



DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

POLICY DEPARTMENT
ECONOMIC AND SCIENTIFIC POLICY **A**



Economic and Monetary Affairs

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Turkey: Labour Market Integration and Social Inclusion of Refugees

Study for the EMPL Committee



DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES
POLICY DEPARTMENT A: ECONOMIC AND SCIENTIFIC POLICY

Turkey: Labour Market Integration and Social Inclusion of Refugees

STUDY

Abstract

This *Policy Department A Study* produced at request of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee provides a review of integration policies at the national level. It identifies the challenges and opportunities that both immigrants and local communities face. Various aspects of the Labour Market Integration and Social Inclusion of Refugees are elaborated by the presentation of legal framework and practices from Turkey.

The study depicts that Turkey has taken significant steps on the regulations which aim to create an attractive economic environment and to facilitate the application process of work permissions for foreigners as part of integration policies. Furthermore, social integration policies are rather weak and started to develop since the recent immigration flow from Syria. Even though there have been improvements in the integration policies, policy makers should focus on the implementation of more stable and long term policies and practices.

This document was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs.

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Original: EN

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Manuscript completed in September 2016

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFAD	Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency
BPRM	The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
DGMM	Directorate General of Migration Management
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ECHO	European Commission - Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection
EU	European Union
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
LFIP	Law on Foreigners and International Protection
LWPF	Law on Work Permits for Foreigners
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
ORSAM	Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies
TECs	Temporary Education Centres
UNFPA	The United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Turkey has had a **long tradition of receiving refugees since the early 20th century**, but its refugee regime has been constrained both by the reception and settlement of Turkish-origin refugees under the logic of nation-building and by the 1951 Convention's geographical limitation placed upon refugees arriving from certain countries of origin. While mostly Turkish-origin refugees have secured settlement in the country, **non-Turkish refugees coming from non-European countries have not been able to stay in Turkey long term** and must find resettlement opportunities in third countries.

While Turkey has been generous in providing **emergency care for Syrian refugees since 2011**, it now faces the challenges of providing them with certain rights and opportunities that will facilitate their integration into the broader communities. Although **Turkey has not granted Syrians official refugee status**, in January 2016, the **Regulation on the Work Permit of Foreigners Under Temporary Protection** took effect. This regulation allows Syrians to apply to the Labour Ministry for work permits six months after their registration. The laws regarding labour market integration for foreigners have been rather weak as Turkey has historically been more of an emigration and transit country rather than an immigrant country. The **shift in migration patterns towards immigration** coupled with the context of the accession negotiations with the EU have resulted in new legislation efforts in Turkey's immigration laws and regulations since 2000.

Even after the introduction of work permits for those under temporary protection, the **informal sector remains the main platform of employment for both Syrian and non-Syrian refugees** including increasing child work. This puts them under unhealthy, dangerous, and unstable working conditions. Moreover, it causes a **displacement of native workers** for refugees who agree to work without job security and for lower wages. Regulations that deter refugees' engagement into the informal sector by creating jobs that recognize their skills and matching them with the needs of local markets will not only help their quality of life but also contribute to economic development. To this end, the **International Labour Force Law** was passed in July 2016, which aims to **attract highly skilled workers** to protect and increase productivity. Unlike the previous regulations, the law employs a selective policy on the qualifications of immigrants to determine who will enter the Turkish labour market.

The evolution of the integration process depends on many different factors. The geographical limitation precludes non-European asylum seekers from permanent settlement while the Settlement Law of 2006 reserves the right to permanent settlement only to persons of Turkish descent and culture. These two legislative reservations accord **refugees with a temporary protection status that disqualifies them from the prospect of long-term integration**. The ratification of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, for the first time, included provisions on migrant integration in 2013. Following the eruption of Syria's humanitarian crisis, **international aid** channelled towards the country fuelled a number of **projects attempting to facilitate the integration of Syrians**.

The access to education, healthcare services, and housing became important elements of the integration process. According to Turkish law, basic education is free for all children, including foreigners. But the **limited capacity of public schools and language barriers** pose serious challenges for the education of refugee children and youth. **Temporary Education Centres (TECs)**, which follow a modified Syrian curriculum and are taught in Arabic, are another option for the children of Syrian refugees. However, some TECs are not accredited by the government due to low quality of teaching.

Moreover, the Temporary Protection Regulation of 2014 ensures that Syrians under temporary protection have the right to **benefit from health services** under the control and responsibility of the Ministry of Health. Additionally, **Migrant Health Centres** have been established to provide health care services to refugees under temporary protection. The **work permit for foreign health professionals** since the beginning of 2016 allows **Syrian medical staff** to work in these centres and in health facilities of refugee camps, which aids language barriers with health care providers and the shortage of medical assistance. Lastly, there are **no public housing opportunities besides refugee camps**. When their numbers surpassed hundreds of thousands in 2013 urban centres in south-eastern Turkey, followed by city centres in other parts of the country, began to attract refugee settlements. **Refugees in Turkey are predominantly settled in poor neighbourhoods** in efforts to find affordable housing, and often numerous families share one unit. Moreover, some local communities construct **illegal buildings for refugees to rent** and many landlords prefer Syrian renters, whom they can **charge higher rent**, which increases living costs for both refugees and natives in the host community.

As regards engagement in the host country's social life, the position of **refugee women** comes forward as a challenge. The most commonly reported problem are traumata induced by gender-based and sexual violence.

As part of EU's commitment to provide 3 billion euro in **financial assistance to Turkey** under the "Facility for Refugees in Turkey", 1.2 billion euro has been contracted to various UN Agencies and international organizations. Turkish civil society organizations are involved in the process mainly as sub-contractors. Under IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) funding, 300 million euro has been contracted directly with the Ministry of National Education to be spent for educational purposes such as language training. IPA funding also supports other projects on health services, socio-economic support and municipal infrastructure.

The refugee-receiving communities in Turkey tended to manage the arrival and settlement of Syrian refugees with considerable hospitality, but given the magnitude of inflow and the duration of the humanitarian crisis this **relatively smooth reception now faces the risk of growing tensions between Turkey's native citizens and the hosted Syrian refugees**. In order to prevent growing tensions, there is a **need to encourage government authorities to formulate long-term integration policies** for refugees in general and to devise policies and practices aimed at reducing xenophobic tendencies in the refugee-receiving communities in specific.

Currently, helping refugees requires practical actions towards providing them with better settlement and integration opportunities. For Turkey, with its large informal labour market and unstable functioning welfare state, a rapid and vigorous integration of refugees into labour markets is essential. There are two priorities: **nationally, Turkey has to develop a comprehensive and multifaceted integration program** which tackles the areas of decent work, housing, education, and health opportunities and services for the refugees and other migrants; and, **internationally, Turkey needs solidarity and cooperation** with other states, the international community, and intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations to provide resources and services for better social and economic inclusion of refugees and migrants.

1. INTRODUCTION*

Turkey has had a long tradition of receiving refugees since the early 20th century, but its highly remarkable position within the international refugee system has become more obvious since the early 1980s. Located at the crossroads of various troubled regions, the country has received large numbers of asylum seekers fleeing from several major conflicts in recent decades, both from neighbouring countries in the Middle East and Europe and from more distant countries in Asia and Africa (Biehl, 2015). While some refugee flows to Turkey have happened in the form of mass arrivals, such as the inflows of around 350,000 ethnic Turks from Bulgaria in 1989, nearly a half million Kurds from Iraq in 1991, 20,000 Bosnian Muslims from the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s (Icduygu and Kirisci, 2009a), and most recently, more than 2.7 million Syrians in the period of 2011-16; there have also been steady arrivals of individual asylum seekers over time, escaping from various conflict zones around Turkey. Before the most recent mass arrivals of Syrian refugees, for instance, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Somalia have been for over several decades the four major countries of origin of asylum seekers individually arriving in the country.¹

The Syrian conflict has led to unprecedented large flows of refugees seeking protection in neighbouring countries and in Europe. Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war, the flow of Syrian refugees has continuously grown, reaching 2.7 million registered Syrians in Turkey as of September 2016. Consequently, the overwhelming influx of refugees, including Syrian, Iraqi, Afghani and refugees of other nationalities, into Turkey has reached over 3.1 million people, making Turkey the host country with the largest refugee population in the world. One should note here that due to the large size of Syrian refugee communities in Turkey and the country's highly and discriminatively positive stand towards these refugees, the case of Syrians in Turkey should be analysed differently than the cases of other refugees in the country. Therefore, this report examines the positions of these two groups separately.

In the past, refugee status was considered a short-term consequence of conflict. However, as observed in the cases of refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, protracted refugee situations are the norm rather than the exception (Bowman, 2016). This shift has forced related actors to develop new strategies to cope with the challenges of protracted refugee situations. It is within this context that the presence of refugees, in particularly of the Syrians, in Turkey is likely to be a medium- to long-term situation, requiring plans in recognition of this time frame as well as recognition of the long-term economic, social and political responsibilities to support these refugees (Culbertson and Constant, 2015). Currently, dealing with refugees in Turkey is, therefore, not a question of halting refugees' flight and reversing their movement, but requires practical actions towards providing them with better settlement and integration opportunities (Icduygu and Millet, 2016). The integration of refugees is a multifaceted process, and therefore complex to evaluate. Along these lines, there is no doubt that offering various decent employment opportunities is an integral tool for tackling refugees' social and economic inclusion. Therefore, for Turkey, with its large informal labour market and shaky-functioning welfare state, a rapid and vigorous integration of refugees into labour markets is essential. This report focuses on the labour market integration of refugees in Turkey, particularly highlighting the cases of Syrian refugees. It argues that while integration into the labour market does not directly guarantee social integration, it is a major contributor to refugees' ability to function as active and able members of the host country.

* I would like to thank Evin Millet for her invaluable assistance on this report.

¹ For the detailed statistics on the asylum seekers and refugees, see the webpage of UNHCR Turkey, <http://www.unhcr.org/turkey/home.php>

2. DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYMENT

The Turkish economy seems to follow a path of moderate and stable growth over the last two decades, even though it has experienced some ups and downs during this period, especially after the 2008 global crises. In order to better understand the impact of the mass migration and asylum flows into the country and the channels into which refugees/migrants could be incorporated, it is important to first look at a general picture of the Turkish economy.

The distribution of economic activity among different sectors does not seem to be very volatile over time. As of January 2016, the economy performs 18.3 per cent in the agriculture sector, 20.2 per cent in industry, 6.7 per cent in construction and 54.8 per cent in services. Male workers are dominant in the industry, construction and services sectors, while the number of male and female workers are close in the agriculture sector.² An important observation is that more than 50 per cent of both male and female workers are employed in the service sector. A closer look at the labour force participation reveals further gender differences in economic activity. In particular, the labour force participation of those between 15 and 64 years old is 55.4 per cent as of January 2016, and this figure is made up of 76.2 per cent male and 34.6 per cent female workers.³

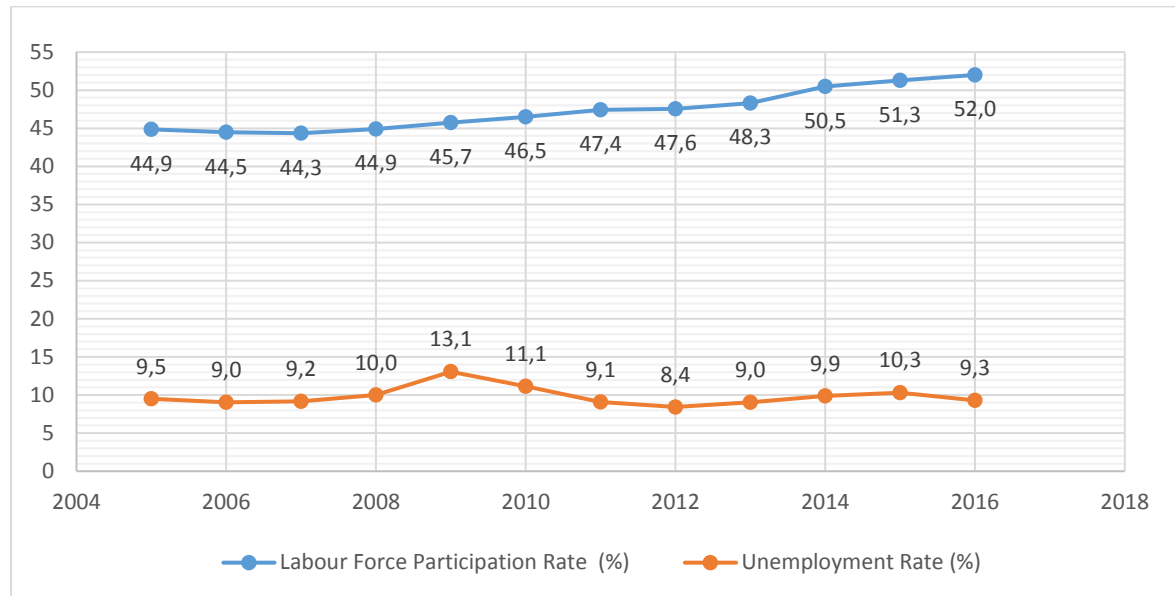
Moreover, the overall unemployment rate is 11.3 per cent: 10.5 per cent for males and 13.3 per cent for females. The national unemployment rate does not seem to be significantly changing over time (See Figure 1), but the local unemployment rates for regions that host large populations of refugees and migrants tend to increase, especially after 2012 (See Figures 2-3). In terms of region, the southeast has the largest concentration of refugees, with the provinces of Gaziantep, Adıyaman, Kilis, Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır, Mardin, Batman, Şırnak, Siirt housing a total of slightly more than one million Syrians. In other words, more than a third of the nearly three million Syrians in Turkey live in the southeast, mainly because of the region's proximity to the Syrian border. As the native population in these nine south-eastern provinces totals over eight million, incorporating a refugee population as big as one-eighth of its size would not be an easy task for the region. It appears that the unemployment rate in most parts of the southeast reaches 18-25 per cent in 2015, higher than any other region of the country and more than double the national average of 10.3%. Conversely, in early 2011 just before the start of the Syrian refugee flows, the unemployment rate in the southeast was only slightly over the national average (Figure 2).

Somewhat similar trends are also observed in the eastern Mediterranean region, which also hosts a large number of refugees mainly coming from Syria due to the region's proximity to the border. The unemployment rates in the provinces of Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye, Adana and Mersin have an increasing trend since 2011. Most of these provinces traditionally host internally mobile seasonal migrants, and now they have also started hosting sizeable Syrian refugee communities. It appears that provinces in the western Mediterranean region such as Antalya, Isparta and Burdur, which are traditionally less affected by the flow of migrants and refugees, have lower rate of unemployment over time, even below the national average (Figure 3).

² Source: TurkStat, Labour Force Statistics, Jan 2016. Furthermore, according to TurkStat, Labor Force Statistics, January 2016 figures (all in thousands): 2,742 males and 2,070 females are employed in agriculture sector; 4,031 males and 1,269 females in industry; 1,698 males and 67 females in construction; and 9,841 males and 4,557 females in services.

³ The numbers are available at <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=21570>. Turkish Statistical Institute, TurkStat (TUIK), Labour Force Statistics January 2016, Newsletter No: 21570, updated on April 15, 2016.

Figure 1: Unemployment and Labour Force Participation Rates (Age 15+)



Source: TURKSTAT, Labour Force Statistics. The April 2016 rates are used for the annual rate for 2016.

Figure 2: Unemployment Rates for Mediterranean Region

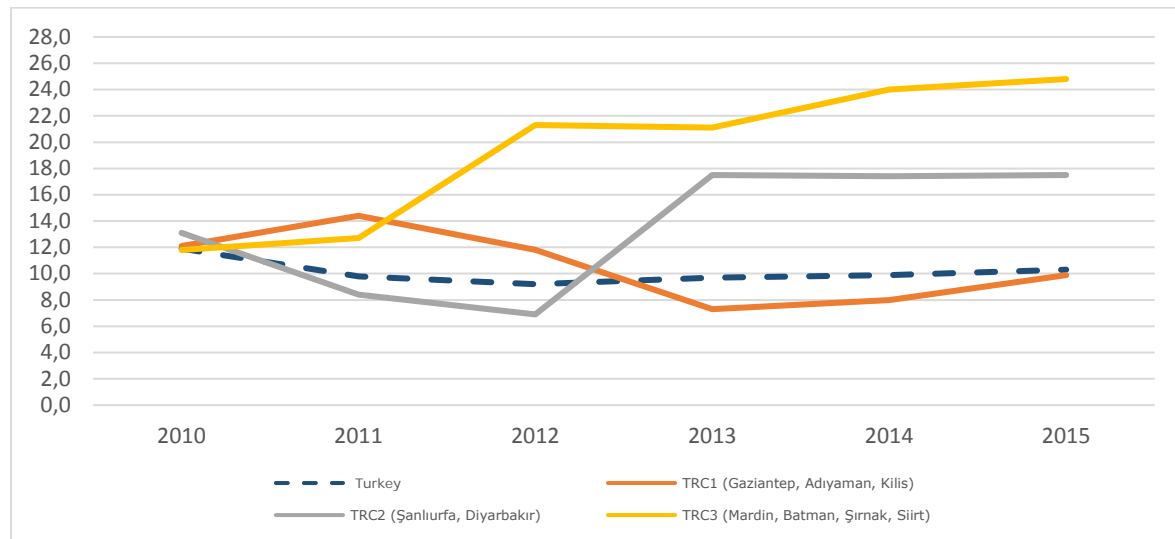
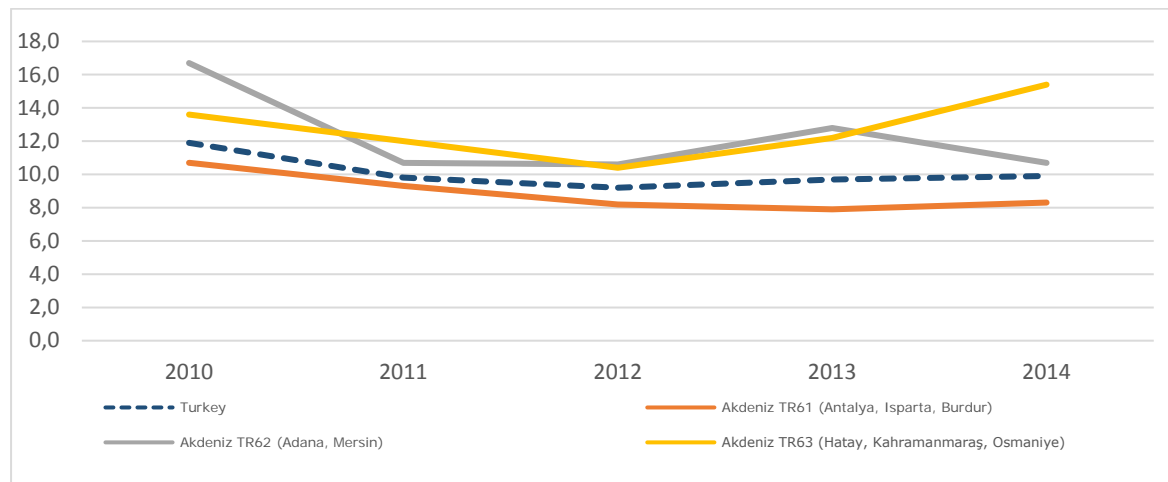


Figure 3: Unemployment Rates for South-East Anatolian Region

Another important point that should be addressed is the rate of unregistered employment (that includes employees who worked without any social security) realized as 31.8 per cent in January 2016, which shows a 0.6 percentage point decrease compared to the same period of the previous year.⁴ The rate of unregistered employment in Turkey has always remained high and has been constantly sustained by the new entrees due to newly arriving migrant labour who are mobilized within the country or across the borders.

The main activities of the informal sector in Turkey are seen in labour intensive, low-wage and manufacturing sectors. High informal engagement seems to occur in industries such as domestic and care services, entertainment, sex work, construction, tourism, and the leather and textile industry. These industries also have unproportionately high levels of involvement by irregular migrants and refugees (Icduygu, 2004). Another economic area in which irregular migrants and refugees are intensively employed is the agriculture sector. The more traditional, less industrialised agriculture sector, with many farms of rather small sizes spread out across Turkey, employs seasonal workers all over the country. For instance, these types of farms typically employ natives from the Southeast region, mostly Kurdish workers. Recent refugee flows into the country seem to provide another group of labour force as seasonal workers who find informal work at lower rates in the agricultural sector (Hayata Destek Dernegi Arastirma Raporu, 2014).

Besides the low-wages, employees in these industries suffer from unhealthy working conditions without any job security. Studies on the informal sector also point out that informal sector activities are more prevalent in small-size enterprises, there is a negative correlation between the level of education and employment in the informal sector (the lower the level of education, the more likely a worker is to engage in the informal sector), and female workers are more likely to be employed in the informal sector than males (Ela 2013; Baslevent and Acar 2015).

The reasons for the occurrence of the informal sector in Turkey are complex and hard to analyse by its very nature. Some of the economic reasons laid out by Ela (2013: 911) are: 1) high taxes on profit, which cause employers to choose to be invisible in the system; 2) the high volume of agriculture and service sectors in the economy, which are the hardest sectors to monitor; 3) developing countries that have been slow to provide new employment opportunities, which

⁴ See Turkish Statistical Institute, TurkStat (TUIK), Labour Force Statistics January 2016, Newsletter No: 21570, updated on April 15, 2016. <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=21570>

lead an unskilled and uneducated labour force to seek jobs in this sector; 4) a labour force that migrates from rural to urban areas and cannot find jobs in the formal sector due to the lack of necessary skills. The existence of this informal sector hinders long term economic growth and leaves many employees without access to health services and pension plans. Therefore, it is important to combat employment in the informal sector, which starts with the identification of the sources that feed this sector.

Understanding the conditions of the Turkish economy and the challenges that the labour market faces is necessary for better integration policies that target the migrants and refugees in the country. The human capital that migrants offer to the labour market can add to economic development with the help of regulations that recognize their skills and match them with the needs of local markets.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF INFLOW OF REFUGEES AND SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

Although Turkey has had a long tradition of receiving refugees since the early 20th century, the nature of refugee flows has considerably changed over the last four decades. Before the 1980s, there were mainly two groups of refugees arriving in the country: first, Turkish-origin refugees who were mostly leaving countries under communist regimes in large numbers and were welcomed to Turkey under the logic of a nation-building process, and second, non-Turkish refugees who were also leaving countries under communist regimes and were individually admitted in very low numbers under the 1951 Convention responsibilities (Kirisçi 1991, 2001).

The refugee flows emerged after the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan, the Iranian Revolution in the late 1970s, and subsequent to the growing political conflicts and instability in various parts the Middle East, Africa and Asia in the 1980s and 1990s. The period of the 2000s also carried a legacy of similar patterns. According to Turkish government statistics, there were approximately 3,500 to 4,000 asylum applicants per year filed between 1995 and 2005.⁵ Nearly two-fifths of the annual total was Iranian and one third was Iraqi, while the remaining portion was mostly Afghani and others nationalities. During this period, a total of more than 50,000 asylum applications were received, about half of whom were recognized as refugees. Because of Turkey's geographical limitation on the 1951 Convention, the majority of the recognized refugees continued to be resettled outside of Turkey. Those whose applications are rejected were supposed to be deported to their countries of origin, but many went underground and stayed in Turkey or tried to move on to European countries "illegally" (Icduygu and Kirisci 2009b).

According to UNHCR statistics⁶, just before the start of Syrian refugee flows in mid-2011, there were nearly 19,000 registered refugees (including asylum seekers) in Turkey, the majority of whom were from Afghanistan (19%), Iran (25%), Iraq (38%) and Somalia (10%). It seemed that in 2011 apart from the newly arriving Syrian refugees, there were over 6,000 newly arrived asylum seekers consisting of 2,000 Iranians, more than 1,500 Afghans, nearly 1,000 Iraqis, and 500 Somalis. Out of these refugee flows, male refugees significantly outnumbered female refugees, making up 58 per cent of the total. Almost two-thirds of the refugee population in Turkey were of working age (18-59), while nearly 30 per cent of them were aged below 18, and 3 per cent were over the age of 60.

Over the last five years, in the period of 2011-16, there have been some remarkable changes within this refugee population in the country. Of course, the major transformation has emerged as a result of the mass flows of Syrian refugees. However, if one excludes the unique case of Syrians, there have still been significant changes; the number of registered refugees (including asylum seekers) in Turkey increased substantially, from 19,000 in mid-2011 to 271,000 in mid-2016. For instance, the number of refugees from Afghanistan was multiplied by 31 times, the number from Iraq was multiplied by 17 times, and the numbers from other countries also rose considerably.

In 2016, the vast majority of non-Syrian registered refugees in Turkey were from three major countries: Afghanistan (40%), Iran (10%), and Iraq (45%). It appeared that men were more numerous than women (165,851 men versus 105,615 women, for a sex ratio of 61 to 39 per cent), a marked change over the preceding five years. There was no change at all in the age

⁵ Compiled by Icduygu and Kirisci and published in their volume (Icduygu & Kirisci, 2009a).

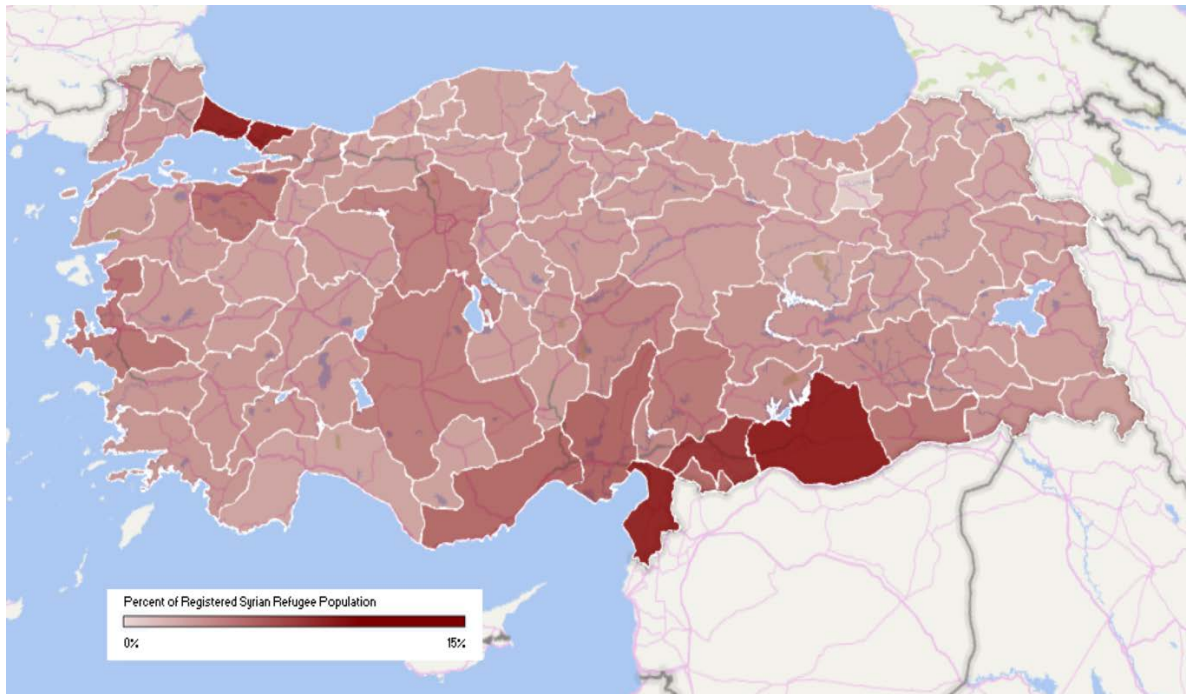
⁶ See the webpage of UNHCR Turkey, <http://www.unhcr.org/turkey/home.php>.

distribution of the refugee population: nearly two-thirds were of working age (18-59), while nearly 31 per cent were aged below 18 and only two per cent were over the age of 60.

The arrival of Syrian refugees from 2011 to the present brought a dramatic change to the general scene of the refugee population in Turkey. The country experienced a gradual increase in the number of Syrian refugees, from few thousands in 2011 to a quarter million in 2013. This figure then rose to 1.5 million in 2014 and to 2.5 in 2015. There was stabilization in the increasing numbers of Syrians in the country towards the end of 2015 through 2016, but still with a steady growth, the figure in mid-2016 reached over 2.7 million (Icduygu and Millet 2016).

In the initial period of the refugee influx to Turkey, Syrian refugees were hosted in the camps located in south-eastern Turkey close to the Syrian border. However, when their numbers reached to hundreds of thousands in 2013 and the camps failed to accommodate the continuously increasing number of refugees, urban centres in the south-eastern Turkey followed by city centres in other parts of the country began to attract refugee settlements. Consequently, as the Syrian refugees seem to now be scattered all over Turkey, their density differs from one region to another (see the Map 1). The most populated regions are south-eastern and southern regions, which share borders with Syria, hosting about 38 per cent and 29 per cent of the total Syrian population respectively. The northern and eastern regions are the least populated, hosting only around one per cent of the total refugee population. The western region hosts about four per cent, and the central region seven per cent. The north-western region, where Istanbul, the country's biggest metropolitan city, is located, appears to host a significant share with 20 per cent of the total Syrian refugee population.⁷

⁷ The Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management. http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik. Last updated 28/06/2016. Accessed on June 29, 2016

Map 1: Distribution of Syrian Refugees

Source of the data: The Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management.

http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik. Last updated 28/06/2016. Accessed on June 29, 2016

While the camp refugees from Syria make up less than 10 per cent of the total Syrian refugee population, the majority of Syrians are living outside of the camps as urban refugees. The divide between urban and camp populations raises different challenges for each group. Although more services are available⁸, camps seem to be a short-term answer to the needs of refugees, and as the space and resources within the camps dwindle and returning home remains unlikely, the camp population will need to eventually move towards integration outside the camps. However, the unfamiliarity with the local communities and the dependency on services easily available within the camps makes the camp population's integration prospect much more challenging than those already living an urban life. On the other hand, while urban refugees' integration prospects are higher compared to camp refugees, a great number of urban refugees outside the camps need better access to services such as, housing, education and healthcare (Erdogan and Unver, 2015; Erdogan, 2014).

As far as the urban refugees are concerned, the poor access to services, such as education and health, naturally point out numerous problems with the current systems in place, especially in areas in which Syrian populations constitute a significant share of the total urban population. In this context, two cities provide us with revealing examples: Kilis, where refugees constitute 49 per cent of the total city population, and Hatay with 20 per cent.⁹ These high percentages exert

⁸ For instance, there is staggering differences in the numbers of children attending school in and outside of the camp population: about 80 per cent of children are in school in camps whereas only 27 per cent of children are in school living in urban areas (Culbertson and Constant, 2015). AFAD's study reported the use of health services is over 90 per cent of the camp population and 60 per cent of the urban refugees (AFAD, 2013).

⁹ Source of the data: The Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management. http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik. Data from 28/06/2016. Accessed on June 29, 2016.

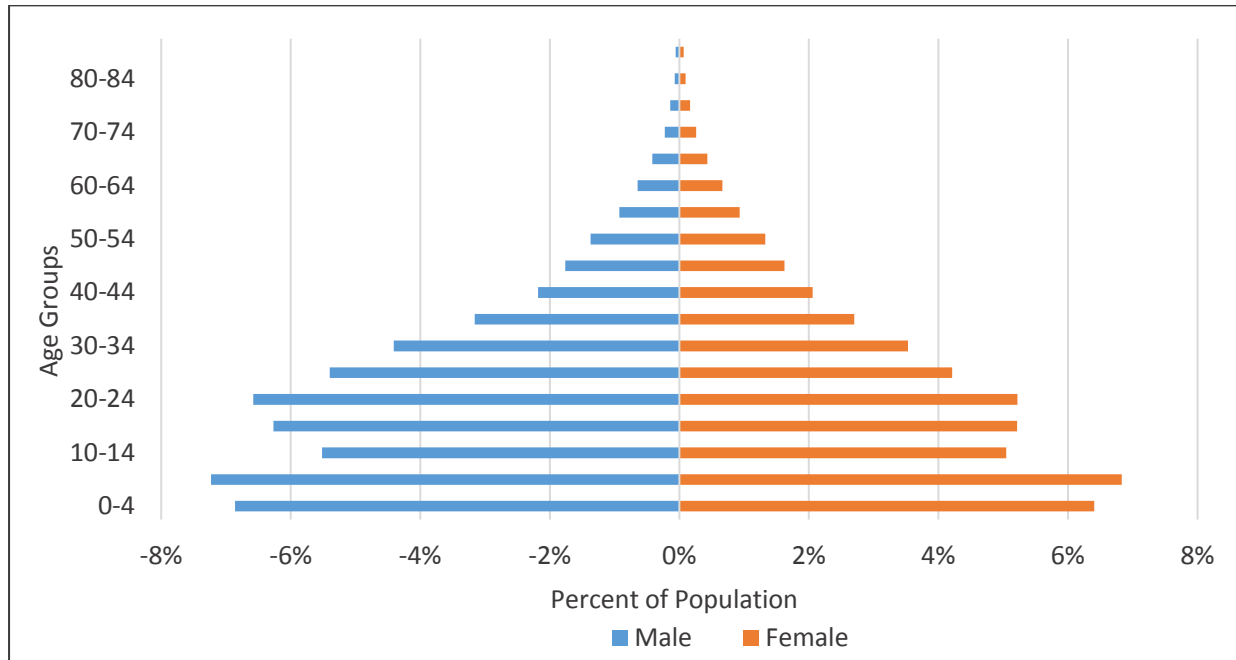
massive effects on the local surroundings. Effects on local housing markets are often the first outcomes that emerge, since accommodation is the most basic and fundamental need for the displaced. For instance, an ORSAM report points out that Syrians mostly live in poor neighbourhoods in efforts to find affordable housing, and often numerous families share one unit (Orhan and Gündoğar, 2015). The report also spotlights that some local communities construct illegal buildings for refugees to rent and that many landlords prefer Syrian renters, to whom they can charge higher monthly rent, which increases living costs both for the refugees and natives in the host community. The issues of increases in rental prices and irregular housing settings will likely continue to be a problem during the transition of the camp population into urban life and the further integration of refugees nationwide and should therefore also be tackled with new policies and regulations.

A closer look at the age structure of the Syrian refugee population will also help policy makers to better understand the challenges and opportunities they face and adjust new policies to suit their needs. For instance, the age distribution among the refugees reflects a young population, with the percentage of ages between 0-19 at 49 per cent, ages between 20-64 at another 49 per cent, and the per cent of Syrians at age 65 and above at only two per cent. It is estimated that the number of children aged between 0-4 is over 362,000, and more than half of them were born in Turkey (See Figure 4).¹⁰

The age make-up points out two important issues that should be addressed. First, there are a huge number of school age children. The school enrolment in 2014 indicates that the enrolment rates in camps (80 per cent) are high compared to those in the urban population (27 per cent) as mentioned earlier (Culbertson and Constant, 2015). The small enrolment rates may be a problem once camp life comes to an end along the way of the integration process. There are numerous other complications that should also be addressed relating to school attendance. Public school system courses are conducted in Turkish¹¹. Therefore, language barriers, together with the limited capacity of schools, pose serious challenges for the education of refugee children and youth. The class sizes in most of the refugee-receiving cities have been known to be high even before the mass influx they faced, and enrolling more children in school is creating inefficient teaching for both Syrian and Turkish children. Differences in Syrian and Turkish curriculum add even more complications to enrolment.

¹⁰ Source of the data: The Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management. http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik. Data from 28/06/2016. Accessed on June 29, 2016.

¹¹ Migration literature emphasizes the importance of education in native language. However, education in the native languages of minorities is currently not allowed in Turkey, which has been a long debated argument, especially among Kurdish communities that have been seeking legal framework for education in Kurdish. Therefore, offering education in Arabic would also mean that education in other languages must be available, and given the political stand of the current government, this outcome is not likely to occur.

Figure 4: Age Pyramid of Registered Syrians Under Temporary Protection (June, 2016)

Source of the data: The Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management. http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik. Last updated 28/06/2016. Accessed on June 29, 2016

Secondly, the large share of working age population is an important source of human capital. Turkey faces two choices; it will either enjoy the new human capital resources by improving their integration process and benefit from their contribution, or else it will create a risky population seeking jobs in the informal sector. As it will be discussed in the next section, Turkey took an important but delayed step by passing a new legislation that allows foreigners under temporary protection status to legally work.¹² The number of applications and permits granted are not publicly announced yet, but officials have addressed the importance of dissemination of the regulation, signalling a lower number of initial applications than expected.

Lastly, another way of looking at the age distribution is that the 40 per cent of the population (aged between 0-14 and age at 65 and older) is dependent on 60 per cent (aged between 15-64), which again reveals the fact that there is an urgent need for the inclusion of this 60 per cent to become a productive population that can provide and support their needs and the needs of their dependents if any.

The gender structure of refugees is another dimension that should be addressed in detail. According to UNHCR, 46 per cent of non-Syrian registered refugees are women (as of January 2016). This share is 47 per cent for the Syrian population living in Turkey (as of June 2016, according to DGMM). Specifically, there are approximately 1.27 million registered Syrian refugee women living in and out of camps. Unfortunately, violence against refugee women is becoming a growing concern. The most commonly reported problem among women is the trauma induced by gender-based and sexual violence experienced in the conflict areas during their journey or in

¹² The regulation on work permits for Syrians who are under “temporary protection” passed in January 2016; see Section 4 for more detailed information on the regulation.

Turkey. Incidences of forced early marriage among Syrian girls, unofficial marriages with Syrian women by Turkish men taking on multiple wives and sex trafficking cases have also been reported by international and Turkish NGOs¹³. There are projects that are designed to guide, support and empower refugee women and girls and provide vocational training to encourage them to pursue career paths in various fields. One such project is under the “Facility for Refugees in Turkey” program, where 1 million euro ECHO funding has been contracted to the Danish Refugee Council for a project that aims to prevent sexual and gender-based violence in South East Turkey. An additional ECHO funding of 9 million euro has been contracted to UNFPA for a project that supports providing women and girls with access to services that deal with sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

¹³ Please see the following two reports for details: http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/TOO_YOUNG_TO_WED_REPORT_0714.PDF and [http://istanbul.mazlumder.org/webimage/files/The%20Report%20on%20Syrian%20Women%20Refugees\(1\).pdf](http://istanbul.mazlumder.org/webimage/files/The%20Report%20on%20Syrian%20Women%20Refugees(1).pdf).

4. RELEVANT INTEGRATION POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Since the Turkish state does not formally recognize the fact that the country has turned into a country of immigration where a growing number of migrants and refugees tend to settle down, it is hard to claim that there are officially formulated comprehensive integration policies towards the incorporation of migrants and refugees into the wider societal context of the country. Most of the public and policy debates on the integration of migrants and refugees have appeared as a product of Turkey's EU affairs, which require the harmonization of related regulation to *the EU acquis* (Icduygu and Ustubici, 2014). However, this did not have any concrete formulation of integration policies until the legislative arrangement of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) in 2013. Article 96 of the LFIP, deliberately using the term "harmonization" instead of "integration", reflects a very cautious approach to the integration issues.¹⁴ Consequently, the laws regarding labour market integration for foreigners have been rather weak due to the fact that Turkey was more of an emigration country as well as a transit country rather than an immigrant country. The shift in the migration patterns towards more immigration coupled with the context of the accession negotiations with the EU have resulted in new legislation efforts since 2000 in Turkey's immigration laws and regulations. Accordingly, regulations for labour market access for foreigners and refugees are gradually improving. The Law on Work Permits for Foreigners (LWPF), passed in 2003, and later the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP), passed in 2013, dealt with the regulation of foreigners' status and work permits but were not enough to provide work permits for many migrants.

The Law on Work Permits for Foreigners of 2003 was the central legislative change regarding the economic activities of foreigners (Icduygu and Sert, 2009). Important changes included in this law were that work permits would be granted considering labour market demands instead of nationality, work permits could be granted to individuals rather than companies, and the process of acquisition would be institutionalized giving the Ministry of Labour and Social Security exclusive authority. This law targeted the employment of foreign workers in the sectors where there is demand for labour but no supply of labour by the native population, but it does not grant any right of work directly to refugees.

The latter 2013 Law on Foreigners and International Protection (No. 6458) contains very few new regulations on work permits and integration of foreigners into the labour market (Cicekli, 2016). The law introduced a long-term residence permit for foreigners who have stayed at least eight years uninterruptedly in Turkey. Additionally, the permanent residence permit grants all rights of a Turkish citizen to the holder except for the right to vote, be elected, enter into public service, and import vehicles with tax exemption. One of the most important sections of the law concerns the regulations on International Protection. With regard to accessing the labour market, the law allows applicants for international protection or conditional refugees including those under subsidiary protection to apply for a work permit six months after their international protection claim. However, under certain circumstances concerning the situation of the labour market and developments in the working life, this access to the labour market could be restricted

¹⁴ Article 96 of the LFIP refers to planning of "harmonization activities in order to facilitate mutual harmonization between foreigners, applicants and international protection beneficiaries and the society as well as to equip them with the knowledge and skills to be independently active in all areas of social life without the assistance of third persons in Turkey or in the country to which they are resettled or in their own country". It also refers to the organization of "courses where the basics of political structure, language, legal system, culture and history of Turkey are explained, and some other courses related to access to public and private goods and services, access to education and economic activities, social and cultural communications, and access to primary healthcare services and, awareness and information activities through distant learning and similar means in cooperation with public institutions and agencies and non-governmental organisations".

for a given period, except for those refugees and subsidiary protection beneficiaries who have been residing in Turkey for three or more years, are married to Turkish citizens or have children with Turkish citizenship.

Even though these laws helped the employment of non-Syrian refugees, they were not responding well to the needs of millions of Syrian refugees. Almost five years after their arrival in Turkey, the Regulation on the Work Permit of Foreigners under Temporary Protection passed in January 2016.¹⁵ According to the regulation, Syrian refugees can apply to the Labour Ministry for work permits six months after their registration as "under temporary protection" status. Applications are to be made online by their employer. If the individual will work independently, then the applications will be made by the foreigner under temporary protection for themselves. There are two important aspects of the law: first, the employees cannot be paid less than minimum wage; secondly, the number of refugees under temporary protection is not to surpass ten per cent of the number of Turkish citizen employees. The number of applications for working permits has not yet been made public, but hopefully this right to work will decrease the interest in the informal sector. The effect of the new labour force on Turkish labour markets will be better measured once employment in the informal sector moves to the formal sector.

Following the regulation for those under temporary protection, a further law, the International Labour Force Law (Law No: 6735) was passed in July 2016, which considers all migrants. According to this law, foreigners can receive a work permit valid for one year, which will be extended with each renewed application. Foreigners who hold long term residence permits or legal work permits for at least eight years have the right to apply for indefinite work permits. Those with indefinite work permits will have the same rights granted to Turkish citizens with the exception of the right to vote, stand for election or public service, and military service liabilities.

The most important aspect of this new law is that it aims to attract highly skilled workers to protect and increase productivity. In other words, unlike the previous regulations, the law employs a selective policy on the qualifications of immigrants to determine who will enter the Turkish labour market (Cizmeci, 2016). Personal factors such as education level and professional experience; a prioritization towards contributions to science and technology; and activities and investments that have positive effects on the Turkish economy and employment are to be considered when granting the new *Turquoise Card* permits (Cizmeci, 2016). Therefore, the presentation of the *Turquoise Card* system means that the International Labour Force Law introduces managed migration that considers the need for a strong Turkish labour force.

In summary, Turkey has taken a number of steps during the last five years towards regulations that aim to create an attractive economic environment and to facilitate the application process of work permission for foreigners as part of the policies and practices of inclusion of migrants and refugees into the wider societal environment in the country.

In a broader perspective, the evolution of the integration process depends on many different factors besides those explained above. The Settlement Law of 2006 reserves the right to permanent settlement in Turkey only to persons of Turkish descent and culture (Icduygu, 2015). In addition, Turkey's geographical limitation included in the 1951 Refugee Convention precludes non-European asylum seekers from permanent settlement in Turkey. These two legislative reservations accord refugees with a temporary protection status that disqualifies them from the prospect of long-term integration as a durable solution. With the vast majority of refugees

¹⁵ Turkey grants asylum rights only to Europeans following the geographical limitation to 1951 Geneva Convention. Therefore, forced migrants coming from Syria are not entitled the refugee status. In order to grant them certain rights Turkish government defined their status as those "under temporary protection".

coming from non-European countries, Turkey had not felt obliged to develop a national integration policy until the ratification of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) that, for the first time, included provisions on migrant integration in April 2013¹⁶. Hence, referred to as “harmonization” in the Turkish context¹⁷, the integration of non-European asylum-seekers is a new concept in Turkey. Following the eruption of Syria’s humanitarian crisis, international aid channelled towards the country fuelled the number of projects attempting to facilitate the integration of Syrians. Among them, the most common approach is through establishing community centres in areas with large Syrian populations. International organizations including UN agencies, BPRM, ECHO as well as international NGOs such as DRC and Mercy Corps have funded community centre projects that are usually implemented by their local Turkish counterparts.

Previous integration research suggests that migrants and refugees continue to face barriers in accessing education system and health services, and in having decent housing, even when they are in employment. They are often more at risk of poverty or social exclusion compared to host-country nationals. Refugees are exposed to a particularly high risk of exclusion. Therefore, well-established comprehensive integration policies will need to cater for the migrants and refugees, in particular to provide for their immediate needs concerning education, health, and housing.

Education services for foreigners became especially important with the increasing refugee population in Turkey. In fact, education-related national Turkish legislation states that all children, including a foreign national have the right to benefit from “basic education” for free. Basic education, which is up to grade 12, is mandatory under Turkish law. Even though the right to education is available for all, Syrian refugees had difficulties to enrol their children into public school system, mainly because of lack of any clear regulation indicating the formal procedures for the enrolment of the students. It appears that there have also been practical limitations such as language barriers and lack of spaces in the classrooms. Growing concerns about education of Syrian children have led to the release of Turkish Ministry of Education Circular No: 2014/21 on “Education Services for Foreign Nationals” of 23 September 2014. The circular aimed to guide and better frame the application process for the access to education services for all migrant children and specified particular options for Syrian refugees’ children. First, the circular states the establishment of Ministerial and Provincial commissions to publish reports that focus on the educational needs of foreigners and provide coordination between civil society organizations and/or international organizations (stakeholders) and public institutions. Moreover, Provincial commissions in particular are responsible for guiding and carrying out foreigners’ application process for educational services. They determine the educational institutions that the children will attend on the basis of diplomas and education certificates they hold.

Another option for the children of Syrian refugees besides public schools is to enrol into Temporary Education Centres (TECs), which are available in urban areas and in some refugee camps.¹⁸ TECs follow modified Syrian curriculum and are taught in Arabic. In fact, the need for such centres mostly arose because of the language barriers the children face in public schools as mentioned before. These centres are monitored by Provincial Commissions in order to take

¹⁶ https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/media/BP-2014-TurkMis-Turkey_New_Law_Foreigners-1.pdf

¹⁷ “This is felt to have a more innocuous meaning in Turkish and therefore better reflects the aim of the Turkish approach which is to understand the indigenous-migrant interaction as a dynamic two-way relationship in which migrants are not confined to a passive role regarding issues which relate to them” (Acikgoz and Ariner, 2014: p.22-23).

¹⁸ Please note that the curricular grants the right to enrol into the temporary education centres to all foreigners who come to our country with mass influx which applies to Syrian refugees in particular given the migrant groups in Turkey.

the necessary measures for the implementation of certain courses and trainings such as teaching Turkish, providing extensive vocational training, arranging social and cultural activities. Furthermore, the Ministry Commission provides coordination with civil society institutions and/or international institutions to help the educational needs of foreigners coming to our country in masses including the practices in TECs. For instance, UNICEF is providing incentives to Syrian voluntary teachers and training them on pedagogical techniques, classroom management, and psycho-social support. Even though the Syrian families opt to enrol their children to these TECs because the students attending these centres share the same culture and language, challenges still exist (Jalbout, 2015).¹⁹ The most important caveat is that some TECs are not accredited by Turkish government due to low quality of teaching (Jalbout, 2015). The travel costs to these centres seem to be a problem for urban refugees (for this reason IOM is providing transportation service to school for urban refugees in some areas).²⁰

With regard to access to health services, Temporary Protection Regulation of 2014 ensures that Syrians under temporary protection have right to benefit from health services and that health services will be provided under the control and responsibility of the Ministry of Health in coordination with AFAD. The circular 2014/4 and the circular 2015/8 published by AFAD regulated the accession processes and the coverage of services available to Syrian refugees. These circulars state that the refugees that are not registered to DGMM cannot benefit from health services other than emergency services and first level health services (i.e. in case of contagious diseases) (Gulay, 2016). Registered refugees have access to all health services provided in the providence they are registered and they need referral for health facilities in other providence.

An important problem for the refugees is the language barriers with health care providers. The work permit for foreign health professionals since the beginning of 2016 aimed to help this problem. In particular, Syrian medical staff can work after the approval of the Ministry of Health and serve Syrian patients in mainly Migrant Health Centres and in health facilities of the refugee camps.²¹ Migrant Health Centres are established by Ministry of Health in order to provide health care services such as outpatient, maternal and child health, health education and vaccination services to refugees under temporary protection.²² The services provided in these centres use collaboration of international organizations as well. For instance, WHO is training refugee doctors and nurses for their smooth adaptation in the Turkish health system. They are organizing trainings and workshops in collaboration with Ministry of Health on specific issues related to Syrian refugees and expanding their outreach WHO will be responsible for supporting six of these centres that are located in areas densely populated with Syrians. IOM is also active in this field by funding two multi-purpose community centres and a primary health clinic in Istanbul through its implementing partner NGOs: IBC (International Blue Crescent) and SSG (Syria Social Gathering), Doctors Worldwide Turkey (DWWT).²³

Lastly, it must be noted that currently there are no public housing opportunities besides refugee

¹⁹ See 3RP (Regional Refugee Resilience Plan) Turkey Monthly Updates, March 2016.
<https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/documents.php?page=1&view=grid&Org%5B%5D=251>.

²⁰ See 3RP (Regional Refugee Resilience Plan) Turkey Monthly Updates, March 2016.
<https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/documents.php?page=1&view=grid&Org%5B%5D=251>.

²¹ See 3RP (Regional Refugee Resilience Plan) Turkey Monthly Updates, June 2016.
<https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/documents.php?page=1&view=grid&Org%5B%5D=251>.

²² See 3RP (Regional Refugee Resilience Plan) Turkey Monthly Updates, July 2016.
<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/TurkeyHealth3RPDashboard2016JulyCompiledVer02.pdf>.

²³ See 3RP (Regional Refugee Resilience Plan) Turkey Monthly Updates, July 2016.
<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/TurkeyHealth3RPDashboard2016JulyCompiledVer02.pdf>.

camps in Turkey. Syrians coming to Turkey who are intending to remain outside the camps can live in any providence they prefer, but they have to register in the city they reside in order to access public services. Therefore, those who choose to live outside the camps need to provide their housing expenses themselves. Although the Deputy Prime Minister announced the possibility of long-term instalment to purchase TOKI housing (Housing Development Administration) in July 2016, there has been no legislation on the subject yet.

The necessity of a public-funded housing and shelter mechanism arises with the fact that the majority of refugees live outside the camps. The most important reason why Syrians prefer to live outside the camps is that they do not want to restrict their freedom. However, living outside the camps has its own difficulties, including finding affordable housing. Families with limited finances often cluster around the poor neighbourhoods, some in the slums and some families have to live together in small houses under unhealthy conditions.²⁴ The increase in the demand for rentals in the areas that Syrians live drive conditions down even more. Therefore, better regulations on rental rates and public housing systems should be improved.

To conclude, even though there are still problems in the integration process of refugees, the integration policies on access to labour markets, education and health services are gradually improving. Policies with long term solutions are needed in each of these areas. The problem of refugees' housing opportunities is also in dire need of addressing due to a current lack of public policies that focus on the settlement of refugees in urban areas to avoid increases in rental prices and irregular housing settings.

²⁴ Serkan, Erincik. Working paper, Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Sığınmacıların Barınma Hakları Ve Barınma Sorununa Yönelik Politikalarının Değerlendirilmesi. Available at http://www.academia.edu/22792504/TÜRKİYE_DEKİ_SURİYELİ_SİĞINMACILARIN_BARINMA_HAKLARI_VE_BARINMA_SORUNUNA_YÖNELİK_POLİTİKALARININ_DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ.

5. EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SITUATION OF REFUGEES IN TURKEY AND IMPACT ON THE TURKISH LABOUR MARKET

The governance of unexpectedly large numbers of forced Syrian refugees' prolonged stay coupled with the regular and irregular migrants already residing in Turkey has not been easy. The *employment and social inclusion of refugees* and the related *legal framework* affected the evolution of each other. Recently, policy makers seem to focus on the integration policies and regulations on the labour market more than the social inclusion of refugees. Perhaps the realisation of the fact that the growing number of refugees also offer human capital that can contribute to sustainable development through carefully planned regulations was one of the reason for this new focus. This way, while governing the mass migration that the country faces, the government could also respond to the needs of the Turkish labour market. Looking at the new regulations explained earlier, it can be seen that a particular attention is given to attract a skilled labour force. These strategic moves, which tend to realize the possible positive contribution of refugee movements into the country's economy, seem to be helpful to reduce the negative populist reaction towards the settlement of refugees.

In general, refugees, together with irregular migrants, are mostly employed in domestic and care services, entertainment, sex work, construction, and the leather and textile industry (Icduygu, 2004). A large share of them, especially those low skilled refugees and not surprisingly refugees who do not have right to work, are working in the informal sector. Both demand and supply-based factors contribute to the increasing employment opportunities of refugees and irregular migrants in various sectors. Traditionally for instance, care services have been provided by female members of the families. Yet, while the demand for such services is growing, more women are graduating from universities and starting work in professional jobs in Turkey. This gap between demand and supply in care services seem to be filled by refugees and irregular migrants (Toksoz et al., 2012). Another sector that meets the supply of the refugee labour force is the agriculture sector as seasonal workers. Particularly, Syrian refugees seem to be substituted for native workers. Because of the involvement of refugees' in the informal sector it is hard to assess their effect on the Turkish labour market.

Understanding the effects of the arrival of refugees on the labour market is an important task but is very difficult to analyse by the very nature of undocumented economic activities. There are some recent studies that examine the impact of Syrian refugees on Turkish labour market as it has created an unexpected shock to the labour market in the country. For instance, Balkan and Tumen (2016) find that with the arrival of Syrians, the wages in the informal sector have declined by four per cent while there has been no significant effect on the formal sector. Also, Akgunduz et al. (2015) finds no significant effect on the native workers' employment rates in the formal sector. Furthermore, Ceritoglu et al. (2015), and Balkan and Tumen (2016) suggest that local workers are replaced by Syrian refugees in informal sectors. Similarly, Del Carpio and Wagner (2015) also find that the entrance of Syrians in the informal sector as a new source of labour seem to displace a large scale of Turkish workers regardless of their gender, age and education. These studies support the observation that refugees are intensively employed in the informal sector, and therefore they have no significant effect in the formal unemployment rates and prices. Moreover, they support the idea that refugee workers are substituted for native workers in low-skilled sectors such as construction and agriculture.

It is important to acknowledge that the "limbo" status of refugees, which often comes from their "ill-defined legal positions" in Turkey, causes employers to take advantage of the vulnerability of refugees who often agree to work under conditions that would be refused by the local labour

force. Major issues such as long working hours, working under unhealthy conditions and not being paid on time or in full arise for the migrants who do not have work permits. Another important point that should be addressed is the increase in child labour. Even though the problem existed prior to the mass immigration flow, the problem worsened after the Syrian refugees' arrival. The reason is that families who escape from their country could not afford their basic needs and did not have the right to work and therefore engage in informal activities such as having their children work. In order to prevent child labour The Ministry of Family and Social Policies offers *conditional cash transfers*, a program that offers families who are eligible a fixed cash subsidy in exchange for the attendance of their child in school in cities. Officials follow the attendance of these children to avoid the misuse of this offer. While such programs can be of use, the problems that the labour markets face due to the illegal activities in the informal sector are not easy to solve, and more effective integration policies and monitoring are needed to lessen the engagement of refugees in the informal sector.

On the formal sector side, there is significant interest in the foreign labour force in Turkey, with 64,547 work permits given to foreigners in 2015 alone. The top 5 nationalities granted work permits are Georgia (8,524), Ukrainian (6,023), Kyrgyzstan (4,274), Syria (4,019) and Turkmenistan (3,323).²⁵ The low number of Syrian applications/permissions could be seen rather surprising when compared to the high number of Syrians living in the country. However, one must note that as it is noted earlier, the regulation on work permits for Syrians who are under "temporary protection" passed only very recently in January 2016. Those migrants coming from Ukrainian, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan are mostly employed in the domestic sector and construction. They often stay in the country temporarily for a few years to save money and then go back to their home country.

In addition to offering a potential labour force, refugee population also functions as consumers who need goods and services which in turn would increase the production and stimulate the economy. For instance, Erdoğan (2014) reports that there have been increasing economic activities and rising cash circulation in the provinces of the southeast Turkey where there is a heavy concentration of Syrian refugees for the last five years.

Even though policy makers concentrate on the employment of refugees and its effects on labour markets, the integration practices in education and health began to gain importance. The recent concern in education originated with the increasing number Syrian refugee children who are out of school. According to DGMM the number of Syrians school age children is about 625,000 and 10 per cent of them are at the pre-school level, 35 per cent at the elementary, 27 per cent at middle school and 28 per cent at high school (Emin, 2016, p.16). The figures taken from Ministry of National Education show that only 290,403 Syrian children are enrolled in the 2015-2016 academic year which indicates a huge number of children are still out of school (Emin, 2016, p.16).

With regard to access to health services, the prolonged stay of Syrian refugees emerged the importance of easy access to health services other than the emergency and first level of health problems. There is substantial number of Syrian refugees who need medical attention at different level. For instance, over a total of a half million Syrian patients from refugee camps was referred to hospitals and the hospitals' capacities at bordering cities are reaching their limits (Orhan and Gundogar, 2015). Furthermore, according to Ministry of Health, over 35 thousand births took place by Syrians in Turkey (Orhan and Gundogar, 2015). The need for vaccination of these newborns alone reveals the importance of health care. New regulations and work permit for

²⁵ The statistics are taken from Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

Syrian medical staff to serve their natives aim to help the shortage of medical assistance and language barriers for them.

In Turkey, integration policies and practices are not limited to public activities. NGO projects and their practices are also active and became widely common during the last few years. But almost all the programs and practices predominantly target the Syrian population rather than all refugees. The main program areas of NGOs and INGOs for urban refugee population include humanitarian aid, cash assistance, psycho-social support, legal counselling, health care, education (including language courses, computer literacy courses, supporting schooling procedure of children), vocational training, culture and art activities, awareness raising campaigns, organization of conferences, workshops and trainings (Kutlu, 2016). There are programs that target the camp populations as well. Since the beginning of the crisis, the government of Turkey took full responsibility of funding and managing the camps through its national disaster agency AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency). Under the overall guidance of AFAD, few NGOs, namely IHH (Humanitarian Relief Foundation) and Kızılay (Turkish Red Crescent) were given access to the camps along with UNHCR in 2012 and some other UN agencies on a very limited basis. Some of the examples on the practices of UNHCR is organizing events to raise awareness about work permit regulations and livelihoods opportunities. UNHCR supplies teaching material and child friendly school kits to community centres which the content of the material is developed by DGMM (Directorate General of Migration Management). UNHCR is also delivering wheelchairs and winterization items to the camps as well as urban settlements.²⁶

As part of EU's commitment to provide 3 billion euro in financial assistance to Turkey under the "Facility for Refugees in Turkey", 1.2 billion euro has been contracted to various UN Agencies and international organizations including UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, UNFPA, Danish Refugee Council, Concern Worldwide, IOM, Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD), Search for Common Ground, and Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)²⁷. Turkish civil society organizations are involved in the process mainly as sub-contractors. The EU Regional Trust Fund, in response to the Syrian crisis, has allocated 36 million euro to UNICEF, out of which 33 million has been spent on the education of Syrian refugee children. Another 2.7 million under the EU Trust Fund has been contracted to Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) for "providing opportunities and perspectives for Syrian refugees in higher and further education sectors (scholarships, credit-based courses, personal and virtual education and language classes)". Under IPA funding, 300 million euro has been contracted directly with the Ministry of National Education to be spent for educational purposes such as language training in both Turkish and Arabic as well as providing stationery, educational materials, clothing and transportation services. Moreover, a measurement system will be developed to monitor the achievements of Syrian students. IPA funding also supports other projects on health services, socio-economic support, municipal infrastructure and project preparation facility.

It appeared that the initial stages of the refugee flows and settlements in Turkey required more specific direct interventions such as humanitarian aid and cash assistance to the refugees. Hence not only the Turkish state but also other giving actors, various nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations engaged in such interventions. However, when all evidence

²⁶ See 3RP (Regional Refugee Resilience Plan) Turkey Monthly Updates. <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/documents.php?page=1&view=grid&Org%5B%5D=25>.

²⁷ See http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news_corner/migration/20160928-frit-table-website.pdf and http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news_corner/migration/factsheet_financing_of_the_facility_for_refugees_in_turkey_en.pdf for details.

pointed to Syrians' protracted displacement, it was seen that the continuation of "cash aid type" arrangements would increase refugees' dependence and prevent them from becoming active contributors in local economies. In this context, providing refugees with employment opportunities is very key to their well-being and welfare of communities they live in.

6. CURRENT ISSUES AND POLICY DEBATE

Turkey has been both an “affected” and “effective” country in relation to Syrian refugee issues (Keyman, 2016). It is affected, because it hosts around three million refugees and carries the burden of a regional conflict. It is effective, because it continues to provide protection and integration facilities to the refugees, and it buffers the spill-over effect of this conflict, including refugee flows that already tend to permeate. While demonstrating the development of these capabilities over the last five years, Turkey’s policy landscape continues to be transformed as the political and the refugee crises intertwine with security issues. The question of the incorporation of refugees into receiving communities, namely the issue of integration, is becoming a consistently rising public and policy debate across Turkey.

When manifested in a speech of the Turkish President Erdoğan, for instance, when he said that Syrian refugees living in Turkey could eventually be granted citizenship, related debates either genuinely promoted the idea as an important step for the integration of Syrian refugees into Turkish society, or they were strongly opposite to it, often referring to the idea that citizenship must be realized only after full integration. Although the details of the official move towards citizenship are not yet known, and the proposal is currently very immature and involves various uncertainties, it indicates that Turkish policy makers circuitously accept the likelihood of a process in which the protracted displacement of Syrians turns into their long-term, and even permanent, settlement (Icduygu and Millet, 2016).

With a trembling debate on the acquisition of citizenship for Syrians, it seems that Turkish policy makers mainly, and the Turkish public partially, have passed a threshold. After a long engagement on the immediate humanitarian needs of refugees under the temporary protection scheme, the incorporation of refugees into Turkish society has become seen as crucial as time passed, and the permanency of settlement has emerged as one of the unintended consequences of the protracted displacements. Although the protracted nature of refugee settlement has been widely recognized by the discourses of state elites and policy makers, the status of Syrian refugees is still not legally stable. In legal terms, Syrian refugees are currently under “temporary protection status”, which provides them with an access to health, education, and social and legal assistance through a provisional identity card. This *ad hoc* status, which applies to Syrian refugees only, does not however grant them internationally recognised refugee status and will not lead to permanent settlement and citizenship rights. Hence there is a long-standing call for an urgent need to clearly redefine the status of Syrian refugees, as well as refugees of other nationalities, in Turkey, considering the likelihood of permanent settlement (Icduygu, 2015).

As more than five years has passed since the eruption of Syrian refugee flows and as the considerable numbers reached to nearly three million, integration has been one of the issues brought to the forefront in relation to refugees’ access to rights and entitlements, their future stay in Turkey and their participation in society. However, the position of Turkey’s legal framework towards the integration of immigrants and refugees is widely questionable. For instance, according to the MIPEX held by Turkish experts²⁸, even after adoption of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP), Turkish legislation is unfavourable towards integration and ranks below the other MIPEX countries, scoring only 25-out-of-100 points. Similarly, MIPEX scores indicate that the policies are unfavourable towards labour market mobility, education, and political participation; and settled immigrants face not only a slightly unfavourable path to citizenship, as in several new countries of immigration, but also one of the

²⁸ See <http://www.mipex.eu/turkey>.

least favourable paths to simply a long-term residence permit, far below EU standards. These scores illustrate the shortcomings of the LFIP in providing necessary legal infrastructure for the social and economic integration of migrants and refugees. In this regard, a practical solution for Turkey would be revising its main related legal documents, including LFIP.

It is widely argued that the integration of refugees into the local labour market is vital to enable them to improve their economic and social status through their own efforts, and for the host communities, to gain more of the potential economic benefits from the demographic capital provided by the refugees. As noted above, however, until recently, labour market policy response in Turkey has largely operated in a direction of restricting refugees' access to labour market, often with a protectionist reflex for the benefit of the native population. Given the large number of refugees, these protectionist positions are unavoidable, but policy needs to also recognize that not everyone will gain from an inflow of refugees. The rising fears of some Turkish people who agree with the assumptions, asserting that "Syrians take our jobs", should not be considered as something baseless (Del Carpio and Wagner, 2015). Hence, Turkey can help mitigate fear and hostility by introducing sociocultural and labour market integration policies.

Initially the refugee-receiving communities in Turkey tended to manage the arrival and settlement of Syrian refugees with considerable hospitality; but given the magnitude and the duration of the humanitarian crisis, it later became clear that this relatively smooth reception would not remain sustainable²⁹. The sum of nearly three million refugees has not been a number that any country could absorb easily, and consequently, Turkey is faced with the very heavy risk of growing tensions between its native citizens and the hosted Syrian refugees. Observers in various parts of the country reported that anxieties have been rising with Syrians due to economic difficulties and social problems posed by the presence of the refugees. For instance, Syrians are blamed for taking away jobs and businesses from natives and for undercutting wages by being prepared to work below the minimum wage without expecting social security³⁰. It is not just in cities near the Syrian border with a high concentration of refugees where confrontations with locals are on the rise. The problem is also spreading to cities far from the Syrian border, which have a better capacity to absorb outsiders due to their large populations. Istanbul, with a population of 15 million, is an illustrative case. Public and official discourse in the city occasionally refers to the possibility of actions to expel Syrians dwelling in and begging on the streets of the city to camps near the Syrian border. Obviously, in order to prevent growing societal tensions over Syrian refugees, there is need to encourage government authorities to formulate long-term integration policies for refugees in general and to devise policies and practices aimed at reducing xenophobic tendencies in the refugee-receiving communities in specific.

The remarkable events in the summer of 2015 indicated that when more and more refugees arrived at the conclusion that they would not have a bright future in some countries of asylum where they sought refuge, including Turkey, they then chose the unsafe, unauthorized path to Europe, where they hoped to start over in a safe, stable environment. The majority of those refugees who tended to move to Europe seemed to be either unemployed after looking for work for a long time or those who were employed in low-skilled, low-paid and often dangerous jobs despite having high levels of education and work experience (Simsek, forthcoming). This was one of the reasons behind the fact that the 2016 EU-Turkey migration deal persuasively drew

²⁹ See the report by Ayla Albayrak, "Tensions Rise Between Syrian Refugees, Turks", The Wall Street Journal, May 12, 2013.

³⁰ Read more: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/07/idiz-turkey-syrian-refugees-local-tension-adana-istanbul.html#ixzz4MX7v8W7s>.

attention to policies and practices to ensure access to the labour market for refugees in need of international protection

The EU-Turkey migration deal does not only verify the necessity of international cooperation in dealing with the mass flows refugees crossing the borders and their consequences for the refugee-hosting communities, it also confirms that international cooperation that involves responsibility sharing might contribute to the facility-building for the integration of refugees into the host communities in Turkey. Based on the deal, the initially allocated €3 billion under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, together with an additional €3 billion to the end of 2018, will be speeding up the programs and investments concerning the economic and social integration of refugees in Turkey.

7. CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

While Turkey has been very generous in providing emergency care for the large inflow of refugees, it now faces the challenge that a vast majority of refugees no longer live in camps but rather in the wider settings of the Turkish neighbourhoods, and consequently they require employment opportunities in order to have a life in dignity and better hope for the future. Syrian refugees in Turkey have not been granted official refugee status, are labelled as “guests” who only enjoy temporary protection, and have been allowed to have work permits only very recently, in early 2016. On the other hand, non-Syrian refugees, who are exclusively from non-European countries and therefore are subject to Turkey’s geographical limitation on the 1951 Convention, are supposed to resettle in third countries and have no or very limited socio-economic rights and no formal access to labour markets. Consequently, although Syrian refugees have some obvious privileges, both Syrian and non-Syrian refugees have shared several severe structural barriers to immigrant employment. Hence, in the case of all refugees, this results in high levels of unemployment, long-term dependency on welfare benefits, and wide range of involvement to informal sector.

As a result, as the overwhelming majority of refugees in Turkey have been pushed to work informally, the economic impact has been felt in the large informal sector, which is neither taxed, nor monitored, and often operates through 3-D (difficult, dangerous, dirty) jobs (Balkan and Tumen, 2016; Del Carpio and Wagner, 2015; Cagaptay, 2014). As informal employment accounts for around one third of paid employment in Turkey, and as an additional 15 per cent of employment consists of unpaid family workers, even after the introduction of the *Regulation on Work Permit of Foreigners Under Temporary Protection*, refugees continued to find their employment widely in the informal sector. These hazardous patterns of employment of refugees have various implications for the wider context of the economy in general, and for the labour market in specific. Some common questions, such as the issues of recognition of qualifications and language proficiency, seem to be main obstacles for the refugees’ labour market integration. Consequently, refugees, who are not able to find proper status in formal labour market, directly contribute to the enlargement of the informal sector.

As far as the impact the flood of refugees has had on the Turkish labour market is concerned, the consequences appears to be mixed (Del Carpio and Wagner, 2015). On the one hand, there is some evidence of large-scale displacement of Turkish workers in informal jobs, particularly replacing women, the low educated and workers in agriculture; on the other hand, there is also evidence for the creation of more formal, higher-paid jobs for Turkish workers due to the inflow of refugees. Problems with the labour market integration of refugees mean that the costs are being borne disproportionately by some of the vulnerable (low-skilled) native workers. They also mean that Turkey may gain the benefits that the most high-skilled and entrepreneurial refugees can bring.

By experiencing these complexities and difficulties in the field of integration and employment of refugees, Turkey has faced with the challenges of developing a comprehensive integration program which considers the centrality of employment in refugee, or immigrant, integration. However, a few internal and external arrangements have to be made while Turkey is effectively developing and operating its own programs for the labour market integration of refugees. First, although it is easily understandable to see the historically and practically established dual system of the current refugee regime in the country which distinguishes Syrians from non-Syrians, regardless of this background, all refugees must gain rights to access the labour market. Second, integration strategies must be multifaceted and have to be supported by efforts in education,

especially with regards to language. Third, precarious employment conditions cannot ever lead to successful integration, therefore towards this end, the related policy-makers and practitioners must be committed to fight precarious employment. Fourth, refugees face specific challenges and barriers in entering the labour market in addition to challenges other migrants commonly face, such as non-acceptance of qualifications or educational attainment, loss of identity documentation and qualification certificates, the long period of inactivity in the asylum system, anxiety over family separation, trauma and uncertainty, and limited social networks; therefore, there must be some particular labour market integration programs which are specifically designed for the refugees. Fifth, the labour market policy response in Turkey has so far naturally and broadly been limited by the activities of the national authorities. With the logic of global governance, various joint efforts from the Turkish government, national and international non-governmental organizations and the international community are required to involve refugees in formalized economic activities and facilitate their social and economic inclusion to the broader communities in Turkey.

As noted in recent report (Icduygu and Millet, 2016), the pressures of such a large number of refugees on Turkey's immature migration system and limited resources, as well as the government's ability to follow its own procedures and live up to the standards of a "country of immigration" are now coming into question on the national and international stages. It appears that two agenda items pose priority: one is, nationally, Turkey has to develop a comprehensive and multifaceted integration program which tackles with descent work, housing, education and health opportunities and services for the refugees and other migrants; and the other is, internationally, Turkey needs solidarity and cooperation with other states, international community, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations to provide resources and services for a better social and economic inclusion of refugees and migrants.

This report examined the main areas where Syrian and non-Syrian refugees in Turkey face challenges during their entry, settlement and integration in the country. It is argued that labour market integration is a key factor towards other forms of integration, but integration must be considered as a multi-faceted phenomenon with all its political, social, cultural, and economic aspects. Below are the main recommendations.

It is recommended that, at the political level, policy makers in Turkey must avoid seeing refugees as temporary guests and must develop certain concrete legal and administrative tools that fully target the integration of refugees into the receiving communities. They must also devise certain policies to raise public awareness about refugee matters and train civil servants on migrants and refugee rights. The authorities in Turkey are also called upon to provide access and opportunities to refugees so that they can take an active part in various social, cultural, political and economic activities in order to integrate themselves into the host communities. With an understanding of multi-level governance, it is recommended that Turkish authorities must be open to collaborative and cooperative efforts with inter-governmental and non-governmental actors in the field.

At the cultural level, in order to meet the expectations and needs of refugees, government authorities and institutions are called upon to promote cultural diversity, educating the communities about refugees. Policies and practices must be designed to respect the cultural diversity and multicultural values; while refugees should respect the host society's culture and social norms, the native population should also develop an understanding of the culture of newly arriving refugees and migrants.

At the social level, to prevent the marginalization of refugees in the receiving communities, the authorities must ensure that both natives and refugees enjoy a reasonable quality of life. There

should not be a calculation of trade-off between the human rights concerns for refugees and the social justice concerns for natives. Policy-makers in Turkey must ensure that refugees and asylum seekers are given similar rights to those enjoyed by citizens, such as educational facilities, housing and healthcare services while at the same time the similar needs of the native population should not be underestimated. It is within this context that, in order to prevent possible societal tensions between natives and refugees, government authorities are called upon to formulate long-term integration policies toward refugees and to devise policies and practices aimed at changing people's attitudes, perceptions, prejudices and stereotypes in order to reduce xenophobic tendencies in the refugee-receiving communities.

Considering the labour market integration of refugees, at an economic level, it is recommended that policy makers in Turkey set up specific policies and practices that provide refugees with better access to education, training, and employment. They must better regulate and facilitate the refugees' access to the formal labour market by either lifting restrictions on the issuing of work permits in order to prevent their entry to the informal labour market, recognising their qualifications acquired abroad, or allocating resources to help bring qualifications to the standard required by institutions in the country. There is a need for special training schemes that would enable refugees to adapt their knowledge and acquire new skills relevant to the economy in Turkey. There are also needs for investment for those refugees who can establish small businesses or engage in business ventures within the host communities.

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NOTES

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ISBN 978-92-846-0396-1 (paper)
ISBN 978-92-846-0397-8 (pdf)

doi:10.2861/445819 (paper)
doi:10.2861/01476 (pdf)

