

# OSCE

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## **Migrants with Turkish Background in Germany and Political Participation**

The political, social, professional and cultural participation of Turkish migrants in the society is evaluated as basic conditions for the development of integration process in Germany. On the other hand, political participation plays a crucial role in terms of equality of chances and social balances. The insufficient establishment and promotion of political participation of immigrants affects equality of chances and social participation adversely.

This problem should not be evaluated with one-sided approaches. However, one of the main reasons for this imbalance is Germany's really late acknowledgement of itself as immigration country and as a result of that, failing readiness for the developing instruments in order to promote the participation of immigrants.

We think that political decisions in order to complicate the naturalization of Turkish immigrants and family reunification have influenced the participation of Turkish immigrants adversely. It is not realistic to say that for all the problems in the process of integration are exclusively immigrants responsible. German society should also question itself and promote migrants' participation in the whole areas of social life and implement policies to develop the equality of chances of and acceptance of diversity in social life.

### **Turkish immigrants should be more involved in German politics!**

According to German constitution, the right to vote in political elections is confined to German citizens. However, immigrants with EU citizenship are allowed to vote in communal elections in Germany. On the other hand; Turkish migrants, no matter how long they live in Germany, does not have the right to vote in any elections. It is understandable that many Turkish migrants see it as an injustice.

In Germany debates on integration of immigrants have been done with excluding immigrants. The representatives of immigrant communities have not found a place in discussions about integration issues in political circles or media. However, we see also a positive trend in recent years that German governments are paying more attention to the demands and expectations of immigrants in the process of establishment of integration policies. We see also rising number of politicians with migrant background in German politics, but it is still not sufficient if we compare the ratio of immigrants in German society with the number of them.

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### **We believe in the future of Germany!**

As an NGO representing Turkish immigrants in Germany, we think that policies like promotion of immigrants` political and social participation, simplifying the acquisition of German citizenship and changing the laws in order to provide also to the non-EU migrants the right to vote in communal elections would be right steps to facilitate better and easier integration of immigrants in German society.

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## **Short Information about the TGD e.V. (Turkish Community in Germany)**

TGD was founded on 2.12.1995 in Hamburg in order to represent the interests of German-Turks at public and vis-a-vis governmental institutions. TGD is a nationwide umbrella organization of legally registered associations. In line with the federal structure of the Federal Republic of Germany, TGD represents not only umbrella organizations at federal states´ level but also the professional and industrial associations existing from around 267 individual associations.

### **Objectives of the TGD**

- legal, social, political equality and equal treatment of immigrants in Germany
- fighting against xenophobia and discrimination of any kind
- integration of cultural minorities into German society with preserving their cultural identity
- recognition of minorities as an equal part of society
- identification of Germany by non-German population living here permanently as a new home

### **Organizational principles of the TGD**

- pluralistic
- grassroots democratic
- refusing any form of violence and racism
- organizing itself in line with the federal structures of Germany
- committed to liberal, democratic, social and constitutional principles
- open to all associations, regardless of political and religious conviction