

## Turkish migration in Europe: EU accession and migration flows

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### Abstract

This paper analyses the impact of Turkey's potential EU membership on emigration from Turkey to the European Union. We apply panel data estimators using the data on emigration from EU15 countries into Germany and the Netherlands in order to construct possible future scenarios of Turkish migration to the EU. Three scenarios of migration, pessimistic, realistic and optimistic (depending on the fears related to the expected impact of Turkish migration on the EU labour markets), are drawn and future migration from Turkey into Germany and the Netherlands during the next 25 years is discussed in detail. We conclude that Turkish EU accession, should it happen in the foreseeable future, will not have any serious consequences in terms of massive migration flows.

**Keywords:** Economics of migration; Turkey; EU enlargement; panel data; seemingly unrelated regressions.

### Introduction

Turkey always had a special place in European politics (see e.g. Marguiles, 1996; Muftuler-Bac, 1997; Krämer, 2000; or Heper, 2005). Although it signed an Association Agreement (“Ankara Treaty”) with the European Communities (EC) and became an Associate Member almost 50 years ago, Turkish EU accession still remains a troublesome question.

It has been shown that Turkish accession to the European Union would have considerable economic, institutional and social implications, both for Turkey and the European Union (EU). Sayek and Selover (2002), Sirkeci (2003), Derviş, Gros, Öztrak, and Işık (2004), Ulgen and Zahariadis (2004), Akkoyonlu (2010), Cohen and Sirkeci (2011), Biffl (2012), Tol (2012), Akkoyonlu (2012a, 2012b), or Sirkeci, Cohen and Yazgan (2012) demonstrated the positive effects of Turkish EU membership on trade, while Lejour et al. (2004), Flam (2004), Quaisser and Wood (2004), Lammers (2006), or most recently Glazar and Strielkowski (2010), Glazar and Strielkowski (2012), or

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Martin, Sirkeci and Stark (2012) analysed possible consequences of Turkey joining the EC or/and the EU concluding that it would lead to narrowing income differences. However, one of the most fundamental questions in the debate about Turkish EU membership is the issue of Turkish labour migration in Europe and its economic outcomes.

Our paper presents an analysis of economic factors and indicators that might determine Turkish migration in case that Turkey would join the EU. Based on the Sjaastad (1962), Harris, Todaro (1970), and Hatton (1995) human capital migration approach we apply the econometric tools employed in similar studies dealing with the prediction of migration flows from CEECs after the EU 2004 enlargement by, for example, Boeri and Brücker (2000) and Alvarez-Plata, Brücker, Siliverstovs (2003), and most recently, Glazar and Strielkowski (2010) and Glazar and Strielkowski (2012) in order to predict future migrations from Turkey into Germany and the Netherlands, two neighbouring European countries with large Turkish diasporas, and to the European Union respectively. Three scenarios of migration are drawn and the sensitivity of estimated coefficients on migration from Turkey into Germany and the Netherlands during next 25 years is discussed in further detail.

To the best of our knowledge, there has never been any similar analysis and extrapolations of possible Turkish migration to the EU, conducted in the migration research literature. This research is built on similar studies predicting eastern migrations to the EU after 2004. However, unlike those studies, it uses more recent data and takes into account the impact of world's economic and financial crises, and employs more advanced econometric techniques. Thence, we believe that this paper might contribute to the vast body of research literature on Turkish migration in Europe and become a reference point for relevant stakeholders and policymakers.

### **Origins of the Turkish labour migration in Europe: 1961-2011**

Turkey is a large country with the total population of over 75 million of people and GDP per capita in market prices several times lower than that of the EU. While Lammers (2006) calculated that Turkey's income per capita at market prices in 2015 would be just 20 % from the EU27 average, more recent calculations indicate that it might reach about 45-50 % of the EU15 average (see e.g. Akkoyunlu 2012a; Tol, 2012; or Sirkeci and Esipova, 2013). This disparity constitutes the main grounds for the fears of massive labour migration from Turkey to the EU, provided that the doors for Turkey would be wide open.

Turkish labour migration in Europe has a long history. After WWII, most of the Western European countries strived with rebuilding their economies. With labour being increasingly scarce, bilateral labour recruitment treaties were signed between Turkey and Germany (1961), the Netherlands (1964), Austria (1964), Belgium (1964), France (1965), and Sweden (1967) and providing European countries access to the vast pool of cheap labour force. Those labour treaties envisaged temporary labour contracts followed by the

return of Turkish workers equipped with new knowledge and skills (see for example Sayari, 1986; Sari, 2003, or Güngör and Tansel, 2006).

The recruitment of Turkish labour came to a halt after the 1973 oil crises. However, Turkish emigration to Europe continued in the 1980s and the 1990s due to family reunifications – most of the Turkish guest workers brought their families with them.

Martin, Midgley and Teitelbaum (2001) showed that there were about 3.5 million Turks living abroad in the late 1990s, and of those the majority residents in the EU (with 70 % of Turks in Germany). Sirkeci et al. (2012) reported that a total of 3,849,360 Turkish citizens were abroad by 2009. Turks in the EU live mostly in Germany (the estimates include between 2.6 million (see e.g. Inge, 2009) to 4 million individuals (see e.g. Haviland et al., 2010; or Akkoyunlu, 2012b)). If second-generation migrants are also taken into account (those born in Europe to parents born in Turkey), other considerable Turkish minorities can be found in France (about 459,000 individuals), the Netherlands (392,000) and Austria (around 350,000) (see e.g. Biffl, 2012; or Tol, 2012). Turks in Europe are represented by relatively young and dynamic individuals (the average age is 27.7 for men and 28.8 for women).

### **Turkish migration in Germany and the Netherlands**

In order to construct and analyse possible scenarios of Turkish labour migration in Europe, we decided upon choosing the case of Germany and the Netherlands, two neighbouring EU countries with the largest Turkish Diasporas. Both countries reveal the similar patterns relative to the Turkish migration, such as family reunifications, network effects and return migration, and both have good migration statistics.

At present, Germany is the largest target EU country for incoming Turkish migrations with a steady growth in absolute numbers of Turkish immigration and a peak around 2000 (in relative numbers the record has got its peak even earlier). In 1975, Turkish citizens constituted 26 % of all foreigners living in Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2007) and by the 1987 they reached the position of the most numerous group of foreigners in Germany.

In 2010, Turks constituted about 2.3 % of the whole population of the Netherlands (about 390 thousand first and second-generation Turks), although it is estimated that Turkish is spoken by as much as 700 thousand people (Statistics Netherlands, 2012). Although the Netherlands is a middle-sized country and its total population constitutes mere 20% of the total population of Germany, the importance of the Turkish migration in both countries is comparable and reveal similar trend – it is apparent that the incoming migration from Turkey is declining in recent years.

From the 1960s until the 2000s Turkish migration in Europe underwent several stages yielding a steady decline since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This trend is likely to be caused by cyclic character of migration and by the

economic situation in the EU and Turkey. Furthermore, recent EU enlargements in the 2000s caused higher competition between immigrants from the EU countries due to the increasing amounts of migrants from the EU new Member States.

All of the above allow us to assume that possible Turkish EU accession, or even opening of EU the labour market for Turkish citizens, should not necessarily lead to the massive influx of cheap labour from Turkey. Nevertheless, it seems interesting to explore the recent trends and to build scenarios of migrations after Turkish EU accession: realistic, optimistic and pessimistic (all three terms representing the outcomes in terms of migrations inflows into the EU: steady inflow, weak inflow that would not cause panic among general EU population who would fear the loss of their jobs due to the influx of the cheap labour, and massive and possibly uncontrollable inflow that would cause massive fears and possible political distortions that might fuel anti-migration populism in the EU). This objective can be achieved by studying the data from recent Turkish migrations and extrapolating them in accordance with processes that might occur in the future.

### Data and methodology

In order to conduct the empirical analysis presented further in this paper, we employ the data on migrations to Germany and the Netherlands from 1967 until 2011, time series from OECD database (complemented by AMECO database) and Eurostat databases. Migration data were compiled from German central register of foreign nationals, German Statistical Office and Statistics Netherlands.

The sample period of dependent variable (the share of migrants from home country living in Germany and the Netherlands as a % of source country population) starts in 1967 when the foreign residence in both countries began to be recorded on annual basis. The breaks in migration stock data series are dealt with using the methodology applied in Alvarez-Plata, Brücker and Siliverstovs (2003) and Glazar and Strielkowski (2010).

Our dependent variable is normalized with the home countries population representing the difference in migration stocks as a % of the original home population. The difference could be in different population growth rates, i.e. of population in original home country (in our case Turkey) and of appropriate population of foreign citizens in receiving country (in our case Germany and the Netherlands) and also in the rate of naturalization. Equation (1) below shows the relation between net migration and difference in migration stocks:

$$\Delta mst_{fht} = m_{fht} + ((g_f - g_b - \delta_f) / (1 + g_b)) * mst_{fht,t-1} \quad (1)$$

where  $mst_{fh}$  denotes the ratio of the stock of foreign residence from country  $b$  in foreign country  $f$  to the original home population,  $m_{fh}$  is the ratio of

actual net migration from country  $b$  into home country  $f$  to the original home population,  $g_b$  is the natural growth of population in the original home country,  $g_f$  is the growth of migrant population in receiving country,  $\delta_f$  is the rate of naturalization of foreign population in receiving country. The index  $t$  denotes the time period. It is apparent from (1) that net migration equals the migration stock if the numerator of the fraction equals to zero. We assume that population growth rates are equal and the naturalization rates are zero.

### Empirical model and its simulations: 3 scenarios of Turkish migration in Europe

The first part of the theoretical model is consistent with those models based on human capital approach (see e.g. Sjaastad 1962; Harris and Todaro 1970; or Hatton 1995) and deals with investment in human capital and expected future income. The model applies the econometric methods used by Boeri and Brücker (2000) and Alvarez-Plata, Brücker and Siliverstovs (2003) in estimating migration from CEEC into the EU15, and most recently by Glazar and Strielkowski (2010) and Glazar and Strielkowski (2012).

We assume that people make expectations regarding the future income in the target (host) country and source (home) country. The differences in former incomes influence expectations about the future possible income. A country's GDP per capita serves as a proxy for individuals' incomes both in source and target countries (the selection of GDP per capita can be justified by limited data sources available for other variables). The average employment rate in both target and source countries is taken as a proxy for the labour market conditions. More precisely, the probability of finding a job is rising with higher employment and vice versa. The lagged migration stocks serves as a proxy for network effects. If migration flows are based on expectations about past variables that mean present values are influenced by past values (Hatton 1995), thus it should be first-order autoregressive process (AR (1)). Thence, a simple error-correction model can be constructed in the following way (an error-correction model is a dynamic model in which the movement of the variables in any periods is related to the previous period's gap from long-run equilibrium):

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta m_{fb,t} = & \beta_1 * \Delta \ln(w_{f,t} / w_{b,t}) + \beta_2 * \Delta \ln(w_{b,t}) + \beta_3 * \Delta \ln(e_{b,t}) + \\ & + \beta_4 * \Delta \ln(e_{f,t}) + \beta_5 * \ln(w_{f,t-1} / w_{b,t-1}) + \beta_6 * \ln(w_{b,t-1}) + \\ & + \beta_7 * \ln(e_{b,t-1}) + \beta_8 * \ln(e_{f,t-1}) + \beta_9 * (m_{fb,t-1}) + \beta_{10} * DummyF + \varepsilon_t \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

where:

$m_{fb,t}$	the share of migrants from home country $b$ living in country $f$ as a % of home population $b$ .
$w_{f,t}/w_{b,t}$	foreign to home country income difference
$w_{b,t}$	home country income
$e_{f,t}$	employment rate in country $f$

$e_{h,t}$	country of origin employment rate
$m_{fh,t-1}$	lagged migrants stock of home country $h$ and target country $f$
DummyF	dummy variable for the free movement of labour
$t, t-1$	denotes time periods

Variables enter the equation specified in (2) both as steady levels and as variables' differences. Variables' differences show the short term reaction of migration to these fluctuations, on the other hand the levels of the variables determine the long-run relations between migration stocks and appropriate variables. The equilibrium stock of migrants can be thence derive from equation (2) by setting all changes equal to nil and getting steady state for stock of migrants (variable  $t$  was left out from the equation in order to indicate the long-term equilibrium):

$$\begin{aligned} \bar{m}_{fb} = & (\beta_5 / -\beta_9) * \ln(w_f / w_b) + (\beta_6 / -\beta_9) * \ln(w_b) + \\ & + (\beta_7 / -\beta_9) * \ln(e_b) + (\beta_8 / -\beta_9) * \ln(e_f) + \\ & + (\beta_{10} / -\beta_9) * DummyF + \varepsilon \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

where  $\bar{m}_{fb}$  is the steady state equilibrium rate of the foreign migrants to the source population.  $\beta$  in brackets are therefore semi-elasticities in the long-run equilibrium and denote the relation between stocks of migrants and explanatory variables. The coefficient  $\beta_9$  is expected to be negative; hence the signs of the original coefficients will not change. Negative sign of the coefficient is expected due to assumption that migration follows AR(1) process. Hence  $m_t = \eta m_{t-1}$  where  $\eta$  must be smaller than 1 (If this does not hold, the whole population of the source country will migrate). The part of (3) can be re-written in the following way:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta m_t = m_t - m_{t-1} &= \beta_9 * (m_{t-1}) \\ m_t &= (1 + \beta_9) * (m_{t-1}) \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

Thus, it appears that  $\beta_9$  should be negative to assure the sustainability of migration. If the  $\beta_9$  were even slightly positive, the coefficient before lagged migration would have been larger than one and this would have led to unsustainable migration explosion. Furthermore, variable denoting the employment rate in country of origin (domestic income) had to be eliminated from equation (3) due to the fact that it proved to be insignificant in all estimations (it appeared to be redundant due because the null hypothesis of insignificance of beta was not rejected). The final model can be then presented in the following way:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta m_{fbt} = & a_b + \beta_1 \ln(w_{ft} / w_{bt}) + \beta_2 \ln(w_{bt}) + \beta_3 \ln(e_{ft}) + \\ & + \beta_4 (m_{fb,t-1}) + \beta_5 (m_{fb,t-2}) + \beta_6 * DummyF + Z_{fb} \gamma + \varepsilon_t \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

where:

- $m_{fht}$  – the dependent variable representing the share of migrants from source country  $b$  living in target country  $f$  as a % of source country population  $b$ .
- $w_{ht}$  – country of origin income level
- $w_{ft}/w_{ht}$  – foreign to home country income difference
- $e_{ft}$  – employment rate in country  $f$
- $m_{fh,t-1}$  – lagged migrants stock of home country  $h$  in country  $f$
- $m_{fh,t-2}$  – lagged migrants stock of home country  $h$  in country  $f$
- $Z_{fh}$  – vector of time-invariant variables which affect the migration between two countries such as geographical proximity and language.
- DummyF – Free mobility of labour.

We employ Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR), Panel data Least Squares (PLS) and General method of moments (GMM). The results are shown in Table 1 that follows.

**Table 1:** Panel data estimations, Turkish migration (Germany and the Netherlands, 1967-2011)

	PLS	GMM	SUR
<b>C</b>	-2.7144**		-2.3420**
<b>w<sub>ht</sub></b>	0.0320**	0.0166**	0.0155**
<b>w<sub>ft</sub>/w<sub>ht</sub></b>	0.0445**	0.1140**	0.0240*
<b>e<sub>ft</sub></b>	0.4206**	0.3552**	0.4188**
<b>m<sub>fh,t-1</sub></b>	1.4452**	1.1693**	1.4491**
<b>m<sub>fh,t-2</sub></b>	-0.5347**	-0.5587**	-0.5228**
<b>Dummy</b>	0.0128**	0.0305**	0.0110**
**, * coefficients are significant at 1 and 5% level, respectively			
Cross section fixed effect (Turkey) 0.1355			

Source: Own calculations

All 3 models in question use a sample of 18 cross sections and 808 (for PLS and SUR) and 800 (for GMM) total balanced panel observations, and cover the data on migration stocks and economic factor in Germany and the Netherlands from 1967 until 2011.

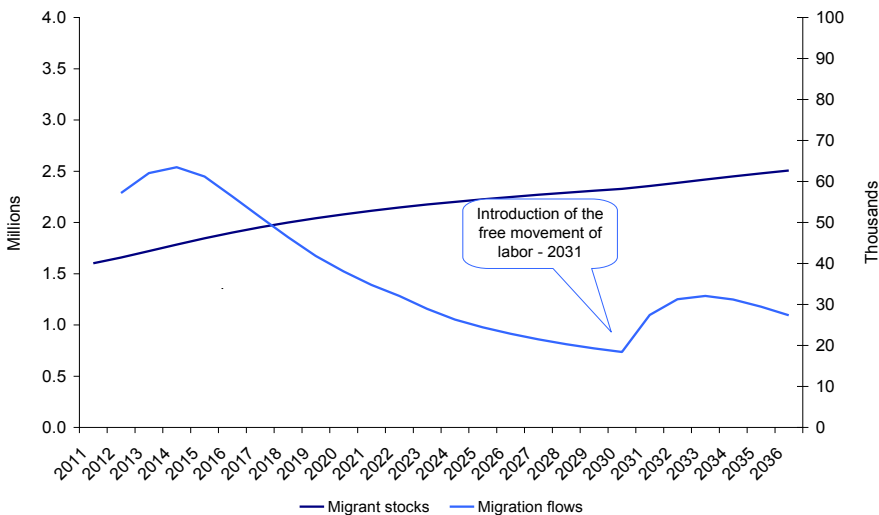
Income differential has positive and significant impact on migration. Furthermore, the income in the source countries is also significant and has a positive impact on migration. Employment rate in Germany and the Netherlands (used as an indicator of the labour market conditions) is significant and positive. Lagged variables of migration also have significant and positive impact on migration. The dummy variable has a positive sign and it is significant, however its impact is rather small. It might be that migrants with the highest

incentives to move have already done so before introduction of free movement of labour.

Hence, migration flows appear not to be much influenced by the free movement of labour. Following the obtained results, we are able to construct 3 different scenarios of what might happen to Turkish migration in Europe after EU accession: realistic scenario, optimistic scenario, and pessimistic scenario. The optimistic and pessimistic scenarios are not concerned with the number of migrants and are based on Turkey's economic development.

In the realistic scenario employment rate remains unchanged and GDP in Germany and Turkey grows at rate 2 % and 4 % p.a., respectively. Moreover, dummy variable for free movement of labour from the 2031 is employed because of the effect on free movement of labour. The results are reported in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** Turkish migration in Europe - realistic scenario



*Source: Own calculations*

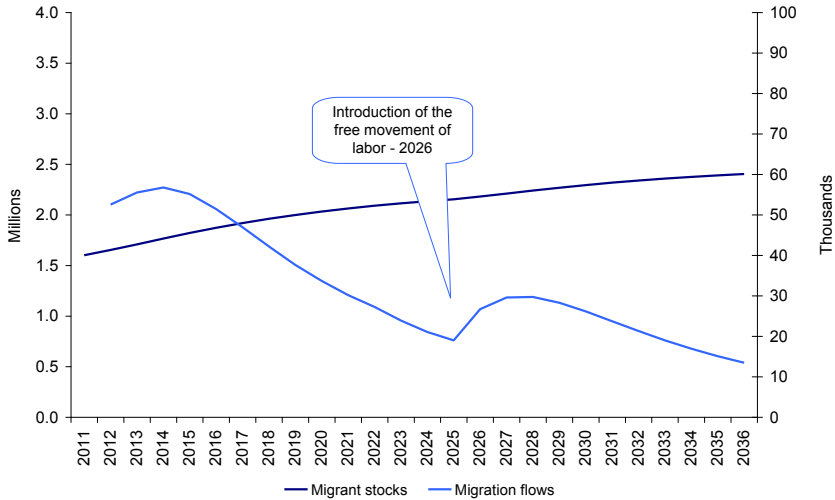
In the optimistic scenario faster convergence of Turkish economy to the EU level is assumed. Moreover, the integration process of Turkey into the EU also happens earlier. GDP per capita of Turkey converges to the German GDP per capita in a rate of 4 % p.a. and free movement of labour is introduced in 2026. The employment rates remain constant as in the realistic scenario. The results of the simulation are reported in Figure 2.

It can be seen that in the optimistic scenario the development of migration is similar to the realistic: migration decreases and then raises slightly after the introduction of free movement of labour. However, the whole convergence process to the steady state is faster.



In the pessimistic scenario (Figure 3) the GDP convergence does not exist at all. In other words, the EU GDP per capita grows as fast as the Turkish GDP per capita for the whole simulated period. The employment rate in the EU is set about 2 % higher compared to the base case and then remains stable.

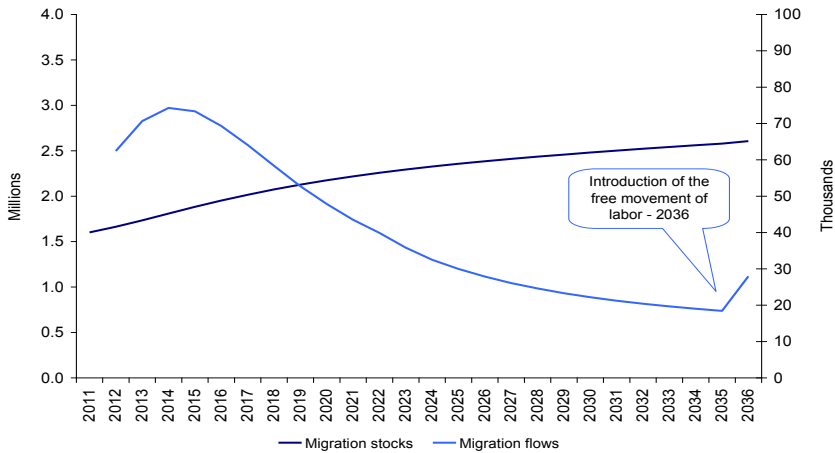
**Figure 2:** Turkish migration in Europe - optimistic scenario



Source: Own calculations

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**Figure 3:** Turkish migration in Europe - Pessimistic scenario



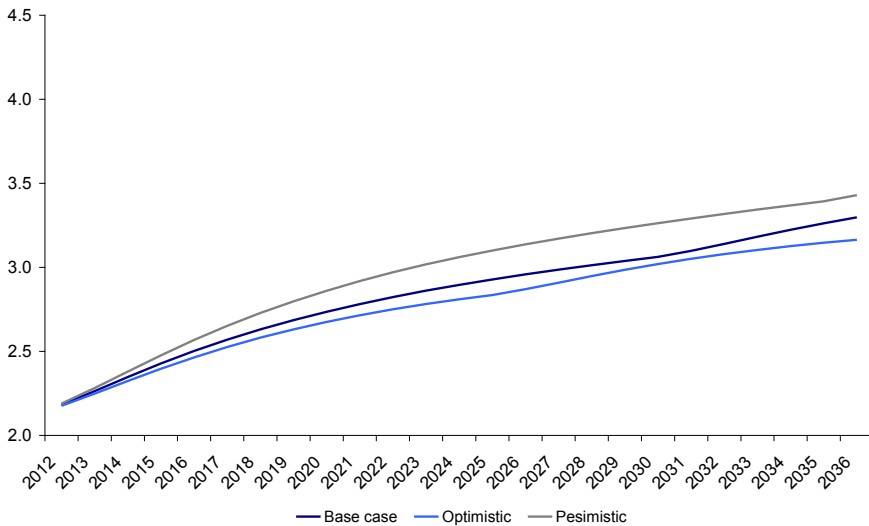
Source: Own calculations

In the pessimistic scenario, the faster increase of migrations from Turkey to the EU is observed. However, the increase after introduction of free movement of labour is missing, thus the final stock of migrants is not that pessimistic as one could have expected.

Sensitivity of estimated results should be accounted for. The impact of GDP per capita both in Turkey and the EU on the stocks of Turkish residents living in Europe is rather small in the long run. Thus, there exists relatively low elasticity between the migrant stock and GDP per capita in Turkey, as well as between the income differential.

It becomes clear that German GDP represents the strongest migration incentive. Turkish GDP growth is, on the other hand, irrelevant mostly because of the coefficients of the variables where the Turkish GDP is employed (Turkish GDP is presented also as a denominator of income difference variable). The EU employment rate seems to have greater impact on migration stock. The % change in employment rate in the EU (used as a proxy for the German labour market conditions) affects the migration stock of Turks living in Europe stronger than a % other variables are taken from the base case. The next step is the extrapolation of the results for the whole EU15 (Figure 4).

**Figure 4:** Extrapolation results for Turkish migration to the EU15 until 2036 (millions)



Source: Own calculations

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In all scenarios a stock of some 2.5 million residents from Turkey is expected to live in EU15 in 2016. By 2020 the scenarios start to vary more significantly and by the 2036 we expect from 3.0 to 3.4 million Turks living in EU15. Specific reasons for migration seem to be relatively stable and the extrapolation of Turkish migration into Germany and the Netherlands to the EU15 gives a reasonable picture of the possible development until the 2036.

### Conclusions and discussions

The main message of our paper is that hypothetical Turkish EU accession is not going to increase Turkish labour migration in Europe. The annual migration flows from Turkey into the EU15 in a long term might be as high as 20-30 thousand people. The experience of former EU enlargements speaks in favour of our results. Furthermore, a successful accession period with high growth and implementation of the reforms is actually leading to elimination of the migration pressures. More precisely, the Turks that have strongest incentives to migrate had already migrated before the free movement of labour was introduced.

Forecasted numbers of Turkish migrants in the EU15 vary according to the scenarios that have different assumptions. In the base case projection the migration stocks will reach 2 250 and 2 500 thousand persons in 2026 and in 2036 respectively. The optimistic scenario shows lower numbers of stocks, i.e. 2 180 and 2 400 thousand persons in 2026 and in 2036 respectively. Furthermore, the pessimistic projections of migration (that might mean catastrophic influx of cheap labour force into the EU with possible political turmoil) leads to the amount of 2 389 and 2 460 thousand persons in 2026 and in 2036, respectively, which represents a manageable number for the EU as a whole. If Turkey joined the EU, migration from Turkey to the EU would remain fully manageable while the economic integration would likely to be beneficial for both Turkey and the EU.

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