

# TURKEY

**EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT  
DEVELOPMENTS 2021**

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# KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Turkey is a large European Union (EU) candidate country with a population of over 83.4 million, its per capita gross domestic product (GDP) was USD 28 435 and life expectancy was 77.7 years in 2020 (<https://data.oecd.org/turkey.htm>). Turkey's economic and social development performance has led to increased employment and income and made Turkey an upper-middle-income country. According to the OECD Turkey Economic Forecast Summary, 2021 (<https://www.oecd.org/economy/turkey-economic-snapshot/>) and in the absence of further major shocks, GDP growth is projected to be 5.7% in 2021 before easing to 3.4% in 2022.

Turkey is a key strategic partner of the EU on issues such as migration, security, counter-terrorism, and the economy, which are important for relations between the EU and Turkey [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/negotiations-status/turkey\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/negotiations-status/turkey_en). Education and culture, science and research and audio-visual and ICT policies bring together people, as well as researchers, labs, economic operators, SMEs, and the EU and multinationals. Turkey has made good progress in science and research, in its e-infrastructure, under Chapter 25 on Science and Research and Chapter 26 on Education and Training. Participation in the EU Horizon 2020 programme is still below expectations. Efforts are being made to encourage its research and innovation community to strengthen its participation – specifically its success rates. Turkey's efforts in stepping up its ranking in the European Innovation Scoreboard have led to tangible improvements in the scoring.

A persistent geographical East-West divide affects the Turkish economy and labour market. According to the World Bank Turkey Overview (2021), there has been a slowdown in reforms in several areas. This, together with economic vulnerabilities, risks reversing some of the progress made to date in Turkey. Due to the COVID-19 effect, the current overall macroeconomic picture is more vulnerable and uncertain, given rising inflation and unemployment, contracting investments, elevated corporate and financial sector vulnerabilities, and a patchy implementation of corrective policy actions and reforms. There are also significant external headwinds due to ongoing geopolitical tensions in the subregion (World Bank, 2021, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/turkey/overview#1>).

At the outset of the COVID-19 crisis, the Turkish Ministry of National Education established a series of policy actions to maintain education services and meet the larger needs of society. Throughout this period Turkey could rely on a strengthened distance education environment to provide teachers, students and parents with an extensive variety of solutions for pedagogical continuity. The deployed solutions immediately covered all levels from primary to secondary education, including vocational education and training (VET), and partly consisted of a package of academic, social and psychological support delivered through online teaching, radio, television and other media (ETF, 2020). The government is building on the Turkey Education 2023 strategy, by increasing access to and the use of e-platforms, already created e-graduate websites, as well as platforms for teacher training and ICT-based curricula. The government has taken measures such as providing free connectivity to students and teachers on mobile services to facilitate access to online educational platforms.

Turkey has responded to the challenges posed by technological changes through several policies and actions. However, and as a large country in an age of digitalisation, Turkey faces and will continue to face many and various human capital development challenges. In economic terms, the most pressing of these concerns making the transition from a low-tech to a high-tech country and a middle- to a high-

income country<sup>1</sup>. These developments and others are impacted also by growing economic vulnerabilities and a more challenging external environment.

Turkey's parliament ratified the Paris climate agreement on 6 October 2021, making it the last G20 country to do so. As one of the biggest partners of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), this is considered a very welcome step forward for Turkey to benefit from the EBRD, which aims to make a majority of EBRD investments green by 2025 and to align with the goals of [the Paris Agreement](#) on climate change by 2023.

Turkey's public institutions report on all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The private sector and academia are highly engaged. For example, TUSIAD, MUSIAD, TURKONFED, BCSD Turkey, TOBB run national reviews that focus on best private sector practices to integrate SDGs into their processes.

The Turkish 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 preparation of digital content and skills-based programmes; updating curricula in vocational and technical education; support for applications for inventions, patents, and utility models; and the establishment of a private sector cooperation protocol for vocational training and skills development. Turkey has developed policies and actions for the improvement of education and skills provision with a focus on improving the quality and equality of educational achievement at all levels, as evidenced by the latest EU benchmarks and acknowledged by the OECD 'Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development policy report' (OECD, 2021).

Turkey remains a key strategic partner of the EU on issues such as migration, security, counterterrorism, and the economy. Hosting 3.6 million refugees (4.3% of the total population at the end of 2019) is a major challenge for Turkey (United Nations, 2019). Refugees represent a comparable proportion of the working age population. A minority has been cleared for formal labour market participation, but the great majority work informally, amplifying informality in regions where the refugee population is large. Turkey has received EU humanitarian funding of approximately EUR 6 billion under the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey. Discussions on the renewal of the EU–Turkey facility for the integration of refugees will notably focus on updating the integration strategy for the four million Syrian refugees living in Turkey (European Commission, 2020)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Turkey is a member of the OECD and many other EU, international and international institutions which have published and continue to publish regularly on education and training, employment and socio-economic issues being it in multi-countries/regional/country policy analysis/reviews. This ETF fiche is based on the ETF thematic work (2020/2021) and brings together policy analysis as well as the latest data, relevant thematic and Turkey-specific work of other international and national actors.

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/negotiations-status/turkey/eu-facility-refugees-turkey\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/negotiations-status/turkey/eu-facility-refugees-turkey_en)

# 1. KEY DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

- **Political developments and health**

In the past few years, growing economic vulnerabilities and a more challenging external geopolitical environment and relations, including with the EU, have threatened to undermine earlier socio-economic achievements in Turkey. The relations are strained due to Turkey's backsliding in the areas of democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights.

In the OECD "Economic Surveys: Turkey 2021", it is reported that after initial success in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and a strong economic rebound, Turkey faces a resurgence of cases which puts pressure on the country's health system, public resources, social cohesion, and macroeconomic sustainability. The number of jobs decreased significantly after both the 2018 financial turmoil in Turkey and the COVID-19 pandemic. Employment and aggregate demand contracted strongly in the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, and then rebounded following vigorous government support.

The tourism and hospitality sectors, which generate a high demand for related products and services and provide employment across many regions, have been particularly affected by the pandemic. The authorities have provided ample quasi-fiscal support to safeguard corporate liquidity, employment and household incomes. However, the government has begun to scale down these measures after an increase in the current account deficit and inflation, a weakening in investor confidence and a sharp exchange rate depreciation between July and October (OECD, 2021). The pandemic-related contraction in economic activity affected informal workers the hardest, as many of them work in contact-intensive services, such as tourism, catering and retail trade.

Different analyses and reports on Turkey emphasise that a stronger, more sustainable, and more inclusive post-COVID growth trajectory would be crucial for Turkey. To continue its efforts for a more inclusive and sustained recovery, structural challenges have been recommended to be addressed, which include the low labour force participation of women, widespread informality, weak skills, and rigid employment rules, which hamper reallocation, and create a large percentage of low-quality employment (OECD, 2021).

- **Demographics**

Turkey's population was 85.3 million in 2021 (<https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/turkey-population>). The current population growth rate is 1.09%, which has however been decreasing gradually every year. Population numbers are expected to peak at 97.96 million in 2059 and then decrease in the years thereafter.

Turkey hosts a large number of Syrian nationals under temporary protection. The number dropped slightly over the course of 2020 (OECD, 2020). As per the Turkish Directorate General of Migration Management, of the roughly 3.6 million Syrian refugees under temporary protection in Turkey (June 2020), almost 1.6 million were 18 years old or younger and 1.7% of the total were in government shelters. In 2019, a record number of irregular migrants were apprehended: 455 000, 41% more than in 2018. This increase was driven primarily by migrants from Afghanistan and Pakistan.

- **Economic developments, informal economy, remittances**

In the past few years, Turkey has been confronting growing economic vulnerabilities and a more challenging external environment. There has also been a slowdown in reforms in several areas that, together with the economic vulnerabilities, risks reversing some of the progress made to date. The

current overall macroeconomic picture is more vulnerable and uncertain, given rising inflation and unemployment, contracting investment, elevated corporate and financial sector vulnerabilities, and patchy implementation of corrective policy actions and reforms. There are also significant external headwinds due to ongoing geopolitical tensions in the subregion (ETF, 2020).

The entrepreneurial vigour of the Turkish economy is remarkable even under difficult macroeconomic conditions and regional geo-political tensions. However, only a minority of firms create high quality jobs. Most SMEs do not comply with official management and tax rules and draw on informal or semi-formal employment.

Turkish firms lag behind in the adoption of advanced digital technologies and thus forego large dividends from digitalisation. Shortcomings in digital skills and limited access to fast broadband present bottlenecks to a more widespread adoption of the most advanced ICT tools and activities. There is also a digital divide between large and small firms and across socio-economic groups. During the pandemic, recourse to teleworking and other digital applications accelerated - despite Turkey's infrastructure being less prone to these transformations (ETF, 2021).

Labour demand, in terms of profiles and competences which are needed by Turkish companies, is changing constantly. Different types of employer surveys are conducted regularly to identify current and future skills needs in Turkey, both for the whole economy and for specific sectors. According to the OECD, structural reforms to allow more flexibility in labour markets, more competition in product markets and major progress in the quality of governance would help to unleash Turkey's full potential by improving productivity, job creation and fostering digital transformation. There is also room for more trade opening up in agriculture, services and the public sector (OECD, 2021)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> OECD AGRICULTURAL POLICY MONITORING AND EVALUATION 2021, [https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=TAD/CA/APM/WP\(2021\)7/FINAL&docLanguage=En](https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=TAD/CA/APM/WP(2021)7/FINAL&docLanguage=En)

## 2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Significant skills challenges exist in Turkey. There is a gap in most of the education and training indicators, when comparing Turkey with the EU or OECD countries (ETF, 2021). These gaps mostly stem from the traditionally large numbers of early school leavers, a phenomenon often linked to rural living, gender, and impoverished and/or refugee family backgrounds. The average skills outcomes of young people, tertiary education graduates and adults remain low. The skills of the population as a whole need to be improved generally. Strengthening vocational education and adult learning in digital areas would help the productive sector to better tap into the potential of technological change. (ETF, 2020).

Turkey has a comparatively large and highly centralised education system. Within the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), strategic planning practices are in place at central and local levels, guided by a five-year vision. Some established structures encourage stakeholder participation, particularly in the vocational sector, and broad multi-stakeholder bodies at central and local level meet regularly. The tertiary sector has grown considerably in recent years, due thanks to efforts to ensure one university per province. This appears to have had a positive impact on regional development. Nascent efforts to improve the quality of tertiary education provision are evident.

### 2.1 Trends and challenges

- **Education expenditure, access, participation and early leaving**

Turkey dedicates a higher-than-average share of national wealth to education, particularly at tertiary level, in part due to the tuition-free provision in public institutions. Before the pandemic, total public expenditure on primary, secondary, and post-secondary non-tertiary education in Turkey reached 2.5% of GDP in 2018, which was lower than the OECD average of 3.2% in the same year. Some funding initiatives are in place to reduce the cost of education for disadvantaged families ([Education at a Glance 2021 : OECD Indicators](#)-Turkey OECD, 2021). Public expenditure on education covers expenditure on educational institutions and expenditure outside educational institutions, such as support for students' living costs and other private costs. Public expenditure on education includes expenditure by all public entities, including the education ministry and other ministries, local and regional governments, and other public agencies. Compared to the previous year, Turkey reported an increase in the education budgets for primary and lower secondary education in both 2020 and 2021 ([Education at a Glance 2021 : OECD Indicators](#)-Turkey)<sup>4</sup>.

Since the adoption of Public Financial Management and Control Act No 5018, Turkish public institutions and corporations apply performance-based budgeting based on strategic planning. In the context of education and related performance goals, strategic plans and activity reports, etc. are prepared regularly every year. For detailed data, see: [Turkey government: Government expenditure on education, total \(% of GDP\) - Turkey and UNESCO Institute for Statistics \(uis.unesco.org\)](#).

Private sources accounted for 26% of total expenditure in pre-primary institutions, i.e. higher than the OECD average of 17%. At tertiary level, 27% of expenditure comes from private sources in Turkey, compared to 30% on average across OECD countries.

With 18.2 million students and 1.1 million teachers in primary and secondary education, the Turkish education system is massive. In addition, there are more than 25 million students in tertiary education.

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<sup>4</sup> OECD (2021), Table A1.2. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes ([https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021\\_Annex3\\_ChapterA.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterA.pdf))

The Turkish education and training system needs to improve both the accessibility and quality of its provision for all students to ensure more inclusive and equitable skills development. Studies point to a stronger influence of young people's socio-economic backgrounds on their attainment of skills and tertiary education than in most other OECD countries (OECD, 2021). Although the VET enrolment rate (% of upper secondary enrolments) is close to the EU average (46%, 2020), the quality and relevance of the Turkish school-based VET system is not satisfactory. The skills of the population generally should be improved.

Between the second quarter of 2019 and the second quarter of 2020 (i.e. during the peak of the first wave of COVID-19), the participation of adults in formal and/or non-formal education and training decreased by 7%. Levels of upper secondary attainment in Turkey are among the lowest of the OECD countries, with Turkish adults showing significantly poorer proficiency in literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills.

Low-level educational attainment is a challenge in Turkey. Early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) amounted to 26.7% in 2020, with the male rate at 27.5% and the female rate at 25.8%. The gender gap has been narrowing. Policies, programmes and strategies driven by either the state, NGOs, public institutions, or international non-governmental organisations have had a noticeable impact on reducing the school drop-out rates among the youth population in recent years. However, the educational attainment rate of the entire adult population remains low, at 50.4% in 2020.

- **PISA results**

Student performance has improved, with a smaller percentage of students in Turkey achieving only baseline proficiency (PISA level 2) in reading, mathematics, and science. However, despite this progress, the average quality of education in Turkey falls significantly behind. Socio-economic status influences learning outcomes more than gender and immigrant status. In Turkey, the proportion of children from the bottom quartile of the PISA index of economic, social, and cultural status (ESCS) achieving at least PISA level 2 in reading in 2018 was 29% lower than that of children from the top ESCS quartile, a similar percentage to the OECD average.

In PISA 2018, Turkey had the highest rates of school-level isolation among both high and low achievers, as well as an above-average isolation index for advantaged students, suggesting some academic and social segregation within the Turkish system. Students in Turkey reported a low sense of belonging at school and high levels of truancy in PISA 2018. Finally, low per-student spending, underdeveloped targeted funding practices and the relatively high cost of school education to households pose challenges in effectively supporting disadvantaged and other vulnerable students. (For more details: OECD, 2020. More details on the OECD PISA results, see: [StatLink https://stat.link/y39enj](https://stat.link/y39enj)).

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

Turkish youth (age group 15-24) suffered the largest losses in terms of labour force participation. The rate of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) has continued to climb since the COVID-19 outbreak. In 2020, the total NEET was 28.3%, with females at 35.7%. A total of 363 000 young people left the labour force in the 12 months prior to November 2020, adding to the significant youth employment losses since 2018 (OECD, 2021).

Early leavers from education and training are a significant group in the composition of NEET in Turkey, since low-level educational attainment affects the school-to-work transition for the young population (OECD, 2020).

- **Education during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Developing the digital skills of students and teachers is the focal point of several official strategic documents, including the latest, Vision 2023, document of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). COVID-19 has pushed the subject to the fore, and the vital importance of digital skills and competences is acknowledged by all stakeholders. The *Safe Schooling and Distance Education Project* (SSDE/ [Turkey Safe Schooling And Distance ... - World Bank Group](#)) was designed in cooperation with the World Bank and carried out under the leadership of the Ministry of National Education Innovation and Education Technologies (YEĞİTEK) General Directorate. It was initiated both to ensure the uninterrupted continuation of education in extraordinary situations and to make breakthroughs that will shape the education system of the future. A resource of USD 160 million has been allocated to the project, which will be implemented with a World Bank loan. This SSDE project will be the mainstay of the Ministry of National Education's strategy in the field of educational technologies in the coming period, together with the FATİH and EBA projects. Turkey conducted a VET mapping study, (2019) to assess at provincial level the capacities, employment opportunities and future investment plans of the regional sectors, and the current VET provision. The study will be used to adapt the future provision accordingly. Finally, Turkey is providing financial incentives for the establishment of private VET institutions (see Funding”).

Within the scope of the ‘Emergency Response’ component of the **Safe Schooling and Distance Education Project** designed in the light of the 2023 Education Vision, “the capacity of the EBA platform was rapidly increased and the distance education content that was urgently needed was rapidly produced to ensure the uninterrupted continuation of education after the pandemic. The following are included in the scope of the longer-term sub-components of the SSDE project that will shape the education system of the future: (i) designing and implementing a new digital education platform, (ii) determining digital content strategies and producing new generation educational content and (iii) creating an educational technologies innovation ecosystem. The project's broad target audience stretches to 18 million K-12 students, as well as participants in lifelong learning programmes and teachers receiving professional development training. Emphasis is placed on supporting access to and using distance and blended education opportunities for students from disadvantaged groups.

The Ministry has taken initiatives to mitigate disparities in the access to and the quality of education during the pandemic. This included the distribution of 500 000 tablet computers free of charge to disadvantaged children, together with free mobile internet access. Close to 13 900 digital education network support centres and 162 mobile support centres were created throughout the country. These included schools in disadvantaged areas where students from low-income families could engage in interactive and personalised computer-based learning (EBA, 2020). Guidelines for infection prevention and containment were published for schools and were enforced with trained inspectors.

Nevertheless, gaps emerged concerning teaching resources and methods in different types of schools. Public schools relied on dedicated television channels (three channels were activated), online education platforms and live classes. The Ministry agreed with GSM operators to provide cellular subscribers with free access to online education platforms. According to (OECD, 2021) , these disparities generated through education, if they persist, they risk amplifying the social gaps (OECD, 2020). Studies to evaluate the impact of the different streams of online teaching on the academic proficiency of students may be required to inform follow-up policies.

## 2.2 VET policy and institutions

- **The strategic and legal framework for VET and adult learning**

The key strategy for the sector is the 2023 Education Vision for a Strong Future, which defines the key goals in the field of education. For VET, the main aims are to improve the perception of VET, to update VET contents, the infrastructure and equipment, to increase training opportunities for teachers, and to strengthen education-business cooperation.

Many reports and analyses identify the need for Turkey to prioritise raising the quality of education across all levels, including through upskilling and adult education. The main human capital challenges in the country comprise: further improving the access to and quality of initial education and training; providing career opportunities for a large youth population; and reskilling and upskilling the adult workforce, including a huge number of refugees (ETF, 2020). Moreover, students' academic proficiency differs widely by school and by socioeconomic background. The relative importance of adult learning is expected to increase, as reskilling and upskilling for new jobs becomes crucial for ensuring employability. Adults in Turkey seem to be less prepared for the future than their peers in other countries.

- **VET governance and financing arrangements**

VET is financed mainly by the central government budget, and it is a centralised multi-level governance structure. The MoNE, which is responsible for planning and implementing education policies, comprises numerous directorates, councils and boards. Formal VET is administered by the Directorate-General of Vocational Education and by the Directorate-General of Lifelong Learning. Post-secondary VET is under the responsibility of the Council for Higher Education. At the regional level, provincial and sub-provincial National Education Directorates in the 81 provinces are responsible for implementing VET regionally and locally. They are also engaged in the monitoring and evaluation of providers on behalf of the ministry. The Ministry of Finance and the MoNE agree on annual subsidies for VET schools in Organised Industrial Zones.

Turkish Employers' Associations play a big role in skills development, through their own funding or implementing EU- and other donor-funded projects. Most of the big employers' organisations have VET departments that interact directly with public institutions. There are many innovative co-governance and (co-)funding models in VET in Turkey, including revolving fund enterprises in VET schools.

The Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR) finances vocational courses for unemployed people. Private (non-profit) education providers, such as NGOs, and sometimes industry finance level-5 short-cycle post-secondary education. Lifelong learning is financed by the state and the private sector. The people also finance it through fees, unemployment insurance, union membership and charitable donations. Several employers finance VET through training and by contributing to training funds of employers' associations.

Central and provincial governments are responsible for human resources and the financial management of schools. Although funding has increased in the past decade, data suggest that primary and secondary education are underfunded compared to other OECD countries (OECD, 2021). Tertiary institutions have more autonomy than schools, but central authorities oversee their funding and entrance exams.

The monitoring and assessment of the education and training system has undergone considerable development. The Vocational Education Board was established to take decisions related to the planning, development, and evaluation of the VET system in Turkey. The Board meets once a year and consists of stakeholders from relevant ministries, professional organisations and trade unions.

Provincial employment and vocational education boards (PEVEB) have been set up to support the monitoring and decision-making relevant to the development of education and labour market policies at provincial level. In general, the following institutions and their representatives are considered key stakeholders in VET: the Ministry of Family, the Labour and Social Services, the Turkish Employment Agency, the Vocational Qualification Institute, KOSGEB (the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organisation of Turkey), the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), trade unions and - big and small - employers, trade and craftspeople associations, education unions and sector representatives.

Cooperation between VET and the business sector has been enhanced to improve the employability of young cohorts in higher productivity activities and access to higher quality jobs. This helps also to mitigate the scarring effects of the pandemic.

- **Quality and quality assurance**

The heterogeneity of vocational education programmes and of academic degrees constitutes a major challenge regarding quality and quality assurance. To address the challenges, Turkey has embarked on 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-assessment studies to be carried out by all vocational schools once a year, whose results are accessed by the MoNE.

Since 2016/17, all VET institutions in Turkey have conducted self-evaluation and received external evaluation. In 2018, progress was assessed by the MoNE in the 'Outlook of Vocational and Technical Education in Turkey' which identified some satisfying outcomes, such as labour force participation and employment rates were both higher for vocational upper secondary students than for general upper secondary students in 2018. These findings are confirmed by the ETF's Assessment of Policies for Human Capital in Turkey (2020), which also reports that the reforms facilitate progress towards higher quality VET provision in line with EU standards. More recently, a national review in the context of COVID-19 (2020) reported that the number of students choosing to enter Vocational and Technical Anatolian High Schools (VTAHs) increased by 17% between 2018 and 2019 and that improvements in Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) have led to a 62% increase in the number of enrolments. However, challenges persist as both the MoNE and ETF report persistent skills mismatches, both vertical and horizontal: in most study areas, and less than 10% of VET graduates are employed in their graduation field. Additional identified priorities include reducing the academic course intensity for VET students, and facilitating the transition to higher education.

Legislation on the [Turkish Qualifications Framework](#) (TQF) envisages that all qualifications, which can be obtained through education and training programmes or other learning pathways, are to be quality-driven and assured and included in the TQF. TQF qualifications are published in the Official Journal on approval by the [TQF Coordination Board](#). Quality assurance principles are modelled on those of the European Qualifications Framework and all diplomas, certificates and Vocational Qualifications Certificates issued in Turkey must meet these criteria (for more details, see:

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/quality-assurance-87\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/quality-assurance-87_en)).

- **Work-based learning**

Turkey has promoted employer engagement and apprenticeships at national and local levels. Turkey is a member of the European Alliance for Apprenticeship (EaA), and a member and active player of the Global Apprenticeships Network (GAN). The latter was founded with the aim of promoting work-based training and improving the status of apprenticeship programmes (GAN TURKEY <https://ganturkiye.org/en/about-us/>). Turkey is represented by a large number of member companies and led by the Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations (TİSK). GAN acts through national networks, which allows them to quickly disseminate innovative ideas and best practices on apprenticeships. It also enables advice and assistance to be tailored to the national regulatory framework.

Work-based learning (WBL) is a key part of the Turkish VET system. According to the age of the student and type of VET institution, this ranges from holiday-period internships, to in-company training periods lasting three days per week, to full-time training in the company. As an increasing number of students in Turkey participate in VET programmes, improving VET quality has been a high priority for successive administrations. The OECD "Turkey Education Policy Outlook", 2020 provides a thorough analysis of the Turkey VET system <https://www.oecd.org/education/policy-outlook/country-profile-Turkey-2020.pdf>, including the WBL system. Turkey's policy efforts in the VET sector can be grouped

into four key areas: 1. Strengthening collaboration with employers to improve transitions to the labour market. Efforts include the School Protectorate Project (2016), which has the aim of linking all vocational and technical secondary education institutions to at least one sector organisation.

The current administration (2019) has identified three key, ongoing and interrelated challenges for the sector: 1) VET programmes disproportionately serve low-skilled or disadvantaged students, exacerbating their perceived low status; 2) collaboration with the private sector needs to be further developed, and 3) despite relatively good employment rates for vocational students, the mismatch in the transition to the labour market is high.

According to the same OECD report, a revised co-operation model (2019) requires private sector representatives to collaborate on curriculum updates, provide students with work-based learning, regularly provide teachers with work-based training, offer scholarships and prioritise students for employment. A leading example in the sector is the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, which aims to establish 189 new VET schools between 2020 and 2023, in addition to the 200 already in place. Schools and hotels are matched, with students performing their skills training in the hotel. Another example is the co-operation protocol (2019) with the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) and TOBB Economy and Technology University to establish workshops or laboratories in one VET institution per province – 81 in total.

Complementing these efforts, Turkey has formed School Administrative Boards of Vocational and Technical Education in all provinces and districts. These Boards bring together representatives of municipal authorities, various professional and sectoral organisations and other public and private institutions. At national level, the Vocational and Technical Education School Board of Directors (2016) oversees and steers the provincial boards. Turkey conducted a VET mapping study (2019) to assess, at provincial level, the capacities, employment opportunities and future investment plans of the sectors, as well as current VET provision. This study will inform the future provision that will be adapted accordingly. Finally, Turkey provided financial incentives for the establishment of private VET institutions (see “Funding”, OECD 2020).

The relevant Regulation on Secondary Education, revised in 2017, introduced the concept of ‘mastership’ (apprenticeship) education within the scope of compulsory education. To support the education-business cooperation, the MoNE established integrated online e-platforms, such as the *Turkish VET Map* ([meslekiegitimharitasi.meb.gov.tr](http://meslekiegitimharitasi.meb.gov.tr)) and the *My Job My Life platform* ([meslegimhayatim.meb.gov.tr](http://meslegimhayatim.meb.gov.tr)). (OECD,2020).

According to an ETF report (2021), WBL is provided by Vocational and Technical Anatolian High Schools (Grade 12), Vocational Education Centres and Vocational Open Education High Schools. The number of students in WBL for the 2019/2020 school year period totalled 1 125 308 (506 006 females and 619 302 males). This included 911 858 students from Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School (Grade 12), of which 452 454 were female and 459 404 male. 159 506 WBL students came from Vocational Education Centres of which 28 302 were female and 131 204 male. WBL students from Vocational Open Education High Schools totalled 53 944 students, of which 25 250 were female and 28 694 male (ETF, 2021).

- **Digital education and skills**

The development of digital skills for students and teachers in Turkey has been the focal point of several policy documents even before Covid-19. The key policy document is the MoNE’s Education Vision 2023. Covid-19 has pushed this subject to the fore, and all stakeholders acknowledge the vital importance of digital skills and competences. In the Education Vision 2023, under ‘Digital content and skills-backed transformation of the learning process’, two main goals are stated: (1) An ecosystem will be created for the development of digital contents and skills’, and (2) ‘Content will be developed, and teachers will be trained for the development of digital skills.

At the outset of the pandemic, the MoNE put in place a series of policy actions to maintain education services. When schools closed on 17 March 2020, Turkey could rely on a strengthened distance education environment to provide teachers, students, and parents with an extensive variety of solutions for pedagogical continuity.

The MoNE's Directorate-General for Innovation and Educational Technologies fully rolled out the Educational Information Network (EBA, <http://www.eba.gov.tr/eicerik>). EBA is an online social education platform offering digital educational materials for free use by students at any time and from any place, ensuring the integration of technology into education. It provides videos, educational software and educational games. This ensures education also outside school walls.

EBA continues to evolve by delivering reliable digital educational content tailored to each class level and by following innovations in education and technology. EBA is enriched with digital content provided by leading education firms in the field in Turkey and worldwide ([EBA](#), [Canlı Ders](#), [EBATV](#), [Akademik Destek](#), [Mesleki Gelişim](#), [Eğitim Bilişim Ağı](#)). International organisations are studying its content and massive outreach. Responding to the pandemic and looking beyond, the World Bank signed a USD 160 million (EUR 43.8 million) loan to invest in innovation, digitalisation and outreach to all students. The deployed funds and innovative measures helped to immediately cover all classes from primary to secondary education, including VET. They included a package of academic, social and psychological support delivered through online teaching, radio, television, and other media.

In 2020-2021, Turkey piloted the EU "Self-reflection on Effective Learning by Fostering the use of Innovative Education" (SELFIE) tool for WBL. Assessments are ongoing on how these tools can be embedded in the EBA platform. For detailed developments and outcomes, see: [Digital skills & learning](#) ; [Innovative teaching and learning](#) ; [Promoting innovative teaching and learning](#) ; [When the tune changes, so does the dance! | Open Space \(europa.eu\)](#).

The pandemic affected education staff in many aspects of their work. One of the main challenges, as the MoNE assessments in 2020/2021 have shown, is the fact that education staff experienced a lack of training in digital skills, digital pedagogy and IT tools already before the crisis. Urgent action is needed for teachers, academics, and other education staff in relation to the use of ICT tools, digital technologies and media to foster inclusion in education.

The pandemic affected some groups and individuals more than others, hitting the most vulnerable the hardest (<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2021-health>). The existing social inequalities are magnified, amongst others due to a lack of appropriate access to digital courses for learners and availability of parents/carers to support them. While remote teaching during the pandemic exposed many systemic deficiencies, respondents argue that innovative technologies could also be of significant help in implementing inclusive education.

- **Donor support for education and VET for young people and adults**

Skills development is included in all IPA funded education managed by the relevant Turkish institutions in cooperation with the MoNE and the Ministry of Labour, Social Services and Family (MoLSSF) (<https://www.avrupa.info.tr/en/how-ipa-implemented-24>).

Some key ongoing EU-funded technical assistance projects include support for the Turkish Qualifications System and Framework Operation (TUYEP), the "Human Resource Development through VET" project and the Improving the Quality of VET in Turkey (IQVET) Project III, focusing on Sectorial Centre of VET Excellence for VET teachers.

In 2021, consultations have started on IPA III HRD projects.

In September 2021, the European Commission approved EUR 149.6 million as funding from the EU budget to support the most vulnerable people of the approximately 3.7 million Syrian refugees in

Turkey. The purpose of the budget amendment is to continue providing support to refugees and host communities in Turkey, which is currently the country with the largest refugee population in the world. It allows the EU to continue its programme for providing multi-purpose cash assistance to refugees – the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN). The ESSN is the biggest humanitarian programme in the EU history. It provides 1.8 million refugees in Turkey with monthly cash transfers to cover essential needs such as rent, transport, bills, food, and medicine.

Furthermore, Turkey participates in many EU programmes. EU-funded projects continue to be a backbone of the EU and Turkey relations. Such programmes are highly valued, and their benefits are widely recognised<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.avrupa.info.tr/en/pr/humanitarian-support-refugees-turkey-council-approves-2021-eu-budget-amendment-10677>

## 3. LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

### 3.1 Trends and challenges

- **Labour market and employment challenges in general**

While there has been progress in creating quality jobs over the past 15 years, bringing with it major gains in well-being, challenges remain in the labour market. The labour force participation of women is still very low October (OECD, 2021). High legal employment costs, including one of the OECD's highest minimum-to median-wage ratios and some of the most restrictive permanent and temporary employment regulations, and an expensive severance system, foster informality. According to the same OECD report, the pandemic has exacerbated structural challenges related to high unemployment, low labour force participation and widespread informality. The crisis has hit the informal sector workers and the self-employed the hardest because they are concentrated in labour- and contact-intensive activities where physical distancing is hard to apply. These workers are also excluded from employment-related social safety nets.

Turkey entered the pandemic with one of the highest unemployment rates among the OECD countries. On the other hand, the country was able to limit the number of redundancies through multiple income subsidies and other forms of assistance for businesses and employees. The pandemic, however, is not over yet. Moving forward, Turkey has to balance focusing on income substitution programmes while expanding available financial support, especially support to small and medium enterprises. While this may not be an easy task, it is crucial to keep unemployment levels in the country at acceptable levels (Gentilini, U. (2020)).

The pandemic hit informal sector workers and self-employed people the hardest because they are concentrated in labour- and contact-intensive activities where physical distancing is hard to apply. They are also excluded from employment-related social safety nets. The employment rate for the 20-64 age group decreased from 53.8% in 2019 to 51% in 2020, for males from 73.2% to 70.1% and for females from 34.4 % to 32%. It is noticeable that COVID affected women more (ETF collected data). The significant impact of the pandemic is reflected in labour force participation (activity rate) with significant decreases for the age group 15+ both for males and females.

According to the OECD Economic Surveys Turkey January 2021 <sup>6</sup>, the number of jobs decreased strongly after both the 2018 financial turmoil and the COVID-19 shock (OECD,2021). The pandemic exacerbated structural challenges related to high unemployment, low labour force participation and widespread informality.

According to the above-mentioned OECD Turkey Economic Surveys (January 2021, pg. 11), '*...the pandemic exacerbated structural challenges related to high unemployment, low labour force participation and widespread informality. The crisis has hit the informal sector workers and the self-employed the hardest because they are concentrated in labour- and contact-intensive activities where physical distancing is hard to apply. They are also excluded from employment-related social safety nets. Despite a strong increase in women's labour force participation, backed by myriad policy initiatives (which grew from 23% in 2007 to 34% in 2019, before declining to 32% in August 2020, against 70% for men) most women stay inactive, or work as unpaid family workers.*' One of the causes of the low labour force participation of women, is the (inadequate) provision and quality of early child education. (OECD,2021).

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/economy/surveys/TURKEY-2021-OECD-economic-survey-overview.pdf>

High legal employment costs, including one of the OECD's highest minimum-to median-wage ratios and some of the most restrictive permanent and temporary employment regulations, and an expensive severance system, foster informality. They impede a more efficient allocation of resources towards the narrow but gradually growing share of fully formal firms and higher technology start-ups. (OECD Economic Review: Turkey 2021).

The Turkish Government Employment Agency (İŞKUR), [iskur.gov.tr](http://iskur.gov.tr), conducts labour market demand analysis annually. There has been considerable support from the EU's Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA funding). The results of the latest review, 2020 (it has been done annually in recent years) confirm the increasing demand for software developers, coders, ICT experts, data processors, AI engineers, robotics specialists, biomedical engineers, industrial automation technicians, hybrid vehicle experts, mechatronics engineers/technicians, drone operators, etc. (İŞKUR, 2021).

- **Employment**

Total number of jobs (formal and informal) contracted by 2.4 million workers between May 2019 and May 2020. The pandemic led to a large-scale exit from the labour market, which has both a short- and long-term impact. By May 2020, the economy had lost 2.6 million jobs (9.2 percent of total employment) relative to the level observed a year before. While labour markets staged a partial recovery over the year, employment remained down by 3.9 percent in November 2020 compared to a year earlier. The contraction of employment in the non-agriculture sector was 3.2 percent, whilst job losses were more evident in the agriculture sector with a 7.4 percent contraction compared to a year earlier. The bulk of job losses were in the services sector, where many jobs are informal. Informal jobs continue to prevail amongst approximately 30 percent of the Turkish population, particularly in the agricultural sector. The labour force fell sharply to 30.6 million people in June 2020, but then reversed some of its losses and rose to 31.1 million in November thanks to the easing of restrictions in 2020 (OECD,2021).

The labour force remains below the pre-pandemic level (around 1 million below the level of end-2019), with more than 50 percent of the losses borne by females. This translated to a drop in labour force participation to below 50 percent, close to its 2013 level. Pre-existing labour market vulnerabilities were exacerbated, with female, lower-income, informal and unskilled workers the worst-affected. Initial labour market losses were unevenly distributed across the population. Most of the employment contraction was felt by informal workers, the lower-skilled, females and youth under 34 – groups that have traditionally experienced more limited employability and job quality. The job recovery over the latter part of 2020 thus benefitted much less those groups that were hit the hardest. For instance, as of November 2020, employment among unskilled workers remained 9.5 percent lower than the year before, whereas it had reverted to pre-pandemic levels for medium- and highly skilled workers. A similar unequal pattern in the employment recovery has been observed for women, youth, and informal workers. Similar disparities can be seen in exits from the labour force altogether (OECD,2021).

- **Unemployment**

The unemployment rate among young people (22.1%) was high in 2019 compared to the previous four years. Youth employment rate is another important economic indicator that increased from 2016 to 2019 by approximately 7%. Moreover, employment rate of young men (54%) is nearly twice as much as young women (28%).

The increase in the number of individuals unemployed for 12 months or more remains relatively limited in Turkey. Based on OECD data, Turkey already had the third highest unemployment rate among OECD countries right before the COVID-19 pandemic hit most countries in February 2020 (OECD 2021). Turkey's unemployment rate in February 2020 was 12.6 percent; the only countries with higher unemployment rates were Greece at 15.9 and Spain 13.50 percent. The OECD average in February 2020 was at 5.21 percent, less than half of Turkey's unemployment rate.

In the fourth quarter of 2020, less than a year had passed since the onset of the pandemic, hence the long-term unemployed data do not yet reflect its impact. Indeed, Turkey saw a declining proportion of the labour force with unemployment periods lasting longer than one year. This, however, likely results from individuals with longer unemployment periods becoming discouraged and abandoning job searching considering the additional hurdles created by the pandemic and the suspension of mutual obligations in Turkey.

Based on the most updated assessments/reports done by the OECD on Turkey in 2021 (OECD, 2021), the government has been advised to act on reducing the cost of employment, particularly for the low skilled, to support job creation in the formal sector. This could be done, for example, by keeping the official minimum wage below average productivity gains for a while, allowing regional differentiation of the minimum wage through local consultations between government, employer and employee representatives and enterprise-level collective agreements.

In addition, reducing social security contributions for young and low-skilled workers would help to cushion the pandemic-induced unemployment shock on the more vulnerable, and in the medium term can be financed through an increase in the tax base. Informality is to a significant extent related to weak skills. Recent large refugee inflows have added to the challenge. Employment protection rules for both permanent and temporary workers should be made more flexible, for instance, by reforming the severance compensation regime and making fixed-term contracts more widely available for all workers, but without compromising health insurance and pension entitlements. Such increased flexibility calls however for more effective social protection for those out-of-work and more reliable public funding for retraining and job searching.

- **Statistical data collection and labour market information**

Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) – TÜİK (<https://www.tuik.gov.tr/Home/Index>) is a very well-developed institution with full capacity which provide data to all the European and international organisations. The most updated data are published quarterly. The most recent data of September 2021, broadly defined unemployment at 21.9% in September - Evrensel.

The Ministry of National Education and Ministry of Labour, Social Services and Family have a well-established evaluation and monitoring system and cooperate with the of labour and education institutions. They collect data, manage, and disseminate administrative datasets on employment, unemployment, and education. The labour market and skills information system are well complemented by developed regular skills demand analyses, graduate tracking, etc.

- **Poverty**

The strong rebound in economic growth, the labour market, and household income is expected to reduce the poverty rate from 12.2 percent in 2020 to 11.6 percent in 2021. The pandemic has deepened gender gaps and increased youth unemployment and the poverty rate. The risk of inequalities has also been increasing. The pandemic is expected to have severely negative consequences for Turkey, further weakening economic and social gains.

There is a wealth of analysis and data on the extent that jobs in different sectors of Turkey are vulnerable to the pandemic considering both effects specific to the pandemic, and sector- and employments specific vulnerabilities. They identify and analyse even specific sectors that are the most suitable for working from home.

Turkey has developed an Employment Vulnerability Index. Interestingly and importantly, it must be noted that all the analysis finds that only 10 percent of workers in Turkey can work from home. Employment vulnerability is highest among textile and apparel, accommodation and food, and leather sectors, while jobs in ICT and finance are the least vulnerable. They find that overall, around 7 million workers are at risk of losing their jobs due to the economic impacts of COVID-19. For very detailed information, the most important and recent analysis and assessments are in: Jobs at risk in Turkey:

Identifying the impact of COVID-19 (A thorough and in-depth information on the institutional set up, strategies and legal framework can be retrieved from Turkey', YouthBankHub study prepared as part of the Western Balkan and Turkey (WB&T) for EmploYouth project, funded by the European Union, December 2020. For additional detailed analyses and data:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/turkey/overview#1>

## 3.2 Employment policy and institutional setting

Strategy and legal framework in the employment policy field in Turkey is framed by the President of Turkey, and government policies for employment and social inclusion. The system is governed by a multi-institutional set up: the Constitution and Presidential Governance, Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, Ministry of Youth and Sports, National Youth Council and by many strategic documents, such as the: Presidential Annual Program, New Economy Program (Medium Term Program) 2020-2022, Eleventh Development Plan and Priorities (2019-2023), National Employment Strategy (2014-2023), and National Youth Strategy (2021-2023), Plans, Policies and Measures for National Employment Service (İŞKUR).

**The Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR)** was established under the **Law of 25/06/2003 and No 4904** to facilitate activities relating to protection, improvement, generalisation of employment, and prevention of unemployment and to provide unemployment insurance services. İSKUR plays a leading role in upgrading the skills of jobseekers and facilitating their access to productive employment by providing vocational training and other employment support services. İSKUR currently provides many programmes to help workers access jobs through on-the-job training support (wage subsidies) and other subsidised forms of employment, including hiring subsidies (covering social security premiums and other non-wage costs for new workers). Apart from financial support measures, there are also programmes that encourage links between enterprises and research universities in activities such as training, skills exchange programmes, and joint ventures.

Turkey introduced a new regulation on teleworking in March 2021 (OECD), which clarified the legal framework around its practice. The generalised experiment in mass teleworking has made one issue particularly salient to regulators and the public, namely the risk of work intensification, related to a reduced work-life balance and blurring of the boundaries between working and non-working times and spaces linked to the introduction of work.

- **Initiatives to boost employment**

The public employment services agency (İSKUR) is the main public entity charged with placing workers in employment in Turkey. İSKUR services range from basic guidance to worker placement. Given its centrality to job placement, and resources spent on supporting job seekers, it is important to consistently improve the effectiveness of how İSKUR delivers services. Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of İSKUR is most salient in a downturn economy when services and resources required are likely to exceed existing capacities for quality service delivery. There have been big efforts to improve service delivery by introducing tools that aid job counsellors in their work.

There has been significant EU and World Bank support to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of İSKUR to boost employment. The capacities for improving service delivery have been boosted by tools that aid job counsellors in their work, e.g. a profiling system that uses data-driven information to support decisions and facilitates a path to formal employment; Labour Market Information System (LMIS) (or a workforce dashboard) to provide guidance to job seekers about the jobs, skills and occupations in demand but also to guide prospective job-seekers (in the education system) to use the LMIS to make training and career-related decisions, and many other tools.

There are many initiatives to boost employment in Turkey. There is an extensive list of initiatives run by the government and its ministries, agencies, and private sector including the development partners. Turkey started implementing labour market programmes targeting income and job protection soon after the country's first recorded case of COVID-19 on 11 March (Gentilini, U. (2020)), "Weekly social protection links: 04 September 2020").

The largest programme that was expanded during 2020 is the “Reduced hours employment programme” (kisa calisma odenegi) (ISKUR 2021). Under this programme the government banned lay-offs and began providing subsidies to the private sector firms to supplement employee wages. Private sector employees could decrease their weekly working hours to at least 2/3rd of their full-time employment. In exchange, the government would subsidise participating private sector firms 2/3rd of their employees’ salaries. This way, employees retain their employment during the pandemic, although with reduced income. While initially extended for three months, the programme has been renewed multiple times and is currently valid until February 2021 (Kasap, 2021).

Additionally, in April 2020 the government introduced a new ‘cash assistance’ (nakdi ucret destegi) programme for the employed to target loss of income (ISKUR, 2021). This programme targets those employees who remain officially employed but are furloughed by their employer due to lack of income or closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the government provides these employees 50 percent of their original salary. Once again, this programme was renewed multiple times, and is currently active at least until March 2021.

More recently, the Ministry of Trade has also introduced several subsidies for small businesses affected (closed or partially closed) by COVID-19 (Ticaret Bakanligi, 2020). The recently introduced ‘loss of income support’ (gelir kaybi destegi) will provide small businesses with TRY 1 000 (USD 139) for three months, and the ‘rent support’ (kira destegi) will provide small businesses with TRY 750 (USD 104) for three months for rent payments. Finally, the Turkish government has been offering tax breaks and low interest loans through publicly owned banks to firms to help with the pandemic and decrease the number of layoffs.

There are arguably too many incentive programmes offered by the government, imposing a heavy fiscal burden, and only some are effective. There are currently several special loan programmes, interest rate subsidies and credits, and grants of many kinds offered by the Turkish banking system, with support from the government. Many government subsidised programmes are targeted to firms under some criteria. They are implemented through various Development Banks (subsidised lending), and institutions such as KOSGEB and TUBITAK (direct grants). Apart from subsidised loans and grants, there are other types of public incentives, such as tax breaks, preferential credit, and public procurement advantages. These types of support to firms are often meant to be for investments in technology, R&D (Research & Development), and innovation; but also, to support employment creation/retention (World Bank, 2019).

- **Initiatives to increase the capacity of the public employment services**

[The Turkish Employment Agency \(İŞKUR\)](#) was established under the Law of 25/06/2003 and No 4904 to facilitate activities relating to protection, improvement, generalisation of employment, and prevention of unemployment and to provide unemployment insurance services. İŞKUR plays a leading role in upgrading the skills of jobseekers and facilitating their access to productive employment by providing vocational training and other employment support services.

Institutional Capacity and Digital Maturity Assessment of İŞKUR is supported by Turkey UNDP, [An Important Step in Developing İŞKUR’s Institutional Capacity \(undp.org\)](#).

- **Donor support to the employment policy field**

Turkey is the largest beneficiary of EU support among the candidate countries to the European Union. The European Union supports the Turkey IPA II (2014-2020), addressing three out of the five main targets of Europe 2020 strategy: increasing employment rates, reducing school dropout levels by investing in education, and reducing poverty and social exclusion. Priority projects focus on gender equality, boosting the participation of women in the labour market and the fight against poverty and social exclusion. The IPA II (2014-2020), with a total funding of EUR 291.6. All the EU funding is administered by Operating Structure for Human Resources Development Programme.

EU Technical Assistant Programme Future of Work- A Future of Work that Works for Women, Gender Equality in the Working Life.

The EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) is a leading institutional investor in Turkey and run many big projects co financed with the Turkish government and private sector. To date, it has invested EUR 14 billion in the country through 351 projects, with 95 per cent of those in the private sector. The Bank's portfolio of EUR 7 billion in Turkey is the largest of the 38 economies in which the EBRD invests. [EBRD adopts first Digital Approach](#) , starting from November 2021, Turkey's Akbank receives USD 50 million EBRD loan to finance women-led firms and provide skills.

There are many initiatives to boost employment in Turkey. There is a thorough list of initiatives run by the government and its ministries, agencies, private sector including the development partners being them EU, EBRD, WORLD BANK, other financial institutions. All the initiatives can be found on the website of the respective ministries and the organisations working closely with the Turkey public and private institutions.

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# STATISTICAL ANNEX, REFERENCES, ACRONYMS - TURKEY

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

	Indicator	2010	2015	2019	2020	
1	Total Population (,000) <sup>e</sup>	72,327.0	78,529.4	83,429.6	84,339.1	
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15-24, %) <sup>c (1)</sup>	26.3	24.9	24.2	24.0	
3	GDP growth rate (%)	8.4	6.1	0.9	1.8	
4	GDP by sector (%)	Agriculture added value	9.0	6.9	6.4	6.6
		Industry added value	24.5	27.8	27.2	27.8
		Services added value	54.5	53.5	56.5	54.6
5	Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
6	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure)	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
7	Adult literacy (%)	92.7	95.6	96.2 (2017)	M.D.	
8	Educational attainment of adult population (aged 25-64 or 15+) (%)	Low <sup>(2)</sup>	63.7	58.3	53.1	50.4
		Medium <sup>(3)</sup>	20.4	20.4	21.6	22.1
		High <sup>(4)</sup>	15.9	21.3	25.4	27.5
9	Early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) (%)	Total	43.1	36.4	28.7	26.7
		Male	37.8	35.0	28.9	27.5
		Female	47.9	37.6	28.6	25.8
10	Gross enrolment ratio in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	72.5	106.4	105.0 (2018)	M.D.	
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	45.1	49.0	46.0 (2018)	M.D.	
12	Tertiary education attainment (aged 30-34) (%)	16.8	26.5	34.1	36.2	
13	Participation in training/lifelong	Total	2.9	5.5	5.7	5.8
		Male	3.1	5.6	5.7	6

	learning (age group 25-64) by sex (%)	Female	2.8	5.3	5.7	5.5
	Participation in training/lifelong learning (age group 25-64) by education (%)	Low <sup>(2)</sup>	1.3	2.7	2.8	2.7
		Medium <sup>(3)</sup>	6.9	8.6	7.6	7.6
		High <sup>(4)</sup>	7.4	12.9	12.4	12.5
	Participation in training/lifelong learning (age group 25-64) by working status (%)	Inactive	2.0	3.5	3.6	3.5
		Employed	3.5	6.5	6.6	7.1
		Unemployed	5.4	9.0	9.7	9.4
14	Low achievement in reading, mathematics and science – PISA (%)	Reading	21.6 (2012)	40.0	26.1 (2018)	N.A.
		Mathematics	42.0 (2012)	51.4	36.7 (2018)	N.A.
		Science	26.4 (2012)	44.5	25.2 (2018)	N.A.
15	Activity rate (aged 15+) (%)	Total	<b>48.1</b>	<b>51.2</b>	<b>52.9</b>	49.3
		Male	69.9	71.6	72.0	68.2
		Female	27.1	31.4	34.3	30.8
16	Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>C</sup>	Total	51.9	48.8	47.1	50.7
		Male	30.1	28.4	28.0	31.8
		Female	72.9	68.6	65.7	69.2
17	Employment rate (aged 15+) (%)	Total	<b>43.0</b>	<b>46.0</b>	<b>45.7</b>	42.8
		Male	62.7	65.0	63.1	59.8
		Female	24.0	27.5	28.7	26.3
18	Employment rate by educational attainment (% aged 15+) <sup>(5)</sup>	Low <sup>(2)</sup>	39.6	41.6	40.7	37.3
		Medium <sup>(3)</sup>	49.4	52.8	50.3	47.2
		High <sup>(4)</sup>	70.6	71.5	69.0	66.0
19	Employment by sector (%) <sup>C</sup>	Agriculture	23.7	20.4	18.1	17.6
		Industry	26.2	27.2	25.3	26.2
		Services	50.1	52.4	56.6	56.2
20	Incidence of self-employment (%)		39.1	32.9	31.5	30.2
21	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%) <sup>C</sup>		33.8	28.4	27.1	25.7
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(5)</sup>	Total	10.7	10.3	13.7	13.2
		Male	10.4	9.2	12.4	12.4

		Female	11.4	12.6	16.5	14.9
23	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(5)</sup>	Low <sup>(2)</sup>	10.2	9.7	13.0	12.6
		Medium <sup>(3)</sup>	13.1	11.3	15.6	15.0
		High <sup>(4)</sup>	9.8	10.8	13.5	12.6
24	Long-term unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%) <sup>(5)</sup>		2.8	2.2	3.2	3.3
25	Youth unemployment rate (aged 15-24) (%)	Total	19.7	18.5	25.2	25.1
		Male	19.2	16.5	22.4	22.5
		Female	20.7	22.2	30.3	29.9
26	Proportion of people aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	Total	32.3	23.9	26.0	28.3
		Male	19.6	14.1	18.3	21.2
		Female	44.4	33.7	34.0	35.7

Last update: September 2021

**Sources:**

**Indicators** 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 – Eurostat

**Indicators** 14 – OECD,

**Indicators** 7, 10, 11 – UNESCO, Institute for Statistics

**Indicators** 1, 2, 3, 4 – The World Bank, World Development Indicators database

**Notes:**

<sup>(1)</sup> The denominator corresponds to the age 15-64

<sup>(2)</sup> Low - primary and basic general education

<sup>(3)</sup> Medium - general secondary and vocational-technical education

<sup>(4)</sup> High - secondary special and higher education

<sup>(5)</sup> Age group 15-74

**Legend:**

e = estimated

c = calculated

N.A. = Not Applicable

M.D. = Missing Data

## ANNEX: DEFINITIONS OF INDICATORS

	Description	Definition
1	Total population ('000)	The total population is estimated as the number of people having their usual residence in a country on 1 January of the respective year. When information on the usually resident population is not available, countries may report legal or registered residents.
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15–24) (%)	This is the ratio of the youth population (aged 15–24) to the working-age population, usually aged 15–64 (74)/15+.
3	GDP growth rate (%)	Annual percentage growth rate of GDP at market prices based on constant local currency. Aggregates are based on constant 2010 U.S. dollars. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources.
4	GDP by sector (%)	The share of value added from Agriculture, Industry and Services. Agriculture corresponds to ISIC divisions 1–5 and includes forestry, hunting, and fishing, as well as cultivation of crops and livestock production. Value added is the net output of a sector after adding up all outputs and subtracting intermediate inputs. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or depletion and degradation of natural resources. The origin of value added is determined by the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), revision 3 or 4.
5	Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)	Public expenditure on education expressed as a percentage of GDP. Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
6	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure)	Public expenditure on education expressed as a percentage of total public expenditure. Generally, the public sector funds education either by directly bearing the current and capital expenses of educational institutions, or by supporting students and their families with scholarships and public loans as well as by transferring public subsidies for educational activities to private firms or non-profit organisations (transfer to private households and enterprises). Both types of transactions together are reported as total public expenditure on education.
7	Adult literacy (%)	Adult literacy is the percentage of the population aged 15 years and over who can both read and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life, and understand it. Generally, 'literacy' also encompasses 'numeracy' – the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations.

	Description	Definition
8	Educational attainment of adult population (25–64 or aged 15+) (%)	Educational attainment refers to the highest educational level achieved by individuals expressed as a percentage of all persons in that age group.  This is usually measured in terms of the highest educational programme successfully completed, which is typically certified by a recognised qualification. Recognised intermediate qualifications are classified at a lower level than the programme itself.
9	Early leavers from education and training (age group 18–24) (%)	Early leavers from education and training are defined as the percentage of the population aged 18–24 with at most lower secondary education who were not in further education or training during the four weeks preceding the survey. Lower secondary education refers to ISCED 1997 levels 0–2 and 3C short (i.e. programmes lasting under two years) for data up to 2013 and to ISCED 2011 levels 0–2 for data from 2014 onwards.
10	Gross enrolment rates in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	Number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education.
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	Total number of students enrolled in vocational programmes at a given level of education (in this case, upper secondary), expressed as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled in all programmes (vocational and general) at that level.
12	Tertiary education attainment (aged 30–34) (%)	Tertiary attainment is calculated as the percentage of the population aged 30–34 who have successfully completed tertiary studies (e.g. university, higher technical institution). Educational attainment refers to ISCED 1997 level 5–6 up to 2013 and ISCED 2011 level 5–8 from 2014 onwards.
13	Participation in training/lifelong learning (age group 25–64) (%)	Participants in lifelong learning refers to persons aged 25–64 who stated that they received education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator is the total population of the same age group, excluding those who did not answer the question on participation in education and training. The information collected relates to all education or training, whether or not it is relevant to the respondent's current or possible future job. If a different reference period is used, this should be indicated.
14	Low achievement in reading, maths and science – PISA (%)	Low achievers are the 15-year-olds who are failing to reach level 2 on the PISA scale for reading, mathematics and science.
15	Activity rate (aged 15+) (%)	The activity rate is calculated by dividing the active population by the population of the same age group. The active population (also called 'labour force') is defined as the sum of employed and unemployed people. The inactive population consists of all people who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.
16	Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%)	The inactivity/out of the labour force rate is calculated by dividing the inactive population by the population of the same age group. The inactive population consists of all people who are classified as neither employed nor unemployed.
17	Employment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed people by the population of the same age group. Employed people are all people who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated.
18	Employment rate by educational attainment (% aged 15+)	The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed persons by the population of the same age group.

	Description	Definition
		<p>Employed persons are all persons who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference period or were temporarily absent from such work. If a different age group is used, this should be indicated.</p> <p>Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: Low (ISCED level 0–2), Medium (ISCED level 3–4) and High (ISCED 1997 level 5–6, and ISCED 2011 level 5–8).</p>
19	Employment by sector (%)	This indicator provides information on the relative importance of different economic activities with regard to employment. Data are presented by broad branches of economic activity (i.e. Agriculture/Industry/Services) based on the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC). In Europe, the NACE classification is consistent with ISIC.
20	Incidence of self-employment (%)	The incidence of self-employment is expressed by the self-employed (i.e. employers + own-account workers + contributing family workers) as a proportion of the total employed.
21	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%)	The incidence of vulnerable employment is expressed by the own-account workers and contributing family workers as a proportion of the total employed.
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed people comprise those aged 15–64 or 15+ who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months).
23	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%)	The unemployment rate represents unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people who are employed or unemployed. Unemployed people comprise those aged 15–64 or 15+ who were without work during the reference week; are currently available for work (were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); are actively seeking work (had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment, or had found a job to start later (within a period of, at most, three months)). Educational levels refer to the highest educational level successfully completed. Three levels are considered: Low (ISCED level 0–2), Medium (ISCED level 3–4) and High (ISCED 1997 level 5–6, and ISCED 2011 level 5–8)
24	Long-term unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%)	The long-term unemployment rate is the share of people in the total active population who have been unemployed for 12 months or more, expressed as a percentage. The duration of unemployment is defined as the duration of a search for a job or as the period of time since the last job was held (if this period is shorter than the duration of the search for a job).
25	Youth unemployment rate (aged 15–24) (%)	The youth unemployment ratio is calculated by dividing the number of unemployed people aged 15–24 by the total population of the same age group.

	Description	Definition
26	Proportion of people aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	The indicator provides information on young people aged 15–24 who meet the following two conditions: first, they are not employed (i.e. unemployed or inactive according to the ILO definition); and second, they have not received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. Data are expressed as a percentage of the total population of the same age group and gender, excluding the respondents who have not answered the question on participation in education and training.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BCSD	Turkey-Business Council for Sustainable Development Turkey
Dig	Comp European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens
EaFA	European Alliance for Apprenticeship
EBA	Turkey's digital education platform/ Türk Milli Eğitim Sistemi
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ESNN	Emergency Social Safety Net
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
ICT	Information and communication technology
İŞKUR	Turkish Employment Agency
IT	Information technology
JRC	Joint Research Centre (European Commission's science and knowledge service)
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MÜSIAD	- Turkey's Independent Industrialists and Businesspersons Association
MoNE	-Ministry of National Education (Turkey)
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIAAC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SELFIE	Self-reflection on effective learning by fostering the use of innovative educational technologies [tool]
SELFIE WBL	SELFIE [tool] for work-based learning
SSDE	Safe Schooling and Distance Education Project
SuTP	Syrian under Temporary Protection
TFP	Total Factor Productivity
TIMMS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TOBB	- The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB)
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
İŞKUR	Turkish Employment Agency
TUIK	Agency of Statistics under the Republic of Turkey
TURKONFED	- Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation

TUSIAD- Turkish Industry & Business Association  
TUIK Agency of Statistics under the Republic of Turkey  
UN United Nations  
VTAH Vocational and Technical Anatolian High Schools  
VTC Vocational Training Centres (). WB  
VET Vocational education and training  
WBL Work-based learning

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