

**Salience, path dependency and the coalition
between the European Commission and the Danish
Council Presidency: why the EU opened a visa
liberalisation process with Turkey**

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Illustration agenda setting/supranational
agency of the Commission

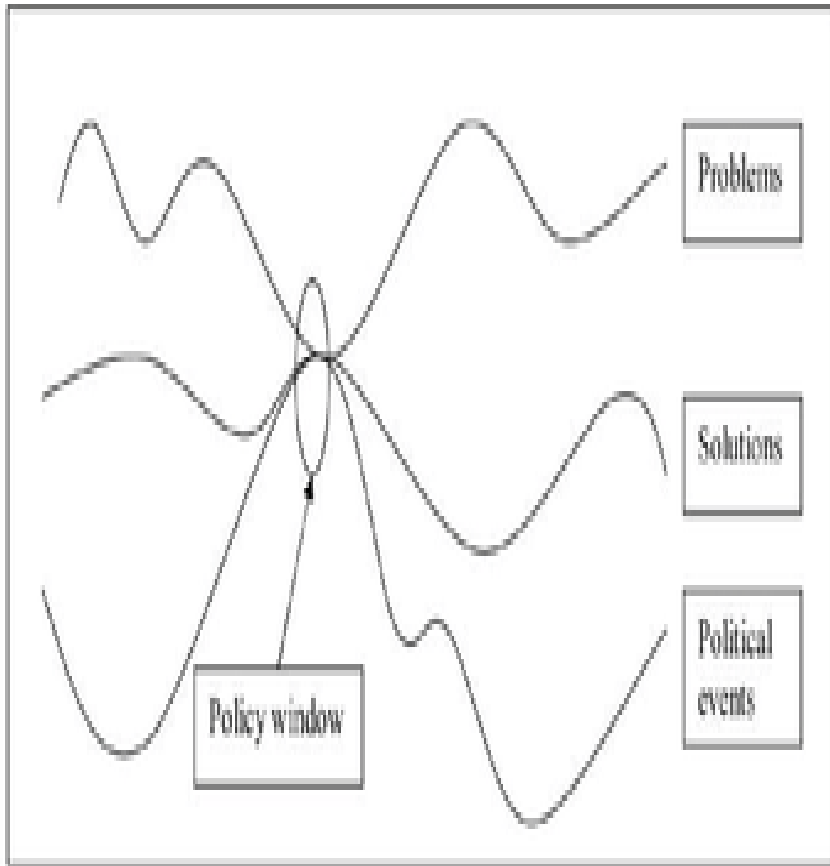
Turkey signed a readmission agreement

- Readmission agreement = take back illegal immigrants who have used Turkey as transit country
- High costs: main route for illegal immigrants, no readmission agreements with origin countries
- Negotiations since 2004 without results
- January 2011: European Commission announced finalization of negotiations
- December 2013 Turkey signed the agreement in return for the opening of a visa liberalization dialogue – initially rejected by some member states

Aim: Explaining the opening of a visa liberalization process with Turkey

- **European Commission's policy entrepreneurship:**
 - Promotes visa liberalization talks in return for a readmission agreement that obliges Ankara to take back illegal immigrants who passed through Turkey as a transit country.
 - Several member states against this linkage
- **Puzzle:**
 - **February 2011:** MS gave only green light for a dialogue on visa facilitations
 - **June 2012:** MS gave the European Commission the political mandate to launch a visa liberalisation process in return for Turkey's readiness for a readmission agreement

Theoretical Approach: Kingdon's multiple stream model (1)



- The influence of supranational policy entrepreneurs depends on their ability to couple problem-, policy (solution)- and politics stream

Theoretical Approach: Kingdon's multiple stream model (2)

- Problem stream:
 - Importance of issue salience
- Policy stream:
 - Acceptability of a policy solutions depends on similarity with previous decisions (path dependency)
- Politics stream:
 - Power balance between Commission/Council depends contingent on a variety of factors
 - One factor that deserves greater attention: synergies between Council Presidency and Commission

Method

- **Process Tracing** based on
 - Document analysis
 - 20 interviews with officials of the European Commission, Turkey, the Danish Council Presidency and reluctant member states such as Germany, France, Austria

Problem stream: Salience of external border control

2011

- Agenda dominated by Arab spring and
- negative experiences with the new visa liberalization for some Balkan states – large numbers of asylum applications for purely economic reasons

2012

- Management of refugees flows caused by Arab spring ceased to dominate agenda
- New alarming Frontex reports regarding Greek-Turkish border

Policy Stream: Coherent application of procedural standards

2011

- Link between readmission agreement and visa liberalization process established since 2006 for Western Balkan countries
- Visa obligation lifted in December 2009 and 2010
- Since 2010 Com. promoted same linkage for Turkey, re-text accomplished in February 2011

2012

- Preparation for the opening of a visa liberalization process with Kosovo (realized in June) once again raised the question of the incoherent treatment of Turkey
- Positive Agenda, May: bring fresh dynamic into EU-Turkey relations

Politics Stream: Role of Council Presidencies

2011

- Neither Hungarian nor Polish Presidencies were active supporters of Com.
 - Not target of illegal migration
 - no need for a readmission agreement
 - Special ties to some of the most important opponents
 - Image problems of Hungarian presidency
 - Personnel discontinuity

2012

- Denmark formed an interest coalition with Com
 - Target of illegal migration
 - New centre-left govt: less fears of overstayers
 - Perceived as an unbiased actor in EU-Turkey relations
 - Strategy to include a broader dialouge on related topics
 - Crumbling opposition of France and Germany

Outlook: How probable is a visa waiver for Turkey?

- Road Map: Difficult benchmarks
 - Harmonisation of asylum policy
 - Harmonisation of visa policy
- Broader Dialogue: a lot of uncertainties
 - Dialogue with all member states
 - Insufficient progress as tool for the member states to delay abolition of visa duty