

TURKEY'S NEW DIASPORA POLICY: **THE CHALLENGE OF INCLUSIVITY, OUTREACH AND CAPACITY**

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Cover photo by Mehmet Kaman [Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Campaign Speech in Cologne, Germany 24 May 2014] © Anadolu Ajansı

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My residence at Istanbul Policy Center and my Mercator-IPC Fellowship has been an intellectually most inspiring experience at times of great upheavals for Turkey. When I assumed the fellowship in September 2013, the aftershocks of the Gezi protests were still being felt. Only three months into my residence, the 17 December corruption investigations began, only to be soon aborted, amidst a hitherto unheard of mass suspension of thousands of civil servants and judges. As a brief but vicious clash of the titans -between Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the spiritual leader of the Hizmet movement, Fethullah Gülen- erupted and then ebbed away, the AKP emerged as the first party from the local elections in March after a highly polarizing campaign period. In May, more than 300 miners were killed in the pits of Soma, due to negligence, greed and irresponsibility. Not even a month passed before the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant marched into the Iraqi town of Musul and took hostage the Turkish Consul general and his entourage. And if this barrage of events were not enough, all the while inconclusive debates continued over the future of Turkey's regime as an executive presidency, even as a democracy, while the Kurdish peace process began to show increasing signs of stress.

In turbulent times like these, it is not always easy to stay focused on a single issue, which after all, most research does. I owe it to the professionalism and commitment of my friends and colleagues at the IPC and beyond that I did stay focused on my research into Turkey's diaspora policies and politics. At the IPC, Fuat Keyman, Onur Sazak, Daniel Grütjen and Çiğdem Tongal were the perfect academic hosts, steering the fellows through the vagaries of doing research in Istanbul and inspiring with their own projects of inquiry. Gülcihan Çiğdem provided excellent administrative support, especially during the workshop on Turkey's new diaspora politics, which I convened in July. Ebru Turhan, Almut Küppers, Çiğdem Bozdağ and Jörn Richert, all Mercator-IPC Fellows and office mates at times, provided an immediate peer group with whom I could float ideas, discuss new trends in research and explore new ways of seeing and representing things. From the larger Sabancı community, Meltem Müftüler-Baç, Ersin Kalaycıoğlu and Bahri Yılmaz were most encouraging interlocutors. Bülent Aras, a colleague from Oxford times, not only put me in touch with the Vice President of the Presidency of Turks Abroad and Related Communities and thereby significantly eased my entry into the field, he also followed the research process and commented on draft versions of this report.

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I would like to thank all of them, while, as always, the responsibility for this work and its inaccuracies rests entirely with the author.

Kerem Öktem, İstanbul, August 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Turkey has many expatriate communities abroad, as well as communities of various origins, whose members reside within its borders and feel connected to other states or regions. Many of these communities have been ignored or eyed with suspicion by the modern Turkish nation-state since its inception in the 1920s. It is only recently that Turkey has "discovered" its people abroad and the diaspora communities within, a discovery that appears to be causally connected with Turkey's rising ambitions and 'soft power' capabilities. Under the Justice and Development Party, efforts for a concerted diaspora policy have reached a peak with the creation of the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities in 2010. This report deals with the Presidency, its goals and capacities, its role within the larger context of Turkey's foreign policy and its desired and actual impacts on Turkey's diaspora communities.

Is this a "new diaspora policy" geared towards increasing Turkish influence abroad or an attempt to improve the quality of life of Turkish citizens often experiencing discrimination in Western European countries? Or is it an example of constructive foreign policy and diaspora building among a disparate group of people, most of whom have only very little in common? Based on qualitative field research in the Presidency, this paper argues that Turkey's new diaspora policy combines all of these different approaches. This openness and flexibility is a great strength, even though significant political challenges await Turkey's diaspora policies, precisely because it is still very much in the process of assembly. That said, this first stage in the making of Turkey's diaspora policy is a perfect time to discuss its direction and suggest ways to make it more inclusive and internationally respected. This is all the more important as Turks abroad are likely to experience more discrimination in a European Union increasingly influenced by racist and Islamophobic political parties, while the contestations over the hundredth anniversary of the Armenian genocide in 2015 will add new stress to inter-community relations between Turks, Kurds and Armenians abroad. An inclusive and post-nationalist diaspora policy would be an important remedy to both of these challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Millions of people in Europe, the United States, and beyond are connected to Turkey in one way or other. From the early "guest workers" in Western Europe to more recent migratory waves to the United States, from ethnic Turkish communities in the Balkans to people who claim a religious or cultural heritage related to Turkey, the range of potentials for a comprehensive diaspora policy is impressive. Despite this wealth in terms of potential diasporas, attempts at creating a concerted policy towards Turks abroad are relatively recent. Throughout much of the republican era since the 1920s, Turkey's relations with its multiple diasporas has been muted or limited only to special subgroups, such as the ethnic Turkish organizations in the Balkans. One of the first initiatives targeting Turkish labour migrants, for instance, was the provision of imams in 1971 by the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*) in 1971. This relative reticence in policies towards Turkey-related communities abroad, in many ways a function of an isolationist foreign policy preference, however, has given way to a significantly more proactive engagement with Turkey's multiple neighbourhoods under the Justice and Development Party (AKP).

Unlike the rather elitist outlook of Turkey's traditional foreign policy cadres, AKP politicians have tended to approach Turkish citizens in Western Europe and their problems from a different and more empathetic angle.[2] In parallel to Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's active -if contested- engagement in world affairs, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has hence taken a keen interest in the plight of Turkish communities abroad. Not surprisingly then, the Presidency of Turks Abroad and Related Communities was established under the aegis of the Prime Ministry in 2010, thereby laying the foundations for a coordinating body of all matters relating to Turkey's multiple diasporas. The initiative came from advisers to the Prime Minister and was supported generously in terms of its budget and personal cadres. At the same time, Turkey's increasingly visible presence in a number of countries of Turkish immigration, not least in Germany, and the insistence of Turkish leaders on the cultural and religious rights of Turkish immigrants - i.e. during Prime Minister Erdoğan's speech in Cologne in May[3] - has triggered criticism and at times created tensions in the relations between Turkey and particularly Germany. I will argue that these tensions can be overcome. They do, however, need to be taken seriously by the Turkish diaspora-builders in Ankara and abroad, and above all, by the Presidency.

This paper will discuss the opportunities and challenges of Turkey's new diaspora policies through an appraisal of the Presidency of Turks Abroad as an exemplary case of a larger global trend of the "rise of diaspora institutions."[4] It will highlight the new

2 There are also personal ties here that matter: The key figure of Turkish political Islam, Necmettin Erbakan, studied in Aachen, Germany and his Milli Görüş (National View, but note that the "Nation" here stands for the Nation of Islam) movement played a major role in the organization of Turkish communities in Western Europe. Many AKP cadres, who hail from the Milli Görüş tradition have hence a much better understanding of the problems particularly conservative Muslims have been experiencing in Western Europe than Kemalist foreign policy actors. The latter approached Turkish guest workers in Europe through a class lens and saw them more as a nuisance than as a chance or a case where the responsibility of Turkey is required.

3 The Prime Minister's visit to Cologne on 23 May 2014 was accompanied by a largely unwelcoming attitude by the mainstream German media and leading German politicians, by demonstrations against his visit, but also by a massive show of support by tens of thousands in the city's stadium. Cf. Deutsche Welle, <http://www.dw.de/thousands-of-germanys-turks-protest-ahead-of-erdogan-speech-in-cologne/a-17660263>, accessed 30 May 2014.

4 Gamlen, Alan et. al. 2013. *Explaining the Rise of Diaspora Institutions. Working Paper 78* Oxford: International Migration Institute, Oxford Department of International Development, University of Oxford. Cf. Ragazzi, Francesco. 2014. A comparative analysis of diaspora policies. Political Geography. Vol. 41, pp. 74–89.

political space that may be emerging from these policies and discuss the goals and efficacy of the Presidency's differentiated diaspora policy. Above all, it will gauge to what extent the Presidency will be able to create a dynamic among Turkey's potential and existing diaspora communities that will benefit those communities while supporting or at least not contradicting Turkey's larger foreign policy goals. To complicate things further, these goals themselves are being re-defined as we speak. To respond to these complex questions, I will first explore the empirical and ideological precedents of diaspora politics in Turkey, then discuss in detail the Presidency as a case of constructive "diaspora building,"[5] or in Ragazzi's term "ontological"[6] diaspora politics. I will then conclude with an elaboration on the challenges that lie ahead, especially if the aim is indeed to create an inclusive and progressive diaspora policy that goes beyond the "emigration state" that cares for its labour emigrants and performs like an inclusive and post-nationalist "global-nation."[7]

The empirical insights discussed in this paper are based on a research visit to the Presidency of Turks Abroad and Related Communities by the author in March 2014.[8] The material discussed has been derived from a content analysis of the Presidency's journal and website and from speeches of its former and current directors, as well as from conversations conducted during the research visit[9] and with leading experts of Turkey's domestic and foreign policy in Ankara and Istanbul.

5 Gamlen, Alan. 2008. The emigration state and the modern geopolitical imagination. Political Geography Vol. 27, pp. 843-44.

6 Ragazzi, Francesco. 2012. Diaspora: The Politics of its Meanings. *International Political Sociology* Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 107–111.

7 Gamlen, Alan. 2008. The emigration state and the modern geopolitical imagination. *Political Geography* Vol. 27, pp. 843-44. Ragazzi, Francesco. 2014. A comparative analysis of diaspora policies. Political Geography. Vol. 41, p. 80.

8 I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Bülent Aras (Sabancı University), who has generously shared with me his expertise on Turkey's foreign policy and his insights into the role of the Presidency within the larger context of Turkey's position in the world. I would also like to thank Gürsel Dönmez, Vice President of the Presidency and his colleagues for their warm welcome and their support.

9 On request of my interlocutors, the quotes have been kept anonymous for this publication.

SOURCES AND PRECEDENTS OF TURKEY'S DIASPORA POLICIES: EMPIRICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Turkey's diasporas have a long history without having been conceptualized in these terms. Until very recently, "diaspora" was understood in Turkey as a term with negative connotations associated with Armenian efforts to precipitate the international recognition of the Armenian genocide. In fact, the term "diaspora" was almost only raised in the context of Armenians particularly in France and the United States. Even today the term is used sparingly, but there is a clear trend among members of the government and the Presidency to speak about Turks abroad in terms of a newly-forming diaspora. Before we detail which communities this diaspora entails in principle and in reality, we will discuss the ideological currents that have shaped the precedents of Turkey's current diaspora policy as well as its underlying conceptions of citizenship.

Exclusive conceptions of citizenship – Disengagement from diasporas

The Turkish Republic was established in 1923 as the ideological anti-thesis to the multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and multi-linguistic Ottoman Empire.[10] Aspects of its founding narratives had a pan-Turkish vision extending wide beyond the borders of Turkey. The Turkish History Thesis and the related Sun-Language Theory both suggested that the Turks and their language had originated from Central Asia and spread globally to found major civilizations. Yet this founding myth narrative also suggested - somewhat disingenuously - that these Turks had found their final homeland in Anatolia and within the territory of the Turkish Republic. According to the same logic, everyone in Turkey was by definition and ancestry Turkish, with the exception of the non-Muslim communities, whose members were not regarded as equal citizens but as remnants of an empire that would eventually disappear. These non-Muslim communities did indeed almost disappear due to repeated waves of expulsions and repression, and due to the formation of Armenian diasporas in the Middle East, the Americas and Western Europe, as well as a Greek and Jewish diasporas. With the eventual decline of the secular-racialist conception of Turkishness and changing global power structures, Turkish decision makers found themselves increasingly confronted with a large geography outside the borders of the nation state where imperial, linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage appeared to connect a large number of communities to modern Turkey.

With the end of the Cold War, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, Turkey's hinterland multiplied, bringing back into view the - largely imagined - ties first with the Turkic people of Central Asia and then - the much more real ones - with the Turkish and Muslim communities of Southeast Europe. In 1991, the first official agency emerged that went beyond the remit of conventional foreign policy and sought to revive relations particularly with Central Asian countries: The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA, *Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı*).

10 This does of course not mean that the foundation of the Republic was a major break in terms of the ruling elites and political cadres, which had already formed in the last decades of the empire. Nevertheless, in terms of citizenship and national identity, the Turkish Republic was built on the ethno-racial and Darwinian ideologies of the Committee of Union and Progress not the cosmopolitanism of the late empire.

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, Turkey's business community expanded into parts of the Arab and Muslim world, where Ottoman rulers had not or only very briefly ventured into. And finally, it became adamant that the waves of Turkish labour migration to Western Europe and beyond had created communities which could not be understood with the narrow vocabulary of earlier elitist politics: What were once foreign 'labourers' abroad (*işçi* or *gurbetçi*) emerged as a complex group of people who eventually made an impact particularly on Turkish popular culture and sports. To sum up, as Turkey opened up to the world, initially and cautiously in the 1990s and then more forcefully in the mid-2000s, imperial and pre-national as well as republican connections became ever more visible and eventually turned into an area of action for state policy.

The synopsis (Table 1) depicts the range of historical turning points and state action that created diasporas of people from Turkey abroad as well as communities within Turkey of distinct ethno linguistic groups. Table 2 allows us to further differentiate the ideological reference points in state approaches to diasporic communities. The range of differential approaches and their evolution over time becomes quite evident in this table. The most important change we can observe here is that the labour migrants in Western Europe are now much more positively connoted and dealt through the framework of citizenship rights but also conceived as representatives of Turkey in Europe. Also with regard to the communities, which are generally regarded as suspicious by the state (ironically, because they were forced out of Turkey in one way or the other), a slightly more engaging attitude of government actors can be observed.

It is on the foundation of this contested historical background that Turkey's new diaspora policy is now being constructed. A central question that emerges from the material in the two tables and from the great diversity of Turkey-related communities is this: Can such a disparate group of communities that have very different positions on the mental map and in the hierarchies of the Turkish state (and the understanding of its national identity and its citizenship practice) and that have been served by different ideological traditions (pan-Turkism, pan-Islamism, citizenship policies, nationalism) be regarded as a "Diaspora of Turkey?" If the answer is "yes," a second question forces itself on the debate: What is the possible aim of such a vast diaspora whose boundaries are as fuzzy as those of pre-modern empires? What kind of policy can sensibly engage with it? Is it, as some authors in the critical diaspora literature suggest,[11] a new form of extended and transnationalized nation-building particularly of emerging countries like India, China, Russia, or Turkey, as part of a larger attempt to increase global power and presence? An effort to construct a new community in the same way as nations are constructed "by political and cultural elites," as King and Melvin suggest,[12] and thereby create new opportunity structures for people who have some connection to Turkey? Or, is it the attempt of a reformed Turkey that wishes to reconnect to all those communities who have been persecuted, ignored, or looked down upon by the former nationalist elites? Could it be more of an idealist conception of diaspora as a "space of imagination?"[13] As a leading bureaucrat at the Presidency suggested, ideals and emotions indeed play a role: "Here is a puzzle from our history, we are now trying to bring

11 Cf. Varadarajan, Latha (2010), *The Domestic Abroad. Diasporas in International Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press). Cf. also: Varadarajan Latha. 2008. Out of Place. Re-thinking Diaspora and Empire. Millenium - Journal of International Studies, Vol. 36, No. 2, pp. 267-293.

12 King, Charles and Neil Melvin 1999. Diaspora Politics: Ethnic Linkages, Foreign Policy, and Security in Eurasia. *International Security* Vol. 24, No. 3, p. 109

13 Berns-McGown, Rima 2008. Redefining "Diaspora": The Challenge of Connection and Inclusion. *International Journal* Vol. 63, No. 1., p. 7.

Table 1: Historical Synopsis of some of Turkey's diaspora communities

Time period	Communities	Direction	Reasons to come to Turkey/flee Turkey	Belonging/proximity to Turkishness in official conceptions of citizenship State perspective
Late Ottoman and early Republican era	Balkan Muslims	<	Balkan Wars, foundation of Christian nation states in the Balkans	Potential Turks Welcoming
	Caucasian Muslims	<	Expansion of Russian Empire into the Caucasus, genocide of Circassians	Potential Turks Welcoming
	Anatolian Christians (Armenians, Assyrians, Greeks)	>	Massacres and genocide, World War 1	Enemy people Suspicious
	Jews	>	Foundation of Israel	Undesired people Suspicious
Republican era 1920s - 2000s	Balkan Muslims	<	Several waves, most importantly in the 1950s after agreement between Tito and Menderes	Potential Turks Welcoming
	Istanbul Greeks	>	Several waves of anti-Christian violence and state action in the 1940s-1970s	Enemy people Suspicious
	Armenians	>	Several waves of anti-Christian violence and state action in the 1940s-1970s	Enemy people Suspicious
	Labour Migration	>	Major wave between 1960-1970 to Western Europe after a series of labour agreements	Initially dismissed as workers, perception changed over time
	Skilled Labour Migration	>	Low-level but persistent migration to the United States since the 1970s including academics and businessmen	Regarded as high-impact and influential diaspora
	Kurdish migration	>	Kurdish War in the 1980s and 1990s to Western Europe	Enemy people, suspicious, perception slightly changed over time
	Turkic republics	=	No connection to the territory of Turkey, but relations developed after 1989	Distant Turkishness
AKP era from 2002	Muslim countries	=	No connection to the territory of Turkey, but relations developed as part of FP	Muslim brotherhood
	Iraqi Kurdistan	=	Relations developed since the late 2000s as part of Turkey's FP in the ME	Potential counterweight to nationalist Kurds in Turkey

*Note: **Terms followed by a forward arrow** > indicate communities that were forced to leave Turkey and have established communities of their own.*

***Groups with an arrow in the opposite direction** < indicate communities that had to leave their countries of origin, but have formed distinct groups in Turkey that maintain relations with their country of origin.*

***In case of a country/region/community with an equal sign** =, there is neither a material connection to Turkey, nor a citizenship bind, but a relation that has been established due to ideological concerns and/or economic cooperation.*

Table 2: Internal and external diasporas and the Turkish state

Communities	Classic Kemalist perspective	State attitudes since the 1980s/2002
Turkish labor migrants	**Problem** I Seen as tarnishing the image of 'modern' Turkey	**Resource** I Citizenship rights and representation
Kurdish refugees	**Threat and enmity** I Seen as engaging in anti-Turkish activities	**Threat and opportunity** I Potential citizenship rights and relations due to Muslim brotherhood
Balkan Muslims	Little to no interest	**Enthusiasm and embrace** I Pan-Islamism and Neo-Ottomanism
Balkan Turks	Limited interest½Pan-Turkism	**Enthusiasm** I Pan-Islamism, Neo-Ottomanism, Pan Turkism
Turkic Republics	Little interest½Pan-Turkism	Some interest, waning since 2000s½Pan-Turkism
Muslim world	Little to no interest	**Enthusiasm, embrace, leadership** I Pan-Islamism
Armenians	**Threat and enmity** I Seen as engaging in anti-Turkish activities	**Threat and opportunity** I Cautious change to partly positive engagement and damage control with regards to genocide recognition
Other Christians	**Threat and enmity** I Seen as engaging in anti-Turkish activities	**Threat and opportunities** I Cautious change to partly positive engagement
Jews	**Little interest** I Generally welcome as pro-Turkish citizens of Israel	**Rejection** I Anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism

these pieces together. This is our job. This is about feeling the same emotions, it is about a sharing of such emotions (*duygudaşlık)*. Unlike Westerners, we value the emotional aspect of relations. Prime Minister Erdoğan is a good example. We have cultural goodwill. We can have a lot of impact through emotions."

These questions hint at tensions within the quest of a larger diaspora policy that may or may not be reconcilable. In terms of ideological traditions, pan-Turkism, pan-Islamism, and modern citizenship policies belong to very different political universes. They are also based on very different understandings of citizenship, i.e. on the question who has a right to make claims in Turkey, and have hence in opposition to each other at times been. Furthermore, there is a clear tension in state approaches to communities that were forced to leave Turkey and have therefore overall and justifiably negative conceptions of their country of origin. Is it conceivable that the AKP government has been able to reconcile these different ideological traditions? I shall look into these questions in the following section, which examines the Presidency of Expatriate Turks and Related Communities as the flagship agency of Turkey's new diaspora policy.

A CONSTRUCTIVIST DIASPORA POLICY FOR THE GLOBAL-NATION? THE PRESIDENCY FOR TURKS ABROAD AND RELATED COMMUNITIES

The Presidency was established in 2010 on direct orders from Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and by a group of influential advisers, who were equipped with generous funds. The explicit aim was to bring services delivered by several ministries towards Turkish expats under the roof of a single one-stop agency, while creating new channels of interaction with different communities related to Turkey. With the foundation of the Presidency, the landscape of diaspora-relevant state organisations in Turkey has become more complex and crowded, as can be seen in Illustration 1.

Illustration 1: Institutional architecture of Diaspora-relevant actors in Turkey



Note: Created with Wordle.net.

With an expert staff of around 120, the Presidency has three key departments that reflect some of the different aspects of diaspora communities discussed in section one: The department for Turkish Citizens Living Abroad, the department for cultural and social relations that deal with co-ethnic and related communities, and the department for the so-called Turkey Scholarships awarded to students particularly from the developing world for a fully-funded academic education in Turkey.[14] With this institutional set-up, the three main groups, initial labour migrant communities, kin, or related communities in the Balkans and Central Asia, and Muslim (and non-Muslim) students are expected to build ties with Turkey and develop them after returning to their countries of origin.[15] It is the latter department that seems to stand out in light of the different communities discussed above. Its inclusion in the remit of the Presidency can be explained with a pragmatic administrative decision rather than reasons of principle.[16]

14 Cf. Yurtnaç, Kemal (2012) *Turkey's New Horizon: Turks Abroad and Related Communities* (Ankara: Center for Strategic Research SAM).

15 The Turkey scholarships are now awarded to around 4,500 students each year, predominantly from the developing and Muslim world.

16 It is indeed surprising that at least 50 experts are responsible for the Turkey Scholarships department, while only around 30 experts are currently tasked with the projects regarding Turkish citizens abroad.

The "Türkiye Scholarships"

The "Türkiye Scholarships" programme was established in 2012, with the transfer to the Presidency of a number of different scholarship programmes administered thitherto by various state agencies. Around 4,500 students are selected every year from applications from 146 mostly less developed countries, as well as from "co-ethnic" Central Asia and the Balkans. At the time of writing, there were around 12,000 beneficiaries of the fellowships studying for a degree in Turkey or undertaking research. They are based in 55 cities and 105 universities all over Turkey.

The fellowship covers the entire stay of a student in Turkey, including accommodation and maintenance costs and does not need to be paid back. An administrator of the Presidency in charge of the programme described the scholarship as "part of our development aid, geared toward the development of the countries of origins of those students. The students are expected to return home and contribute to the development of their country."

The scholarships, however, are not limited to undergraduate and graduate students, but also extend to post-doctoral researchers. In fact, there is a highly differentiated programme structure, which has dedicated selection processes and conditions according to region of origin and field of study. A particular emphasis is laid on medical sciences, Turkish language education and Islamic Studies.

Graduate Scholarship Programmes

Ali Kuşçu Science and Technology Scholarship / İbni Haldun Social Sciences Scholarship

Undergraduate Scholarship Programmes

Türkiye Africa Scholarship / Bosphorus Scholarship / Balkans Scholarship / Harran Scholarship / Black Sea Scholarship / Turkic Speaking Countries Scholarship

Branch Scholarships

İbni Sina Medical Sciences Scholarship / Yunus Emre Turkish Language Scholarship / Islamic Studies Scholarship

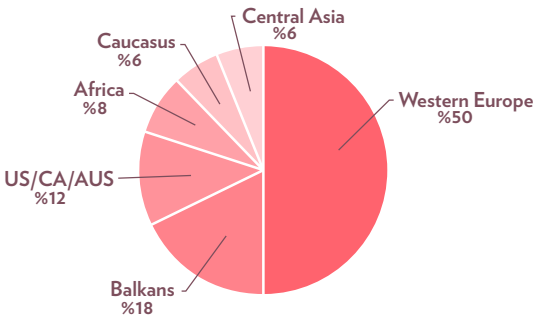
Short Term Scholarships

Support Scholarship / Success Scholarship / Research Scholarships

Cf. Website of the Türkiye Bursları at: http://www.trscholarships.org/

The very wide range of diaspora communities and the challenges to an operationalization of diaspora policies is fully reflected in Plus 90 (Artı 90 or +90), the three-monthly journal of the Presidency.[17] The journal, available both in print and online, presents stories about migrants from Turkey to Western Europe and the United States, their problems and achievements alongside with, albeit much fewer, stories on Assyrian Christians in Sweden and Greeks from Turkey in Greece.[18] The geographical emphasis is, not surprisingly, on stories on Western Europe and particularly on Germany. Coinciding with Turkey's current foreign policy outlook, Western Europe is followed by the Balkans, the US and Canada, while it is noteworthy that Africa features as widely as do the Caucasus and Central Asia, which used to be in the heart of Turkey's exterior relations (Cf. Tables 3 and 4). Interestingly, the Middle East and the Muslim world is not very strongly visible in terms of dedicated feature pieces.

Graphic 1: Geographic scope of the Presidency's journal Plus 90 according to world regions

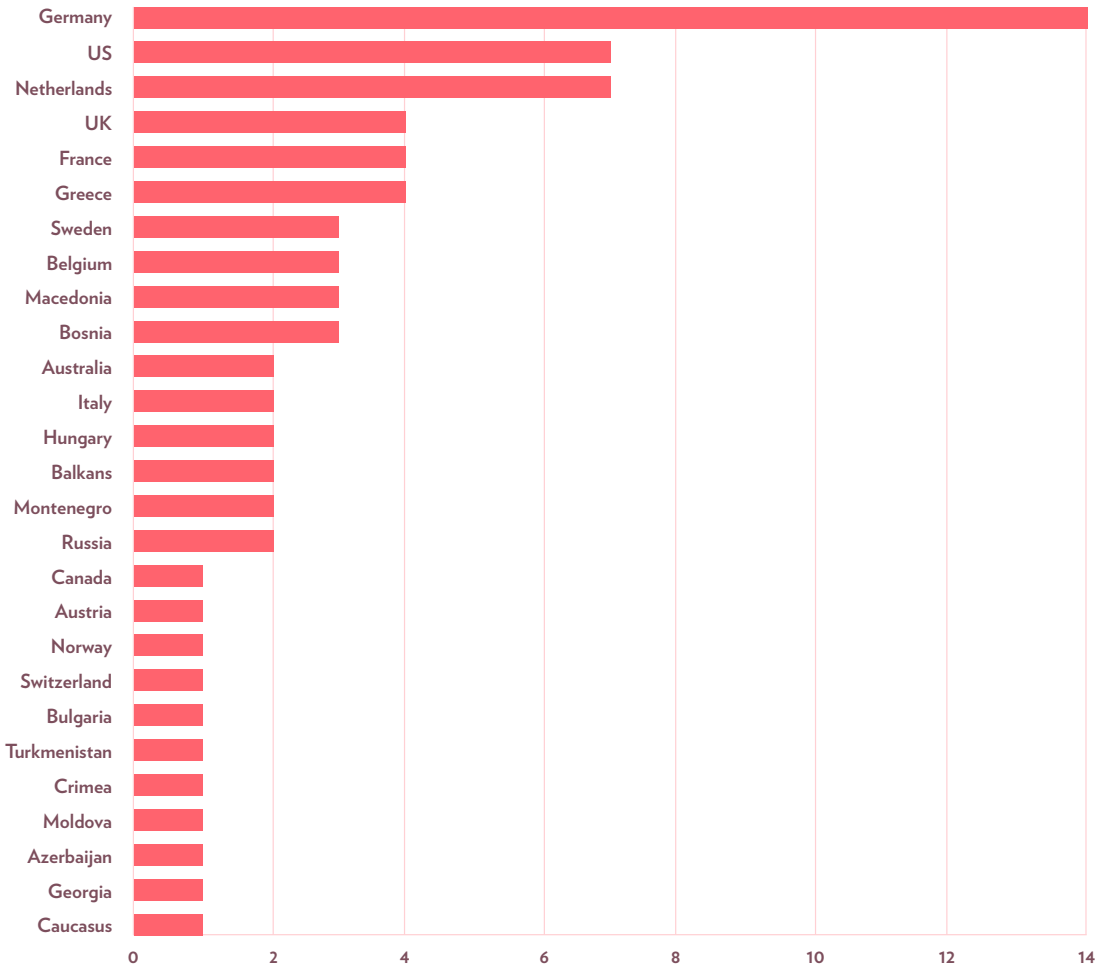


Note: Based on a content analysis of 190 entries in seven issues of the journal +90 published since January 2013. This chart only displays dedicated country pieces or stories that are strongly related to the world region cited.

17 As the then President Kemal Yurtnaç explained in the journal's first issue in January 2012, the title is a reference to Turkey's international telephone calling code, which is indeed 90.

18 All issues are available on the Presidency's website: <http://ytb.medyasoft.com.tr/tr/yayinlar/956-arti90-dergisi>, accessed 30 May 2014.

Table 4: Geographic scope of the Presidency's journal Plus 90 according to countries



Note: Based on a content analysis of 190 entries in seven issues of the journal +90 published since January 2013. This chart displays only dedicated country pieces or stories that are strongly related to the country cited.

Even though there are no Armenians of Turkish origin represented in *Plus 90*, activities by Turkish diaspora organizations against Armenian diaspora efforts for the international recognition of the genocide are given some prominence. The established trope of Turkish Azerbaijani friendship does come up. So do stories about immigrants to Western Europe and the US and their achievements in business sports and politics, and those on foreign students in Turkey who are the beneficiaries of the Turkey Scholarships. Their homilies about their experience in Turkey, alongside stories on Turkish universities have appeared in all issues since January 2012 (see illustrations 2+3).

Illustrations 2+3: Turkey Scholarships





Note: The Turkey Scholarships feature greatly in the journal. Here are two images from the April 2013 and July 2012 issue. In the first, we see two African beneficiaries talking about their experience in Turkey as beneficiaries of the programme. The second is a synopsis of the adverts of the scholarship in different languages.

Plus 90 is indeed an excellent source to explore the Presidency's remit and its scales and scope of operations as it is very professionally edited and produced, and has an impressive volume with more than hundred pages on average. In addition to the life stories and biopics mentioned above, the journal contains two more distinct sections. The cover stories in every issue highlight a theme thought to be of importance for the communities served by the journal, while the other section highlights the activities of the Presidency. In the cover stories, three programmatic themes are explored repeatedly: Discrimination in Europe, Assimilation and adoption and the Ottoman Empire. For a synoptic overview of the journal's visual language, see illustrations 4-9.

Most prevalent there is the debate on racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia in European countries, its impact on Turkish communities there and efforts at organizing against it. The emphasis here is particularly on Islamophobia and the need to defend Muslim, or national, values against assimilation. The effects of racism and Turkey's support of its citizens is central and reflected in a communication by a senior civil servant in the Presidency: "When eight people were killed in a fire attack in Germany, we were present and organised the transport of the coffins to Turkey. We showed a presence there. We oversaw the investigations. A country like Germany would do this. We did it too."

Criticism of social welfare agencies particularly in Germany and the Netherlands is another major issue of concern. Particularly cases of adoption of children from socially marginalized Turkish families to Christian and/or homosexual couples are discussed in the journal in great detail. Often, these

features are enriched with interviews from parents, who argue that their children were taken from them with no sufficient reason. This issue is contextualised by frequent recourse to the term "Turkish family values," while the issue of involuntary adoption facilitated by German welfare agencies is discussed as a form of assimilation.

Finally, a third recurring theme is the heritage of the Ottoman Empire as well as cultural and culinary traditions as cement that binds people together in the Balkans, the Middle East and beyond. Essays on Ottoman architecture and on social customs like wedding rituals belong in this category, as do historical stories on the role of Ottoman Sultans and their contributions to law and religion.

Particularly the first two themes relate to the larger antagonistic field of integration vs. cultural specificity, where the Presidency follows a compromise position based on Prime Minister Erdoğan's perspective: Integration, the learning of the language of the country of residence and the abiding to its laws is supported in principle, whereas assimilation and the imposition of lifestyles in conflict with "Turkish values" are perceived as irreconcilable with conservative values and are thus rejected. Kemal Yurtnaç, the former President, sees integration as a two-sided process in which both sides have to make an effort to change, while the cultural and religious values of immigrants should be respected and equal opportunities must be provided for the newcomers. His insistence on cultural specificity and religious essence is clearly illustrated in his statement "Hasan should not become Hans!" (cf. Illustration 10), i.e. there should be no assimilation in cultural terms.[19]

19 Interview with Kemal Yurtnaç in the Presidency's Journal Artı 90 (January 2013).

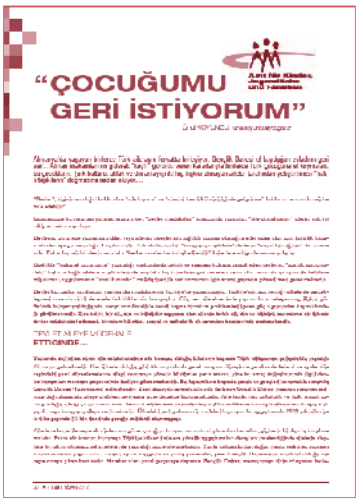
Illustrations 4+5: Racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia





Note: The cover page of the first issue in January 2012 on the history of racist attacks and Neonazis in Germany, triggered by the court case against the National Socialist Underground, a small cell that killed 10 people (eight of them Turks) in Germany between 2000 and 2006 out of racist hatred. The page with the Swastika asks: "Can Germany come to terms with itself?"

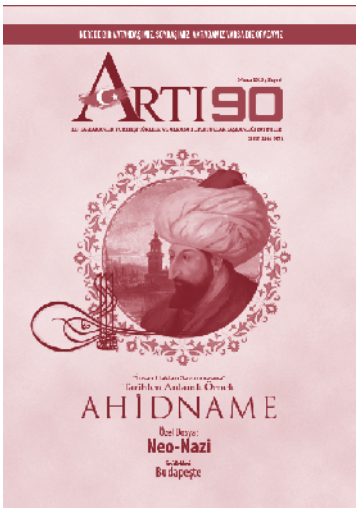
Illustrations 6+7: Turkish children and German social welfare agencies





Note: The theme of Turkish children snatched from their parents by social welfare agencies is a prominent one in the journal. In the April 2012 issue, two features deal with parents, who believe their children have been taken away from them without reason. The first page is entitled "I want my child back" and followed by the subtitle: "Thousands of Turkish families living in Germany join in the same outcry. Youth services, give back my child, which you have taken from me! The fact that German authorities take away thousands of Turkish children on the basis of "random" decisions and that those children are then raised by families who have no relations with Turkish culture, morals and religious understanding, triggers "justified reactions."

Illustrations 8+9: Traditions that bind





Note: The April 2013 issue has a dedicated feature on Fatih Sultan Mehmet (The Conqueror) and his views on tolerance and coexistence. The second image is from the July 2013 issue and part of a dossier on wedding traditions in the Balkans, Anatolia, Central Asia and the Middle East.

Illustration 10: The conceptual fabric of Turkey's diaspora policies



Note: Based on programmatic pieces by the President and the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the Presidency in the journal +90. Please note that this word cloud is an approximate illustration of the concepts used in those contributions. This image has been prepared with the open source software clairvoyant-tools.org.

With this range of themes, we can circumscribe the ideological universe of the Presidency as largely in line with Turkey's current domestic and foreign policies as socially conservative, religiously Muslim, culturally nostalgic (for the Ottoman Empire), ethnically cosmopolitan, and potentially post-nationalist.[20] The legacy of the Ottoman Empire is a major source of pride and understood as a binding element. Ethno-nationalist and ethno-racialist conceptions of Turkishness rarely appear in *Plus 90*. From this angle, it is indeed possible to think about this approach in terms of a constructivist diaspora policy, a "diaspora building"[21] that aims to form communities abroad in the image of the new conception of citizenship that has been promoted by the AKP government in the last decade and is

20 Very much resounding with the earlier discussion of the ideological tensions in the precedents of Turkey's diaspora policies, we can detect a field of tension here as well: Post-nationalism and cosmopolitanism are important ingredients of the Presidency's work, but being part of the bureaucracy of a nation state that remains to show nationalist reflexes, the tension is there. Nowhere can this be detected more clearly than in the position regarding Azerbaijan and the Armenian genocide. During a speech at the Global Council of Azerbaijanis in July 2011, for instance, the then President Kemal Yurtnaç emphasized that the Turkish and Azerbaijani diasporas need to hold closely together "to work against the unfounded claims of Armenians... and to bring to the attention of the world the plight of more than a million co-ethnics, who have lost their territories under Armenian occupation." Cf. <http://www.ytb.gov.tr/tr/soydas-ve-akraba-topluluklar/548-yurtnac-ayni-dili-ayni-kulturu-paylasan-halklarin-birbirine-destek-olmasi-bizler-icin-bir-hedeftir>, accessed 13 June 2014.

21 Gamlen, Alan. 2008. The emigration state and the modern geopolitical imagination. *Political Geography Vol. 27, pp. 843-44.*

now increasingly prevalent in Turkey. A senior civil servant in the Presidency describes this notion of Diaspora as a "common space that is not so clearly definable. Maybe one has to look at the activities to define what the Diaspora is. It is constantly changing... it is a diaspora process. For instance, Somalis have now a very high view of Turkey, which also impacts on how the Somali and Turkish communities in the US or elsewhere interact". This is a form of citizenship, where religion, rather than ethnicity, and commitment to an Ottoman imaginary seem to ne core determinants of belonging and rights.

Capacity-building projects for civil society, another important field of activity, is also presented well in *Plus 90*. The Presidency has several programmes to support Turkish NGOs abroad.[22] The budget of around 30 million TL (app. 10 million Euros) goes to projects of education and capacity building. Key areas of operation are the education of lawyers who are hoped to represent Turks in legal cases such as the aforementioned adoption and social welfare cases, and to support young leaders of Turkish communities through workshops and trips to Turkey. A Young Expat Leader's Program had two meetings in 2013, while an advisory board with 80 representatives from 19 countries was established to create direct bonds between members of Turkish communities and the Presidency.[23]

At least in theory, this conception of diaspora comes closest to the category of the "global-nation state", which Ragazzi defines as representing "the widest range of diaspora policy features and provide populations abroad with the broader number of rights. ... they encourage lobbying, generally provide a document certifying the national origin ... and provide welfare for returnees and organizing diaspora conferences."[24] Yet, to what extent do aspirations and realities overlap in our case?

Chances and challenges

Judging on this overview of the journal as the flagship of the Presidency, and taking into consideration that the Presidency has thus far been operative for only a short period of time and is still in the process of consolidation, we can arrive at a few provisional conclusions. First of all, the focus of the Presidency's work clearly lies in Turkish communities in Western Europe and particularly the strengthening of their civil society structures, as well as on services for kin communities in the Balkans and Central Asia. Secondly, considering the massive task only these two fields of activity would require, the number of available staff in the departments is still relatively small. The department for Turkish citizens abroad for instance employs around 30 experts. Given the number of almost five million Turkish citizens (or former citizens of Turkey) in Western Europe alone, this is indeed a relatively small team and a very limited institutional capacity.

Secondly, the political outlook of the Presidency that is represented in *Plus 90* and in the public speeches of its cadres is received well by a large group of Turkish citizens in Western Europe. However, this same outlook is unlikely to appeal to the communities that either have been forcibly removed from their ancestral homelands in earlier periods, such as Armenians and Kurds, who have been regarded as potential enemies of the state.[25]

22 During the fieldwork, I have not been able to ascertain according to which criteria these funds are allocated and which NGOs are entitled to apply. Circumstantial evidence suggests, however, that the beneficiaries are mostly Turkish NGOs abroad that feel close to the political goals of the current government.

23 The advisory board has only met a couple of times and cannot yet be seen as fully functional. It could play a very important role as a lobby group of Turkey's citizens abroad *vis-a-vis the Turkish government, yet it would require some well-balanced notion of representativeness to achieve this goal. This is, however, probably almost impossible to achieve.*

24 Ragazzi, Francesco. 2014. A comparative analysis of diaspora policies. Political Geography. Vol. 41, p. 80.

25 This is particularly true for Armenians abroad who hold a Turkish passport and who are still largely eyed with suspicion by state institu-

Neither do the strong Alevi organizations in Western Europe look favourably at this conception of diaspora, even though it appears more inclusive and flexible than the notion of ethno-religious and ethno-racial conceptions of citizenship during the Kemalist Republic. Both challenges of capacity and outreach may be among the most pressing issues that the Presidency will have to engage with in the near future.

Another area of tension that emerges from this analysis is that of the conflict between the Presidency's conceptions of Turkishness and the immigration/integration politics in the country of residence. It can be said with a degree of certainty that this increased presence of Turkey - whether through the Presidency or regular visits of Turkish decision makers - is a great opportunity for many Turkish citizens in Western Europe. This is the case especially for those Turkish citizens who have long been discriminated against in their countries of residence and often felt neglected by Turkey. However, the social and cultural norms projected by the Presidency do not readily agree with those prevalent in some countries of residence. A case in point are the adoption cases and the insistence by both the Presidency and visiting dignitaries such as Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan that Turks abroad should stick to their cultural values and stand fast against assimilation. This has repeatedly led to consternation particularly in Germany and Netherlands, where fears of intervention into their own policies of citizenship and identity are widespread. Such fears and critiques should be taken seriously when developing the future policies of the Presidency.

In terms of its inclusivity, the Presidency can be seen to have squared the circle of combining different ideological orientations - pan-Turkism, citizenship-based policies, pan-Islamism - in a most pragmatic, if not always convincing, manner. The price of this pragmatic synthesis may be a lack in the focus of its activities, particularly if we recall that the only group the Turkish Republic bears direct responsibility for is that of Turkish passport holders or other documents such as the Blue Card (held by former citizens), which entitles them to citizenship rights. This tension needs to be addressed if its stated goal of creating a strong diaspora of Turkey - presumably consisting of influential Turkey-related communities abroad and actors willing to present their interests in Ankara as well as Turkey's interests in their countries of residence - is to become both manageable, efficient and inclusive.

A fifth and final challenge is the potential of institutional overlap and duplicate authorities. The main service provider for Turkish citizens abroad is the Foreign Ministry through its consulates. The Presidency's remit is at once broader and much narrower as it does not supply any direct services such as the issue of passports or birth certificates. In terms of developing civil society and supporting Turkish organizations or events, the remit of consulates and the Presidency do clearly overlap. This is further confounded by different institutional cultures. The Presidency is a much more recent institution characterized by a strong engagement with the ideological foundations of the Justice and Development Party and personal ties with the Prime Minister, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been able to defend some of its autonomy and sees itself more as a representative of the state and state interest, regardless of the individual in power.[26]

tions, particularly if they engage in efforts at genocide recognition.

26 Members of the Turkish Foreign Service are reported to be wary of visits by representatives of the Presidency, as they are perceived as not operating according to diplomatic protocol. During the latest visit of the Turkish Prime Minister to Cologne for instance, where he held his first election speech, the Presidency played a major role in the execution of the event.

WHERE TO PLACE THE EMPHASIS? POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN INCLUSIVE DIASPORA OF TURKEY

The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities is indeed an agency with great potential whose work could create a win-win opportunity for both Turkey - i.e. by increasing its presence abroad and ensuring that its citizens can benefit from equal opportunities in terms of education, citizenship, and political participation - and for its diaspora communities. In order to achieve this goal, however, the aforementioned fields of tension need to be addressed. We see three areas where concerted action can make a difference to this end: inclusivity, cooperation, and capacity.

Inclusivity

The Presidency's decision makers were clear in their private communications that they are ready to work with all segments of Turkey's diaspora abroad as long as they are not categorically opposed to cooperation with the Turkish state. As a decision maker within the Presidency emphasized regarding Alevi and Kurdish citizens abroad: "[s]ome of them might not feel very welcome, because there is a state connection. But we are open to them. It ultimately depends on their position [*vis-a-vis* the Turkish state]." Despite this reported openness, the Presidency's focus of activities have so far, in terms of both its political language as well of the remnants of nationalist ideas, created the impression among parts of the Turks abroad that it is mostly interested in cooperating with the conservative Sunni-Muslim core segment of Turkish organizations abroad. This may or may not be true, but it is a fact that most Kurdish, Alevi, and Armenian communities have at no point believed that they would be welcomed if they were to reach out to the Presidency.

The Turkish government has recently been following an ostensibly more inclusive approach at home with the Kurdish Opening, the Alevi Opening, and Prime Minister Erdoğan's expression of condolences to Armenians in April 2014. While all of these positive steps have been criticised profusely and often with good reason, it is still possible to see at least potentialities for a more inclusive conception of citizenship in Turkey that moves beyond both Kemalist notions of exclusively ethno-racial Turkishness and Islamist notions of exclusively Sunni Turkishness. At least in theory, these are important points of departure, which the Presidency could draw upon.[27]

The Presidency could assign some of its experts to the explicit task of creating channels for cooperation within these communities and to ensure that they feel welcome and represented as current or former citizens of Turkey. This would also have the beneficial effect of easing intra-community conflicts in countries like Germany and France, where relations particularly between Turkish, Kurdish and Armenian communities are often fraught with tensions. Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's dictum that "Not only Turks, but everybody who has migrated from these lands are our Diaspora"[28] is encouraging in this respect, if it is indeed meant in an inclusive fashion. It would have a very favourable impact for Turkey's diasporas if this approach would become universalized within the Presidency.

27 This would, of course, necessitate that the Presidency does not engage in cooperation with Azerbaijan to directly work against the Armenian diaspora, as this would destroy the foundations of trust between Turkey's Armenian citizens abroad and the Presidency.

28 Ahmet Davutoğlu, in *Vizyon Projeler, (Ankara: Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Toplulukları Başkanlığı, 2013).*

Cooperation

The Presidency's work will be more effective in countries like Germany, Austria, or the Netherlands if it is not perceived as the intervention of a third country, but is regarded as part of a cooperative effort geared towards improving the quality of life for Turkish citizens (or ex-citizens) in their countries of residence. The tensions that have arisen in the field of diverging social and cultural norms outlined in the preceding section need to be addressed and some publicity work to this end seems appropriate. For this aim, the Presidency could add a task force of experts, who are preferably educated in the countries in question, to its area of Civil Society Development. This would facilitate the effort to explain the concerns of both the Presidency and many Turkish families abroad, such as in the adoption cases, in a language that is more understandable in the differential cultural context of Western Europe. It is crucial to see that the Presidency needs to be able to speak to the public debates in the countries of residence and not only to the Turks, who feel represented by it.

Providing close cooperation between those experts and social services, ministries, and targeted media contacts in the countries of residence may be a good starting point. In addition, the Presidency could shift the focus of operations from issues of cultural specificity, like the adoption cases, to questions of equal rights and anti-discrimination, and also seek new coalitions to this end. Cooperation with the European Commission and subordinated agencies as well as the European Court of Human Rights would be sensible steps further supporting this goal.

Capacity

Both the aforementioned points of increased inclusivity and cooperation will, as I believe, significantly strengthen Turkey's diaspora policy and its quest to increase the quality of life of its citizens abroad and communities related to Turkey through historical ties. This is all the more important as member states of the European Union are facing a new wave of xenophobic and Islamophobic movements that are likely to result in even more discriminatory policies. Therefore, it is important that Turks abroad can rely on support from Turkey when the need arises. Furthermore, a Presidency that reaches out to all constituents of Turkey's diasporas could play a major role in addressing latent conflicts between different communities and thereby make an example of Turkey's future as an open society.

Such an expansion, however, will require increased capacity in terms of staff and budget and a larger number of experts that are native to the countries of residence of Turkish citizens and ex-citizens. In this context, it is important to note two avenues of expansion. First, the Presidency of Turkish Citizens Abroad is certainly the most important one, as it is tasked with improving the quality of life of citizens abroad, i.e. of people who can vote in Turkish elections. It has to be able to live up to this massive responsibility with an enlarged expert staff. Second, if the communities that the state once viewed with suspicion are to be fully included in the Presidency's work - and this is unavoidable if inclusivity is the aim - a dedicated department might be established to this end.

With these broad lines of future expansion of the Presidency, Turkey could make an example for a post-nationalist diaspora policy that is inclusive and opens up new channels of opportunities for all expatriate people from Turkey, whether they have left voluntarily or have been forced out of the country. This would also create a momentum for reconciliation and resolution of conflict between its many communities abroad. While doing this, however, the risk of duplicate responsibilities and overlapping authority between the Presidency and the Foreign Ministry has to be addressed.

CONCLUSION

The Presidency of Turks Abroad and Related Communities is the institutional crystallization of Turkey's new diaspora policy. It was established in 2010 and is consolidating its operations at a unique moment in time, when it can make a major difference to both the welfare of Turkey's many diasporas and Turkey's international standing, which has been experiencing a series of challenges lately. Two conjunctures make this not only possible but also urgent. The increasing political influence of racism and Islamophobia within the European Union and the potential opening of Turkey's conceptions of citizenship, belonging, and identity.

The Presidency has so far shown great creativity and resolve in synthesizing different political traditions and ideological reference points to establish a functional institution in charge of the wellbeing of its diaspora communities abroad. A set of tensions, however, has prevailed in terms of differential treatment of different communities as well as in terms of its public image particularly in Western European countries. In order to overcome these tensions, the Presidency can move a step further to reach out to all diaspora communities that feel an affinity with Turkey or that are entitled to support and services due to their citizenship status. Such a post-national, inclusive, and humanist conception of diaspora that invites everyone with a stake in the country to participate in the country's future can contribute to Turkey's international standing as an open society that seeks to move beyond its historical and recent conflicts.

The opposite, a selective diaspora policy that continues to treat communities differentially and makes available funds only to preferred groups would have exactly the opposite effect. It would further compound already existing societal conflicts in Turkey's "Domestic Abroad" and carry the fault lines of Turkey's divided political landscape right into heart of its diasporas.

The Presidential Elections of August 2014 provided a good case in point. During Prime Minister Erdoğan's campaign particularly in Germany and Austria, the Presidency played a prominent role in mobilizing Turkish citizens. Yet, the challenge of capacity and inclusivity set in here too: Considerable efforts were made to bring Turkish expatriates into the fold of Turkish electoral politics, and it has been no secret that the Prime Minister was counting on a strong voter support from Europe. Tens of thousands of Turkish citizens coming to see Erdoğan's often epic appearances in Germany compounded these hopes. These massive manifestations, however, also created an atmosphere, in which Turks abroad appeared as Ankara's "fifth column", particularly to those who already harbour anti-immigrant or anti-Muslim sentiments.

Crucially, the inclusion of expatriate Turks into electoral politics has been a failure: Less than ten per cent of the 2.7 million Turkish citizens abroad, who are entitled to vote, registered, and even fewer took part in the actual election. [29] Members of the government have blamed this low turnout on the complicated registration procedures, and more implicitly, on a lack of cooperation by the consulates. It is much more likely, however, that the reason is sought to be elsewhere: Many Turks in Europe may feel an emotional connection to

29 Cf. "Only 178,960 Turkish expats to vote in first round", Hurriyet Daily News, 6 August 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/only-178960-turkish-expats-to-vote-in-first-round-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=69876&NewsCatID=338>, accessed 10 August 2014; "Nur wenige Türken im Ausland gehen wählen", Spiegel Online, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/praesidentenwahl-geringe-wahlbeteiligung-von-tuerken-im-ausland-a-984347.html>, accessed 10 August 2014.

Turkey's future President and hold him in high esteem. When it comes to the conduct of politics, however, they seem to be less interested in engaging in Turkey's polarized environment than in contributing to the democratic politics of their countries of residence. The case of the Presidential Elections, hence, reminds us of the limits of Turkey's diaspora politics. It appears that they lack, above all depth and scope. Future actors within the Presidency will need to take these limitations into consideration.

The idea of Turkey's diaspora policy as an exclusive and post-nationalist, but also post-sectarian "global-nation" is certainly not yet a reality. As a potentiality, however, it is tremendous opportunity that at the same time also bears considerable risks and potential of competition between citizens and non-citizens.[30] Turkey's diaspora policies in the future will indeed require from its actors a great measure of vision, complemented by responsibility, commitment and realism.

30 This includes a conflict over resources between citizens and non-citizens. The Presidency, for instance, now also administers the student fees for Syrian students in Turkey, in order to facilitate free education. While this is a generous gesture to Syrian students, it also means that fewer grants are available for students with a Turkish passport.

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