

Muslim migrants in Europe: A challenge to the policy of the state

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Although there have been Muslims in Western Europe for ages - including foreign traders, diplomats and students - they have never before been present on such a large scale as they are now. There are no authoritative maps of the distribution of Muslims in Europe or counting systems that warrant reliable statistics about the precise number of Muslims. According to the U.S. Department of State Annual Report on the International Religious Freedom 2003, more than 23 million Muslims reside in Europe, comprising nearly five per cent of the population. The overwhelming majority of Muslims - approximately three quarters of the total - are living in Western Europe as first and second-generation immigrants.

The largest Muslim group consists of Arabs, especially North Africans. The second group consists of Turks, although a portion of these Turks is ethnic Kurds, originating from Turkey. Although

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the Turkish presence is generally identified with Germany, Turks are also present in most European countries. The levels of their concentration differs, however. The third large group of Muslims in Europe consists of those originating in the Indian sub-continent, especially Pakistan. According to the International Organization for Migration, 500,000 immigrants - mainly, family reunification cases and 400,000 asylum seekers arrive in Western Europe each year (World Migration Report 2000, 195). Muslims also constitute a significant number of Western Europe illegal immigrants (between 120,000 and 500,000 arrive in Europe annually (Migration Policy Issues no. 2, 2003, 2).

Since the 1950s, Britain, France and the Netherlands have experienced postcolonial immigration. Indians, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Caribbeans approached United Kingdom. France was popular with Morocco, Algeria and other North African countries. Netherlands attracted Muslims from Indonesia, Moluccans and Surinam. Their arrival in Europe coincided with the economic boom in the 1960s and 1970s. They were eligible for Dutch, British and French citizenship and were to a large extent

familiar with the language, norms and practices of the metropolises. Among these immigrants were significant numbers of higher-class representatives, which was a noteworthy difference to the next immigrant groups. Many other Muslim migrants were recruited under the guest worker scheme that was implemented in most Western European countries (until the mid 1970s), or came under family unification scheme or are the children of these recent immigrants. Islam first emerged as a social issue between Muslim communities and their host societies in Western Europe when European governments changed their immigration policies in response to the economic crisis of the 1970s. Family reunification plans, introduced by the European governments, actually forbid the arrival of the new male workers. Family reunification was a positive step towards integration with the host society: Muslim women and children appeared at the public scale. The second generation of the migrants placed their practicing of religion in the public sphere. Their Western education and influential public institutions allowed them to gain visibility. All the above-mentioned prerequisites were crucial in creating a generation and out-

look gap between first and second generation of migrants. The "first generation" of Muslims arrived from the countries where Muslims constitute a majority. The "second generation", however, was urged to cope with the novel minority status.

The Muslims' birth rate is more than three times that of non-Muslims (Caldwell 2000, 22). Muslim communities in Europe are considerably younger than the graying native population. Europe's "Generation X" and "Millennium Generation" include considerably more Muslims than does the continent's population as a whole (Mandaville 2002, 219-230). Would it mean the possible shift in values and norms of the younger generation with religion being top priority? If so, the broad inclusiveness of the religion in youth sub-culture could lead both to anti systematic movements (religious fundamentalism) and intro systematic (instiutalization of youth movements in the public sphere).

The next decade will definitely display the pattern of the possible de-secularizing of the youth. Muslims, which will comprise at least 20 per cent of the population by 2050 (up from 5 per cent today).

Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden demonstrate the most evident growth of immigrants and asylum seekers in Europe. It can be straightforwardly explained by more liberal rules for naturalization, which is generally obtainable after five years of residency (current levels of citizenship are 15 - 30%). Although being labor catchment's areas for Muslims immigrants, Spain and Germany offer far less favorable procedures for obtaining citizenship. Hence the percentage of Muslim citizens in Germany is approximately 15-20 (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 2001, 1-2). The Balkan wars and Turkish and Albanian out-migration provoked a substantial decline of the indigenous Muslim population in South Eastern Europe.

Socio-economic factors are also decisive in defining Muslim identity. The qualifications and educational level of the Muslim workers are relatively low. The participation of Muslim women in the workforce is limited not only in quantity indicators but also in some professional spheres, which are not allowed by the sharia practice.

Concerning geographic distribution, Muslims tend to prefer industrialized (most of them received technical education), urban areas. Muslims constitute 20 per cent of Malmo, 10 per cent of Oslo and Copenhagen (Haddad 2002, 110). Urbanized areas are the destination place due to the commonly more developed sense of multiculturalism as well as better labor market. Their settlement pattern is generally associated with poor, self-encapsulated neighborhoods. This often provoke the raise of a parallel, often hostile, culture, which avoids assimilation with the host society.

Hence, the identity of Muslims in Europe is marked by an isolationist model of behavior. The everyday contacts with the indigenous population are often minimal, Muslim communities often create a "world in itself" with its own hierarchical system. On the contrary, to the attempts of the government to control communal life of Muslims through state-established councils, they are more inclined to seek guidance by the means of electronic or printed media, satellite TV or other transnational media. Among the mediators, we find imams, teachers and preachers visiting Western Europe, as well as ulama,

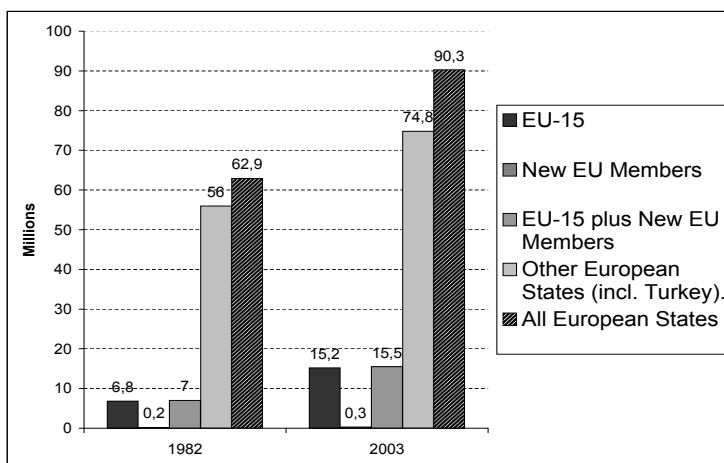


Figure 1. Muslim Presence in Europe in 1982 and 2003. Comparative table. (Current numbers from U.S. Department of State, Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2003; 1982 estimates from Kettani, 1986)

intellectuals and journalists in the "home" countries. The mobilizing potential of Islam is displayed through numerous requests for fatwa (authoritative opinion based on the norms of Islam). The range of questions differs significantly: from participation in elections to celebrating holidays in the host countries and e-dating.

At the early stages of Muslim migration, there was a dominant scholar attitude Muslims should always consider that their presence in host society is temporary; therefore, they had to conform to their own norms and practices. However, this attitude has transformed over precedent decades. Prominent Muslim scholars approached the contemporary minority status of the Muslim migrants and favored their integration as to achieve institutional goals. Conversely, their scholar opponents played the radicalism card. From the safety of Western cities, they counsel belligerence and inveigh against assimilation. They forbid shaking hands with women examiners at universities. They warn against offering greetings to "infidels" on their religious holidays, or serving in the armies and police of the new lands (Ajami 2004).

The role of the mosques, Qur'an courses and institutes of formal or informal Islamic education in forming Muslim identity should not be underestimated. State schools can be also "Muslim-favored" when including Islam studies in the curriculum. Mosque imams appear to be far more influential in the diaspora than in the home countries, at least in part because of the pastoral role and authority attributed to them

by local governments and other institutions, and in part because of the different functions the mosque fulfils in the diaspora. Turkey, Morocco, Algeria and Saudi Arabia make great efforts to keep their subjects under control through Muslim associations, centers and mosques. These states were particularly active in granting financial aid to the institutions of the Muslim newcomers in 1970s. Morocco and Algeria tried to extend this influence in the political sphere through their communities when seeking advantages in the Barcelona Conferences as well as Mediterranean Dialogue.

All the above-mentioned issues cause the reasonable question: is

Islam in Europe universalized or differentiated? Cultural and ethnical differentiation was common in the past. For example, the Turkish community was a model for its co-coordinated action among her members. The broad presentation of Turks in the Western European countries enabled this action and allowed Turkey to perform external influence.

First generation migrants, particularly from North African countries often visited their home countries and frequently sought spouses for their children there. Some even used the black market of the countries of origin to organize trade routes. In addition to this, political opposition that

Country of origin	Population	Muslim population	Turks
Austria	8.102.600 (1999)	300.000 (1997)	138.860
Belgium	10.192.240 (1998)	370.000	70.700
Denmark	5.330.020 (2000)	150.000	36.500
Finland	5.171.302 (1999)	20.000	2.334
France	56.000.000	4/5.000.000	350.000
Germany	82.000.000	3.040.000	2.280.000
Greece	10.000.000	370.000	70.000
Italy	56.778.031 (1991)	600.000 (2000)	10.000
Luxembourg	435.700 (2000)	3.800	.
Portugal	9.853.000 (1991)	35.000	.
Spain	40.202.160 (1999)	300.000	.
Sweden	8.876.611 (2000)	250. /300.000	20.000
The Netherlands	15.760.225 (1999)	695.600 (1998)	284.679
United Kingdom	55.000.000 (1991)	1.406.000	45.000 (Turkish Cypriots)

Table 1. Turkish population in European countries (Maréchal 2002)

was oppressed in the Middle East and North Africa countries gained support among diaspora in the Western Europe. Immigrant circles in Europe frequently served as sounding boards for political dissent that would normally be prohibited in the countries of origin. The Berber rights movement, initially suppressed in both Algeria and Morocco, first gained a foothold in France; Germany has provided fertile ground for the Turkish Islamists movement.

Nowadays, this process transforms to what the French expert Oliver Roy (Roy 2003, 63) has described as "recomunalization along supranational lines". The transnational flows are directed not inwards but outwards Western Europe. The distinct European Islam emerges with the institutions both at the local, national and transnational levels. There was a shift from transnational relations (between migrant communities and their homeland and relations between migrants of same cultural background living in various European countries to relations transcending ethnic and state boundaries. However, to talk about one Muslim community is misleading. The mentioned trends are often parallel and simultaneous, yet the universalistic transnational trend is dominant. Most prominent contemporary Muslim scholars in the social sciences, which investigate, for example, nationalism, feminism or Muslim cyber society are mainly citizens of Western countries. Hence, not only the movement of Muslim capital is directed outwards Europe, but also the flow of modern knowledge and ideas.

According to Oliver Roy, the Salman Rushdie affair contributed to the shift from diasporic to universalistic Islam. The September 11 attack was the direct outcome of the universalized Islam. The hijackers were the product of Europe itself, being educated and socialized in the West.

Europe's counter terrorism officials estimate that 1-2 percent of the continent's Muslims-between 250,000 and 500,000 individuals-are involved in some type of extremist activity. The radicalization of Muslims goes hand in hand with Westernization. The "born-again Islamists" are not the product of Middle Eastern intelligence services but of the cultural shock experienced because of harsh secularization and modernization conditions. As Olivier Roy has observed, the sociological background of Western Europe's violent Islamic militants fits a pattern common to most of the western European radical leftists of the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Germany's Rote Armee Faktion, Italy's Brigatta Rosso, and France's Action Directe). All the radical literature and Internet links stress the need to perform "peripheral" jihad, which can be easily applied to the case of Bosnia. Most of jihadi websites are based in the Western Europe, not only because of better technical equipment, but also owing to the radical leadership, eager to export Islamist revolution from the safety of Western breeding ground. Milan, one of the primary cultural centers in Europe is believed to be a logistics basis of the Islamists. Young Muslim radicals are recruited there and then conducted for further train-

ing. London, another cultural and intellectual heart of Europe will be soon transformed into basis "Café Medina" project, the Internet-connected network of mosques and radical Muslim associations. This very fact could convert Britain to from Albion to oriental "Al-Bion". "We will remodel this country in an Islamic image," claims Syrian-born Sheikh Omar bin Bakri, a foremost Islamic leader in Britain, who is active in "the struggle against racism and discrimination" to which the Muslims in Britain are supposedly subjected.

The favorable socio-economic position of the Jewish population in the Western European countries as well as Israeli-Palestinian conflict provokes fierce anti-Semitic attacks held by young Muslim radicals. According to the statement of Nathan Sharansky, minister of Israel, the number of anti-Semitic attacks and Jewish emigrants from France doubled between 2001 and 2003 (Broughton 2004). In the recent year, the Prime-minister of Israel even called for Jewish out-migration from France due to the threat posed by the Islamists. Even though this declaration was viewed by the French government as diplomatic *mauvais ton*, it raised the emigration indicators of Jewish population.

Growing Muslim presence contributed to the spread of the radical right-wing parties in Europe (e.g. Flemish Block), which speculated on the common fears and misperceptions. The Europeans provoked the raise of the Muslim radicalism themselves by granting support to the far right leaders and maintaining stereotypes in the everyday life. According to Oliver Roy

(Roy 2003, 16), the decision of the Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn to enter the politics was affected by the speech of a Moroccan-born imam who called homosexuals "sick people". For the part of the imam, it was a way to exclude homosexuals from the harsh norms of sharia. The pronouncement of Switzerland's People's Party to close the doors to migration was the easiest but not the most effective mode of expression of the frustration with the failure of the government migration policy.

The brand new type of xenophobia has emerged. It was the British who coined the term for it - Islamophobia. In 1997, there was a very famous report by the Runnymede Foundation, which is now quoted by everyone on Islamophobia. This report tried to investigate various kinds of discrimination faced by Muslims in British society. The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, while analyzing situation in the Muslim communities in 2001 in the five European cities (Aarhus, Bradford, Mannheim, Rotterdam and Turin) emphasized the need for local initiatives which are able to create positive social climate and the atmosphere of mutual understanding.

However, the European politicians are actively taking into consideration the influence the events on the international arena could have on the Muslim citizen. These political calculations could have been decisive in forming the position of the German and French President on the situation in Iraq. Due to their minority status as well as specific implications of Islam, Muslims stay disconnected

politically, priority being given to apolitical concerns, such as family or religion. With the exception of Denmark and Belgium, Muslims are highly underrepresented. While the parties based on the ethnic criteria sometimes proved a success, the parties based on the religious component - Islam, actually failed. Muslim population in Europe used to lean to left-of-center parties, particularly at the first stages of migration, owing to the welfare programs, attractive to the Muslim minorities as they were deprived of the majority of the socio-economic rights. With the raise of entrepreneurship among Muslims as well as obtaining basic citizenship rights, there could be a shift in their preferences toward right-of-center parties. Yet, most likely the representatives of the far right would try to pass up this possible cooperation.

Muslim presence redefined the painful issue of the place of religion in the public life, which is especially significant for France. The most evident example is the current headscarf issue. France is placing great value on the secular institutions; therefore, the public practicing of the religion is viewed as posing a threat to the fundamental principles of the state. "Islam question" provoked debates on the status of ethnicity in the UK and status of nationality in the UK. Even though Europe has been successful in assimilating previous non-Muslim flows of migrants (of Far Eastern and South-Eastern Asian origin), the situation is significantly dissimilar with the current wave of Muslim migration. Consequently, the European society should seek alter-

native ways of integration, since some prominent researchers (e.g. Lewis and Huntington) highlight that all spheres of the life of the Muslim, including political, economic, social, are subordinate to the norms and principles of Islam. Even though Europeans are more accustomed to the secular definition of Westphalia state, through social tolerance they should seek a way of mutual fruitful dialogue with Muslims.

European states are put under pressure both owing to the expansion of the EU structures and to the inner "corrosion" of the native society because of immigrant influx. This double pressure contributes to the growth of nationalist sentiments, which is obvious in case of the negative results of the various EU referenda.

Finally, Muslims assisted in redefining European identity, putting it aside from materialistic attitudes. The hotly debated issues on the place of religion in the European Constitution mark the return to the original European values.

The pessimistic scenario of the Muslim presence in Europe foresees the intense out-migration of native Europeans, their cultural and religious institutions. The Vatican could be easily relocated to Buenos Aires or Manila. Under the Koran, it is the duty of every believer constantly to strive to expand the borders of Dar al Islam, and every peace treaty with unbelievers can only be a "Hutna", a tactical truce. The fundamentalist view is that any part of the world that has ever been part of Islam must be so again. This would include Spain, Portugal, Southern Italy, Sicily, all the Balkan coun-

tries, most of southern Russia and Ukraine. (Reingold 2004).

Some researchers propose to fill needed jobs by increasing immigration from Eastern Europe (Poland, Russia, Bulgaria, etc.), and from non-Muslim Asia, and Latin America. Spain is now encouraging the arrival of new citizens from the many unemployed Argentines and Mexicans. Romanians are replacing Arab workers in Israel. There may well be a difference between "old Europe" and "New Europe" on this score. It is highly possible that there will be less tolerance of this threat among those who have recently regained their freedom.

The optimistic scenario anticipates the origin of Euro-Islam, composed of Western culture and Islamic orthodoxy. It also predicts broad Muslim involvement in electoral processes, political parties, economic life and achievement of social mobility. The European governments should avoid nationalizing and secularizing Muslim institutions. Both Europeans and Muslim migrants should overcome the wish to pursue status quo in the already established relations.

The foreign policy implications are supposed to be based on the assumption that Muslims pay considerable attention to Israeli-Palestinian, Iraq and Bosnia conflicts. The level of this attention is visualized not only by the financial support, but also the coordination of action from the European logistic centers. The politicians should always take into consideration the effect of the policy toward these conflict zones both on the election bulletin and simply on

the "Muslim street". They should avoid bonding their foreign policy to the American own directions, since the image of America is not very positive in the Muslim world. European governments can also try to moderate a dialogue with the extremist Muslim groups, with Belgium being a successful candidate to fulfill this task. European community is advised to further implement strategies for Islamic "near abroad", such as "A Secure Europe in a Better World" and "Wider Europe - New Neighborhood". Europeans should take into consideration the possible outcomes of the proliferation of the arms of mass destruction as well as black market operations, which are common in the Middle East and North Africa.

Many analysts consider Crimea as potential hotspot of Ukraine. The reason for such undesirable script is the Crimean Tatar community on the peninsula. As some Ukrainian politicians predict, rapid growth of the Tatar population, insularity of its social structures, sibling connection Tatars, Turkey and other Muslim countries will in some time result in Ukrainian Kosovo (Romanenko, Dremov 2003).

The Crimean Tatars are a Turkic-speaking, Sunni Muslim people who trace their origins to the Crimean peninsula (now southern Ukraine). In addition to residing in the historic homeland of Crimea (where a population of 270,000 comprises 11.9 percent of the total population) and places of former exile such as Uzbekistan, there are large populations of Crimean Tatars in Turkey where they number over five million, Bulgaria (10,000), Romania (40,000),

the United States (6,000) and Germany (unknown) (Lederer 2000).

The colonial period witnessed one of the most dramatic out-migrations in European history. The Crimean Tatar population left in a series of waves, culminating in a mass migration after the Crimean War of 1853-56. According to some sources, this wave may have reached 200,000 of the 300,000 Tatars then living in Crimea. The Russian appropriation of the Tatars' land, together with the oppressive conditions of the new regime, are two of the factors that made the Tatars willing to leave. The presence of linguistic, religious, and cultural kin across the Bosphorus in Turkey provided added incentive.

The national content before the forced migration of the Crimean Tatars was the following is described in Figure 2.

Tatar collaboration with the German regime is one of the most controversial topics in Soviet history. The Crimean Tatars were charged with engaging in punitive expeditions against the Soviet partisans; participating in the German self-defense battalions; and providing intelligence services for the German and Romanian occupation. However, it has since been recognized that Crimean Tatar participation in the German battalions was not necessarily voluntary, often being secured at gunpoint. It must also be added that severe hunger and disease in the Soviet ranks led people of all nationalities to desert and join the Germans.

On May 18, 1944, 191,044 of Crimean Tatars were loaded onto trains for livestock. Since most of

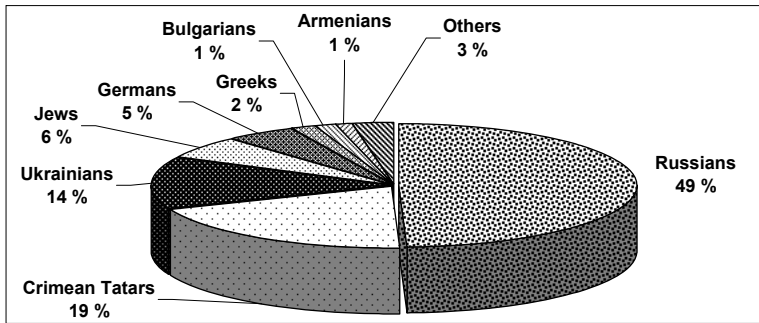


Fig. 2. National content of the Crimean population

the able-bodied men were still at the front, the majority of deportees consisted of women, children, and the elderly. The point of their destination was Ural Mountains and Soviet Central Asia, primarily Uzbekistan. Not only were they deprived of food and sanitation, the Crimean Tatars were not allowed to give the dead a Muslim burial and they were thrown out of the trains. When they arrived, the Tatars were interned under forced-labor conditions in what is referred to as the "special settlement" system. In the first three years, according to conservative NKVD estimates, approximately 22 percent of the population perished from infectious diseases, malnutrition, and dehydration. According to Crimean Tatar accounts, however, the losses are much higher, consisting of 46 percent or approximately half the population.

In 1956, the special settlement system was dismantled and many of the Crimean Tatars in the Urals relocated to Central Asia to be closer to Crimean Tatar kin and other Muslims. A decree absolving the Tatars of mass treason was not issued until 1967. This sparked many Tatar families to try to return to Crimea, but authorities in Mos-

cow had stipulated that while they were free to move about, they should not be allowed to obtain a propiska (residence permit) or become employed in Crimea. Beginning in the summer of 1965, there was an almost uninterrupted presence of Crimean Tatar delegates in Moscow. As a result of the Tatars' agitation to return, the Soviet authorities dealt major repressive blows. Crimean Tatars suspected of disloyalty to the Soviet Union were arrested, tried, and imprisoned. Even as the Soviet regime attempted to portray the activists as petty thieves, and sometimes imprisoned them with regular as opposed to political criminals, the Crimean Tatars built their movement along peaceful, democratic lines as a movement for human and national rights.

A pivotal moment in the National Movement came in 1978 when a Crimean Tatar man named Musa Mamut protested their condition. He had been denied registration at his home and imprisoned for "violation of the passport regime." Upon returning from prison, he was again threatened with imprisonment. Mamut decided he preferred death to losing the freedom to live in his homeland. Therefore, when the authorities

came to take him for questioning, he immolated himself in front of his home. After his death, Mamut became a martyr and a model.

In July 1987, over 2,000 Crimean Tatars, from all parts of the Soviet Union held a series of highly visible demonstrations in Moscow. Their protest registered in the international news and sparked numerous letters on their behalf from other dissidents. The Crimean Tatars began repatriating on a massive scale beginning in the late 1980s and continuing into the early 1990s. The population of Crimean Tatars in Crimea rapidly reached 250,000 and leveled off at 270,000 where it remains as of this writing. There are believed to be between 30,000 and 100,000 remaining in places of former exile in Central Asia.

While the vast majority of the Tatars remaining in Central Asia still hope to return, political and economic conditions prevent them. A flooded real estate market makes it difficult for Tatars to sell their homes in Central Asia and rampant inflation in Ukraine makes it close to impossible to construct or purchase new ones. New border and customs regulations complicate relocation.

Despite the successful repatriation of over half the population, the Crimean Tatars' struggle for full repatriation and a full restoration of their rights is not complete. Battles for representation in the Crimean legislature as well as disagreements about suffrage and citizenship have characterized the last decade. The present state of affairs represents deterioration from the situation beginning in the mid-1990s when the Crimean Tatars

held a quota of fourteen seats in the Crimean Parliament. In 1998, there was a series of mass demonstrations protesting the Crimean Tatars lack of voting rights (linked to citizenship) in what is now the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC). The citizenship issue has been largely resolved but the issue of representation remains complicated by the Tatars minority status. As of 2001, the Crimean Tatars still comprise only 11-12% of the population. One of the more significant political victories came in 1998 when two prominent Tatar political leaders, Mustafa Dzhemilev and Refat Chubarov, were elected to the Ukrainian Upper Parliament. Complicating the political difficulties has been the increasing criminalization of the Ukrainian economy and the proliferation of criminal groupings. The Crimean Tatars' primary objectives are government sponsored return of the Crimean Tatar people to Crimea; full restoration of their rights and property; recognition of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis as the official representative body; and representation of the Crimean Tatars in the Crimean Parliament. In addition to a full political rehabilitation and repatriation to the homeland, the Crimean Tatars are engaged in revitalizing their religion, language, and culture (Osmanov 2003, 37).

To sum up with, the obstacles experienced by the Ukrainian repatriates significantly differ from the complexities faced by the migrants to Western Europe. Lack of the institutional basis, fierce economic conditions and speculations of the Ukrainian politicians provoke growing Crimean Tatar

discontent with the state policy. This in turn permits the Muslim spiritual governmental and non-governmental organizations of Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran to spread their influence to Crimean peninsula, which can pose serious threat to the national security of Ukraine.

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