

GREEN
BALKAN
NEWS
LETTER
#5



Balkan
network

POWERED BY THE EUROPEAN GREEN PARTY

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GREEN BALKAN NEWSLETTER #5 Nov 2015

Dear Balkan friends,

We have had the opportunity of coordinating the Balkan Network for the last four years. During this time, the Network grew and embarked on a series of activities to spread the green message within the Green family in the region and to a wider audience.

During the EGP Council meetings, BN sessions incorporated presentations on topics, such as: sustainable agriculture, climate change challenges in the Balkans, energy alternatives, Green New Deal models in the region, mining projects, best practices, green campaigning, etc. In Oct 2013, a very successful and well attended conference on pharaonic projects was organized in Istanbul. A new publication, the Green Balkan Network Newsletter, was produced in order to keep members informed and engaged. The Network presented and co-signed a number of resolutions during the EGP Council meetings. With the support of EGP, GEF and Green Institute Greece, the first Balkan Network Summer Camp was organized a few months ago. We hope it will become an annual event as it is an excellent opportunity to bring members together in order to explore green thematic issues.

We believe the Network has the potential to contribute to the strengthening of the Green parties in the region given the effective support of the EGP along with members' active participation. As the time has come for us to pass the baton to a new team, we would like to thank all of you for your cooperation and assure you that we will continue to provide our assistance in the future.

With best wishes,

Olga Kikou and Ahmet Atıl Aşıcı
Coordinators, Balkan Network



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A little kindness goes a long way



“In Belgrade, NGO No border Serbia started to brew tea, some different organizations started to collect wardrobe, food and medication.”

In the last twenty five years synonyms for countries of former Yugoslavia are mostly conflict, instability, crisis, etc. This is the image we sent and this is how the rest of the Europe sees us. But in the last two years the citizens of this region showed a new face, one that has existed all along but

didn't have the opportunity to show. It is the face of solidarity. In the time we are witnessing European states building walls that we all thought are a part of the history, when populism is being awoken once again, this pictures of solidarity are giving hope that there is a different future for the region. There are

good stories out there, so I wanted to share some of the energy we all have.

During 2014, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia were hit by floods. These countries have experienced extremely heavy rain - the amount of rainfall expected over the period of

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three months, fell on the region in only three days, bringing about catastrophic floods. Tens of thousands of people have been displaced across the region. Our states were not ready, because bad economy and poor environmental protection dams have yielded, and governmental agencies that were in charge for emergency situations didn't react fast enough. On the other side, citizens organized by social networks, radio amateurs instructed volunteers in boats where are the people that were stuck, various organizations collected food, clothes and medicine... In Bosnia and Herzegovina lifeguards forgot borders of cantons and went from Bihac to Dobo, and from Foca to Zenica, in order to help their fellow citizens, regardless of their ethnicity. One of the pictures that really stayed in our memory was a picture of couple of refugees from Syria helping people in Obrenovac, town in Serbia that was worst hit by floods. That picture connects pictures of solidarity that citizens from the region showed to refugees in the crisis this year.

Some small number of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq

and other war – torn countries pass through the region for few years now. As transit countries, this states let them go through by themselves. There were cases that people slept in the wood, in snow or in some old buildings. When the number of refugees increased this year, situation didn't change a lot. Except for registration on the border and basic medical help, the government didn't help much. Distrustful because of all that they have endured, most of the refugees do not want to go into the camps, so they sleep in the open, with only that stuff with which they had come.

The people organized in different ways by themselves again. In Belgrade, NGO No border Serbia started to brew tea, some different organizations started to collect wardrobe, food and medication. Citizens and NGOs all across the region are now helping, they have people at the critical points, they share information through social networks, collect money through crowdfunding platforms, etc. People from Bosnia and Herzegovina are collecting aid and sending it by trucks to Croatia and Serbia. Since there are a lot children

among refugees, the people are coming to parks where refugees rest and play football with children. There is also a huge campaign for baby carriers for refugees, so the parents can carry their babies easier.

As the winter is coming, situation will be more and more difficult. Refugees need warm clothes, shoes and shelter. Countries in the region do not have enough camps or funds. Citizens of this countries showed the true spirit and compassion of Europe, so we can only pressure our governments to do the same.



Epaminondas Farmakis
Managing Director
SolidarityNow, Greece

Step Up Relief for Refugees in Greece



“Extremist movements use people’s frustration to fuel xenophobic sentiments and hate speech rhetoric. In the recent Greek national elections, Golden Dawn increased the number of its seats in parliament and dramatically increased its share of votes on the islands like Lesbos.”

I have visited the Greek islands of Lesbos, Kos, Leros, Rhodes, Tilos, and Samos several times since the influx of refugees started earlier this year. In the face of this new reality for people on the islands, I have felt both proud and dismayed. Proud thanks to civil society groups and ordinary

citizens who work tirelessly to respond to the unprecedented needs of these vulnerable populations. And frustrated that people with a right to international protection resort to smugglers to enter Greece and continue their journey to Europe.

Islands like Lesbos have become prime entry points to Europe

due to their geographic location. While other Greek islands-like Kos and Chios-are also close to Turkey, the sea around Lesbos is relatively calm, making the crossing easier. Turkey is so close that refugees have to cross as few as six sea miles to reach the island. Nearby Turkish shores are sparsely inhabited, making them



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ideal spots for human traffickers to gather refugees and transfer them in flimsy inflatable rafts.

For most refugees—who escape conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan—Lesbos is a mere way station on the way to mainland Greece and further afield in Europe.

Today the situation on Lesbos and other islands remains challenging. The scale of daily refugee arrivals may have de-

creased—from around 3,000 during the summer to 1,000 in October—but conditions for their receipt remain abysmal.

In August a rise in arrivals and slow registrations led to a back-up of more than 20,000 refugees on the island, nearly a quarter of its native population. The refugees protested for the lack of services, blocking traffic and clashing with the police.

In September the streets of Les-

vos and Kos in particular were still full of refugees speaking a variety of languages, lugging large backpacks, and charging their phones for outrageous fees at impromptu charging stations in cafes. There were long lines outside ferry company offices where people were waiting for a ticket to board a ship to Athens. In the absence of a proper transportation service, people who reach the Greek shore are forced to walk 25 miles to the nearest small center of registration. Hu-





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number of its seats in parliament and dramatically increased its share of votes on the islands like Lesbos.

Our advocacy has to grow stronger and call for refugees to be treated as human beings needing protection, not threats to our security. Our humanitarian support has to go hand-in-hand. Europe should not be separated by borders but united by humanity and solidarity. We have a responsibility to protect these people and not treat asylum seekers as criminals.

For Greece this practically means improving reception and stepping up relief as a matter of urgency. Civil society organizations are overstretched and we require more coordinated efforts by all stakeholders to address this new reality for Greece and for Europe.

humanitarian organizations struggle to offer meaningful services beyond first reception.

All stakeholders, local and regional government; local volunteer groups; Greek and international NGOs; state services have to acknowledge the urgent need to step up relief whilst an EU-wide political solution to the problem takes effect. The first autumn rains have started and without some basic infrastructure the situation will get even worse.

The situation in the cities of Athens and Thessaloniki—where refugees are transferred—is also challenging. Solidari-

tyNow targeting to address the lack of access to a comprehensive package of services for the most vulnerable in both cities operates two Solidarity Centers. There we offer space to new and existing civil society organizations while a branch of the state Asylum Service operates within the Athens Center to accelerate fast track asylum procedures.

One of the biggest risks of the current situation is the exploitation of the phenomenon for political gains. Extremist movements use people’s frustration to fuel xenophobic sentiments and hate speech rhetoric. In the recent Greek national elections, Golden Dawn increased the

A view from the other side of the EU border – a focus on Western Balkan transit countries



“The ever-growing number of migrants and refugees taking the Balkan route is a consequence of a broader failure of EU migration and asylum policy on which Serbia and Macedonia have no control.”

As European and Western Balkan leaders met in Vienna at the EU-Western Balkans

Summit on 26 and 27 August

2015 Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić praised Serbia’s treatment of refugees in contrast to some EU member states, especially Hungary and

Greece, when it comes to registration, and to barbed wire fence and tear gas.

A closer look will not complete-

» ***“The, Western Balkans route has become the busiest irregular passage to Europe overtaking the Mediterranean route which remains the most deadly, a recent air-report said.”***



ly confirm this Serbian official voice, but the statement shows that the refugee crisis dominated most of the official discussions at the Vienna summit and it also highlights the absurdity of the Western Balkans being outside the EU: Tens of thousands of refugees are crossing an EU and Schengen country (Greece) to escape through two non-EU countries (Macedonia and Serbia) to get to another Schengen/EU country (Hungary). The latter one's government – a member of the allegedly pro-European European People's Party – was building a 175 km long fence along the Serbia-Hungary border which erects yet another barrier to refugees seeking protection.

Unnecessary to say that this summit was unable to offer more than symbolic support to the countries where thousands of refugees are stranded in legal limbo across the Balkans – or as Amnesty International (ai) is warning: Serbia and Macedonia have become a sink for the overflow of refugees and migrants that nobody in the EU seems

willing to receive. And there is a real concern that refugees are getting trapped in a 'Balkan no-man's land' without protection or support, whilst EU countries turn their backs.

The „Western Balkans route“ has become the busiest irregular passage to Europe overtaking the Mediterranean route which remains the most deadly, a recent air-report said. And increasingly Macedonia and Serbia are unable to cope with the rising number of refugees. In August Macedonia declared state of emergency, sealing its Southern border for two days with paramilitary police and military forces to prevent refugees entering the country. According to UNHCR the Serbian authorities are now able and willing to deal responsibly with this challenge. But also in Serbia reception conditions remain inadequate, and access to asylum is extremely

difficult.

It is true, however, that

Serbia has not been using tear gas against refugees as some authorities have done in Greece, neither building a barbed wire fence or wall as the Hungarian government is doing.

The majority of people using this route are mainly from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea and Somalia. They mostly come via Greece, and with the recent surge in sea arrivals there, the number of people undertaking this journey is expected to grow. Some are registering for asylum in the Balkans while others head onwards, but both groups face mounting danger.

The increase in arrivals doesn't absolve countries along the Balkan route of their legal obligations. The authorities in the

» ***“The authorities in the Western Balkan countries must still live up to their international obligations towards asylum-seekers, including allowing those seeking asylum to do so in a prompt and effective manner.”***

Western Balkan countries must still live up to their international obligations towards asylum-seekers, including allowing those seeking asylum to do so in a

prompt and effective manner. But individuals who attempt to seek asylum in Serbia or Macedonia face severe obstacles. In 2014, only 10 asylum seekers were granted refugee status in Macedonia and only one was granted asylum in Serbia. Discouraged by the slow progress in processing asylum applications, most asylum seekers continue their journey into Hungary,

where they face further - and for an EU country - completely unacceptable severe violations of their rights.

The ever-growing number of migrants and refugees taking the Balkan route is a consequence of a broader failure of EU migration and asylum policy on which Serbia and Macedonia have no control. Placing the primary responsibility for processing asylum applications on the first EU country of entry (with the Dublin regulation) and limiting safe and legal avenues of entry has put an unsustainable strain on the EU's outer fringes and neighbouring states. Therefore I agree completely with the Amnesty International-resume: Serbia and Macedonia have to do much more to respect migrants and refugees' rights. But it is impossible to separate the human rights violations there from the broader pressures of the flow of migrants and refugees into and through the EU, and a failed EU migration system.



Teresa Sulamith Bauer
NGO Volunteer, Austria

Help! I need somebody



People in Austria say: “We have a refugee crisis.” There are traffic jams and many trains are cancelled or delayed; in fact, we need more space, food and education for refugees and some people even say they don’t feel safe with the refugees around. Of course, the traffic jams and train delays are annoying, but imagine how bad it must be for refugees if we, after their longing for coming to us, call them „a crisis“.

For Austria it is hard to be the host for so many refugees all at once. We all knew that the war in Syria would lead to a wave of refugees, but the number of

people coming to Europe has been increasing so quickly that we have not been able to cope with that yet. By now, the Austrian government finally decided to use military bases as refugee accommodations. Before that, we just had one well-known refugee accommodation, called Traiskirchen, and temporarily we had tents put up next to the police station in Salzburg. Traiskirchen is infamous for its bad condition and treatment.

Now there are organisations like “Flüchtlinge Willkommen“, which, in order to make Traiskirchen the last and least accommodation to go to, encourage Aus-

trians to be a host for refugees. Those who would like to help but cannot offer space to live can become a “buddy” for a refugee and spend time with her or him. Many projects have been set up during the last few years and you can feel that many Austrians want to help. There is a lot of fundraising and many people donate for refugees – but as a matter of fact- the biggest problem is to find suitable accommodation with sanitary facilities and medical treatment for refugees. Austria and other European countries think of returning the refugees to their home countries as soon as the war or crisis is over, which is why many countries provide interim solutions



like tents or containers. Everybody understands that it is the quickest solution to put up tents, but actually we have houses where refugees could live. By swapping one interim solution into another, we forget the people who are dependent on our help and hospitality.

There are some NGOs working on the problem of supplying the refugees with food, drinks, blankets, clothes, medicine etc., but they are all overburdened by the amount of people and the laws they have to follow. In the border regions of Austria the situation is quite complicated: since Germany restricted their entry regulations, many people stay at the train station in Salzburg in order to catch a train to Germany. Since the trains to Germany were all cancelled, Salzburg had to organise housing for the waiting refugees, which was provisory set up in the underground car park at the main station. Some NGOs announced the missing supplies via

social media platforms. Immediately some people would bring them the demanded goods, which shows great hospitality and helpfulness in parts of the Austrian society. The local youth scouts even provide a child-day-care throughout the whole day.

Unfortunately, there are parties and organisations that use the difficult, challenging and chaotic situation to instigate the society against refugees and feed the nationalistic Austrians with prejudices about foreign people coming to us. Violence against foreigners has increased and rightist parties have gained votes. Some people fear that our culture could change if we take in too many foreigners in our society and warn the Austrian population of “economic migrants” who would possibly take over the Austrian employment market. Those people wink at the fact that most refugees flee because of war, hunger or persecution. Hopefully those will reconsider like in the Beatles’ song “Help!”: “Now I find I’ve changed my mind and opened up the doors...”

» *“The ever-growing number of migrants and refugees taking the Balkan route is a consequence of a broader failure of EU migration and asylum policy on which Serbia and Macedonia have no control.”*

Although the situation for refugees in Austria is hard, it can be a deal worse in other countries like Hungary. Closing the borders is not the right way to release tension off the topic. The European Union has to discuss this topic on a Europe-wide and international basis. A solution to all the problems can certainly not be found, but it is worth trying to make the situation more bearable for both sides: the welcoming countries and the refugees.

Of course, there are many questions that should be discussed urgently – like the Dublin Regulation - or how we can integrate refugees in the Austrian education or employment system without Austrians feeling disadvantaged. As a conclusion, we can say that there is a will to help people who are in need in Austria. The refugees are grateful for everything we can give – aid and support with money, goods or time. We should help with the motive of gaining many new and interesting experiences and people that enrich our culture and lives.

Response to Syrian Refugees Influx in Turkey

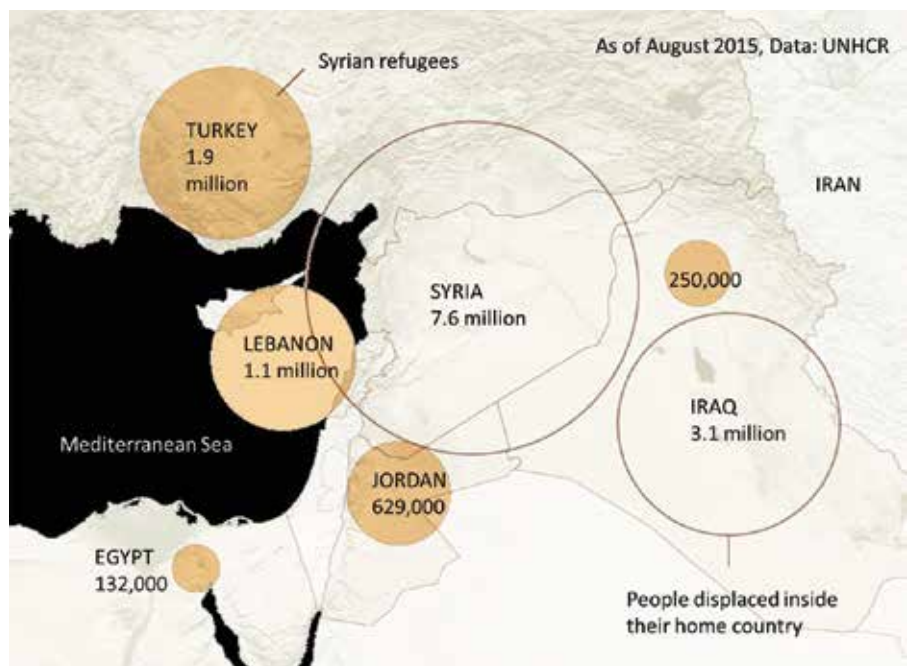
“Although Turkish Government had a open doors policy foreseeing that 100 thousand people would flee from the border towns, around 2 million people from Syria have found refuge in Turkey since 2011. It has built high quality camps which host 250 thousand people, the rest have settled in cities as urban refugees. In 2014, Temporary Protection Regulation has been issued, giving Syrian immigrants a special status, as Turkey does not recognise them as “refugees” legally. International and national NGOs are active from food security to education and livelihoods. YUVA has two community centers along the border working with international NGOs, focusing on psychosocial support, adult education and livelihoods.”

Syria: the 21st Century’s Worst Crisis

Syria’s civil war is in its fifth year with no end in sight. The conflict has claimed an estimated 200,000 lives and driven over 4 million Syrians to take refuge in neighboring countries, making it the largest refugee displacement since WWII. An estimated 7.6 million additional civilians have been displaced within Syria itself. Currently, 12.2 million people are in need of humanitarian aid in Syria and 5.5 million children are affected by the crisis.

Influx to European Union

Until the end of August, more than 200 000 Refugees have crossed Aegean Sea in 2015. Current rate is 20 000 people a week (end of August 2015). The majority (69%) are Syrians, Afghans (18 %), Iraqis and



Somalis fleeing conflict in their countries. Therefore it can be estimated that the majority of them are entitled to get refugee status in the destination countries.

The main route of the refugees crossing the Aegean Sea from

Turkey consists of Greek Islands, Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary to northern European countries such as Germany and Sweden. On September 2nd 2015, 3 year old Syrian boy Alan Kurdi was found at the coast of Bodrum, Turkey, whose image made global headlines after

» **“In October 2014, Turkish Parliament issued the Temporary Protection Regulation, which has guaranteed some rights for the Syrian refugees for a temporary period to be decided by the Government.”**

he drowned in the Aegean Sea. This incident brought the refugee issue to the agenda of many governments and citizens.

The first findings of researchers show that the most of the refugees trying to cross Aegean Sea have entered Turkey only weeks ago, thus using it as a transit country. They are mainly from rather “safe” places from Syria which are under control of Esed regime, whereas access to electricity, clean water, food, health and education is a problem for the whole country. Yet the main reason seems to be the lost hope for a peaceful and decent future after 4 years of war. On the other hand, many who have settled in Turkey state also their wish to live in the European Union countries, as Turkey with its temporary protection regime and without a real integration policy does not provide a vision for future either.

Response of the Turkish Government

Turkey had an “open doors” policy

when the crisis started in 2011, expecting around 100 thousand people to flee the armed conflict area. It has built high standard camps to host Syrian refugees, yet the number has increased to more than 1,9 million at the end of August 2015. Around 260 thousand refugees are currently residing in refugee camps, whereas 1,7 million live in the cities scattered around Turkey but mainly along Syria-Turkey border region.

The initial response of Turkish Government was to cover all needs of refugees by itself refusing help from international community, expecting the conflict to be over soon. This expectation did not become reality and in 2014 Turkish Government asked for foreign contribution to the efforts for covering basic needs of Syrian refugees, including food security and hygiene. According to Turkish Government officials Turkey spends around USD 1 billion to cover the needs of the refugees annually.

In October 2014, Turkish Parliament issued the Temporary Protection Regulation, which has guaranteed some rights for the Syrian refugees for a temporary period to be decided by the Government. According to the Regulation registered Syrian refugees are entitled to free public health care, free entry to public schools and universities. The Regulation also gave the Council of Ministers the authority to issue working permits and to define the working areas and geog-

raphy where these permits would be valid. Yet, until today these areas could not be defined by the Government, general elections and failure to establish a new Government has stalled this process. No real progress is expected until a stable Government is established, probably after November 2015.

The practical absence of working permits affect the resilience of 1,7 million refugees drastically as they have costs such as rents and utilities. This also creates a barrier on the way to social cohesion.

NGO – INGO Response

Many international and national humanitarian aid organisations have responded to the crisis. In 2013, some also have gained permission to locate their bases for cross-border assistance in south-eastern Turkey and consequently started to work for refugees in Turkey. The organisations include United Nations bodies such as UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, UNFPA, WFP and nearly all international humanitarian aid organisations. Disaster Management Directorate (AFAD) and Red Crescent were the main actors affiliated with the Turkish Government. National NGO’s include humanitarian aid and refugee organisations, many affiliated with international NGOs.

The initial response was focused on emergency aid, meaning food security, winterization and hygiene as such. Psychological first aid and psychosocial support to the most



vulnerable such as children and sexual and gender based violence victims followed the first material help. Recreational activities, non-formal and informal education activities have begun to be provided later. Currently the task in front of NGO community is to find innovative solutions for livelihoods and resilience of refugees and host community.

Yuva Association (YUVA)

Yuva Association was established in 2010 with the aim to bring together the concepts of adult education, nature and human rights and conducts advocacy activities and projects.

YUVA takes measures for sustainable lifestyles, poverty eradication and democratization through adult education and promotes participatory teaching methods.

YUVA's Syrian Refugees Program

The main objective of Syrian Refugees Program conducted since April 2013 is to empower Syrian community and the local people through non-formal adult education, to develop and implement psychosocial support program especially for Syrians' emotional and cognitive well-being, to improve and strengthen professional skills through vocational trainings and income generating activities, and to increase the dialogue and solidarity between Syrian refugees and the local people through social activities.

In the framework of Syrian Refugees Program, YUVA has established two Community Centers in Kırkhan and Nizip. Yuva Community Centers provide services under two main headings:

1. Community protection and

support activities including case management, awareness raising sessions, social counseling, legal aid, community mobilization; language courses; computer trainings; skills development courses;

2. Training Activities that contribute income generation and livelihood of Syrian population in Turkey including language, ICT, vocational trainings.

In these Community Centers there are also spaces for children where YUVA provides early childhood services for the infants of participants and also drama, drawing, photography workshops for children.

When looked into the demographics of the beneficiaries who participate in the activities in these centers, it's seen that they are mostly women. Women composes 73 percent and men composes 27 percent of total actively participated people. Syrians composes 74 percent and Turkish people composes 26 percent of total actively participated people.

From 2013 till May 2015, more than 13000 people have been reached and 8000 people have been actively participated in courses and social activities. In the 2014/2015 period, in Kırkhan Community Center:

- 1644 youth and adult participated in the language courses regularly.

- 1158 youth and adults partic-



“Turkey had an “open doors” policy when the crisis started in 2011, expecting around 100 thousand people to flee the armed conflict area.

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ipated in vocational orientation workshops, vocational courses (incl. PC) and courses in key qualifications.

- 256 children from 3 to 6 years have benefited from the pre-school courses offered specifically for them.

- A total of 4788 people participated in the offerings of the Kırıkhan Community Center.

YUVA has opened a new Community Center in Nizip at the beginning of March 2015. Until May 2015, almost 1200 people have been reached and 600 people have been actively participated in the activities of Nizip Community Center. In two months period:

- 188 children (7-14), 49 adolescents (14-18), and 130 adults actively attend to the language courses.

- 39 (adults) Active participants to handcrafts, 20 active participants to nursery assistance, 15 active participants to hair dressing, 21 active participants to sewing, 70 (11 youth, 29 children -30 adults) active participants to ICT courses

- 52 Children benefited from early childhood services. 11 children and 5 youth attended to study support

- 14 individuals were referred to Psychological Support and Mental Health Centres. Nizip Community Centre staff received various trainings on psychological first aid, trauma, self protection, and child protection.

Cooperation with NGOs

In order to support the activities in question, YUVA is cooperating with various national and international organisations. The first operation YUVA has conducted regarding Syrian refugees was a cooperation with DVV International, an international adult education organisation and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe, a humanitarian aid organisation, both with headquarters in Germany. Kırıkhan Community Center has been established in 2013 via this cooperation to serve the Syrian refugee community of 35 000 people and the local community of 95 000.

YUVA continued to enlarge its services by cooperating with International Medical Corps to open a second Community Center in Nizip in 2014 with similar population characteristics like Kırıkhan.

In addition, together with DGRV, The Association of German Cooperatives, YUVA has provided Syrian Refugees trainings on establishing social enterprises, legal counseling together with American Bar Association and mediation trainings to both communities and social workers together with Inmedio from Germany. YUVA has also collaborated with national NGOs such as Support to Life Association and Community Volunteers Foundation. In October 2015, YUVA will initiate a new program with GIZ, German International Economic Cooperation Agency, on vocational training, livelihoods and women cooperatives.

Lastly, YUVA has partnerships with UN agencies as well. Together with United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA), YUVA works on youth centers for refugees and host community and collaborates with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on capacity building of social workers. A new project is under way together with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to establish child friendly spaces for urban refugee children.

The EU, Erdoğan and Merkel, an imaginary World



“The fear of refugees and the support being hoped for from Erdoğan will not allow the EU to utter this truth. But all it will allow this: The EU does not treat Turkey like a strategic partner. Turkey is a partner to the West to the same degree that Egypt is. It’s functional and tactical!”

Last Thursday October 15, following an 1.30 hour-long meeting by an incoming team headed by the Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans and Erdoğan, it was announced that an agreement was reached on an action plan with Turkey on the Syrian refugee crisis. With few exceptions, the Turkish media presented the deal as though it had been final. We were almost joined

the EU! The truth of the matter is different. Let’s have a closer look. Startled by the Syrian refugee influx the EU panicked. During summer meetings it was agreed that Turkey should be approached. But just as it often does in this kind of situation, the EU aimed for the impossible. Roughly speaking, they said, “Let’s give Erdoğan cash, he keeps the refugees in Turkey and takes back the ones that have arrived here.” Ankara added visa

exemption and restarting the EU accession talks in the deal.

However, the deal is a draft from beginning to end. Every word of it must be approved by EU Member States, as asylum and migration issues are not federal policy that is in the scope of responsibility of the European Commission, but rather an inter-governmental policy that is under the control of 28 European capitals. So are the \$ 3 billion

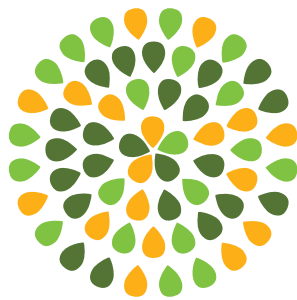
promised to Ankara; the revival of the accession talks as well as the visa exemption. And in the European Council's final declaration, which was published after the Ankara deal (EUCO 26/15), it is clearly stipulated that every clause is subject to the approval of member states as well as to previous Council decisions on Turkey's negotiation framework.

And now onto the dreams! EU's immoral demands on containing in and readmitting back refugees, and offering money to Turkey are unfeasible. As I have always emphasized, a person who has decided to leave a place can't be held back even if you were to tie him/her down. And in the end, most of those whom leave Turkey are well-educated Syrians who cannot see a future for themselves there, in the sheer absence of a refugee policy in Turkey. The readmission agreements look nice on paper; however, its application rate in the world is less than five percent. And in order for Turkey to become "a safe country of asylum" it must lift its current geographical limitation to the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention refusing thereby the refugee status to those coming from elsewhere than Europe! And the Euros mentioned can only be channeled to Turkey through UN specialized bodies and expert non-governmental organizations. Turkey has not agreed on this formula since the refugees have begun to arrive; as it means transparency, auditing and control.

In this ridiculous bargain, the Turkish side too had requests. Despite that the fact that it is a candidate country Turkey has not been invited to EU summits since the time of former French President Nicolas Sarkozy. This is the EU's shortcoming and certainly not a favor they have bestowed upon Turkey. Regarding visa exemption, the matter seems to be stuck between a rock and hard place. When taking into consideration the dire state of Human Rights and freedoms in Turkey, this would translate into a large influx of Turkish refugees into the EU. The paradox of opening their doors to Turkish refugees while trying to shut them on Syrian ones... And lastly the condition of the opening of five chapters to negotiation talks. Placing the fate of the negotiations as an addendum to such a matter is, simply put, imprudence. And the chapters that are being asked to be opened are another paradox themselves. The opening of the chapters on Judiciary Fundamental Rights and Justice, Freedom, Security has been requested by the European Commission and Turkish civil society for years. The EU Member States never sided with lifting of the Cyprus veto. Had these chapters been open to negotiation, the rule of law wouldn't be in such dire state now. EU countries didn't even care about this fact. And the best irony is that Turkey's lifting of its geographical limitation is a condition of the Justice, Freedom, and Security chapter!

In light of the given conditions and what I have explained above, it is necessary to know that both sides will be hard-pressed to have any luck in having their demands and expectations met and this comedy will only be of benefit to the Justice and Development Party (AKP). For info, Chancellor Merkel visited Turkey following after the Commission to energize the deal, she got a "no" from her sister party CSU to the opening of new chapters.

The Commission's annual Progress Report, which keeps record of Turkey's pathetic EU membership negotiations, was slated to be announced on Oct. 14th; it is continually postponed. The report will list, one by one, the appalling political state we are currently in. What is unknown is the emphasis on the fact that the Copenhagen Political Criteria, which is a prerequisite to commence negotiations, is no longer being fulfilled by Turkey despite having been in negotiations for 10 years! The fear of refugees and the support being hoped for from Erdoğan will not allow the EU to utter this truth. But all it will allow this: The EU does not treat Turkey like a strategic partner. Turkey is a partner to the West to the same degree that Egypt is. It's functional and tactical!



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