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Corridor Report on Belgium: the case of Moroccan and Turkish immigrants

Authors: Sonia Gsir, Jérémy Mandin, Elsa Mescoli, Centre d'études de l'ethnicité et des migrations, Institut des Sciences Humaines et Sociales, Université de Liège

Editor: Cameron Thibos, Lecturer, Council On International Educational Exchange

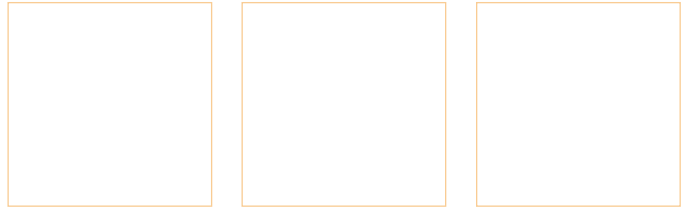
Belgium has been an immigration country since the 1920s onwards. At present, the country has a total population of 11,099,554, approximately 10.76% of which are migrants. The larger numbers of migrants (more than a half) are from European member states, especially Italy, France and the Netherlands. The largest migrant groups in the non-EU foreign population, however, are the Moroccans (83,271) and the Turks (37,989). Moroccans and Turks are diversely settled in the three federated regions of Belgium. The latter are more numerous in Flanders, whereas the Moroccans live mainly in the Brussels-Capital Region. Integration policies are the purview of the federated entities. Flanders, the Walloon region and the Brussels-Capital Region have each developed their own integration policy according to their debates and objectives regarding the

KEY FINDINGS



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management of cultural diversity. Moroccan and Turkish migrants were the first migrants targeted by these policies. For several years, Flanders has had a compulsory integration programme targeting newcomers. More recently, two other regions have also developed integration programmes for new migrants but without obligations. New Moroccan and Turkish migrants are thus differently affected by integration programmes, depending on the region in which they settle.

Both Moroccan and Turkish governments have been inclined to protect their economic and political interests through a growing engagement with Turkish and Moroccan migrants in Belgium. At the beginning of the mass migration to Belgium in the 1960s, they mainly supported the economic dimension of integration in the Belgian labour market. They expected remittances from temporary migrant workers and they also hoped that their migrants would acquire new skills from which the Moroccan and Turkish economies could benefit. After the end of migration recruitment in the mid-1970s, other dimensions of integration were progressively taken into account. Turkey, earlier than Morocco, encouraged the legal and political integration of Turkish migrants in Belgium through a dual citizenship law in the early 1980s. It is only in the late 1990s that the Moroccan government began to encourage migrants' political integration. Morocco and Turkey have thus developed legal frameworks and measures that are oriented toward their diasporas in a quite different ways. Turkey has certainly been quicker to consider the importance of the diaspora and has been more proactive, whereas Morocco, despite the huge number of Moroccans in Belgium, has been slower and perhaps less efficient in this respect.

The report shows that the migration patterns of Moroccan and Turkish migrants are similar in many respects. They started with temporary labour migra-

tion that ended in permanent settlement, followed by family and marriage migration through a similar mechanism of chain migration. Nevertheless, it also shows different patterns of integration.

The following table summarizes their level of integration according to the INTERACT index:

Table 1. INTERACT integration index for Belgium: Moroccan vs. Turkish immigrants

	Moroccan immigrants	Turkish immigrants
Labour Market Integration Index	0.14	0.26
Education Integration Index	0.17	0.03
Citizenship	0.93	1

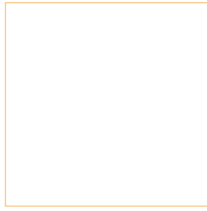
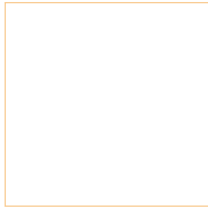
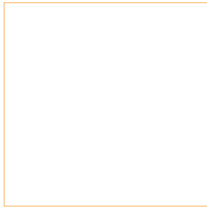
Source: Di Bartolomeo, Kalantaryan and Bonfanti (2015)

The objective of the report was to compare important corridor migrations to Belgium in order to better understand the variation in several dimensions of immigrants' integration. It tried to understand the impact of emigration and particularly the diaspora policies of Morocco and Turkey on the integration of Moroccan and Turkish migrants in Belgium.

Accordingly, several key findings can be highlighted:

1. Differences in the original bilateral labour migration agreements of the 1960s continue to affect the integration processes of Turks and Moroccans in Belgium.

Two bilateral agreements for temporary labour migration initiated significant flows of Moroccan and Turkish migrants to Belgium starting in the 1960s. They were negotiated differently, however, as while the interests and objectives of Belgium remained the same this was not the case for the countries of origin. Both Morocco and Turkey



encouraged emigration and expected remittances and the return of their emigrants along with new professional skills. But the government of Turkey demonstrated a greater interest in the protection of Turkish migrant workers' interests. Specific provisions were thus included in the bilateral agreement between Belgium and Turkey, such as the possible family reunification of dependent parents and access to social housing, which were absent from the Belgium-Morocco treaty.

2. Countries of origin may have an impact on integration from the beginning, when emigration starts

The Turkish and Moroccan association survey shows that respondents consider official, pre-departure programs to be relevant to integration in the Belgian labour market. This finding makes the recent mobility partnership between Belgium and Morocco particularly interesting, as it takes integration dimensions into account from an early stage. It aims to improve the information available to qualified Moroccan citizens on employment, education, and training opportunities available in the EU. Another objective is to support the integration of Moroccan migrants who regularly visit an EU Member State. While it is too early to assess the implementation of this mobility partnership or its articulation with Belgium's immigration policy, it remains an intriguing example of bilateral cooperation on integration going forward.

3. Countries of origin may have no impact on certain integration dimensions such as education and the labour market in the destination country

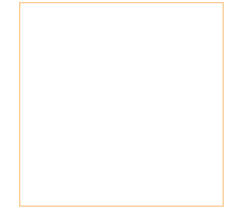
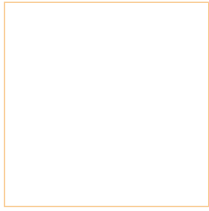
Countries of origin may have little or no impact on certain integration dimensions such as education and the labour market in the destination country. In these areas integration relies instead on other key elements, namely the opportunity structures

available in the destination country and migrants' capacity for mobilization.

Neither Turkish nor Moroccan migrants are well integrated into Belgium's educational system and labour market. One might expect that these two dimensions would go hand in hand and positively correlate with one another, but this is not necessarily true. Moroccan migrants, who appear better integrated in education, are less integrated into the labour market. Conversely, while Turkish migrants seem very weakly integrated in education they are almost twice as integrated into the labour market.

The explanations are structural. The Belgian labour market is highly segmented and Turkish migrants are largely employed in sectors where a low level of education is required (Wets, 2006). Furthermore, in order to combat unemployment, Turkish immigrants have opted for self-employment by opening businesses, many of which cater to other Turkish migrants. Labour market segmentation appears to actually work against those migrants with higher levels of education. The share of tertiary-educated is two times higher for Moroccan migrants (10.8%) than for Turks (5.6%), and thus there are many more Moroccans than Turks that seem to have difficulty accessing positions that match their qualifications.

What can the impact of the countries of origin be, given these specific results? Since the end of active labour recruitment in 1974, few new migrants – less than 10% – have come from Morocco and Turkey primarily for work or study. Instead, the vast majority of Moroccan and Turkish migrants who legally entered Belgium during the four last decades were primarily admitted for family reasons. In other words, this dominant migration channel does not allow the countries of origin to contribute to migrant integration in the labour market to the extent that they were able in the bilateral agreements for labour migration. That said, the qualitative survey showed



that labour market integration remains a critical issue, and organizations oriented towards both Turkish and Moroccan migrants are particularly active in this area.

4. Countries of origin may have a positive or negative impact on some dimensions of integration, such as citizenship

The citizenship integration indices demonstrate a high rate of acquisition of Belgian nationality for both Moroccan and Turkish migrants with respective scores of 0.93 and 1. One can infer that in this particular dimension, integration succeeded because (until recently) the federal Belgian government considered the acquisition of Belgian nationality to be a major tool of integration. Belgian integration policy was developed accordingly, facilitating access to Belgian nationality for foreign residents.

The differences between the two groups in the citizenship integration indices could be attributed to the attitudes of the countries of origin regarding dual citizenship. Turkey began to permit dual citizenship in 1981, and has, especially under the current government, promoted its acquisition. Morocco was more reluctant. While it has never banned dual citizenship in law, it actively discouraged the acquisition of a second nationality – and integration, generally – until the early 1990s (De Haas, 2007: 19). Thus it seems that for some specific dimensions of integration, the countries of origin may have a positive or negative impact.

5. State-level framework of emigration/diaspora policies: Turkey vs. Morocco

Countries of origin play a mixed role when it comes to migrant integration. At times they may encourage and accelerate integration in the country of destination, while at others they may delay or hinder the integration process. While the extent to which

countries of origin positively or negatively impact integration processes is difficult to assess, the survey results show that associations were quite doubtful about the impact of countries of origin on integration in Belgium.

Both Moroccan and Turkish diaspora policies are oriented toward maintaining and developing links with their respective diasporas in the hopes of reaping benefits from them, and are not primarily oriented toward facilitating integration in the country of destination. Migrant integration can thus be considered an “unstated objective” of diaspora policies (Délano, 2010), as efforts to maintain links and protect migrant’s rights can be considered a way of empowering migrants. The countries of origin can thus facilitate integration, but they only do so indirectly.

The table below shows the legal and political systems that frame Turkish and Moroccan diasporas abroad, and in this case in Belgium.

References

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Wets, Johan (2006), “The Turkish Community in Austria and Belgium: The Challenge of Integration”, *Turkish Studies*, 7(1), 85-100



Table 2. State-level framework of emigration/diaspora policies: Turkey vs. Morocco

	Turkey	Morocco
Legal framework for emigrants / diaspora	Formal and organized structure	2003 Law on the entry and sojourn of foreigners, immigration and irregular emigration
Approach towards emigrants	Controlling, protecting and engaging diaspora	Controlling, protecting and engaging diaspora
Main state-actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Ministry Presidency for Turks Abroad and Relative Communities • Advisory Committee for Turkish Citizens Living Abroad • High Committee for Turkish Citizens Living Abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Moroccans Residing Abroad • Council of Moroccan Community Abroad (advisory institution) • Hassan II Foundation • Observatory for the Moroccan Community Residing Abroad
Socio-economic rights	Blue Card 1964 Bilateral agreement in force with Belgium	1964 Bilateral agreement in force with Belgium
Political rights	Right to vote in Presidential election, general election and for referendums	
Language and cultural and religious rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turkish-Islamic Union of the Religious Affairs, Belçika Turk Islam Diyanet Vakfi • Cultural programmes and language courses. Turkish teachers and imams sent abroad. 	Moroccan teachers and imams sent abroad
Dual citizenship	Actively supported as a tool for integration abroad	Actively supported as a tool for integration abroad

INTERACT

Researching Third Country Nationals' Integration as a Three-way Process - Immigrants, Countries of Emigration and Countries of Immigration as Actors of Integration

The INTERACT project studies the impact of sending countries on migrant integration. It looks at the ways in which institutions and organisations in origin countries thicken transnational bonds by developing tools to boost financial transfers, maintain cultural heritages, enhance migrant political participation, and protect migrants' rights. It seeks to understand how these efforts impact migrant integration, as well as how origin country policies complement or contradict the integration measures of receiving country governments.

Tel: (+39) 055 4685 817/892

Fax: (+39) 055 4685 – 755

mpc@eui.eu

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Complete information can be found online at: interact-project.eu

