

KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT – TÜRKIYE 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to the Commission Staff Working Document entitled Türkiye 2023 Report¹, Türkiye remains a key partner of the European Union and a candidate country. It has been linked to the EU by an Association Agreement since 1964 and a Customs Union was established in 1995. Within the framework of accession negotiations, 16 chapters have been opened and one has been provisionally closed. However, accession negotiations with Türkiye have stalled. Presidential and parliamentary elections were held in May 2023 in which the ruling coalition retained its majority in the national parliament and the incumbent president was re-elected. The priorities of the new government include post-earthquake relief and reconstruction, financial stability, and an overhaul of Türkiye's constitution.

The Economic Reform Programme (ERP) was submitted on 31 January 2023, that is before the two devastating earthquakes that hit Türkiye on 6 February 2023. The EU has stood by Türkiye in the aftermath of the earthquakes, and on 4 October 2023, the [European Parliament](#) approved almost EUR 455 mln. in aid from the EU Solidarity Fund in response to the recent natural disasters. This includes EUR 400 mln. for Türkiye following the two major earthquakes of February 2023. A lot has been done to date, with the European Union and its international partners focusing on working closely with Türkiye's government to support reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts for the benefit of the affected communities, including hospitals, schools, and housing.

In September 2023, the Parliament approved Türkiye's Mid-term Programme for the period 2024–2026². The adoption of the Mid-term Program (MTP)³, which launches the budget process, is a key policy document that covers macroeconomic policies, principles, the government's macroeconomic targets, revenue and expenditure projections for the next three-year period, fiscal balance and debt levels, and appropriation ceilings for public administrative bodies. It also sets out an analysis of recent global and domestic economic developments and, in line with the findings, the main economic and social policies to be communicated to the public. In this sense, the MTP is a roadmap that enhances foresight and ensures predictability for the private sector. The MTP 2024–2026, in line with the general framework of the Twelfth Development Plan for the period 2024–2028, aims to strengthen macroeconomic and financial stability, promote high value-added production and achieve growth through increased productivity and exports, focusing on the green transition, digital transformation, sustainable improvement in the current account balance, reduction of inflation to single digits in the mid-term, improvement of the business and investment environment, and the establishment of a policy framework based on maintaining fiscal discipline while taking into account disaster preparedness and management.

According to the OECD (2023), Taking stock of education reforms for access and quality in Türkiye, OECD Education Policy Perspectives, No. 68, important progress has been made towards expanding access to education for learners of all ages, along with progress to increase the quality of education. Türkiye has managed to achieve progress despite substantial global headwinds, including the 2008–2009 global financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. Key policies aimed at expanding access to education have sought to broaden participation at pre-primary and post-primary levels. In addition to expanding access, improving the quality of education provision has also been identified as a policy action area. Efforts to improve quality have been pursued at different policy levels. For example, some initiatives at school level have focused on improving education resources and infrastructure, such as increasing the availability and quality of equipment for science classrooms, while others have sought to achieve more widespread distribution of educational tools, such as connected whiteboards or personal learning devices. Important steps to improve quality have also been taken at system level. A

¹ COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT, Communication on EU Enlargement Policy Türkiye Report, 2023, Brussels, 8 November 2023, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_696%20T%C3%BCrkiye%20report.pdf

² <https://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Medium-Term-Program-2024-2026.pdf>

³ Medium-Term Program and Medium-Term Fiscal Plan were combined under the name of the Medium-Term Program with the amendment made to the Public Financial Management and Control Law No. 5018 with the Law No. 7319 dated 20.05.2021.

key development in this area was the adoption in 2021 of legislation to establish career pathways for teachers and enhance the professionalisation of the teaching profession.

At the same time, important challenges remain for Türkiye to ensure that the youngest have access to relevant education and that students remain engaged in learning as they progress through the system. This means, more specifically, supporting those who are most vulnerable due to their gender, socio-economic or cultural background, or geographical location. With a smaller share of education spending compared to other OECD education systems despite significant increases in recent years, Türkiye will also need to ensure that education policy efforts are directed where they can have the greatest impact.

Details of the first year's policies and measures will be further elaborated in the 2024 Annual Presidential Program. Türkiye's Mid-term Programme 2024–2026 sets out measures for the reform of vocational education and training (VET), notably updating curricula and digital content⁴. The strategy entitled Education Vision 2030, which is currently being developed, aims to improve the performance of the VET sector through measures such as the establishment of new centres of excellence, improving the responsiveness of VET in support of innovation, modernising teacher training, and increasing access and inclusiveness.

At the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, Türkiye's Ministry of National Education introduced a series of policies to maintain education services and meet the wider needs of society. Throughout this period, Türkiye was able to rely on a strengthened distance learning environment, providing teachers, students, and parents with a wide range of solutions for pedagogical continuity. The solutions deployed immediately covered all levels of primary and secondary education, including VET, and partly consisted of a package of academic, social, and psychological support delivered through online teaching, radio, television, and other media.

Türkiye does not have a national youth strategy or an officially recognised national youth council. It has made satisfactory progress in science and research, e-infrastructure under Chapter 25 on science and research and Chapter 26 on education and training. Efforts are being made to encourage the national research and innovation community to increase participation and success rates. Emphasis has been placed on the critical role of digital education and training in enabling innovation and technology transfer. Türkiye's efforts to improve its ranking in the European Innovation Scoreboard⁵ have resulted not only in tangible improvements in its score, but also in bringing together education and culture policies, scientists and researchers, the audio-visual and ICT industries, as well as laboratories and economic operators, SMEs, multinationals, and the EU.

Türkiye has launched consultations on the design of the Education and Training Strategy 2023–2030. The EU and Türkiye agree that a stronger integration of research and innovation capacities and technology transfer activities, coupled with human capital development, are key in sustaining the ongoing transition. Collaboration between academia, industry and SMEs is being continuously supported through Horizon Europe — the EU's framework programme for research and innovation, of which Türkiye is a full member. In mid-2021, Türkiye launched a high-profile Skills Gap Reduction Accelerator programme linked to a multi-country initiative of the World Economic Forum. The Geleceğin Becerileri programme⁶ has received cross-government commitment from key ministries for the implementation of a set of actions designed to improve the provision, anticipation and assessment of skills data at national and regional level. The new measures on innovation, the links between innovative companies, universities and vocational schools in key sectors, the development of business incubators, etc., are to be commended in the context of Türkiye's transition from a low-tech to a high-tech economy, and a from a middle-income to a high-income country.

⁴ <https://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Medium-Term-Program-2024-2026.pdf>

⁵ European Commission, European Innovation Scoreboard 2023 – Country profile Türkiye

⁶ The World Economic Forum (WEF, 2020) is a platform that aims to create multi-stakeholder cooperation at the global and national levels for reforms which will be made in education systems and labour policies to prepare the workforce for future jobs and to increase their employability by reorganising the education and training system to eliminate talent and skill deficiencies.

In the period 2022–2023, Türkiye has responded to the challenges posed by technological change through various policies and actions. According to data published on the website of the Ministry of Industry and Technology, there are currently more than 1 500 research and development (R&D) and design centres in Türkiye, employing more than 70 000 people. R&D is defined as creative activities that are conducted to enhance existing knowledge and produce original, experimental, scientific, and technical results. Design activities aim to enhance and improve the functionality of products that can create added value and boost competitiveness in industry and other relevant areas. Industry has established closer relations with the education and training system to support the public sector in rolling out planned reforms with a view to improving quality and equal access to education and training at all levels. There are many protocols between the public and private sectors to improve the quality of education and the VET system, further enhancing skills provision.

The pandemic and declining growth just prior to COVID have reversed the declining trend in poverty since the early 2000s and exacerbated income inequalities. In addition, high inflation has a particularly negative impact not only on the vulnerable groups but on the entire working age population. Youth and women continue to face poor labour market prospects. One fifth of young people aged 15–24 years are unemployed, and many young women are neither in employment nor in education or training. While progress has been made, the employment rate for women continues to lag behind that of men, with the gender pay gap remaining significant. Gender gaps in labour market participation are often due to barriers or incentives related to the provision of childcare and parental leave, as well as the design of the tax and welfare systems. Tackling such barriers can not only boost gender equality, but also provide a remedy to the currently tight labour markets and widespread labour shortages.

On 1 September 2023⁷, the European Commission signed an association agreement with Türkiye for the Digital Europe Programme. The agreement will enter into force once it has been signed and ratified. Businesses, public administrations, and other eligible organisations in Türkiye will be able to access calls under the Digital Europe Programme 2021–2027, which has a total budget of EUR 7.5 bln. Under the programme, participants from Türkiye will be able to participate in projects that deploy digital technologies across the EU in specific areas such as artificial intelligence and advanced digital skills. They will also be able to set up digital innovation hubs in Türkiye. The latter will strengthen Türkiye's links with the EU economy and society, increase cooperation for the development of the country's technological capabilities and support digitalisation, especially of small and medium-sized enterprises.

⁷ https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-opens-digital-europe-programme-turkiye-2023-09-01_en

1. KEY POLITICAL, DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Political developments

In recent years, growing economic vulnerabilities and a more challenging external geopolitical environment and relations, including with the EU, have threatened to undermine past socio-economic achievements in Türkiye. Relations are strained due to Türkiye's backsliding on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights. The European Commission believes that there are serious deficiencies in the functioning of democratic institutions in the country (EC, 2023)⁸.

Türkiye is a key strategic partner of the EU on issues such as migration, security, counterterrorism, and the economy. However, accession negotiations have stalled, and no further chapters can be considered for opening or closing at present. In early 2022, Türkiye submitted its Eighth Annual Economic Reform Programme for the period 2022–2024. Over the reporting period, the government did not reverse the negative trend in reforms, despite its repeated commitment to EU accession.

Demographics

In 2022, Türkiye's population was 85 341 200 mln., of which 49.9 % are women and 50.1 % are men. At the beginning of 2023, 77.2 % of Turkey's population lived in urban centres, and 22.8 % lived in rural areas⁹.

According to the ILO, Türkiye¹⁰ is both a country of destination and transit for refugees as humanitarian crises persist in its neighbourhood. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates¹¹ that Türkiye is currently hosting one of the world's largest refugee populations of more than 4 mln., including more than 3.8 mln. Syrians under temporary protection (hereinafter referred to as Syrian refugees). Refugees in Türkiye live mostly in urban areas and are concentrated in Istanbul, Bursa and İzmir in the west, Konya in central Anatolia, and Kilis, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Mardin, Hatay, Adana and Mersin, which have higher unemployment rates. A total of 23.5 % of Syrian refugees are aged between 19 and 29 years, while this rate is 8.6 % for the Turkish population. A young population of Syrian refugees offers opportunities, such as the availability of young workers or entrepreneurs. However, it can also put additional pressure on social security systems due to their inactivity or unemployment, as well as on wages or the sectoral replacement of workers, and public employment services.

According to the Directorate General for Migration Management, there were 29 256 applicants for international protection in Turkey in 2021. In addition, according to the UNHCR, there were nearly 330 000 beneficiaries of international protection and asylum seekers. This figure is compounded by 1 364 991 foreign nationals with residence permits. The latter figure includes humanitarian residence permit holders (UNHCR, 2022).

Key economic developments

Türkiye is the EU's seventh largest trading partner, accounting for 3.3 % of the EU's total international trade in goods (imports and exports combined) in 2022. The EU is by far Türkiye's largest partner for imports and exports of goods. In 2022, 26 % of the goods imported in Türkiye originated from the EU and 41 % of the country's goods were exported to the EU¹². With a GDP growth rate of 5.6 %

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/pt/country_22_6088

⁹ Updated on July 16, 2023, with the latest July 2023-July 2024 estimates from the 2022 U.N. Revision [Turkey Population \(LIVE\)](https://www.unhcr.org/tr/en/figures-at-a-glance)

¹⁰ For further details of the ILO's work in Turkey please visit: <https://www.ilo.org/ankara/lang-en/index.htm>.

¹¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/en/figures-at-a-glance>

¹² https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/turkiye_en

(USD 720 bln.), Türkiye is the 19th largest economy in the world. It is a member of the OECD and the G20, and an increasingly important donor of official development assistance (World Bank, 2022).

According to the OECD, GDP growth in Türkiye is expected to moderate, from 5.3 % in 2022 to around 3.6 % in 2023 due to weaker exports, while domestic demand will remain the main driver of growth. The devastating earthquake earlier this year caused widespread damage in southern Türkiye. However, in the OECD Economic Outlook Note – Türkiye (OECD, June 2023), the country's economic growth is projected to moderate to 3.6 % in 2023 due to weaker exports, with domestic demand remaining the main driver of growth. The devastating earthquake earlier this year caused widespread damage in southern Türkiye. However, the boost from reconstruction is expected to offset the negative impact of the disruption to economic activity. The unemployment rate is expected to remain close to 10 %.¹³

Based on 2022 data, the three main economic sectors in Türkiye that employ the largest number of workers and generate the largest share of GDP, are manufacturing (25 % of the workforce, 19.1% of GDP), construction (8.8 % of the workforce, 5.2 % of GDP), and transport (5.8 % of the workforce, 7.9 % of GDP) (TurkStat, 2022).

The 2022 edition of OECD's *Tourism Trends and Policies* sets out an analysis of the impact of COVID and other international developments on the tourism and hospitality sectors. As in most other countries, Türkiye's tourism and hospitality industry was affected by three unprecedented and challenging years for tourism. The industry was hit hard by the depth and duration of the crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Tourism is an important part of a growing service economy, and a major source of job creation, export earnings and domestic value added. Before the pandemic, tourism was an important contributor to Türkiye's economy. In 2019, revenue from the sector reached USD 41.3 bln., accounting for 5.4 % of GDP. Tourism-related employment accounted for 8.1 % of the labour force, or 2.3 mln. people. The share of those employed in the industry fell to 6.6 % in 2021. Revenue fell by 67 % in 2020 to USD 13.6 bln., with the contribution of tourism to national GDP falling to 1.9 %. In 2021, tourism earnings increased by 110 % over the previous year to reach USD 28.6 bln., contributing 3.5 % to national GDP. While the number of international arrivals to Türkiye reached a record high of 51.2 mln. in 2019, it fell to 15.9 mln. in 2020 — a decrease by 69 % compared to the previous year. However, the number of international visitors to Türkiye rebounded to 30 mln. in 2021, an increase by 88 % compared to 2020. The relative strength of international tourism saw Türkiye enter the top five global destinations in 2021. The country's top source markets included Russia (15.6 % of total inbound tourism), Germany (10.3 %), Ukraine (6.8 %) and Bulgaria (4.7 %). Signs of recovery were also seen in domestic tourism, which recorded 52.8 mln. tourists, an increase by ten million compared to 2020, but still 32.5 % below pre-pandemic levels in 2022. Türkiye expects to hit 60 million international arrivals in 2023 and 70 million in 2024¹⁴.

Businesses operating in this and other sectors in Türkiye often cite inadequate skills as a barrier to further growth and development. Some efforts have been made to address the needs of SMEs to improve their productivity and competitiveness, which now include a greater focus on digitalisation and greening. Türkiye has introduced formalised, structured frameworks, which would enable regular and systematic training needs assessments to be conducted through its Information Management and Decision Support Department (OECD, 2022). The country updates the dedicated training portal accordingly and the results of training needs analyses are used to design future support programmes.

Key social issues

According to the Sustainable Governance Indicator (SGI, 2022), income distribution in Türkiye remains among the most unequal in the OECD. According to TurkStat, the top 20 % of earners received 47.5 % of income, while the bottom 20 % of earners received 5.9 % of total income

¹³ OECD, *Türkiye Economic Snapshot, Economic Forecast Summary (June 2023)*,

<https://www.oecd.org/economy/turkiye-economic-snapshot/#:~:text=Economic%20Outlook%20Note%20%2D%20T%C3%BCrkiye,widespread%20damage%20in%20southern%20T%C3%BCrkiye.>

¹⁴ OECD, *Tourism Trends and Policies 2022*, (pg. 286-291)

(TurkStat, 2021b). TurkStat data shows that if the poverty line is set at 60 % of the median income, 21.9 % of citizens would be below the poverty line. Poverty remains prevalent among people with comparatively low levels of education, workers in the informal sector, unpaid family caregivers and homemakers, and the elderly. As currency shocks have affected low-income households more strongly than others, it would not be surprising if poverty rates were to rise in the short term. Research, studies and assessments have been carried out by the public and private sectors in Türkiye on the impact of COVID-19 and how it has exposed the many vulnerabilities and inequalities affecting disadvantaged learners and workers in Türkiye. Social disadvantage is multifaceted: the most strongly affected are those living outside big cities/developed regions from certain age groups, backgrounds, etc.

Young people living in rural areas and different geographical regions, people with different ethnic backgrounds or migrants from different neighbouring countries face greater challenges in accessing education, employment and affordable housing. They have fewer opportunities than their urban counterparts to participate in public and political life. Many publicly and privately funded initiatives support policy and action frameworks for local and regional authorities to enable them to provide better support to rural youth, the best possible representation of young women, young people from minority backgrounds, migrant communities and vulnerable groups as well as incentives for them to stay in rural areas. The focus should be on better matching resources to the needs of vulnerable (young) people.

In 2021, an OECD team conducted an analysis of Türkiye's data from two international assessments – the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). The analysis aimed to understand how student performance in Türkiye has evolved over time and whether factors related to student background, such as gender or socio-economic background, are associated with performance. This policy perspective uses the findings from the PISA and TIMSS analysis to identify policy options to help Türkiye raise its performance and improve equity. It offers suggestions in five policy areas for Türkiye to create a stronger policy focus on overcoming barriers to more equal opportunities for students¹⁵.

Türkiye still grapples with supporting and integrating the 3.3 mln. Syrian refugees. It continues to implement vocational training programmes and works with the EU and international partners to support migrant families and their labour market integration. Another programme aims to encourage employers to hire migrants. Working closely with businesses and identifying their needs is part of the ISKUR's efforts to match supply and demand on the labour market.

2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Türkiye continues to make progress in implementing the Bologna Process, although there are still considerable differences in quality at the 208 higher education institutions in Türkiye. In March 2023, the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) approved the registration of the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council on the basis of compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Türkiye also actively participates in 7 European Education Area (EEA) working groups, which promote European cooperation in education and prepare youth for the green and digital transitions¹⁶.

There has been more private sector investment in the education and training system with the aim of supporting the investment of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in the VET system. According to the same OECD report, there are many examples of social support programmes implemented across Türkiye. One of the flagship policies to support the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in higher

¹⁵ OECD (2022), "Policy options for stronger, more equitable student outcomes in Türkiye", OECD Education Policy Perspectives, No. 63, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/2c578d0c-en>.

¹⁶ COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT, Communication on EU Enlargement Policy Türkiye Report, 2023, Brussels, 8 November 2023, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_696%20T%C3%BCrkiye%20report.pdf

education has been the diversification of quotas for university admissions. Under many EU-funded programmes, academics and researchers in Türkiye have conducted studies to analyse students' performance in different cognitive and content areas of learning. The aim is to provide robust evidence on the existing enrolment differences between girls and boys at secondary and tertiary level. The same applies to the vocational segment of the public education system.

Türkiye's Ministry of National Education is implementing several innovative programmes for all levels of education. Distance learning modalities have been developed and are used at all levels, including pre-school education. Green practices are becoming more widespread in Türkiye. It is commendable that the private sector, vocational schools and the ISKUR (among others) use information-based tools in their greening efforts, with business associations playing a leading role in this regard.

There are many structures and platforms that enable interaction and partnership between companies of all sizes and schools/universities, especially on the transition to a low-carbon economy and resource efficiency. Türkiye has introduced legislation on eco-labelling and environmental management systems, which are promoted by the KOSGEB and the Ministry of National Education (MoNE).

Following the results of the presidential and parliamentary elections in May 2023, changes were made in the various structures of the Ministry of National Education in June 2023. Under the leadership of the new government, Türkiye is finalising its Twelfth Development Plan and the new Strategic Plan of the MoNE, both of which will set the country's macro and education policy vision and strategy for the period 2024–2028.

According to the 2022 Annual Report published by the Directorate-General for Vocational and Technical Education (DGVT) of the MoNE, the Directorate provided vocational education and training (VET) to 2 604 548 students, with 130 836 teachers in a total of 3 642 schools¹⁷ — a figure that includes 2 403 Anatolian secondary VET schools, 673 Anatolian secondary multi-programme schools, 368 vocational training centres, 101 Fine Arts secondary schools, and 97 secondary sports schools.

Several key lessons emerge from the monitoring process undertaken by Türkiye's institutions and partners. First and foremost, the policy progress outlined above provides further evidence of Türkiye's firm commitment and focus on improving the quality of VET, while emphasising inclusivity and equitable access. Türkiye's National Education Strategy 2019–2023 has served as a comprehensive framework that various national agencies, including the Directorate-General for Vocational Education (DGVT), the Directorate-General for Lifelong Learning (DG LLL) and the Vocational Qualification Authority (VQA), have translated into tangible policies, programmes and projects under ministerial leadership. Maintaining this momentum should be a key objective of the forthcoming strategy.

Türkiye has focused on strengthening VET by working with industry, establishing model schools and centres of vocational excellence, and promoting innovation through R&D centres. Initiatives aim to convert student and teacher projects into valuable products, with more than 20 000 patent applications. Vocational schools also contribute to economic growth, with their revenues having increased significantly. Efforts to internationalise vocational education are reflected in the establishment of international schools. In addition, students earn higher wages and receive social assistance through the dual education programmes offered by vocational education and training centres (MEM) — a policy development that promotes and facilitates access to VET.

Türkiye's cooperation with the EU and other global partners, in particular the EBRD, UNICEF, ILO and EU programmes, has significantly strengthened its progress in the area of VET. More specifically, the EU-funded IQVET III project 'Improving the Quality of Vocational Education and Training through

¹⁷ In Türkiye, MoNE governs VET along with its sub-government bodies— the Board of Education (Board of Education and Discipline), the Directorate General of Vocational and Technical Education, the Directorate General of Lifelong Learning, the General Directorate of Special Education and Guidance Services, the General Directorate of Private Education Institutions and the Strategy Development Department are all involved in the majority of governance functions.

Establishment and Operation of Sectoral Centres of Excellence' (IQVETIII)¹⁸ has been instrumental in igniting the country's essential pursuit of quality improvement through investment in Centres of VET Excellence (CoVEs), teacher competencies in vocational and VET-specific STEM fields, and the quality assurance framework. It remains to be seen how the responsible departments will expand these investments to scale up promising practices, improve teacher training and ensure that quality assurance permeates the various VET providers, culminating in seamless integration with lifelong learning.

Türkiye is consistently aligning its VET policy with the EU's Skills Agenda and the Osnabrück Declaration (2020), while taking advantage of technical and financial support from the European Union to improve VET provision. The 'Improving the Quality of Vocational Education and Training through Establishment and Operation of Sectoral Centres of Excellence' (IQVETIII) has played a significant role in DGVET's progress towards achieving national policy goals. Also, Türkiye's ongoing collaboration with the European Training Foundation (ETF)¹⁹, through the ETF's Network for Excellence (ENE), is also instrumental in promoting excellence in VET in line with EU initiatives. This cooperation also promotes cooperation with partner countries to deliver relevant skills for the labour market and to promote an active approach to VET and lifelong learning, drawing on ETF's experience and self-assessment tools.

Türkiye is participating in the monitoring exercise on the Council Recommendation on VET for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (2020) and the Osnabrück Declaration on VET as an enabler of recovery and fair transitions to the digital and green economies (2020). The monitoring exercise will cover policy developments in Türkiye in 2021 and 2022 (including the first half of 2023), in relation to the thematic priorities identified in the National Implementation Plan. The monitoring process of the Integrated Framework of the VET Recommendation and the Osnabrück Declaration has consistently demonstrated the progress achieved by Türkiye across all five thematic priorities since 2021. While Türkiye's National Implementation Plan (NIP) limited the scope of the country's primary measures, notable policy progress has emerged both within and beyond this scope, indicating broader progress towards a VET system that is agile, resilient, flexible, and inclusive.

The monitoring process of the Türkiye-EU framework has shed light on the progress made in policy formulation and implementation. Throughout the monitoring process it is evident that national structures and social partners have strengthened their cooperation at all levels of policy development. In turn, private sector/social partners confirm the strengthening of this tripartite partnership for innovation, technology, and resources to support the implementation of government policies and objectives. The establishment of CoVEs within VET colleges and partner organisations builds on this foundation and promises to enhance cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation.

There is evidence (some evaluations have been undertaken) that CoVEs act as catalysts for a robust VET ecosystem. Current evidence shows incremental progress in fulfilling this promise, making it imperative to sustain their viability, particularly from the perspective of partners. The monitoring process underlines the pivotal role of projects in generating momentum and synchronisation. The IQVET III project serves as a prime example, as do initiatives such as the Social and Economic Adaptation Through VET (SEUP) project and the Vocational Training for Employment (VET4JOB) programme, as highlighted in Türkiye's self-assessment under the Torino Process. Türkiye's MoNE could further champion project-driven policy implementation, even in the absence of international partners.

Türkiye's participation in the European Training Foundation's (ETF) Network for Excellence (ENE) is commendable. Türkiye's Ministry of National Education/DGVET and ACVT have been members of the network since its launch in late 2020. This approach is in line with both the new EU Skills Agenda and the Osnabrück Declaration (2020).

¹⁸ <https://www.ikg.gov.tr/improving-the-quality-of-vocational-education-and-training-through-establishment-of-sectoral-centres-of-excellence-operation-iqvetiii/?lang=en>

¹⁹ <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/where-we-work/countries/turkiye>

As of 2023, 57 VET and higher education centres from Türkiye are actively participating, contributing to and benefiting from the country's participation in ETF's Network for Excellence (ENE) and the international dimension of the Erasmus+ programme. Türkiye's policy makers and public and private institutions are responding very actively to ETF's experience in collaborating with partner countries (PCs) to promote VET excellence as a key driver in supporting VET and Lifelong Learning (LLL) and providing relevant skills for the labour market. Türkiye CoVEs have participated in a self-assessment tool (ENESAT) to support CoVEs network members in self-assessing excellence to develop, improve and/or transfer excellence to other parts of the VET system.

Türkiye's public and public institutions have been continuously active and are members of all the ETF ENE 10 thematic areas. They cooperate very closely with Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) from more than 40 countries around the world, not only to share learning processes but also Türkiye's policies and CoVEs practices, enable peer-to-peer learning among practitioners, and build synergies to forge partnerships among its members, etc.

During the period covered by the next Mid-term Plan (MTP), i.e. between 2024 and 2026, Türkiye plans to continue implementing VET initiatives through collaboration with industry to design specialist VET programmes, update VET curricula in partnership with the private sector, improve early labour market entry for VET graduates, and forge strategic partnerships for the development of a skilled workforce (continuing VET-CVET) in key sectors. Efforts are also being made to empower individuals with income-generating skills and promote lifelong learning for adaptability. There is also a focus on raising career awareness among young people for future occupations and addressing skills gaps in green and digital transition.

More efforts are needed to improve coordination between MoNE's DGVT, other DGs and social and private partners. The pursuit of improved quality and the need for qualitative and substantive evaluations of policy developments on the actual impact of these policy/practice advances are also seen as important.

2.1 Trends and challenges

Education strategy and legal framework for education

In the context of the implementation of Türkiye's Education Strategy 2023, policies and actions aim to provide adequate skills for the labour market, not only for young people but also for adults in need of up-skilling or re-skilling. Many initiatives at multi-country level, EU-supported projects, but also national initiatives, have introduced and implemented innovative education and training policies and practices.

The Ministry of National Education and its structures have developed innovative projects for teacher training and professional development; tools and methodologies are being developed (together with many European partners) to advance pre-service and in-service teacher training and equip teachers to better recognise learner progress and achievement in the 'hard-to-reach' entrepreneurial and green learning outcomes in diverse learning contexts, e.g., Design Skills Labs, robotics and coding workshops, or activities such as those in Deneypap Türkiye²⁰, providing experimental technology training to students in 81 provinces²¹.

A changing world of work brings to the fore the importance of vocational education and training (VET) in developing the skills needed in today's labour markets and societies. At the same time, structural changes highlight the need to redesign certain parts of the VET systems in some countries to make them more resilient and ensure that they can make the most of the opportunities offered by ongoing change. Lessons could be drawn from the developments and practical training provided by EntrComp Europe, involving the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye (TOBB) and Türkiye's government.

²⁰ <https://www.deneyapturkiye.org/deneyap-EGITIM-AMACI-5.html>

²¹ <https://www.deneyapturkiye.org/Kurumsal-DENEYAP-TURKIYE-13.html>

The above initiatives are complemented by forward-looking research to compile evidence-based guidance on effective ways to develop learners' entrepreneurial skills through digital and online learning. Work is under way to explore the best ways to track and evaluate the implementation and quality of entrepreneurial competences in compulsory education, including the potential to demonstrate this through a range of practical entrepreneurial experiences. Türkiye has recently piloted the SELFIE tool and is considering the development of a similar tailored national approach to understand the progress and recognition of entrepreneurial competences among educators and learners. There have been attempts in some sectors to look at innovative ways of developing competences for green skills.

According to the OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training *Building Future-Ready Vocational Education and Training Systems*, June 2023, and analyses conducted by other partners, including the ETF, Türkiye needs to focus on four key dimensions of future-ready VET systems: (i) their responsiveness to changing skills needs; (ii) their flexibility to make VET work for all; (iii) their ability to support transitions to a changing labour market and further learning; and (iv) the potential of digital technology to innovate VET design and delivery. For each of these dimensions, public and private institutions in Türkiye, together with their partners (including the ETF), have organised many policy option discussions involving policymakers, providers, the private sector, civil society, researchers, and other VET stakeholders in order to share ongoing work on policies to reshape VET and make it more sustainable. Many discussions in the context of ongoing work focus on data-based evidence, and EU and international examples of policy and practice.

Education spending

According to the latest available data, in 2020 total public spending on education (as a percentage of GDP) stood at 3.4 % and public spending on education (as a percentage of total public spending) was 3.4 %. This represents a decrease (based on available data) by 1 % (in 2019 spending stood at 4.4 %). Public spending (as a percentage of total public spending) decreased from 12.5 % in 2019 to 9.4 % in 2020 (as per the latest available data set out in the annex below).

Across all levels from primary to tertiary education, Türkiye spends USD 5 352 full-time student equivalent per year (adjusted for purchasing power and including spending on research and development), compared to the OECD average of USD 12 647. Spending per student is equivalent to 19 % of GDP per capita, which is below the OECD average of 27 %²².

Access, participation and early school leaving

Türkiye's trajectory of improvement over the last two decades stands out internationally. Gender disparities in primary education have been progressively reduced and in some parts of the country trends have even been reversed, with more girls than boys enrolled in primary school. However, Türkiye still faces significant skills challenges, and labour market inclusiveness remains weak, despite some progress made in improving access to education.

According to OECD's country note *Education at a Glance 2023 | In Türkiye*, 34 % of 15–19-year-olds are enrolled in general upper secondary education and 25 % in vocational upper secondary education. A further 1 % are enrolled in lower secondary education and 11 % in tertiary education. In comparison, the OECD average is 37 % of children enrolled in general upper secondary education, 23 % in vocational upper secondary education, 12 % in lower secondary education and 12 % in tertiary education. 11 % of 25–34-year-olds have upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary VET as their highest level of educational attainment.

Although the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) is operational in Türkiye, the training provided by VET institutions remains poorly matched to the needs of National Qualification (NQ) candidates. This is due to the fact that candidates do not demonstrate full competence, nor do they aspire to a higher qualification or move horizontally/vertically between qualifications in the relevant occupation. To improve the functioning of the TQF, in addition to existing VET institutions, university continuing

²² [Education at a Glance 2023 | Country Note |](#)

education centres should develop modular vocational education and training for specific occupational levels that are in line with the expected NQ learning outcomes in cooperation with the authorised certification bodies.

According to the same country note of the OECD (*Education at a Glance 2023 | In Türkiye*), the distribution of spending between general and vocational upper secondary programmes depends on a number of factors, such as the number of VET students, the fields of study within VET programmes and the importance attached to VET relative to general programmes. In Türkiye, 14 % of total funding for educational institutions is spent on general upper secondary education, and 14% on vocational upper secondary education (the OECD average is 11 % and 10 % respectively).

Although upper secondary education is often the minimum requirement needed for successful participation in the labour market, 33 % of 25–34-year-olds in Türkiye have not completed this level of education, which is higher than the OECD average (14 %). In Türkiye, workers aged 25–34 years with vocational upper secondary education earn 30 % more than their peers without upper secondary education, while the earning advantage for workers with general upper secondary education is 20 %.

Türkiye needs to keep up its efforts to increase the accessibility and attractiveness of VET, particularly for the most disadvantaged and in the regions with low provision. As highlighted in a previous OECD report, conducting a full evaluation in the framework of the *One Thousand Schools in Vocational Education and Training* project will enable Türkiye to identify and mainstream key elements that improve learning environments and outcomes in disadvantaged VET schools (OECD, 2022). In addition to improving infrastructure, it is crucial for Türkiye to ensure the relevance of the training on offer so that it contributes effectively to preparing students for the next stages of their education or career as their contexts evolve.

Engineering, manufacturing and construction VET programmes enrol the largest number of students in Türkiye, with 23 % of upper secondary VET students having graduated in these fields in 2020. The second most common VET field in Türkiye is health and social work, which accounts for 21 % of upper secondary VET graduates (OECD, 2022b).

In Türkiye, 18 % of teachers in general upper secondary programmes are aged 50 years or over, compared to the OECD average of 39 %. Teachers in vocational programmes are on average younger than their counterparts in general programmes, with 17 % aged 50 years or over (the OECD average is 43 %).

The proportion of pupils in religious education increased to 13.7 % at lower secondary level, up from 10.1 % five years earlier but remained broadly stable at just under 11 % at upper secondary level.

The number of university graduates has also increased. However, despite all efforts, in some instances the quality of higher education is low, with programmes that are disconnected from the labour market. There are significant differences between men and women in terms of the fields of study chosen. The enrolment of girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM disciplines) remains exceptionally low. The main constraint are stereotypes and biases that perpetuate the belief that boys have greater innate ability than girls in these fields and are better suited for careers that make use of the skills taught (OECD, 2022c). This educational segregation has long-term consequences as it predetermines the status of men and women in the labour market and in all spheres of life – economic, political, and private. It directs men studying STEM subjects towards dynamic, productive and well-paid sectors that benefit from the digital transformation, while women tend to be concentrated in sectors such as wholesale and retail or food and accommodation services (ILO, 2022). Concerted efforts are being made by government bodies and the private sector to address this gap. There are many analyses that show that stereotypes and biases are important drivers of the gender gap in STEM. Türkiye's analyses recommend addressing the gender bias in learning materials, involving parents, encouraging participation in STEM-related extracurricular activities, promoting role models and partnerships with the private sector. There has been an increase in the number of workshops, national and international forums that feature female role models. These provide examples of the success that can be achieved and often also a template of behaviours that may be required to achieve success. It is worth noting that the private sector in Türkiye (supported by

various international partners) has also stepped up its involvement by providing financial support to non-profit STEM initiatives, facilitating exposure to female role models and providing internship opportunities for girls in secondary school. Much emphasis is placed on career and educational guidance and promoting pathways that address these differences.

According to the OECD's *SME Policy Index: Western Balkans and Turkey 2022*, Türkiye continues to promote and support entrepreneurial careers for students at university through the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organisation of Türkiye (KOSGEB), the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TUBITAK), and a network of university business incubators and government-supported technological parks. Many efforts have been made in recent years to develop entrepreneurial skills and careers in vocational education. The involvement of VET schools in the production of various medical materials needed by the hospitals /clinics during the COVID emergency is clear evidence of this. VET students in Türkiye now have access to entrepreneurship courses and start-up training through KOSGEB. They are eligible for business start-up loans and have access to help with key processes, such as patent applications. Through the National Youth Employment Strategy, there is an innovative commitment to support entrepreneurship development through practical training and opportunities for business cooperation (OECD, 2022).

PISA results

The government's education policies have contributed to an improvement in educational outcomes, including curriculum reform, gradual modernisation of teaching and learning materials and practices, and a greater focus on measuring learning outcomes through large-scale national and international assessments, and enhanced monitoring and evaluation systems. Despite this success, some challenges remain²³.

Regarding the performance of 15-year-old in Türkiye in PISA 2018: students scored 466 points in reading literacy compared to an average of 487 points in OECD countries. Girls outperformed boys with a statistically significant difference of 25 points (OECD average: 30 points higher for girls). On average, 15-year-olds scored 454 points in mathematics compared with an average of 489 points in OECD countries. Boys outperformed girls, with a non-statistically significant difference of 5 points (OECD average: 5 points higher for boys). In Türkiye, the average science score of 15-year-olds is 468 points, compared with an average of 489 points in OECD countries. Girls outperformed boys, with a statistically significant difference of 7 points (OECD average: 2 points higher for girls). Students' socio-economic status can explain 11 % of the variance in reading performance in Türkiye, which is lower than the OECD average of 12 %. According to the same OECD analysis, the average difference between advantaged and disadvantaged students in reading in Türkiye was 76 points, while the average for the OECD countries was 89 points²⁴.

There has been much discussion about how to improve PISA results. Ongoing analysis suggests that the main areas where further improvement is needed are encouraging earlier school entry, improving teaching methods, and reducing unequal opportunities in upper secondary education.

Some of the key areas in which improvement will be pursued are focused on: (1) a future research agenda to improve response through policy measures and support; (2) an assessment of current teacher practice and classroom dynamics in Türkiye's schools; and (3) a diagnosis of teacher career management to assess current teacher management structures at central, provincial and school level. A number of policy recommendations have emerged from the studies: (a) encouraging an earlier

²³ World Bank, "Promoting Excellence in Turkey's Schools," <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/944721468110943381/pdf/777220REVISED00B00PUBLIC00Egiti m0EN.pdf>

²⁴ OECD (2021), 21st-century readers: Developing literacy skills in a digital world, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=TUR&treshold=10&topic=PI>

school start; (b) improving teaching methods and promoting the use of effective learning strategies; and (c) reducing unequal opportunities in upper secondary education²⁵.

Türkiye participated in PISA 2022²⁶, the results were released on 5 December 2023 and are available at [Türkiye | Factsheets | OECD PISA 2022 results](#).

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)

Türkiye has a young population, with almost half under the age of 30 years and a quarter aged between 15 and 29 years. In response to rising youth unemployment and the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET rate), in 2021 Türkiye launched the National Youth Employment Strategy and Action Plan (2021–2023). With the adoption of the National Youth Employment Strategy and Action Plan (2021–2023)²⁷, Türkiye is stepping up its efforts to improve vocational training and to reduce the NEET rate to 20 % by the end of 2023. The strategy and action plan are based on three main pillars: strengthening the link between education and employment; increasing the employment of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs); and preparing them for future jobs. In 2022, early school leavers had a share of 21.4 % of young people aged 18-24 years (22.2 % men compared to 20.5 % of women).

Promisingly, positive developments are planned under the Eleventh Development Plan (2019–2023) to further align the education system with labour market needs. There is a persistent mismatch between the needs of the labour market and the skills acquired in education. In 2022, the share of young people aged 15-24 years who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) stood at 24.2 %, with the rate for women (32.3 %), i.e. significantly higher than that for men (16.4 %). Overall, 24.2 % of NEETs were inactive.

According to Türkiye (and other reports), the economy has one of the highest skills mismatches (43 %) and ranks in the bottom 20 % of OECD economies in terms of skills activation in the labour market, intensive use of skills in the workplace and innovative stimulation of skills (OECD, 2022a). In addition, the unemployment rate for people with higher education remained persistently high at 12.4 % in 2021. The implementation of the Eleventh Development Plan aims to address some of the significant skills challenges, as well as labour market inclusiveness as mentioned above.

According to the European Commission, the labour market shows signs of recovery and efforts have been made to address skills mismatches and shortages (EC, 2022). However, the relevance of education, and the situation of women and young people in the labour market remain key challenges. The potential of women in the labour market also remains untapped. In 2022, the activity rate for men was 71.4 % compared to 35.1 % for women (improving after a decline to 30.9 % in 2020). Low participation rates in early childhood education and care have a negative impact both on women's labour market participation and on the educational foundation of children later in life.

According to Türkiye's Economy Profile (OECD, 2022)²⁸, the country still faces significant skills challenges, and the inclusiveness of the labour market remains weak, despite some progress made in improving access to education. The same report highlights that Türkiye's economy has one of the highest qualification skills mismatches (43 %) and ranks in the bottom 20 % of OECD economies in terms of skills activation in the labour market, intensive use of skills in the workplace and innovative skills stimulation (OECD, 2022a). According to Eurostat, Türkiye has the highest rate of overqualification in Europe (35.3 % against an EU average of 21.7 % in 2020, the latest year for which

²⁵ World Bank, "Promoting Excellence in Turkey's Schools", <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/944721468110943381/pdf/777220REVISED00B00PUBLIC00Egitim0EN.pdf>

²⁶ [Türkiye | Factsheets | OECD PISA 2022 results](#)

²⁷ Türkiye National Youth Employment Strategy and Action Plan (2021-2023) <https://www.eu4youthdays.eu/t%C3%BCrkiye>

²⁸ [Turkey: Economy Profile | SME Policy Index: Western Balkans and Turkey 2022: Assessing the Implementation of the Small Business Act for Europe | OECD iLibrary \(oecd-ilibrary.org\)](#)

data is available), with almost half of its younger workers (aged 20–34 years) being exposed to a vertical mismatch (42.3 %, Eurostat, 2020).

Active labour market policies and opportunities for up-skilling and res-skilling are in place and further efforts were made in 2021, but these have remained limited in scope. Overall, the policy package is insufficient to address the risks of discouragement and labour market disengagement of young people, especially young women. NEET rates are even higher among refugees due to the tendency of young Syrian women not to participate in the labour market and young Syrian men not to continue their education. Structural challenges in the labour market and the impact of the pandemic on employment and working hours have put additional negative pressure on the participation of young women in the labour market compared to the pre-pandemic period.

Although there is no dedicated budget for youth employment in Türkiye, the country's Employment Agency (İŞKUR)²⁹ is engaged in related activities by allocating funds to active employment measures from its general budget and other sources of revenue. The İŞKUR cooperates with vocational training schools/centres to facilitate the job search of vocational training graduates.

In addition, the KOSGEB and the Ministry of Economy support youth employment and entrepreneurship practices with allocations from the general budget. Furthermore, employment and entrepreneurship policies and activities geared towards women and young people are implemented with funding from the EU's Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA). Although there is no specific mechanism or system for monitoring youth employment measures and projects, quality is ensured by means of strategic plans, activity reports and annual programmes of the relevant bodies.

2.2 Initial VET and adult learning

In recent years, Türkiye's public and private education and training bodies have sought to address the provision of skills for the changing world of work. Vocational education and training (VET) have been brought to the forefront to meet the challenges of developing the skills needed in today's labour market and society in Türkiye.

Through research, policy papers and discussions some challenges have been raised regarding structural changes in the system. Some efforts have also been made through Türkiye's Education Vision 2023. The assessment of the work done over the last three years, has highlighted the need to redesign certain parts of Türkiye's VET system to make it more resilient and ensure that it can make the most of the opportunities presented by ongoing changes. The discussions focus on four key dimensions of future-ready VET systems: (i) responsiveness to changing skills needs; (ii) the flexibility to make VET work for all; (iii) the ability to support transitions to a changing labour market and further learning; and (iv) the potential of digital technology to innovate the design and delivery of VET. For each of these dimensions, decisions have been made and research is being conducted. All work done to date raises a number of key questions that policymakers and other VET stakeholders should consider when redesigning VET to make it more future-ready. The OECD and Türkiye's public and private education and training bodies have launched a joint assessment exercise to address some of the challenges.

A detailed description of Türkiye's VET system can be found on the European Commissions' Eurydice website³⁰. Vocational education and training in Türkiye are provided at the upper secondary and post-secondary education levels and cater to both young people and adults. Upon completion of lower secondary education, students, usually at the age of 14, can continue with upper secondary education in general or vocational programmes. Both general and vocational upper secondary education last 4 years.

²⁹ <https://www.iskur.gov.tr/>

³⁰ [Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary Education | Eurydice \(europa.eu\); Teaching and learning in vocational upper secondary education | Eurydice \(europa.eu\)](#)

Adult education in Turkey (formal education) includes all types of learning activities that help to develop the skills and competencies in the formal education system and continuous lifelong learning system. (Regulation on Lifelong Learning Institutions / 2018). Efforts are being made and policy discussions are being held on the importance of adult learning with a focus on re-skilling and up-skilling for new jobs. Adults in Türkiye appear to be less prepared for the future than their peers in other countries. Current lifelong learning provision is not fit for purpose. In 2022, 6.7 % of adults aged 25–64 years participated in training/lifelong learning, which is a slight improvement compared to 2021 (6.5 %) ³¹.

The İŞKUR Directorate-General of the Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family develops national occupational standards and qualifications. It is also Turkey's National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme and provides funding for adult education and VET projects under the programme to maintain active labor programmes (Ministry of Family Affairs and Social Services, Annual Reports). The İŞKUR has launched several programmes aiming to increase adult education ³². The low level of participation is also due to the inadequate measures taken by the Directorate-General for Lifelong Learning of the MoNe and other directorates, the lack of investment by enterprises in the (re)training of their employees, and the lack of adult education programmes at municipal level. The coverage and quality of adult learning varies, and the private sector in Türkiye is conducting research and analysis to better understand the skills needs in each sector. Many 'Skills for the future' platforms have been established in which the public and private sectors in Türkiye have called for joint action, suggesting that the workforce needs to significantly upgrade its skills. The underlying conclusion is that re-skilling and up-skilling efforts would be key to achieving sustainable change in the workforce.

According to the Regulation on Lifelong Learning Institutions ³³, formal adult education in Türkiye covers all types of learning activities that combine the development of skills and competences in the formal education system and continuous education and training in a lifelong learning setting by public and private providers. The Directorate-General for Lifelong Learning of the MoNE is responsible for many adult education institutions, including public education centres, open education schools and distance learning providers. In addition, there are vocational and technical secondary schools affiliated with the Directorate-General for Vocational and Technical Education and vocational training centres. The secondary education programme in the fields and sectors specified in the Vocational Education Act, which provide training and issue certificates to adults are specified in the Vocational Education Act No 3308).

There are other institutions and modalities of financing and cooperation that provide lifelong learning courses. For example, the İŞKUR, which is affiliated with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, develops national qualifications and occupational standards. The National Agency for Erasmus+ provides funding for adult education and VET projects under the Programme to maintain the implementation of active labour programmes. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry conducts training activities in the sector in cooperation with the MoNE and other relevant institutions and organisations. Special training activities are also conducted at private institutions with the approval of the Directorate-General for Private Educational Institutions (Private Educational Institutions Act No 5580).

Strategic and legal framework for initial VET and adult learning

The main strategy for the sector is the 2023 Education Vision for a Strong Future, which defines the main objectives in the field of education. The strategy sets out the lifelong learning objectives/targets of Türkiye's government. For VET, these are to improve the perception of VET, update VET content, infrastructure and equipment, increase training opportunities for teachers, and strengthen cooperation

³¹ <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/turkey/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning>

³² <https://www.iskur.gov.tr/en/job-seeker/on-the-job-training-programs/>

³³ <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/turkey/developments-and-current-policy-priorities>

between education and businesses. As mentioned above, the new strategic framework for education and training is currently under discussion and in preparation.

Türkiye's Economic Reform Programme 2020–2022 provides the basis for progress in the form of measures for technical and vocational education and training (VET). These include the development of digital content and skills-based programmes, the updating of vocational and technical curricula, and the establishment of a protocol for cooperation on vocational education and skills development with the private sector. Türkiye has developed policies and measures to improve education and skills provision with a focus on improving the quality and equity of educational outcomes at all levels, as evidenced by the latest EU benchmarks, and recognised in OECD's policy report (OECD, 2021)³⁴.

As mentioned above, the analysis shows that the country's main human capital challenges include the need to improve the access to and quality of initial education and training, provide career opportunities for a large youth population, re-skill, and up-skill adult workers, including a large number of refugees.

Students' academic performance varies widely across schools and by socio-economic background. There are disparities between the capital, major cities and more peripheral areas. However, the government continues to support VET at all levels – both financially and through policies and partnerships. VET provides skills development in a wide range of occupations through school-based and work-based learning.

VET governance and financing arrangements

At the national level, the main actors in VET governance are the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), which is responsible for higher vocational schools (post-secondary VET is under the Council for Higher Education), the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS), the Ministry of Development (MoD), and the Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology (MoSIT). The MoNE is engaged in six out of the seven functions of VET governance, and the MoD and MoLSS participate in four each.

Other strategic actors are the directorates of the MONE, notably the Education Board, the Directorate-General for Vocational and Technical Education, the Directorate-General for Lifelong Learning and the Directorate for Strategy Development, each participating in a number of governance functions. The Vocational Education Council (VEC) plays a crucial role, being involved in six out of the seven governance functions. It comprises representatives of the competent ministries, trade unions and employers' organisations, public institutions and agencies and other key social partners who decide on the planning and implementation of VET programmes.

The government attaches particular importance to social dialogue in VET. NGOs and social partners participate in decision-making. The most active organisations are the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye (TOBB), business federations and associations, and other trade and employers' unions and associations. They participate in many governance functions through public bodies such as the VEC or through public-private partnerships for skills development or capacity building.

At the regional and local level, the provincial and district national education directorates, the Provincial Employment and Vocational Education Board and the Provincial Employment Agency oversee both the implementation of VET policy and the development of public-private partnerships at provincial, district and municipal level.

The private sector in Türkiye makes significant investments in education and training.

The Directorate-General for Vocational Education and Training (DGVET) of Türkiye's MoNE has developed a very comprehensive e-governance system for VET students in partnership with other public institutions and private organisations.

³⁴ [Türkiye Economic Snapshot - OECD](#)

The main sources of funding for education are the budget of the central government, the budgets of private provincial administrations and metropolitan municipalities, loans, scholarships, donations and protocols signed with foreign countries and institutions, personal and institutional donations for education, and income from the school-family union. Early childhood education and primary and secondary education are mostly State financed.

Qualifications, validation, and recognition

Türkiye's Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning (TQF)³⁵, which was adopted in 2015, is designed as a single structure that integrates all qualifications obtained through education and training programmes, including primary, secondary and higher education, special needs education and continuing training. It also recognises the learning outcomes achieved through experience in the workplace or other non-formal or informal settings. The TQF has eight levels and covers all types and levels of qualifications and certificates.

At the VET level, the Vocational Qualifications Agency has initiated a project to identify the skills sets required for the greening of the economy. Green skills sets have been identified for a total of 45 occupations in 5 sectors. These skills sets are not yet finalised, and the Agency plans to organise a series of workshops to validate them with representatives of the different sectors to try to come up with sets of generic and sector specific green skills. Work is underway to develop curricula (in early pilot stages) for VET levels, including level 5, in close cooperation with the Turkish Ministry of National Education and the private sector. It is recognised that there is an urgent need for the Ministry of National Education and higher education institutions to further develop curricula and provide training for the skills needed at all levels of education.

The framework has been jointly developed and implemented by the MoNE, the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) and the Council of Higher Education (CoHE). The Vocational Qualifications Agency has established various expert groups and works closely with research institutions on the sustainability of education to define national occupational standards with the aim of developing job profiles and competencies. The TQF legislation stipulates that all qualifications obtained through education, training or other learning pathways must be quality assured. TQF qualifications are published in the Official Journal after approval by the TQF Coordination Board³⁶. The principles of quality assurance are modelled on those of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). All diplomas, certificates and vocational qualifications certificates issued in Türkiye must meet these criteria³⁷.

Implementation structures, main working methods and tools have been established and the TQF is a reference point for the use of learning outcomes, the continuous revision and renewal of qualifications and for classification of qualifications at different levels. To date, 29 000 qualifications have been registered in the TQF database. Most of them are outcome-based but the implementation of the TQF is progressing at different speeds in the different sub-sectors of the education system.

Türkiye is a member of the EQF Advisory Group and participates in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA—Bologna process). In 2017³⁸, the TQF was referenced to the EQF and self-certified to the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF—EHEA).

In 2022, the TQF Principles and Procedures for Recognition and Quality Assurance of Prior Learning (TQF RPL Principles and Procedures) were published. These Principles and Procedures use the four stages of validation as the basis for the framework of RPL requirements that should apply to all TQF qualifications. The RPL requirements for TQF qualifications are set out in the TQF RPL Principles and Procedures. The validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) was one of the six priorities of the Lifelong Learning Strategy 2014—2018. The MoNE has adopted a national framework, procedures and operational guidelines and has implemented processes to validate non-formal and informal learning for qualification levels 1 to 5. The Ministry has implemented an increasing number of pilot projects on VNFIL³⁹. Türkiye is now in the third phase of the development of its qualifications system, which comprises an 'implementation phase,' a 'preparation phase (2010-2015)', and an 'improvement/further development phase (2016—2020)'. With the actions set out in the Action Plan

³⁵ [Turkish Qualifications Framework](#).

³⁶ [TQF Coordination Board, TQF Coordination Board \(tyc.gov.tr\)](#)

³⁷ For more details, see: [Quality assurance | Eurydice \(europa.eu\)](#).

³⁸ TQF (Turkish Qualifications Framework), Strategy Paper, Ankara, VQA, 2021.

³⁹ For more details, see Akkök, F (2022), The role of career guidance in the VNFIL.

2016–2018 to the Turkish Qualification Framework (TQF) either completed or in the final stages of completion, and once the requisite TQF ‘infrastructure’ has been put in place, the implementation phase of TQF will focus on putting the framework ‘on the ground’ (TQF Strategy Paper, 2021). The priorities of this phase are quality assurance (QA), including qualifications in TQF, and tools for widening access to VNFIL qualifications (validation of non-formal and informal learning) and credit transfers to make TQF a reality. Within this process, VNFIL implementing systems have been a priority. This system is operated by the VQA, a powerful platform that brings together the State, workers and employers in the country. The main aim of the system is to equip the workforce with up-to-date qualifications and ensure that learning in workplace settings is recognised. Türkiye has made an excellent case for validation as a tool of economic development policy. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) referencing criterion 3 specifically refers to the relationship between national qualifications frameworks and arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. EQF referencing ensures the accountability and validity of all qualifications, formal, non-formal and informal⁴⁰.

Quality and quality assurance

The heterogeneity of VET programmes and academic degrees is a major challenge in terms of quality and quality assurance. To address these challenges, Türkiye has embarked on the development of a nationwide quality assurance system for VET institutions. A directive on quality assurance in vocational and technical education institutions was adopted in May 2019. This includes self-assessments to be conducted once a year by all vocational schools, with the results made available to the MoNE.

Since the academic year 2016–2017, all VET institutions in Türkiye have conducted regular self-assessments and undergone external evaluations. The MoNE’s assessment of progress conducted in 2018 showed some satisfactory results: workforce participation and employment rates were both higher for vocational college graduates than those for general upper secondary school graduates in 2018. A national review in the context of COVID-19 (2020) reported a 17 % increase in the number of students opting for vocational upper secondary education between 2018 and 2019. However, challenges remain in most fields of study. Less than 10 % of VET graduates are employed in the field in which they graduated. Other priorities identified include reducing the intensity of academic courses for VET students and facilitating the transition to higher education (OECD, 2020).

Work-based learning arrangements

Türkiye has strengthened employer engagement and apprenticeship at national and local level. Employers’ associations in Türkiye play a crucial role in skills development, both through their own funding and the implementation of EU or other donor-funded projects. Most large employers’ organisations have VET departments that interact directly with public institutions, and work-based learning (WBL) is an important part of Türkiye’s VET system. Depending on the age of students and the type of VET institution, WBL ranges from work experience placements during the holidays to in-company training periods of three days a week and full-time in-company training. An increasing number of students in Türkiye are participating in VET programmes. In 2017, the country introduced the concept of ‘master craftsman’ as part of its apprenticeship system within the scope of compulsory education. To support cooperation between education and businesses, the MoNE has established integrated online e-platforms, such as Türkiye’s VET Map and the ‘My Job My Life’ platform.

The OECD (2020) provides an in-depth analysis of Türkiye’s VET system, including the WBL system. Türkiye’s policy efforts in the VET area focus on strengthening cooperation with employers to improve young people’s transition to the labour market. The School Protectorate Project (2016) sought to link vocational and technical secondary education institutions with at least one sectoral organisation. Türkiye’s cooperation model, which was revised in 2019, requires private sector representatives to

⁴⁰ For more details, see Akkök, F (2022), *The role of career guidance in the VNFIL*.

collaborate on curriculum updates, provide WBL to students and teachers and offer scholarships for students coming from more marginalised backgrounds with a focus on providing skills for employment.

A successful example of this is the cooperation protocol signed between Türkiye's Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB) and the TOBB University of Economics and Technology in 2019, which provides for the establishment of workshops or laboratories in one VET institution per province (81 in total). Another good example is the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, which aims to establish 189 new vocational schools between 2020 and 2023 in addition to the 200 that already exist. Schools will be paired with hotels, where students will practice their skills in a work setting.

More detailed information is available on the portal of the Ministry of National Education⁴¹.

Digital education and skills

The development of digital skills for students and teachers in Türkiye was the focus of several policy documents even before the COVID-19 pandemic. The key policy document is MoNE's Education Vision 2023. The pandemic has brought this subject to the fore, and all stakeholders recognise the critical importance of digital skills and competences. Two main objectives are stated under the 'Digital content and skills-based transformation of the learning process': (1) to create an ecosystem for the development of digital content and skills; and (2) to develop content and train teachers to improve their digital skills.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, the MoNE introduced a number of policy measures to maintain educational services. When schools closed on 17 March 2020, Türkiye was able to rely on a strengthened distance learning environment to provide teachers, students and parents with a wide range of solutions for pedagogical continuity. The MoNE's Directorate-General for Innovation and Educational Technologies has fully implemented the Educational Information Network (EBA)⁴². The EBA is an online social education platform that provides digital educational materials for free use by students anywhere, at any time, ensuring the integration of technology in education. It provides videos, educational software and educational games, ensuring that education is provided beyond the school premises. The EBA continues to evolve by providing reliable digital educational content tailored to each grade and following innovations in education and technology. It is enriched with digital content provided by leading educational companies in Türkiye and worldwide. International organisations are studying its content and massive outreach.

In response to COVID-19 and looking beyond, the World Bank had provided a USD 160 mln. (EUR 143.8 mln.) loan to be invested in innovation, digitalisation and outreach to all students. The funds and innovative measures deployed have helped to cover all grades in primary and secondary school, including vocational training. They consisted of a package of academic, social, and psychological support delivered through online lessons, radio, television, and other media.

The COVID-19 outbreak affected educational staff in many aspects of their work. One of the main challenges, as reported in the assessments of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) of Türkiye in 2020 and 2021, is that experienced educational staff lacked training in digital skills, digital pedagogy and IT tools before the crisis. Urgent action is needed to train teachers, members of the academic community and other educational staff in the use of ICT tools, digital technologies and media to promote inclusion in education.

The pandemic affected some groups and individuals more than others, especially the most vulnerable. Existing social inequalities were exacerbated, including lack of appropriate access to digital courses for learners and the availability of parents/carers to support them. While distance learning during the pandemic exposed many systemic deficiencies, respondents argue that innovative technologies could also be of significant help in implementing inclusive education.

⁴¹ <https://www.meb.gov.tr/vocational-high-schools-made-export-agreements-with-5-different-countries-within-11-months/haber/28132/en>

⁴² <http://www.eba.gov.tr/eicerik>

In 2020–2021, Türkiye piloted the EU Self-reflection on effective learning by fostering the use of Innovative Education (SELFIE) tool for WBL. An evaluation is currently under way to determine how these tools can be integrated into the EBA platform. No decision has yet been taken on whether SELFIE can be mainstreamed.

Jobs in Türkiye are at high risk of automation. More than half of all occupations are at risk of becoming redundant in the near future. Türkiye has improved its performance in terms of individuals' digital skills. **However**, only one third of people aged 16–74 years have basic or advanced digital skills (Eurostat 2022). This is another vulnerability of the youth labour force. Further tailor-made re-skilling and up-skilling would be of great benefit to workers affected by the changing world of work.

Statistics on education and training

Türkiye's Statistical Institute (TurkStat)⁴³ is the source of data and analysis on the education and training system, the labour market, etc. TurkStat's data is available to a variety of audiences for different uses. The Institute also shares data and analyses with the European Commission and its services, the ETF and all international organisations.

Türkiye's Ministry of National Education (MoNE) conducts assessments and conducts analyses on the status of the Education Management Information System (EMIS). Reviews have been undertaken on the current state of MoNE information systems in terms of interoperability with other information and data sources. The Ministry has some operational features in terms of both intra-organisational and inter-organisational interoperability, but it cannot fully exploit the opportunities arising from the use of the Central Education Management Information System (EMIS). Accordingly, some areas need to be developed in both dimensions in terms of interoperability. With regard to intra-organisational interoperability, proposals have been made to ensure a possibility for the transfer of data in the Education Information Network (EIN) to the e-school module, the transfer of a greater volume of student data between educational levels, and the transfer of data expected from management levels through information systems by predefining interoperability requirements. In terms of interorganisational interoperability, it is recommended that interoperability be ensured between the information systems of the MoNE and those of the Ministry of Health, higher education institutions and social security institutions (Boz, M., & Simsek, I., 2022).

⁴³ [Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu \(TÜİK\) \(TurkStat.gov.tr\)](https://www.turkstat.gov.tr)

3. LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

3.1 Trends and challenges

Labour market characteristics

According to the European Commission (2022), Türkiye's labour market has recovered from the pandemic, but deep-seated structural challenges remain. In 2022, strong economic growth boosted the labour market and the number of jobs reached new highs. Activity and employment rates increased significantly to pre-crisis levels (slightly higher for women). Job creation was particularly strong in the services and industry sectors, which continued their gains in terms of jobs in 2022, with the number of jobs in agriculture decreasing. The number and share of workers not registered with the social security system continued to decrease, reaching their lowest levels on record in early 2022.

In terms of employment, the labour market situation in Türkiye has improved. The employment rate (age group 15+ years) was 47.5 % in 2022, compared to 45.2 % a year earlier. The unemployment rate (age group 15+ years) decreased from 12 % in 2021 to 10.4 % in 2022. The composite measure of labour underutilisation decreased to 25 % in 2022 from 25.5 % in 2021. Despite an increase by 2.3 percentage points, the employment rate for women (age group 15+ years) remained low at 35.1 %. The youth unemployment rate (age group 15–24 years) continued to decrease from 22.6 % in 2021 to 19.4 % in 2022. Youth unemployment for women decreased from 28.7 % to 25.2 %. The rate of unemployed young people aged 15–24 years not in employment, education or training decreased slightly from 24.7 % in 2021 to 24.2 % in 2022 but remained particularly high for women (32.3 %). The number of job and vocational counsellors at the Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR) remained at a similar level of 4 734 compared to 4 755 in 2021. The number of people registered in active labour market programmes decreased significantly by 65 %. At the same time, there was a steep decline in the number of vocational training courses offered from 5 027 to 514, and in the number of on-the-job training courses from 93 840 to 40 332 in 2022. In 2022, the vocational courses previously available to vulnerable groups were discontinued. Türkiye should reverse the trend and invest in more re-skilling and up-skilling of its workforce through targeted active labour market policies. The number of people, not in employment, education or training under the new counselling model initiated by the ISKUR increased from 80 730 in 2021 to 100 150 in 2022⁴⁴.

In terms of employment, Türkiye experienced strong job growth in 2022, with 1 955 000 jobs added in most sectors, especially the industry and services sectors, except for agriculture. This has led to the highest share of industry in employment (21.7 %) since the global financial crisis. The labour force expanded by 1 618 000, with a significant increase in female participation, pushing employment and female workforce participation to their highest levels since 2005. This robust economic performance lowered the unemployment rate to 10.4 %, exceeding the 2023–2025 target of 10.8 %. Türkiye is planning to implement a comprehensive set of policies and measures to facilitate progress towards further reducing unemployment to 9.3 % by 2026.

Despite economic recovery, the labour market remains characterised by structural imbalances, including the lack of integration of Türkiye's young population, the underutilisation of women's potential in the workforce and the high share of the informal economy.

Number of registered unemployed

The data presented refers to the registered unemployed. In Türkiye, this category is defined as 'persons in active records who are of working age, and are able and willing to work, but did not have a job with a minimum wage at the time of applying to the institution and have not yet been able to find a job through the institution.' When those looking for a job with better conditions, those looking for a job

⁴⁴ COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT, Communication on EU Enlargement Policy Türkiye Report, 2023, Brussels, 8 November 2023, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_696%20T%C3%BCrkiye%20report.pdf (pg. 102)

following retirement and those wishing to work in a specific workplace are excluded from the registered workforce, the rest are the formally unemployed⁴⁵.

In the period 2019–2022, the lowest number of registered unemployed was observed in 2020, when the figure fell to below 3 000 000 persons. In 2022, the total number of registered unemployed once again increased, reaching 3 053 450 persons.

As a trend over the years, there are slightly fewer women registered as unemployed than men, but in 2022 the pattern changed with a small gap (1 532 251 women compared to 1 521 199 men). There is also a difference between unemployed people aged under and over 29 years, with the latter category being smaller by around 300 000 persons each year. In 2022, the difference was 300 056.

In terms of educational level, the lowest number of registered unemployed in the period 2019–2022 were those with higher education. In 2022, the number was the lowest in recent years (359 464). The highest number of unemployed persons were those with the lowest levels of education (1 213 772 in 2022). This number that has been steadily decreasing since 2019.

Participants in counselling activities

In 2022, the number of participants in vocational orientation and career counselling services, such as individual interviews, reached 3 139 241, an increase compared to 2021 and 2020. This service is provided face-to-face by a career counsellor to job seekers and those who are in the process of choosing a career, to prepare them for vocational training and/or the labour market and finding a job. Out of the total number of participants, 3 074 959 took part in job counselling (the process of providing regular assistance in solving problems relating to the choice of a career that is best suited to an individual's wishes and situation, work placements or job adaptation by comparing an applicant's interests and abilities to those of people who have the necessary qualifications and meet the conditions for employment in various professions), and 64 282 took part in vocational (career) counselling (the process of regularly assisting individuals in choosing a career that is best suited to their wishes and situation so that they can benefit from the education opportunities related to their chosen occupation by comparing applicants' interests and abilities to those of people who have the necessary qualifications and meet the conditions for employment in various professions).

In recent years, the participation of women in labour market services has been lower than that of men.

By level of education, the figures for 2021 and 2022 show that counselling services are provided more or less equally to people with a low and medium level of education and much less to those with higher education, which is consistent with the overall structure of registered unemployed (who mostly have a low or medium level of education).

Another labour market service includes group interviews offered to groups of job seekers and/or students with common expectations and needs to prepare them for vocational training and/or the labour market and finding a job. In 2022, 15 128 persons benefited from this service.

Participants in labour market measures

ISKUR staff have conducted almost 650 000 workplace visits, i.e. a job interview with employers directly at the workplace. These visits are part of ISKUR's strategy to improve its cooperation with employers and collect information on labour demand and job expectations to better inform career guidance services and jobseeker orientation.

The ISKUR has reported that 167 119 jobseekers participated in training and skills development activities, almost double the number compared to the previous year. Over the last two years, the participation of adults has remained at a similar level, with women slightly more involved. In terms of age, however, from 2020 onwards the number of participants aged over 29 years has been half that of those aged under 29 years.

⁴⁵ Source: 2019 -2022, Statistical Tables, Iskur (<https://www.iskur.gov.tr/kurumsal-bilgi/istatistikler/>)
Note: The data refers to the monthly stock of registered unemployed at the end of December 2022.

In terms of educational attainment, the overall trend shows that the largest group of unemployed are those with medium education (81 302 in 2022), followed by those with low education (67 822 in 2022), the smallest share comprising those with tertiary education (17 995).

By category, 10 763 persons participated in vocational training in 2022, a drastic decrease compared to 101 501 in 2021. Regarding the on-the-job training programme, the number of participants was 156 356 (less than half compared to the previous two years). The programmes concerned provide on-the-job training for the unemployed to enable them to gain work experience at workplaces that meet the minimum requirements set by the ISKUR⁴⁶.

Spending on labour market policies

Most spending on labour market policy programmes in Türkiye is channelled to job training programmes and active labour market programmes. Spending on active labour market programmes remained stable in 2021 and 2022 (well below the amount spent in 2019), while spending on job training programmes increased sharply in 2022⁴⁷.

Transition from unemployment to employment

In 2022, 45.7 % of the registered unemployed transitioned from unemployment into employment, a steady increase compared to 2020. Fewer women seeking jobs transitioned to employment compared to men while, by age group, the transition to employment was twice as high for young people (57.7 %) compared to those aged 29 years and over (35.9 %).

In terms of educational attainment, the percentage of registered unemployed who transitioned from unemployment to employment in 2022 was the lowest for people with higher education (40.9 %), and the highest for those with low education (48.9 %).

Thus, the total number of job placements in 2022 was 1 395 659, an increase compared to 2020. In general, there were more job vacancies for men, those aged under 29 years and those with a medium level of education⁴⁸.

Number of job vacancies

The ISKUR reports data on the job vacancies from January to December, each year. In 2022, the total number of vacancies was 2 315 250, a slight increase compared to the previous year.

By economic activity, the highest number of vacancies was available in (i) manufacturing; (ii) administrative and support service activities; (iii) wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; (iv) accommodation and food services; and (v) transportation and warehousing. The lowest number of vacancies was in (i) extra-territorial organisations and bodies, followed by (ii) private households and public administration; and (iii) defence and mandatory social security.

In terms of major occupations (national classification), the highest demand is for unskilled workers, other occupations, and sales consultants/specialists. The smallest groups are airport passenger service agents, elementary production and assembly workers, and patient care workers.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Source: 2019 -2022, Statistical Tables, Iskur (<https://www.iskur.gov.tr/kurumsal-bilgi/istatistikler/>)

⁴⁷ Source: 2019 -2022, İŞSİZLİK SİGORTASI Report (Except for GDP data). Source for GDP data (current TL) is world development indicators (world bank). Note: c) = calculated data

⁴⁸ Source: 2019 -2022, Statistical Tables, Iskur (<https://www.iskur.gov.tr/kurumsal-bilgi/istatistikler/>)

⁴⁹ Source: 2019 -2022, Statistical Tables, Iskur www.iskur.gov.tr

3.2 Employment policy and institutional settings

Strategy and legal framework for employment policy

The strategy and legal framework for employment policy in Türkiye are developed by the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye and shaped by the government's policy on employment and social inclusion. The system is governed by a multi-institutional structure: the Constitution, the Presidential administration, the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the National Youth Council and many strategic documents, such as the Annual Presidential Programme, the New Economy Programme (Mid-term Programme) for the period 2020–2022, the Eleventh Development Plan and Priorities (2019–2023), the National Employment Strategy (2014–2023), and the National Youth Strategy (2021–2023), as well as plans, policies and measures of the National Employment Service (İŞKUR).

The İŞKUR was established by [Law No 4904 of 25.6.2003](#) to facilitate activities related to the protection, improvement and mainstreaming of employment, the prevention of unemployment and the provision of unemployment insurance services. The İSKUR plays a leading role in upgrading the skills of jobseekers and facilitating their access to productive employment through the provision of vocational training and other employment support services. The Agency currently offers a range of programmes to help workers access jobs through support for on-the-job training (wage subsidies) and other subsidised forms of employment, including hiring subsidies (covering the social security contributions and other non-wage costs for new workers). In addition to financial support, there are also programmes that aim to foster links between companies and university research centres in activities such as training, skills exchange programmes and joint ventures.

In March 2021, Türkiye introduced a new regulation on teleworking (OECD, 2021), which has clarified the legal framework for this practice. The mainstreaming of teleworking has made one issue particularly salient for regulators and the public, namely the risk of work intensification associated with an impaired work-life balance and the blurring of the boundaries between working and non-working hours and spaces associated with the introduction of work.

Initiatives to boost employment

The wide-scale introduction of short-time work schemes, with a total of 6.2 mln. beneficiaries, the ban on dismissals and the obligation to grant unpaid leave to those not entitled to short-time work benefits in 2020 and 2021 proved effective in protecting formal jobholders in the labour market from a more severe impact. At the same time, workers in the informal economy and the self-employed received only ad hoc cash support, despite the fact that these groups were among the hardest hit by the pandemic (OECD, 2021).

The İŞKUR portal⁵⁰ is the platform that helps to match labour supply and demand. The İŞKUR has also invested in its career guidance system and increased the number of career counsellors.

Public authorities, notably the İŞKUR and MoNE, provide a wide range of skills development programmes. In addition, non-governmental organisations target both host and refugee communities. Women's potential in the labour market remains underutilised. Policies aimed at integrating women into the labour market have so far had limited results. The İŞKUR is the institution that implements the main policy initiative to increase women's participation and employment through a subsidy system as an incentive for employers to hire women. It is a continuation of the first programme, which was introduced after the global financial crisis in 2008.

However, the coverage and funding of active labour market policies (ALMPs) is still too low and does not meet the needs of the increased number of registered jobseekers.

⁵⁰ www.iskur.gov.tr

Initiatives to increase the capacity of the public employment services

There has been continuous support to strengthen the employment policy-making capacity of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the İŞKUR and social partners in their role as key collaborators. EU financial support, coupled with government programmes, has strengthened the institutional capacity of İŞKUR's administration at central level, but also that of its provincial directorates to deliver better public employment services in provinces within the 'model offices' approach.

As a result of the technical and financial support to the İSKUR, monitoring reports and analyses⁵¹ indicate that the Agency has improved its labour market information system, guidance services on occupations, careers and jobs, as well as the public employment services it provides at regional level⁵².

In Türkiye, guidance services are provided in different contexts by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR), universities, the private sector and trade unions, and employers' associations. Most of the regular services are provided by the MoNE and the İŞKUR. There are two main guidance and counselling systems in Türkiye: one in the education sector (primary and secondary education, vocational schools, guidance and research centres at provincial level, tertiary education, and career planning centres), and the other in the employment sector (primary and secondary education, vocational schools, tertiary education and adult learning). In the education sector, the practitioners are counsellors, classroom teachers and specialists in career guidance centres, while in the employment sector the main practitioners are job and vocational counsellors.

The İŞKUR has a well-developed system for monitoring ALMPs, which aims to increase their efficiency and effectiveness. Extensive support has been provided to further strengthen the functioning of provincial employment and vocational training boards and to design, implement and monitor tailor-made employment policies in all NUTS II regions. These efforts have resulted in increased access to the services of the İŞKUR.

The services provided by the İŞKUR are integrated into the infrastructure of Türkiye's e-government portal. The website³⁴ is fully developed and regularly updated. A substantial investment in infrastructure and staff capacity has been made to improve İŞKUR's service delivery. Needs have been identified for the development and implementation of new policies, and capacity development plans and digital transformation roadmaps have been prepared accordingly.

The İŞKUR is an active member of the 'Centres of Public Employment Services of Southeast European Countries (CPESSEC)' network⁵³.

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⁵¹ <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentlist?qterm=Turkey%20ISKUR>

⁵² World Bank Support for Transition to Labour Market Project, [Support for Transition to Labor Market Project \(worldbank.org\)](https://documents.worldbank.org), Turkey: Employment Support and Activation of Work-able Refugees and Turkish Citizens (P171471)

⁵³ <https://www.iskur.gov.tr/en/news/members-of-centre-of-public-employment-services-of-southeast-european-countries-cpessec-gathered-in-north-macedonia/>

STATISTICAL ANNEX – TÜRKIYE

The Annex includes annual data from 2010, 2015, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 or the last available year.

| | Indicator | 2010 | 2015 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | |
|----|---|-----------------------|------------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|---------------------|------|
| 1 | Total Population (,000) ⁽¹⁾ | 73 195.3 | 79 646.2 | 83 481.7 | 84 135.4 | 84 775.4 | 85 341.2 | |
| 2 | Relative size of youth population (age group 15–24 years and denominator age 15–64 years, %) ^{(1) c} | 26.6 | 25.3 | 23.5 | 23.1 | 22.6 | 22.2 | |
| 3 | GDP growth rate (%) | 8.4 | 6.1 | 0.8 | 1.9 | 11.4 | 5.6 | |
| 4 | Gross value added by sector (%) | Agriculture | 9.0 | 6.9 | 6.4 | 6.7 | 5.5 | 6.5 |
| | | Industry | 24.5 | 27.8 | 27.3 | 28.0 | 31.1 | 31.9 |
| | | Services | 54.5 | 53.5 | 56.4 | 54.2 | 52.8 | 51.2 |
| 5 | Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP) | 3.8 | 4.3 | 4.4 | 3.4 | M.D. | M.D. | |
| 6 | Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure) | 10.6 | 13.0 | 12.5 | 9.4 | M.D. | M.D. | |
| 7 | Adult Literacy (%) ^c | 92.7 | 95.6 | 96.7 | M.D. | M.D. | M.D. | |
| 8 | Educational attainment of total population (age group 15+ years) (%) | Low ⁽²⁾ | 72.0 ⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾ | 68.9 | 63.9 | 62.1 | 60.5 ⁽⁷⁾ | 58.9 |
| | | Medium ⁽³⁾ | 17.9 ⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾ | 17.5 | 19.2 | 19.8 | 20.8 ⁽⁷⁾ | 22.0 |
| | | High ⁽⁴⁾ | 10.1 ⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾ | 13.6 | 16.9 | 18.1 | 18.8 ⁽⁷⁾ | 19.1 |
| 9 | Early leavers from education and training (age group 18–24 years) (%) | Total | 43.1 ⁽⁹⁾ | 36.6 | 28.8 | 26.6 | 23.0 ⁽⁷⁾ | 21.4 |
| | | Male | 37.8 ⁽⁹⁾ | 35.4 | 29.0 | 27.5 | 23.8 ⁽⁷⁾ | 22.2 |
| | | Female | 47.9 ⁽⁹⁾ | 37.9 | 28.6 | 25.8 | 22.2 ⁽⁷⁾ | 20.5 |
| 10 | NET enrolment rates in secondary education (ISCED level 2–3) (%) | M.D. | 86.6 | 87.5 | 88.1 | M.D. | M.D. | |
| 11 | Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%) ^c | 45.1 | 49.0 | 42.5 | 39.4 | 38.0 | M.D. | |
| 12 | Low achievement in reading, mathematics and science – PISA (%) | Reading | 21.6 ⁽⁶⁾ | 40.0 | 26.1 ⁽⁵⁾ | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. |
| | | Mathematics | 42.0 ⁽⁶⁾ | 51.4 | 36.6 ⁽⁵⁾ | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. |
| | | Science | 26.4 ⁽⁶⁾ | 44.5 | 25.2 ⁽⁵⁾ | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. |
| 13 | Activity rate (age group 15+ years) (%) | Total | 48.1 ⁽⁹⁾ | 51.3 | 53.0 | 49.3 | 51.4 ⁽⁷⁾ | 53.1 |
| | | Male | 69.9 ⁽⁹⁾ | 71.6 | 72.0 | 68.2 | 70.3 ⁽⁷⁾ | 71.4 |
| | | Female | 27.1 ⁽⁹⁾ | 31.5 | 34.4 | 30.9 | 32.8 ⁽⁷⁾ | 35.1 |

| | Indicator | | 2010 | 2015 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|----|--|-----------------------|------------------------|------|------|------|---------------------|------|
| 14 | Inactivity rate (age group 15+ years) (%) ^c | Total | 51.9 ⁽⁹⁾ | 48.7 | 47.0 | 50.7 | 48.6 ⁽⁷⁾ | 46.9 |
| | | Male | 30.1 ⁽⁹⁾ | 28.4 | 28.0 | 31.8 | 29.7 ⁽⁷⁾ | 28.6 |
| | | Female | 72.9 ⁽⁹⁾ | 68.5 | 65.6 | 69.1 | 67.2 ⁽⁷⁾ | 64.9 |
| 15 | Employment rate (age group 15+ years) (%) | Total | 43.0 ⁽⁹⁾ | 46.0 | 45.7 | 42.8 | 45.2 ⁽⁷⁾ | 47.5 |
| | | Male | 62.7 ⁽⁹⁾ | 65.0 | 63.1 | 59.8 | 62.8 ⁽⁷⁾ | 65.0 |
| | | Female | 24.0 ⁽⁹⁾ | 27.5 | 28.7 | 26.3 | 28.0 ⁽⁷⁾ | 30.4 |
| 16 | Employment rate by educational attainment (age group 15+ years) (%) | Low ⁽²⁾ | 39.6 ⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾ | 39.4 | 38.4 | 35.0 | 37.0 ⁽⁷⁾ | 38.7 |
| | | Medium ⁽³⁾ | 49.4 ⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾ | 52.5 | 50.0 | 46.8 | 49.5 ⁽⁷⁾ | 52.9 |
| | | High ⁽⁴⁾ | 70.6 ⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾ | 71.0 | 68.4 | 65.4 | 67.0 ⁽⁷⁾ | 68.6 |
| 17 | Employment by sector (%) ^c | Agriculture | 23.7 ⁽⁹⁾ | 20.6 | 18.2 | 17.6 | 17.2 ⁽⁷⁾ | 15.8 |
| | | Industry | 26.2 ⁽⁹⁾ | 27.2 | 25.3 | 26.2 | 27.5 ⁽⁷⁾ | 27.7 |
| | | Services | 50.1 ⁽⁹⁾ | 52.2 | 56.5 | 56.2 | 55.3 ⁽⁷⁾ | 56.5 |
| 18 | Incidence of self-employment (%) ^c | | 39.1 ⁽⁹⁾ | 33.0 | 31.6 | 30.2 | 30.1 ⁽⁷⁾ | 29.5 |
| 19 | Incidence of vulnerable employment (%) ^c | | 33.8 ⁽⁹⁾ | 28.6 | 27.1 | 25.7 | 25.5 ⁽⁷⁾ | 25.0 |
| 20 | Unemployment rate (age group 15+ years) (%) | Total | 10.7 ⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾ | 10.3 | 13.7 | 13.2 | 12.0 ⁽⁷⁾ | 10.4 |
| | | Male | 10.4 ⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾ | 9.2 | 12.4 | 12.3 | 10.7 ⁽⁷⁾ | 8.9 |
| | | Female | 11.4 ⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾ | 12.6 | 16.5 | 15.0 | 14.7 ⁽⁷⁾ | 13.4 |
| 21 | Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%) | Low ⁽²⁾ | 10.2 ⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾ | 9.7 | 13.0 | 12.6 | 11.0 ⁽⁷⁾ | 9.1 |
| | | Medium ⁽³⁾ | 13.1 ⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾ | 11.3 | 15.7 | 15.0 | 13.5 ⁽⁷⁾ | 12.1 |
| | | High ⁽⁴⁾ | 9.8 ⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾ | 11.0 | 13.7 | 12.8 | 12.4 ⁽⁷⁾ | 11.3 |
| 22 | Unemployment rate (age group 15–24 years) (%) | Total | 19.7 ⁽⁹⁾ | 18.5 | 25.4 | 25.3 | 22.6 ⁽⁷⁾ | 19.4 |
| | | Male | 19.2 ⁽⁹⁾ | 16.5 | 22.5 | 22.6 | 19.4 ⁽⁷⁾ | 16.4 |
| | | Female | 20.7 ⁽⁹⁾ | 22.2 | 30.6 | 30.3 | 28.7 ⁽⁷⁾ | 25.2 |
| 23 | Proportion of people aged 15–24 years not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%) | Total | 32.3 ⁽⁹⁾ | 24.0 | 26.0 | 28.3 | 24.7 ⁽⁷⁾ | 24.2 |
| | | Male | 19.6 ⁽⁹⁾ | 14.3 | 18.3 | 21.2 | 17.4 ⁽⁷⁾ | 16.4 |
| | | Female | 44.4 ⁽⁹⁾ | 33.8 | 34.0 | 35.7 | 32.4 ⁽⁷⁾ | 32.3 |
| 24 | Participation in training/lifelong learning (%; age group 25–64 years) | Total | 2.9 ⁽⁹⁾ | 5.4 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 6.5 ⁽⁷⁾ | 6.7 |
| | | Male | 3.1 ⁽⁹⁾ | 5.5 | 5.6 | 6.0 | 6.6 ⁽⁷⁾ | 6.4 |
| | | Female | 2.8 ⁽⁹⁾ | 5.3 | 5.7 | 5.5 | 6.4 ⁽⁷⁾ | 7.1 |

| | Indicator | 2010 | 2015 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|----|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 25 | Human Development Index | 0.749 | 0.817 | 0.842 | 0.833 | 0.838 | M.D. |

Last update: 21/07/2023

Sources:

Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7: The World Bank, World Development Indicators database

Indicators 7, 10: UNESCO, Institute for Statistics

Indicators 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 - years 2015 to 2022: LFS- Household Labour Force Survey

Indicators 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 - year 2010: Eurostat

Indicator 12: OECD PISA 2018 Results (Volume I) Annex B1

Indicator 25: UNDP

Notes:

(1) Estimation.

(2) Low – ISCED 0-2

(3) Medium – ISCED 3-4

(4) High – ISCED 5-8

(5) applies to 2018

(6) applies to 2012

(7) In HLFS, the series is not comparable to previous years due to the adjustments in the definition, scope and design of the survey since 2021.

(8) age 15-74

(9) 2010: Different source (Eurostat) than 2015-2022

Legend:

C= ETF calculations

N.A. = Not Applicable

M.D. = Missing Data

LABOUR MARKET POLICIES - INDICATORS, 2023 UPDATE

This fiche sets out an overview of main trends in the implementation of active labour market policies and key indicators pertaining to the Public Employment Service (PES). It provides a summary of the data through tables and visual representations, along with definitions and an outline of existing tendencies.

The key indicators are number of registered unemployed by gender, age and education; participants in counselling activities; participants in labour market measures; expenditure on labour market policies; transition from unemployment to employment; number of job vacancies by main occupational groups and economic activities. Where appropriate and available, datasets are disaggregated by gender, age, and level of education.

The document has been prepared using ETF data collected from public sources (PES websites, ministries of labour, statistical offices and/or shared by relevant national institutions).

Number of registered unemployed

Definition: registered unemployed are all persons who are registered with Public Employment Services and do not have a job, excluding other categories of persons who want to change their job (e.g., employees) or are not actively seeking a job (inactive). Data refers to registered unemployed at the end of the year (reference period) and cumulative, i.e. the sum of number of the number of unemployed persons on January 1 and number of registered unemployed for each month.

The data presented refers to the registered unemployed. In Türkiye, they are defined as: 'persons in active records who are of working age, able to work and want to work, but did not have a job with a minimum wage at the time of applying to the institution and have not yet been able to find a job through the institution.' When those who are looking for a job with better conditions, those who are looking for a job from the retired and those who want to work in a specific workplace are excluded from the registered labour force, the rest are formally unemployed.

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Total | 3 872 211 | 2 959 544 | 3 171 600 | 3 053 450 |
| Men | 1 938 695 | 1 557 095 | 1 591 731 | 1 521 199 |
| Women | 1 933 516 | 1 402 449 | 1 579 869 | 1 532 251 |
| under the age of 29 years | 2 010 620 | 1 685 073 | 1 741 812 | 1 376 677 |
| 29+ years | 1 861 591 | 1 274 471 | 1 429 788 | 1 676 773 |
| Low education attainment | 1 849 920 | 1 194 773 | 1 308 228 | 1 213 772 |
| Medium education attainment | 1 402 754 | 1 298 853 | 1 394 664 | 1 480 214 |
| High education attainment | 619 537 | 465 918 | 468 708 | 359 464 |

Source: 2019–2022, Statistical Tables, Iskur (<https://www.iskur.gov.tr/kurumsal-bilgi/istatistikler/>)

Note: The data refers to the monthly stock of registered unemployed at the end of December.

Participants in counselling activities

Definition: Labour Market services refer to labour market interventions where the main activity of participants is job search and where participation usually does not normally lead to a change in labour

market status. Collected data includes job matching and counselling. Data refers to the registered unemployed and job seekers at the end of the year (reference period).

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Individual Interviews (Job Counselling and Vocational Counselling) | 7 057 356 | 2 663 432 | 2 421 114 | 3 139 241 |
| Men | 4 305 331 | 1 772 492 | 1 517 454 | 1 912 280 |
| Women | 2 752 025 | 890 940 | 903 660 | 1 226 961 |
| under the age of 25 years | 1 806 054 | 711 832 | 667 823 | 808 223 |
| aged 25 + years | 5 251 302 | 1 951 600 | 2 421 114 | 2 331 018 |
| Low educational attainment | 3 881 344 | 1 435 211 | 1 202 417 | 1 488 647 |
| Medium educational attainment | 2 608 308 | 1 031 784 | 1 031 582 | 1 411 381 |
| High educational attainment | 567 704 | 196 437 | 187 115 | 239 213 |
| Individual Interviews: Job Counselling | 6 904 045 | 2 595 394 | 2 350 319 | 3 074 959 |
| Individual Interviews: Vocational (Career) Counselling | 153 311 | 68 038 | 70 795 | 64 282 |
| Group Interviews | 29 500 | 10 436 | 11 920 | 15 128 |
| Workplace Visits (visits to employers) | 728 657 | 514 276 | 634 338 | 641 967 |

Source: 2019 -2022, Statistical Tables, Iskur (<https://www.iskur.gov.tr/kurumsal-bilgi/istatistikler/>)

Participants in labour market measures

Definition: Labour market measures (LMM) cover interventions that provide temporary support to groups that are at a disadvantage in the labour market, with the aim of activating the unemployed, helping people move from involuntary inactivity into employment, or maintaining the jobs of those at risk of unemployment. Such measures include training, employment incentives, supported employment and rehabilitation, direct job creation, business creation incentives.

In case of this data collection, the ISKUR reported on participants in training and skills development labour market measures.

Participants in training related labor market measures, 2022

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Participants in Training measures (total) | 568 420 | 423 133 | 461 671 | 167 119 |
| Men | 266 476 | 204 563 | 204 886 | 82 355 |
| Women | 301 944 | 218 570 | 256 785 | 84 764 |
| under the age of 29 years | 255 676 | 287 091 | 315 989 | 112 148 |
| aged 29 + years | 312 744 | 136 042 | 145 682 | 54 971 |
| Low educational attainment | 250 403 | 175 789 | 185 350 | 67 822 |
| Medium educational attainment | 244 478 | 198 562 | 219 824 | 81 302 |
| High educational attainment | 73 539 | 48 782 | 56 497 | 17 995 |
| Vocational Training - MEK | 124 920 | 87 372 | 101 501 | 10 763 |
| Men | 36 027 | 27 245 | 28 573 | 4 995 |
| Women | 88 893 | 60 127 | 72 928 | 5 768 |
| under the age of 29 years | 65 867 | 48 774 | 55 915 | 7 534 |
| aged 29+ years | 59 053 | 38 598 | 45 586 | 3 229 |
| Low educational attainment | 73 195 | 49 506 | 54 543 | 5 161 |
| Medium educational attainment | 41 272 | 32 012 | 39 294 | 3 869 |
| High educational attainment | 10 453 | 5 854 | 7 664 | 1 733 |
| On the Job Training - IEP | 402 393 | 335 761 | 360 170 | 156 356 |
| Men | 208 747 | 177 318 | 176 313 | 77 360 |
| Women | 193 646 | 158 443 | 183 857 | 78 996 |
| Under the age of 29 years | 287 297 | 238 317 | 260 074 | 104 614 |
| aged 29+ years | 115 096 | 97 444 | 100 096 | 51 742 |
| Low educational attainment | 162 573 | 126 283 | 130 807 | 62 661 |
| Medium educational attainment | 186 826 | 166 550 | 180 530 | 77 433 |
| High educational attainment | 52 994 | 42 928 | 48 833 | 16 262 |

Source: 2019 -2022, Statistical Tables, Iskur (<https://www.iskur.gov.tr/kurumsal-bilgi/istatistikler/>)

Spending on labour market policies

Definition: Spending on labour market policies is limited to public interventions which explicitly target groups of persons with difficulties in the labour market: the unemployed, the employed at risk of involuntary job loss, and inactive persons who wish to enter the labour market.

In this data collection process, the LMP spending indicator refers to the cost of LM services (LMS) and measures (LMM). Spending on LMP support (such as unemployment benefits) is excluded.

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------|
| Active Labour Programs (TL in thousands) | 6 579 273 | 2,955,297 | 3 737 828 | 3 547 801 |
| Job Training Programs (TL in thousands) | 3 039 028 | 2 690 180 | 3 605 548 | 10 138 286 |
| GDP (Current TL in thousands) | 4 311 732 766.20 | 5 048 220 066.90 | 7 248 788 983.00 | m |
| Expenditure on Active Labour Programs (% of GDP) c) | 0.153 | 0.059 | 0.052 | m |
| Expenditure on Job Training Programs (% of GDP) c) | 0.070 | 0.053 | 0.050 | m |
| Expenditure on Active Labour Programs and Job Training Programs (% of GDP) c) | 0.223 | 0.112 | 0.101 | m |

Source: 2019–2022, İŞSİZLİK SİGORTASI Report (Except for GDP data).

Source for GDP data (current TL) is world development indicators (world bank).

Note: c) = calculated data

Transition from unemployment to employment

Definition: Number of registered unemployed who transitioned from unemployment into employment per age group and gender, as a share of the total number of registered unemployed persons.

Transition from unemployment to employment (%), by sex, age and education (2019-2022)

| % | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Total | 38.5 | 29.4 | 40.8 | 45.7 |
| Men | 51.7 | 37.2 | 52.0 | 57.5 |
| Women | 25.3 | 20.7 | 29.4 | 34.0 |
| under the age of 29 years | 39.6 | 28.6 | 43.3 | 57.7 |
| aged 29+ years | 37.3 | 30.3 | 37.7 | 35.9 |
| Low educational attainment | 43.0 | 35.2 | 45.1 | 48.9 |
| Medium educational attainment | 39.4 | 27.8 | 39.9 | 44.3 |
| High educational attainment | 23.1 | 18.8 | 31.1 | 40.9 |

Source: 2019 -2022, Statistical Tables, İskur (<https://www.iskur.gov.tr/kurumsal-bilgi/istatistikler/>)

Number of job placements, by sex, age and education (2019-2022)

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| Total | 1 490 276 | 868 744 | 1 292 534 | 1 395 659 |
| Men | 1 001 707 | 579 021 | 827 851 | 875 341 |
| Women | 488 569 | 289 723 | 464 683 | 520 318 |
| under the age of 29 years | 795 904 | 482 219 | 753 847 | 794 057 |
| Aged 29+ years | 694 372 | 386 525 | 538 687 | 601 602 |
| Low educational attainment | 795 119 | 420 008 | 589 984 | 593 245 |
| Medium educational attainment | 552 168 | 360 959 | 557 010 | 655 407 |
| High educational attainment | 142 989 | 87 777 | 145 540 | 147 007 |

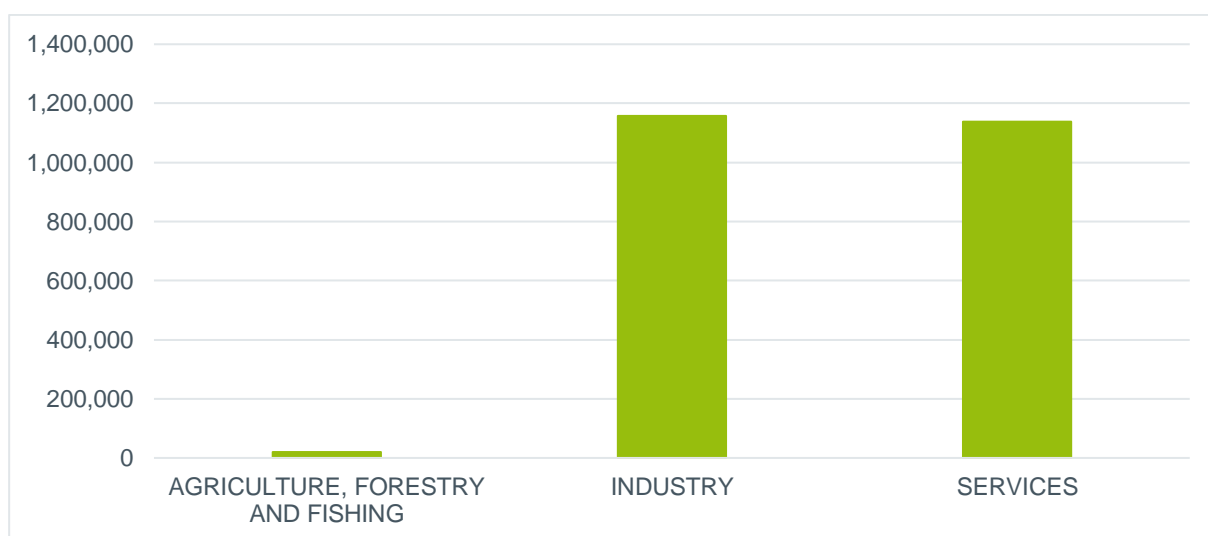
Source: 2019 -2022, Statistical Tables, Iskur (<https://www.iskur.gov.tr/kurumsal-bilgi/istatistikler/>)

Number of job vacancies

Definition: A job vacancy is a newly created, unoccupied soon-to-be vacant post, which the employer is actively seeking to fill, immediately or in the near future, with a suitable candidate from outside the organisation (including any further steps that may be necessary). Although the definition states that a job vacancy should be open to external candidates, this does not exclude the possibility of appointing an internal candidate to the post. However, a post that is only open to internal candidates is not considered a job vacancy.

The data reported by the ISKUR covers vacancies from January to December each year.

Number of vacancies by major economic sectors (2022)



Source: 2019–2022, Statistical Tables, Iskur (<https://www.iskur.gov.tr/kurumsal-bilgi/istatistikler/>)

KEY DONOR PROJECTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

The European Commission (EC) pays special attention to youth, education, and innovation in Türkiye. Cooperation between Türkiye and the EU in science, technology and innovation has advanced. Türkiye and the EU share the ambition and have the assets necessary to design, deploy innovative technologies, and transform research and innovation outputs into industrial products.

Within the scope of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme, implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, 431 projects have been implemented to date. The EUR 486 mln. programme, implemented with financial support from the EU, provides support in a number of areas from women and youth employment to girls' enrolment in school. With projects ranging from promoting formal employment to providing lifelong learning opportunities, it has made a difference in the lives of tens of thousands of people, especially from disadvantaged groups:

[Publications – İnsan Kaynaklarının Geliştirilmesi Program Otoritesi \(ikg.gov.tr\).](#)

The increased participation of VET and university institutions in the Erasmus Programme of the EU and other EU programmes has enabled exchanges and cooperation among Türkiye and its partners in Europe. Emphasis has been placed on the critical role of digital education and training in enabling innovation and technology transfer. The views of the industry on the future and the ongoing digital transformation have also been identified as an area of cooperation. Future opportunities for collaboration between academia and businesses, including through the activities of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) are in the pipeline.

As an eligible country, Türkiye is fully integrated into the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+). This means that Türkiye can benefit from a wide range of budget guaranteed mechanisms that facilitate public and private investment. The recently established Türkiye investment platform (TIP) has become the main vector for identifying and selecting investment opportunities that reflect the EFSD+ priorities — the Green Deal, Global Gateways, Jobs, and Growth. This new mechanism aims to support innovative investments proposed by the EU financial institutions in areas such as decarbonisation, digitalisation, access to finance, innovation and green investment.

The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) will also underpins the EU's evolving relations with Türkiye, through support for people-to-people contacts, civil society, fundamental rights, the good functioning of the EU-Türkiye Customs Union, and the green and digital agendas. For more detailed information on the programmes and support provided, see the [IPA III factsheet](#).

On 27 October 2021, the Commission and Türkiye signed three agreements granting association status to EU programmes for the period 2021–2027: *Horizon Europe*, the EU research and innovation programme; [Erasmus+](#), the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport; and the [European Solidarity Corps](#). Researchers, innovators, students, pupils, trainees, teachers, young people can now participate under the same conditions as participants from Türkiye and in partnership with EU Member States and neighbouring countries. Türkiye participates in the following programmes: [International cooperation with Türkiye](#); [Horizon Europe](#); [Europe's Global Approach to Research and Innovation](#); [Erasmus +](#); [European Solidarity Corps](#).

The EU Facility for Refugees in Türkiye provides EUR 6 bln. in support for refugees (mostly from Syria) and host communities. In 2020, an additional EUR 535 mln. in humanitarian aid outside the Facility ensured the continuation of two Facility flagship programmes. In 2021, EUR 3 bln. were provided to ensure the continuation of support under the Facility. The EU is supporting the socio-economic development and reforms in the enlargement region, including in Türkiye, with financial and technical assistance through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA).

In Türkiye, the European Bank for Reconstructions and Development (EBRD) focuses on strengthening financial resilience, fostering the knowledge economy, promoting inclusion and skills for

inclusion, and accelerating the shift to the green economy: for more information, see [‘The EBRD in Türkiye’](#).

The *International Labour Organization (ILO) Office for Türkiye* has a strong, visible and proactive presence by effectively engaging with the government, employers’ and workers’ organisations, and other international organisations to promote decent work conditions for all, ensuring that the core ILO priorities, standards, interests, policies are promoted, and its experience is disseminated. For more information, see [‘About the ILO Office in Ankara \(ILO-Ankara\)’](#). Many programmes and studies on skills development programme have been provided by the ILO Office in Türkiye. The most recent is the Work-based Learning Programme (locally known as ISMEP), which continues to create productive environments in which everyone is protected and empowered through access to decent jobs. The ISMEP is currently implemented in Adana, Ankara, Bursa, Denizli, Gaziantep and Istanbul and has extended its cooperation in Ankara with the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality. Through ISMEP, Syrians under temporary protection and Turkish citizens receive technical and vocational training at their workplaces and are employed formally from the first day: [Applications started in Ankara for Work-Based Learning Programme \(ISMEP\) with Ankara Metropolitan Municipality \(ilo.org\)](#). All jobseekers aged 18 years and over may apply to the ISMEP programme, with women, young people and persons with disabilities particularly encouraged to apply and receiving support through additional financial incentives.

The *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)*, [OECD opens Istanbul Centre for Global Relations to support work with partner countries - OECD](#), opened a regional Centre focused on Global Relations in Istanbul, Türkiye in 2021. It is part of the OECD’s commitment to broaden the impact of its standards and recommendations beyond its 37 member countries. Cooperation with partner countries includes regional programmes in [Eurasia](#), [South East Europe](#), [the Middle East and North Africa](#), [Southeast Asia](#), [Latin America and the Caribbean](#), as well as the [OECD Development Centre](#). Through analytical work, conferences, capacity building and high-level meetings, it chairs multilateral co-operation, encourage regional collaboration, and offer guidance in areas like governance, transparency, adult skills, gender equality, and regional transport, energy, and digital infrastructure. The Centre will also contribute to advancing the implementation of the OECD’s Global Relations Strategy.

United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) through its ADAP focus addresses the needs of adolescents and young people. [Adolescent Development and Participation \(ADAP\) | UNICEF](#). UNICEF Türkiye, *Early Childhood Education project*, co-funded by the European Union and the Republic of Türkiye and led by the MoNE in close cooperation with UNICEF, The Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, UNICEF and the European Union reaffirm their support for early childhood education in Türkiye (<https://www.unicef.org/turkiye/en/press-releases/ministry-national-education-ministry-labor-and-social-security-unicef-and-european>).

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supports Türkiye’s Employment Agency (İŞKUR) in improving their services to enhance the labour market access of Syrians and host community members in sixteen provinces. [UNDP helps strengthening İŞKUR and increasing access to decent jobs | United Nations Development Programme](#), <https://www.undp.org/turkiye/news/%E2%80%98engineer-girls-turkey%E2%80%99-met-istanbul>

There are many UN, bilateral and EU country-by-country cooperation protocols on the skills agenda in Türkiye.

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