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DEMOGRAPHICAL DEVELOPMENT OF  
THE SYRIAN REFUGEE POPULATION  
AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON THE  
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND  
MUNICIPALITY SERVICES IN TURKEY  
IN NEAR FUTURE



# UDRA PROGRAMME RESEARCH PANEL

Prof. Dr. M. Murat ERDOĐAN  
Metin ÇORABATIR

Implemented by



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# GENERAL FRAMEWORK

UNHCR defines the humanitarian tragedy that the Syrians face as the “biggest wave of migration observed in recent history”. The demonstrations opposing the regime in Syria that began back in 15th of March 2011 had been expected to continue for at most a few weeks. More than 8 years of time has passed since, and one of the gravest refugee crises of the world that affected millions of people has occurred. According to UNHCR data, the number of Syrian refugees<sup>1</sup> who took shelter and got registered in only the five neighbouring countries reached 5,462,875 as of June 2019. When around a million Syrians who took shelter in countries such as the USA, Canada and European states is included in this number, the number of Syrians who had to leave their country after 2011 is calculated to be around 6.6

million, corresponding to approximately 25% of the country population.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, 6-7 million people had to move within Syrian borders.<sup>3</sup> What is even more saddening is the fact that there is no expectation in short or medium term for an environment of peace, calm and safety to be established in Syria, which already turned into a state of ruin. While the actual victim of this crisis, which is hard to come by in terms of quantitative magnitude and duration, is Syria, it may be mentioned that a complex “social shock” bearing very severe economic, political, social and security-related aspects is being experienced also in the neighbouring countries where Syrians took refuge, particularly in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. Once again, the “open door policy” turned into a process that caused suffering in the neighbouring countries.

| Country                            | Number of Syrian Refugees | Distribution of Syrians among Countries % | Country Population (2018) (Million) | Raito within Country Population |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Turkey                             | 3,614,108                 | 54.42                                     | 82.0                                | 4.42                            |
| Lebanon                            | 935,454                   | 14.21                                     | 4.8                                 | 19.66                           |
| Jordan                             | 660,330                   | 9.93                                      | 6.4                                 | 10.31                           |
| Iraq (Northern Iraq)               | 252,983                   | 3.53                                      | 35.4                                | 0.71                            |
| Sum of Neighbouring Countries      | 5,462,875                 | 82.2                                      |                                     |                                 |
| Egypt and other regional countries | 168,626                   | 2.51                                      |                                     |                                 |
| Europe, USA, Canada ...            | 1,000,000                 | 15.06                                     |                                     |                                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                       | <b>6.640.061</b>          | <b>100.00</b>                             |                                     |                                 |

4

| Country/Region                          | Percentage | Number of Refugees |
|---|------------|--------------------|
| Turkey                                  | 54%        | 3,613,389          |
| Lebanon                                 | 14%        | 944,613            |
| Europe & USA & Canada                   | 10%        | 1,000,000          |
| Jordan                                  | 4%         | 660,393            |
| Iraq                                    | 4%         | 252,983            |
| Egypt and other countries in the region | 3%         | 168,626            |

Kaynak/Source: UNHCR: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria> (Accessed: 07.07.2019)

One of the most significant addressees of the Syrian crisis is Turkey, having a border 911 km long. With Syrian refugees<sup>4</sup> taking shelter extensively since 29 April 2011, Turkey has become the country hosting the highest number of refugees in the world as of the year 2014. The first mass migration movement from Syria to Turkey occurred on the date 29.04.2011 with a group of 252 people entering from Cilvegözü border gate in Yayladağı district of Hatay province, and although it decreased after the year 2016, the flow of refugees continued without halting until this

day. As of June 2019, Turkey is a country that hosts by itself more than 54% of the Syrians numbering in total around 6.5 million who were displaced out of their country. The number of refugees in Turkey that was 58,000 in the year 2011 rose to around 4.1 million total, including 3.6 million Syrians, as of June 2019. It should also be mentioned that, if the number of Syrians who come to Turkey and leave to other countries after some time is included in this, the number of Syrians who entered Turkey is close to 5 million.

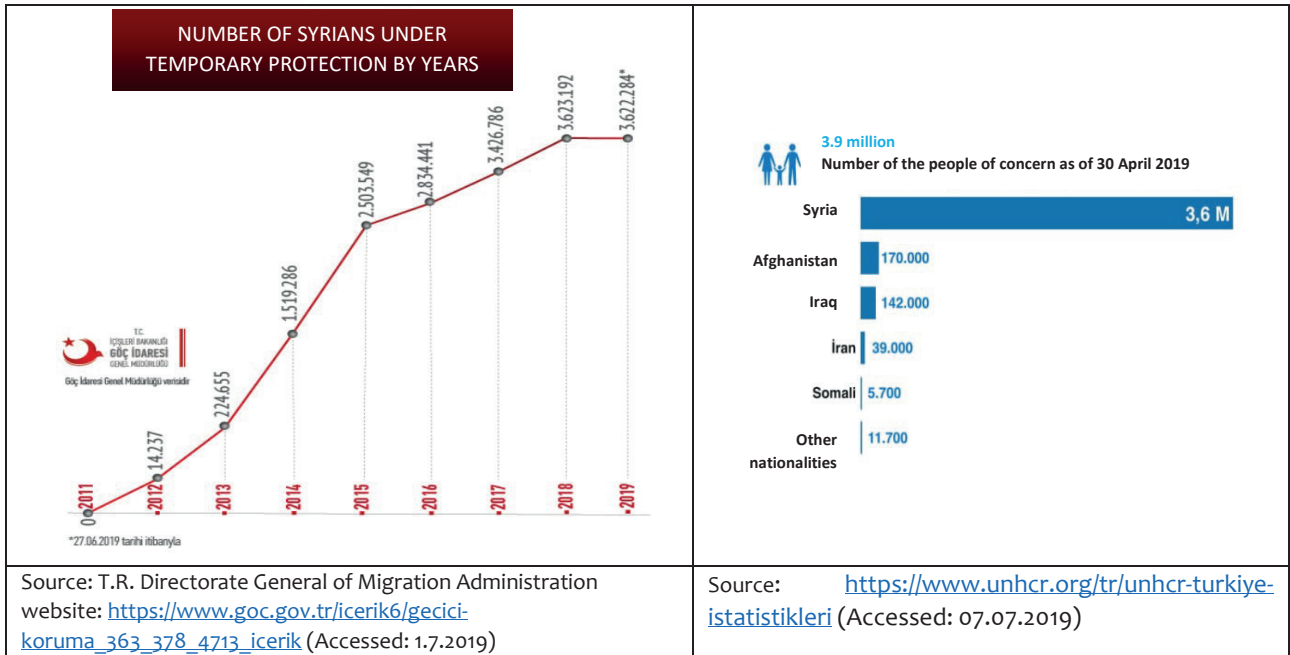
<sup>1</sup>Syrians in Turkey has the status of “temporary protection”, as a type of international protection. The geographical reservation placed by Turkey in the Geneva Convention prevents those of non-European origin to be granted the status of refugee. The concepts of “refugee” or “asylum seeker” used in this study to define the Syrians in Turkey has been used not in a legal context but rather in a sociological and everyday meaning.

<sup>2</sup>According to the data communicated by UNHCR, the number of Syrian refugees outside of the four neighbouring countries (Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq) is 132,281 in Egypt and 35,713 in other regional countries, which means the total number of refugees in the region is 5,648,002. UNHCR: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria> (Accessed: 07.07.2019)

<sup>3</sup><https://edition.cnn.com/2013/08/27/world/meast/syria-civil-war-fast-facts/index.html> (Accessed: 07.07.2019)

<sup>4</sup>In this study, the concept of “refugee” is used for Syrians which reflects the status better in sociological perspective, with the knowledge that they are not legally refugees in Turkey. The legal framework in Turkey and its grounds are handled in more detail under the section titled “Legal-Administrative Regulations Regarding Refugees in Turkey”.





Turkey, within which all types of migration take place, became a country that not only Syrians but refugees from many other countries, particularly Afghanistan and Iraq, came in masses following the crisis that had begun in Syria. Turkey had to receive in a period of 5 years such high numbers of refugees not ever seen in its history. The number of applications for international protection that was 17,925 in the year 2011 rising to 114,537 as of the year 2018 is one of the most striking indicators of this fact. The “open door policy” implemented for Syria has enabled refugees from many other countries, particularly Afghanistan and Iraq, to come to Turkey. It is estimated that around 4.5 - 5 million Syrian and around 2 million non-Syrian refugees entered Turkey between 2011 and today, and around 1.5 - 2 million of them left the country.

# STATUS AND DEMOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SYRIANS IN TURKEY

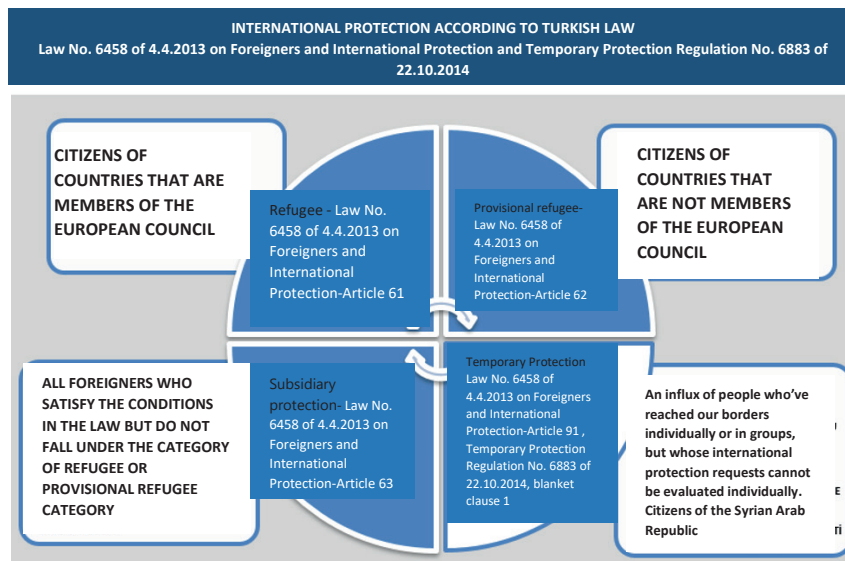
## A. STATUS OF SYRIANS

The first regulation in regards to the status of the Syrian refugees who begun to enter Turkey after 29 April 2011 was made in the year 2012 through the “Directive on Reception and Accommodation of Syrian Arab Republic Nationals and Stateless Persons who reside in Syrian Arab Republic, who arrive to Turkish Borders in Mass Influx to Seek Asylum”. However the main legal regulation was actualised through Article 91 of the “Law on Foreigners and International Protection” which constitutes the first comprehensive migration law of Turkey and was effectuated on 11 April 2013.<sup>5</sup> The “Temporary Protection” that was expressed therein as, “foreigners who were forced to leave their countries, unable to return to the country they left, arrived at our borders or passed our borders in mass migration for the purpose of seeking urgent and temporary protection may be granted temporary protection”, has become the status defined for Syrians by the Turkish state. With the Law no. 6458 effectuated as of the year 2013, the temporary protection regime not before included under the current legislation was recognised for the first time. Furthermore, the Temporary Protection Regulation<sup>6</sup> with date 13 October 2014 and number 2014/6883 was issued where the principles and procedures in regards to all acts and actions related to Temporary Protection defined under Article 91 of the Law. Enabling provision of particularly health services, and education, access

to labour market, social assistance and services and translation and similar services to foreigners covered within the scope of this regulation was thus arranged.

In Turkey where the number of refugees was less than 50,000 when the Law preparation works began, the number of only Syrian refugees had increased to over 500,000 when the Law was effectuated. The Law has regulated and civilianised the subject of international protection, made it conformant with the EU acquis, and enabled establishment of a new institution under the name of Directorate General of Migration Administration. When the Directorate General of Migration Administration began functioning 1 year after the issuance of the Law, the number of Syrian refugees in Turkey had already exceeded 1.5 million. Provincial (field) organisation of the Directorate General of Migration Administration was initialised at the end of the year 2014. Developing through an extraordinary effort in spite of capacity issues and huge numbers of refugees, the Directorate General of Migration Administration established its provincial organisation structure within a brief time period and began realising works on all subjects, particularly registration, in relation to refugees. The status of the refugees in Turkey who were subjected to forced migration, particularly of Syrians, prevails as a significant issue.

6



<sup>5</sup>Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu: T.R. Directorate General of Migration Administration website: [https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/yukk\\_327\\_328\\_329](https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/yukk_327_328_329) (Accessed: 01.07.2019)

<sup>6</sup>Geçici Koruma Yönetmeliği: T.C. Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü web sayfası: [https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma-yonetmeliği\\_333\\_336\\_1473\\_icerik](https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma-yonetmeliği_333_336_1473_icerik) (Accessed: 01.07.2019)

The subject of the status of the Syrians in Turkey continues to be a significant topic of discussion. The geographical reservation placed by the signatory state Turkey in the 1951 Geneva Convention enables granting of refugee status only to those who come from countries member to the European Council -in case they satisfy certain conditions. This implementation of Turkey was continued also in the Law effectuated in 2013, through a regulation towards defining refugees as “provisional refugees”. Although the concerns of Turkey in this regard may be understandable considering especially the unstable region within which it is situated, many human rights and refugee rights advocates are voicing criticisms on the issue. This implementation, which leads to insufficient recognition of the rights of “de facto” refugees deprived of refugee rights, is also valid for other non-European refugees. Turkey has deemed it appropriate to implement the “temporary protection” status to Syrians that had previously been implemented during the Balkan War during the 1990s as per the decree of the EU Commission. The reason behind such status is the expectation that the people running away from their countries with an effort of saving their lives in state of war -as seen before in the Balkans- are to return to their countries after the war

is over and their temporary protection status is to end. Other issues that may be caused due to the refugee status in such cases are also being voiced. Although Turkey defined “temporary protection, as a type of international protection in line with international law for the Syrians, the implementation of a “temporary protection” of which period is not defined under regulations or laws is criticised more and more as the period extends and the possibility of Syrians to return to their country diminish. It is apparent that the temporary protection status causes certain handicaps in regards to not only limitation of “de facto refugees” but also to their cohesion processes. However, due to the fact that the “open door” policy is aggrieving almost only the neighbouring countries and division of burden is not being actualised as observed particularly in the case of Syrian refugees, it is not expected for Turkey to realise any radical amendments towards granting the status of refugee to Syrians and other non-Europeans in short or medium term. What is striking at this point is that the status change of Syrians in Turkey occurs through a considerably radical policy of granting “citizenship”. The status of citizenship for more than 450,000 babies born in Turkey and the option of “residence” may be expected to come to agenda in the coming period.

## B. DEMOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SYRIANS

### a. Population Inside and Outside Camps

Syrians coming to Turkey were initially accommodated at the border region and dominantly inside camps but the camps become insufficient when significant increases occurred in the number of Syrians coming to Turkey especially since the mid-2012, and Syrians preferred to move away from border regions and towards other regions of Turkey. As of October 2014, there were 1,565,000 Syrians in Turkey. 13%-14% of the Syrians, corresponding to 220,000 people, were living inside the 22 camps established within 10 provinces (“temporary accommodation centres”). As of April 2015, the number of Syrians in Turkey reached 1,758,000 and the camp population reached 14%, corresponding to 258,000, and in March 2016, the Syrian population and the Syrians living inside camps reached record numbers of 2,747,946 and 272,000 respectively. After this date, a regular decline was observed in the number of Syrians living inside camps. As of August 2018, the total number of Syrians reached 3,188,909 and the population inside camps reached 23,064, while as of October 2018 the total number reached 3,577,792, and the population

inside camps declined to 174,256. The Turkish state on one hand transferred the camps managed by AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Authority) to the Directorate General of Migration Administration, and on the other hand reduced the number of camps and implemented an incentive policy towards enabling those living inside camps to leave the camps in cooperation with UNHCR. This process, which was commenced in the beginning as “shutting down camps with inappropriate conditions and enabling those living in such camps to transfer to another camp or leaving the camp environment through ‘financial aid’”, is continued in recent times as transferring the Syrians in the camps with good conditions to urban areas within the framework of the policy defined in line with “reducing the concentration inside camps” and once again through incentives granted. Through shutting down as a priority of the camps comprised of tent areas, the number of camps was decreased within a short time. As of June 2019, there are a total of 11 camps situated within 8 provinces of Turkey. The number of Syrians accommodated within these camps

# STATUS AND DEMOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SYRIANS IN TURKEY

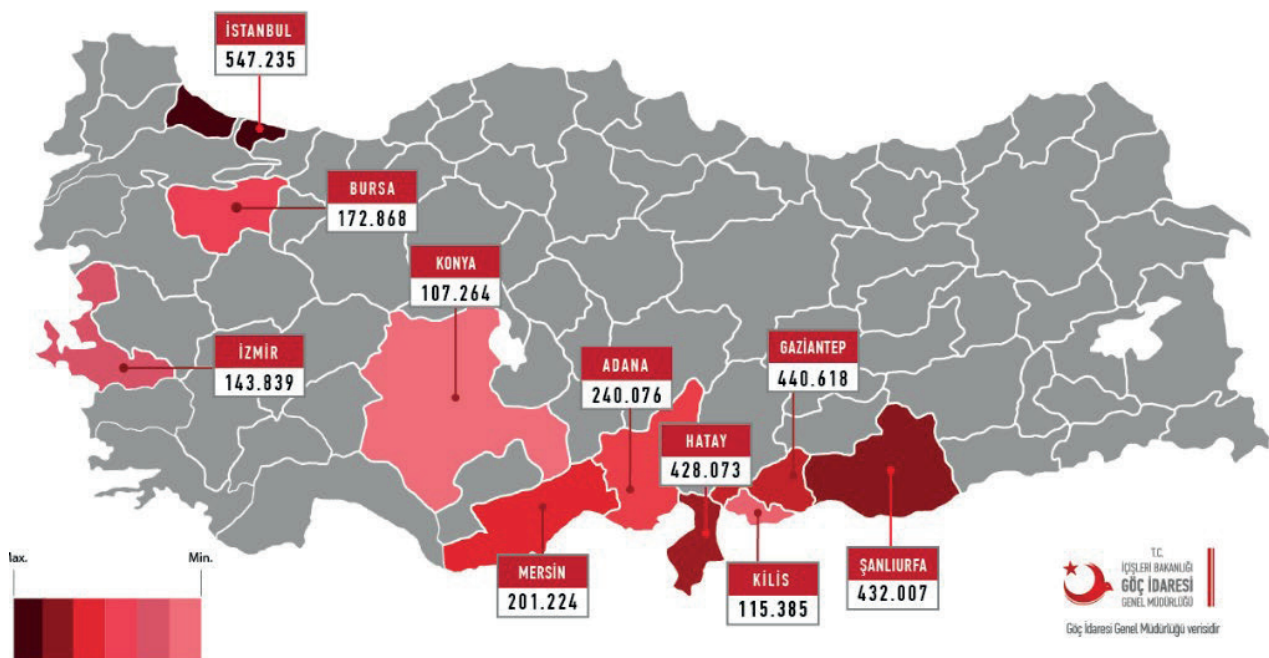
is 108,732, which means that the ratio of Syrians Under Temporary Protection living inside camps in Turkey declined down to 2.98%.<sup>7</sup> Probably this number will decrease even further as of the end of the year 2019, and none will remain in the camps as of the year 2020 excluding only some exceptional groups.

More than 97% of the Syrians in Turkey now live together with the Turkish community, spread out within all regions of Turkey as “urban refugees”. Due to failure of developing a central distribution system in Turkey, significant differences among regions, provinces, districts and even neighbourhoods in regards to number and concentration of refugees. While there are over 100,000 Syrians in ten provinces of Turkey, the ratio of Syrian population to Turkish citizens that corresponds to 4.42% for overall Turkey reached levels close to 100% and even exceeded such levels in some provinces and districts. The ratio of Syrian population in border provinces and areas near the border region of Turkey that has a border length of 911 km with Syria compared to the Syrians in other provinces is 58% - 42% respectively. However, these numbers differ when the existence of people registered in border provinces but live in big cities, particularly in İstanbul, are considered.

## b. Distribution of Syrians in Regions and Provinces

The fact that fewer than 3% of the Syrians now reside in the camps also reveals that the Syrians in Turkey transitioned to being “urban refugees”. According to Directorate General of Migration Administration data, the Syrians in Turkey appear to have spread out among all 81 provinces of Turkey. İstanbul takes the lead among all provinces in terms of number of refugees, followed by Şanlıurfa, Hatay and Gaziantep. The number of registered Syrian people in these four provinces exceeds 400,000. While there were only 58,000 refugees in Turkey as of the year 2011, the number of provinces in Turkey housing more than 100,000 Syrian refugees occurred to be 10 as of June 2019. Official data also clearly reveals that Syrians live in all provinces of Turkey, especially in province or district centres. The weight of provinces outside of the border region regarding the distribution of regional distribution of Syrians is observed to increase every passing day. The ratio of Syrians in the 10 provinces (Hatay, Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Kilis, Mardin, Adana, Osmaniye, Mersin, Kahramanmaraş, Şırnak) on Syrian border and the nearby area is observed to be around 58% (2.1 million), while the ratio of Syrians living outside of the region is observed to be around 54% (1.5 million).

### DISTRIBUTION OF SYRIANS UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION IN TOP 10 CITIES



Source: T.R. Directorate General of Migration Administration website: [https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma\\_363\\_378\\_4713\\_icerik](https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik) (Accessed: 1.7.2019)

<sup>7</sup>T.R. Directorate General of Migration Administration website: [https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma\\_363\\_378\\_4713\\_icerik](https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik) (Accessed: 1.7.2019)



**DISTRIBUTION OF SYRIANS UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION BY CITIES**

| ÜLKEMİZDE GEÇİCİ KORUMA KAPSAMINDA BULUNAN SURİYELİLERİNDAĞILIMI 27.06.2019 ALFABETİK) |            |              |            |                                     |         |               |              |           |                                     |
|--|------------|--------------|------------|-------------------------------------|---------|---------------|--------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| İL SIRA  | İLLER      | KAYIT EDİLEN | NÜFUS      | İL NÜFUSU İLE KARŞILAŞTIRMA YÜZDESİ | İL SIRA | İLLER         | KAYIT EDİLEN | NÜFUS     | İL NÜFUSU İLE KARŞILAŞTIRMA YÜZDESİ |
|  |            |              |            |                                     |         |               |              |           |                                     |
| 1  | ADANA      | 240.076      | 2.220.125  | 10,81%                              | 42      | KAHRAMANMARAŞ | 89.288       | 1.144.851 | 7,80%                               |
| 2  | ADYAMAN    | 24.832       | 624.513    | 3,98%                               | 43      | KARABÜK       | 842          | 248.014   | 0,34%                               |
| 3  | AFYON      | 7.037        | 725.568    | 0,97%                               | 44      | KARAMAN       | 763          | 251.913   | 0,30%                               |
| 4  | AĞRI       | 1.028        | 539.657    | 0,19%                               | 45      | KARS          | 175          | 288.878   | 0,06%                               |
| 5  | AKSARAY    | 2.947        | 412.172    | 0,71%                               | 46      | KASTAMONU     | 2.061        | 383.373   | 0,54%                               |
| 6  | AMASYA     | 726          | 337.508    | 0,22%                               | 47      | KAYSERİ       | 78.418       | 1.389.680 | 5,64%                               |
| 7  | ANKARA     | 92.324       | 5.503.985  | 1,68%                               | 48      | KIRIKKALE     | 1.533        | 286.602   | 0,53%                               |
| 8  | ANTALYA    | 1.755        | 2.426.356  | 0,07%                               | 49      | KIRKLARELİ    | 2.717        | 360.860   | 0,75%                               |
| 9  | ARDAHAN    | 129          | 98.907     | 0,13%                               | 50      | KIRŞEHİR      | 1.374        | 241.868   | 0,57%                               |
| 10   | ARTVİN     | 35           | 174.010    | 0,02%                               | 51      | KİLİS         | 115.385      | 142.541   | 80,95%                              |
| 11   | AYDIN      | 7.834        | 1.097.746  | 0,71%                               | 52      | KOCAELİ       | 57.238       | 1.906.391 | 3,00%                               |
| 12   | BALIKESİR  | 4.491        | 1.226.575  | 0,37%                               | 53      | KONYA         | 107.264      | 2.205.609 | 4,86%                               |
| 13   | BARTIN     | 136          | 198.999    | 0,07%                               | 54      | KÜTAHYA       | 811          | 577.941   | 0,14%                               |
| 14   | BATMAN     | 22.423       | 599.103    | 3,74%                               | 55      | MALATYA       | 29.985       | 797.036   | 3,76%                               |
| 15   | BAYBURT    | 23           | 82.274     | 0,03%                               | 56      | MANİSA        | 14.294       | 1.429.643 | 1,00%                               |
| 16   | BİLECİK    | 601          | 223.448    | 0,27%                               | 57      | MARDİN        | 87.319       | 829.195   | 10,53%                              |
| 17   | BİNGÖL     | 1.041        | 281.205    | 0,37%                               | 58      | MERSİN        | 201.224      | 1.814.468 | 11,09%                              |
| 18   | BİTLİS     | 998          | 349.396    | 0,29%                               | 59      | MUĞLA         | 14.758       | 967.487   | 1,53%                               |
| 19   | BOLU       | 2.486        | 311.810    | 0,80%                               | 60      | MUŞ           | 1.413        | 407.992   | 0,35%                               |
| 20   | BURDUR     | 8.502        | 269.926    | 3,15%                               | 61      | NEVŞEHİR      | 9.656        | 298.339   | 3,24%                               |
| 21   | BURSA      | 172.868      | 2.994.521  | 5,77%                               | 62      | NİĞDE         | 4.534        | 364.707   | 1,24%                               |
| 22   | ÇANAKKALE  | 6.048        | 540.662    | 1,12%                               | 63      | ORDU          | 660          | 771.932   | 0,09%                               |
| 23   | ÇANKIRI    | 547          | 216.362    | 0,25%                               | 64      | OSMANIYE      | 48.974       | 534.415   | 9,16%                               |
| 24   | ÇORUM      | 2.602        | 536.483    | 0,49%                               | 65      | RİZE          | 910          | 348.608   | 0,26%                               |
| 25   | DENİZLİ    | 12.439       | 1.027.782  | 1,21%                               | 66      | SAKARYA       | 15.894       | 1.010.700 | 1,57%                               |
| 26   | DİYARBAKIR | 33.669       | 1.732.396  | 1,94%                               | 67      | SAMSUN        | 5.795        | 1.335.716 | 0,43%                               |
| 27   | DÜZCE      | 1.805        | 387.844    | 0,47%                               | 68      | SİİRT         | 4.059        | 331.670   | 1,22%                               |
| 28   | EDİRNE     | 971          | 411.528    | 0,24%                               | 69      | SİNOP         | 127          | 219.733   | 0,06%                               |
| 29   | ELAZIĞ     | 13.680       | 595.638    | 2,30%                               | 70      | SİVAS         | 4.055        | 646.608   | 0,63%                               |
| 30   | ERZİNCAN   | 100          | 236.034    | 0,04%                               | 71      | ŞANLIURFA     | 432.007      | 2.035.809 | 21,22%                              |
| 31   | ERZURUM    | 1.143        | 767.848    | 0,15%                               | 72      | ŞIRNAK        | 15.013       | 524.190   | 2,86%                               |
| 32   | ESKİŞEHİR  | 4.705        | 871.187    | 0,54%                               | 73      | TEKİRDAĞ      | 14.224       | 1.029.927 | 1,38%                               |
| 33   | GAZİANTEP  | 440.618      | 2.028.563  | 21,72%                              | 74      | TOKAT         | 1.008        | 612.644   | 0,16%                               |
| 34   | GİRESUN    | 159          | 453.912    | 0,04%                               | 75      | TRABZON       | 3.189        | 807.903   | 0,39%                               |
| 35   | GÜMÜŞHANE  | 107          | 162.748    | 0,07%                               | 76      | TUNCELİ       | 62           | 88.198    | 0,07%                               |
| 36   | HAKKARİ    | 5.336        | 286.470    | 1,86%                               | 77      | UŞAK          | 2.321        | 367.514   | 0,63%                               |
| 37   | HATAY      | 428.073      | 1.609.856  | 26,59%                              | 78      | VAN           | 2.121        | 1.123.784 | 0,19%                               |
| 38   | İĞDIR      | 90           | 197.456    | 0,05%                               | 79      | YALOVA        | 3.753        | 262.234   | 1,43%                               |
| 39   | ISPARTA    | 6.614        | 441.412    | 1,50%                               | 80      | YOZGAT        | 4.404        | 424.981   | 1,04%                               |
| 40   | İSTANBUL   | 547.235      | 15.067.724 | 3,63%                               | 81      | ZONGULDAK     | 584          | 599.698   | 0,10%                               |
| 41   | İZMİR      | 143.839      | 4.320.519  | 3,33%                               |         |               |              |           |                                     |

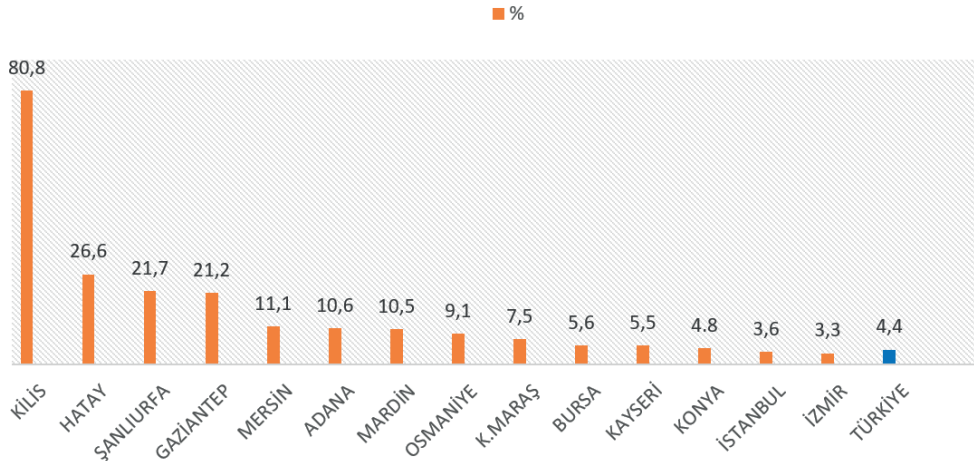
Source: T.R. Directorate General of Migration Administration website: [https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma\\_363\\_378\\_4713\\_icerik](https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik) (Accessed: 1.7.2019)

# STATUS AND DEMOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SYRIANS IN TURKEY

Without any doubt, an aspect just as important as the quantitative size of Syrian populations is the proportional size, i.e. concentration of such populations within the province they are registered. Turkey average in this respect is 4.42%, while İstanbul is observed to remain significantly lower than this average concentration with a value of 3.63%. However, it is understood that there are many refugees who are registered in other provinces but live in İstanbul. In the most recent studies conducted, a further 300,000 Syrians registered in other provinces were found

out to be living in İstanbul. This means that around 830,000 Syrians are known to be living in İstanbul. If this value of 830,000 is taken as basis, the Syrians' ratio within overall population in İstanbul may be calculated at around 5.5%, thus over the Turkey average. In the provinces that follow İstanbul in terms of quantitative size, the ratio of Syrians within overall population is found out to be 21.22% in Şanlıurfa, 80.95% in Kilis, 26.59% in Hatay, and 21.72% in Gaziantep.<sup>8</sup>

## RATIO OF THE SYRIAN POPULATION WITHIN PROVINCIAL POPULATION (CITIES WHERE THE NUMBER OF SYRIANS EXCEEDS 100,000 OR WHERE THE NUMBER OF SYRIANS ARE HIGHER THAN THE AVERAGE NUMBER IN TURKEY.)



### c. Age Characteristics

Age distribution is particularly striking in regards to the demographical characteristics of Syrians in Turkey. The number of Syrian babies born in Turkey after the year 2011 is known to be over 450,000. In any event, the number of children between 0-4 years of age being 501,836 reveals that this value is realistic. The number of children under 18 years old (0-17) is 1,657,000. Within this number, the number of children at school age is 1,080,000. The population at active labour age, i.e. 15-64 years old, is 2,155,000. 1,458,000 Syrians in Turkey belongs within either 0-14 or 65+ years age group. However, it is observed that only 540,000 among the Syrian population is 40 and over years of age, which means that there is a considerably young population under 40 years of age, corresponding to around 80% of overall Syrian population.

DISTRIBUTION OF SYRIANS UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION BY AGE AND GENDER

| AGE    | MALE      | FEMALE    | TOTAL     |
|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| TOPLAM | 1.960.995 | 1.661.289 | 3.622.284 |
| 0-4    | 272.208   | 254.268   | 526.476   |
| 5-9    | 254.845   | 239.931   | 494.776   |
| 10-14  | 199.534   | 185.044   | 384.578   |
| 15-18  | 149.146   | 122.849   | 271.995   |
| 19-24  | 316.524   | 228.713   | 545.237   |
| 25-29  | 204.858   | 144.307   | 351.165   |
| 30-34  | 169.384   | 124.358   | 293.742   |
| 35-39  | 119.837   | 94.640    | 214.477   |
| 40-44  | 79.168    | 69.946    | 149.114   |
| 45-49  | 58.681    | 55.795    | 114.476   |
| 50-54  | 47.468    | 45.378    | 92.846    |
| 55-59  | 33.001    | 33.307    | 66.308    |
| 60-64  | 23.068    | 23.738    | 46.806    |
| 65-69  | 15.155    | 15.762    | 30.917    |
| 70-74  | 8.546     | 9.169     | 17.715    |
| 75-79  | 4.743     | 5.952     | 10.695    |
| 80-84  | 2.633     | 3.283     | 5.916     |
| 85-89  | 1.434     | 1.888     | 3.322     |
| 90+    | 762       | 961       | 1.723     |

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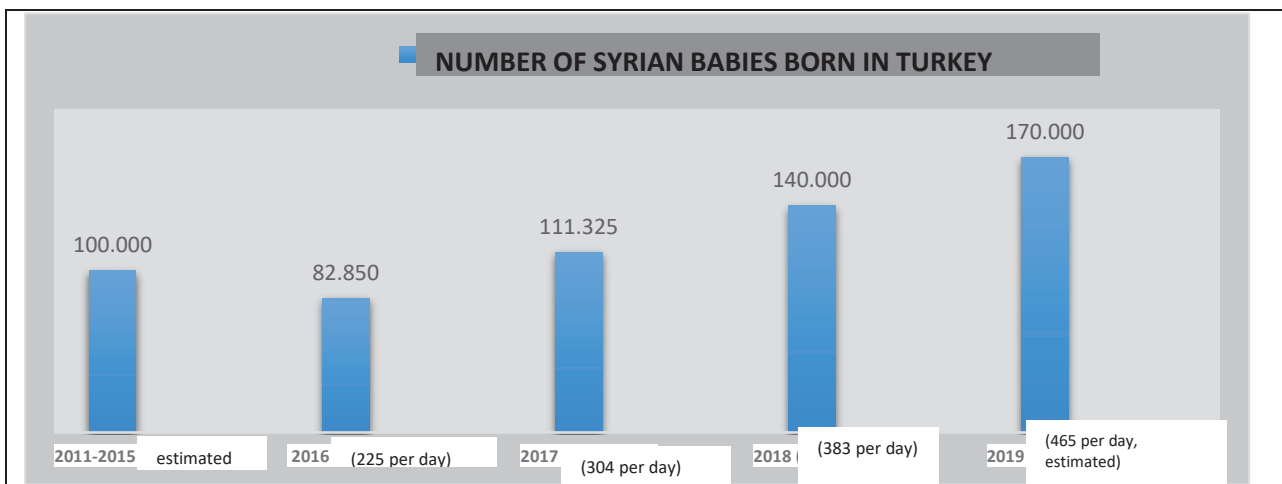
Source: T.R. Directorate General of Migration Administration website: [https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma\\_363\\_378\\_4713\\_icerik](https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik) (Accessed: 1.7.2019)

<sup>8</sup>In the calculations of the Directorate General of Migration Administration, the province population and refugee population are handled separately and a linear mathematical calculation is conducted. The calculation that is mathematically more meaningful would be taking the sum of provincial population and Syrian population and determining the ratio of Syrians over this sum. In this framework, the ratio is found out as not 4.42% but 4.21% for overall Turkey, not 3.63% but 3.52% in İstanbul; not 80.95% but 44.74% in Kilis, not 26.59% but 21.16% in Hatay, not 21.72% but 17.97% in Şanlıurfa, and not 21.72% but 17.42% in Gaziantep.

#### d. Newborns

The number of Syrian babies born in Turkey after the year 2011 increases every passing day. This may be understood as a result of normalisation of life. Although there is uncertainty for the 2011-2015 period in regards to the number of newborn babies, this number is estimated to be around 100,000. However, according to official data of the Ministry of Health, 82,850 Syrian babies were born in 2016, 111,325 Syrian babies were born in 2017 and 140,000 Syrian babies were born in 2018 within Turkish borders. Through a simple projection, it may be estimated that around 80,000 babies were born within the first half of the year 2019. Considering the increase trend, this number may be foreseen to occur as minimum 170,000 babies for the year 2019,

which means that that the average number of Syrian babies to be born each day of the year 2019 will be 465. In this framework, it may be easily mentioned that the number of Syrian babies born in Turkey exceeds 450,000 as of this day. Although the number is observed to increase a further 30,000 each year, assuming that the number does no further change between 2019 and 2025 it may be estimated that the number of Syrian babies born in Turkey will reach 1.6 - 1.8 million as of the year 2025. As is known, another important issue for the Syrian babies born in Turkey is their "de facto stateless" ("haymatlos") status due to neither Turkey nor Syria granting automatic citizenship to newborns.

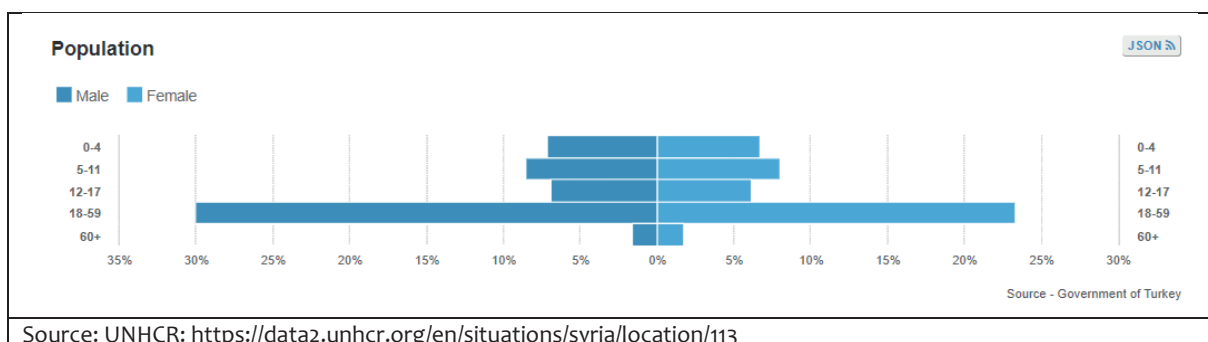


Source: Tabulated by M. Murat Erdoğan over the data from the Ministry of Health, statements from the Ministry of Interior and projections belonging to the 2011-2015 period and the year 2019. "Per Day" numbers were obtained by dividing the annual sums into 365 days.

#### e. Gender Characteristics

Another important characteristic of the demographical structure inherent within the Syrians in Turkey is the imbalance in regards to gender distribution. According to the data provided from the Directorate General of Migration Administration reveals 45.85% (1,661,289) women and 54.14% (1,960,995) men within the overall population of Syrians in Turkey.<sup>9</sup> This means that 118

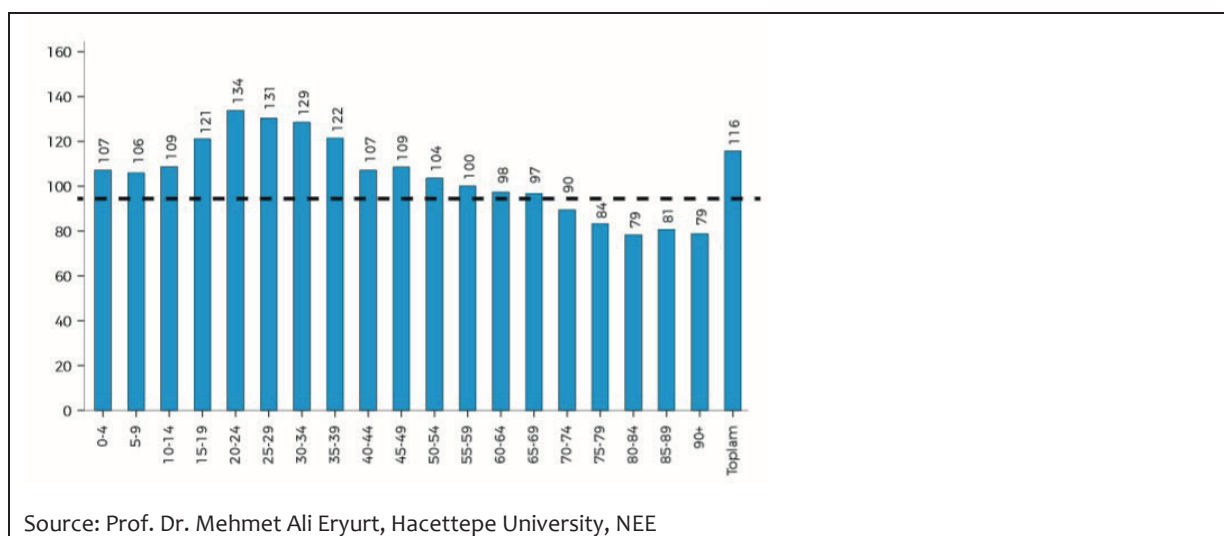
Syrian men coincide with 100 Syrian women, while this ratio occurs to be 107 versus 100 for the 0-4 years age group. However, this imbalance increases further within the 15-29 years age group, which includes 135 Syrian men coinciding with 100 Syrian women. Syrian men having less ratio compared to women only occurs after 55 years age.



<sup>9</sup>T.R. Directorate General of Migration Administration website [https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma\\_363\\_378\\_4713\\_icerik](https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik) (Accessed: 1.7.2019)

## STATUS AND DEMOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SYRIANS IN TURKEY

The table below reveals the imbalance between genders in an even more striking way. What the black line indicates in this table is the number of women, while the men were indicated in the blue columns according to age groups. It is clearly observed from the table that the number of Syrian men is considerably higher than the number of Syrian women. It is even understood that 127 Syrian men coincide with 100 Syrian men for the 15-39 years age group. This striking demographic is caused by the Syrian young men who would be obligated to side with the warring parties of the war in case they remained in Syria. This group of young men who left their country because they did not see the war in Syria as their war and did not want to do military duty (or to side with opposing groups) causes a similar demographical status not only in Turkey but also in other countries.



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Syrian men having distinctively higher numbers within overall Syrian population compared to women has to be handled with care in terms of education, labour life and social cohesion.

### C. SPONTANEOUS RETURN OF SYRIANS

The most important aspect that defines the policies on the Syrians in Turkey is whether or not the Syrians are permanent in the country. Likewise, the returning inclination will play an important role also in respect to the projections to be presented within the context of this study. Albeit there is a common will among both the community and the political arena revealing the necessity for them to return, the realism of this is will questionable. Without doubt, the issue was a "temporary" one for both the Syrians and for Turkey, and the correct path in this regard was "emergency management". However, five important factors changed the nature of the subject of Syrian refugees:

1. The number of Syrians displayed an extraordinary increase and exceeded 3.6 million. With the inclusion of those who were granted citizenship, this number exceeds 3.7 million.
2. A Syrian immigration to Turkey has been occurring spanning over 8 years. This process has thus exceeded not only expectations but also psychological time limits. It is known the Syrians in Turkey have been living in Turkey for 4 to 4.5 years in average.

3. Syrians began to settle in places outside of the border region of Turkey. As of now, approximately half of the Syrian population live in provinces outside of the border region. Getting distant from the border region, therefore from the motherland Syria, played a role that accelerated the detachment.

4. Most importantly, the crisis environment in Syria deepened became more complex with even more actors in a manner that was never projected. As of today, no estimation could be done in regards to when a peaceful environment may be established in Syria. Even if peace was concluded between the warring factions, it is not expected in short or medium term for a peaceful environment could become dominant in the country.

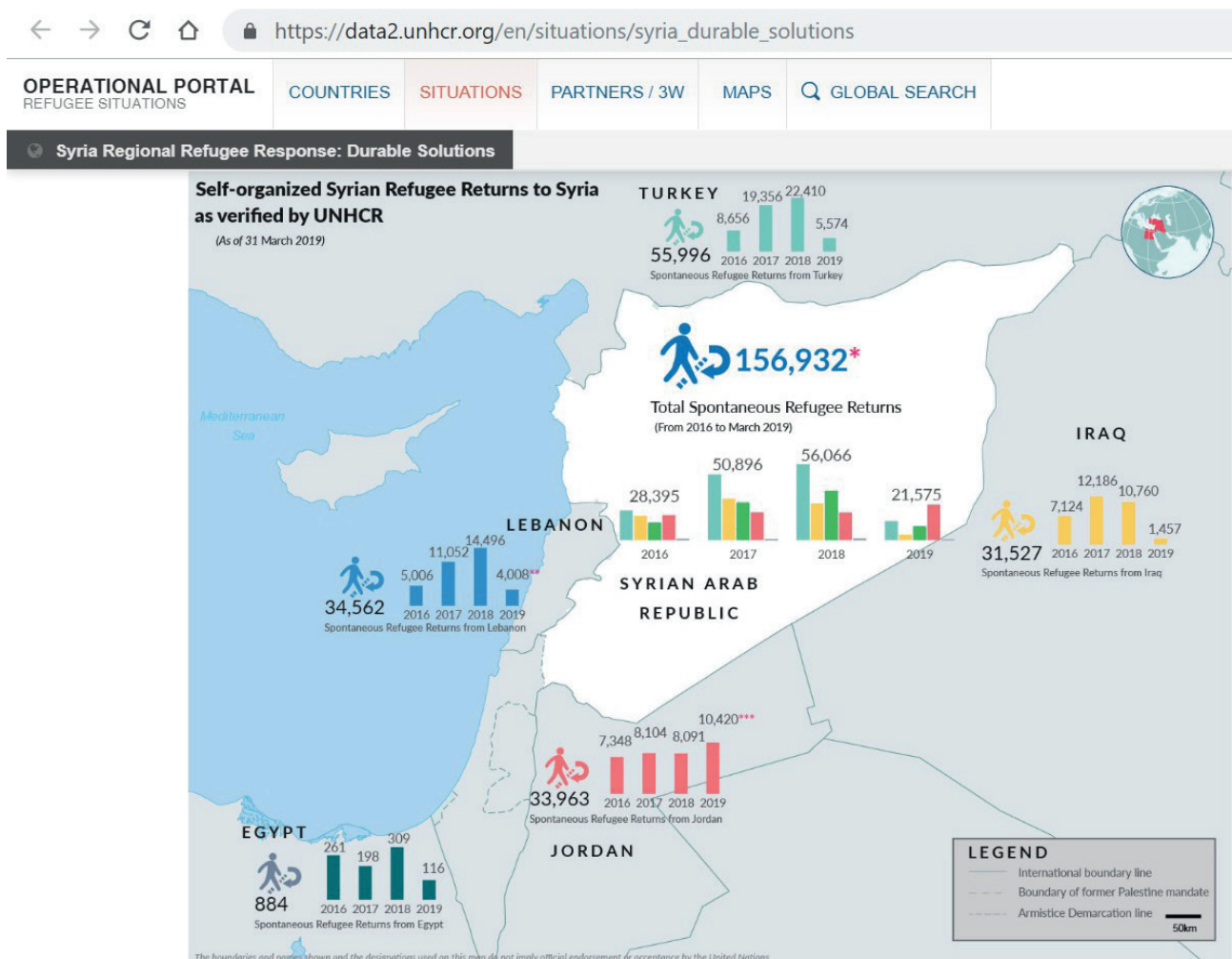
5. Elimination of the physical and sentimental damage to Syria which accumulated for more than 8 years will take at least 10 years even if the war ended today. Return to the country seems quite risky in this period. It seems to be not possible to receive services especially in regards to the fields of education, health, accommodation and infrastructure for a long while still.



These five fundamental factors considerably pruned the possibility and willingness of Syrians' return to their home country. This means that unfortunately the grounds for spontaneous return do not yet seem to be established in Syria. It also does not seem it may be established in the short or medium term. It is observed that Syrians inclination to return still remain at utterly low levels. It is no doubt that many Syrians talk of returning to their country when appropriate conditions arise. However, the possibility of such is running out. Efforts of the regional (neighbouring) countries that host Syrians towards this end also remains inconclusive.

The numbers provided by UNHCR in regards to spontaneous return reveal at how symbolic levels such return remains. The number of those who spontaneously returned to Syria during the last 4

years among over 5.6 million Syrians who left their country and are living in neighbouring countries seems to be around merely 156,000. Other experiences throughout the world reveal that the possibility of return declines as the time of a crisis gets extended. And this consequence occurs independently from the addressee countries developing or not developing any cohesion policies. For instance, the number of those who returned from Lebanon where the cohesion policies are strongly opposed and the discourse of "Syrians will either go or go any way" over the justification of "Syrians have a quantitative size that will change the entirety of our country's ethnical, religious and political dynamics of our country. This population bears the risk of collapsing the fragile system of our country" remained at 34,562 as may be observed from UNHCR data.



## STATUS AND DEMOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SYRIANS IN TURKEY

14 Although statements in the line of spontaneous returns from Turkey accelerating and more than 329,000 Syrians returning to their country are being made -partly for alleviating the pressures from the public-<sup>10</sup> UNHCR data, those who come back in some manner after spontaneously returning to Syria and the rate of increase in Turkey paint a different picture. The UNHCR data also presented above reveal that there is a different reality in this regard. The quantitative data published in regards to the Syrian under temporary protection in Turkey also point out that the aspect of spontaneous return in actuality played almost no role within the entirety of the situation, and in fact the numbers reveal a constant increase. There is information pointing out that more than half of those who signed spontaneous return document and left Turkey came back into Turkey. After significant problems were experienced due to renewal of the temporary protection status of those who spontaneously returned to their country and then came back into Turkey not being possible, the Directorate General of Migration Administration under the Ministry of Interior sent a letter to Provincial Directorates of Migration and gave the instruction, for “the temporary protection status of those who spontaneously returned to their country and then came back into Turkey to be reactivated”.<sup>11</sup> At which

degree this instruction is carried out in actuality is another aspect to be studied separately.

Official data of Turkey also reveal that such a return is not very realistic. For instance, the number of Syrians who were placed under temporary protection in Turkey occurred to be 197,000 just within the year 2018. The number of Syrians who were placed under temporary protection that was 3,623,192 as of 1 January 2019 increased to 3,635,841 as of 21 February 2019, and to 3,642,738 as of March 2019 and declined slightly for the first time to 3,613,389 in April 2019. However, when the existence of nearly 80,000 Syrians who were granted Turkish citizenship and thus lost their temporary protection status is taken into consideration, the decline in the number is understood to have a different meaning.

All of the aforementioned point out that the willingness of Syrians in Turkey to “spontaneously return” and the possibility of the same as per the state existent in their country decreased considerably. And this drove the Turkish state to steer towards medium and long term cohesion policies. Although it is challenging and risky for the government to voice, it may be easily mentioned that the Turkish state is carrying out “an unnamed cohesion policy”.

<sup>10</sup>Sabah Gazetesi (26.05.2019) <https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2019/05/26/bakan-duyurdu-329-bin-suriyeli-ulkesine-geri-dondu> (Accessed: 07.07.2019)

<sup>11</sup>Letter with date 7 January 2019 and no. 16-000-E1112 from the T.R. Ministry of Internal Affairs, Directorate General of Migration Administration, International Protection Department, signed by the General Director.



## SYRIANS IN TURKEY: DETERMINATIONS AND PROJECTIONS BASED ON PERIOD, THEME AND SUBJECT

The policy of Turkey on Syrians naturally changed through the process, and transitioned from emergency management to cohesion policies by way of institutional and administrative regulations.

While everything was built upon “temporariness” and “emergency management” in the beginning years of the crisis, after April 2011, and in the years 2012 and 2013, the aforementioned change became unavoidable in the following years. It seems that the existence of Syrians in Turkey, which prevailed for over eight years and depicted by numbers exceeding 3.6 million, will continue to be one of the most significant issues of Turkey in short, medium and even long term.

As the internal conflict that began in Syria shortly after turned into a civil war, and as the overthrowing of the Damascus regime meant to Turkey till 2014, which was the main target of the human influx, the resolution of the problem of Syrians in the country, the subject was seen as a field of international relations and the process was managed through emergency management. In other words, the expectation that the overthrowing of the regime in Syria would be sufficient for the refugees to return to their country was the main reason why Turkey’s efforts concentrated mainly on Syria.

Rather short-term and sector based (education, health, labour, accommodation etc.) cohesion policies -although not systemic, long-term and centralised- or “problem solving policies” with a better definition have begun to be implemented particularly with the Syrians having risen numbers and becoming urban refugees after the year 2014. Integration of Syrian children into the Turkish education system, provision of health services, granting work permits, conducting psychosocial support studies etc. processes have gotten accelerated as of the year 2015. It is known that local administrations also made some significant efforts in this regard -albeit more towards the aim of “charity works” or in line with a reflex of “let no problems emerge in our area”. ISIS becoming involved in Syria, Turkey entering the arena, and Russia and Iran becoming involved as regional powers in the conflict in favour of the Damascus Regime made the status much more complicated. The role undertaken by the Kurdish groups in this period in regards to the combat against ISIS played an active role for both the policies of the USA (and certain European countries) regarding the Kurds and the fight against terrorism becoming more prioritised compared to the fight against the Damascus Regime. This priority shift from Damascus to ISIS led to Turkey combating both the Damascus Regime and ISIS. Another aspect in this period occurred to be the activities of Kurdish organisations in the region. However, in this exact moment of the process, the

“great escape” of the Syrians from their countries and from Turkey to Western countries began. This escape caused Turkey, which already lacked any further capacity to hold the Syrians at the camps, to overlook the Syrians’ efforts to leaving the region and “taking care of their own”. In Turkey, which lacked any settlement policy, Syrians began to settle wherever they wanted and leave the border area. Although the Temporary Protection Regulation brought forth certain mobility limitations, the control of such limitations would not be easy.

“Aylan Baby”, who was an unfortunate victim of the escaping to Europe experience near Bodrum on 2 September 2015, created a global wave effect and some Western countries, particularly Germany and Sweden, opened their doors for a short time to refugees with the pressure of refugee-friendly civil society powers. It is mentionable at this point that Germany played a special role in this instance and opened its doors much more to refugees that arrived in Europe than the other EU States. However, the doors that were opened reluctantly not only to Syrian but other refugees who came from many countries and attempted to reach Europe over Turkey were about to be shut again in a short while. So at the end, first the Balkan route was shut down; and then, within the framework of the agreement made with Turkey (Turkey-EU Agreement), the EU decided to provide Turkey with financial support for the refugees in Turkey with the condition Turkey lends support to prevent new influxes of refugees over Turkey. The Turkey-EU Agreement signed on March 2016 was not a part of EU *acquis* and instead made between EU Member States and Turkey but it was thus decided through this agreement for a total of 6 billion Euros (3+3) financial resource to be transferred to Turkey to be spent for refugees for the following 4 years. Although there also were promises for visa liberalisation and opening new chapters in EU negotiations, this subject fell into the background and was forgotten soon. These years also marked a period during which a transformation occurred where the process management regarding the Syrians was transferred from AFAD, which had been an institution responsible for step by step emergency management and gotten in a sense “obese” with responsibilities, to the newly established Directorate General of Migration Administration while both national and international NGOs started to undertake more important roles. Having been virtually the most important institution since 2016 in regards to refugees, AFAD was bound under the Ministry of Interior in the year 2018 and got distanced from responsibilities in regards to refugees. It is apparent that the transfer of the camps formerly managed by AFAD to the Directorate General of Migration Administration and both the



numbers of and the incidents in the camps having decreased played roles in this change. One of the developments experienced in this process that was considered overall as a surprise was Turkey opening the way of “exceptional” citizenship to Syrians and thus granting citizenship to more than one hundred thousand people. The citizenship grant of the Turkish Republic that had been implemented for migrants with Turkish ethnicity since the year 1923 was thus revised significantly in the manner of granting mass citizenship to a group of non-Turkish ethnicity.

It is possible to trace the process management of Turkey under the three main periods comprising of 2011-2013, 2014-2016, and 2017-2019 period.

I- 2011-2013: During this period when there were 250,000 Syrians, the expectation was that the crisis will be very short lived, the regime in Damascus that caused the problem will be overthrown, and the refugees will return to their country. Through this process, community solidarity was at the utmost level. The issue was not a crisis for the EU but it was sending warnings to Turkey for the country to implement open door policy. Sentimentality was at the top in this period, usually the Government defined the issue as solidarity of brotherhood, and was frequently using the concept “Ensar-Muhacir”, referring to the migration of Prophet Mohammad from Mecca to Medina during the birth period of Islam. The remainder of the world was being accused of insensitivity. However, the actual sensitivity expected in this period was in the form of pressures that will lead to Assad leaving power as soon as possible. Support and settlement for refugees was not an issue on the agenda yet. The actor of the process was AFAD providing “emergency management” and the area of the process was the border region. Syrians was being accommodated still at the border region, and mostly in camps. The general policy of this period was defined as, “we openly embrace the sufferers, we see overthrowing the regime as the main aspect for resolution of the problem, and we cover the urgent needs of the refugees with generosity”.

II- 2014-2016: The most distinctive characteristic of the second period was pronounced increase of the number of refugees and refugees starting to settle outside of the border region. The camps were now full, Assad was still resisting and the process was getting longer and longer. The number of refugees reached millions, up to 2.8 million. The situation was formulated in the way, “Crisis may get extended but the refugees will either flee to Europe or will return to their country”. The EU started to talk of crisis with the people fleeing from the war environment that had gotten out of control with the involvement of

ISIS and aiming for Europe. Although the “Ensar-Muhacir Solidarity” discourse was continued, a certain surprise effect was being felt regarding the situation. The newly established (2014) Directorate General of Migration Administration began to function in addition to AFAD, Syrians passed through the border region, while the policy was still concentrated on emergency management and registration. This was the period when cooperation with the EU also gotten developed.

III- 2017-2019: These years marked the third period where the increase of Syrian refugee numbers reached the top and exceeded 3.6 million, and also non-Syrian refugees began to significantly manifest themselves, thus pushing the total number to 4.1 million. The EU had efforts to externalise the process, while Turkey tried to instrumentalise the process as a significant part of EU negotiations. The perception that the refugees have gotten permanent began to be accepted by both the Syrians and the Turkish community. In spite of the mobility prevention, settling outside of the camps unavoidably continued. An important development of this period, when the Directorate General of Migration Administration became prominent, cohesion works, border safety, registration update and efforts to create safe havens to enable return were commissioned, was the refugee agreement signed between Turkey and the EU. While the EU embraced an approach towards externalising not only security and costs but also cohesion, Turkey utilised this as a soft power field, and an instrument for criticising the EU. It was also observed that an unnamed and generally local scale cohesion policy was begun to be implemented.

# SYRIANS IN TURKEY: DETERMINATIONS AND PROJECTIONS BASED ON PERIOD, THEME AND SUBJECT

| PERIOD                       | NUMBERS  | EXPECTATION / DISCOURSE  | AREA / METHOD  | INSTITUTION IN CHARGE   | POLICY  | IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS   |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| 2011 (April)<br>2012<br>2013 | 252<br>14,237<br>224,655<br><br>Number of Syrian Babies Born in Turkey: 2011-2012: 10,000                            | Crisis will be short lived, Syrians will return after regime change /<br><br>Open Door Policy<br>Ensar-Muhacir Solidarity  | Syria border region / Settling in Camps  | AFAD<br>Turkish Red Crescent<br>Ministry of Interior<br>Civil Society   | Emergency Management  | 29 April 2011: First band of refugees entering Turkey<br><br>2012: "Directive on Reception and Accommodation of Syrian Arab Republic Nationals and Stateless Persons who reside in Syrian Arab Republic, who arrive to Turkish Borders in Mass Influx to Seek Asylum"<br><br>11 April 2013: "Law on Foreigners and International Protection"   |
| 2014<br>2015<br>2016         | 1,519,286<br>2,503,549<br>2,834,441<br><br>Number of Syrian Babies Born in Turkey: 2014-2015: 80,000<br>2016: 82,850 | Crisis may get extended but the Syrians will either return or go to Europe / Criticism against Europe for not applying enough pressure on Syrian Regime and sharing the burden | Border Region and Metropolitan Cities of Turkey / Settling in camps / Permission (not preventing) settling in cities | AFAD<br>Directorate General of Migration Administration<br>Prime Ministry<br>Ministry Counsellor<br>UN Institutions<br>Civil Society<br>Local Administrations | Emergency Management<br>Registration Agreement with EU<br>Border security | ISIS getting involved with the process, international pressure on Syrian Regime decreasing, priority being placed on combating ISIS<br><br>Russia and Iran getting involved with the process in favour of Syrian Regime<br><br>11 April 2014: Directorate General of Migration Administration getting commissioned<br>22 October 2014: Temporary Protection Regulation<br>Establishment of Directorate General of Migration Administration<br>Provincial Organisation structure<br><br>Syrians fleeing to Europe over Turkey<br><br>2 September 2015: Drowning of Aylan Kurdi<br><br>15 January 2016: Regulation on Work Permits for Foreigners under Temporary Protection<br><br>18 March 2016: Turkey-AB Agreement<br>EU Financial Aid Programme for the Refugees in Turkey (FRIT-I)<br><br>EU shutting down the Balkan Route, and effective prevention of refugees coming over Turkey<br><br>Commissioning of Social Cohesion Assistance (ESSN) Programme |
| 2017<br>2018                 | 3,426,786<br>3,623,192   | The process steering towards permanence  | All Turkey /   | Directorate General of Migration  | Incentive for return  | Data Update through Directorate General of   |

|                                   |  |  |  |   |  |   |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|---|
| <b>2019</b> <small>(July)</small> | <b>3,630,575</b><br><br>Number of Syrian Babies Born in Turkey:<br>2017: 111,325<br><br>2018: 140,000<br>2019 (July): 85,000 | Most generous country in the world<br><br>Turkey / They will go / be sent to Safe Havens | Permission on settling outside of camps, shutting down camps with inappropriate conditions, encouraging camp populations to leave the camps and reducing the concentration of existing camps<br><br>Mobility restriction | Administration International Institutions<br><br>Civil Society<br><br>AFAD<br><br>Local Administrations | Cohesion Policies<br><br>Citizenship Policy<br><br>Reducing the Syrians inside the Camps<br><br>Updating Registrations | Migration Administration- UNHCR Cooperation<br><br>Turkey-Russia-Iran Cooperation<br><br>20 January 2018: Olive Branch - Afrin Operation<br><br>Establishing Safe Havens<br><br>EU Financial Aid Programme for the Refugees in Turkey (FRIT-II)<br><br>July 2018: AFAD bound under the Ministry of Interior |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|---|

Turkey skipping social and economic cohesion processes and exceptionally granting citizenship to Syrians may be understood as an important part of cohesion efforts. However, it is known that the government discourse had significant changes to it following increased reactions from the local community particularly after July 2016, and “repatriation” topic was mentioned just as much as the “cohesion” topic. It is clear that significant criticisms brought forth by the shattered temporariness belief regarding the subject of refugees after especially the “citizenship” policy played an important role in this change. Although Syrians have never been an important factor in the political processes or an important variable in the elections in Turkey during the last 8 years, it is still observed that the concerns and reactions coming from host community have gotten deepened in this period. The response of the political powers to such reactions has become apparent through the Euphrates Shield commenced on August 2016 and especially the Afrin Operation commenced on January 2018. Politicians at positions of power in the government frequently used the discourse, “Afrin operation is being realised not only for combating terrorism but also for the Syrians to return home”. In the de-facto safe havens established within the areas of these two operations, Turkey commenced “on-site problem solving, on-site security, on-site cohesion” policies. As of now, Turkey is making extraordinary efforts towards satisfying the security and living needs of around 1.5 million Syrians in these two areas. This policy is attached importance to also in respect to preventing influx of more refugees. However, the policy of establishing safe havens and encouraging Syrian refugees in Turkey to return to such areas has not been successful enough. All these indications point out to the fact that Syrians’ inclinations towards permanence in Turkey have gotten strengthened.

## I. SYRIANS IN TURKEY AND EDUCATION

### A. Current Status

The subject of education of the Syrians in Turkey was evaluated under five different fields within the context of this study:

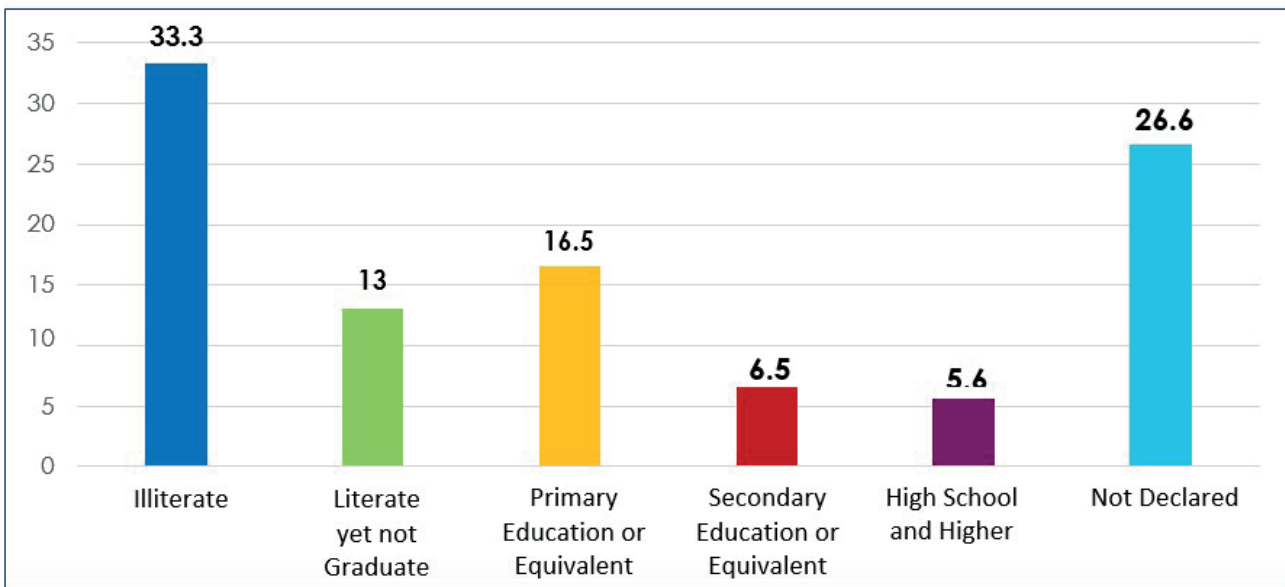
1. Overall education status of the Syrians in Turkey
2. Access of children at school age (5-17) to education
3. Access to higher education
4. Turkish language education
5. Access of Syrians to vocational courses and informal education

The subject of overall education status of the Syrians in Turkey is of significance in regards to both contribution to cohesion and society and the schooling of children at school age and their success at the school. Limited data at hand in regards to this subject reveal that Syrians have an education status that is significantly lower compared to Turkey average. This situation is closely related to their education and cohesion processes. Education level is of most importance regarding receiving families’ support for the education of the children. Likewise, it is mentionable that overall education level would play an important role in regards to subjects such as Turkish language learning, contribution to economy, entrepreneurship, forms of labour, diversification of social life, recognition of the value scale of the local community etc. The subject of the efficiency of employment studies, which are planned for adults and are of importance in regards to adaptation of Syrians to economic and social life, is also closely related to education level.

# SYRIANS IN TURKEY: DETERMINATIONS AND PROJECTIONS BASED ON PERIOD, THEME AND SUBJECT

There is only very limited information in regards to the overall education status of the Syrian population that correspond to 4.42% of the total population in Turkey. We may see the study titled "First Stage Needs Analysis Covering the 2016-2018 period for Syrians in Turkey under Temporary Protection Status" published by the Ministry of Development within the framework of "Turkey-EU Refugee Agreement" in the year 2016 as virtually the only official source on this subject until this day.<sup>12</sup>

## Syrians uTP in Turkey according to their Educational Statuses (%) March 2015



This table unfortunately reveals a severe educational deficit. However, it is also frequently mentioned that the data obtained as of March 2015 was not reliable enough, and that high levels of errors came up due to the high workloads and technical defects during the process of data collection. Therefore, a study was conducted through cooperation between the Directorate General of Migration Administration and UNHCR for updating the registrations and the information presented during registrations, however, the outputs received were not published. In the table with date March 2015 published by the Ministry of Development by use of the data from the Directorate General of Migration Administration, it is observed that 33% of the Syrians in Turkey were illiterate, and 13% were literate but not graduate. Under the same table it is also observed that a group of 26.6% was marked as "unanswered". Thus, it does not seem possible to make any realistic assessment by this table. Data obtained by the Ministry of Education in regards to pre-war Syria also provides some hints towards understanding the overall situation.

According to this, Syria had reached a schooling ratio of 92% for elementary education, 69% for secondary education and 70% schooling for high school education prior to the year 2011. On approximately the same period, Turkey had achieved schooling ratios of 99% for elementary schools, 93% for secondary schools and 70% for high schools. This means that Syria had an average schooling ratio of 62.3%, while Turkey had an 87.3% average ratio.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, these averages had been even lower in Northern Syria, which gave the most migrant population to Turkey. Thus, many indirect data at hand pertaining to the overall education level of Syrians in Turkey reveals a not very bright overall picture. Within the context of comprehensive field studies conducted for understanding the overall structure of the Syrian population (for instance; "Syrians Barometer")<sup>14</sup>, the ratio of illiterate people among the Syrians was defined to be 18.5%. The ratio of literate but not graduate Syrians is observed to be 11.8%. According to this study, the total ratio of those who had never seen schools among Syrians is around 30%.

12T.R. Ministry of Development: Türkiye'deki Geçici Koruma Statüsündeki Suriyelilere Yönelik 2016-2018 Dönemini Kapsayan Birinci Aşama İhtiyaç Analizi, Mart 2016 / First Stage Needs Assessment Covering 2016-2018 Period for Syrians with Temporary Protection Status in Turkey, March 2016, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup>Syrians Barometer -2017, p.44

<sup>14</sup>For instance Syrians Barometere -2017, p.122



**Table 4.7 Education Levels of Syrians in Turkey According to Syrian Barometer (SB) Research**

|  | inside camp |              | outside camp |              | total       |              |
|--|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
|  | #           | %            | #            | %            | #           | %            |
| Illiterate   | 241         | 14,9         | 959          | 19,7         | 1200        | 18,5         |
| Is Literate But Did Not Complete Primary Education | 277         | 17,2         | 491          | 10,1         | 768         | 11,8         |
| Primary School                                     | 479         | 29,6         | 1338         | 27,5         | 1817        | 28,0         |
| Primary Education/Secondary Education              | 303         | 18,8         | 975          | 20,0         | 1278        | 19,7         |
| High School And Its Equivalents                    | 177         | 11,0         | 532          | 10,9         | 709         | 10,9         |
| Associate's Degree / Vocational Schools            | 59          | 3,7          | 154          | 3,2          | 213         | 3,3          |
| Bachelor's Degree                                  | 76          | 4,7          | 387          | 7,9          | 463         | 7,1          |
| Masters/Phd  | 1           | 0,1          | 36           | 0,7          | 37          | 0,6          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                       | <b>1613</b> | <b>100,0</b> | <b>4872</b>  | <b>100,0</b> | <b>6485</b> | <b>100,0</b> |

\* Results of people above the age of 6

According to 2017 data, the ratio of illiterate people in Turkey is 3.3%. This situation reveals that there is a severe imbalance between the education levels of communities, based either on the 33% ratio as published by the Ministry of Development or the 18.5% ratio as pointed out in the Syrians Barometer study. According to the information provided by MoNE, the participation to education ratios in Syria pertaining to compulsory education period which was 9 years prior to 2011 had also been significantly lower than the Turkey average.<sup>15</sup> Another aspect that is of importance regarding the education level of the Syrians in Turkey is that the majority of the Syrians who immigrated to Turkey comprised of those who had lived in Northern Syria and mostly in rural areas, oppressed by the regime, worked in agriculture sector and traditionally had education levels lower than that of Syrian average. This situation, which was observed even among those who come from Syria that had a higher education level prior to 2011 compared to overall Arab world, was understood to be also related to the regional differences; in other words, the Syrian regime traditionally oppressing, neglecting, or even consciously holding away education services in Northern Syria region, and such regions dominantly housing rural and agricultural areas got reflected in the educational averages observed among people coming from the region.

### B. Foundation Stones of the Turkish State's Educational Needs Analysis and the Educational Strategy on the Syrians

The Turkish State, through the first comprehensive needs analysis and strategy document it realised under the coordination of the Ministry of Development and presented within the process of EU refugees agreement titled "First Stage Needs Analysis Covering the 2016-2018 period for Syrians in Turkey under

Temporary Protection Status", provided important principles and an implementation framework in this regard. At the introduction of the document, it included the expression, "The needs analysis study shall be implemented as the first stage implementation tool covering the 2016-2018 period. Although covering a certain period, the needs analysis was prepared with a dynamic structure through which updates may be realised as required. The study provides the main framework for the supports to be provided by all international donors, particularly by the European Union (EU)". It was also expressed under this document that "Needs pertaining to the provision of education services were defined in line with the aim of approximately 834,000 Syrian children in our country at school age and 5-17 years age group to access education services at the same standards as that of Turkish students".<sup>16</sup>

The principles defined within the needs analysis prepared in the year 2015 remained mostly the same over time. However, expectations were failed to be satisfied in regards to objectives. Three major objectives were defined under the document:

1. Schooling all of the Syrian children
2. Increasing the ratio of participation of Syrians to the training courses organised over the public education centres
3. Increasing the capacity of Ministry of National Education personnel for providing better services

In spite of many studies conducted towards these objectives, it is apparent that satisfactory results could not be achieved particularly in regards to schooling ratios of students. While it was targeted to have all of the Syrian children to be schooled within 3 years (until 2018) through strengthening physical and human resource infrastructure, this indicator remained at around 62% as of the year 2019.

<sup>15</sup>This situation was further analysed under the title b.

<sup>16</sup>"First Stage Needs Assessment Covering 2016-2018 Period for Syrians with Temporary Protection Status in Turkey" p.17.

# SYRIANS IN TURKEY: DETERMINATIONS AND PROJECTIONS BASED ON PERIOD, THEME AND SUBJECT

Components defined for the 3 objectives of the needs analysis were compiled under 19 items. According to this, the following were planned;

For schooling of Syrian children:

1. Building education buildings and increasing the physical capacities of the public education centres functioning for Syrians
2. Providing course book and stationery material needs of students, providing clothing etc. supports for students
3. Providing transportation support for students who need such support
4. Providing regular supports for covering the operational costs of schools allocated as fulltime or haltime for Syrian students; covering maintenance-repair costs of state schools and allocating such for Syrian students as haltime (afternoon) schools
5. Assigning the permanent Turkish teacher and/ or administrator personnel for coordinating and managing the educational activities carried out at temporary education centres
6. Assigning salaried teachers to temporary education centres for providing Turkish language education
7. Assigning Turkish teachers to work at public schools with urgent needs against additional permanent assignment or additional lesson payments
8. Assigning voluntary Syrian teachers at temporary education centres
9. Providing scholarship opportunities to Syrians at higher education level

For increasing the ratios of participation of Syrians to the courses carried out over the public education centres

10. Assigning qualified instructors or trainers for the courses opened for Syrians at the public education centres

For strengthening the capacity of Ministry of National Education personnel for providing better services to Syrians

11. Realising legislation updates in fields where such update is required
12. Strengthening the informatics infrastructure of the Ministry of National Education
13. Preparing a remote learning programme for increasing the schooling ratios of Syrian children at secondary school age
14. Updating the "Turkish Education for Foreigners" modules prepared by the Ministry of National Education
15. Reorganising the Arabic teaching curriculum used in temporary education centres

16. Commissioning the religious vocational temporary education centre model at high school grade
17. Preparing special programmes for enabling Syrian students to continue to keep their language and culture alive, and ensuring them to receive education over such programmes during out-of-school hours
18. Conducting studies towards enabling Syrian children with special education needs to access such services at the same level as their Turkish peers
19. Increasing studies towards enabling Syrian young people to benefit more from higher education opportunities

These studies to be realised within the 2016-2018 period were indicated to have a cost around 2.7 billion Euros under the needs analysis report.

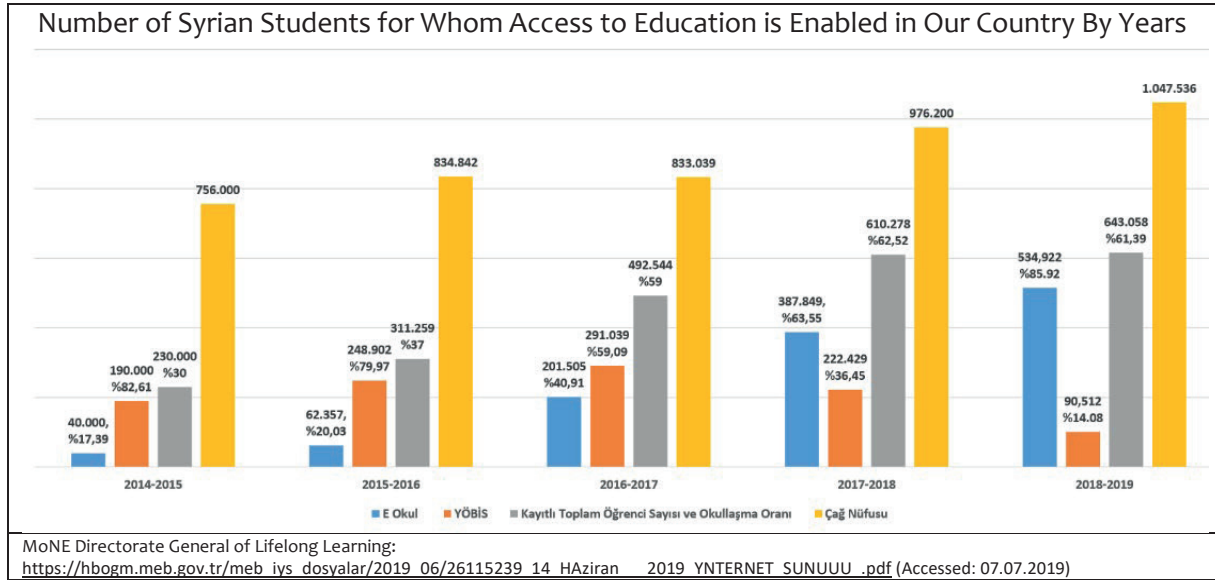
## C. Syrian Children and Young Persons at School Age (5-17)

The subject of Syrian children in Turkey is of vital importance for minimising lost generations, for a dignified life and planning a future where they may live together in peace. According to Directorate General of Migration Administration and MoNE data, the number of Syrian children in Turkey who are within the 5-17 years age group, or in other words at compulsory education age, is 1,047,536. This number corresponds to 28.97% of the total number of Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey. Turkey displays an extraordinary effort in response to this large number that emerged suddenly and pushed the entire education capacity. Of Syrian children, 230,000 were schooled in the 2014-2015 education year, 311,000 were schooled in the 2015-2016 education year, 492,000 were schooled in the 2016-2017 education year, 610,000 were schooled in the 2017-2018 education year, and finally 643,058 were schooled in the 2018-2019 education year. According to most recent data, 61.41% of these children were schooled at this moment. MoNE data indicates the schooling ratios of these children at formal schools and temporary education centres by education levels as; 33.86% for preschool, 96.50% for elementary school, 57.66% for secondary school and 26.77% for high school education.

Data pertaining to the schooled Syrian children reveal that there are severe imbalances in the schooling ratios. While 33.9% or 32,000 of the 95,000 preschool age population were schooled this schooling ratio increases to over 90% for 1st and 2nd grade of elementary school education. Schooling average occurs to be at a significantly high level with a value

of 95% for the first 4-year part of elementary school education (6-9 years age group). However, this ratio declines to 57.66% for the secondary school education covering 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades (10-13 years age), and to 26.77% for the 9th to 12th grades (14-17 years age group). This ratio includes 17,624 Open School and 3,709 HEP A-B & High School Prep Class populations. When these are deducted, the total number of students schooled in 9th to 12th grades decreases to 50,740 among the total high school age population of 269,000, corresponding to 18.84%. This situation is of utmost importance particularly for

the Syrian high school age youngsters who should enter higher education life. According to MoNE data, the number of students with the potential to enter university, i.e. students at 12th grade, as of 2019 occurs to be only 10,077, corresponding to 14.7% of the overall high school age population. It is understood that one of the most important problems in regards to education is dropping-out of education, apparent from the fact that school drop-out ratio increases considerably especially at higher age groups and grades.



The gender distribution of the Syrian children at school age who receive education in Turkey seems to be considerably balanced. Within the total number of 643,058 students, 49.22% (316,485) occurred to be girls, and 50.78% (326,573) occurred to be boys.



### Sınıf Seviyelerine Göre Okullaşma Sayı ve Oranları (01-Nisan -2019)



| SINIF                        | E Okul Kayıtlı Öğrenci | YÖBİS Kayıtlı Öğrenci | Toplam         | Eğitim Kademelerine göre | Çağ Nüfusu Toplam | Kademelere Göre Toplam Çağ Nüfusu | Yüzde         |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Okul Öncesi ( 5 yaş )        | 30.997                 | 1.201                 | 32.198         | 32.198                   | 95.094            | 95.094                            | %33,9         |
| 1. Sınıf ( 6 yaş )           | 99.914                 | 626                   | 100.540        | 365.535                  | 101.529           | 382.748                           | %95,50        |
| 2. Sınıf ( 7 yaş )           | 92.938                 | 920                   | 93.858         |                          | 99.667            |                                   |               |
| 3. Sınıf ( 8 yaş )           | 70.211                 | 2.554                 | 72.765         |                          | 94.684            |                                   |               |
| 4. Sınıf ( 9 yaş )           | 55.494                 | 42.878                | 98.372         |                          | 86.868            |                                   |               |
| 5. Sınıf ( 10 yaş )          | 67.503                 | 908                   | 68.411         | 173.252                  | 85.820            | 300.458                           | %57,66        |
| 6. Sınıf ( 11 yaş )          | 42.817                 | 2.513                 | 45.330         |                          | 77.881            |                                   |               |
| 7. Sınıf ( 12 yaş )          | 22.444                 | 9.129                 | 31.573         |                          | 69.818            |                                   |               |
| 8. Sınıf ( 13 yaş )          | 13.862                 | 14.076                | 27.938         |                          | 66.939            |                                   |               |
| 9. Sınıf ( 14 yaş )          | 20.254                 | 214                   | 20.468         | 72.073                   | 66.550            | 269.236                           | %26,77        |
| 10. Sınıf ( 15 yaş )         | 10.290                 | 691                   | 10.981         |                          | 64.782            |                                   |               |
| 11. Sınıf ( 16 yaş )         | 5.344                  | 3.870                 | 9.214          |                          | 69.398            |                                   |               |
| 12. Sınıf ( 17 yaş )         | 2.849                  | 7.228                 | 10.077         |                          | 68.515            |                                   |               |
| HEP A - B & Lise Hazırlık    | 5                      | 3.704                 | 3.709          |                          |                   |                                   |               |
| Açık okullar                 | 17.624                 | 0                     | 17.624         |                          |                   |                                   |               |
| <b>Toplam Öğrenci Sayısı</b> | <b>552.546</b>         | <b>90.512</b>         | <b>643.058</b> | <b>643.058</b>           | <b>1.047.536</b>  | <b>1.047.536</b>                  | <b>%61,39</b> |

HEP A: Turkish A1, A1 language course for foreigners at 10-18 years age group (2,535 students)

HEP B: Complementary education for 3rd and 4th grades (153 students)

High School Preparation, Support and Catch Up classes (1,021 students)

Source: Directorate General of Lifelong Learning Presentation (May 2019)

# SYRIANS IN TURKEY: DETERMINATIONS AND PROJECTIONS BASED ON PERIOD, THEME AND SUBJECT

As an important indicator of how valuable the effort spent for providing access to education for the Syrian children in Turkey is, looking up the education values provided above regarding pre-2011 Syria should be considerably explanatory. 2011 data pertaining to education in Syria indicated ratios of participation in education as 12% for preschool, 92% for elementary school, 69% for secondary school and 26% for high school education. In actuality, these ratios seem lower than the current ratios of participation in education for the Syrians in Turkey that occur to be 33.9% for preschool, 95.5% for elementary school, 57.6% secondary school and 26.77% high school education - except the secondary school participation ratio. This situation should be accepted as an important indicator of the performance and success put forward by Turkey in merely 5 years. The overall state of education in Syria worsened much more due to the on-going war, as would be expected. In Northern Syria, the ratio of participation in education occurs to be around 6% for Aleppo, around 38% for Idlib, around 60% in Rakka, and around 80% in Haseki.<sup>18</sup> This situation is a clear indicator of how crucial the open door policy of Turkey has been especially for the lives and education of the children.

## D. Regulations of the Ministry of National Education in regards to the Education of Syrian Children

The Ministry of National Education has made regulations in regards to the access of Syrian children to schools since the beginning of the process. The first significant step in this regard was the "MoNE Secondary Education regulation" issued on 7 September 2013. Through Article 29 of this Regulation, comprehensive legal regulations were made in this regard for the first time ever under the title of "Students with Foreign Nationality".<sup>19</sup> However, with the rapid progression of the process, the condition of having residence permit placed for registration of Syrian students in schools was abolished by MoNE on September 2014 through the "Directive on Educational Services Aimed at Foreign Nationals". The Temporary Protection Regulation published on the Official Gazette on 22 October 2014 regulated the education services with its Article 28. In this article, education was defined as a right, while assignment and supervision was left to MoNE. Article 35 of the Regulation, titled "Restrictions on Implementation of Rights" strikes attention. Herein, after expressing that "Those who fail to partially or wholly fulfil their

liabilities are warned by relevant departments to fulfil such, and criminal and administrative actions are filed against those who do not comply with the warnings", "emergency health" and "education" were left outside of such scope of restriction: "In regards to those who do not comply by their liabilities despite being issued warning, restrictions may apply partially or wholly for benefitting from their rights, excluding education and emergency health services."<sup>20</sup> The Ministry of National Education organised the "High School Qualification and Equivalence Examination for Students of Foreign Nationalities" with the purpose of certifying the education provided to Syrian students on June 2015. Those who were successful at the examination, to which approximately 8,500 candidates attended, were granted with equivalence certificate or diploma approved by the Ministry of National Education; and those who graduated were registered into various universities in our country.

MoNE is observed to have taken considerably important steps for Syrian students in the year 2016. The first important step taken by MoNE was signing an agreement with the EU Delegation to secure 300 million Euros for the education costs of students on 3 March 2016 within the scope of EU Facility for Refugees (Syrians) in Turkey (FRIT). However, the real important step was taken on August 2016, and MoNE defined its "roadmap" for the accessibility of education for Syrian children. A very significant difference of approach is observed with what was stipulated in this roadmap compared to the 2011-2015 period. Through this "roadmap" MoNE also established a new institutional structure and formed the "Migration and Emergency Education Department" under its Directorate General of Lifelong Education.<sup>21</sup> Within the scope of this roadmap, the issue was handled with permanence rather than temporariness approach, and integration of Syrian children into the Turkish education system was defined as the main objective. As a result of this, gradually (within 3 years until 2020) shutting down of the temporary education centres that provided Arabic education in line with Syrian curriculum was determined as an aim within this roadmap.

Without doubt, bringing into education 643,000 of more than 1 million Syrian children at school age in Turkey is an extraordinary success. This number is higher than the total number of elementary and secondary education students in many European countries. Even more, this success was realised

<sup>18</sup>T.R. Ministry of National Education, Directorate General of Lifelong Education, Migration and Emergency Education Department - Education Services for Students under Temporary Protection, July 2017 (PPP, p.8)

<sup>19</sup>MEB Secondary Education Institutions Regulation: <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2013/09/20130907-4.htm>

<sup>20</sup>Temporary Protection Regulation: [http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/03052014\\_6883.pdf](http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/03052014_6883.pdf)

<sup>21</sup><http://www.meb.gov.tr/suriyeli-cocuklarin-egitimi-icin-yol-haritasi-belirlendi/haber/11750/tr>



despite the very limited increase achieved in the technical capacity of MoNE, or through much devotion in other words. Education is a field in which rewards are collected late even if investment is made early. As much as new schools and classrooms, qualified educators is another demand of great importance. Therefore, it must be mentioned that the greatest self-devotion was displayed by the teachers, who suddenly faced children that come from a different language and alphabet, and most of such through traumatic experiences. Especially in the border regions where the Syrian population lived in high concentration, the value of such self-devotion increases even more.

Temporary education centres (TEC / [Geçici Eğitim Merkezleri - GEM]) were institutions that had gotten involved in the situation even before public schools and performed an important function for a long time in regards to the education of Syrian children in Turkey. Temporary education centres were commissioned initially by the administrations of camps where Syrian children were sheltered or through the Syrian refugees' own initiative. In temporary education centres, education is provided with an Arabic curriculum over the lesson schedules prepared specially by the MoNE Board of Education and Discipline. The purpose of such was preventing the children not to get distanced from their education until the end of the Syrian crisis that was expected to end soon during that time, and thus establish temporary schools through the support of Syrian teachers or other persons capable of serving as teacher at the camps. As this model attracted significant attention in a short while, such schools were started to be established also in areas outside the camps, and their number rose to 432 as of March 2017. Over 14,500 "voluntary teachers", of which 12,000 are Syrians, serve in TECs. The teacher salaries paid to the voluntary teachers, which were initially 600 TL for those inside the camps and 900 TL for those outside the camps, were increased to 1,300 TL as of the year 2017. These salaries are paid by UNICEF. It is known that a major portion of the "teachers" serving at TECs are persons who did not receive pedagogic training, thus not really teachers. Although intensive Turkish education and Turkish language lessons were added to the curriculum of temporary education centres in recent times, education is provided fundamentally in Arabic and a reviewed Syrian school curriculum is followed during lessons. While the system had initially been established with a quite good intentions and spontaneity, MoNE decided to issue an order

to this subject as the system gotten larger and the number of students reached 300,000 at one time. Not establishing any more TECs if possible, definitely obtaining permission from MoNE if they are to be established, MoNE involving in the process of teacher selection, administrators being assigned by MoNE, and inspection of the centres likewise by MoNE were among the decisions issued by the MoNE. As such, it was frequently brought to attention that serious problems were experienced in TECs regarding quality of teachers, attendance to school, transportation to and from schools and the potential towards radicalisation. Based on the problems experienced in schools and the process evolving towards permanence, MoNE started works towards having all Syrian children be integrated into the Turkish Education System within 2-3 years following 2016. Thus, establishing new temporary education centres is not permitted, and children at preschool, 1st and 2nd grade age are asked to be registered in public schools instead. After this decision, significant decrease in the number of children going to TECs and significant increase in the number of children going to public schools were observed. Although the 2016 decision aimed for shutting down the TECs after 2018, it is known that more than 90,000 children attend such schools even during this 2018-2019 education year. According the MoNE data, the number of TECs still operating is 215 as of 2018. MoNE frequently mentions its decision for wholly shutting down these schools and integrating Syrian children into the Turkish Education System as of the year 2020.<sup>22</sup> In this context, it is understood that a total of 165,000 new students, comprising of approximately 70,000 persons except the 12th grade students to graduate in the 2018-2019 education year and high school prep class students and of 95,000 students with the potential to become 1st grade student, are planned to be integrated into public schools in the 2019-2020 education year. In the event students at interim grades are added in this number, it would not be surprising for the number of new students in public schools to reach 200,000. Under normal conditions, 278 new schools and 10,000 new teachers will be required for 200,000 new students.

<sup>22</sup>This statement was made by MoNE on July 2017: "While previously educational studies were carried out over their own language and curriculum in the Temporary Education Centres, 15 hours of Turkish lessons were added into the framework of their education curriculum and programmes, and a new schedule was structured in order to ensure Turkish being learned by the students in these centres. Within this scope, Syrian students will be taught Turkish and academic based lessons and will gradually be transferred to the schools functioning under our Ministry. Although subject to the Turkish Education System and curriculum, the students will also receive additional lessons on Arabic Language and Culture towards ensuring they do not forget their own language and culture." T.R. Ministry of National Education, Directorate General of Lifelong Education, Migration and Emergency Education Department - Education Services for Students under Temporary Protection, July 2017, (PPP-Slide:19)



## SYRIANS IN TURKEY: DETERMINATIONS AND PROJECTIONS BASED ON PERIOD, THEME AND SUBJECT

In order to provide education also for Syrian students in a manner that is compliant to standards, with high quality and not irritating and aggravating the host community, the technical capacity increase, notably in terms of teachers, classrooms and schools, should be rapidly realised. However, it should not be forgotten that this is a very challenging and time-consuming

process. According to MoNE data, in average each classroom is structured to have a capacity of 30 students and each elementary school is structured to have a capacity of 720 students, and 1 teacher is planned to be assigned per 20 students. In this framework, the needs of 1,047,000 Syrian students in Turkey are enormous:

| <b>Needs for a Standard Education Environment for Syrian Children at School Age</b> | <b>School classrooms) (24 classrooms)<br/>720 students/school</b> | <b>Classroom<br/>30 students / classroom</b> | <b>Teacher<sup>23</sup><br/>20 students / teacher</b> |
|---|---|--|---|
| Needs for a Standard Education Environment for 1,047,536 Syrian Children            | 1,454   | 34,918                                       | 52,376  |
| Needs for a Standard Education Environment for 643,058 Existing Syrian Children     | 893   | 21,435                                       | 32,152  |

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Without doubt, education is also a capacity and expenditure item. According to TurkSTAT calculations, the average cost of an elementary-secondary-high school student in Turkey occurred to be 8,111 TL in the year 2017.<sup>24</sup> Based on this number, it is seen that the annual school cost of more than 640,000 schooled Syrian children is 5.1 billion TL, or 823 million Euros over the Euros exchange rate as of 7 June 2019 (6.3 TL = 1 Euro). It is understood that a considerably high expenditure item exist from the physical infrastructure in schools to teachers, even only in the field of education.

In the needs analysis study conducted by MoNE on July 2017, both overall and province based needs were revealed.<sup>25</sup> The most striking information here is that the number of schools needed for the Syrians

students whose number was calculated as 856,000 as of the date of analysis was defined to be 1,189, while the number of "Schools to be built within the scope of EU Projects" was given as 183, corresponding to merely 15.3% of the actual need.<sup>26</sup> For instance, in this study the number of children at school age in Şanlıurfa was given as 142,042, while the number of schools required was given as 197. However, this number went up to 152,742 and the number of schools required went up to 212 as of October 2018. On the other hand, the number of "Schools to be built within the scope of EU Projects" in Şanlıurfa remained at 14. Without any doubt, there are also schools built by MoNE outside of the scope of EU Projects, by private sector and other donor institutions in Şanlıurfa and other provinces. However, it is also apparent that a considerable time is required for the needs to be fully covered.

<sup>23</sup>As of 2017-2018 education year in Turkey, the number of students in elementary schools was 17,885,248 and the number of teachers was 1,030,130. Based on these numbers, the number of students per teacher is 17.3. However, calculation in this table was made over 20 students per teacher.

<sup>24</sup><http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=27600>

<sup>25</sup>T.R. Ministry of National Education, Directorate General of Lifelong Education, Migration and Emergency Education Department - Education Services for Students under Temporary Protection, July 2017 (PPP: Slide: 37).

<sup>26</sup>Within the scope of EU Support for the Education Infrastructure of the Syrians under Temporary Protection and in the context of FRIT, an investment of 150 million Euro was planned for 75 Concrete School Buildings, and within the scope of MADAD2, an investment of 68 million Euro was planned for 30 Concrete and Prefabricated School Buildings and within the scope of FRIT (Additional Funding) an investment of 45 million Euro was planned for 46 Prefabricated School Buildings. T.R. Ministry of National Education, Directorate General of Lifelong Education, Migration and Emergency Education Department - Education Services for Students under Temporary Protection, July 2017 (PPP:Slide:36)

| GKAS İHTİYAÇ ANALİZİ |   |                     |                          |   |                      |
|----------------------|---|---------------------|--------------------------|---|----------------------|
| İLLER                | EĞİTİM ÇAĞINDAKİ NÜFUS (5-17 Yaş Aralığı) | İL DERSLİK İHTİYACI | 24 DERSLİK OKUL İHTİYACI | AB PROJELERİ KAPSAMINDA YAPILACAK OKUL SAYISI | GÜNCEL OKUL İHTİYACI |
| 1 ŞANLIURFA          | 142.042                                   | 4.735               | 197                      | 14  | 183                  |
| 2 İSTANBUL           | 132.088                                   | 4.403               | 183                      | 8   | 175                  |
| 3 HATAY              | 115.465                                   | 3.849               | 160                      | 16  | 144                  |
| 4 GAZİANTEP          | 112.936                                   | 3.765               | 157                      | 17  | 140                  |
| 5 ADANA              | 49.617                                    | 1.654               | 69                       | 19  | 50                   |
| 6 MERSİN             | 45.069                                    | 1.502               | 63                       | 9   | 54                   |
| 7 KİLİS              | 45.023                                    | 1.501               | 63                       | 13  | 50                   |
| 8 MARDİN             | 26.467                                    | 882                 | 37                       | 6   | 31                   |
| 9 BURSA              | 31.685                                    | 1.056               | 44                       | 6   | 38                   |
| 10 İZMİR             | 31.174                                    | 1.039               | 43                       | 4   | 39                   |
| 11 KAHRAMANMARAŞ     | 29.861                                    | 995                 | 41                       | 8   | 33                   |
| 12 KONYA             | 23.801                                    | 793                 | 33                       | 7   | 26                   |
| 13 ANKARA            | 22.393                                    | 746                 | 31                       | 6   | 25                   |
| 14 KAYSERİ           | 17.236                                    | 575                 | 24                       | 3   | 21                   |
| 15 OSMANİYE          | 12.880                                    | 429                 | 18                       | 6   | 12                   |
| 16 DİYARBAKIR        | 9.358                                     | 312                 | 13                       | 6   | 7                    |
| 17 ADIYAMAN          | 9.263                                     | 309                 | 13                       | 3   | 10                   |
| TOPLAM               | 856.358                                   | 28.545              | 1189                     | 151   | 1.038                |

Source: MoNE Directorate General of Lifelong Learning Presentation (December 2017)

An important step MoNE took within the framework of the education of Syrian children has been establishing the Migration and Emergency Education Department. Over this department, Programmes for Orientation into Formal Education were planned for teaching Turkish language to Syrian students at school age who receive education in Turkey and for minimising the psychosocial problems experienced by the students, and Turkish language courses were given emphasis via public education centres.

In spite of all the extraordinary efforts in regards to the access of over 1 million Syrian children to education, and a success of reaching out to 643,058 children, it is known that there are still significant problems in this field. These problems may be listed as below:

1. While it is very valuable that 643,000 children were schooled, there is still the issue of around 400,000 children not yet able to be schooled. It is of utmost importance that these children are schooled in the fastest manner.
2. Difference of language naturally impacts the success of schooled children at a significant degree. Children should be supported even further in regards to learning the Turkish language.
3. Providing Arabic education in line with Syrian curriculum in the 215 TECs, which are planned to be shut down for educational activities next year but are still existing and housing around 90,000 children as of now, bears significant problems in regards to the lives of such children in Turkey. Even more importantly are the problems of low quality of education, non-attendance of students, low teacher qualities, and recognition of the report cards and diplomas received in the TECs.
4. There are serious cohesion issues prevailing still at the schools. The issue of cohesion reveals itself particularly as peer bullying and humiliation among students. However, the number of those who assume discriminatory language and attitudes

among families-parents and even teachers is also at levels not to be underestimated. Thus, the education policy should be defined in consideration of details also paying regard to the host community.

5. Another one of the cohesion issues experienced at schools is that still classrooms only for Syrians are formed in many of the public schools. In regards to mixed classrooms, there are concerns and complaints particularly from Turkish families saying quality of education declines due to teachers having to handle Syrian children. Failure to take fast and comprehensive measures in this respect will also make social cohesion more challenging.
6. Teachers who face Syrian children coming from a different language and alphabet should be supported, trained and their resilience should be improved. Many of the teachers express, despite all their devotion, that they experience trauma and depression. Especially in regions with concentrated Syrian population, the workloads of schools and teachers have increased considerably. For the 643,000 Syrian students in public schools, at least 32,000 new teachers should be assigned. However, support in this respect was able to be provided at levels well below the necessity.
7. Access to preschool education remains at significantly limited levels. However, bringing the children at this age into the school system will strategically increase the interest and success of children in education, particularly due to having learned Turkish at early ages.
8. Regions in Turkey where Syrians are concentrated are also usually regions with low socioeconomic development levels. Even in large cities, Syrians try to live in the very periphery of cities. This situation leads to worsening of the already insufficient education services. For instance, while the educational means were already considerably lower than Turkey average in a city like Şanlıurfa, entrance of 152,000 new students into the educational system further complicates the problems.

## SYRIANS IN TURKEY: DETERMINATIONS AND PROJECTIONS BASED ON PERIOD, THEME AND SUBJECT

9. For a standard education to be provided and the suffering of the host community to be eliminated, new schools should be built and new personnel should be commissioned post-haste. According to MoNE calculations, 1,454 new schools are required. The most important issue in regards to building such schools occur to be their cost, as each new school costs around 2 million Euros. Thus, the cost of 1,454 new schools required to achieve the ideal number is around 3 billion Euros. This is a considerably high cost. And this is not the only issue. Finding lands for the schools to be built especially in city centres became very challenging. And another regular source of cost emerges for schools to be built outside of city centres, which is the cost of transportation.
  10. Among the most significant issues in the field of education come children not going to their schools, making much non-attendance or dropping-out of the school after a short time. Families need to be informed and, if possible, supported financially in this regard. It is of crucial importance that obstacles against accessing education such as transportation, educational materials and nutrition are eliminated. In this regard contributions of EU and UN institutions to provisional school support are of utmost importance. This support is paid as 40 TL for girls attending elementary school, 35 TL for boys attending elementary school, 60 TL for girls attending secondary school, and 50 TL for boys attending secondary school. However, it should be noted that providing active “provisional support” programmes with higher amounts without going below these numbers but implementing even higher support is of crucial importance, taking into consideration regional differences.
  11. Another important issue in regards to the field of education is that schooling ratios undergo a sharp decline after the elementary school stage. Schooling ratios display a certain decline based on age and grade in all education systems. However, the decline observed in regards to Syrians is very deep. It is clear that this issue is related to female children not being sent to school or even being forced to marry, and male children having to work after ages 13-14. Activating provisional education support and awareness raising studies more effectively may contribute in this regard.
  12. Syrian children’s cohesion processes over education will contribute to these individuals living in peace with the Turkish community. However, this should not be at the expense of Syrians losing their own sense of belonging. Syrian children should also definitely continue with their Arabic lessons.
  13. Without any doubt, the most important aspect of education policies is their spirit, or in other words their philosophy. Turkey has faced for the first time in its history such high numbers of “foreigners”. The education model to be developed for the Syrians in Turkey who comprise mostly of Sunni Arabs should be an inclusive model that takes into consideration pluralism, diversity, transparency, and scientific focus, culture of coexistence and at the same time respecting differences. This should be embraced as an objective that is required to be achieved also for overall education in Turkey. In this framework, it is a known scientific fact that through placing importance on native language education, those who have good knowledge of their native language have more ease in learning other languages. Native language education could also be a foundation for a diversified education system.
  14. Another crucial aspect in the field of education is receiving support of the host community. This is the most important component of the cohesion process. However, it should be noted that if implementations that victimise the host community’s own children regarding education continue, as currently experienced in the border regions where the Syrian population live in high concentrations, these may lead to objections, complaints and even marginalisation and even hatred if such are not resolved within a reasonable time period. Nobody is obliged to accept decline of the education quality and opportunities prior to 2011, and high quality education is the right of all. It is the state that has to involve itself with the situation at this point and to make necessary planning. The state should not allow for anyone to suffer due to Syrians, excluding certain short-lived situations. In case there are still those with complaints after 8 years have passed, it should be avoided to criticise such complaints by merely stigmatising them with expressions like “racism” etc. The state, which allowed for the Syrians to enter the country, has the responsibility to provide a dignified life and the opportunity to develop their selves to Syrians, while also preventing any decline in the standards of the host community who embraced the Syrians generously.
- The education efforts started initially at the Temporary Education Centres (TECs) in the camps 8 years ago were gradually continued in the public schools after the year 2016. The objective of MoNE is shutting down the TECs completely and ensuring all Syrian children at school age to attend public schools as of the year 2020. As of April 2019, the number of Syrian children at school age in Turkey is 1,047,536. 643,058 of these children, corresponding to 61.39%, were schooled. 86% of the Syrian students are taught in public schools and 13% are taught in TECs. It is apparent that Turkey displayed an extraordinary effort and achieved

success in the face of such enormous numbers that arose suddenly and pushed the capacity of the entire education system. However, it is known that there are still considerable issues in the field of education such as around 400,000 children not yet schooled, education quality of the 90,000 students receiving education at TECs, high ratios of non-attendance and school drop-out incidents, severe differences between the schooling differences of different education levels, decline of participation to education ratios in higher grades (33.86% for preschool, 96.50% for elementary, 57.66% for secondary, 26.77% for high school education), insufficiency of the physical capacity and teacher capacity especially in regions with high concentration of Syrian population, teachers not benefitting from in-service trainings required for providing education to children who come from different language and education culture despite their devotion, discontent of Turkish parents especially in regards to mixed classes and challenges faced in respect to social cohesion. Another issue of importance is that the education incentives to Syrian families not being strong enough due to their own education levels and their financial constraints. The number of children at school age working in labour market also with the impact of economic challenges is estimated to be at least around 300,000.

It is observed that MoNE took important steps for Syrian students in cooperation with the EU in the year 2016. The first important step taken by MoNE was signing an agreement with the EU Delegation to secure 300 million Euros for the education costs of students on 3 March 2016 within the scope of EU Facility for Refugees (Syrians) in Turkey (FRIT). Likewise, the “provisional education support” funded by the EU with 66.5 million USD since May 2017 and given much importance by the poor Syrian families has also become a very effective tool in this regard. The number of Syrian children who benefitted from this support reached 494,620 during the last two years.

Another really important step taken by MoNE in regards to planning and managing the formal and informal education of Syrians has been its roadmap study that MoNE embraced in August 2016, handling the issue with permanence rather than temporariness approach, and defining integration of Syrian children into the Turkish education system as its main objective. Through this “roadmap” MoNE also established a new institutional structure and formed the “Migration and Emergency Education Department” under its Directorate General of Lifelong Education.<sup>27</sup>

The project PICTES “Promoting Integration of Syrian Kids into Turkish Education System” that was developed by MoNE in regards to Syrian children in cooperation with the EU was commenced on 3 October 2016 within the framework of the 3 March 2016 agreement.<sup>28</sup> Expected outputs of the project were defined in scope of the aims of “increasing access to education for Syrian students”, “improving the quality of education provided to Syrian students” and “improving the operational capacity of the education institutions and personnel”.<sup>29</sup> Merely schooling the students without realising capacity increase in regards to physical aspects and teachers -through special in-service trainings- has a high risk of creating adverse impacts also on the Turkish National Education System. The number of schools required for 1,047,000 Syrian children to receive a standard level of education is 1,454, and the number of teachers to provide such education is 52,000, while the number of schools planned to be built for the next 2 years is below 200. The tasks required to be carried out for preventing lost generations while also avoiding decline of the education quality of Turkish children require taking into consideration the existence not only of financial but also capacity issues.

### E. Syrians within the Turkish Higher Education System

The number of Syrian students who enrol in universities in Turkey, who either had to discontinue their education in Syria before coming to Turkey or became successful in the Foreign Student Exams and language competence exams after receiving elementary and high school education in Turkey, is constantly on the rise. The number of Syrian university students who receive education in around 100 public universities and around 50 foundation (private sector) universities of Turkey occurred to be 14,747 in the 2016-2017 academic year, which rose to 20,701 in the 2017-2018 academic year and to 27,606 in the 2018-2019 academic year. Syrian students also took the top place during the last 2 years among international students in Turkey, which amount to around 140,000, in terms of numbers of students. Syrians including 410 doctorate and 1,650 graduate students according to 2017-2018 data continue their studies at public universities exempt from all tuition fees. Many national and international institutions, particularly Turks Abroad and Related Communities, provide scholarships for Syrian students. EU support, HOPES and SPARK scholarships are known to have a special place among such assistances. However, the ratio of those receiving scholarships among Syrian university students is observed to be around 15% according to studies conducted.

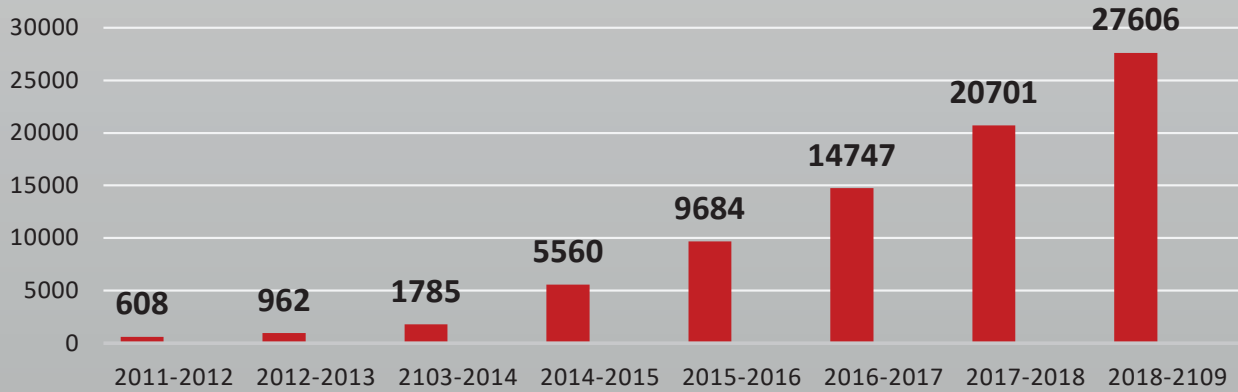
<sup>27</sup><http://www.meb.gov.tr/suriyeli-cocuklarin-egitimi-icin-yol-haritasi-belirlendi/haber/11750/tr>

<sup>28</sup>PICTES: Promoting Integration of Syrian Children to the Turkish Education System-PICTES

<sup>29</sup><https://pictes.meb.gov.tr/izleme/>

# SYRIANS IN TURKEY: DETERMINATIONS AND PROJECTIONS BASED ON PERIOD, THEME AND SUBJECT

## SYRIAN STUDENTS WITHIN THE TURKISH HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM 2011-2019



Source: YÖK: <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/> Tabulated by M. Murat Erdoğan over the data from the Council of Higher Education (YÖK).

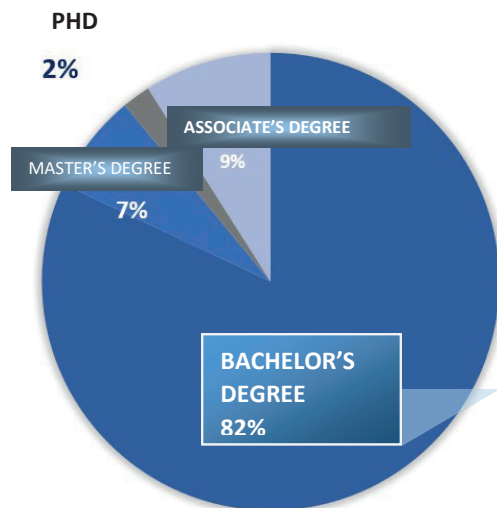
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It is known that the Turkish state and the relevant institutions of Ministry of National Education and Council of Higher Education make special efforts towards Syrians receiving education in the Turkish universities in higher and higher numbers each passing day. It is also known that 4 main objectives emerge in this respect:

1. Enabling young Syrian people who fled the destructiveness of the war environment, some of which discontinued their university education and some were entitled to enter university after completing their required education in Turkey, to achieve a dignified life with future perspective, preventing lost generations, developing human capital
2. Building social bridges between the Syrian population in Turkey that exceed 3.6 million and of which inclination towards permanence strengthens every passing day and the Turkish host community, thus becoming important actors for the peaceful coexistence culture
3. Contributing to Turkey
4. Undertaking special roles in building the new Syria in case they return to their country

It is mentionable that international institutions have an important role, especially regarding their financial support, in the efforts Turkey makes in this respect. However, it is also of utmost importance that such role is further strengthened and rendered sustainable. Preventing lost generations and developing human capital should be advocated as a paramount virtue for everyone.

## SYRIAN STUDENTS STUDYING AT TURKISH UNIVERSITIES – APRIL 2019- 27,606



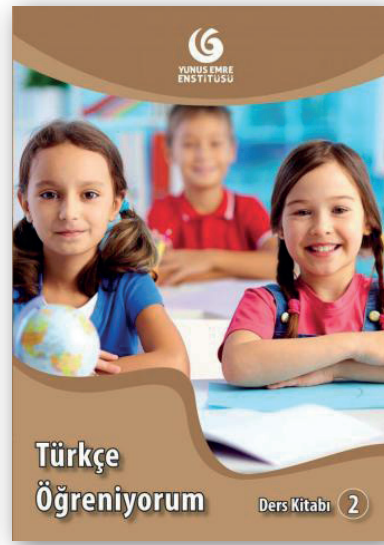
Source: <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/> Tabulated by M. Murat Erdoğan over the data from the Council of Higher Education.



## F. Turkish Language Learning and Vocational Courses

Turkish language education has become a very important aspect in Turkey with the coming of Syrians. Turkey have had to develop Turkish education modules for this many “foreigners” for the first time in its history. MoNE realised employment of a total of 5,959 temporary instructors (education personnel), comprising of 5,468 Turkish education personnel and

491 Psychological Counselling and Guidance experts, in the year 2017 within the context of providing education f “Turkish for Foreigners”, and provided a special 2-week training to these instructors. Syrian students were provided with an education toolkit titled “Turkish Education” that was developed by Yunus Emre Institute and printed as 925,000 copies.

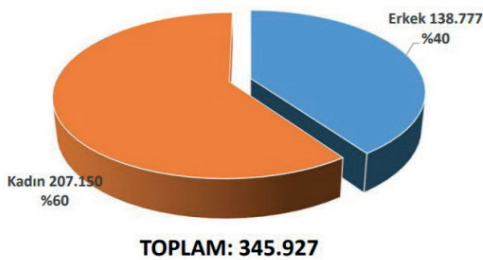


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“Turkish Language Education for Foreigners” modules specific to different age groups were also prepared in Public Education Centres for the purpose of teaching Turkish language. Within the scope of the “Turkish Language Education for Foreigners” courses, the “Turkish Language Education for Foreigners” modules developed by the Ministry were drawn up specifically for 6-12, 13-17 years age groups and for adults; and implemented at A1, A2 and B1 levels. While the total number of children who participated in the Turkish

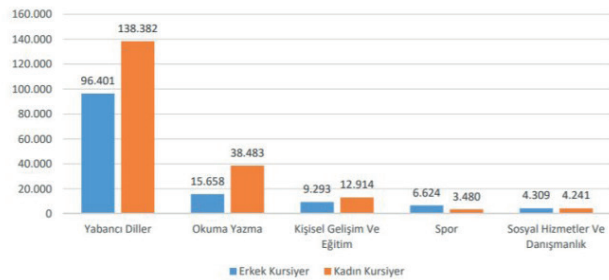
language courses within the 6-17 years age group was around 45,000, 213,000 participants, corresponding to 82% of the total participants, comprised of adults. Another interesting statistic is revealed in terms of gender distribution. While the distribution of those within the 6-17 years age group who participated in the Turkish language courses is relatively balanced, the ratio of women among adults who participated in the courses occurred to be distinctively higher than men, with a value of 60%.

2014-2018 Yılları Arası Genel Kurslara Katılım Durumu



Kaynak: 31.12.2018 E-Yaygın verileri

Halk Eğitimi Merkezlerinde Suriyelilerin Genel Kurslara Katılım Sayıları



# SYRIANS IN TURKEY: DETERMINATIONS AND PROJECTIONS BASED ON PERIOD, THEME AND SUBJECT

As the data from the Ministry of National Education's Directorate General of Lifelong Learning, of which one of the strategic objectives occur to be increasing the Syrians' ratios of participation in the courses carried out over public education centres, also reveal, significant efforts are being made for Syrians in Turkey in regards to both Turkish language education and vocational education. The number of Syrians who attended the courses prepared by the Ministry based on different age groups between the years 2014 and 2018 reached 258,260. Vocational education provided by or under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education's Directorate General of Lifelong Learning also provides a significant contribution to the process. A total of 345,927 Syrians attended these vocational courses between the years 2014 and 2018. Syrians were observed to show the most interest to the "foreign language" courses, and it is striking that more than 60% of the participants comprise yet again of women.

## G. Field Findings in regards to Education

### Problems Related to Interest in Education and the Process

Although the registration issues for the Syrians in Turkey were resolved to a high degree with the establishment of the Directorate General of Migration Administration, unfortunately there are still Syrian children without registration due to various reasons. These children experience problems also when enrolling in school due to having no registration anywhere and no temporary protection identity cards. During the interviews made, it was mentioned that there were many families who experience serious problems in this regard.

While children with registration could go to schools near their homes, children without registration sometime have to go to schools far from the places they live, which causes the need for shuttles. However, families in such circumstances may prefer most of the time to not send their children to school due to not being able to cover shuttle costs. And children who do not go to school may have to work to assist in the livelihood of their families.

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***"I think the most important deficiency here is the problem of how Syrians are defined. Are these guests? Will they become citizens? Or are they under temporary protection? Education policy will shape up actually in accordance to this."*** (Hatay-Journalist)

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***"They refer children to certain schools, for instance to certain vocational schools; if the family say they want to register their child in regular high school, they say that is not possible because they do not have registration and that they have pilot schools for such instance and send such children to religious vocational schools (imam hatip) or other vocational high schools, despite the family's unwillingness".*** (International Blue Şanlıurfa Humanitarian Aid and Development Foundation / Uluslararası Mavi Şanlıurfa İnsani Yardım ve Kalkınma Vakfı, Kilis).

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***"They have issues about education, language is the first problem. If the language problem is resolved, they will be schooled in either formal or informal education."*** (İzmir Provincial Directorate of National Education)

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***"The ratio of Syrian students attending elementary school is 60% but this ratio declines with grade, especially the school registration ratios decline as the age group gets older. At high school level, 80% are outside of high school education, and there is no policy generated on how to bring these into formal education"***(Academician, Adana)

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***"The education system in Syria and the education system in Turkey are very different. If they were to implement the education system in Syria here, the infrastructure in here would not be suitable, if they were to implement the one in here, it would not suit theirs. What is necessary is these children are to receive special education for at least one or two years with a transitioning system for adaptation before being taken into the schools."*** (Hatay-HAYAD Association)

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***"Syrian students are concentrated in certain neighbourhoods of Konya. The neighbourhood where SGDD is situated is one of such neighbourhoods, where schools have around 89-90% Syrian students. Similar numbers are present also in other such neighbourhoods. We have a protocol with the Ministry of National Education, we are discussing how we could contribute to social cohesion, what to do together with counselling teachers. According to the interviews we realised with the schools, one important need is elimination of deficiency in hygiene requirements. Trainings in this regard were provided with the lifelong learning centre. There is also peer bullying between Syrian and Turkish students. There is no awareness on respecting differences. Turkish students also carry the perceptions of their families. The first education to children is given by their families. Those who came here came from the villages of Aleppo. Those who come here from Aleppo***

city centre give importance on the education of their children but those who come from rural areas do not place importance on hygiene and have no knowledge on education regarding child development... Children speak Turkish very well but a child who entered Turkey recently suffers from lack of confidence due to not being able to understand. Received education for 5 years in Syria, came to Turkey, losing 1-2 years due to war and 1-2 years here. Regarding those lost years, reading writing is taught with a few lessons, the lost years are tried to be recovered with some lessons. (Konya-SGDD- ASAM)

“As the temporary education centres are shut down they begin going to public schools, and they experience one problem due to being behind in curriculum, another problem due to the lack of infrastructure capacity. This will also be a problem for the Turkish students and teachers. Classroom populations will go up to around 5-60 students per classroom. There was already a lack of teachers in the eastern and south-eastern parts of Turkey, now it got even more complicated. We hear of many drop-outs. There is a language barrier. They do not feel at ease. Peer bullying is very common. While the Back-to-School project reveals nearly 100% registration ratio regarding elementary school level, this ratio declines to around 20% at high school level. The education in Turkey ails generally of the following problems:

- Most cannot benefit from preschool education. There are those who do not even know how to hold a pencil before school within the refugee groups. 1-2 year adaptation period is of much importance for adapting to the 1st grade, we initiated such efforts. What we need to do is sending Syrians, local community members and other refugees to preschool education centres, preparing them before starting school and thus preventing setbacks.
- Will start elementary school, problems exist with registration into secondary school and high school. Depends on the initiative of administrator.
- Regarding adaptation of those who start school, how successful are the children, are they adapting, how is their psychosocial status... We have this in Sultanbeyli. We assign our own counselling teacher to schools with high concentration of Syrian population. We follow them up. School, family and education ÇOGEM, we produce solutions through these 3 mechanisms. We provide catch-up lessons, and Turkish complementary lessons at the education centre if the children have lacking Turkish language knowledge. In regards to psychosocial aspects, psychologists get involved in and follow up the process,
- Student registers, attends the school and then drops out, but why drops out? This mechanism should also

follow this up.” (Istanbul-Support to Life Association)

“Registration problem, lack of adaptation, lack of Turkish language proficiency and also lack of a system to follow up these issues. In some places, in places with socioeconomic disadvantage, the crowding of classrooms is also a problem, physiological issues. Newborn children learn Arabic but cannot read and write. reading writing problem should be resolved. This is an important issue to think about.” (Istanbul-Sultanbeyli Municipality)

“Because this immigration issue occurred suddenly in a messy way, the measures and plans regarding such also occur in such a messy way. This shutting down Temporary Education Centres and transitioning to National Education happened somewhat too hastily. Thus, teachers, students and parents all experienced various problems. ... Although National Education trains teachers with formation in Antalya and organise courses towards training such teachers in provinces, for instance language teaching to foreign students, foreign language teaching was considered over English in Turkey, but now there is a new field with the migrants in respect to Arabic and Turkish education. Teachers should have awareness in regards to these foreign students who have different culture, different historical background, different capabilities, skills, knowledge levels, and academic skills.” (Şanlıurfa-Harran University - Academician)

“Syrian population increased so much in recent years. Supports are being given in such insensibly. Teachers were provided with social cohesion trainings by National Education 3 years ago. The first problem is that Turkish citizens do not want to register their children in classrooms with Syrian students. And teachers do not want to accept them. Syrians were used to being taught in separate classrooms, it was like this between 2011 and 2016; then they got distributed to accelerate integration.” (Bursa Metropolitan Municipality)

### Child Labour

In regards to the subject of child labour, which was reduced considerably though years of combating in Turkey, it is observed that a new rising trend is present.

“An education service planning aimed at specific age groups should be realised. It is known that there is a child population of 1,000,000 in Turkey, for which suitable education environment and alternatives should be presented, and integration between their



# SYRIANS IN TURKEY: DETERMINATIONS AND PROJECTIONS BASED ON PERIOD, THEME AND SUBJECT

*education backgrounds and Turkish education system should be established ... There are around 400,000 Syrian children outside of the education system, and vast majority of these comprise vulnerable groups within child labour category. Thus, increasing their adaptation to Turkish education system and the period they remain within education should be prioritised.” (ILO-Ankara)*

*“A Syrian needs to obtain work permit in order to work. Governorships should be involved in this process. It should not have to go all the way up to the Ministry. SSI (Social Security Institution) Provincial Directorates may resolve this issue. The processes should go faster this way and they could have a faster process to participate in labour market. The process is long, one side gives up. Authority at local scale should be strengthened. Syrians should also develop themselves in some professions, we observe them to be somewhat lazy or negligent. I do not know their living conditions but we observe them to be distanced from working. They want to obtain money in easy ways. 40 year old father does not work, but has his 15 year old child to collect garbage.” (İzmir Provincial Directorate of National Education)*

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## Language Problem

According to the data obtained from qualitative field study, one of the most significant problems experienced by Syrian students in the field of education is language barrier. Language barrier not only adversely impacts the academic success of Syrian children but also constitutes an important obstacle against communicating and comingling with Turkish children.

*“Syrians complain about the difficulty of Turkish language. In fact this arises due to the methods or styles of teaching Turkish... Which in turn is caused by our foreign language education methods. For instance, additional workshops could be organised in regards to these subjects, in faculties of education, in faculties of linguistics, on how it could be taught better. Materials on language education are also problematic. For instance our Yunus Emre Institute and the like or TÖMER of some universities prepared various materials but they do not seem adequate.” (Academician, Şanlıurfa)*

## Teachers

Language barrier constitutes a large problem field also for teachers. Taking children into Turkish schools after the temporary education centres are shut down

without checking about their language competence paved the way for problems based on difference of level to emerge in the classrooms.

*“The teacher says -I will either move on to the next topic with the children who speak Turkish and understand what I teach or explain 3 or 4 times the same topic that the Syrian children cannot understand due to language problem. If I continue teaching the same topic, I will lose the interest and motivation of the Turkish children who have already understood the topic, and if I move on to new topic, I will lose the Syrian children who could not understand it.” (International Blue Crescent Humanitarian Aid and Development Foundation, Kilis).*

*“Also, the skills of Turkish teachers. Syrian children do not have the same level in Turkish proficiency. Native students go slower, go faster according to Syrian children. How to communicate the foreigners is another issue for teacher. Peer pressure is also language-related issue. Make fun of new comers. Certain sensitivities. Children start to say that mom I do not want to school, not make comfortable. There are also reasons to drop out. Peer pressure and ability to communication both teachers and classmates. They have a post traumatic effect from war. It is very common among Syrian children. There are no aids on the psychological basis, they may be feeling isolated in the society, that will greatly be affected to their attainment. (Expert-TEPAV)*

Likewise in connection with the language problem, the workloads of the teachers got increased due to change in the profiles of students in their classrooms.

*“Syrian students bring along additional workload unto teachers, but no personal rights are defined against this additional load. So the same thing in municipalities also applies for teachers. Do we distribute children with special education needs to classrooms in concentration? No we do not. We distribute them evenly to classrooms. And if the situation is very severe, we take the child to a more specialised school. These constitute a special group with special education needs, thus require additional care. But you do not define a personal right neither to the teacher nor to the school. So there is problem also at this point”. (Academician, Çukurova University)*  
*What could the teachers in schools do about the differences, how to handle them. Hints towards cohesion of all should be provided. The exhaustion may be prevented. Some teachers are exhausted due to handling education for different groups. They say there are many problems regarding cohesion. Such trainings are given by National Education but they have to be increased. Almost 50% of the school comprise of Syrians. (Konya-SGDD-ASAM)*

## Supports Provided in the Field of Education

Due to not having a single registration system for the supports given for education, the supports are sometimes provided insensibly and repeatedly. Also, the provided supports not encompassing Turkish needers sometimes negatively affect the perception of Turkish community regarding Syrians.

***“If supports are to be distributed in a school, which is based on the protocol made with the National Education, these should be distributed without discriminating between Turkish and Syrian children. While we try to eliminate disadvantageous conditions, the sentiment that being a refugee provides a special advantage creates significant resistance in this respect. It also increases such resistance in regards to prejudice, discrimination etc. between communities”.***  
(Academician, Çukurova University)

***“MoNe is the most inclusive in regards to integration of refugees into education, the right to education is the most important. However, there is capacity problem. There are 1,000 refugees in Kadıköy, while Bağcılar houses 60,000 refugees. Problems are classroom population and teacher not speaking the same language, insufficient experience of creating classroom culture, problem to accessing registration in places like İstanbul where refugees live in great concentration. Registration to Migration Administration in İstanbul was halted. There is no possibility to register in İstanbul other than marriage or registering into university. Families and children are unregistered; children are registered to schools with guest student status. Ad hoc methods, registration and capacity problems. (UNHCR-İstanbul)***

Supports granted in the field of higher education are scholarships and dormitory supports. Students who cannot access such scholarships sometimes come to the point of dropping out of school.

***“But scholarship and dormitory is a serious problem particularly for university students, this should be provided. I have come upon students that entered but dropped out of school for not being able to access such needs. Because there are children who suspended their registration or dropped out of school due to not being able to cover the books, transportation, food etc. needs necessitated by the school (Academician, Adana)***

## Vocational Courses

Vocational trainings are provided by both national and international NGOs. The actual problem here is that the fields of work to perform their professions after receiving training are very limited. Thus NGOs have to organise vocational courses by focusing on new models through new tools with employment guarantee, production focus without disrupting the city’s own employment opportunities.

***“Local vocational needs should be made compliant with vocational trainings through analysis. Needs market. The trainings to be provided to these should be both theoretical and practical. They are generally not practical but theoretical in Turkey. They should be registered through vocational qualification certificate. At the point of entering the labour market, they have to be supported after the vocational courses and enabled to be employed in the market. These mechanisms should be considered as a whole. Cash-for-work is a very important and effective project. Due to being unqualified labour, it provides contribution to organising public spaces such as parks and gardens, fulfilling public needs in short term, experiencing work in its own process, observing work practices related to public, providing support cleaning personnel support to schools and cooperation with school principal..” (İstanbul, Sultanbeyli Municipality)***

***“As of now, a woman is opening her own hairdresser shop in Kilis. I think this is an important success story. With the project she wrote following the course she received from us, she opened her shop. The shop is rented, renovations are underway.” (Kilis Municipality)***

During the interviews, it was sometimes mentioned that participation in the courses has been inadequate. As the most important reason behind the participation shortfall, it was expressed that the individuals are rather spending efforts towards accessing basic services.

***“For instance, if there are no father, uncle etc. person to work at the household, young girls has to work and cannot go to such courses. Also, sometimes people over a certain age, for example women whose husbands are dead, have to become heads of household and this also causes problems in continuing in such courses. They cannot attend, for example.”(Academician, Adana)***

Another field of problem regarding vocational courses is payments made to participants for encouraging participation to the trainings. It became impossible to



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discern whether one comes to the training really for training or for getting such payments.

***“Unfortunately these people needed assistance and they registered themselves in very unrelated branches so that they could receive the daily 25 TL payments. In this perspective, first our basic needs should be covered. If we are making efforts for providing basic needs of ourselves and of our children, if we are hungry, cold etc. it is not very realistic to go to a painting training after all”. (International Blue Crescent Humanitarian Aid and Development Foundation, Kilis)***

Although some Syrians see the courses as an income source due to the incentive payments for the vocational trainings, such courses are still a successful implementation for those who wish to learn a profession and being employed after receiving their certificates.

***“Courses within small classrooms are opened for those who wish to participate in the trainings but have to work in line with their lesson hours or requests ... We try to open trainings that are suitable to their qualifications or days or time segments appropriate for them” (International Blue Crescent Humanitarian Aid and Development Foundation, Kilis)***

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***There is not a complete sustainability with NGOs. There is no adequacy in regards to social cohesion. UNICEF is responsible of elementary education, there are too few scholarships in higher education. Visibility of UNICEF is very low, disadvantages of centralised approach are dominant. There are works aimed for teachers.” (UNHCR-Istanbul)***

***“I think that international NGOs should focus more on these aspects. For instance, men can access public services or courses because of being relatively more active in terms of gender. However, there are for instance women who have no knowledge of the courses or do not know what to do in regards to access to public services. Their education level is somewhat lower. For example, their capabilities and skills should also be increased and their participation should be enabled. I mentioned just before, for instance, social groups such as orphans, widows, unaccompanied children, Dom people, groups of different sexual identities, groups of different ethnic and religious groups, women, men, those who work, those who do not work, educated people, uneducated people, there are many groups and they should be defined, and first a screening should be realised, for instance, who works in which field, which fields are vacant, which field requires support. (Şanlıurfa-Harran University - Academician)***

## Lack of Coordination

Another frequently mentioned problem is the coordination problems and lack of planning experienced between public institutions and NGOs. Interviewed persons indicated that sometimes several institutions work on the same issue without knowledge of one another, and sometimes none work on a very important field of problem. They emphasised that there are very diverse groups among the refugees (women, children, elderly people, widows, handicapped people, orphans, Dom people), and that the needs specific to each group should be defined and plans should be devised in line with such need definitions.

***“There are UNICEF and UNCHR in the field of education but it is arguable how effective they are. Regarding coordination, the state working much with NGOs in the field of education, social cohesion is a big problem. The ratio of Syrians attending elementary school is 60%, but this ratio declines in higher grades. Schooling issue is a big problem, for child marriages, for child labour... The most important problem is that people in public positions change like every 6 months. Circulation in bureaucracy is too much, which means not a good use of human resource.***

## Education and the Role of NGOs

During the interviews it was indicated that a fundamental service such as education is not the responsibility of NGOs, but that they should work in coordination with the public institutions and provide services as to assist the state.

***“What NGOs could do in this field for enabling access to education is limited. Structures that may be included with different aspects for increasing success ratios within the education system may be planned at both local and national scale. Complementary, supporting Turkish language education support, support in cultural and social activities, integration with local children – spreading examples to act as role model ... Zero. Vocational education, technical education, these are things defined with curriculum; they should have roles defined to them. We do not consider those trainings realised by NGOs but not connected to vocational training certificates. Relations between public and state should be strong. When the definition of providing vocational training includes a chamber of industry or commerce, these should be carried out in cooperation with them. What you refer to regarding NGO should also be considered, you use it too loosely here.” (ILO-Ankara)***

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***“NGOs have much role but unfortunately NGOs function rather by taking from us, they do not provide material contribution. ... NGOs should make strides in regards to food, stationery and food.” (Izmir Provincial Directorate of National Education)***

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***“Their learning Turkish is not NGOs’ duty; this is not a voluntary thing. These are among mandatory skills for adapting to education and to their lives here. Such mandatory skills should be provided by the public sector. NGOs may be facilitator at this point. The public sector may share some of its roles with NGOs, but NGOs can be neither organising nor carry any responsibilities here ... Other than that, NGOs may not have a duty in regards to language learning, not a primary duty, not responsibility; that would be wrong” (Academician, Adana)***

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***“I would say that there are different needs. Most importantly overall impact on involvement schools and continues to keep in schools. Put them into schools is the key, because families tend to keep their children in to the labour market. Now, half of them are out of school. Overlook the number drop out the school. In later stage, financial needs.” (Expert-TEPAV)***

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***“Structural needs related with policies, financial needs, conditional cash transfer – effective in the short run. Outset of similar conditions, how long these kids will be stay at school according to funds. Parallel education system in temporary education center at the time envisioned open space to be in Syrians schools. Protecting their criminal activities. Governments are now decided adequate; Syrians are not going to be Arabic for the integration skills. Shutting down these schools and they try to integrate them to Turkish schools. Syrians here to stay, to seen them public schools. The idea of backing to their home is not the case. 8 years after that, there is no positive development on war. The integration into the public schools is a good idea, but they have same capacity problems.” (Expert-TEPAV)***

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## H. 2025 Expectations – Education

Without doubt, studies to be conducted on the subject of education, which is a responsibility of the state, is closely related to the quantitative size of the Syrians in Turkey. Within the Syrian population currently existing in Turkey that reached 3.6 million, the number of children at school age is 1,047,000, which means that children within the 5-17 years age group comprises 30% of the overall population. Considering the population increase rate among the Syrians, it may

be expected that the number of children at school age will reach 1.5 million, and the school age population will reach 1.7 - 2 million through the studies to be conducted for children not yet schooled as of the year 2025. According to MoNE needs analysis, approximately 2,000 schools and 80-100,000 teachers will be required in 2025. In the coming years, the problems regarding Turkish language and the number of children that have to work may be expected to decline. Through the physical and human capacity development efforts of MoNE, it may be foreseen that schooling ratios are to reach 90% within the society, classrooms assigned only to Syrians are to be turned into mixed classes, and the resistance of teachers and administrators are to be improved further with in-service trainings until the year 2025.

Although it is desirable for the primary education to evolve into an inclusive and multi-language model, it does not seem very possible in short or medium term.

It seems that access of Syrian students to university education will accelerate further, and probably the number of students graduated from Turkish universities will amount to 25,000 and those receiving education will rise up to 50-60,000 as of the year 2025. It is also foreseen that by this year, the number of those in graduate and especially doctorate students within these students will exceed 2,000. However, with the Syrians being granted citizenship, it should also be foreseen that significant shifts are to occur in regards to such statistics. This means that the number of “Syrian” students in Turkish universities may drop down to 5,000 within 5 years.

## I. Policy Recommendations - Education

The field of education is the most prominent prerequisite for both preventing lost generations and achieving a brighter future for Syrian children and young people, and peaceful coexistence with the Syrians in Turkey. In this regard, the following are recommended:

- Rapid development of the physical capacity (school, classroom, teacher, school materials etc.)
- Universalising the awareness raising studies and provisional education supports for children to come to school
- Empowering all teachers and administrators who have Syrian students through in-service trainings and providing financial incentives
- Providing supports for developing the numbers, language skills and capabilities to teach foreign students especially of counselling teachers and class teachers

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- Rescinding the decision to steer Syrian children to religious vocational schools and increasing options
- Steering children to vocational schools in line with the wills of students and their families
- Increasing capacity regarding Turkish language education and providing additional opportunities to Syrian children
- Enabling Syrian children to receive native language (Arabic) education, receiving support from the Syrian teachers in Turkey in this regard
- Making efforts towards ensuring that the education quality of Turkish children does not decline and is not affected adversely due to refugee children
- Placing importance on studies aimed for parents, providing parent teacher association meetings and consultancy services in this regard, with translator support if needed
- Providing transportation opportunities for children far from their schools
- Developing policies towards reducing the school drop-out ratios to reasonable levels
- Providing psychosocial support in regards to peer bullying
- Developing special incentive policies for enabling children at secondary school and high school to enter university
- Implementing information and incentive policies aimed at families for bringing girls into education system
- Implementing “inclusive” and “diversified” education models within the bounds of possibility

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## II. SYRIANS IN TURKEY AND EMPLOYMENT

### A. Current Status

One of the most sensitive topics of all mass human movements is the field of labour. Local communities worry that the migrants-refugees-asylum seekers who come later and would probably work as “cheap labour force” will take their jobs away. This is actually not an unjustified worry. Especially in cases with high unemployment, the concern among the local populace increases even further. Not counting internal migration movements, Turkey had not experienced such serious concern in this regard until the year 2011. Discussions in this regard had usually come to agenda in respect to the Turks in abroad countries. However, the Turkish community too was faced with this phenomenon following the Syrians’ arrival in the year 2011. As Turkey received refugees exceeding 5% of its overall population within a few years, naturally the

subject of employment came to agenda. In the TISK (Turkish Confederation Of Employer Associations) report prepared in the year 2015 and covered the opinions of the Turkish Business Society on the topic, it was observed that not only the labourers who are disturbed due to the risk of losing their jobs because of cheap labour supply but also the employers who point out the unfavourable consequences to emerge due to informal (shadow) economy were concerned. Corporate companies mentioned the difficulties of competing with cheap labour and informal employment. Employers registered under TISK even mentioned that it would be more appropriate to grant Syrians working rights due to these concerns, and argued that they would suffer otherwise.

The topic of labour regarding the Syrians who have begun arriving in Turkey since April 2011 had a constantly increasing importance beginning with the year 2013. Until 2013, the basic needs of Syrians, who mostly lived inside camps and had relatively low numbers, were covered by the Turkish state in line with emergency management logic. However, as the number of Syrians increased and the Syrian population outside of the camps rose dramatically, a new stage has begun as of the end of year 2013. With the Syrians starting to live in areas outside of camps, in city centres, the process of being involved in economic activities started spontaneously. Because provision of regular and continuous financial supports to those living outside of camps has not been realised excluding some very exceptional situations since 2011, working became unavoidable. The number of families who were supported for basic needs such as food over “AFAD” and “Kızılay Kart” (“Red Crescent Card”) declined to symbolic numbers after the year 2013. Thus, working became mandatory for the Syrians, of which majority already lived outside of camps and within urban areas.

No central planning was conducted in regards to Syrians living outside of camps, and Syrians mostly preferred to remain in areas where they had acquaintances, where they can work and earn their daily livelihoods. All studies conducted reveal that more than 30% even of the Syrians who lived in camps and actually had their needs covered obtained permissions to exit the camps during the day to find work.

<sup>30</sup>M.Murat Erdoğan ve Can Ünver [2015] Perspectives, Expectations and Suggestions of the Turkish Business Sector on Syrians in Turkey, TISK.

## 1. Regulation of Labour Rights for the Syrians in Turkey

Legal regulations that enable the Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey were effectuated on 15 January 2016 through the “Regulation on Work Permits for Foreigners under Temporary Protection” that was issued based on Article 29 of the “Temporary Protection Regulation”, which in turn was prepared in line with Article 91 of Law no. 6458 on Foreigners and Temporary Protection. According to the regulations, the labour rights of Syrians under temporary protection were regulated as per the following conditions and means:

1. Condition of Time: Having been under temporary protection status in Turkey for at least 6 months
2. Condition of Place: Working within the registered location, excluding those granted with exceptional permission
3. Condition of Quota: Not working in a workplace to constitute numbers over 10% of Turkish citizens (the quota may be exceeded if citizens do not apply within 4 weeks to the job posting given by the employer)
4. Condition of Employer: Work permit applications are to be made by the employer who will employ the foreigners under temporary protection.
5. Condition of Salary: No salary lower than subsistence wage may be paid.
6. Turkish Employment Agency - İŞKUR: Foreigners may participate in the courses and programmes organised by İŞKUR within the scope of active labour services, and receive vocational training and on-the-job training in a workplace in this regard.
7. Exemption: Regarding those who are to work in seasonal agriculture or livestock jobs, work permit exemption is granted by way of applying to governorships.
8. Restriction: Syrians may not apply for jobs or professions of which performance is permitted solely to Turkish citizens in legislation.

This step, which was of utmost importance in regards to the economic activities and cohesion of Syrians in Turkey and would enable Syrians to work in formal economy, failed to display the expected impact towards ensuring informally working Syrians to work in formal economy. According to the statement made by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services on the date 31 March 2019, the number of Syrian Arab Republic citizens granted with work permit in Turkey is only 31,185.<sup>31</sup> This number corresponds to only 2.5% of the 1.2 million people estimated to

work. Furthermore, it is not known whether or not this number includes those who arrived in Turkey before or after 2011 but work not under temporary protection but through residence and/or work permit. Even if this number comprises completely of those under temporary protection, considering the number of Syrians working in actuality within Turkey borders, these numbers reveal that working rights are not functional enough for the Syrians under temporary protection and that more than 95% of the working Syrians work within informal economy.

## 2. Emergency Social Safety Net Programme

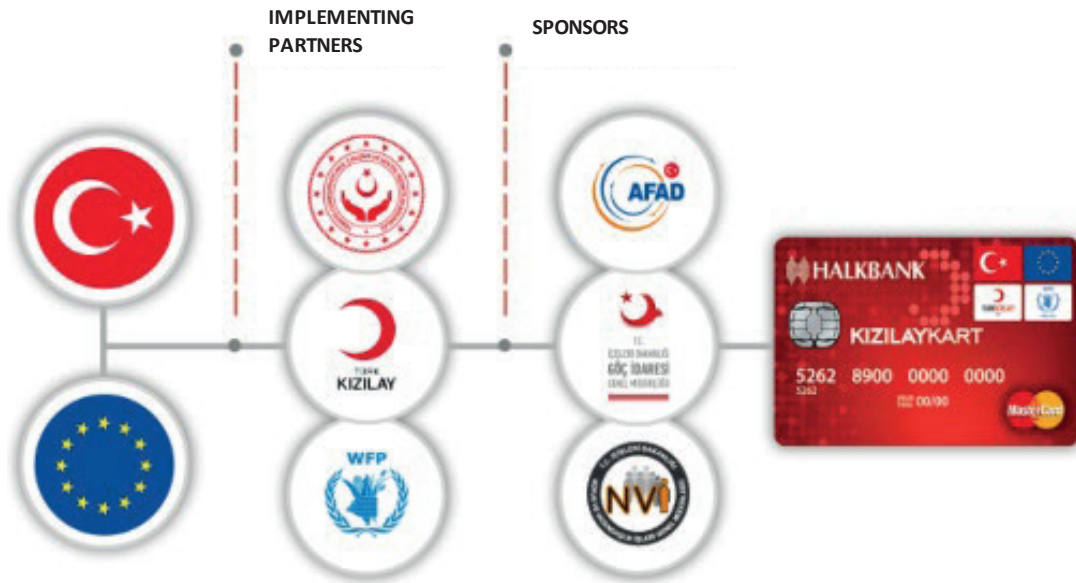
Financial assistance programmes for a part of Syrians commenced with the 16 March 2016 Turkey -EU Agreement, through which EU committed to provide a funding resource of 1.5 billion Euros annually, for a total of 3+3=6 billion Euros. Annual 300 million Euros allocated within this resource has turned into a relatively regular financial source for a part of Syrian and non-Syrian refugees within the framework of the programme called Emergency Social Safety Net (Sosyal Uyum Yardımı - SUY) since the end of year 2016. The Emergency Social Safety Net - ESSN programme aims for the asylum seekers and refugees who live outside of camps throughout Turkey to be able to cover their basic needs such as food, accommodation and clothing in a dignified manner. Assistance is provided through KIZILAYKART, after the indigence assessment is concluded. Known commonly as “Kızılay Kart”, the Emergency Social Safety Net-ESSN assistance programme is carried out through the cooperation among EU European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), World Food Programme (WFP), Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Administration and Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Civil Registration and Citizenship, Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay) and AFAD.

Thanks to the 998 million Euros funding provided by the EU between December 2016 - April 2019, the ESSN Programme provided assistance to a total of 1,606,404 individuals under temporary protection within 276,556 households in Turkey. 88.2%, or 1,417,882 of this number (approximately 245,000 households) comprises of Syrians. Through which monthly 120 TL per capita is provided in principle, this resource is not adequate but still crucially important especially for the families that live in urban areas and have to pay for items such as rent, electricity, water, transportation etc.

<sup>31</sup>It is striking that this number occurred to be less than the 32,199 people with permits as of the date 15 November 2018. However, it may be estimated that Syrians being granted with citizenship played a role in the reduced numbers.



# SYRIANS IN TURKEY: DETERMINATIONS AND PROJECTIONS BASED ON PERIOD, THEME AND SUBJECT

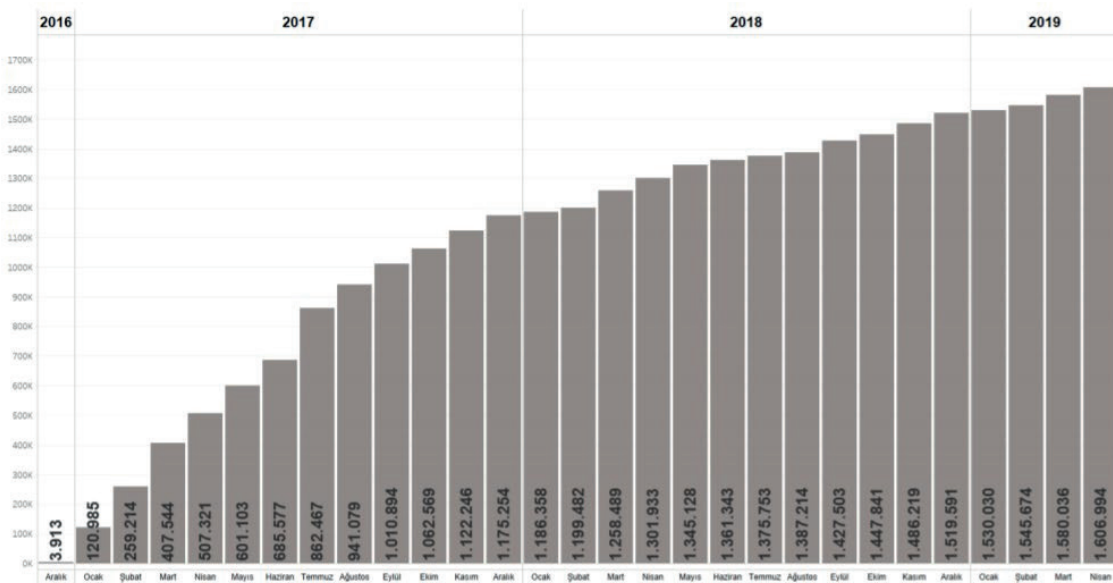


Source: Turkish Red Crescent: <http://kizilaykart-suy.org/TR/hakkinda.html> (07.07.2019)

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Although ESN supports turned into an important regular source of income for the Syrians, they could be brought to around 39% of the 3.6 million Syrians living within approximately 630,000 households in Turkey. The remaining 2.2 million Syrians, or 383,000 families, have no option but to work to be able to continue their lives. Also considering that ESN supports began in December 2016 and reached 1.1 million in the beginning of the year 2016 and 1.5 million in the beginning of the year 2019, it is understood clearly that the financial needs of Syrians who began immigrating to Turkey as of April 2011 were covered through labour.

NUMBER OF ESN BENEFICIARIES BY YEARS AND MONTHS



Source: Turkish Red Crescent: <http://kizilaykart-suy.org/TR/hakkinda.html> (07.07.2019)



### 3. Informal Economy and Syrians

Syrians living outside of camps in Turkey are not capable of earning their livelihoods without labour, whether or not they benefit from ESSN supports during the last two years. It is not possible to reach any official data in this regard due to the nature of the subject. However, it is understood that informal economy provides an important opportunity and environment for Syrians, albeit it is not sustainable and very arguable especially in respect to the concept of “decent job”. This situation may be evaluated as an important reason why the “fragile” but still high social acceptance of Syrians in Turkey occurs to be at such high level. According to TurkSTAT March 2019 data, 33.9% of the T.R. citizens that work actively do so “without being registered under any social security organisation”, or “informally”. This means that more than 10 million T.R. citizens among the overall 32.3 million “labour force” over 15 years age work “informally”. This wide informal economy provided an opportunity to work for the Syrians. Through comprehensive field studies such as the Syrians Barometer, it is revealed that a 30-40% of the Syrians expressed that they work. This means that at least 1 million or 1.4 million based on the 40% value, of the 3.6 million Syrians within Turkish borders worked in the labour market in Turkey. It is seen through the studies that 30% even of those living in camps declared that they are working. In addition, it should be noted that even if only 1 person within more than 630,000 Syrian families is working, the number exceeds 630,000. The usually low level of wages also means that a family may not earn their livelihoods with the labour of just one person, especially in urban areas. In this respect, it may be estimated that the number of Syrians working formally or informally is around 1.2 million.

It may be mentioned that informal economy, a significant structural issue of the Turkish economy, grew somewhat more with the Syrians. It is apparent that this causes a serious labour exploitation, and that this is not a sustainable situation in terms of both employee rights (“decent job”) and the country economy. However, it is necessary to underline a certain fact at this point: the existence of the informal economy in Turkey, which already experienced a chronic unemployment problem and suddenly received an extraordinary amount of population, served a purpose in short term and enabled Syrians to stand on their feet and cling to life during the 2011-2019 period. More importantly, the informal economy limited the increase of unemployment numbers in Turkey due to Syrians. Although the unemployment ratio in Turkey increased to 14.1%, youth unemployment increased to 25.2% and the number of T.R. citizens seeking employment increased to 4.5

million as of March 2019, it would not be realistic to say that such dramatic increase was caused by Syrians -excluding some exceptions in certain border provinces. The reason why is that Syrians found a place for themselves in the field of informal economy, within which more than 10 million T.R. citizens already existed.

According to March 2019 data provided by TurkSTAT, workforce participation ratio of T.R. citizens occurred to be 52.9% for overall population, 71.7% for men, and 34.4% for women. It may be expected for the workforce participation ratio in Syrians to be lower than that of T.R. citizens due to reasons such as women working less, language barrier and work culture difference, sentiment of temporariness etc. However, all projections made reveal that around 1-1.2 million Syrians in Turkey are able to stand on their own feet even though working informally, that their needs for financial support from the state decrease, and they contribute to Turkish economy.

### 4. Child Labour

Another important issue related to Syrians and working life is child labour. Child labour was known to be an important problem in Turkey before the year 2011. At least 6% of Turkish children between ages 6 and 17, or approximately 950,000 children, worked for the purpose of supporting their household incomes. It is estimated that this ratio is over 15% for Syrians, meaning that the number of working children between ages 6 and 17 reaches up to around 150,000 - 200,000.

### 5. Entrepreneurship

Syrian entrepreneurs without doubt provided important contributions to the economic adaptation of the Syrians in Turkey. Syrians are able to establish their own businesses in Turkey in accordance to Turkish Commercial Code. In businesses officially registered in Turkey, business owner may officially apply for work permits. Although some of these comprise only of micro scale enterprises that merely finance themselves, the number of businesses found by Syrians in Turkey has a significant increase trend. The highest numbers within the overall number of foreign companies established in Turkey in the years 2017 and 2018 belong to Syrians. According to the statement of the Ministry of Commerce, the number of companies with at least one Syrian partner was 15,159 as of the date 26 February 2019. Together with the informally established companies, this number is estimated to be even higher. Wholesale trade, real estate and construction sectors come at the top of the fields of activity of the established companies. According to some studies, Syrian Joint Capital exceeded 100 million Dollars.

<sup>32</sup>M. Murat Erdoğan (2018) Suriyeliler Barometresi: Suriyelilerle Uyum İçinde Yaşamın Çerçevesi, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları”, İstanbul

<sup>33</sup>Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu-TUIK: <http://tuik.gov.tr/HbGetirHTML.do?id=30683> (Accessed: 07.07.2019)

<sup>34</sup>CNN-TÜRK: <https://www.cnnturk.com/ekonomi/bakan-pekcan-15-bin-159-suriyeli-sirket-var>

# SYRIANS IN TURKEY: DETERMINATIONS AND PROJECTIONS BASED ON PERIOD, THEME AND SUBJECT

## B. Field Findings in regards to Employment

### Informal Economy and Labour Exploitation

The significant issues faced by Syrians in their labour lives are informal employment without social security and earning lower wages. Syrians under temporary protection may obtain work permit and participate in labour market. However, there are certain obstacles against formal employment. These obstacles may be listed as below, in accordance to the data obtained in result of the interviews:

- Obstacles based on legislation: Work permits being obtained by employers, procedure taking too long, Syrians being able to work only at places they are registered in.
- Obstacles based on employers: Not knowing the procedures required for obtaining work permits, not wanting to undertake an extra load for legally employing Syrians, preferring employment of Turkish citizens when deciding between Turkish and Syrian with the same capacity for the job.
- Labour life in the country: Informal employment being a problem of its own independent from Syria, and not being able to prevent informal economy.
- Economic state of the country: Increase of unemployment rates of country citizens due to economic crisis.
- Syrians not preferring formal employment with the concern that the assistance they receive will be cut off.
- The common discourse that the work culture in Syria is different from that in Turkey, Syrians not being used to the long work hours in Turkey.

***"We are regarding the issue over formal employment but there is a situation that deepens informal economy. Labour continues for long time with informal work in environments without security ... In provinces where informal economy is rampant within national workforce, they may not be willing for formal employment. Large scale ones are within inspection network, it is a common status for informal employment to be more widespread in small scale enterprises. (ILO-Ankara)***

***"Syrians in Turkey have the right to work under temporary protection status, but procedure works differently in practice. They do not need work permit only in agriculture and livestock fields. Not different from western migrant, in cities. The situation is similar if they are to work both under someone or by themselves. ... Issuance of work permits take too long. They have difficulty even when obtaining permits for their own employees. When they work without economic permit, they work without stability." (Istanbul-Support to Life Association)***

***"Syrians are neither refugee, nor immigrant, they have been granted a special status. There is no discrimination regarding working within the rights the Turkish legislation grants them. National employment policies grant certain privileges to protect their own workforce, and draw certain limits for Syrians. An environment that will not affect labour peace is produced. Although there are some quotas, they are not devoid of the right to work." (ILO-Ankara)***

***"Employees being uninformed of work permits is an obstacle. So is the bureaucratic process taking too long; it is normal to take like 3 weeks, but it takes at least around 1-2 months. So the employer is not cooperating. For some Syrians, it is more beneficial to work informally, so that they can continue to benefit from Kızılaykart". (Bursa- Chamber of Commerce and Industry)***

***"It is also related to exhaustion of resources. And it has a social aspect, there is a segment who are not willing to employ Syrians. There is also economic conjuncture" (Bursa- Chamber of Commerce and Industry)***

***"You know that now we are in a period with more frequent dismissals and I observe in the individuals who seeks consultancy from us that they are in fact aware of the economic process. I mean, they are hopeless, thinking that their friends already lost their jobs, how will they find jobs for themselves. At this point, employer asks this: I will comply with the work permit procedure, and will give money on top of this every year. Now then, why would I do that? What would that bring me, why would I do it? I mean what do they have that the Turkish citizens do not for me to undertake such burden?"(Ankara-Keçiören Municipality)***

***"They are not willing to work formally. Because the assistance they receive from the UN would be cut off, it would be difficult to transition from free healthcare to insurance. That is why the projects do not result in employment" (İzmir-İŞKUR)***

***"Considering that the assistance received via Kızılay will be cut off, they do not want employment-guaranteed work. They have concerns that they will incur some losses". (İzmir-İŞKUR)***

***"Everybody's making projects, many things are being done, there is activity but not result oriented. That is why there are so few who actually found employment. For example, we trained 350 people in Adana for increasing the number of Syrian entrepreneurs, two of them already had businesses,***

*they were operating their businesses, and there is no one other than them who established business. Then this has no purpose. What good did this do? ... But this is a field of expertise and a trainer staff should be found about this.” (Adana - Academician)*

*“There are many informally employed. There is a vacancy for 175,000 workers, but something should be done to fill up that vacancy. Such vacancies are filled with informal ways. A legal regulation has to be realised to prevent this. We are providing support for regulation of the workplaces; we work with municipalities in 12 districts. What can be done to prevent accidents when they work illegally? It is apparent that they do not have any assistance in regards to livelihood or legal support. This made even more peak with the refugees. We provide vocational training, together with language and social cohesion but it is still not enough, public mechanisms should be supported better. There is such mechanism in İSMEKs (Art and Vocational Training courses) but refugees are not included”. (UNHCR-İstanbul)*

*“Formal employability, all types exploitation, bullying, no registration in the employment. Long hours of working, protection mechanism does not operate. In practice private sector jeopardizing their aids. ... Aid is not going to last forever. ECCS cards, telling them fund and assistance last forever. 2, draw a plan or policy for active members of state both socially and economically. Obtaining their legal status in turkey, taxpayer would be – istisnai vatandaşlık – formal employment, paying taxes. Better position to negotiate with employer. After 8 years, majority do not have a problem of self-reliance in Turkey. Constructing the way of tax payer only becoming citizens. They are resilient enough to not going to back. You’re in a better position for now here, much greater even in your home country. Not willing to give up this.” (Expert-TEPAV)*

*“There are around 3000-5000 people dealing in the field of shoemaking. Syrians are expert in shoemaking. Conflicts have already begun with Turkish citizens. They pulled the prices upwards. Prices began to be equalised. There are of course the problems of work permits, formal-informal employment.” (İzmir –EBSO)*

*“Companies also do not prefer to formally employ Syrians. You may ask why. Because they have language problems. Because the working system in Turkey and the working system in Syria are not the same, the work programmes are not the same. For instance, the working hours. Back in Syria formerly their daily work hours did not exceed six hours, but our people in Turkey works for a minimum of eight*

*hours, this can reach ten or twelve hours in private sector. Thus, usually Turkish citizens are preferred. After all, we already have problems regarding employment of Turkish citizens, we already have our own unemployed.” (Şanlıurfa Chamber of Merchants and Craftsmen)*

*“A mutual cohesion and tolerance will provide the appropriate platform for this. Rather than what to be developed regarding social life, one should look into the examples throughout the world; risk factors such as ghettoization, isolation should be prevented for the sake of both Turkey and the Syrians”. (ILO-Ankara)*

*“The wage against labour definition of the organisation you work is literature based, working for the benefit of public may not require much qualification and productivity and provides short term income but we think it does not allow for integration in long term at national and international platforms. It may provide answers particularly during transition period and emergencies but should not actually be related with economic relations. Other trainings, aspects we mentioned would provide more permanent impacts. We think that on-the-job trainings etc. solutions, production through some incentives will facilitate this integration. It would make them dependent on short term assistance, even if it is called against labour, not this but long-term work is required. A cohesion work where cultural and social supports go hand in hand is ideal.” (ILO-Ankara)*

### Syrians and Entrepreneurship

In result of the interviews, it was mentioned that Syrians in Turkey have no legal obstacles against setting up businesses, but they face problems in accessing the resources required for setting up and developing business. Although public institutions report there is no obstacle in this regard, both international institutions and refugees mention that they face problems in regards to many aspects, particularly to opening accounts and taking loans. Language barrier comes at the top of the challenges Syrians face, followed by not being knowledgeable in computer skills and in legislation.

*“In regards to entrepreneurship opportunities, they may have no obstacles against setting up new businesses but I know that they have challenges in regards to accessing the resources required for establishing and developing a business. They are not recognised by the banking system. They have no passports; they cannot provide the contribution they could have from other markets to Turkish economy due to not having passports. They have potential;*



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*they want to bring in the resources but have to keep the resources in other countries due to constraints.” (ILO-Ankara)*

*“They can register in the finance registration and establish business. Their registration to all public institutions is performed appropriately, they can enter into trade registry, and they can be merchants. There is no obstacle. They have registration with the identity number given to them. We can already register them in our own registration directorate. So they become employers”. (Şanlıurfa, Chamber of Merchants and Craftsmen)*

*“We have here a very large Syrian population and the number of Syrians inside those camps is constantly decreasing. This means they enter city environments ... Some of them establish bakeries, dessert shops, their own style of clothing shops, there are such specialisations that are beginning, but there is need for trainer personnel who can direct these, originated from that land, understanding that culture. People should be trained in this regard. This is a very important aspect to make them entrepreneurs, to make them self-sufficient.” (Academician - Çukurova University)*

*“It is already very risky for small scale merchants, small scale enterprises to continue to exist in the economy of Turkey, add to this that the entrepreneur is a foreigner, not knowing legislation and computer skills. These are important barriers. For such barriers to be overcome, the project written in this field should be supported and planned very good. Because for instance the system of KOSGEB changed, now you make the application over internet. So now, you do not know the computer, you should take the e-government password but you do not know the language, then you will long in, you will receive mail, this is an incredible process for them.” (International Labour Organisation, Gaziantep)*

*“We heard that there are projects aimed at entrepreneurship but there are obstacles. The process of setting up business is not the same for Turkish and Syrian people. Many details and procedures are required.” (Konya-SGDD-ASAM)*

*“The most important obstacle against participation in the economy is economic grounds, because most of these people already have no money. There are people who came here eight years ago, seven years ago, five years ago, who came with just the clothes on them, these already have no money. Their greatest problem is monetary resources, economic grounds. And because they do not have language skills, they do not find opportunity to work for long time in any place.” (Hatay-Journalist)*

### Non-Governmental Organisations and Employment of Syrians

During the interviews, it was frequently mentioned that non-governmental organisations have to work in coordination with each other, that they sometimes perform repetitive works in the same fields or no works in some fields due to not being informed of the works of each other.

*“Nothing in the most crucial field, five studies in another field. As I understand they agree upon like; if there is labour, employment etc. in it, ILO deals with it, if only coming refugees, IMO deals with it. There cannot be such definitions. Definitions should be project based, like, you do this, and we do that. Not about the word, for employment may also be the field of work for UNDP or even of World Health Organization” (Academician - Adana)*

*“Non-governmental organisations should provide so much more contribution to employment oriented vocational education, we think so. That is because teaching people to earn money will provide much more benefit to people than giving money to them” (Şanlıurfa Chamber of Merchants and Craftsmen)*

*“Regarding private sector, they have aims for profit, purposes for brand image protection. It is important to think of what can be done over this. We enable them to reach refugees, for instance we pay the work permit fees. We try to inspect whether or not child labour is tolerated, in the framework of social responsibility of brands. Organisations like MUDEM work with big brands. If there is a child employed in labour, they bring the child into education system and employ some other one in the child’s family to that position. The efforts of GAP are aimed towards empowering women after they enter employment life, they reach refugees over NGOs. Marmara Region is a place where contract manufacturing, under the country production and child labour are experienced extensively. There are public supports with the aim of preventing child labour. Like socioeconomic support model, bringing the child workers back to school, and providing assistance to family if the child returns to school. We provide translator, personnel and transportation means for social service centres (SSCs). We try to strengthen the communication between municipalities and social services. When the municipalities refer their findings to SSCs, the possibility of a child entering the protection network becomes higher ... Civil society– public sector – private sector relations should be strengthened. Special programmes are always required because market dynamics and the dynamics and practice of persons with special needs. There are men within 15-*



**25 years age group sitting at home, no education, no language, no work; specific programmes are required for this group. Plans of WALD and World Food Fund are aimed towards providing education, internment and employment for these young people. Refugees received training on entrepreneurship. 20,000 core grants received. But then what happened? These should be followed up. (UNHCR-Istanbul)**

**“Gaziantep Chamber of Industry. What do they do well: They have a potential to provide to their members regular information flow regarding qualified workforce, to assess both demand and supply to answer the production demands of their members. They have a role with the things they do well for actively working to provide a qualified workforce pool through receiving vocational, technical and certification training, and İŞKUR has an important role for collecting and referring the demands through business analysis data.” (ILO-Ankara)**

**“Our activities started around the end of September. We are within the first component, profiling and vocational mapping. We started with only the Syrians, then we started with the Turks at the end of November. Approximately 1,400 people have registration, nearing 1,500, mostly comprised of Syrians. Vocational exams are to begin in 1-2 weeks, profiling should be continued to reach the desired number. There are some shoemakings, construction, furniture opportunities for Syrians. ... Our Syrian personnel is very knowledgeable regarding the region and knows the field because she worked in National Education before. Total of 82 women applicants, 22 Turkish and 60 Syrians. Here is how it is done in vocational education. We opened training, cooking, welding. A person was student in Syria, here he is working in machining, we provided training and employment to 200 Syrians at the end of the project. Quality is decreasing in industry, big loss for the future. Equivalence is required.” (Konya Chamber of Commerce)**

**“There should be a logic that coordinates these works, drawing a framework, a strategy. My recommendation is the easiest resolution for that purpose, you will generate a main list through a senior board on what to do in here, you will divide the top and bottom of this and its number among institutions. It may be completely independent from you. Who is at the top level in Turkey, or in the world? There is the EU, European Union, I think GIZ in this framework, there is the World Bank, UNDP and the UN. These three organisations will come together and say we will work on this part, you take this part, let us share this one, let us not share this one. There is like a hide-and-seek here, someone does something, the other is not informed of such, that one**

**does not publish it, it stays as grey literature. If you are working for a region to develop or the state of a society segment to be improved, there cannot be such a logic” (Academician - Adana)**

**“There is not much interest to vocational training courses from men. Interest to vocational trainings gets reduced due to the risk of supports being cut off. They either do not accept employment opportunity or work without insurance. A family of 5 with 3 children can receive up 1,600 TL support. These supports vary within the range of 1,600 and 2,000. ... On-the-job trainings may be revised and utilised. They say “I need work, I do not have time for courses” or they think “let me jump from training to training, and my supports should not be cut off”. Because of on-going supports, employment without social security is common. And they do not work within formal employment because they also think of themselves as temporary in jobs. There are 20% Syrians working within the furniture sector in Bursa; Turkish citizen have a gross cost of 3,000 TL, while they can employ Syrians for 1,500 - 1,600 TL salary. It suffices as income due to accommodation. ... Also, there is no dialogue with İŞKUR, SGK, and National Education. Migration Administration only deals with updating data. They do not have the institutional capacity to develop projects for Bursa.” (Bursa Metropolitan Municipality)**

### **C. 2025 Expectations – Employment**

It seems that the quantitative increase of the Syrians in Turkey will continue. In this respect, it may be expected that the current actively working population of 2.1 million will rise over 2.5 million and the workforce participation ratio will also increase as of the year 2025. However, it may also still be expected that the informal employment ratios will remain at high levels. In the event investments are developed and field of employment gets expanded in Turkey during this period, the ratio of those registered in formal employment may raise up to 20% levels. Further decrease of the problem of language and work culture may be considered as a natural development. In addition, child labour will decline in line with the increased schooling ratios for children. It does not seem that the ratio of children working for supporting their families, which is around 5-6% in Turkey, will decrease below around 15% among Syrians for a long time still. It is estimated that Syrians will continue to work for lower wages even if they are granted with T.R. citizenship. However, the wage imbalance is expected to decrease further.

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It will not be a surprise for Syrians to be braver and more enterprising in regards to setting up their own businesses, which constitutes the other half of employment. It seems that the number of Syrian companies in Turkey will reach around 30,000 as of the year 2025. This will also mean a new employment capacity for a minimum of 150,000 people.

The concerns of the Turkish community in regards to employment should be taken seriously. Nobody would accept living in lesser living conditions compared to before 2011 due to the incoming refugees. This would be a rightful complaint. However, it is of utmost importance that misunderstandings and false information are eliminated in this regard. Studies conducted reveal that while Turks seriously object to Syrians' employment, they object even more severely to them opening businesses. This subject should be handled and studied with care.

## D. Policy Recommendations - Employment

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- The subject now needs to be handled more distinctly through a "development policies" perspective.
- Legal-administrative decisions that regulate the labour of Syrians should urgently be reviewed and they should be more encouraging towards working legally.
- Reducing or even completely abolishing the quota regarding the beneficiaries allowed to be employed by registered businesses is required.
- It is known that Syrians have many problems regarding entrepreneurship, particularly pertaining to making business transactions with banks, opening accounts and taking loans. These obstacles should be eliminated post-haste.
- Incentive policies should be implemented for Syrians especially in the field of agriculture through micro loans etc. policies that will also enable cooperation with local population.
- Obstacles against Syrians getting real estate in Turkey should be eliminated.
- The freedom to move within the country, i.e. the freedom to travel is of utmost importance for both employees and entrepreneurs. This restriction should either be completely abolished or travelling should be facilitated.
- The protection for the Syrians in Turkey should be expanded by recognising for them a special exemption from the employment restrictions normally applied to foreigners and granting the same rights as those with residence permit or citizens in regards to earning wage, setting up own business and entrepreneurship.
- Company registration costs should be reduced.
- The process related to diploma and qualification equivalence and acceptance should be accelerated.
- Refugees should be made knowledgeable of their rights by increasing Arabic and Turkish information flow and its accessibility, through municipalities, NGOs, labour institutions and social media.
- Legal procedures related to setting up own business and company registration and laws and employee rights pertaining to earning wages should be developed.
- Although projects such as "Cash for Work" provide significant contribution in short term, they are not sustainable policies, and should be developed in consideration of the risks towards pruning seeking of regular, formal employment opportunities.
- "Skill mapping" studies regarding determination of Syrians' economic capacities and skills should be conducted and strategies should be developed towards relating such data with regional and sector-based analyses of Turkey.
- Turkish language courses aimed at gaining adequate language proficiency should be granted incentives, and language barrier should be eliminated.
- Concerns of the Turkish community towards losing their jobs and in line with discourses such as "Syrians are granted more privileges than citizens" should be overcome through regular and transparent information campaigns.
- In periods of economic-financial crisis, the risk of refugees becoming scape goats is considerably high, so the public should be informed better in this respect.
- Vocational courses should be made on a realistic ground and in relation to economic demands and capacities. It should not be forgotten that what is important is not the number of certificates but the certificates actually turning into formal jobs.
- İŞKUR, KOSGEB and municipalities' relevant departments should undertake more responsibility in regards to entrepreneurship.
- As is known, although there is an employment vacancy of around 180,000 jobs in Turkey, employee for such jobs cannot be found. Special studies should be conducted in this regard, and opportunities should be created for Syrians to work formally in these sectors.
- On-the-job trainings provide a very important capacity opportunity. These should be developed, including Turkish language courses prior to such.
- Cooperative system should be encouraged, and

<sup>35</sup>The findings and recommendations also in three important studies conducted in 2018-2019 involving in two of them also the author of this report were utilised in this section (RAND Cooperation ("Win-Win Solutions for Syrian Refugees — and Their Hosts") ([https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB10042.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB10042.html)); IGAM-DSP ("Syrian refugees' economic participation in Turkey- "Türkiye'deki Mültecilerin Ekonomiye Katılımı") ve Fulya Memişoğlu (2018) Assessing the Development Displacement Nexus in Turkey, ICMPD ([https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/1\\_2018/Downloads\\_VMC2017/Assessing\\_the\\_Development-Displacement\\_Nexus\\_in\\_Turkey\\_v.7\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/1_2018/Downloads_VMC2017/Assessing_the_Development-Displacement_Nexus_in_Turkey_v.7_FINAL.pdf)).

additional support should be provided to efforts of joint cooperative systems between Turks and Syrians if possible.

- Syrians who are granted T.R. citizenship being removed from statistics may prevent healthy assessments to be conducted in the future. Thus it is clear that regular and detailed statistics are needed.

### III. SYRIANS IN TURKEY AND MUNICIPALITY SERVICES

#### A. Municipalities, Current Actual Status and Authorities

More than 97% of the Syrians in Turkey continue their lives as “urban refugees”. The UN’s “if the problem is local, solution should be local!” vision that has frequently come to agenda in recent years within the context of “Global Agreement for Refugees” indicates that one of the most important actors of the process should be local administrations and “local cohesion” models should be given importance.<sup>36</sup> The concern for whether or not the agreement principles will come to life does not reduce the role local administrations undertake in reality. An utterly important and educatory process is being experienced in this regard also in Turkey since the year 2011. Maybe the most determining aspect in this process has been Turkey’s lack of an application/policy towards distributing refugees throughout the country according to certain quotas. This situation caused emergence of extraordinarily large imbalances between municipalities regarding sharing of burden due to refugees settling in certain regions as per their preferences. This de facto situation became even more dramatic due to legal and financial obstructions.<sup>37</sup>

Municipalities, which are the most important and common local administration unit in Turkey, had neither preparation nor perception in regards to refugees until 2011. Facing a rapid refugee population influx after the year 2011, the first important obstacle in front of municipalities has been the Municipalities Law. Because Municipalities Law render municipalities “responsible for providing services to citizens”, it prevents municipalities to provide services to refugees, people under temporary protection and even foreigners with various residential status living inside a municipality’s borders. In spite of this, municipalities in Turkey displayed an extraordinary performance during the recent 6-7 years in the face of financial impossibilities, lack of authority and capacity

issues. In regards to the needs of Syrians living in Turkey, local administrations that host refugees over a certain number or ratio have to make efforts primarily in line with humanitarian aid but also with “preventing incidents”. In fact, municipalities’ playing more active role in regards to refugees is necessary also by its nature. However, the rights and resources of local administrations in Turkey are not sufficient for providing services in regards to the subject of refugees, which is perceived particularly as a “security” issue. At this point not only lack of authority and resources but also the issue being seen as a problem of the central administration play a significant role.

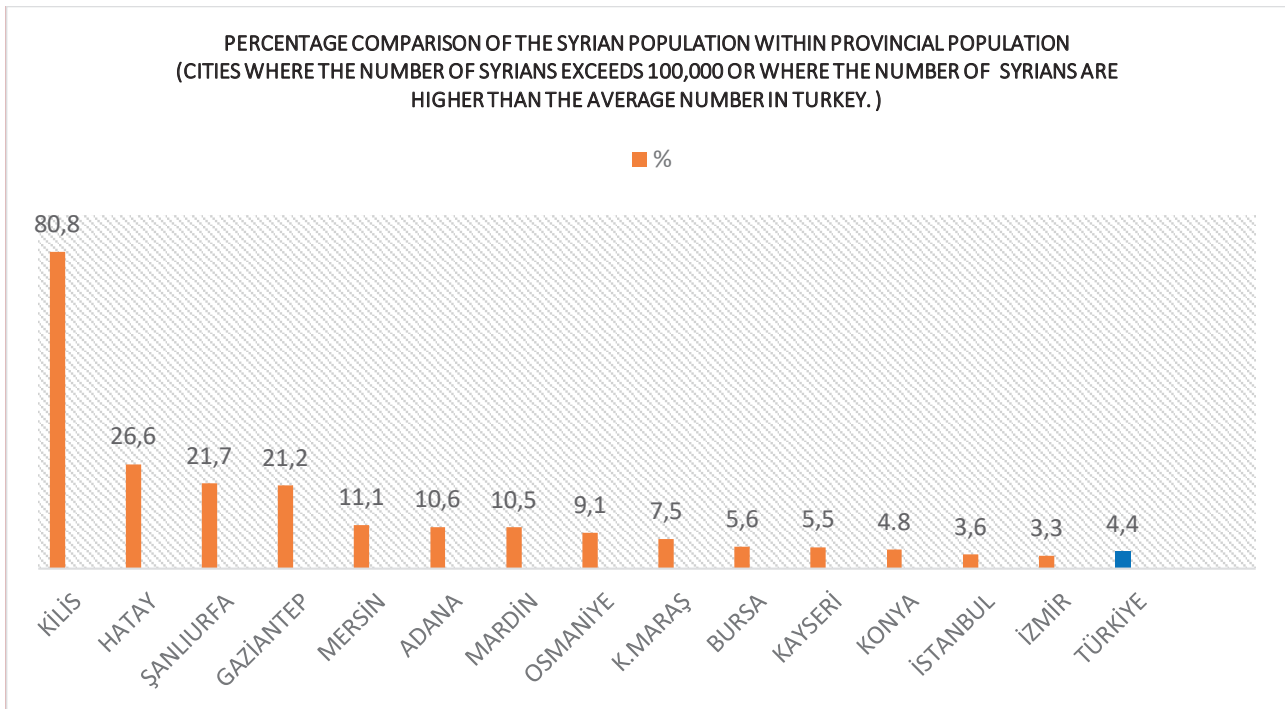
Turkey does not have a special refugee quota and distribution system for the Syrians living in urban areas. Thus, there are significant differences in regards to quantitative and proportional distribution of Syrians throughout the country. These differences are also observed between the districts or neighbourhoods of a province. In cities where citizens had to suddenly live with enormous numbers of refugees outside of their will and control, the financial supports that are the main source of income for the municipalities and determined based on number of citizens cannot reach the refugees. Urban areas are subject to provisions of Municipalities Law, which clearly render municipalities liable of services exclusively to citizens. In line with this logic, the resources allocated from the central administration to municipalities are defined based only on the number of T.R. citizens living inside the borders of a municipality. This situation further complicates the problems of imbalance and burden sharing between municipalities. The monthly financial supports amounting between 50-300 TL given normally by municipalities to poor families within their borders likewise do not cover refugees in this same context.

Another important issue experienced by the municipalities is faced by metropolitan cities. There is no role/duty sharing regarding the services to be provided to refugees among the district municipalities within metropolitan municipality borders. For instance, a study conducted in İstanbul displayed that special units related to refugees were formed within the body of 20 out of 39 districts of İstanbul (these districts have very high Syrian numbers or ratios within overall populations) or a certain unit was given responsibility in this regard, it is striking that there is no unit within the body of the Metropolitan Municipality that is related/responsible of this same issue. It seems like the issue was left to the district municipalities’ own devices.

<sup>36</sup>UNHCR: <https://www.unhcr.org/the-global-compact-on-refugees.html> (Accessed: 01.07.2019)

<sup>37</sup>For one of the most comprehensive studies on process management regarding municipalities in Turkey and refugees that is had done by Marmara Municipalities Union, see: M.Murat Erdoğan [2017] “Urban Refugees From “Detachment” to “Harmonization” Syrian Refugees and Process Management of Municipalities: The Case of İstanbul”, Marmara Municipalities Union Culture Publications, İstanbul

# SYRIANS IN TURKEY: DETERMINATIONS AND PROJECTIONS BASED ON PERIOD, THEME AND SUBJECT



Source: Produced by M. Murat Erdoğan in line with data from T.R. Directorate General of Migration Administration provided as of 1 July 2019. [https://www.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma\\_363\\_378\\_4713\\_icerik](https://www.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik) (Accessed: 1.7.2019)

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When the provincial distribution of the Syrians in Turkey is examined, it is observed that as of April 2019 the province hosting the highest number of Syrians occurs to be İstanbul with a total Syrian population of 550,000. This coincides with 3.66% of overall İstanbul population, which means a ratio lower than the Turkey average of 4.42%. However, it should be mentioned that İstanbul has a special condition in this regard. While the numbers reveal those registered in İstanbul, the number of Syrians actually living in İstanbul is estimated to reach approximately 850,000 together with the Syrians registered in other cities but living in İstanbul. İstanbul is followed by Şanlıurfa (446,000, ratio within population 21.92%), Hatay (432,000, ratio within population 26.85%) and Gaziantep (428,000, ratio within population 21.15%). The number of Syrians in each of these four cities exceeds 400,000. On the other hand, 10 provinces of Turkey house more than 100,000 Syrian refugees each. The number of provinces housing more than 50,000 refugees is 14, while the number of provinces having ratios of refugees higher than the Turkey average of 4.42% is 12. Among these provinces with the highest ratio of refugees within overall population, Kilis takes up the first place with a ratio of 81.10%, followed by Hatay, Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Mersin, Adana, Mardin, Osmaniye, Kahramanmaraş, Bursa, Kayseri, Konya, İstanbul and İzmir.

Distribution of Syrians within municipality areas throughout the country in an unbalanced manner

-mostly in line with their own preferences- may be shown to be the most serious cause of challenge for local administrations. This situation is observed both among provinces and among the districts of a province. Municipalities make extraordinary efforts despite lack of authority and impossibilities for local administration services to be provided also to the "new fellow residents" at similar standards. Municipalities being subject to election processes unlike the central bureaucratic institutions may even prevent municipality administrators from sharing the services provided to refugees. Local populations facing setbacks in the levels of benefitting from public services compared to the levels they benefitted from before the arrival of Syrians naturally aggravates the social reactions against refugees, and makes in challenging for the municipalities to provide services. Furthermore, municipalities providing better services become centres of attraction, which lead to other problems at local scale and leave the municipality administrators in a tight spot in political sense. However, a balanced refugee distribution and additional resource allocation to municipalities for the refugees would have enabled sharing and alleviation of the problem. However, a "relocation" for Syrians within Turkey no longer seems viable.

At this point, another important issue needs to be highlighted. Contrary to the overall approach in Europe, the central administration and its provincial organisation, i.e. governorships and district



governorships, have significant power over the local administrations in Turkey. Especially due to the issue of migration and refugees is defined as a security field, the process management role of central state authorities is much stronger, and this situation is not expected to change anytime soon. Therefore, it is necessary to think of the concept of “local administration” in Turkey not only within the context of municipalities but also together with the governorships in provinces and district governorships in districts. Legal grounds that may enable local administrations in Turkey to get involved more actively in the process is still not present.

## B. Municipality Incomes and Refugees

The incomes of municipalities in Turkey that are rendered responsible of “serving the citizens as per the Municipalities Law are defined as per the Law no. 2380 and summed up under three main titles:

1. Equity incomes of municipalities (taxes, fees, expenditure contribution shares)
2. Shares allocated over state incomes
3. State supports and other incomes (extraordinary incomes, loans etc.)

The most important item among these sources of income is the share allocated from the central budget. In this regard, a different implementation exists for metropolitan municipalities and normal provincial municipalities. As of the year 2018, the population living within metropolitan municipality borders reached 78% of the overall population of Turkey. For metropolitan municipalities, 6% of the overall budget tax incomes collected from that province is allocated (31.9 billion TL total for Turkey as of 2018). For other provincial municipalities, 6.5% of the overall budget tax incomes collected throughout the country (40.4 billion TL total for Turkey as of 2018) is distributed based on population and geographical area. Dependence of local administrations in Turkey to this source coming from the central government is considerably high. Dependence on central administration is 74% for metropolitan municipalities, 41% for the district municipalities in metropolitan municipality borders, 57% for ordinary provincial municipalities, 57% for district municipalities, and 62% for county municipalities. The total amount of resource allocated by the state to municipalities over these two main sources occurred to be 147.3 billion TL as of the year 2018. Naturally, these amounts are calculated based on the number only of citizens.

| Type of Municipality               | From Central Budget Per Capita / Annual / TL | Total Income Allocated Per Capita / TL | Dependence to Central Administration Regarding Income / % |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Metropolitan Municipality          | 687  | 871                                    | 74%   |
| Metropolitan District Municipality | 268  | 658                                    | 41%   |
| Provincial Municipality            | 693  | 1,139                                  | 57%   |
| District Municipality              | 712  | 1,190                                  | 57%   |
| County Municipality                | 714  | 1,314                                  | 62%   |

In regards to resources allocated to municipalities, the most significant distinction is the distinction of Metropolitan Municipalities, Metropolitan District Municipalities, Provincial Municipalities and District Municipalities. According to this, for instance 687 TL /capita-annual resource is allocated for İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality. The District Municipalities under İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality are allocated with 268 TL /capita-annual resource. Annual per capita support provided to an ordinary (non-metropolitan) provincial municipality is 693 TL. However, when the other resources allocated to municipalities based on the number of citizens is added to these numbers, the total income allocated per capita (citizen) becomes 871 TL for Metropolitan Municipalities, 658 TL for Metropolitan District Municipalities, 1,139 TL for Provincial Municipalities, 1,190 TL for District Municipalities and 1,314 TL for Country Municipalities.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup>This resource also includes the resources allocated to Provincial Special Administrations (total 11.3 billion TL) and Municipality Subsidiaries (24.5 billion TL).

<sup>39</sup>The numbers presented here are approximate values obtained in result of a complex calculation. There are no official sources in this regard. Approximate values were obtained from a senior institution working on municipalities merely for the purpose of rendering the topic understandable and making projection.

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The financial resource explained above means an annual sum of 13 billion 124 million TL income for İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality that has a population of 15,067,724. Metropolitan District Municipalities of İstanbul receive a total per capita resource of 658 TL. In this framework, according to T.R. citizen populations, for instance Fatih Municipality receive resource allocation based on its population of 433,000, while Sultanbeyli Municipality receive resource allocation based on its population of 324,000. This situation did not cause a very important discussion prior to 2011 when the overall refugee population throughout Turkey was less than 50,000. However, provinces and districts were faced with a sudden population increase in terms of both quantitative and proportional size. In addition to the rapid occurrence of this population increase, the really important characteristic was that the newcomers were not "citizens". Because the principle of support based on number of citizens did not change, this caused services to be adversely affected and more importantly led to complaints from the host community that the status of services declined to levels worse than the levels present as of 2011 due to Syrians and other refugees in the provinces and districts where high refugee populations were faced. Municipalities not being able to receive resources for a refugee population that exceeded 80% of overall population in some provinces may be understandable for short term, but is no longer sustainable.

It may be mentioned that a significant relief could be achieved for the municipalities in case the incomes they receive from the central budget based on the number of citizens living within province or district borders are calculated to include those under temporary protection and the resource is allocated thus to municipalities. For instance, while the current annual monies received from central budget by İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality that house 15,067,724 T.R. citizens is 13.1 billion TL, addition of even only the registered 550,000 Syrians would result in an annual allocation of 13.5 billion TL. This difference over 480 million TL would create an important opportunity for the services to be provided to refugees. And this is just the resource to be allocated to the Metropolitan Municipality. When the registered Syrians are accounted for, metropolitan district municipalities will also receive an additional sum of 361 million TL resource allocations. You may see in the table below the projections made for İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality, İstanbul Bağcılar District Municipality and Kilis Provincial Municipality. However, due to no data being present at this point regarding others under temporary protection based on provinces and districts, only registered Syrians are included. The numbers of people actually living in municipality borders are even higher.

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| Municipality Type                           | Per Capita /Annual /TL | Population | CURRENT STATUS ANNUAL INCOME Current Status (T.R. Citizens) | Syrian Population | Total Population | <b>RECOMMENDED: ANNUAL INCOME T.R. Citizens and Registered Syrians<sup>40</sup></b> |
|---|------------------------|------------|---|-------------------|------------------|---|
| İSTANBUL Metropolitan Municipality          | 871                    | 15,067,724 | 13,123,987,604  | 547,235           | 15,614,959       | <b>13,600,629,289</b>   |
| BAĞCILAR Metropolitan District Municipality | 658                    | 748,483    | 492,501,814   | 51,065            | 799,548          | <b>526,102,584</b>  |
| KİLİS Provincial Municipality               | 1,139                  | 142,541    | 162,354,199   | 115,385           | 257,926          | <b>293,777,714</b>  |

Although the complex structure herein makes calculations challenging, if the Syrians throughout all of Turkey were taken into account, the resource required to be allocated by central sources to the municipalities would change by 2 to 5 billion TL. This situation would not only allow municipalities to provide better services but also significantly mitigate the "the money given to us is used for Syrians" perception inherent in the local community. It is apparent that primarily a change of legislation is required in this regard. The legislation change should initially include the phrase "municipalities are liable to provide services to all residents registered within

<sup>40</sup>Province and district based data only for Syrians among all foreigners under Temporary Protection may be obtained. Thus, the calculation was conducted only over the Syrians under Temporary Protection.

their borders". And then the phrase "annual payments per capita is made by taking into consideration all those who are T.R. citizens, who have residence permits or under temporary protection living inside municipality borders" should be added to the item for the resource to be allocated from state budget under the municipality incomes.

It is apparent that Turkey, which already undertakes much financial burden, to reach a special agreement with the EU in regard to such an implementation that would affect local cohesion processes very positively and at least the resource required for Syrians to be provided by the EU will constitute a significant field of solidarity, burden sharing and cooperation.

### C. Field Findings in regards to Local Administrations / Municipalities

#### Lack of Capacity and Needs of Municipalities

According to the information obtained through the interviews, the most prominent problem the municipality administrations of all provinces covered within the study face in regards to Syrians in Turkey was observed to be defined as "legal financial obstacles and lack of capacity". Resources not having increased in line with the demands of municipalities despite the population and workload that increased based on the arrival of Syrians comes up as a significant problem.

*"Until 2011, we thought obesity was a problem reserved only for individuals but when the Syrian crisis occurred in the year 2011 we saw that cities could also face obesity. Think of a person who goes to bed as 70 kg, and gets up as 150 kg in the morning. Hundreds of thousands of people came suddenly to our city. All our avenues, streets, houses, parks, everything in our city got filled up with people. And in result of this, the already inadequate infrastructure came to the point of total collapse. Our parks, everything is gone, the park area per individual declined down to 1.5 square meters. Infrastructure, sewer, drinking water all became severe problems." (Kilis Municipality)*

*"As Sultanbeyli Municipality, we started our efforts back in the year 2014. We began by organising workshops in order to define who those are in front of us, like, to get an overall picture of the situation. Drawing the attention of administrators. No clear opinion on the population in the field among public, civil society, universities and volunteers. Needs, target group, data are not sound. There is no coordination in*

*this field. Maybe always the same institution goes to the same family. It is a fact that we should focus on two main fields. Short, medium and long term plans have been made: Short: No mention of migration in the Municipalities Law with no. 5300, when the Syrian comes knocking on the door you become forced to answer. The importance of solving through a new organisation, through civil society logic. Refugees association, its international name is RASAS. In this structure, municipality deputy mayor is chairperson, we are in administrative board, education and civil collective organisation. We created a coordination centre. We did not have migration experience, we used to write and realise social projects but none specific to migration. We screened all conferences, panels, literature, we created background. We established dialogue with international institutions. We transformed into coordination centre, into social centre, according to the needs of refugees. We created a mental, psychosocial counselling, law, vocational support education. We made this with international funds. We are working with a social centre, a training centre." (Istanbul, Sultanbeyli Municipality)*

*"Preventing social problems is for the peace of the city. Obligation also occurs, we have to take responsibility towards living together and managing the process. Some projects for them should be prepared for our own safety and health. Unavoidably, patience in local populace declines." (Bursa Metropolitan Municipality)*

*"A certain share is allocated from the national income by the Provincial Bank to municipalities based on number of citizens, but no share is received for the Syrians in our city. For instance, money comes for 200-250,000 people, but 300,000 people live in the city. These people use my pavement, my park, my green areas, my roads, my traffic, I have to allocate a separate share for them but there is nothing to allocate. I mean there are problems in these regards." (İskenderun Municipality)*

*"The vision of municipality being inclusive or exclusive is in the first place. Expanding the skills and budget, Gaziantep only expanded the budget for Syrians. Even if we want to help, we do not have the capacity to do that. Social tension, many local says more living same in the neighbourhood. Approach on inclusivity or exclusivity, supported by expanding the budget." (Expert-TEPAV)*

*"I can easily say that the item that challenges us most is the budget when trying to give services. As you know, municipalities receive a certain share from central budget according to its own municipality population, and this is a very significant income*

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*other than the municipality's own incomes, so the municipality can plan its services. Right now there are 424,000 registered Syrian refugees in Gaziantep. Together with those in queue for registration and those registered in other cities but living here, we may say the total population reaches 500,000. So, if we say Gaziantep has a population of 2 million, almost 20% is Syrian right now. But the municipality receives no additional income or budget allocation for that 20 percent. Because the budget is not sufficient, we try to handle this deficit by cooperation with different institutions. Right now, this is our biggest challenge". (Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality)*

*"There are 50,000 Syrians here in İskenderun, no money comes from the Provincial Bank for these people; it came to border provinces, to Kilis and such, and here to Kumlu, Reyhanlı, Kırıkhan. Not 1 lira came to İskenderun Municipality yet. 50,000 Syrians use my park, my pavement, my garbage container; I mean for the service I previously gave with 3 workers, I had to increase to 5 after the Syrians came." (İskenderun Municipality)*

*"The importance of municipalities was not understood much before the crisis. District coordination over municipalities is important. The legal framework should be clarified and spread over the institutions. It should be regulated correctly. The issue should be changed from a relief package to a protection coverage." (UNHCR-İstanbul)*

*"We see the needs of schools, and as municipalities we are making certain efforts for integrating these at some point for not harming the community much. So that these do not disturb our people here. I mean, municipalities have a sufferer morale, I mean you give that support, also not to disturb much the city population and the people in the city, so that a two pole spark not to explode, could I explain it? I mean both sides should be understood." (İskenderun Municipality)*

### Supports Required by Municipalities

Because municipalities have a hard time fulfilling the needs of the increasing population with the budget they have, they think that international institutions should take their needs into consideration and allocate resources accordingly.

*"An experience of personal sense is happening. There is no process that motivates the municipality. An awareness at civil society, university, world scale, only a personal satisfaction and motivation. Municipalities have no motivation, there is no*

*resource allocation, and the public opposes the process. Official responsibility being given to municipalities. Municipality should be given the duty of realising social cohesion projects. Local needs are known, decided and applied best by the local. The association has 3 sociologists. They passed social cohesion strategy. They determined the obstacles against social cohesion; they developed steps for these, and activities for these steps. Refugee assemblies were formed over the mechanism between Syrians and local population, covering also the local population, over women and children." (İstanbul-Sultanbeyli Municipality)*

*"Now we are not noticing a point here, this in fact brings a great pressure to the city. Be it solid waste management, transportation, environmental health, parks and gardens, landscaping, social spaces, there is a great pressure. But when you carry out these works, unfortunately the reason of such being population increase is neglected by international organisations. The incoming resource is rather like, let us give food packages, let us give hygiene set, let us give social support to Syrians, open language course, open vocational course for Syrians, usually works like this. The pressure, especially the physical pressure suffered by the city is neglected. This is a significant problem. As the municipality, we are in need especially in these regards." (Seyhan Municipality)*

*"There are already both language courses and vocational training courses being carried out extensively in 26 centres; the municipality provides these with its own budget. I do not have much need for support in this field but eight out of ten international society organisations or UN agencies say let us work on vocational training or language education fields. Well I am already doing that; the service you are to give in this regard will just repeat this. In this regard, actually the international society should review the fields it allocate resources. Because the city is affected as a whole, from transportation to pavement." (Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality)*

*"Our municipality has formed a Migration Branch Directorate since like 2-3 years ago, somewhat in line with our requests and insistence. And the municipality's own branch directorates, like Social Assistance Directorate or Women Support Directorate or Sports Branch Directorate provide assistance at various points; for instance the municipality has a handicapped coordination centre, including that, the municipality supports refugees and migrants through various supports. And recently this Migration Branch Directorate had a joint project with IOM for the Syrians to receive legal consultancy, rehabilitation service and information service. Through that the*



*municipality has efforts towards this integration, towards integration in all these fields. But as I mentioned, being a disadvantaged city itself, Urfa faces problems in implementing national policies in a very professional manner.” (Şanlıurfa-Harran University - Academician)*

*“The budget is limited, the budget of Bursa is limited compared to other big cities. There is a challenge regarding the budget in general sense. There are people frequently changing addresses, those migrating to Istanbul or to İzmir. Crowded families are another problem. They were like 10-15 people, and then they started being divided into 2-3. We also provided assistance to Iraq Turkmens. We do not experience any problem in reaching out to Syrian families.” (Bursa Metropolitan Municipality Social Services Department)*

*“It should be like this. For instance how many people are there here? 30,000 people. So, for example, if the Provincial Bank sends 30 liras per month for every Turkish citizen, it should send half of it, say 15 liras per month for the Syrians. How many people? 30 people? What does it make over 15 liras? 450 billion, 450 thousand liras. I need this money to come in my hand every month. But it does not. Even when it comes, it goes to border counties not us. There are 550,000 people living in Hatay province, but this money I mentioned just goes to four districts on the border” (İskenderun Municipality).*

*“GIZ is making efforts to develop NGOs. Platforms of the joint stakeholder are more active at local scale in some provinces, CITY COUNCILS are in contact with local administration, be it social opinion leaders, institutions aimed just for Syrians, and let this contact be facilitated. Studies to being together may also be done within the structure of governorships. Governorship is the structure that knows and manages best. City council, platforms should be prioritised. (ILO-Ankara)*

*“Provincial Migration Administration did not ask what services they required. Our extra works increased so much, we had difficulties but information was given regarding this. No resource allocation happened. They said we manage by ourselves. ... There is no legislation obstacle. This time there is Turkish language barrier. We could not find any systematic addressee. There is no policy, no strategy.” (İzmir – EBSO)*

### **Municipalities’ Projects towards Syrians and Examples of Good Practices**

In provinces and districts where Syrians live in high concentrations, municipalities have been the institutions that had to face the problems and feel the society’s resistance the closest. Despite no additional resource or authority allocation, it is observed that many places had very successful examples of good practices.

*“Rather than access, there is problem in locating (which service, social service, electricity, water, not clears?). There is significant increase in existing population, but equal distribution of limited municipality services. From the perspective of municipalities, we can say this. Municipality has to provide this service within its borders independent from gender or race discrimination. From access to clean water to electricity, sewer system. Social cultural affairs departments come up as important units in regards to cohesion. Under their coordination, social centres, intervention forms are good examples.” (ILO-Ankara)*

*“From PKK region, many rockets were fired on us, we took like 137 Katyusha rockets. Many of our citizens died, became martyrs. Many of our people got injured, got their psychology disorted. Still we did not break the peace, our coexistence culture. Thus, I am proud of the people of Kilis. Really an event to be shown as an example to the world, we were nominated to Nobel Peace Prize but it was not awarded to us. Of course we did not do these to get Nobel Peace Prize. We would have done it whether or not it was to be given, we are still continuing, we did not stop supporting and aiding these people because it was not given. However, it Nobel Peace Prize was given, the things Kilis did would be written in golden letters in the world humanity history and the whole world would know it. We should increase the good examples and Kilis is a very good example, I think this should be developed.” (Kilis Municipality)*

*“Capacities of public trainings like İSMEK should be strengthened. When cooperating, a strategy where the public education provides the trainer, municipality provides the classroom and we provide road and food costs should be followed. Municipalities play an informative role. Good practices of entrepreneurship programmes should be shared with the public should be made widespread – İMECE programme – (UNHCR-İstanbul)*

# SYRIANS IN TURKEY: DETERMINATIONS AND PROJECTIONS BASED ON PERIOD, THEME AND SUBJECT

## Syrians' Requests from Municipalities

According to the data obtained in result of the interviews, it is observed to be mentioned that Syrians mostly made requests for food and clothing aids, and vocational training and Turkish language education requests came to the forefront outside of humanitarian aids.

*"They rather want food, clothing for their children or vehicle support when their children are to go to doctor; that is what they want from me. They do not want, like, capital or something. They want a convenient life here; their roof is leaking, they come to us, we go repair their roof, their window is broken, you go repair their window or, like they do not have coal, or something similar; I mean what they want from us are always material things, to continue their daily lives. Then of course, you do not have the budget for that. You give to one, all of them come to you; you cannot handle it then." (İskenderun Municipality)*

*"Requests especially regarding health or medical materials come, regarding winter materials... But, as the municipality, we know there are non-governmental organisations working in this field and they manage a significant budget; by referring such requests to non-governmental organisations with which we have protocol, we mediate them to reach appropriate people and use the limited resources of municipality in a more appropriate and economic manner. We provide referral for such aid requests." (Gaziantep Municipality)*

*"They have requests for aids and employment. In fact they find you regarding all subjects. Their children's registration to school during education time, transportation to hospital during sickness, work permits... Bill or rent payment, divorcing from spouse etc. Mostly humanitarian aid and employment." (Sultanbeyli Municipality)*

## Municipalities and Social Cohesion

Under Municipalities Law, there is no specific definition in regards to residence for migrants and refugees. Municipalities develop different services in line with the coming requests. Because the resources of municipalities differ based on district dynamics and strategic priorities, equal access to municipality services does not always be possible. After the legislation amendment on municipalities in the year 2005, social municipality services are included within the scope of municipality responsibilities as per law. In this respect, social cohesion works gain utmost importance.

*"We have to set up community centres. This is already among our projects. Social cohesion works should be emphasised over the community centres to be established. Social cohesion is required not only between the local community and refugees but also among the refugees. Honestly, at the beginning we had much challenge for instance in bringing together Iranians and Afghans. Then, just as we said we resolved the issue with the Iranians and Afghans, then Syrians came, now Iranians, like, do not want to get in the bus Syrians are using. There are such interesting issues, I mean, the refugee groups; minority groups have a social cohesion problem among each other. Now think, we are trying to bring these people into social cohesion with the local population. Honestly this is a very challenging issue. To that end, the number of community centres should increase. If there were, like, seven or eight public centres just for Seyhan, we could move on faster. We should make efforts on social cohesion. Without bringing social cohesion, we cannot succeed in any aspect whatsoever; we would be unsuccessful in this field." (Seyhan Municipality)*

*"It is necessary to open up spaces they could use mutually. Social cohesion is such a topic that you cannot simply bring people together and say, okay I brought you together now you integrate together, now create cohesion with each other. This is not something we can do; it is something they could do. People should be given appropriate spaces for doing that. For instance, we set up an Arabic course, and there is a Turkish course next to it. These people interact with each other." (Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality)*

*"Unless you solve the job problem of people, unless you do not have them employed, they will not think of anything else if they are hungry. They would think only of eating their fill. We can understand this easily from the Maslow Pyramid, first he has to be full. Thus, everything must be employment oriented, sound employment policies with sustainability are required and in fact Adana is a very suitable place for this. There are wide agricultural areas, numerous employment opportunities in potential, but it is a region that cannot develop due to low added value production. Çukurova is the second biggest fertile lowland of the world, but in terms of added value in agriculture, it is at seventh place in Turkey." (Seyhan Municipality)*

*"They were making barbecue on the beach back in 2014. Barbecue on one side, tea urn and hookah on the other side, throwing a straw mat on the floor, they came at 8:00 - 9:00, sorry but I have to say, 10 children, wearing robes, ugly sight, shouts noises,*

*pollution, etcetera, I banned all of these. Now you cannot see even at the bazaar, or at the beach. Why did I do that? My people are disturbed, right or wrong. This also caused disintegration among the people, city peace was being disrupted. I banned them all, you cannot see one of them now. Well, these are important for a peaceful city life. (İskenderun Municipality)*

*"We always speak of refugees' rights but refugees also have duties. There is a social structure here, when you join this society, you have to act in accordance to the structure of such society. We can say it is a normal social structure, a modern social structure, you have to get integrated with this somehow." (Seyhan Municipality)*

#### **Municipalities - Non-Governmental Organisation - UN Agencies**

During the interviews, it was emphasised that migration management was very challenging, local administration had many budget-based difficulties, and that local administrations should work closely with non-governmental organisations and UN agencies in order to overcome such challenges.

*"National Education, NGOs and municipalities should work together, they have to hold regular meetings each month with Syrian asylum associations. If not monthly, they should be once every two months. Senior level meetings should be realised at decision making stage. Opinion exchange should be done, what is done until then should be shared and synergy should be created (İzmir Provincial Directorate of National Education)*

*"In fact we work with many different institutions but we take great care about this during our works. In fact, when working with very experienced, strong institutions, we want especially a Syrian association to also be partner with us in some manner and conduct studies together. The reason behind this is; hopefully when this crisis is over someday, the United Nations will go somewhere else in the world with crisis, international NGOs will follow it, our local NGOs will continue working, but the group that is most probable to carry out works inside Syria will be Syrian NGOs. Maybe due to the previous regime, because of the dynamics in Syria, a very serious civil society culture had not formed, they are not very good in that field; transparency, accountability are very important. While carrying out these studies, we specifically cooperate with those Syrian associations, trying to support them to develop and increase their own capacities. By bringing them together with international non-governmental organisations and*

*by providing various trainings, we aim for them to provide more healthy and more professional services during the studies to be realised in the future within Syria" (Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality)*

*"Save the Children There are also good examples where they work in cooperation with Zeytinburnu Municipality for the protection of children. However, this is İstanbul profile. Capacity should be developed on how this situation is in other municipalities. In this respect, it is very important for good examples to be shared or copied, localised and implemented". (UNHCR, İstanbul)*

*"We work in close relation with local institutions and organisations, governorship and district governorship in the region we work. Coordination is very important. Küçükçekmece Municipality is very open to cooperation; there are many joint activities and cooperation. Such a partnership cannot be realised everywhere." (Support to Life Association, İstanbul)*

*"NGOs are also expected to join in the coordination efforts. And it is not easy to say that this is at an ideal level. Some of them are active in the field but cooperation with municipalities is very weak. There are good examples: Organisations such as Yuva Association, Blue Crescent are non-governmental organisations that work closely with municipalities. We established social protection desks in 12 municipalities with WALD - World Academy for Local Government and Democracy." (UNHCR, İstanbul)*

#### **D. 2025 Expectations – Local Administrations**

Local administrations entered a period during which they are to face even more challenges in the future in terms of both politics and service distribution. Especially in recent times, Syrians and the services provided to them come to the agenda frequently at elections, and even the municipalities that produce very good works in this field hesitate to share these topics with the citizens. It is understood that municipalities will not be too open to providing services for refugees without additional share from central budget and without additional authorities. In regard to this subject, an important contribution may be expected to come from the international society, i-NGOs and UN agencies.



# SYRIANS IN TURKEY: DETERMINATIONS AND PROJECTIONS BASED ON PERIOD, THEME AND SUBJECT

## E. Policy Recommendations - Local Administrations

- Problems are local and should be solved locally. In this sense, it is crucial that the state display strategic decisiveness, and transfer authorisation and capacity to local scale.
- Local administration logic of Turkey covers not only municipalities but also governorships and district governorships. This system is the product of a strict central structure, and is not expected to change anytime soon. Thus, it is of importance that local activities especially regarding refugees are realised through the cooperation of municipalities and governorships-district governorships.
- The local administrations in Turkey make extraordinary efforts regarding refugees despite legal challenges, capacity and finance limitations, and almost all of them produce practices that may be considered "good example" at universal level.
- The Municipalities Law of Turkey that was restructured in the year 2005 clearly gave the municipalities the responsibility of "social municipality" activities. This situation should actually be evaluated as a key for providing services to refugees.
- Fair distribution of migration and asylum seekers among local units is of utmost importance and necessity. Otherwise, municipalities face the risk of undertaking more burdens in line with the services they provide. However, the arrival of Syrians in Turkey did not happen within the scope of any plan or programme, which produced a very unbalanced distribution. However, it is no longer realistic to think of the possibility of establishing a mechanism that could structurally change the existing situation.
- It should be mentioned that the responsibilities and challenges the local administrations in Turkey undertook have been heavy, but that they still produced significant successes.
- The second most important problem faced by local administrations following the unbalanced distribution is lack of coordination. In this respect, cooperation among district municipalities, district and province municipalities, international municipalities are of utmost value.
- Efforts aiming at cohesion should be carried on with coordination at national/overall level and at local level.
- Although there are universal principles for cohesion, there is not a single universal model. Such model should be developed based on each province-district with priority to local cohesion and basis of data as emphasised under the EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement.
- The public centres which include municipalities play an important role regarding refugees being informed of their rights and exercising them, and regarding cohesion studies. Public Centre models should be developed, and their numbers should be increased.
- In the event the services of local administrations have reduced quality or interruptions due to asylum seekers, social tensions may increase, leading also to political consequences.
- Roles and effectiveness of Local Administration Unions regarding the process should be increased.
- Cooperation between local administrations, international institutions and NGOs working on the field of asylum seekers should be developed.
- Needs analysis should be conducted prior to commencing the services to be provided by municipalities, and effectiveness analysis should be conducted during and after the services.
- All local administrations which house asylum seekers exceeding 5% of the district population should establish special units within their structure. A legal ground may also be created in this regard.
- Getting asylum seekers involved in the local decision making processes, creation of local consultancy boards (such as "City Assemblies", "Refugee Assemblies") in this regard within the body of municipalities and making already existing ones to become functional should be made possible.
- Local administration should be enabled to receive resource allocation from the central budget based on not merely number of citizens, but also on those under temporary protection and those living within municipality borders with residence permits.
- International institutions, particularly the EU, may have significant contributions for providing a financial support per refugee (similar to ESSN supports) to municipalities. In case the support per refugee to be allocated for the municipalities is to be, for instance, 5 Euros per month, this would prevent interruptions in municipality services and push to other regions, self-preservation policies and local population reactions would decrease. Considering that the number of Syrians within urban areas, as in municipality borders, is around 3.5 million, it could be determined that the cost of this to an EU or other organisation will be around 210 million Euros with a simple calculation (3,500,000 person x 5 € x 12 months).
- Local administrations should create closer cooperation with international institutions and NGOs in terms of both capacity and resources.





# OVERALL SCENARIOS AND PROJECTIONS

## A. 2025 Expectations - Overall

Turkey has been experiencing a very special and difficult situation since 2011, the like of which it had never faced in its history. In the beginning, the expectation of both Turkey and the Syrians was that the crisis will end in a short time and the Syrians will return to their homes. However, developments completely to the contrary happened during the eight years that passed. The total number of people under protection that was just 58,000 back in 2011 exceeded 4.1 million in a short time, corresponding to over 5% of the overall population of Turkey. It is also quite difficult to make any future estimates on the refugee influxes into Turkey. In not a far future but even around the time this report is published, a new refugee influx from Idlib may flow into Turkey. Or a different development based on Iran may occur in the very near future.

In this study, the possibility of great numbers of additional Syrians coming to Turkey was left out of assessment. However, it seems that the total number of Syrians in Turkey will already near 5 million as of the year 2025, with 350,000 “new citizens” due to the fact that an average of 465 Syrian babies are born every day within the country. It is estimated that this number will include over 1.5 million students, and around 1.6 million employees, of which approximately 10% will be employed formally.

With eight years already passed, 450,000 babies born inside Turkey, 1.2 million Syrians working, 650,000 Syrian children and young people attending schools, with Syrians spread over all around Turkey and built new lives for themselves, it is observed that the option of returning has already been weakened considerably. Even more importantly, it is a fact that the situation in Syria is still utterly unsafe and fraught with conflict. It is known that even if the war ended today, the physical and mental rehabilitation in the already ruined country would still take decades. In this framework, the “net” spontaneous returns from Turkey to Syria, which remained around 55,000 until today according to UNHCR data, will be at symbolic levels in the future. In other words, the possibility and opportunity for Syrians to return to their country have declined dramatically. This reality should be faced. Otherwise, short term “problem solving” policies built upon temporariness occur to be ineffective, inefficient and expensive. Turkey had handled the issue in the form of “emergency management” during the years AFAD led the policies until the year 2016. However, the need for more long term policies is apparent today. It is known that cohesion policies encourage permanence. However, it is clear that the risk of not implementing social cohesion policies and building

the process constantly upon temporariness is even more severe. A culture of coexistence with Syrians should be developed in Turkey. Presence of a social acceptance level that still remains considerably high -despite all the concerns, worries, and a background of not wanting them to remain in the country until this day- can be observed. However, much effort is required to be made in this context, for the resilience of the Turkish community to be increased and the fragile social acceptance level to be prevented from declining.

## B. Fundamental Policy Recommendations - Overall

### STRATEGY

Turkey initially has to face with this process that exceeded 8 years now, and realise plans in compliance with its strategic decision. The process experienced in Turkey during the recent years is a considerably intense “project making” period. Turkey now has to develop a comprehensive strategic planning and implement the projects within this strategic framework. Project oriented short term processes should be transformed into robust, long term processes. If no plan is devised, the country will have to make do with short term and fractured solutions developed in the context of daily needs. It will not be possible to create permanent and positive impacts with projects that are not part of a large scale plan.

### GEOGRAPHICAL RESERVATION

The geographical reservation Turkey placed in the Geneva Convention by now lost its meaning. This subject should be reconsidered. However, it is apparent that any “refugee” or even “citizenship” statues will not be able to eliminate the problems. Temporary Protection status may sometimes occur to be more disadvantageous than other international protection statuses especially in regards to economic activities. This imbalance should be eliminated.

### STATUS

Serious steps need to be taken in regards to the subject of status. The “temporary protection status” defined by Turkey for the Syrians no longer correspond with the reality, and also contradicts with social cohesion policies. Thus, the system going between “temporary protection” and “citizenship” is not sustainable. In this sense, “abolishing the geographical reservation” may be an important step. However, the reality the reality experienced throughout the world following 2011 made this difficult. Open door policy virtually “victimising” neighbouring countries push Turkey to act even more hesitantly in regards to refugee status. However, different solutions may be considered. One such

solution may be turning “temporary protection” into “residence”.

### **CITIZENSHIP**

Although the “temporary protection” status of Syrians lost its meaning in this day, the alternative to this should not be “citizenship”, which has a high risk of disrupting social cohesion if realised rapidly. Although the citizenship practice is continued, formation of also interim statuses may be more effective.

### **SPONTANEOUS RETURN**

Turkey should face with the fact that Syrians lost almost all inclination and opportunities to return. The contradiction between the discourse of return and cohesion policies should be taken seriously.

### **UNIVERSITY**

It should not be forgotten that the young University student Syrian people at higher education will be the most significant mediators of social cohesion in the future, and they should be supported during both their education process and the job seeking process after graduation.

### **MUNICIPALITIES**

Local cohesion processes should be encouraged, and municipalities should be granted the opportunity to develop their financial and administrative capacities in this context.

### **FOR PEACE**

Turkey should succeed in explaining this issue to the Turkish community, by saying “we have to do this also for our own peace”, and implement comprehensive cohesion policies.

### **DEVELOPMENT, NOT EMERGENCY**

The processes, which were referred to as emergency during the beginning, and as cohesion policies nowadays, should from now on be handled within a perspective of development.

### **LANGUAGE**

The issue of “language” comes to forefront in any and all fields. Capacity should be developed in the field of Turkish language education, and as many as possible people should be reached out in this regard.

### **COMMUNITY CENTRES**

Numbers and quality of multi-purpose community centres should be increased, information and orientation should be realised in such centres in the fields of education and employment, while also providing support in regards to legal rights and social cohesion.

### **LOCAL COHESION**

Global Agreement for Refugees, which prioritises local cohesion in policy development, recommends public sector - private sector - NGO cooperation, empowers cohesion and highlights sharing of responsibilities, should be taken seriously.

### **COORDINATION**

The issue of coordination, which is an utterly serious problem, should be resolved through a central restructuring.

### **MODULAR**

Cohesion policies should be modular and local cohesion should be prioritised. It should be remembered that the addressees of local cohesion in Turkey are not only municipalities but also governorships and district governorships.

### **COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

By developing a healthy communication strategy, the gossips spread very fast and mostly over social media should be reduced.

### **EDUCATION**

It should be remembered that education policy is crucial, and that although the aim may be achieving an inclusive, pluralist education, the priority right now should be integrating all children at compulsory education age into the Turkish National Education System.

### **TEACHERS**

Within the framework of education policy, the physical capacity and the teacher-administrator capacity should be developed urgently.

### **MOBILITY**

The policy of Turkey towards trying to hold the Syrian population within the provinces they are registered should be reconsidered, and abolished if possible.

### **CONTROL AND FOLLOW UP**

Control and follow up systems should be set up as required by transparency and effectiveness principles.

### **ADDRESS AND REGISTRATION**

Address and registration systems should be able to be established sturdily.

### **ABPRS**

For the data collection and analysis capacity of TurkSTAT to be able to be utilised, Syrians should be included in the address based population registry system (ABPRS). This data flow will enable many aspects ranging from child births to health, from employment to informal economy, and from education

# OVERALL SCENARIOS AND PROJECTIONS

to health to be observed much more accurately, and develop the strategy-policy making opportunities.

## CHILD LABOUR

On one hand child labour should be combatted, and on the other hand schooling should be encouraged. However, also special policies should be developed for the young people group who are both non-schooled and non-employed, observed to be at a very high ratio within the population.

## ESSN

How longer the international funding that is the source of the ESSN supports will prevail is not known. However, although the contribution of this resource and system cannot be denied, it is also apparent that it is not sustainable. ESSN and similar programmes cause segments dependent on eternal supports to form. In this regard, the resource used for ESSN should be transformed more into investment efforts, and steered towards medium and long term policies. It is apparent that with the resource spent for ESSN, amounting currently to almost 1 billion Euros, many things in the investment field may be realised.

## INFRASTRUCTURE-SUPERSTRUCTURE

Resources should be allocated for the infrastructure-superstructure works in regions where refugees live in high concentrations.

## VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The demand in this regard is utterly clear. However, training courses that do not relate with the real life and do not lead to employment should be rapidly terminated. Vocational trainings realised without cooperation with chambers of industry, commerce and craftsmen create nothing other than an unnecessary certificate inflation.

## ROLE OF NGOs

After 2011, the importance of the cooperation with international organisations and both local and international NGOs became apparent. International Organisations and NGOs not only bring in resource but also, maybe more importantly, play a significant role in many aspects such as project development, protection, establishing universal values and principles, transparency, reflecting support programmes on the field etc. In regards to policies related to refugees, public sector - NGO cooperation should be rendered more functional.

## HIGH SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE

The solidarity and high acceptance level displayed by the Turkish community should be made sustainable. The concerns of the Turkish community should be taken seriously, and transparency should be adopted for the social peace to prevail.

## POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS

The subject of Syrians, which has taken place considerably rarely within political discussions until 2019, seems to become an important factor in the near future. At this point, the political discourse should be kept suited to human dignity, indiscriminating and realistic, as much as possible.

“COHESION POLICIES” is a political and social preference that is of importance or even crucial importance in regards to the future of a community. Cohesion policies encourage and increase permanence. However, if the permanence trend is already high, trying to offset cohesion policies may be much more costly.

It should be noted that all these efforts I may sum up under the title “COHESION” have two fundamental fields and two primary objectives, and these should be shared with the public:

Fundamental fields for Cohesion:

1. State: The state should define the needs and develop policies.
2. Community: The community has a much important place especially regarding “social acceptance”. In this regard, policies that will increase the support and resilience of the community and policies prioritising “social acceptance” should be brought to forefront.

Primary objectives for Cohesion:

1. Allowing refugees to live in tune with human dignity, to develop themselves and provide contribution to Turkey
2. Should be developed for mitigating the risks against the peaceful future of the Turkish community, for being diversified and made resilient.

## Methodology and Team

The GIZ-QUDRA project titled “Demographical Development Of The Syrian Refugee Population And Its Potential Impacts On The Education, Employment And Municipality Services In Turkey In Near Future” aimed to take account of the last 8 years in regards to more than 3.6 million Syrians who have arrived to Turkey since April 2011 and have been living in Turkey until today, to present the current status, and to present the expectations for the future along with policy recommendations in this framework. The study project conducted with the leadership of Prof. Dr. M. Murat Erdoğan and Metin Çorabatır was structured through a literature review, assessment of official and other data, and though a field survey in the form of semi-structured interviews made with 30 key-informants in 10 provinces by the Field Assistants Fethiye Beşir and Adil Özhan Yüksel.



In-depth interviews were realised in 5 border provinces (Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Adana), and 5 western provinces with metropolitan structures and strong economies (İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Bursa, Konya). Outputs of the aforementioned 30 interviews were presented in the study without giving references to real persons, and summarised findings per each field were annexed to the report at section ends.

Prior to putting the last touches on the final report, the study findings were assessed together with experts, and representatives from public institutions, international institutions and NGOs in Ankara on the 14th of May 2019. Within the framework of the opinions received in scope of panels and round table meetings, the report was finalised.

Reporting of the study project was realised by Prof. Dr. M. Murat Erdoğan. The project involving Dagmar Blickwede and Elif Dönmez within GIZ-QUDRA was conducted between the dates October 2018 and July 2019.

