

Turkish Migrant Workers in Germany

Course: World Geography (CGU4U), Canadian and World Issues (CGW4U)

Briefing:

The European labour market, after the Second World War, faced a shortage of labour due to the loss of young men of working age. To satisfy the growing demand for labour, many countries, including Germany, found the solution in recruiting migrant workers. In the 1950s and 1960s, many migrant workers from Turkey came to Germany for temporary work. The employers in Germany usually gave these migrant workers short-term contracts, in expectation that they would return to their country of origin once the contract ended. However, many workers had started families during their work term in Germany. With their families already rooted in Germany, these workers felt it would be too difficult to uproot their families, and decided to stay in Germany.

Staying in Germany, however, did not mean that these migrants were an integrated part of society. Since the German government still expected these workers to return home, there was no large-scale effort to encourage these migrant workers to integrate. German citizenship law, which is based largely on parentage rather than place of birth or residence, makes it difficult for migrant workers and their descendants to obtain citizenship. Out of a population of 80 million, there are approximately 7 million foreigners currently living in Germany. About 2 million are Turkish migrant workers or their descendants.

Questions related to this topic:

- What is the predominant age group and sex of the Turkish migrant workers? Does this change depending on the time period?
- What are the push and pull factors that encouraged the Turkish migrants workers to move to Germany?
- What type of employment do migrant workers typically engage in?
- In which parts of the country do migrant workers typically settle?
- How have their social and economic status changed since the 1950s?
- What measures have the German government taken to ensure the rights of Turkish migrant workers (as well as migrant workers from other country) and their families are protected?

Web sites:

- [History of International Migration](#), University of Leiden, Netherlands
- [Unions take up immigration issues](#), European Industrial Relations Observatory On-line
- [Multicultural Germany Project](#)
- [Germany: Immigration in Transition](#), Migration Immigration Source

Books:

- Faist, Thomas. Social Citizenship for Whom? Young Turks in Germany and Mexican Americans in the United States. Brookfield: Aldershot, 1995.

- Gurr, T.R. *People Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000.
- Horrocks, D. and E. Kolinsky. *Turkish Culture in German Society Today*. Providence, RI: Berghahn, 1996.

Articles:

- Kilicli, Ayca. "[Turkish Migrants in Germany: Prospects of Integration.](#)" *Observatory of European Foreign Policy* (2003).
- Topcu, Canan. "[Many Worlds.](#)" *Magazine for Development and Cooperation*.
- Manco, Ural. "[Turks in Western Europe.](#)" *Ghent Centre for Islam in Europe*.

Reports:

- [Labour market discrimination against foreign workers in Germany](#), International Labour Organization
- [International Migration: Promoting Management and Integration](#), European Population Forum 2004

Documents:

- [The situation of Turkish Migrant Workers in Europe](#), Council of Europe: Parliamentary Assembly
- [Foreign Population in Germany](#), Federal Statistics Office Germany

Literature Reviews:

- [Turks in Germany: Overview of the Literature](#), Middle East Studies Association, University of Arizona