Restricting Turkish marriage migration? National policy, couples' coping strategies and international obligations

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Abstract
Marriage migration has become the most common form of immigration from Turkey to the Netherlands. The Dutch government increasingly pursues restrictive admission policies for the immigration of partners from non-EU countries. This article shows that the tightened income and age restrictions were to some extent successful in limiting Turkish marriage migration. It is also demonstrated, however, that the power of the state to control this migration flow is constrained by two main factors: coping strategies of Turkish couples and international obligations, including the Association Agreement.

Keywords: Marriage migration, migration policy, coping strategies, The Netherlands, Turkish migrants.

Introduction

Among the countries in the European Union, the Netherlands has one of the highest numbers of residents originating from Turkey (cf. Milewski & Hamel, 2010). In the Netherlands, residents of Turkish[1] origin constitute the largest ethnic community, forming part of the four largest migrant groups often referred to as the 'traditional four'.[2] In 2011, about 389,000 first and second-generation Turks[3] were living in the Netherlands, comprising 2.3% of the total population.[4] Statistics Netherlands (CBS) forecasts that about 500,000 residents of Turkish origin will be living in the country by 2060 (Stoeldraijer & Garssen, 2011).

As the opportunities for legal labour migration have become very limited since the 1973 oil crisis, marriage migration has become the most common form of immigration from Turkey to the Netherlands (Lucassen & Penninx,

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[1] In Turkey, there are different ethnic groups (e.g. Kurds, Zaza, Arabs, etc.). In this article terms like residents of 'Turkish' origin, 'Turkish' migrants, or 'Turks' are used for narrative purposes and refer to all ethnic groups originating from Turkey.

[2] The traditional four migrant groups are: Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans.

[3] About 197,000 and 192,000 respectively (Source: Statistics Netherlands, www.cbs.nl). There is also a third generation of Turks (who are born in the Netherlands with both parents born in the Netherlands, but with at least one grandparent born in Turkey); however, this group is registered as native Dutch in the Dutch statistics.

[4] Source: Statistics Netherlands, http://www.cbs.nl.

1997). The roots of Turkish migration to the Netherlands lie in the 1960s, when several West-European countries, including the Netherlands, recruited large numbers of international 'guest-workers' from Mediterranean countries to meet their demand for unskilled labour. Some of those recruited, including Turkish nationals, decided to stay in the host country on account of the rather unfavourable economic situation in their origin countries at the time (Kullberg & Kulu-Glasgow, 2009). Many subsequently brought their wives and children to Western-Europe in the mid-1970s and early 1980s.

As a result of concerns regarding the socio-economic position of the new ethnic minorities, the Dutch government increasingly started to employ restrictive admission policies (Van Amersfoort, 1999). These initial restrictions, however, could not prevent that family reunification was increasingly complemented with marriage migration involving newly established couples. It turned out that the majority of the children of the Turkish labour migrants opted for a spouse from the home country "- often from the parents' region of origin (Hooghiemstra, 2003) – and began bringing them to the Netherlands in substantial numbers. In 1983, the government tried to regulate and limit this continuing immigration by introducing income criteria for the second generation to 'import' a spouse (Bonjour, 2009).

Since then, the policies were revised several times, but as in many other EU countries (e.g. Andreas & Snyder, 2000; Lavanex 2006; EMN, 2010) the general line is to pursue restrictive admission policies for the immigration of partners from non-EU countries. Right-wing and centre-right political parties in particular consider 'non-western'[5] marriage migrants, including those from Turkey, a problematic group due to the lag in social and economic integration among ethnic minorities from these countries. The Minister for Immigration, Integration and Asylum during the centre-right Rutte I cabinet (2010-2012) stated his mission as follows:

> '*Because of the arrival of underprivileged family members of people legally staying in the Netherlands, chain migration can occur where successive generations immigrate to the Netherlands. Consequently the integration process lags behind again and again. Therefore the rules and requirements are tightened*'[6].

This article focuses on the outcomes of the tightened income and age requirements introduced by the Dutch government in 2004. We show that the new restrictive measures were – at least initially – to some extent successful in limiting Turkish marriage migration. Yet we also show that the power of the state to control Turkish marriage migration was constrained by two main factors, one originating 'from below' (coping strategies of Turkish couples) and one originating 'from above' (international obligations increasingly originating

[5] Migrants from Africa, Latin America and Asia, excluding Indonesia and Japan; on the basis of their socio-economic and cultural position, migrants from the latter two countries are considered 'western' (www.cbs.nl).

[6] http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/regering/het-kabinet/bewindspersonen/gerd-leers; November 2012; translation by the authors.

from the EU Directive on Family Reunification and the Association Agreement between the EU and Turkey). Furthermore, we show that the measures were not always successful in stimulating the integration of the Turkish minority, as the socio-economic improvement in the position of socio-economically disadvantaged couples, especially female sponsors, seemed to be mostly temporary and because future possibilities of improvement were compromised by the income or age requirement. The analysis is based on 50 interviews with international couples, concentrating on 18 interviews with Turkish couples, and a review of recent policy changes regarding immigrants from Turkey.

Restrictions in the Dutch marriage migration policy

In November 2004, the Dutch government tightened the requirements for the legal immigration of a partner (for 'family-formation') from outside the EU as follows:

- Both the person already residing in the Netherlands (the so-called 'sponsor') and the immigrating partner had to be at least 21 years old. Before this date the limit was 18.

- The sponsor had to earn at least 120% of the minimum wage[7] and have an employment contract for at least the following 12 months after the partner's application. Previously, the income limit was set at 100% of the minimum wage.

In the parliamentary documents of the time, where arguments justifying the above measures are presented, one can find various substantiations for the claim that the integration of non-western migrants is lagging behind. These substantiations especially relate to the poor education levels, employment situation and skills, social and cultural integration of Turkish and Moroccan marriage migrants (including limited social contacts with the native Dutch population and orientation towards own community and language), and the poor socio-economic position of women from these groups. It is argued that these characteristics will affect the position of the future generations of these two minority groups, but that they also have a negative impact on the Dutch social welfare state. The abundance of group-specific examples in parliamentary documents suggests that the new restrictions were largely meant to restrict Turkish and Moroccan marriage migration. The parliamentary documents also reveal policy makers' assumptions about how these measures would 'work', and what the expected results would be. In general terms, it was expected that these measures would limit marriage migration by 45% (Nota van Toelichting (NvT), Staatsblad, 2004, nr. 496; TK 2004-2005, 19637, no.873). It was moreover assumed that the tightened income and age re-

[7] Sponsors, including those between 21 and 23 years old, had to earn the minimum wage applicable to 23 years and older.

quirements would improve the socio-economic position of sponsors for the following reasons (NvT, Staatsblad, 2004, nr. 496):

- Due to the higher income requirement, sponsors would have an incentive to improve their job market position; this would especially apply for Turkish and Moroccan female sponsors.
- An improved socio-economic position of the sponsor would contribute to the immigrating partner's 'starting position', as he/she would be arriving in a more favourable socio-economic situation.
- Due to the higher age limit, sponsors could continue to study for a longer period of time as it would be impossible to import a partner from abroad at younger ages.
- Marriage migrants, especially women, would 'prepare' for their migration better.[8]
- Youngsters, especially women, would be able to take more independent decisions at age 21 [compared to 18] and would be able to resist family pressure for early/forced marriages.

These measures were part of a bigger policy package to regulate partner immigration from non-EU countries and to improve the integration of migrants from these countries. For example, since 2006 'non-western' immigrants aged between 18 and 65 years and planning to immigrate to the Netherlands are required to complete an oral and written exam in their countries of origin, where their basic knowledge of the Dutch language and society are tested (the so-called 'civic integration abroad exam' (cf. Wilkinson et al., 2008). After immigration, completing a second civic integration exam is required (cf. NvT, Staatsblad, 2006, nr. 645).

Role of social capital in coping strategies of migrants with 'unwanted' policy measures

It is likely that international couples at a socio-economically disadvantaged position who are confronted with stricter income and age requirements will react in different ways to these measures (Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2010 and 2011). It is known that people or households in a socio-economically disadvantaged position develop strategies to cope with the rules of welfare states (Snel & Staring, 2001). We argue that those who are strongly committed to continuing their relationships, and have sufficient resources, will develop strategies to cope with the above mentioned income and age restrictions to ensure the settlement of the immigrating partner in the Netherlands (we name

[8] It is not clear in the parliamentary documents what is meant by 'a better preparation'. Given the assumptions relating to sponsors, it may be deduced that this relates to the expectation that potential immigrants would continue with their education or work in the country of origin for a longer time.

these couples 'persisters'; see Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2010 and 2011). In doing so, they will make use of two types of capital: social and human capital. Some sponsors will probably try to improve their job market position (e.g. looking for a better paid job) by primarily relying on their human capital. Those who have less human capital will primarily utilise their social capital. Co-ethnic social networks consisting of bonds of kinship, friendship and/or shared community origin bind migrants in a complex relationship of social roles. These networks function as important sources of support, for example by providing information, advice, social and financial assistance (e.g. Bourdieu, 1985; Fawcett and Arnold, 1987; Massey et al., 1987) or by arranging employment, for instance helping to obtain better paid jobs, or in attaining more hours of employment (e.g. Massey et al, 1987; Aguilera & Massey, 2003; Curran & Rivero-Fuentes, 2003). In this manner, social networks build a self-perpetuating momentum in migration processes (e.g. Massey, 1990). There is evidence that the extent to which members rely on their networks depends on the socio-economic and political context in which these networks operate: in times of restrictive policies, social networks are increasingly made use of (Lim, 1987). Socio-economically more vulnerable migrant groups (like the young and the less educated) also rely heavily on their social networks to find a job during unfavourable economic circumstances (Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008). In addition, the degree of commitment to social networks (Lim, 1987), expectations regarding what it may provide, and support-seeking strategies may be culturally determined (Stewart et al., 2008). Research in the Netherlands shows that there is not only a strong social cohesion among the Turkish community (e.g. Staring, 2001), but also a strongly developed entrepreneurship (e.g. Rusinovic, 2006). These factors may be seen as two important 'ingredients' for providing support to and the 'survival' of persisting international Turkish couples in the face of restrictive Dutch admission policies.

Coping strategies of Turkish migrants with the 2004 measures

In 2009, the Research and Documentation Centre (WODC) and the Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) carried out a study evaluating the results of the 2004 increases in the income and age requirements (WODC/INDIAC, 2009). The first part of the study was based on quantitative data taken from the registration systems of the IND and Statistics Netherlands. The quantitative analyses assessed the impact of the tightened requirements on the level of marriage migration. These showed that the 2004 measures had reached the quantitative goal set by the government: there was a 37% decline in the total number of granted applications for marriage migration.[9] The decline was the most pronounced among the socio-economically more vulnerable groups, namely:

[9] Research period: sixteen months *before* and *after* November 2004; this period was chosen to exclude the possible immigration-restricting effects of the introduction of Dutch civic integration courses in the countries of origin in March 2006.

- *Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese sponsors* (number of granted applications in all three groups halved - 52% to 54%-, which was considerably more than the average decline).

- *female sponsors* (a decline by about 50% versus 32% among male sponsors); and

- *younger sponsors* (the share of sponsors younger than 28 years declined by half).

Among Turkish immigrants there is also a more general decrease in marriage migration. In 2002, more than 50% of the Turks married a Turk from Turkey; by 2011 this had dropped to about 17% (Loozen & Nicholas, 2012)[10]. About 80% of residents of Turkish origin still marry a partner from their own ethnic group, but there is a shift towards marrying someone already living in the Netherlands. This gradual trend, however, cannot explain the sudden decrease in marriage migration after the tightening of the admission requirements (see Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011).

The second part of the study had a qualitative nature. In-depth interviews were conducted with 50 international couples from various ethnic backgrounds. These were all persisting couples, i.e., eventually they all had been successful in getting a residence permit for the partner.[11] Of these, 18 were ethnically homogeneous Turkish couples.[12] During the interviews all couples were not only asked about their own coping strategies but also about strategies of couples with similar problems in their immediate networks, such as a family member or a close friend (we were not interested in mere 'hearsay'). In this way, some indirect information was obtained about couples who had failed to meet the admission requirements. All respondents were assured that the results would be presented anonymously. Respondents were very open-hearted in telling the interviewers about the ways they overcame the income and age requirements, which in some cases had a strong impact on their personal or family lives (e.g. psychological problems, tensions between the sponsors and the family-in-laws in Turkey who sometimes blamed them for prolonging the settlement of the partner in the Netherlands). Statements such as '*I am telling you this [the coping strategy] honestly, because the Dutch government forces us to do these kind of things, they don't want Moroccans or Turks. If I tell you my story maybe things will change and future couples will benefit from it*' were not uncommon (for more information on the method, see WODC/INDIAC, 2009; Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2010; Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011).

[10] Percentages relate to those who were married in 2002 and 2011.

[11] One-third of the interviews was conducted by the authors. The rest were conducted by interviewers who are specialised in conducting in depth-interviews. Interviewers were generally from the same ethnic background as the respondents. Aside from a few exceptions, the partners were interviewed separately.

[12] Distribution of the other couples were: Moroccan – Moroccan (12), Dutch– Thai (8), Dutch – South American (6), Dutch – Turkish or Moroccan (4), and other (2).

This article uses interviews with the Turkish couples to highlight the *types* of coping strategies these couples used to get a residence permit for the partner. We do not have the ambition of generalising the results by drawing conclusions about the prevalence of the strategies among all Turkish couples in the Netherlands. We do sometimes formulate hypotheses why some of the strategies appeared to be more common among the Turkish couples than among couples from other ethnic groups. However, we do not have the possibility to test these hypotheses, due to the nature of the data.

The minimum age requirement

Turks in the Netherlands marry at a younger age than Moroccans and the native Dutch (Van Praag, 2006; De Valk, 2006). Indeed, we found that of the 14 couples interviewed where one or both partners were under 21 years when the couple decided to live in the Netherlands, 10 were Turkish. These couples had to postpone the legal residence of the partner in the Netherlands for on average 2 to 2.5 years. There were a few young couples, all Turkish, where the immigrating partner spent the 'waiting time' in the Netherlands without a residence permit; these partners, however, were already staying illegally in the country when they met the sponsoring partners. During the 'waiting time' the young sponsors were also busy trying to meet the income requirement (see below). Some Moroccan and native Dutch sponsors similarly reported that couples in their immediate social networks sometimes chose to bring the foreign partner to the Netherlands without a residence permit because of difficulties in meeting the income requirement.

One Turkish sponsor reported an incidence of age fraud, where his brother, who lived in the Netherlands, married a girl from Turkey, younger than 21 years. In Turkey, he arranged papers showing that she was older than 21; the couple had applied for a residence permit with these papers in the Netherlands and settled without having to wait.[13]

The minimum income requirement

Sponsoring partners took different actions to meet the minimum income requirement; sometimes a combination of 'strategies' was used:

- *Negotiating with the employer for a real salary increase*

Two Turkish women with a high education (thus those who were 'rich' in human capital), negotiated with their current employers for a salary increase in order to meet the income requirement, and all ended up with a higher salary. It is possible that due to their relative scarcity on the job market, higher educated sponsors had such a possibility. For example, a Turkish sponsor working in the commercial sector warned her employer that she would quit her job

[13] There were also reports of young Turkish couples whose relationship did not survive the age requirement, or where the sponsoring partner was considering the option of 'importing' the partner to the Netherlands illegally until the partner would reach the required age, or through a student visa. In these cases other admission barriers (the income requirement and civic integration abroad exam) also played a role. We do not have information whether these strategies were actually applied later.

if she was not given the increase she demanded: *"Thanks to the income measure I started to earn a high salary. That is nice, but it was a lot of stress; but I have a very good position now".*

- *Negotiating for a fictitious salary increase*

Three Turkish sponsors (and also one native Dutch sponsor) also negotiated with their employers, but just for a salary increase 'on paper'. These sponsors had lower education qualifications (thus 'poor' in human capital). This informal way of coping with the income criteria occurred in various forms and contexts: negotiating for a fictitious salary increase after the partner's first application for a residence permit was rejected due to the insufficient income level, or after various rounds of job applications made the sponsor realise that earning the required income would be impossible. In all these informal arrangements, employers of the Turkish sponsors were of Turkish origin and sometimes a friend/acquaintance, either of the sponsor or his/her family. In these cases, the sponsor 'officially' received a higher monthly salary in the bank account, and repaid the difference with his/her original salary to the employer in cash. One sponsor even agreed to quit his job once his partner received the residence permit, as it was impossible for the employer to reduce the salary back to its original level. The father of a female sponsor with a secondary school diploma had arranged that she could 'work' fictitiously at his friend's firm in horticulture, until her partner got a residence permit. The Turkish sponsors who had opted for a salary increase on paper mentioned that such arrangements are possible because Turkish immigrants feel responsible for each other:

> *"I know at least four couples who did this. Even those with secondary education can't earn this money. The government wants to avoid that Turks marry with Turks and Moroccans with Moroccans. They know that many people actually 'earn' this money on paper. They know that many people arrange employment contracts through people they know. In every race people take care of each other".* [Turkish female sponsor]

In addition, two Moroccan couples and a couple with mixed ethnicity reported that they knew at least one couple in their immediate environment who used some form of income fraud so that the immigrating partner could get a residence permit.

- *Working more hours*

Some Turkish sponsors (five men and three women) decided to work more hours in their jobs to earn a higher income. There was an important difference among men and women, however: while men continued to work for more hours once their partners were in the Netherlands, female sponsors decreased the hours they worked or stopped working altogether once their partner got a residence permit and found a job. During the interviews, these women were either pregnant or had small children. This strategy led to a

structural improvement in the socio-economic position of the male sponsors, while for women the improvement seemed temporary.

- *Switching jobs*

Five sponsors, mostly women, switched to another job with a higher salary and/or to a job where they could get a stable employment contract (which is also part of the income criteria). In almost all cases, the new employer was of Turkish origin and/or the sponsors had found these jobs through their social networks. These women went back to their original jobs (e.g. a teacher with a temporary position) after working temporarily at a lower-skilled job to guarantee the residence permit of their partners, or they quit working altogether due to children.

- *Substituting work for education*

Some of the sponsors decided to abandon further education (or on the job training) to meet the income requirements: of the 11 sponsors who made this choice, nine were Turkish (slightly more men than women).[14] This ethnic pattern is probably due to a larger share of young Turkish couples in the sample, as mentioned above. Many of these Turkish sponsors relied on their social networks to find a 'suitable' job quickly. For example, a female sponsor decided to discontinue her higher education and began work at a supermarket of a Turkish acquaintance, where she could earn enough to apply for the residence permit for her partner. After the application was initially rejected as the income reported for such a job was considered unlikely, her employer changed her job on paper, after which the application was approved. Only a very limited number of these young sponsors completed their study – or still had the intention to do so – after their partners' immigration. The sponsors who quit their studies earned more in the short run, but in the long run would probably end up with a lower socio-economic status than they would have achieved if they had continued their studies.

Recent changes in Dutch admission policies

Although the Dutch admission policies have gradually become more restrictive towards marriage migrants from non-EU countries, both domestically and internationally they are also increasingly confronted by limits set by EU policies and other international legislation. In 2010, about half a decade after the introduction of the 2004 measures, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled that the Dutch income requirement of 120% of the minimum wage contravened the EU Directive on Family Reunification. An income requirement of 100% of the minimum wage was deemed permissible, but only as a 'reference amount'; in situations where applicants do not meet this requirement, applications must be assessed individually (Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011: 101). Consequently, the Dutch government lowered the income requirement to 100% of the minimum wage.

[14] The other two sponsors were of Moroccan and native Dutch origin respectively.

In addition, there are recent court judgements that are specific to the situation of Turkish migrants which constrain the Dutch state in restricting Turkish immigration. In 2009 the ECJ ruled that it was unlawful for the Dutch government to impose higher fees on Turkish migrants holding a work permit than on EU citizens in a comparable situation.[15] According to the 'stand-still' provisions of the Association Agreement [16], EU countries are not allowed to introduce new restrictions for Turkish workers residing legally in EU countries, nor for their family members. This was agreed, among other things, to gradually ensure the free circulation of Turkish workers in the European labour market (Oosterom-Staples & Woltjer, 2009).

Another judgement regarding the rights of Turkish migrants as 'potential EU-members' was taken by the Dutch Administrative High Court, in August 2011. The Court ruled that imposing obligations of civic integration on Turkish immigrants was in conflict with the Association Agreement. Since failing a civic integration exam has consequences for the residence permit and admission to the job market, it was ruled that such an obligation is a barrier to the free movement of Turkish labour migrants, and that Turkish migrants residing legally in EU countries must be considered equal to EU citizens who are not obliged to take this exam.[17] Subsequently, the Dutch government announced that, starting from August 2011, Turkish citizens applying for a regular residence permit cannot be required to take the civic integration abroad exam. In addition, Turkish migrants who already took this exam will be compensated for the costs associated with the exam (fees, travel and accommodation costs).[18] Similarly, starting from 1 January 2013, Turkish migrants, just like other EU citizens, are not required to take the civic integration exam in the Netherlands.

With a view to its national interests, the Dutch government intends to continue implementing restrictive admission policies for marriage migrants from non-western countries. In an attempt to harmonise European policy and to decrease the gaps between the European policy and national policy ambitions, the former Minister for Immigration, Integration and Asylum began to lobby within the EU to tighten the minimum requirements defined in the EU Directive on Family Reunification (e.g. increasing the income requirement, increasing the minimum age limit to 24, and introducing a minimum education requirement for the partners). Similarly, the current coalition (cabinet Rutte II) agreement, announced in November 2012, states that the govern-

[15] TK 2009-2010, 30573, nr. 48 (Official Document of the Dutch House of Representatives).

[16] Signed in September 1963 and enacted in January 1964, and complemented by the Supplementary Protocol (signed in November 1970 and enacted in January 1973) and decisions of the Association Council, especially 1/80, signed on September 19, 1980 and enacted on December 1, 1980) (Oosterom-Staples & Woltjer, 2009).

[17] http://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2011/08/16/turken-niet-verplicht-tot-inburgeren/; Letter of the former Minister of Immigration, Integration and Asylum to the Dutch Parliament, dated 31 October 2012.

[18] Letter of the minister for Immigration, Asylum and Integration to the Dutch House of Representatives, 31 October 2012, WBI/I&S 2012_0000601022.

ment will plead for a stricter EU policy for family reunification (including marriage migration) and will introduce new restrictions in its admission policy. So far, however, these attempts to influence EU law have been unsuccessful.

Conclusion

Marriage migration is still the most important type of Turkish migration to the Netherlands. The declining trend in marriage-migration is probably a result of a combination of factors, including restrictive admission policies and changing preferences of second-generation Turks concerning partner choice. There is no doubt that future policies and their outcomes will be determined by the interplay of concerns voiced by national governments meeting resistance by factors 'from below' (coping strategies) as well as from factors 'from above' (international obligations). The power of social capital among Turkish ethnic minorities, and their creativity in developing coping strategies, are reflected in the fact that although Turkish couples are formed at a relatively younger age than other couples, the 2004 restrictions did not affect them more than other groups.

In times of increasing globalisation and transnational relations, marriage migration is and will be an important component of Turkish immigration flows, not only to the Netherlands but also to other European countries. It has been argued that international cooperation in the European Union used to be a way for national governments to neutralise forms of domestic opposition (cf. Bonjour & Vink, forthcoming). Today, however, international agreements at the EU level mostly seem to constrain European governments in their aim to limit immigration. The constraining power of international relations on Turkish migration at the EU level is twofold. Firstly, Europeanisation of domestic immigration policies is a reality. In the Netherlands, but also in other EU-countries, tensions between national concerns and a harmonised EU policy are on the rise (Faist & Ette, 2007). Secondly, obligations resulting from the Association Agreement – which was originally based on Cold War conditions and the strategic position of Turkey as a NATO member (Cremasco, 1990) – is increasingly impacting Dutch admission policies. Consequently, the Dutch government has been forced to ease or adjust the admission conditions for Turkish immigrants. Within this context, the government is confronted by a dilemma, where domestically, Turkish marriage migrants are a target group of integration policies with real and perceived integration lags, while internationally, they are citizens of an ally and a potential EU member state. This dilemma is likely to increasingly confront other EU countries as well; a court case brought by a potential Turkish marriage migrant against Germany is pending.[19] Due to the 'newly' emerging rights of Turkish citizens, supported

[19] In 2012 a Turkish woman challenged the German language requirement to join her husband in Germany, arguing that this requirement was in conflict with the Association Agreement (Migration News Sheets, E-letter, December 2012, Migration Policy Group).

by their coping strategies, declining trends in Turkish marriage-migration to the Netherlands and other EU-countries may eventually be reversed.

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