

FWF GENDER FACT SHEET - TURKEY

FACTS & FIGURES

- Human Development Index: 64 of 189 countries (UNDP 2018)
- Gender Inequality Index: 69 of 160 countries (UNDP 2018)
- Global Gender Gap Index: 130 of 149 countries (WEF 2018)
- Lifetime Physical and/or Sexual Intimate Partner Violence: 38 %
- Physical and/or Sexual Intimate Partner Violence in the last 12 months: 11%
- Child Marriage: 15%
- Literacy Rate: Female: 93.56% / Male: 98.78%
- Population: 80.8 million
- GDP: USD 851,102 million (2017)
- Official statistics on living wage unavailable. 2017 Turkish Statistical Institute data show the majority of the population cannot afford basic living needs.
 - 21% of individuals are living under the poverty line.
 - This number is 26% for families with children.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Garment industry:

- Turkey is the 17th largest economy in the world and the **garment industry is Turkey's second largest industry**, responsible for a large proportion of total export, with the European Union as the biggest purchaser.
- Although the industry is familiar with international workplace standards and international buyer audits, **improvements are still needed in many aspects of its labour conditions**.
- Small and medium-sized factories with a wide sub-contractor chain dominate the industry, with the **working conditions deteriorating throughout the supply chain**.
- It is estimated that **almost 60% of the total workforce in the industry is unregistered**, resulting in workers who are unable to assert their rights to social security, job security, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

Syrian refugees in labour force:

- There has been an **influx of refugees, primarily from Syria**, in recent years.
- Syrians end up in **the lowest paid and most precarious segments of the workforce**.
- Since they often lack the residence or work permits that would allow them to work legally in Turkey, without any official sources of income they have **no choice but to accept working in very hard conditions**, particularly in the agricultural and construction sector. Many Syrians also work in Turkey's textile sector.

Gender discrimination:

The results of research conducted by DİSK Research Department (DİSK-AR) in early 2018 points to the **serious discrimination in the labour market for women workers**.

- The three most important problems for women workers are **low wages, unemployment, and unregistered employment**.
- An estimated **63.9% of women workers are not content with working life**, mainly due to low wages and long working hours.
- Around **92% of women workers are not union members**.
- The level of discrimination against women is high, with **23.2% of women discriminated against during the hiring phase**.
- An estimated **86% of women workers state that there is no childcare support at the workplace**.
- Nearly **one-fourth of women are working at precarious jobs**.
- In general **'a woman's job' holds a lower status, is temporary, precarious, and unskilled**, whereas 'a man's job' tends to be more permanent and secure.

Gender-based violence:

Over many years despite the great efforts shown by government, institutions and most importantly by women's movements:

- **Women and girls are still exposed to violence**, being abused, trafficked, their access to education and political participation is refused and face many other human rights violations.
- According to some, **approximately 40% of women in Turkey have suffered domestic violence**.

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- A 2011 UN report indicated **domestic violence rates were almost twice those in the United States, and ten times higher than in some European countries.**

LEGAL CONTEXT

National legislation:

- **The Constitution** includes provisions related to **gender equality, prohibition of discrimination based on sex** (Article 10 'everyone is equal before the law...'), and **equality within marriage** (Article 41 family is 'based on equality between spouses').
- **The Civil Code provisions for gender equality and protection of women include:**
 - **The legal age of marriage set at 18**, though there are exceptions for 16- and 17-year olds marrying with guardian's consent (Civil Code, Articles 11, 12, 124, 126, 128).
 - **The prohibition of child marriage** (Civil code, Article 153). However, child, early, and forced marriage is not defined as a criminal act in Turkey and there are no sanctions for those facilitating a marriage of an individual under minimum age.
 - **Equal status within marriage** (Civil Code, Article 186 and 188). There are no laws requiring married women to obey their husbands.
 - **Sharing of parental authority** (Civil Code Article 335).
 - Married and unmarried women also have equal rights as men to choose where to live (Civil Code, Article 186).
- Law No. 6248 provides measures for the **Prevention of Violence against Women and the Protection of the Family**. However, this law does not criminalise domestic violence as such, and includes no provision for prosecution or punishment of perpetrators (CEDAW, 2016b).
- **The Criminal Code** does **criminalise domestic violence, sexual assault and rape, and sexual harassment**. However, women's rights activists and news reports indicate inadequate enforcement of the law.
- According to Article 74 of the Labour Act, **pregnant women workers** must not be engaged in work for a total period of sixteen weeks, eight weeks before and eight weeks after delivery.

International legislation:

- Turkey was the first country to sign and ratify the **Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence and Domestic Violence against Women** in 2012 and has since passed major legislative changes to prevent violence against women.
- Turkey has signed and ratified the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** and signed a range of **ILO conventions**. These include conventions on forced labour, child labour, freedom of association and bargaining. However some are yet to be ratified and/or current legislation and practice are still in violation of these international texts.
- In fact, the country has been criticised for years by the ILO and the EU for **not complying with international standards on freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining**. The new **Act on Trade Unions and Collective Labour Agreements** was adopted and took effect in 2012, but continues to be problematic when it comes to compliance with ILO standards.

SOURCES

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