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Asylum Policy and the Future of Turkey-EU Relations: Between Cooperation and Conflict

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Abstract

Migration was a critical policy area for Turkey even before Turkey became an official candidate country to the EU in 1999. Especially, with the end of the Cold War in the 1990s Turkey began to face the challenges of being a country of origin and destination, while acting as a transit country for documented and undocumented migration. Although the foundations of a migration policy were shaped in Turkey prior to the EU accession process, the EU accession process had an important catalyser effect in transforming the migration and asylum policies. This paper presents an overall analysis of the changes experienced in Turkey since 1999 on the asylum field with a projection of three possible scenarios of convergence, cooperation and conflict on Turkey-EU relationship. In that respect, this paper aims to map out the important periods that have influenced the transformation of the asylum policy in Turkey. While locating the important events and drivers at the global, neighbourhood, EU and Turkish levels, this research based on extensive fieldwork interviews presents findings of a EU-Turkey relationship that lies between cooperation and conflict.

Özet

Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği'ne resmi üyeliğinin ilan edildiği 1999 yılından çok daha önce göç önemli bir politika alanı olarak önem kazanmaya başladı. Özellikle 1990larda Soğuk Savaşın sona ermesi Türkiye'yi kaynak, hedef ve düzenli ya da düzensiz göçte geçiş ülkesi olarak ön plana çıkardı. Göç politikasının temelleri AB giriş sürecinden öncesinde atılmış olsa da AB uyum süreci göç ve sığınma politikalarını dönüştürmede önemli bir katalizör görevini üstlendi. Bu araştırmanın hedeflerinden biri Türkiye'de sığınma alanındaki değişimlerin genel bir analizini sağlarken aynı zamanda uyum, işbirliği ya da çatışma gibi üç olası senaryonun 1999 yılından sonra Türkiye-AB ilişkilerini nasıl etkilediğinin çerçevesini çizmektir. Geniş kapsamlı saha çalışması görüşmelerini temel alan bu araştırma, küresel, bölgesel, AB ve Türkiye temelinde olay ve etkilerini belirlemektedir. Aynı zamanda, Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinin sığınma politikası çerçevesinde uyumdan daha çok, işbirliği ve çatışma ekseninde nasıl şekillendiğini ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamıştır.

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1. Introduction

Migration was a critical policy area for Turkey even before Turkey became an official candidate state to the European Union (EU) in 1999. Especially, with the end of the Cold War in the 1990s Turkey became a country of asylum as well as a country of immigration and transit irregular migration (Kirişçi, 1996; İçduygu, 1996). Since then Turkey faces the challenges of being a country of origin and destination, and acts as a transit country for documented and undocumented migration. Irregular migration, human trafficking and human smuggling are different aspects that also add to complexities of migration policy management in Turkey.

In the last three decades the need to establish an organized migration policy in Turkey to deal with different aspects of migration became very clear. Turkey's domestic needs, globalization, pressures from the EU and the political changes in and around Turkey's neighbourhood were the motivations for Turkey to establish a migration management system to somewhat compatible with its European counterparts. Although the foundations of a migration policy were formed and shaped in Turkey prior to the EU accession process, the EU accession process had an important catalyser effect in transforming the migration and asylum policies. From 2002 onwards AKP's long-term governance has also had a gradual and critical impact on the course of this transformation with critical changes in Turkey's domestic policy infrastructures. This paper aims to contribute to the discussions on the impact of migration on Turkey-EU relations by providing an overall analysis of these changes in Turkey since 1999 on asylum policy with a projection of three possible scenarios of convergence, cooperation and conflict with the EU. This analysis also looks into the impact of different drivers that influence EU-Turkey relations at different levels including Turkey, the EU, neighbourhood and global.

The EU-Turkey relationship over the course of more than 50 years of its existence has not always operated in a cooperative setting. During different periods of time either cooperation or conflict has influenced the nature of this relationship. In that respect, this paper aims to map out the important periods that have influenced the transformation of the asylum policy while locating the important events and drivers that has not only governed but also at the same time transformed the asylum policy in Turkey and the EU and their relationship. The data providing the basis of this analysis is collected through an extensive literature review and semi-structured interviews. More than forty semi-structured interviews are conducted with various stakeholders working on the migration field in Turkey. An additional twenty interviews were conducted in Athens, Brussels, and in the Western Balkan countries. These interviews were done mostly in the first half of 2017.

Analysing the basis and the fundamental features of Turkey and EU's asylum policies reveal the incentives behind the current policy in action. The following parts of this paper will identify the drivers that have shaped the policy development and implementation in Turkey, at the EU, neighbourhood and global levels. This paper presents an overall analysis of the changes experienced in Turkey since 1999 on the asylum field with a projection of three possible scenarios of convergence, cooperation and conflict on Turkey-EU relationship. In that respect, this paper aims to map out the important periods that have influenced the transformation of the asylum

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policy in Turkey. While locating the important events and drivers that has influenced at the global, neighbourhood, EU and Turkish levels, this research presents findings that EU-Turkey relationship fluctuates between cooperation and conflict. Interestingly, empirical evidence suggests that this fluctuation happen very rapidly.

Three different periods shape Turkey-EU relationship with respect to asylum policy. The first period can be identified as the transformation of the asylum policy between 1999-2009, which coincides with closer cooperation with the EU. During the second period between 2009-2015, the cooperation in the asylum field with the EU tuned into convergence with signs of slight tension. In the last period covering 2015 onwards -including the EU-Turkey Deal-presents indicators of strong cooperation that can rapidly swing towards tension and conflict. With the July 2016 coup attempt and its aftermath, Turkey's relations with the West deteriorated. This has reflected on Turkey-EU relations which is leading towards a potentially conflict prone relationship. Despite obstacles and challenges, the data collected from the fieldwork interviews suggest that cooperation at the technical and operational level can continue for practical and pragmatic reasons, while tensions can easily arise if political circumstances change both at the EU or Turkish levels.

2. Turkey's and EU's Migration and Asylum Policies in Transition

Since the end of the Cold War both Turkey and EU's asylum and migration policies have been in the process of transformation and development. It is possible to observe that the migratory pressures within their neighborhoods and global developments have shaped these transitions. The following two sections look into these changes in detail.

2.1. Turkey's Migration and Asylum Policies in Transition

Turkish refugee protection, migration and asylum policies are based on the implementation of national and international legislations regulating this area. Turkey has signed the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees (1951 Convention) and its 1967 Protocol (UN, 1951 and Jackson, 1999). During the Cold War years the international tenants of the Turkish asylum and refugee policies were based fundamentally on this single international legal document and its 1967 Protocol (Kirişçi, 2002: 127). However, Turkey signed the 1951 Convention with a "geographic limitation". This limitation meant refugees were expected basically from the Communist Bloc countries.[1]

The 1951 Convention and the "geographic limitation" established the main basis of Turkey's refugee protection. Turkey, as a signatory state to the 1951 Convention after granting refugee status allows only refugees coming from European countries to stay in Turkey. As the Convention was signed in the Cold War context, the justification made by Turkey was considered reasonable. Non-European refugees were settled in other countries. It has been argued that during the time

[1] In the Declaration of the signature of the Convention, the following statement was made: "The Turkish Government will, at the time of ratification, enter reservations which it could make under article 42 of the Convention." United Nations (2004), *Declarations and Reservations to the* 1951 Convention *Relating to the Status of Refugees* as of 01.10.2004.

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of signature there were many other signatory states having limitations of this kind. On the other hand, most of the states have overruled these limitations in time. Turkey is the only remaining "persistent objector" in Europe (Kirişçi, 2001). Kirişçi argues that geographical limitation led to the evolution of a two-tiered asylum policy (Kirişçi, 1991). The first tier effectively covered asylum seekers within the geographical limitation of the 1951 Convention. In principle, after receiving their refugee status the first category is allowed to stay in Turkey. Turkey does not allow the second category of refugees coming outside of Europe to stay. Turkey has been cooperating with the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for resettling these refugees to third countries (Interview, IOM and UNHCR, 2017). Turkey still complies with the principle of *non-refoulement* where asylum seekers are not send back to the countries of origin that they may face prosecution.

Until the EU accession process, Turkey's asylum policy remained mostly unchanged. The 1999 European Council Meeting in Helsinki and the launch of the process of pre-accession have altered the migration and asylum field fundamentally. It started a process of acquis adoption and adaptation while promoting cooperation between actors and institutions in the EU and Turkey at various administrative and governance levels.

2.2. EU's Migration and Asylum Policies in Transition

At the EU level after the end of the Cold War the development of a common asylum and migration policy was also necessary to meet the needs of the changing migratory pressures on the Member States. From 1999 onwards the EU has been working to create a Common European Asylum System (CEAS) in order to improve the current legislative framework on asylum. In this framework "several legislative measures harmonising common minimum standards for asylum were adopted" (European Commission, 2018). The objective of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), as defined in the Stockholm Programme (2010-2014), is "to establish high standards of protection and ensure that similar cases are treated alike and result in the same outcome, regardless of the Member State in which the asylum application is lodged" (AIDA, 2013). Although this objective sounds quite straightforward achieving this result has not been easy. Asylum, for the EU, poses a particular challenge: how to preserve the right to asylum (embedded in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights) while restricting asylum shopping and secondary movements within the Schengen area. In the early days, asylum applicants could lodge multiple applications in different Member States and choose invariably their destination. The absence of internal borders facilitated their secondary movements from one member state to another easily.

The CEAS sought to end the process of this selection, which was perceived also as the exploitation of the national asylum systems. A system was envisaged whereby member states undertake the same processes, apply the same criteria and ideally reach also the same decisions on asylum applications. The application of uniform standards and procedures, in theory, leads also to burdensharing since all Member States can be transformed into 'attractive' destinations with similar standards of protection. In practice, however, CEAS constructed an imbalanced burdensharing mechanism through the Dublin Regulation.

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The Dublin Regulation allocates responsibility to process asylum applications in the member state where the applicant first arrived (and/or was apprehended). In an ideal scenario where Dublin was fully implemented, the frontline States like Greece, Italy and Spain would be responsible for the total irregular maritime arrivals and a fair share of air and land irregular crossings. In this framework, burdensharing was structured in such a way to protect the Schengen system. If Dublin had worked as envisaged the Member States bordering the EU would function as a filter, constraining onward movement within Schengen for those "deemed unwanted." A lack of shared positive recognition would in turn mean that those granted asylum would also be unable to freely settle in a member state of their choosing. This will make the movement of refugees once recognized from one member state to another not possible for accessing better standards or services for protection.

Dublin is anchored in Schengen, functioning as the counterbalance to the internal free movement. Like border controls and readmission agreements deployed to externalise the management of irregular migration, asylum is externalised within and outside the EU through Dublin. The Regulation functions as an externalisation on two levels. Firstly, externalisation of asylum from the core of the Schengen area towards peripheral Member States (Triandafyllidou and Dimitriadi, 2014). Secondly, externalisation of asylum to third countries of origin and/or transit is achieved again through Dublin. The Regulation foresees the return of asylum seekers to safe third countries. The safe third country rule has been criticised for effectively denying access "to substantive status determination procedure by cultivating the idea that protection should be sought elsewhere: to the country of origin and/or transit deemed safe for return." (Ibid: 604)

In 2016 for the first time, the idea that protection should be sought outside the EU was implemented through the EU-Turkey Statement (EU-Turkey Deal). The Statement thus, is the first successful effort of the EU to externalise asylum processing to a transit country. In this specific instance, it was an accession country to the EU; Turkey. Closely mimicking the Australian model of off-shore processing, the Statement offers an incentive for resettlement to the EU to those Syrian refugees registered officially in Turkey that opt out of undertaking an irregular journey to the EU territories. In the following parts, the EU-Turkey Statement will be discussed in detail. The next section looks at the influence of the EU on transforming asylum policy in Turkey.

3. Europeanization of Turkey's Asylum Policy after the Helsinki Summit

This section assesses the influence of Europeanisation in Turkey on migration and asylum policies after the Helsinki Summit. According to Lavenex and Uçarer Europeanisation is a means of achieving the influence of EU legislation on member states (Lavenex and Uçarer, 2002). According to them, Europeanisation is the transfer of policies, instruments, programs and norms in the accession processes. In that respect, the EU conditionality forms an excellent opportunity to guarantee compliance with EU polices and the cooperation of candidate countries. Looking at

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Turkey's case it was possible to access that Commission's intended Europeanisation mechanisms effectively worked after the launch of the accession process. Asylum policy in this regard became an important and critical platform to cultivate the relationship between Turkey and the EU with EU accession conditionality being an important driver for cooperation. Even in the times of deep conflict at the political level, the technical cooperation between the stakeholders in Turkey and the EU continued due to EU accession conditionality.

Following the launch of the pre-accession process in 1999 a legislative adoption process through accession partnership documents prepared by the EU presented a road map for the technical details of accession. The Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) component of the accession partnership documents (AP) consisted of issues that had significant importance on Turkey's migration and asylum policy (European Council, 2001). The AP in 2001 included a priority in the medium-term criteria proposing 'lifting of the geographic reservation of the 1951 Convention' in the field of asylum. According to this clause Turkey should include lifting its geographic limitation on the 1951 Convention as a priority to its National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA).

In 2001 when the AP document was presented the domestic political climate in Turkey did not show signs of political and bureaucratic determination to produce immediate policy changes. It was argued that the geographic limitation would possibly remain for a relatively long period of time without affecting the chances of moderate transformation in Turkey's asylum policy. (Kale, 2001) The main reason behind Turkey's hesitant attitude was the lack of burdensharing mechanisms envisaged after Turkey's lift of geographical limitation.

3.1. Opening Accession Negotiations and Transformation of the Asylum Field (2005-2009)

After the launch of the accession negotiations in 2005 the migration and asylum policies have continued to be a technical issue of cooperation for both the EU and Turkey. The EU's commitment on supporting Turkey to "Europeanize" this policy field was also in line with the securitization of the migration policy at the EU level. Strengthening external border controls, combatting human smuggling, human trafficking and organized crime while supporting the efforts to control irregular migration were motivations for the EU (Kale, 2010, p. 67). These issues were important for the EU in order to cooperate on migration and asylum related matters with the countries in its neighbourhood including Turkey. Externalization of the migration policy of the EU required willing non-EU partner countries in the EU's neighbourhood to cooperate on migration and asylum related matters with the EU. The need for viable partners in the neighborhood goes to the heart of the EU approach on burden distribution. A reformed domestic asylum system of Turkey inspired by EU norms and standards meant that even without EU membership Turkey could be treated by EU Member States as a safe third country. Turkey's accession process provided the means and the tools to enable a structured cooperation.

The need for reform and institutionalize the asylum policy was an important driver for Turkey to enhance technical cooperation with the EU. This was mainly because of the intensified

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international migration in and out of Turkey after the end of the Cold War. Opening accession negotiations accelerated the reform process. The launch of preparations of a national law on migration with a civilian institution in charge of the migration related issues was critical. In that respect, in two different areas change was clearly desired. These avenues of change were institution building and legislation preparation. During the preparation of the national law on migration, asylum and foreigners not only the compatibility with domestic legislations, but also compatibility with international conventions and EU acquis was also taken into consideration. (Kale, 2018a) Turkey's international commitments as well as the EU conditionality were utilized in order to avoid prospective conflicts with the EU standards.

The period covering 2005-2009 also marked the initial efforts for the establishment of the Directorate General Migration Management (DGMM) in charge of migration related policy matters. DGMM unofficially started its functions prior to the acceptance of the new national law on migration. Until the acceptance of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) in 2013, the official launch of the DGMM was postponed. In the establishment of this specialized civilian institution cooperation with the EU and EU institutions were important.

3.2. Redirection of Turkey's Foreign Policy and its influence on Asylum Policy (2009-2015)

The period following 2009 has presented itself with challenges in Turkey's EU accession process as the accession process itself slowed down due to the reasons linked both to the EU and Turkey. 2008 global financial crisis and the Eurozone crisis coupled with the constitutional crisis of the EU put the enlargement process on hold creating a limited EU influence on Turkey's domestic reform process. During this era Turkish officials claimed that decreased EU's interest on Turkey's reform process meant changes on asylum policy were made regardless of the EU (Interview, DGMM, 2017). It has been argued that the transformation took place, as a response to domestic needs led by international or regional political circumstances such as the Arab Spring or the Syrian crisis. (Interview, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017) It was argued that the commitment for developing a national migration policy was a response to domestic needs, as well as international and regional migratory pressures on Turkey.

Despite these claims, the 2009-2015 era brought critical changes for the migration and asylum policies, which could be linked to the domestic needs or international circumstances but equally critical was the EU conditionality. EU conditionality was observed at the institutional, administrative and legislative levels (Kale, 2012). During this time the relations between Turkey and EU were held in a cooperative environment where occasional confrontations were experienced. Change and EU's influence was visible at technical levels. The interactions with the EU officials in the stagnated accession process continued through technical meetings (Interview, EU Ministry, 2017). At the same time, changing domestic and foreign policy objectives had its repercussions on Turkey's migration and asylum policies (Interview, EU Delegation Turkey, 2017).

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From 2009 onwards one of the important drivers influencing the cooperation on migration and asylum policy was the redirection of Turkish foreign policy under the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu. When Ahmet Davutoğlu became the Minister of Foreign Affairs in May 2009, he was committed to pursue a liberal foreign policy. The foreign policy approach of Davutoğlu aimed at enhancing collaboration and cooperation with the neighbouring countries through various mechanisms. (Davutoğlu, 2001) This new approach was utilizing foreign policy activism, trade, humanitarian aid, and other soft power capabilities.

A liberal approach to trade and economic relations promoting a liberal visa policy with Turkey's neighbours aimed at achieving increased economic, political and social interactions. This liberal visa policy, on the other hand, was contradicting with the EU's approach of strict border controls and the implementation of the Schengen negative list. However, as Turkey's EU accession was perceived to be a long-term objective divergence of accession goals on visa policy was seen possible or even dismissible (Kale, 2011). In the short-term, a more pragmatic approach of visa liberalization with neighbouring countries was adopted.

Turkey historically kept a liberal visa policy towards its immediate neighbours. For example, visa-free travel helped thousands of Iranians flee the Khomeini's regime after the Iranian Revolution. However, Davutoğlu's foreign policy extended this no-visa requirement beyond immediate neighbours such as Albania, Libya, Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan, and Ukraine. Reciprocal visa abolishment with various countries including Syria became a common procedure. A liberal visa policy with no visa requirements encouraged enhancing trade and tourism with these countries. The second tier of this policy involved a "humanitarian aspect" to foreign policy goals (MFA, 2018). In this framework, Turkey further committed itself to developmental diplomacy efforts focused on humanitarian diplomacy and aid. Turkey hosted in Istanbul the 4th UN Conference on Least Developed Countries, on 9-13th May 2011 while contributing to the adoption of the Program of Action for the decade 2011-2020. (Ibid) World Humanitarian Summit was also held in May 2016 again in Istanbul.

These changes in the foreign policy evolved in parallel with two important and critical regional events: the Arab Spring and the Syrian crisis. Transnational migratory movements due to the Arab Spring had critical regional and international implications affecting deeply also the EU. In March 2011 it was estimated that around 1000 people were fleeing Libya into Tunisia and Egypt (Khalid, 2012). During the Arab Spring approximately thirty countries in North Africa, Middle East and Europe were affected by mass displacement and migration. One key issue that has to be noted is that Turkey was not directly affected with the Arab Spring in terms of migratory movements. The migratory routes were mostly in the western Mediterranean region. However, Turkey was affected indirectly by the responses of the EU, its member states and the changing routes of mixed flows or irregular crossings into the EU borders. The Arab Spring has also demonstrated evidence for the prospective responses of the EU in cases of mass irregular movements and arrivals to the EU. Accepting mass irregular arrivals as a border control and security issue, the EU focused on the maritime operations of FRONTEX while temporary suspension of the Schengen Treaty was on the

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political agenda. Four years later, during the "Syrian refugee protection crisis,"[2] EU member states adopted a similar approach towards the mass arrival of irregular migrants. In the height of the Syrian War an ever-growing number of people moved out of Syria. In this flow, managing the EU's external land and maritime borders proved to be a very challenging task.

3.2.1. Humanitarian Foreign Policy Activism, Syrian Crisis and Turkey's Refugee Protection

One of the critical events that had a dramatic impact on Turkey's asylum policy and its relations with the EU was the Syrian civil war and the following refugee protection crisis in Europe. The civil war in Syria has led to the displacement of nearly half of the Syrian population creating more than 5 million refugees and 7.5 million internally displaced persons. Most of the Syrian refugees stayed in the neighbouring countries of Syria such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that half of the Syrian population who remained in the country is in need of humanitarian assistance and protection (Humanitarian Response to Syria, 2015). The scale of the destruction, the number of people affected in this civil war, and the spill-over affects made the Syrian civil war a concern of almost every country in the region.

Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011, Turkey as a part of its "humanitarian foreign policy" activism has adopted an "open door policy" for the Syrian refugees. Turkey's new liberal approach to its foreign policy was an important domestic factor. Davutoğlu's new foreign policy was based on normative principles of "fairness", "moral responsibility", "principled vision" was motivated by "several complementary political, economic, humanitarian and cultural means" (MFA, 2018). This new foreign policy outlook had regional and global outreach goals while utilizing soft power capabilities that touched base with historical, cultural and religious links of Turkey, which dated back to the Ottoman Empire. Davutoğlu's new approach was criticized by many with the accusation that it was inspired by a neo-Ottoman approach. Officially, Davutoğlu has never accepted the term "neo-Ottomanism" (Today's Zaman, 2009). Turkey's new "enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy" had also global outreach goals, which aimed at making Turkey a global player (MFA, 2018). This goal is clearly summarized by the motto "the world is larger than five" stipulated by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Al-Jazeera, 2014). In that perspective, Turkey began to advocate the reform of the UN and the UN Security Council.

In line with these foreign policy objectives, Turkey also took on the role of a selective protector of Muslim communities around the world. Claiming to be the "ensar" (historical protector of the migrant/refugee) President Erdoğan argued that it was a religious and historical responsibility to provide refugee to the Syrian refugees (Haber7, 2014). In this line of argument, Turkey claimed to become a global protector of the normative framework of refugee protection. This claim has been one of the main drivers of Turkey's relations with its international partners including the EU.

[2] This research adopts the term "Syrian refugee protection crisis" arguing that the crisis associated with the mass migrations of the summer 2015 was not as a result of the arrival of the refugees, asylum seekers and irregular migrants. The crisis occurred as a result of the lack of humanitarian protection provided by the host states.

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Linked with its "humanitarian foreign policy" and "open door policy" to Syrians, Turkey's claim to be the advocate of refugee protection became more vocal. This was particularly evident when the Syrian war intensified and the number of refugees that Turkey hosted increased. After the election of President Trump in the US, global refugee resettlement allocated for the Syrians were reduced (UNHCR Interview, 2017). Arguing that there has been erosion in the normative framework both in the EU and USA, Turkey claimed to keep it up with its own refugee hospitality. In his opening talk at the ICAPP Special Conference on Migration and Refugees Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım argued that Western states should be more involved in refugee protection: "Appreciation (Turkey's efforts in helping the refugees) is a nice thing, but insufficient. They (western states) should become a partner in these responsibilities" (Yeni Şafak, 2016). Turkey, on the one hand, aimed at promoting its new mission while at the same time raising concerns of financial responsibilities attached to this new mission. Refugee protection comes with its own financial responsibilities. As the numbers increases so does the financial responsibility attached to providing services to these refugees. Turkey recently became one of the top donors of humanitarian aid in the world (Global Finance, 2017 and BBC, 2013).

Despite the moralistic and religious based claims, the open door policy was also necessary due to Turkey's international commitments naturally arising from the 1951 Convention. Although Syrians can be considered as non-European refugees or "conditional refugees" according to the new Turkish law on asylum (LFIP), Turkish government decided not to open the asylum route for the Syrians. Assuming that the crisis in Syria will be resolved rapidly like in the case of other Arab Spring countries, Turkish government did not feel the urge to have a long-term planning on Syrians crossing Turkish borders (Kale, 2018a). The first group of Syrians crossed the Turkish border in 2011 and their number was a manageable amount of approximately 250 (T24, 2011). Turkish government declared that they are prepared to host these small groups crossing the borders, assuming that the Assad regime will fall soon enough. As the numbers crossing the borders gradually increased, eight refugee camps were established, and their operation was given to Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) (Interview, AFAD, 2017).

When the numbers of Syrians increased dramatically, refugee camps - which are referred as "temporary accommodation centers" by Turkish government - increased accordingly. Despite this increase in the number of camps, currently approximately 8% of the Syrians are accommodated in them. The rest of the refugees (92%) are living in cities or urban areas (Kale, 2018a). Turkey's policy towards the Syrian refugees either accommodated in the camps or in the cities is based on Turkey's traditional conceptualization of refugees as "temporary guests." The Turkish government's expectation on temporariness of the crisis was reflected on the possible return of the Syrians (T24, 2012). The escalated conflict turning into a civil war in Syria with ethnic and religious components proved that this "guest" rhetoric was no longer applicable for the aggravating humanitarian situation.

From 2012 onward without a clear legal basis Syrians were considered by the Turkish authorities to be under the "temporary protection status." This status was not defined under law as LFIP was

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still in the process of preparation. Later, Article 91 of the LFIP defined the legal specifications of the "temporary protection" status. In 2014 the Temporary Protection Regulation set the framework for the legal status of the Syrians (Temporary Protection Regulation, 2014). Under this status, Syrians are allowed to stay in Turkey, but they are not allowed to apply for asylum. This created resettlement or voluntary repatriation as the only durable solution options for them (Ferris and Kirişçi, 2016: 35). In the summer of 2015, thousands of Syrians as well as other irregular migrants from other countries aimed at crossing the land and sea borders of Turkey to the reach the EU territories. As the numbers of irregular crossings increased, this massive movement created a fear of instability and insecurity within the EU. The next section looks at the implications of this rapid increase in human mobility.

3.2.2. Escalation of irregular migration from Turkey to the EU

In the summer 2015 the EU and the member states declared that they were overwhelmed with the mass population movements and irregular borders crossings. According to the EU's border agency FRONTEX, more than 700,000 refugees and irregular migrants crossed the land and sea borders of the EU in 2015 (Frontex, 2016). This caused the member states to react with panic. Some closed their borders while others demanded an end to the free movement of persons in the Schengen system. Managing borders signifies a very critical element of state sovereignty and a sudden increase in irregular migration can result with an immediate response of tightening border crossings (Kale, 2018b). The escalated number of irregular border crossings created challenges in countries at the eastern and southern land and maritime borders of the EU i.e. Greece. Overwhelmed with these arrivals, the Member States including Greece turned to the EU for support. In this mass movement the main EU level driver was the escalated numbers of irregular crossings.

Commonly, the Aegean Sea between Turkey and Greece has always been used as a route for irregular crossings by smugglers. The Greek efforts to bring this issue to a high-level political agenda have been previously mostly ignored. As the numbers reached to almost a million in the summer of 2015, the severity of the issue raised concerns for many different EU Member States. Having hundreds of irregular migrants whom were mostly refugees wandering around the EU causing almost the collapse of the Dublin system and the overall failure of CEAS to respond to this crisis, pushed the EU guided by Germany to seek a solution elsewhere. In this case, they turned to Turkey.

During this mass movement, Turkey has been criticized for not managing its land and sea borders effectively and becoming a "highway" for transit passage of refugees and irregular migrants to the EU. Border controls and their management have already been an essential issue of discussion between Turkey and the EU. Irregular crossings and the volume of these crossings were already creating tensions between Greece and Turkey before the summer 2015. This concern was mostly ignored by the EU (see irregular migration paper). Until the summer of 2015 situation of the Syrian refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and in other countries around Syria's immediate neighbourhood was considered by the EU or the member states to be under almost control. In

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that respect, the period between 2011 until summer 2015 can be labelled as the first phase in Syrian refugee protection. In this first phase, the majority of the refugee protection responsibilities were rested on the neighbouring countries to the Syrian war. The enormous increase in the number of crossings and the increased number of deaths at sea brought the crisis to the second phase. In the second phase of the Syrian refugee protection, Syrian refugees travelled beyond the neighbouring countries causing a "refugee protection crisis" in Europe.

3.2.3. Aylan Kurdi the Human Face of Irregular Mobility

In September 2015, the media attention raised public outrage on refugee deaths at sea with one single dramatic photo of the lifeless body of Aylan Kurdi, a little toddler lying on a sandy beach of Bodrum, an Aegean coastal town in Turkey. The appearance of Aylan Kurdi's photo on Western media was a critical event both for the Syrian refugees and the Turkey-EU relations. It activated media and public opinion and became a driver at the EU level. The EU public opinion has shifted quickly and a rapid response was necessary either by the EU collectively or by the EU member states unilaterally. The irregular crossings before Aylan Kurdi were considered solely as "numbers." After this tragic incident the "human face" of mobility became visible by public in member states. (NGO, Interview, 2017) One law enforcement officer commenting on this shift in perception argued that public opinion transformed how member states were reflecting on refugees. He argued that there has been a shift in officials' perceptions due to the public interest in this tragic event. "Aylan was not the first baby or child who lost his life crossing the Aegean Sea. I have been actively working on patrolling irregular border crossing for years. I do not remember how many lifeless babies or children I had to carry in my arms from the shores. None of the European officials were paying attention until Aylan's photo was on the international press." (Interview, LEA, 2017) The media attention has brought policy related changes that had an impact on EU-Turkey cooperation seen at various levels i.e. the EU, member and candidate states.

This section presented that in the period covering 2009-2015, various drivers shaped the cooperation between Turkey and the EU. During this period, the main driver for Turkey in reforming its asylum policy while increasing its cooperation with the EU turned out to be the EU accession conditionality. The accession conditionality and the legal framework offered within accession provided the road map for a structured cooperation (Kale, 2012). Turkey also had domestic drivers leading towards cooperation such as the growing need to institutionalize its asylum policy. This internal driver matched well with the EU accession conditionality to shape and transform Turkey's asylum policy. Cooperation with the EU led to convergence in Turkey's asylum policy.

In the same period, the redirection of Turkish foreign policy with a new liberal outlook to international affairs have also shaped the relations with regards to Turkey's migration, asylum, visa, border and trade policies. Ahmet Davutoğlu's new redirection of foreign policy embraced an "open door policy" towards Syrian refugees after the Syrian war in 2011. Initially, "open door policy" was considered to be a short-term solution to a humanitarian issue. However, temporary hosting of the Syrian refugees turned out to be a long-term commitment. In that context, Turkey's

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aim to be the global protector of the normative framework of refugee protection became one of the drivers shaping its policies with the EU. This has developed also in line with the lack of international burden sharing. Turkey argued that international community including the EU and its member states, failed to deliver the expected response to protect Syrian refugees either within EU member states (closing their borders) or outside EU territories (not being able to provide significant financial support to host countries).

Finally, the escalation of the irregular crossings in the summer of 2015 was a critical EU level driver. The appearance of Aylan Kurdi's photo gave a human face to irregular crossings and losses at sea. This put the Syrian refugees at a spotlight, caused a media hysteria on the subject while gaining public awareness and interest. This strong trigger of media attention elevated the Turkey-EU relations in a more prominent position. The next section looks into the details of this cooperation.

4. Enhanced Cooperation between EU and Turkey: Summer 2015 Onwards

The period starting from the summer 2015 onwards can be identified as the most interesting and bizarre episode in Turkey-EU relations and the influence of asylum policy on this relationship. On the one hand, during this era the bilateral relations between Turkey and the EU were intensified dramatically since the accession negotiations were launched in 2005. On the other hand, different sources of conflict were placed on the Turkey-EU political agenda. In that respect, the last three years the cooperation between EU and Turkey had shown indications of very rapid political shifts and turns, transforming itself into a peculiar form of relationship.

4.1. Regional, EU Level and Global Impact

The drivers that have significantly affected the development of Turkey-EU relationship since 2015 can be listed as the lack of international burden sharing on refugee protection, the rise in irregular migration and deaths at sea, the EU-Turkey Deal, rising security concerns and finally the July 15th failed coup attempt.

4.1.1. The Lack of International Burden Sharing

In the initial stages of the Syrian conflict the Turkish government did not seek for international burden sharing (T24, 2013). There were two main reasons for this. First of all, Turkey assumed the Syrian conflict would be temporary and seeking international assistance or cooperation would not be essential. Secondly, financial or other types of international assistance required sharing information, opening camps to international organizations as well providing international financial transparency (Kale, 2018a). Taking into consideration of these two main reasons Turkey aimed at

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responding to this crisis unilaterally (Kale, 2016a). In that respect, initially Turkey's approach to international burden sharing was rather critical and distant (Kale, 2018a). Likewise, The Turkish officials did not recognize an immediate need of support from the international community (Interview, IGAM, 2017).

Overtime, however, Turkey realized that the financial cost for providing services to Syrian refugees was mounting, societal conflict might be arising and the Syrian war was not ending. Turkey became vocal about the need for support from the international community. As discussed in the previous sections, Turkey's asylum policy was in a transitional phase when Syrian war started. Turkey did not have an established long-term asylum and refugee policy. In the middle of this mass influx, it was complicated and challenging for Turkey to develop a structured and institutional approach to handle the needs of the refugees while safeguarding their rights and livelihoods (Kale, 2016a). Although the LFIP was developed with the influence of the EU accession process with a surprisingly open-minded and liberal approach since 2008, the arrival of more than 2 million refugees in the course of less than 3 years had direct influence on the development of Turkey's migration, asylum and integration policies. Instead of adopting a very liberal policy, during the process of policy planning, Turkish authorities have opted for a more cautious and eclectic understanding. This was not surprising, as Turkey had to adjust its policies to the growing number of refugees. In 2015 without significant international support or burden sharing, Turkey was hosting more than 2.5 million Syrians. In that respect, one of the major drivers leading Turkey to take on further cooperation on asylum related issues since 2015 became the lack of international burden sharing.

The escalation of the Syrian conflict over the years brought complicated political, social and security challenges to Turkey. In addition to these challenges, the financial impact of hosting refugees was also mounting. Turkish government over the course of the Syrian conflict realized that the dynamics involved in Syrian civil war was far more complicated than it was initially anticipated. Turkey hoped for a "no fly zone" in Northern Syria similar to the 1991 experience with Iraq. Turkish former experiences in mass influx situations were misleading, because in the Iraqi case, hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Kurdish refugees were able to return back to their home country after the establishment of a no-fly zone. This was also observed in the case of Kosovar refugees in the 1990s. Not being able to get the international support for a no-fly zone, the Turkish government developed an uneasy relationship with the international community (Ferris and Kirişçi, 2016). This was especially visible after Turkey received accusations in the summer 2015 that it became a "highway" for irregular crossings. Turkey was accused of not being able to control its borders and letting irregular crossings to proceed towards the EU. However, it is possible to argue that during this time, Turkey was mostly acted as a "dam" that was overburdened, overloaded and flooded towards the EU (Kale, 2016b).

In the Middle East, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt and Iraq are providing safety and shelter for approximately 5 million registered Syrians (UNHCR, 2017). If Syria's neighbours did not host these refugees, then these refugees would have to flee further distances causing international consequences. The lack of prospective long-term solutions in the region opens the way for the

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Syrian refugees to look for alternative options including leaving their host countries to reach to the EU member states (Kale, 2016c). The summer of 2015 was specifically critical for the mass number of irregular arrivals to Europe (Frontex, 2015). These irregular arrivals were not limited to Syrians. The majority of the arrivals in the summer 2015 were Syrians followed by other nationalities such as Afghanis, Somalis, Iraqis, and nationals from sub-Saharan African countries. (Frontex, 2016) The lack of international burden sharing to support the host societies coupled with intensification of the situation in the region caused a push factor for more people to take the journey to reach Europe. As discussed above the increased number of irregular crossings then led to a EU wide anxiety while changing actions in various EU member states.

4.1.2. Protection of the Schengen System

This increase in irregular arrivals created panic in the EU member states as the irregular migrants and refugees arrived in a relatively short period of time. Some of the member states considered closing their borders while others demanded an end to the free movement of persons within the Schengen system. One may argue that Syrian humanitarian crisis evolved into a political crisis deeply affecting the foundations of the European integration. (Kale, 2016d) The protection of the Schengen system became EU level driver for cooperation with Turkey. The EU wanted to guarantee the functioning of the Schengen system. This was especially critical for Germany as the stability in the Western Balkan region was already fragile. The large number of arrivals was considered as a destabilizing factor in the Western Balkans where ethnic and religious divisions can create security based concerns. By early summer of 2015, a formalised corridor was established along the route from Greece to Western Europe through Balkans. The EU engaged in influencing the policies of the countries in this region to deal with refugees arriving via Turkey. One of the initial reactions of the countries along this route has been "fortification of their borders with the construction of fences all along the route." (Sanchez-Montijano, 2017) The reactions of the countries along the route were security and control based. They were mostly ignoring the humanitarian aspect of this mass movement.

The EU has been trying to develop over the decades a system of refugee and asylum policies that would support fair internal burden sharing mechanisms between its member states. This search became apparent especially after the launch of the common market and the abolishment of internal borders. (Lavenex, 1998) The problems and challenges on the EU's internal burden sharing presented itself very clearly in the summer 2015 when refugees and irregular migrants started to arrive in mass numbers. The member states clearly demonstrated a lack of solidarity and they could not come up with an effective response on how to handle the rights and needs of the arrivals. Specifically the southern and eastern member states with land and sea borders were on the frontline. They were exposed to this movement directly and overwhelmed with domestic and international pressures. In the same period, human smuggling and deaths at seas also became an everyday fact. (IOM, 2015) On the one hand, controlling borders became very difficult and nearly futile. On the other hand, countries along the EU's land and sea borders were either closing the crossings or further increasing their patrolling. FRONTEX was given extensive responsibility to

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patrol the external borders of the EU while providing assistance to member states. After the summer 2015, NATO was also brought into the patrolling and rescue missions. This was a move also proposed and promoted by Turkey (Interview, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). In this way, rapidly the movement of irregular migrants and refugees became a Europe wide patrolling mission raising concerns at the state and EU levels.

The lack of international burden sharing and the deficiencies within the internal EU burden sharing mechanisms transformed the mass arrival of the refugees into a refugee protection crisis. Shutting down borders, increase in the land and sea border patrols were all aiming to protect the Schengen system. They also aim to protect the functioning of the internal market without compromising on the security and stability aspects especially in the Western Balkans region. The lack of solidarity within the EU itself made external cooperation inevitable. Externalization of the responsibility on migration and asylum was visible with an increased interest in cooperation and collaboration with Turkey on asylum related matters. The next section looks into the evolution of the EU-Turkey Statement and its implications on Turkey-EU relations.

4.2. The EU-Turkey Statement and Its Implications

The EU-Turkey Statement (EU-Turkey Deal) was largely driven by German political will to resolve the rapidly evolving refugee protection crisis, maintain unity in the EU amongst Member States and reducing the increased numbers that were arriving in Greece. The drivers from EU point of view were controlling EU borders effectively while keeping EU solidarity, helping the Greek overburdened asylum system, reducing if not stopping deaths at sea, and maintaining security within the EU against serious threats such as ISIS. For Turkey, the EU-Turkey Deal offered drivers that could have enhanced cooperation including financial numeration, visa liberalisation, and the revitalizing accession process.

4.2.1. Controlling EU borders Effectively and Keeping EU Solidarity

The goal to control EU borders effectively and in that way keeping EU solidarity was one of the EU level drivers pushing for further EU-Turkey cooperation. Germany was the first EU Member State to recognize that Greece was not able to address the needs of the mass irregular arrivals due to the worst financial crisis of its recent history and its on going internal politically turbulence. (Dimitriadi, 2017a) The result was Germany's call for a 'European' solution. According to a senior staff in one of the EU institutions 'Germany showed significant interest for a model of cooperation with Turkey and the Dutch Presidency was utilized to negotiate a proposal'. (Interview, European institution, 2017) The Dutch Presidency was eager to support the cooperation in order to facilitate a cooperative environment both for the EU as well as Turkey. However, this type of subject specific cooperation has never been developed before. This pioneering effort and the subject based cooperative model required means and tools that would make cooperation desirable for both sides. The new model of cooperation was not totally straightforward neither for the EU or Turkey. (Interview, Staff from Dutch Presidency, 2016) In that respect, the winter and spring of 2016

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demonstrated a high number of visits by the EU officials meeting with their counterparts in Turkey and vice versa.

While this German initiative under Dutch Presidency was developing, Member States wanted the closure of the Western Balkan route. This was seen as critical in 'regaining' control of the external borders and stemming the movement towards northern and central Europe- and closure of the Greek-Turkish maritime corridor. (Dimitriadi, 2017b) In October 2015, at the same time the EU-Turkey Deal started to be negotiated, the European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker met in Brussels with the leaders of the countries affected by the refugee flows along the Western Balkans route: Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia (European Commission, 2015). At this meeting, a detailed plan on how to coordinate the management of refugee flows was agreed on by the participant states. This Plan included actions to step up efforts (i) to facilitate the return of migrants that were not in need of international protection, (ii) to stop facilitating the movement of migrants to the border of another country, and (iii) to step up coordination, bilateral police cooperation and the exchange of information between en route countries. (Sanchez-Montijano, 2017) The leaders attending this meeting also agreed to increase the capacity to provide temporary shelter and border registration. (Guardian, 2015) In order to achieve these objectives the EU allocated funding to support some activities carried out by different states in the region keeping two aims. The first aim was to improve the accommodations and living conditions of the refugees stranded in these countries and secondly monitoring the borders with fences and surveillance. (Sanchez-Montijano, 2017)

The main objective of the EU here was to increase the control of the borders. The objective of most of these countries was not to create a pull factor for further movement of irregular arrivals (Ibid). Immediately fences were built on the borders closing the passage for irregular migrants and refugees. The Hungarian government was the first to finish its fence on the borders with Croatia and Serbia. The Slovenian-Austrian border, the Macedonian border with Serbia and Greece, and finally the land borders between Greece-Turkey and Bulgaria-Turkey were sealed off with fences. It was hoped that irregular crossings would drop when the borders are closed.

4.2.2. Financial Support and Visa Liberalization

Within this political environment German Chancellor Angela Merkel took the initiative and visited Turkey on 16th October 2015 to offer an Action Plan to limit the irregular border crossings in exchange for visa liberalization to Turkish citizens. This Plan also aimed at revitalization of Turkey-EU relations by promising to open several accession negotiation chapters that have been previously blocked. The Plan offered these incentives to encourage Turkey to cooperate with the EU on managing irregular migration towards Europe. The EU was expecting Turkey to control its Western and Eastern borders more efficiently and effectively. Turkish government embraced this strategic EU approach enthusiastically. EU's proposed incentives for cooperation such as the financial support and visa liberalization became important drivers for enhancing this cooperation. The proposed Action Plan was aiming to contribute initially 1 billion Euros. This was later increased to 3 billion Euros under different funding schemes. Another 3 billion Euros was added later to

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support Turkey's efforts on refugee protection. The total of 6 billion Euros were aimed at providing better services to Syrian refugees in Turkey. In this new initiative both the EU and Turkey had optimism for future cooperation.

In August just before Merkel's visit, a new Migration and Humanitarian Aid Unit (MHAU) was established by the PM Davutoğlu under the coordination of the Prime Ministry. The aim of this new unit was to advise the PM Davutoğlu on issues regarding migration and humanitarian aid.[3] It also had the responsibilities associated with the Deal. The Unit was responsible mainly from the implementation of provisions of the EU-Turkey Deal. This new unit was also in charge for the coordination of the financial aspects. The first part (3 billion Euros) of the financial support arrived in various packages supporting education of the Syrian refugees or the health care services. (Interview, AFAD, 2017)

After Merkel's visit the details of EU-Turkey collaboration and cooperation were clarified on 18th March 2016 with the EU-Turkey Statement (EU-Turkey Deal). (Council Statement, 2016) The Deal was a result of a strong bargaining process. (Interview, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017) However, it was prepared very quickly. It outlined the general framework of the cooperation setting out the general principles. In setting out these principles it was criticized for being too pragmatic, unethical, and overly strategic. Thus, it has been argued that the deal should be put into practice with a "genuine spirit of cooperation whereby the welfare of the refugees comes first." (Kirişçi, 2015) Both in the EU as well as in Turkey, different stakeholders working in the migration and asylum field heavily criticized the moral principles and the practices of the Deal. It was argued that this arrangement with Turkey was an indication of the fact that the "principle-based normative EU" was partially replaced with an "interest-based EU." Although the Action Plan called for the coordination of responses with "solidarity, togetherness and efficiency", it was critical that its application should not undermine the current status of Turkey-EU relations, changing it into a strategic partnership (Şenyuva and Üstün, 2015) or simply making Turkey a migrant buffer zone or a border guard of the EU. (Alessandri, 2015)

The ones in favour of this arrangement were arguing that this Deal was an important effort by the EU in providing assistance to countries handling the needs of the refugees disproportionately. The Deal was proposing various incentives for Turkey in return for its cooperation with the EU. (Kale, 2016b) For example, visa liberalization was a critical incentive. Previously during the negotiations of the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement, the possibilities of activating "visa facilitation" or "visa liberalization" were on the agenda. There was no result at the end of these discussions. Thus, getting a positive outcome on visa liberalization issue was an important driver for the Turkish government. Visa free travel to Schengen area for Turkish citizens could have been regarded as an important political achievement. This could have created a nation-wide public support for other

[3] This unit was later became dissolved in May 2016 when PM Davutoğlu resigned from his position. BBC Turkish, 5 May 2016, "Davutoğlunu'nun İstifası: Şimdi Ne Olacak? (Resignation of Dautoğlu: What is next?)", http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2016/05/160505_davutoglu_analiz_arslan (last visited 15 January 2017)

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initiatives related to the EU accession. As a concrete outcome of the Deal, visa liberalization for Turkish citizens became an important driver for cooperative action for Turkey.

In return for visa liberalization and financial support, the Deal targeted that Turkey would accept the return of irregular migrants from Greece. With several issues requiring common solutions both for the EU and Turkey, it was possible to argue that the cooperation could have led to a win-win situation for both sides of the negotiation table. (Kale, 2016b) It is possible to argue that the irregular flow from Turkey to the EU leading to the conclusion of the Deal was a harbinger of cooperation. The cooperation initially proved to be a success when increased interaction and visits revitalized the EU-Turkey relationship until the mid-summer of 2016. (Interview, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) In that period, the stagnated Turkey's accession process suddenly was back on the political agenda of both the EU and Turkey.

During the application of the Deal certain issues created tensions relating to the practical aspects. These tensions were related to aspects of visa liberalization, transfer of funds from the EU and the return of irregular migrants from Greece. From an ethical perspective the Deal was criticised to have a weak moral basis for refugee protection. One of the main declared aims of the Deal was to provide better services and living conditions to Syrian refugees in Turkey. The Deal also aimed at tackling human smuggling networks while reducing deaths at sea. It was able to reduce deaths at sea. However, the inclusion of the financial package to the Deal raised concerns. In providing financial support, the EU was criticized to offer financial remuneration to Turkey in order to reduce the security costs for the EU member states. Some critics of the Deal argued that a security oriented protection policy, which was aiming to contain the flow of refugees and irregular migrants outside the borders of the EU, was at the heart of the Deal. (Interview, NGO Representative, 2017)

EU's approach towards the Balkan states was similar. Instead of providing the financial support for improving the services provided to refugees, Balkan states opted for increasing security measures and border controls. As one of the interview partners from civil society pointed out "our (Balkan) countries are not going to do anything in order to improve the accommodation of the migrants (refugees)… they don't want them (refugees) here… any improvement in hosting can be read as a pull factor for new arrivals." (Interview, NGO Representative, Western Balkans, 2017) It was argued that the EU's efforts were largely ignored by the Balkan states as they decide to spend the EU funding on controlling borders rather than on improvement of camps or other arrangements on hosting refugees (Ibid). The findings of this research shows that EU funding aiming to support services for refugee protection, if not implemented effectively can create tensions with the partner countries and the actors involved in implementing these policies.

In Turkey's case, the cooperative environment between EU and Turkey turned into a more conflict prone one when the arrival of the funds promised under the Deal was delayed. Various politicians including President Erdoğan on different occasions criticized the EU publicly. He argued that the funds, which have been promised to Turkey under this Deal, were not delivered in full. (DW, 2016) Tensions arose even further with the EU when President Erdoğan threatened to open Turkey's

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Western borders to send the refugees towards the EU, if the promised funds did not arrive soon. (BBC, 2016) In addition, disagreements occurred between the Turkish authorities and their EU counterparts on how these funds would be utilized. While Turkey was interested in spending the funding on infrastructure needs such as building hospitals or facilities, the EU was keen on providing direct cash to refugees. (Interview, AFAD, 2017) Turkish authorities raised concerns on the prospective results of this type of direct financial support "as the funds will not be limitless and this financial aid mechanism will make the refugees depended on a charity based system for the future." (Ibid) Without a definite ethical objective, the Deal was not able to provide a distinct model of refugee protection for the future. It was perceived as "nothing more than a low-cost migrant and refugee accommodating system for the EU." (Interview, NGO Representative, 2017)

Overall, the Deal initially proved to demonstrate drivers for advanced cooperation between Turkey and the EU. Financial support and visa liberalization were important drivers for supporting cooperation. However, the ethical aspects of the Deal were questioned with respect to refugee protection standards and moral obligations. The revitalization of Turkey-EU relations (by promising to open several accession negotiation chapters) was an incentive in the beginning. Later financial support package and visa liberalization became the backbone of negotiations with Turkey on managing irregular migration towards Europe. While the irregular flow from Turkey to the EU leading to the conclusion of the Deal was a harbinger of cooperation, the delay of the funds made the same flow as a pawn leading to conflict between the EU and Turkey. This demonstrated the absolute need to establish the fundamental principles of such an arrangement on strong ethical, moral and legal grounds. Implementation of such a deal also has to be done quickly and efficiently without causing delays and tensions between the partners and stakeholders.

4.2.3. Overburdened Greek Asylum System and Operational Difficulties

Returns from Greece to Turkey were another aspect of the EU-Turkey Deal that proved to cause conflict. The mass irregular movement in the summer 2015 created an overburdened Greek asylum system, which was an important driver for cooperation with Turkey both for the EU and Greece. It was argued that the EU-Turkey Deal largely rested on Europeanization of the Greek asylum system in recent years. (Dimitriadi, 2017a) If there have not been any improvements in the Greek asylum system recently, the Deal couldn't have been developed or operationalized. (Ibid) The Greek asylum system has gone under serious reform especially after 2010 when the Dublin Regulation was suspended for returns from Member States to Greece. The reasons for the suspension were due to the inefficient refugee protection conditions in Greece. Following this decision, the M.S.S. vs Belgium and Greece landmark judgment of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), has also suspended the returns to Greece. These decisions paved way an overall suspension of returns to Greece by Member States regularly applying the Dublin rules such as Germany, Belgium, Finland, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

Under the Dublin Regulation, the country of entry and registration is also the country responsible for processing asylum claims. Dublin returns to Greece were-until 2010- a way of maintaining a measure of internal balance between the irregular entry and secondary movements to the Union.

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Thus, the suspension of Dublin returns, while motivating the EU also at the same time pressured the Member States who would not be able to return third country nationals to Greece, both in addressing the shortcomings of the Greek system and shifting the focus to specifically on Turkey. It placed the Greek-Turkish migration route in the forefront. It also forced the European Commission and Member States to look for solutions (Interview, European Institution, 2017). The suspension remained in place until March 2017, with the exception of Hungary.

The suspension of the Dublin Regulation reinforced the reform process on asylum system in Greece, which also paved way the operationalization of the EU-Turkey Deal. However, returns from Greece to Turkey proved to be complicated. Already before the Deal, Turkey-Greece Bilateral Readmission Agreement was not working effectively. There have always been issues regarding the returns from Greece. (Interview, Law Enforcement Officers, 2017) Although, the Deal acknowledged that individualized processing of all asylum claims submitted in Greece must continue in line with the 1951 Convention, it introduced the (in)admissibility procedure as a way of facilitating returns. Those asylum seekers, whose claims will be deemed inadmissible for processing in Greece, can be returned to Turkey under the Greek-Turkish Bilateral Readmission Agreement of 2001.

The Deal was heavily relying on effective return of the irregular migrants and refugees to Turkey. This meant the Turkey-Greece Bilateral Readmission Agreement should function efficiently. However, the overburdened Greek asylum system had difficulties in assessing the asylum claims. This resulted with the creation of "hotpots" approach and changes in the legal framework regarding asylum applications. "Hotspots" approach was not invented for the Deal. Complimentary to the CEAS (which is currently under review) was also the establishment of the hotspots, initially presented in the European Agenda on Migration.[4]

According to the Deal, asylum seekers arriving after 20th March 2016 were subject to as fast-track border assessment procedure in Greece with the exception of vulnerable groups. The hotspots were intrinsically tied to the Deal, functioning as the sites of detention while return of arrivals is pending to Turkey. In that sense, it could be argued that they are also part of the 'internal' externalization approach with the Greek islands transformed into zones of immobility and transit for backward movement to Turkey (Dimitriadi, 2017c). Hotspots created a two-track asylum system, as the asylum process on the islands is different from the one in the mainland (Interview, LEA, Athens, 2016). [5]

In this complicated process, Turkey's eligibility as a "safe third country" has risen a lot of concerns and questions due to Turkey's geographic limitation and acceptance of Syrian refugees under temporary protection. All these concerns have raised tensions at the operational level as the

[4] The hotspots were envisaged as primary reception centres at the external borders though as the crisis unfolded and the numbers increased, the hotspots were seen also as a way of implementing the emergency relocation mechanism. In reality, the hotspots in Greece were transformed into detention facilities, with asylum applicants waiting for their application to be processed in some cases for more than a year.

[5] In this two-track asylum system admissibility of the claims are processed. (In)admissibility procedure assesses whether the "first country of asylum" concept or the "safe third country" concept can be applied.

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number of returns from Greece stayed very low, questioning the effectiveness of the EU in terms of supporting Greece in its efforts to provide services to asylum seekers, refugees and irregular migrants.

Despite the tensions and problems, it is possible to observed that overall the Deal reduced the numbers of irregular crossings and deaths at Aegean Sea. Another positive development was that Turkey was able to get acknowledgement on its efforts in support of its Syrian refugees. However, the Deal's impact on helping the overburdened Greek asylum system as well as on the Syrian refugees or other irregular populations trapped on the Greek islands proved to be far less critical. The Deal externalized the burden of registering and processing asylum claims first to Greece and then to Turkey. Although initially the overburdened Greek asylum system was a driver for cooperation, the lack of sufficient technical and infrastructural support provide by the EU and their application in Greece made the long-term success of this cooperation difficult. The Deal initially facilitated operational cooperation between the two countries. It has also provided a framework for cooperation on migration management between the EU and Turkey. On the other hand, the challenges experienced in the overburdened Greek system ended up creating tension between the parties. It is quite evident that a long-term cooperation between all parties requires a balanced partnership and a convergence of interests on both sides.

4.3. International Security Concerns and International Terrorism

When the Deal had its operational difficulties in terms of returns from Greece, the Syrian war at the same time intensified. Clashes between different actors caused more security concerns and forced displacement. The international security concerns and spillover of the Syrian War became more visible in Syria's neighbourhood. First, the clashes between ISIS and PYD forces made more Syrians to flee the conflict. Later, Russia's intervention has complicated the political and security situation in the region even further. (Ferris and Kirişçi, 2016: 39)

As the international security spillover of the Syrian civil war became clearly visible in and around the region, containing threats to international security became an important driver both for the EU and Turkey. This risk of spillover has proved to be a real threat demonstrated by the terrorist incidents occurred in Turkey and Europe in 2016. The challenges faced by the host counties, such as the rise of fundamentalist movements, and the increased safety concerns of the refugees caused secondary sudden flights.

The worsening security situation in Syria had security repercussions on countries hosting Syrians including Turkey. When Turkey began to be directly and indirectly involved in operations in Northern Syria, a series of terrorist attacks killed and wounded hundreds of civilians in Turkey. Immediately, Turkey raised its security controls both at the borders as well as within the country. One official working in the migration and asylum field argued that his "day-to-day job since 2016 involved providing security background checks and sensitive border crossing analysis." (Interview, LEA, 2017) This change in understanding had a direct impact on Turkey's "open-door policy" towards Syrian refugees. Due to security considerations, Turkey decided to drop this policy and

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adopted a tighter border crossing policy. Once proud to be welcoming everyone, Turkey started to build a 900 km wall along the border to filter the crossings. (Reuters, 2016) Aiming to limit the security implications of border crossings Turkey at certain times completely closed its Syrian border. As a part of the Deal, Turkey was determined to prove that it is a reliable EU partner and it can effectively control its eastern borders. In this topic, the EU and Turkey were able to convergence on their understanding of raising security checks at the border crossings. However, this does not indicate a complete convergence in border control policies between Turkey and the EU. Tightening border controls proved that maintaining international security and combatting international terrorism became a critical issue in the region surrounding Syria.

4.4. July 2016 Coup Attempt and Ineffectiveness of the Accession Conditionality

The final driver affecting the Turkey-EU relation with respect to Turkey's asylum policy has been the July 15th 2016 failed coup attempt and the ineffectiveness of the accession conditionality. Just before the attempt, Turkey and the EU were cooperating quite intensively on the details of the EU-Turkey Deal with respect to the application of the readmission agreement and the visa liberalization for the Turkish citizens. There was intensified collaboration between the EU officials and the Turkish officials. As discussed in the previous sections, the EU leaders made high-level visits to Turkey. In these visits, not only the technical details of the Deal but also other issues relating to Turkey-EU relations were discussed. Suddenly, "the morbid relationship between Turkey and EU became as alive as it can be." (Interview, Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2017) It was estimated that in October 2016, if not in June 2016, visa liberalization for Turkish citizens was going to be operationalized by the EU. (Interview, EU institution, Brussels, 2016) However, the July 15th coup attempt had drastic consequences not only on the political situation in Turkey, but also on Turkish public administration structures.

After the failed coup attempt, the reshuffling of the high-level public figures had consequences on different policy areas including migration and asylum. Changes were made at the various public institutions. By December 2017 all migration and asylum related issues were transferred to DGMM. Thus, the failed coup attempt had direct consequences on Turkey-EU collaboration on the EU-Turkey Deal, Syrian refugees, the distribution of EU based humanitarian aid, visa liberalization for Turkish citizens as well as Turkey's relations with the EU.

Within a couple of months following the coup attempt the cooperative relationship with the EU, turned into a more distant relationship. First, there were no discussions on the EU-Turkey Deal or visa liberalization for Turkish citizens. Worsening political conditions in Turkey further aggravated the relationship between Turkey and the EU. The presidential referendum held in April 16th, 2017 resulted with a "Yes" vote in favour of a presidential system. There were fears that a presidential system with the suggested constitutional changes would not be able to safeguard the checks and balances required for a representative democracy. Following the referendum, in April 24th, 2017 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) called for monitoring the political

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situation in Turkey (The Guardian, 2017). The political developments following the coup attempt demonstrated the critical importance of the EU conditionality as an anchor for Turkish democratic reform process.

From a migration and asylum policy point of view, the EU conditionality was important in Turkey's accession process. The transformation of Turkey's migration and asylum policy suggests explicitly that this policy area presented factors of strong cooperation and at times convergence with the EU. As Turkey's asylum policy Europeanized through the influence of accession conditionality, the norms, standards and principles shaping this policy area demonstrated signs of EU influence. With the erosion of accession conditionality over time even before the coup attempt, the asylum policy turned into a policy area influenced by various domestic factors. After the coup attempt, the implementation of the asylum policy and the norms associated by its implementation became heavily induced by domestic principles and measures. The EU accession conditionality has proved itself to be an important stabilizing political and economic factor in Turkey. Migration and asylum policy is not immune from this positive influence. A field that has proved to have strong prospects of future cooperation and even convergence with the EU demonstrates the signs of tensions and conflict when accession conditionality's effectiveness fades away.

In this section, the drivers shaping the relations between Turkey and the EU since the summer of 2015 have been identified and discussed. In this relationship, the EU-Turkey Deal by itself did not constitute a driver for cooperation, convergence or conflict. Various drivers leading to the completion of the EU-Turkey Deal were quite critical in shaping convergence, cooperation and/or conflict. The lack of international burden sharing for refugee protection was an important driver for Turkey to cooperate with the EU. As the escalation of the Syrian conflict brought complicated political, social, financial and security challenges, and the lack of international burden sharing shaped Turkey's willingness to cooperate on asylum related matters. For the EU, the motivation to protect the Schengen system, controlling EU borders effectively and keeping EU solidarity, helping the overburdened Greek asylum system were drivers for further cooperation with Turkey. For both the EU and Turkey, international security concerns stemming from the Syrian war, containing if not combatting international terrorism were main drivers to for this collaboration. With the EU-Turkey Deal, for the Turkish government financial support for providing protection services to Syrian refugees and visa liberalization for Turkish citizens became the drivers of cooperation. However, operational difficulties with Greece on return of irregular migrants, delays in delivering financial support, the July 2016 failed coup attempt and the loss of effectiveness of the accession conditionality brought tensions and conflict into this relationship.

A sustainable long-term cooperation between EU and Turkey requires relationship that is both successful and sustainable not only the operational level but also at the political level. Without a strong commitment to mutual interests by both sides on asylum policy, a long-term partnership between the EU and Turkey will be difficult to bear results. At this moment, cooperation on the asylum policy is lacking these necessary aspects. Without these aspects being embraced by both

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parties, a strong convergence or cooperation will be unlikely. It will not be surprising to see asylum policy related conflict and tensions to arise between EU and Turkey in the future.

5. Conclusion and future scenarios

This paper aimed to identify the drivers affecting EU-Turkey relations with respect to asylum policy. In this analysis, three different periods of Turkey-EU relations were classified. In these different periods, Turkey-EU relations presented mostly the signs of cooperation and conflict. In the presence of strong EU accession conditionality, there were times when convergence between Turkey and the EU on certain aspects of the asylum policy was evident.

In its long history with EU accession process, Turkey always brought the positive aspects of its partnership to the discussion agenda. For example, Turkey's young dynamic population, its unique geographical position, a vibrant economy, and an expanding market were usually presented as Turkey's strengths. Likewise an effectively functioning customs union with the EU, links with different regions that creates opportunities for trade and policy advancement (energy policy), and issue specific experiences (combatting international terrorism) were seen as Turkey's contributions. The summer 2015 with the mass irregular arrivals to the EU was the first instance when Turkey argued that its cooperation with the EU is vital to deter a possible negative outcome. Some may argue that Turkey used this mass arrival of irregular migrants as a strategic and pragmatic tool to negotiate with the EU. It will not be totally incorrect to say that non-Turkish migration to the EU through mass irregular arrivals and Turkey's effective border control policy became a bargaining chip for Turkey.

This analysis demonstrated that in the initial period of the accession process between the years 1999-2009, Turkey's asylum policy underwent through extensive transformation. In this period, in order to advance in the accession process, Turkey was motivated to cooperate with the EU. During this period EU accession conditionality was an important driver for cooperation. Likewise asylum policy became a critical platform to cultivate the relationship between Turkey and the EU. Due to the accession conditionality even in the times of deep conflict at the political level, the technical cooperation between the stakeholders in Turkey and the EU continued.

In the second period covering between 2009-2015, Turkey's cooperation with the EU turned into limited convergence. Turkey's asylum policy presented indicators of Commission's intended Europeanisation mechanisms working effectively after the launch of the accession process. Domestic drivers such as the need for reform and institutionalize Turkey's asylum policy enhanced cooperation with the EU counterparts. It resulted with the acceptance of Turkey's first national law on migration and asylum. The establishment of a civilian institution specialized on migration and asylum policies was initialized at the same time. The avenues of convergence were visible at the institution building and legislation preparation areas. However, this convergence process was not immune from tensions. The first domestic level driver for Turkey was the redirection of Turkish foreign policy under the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu. Turkey's new liberal foreign policy formulated by Davutoğlu utilized foreign policy activism, trade, humanitarian aid,

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and soft power capabilities. These did not present factors of convergence with the EU. Turkey took an interesting unilateral approach to these issues. Tensions, if not conflict with the EU were particularly evident on topics such as border control and Turkey's liberal visa policy.

Following the Syrian War, Turkey adopted a unique approach to its refugee protection. With an "open door policy" towards the Syrians crossing Turkey's borders, Turkey placed them under temporary protection. Hoping to have a resolution to the Syrian conflict, Turkish government expected their returns back to Syria soon enough. Thus, under this legal status Syrians were not allowed to apply for asylum. They were neither put under a comprehensive migrant integration programme. However, Turkey strongly observed the non-refoulement principle and did not return Syrians crossing Turkey's borders back to Syria. Setting up camps to host hundreds thousands of refugees and providing services to millions of them made Turkey the number one refugee hosting country in the world. Despite its persistent objection to lifting geographic limitation to the 1951 Convention, Turkey's refugee protection experience grew rapidly and drastically in a short span of couple of years.

As a host of 3.5 million Syrian refugees, Turkey also took on the role of a selective protector of Muslim communities around the world. Arguing to be the "ensar" (historical protector of the migrant/refugee) Turkey claimed to become the global protector of the normative framework of refugee protection. This claim has been one of the main drivers for Turkey with its international partners including the EU. Turkey criticized international community including the EU for the lack of financial and physical commitment to Syrian refugees in the region.

The last phase of relations with the EU starting from 2015 onwards demonstrates cooperation at the technical and operational level. At the political level, a successful cooperation was depended on various factors including the effectiveness of EU accession conditionality. Different EU level drivers motivated the EU for action. The escalated numbers of irregular crossings and the appearance of the Aylan Kurdi's photo on Western media raised public awareness on irregular migration globally but more specifically in Europe. Overwhelmed with these arrivals, the member states including Greece turned to the EU for support. For the EU, the motivation to protect the Schengen system, controlling EU borders effectively and keeping EU solidarity, helping the overburdened Greek asylum system were drivers for further cooperation with Turkey. These drivers were able to bring cooperation through the EU-Turkey Deal.

As explained in detail, the EU-Turkey Deal by itself did not constitute a driver for cooperation, convergence or conflict. Various drivers leading to the completion of the EU-Turkey Deal were quite critical in shaping this cooperation while also bringing conflict. The lack of international burden sharing on refugee protection was an important driver for Turkey to cooperate with the EU. As the escalation of the Syrian conflict brought complicated challenges that were not foreseen before, the lack of international burden sharing shaped Turkey's willingness to cooperate on asylum related matters with critical international partners including the EU. For both the EU and Turkey, international security concerns stemming from the Syrian war, containing if not

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combatting international terrorism were main drivers to collaborate. This cooperation was not always smooth and easy due to the divergent political interests of both parties in this conflict.

Similarly, the EU's driver to advance in cooperation with Turkey on irregular returns in order to support Greece on its overburdened asylum system brought tensions both in Turkey-EU relations and Turkey-Greece relations. The EU was not coherent and well equipped enough to support the Greek efforts to respond to the needs of these irregular arrivals. This lack of coherence and efficiency did not only frustrate the EU's Greek counterparts but also it put the returns from Greece to Turkey under jeopardy. One driver that initiated the cooperation at the EU level turned into a source of tensions at the operational level. Interestingly, the empirical evidence from the field both in Turkey and Greece interviews demonstrate that despite these tensions on a day-to-day basis cooperation continued at the operational and technical levels. Law enforcement officers, coastal guards have to cooperate with their counterparts to deal with their daily issues.

With the EU-Turkey Deal, for Turkey, financial support for providing protection services to Syrian refugees and visa liberalization for Turkish citizens became main the drivers of cooperation. However, with the delays in delivering financial support and the disagreements on the usage of these funds, a potential fruitful cooperation turned into a tension driven one. Turkey presented these two issues as the main sources of tensions bringing the relations with the EU to a conflict driven one.

Finally, the July 2016 failed coup attempt brought important changes to Turkey's asylum policy and EU-Turkey relations. The main reason for this change was the following loss of effectiveness of the accession conditionality after the coup attempt. Accession conditionality proved to be a critical driver for change and transformation in Turkey's domestic policies. Even in the periods where dialogue weakened with the EU at the political level, accession process pushed for further collaboration and reform process at the technical level. The failed coup attempt did not directly influence Turkey's asylum policy, but it had indirect consequences. The weakening or fading impact of political conditionality made visible repercussions on this policy area.

From a global perspective, it is clear that the Syrian refugee protection crisis, Turkey's involvement with Syrian refugees and Turkey's rather vocal complains of lack of international solidarity and burden sharing have sparked some further global action. Discussions on how to advance on international burden sharing is now discussed at the INGO, IO and intergovernmental levels. It is difficult to assess the prospective results of these discussions, but it is clear that further discussion on the eroding global and EU level normative framework on refugee protection is ongoing. The result of these discussions will be interesting to observe.

The empirical evidence in this research presented the facts that Turkey's asylum policy since 1999 has changed constantly during its accession process to the EU. From pre-accession process onwards Turkey's migration and asylum policies became important avenues for transformation. In the period between 1999-2009 accession conditionality became the catalyser for this change. Cooperation between EU and Turkey over asylum policy at operational and technical levels was

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intense during this time. From 2009 onwards until 2015, Turkey's asylum policy briefly presented facts for convergence with the EU. The summer 2015 was critical in showing how asylum policy could become important when pragmatic benefits of cooperation in this field were evident for both parties. The EU-Turkey Deal is a clear example of cooperation initiation at the highest level when circumstances required further interaction between Turkey and the EU. However, the empirical evidence also demonstrates that in this form of relationship the legal and normative basis can affect the scope and extent of this cooperation. Tensions and conflict may arise when this basis is not strong and political circumstances change either in Turkey or the EU. The ineffectiveness of accession conditionality or weakening of its application can also bring limitations for cooperation or policy specific transformation.

From the drivers analysed in this paper, it is possible to conclude that asylum policy placed Turkey's relations with the EU between cooperation and conflict since 1999. Although political developments both at the EU and Turkish levels do not always immediately impact the cooperation over asylum policy, long-term influences of these developments are inevitable. Despite the existence of various political tensions at different occasions, cooperation at the technical level among different stakeholders on asylum policy at the domestic, EU and international levels continued. Continuation of daily collaborations and cooperation does not always guarantee that full convergence will likely to happen. Convergence will not happen unless Turkey-EU relations will advance at the political level with negotiation chapters in the accession process are fully implemented.

For Turkey, the indicated periods clearly demonstrate the facts that in EU-Turkey relations, migration and asylum related issues are important in shaping overall policies and politics. When managed effectively asylum policy can provide the necessary tools for cooperation. At the same time, due to the nature of this policy area it can also bring issues of security, solidarity or resource sharing into a more complicated framework leading to serious tensions and possible conflict. Depending on the domestic and international environment, this shift can happen very rapidly and unexpectedly. This was the clear case after the summer 2015. International and domestic political circumstances brought Turkey and the EU together for advanced cooperation. In a very short period of time -within a year- unexpected political circumstances brought conflict into this relationship.

Turkey has shown proof that it can strategically use its geographical location. In case of a conflict-based scenario, Turkey can seal its borders for not accepting refugees in a possible influx situation. Turkey can claim that this action is in line with the 1951 Geneva Convention. Turkey can also argue that this influx created a national security issue like in the 1991 Iraqi refugee crisis. Turkey's sealed border can redirect the refugees to alternative routes in the region. This can create an influx movement similar to the summer 2015 towards Europe. In this conflict-based scenario, Turkey while accepting refugees of such an influx can open its western borders for secondary movements. Turkey may unilaterally get out of the EU-Turkey Deal, pull out from the Greece-Turkey Readmission Agreement or reject the returns. Turkey may also pull out of the EU-Turkey

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Readmission Agreement. However, this research did not find any sufficient evidence for such prospective actions by Turkey. In the immediate future, Turkey will not lift the geographic limitation and probably will not participate in global settlement. However, it can increase funding for resettlement globally and maintain the safety assistance for the Syrians. Turkey will probably continue to cooperate with the EU in case of a prospective refugee crisis within the region. The Greece-Turkey Readmission agreement will continue to be used for the EU-Turkey Deal for the return of irregular migrants.

Both for Turkey and the EU, the wild cards that need to be taken into consideration are future influx situations such as in the case of Afghan refugees in Iran. It is a serious possibility that in case of a conflict in Iran, a movement of almost half a million of Afghan refugees hosted in Iran towards Turkey is very likely. This mass movement can create a serious setback for policies in Turkey and create secondary movements towards the EU. Depending the political and security environment in Syria, another wild card can be the prospective influx movements from Syria to Turkey.

In that respect, it is very important that the EU equips itself with the tools and mechanisms to respond to major and quick shifts in policy developments within or outside the Union. There has been long-term efforts of the Union and member states to establish an effective and efficient burden sharing policy that will equip itself to respond effectively to mass refugee movement situations. However, the events of 2015 proved that there are still very serious obstacles for the achievement of this goal. Taking the asylum policy as an important policy area to produce common solutions both Turkey and the EU can utilize instruments to deal with migration and asylum related challenges. This can result with a cooperation prone relationship between Turkey and the EU. However, current trends indicate that without a strong commitment at the political level, a tension prone relationship between Turkey and the EU with regards to asylum related issues will be likely.

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ABOUT FEUTURE

FEUTURE sets out to explore fully different options for further EU-Turkey cooperation in the next decade, including analysis of the challenges and opportunities connected with further integration of Turkey with the EU.

To do so, FEUTURE applies a comprehensive research approach with the following three main objectives:

1. Mapping the dynamics of the EU-Turkey relationship in terms of their underlying historical narratives and thematic key drivers.
2. Testing and substantiating the most likely scenario(s) for the future and assessing the implications (challenges and opportunities) these may have on the EU and Turkey, as well as the neighbourhood and the global scene.
3. Drawing policy recommendations for the EU and Turkey on the basis of a strong evidence-based foundation in the future trajectory of EU-Turkey relations.

FEUTURE is coordinated by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wessels, Director of the Centre for Turkey and European Union Studies at the University of Cologne and Dr. Nathalie Tocci, Director of Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome.

The FEUTURE consortium consists of 15 renowned universities and think tanks from the EU, Turkey and the neighbourhood.

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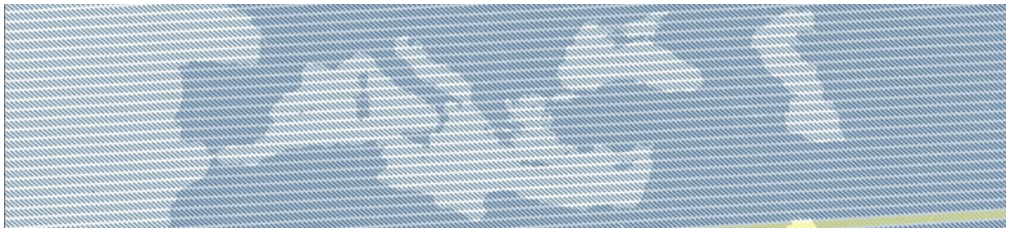

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