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BOTTOM-UP APPROACHES TO  
EU-TURKEY MIGRATION COOPERATION:  
A CALL FOR SUSTAINABLE, PRINCIPLED,  
FAIR AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

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## BOTTOM-UP APPROACHES TO EU–TURKEY MIGRATION COOPERATION: A CALL FOR SUSTAINABLE, PRINCIPLED, FAIR AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

Asli Selin Okyay<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Based on stakeholder consultations in Turkey, this report examines civil society actors' views on policy issues regarding migration and mobility, the factors underlying these issues, and the actors' assessment of policies and cooperation mechanisms developed by the EU and Turkey. The consultations show that the inclusion of Syrian refugees and broader social cohesion are by far the top priorities. Rights of refugees and (irregular) migrants, and Turkish citizens' facilitated mobility in the EU also form part of the civil society's policy priority repertoire. As for EU policies and EU–Turkey cooperation, a substantial rethink is needed on three major points. The first is the need to go beyond policies oriented at preventing and deterring human mobility that would fail the tests of effectiveness and sustainability in the longer term, and to focus on broadening and diversifying options for authorized migration and mobility. Second, a reprioritization of respect for human rights and international law is needed, as the currently predominant restrictive and instrumentalizing approaches have negative implications not only for migrants, but also for the development of a rights-sensitive migration governance regime, the capacity of civil society to defend pro-rights positions, and broader social cohesion in Turkey. Third, the EU needs to rethink and invest in fairer responsibility-sharing mechanisms that are not limited to times of "crisis". Such mechanisms should include financial support, (actually enforced) resettlement, and holistic measures aimed at enhancing the protection capacity of third countries like Turkey with its state and non-state stakeholders. Maximizing the positive impact of EU–Turkey cooperation on refugee integration, enhanced protection capacity, and overall social cohesion requires bottom-up approaches to defining funding priorities and designing locally tailored measures. This implies that the EU needs to closely engage with a broader range of local governmental and non-governmental actors, while being sensitive to the specificities of domestic political-institutional culture.

### INTRODUCTION

In the framework of the MEDRESET project, Work Package 7 (WP7) aims to develop a more sophisticated knowledge and awareness about the frames, perceptions and priorities of a variety of stakeholders with regard to migration-related issues in the Mediterranean space, focusing on local stakeholders in four southern and eastern Mediterranean (SEM) countries –

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Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey – and among them on those actors who are generally excluded from Euro-Mediterranean dialogue and decision-making (e.g., civil society and grassroots organizations). Focusing on bottom-up framing processes involving civil society actors in SEM countries, WP7 aims to examine overlaps and differences in the understanding and evaluation of EU migration cooperation policies in the Mediterranean, investigating whether the perspectives and priorities of stakeholders in Europe and in SEM countries are conflicting, competing or converging with current EU policies.

Within this framework, this country report analyses the major policy issues and their underpinnings seen from the lens of non-state stakeholders in Turkey relating to the issue of migration and mobility, in addition to these actors' evaluation of EU policies and EU–Turkey cooperation on migration and mobility as well as their suggestions for improving these policies and cooperation mechanisms. The analysis is based on information gathered through recursive multi stakeholder consultations (RMSCs) in a first round of in-depth unstructured interviews, a second round of semi-structured interviews with a selected number of previously interviewed stakeholders and an interview with an additional type of stakeholder who could not be included in the first round.

As described in detail in the MEDRESET Methodology and Concept Paper No. 6, which sets out the theoretical and methodological framework for WP7 research (Roman et al. 2017), the analysis builds upon literature on policy frames. Drawing upon Boswell et al. (2011: 4-5), we construe the structure of policy frames as consisting of three essential components: the definition of the policy problem; the specific factors or actors seen as causing, underlying or contributing to the policy problem; and the solutions to the problem, including claims about how policy interventions have affected, or are likely to affect the issue. This categorization largely overlaps with the three-dimensional multi-actor, multi-layer and multi-sector analytical framework of the MEDRESET project (Huber and Paciello 2016: 11-12).

Section 1 provides information on the fieldwork carried out in Turkey and details on these two rounds of interviews. Section 2 analyses general and mainly migration-related policy issues identified by non-state stakeholders in Turkey as well as their underpinnings seen from the lens of these actors. Section 3 examines how stakeholders evaluate existing policy responses, focusing in particular on European policies and EU–Turkey cooperation on migration and mobility. The final section elaborates on policy implications emerging from consultation with the stakeholders and provides bottom-up insights for EU policies and EU–Turkey cooperation on migration and mobility.

## 1. METHODOLOGY AND FIELDWORK IN TURKEY

The research on which this report is based mainly relied on RMSCs in line with the broader aims, bottom-up approach and methodological choices of the MEDRESET project, and the specific conceptual and methodological framework of WP7 (Roman et al. 2017). Interviews consisted of a first round of face-to-face in-depth unstructured interviews with individual non-state stakeholders in Turkey (and one phone interview), and a second round of semi-structured interviews with a selected number of previously interviewed stakeholders as well as with a representative from a stakeholder group that the first round of research was not able

to access (see Tables 1 and 2 for the different types of stakeholders). In the first round, the largely unstructured nature of the interviews aimed at the emergence of the stakeholders' views and priorities to the greatest extent possible. In the second round, the interviewees were invited to react to and elaborate on the main outcomes of the first round (Roman et al. 2017: 23).

Due to the later addition of Turkey among the WP7 case studies, the fieldwork was conducted within a relatively short period, slightly later than the other three case studies. The first round of interviews was conducted during the fieldwork in Ankara and Istanbul, which was completed between 24 September and 7 October 2017. Using the researcher's previous contacts and the assistance of two gatekeepers, interviewees were reached through snowballing. A total of 43 people were contacted (21 female and 22 male), of whom 30 (16 female and 14 male) were interviewed in 22 interview sessions (see Table 1 and Annex). In several cases there were interviews held with two or more representatives from the same organization (on their request). In some of these cases the initially contacted interviewee brought in other interviewee(s) who had not been contacted by the researcher, and hence not included in the numbers of people contacted as shown in Tables 1 and 2. Interviews lasted between 40 minutes and 140 minutes. In line with MEDRESET's data management plan, all interviews were anonymous, based on note taking, and not recorded.

**Table 1** | Overview of interviewees (first round)

Type of stakeholder	Contacted			Interviewed		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Members of academia	3	7	10	2	6	8
CSOs	5	4	9	4	4	8
INGOs/INGO networks with office in Turkey	5	1	6	5	1	6
International organizations (IOs) with office in Turkey	3	5	8	-	3	3
Think tank/research institute	5	4	9	2	2	4
Independent expert	1	-	1	1	-	1
<b>Subtotal</b>	22	21	<b>43</b>	14	16	<b>30</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 interviewees in 22 interview sessions</b>					

Given the time constraint, priority was given to reaching to the broadest possible range of non-state stakeholders, as their views are the main focus of the MEDRESET project, hence the lack of institutional stakeholders (i.e., officials), in divergence from other three case studies. The sample includes members of academia working on migration and mobility issues; experts focusing mainly, but not exclusively on migration and mobility-related issues from think-tanks working on broader political, economic and foreign policy issues (and an independent expert focusing on economy and foreign trade relations and mobility issues); representatives of international organizations (IOs) in the migration-asylum domain; civil society organizations (CSOs) and international NGOs (INGOs) or INGO networks focusing on rights advocacy and/or legal assistance mainly or exclusively in the realm of migration and asylum; and those that

focus on humanitarian aid/livelihood support in a broader sense, including refugees as target populations (among them some that are faith-based and/or charity-centred). The sample did not include representatives of political parties, trade unions and employers' associations.

In line with the methodological choice based on the RMSCs, the objective of the second round was to gain in-depth and specific knowledge on the main policy issues, factors and alternative suggestions that emerged from the first phase (Roman et al. 2017: 23). Accordingly, a limited number of previously interviewed stakeholders were selected so as to include those who previously identified and provided in-depth analyses of different policy issues, while attention was paid to maintaining a fairly diverse composition of different types of stakeholders. As the researcher was not able to include CSOs established by, and/or predominantly composed of, and representing Syrian refugees in the first phase, a representative from such an organization was also included. Eight stakeholders were contacted, whereas 7 phone or Skype interviews (3 females and 4 males) were conducted between 24 April and 22 May 2018 (see Table 2 and Annex). Interviews lasted between 40 minutes and 100 minutes, and were based on note taking.

**Table 2** | Overview of interviewees (second round)

Type of stakeholder	Contacted			Interviewed		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Members of academia	1	1	2	1	1	2
CSOs	-	1	1	-	1	1
INGOs/INGO networks with office in Turkey	1	-	1	1	-	1
International organizations (IOs) with office in Turkey	-	1	1	-	1	1
Think tank/research institute	2	1	3	2	-	2
Independent expert	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Subtotal</b>	4	4	8	4	3	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 interviewees in 7 interview sessions</b>					

## 2. A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF STAKEHOLDERS' FRAMES IN THE AREA OF MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

### 2.1 FRAMING MIGRATION WITHIN A BROADER POLICY CONTEXT

As most interviewees' work pertained to the realm of migration and international protection, and as we approached them indicating our interest in their views on policy issues on migration and mobility, migration-related issues dominated policy priorities identified by the stakeholders. Nevertheless, most CSO and INGO representatives in both rights advocacy and humanitarian aid sectors, IO representatives, members of academia, and some experts from think-tanks

framed migration and forced displacement as phenomena deeply embedded in structural problems at global and regional scales; that is, increasing inequality in human prosperity and security between migrant-producing and -receiving contexts. Inequality in wealth distribution and discrepancies in terms of decent income-generating opportunities, as well as political instability, human rights violations, and conflicts and wars in the Middle East, Africa and Asia were frequently highlighted. Despite not being specifically asked, a considerable section of scholars, experts, CSO and INGO representatives also mentioned EU-specific issues, generally framed as the “EU’s own existential problems”. Often associated with the EU’s attitude towards and policies on migration, these included: the rise of the far right and populist politics, Brexit and disintegration issues, longstanding effects of the 2008 financial crisis, the intra-EU solidarity/factionalism problems and the EU’s decreasing power as a global actor.

In the context of Turkey, socio-economic, security-related and political issues were raised as priorities. All types of stakeholders highlighted Turkey’s overall domestic socio-economic difficulties: high unemployment (particularly youth unemployment); informal and precarious work; and regional inequalities in job opportunities, income levels, public infrastructure and services. Mainly scholars and experts engaging in broader economic and political research included domestically and regionally driven security challenges and contentious foreign policy issues among priorities. The less-than-needed prioritization of the refugee issue was explained by Turkey’s overpopulated agenda of highly important policy issues. For instance, one interviewee argued that the issue of Syrian refugees would come only sixth in Turkey’s priority list, after “unemployment, the EU, Northern Iraq, security implications of the Syrian civil war and Cyprus” (Interview 3), while another thought it would not make it into the top five, considering security issues linked to the coup attempt and the Syrian civil war (Interview 21). Most members of academia and representatives of CSOs and INGOs focusing on rights advocacy identified the increasingly security-oriented domestic political atmosphere and shrinking civil space as significant issues with implications for broader politics, policy-making processes, public debate and civil society activities.

## 2.2 MIGRATION-RELATED PRIORITY POLICY ISSUES AND THEIR UNDERLYING FACTORS

While one of the aims of our fieldwork was having a better understanding of SEM stakeholders’ framing of the “Mediterranean space”, this did not really emerge as a concept used in defining and understanding migration-related policy issues in Turkey. These issues were mostly defined as embedded in the national context and in the relational and physical space that exists between Turkey and the EU. Nevertheless, one can still talk about a distinction between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, as parallels were made between the EU’s migration-specific relations with Turkey and those with Libya, Tunisia and Morocco (Interviews 6, 9, 13, 15, 17, 18). A somewhat related clustering was also made between mid- and low-income refugee-receiving countries such as Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, facing similar challenges (Interviews 20, 21, 25, 26). Nuancing a strict southern–northern Mediterranean differentiation, CSO and INGO representatives focusing on rights advocacy and legal support mainly in the realm of asylum, expressed empathy with member states at the EU’s external borders, such as Greece and Italy (Interviews 4, 6, 9). Turkey and these countries not only face similar challenges in terms of migrant and refugee flows, but also in terms of the shifting of responsibility on irregular migration control and international protection by the EU’s “core”.

Indicating a perceived commonality among migration-related civil society actors, one interviewee stated that “probably we share many challenges and have similar experiences with our counterparts in Greece or Italy, but we do not really know about each other as dialogue remains limited” (Interview 4).

### 2.2.1 GENERAL MIGRATION-RELATED ISSUES AND THEIR DRIVERS

#### GOVERNING MIGRATION: SUSTAINABILITY, HUMAN RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITY-SHARING

The great majority of stakeholders converged on the view that governing migration and refugee flows is the overarching policy issue. They framed these flows as structural, natural and normal phenomena mainly driven by global and regional discrepancies in wealth, living conditions, life prospects and human (in)security.<sup>2</sup> There was wide convergence on the negative implications of increasingly restrictive, preventive and control-oriented migration-management measures for human security and human rights, as well as the ineffectiveness of such measures in the long term. Categorization problems between different types of human mobility (especially in the West) with growing impact on actual policies were also highlighted. This shows itself either as the conflation of (potential) refugees with irregular (economic) migrants (Interview 10, 23), a simultaneous polarization between deserving refugees versus economic migrants or potential “jihadist foreigners” (Interview 23), or a “pyramid of hierarchies”, where “refugees fleeing active armed conflicts are on top, followed by migrants displaced due to political reasons, and economic migrants at the very bottom” (Interview 14).

All stakeholders touched upon insufficient efforts by states and the international community for poverty reduction and conflict resolution as informing migration and refugee flows. Members of academia, experts specifically focusing on migration-asylum issues, representatives of rights advocacy CSOs, of IOs and INGOs emphasized the lack of complementary policies that broaden and diversify ways for migrating legally. Increasingly rightist and populist ways of understanding migration at a global level (Interviews 14, 18, 20, 23, 25), increasing normalization of an approach that sees asylum as a discretionary favour rather than an international legal obligation (Interviews 6, 9, 10, 23, 25), growing pressure on the mechanism of international protection as one of the few remaining channels of migration for the lower skilled from the global South (Interview 23), and increasing difficulty of accessing asylum on territory and the reduction of resettlement schemes in the wealthier and safer parts of the world (Interviews 6, 9, 10, 23, 25, 26, 27) were highlighted as major factors behind problematic migration governance. As for international protection, unfair sharing of responsibility by the more prosperous/powerful states (referring to the EU, the US, Canada, Australia, the Gulf countries and Russia) was widely identified as turning refugee flows from a phenomenon into a policy problem.

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<sup>2</sup> The exceptions were local CSO representatives and experts focusing on inclusion and social assistance issues within Turkey; a nation-wide, faith-based humanitarian CSO and a charitable INGO; and an expert who exclusively focused on business-related mobility issues in the specific EU-Turkey context, who did not touch upon global migration flows and their governance (Interviews 2, 8, 11, 19, 29).

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## 2.2.2 POLICY ISSUES AND PRIORITIES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF TURKEY

### THE "NON-ISSUES": EMIGRATION AND GENDER-SPECIFIC ISSUES

Before delving into policy priorities that emerged from the interviews, it is important to note which migration-related issues emerged only marginally. First, issues such as out-migration, Turkish citizens as diasporic actors, or remittances (financial or political) did not emerge as priorities. The deprioritization of emigration confirms the transformation of Turkey's migratory profile in the last two decades from a country of emigration into one of immigration and transit migration (İçduygu and Kirişci 2009). Second, gender-specific issues largely failed to emerge in the first round, even if some problems such as child marriages and employment-related issues were mentioned in passing, generally by CSO and INGO representatives in the humanitarian aid sector. A scholar whose work specifically focuses on female migrants and refugees was the only exception: underlining that the issue of female refugees/migrants is considerably low ranked in the hierarchy of priorities in the integration policy-related landscape, she identified as the main issues additional obstacles faced by female refugees in labour-market integration, further layers of exploitation at the workplace (e.g., harassment), and the challenges stemming from the collision of reversed gender roles with the traditional family structure (one interviewee in Interview 20). The second round of interviews confirmed that female-specific policy issues are relatively marginalized amidst many other integration-related priorities. The representative of a local Syrian CSO that also works closely with women seconded the issues identified by the abovementioned scholar, highlighting once again early marriages (Interview 29).

### POLICY PRIORITIES AND THEIR DRIVERS

Apart from the "non-issues" discussed above, stakeholders in Turkey identified the following issues as the main priorities, while pointing out a range of local, national and international factors and actors as underlying and/or feeding into these policy issues. As Section 3 will specifically focus on stakeholders' evaluation of EU policies and cooperation initiatives in the migration-related context of Turkey as well as the implications of these policies for the issues below, this section will mainly focus on domestic factors and drivers highlighted by the stakeholders. The exception will be the issue of visa-free travel of Turkish citizens in the Schengen space, which is inherently tied to EU-Turkey relations.

#### (I) SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION AND LONG-TERM INTEGRATION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES

The overarching issue of socio-economic inclusion and long-term integration of close to four million Syrian refugees<sup>3</sup> emerged as the top priority according to all types of stakeholders, and especially in terms of employment and education. Regarding employment, stakeholders

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3 Although a signatory of the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol, Turkey still maintains "geographical limitation", implying that it grants full refugee status only to recognized asylum seekers from Europe. Hence, while the term "refugee" is used for the sake of brevity and so as to reflect the widespread usage in Turkey, it should be noted that the legal status granted to Syrians is temporary protection (TP). Turkey's 2013 Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) provides forms of international protection falling short of full refugee status, i.e., conditional refugees and subsidiary protection. TP, which is within the scope of subsidiary protection, is granted to those who arrived through mass influxes. This status was further regulated through the Regulation No. 2014/6883 on Temporary Protection.

emphasized the issues of over-representation of refugees in the informal sector, precarious work, exploitation and child labour. Most CSO, IO and INGO representatives, members of academia and experts highlighted continuing hurdles before accessing formal employment, such as high dependency on employers, cumbersome administrative procedures or high ceilings introduced by the quota system that aims to protect native workers.<sup>4</sup> Job creation for both refugees and members of host society was also often emphasized by almost all types of stakeholders. Issues related to the incorporation of Syrian children into the public education system (e.g., the unsatisfactory schooling rate among Syrian children, relatively high drop-out rates and insufficiencies in public infrastructure) also emerged as priorities.<sup>5</sup> As part of inclusion and normalization, the need for incorporating "camp refugees" – namely, around 7 per cent who still live in state-catered "temporary shelter centres"<sup>6</sup> – to life outside was also raised (Interviews 1, 4, 9, 16, 29). Overburdening of local contexts that were already socio-economically disadvantaged prior to the arrival of refugee populations in terms of job opportunities as well as public services (especially schooling and to a lesser extent also health) emerged as another major point of convergence.

Difficulty in accessing rights and social services in practice is another major issue, often linked to the unstandardized implementation of the legal framework by local administrations and service providers. This was particularly raised by stakeholders who work closely with refugee populations and local actors in different regions as part of their research as well as advocacy and livelihood assistance-centred work – the latter often acting as intermediators/facilitators between local authorities and refugees (Interviews 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 16). Representatives of CSOs that are similarly active in local contexts, but engage mainly in basic humanitarian aid (e.g., providing in-kind aid), which include, but are not limited to faith-based and/or charitable organizations, did not raise this issue as explicitly (or at all). Acknowledging that it is neither plausible nor desirable to generalize from our research, based on consultations with a limited number of non-state stakeholders, we can point out some patterns of convergence/divergence when it comes to highlighting policy issues that pertain to the domain of rights (and their practical enjoyment), which is often closely linked to the enabling or disabling role of policies as well as state authorities. Thus, in addition to members of academia, CSOs and INGOs that engage mainly in rights advocacy tended to be more vocal, and explicit in their criticism in comparison to those that focus on humanitarian aid and relief, social support, livelihood assistance and resilience building. Another line of divergence seemed to emerge between those CSOs and INGOs in the humanitarian aid and social support sector that self-identify as having a more explicit rights-sensitive stance and a relatively more autonomous standing (even if they often interact and cooperate with authorities on a case-by-case basis); and those that are closer to the relief and/or faith-based charity end, and engage in closer collaboration with authorities, in some cases acting in almost entirely executing and implementing capacities.

As for the factors informing these policy issues, the main point raised by the great majority of stakeholders is the continuing difficulty in going beyond a short-term focus and a temporary crisis-management approach. All stakeholders highly appreciated Turkey's liberal admission

4 The issue of TP beneficiaries' employment is regulated through Regulation No. 2016/8375 on Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection.

5 Despite some continuing challenges, the health sector was considered as the least problematic area.

6 Turkey's Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) website: *Migration Statistics: Temporary Protection*, [http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/temporary-protection\\_915\\_1024\\_4748\\_icerik](http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/temporary-protection_915_1024_4748_icerik).

policy and a significant majority thought that it performed quite well in emergency reception given the sheer magnitude of the influx. Most stakeholders also pointed out that there have been signs of an emerging longer-term inclusion-oriented approach, particularly in the realm of education (and to a certain extent employment) in the last years. Yet, the continuing delay in devising an integration strategy that is comprehensive, has a long-term perspective and focuses on self-sufficiency and sustainability informs most inclusion-related policy problems.

This difficulty demonstrates itself in legal, political, administrative and discursive terms. In terms of the legal framework, many highlighted the “temporary” nature of refugees’ status, which has to be renewed every year with no possibility of being turned into a permit with longer validity, negatively affecting their feeling of (in)security and life prospects (Interviews 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 19, 20, 21). A criticism shared by members of academia, experts and representatives of rights-advocacy CSOs and INGOs was that Turkey lacks a comprehensive refugee integration policy with clear objectives, principles and an overarching logic. Indecisiveness at the strategic level as to what the main pillars of Turkey’s refugee integration policy should be (Interview 1) and the lack of clarity as to which actor at the central level should assume the political and institutional leadership on refugee integration (Interviews 2, 3, 4, 9, 24) were highlighted as particular dimensions of this shortcoming. Further, a wide-spread observation was that even if piecemeal well-intended measures are taken, these pieces do not follow an overarching integration logic. An expert exemplified this with the granting of citizenship to a section of Syrian refugees, before dealing with the issue of adults’ language acquisition, as the “key to accessing employment is knowing the language, not being a citizen who is not fluent in Turkish” (Interview 3). Turkey’s insistence on granting subsidiary protection statuses was considered by representatives of rights-advocacy CSOs and INGOs as contributing to this problem, given that in the absence of a comprehensive refugee status containing the entire range of rights, different dimensions such as education and work need to be governed through ad hoc and piecemeal measures (Interviews 6, 9). At the discursive level, continuing official framing of the issue as one of humanitarian aid, referring to Syrians as “guests”, or occasional references to the large-scale return of Syrians, were seen as symptoms of the inability to overcome this logic of temporariness (Interviews 1, 3, 6, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21).

A factor that was similarly highlighted was the continuing predominance among the authorities and the broader public of the perception that sees international protection (and refugee integration) as a matter of aid, favour, charity and benevolence rather than one of rights and international legal obligations (Interviews 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 17, 20). A similar divergence between stakeholders with higher degrees of rights-sensitivity and those who focus on social assistance and humanitarian aid, without necessarily basing it on rights, emerged also on this point. According to those who highlight insufficient consolidation of a rights-based approach, this not only affects overall integration policy development, but also informs low rights-sensitivity among administrators and implementers, contributing to the difficulties in practical access to rights and services. Those who did not highlight the lack of a rights-based approach pointed at the public unpopularity of the refugee issue as informing the absence of overarching integration policies: due to the political costs involved, the government shies away from taking comprehensive integration measures (Interview 2), or even if it takes steps in that direction, does not publicly share them (Interview 14; one interviewee in Interview 20).

Many stakeholders also highlighted shortcomings in communication and coordination mechanisms between the central and local levels of government and administration as an important factor informing policy problems. In top-down terms, the lack of clear guidance from the centre to the local level was highlighted as contributing to the unstandardized implementation of the political and legal framework, while insufficient central monitoring as leading to discretionary practices by implementers (Interviews 1, 3, 7, 9). In bottom-up terms, mainly because the local level has difficulty in making its voice heard by the centre, particular local dynamics, needs and data cannot sufficiently feed into strategy development, negatively affecting the devising of locally tailored measures (Interviews 1, 2, 18, 23). In general, most stakeholders highlighted that the critical importance of closely engaging and empowering local governments in refugee integration has still not been sufficiently understood by central authorities.

One of the reappearing factors – particularly highlighted by members of academia and experts – was the insufficiency and generality of publicly available official data on refugee profiles (e.g., no data on age breakdown at the province level, or on educational and occupational backgrounds) and on public spending, contributing to deficiencies in evidence-based, locally tailored policy-making, and more efficient public spending.<sup>7</sup> Beyond state institutions, the fact that universities, CSOs and research institutes do not sufficiently contribute to knowledge production, especially at the micro-level, also feeds into this problem (Interviews 2, 5, 13, 16). As for other civil society actors, the private sector's insufficient input to job creation and labour-market integration aspects was highlighted (Interviews 1, 13, 16). Finally, both insufficient knowledge on the part of INGOs, IOs and to a lesser extent also central authorities on particular local needs, and the lack of coordination among them, was seen as leading to the inefficient use of resources. Repetitive initiatives and overemphasis in certain contexts is one dimension of this; such as four or five different national and international bodies providing vocational training in the same context (Interview 3, 5). The complete lack of attention to other (more provincial) localities that proportionally host a high number of refugees is the other side of the coin (Interview 5).

## (ii) PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES AND REFUGEE–HOST SOCIETY RELATIONS

According to almost the entire range of stakeholders, the widely spread negative perception of Syrian refugees by the host society (cutting across ideological and party political affiliations) and its potential to turn into outright xenophobia and exacerbated social tension is a major policy problem. At the same time, the fact that social explosion has not happened in seven years also demonstrates the host society's social acceptance capacity to be higher than what the discourse indicates, pointing at a perception–reality gap. The media and political actors came to the fore as the main actors feeding into this problem. Almost all stakeholders underlined that the media spreads misinformation, uses a highly problematic language about Syrians and has a negative selection bias. As for political/electoral instrumentalization, almost all interviewees found the attitude of the majority of opposition parties problematic, whereas

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<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that some INGO representatives in the humanitarian aid and livelihood assistance sector, who acknowledge having good working relations with state institutions and do not face difficulty in accessing data, found the criticisms on "data (non)transparency" unfair. They thought that the state (like all other states) has the discretion over whether and to what extent it shares data (Interview 14), and data privacy is essential in humanitarian aid for the security of beneficiaries, especially when it comes to sharing it with external actors (Interview 5).

the instrumentalization by the governing party – Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) – was highlighted mostly by members of academia, experts, and CSO and INGO representatives who expressed relatively more critical stances towards governmental and state actors, mainly through rights-centred arguments. As for the opposition, the main opposition party – Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) – was particularly criticized for playing on "nativism" on issues such as public social assistance, employment and naturalization, while depicting all Syrians as a potential voter base for the AKP. The main line of criticism towards the AKP was its framing of the issue as a sign of the benevolence, generosity and grandeur of the Turkish state and government (mainly vis-à-vis the West). This is often done through highlighting its billions-worth spending on millions of refugees without providing a breakdown, which feeds the perception of the state disfavouring the "natives". A final point of convergence was the criticism against refugee-exclusive assistance. Given that the host society is facing socio-economic difficulties, which are exacerbated in certain regions, exclusive focus on refugees in terms of socio-economic support contributes to feelings of resentment.

### (iii) RIGHTS AND LIVING STANDARDS OF NON-SYRIAN PROTECTION SEEKERS AND BENEFICIARIES

Mainly CSOs and INGOs focusing on rights advocacy for migrants and asylum seekers elaborated on this issue as an important but often neglected one (Interviews 4, 6, 7, 9), while members of academia also mentioned it as one of the policy issues (Interviews 1, 14, 18, 20). The problem is that non-Syrian international protection beneficiaries – mainly Afghans, Iraqis, and Iranians – have temporary and precarious legal status, and a narrower range of entitlements to social assistance (especially compared to Syrian refugees), contributing to their very poor living standards and keeping them in a constant state of limbo.<sup>8</sup> The inequality between the two groups (real or perceived) also feeds into increasing resentment by non-Syrian "refugees" towards Syrians (Interviews 4, 6, 7, 9). All stakeholders highlighted global, domestic and EU–Turkey factors as underlying this problem: the reduction in resettlement quotas at a global scale; the EU's lowering of its international protection standards for (and pressure on) third countries as part of its containment and externalization-based policies; and Turkey's insistence on granting subsidiary and temporary statuses despite being aware that return or resettlement options are largely out of the picture (Interviews 4, 6, 9). Further, national and EU assistance (particularly the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, FRIT) focuses on Syrian refugees and largely neglects these groups (Interviews 4, 9). Arguing that such a Syrian-focused approach also exists among CSOs, one stakeholder defined the main issue as overall "discrimination between people in need of protection" (Interview 9). That this issue was raised mainly by a small group of rights-advocacy CSOs seems to confirm this selection bias. Yet, such selection bias is largely top-down, as donors' funding priorities and choices largely define civil society actors' activities, a point highlighted by the entire range of CSO and INGO representatives in both rights-advocacy and humanitarian-aid domains.

<sup>8</sup> This group is entitled to conditional refugee or subsidiary protection status under the LFIP. Conditional refugees are persons who are unable to return their country of origin for the same reasons as a Convention refugee but are from outside Europe, while subsidiary protection is granted to persons who do not qualify as refugees or conditional refugees, but whose return to their origin country would have dire consequences. These statuses do not foresee long-term or permanent settlement and integration in Turkey as a possibility, leaving only resettlement and return as the two long-term options.

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#### (IV) IRREGULAR MIGRATION CONTROL AND RIGHTS OF IRREGULAR MIGRANTS

In the first phase, stakeholders did not identify border control or the fight against irregular migration as policy priorities per se. This issue only came up in the second phase, when interviewees were specifically asked about the links between security and migration-related issues. The main issue is thwarting security risks, i.e., infiltration of armed actors, terrorists and foreign terrorist fighters, while avoiding fully-fledged criminalization of migrants, and respecting fundamental human rights and the right to asylum (Interviews 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28). While compliance with international legal obligations remains important, not taking the security dimension sufficiently seriously might create a serious future policy problem especially in the context of a country like Turkey (Interviews 23, 25). The interviewees largely converged in their view on the factors making the security–irregular migration link an important issue: security and terrorism-related implications of the war in Syria, the foreign terrorist fighter issue within the broader jihadist radicalization phenomenon, and Turkey's being the point of transit from Europe and Asia towards Syria and the other way around.

In the first round, only a small group of representatives of rights-advocacy CSOs and INGOs, and an IO representative focusing on irregular migration, identified the issue of irregular migrants' rights (Interviews 6, 7, 11). This seems to confirm that refugee integration dominates civil society activism in general, and even the agendas of CSOs active in the broader realm of asylum seekers' (and due to the inherent connection, also migrants') rights. Within the broader issue, lawful treatment and practical access to rights (including the right to apply for asylum) by irregular migrants, especially from detention centres, were highlighted. The gap between the legal framework and actual implementation was emphasized as one of the major factors in contributing to these problems. A stakeholder also problematized backward steps taken in the legal framework itself, illustrated by the amendment to LFIP through an emergency decree in October 2016,<sup>9</sup> which, in a nutshell, broadened the scope of and increased state discretion on deportation on the basis of threat to public security and links to terrorism, and has high potential for unlawful deportations and violating non-refoulement (Interview 28). Limited access by civil society actors to deportation centres or to irregular migrants in law enforcement custody (Interviews 6, 7, 11), and insufficient transparency on the conditions and the composition of irregular migrants in these centres (Interview 11), were emphasized as important issues. These issues were seen as part of the overall securitization of migration management at the expense of human rights, additional effects of EU–Turkey cooperation on Turkey's increased adherence to this trend, and the insufficiently consolidated rights-sensitive conception of migration management at both central and lower levels of authority in Turkey.

#### (V) VISA-FREE TRAVEL OF TURKISH CITIZENS IN THE SCHENGEN SPACE

Only two experts whose work involves close engagement with the private sector and business circles raised the issue of visa-free travel (particularly for service providers) as the policy priority (Interviews 11, 12), indicating that this issue is a priority mainly, if not only, for stakeholders representing the private sector. The main policy problem is the inability of Turkish citizens to enjoy what these stakeholders see as a right stemming from legally binding agreements between Turkey and the EU, i.e., Association Agreement, Additional Protocol and the Customs

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9 Decree Law No. 676 on Measures to be taken under the State of Emergency.

Union. As put by one interviewee, "Goods can travel freely, but not the people who produce and market those goods", and this generates a highly disadvantageous situation for the Turkish economic and trade interests (Interview 11). Seen from a broader scope, the visa requirement itself is viewed as problematic, implying heavy and costly visa procedures for all Turkish citizens, which constitute disincentives for short-term human mobility. Both stakeholders thought that the search for a solution to this issue should have remained embedded within the legal framework, instead of being made a largely political matter.<sup>10</sup> Both saw this politicization as contributing to the current deadlock, as this mechanism has been rather prone to being affected by the broader political conjuncture between the two parties, which became even more complicated after the issue was linked to other unrelated and politically contested issues within the scope of the EU–Turkey Statement. "The EU's confusion in terms of its conditionality logic where everything is a condition for everything else" was also raised as a factor that leads to the blocking of all issue areas (Interview 24). In overall terms, insufficient interest in resolving the issue on the part of both sides underlies the problem. The EU has always lacked political will according to both these interviewees, and Turkey has never highly prioritized the issue of its citizens' facilitated movement abroad (Interview 12).

### 3. EVALUATING EU POLICIES AND EU–TURKEY MIGRATION COOPERATION

While often pointing out the two-decade close engagement between the EU and Turkey on migration management, and highlighting the significant EU effect on Turkey's migration governance particularly as part of the accession process (İçduygu 2007, 2014), stakeholders' views on EU–Turkey cooperation on migration management are largely based on an assessment of the EU–Turkey Statement of March 2016.<sup>11</sup> The main lines of assessment can be grouped into four categories: (i) the effectiveness and sustainability of the EU's outsourcing strategy and restriction/containment-centred policies; (ii) diffusion of restrictive policies,

10 Based on the provisions on the free movement of services in the 1963 Association Agreement and its 1973 Additional Protocol, Turkey supported seeking to obtain the right to visa-free travel for certain sections of its citizens (i.e., service providers and those benefitting from services) at the European Court of Justice (ECJ). While the ECJ took a positive decision for the free movement of service providers in 2009, in 2013 it took a negative decision on the movement of those travelling to the EU for benefitting from services (Nas 2016: 28–29). The issue (of visa-free travel for all Turkish citizens) was made part of the mechanism between the EU and Turkey based on the signing of a Turkey–EU Readmission Agreement in exchange for the launching of a Visa Liberalization Dialogue in 2013 (see, İçduygu and Aksel 2014). This mechanism was then embedded into the scope of the 2016 EU–Turkey Statement, as one of the important aspects of the latter was the reinvigoration of the dialogue.

11 The EU and Turkey negotiated and launched the EU–Turkey Statement through the Joint Action Plan of November 2015 and the final Statement of March 2016 (European Council 2015, 2016). At the heart of the mechanism lies Turkey's reduction of the number of irregular crossings, disincentivizing future attempts by returning irregular migrants from Greece to Turkey after a cut-off date (20 March), and improving the living conditions of Syrian refugees in Turkey. The 1:1 resettlement scheme foresees the resettlement of a Syrian refugee in Turkey in exchange for every irregular migrant returned to Turkey, which initially promised a total of 72,000 places. The Statement also foresaw the reinvigoration of the Visa Liberalization Dialogue, and additional incentives for Turkey not related to migration and mobility such as the opening of accession negotiation chapters and the upgrading of the Customs Union. Finally, the mechanism foresees a substantial financial dimension, namely the EU's 3 billion euro Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRIT), for improving the living conditions of Syrian refugees for the 2016–18 period, with the possibility of an additional 3 billion euros after 2018.

instrumentalization of migration and asylum issues, and their impact on the development of rights-based and principled approaches in Turkey; (iii) the EU's unfair responsibility-sharing and its impact on international protection standards; and (iv) the EU's understanding of and engagement with the national and local context, and the impact of its assistance on refugees, local populations and civil society actors.

#### (i) THE EFFECTIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE EU'S OUTSOURCING STRATEGY AND RESTRICTION/CONTAINMENT-CENTRED POLICIES

Similar to their evaluation of the global migration governance, a wide range of stakeholders viewed the EU–Turkey Statement as unsustainable. Focusing only on control and prevention, and not sufficiently broadening regular ways of reaching Europe, given the continuing demand to move, the Statement was seen as bringing short-sighted, partial and periodical solutions. The continuous nature of migratory movements (and that the question is not limited to the Syrian refugees) was in fact well illustrated by the increasing number of Afghan migrants irregularly entering Turkey since the beginning of 2018 (Interviews 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28). Hence, such measures, in the longer term, would merely lead to route shifting and the emergence of more dangerous routes (Interviews 6, 9, 11, 13, 17), to increasing pressure on international protection as the only possibility to regularly move (Interview 17) or to changing organization of and methods used by smuggling networks (Interview 28).

Scholars, experts and a considerable section of humanitarian aid CSOs and INGOs also questioned the sustainability of the EU's externalization of international protection, which in the EU–Turkey case was exemplified by its financial support through the FRIT mechanism: often-asked questions included "How long will the EU be paying Turkey?" or "What will happen once the 6 billion euros is used up?" Some experts also questioned the types of FRIT assistance from a sustainability point of view, as funds and projects have so far predominantly focused on humanitarian/emergency aid (e.g., direct cash assistance) rather than those prioritizing long-term integration (e.g., job creation) aiming at self-sufficiency and inclusion (Interview 2, 16, 23, 26). While humanitarian aid was also needed and hence welcomed by most stakeholders, they cautioned about not generating aid dependency and spending the funds (which might be limited) in an efficient way to cut Turkey's need for external funds in the future.

#### (ii) DIFFUSION OF RESTRICTIVE POLICIES, INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF MIGRATION AND ASYLUM, AND THE IMPACT ON RIGHTS-BASED AND PRINCIPLED APPROACHES IN TURKEY

An issue raised mainly by members of academia, rights-advocacy CSOs and INGOs, and an IO representative focusing on irregular migration was the impact of the EU's approach to Turkey as a transit country in general, and of the Statement in particular, on the diffusion of restrictive policies to Turkey. Faced by the pressure to reduce irregular exits and in order not to become overwhelmed by irregular migrants inside the country, Turkey is increasingly adhering to: obstructing irregular entries and exits through hardening of borders, more stringent inland controls, introducing intra-country mobility restrictions (for Syrian refugees) and preventive and deterring strategies such as introduction of visas or signing readmission agreements with countries in its hinterland (Interviews 6, 9, 11, 15, 22, 24).

A related point raised mainly by members of academia and rights-advocacy CSOs and INGOs is that the ways in which the EU handled the "migration crisis" inside Europe and interacted with Turkey (the negotiation and the final content of the Statement) had a negative impact on the future development and consolidation of rights-based and principled approaches in Turkey (Interviews 4, 6, 9, 15, 18). A more specific criticism was that the EU response to the "crisis" legitimized the idea that not fully respecting international legal standards could be justified for the sake of achieving control-oriented policy objectives. This would have long-lasting negative effects for Turkey and other non-European countries, where migration and asylum systems are either insufficiently developed or non-existent and the concept of international protection as an internationally inscribed human right and state obligation is not consolidated (Interview 6). In addition, as a function of its containment approach, the EU has been increasingly lowering its expectations from third countries in terms of sufficient international protection standards, "which seem now to be limited to open borders, access to asylum procedures, and non-refoulement, while humane living conditions of beneficiaries are not much of a concern" (Interview 9). The setting of such a bad example on the part of the EU also weakens the hand of rights-advocacy CSOs and activists, as they can no longer push state actors based on the need to align with European standards (Interview 4, 6). Beyond migration-specific issues, the fact that the EU has significantly toned down its criticism towards Turkey regarding democracy and rule of law for the sake of migration management cooperation, and thereby indirectly contributed to the shrinking of civil space, was criticized by members of academia and rights-advocacy CSOs and INGOs. A frequent observation was that the EU's response to the migration crisis generated disillusionment among pro-EU sections of civil and broader society (Interviews 1, 4, 6, 18, 21).

The instrumentalization of international protection and humanitarian aid through the turning of these issues to matters of political and financial bargaining by both sides through the Statement (and its negotiation) was widely criticized by members of academia, representatives of both rights-advocacy and rights-sensitive humanitarian-aid CSOs and INGOs, and IOs. While actors in the humanitarian sector highlighted its violation of the principle that humanitarian is free from political calculations and interests (Interview 16), rights-advocacy CSOs and an IO representative underlined its impact on the weakening of approaches that see asylum as a human rights and state obligation, and on strengthening public perception that sees the issue as a favour, and the refugees as a burden (Interviews 4, 9, 10, 20). Alternatively, the transactional approach makes the public and officials conceive refugees as an "investment that would eventually bring profits" – which turns into a perception of "dead investment" if the promises are not kept (Interview 6).

### (iii) UNFAIR RESPONSIBILITY-SHARING AND ITS IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION STANDARDS

A very widely shared position among different types of stakeholders was that the EU became interested in relieving part of Turkey's burden too late, and only after the "refugee issue" started to have immediate effects for itself. Even if the inclusion of resettlement and FRIT mechanisms into the Statement has been perceived positively, the great majority thought that it was still not sharing the responsibility sufficiently fairly. The funds, while certainly beneficial, were generally found insufficient: "a total of 6 billion euros for almost 4 million refugees in four years is actually a rather modest amount for a country with limited financial resources, if one aims at providing certain minimum standards" (Interviewee 1), also "considering that 6 billion euros was not that big of an amount for the EU" (Interviewee 21). Many stakeholders found

the initially pledged resettlement quotas (72,000) very low, and strongly criticized that the EU was not able to actually fulfil even this low commitment. Some recalled the large-scale resettlement mechanisms that were initially promised, but that are still lacking (Interview 26). IO representatives and some members of academia also made the point that responsibility-sharing was also about enhancing the technical and institutional capacity of countries and regions providing international protection, an aspect in which the EU was not doing as much as it could (Interview 10, 23, 25).

#### (iv) THE EU'S UNDERSTANDING OF AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT, AND ITS IMPACT ON REFUGEES, LOCAL POPULATIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Based on an assessment of the workings of the FRIT mechanism within the realm of refugee integration and enhancing the protection capacity in Turkey, the EU's understanding of the local context and engagement with local actors was assessed as inadequate by members of academia, IO representatives, experts specifically focusing on refugee integration, and CSOs and INGOs mainly in the humanitarian aid and livelihood assistance realm. One dimension of this was the EU's (and other external donors') relatively poor understanding of the political-institutional culture in Turkey. That Turkey is a highly centralized country and external actors need to avoid circumventing central authorities in their activities in Turkey was a repeated cautionary note (Interviews 1, 5, 14, 25, 27). To exemplify this, one interviewee said that humanitarian corridor schemes (such as the Sant'Egidio-Italy example) were not really fit for the Turkish domestic context, as the state would prefer not to delegate to and/or share with non-state actors the authority over nominating refugees to be resettled (Interview 27). Another criticism was that the EU (and other external actors/donors) felt authorized to instruct local and national actors without necessarily having sufficient knowledge and experience of the local problems and dynamics. For example, some underlined that the EU has not experienced mass movements in a very short time span (and of the same magnitude) as Turkey has; and therefore, was not really in a position to instruct Turkey on emergency response to cases of arrivals en masse (Interviews 2, 4, 5). That the EU tends to use a "one-size-fits-all approach" (Interview 22) and to presume that "every country they engage with is like a small African country" (Interviews 4, 5, 14) was also highlighted, pointing at problematic Euro-centric policy measures and attitudes. In overall terms, due to different migratory, socio-economic, and political differences between the two contexts, exporting a European migration and asylum governance model to Turkey would be neither desirable nor beneficial (Interviews 23, 25).

Issues pertaining to the EU's insufficient knowledge of local specificities were emphasized, generally from the perspective of inefficient use of resources: some FRIT projects mismatched context-specific needs and priorities, whereas others overlapped with those of other international and national bodies, while at the same time certain localities and target populations were largely neglected (Interviews 2, 3, 5, 16). A view that was shared especially among CSO representatives focusing on humanitarian aid and livelihood support as well as some scholars and experts, was that this came about because funding allocation and project design did not sufficiently involve locally embedded partners (Interviews 3, 10, 16, 23, 29). Stakeholders also emphasized that the FRIT's fund-allocation mechanism, which uses INGOs and IOs as intermediaries, contributes to insufficient involvement of a wider range and more diversified set of grassroots actors (Interviews 14, 16, 20, 23, 29). It reproduces a system in which only a limited number of CSOs, which generally have previous experience in EU projects and are part of INGO and IO networks, are involved in projects, while others continue to be largely excluded,

despite their embeddedness in local contexts. The evaluation of those CSOs that are part of the FRIT system seems to differ: the intermediation system is necessary for accountability reasons and the procedural requirements make the CSOs improve their standards (Interview 9). Nevertheless, even for those CSOs involved in the projects, the fact that they often act merely as sub-contractors for the international intermediaries has counterproductive effects on their capacity for creativity and innovation (Interviews 14, 20).

Criticism in terms of the insufficient involvement of local governments (as opposed to central institutions receiving capacity-enhancement support) was also raised (Interviews 16, 23), while some cautioned that this might not be feasible for small local governments that often lack the required procedural and administrative know-how to manage large EU funds (Interviews 24, 25). As for the FRIT's engagement with and impact on local actors beyond refugees, one of the points frequently raised by a wide range of stakeholders was that the measures have so far not sufficiently targeted broader local communities, particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged regions, which is a shortcoming in terms of social cohesion.

#### 4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND BOTTOM-UP INSIGHTS FOR EU-TURKEY COOPERATION ON MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

First of all, civil society actors think that migrant and refugee flows are deeply rooted in discrepancies in wealth, decent life prospects and human security that are structurally embedded, and hence set to continue in the future. Hence, a broader implication is that the logic on which EU migration policies and EU-Turkey cooperation are based needs a substantial rethink from the perspectives of appropriateness, comprehensiveness, effectiveness and sustainability so as to respond to – and not only to postpone or divert – these movements. The considerably widespread conviction is that cooperation that is centred on restriction, prevention, control and containment of refugees will be neither effective nor sustainable in the longer run. It is also likely to contribute to human insecurity, due to its potential to lead to the emergence of more risky routes and smuggling methods. Hence, while increasing efforts aiming at poverty reduction and conflict prevention/resolution, the EU (and the global North) need to broaden and diversify authorized ways of migration and mobility so as to cover international protection, labour migration for both high and low skilled, and migration with other motivations. Some concrete examples mainly given by IO representatives, scholars and experts were: increasing resettlement quotas, opening humanitarian corridors, educational visas with a possibility of searching for work afterwards, broadened scope of family reunification, and short-term work permits allowing return, such as seasonal permits for jobs in agriculture or the service sector (Interviews 10, 11, 15, 23, 25, 26).

What strongly emerges from the consultation with the stakeholders is that the EU needs to rethink and invest in fairer responsibility-sharing mechanisms for the provision of international protection. This not only concerns the amount of funds the EU dispatches for countries like Turkey, but also envisaging large-scale resettlement mechanisms – and more importantly, making them work. Such mechanisms should not be envisaged as limited to times of “crisis” and mass influxes, but with a longer-term perspective. Further, resettlement needs to take into account not only physical safety, but also the possibility of building a decent life in the receiving context, implying the importance of pairing mechanisms between refugees and

host contexts that take into account different parameters like family ties or skill-labour market match (Interviews 26, 27). Finally, the conception of responsibility-sharing should be nuanced so as to include measures that enhance the overall protection capacity of governmental and administrative actors at both central and local levels, as well as that of the civil society.

EU-Turkey cooperation on migration needs to reprioritize respect for human rights, international legal standards and principled stances, which have been significantly overshadowed on the one hand by restrictive policies and discourses, and on the other by those conceiving of humanitarian aid and international protection as discretionary favours. The EU's lowering of its own standards and those that it expects from "safe third countries" negatively affects the development of rights-based migration-management approaches in countries with non-existent or relatively less developed governance regimes. Leading by (bad) example, the EU's restrictive approach also weakens the hand of civil society actors in these countries to pressure and convince their states to comply with international legal standards. An important implication is that the EU needs to primarily resolve its internal problems regarding responsibility-sharing and principled approaches to migration and asylum governance, as highlighted by most stakeholders.

Financial and political instrumentalization of these issues in both foreign and domestic politics on the part of both the EU and Turkey contributes to public and official perceptions seeing refugees as a burden or as a bargaining chip, feeding into nativism and xenophobia, especially when the expected benefits are not reaped. The EU increasingly favours an approach based on incentives and levers that links different policy areas with third countries' cooperation on migration control and provision of international protection, hence contributing to instrumentalization. Yet, the case of Turkey indicates that creating inter-linkages between unrelated issue areas governed by different logics and criteria (such as the visa-free travel of Turkish citizens, upgrading the Customs Union or the accession process itself) and the "refugee issue" risks being counterproductive for progress in all these realms, contributing to a perception of the EU as an unreliable partner not fulfilling its commitments. The EU's deprioritization of rights and principles in its own migration policies, in migration management cooperation with third countries and for the sake of not jeopardizing such cooperation, has a negative impact on the EU's image and credibility as an actor built on liberal democratic values, particularly in the eyes of rights-sensitive sections of civil and broader society.

As for the issue of socio-economic inclusion of refugees, improved knowledge of and sensitivity vis-à-vis national and local contexts, as well as closer involvement of grassroots actors, are needed to make EU assistance work to the maximum benefit of both the beneficiaries and local actors. Prioritizing bottom-up approaches to defining funding priorities and designing locally tailored assistance measures is a widely shared recommendation. Closer involvement of a broader range of grassroots organizations and local governments in these processes (and not only in the implementation phase) is needed. An important cautionary note from Turkey is that while enhancing engagement with such actors, the EU and other international actors need to be sensitive towards the specificities of the political-institutional-legal setting, the political context and particularly the workings of the relationship between central and local levels of government, and between the state and civil society. Stakeholders raised another important point regarding the implications of the EU's funding procedures for civil society capacity: the mechanism leaves out smaller, less resourceful, but locally well embedded grassroots organizations that are outside INGO/IO networks, including those set up by

Syrian refugees themselves. Similarly, closer involvement of (especially small and provincial) local governments that are key actors in fostering refugee integration and social cohesion is needed. For such local actors that have insufficient capacity to manage highly technical EU funding procedures, individual member state involvement with smaller budgets might be considered as an alternative (Interview 22). All these points suggesting closer engagement with local actors for improved refugee-integration and social-cohesion outcomes were not only directed at the EU, but also at authorities in Turkey.

Stronger focus on sustainable solutions, inclusion of all international protection beneficiaries beyond Syrian refugees, as well as holistic approaches that aim at improving the living conditions of local communities in their entirety, particularly in regions that are socio-economically disadvantaged, need to be given higher priority both by Turkey and the EU. While for some communities humanitarian aid might still be needed, in overall terms, it is high time that self-sufficiency is prioritized, with employment, education and adult language acquisition being its pillars. Fostering employment and improving public infrastructure and services for the entire local community, while catering for the specific needs of the refugees, is fundamental for social cohesion. This dimension is particularly important considering that widely spread negative public perception of refugees and discontent with what is perceived as policies disfavouring the host society is one of the priority policy issues underlined by the entire range of stakeholders. Hence, attention should be paid to taking all-inclusive measures, such as investing in industrial zones in socio-economically less-developed areas with high refugee density (especially in proportional terms), creating jobs for local communities as a whole (Interviews 25, 26).

In overall terms, cooperation should be deepened so as to support improving Turkey's protection capacity, integration strategy and overall migration governance in the most needed and most meaningful ways, while a model exported from the EU to Turkey, or policy transfer based on one-size-fits-all approaches, is neither plausible nor desirable. Turkey needs to develop its own migration and integration model responding to particular human mobility-related and broader socio-economic and political dynamics and challenges it faces, while complying with international legal standards it adheres to. It is suggested that the EU have a better understanding of these particular dynamics, and more strongly remind Turkey regarding compliance with international legal standards, while also leading by (good) example. In overall terms, cooperation between the two parties should go beyond being exclusively oriented at stemming EU-bound migration and refugee flows: it needs to better respond to both local and shared challenges and needs, while aiming at enhancing the capacity of all state and non-state stakeholders in a balanced manner, reprioritizing rights and international standards, and sustainably governing the complex phenomenon of human mobility.

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## ANNEX: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

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- Interview 2. Interview with a female expert from a think-tank, Ankara, 25 September 2017
- Interview 3. Interview with a male expert from a think-tank, Ankara, 26 September 2017
- Interview 4. Interview with two CSO representatives (male & female), Ankara, 26 September 2017
- Interviewee 5. Interview with two male representatives of an INGO network, Ankara, 27 September 2017
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- Interview 13. Interview with a male expert from a think-tank, Istanbul, 2 October 2017
- Interview 14. Interview with a female INGO representative, Istanbul, 3 October 2017
- Interview 15. Interview with a female member of academia, Istanbul, 3 October 2017
- Interview 16. Interview with two female CSO representatives, Istanbul, 4 October 2017
- Interview 17. Interview with a female member of academia, Istanbul, 4 October 2017
- Interview 18. Interview with a male member of academia, Istanbul, 4 October 2017
- Interview 19. Interview with two male representatives of an INGO network, Istanbul, 5 October 2017
- Interview 20. Interview with four female members of academia, Istanbul, 5 October 2017

Interview 21. Interview with a female expert from a think-tank, 6 October 2017

Interview 22. Interview with a male CSO representative, Istanbul, 6 October 2017

## SECOND ROUND

Interview 23. Phone interview with a female member of academia, 24 April 2018

Interview 24. Skype interview with a male expert from a think-tank, 25 April 2018

Interview 25. Skype interview with a male member of academia, 27 April 2018

Interview 26. Phone interview with a male expert from a think-tank, 30 April 2018

Interview 27. Phone interview with a female IO representative, 2 May 2018

Interview 28. Phone interview with a male INGO representative, 3 May 2018

Interview 29. Phone interview with a female representative of a CSO established by Syrian refugees, 22 May 2018

# MED RESET

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