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Turkish diaspora in Germany as a pressure tool on the German government?

On 27th-28th February Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan paid a visit to Germany. During a meeting with Turks living in Germany he presented a proposal on how they can obtain the 'blue card'. The document provides e.g. the right to reside and work on the territory of Turkey, the right to inherit and buy land; it does not however give the right to vote. Prime Minister Erdoğan's proposal may be taken as an attempt to exert pressure on Berlin regarding the liberalisation of visa regulations and consent for Turkey to join the EU.

The announcement of facilitations in obtaining the 'blue card' was made on 27th February in Düsseldorf during Turkey's rime minister's meeting with about 10 thousand Turks living in Germany. His appearance before such a numerous Turkish diaspora is an element of his electoral campaign ahead of parliamentary elections in Turkey. The Turkish community in Germany, i.e. presently about 2 million people, is an important electorate for Turkish parties. At present the creation of 14 polling stations in Germany at the Turkish embassy and consulates is being considered (until now the possibility of voting in Germany has not been made use of). In his speech in Düsseldorf, Erdoğan traditionally called on Turks to integrate with German society, but also warned against assimilation, which drew criticism from many Christian democratic politicians. The issue of the 'blue card', which may have grave consequences for German integration policy, passed without comment. The document is a response to the German regulation ordering Turks born in Germany after the year 2000 to waive one of their citizenships before turning 23. The introduction of the card may slow down the assimilation of Turks with German society, which is the overriding goal of Germany's integration policy.

Apart from France, Germany is the strongest opponent of Turkey joining the EU. By appealing to the diaspora in Germany, Erdoğan is trying to change this attitude and, for the time being, to force visa facilitations for Turkish citizens. <zawil>