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Over Four Centuries of Relations between the Netherlands and Türkiye

Ponad cztery wieki relacji między Niderlandami a Turcją

• Abstract •

The year 2012 marked the 400th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Türkiye. The history of Dutch-Turkish relations presented in the work is a synthetic description of the mutual relations between the two countries. In the political relations between the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands and Türkiye, in addition to the commercial reasons characteristic to the Republic, it was the existence of a common enemy that united the countries, although over the course of four centuries, it was the commercial relations that dominated over the political ones. In the historical outline presented, it can be seen that the activities of the two countries proceeded quite smoothly, however, the recent history may bring a greater number of conflicts related to migration.

Keywords: Türkiye (Turkey); Holland; the Netherlands

• Abstrakt •

W 2012 roku minęła czterechsetna rocznica nawiązania stosunków dyplomatycznych między Niderlandami a Turcją. Zaprezentowana w pracy historia stosunków holendersko-tureckich jest syntetycznym opisem wzajemnych relacji tych dwóch krajów. W stosunkach politycznych Republiki Zjednoczonych Prowincji Niderlandów z Turcją poza względami merkantylnymi, charakterystycznymi dla Republiki, czynnikiem jednoczącym było istnienie wspólnego wroga, choć na przestrzeni czterech wieków to relacje handlowe dominowały nad politycznymi. W prezentowanym rysie historycznym widać, że działania obydwu krajów przebiegały dość sprawnie, aczkolwiek historia najnowsza może przynieść zdecydowanie większą liczbę konfliktów związanych z procesem migracji.

Słowa kluczowe: Turcja; Holandia; Niderlandy

The year 2012 marked the 400th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Türkiye.¹ Accordingly, a number of publications on the subject have been published in the Netherlands, often being the aftermath of conferences on the subject and showing what contacts between the two different cultures looked like.

The Netherlands and Türkiye had a decidedly more turbulent relationship from the beginning, with some peaceful periods, however, conflict prevailed. Then, at the end of the golden age of both countries as superpowers, as they were facing a common enemy, a normalization of relations happened, turning them into friendly neutrality. Such were the relations of these countries, with different cultures, bordering each other. The relations of the Netherlands and Türkiye, as two geographically distant and culturally alien countries, were completely different. In each of these cases, Poland and Türkiye, and the Netherlands and Türkiye, an undisguised fascination with the exotic Ottoman Empire was evident. As for the Netherlands, in addition to the commercial reasons characteristic to the Republic, it was the existence of a common enemy that united the countries, although over the course of four centuries, it was the commercial relations that dominated over the political ones.

However, Dutch researchers have concluded that diplomacy and trade alone do not fully reflect the mutual relations. They found that it is possible to see a penetration of cultures, not only in the 21st century, when it is perfectly natural, given that the Turkish minority is among the most numerous and better organized diasporas in the Netherlands. As examples, they cite the activities of some Dutch artists who showed interest in Türkiye in different eras. These included the playwright and writer Joost van den Vondel, while the most famous one was the Orientalist painter Marius Bauer, who lived at the turn of the 20th century (Mariusbauer, 2022).

Türkiye is associated with the most renowned Dutch flower – the tulip, and with the Tulip Craze. Tulip bulbs reached the Netherlands through an Austrian diplomat, Ogier Gisleen van Busbeke, who received them from Sultan Suleyman I. Ogier Gisleen van Busbeke gifted them to his friend, Carolus Clusius, who managed the imperial gardens in Vienna. In 1593, he became professor of botany at Leiden University and was responsible for managing the *Hortus botanicus* of Leiden, where he grew the first collection of tulips in Europe (Hortusleiden, 2022). The importance of tulip cultivation in both countries was mentioned in a speech by Queen Beatrix in 2001, during a meeting with Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer. At the time, she stated that “the most colorful and enduring aspect of our commercial exchange has undoubtedly been the tulip trade. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the cultivation

¹ Formerly known as Turkey; hereinafter referred to by its new name established in 2022.

of tulips became a true passion in both our countries. The tulip, initially brought in from Türkiye, later became a symbol of Dutch identity” (Koninklijkhuis, 2001). The queen also mentioned the well-known freethinker Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert, who spoke positively about the situation of Christians in this Muslim state, about the interest in Turkish carpets and Ottoman manuscripts, whose significant collection is located at the University of Leiden (Koninklijkhuis, 2001).

In the centuries that followed, interest in the Orient did not diminish. Merchants and sailors settled in the areas of the Ottoman Empire were often Sephardic Jews expelled from areas of present-day Spain, some of whom initially lived in the Netherlands but the lucrativeness of trading with Türkiye caused some of them to settle mainly in Smyrna (Izmir), Constantinople (Istanbul), and Aleppo. These settlers included not only Jews but other residents of the Netherlands; it must have been quite a large group, for even a Protestant church was built in Smyrna in the 17th century (Fotocollectie Elsevier, 1950).

Diplomacy

The history of the mutual contacts dates back to the Middle Ages, when Türkiye was visited by merchants from the Netherlands, but the beginning of the official relations between Türkiye and the Netherlands, and more specifically the rebellious provinces of the Netherlands, which at that time were a property of the Habsburgs, started already in modern times. Even before the creation of the Dutch Republic, the Ottoman Empire was visited by travelers from the Netherlands. A more common reason outside of trade, in the Middle Ages and later on, was to journey to the Holy Land. One such peregrination was described by a Dutch nobleman, Joos van Ghistele. A separate chapter in his journal is devoted to the structure of power in the Ottoman state, and in particular, the Turkish army (Zeboout, 1998).

The first ambassador of the United Provinces of the Netherlands was Cornelius Haga, who arrived in Istanbul on March 17, 1612, after a long sea voyage. The voyage lasted 4 months and was very risky, as it ran close to Spain and near the bases of Barbary pirates in Algiers and Tunis (Boogert, 2012, p. 17). The establishment of diplomatic relations was tantamount to the recognition of the United Provinces of the Netherlands as a sovereign state. In 1612, an agreement on sustainable commercial and political cooperation was signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of the Netherlands. The agreement described exactly on what terms the trade would be conducted, what rights the inhabitants of the Republic would have in the areas ruled by the Sultan. The first Dutch embassy in Istanbul, the Palais

de Hollande, now the Consulate General in Türkiye, was established (Schmidt, 2012, p. 17).

The establishment of diplomatic relations, while the war for independence with the Spaniards was still going on, was of great importance for the international position of the young state. Efforts to establish relations, and presumably to receive military assistance from the Ottoman Empire in the fight against the Catholic Spain, were made in the Netherlands much earlier. The General States (the parliament of the united provinces) made attempts to establish diplomatic contacts with the Sublime Porte, but a positive response was received only in 1610, and a year later the decision was made to send an official representative to Istanbul (Karacay, 2012, p. 14). All this time, the Dutch were under the illusion that Türkiye would somehow support the Dutch militarily fighting for independence. At the beginning of the 16th century, the idea of seeking military assistance in Türkiye against the Spaniards was often raised during the deliberations of the parliament of the Republic of the Netherlands, the General States (Boogert, 2012, p. 17).

At that time, it was popular to say that 'better a Turk than a Spaniard' (*liever Turks dan Paaps*) (Roelants, 2012, p. 13). There were even special medallions (1570) with this inscription, worn by the Geuzen fighting the Spanish troops (Overmeer, 2012). In 1604, the army of Prince Maurits seized the town of Sluis in Flemish Zealand, where a number of galleys were conquered. It turned out there were 1,400 Turkish rowing boatmen serving on them. Those of them who wished so, received special documents from Prince Maurits, thanks to which they could travel to Marseille, and then return to their homeland by ship. This gesture was to convince the Sultan of the Netherlands' friendly intentions (Bülent, 2003, p. 81). The Turks were also interested in cooperation. The faction at the Sublime Porte striving for strategic alliances with all the enemies of Spain was increasingly stronger. The main representative of this faction was Khalil Pasha. This was due to the increased activity of the Spanish, Neapolitan, Sicilian, Maltese and Florentine fleets in the eastern Mediterranean (Groot, 1978, pp. 48–58). That is, in a region where, at the end of the 16th century, Türkiye was heavily involved militarily, conducting regular warfare against the Habsburg provinces in this part of the world. The Dutch fought the Spanish Habsburgs, and the military successes of the Turks influenced the imagination of Europeans, who were considered almost invincible at the time. The uprising in the Northern Netherlands against the Spaniards was positively received by the Turks, mainly because it involved Spain financially and militarily in the north, while it was still conducting military operations in the Mediterranean (Groot, 1978, p. 85). In 1610, Khalil Pasha, on behalf of the Sultan, sent an invitation to the General States and Prince Maurits to cooperate

against Spain, which he openly called a common enemy in his letter, in addition to promising the Dutch a right to free trade in Ottoman ports (Heering, 1910, pp. 180–181).

It seemed that the common enemy could facilitate military cooperation between such culturally distant countries as the Protestant Republic and the Muslim Ottoman Empire ruled by despotic rulers. The government of the Republic wanted to conduct its foreign policy in accordance with the principle of *de vijanden van mijn vijanden zijn mijn vrienden* (Boogert, 2012, p. 13). It turned out, however, that the results of Cornelis Haga's mission were at first far from expectations. The beginning of his stay was a series of often futile attempts to obtain cooperation from the Sultan and his closest advisers. In addition, the situation was complicated by the actions of French and Venetian diplomats not very favorable to the Cornelis mission, so he had to act extremely cautiously. In 1609, after a series of spectacular successes of Spanish troops, a truce was signed with the Spaniards (for 12 years), stating that any action for close military cooperation between the Netherlands and Türkiye could have been a reason to break this truce. It should be remembered that the struggles of the regular troops took place over 80 years with variable luck. Most often than not, Spanish commanders showed greater strategic talent, but "the Spanish troops never managed to conquer the Dutch dykes, Dutch money, Dutch warships and allies" (Zweifel, 2013, p. 45). Moreover, Cornelis himself was afraid that the Spanish would take his life, which is why he tried to reassure them that he had come to Türkiye not to lead to a military alliance between these countries, but to free Dutch prisoners (Karacay, 2012, p. 15). This was, moreover, the official reason for his visit; it was to free the Dutch kidnapped by the Barbary pirates, who were then subjects of the Sultan (Roelants, 2012, p. 13). It adds to the spiciness of the fact that in those days, several high-profile pirates were of Dutch origin (Vermeulen, 2001, p. 324).

However, the final result of Haga's activities turned out to be positive for the Netherlands, at least in terms of trade. Cornelis managed to obtain facilities for Dutch traders trading with Türkiye. In the years 1604–1613, the turnover in Levantine trade tripled, but east was still a much less popular direction than the Baltic one. The German historian Hermann Wätjen calculated that the number of ships flying the Dutch flag that passed through the Strait of Gibraltar annually between 1619 and 1631 was about two hundred on average. During the same period, thousands of Dutch ships passed through the Sound (Øresund) every year (Wätjen, 1909). However, mercantile reasons did shape the nature of the relations between Türkiye and the Netherlands, as it turns out. As stems from the research, the dynamic Dutch merchants began to displace the Venetians and gain importance

in the Levantine trade,² which definitely was aided by the construction of a very efficient and practical freighter called the *fluyt* (Koops, 2019). Thanks to the fluyts, the Dutch pushed their competitors, mainly Venetians, out of the transport services market in the Mediterranean (Gelder, 2009, p. 100).

In 1639, Cornelius' mission ended and he returned to the Republic. He later held many important positions in the country until his death in 1654. Cornelius' mission, in addition to a significant facilitation for merchants, brought legal international recognition to the Republic. Türkiye was the first state to officially recognize the United Provinces, and in the main Turkish ports Dutch consuls began to function, whose main task was to help Dutch merchants (Vermeulen, 2001, pp. 16–17). The largest colony of the Dutch merchants was established in Smyrna (today's Izmir) (Roelants, 2012, p. 15). In Istanbul, although the name Constantinople was sometimes used in unofficial diplomatic correspondence, the Embassy of the Republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands was located. Some of the diplomatic representatives of the Republic held these positions for life. The first ambassador, Cornelius Haga, returned to his homeland at the end of his life, but his successors fulfilled their functions until his death abroad. There were even such cases that the son inherited the position of the deceased father, as was the case with the Colyers (see Table 1; Bulut, 2001, p. 211).

With the ongoing decline in the international importance of the Republic and the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the diplomatic representatives' task was only to take care of the interests of the Dutch merchants. They did not have ambitious political goals set as was the case in the times of Ambassador Cornelius Haga. The Embassy of the Republic was dissolved in 1811, which showed the low importance of relations between the two countries. Later, after the situation stabilized in the Netherlands, the embassy resumed its activity, and during World War I, it was one of the few European diplomatic missions in Türkiye.

Table 1. Diplomatic Representatives of the Netherlands in Türkiye in the Years 1612–1811

Name	Function	Years in office
Cornelius Haga	Ambassador	1612–1638
Henric Corps	<i>Chargé d'affaires</i>	1638–1647
Nicolas Ghisbrechti	<i>Chargé d'affaires</i>	1647–1654
Levinus Warner	<i>Chargé d'affaires</i>	1654–1665

² In 1670, the French ambassador in Istanbul reported that Western states sent goods worth 20 million livres annually from the Ottoman Empire, of which, in his opinion, the Dutch had a share of more than 50%.

Table 1 (continued)

Name	Function	Years in office
Joris Crook	<i>Chargé d'affaires</i>	1667
Justinus Colyer	Until 1680, a resident, that year appointed Ambassador	1667–1682
Jacobus Colyer	Son of Justin Colyer. Officially appointed Ambassador in 1688	1682–1725
Cornelis Calkoen	Ambassador, previously on a diplomatic mission to Poland	1725–1744
Jan Carel Des Bordes	<i>Chargé d'affaires</i>	1744–1747
Elbert De Hochepped	Ambassador	1747–1763
Jean Louis Rigo	<i>Chargé d'affaires</i>	1721–1756
Van Asten, M.	<i>Chargé d'affaires</i>	1763–1764
Dedel, W.g.	Ambassador	1765–1768
De Weiler, F.	<i>Chargé d'affaires</i> , and since 1775 Ambassador	1768–1776
Van Haecten, R.	Ambassador, after 1784 Ambassador in Vienna	1778–1784
Kroll, C.f.	<i>Chargé d'affaires</i> until the arrival of Ambassador Van Dedem van de Gelder	1784–1785
Van Dedem Van De Gelder, F.g. (1)	Ambassador	1785–1793
Panchaud, J.p. And Braggiotti, R.	Officials who were replacing the Ambassador during his several years' leave	1793–1796
Van Dedem Van De Gelder, F.g. (2)	Ambassador, stayed outside Constantinople (in Bucharest) in the years 1799–1802 in connection with the break-up of diplomatic relations	1796–1803
Francois Testa	<i>Chargé d'affaires</i>	1803–1807
Van Dedem Van De Gelder, F.g. (3)	<i>Chargé d'affaires</i>	1807–1808
Gaspard Testa	He became vice-chancellor in 1791. After Van Dedem's departure he was <i>chargé d'affaires</i> until the dissolution of the embassy	1808–1810

Source: Authors' own study based on: Bulut (2001), and *Inventaris...* (2021).

In addition to trade, an interest in a different culture was also observed, as evidenced by numerous manuscripts from that time. Citizens of the Republic came to the Ottoman Empire in greater numbers, and interest in Türkiye was much greater in the Netherlands than the other way around. The first Turk to officially come to the Netherlands as an envoy of the Sultan was Omer Aga, who came to the Hague in 1614. The aim of his mission was to get acquainted with the political and

economic situation of the Republic and learn about its military capabilities (Lewis, 2001, p. 111). Omer Aga was in the General States. Besides, he traveled around the Republic, visiting, among others, Utrecht. He was the first Turk to climb the Domtoren in Utrecht (the highest church tower in the Netherlands with a height of 112.5 m, which is part of the Cathedral of St. Martin and was built in the years 1321–1382) (Weijer, 1856). For the economical Dutch, the stay of Omer Aga proved to be troublesome. According to the General States, the visit was too expensive for the treasury of the Republic, which is why the Dutch envoy in Istanbul, Cornelis Haga, was asked how to avoid this type of visit in the future. It is not known whether this had any impact on the arrival of subsequent envoys of the Sultan, because we know very little about their stays in the Netherlands (Lange, 2013). Perhaps the Turkish interest in the Netherlands was much less responsible for this state of affairs. This is reflected by the scarcity of preserved books and documents treating about the Netherlands. Although there were some descriptions of this country made by Turkish travelers, none of the authors did actually go to the Netherlands. For example, Evliya Çelebi, a Turkish traveler who supposedly intended to include the Netherlands in his itinerary, wrote a description of certain cities in the Netherlands, although historians accuse him that they are far from reality and in fact he never went there. This is one of the few descriptions of the Netherlands made by a Turk at that time (Schmidt, 2012, pp. 31–32). Unlike the Turks, Greeks, who were subjects of the Sultan at that time, often visited the Netherlands. Orthodox Church followers studied theology at universities in the northern Netherlands. These included Cyril Lucaris, later Patriarch of Constantinople, who had already met the later representative of the Netherlands in Türkiye, Cornelis Haga, around 1600. His correspondence with leading theologians and thinkers of the Republic was preserved, and the influence of the Calvinist doctrine on Cyril turned out to be so great that he was referred to as the “Protestant Patriarch of Constantinople” (Boogert, 2012, pp. 23–27).

Apart from Cyril Lucaris, the Netherlands was visited by other Greeks: Stephanus d’Isaij, a merchant and traveler living in Amsterdam at the turn of the 19th century. The Greek diaspora was so numerous that they even had their own Greek Orthodox church in Amsterdam (Koster, 2012, pp. 57–58). This testifies to the mobility of the Sultan’s subjects, with the exception of the Turks themselves, who only began to come to the Netherlands in the second half of the 20th century. However, it is not entirely true that no Turk settled in the northern Netherlands before the 20th century. As already mentioned, around the year 1604, as a result of an attack of the Republic’s troops and the seizure of the town of Sluis, where Spanish galleys were stationed, 1,400 galley slaves, including Algerians, Arabs and Turks, were freed.

Some of them settled near Sluis. Even one of the villages was called “Türkiye” to commemorate this event, and the inhabitants of another were called “Turks”. Dutch historians suspect that these are descendants of the freed galley slaves. The news of their liberation reached the Sultan, which greatly facilitated the subsequent contacts between the two countries in their early stages (Karacay, 2012, p. 52).

Some ambassadors not only represented their country, but were also involved in international politics, as was the case with Cornelis Calkoen, who in 1727 became an ambassador of the Republic in the Ottoman Empire. Calkoen maintained good relations with the Ottoman court, enjoying such high trust that in 1737 he participated in peace negotiations between the Sultan and the Russian Tsar (Rijksmuseum, 2022b).

Cornelis Calkoen’s mission was immortalized by the French artist Jean Baptiste Vanmour in a series of paintings depicting not only the ambassador’s audiences with the Sultan, but also fragments of his private life in the Ottoman Empire. Calkoen valued Vanmour’s paintings, as in his will he even forbade the sale of these works. He wanted them to be placed in a museum. That was what happened, and the paintings are in the Rijksmuseum (Rijksmuseum, 2022a).

As we learn from historical reports, those diplomatic representatives of Türkiye who were in Amsterdam at the time did not have much to do. In addition, they were lower ranking representatives of the Sultan than, for example, in countries such as France.

Diplomatic relations between the Republic and Türkiye were maintained, although they lost their importance in the 18th century due to the decrease in the political role of the Netherlands in Europe and the weakening of the Ottoman power. However, this did not cause a break in diplomatic relations, which still existed.

An interesting example of a Turkish diplomat in the 19th century was Murad Effendi, a writer, playwright, and publisher in the Netherlands. Since 1877, he was the ambassador of Türkiye to Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands, residing in the Hague. He translated Turkish poetry into Dutch, and fragments of his literary works were printed in Dutch magazines. In 1881, he even received a literary medal from King William III. He died in the same year, and his funeral was reported in the Dutch press. He was buried in the Hague, where his grave still exists (Braamhorst, 2012, pp. 27–28). This does not hide the fact that, in relations between Türkiye and the Netherlands, trade relations were of the greatest importance. Dutch merchants, most often settled in the European district of Izmir, conducted an intensive trade exchange, enjoying many privileges and the protection of the Sultan (Schmidt, 2012, p. 18).

Trade relations developed without major obstacles until the reign of Napoleon Bonaparte, who introduced a continental blockade, which immobilized the entire Dutch fleet. In addition, it led to a temporary break in political relations. However, the latter were re-established in 1804, when the first Ottoman consul was appointed in Amsterdam. As far as trade relations are concerned, they eventually returned to their pre-Napoleon state, but with a new formula (Schmidt, 2012, p. 21). Since the opening of the Suez Canal (1869), however, the nature of this trade changed. The Dutch took to the most profitable trade, in opium, with India (Bulut, 2001, p. 49). They bought opium from Turkish farmers to sell to the British colony. Opium produced in Izmir was considered by Indians to be of much better quality than that produced in India (Schmidt, 2012, p. 15). The trade was ended by the youth revolution, as a result of which Dutch settlers left Izmir with other Europeans, fearing the chaos that prevailed at that time.

During World War I, the Netherlands remained neutral and had diplomatic representatives in Türkiye, and from 1912 until the end of the war, a mission of the Dutch Red Cross operated in Türkiye. Its activity was positively received by the Turks, which was reported in the Turkish press (Braamhorst, 2012, pp. 84–85). The Dutch were positively received compared to other Europeans. The Netherlands was the first country to officially recognize the state of Atatürk. Then, quickly, because already in 1924, a treaty of friendship between the two countries was signed in Ankara (Verdrag, 1924). The official Turkish delegation visited the Netherlands a year later, the Turkish military being interested in buying two submarines to be produced in Dutch shipyards (Braamhorst, 2012, pp. 16–18). In 1935, under the auspices of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands and Atatürk, the Dutch-Turkish Friendship Society was established. It is said that Wilhelmina and Atatürk exchanged letters, which, according to some researchers, is a myth. What is certain, however, is that trade was developing without major disruption, as Dutch companies were still showing interest in the Turkish partner, including branches of Unilever and Shell in Türkiye (Schmidt, 2012, pp. 21–22). Before World War II, both countries had a friendly relationship, and after the war, with the reconstruction of the Netherlands and the lack of workforce, a new era in relations between the countries began.

As a result of the agreement signed between the Netherlands and Türkiye, Turkish workers could legally work in the Netherlands. Officially, the first large group arrived in 1964 from Central Anatolia (Schmidt, 2012, p. 33). However, already in 1960, the Central Statistical Office recorded the presence of Turks in the Netherlands for the first time. In 1960, there were 100 of them, two hundred a year later, three hundred in 1962, and in the following year, there were over 1,200 Turks in the Netherlands (Butter, 2019). Currently, the Dutch of Turkish origin

are the largest ethnic minority in the Netherlands. As early as in 2011, there were 388,967 Dutch of Turkish origin, which constituted 2.3% of the entire population in the Netherlands, and the data from May 1, 2022 already provide the number of 434,103. According to forecasts, in 2040, almost half a million of them will live in the country (490 thousand) (CBS.nl, 2022). Some of the Turks who had lived in the Netherlands for many years did not learn the Dutch language, nor were they willing to learn the rules of the country in which they resided and did not show a pro-social and active attitude in the field of the multicultural society and mutual functioning in it. They often formed groups with separate hierarchies and rules. In order to counteract social exclusion by choice, the Dutch government in 2011 introduced a “social inclusion order” which obliged Turkish citizens who came to the Netherlands permanently to learn the language, ethics and the laws in force in the country. However, these provisions were later abolished, and after the deliberations of the European Court of Justice in 2020, it was recognized that the previous provisions do not undermine the Association Act, and Turks and other newcomers will need to pass special tests, the so-called citizens’ exams (Rabiej, 2020).

Relations between the Netherlands and Türkiye are not always exemplary, and in recent years there have been various tensions, even for some time, diplomatic relations between the two countries were broken off. In 2013, the first rattle happened in the mutual relations, regarding the adoption of a boy named Yunus, of Turkish origin, by a lesbian family foster home. This sparked loud protests by then Prime Minister Erdogan (Weinthal, 2013) and demanded that such issues be brought under the control of Turkish institutions. Soon it was necessary to wait for a response from the Dutch side, the then Deputy Prime Minister Lodewijk Asscher from the Social Democratic Labor Party stated that “it is completely inappropriate for Türkiye to interfere with the nine-year-old Yunus and his lesbian foster parents” (Coc.nl, 2013). Members of the Turkish minority living in the Netherlands were involved, some of them supporting Erdogan’s aspirations, while the majority were against them (Omroepwest.nl, 2013).

The situation worsened in January 2015, when Turkish police arrested Dutch journalists Frederike Geerdink and Mehmet Ülger. This took place during the visit of the Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders to Türkiye (Volkskrant, 2015). The fact that the Minister of Foreign Affairs’ visit was aimed at improving Dutch-Turkish relations adds to the spiciness. A further deterioration in the mutual relations took place in 2017, when at the beginning of the year, several Turkish ministers campaigned in the EU countries inhabited by the Turkish minority in favor of voting “yes” in the Turkish referendum on the amendment of the constitution. This led to diplomatic conflicts in various countries, and in particular in the

Netherlands, whose government considered the campaigning undesirable and tried to ban Turkish ministers from entering the Netherlands. In response to these decisions by the Dutch authorities, the Turkish ambassador was withdrawn, and similar actions were taken by the Netherlands in 2018 (NOS, 2017). The tense situation was conducive to mutual distrust, with some Dutch politicians suspecting that Erdogan and his secret services were supporting Islamic extremists in the Netherlands, as expressed in the question to the Minister of Foreign Affairs by Femke Merel van Kooten-Arissen. Van Kooten-Arissen asked directly whether Türkiye is behind the creation and development of the Salafi movement in the Netherlands, as indicated by a confidential report by the National Coordinator for Terrorism and Security (*Nationaal Coördinator Terrorisme en Veiligheid*, NCTV) (*Tweede Kamer...*, 2021). The actions of the Turkish authorities were puzzling, as the Netherlands had been, one can even say for four centuries, a Turkish-friendly country that supported the issues of Türkiye's membership in the EU, and was Türkiye's biggest ally in the European Union. All of this was, in a sense, squandered by Erdogan's policy.

The presented history of the Dutch-Turkish relations is a synthetic description of the relationship between the two countries. Undoubtedly, the anniversary mentioned in the introduction of the work deserves some attention. In conclusion, it seems that such a long history of diplomatic relations should be characterized by greater dynamism. However, as evidenced in the paper, the activities of the two countries proceeded quite smoothly, however, the recent history can bring a greater number of conflicts related to the process of migration.

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