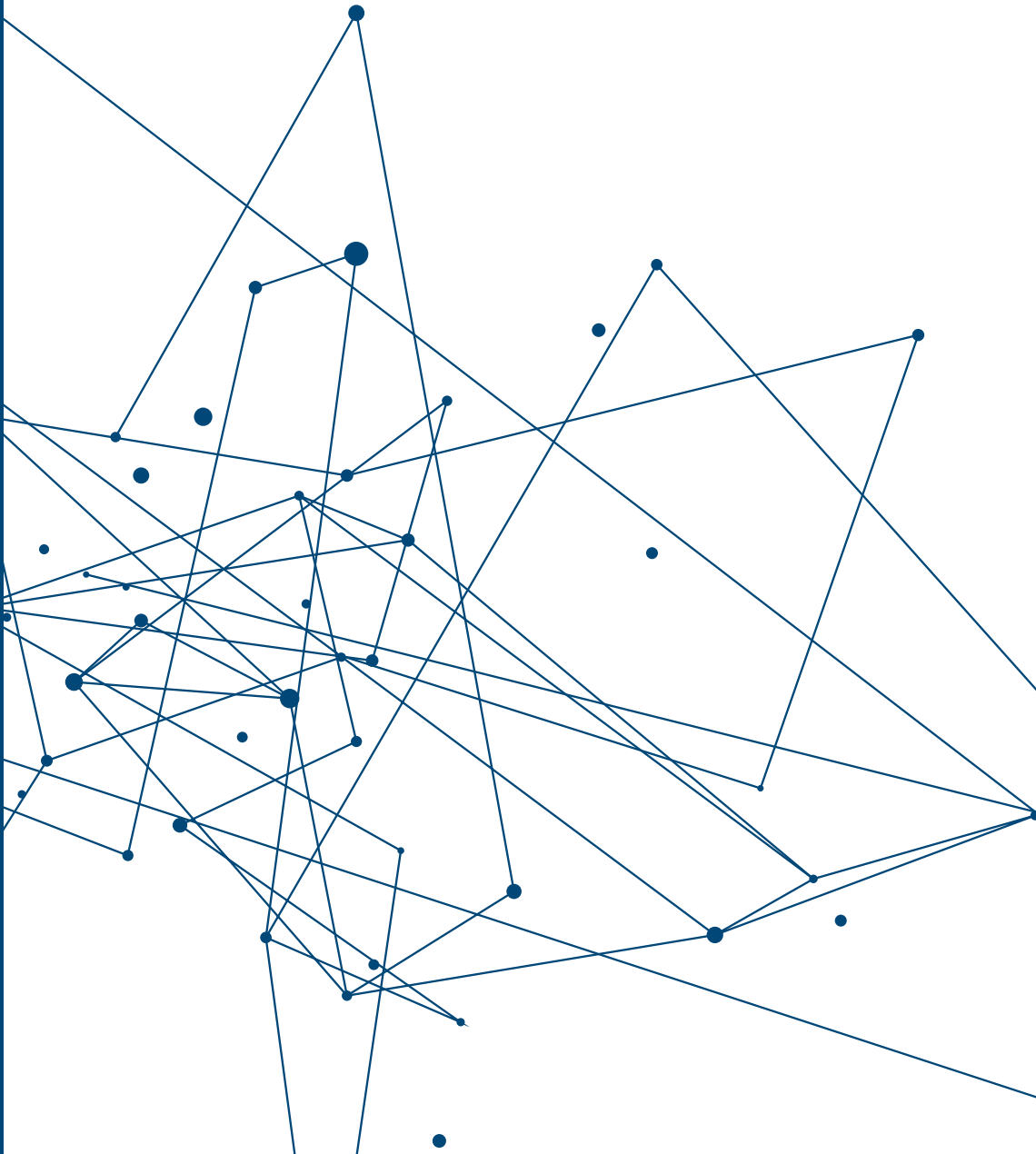


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# Turkey's Policy towards its Diaspora in Germany

## Consequences for Bilateral and Intersocietal Relations

Yaşar Aydın



In last year's Turkish parliamentary and presidential elections, President Erdoğan and his People's Alliance received a significantly higher percentage of votes from Turkish voters living in Germany than from those living in Turkey. However, this does not necessarily mean that the present Turkish government has a strong grip on the Turkish diaspora as a whole as it is feared in German policy circles and media. Indeed, Ankara has not been able to establish strong control over the diaspora or to achieve the desired level of political mobilization beyond Islamist, conservative and nationalist milieus. Turkey's diaspora policy is driven primarily by the aim to bind diaspora people and their organizations to Turkey in social, economic, and political terms and mobilize them in line with perceived national interests, such as cultivating and maintaining a positive image of Turkey and Turks, promoting economic and political relations with Germany and the EU, and countering more radical groups. However, the success of the present Turkish diaspora policy is modest and it also contributes to inner-community fragmentation in the diaspora and creates tensions in Turkey's bilateral relations with Germany. This paper recommends that German policymakers and institutions adopt a comprehensive strategy that includes understanding the paradoxical nature of the diaspora, appreciating the transnational ties and orientations of Turks, and recognizing Islam as part of Germany.

This paper is one of five CATS Network Papers assessing perceptions, ongoing debates, and key responses in selected EU member states regarding Turkish diaspora policies.

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1.

# Introduction

The Turkish government's growing interest in Turkish migrants and their foreign-born children in Europe has made Turkey's diaspora and its diaspora policy a subject of lively political debate in almost all countries with a Turkish migrant community. Germany is a prime example. It is not uncommon to encounter critical remarks in the German public and political discussion about Turkey's diaspora policy for jeopardising the integration process of migrants from Turkey living in Germany, weakening social coherence, and stoking long-distance nationalism among them.<sup>1</sup> The Turkish diaspora has occasionally been associated with integration deficits in the German mainstream media and was even characterised as a parallel society. In addition to public scepticism, German decision-makers and institutions lack a coherent strategy for dealing with the Turkish diaspora policy, which presents institutional, political, and societal challenges for German integration efforts and Germany's bilateral relations with Turkey.

How should Turkey's diaspora in Germany be dealt with, and how can Germany respond strategically to Turkey's diaspora policy? Answering such questions requires a systematic assessment of the Turkish government's diaspora policy to understand its dynamics, objectives, reach, limitations, and outcomes. It is also important to analyse the structure and structural changes that have taken place within the Turkish diaspora, as well as the German perception of and dealings with the Turkish diaspora and its relevant associations and organisations.

To this end, this study begins by establishing a basic definition of diaspora, a community of people of a common origin who live permanently outside the borders of their home state, maintain stable communication channels with their homeland, and have self-organised migrant associations. Based on this definition, the transnational community of migrants with roots in Turkey can be described as a diaspora for at least four reasons.

Firstly, more than six million migrants from Turkey are dispersed around the world, most of whom live in Western Europe, where they form a distinct community and participate in the social and political life of the receiving society as residents, denizens

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<sup>1</sup> "Erdoğan's Rede erzürnt deutsche Politiker", *Die Welt* (online), 28 February 2011, <https://tinyurl.com/562stj2x> (accessed 04 March 2024)  
Maximilian Popp, "Ersatzkanzler in Ankara", *Der Spiegel* (online), 05 May 2013, <https://tinyurl.com/436zwxse> (accessed 04 March 2024)

and citizens (*dispersion*). Secondly, migrants from Turkey living in Germany have strong ties to Turkey. Most of them identify themselves as being from their country of origin (*retrospection*).<sup>2</sup> Thirdly, they are united by a strong sense of community, sustained by a collective sense of exclusion and discrimination in the host country (*a shared community spirit*). Fourthly, migrants from Turkey have a collective identity that is no longer necessarily linked to belonging to a specific territorial area – be it the host country as a whole, the specific region in which they live, or their country of origin (*exterritoriality*).<sup>3</sup>

Based on these four aspects – dispersion, retrospection, a shared community spirit, and exterritoriality – which are constituent elements of the modern definition of a diaspora, Turkish migrants and their children born in Germany should be described as a diaspora.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, the term diaspora policy is used in this paper to refer to the policies, strategies, and discourses aimed at strengthening the self-confidence and capabilities of a given diaspora community. The policy of the Turkish government towards the Turkish diaspora in Germany appears to align with the definition of diaspora policy provided above. It encourages Turkish migrants in Germany to maintain social, linguistic, and political links with Turkey and supports diaspora organisations in Germany that share its worldview and identity. In addition, the Justice and Development Party (AKP thereafter) has established a partisan diaspora organization, the Union of International Democrats (UID), with whom it maintains close links and, as such, aims to promote and support the Turkish diaspora in Germany.

Turkey's diaspora policy, introduced by the AKP government in the late 2000s, is part of Turkey's multidimensional and active foreign policy. The ruling elites see members of the Turkish diaspora as potential representatives and proponents of Turkish states' interests abroad. Based on such perspective, the diaspora policy aims to strengthen and expand Turkey's network of supporters abroad.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Based on various surveys, Turkish individuals living in Germany tend to have a notable level of attachment and a strong or very strong connections to Turkey. See, for example, Susanne Schührer, *Türkeistämmige Personen in Deutschland*, (Nürnberg: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge [BAMF], Working Paper 81, 2018): 43, <https://tinyurl.com/mvtnjray> (accessed 04 March 2024)

<sup>3</sup> Helmuth Berking, “>Homes away from Home<: Zum Spannungsverhältnis von Diaspora und Nationalstaat”, *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 10, no. 1 (2000): 53

<sup>4</sup> Turks in Germany do not commonly use the term diaspora to refer to themselves or the Turkish community in Germany as a whole. However, the term is used by Turkish academics and journalists based in Germany. For a more detailed discussion on the disputed definition of the term diaspora, see Yaşar Aydın, *The New Turkish Diaspora Policy*, SWP Research Paper 10/2014 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik [SWP], October 2014), <https://tinyurl.com/2kwu8ss8> (accessed 18 December 2023)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

2.

# Turkish Diaspora in Germany: Conditions and Structure

Turkish diaspora in Germany is an outcome of the combined effect of Turkish mass migration to the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and the German legal framework, which enabled the settlement of a Turkish community within the society and migrant self-organisations. Turkish diaspora policy is both a trigger of and a reaction to decades-long processes of diaspora formation.

2.1

## Historical Context: Turkish Mass Migration to (West) Germany

The origins of the Turkish diaspora in Germany go back to the mass migration from Turkey thanks to a bilateral labour agreement between West Germany and Turkey in 1961 (*Anwerbeabkommen*). Migration to other Western European countries, including France, Austria, the Netherlands, and Belgium, followed the arrival of Turkish workers in West Germany. Migration from Turkey to Germany (and elsewhere in Europe) continued in the 1970s through family unification. Many Turkish citizens who had moved to work in West Germany chose to remain, with their spouses and children from Turkey eventually joining them.

Meanwhile, political turmoil in Turkey in the late 1970s and the 1980 military coup d'état instigated another wave of migration from Turkey. Many political actors – mostly leftist Turkish citizens such as members of centre-left trade unions or radical left-wing movements and parties – and academics, intellectuals, and artists sought refuge in West Germany. Throughout the 1980s, Germany witnessed an upsurge in the number of asylum seekers from Turkey. In the 1990s, the armed conflict between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê*, PKK), which Turkey and the EU consider a terrorist organisation, and the Turkish army also led many Kurds to seek

refuge and political asylum in Germany. During the 1990s, a separate Kurdish diaspora became increasingly visible in social, economic, and political spheres. This period marks the peak of political activism by Kurds and Kurdish organisations in Germany.

Yet, the 1990s were not only marked by political migration. This period also witnessed Turkish students arriving in Germany to attend German educational institutions. Since then, migration for education purposes has continued. Moreover, since 2015/16, a new wave of highly qualified technicians and academics left Turkey for Germany in a phase of migration often regarded as politically motivated.<sup>6</sup>

Migration from Turkey to Germany over the decades has been multifaceted. It has included numerous migrant flows, including labour migrants, family members reuniting with settled emigrants, students, asylum seekers, returnees from Turkey to Germany, and transnational circular migrants. As a result of various migration processes, the Turkey-originated diaspora in Germany reflects the fragmentations, related conflicts, political divisions, and polarisations salient within Turkish society.

## 2.2

# Legal Context: Residence Conditions, Citizenship, and Religious Affairs

The legal framework in Germany comprises different constitutional basic rights, laws, and bilateral agreements, of which only the most relevant are outlined below. Each of these regulates migration, asylum, and diaspora issues and establishes formal channels for immigration into Germany.

### Recruitment Agreement 1961

As noted in the previous section, the labour recruitment agreement between Turkey and West Germany formed the legal context for migration from Turkey to West Germany until its termination in 1973 due to the worsening economic conditions in West Germany.<sup>7</sup> As such, recruiting workers from Turkey was initially designated as *temporary*. This categorisation is essential to understand not only the migration movements from Turkey to Germany in the following decades, but also the complexities of the integration process. The principle of rotation, which was soon abandoned for reasons of economic effectiveness, was the foundational assumption of the labour agreement. It is widely acknowledged that there was a lack of integration

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<sup>6</sup> Yaşar Aydın, *The Germany–Turkey Migration Corridor: Refitting Policies for a Transnational Age* (Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2016), <https://tinyurl.com/3dckyvax> (accessed 04 March 2024)

<sup>7</sup> Bundesminister für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, *Bundesarbeitsblatt* 13, no. 3 (Bonn, 10 February 1962): 69–71, <https://bit.ly/3RaxniI> (accessed 18 December 2023)

policy before the late 1970s, which is supposed to have contributed to subsequent integration deficits.

### Law of Family Reunification

As of 1973, many migrant workers from Turkey chose to remain in West Germany. Their partners and children joined them per family reunification. Today, the entry and residence of family members from third countries living in Germany is regulated in §§ 27 to 36a of the Residence Act (Gesetz über den Aufenthalt, die Erwerbstätigkeit und die Integration von Ausländern im Bundesgebiet, AufenthG).<sup>8</sup> Family reunification is granted according to § 6/1 of the German Basic Law (Grundgesetz, GG).<sup>9</sup> It is designed to protect marriage and family per § 1/27 of the AufenthG.<sup>10</sup>

### Turkish Law on Nationality

The 1982 Turkish Constitution contains a provision allowing Turkish citizens to acquire dual citizenship. Should Turkish citizens need to renounce their citizenship upon naturalisation in another country, they can still obtain the Blue Card (*Mavi Kart*) from the Turkish government. The Blue Card not only allows living and working in Turkey without the need for a separate work or residence permit, but also enfranchises its holders with all citizenship rights except political rights.<sup>11</sup>

### German Citizenship Law 2000

Based both on the principle of descent (*ius sanguinis*) and the principle of place of birth (*ius soli*), the Citizenship Law 2000 bestows German citizenship to children born in Germany to foreign parents qua birth (§ 3 and § 4/1 StAG). Until 2014,<sup>12</sup> those who wanted to acquire German citizenship had to decide between German nationality and the foreign nationality of parents between the ages of 18 and 23 (the so-called option obligation)<sup>13</sup>. The length of legal habitual residence in Germany required for a claim to naturalisation has also been reduced from 15 to eight years. According to this law, applicants for naturalisation must meet several criteria, including having sufficient knowledge of the German language, society, and institutions, having adequate earnings, expressing a commitment to the free democratic order of the Basic Law, and making a declaration of loyalty (§§ 8 – 14 StAG).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Bundesminister der Justiz, *Gesetz über den Aufenthalt, die Erwerbstätigkeit und die Integration von Ausländern im Bundesgebiet* (21 Februar 2024) <http://tinyurl.com/sn58m5mv> (accessed 24 January 2024)

<sup>9</sup> Bundesminister der Justiz, *Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (19 December 2022), <http://tinyurl.com/5n87by59> (accessed 24 January 2024)

<sup>10</sup> Bundesministerium des Inneren und für Heimat (BMI) and Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF), *Migrationsbericht der Bundesregierung 2021* (2022): 106, <https://tinyurl.com/39nkctzw> (accessed 04 March 2024)

<sup>11</sup> T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Türkiye], *Mavi Kart (Eski Pempe Kart) Uygulaması [Blue Card (Former Pink Card) Application]*, (Ankara: T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı) <http://tinyurl.com/yc5wvmes> (accessed 24 January 2024)

<sup>12</sup> Bundesministerium des Inneren und für Heimat (BMI), *Erwerb der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit durch Geburt in Deutschland*, <https://tinyurl.com/4pbnjykn> (accessed 18 December 2023)

<sup>13</sup> The obligation to choose between two citizenships was abolished in 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Bundesministerium des Inneren und für Heimat (BMI), *Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht*, <https://bit.ly/3Y1F7WB> (accessed 25 January 2023)



## Further Adjustments to the Citizenship Law

On 1 January 2005, the most crucial naturalisation regulations to date, which had previously been standardised in the Foreigner Act (*Ausländerrecht*), were summarised in the Nationality Act. On 1 September 2008, the naturalisation test was introduced as a further requirement due to the growing importance of social integration. Since 20 December 2014, *ius soli* children who have grown up in Germany no longer have to choose between German citizenship and the citizenship of their parents' home countries citizenship. However, the so-called option obligation continued to exist for *ius soli* Germans who did not grow up in Germany.<sup>15</sup>

## Immigration Law

The Act on the Control and Limitation of Immigration and the Regulation of the Residence and Integration of Union Citizens and Foreigners (*Zuwanderungsgesetz*) came into force on 1 January 2005.<sup>16</sup> Known as the Immigration Act, it was part of a legislative package combining several individual laws or legal amendments in existing laws. Meanwhile, the Act on the Residence, Employment, and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory (*AufenthG*), which reformed the previously applicable Law on Foreigners (*Ausländerrecht*), is § 1 of the Immigration Act. In addition, § 2 contains the Law on the General Freedom of Movement for Union Citizens. Also, of relevance here are the Immigration Act, the amendments to the Asylum Procedure Act, the Citizenship Act (*StAG*), the Act on Matters Relating to Expelled Persons and Refugees (*BVFG*), and the Asylum Seeker Benefits Act (*AsylbLG*).<sup>17</sup>

## Skilled Immigration Act

The *Skilled Immigration Act*, which came into force on 1 March 2020, was introduced to address the need to facilitate labour immigration and effectively address Germany's shortage of skilled workers. The more recently adopted *Skilled Worker Immigration Act*, passed in 2023 to further the development of skilled workers' immigration, will gradually ease existing hurdles and lower the income limit for the EU Blue Card<sup>18</sup> starting in November 2023. According to the new legislation, anyone with two years' work experience and a degree in their home country can move to Germany as a skilled worker. The so-called Opportunity Card (*Chancenkarte*) is also introduced in the

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Wissenschaftliche Dienste des Deutschen Bundestages, *Sachstand WD 3 - 3000 - 234/20. Grundlagen des Erwerbs der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit* (Berlin, 12 October 2020), <https://bit.ly/3wxIQDR> (accessed 27 January 2023)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Bundesgesetzblatt, *Gesetz zur Steuerung und Begrenzung der Zuwanderung und zur Regelung des Aufenthalts und der Integration von Unionsbürgern und Ausländern* 2004/ I, no. 41 (Berlin, 05 August 2004), <http://tinyurl.com/y3pb7dpb> (accessed 24 January 2024)

<sup>17</sup> Bundesminister der Justiz, *Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz* (Berlin), <http://tinyurl.com/wv2huutz> (accessed 24 January 2024)

<sup>18</sup> EU-Blue-Cards are issued by EU member states to third-country nationals. They entitle the holder to reside in the EU for the purpose of gainful employment. See German Federal Foreign Office, *FAQ*, <http://tinyurl.com/4rjav6tj> (accessed 25 January 2024)

framework of a points system. In the future, there will be three main channels for skilled workers to migrate to Germany: a) Qualification: With the EU Blue Card, IT specialists, for example, who are currently in high demand in Germany, can already come to Germany with a recognised qualification; b) Experience: Anyone with at least two years' work experience and a state-recognised professional qualification acquired abroad can come to Germany as a skilled worker; and finally, c) Potential: For those who do not yet have a concrete job offer, but who have potential for the labour market, an "opportunity card" will be introduced.<sup>19</sup>

### Regulation of Religious Affairs

The Federal Republic of Germany supports religious communities and, at the same time, must refrain from interfering in their internal affairs. A vital element of the relationship between the state and religious communities here is the right of the religious communities to autonomy in internal affairs, according to Art. 137/1 of the Weimar Constitution (*Weimarer Reichsverfassung*,<sup>20</sup> WRV) integrated into § 140 of the GG.<sup>21</sup> All religious communities are entitled to this right, regardless of their legal form. According to this principle, religious communities granted the corporate body status are entitled to the same rights as the Catholic and Protestant churches.<sup>22</sup>

The state's relationships with religious communities are characterised by the principle of parity, derived from § 3/3 of the GG, but not by exclusivity. Yet, distinctions between individual religious communities based on actual differences are permissible, provided they are just. Yet, the principle of religious and ideological neutrality is not explicitly anchored in the Basic Law. According to § 137/5 of the WRV, a religious community must offer the guarantee of duration based on the number of its members and through its constitution if it wants to attain the status of a corporate body.

The corporate body status brings with it a significant increase in prestige and social influence. It confers on members of the corporation the right to levy taxes per Article 140 of the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*, GG) in conjunction with Article 137(6) of the WRV. It also permits hiring civil servants, thereby creating public law employment

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<sup>19</sup> Bundesrat, *Gesetzesbeschluss des Deutschen Bundestages. Gesetz zur Weiterentwicklung der Fachkräfteeinwanderung* (Berlin, 23 June 2023), <https://tinyurl.com/4exb79c9> (accessed 18 December 2023)

<sup>20</sup> *Die Verfassung des Deutschen Reiches ("Weimarer Reichsverfassung")* (11 August 1919), <http://tinyurl.com/2jmbw2ac> (accessed 24 January 2024)

<sup>21</sup> Bundesminister der Justiz, 2022

<sup>22</sup> With the status of a public corporate body (*Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts*, KdöR), the state grants special rights to religious and ideological communities. These include (a) the right to levy taxes from their members, (b) the ability to act as employers (the possibility to structure the legal status of their employees under public law), (c) the power to legislate (for their own internal law, e.g., regulations on internal church organization and membership relations) and, finally, (d) the right to create ecclesiastical public property through dedication. In addition, religious communities with corporate status are granted a number of individual advantages, such as tax benefits or protection from enforcement. See Bundesministerium des Inneren und für Heimat (BMI), *Körperschaftsstatus* (Berlin), <https://tinyurl.com/2kc8m7yf> (accessed 18 December 2023)

relationships not governed by labour and social security law (see footnote no. 22). It also grants special privileges, including tax benefits and fee exemptions. Religious associations with corporate status also have a privileged position in social and youth welfare. In addition, they are also given the right to sit on broadcasting councils and the Federal Review Board for Media Harmful to Minors.<sup>23</sup>

The Ministry of Labour, Integration and Social Affairs of the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia recognised in 2020 and the Senate Department for Culture and Social Cohesion of the federal state Berlin in 2022 the Alevi community in Germany as a corporation under Public Law. A religious community striving for the status of a corporate body must not endanger the fundamental constitutional principles outlined in § 79/3 of the GG. It must meet the requirements of § 9/2 of the GG. A form of loyalty to the state that goes beyond meeting the requirements of the GG is not required.

These regulations are of relevance against the backdrop that occasional discussions within the mainstream media and public tend to portray Islam as hostile to democracy and lacking the necessary willingness to cooperate.<sup>24</sup> Convictions about Islam's tendency towards a radical orientation also exist. To date, no Islamic religious community has been granted corporate rights in Germany. The granting of corporate rights falls under the responsibility of the federal states, and the application is usually to be addressed to the respective ministries. The non-recognition of religious Muslim communities – except the Alevi community – in the respective federal states is more of a political issue than a legal problem. With the denial of the status of a religious community according to Article 137 of the WRV, which is relevant for Art 7/3 of the GG, religious Islamic communities are denied important rights and privileges.

## 2.3

# Social Context: Socio-Culturally Plural, Politically Polarised

In Germany, there is a large community originating from Turkey. It is politically active with numerous civil society associations. More than three million inhabitants with roots in Turkey are based in Germany. According to the micro-census 2022, 1.53 million German citizens have a Turkish background, and 1.3 million residents in

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<sup>23</sup> Wissenschaftliche Dienste des Deutschen Bundestages, *Ausarbeitung. Fragen zur religionsrechtlichen Anerkennung des Islam in Frankreich und Deutschland* (Berlin, 20 March 2006), <https://tinyurl.com/3c8jv4tu> (accessed 18 December 2023)

<sup>24</sup> Bertelsmann Stiftung, *Religionsmonitor: Sonderauswertung Islam 2015*, <https://tinyurl.com/mhs73bfj> (accessed 05 March 2024); Mediendienst Integration, *Infopapier. Antimuslimischer Rassismus in Deutschland: Zahlen und Fakten* (March 2021), <https://tinyurl.com/4m9psn9a> (accessed 05 March 2024)

Germany are citizens of the Republic of Turkey.<sup>25</sup> According to the Census of 2011, there were 530,596 Turks in Germany with dual citizenship. Today, the number of people with dual citizenship should be significantly greater. Relatedly, the German Citizenship Law of 2000 grants German citizenship to children of Turkish families at birth.<sup>26</sup>

Most migrants in Germany with roots in Turkey (52.6 per cent) were born in Germany, while the other 47.4 per cent were born in Turkey and migrated to Germany. Turkish migrants have been residing in Germany for a significant amount of time, with 37.3 per cent living there for over 40 years and 42.2 per cent for over 20 years. A mere 8.8 per cent of newcomers living in Germany for less than 10 years can be considered newcomers.<sup>27</sup>

Today, migrants with roots in Turkey are present in all areas of social life in Germany and in almost every field of work. In big cities and metropolitan areas, private medical practices, law offices, restaurants, and many other businesses are run by Turkish migrants and their foreign-born children. Turkish diaspora is also intertwined with the host society in the family realm. The number of inter-ethnic marriages has been on the rise. In total, 19 per cent of German women and 14 per cent of German men who are in bi-national marriages are married to Turkish citizens (albeit not all of these marriages are inter-ethnic in the strict sense of the term because some of the German citizens involved are of Turkish descent)<sup>28</sup>.

According to the Federal Ministry of Education and Research data, approximately 75,000 entrepreneurs with roots in Turkey – some of them German citizens and others Turkish citizens – employ approximately 375,000 people in Germany and realise an annual turnover of approximately €35 billion. Indeed, the economic potential of the Turkey-originated diaspora in Germany is one of the reasons behind the Turkish state's interest in the diaspora.<sup>29</sup>

Today, migrants with roots in Turkey with German citizenship are also substantially represented in German parties, federal parliament, and local assemblies. The 1980s

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<sup>25</sup> Bundesministerium des Inneren und für Heimat (BMI) und Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF), *Migrationsbericht der Bundesregierung 2020* (2021): 178, <https://tinyurl.com/2c46452v>, (accessed 18 December 2023)

<sup>26</sup> Bundesministerium des Inneren und für Heimat (BMI), *Staatsangehörigkeitsrechts*, <https://tinyurl.com/fhnh359c> (accessed 22 January 2024)

<sup>27</sup> Bundesministerium des Inneren und für Heimat (BMI) and Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF), *Migrationsbericht der Bundesregierung 2019* (2020): 201-205, <https://tinyurl.com/yr8uk52h> (accessed 4 March 2024)

<sup>28</sup> "Deutsche heiraten am liebsten Deutsche – oder Türken", *Focus* (online), 19 February 2015, <https://tinyurl.com/25ctkury> (accessed 26 March 2024)

<sup>29</sup> Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt e.V. (DLR), *Turkey*, <https://tinyurl.com/bdu5krtp> (accessed 18 December 2023)  
Auswärtiges Amt (AA), *Germany and Turkey: Bilateral relations* (Berlin, 24 February 2021), <https://bit.ly/3s2A3CY> (accessed 18 December 2023)

can be described as a period when the issue of migrants coming from Turkey to stay in Germany was politicised. Being placed at the centre of immigration and integration debates and being the target of xenophobia and racist violence stimulated such politicisation, especially as political actors with roots in Turkey developed closer relations with German parties.<sup>30</sup> In such a political context, as of the late 1980s, migrants with roots in Turkey entered state assemblies (Landtag) via party lists, after which they entered the federal assembly (Bundestag) in the 1990s. In the 20th legislative period, 18 deputies with roots in Turkey entered the Bundestag. In federal state assemblies, as well, there were around a dozen.

The preferences of Turkish migrants regarding German parties are quite different from their preferences concerning parties in Turkey. In a 2016 survey, 69.8 per cent of the respondents declared their preference for the Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD) in Germany, 13.4 per cent were for the Alliance 90/The Greens (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, B'90/Die Grünen), and 6 per cent were for the Left Party (Die Linke). Nearly 90 per cent of respondents indicated their preference for leftist parties. The Christian Democratic Union (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, CDU) – then the party of Chancellor Merkel, which had been in power continuously since 2005 until 2021 – was only backed by 6.1 per cent of the surveyed.

In recent years, there have been notable changes in the political party preferences of Turkish migrants in Germany, as empirically proven by Viola Neu's research for the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) in 2021. Accordingly, most of the Turkish-origin migrants with voting rights in Germany responded that they would vote for the CDU at the federal election. In the previous years, SPD was the most popular among the Turkish diaspora. The support of the SPD among German citizens of Turkish origin decreased sharply from 50 per cent in 2015 to 13 per cent in 2019. During the same period, the CDU's vote share among the Turkish diaspora increased from 17 per cent to 53 per cent. Thus, for the first time in its history, the CDU surpassed the SPD in popularity among the Turkish community. However, it remains to be seen whether this political trend, which suggests a conservative turn, will continue.

The voting behaviour of Turkish migrants and their Germany-born children in the Turkish elections do pose interesting contrasts to their choices in the German elections.<sup>31</sup> In social and political terms, Turkey's diaspora in Germany is markedly heterogeneous. First, it is possible to make a socio-cultural distinction between those

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<sup>30</sup> For more detailed accounts and analysis of the patterns of racism in Germany, see Stephen Castles, *Racism and politics in West Germany*, *Race & Class* 25, no. 3 (1984): 37–51; Stephen Castles, Heather Booth and Tina Wallace, *Here for Good: Western Europe's New Ethnic Minorities* (London: Pluto Press, 1984)

<sup>31</sup> Regarding voting behaviour of Turkish migrants see Sinem Adar, *Rethinking Political Attitudes of Migrants from Turkey and Their Germany-Born Children: Beyond Loyalty and Democratic Culture*, SWP Research Paper 7/2019 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik [SWP], June 2019), <https://tinyurl.com/2cpy9r4p> (accessed 4 March 2024)

with Islamic, traditional religious orientations and those with more secular, nationalist or social-democratic leanings. Second, a political distinction can be made regarding attitudes toward the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government. On the one hand, there are migrants with roots in Turkey loyal to and supportive of the AKP government, identifying themselves as ethnically Turkish, while on the other, there are those who are dubious about the Turkish government and reject ethnic Turkish nationalism. The contrasting attitudes of these groups and more secular migrants from Turkey were, for instance, observable in the controversial discourse on social media surrounding the Turkish government's conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque in 2020. While the former supported the AKP government's decision, the other group was highly critical. Another example of such division was visible during the Nagorno-Karabagh War between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020. Groups uneasy with the Turkish government's nationalist and militarist foreign policy criticised the AKP leadership for its support of Azerbaijan.<sup>32</sup>

Third, another point of distinction, which has a denominational/sectarian basis, concerns Alevis and Sunnis, albeit there are many grey areas where these distinctions intersect. For example, while some Alevis display leftist, secular-nationalist approaches, others may side with Turkish right-wing parties. Some Alevi circles confidently express criticism of the West due to their secularist-nationalist approaches.<sup>33</sup>

Still, there is not always a direct relationship between political orientation and cultural identity. Some conservative and religious Kurds or Alevis support Turkish state nationalism and share similar loyalty to the state as Turkish nationalists or conservatives. There are even Kurds and Alevis who vote for or are sympathetic to the ruling right-wing conservative AKP and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). Scepticism towards the West is widespread among nationalists, conservatives, Islamists, liberals, and social democrats in Turkey.<sup>34</sup> Here, an amalgam of anti-imperialism, Third Worldism, and nationalism unite individuals and groups from all

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<sup>32</sup> These assessments are based on the author's own observations of social media platforms such as Facebook or X. Feridun Zaimoğlu welcomes the conversion of the Hagia Sophia into a mosque, while the *Left Party* Sevim Dağdelen (MP) regards it as an act of barbarism. "Schriftsteller Zaimoglu begrüßt Umwandlung", *Stuttgarter Nachrichten* (online), 22 July 2020, <http://tinyurl.com/ydxjir88>; (accessed 24 January 2024). "Hier instrumentalisiert Erdogan Religion politisch", *Deutschlandfunk* (online), 24 July 2020, <http://tinyurl.com/p5dtfdj3> (accessed 24 January 2024). Regarding the controversy within the Turkish diaspora in Germany over the Nagorno-Karabakh War see Inga Barthel, "Krieg in Berg-Karabach: Wie zwei Musiker die Bundesregierung aufrütteln wollen", *Tagesspiegel* (online), 20 October 2020, <http://tinyurl.com/yn86dxex> (accessed 24 January 2024).

<sup>33</sup> Ayca Arkilic and Ayse Ezgi Gurcan, *The Political Participation of Alevis: A Comparative Analysis of the Turkish Alevi Opening and the German Islam Conference*, *Nationalities Papers* (2020): 1-18, <https://tinyurl.com/vcrrarmz> (accessed 29 January 2024).

<sup>34</sup> Ruken Tuncel, "HDP Kürt seçmende oyunu yüzde 73'e çıkardı, AKP yarı yarıya düştü" [HDP increases its vote among Kurdish voters to 73 per cent, AKP drops by half], *Bianet* (online), 9 November 2022, <https://tinyurl.com/3sj4mn4r> (accessed 29 January 2024).

spectrums of Turkish society.

In summary, the Turkish diaspora in Germany is divided along ethnic, religious, and cultural lines, and shows a high degree of political polarisation. In this context, the results of the Turkish parliamentary and presidential elections since 2014 and the constitutional referendum in 2017 provide instructive illustrations. In 2012, a new law (Law No. 6304) allowing the installation of ballot boxes abroad was implemented, and the 2014 presidential election was the first in which Turkish citizens voted in consular polling stations.<sup>35</sup>

In the 2015 Turkish parliamentary elections, among the Germany-based Turkish electorate, the governing AKP received 59.7 per cent of the valid votes. Meanwhile, the pro-Kurdish leftist Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) gained 15.9 per cent, the secular social democratic Republican People's Party (CHP) gained 14.8 per cent, and the nationalist MHP won 7.5 per cent of the votes.<sup>36</sup> This pattern was more or less repeated in the 2023 presidential elections, where President Erdoğan won both rounds with twice as many votes (65.5 and 67.2 per cent) as the joint opposition candidate Kılıçdaroğlu (32.5 and 32.8 per cent).<sup>37</sup>

In the 2023 parliamentary elections, the ruling People's Alliance won 65.09 per cent of the vote, the opposition's National Alliance gained 22.08 per cent, and the Alliance for Work and Freedom won 10.61 per cent. The election results in Germany contrasted with those in Turkey, where the People's Alliance won 49.47 per cent of the vote, the opposition National Alliance gained 35.02 per cent, and the Alliance for Work and Freedom picked up 10.55 per cent.

Erdoğan's higher vote shares in Germany (1st round 65,47, 2nd round 67,22 per cent) than in Turkey (49,52 and 52,18 per cent),<sup>38</sup> and scenes of Turkish youths celebrating his victory publicly in several German cities caused disappointment and outrage within the German public and among German political actors.<sup>39</sup> At the centre of such

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<sup>35</sup> "Kanun No. 6304" [Law No. 6304], *Resmî Gazete* (online), 18 May 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/4djtzvzk> (accessed 18 January 2024)

<sup>36</sup> "Seçim 2015" [Election 2015], *Sabah* (online), <http://tinyurl.com/mvechebh> (accessed 18 January 2024)

<sup>37</sup> "Almanya Seçim Sonuçları" [Germany Election Results], *Sabah* (online), <http://tinyurl.com/4dzbewfe> (accessed 18 January 2024);

"Almanya Seçim Sonuçları, 2. Tur" [Germany Election Results, 2nd Round], *Sabah* (online), <http://tinyurl.com/5n7dsp97> (accessed 18 January 2024)

<sup>38</sup> One explanation for this is Erdoğan's omnipresence in the Turkish media consumed by the Turkish diaspora - he was even at the forefront of most of the media coverage in Germany of the Turkish elections. Due to his 20-years term in office, he is now considered by many Turkish voters an experienced statesman. Meanwhile, Kılıçdaroğlu was largely considered an unknown with scant executive experience. For German Turks, infrastructural modernisation in Turkey is Erdoğan's sole achievement, while they are not directly affected by the decline of democracy or restrictions on human rights in Turkey. It can also be argued that the criticism of Erdoğan in the German media and the prohibition of campaigning in Germany have generated support for him.

<sup>39</sup> "Türkiye Geneli Açılan Sandık Oranı" [Ratio of Opened Ballot Boxes in Turkey], *Sabah* (online), <http://tinyurl.com/mryepvpm> (accessed 18 January 2024)

discontent are the concerns about the loyalty of the Turkish diaspora to their host country and their lack of democratic values (living in a democracy but voting for authoritarianism abroad).<sup>40</sup> These developments have also fuelled the ongoing debate on the modernisation of German citizenship law. Notwithstanding the controversy, dual citizenship will become legally possible from July 2024, following the approval of the amendment to the law in January 2024.

It has also reinforced the myth that the majority of Turkish citizens living in Germany support Erdoğan. Of the three million Turkish-Germans and 1.5 million Turkish citizens living in Germany eligible to vote, only 509,000 (17 per cent of all Turks living in Germany) voted for him – with a voter turnout of 50 per cent. No scientific research has been conducted on the motives and party preferences of Turkish non-voters in Germany, nor on how German citizens of Turkish origin would vote if they were eligible.<sup>41</sup>

In Germany, about 70 per cent of Turkish voters select parties on the right of the political spectrum in their home country's elections, with the rest opting for parties on the left. These right-left dynamics more or less mirror those of the electorate in Turkey itself.<sup>42</sup> Besides, the voting tendencies of Turkish migrants and their Germany-born children in Turkish elections, among other indicators, show how polarised the Turkish diaspora is in political terms.

## 2.4

# Associational Context: Migrant Self-Organisations

It is, therefore, unsurprising that the Turkish diaspora in Germany contains a diverse landscape of migrant political associations. At the outset of the Turkish labour migration, West German trade unions were important structures which brought people of all political views together, largely staying away from party politics. In the 1970s, this situation changed as Turkish parties started to take on organisational roles in the diaspora. The Millî Görüş movement, out of which the National Salvation Party emerged (first MSP, then as of 1983 the Welfare Party, and from 1997 to 2001 the Virtue Party, which was in 2001 divided into two: AKP and the Felicity Party), started

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<sup>40</sup> Sinem Adar, 2019

<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> Yaşar Aydın, Die Parlamentswahlen in der Türkei im Juni 2015: Ist das Wahlergebnis ein Sieg für die Demokratie und für den nationalen Zusammenhalt, *Südosteuropa Mittelungen*, no. 03-04 (2015): 11 - 26;

Yaşar Aydın, Die Parlaments- und Präsidentschaftswahlen in der Türkei im Juni 2018, *Südosteuropa Mittelungen*, no. 04 (2018): 54-71



to establish an organizational presence in Germany.

The umbrella association started in West Germany under the name of the European Turkish Union in Cologne in 1976, after which the name was changed to the European Islamic Union (Millî Görüş) in 1982. In 1987, Turkish citizens living abroad were allowed to vote, but only at customs and border crossings. Around that time, Millî Görüş in West Germany organized election tours to Turkey and donation campaigns for the Welfare Party in Turkey. In this period, Turkish citizens living abroad could vote in Turkish elections while entering Turkey via land and air. Since 2012, however, citizens abroad have had the right to vote without having to travel to Turkey. For the first time, in the 2014 presidential elections, eligible voters could vote in the countries they reside in.<sup>43</sup>

Yet, Turkish political parties' efforts to mobilise Turkish migrants living in Germany preceded the election periods. In the 1970s, for instance, the MHP established an organizational presence in West Germany. According to a report of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz), West German internal intelligence found in 1977 that MHP members were organised in West Germany under the name of Idealist Hearths (Ülkü Ocakları). In the same year, the MHP ended as a formal party organisation with the decision of the Turkish Constitutional Court, which found foreign organisations of Turkish parties unconstitutional.

Similarly, the organisational efforts of Turkish social democrats also date back to the early 1970s, when Bülent Ecevit became the leader of the CHP in 1973. On 12 March 1973, the first social democratic Turkish organisation in West Germany was established under the Turkey Left of the Center Association (Türkiye Ortanın Solu Derneği). On 29 October 1977, a social democratic umbrella organisation was established in Berlin under the name of the People's Revolutionary Federation (HDF), which has continued to operate until today.<sup>44</sup>

In 1980, an umbrella leftist association entitled the Federation of Democratic Workers' Associations (DİDF) was established based on the demand of Turkish migrants on the more radical left and in line with Turkey's relatively marginal Labour Party (EMEP). On the far left, Kurdish associations close to the PKK assembled under the umbrella association Democratic Social Centre of the Kurds in Germany (Navenda Civaka Demokratik ya Kurden li Almanyaye, NAV-DEM).

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<sup>43</sup> For the relevant Electoral Code, Law No. 5749 of 13<sup>th</sup> March of 2008, see "Kanun No. 5749" [Law No. 5749], *Resmî Gazete* (online), 22 March 2008, <http://tinyurl.com/32prb7pu> (accessed 26 March 2024); Zeynep Şahin-Mencutek and Murat Erdoğan, "The Implementation of Voting from Abroad: Evidence from the 2014 Turkish Presidential Election", *International Migration* 54, no. 3 (June 2016): 173-186

<sup>44</sup> Based on expert interviews conducted by the author.

Two umbrella organisations stand out because of their neutrality concerning party politics: the German Alevi Unions Federation (Almanya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu, AABF) and the Turkish Community in Germany (Türkische Gemeinde in Deutschland, TGD). In the late 1980s, Alevis in Germany started to organise themselves politically. Today, they are represented under the umbrella of the AABF. Many individuals involved in the AABF are also very active in German parties. Besides, there are also many religious, cultural, and economic umbrella associations (see the Appendix).

The nationwide Turkish Community in Germany (Türkische Gemeinde in Deutschland, TGD) and its numerous regional associations play a bridge role between the Turkish diaspora and federal and regional politics. Despite their small size compared to the Islamic Community Millî Görüş (IGMG), the AABF, or the Federation of Turkish Democratic Idealist Associations in Germany (Almanya Demokratik Ülkücü Türk Dernekleri Federasyonu, ADÜTDF), and the TGD and related associations play a committed role in integration policy as they carry out numerous integration and cultural projects, events, and campaigns. They are also involved in activities focusing on the prevention of ultranationalism, racism, and anti-Semitism.

3.

# Turkish Diaspora Policy, Its Institutions, and Outcomes

3.1

## Turkish Diaspora Policy: Main Objectives and Interests

Several economic, political, and cultural concerns drive Turkey's diaspora policy. In addition, the ruling AKP pursues self-serving interests, such as mobilising voters during elections and controlling Turkey's religious milieus.

### **Economic Interests**

According to the Turkish authorities, the Turkish diaspora in Germany has considerable economic potential<sup>45</sup> and should act as a link between the two countries. In addition, Turkey is keen to attract investment (from Turkish entrepreneurs) and remittances from the Turkish diaspora. As of 2022, Turkey's bilateral trade volume with Germany reached €51.6 billion, Turkish exports to Germany amounted to €24.6 billion, and German exports to Turkey totalled €27 billion. As of 1980, the direct investments from Germany to Turkey amounted to \$16 billion. Over the same period, direct investment from Turkey to Germany was \$3.1 billion.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> "Turkish diaspora establishing 'Global City Network'", *The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye* (TOBB) (online), 6 September 2014, <https://tinyurl.com/djtt6xwd> (accessed 18 December 2023)

<sup>46</sup> German Representations in Turkey, see "Bilaterale Wirtschaftsbeziehungen", *Deutsche Vertretungen in der Türkei* (online), <http://tinyurl.com/6x7986z8> (accessed 20 December 2023); "Commercial and Economic Relations between Türkiye and the Federal Republic of Germany", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye* (online), <https://tinyurl.com/5n89mssu> (accessed 18 December 2023); "Almanya Federal Cumhuriyeti Ekonomisi" [Economy of the Federal Republic of Germany], *T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye]* (online), <https://tinyurl.com/5as3v57u> (accessed 14 November 2023)

### **Political Interests**

The Turkish government's diaspora policy also pursues political objectives – seeking to reshape, control, and mobilise the Turkish diaspora to support official Turkish foreign policy. The aim is to make the Turkish diaspora a voice advocating for Turkey's interests. Accordingly, the Turkish government encourages Turkish citizens to acquire German citizenship and integrate economically, enabling them to exert influence as lobbyists for Turkey within German institutions such as political parties and associations. Ankara believes that an insufficiently integrated Turkish community could have undesirable consequences for bilateral relations between Ankara and Berlin, as this could create a negative image of Turkey among German decision-makers and lead to diplomatic tensions. According to Ankara, a highly integrated and economically prosperous Turkish diaspora would legitimise Turkey's relations with the European Union and its member states.

### **Cultural Interests**

Cultural interests are central to Turkey's diaspora policy. Presenting Turkey's cultural heritage, facilitating cultural exchanges, disseminating information about Turkey, and offering educational programs on the Turkish language, culture, and arts are all part of Turkey's cultural policy towards the Turkish diaspora and host societies. These intentions cannot be separated from political goals, as they also constitute public diplomacy and aim to enhance Turkey's image abroad.

In summary, Turkey's policy regarding its diaspora is driven by economic, political, cultural, and identity-based motives. It aims to maintain control over the diaspora in line with Ankara's interests. In addition, the policy seeks to construct a favourable image of Turkey and harness the diaspora organisations for lobbying purposes.

## **3.2**

# **Diaspora Policy: Organisations, and Reach and Limits**

### **New Diaspora Institutions**

Under AKP government, new diaspora organisations such as the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, YTB), the Culture Centres of Yunus Emre Institute (Yunus Emre Kültür Merkezleri, YEKM), and the Berlin branch of the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı, SETA) have been established.

Founded in 2010, the YTB is a state secretariat supervised by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey.<sup>47</sup> With the establishment of this new office, Ankara has provided an institutional basis for interaction with Turkish citizens living abroad and the associated kin communities. The YTB aims to cater to the following groups: a) Turkish citizens abroad; b) related communities (a term which refers to Muslims in the Balkans who share common cultural and geographical heritage with the Turks); c) international students, especially students of Turkish origin from the Turkic republics and the Balkan states, studying in Turkey, and d) non-governmental organisations. To advance Turkey's economic, political, and cultural interests, the YTB intends to support communities of Turkish origin residing abroad in becoming politically involved within their countries of residence and enhance their connections with Turkey.<sup>48</sup>

The YEKMs are pillars of Turkish public diplomacy that strengthen Turkey's soft power. The establishment of the first YEKM in Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina) aligns with the diaspora policy's focus on historical and cultural heritage, underlined by neo-Ottoman assumptions and aspirations. According to the sociologist and migration expert Ayhan Kaya, the aim of cultural institutions in areas such as the Balkans or the Middle East is to propagate the neo-Ottoman discourse by invoking a shared history.<sup>49</sup>

Founded in 2005, SETA is "a non-profit research institute dedicated to innovative studies on national, regional, and international issues." Furthermore, the objective of the think tank is to produce "up-to-date and accurate knowledge and analyses in the fields of politics, economy and society" and evaluate "national and international issues in a historical and cultural context."<sup>50</sup> Yet, contrary to its self-proclaimed position, SETA is widely acknowledged as the academic voice of the AKP regime.<sup>51</sup> The think tank, which also has an office in Berlin, has been criticised in Germany for a

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<sup>47</sup> "Teşkilat Şeması" [Organisation Chart], *Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı (YTB) [Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities]*, <https://ytb.gov.tr/kurumsal/teskilat-semasi> (accessed 22 January 2023)

<sup>48</sup> "Başkanlığımız" [Our Directorate], *Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı (YTB) [Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities]*, <https://tinyurl.com/3ru24ebm> (accessed 26 March 2023) and T.C. Başkanlık [T.C. Presidency] "Artı Doksan Dergisi" [Article Ninety Magazine], no. 5 (January 2013): 6, 12 and 15, [https://ytbweb1.blob.core.windows.net/files/resimler/dergiler\\_pdf/arti-05.pdf](https://ytbweb1.blob.core.windows.net/files/resimler/dergiler_pdf/arti-05.pdf) (accessed 11 April 2024)

<sup>49</sup> Ayhan Kaya and Ayşe Tecmen, *The Role of Common Cultural Heritage in External Promotion of Modern Turkey: Yunus Emre Cultural Centres*, Working Paper 4, EU/4/2011 (Istanbul: Bilgi University, 2011) <https://bit.ly/3kyl1Vt> (accessed 22 January 2023)  
Further evidence for such an interpretation can be found in the speech of the then foreign minister Davutoğlu at the inauguration of the YEKM branch in Sarajevo, see Yunus Emre Enstitüsü [Yunus Emre Institute], *Yunus Emre Bülteni [Yunus Emre Bulletin]*, no. 2 (Ankara, December 2009), <https://tinyurl.com/48fdddsd> (accessed 26 March 2024)

<sup>50</sup> "About", *Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA)*, <https://www.setav.org/en/about/> (accessed 22 January 2023)

<sup>51</sup> Bulut Gürpınar and Ömür Aydın, "The Uniformization of Think Tanks in Turkey: The Foundation for Political, Economic, and Social Research (SETA) as a Case Study", *SAGE Open* 12, no. 1 (2022) <http://tinyurl.com/2kd6wu9a> (accessed 18 January 2024)

study it released and in which Deutsche Welle journalists were denigrated.<sup>52</sup>

### Strategies in the Field

The establishment of Turkish organisations as part of the AKP's diaspora policy has aimed to have direct communication channels with the Turkish diaspora and maintain control over it. The religious organisation Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği, DİTİB) plays a central role here. The Friday sermons formulated in Ankara by the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, DİB) are read out in the DİTİB mosques.<sup>53</sup> In terms of content, they encourage a state-loyal attitude. Organisations such as the UID actively promote the interests of Turkey and the AKP.

Besides these efforts, the Turkish Embassy in Berlin and Turkey's thirteen consulates in various cities across Germany also play an essential role in implementing the diaspora policy and fostering orientation and loyalty towards Turkey. Attending the receptions organised by the Embassy to celebrate national holidays is highly perceived within the Turkish community, including those of secular and liberal-left orientation. These events serve to engage attendees in identity politics, instilling in them the notion that the AKP government is committed to the well-being of Turks residing overseas.

Other events organised by the consulates and the Embassy are panel discussions and commemorations of important national dates, such as the failed coup d'état on 15 July 2016, celebrated as a victory for democracy in Turkey. What is noteworthy about these events is the blame placed in a propagandistic and nationalistic tone on German decision-makers for providing "retreat areas" and "safe havens" for groups and organisations such as PKK or Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi/Cephesi, DHKP-C) officially classified by Turkey, Germany, and the EU as a terrorist group. Observations from these events and interviews conducted by the author of this study with their participants suggest that they are designed to promote a political message and encourage migrants to align themselves with the government's stance.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Elmas Topçu, "SETA: Eine Stiftung im Dienste der AKP", *Deutsche Welle* (online), 14 November 2019, <https://bit.ly/3XQoNYQ> (accessed 22 January 2023); Die Linke, Ulla Jelpke (MP), "Spitzeln des Erdogan-Regimes das Handwerk legen!" Press release, 18 November 2019, <https://bit.ly/3Hp33Oj> (accessed 22 January 2023)

<sup>53</sup> Iulia-Alexandra Oprea, *An Assessment of DİTİB's role in the prevention of violent radicalization* (Berlin: CATS Network, June 2020), <https://tinyurl.com/mrjxjbjc> (accessed 4 March 2024)

<sup>54</sup> "T.C. Düsseldorf Başkonsolosluğu 15 Temmuz Anma Programı Geniş Özeti, 2023" [Consulate General of the Republic of Turkey in Düsseldorf 15 July Commemoration Programme, 2023], *YouTube* (online) <https://rb.gy/m7rlr> (accessed 29 August 2023); "15 Temmuz şehitleri yurt dışında da anıldı: 'Kahraman güçlerimiz destan yazdı'" [The 15 July martyrs were also commemorated abroad: 'Our heroic forces have written an epic'], *Hürriyet* (online), 16 June 2023, <https://tinyurl.com/mss6kbpq> (accessed 18 December 2023)

However, the impact of the Turkish policy on Turkish migrants and their Germany-born children is restricted. Radical and nationalist Kurds and the majority of Alevites, as well as secular and radical-left-oriented Turks, remain beyond the reach of the policy. The same applies to Turkish migrant associations – not all possess robust links to the Turkish government. Furthermore, it should be noted that not all football clubs and federations have a close relationship with the Turkish government. At the same time, apart from a few exceptions, there is no Turkish state control over Turkish-language media in Germany. The latter, which mainly comprises online news portals, vary in their approaches towards the Turkish government from affirmative to critical.

Between 2016 and 2018, some Turkish migrant groups and organisations held protest activities against, for example, the Armenian Resolution, which was passed in the Bundestag in June 2016, while others staged rallies in solidarity with the Turkish government in response to the attempted coup. The latter, organised by the AKP-affiliated actors, fell short of expectations. Some pro-government actors expressed their views on social media and televised discussions following the failed coup, but they had limited resonance among the Turkish diaspora in Germany. Meanwhile, pro-government actors also struggled to gain traction in major German media outlets and exert influence in the discourse. Their reach was limited to certain segments of the Turkish diaspora.

Developments over the past decade show that the Turkish government has not been able to establish full control over the Turkish diaspora or achieve its desired level of political mobilisation. Relatedly, those affiliated with the AKP-led government who are part of the diaspora have been unable to significantly influence mainstream discourse or contribute to public debates and policies.

### 3.3

## Outcomes I: Intra-Conflicts in the Diaspora

Socio-political tensions in Turkey and mobilisation efforts of political actors in the diaspora from the left (such as the PKK or other extremist Marxist-Leninist groups) as well as from the right of the political spectrum (including followers of the Party of Great Unity (Büyük Birlik Partisi, BBP), Ottomans Germania (Osmanen Germania), or groups and associations following the tradition of the Grey Wolves (Ülkücü) movement all contribute to intra-community conflicts. These actors and developments have also intensified tensions between the Turkish diaspora and institutions of the host society, as well as bilateral spats between Turkey and Germany. Political shifts and disputes in Turkey cast their shadows on the Turkish diaspora in Germany and contributed to long-standing social polarisation therein. For

example, a series of high-profile developments such as the Gezi Park protests in Istanbul in the summer of 2013, the corruption scandal of December 2013, the persecution of academics signing a petition against the government's securitised and militarised approach to the Kurdish issue<sup>55</sup>, the failed military coup attempt on 15 July 2016, and subsequent elections have all contributed to the increasing politicisation of Turkey's diaspora.

Migrants from Turkey are politically mobilised not only by the Turkish government via diaspora institutions such as the DİTİB, the UID, and other migrant organisations with close ties to the government, but also by left-wing radicals<sup>56</sup> and pro-PKK or Kurdish nationalist circles and groups. For example, in September 2016, these groups held a protest rally in Cologne against the Turkish government and President Erdoğan. Sympathisers of the PKK also participated in this rally, bearing symbols and flags of the banned organisation. Contrary to the critical reaction to the pro-government demonstration held a few weeks beforehand, German politicians, media, and the public remained silent during this rally where PKK propaganda was present.<sup>57</sup> Many migrants from Turkey perceived this as evidence of prejudice among German politicians and the public against Turkish conservatives and as a demonstration of the German authorities' "tolerance" for the PKK and extreme left-wing groups in Turkey.<sup>58</sup>

The militant activities of ultra-leftist and pro-PKK and Kurdish nationalist actors prompt some Turks outside of these groups to form counter-movements.<sup>59</sup> However, it is essential to bear in mind that the PKK or other left-wing organisations are rather political fringe groups. Therefore, their activities should not be generalised and considered representative of the Turkish diaspora in Germany.

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<sup>55</sup> In January 2016, over 2000 academics in Turkey signed a petition which called for non-violent resolution to the conflict in the southeast of the country. President Erdoğan immediately branded the signatories as traitors, while many of the petition's signatories lost their jobs, received death threats, or were subjected to other forms of harassment by the state.

<sup>56</sup> The Verfassungsschutz report lists a dozen associations and organisations that, in its view, are "left-wing extremist" and are under surveillance by the German authorities. This includes groups such as the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front [*Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi -Cephesi*, DHKP -C], the Marxist Leninist Communist Party [*Marksist Leninist Komünist Partisi*, MLKP], the Turkish Communist Party-Marxist-Leninists [*Türkiye Komünist Partisi -Marksist-Leninist*, TKP-ML] and organisations associated with them.

Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat (BMI), *Verfassungsschutzbericht 2022*, <http://tinyurl.com/4zsm3m29> (accessed 24 January 2024)

<sup>57</sup> Daniel Bax, "Mustergültige Gelassenheit" *Die Tageszeitung* (online), 04 September 2016, <https://bit.ly/3Z1L5Hk> (accessed 11 September 2023)

<sup>58</sup> This assessment, which is common among Turks in Germany, influences the perception of the majority society. However, it is short-sighted and ignores the fact that the PKK is banned in Germany and there are numerous court cases against suspected members of the PKK in Germany.

<sup>59</sup> Norman Siewert, "'RiseUp4Rojava' Der Konflikt in Nordsyrien und die Kurdensolidarität im Linksextremismus", *Analysen & Argumente*, no. 377 (Berlin: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, December 2019), <https://tinyurl.com/38bjat26> (accessed 4 March 2024)



### 3.4

## Outcomes II: Inter-Societal Conflicts and Tensions in Bilateral Relations

The Turkish diaspora's economic, socio-political, and cultural activities not only have a lasting influence on society and politics in Germany, but also affect Germany–Turkey and EU–Turkey bilateral relations. Here, four aspects significantly influence bilateral relations and act as a source of diplomatic tensions are highlighted.

### **Transnational Ties and Political Mobilisation**

Loyalty to the state of origin and respect for state administrators are often stronger in diasporas than in the home country. Members of the Turkish diaspora tend to have a better knowledge of the ruling party executives and state elites than of the opposition party leaders. Here, the influence of the pro-government Turkish media is also significant given that migrants with roots in Turkey intensively consume it. Meanwhile, Turkish migrants in Germany rarely see Turkish opposition party leaders and politicians in either Turkish or German media.

Another factor is that Turkish migrants and their Germany-born children are, by and large, enthusiastic about Turkey's economic development and may be inclined to ignore economic problems that do not directly affect them. Some German political actors and decision-makers, as well as the media, have concerns about the transnational ties of Turks living in Germany, as they regard transnationalism<sup>60</sup> as an obstacle impeding the integration process. In particular, they are wary of those who reject a multicultural society and an inclusive collective identity, preconditions of comprehensive integration.

### **The DİTİB and Religious Affairs**

From the German perspective, the DİTİB is an important partner in faith and integration. Moreover, it is a member organisation of the German Islam Conference (Deutsche Islam Konferenz, DIK). Recently, DİTİB has been at the centre of controversial debates and has become the target of criticism. Christoph de Vries, a politician from the governing CDU, called for the suspension of the DİTİB's membership at the DIK and underlined the organisation's dependence on Ankara.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Transnationalism refers to migrants' strategy of getting involved with the culture of their country of immigration, and of participating in social life and politics there without severing ties with their country of origin, breaking with their culture of origin, or giving up their particular identity.

<sup>61</sup> Wolf Wiedmann-Schmidt, "Moschee-Dachverband. CDU-Innenpolitiker fordert Ausschluss der DİTİB aus Islamkonferenz", *Spiegel Panorama* (online), 22 February 2019, <https://tinyurl.com/2s37javw> (accessed 5 March 2024)

Elsewhere, the German Domestic Intelligence Service (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, BfV) has contemplated whether DİTİB had acted in line with German constitutional law. The BfV found that a series of incidents showed that the Turkish government had been using the DİTİB as an instrument to achieve its objectives on German soil. One such incident was the investigation conducted by the Federal Attorney General of at least 19 DİTİB imams who had reportedly transmitted intelligence about expatriates of Turkish origin living in Germany who had expressed criticism of the Turkish government. Another controversy emerged upon the leaked pictures of Turkish youngsters wearing Turkish army uniforms in a re-enactment playing the roles of Turkish soldiers in an event organised by a mosque associated with DİTİB. Moreover, the collective prayers to mark the Turkish invasion in Afrin also fuelled the tension and widened the psychosocial gap between migrants of Turkish origin and the majority society.<sup>62</sup>

Finally, the BfV did not observe DİTİB as a potentially suspicious organisation despite considering it for a while. Such a classification could put the DİTİB's membership in the DIK and its funding by the German federal government at risk. It is important to acknowledge that the decline in DİTİB's reputation has not been sudden but gradual. The failed coup attempt in Turkey marked a significant turning point in this regard. Since then, the Turkish government has aspired to enhance its control over the Turkish community in Germany by utilising DİTİB. Indeed, this constitutes a fundamental aspect of Turkey's new diaspora policy, implemented under the AKP government, seeking to attain ideological dominance over the diaspora and mobilise it whenever it is deemed appropriate.

In conclusion, Ankara's deployment of DİTİB as an instrument of its diaspora policy and a propaganda tool<sup>63</sup> to increase the AKP's public approval in the diaspora hampers Turkey's bilateral relations with Germany. Berlin demands that the DİTİB operate as an autonomous structure in the country. In addition, the German authorities require assurances from the DİTİB's management that the religious umbrella organisation will not serve as a base for covert intelligence operations.

### **Diaspora Nationalism**

A significant number of Turkish migrants and Germany-born children possess a strong affinity towards Turkey, advocate for bilingualism, and express dual identities. They identify themselves as either German Turks, European Turks, or Germans with

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<sup>62</sup> Wilfried Buchta, "Ditib und die türkische Offensive in Syrien 'Plumpe Kriegspropaganda'" (interview with Andreas Main), *Deutschlandfunk* (online), 25 January 2018, <http://tinyurl.com/nsde2nfh> (accessed 24 January 2024)

<sup>63</sup> The DİTİB, which oversees mosques, is perceived by the German public as an extension of the Turkish government. As per an article in *Der Spiegel* by Katrin Elger (2022), DİTİB North is closely aligned with the Turkish government and with the Grey Wolves movement, which is considered in Germany as right-wing extremist and anti-democratic. Katrin Elger, "Extremismus in deutschen Moscheen »Wo stehen wir? An Erdoğans Seite«" *Der Spiegel* (online), no. 4, 25 January 2022, <https://tinyurl.com/mdtek678> (accessed 25 January 2022)

Turkish roots (transnational orientation). Beyond these transnational attitudes and orientations, there is a vivid sense of nationalism within the Turkish diaspora, which can be separated into two types: diaspora nationalism and right-wing ultranationalism.<sup>64</sup> In cases of diaspora nationalism, migrants tend to over-identify with Turkey and its government, romanticise and idealise the country, and take offence at any criticism levelled towards Turkey and its leaders. Meanwhile, right-wing ultranationalism is also present within the Turkish diaspora, as evidenced by umbrella organisations, as well as numerous clubs and mosque communities, attracting a portion of the Turkish diaspora.

### **Grey Wolves**

With riots in Vienna, violent escalations in France, and attempts at intimidation in Germany, the Grey Wolves has gained political and media attention. On 18 November 2020, the Bundestag approved a cross-party motion put forward by the CDU/Christian Social Union in Bavaria (Christlich Soziale Union in Bayern, CSU), the SPD, the Free Democratic Party (Freie Demokratische Partei, FDP), and the B'90/Die Grünen parliamentary groups, calling for a consistent fight against the Ülkücü movement and a reduction of its influence in Germany. Extreme far-right, racist, and anti-Semitic beliefs, as well as ultranationalist mobilisation among German citizens of Turkish origin, have been cited as causes of public defamation and threats against certain German politicians with Turkish roots. Such rhetoric and activities have been particularly prevalent within the Ülkücü movement in Germany.

Over 300 organisations and communities throughout Germany are presently associated with far-right and ultranationalist groups. These include self-help and cultural associations such as mosque communities, youth clubs, and football clubs. Such entities have an impact on the social lives of members of the Turkish diaspora. They also have extensive networks and connections with municipal and integration councils.<sup>65</sup> However, Turkish ultranationalists are on the fringes of political life in Germany,<sup>66</sup> and thus, their activities ought not to be seen as representative of the Turkish diaspora.

Moreover, numerous associations within the Turkish diaspora are dedicated to countering Turkish ultranationalism within the framework of democracy promotion

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<sup>64</sup> Ultranationalism is understood as a radicalised form of nationalism based on an essentialist friend-enemy dichotomy, exaggeration of one's own and the devaluation of the supposedly other, as well as an open commitment to ideologies of inequality.

<sup>65</sup> Marion Sendker and Jonas Panning, "Die Grauen Wölfe und der Traum vom großtürkischen Reich", *Deutschlandfunk* (online), 18 February 2021, <https://bit.ly/3wltDBq> (accessed 22 January 2023); "Rechtsradikale Türkeistämmige- Wie die Grauen Wölfe in NRW Parteien unterwandern", *Das Erste* (video), 08 September 2020, <https://bit.ly/3XOGlo1> (accessed 22 January 2023)

<sup>66</sup> For an assessment of the support base of Turkish ultra-nationalism, see Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV), *Türkischer Rechtsextremismus- Die "Grauen Wölfe" in Deutschland*, (Köln, September 2023) <http://tinyurl.com/574aetra> (accessed 29 January 2024)

projects, which impact the diaspora in Germany.<sup>67</sup> In particular, the TGD and many of its regional associations run projects on the prevention of ultranationalism and anti-Semitism. The overarching goal of the specialised information centres engaged here is to empower various target groups in such a way that they recognise ultranationalist tendencies among the Turkish diaspora in Germany and react accordingly. Such projects enable young people to critically reflect on manifest and latent forms of anti-Semitism in the past and the present using different educational approaches, ultimately strengthening their resistance to anti-Semitism.

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<sup>67</sup> Exemplarily see Turkish Community in Schleswig-Holstein: Türkische Gemeinde in Schleswig-Holstein e.V. (TGS-H), *Fach- und Informationsstelle Türkischer Ultranationalismus in Deutschland*, <https://diyalog.tgsh.de/> (accessed 11 September 2023); Turkish Community in Hamburg: Türkische Gemeinde Hamburg und Umgebung e.V. (TGH), »Neue Wege« *Prävention von Antisemitismus* (Hamburg, March 2020), <https://tinyurl.com/yznmhk9s> (accessed 26 March 2024); or the project *KOgEX Hessen – Kompetenz gegen Extremismus in Justizvollzug und Bewährungshilfe*, which is implemented among others by Violence Prevention Network gGmbH, <https://violence-prevention-network.de/angebote/projektuebersicht/radikalisierungspraevention-und-deradikalisierung-in-strafvollzug-und-bewaehrungshilfe/hessen/> (accessed 04 April 2024); or the project *AKTIV! Für Demokratie und Toleranz in der Migrationsgesellschaft* implemented by Alevi Federation Germany [Almanya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu (AABF)] <http://tinyurl.com/bdvt dh2k> (accessed 26 March 2024)

4.

# Policy Lessons and Recommendations

The movement of people between Germany and Turkey will continue, bringing many social, cultural, and economic challenges as well as benefits to both nations.

Therefore, the significant Turkish diaspora with a strong voice will remain crucial in Germany's social, political, economic, and cultural fabric. Any Turkish government will pursue an active diaspora policy towards migrants with roots in Turkey, so Turkish diaspora policy will inevitably remain a source of diplomatic tension between Germany and Turkey. It will also likely persist as a source of social conflict and controversy in German politics, media, and public discourse. Therefore, devising a comprehensive strategy for the Turkish diaspora in Germany will be indispensable to prevent Turkey's potential attempts to instrumentalise it and strengthen its loyalty toward and identification with Germany. Undoubtedly, greater mobility between Germany and Turkey can catalyse cooperation in several areas, such as trade, science, culture, and the media. By considering the following recommendations, policymakers could maximize these potential benefits.

## **1. Grasp the Paradox of the Diaspora**

Turkey's diaspora as a transnational community is paradoxical regarding its functions and outcomes. On the one hand, it functions as a catalyst for further immigration and integration. However, because of its size and structure, the Turkish diaspora also slows down the integration process due to the social and cultural polarisation within it. Meanwhile, Turkey's diaspora also absorbs newcomers into a social solidarity network, providing them with information and support in their integration efforts. The activities in Turkey's diaspora – in political, social, and economic terms – show an advanced level of integration into the host society. Still, paradoxically, its members also reproduce a strong sense of diaspora nationalism. Ultimately, policymakers need to gain a broad understanding of this paradox within the Turkish diaspora in Germany.

## **2. Do Not Overstate Political Transnationalism as Obstacle to Integration**

It is essential not to misinterpret the support of the Turkish diaspora in Germany for Erdoğan and the AKP in Turkish elections. The public depictions of Turkish migrants and Germany-born children as a homogenous group united behind autocracy while living in a liberal democracy are factually misleading. Blaming the Turkish diaspora

for their voting behaviour in the Turkish elections could risk alienating them from society and politics and furthering radicalisation. There is no solid scientific evidence that transnational political orientations are detrimental to the integration process.

### **3. Recognise the Benefits of Transnational Ties and Orientations**

Focusing only on the conflictual outcomes of the transnational ties and orientations of migrants from Turkey is misleading, as they also have a bridging function. Moreover, the non-recognition of the transnational ties and orientations of migrants from Turkey nurtures essentialist identities as well as diaspora nationalism. Therefore, it would be politically wise to recognize the mediating and bridging functions of the transnational ties and orientations of migrants from Turkey. This would also prevent such migrants from alienating themselves from their host state. Recognition of transnational ties and orientations would effectively tackle diaspora nationalism, intra-community fragmentation, and instrumentalization efforts of any Turkish government.

### **4. Involve Migrant Self-organisations in the Decision-making Process**

It is important to realise that transnationally oriented organisations can play a more decisive role in institutionalised communication between mainstream society, state institutions, and migrants with roots in Turkey. Many Turkish umbrella organisations and their regional associations are active in the prevention of extremism and ultranationalism within the diaspora. Politicians as well as state and civil society organisations should support Turkish associations in their preventive educational work against ultranationalism, racism, anti-Semitism, and extremism.

### **5. Recognise Islam as a Part of German Society**

The German government's policy concerning Islam and the DİTİB is driven by security concerns, which produces exclusionary and discriminatory practices towards migrants with Turkish and Muslim backgrounds. Besides, the denial of status as corporate religious communities to religious Muslim communities deprives them of important rights and privileges. Hostility towards Islam and Muslims is no longer a fringe phenomenon but has reached the centre of society. A clear stance against hostility towards Muslims is vital to counter discrimination, self-exclusion, and radicalisation.

5.

# Appendix: Diaspora Associations

Name	Directions, Aims, and Positions	
<b>Political Associations (from Right to Left)</b>		
ADÜTDF	<p><i>Almanya Demokratik Ülkücü Türk Dernekleri Federasyonu, (ADÜTDF)/ Federation of Turkish Democratic Idealist Associations in Germany</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part of the “European Turkish Confederation” (Avrupa Türk Konfederasyonu), which was founded in 1978 as the European Democratic Idealist Turkish Associations Federation</li> <li>Carries out diverse activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aims to preserve, maintain, and transfer national and spiritual values to generations by conducting social and cultural activities</li> <li>Carries out all of its activities per its purpose and in a way that covers all segments of the Turkish community living abroad</li> <li>Encourages Turks in Germany to remain Muslim Turks, not to break away from their own culture, and to live in better conditions and harmony with each other in society</li> </ul>
UID	<p><i>Union of International Democrats (UID)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Founded as the Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD)</li> <li>AKP lobby organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fulfils a “transmission function”</li> <li>Works to establish Turkish and related communities and groups in their adopted countries, especially in economy, science, politics, and culture.</li> <li>Organised rallies and voting campaigns for the AKP during various election periods</li> </ul>
AADD	<p><i>Avrupa Atatürkçü Düşünce Dernekleri (AADD)/ European Atatürkist Thought Associations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Founded in 1995, previously known as the Atatürk Culture Centers in Europe</li> <li>In Europe operates under the name Federation of Kemalist Thought Associations in Europe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active in the diaspora and organises itself alongside local German groups</li> <li>Took part in solidarity rallies in support of the Gezi Park protests</li> </ul>
TGD	<p><i>Almanya Türk Toplumu (TGD)/ Turkish Community in Germany</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consists of many regional associations, which bring together numerous political, social, cultural, and sports associations</li> <li>Contact point for state and federal policy on issues of integration and participation</li> <li>Regional associations run numerous integration courses and prevention projects to counter racism, anti-Semitism, and Turkish ultranationalism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pluralist and “ideologically neutral” representation of the interests of Turkish migrants, with a secular emphasis</li> <li>Attends to the concerns and interests of “Turks in Germany” in public and state institutions</li> <li>Demands equal treatment for all migrants in Germany and fights against hostility toward foreigners and discrimination</li> <li>Demands recognition of minorities as part of society with equal rights</li> <li>Supports integration by “preserving cultural identity” while appealing to migrants to identify themselves “with Germany as a new home”</li> </ul>
DİDF	<p><i>Demokratik İşçi Dernekleri Federasyonu (DİDF)/ Federation of Democratic Workers’ Unions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperates with trade unions and Die Linke (The Left Party)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political organisation of left-wing orientation claiming to engage in a “class struggle”, “international solidarity of workers”, and anti-imperialism</li> <li>Mobilises workers and young people against discrimination and social injustice</li> <li>Understands integration as a genuine “social issue” and is sceptical about religion</li> </ul>

<p><b>NAV-DEM</b></p>	<p><i>Navenda Civaka Demokratîk ya Kurdên li Hannoverê (NAV-DEM)/ (Democratic Society Centre of the Kurds in Germany), until 2014</i> YEK-KOM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part of the Congress of Kurdish Democratic Society Europe (KCD-E)</li> <li>Umbrella organisation with a coordinating function for Kurdish organisations in Germany. The BfV regards the organisation as having close ties to the PKK</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officially works toward the integration of Kurds “into German society while preserving their own identity”</li> <li>Promotes cultural identity, religious and philosophical “values of the Kurdish people” and aims at realising the principles of peace and friendship among peoples, and establishing “peace in Kurdistan”</li> <li>Commitment “to the unity of Kurdish society” and the establishment of contacts with “democratic institutions in Turkey”</li> </ul>
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### Religious Associations (in Alphabetical Order)

<p><b>AABF</b></p>	<p><i>Almanya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu (AABF)/ Alevi Federation Germany</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member of the European Union of Alevi Communities (AABK)</li> <li>Takes part in the German Islam Conference (DIK)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aims at the revitalisation of the Alevi religion and documents and publishes the fundamentals of the Alevi faith</li> <li>Supports interreligious dialogue and offers political consultancy on questions related to the Alevi faith and Alevi social life in Germany</li> <li>Positions itself as pro-integration and supports democratic values and secularism</li> </ul>
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<p><b>ATIB</b></p>	<p><i>Avrupa Türk İslam Kültür Dernekleri Birliği (ATİB)/ Union of Turkish-Islamic Cultural Associations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annually organises a pilgrimage to Mecca</li> <li>Runs a funeral aid fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Represents the cultural, social, and legal interests of the Turkish-Muslim minority in Germany</li> <li>Committed to promoting international understanding to ensure acceptance and friendship of different cultures and to enable the development of a society without exclusion and discrimination</li> <li>Aims to maintain and preserve the cultural and religious identity of Turks in Germany and to integrate them into German society</li> <li>Adopts measures and initiatives against racism, xenophobia, and discrimination, as well as those pursuant to the peaceful settlement of conflicts in districts and to cooperation with every association that works toward similar goals</li> <li>Financed exclusively from donations, membership fees, proceeds from events, and the sale of books, magazines, videos, and CDs</li> </ul>
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<p><b>DITIB</b></p>	<p><i>Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği (DİTİB)/ Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partakes in the German Islam Conference (DIK) and Integration Summit</li> <li>Represents 70 per cent of mosque associations</li> <li>Unites over 960 local mosques under its roof, which are legally and economically independent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Founded by the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı-DİB) to fight political Islam and to meet the religious needs of the Turkish community, and as of 1985 has been the biggest umbrella organisation for mosque communities in Germany</li> <li>Describes its <i>raison d'être</i> as “providing Muslims a place of worship and to make a contribution to their integration in their host countries”</li> <li>Focuses on four areas: education and culture, youth indoctrination, women, and interreligious dialogue with the rest of German society</li> <li>With the coming to power of the AKP government, the DİTİB ceased to function as the tool of a secular state and was transformed into an instrument of Ankara’s foreign and diaspora policy, supervised and controlled by the DİB</li> </ul>
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<p><b>IGMG</b></p>	<p><i>İslâm Toplumu Millî Görüş (IGMG)/ Islamic Community Millî Görüş</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A total of 518 mosques are active in Germany under the umbrella of the IGMG</li> <li>The IGMG was close to parties under the leadership of former PM Necmettin Erbakan (i.e., the Welfare Party)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Religious association aiming to organise “the religious life of Muslims comprehensively” and to care for “all affairs of Muslims”</li> <li>Seeks to improve the living conditions of Muslims and protect their fundamental rights</li> <li>Aims to participate in public discussions to contribute to the solving of economic,</li> </ul>
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		political, and social problems of society as a whole
<b>VIKZ</b>	<p><i>Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren (VIKZ) / Association of Islamic Cultural Centres</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No organic ties to any Turkish party</li> <li>• Nine associations in Germany, and approx. 300 local mosques &amp; educational associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Its stated goal is to provide comprehensive religious, social and cultural care to Muslims in Germany</li> <li>• Committed to the acceptance of Islam and Muslims as part of German society and to “intercultural exchange”</li> <li>• Works as a recognised partner with many other religious, social, and state institutions in Germany at the municipal, state, and federal levels</li> <li>• Claims to be politically neutral and to observe the principle of non-partisanship, and is financed exclusively by membership fees and donations</li> <li>• Has been training its imams in Germany since the 1980s</li> </ul>

### Cultural Association (in Alphabetical Order)

<b>DTF</b>	<p><i>Stuttgart Türk-Alman Forumu (DTF) / German-Turkish Forum Stuttgart e.V.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founded in 1999, under the chairmanship of former Mayor Prof. Dr. h.c. Manfred Rommel and with the support of the Robert Bosch Foundation</li> <li>• Non-partisan and non-denominational</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims to promote cultural events, understanding, and cooperation</li> <li>• Organises educational initiatives and cultural programs to contribute independently to the social participation of migrants from Turkey</li> <li>• Advocates for more equal opportunities for second- and third-generation migrants in education, work, and society, relying on a wide range of civic engagement</li> <li>• Recognised as a provider of free youth welfare (according to § 75 SGB VIII) and as a provider of extracurricular youth education (according to § 4 Youth Education Act Baden-Württemberg)</li> </ul>
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### Economic Associations (in Alphabetical Order)

<b>MÜSIAD</b>	<p><i>Müsiad Berlin e.V. (MÜSIAD) / Independent Association of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs Berlin</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founded in 1994 and brought back to life in May 2017</li> <li>• 120 members since 2017</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interculturally oriented, and considered an open, neutral, and dynamic organisation</li> <li>• Connects its members with companies in Turkey</li> <li>• Endeavours to act as a guarantor for technical progress, dialogue, and cooperation between members</li> </ul>
<b>TDU</b>	<p><i>Türkisch-Deutsche Unternehmervereinigung e.V. (TDU) / Turkish German Entrepreneurs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founded in 1996 in Berlin by 28 entrepreneurs</li> <li>• 280 members active in diverse sectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committed to supporting the Turkish (business) community and to taking a stand on and actively participating in economic, political, social, and cultural issues</li> <li>• Regularly organises events and strives for an open, constructive, and critical dialogue with institutions, other associations, and political parties</li> <li>• Assumes a bridging function between companies within Germany</li> </ul>
<b>TÜSIAD</b>	<p><i>Türk Sanayicileri ve İş İnsanları Derneği (TÜSIAD) / Turkish Industry and Business Association</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founded in 1971 in Turkey</li> <li>• Member of the European Business Confederation (Business Europe)</li> </ul> <p>Headquartered in Istanbul, with offices in Ankara, Brussels, Washington D.C., Berlin, London, and Paris, and networks in China, Silicon Valley, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims to contribute to the formation of a social order in which there is an understanding and adoption of a competitive market economy, sustainable development, and participatory democracy</li> <li>• TÜSIAD Berlin Representation Office seeks to inform the German public accurately during Turkey’s negotiation process with the EU, to influence public opinion in Germany, to ensure that Turkey is better known in the German private sector, media, political authorities, and cultural circles, and to ensure that Turkish-German economic and political relations and partnership to contribute to the development of cultural relations</li> </ul>

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- Maintains close and regular contact with its counterpart in Germany, the Federation of German Industries (BDI) and with official German institutions
  - Voluntary business organisation formed by Turkey's leading entrepreneurs and business executives
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*Source: Compiled by the author.*

# Abbreviations

AA	German Federal Foreign Office ( <i>Auswärtiges Amt</i> )
AABF	German Alevi Unions Federation ( <i>Almanya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu</i> )
AADD	European Atatürkist Thought Associations ( <i>Avrupa Atatürkçü Düşünce Dernekleri</i> )
ADÜTDF	Federation of Turkish Democratic Idealist Associations in Germany ( <i>Almanya Demokratik Ülkücü Türk Dernekleri Federasyonu</i> )
AKP	Justice and Development Party ( <i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i> )
BAMF	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees ( <i>Bundesamt für Migration und Flucht</i> )
BfV	German Domestic Intelligence Service ( <i>Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz</i> )
CDU	Christian Democratic Union ( <i>Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands</i> )
CHP	Republican People's Party ( <i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</i> )
CSU	Christian Social Union in Bavaria ( <i>Christlich Soziale Union in Bayern</i> )
DHKP-C	Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front ( <i>Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi/Cephesi</i> )
DİB	Directorate of Religious Affairs ( <i>Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı</i> )
DİD	Federation of Democratic Workers' Associations ( <i>Demokratik İşçi Dernekleri Federasyonu</i> )
DIK	German Islam Conference ( <i>Deutsche Islam Konferenz</i> )
DİTİB	Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs ( <i>Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği</i> )
DTF	German-Turkish Forum Stuttgart ( <i>Stuttgart Türk-Alman Forumu</i> )
EMEP	Labour Party ( <i>Emek Partisi</i> )
FDP	Free Democratic Party ( <i>Freie Demokratische Partei</i> )
GG	German Basic Law ( <i>Grundgesetz</i> )
HDF	Social Democrat People's Association Federation ( <i>Sosyal Demokrat Halk Dernekleri Federasyonu</i> )
HDP	Peoples' Democratic Party ( <i>Halkın Demokrasi Partisi</i> )
IGMG	Islamic Community Millî Görüş ( <i>İslam Toplumunu Millî Görüş</i> )
İKMB	Association of Islamic Cultural Centres ( <i>İslam Kültür Merkezleri Birliği</i> )
KCD-E	Congress of Kurdish Democratic Society Europe ( <i>Konfederasyona Komalên Kurd li Ewropa</i> )
MHP	Nationalist Movement Party ( <i>Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi</i> )
MLKP	Marxist Leninist Communist Party ( <i>Marksist Leninist Komünist Partisi</i> )
MSP	National Salvation Party ( <i>Milli Selamet Partisi</i> )
MÜSİAD	Independent Association of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs Berlin ( <i>Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği</i> )
NAV-DEM	Democratic Social Center of the Kurds in Germany ( <i>Navenda Civaka Demokratik ya Kurden li Almanyaye</i> )
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party ( <i>Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê</i> )

SETA	<i>Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Arařtırmaları Vakfı)</i>
SPD	<i>Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)</i>
TDU	<i>Turkish German Entrepreneurs (Türkisch-Deutsche Unternehmervereinigung)</i>
TGD	<i>Turkish Community in Germany (Türkische Gemeinde in Deutschland)</i>
TGH	<i>Turkish Community in Hamburg (Türkische Gemeinde Hamburg und Umgebung e.V.)</i>
TGS-H	<i>Turkish Community in Schleswig-Holstein (Türkische Gemeinde in Schleswig-Holstein e.V.)</i>
TKP-ML	<i>Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist (Türkiye Komünist Partisi/Marksist-Leninist)</i>
TOBB	<i>Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye (Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birlięi)</i>
TÜSIAD	<i>Turkish Industry and Business Association (Türk Sanayicileri ve İş İnsanları Derneęi)</i>
UETD	<i>Union of European Turkish Democrats</i>
UID	<i>Union of International Democrats</i>
WRV	<i>Weimar Constitution (Weimarer Reichsverfassung)</i>
YEKM	<i>Culture Centers of Yunus Emre Institute (Yunus Emre Kültür Merkezleri)</i>
YTB	<i>Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı)</i>

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