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THE AWAKENING OF SOCIETIES IN TURKEY AND UKRAINE

How Germany and Poland Can Shape European Responses

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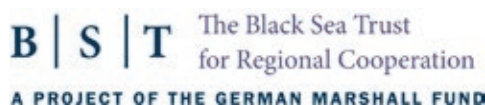
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On the cover: (left) Meeting on the Independence square at night in Kyiv, November 24, 2013, © Vadven/iStockPhoto. (right) Sunset over Taksim Square, © Jenna Pope/Getty Images.

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Executive Summary

The Issue

Among the European Union's neighbors, Turkey and Ukraine stand out in their strategic importance. Both countries are central to the broader confrontation between Russia and the West and occupy critical positions in the Black Sea region. Turkey holds the keys to Europe's ability to manage the refugee crisis and to Western engagement with Middle East conflicts, and Ukraine is as important a trendsetter for developments in the post-Soviet space as Turkey is for the Muslim world. However, European policy toward both countries has not lived up to their key strategic positions and potential.

Turkish and Ukrainian societies have been coalescing and are taking an ever-more active part in their countries' politics, illustrated by the series of social and political mobilizations that Turkey and Ukraine have witnessed over the past decade. The shifting sociopolitical grounds in both countries have not been sufficiently appreciated by external actors.

The EU, in particular, needs to seize this growing social momentum, and support Turkish and Ukrainian societies' efforts at democratic transformation and European integration. Only a successful rebalancing of state-society relationships will provide long-term stability in both countries and allow them to realize their strategic potential beyond their borders.

The necessary adjustments in European policy should be spearheaded by Germany and Poland. The two countries are deeply intertwined with Turkey (particularly Germany) and Ukraine, and carry enough political weight in the EU that a German-Polish initiative would go a long way toward more effective EU policies regarding Turkey and Ukraine.

Policy Priorities

Initiatives to reinvigorate European policies toward Turkey and Ukraine should be guided by several parameters. First, such efforts need to acknowledge the changing state-society dynamics in Turkey and Ukraine. In both countries, tensions are increasing between emboldened societies and state and political structures. As agents of democratic change, Turkish and Ukrainian societies deserve stronger and direct support from European governments.

The governments, secondly, should be subject to much stricter European conditionality. Whether in response to Kyiv's failure to reform or to Ankara's human rights violations, the EU must respond to government action in Turkey and Ukraine, not least also to retain and restore its credibility among the Turkish and Ukrainian people. Thirdly, direct support to Turkish and Ukrainian societies needs to be boosted and, to the extent possible, decoupled from government performance. Only then will Turks and Ukrainians more directly benefit from, and become more supportive of, European integration.

Fourthly, Poland and Germany should do more to bridge the significant social and political cleavages inside Turkey and Ukraine. Defusing social, ethnic, and cultural divisions is central to retaining the integrity and stability of Turkey and Ukraine.

Finally, Turkey and Ukraine need a credible prospect for European integration. Political obstacles notwithstanding, EU membership must be the stated future goal, with the same conditions to be met by both countries and the same assistance made ready by the EU as with previous rounds of enlargement. Without this prospect, and the commensurate support from the EU, sustainable and democratic reforms in both countries will most probably not succeed. Such failure, in turn, would render Turkey and Ukraine permanent problems for Europe rather than strategic partners.

1

Europe's Strategic Neighbors: Turkey and Ukraine

Adam Balcer and Joerg Forbrig

The key to some of Europe's biggest current political predicaments lies in the east.

Whether the wars in Ukraine and Syria, or the challenge to the Western community of democracies from both Russia and the self-proclaimed Islamic State group (ISIS), or the massive flow of refugees making their way to Europe, the region to the east and southeast of the European Union is center stage. It is here, immediately across EU land borders, that the rule-based international order, which Europe and the West broadly have sought to build for decades, clashes directly with Russian designs for an exclusive sphere of influence in the Black Sea region. It is here, at the doorstep of the EU, that millions attempt to leave behind the wars and conflicts raging in the Middle East to reach Europe, while several thousands of radicalized Europeans transit to join the ranks of ISIS and other terrorist groups. It is here, in geographical Europe outside of the EU, that the European aspirations of many are countered by powerful non-European narratives, and frustrated by state failure, pervasive corruption, political autocracy, and lack of development. Whether as a theater of open conflict, source of political and social instability, or indispensable partner in managing and perhaps resolving some of the crises and threats before the EU today, Europe's east has become more important than ever. And among the many countries of the region, two states stand out in their strategic significance: Turkey and Ukraine.

Clearly, there are obvious differences between the two countries. Turkey, heir to the Ottoman Empire, can look back at more than seven centuries of uninterrupted statehood, while Ukraine declared its sovereignty just 25 years ago, after centuries of domination by foreign powers, especially Russian Tsarist and later Soviet rule. Aspirations to integrate with Western institutions have long been manifest in Turkey, which joined NATO in

1952 and placed its membership bid with the EU as early as 1987, although progress has been slow and accession remains a long shot. By contrast, Ukrainian ambitions to enter both organizations have only materialized in the last decade and for the foreseeable future, full membership in NATO and accession to the EU remain unlikely. Domestically, too, the two countries are quite different. The Turkish state is a paragon of stability, if with authoritarian tendencies, compared with a tumultuous Ukraine, which has persistently bordered on state failure. Economically, Turkey has posted growth rates averaging close to 4 percent since 1999, making it a successful emerging market and placing it among the G20. Ukraine, by comparison, ranks 47th among world economies (the GDP purchasing power parity), with an average growth of around 2.5 percent over the last 15 years, and a deep recession induced by the last two years of domestic turmoil and external conflict. Socially, differences in prosperity and development between both countries are somewhat less drastic, although still pronounced, as Turkey ranks 69th and Ukraine places 83rd in the UN Human Development Index.

Yet despite these and other differences, Turkey and Ukraine share a similarly central strategic position for Europe and the broader West, and a range of structural commonalities in their relations with Europe. The most obvious of these is certainly the role of both countries in the rapidly evolving confrontation between Russia and the West over the last two years. For a long time, both Turkey and Ukraine tried hard to maintain a balanced relationship with Europe on one hand, and Russia on the other. Russia's turn to an aggressive revisionism and geopolitics, however, has made such a middle ground impossible. Instead, Ukrainian attempts at closer association with the EU have been met with a brutal response by Russia, which has successively mounted political,

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Whenever democratic and reformist sentiments prevailed in Ankara and Kyiv, relationships with the EU warmed and hopes for closer integration thrived.

economic, and energy pressures, the annexation of Crimea, and a barely veiled war in Donbas, all designed to keep Ukraine in the Kremlin's exclusive sphere of influence. Turkey, in turn, has found itself tested in its dual capacity as a NATO member and a regional power hoping to end the war in neighboring Syria. Russian violations of Turkish airspace and Ankara's stance on Syria, which is diametrically opposed to that of Moscow, have taken the erstwhile Russo-Turkish partnership to the brink of open conflict.

Under this Russian onslaught, both countries are trying to move toward the West. In order to weather the Kremlin's pressures, however, Turkey and Ukraine need the unambiguous support of the European and transatlantic community. This, in turn, requires a clear Western acknowledgement that both Turkey and Ukraine are the frontline of the broader Russian challenge. Their geopolitical in-between position had long translated into a semi-democratic (or semi-authoritarian) character of their political systems. According to the Freedom House *Freedom in the World* index, both are partly-free countries, with partly free media in Ukraine, while those in Turkey are considered non-free.¹ Even more important for the EU is to acknowledge that the domestic political developments in Turkey and Ukraine are sequences of opening and closing, of democratic reform and authoritarian restoration rooted in internal conditions but simultaneously linked to the EU's ambiguity toward their European aspirations. Indeed, the democratization of Turkey and Ukraine is also affected by EU policy toward both countries.

In Turkey, the ascent to power of the Justice and Development Party (AKParty) in 2002 brought a significant political liberalization and a series of reforms, but since 2007, an increasingly

authoritarian turn has successively curtailed civic freedoms, expanded control over the media, and centralized power. In Ukraine, an initial period of democratic opening was followed by years of consolidating authoritarian rule and corruption until, in 2004, the Orange Revolution ushered in a reformist government and what seemed to be clear democratic change. Infighting between the president and prime minister paralyzed reforms, however, eventually breaking the Orange government and returning the country to semi-authoritarianism and corruption before a new popular rising, the 2013-14 Revolution of Dignity, once again returned democratic reformers to power.

These political ups and downs at home were closely mirrored in Turkish and Ukrainian ties abroad. Whenever democratic and reformist sentiments prevailed in Ankara and Kyiv, relationships with the EU warmed and hopes for closer integration thrived. EU responses, however, have typically been half-hearted. In turn, there have also been periods of authoritarian backlash in both countries when non-Western priorities and partnerships gained priority. Thus, Ukraine regularly swung back in the direction of Russia, and Turkey also sought alternative partnerships elsewhere.

The similar strategic role and shared domestic and international dynamics of Turkey and Ukraine are also reflected in the importance that both countries afford each other. Ever since the breakup of the Soviet Union, Turkey and Ukraine have developed ever closer political and economic cooperation. In part, this partnership is historically based, as with the presence of a large Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey. Economic ties between both countries are significant, with Turkish investments in Ukraine estimated at \$2 billion and Turkish construction contracts totaling \$3.8 billion. Meanwhile politically aggressive Russian policy in the Black Sea region and the Middle East has forged closer

¹ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2016*, <https://freedom-house.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2016>.

Turkish-Ukrainian ties, as seen in a flurry of recent high-level contacts between the two countries.

Powerful as they are, strategy and self-interest are only two reasons why Europe should be more attentive to and supportive of positive developments in Turkey and Ukraine. Just as importantly, a social dynamic has unfolded in both countries over the last years that can facilitate their democratic transformation and European integration. As this paper will detail, a noticeable awakening of Turkish and Ukrainian societies has been underway that has repeatedly erupted in large-scale social and political mobilization. In Turkey, the 2013 Gezi Park protests and the strong electoral showing of the People's Democratic Party (HDP) in 2015 equally testify to this awakening, as was the case in Ukraine with the Orange Revolution in 2004 and the Revolution of Dignity ten years later. These protests herald a gradual emancipation of society against an overbearing state, whether strong and authoritarian as in Turkey or dysfunctional and corrupt as in Ukraine.

This social emancipation is fueled by several and very similar sources despite the many differences between Turkey and Ukraine. Both countries are socially and culturally diverse, and horizontal ties along regional, ethnic, and religious lines complement and often challenge vertical identification with the state. Turkey no less than Ukraine is burdened with legacies of authoritarianism, which has variously been justified by the need for state and nation-building or secular ideologies from republicanism to communism. The limits and often repression imposed on societies by this primacy of the state have prompted, among Turks and Ukrainians alike, strong traditions of resistance against state domination. Nothing illustrates this shared heritage better than language: political culture in both countries features the iconic *meydan* (in Turkish) and *maidan* (in Ukrainian), a popular assembly (and at times riot)

that cultivates society's autonomy from rulers and that expresses direct public participation of citizens. Not surprisingly, recent political mobilizations of Turks and Ukrainians regularly relate to this tradition.

A new important development is an intensification of relations between the civil societies of Turkey and Ukraine. The cooperation was facilitated by the Crimean Tatars, who for centuries played a role of bridge between Turks and Ukrainians. Russia's annexation of Crimea activated close cooperation between Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar societies.² On the other hand, Turkey is home to the largest originally Crimean Tatar community in the world. The annexation of Crimea led to a rediscovery of Tatar roots among quite a large number of Turks and a rise of activism among Crimean Tatar NGOs operating in Turkey. They organized pro-Ukrainian demonstrations and petitions against Russia's policy in Ukraine and Crimea.

The heritage of social resistance has been reinforced in the last decades, not least under the impression of broader European developments, by a growing democratic sensibility in Turkish and Ukrainian societies. Adherence to the rule of law, the inviolability of basic rights of individuals, and the performance of state authorities have come under greater public scrutiny than ever before. New agencies have sprung up that perform society's control over the state, from new political parties and civil society organizations to independent media and parts of the academic and business communities. The entry of scores of civic activists into the Ukrainian parliament after the Revolution of Dignity signals this new momentum no less than the recent electoral successes of the HDP

² The best illustrations of this trend include a joint Tatar-Ukrainian social campaign for an economic blockade of the occupied Crimea, the Ukrainians' support for Tatar internally displaced persons (IDPs) as well as Tatars' engagement in the Ukrainian volunteer units fighting against pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine.

A social dynamic has unfolded in both countries over the last years that can facilitate their democratic transformation and European integration.

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in Turkey. Naturally, resistance to ceding ground and relinquishing control over society and actors has been strong among state structures and elites. In Turkey, initial liberalization was followed by an authoritarian backlash that continues to this day. In Ukraine, one peaceful revolution failed to fundamentally alter state-society relations and another one, which turned violent in response to police brutality, is yet to produce sustainable democratic change. These mixed results to date notwithstanding, the upsurge in genuine citizenship that is observable in Turkey and Ukraine is an encouraging trend, limiting as it does the chances of political autocracy and expanding those of democracy in both countries.

It is in line with Europe's core values to nurture this emancipation of Turkish and Ukrainian societies. At present, however, European attention and aid is overly directed at the governments in Ankara and Kyiv, and at the state structures of both countries. This may be understandable, given the imperative to control refugee flows and to avoid military escalation in the case of Turkey, and to avert economic and political collapse in the case of Ukraine. Yet beyond these immediate policy priorities, the longer-term development of both countries must not be ignored. That evolution will depend on whether or not a new balance can be found between bold and active societies on one hand, and states and elites failing to maintain their dominance and control on the other. Success in establishing such a new healthy equilibrium between state and society would boost democracy and stability in Turkey and Ukraine no less than the European perspective of both countries. Failure, on the contrary, would feed instability, civic strife, and violent conflict, and take them ever closer to disintegration.

The outcome will depend on whether Europe can refashion its approach and assistance to Turkey and Ukraine, away from overly state-focused

relations and toward ties that place at least as much emphasis on societies. More than has been true to date, such an approach should impose European conditionality on Turkish and Ukrainian governments, state institutions, and political elites in dealing with their societies. It needs to provide more systematic assistance to building civil society structures that are equipped to keep a close watch on the conduct of elites and institutions, while being committed to observing democratic norms themselves and to advocating for those among citizens-at-large. Tangible benefits for Turkish and Ukrainian citizens have to be built into European assistance, from facilitating people-to-people contacts to opening opportunities for business, education, and employment. These and other adjustments, which are further detailed in this paper, should build on experiences with aiding EU neighbors and fledgling democracies, and draw on existing European soft power.

In reinvigorating European policies toward Turkey and Ukraine, two EU countries appear to be of particular importance: Germany and Poland. Their hitherto engagement in the Black Sea region — including with Turkey and Ukraine — transition experiences, connectedness and soft power, political and financial resources, and leverage on the European level position them well to shape EU strategies and support. Their combined and upgraded commitment can become an added value and do much to boost and improve EU involvement in domestic developments in what are arguably Europe's key neighbors to the east today and for years to come. The main argument of this paper is that Poland and Germany should substantially enhance the coordination of their policies toward Ukraine and Turkey and should decisively promote a significant increase of EU support for Turkish and Ukrainian societies. In order to shape a possible new framework of Polish-German approach to both countries, the paper will examine Poland's

and Germany's engagement with and influence in Turkey and Ukraine. It assumes that both case studies can serve as an introduction to what Poland and Germany can do together to promote the democratization of Turkey and Ukraine and their integration with the EU. The authors argue that a new Polish-German society-oriented approach can also strengthen the evolution of the EU position on this issue that has recently begun. Indeed, because of already mentioned social hallmarks, Ukraine and Turkey seem to offer especially favorable conditions for the implementation of a new more robust, proactive, and assertive EU strategy for civil society and democracy promotion in its external policy.

To be sure, greater openness and generous support for the democratic transformation and European integration of Turkey and Ukraine are a hard sell politically and publically in today's EU, rife as it is with uncertainty and self-doubt, internal divisions, and Euro-skepticism. Yet a number of powerful and strategic arguments should make stronger EU moves toward Turkey and Ukraine

an imperative. First, there is the political vision of a Europe that is united and at peace. This vision, including the possibility of EU membership for any European country, remains unaccomplished without the inclusion of the eastern half of the European continent. But even beyond questions of a united continent, Europe's security is tenuous, at best, if Ukraine and Turkey are instable. The current migration crisis is one example of the fallout for Europe when there is chaos near its borders. Furthermore, due to their size and stature, the development of Turkey and Ukraine are key for their regions. Successful transformation, democratic reforms, stability, and prosperity in both countries will have signaling and knock-on effects on neighboring countries. Much as a modern, democratic Turkey could serve as a model for other Muslim countries, the development of Ukraine will determine the political evolution throughout the post-Soviet space, including Russia. In order to unleash such a positive regional momentum, Turkey and Ukraine must succeed.

2

Turkey: A Strong State Obscures the Transformation of Society

Adam Balcer

Since 2007, the AKParty has become decidedly more authoritarian in its internal politics.

Since 2002, Turkey has been ruled by the conservative Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKParty), which has transformed the country radically and left a tangible imprint on society. The party does deserve recognition for an unprecedented widening of freedoms between 2002 and 2005 that was carried out within the framework of reforms expected by the European Union. As a result of the European integration processes, which were undertaken by Turkey during that time, the country's ranking in the "Freedom in the World" index improved from 4.5 to 3 points. Turkey earned the rank of a "partly free" state on the verge of being recognized as a full-fledged "free" country.³

However, since 2007, the AKParty has become decidedly more authoritarian in its internal politics. This change was a result of a series of factors, including the political struggle with the opposition and the army, conflicts within the ruling establishment (such as between the *Hizmet* movement and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan), and the slow pace of EU accession talks that weakened the EU's influence in Turkey's domestic transformation. Yet, even these strong authoritarian tendencies did not stop the government from implementing certain democratic reforms, such as regulating the rights of ethnic and religious minorities and women (though substantial improvements in these spheres are still needed). The slide toward authoritarianism observed in Turkey explains why, in 2012, Freedom House downgraded the country's score in from 3 to 3.5. The report pointed out that since 2005, and especially since 2007, media freedom has deteriorated systematically in Turkey. What is more, in 2013, Freedom House also moved Turkey from the category of countries recognized as having partly free media to the category of states with non-

free media. The organization still recognizes that internet in Turkey is partly free, but the trend there is also negative.⁴

With an unprecedented level of social support, the AKParty has succeeded in taking over many state institutions. The independent Constitutional Court and other high courts remain, despite strong government pressure, rare institutional checks to the authoritarian tendencies. According to the European Commission's *Turkey Report 2015*, "The Constitutional Court and other higher courts have continued to follow the case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in their rulings in areas such as freedom of assembly, freedom of thought."⁵ While the ruling party has to a large degree politicized the lower structures of the judiciary, it is fair to say that as of yet, the government cannot fully count on the obedience of all courts. For instance, in April 2015, a Turkish court acquitted the leaders of Taksim Solidarity, the umbrella group at the forefront of the Gezi Park demonstrations.

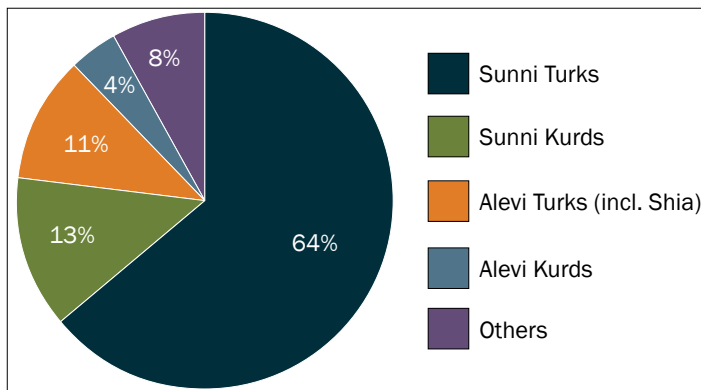
Turkey remains a highly centralized country. Since 2002, there has been no progress in devolving power to local governments, which is a crucial issue in the context of strengthening the checks and balances in the Turkish political system and necessary to reflect the social diversity of the country. Fiscal decentralization remains very limited. The share of the local government revenues and expenditures in the 2013 federal budget was less than 10 percent.

³ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2016*, <https://freedom-house.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2016>.

⁴ In the first half of 2015, more than 90 percent of all court orders to remove content received by Twitter worldwide originated from Turkey. As of May 2015, over 80,000 websites were banned based on civil code-related complaints and intellectual-property rights violations.

⁵ European Commission, *Turkey Report 2015*, p. 61, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2015/20151110_report_turkey.pdf.

Figure 1 — Turkey's ethnic and spiritual mosaic



Note: Others include Zaza, Arabs, Roma, Bosnians, Albanians, Crimean Tatars, Georgians (including Laz people), Azeris, Circassians, Abkhazians, Chechens, and various small ethnic groups, along with non-Muslims (including atheists), etc.

Source: KONDA Araştırma, *Kürt Meselesi'nde Algı ve Beklentiler* [Perceptions and Expectations in the Kurdish Issue], 2011. Milli Güvenlik Kurulu [National Security Council], *Türkiye'deki Etnik Grupların Dağılım Raporu* [Report on distribution of ethnic groups in Turkey], 2008.

Who are the Turks?

Turkey is so complex and ambiguous that one could apply words that Winston Churchill once uttered about Russia to Turkey: “Turkey is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.”

Despite the idea of a monolithic nation that has been promoted in the Turkish Republic since its establishment, Turkish society remains very diverse. Religiously and ethnically, around 65 percent of the population is Sunni-Turkish. The largest ethnic and religious minorities are the Kurds and the Alevis. The popularity of multilayer identities (Turkish-Kurdish) confirms the diversity of the ethnic-religious landscape in Turkey. The popularity of state identity (“a citizen of the Republic of Turkey” is the identification of first choice for around 35 percent of Turks) and the belief among a large group of Turks that religious identification is more relevant than the ethnic identification exemplify the mosaic of the Turkish society. It is also a living legacy of the Ottoman Empire, where a strong

state (with certain ethnic features) and religion were the main reference points for the society.⁶

Religion and Politics

Turkish society is considerably more conservative and religious than most EU societies. At the same time, it is a society that strongly supports a secular state. Few Turks (around 10 percent) want their government to codify Islamic law (Sharia Law) as state law, and these numbers are declining. Even fewer people (around 8 percent) support the severe punishments required by the most restrictive application of Sharia Law, such as stoning for adultery or the death penalty for people who leave the Muslim faith.⁷ Paradoxically, under the mild Islamist AKParty

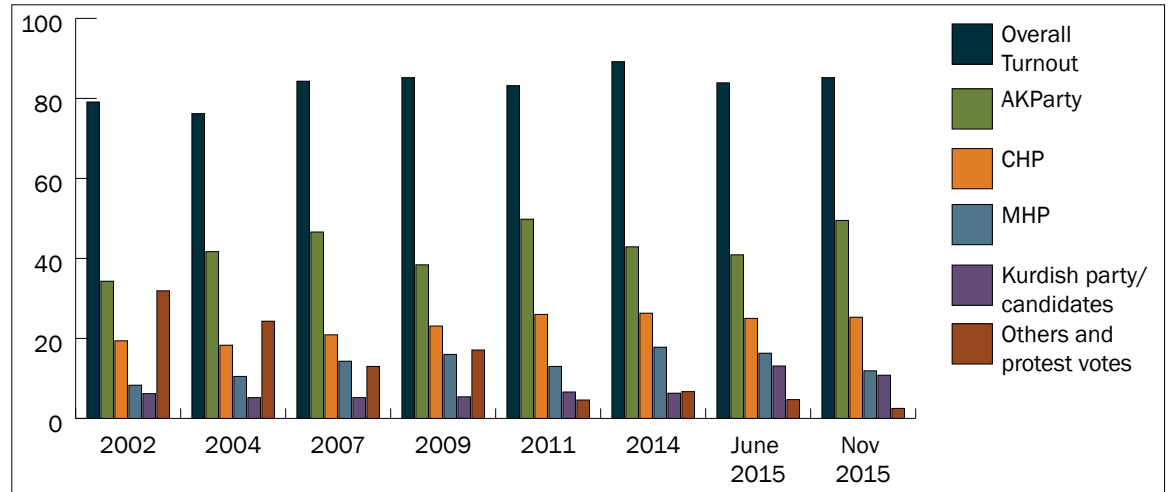
government, Turkish society has become even more secular. The number of women who wear headscarves has been decreasing, now estimated at less than 60 percent. The level of religious practice (praying, fasting, mosque attendance) has also seen a decline. The consumption of alcohol is on the rise. Secularization is noticeably more widespread among younger generations.

The confrontational political culture in Turkey represents a very serious liability for Turkish society. “Doing politics” in Turkey has always been based on massive social engagement (large

⁶ Hakan Yılmaz, *Türkiye'de Kimlikler, Kürt Sorunu ve Çözüm Süreci - Algılar ve Tutumlar* [Identities, the Kurdish Question, and the Peace Process in Turkey: Perceptions and Attitudes], September 2014, p 6, http://hakanyilmaz.info/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/OSI_Yurttaslik_2014_Cozum_Sureci_Sunum_Basin_v08.259182726.pdf.

⁷ Pew Research Center, *The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics, and Society*, Survey Topline Results, April 30, 2013, <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2013/04/worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-topline1.pdf>.

Figure 2 — Turkish political life: polarization and mobilization in elections



Note: The elections referred to are the local polls in 2004, 2009, and 2014, and parliamentary ballots in 2002, 2007, 2011, and 2015.

Source: Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey.

rallies) and emotional partisanship (political life is seen as a substitute for war, while politicians and supporters of antagonistic parties are perceived as enemies). The traditional polarization of Turkish political culture softened substantially between 2002 and 2005 due to the moderating influence of the EU enlargement process. In that period, the AKParty and the People’s Republic Party (CHP), a main opposition party, together voted for six comprehensive democratic packages, which included hundreds of new laws and amendments. This period can be called the “golden age” of Turkey’s democracy and social reconciliation.

Deep political polarization of the Turkish society weakens social trust and fosters conspiracy theories. Subsequently, a reportedly very low level of trust toward people other than members of family and friends is a serious impediment to the development of civil society in Turkey.⁸ All

⁸ Özgür Ünlühisarcıklı, A Culture of Trust and Tolerance, or a Beautiful, but Lonely Turkey?, GMF Blog, June 12, 2009, <http://www.gmfus.org/publications/culture-trust-and-tolerance-or-beautiful-lonely-turkey>.

political forces bear some responsibility for the confrontational political climate, but the largest responsibility rests on the AKParty, as it is the ruling party controlling state institutions.

Currently, this polarization has led to the winnowing down of alternatives so that the entire political scene is divided between four parties — and voters are highly mobilized.

The most recent parliamentary elections confirmed that the Turkish political scene is dominated by four parties, which together won almost 99 percent of votes. The level of political participation in Turkey is the highest in Europe. In the parliamentary elections in November 2015, the election turnout in Turkey as a whole approached 90 percent. Obligatory voting is only a partial explanation since other countries with such an electoral code have a much lower turnout.

Around 55-65 percent of Turks are against the presidential system promoted by Erdoğan, while

around 30 percent support it.⁹ A majority of Turks condemn the government's interference in the judiciary, media, and corruption scandals. Yet in the most recent elections, almost half of Turks voted for the AKParty. This illustrates that a large part of the electorate is critical of the party's performance, but takes a "devil you know" perspective. The main reason for this is a conviction that only a single party government can assure economic stability and security. This calculated support can be somewhat explained by the bitter experience of political and economic turmoil in the 1990s under coalition governments. The insecurity from the armed conflict with the Kurdish guerilla fighters, which has been taking place for more than 30 years now, may also incline the population toward a strong government.¹⁰

Turkey and the West

The Turkish society's attitude toward the West and the EU is also full of contradictions. It can almost be called a love-hate relationship. On one hand, as many opinion polls indicate, the majority of people (about 55 percent) want their country to become a member of the EU, while 30-35 percent oppose this. These attitudes have held relatively steady since 2006 despite some serious ups and downs in EU-Turkish relations.¹¹ Additionally, survey data suggest that in the case of a serious rapprochement between the EU and Turkey, support for the EU accession could rise quite substantially. At the same

⁹ T24, Dört araştırma şirketine göre halk başkanlık için ne düşünüyor? [According to Four Research Centers, what do people think about the presidential system], May 11, 2015, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/dort-arastirma-sirketine-gore-halk-baskanlik-icin-ne-dusunuyor,315382>.

¹⁰ Kemal Kirişçi, Erdoğan's victory isn't a win for Turkish democracy, Brookings Blog, November 2, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/order-from-chaos/posts/2015/11/02-turkish-election-results-akp-kirischi>; Sinan Ülgen, Erdoğan's Second Chance, Project Syndicate, November 2, 2015, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/erdogan-election-turkish-democracy-by-sinan-ulgen-2015-11?barrier=true>.

¹¹ Pew Research Center, op. cit.

time, more than half of Turks believe that Western countries try to divide Turkey and undermine its sovereignty. Most of the society does not trust the EU.¹² However, these fears and suspicions should be placed in a wider context of the general lack of trust and antipathy felt toward many foreign countries (China, Russia, the United States, or Iran).

Social Awakening

The most important new development in Turkey is an increased mobilization and organization of the country's society, which is enabling a strong resistance against the government's authoritarian pressure. The number of associations in Turkey increased between 2007 and 2015, from around 68,000 to almost 110,000. During the same period, membership in organizations also went up from more than 7.5 million to over 10 million, a steady increase since the beginning of the century.¹³ On the other hand, membership in civil society organizations in Turkey is still below the EU average. To compare, membership in Polish NGOs is, in absolute terms, more or less at the same level as it is in Turkey, even though Poland's population is half of that of Turkey.

The most important social backlash to the authoritarian pressure of the Turkish state was massive protests that started in Gezi Park. With their high turnout and wide geographical range, these gatherings were the largest political protests in Turkey's modern history. According to the Turkish Ministry of Internal Affairs, almost 3.6 million of the country's 77 million people are

¹² The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Turkish Perceptions Survey 2015, <http://www.gmfus.org/initiatives/turkish-perceptions-survey>.

¹³ Dernekler Dairesi Başkanlığı, Yıllara [Turkish Ministry of Interior, Department of Association], *Nevilere ve İllere Göre Dernek ve Üye Sayısı* [Associations and their membership according to years, categories, and provinces].

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estimated to have participated in more than 5,500 demonstrations held in 80 out of 81 provinces.¹⁴

The younger generation formed the backbone of Gezi Park protests. More than 80 percent of protesters arrested by the police were under 30 years old. Turkish society is substantially younger than other EU societies — with a median age of 30, versus 42 in the EU.¹⁵ Overall, young people are better educated, less religious, and more liberal, but also more nationalistic than older Turks. Yet, the recent rise of tolerance in the Turkish society is particularly correlated with the younger generation. This generation is also the most critical toward the authoritarian slide in Turkey. According to the Pew Research Center, slightly more than 40 percent of Turks in the age group 18-29 are satisfied with the way democracy is working in their country. By comparison, more than 60 percent of Turks older than 50 declare their satisfaction with the quality of democracy.

The protests brought together a very wide range of social and political groups, from the far left through the center to the far right (although generally speaking they were mostly left-oriented). Women were much better represented among the protesters and their informal leaders than in the Turkish political elite. The demonstrations led to the establishment of several important NGOs. Oy ve Otesi (Vote and Beyond), the first civic election-

monitoring initiative in the history of Turkey,¹⁶ is probably the most significant initiatives that has emerged from these protests. More than 60,000 of its volunteers monitored the voting during the November 2015 elections. They observed more than 70 percent of the ballot boxes, especially in the most sensitive regions. Two-thirds of its volunteers were women and two-thirds were aged between 26 and 45.¹⁷

The Gezi Park demonstrations also led to an increase in online activism. During the protests, the number of Twitter users rose from 2 to 8 million in Turkey. According to the International Telecommunications Union, by the end of 2014, internet penetration stood at 51 percent, a rise from 36 percent in 2009. Turkish online society is resisting the pressure of the state by circumventing state bans and blockades. Freedom House noted this in its *Freedom on the Net 2015* report, saying that “circumvention tools are widely available, enabling even inexperienced users to avoid filters and blocking mechanisms. Each time a new order is issued and a popular web site is blocked, articles are published to instruct users on how to access it. YouTube was the eighth most-accessed site in Turkey in 2010, at a time when it was officially blocked.”¹⁸

Turkish society is also trying to counterbalance authoritarian backsliding by using the judiciary system. The number of individual applications

¹⁴ T24, “Emniyete göre, Gezi Parkı şüphelilerinin yüzde 78’i Alevi” [According to the police, 78% of the Gezi Park suspects are Alevi], November 25, 2013, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/gezide-kac-eylem-gerceklesti-kac-kisi-goz-altina-alindi,244706>.

¹⁵ UN Statistics Division, Demographic and Social Statistics, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/>

¹⁶ The percentage of participants of a survey who stated that they do not believe that the election results will be fair increased from 28 to 43 percent in 2015. The research also demonstrated that the percentage of voters who believe that the results of the elections will be fair decreased from 70 percent in 2007 to 43 percent in 2015. Koç Üniversitesi Saha Araştırmaları Merkezi [Koç University Center for Survey Research], Haziran 2015 Seçimlerine Giderken Kamuoyu Dinamikleri [Approaching the June 2015 elections: Public opinion dynamics], May 5, 2015, http://t24.com.tr/files/20150506015156_20150505232435_ali-carkoglu-2015-secim-arastirmasi-sunum-4.pdf

¹⁷ See Oy ve Ötesi, <http://oyveotesi.org/>.

¹⁸ Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2015, Turkey, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2015/turkey>.

submitted to the Constitutional Court since the introduction of the right to complain individually to the court in 2012 approached 45,000 in July 2015. Out of this number, more than 20,000 cases were filed in 2014 alone and more than 10,000 in the first half of 2015.¹⁹ Before 2012 Turks could only submit complaints to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). The number of complaints submitted by Turks to the ECtHR almost quadrupled between 2006 and 2012, from 2,300 to 9,000. Importantly, Turkish citizens are much more eager to sue their own state than Russians, even though the human rights situation in Turkey is substantially better than that in Russia.

Achilles' Heel: The Kurdish Issue

The Kurdish issue can be called Turkey's Achilles' heel. The conflict between the Turkish army and Kurdish guerilla fighters has lasted more than 30 years and has claimed at least 30,000 lives. In July 2015, hostilities restarted and annulled the achievements of more than two years of peace talks. The Kurdish community in Turkey faces even larger paradoxes than the Turkish society. Kurds are more patriarchal, religious, and conservative than Turks, but they have started to vote for the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), a left-wing, nationalist party that adheres to a 10 percent quota for the LGBT community and a 50 percent quota for women; the party is also led by both a man and a woman. The HDP has the largest share of women in any parliamentary club (40 percent). Many Turkish Kurds have joined their co-nationals in Syria fighting against ISIS. However, Kurds are also overrepresented among ISIS fighters originating from Turkey. It is a bitter irony that Kurds were the perpetrators of two bloody terrorist attacks in July and October 2015 against the sympathizers of the Kurdish national movement.

¹⁹ European Commission, Turkey Report 2015, p. 58, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2015/20151110_report_turkey.pdf.

Kurds are the biggest group of victims of human rights' violations in Turkey. For instance, at the end of 2015, 31 journalists (including unregistered) and 8 publishers were sent to Turkish jails. Seventeen of the imprisoned journalists and all of the imprisoned publishers were affiliated with Kurdish media.²⁰ This is in part why the Kurds are strong supporters of Turkey's accession to the EU, and it is in part thanks to their support that the EU has not lost its leverage within the Turkish society.

An unprecedented increase of Kurdish ethnic self-awareness, which is exemplified by the impressive increase of support for the HDP and its outreach to various minorities and the liberal middle class, has been one of the most significant developments in Turkey in recent years. The influence of the Kurds in Turkey is predicted to rise due to their higher reproductive rates, increase of ethnic self-awareness, and growing influence in the Middle East. Since 2007, the Kurdish influence in the Turkish political system has increased dramatically. In 2007 a Kurdish party, the political arm of the Kurdish guerillas, won a mere 5 percent of the vote in parliamentary elections. In the June 2015 elections, the HDP won 13 percent of the vote, crossing the parliamentary threshold. For the first time in Turkey's history, a great majority of ethnic Kurds voted for the Kurdish party; an additional 15 percent of HDP voters were non-ethnic Kurds. The party's support decreased to almost 11 percent in the November 2015 snap elections due primarily to the war between the Kurdish guerillas and the Turkish army as well as administrative pressures placed on the party.

The rise of the HDP cost the AKParty its majority in the June 2015 elections. By managing to cross the threshold in November, it also kept the AKParty from having a constitutional majority. Without a

²⁰ Erol Önderoğlu, *Medya Gözlem* [The Media Observatory] 2015, BIA, January 29, 2016, <https://bianet.org/bianet/ifade-ozgurlugu/168352-bia-medya-gozlem-temmuz-agustos-eylul-2015-tam-metin>.

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doubt, the Kurds supporting the AKParty will be crucial for the political future of the country. These swing voters will decide the fate of the AKParty.

The HDP's most recent electoral success was to a large degree possible thanks to the armistice and the launch of the peace process between Turkey and the Kurdish guerilla. During the peace process (2013-15), Turkish attitudes regarding the Kurdish issue became more moderate and less nationalistic. A Metropoll survey conducted in July 2013, for example, indicates that for the first time a large number of Turkish citizens (almost 50 percent) accepted the use of Kurdish as a language of education in Kurdish areas.²¹ In the fall of 2014, almost 60 percent of Turks declared their support for the peace process; less than 40 percent were against it.²² Immediately after the 2015 June elections, the approval rates of the HDP, and its leader particularly, substantially improved among the Turkish society.²³

Certainly, the outbreak of the war between the PKK and the Turkish Armed Forces in July 2015, after two and a half years of armistice, changed social moods and increased Turkish nationalism

and hostility toward the Kurds.²⁴ Around 200 HDP offices were attacked by angry mobs, though demonstrations have never turned into massive anti-Kurdish pogroms. At the same time, a new phenomenon emerged: the substantial increase of cooperation between the HDP and the CHP, whose leaders met several times and endorsed common political declarations calling for an immediate return to the peace process. However, currently the prospects are rather gloomy. The further escalation of confrontation between the Turkish state and the Kurdish guerillas may have a negative impact on the social cohesion of Turkey. In recent years, the Kurdish nationalistic movement has changed its character, undergoing a similar transformation to Turkey as a whole; Kurdish society has started to play a substantially more prominent role in the conflict with the Turkish state. A generational shift has also occurred within the Kurdish national movement. Currently, radical youngsters organized in a Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (YDG-H), an armed, urban militia, are taking a lead in fight against the Turkish state. Cities have become the main arena of confrontation. As Mehul Srivastava, the *Financial Times* correspondent in Turkey rightly points out

“For much of the past three decades, the conflict has largely been concentrated around remote mountain ranges. Typically fighters from the outlawed Kurdistan Workers party (or PKK) placed bombs on winding roads used by military convoys, staged attacks on local guards or were hit in their own redoubts by government forces. The current battle, in the hearts of southeastern cities such as Diyarbakir or Cizre, is not only bloodier and more intense

²¹ Metropoll, “Türkiye'nin Nabzı” [Pulse of Turkey], July 2013, p. 12, <http://www.metropoll.com.tr/upload/content/files/1732-turkiyenin-nabzi-temmuz-2013.pdf>.

²² Hakan Yılmaz, op. cit., p. 45.

²³ Just after the elections, 25 percent of Turks approved Selahettin Demirtas' performance as a politician and less than 70 percent disapproved of his political activism. By comparison, at the same time, Erdoğan is the most popular politician in Turkey and has the support of less than 40 percent of citizens. Less than 50 percent of Turks unequivocally rejected the idea that the crossing of threshold by the HDP is a contribution to the democratization of Turkey; see Metropoll, Türkiye'nin Nabzı Ağustos 2015, p.27, http://www.metropoll.com.tr/upload/content/files/1786-turkiyenin-nabzi-agustos-2015_site.pdf.

²⁴ Currently, half of Turks are against a return to the peace negotiations until the PKK lays down its arms or is military defeated; 30 percent of respondents support the immediate end of hostilities and talks with the PKK; see Metropoll, Türkiye'nin Nabzı Ekim 2015, p.19, <http://www.metropoll.com.tr/upload/content/files/1788-turkiyenin-nabzi-ekim-2015.pdf>.

because of the nature of urban warfare, it is also against a more shadowy and decidedly more youthful foe.”²⁵

This kind of warfare has resulted in a substantially higher death toll among civilians. Radicalized Kurds have brought the war into big cities in western Turkey, organizing suicide terrorist attacks in Ankara in February and March, respectively. In consequence, the possibility of transformation of the conflict between the Turkish state and the Kurdish guerillas supported by the majority of Kurdish society, into a fully fledged ethnic confrontation between Turks and Kurds has never been so high as it is right now.

The recent escalation of the Kurdish-Turkish conflict severely risks the undoing of the role Kurds have played in the burgeoning civil society for the last few years in Turkey.

Alevi: The Religious Monolith?

Alevi are followers of a heterodox Islamic belief system that is close to Shia Islam. Alevi constitute around 15 percent of the Turkish population and rightly feel that they are discriminated against by state institutions. They are not officially recognized as a religious minority, and are greatly underrepresented in state structures and hold none of the country’s 81 provincial governorships. In the ruling AKParty, their representation is negligible. In contrast, Alevi were greatly overrepresented among the participants of the Gezi Park demonstrations. All seven of the protestors killed by the police during the demonstrations were Alevi. Sectarian divisions in Turkey are correlated with political polarization. Around 90 percent of Alevi vote for the left-wing parties, CHP and HDP. Alevi are proportionally more often

ethnically Kurds than Turks, and they are strongly overrepresented among the elite of the Kurdish nationalist movement.

The HDP and CHP have managed to cross the sectarian divide and unite Sunni and Alevi voters and their leaders belonging to both denominations. The CHP leader, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, is an Alevi of Kurdish origin, but most other leaders are Sunnis.²⁶ Alevi-Sunni marriages are also on the rise, in the context of an increase of education and urbanization.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the self-organization of the Alevi in Turkey has strengthened considerably. Many Alevi NGOs have been established, and the number of their temples (*cemevi*) increased almost 15 times between 2002 and 2015. Despite the lack of official recognition, the Alevi receive financial support from local administration in the provinces that are ruled by the opposition. Nevertheless, their number, even when small houses of prayers are added, is still substantially smaller than the number of Sunni mosques.

Women and Minorities

The situation of women in Turkey is considerably worse than in the EU. Turkish women are exposed to a high level of domestic violence, including honor killings. Arranged marriages and political under-representation as well as a low level of employment are other characteristics. At the same time, Turkish women are relatively well represented — sometimes even better than in some EU countries — in the most prestigious professions (attorneys, judges, professors, architects, etc.). The emancipation of women, particularly in the young generation, is taking place often independently or even in spite of the conservative government

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the self-organization of the Alevi in Turkey has strengthened considerably.

²⁵ Mehul Srivastava, “Turkey faces younger Kurdish foes as conflict enters cities,” December 23, 2015, www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/7939dd5a-a894-11e5-955c-1e1d6de94879.html#axzz3wBOwxT00.

²⁶ In fact, Kilicdaroglu comes from the Zaza community, which is divided into three national identities: Kurdish, Zaza, and Turkish.

On the declarative level, Turks are very supportive of gender equality in the public sphere.

and society. Further progress is vital for the strengthening of the Turkish civil society (with women as equal and active citizens). In 2002, women made up of less than 5 percent of members in the Turkish parliament. Following the June 2015 elections, their representation increased to 18 percent. Unfortunately, it decreased to 15 percent after the snap elections in November 2015. In the 2004 local elections, only in 1 out of 81 provinces was a woman elected mayor. In the 2014 local elections, women gained four positions of this kind, including two major cities (Diyarbakir, Gaziantep).

The level of education of women has improved substantially under the AKParty government. At the beginning of the AKParty period, 20 percent of women were illiterate. Since then that number has decreased to 6 percent.²⁷ The level of employment among young women has also improved. The ongoing emancipation of Turkish women can be observed also in their sexual and family life. Surveys and statistics indicate that in recent years, the average age of sexual initiation has decreased substantially and the median age of marriage has increased considerably. Arranged marriages are on decline. At the same time, the ratio of divorces to marriages has risen. Between 2004 and 2014, the ratio of divorces to marriages decreased from 1:6.8 to 1:4.6.²⁸ Studies also show that Turkish women today are much more likely to use contraception and are having fewer children.

On the declarative level, Turks are very supportive of gender equality in the public sphere. In family

²⁷ In the academic year 2001-02, only 13 percent of girls completing high school continued their studies at universities. By comparison, in the 2013-14 academic year, more than 40 percent did. Women made up more than 45 percent of all students; see Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü, Türkiye'de Kadın [Women in Turkey], August 2015, <http://kadininstatusu.aile.gov.tr/uygulamalar/turkiyede-kadin>.

²⁸ Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu [Turkish Statistical Institute], *Evlence ve Boşanma İstatistikleri 2014* [Marriage and Divorce Statistics], April 2, 2015, <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=18628>.

life, however, the patriarchal model is still applied, even though a certain degree of liberalization can be observed. Patriarchy is rooted in the position of the traditional family model perceived as the most important social institution.

Smaller minorities (LGBTI, non-Muslims, Roma) have also increased their visibility in the Turkish public sphere. Such a development would be impossible without the rise of social tolerance. While the Turks still have one of the most homophobic societies in Europe, their attitude toward gay members of the community has become more lenient. In 2003 and 2004, a "Gay Pride Parade" was held in Istanbul and attended by only several dozen participants. In 2015, 40,000 people from the LGBTI community and their sympathizers organized a march in the center of Istanbul, during Ramadan, but the event was dispersed by angry members of the public and the police.

In case of the non-Muslims and Roma, the elections in 2015 were ground-breaking events. In June 2015, four Christians (three Armenians, one Syriac) and two Yazidis were elected to the parliament for the first time in the history of modern Turkey.²⁹ This was the highest number since the founding of the republic almost a century ago. In the November 2015 snap elections, all of them, excluding one Yazidi who withdrew his candidacy, managed to preserve their seats in the parliament. Taking into consideration that non-Muslims account for around 0.3 percent of Turkish citizens, they are greatly overrepresented in the Turkish parliament. In the 2015 elections, a representative of the Roma community (less than 1 percent of the population) was reelected to the Turkish parliament, the first time in the country's history.

²⁹ Agos, "Meclis artık daha renkli" [The Parliament is More Colorfull Now], June 8, 2015.

Conclusion

Two contradictory trends can be observed in Turkey. On the one hand, empowerment can be seen within the Turkish society, which is becoming increasingly more tolerant and open to social diversity; on the other hand, there is a spectacular deepening of political polarization accompanied by a strong slide toward authoritarianism. The internal diversity of Turkish society serves as a security guarantee against a dictatorship. Unfortunately, the tradition of an omnipotent state and the support for a strong leader by a large part of the society still exist in Turkey and hinder society's emancipation. The authoritarian inclinations of Erdoğan, who aspires to be "the father of the fatherland" are the primary factors influencing political polarization. Erdoğan's popularity is

strengthened by the relatively good performance by the Turkish economy. All in all, tensions between the above-mentioned trends have resulted in political instability in recent years. The importance of the Kurdish issue will not diminish due to the Kurdish awakening taking place in Turkey, changing — in favor of Kurds — demographics, and further developments in the Middle East, which include an unprecedented increase of Kurdish leverage in Syria and Iraq as well as playing of Kurdish card by Russia and Iran and the U.S.-Kurdish military cooperation in Syria. The new character of the military conflict between Turkey and the Kurdish guerillas increases a possibility that, in the worse-case scenario, Turkey could slide into fully fledged civil war.

3

Ukraine: A Society Challenges the State

Joerg Forbrig

Ukrainians sense that the central aspect of change is in a new balance and format of state-society relations, requiring major adjustments not just to state institutions and laws but to day-to-day practices across political, economic, and social life.

A curious semantic difference has emerged in the domestic and international debates about Ukraine over the last two years. Where international observers have typically referred to the Euromaidan as the event marking the beginning of the unfolding drama, Ukrainians usually call the same events their Revolution of Dignity (Революція гідності). At first glance, Ukraine is yet another European country that is attracted by the EU's soft power, democracy, and prosperity, and that harbors hopes for an eventual integration with the continent's political and social mainstream. When these hopes were dashed by former President Victor Yanukovich and his rejection of closer association with the EU, the European orientation of many Ukrainians erupted in mass protests, eventually ushering in a new government that is more committed to taking Ukraine to Europe. In short, a dynamic was at work that has been seen at the EU's peripheries before and whose record, skeptics will add, has been mixed at best.

In contrast, the other and more genuinely Ukrainian view contends that the meaning of the events beginning in late 2013 goes much deeper. Wrapped in more emotive language that invokes revolution, sacrifice, and heroism, a fundamental conflict is playing out between an utterly corrupt and dysfunctional state, and a society that has grown tired of paternalism and abuse, and that seeks to assert itself. This struggle is principally about finding new arrangements, norms, and institutions to govern the relationship between the state and its citizens, between politics and the economy, between elites and Ukrainians-at-large. In short, the Revolution of Dignity wants a complete overhaul of Ukraine from within. More than any of the previous and failed attempts at change, it is driven by society in general. That society is more anxious than ever and senses that the current

struggle may be its last chance for a long time to ensure a better future.

These two perspectives are not mutually exclusive but the difference in accents is consequential. In the first place, it provides a hint that recent developments in Ukraine are not merely driven by a desire for EU membership, naïve as that would be given the current state of both Ukraine and the EU, but by Ukrainians determined to change their country from within. They acknowledge that such change is necessary for the sake of their individual improvement as much as for the survival of their country, and possible integration with the EU will be an added long-term benefit. Ukrainians sense that the central aspect of change is in a new balance and format of state-society relations, requiring major adjustments not just to state institutions and laws but to day-to-day practices across political, economic, and social life. In accomplishing such a sweeping makeover, Ukraine will require external assistance, from the EU as much as from other Western democracies, yet help will have to target society as much as the state.

It is for these reasons that the following analysis seeks to shed light on some key societal drivers of Ukraine's ongoing evolution, at the opportunities and risks associated with an ever more emancipating society, and at ways for the EU and the West broadly to assist Ukrainian society in succeeding.

A Growing Sense of Ukrainian Identity and Statehood

The key prerequisite for a stable democracy, as theorists have long since established, is a clearly defined community in terms of both membership and territory.³⁰ Only if the external boundaries

³⁰ One of the earliest theorists to spell out this precondition was Dankwart Rustow in his 1970 article "Transitions to Democracy. Toward a Dynamic Model."

Figure 3 — The gradual strengthening of Ukrainian identity



Source: Institute of Sociology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Data quoted by Democratic Initiatives Foundation, *До Дня Незалежності: що українці думають про Україну?* [On Independence Day: what Ukrainians think about Ukraine], August 21, 2015.

Note: Percentage of Ukrainians responding “fully agree” and “somewhat agree.”

of a given community are generally accepted and if loyalties, expectations, and participation internally are overwhelmingly directed at one’s own community does democracy have a chance to succeed and persist. If, in turn, major parts of the population harbor doubts about the community they live in, remain reluctant to identify with it, or long for an alternative, and if borders remain contested for reasons of history, culture, or geopolitics, democracy will remain fragile or even give way to authoritarian rule.

This has long been the dilemma of most countries that succeeded the Soviet Union a quarter of a century ago. National identities remained weak as earlier nation-building had been absent or aborted, and political loyalties were torn between the Soviet past, the nascent new countries, and, on the part of many Russian speakers, the mighty Russia. Borders, artificially drawn by the whims of Tsars, Soviets, and outsiders but meaningless for decades, became contested dividing lines and, repeatedly, front lines. Subjected to these pressures from within and without, much of the region ended democratic

experiments and returned to more or less autocratic government, typically in the hands of old Soviet elites and always justified by the need to defend still-fragile statehood. Ukraine has been a textbook example in this respect.

However, Ukraine is also the premier example for a mitigating trend in post-Soviet societies. With every year,

independent statehood becomes a little more normal and identities less blurred. A generation has come of age that was born and raised in independent Ukraine, while those socialized in the Soviet Union are an aging minority. Expressions and achievements of independence — flags or folk, factories or football — are gradually replacing those of the Soviet past, as illustrated in Figure 3.

In 2002, only two-fifths of Ukrainians were fully or rather proud of their citizenship and primarily considered themselves citizens of Ukraine, rather than mainly identifying with a region of Ukraine or with the Soviet Union. By 2014, this had gradually risen to about two-thirds of the population.

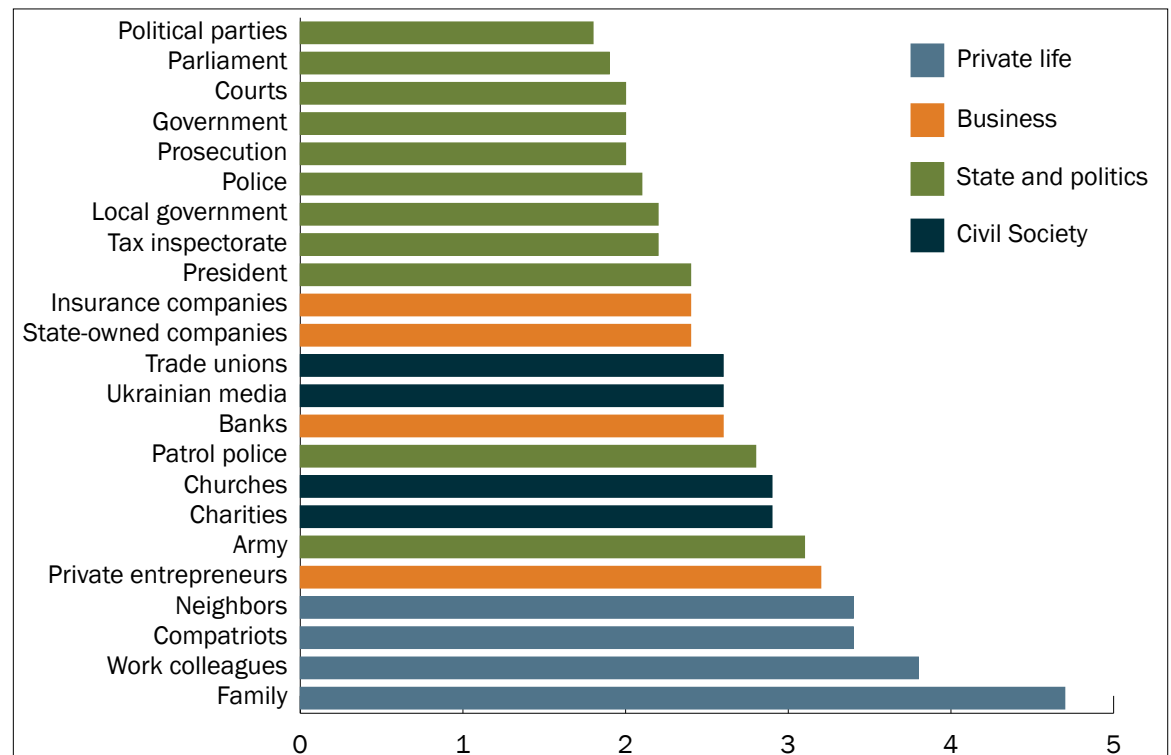
Interestingly, and crucially against the background of Russian-sponsored separatism, this trend is visible across all regions of Ukraine. Thus, by 2015, the portion of Ukrainians that fully or rather felt proud of being citizens of Ukraine ranged from 79.8 percent in the primarily Ukrainian-speaking west and 71.3 percent in Central Ukraine to 65.4

percent in the south and 59.1 percent in the east, both traditionally Russian-speaking regions; even in the contested Donbas, 45.4 percent expressed a positive feeling toward their citizenship. A comparable picture emerges among Ukrainians when asked for their primary identification, as clear majorities in all regions consider themselves Ukrainian citizens. The one exception is Donbas, where only 38.6 percent do so; 45.2 percent instead identify with their community or region of residence.

In short, Ukrainian statehood and identity has become firmly anchored in the minds of most citizens between Lviv and Dnipropetrovsk, and

among many in Donbas. This picture defies oft-invoked internal splits of Ukraine into an allegedly more patriotic west and center, and a more Russian-leaning south and east. Instead, the aware and active siding with Ukraine of an ever-increasing number of its citizens has regularly erupted into broad-based mobilization when internal or external threats appeared before Ukraine as a state and as a society. Such was the case with both the Orange Revolution and its follower a decade later, the Revolution of Dignity, when Ukrainians at large rebelled against blatant abuse by the powers-that-be. Likewise, Ukrainian identity made itself clearly felt in the face of Russian aggression, as

Figure 4 — Ukrainians trust society, largely distrust the state



Source: TNS-Ukraine poll of August 2015, quoted in *Ukrainska Pravda*, Українці більше довіряють астрологам, ніж політикам — опитування [Ukrainians trust astrologers more than politicians, poll says], October 6, 2015.

Note: Responses to the question “Please rate your trust in the following institutions on scale from 1 (no trust) to 5 (full confidence).”

most Ukrainians rallied behind the flag and lent their support to fighting the Kremlin's invasion, or at least turned a deaf ear to Russian calls for separatism in Donbas and elsewhere.

This obvious progress in building Ukraine as an independent political nation and in endowing Ukrainians with a clear identity as citizens provides a promising basis for democratizing the country in the long run. To be sure, this obvious maturation is no guarantee that a democratic transformation in Ukraine will succeed, but it does give the country a better chance.

Ukrainian Citizens: Faithful in Society, Wary of the State

With their sense of belonging to a common home country clarified, Ukrainians no longer ask who they are, but instead ask how they should live, and perhaps how they should live better, in their country. Attention has shifted to political, economic and social realities, to what constitutes life in Ukraine, to those who are in charge, to those who hold the country back and those who might advance it. And judging from opinion polls, Ukrainians have a very clear sense of how different players, structures, and institutions in their country, from the state apparatus and politics to the business community to civil society to private relationships, are performing their roles.

Most obviously, although least surprisingly, Ukrainians have the strongest confidence in various forms of private relationships (family and friends, co-workers, neighbors). More interestingly, however, high levels of confidence are also expressed in compatriots broadly, indicating again that Ukraine has clearly advanced in its nation and identity-building. Overall, and very positively, it seems that Ukraine has retained a remarkably solid and vibrant social fabric despite the manifold ruptures brought by Soviet and post-Soviet history.

At the opposite end of the scale, soberingly enough, are all key institutions of the state. A pervasive lack of trust is clearly shown in the executive, legislative, and judicative branches of government alike, from the national to the local level, and with political parties marking the absolute bottom of the list. This certainly reflects a cumulative effect of over two decades of state failure in Ukraine but also demonstrates that the positive changes that have resulted from the Revolution of Dignity, from free elections for the presidency, the parliament, and local and regional administration to a number of serious reforms initiated by the new government, have yet to translate into greater confidence in political institutions among citizens-at-large.

The two marked exceptions to this grim picture are the army and the newly established patrol police. The former, effectively neutered by years of corruption, recovered remarkably under the onslaught of Russia. Together with volunteer battalions, it put up an unexpected fight and stopped Russian military advances, earning a new-found respect among many Ukrainians. The latter, designed to police traffic and neighborhoods in key Ukrainian cities, replacing the scourge of corrupt cops, has had public sympathies ever since its launch. Ukrainians have praised its modern outlook and polite and helpful behavior, and started to feel safer. Both examples are hopeful, indicating that state institutions can indeed recover public trust if they act in ways beneficial to the country.

Wedged in the middle, between near-absolute trust in the private relationships and close-to-total distrust of the state, are the structures of business and civil society writ-large. Most of these enjoy a modest to marked confidence among Ukrainian citizens. Among business, the comparably high rating of private entrepreneurs certainly stands out. This may well reflect an understanding among the public that free and unhindered entrepreneurship, especially small and medium sized, is a key

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Certainly the clearest indication for the changing relationship between society and the state in Ukraine is the significant change in civil society's role.

driver for economic and social development, and that successive Ukrainian governments have disproportionately attended to large and typically corrupt corporations. At the same time, this sentiment toward private entrepreneurs may in fact be a nod to Ukrainian oligarchs, as they have fashioned themselves as local benefactors.

Much the same holds for civil society. Whether charitable organizations or churches, Ukrainian media or trade unions, structures of self-organized society are viewed favorably by citizens. In part, this is certainly a result of the positive role many civil society organizations have played in the Revolution of Dignity, whether as the organized underbelly of a broad-based mobilization, as conduits of independent information, as flag-bearers of democratic reforms and the fight against corruption, or as agencies to cushion some of the worst effects of Russian aggression against Ukraine. This standing of civil society in the eyes of many Ukrainians also certainly results from the many years of public struggle that numerous civic groups, well-known civil society leaders, journalists, and experts, and lesser-known activists and volunteers have invested to improve their country.³¹

To varying degrees perhaps, they invest much of their confidence in the relationships and structures of society, from the private to the civic to the commercial, while having little to no trust in the state and politics. Over time, and no less since the Revolution of Dignity, the two sides have been drifting apart. As opinion surveys indicate, private relationships have gained in trust, as have business and civil society broadly, while state institutions

³¹ Halyna Stadnyk, Ukrainians seek replacement for parties in NGOs, Human Rights in Ukraine, October 6, 2011, <http://www.khpg.org/en/index.php?id=1317851929>; Kateryna Pishchikova and Olesia Ogryzko, Civic awakening: The impact of Euromaidan on Ukraine's politics and society, FRIDE working paper no. 124, July 2014, <http://fride.org/publication/1209/civic-awakening:-the-impact-of-euromaidan-on-ukraine%E2%80%99s-politics>.

such as the president, the government, parliament, and political parties have further lost Ukrainians' trust.

The emerging picture, then, is one of a Ukrainian society that continues to assert itself against the state. To the extent that this evolution sees Ukrainians disconnecting from, and even turning hostile to, state and political institutions, serious challenges to a stable and democratic Ukrainian state are certainly ahead. At the same time, the confidence and hopes placed in society, and specifically in civil society as a key ingredient of a new Ukraine, point to potentials for lasting and democratic change that must be tapped.

Civil Society in Ukraine: Challenging the State, and Compensating for its Failures

Certainly the clearest indication for the changing relationship between society and the state in Ukraine is the significant change in civil society's role.³² The Revolution of Dignity, swelling as it did from a spontaneous protest by a few hundred students to a standoff of hundreds of thousands with a violent police force, testifies to the remarkable mobilization and self-organization of Ukrainian citizens. No less than the events leading to the ouster of Victor Yanukovich from the presidency in February 2014, the developments that have followed since have demonstrated that Ukrainian society is determined to take matters into its own hands, and that it can rely on the well-developed organizational structures of civil society.

³² The author follows a comparably broad concept of civil society, such as the one offered by Philippe Schmitter: "civil society can be defined as a set or system of self-organised intermediary groups that: 1) are relatively independent of both public authorities and private units of production and reproduction, that is, of firms and families; 2) are capable of deliberating about and taking collective actions in defence or promotion of their interests or passions; 3) do not seek to replace either state agents or private (re)producers or to accept responsibility for governing the polity as a whole; and 4) agree to act within pre-established rules of a 'civil,' i.e. mutually respectful, nature."

These structures are the product of a gradual development, expansion and strengthening of civil society over two decades. As of 2015, some 90,000 civil society organizations were registered in Ukraine, including public associations, professional unions, charitable organizations, and self-organized bodies. These have come to cover all spheres of public life from leisure-time activities and economic interests, human rights advocacy and independent media, religious groups and social welfare, to policy think tanks and alternative culture. Even more importantly, the combined strength of these numerous organizations has steadily increased over the last decade, in particular with noticeable advances in their sustainability and organizational capacity, financial viability, and advocacy.³³ This ever-more dense and capable self-organization has long come to set Ukrainian society apart from most of its post-Soviet peers.

More importantly, this remarkable civil society burst into action and mobilized citizens-at-large at every critical juncture in Ukraine's political development. Such was the case in late 2004 when electoral fraud threatened to hand the presidency to Victor Yanukovich. The ensuing Orange Revolution ushered in the democratically elected Victor Yushchenko as president. However, Ukrainians and civil society were bitterly disappointed by the failure of the Orange government. Years of infighting and failure to conduct much-needed democratic and market reforms followed, culminating in the election of the mind-bogglingly corrupt Victor Yanukovich. The tough lesson of the Orange disappointment was, for Ukrainian society and its civic structures alike, that a popular rising is not enough to result in true democratic change. Instead, a continued and close watch by citizens and civil society on the

government, state administration, and political elites is needed for change to be lasting.

The Revolution of Dignity and its aftermath suggest that Ukrainian civil society, and citizens-at-large, are heeding this historical lesson. More than ever before, they scrutinize the dealings of their state and political decision-makers. Truly independent media outlets, including *Hromadske* and *Espresso TV* as well as numerous web-based media, are challenging the monopoly of mostly oligarch-controlled broadcasters and provide critical information and multifaceted debates. Policy experts from numerous independent think tanks and civil society organizations have joined forces, including in the Reanimation Package for Reforms, to push through legislative and institutional changes in the country. Dozens of civil society leaders have been elected to the Ukrainian parliament and appointed to government posts to keep a watchful eye on lawmakers and office holders from within, and to advance reforms from inside state institutions. Notable examples of such civic leaders-turned-politicians include the initiator of the Euromaidan protests, Mustafa Nayem, and the coordinator of the Reanimation Package for Reforms initiative, Hanna Hopko. If these and other pressure tools fail to prompt state and political action as demanded by society, mobilization of citizens — or only the threat thereof — remains a credible instrument and is used regularly by civil society.

However, controlling and confronting the Ukrainian state and politics is only one of the key roles played by civil society in the wake of the Revolution of Dignity. Just as important is its role in compensating for the state wherever that fails to deliver. Nowhere has this become more obvious than in Ukraine's handling of the grave consequences of Russian aggression. When the Ukrainian army was clearly unable — in personnel and materiel — to withstand the attack

This remarkable civil society burst into action and mobilized citizens-at-large at every critical juncture in Ukraine's political development.

³³ U.S. Agency for International Development, "The 2014 CSO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia," Washington, DC: USAID, 2015.

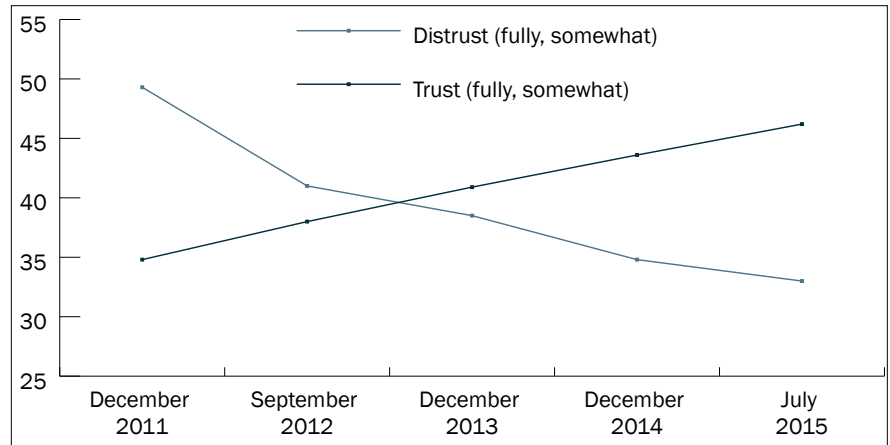
on the country's east, society rallied to create volunteer battalions and to donate much-needed equipment. Faced with a growing wave of internally displaced persons from war-torn Donbas and annexed Crimea, reaching nearly 1.5 million by the summer of 2015, numerous civic and volunteer groups sprang up across the country to provide urgent assistance.

In cushioning some of the worst social fallout of the war, and in reinforcing their country's ability to defend itself, Ukrainian society and its civic networks made up for the shortcomings of a state that found itself on the brink of political and economic collapse.

In holding the state accountable to society, and in making up for its weak performance, Ukrainian civil society has earned enormous confidence among citizens at large. As of mid-2015, nearly one half of the population has trust in civil society.

More visibly and vitally than ever before, this intermediary layer of civic organizations and informal groups, diverse interests and orientations, and numerous activists, volunteers, and ordinary citizens has assumed responsibilities regarding both the state and society at large, and shapes the relationship between them. It channels society's demands and expectations vis-à-vis the state and political players, often openly confronting the latter. It steps in where the state fails to meet its responsibilities to society, mobilizes societal

Figure 5 — Ukrainians are increasingly confident of civil society



Source: Regular surveys conducted by Democratic Initiatives Foundation and Razumkov Center.

Note: Responses to the question “Do you trust non-governmental organizations?”

resources, and points to an alternative to inherited state paternalism. And in so doing, civil society further strengthens the confidence and capacity of society in its interaction with the state.

**The State and Politics:
Hibernating or Transforming?**

Compared with this energetic societal response to developments over the last two years, the Ukrainian state and its politics appear to be on the defensive. When the post-Yanukovich government was inaugurated through presidential and parliamentary elections in May and October 2014, respectively, hopes were high among many in Ukraine that under the new leadership of President Petro Poroshenko and Prime Minister Arseniy Yatseniuk, the country would embark on a radically new path. More than a year into this new government, however, its record and standing is very mixed.

Clearly, the new government started out in the most difficult of circumstances. It faced the annexation

of one part of the country, the Crimean Peninsula, and Russian military aggression in another, the Donbas industrial district of Eastern Ukraine. A string of terrorist attacks, attributed to separatist militants, shook key cities from Kharkiv to Odessa. Ukraine's economy and finances, depleted after years of extreme corruption, were on the brink. An outsized state apparatus and oligarchs thriving on public funds were determined to defend their perks and mobilized to oppose reforms. At the same time, the party of change was made up of a diverse and shaky coalition ranging from moderates to radicals and including old political hands as well as newcomers hailing from civil society.

Under these adverse conditions, as the Ukrainian government and observers more favorably inclined to it will maintain, reformers in Kyiv can point to considerable achievements. First and foremost, Ukraine averted military defeat, revived its army and defenses, and contained Russian aggression. No less importantly, financial and economic stabilization was achieved — through radical measures from within and generous assistance from without. A raft of new laws was passed on areas ranging from decentralization to lustration, justice reform and a new tax system, public procurement and the energy market. Association and trade agreements with the EU were signed, structural reforms are underway to meet IMF criteria, and cooperation with NATO was enhanced. In implementing these and other measures, as optimists will underscore, the new Ukrainian government has indeed initiated more reforms in 18 months than any of its predecessors in the previous two decades.

Critics, however, point to the slow pace of reforms and to the many crucial unfinished tasks that would make reforms in Ukraine irreversible. They cite the personal failure of Poroshenko to part, as promised, with some of his business interests, and they argue that any serious fight against oligarchs, controlling

several key regions of Ukraine as they do, has barely started. They point out that the burden of structural reforms, in the form of declining incomes and skyrocketing prices, already rests heavily on society while their results are far off and no mechanisms to cushion social pains are in place. According to critics, several key areas for reform have hardly been tackled, as corrupt prosecutors and judges have largely kept their posts, and anti-corruption agencies have barely started to function. Instead, infighting among political actors and parties is seen as returning and paralyzing decision-making, and forces of preservation — oligarchs, apparatchiks, and political heirs of the Yanukovich regime — are gradually gaining the upper hand again.³⁴

These starkly contrasting assessments originate in several dilemmas that are well-known to reform governments anywhere in the world. One is that political mass mobilization, as in the Revolution of Dignity, generates expectations of radical change and swift results. Yet given the extent of necessary reforms in all spheres of political, economic, and social life, even the most reformist government is bound to lag behind those expectations. Another dilemma is that much-needed structural changes typically pay off only in the longer term, while they incur hefty costs in the short term. This immediate burden contrasts with the hope for quick improvement, and it can only be partially compensated for by swift pay-offs such as the new patrol police. Finally, it naturally takes time for reforms to trickle down through institutions and regions, especially in as large and diverse a country as Ukraine. The central government may well have rolled out a comprehensive reform agenda but taking a real effect across society requires time.

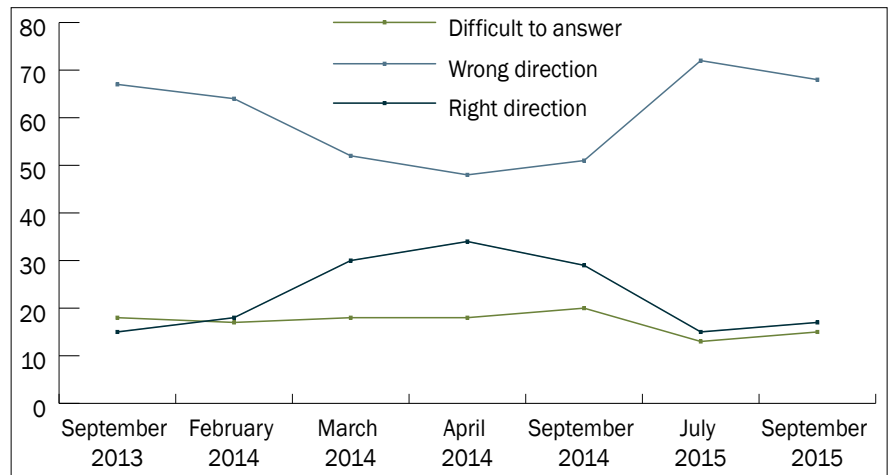
³⁴ See, for example, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Ukraine Reform Monitor, February 2016, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/02/19/ukraine-reform-monitor-february-2016/iaa5>.

Under these adverse conditions, as the Ukrainian government and observers more favorably inclined to it will maintain, reformers in Kyiv can point to considerable achievements.

Whether a result of these dilemmas, the real or alleged failure of the Poroshenko-Yatseniuk government, or due or undue criticism, perceptions by Ukrainian society of the state and politics have already changed drastically since the Revolution of Dignity. Thus, confidence in all the newly elected central offices of Ukraine — presidency, parliament, government — has plummeted dramatically over the last year, with two-thirds to three-quarters of all Ukrainians now expressly mistrusting these key state institutions. Opinion polls also indicate that support for the two key political players, the president and the prime minister, has significantly eroded, with support for Poroshenko's bloc halved and that for Yatseniuk's party effectively vanished. Given these devastating views of Ukraine's central government institutions and key political players, it is hardly surprising that broad pessimism has once again engulfed a majority of Ukrainians, as Figure 6 indicates.

After a brief period of hope in 2014, when optimism about Ukraine's overall development was clearly on the rise, around 70 percent of Ukrainians now see their country moving in the wrong direction. The general mood has effectively gone back to the gloom and doom of the Yanukovich years. It seems that the public has lost hope that the Revolution of Dignity may result in fundamental and positive changes in Ukraine.

Figure 6 — After a moment of hope, pessimism is back among Ukrainians

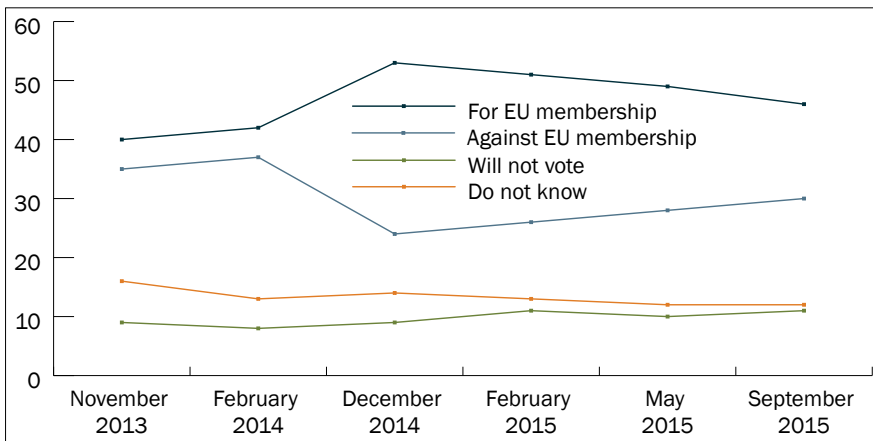


Source: Rating Group Ukraine, International Republican Institute.

Risks: When a New State-Society Balance is not Found

What is at stake in Ukraine, and what really was at the heart of the Revolution of Dignity, is a fundamental rebalancing of the relationship between society and the state. Under the old arrangement, inherited from the Soviet Union and prolonged over two decades of Ukrainian independence, the state had a primacy over society. It patronized society by setting the standards of how Ukrainians were to live, it extracted the human and material wealth from society, and it largely served itself, a narrow *nomenklatura*, and later oligarchy, and a broader class of apparatchiks. This constellation has now been challenged by the Ukrainian public. Their desire is for a new compact, under which society and the state find themselves on a more equal footing. Societal needs and demands are to be taken seriously by the state and its political class, and in turn, citizens and civil society have shown their willingness to take on much-needed tasks that the state has failed to perform. The new formula, in short, is one of

Figure 7 – Ukrainians are gradually losing their hope in Europe



Source: Kiev International Institute of Sociology.

partnership between a self-confident society and a state that is aware of its limits and responsibilities. However, recent developments in Ukraine also show that such a recalibration faces formidable obstacles and, if unsuccessful, serious risks.

A possible defeat of the Revolution of Dignity risks losing, with Ukrainian society, what today is the single-most hopeful and strongest advocate for democratic and European change in the post-Soviet space. Ukrainians are fully aware that their struggle is not only about their own country. They understand that they are battling a broader problem of post-Soviet kleptocracy and autocracy, they have finely registered the many expressions of solidarity from neighboring societies including

Russia, and they understand that their success or failure will send a strong signal throughout the former Soviet space. Yet at the same time, they have learned of the limited support their plight has received from Europe. As a result, failure to reform will be blamed not only on unwilling or an incapable state and political elite in Ukraine but equally on Europe and its lukewarm help. This

effect is already visible in the fact that recently support for European integration among Ukrainian citizens has started to wane again.

Neither Ukraine, nor the post-Soviet region, nor Europe as a whole can afford to lose Ukrainian society. Its defeat in the ongoing effort to transform Ukraine, and especially to revamp the relationship between society and the state in this country, would have a devastating effect. It would discourage similar attempts at reform across the region, revive Russian influence over Ukraine and its neighbors, and effectively foreclose any prospects of European integration to the east of current EU borders.

4 Shaping European Responses to Change in Turkey and Ukraine

Adam Balcer and Joerg Forbrig

The question is whether in response to these events, and to the broader social development underlying them, Europe has moved to adjust its approach and assistance to Turkish and Ukrainian societies.

The critical developments that have been underway in, and that have indeed been reshaping, societies in Turkey and Ukraine have not gone unnoticed in Europe. The outbursts of social and political mobilization that have reflected the galvanization of Turks and Ukrainians have regularly gripped political and public attention in Brussels and elsewhere. Whether watching the 2013 Gezi Park protests in Turkey or the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity one year later, Europeans were certainly impressed by the energy and creativity, and often also by the European imagery on display in both countries. Yet the question is whether in response to these events, and to the broader social development underlying them, Europe has moved to adjust its approach and assistance to Turkish and Ukrainian societies.

The EU Response to the Awakening of Turkish and Ukrainian Societies

European policymakers, specifically those of the European Union, have so far found it difficult to reorient their policies. In the case of Turkey, the primary mechanism of EU relations has been the accession talks that were formally opened in 2005. For the decade since, however, these negotiations have been stalled by internal and external factors alike; despite various attempts at creating a positive and mutual agenda, progress has effectively been absent. In the case of Ukraine, the EU's regional frameworks of the European Neighborhood Policy, since 2004, and the Eastern Partnership, since 2009, have produced a similarly meager track record. A key outcome of the process was the signing of the Association Agreement with Ukraine in June 2014. However, its implementation remains a considerable challenge and the EU still maintains a rather reluctant position on the issue of the granting of potential candidate status to Ukraine. As a review of EU policy found, it has neither been sufficiently responsive to the aspirations of countries like Ukraine nor sufficiently focused

on inducing sustainable change, nor even flexible enough to meet needs and contexts that are in considerable flux.³⁵

Nonetheless, a partial re-orientation of the EU's approach to the civil society and democracy promotion has been observed since the launch of the Eastern Partnership in 2009 and following the Arab Spring in 2011. The EU leadership and institutions pay considerably more attention to these issues than before. Funding assigned for civil society support has been increased, more consultations are held with representatives of civil societies, and more efficient institutionalized forums and platforms have emerged to engage with civil society.³⁶ These upgraded initiatives devoted to the Turkish and Ukrainian societies have now fully become part of the institutional framework of the relations between the EU and Turkey (accession negotiations) and Ukraine (implementation of the Association Agreement).

After the Revolution of Dignity, the EU established an institutional framework to facilitate cooperation between European and Ukrainian civil societies. In April 2015, the EU and representatives from Ukrainian civil society set up the EU-Ukraine Civil Society Platform (CSP), which was preceded by the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement.³⁷ It provides a forum for NGO representatives (15

³⁵ European Commission, High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy, Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy, JOIN(2015) 50 final, Brussels, November 18, 2015, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/pdf/key-documents/151118_joint-communication_review-of-the-enp_en.pdf.

³⁶ In the case of Ukraine, the EU responded to the Revolution of Dignity by launching its Special Measures 2014 for Ukraine initiative, comprised of a state building contract of €355 million, and support to civil society of €10 million; see European Commission, New EU support for the civil society in Ukraine, press release, September 13, 2014, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-999_en.htm.

³⁷ Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, "The establishment of EU-Ukraine Civil Society Platform," <http://eap-csf.eu/en/news-events/news/eu-ukraine-civil-society-platform/>.

from each side) to monitor the implementation of the agreement. More than 165 Ukrainian NGOs selected the Ukrainian members, who also formed also 15 working groups to cover Association Agreement issues. The platform, which has a budget of €10 million, is supposed to meet twice a year, alternatively in Brussels and Ukraine, and its recommendations will be forwarded to relevant administrative authorities.

In 2008, the EU launched the Turkey Civil Society Dialogue, a program to bring together civil society organizations from Turkey and the EU around common topics in order to exchange knowledge and experience, and to foster cooperation between them. Since its launch, the Civil Society Dialogue Program has supported over 200 dialogue partnerships in many different fields, witnessing hundreds of activities. Through 2015, almost €32 million was spent for these activities; more than 1,650 Turkish civil society organizations were involved in the projects financed by the program. In the first stage, the program agenda was modest, avoiding difficult topics (i.e. human rights, media freedom). However in recent years, the program agenda become more explicitly focused on democracy promotion and the rule of law. The phase of the program that was just completed (2014-15), hosted projects from civil society organizations in Turkey and Europe that are active in the fields of media and the EU accession political criteria (democratic values). The next phase of the program will focus on projects covering justice, freedom, security, and education. The projects will be supported with a total budget of €11 million.³⁸

Visa liberalization certainly constitutes the key lever to positively shape Turkish and Ukrainian relations with and views of the EU. Negotiations on the issue with both countries have advanced

³⁸ EU Turkey Civil Society Dialogue, <http://civilsocietydialogue.org/>.

decisively in recent years. In case of Ukraine, the negotiations accelerated considerably after the Revolution of Dignity. In December 2015, the European Commission announced that in early 2016 it will present a legislative proposal to the European Council and the European Parliament to lift visa requirements for Ukrainian citizens. A visa liberalization dialogue between the EU and Turkey sped up in the same period. In December 2013, after signing a readmission agreement, the EU launched the dialogue with Turkey presenting a “roadmap toward the visa-free regime.” During the EU-Turkey summit that took place in November 2015, an agreement was reached on abolishing visas for Turkish citizens within a year if certain conditions are met. In March 2016 during the EU-Turkey summit in Brussels, the decision was taken to speed up the process and to lift visas in June.

Yet despite these positive developments, EU engagement with Turkish and Ukrainian societies remains insufficient. Both countries now boast extensive organizational structures and networks of civil society, with over 103,000 registered citizen associations in Turkey and some 76,000 such organizations in Ukraine.³⁹ As few of these groups have so far had any interaction with EU programs or counterparts, much remains to be done to intensify the scope of cooperation between European civil societies and their Turkish and Ukrainian partners. This requires systematic efforts on the part of the EU to reach out to Turkish and Ukrainian NGOs, so as to expand NGO participation in EU initiatives beyond the often narrow circle of capital-city based and professional organizations. In turn, it is necessary to raise

³⁹ International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, NGO Law Monitor: Turkey, December 17, 2015, <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/turkey.html>; U.S. Agency for International Development, The 2014 CSO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1863/EuropeEurasia_FY2014_CSOSI_Report.pdf.

Despite these positive developments, EU engagement with Turkish and Ukrainian societies remains insufficient.

Policy adjustments toward a more proactive and society-centered approach to Turkey and Ukraine will require the concerted initiative of individual EU member countries before gradually and hopefully becoming EU policy at large.

interest among EU NGOs in cooperation with Turkish and Ukrainian partners.

Most importantly, however, the underfinancing of civil society and generally of social infrastructure constitutes the weakest point of the EU performance. After the Revolution of Dignity, the EU dramatically increased its bilateral official development aid (ODA) allocated to Ukraine. In 2014, the EU committed €12.8 billion to support the reform process in Ukraine, which will be spent in next few years. Due to the enormous economic crisis in Ukraine, the absolute majority of the funds are planned to be a benefit to the economy. Only approximately 5 percent of total current EU aid to Ukraine is expressly allocated to civil society (€10 million) and, in form of humanitarian assistance (€223 million), to society more broadly.⁴⁰ The EU also ranks as the largest donor of ODA to Turkey (around \$3 billion each year), around 75 percent of total gross ODA Turkey receives annually. Nevertheless, again according to OECD statistics, around 75 percent of EU ODA allocated for Turkey was spent on economic infrastructure and almost 20 percent on multi-sector projects.⁴¹ More specific pre-accession assistance, with its strong focus on democracy, governance, and the rule of law, has fared no better than in Ukraine, as only 3.5 percent of funds are dedicated to civil society.⁴²

One key reason behind the shortcomings of EU policy toward both Turkey and Ukraine — in spite of substantial reshuffle — is certainly its primary focus on governments, state structures, and

⁴⁰ Mission of Ukraine to the European Union, EU's assistance to Ukraine, <http://ukraine-eu.mfa.gov.ua/en/ukraine-eu/eu-policy/assistance>.

⁴¹ OECD, "Compare your country, Aid statistics by donor, recipient and sector," <http://www.compareyourcountry.org/aid-statistics?cr=302&cr1=oced&lg=en&page>.

⁴² European Commission, Turkey — financial assistance under IPA II, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/turkey/index_en.htm.

political elites, at the expense of mechanisms of direct support for and cooperation with societies. Recent political developments in both countries and the regions surrounding them have further strengthened this long-standing state bias. Thus, the EU has rebooted its political relationship with Ankara, given that the country is central to managing the current refugee crisis as well as the ongoing Syria conflict and fight against ISIS. Relations with Ukraine have been dominated by attempts to avert a political, economic, and military collapse, an objective that effectively prioritizes a partnership with the Ukrainian state and politics. As a result, a more proactive EU policy and outreach to Turkish and Ukrainian societies, despite their ongoing and fundamental transformation, remains all too limited.

Given all this, impulses for a more society-focused European approach to Turkey and Ukraine have to be sought elsewhere. Earlier experiences with EU policies toward neighboring countries and regions show that key initiatives have often originated with individual EU member states that have a particular interest in and need for engagement. Thus, the eastward enlargement of the EU owed much to German advocacy, closer EU relations across the Mediterranean were long pushed by France, and the Eastern Partnership was proposed by Poland and Sweden. Following a similar logic, it seems plausible that policy adjustments toward a more proactive and society-centered approach to Turkey and Ukraine will require the concerted initiative of individual EU member countries before gradually and hopefully becoming EU policy at large.

Such a role can be played by Germany and Poland, as two main EU stakeholders in the Black Sea region. Moreover, both countries have established, though to varying degrees, comprehensive political and economic relations with Turkey and Ukraine. Poland, and to a lesser degree Germany, have a close relationship with Ukraine. No country

has as strong ties with Turkey as Germany, and Polish engagement with Turkey has seen an impressive rise recently. However, an audit of their performance is needed if Poland and Germany really want to make their policy toward Turkey and Ukraine more society-oriented and to promote a new EU approach to these countries.

An Audit of German and Polish Engagement and Influence in Turkey and Ukraine

The choice of Poland and Germany as potential drivers of a new EU policy toward Turkey and Ukraine focused on an engagement with their societies is not accidental. It stems from the favorable geopolitical conjuncture that is currently emerging in the Black Sea region. Traditionally strong bilateral economic and political relations between Poland and Germany, Poland and Ukraine, Germany and Ukraine, Turkey and Ukraine, and finally Germany and Turkey have become even closer. But what is even more important, what has been a missing element, namely Polish-Turkish cooperation, has enhanced substantially. By default, the conditions for multilateral and multidimensional cooperation in this quadrangle have become more favorable.

There have long been hopes that the Polish-German relationship might become a second engine of the EU after the German-French locomotive. Expectations were fueled by the steady strengthening of Poland's political and economic weight in the EU; they were substantiated by the fact that Poland is now Germany's seventh-largest trade partner;⁴³ and they were articulated by

Polish and German leaderships alike.⁴⁴ As two of the largest member states of the EU, Germany and Poland naturally carry a particular weight when it comes to initiating and shaping European policies. The significance of both countries has only increased further in recent years. The simultaneous eurozone, Russia, and refugee crises have propelled Germany into a European leadership role that the country has come to accept, albeit reluctantly. In parallel Poland, as the only EU member state that has been relatively unscathed by the 2008 economic downturn, has increasingly turned its economic strength into self-confidence and efforts to play a stronger political role on the European level. This dual development holds the potential for a strong German-Polish tandem with critical leverage on the EU at large. However, a substantial deterioration of Polish-German relations under a new Polish government suspicious of Germany's leadership in the EU should not be ruled out in the future. Moreover, possible Polish-German support for a society-oriented EU foreign policy could be undermined by insufficient interest in this topic from the new Polish government.

No less importantly, the economies of Germany and Poland are closely tied to those of Turkey and Ukraine, providing for an important layer of mutual interest and material interaction. Germany is definitely Turkey's most important economic partner, accounting for 10 percent of foreign direct investment (the first position in total FDI stocks), and ranking first among export destinations and second among importers. The share of Germany in the Turkish trade balance surpasses 10 percent. German-Turkish trade accounts for around one-quarter of the entire exchange between the EU and Turkey. Poland, meanwhile, holds a healthy 18th

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⁴³ Statistisches Bundesamt, *Außenhandel. Rangfolge der Handelspartner im Außenhandel der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* [Foreign trade: ranking of trade partners of the Federal Republic of Germany], February 24, 2016.

⁴⁴ The best example is certainly then-Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski's speech in Berlin in November 2011; see Edward Lucas, Sikorski's Challenge to Germany: Lead, Center for European Policy Analysis, December 1, 2011, <http://www.cepa.org/content/sikorskis-challenge-germany-lead>.

Poland and Germany have been two of Kyiv's most important EU partners since Ukraine's independence.

position on Turkish exports and 15th on imports, and it has been gaining ground rapidly in recent years. Currently, the Polish share of Turkish trade turnover exceeds 1.5 percent.⁴⁵ Moreover, Poland and Turkey recognize each other as strategic destination markets. Ankara has granted this status to 17 countries, Romania being the only other European nation.⁴⁶

Poland is also the second-largest destination in the EU for Turkish construction companies, the construction sector being one of key engines of the Turkish economy. For Ukraine, Germany is the third-largest and Poland, the fourth-largest trade partner. Further positive dynamics can be expected from the EU-Ukraine free trade agreement that took effect in early 2016. The share of Germany in Ukrainian trade volume approaches 7 percent, and the share of Poland exceeds 5.5 percent.

Germany and Poland rank second and eighth, respectively, in Ukraine's FDI stocks originating from the EU (excluding Cyprus).⁴⁷ Twelve percent of all foreign direct investment in Ukraine originates from Germany, and another 2 percent from Poland.⁴⁸ Cross-border trade is a critical economic factor for the area between Ukraine and Poland. Seasonal and permanent labor from

⁴⁵ Turkish Statistical Institute, Foreign Trade Statistics, November 2015, <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=18586>

⁴⁶ In 2015, Poland occupied ninth place among the EU countries in the Turkish trade balance, but the exchange of Poland-Turkey is just slightly smaller than Turkey achieved with the Netherlands, Belgium, and Romania. Therefore, Poland has the potential to gain sixth place among Turkey's EU trade partners.

⁴⁷ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, <http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/>.

⁴⁸ German Advisory Group, Foreign Direct Investment in Ukraine: Past, Present, and Future, PP/02/2015, http://www.beratergruppe-ukraine.de/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/PP_02_2015_en.pdf; Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Kyiv, Informator ekonomiczny Ukraina [Economic information bulletin: Ukraine], December 2015 r, <http://www.kijow.msz.gov.pl/resource/c9e67470-7945-49b2-8e03-a69a46386630:JCR>.

Ukraine plays a key role for a range of sectors from agriculture to care and domestic services in Poland, with some 400,000 work permits issued in the first half of 2015 alone. Remittances from Germany and Poland, amounting to \$330 million and almost \$40 million, respectively, constitute an important lifeline for crisis-ridden Ukrainian society.⁴⁹

Poland and Germany have been two of Kyiv's most important EU partners since Ukraine's independence. However, the intensity of their diplomatic contacts with Ukraine increased substantially after the Revolution of Dignity. In 2015, Poroshenko visited Germany four times and Poland three times (including one visit in December 2014). Polish presidents visited Ukraine four times and the Polish prime minister two times in 2015. Meanwhile, the German chancellor and president also visited Ukraine in the same year.

Germany has always occupied, together with the United States, a position of Turkey's most important partner in the international arena. Nevertheless, the German-Turkish relations have upgraded to unprecedented levels in recent years. In May 2013, a Strategic Dialogue was launched between Turkey and Germany at the foreign minister level. In January 2015, the Turkish prime minister and German chancellor agreed to hold biennial intergovernmental consultations. They first took place in January 2016. But the most impressive enhancement of bilateral relations has occurred between Poland and Turkey since 2013. Poland "discovered" Turkey and vice versa, and they began to see each other as closely located huge

⁴⁹ National Bank of Ukraine, Remittances in Ukraine, 2014, <http://www.bank.gov.ua/doccatalog/document?id=80651>.

emerging markets,⁵⁰ significant stake holders in the Black Sea Region and strong members of NATO. Consequently, since 2013, the Polish president and deputy prime minister have visited Turkey, and the Turkish prime minister has travelled to Poland twice. Ministers of foreign affairs of both countries made several bilateral visits between 2013 and 2015.

There is more that unites Germany and Poland beyond current affairs, which puts both in a position to better relate Europe to Turkish and Ukrainian societies. Only a generation ago, (East-) Germans and Poles experienced a very similar emancipation of their societies from the state when they broke free from communist dictatorship and Soviet domination. The ensuing political, economic, and social transformation of the eastern parts of Germany and of Poland put enormous strains on both societies. It saw disappointments and setbacks, and it may still not be complete. Overall, however, this transformation in both countries, German reunification and the Polish return to Europe, ultimately succeeded. This shared experience should give Germans and Poles a particular sensitivity and empathy for the struggle of Turks and Ukrainians to follow a similar path toward liberal democracy, and perhaps even European integration.

German Engagement and Influence in Turkey

Germany is certainly the EU country with the largest potential to engage with Turkish society. Germany has consistently received more favorable views among Turks than other key Western powers, such as France, the U.K. and the United

States, resulting most likely from its critical engagement combining close cooperation with justified criticism of human rights violations and authoritarian tendencies in Turkey. In fact, a few years ago, Germany belonged to a very small group of countries liked by the majority of Turks. The biggest disappointment for Turks is certainly the continued German opposition to an eventual EU accession of their country. Generally the majority of Germans opposes Turkey's accession to the EU. However, it should also be noted that German skepticism toward Turkey's membership is substantially more moderate than in the case of France. After the Gezi protests, Turkey's image in the German society deteriorated dramatically but Germans maintained a positive attitude toward German Turks.⁵¹ The German government supports the accession negotiations with Turkey but Chancellor Angela Merkel and her party (CDU) regularly express their skepticism regarding actual Turkish membership. This approach to Turkey's European aspirations decreases Germany's attractiveness as a partner for Turkish society, limits German leverage, and fuels the EU fatigue that has been gaining momentum among Turks for a number of years.

Germany is home to the largest Turkish diaspora in Europe and the world. Some 3 million people of Turkish origin live in Germany, where a majority of them was also born. More than half of them are German citizens. The Turkish community in Germany resembles its country of origin in its full diversity, bringing together Sunnis and Alevis, Kurds and Turks, secularists and Islamists, and the political right and left.

Germany is certainly the EU country with the largest potential to engage with Turkish society.

⁵⁰ For instance, outside the EU, only China, Russia, and the United States are more important trade partners of Poland than Turkey. However, Polish exports to Turkey substantially surpass its exports to China (including Hong Kong). According to the National Bank of Poland, Turkey occupies, with India, the third place on the list of non-EU single market destinations for Polish investment. National Bank of Poland, Foreign direct investment in Poland, <http://www.nbp.pl/homen.aspx?f=/en/publikacje/ziben/ziben.html>.

⁵¹ According to the Transatlantic Trends 2014, the number of Germans expressing an unfavorable opinion of Turkey increased from 48 percent to 72 percent between 2012 and 2014. German Marshall Fund, *Transatlantic Trends 2014*, Topline Data, p. 23 http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends_2014_Topline-Data.pdf.

The strong political representation of the Turkish community in Germany provides one important mechanism to place Turkey, the transformation of Turkish society, and support for its development and European aspirations high on the agenda in Germany and the EU.

Over the last few years, the Turkish community has made a respectable inroads in German political life, and it has established a far better representation than the various and strong Muslim communities in other EU countries. At the local level, their elected representation typically exceeds their share of the German migrant population.⁵² Their share among members of regional parliaments has increased dramatically.⁵³ German-Turks have advanced within the structures of political parties, and the leaderships of the Green Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the Christian Democratic Union now all include figures from this community. In the 2013 federal elections, Germans of Turkish descent won 11 seats in the Bundestag, more than doubling their representation; one of them was subsequently, for the first time ever, appointed state secretary in the federal chancellery.⁵⁴ Their proportion in the parliament is the same as the share of German citizens of Turkish descent (less than 2 percent).

The political integration of German Turks extends beyond numbers, however. A particularly striking indicator is their involvement in and support for the Christian-Democratic Union which, according to some estimates, receives the electoral support

⁵² By 2011, Turks accounted for 40 percent of local representatives of Germans with a migration background, although they only form 20 percent of the migrant population. See Karen Schönwälder, Cihan Sinanoglu, and Daniel Volkert, *Vielfalt sucht Rat Ratsmitglieder mit Migrationshintergrund in deutschen Großstädten* [Diversity looking for council. Council members with migration background in German cities], 2011, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Max Planck Institut, http://www.mmg.mpg.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Publikationen/Pdf/Vielfaltsuchtrat.pdf.

⁵³ Currently there are more than 40 MPs of Turkish origin in the 16 regional parliaments across Germany. In Bremen, they constitute around 15 percent of all MPs. In 2010, the first German-Turkish politician became a minister in a federal state and currently, there are two state ministers of Turkish origin, including the deputy mayor of Berlin.

⁵⁴ The political activity of Turks with German citizenship is significantly higher than that of their kin without. Turnout in the November 2015 parliamentary elections was 40 percent among Turkish citizens in Germany. By contrast, over 70 percent of Turks with German citizenship vote in German elections.

of nearly a 25 percent of this community. Another sign of the transformation of the German-Turkish community is certainly the significant over-representation of women among politicians of Turkish descent: 60 percent of this community's members of the Bundestag are women.

The strong political representation of the Turkish community in Germany provides one important mechanism to place Turkey, the transformation of Turkish society, and support for its development and European aspirations high on the agenda in Germany and the EU. German-Turkish politicians are often strongly engaged in Turkish affairs, and openly criticize human rights violations and growing authoritarianism. Developments in Turkey meet with a huge response in the German-Turkish community, with rallies staged regularly by Kurds, Alevis, AKParty followers, and pro-Gezi groups alike. Cem Özdemir, the co-chairman of the Green Party, exemplifies that phenomenon. In September 2015, he arrived in the embattled Turkish border town of Cizre, which had been sealed off from the rest of the world during clashes between Turkish security forces and Kurdish insurgents. Özdemir urged the Turkish government and Kurdish guerillas to lay down the arms and return to peace talks. He also accused Erdoğan of trying to gather support for his party by using military conflict to polarize public opinion ahead of the November elections.

Another mechanism is the intensity of people-to-people contacts that results from the close social and economic relationship between Germany and Turkey. In 2015 alone, German citizens paid more than 55 million visits to Turkey, representing some 15 percent of all foreigners visiting Turkey.⁵⁵ In turn, Germany is the fourth most popular

⁵⁵ T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, Sınır Giriş-Çıkış İstatistikleri [Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Border Entry and Exit Statistics], <http://yigm.kultur-turizm.gov.tr/TR,9854/sinir-giris-cikis-istatistikleri.html>.

destination for Turks traveling abroad, with nearly 500,000 Turks visiting Germany in 2014. For Turkish students, Germany is the second-most popular destination after the United States, with 6,700 Turks enrolled at German universities in the academic year 2014-15, accounting for 3 percent of all foreign students. In April 2014, the Turkish-German University in Istanbul opened, and has the potential to become the best technical university in Turkey. Germany also recognizes Turkey as a priority country in regards to promoting German language abroad. The Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir branches of the Goethe Institute offer a wide range of cultural programs and language courses. At the initiative of Germany, a Cultural Foundation of German and Turkish Businesses was launched in October 2005, which is devoted to stepping up cultural exchange. It supports exhibitions, theater, concerts, summer schools, and scholarships. This extensive interaction with German society certainly provides for mutual knowledge, understanding, and inroads that can play an important role in nurturing the further modernization and emancipation of Turkish society.

No less importantly, Germany invests considerable financial resources in Turkey's development. In 2014, Germany was the largest donor of bilateral ODA to Turkey. At \$375 million, Turkey was the sixth-largest recipient of German ODA; the German share of Turkey's total ODA stood at nearly 10 percent. Almost 30 percent of German ODA was allocated to social infrastructure, with a large portion supporting (directly or indirectly) the development of Turkish society.⁵⁶ In comparison, less than 8 percent of the EU development aid assigned to Turkey was invested in social infrastructure. German civil society sector has the closest relations with the Turkish partners among

⁵⁶ OECD, "Compare your country, Aid statistics by donor, recipients and sector," <http://www.compareyourcountry.org/aid-statistics?cr=oeacd&lg=en#>.

the EU members. The best evidence for this is the fact that German NGOs make up the largest share in the programs conducted within the EU-Turkey Civil Society Dialogue. Sixty-five European NGOs took part in the 2014-15 phase of the program, including 11 from Germany. Turkey also occupies the top position of the agenda of German NGOs (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung, Heinrich-Böll Stiftung) affiliated to political parties that have established offices in Ankara and Istanbul.

Until recently, the German political elite, civil society sector, and media were known for their justified criticism of the human rights violations' and authoritarian tendencies in Turkey. The refugee crisis and the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015 contributed to a substantial softening of the German government's criticism toward negative developments in Turkey. This policy, if conducted without caution, could partly undermine Germany's position in the deeply polarized Turkish society, as it may create an impression that Berlin has aligned itself with the Turkish president and lost its integrity. Germany can maintain influence on the social mood by supporting the reinvigoration of negotiations between Turkey and the EU based on political conditionality.

Polish Engagement and Influence in Turkey

Compared to the multiple and intense ties between Germany and Turkey, Polish connectivity and leverage in Turkish society is incomparably smaller. Relationships have, however, steadily grown and intensified substantially over the last years. Polish governments have several times in recent years expressed support for Turkey's accession to the EU, most recently in April 2015. However, the official Polish position should be described as rather lukewarm. In fact, Turkish membership has never been a serious issue in the Polish public debate. Before the refugee crisis, Poles presented a rather

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In contrast to Germany, the Polish government has almost completely abstained from discussing sensitive issues such as the violation of human rights or media freedom.

positive approach to Turkey⁵⁷ and its accession to the EU, though polls on the latter issue have not been conducted for several years. Meanwhile, according to an opinion poll from January 2015, the feelings of Poles regarding the Turks were rather indifferent. A strong minority expressed a negative attitude (above 35 percent), which was larger than the group with a positive opinion (at almost 25 percent).⁵⁸ In all likelihood, the attitude toward Turks, Turkey, and its accession may deteriorate due to a decisive rise of Islamophobia in Polish society in 2015.

The attitude of Turks toward Poland has never been a matter of serious sociological research. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that Poland's image in Turkish society is rather positive because of broader historical legacies (rare conflicts in the distant pasts and Polish contributions to the Turkish modernization in the 19th century) and Polish support for Turkey's accession. However, a limited knowledge of Poland makes Turks' sympathy mostly superficial. Yet Poland's visibility in Turkish public space has improved considerably since 2013. This positive development stemmed from two important anniversaries occurring in 2013 and 2014. In 2013, Poland and Turkey celebrated the 90th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Polish Republic and Turkish Republic. In 2014, Poland and Turkey commemorated the 600th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Polish Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire. The anniversaries were the impetus for the organization

⁵⁷ In *Transatlantic Trends 2014*, 45 percent of Poles had a favorable opinion of Turkey and less than 25 percent unfavorable. German Marshall Fund, *Transatlantic Trends 2014*, Topline Data, p.23, http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends_2014_ToplineData.pdf.

⁵⁸ CBOS, *Stosunek do innych narodów* [Relationships with other nations], January 2015, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2015/K_014_15.PDF.

of many cultural events, including exhibitions, concerts, conferences.

Poland is a home to a tiny Turkic community composed of Tatars and Turks. Despite its small size, this community possesses an important asset for Polish influence because it can play the role of interconnector between Poland, Ukraine, and Turkey. Indeed, Polish Tatars, who have been living in Poland for almost seven centuries, maintain close relations with Tatar communities in Ukraine and Turkey. They play an active role in many Tatar and Turkish international organizations and initiatives devoted to the Tatar and Turkic community around the world. Moreover, Turks who migrated to Poland in recent years, in contrast to other Muslim ethnic diasporas in Poland, are well integrated with Polish Tatar religious and social structures.

Poland has recently become the most popular destination for Turkish Erasmus students. More than 3,000 students were enrolled at Polish universities in the 2013-14 academic year, which is almost 25 percent of all Turkish Erasmus students attending European academic institutes. Their number increased almost 45 times between 2004-05 and 2013-14. During this period, almost 12,500 Turks studied in Poland under the Erasmus program.⁵⁹ Currently, more than 1,000 Turkish students attend Polish universities full time. Their number increased considerably in recent years, and is larger than the number of students from Russia or Germany enrolled at Polish universities. Moreover, a private Turkish university operates in Poland, a unique situation in the EU. It is one of the best private universities in Poland, and has the highest level of internationalization of its student community. A substantial portion of foreign students studying at this university originates from Turkey and Ukraine.

⁵⁹ Erasmus, *Statystyki* [Statistics], <http://www.erasmus.org.pl/odnosniki-podstawowe/statystyki>.

Turkey has become an ever-more popular travel destination for Poles, with around 500,000 visits to the country in 2015, a 20 percent increase since 2013.⁶⁰ In 2015, Poles traveled to Turkey as often as Italians and twofold more frequently than Spaniards.

Nonetheless, Polish engagement with Turkish civil society remains very limited, and with the exception of some micro grants, no financial support or closer cooperation has emerged to date. In contrast to Germany, the Polish government has almost completely abstained from discussing sensitive issues such as the violation of human rights or media freedom. Meanwhile, the absence of Polish NGOs in the recently accomplished phase of the EU-Turkey Civil Society Dialogue (2014-15) shows the lack of interest of Polish civil society in Turkish issues.⁶¹ A huge gap exists between Poland's considerable interest in the development of political and economic cooperation with Turkey and extremely limited engagement in the civil society dimension.

German Engagement and Influence in Ukraine

In comparison to intensive social relations between Turks and Germans, German-Ukrainian social relationships are less extensive and multifaceted, due in part to the often one-sided orientation among many in Germany toward Russia. In the course of the ongoing Ukrainian crisis, however, awareness of and interest in Ukraine has been boosted among many Germans, as has their willingness to support Ukraine in what most see as a rightful struggle against Russian aggression and domination. However, many Germans remain

⁶⁰ T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, op. cit.

⁶¹ Five Polish NGOs took part in the first phase of the program (2008-09). They accounted for slightly more than 3 percent of the EU NGOs participating in this phase. However, their representation among the EU NGOs was weaker than civil societies from other Central European countries (Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria).

reluctant regarding Ukraine's accession to the EU, though opposition is slightly weaker than toward Turkish EU membership.⁶² The German government avoids political commitments concerning the granting of candidate status to Ukraine. On the other hand, in contrast to Turkey's case, mainstream German politicians have never openly rejected Ukrainian accession to the EU.

Perceptions of Germany among Ukrainians underscore that country's important political and economic position in Ukraine. This acknowledgement is indicated by recent opinion surveys in Ukraine, where 42 percent of citizens express warm feelings for Germany and only 8 percent negative.⁶³ Moreover, the half of Ukrainians approve of Germany's policy toward the country, while slightly more than 25 percent have the opposite opinion.⁶⁴

Another layer of people-to-people contacts between Germans and Ukrainians has emerged since the late days of the Soviet Union, with a sizeable Ukrainian emigration to Germany, including Ukrainian Jews. At the end of 2014, almost 130,000 Ukrainian citizens resided in Germany. The number of Germans with Ukrainian migrant background is almost the same. Additionally, in the academic year 2014-15 6,400 Ukrainians studied at German universities. Germany (after Poland and Russia) was a main destination for Ukrainians enrolled at foreign universities. In Ukraine, on the other

⁶² Pew Research Centre, "NATO Publics Blame Russia for Ukrainian Crisis, but Reluctant to Provide Military Aid," June 10, 2015, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/06/10/nato-publics-blame-russia-for-ukrainian-crisis-but-reluctant-to-provide-military-aid/>.

⁶³ International Republican Institute, "Public Opinion Survey Residents of Ukraine, November 19-30, 2015," http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/2015_11_national_oversample_en_combined_natl_and_donbas_v3.pdf.

⁶⁴ Democratic Initiatives Foundation, Foreign policy of Ukraine: assessments and expectations of the public, July 2015. <http://dif.org.ua/en/publications/press-relizy/hriirhiehrjihj.htm>.

In the course of the ongoing Ukrainian crisis, however, awareness of and interest in Ukraine has been boosted among many Germans, as has their willingness to support Ukraine.

Within the EU, Poland is definitely the main advocate of Ukraine's accession.

hand, a 2001 census revealed a German minority numbering nearly 35,000. Nonetheless, people-to-people contacts between Ukrainians and Germans are decisively less frequent than Polish-Ukrainian social interactions. German citizens rarely visit Ukraine. In 2014, Germans took slightly more than 130,000 trips to Ukraine. By comparison, in the same year, Ukrainian citizens travelled to Germany more than 300,000 times.

In 2014, Germany allocated almost \$110 million of bilateral ODA to Ukraine, making Germany Ukraine's largest donor of bilateral aid. However, for perspective, Germany delivered two and half times more ODA to the military junta in Egypt than to Ukraine. The German commitment to the democratization of Myanmar was also notably stronger than to Ukraine, with almost five times more ODA. German political party-affiliated NGOs operate actively in Ukraine, but are based only in Kyiv. The Goethe Institute also does not have offices outside the capital. On the other hand, German foundations contribute considerably to the development of cooperation between Polish, German, and Ukrainian civil societies because they are the main financial supporters of projects involving NGOs and think tanks from these countries. However, the number of such projects is clearly below the need and potential.

Polish Engagement and Influence in Ukraine

Poland is incomparably more closely intertwined with Ukraine than Germany. Ukraine is a direct neighbor of Poland, and they share a complicated common history. Ukraine has long had a strong presence in Polish political and social awareness and action, whether in historical narratives and identities, people-to-people contacts, business ties, or civil society cooperation; much the same can be said about the presence of Poland in Ukraine. Within the EU, Poland is definitely the main advocate of Ukraine's accession. This idea also

enjoys the support of the majority of Poles. On the other hand, the attitude of Poles toward its western and southern neighbors (Germans, Czechs, Slovaks) is clearly better than toward Ukrainians. The Revolution of Dignity did not significantly improve Poles' feelings toward Ukrainians. According to an opinion poll conducted in 2015, a considerable minority of Poles (more than 30 percent) does not like Ukrainians, and a similar proportion has an indifferent attitude toward them.⁶⁵

The image of Poland in Ukrainian society is decisively more positive. In a recent opinion poll, Poland had the highest score of all of Ukraine's neighbors and international partners, with almost 60 percent of citizens expressing positive feelings for Poland, and just 5 percent negative.⁶⁶ These sentiments are not least a result of the political position Poland has taken in the course of the Ukraine crisis, which are seen positively by the great majority of Ukrainians. Poland is perceived by the same proportion of Ukrainians as the main supporter of their country on the international arena.⁶⁷

The extent to which a shared, and more often than not tragic, history and geography binds Ukraine and Poland together is probably best reflected in the various layers of people-to-people ties between the two countries. One of these consists of historical minorities, with a Ukrainian minority of 50,000 people in Poland, according to the last census. In turn, a 2001 census in Ukraine found a Polish minority numbering nearly 150,000. Both countries claim that the number of their respective co-nationals is substantially higher. A

⁶⁵ CBOS, Stosunek do innych narodów [Relationships to other nations], January 2015, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2015/K_014_15.PDF.

⁶⁶ IRI, op cit.

⁶⁷ Democratic Initiatives Foundation, op cit.

next layer of history is reflected in the hundreds of thousands of Poles and Ukrainians and their descendants who experienced forced migration between both countries after World War II. Labor migration from Ukraine to Poland emerged and accelerated after the Revolution of Dignity. An estimated 300,000-500,000 Ukrainians work in Poland seasonally. Generally, Poland has become the gateway to Europe for millions of Ukrainians. In 2014, Ukrainians visited Poland 7.6 million times, accounting for almost 35 percent of all visits abroad. Likewise, Poles are the EU citizens most often visiting Ukraine, with 1.1 million visits in 2014. These trips accounted for 10 percent of the total crossings of the Ukrainian border by foreigners. Poland also recently attained the status of the most attractive destination for Ukrainian students going abroad. In the academic year 2014-15 more than 23,000 students from Ukraine were enrolled at Polish universities. Since 2010, their number has increased almost five times. This impressive rise derives from the fact that Ukraine occupies the first place in the promotion of Polish culture abroad (for instance, language courses).

These massive movements of people create a dense web of human interaction between the two countries. They have found their expression in the numerous organizations and institutions, from minority representations to cultural and academic institutions to bilateral forums, that bring Ukraine closer to Polish publics and vice versa. Many of these have grown considerably more active over the last two years and contributed to a remarkable mobilization of Polish society in solidarity with their embattled Ukrainian counterparts. People-to-people contacts are bolstered by cooperation and programs among civil society organizations from both countries. For Poland, Polish NGOs, and foundations, Ukraine has long been a focus country.

Between 2004 and 2014, Ukraine received more than 10 percent of bilateral Polish development aid, making Ukraine the fourth-largest recipient of Polish bilateral ODA. Although until 2013, the great majority of Polish bilateral ODA allocated to Ukraine was assigned for scholarships for Ukrainian students, Poland also contributed substantially to the Revolution of Dignity by supporting democracy promotion programs. Indeed, in a 2013 survey conducted among Ukrainian civic and political elites, they ranked Poland as the second-most active democracy promoter in Ukraine after the United States; among ordinary Ukrainians, Poland was ranked the most active promoter.⁶⁸ After the Revolution of Dignity, Ukraine was the top destination for bilateral Polish ODA. According to preliminary data, total Polish bilateral ODA increased dramatically between 2014 and 2015, from \$83 million to \$283 million.⁶⁹ A huge part of this amount was allocated to Ukraine mostly within the framework of a loan with favorable terms, worth around \$110 million. In 2014, Poland ranked seventh on the list of donors of bilateral ODA to Ukraine. It likely advanced on this list considerably in 2015 due to above mentioned increase of the bilateral ODA allocated to Ukraine. In 2014, more than 60 percent of Polish bilateral ODA allocated to Ukraine was spent on scholarships for Ukrainian students, and almost 15 percent was assigned to projects dedicated to administrative capacity building in the Ukrainian public sector.⁷⁰ In 2014, Poland and Canada launched a joint Democracy Support Program to

⁶⁸ On the other hand, many Ukrainian civil society representatives pointed to Poland's limited financial and human capacity as its most serious weakness. Tsveta Petrova, "Polish democracy promotion in Ukraine," Carnegie, Endowment for International Peace, October 14, 2014, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/10/16/polish-democracy-promotion-in-ukraine>.

⁶⁹ The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁷⁰ Polska pomoc rozwojowa 2014 [Polish development aid 2014], https://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/download/files/Dokumenty_i_Publikacje/Raport2014/raport_2014.pdf

For Poland, Polish NGOs, and foundations, Ukraine has long been a focus country.

Poland and Germany have to make their own policies toward Turkey and Ukraine more society-friendly.

increase the involvement of Ukrainian residents in the creation of effective, law-abiding and socially trusted democratic institutions, especially local authorities and independent media.

Conclusion

This overview of existing ties between Germany and Poland, on one hand, and Turkey and Ukraine, on the other, provides a number of important pointers as to the potential of the former for furthering European support for positive and democratic developments in the latter. First and foremost, extensive ties already exist among the societies of the four countries, albeit to different degrees. These broadly deserve continued, systematic, and enhanced support. Particular emphasis should be placed on any possible form of contact and communication, exchange, and cooperation among professional groups and students, civil society and local communities. Support should also serve to strengthen those links, such as between Poland and Turkey or between Germany and Ukraine, that have so far remained less extensive.

Second, both Germany and Poland have well-established civil societies that can do much to support their developing counterparts in Turkey and Ukraine. Such assistance, whether bilaterally or among three or even all of the countries, holds potential in a number of directions. Building on the transition experience of both Poland and Germany, civil society cooperation can do much to advance the reform agenda in Turkey and Ukraine. Drawing on the extensive civic presence on subnational levels in Germany and Poland, pressure can be exerted to take civil society beyond capital cities and to boost regional and local civic structures in Turkey and Ukraine. Linking civil societies in the four countries can also affect relationships between governments and NGOs, whether by elevating civil society to a fully fledged partner in its own right, building its

resilience against state meddling, or internationally addressing any attempts by the Turkish and Ukrainian governments to subdue civil society.

Finally, the strong economic links among the four countries can serve to advance the political and social transformation of Turkey and Ukraine. They mean that German and Polish businesses have a direct stake in Turkey and Ukraine, and a strong interest in providing for the political, legal, and social conditions that make businesses thrive. Germany and Poland, given their extensive segments of small and medium-sized enterprise, have much to offer to diversify Turkish and Ukrainian economies and, with it, to democratize both societies. And this economic clout, combined with political checks, could do much to keep authoritarian temptations in Ankara and Kyiv at bay — to the benefit of civil society and Turks and Ukrainians at large.

Recommendations: Reaching Out to Turkish and Ukrainian Societies

The considerations of this paper have evolved around four key assumptions. Firstly, Turkey and Ukraine represent Europe's key strategic neighbors to the east and southeast. Secondly, it has been shown that in both countries, a remarkable process of societal emancipation has been underway that has increasingly come to challenge the political status quo. Thirdly, for these strategic and socio-political reasons, a definitely more society-friendly EU policy toward Turkey and Ukraine is needed. Fourthly, Poland and Germany represent key EU stakeholders in Ukraine. Germany has long been such in Turkey and more recently, Poland has become a rapidly rising stakeholder in Turkey, politically, economically, and socially. Both Germany and Poland are, therefore, predisposed to push for making EU policy toward Turkey and Ukraine more society-oriented. In order to succeed, and hopefully thus shape more effective European

approaches to its key neighbors in the long run, German and Polish initiatives should consider the following recommendations.

Boost Direct Support to Turkish and Ukrainian Societies

First of all, Poland and Germany have to make their own policies toward Turkey and Ukraine more society-friendly. They should support a qualitative and quantitative increase of their own civil societies' activities in Turkey and Ukraine. The rise of Polish engagement with Turkish civil society is of particular importance. Poland and Germany should also foster an establishment of a solid and permanent cooperation between Polish and German civil societies in Turkey and Ukraine. For that sake they should establish a German-Polish-Turkish-Ukrainian Civil Society Platform. Despite a substantial strengthening of relations between Turkish and Ukrainian civil societies taking place after the Revolution of Dignity, there is still a great deal of room for improvement. The further enhancement of cooperation between them will be mutually beneficial for both societies, providing them with the opportunity to share their experiences, exchange expertise on transformation, and support each other in difficult times. Polish and German NGOs should play the role of facilitators, networking between Ukrainian and Turkish partners. The platform should be based on a bottom-up model, creating local branches and promoting the networking between civil societies at the grassroots level. To the extent possible, German and Polish links and aid to Turkish and Ukrainian societies should be both decoupled from government performance and stepped up to directly demonstrate to Turks and Ukrainians the benefits of European integration. Such support should include support for visa liberalization and enhanced exchange programs for students, civic and political leaders, journalists, and academics. Increased funding and cooperation with key

NGOs, think tanks, anti-corruption groups, and independent media is no less necessary than assistance for SME development, humanitarian and social projects, citizenship education and participation, and regional and local civil society.

Target the Social and Political Divides Inside Turkey and Ukraine

Turkish and Ukrainian societies are both marked by significant cleavages along social, geographical, and cultural lines. More often than not, these divisions are reinforced by politics and result in explosive polarization. Defusing and bridging these divisions is key to retaining the integrity, stability, and functionality of Turkey and Ukraine. Such internal reconciliation will require long-term efforts, starting with confidence-building measures and eventually resulting in constitutional arrangements that accommodate the diversity of Turkish and Ukrainian societies. Germany and Poland have some experience, not least with one another, of such efforts at reconciliation. Existing Polish-German foundations, academies, associations, platforms, networks, and programs that carry out dialogue between both societies may serve as an inspiration for developing a comparable culture of dialogue in Turkey and Ukraine, and their expertise and funding could help with necessary adaptations to the local context. These initiatives should focus particularly on redoubling the efforts to end conflicts in Turkish Kurdistan and Eastern Ukraine. Democratization will hardly be achieved for as long as Turkey and Ukraine have open hostilities on their territory. Ukraine demonstrates how the Russian war in the eastern part of the country hampers more resolute reforms by the government in Kyiv, and the conflict between Turkish security forces and Kurdish guerillas have only facilitated the authoritarian slide in Ankara. Hostilities will not end in either country without international mediation, given that the conflicts extend beyond their borders.

Existing Polish-German foundations, academies, associations, platforms, networks, and programs that carry out dialogue between both societies may serve as an inspiration for developing a comparable culture of dialogue in Turkey and Ukraine.

Berlin and Warsaw need to consistently make the strategic case of how the successful transformation and European integration of Turkey and Ukraine will benefit all of Europe.

Undertake a More Supportive Approach to EU Enlargement

In the long run, sustainable democratic reforms in Turkey and Ukraine will depend on whether or not both countries receive a prospect for full EU integration. Both societies, and their political class, are fully aware of the reluctance of many in the EU to grant this. This has already led to the disillusionment among many Turks and Ukrainians, has reduced energy and commitment to reforms among their leaderships, and has prompted authoritarian backlashes in both countries. More than ever, therefore, it is necessary to stress that the European ambitions of both countries are legitimate and depend first and foremost on the fulfilment of all democratic criteria for membership. In meeting these conditions, Turkey and Ukraine should receive the same financial and other support that was offered to earlier accession candidates. Poland and particularly Germany should rethink their current cautious approach to the issue of further enlargement. In case of Germany, the shift to a completely affirmative approach to the EU enlargement seems highly unlikely because of internal political calculations. Nevertheless, Germany has to convince its own society that Turkish and Ukrainian accession to the EU is a long-term goal and not likely to happen in the next few years. The integration process of these countries with the EU should be treated as a goal in itself and the best instrument to anchor Turkey and Ukraine in the West. The process itself, without predetermining its outcome, can serve German national interests (stabilization of the Black Sea Region and the Middle East). Therefore, Merkel could afford to support a “normal” pace of Turkey’s accession negotiations. It would also be beneficial for the credibility of the process if she refrained from regularly recalling her opposition to Turkish membership. At the same time, Poland has to reinvent its support for Turkish accession,

which is currently almost non-existent. Both countries should also support the recognition of Ukraine as a potential candidate to the EU. In advocating these positions toward those more reluctant EU members, both Berlin and Warsaw need to consistently make the strategic case of how the successful transformation and European integration of Turkey and Ukraine will benefit all of Europe.

Defend Turkish and Ukrainian Societies Against State Pressure or Failure

Enhanced outreach to Turkish and Ukrainian societies is not to replace cooperation with the governments in Ankara and Kyiv. However, putting much more emphasis on relations with societies than before will require that Poland and Germany maintain firm and consistent positions on issues relating to human rights abuses and corruption. For instance, Warsaw and Berlin should place themselves in the avant-garde of EU conditionality on the leaderships in Ankara and Kyiv, making political and financial support strictly dependent on adherence to European principles of good governance and the rule of law. Such conditionality, aiming as it does at long-term positive and democratic developments in both countries, must not be hollowed out by short-term considerations, such as when cooperation with both capitals is needed to counter current threats emanating from the Syria, Russia, or the refugee crises. In turn, Germany and Poland should explicitly support the strengthening of civil society resistance against government pushbacks, and make non-state actors partners in their own right for European politics and diplomacy. Rebooting European correctives on government action in Turkey and Ukraine and building agency from within society will help recharge the confidence of both societies in the positive and beneficial influence of the EU.



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