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| **TURKISH-GERMAN UNIVERSITY** |
| **EU-Turkey Relations on the axis of Refugee Crisis** |
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| **AVU 114 Contemporary EU-Turkey Relations** |
| **Final Project** |
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# ABSTRACT

The massive influx from Syria to Turkey and Europe started with the begining of civil war in Syria. After this situation many people started to disconcert about impacts of these people. Especially in Turkey approximately 5 million Syrians looked for shelter and assistance to sustain their life. Howevever, after refugee flow started, comon menace came to exist for Europe. As it known the geography of Turkey can be explained as a bridge between Europe and Middle East region. For this reason, it is possible to said that the main concern of Europe can be identified as arriving of refugees to Europe. In the perspective of this idea, the European Union wanted to improve its connection with Turkey. For this reason some official and unofficial agreements and deals which were about refugees materialized between the European Union and Turkey like Joint Action Plan and Turkey-EU Refugee Deal. This study will examine relations between Turkey and the European Union on the axis of refugee crisis. Especially this study will search for an answer about quality of this relation.

**Key words:** Turkey-EU Relations, Syrian Refugees, Migration, Joint Action Plan, Turkey-EU Refugee Deal

# INTRODUCTION

It is a well known fact that Turkey and the European Union relations can be explained as non-proportional. The quality of relations between Turkey and the European Union have changed throughout history. It is possible to say that relations between Turkey and the European Union started with application of Turkey to the European Economic Community in 1959. This situation was concluded with Ankara Agreement wich was attestator of Turkey’s participation to the community. Actually 1992 was the brink for Turkey and EU relations because structure of community changed and it was born out of the ashes as an European Union. The most important incident for Turkey in the axis of the European Union can be identified as 1999 Helsinki Summit because Turkey gained candidate status with this Summit. Actually it can be said that official relations with the European Union started with this summit. After this situation Turkey started to change its structure in terms of democracy, rule of law and human rights. In other words Turkey entered to process of europeanisation. The europeanisation means that ‘*the implementation of EU directives ; and, from a wider perspective, change and resillience in the structures and identities of nation states under pressure from developments at the European level’* (Vink, 2003, p. 63)*.* As it knwon, refugee crisis still stays on the agenda for many countries. Especially in Turkey and Europe the importance of refugee crisis is continuining to increase. It is possible to said that there were a distruptive war and uprising in the Middle East and North Africa in 2011. Many people died and 11 million people were forced to leave from their living spaces due to distruptive wars and uprisings in these areas (Democratic Progress Institute , 2016, p. 7). Turkey and Europe are most influenced areas from these people. For this reason, Turkey and the European Union established relations about refugees. Especially in 2015 many Syrian people poured in Europe and this situation created obligation about approximation of relations between Turkey and the European Union because Turkey was a transition country which was used for reaching to Europe by Syrian refugees (Çoban Oran, 2018, p. 428). After this situation many agreements and deals was actualise between Turkey and the European Union.

In the light of this framework the main purpose of this study can be explained as examining of Turkey and the European Union relations in the axis of refugee crisis. For examinig this topic the agreements and deals between Turkey and the European Unions like Turkey and the EU statment and Joint Action Plan etc. will be focal point. The fundemental question of this study aims to eludicate the reasons behind Turkey’s purpose. In other words how Turkey’s purpose can be evaluated in this relations about refugee. Is it normative issue for Turkey or is it a relationship with the European Unin based on self-interest?

This study will consist of two main part for analyzing the research question. In the first part agreements between Turkey and the European Union about refugees and prons and cons of these agreements will be explained. Second part will explain how Turkey interprets this relations about refugees.

# TURKEY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION RELATIONS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF DEALS, PLANS, AGREEMENTS AND COOPERATION ABOUT MIGRATION CRISIS

Actually it is posible to say that historical background of Turkey and the European Union relations is unsteady. When the history is examined there were many challanges in the way of the European Union for Turkey. These challanges can be called as ‘veto’ which were implemented by member states of the European Union to Turkey. These vetos were implemented by France and Cyprus. Also in this process Council of the European Union freezed 8 chapter (İktisadi Kalkınma Vakfı, 2017, pp. 11-14). These fluxes and refulexes in the relations between Turkey and the European Union contiuned untill migration or refugee crisis which affected Turkey and the European Union. After this situation the cooperation between Turkey and the European Union started to increase (Demirsu & Müftüler Baç, 2017, p. 4). This part will try to explained this cooperation with deals, plans and agreements which were implemented between Turkey and the European Union.

## Readmission Agreement

As it known, the European Union mentioned that Turkey can be identified as negotiating country for the European Union. With the starting of negotiations between Turkey and the European Union readmission process begun. In 2010 draft agreement text was prepared some articles which were prepared by EU Justice and Home Affaisrs Council about migration and visa liberalisation created problem for Turkey (İçduygu, 2014, p. 10). Actually it is possible to said that main aim of Turkey was visa liberalisation. For this reason in 2011 Turkey persisted about visa liberalisation to the European Union. This insistence succeeded and in 16 December 2013 Readmission Agreement was signed between Turkey and the European Union. Actually in this sense it can be emphasized that the purpose of the European Union is preventing illegal migration and Turkey’s aim is entering process of visa liberalisation (Açıkgöz, 2015, p. 99).

Actually when the Readmission Agreement is examined, it is possible to say that ‘*the main objective of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement is to establish, on the basis of reciprocity, procedures for the rapid and orderly readmission, by each side, of the persons having entered or are residing on the territory of the other side in an irregular manner’* (European Commission, 2013)*.* With the readmission agreement visa liberalisation process started and roadmap was created for Turkey. According to this roadmap there were four blocks and 72 criteria which had to be completed by Turkey. These four blocks were documents security, migration and border management, public order and security and fundemental rights. That is to say the cooperation between Turkey and the European Union officially started with readmission agreement. However Turkey could not obtain visa liberalisation because according to Commission ‘*the Turkish authorities have not yet managed to meet this ambitious objective, as 7 requirements out of 72 have not yet been fulfilled. Some of them are of particular importance’* (European Commission, 2016, p. 10)*.*

## Eu-Turkey Joint Action Plan

In 2015 refugee crisis started to be common agenda for Turkey and the European Union. In the light of this situaton, the main purpose for the European Union was managing the refugee crisis. For this reason the European Union was actualised the Joint Action Plan with Turkey because Turkey was a transit country for reaching to Europe for refugees. Aim of the EU-Turkey Join Action Plan is ‘*to step up cooperation for the support of Syrian refugees under temporary protection and their host communities in Turkey and to strengthen cooperation to prevent irregular migration flows to the EU. The implementation of the Joint Action Plan should bring order into migratory flows and help to stem irregular migration’* (European Commission, 2016, p. 1)*.* Actually it is possible to say that with this plan cooperation between Turkey and the European Union started to gain importance. Indeed in EU-Turkey Joint Action plan there were two important parts which should be examined. First part explains how Syrians under temporary protection should be supported. According to this part the aims of the European Union can be explained as providing funds apart from IPA funds to Turkey for mobilising Syrians under temporary protection, taking decisions with Turkish authorites jointly, providing psychological support to Syrians and providing good education (European Commission, 2015, pp. 1-2). In the first part of the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan intends of Turkey are providing effective educational opportunuties, strengthening of migration management and entegration of refugees with laws (European Commission, 2015, pp. 1-2).

The second part of this plan talks about strengthening cooperation to prevent irregular migration. ‘*Under this part of the Action Plan, measures will build on the visa liberalisation dialogue, the visa roadmap and the provisions of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement’* (European Commission, 2015, p. 2)*.* In this part visa liberalisation is the accentuated topic for Turkey and its citizens.

## Eu-Turkey Statement (Refugee Deal)

It should be known that, the most important event about refugees between Turkey and the European Union was EU-Turkey statement or in other words EU-Turkey refugee deal. Actually to understand this situation first step should explain difference between ‘deal’ and ‘agreement’. Agreement is a concept which implements binding decisions but deal does not include any binding decisions or articles. For this reason, in begining it is possible to say that EU-Turkey statement does not include binding rules and decisions.

Turkey-EU statement (rufugee deal) was implemented in 2016 between Turkey and the European Union. According to this deal irregular migration movement should be terminated. For this reason Turkey and the European Union took some decisions. Firstly the most important decisions in the framework of EU-Turkey statement is re-settlement procedure. According to this procedure ‘*all new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into Greek islands as from 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey and for every Syrian being returned, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU’* (European Council, 2016)*.* Actually this programme tried to reduce illegal migration movement to the Europe. It should be emphasized that it did not create substantial impact but it created psychological impacts on the refugees.

The other importants articles in this statement can be explained as taking precautions for protection of highway and seaway, cooperation with other member states to protect these ways, implemening of Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme for the EU member states[[1]](#footnote-1). Also point of speeding up the visa liberalisation process was crucial for Turkey. At the same time as an important point, the European Union was going to provide additional 3 billion euro for Turkey up to end of 2018. In the light of these conditions, it can be said that the cooperation between Turkey and the European Union improved. The demands of two sides forced them for cooperation but the conspicious question as which intentions are effective in the cooperation between Turkey and the European Union. In the next part, this study will try to explain these intentions from the side of Turkey and the European Union.

# THE INTENSIONS OF TURKEY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION ABOUT REFUGEE CRISIS: NORMATIVE ISSUE OR SELF INTEREST

It is a well-known fact that the cooperation between Turkey and the European Union was implemented for reducing the burden on the shoulder of Turkey and the European Union. In the light of this situation relations between Turkey and the European Union was established in the framework of reciprocity. However measuring of behaviors of two sides about refugee crisis is significant to analyze this situation. For this reasons in this part the intensions of Turkey and the European Union will be examined in terms of concepts of normative issue and self-interest. This examination will make for two sides.

Firstly the article 2 of TEU is crucial to understand origin of the European Union. According to article 2 of TEU ‘*the Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail’* (European Union, 2012, p. 17)*.* In the light of this article the European Union was established base on respect for freedom and human rights. For this reason it is possible to say that, refugee crisis was an indicator for the significant challenges for the European Union. Actually refugee crisis should be normative issue for the European Union according to article 2 of TEU but for the European Union the most important concept can be clarified as ‘interest’ in the axis of the refugee crisis. As it known according to realism states wanted to actualize their national interests which is explained in the framework of concept of power. The European Union concerns about flow of people to its borders. For this reason EU wanted to implements some deals and agreements with Turkey because as mentioned above Turkey is a transit country to Europe for refugees. However this study defends that in the perspective of the European Union, cooperation between Turkey and the European Union was established in terms of interests of the two sides. The interests of the European Union can be explained as keeping refugees out of the European borders.

Actually in the sense of behaviors based on norms and interests, there are two important logic. The logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences can explain the behaviors of actors (March & Olsen, 1989, pp. 7-10). It is possible to say that the logic of consequences can be evaluated with the concept of interest and logic of appropriateness can be evaluated with the concept of norms and rules. In the light of this idea, the European Union determined its intention in the framework of logic of consequences. In other words the European Union established cooperation with Turkey because the main demand of the European Union is cutting the refugee flow to Europe. That is to say values or norms cannot be emphasized in the Europe’s intentions.

When the Turkey side is examined in terms of concept of interest and norms, it can be said that Turkey established cooperation with the European Union in the axis of interest. Actually, accepting of refugees by Turkey started with normative issue but this situation continued as an issue related with the concept of interest. In this sense the most important concept for Turkey can be explained as ‘visa liberalization’ because visa liberalization was driving power to continue policies about refugee. It was an award, if Turkey provide good partnership between the EU about refugees. For this reason as a conclusion of this part, the refugee crisis was not normative issue for Turkey and the European Union. For both side there were structures which should be constituted and award which should be reached. In the light of this idea, Turkey and the European Union did not approach to the refugee crisis as a normative issue.

# CONCLUSION

As a consequence Turkey and the European Union have lived common problem together. Actually this problem created strong cooperation between Turkey and the European Union. The relations which can be explianed as wavy throught the history started to put on the right track. There were prons and cons of this cooperation. Especially the European Union provided opportunuties for Turkey about visa liberalization. Also the European Union tried to be isolated from refugee flow thank to Turkey. This cooperation created task for both sides. The responsibility of Turkey was providing integration of refugees and prevent their flow to Europe. For this reason the European Union started to give funds to Turkey. At the same time the European Union started to live problems inside the its border. Member states of the European Union started to worry about refugees and this situation posed radical movements in the European Union. That is to say the refugee crisis was no longer a normative issue for Turkey and the European Union due to some problems. Due to the gains and expectations to be received, this study argues that this issue is a matter of interest within the two sides. For further studies, this situation can be analyzed with the discourses of two sides. Making discourse analyses can strengthen the arguments of this study.

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1. *Humanitarian Admission is the process by which countries admit groups from vulnerable refugee populations in third countries so as to provide temporary protection on humanitarian grounds* (European Resettlement Network, n.d.)*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)