

# LABOUR MARKET (RE-)INTEGRATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES – TÜRKIYE

Country note

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# PREFACE

The Country Note presents the situation in Türkiye related to labour market (re-)integration and skills development for persons with disabilities with special attention on the role of Active Labour Market Policy and Measures.

The European Training Foundation (ETF) initiated a mapping of policies and programmes for labour market (re-)integration and skills development for persons with disabilities in several Partner countries, in response to the European Union's priority to foster social inclusion and economic autonomy of persons with disabilities through employment, as per priorities set out in the EU Disability Employment Package.

The main objectives were to conduct a systemic, comparative policy analysis of the support for employment of persons with disabilities and to identify needs for strengthening the capacity of actors in selected EU neighbouring countries.

The analysis was conducted in accordance with the framework proposed by the EU Disability Employment Package, with a particular focus on Active Labour Market Policies and skills development dimensions.

In Türkiye, the methodology consisted of desk review and face-to-face and online interviews with main stakeholders active in the area of promotion of employment and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The list of interviewees appears in annex.

# 1. CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

## 1.1 Context

Türkiye, according to the Address Based Population Registration System, had 85.7 million residents as of 31 December 2024. 50.2% of the total population were males, and 49.8% of the total population were females. There has been no recent census on people with disabilities since the Population and Housing Census of 2011.

## 1.2 The situation of persons with disabilities

The Disability Act defines a person with disabilities (PwD) as ‘a person who has a physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, at various levels, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder his full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others’. In 2014 this definition was replaced with the definition of disability from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), a revision showcasing a shift from a medical perspective to a rights-based approach.

The European Union’s (EU) survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) gives important insights for PwD (16 years old and over) in Europe. The percentage of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion for people with severe and some activity limitations in Türkiye was 33.0%, while for the EU 27 it was 28.8% in 2023.<sup>1</sup> Persons at risk of poverty before social transfers was 66.4% for the EU 27, while it was lower for Türkiye at 54.5% in 2023<sup>2</sup>. Thirdly, the in-work at-risk-of-poverty rate covering only the age group of 18-24 years old was at 11.5% for EU and 9.3% for Türkiye in 2023<sup>3</sup>. In general, it can be said that social transfers play an important role in reducing poverty and social exclusion. For Türkiye, social transfers are lower than in the EU 27. However, there were fewer in work but at risk of poverty in Türkiye than in the EU 27.

Türkiye’s Population and Housing Census (PHC, 2011) provides the most recent figures on the disabled population. Taking into account the Washington Group criteria, the survey was carried out in over 2.2 million households and revealed that the prevalence of disability was at 6.9% in Türkiye. Prevalence is slightly higher for females (5.9% for males and 7.9% for females). The figures also display a dramatic increase in disability for the 75+ population (**Annex II**) and provide data on disabled citizens. It is worth noting that the Turkish Health Survey 2022 revealed a higher prevalence rate than the PHC 2011 due to a difference in applied criteria.

Besides the PHC 2011 and Turkish Health Survey, the Ministry of Family and Social Services has established a national database of people with disabilities. The database includes individuals with disabilities only if they obtain medical reports from authorised hospitals. As of December 2023, 2.5 million persons have been registered, and in this group 56% were males and 31% have a severe disability.

<sup>1</sup> Eurostat, Persons at Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion by Level of Disability, [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth\\_dpe010/default/table?lang=en&category=dsb.dsb\\_ilc.dsb\\_ilcip](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth_dpe010/default/table?lang=en&category=dsb.dsb_ilc.dsb_ilcip).

<sup>2</sup> Eurostat, Persons at Risk of Poverty Before Social Transfers (Pensions Included in Social Transfers) by Level of Disability, [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth\\_dpe030/default/table?lang=en&category=dsb.dsb\\_ilc.dsb\\_ilcip](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth_dpe030/default/table?lang=en&category=dsb.dsb_ilc.dsb_ilcip).

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat, In-Work At-Risk-of-Poverty Rate by Level of Disability, [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth\\_dpe050/default/table?lang=en&category=dsb.dsb\\_ilc.dsb\\_ilcip](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth_dpe050/default/table?lang=en&category=dsb.dsb_ilc.dsb_ilcip).

Eurostat<sup>4</sup> provides general information regarding the employment situation of PwD for the age group of 15-64 years in Europe in general, including Türkiye. Eurostat figures indicate that the overall activity rate is 59.2%, with 16.9% for individuals with severe disabilities and 41.8% for those with some disabilities.<sup>5</sup> However, the employment gap in Türkiye is lower than the EU average. While the EU 27 average is 21.5 percentage points, Türkiye's is 18.6 percentage points<sup>6</sup>.

Despite the Eurostat figures revealing a significant increase in the last decades, the employment gap between the disabled population and general population still persists. More importantly, when the employment situation is examined in detail, it can be seen that certain subgroups of the disabled population are at higher risk of economic marginalisation, especially those who have severe limitations. Labour force participation by disability type is presented in the annexes.

Furthermore, Eurostat also found that 4.4% of the employed population in Türkiye had a moderate or severe level of disability as of 2022. In terms of unemployment rates, while the overall unemployment rate is 10.7%, it is 12.5% for people with severe disabilities and 10.6% for people with some disabilities. Most striking is the inactivity rate of PwD. While the overall inactivity rate is 40.8%, it is 58.2% for people with some disabilities and 83.1% for people with severe disabilities<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Eurostat, Statistics on Employment of Persons with Disabilities through European Union Labour Force Survey Ad-Hoc Modules (2022), [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/lfsa\\_esms.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/lfsa_esms.htm).

<sup>5</sup> Eurostat, Activity Rates by Level of Disability, [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsa\\_argaedd/default/table?lang=en&category=dsb.dsb\\_lab](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsa_argaedd/default/table?lang=en&category=dsb.dsb_lab).

<sup>6</sup> Statistics on disability employment gap are derived from the EU's Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). The latest statistics are from 2023. The statistics are collected from persons 16 years old and over.

<sup>7</sup> Eurostat, Employment and Inactivity Rates by Level of Disability, [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsa\\_ipgaedd/default/table?lang=en&category=dsb.dsb\\_lab](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsa_ipgaedd/default/table?lang=en&category=dsb.dsb_lab).

## 2. STRATEGIC AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Türkiye has amplified its efforts to increase the employment of PwD in the open labour market. To this end, legislative efforts, strategic plans and action plans were generated throughout the years. However, the employment of PwD remains low, despite the continuing efforts. Some barriers include limited education and training opportunities, long-standing labour market discrimination and lack of access to the workplace. All these challenges are addressed via legislation, policy frameworks and plans.

### 2.1 Strategic framework

Social services for PwD in Türkiye date back to 1970 in the form of educational services. Some major achievements since then include the establishment of the Administration for the Disabled in 1997. The Turkish Constitution provides the basis for anti-discrimination, the right to work and social security rights. The Turkish Disability Act (Law No 5378), enacted in 2005, provided a legal basis for the provision of social services and assistance as well as the regulation of the rights of PwD in the areas of education, employment and health.

Türkiye ratified the UNCRPD in 2008, which helped the development of further PwD policies. The 2010 constitutional amendment ensured equal rights and protection against discrimination as well as paving the way to the signing of the UNCRPD Optional Protocol. The Ministry of Family and Social Services is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the UNCRPD. The UN framework provides the basis for the strategic and action plans as well as amendments to the legislation – especially to the Disability Act, as seen in 2014.

The 12th Development Plan (2024-2028)<sup>8</sup>, Barrier Free Vision 2030 and Action Plan 2023-2025 are the main political and strategic documents apart from the legislation for PwD covering all aspects of life. These plans reflect the basic problems that PwD meet in real life. For this reason, they are well-prepared in line with the needs of PwD. However, its implementation is equally important. Public institutions in recent years have paid particular attention to planning implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, it is important to verify how the plans are implemented and monitored. However, no monitoring reports have been made public for some time.

The 12th Development Plan (2024-2028) includes a special section dedicated to PwD and several policy measures on PwD. That section's objective covers all policy aspects of PwD including employment. They aim to increase employment of PwD at the workplace through: a) awareness raising activities and promotion of protected workplaces; b) a quota system which will be utilised to increase employment of PwD – especially its administrative fines, which will be fully used; c) effective consultancy, guidance, on-the-job training and career counselling services; and d) supported employment.

The employment-specific actions and measures in the Development Plan are also very ambitious. İŞKUR will be the main institution in providing the services and increasing the opportunities. Most of the duties will be carried out at İŞKUR's centres at the provincial level.

Barrier Free Vision 2030 was made public on 3 December 2021 by the Ministry of Family and Social Services. Barrier Free Vision 2030 has eight dimensions (purposes), one of which is directly related to employment: Economic Guarantee<sup>9</sup>. The Economic Guarantee section includes measures on protected workplaces, supported employment, awareness-raising activities towards employers, more effective use of Administrative Fines Funds and increasing employment services to PwD. Differing

<sup>8</sup> Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye – Strategy and Budget Office, Twelfth Development Plan (2024-2028), [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: [https://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Twelfth-Development-Plan\\_2024-2028.pdf](https://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Twelfth-Development-Plan_2024-2028.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Family and Social Services, Barrier Free Vision 2030.



from the 12th Development Plan, there are actions and measures on increasing accessibility, vocational guidance, vocational training, entrepreneurship and e-commerce.

The Action Plan on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2023-2025)<sup>10</sup> was published in 2023. It is prepared in line with, and almost identical to, Barrier Free Vision 2030. It includes 8 purposes, 31 targets and 107 actions.

Barrier Free Vision 2030 and the Action Plan on the Rights of People with Disabilities are almost identical documents. The Action Plan is more specific in terms of targets and actions (31 targets and 107 actions). The Economic Guarantee policy focuses on the employment of PwD and is in line with the 12th Development Plan.

The National Employment Strategy (2025-2028) also includes a section on increasing employment of PwD. It contains three actions. First of all, the curricula of vocational programmes for children with disabilities is to be updated on the needs of the labour market. The state of play on the quota for employment of PwD will be studied and İŞKUR's services will be disseminated and increased.

## 2.2 Institutional framework

The main institution responsible for disability-related social policy in Türkiye is the Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS). Within the Ministry, the General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly plays the central role in coordinating, preparing and monitoring policies for persons with disabilities, while services are delivered through MoFSS provincial directorates and social service centres.

Responsibilities related to employment are shared across institutions. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS) is responsible for labour-market and working-life policy, including legislation and measures affecting the employment of persons with disabilities. In practice, the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR), which is related to MoLSS, plays a key role in job placement, monitoring employment quotas and supporting vocational training and labour-market integration measures for persons with disabilities. MoFSS remains responsible for broader disability policy, including care, rehabilitation, accessibility and coordination across sectors.

İŞKUR was restructured as the Turkish Employment Agency under Law No. 4904 in 2003, with a mandate to contribute to national employment policy and to deliver employment services and labour-market programmes. The Regulation on Active Labour Market Services sets out the procedures for active labour-market measures implemented by İŞKUR, including vocational training courses, on-the-job training, entrepreneurship training, public works programmes and other special programmes. The Regulation also covers groups requiring special policy measures, including persons with disabilities.

The employment placement of persons with disabilities is regulated mainly through the Regulation on Domestic Job Placement Services, which regulate the quota mechanism.

İŞKUR also provides or commissions vocational training, counselling, rehabilitation and workplace-based vocational training for persons with disabilities and former convicts. More recently, İŞKUR has strengthened targeted services through disability job coaching, including individual action plans, contact with employers, referral to suitable jobs or occupations, and support for adaptation at work.

There are also non-governmental organisations working in the field of the employment of PwD. Two Confederations (Türkiye Sakatlar Konfederasyonu [Confederation of Disabled People] and Türkiye Engelliler Konfederasyonu [Confederation of People with Disabilities]) in particular are the most representative organisations of PwD. They represent PwD in platforms such as the Administrative Fines Fund Commission at the central level and Accessibility Commission in each province. They also

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye, Engelli Hakları Ulusal Eylem Planı (2023-2025) [National Action Plan on Disability Rights (2023-2025)], [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: [https://aile.gov.tr/media/133056/engelli\\_haklari\\_ulusal\\_eylem\\_plani\\_23-25.pdf](https://aile.gov.tr/media/133056/engelli_haklari_ulusal_eylem_plani_23-25.pdf).

organise meetings and present their views on the situation for PwD and their opinions on draft legislation. However, they need to strengthen their human resources and financial sustainability.

Regarding donors, the EU provides most of the funds. Three big projects were supported in the IPA II period, namely Coordination and Training Technical Support Project for Employment (ISKEP), 2014-2016; Project on Increasing Employability of PwD, 2015-2017; and Project on Improving Employability of PwD through Social Integration, 2016-2017. However, since then, no large projects have been conducted in the field of PwD through donors.

In general, Türkiye can be considered to have an institutional and a legislative framework on the services directed towards PwD. However, it is equally important to have monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the impact.

## 2.3 Coordination and cooperation mechanisms

In Türkiye, coordination and cooperation among the public institutions are mostly regulated through legislation. In terms of cooperation and coordination on PwD, the most important board is the Monitoring and Evaluation Board on the Rights of PwD. Regarding the employment of PwD, the Administrative Fines Fund Commission at the central level and the Accessibility Commission at the provincial level can be listed as effective mechanisms. These mechanisms include representatives from aligned public institutions, NGOs, employer associations and trade unions.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Board on the Rights of PwD was established in line with Prime Ministry Circular No 2013/8 for the CRPD's monitoring of the implementation. The board includes representatives from the Strategy and Budget Presidency, MoFSS, MoLSS, Ministry of National Education (MoNE), Ministry of Finance and Treasury, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Youth and Sport and Ministry of Justice. Its responsibility is to prepare strategic action plans as well as to develop cooperation and coordination on all aspects of policies including employment and vocational education and training. However, the effectiveness of this board is unknown as there is no follow-up mechanism.

The Administrative Fines Fund Commission is widely regarded by employer associations and public institutions as a best practice for PwD employment. Projects funded by the commission are considered successful. While NGOs believe the fund is sufficient, they recommend simplifying eligibility criteria and building their capacity in the PwD field. Trade unions argue that the fines (TL 20 900 per month per PwD in 2024) are insufficient compared to the minimum wage (TL 23 500). This allows enterprises with 50 or more employees to opt for paying fines instead of hiring PwD. To address this, trade unions propose increasing fines above the minimum wage and analysing Germany's quota system as a potential model for reform.

Cooperation mechanisms which are grounded protocols between the public institutions and employer organisations are deemed to be effective. One of the most notable examples is the protocols signed between the MoLSS and the Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations (TISK) on 16 September 2024, which focuses on the twin transition and employment of PwD over quota. To this end, PwD will also benefit from vocational training under courses envisaged for twin transition. Furthermore, the members of TISK will be encouraged to employ more PwD as envisaged by the quota system.

Another important cooperation protocol between the Ministry of National Education and the Istanbul Chamber of Industry (ISO) is on the improvement of special vocational high schools organised for children with disabilities (particularly children with mild intellectual disabilities). ISO has also been organising on-the-job programmes for children with disabilities and employing them in their member enterprises since 2021.

## 2.4 Legislative framework

Since 2005, Türkiye's legal framework on the rights of persons with disabilities has developed significantly. The main framework law is Law No. 5378 on Persons with Disabilities, adopted in 2005. The Law covers persons with disabilities, their families, institutions and organisations providing services to persons with disabilities, and other relevant stakeholders. It establishes general principles such as equality, accessibility, non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation. It also defines protected workplaces and includes specific provisions on vocational rehabilitation, employment and education.

In relation to employment, Law No. 5378 requires measures to support the sustainable employment of persons with disabilities in the labour market and workplace. These measures include guidance for self-employment, vocational counselling, non-discrimination in job applications and recruitment, working time and working conditions, continuity of employment, career development, and healthy and safe working conditions. The Law also requires relevant institutions and employers to take measures to remove barriers faced by employees or job applicants with disabilities and to provide reasonable accommodation in the workplace. Protected workplaces are also regulated under this framework, particularly for persons with disabilities who face significant difficulties in accessing the open labour market.

The Labour Act No. 4857 is also central to the employment rights of persons with disabilities. It prohibits discrimination in employment relationships on several grounds, including disability. It also provides the legal basis for the disability employment quota for workers. Under Article 30, employers with 50 or more workers must employ persons with disabilities in jobs suited to their occupational, physical and mental condition: 3% in private-sector workplaces and 4% in public-sector workplaces. Employers must normally meet this obligation through the Turkish Employment Agency, İŞKUR.

A separate quota applies to civil service posts. Under Public Servants Law No. 657, public institutions and organisations must employ persons with disabilities in 3% of their filled civil servant posts, calculated on the basis of the total number of filled posts, excluding overseas units. There are also more employment-related regulations, important for the employment of persons with disabilities:

Regulation on Protected Workplaces;

Regulation on Active Labour Market Services;

Regulation on Commission for Using Administrative Fines Collected from Employers that do not Employ Disabled Persons and Ex-Convicts.

As stipulated in the Disability Act, **the regulation on protected workplaces** provides the basis for additional jobs to PwD. Protected workplaces are defined as 'a workplace that is technically and financially supported by the state and whose working environment is specially arranged in order to create employment for mentally or psychologically disabled individuals who have difficulty in being integrated into the labour market.'

There are also other conditions to be considered for a protected workplace. First of all, at least five PwD are to be employed in these workplaces and this cannot be less than 50% of the total employees employed in that workplace. Secondly, all people with disabilities confirmed at least 40% of the disability, particularly those mentally or psychologically disabled, are to be registered with İŞKUR in order to be employed in the protected workplace. The state covers the minimum salary and social security premiums if the PwD are employed in that workplace. The inspection is carried out annually by the provincial directorate of the MoFSS.

The Regulation on **Active Labour Market Services** defines PwD as those persons who have at least 40% work capacity loss. The associated provisions such as job placement services, counselling, vocational training and workplace rehabilitation are provided by İŞKUR.

The **Regulation on Domestic Job Placement Services** includes provisions related to job placement. In this framework, İŞKUR manages the job placement of PwD through a quota system. In addition, services such as job counselling, vocational training, rehabilitation programmes and training at the workplace are given by İŞKUR.

A regulation by İŞKUR on the **Commission for Using Administrative Fines Collected from Employers that do not Employ Disabled Persons and Ex-Convicts** includes provisions on the composition of the commission, working procedures, the assessment of projects, monitoring and inspection of the projects. The companies which failed to recruit PwD or refused to do so are fined. The funds generated from these fines are used for PwD-targeted projects. İŞKUR oversees the implementation of the quota system and governs the use of the funds generated through fines.

## 2.5 Sources of financing

Financial sources on employment of PwD are mostly national sources and employers. Most of the funds allocated for PwD are not used, including the fund that İŞKUR allocates<sup>11</sup>, as the İŞKUR activity report indicates. Even the fines collected from the employers and used by İŞKUR through the Administrative Fines Fund Commission cannot be fully absorbed<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency), 2023 Faaliyet Raporu (2023 Activity Report), [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: <https://media.iskur.gov.tr/81436/2023-faaliyet-raporu.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency), 2023 Faaliyet Raporu (2023 Activity Report), [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: <https://media.iskur.gov.tr/81436/2023-faaliyet-raporu.pdf>.

## 3. POLICIES SUPPORTING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

### 3.1 Services supporting the employability of persons with disabilities

The major responsibility for the provisions of employment services for PwD, such as job placement, job and vocational counselling, vocational training courses and/or on-the-job training, are handled by İŞKUR.

İŞKUR provides job and vocational counselling for PwD in line with the objectives in the 12th Development Plan and Action Plan on the Rights of People with Disabilities. During 2023, İŞKUR's job and vocational counsellors interviewed 268 429 PwD in total and 213 143 of them were reported to be male<sup>13</sup>. Job coaches provide specific services to PwD such as training in job search skills and interview techniques, vocational guidance, referral to active labour market programmes, providing information about vacancies in the public or private sector and job placement services<sup>14</sup>.

To improve the service provision for PwD with hearing impairments, 302 job coaches specialised in working with PwD were also trained in sign language. İŞKUR also governs the job coaching programme. Associated job coaching provisions and job clubs are organised in all provinces in Türkiye. İŞKUR gives special importance to job coaching as it is regarded as the most effective tool to smooth the transition into working life. In 2024, disability job coaching services were provided by 354 job and vocational counsellors in 123 units in 81 provinces.

İŞKUR also launched new initiatives on its services for PwD in May 2025. A new online platform ([engersiz.iskur.gov.tr](https://engersiz.iskur.gov.tr)) has been designed to help employers as well as PwD. The platform incorporates the Barrier Free Academy and introduces additional services tailored for persons with disabilities (PwD). Employers are granted direct access to registered PwD profiles through the İŞKUR database.

### 3.2 Measures supporting the employability of persons with disabilities

#### Activities of the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR)

Information on PwD who are registered with İŞKUR is collected in a database. In 2024, there were around 830 000 PwD in the İŞKUR database and approximately 115 000 of them are registered job seekers.

As displayed in Table 5 and Table 6 (see also: [Annex II](#)), there is a gradual increase in İŞKUR's job placement, where the majority of placements take place in the private sector. On the other hand, public sector employment of PwD is relatively lower. It is worth noting that the fines system does not apply to public institutions and PwD job placement in the public sector is carried out via EKPSS which is overseen by the MoFSS. İŞKUR's records also confirm 84% job placement of compulsory employment of PwD in the companies that have to employ them under the quota system<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency), 2023 Faaliyet Raporu (2023 Activity Report), [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: <https://media.iskur.gov.tr/81436/2023-faaliyet-raporu.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency), Engelli İş Koçluğu (Disability Job Coaching), [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: <https://www.iskur.gov.tr/is-arayan/is-ve-meslek-danismanligi/engelli-is-koclugu/>.

<sup>15</sup> İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency), 2023 Faaliyet Raporu (2023 Activity Report), [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: <https://media.iskur.gov.tr/81436/2023-faaliyet-raporu.pdf>.

**Table 5: Job placement by İŞKUR for People with Disabilities (Yearly)**

| Years | Placement |        |        |
|-------|-----------|--------|--------|
|       | Private   | Public | Total  |
| 2019  | 13 798    | 917    | 14 715 |
| 2020  | 7 656     | 1 197  | 8 853  |
| 2021  | 10 200    | 355    | 10 555 |
| 2022  | 17 471    | 418    | 17 889 |
| 2023  | 34 622    | 555    | 35 177 |

Source: İŞKUR, 2023

**Table 6: Number of Persons with Disabilities Working as Workers in Workplaces Obligated to Employ Persons with Disabilities**

| Years | Workplaces subject to the disability employment quota, 50+ employees |         | Workers with disabilities employed in quota-obliged workplaces, 50+ employees | Workers with disabilities employed in workplaces with fewer than 50 employees | Unfilled quota positions for workers with disabilities | Workers with disabilities employed above the quota |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
|       | Public                                                               | Private | Public                                                                        | Private                                                                       | Public                                                 | Private                                            |
| 2023  | 1 433                                                                | 21 501  | 22 449                                                                        | 121 729                                                                       | 1 017                                                  | 7 797                                              |
| 2022  | 1 443                                                                | 20 175  | 21 309                                                                        | 110 160                                                                       | 853                                                    | 7 385                                              |
| 2021  | 1 440                                                                | 18 695  | 20 296                                                                        | 103 426                                                                       | 1 086                                                  | 7 357                                              |
| 2020  | 1 167                                                                | 15 266  | 15 375                                                                        | 85 614                                                                        | 991                                                    | 6 062                                              |
| 2019  | 1 320                                                                | 18 029  | 15 928                                                                        | 101 377                                                                       | 1 037                                                  | 8 328                                              |

Source: İŞKUR, 2023

In 2023, vocational training courses held by İŞKUR served 134 people with disabilities (PwD), with a higher number of male participants (84 men and 50 women). In 2024, the number of PwD taking part in these courses fell to 109. The scale of training is considered very limited. According to TISK, this issue stems from employers not having enough information.

İŞKUR carries out also activities under the umbrella of the Administrative Fines Fund. Implementing regulations on the Commission for Using Administrative Fines Collected from Employers that do not Employ Disabled Persons and Ex-Convicts provides legal grounds. The Fund is governed by a board which is composed of representatives of İŞKUR, the MoFSS and social partners. İŞKUR carries out six activities for PwD financed under the Administrative Fines Fund as projects:



- Self-employment support for PwD projects;
- Support Technologies for PwD projects;
- Placement and Adaptation to the workplace for PwD projects;
- Vocational training and rehabilitation courses aimed at PwD;
- Protected workplaces;
- Supported employment.

The board not only decides which projects are to be financed but also monitors the implementation of the projects. The funds are not used in an effective manner. The İŞKUR Activity Report 2023 demonstrates that only 12% of the budget has been spent so far. The lack of capacity of NGOs is considered to be the main reason for the inadequate use of the funds. It is also important to note that İŞKUR asserts that most of the funds have been allocated to NGOs as well as trade union and employer associations in 2025. The Commission also gathers more frequently following the change in the implementing regulation in September 2024 on the distribution of funds to the disability projects.

### **Activities of the Ministry of Family and Social Services**

The MoFSS is responsible for the employment of PwD as civil servants in public institutions. As of August 2024, job placement in the public sector reached 68 396. This represents 2% of all civil servants in Türkiye. ([Annex II](#), Table 7). In an evaluation study, 6 974 civil servant with disabilities, their colleagues and their supervisors were interviewed. The main challenges of this provision were reported to be inaccessibility of the workplace and transportation.

Protected workplaces are regulated under the Regulation on Protected Workplaces, which sets out the conditions for obtaining protected workplace status, the operation of protected workplaces and their supervision. The Regulation applies to workplaces established by natural or legal persons to create employment for persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities who face particular difficulties in entering the open labour market. A workplace may obtain protected workplace status if it employs at least five eligible persons with disabilities and if these workers represent at least 50% of the total workforce. Applications are submitted to the provincial directorate of the Ministry of Family and Social Services, assessed by a provincial commission, and approved through the granting of a protected workplace status certificate. Protected workplaces are inspected at least annually by the provincial directorates of the Ministry.

Financial support for protected workplaces is provided through İŞKUR under its support schemes for persons with disabilities and former convicts. Three main types of support are available:

Establishment capital support: up to 60% of eligible establishment or capacity-building costs, subject to a ceiling. This support may cover machinery, equipment, fixtures and related consumables needed for the protected workplace.

Wage support for workers with disabilities: wage costs of workers with disabilities employed in the protected workplace are supported for the first year of the project, calculated on the basis of the gross minimum wage. Any overlapping wage or social security premium support provided under other legislation is deducted to avoid double funding.

Operating-cost support: for one year from the signature of the contract, 60% of eligible operating costs — such as water, electricity, heating, communication and visibility/publicity costs — may be covered. This support is limited to 12% of the establishment capital support set in the project application guide, and visibility/publicity costs may not exceed 25% of the operating-cost support budget.

Between 2019 and 2022, the Commission approved one project each year on protected workplaces, followed by three projects in 2023.

Worker representatives and representatives of public institutions also emphasise the need for increasing the number of protected workplaces, which is also in line with strategic document.

Per the Disability Act and associated regulations, a commission at the provincial level was established for each provincial office. The commission is tasked with overseeing the implementation of the associated policy framework, including the Action Plan on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2023-2025).

As previously outlined, the MoFSS is also responsible for the execution of the EKPSS in collaboration with OSYM. OSYM organises the examination for PwD, and The MoFSS informs OSYM about the vacancies in public enterprises. Based on the grades, OSYM makes the job placements per the people with disabilities' interests. Table 8 in Annex 11.2 provides the overall figures.

NGOs also play a role in the employment of PwD in Türkiye. NGOs can utilise the grant schemes of the EU or employer organisations, but so far, no data is available regarding the impact of the utilised grants. The capacity of NGOs is considered to be the main reason behind the limited role that they have played in promoting the employment opportunities of PwD.

### 3.3 Measures addressing the needs of refugees and earthquake victims

The MoFSS is the leading institution regarding the services for refugees (Syrians under temporary protection – SuTP) and earthquake victims. In Kızılay's (Red Crescent) report, there are 135 000 households in the 2023 earthquake region that are provided with social assistance due to the household conditions, including having a disabled family member. However, there is no reliable information on whether the disability resulted from the recent earthquake. Still, the Strategic and Budget Presidency Report provides some insight on the disabled victims of the earthquake. According to the report, the Ministry of Health registered 1 956 people who became amputees in the 120 days following the earthquake as a result of the same. Out of this number, 1 639 are considered to be of working age. NGOs have also played an important role in the aftermath of the earthquake by carrying out campaigns for prostheses, orthoses, wheelchairs and assistive devices.

Social services centres in this region are delegated tasks for providing services to persons with disabilities, including SuTP with disabilities. These MoFSS centres in the earthquake region provide psycho-social support services<sup>16</sup>. In 2023, more than 4 million services of psycho-social support were given to earthquake victims. In 2024, these services were still being provided in the region and have reached over 500 000 people. Moreover, 5% of the housing quota has been allocated to PwD in the earthquake region. In addition, renting assistance is provided to PwD and their families in this region, and Kızılay also provide benefits in cash to PwD and their families.

Regarding the refugees with disabilities, it is estimated that 450 000 Syrians with disabilities live in Türkiye. Following registration in the MoFSS' database, most are entitled for benefits. At the moment, benefits in cash are provided through EU funds. The MoFSS provides social services for refugees as well.

### 3.4 Enhancing the capacity of the main stakeholders

The MoFSS formulates the policy provision at the central level, but relies on the 81 MoFSS provincial directorates and associated actors for implementation at the local level. In addition to provincial directorates, there are 416 MoFSS social services centres operating at grassroots level. These centres provide services that fall under the responsibility of the MoFSS: the ministry's 2023 Activity

<sup>16</sup> Psycho-social services given in the earthquake region are the services on prevention of psychological incompatibilities and disorders that may arise after a disaster, re-establishment/development of relationships at the family and community level, returning to their 'normal' lives, the increase of their coping/healing/recovery skills against possible future disasters and emergencies in the society. The MoFSS provided these services mainly to individuals with physical or mental disabilities, elderly people in need of care, adolescents left out of the school system, women with children, people who have lost more than one relative in the earthquake and individuals who have lost their homes and workplaces.



Report point out that the majority of the MoFSS workforce operates at the local level with 52 200 employees in total. Of these, 2 227 work as Family Social Support experts, 780 as child development experts, 301 as physiotherapists, 958 as nurses and 1 727 as teachers. Furthermore there are personnel who are employed as psychologist (1 626), sociologist (792) and social worker (2 782). The number of experts at the local level is insufficient, when comparing to the number of the persons in need.

In terms of expert capacity working on the employment of PwD, the MoFSS central level (Department of Policy on People with Disabilities) carries out activities, such as policymaking, preparation and implementation of strategic plans, monitoring and evaluation of the policy and strategic plans, Public Servants Selection Examination (EKPSS) and contribution to Administrative Fines Fund Commission. It is considered adequate in terms of human resources. Protected workplaces are supervised by the provincial directorates. However, since there are just over 100 protected workplaces in Türkiye, there is no plan to increase human resources at the provincial level for protected workplaces.

İŞKUR is also organised at the central level and local level, with a total of 9 656 employees. Of these, 9 010 are employed at the local level, while 646 are employed at the central level (544 of whom at expert level). The total workforce includes almost 7 000 university graduates, almost 5 000 job and vocational counsellors and a total of 283 PwD. However, more job and vocational counsellors are needed at İŞKUR as the caseload per counsellor is around 475. As indicated earlier, job and vocational counsellors have been trained to provide more services to PwD since 2018. In this framework, for İŞKUR, job coaches have been allocated in line with the number of registered unemployed PwD in the province. However, the 354 job coaches in total are likely not enough to provide services to PwD. In 2023, more than 35 000 PwD were placed in the private sector (less than 3% of total job placement)<sup>17</sup>. However, there is no information regarding the employment of new job coaches.

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<sup>17</sup> İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency), 2023 Faaliyet Raporu (2023 Activity Report), [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: <https://media.iskur.gov.tr/81436/2023-faaliyet-raporu.pdf>.

## 4. POLICIES SUPPORTING DEMAND FOR EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Employment of PwD in Türkiye, as reflected in the above sections, mostly relies on the quota system. The policy framework that was set by the Labour Act and Civil Servants Law is governed by collaborative work by İŞKUR and the MoFSS.

A 2011 study carried out by the MoFSS identified reasons behind low labour force participation. To this end, 1 628 interviews in the private sector were held. According to the Labour Market Analysis Report in Terms of Disabled People<sup>18</sup> study, the main reasons for employers not employing disabled people can be listed as: 31.6% – failure to find a suitable disabled person for the job/sector; 19.2% – failure to find a vocationally educated/qualified disabled person; 11% – failure by İŞKUR to send a suitable disabled candidate for the job; 7.4% – reluctance of PwD to work; and 5.4% – failure to find a suitable candidate. The same report also mentions other reasons, such as prejudices between employers and employees, no guidance for PwD looking to work and the tendency of families to protect their children.

Similar problems were reported in İŞKUR Labour Market Surveys, which includes a special section on employment of PwD. Despite the common belief, employers are declaring willingness to employ PwD in recent years (Table 9, Annex 11.2).

**Table 9: Estimated Number of Persons with Disabilities by Occupation and Estimated Employment Rate for Persons with Disabilities, (2023)**

| Sectors                                                | Potential Number | General Total Vacancies | Potential Vacancy Rate for People with Disabilities (%) |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Employees working in clerical services                 | 11 015           | 31 097                  | 35                                                      |
| Service and sales staff                                | 24 069           | 74 663                  | 32                                                      |
| Occupations requiring no qualification                 | 22 824           | 54 788                  | 42                                                      |
| Skilled agricultural, forestry and aquaculture workers | 293              | 1 827                   | 16                                                      |
| Professional occupations                               | 16 851           | 32 616                  | 52                                                      |
| Craftsmen and workers in related trades                | 34 702           | 126 621                 | 27                                                      |
| Technicians and allied professionals                   | 7 923            | 26 679                  | 30                                                      |
| Plant and machine operators and assemblers             | 39 671           | 110 558                 | 36                                                      |
| Managers                                               | 867              | 2 330                   | 37                                                      |

Source: İŞKUR, Labour Market Survey, 2023.

In some sectors, especially in manufacturing-related sectors, there is more demand for the employment of PwD (one example here could be the Türk Tractor), especially those with hearing impairments. In addition, the stakeholders are open to the cooperation<sup>19</sup> with İŞKUR to promote the employment of PwD. In this framework, TISK, TURK-İŞ and Hak Trade Union Confederation (HAK-İŞ)

<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye, İşgücü Tam Metin (Full Text on Labour Force), [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: <https://www.aile.gov.tr/media/5816/isgucu-tam-metin-turkce.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with TISK, 16 October 2024.

together with İŞKUR set up the Barrier Free Academy for supporting PwD in accessing the courses on personal development as well as vocational training.

As noted earlier, the Labour Act provides the basis for the employment of PwD. It also regulates a quota system for enterprises that have a workforce of 50 or over. While a quota of 3% is applied for the private sector, it is 4% for the public sector.

Those employers that fail to meet the quota requirements are fined, and the fines are collected under the Administrative Fines Fund, which remains the main financial instrument for increasing employment of PwD. The fund is mainly used for projects aiming to promote the employment of PwD through supported employment, entrepreneurship and/or protected workplaces. NGOs also support the employment of PwD.

However, the fund is not used efficiently, since only 12% of funds are allocated for the projects<sup>20</sup>. The Confederation of PwD and TURK-İŞ as well as public institutions believe that the conditions are too strict and information among the employers and NGOs is lacking.

In December 2023, the Administrative Fines Fund Commission increased number of approved projects: 149 self-employed projects for PwD, 22 vocational training and rehabilitation courses, 3 protected workplaces and 2 supported employment projects. The budget allocated has increased<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency), 2023 Faaliyet Raporu (2023 Activity Report), [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: <https://media.iskur.gov.tr/81436/2023-faaliyet-raporu.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency), 2023 Faaliyet Raporu (2023 Activity Report), [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: <https://media.iskur.gov.tr/81436/2023-faaliyet-raporu.pdf>.

## 5. THE LINKS BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT AND OTHER POLICY AREAS

The link between employment and education is considered the most important factor in promoting the employment of PwD. Trade union, employer association, NGO and public institution representatives support this endeavour.

Still, statistical figures (PHS, 2011) show there is a link between disability type and the level of educational attainment level. Those with severe disabilities were found to have the lowest educational attainment level, underlying the inaccessibility of the educational facilities. University graduates constituted 3.7% of disabled population, while high school graduates made up 8.2%.

### 5.1 From school to the labour market

Rights to education for children with disabilities from pre-school to secondary education is regulated by the Regulation on Special Education and Training Services. In line with the regulation, the MoNE governs the implementation of provision on education. Children requiring special education are expected to attend a school in their catchment area. Those children who have severe limitations have the option to attend special education classes that operate in these educational facilities. If conditions allow, an additional special education teacher is also employed. After formal education is completed, no other support is provided. It should also be noted that there is no follow-up mechanism for children with disabilities in the formal education system whether or not they enter the labour market.

At the secondary education level, support education services are also available for children who have been in special education prior to secondary education. They are provided with support to receive education at the least restricted environment. Mainstreaming and inclusive education and vocational training measures are also available at all levels of education.

For the education of children with mild intellectual difficulties, as well as those hearing impaired, physically impaired or visually impaired, there are specialised vocational high schools. There are around 200 vocational high schools for the children with disabilities<sup>22</sup>. Most of these high schools are located in big cities, Istanbul in particular. In this regard, MoNE and the Istanbul Chamber of Industry (ISO) signed a protocol in 2021 for promoting skills and qualifications. MoNE has also been striving for children with mild intellectual difficulties to have the opportunity to study at university since 2021, but this has not yet been realised.

### 5.2 Skills development opportunities

On adult training for PwD, there are very few initiatives. In 2022, MoNE opened a lifelong learning centre to serve adult PwD. The expansion of adult training centres for PwD in each province has also been envisaged, but there are very few such centres and they include fewer training opportunities for adult PwD. In municipalities, there are almost no training centres for adult PwD and those that do exist are newly opened and have just started providing training. The best example of adult training is TISK's activity. The TISK initiative called the Barrier Free Academy also contributes to this endeavour. It is clear that attention has recently been paid to adult training for PwD. Therefore, it is too early to evaluate the training programmes. On the other hand, information should be made more public.

<sup>22</sup> Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Türkiye (MEB), MEB İstatistikleri – Örgün Eğitim 2023-2024 (MEB Statistics – Formal Education 2023-2024), [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: [https://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2024\\_10/11230736\\_meb\\_istatistikleri\\_orgun\\_egitim\\_2023\\_2024.pdf](https://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2024_10/11230736_meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2023_2024.pdf).

İŞKUR provides vocational training courses for PwD through two programmes. The first, as mentioned earlier, is the projects supported by the Administrative Fines Fund Commission. In this framework, nine vocational training courses were provided to PwD for increasing their skills in 2024. Only 109 PwD benefitted from this programme<sup>23</sup>. The second is provided within its active labour market programme. In 2024, there were no applications for this programme. The main reason for the lack of vocational training, according to TISK, is a lack of information among employers and lack of awareness on employing PwD.

On-the-job training courses and internship programmes for PwD can play a vital role. İŞKUR provides on-the-job training programmes for PwD, but there is no specific information on how many PwD have benefitted from this programme. It is important to note that İŞKUR has intensified its overall policy on employment of PwD including on-the-job training since the end of 2024.

It is also significant that İŞKUR as well as employers consider that there is a correlation between social assistance and employment of PwD. İŞKUR surveys demonstrate that social assistance given to PwD can create some barriers in the employment of PwD. It is asserted that there are two reasons for this: families of PwD tend to be protective of their children with disabilities; and are inclined to accept the social assistance given to PwD.

NGOs also emphasise developing the soft skills of PwD. Communication, mathematics and digital work skills in particular can increase PwD's employment opportunities. In this regard, there is no such systemised training.

### 5.3 Access to social services

The relation between rehabilitation and the employment of PwD is recognised in legislation, as stated earlier. The 2005 Act and associated regulations also paved the way for the establishment of private care and rehabilitation centres. In 2024, the number of centres has exceeded 300, providing services to approximately 30 000 PwD in total. Alongside these centres and the centralised efforts of the MoFSS, the municipalities have started to pay more attention to the situation of PwD. There are rehabilitation and care centres for PwD that operate under the umbrella of municipalities. Compared to the size of the disabled population, the number of PwD benefitting from the social services is rather low. Moreover, there is no information on how many PwD joined the labour market after making use of rehabilitation services. It is also valid for those people who were injured in the workplace. There are no statistics after rehabilitation services on those who had work accidents and returned to the labour market.

### 5.4 Accessibility

The framework for accessibility is also structured via the 2005 Disability Act and associated regulation. Since becoming a signatory country to UNCRPD, efforts to ensure accessibility have escalated.

The regulation on accessibility, with its recent revision, sets the standards of accessibility and the monitoring mechanism for the implementation of accessibility rules. In line with the regulation, commissions were established in provinces to monitor the implementation of accessibility rules in public buildings, built environment and transport system.

The Accessibility Commission mechanism is regarded as an effective tool to ensure the implementation of accessibility rules. The provincial commissions are set to regularly meet twice a week. In addition to the members of public institutions, NGOs also participate in the Commission activities. Since its introduction to the Turkish context in 2016, over 5 000 inspections are carried out annually. The MoFSS issues an 'accessibility certificate' to the institutions that fully comply with the

<sup>23</sup> İŞKUR, İŞKUR Monthly Statistics (January to December 2024), <https://www.iskur.gov.tr/kurumsal-bilgi/istatistikler/>.

rules on accessibility criteria. Institutions or enterprises who failed to comply receive an administrative fine. The collected funds are diverted to projects for PwD.

## 6. THE GENDER DIMENSION OF POLICIES SUPPORTING THE EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The gender dimension in employment in Türkiye is a crosscutting problem. Compared to the labour force participation rate and employment rate of men (72.1% and 67.1%, respectively), the corresponding rates for women were relatively low (36.7% and 32.4%, respectively) in November 2024. This implies that women with disabilities are at a greater risk of marginalisation. Their educational attainment level is also dramatically low compared to that of males. For example, in 2023, more than 1.5 million women were still illiterate, compared to around 300 000 men. Turkstat shows that in 2023, the mean years of schooling for women were 8.6 and for men, 10.1<sup>24</sup>.

There are no specific statistics on education status in recent years. PHC 2011 provides the statistics on women's education. Women with at least one disability are almost three times more illiterate compared to men with at least one disability. This difference is lower among female high school and university graduates with disabilities than males<sup>25</sup>. This situation negatively impacts the employment of women with disabilities. The same statistics demonstrate that activity and employment rates of women with disabilities are three times lower than men with disabilities.

The longstanding discrimination against female candidates also creates an additional barrier, increasing the risk of marginalisation for disabled females. Together with the longstanding discrimination, disabled females have reservations about looking for a job in the first place. In recent years, employment for women with disabilities has been given particular attention by NGOs and TISK.

The 2011 study on analysing the labour market for PwD showed that there is a significant discrepancy among certain subgroups of the disabled population, especially when it comes to gender. This situation adversely affects disabled females and puts them at further risk of marginalisation.

<sup>24</sup> Turkstat, National Education Statistics 2023, <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=National-Education-Statistics-2023-53444&dil=2#:~:text=In%202023%2C%20the%20mean%20years,men%20it%20was%2010.1%20years.&text=In%202023%2C%20the%20city%20with,%2C%20Eskişehir%2C%20Kocaeli%20and%20İzmir>.

<sup>25</sup> Turkstat, Population and Housing Census-Disability, 2011, p.100.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.1 Conclusions

As stated in the main findings sections, the low labour force participation rate among PwD is a challenge for the inclusion of PwD. Women in particular are less likely to look for a job due to longstanding discrimination against women. Another challenge worth mentioning is the skills and qualifications level of persons with disabilities.

The number of vocational training courses available for PwD is rather low. This is believed to be rooted in limited financial resources or lack of information among employers. To change the situation in favour of PwD, especially disabled females, vocational education and training opportunities should be increased. In recent years, with the budget created via Administrative Fines, resources have increased. Still, the take up rate remains relatively low. This suggests a need to raise awareness amongst disabled people, employers and NGOs. Lack of or inadequate on-the-job training and internship opportunities for PwD can also be listed as a major challenge. The lack of flexible working arrangements is also a barrier to the employment of PwD. İŞKUR's new labour adaptation programme in this sense is an important step to make PwD familiar with working life. It has also been suggested by some public institutions that phasing out social assistance programmes for PwD who are employed for a certain period will be beneficial for both the employer and PwD. Prejudices towards the employment of PwD also adversely affects labour market involvement.

İŞKUR's activities have significantly increased since 2018. In September 2024, employment policy towards PwD diversified through legislative change. More than 350 job coaches for PwD provide several services for PwD such as training in job search skills and interview techniques, vocational guidance, referral to active workforce programmes, providing information about open jobs in the public or private sector and job placement services in each province. Job coaching, on-the-job training, employment support model and labour adaptation programmes are the new policies adopted in September 2024. However, the potential of vocational training courses are still underutilised by employers.

İŞKUR's on-the-job training courses, internship programmes and labour adaptation programmes can be important means to increase the employment of PwD since they will gradually enhance the integration of PwD into working life. Additionally, self-employed projects for PwD have been increasing. The best practices on the self-employment projects can be disseminated.

İŞKUR's Administrative Fines Fund Commission provides financial support to NGOs, trade unions and employers through projects. However, the allocated budget is underused. In recent years there has been an increase in the projects approved by the said Commission.

The MoFSS's EKPSS provides PwD with the opportunity to work in public institutions as civil servants. This programme is considered as successful. The employment of PwD in public institutions through a guaranteed job particularly increases the social integration of PwD.

There is still an inadequate number of protected workplaces in Türkiye. The strategic plans and action plans emphasise the importance of protected workplaces for the employment of PwD. However, the total has remained around 100 for the last three years in Türkiye. EU examples are to be studied in order to be reflected in regulations and practice.

Equipping PwD with skills including soft skills can also increase their employment opportunities. Some NGOs consider soft skills, particularly communication, mathematics and digital skills, key to increasing the employment of PwD. MoNE and municipalities' centres can be used for developing their soft skills and qualifications, as can TISK's e-learning platform.

Since the 2005 Disability Act, there has been a significant improvement in the situation of PwD. Support for the families of persons with disabilities has significantly amplified. Their involvement in



decision-making has also improved. The MoFSS has expanded its services, and care services have improved their service provisions. This includes daytime services to support families with a disabled family member. In 2024, the number of people who benefitted from these services was at around 10 000. Municipalities in Türkiye have also started getting involved in improving the situation of PwD by setting up more than 300 rehabilitation and care facilities for 30 000 people. As of 2024, there are 560 000 families in total receiving home care allowances. However, it is necessary to evaluate the impact of these services on the employment of PwD even though some of the services are very new.

Regarding accessibility, the Disability Act, its associated regulations and the UNCRPD provide the grounds. The provincial commissions, which were set up in 2016, are tasked with monitoring the implementation of the accessibility rules and provisions. To promote the best practices, accessibility certificates are granted to those enterprises which fully comply with the rules and guidelines. The commission's efforts in each province are important in order to increase employment of PwD even though they do not directly relate to employment. The NGOs have also contributed to the process, although their contribution is limited. This is believed to be rooted in the capacity of the NGOs, even though NGOs have done a lot to increase employment of PwD through grant schemes.

Strategic plans and action plans on the employment of PwD are well developed. However, it is equally important to monitor and evaluate their results. This part of the policymaking seems to be lacking at the moment as no information has been provided to the public on the results of the Development Plan, Barrier Free Vision and Action Plan on the Rights of People with Disabilities in recent years. Overall, there are a few challenges in the process of the employment of PwD. Still, the government of Türkiye has made a genuine effort to change this situation. In collaboration with the stakeholders and through effective use of the resources, the participation rate is expected to increase. To this end, the following subsections display good practices and recommendations.

## 7.2 Best practices

There are several best practices in the field of employment, as outlined in the above sections. Therefore, they will be addressed briefly under the scope of this subsection.

1. Projects allocated through the Administrative Fines Fund Commission are considered to have positive impact.
2. EKPSS is also seen as an exemplary unique tool for job placement in the public sector<sup>26</sup>. This view is supported by trade unions and NGOs.
3. The Accessibility Commission at the provincial level is considered very effective, especially in recent years.
4. Administrative fines raised in relation to non-compliance with the quota system or accessibility standards generates funds that can be utilised to promote the situation of PwD.

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<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye, Kamuda Engelli İstihdamının Analizi (Analysis of Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Public Sector), [online]. Last accessed 5 February 2025 at: <https://www.aile.gov.tr/media/5649/kamuda-engelli-istihdaminin-analizi-son.pdf>.

## 7.3 Recommendations

1. It is seen that vocational training for the employment of PwD is very low. The ongoing cooperation between İŞKUR and TISK can be used in order to increase information among the employers. Secondly, vocational training for PwD in selected sectors can be implemented through İŞKUR and TISK cooperation as happened in the Turk Tractor case, since TISK has committed to increasing the employment of PwD over the quota.
2. İŞKUR's services: on-the-job training and internships for PwD has recently begun. It will help PwD integrate into working life. These on-the-job training courses and internships can be increased through a special dedicated programme.
3. Within the Administrative Fines Fund, self-employment projects have increased. In this frame, best practices of self-employment projects can be disseminated in order to attract more PwD to apply for this scheme.
4. The impact of social services, especially care services, to PwD and home care allowances is to be studied in order to see whether there is an impact on the employment of PwD.
5. Gradual elimination of social assistance in cases of employment of PwD in a workplace is expected to increase employment of PwD.
6. There is a need to increase the number of protected workplaces. The reports as envisaged in the Action Plan for the Rights of People with Disabilities will produce insights for increasing protected workplaces for PwD. The France case on protected workplaces can be studied. The reports on the protected workplace could lead to new regulations and more incentives. A pilot project on protected workplaces can be implemented.
7. MoNE and municipalities' training centres can be organised to increase PwD's skills (including soft skills) and qualifications. It is known that there are new initiatives on adult training for PwD in recent years. Like the TISK e-learning platform, e-learning platforms can also help increase the skills of PwD.

# ANNEXES

## Annex I – List of interviewees and organisations

The interviews were carried out with the following interviewees and organisations:

- Ministry of Family and Social Services
- Turkish Employment Organisation (İŞKUR)
- Barrier Free Association
- Confederation of Turkish Employer Trade Union
- Confederation of Turkish People with Disabilities
- Türkiye Workers Trade Union Confederation – TÜRK-İŞ
- Confederation of Turkish Artisans and Craftmen –TESK

## Annex II – Tables

**Table 1: Population with at least one disability by age group and gender, 2011**

| Persons with disabilities | Proportion of Population (%) | Male (%) | Female (%) |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------|------------|
| All age groups            | 6.9%                         | 5.9%     | 7.9%       |
| 3-9 years                 | 2.3%                         | 2.5%     | 2.1%       |
| 10-14 years               | 2.1%                         | 2.4%     | 1.8%       |
| 15-19 years               | 2.3%                         | 2.6%     | 2.0%       |
| 20-24 years               | 2.7%                         | 3.4%     | 2.0%       |
| 25-29 years               | 2.6%                         | 3.0%     | 2.3%       |
| 30-34 years               | 3.2%                         | 3.4%     | 3.0%       |
| 35-39 years               | 4.0%                         | 4.0%     | 4.1%       |
| 40-44 years               | 5.1%                         | 4.7%     | 5.6%       |
| 45-49 years               | 6.9%                         | 5.9%     | 7.8%       |
| 50-54 years               | 8.8%                         | 7.1%     | 10.7%      |
| 55-59 years               | 12.1%                        | 9.2%     | 15.0%      |
| 60-64 years               | 16.5%                        | 12.3%    | 20.4%      |
| 65-69 years               | 23.0%                        | 18.3%    | 27.2%      |
| 70-74 years               | 31.9%                        | 26.3%    | 36.3%      |
| 75+ years                 | 46.5%                        | 40.9%    | 50.3%      |

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSAT), Population and Housing Survey, 2011. This proportion is 2.7% for the 20-24 age group and 46.5% for people aged 75 and over.

**Table 2: Persons with a disability according to type of disability**

| Type of disability                         | Total proportion of population (%) | Male (%) | Female (%) |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|------------|
| Difficulty in seeing                       | 1.4%                               | 1.3%     | 1.5%       |
| Difficulty in hearing                      | 1.1%                               | 1.1%     | 1.2%       |
| Difficulty in speaking                     | 0.7%                               | 0.8%     | 0.6%       |
| Difficulty in walking / climbing           | 3.3%                               | 2.4%     | 4.1%       |
| Difficulty in holding or lifting something | 4.1%                               | 3.2%     | 5.1%       |
| Difficulty in learning and remembering     | 2.0%                               | 1.4%     | 2.6%       |

Source: TURKSAT, Population and Housing Survey, 2011.

**Table 3: Type of disability under the national database, 2023**

| Type of disability     | Number of Persons | Share (%) |
|------------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Difficulty in seeing   | 215 076           | 9.53%     |
| Difficulty in hearing  | 179 867           | 7.97%     |
| Difficulty in speaking | 33 686            | 1.49%     |
| Orthopaedics           | 311 131           | 13.78%    |
| Mental                 | 385 313           | 17.07%    |
| Psychological          | 170 927           | 7.57%     |
| Chronic illness        | 917 259           | 40.63%    |
| Other                  | 44 248            | 1.96%     |

Source: Ministry of Family and Social Services, 2023.

**Table 4: Basic labour force indicators of population by type of disability, 2011 (15 years and over)**

**Persons with a sight impairment**

|                          | Labour force participation rate | Employment rate | Unemployment rate |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| No difficulty            | 49.8%                           | 45.8%           | 8.0%              |
| Some difficulty          | 31.2%                           | 28.9%           | 7.3%              |
| Severe/cannot see at all | 23.2%                           | 20.9%           | 10.2%             |
| Unknown                  | 0.5%                            | 0.1%            | 4.1%              |

**Persons with a hearing impairment**

|                           | Labour force participation rate | Employment rate | Unemployment rate |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| No difficulty             | 49.2%                           | 45.3%           | 8.0%              |
| Some difficulty           | 23.5%                           | 22.1%           | 5.9%              |
| Severe/cannot hear at all | 18.5%                           | 17.1%           | 7.5%              |
| Unknown                   | 0.4%                            | 0.4%            | 6.7%              |

**Persons with a speech impairment**

|                            | Labour force participation rate | Employment rate | Unemployment rate |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| No difficulty              | 48.3%                           | 44.4%           | 8.0%              |
| Some difficulty            | 20.5%                           | 19.0%           | 7.4%              |
| Severe/cannot speak at all | 12.9%                           | 11.7%           | 9.4%              |
| Unknown                    | 1.1%                            | 1.0%            | 10.1%             |

### Persons with a walking impairment

|                           | Labour force participation rate | Employment rate | Unemployment rate |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| No difficulty             | 51.0%                           | 46.9%           | 8.0%              |
| Some difficulty           | 26.1%                           | 24.3%           | 7.2%              |
| Severe/cannot walk at all | 15.1%                           | 13.9%           | 8.2%              |
| Unknown                   | 1.2%                            | 1.1%            | 8.9%              |

### Persons with an impairment in holding or lifting something

|                                     | Labour force participation rate | Employment rate | Unemployment rate |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| No difficulty                       | 51.0%                           | 46.9%           | 8.0%              |
| Some difficulty                     | 27.9%                           | 26.0%           | 7.0%              |
| Severe/cannot hold or lift anything | 18.1%                           | 16.6%           | 8.6%              |
| Unknown                             | 1.2%                            | 1.1%            | 9.1%              |

### Persons with a learning or remembering impairment

|                                        | Labour force participation rate | Employment rate | Unemployment rate |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| No difficulty                          | 49.2%                           | 45.3%           | 8.0%              |
| Some difficulty                        | 25.6%                           | 23.9%           | 6.6%              |
| Severe/cannot learn or remember at all | 16.0%                           | 14.9%           | 6.4%              |
| Unknown                                | 1.4%                            | 1.2%            | 10.7%             |

Source: TURKSTAT, Population and Housing Survey, 2011.

**Table 5: Job placement by İŞKUR for People with Disabilities (Yearly)**

| Years | Placement |        |        |
|-------|-----------|--------|--------|
|       | Private   | Public | Total  |
| 2019  | 13 798    | 917    | 14 715 |
| 2020  | 7 656     | 1 197  | 8 853  |
| 2021  | 10 200    | 355    | 10 555 |
| 2022  | 17 471    | 418    | 17 889 |
| 2023  | 34 622    | 555    | 35 177 |

Source: İŞKUR, 2023.

**Table 6: Number of Persons with Disabilities Working in Workplaces Obligated to Employ Persons with Disabilities**

| Year | Obligated to Employ Persons with Disabilities (Workplaces with 50+ employees) |         | Number of Employees with Disabilities (Workplaces with 50+ employees) |         | Number of Employees with Disabilities (Workplaces with 50+ employees) |         | Number of Open Quotas for PwD |         | Number of Disabled Quota Excess |         | Total Number of Employees with Disabilities |         |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------------------|---------|
|      | Public                                                                        | Private | Public                                                                | Private | Public                                                                | Private | Public                        | Private | Public                          | Private | Public                                      | Private |
| 2023 | 1 433                                                                         | 21 501  | 22 449                                                                | 121 729 | 1 017                                                                 | 7 797   | 3 532                         | 21 370  | 3 453                           | 10 407  | 23 466                                      | 129 526 |
| 2022 | 1 443                                                                         | 20 175  | 21 309                                                                | 110 160 | 853                                                                   | 7 385   | 3 849                         | 24 216  | 3 365                           | 9 015   | 22 162                                      | 117 545 |
| 2021 | 1 440                                                                         | 18 695  | 20 296                                                                | 103 426 | 1 086                                                                 | 7 357   | 4 205                         | 20 744  | 3 709                           | 8 508   | 21 382                                      | 110 783 |
| 2020 | 1 167                                                                         | 15 266  | 15 375                                                                | 85 614  | 991                                                                   | 6 062   | 4 092                         | 16 875  | 2 456                           | 6 862   | 16 366                                      | 91 676  |
| 2019 | 1 320                                                                         | 18 029  | 15 928                                                                | 101 377 | 1 037                                                                 | 8 328   | 3 958                         | 16 938  | 3 222                           | 8 221   | 16 965                                      | 109 705 |

Source: İŞKUR, 2023.



**Table 7: Number of Civil Servants with Disabilities**

| Year           | Number of Disabled Civil Servants |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2019           | 55 196                            |
| 2020           | 57 408                            |
| 2021           | 62 356                            |
| 2022           | 65 662                            |
| 2023           | 67 986                            |
| 2024 (Jan-Aug) | 68 396                            |

Source: Ministry of Family and Social Services, 2024.

**Table 8: General Information on 2024 EKPSS (OSYM)**

| Type of placement                     | Number of Candidates | Quota | Number of candidates placed | Number under quota |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| University graduates                  | 5 246                | 1 321 | 1 207                       | 114                |
| Vocational higher education graduates | 9 133                | 552   | 523                         | 29                 |
| Secondary education graduates         | 28 751               | 423   | 384                         | 39                 |
| Total                                 | 43 130               | 2 296 | 2 114                       | 182                |

Source: OSYM, EKPSS, 2024.

**Table 9: Estimated Number of Persons with Disabilities by Occupation and Estimated Employment Rate for Persons with Disabilities (%), 2023**

| Sector                                                 | Potential Number | General Total | Potential Vacancy Rate for People with Disabilities (%) |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Employees working in clerical services                 | 11 015           | 31 097        | 35                                                      |
| Service and sales staff                                | 24 069           | 74 663        | 32                                                      |
| Occupations requiring no qualification                 | 22 824           | 54 788        | 42                                                      |
| Skilled agricultural, forestry and aquaculture workers | 293              | 1 827         | 16                                                      |
| Professional occupations                               | 16 851           | 32 616        | 52                                                      |
| Craftsmen and workers in related trades                | 34 702           | 126 621       | 27                                                      |
| Technicians and allied professionals                   | 7 923            | 26 679        | 30                                                      |
| Plant and machine operators and assemblers             | 39 671           | 110 558       | 36                                                      |
| Managers                                               | 867              | 2 330         | 37                                                      |

Source: İŞKUR, Labour Market Survey, 2023.

## ACRONYMS

|          |                                                                      |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AB       | Assignment Beneficiary                                               |
| ALMM     | Active Labour Market Measures                                        |
| ALMP     | Active Labour Market Policy                                          |
| DG       | Directorate General                                                  |
| EAA      | European Accessibility Act                                           |
| EC       | European Commission                                                  |
| EKPSS    | Public Servant Selection Exam for PwD                                |
| ETF      | European Training Foundation                                         |
| EU       | European Union                                                       |
| İŞKUR    | Turkish Employment Organisation                                      |
| ISO      | Istanbul Chamber of Industry                                         |
| IT       | Information Technology                                               |
| MoFSS    | Ministry of Family and Social Services                               |
| MoLSS    | Ministry of Labour and Social Security                               |
| MoNE     | Ministry of National Education                                       |
| MSs      | Member States                                                        |
| NGO      | Non-governmental organisation                                        |
| OSYM     | Measurement, Selection and Placement Centre                          |
| PCs      | Partner Countries                                                    |
| PES      | Public Employment Services                                           |
| PHC      | Population and Housing Census                                        |
| SuTP     | Syrians under Temporary Protection                                   |
| TISK     | Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations                       |
| TÜRK-İŞ  | Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions                                |
| TURKSTAT | Turkish Statistical Office                                           |
| UNCRPD   | United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |

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