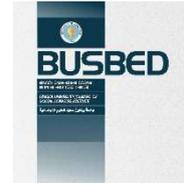


Article Type : Review Article  
Date Received : 10.05.2023  
Date Accepted : 15.08.2023



<https://doi.org/10.29029/busbed.1295173>

## THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN INCREASING THE INTEGRATION AND WELFARE OF THE SYRIANS UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION STATUS: THE CASE OF ADANA METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY<sup>1</sup>

Hamza Bahadır Eser<sup>2</sup>, Mehmet Recai Uygur<sup>3</sup>, Abdurrahman Saydam<sup>4</sup>

### ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of the Syrian civil war on Türkiye, specifically the migration of Syrians to Türkiye and the legal and institutional arrangements made for their temporary protection. Initially, Syrian immigrants settled in camps along the Syrian border, but they were later allowed to reside outside the camps, leading to their integration into Turkish society. The study analyzes the legal and institutional arrangements for Syrians under temporary protection status and the services provided by the Adana Metropolitan Municipality. The role of local governments in migration policies and the financing of services for immigrants are also explored. The strategic plan and activity reports of the Adana Metropolitan Municipality are analyzed to understand the various projects undertaken by the municipality in collaboration with international stakeholders to improve the integration and social and economic welfare of immigrants. The findings of the study show that the Adana Metropolitan Municipality has implemented numerous initiatives to support the integration of Syrian immigrants into Turkish society. These initiatives include education and vocational training programs, health services, and social support programs. The study also emphasizes the importance of local government involvement in migration policies and the need for adequate funding to ensure that essential services are provided to immigrants.

**Keywords:** Migration, Syrians, Integration, Central Government, Local Government

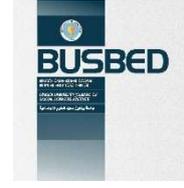
<sup>1</sup> This article is an extended and comprehensive review of the full-text paper presented at the 6th International Civil Strategy Symposium held at Marmara University between 08-09 December 2022 with the title "A Brief Analysis of the Services Provided to Syrians in Temporary Protection Status: The Case of Adana Metropolitan Municipality."

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Dr., Suleyman Demirel University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, [bahadireser@sdu.edu.tr](mailto:bahadireser@sdu.edu.tr), <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4063-051X>.

<sup>3</sup> Senior Researcher, SMK University of Applied Sciences, International Relations, [mehmetrecai.uygur@smk.lt](mailto:mehmetrecai.uygur@smk.lt), <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1872-0885>.

<sup>4</sup> Ph.D. Candidate, Suleyman Demirel University, Graduate School of Social Sciences, [abdurrahmansaydam91@gmail.com](mailto:abdurrahmansaydam91@gmail.com), <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6953-5164>.

Makalenin Türü : İnceleme Makalesi  
Geliş Tarihi : 10.05.2023  
Kabul Tarihi : 15.08.2023



<https://doi.org/10.29029/busbed.1295173>

## GEÇİCİ KORUMA STATÜSÜ ALTINDAKİ SURIYELİLERİN ENTEGRASYONUNU VE REFAHINI ARTIRMADA YEREL YÖNETİMLERİN ROLÜ: ADANA BÜYÜKŞEHİR BELEDİYESİ ÖRNEĞİ<sup>1</sup>

Hamza Bahadır Eser<sup>2</sup>, Mehmet Recai Uygur<sup>3</sup>, Abdurrahman Saydam<sup>4</sup>

### ÖZ

Türkiye, Suriye'deki iç savaş nedeniyle yaşanan göçten doğrudan etkilenmiştir. Göçmenler ilkin Bu çalışma, Suriye iç savaşının Türkiye üzerindeki etkisini, özellikle Suriyelilerin Türkiye'ye göçünü ve geçici koruma için yapılan yasal ve kurumsal düzenlemeleri incelemektedir. Başlangıçta, Suriyeli göçmenler Suriye sınırındaki kamplara yerleştiler, ancak daha sonra kampların dışında kalmalarına izin verilerek Türkiye toplumuyla bütünleşmeleri sağlandı. Çalışma, geçici koruma statüsündeki Suriyelilere yönelik yasal ve kurumsal düzenlemeleri ve Adana Büyükşehir Belediyesi'nin sunduğu hizmetleri incelemektedir. Yerel yönetimlerin göç politikalarındaki rolü ve göçmenlere yönelik hizmetlerin finansmanı da araştırılmaktadır. Adana Büyükşehir Belediyesi'nin stratejik planı ve faaliyet raporları, belediyenin göçmenlerin entegrasyonunu ve sosyal ve ekonomik refahını artırmak için uluslararası paydaşlarla işbirliği içinde üstlendiği çeşitli projeleri anlamak için analiz edilmektedir. Çalışmanın bulguları, Adana Büyükşehir Belediyesi'nin Suriyeli göçmenlerin Türkiye toplumuna entegrasyonunu desteklemek için çok sayıda girişimde bulunduğunu göstermektedir. Bu girişimler arasında eğitim ve mesleki eğitim programları, sağlık hizmetleri ve sosyal destek programları yer almaktadır. Çalışma ayrıca yerel yönetimin göç politikalarına dahil olmasının önemini ve göçmenlere temel hizmetlerin sağlanmasını sağlamak için yeterli finansmana duyulan ihtiyacı vurgulamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Göç, Suriyeliler, Uyum, Merkezi Yönetim, Yerel Yönetim

<sup>1</sup> Bu makale, 08-09 Aralık 2022 tarihleri arasında Marmara Üniversitesi'nde düzenlenen 6. Uluslararası Sivil Strateji Sempozyumu'nda "Geçici Koruma Statüsündeki Suriyelilere Sunulan Hizmetler Üzerine Kısa Bir İnceleme: Adana Büyükşehir Belediyesi Örneği" adıyla sunulan ve tam metin olarak yayımlanan bildirinin genişletilmiş ve güncellenmiş halidir.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Dr., Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi, İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi, [bahadireser@sdu.edu.tr](mailto:bahadireser@sdu.edu.tr), <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4063-051X>.

<sup>3</sup> Uzman Araştırmacı, SMK University of Applied Sciences, Uluslararası İlişkiler, [mehmetrecai@smk.it](mailto:mehmetrecai@smk.it), <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1872-0885>.

<sup>4</sup> Doktora Öğrencisi, Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, [abdurrahmansaydam91@gmail.com](mailto:abdurrahmansaydam91@gmail.com), <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6953-5164>.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Migration is a phenomenon that has been going on since the existence of humanity and will probably continue in the future. Migration, in its most general terms, can be defined as an act of displacement in different geographies. This phenomenon affects not only the immigrants but also the social relations and institutions in the receiving regions (Koçak & Terzi, 2012, p. 164). Especially since the second half of the 20th century, the immigrant population has rapidly increased. According to the United Nations data, if the increase in the world population continues at the rate of increase in the last 20 years, it is calculated that the number of immigrants will reach approximately 405 million by 2050 (Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü, 2017, p. 24). A significant part of this largely immigrant population is located within the borders of Türkiye. As it is known, since April 2011, there has been a mass Syrian migration to our country due to both the long border from Syria and the "Open Door" policy implemented by Türkiye. Migration, which started with the entry of the first group from the Cilvegözü Border Gate in 2011, has evolved into a sociological phenomenon that includes millions of immigrants in the process. According to November 2022 figures from the Directorate General of Migration Management, Türkiye hosts 3,585,447 Syrians (Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü, 2022).

Only 1.3% of Syrians under temporary protection live in camps. The remaining 98.7% is distributed almost all over the country. As of November 2022, the number of Syrians living in cities is 3,585,447 as indicated above. When the distribution of Syrians by provinces is examined, the 5 provinces with the highest number of Syrians are Istanbul (550,784), Gaziantep (463,423), Şanlıurfa (374,342), Hatay (359,296), and Adana (254,203) (Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü, 2022).

Today, it is possible to state that the Syrian problem is not a short-term issue. In this context, policies regarding Syrians under temporary protection status should also be determined with long-term foresight, taking the reality that some of the immigrants will be permanent (Alvanoğlu & Ateş, 2020: 396; Çamur, 2017:128).

Since it was positioned as the target country to migrate to when the Syrian migration to Türkiye first started, the central government assumed the main responsibility and reacted to the problem by making legal and institutional arrangements immediately. However, while doing this, due attention was not paid to the fact that local governments are one of the main stakeholders in the solution of the problem. It is possible to state that local governments have a very important role in the actual solution of the problem and the management of the process since immigrants directly affect the cities they migrate to socially and economically (Oktay et al., 2016: 773; Kahraman & Taniyıcı, 2018: 266; Alvanoğlu & Ateş, 2020: 397; Kaya, 2022: 346-348).

In the first place, a quick solution was produced regarding the legal status (temporary protection) of Syrians. However, it is discussed in the literature that the problem includes some risks in terms of obtaining the right to citizenship and resettlement in the long run (Bostan, 2018: 74-77). In addition, aspects of the issue threaten border security, such as human smuggling (Çetiner, 2021: 16-17).

However, the main focus of the study is the problem areas created by the new sociology that emerged in the cities, in short, the practices of living together. Host society divorces and problems such as the increase in crime rates are associated with Syrians (Çetiner, 2021: 16-17). The gradual increase in the number of Syrians under temporary protection, especially in metropolitan cities, and the prolongation of the "temporary protection process", which expresses an uncertain situation by its nature, make the host society uneasy; this situation increases the demand for urban services and negatively affects the social and economic situation of the city (Lale, 2022: 75). Similarly, it is emphasized that problems arise with the prolongation of the stay of immigrants in metropolitan cities, and that adaptation plays a key role in overcoming the problems (Karasu, 2016: 1012). These problems can be counted as informality, lack of basic education, lack of language, access to health services, housing, access to employment, social exclusion, cultural differences, and communication problems with public institutions (Batuk & Adıgüzel, 2002: 51; Çamur, 2017: 113; Alptekin et al, 2018: 110).

There are already studies that draw attention to the difficulties experienced by immigrants in their integration and access to healthy housing (Güngördü & Özbakır, 2021) and offer projects for solutions (Özbakır et al., 2020). Local governments act together with non-governmental organizations in overcoming the mentioned problems (Batuk & Adıgüzel, 2002: 74). Non-governmental organizations, which came to the fore with food/hygiene aid in the early days of Syrian migration, focused on adaptation activities in the process (Çolakoğlu & Kaya, 2021: 725). While some non-governmental organizations develop adaptation projects, some organizations turn to humanitarian aid in urgent need (Çebi, 2017: 136).

With Article 96 of the YUKK numbered 6458, "... public institutions and organizations, local governments, non-governmental organizations, universities, and international organizations can plan harmonization activities by benefiting from the suggestions and contributions." It gives duty to the central administration to ensure compliance with the expression (YUKK no. 6458, art. 96). Ensuring coordination among the institutions listed by this provision is vital for integrating Syrians.

Our study aims to reveal the services provided by Adana Metropolitan Municipality to meet the needs of Syrians, facilitate their social integration into the city, and increase their welfare. In our study, the issue of integration of immigrants will be briefly explained first. After that, Türkiye's policies on migration management and the roles of central and local governments in this process will be mentioned. Afterward, the study will be concluded by including the services provided by Adana Metropolitan Municipality for Syrians.

In our study, the following research method has been used:

**Literature review:** A comprehensive literature review has been conducted a comprehensive literature review to identify relevant theories, concepts, and previous research on migration, integration, and the role of local governments in managing migration.

**Case study design:** Adana Metropolitan Municipality has been selected as a case study due to its significant population of Syrians under temporary protection status and its efforts to integrate them into the city.

**Data collection:** Collect data through a combination of methods, such as document analysis. Through document analyses, we reviewed relevant policies, strategic plans, activity reports, and other documents related to migration and integration in Adana Metropolitan Municipality.

**Results and discussion:** We have presented the findings of the study, and highlighted the services provided by Adana Metropolitan Municipality to Syrians and the challenges faced by the municipality in managing migration and integration. We discussed the implications of the findings for policy and practice and suggested recommendations for improving the integration and welfare of Syrians under temporary protection status.

## **2. SOCIAL INTEGRATION**

Social integration is an important concept that has been widely discussed in immigrant-receiving societies. However, the main focus of this study is to shed light on the role local governments play in regarding migrants' adaptation. A brief theoretical introduction to what the integration concept (which will be used below) is considered to contribute to the reader.

The subject of integration is the acceptance and adaptation of Syrians in Turkish literature (Canbey, 2018; Gürbüz & Dugan, 2018; Kesgin, 2022; Yıldırım alp & İyem, 2017; Yılmaz, 2019), their adaptation to the city (Ağcadağ Çelik, 2021; Bımay, 2020; Gürel Üçer & Özkazanç, 2018; Polat & Yılmaz, 2021; Yuksel & Aydemir, 2020;) in the context of the role of non-governmental organizations in the Integration Process of Syrians (Çebi, 2017). However, the main focus of this study is to shed light on the role local governments play in regarding migrants' adaptation. Both in the section where the plans and activities of Adana Metropolitan Municipality are examined and in the conclusion section of the study, they are discussed and discussed in detail below. A brief theoretical introduction to the integration concept (which will be used below) is considered to contribute to the reader.

According to the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and Scheff (2007), social integration refers to "the process of promoting values, relationships, and institutions that enable everyone to participate in social, economic, and political life based on equality of rights, dignity, and equality." This definition emphasizes the importance of promoting social, economic, and political equality among all individuals and groups in society. It also highlights the need to respect diversity and avoid imposing a unitary identity on those who do not wish to adopt it. The concept of social integration differs from assimilation, which refers to the process of making individuals or groups conform to the dominant culture and values of a society. As Castells (1997) notes, assimilation involves a process of cultural homogenization and the suppression of diversity. In contrast, social integration seeks to promote diversity and respect for different cultures and identities. To promote social integration, it is necessary to pay attention to three interconnected processes: recognition, representation, and redistribution (Ferguson, 2008). Recognition involves acknowledging and respecting the diversity of social groups, cultures, and identities. This can help promote respect, dignity, and cooperation among different groups. Representation involves ensuring that the interests and perspectives of different groups are taken into account in decision-making processes and resource allocation. This can help promote equality. Redistribution involves ensuring that socioeconomic resources are distributed fairly among individuals and groups, to avoid deep inequalities and fragmentation based on wealth, ethnicity, region, gender, age, or other social identities.

Cohen (1985) argues that community identity is central to social integration. He suggests that communities are formed through shared experiences, values, and symbols. The symbolic construction of community involves the creation of shared meanings and values that help to bind people together. This can help promote social cohesion and a sense of belonging among individuals and groups. In conclusion, social integration is an important concept that emphasizes the need to promote equality, diversity, and respect for different cultures and identities. Community identity is also central to social integration and can be fostered through shared experiences, values, and symbols. Moreover, social integration is essential for the functioning of society. When individuals and groups

are excluded from social and economic life, this can lead to social fragmentation, inequality, and conflict (Putnam, 2000). Therefore, promoting social integration is a moral imperative and a practical necessity for building a cohesive and prosperous society.

One important aspect of social integration is promoting intergroup contact. Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis suggests that increasing contact between members of different groups can reduce prejudice and promote positive attitudes and behavior toward each other. However, contact alone is not sufficient to promote social integration. Positive intergroup contact needs to be accompanied by other factors, such as equal status, cooperation, and institutional support (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

The promotion of social integration also requires attention to structural inequalities and discrimination. This includes addressing issues such as poverty, unemployment, and unequal access to education, healthcare, and housing. Addressing structural inequalities and discrimination is essential for creating a level playing field and promoting equal opportunities for all individuals and groups in society. Finally, it is important to recognize that social integration is not a one-time achievement but an ongoing process. Societies are constantly changing, and new challenges to social integration can arise over time. Therefore, promoting social integration requires sustained effort and attention from individuals, communities, and policymakers.

In conclusion, social integration is a complex and multifaceted process that requires promoting intergroup contact, addressing structural inequalities and discrimination, and recognizing that social integration is ongoing. Promoting social integration can create a more equal, cohesive, and prosperous society.

### **3. TÜRKİYE'S MIGRATION MANAGEMENT POLICIES IN RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS**

Migration has been a phenomenon that has taken place throughout human history. It has been driven by various factors such as economic and social needs, the pursuit of a better life, and a desire for safety. In recent times, migration within and between countries has been further accelerated by globalization, scientific advancements, rapid technological progress, and increased transportation opportunities (Emeç & Şengün, 2022, p.2085).

The Arab Spring, which began in 2010 in North African countries and later spread to Syria, was primarily fueled by the masses' aspiration for a better life. What started as protests eventually turned into significant political movements, culminating in a civil war in Syria and resulting in one of the most significant migrations of the century (Hajipouran Benam, 2018, p. 261). Türkiye has been one of the countries profoundly affected by this process, with approximately 5 million immigrants, including individuals from countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Somalia, currently residing in the country. It is essential to note that the Republic of Türkiye legally accepts only a small portion of these immigrants as refugees. The country's domestic law stipulates that the status of a refugee is determined by the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Legal Situation of Refugees (Çevik, 2020, p. 131). Türkiye accepted the Geneva Convention in 1961, with the precondition of not accepting refugees from non-European countries. The country also accepted the 1967 New York Protocol, which abolished the place and time limitation requirement in the Geneva Convention while maintaining the same reservation. The reason for the Turkish government's approach may be attributed to the country's geographical proximity to politically unstable regions and its desire to avoid encountering a large influx of refugees that may occur in the future (Aslantürk, 2020, p. 189).

The first Syrian migrant caravan crossed the Turkish border on April 29, 2011, and the country adopted an "open-door" policy for subsequent crossings. Türkiye initially assumed that the Syrian conflict would end soon and shaped its policies accordingly (Karasu, 2018, p. 55). However, the number of refugees increased rapidly, starting with the entry of 300-400 Syrian immigrants through Hatay's Cilvegözü border gate, reaching millions today (Güleç, 2015, p.95). To accommodate the refugees, AFAD established 26 temporary shelters in ten provinces, providing education, health, guidance, psychological support, and other services (AFAD, 2013, p. 52).

Nevertheless, the prolonged stay of Syrians under temporary protection status in Türkiye has made it necessary to ensure their social adaptation. Consequently, efforts have been made to support individuals' ability to continue their lives outside temporary shelter centers, and they have been permitted to exit the camps. Currently, the number of Syrians living in seven temporary accommodation centers in five provinces is relatively small, with a total of 47,686 individuals (Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü, 2022).

The large-scale migration of Syrians to Türkiye has presented numerous social and economic challenges, necessitating significant policy adjustments and institutional restructuring. Effectively managing this migration has become a critical area of concern for the state's institutional framework (Skeldon, 2010, p.21). Given the rapid influx of Syrian immigrants and Türkiye's open-door policy towards them, the legal infrastructure required to accommodate them was quickly established (Aslantürk, 2020, p. 190). This involved the creation of new institutions to supervise and regulate the activities of Syrian immigrants and to formalize their legal status in the

country. The legal framework for regulating Syrian migration was established through the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (YUKK) No. 6458 (Akman, 2018, p.455). This law ushered in a new era of migration management, with both central and provincial government institutions responsible for overseeing migration-oriented structures (Kara & Dönmez Kara, 2016, p.11).

Article 91 of the YUKK defines the concept of "temporary protection" as a status provided to individuals who have been forced to leave their country and require urgent protection. The specifics of this temporary protection are to be determined by the President through regulation, as stated in the second paragraph of the same article (YUKK No. 6458, art.91). The Temporary Protection Regulation was subsequently issued on 13.10.2014, with provisions regulating healthcare, education, working conditions, social aid, and services, and interpreting services for Syrians under temporary protection (Temporary Protection Law, art.27, Art.28, Art.29, Art.30, Art.31).

Before the enactment of the YUKK, the General Directorate of Security's Foreigners' Branch and Governorships was responsible for managing all procedures related to Syrian immigration. The central government institutions empowered by law to implement immigration policies include the Council of Ministers, the Migration Policy Board, the Directorate of Migration Management, the Migration Advisory Board, the International Protection Evaluation Commission, the Coordination Board for Combating Irregular Migration, the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, and local municipalities (Demirhan & Aslan, 2015, pp. 46-52).

#### **4. REPUBLIC OF TÜRKIYE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, PRESIDENCY OF MIGRATION MANAGEMENT**

The Directorate of Migration Management was first established with the status of General Directorate under Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection (2013). However, Decree-Law No. 703, which came into effect in 2018, repealed Article 103 and Article 104 of Law No. 6458 that detailed the establishment, duties, and authorities of the General Directorate of Migration Management (Decree-Law No. 703, 2018). Subsequently, the provisions about the establishment of the General Directorate of Migration Management were outlined in Article 158 of the Presidential Decree No. 4 (2018).

"Duties and powers of the General Directorate of Migration Management with Article 159 of the Decree include: "To carry out studies on the development of legislation and administrative capacity regarding immigration, to monitor and coordinate the implementation of policies and strategies determined by the President", "To carry out migration-related works and procedures", "To carry out the duties assigned to the Ministry in the Settlement Law No. 5543" (2006), "To carry out the works and procedures regarding the protection of victims of human trafficking", "To identify the stateless persons in Türkiye and to carry out the works and transactions related to these persons", "To carry out the works and procedures related to the harmonization processes", "To carry out the works and transactions regarding temporary protection", "To ensure coordination between the law enforcement units and the relevant public institutions and organizations, to develop measures, to monitor the implementation of the measures taken in order to combat irregular migration", it is counted as "Assisting in the programming and project planning of the activities of public institutions and organizations in the field of migration, evaluating and approving the project proposals, monitoring the works and projects carried out, supporting the execution of these studies and projects in accordance with international standards" and "executing other duties given by the legislation" (Presidential Decree No. 4, 2018, art. 159).

The "Integration" article of YUKK (art. 96) describes the duties of administration as follows: (1) "The Directorate General is responsible for facilitating the mutual integration of foreigners and applicants or persons with international protection status with the society in our country, within the scope of the country's economic and financial possibilities, and to mediate third parties in all areas of social life in our country, in the country where they are resettled or in their country when they return. It can plan harmonization activities by taking advantage of the suggestions and contributions of public institutions and organizations, local governments, non-governmental organizations, universities, and international organizations to provide them with the knowledge and skills that will facilitate their ability to act independently." (2) "Foreigners can attend courses in which the political structure, language, legal system, culture, and history of the country and their rights and obligations are explained at a basic level." (3) "Courses, distance education and similar systems, promotion, and information activities on subjects such as benefiting from public and private goods and services, access to education and economic activities, social and cultural communication, and receiving primary health care, are also organized by the General Directorate with public institutions and organizations and non-governmental organizations, expanded through cooperation" (Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection, 2013, art. 96).

The duties and authorities of the General Directorate of Migration Management were first regulated on 04/04/2013, in the second paragraph of Article 104h of YUKK numbered 6458. The phrase "is authorized to provide cooperation and coordination with public institutions and organizations, universities, local governments, non-governmental organizations, private sector, and international organizations in matters related to their duties" (Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection, 2013, art. 104) was not included in the subsequent regulation

detailing the duties and authorities of the institution. Instead, the task of coordination was specified as being only with law enforcement units and relevant authorities. The original regulation's scope was reduced by Presidential Decree No. 4, dated 15.07.2018, article 159/g, specifying the interactions between public institutions and organizations (Çakı, 2018, p. 85).

Presidential Decree No. 85, dated 29.11.2021, altered the status of the General Directorate to the Presidency (Presidential Decree No. 85, 2021, art. 18). Furthermore, with the 21st article of this regulation, the provision "to carry out the secretariat services of the Immigration Board, to follow the implementation of the Board's decisions" was added to follow the clause an of the 1st paragraph of the 159th article of Presidential Decree No. 4 (Presidential Decree No. 85, 2021, art. 21). Under YUKK, the General Directorate of Migration Management finalized its organization in all provincial centers and districts as well as abroad, and in 2015, assumed its duties and responsibilities from the General Directorate of Security in all provinces (Örselli & Babahanoğlu, 2016, p. 2069).

The Presidency, whose structure was changed with the constitutional amendment made in 2017 and the transition to the Presidential Government System in 2018, became the most authoritative authority in migration management, as in many other matters related to the executive function and the executive. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Family and Social Services, Ministry of Labor and Social Security, and Ministry of Environment and Urbanization stand out as institutions that undertake important tasks in migration management, as well as the Presidency, especially the Ministry of Interior. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs plays an important role in migration management due to its involvement in international migration, international diplomatic crises and agreements, and the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization due to its source of some urban problems and its effects on the field of local governments.

Another organization that is at the center of migration is the Migration Board. The board, which was established with the Article 105 of the YUKK, was abolished with the transition to the Presidential Government System, and the board was re-established with the 17th Decree issued by the Presidency in 2018. The Board has been added to subparagraph h of paragraph 1 of Article 522 of Presidential Decree No. 1, and the working procedures and principles of the Migration Board have been determined according to this article. With the regulation, it was stipulated that the board would consist of other ministries, institutions, and organizations to be determined by the ministry upon the call of the Ministry of Interior. Organizations such as AFAD and Kızılay that assist the central government's provincial administration are other institutions that play an important role in and contribute to migration management (Arslan, 2021, pp. 15-16).

## **5. LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND MIGRATION**

Although the central administration actively participates in the migration management process, there is no clear regulation on municipalities. It has been stated that this situation is also included in international documents and that the provincial municipalities in the Southeastern Anatolia Region, which hosts approximately 20% of the total number of Syrian immigrants in Türkiye, are insufficient to increase their service capacity for immigrants (UHCR, 2018, p. 3). YUKK numbered 6458 has given the duty and authority regarding immigrants to the central administration, and municipalities have been indirectly included in the process. However, when the services of local governments towards immigrants are examined in practice, it is seen that the given situation is quite different. Although the duties and authorities of municipalities regarding migration management are not clearly defined in both national migration and local government legislation, municipalities provide services to immigrant groups in many different areas (Ateş, 2020: 24; Alvanoğlu & Ateş, 2020, p. 384).

When it comes to local governments, the first administrative unit that comes to mind is the municipalities. As emphasized above, although local governments/municipalities have not been given a direct duty and authority regarding migration, according to the Citizenship Law regulated in Article 13 of Law No. 5393, being a citizen is linked to residence by saying "Everyone is a citizen of the town in which they reside" (Çevik, 2020, p. 135; Kaya, 2022: 347-348). However, with the expression "Municipal services are offered to citizens in the closest places and by the most appropriate methods" in Article 14 of the relevant Law, the condition of being able to receive service is tied to the condition of being a citizen (Kaya, 2022: 348). From this point of view, considering that the expenditures to be made on immigrants will cause problems in the audits to be made by the Court of Accounts (since the immigrants are not citizens), there may be hesitations in providing services (Erdoğan, 2017, p.41).

Despite this dual situation, in practice, local governments are the first step to meet the needs of immigrants and provide basic public services such as infrastructure, cleaning, housing, education, and health, without any discrimination (Council of Europe, 2017, p. 1). After the Syrian migration, Türkiye experienced the impact of the migration movements on the city administrations. As stated above, the Syrians who were first settled in the shelter centers are now dispersed throughout the country, especially in the border provinces. This situation has brought a significant burden to local governments in terms of providing public services in cities (Akman, 2018 p.456). When the ratio of Syrians living in cities to the local population in terms of local services is examined, it is seen that 22% in Gaziantep, 25% in Hatay, 11% in Adana, 10% in Mardin, 12% in Mersin, 22% in Şanlıurfa, and Kilis reached

approximately 75%. Since the shares allocated to local governments from the central budget are distributed taking into account the official population of the city, Syrians are not included in these calculations. This situation places an extra burden on local governments to provide services to Syrians, especially those settled in the lower socio-economic areas of cities (Taşcıer, 2021, pp. 84-85).

In the process, to be closer to work, education, health, and public services, the majority of the Syrian population with temporary protection status preferred to live in cities instead of accommodation centers. In this process, Syrians who voluntarily leave the camps face many different problems such as accommodation, access to employment, education, health, cultural values, and language, especially in terms of adaptation to the city and society (Alvanoğlu & Ateş, 2020 p. 383). To overcome these problems, some services (such as daily food supply, vocational training, and language courses) are provided by the central administration as well as by the local administrations. The expenditures of these services are tried to be provided by municipalities from their budgets, the projects they carry out together with non-governmental organizations, and the funds provided by international organizations (Taşcıer, 2021, p. 93).

## **6. THE CASE OF MIGRATION IN ADANA METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY'S STRATEGIC PLAN AND PERFORMANCE REPORTS FOR THE YEARS 2020-2024 AND SERVICES PROVIDED TO SYRIANS UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION THROUGH ADANA METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY**

The province of Adana has experienced significant migration due to the Syrian civil war. The number of Syrian immigrants settling in Adana has consistently risen, from 16,000 in Istanbul in the early years of the conflict to 253,636 as of November 24, 2022. Based on official data, Adana is now ranked as the fifth province in Türkiye with the most significant number of Syrian immigrants (Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü, 2022). However, considering potential unregistered immigrants, the actual count of Syrians in Adana may be even higher. In Adana Metropolitan Municipality's strategic plan for 2020-2024, the topic of migration and the status of Syrians under temporary protection is briefly discussed. The plan incorporates data from the municipality's annual reports from 2019 to 2021. The plan recognizes that Adana has seen considerable immigration both internally and externally and that these migrants often encounter adaptation challenges, typically hailing from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The local government aims to enhance these individuals' living conditions and foster integration with the resident population (Adana Metropolitan Municipality, 2020, p. 23). The plan presents a "Migration Master Plan," supported by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL), and multiple Turkish municipalities, including the Union of Çukurova Municipalities and the Union of Marmara Municipalities. This master plan seeks to mitigate migration's impact on municipal utilities, like capacity, expense, and funding, by addressing related challenges such as environmental sanitation, healthcare, potable water provision, police services, solid waste handling, and the inception and maintenance of parks and green spaces. The plan defines core policy domains like foresight, objectives, and activities concerning decision-making procedures, education, culture, and art, urban organization, and data management to transform the migration effects positively and bolster Adana Metropolitan Municipality's resilience to immigration (Adana Metropolitan Municipality, 2020, p. 26). The section comparing the Eleventh Development Plan (2019-2023) to the Municipal Plan highlights the strategic area of "Social Cultural and Sporting Services Management" as aligning with the 11th Development Plan's developmental goals/targets, centered on enhancing living standards via citizen-focused social services. The plan lists among its strategic objectives the creation and execution of 10 new initiatives designed to address the needs of the immigrant population residing within provincial limits and facilitating their societal integration. This goal is associated with the external migration heading under the Qualified People, Strong Society title (Adana Metropolitan Municipality, 2020, pp. 71-73). The economic segment of the PEST Analysis, which scrutinizes Political, Economic, Social, and Technological aspects, indicates that unchecked migration has escalated unemployment rates in Adana. Yet, the provision of low-cost labor by migrants and the potential contributions of skilled immigrants to the economy are recognized as opportunities. The analysis also highlights the sociocultural assimilation challenges faced by immigrants. The PEST analysis concludes by recommending intensified efforts, like language instruction, to facilitate adaptation and mitigate migration's adverse effects (Adana Metropolitan Municipality, 2020, p. 127). The social component of the PEST Analysis stresses the negative impacts of unchecked migration on societal order and security, underscoring the importance of comprehensive migration planning, continuation of adaptation schemes, and seeking additional financial resources from the central government (Adana Metropolitan Municipality, 2020, p. 128). In the SWOT Analysis segment, which delves into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, the fact that Syrians under temporary protection constitute 15% of the total population is classified as a "threat" (Adana Metropolitan Municipality, 2020, p. 130).

According to the Adana Metropolitan Municipality's 2019 Activity Report, the number of aids received from public institutions and organizations and real persons with the means to support immigrants economically was 3, and only 25% of the targeted amount was reached. However, the number of immigrants helped exceeded the target, with 10,714 people assisted out of a goal of 5000, and the percentage of reaching the goal was expressed as 100%. The report also stated that there were 5 pieces of training and projects for immigrants, and 55.6% of the targeted amount (9) was reached (p.269). Moving on to the 2020 annual report, it was mentioned that the number of aid received from public institutions and organizations and real persons with the means to support immigrants economically increased to 7. Still, only 28% of the targeted amount was reached. The number of immigrants supported by activities such as training, consultancy services, etc., was 9135 people, exceeding the target of 6000, and the percentage of reaching the target was expressed as 100%. However, the number of immigrants participating in cultural and artistic activities for social cohesion was 348, falling short of the target of 500, with a percentage of 69.6% of the targeted amount reached (p.266).

The Adana Metropolitan Municipality's 2021 Activity Report reported that the number of aid received from public institutions and organizations and real persons with the means to support immigrants economically increased to 18, and 60% of the targeted amount was reached. The number of immigrants supported by activities such as training, consultancy services, etc., was 18,378 people, surpassing the target of 7000, with the percentage of reaching the goal expressed as 100%. However, the number of immigrants participating in cultural and artistic activities for social cohesion was 402, falling short of the target of 1000, with a percentage of 40.2% of the targeted amount reached (p.252).

Adana Metropolitan Municipality has a strong commitment to supporting migration, reflected in its policies and initiatives. This commitment is not new; in 2017, the municipality collaborated with the Immigration and Migrant Affairs Branch Directorate under the Health and Social Services Department to produce and implement policies for Syrians under temporary protection status. In 2018, the municipality worked with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to establish the Migrant Coordination Adaptation Center (GKUM). It developed various projects in partnership with international organizations (Migration Studies and Approach of the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye, p. 12).

GKUM receives requests from immigrants, provides consultancy services, and directs them to other institutions if necessary. The center also helps immigrants find employment by collecting demands from different sectors and connecting them with potential employers. Adana Metropolitan Municipality collaborates with the Turkish Employment Agency, the IOM, and the World Bank to carry out this work successfully (Kaya, 2020, p. 22).

The municipality's activities for immigrants can be divided into two categories: adaptation and economic support. One example of the former is the courses opened under the leadership of the International Labor Organization in 2017 to teach Syrians languages and professions. Approximately 120 people have received language courses at A-1 and A-2 levels (Migration Studies and Approach of the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye, p. 13).

Another initiative is the "Promoting Decent Job Opportunities for Non-Syrian Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Türkiye" project, which created a training center in 2018-2019 and provided 80 people with A1 level Turkish education in the language school. The municipality also collaborated with the Asylum Seekers and Migrants Solidarity Association (SGDD-ASAM) to open a psycho-social support center for immigrants in 2019. As of 2021, approximately 6,000 people have received psychological counseling services (Migration Studies and Approach of the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye, p. 14). Finally, Adana Metropolitan Municipality provided distance language training to 200 host society members and immigrants from disadvantaged groups between September 2020 and January 2021 with the support of GIZ (Migration Studies and Approach of the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye, p. 14). These projects demonstrate the municipality's commitment to supporting immigrants in Adana.

In addition to the activities listed above, Adana Metropolitan Municipality Health and Social Services Department Immigration and Migrant Affairs Branch Directorate and IOM organized a Pozanti Belediyelik trip for 60 people within the project of "Supporting Integrated Service Supply and Social Cohesion with the Municipality Migrant and Refugee Center". During the activity, various awareness activities were held as part of the "International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women". In cooperation with the Department of Health and Social Services, Migration and Migrant Affairs Branch Directorate, IOM, and SGDD - ASAM, health kits were distributed to seasonal agricultural workers living in tents in Karataş Bahçe Mahallesi by providing health screening, mobile hairdresser and care services (Adana Metropolitan Municipality Instagram Page, 2023).

Again, Adana Metropolitan Municipality implemented the "Hope in the Kitchen Project" with the United Nations World Food Program and GIZ to ensure social cohesion, and within the scope of the project, 1,500 (immigrants and host society members in need) were delivered to the needy for three months during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hot meals were served. A laundry with a daily capacity of 100 people has been put into service in the Şakirpaşa District of Seyhan District. In addition, iftar dinner on the occasion of Mother's Day, a short film screening and social cohesion meeting event, the integration event "Sister with Our Similarities, We Are Rich with Our

Differences", cinema shows, painting workshops, terrarium workshops, children's theaters, plant planting workshop, "Migration Films Festival and Different cultural, artistic, visual, applied and participatory activities such as "Museum Tour", which appeal to different age groups, bring together the host society and immigrants and encourage integration and intergroup contact (Akkaya, 2020; Kaya, 2020, p. 24).

For the economic support activities carried out with the international community; Under the leadership of the International Labor Organization, courses have been opened to enable Syrians to learn a profession since 2017, and courses in the fields of cooking and shoemaking have been given to approximately 120 people, again in 2018-2019; A training center was created with the project "Promoting decent job opportunities for non-Syrian Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Türkiye", a vocational training workshop was established and vocational training was provided to 70 participants (Migration Studies and Approach of the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye, p.13). The project "Developing Social Cohesion at Local Level by Increasing the Capacity of the Migration and Refugee Assembly", financed by the German Ministry of Development (GIZ) and United Cities and Local Governments Middle East and West Asia Regional Organization (UCLG-MEWA) in 2019, is the project of Adana Metropolitan Municipality's local It is a project in which he is involved as a practitioner. The International Center for Migration Studies, the General Directorate of Migration Management, and the Swiss Immigration Administration also carried out the project. Within the scope of this project, entrepreneurship, basic citizenship, computer classes, and various consultancy services were provided to 20 female participants, 15 of whom are immigrants and 5 of whom are citizens of the Republic of Türkiye and with the encouragement of Adana Metropolitan Municipality, the establishment of the "Mary Women's Cooperative" with 37 partners by bringing together women from Türkiye, Syria, Iran, and Afghanistan on 20/07/2020 (Migration Studies and Approach of the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye, p. 13-14).

In addition, with the contributions of the UN-IOM, a fruit and vegetable drying facility, which provides its energy from the sun, was established at the location indicated by the Adana Metropolitan Municipality. Within the scope of this project, 36 disadvantaged women from the host society and immigrants were employed, and the products were sold in the Meryem Women's Cooperative (Migration Studies and Approach of the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye, p.14).

Adana Metropolitan Municipality also employed 75 immigrants and disadvantaged individuals from the host society for a period of 4 months, with the participation of the GIZ and the "Cash for Work" Employment Project with the participation of the Support to Life Association (February-June 2021) as part of this project. Within the scope of the UN-ILO supported access to livelihoods project, which started in July 2020 and ended in December 2021, a 3-decare greenhouse was built on the municipality's land, and agricultural production was provided with a total of 135 women from the host community and Syrians (Migration Studies and Approach of the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye, p. 14).

## 7. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Our country is located in an unstable geography. Although this situation brings with it some disadvantages, it also offers many opportunities geopolitically. On the other hand, the political developments in the region continue to affect our country in different dimensions. The Republic of Türkiye, which is a great and powerful state, should know how to meet and eliminate the political-social risks it faces due to its position while using the advantages of the conjuncture and its geography. Because the experience of our state dating back centuries is sufficient to demonstrate this will.

Türkiye hosts approximately 4 million Syrians who left their country as a result of the Syrian civil war. Türkiye has approached this process as a humanitarian crisis since the events broke out in Syria and have implemented an "open door" policy against Syrians with whom we have historical and cultural ties. Expectations that the war would not last long and that the Syrians who had to leave their homeland would return to their homeland with the establishment of stability and peace were also effective in the emergence of this preference. At the point reached today, the primary problem for the Syrians, whose numbers are expressed in millions, is the integration, employment, and education of this population. The problem is not static, on the contrary, it is becoming chronic. The number of Syrians living in Türkiye is increasing day by day. As it is known, the majority of Syrians under temporary protection status live in urban centers. This situation also increases the population that local governments will serve.

The 5 provinces with the highest number of Syrian immigrants, which are spread all over Türkiye, are respectively; Istanbul (531.816 people), Gaziantep (452.189 people), Şanlıurfa (357.278 people), Hatay (337.644 people), Adana (243.905 people). In terms of population density, most Syrians live in Kilis (%35,8). The ratio of registered Syrians under temporary protection to the Turkish population is 4% across the country (Multeciler.org.).

"Temporary protection status" makes it difficult to approach the issue from a permanent and long-term perspective. There is a need for a paradigm shift in the management of the process with the transformation of a "temporary"

situation into a "permanent" one. In this context, public, local government, and non-governmental organizations should act jointly and cooperate for the social cohesion of Syrians (Alptekin, Akarçay Ulutaş and Gündüz, 2018: 110). On the other hand, although local governments are the main actors affected by the Syrian migration, they are not included in the policy-making stages of the center. The absence of regulation on this issue in the legislation (Alvanoğlu & Ateş, 2020: 397), in other words, the absence of a municipal law that gives authority and responsibility to the municipalities on migration management, in other words, administrative and financial uncertainty causes the municipalities to be uncertain in the financing and supply of services. (Babaoğlu and Kocaoğlu, 2017: 511; Lale, 2022: 91; Yanar & Erkut, 2020: 189). Because the financial resources sent by the central administration to the municipalities are determined only by the number of citizens residing within the boundaries of the municipality in question, however, municipalities that host a large number of Syrians under temporary protection are in financial difficulty in this case (Kaya, 2022: 348; Oktay et al., 2016: 782). Additional resources should be allocated to local governments according to the number of irregular migrants, refugees and conditional refugees, and Syrian migrants registered under temporary protection, and their authorities for the integration of local migrants should be increased (Karasu, 2017: 644-645; Bostan, 2018: 74; Babaoğlu & Kocaoğlu, 2017: 510-511).

Collaborations with non-governmental organizations are effective in overcoming the pointed problems (Alptekin et al., 2018: 102-103). However, there may be a lack of coordination between non-governmental organizations and this may result in repeated aid delivery (Alptekin et al., 2018: 103). The priority issues are opening language and vocational courses to ensure harmony (Karasu, 2016: 1012). However, local governments carry out short-term projects that are disconnected from each other due to the lack of financial resources and legal basis for immigrants, which makes it difficult to achieve the desired results in terms of social cohesion (Batuk & Adıgüzel, 2002: 51, 74). Activities (language courses, joint social activities) aimed at ensuring harmony between the host society and the Syrian immigrants continue despite all the negativities. (Lale, 2022: 89). However, it can be stated that the central government is more active in matters that require legal regulation and resources such as the employment of Syrians and employment, and similarly, local governments and non-governmental organizations operate more limitedly in the field of health (Çolakoğlu & Kaya, 2021: 725). Again, it is seen that women and children are more involved in harmonization activities organized by local governments and non-governmental organizations.

In this process, local governments need to take action to prevent possible confrontations with the host society while providing services to Syrians under temporary protection status. Efforts to be made by municipalities on integration will positively affect the overall level of integration of Syrians. Efforts to prevent social exclusion, on the contrary, to encourage contact with members of the Syrian community, are extremely valuable in terms of preventing possible tensions between groups. Above, the activities of Adana Metropolitan Municipality for Syrians under temporary protection status have been comprehensively discussed. The main point that draws attention to the financing of these efforts is that the contributions and supports of international institutions and organizations are the main components. Similar cooperation is also valid for Syrian Metropolitan Municipalities such as Istanbul, Gaziantep, and Urfa at most (Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality 2021 Annual Report, p.251, Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality 2021 Activity Report, pp.160-161, Urfa Metropolitan Municipality 2021 Activity Report, p.74, 336).

These projects, which are directed towards disadvantaged groups with temporary protection status, especially immigrant women, are very important and remarkable for the adaptation and socio-economic conditions of these groups. However, it is another important point that the mass reached by these efforts among the total number of immigrants is quite small in numerical terms. In this context, it is a vital necessity that the central authority strongly supports the efforts for harmonization and employment. Another important issue is that the shares of local governments from the central budget are calculated according to the resident population. In this context, another important requirement is to increase the support given to the municipalities in the context of financing the municipal services provided to the new residents of the city.

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## **ETHICAL APPROVAL OF THE STUDY**

All the rules specified in the "Directive on Scientific Research and Publication Ethics of Higher Education Institutions" were followed in this study. None of the actions specified under the second section of the Directive, "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", have been carried out.

### **Ethics committee permission information**

This study does not require any ethics committee permission

## **ARAŞTIRMACILARIN KATKI ORANI (**

1st author's contribution rate is approximately 40%, 2nd author's contribution rate is 30%, 3rd the author's contribution rate is 30%.

Author (1) contributed to the determination of the subject, discussion of the literature, and conclusion.

Author (2) contributed to the discussion of literature.

Author (3) contributed to the discussion of literature.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

"There is no financial or personal connection with any person or organisation in the research. There is no conflict of interest in the research."