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A studyvisit from Turkey

On November 7, the COA received a delegation from the Turkish Migration Management Authority PMM (Presidency of Migration Management, in Turkish: Göç İdaresi Başkanlığı). They came to see and learn from our experiences with promising matching, also known as screening and matching. This working visit was a follow-up to the presentations that COA gave on this subject earlier this year in Ankara.

Screening, matching and promising linking

In the context of 'Early integration and participation', the COA is working intensively on strengthening the position of (future) permit holders at an early stage. For this purpose, the 'screening and matching' approach has been developed. Part of this is creating 'promising links'. With a promising link, we promote the chance of integration by means of a link between permit holders and municipalities in the Netherlands that is as stimulating as possible.

Previously, the choice of place of residence was made solely on the basis of so-called hard placement criteria, such as family in the Netherlands, family reunification, medical treatment, an existing employment contract or training. With the promising link, soft placement criteria have been added, such as work experience, educational background, an existing social network in the Netherlands and professional ambitions. In the screening interview, both the hard and soft criteria are discussed. Subsequently, all these aspects are taken into account when deciding to which municipality the permit holder will be linked.

The situation in Turkey

Last week, the Turkish Presidency of Migration Management paid a visit to the Netherlands to further discuss the screening and matching. PPM is responsible for migration matters and international protection across the country. Turkey is home to some 4 million people who have fled and sought safety there. Especially from countries like Syria, Iran and Afghanistan. This is a huge challenge for the Turkish government. Since Turkey has been an important partner country of the European Union since the 2016 EU-Turkey Agreement, the EU Asylum Agency EUAA helps them to address these challenges. PPM is also looking forward to collaborating with the COA in the field of knowledge exchange.

Good distribution and promising links are especially important in Turkey because many refugees are concentrated in and around Istanbul and near the border with Syria. This puts great pressure on the local communities and the facilities available there, such as education and health care. This has an effect on the support for the reception of refugees among the Turkish population. With an own 'promising link' programme, the PMM wants to ensure that refugees in Turkey are better distributed across the country.

The working visit and the follow-up

During the working visit to the Netherlands, COA colleagues Desirée Immerzeel, Trijnie Post, Veronique Eefsting, Nicky Korte, Stephan van der Meij and Robert Kutschenreuter explained how screening and matching works in Dutch practice. Sjef van Grinsven also explained how we can use

algorithms for this – something that the Turkish delegation was very interested in. Marco Borg and Tirsia Leeuwenhage talked about how integration starts at the asylum seeker’s center. The visitors from Turkey also had meetings with 'Open Embassy' and the municipality of Amsterdam, who showed how promising linking feels and works from within the local community.

The Dutch experiences cannot be applied one-on-one in Turkey, because promising linking in the Netherlands focuses on status holders and promising asylum seekers, while the PMM concerns everyone seeking safety in Turkey. The exchange of knowledge and experience will be continued in 2023, in which COA will again be involved on the basis of our expertise.

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