

NATIONAL REPORT - TURKEY

**Fourth cycle of the implementation of the Madrid
International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional
Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS)**

2018 - 2022

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

MINISTRY OF FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

September 2021

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Part I

Executive summary

Turkey welcomes the opportunity to provide a fourth report to the United Nations on the progress made to fulfil its commitments to the Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) during the 2018-2022 assessment period.

The focal point on aging in Turkey is the General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly affiliated to Ministry of Family and Social Services. The General Directorate coordinates policies and strategies related to aging and provides social services for both persons with disabilities and the elderly.

This report is organized around the three overarching goals of the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration:

- I. Recognizing the potential of older persons
- II. Encouraging longer working life and ability to work
- III. Ensuring ageing with dignity.

First, the national aging situation in Turkey is described and the method used in the preparation of the report is explained.

In the second part of the report, a short analysis of the implementation of the goals and measures of the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration during the last five years is provided by taking into account the RIS commitments, highlighted in a nutshell the most important achievement in the implementation of MIPAA/RIS during the last 20 years and the actions planned for the future.

In the third part, information about the contribution of aging-related policies to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, lessons learned from managing the consequences and impacts for older people in emergency situations: the COVID-19 pandemic and activities in preparation and implementation of the WHO Decade of Healthy Aging 2020-2030 was given within the scope of “Healthy and Active Aging in a Sustainable World”.

In the last part, an overview of the findings, future challenges and opportunities regarding aging are presented and recommendations are made with regard to the work of international organizations on aging.

Turkey promotes the human rights of older persons by emphasizing the enormous value that older people represent for our society. Recognizing the value that older persons add to our society with their tremendous knowledge and experience, it attaches importance to the contributions they have made and continue to make to Turkey's economy and social fabric. Turkey will continue to work in cooperation with and support relevant stakeholders to build a safe and healthy future for older persons. This will help ensure that Turkey effectively copes with the challenges posed by the population aging.

General information

Country name: Turkey

Name and contact details of the author(s) of the report

Dr. Orhan Koc, MD., General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly, Ministry of Family and Social Services, orhan.koc@ailevecalisma.gov.tr

Cosgun Gurboga, General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly, Ministry of Family and Social Services, cosgun.gurboga@ailevecalisma.gov.tr

Mustafa Karabey, General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly, Ministry of Family and Social Services, mustafa.karabey@ailevecalisma.gov.tr

Burcu Ayhan Ekenci, General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly, Ministry of Family and Social Services, burcu.ayhan@ailevecalisma.gov.tr

Rumeysa Ceylan, General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly, Ministry of Family and Social Services, rumeysa.ceylan@ailevecalisma.gov.tr

Name and contact details of official national focal point on ageing

Burcu Ayhan Ekenci, General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly, Ministry of Family and Social Services, burcu.ayhan@ailevecalisma.gov.tr

Rumeysa Ceylan, General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly, Ministry of Family and Social Services, rumeysa.ceylan@ailevecalisma.gov.tr

Name, reference, and date of adoption or status of preparation of national strategy, action plan or similar policy document on ageing

“Vision Document on Ageing 2030” and Action Plan:

A high-level policy document titled “2020-2030 Aging Vision Document” was prepared by the Ministry of Family and Social Services to guide policies, programs and services on aging. The Vision Document has been prepared by taking into account the opinions and decisions of the First International Council on Aging held on 20-22 February 2019. The policies that developed for older persons are discussed under 6 headings in the Vision Document: active aging, care economy, care services for older persons and quality of life, economics of ageing, rights of older persons, and age friendly cities and local governments. With the contribution and participation of the relevant stakeholders, 63 actions were determined for 21 goals related to the issues in the document. In this context, the preparatory work for the “Action Plan” to implement the policies and goals in the Vision document is still in progress. It is planned to implement and monitor the vision document with 5-year action plans.

1. National ageing situation

Turkey has a total population of 83.6 million, which puts Turkey in one of the 20 most populated countries in the World. The number of persons aged 65 and over, which is considered as the older population, was 4.3 million in 2000 and, it has increased by approximately 45% in the last twenty years and reached to 7.9 million in 2020. While the proportion of older population in the total population was 6.7% in 2000, it increased to 9.5% in 2020. In 2020, 44.2% of older population was male and 55.8% was female.

In Turkey, the population of older persons has increased at a higher rate than the population in other age groups. While the share of the elderly population in the total population increased, the share of the child and youth population decreased. This situation caused a change in the age structure of the population of Turkey. While the population pyramid of Turkey was close to a broad-based pyramid in 1975, it changed to a beehive-shaped pyramid in 2019 (see Annex, Figure 1). This demographic transition in the country took place in a very short period.

The total fertility rate was 2.38 in 2001 and 1.76 in 2020 indicating that fertility remains below the population replacement level of 2.10. Life expectancy at birth was calculated as 71.8 years for 2001 and 78.6 years for 2020 (76.0 years for males and 81.3 years for females) according to the population estimates and projections produced by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT). In general, women live longer than men do and the difference in life expectancy at birth is 5.3 years.

The remarkable decline in the fertility rate, the increase in average life expectancy and life expectancy at birth as a reflection of the developments in basic health services and nutrition, and the controllability of early mortality have reshaped the age structure of the population. Although Turkey, whose demographic transformation process continues, has a relatively young population structure due to the high fertility rates of the past, the fact that the proportion of older population in the total population approaches 10% is an indicator of Turkey's transition to the country with an older population.

On the other hand, the annual population growth rate was 13.9 per thousand in 2019 and it dropped to 5.5 per thousand in 2020. According to population projections made by TURKSTAT, it is predicted that the proportion of the elderly population will be 11.0% in 2025, 12.9% in 2030, 16.3% in 2040, 22.6% in 2060 and 25.6% in 2080.

The median age, one of the indicators of aging population, was 25.8 in 2000 and 32.7 in 2020.

The elderly dependency ratio increased from 12.2% in 2015 to 14.1% in 2020. According to labour force statistics, while the labour force participation rate for 15 and over aged population was 51.3% in 2015, this rate increased to 53.0% in 2019. While the labour force participation rate for 65 and over aged population was 11.9% in 2015, this rate was 12.0% in 2019. When the labour force participation rate was examined by sex, it was observed that this rate was 20.1% for elderly male population, and it was 5.6% for elderly female population in 2019. While the unemployment rate of elderly population was 2.5% in 2015, it was 3.1% in 2019.

According to the results of "Income and Living Conditions Survey", while poverty rate calculated by using 60% of equalised household disposable median income was 21.9% for Turkey in 2015, this rate was 21.3% in 2019. While poverty rate for elderly population was 18.3% in 2015, this rate was 14.2% in 2019. When the poverty of elderly population was

examined by sex, it was observed that the poverty rate for elderly male population was 17.8% and 12.1% respectively in 2015 and 2019 and, it was 18.6% and 15.9% respectively in 2015 and 2019 for elderly female population.

When the level of education of elderly population was examined by gender, it was observed that there were significant differences between the genders. It was observed that the ratio of elderly male population was higher than the ratio of elderly female population at all completed education levels.

According to the “Turkey Health Interview Survey”, the rate of obesity in the population aged 65 and over was 22.9% in 2010, while this rate was 29.0% in 2019.

According to the death and causes of death statistics, the elderly people lost their lives mostly from diseases of the circulatory system in 2019 and the proportion of elderly who lost their lives from Alzheimer's disease has increased over the years. In addition to the increasing elderly population and changing family structure, the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease increases the demand for elderly care services and creates the need for diversification and improvement of care services. The care policy for older persons in recent years has gained momentum in this direction.

According to the results of “Life Satisfaction Survey 2020”, when the level of happiness by age groups is examined; the age group 65 and over had the highest happiness rate with 58.5% in 2019 and 57.7% in 2020. According to the results of the household information technologies usage survey, the rate of individuals in the 65-74 age group using the Internet has increased 5 times in the last five years, increasing from 5.6% in 2015 to 27.1% in 2020.

According to the “Statistics for Older Persons, 2020 News Bulletin”¹ published annually by TURKSTAT, 24% of households in Turkey have at least one older person aged 65 or over. Estimates indicate that the share of older population in the total population will reach 16% by 2040, exceed 22% in 2060, and by 2080, more than a quarter of the total population will be aged 65 and over.

As in all over the world, the Covid-19 pandemic has also caused significant disruptions in the Turkish economy. In response, the Turkish Government has launched an economic stimulus package that offers a mix of financial support, credit support and employment-related measures to help citizens and businesses weather the Covid-19 crisis.

Since mid-March 2020, a number of measures has been implemented by different Government entities through various decrees, legislative changes and multi-purpose laws. One of the main support measures of social transfers was to increase the minimum monthly old-age pension from TRY 1.000 to 1.500.

¹ <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Elderly-Statistics-2020-37227>

2. Method

The General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly, affiliated with the Ministry of Family and Social Services, coordinates policies and strategies on ageing and provides social services for both persons with disabilities and the elderly. The present Country Report was prepared by the National Focal Point on Ageing on behalf of the Ministry of Family and Social Services.

The country report was elaborated in an inter-ministerial context. It was engaged and consulted with other major stakeholders including Ministries, public institutions, academia and civil society organizations. This is in line with the Government's understanding of the policy and the bottom-up approach preferred by the UN.

Within the context of the preparatory work for the country report, The General Directorate organised a consultation meeting with the participation of major stakeholders to explain the objectives and the format of the report, and what was expected from them considering the nature of the reporting requirements. Inputs including qualitative information were collected from the participating Ministries, public institutions, universities and civil society organizations and summarized along with the Ministry of Family and Social Services' policy actions. After the report was prepared, it was presented to the stakeholders for their review and the report was finalized by making the necessary changes. All institutions that submitted inputs were listed in the Annex.

Quantitative information comes from reports written by the TURKSTAT, Household Labour Force Survey, Income and Living Conditions Survey, Turkey Health Interview Survey, Life Satisfaction Survey, Information and Communication Technology Usage Survey, and review and follow up reports from the Ministries.

For better comparability, the format of the report is based on the guidelines of the UNECE Working Group on Ageing (WGA). The report is structured around the three main goals of the Lisbon Declaration. In each section there are subsections which will address the relevant developments in Turkey in regard to the commitments and questions mentioned in the guidelines.

Part II: 20 Years of MIPAA/RIS

Main actions and progress in implementation of MIPAA/RIS and the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration goals

Goal 1: Recognizing the potential of older persons

1.1 Measures to empower individuals to realize their potential for physical, mental and social well-being throughout their lives and to participate in and contribute to society according to their capacities, needs, and desires along the RIS commitments 1, 2, 8, 9, and 10 and the goals of the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration

RIS Commitment 1: To mainstream aging in all policy fields with the aim of bringing societies and economies into harmony with demographic change to achieve a society for all ages.

Integration of policies on ageing at the national level

While issues on ageing focused more on social service and social security in the past in Turkey, ageing issues have started to attract attention as a policy area especially since 2002. The most important step taken towards this end was the establishment of the General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly affiliated with the Ministry of Family and Social Services in 2011.

Although services for older persons are provided by different public institutions, local governments, civil society organizations and the private sector in Turkey, the main government body that is responsible for both carrying out the services and coordinating public and private institutions who engage services for older persons is the General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly. The General Directorate also coordinates the implementation of national policies and strategies in order to ensure that the older persons participate in social life effectively and without discrimination against all kinds of obstacles, neglect and exclusion.

Units working in the field ageing have been restructured within the General Directorate over the years. Thus, it is aimed to make the institutional structure stronger and more effective. Finally, in the institutional configuration made in 2020; in addition to the Department of Care Services for Older Persons, the Department of Older Persons' Welfare, which consists of the Economics of Ageing Unit, Support for Older Persons Unit, the International Relations Unit and the Active and Healthy Aging Unit, was established. From this point of view, in addition to the social services and social assistance provided to the older persons, a rights-based approach has been adopted in the social policies on ageing in recent years. The ultimate goal of these policies is to ensure that older persons lead an independent, high-quality, active and healthy life in the community in accordance with their own human dignity and preferences based on social inclusion.

In this context, a high-level policy document titled “**2020-2030 Aging Vision Document**” was prepared by the Ministry of Family and Social Services, which will guide the policies, programs and services on aging in the next 10 years. The Aging Vision Document aims to enable people

to actively participate in the active aging process in every period of their lives, to strengthen the rights of older persons, to develop new service and support models for older persons with a rights and social inclusion-based approach, to strengthen intergenerational solidarity, and to present a new vision with a family and society-oriented approach. In the Vision Document, policies that developed for older adults are discussed under 6 headings: active aging, care economy, care services for older persons and quality of life, economics of ageing, rights of older persons, and age friendly cities and local governments. With the contribution and participation of the relevant stakeholders, 63 actions were determined for 21 goals related to the issues in the document. In this context, the preparatory work for the “**Action Plan**” which is based on the Vision Document is still in progress. The implementation and monitoring of the Aging Vision Document with 5-year action plans will be ensured.

Tenth development plan (2014-2018) and Eleventh development plan (2019-2023)

The five-year development plans that started to be implemented in the early 1960s in Turkey are the fundamental policy documents that include holistic policies in the economic, social, cultural and health fields. Development Plans outline the macro policy goals and the institutions and organizations in charge transform these goals into specific implementations in line with these goals.

Since the transition to planned development, eleven development plans have been published and aging policies have been included in almost all plans. However, the Tenth Five-Year Development Plan covering the period of 2014-2018 brought a new adjustment by establishing a “**Special Expertise Committee on Aging**”. This is the reflection of the changing mindset on aging in recent years. The Committee carries out the studies that form the basis of the development goals related to ageing and prepares a report that will guide economic and social policies on ageing issues.

The main axis of the goals and actions determined in the Tenth Development Plan are;

- Active aging,
- Elderly law and rights/legal regulations,
- Elderly workforce and working life in Turkey,
- Elderly poverty,
- Services for older persons,
- Psychosocial life in old age and intergenerational solidarity,
- Aging and research and development activities on aging.

In this context, the Tenth Development Plan emphasized the need to diversify and expand the services for ageing population and to design housing and environments suitable for their needs. The following actions were planned;

- Providing access to healthy and safe living conditions for the increasing older population to lead an active life,
- Strengthening intergenerational solidarity in society,
- Implementing spatial planning and urban design schemes that consider equality of opportunity and equity for older persons,
- Diversifying and expanding home care services for older persons and increasing the quality and quantity of institutional care services for older persons,

- Developing innovative models by strengthening the service delivery capacity of the public at the local level in order to facilitate the participation of older persons and persons with disabilities in economic and social life and their access to care and other social services.

The main axis of the goals and actions determined in the scope of the Eleventh Development Plan are;

- Active aging,
- Social inclusion,
- Intergenerational solidarity,
- Developing institutional and legal infrastructure,
- Data sources activities on aging
- Health services,
- Long-term care.

In this plan period, the "active aging" approach was taken as a basis in the development of social and economic policies on aging and aging population. It was emphasized that with the increase in the population, the need to improve care services, enhance lifelong education opportunities and ensure the adaptation of older persons to changes came into prominence. The policies and measures in this context are as follows:

- Diversifying and disseminating social service models within the framework of human-oriented social policies,
- Expanding quality, affordable and easily accessible care opportunities for children, persons with disabilities and older persons,
- Developing standards of care services for persons with disabilities and older persons and increasing the quality and quantity of personnel providing these services,
- Improving the interior and the environmental design to prevent falls and reduce incidents that older people may encounter,
- Enhancing the access of older adults to lifelong learning opportunities,
- Developing mechanisms that will enable older adults to stay in working life longer under certain conditions,
- Creating social spaces and environments where ideas and values can be transferred between generations,
- Supporting voluntary activities and projects that will increase intergenerational solidarity,
- Developing data-driven services and policies for aging population,
- Protecting public spaces in cities, especially open and green spaces; improving access and security; reconstructing it within the framework of human-nature relationship that is sensitive to women, children, older people and persons with disabilities,
- Enhancing access to healthcare services for older people, especially those living in rural areas, strengthening preventive and curative services for them,
- Expanding home healthcare services to increase access, efficiency and quality; ensuring the integration of intensive care, palliative care and geriatric services with home care services,

- Carrying out health follow-ups for older people, strengthening preventive and curative services for diseases that increase with age, increasing the number of centres providing geriatrics and palliative care services.

2016-2019 e-Government strategy and action plan

In order for citizens to benefit equally from the opportunities offered by the State such as education, health, employment, transportation, etc., the actions addressed to disadvantaged groups in the "2016-2019 e-Government Strategy and Action Plan" are as follows:

- Updating and disseminating public websites and social media sites in accordance with the defined guidelines,
- Restructuring of public information and promotion sites,
- Integrating the information systems related to labor and social security services,
- Integrating the information systems related to the healthcare service sector,
- Integrating the information systems for social services,
- Designing new service delivery models that will increase usage,
- Redesigning e-government services in a way that takes into account all disadvantaged groups,
- Providing e-government services primarily through the e-government gateway,
- Increasing awareness by strengthening information channels for e-government services,
- Ensuring that e-government applications are preferred primarily.

Councils of older persons

The most important development regarding the participation of older persons in decision-making processes at the local level in Turkey is the city councils and the councils of older persons formed under them. In 2009, in order to establish the governance mechanism, city councils were established with the participation of central administrations, local administrations, professional organizations and community members, producing solutions to the problems of the city within the framework of sustainable development. In 2013, under the priority of *Older People and Development* in the "The Situation of the Older People in Turkey and the Implementation Program of Aging Action Plan"; a step was taken to keep the older persons in the active labour force and to include in the community by providing the opportunity to take a role in the decision-making processes through councils of older persons. The main task of the councils is to discuss the urban problems and the demands of older persons as well as other groups in the society, and to have a say in decisions about their future. These councils are divided into working groups such as healthy life, intergenerational relations, environment, sustainable and accessible city, culture and art.

Integration and participation of older persons in society

It is significant to encourage the establishment of mechanisms to participate in the decision-making processes at the regional and national level to for older persons who contribute to the governance mechanism at the local level. To this end, one of the important mechanisms is the civil society organizations. The number of civil society organizations in the field of aging in Turkey has increased in recent years. This contributes to the interest and awareness of the society on aging. Especially many of the associations that carry out studies on ageing generally consist of experts and academicians from the field. On the other hand, the effectiveness of these organizations is limited. Strengthening the participation of older persons in such civil activities

and increasing their participation in decision-making mechanisms are the important agenda items for Turkey. For this purpose, Turkish government provides grants to support the work of the civil society and financial support for individual projects made by them.

RIS Commitment 2: To ensure full integration and participation of older adults in society.

Promoting a positive image of the elderly

The image of older persons produced in the society is a part of the culture. However, the most important contribution to the image of older person produced in the society is manifested in mass culture and popular culture products. These images, which are reflected from the society but become permanent by reflecting on these cultural products, generally standardize the older person and nourish age discrimination.

New aging trends, such as active and healthy ageing, and productivity, promote a positive image of older people. One of the policy tools applied in Turkey is the public service announcements prepared by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Family and Social Services. In these public service announcements, topics such as wisdom about aging, healthy aging, intergenerational relations, the importance of social relations, and prevention of dementia are covered. In addition, such public service announcements are broadcasted on special days such as the Day of Older Persons, the Senior Citizen Week, and the World Alzheimer's Day in order to increase the awareness on aging and the visibility of older persons in the society. These public service announcements are regularly featured on state and private television channels.

Life satisfaction survey

"Life Satisfaction Survey" has been carried out regularly since 2003 by TURKSTAT in Turkey. The main purpose of this survey is to measure the overall happiness perception, social values, satisfactions with the main components of life and public services of the individuals and to follow the changes in satisfaction level in time. The data in this survey covers subjects such as happiness, level of life satisfaction, satisfaction with the main components of life, education, health, public order, judicial, transportation, satisfaction with municipal/provincial administration services, environmental safety, level of hope, perception of social pressure. When the level of happiness is analysed by age groups in 2020, the highest level of happiness is at 65 and over age group (Table 1). As people get older, the proportion of happiness decreases, and a sharp rise is observed in the 65+ age group. Of course, there are both sociological and psychological reasons for this rise.

Table 1. Level of happiness by gender and age group, 2020

(%)

	Level of happiness		
	Happy	Neither happy nor unhappy	Unhappy
	2020	2020	2020
Gender			
Male	43,2	39,2	17,6
Female	53,1	35,4	11,5
Age group			
18-24	47,1	38,6	14,2
25-34	46,8	38,1	15,1
35-44	45,4	39,4	15,2
45-54	46,2	38,5	15,3
55-64	49,0	36,5	14,5
65+	57,7	30,4	11,8

Source: TURKSTAT, Life Satisfaction Survey, 2020

Education on aging and sustainable development goals

In cooperation with the UN Population Fund Turkey Office and Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies, trainings were held between 9-13 December 2019 and 25-27 November 2020 in order to contribute to the production of data-based ageing policies on the phenomenon of ageing and to draw attention to the importance of institutional infrastructure studies. In this direction, awareness-raising trainings on demographic indicators of older population, active aging, elderly health, gender equality in old age, etc. were given to the representatives of public institutions and organizations to develop data-based policies by associating these issues with aging policies and sustainable development.

Age-friendly environment and housing

All kinds of policies and services that actively recognize the capacities and abilities of older persons, respond to their needs and choices, respect their ideas and lifestyles, protect the vulnerable, and encourage participation in all areas of community life make very important contributions to healthy aging. Practices to create age-friendly living spaces that fulfil the requirements of such policies and services have gained momentum in the last ten years in Turkey. In particular, the Turkish Disability Act No. 5378, adopted in 2005, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Turkey became a party in 2009, contributed greatly to this. With the Convention, a number of administrative and political measures have been taken, both in national law and in practice, with the goal of a more accessible Turkey for all segments of society, including older persons and persons with disabilities.

With the establishment of the Ministry of Family and Social Services in 2011, the Department of Accessibility Services was also established under the General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and Elderly. Numerous legal and administrative arrangements were carried out to solve the problems experienced by persons with disabilities and older persons in accessing their rights and services since then. In this direction, with the amendments on related laws such as Law on Land Development Planning and Control (Law No. 3194), Turkish Disability Act (Law No. 5378), Turkish Condominium Law (Law No. 634), etc., a number of

provisions have been introduced regarding the physical and built environment and the accessibility of public transportation vehicles. Inspection activities for monitoring and auditing the implementation of accessibility standards are carried out by Accessibility Monitoring and Inspection Commissions in each province.

In order to increase information and awareness on accessibility, the Ministry of Family and Social Services organizes "Regional Accessibility Meetings" for senior managers and technical staff of local administrations throughout the country in cooperation with the Union of Municipalities of Turkey. Trainings within this scope have been continuing since 2011 in order to create an accessibility culture, fulfil the obligations in the legislation and implement the practices in accordance with the standards.

Awareness of designing barrier-free and age-friendly environment in Turkey has increased significantly over the past two decades. In this context, some of the activities carried out in 2021 by the General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly Ministry of Family and Social Services are as the following:

- In order to prevent the falls and incidents that older persons may encounter, arrangements at the residence can be made by the owners as covered in the 634 Turkish Condominium Law. As for the environment, it is carried out by the relevant authorities and municipalities. In this direction, as a result of the joint work of the Turkish Standards Institute (TSE) and the Ministry of Family and Social Services, "TS 13882 Classification Rules for Pedestrian Walking Surfaces: Basic Requirements and Evaluation Methods Standard" was published on 30.09.2019. Work continues with Sivas Cumhuriyet University to determine the technical conditions for measurement measures for the implementation of the standard.
- An informative presentation on the above-mentioned standard was made to the unit representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization. The joint work of the two ministries on the subject continues and a second meeting is planned to be held in September.
- "Accessibility Workshops: Sidewalks" were organized within the scope of environmental regulations. Total of 637 architects, engineers, technicians and managers working in the pavement construction and repair works of municipalities participated in 25 workshops.
- A joint work between the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization and the Family and Social Services is carried out in order to select the flooring material and plan the pedestrian paths in the newly constructed buildings.

Rapidly changing and evolving technological developments and innovative approaches have a powerful transformative effect on city life today. In this context, the concept of "Smart City", which is seen as a tool that can constantly follow new developments in order to create a liveable and sustainable living space for everyone, attracts the attention of countries, and countries make special efforts to be prepared for changing conditions, to adapt and direct this dynamic process. With a similar motivation in our country, the "**2010-2023 National Smart Cities Strategy and Action Plan**" was prepared by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization in order to bring a holistic perspective to Smart City policies at the national level. Within the scope of the policy document, 4 strategic goals, 9 targets and 40 actions were determined with the vision of "Liveable and Sustainable Cities Adding Value to Life". In the Action Plan, which will shape

Turkey's Smart City transformation and accelerate its social, economic and environmental development, the actions addressed for the effective inclusion of persons with disabilities and older people in social and economic life are indicated below:

- Within the scope of its strategic purpose of “17.1: Accessibility to urban services will be provided to disadvantaged segments of the society such as persons with disabilities, older people and special needs groups with limited mobility.”
 - “17.1.1: A standard will be developed to organize urban service areas according to the needs of disadvantaged groups.”
- “17.1.2: Planning, architectural solutions and urban designs that take into account the disadvantaged groups will be made.”
- Within the scope of its strategic purpose of “5.5: Preparation and implementation of standard and design projects for pedestrian and vehicle transportation integrity, which takes into account the needs of those with mobility restrictions in the urban transportation system, will be ensured.”
 - “5.5.1: Standards will be developed for the use of transportation services by those with mobility restrictions.”

The Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure has published the “**National Intelligent Transportation Systems Strategy Document (2014-2023) and its Supplementary Action Plan (2014-2016)**” that indicates the following strategic goals:

- “Arranging the transportation infrastructure to provide more effective and safe services for older persons, children and persons with disabilities.”
- “Regulation of public transport fleets to provide more effective and safe services for older persons, children and persons with disabilities.”

In this context, the project titled “**The Accessibility of Passenger Transport Services in Turkey**”² was carried out between 16 August 2017 and 26 September 2019 by the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure. The Project aimed to improve the mobility of older persons, persons with disabilities and other persons with mobility limitations who benefit from passenger transport services, including pedestrians. Within the scope of the project, an “accessible transportation services platform” consisting of sub-working groups and representatives of relevant ministries, institutions, private sector, civil society organizations and universities was established. Other outputs of the project are; action plans, pilot projects, training of trainers, communication campaigns and awareness-raising activities.

In the **2018-2022 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization**, it is stated that “Spatial planning and urban design practices that respect equality of opportunity and equity will be implemented to increase the livability for different segments of society, primarily older persons, persons with disabilities and children.” and “Spatial planning and urban design practices that respect equality of opportunity and equity will be implemented in order to enhance access to services for those who require special attention, such as persons with disabilities, older people and those with reduced mobility.”

In the **Medium Term Program 2018-2020** period, which is a programming tool that initiates the budget process and directs resource allocations by revealing public policies and practices on the basis of the policies and priorities in the Development Plans, it is stated that “Social and

² <https://sgb.uab.gov.tr/turkiye-de-yolcu-tasimaciligi-hizmetlerinin-erisilebilirligi>

physical environmental conditions will continue to be improved in order to increase the participation of persons with disabilities in economic and social life.”

There are also initiatives to participate in the "Age Friendly Cities Network" initiated by the World Health Organization at the level of local governments. Although limited number of municipalities have joined the Network, a number of them are making a great effort towards this goal with the increasing awareness in recent years.

Within the scope of the Project of Preparing Service Guidelines for Municipalities carried out by the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, the Local Administration Policies Council; the **“Guideline for Municipalities on the Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly”** (2020) has been prepared in order to draw attention to the service needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly, to plan and develop services for them, to increase the service quality, and to create a vision for the future.

Another topic that has become more important in recent years for the active and healthy aging of the individual in place is the age-friendly hospitals. As a matter of fact, "creation and dissemination of the age-friendly centre concept in primary, secondary and tertiary care" was counted among the activities related to the realization of the goal of improving health services for older people in the **“2015-2020 Turkey Healthy Aging Action Plan and Implementation Program”** published by the Ministry of Health. In this context, various public and private health institutions and organizations in Turkey carry out studies at various levels. For example, Izmir Urla State Hospital and Bayindir Icerenkoy Hospital are organized in line with the criteria of age-friendly hospitals. In addition, “Workshop on Age-Friendly Hospital” on 3 December 2019 and “Symposium on Age-Friendly Hospital and Health Practices” on 19 September 2019 were held with the participation of public institutions, civil society organizations and academicians.

Among the activities to be carried out within the scope of the **“2022 Presidential Annual Program”**, the following action regarding age-friendly environment is included:

- Making interior and environmental regulations to minimize the falls and reduce incidents that older people may encounter, and organizing a symposium on the "Causes and Prevention of Home Accidents for Older Persons" for this purpose.

RIS Commitment 8: To mainstream a gender approach in an ageing society.

“Women's Empowerment Strategy Document and Action Plan 2018-2023”³ was prepared under the coordination of the Ministry of Family and Social Services in order to strengthen women's participation in economic and social life in Turkey, to ensure that they benefit from rights and opportunities equally, and to reflect equality of opportunity between women and men in all main plans and policies. For detailed information on the Document, see the section titled “Ensuring aging with dignity”.

³ <https://www.aile.gov.tr/media/6315/kad%C4%B1n%C4%B1n-gue%C3%A7lenmesi-strajesi-belgesi-ve-eylem-plan%C4%B1-2018-2023.pdf>

RIS Commitment 9: To support families that provide care for older adults and promote intergenerational and intragenerational solidarity among family members.

Maintaining and enhancing intergenerational solidarity and volunteering

With the prolongation of human lifespan, many generations live together today. Many intergenerational practices, projects, etc. are carried out in Turkey so that generations can get to know each other better. Public institutions, educational institutions and universities generally carry out these studies. Some examples to these projects are as the following:

“Intergenerational Solidarity” Project: Ankara University Aging Studies Application and Research Centre (YASAM) regularly carries out the “Intergenerational Solidarity” social responsibility project. In this context, visits are made where young and old people come together, conferences are held on various topics related to ageing, different programs are held for nursing home residents, and various activities are provided for young and older people to share information and experience.

“Meeting of Generations” Project: In order to strengthen intergenerational solidarity, to provide the participation of children, young people and older people in social life together, and to provide experience-oriented learning, various activities are organized where the older persons living in nursing homes and the children under protection and care come together. Within the scope of the project initiated by the Ministry of Family and Social Services in 2017, 847 activities were held as of the end of 2019, bringing together 13.514 children and 13.011 adults. In the "2020-2030 Aging Vision Document", the project is planned to be continued in order to "support communication and intergenerational solidarity between older persons and their children/grandchildren". For this purpose, some of the actions determined to ensure the full and effective participation of older people in social life and to increase intergenerational solidarity are as follows:

- Supporting communication and intergenerational solidarity between older persons and their children/grandchildren,
- Encouraging programs for transferring the experiences of older persons to future generations,
- Carrying out studies to eliminate the loneliness of older persons.

“While You Were Small, We Grow” Project: High school students and older adults at the 3rd Age University of Ege University in Izmir province came together in 2018 to determine the games they wanted to teach each other and played these games at a different high school every month for 9 months. In these activities, the group consisting of 50 young and 50 old people taught each other the games of their generation. The project was ended with the Intergenerational Game Festival on May 28, World Game Day.⁴

“Fresh Companion” Project: This is a new education and training initiative started among students of 3rd Age University and Gerontology Department of Akdeniz University. Young and old students learn gerontological topics and share what they have learned with each other.⁵

“Aging Young with the Youth” Project: The Project carried out by the Mersin Alzheimer's Association brings together older persons, who are isolated from society due to Covid-19,

⁴ <http://www.ortakdegerlerhareketi.com/deger-haberleri/siz-kucukken-biz-buyurken>

⁵ <http://yacumer.akdeniz.edu.tr/60-tazelenme-universitesi-projesi/taze-yol-arkadasim-60/>

university students and volunteers. The Project aims to create a stronger society by ensuring intergenerational communication.

Participation of older individuals in volunteering activities contributes to many issues such as eliminating the loneliness, the desire for authority, the feeling of belonging, the need for socialization, the development of the intellectual level, the sharing of experiences, the learning of new information, the development of skills, the change of social roles and status. Although volunteering activities are not very common in Turkey, there are various projects carried out by public institutions, local governments and educational institutions in which older persons participate in volunteering activities. One example is the project titled “Soul Neighbour” which aims to rehabilitate older persons in need of home care by their educated neighbours and to ensure that they participate into social life. The project is carried out in cooperation with Etimesgut Municipality, Etimesgut Sehit Sait Erturk State Hospital and Turkish Home Health and Social Services Association (EVSAD). Volunteers support older persons in their daily living activities and instrumental daily living activities. In the 2020-2030 Vision Document, it is planned to expand this project in the forthcoming years.

Volunteering activities are also carried out by some local governments. For example, a Volunteer Education and Counselling Centre was established by Kadikoy Municipality. Mostly older persons took part in the planning and execution of the studies such as volunteer houses, volunteer council, artistic and cultural activities etc. Another example is the voluntary work of individuals aged 60 and over in the units within the Antalya Governorship and Antalya Metropolitan Municipality. Older persons perform volunteer activities in these units 3 days a week, 4 hours a day. These mutual learning programs aim to raise the social responsibility awareness of older people theoretically and practically, and to develop cooperation, solidarity, and effective communication and self-evaluation skills during practice. In addition, some civil society organizations carry out such civil activities in which older people volunteer.

Celebrating older citizens in Turkey

The Government of Turkey, as well as organizations and individuals in communities across the country, celebrates the International Day of Older Persons on October 1 each year, as a means of recognizing the valuable past and present contributions of older persons to Turkish communities, workplaces and society. Within this context, The Ministry of Family and Social Services organized a conference on “The Covid-19 Process, Ageing and Perspective on Aging” on October 1, 2020 with the participation of academia, civil society organizations and public officials. On 2 October 2018, a conference on “The Rights of Older Persons for Their Welfare” was held in cooperation with the Ministry and Ankara University Aging Studies Application and Research Centre (YASAM).

In addition, the week of March 18-24 is celebrated as “The Senior Citizen Week” across the country every year. The Senior Citizen Week is meant to raise awareness on ageing and events throughout the country are organized by the public institutions, civil society and local communities to develop a positive image of older persons.

Among other special days celebrated to increase social awareness on ageing are the “World Elder Abuse Awareness Day” on June 15th, “European Day on Intergenerational Solidarity” on April 29th and “World Alzheimer's Day” on September 21st.

RIS Commitment 10: To promote the implementation and follow-up on the regional implementation strategy through regional co-operation

Multilateral collaboration

One of the goals in the "2020-2030 Aging Vision Document" mentioned in RIS Commitment 1 is to support the strengthening of international and regional cooperation. The policy measures based on this goal are as follows:

- Including the ageing dimension into international cooperation such as in projects, conferences, exchanging good practices and experiences, and encouraging participation in international activities on ageing,
- Ensuring that international cooperation and development processes are carried out in an inclusive way for older persons,
- Strengthening the inclusive work on aging with international organizations on a sectoral basis.

Turkey also seeks to engage bilaterally on matters of mutual interest with regard to older persons and population aging along with other disadvantaged groups such as children, women and persons with disabilities. Turkey signed a memorandum of understanding to support the exchange of information on related issues with the Republic of Chad in 2020 and Algeria, Palestine and Gabon in 2021.

1.2. Global/UN-wide campaigns

Activities of the UN open-ended working group on aging (OEWGA)

Turkey has been taking part in sessions of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA) since 2018. Turkish Delegates including the representatives of the Ministry of Family and Social Services attend to the meeting held in New York each year. Turkey have been providing written information for the guiding questions on the areas of rights and recommendations requested by the Chair of the OEWGA. A country statement is also presented at the General Discussion and the Delegates participate and contribute to side events and panels in line with the agenda. In 9th and 10th sessions, an assistant expert from the Ministry of Family and Social Services made a presentation on “Autonomy and Independence” and “Social Protection And Social Security” respectively as a panellist.

The OEWGA discussions allow Turkey to identify inequalities in law and in practice and provide guidance on what changes need to be made for human rights of older persons. Given the unique characteristics of aging, it is critical for Turkey to identify where the current human rights framework falls short and what appropriate and effective measures are lacking.

National policies and measures for the protection of the human rights of older persons in Turkey are included in the 3rd section of the Report titled "Ensuring aging with dignity".

1.3. The most important policy achievement during the last 20 years to contribute to empowering individuals to realize their potential for physical, mental and social well-being throughout their lives and participate and contribute to society.

Most important policy achievement during the last 20 years

A high-level policy document titled “2020-2030 Aging Vision Document” was prepared by the Ministry of Family and Social Services to guide policies, programs and services on aging. The Aging Vision Document aims to enable people to actively participate in the active aging process in every period of their lives, to strengthen the rights of older persons, to develop new service and support models for them with a rights and social inclusion-based approach, to strengthen intergenerational solidarity, and to present a new vision with a family and society-oriented approach. In the Vision Document, policies that developed for older adults are discussed under 6 headings: active aging, care economy, care services for older persons and quality of life, economics of ageing, rights of older persons, and age friendly cities and local governments. With the contribution and participation of the relevant stakeholders, 63 actions were determined for 21 goals related to the issues in the document. In this context, the preparatory work for the “**Action Plan**” which is based on the Vision Document is still in progress. The implementation and monitoring of the Aging Vision Document with 5-year action plans will be ensured.

Overview of the perspective on ageing in the last 20 years

In the last two decades, the image of older persons has changed drastically in a positive way in Turkey. In previous years, older individuals were seen as more in need of care/support. In today's Turkey, especially with the expansion of the third age population, the image of active, versatile, productive, healthy and happy elderly comes to the fore. In addition to the developments in health services and technology, the campaigns of the Ministry of Health for the prevention of diseases and the promotion of health were also effective in the development of this image.

Other good practices that have contributed significantly to the formation of a positive elderly image in recent years are the proliferation of 3rd Age Universities and the increase in lifelong learning programs. Not only such programs make older persons visible in the society, they have also contributed greatly to the development of social relations and the image of independent older adults who is learning, being productive and physically active.

In the coming years, the government is planning to expand such programs for lifelong learning and active and healthy aging. In this context, under the goals of "Active Aging" and "Independent Living" of the 2020-2030 Aging Vision Document, it is envisaged to carry out a number of studies in order to spend the expected life expectancy of individuals aged 50 and over in a healthy way and to support the independent, healthy and safe life process of older persons through lifelong learning. Detailed information on lifelong learning is given under the heading of “encouraging longer working life and working ability” of the Report.

Future actions

Actions for the future to contribute to the perspective on aging and to avoid ageism;

- Conducting public awareness studies on rights-based approaches to aging,
- Supporting the representation of older people in decision-making mechanisms such as city councils and municipal councils within the scope of the right to be represented,
- Providing training to professionals working with older persons on issues such as care, independent decision making, life with dignity, neglect and abuse, etc.,
- Preparing a Document on the Rights Older Persons to promote and protect the human rights of older persons,
- Making necessary legal amendments for older persons in the legislation based on above mentioned Document,
- Increasing lifelong learning opportunities for older persons with an active aging and social inclusion perspective,
- Expanding digital and financial literacy opportunities for older persons within the framework of active aging, social inclusion and digital transformation processes.

Goal 2: Encouraging longer working life and ability to work

2.1 Measures implemented to recognizing the potential embedded in the employment of older workers and developing labour market strategies to promote maximum participation opportunities for workers of all ages along the RIS commitments 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10 and the goals of the Lisbon Declaration

RIS Commitment 3: To promote equitable and sustainable economic growth in response to population ageing

Legislation related to non-discrimination of older employees

In Turkey, the principle of equality before the law and non-discrimination is regulated in Article 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey. Pursuant to Article 10 of the Constitution, “Everyone is equal before the law without any discrimination based on language, race, colour, gender, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion, sect or any such grounds.” As per an amendment made in the Constitution in 2010, the measures to be taken for children, older persons, persons with disabilities, the widows and orphans of martyrs of war and duty, and veterans to ensure the equality exist in practice shall not be considered as violation of the principle of equality.

Article 5 of the Labour Law No. 4857, titled “Principle of Equal Treatment”, stipulates that no discrimination based on language, race, gender, disability, political thought, philosophical belief, religion, sect and similar reasons can be made in the employment relationship. Though the term “older persons” is not included in the grounds of discrimination, it is generally commented that the connotation “similar reasons” covers older persons as well. According to this, the employer cannot treat a part-time employee against a full-time employee, or a fixed-term employee against an indefinite-term employee, unless there are fundamental reasons. Unless biological or work-related reasons necessitate, a worker cannot be directly or indirectly treated differently in the conclusion of the employment contract, in the creation, implementation

and termination of the conditions, due to gender or pregnancy. For work of the same or equal value, a lower wage cannot be agreed based on gender. The application of special protective provisions due to the gender of the worker does not justify the application of a lower wage.

In the Article 1 of the Law No. 6701 on the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey, securing the right of workers to be treated equally, preventing discrimination in benefiting from legally recognized rights and freedoms, and operating in line with these principles are included. Principles and obligations regarding the principle of equality are also stipulated in Article 3 of the Law (art. 3/1). In this provision, “discrimination based on wealth, birth, marital status, health status, disability and age is prohibited” (art. 3/2).

Increasing the IT literacy of older persons

“**The Information Society Strategy and Action Plan (2015-2018)**” was prepared as a result of a comprehensive and inclusive study in order to get involved in the global transformation and benefit from this process to the maximum extent possible. The Strategy outlines 8 main policy pillars in information society by focusing on growth and employment as main items of our country’s development agenda. In this context, building a strong information technology industry, installing broadband infrastructures through a healthy sectoral structure, organization of human resources in line with the needs of information society agenda, increasing effectiveness and reducing inequalities regarding access to information and communication technologies (ICT) by different segments of the society, ensuring information security and user trust, benefiting from information and communication technologies supported innovative solutions in societal challenges, forming an ecosystem supporting economic development through internet entrepreneurship and e-commerce, and ensuring user-centricity and effectiveness in public services are foreseen targets to be reached with this Strategy. Among the goals for 2018, following goals specifically addressed for disadvantaged groups;

261. In order to provide new employment opportunities through ICT, investments that create employment through remote working such as call centers will be encouraged, particularly in developing regions. These incentives will be aimed at increasing the employability of disadvantaged groups as a priority.

271. ICT access and usage status of individuals and their skills will be measured more soundly. In order to measure ICT access, use and skills, a digital divide index will be developed that will enable development of focused policies for disadvantaged groups in terms of age, income level, gender, physical conditions and residential location. Currently conducted field studies will be improved in a way to measure individuals’ digital skills.

306. Electronic public services will be offered through different platforms in an interoperable and integrated fashion while ensuring information security and privacy. Citizens will not be requested to provide information repeatedly. Demands and needs of disadvantaged groups in access to services will be considered especially. Compliance with international standards in delivery of e-government services will be ensured.

As can be seen in Table 2, the usage rate of ICT in Turkey has increased in recent years. The fact that these technologies are not used by a significant part of the disadvantaged population, including older people, leads to digital divide across the country. The digital divide, which

expresses the inequality in access to ICT, mostly includes individuals with low income, middle-aged and above, persons with disabilities, women, living in rural areas or underdeveloped areas.

Table 2. Information and communication technologies usage rates (percent), 2017-2021

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Internet usage rate ¹	64,7	71,0	74,0	77,7	81,4
Women's internet usage rate ¹	56,6	63,9	67,6	72,1	76,4
Internet usage rates of individuals aged 45-54 ¹	51,7	61,5	68,5	74,8	80,1
Internet usage rates of individuals aged 55-64 ¹	27,2	39,2	42,6	50,9	58,6
Internet usage rates of individuals aged 65-74 ¹	11,3	17,0	19,8	27,1	32,5
Households with broadband internet access	78,3	82,5	87,9	89,9	92,0

Source: TURKSTAT, Survey on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Usage in Households, 2017-2021

¹In the last three months

The Ministry of Family and Social Services signed cooperation protocols with Vodafone and Turkcell, major telecommunication and technology services providers in Turkey, in order to increase the digital literacy of older persons living in long-term care institutions affiliated to the Ministry. Within this scope, a pilot project titled "**Digital Spring Project**" was initiated. With the Project, technology rooms will be established in ten nursing homes in three years as of 2021, where older persons can use and experience technology. Based on the outcomes, the Ministry is planning to expand the Project to all nursing homes across the country in the coming years.

A symposium on "Digital Transformation for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly" was held by the Ministry of Family and Social Services on 19 June 2019 with the participation of public institutions and organizations, civil society organizations, local governments and universities. The aim of the symposium was to reveal and develop the talents of persons with disabilities and the elderly, to increase their participation in active labour market, to increase accessibility in all areas of life and to raise awareness about information technologies.

RIS Commitment 4: To adjust social protection systems in response to demographic changes and their social and economic consequences

Social protection system

With the reform made in 2006, all of the social security institutions were gathered under one roof with the **Social Security Institution Law No. 5502** and the Social Security Institution (SSI) was established. **Social Insurance and General Health Insurance Law No. 5510**, which entered into force on October 1, 2008, unified the legislation of these institutions. As a result of this change, the employment between the ages of 55-64 increased in some years.

Insurance branches are divided into two groups as "short-term insurances" and long-term insurances in the Law No. 5510. Disability, old-age and survivors insurances are covered under long-term insurance branches. In addition to the restructuring of the social protection system, important legal regulations were issued such as consolidation of social security institutions and provision of health insurance to the whole population by means of the implementation of Universal Health Insurance.

Benefits within the scope of old age insurance are old-age pension and old-age settlement. To qualify for both benefits, the insured is expected to meet certain conditions such as a certain number of premium payment days.

According to the amendment in the Social Insurance and General Health Insurance Law in 2019, the sum of pensions and additional payments paid from disability and old-age insurance cannot be less than 1.000 Turkish liras. If it is lower than 1.000 Turkish liras, the difference is paid from the Treasury. An adequate standard of living for older persons is ensured by this provision. On the other hand, under the Law No. 5510, a holiday bonus of 1.000 Turkish Liras (TL) was paid to pensioners, on the condition of receiving income and pension on the date of payment, during Ramadan Feast and Eid al-Adha. However, with the Covid-19, the minimum pension for older citizens has been increased from 1.000 TL to 1.500 TL; holiday bonuses paid twice a year have been increased from 1.000 TL to 1.100 TL.

Unemployment insurance and wage guarantee fund are regulated in Law No. 4447. There is a premium based unemployment insurance system for employees in Turkey, regardless of age. Unemployment benefit is made to those who lose their job while working in a workplace, despite their willingness, ability, health and competence to work, except for their own will and fault, if they also meet other conditions. All individuals, regardless of age, can benefit from unemployment benefit.

A monthly 1% insured and 2% employer's share is taken over the premium earnings of the insured, and the State contributes 1% to the system. The minimum daily benefit is 40% of the insured's average daily earnings in the last four months. The maximum monthly unemployment benefit is 80% of the gross legal monthly minimum wage. For the year 2021; the lowest unemployment benefit amount is 1.420,14 TL; the highest unemployment benefit amount is 2.840,28 TL.

RIS Commitment 5: To enable labour markets to respond to the economic and social consequences of population ageing

Supporting employment of older persons through active labour market policy

Currently, Turkey is in a period where the population growth rate for working age population is higher than the total population growth rate and the share of working age people in the total population increases over time, resulting in an advantageous large labour supply. However, the projections indicate that Turkey, which is currently in the demographic dividend period, will become a country where the proportion of persons aged 65 and over is gradually increasing, while the proportion of working age group is gradually shrinking in about 20 years. See Section 1 for statistical data on the labour force participation of older people.

Since the size and structure of older population in Turkey does not yet fully resemble the population characteristics in Europe or other developed regions of the world, and it still has a young population structure, therefore it is not yet a strong demand for older people to work and remain active in working life longer. Issues such as care services and social security come first in the older people's demands and policies for them are mostly shaped on the basis of these demands. According to the results of a research conducted by the General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly, it was revealed that older persons defined their own expectations and demands as accessibility to health services, social security, public services, urban transportation, and support in housing and home care.

Nevertheless, in the *11th Development Plan* (2019-2023)⁶, it was stated that the working age population in Turkey will start to decrease as of 2038 and the total population will start to decrease as of 2050 and within this framework, there is a need to increase the fertility rate with population policies and to develop effective and timely policies for the aging population. Necessary legislation was prepared in this direction and a series of practices were implemented to facilitate women's working life and to encourage fertility. In order to protect the young and dynamic population structure and to prevent the rapid decline in fertility, maternity leave and rights have developed for the employees, nursery incentives and flexible working opportunities. The policies and measures envisaged in the 11th Development Plan to protect the young and dynamic population structure and to increase the quality of life of older people and to empower them to participate effectively in economic and social life are;

- Enhancing access of older persons to lifelong learning opportunities,
- Developing mechanisms to empower older persons to stay in working life,
- Giving priority to households, in which persons with disabilities, economically deprived persons and older people live, in activities aimed at fighting poverty in rural areas.

Among the direct and indirect approaches on aging and older population, the sensitivity is generally on the importance of the young population. Turkey is one of the rare countries that can benefit from the demographic dividend in terms of workforce potential until 2030. To this end, Turkey aims to make maximum use of the demographic dividend and to increase the quality of life of the population by preserving the productive and dynamic population structure.

In this context, the phenomenon of aging and employment policies related to aging became one of the prominent themes during the *10th Development Plan* period (2014-2018). The Plan included the issues of working life, employment, vocational training and increasing qualifications. The ultimate goal of the Plan's objectives for the labour market is to create a labour market where decent job opportunities are offered to all segments of the society, the quality of the labour force is increased and used effectively, gender equality and occupational health and safety conditions are improved, and a safe flexibility approach is adopted. In this direction, in order to strengthen the efficiency and productivity of the labour markets, policy objectives such as the harmonization of work and family life, the dissemination of active labour force policies especially vocational guidance and consultancy services based on impact analysis, prioritization of lifelong learning activities, improving working conditions, improving the wage-productivity relationship, increasing compliance with occupational health and safety standards were determined.

In addition, a development program was designed to increase basic and vocational skills in the Plan. The program aimed to provide opportunity for individuals to develop skills required by working life in information and communication technologies, foreign language, financial literacy, problem solving, critical thinking, communication, leadership, career planning and job search, as well as artistic and sportive skills. Another regulation envisaged in vocational education is the restructuring of Public Education Centres affiliated to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training Centres operated by local governments as “Lifelong Learning

⁶ Access the 11th Development Plan at <https://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/OnbirinciKalkinmaPlani.pdf>.

Centres”. Increasing the quantity and quality of training activities offered in these centres is another goal planned in the Program.

The Development Plan also included policies and objectives related to research and development activities. In this context, policy goals such as increasing research, development and innovation activities with a focus on the private sector, commercializing the outputs and increasing added-value by accelerating the branding processes were set to increase the productivity of the capital stock and to support sustainable growth in Turkey.

The “Labour Market Development Programme” was also designed to support the above-mentioned policies and objectives. The Program, whose target audience is the unemployed, women outside the labour market, informal workers and employers, aimed to increase; labour force participation of women and employment rates to 34.9% and 31% respectively at the end of the Plan period, to expand flexible working arrangements, to strengthen the social assistance-employment link and to increase the effectiveness of employment incentives.

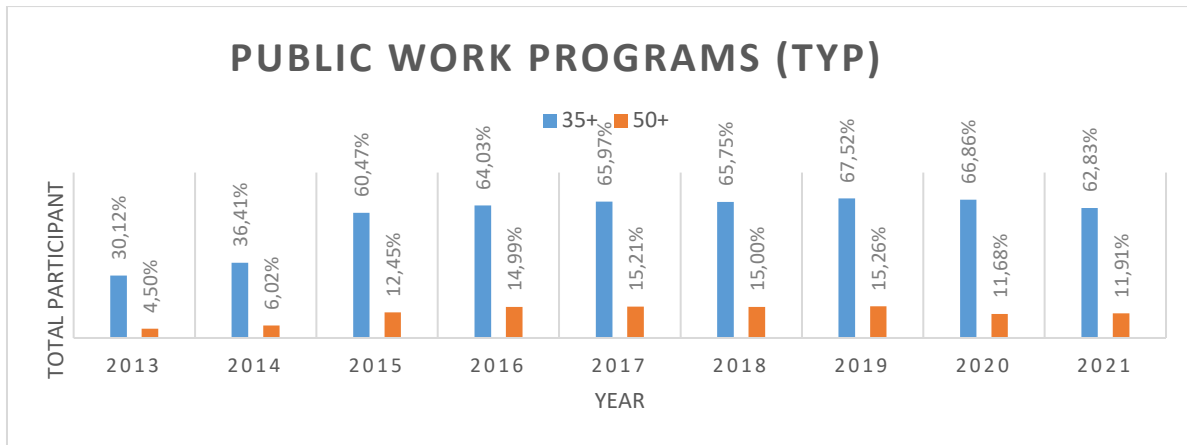
One of the main goals in the *2018-2020 Medium Term Program* was “ensuring adaptation to digital transformation and technological change, increasing the harmony of competency between the job and the workforce, increasing the employment of groups requiring special policies and combating unregistered employment to strengthen the labour market;”. In this context, following goals were included;

- Increasing accessibility to basic services such as education, health, employment and social security for disadvantaged groups,
- Continuing to improve social and physical environment in order to increase the participation of persons with disabilities in economic and social life.

Public Work Programs (TYP)

Public Work Programs, which are carried out by the Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR), target short-term employment and training of the unemployed directly or through contracting for public works in the periods of intense unemployment. These activities are generally performed to prevent the registered unemployed from joblessness for longer periods and ending up in financial difficulties, losing their work habits and discipline, and provide their short-term employment and training in the periods of financial crisis, privatization, financial structuring, natural disasters, and intense unemployment. With the regulation made in 2015, individuals over the age of 35 were able to benefit from this program with priority. The change in the participant profile of the Program after this regulation is shown in Figure 1. Accordingly, the participation of individuals aged 35 and over who are given priority to these programs has almost doubled since 2015, and this increase continued until the pandemic period.

Figure 1.



Source: ISKUR, 2021

Counselling services for older persons

ISKUR provides job and vocational counselling which is employment based counselling service for job seekers, employers and students. Within the scope of these services, job seekers registered in ISKUR are supported in job finding, solving their vocational adaptation problems, developing their vocational skills, changing their professions/jobs; employers are informed regarding legislation and their labour force demands are met.

The data on the job and vocational counselling services provided to the 50+ age group in order to keep the older workforce in working life longer are as follows:

- Individual consultancy services were provided to 879.532 men and 448.657 women in 2012-2020.
- 85.850 people benefitted individual consultancy services as of August 2021 (58.661 men and 27.189 women).
- A total of 3.934.238 individual interviews were conducted.

Other labour market programs and implementations conducted by ISKUR

Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR) is the public authority in charge of designing and implementing active and passive labour market policies in Turkey. As per the data of the ISKUR, the number of unemployed persons aged 50 and over registered with the Agency is 165.474 (69,255 women and 96,219 men) as of August 2021.

Within the scope of job placement services to ensure and support the sustainable employment of older workforce by ISKUR, 412.169 people were employed in the 50+ age group between 2011 and 2020 and 41.348 people were employed as of August 2021.

ISKUR organises **active labour market programs** all around Turkey through the vocational education courses, on-the-job training programs and entrepreneurship training programs in order to find solutions for the unemployment issue and enable job seekers to acquire relevant vocational qualities and skills. The number of persons aged 50 and over benefitted from active labour market programs is as the following:

- **Vocational training courses:** 50.333 persons in 2012-2020; 4.332 persons in January-August period of 2021 benefitted from the courses.

- **On-the-job training program:** 20.305 persons in 2012-2020; 3.719 persons in January-August period of 2021 were able to gain experience with the on-the-job training program.
- **Entrepreneurship training programs:** 23.689 persons attended to entrepreneurship training programs in 2012-2019.

In addition, İSKUR organises **passive labour market programs**, which are benefitted by older persons as well, to protect the employment of older workforce and to provide income support during the unemployment period. Passive labour market statistics are the following:

- **Unemployment benefit:** The number of unemployed aged 50 and over receiving unemployment benefit is 401.944 persons in 2002-2020; 30.545 persons at the end of August 2021.
- **Wage guarantee fund:** 8.060 persons aged 50 and over in 2007-2020; 348 persons aged 50 and over at the end of August 2021 benefitted from the wage guarantee fund.
- **Short-term employment allowance** is paid to employees because of the reduced working time due to crisis or forces majeure. 232,379 persons aged 50 and over in 2009-2020; 6,970 persons aged 50 and over as of February 2021 benefitted from short-term allowance.
- During the pandemic, **benefits in cash** provided to 182.966 persons aged 50 and over.

İŞKUR also organizes career days and employment fairs where job seekers and employers come together, and public institutions and organizations can open stands. Job and vocational counsellors carry out labour market researches and information is collected on detailed topics such as occupations that may create a job in the future and vacant job positions.

Communication channels

All kinds of questions, suggestions, criticisms and complaints received through e-government, CIMER (Presidential Communication Centre) and ALO 170 Work Life Communication Centre related to the activities of İSKUR are processed effectively and quickly. In addition, complaints or requests can be submitted to the Provincial Directorates of Labour and Employment Agency/Service Centres in electronic format or in person, and solutions are produced for citizens in this way.

RIS Commitment 6: To promote lifelong learning and adapt the educational system in order to meet the changing economic, social and demographic conditions

Lifelong learning

Educational activities for various age groups including older people are offered by central and local public institutions, and civil society organizations. The most common of these trainings are the courses that provide lifelong skills, knowledge and cultural development to individuals from different age groups at the **Public Education Centres** affiliated to the Ministry of National Education. These courses are given free of charge periodically at certain times of the year. These courses are designed to be accessible to all segments of society at the district and neighbourhood level.

In addition, universities in some of the provinces offer higher education programs for older persons within the framework of active aging and lifelong learning. These programs, called **3rd Age University**, enable the individual to spend the aging process as productive and meaningful

as other stages of his/her life and to continue his personal development in a comprehensive way within the framework of the concept of lifelong learning. 3rd Age University is an important part of lifelong learning in Turkey. For this reason, it is expected that the education given to older people will improve the health awareness, intellectual and physical activities and artistic capacities of them and encourage active participation in the local environment. 3rd Age University is seen as an opportunity for older people to integrate with the society and maintain their productivity.

In these programs, in addition to the courses such as philosophy, psychology, communication, archaeology, public health, lifelong health, rights of older persons in the legislation, law/copywriting, microbiology, geriatrics, cosmology, mythology; courses on the art of cooking, psychodrama, yoga, aikido, folk dances and knitting are also provided. The education model is voluntary and the content is determined in line with the programs of the relevant universities and the demands of the older participants. Older individuals benefit from these universities free of charge.

Although the age group is flexible, in general, every individual aged 60 and over can apply to the 3rd Age University. In this context, 3rd Age Universities set an example as the most widespread and sustainable lifelong learning program implemented on ageing in Turkey. The 3rd Age University, which started within the body of Akdeniz University in 2016, became widespread in a short time and started to be implemented in many universities such as Ege University, Ankara University, Mugla Sitki Kocman University, Nisantasi University, Anadolu University, University of Kyrenia. The Ministry of Family and Social Services and the Higher Education Institution signed a protocol in order to expand 3rd Age Universities in all universities in Turkey.

The activities to establish a lifelong learning system have been accelerated since 2000s in Turkey. The 2009-2013 Lifelong Learning Strategy Document set the baseline for the lifelong learning system, and the Ministry of National Education aimed to give it a more systematic structure with the 2014-2018 Lifelong Learning Strategy Document and Action Plan in line with national and international approaches. The priorities included in the 2014-2018 National Lifelong Learning Strategy Document and Action Plan prepared to increase effectiveness and efficiency of lifelong learning system are as follows;

- Establishing lifelong learning culture and awareness in the society,
- Increasing lifelong learning opportunities and provision,
- Enhancing access to lifelong learning opportunities,
- Improving lifelong guidance and counselling system,
- Improving recognition of prior learning system,
- Improving lifelong learning monitoring and evaluation system.

The Ministry of National Education established **The Lifelong Learning Portal**⁷ in January 2018, which allows citizens of all ages to access lifelong learning activities from a single point. The portal is an important innovation as 'the door to learning and working opportunities'. In addition to current learning and employment opportunities, the portal provides lifelong guidance on information for people's professional and personal development needs. The Portal, where data from various service providers are brought together, provides information on all

⁷ The Lifelong Learning Portal can be reached at www.hbo.gov.tr.

learning opportunities from basic education to higher education, from non-formal education to distance learning. In the career guidance section of the portal, important information about career planning and profession choice can be accessed, and individuals can make self-evaluations through various scales, questionnaires and worksheets presented on the portal.

The project of “**Meaningful Occupation after Retirement for Active and Healthy Ageing (MORE)**”⁸, which was coordinated by Social Security Institution and supported by European Commission in 2017 and 2019, aimed to create an *Adaptation to Retirement: Life Long Learning Module* in order to ensure that retirees do not fall into the gap in the adaptation process to their new life after work.

RIS Commitment 10: To promote the implementation and follow-up on the regional implementation strategy through regional co-operation

Multilateral collaboration

Various projects are carried out in Turkey in cooperation with civil society organizations, the Ministry of Family and Social Services, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the United Nations, and UNICEF to ensure the participation of older persons and citizens who have difficulties in entering the labour market in economic activities and their functionality in the economic cycle.

2.2. Gender wage gap

Detailed information on the legal regulations regarding non-discrimination in the working life is given under “RIS Commitment 3” in relation to the “Encouraging longer working life and ability to work” in Section 2.

The amendment made in the Article 10 of the Constitution in 2004 guaranteed that men and women have equal rights and State is responsible for ensuring this equality. Additionally, the Article 90 of the Constitution states that international treaties have the force of law.

In this direction, one of the main conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the “**Equal Remuneration Convention No. 100**” was approved by Turkey on 19 July 1967 and entered into force. Article 1 of the Convention stipulates that equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value.

The UN Convention on the “**Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**” dated 19 December 1979 was ratified by Turkey on 24 July 1985. The states party to the Convention recognizes the “right to equal remuneration for work of equal value” in order to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment.

The right to equal treatment in domestic law is also included in the Labour Law and it stipulates that "A lower wage cannot be determined due to gender for a job of the same or equal value" (art. 5/4).

When the 11th Development Plan (2019-2023) is examined in the light of the developments in the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the national level, it is observed

⁸ <http://www.moreprojesi.com/?lang=en>

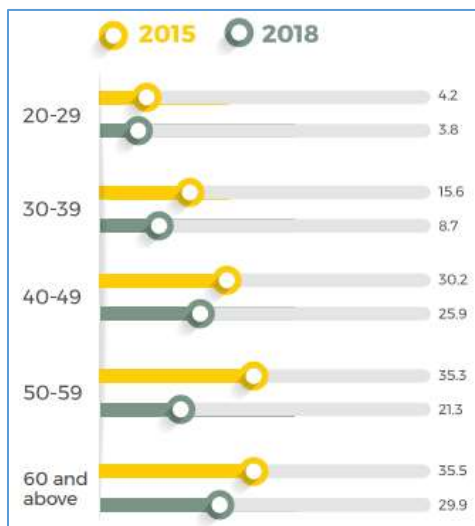
that the issues of eliminating all kinds of gender discrimination and the gender wage gap are included in the Plan.⁹

Within the framework of the “**Women's Empowerment Strategy Document and Action Plan 2018-2023**” prepared under the coordination of the Ministry of Family and Social Services, General Directorate for the Status of Women, activities related to reducing the gender wage gap are set in the strategy number 4 in the field of economy.

The project titled “**More and Better Jobs for Women: Women’s Empowerment through Decent Work in Turkey**” was jointly implemented between 2013 and 2018 by ILO and the Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR) with the funding of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Within the scope of the project, a series of activities were carried out to raise awareness on gender wage gap and possible solutions to it for public institutions, workers’ and employers’ organizations and civil society organizations. A cooperation protocol was signed between the ILO Office for Turkey and TURKSTAT in January 2020 with the intention of measuring and presenting the gender wage gap in Turkey in a comprehensive manner using alternative data sources and a report titled “**Measurement of Gender Wage Gap**” was prepared.

In the report, gender wage gaps were provided for various sub-groups (by educational level, age group, economic activity, occupational group etc.) using data from the Income and Living Conditions Survey (2015-2018). According to 2018 data, the average gender wage gap was 15.6% while the median level was at 14.6%.

Figure 2. Gender Wage Gap by Age Group (%)



Source: TURKSTAT, Income and Living Conditions Survey (2015-2018).

Gender wage gap increases with age, being lowest at the ages between 20-29 years old with a significant increase observed at the 30s and 40s (Figure 2). These latter periods over the life cycle correspond to the ages when job promotions take place at work and women experience setbacks due maternity, marriage or reasons alike in their working life. Gender wage gap is 3.8% for the youngest among the age groups (20-29) while the gap is 29.9% for people aged 60 or over. There is a decline in the gender wage gap from 2015 to 2018 across all age groups.

⁹ 11th Development Plan 2019-2023 (art. 599, p. 151).

The largest change is observed for the age groups 30-39 and 50-59 age brackets. Note that the proportion of 40 or older women among all women in employment, increased considerably over the period 2015-2018 (Table 3).

Table 3. Distribution of Employment by Gender and Age Group (percent)

	2015		2018	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
<20	4,7	5,3	3,5	4,1
20-29	32,1	26,4	29,7	25,2
30-39	34,6	33,2	32,1	32,1
40-49	20,4	23,6	24,6	24,9
50-59	6,6	9,8	7,9	11,4
60 and above	1,7	1,8	2,1	2,4

Source: TURKSTAT, Income and Living Conditions Survey (2015-2018).

2.3. The most important achievement during the last 20 years in recognizing the potential embedded in the employment of older workers and developing labour market strategies to promote maximum participation opportunities for workers of all ages

Most important policy achievement during the last 20 years

The activities to establish a lifelong learning system have been accelerated since 2000s in Turkey. Lifelong learning system has been systematically restructured with the **2014-2018 Lifelong Learning Strategy Document and Action Plan**, prepared by the Ministry of National Education, in line with national and international approaches. The priorities included in the Document prepared to increase effectiveness and efficiency of lifelong learning system are as follows;

- Establishing lifelong learning culture and awareness in the society,
- Increasing lifelong learning opportunities and provision,
- Enhancing access to lifelong learning opportunities,
- Improving lifelong guidance and counselling system,
- Improving recognition of prior learning system,
- Improving lifelong learning monitoring and evaluation system.

Additionally, the Ministry of National Education established **The Lifelong Learning Portal** in January 2018, which allows citizens of all ages to access lifelong learning activities from a single point. The portal is an important innovation as 'the door to learning and working opportunities'. In addition to current learning and employment opportunities, the portal provides lifelong guidance on information for people's professional and personal development needs. The Portal, where data from various service providers are brought together, provides information on all learning opportunities from basic education to higher education, from non-formal education to distance learning. In the career guidance section of the portal, important information about career planning and profession choice can be accessed, and individuals can make self-evaluations through various scales, questionnaires and worksheets presented on the portal.

Future actions

In the section of economics of ageing in the **2020-2030 Aging Vision Document**;

Actions planned to provide *income security and poverty prevention*:

- Continuing to support implementations such as social protection expenditures (such as social benefits, home care support, free and low-paid housing or residential care institution support) and pension payments so that older people can live in decent living conditions.

Actions planned regarding the goal of supporting the participation of older population in economic and social life in the context of *silver economy*:

- Raising awareness on consumer rights in many areas such as health, housing, entertainment, travel and media in the context of the “silver tsunami” wave that emerged due to the increase in older population,
- Carrying out studies to raise awareness in the society on issues such as economic preparation for retirement, savings and investment behaviours, digital banking, credit use, and to prepare a guide on financial literacy.

Actions planned to support active aging by ensuring the participation of older individuals in economic and social life under the *employment* goal:

- Accommodating the physical conditions of the workplaces ergonomically in accordance with the older workers’ needs,
- Ensuring professional solidarity and experience sharing between generations in working life,
- Developing profile-based consultancy services,
- Providing trainings on computer and internet literacy,
- Disseminating the job club services for older people,
- Developing web-based consultancy and training services,
- Carrying out guidance and consultancy activities to prevent age discrimination in working life,
- Developing current active labour market programs.

Policies and measures planned in the **Medium Term Program (2021-2023)**, which is a programming tool that guides public policy and practice:

- Providing more flexible conditions to enhance the employability of persons aged 50 and over,
- Encouraging the transition of full-time employees aged 50 and over to part-time work in order to support employment in older age groups, thus making the work-life balance healthier,
- Implementing active labour force programs effectively in order to increase the employability of individuals who are able to work and receive social assistance,
- Organizing active labour force programs for groups requiring special policies and mediating the employment of these groups in the private sector,
- Establishing a digital library to enhance access to the trainings offered by Turkish Employment Agency, in which older persons also participate.

Goal 3: Ensuring ageing with dignity

3.1 Measures contributing to protecting older persons' enjoyment of all human rights and dignity, promoting their autonomy, self-determination and participation in society, and making sure that no law, policy or programme leaves room for discrimination of any kind along RIS commitments 7, 8, 9 and 10 and the goals of the Lisbon Declaration

RIS Commitment 7: To strive to ensure quality of life at all ages and maintain independent living including health and well-being

Protecting older persons' enjoyment of all human rights and dignity

As is known, there is no international convention binding the states parties on the human rights of older persons. As in other countries, legal arrangements for the protection of human rights and dignity of older persons are scattered in the Turkish legislation.

Older persons in Turkey can resort to the jurisdiction in case they think their rights are being abused and they can apply to various authorities in order to have the concerned abuses assessed or corrected.

In line with the provisions of Article 74 of the Constitution on right of petition, citizens hold the right to submit their complaints through official petitions to parliamentary or to competent authorities. **The Law on the Right to Petition** dated 1984 grants applicants the right to receive a justified response from the competent authorities within 30 days at the latest. Petition Commission responds to the petitions submitted to the parliament within 60 days. The Commission sends some of the petitions to the related public institutions and the responses are collected within 30 days at the latest.

In accordance with Article 74 of the Constitution, citizens can apply to government auditor for their complaints about the functioning of public administrations. Within this context, **Public Investigation Institution (Ombudsman Institution)** was established in 2012. The Institution is responsible for investigating, researching and making recommendations about the conformity of all kinds of actions, acts, attitudes and behaviours of the administration with law and fairness within the understanding of justice based on human rights. Natural and legal persons including foreign national have the right to apply to the institution and their identities are kept confidential on request.

The applications made to the Ombudsman Institution by older persons mostly include administrative complaints within the scope of social security law, applications for social assistance, works and transactions made by the Ministry of Family and Social Services and Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations, and services of the municipalities for older people. The Ombudsman, the highest administrative officer of the Institution, advises the administrations on the issues he deems appropriate as a result of the investigations made. The Institution submits an annual report to the General Assembly of the Turkish Grand National Assembly regarding its decisions and activities. The Institution can also prepare special reports on the issues it deems necessary within the scope of its powers, without a complaint.

Another mechanism that citizens can resort in case of violations of their rights is the **Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey (TIHEK)**, which was established in 2016. The Institution has the authority to examine, investigate, conclude and follow the consequences of

non-discrimination violations ex officio or upon application. TIHEK has three main tasks: protection and promotion of human rights, equality against discrimination and national prevention mechanism. **Discrimination based on age** is prohibited in the organizational law of TIHEK. In addition, the scope of the prohibition of discrimination is regulated in Article 5 of the Law and provisions regarding the prevention of discrimination are included in Article 6 under the title of "Employment and self-employment".

Based on the provisions of the "Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment" (OPCAT), TIHEK acts as a **national prevention mechanism**. In this context, it conducts regular visits to the places where people under protection stay and prepares a report containing recommendations regarding these visits. Among these places, there are **Nursing Homes, Elderly Care and Rehabilitation Centres**. TIHEK conducts inspections to prevent torture and ill-treatment and to ensure that the elderly stay in a better environment in nursing homes, and makes recommendations to improve conditions after these inspections. These inspections and recommendations by the national prevention mechanism are examples of good practice that contribute to protecting the enjoyment of all human rights and dignity by older people.

As a national human rights institution, TIHEK carries out various studies in order to contribute to the protection and development of the human rights of older persons. In this context, a **workshop on "The Rights of Older Persons"** was held on 2 December 2019 by the institution, where the rights of older persons and discrimination against them were discussed in various aspects. In the workshop two sessions were held on "The Rights of Older Persons as a Neglected Area" and "Discrimination against Older Persons as a Type of Discrimination". Following the workshop, the "Consultation Committee Meeting" on the rights of older persons was held. As a result of the study, "Book on the Rights of Older Persons Workshop and Final Declaration of the Workshop on the Rights of Older Persons" was published.

"The Forum on the Rights of Older Persons" was organized by TIHEK on 22 March 2021. The event was carried out on two main themes: "Rights of Older Persons in Law and Practice" and "Rights of Older Persons in the COVID-19 Pandemic Process", and then a Final Declaration¹⁰ was published. In the first session, public services offered to older people were discussed in terms of the general situation of the rights of older persons. The rights of older person in the legal system has been expressed in the context of administrative law and human rights law. In the second session, the problems faced by older individuals during the pandemic process, especially stigmatization and age discrimination, were discussed. In addition, the results of the public survey on the **"Perception of Aging of Persons aged 60 and over, and Their Views on Their Own Problems"** conducted between 1-14 March 2021 with the participation of 5.600 people across Turkey were shared at the event.

"A Consultation Meeting on the Rights of Older Persons" was held on 22 June 2021 hosted by TIHEK. At the meeting attended by representatives of public institutions and organizations, universities and civil society organizations, the problems faced by older persons in daily life and the place and significance of them in our civilization were discussed.

¹⁰ Final Declaration for the Forum on the Rights of Older Persons can be reached at https://www.tihek.gov.tr/upload/file_editor/2021/06/1623708435.pdf.

Action Plan on Human Rights

In line with the vision of “Free Individual, Strong Society; More Democratic Turkey”, the **Action Plan on Human Rights**¹¹ was announced to the public on March 2, 2021, in order to raise the human rights standards. The Action Plan covers the activities of all ministries and public institutions and organizations as a continuation of the reforms based on the 11th Development Plan (2019-2023) and the Judicial Reform Strategy Paper¹², which was made public by the President of the Republic on 30 May 2019. The Plan envisages to create a high level of awareness and a strong system of protection oriented at resolving the problems in practice. Furthermore, in addition to amendments that expand the scope of rights and freedoms through a detailed screening over the legislation, another goal is to be able to offer public services in an accessible, accountable, equal, transparent and fair manner.

One of the areas in the Action Plan where the State needs to take affirmative action and develop special policies is the rights of persons with disabilities and/or the elderly. In the Action Plan, it is stated that the improvements launched via legal amendments in Turkey in this regard have gained a significant momentum particularly since 2003. The Plan also emphasizes that the principle of “social state” in the Constitution has been turned into a fundamental norm for individuals with disabilities and the elderly with the measures that have been taken. This norm has made itself strongly felt within sentence execution policies in the recent years. As a continuation of this strategy, the Action Plan envisages a range of activities oriented at further expanding the rights of convicts and detainees, developing special execution procedures, and being mindful of the vulnerable groups in penitentiary institutions. Increasing the possibilities for the seriously-ill, elderly, pregnant convicts or those with disabilities to serve their sentences at home, expanding the scope of alternative sanctions to short-term prison sentence, and expanding the scope of release on parole for the elderly convicts and those with disabilities are some of the activities planned in this respect.

Access to Justice

Measures taken to ensure accessibility to the justice system prioritize measures to strengthen the mechanisms for claiming rights or the ways to seek their rights and to raise awareness of victims, including vulnerable groups. For this reason, it is important to eliminate the risk of victims in the vulnerable group in terms of the possibility of re-victimization and to develop activities for psycho-social support of elderly victims in the judicial system for this purpose.

In this context, “the Directorates of Judicial Support and Victim Services” were established in 116 courthouses as of 2021. Efforts are underway to establish these Directorates in 45 more courthouses. The Directorates provides information and guidance to victims and they can easily access accurate information about their rights and obligations throughout the judicial process. In practice, a legal support plan, case management and follow-up programs have been developed for victims in the vulnerable group, and it was envisaged that the necessary planning, implementation, monitoring and coordination processes will be carried out by a single legal support officer in order to provide services to victims in a systematic and timely manner. Elderly victims receive psycho-social support throughout the judicial process, thus minimizing the effects of the crime on the judicial process.

¹¹ https://inhak.adalet.gov.tr/Resimler/SayfaDokuman/1262021081047Action_Plan_On_Human_Rights.pdf

¹² Access the Judicial Reform Strategy Paper at <http://www.sgb.adalet.gov.tr>.

With the objective No. 6.5 of the Judicial Reform Strategy (2019-2023), it is envisaged to take measures to facilitate the access of older people to justice. In this regard, 109 specially equipped **Judicial Interview Rooms (AGOs)** operate in 81 provinces and 104 courthouses across the country. An AGO is a room in the courthouse, with high-technology equipment and designed to minimise secondary victimisation and ensure safe and less intimidating judicial interview that is in accordance with the age, the level of development and the psychology of vulnerable victims of crime.

The "**Guidelines on Approaching Victims**", which includes the basic principles of approaching victims by public officials who are in contact with victims of crime, has been prepared and the principles of approaching to older victims are also included in this guide.

An easily accessible, plain and understandable website has been prepared for victims of crime ("magdurbilgi.adalet.gov.tr"). Victims who visit the website can easily learn what rights they have based on the type of victimization they have experienced, which services they can receive from which institutions and what kind of procedure they should follow.

In addition, brochures containing information about some fundamental rights and types of crimes were prepared and made accessible in courthouses in order to inform crime victims about the judicial process.

Improving the quality of life and ensuring the welfare of older persons

In his remarks at the General Assembly of the United Nations on 25 September 2018 on the importance of the issue of ageing and the needs of older persons in Turkey and in other countries of the world, H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Turkey underlined the need to declare 2019 as the "**Year of Older Persons**" and to organize an "**International Council On Ageing**" that would provide a platform to tackle the issue of ageing comprehensively.

In the 1st Council on Ageing, commission studies were conducted with the contributions of foreign and local experts, academicians, representatives of public institutions and civil society organisations on the topics of Active Ageing (Healthy Living and Participation to Social Life), Care Economy, Care Services for Older Persons and the Quality of Life, Age-Friendly Cities and Local Governments", the Rights of Older Persons, Economics of Ageing.

Within the scope of the Year of Older Persons 2019, "Regional Welfare Seminars on Elderly Welfare" were organized across the country by the Ministry of Family and Social Services in order to increase awareness on improving the quality of life of older persons and enduring the welfare of them, at the regional level.

RIS Commitment 8: To mainstream a gender approach in an ageing society.

The Strategy paper and action plan on women's empowerment 2018-2023

"The Strategy Paper and Action Plan on Women's Empowerment"¹³ has been prepared under the coordination of the Ministry of Family and Social Services, General Directorate on the Status of Women covering the period 2018-2023. The Action Plan aimed at promotion of

¹³ <https://www.aile.gov.tr/media/6315/kad%C4%B1n%C4%B1n-gue%C3%A7lenmesi-strajesi-belgesi-veyem-plan%C4%B1-2018-2023.pdf>

women's participation in economic and social life; ensuring women's equal access to rights and opportunities; mainstreaming the principle of equality between women and men into all main plans and programs, has been a very comprehensive action plan prepared for women's empowerment.

The Strategy Paper includes the current situation, main purpose, objectives, strategies and activities regarding the five main policy pillars for women's empowerment: education, economy, health, participation in decision-making mechanisms and media.

In addition, cross-cutting policy areas have been determined to be addressed under the policy axes of the Paper, and these have been taken into account in the formulation of objectives, targets, strategies and activities throughout it. One of the cross-cutting policy areas is the "Aging".

Preventing all types of abuse and neglect against older persons

Today, elder abuse and neglect has become an important social problem that can be seen in any country and threaten older individuals physically, emotionally and economically or cause them harm. The Penal Code of Turkey No. 5237 has the following provisions on this issue:

Article 97: "Any person, holding the duty of protection or observation of an individual who cannot care for himself (on account of age or illness), who abandons that individual so that they are alone, shall be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment for a term of three months to two years."

Article 98: "Any person who fails to assist, taking into account his position and circumstances, an individual who is incapable of caring for themselves (on account of age, illness, injury or any other reason), or immediately notify the relevant authority of the circumstances of such individual, shall be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment for a term of up to one year, or a judicial fine."

Article 279: "Any public officer who fails to report of an offence (which requires a public investigation and prosecution), or delays in reporting such offence, to the relevant authority, after becoming aware of such offence in the course of his duty, shall be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment for a term of six months to two years."

Article 280: "Any member of the medical profession who fails to report of an offence, or delays in reporting such offence, to the relevant authority after becoming aware, in the course of his duty, of any evidence demonstrating that a crime may have been committed shall be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment for a term up to one year."

According to the Articles 279 and 280, public officers and members of the medical profession are obliged to report elder abuse.

In addition to academic research on elder abuse and neglect, various awareness raising activities are also carried out by different institutions. For example, a conference was organized by Ankara University Aging Studies Application and Research Centre (YASAM) on 15 June 2021, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), on the occasion of "June 15 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day".

On the other hand, preventing all kinds of violence, harassment and abuse against women is one of the most important agenda items of the Ministry of Family and Social Services. In this

direction, legal, training and awareness raising, inter-institutional cooperation and coordination activities are carried out and protective and preventive services are provided.

National action plans that set out the main policy priorities in combating violence against women have been prepared regularly since 2007. With the expiration of the 3rd National Action Plan (2016-2020), “**The 4th National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women (2021-2025)**” has been developed with the contribution and participation of public institutions and organisations, civil society organisations and women’s studies centres of various universities, taking into consideration the relevant international conventions and provisions of national legislation, relevant research and evaluation reports and recent social needs and developments.

Five main goals set in the Action Plan (2021-2025) are as follows:

- Access to justice and legislation
- Policy and coordination
- Protective preventive services
- Social awareness
- Data and statistics

In line with the 3rd National Action Plan, a joint study was carried out on the problems and related solutions through the cooperation between the Ministry of Family and Social Services, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Health and the Presidency of Religious Affairs. “**The Coordination Plan for Combating Violence against Women (2020-2021)**” was prepared as result of the work carried out. Through the Coordination Plan, 75 activities are planned to be carried out by the relevant institutions within the scope of the following titles; effective implementation of the legislation, development of institutional capacities, awareness raising, data collection and research.

Pursuant to the Law No. 6284 on the Protection of the Family and the Prevention of Violence against Women, adopted in 2012, the Ministry of Family and Social Services established “Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres (SONIM)” throughout the country. These centres offer psychosocial, legal, educational, vocational and economical support as well as counselling and guidance services. These services are provided to victims of violence without any discrimination based on age, gender, disability, etc.

As of today, such Centres are operational in each provinces across Turkey. The number of people who received services from these Centres in 2018-2021 is shown in the table below.

Table 4. Number of people who received services from SONIM in 2018- 2021

Year	Female	Male	Children	Total
2018	107.070	10.462	17.740	135.272
2019	164.945	9.494	19.012	193.451
2020	189.663	16.648	14.397	220.708
01.01.2021- 31.07.2021	135.403	11.932	9.547	156.882

Source: Ministry of Family and Social Services General Directorate on the Status of Women, 2021

As of today, **Contact Points for Combating the Violence** have been established in 365 Social Service Centres to facilitate access to the victims and to strengthen the effective combating with violence against women on a provincial/district basis.

Through the “**ALO 183 Social Support Line**” of the Ministry of Family and Social Services, psychological, legal and economic guidance and consultancy services are offered for families, women, children, persons with disabilities, elderly, relatives of martyrs, veterans and their relatives who are victims of violence or are at risk of being subjected to violence. This line is free of charge and available in different languages 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There is also a 3G feature for hearing impaired individuals. The support line can also be reached via SMS, WhatsApp and BIP applications at the contact number "+90 501 183 0 183".

RIS Commitment 9: To support families that provide care for older adults and promote intergenerational and intragenerational solidarity among family members.

Promoting older persons’ autonomy and participation in society

There are a number of practices to promote older persons’ autonomy and the participation in the society including the social relationship with their family and friends. In this context, in addition to long-term institutional care; home care support services, home healthcare services, home care allowance, day care services, consultancy services, old age pension, benefits in-kind and in-cash, support in assistive technology, tax exemptions and derogations, and free or discounted travel opportunities are provided by the State.

Although the traditional family structure and function in Turkey has changed in recent years, the care of older persons is still largely undertaken by family members. At this point, one of the services offered both to support caregiving families and to encourage intergenerational solidarity among family members is the “**home care allowance**”. As per the “Social Services Law No. 2828”, the Ministry of Family and Social Services pays the family member who provides care to a person with disability and an older person in need of care and in economic and social deprivation, on a monthly basis equal to the amount to be found by multiplying the indicator number (10,000) and the civil servant monthly coefficient. While the number of people benefiting from home care allowance was 28.583 in 2007, this number increased by 18 times and reached approximately to 536.000 in July 2021.

Home care support services include services such as guidance and vocational counselling, social and psychological support, technical services (home repair of the elderly, painting, etc.), health care (injection, blood pressure measurement, etc.) and cleaning services (in terms of ensuring the hygiene of the elderly and home), etc.

Day care services are provided through Day Life Centres to older persons who live in their own home or with their families and individuals with dementia, especially Alzheimer, in order to increase their quality of life to meet their psychological, social and health needs and contribute to their leisure time. As of August 2021, 382 older persons benefitted from 31 Day Life Centres.

Elderly Support Program (YADES) was put into practice in 2016 by the Ministry of Family and Social Services in order to support, strengthen, ensure standardization and expand the services of local governments for older persons in Turkey. YADES, which is realized with the resources transferred from the general budget, is a project-based support program that aims to raise awareness about old age by activating local dynamics, to support older persons in their own home environment and to prevent their isolation from social life. Within the scope of the program, home care and day care services of local governments for older individuals are supported. As of 2021, more than 66 thousand older individuals have been reached with the YADES program.

Home healthcare: The Ministry of Health provides home healthcare services at home to individuals from all age groups who need home healthcare and rehabilitation services due to their chronic illness. With the “Directive on Implementation Procedures and Principles of Home Healthcare Services Provided by the Ministry of Health” dated 1 February 2010, healthcare services provided by institutions and organizations affiliated to the Ministry through home healthcare service units to citizens at home and in the family environment were defined. Citizens across the country can request home healthcare services by calling the call centre at 444 3 833. Since 1 March 2011, home healthcare services have been covered by the social security.

Old age pension is the monthly payment made to citizens aged 65 and over who do not have social security and whose monthly income per capita is less than 1/3 of the net minimum wage, taking into account the person and his spouse. As of 2021, 797.426 people receive old-age pension. As per the Law No. 2022, older persons who receive pensions and their dependents are covered by General Health Insurance. The payment of the old-age pension can also be made in the residence of the individual upon request. Electricity Consumption Support is also provided to people who receive old-age pension.

Hot meal service is provided by the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations established in each province and district to older persons, persons with disabilities, the sick and those who are not able to cook at home within the scope of Law No. 3294.

The Ministry of Family and Social Services held a meeting on the “**Alzheimer/Dementia Service Models Evaluation**” on 25 September 2019 with the participation of relevant stakeholders to develop patient care and support for patient relatives which are carried out by central, local, non-governmental and private institutions for dementia, particularly Alzheimer's disease. For individuals with dementia, for whom exercise and regular physical activity are of great importance in improving their quality of life, a book titled "Protective Approaches for

Individuals with Dementia" has been prepared by the Ministry of Health and has been put into print recently.

Turkey has been invited to the second phase of the *Global Dementia Observatory Platform* organized by the WHO, which includes comparable policy, information, data and service delivery data in the field of dementia. Additionally, the Global Dementia Observatory Survey is periodically updated by the focal point at the Ministry of Health on behalf of Turkey.

Long-term care

Although long-term care services in Turkey are rendered by different institutions and organizations such as municipalities, foundations, associations and similar organizations; the Ministry of Family and Social Services is the main public authority that carries out services of the identification, protection, care, training and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities and older persons with the Decree Law No. 633 dated 3 June 2011. In this context, an integrated care model policy has been implemented in recent years to integrate long-term care and healthcare services. Long-term care services offered for older persons by the Ministry include nursing homes, elderly care and rehabilitation centres and elderly living homes, which are a community based care model. In addition, there are public and private care centres that provide care services for persons with disabilities and older persons with disabilities can also benefit from these care centres.

Nursing homes are residential social care institutions that provide continuous care and psychological, social and physical rehabilitation services for persons aged 60 and over. Services such as accommodation, individual self-care, health, social support-counselling, psychological support-counselling, rehabilitation, social activity, nutrition and cleaning are provided in nursing homes. Older people with insufficient economic status can benefit from services at a discount or free of charge in the nursing homes. While the number of nursing homes under the Ministry was 63 in 2002 and the number of older people receiving service was 4.952, these numbers increased to 162 and 11.918, respectively, as of August 2021.

Elderly care and rehabilitation centres provides services for persons aged 60 and over who need special care and rehabilitation. It is obligatory to establish these centres in every nursing home as a separate unit. Older persons who have lost their physical and mental abilities to different degrees and become in need of rehabilitation, continuous and special care, and older persons who come to this situation while they are at home and become difficult to care for by their families can benefit from these centres.

Elderly living homes have been implemented first in 2012 as a community-based care approach. Three or four elderly persons of the same gender live in an apartment or a house together with the neighbours in their own environment without being isolated from the social life and daily housework, kitchen arrangements and food are carried out by the care personnel. The purpose of this model is to support active ageing and participation of the elderly in the society, and to prevent social exclusion. Elderly living homes are an exemplary practice in terms of maintaining the life of the elderly person without being separated from the society and ensuring their individual autonomy. As of August 2021, 90 elderly individuals benefit from 25 elderly living homes with a capacity of 117.

Raising quality standards for social and long-term care services

The need for a structural transformation to provide a homogeneous and objective coexistence of care services for persons with disabilities and the elderly in Turkey emerged especially in the 2000s. In this context, the Ministry of Family and Social Services developed the ***“Quality Standards for Care Services”*** in order to improve the quality in long-term care system for persons with disabilities and the elderly by managing the disrupted processes, measuring the performance of the services and institutions, ensuring the safety of caregivers and care receivers, and establishing a system that measures the satisfaction. Standards have been prepared with a rights-based and person centred approach by considering the privacy and safety of the person with a disability and older person, the satisfaction of the care receiver and caregiver, and it has been planned to allow quality and performance measurements.

Quality standards for care services have become mandatory for institutional care services for persons with disabilities and older persons, as well as home care services, home care support services and day care services with the directive published on 16 December 2019. In this direction, the ***“Implementation Guide on the Quality Standards for Care Services”*** has been prepared based on the service models in 2020.

The project titled ***“Improving Day Care and Home Care Services for the Elderly (YAGEP)”*** is carried out by the Ministry of Family and Social Services under the Second Period (2014-2020) of the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). The project aims to create a model for the improvement of day care and home care services for the elderly, and to support active aging by increasing the institutional capacity of central and local institutions. The Project, which was accepted and approved on 1 August 2020, is expected to last for 2 years from the end of 2021.

The Project titled ***“Increasing Accessibility of the Social Services by the Most Vulnerable Segments of the Turkish Citizens and Persons under Temporary Protection and Persons under International Protection”*** is carried out the Ministry of Family and Social Services under the EU financial aid program for refugees (FRIT-II) in Turkey. The Project was initiated on 17 December 2020 and it is aimed to establish day care service centres for older persons in six provinces where Syrians under temporary protection live heavily and capacity building of these centres is planned including the training of personnel providing care services.

On the other hand, various activities are carried out for the integration and development of the services offered within the scope of the integrated care model in Turkey. One of them is the ***“I. International Elderly Care Workshop from the Perspective of Gerontological Care”*** held on 18-19 June 2021. Another one is the ***“2nd International Palliative Care Congress”*** which was held on 20-23 May 2021 in cooperation with the University of Health Sciences and the Palliative Health Services Association. In addition, a number of publications and guides have been prepared as a result of the examinations and researches carried out by the Ministry of Family and Social Services. Among them;

- Dementia Care Model Report: Care and Approach to Alzheimer's and Other Dementia Patients in Turkey,
- General Framework, Models and Projections (2017),
- Report on the Elderly Care Services in Turkey: Good Practices from Europe and Designing a Model for Turkey (2017),

- Services for the Elderly, Institutional Elderly Care and the Situation of Provinces in Turkey (2018),
- International Council on Ageing Commission Reports (2020) are included.

Within the scope of the project titled **“Geriatric Patient Evaluation Training in Home Healthcare Services”** carried out by Ankara Health Directorate, trainings were given to the home healthcare personnel between 7 February-1 March 2018.

In cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Ministry of Industry and Technology and Ankara University Aging Studies Application and Research Centre (YASAM), a five-stage webinar training series on **“Professional Adaptation for Healthcare and Social Workers”** between July 2020 and September 2020 and a four-stage webinar training series on **“Aging Studies”** between October-November 2020 were held. In this context, for healthcare and social service workers; trainings were given on occupational adaptation and coping with stress during the Covid-19 period, geriatric assessment during the Covid-19 period, occupational practice-case management with older persons and persons with disabilities during the Covid-19 period, professional resilience during the Covid-19 period and the art of life. Within the scope of the Aging Studies Webinar Series, trainings were given on Pandemics: Do They Change Our Views on Age and Aging?, Physical Well-being of Older Persons: Musculoskeletal Health in the Covid-19 Period, Social and Spiritual Well-Being of Older Persons, Psychological Well-Being of Older Persons, and the Art of Living on Diet and Exercise.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Family and Social Services, Ankara University Faculty of Health Sciences and Ankara University Aging Studies Application and Research Centre (YASAM), a five-stage webinar training series was organized on anger management, stress management, case management, corporate communication and evidence-based practice during the Covid-19 process on 1-5 February 2021 for the member of profession working in the care institutions for older persons and persons with disabilities affiliated to the Ministry.

Palliative care

Palliative care is provided to increase the quality of life of patients and their relatives who encounter problems arising from life-threatening diseases, to prevent or eliminate all physical, psycho-social and mental problems, especially pain, by early detection and effective evaluations. As per the statistics of the Ministry of Health, as of 2020, palliative care services are provided in state hospitals and training and research hospitals with a total number of 5.759 beds in Turkey.¹⁴

RIS Commitment 10: To promote the implementation and follow-up on the regional implementation strategy through regional co-operation

Multilateral collaboration

In Turkey, various projects are carried out in cooperation with civil society organizations, the Ministry of Family and Social Services, the Ministry of Health, the United Nations, and the World Health Organization to protect the older persons’ enjoyment of all human rights and dignity, and to encourage their autonomy and participation in society.

¹⁴ Ministry of Health 2020 Annual Report, <https://sgb.saglik.gov.tr/Eklenti/40174/0/2020-faaliyet-raporupdf.pdf>.

3.2. *The most important achievement during the last 20 years to protecting older persons' enjoyment of all human rights and to raising quality standards for integrated social and long-term care and health services*

Most important policy achievement during the last 20 years

With the legal regulation¹⁵ issued on 30.07.2006, the Ministry of Family and Social Services pays a **home care allowance** to the relative or third person who provides care to a person with disability and older person at home on a monthly basis equal to the amount to be found by multiplying the indicator number (10,000) and the civil servant monthly coefficient. In Turkey, which still has a traditional family structure, home care allowance is one of the most important service models implemented in the last 20 years, since the care of older persons is largely undertaken by family members and their preferences are also in this direction which is indicated in various researches. Home care allowance enables older persons to live independently in their own homes or environment, and it is observed that their quality of life increases. While the number of people benefiting from home care allowance was 28.583 in 2007, this number increased by 18 times and reached approximately 536.000 in July 2021.

In order to raise the quality standards for integrated social and long-term care and healthcare services, the Ministry of Family and Social Services also conducted a study on “**Quality Standards for Care Services**”. These standards have been implemented on 16 December 2019 for institutional care services for persons with disabilities and older persons, as well as home care services, home care support services and day care services. In this direction, “**Implementation Guide on Care Services Quality Standards**” has been prepared based on the service models in 2020.

The Ministry of Family and Social Services carries out the project titled “**Improving Day Care and Home Care Services for the Elderly (YAGEP)**” in 2021-2023 under the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) to create a model for the improvement of day care and home care services for older persons, and to support active aging by increasing the institutional capacity of central and local institutions.

Future actions

Actions planned in the 2020-2030 Aging Vision Document:

- Within the scope of the goal of developing and improving the rights of older persons;
 - Raising public awareness,
 - Supporting the representation of older people in decision-making mechanisms such as city councils and municipal councils,
 - Providing training to professionals working with older persons on issues such as care, independent decision making, life with dignity, neglect and abuse, etc.,
 - Preparing a “Document on the Rights Older Persons” to promote and protect the human rights of older persons and making necessary legal amendments in the legislation based on this Document,

¹⁵ Regulation Amending the Regulation on Determination of Persons with Disabilities in Need of Care and Determination of Care Service Principles, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2007/10/20071023-10.htm>.

- Increasing the capacity of qualified workforce in order to increase the quality of care services for older persons,
- Providing trainings in cooperation with the Ministry of Family and Social Services, Vocational Qualifications Authority, Turkish Employment Agency and universities in order to improve and update the professional knowledge and skills of the care personnel.

Policies and actions planned in the **Medium Term Program (2021-2023)**, which is a programming tool that guides public policy and practice:

- Establishing a legal aid system that is sensitive to the needs of vulnerable groups, including older persons, in order to enhance access to justice more effectively,
- Strengthening the holistic structure of social assistance in order to prevent duplications in social assistance and to ensure efficiency in public resources,
- Strengthening the infrastructure of care economy and creating an actuarial model for long-term care insurance,
- Conducting a survey on “Aging and Health in Turkey” and implementing a project on “Health Monitoring for Older Adults” in order to identify the medical care needs of older persons and to ensure the appropriate and effective functioning of the diagnosis, treatment and monitoring services in old age.

Rights of Older Persons and Volunteering Project (IPA III)

The Ministry of Family and Social Services is planning to conduct a project on “The Rights of Older Persons and Volunteering” in the sub-field of Fundamental Rights under the Third Period of the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (2021-2027/IPA III).

Part III: Healthy and Active Ageing in a Sustainable World

1. Contribution of ageing-related policies to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals

1.1. Voluntary national report(s) (VNR) on the implementation of the sustainable development goals

Turkey’s 2nd VNR Report 2019

Turkey submitted the “**2nd Voluntary National Review Report (VNR)**”¹⁶ to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2019. Turkey was among the 22 countries, which submitted their first VNR Reports to the HLPF in 2016, demonstrating its strong ownership towards the Agenda. Turkey’s first VNR Report laid down a roadmap elaborating the planned steps to achieve SDGs. Its 2nd VNR Report of 2019 focuses on the status of progress towards the SDGs.

¹⁶ <http://www.surdurulebilirkalkinma.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/TURKEY-2nd-VNR-Report-2019-Strong-Ground-towards-Common-Goals-Interactive.pdf>

Along with its assessments regarding vulnerable groups under each SDG titles, the VNR Report also addresses the progress within the context of the principle of “leaving no one behind” in a separate chapter. Thereby, the actions for women, children, and persons with disabilities, older persons and refugees are reviewed in an inclusive and holistic approach.

Goals included in the Report such as reducing poverty among older persons, providing and enhancing access to basic care and health services, eliminating inequalities, protecting older persons and vulnerable groups (such as older immigrants), and developing technological infrastructures for smart and age-friendly practices are related to the 2030 agenda.

The Report indicated older persons and persons with disabilities among the groups of special focus in terms of the policies for vulnerable groups of the society. It was emphasized that various policies have been implemented to integrate persons with disabilities into the labour force as well as reduce poverty among older persons or ease the burden on their families by means of social security and assistance services. The Report also elaborated information on the YADES¹⁷ program, which provides financial support to local governments in order to improve and expand home care and day care services provided for older persons. Participation of older persons in social life, social assistance provided to persons with disabilities and older people in order to prevent poverty, and care services for them were among the main goals of the Report.

The example of “**Gender Responsive Budgeting**” draws attention in the Report, which also included policies and practices for education, health, employment, participation in social life for women and girls. According to the Report, the Sub-committee for Gender-Responsive Budgeting, under the Equal Opportunities Commission in the Turkish Grand National Assembly implemented a Project based on gender-responsive budgeting to set an example for other administrations, and executed a series of awareness-raising activities in this regard.

1.2. Links between the national political planning on ageing issues and the 2030 Agenda

SDG 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere



In the report, it is emphasized that substantial progress has been made in the last 20 years concerning the goal of eradicating poverty, and Turkey is among the countries that made most progress in eradicating poverty. It is stated that both economic growth and improvement in the social protection system contributed to this outcome.

The key components of the policy framework in line with SDG 1 are as follows:

- Improving the quality and quantity of protective and preventive services to avoid the risk of poverty,
- Alleviating destructive effects of poverty, improving social assistance and social service system,
- Increasing the participation of disadvantaged groups, notably women and young people, to economic activities and
- Implementing employment policies targeting these groups,
- Facilitating the access to opportunities for groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion,

¹⁷ Please see page 41 for detailed information on YADES Program.

- Increasing the participation of civil society and enhancing the role of local administrations in combating poverty,
- Ensuring the coordination between the information systems of social assistance and social service,
- Conducting social adaptation analyses,
- Increasing the impact of taxes and social transfers that reduce income inequality and poverty.

Some of the issues addressed in the report for vulnerable groups, including older persons, within the scope of SDG 1 are as follows:

A series of legal and institutional regulations that helped to reduce poverty were issued between 2000 and 2018 in Turkey. Some of the significant developments include the restructuring of the social protection system, increasing efficiency of the Social Assistance and Solidarity Incentive Fund for this purpose and bringing together other units concerning vulnerable groups under the Ministry of Family and Social Services. In addition to the restructuring of the social protection system, important legal regulations were issued such as consolidation of social security institutions and provision of health insurance to the whole population by means of the implementation of Universal Health Insurance.

SDG 1 is assessed on two focus areas: *i. Poverty Reduction and ii. Empowerment of vulnerable groups.*

With respect to poverty reduction, a significant improvement was achieved in reducing the rate of national population living in absolute poverty with the help of achieving of macroeconomic stability, economic growth, and the increase in social transfer. Diversifying and increasing the amount of social aids and the steps taken to improve the social assistance system have contributed to poverty eradication.

Social assistance and support provided by various institutions and organisations were brought together under the Ministry of Family and Social Services as the focal body that executes relevant programmes. The poor segments are provided aid for food, fuel, education, childbirth, and family expenses to raise their living standards. The number and variety of social assistance and support have been gradually increasing since 2003. The increase in aid for education and food aimed to prevent the intergenerational transmission of poverty particularly during this process is remarkable. In addition, assistance programmes started to help various groups in society such as military families in need, individuals with chronic illnesses, and orphans.

Evaluation and monitoring processes of social assistance are operated through an online system, namely, *the Integrated Social Assistance Information System.* The system facilitates the application processes and improves access to people in need.

In the context of empowerment of vulnerable groups, their integration into the labour force is considered important to combat poverty. In order to increase the labour force participation of women, the amendment to the Labour Law in 2016 granted rights such as the right to work part-time until the start of the month following the start of mandatory primary education age, the right to work part-time for 60 to 360 days following the birth, and part-time work allowance from the Unemployment Insurance Fund to those who meet the criteria for premium. Many projects targeting disadvantaged groups including older persons are implemented in Turkey. In

this respect, policies to improve social protection systems and measures have been further developed.

The risks related to environmental disasters that may negatively affect vulnerable groups are addressed in the “*Climate Change Strategy*” covering 2010-2023. In this framework, the vulnerability of groups living below the poverty line to environmental disasters will be minimised by combating agricultural drought, developing risk maps and implementation plans related to the impact of climate change on infrastructure, health, and urbanisation.

SDG 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture



Structural initiatives and implementations countrywide to achieve the targets listed under SDG 2 are included in the Report by addressing the issues of eliminating poverty, improving income distribution, increasing agricultural production and ending child malnutrition through the economic and social policies.

SDG 2 is assessed on three focus areas: *i. Access to adequate food and meeting nutrition needs; ii. Increasing agricultural productivity and resilient agricultural practices; and iii. Conservation of genetic resources and traditional knowledge*

Meeting the basic nutrition requirements of vulnerable segments is among the policies that will be implemented in the upcoming years to achieve SDG 2.

SDG 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



In the framework of the *Health Transformation Programme* implemented in Turkey since the early 2000s, major changes and reforms have been achieved in terms of physical infrastructure, service quality, access to services and financial support in the field of healthcare. In the report, it was emphasized that through these developments, there has been substantial progress in all indicators under each target, and SDG 3 stands out as one of the goals on which Turkey has made most progress.

SDG 3 is addressed under two main themes: *i. Programmes for preventive healthcare services and ii. Improving healthcare service provision and infrastructure.*

In the context of preventive health services and promoting a healthy life; exemplary practices and projects were included in the Report stating that comprehensive policies were in place in Turkey in the fields of maternal-child health, combating communicable and non-communicable diseases, mental health, alcohol, tobacco and substance abuse, and reproductive health.

It is emphasized that non-communicable diseases (NCD) are becoming the main cause of death, as opposed to communicable diseases, not only in Turkey, but also globally. Activities aimed at reducing the risk factors of NCDs are undertaken as part of the *Healthy Life and Activity Priority Transformation Programme*. Works are mentioned which are undertaken to assess risks of cardio-vascular conditions, and monitor hypertension and diabetes at primary healthcare level in respect of NCD early diagnosis, treatment and process management. Programs that are underway to promote healthy lifestyles, nutrition and active life habits, and to prevent obesity; and counselling services on healthy nutrition and obesity treatment are explained. The information is provided on the *Community Mental Health Centres*, which were

opened for the first time in 2014 to ensure that psychological counselling services and were available to patients with psychological disorders as part of primary healthcare services. Currently there are 177¹⁸ centres operating across the country.

With regard to improving healthcare service provision and infrastructure, it is emphasized that there have been major strides in the field of healthcare labour force, funding of investments and services, universal health coverage, and access to medicines. As a result of these strides, the number of hospital beds per ten thousand patients increased to 28.8 in 2019 from 27.9 in 2017. In addition, the share of quality beds in the total number of hospital beds increased to 74.7% in 2019 from 67.2% in 2017. Through the surge in the number of physicians, nurses and other healthcare staff across the country, the number of medical professionals per person is now close to that of developed countries. While the total number of physicians and nurses/midwives per 100.000 people were 186 and 272 respectively in 2017, these figures rose to 193 and 306 in 2019. The number of primary healthcare institutions increased and the infrastructure of emergency services was substantially enhanced compared to 2017. 25.198 **Family Practice Units** and 7.774 **Family Health Centres** existed in 2017, which increased to 26.476 and 7.997 in 2019 respectively. As of 2019, there was one family practitioner per 3.141 persons.¹⁹ However, the desired level in terms of average number of patients per family practitioner has yet to be achieved, and there is still need for a balanced distribution among provinces.

Regarding SKA 3.8, the number of patients reached by the end of 2020 is approximately 1.8 million within the context of home healthcare services such as medical examination, analyses, treatment, care, monitoring and rehabilitation, social and psychological counselling provided by the Ministry of Health for individuals who are dependent on bed and/or home due to their physical and mental conditions.²⁰

SDG 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



The Report states that ensuring access to inclusive and quality education based on equal opportunities and lifelong learning facilities is one of the most important policies in achieving all SDGs, namely reducing poverty, qualified employment, and realising economic growth.

SDG 4 is assessed on three focus areas: *i. Access to quality education; ii. Equal opportunities for education; and iii. Vocational education and lifelong learning.*

Regarding equal opportunities for education, it is stated that the legislation guarantees the right to education of all individuals regardless of gender, language, race, disability or religion and without privileging any individual or class. The Report included information on various

¹⁸ The number of Community Mental Health Centres specified as 163 as of 2018 in the VNR report has been updated according to the data of the Ministry of Health, General Directorate of Public Hospitals, <https://khgmsaglikhizmetleridb.saglik.gov.tr/TR,43118/toplum-ruh-sagligi-merkezleri-trsm-listesi.html>.

¹⁹ The data in the VNR report has been updated according to the Health Statistics Yearbook 2019 published by the Ministry of Health, <https://sbu.saglik.gov.tr/Ekutuphane/kitaplar/saglik-istatistikleri-yilligi-2019pdf.pdf>.

²⁰ Activity Report of the Ministry of Health 2020, <https://sgb.saglik.gov.tr/Eklenti/40174/0/2020-faaliyet-raporupdf.pdf>.

implementations and projects to strengthen the human and physical infrastructure adapted for students with disabilities.

For purpose of vocational education and lifelong learning, the Report highlighted that the focus was placed on improving the education-employment-production relation and increasing employability of individuals of various educational backgrounds and age groups by improving their knowledge, skills and competences. In this context, it included activities carried out by the Ministry of National Education and local administrations regarding lifelong learning.

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



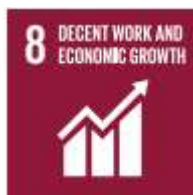
It is emphasized that empowering women in its all dimensions including economic, social and cultural aspects and ensuring their active contribution to development is considered an essential component of Turkey's human-centred development approach.

SDG 5 is assessed on four focus areas: *i. Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women; ii. Prevention of violence and abuse against women; iii. Promotion of opportunities for women to participate in social, political and economic spheres; and iv. Reproductive health and rights.*

Among the key components of the policy framework in line with SDG 5 are as follows:

- Increasing employment rates of women and ensuring that they are employed in safe and good jobs with equal wages for work of equal value and without any form of discrimination,
- Harmonising work and domestic life and developing accessible, widespread and high-quality care service infrastructure to increase women's participation in economic life,
- Promoting women's entrepreneurship,
- Increasing digital literacy rates of women and girls,
- Increasing the ratio of women represented in politics and decision-making mechanisms.

SDG 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



The Report emphasized the importance of reducing unemployment in a growing economy through an increase in employment and decent work. Increasing decent work opportunities and increasing employment of all vulnerable groups, especially women, youth and persons with disabilities were included among the policies addressed regarding SDG 8 targets.

The Report emphasized that regulations on employment, wage equality between men and women, rights and professional rehabilitation of persons with disabilities taking gender, age and disability into account are at an advanced level with regard to the achievement of targets under SDG 8. In addition, it is mentioned that under the ***“Programme on Improving the Social Integration and Employment of Disadvantaged Persons”***, which was carried out in 2016-2017, activities were supported to remove barriers to entering and to facilitate access to labour market, expand relevant opportunities, and fight against discrimination.

SDG 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries



In the Report, it is stated that there are legal regulations to ensure equal opportunities for employment, education, healthcare, social security, social aid and elimination of regional differences in Turkey.

Among the key components of the policy framework in line with SDG 10 are as follows:

- Empowering vulnerable segments particularly through social transfers and other various policy tools,
- Enhancing social, political and economic inclusion of vulnerable segments,
- Reducing differences in level of development among regions,
- Increasing the quantity and effectiveness of social aid,
- Making distribution of income more equal,
- Strengthening equal opportunities,
- Increasing participation to labour force and employment particularly of young people and women,
- Ending all forms of discriminatory practices,
- Strengthening the link between employment and social aid.

One of the three focus areas within the scope of SDG 10 was ***“strengthening economic and social equality”***.

SDG 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable



The main objective stated in the Report was to create human settlements that preserves historical and cultural values; are resilient to disasters and secure; have effective waste management systems which minimises the impacts of waste on environment; and are safe and accessible with integrated transportation networks and also to ensure that all segments of the society, particularly elderly, persons with disabilities, women and children are safely included in city life.

Among the key components of the policy framework in line with SDG 11 are as follows:

- Implementing spatial planning and urban design schemes that aim to enhance liveability for different segments of the society, particularly elderly, disabled, women and children and protect equal opportunities and equity,
- Taking into account the needs of vulnerable segments in designing housing and their surroundings and creation and provision of all urban services, particularly transportation,
- Developing healthy and alternative solutions to the housing problem,
- Ensuring adequate, liveable, resilient, safe, inclusive, affordable and sustainable housing with basic infrastructure services for all, especially for those with lower incomes,
- Ensuring that urban transportation systems offer highly accessible, safe, high-quality and effective services.

SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide Access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels



The Report emphasizes the significance of ensuring everyone's access to justice and maintaining peace, in addition to right to life, education, health and other fundamental rights for the full realization of sustainable development. Prevention of all forms of violence and crime, which is a fundamental human rights violation, is also a prerequisite to achieve the targets. Ensuring the rule of law, inclusive, effective and transparent institutionalisation, integrating access to information and fundamental rights into social practices are important and are guaranteed by the Constitution of Turkey.

One of the key components of the policy framework in line with SDG 16 was “Developing practices for disadvantaged groups in courts and penitentiaries”.

SDG 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development



The Report stated that Turkey took significant steps through national and international cooperation, capacity building, innovation, alternative funding methods and particularly Turkey's Official Development Assistance to overcome the challenges in achieving the 2030 Goals. In this context, the activities carried out by Turkey in cooperation with international and regional organizations and the international development cooperation activities of the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) are mentioned.

1.3. Given the information reported about MIPAA/RIS implementation, the most relevant SDGs which could be nourished by current policy measures

Given the information reported about MIPAA/RIS implementation, SDGs 1, 3, 4, 10 and 11 are considered the most relevant SDGs, which could be nourished by current policy measures. These policy measures were included in the Turkey's VNR Report 2019. However, more policy measures on aging are included as the report on MIPAA/RIS implementation covers the years 2018-2022.

For example, information on the YADES program, which is included in the report on the implementation of MIPAA/RIS and aims to improve day care and home care services for older persons, is processed under SDG 1 in the VNR. Again under the SDG 1, social assistance provided by the Ministry of Family and Social Services has been mentioned among the regulations that can contribute to poverty reduction in Turkey. In this context, it is stated that in addition to the restructuring of the social protection system, important legal regulations such as the consolidation of social security institutions, the implementation of general health insurance and the provision of health insurance for the entire population have been implemented.

Another example covered in the VNR is the information given under the SDG 3. In this context, preventive health services and practices in the context of promoting healthy life, which were included in the MIPAA/RIS Report, were also included in the VNR. In particular, programs for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and primary health care services in the early diagnosis, treatment and process management of non-communicable diseases were included. Another common topic included in the both reports was the home healthcare services provided by the Ministry of Health.

2. Lessons learnt from managing the consequences and impacts for older people in emergency situations: the COVID-19 pandemic

According to the most recent report published by the Ministry of Health, it has been stated that the highest death rate in our country as of 25.10.2020 belongs to the group aged 80 and over (30.81%). As of this date, of all deaths due to Covid-19, 73% were in people aged 65 years or older. As per the most recent *“Death and Causes of Death Statistics”* published by the TURKSTAT in 2019, 72% of the total deaths in 2019 consisted of individuals aged 65 and over.

Turkey has begun taking measures promptly through an effective cooperation with all related public, private institutions and civil society organizations to prevent the pandemic from occurring and spreading in the country. One of the most effective assets in fighting against the pandemic in Turkey is the large number of hospitals and intensive care units per person.

The Ministry of Family and Social Services has started to take measures for older persons, who stay in nursing homes or receive homecare, even before Covid-19 became widespread in the country. Trainings on the health and nutrition of older persons are provided and measures have been taken to meet their needs and procured the essential medical and hygiene supplies to ensure older citizens have access to the care and support they need during the pandemic. Crisis Desks have been created in all provinces and in the Ministry of Family and Social Services in response to the pandemic. Social isolation rooms, blocks and units were created within the long-term care institutions. The personnel in the care institutions have worked in 7-10-14 day’s shift and a PCR tests were regularly applied at personnel shifts. In addition, body temperature, pulse and respiration of older persons and the personnel in the nursing homes have been checked every six hours.

The guidelines have been prepared in multiple formats for older persons and their households, health and social care workers, care facilities and local authorities in order to minimise adverse outcomes of the pandemic for older persons.

Older persons in long-term care institutions have been informed about the measures taken and the course of Covid-19 in a way that will not adversely affect their psychological state. Protective and preventive measures were implemented without raising their anxiety levels, and attention was paid to the implementation of isolation, testing, mask, social distance and hygiene measures by older persons. Follow-up, control of treatment processes, management of symptoms and psycho-social support for older persons and individuals with chronic diseases, who often have to go to health centres and hospitals, were provided via tele-medicine implementations. On the other hand, necessary measures at the health centres where physical presence is required such as dialysis centres have been taken by the Ministry of Health.

Older persons have had the priority in mass vaccination practices carried out in Turkey and the first group given priority in vaccination included health workers, the residents of nursing homes and care centres, and citizens aged 90 and over. After the vaccination of first group, the vaccination of persons over the age of 85, 75, 70 and 65 was started respectively. During all these implementations, older individuals have had the right to have an active voice in the precautionary and treatment processes envisaged for them without any imposition.

Below information is provided on some examples of initiatives carried out by civil society organisations, public institutions, universities and other stakeholders across Turkey to overcome the challenges raised by the COVID-19 crisis.

As Turkey declared a partial curfew for senior citizens aged 65 and over, “*Vefa Social Support Groups*” were formed by the Ministry of Interior under the coordination of provincial and district governorships to help those in need, particularly who live alone or with chronic illnesses. The Groups have displayed the good examples of solidarity, cooperation and volunteering during the pandemic. The Group volunteers have rushed to the aid of citizens aged 65 and over such as the medicine supply, basic food needs, withdrawing pensions, performing instrumental life activities, etc. Special helplines have been put into service to meet the urgent needs of older persons, and some of the existing lines (112, 155, 156) have started to serve for this purpose. In addition to the Vefa Social Support Groups, the police, gendarmerie, municipalities and local authorities have formed groups to meet the needs of older persons and to prevent negative situations that may occur.

With the collaboration of Ankara University Aging Studies Application and Research Centre, the Ministry of Family and Social Services and the Union of Municipalities of Turkey, a symposium was held titled “*Elderly Welfare During the Pandemic Period and Social Policies for the Elderly*” on 23 March 2021.

One of the good practices that have contributed to the social inclusion of older persons during the Covid-19 period is the “*Socially Distanced Fresh Projects*”²¹. The second phase of the Project, which started on 14.03.2020 for 60+ Refreshment University students, one of the higher education programs for older persons, has continued online as of 13.07.2020. In this context, various trainings have been given such as Fresh English, Fresh Food, Fresh Memory, Fresh Knitting, Fresh Corona Diary, Fresh Cocoons, Fresh Friends and Fresh Music. These trainings have been provided throughout the week and contributed to reduce the negative effects of the pandemic on older persons and enabled them to spend their days actively in the curfews. At the same time, it has created a sense of solidarity and friendship among the participants of the project. The older students stated that their worries and fears brought about by the pandemic were alleviated and that they were interlocked with each other.

In response to the Covid-19, the Turkey has introduced an economic stimulus package, introducing a mix of financial support, credit support and employment-related measures to help citizens and businesses weather the COVID-19 crisis. In this context, taxpayers having chronic illness or aged 65 and over were granted “force majeure” status during the curfew and the deadline for submitting tax statements and the due date for tax payments were extended by a certain amount of time. Retirees who receive their pensions from public banks could receive their pensions at their residences upon request. Older persons who wanted to benefit from the long-term care institutions affiliated to the Ministry of Family and Social Services have been accepted to receive care regardless of their income criteria. The minimum amount for pensions has been raised from 1.000 TL to 1.500 TL. The holiday bonuses paid twice a year have been increased from 1.000 TL to 1.100 TL. It has been decided to deposit the pension promotion payments directly into the older persons’ accounts. All these socioeconomic interventions aimed that the living conditions of older persons would be affected by the pandemic to a minimum degree.

Sportive, cultural and recreational physical activities were carried out especially in the long-term care centres in order to prevent older persons from being adversely affected by the isolation

²¹ Akdeniz University, Aging Studies Application and Research Centre, <http://yacumer.akdeniz.edu.tr/60-tazelenme-universitesi-projesi/korona-krizi-gunlerinde-mesafeli-taze-projeler/>.

processes. The necessary precautions have been taken within the scope of protective and preventive measures for them to actively value their spare time. In this sense, the open spaces and gardens of the care centres have been used as much as possible. Practices such as the use of camping areas and the resumption of Bocce tournaments, which have become a tradition in nursing homes, have been carried out after the mass vaccination process. Some psychosocial support activities for nursing home residents including digital conversations, weekend surprises, digital national festivals and birthday celebrations have played an important role in increasing their morale and motivation. In addition, the Ministry has focused on the importance of digital literacy, which has increased with the pandemic, and initiated digital literacy trainings particularly for older individuals who are receive care in institutions and live in their homes.

3. Activities in preparation and implementation of the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030

Information on *the age-friendly environments, combatting ageism and long-term care* from the four action areas covered in the Decade of Healthy Aging 2020-2030 is provided under the second part of the Report (20 Years of MIPAA/RIS) in detail within the framework of the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration. With regard to action area on *the integrated care and primary healthcare services* of the Decade; the Ministry of Health prepared **“Turkey Healthy Aging Action Plan and Implementation Program 2015-2020”**²² in order to provide accessible, effective and appropriate healthcare service for individuals and community and to better respond to the people with special needs due to their physical, social or economic conditions by rendering this service easily accessible for them. The Action Plan aimed to improve health care of older persons by means of easy and free access to essential healthcare services for older persons that include prevention, promotion, curative, rehabilitative, safe, affordable, effective, good quality essential medicines and vaccines, etc. Executive committee reports have been prepared for the completed activities of the Implementation Program, and **“Turkey Healthy Aging Action Plan and Implementation Program 2021-2026”** has been prepared for ongoing and new activities.

In accordance with the goal of “Developing Home Health Care and Home Care Services for the Elderly” in the Action Plan, the **“Implementation/Training Guide for the Project on Home Health Care and Social Services for Syrian Migrants”** was prepared and trainings for Syrian health personnel (physician/nurse) were completed.

In line with the goal of "Developing Exercise, Physical Activity and Rehabilitation Services for All Elderly" in the Action Plan, the planning phase for the “Turkey Aging and Health Survey” was completed, however it is postponed to a later time due to the pandemic. The aim of the Survey was to reduce the duration and frequency of hospital admissions and hospitalizations in chronic diseases, to reduce the number of older people who require continuous care due to chronic diseases, and to reduce the cost of elderly care.

In accordance with the goal of "Developing Health Services for Elderly People and Providing Full Access to Health Services" in the Action Plan, family physicians provided multi-faceted

²² https://hsgm.saglik.gov.tr/depo/birimler/kronik-hastaliklar-engelli-db/hastaliklar/Yasli_Sagligi/kitap_ve_makaleler/Healthy_Ageing_Action_plan_2015-2020.pdf.

follow-up and evaluation for individuals aged 65 and over in order to provide early diagnosis and treatment of diseases within the scope of preventive and protective healthcare services.

Within the scope of *integrated care and primary healthcare services*, a policy goal was set in the 11th Development Plan indicating, “Health follow-ups for older people will be carried out, preventive and curative services for diseases increasing with age will be strengthened, and the number of centres providing geriatrics and palliative care services will be increased.” In this context, “***Disease Management Platform***”²³ has been launched on 1 July 2021. With the Platform, it is aimed to ensure early diagnosis of chronic diseases and to treat them appropriately with periodic follow-ups, to control the symptoms and signs of diseases, and to prevent individuals from experiencing loss of function and becoming disabled through follow-up of complications.

Conclusion

The remarkable decline in the fertility rate, the increase in average life expectancy and life expectancy at birth as a reflection of the developments in basic health services and nutrition, and the controllability of early mortality have reshaped the age structure of the population. Although Turkey, whose demographic transformation process continues, has a relatively young population structure due to the high fertility rates of the past, the fact that the proportion of older population in the total population approaches 10% is an indicator of Turkey’s transition to the country with an older population.

In the last two decades, there has been an important change in line of vision regarding the care for older persons in Turkey. In particular, the awareness of the importance of aging in place and home care has contributed to the development of policies by the government and the Ministry of Family and Social Services. One of the significant developments is the home care allowance, which is implemented by the Ministry of Family and Social Services to support informal care and strengthen the home care for older people. In addition, in recent years, efforts to develop and expand home care support services, home healthcare services and day care services are important developments in terms of the cost of care, enabling older persons to age in their own environment and at the same time supporting a strong family structure.

Another important development in the last two decades is the socio-cultural aspect of ageing. Rather than the image of an authoritarian in the traditional extended family but dependent on others for care and support, fragile and unhealthy older persons, an image of working at an advanced age, participating in volunteering activities, and considering active and healthy aging has come to the fore with social change. Active and healthy aging, and lifelong learning goals and policies have been effective in this change. Thus, policies in this direction contributed to the change in the image of older persons and the implementation of MIPAA/RIS.

Today's older people make significant contributions to society and the economy. They also have more options to live, work, retire and stay active. However, in line with the increasing older population and global trends, Turkey, as every country, has to deal with issues such as poverty

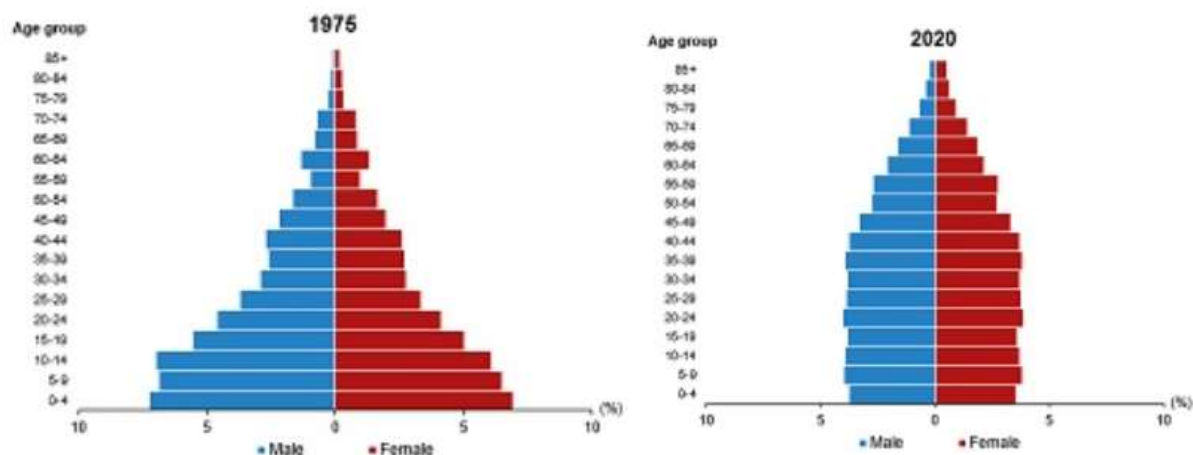
²³ The Disease Management Platform is an online platform developed to control the symptoms and signs of the diseases of individuals with chronic diseases and to prevent individuals from experiencing loss of function and becoming disabled. Providing early diagnosis in chronic diseases by performing periodic scans and performing the periodic follow-up of the diagnosed patients in line with the recommendations of the evidence-based medical guidelines facilitate the provision of appropriate treatment and early detection of complications.

of older people, increasing need for care and health, neglect and abuse, gender inequality, and ageism. As an ageing society, Turkey is now aware of the necessity of precautions and interventions for the phenomenon of aging. Important works will be continued with the contribution and participation of stakeholders in the field of ageing so that no older person is left behind. Turkey is committed to achieving these goals by building a society for all ages, promoting intergenerational solidarity and ensuring that all individuals can maintain their well-being as they age.

In order to produce data-based policies, there is a need for studies that will be carried out with different research methods in which ageing can be evaluated from various aspects throughout country. In this direction, Turkey attaches great importance to international and regional cooperation in terms of ensuring the welfare of older persons and producing scientific information on ageing through practices aimed at increasing the quality of life and preventing the risks they face. For this purpose, it is important for international organizations to take an active role in creating environments that will pave the way for joint studies between countries and encouraging the sharing of knowledge and experience.

Annex

Figure 1: Population Pyramid of Turkey 1975, 2020



Population Pyramid of Turkey, 1975

Population Pyramid of Turkey, 2020

Source: TURKSTAT, Population Censuses, 1975

TURKSTAT, Address Based Population Registration System, 2020

Active Ageing Index

The Active Aging Index was calculated for Turkey in 2016 by UNECE in cooperation with Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) and the Ministry of Family and Social Services and published on the UNECE website with the title of "Pilot Study for Serbia and Turkey, 2015-2016".

On the subject of aging and the production of age-specific disaggregated data/statistics, TURKSTAT has participated in the technical meetings of "Titchfield City Group on Aging and Age Disaggregated Data", which was established and started its activities based on the decision at the 49th Session of the United Nations Statistics Commission held in New York on 06-09 March 2018 under the Secretariat of the United Kingdom Office for National Statistics (ONS). Accordingly, TURKSTAT follows the international agenda on ageing and age-specific disaggregated data/statistics.

Institutions contributing to the National Report on MIPAA/RIS implementation

- Ministry of Family and Social Services, General Directorate of Family and Community Services
- Ministry of Family and Social Services General Directorate on the Status of Women
- Ministry of Family and Social Services General Directorate of Social Assistance
- Ministry of Justice
- Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey
- Ombudsman Institution (Public Investigation Institution)
- Turkish Statistical Institute
- Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR)
- Ministry of Health

- Social Security Institution
- Akdeniz University Aging Studies Application and Research Centre
- Ankara University Aging Studies Application and Research Centre
- Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies
- Alzheimer's Association of Turkey
- Turkey Retirees Association
- International Federation of Respect for Older Persons
- Kahramanmaraş Metropolitan Municipality