

# Turkey

## Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Turkey has been a member of ILO-IPEC since 1992.<sup>3636</sup> The Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MLSS) established a Child Labor Unit (CLU) that chairs an interagency advisory committee, comprising representatives of government ministries, NGOs, universities, and other United Nations agencies.<sup>3637</sup> The CLU is also responsible for making and promoting child labor laws, launching new programs, and raising awareness with the public.<sup>3638</sup> Since 1992 there have been 101 action programs launched by ILO-IPEC in cooperation with the government in an effort to combat child labor. Eleven of these action programs are ongoing. The ILO-IPEC country program in Turkey has been extended until 2006.<sup>3639</sup> The CLU has contributed to the preparation of the child labor chapter in the Eighth Five-Year Development Plan of Turkey. This plan commits the government to respond to child labor and promote policies designed to combat child labor by increasing family income, providing social welfare, and reducing education costs for the poor.<sup>3640</sup> The Apprenticeship Education Center of the Ministry of National Education (MONE), in conjunction with UNICEF, provides vocational training to 250,000 children working in the industrial sector.<sup>3641</sup>

The World Bank and UNICEF have coordinated a number of education programs with MONE.<sup>3642</sup> UNICEF conducted several projects aimed at promoting universal education, including a Basic Education Pilot Project from 1996-1998.<sup>3643</sup> In 2002, the World Bank approved a USD 300

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<sup>3636</sup> Turkey was one of the six original member countries of ILO-IPEC. ILO-IPEC, *All About IPEC: Programme Countries*, [online] [cited August 22, 2002]; available from [http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/about/countries/t\\_country.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/about/countries/t_country.htm).

<sup>3637</sup> The Embassy of Turkey in Washington, D.C. submitted a report to USDOL. See Embassy of Turkey, *The Implemented Programs and Measures Taken Against Child Labour in Turkey*, Washington, D.C., 2001, 5-7.

<sup>3638</sup> Ibid. See also ILO-IPEC, *IPEC in Action: Turkey*, [online] 2000 [cited August 30, 2002]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/publ/field/europe/index.htm>.

<sup>3639</sup> ILO, *Country Programme: Turkey*, [online] February 11, 2001 [cited August 30, 2002]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/eurpro/ankara/programme/>. For a list of some of the prominent action programs, see ILO-IPEC, *IPEC in Turkey 1998-1999: Overview of the Activities at the Country Level* (Ankara: 2000). The focus of the program is on developing pre-school education as a central component of basic education.

<sup>3640</sup> Embassy of Turkey, *The Implemented Programs and Measures Taken Against Child Labour*, 5.

<sup>3641</sup> UNICEF, *Ministry of National Education Apprenticeship Education Center*, [online] [cited August 30, 2002]; available from [http://www.unicef.org/turkey/u\\_in\\_tr/apprtraining.htm](http://www.unicef.org/turkey/u_in_tr/apprtraining.htm).

<sup>3642</sup> For a brief review of World Bank projects, see the list of education programs in the database at UNICEF, *UNICEF in Turkey*, [online] [cited August 30, 2002]; available from [http://www.unicef.org/turkey/u\\_in\\_tr/index.html#crc](http://www.unicef.org/turkey/u_in_tr/index.html#crc). See also World Bank, *Projects, Policies, and Strategies*, [online] 2002 [cited August 30, 2002]; available from <http://www4.worldbank.org/sprojects/Default.asp>.

<sup>3643</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF in Turkey*.

million loan to support the Second Basic Education Project that will improve education through a number of measures, including the construction of new classrooms, provision of education materials, and teacher training.<sup>3644</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, the ILO estimated that 7.8 percent of children ages 10 to 14 years in Turkey were working.<sup>3645</sup> Children work in agriculture, metal work, woodworking, automobile and clothing industries, textiles, leather goods, personal and domestic services,<sup>3646</sup> and automobile repair.<sup>3647</sup> During certain seasons, heavy agricultural workloads prevent children from regularly attending classes.<sup>3648</sup> Street children in the cities of Diyarbakır, Adana, and Istanbul collect trash, pick through garbage at dumpsites, shine shoes, and sell various goods.<sup>3649</sup> Turkey is also a destination and transit country for girls who are trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation from Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria and Georgia.<sup>3650</sup>

Primary education is compulsory for 8 years for children between the ages of 6 and 14 under the Basic Education Act.<sup>3651</sup> Expenses for school, such as uniforms, books, and voluntary

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<sup>3644</sup> World Bank, *World Bank Board Approves \$300 Million Basic Education Loan*, [online] 2002 [cited August 30, 2002]; available from <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf/66d6f5004ed085ca852567d10011a8b8/2b4bbe319ceb563085256bf8006cc3ee?OpenDocument>.

<sup>3645</sup> World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2002* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2002. According to a 1999 survey conducted by the State Institute of Statistics, 4.2% of children ages 6-14 were economically active (511,000) while 27.6 percent (3,329,000) were working at home. Approximately 80 percent of working children were also attending school. Embassy of Turkey, *Policies, Programmes, and Measures Against Child Labour in Turkey*, Washington, D.C., September 6, 2002.

<sup>3646</sup> Government of Turkey and UNICEF, *The Situation of Children and Women in Turkey: An Executive Summary*, [online] 1998 [cited August 30, 2002]; available from [http://www.unicef.org/turkey/c\\_in\\_tr/sa98.htm](http://www.unicef.org/turkey/c_in_tr/sa98.htm). This data is based on a 1994 joint Ministry of Labour and Social Security-IPEC survey as well as a second joint IPEC-Turkish Development Foundation survey.

<sup>3647</sup> Ibid. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2000: Turkey*, Washington, D.C., February 23, 2001, Section 6d [cited December 18, 2002]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/eur/844.htm>. The former study reports that children work in the automobile industry, but the *Country Reports* states automobile repair. The latter seems more likely.

<sup>3648</sup> UNICEF, *State of Turkey's Children: Preliminary Report*, Ankara, December 1999, [cited August 30, 2002]; available from [http://www.unicef.org/turkey/c\\_in\\_tr/sotc.htm](http://www.unicef.org/turkey/c_in_tr/sotc.htm).

<sup>3649</sup> Bahattin Akit, Nuray Karancy, and Aye Gunduz-Hogor, *Turkey Working Street Children in Three Metropolitan Cities: A Rapid Assessment*, ILO, Geneva, October 2001 2001, 4-5.

<sup>3650</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2002: Turkey*, Washington, D.C., June 5, 2002, 103 [cited August 30, 2002]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2002/10682.htm>. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2001: Turkey*, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2002, 1856-64, [cited December 18, 2002]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/eur/8358.htm>. See also Swedish International Development Agency, *Looking Back, Thinking Forward: The Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Agenda for Action Adopted at the First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Stockholm, Sweden on 28 August 1996*, ECPAT International, Bangkok, 2000, 124.

<sup>3651</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF in Turkey*. See also Government of Turkey and UNICEF, *Children and Women in Turkey*. See also UNICEF, *State of Turkey's Children*.

contributions are costs that negatively affect low-income families.<sup>3652</sup> For the period between 1995 and 1999, the gross primary enrollment rate was 86 percent for girls and 98 percent for boys, while the net primary enrollment rate was 82 and 93 percent respectively.<sup>3653</sup> Approximately 99 percent of those children enrolled reach grade five.<sup>3654</sup>

## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Act establishes the minimum age for employment at 15 years, but allows children at least 13 years of age to perform light work that does not harm their health, development, or interfere with their education.<sup>3655</sup> The Labor Law prohibits underground work for children under the age of 18 and precludes children under 16 years from working in heavy and hazardous work.<sup>3656</sup> The minimum age for night work is 18 years.<sup>3657</sup> Before beginning a job, children who are under 18 years of age must undergo a physical examination, which is to be repeated every six months.<sup>3658</sup> Children under 18 years are not permitted to work in bars, coffee houses, dance halls, cabarets, casinos, and public baths.<sup>3659</sup>

The Apprenticeship and Vocational Training Act No. 3308 allows children ages 14 to 18 who have completed the mandatory eight years of education to be employed as apprentices. One day per week is dedicated to training and education, and the annual vacation for children is one month.<sup>3660</sup> Criminal law forbids the sexual exploitation of children.<sup>3661</sup>

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<sup>3652</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF in Turkey*. See also UNICEF, *State of Turkey's Children*.

<sup>3653</sup> UNICEF, *Official Summary: The State of the World's Children 2002: Leadership*, United Nations Publications, New York, 2002, table 4 [cited December 18, 2002]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/sowc02summary/regionalsummaries.html>.

<sup>3654</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3655</sup> Labor Act, Article 67 as cited in Embassy of Turkey, *The Implemented Programs and Measures Taken Against Child Labour*, 1. See also ILO-IPEC, *Turkey Working Street Children in Three Metropolitan Cities: A Rapid Assessment*, ILO, Geneva, November 2001, 24. Also see Fisek, *Turkish Laws on Working Children*, [online] [cited September 2, 2002]; available from <http://www.fisek.org.tr/e020/php>.

<sup>3656</sup> Amendments to Labor Act, Articles 68, 69, and 78 as cited in Fisek, *Turkish Laws on Working Children*. See also ILO-IPEC, *Turkey: A Rapid Assessment*, 24.

<sup>3657</sup> ILO-IPEC, *Turkey: A Rapid Assessment*, 24.

<sup>3658</sup> Article 80 as cited in *Ibid.* See also Fisek, *Turkish Laws on Working Children*.

<sup>3659</sup> See Article 176 of the 1930 General Health Care Act 1593 as cited in Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations and ILO Ankara, *Child Labour in Turkey* (Geneva: ILO Publications Bureau, 1997), 31.

<sup>3660</sup> Apprenticeship and Vocational Training Act 3308 as quoted in *Ibid.*, 29-30. See also Fisek, *Turkish Laws on Working Children*. See also ILO-IPEC, *Turkey: A Rapid Assessment*, 26. See also The Ministry of Labour and Social Security Labour Inspection Board, *Report on the Implementation of Labour Inspection Policy on Child Labour in Turkey*, Ankara, June 2000, 14.

<sup>3661</sup> UNICEF, *State of Turkey's Children*.

The MLSS Labor Inspection Board (BLI) is the government agency responsible for enforcing child labor laws in Turkey.<sup>3662</sup> The MLSS has been unable to effectively enforce many of the child labor laws for a variety of reasons, including inadequate legislation, traditional attitudes, socio-economic factors, and the predominantly informal nature of child labor in Turkey.<sup>3663</sup> Therefore, the BLI has focused on protecting working children by improving their working conditions.<sup>3664</sup>

The Government of Turkey ratified ILO Convention 138 on October 30, 1998, and ILO Convention 182 on August 2, 2001.<sup>3665</sup>

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<sup>3662</sup> The Ministry of Labour and Social Security Labour Inspection Board, *Report on Labour Inspection*, 5. See also Embassy of Turkey, *Policies Against Child Labour in Turkey*, 9. See also Embassy of Turkey, *The Implemented Programs and Measures Taken Against Child Labour*. The Labor Inspection Board is the mechanism within the MLSS that is responsible for enforcing child labor legislation. A project called “Implementation of Labour Inspection Policy on Child Labour in Turkey” was launched in 1995.

<sup>3663</sup> The Ministry of Labour and Social Security Labour Inspection Board, *Report on Labour Inspection*, 3-5.

<sup>3664</sup> Embassy of Turkey, *Policies Against Child Labour in Turkey*, 10. See also Embassy of Turkey, *The Implemented Programs and Measures Taken Against Child Labour*, 9.

<sup>3665</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited September 15, 2002]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.