

# The lost Turks, or the lost Europeans

Tuesday 15 April 2008, by [Yusuf Kanli](#)

**A splendid office in Stockholm... A "Turkish Swede" manager of a not such a small company involved in investments in several dozens of countries, including Turkey, shared some of his extremely valuable time exchanging opinions with a group of guests "from the motherland" on "What's happening in the motherland?" on the one hand, rising xenophobia across Europe and the reflection of it on the Turks living in Europe.**

The situation has been getting all the more difficult at home for Turks because of the closure case at the Constitutional Court against the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). Workers were angry about the Social Security Reform package - indeed they claim it will be a "deform," taking away many existing rights of the working population. Industrialists and businessmen have been worried that if the existing clouds over Ankara are not urgently diffused through a consensus among political parties - that is through a political process - the Turkish economy, which has been sounding the alarm for some time, might go astray once again.

The Turkish Swede manager explained developments in the global economy, the importance of Turkey remaining anchored to the European Union membership bid and expressed hope that there were "sufficient wise men" in Ankara who might realize the urgency of "putting the house in order at once." He stressed that the AKP must realize the "limits" and should stop stretching Turkey further than those limits.

A "Turkish Dane" waiter working at a restaurant in Copenhagen, however had a different approach, like the "German Turk" pizza restaurant owner or grocer in Frankfurt or the "Turkish British" printing house owner in London. The Turkish Dane waiter was fuming against the "secularists" who he believed were "out to hunt down this time through the judiciary" a government that "respected the religion of the nation."

He was sure that the secularists were doing great harm to the country. "I am here for the past 30 years, religion is no problem here. Why is religion a problem in our homeland?" he asked.

In Frankfurt, a Turkish driver exploded the moment he learned that the passenger in his car was someone from Turkey. "I am just back from a sad trip to Turkey... I was there to attend the funeral of my 21-year-old cousin, the only son of his family... We were told that he was killed in Şırnak while fighting the PKK (the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party gang). His father said doctors removed 19 bullets from his body. We are a Kurdish family. Why this fight? Why are brothers killing brothers?"

Proud of Turkey and second homeland

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Despite the differences in their approaches to the "actuality problems" Turkey is faced with at the moment - which indeed underline their strong links with Turkey - however, these successful European Turks were all proud of their motherland, concerned with its problems, but very happy at the same time of being Turkish Europeans. The glare in their eyes while talking about Turkish affairs was a demonstration of the continued strong bonds of love between them and their motherland. When they were talking about their "second homeland" there was also a similar glare in their eyes. These people were all speaking, besides Turkish (and some also besides Kurdish), the language of the country as well.

None was unemployed. None ever thought of severing ties with Turkey. None ever thought of being assimilated. There are, however, the first, second and even third generation of "European Turks," who not only lost their ties and sense of belonging with Turkey, but could not develop belonging to their new motherland either, still cannot speak the local language and this group of people is suffering from the highest rate of unemployment in all European countries.

There were tears in the eyes of this writer Sunday morning on an Amsterdam metro car, seeing a group of people talking in a mixture of broken Turkish and broken Dutch vandalizing other passengers. These are the lost Turks... Or, lost Europeans, with ethnic descent from Anatolia, who have been long neglected. Yes, Turkey has perhaps more than enough problems at home. But, it must be the duty of Turkey, together with the governments of the European countries to engage in further joint efforts - particularly the German government has been striving to solve this problem - to put an end to this human drama. The success stories of those who managed "integration" in their second homeland must be taken as a demonstration of the absurdity of "assimilation" fears.

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## **Sources**

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