

Turkey

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

The ILO estimated that 6.7 percent of children between the ages of 10 and 14 years in Turkey were working in 2002.⁴⁰¹⁷ Currently, the government has identified the worst forms of child labor in Turkey as children working in the streets, in hazardous industrial sectors, seasonal agricultural work, domestic service, and rural labor.⁴⁰¹⁸ The majority of children work in agriculture. Children can also be found working in metal work, woodworking, clothing industries, textiles, leather goods, personal and domestic services,⁴⁰¹⁹ automobile repair, furniture making, hotel and catering, and footwear.⁴⁰²⁰ A rapid assessment on working street children in 2001 found that street children in the cities of Diyarbakir, Adana, and Istanbul pick through garbage at dumpsites, shine shoes, and sell various goods, among other activities.⁴⁰²¹ Girls are trafficked to Turkey for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and domestic service from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, and Russia, and through the country to Western European destinations.⁴⁰²²

Under the Basic Education Act, primary education is compulsory for 8 years for children between the ages of 6 and 14.⁴⁰²³ In 2001, the gross primary enrollment rate was 94.5 percent and the net enrollment rate was 87.9.⁴⁰²⁴ Recent primary school attendance rates are unavailable for Turkey. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.⁴⁰²⁵ School

⁴⁰¹⁷ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2004.

⁴⁰¹⁸ ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Turkey - Supporting the Timebound Program for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Turkey (2004-2006)*, project document, TUR/03/P50/USA, Geneva, 2003, 2.

⁴⁰¹⁹ This data is based on a 1994 joint Ministry of Labor and Social Security-IPEC survey as well as a second joint IPEC-Turkish Development Foundation survey. See Government of Turkey and UNICEF, *The Situation of Children and Women in Turkey: An Executive Summary*, [online] 1998 [cited March 18, 2004]; available from <http://www.die.gov.tr/CIN/Sa98.pdf>. See also Ministry of Labor and Social Security Labor Inspection Board, *Report on the Implementation of Labor Inspection Policy on Child Labor in Turkey*, Ankara, June 2000, 3, 26.

⁴⁰²⁰ Government of Turkey and UNICEF, *Situation of Children and Women*. See also Ministry of Labor and Social Security Labor Inspection Board, *Report on the Implementation of Labor Inspection Policy*, 26.

⁴⁰²¹ Bahattin Aksit, Nuray Karanci, and Ayse Gunduz-Hosgor, *Turkey Working Street Children in Three Metropolitan Cities: A Rapid Assessment*, ILO, Geneva, November 2001, 41-42; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/simpoc/turkey/ra/street.pdf>.

⁴⁰²² U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report-2004: Turkey*, June 2004. There is no reliable government data on trafficking of children. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-2003: Turkey*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004, Section 6f; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27869.htm>.

⁴⁰²³ Embassy of Turkey, *The Implemented Programs and Measures Taken Against Child Labor in Turkey*, Washington, D.C., November 9, 2001, 5. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2003: Turkey*, Section 5.

⁴⁰²⁴ The gross primary school enrollment rates are higher for boys than for girls. In 2001, those rates were 98.2 percent and 90.7 percent respectively. The net primary school enrollment rate for both genders was 91 percent. See World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004*.

⁴⁰²⁵ For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

expenses, such as uniforms, books, and voluntary contributions, place an economic strain on low-income families and can impede children's school attendance.⁴⁰²⁶

Children of legal working age employed in small enterprises that are registered with a Ministry of National Education Training Center attend apprenticeship training once a week and the centers are required by law to inspect these workplaces. Apprenticeship programs provide a wide range of occupational training at 346 training centers in 81 cities. An estimated 22.8 percent of working children took advantage of these training opportunities in 2003.⁴⁰²⁷

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

A new Labor Law became effective in June 2003 that establishes the minimum age for employment at 15 years. The law, however, allows children 14 years of age to perform light work that does not interfere with their education, and enables governors in provinces dependent on agriculture to determine the minimum age for work in that sector. Children 15 years old who have completed their education and do not attend school may work up to 7 hours a day, not to exceed 35 hours a week. Children 16 years old may work up to 8 hours a day and up to 40 hours per week. Before beginning a job, children ages 15 to 18 years of age must undergo a physical examination, which is to be repeated every 6 months.⁴⁰²⁸

In 2004, the Ministry of Labor and Social Services (MOLSS) compiled a list of prohibited occupations for children under 15 years old, as well as for children 15 to 18 years old. The MOLSS also published a list of permitted occupations for children through 18 years of age.⁴⁰²⁹ Children under 18 years are not permitted to work in bars, coffee houses, dance halls, cabarets, casinos, or public baths, or to engage in industrial night work. The law also prohibits underground and underwater work for women of any age and for boys under the age of 18.⁴⁰³⁰ The Apprenticeship and Vocational Training Act No. 3308 allows children ages 14 to 18 who have completed the mandatory 8 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.⁴⁰³¹

The Ministry of Labor and Social Services (MOLSS) Inspection Board is responsible for enforcing child labor laws in Turkey.⁴⁰³² The MOLSS has been unable to effectively enforce many of the child labor laws for a variety of reasons, including traditional attitudes, socio-economic factors, and the predominantly

⁴⁰²⁶ UNICEF, *State of Turkey's Children: Preliminary Report*, December 1999 [cited March 26, 2004]; available from <http://www.die.gov.tr/CIN/got-unicef/sotc/sotc.htm>.

⁴⁰²⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2003: Turkey*, Section 6d.

⁴⁰²⁸ U.S. Embassy- Ankara, *unclassified telegram no. 5326*, August 22, 2003.

⁴⁰²⁹ U.S. Embassy- Ankara, *unclassified telegram no. 4870*, August 27, 2004.

⁴⁰³⁰ See Article 176 of the 1930 General Health Care Act 1593 as cited in Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations and ILO Ankara, *Child Labor in Turkey*, ILO Publications Bureau, Geneva, 1997, 31.

⁴⁰³¹ Apprenticeship and Vocational Training Act 3308 as quoted in *Ibid.*, 29-30. See also Fisek Institute Science and Action Foundation for Child Labor, *Turkish Laws on Working Children*, [online] [cited March 18, 2004]; available from <http://www.fisek.org.tr/e020.php>. See also Aksit, Karanci, and Gunduz-Hosgor, *Turkey Working Street Children*, 26.

⁴⁰³² Ministry of Labor and Social Security Labor Inspection Board, *Report on the Implementation of Labor Inspection Policy*, 5. See also Embassy of Turkey, *The Implemented Programs and Measures Taken Against Child Labor*.

informal nature of child labor in Turkey.⁴⁰³³ Therefore, the Board has focused on protecting working children by improving their working conditions.⁴⁰³⁴

Criminal law forbids the sexual exploitation of children.⁴⁰³⁵ The Criminal Code designates the trafficking of persons a crime; those convicted face 5 to 10 years in prison and a fine of approximately USD 665 or more.⁴⁰³⁶

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

In working towards meeting EU accession conditions, priorities for the Government of Turkey include fulfilling obligations to eliminate child labor.⁴⁰³⁷ The Government of Turkey has also developed a National Timebound Policy and Program Framework designed to eliminate the worst forms of child labor and the involvement of children below the age of 15 in all forms of work in Turkey within a period of 10 years.⁴⁰³⁸ The MOLSS' Child Labor Unit is the focal point in coordinating child labor activities among all institutions in Turkey and developing policy responses to child labor.⁴⁰³⁹ The Child Labor Unit contributed to the preparation of the child labor chapter in the Eighth Five-Year Development Plan of Turkey (2000-2005). This plan commits the government to respond to child labor by promoting policies designed to combat

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138	10/30/98	✓
Ratified Convention 182	8/2/01	✓
ILO-IPEC Member		✓
National Plan for Children		
National Child Labor Action Plan		✓
Sector Action Plan (trafficking)		✓

⁴⁰³³ Ministry of Labor and Social Security Labor Inspection Board, *Report on the Implementation of Labor Inspection Policy*, 3-5. Out of 700 MOLSS field inspectors, approximately 108 are trained to review compliance with child labor regulations. However, the work many children are engaged in are not covered by labor laws, such as in agriculture or the informal economy, and therefore cannot be regulated by the inspectorate. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2003: Turkey*, Section 6d.

⁴⁰³⁴ Embassy of Turkey, *The Implemented Programs and Measures Taken Against Child Labor*. See also Embassy of Turkey, *Policies, Programs, and Measures Against Child Labor in Turkey*, Washington, D.C., September 6, 2002, 10, 11, 14.

⁴⁰³⁵ UNICEF, *State of Turkey's Children*.

⁴⁰³⁶ The Code calls for a fine not less than one billion Turkish lira. See U.S. Embassy- Ankara, *unclassified telegram no. 5326*. In 2003, 14 cases were opened under the trafficking law, against 46 suspects. The suspects in three cases were acquitted. The remaining cases remained open at the end of 2003. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2003: Turkey*, Section 6f. For currency conversion, see FXConverter, [online] [cited May 26, 2004]; available from <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>.

⁴⁰³⁷ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Executive Summary of the Turkish National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis*, [online] 2003 [cited March 18, 2004]; available from <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ad/adc/executive.summ.htm>.

⁴⁰³⁸ ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Turkey - Supporting the Timebound Program for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Turkey (2004-2006)*, technical progress report, TUR/03/P50/USA, Geneva, September 2004. See also Ministry of Labor and Social Security Child Labor Unit, *Timebound Policy and Programme Framework for the Elimination of Child Labor Turkey (Draft)*, 2003.

⁴⁰³⁹ Ministry of Labor and Social Security Child Labor Unit, *Timebound Policy and Programme Framework*, 7, 30.

child labor by increasing family income, providing social welfare, and reducing education costs for the poor.⁴⁰⁴⁰

The Government of Turkey has committed to making a significant contribution (USD 6.2 million) to support the ILO-IPEC project *Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Turkey - Supporting the Timebound Program for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Turkey, 2004-2006*. The program will include activities in 11 provinces based on the prevalence of priority sectors selected by in-country stakeholders (street work, informal urban economy, and seasonal commercial agriculture).⁴⁰⁴¹

Various other regional child labor elimination programs are underway throughout the country, supported by the national or local level authorities in Turkey. The government operates 28 centers to aid working street children.⁴⁰⁴² The Interior Ministry's Child Police operate in 81 provinces of Turkey and are specifically responsible for protecting children, including protecting working children from employer abuses. Over the summer months when school is in recess and children are particularly vulnerable to engaging in work, the Child Police in Diyarbakir offered swimming courses and supplementary nutrition to children working on the streets. In Konya, computer literacy courses and organized tennis and soccer activities were offered to children who otherwise would be working. Such activities have contributed to the rehabilitation of working children and increased national awareness of the problem of child labor.⁴⁰⁴³ A project led by the MOLSS Inspection Board in Izmir to stop children under 15 years from working in the footwear industry, textiles, and auto repair removed and prevented children from involvement in hazardous work, and improved working conditions for children ages 15 to 18.⁴⁰⁴⁴

The Government of Turkey is taking steps to combat trafficking of persons.⁴⁰⁴⁵ The Ministry of Health provides free health treatment for trafficking victims.⁴⁰⁴⁶ The government also makes efforts to provide rehabilitation and treatment to victims,⁴⁰⁴⁷ and has also reached repatriation agreements with 26 countries of

⁴⁰⁴⁰ The child labor policy directives that are part of the Eighth Five-Year Development Plan include eliminating the causes forcing children to work and the constraints that prevent children from attending school, and harmonizing national legislation with international conventions. See ILO-IPEC, *International Program for Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) Turkey*, [online] January 21, 2004 [cited March 18, 2004], 1-2; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/eurpro/ankara/programme/ipec.htm>. See also Embassy of Turkey, *The Implemented Programs and Measures Taken Against Child Labor*, 5. See also U.S. Embassy- Ankara, *unclassified telegram no. 4870*.

⁴⁰⁴¹ ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2004 - 2006)*, cover, 1.

⁴⁰⁴² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2003: Turkey*, Section 6d.

⁴⁰⁴³ ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2004 - 2006)*, 2.

⁴⁰⁴⁴ Children and families receive services at the social support center opened in 2001. Activities at the center include reading and writing courses, and educational meetings for teachers, trade unions, and the media. Medical referrals and treatments are also provided to children. ILO-IPEC Turkey, *Integrated Programme for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor in selected Industrial Areas in Izmir by 2003*, [online] September 2004 [cited December 15, 2004]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/eurpro/ankara/programme/ipec/tbp.htm>.

⁴⁰⁴⁵ The *Trafficking in Persons Report* is consistent with this assessment. The report concludes that Turkey is making significant efforts to combat trafficking. See U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons-2004*.

⁴⁰⁴⁶ U.S. Embassy- Ankara, *unclassified telegram no. 4141*, August 2, 2004. This cable cites an on-line Ministry of Foreign Affairs report. See Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Updated Country Report of Turkey on Trafficking in Human Beings*, MOFA, 2004; available from <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ac/acb/TraffickinginHumanBeings.htm>.

⁴⁰⁴⁷ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Updated MOFA Report*.

origin, including Greece, Syria, Kyrgyzstan, and Romania.⁴⁰⁴⁸ In September 2003, the Interior Ministry and a local NGO called the Human Resources Development Foundation signed a protocol and have agreed to collaborate on training of judges and government officials and policy development of new trafficking legislation, and opening shelter for trafficking victims.⁴⁰⁴⁹ In April 2003, a National Action Plan on Trafficking was developed by the government's Anti-Trafficking Task Force, and the IOM, ILO, and UNHCR are collaborating with the government to address the trafficking problem.⁴⁰⁵⁰

In 2002, in an effort to support basic education reform, the EU provided funding to improve access and the retention of children in basic and non-formal education in 12 provinces and 5 urban and suburban areas.⁴⁰⁵¹ The same year, the World Bank approved a 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.⁴⁰⁵² The World Bank funds the Social Risk Mitigation Project to alleviate economic hardship on poor households that finances the expansion of education and health grants for the poorest 6 percent of families to support keeping children in school.⁴⁰⁵³ The Ministry of National Education and UNICEF currently supports the Advocacy Campaign for Girls' Education designed to place every girl in school by the year 2005.⁴⁰⁵⁴

⁴⁰⁴⁸ U.S. Embassy- Ankara, *unclassified telegram no. 4141*.

⁴⁰⁴⁹ U.S. Embassy- Ankara, *unclassified telegram no. 2198*, April 16, 2004. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2003: Turkey*, Section 6f.

⁴⁰⁵⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2003: Turkey*, Section 6f.

⁴⁰⁵¹ The EU provided 100 million Euros for this project. The provinces include Adiyaman, Agri, Ardahan, Bayburt, Bingol, Diyarbakir, Erzurum, Kars, Mus, Sakarya, Sanliurfa and Siirt, and the urban/suburban areas of Istanbul, Antalya, Bursa, Mersin, and Adara. See European Commission Representation to Turkey, *EU Funded Programs in Turkey, 2003-2004*, December 2003, 36; available from <http://www.deltur.cec.eu.int/english/eu-funded2004-en.html>.

⁴⁰⁵² The second phase of the Basic Education Project continues to support improving the quality of basic education, in addition to the development of preschool education as an integral part of basic education. The Government of Turkey's goals for its Basic Education Program are for all eligible children to enroll in and complete basic education, pre-school enrollment for eligible children to reach 25 percent, improved student performance, and for 40 percent of children in basic education to be utilizing information and communication technologies (i.e. computers). See World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Loan in the Amount of US\$300 Million to the Republic of Turkey for a Second Basic Education Project in Support of the Second Phase of the Basic Education Program*, June 12, 2002 [cited March 18, 2004], 3-7; available from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2002/07/09/000094946_0206260400300/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf. See also World Bank, *Basic Education Project (02)*, March 18, 2004 [cited March 18, 2004]; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=104231&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P059872>.

⁴⁰⁵³ World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Investment/Adjustment Loan in the Amount of US\$500 Million to the Republic of Turkey for a Social Risk Mitigation Project/Loan*, August 17, 2001 [cited March 18, 2004]; available from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2001/10/18/000094946_01082504044864/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf. See also World Bank, *Social Risk Mitigation Project*, March 18, 2004 [cited March 18, 2004]; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=104231&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P074408>.

⁴⁰⁵⁴ The program was launched in 10 provinces and will expand to 40 more by late 2005. See UNICEF, *One in Every Eight Girls Out of School in Turkey*, [online press release] July 19 2003 [cited March 18, 2004]; available from http://www.unicef.org/media/media_10946.html. See also UNICEF, *At a Glance: Turkey*, [cited March 18, 2004]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/infocountry/Turkey.html>.