accommodation and reception centres, while the number of camps has remained steady in 26, which were established in 10 border cities in the southeast of Turkey. The number of Syrian refugees accommodated in the camps is 139,150 persons as of 11 April 2019. As of April 2019, the camps host only 3,84 per cent of more than 3,5 million Syrian refugees.<sup>45</sup>

The LFIP maintains the previous dispersal policy of assigning each applicant to a specific province, where they are required to register with the Provincial DGMM Directorate and stay until the end of their international protection. As the field research findings show this is one of the impediments to societal and economic integration of refugees in Turkey. Article 71 of the LFIP indicates that international protection applicants are obliged to reside in the province to which they are assigned by the DGMM, where they are expected to secure their own private accommodation on their own resources and eligible to seek for health services, social services, work permit and education. The LFIP does not indicate any plans to offer international protection applicants financial assistance to cover housing expenses.

**Financial allowance:** Article 89-5 of the LFIP states that international protection applicants who are identified to be “in need” may be allocated a financial allowance by the DGMM. The DGMM shall establish the criteria and modalities for this financial allowance, and the Ministry of Finance will decide about the amounts in accordance with the budgetary constraints. Applicants whose applications are identified to be inadmissible are excluded from financial

<sup>45</sup> For the latest figures see the website of the DGMM [http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik/migration-statistics\\_915\\_1024](http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik/migration-statistics_915_1024)

allowance. It is stressed by the DGMM that this is not a right but rather a benefit that “may be” allocated to the ones in need on a discretionary basis. In this respect, applicants are required to keep the Provincial DGMM Directorate informed of their current employment status, income, any real estate, or other valuables acquired (Article 90).

Currently, financial allowance is provided by the European Commission to around 1,5 million persons under temporary protection in collaboration with the DGMM, Turkish Crescent, and Halkbank, a public bank. The Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) was introduced by the European Commission following the EU-Turkey Refugee Statement put into force on 18 March 2016.<sup>46</sup> The ESSN programme aims to help the most vulnerable of refugee families residing in Turkey. The scheme provides refugees with an ESSN debit card which gives them access to a fixed amount of money every month. They can use the money to buy whatever they need most for their families: food, fuel, rent, medicine, and pay bills. Refugee families receive 120 Turkish Liras (currently about 16 euros) per family member under the condition that no member of the family works in any formal job and that the family has at least three kids.<sup>47</sup> It should be also underlined that International protection applicants, who are also registered with UNHCR-Turkey, are rarely granted the right to seek financial assistance from UNHCR.

The General Directorate of Social Assistance (*Sosyal Yardımlar Genel Müdürlüğü*) under the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services takes the responsibility of using EU financial funding by administrating two social assistance programs specific to foreigners who have identity cards starting with the number “99” showing the ones registered as foreigners.<sup>48</sup>

- a. The Emergency Social Safety Net Program (ESSN)
- b. Conditional Educational Assistance to Foreigners

**The Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) Program** (*Yabancılarla Yönelik Sosyal Uyum Yardımı Programı, SUY*): The ESSN Program provides cash to the most vulnerable refugee families living in Turkey. The program provides Syrians with cash money deposited in debits cards to be spent on whatever the recipients want to. The program is funded by the EU, and is implemented by the World Food Program and the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay). While the ESSN’s web page notes that the program works “closely with the Turkish Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, the Directorate General of Migration Management under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior and the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD)”<sup>49</sup>, the web page of the MoFLSS only mentions that the Ministry and Kızılay are the main partners of the ESSN Program in Turkey.<sup>50</sup> The Ministry’s web page informs that applications are received by the Social Assistance and Solidarity Association (SASA, *Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Dernekleri*) and the Red Crescent’s Service Units in the selected towns and provinces. The representative from the SASA that we interviewed informed us that they are making house visits to check whether the given address of the applicant is correct and whether applicants meet assistance criteria (Interview, 16 July 2018, Şanlıurfa, Meso\_9\_SR11).

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<sup>46</sup> For the text of the EU-Turkey Statement see <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18-eu-turkey-statement/> accessed on 25 March 2017.

<sup>47</sup> For more information on the ESSN Card see <https://www.essncard.com/>

<sup>48</sup> See the relevant website of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, <https://ailevecalisma.gov.tr/sygm/programlarimiz/sosyal-yardim-programlarimiz/> accessed 24 October 2019.

<sup>49</sup> For more information on the ESSN Card see <http://www.essncard.com/powerofpartnerships/> accessed 24 October 2019.


<sup>50</sup> For the Social assistance programs of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services see <https://ailevecalisma.gov.tr/sygm/programlarimiz/sosyal-yardim-programlarimiz/> accessed 24 October 2019.

The main prerequisite to be able to have an ESSN Kızılaycard is to have an ID card starting with “99” digits. This means that the applicants are eligible to apply for a car as they have already completed registration with the DGMM. It notes that the program is designed for families in need. The ESSN program does not include those with formal work permits and those who were granted Turkish citizenship. If applicants meet one of the following demographic criteria, they are eligible to benefit from the social assistance:


1. Single females;
2. Single parents with no other adults in the family and at least one child under 18;
3. Elderly people (above 60) with no other adults in the family (18-59 ages);
4. Families with four or more children;
5. Families with one or more disabled people (they must have a diasability of 40 per cent or more, evidenced by a disability health board report from an authorized state hospital); and
6. Families that have a high number of dependents (children, disabled and elderly).

## ESSN CRITERIAS


Households matching the following criteria are eligible for assistance:




**Criteria number 1 - Single female**




**Criteria number 2 - Single parents with no other adults in the family and at least one child under 18**




**Criteria number 3 - Elderly people above 60 with no other adults (between 18 and 59) in the family**



**Criteria number 4 - Families with four or more children**



**Criteria number 5 - Families with one or more disabled people. They must have a diasability of 40% or more, evidenced by a disability health board report from an authorized state hospital.**




**Criteria number 6 - Families that have a high number of 'dependents' (i.e. children, elderly and disabled). This is determined as families that have at least 1.5 dependents for every able bodied adult (between 18 and 59).**

*The programme is for families and individuals who are in need of assistance and not engaged in formal employment (do not have a SGK social security record).*


**How much assistance am I entitled to?**

120 TL per person in the household is loaded onto the card every month. Assistance is loaded onto the KIZILAYKART on the last day of every month, however you will be informed by SMS when your assistance is available.



**Monthly checks**

Your family are automatically checked on a monthly basis to assess your continued eligibility against the programme's criteria. You will be notified in advance if your assistance is cut or reduced.



**Keep your phone number up-to-date!**

If you change your phone number please update this as soon as possible at the SASF or TRC Service Centre where you submitted your application, otherwise the programme will not be able to contact you with important updates.

**Figure 2:** Criteria for being eligible to get ESSN assistance, Kızılaycard. Source: <http://kizilaykart-suy.org/EN/degerlendirme.html> accessed 24 on October 2019

Conditional Educational Assistance to Foreigners (CCTE, *Yabancılarla Yönelik Şartlı Eğitim Yardım Programı*): This is a programme provides the primary and secondary school students under temporary protection with cash. The CCTE aims “at supporting the integration of refugee children into the national education system through a financial incentive when the children

attend classes regularly. The project also includes a component of child protection.”<sup>51</sup> The program is funded by the EU through the Humanitarian Implementation Plan. It is run by UNICEF, MoFLSS, the Turkish Red Crescent and the Ministry of Education. It has committed 34 million Euro for 2016, 50 million Euro for 2017, and 20 million Euro for 2019.<sup>52</sup> It is a monthly cash assistance for students from grade 1 to 9. The amounts are as follows: grades 1 to 8, for female students 40 TL and for male students 35 TL; and grades 9 to 12, for female students 60 TL and for male students 50 TL. The criteria for benefiting from this aid is to be a member of a needy family that does not have any social insurance. The assistance is conditional upon the regular attendance to the school evidenced by the school administrators; 80 per cent attendance is needed to benefit from the program.<sup>53</sup>

**Healthcare:** Article 89-3 of the LFIP states that applicants who do not have any health insurance coverage and do not have the financial means to pay for healthcare services, are to be covered by the General Health Insurance scheme under Turkey’s public social security scheme. The General Health Insurance premiums of such beneficiaries are paid for by the DGMM. However, the DGMM may require applicants to refund all or part of the premiums at a later time in consideration of the applicant’s financial means. Coverage under Turkey’s General Health Insurance scheme provides substantial level of free healthcare services and medication, however the LFIP is yet to establish administrative guidelines as to how the financial means of applicants will be determined. Beneficiaries need to be assigned a Foreigners ID Number as a prerequisite for coverage by the General Health Insurance scheme, applicants processed under the accelerated procedure cannot have access to this benefit since they are not issued the International Protection Applicant Identification Document in accordance with Article 76 of the LFPI. Applicants who are not processed under the regular procedure only have resort to urgent and basic healthcare services, as defined by Turkish healthcare legislation.

**Social assistance, food, clothing, and benefits:** Article 79-2 of the LFIP states that international protection applicants who are identified “to be in need” are granted access to social assistance and benefits. The LFIP asks international protection applicants to benefit from state-funded “social assistance scheme” dispensed by the provincial governorates as per Turkey’s Law on Social Assistance and Solidarity. The Governorates dispense social assistance and benefits under this scheme by means of the Social Solidarity and Assistance Foundations, which are government agencies structured within the provincial governorates.

The Governorates dispense in kind assistance, such as coal and wood for heating purposes, food and hygiene items and financial assistance to “poor and needy residents” in the province, including foreign nationals. As provincial Governorates are already responsible to deliver social assistance and benefits in accordance with the Law on Social Assistance and Solidarity, Article 79-2 confirms the principle that “poor and needy” international protection applicants can apply to the Social Solidarity and Assistance Foundation in their assigned province of residence to seek subsistence assistance. It is up to the provincial Social Solidarity and Assistance Foundation to determine whether the applicants qualify the “poor and needy” threshold.

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<sup>51</sup> EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey, 30.09.2019. [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/facility\\_table.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/facility_table.pdf) accessed on 25 October 2019.

<sup>52</sup> EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey, 30.09.2019. [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/facility\\_table.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/facility_table.pdf) accessed on 25 October 2019.

<sup>53</sup> For more information on the Social Assistance Programs of the MoFLSS see <https://ailevecalisma.gov.tr/sygm/programlarimiz/sosyal-yardim-programlarimiz/> accessed on 24 October 2019.



## **Reduction and/or withdrawal of reception conditions**

Article 90-2 of LFIP states that applicants who fail to comply with the obligations listed in Article 90, or about whom a negative status decision was issued, will be losing their rights and benefits, with the exception of education rights for minors and basic healthcare. In this sense, Article 90-1 of the LFIP lists the obligations of international protection applicants as follows: (i) “report changes in their employment status to the competent DGMM directorate within 30 days; (ii) report changes in their income, real estate and valuables in their belonging within 30 days; (iii) report changes in their residence, identity data and civil status within 20 days; (iv) refund in part or in full costs incurred where is identified after the fact that he or she has benefited from services, assistance and other benefits although s/he actually did not fulfil the criteria; and (v) comply with any other requests by the DGMM within the framework of various procedural obligations listed in the LFIP for applicants.

In case of legal disputes between international protection applicants and the DGMM, applicants may pursue judicial appeals with the competent administrative court. If the judicial appeal is successful, it does not mean that the court decision will necessarily overturn the DGMM decision. In this case, it requires the DGMM to either issue a new decision to comply with the court’s decision, or appeal the court’s decision in the competent higher court of law. In practice, administrative court adjudication in Turkey is extremely lengthy and therefore could not be considered a practical and effective remedy to challenge a DGMM decision for the reduction or withdrawal of reception conditions.

## **Addressing special reception needs of vulnerable persons**

The Law on Foreigners and International Protection also includes articles addressing the special needs of vulnerable groups. According to Article 3 of LFIP, the “persons with special needs” category includes unaccompanied minors, handicapped persons, elderly, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of torture, rape and other forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence. The LFIP has a number of special provisions regarding the reception services to be extended to such vulnerable groups. However, the additional reception measures prescribed by the existing legislative and administrative framework is far from sufficient. This is also what we have come across in the field research while having conducted interviews with the members of the bureaucracy, NGOs, and refugees with special needs.

Article 66 of LFIP stipulates that the principle of “best interests of the child” shall be observed in all decisions concerning unaccompanied minor applicants. While applicants below the age of 16 shall be placed in children’s shelters or other premises under the authority of the Ministry for Family and Social Services, applicants who are above 16 years of age may also be accommodated in dedicated quarters within Reception and Accommodation Centres. Furthermore, Article 67 of LFIP requires “priority” to be given to “persons with special needs” in all procedures, rights and benefits extended to international protection applicants.

## **Municipal policies and regulations**

In principle, municipalities in Turkey are authorized to provide social assistance and services by Law No. 5393 on Municipalities. Article 14 indicates that “municipal services are offered at the closest level to citizens and with the most appropriate methods”. Here, the use of the word ‘citizens’ generally seems to be a barrier to providing social assistance and services to foreigners in general, and refugees in particular. However, Article 13 clearly states that everyone residing within the boundaries of a municipal district is entitled to equal services. According to the same article, “everyone is a fellow-towns(wo)man (*hemmer*) of his/her own neighbourhood.” Fellow-towns(wo)men are entitled to participate in municipal decisions and services, to be informed about municipal activities, and to benefit from the assistance of municipal authorities:

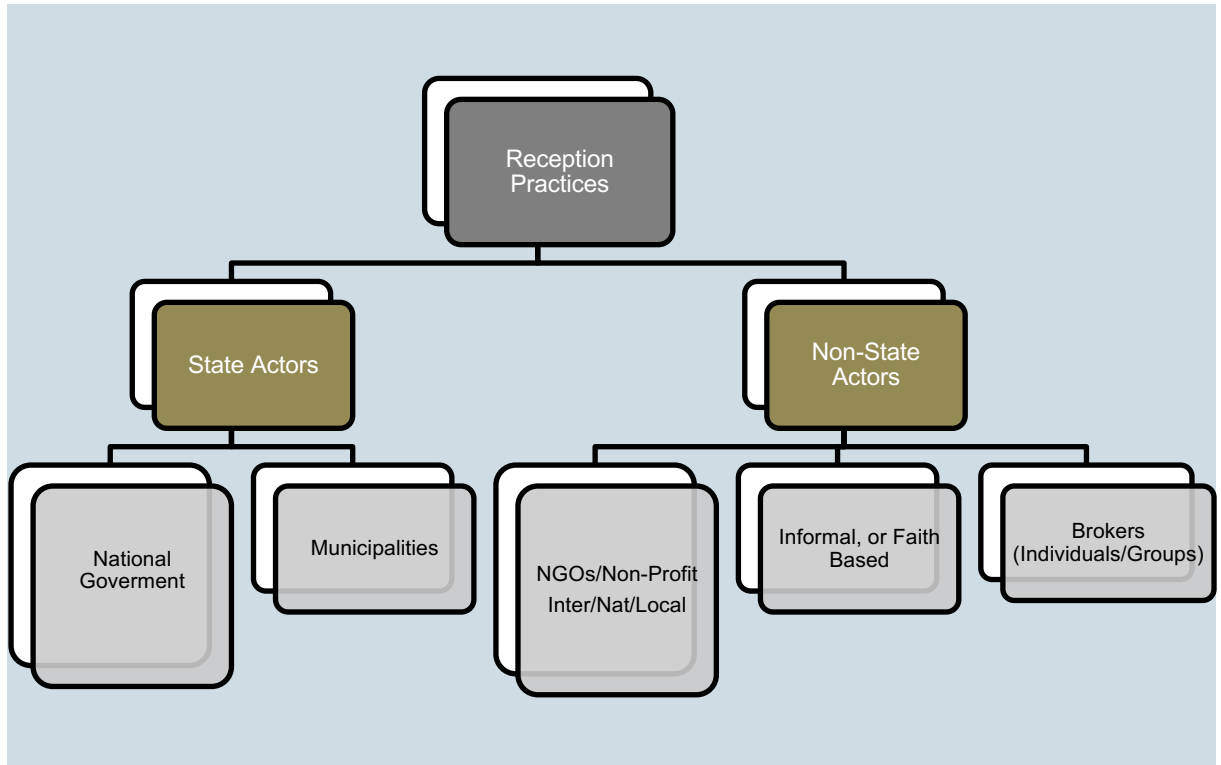
**ARTICLE 13**-Everyone is a fellow-towns(wo)man of the county which he lives in. The fellow- towns(wo)man shall be entitled to participate in the decisions and services of the municipality, to acquire knowledge about the municipal activities and to benefit from the aids of the municipal administration. It is a basic principle to extend aid without hurting human feelings. The municipality shall perform necessary activities to improve the social and cultural relations between the fellow- towns(wo)man and to preserve cultural values. While performing these activities, it shall take measures to enable participation of the universities, proficiency groups in the status of public institution, trade unions, non-governmental organizations and experts. Each person, who is settled or domiciled within the municipal boundaries or has relation with the fellow-towns(wo)man, shall be liable to obey the decisions, orders and notifications of the municipality based on laws, and to pay his portion of taxes, levies, duties, support and participation shares.<sup>54</sup>

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT, 2018: 263) has also recognized that “many municipalities provide food, clothing, blankets, and other necessary goods for troubled Syrians, and aid collection campaigns are organized”. Syrians in need are included in existing social assistance and protection services. As for the content of social assistance, it is observed that none of the municipalities provides social assistance in the form of cash. However, many try to provide some level of social support in the form of clothing, educational materials for children, etc., and to encourage refugees to take advantage of social facilities free of charge.

However, since the beginning of mass migration of Syrians, Turkish municipalities have mostly refrained from complying with the requirements of Article 13 of the Municipal Law (No. 5393), which commits the municipalities to equally serve everybody residing in their districts irrespective of residents having Turkish citizenship or not. Municipality services (garbage collection, cleaning, public transportation, water distribution, controls, etc.) are planned according to the population. Thus, the services are not sufficient because of the sudden mass migration of refugees. Municipalities receive their budget according to their population numbers. Yet, the actual population of many cities, especially the ones at the Syrian border (e.g. Kilis, Şanlıurfa, Hatay, Gaziantep), has increased critically. Therefore, these municipalities are forced to serve their populations with limited supplies and budgets. The reluctance of municipal bodies to contribute to the reception, protection and integration of Syrians under temporary protection has often been addressed by the Directorate General of Migration Management bodies as well as local NGOs.

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<sup>54</sup> For the Turkish Municipal Law No. 5393 See <http://www.ibb.gov.tr/en-US/Organization/Birimler/FinansmanMd/Documents/MUNICIPAL%20Law%20Nr.5393.doc> accessed on 11 August 2019.



**Table 2.** Reception Practices in Turkey

## Practices of reception

At the beginning of mass migration of Syrians to Turkey, the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) was given the mandate to coordinate their reception needs. AFAD was established in 2009 in order to create a single Center for the state's disaster management. It is an amalgamation of the General Directorate of Civil Defence under the Interior Ministry, the General Directorate of Disaster Affairs under the Ministry of Public Works and Settlement, and the Directorate General of Turkey Emergency Management under the Prime Ministry.<sup>55</sup> AFAD has a very particular role in mobilizing civil society organizations, which have always been very active in welcoming Syrians since the beginning of mass migration. AFAD acts as the representative of the state in humanitarian assistance. Until the time AFAD left the field to the DGMM in 2018 to coordinate the reception, protection and integration practices of the migrants under temporary protection, it was the main organisation that civil society organizations in the field communicated with when trying to reach the state (Macreath and Sađnıç, 2017). AFAD was also in charge of the camps established at the Syrian border to look after the first incoming groups of Syrians. According to UNHCR data, in January 2012 there were 9,500 Syrian Refugees in Turkey (UNHCR, 2017). According to AFAD's "Syrian Refugees in Turkey Report" (AFAD, 2013), there were a total of 200,386 Syrian refugees in the camps operated by AFAD, and it is believed that there were a total of 350,000 Syrian refugees outside the camps in various cities at the end of August 2013. In the years to come, the number of Syrians residing in the camps remained unchanged, however the number of urban refugees has dramatically increased.

UNHCR and national governments have for a long time favoured the camp model based on a political calculation.<sup>56</sup> In Turkey, 22 camps used to host over 217,000 Syrian refugees until early 2018. Nearly 3,5 million are spread across the nation living in conditions varying from group homes to informal camps and in rural settings. In addition to Syrian refugees, Turkey has also seen an unprecedented number of asylum applications from Afghans, Iraqis and Iranians in the recent years. As of August 1, 2019, the number of Syrians staying in temporary accommodation centres (camps) was 67,066 persons. This number was 103,579 in July 2019, and 228,251 people at the end of December 2017. Accordingly, since the beginning of 2018, the number of Syrians living in camps has decreased by 161,185 people. As of August 1, 2019, only 1.84 per cent of Syrians live in the camps.<sup>57</sup>

Major humanitarian organizations, from the Red Cross to UNHCR and UNICEF, and a myriad of smaller NGOs, worked to supply the camps and other settlements with the basics since the beginning of the mass migration: housing, food, water, clothing and hygiene items. In the beginning, urban refugees under temporary protection were not offered by the state any support to meet their urgent needs such as food, water, housing, and clothing. It was the civil society organizations, local administrations and international organizations providing Syrian migrants with their basic needs. It is the European Union's Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme introduced by the European Commission following the EU- Turkey Refugee Statement on 18 March 2016, which has brought a structured scheme to look after their basic needs.

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<sup>55</sup> For the text of the Law on the establishment of the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (No. 5902), see <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/tur151519.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> According to the UNHCR, most refugees in Jordan are housed at overcrowded camps, like Za'ahtari and Azraq. Za'ahtari houses about 80,000 and Azraq over 30,000 Syrian refugees and the rest are struggling to survive in towns and cities across Jordan. In Lebanon, where there are no formal refugee camps. The approximately 1 million Syrians are scattered around the country, living on streets, in parks and informal encampments. For details see the interactive UNHCR map <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria>.

<sup>57</sup> For more detail see <https://multeciler.org.tr/turkiyedeki-suriyeli-sayisi/>

It is known that harsh reception policies become a tool to ensure the temporary nature of refugee stay. The Turkish camps offered power, hot water, schools, playgrounds, and job training courses to the migrants. Turkey's camps were even praised by international media as the "perfect refugee camps".<sup>58</sup> Irrespective of the conditions within, however, 90 per cent of refugees in Turkey have chosen self-settlement mainly in urban areas, rejecting the camp option. The Turkish case, therefore, suggests that there was a restriction of movement, isolation and a passive life outside the camps.

The AFAD temporary accommodation centres (camps) were in extremely good conditions, both in terms of infrastructure and their ability to meet societal needs such. They offered kindergartens and schooling facilities from primary degree to high school, courses for vocational training, language courses (mainly in Turkish), internet rooms, grocery stores and Markets, and health centres and post offices.



Map 1. Refugee camps until early 2018

Urban refugees have always been exposed to more difficult conditions, such as poverty, expensive housing and rents, exploitation of labour, shelter, education, health services, insecure circumstances for women and children, human trafficking; and growing xenophobia.

## Housing

The term 'housing' refers to access to accommodation and means of subsistence in the receiving country for first arrivals, food/water, coal and wood for heating purposes. In the framework of the reception practices in Turkey, this work mainly reports to temporal accommodation, accommodation centres, emergency shelters, camps or private flats. There

<sup>58</sup> See <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/entertainment-arts-19589354/angelina-jolie-visits-syrian-refugees-in-turkey>

have been basically three different forms of housing for Syrian refugees since the beginning of mass migration in 2011: temporary accommodation centres, private housing, and informal settlements (such as staying with friends, in squats, and make shift). In the very beginning, Syrians were accommodated in the 22 temporary accommodation centres (camps) located at the Syrian border. However, soon after, those who were accommodated in the camps constituted only 10 percent of around 4 million Syrians under temporary protection. The camps started to be evacuated and closed down in 2018. Since the very beginning of the mass migration, an overwhelming majority of Syrians have stayed in private housing while a small proportion of them stayed in informal settlements.

Temporary Accommodation Centres were previously run by the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), which was first established in 2009 under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office, and then transferred to the auspices of the Ministry of Interior in 2018.<sup>59</sup> When AFAD was transferred to the Ministry of Interior, its mandate on the temporary accommodation centres was transmitted to a sister organization, which is also operating under the same Ministry: the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM).<sup>60</sup>

Affordable accommodation for Syrian refugees is one of the most important challenges, given that now almost all Syrians under temporary protection have become urban refugees. Private housing, social housing, protected housing, environmentally-friendly housing and their connection with municipal services are all part of governance and planning for Turkish society. Shelter solutions in the mid-term need to be planned with a view to social inclusion, transportation needs, livelihoods and integration considerations (Akçapar and Şimşek, 2018).

The average size of a Syrian refugee family is just above 5 people, with an average of 2 families in each household. Housing and living costs are higher for Syrian refugees due to abuse by landlords, and generally higher in Istanbul than in other parts of the country, resulting in multiple families living under the same roof. A majority of Syrians navigate their way in Turkey with overwhelmed public services and support, coupled with a language barrier. Even though assistance and protection is being sporadically provided by a number of aid agencies to the refugee population settled in urban areas, urban refugees struggle to secure a minimum of social and economic rights, such as education, housing and healthcare. Many families live in abject poverty, often in unsanitary, even dangerous, housing conditions.

The interviews conducted in Istanbul, İzmir and Şanlıurfa demonstrate that the majority of our interlocutors have tremendous difficulties in finding private housing. Higher rents, stereotypes, discrimination, racism, and difficult housing conditions were repeatedly expressed by the interlocutors. The following statement made by a 23-year-old married male with a new-born baby residing in Esenyurt, Istanbul, is very exemplary of most of the Syrians living in Turkey, especially in the big cities. When asked about housing conditions, he said:

We went around for many houses and they did not give us any. We kept looking around and nobody gave us any house for rent. They'd tell us, Syrians are "pis, pis, pis" [filthy, filthy, filthy], and thank God, finally we found a paper written here outside [saying for rent], even the rent is 700 liras [meaning cheap, around 120 Euro]. We even told him we are only 4 persons, and that we are wise, and we have relatives. He said there was another family that lived here before us, and they used to have a lot of relatives and guests and people. If we had guests coming to visit us, should we kick them out? They come for an hour or two, he said no it can't be possible. We told him, ok it won't work then. But we needed the house to stay, we were not going to stay on the street, we

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<sup>59</sup> For more detail on the history and organizational structure of AFAD see <https://www.afad.gov.tr/en/2572/About-Us>.

<sup>60</sup> For a full account of the number of people residing in the temporary accommodation centres until the delivery of their organization to the DGMM in October 2018 see the official internet page of AFAD <https://www.afad.gov.tr/tr/2374/Barinma-Merkezerinde-Son-Durum>.

used to live in a flat down in the basement, and it had mold and rot, it wouldn't work out for the children, we needed to leave that house. We came here, and thank God, they gave us the flat. Every now and then he would come home and inspect it, sees the cleanliness of the house and leaves. If there's any dirtiness or something. Thank God... (Interview, Istanbul, Balat, 1 August 2018, 18\_Bilgi).

A 38-year-old married woman with six children from Aleppo residing in Izmir has a different story with regards to housing. She refers to the fact that her family's living conditions have changed for the better since they started to get ESSN funding from the Red Crescent (Kızılay). When asked about the housing conditions in Izmir she said the following:

The contract says we pay 400 TL but we are paying actually 600 TL [around 100 Euro] because of the taxes. In our previous house, our rent was 300 TL, but the house was not receiving sun, and we always had problems and illness. When we started to get help from the Red Crescent, we moved to this house. One of my sons works somewhere. Our house is 3 rooms and 1 living room. Our current house is very good, there is a washing machine and dishwasher at home [owned by the landlord]. We only have sofa beds and a refrigerator (Interview, 1 August 2018, Izmir, 18\_SRII).

The interviews also demonstrate that informal settlement such as staying with friends, and/or in squats is also a common practice among Syrians. It is also a common practice, especially in Istanbul, for some landlords to offer their make-shift shops, stores and workshops for rent in a rather more exploitative way. A 50-year-old married man with four children from Deir Ez-Zor residing in Fatih, Istanbul, said the following when he was asked about his housing conditions:

We have been living in a shop (ground floor "Dukkan") for the last four years. Thank God, they know me well. Excuse me, if they found something on me or my family, they wouldn't let us live there, because it is their right... I have been settled in my home for four years (Interview, 1 August 2018, Fatih, Istanbul, 15\_Bilgi).

Poor housing conditions remain a big problem. Local municipalities, central state actors and local NGOs have expressed their limited capacity to look after this problem. During the field research, it was only the IOM officers in Şanlıurfa who explained their activities to help the Syrians under temporary protection find proper housing conditions. The IOM officer in Şanlıurfa explained their efforts with the following words:

We have a shelter team. If houses need repairing, reconstruction, they work with Syrians in towns such as Suruc, Akçakale and Siverek. IOM makes an agreement with the landlord and the refugees living in this house in poor conditions, they first do assessment, they do not make full renovation, it is not on the coverage of the project, rather they repair if the window glasses are broken, or there is electricity line issues, or toilets are in bad conditions, if women are not going to go to toilet outside the house, lighting, bathroom, roof etc. IOM, just this year, repaired around 1000 houses. We first talk with *Kaymakamlık* [local governorship]. We also repair schools, we built a washing room in Siverek and Harran at a place allocated by the local municipality. These rooms serve for both locals and refugees, the municipality covers detergent and electricity (Interview, 13 July 2018, Şanlıurfa, Mezo 7\_SRII).

The mass migration of Syrians has radically changed the housing market in Turkey in general. The change has not only affected the Syrians but also local populations. Balkan et al. (2018) found that housing rents have exhibited a statistically significant increase following the mass migration of Syrians to Turkey. Contrary to some of the previous findings documented in the literature, they found that the increase in rental prices mostly comes in the high-quality units. Accordingly, the natives who used to reside in low-quality neighbourhoods have now moved into high-quality neighbourhoods and refugees substituted them. The demand for low-quality dwellings did not change significantly, but high-quality neighbourhoods experienced a sharp

surge in demand. As testified by our interlocutors, low-quality houses are now being occupied by the Syrians in different parts of the big cities.

## Early access to education and the labour market

**Early access to education:** Turkey recognises the right of all children in Turkey to receive an education. For Turkish nationals, enrolment in schooling is mandatory up to grade 12. Currently 95 percent of school-aged children are enrolled in primary education while 86 per cent are enrolled in secondary education.<sup>61</sup> In the case of Syrian children, the Turkish Government has given a strong message in favour of education and centralised accountability at the highest levels. During consultations with the members of the Ministry of National Education during the field research, the local representatives repeatedly emphasised that they see education for Syrians as an opportunity for a brighter future and the ability to contribute to the rebuilding of Syria. This is also the position which is often reiterated by the officers of the Directorate General of Migration Management (Jalbout, 2015). In the meantime, since their massive migration to Turkey, it offers them a safer, more comfortable, and more productive experience during their stay, allowing them to become independent and more engaged members of their host communities. This policy stance was reflected in the Ministry of National Education's Circular 2014/21 on Foreigners' Access to Education, which has eased the administrative barriers for Syrian children to enrol in public schools.

The Ministry of National Education Circular 2014/21 on "Education Services for Foreign Nationals" of 23 September 2014 introduced the concept of Temporary Education Centre (*Geçici Eğitim Merkezi*, GEM) and provided a legal framework for the supervision and monitoring of private schools run by Syrian charities, which had existed outside the regulatory framework of the Ministry of National Education and were therefore unlawful but tolerated by provincial authorities. GEM are specifically defined as schools established and run for the purpose of providing educational services to persons arriving in Turkey for a temporary period as part of mass migration.<sup>62</sup>

The Ministry of National Education authorities has stated that the children accommodated in the camps have unimpeded and virtually full access to basic education mainly at GEM administered inside the camps. On the other hand, children of school age outside the camps, have the option of either attending a public school in the locality, which teach the Turkish school curriculum and instruct in Turkish, or a GEM. Such private Syrian schools are generally not free. They charge students varying amounts of fees. It remains unclear what legal validity any diplomas or certificates issued by the temporary education centres will have going forward, while the Provincial Directorate of National Education authorities are authorised to determine such questions if and where the child is subsequently admitted to a public school or a university in Turkey. Another challenge concerns the quality of education provided in GEM, since courses are taught by Syrian teachers, often volunteers, who need remuneration and professionalisation (Interview with an officer of the Şanlıurfa Directorate of National Education, 25 July 2018, MESO 29\_SR11).

The Ministry of National Education has planned a gradual-phasing out of the GEM. From September 2016 onwards, all Syrian children entering kindergarten or first grade have to be enrolled in Turkish schools since it has been decided that the GEMs would be gradually closed down. The Ministry of National Education has also encouraged children entering fifth and ninth grade to register at Turkish schools.

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<sup>61</sup> For the schooling statistics in Turkey see [https://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2018\\_09/06123056\\_meb\\_istatistikleri\\_orgun\\_egitim\\_2017\\_2\\_018.pdf](https://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2018_09/06123056_meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2017_2_018.pdf)

<sup>62</sup> See <https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/access-education-1>.



The closure process of the GEMs is continuing, and as of October 2018, 224 GEMs continued their activities. The cities with the highest concentration of temporary education centres are Hatay (63), Gaziantep (49), Sanliurfa (29) Adana and Kilis (21).<sup>63</sup> These cities are also the most densely populated by Syrian citizens and Syrian students.

According to the September 2018 data of the DGMM, there were 1,047,536 Syrian children of school age. A total of 518,105 students (465,171 Syrians and 52,934 Iraqis) under temporary protection were then enrolled in the formal education system in October 2018. In 224 temporary education centres in 19 provinces, 106,845 students, all of whom are Syrians, received intensive Turkish language education. In total, 641,630 (316,045 female, 325,585 male) immigrants were being provided access to education.<sup>64</sup>

During the fieldwork, some of our interlocutors talked about the difficulties of adapting themselves and their children to the Turkish educational system, which has decided to close down the GEMs. A 40-year-old man with three children from Aleppo residing in Istanbul said the following when he was asked about his experiences regarding access to education:

My girls are in Temporary Syrian Schools [GEM], at the beginning of this year I wanted to transfer them to Turkish schools, but there was a problem, we transferred them to schools that are quite far away. And it's a problem, they're far and if it doesn't work out I'll have to send them with someone (Interview, 31 July 2018, Şişli, Istanbul, 11\_Bilgi).

Since the beginning of the mass migration, one of the biggest difficulties experienced by the Syrians are the problems they encounter in having their degrees, or formal educational levels, recognized by the Turkish state (Çelik and İçduygu, 2018). When asked whether he had difficulties in having access to education, a 21-year-old male from Damascus living in Sancaktepe, Istanbul, expressed his feelings as such:

School—it was not easy to complete my studies here. In Syria I finished 8th grade. When I came here, I registered in a Syrian school, when I finished the 9th grade, I discovered that the school was not accepted by the Turkish government. The Turkish schools wouldn't accept my certificate. I waited for some time until the school was accepted by the government. This happened 2 years ago. I then went to the Turkish education ministry. They told me it is a fake certificate, we can't accept it. I went then to the headmaster there and told him about my situation. He didn't accept it either. He said it was because it had only the school stamp, not the ministry one. He said, 'we can't help you, we don't have a system that saves the names of students! I lost my future because of that (Interview, 10 August 2018, Sancaktepe, Istanbul, 20\_OzU).

Syrians mostly talked about the lack of institutions teaching the Turkish language as one of the biggest difficulties in the first days and years of their stay in Turkey. In the early days of their reception, many of them were not offered any opportunity to learn Turkish through formal institutions. However, in the course of time, various local institutions such as ISMEK run by Greater Municipality of Istanbul<sup>65</sup>, Halk Eğitim Merkezleri (Public Education Centres operating under the Ministry of National Education)<sup>66</sup>, TÖMER (a public institution teaching Turkish as a foreign language)<sup>67</sup> and ASAM (Association of Solidarity with Asylum-Seekers and Migrants, a nation-wide NGO)<sup>68</sup> started to introduce Turkish language courses for foreigners and individuals under temporary protection.

<sup>63</sup> See [https://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2018\\_10/23093037\\_22-Ekim\\_-2018\\_Yinternet\\_BYlteni.pdf](https://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2018_10/23093037_22-Ekim_-2018_Yinternet_BYlteni.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> See <https://ismek.ist/eng/default.aspx>

<sup>66</sup> See [https://europa.eu/youth/tr/article/54/14007\\_tr](https://europa.eu/youth/tr/article/54/14007_tr)

<sup>67</sup> See <http://tomer.ankara.edu.tr/en/home-page/>

<sup>68</sup> See <http://en.sgdd.info/>

**Early access to employment:** Before the enactment of Law 8375 in January 2016, which allowed Syrians under temporary protection to have work permits only under certain conditions and with certain restrictions, there were only 7,351 work permits issued to Syrians.<sup>69</sup> They were mostly issued to those who started a business. The number of Syrians who received work permits in 2019 was around 65.000.<sup>70</sup> Because Syrians living in urban areas have to work to sustain their livelihood, several hundred thousand have joined the informal workforce. Anecdotal evidence points to a boom in the construction sector arising from the arrival of the refugees, particularly in the provinces bordering Syria, and that textiles and clothing manufacturing, agriculture and service sector were other major sectors of informal employment for refugees (Kaya and Kırac, 2015; Erdoğan, 2014; Ferris and Kirişçi, 2016; Erzan et al., 2018). The field research findings indicate that one of the main reasons for the reluctance of Syrians to apply for work permits is the fact that they know that they will no longer be able to benefit from financial and in-kind assistance once they are given a formal work permit.

In the early days of mass migration, Syrians used their existing informal labour networks widely. Labour networks are widely applied in the process of migration. Not only do they help potential migrants in obtaining information about the availability of jobs, but they also help new migrants settle before starting a job. Even though applying to labour networks might be helpful it should be highlighted that it cannot always be trusted. During the interviews, several Syrians stated that the jobs that were offered for them via labour networks turned out to have poor working conditions as well as low salaries that were often times not paid on time and consistently. At the heart of self-sufficiency is the ability for individuals to earn a living and provide for their families. Under temporary protection, refugees do not have the right to work and without the legal channels to access the labour market, the informal sector becomes the only option for individuals to earn a living. Jobs are mostly found in the textile, construction, service and agricultural sectors. Wages for Syrians are generally reported to be only half of the minimum legal salary and some participants reported making as little as 30 TL a day. It should be mentioned of course that none of these jobs provide job security, occupational safety, or social security benefits.

At the very beginning of the mass migration, the neighbouring cities at the Syrian border (Kilis, Hatay, Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep) had been affected the most. As these cities mostly have agricultural fields to accommodate their own inhabitants, Syrians also tried to find job opportunities in the agricultural sector. Initially, there were only international organizations and local ethno-cultural kinship networks which helped the Syrians find jobs. Some of the migrants also volunteered to contribute to the well-being of their compatriots by working as teachers, doctors, dentists etc. The local communities also needed such help as the central state did not offer any financial help to those municipalities in parallel with the increasing number of inhabitants of the border cities. A 46-year-old male teacher in Şanlıurfa expressed his experience with the following words:

When Syrian teachers first came here, they were accepted as volunteers, and they could work in district education centres with their diplomas. There were those who abused it, those who issued false diplomas, and so those who deserved to work as teachers were not recruited afterwards. There were also some other problems, such as the assignment of unqualified ones. In this sense, we cannot criticize the Turkish government. On the contrary, they have always been very empathetic to our conditions from the very beginning (Interview, 19 July 2018, Şanlıurfa, 17\_SRII).

Syrians who found refuge in the border cities were mostly hosted by their kins, relatives and

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<sup>69</sup> For the Law 8375 see <https://turkishlaborlaw.com/news/legal-news/362-turkey-grants-work-permit-for-syrian-refugees>

<sup>70</sup> See <https://t24.com.tr/haber/suleyman-soylu-bu-gune-kadar-76-bin-443-suriyeliye-vatandaslik-verdik,791996>

friends in the first years of their exodus. Traditional kinship networks helped them struggle against the difficulties of everyday life, including finding a job. Other than that, international organizations such as IOM and UNHCR also helped the Syrians have the right qualification to find jobs. Having graduated from the medical faculty in Damascus and now working as an Imam, a 36-year-old man married with three children from Damascus living in Şanlıurfa, said the following to explain the support of international organizations:

Upon arrival some of us first worked at the temporary training centre where we learned to do things. We were also paid to attend these trainings. The project did not last long. We continued until UNICEF came. I am now currently teaching at a school to teach religion to students. I also work in the temporary education Centre [GEM] to teach the Syrian students (Interview, 19 July 2018, Şanlıurfa, 19\_SR11).

The situation in the remote cities is much more different than the ones at the border cities in the southeast. In the metropolitan cities such as Istanbul and Izmir, Syrian migrants did not have any assistance in finding jobs. Those with kinship networks preferred to rely on their kins, but those without any network mostly found underpaid jobs in the informal markets in textile, construction, service and agriculture. A 48-year-old man married with 4 children expressed the difficulties at finding a job when he first came to Izmir:

In the beginning, we did not find any job, we did some textile jobs at home, but they were paying very little, we did not have any money, any bread to eat really (Interview, 17 August 2018, İzmir, 12\_SR11).

The lack of formal structures to help migrants find jobs made their reception even more difficult. As it was also not officially possible to get a work permit until January 2016, migrant did not also feel the urge to follow the formal mechanisms to find jobs. Many Syrians had to work in underpaid jobs which mostly did not correspond with their qualifications. As the safety net in big cities was not very strong, the difficulties in the labour market even triggered the exploitation of child labour among Syrian families. A 37-year-old married man married with four children living in Balat, Istanbul, shared with us his experience when asked about child labour:

Yes yes yes... The children's rights.. their rights aren't guaranteed. For example, my sick son, worked in a shop, and he used to work a lot, from 7 in the morning till 7 in the evening. He is now sick but he wanted to work so that he would escape this misery. His boss used to give him 1000 TL, not all of it though. And once for ten days he didn't give him any, and it is his right. When it comes to the treatment between the boss and the worker, the treatment is bad, for most of the bosses. And then.. The workers work 12 hours a day without lifting their heads. They are exploiting workers, and the salaries are weak. For example, the dollar rose and fell and that affects their living and their salaries, they don't deal with them accordingly (Interview, 1 August 2018, Istanbul, 13\_Bilgi).

Some of the interlocutors we talked to in Istanbul addressed the Association of Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) for giving them trainings to help them find jobs. A 37-year-old married man with four children living in Balat, Istanbul, shared with us his experience with ASAM:

In ASAM, they took us for a general health workshop. In ASAM I participated in other workshops too. I did also a computer course, and I took Turkish language courses in ASAM. And I told them, they have my number, whenever they have a workshop, they call me and I participate. I have hobbies and interests. I like designing, and making inventions, I have a design but I didn't find someone who would adopt my design. I have a design I presented in Syria but without results, protecting the environment from pollution, and I have a design for a motor that works without any source of energy, it generates movement without any source of energy, I have the design, of course not

complete just a study, a design. And I have interests in weaponry, too (Interview, 1 August 2018, Istanbul, 13\_Bilgi).

Since the beginning of the mass migration, one of the predicaments which has made the societal reception of Syrians in the labour market difficult is reported to be the differences of work ethics of Syrians from the locals in Turkey. A 23-year-old married male with a new-born baby residing in Esenyurt, Istanbul,

Life in Syria at the beginning was much better, we used to live and thanks to God we were well. Here, also the same, it's like in Syria, but there we were comfortable, enough that there isn't the word "*çabuk*" [quickly] or "*Hadi*" [come on]. At work, they keep telling us "*çabuk. hadi, hadi, hadi!*" even if you just get out for a minute, they'd call you in immediately. But in Syria, we used to have the cigarette on the machine, coffee, tea. I told them here "*nefes*" [breathe], he said "*Nefes Yok!*" [No time for a breathe]. "*Olmaz!*" [Not possible]. I asked him are we in the military?! If we're in the military they wouldn't do that. He told me we do it like that here, if you want to work, you work! Otherwise leave, god be with you! I worked for several people and it was the same story. In Syria we used to work comfortably, true it was a low salary, but we lived and it was sufficient. If it wasn't for the war in Syria we wouldn't have come here. I wouldn't have come here, and this and that wouldn't have come here, people would have stayed in Syria, nobody would've ever come here. But the war in Syria is the reason for causing that (Interview, Istanbul, Balat, 1 August 2018, 18\_Bilgi).

Child labour, exploitation of men and women in the labour market, low salaries, lack of social security, difficult working conditions, lack of formal channels to help migrants find jobs, lack of official controls in the labour market have been repeatedly expressed by our interlocutors.

When the mass migration of Syrians began, Turkey was at the verge of introducing the new Law on Foreigners and International Protection (No. 6458). However, the mass migration delayed the finalization of the law, and already led to the revision of some of the articles even before the law was put into force. However, these revisions and regulations did not create an environment in which the Syrian refugees would have decent work conditions. One of the most important reasons of this failure was the power of the informal labour markets in Turkey. In the first days of their mass migration, Syrians entered a labour market that had high unemployment and informality, especially among the youth, since the beginning of the 2000s. All these combined with the lack of sufficient regulations, discrimination, exploitation and prejudices against Syrian refugees resulted in their settlement at the lowest and most vulnerable strata in Turkey.

Since the beginning of their reception, Syrian refugees have had difficulties in Turkey in terms of education and working conditions. In terms of working conditions, one of the most important problems is child labour and the unemployment among Syrians. The adults of the families remained unemployed because they have no work permit, hence, children are forced to be involved in the labour market to sustain family life. However, the basic reason making the prevalence of child labour widely desired is because it enables employers to reap higher profits. The lack of state control over the labour market has also triggered the employment of child labour. Other problems that Syrian refugees face on the labour markets are low wages, longer working hours, employment without social insurance, late payment or non-payment of the wages, discrimination at the workplace, etc.

The situation of Syrian refugees in the Turkish labour market has a strong gender dimension. Syrian women work as flexible labourers at the workplace and at the same time, look after their families. They struggle on both ends, i.e., the production and re-production sides of life. At the workplace, they are the most affected and vulnerable agents of the labour market because they are employed with lower wages in comparison with males from other nations; Syrian males are employed with lower wages in comparison to the Turkish male workers (Tören, 2018). As witnessed in the field research, Syrian female refugees also take the responsibility of the education of their children who have to struggle with the language barrier,

peer violence and discrimination practiced against them in school. All these problems, low working conditions without social security or registration, discrimination, stereotypes, language barriers, violence, prejudices, low quality housing, integration problems into society create many barriers for them in using their rights at the workplace. While the Syrian refugee population constitutes cheap labour force for the Turkish economy, the state has become a factor in the creation of this situation by neither exercising control nor granting equal rights to Syrian refugees (Tören, 2018).

## Services and allowances

**Healthcare services:** Syrian refugees are impacted significantly by difficulties in registration, thereby impacting access to healthcare services, among others. Many interlocutors during the field research reported the lack of healthcare facilities providing Arabic speaking staff and doctors. They attributed this as a major concern and barrier for access of Syrians to basic services. Due to the size of big cities such as Istanbul and Izmir, local transportation is also reported to be another major barrier in terms of access services. Since the very beginning of the mass migration, it has not been easy for Syrian refugees to travel in the country from one city to another. Domestic travel was subject to permission to be granted by the local authorities.

All the Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey are eligible to receive the same health care as Turkish citizens, being covered by the national health insurance scheme. According to the Temporary Protection Regulation, their access to health care services is only possible in the province where they are registered. Emergency medical services are also provided to non-registered persons. Syrians have the right to access free of charge health care services provided by public health institutions, for both primary and secondary care. A subsidy of 80 per cent applies to medication costs, which used to be previously covered by AFAD, and now by DGMM since March 2018. Other than primary health care services and public hospitals, Syrians can also approach one of the many Migrant Health Centres, located in the provinces with high refugee population density. These centres are staffed by both Syrian doctors and nurses, as well as bilingual (Turkish-Arabic) Turkish medical staff. As of May 2018, 1.515 medical staff (75 per cent being Syrian refugees, 16 per cent Turkish citizen Syrians) are delivering primary health care services in 169 Migrant health centres supported by the project. Syrians under temporary protection can also benefit from mental health services provided by public health care institutions. In most health care facilities interpreters are not available, rendering communication with health care providers very difficult since the beginning of the mass migration (Batalla and Tolay, 2018). Some NGOs, including the Turkish Red Crescent (KIZILAY) and ASAM are trying to bridge this gap. A 37-year-old man married with four children said the following when asked about his access to health services:

The area [I live in] has everything, but there is a healthcare centre in the same neighbourhood, they don't receive us, the Syrians, I don't know. They tell us to go to Kasimpasa [a district of Istanbul in the European continent], well I have the *kimlik* [temporary protection ID] and everything and it is a healthcare centre, they should receive us. I called and complained against them. They said I should go to the directorate of migration [DGMM in Istanbul], so I called them. No body, I called this number 100 and ... this red crescent number, and 177 they said go to the directorate of migration, I would have to go and come.. no. I don't want to be silent. If I see something wrong, I have to speak up, if it was here, or anywhere else I have to speak up (Interview, 1 August 2018, Istanbul, 13\_Bilgi).

Istanbul is a metropolitan city with its own innate problems. This is a complaint that we have heard from other interlocutors, too. These are the kinds of complains that we did not come across during the field research we conducted in Şanlıurfa. A 25-year-old man married with

two children from Aleppo living in Avcılar confirmed what the previous interlocutors said with regard to the access to health services:

My son is sick, I went to the Kanuni Sultan Suleyman public hospital [in Halkali nearby], but they keep transferring us without giving us medication, no treatment and they don't even do any proper examination. I went to Bakirkoy public hospital they gave him medication and said that he is cured and that there is nothing wrong with him anymore, so I went to a private hospital since he didn't improve. There is no attention for us. I understand Turkish but they don't help us at hospitals they say we should call 189 and take an appointment after 1 month and a half and it is all useless (Interview, 18 August 2018, Avcılar, Istanbul, 20\_Bilgi).

This interlocutor apparently went through the same things that the locals of the city go through. Apparently, he did not appreciate the way he was treated by the public hospitals. This is a common problem that every citizen in the city might come across. This is why, recently many migrants under temporary protection prefer to go to Migrant Health Centres (*Göçmen Sağlık Merkezleri*)<sup>71</sup> where translation facilities are better and there are Syrian doctors and nurses serving. A 27-year-old woman married with two children from Aleppo living in Izmir expressed her thoughts about access to health services:

My mother has diabetes, we often go to the Migrant Health Center to see a Syrian doctor, no need for Turkish language, treatment is good. We are able to get medicines. My mother's finger got gangrene as doctors were not able to identify problem properly, tomorrow she will get in operation for cutting the finger (Interview, 16 August 2018, Izmir, 11\_SRII)

One of our interlocutors told us about her rather positive impressions about the public hospitals in Izmir. The 35-year-old woman married with three children from Aleppo said the following:

We visited hospitals a lot. I visited all of these departments for my daughter from neurology to cardiology. She had many problems such as anaemia, internal bleeding etc. All these sicknesses have been treated in the course of time. The state gives medicine, but the most difficult part is the language barrier, there is no other difficulty. For example, the nurse has given me an injection to do, but I don't know whether I will drink it or what (Interview, 5 August 2018, Izmir, 3\_SRII).

Language barrier has always been the most difficult one since the reception of Syrians. Though it was reported to be less of a problem in the cities at the Syrian border where Arabic is a one of the spoken languages during the early years of mass migration, it has become a bigger issue after the Syrians started to migrate to the bigger cities in the country. One of our interlocutors in Şanlıurfa confirmed this observation with her experience. The 60-year-old woman with a son, and divorced years ago in Syria, said the following when asked about the access to health services:

Hospitals and health services here are very good here, all of them have translators. They give the medicines for free, and they do the treatment for free (Interview, 12 July 2018, Şanlıurfa, 10\_SRII).

An 30-year-old-woman married with three children in Şanlıurfa affirmed the testimony of our previous interlocutor regarding the access to public health services in the city:

In the Migrant Health Centres which are funded by donors, they are treating us badly, they are making us wait, they order us to keep silent. Local doctors are treating us well, but Syrian doctors who are working in these centres treat us very poorly (Interview, 12 July 2018, Şanlıurfa, 5\_SRII).

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<sup>71</sup> For more information on the Migrant Health Centres see <https://hsgm.saglik.gov.tr/tr/gocsagligi-anasayfa>

Health care services have been provided for free to all the migrants under temporary protection since the beginning of their reception. However, the language problem has always been the greatest issue raised by the Syrians under temporary protection.

**Food and hygiene:** The lack of job opportunities deeply affects the ability of refugees to secure their food and hygiene needs as well as to obtain suitable housing. It is common for refugee families to live in sub-standard accommodations with poor water, sanitation and hygiene conditions, especially in big cities such as Istanbul, Izmir and Şanlıurfa. In terms of food security, studies have reported consistent poor dietary diversity amongst the refugee population and 24 per cent of under-5 children suffer from chronic under-nutrition (MDMT, 2019; FAO, 2019; Kaya and Kıracı, 2016).

Non-food items needs also remain substantial amongst Syrian refugees, especially for those living in rural areas. Needs range across sectors, from bedding units such as blankets, mattresses as well as clothing, kitchen kits and heating systems (fuel and heaters/stoves). Households' depleted resources and inability to access and afford such items due to their high cost, lack of humanitarian support and distance to local markets were the most cited challenges in terms of accessing non-food items. Yet, findings show geographical variations and while poverty cuts across locations, refugees in rural areas also tend to face higher physical constraints such as distance to markets selling non-food items, or non-food items not being available in their local markets (MDMT, 2019).

A research conducted by MDMT (2019) shows that water, sanitation and hygiene conditions are poor amongst the Syrian refugee population, and one in five households (20 per cent) does not have access to clean drinking water. Access to clean drinking water greatly varies according to locations, and those living in rural areas tend to have less access to clean drinking water (47 per cent do not have access) compared to those in urban settings (13 per cent). This may be explained by their living conditions and dwelling types, which mostly consist of unfinished buildings and tents in informal camps. Cost, financial instability, and inexistence of facilities were the most reported barriers to having suitable and safe hygiene conditions. It is also reported that refugee households complain of poor sanitation conditions at the community level. Issues range from the presence of garbage in streets (especially in Istanbul), presence of rodents and pests, flooding (Izmir Centre), open sewage and open defecation (mostly in Izmir and Şanlıurfa).

Food vouchers supplied by the local authorities or aid agencies are stated during the fieldwork to be one of the main sources of income. Research reveals that some families sell their food aid or vouchers in exchange for cash (Kaya and Kıracı, 2016). Food and rent constitute the largest portion of monthly expenditures by refugee families. The average monthly expenditure of a Syrian refugee family is much less than the poverty threshold of a Turkish family with four members (Kaya and Kıracı, 2016).

The Food Consumption Score (FCS) adapted from the World Food Programme's (WFP) food security and livelihood monitors considers the amount of times a household consumed food from various food groups over a seven-day recall period. It is a measure of both frequency of consumption of each food group and variety of the diet. Using WFP's standard (0-21 Poor; 21.5-35 Borderline; >35 Acceptable) as the thresholds for the FCS score, Kaya and Kıracı (2016) found that 12 per cent of the refugee population in Istanbul did not have an adequate diet and can be considered as food insecure. Around 15 percent of refugee households are borderline, meaning that these people are also considered as being at-risk in terms of food security. Finally, 73 per cent of Syrian refugees in Istanbul were found to be food secure (Kaya and Kıracı, 2016). Our interlocutors mostly state that they get food boxes from various local sources such as municipalities and NGOs. A 41-year-old female married with four children in Istanbul said the following when asked about food supplies:

I was feeling embarrassed to ask for help, they insisted and brought me a lot of furniture. Also, they were giving me food continuously until I got the Kimlik [Temporary Protection Identity Card]; for about 10 months I lived from the help of people (at that

time my husband was still with me). After that, when I got the Kimlik, they told us to register in the *Belediye* to get help. We registered, and they gave us 400 TL and a carton of food. Then the number of people started to increase, and the support decreased (Interview, 19 July 2018, Istanbul, 8\_OzU).

Food aid is certainly an urgent need for many families who cannot afford to buy enough food for their survival. For families that have low FCS, food support coming from the municipalities, various foundations or NGOs seems to be essential since the very beginning of their reception to Turkey. A 50-year-old man married with ten children residing in Ceylanpınar Temporary Accommodation Centre in Şanlıurfa expressed his appreciation with regards to the food boxes coming to his house regularly:

*Sosyal Yardımlaşma Vakfı* [Social Assistance Foundation] brings some aid, such as food boxes, meat, clothing etc. Five of my kids go to school, they are given aid for attendance, we follow up all aids, we like kids a lot, because of that we have many kids (Interview, 23 July 2018, Şanlıurfa, 20\_SR11).

One of our interlocutors in Istanbul responded to our question about the access to food and hygiene with a very critical gaze. A 29-year-old female student who is trying to complete her engineering degree, which was interrupted because of the war in Syria criticized the way the international community treated the Syrian refugees:

We don't want food support from the UN, we don't want to be given salary. We want them to consider us as a normal people, not to make us like the Palestinians. We can't enter most countries. This is the most important thing, to be like a normal person. I think the organisations are not searching for a solution, they only give a glass or cup or some food, but we don't want that. There is a lot of food in Syria. We want them to respect us and treat us as normal people and give us our rights, and have the right to travel to other countries, even to the Arab countries. If the UN wants, they can tell Jordan for example to open the border, and they will open it immediately, but they don't want a solution. For the Syrians outside Syria, we live a good life but the people inside are suffering (Interview, 2 July 2018, Sancaktepe, Istanbul, 1\_OzU).

Such critical voices against the international community were rather limited. However, there were some other interlocutors who expressed their appreciation in Turkey away from Syria, which did not offer any prospects for their children even in times of tranquillity. A 40-year-old man married with three children living in Taksim said the following when asked about the living conditions in Istanbul:

I am living here better than I was in Syria. I am living in luxury more than in Syria. In Syria I was taking in 15,000 in a month, and it wasn't enough. I had to pay 5000 for house rent, and I lived with 10,000. It was always 'cleaned out' [I spent all that I got]. If I wanted to buy something for my children, I couldn't. Here, the salary is good, and there is support so I am living well. In Antakya, I was taking a lot of support cards, a Germany card, a food card. I got 300 or 400 TL to buy everything (Interview, 31 July 2018, Taksim, Istanbul, 15\_OzU)

Refugees interviewed resorted to different coping strategies as far as socio-economic constraints were concerned. As the most frequently observed coping strategy, families were found to rely on less preferred and less expensive food items, while some of them reduced the number of meals eaten per day, some borrowed food from others or relied on help, some reported to reduce portion size of meals, some restricted consumption by adults in order to feed infants and young children, and some resorted to sending family members elsewhere to eat.

**Subsistence:** As explained earlier, most Syrians in Turkey work in irregular low-paid jobs. Although Turkey has allowed refugees to apply for work permits since January 2016, most cannot overcome the financial and bureaucratic hurdles associated with acquiring a permit, and are unsure whether their employers will want to obtain work permits for them because



doing so would increase the costs of employing refugees (as employers must pay pensions and other social contributions). As stated above, the other reason of Syrians' reluctance to apply for work permits is that they would lose all the aids in cash and in kind. Since their reception in Turkey, the refugees' main frustration is that the only available work is low-paid and unskilled, and leaves them vulnerable to exploitation. Most salaries are not sufficient to meet all subsistence needs, so refugees must make trade-offs between priorities such as food, accommodation, education, non-food items, and hygiene. The diverse profiles and circumstances of refugees in Turkey highlight their wide range of priorities, goals and aspirations. Providing tailored support to meet these varied needs, particularly for refugees with added vulnerabilities seems to be a key programmatic challenge moving forward (Barbelet and Wake, 2017).

Refugees with very poor conditions move frequently or stay with acquaintances or family, or in some cases groups of single men live together. Refugees in the survival category relied on short-term strategies designed to reduce their living costs and provide them with immediate cash. Upon arrival in Turkey, these refugees often shared crowded accommodation, lived at their place of work, or make-shift places. With no savings or direct support through existing networks of friends or family, daily labour was their main source of income.

During the fieldwork, most of our interlocutors expressed the dire conditions in which they had to live. One of our interlocutors, a 60-year-old Kurdish man married with four kids from Damascus living in Kasımpasa, Istanbul, explained how he was mistreated ever since he came to Turkey:

We came to Turkey and stayed for 2 or three months in Mardin, life I told you was below zero. And one like you, told me why wouldn't you go to Istanbul? You have children. I told him I don't have money, he said "If I found you a workshop for jackets would you go?" I told him yes. He called and the owner of the workshop brought us here, for 2 years, we couldn't pay for the rent that we paid, for two years we have been working, and couldn't pay for rent. We paid for the car from there to here. And no one here is helping us my brother. No one here is helping. I went to the red Crescent and they didn't help me, I went to the organizations, in Fatih there are organizations, I went to them and they didn't help me (Interview, 25 July 2018, Şişli, Istanbul, 6\_Bilgi).

However, some others did not have such dire conditions. A 23-year-old woman married with two children from Aleppo, who stayed in Hatay for the first three years and then moved to Yedikule, Istanbul, explained how they were lucky now, thanks to an NGO, called Qnushyo (Respond Project Advice Hub in Istanbul)<sup>72</sup>:

Here they helped us a lot, in the centre her, the Qnushyo, they helped us with putting the girl in school. She's in kindergarten, they paid the money, whatever was requested, whatever the school requested they, -I swear- they facilitated all the documents, we just took the kids to first day at school (Interview, 27 July 2018, Yedikule, Istanbul, 7\_Bilgi).

The testimonies of our interlocutors change from city to city. Another of our interlocutors explained one of her sad experiences on the public transportation once she was asked about the matters of subsistence of her family. The 60-year-old woman with her three children (two married and one single) from Humus living in Izmir said the following:

Once, I got on a bus, ticket card did not work properly, a Turkish woman started to scream at me saying that "you have a lot money, state gives you tons of money, you get on buses". And then they got me out of the bus, they did not allow me to stay on

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<sup>72</sup> Qnushyo was originally established to help the Christian Assyrian refugees coming from Syria. Since almost all those refugees were settled in European countries, the founders of Qnushyo wanted to continue their work to support Muslim refugees in the neighbourhood. See <http://qnushyo.com/>

the bus as my ticket did not work". But this is not true, we did not receive any aid from the state, I do not understand why do they treat us like that, I got upset a lot, why do they treat us in this way, Erdogan called us, he accepted us, why do people treat us like that, we do not receive any money (Interview, 5 August 2018, Izmir, 4\_SRII).

The interviews that we conducted mostly show that the cash money given to more than a million of the Syrian refugees under temporary protection makes a very big difference in their everyday life to pay the bills, rent, and food.

**Domestic mobility:** The temporary protection framework in Turkey provides a domestic legal status to beneficiaries by granting legal stay in the country (Article 25); protection from punishment for illegal entry or presence (Article 5); and protection from *refoulement* (Article 6). The first four years following the reception of Syrians can be considered as the first period in which both authorities and the Syrians themselves regarded the crisis as a rather short-term problem. In this period, meeting temporary needs such as accommodation, nutrition, and health was perceived by the refugees to be more important than planning for their future. The second period includes the years after the first four years. In this period, due to the anticipation that the crisis is not going to be resolved shortly, there has been a mobility from the border cities towards the big cities in the western parts of the country. The Syrian population that used to live around the border towns and in South East Anatolia, have migrated to industrialized cities where the labour market is more active. Today, Istanbul alone hosts around 600 thousand Syrians, Bursa around 200 thousand, and Izmir around 150 thousand. The focal points of this second period have been participation in education opportunities, special needs of women and children, child marriage, child labour, and problems of people with chronic diseases, the disabled, and the elderly, etc. During this period, protection has come more to the forefront, and the actors have focused more on the aforementioned issues. Besides, access to livelihood and labour market have become more important subjects. As a result of the mobility in Turkey and the increase in participation in the labour market in this period, Syrians have become more visible in Turkey (UN Women, 2018).

According to Article 43 of the Temporary Protection Regulation, migrants under Temporary Protection living outside the camps should apply to the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management in their provinces and request a travel permit. The travel permit is valid for a certain period of time and allows the person to travel to other cities. In some places, migrants under temporary protection have an obligation to make regular declarations to the relevant authorities by obtaining their signature / fingerprint. Those migrants who live in temporary accommodation centres (camps) are also required to obtain permission from the camp administration in order to travel in the province where they live. If they wish to travel to another city, they must obtain a travel permit from the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management as described above.

Security forces conduct their work under the coordination of the DGMM and make travel permit control checks for Syrians traveling to another city. Bus companies do not sell tickets to Syrians without a permit. Similar applications are being carried out at the airports. Those who pass through the search points and have permission to travel are allowed to do so. With these efforts, it is aimed to register Syrians and make them stay in their residences in order for them to enjoy services. However, the Syrians expressed their discontent about the legal barriers before their mobility. A 40-year-old woman married with six children from Daraa living in Sancaktepe said the following about the difficulties of getting travel permits:

It is hard to meet the relative because of the travel permit, it is difficult to take it. I visited my sister once but before the travel permit was required. When we went to bring the girl that my son chose [as a bride], we went to the government office to take a travel permit, they asked a lot of questions such as why you want to go? How long will you stay? etc. We told them that we were going to bring a girl who would be the bride of my son, so they gave us a permit for 10 days (Interview, 16 July 2018, Sancaktepe, Istanbul, 5\_OzU).

When asked about their ability to travel in and outside Turkey, a 23-year-old man married with two children living in Yedikule, Istanbul, said the following with regard to his appreciation of the opportunity to go to Syria and come back:

Everyone gives you a way, an idea, there are many people who advised us to go outside of Turkey, Germany, Sweden or such. But we liked to stay here, I have family in Syria, I mean here I am able to go to Syria and see my family every Eid [Islamic Holiday, "Bayram" in English it is also transliterated into Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha], in the Eid we travel, we see them and come back. My in-law's house is also the same, they live next to us, because of that reason we didn't like to travel outside of Turkey (Interview, 27 July 2018, Yedikule, Istanbul, 7\_Bilgi).

It has become a public debate in Turkey whether the state should let those who visit their relatives back into Turkey after the religious holidays.<sup>73</sup> There is an increasing demand among the Syrians to more often visit their relatives in Syria not only to meet their needs resulting from feelings of longing for their homeland, but also to meet some of their subsistence needs. A 60-year-old divorced woman with a son in Şanlıurfa said the following:

We did not travel anywhere else, beyond Urfa, I visited Syria three years ago crossing from Akçakale border gate for festive time [Eid], stayed there for 1.5 month. I went to ask money from my brother, while returning I came through Afrin (Interview, 17 July 2018, Şanlıurfa, 10\_SRII).

Syrians try to find different coping strategies to overcome the issues related with the difficulties of geographical mobility. Applying for Turkish citizenship is one of them. A 35-year-old married man with two children living in Şanlıurfa said the following:

Yes, if I can take citizenship, I can work here. For example, right now when I need something I cannot go to Adana, Istanbul or go to the border to view our goods, or to talk with customers etc, but if I get citizenship, I can travel freely, do you understand that, if I can have nationality, I can work freely, I can talk with people, government, I will not have any problem then (Interview, 11 July 2018, Şanlıurfa, 2\_SRII).

It seems that geographical mobility for the Syrians under temporary protection is going to become a more complicated matter as central state actors and the ruling party, AKP, have become more repressive in keeping Syrians in the cities where they are originally registered. In the summer of 2019, for instance, the governor of Istanbul announced that those migrants under temporary protection who are registered in other cities are bound to go back to their cities of registration. It should be noted that this change in practice became more common after the ruling party had lost the municipal elections in big cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, Adana, Mersin, İzmir, and Antalya.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> For more discussion on this topic see <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/syrians-return-from-eid-al-fitr-visits-to-turkey-144467>

<sup>74</sup> For more discussion on this matter see <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-syrians/istanbul-gives-syrians-one-month-to-return-to-provinces-in-which-they-are-registered-idUSKCN1UH1Y6>

## Encounter with officials, civil actors, and the receiving society

Our research has revealed that the majority of local residents in the country where we conducted the field work have been supportive of the rhetoric of the *Ansar Spirit* reified by state actors in general and the government in particular. The *Ansar Spirit* has been embraced by pious Muslim Turkish citizens who perceive the Arabs and the Arabic language that they speak as sacred. The fact that Prophet Mohammad was of Arab origin, and the language of Quran is Arabic, carries a lot of significance for pious Muslims in Turkey as well as in other non-Arabic geographies of Islam. The members of local communities in the municipal districts run by the Justice and Development Party have often referred to the cultural and religious intimacy which they have practiced in everyday life with the Sunni-Arabs coming from Syria. Hence, religious and linguistic similarities are not only instrumentalized by Sunni-Muslim-Syrian refugees, but also by members of the Sunni-Muslim local communities who have already reified the language and the ethnicity of the Sunni Arabs (Kaya and Kırac, 2016; and Deniz et al., 2016).

This kind of similarity which comforts the Syrians is not only limited to religious and linguistic aspects, but also to gastronomic and musical tastes on both sides. The number of Syrian restaurants is rapidly increasing in Istanbul, Şanlıurfa, Bursa and other cities. These restaurants do not only attract the Arabs who feel a kind of cultural intimacy with the food and beverages served there, but also the locals who feel a similar cultural intimacy with the Arabic cuisine, which has always been an essential part of the cosmopolitan Ottoman cuisine. Similarly, the number of Syrian street music bands is also increasing. Radio stations such as *Al-Kol*, *Muftah* and *Alwan* were established in Istanbul to broadcast not only to the Syrian Diaspora in Turkey but also to the homeland in Syria.<sup>75</sup> The sound of Arabic music echoing in the streets of cities such as Istanbul and Şanlıurfa as well as in the Arabic radio stations construct new bridges between the Syrian refugees and the members of the local communities who are somehow appealed to it by virtue of resemblance to the popular Turkish Arabesque music (Kaya, 2017).

However, some locals do not seem to be so much at ease with the *Ansar Spirit*. This kind of attitude was mostly been reported by our interlocutors in Izmir. A 35-year-old divorced woman with five children, two of whom live with her and three of whom stayed behind in Aleppo with her ex-husband, said the following when she was asked about the way the local inhabitants and authorities treat them:

There is a bit of change now. I feel like they don't like us anymore. They used to help us before. For instance, I get milk support for my children. When I am not at home they drop the milk at the office of the Muhtar (local authority). When I go there to pick up the milk, he screams at us, saying "We don't want Syrians anymore" (Interview, 30 July 2018, Izmir, 10\_SRII).

During the fieldwork in Izmir, we encountered more of such experiences compared to the ones in Istanbul, Ankara and Şanlıurfa. A 27-year-old Arab woman married with two children from Aleppo said the following along the same lines:

Yesterday, I was waiting at the bus station in the queue to go to the hospital. There were two other Syrians in the queue. A Turkish woman came and told us to get out of the queue as were Syrian, she said first Turks will get on the bus, and then the Syrians

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<sup>75</sup> For the media coverage of the Syrian-origin radio stations founded in Istanbul see some examples such as <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/life-style/art-and-culture/2013/04/07/Syrian-opposition-radio-station-launches-from-Istanbul.html>; <http://muftah.org/sout-rya-a-syrian-voice-broadcasting-from-istanbul/#.WAdcPuh9600>; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-30015656>; and [http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2016/04/160418\\_istanbul\\_suriye\\_radyo](http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2016/04/160418_istanbul_suriye_radyo) .

will get on, she was not a bus driver, she was another passenger. She did not allow us to sit down, and looked at us strangely. Such incidences happen on the buses too, they accuse us for making the bus crowded (Interview, 16 August, Izmir, 11\_SRII).

Similarly, a 48-year-old man married with 4 children said the following when asked how they were received by the locals in Izmir:

In the first years, we encountered good people, but in the last one year we are encountering bad people. Once young boys came in front of our house, they stoned our house, they say bad things to us. They say these things in the school to my daughter too "Suriyeli bomba" (Syrian bomb) "okula gelme" (don't come to school). Her teacher is very good, but some pupils treat our daughter badly. Similarly one day, one girl did not want to play with my daughter, her mother came and warned them and wanted her to play with my daughter too (Interview, 17 August 2018, Izmir, 12\_SRII).

This kind of discourse has also become rather widespread, especially after a popular conservative-pious-Muslim poet, İsmet Özel, has treated the Syrian refugees in the same way as "traitors".<sup>76</sup> Defining the Arabs as traitors in Turkey is actually a rather old habit dating back to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Turkish nationalists perceived the Arabs in those days as "traitors" since they believed that the Arab nationalists stabbed the Turks in their back by collaborating with the imperialist western forces (Pope and Pope, 1997). Such a stereotype is still very strong in collective memory of the Turkish citizens.

Such attitudes have become more common due to the fact that local authorities and inhabitants suffer from societal and political polarization as well as from economic crisis. Such attitudes have become more visible during the electoral cycles when mainstream political parties try to exploit the high number of Syrians in the country. In times of economic and political instability, nationalist and populist agenda have become more visible, and authorities attempt to generalize hostility towards others who are culturally, ethnically and religiously different. Refugees are easily portrayed as inferior, malign, dangerous, or threatening (Wodak and van Dijk, 2000). Lacking the resources of public communication and relevant language skills, most of the refugees are unable to contest such labellings, stereotypes and xenophobic attitudes generated by the majority society (Marfleet, 2007, and 2013). Such a xenophobic discourse had also been employed by the main oppositional parties prior to the 07 June 2015 General Elections in their electoral campaigns. The Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) were using a populist discourse scapegoating Syrian refugees for the political, social and economic ills in Turkey (Yanaşmayan et al., 2019). Syrian refugees have been instrumentalized by both parties to express their critique against the AKP, which they blamed for deepening the Syrian crisis in the first place, thus leading to massive migration of Syrians to Turkey at the expense of Turkish citizens (Werz et al., 2015). Upon growing criticisms from civil society organizations and academics, it should also be noted here that both parties, especially the CHP, gave up on such discourses prior to the second general elections held on 01 November 2015, and have since then used a rather constructive and friendly discourse vis-a-vis the Syrians (Canyaş et al., 2015). However, the same anti-refugee discourse has been repeated by the CHP leader in response to the government's efforts to grant citizenship to Syrians prior to the constitutional change referendum on 16 April 2017.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> For the speech of İsmet Özel see the following video recorded on 14 December 2015, <https://twitter.com/fazzare/status/677191012738011140>

<sup>77</sup> For Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's words on the Syrians see *Hurriyet Daily News* (6 March 2017), "If one person makes mistake, the whole country will have to pay for it: CHP leader," available at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/if-one-person-makes-mistake-the-whole-country-will-have-to-pay-for-it-chp-leader.aspx?pageID=238&nID=110283&NewsCatID=338> accessed on 6 March 2019.

The interviews conducted in Istanbul show that the Syrians are rather content with their lives in the city as far as encounters with locals, authorities, and civil society organizations are concerned. The discourse of cultural and religious similarity is very wide spread among the Syrians. A 40-year-old woman married with six children said the following when asked about the living conditions in Istanbul:

Our third son travelled illegally to Germany, he stayed there for 2.5 years, he learned German and reached a very good level in it. But recently when he was there, I felt that his attitude began to change, my husband told me "I will try hard to make him come back to Turkey but without letting him [the son] know about that." I have a brother living in Germany, so my husband communicated with him, and they both made my son come back to Turkey, also illegally. He came back on the first of this year. After he came back, he found a job and recently, less than a month ago, he got married. He is now used to the life here, but it wasn't easy for him in the beginning, he was telling me that the job is very tiring here, I was telling him that is normal, in every country you will find difficulties. *I believe that Turkey is better than other countries, it is an Islamic country and we can hear the sound of ezan [call to prayer] here*, this advantage is enough. We decided to stay here, we don't want to go to another country because we will again start from scratch, so we decided to stay here until our country's situation becomes better (Interview, 16 July 2018, Sancaktepe, Istanbul, 5\_OzU, italics mine).

Our interlocutors in Istanbul have mostly expressed their appreciation about the welcoming culture of the city at all levels. A 37-year-old-woman with two children said the following when she was asked whether she wants to go to Europe:

No, I don't think that we will get this chance, and even if we did, we don't want to go there mainly because of the kids, they got used to being here. My son always says my country is Turkey, my president is Erdogan (Interview, 25 July 2018, Fatih, Istanbul, 10\_OzU).

There are of course some other interlocutors in Istanbul who have mixed feelings and experiences as far as their encounters with the locals are concerned. A 37-year-old man married with four children in Balat, Istanbul said the following when asked how he is being received by the locals:

It's mixed, there are those whom I would like to thank such as the Turkish government, and the Turkish people in general, without exception, those who accepted me well and those who didn't. Because none of the Arab countries or any other country in the world, except Germany, did what Turkey did. Turkey accepted and received us. I see that all the world governments and all the world countries are conspiring against the Syrian people (Interview, 1 August 2018, Istanbul, 13\_Bilgi).

Similarly, our interlocutors in Şanlıurfa mostly stated that they feel at home because of cultural, religious, linguistic and geographical similarities. Syrians who found a refuge in the border cities in the South East of Turkey are reminded by their collective memory that Aleppo, the province where they mostly come from, was the third most cosmopolitan province of the Ottoman Empire after Istanbul and Izmir, and also that Aleppo province included some cities which are now parts of Turkey such as Hatay, Kilis and Şanlıurfa (Watenpaugh, 2005). A 23-year-old single woman said the following about her everyday life in the city:

I am very happy here. Sometimes I miss Syria of course, but here I have my aunt, my neighbours. We are communicating with them very well. I also have very good relations with the people in my work place. They are like my family. I don't really feel like a stranger here (Interview, 16 July 2018, Şanlıurfa, 14\_SR11).

As far as relations with local authorities are concerned, the feelings of Syrians in Şanlıurfa are a bit different from the ones in other cities. Şanlıurfa has a total population of around 2 million, and another 450 thousand Syrians. The capacity of the public institutions seems to be far from meeting the demands of the entire population of the city including the Syrians. A 30-year-old

woman married with three children in Şanlıurfa said the following when asked about her encounters with the local authorities:

The director of the temporary education centre who as a Syrian director is treating kids very badly, humiliating. He is saying "you smell", "you are trash". This is the school where my daughter goes. In some schools, they are treating students very well, like the one my sister's son attends, sometimes they say good things to them. Also, in the migrant health centres which are funded by donors, they are treating us badly, they are making us wait, they order us to keep silent. Local doctors are treating us well, but Syrian doctors who are working in these centres treat us very badly. I gave birth in a Turkish hospital, they treated me and my twins very well, they took care of medication, but the centres worked with Syrian doctors are very poor in quality (Interview, 12 July 2018, Şanlıurfa, 5\_SRII).

Such testimonies were quite common among our interlocutors who expressed their appreciation on every occasion about the ways in which they are being treated by Turkish authorities, local inhabitants and local NGOs.

## Conclusion: challenges, prospects and policy recommendations

The concluding section of this report was written in a period in which worrying developments took place in Turkey with regard to the state of Syrians under temporary protection. Following the election defeat of the ruling party in the local elections in Istanbul, the Governor of Istanbul operating under the Ministry of Interior announced that Syrians under temporary protection residing in Istanbul without a valid document showing their legal residence permit, in other words, those who had originally been registered in other cities at their reception would be sent back to the cities where they were initially registered. For many years, many Syrians have found ways to unlawfully migrate to Istanbul to find better opportunities with respect to jobs, education, housing and protection despite the fact that they were originally registered in different cities, mostly in the cities bordering on Syria. However, growing animosity and hatred has been observed against the Syrians in the country, which has been politically and socially fragmented, economically weakened, and institutionally destabilized after the inception of the presidential system in April 2017.

The mounting discourse of the return of Syrians has replaced the initial discourses of guesthood and the Ansar spirit as explained earlier in detail. The ruling elite has refrained from using a discourse of integration as they strongly believe that it is the discourse of return which will politically pay off. It is for this reason that the DGMM is reluctant to publicise the Integration Strategy Document (*Uyum Strateji Belgesi*), which has already been reported to have been prepared by the Ministry of Interior. In the mist of the growing stream of the return discourse, Syrians under temporary protection have started to feel even more threatened when the gas drilling polemic came up between the EU and Turkey on the shores of Cyprus in the summer of 2019, which has resulted in the Turkish Foreign Minister, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu's statement regarding the unilateral suspension of the Readmission Agreement, which has been subject to instrumentalization by Turkey as a bargaining chip during the times of crises with the EU. The crisis between the two sides resulted in the EU's financial assistance sanctions on Turkey. In return, Turkey announced it would suspend the Readmission Agreement operating since March 2016.<sup>78</sup> However, returns can still take place under the EU-Turkey Statement from Greece to Turkey.

Growing domestic political, societal and economic fragility in Turkey, as well as the continuous ambiguity in their temporary legal status, has made the Syrians become more concerned about their future prospects let alone the fact that their homeland is still in ruins. Strong regional variations display that agrarian economies facilitate early access to the labor market. In this regard, urban refugees continue to face difficulties in having access to the labour market. Such destabilizing factors and the ongoing ambiguity about the future have made some of the Syrians consider to flee to the Greek islands. Away from public attention in Europe and Turkey, the number of illegal passages from Turkey to the Greek island continues to increase, reaching the level prior to the so-called refugee crisis that erupted in the Summer of 2015. The fire in the Moria Refugee camp in late September 2019, leading to the death of a woman and a child, revealed once again the misery of refugees in the Greek islands waiting for another rescue operation.<sup>79</sup> The attention of the international media has also disclosed the fact that the deadly exodus of refugees to the Greek islands, who are afraid of encountering

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<sup>78</sup> For more information on the suspension of the Readmission Agreement by Turkey see Euractiv (24 July 2019), <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/turkey-suspends-deal-with-the-eu-on-migrant-readmission/> accessed on 9 August 2019.

<sup>79</sup> For further information on the deadly fire in Moria Refugee Camp with a capacity of 3000 residents where there were 13 thousand people in October 2019 see, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/sep/30/riots-at-greek-refugee-camp-on-lesbos-after-fatal-fire> accessed on 11 October 2019.



the risk of being sent back to Syria where the Asad regime continues and the gun war of many different groups still continues. The fear of being sent back to Syria has increased even more after Turkish armed forces have started a military operation in the Turkish-Syrian border in October 2019 to create a safe zone, which is to be planned for the return and settlement of around one million Syrians under temporary protection. The fear of being sent back, as well as the growing unrest among Turkish citizens in regard to the current state of Syrians, are likely to deteriorate the situation for the refugees. Syrians have become even more concerned when the Turkish President repeated that Turkey may consider to open up the borders to let the refugees go to Europe as a reaction to statements by European leaders and the European Commission regarding their condemnation of the Turkish military operation in Northern Syria.<sup>80</sup>

### Policy Recommendations for Refugee Reception

1. **Be aware of your own history.** Turkey has a long history of accommodating refugees since the 19<sup>th</sup> century of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey also has a long history of outgoing labour migration since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is by combining these two migration experiences – the reception of various mass migrations and the Turkish labour emigrants – that Turkey can build the intellectual foundation for its own migrant/refugee reception policy.
2. **Work together.** Turkish migration and refugee policy requires multidimensional cooperation and coordination among actors and sectors. It requires both strong state actors like the DGMM and strong civil society networks like ASAM, which can bring together very different stakeholders to take part in the process.
3. **Consensus building.** Effective migration and refugee policy involves building and managing political consensus across the country. A migrant/refugee friendly public opinion should be encouraged by the political leadership of the country together with the academia, civil society organizations and the media to have a positive attitude about migrants and refugees. The national parliament could be the venue for the building of consensus among different political parties.
4. **Managing public opinion.** Engaging with the public and managing public opinion is of essential importance. There is a need to build a specific migrant/refugee reception policy with the main purpose of reducing tensions between what the government does and how the society may interpret government's actions.
5. **Engaging the media.** The role of the media is clearly an integral part of public engagement. The DGMM should work on a communication strategy to appeal to the mainstream media promoting solidarity and human protection values, with biographies and refugee testimonials, and an explanation of how they relate to all of us.
6. **Holistic approach.** Migration and refugee policies are all interconnected. Admission is connected to integration; reception conditions are connected to long-term integration outcomes; and housing policy is connected to public opinion. This makes migration/refugee policy especially complex and it makes holistic, integrated approaches, multilevel governance, and institutional and international cooperation essential.

<sup>80</sup> For further debate on the statements of Erdoğan see, *The Independent* (11 October 2019), <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/erdogan-syria-turkey-kurds-europe-refugees-invasion-sdf-latest-middle-east-a9150271.html> accessed on 11 October 2019; and *the Guardian* (10 October 2019), [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/10/turkish-president-threatens-send-refugees-europe-recep-tayyip-erdogan-syria?CMP=Share\\_AndroidApp\\_Tweet](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/10/turkish-president-threatens-send-refugees-europe-recep-tayyip-erdogan-syria?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Tweet) accessed on 11 October 2019.

7. **Facilitating knowledge formation.** Turkey must be able to evaluate the policies that are implemented, and this requires benchmarks and indicators. All the stakeholders must be able to analyse results and communicate them back to the public. All of this requires data collection and interpretation. There should be scientific venues where a synergy can be constructed between government, civil society, and academia to exchange views and opinions on objective grounds.
8. **Reception on arrival.** Reception facilities at borders, including airports, should include all necessary assistance and the provision of basic necessities of life, including food, shelter and basic sanitary and health facilities. Even for a short stay, family unity and privacy are essential. Single men and women should be accommodated separately, and families should have the possibility to stay together in the same premises.
9. **Training of border officials.** Officials who come into contact with refugees should be aware of international and domestic laws relating to asylum-seekers and refugees. They should be trained on how to handle asylum applications, including sensitive ones, such as those based on gender-based persecution or those submitted by minors.
10. **Accommodation.** In most instances, refugees are destitute. Many depend on the solidarity of friends or relatives who may host them temporarily. Even when they can afford rented or hotel accommodation, owing to language difficulties, hostility of landlords or racial prejudices, asylum-seekers often encounter difficulties when trying to find private accommodation. This proves even more difficult when asylum-seekers are not permitted to work or cannot find employment.
11. **Health services.** Refugees may suffer from health problems, including emotional or mental disorders that require prompt professional treatment. When medical examination is not undertaken upon arrival, it is usually done prior to admission to a reception centre following the admissibility stage.
12. **Education.** Following the departure from the country of origin, children asylum-seekers suffer from the forced interruption of their education. In order to restore a semblance of normality, it is essential that children benefit from primary and secondary education of a satisfactory quality.
13. **Employment.** It is widely accepted that dependence on the state is reduced when refugees are working. Apart from the financial aspect, the right to work is an essential element of human dignity, particularly in case of lengthy stay pending the outcome of the asylum procedure. As is already the practice in many countries, refugees should, preferably, be granted permission to work when the length of the asylum procedure exceeds a certain period or where the "package" of support offered to asylum-seekers requires independent financial self-sufficiency to maintain an adequate standard of living.
14. **Unaccompanied and separated Children.** Reception standards should address in particular the special educational, medical, psychological, recreational and other special needs of children, in accordance with relevant international human rights law, UNHCR guidelines and Executive Committee Conclusions. A legal representative should be designated for the handling of the social and legal rights of separated children throughout the asylum procedure, and otherwise to ensure that the child's best interests are represented throughout the child's stay in the country
15. **Elderly refugees.** The vulnerability inherent in advanced age makes prompt access to medical and health care an essential condition for this group. Also, lack of mobility, a sense of isolation and abandonment, as well as chronic dependency are factors,

which the host authorities will need to take into account when designing adequate reception policies for this group.

16. **Female refugees.** At the initial stage of the procedure, female refugees need to be counselled on their rights, including the right to submit an individual application when family members accompany them. As is the case in many countries, female staff using female interpreters should interview women asylum-seekers. To the extent possible, efforts should be made to arrange female staff to carry out the determination of refugee status.

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## Appendices

### Annex I: List of Legislation: Overview of the legal framework on migration, asylum and reception conditions

Legislation title (original and English) and number	Date	Type of law (i.e. legislative act, regulations, etc...)	Object	Link/PDF
Passport Law <i>Pasaport Kanunu</i> Law No. 5682	July 15, 1950  (A number of provisions were repealed in 2013. A clause of article 18 was amended on August 1, 2010.)	Legislative act	Regulating passports, documents and entry visa obligations; to determine persons who are forbidden to enter Turkey; regulations about exceptional measurements in war and exceptional circumstances, for foreign persons" sealed passports, and stateless persons; penal sentences for illegal entries and departures.	<a href="http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.3.5682.pdf">http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.3.5682.pdf</a> [Turkish]  <a href="http://www.legislationline.org/documents/id/8984">http://www.legislationline.org/documents/id/8984</a> [English]
Foreign Direct Investment Law <i>Doğrudan Yabancı Yatırımlar Kanunu</i> Law No. 4875	June 5, 2003	Legislative Act	Regulating foreign direct investments and the rights of foreign investors	<a href="http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/6(1).pdf">http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/6(1).pdf</a> [Turkish]  <a href="http://www.invest.gov.tr/en-US/infocenter/publications/Documents/FDI%20Law%20in%20Turkey.pdf">http://www.invest.gov.tr/en-US/infocenter/publications/Documents/FDI%20Law%20in%20Turkey.pdf</a> [English]
Turkish Criminal Law <i>Türk Ceza Kanunu</i> Law No. 5237	September 26, 2004	Legislative act	Defining the basic principles for criminal responsibility and types of crimes, punishments and security precautions.	<a href="http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5237.pdf">http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5237.pdf</a> [Turkish]  <a href="http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/tr/tr171en.pdf">http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/tr/tr171en.pdf</a> [English]

Law for the Protection of Children (Juvenile Protection Law) <i>Çocuk Koruma Kanunu</i> Law No. 5395	July 3, 2005	Legislative act	Regulating the procedures and principles with regard to protecting juveniles who are in need of protection or who are pushed to crime and ensuring their rights and well-being." Art. 1(1).	<a href="http://www mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5395.pdf">http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5395.pdf</a> . [Turkish] <a href="http://www.lawsturkey.com/law/juvenile-protection-law-5395">http://www.lawsturkey.com/law/juvenile-protection-law-5395</a> [English]
Social Insurance and General Security Law <i>Sosyal Sigortalar ve Genel Sağlık Sigortası Kanunu</i> Law No. 5510	May 31, 2006	Legislative act	Regulating the rights of beneficiaries and provides for general rules for the functioning of the insurance system and funding conditions. Also contains provisions on employers and workplaces, short-term and long-term insurances.	<a href="http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5510.pdf">http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5510.pdf</a> . [Turkish] <a href="http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&amp;p_isn=74711">http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&amp;p_isn=74711</a> [English]
Citizenship Law <i>Vatandaşlık Kanunu</i> Law No. 5901	May 29, 2009	Legislative act	Regulating "the principles and procedures regarding the conduct of operations and transactions for acquisition and loss of Turkish citizenship" Art. 1(1).	<a href="http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/7(1).pdf">http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/7(1).pdf</a> [Turkish] <a href="http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4a9d204d2.pdf">http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4a9d204d2.pdf</a> [English]
Settlement Law <i>İskan Kanunu</i> Law. No 5543	September 19, 2006	Legislative act	Regulating the formal settlement of foreigners.	<a href="http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2006/09/20060926-1.htm">http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2006/09/20060926-1.htm</a> . [Turkish]
Law on Institutional Framework and Mandate of Disaster and Emergencies Agency (AFAD) <i>Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığının Teşkilat ve</i>	May 29, 2009	Legislative act	Forming the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) in order carry out services in cases of disasters and emergencies	<a href="http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5902.pdf">http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5902.pdf</a> [Turkish]

<i>Görevleri Hakkında Kanun</i> Law No. 5902				
Law on Foreigners and International Protection, LFIP <sup>81</sup> <i>Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu</i> Law No. 6458	April 4, 2013 (most provisions entered in to force on April 11, 2014)  Amended by: Emergency Decree No 676, 29 October 2016	Legislative act	Regulating “the principles and procedures with regard to foreigners’ entry into stay in and exit from Turkey, and the scope and implementation of the protection to be provided for foreigners who seek protection from Turkey, and the establishment, duties, mandate and responsibilities of the Directorate General of Migration Management under the Ministry of Interior.” Art. 1(1).	<a href="http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.6458.pdf">http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.6458.pdf</a> [Turkish]  <a href="http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/YUKK_I%CC%87NGI%CC%87LI%CC%87ZCE_BASKI(1)(1).pdf">http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/YUKK_I%CC%87NGI%CC%87LI%CC%87ZCE_BASKI(1)(1).pdf</a> . [Official English Translation]
International Labour Force Law <sup>82</sup> <i>Uluslararası İşgücü Kanunu</i> Law No. 6735	July 28, 2016	Legislative act	Determining policies, implementation and monitoring of international labour force in Turkey; regulates the processes and transactions to be followed on work permits and work permit exemptions granted to foreigners and the rights and obligations in the field of employment of international workforce.	<a href="http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/08/20160813-1.htm">http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/08/20160813-1.htm</a> . [Turkish]  <a href="https://turkishlaborlaw.com/international-workforce-law">https://turkishlaborlaw.com/international-workforce-law</a> [English]
Provincial Organisation’s Establishment, Duties and Working Regulation <i>Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü Taşra Teşkilatı Kuruluş, Görev ve</i>	November 14, 2013	Regulation	Determining the protocol principles for establishment and operations of the provincial organization of Directorate General of Migration Management	<a href="http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2013/11/20131114-4.htm">http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2013/11/20131114-4.htm</a> .

<sup>81</sup> The LFIP abrogated the 1) *Law Regarding Residence and Travel of Foreign Subjects in Turkey*, Law No. 5683, 1950; 2) *Asylum Regulation Law* No. 1994/6169, 1994.

<sup>82</sup> This Law replaced the Law No 4817 on Work Permits for Foreigners, 27 February 2003.

<p><i>Çalışma Yönetmeliği</i></p> <p>No.28821 (Official Gazette)</p>				
<p>Circular of the Prime Minister on the Turkey-EU Readmission Agreement</p> <p><i>Geri Kabul Anlaşması ile İlgili Başbakanlık Genelgesi</i></p> <p>No. 28974 (Official Gazette)</p>	April 16, 2014	Circular	President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's circular addressing DGMM on irregular migration and readmission agreements	<a href="http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/04/20140416-10.htm">http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/04/20140416-10.htm</a> [Turkish]
<p>Regulation on the Establishment and Operations of Reception and Accommodation Centres and Removal Centres</p> <p><i>Kabul ve Barınma Merkezleri ile Geri Gönderme Merkezlerinin Kurulması, Yönetimi, İşletilmesi, İşlettirilmesi ve Denetimi Hakkında Yönetmelik</i></p> <p>No. 28980 (Official Gazette)</p>	April 22, 2014	Regulation	Determining protocol principles for establishment, management, operation, service provision, outsourcing the operation of and auditing the reception, accommodation and removal centres affiliated to Directorate General for Migration Management.	<a href="http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/04/20140422-5.htm">http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/04/20140422-5.htm</a> . [Turkish]
<p>Information Note on the Documents and Identification Cards issued on the basis of LFIP</p> <p><i>YUKK Uyarınca Verilen Belge ve Kimlikler Hakkında , 19/9/2014 tarihli 93 numaralı Genel Yazı</i></p>	September 19, 2014	Circular	Regulating documents and identification cards issued to foreigners and those under international protection	<a href="http://www.tnb.org.tr/GenelgeDetay.aspx?TURU=GENEL YAZI&amp;ULAS=78653&amp;K=&gt;">http://www.tnb.org.tr/GenelgeDetay.aspx?TURU=GENEL YAZI&amp;ULAS=78653&amp;K=&gt;</a> [Turkish]

<p>Circular on Educational Activities Targeting Foreigners</p> <p><i>Yabancılaraya Yönelik Eğitim Öğretim Hizmetleri – Genelge</i></p>	September 23, 2014	Circular	Regulating educational activities of foreigners including refugees, asylum seekers and those under temporary protection regime	<p><a href="http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/dosyalar/1715.pdf">http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/dosyalar/1715.pdf</a>. [Turkish]</p>
<p>Temporary Protection Regulation</p> <p><i>Geçici Koruma Yönetmeliği</i></p> <p>No. 2014/6883</p> <p>Amended by: Regulation 2016/8722, 5 April 2016</p> <p>Amended by: Regulation 2018/11208, 16 March 2018</p>	October 22, 2014	Regulation	Determining “the procedures and principles pertaining to temporary protection proceedings.” Art. 1(1).	<p><a href="http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/20141022-15-1.pdf">http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/20141022-15-1.pdf</a>. [Turkish]</p> <p><a href="http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/temptemp.pdf">http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/temptemp.pdf</a> [English] [Official English Translation]</p>
<p>Circular on the Marriage and the Registration of Children of Refugees and Temporary Protection Beneficiaries</p> <p><i>Mülteciler ve Geçici Koruma Altına Alınanların Evlenme ve Çocuklarının Tanınması Konulu Yazı</i></p> <p>(Document No. 4000496010.07.01-E.88237)</p>	October 13, 2015	Circular/Note from the Ministry of Interior	Regulating the marriage and the registration of children of refugees and the beneficiaries of temporary protection.	<p><a href="https://www.nvi.gov.tr/PublishingImages/mevzuat/nufus-mevzuati/talimat-a%C3%A7%C4%B1klay%C4%B1c%C4%B1-yaz%C4%B1lar/M%C3%BCltteciler%20ve%20Ge%C3%A7ici%20Koruma%20Alt%C4%B1na%20Alınanlar%C4%B1n%20Evlenme%20ve%20%C3%87ocuklar%C4%B1n%20Tan%C4%B1nmas%C4%B1">https://www.nvi.gov.tr/PublishingImages/mevzuat/nufus-mevzuati/talimat-a%C3%A7%C4%B1klay%C4%B1c%C4%B1-yaz%C4%B1lar/M%C3%BCltteciler%20ve%20Ge%C3%A7ici%20Koruma%20Alt%C4%B1na%20Alınanlar%C4%B1n%20Evlenme%20ve%20%C3%87ocuklar%C4%B1n%20Tan%C4%B1nmas%C4%B1</a></p>

				<a href="#">4%B1.pdf</a> [Turkish]
Directive on Unaccompanied Children  <i>Refakatsiz Çocuklar Yönergesi</i>	October 20, 2015	Directive	Regulating the services provided to the unaccompanied children by the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs.	<a href="http://cocukhizmetleri.aile.gov.tr/data/544e26d9369dc318044059b0/REFAKATS%C4%B0Z%20%C3%87OCUK%20Y%C3%96NERGES%C4%B0.pdf">http://cocukhizmetleri.aile.gov.tr/data/544e26d9369dc318044059b0/REFAKATS%C4%B0Z%20%C3%87OCUK%20Y%C3%96NERGES%C4%B0.pdf</a> . [Turkish]
Circular on Health Benefits for Temporary Protection Beneficiaries  <i>Geçici Koruma Altına Alınanlara Verilecek Sağlık Hizmetlerine Dair Esaslar Yönergesi</i>	November 4, 2015	Circular	Regulating the access to public health services by the beneficiaries of temporary protection; regulating the voluntary health services and civil society health services targeting to beneficiaries of temporary protection.	<a href="https://dosyasb.saglik.gov.tr/Eklenti/1376_saglik-bakanligi-gecici-koruma-yonergesi-25032015pdf.pdf?0">https://dosyasb.saglik.gov.tr/Eklenti/1376_saglik-bakanligi-gecici-koruma-yonergesi-25032015pdf.pdf?0</a> . [Turkish]
Regulation on Work Permits of Refugees Under Temporary Protection  <i>Geçici Koruma Sağlanan Yabancıların Çalışma İzinlerine dair Yönetmelik</i>  No. 2016/8375 (Council of Ministers)	Jan. 11, 2016	Regulation	Determining “the procedures and principles related to employment of foreigners under temporary protection pursuant to Article 91 of the Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection dated 4/4/2013.” Art. 1(1).	<a href="http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/01/20160115-23.pdf">http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/01/20160115-23.pdf</a> [Turkish]  <a href="http://www.refworld.org/docid/582c71464.html">http://www.refworld.org/docid/582c71464.html</a> . [English]
Regulation on the Implementation of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection  <i>Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu'nun Uygulanmasına Dair Yönetmelik</i>	March 17, 2016	Regulation  LFIP Implementing Regulation	Determining “the principles and procedures in the implementation of Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection dated 4/4/2013.” Art. 1(1).	<a href="http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/_dokuman5.pdf">http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/_dokuman5.pdf</a> . [Turkish]

Regulation on the Fight against Human Trafficking and Protection of Victims  <i>İnsan Ticaretiyle Mücadele ve Mağdurların Korunması Hakkında Yönetmelik</i>  No. 29656 (Official Gazette)	March 17, 2016	Regulation	Regulating the fight against human trafficking; the protection of victims, granting residence permits to victims and regulating service provisions	<a href="http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/03/20160317-9.htm">http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/03/20160317-9.htm</a> . [Turkish]
Regulation on Work Permit of Applicants for International Protections and those Granted International Protection  <i>Uluslararası Koruma Başvuru Sahibi ve Uluslararası Koruma Statüsüne Sahip Kişilerin Çalışmasına Dair Yönetmelik</i>  No. 29695 (Official Gazette)	April 26, 2016	Regulation	Determining the procedures and principles governing the employment of the applicants or the beneficiaries of international protection status based LFIP.	<a href="http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/04/20160426-1.htm">http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/04/20160426-1.htm</a> [Turkish]
Circular of the DGMM on Principles and Procedures for Foreigners under Temporary Protection  <i>Geçici Koruma Altındakilere Uygulanacak Prosedürler ve İlkeler Hakkında Genelge</i>	November 29, 2017	Circular	Information about the content of circular has not yet available as of 27 April 2018.	The original document has not yet published on the DGMM web site.





## Annex II: List of authorities involved in the migration governance

Authority	Tier of government (national, regional, local)	Type of organization	Area of competence	Link
Migration Policies Board <i>Göç Politikaları Kurulu</i>	National	Board under the authority of Ministry of Interior <sup>83</sup>	Deciding Turkey's migration policies and strategies and follow up on their implementation	<a href="http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/migration-policies-board_917_1067_4728_icerik">http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/migration-policies-board_917_1067_4728_icerik</a>
Directorate General for Migration Management <i>Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü</i>	National Including directorate general, permanent boards and committees <sup>84</sup> , central organization, service units, 81 provincial branches across Turkey overseas organizations	Directorate under the authority of Ministry of Interior	Implementing policies and strategies related to foreigners, international protection, temporary protection and protection of victims of human trafficking.	<a href="http://www.goc.gov.tr/main/En_3">http://www.goc.gov.tr/main/En_3</a> [English] For organizational chart see <a href="http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/organisation-chart_911_925_955_icerik">http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/organisation-chart_911_925_955_icerik</a> .
Disaster and Emergency Management Authority <i>AFAD</i>	National Including Central and 81 provincial branches across Turkey	Agency under the under the Prime Ministry	Managing international humanitarian assistance that will be distributed to foreigners. It is main responsibility is on emergency and	<a href="https://www.afad.gov.tr/en/">https://www.afad.gov.tr/en/</a> [English]

<sup>83</sup> Migration Policies Board operates under the chairmanship of the Interior Minister and is comprised of the undersecretaries of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, Ministry for European Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications as well as the President of the Presidency of the Turks Abroad and Related Communities and the Director General of Migration Management.

<sup>84</sup> These include Migration Advisory Board; International Protection Assessment Committee; and Coordination Board on Combating Irregular Migration.

			disaster management.	
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Turkey	International		Supporting Turkey's national refugee governance in terms of capacity building to provide humanitarian aid to refugees; registration of non-Syrian refugees, conducting RSD <sup>85</sup> and pursue resettlement procedures.	<a href="http://www.unhcr.org/tr/">http://www.unhcr.org/tr/</a> [Turkish]
Sub-Committee for the Rights of Asylum-Seekers <i>Mülteci Hakları Alt Komisyonu</i>	National	Parliamentary Sub-Committee of Human Rights Monitoring Committee at Grand National Assembly of Turkey	Investigation and monitoring of legal and practical problems experienced by asylum seekers, refugees, migrants, irregular migrants, making recommendation for solutions	<a href="https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyonyon/insanhaklari/altkom_2018_2.htm">https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyonyon/insanhaklari/altkom_2018_2.htm</a> . [Turkish]

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<sup>85</sup> UNHCR mandate RSD decisions do not have any direct binding effect under LFIP as it recognizes the DGMM as the main decision maker in asylum applications.

## Annex III. List of Interviews

1. Interview, a 28-year-old mother with two children from Damascus residing in Istanbul, Zeytinburnu, 27 July 2018, 9\_Bilgi.
2. Interview, a 23-year-old Kurdish person from Afrin, married with one son residing in İzmir, 17 August 2018, 13\_SRII
3. Interview, graduate 34-year-old mother with one daughter from Damascus residing in Istanbul, Fatih, 25 July 2018, 9\_OzU
4. Interview, a 54-year-old man with two spouses and 11 children from Damascus residing in Istanbul, Fatih, 29 July 2018, 14\_OzU
5. Interview, a 37-year-old man married with four children living in Istanbul, Balat, 1 August 2018, 13\_Bilgi
6. Interview, a 19-year-old Arabic and English-speaking male residing in İzmir, Karabağlar, 5 August 2018, 5\_SRII
7. Interview, 24-year-old Arabic, English and Turkish speaking female residing in İzmir, 30 July 2018, 9\_SRII
8. Interview, a Kurdish-origin 23-year-old married woman with a son from Afrin residing in İzmir, 17 August 2018, 13\_SRII
9. Interview, a 23-year-old married male with a new born baby residing in Esenyurt, Istanbul, 1 August 2018, 18\_Bilgi
10. Interview, a 38-year-old married woman with six children from Aleppo residing in Izmir, 1 August 2018, 18\_SRII
11. Interview, a 50-year-old married man with four children from Deir Ez-Zor residing in Fatih, Istanbul, 1 August 2018, Fatih, Istanbul, 15\_Bilgi
12. Interview, an IOM Officer in Şanlıurfa, 13 July 2018, Şanlıurfa, Mezo 7\_SRII
13. Interview, a 40-year-old man with three children from Aleppo residing in Şişli, Istanbul, 31 July 2018, 11\_Bilgi
14. Interview, a 21-year-old male from Damascus living in Sancaktepe, Istanbul, 10 August 2018, 20\_OzU
15. Interview, a 46-year-old male teacher in Şanlıurfa 19 July 2018, 17\_SRII
16. Interview, a 36-year-old man married with three children from Damascus living in Şanlıurfa, 19 July 2018, 19\_SRII
17. Interview, a 48-year-old man married with 4 children residing in İzmir, 17 August 2018, 12\_SRII
18. Interview, 23-year-old married male with a new-born baby residing in Esenyurt, Istanbul, 1 August 2018, 18\_Bilgi
19. Interview, A 25-year-old man married with two children from Aleppo living in Avcılar, Istanbul, 18 August 2018, Avcılar, 20\_Bilgi
20. Interview, a 27-year-old woman married with two children from Aleppo living in Izmir, 16 August 2018, 11\_SRII
21. Interview, a 35-year-old woman married with three children from Aleppo residing in Izmir, 5 August 2018, 3\_SRII

22. Interview, a 60-year-old woman with a son and divorced years ago in Syria residing in Şanlıurfa, 12 July 2018, 10\_SRRI
23. Interview, a 30-year-old-woman married with three children in Şanlıurfa, 12 July 2018, 5\_SRII
24. Interview, a 41-year-old female married with four children in Istanbul, 19 July 2018, 8\_OzU
25. Interview, a 50-year-old man married with ten children residing in Ceylanpınar Temporary Accommodation Centre in Şanlıurfa, 23 July 2018, 20\_SRII
26. Interview, a 29-year-old female student residing in Sancaktepe, Istanbul, 2 July 2018, 1\_OzU
27. Interview, a 40-year-old man married with three children living in Taksim, Istanbul, 31 July 2018, 15\_OzU
28. Interview, a 60-year-old Kurdish man married with four kids from Damascus living in Kasımpasa, Istanbul, 25 July 2018, 6\_Bilgi
29. Interview, A 23-year-old woman married with two children from Aleppo residing in Yedikule, Istanbul, 27 July 2018, 7\_Bilgi
30. Interview, 60-year-old woman with her three children from Humus living in Izmir, 5 August 2018, 4\_SRII
31. Interview, a 40-year-old woman married with six children from Daraa living in Sancaktepe, 16 July 2018, 5\_OzU
32. Interview, a 35-year-old married man with two children living in Şanlıurfa, 11 July 2018, SRII\_2
33. Interview, A 35-year-old divorced woman with five children residing in Izmir, 30 July 2018, 10\_SRII
34. Interview, A 27-year-old, Arab woman married with two children from Aleppo residing in Izmir, 16 August, 11\_SRII
35. Interview, a 48-year-old man married with 4 children residing in Izmir, 17 August 2018, 12\_SRII
36. Interview, a 37-year-old-woman with two children residing in Fatih, Istanbul, 25 July 2018, 10\_OzU
37. Interview, A 37-year-old man married with four children in Balat, Istanbul, 1 August 2018, 13\_Bilgi
38. Interview, a 23-year-old single woman residing in Şanlıurfa, 16 July 2018, 14\_SRII
39. Interview, Representative of the Social Assistance and Solidarity Association (SASA) in Şanlıurfa, 16 July 2018, Meso\_ 9\_SRII.

## **Annex IV. Guiding Directives on Reception**

*DIRECTIVE 2013/33/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL,*  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013L0033>

Proposal for a DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160713/proposal\\_on\\_standards\\_for\\_the\\_reception\\_of\\_applicants\\_for\\_international\\_protection\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160713/proposal_on_standards_for_the_reception_of_applicants_for_international_protection_en.pdf)

*EASO guidance on reception conditions: operational standards and indicators*  
<https://www.easo.europa.eu/news-events/easo-guidance-reception-conditions-operational-standards-and-indicators>

Reception of female refugees and asylum seekers in the EU Case study Germany, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/536497/IPOL\\_STU\(2016\)536497\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/536497/IPOL_STU(2016)536497_EN.pdf)

## **Annex V. Additional Texts**

CONFRONTING THE GLOBAL FORCED MIGRATION CRISIS, 2018, CSIS [https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/180529\\_Ridge\\_ForcedMigrationCrisi.pdf?xG6zs9dOHsV2fr2oCxYTT6oar049iLfA](https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/180529_Ridge_ForcedMigrationCrisi.pdf?xG6zs9dOHsV2fr2oCxYTT6oar049iLfA)

STATE OF THE SYRIA CRISIS RESPONSE, 2018, Voluntas, [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/180416\\_Voluntas\\_Advisory\\_Syria\\_Crisis\\_Response\\_Assessment.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/180416_Voluntas_Advisory_Syria_Crisis_Response_Assessment.pdf)

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