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A Review of Milli Görüş and the Basic Law

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MILLI GÖRÜŞ: A Background



IGMG

Milli Görüş, or *Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüş* (IGMG), is a Turkish Islamic group that exists throughout Europe, but is based in Germany. IGMG identifies itself as an Islamic religious, cultural, and social group, which was formed to provide support in all aspects of life for Turkish, and other migrants of the Islamic Faith. Their goal is to provide these services while preserving and enriching the Islamic Faith within the current economic and social environment of Europe today.

<http://igmg.de>

The main functions of the IGMG include organization of the religious lives of Muslims, maintaining teachings and religious duties on a community level, addressing issues and representing the interests of, as well as protecting the fundamental rights of Muslims. The group has based their existence on the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, and states that, "Islam is a social and individual way of living, the influence of which certainly does not end at a mosque's doorstep...Entrusts Muslims with moral values and duties and therefore, plays a significant role in their everyday lives as well" (www.igmg.de). As of 1997, Milli Görüş owned 300 of the 1,000 mosques in Germany, as well as many community centers providing devout and secular religious services (Kleine-Brockhoff 206).

The name "Milli Görüş" is derived from the Turkish word "Millet", meaning a type of community (today, it specifically refers to legally protected religious communities), and the word Görüş, meaning a view or opinion.



A Milli Görüş owned mosque located in Berlin

http://www.cosmicbeing.info/berlin_mosque.jpg

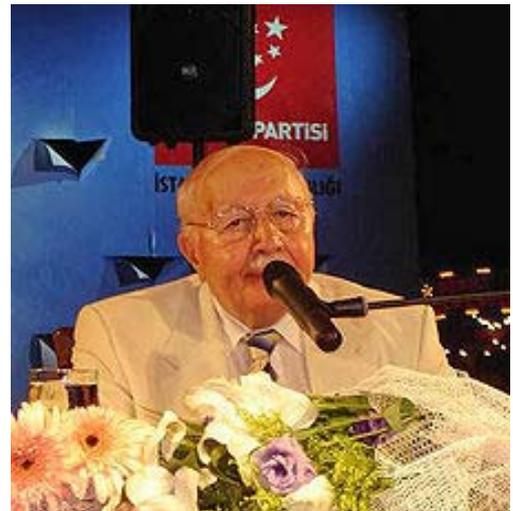
Milli Görüş/ ICMG was founded as a direct result of the "economic miracle" of the 1960s, when millions of Muslims were recruited from Turkey and several other countries as workers. As the Islamic population in Europe grew, these migrants established prayer rooms, and by the 1980s, these communities had begun to unite on a regional and national level. It was determined that further organization of the group was needed, and by 1995, after creating a central administrative body, Milli Görüş was officially founded. Necmettin Erbakan, one of the main founders, is the current leader and former Prime Minister of Turkey.

Because of its seemingly anti-integration stance in Germany, and throughout Europe, ICMG is considered an extremist group by many. Its ties to Islamic political groups in Turkey, such as The Islamic Justice and Development Party, are also under suspicion. ICMG has been in the news over the past four years due to fraud surrounding organization funds, as well as for participation in recent demonstrations.

Main Activities of Milli Görüş

Irschad (religious support)

- Religious education
- supports prayer rights, and accommodations for daily prayer



*Necmetten Erbakan,
Former Prime Minister of Turkey
founder and current leader
of the group Milli Görüş*

<http://img.webme.com/pic/t/turkiyeninilleri/necmettinerbakan.jpg>

Education

- Support for religious, German, and general education
- Homework help
- Expansion of parent-teacher relationships

Social Services

- Bridges gap between rich and poor members of IGMG based on Qur'an teachers of charity
- In 2007, 84,560 donations were made to families living in poverty

Community Development

- Build Mosques and prayer rooms
- Maintenance of tax and legal aspects of community work
- Coordinate annual meetings and major events

Secretariat

- Maintains community relations with other social groups - contact between community and society
- Maintains IGMG website, radio station, and the two IGMG magazines, *IGMG Perspective* and *Tomorrowland*
- Includes legal department which concerns itself with cases of discrimination and protecting fundamental religious rights.

Women's Division

- Provides job training and education, as well as courses in marriage, parenting and health
- Assists women in finding jobs within the community
- Promotion of language skills
- Seeks to help women overcome challenges of life after migration



Female members of Milli Görüş

<http://www.ig-ma.de/galerie/upload/Kermes%202008/kermes1.jpg>



Young Members of Milli Görüş participate in religious activities
<http://img114.imageshack.us/img114/6060/igmg03151ch.jpg>

- Provides literature aimed towards youth
- Maintains IGMG "kids' club"

Finance

- Milli Görüş is solely funded by members
- Keeps money holdings for IGMG Pilgrimage organization, as well as a IGMG bookstore

Milli Görüş in the News

Milli Görüş is considered by many to be a dangerous extremist Muslim group because of its supposed anti-integration stance, as well as its ties to Turkish Islamic leaders. First and foremost, its founder and current leader, Necmetten Erbakan, has strong connections to many Islamist groups in the country. In May 2005, three men were stripped of their citizenship after non-disclosure of their affiliation to the group. They were then stateless, as they had given up their Turkish citizenship, and according to the German officials, "the men should never have been granted German citizenship because Milli Görüş is hostile to democratic principles" ("Islamists Stripped of German Nationality"). More recently, in December of 2008, Milli Görüş faced an internal dispute over the distribution of \$60 million allocated in the sale of Turkish land. Abdulsamet Temel, a member of Milli Görüş's central executive body, was

Youth Division

- Offers homework help and religious education, as well as religious language, computer and other courses
- Organizes sports, travel, and major youth activities

removed after it was discovered that he had taken part in suspected funneling of funds into accounts of the Islamic Justice and Development Party (AKP). It is also suspected that Zahid Akman, the head of Turkey's Radio and Television watchdog, as well as its founders who are close to the current ruling government, were involved in this scandal ("German-based radical Islamist Milli Görüş in \$60 mln fund dispute"). It is safe to say that Milli Görüş will remain under suspicion as long as there is indication that they may have strong ties to Islamic groups in Turkey. However, the actions of the German Government in regards to the revocation of citizenship are also under the suspicion of the public.

<http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/0,1518,602052,00.html>

Integration into a different culture is a difficult task, even for the most open of people.



It is especially hard for those with very different religious beliefs and customs from those of the new culture. Many immigrants of Islamic belief have a hard time fitting in when they come to Germany, often as asylum-seekers or as guest workers. The majority of Islamic immigrants coming to Germany come from Turkey. When these immigrants come to Germany, they are often looking for a better way of life. German social systems and wages provide this sought-after lifestyle, even for immigrants who are working for very low wages and living in substandard housing. This affluent and raised social status is what lures so many from Turkey to come to Germany.

When they arrive, however, they find that integrating into the German way of life is much harder than they had first imagined. These immigrants coming from Islamic backgrounds search for those of similar beliefs and backgrounds. One way to come into



contact with similar people is for immigrants to join Islamic groups that will support their religious beliefs and help them to feel stronger in their new surroundings. One such group, previously mentioned, is Milli Görüş. Yet, the German government is beginning to see this group as a threat to German National Security.

“German security agencies have

[http://wissen.spiegel.de/wissen/](http://wissen.spiegel.de/wissen/resultset.html?suchbegriff=turkisch+deutsch)

resultset.html?suchbegriff=turkisch+deutsch

repeatedly warned about Milli Görüş’

dangerousness. Even though the group has never resorted to violence, it plays an important role in radicalizing and preventing the integration of the large Turkish immigrant community” (Vidino). For this reason, Germany does not allow immigrants of Islamic beliefs to become citizens of the Federal Republic if they are members of the fundamentalist Islamic group Milli Görüş. With this in mind, the following event comes as no surprise.



On May 18, 2005, three naturalized German citizens were stripped of their citizenship. The three men were of Turkish origin and active members of the Islamic group Milli Görüş in their small town’s chapter in Limburg. This was the reason the Wiesbaden tribunal stated for revoking their previously granted

<http://www.spiegel.de/sptv/magazin/0,1518,165999,00.html>

citizenship. Milli Görüş is under tight watch by the German government because it is seen as

"hostile to democratic principles" (Expatica).

Officials said that the three men did not disclose their membership to the organization when they applied for naturalization. If they had, their application would most certainly have been denied. Officials in the city of Giessen, located just north of Frankfurt, were the first to make the judgment. The three men then appealed the ruling to a higher administrative tribunal in Wiesbaden. On May 18 2005, the three men found out that their appeal had been denied, and that their previously granted citizenship was to be revoked.

The three men were then in a difficult situation. They were forced to hand in their passports soon after the ruling. However, it was not as simple as sending them back to Turkey. The reason for this is because part of the process of becoming a naturalized citizen of Germany is to have one's previous citizenship (in this case Turkish citizenship) dissolved. These three men are now citizens of no country, stateless. Despite in-depth research, the authors of this report were unable to find an update on the situation of these three men, such as where they are living now, and of what country they are citizens.

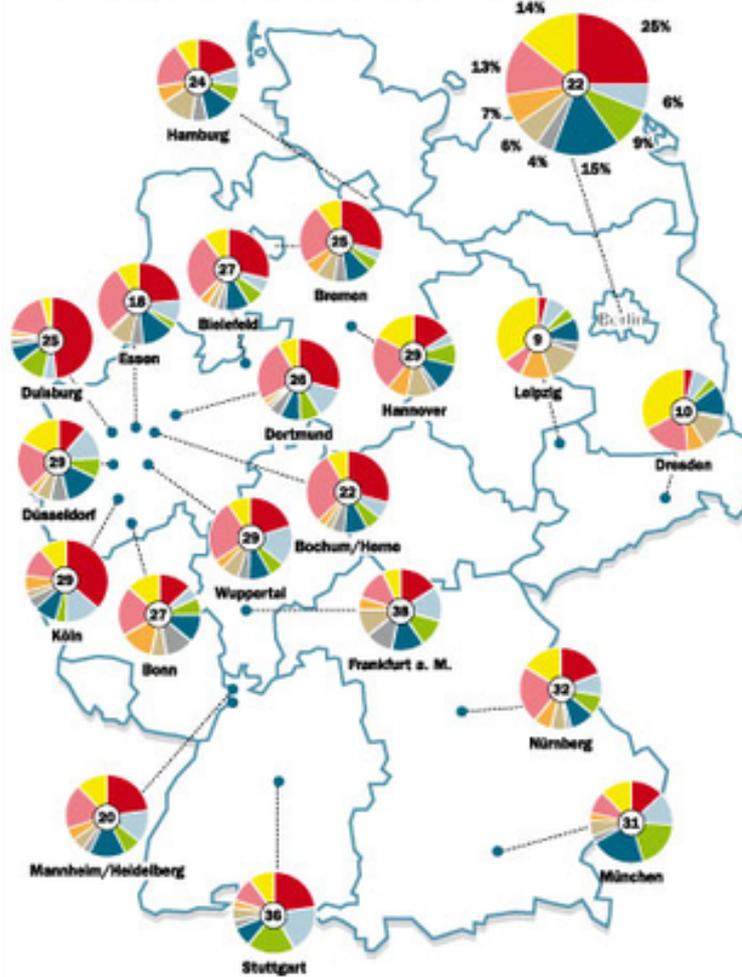
With events like the above-mentioned happening, it is no wonder that immigrants coming to Germany have a hard time fitting in with their new German neighbors, especially when seen in the light of how many immigrants of Turkish origins live in Germany without citizenship rights. "Germany has the largest Muslim population in Western Europe after France. Approximately 3.0 to 3.5 million Muslims live in Germany, and 80% of them do not have German citizenship ... 70% of the Muslim population is of Turkish origin" (Euro-Islam). The question still facing Germany today is whether or not it in fact *is* a country of immigration. Resent press releases say yes, Germany is a county of immigration and friendly toward foreigners. But look no further than the attitudes of native Germans on the street and the experiences of non-native Germans, and you will see that in the eyes of immigrants, the answer is no, Germany is not friendly toward foreigners.

Woher die Migranten kommen

Anteile der Herkunftsgruppen an allen Zuwanderern in Prozent



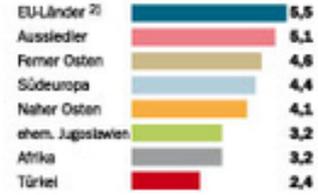
22) Bevölkerungsanteil aller Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund in Prozent



Am besten integriert sind ...

Indikatorenwerte ¹⁾ in Punkten

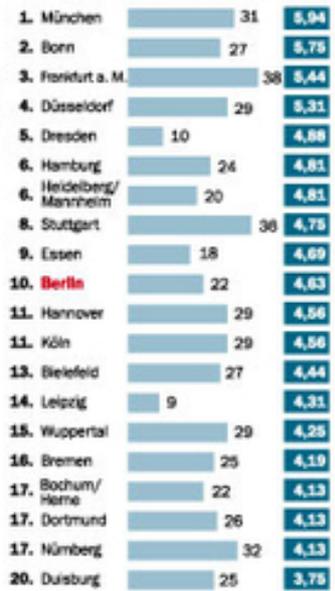
8 Punkte = gelungene Integration
1 Punkt = missgückte Integration



Städtebewertung: München vorn, Berlin in der Mitte

Ergebnisse der einzelnen Indikatoren für die 20 größten Städte

Migrationsanteil (in Prozent)
Integrationspunkte
(8 Punkte = gelungene Integration, 1 Punkt = missgückte Integration)



1) Das Berlin-Institut entwickelte einen Index zur Messung der Integration, der auf 20 Indikatoren besteht. Zum Beispiel schulische und berufliche Bildung, Heiratsverhalten, Haushaushaltsquote und Arbeitslosenquote. Ein Ranking aus der Punktskala ergibt: 1 Punkt = missgückte Integration, 8 Punkte = gelungene Integration (das heißt, die Herkunft behindert ein erfolgreiches Leben in Deutschland nicht).
2) Weitere Länder der EU-25

Quelle: Berlin-Institut für Bevölkerung und Entwicklung

Related Articles in the German Constitution



Feldman, Matthew. "The LaRouche Organization As An Extremist Movement." *H.E.A.R.T.* 2008. 16 March 2009 <<http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/essays&editorials/larouche2.html>>.

Regarding the revocation of German citizenship for the three naturalized Turkish citizens mentioned above, there seem to be some contradictions pertaining to the rights of these men in the German constitution called *Das Grundgesetz*, or “The Basic Law.” The officials' reasoning for stripping the three men of their citizenship because of their affiliation with the Islamic group Milli Görüş is contradictory to some of the articles written into the *Grundgesetz* that were created to protect people and their right to freedom of religion.

Article 3 of the Grundgesetz promises “equality before the law,” stating that no one may be discriminated against or favored because of one's sex, parentage, race, language, homeland or origin, **faith or religious beliefs, or political opinions**. Being that the Milli Görüş is a religious organization with their own social, religious and political opinions that do not directly relate to Germany's ideologies, it seems somewhat hypocritical to take away German citizenship from these men who should be protected under Article 3 for their affiliation with a non-German religious group.

In Article 4, “freedom of faith, of conscience and of creed,” it states again that anyone has the right to freely practice the religion of their choice and that **the undisturbed practice of religion is guaranteed and inviolable**. This article again would seem to work in favor of the three stateless Turkish men but instead they most likely remain without any national

citizenship. “Freedom of assembly,” in Article 8, says that all Germans have the right to assemble peacefully and unarmed **without prior notification or permission**. The officials of this case included in their reasoning that the three men failed to disclose their involvement with the Milli Görüş, but here in Germany's Basic Law, one does not need prior notification or permission to assemble.

Another basic law in the *Grundgesetz* promises the “freedom of association.”

Article 9:

(1) “All Germans have the right to form associations and societies.” The Milli Görüş is one of the largest religious associations of the Turks in Germany and has over 300,000 members in Europe.

(2) “Associations, the objects or activities of which conflict with the criminal laws or which are directed against the constitutional order or the concept of international understanding, are prohibited.” In granting freedom of religion and freedom of political opinion, there are bound to be conflicting ideologies, unfamiliar belief systems and different perspectives that do not coincide with Germany's main ideas of constitutional order or concept of international understanding. So is it the case that one can have freedom of religion and political opinion as long as their views are not too different and fit Germany's concept of international understanding? Must every religion be familiar to a certain degree in order for it to be “freely” practiced without prejudice?

(3) “The right to form associations to safeguard and improve working and economic conditions is guaranteed to everyone and to all trades and professions. Agreements which restrict or seek to hinder this right are null and void; measures directed to this end are illegal.” On an informational website about the Milli Görüş also known as IGMG, it states that it aims at maintaining the Islamic teachings as well as proclaiming the Islamic creed and communicating religious duties. They represent Muslims’ interests while addressing all

issues regarding them. The goal of the IGMG is to improve the living circumstances of Muslims and to provide for their fundamental rights (IGMG). The Milli Görüş seems to be trying to work towards protecting people of the Muslim faith, especially Turks in Germany who, after giving up their Turkish citizenship to become naturalized German citizens, can still hold onto their religious and cultural background.



Laurie. "Euro 2008 Semifinal Preview:Germany vs.Turkey." *Euro 2008*. 25 June 2008. 16 March 2009 <<http://euro2008.worldcupblog.org/news/euro-2008-simifinal-preview-germany-vs-turkey.html>>.

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