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Research Report



MIGRATION GOVERNANCE IN TURKEY

IS THERE AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH IN LIGHT OF
INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND TRENDS?

Migration Governance in Turkey

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What does this report say?

This report evaluates the current national institutional architecture in migration governance in Turkey from an international point of view.

By distributing its responsibilities in national migration management to various sub-ministerial migration departments, Turkey has established an appropriate institutional structure to manage the mixed migration flows that it faces.

Nevertheless, the report indicates that in order for Turkey to manage current and future migration flows more effectively, the Migration Board within the Ministry of Interior should be dissolved and a “Migration Policy Council” should be established in the Presidency.

Migration is a multi-faceted phenomenon that shapes and is concurrently shaped by other sectors of public policy and governance, including but not limited to the economy, law, national security, foreign affairs and social protection. Ranging from the Syrian Refugee Crisis in 2015 to the Migrant Caravan in 2018, the latter half of the 2010s has witnessed a series of internationally well-publicized mass migration movements that have had a diverse set of implications for all countries involved. As a result, migration's inherent link to economic development and its interconnections to other areas of public policy have received renewed political interest. Furthermore, as urbanization gains pace globally, international mobility flows interact with internal rural-to-urban migration flows¹, which complicates the national management of migration in the 21st century. Hence, governments today are keen to employ a multi-dimensional approach to migration governance to build systems that are not only appropriate for the present but also fit-for-purpose for migratory dynamics that might arise in the future.

The acceleration of international and national mobility in all its forms (economic, humanitarian, familial etc.) has particularly acute governance-related consequences for countries like Turkey that are simultaneously migrant-receiving,

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migrant-sending and transit geographies; they face the challenge of adapting to ongoing changes in the relative frequencies of various migration flows and their attendant macro- and micro-level effects. Rising to this challenge requires an efficient yet flexible migration management system that allows for stakeholders from multiple sectors to collaborate and coordinate in strategic, executive and implementational terms.

In light of this reading, this report will assess Turkey's existing national institutional architecture in the migration sector. Firstly, it will examine Turkey's current migration governance apparatus and discuss the present state and future projections of migratory dynamics in Turkey. Then, it will analyze global trends and patterns in national migration management based on the results of a desk review that covered 198 countries. Lastly, the report will synthesize takeaways from the previous sections and conclude on policy recommendations for national migration governance in Turkey.

Turkey's Current Institutional Framework for Migration Management

Largely established in 2013-2014, prior to the transition from the parliamentary

¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision. New York: United Nations.

to the presidential system with the 2018 Constitutional Referendum², Turkey's migration management framework brings together four main governmental stakeholders: Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services, Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see Graph 1). The Ministry of Interior assumes the political lead in migration matters through its agency, the Directorate General of Migration Management.

While the transition to the presidential system has largely kept the ministerial institutional framework intact, it has additionally assigned consultative mandates in the field of migration to three policy councils under the Presidency: Security and Foreign Policy Council, Social Policies Council, Local Governance Policies Council. In particular, the Security and Foreign Policy Council is tasked to determine and monitor Turkey's migration policies. Lastly, the Presidency of Strategy and Budget, also under the purview of the Presidency, is involved in migration policymaking insofar as it coordinates the implementation and progress of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 10 which covers migration.

Migration Trends in Turkey: Present and Future

From the 1980s and 1990s onward, Turkey has undergone a transformation and has

switched from being primarily an emigration country to an immigration country that experiences the full spectrum of mobility flows³. It has become a regional labor and humanitarian immigration destination, receiving regular and irregular flows from East Africa, the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Furthermore, it serves as a transit geography for migrants who take the Eastern Anatolian and/or the Eastern Mediterranean migration routes to reach Europe. Lastly, it manages relations with established Turkish diasporas across the world, most notably in Western Europe, while concurrently addressing concerns regarding the continued emigration of its educated labor force, termed 'brain drain' in the literature.

Future projections of migratory dynamics in Turkey take into account factors such as demographic trends, urbanization rates, climate change-induced transformations and regional volatility (e.g. armed conflicts in neighboring countries). Firstly, mixed migration flows, including economic, family and humanitarian migrants, from bordering regions (Middle East and Western Asia) and beyond (Central Asia and East Africa) are expected to continue.⁴ Secondly, brain drain is estimated to continue and, in the potential event of Turkey's accession to the European Union, both low-skilled and high-skilled

Future projections of migratory dynamics in Turkey take into account factors such as demographic trends, urbanization rates, [...] and regional volatility.

² Üstübcü, A. (2019) 'The impact of externalized migration governance on Turkey: technocratic migration governance and the production of differentiated legal status', *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7(46), pp. 1–18; İçduygu, A. and Diker, E. (2017) 'Labor Market Integration of Syrian Refugees in Turkey: From Refugees to Settlers', *Journal of Migration Studies*, 3(1), pp. 12–35.

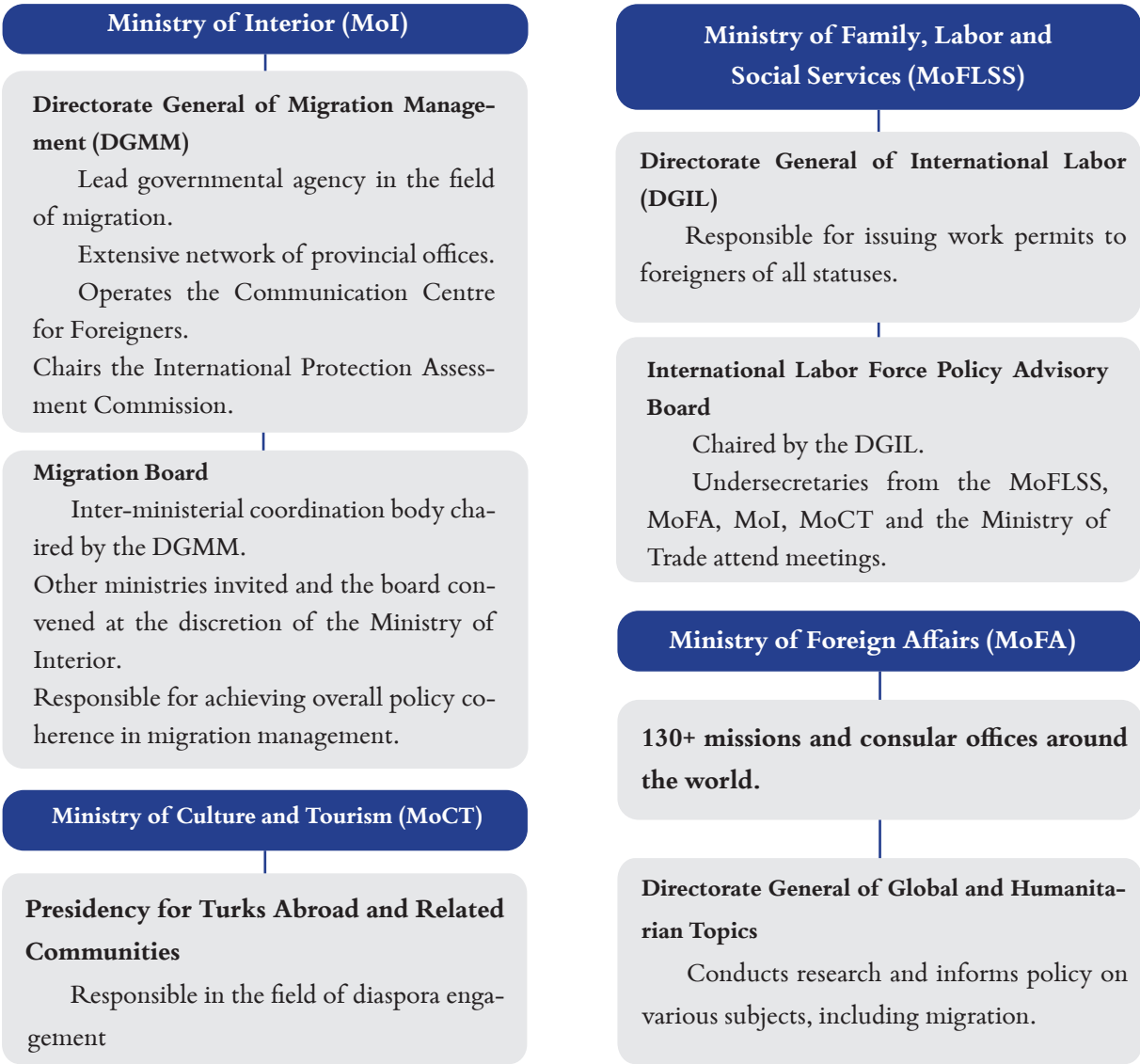
³ İçduygu, A., Göker, Z. G., Tokuzlu, L. B. and Paçacı Elitok, S. (2013) *MPC Migration Profile: Turkey*. Florence: Migration Policy Centre.

⁴ Kilberg, R. (2014) *Turkey's Evolving Migration Identity*. Available at: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/turkeys-evolving-migration-identity> (Accessed: 29 October 2020).

labor emigration to Europe is expected to surge.⁵ Thirdly, climate change is projected to escalate rivalries over scarce and critical natural resources (e.g., water) in regions bordering Turkey, which will potentially intensify already established regular and irregular flows into or through the country.⁶ Hence, it is projected that the mixed nature of Turkey’s

migratory dynamics will only be reinforced in the medium-to-long term. This will require greater vertical and horizontal coordination and policy coherence among the various governmental stakeholders involved in managing immigration, emigration and transitory migration flows.

Graph 1. Key Institutional Actors in National Migration Management in Turkey

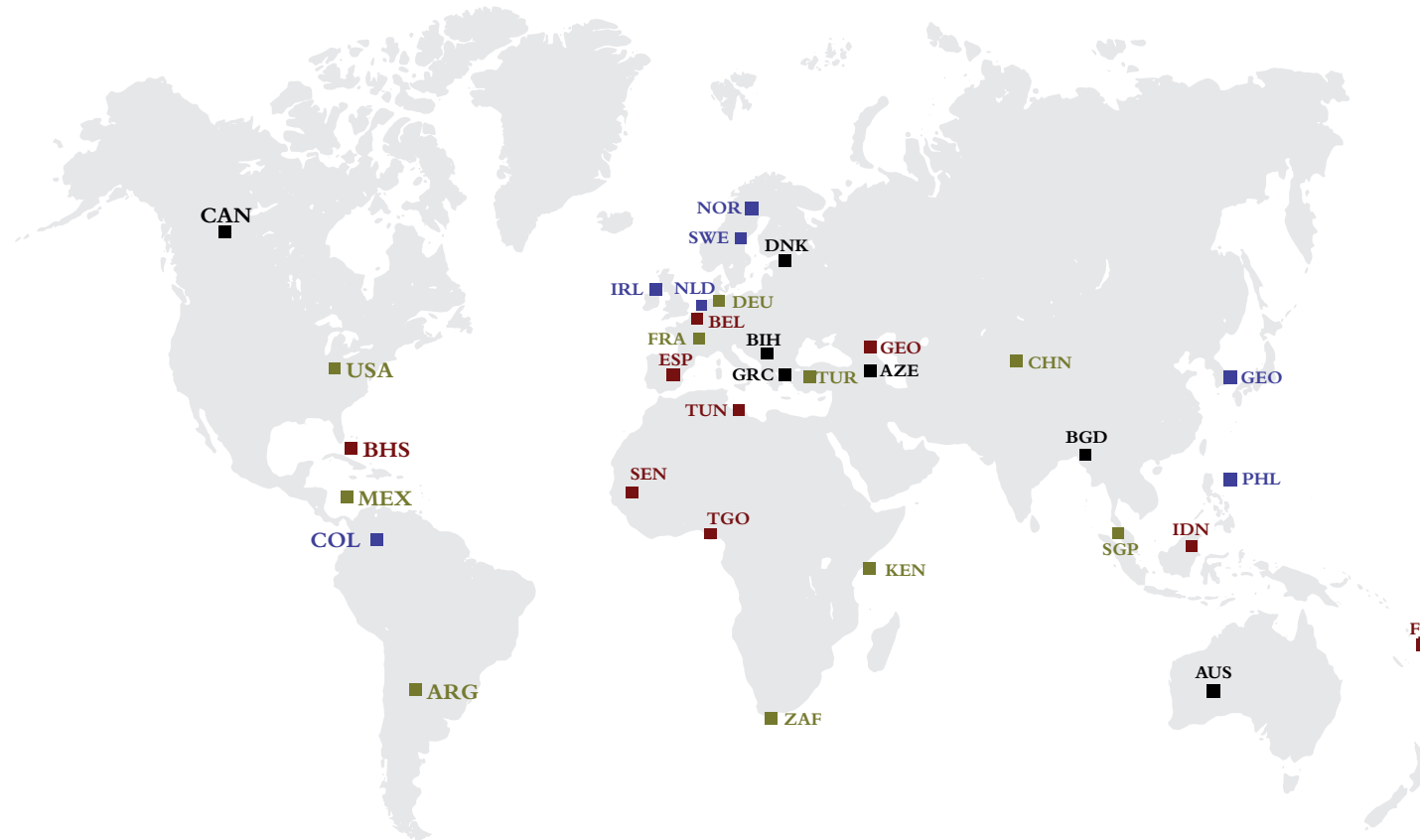


⁵ İçduygu, A. and Karaçay, A. B. (2012) ‘Demography and Migration in Transition: Reflections on EU-Turkey Relations’, in Paçacı Elitok, S. and Straubhaar, T. (ed.) Turkey, Migration and the EU: Potentials, Challenges and Opportunities. Hamburg: Hamburg University Press, pp. 19–38.

⁶ Wodon, Q., Liverani, A., Joseph, G. and Bougnoux, N. (2014) Climate Change and Migration: Evidence from the Middle East and North Africa. Washington DC: The World Bank.

Which institution manages immigration?

Institutions responsible for immigration



■
Countries with a standalone migration ministry or implementational agency

[Denmark, Bangladesh, Canada, Australia, Greece, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina]

10% of surveyed countries

■
Countries with a ministry that combines migration and another public policy competency

[Spain, Tunisia, Belgium, Georgia, Senegal, Indonesia, Togo, Fiji, Bahamas]

15% of surveyed countries

■
Countries with an agency overseeing migration matters under the Ministry of Interior

[Germany, Mexico, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Argentina, France, China, Singapore, United States]

55% of surveyed countries

■
Countries with an agency overseeing migration matters under a ministry other than the Ministry of Interior

[Colombia, Sweden, Ireland, Norway, Netherlands, Switzerland, South Korea, Philippines]

20% of surveyed countries

Migration

Governance: A

Global Review of 198 Countries

The multi-dimensional nature of migration, in combination with diverse geopolitical realities, has led to several distinctive institutional arrangements and national governance systems in migration management that nonetheless exhibit regional and global similarities.

1. Standalone migration ministry or implementational agency

At a global scale, approximately 10% of countries have a migration ministry. These countries are mostly located in the Middle East. Examples include the Ministry of Immigration and Integration in Denmark and the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment in Bangladesh.

In these countries, the ministry in question either covers all migration-related issues, or more often only deals with a particular type of migration flow. These ministries generally act as the leading government agency on migration.

Countries that have adopted this institutional configuration mostly manage a single dominant migration flow (e.g., labor migration, humanitarian migration). Half of the countries with independent ministries have

complementary migration departments under other ministries.

2. A ministry that combines immigration and another public policy competency

About 15% of the countries reviewed have merged their migration ministry with another ministry. This practice is particularly common in Oceania. Examples include the Ministry of Participation, Social Security and Immigration in Spain and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Tunisians Abroad in Tunisia.

The ministerial competency most often coupled with migration is foreign affairs. Other ministerial mandates combined with migration include social services and labor. Half of the countries in this category have set up complementary departments under other ministries that do not fall under the combined ministry's responsibility and manage migration issues.

Diaspora engagement, a sub-topic of migration governance, is frequently associated with foreign policy. This approach is adopted in Sub-Saharan Africa in particular. Island nations and other countries with small populations that combine multiple policy areas under a limited number of ministries also adopt this arrangement.

3. An agency overseeing migration matters under the Ministry of Interior

55% of countries worldwide manage migra-

tion under the Ministry of Interior. This especially prevalent in the Americas, Asia and Europe. Turkey is included in this category. Examples include the Federal Office for Immigration and Refugees in Germany and the National Directorate of Immigration in Mexico.

Globally speaking, it is the most common national institutional approach in migration governance. It highlights the national security aspects of migration, including border control and the fight against human trafficking.

Half of the countries in this category have also established immigration departments with separate yet complementary mandates under other ministries. These complementary departments are usually located within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Labor/ Social Protection. Establishing an inter-ministerial coordinating body on migration to ensure political coherence among various political stakeholders is among the best global practices in migration management.

4. An agency overseeing immigration matters under a ministry other than the Ministry of the Interior

20% of the countries reviewed in this survey entrust migration management to institutions other than the Ministry of Interior. It is a common institutional arrangement in Sub-Saharan Africa. Examples include the Special Colombian Immigration Service under the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

and the Swedish Immigration Office under the Swedish Ministry of Justice.

Lead migration agencies under this category are most often housed under the Ministry of Justice, followed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Labor/ Social Protection. Migration departments under the Ministry of Justice often endorse a rights-based view of migration matters. This institutional structure is most often adopted by countries with developed international protection systems. On the other hand, migration departments under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs often emphasize an internationalist view that is more favorable towards human mobility in comparison to a more security-focused outlook.

Institutional Architecture and Policy

Based on its review of global migration governance practices, this report had observed that the institutional architecture of countries in migration management directly shapes their policy approaches to migration and migrants. The main takeaways that emerge from this survey are the following:

1. Depending on the spectrum of migratory flows that a country faces (i.e. immigration, emigration, transit; economic, humanitarian, familial), the institutional framework that works

Managing migration under the Ministry of Interior is the most common national institutional approach in migration governance.

best in managing these flows differ.

a. A standalone migration ministry or agency is best suited for countries that manage a single dominant migration flow.

b. A ministry that combines migration with another policy competency is best suited for smaller nations or nations with limited governance capacity.

c. A system that combines several sub-ministerial migration departments is best suited for countries that manage mixed migration flows.

2. It is global best practice to:

a. Establish several sub-ministerial departments on migration with distinct yet related mandates; and

b. Indicate a ‘lead’ agency on migration matters to spearhead and coordinate all relevant actors in this policy field.

The combination of these approaches, which is often referred to as the “whole-of-government” approach in the literature⁷, ensures multi-dimensional policy-making in the field of migration without compromising on horizontal and vertical policy coherence.

3. The placement of the agency or agencies responsible for migration within the overall institutional framework in a given country is indicative of the dominant approach to migration management in the country in question. Lead agencies under the purview of

a. the Ministry of Interior tend to emphasize a securitarian view;

b. the Ministry of Justice tend to empha-

size a rights-based view;

c. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs tend to emphasize an internationalist view.

National Migration Governance in Turkey: A Synthesis

By global standards in migration management, Turkey’s standing institutional framework is considered as mature.⁸ The main tenets of this institutional architecture were established in 2013 onwards to better manage mass humanitarian migration flows into the country. Given Turkey’s position as a simultaneously migrant-receiving, migrant-sending, and transit country, the assignment of complementary yet distinct mandates to several sub-ministerial departments on migration is fit-for-purpose. Its system is exemplary of the ‘whole-of-government’ and ‘lead agency’ approaches⁹ wherein multiple sub-ministerial departments coordinate on migration policy under the leadership of a single agency.

Although the current institutional infrastructure in Turkey is considered mature, national security issues continue to predominate and sub-headings such as economic develop-

The transition from the parliamentary to the presidential system in 2018 has further centralized most components of national governance.

⁷ International Organization for Migration (2019) Migration Governance Indicators: A Global Perspective. Geneva: International Organization for Migration.

⁸ The Economist Intelligence Unit (2016) Measuring well-governed migration: The 2016 Migration Governance Index. London: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

ment are relatively less prioritized in public policies pursued within the migration sector. Many of the constituents of this institutional infrastructure, including the DGMM and the Security and Foreign Policy Council, are staffed by experts in the field of and professionals with a background in national security. Moreover, the Migration Board, which is housed under the Ministry of Interior and is responsible for the coordination of public stakeholders in the field of migration policies, also highlights national security issues due to its institutional placement. In summary, when it comes to migration policies, the prevailing professional know-how at the higher levels of the state leads the system to a securitarian logic and prevents holistic policies.

Moreover, while the transition from the parliamentary to the presidential system in 2018 has further centralized most components of national governance, it left the institutional framework regarding migration management in Turkey largely unchanged, save for the addition of consultation capacities in the field of migration to several presidential policy councils. This has consequently diminished the institutional weight and relative executive powers of the Migration Board based at the Ministry of Interior.

In all, the combination of a) the current system's emphasis on securitarian policies; and b) the fact that lead state agencies in the migration sector have been rendered bureaucratically distant to principal governmental

decision-makers in the new presidential system, makes it difficult to ensure the holistic and effective governance of migration policies in the country in the medium-to-long term. Given projections of the future intensification of mixed migration flows in Turkey and taking into account the best practices in countries facing similar dynamics, this report concludes that an institutional architecture that is deeply embedded in central government decision-making processes and that equally emphasizes the economic development, human rights and national security-related implications of migration policies, is needed.

Structurally speaking, this can be achieved through the dissolution of the Migration Board and its replacement by a newly formed presidential "Migration Policy Council" that reports directly to the President. The Council would bring together governmental stakeholders (MoI, DGMM, MoFLSS, DGIL, MoFA, MoCT, etc.) and policy professionals from multiple fields, including national security, economy, law, foreign affairs, social services, education and health. Similar to the structure of the Migration Board, the MoI can serve as the council chair. The formation of the Migration Policy Council would facilitate the design of a holistic national migration strategy, increase the relative importance of stakeholders with expertise and authority in the fields of economics and law in migration governance in Turkey, and expedite policy-making and implementation in the field of migration under the new system of government.

⁹ International Organization for Migration, 2019; The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2016.



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