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TÜRKEI-EUROPAZENTRUM
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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

International Workshop on

“Migration Potentials from and to Turkey”

Hamburg, 12 January, 2010

Turkey is an important actor in terms of migration flows as it stands at the junction point of Europe, Asia and Africa. Due to its geopolitical significance and closeness to both the European Union (EU) Area and MENA (Middle East and North Africa), Turkey has become a nexus of emigration, immigration and transit migration. The possible accession of Turkey to the European Union triggered discussions on migration potentials from Turkey, not only at academic levels but also among policy makers. With developments towards eastward enlargement of the EU, ageing populations and decreasing labor force participation rates, academic debates increasingly focus on migration potentials from/to Turkey within the context of its possible EU membership. Thus, the effects of Turkey’s accession to the EU upon immigration flows and migration towards the EU member states are questions of considerable importance.

Against this background, with the workshop we seek to generate some more knowledge on the topic of ‘migration potentials’ from several angles. To this end, it will include issues such as the history of Turkey as a country of emigration-immigration and transit, as well as evaluations of past migration practices from a critical point of view. Labor market aspects, push and pull factors, volume/profile/regional distribution/patterns of migration potential, current migration panorama, future trends, demographic factors and policy aspects in the context of the EU accession are the among the issues which shall be covered throughout the workshop.

Questions/topics which we may touch upon are as follows:

1. Assessing the migration history of Turkey:

- What are the main trends from the early sixties up to today?
- Is the history of Turkish emigration a “failure” or a “success”?
- The role of nomadic history of Turkey (tradition of migration) in the past and future Turkish emigration to the Western Europe.

2. European Enlargement and Its significance for Turkey:

- What are the challenges that Turkey will be facing in the near future, within the context of possible EU accession, with respect to migration?
- How will Turkey deal with the issues of asylum, border management and refugee movements under the EU framework?
- What role does migration play in the relations of Turkey with the EU?

3. Profile of Potential Migrants:

a. Quantity:

- How to approach the literature which is estimating the volume of potential migration from Turkey?
- To which extent are those studies reliable with respect to their methodologies, data sets etc.?
- Will the emigration trends in Turkey be similar to the experiences of CEE?

b. Quality:

- What will be the general characteristics of future migrants’ profile and how does this ‘new’ profile differ from the previous/existing ones?
- What are the implications of female migration as a ‘potential’ for Turkey and Europe?
- What are the implications of ‘transformation of Turkish migrants from guest workers to transnational citizens’ for future patterns?

4. Policy aspects:

- How to approach 'skill-biased' migration policies of the EU?
- What are the prospects for Turkey in its transformation from being a labor exporter country to a labor importer one?
- What should be the policy agenda of Turkey in terms of reforms on expected emigration and immigration flows?

5. Pushing and Pulling Factors:

- How did pull and push factors transform during the last decades?
- Will the membership process help Turkey to elevate the pulling factors?
- Will Turkey's migration potential be able to offset the ageing of the EU societies?

6. Other controversial issues:

- Assessment of the Turkish accession to the EU in terms of Turkish identity and its relation to the European identity in the light of 'transnationality' discussions.
- What kinds of conflicts do exist between the Islamic routes of AKP (Justice and Development Party) and secular tradition of the EU?
- Evaluation of cultural-revivalist tendencies and extreme ethno politics among Turkish migrants in the EU.
- Do ethnic Kurds have a potential to emigrate? What is the role of forced displacement?
- Is there a risk for brain drain and youth drain?
- Are brain waste discussions relevant?