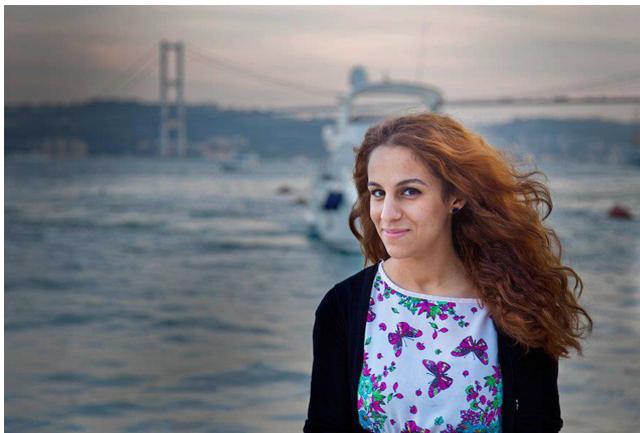


Background article on the winning photograph 'To eat herring'



by *Gulsum Elmas*, winner of the photo competition Netherlands – Turkey: 400 years architecture, urban planning and interior design. Gulsum Elmas lives in Istanbul and was during the summer 2012 in the Netherlands for an internship.



I was so excited about what awaited in the Netherlands last summer. What new things would I see? How do Turkish- Dutch people live their lives there? Are they satisfied? What do Dutch people think about their Turkish-Dutch fellow-citizens? To what extent do Dutch people and Turkish people really know each other? And so I wondered...

For the photo competition Celebrating each other's influences, Netherlands – Turkey: 400 years of architecture, I went wondering about in Amsterdam. Trying to find influences of the 400 years relations between the Netherlands and Turkey. And with my camera trying to capture these as beautiful photographs. One day I was walking around in a neighbourhood that I had not visited before. Walking through the streets I got the feeling I was back home in Turkey. It was a neighbourhood inhabited by many Turkish-Dutch people. This is when I met Memet at his barbershop. Like many other Turks he invited me into his shop. While we were drinking tea and chatting away, he told me about his Dutch adventure.

Before many of us were born, he had come to the Netherlands to work. In the place where he now lives, he knows everyone and everyone knows him. His customers come to his barbershop and don't need to explain how they want their hair to be done, he knows the wishes of each of his customers as they have been returning to his shop for years. And so many of them are Dutch.

Memet originally comes from one of the hottest of places in Turkey; Adana and so his sole complaint of the Netherlands is the weather; even though he is accustomed to it by now.

He continuously mentioned how very pleased he is with his life in the Netherlands. He doesn't think of "going back to Turkey after making enough money" but he doesn't neglect his roots.

Every summer he goes to Adana to spend the summer with his family. During our chat, he mentioned two culinary treats to be found in the Netherlands; herring and 'kibbeling'. We went to the fish-shop next door and he asked me to try these. This is when two very nice things happened: I fell in love with 'kibbeling' and I took the photograph with which I came to win the competition! I told him about the photo competition and asked if I could use the photograph. He approved and to help with the competition made some poses for me. Thanks to him and his funny posing I will go back to the Netherlands to do a photo-shoot for the broadcaster NTR.

But my chat with Memet means more than winning this competition and the winning picture tells more than my story. 'To eat herring' shows how Turks have influenced the urban landscape of the Netherlands and how the Netherlands has welcomed the Turks in a nice way.