

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH POLICY IN TURKEY



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1. Context and principles of national youth policy

1.1 Context of national youth policy

The National Youth and Sports Policy Document was prepared with a democratic and participatory method in accordance with the opinions and recommendations of public institutions and organizations, universities, non-governmental organisations, trainers and most importantly, young people. For this purpose, comprehensive workshops were held at home and abroad, the 2nd Youth Council was organised, sports workshops and post Olympics evaluation meetings were held, written opinions were taken and online platforms where everyone shared their opinions and recommendations were established.

A reasonable frame analysis method was used in the preparation of the Policy Document in order to determine youth and sports policies and set targets to realise these policies. Within the framework of this method, problem and target analyses were carried out.

Definition of Youth

Youth is a concept that should be discussed in a sociological meaning rather than just biological. The definition of youth is made according to the era, socio-economic developments, culture and traditions of societies. Therefore, it is not possible to mention a single universally accepted age range for subjective youth definitions. When the conditions of our country are taken into account, individuals between the ages of 14 and 29 are accepted as the target group of youth policies. Establishing suitable communication channels with young people, while taking into consideration their age, gender, economic, social, family and cultural conditions, educational level, place of residence etc. is crucial for the formation of public policies.

Why Youth Policy

National youth policies are important social variables and a determining factor which concerns not only young people but also the family, institutions and everyone else in the society and which also affects today and the future.

Young people should be seen as a unique group requiring attention because of their vulnerability and openness to abuse during the most important period of their lives. Along with this situation related to the nature of youth, young people should be accepted as a dynamic human resource and positive power that will have a role in the construction of the future.

National youth policies are an indispensable factor for the participation of young people as active individuals in every area of the social structure and for revealing the skills and capabilities they have. In addition to this, youth policies are the body of means which protects young people from abuse and neglect.

In order to form fundamental values for the development of youth in Turkey, to set targets, to define main target groups, to ensure co-operation and coordination between all the relevant institutions/organisations and groups and young people, and to improve youth programs and determine priorities, we need active and qualified youth policies and a policy document in which such policies are determined.

VISION

The vision of youth policies is to provide opportunities and to establish a ground where young people can truly realize their own potentials as individuals who have international and humanitarian values, respect for the environment, a sense of social belonging, who participate actively in social life, make use of fundamental rights and liberties efficiently and who are committed to national and moral values, are informed, self-confident, active and enterprising and at a level to be able to compete with their peers in the international arena.

1.2. Principles of national youth policy

The National Youth and Sports Policy Document emphasises the main principles and values of youth policies as follows ([National Youth and Sports Policy Paper](#)):

- Commitment to human rights, democratic values and the Republic,
- To adopt, to live and to maintain national, historical, cultural and humanitarian values,
- To develop a rights-based approach,
- To prevent all kinds of discrimination and to realize equal opportunities,
- To consider individual and social differences as wealth and to consider this wealth a means of social solidarity and integration,
- To be based on research and knowledge,
- To give priority to disadvantaged young people,
- To pursue international standards in policies and practices,
- To focus on participation, accessibility, holism, applicability, accountability, transparency, and locality.

2. Statistics on young people

The population of Turkey in 2016 was at 78,741,053 million including, 39,511,191 men, 39,229,862 women. The table below shows the distribution according to age and gender (<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/hui/submitViewTableAction.do>) of young people.

Ages	Total	Men	Women
15-19	6 585 500	3 382 363	3 203 137
20-24	6 314 167	3 224 168	3 089 999
25-29	6 263 249	3 178 350	3 084 899

3. Actors and Structures

3.1 Public authorities

3.1.1 National public authorities:

Ministry in charge of youth: Ministry of Youth and Sports

Minister: Akif Çağatay KILIÇ

Duration of mandate: Since 26.12.2013

Youth Department in the Ministry: General Directorate of Youth Services, General Directorate of Project and Coordination, General Directorate of Education, Culture and Research

Main tasks of the Youth department:

The duties of the General Directorate of Youth Services shall be as follows:

- a) To take necessary measures and produce recommendations for the prevention of abuse and violence against the young people and for the elimination of all types of privileges among young people.
- b) To organize youth-related meetings, courses, seminars and similar events at home and abroad; to participate in the activities organised, and to support such activities.
- c) To determine the procedures and principles regarding the establishment and functioning of youth centers and similar facilities serving for the young people as well as youth and scouting camps, and to carry out activities that will improve and promote such facilities.
- d) To develop recommendations that will ensure the participation of young people in all areas of social life.
- e) To conduct the registration, visa and transfer transactions of youth associations.
- f) To carry out works for protecting young people from bad habits and to carry out activities in this respect.
- g) To organise youth events at national and local level.
- h) To carry out the youth week activities. (Including the Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day, the first week of May is celebrated as the youth week in Turkey)
- i) To handle relations with the relevant units of universities and local administrations and with the non-governmental organisations and public organisations and institutions that work in the field of youth.

General Directorate of Projects and Coordination

The duties of the General Directorate of Projects and Coordination shall be as follows:

- a) To carry out projects and works in the field of youth or sports; to evaluate, support and participate in the projects or works carried out in this area and to inspect their implementation and results; to set out the procedures and principles regarding the projects and works to be supported.
- b) To give priority to supporting the projects for the disadvantaged young people and for the mobility of young people.
- c) To ensure coordination and cooperation between the organizations and institutions in the areas related to its area of responsibility.
- d) To perform the preparatory works for creating the National Youth and Sports Policy Paper and to follow up its implementation.
- e) To convey to the relevant institutions the demands, recommendations and complaints about the services and opportunities offered to young people.

General Directorate of Education, Culture and Research

The duties of the General Directorate of Education, Culture and research shall be as follows:

- a) To offer guidance and counseling service to young people and to perform activities that will develop educational services and opportunities.
- b) To plan the activities that can be performed in the field of education and culture in order to contribute to the development of young people.
- c) To issue publications about the area of responsibility of the Ministry or to get such publications issued, and to follow up publications.
- d) To carry out investigations and research about youth at home and abroad or to get such research conducted, and to share their results with relevant organizations and institutions.
- e) To carry out activities for increasing the interest of young people in scientific, artistic and cultural areas and to support the activities carried out in this context.

Number of people who work in this ministry in the youth department: 516 people are working at the Ministry according to the 2016 performance reports (http://www.gsb.gov.tr/public/edit/files/strateji/2016_yili_performans_programi.pdf?0) .

Director responsible for Youth in the Ministry: N/A

Contact person in the youth department competent for European youth policy: The Department of Foreign Relations is responsible for the European relations.

Mr. Cemre Berker Ülker is acting as the Head of the Department of Foreign Relations.

Other national public bodies who are directly involved in youth policies:

Other Ministries:

- Ministry of National Education
- Ministry of Family and Social Policies
- Ministry of Development
- National Agency of Turkey
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Labor and Social Security
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Interior Affairs
- Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime
- Turkish Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction

Offices

- Higher Education Council
- Parliament commission in charge of youth issues
- Name: The Commission of National, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport
- Name of president / chair: Beşir ATALAY (Deputy of Ankara)

Role and competence: Negotiates the notices of motion and is responsible for the voting and the legalisation of these notices.

3.1.2 Regional public authorities with competencies in the youth field

The Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) Regional Development Administration

[The Southeastern Anatolia Project \(GAP\)](http://www.gap.gov.tr/en/) Regional Development Administration is a multi sector and integrated regional development effort in the context of sustainable development. Its basic objectives include the improvement of living standards and income levels of people so as to eliminate regional development disparities and to contribute to such national goals as social stability and economic growth by enhancing productivity and employment opportunities in the rural sector. It runs programmes to ensure the social development of the disadvantaged groups such as women, working children and youth.

<http://www.gap.gov.tr/en/>

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3.1.3 Local public authorities with competencies in the youth field

Municipalities (<http://www.migm.gov.tr/belediyeleristatistik>), Provincial Directorates of Youth Services and Sports (<http://www.gsb.gov.tr/IIIMudurlukleri>) and Provincial Directorates of Ministry of National Education are in charge in 81 cities of Turkey.

3.2 Youth welfare services (comprising public and/or non public actors)

Structure and major organisations of (voluntary) social welfare and social services for young people N/A

The Ministry of Youth and Sports is the major implementing institution of youth welfare services. 81 provincial directorates are attached to the Ministry.

3.3 Non-public actors/structures & youth services with competencies in the youth field

3.3.1 Youth Councils

Legislation about the foundation of Turkish National Youth Council has been carried on in co-operation with young people, youth NGO's and other relevant stakeholders and the regulations of the Council about the establishment, operating principles, rules and procedures are being finalised.

3.3.2 Youth NGOs

There are many youth NGOs in Turkey which are involved international, national and local youth work. Some of them are listed below:

1. Youth Organizations Forum (www.genchakli.org)
2. Community Volunteers Foundation (www.tog.org.tr)
3. Youth Services Centre (www.gsm.org)
4. Civil Society Development Center (www.stgm.org.tr)
5. Youth for Habitat (<http://www.habitaticingenclik.org.tr>)
6. Youth for Understanding (www.yfu-turkey.org)
7. Educational Volunteers (www.tegv.org)
8. The Association of Support for Contemporary Life (www.cydd.org.tr)
9. Umut Foundation (www.umut.org.tr)
10. Turkish Education Trust (www.tev.org.tr)
11. Güven Education and Health Trust (www.guvenvakfi.org.tr)
12. Youth Association for the Future (www.gelecekicingenclik.org.tr)
13. Youth Development Association (www.gengcelisim.org.tr)
14. Roma Youth Association (www.romangenc.org)

15. Young Europeans Association (www.gencavrupalilar.org.tr)
16. Gencnet (www.gencnet.org)
17. Youth Express Network (www.gencgelisim.org.tr)
18. Turkish Red Crescent Society (www.kizilay.org.tr)

3.4 National network(s) for knowledge on youth linking all actors in the field (policy makers, researchers, young people and their organisations, NGOs)?

First introduced in 2003 as "Turkey National Youth Council Initiative-TUGEK", Youth Organisations Forum (YOF) suspended its work after the preparation of an inclusive national youth policy document at the beginning of 2000s. After about a decade, YOF re-initiated its work with the gathering of 7 youth organisations. The main aim of the Forum is to advocate the rights of young people in Turkey as well as preparing a youth policy including all young people regardless of their backgrounds and monitoring the implementation of the policy. The forum is consisted of youth NGOs. Although there isn't any member from Universities or research community, most of the forum members are in close relations with Universities and conduct joint projects. The Forum keeps developing and enlarging through the local and national meetings it has been organising since the beginning of 2013. (<http://www.genchakli.org/en/54/About-Forum.html>)

There are 71 forum members up to date, some of them are listed below:

- 1) AEGEE Ankara
- 2) AFS Volunteers Association
- 3) AIESEC Turkey
- 4) Alevi Rights Violations and Youth Association (AHİGED)
- 5) European Youth Society Association (EYSA)
- 6) Great Youth Movement
- 7) Çanakkale Koza Youth Association
- 8) Experiential Learning Center Association
- 9) Natural Life Association
- 10) e-youth Association
- 11) ETurkish Ex-European Voluntary Service Volunteers' Association (TREX)
- 12) GAP Youth Association
- 13) Youth for Future Association
- 14) Young Europeans Association
- 15) GENÇEV Youth and Culture House Association
- 16) Youth Organisations Association (GO)
- 17) Youth Services Centre Association (GSM)
- 18) Youth and Change Association

- 19) GENÇTUR – Youth Tourism Association
- 20) Hayat Sende Youth Academy Association
- 21) İstanbul Young Steps Association
- 22) Kaos GL
- 23) Kocaeli Aydıllı Arts Association
- 24) Lykia Scouting and Nature Sports Club Association
- 25) Punta Youth and Sports Club Association
- 26) Support to Social Economic Cultural Development Association
- 27) Turkey Youth Union Association (TGBDER)
- 28) Tokat Erbaa Youth Parliament
- 29) Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)
- 30) Türk Tıp Öğrencileri Birliği (TurkMSIC)
- 31) Turkey Youth Federation
- 32) Uçarlı Youth Association
- 33) Non-Formal Training Center Association
- 34) Youth Agenda Association
- 35) Youth For Understanding Turkey

On the other hand, on 19 May 2004, the Youth Councils around Turkey founded [National Youth Parliament](#). Habitat Turkey is holding the secretariat of the Parliament. In 2012, the Parliament concerted to accept the youth organisations other than the youth councils. Since then, the parliament have members from 54 cities, including 21 Youth Councils, 45 Youth NGOs and 62 University clubs.

As an EKYCP correspondent, I am in touch with many of the youth organisations and NGOs also with the Youth Forum described above. This is not only because of the role as the correspondent, but it is because I am an academic and conduct research on youth work. I have been the Turkish team leader of the FP7 Project titled “Processes Influencing democratic Ownership and Participation- PIDOP. This project has provided great opportunities to contact with youth NGOs. EKYCP is not very well known in Turkey and being a correspondent is not considered as an important role, neither at governmental level, nor with the wider public. The importance of the role should be recognised.

4. Legislation

Articles of the constitution concerning youth explicitly:

In Turkey there are three types of legal regulations concerning the rights of youth. First, there are laws that are directly about young people, such as Article 58 and 59 of the Constitution. The second type consists of laws that do not target youth directly but nevertheless concern sections of society that are predominantly young. Finally, the third type consists of legal regulations that target youth as part of a separate issue, such as employment.

The constitution (https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf) of the Republic of Turkey formulates the relationship between the state and youth in only two Articles 58 and 59 of Section IX Youth and Sports, under Part II, Chapter 3 (See: Legislation part). Article 58 of the constitution very clearly expresses the way in which youth are viewed from the perspective of the state. According to this article, independence and the republic are entrusted to *youth*, as opposed to other sections of society defined within the constitution, such as women, people with disabilities, or citizens. The state's obligation is to take precautions to ensure the "training" and "development" of youth. However, the fundamental aim of this "training" and "development" is to oppose "ideas aiming at the destruction of the indivisible integrity of the state with its territory and nation". With this aim in view, the training and development is prescribed to be based on Atatürk's principles and reforms and developed in the light of positive science. Furthermore, "precautions" are to be taken for the fundamental objective of securing the continuity and the unity of the state. Hence, the main focus of this segment of Article 58 is not youth per se, but rather the extent of legitimised state intervention in the affairs of youth in order to minimise the potential "harm" that may be brought to the state by means of youth. Therefore, these "precautions" are in favor of the state in the rights-based relationship between the state and youth, and are conceptualised in terms of the state's right of intervention and protection, rather than the rights and needs of youth.

National legislation on youth

The National Youth and Sports Policy Document was prepared in accordance with the below provision of Article 18 of the Legislative Decree Number 638 on the Organization and Duties of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The provision states that "it (the document) is submitted to the approval of the Council of Ministers by the Ministry for the purpose of providing coordination and cooperation between public institutions and organizations which carry out policies and activities directly or indirectly affecting young people and sports. The National Youth and Sports Policy Document (National Youth and Sports Policy Paper-
[http://www.gsb.gov.tr/public/edit/files/Mevzuat/TheNationalYouthandSportsPolicyDocument\(1\).pdf](http://www.gsb.gov.tr/public/edit/files/Mevzuat/TheNationalYouthandSportsPolicyDocument(1).pdf)) is reviewed and updated in periods of four years at the latest. In the updating process of the National Youth and Sports Policy Document, recommendations of the relevant public institutions

and organizations, sports federations and non-governmental organizations are taken into consideration.”

Regional and local legislation on youth. N/A

5. National Policy Programmes on youth

The 10th National Development Plan for 2014-2018 (<http://www.mod.gov.tr>) was prepared in a global economic environment with protracted risks, uncertainties, changes and transformations, with emerging and reshaping power balances among developed and developing economies. It is designed to include not only high, stable and inclusive economic growth, but also issues such as the rule of law, information society, international competitiveness, human development, environmental protection and sustainable use of resources. In the Plan, economic and social development processes of Turkey are discussed with a holistic and multi-dimensional view, and a participatory approach has been adopted within the human-oriented development framework.

In the Plan there is a section for children and youth which underline the problematic areas and the solutions for them. Especially the increase in youth unemployment has become one of the main problems of labor market. As objectives of the Tenth Development Plan 2014-2018, quality of services will be raised, and the services for children in need of protection will be provided in a way to support their social and personal development. Worst forms of child labor such as works in the street, heavy and hazardous works, paid employment in mobile and seasonal agriculture works apart from family work will be eliminated. It will be provided that youth are more active in social life and decision making mechanisms; mobility programs will be diversified and scaled up so as to increase the participation of disadvantaged young people. In order to prevent young people from harmful habits, supportive programs in the field of sports, culture and art will be maintained. Significant improvement has been recorded in promoting fairness of income distribution and combating poverty. While in 2006 the share of income that the richest 20 percent quintile of the population gets from the total disposable income was 8.1 services, particularly education health, justice and social services; along with providing that youth are equipped with the requirements of the information society, are active in the development process of the country, are empowered with life skills, are self-confident entrepreneur and participatory, possessing humanitarian and national values, as well as increasing the quality of services for youth are main goals. Eliminating children's deprivation stemming from poverty, increasing the enrollment and attendance rates of girls, increasing the participation of youth, who are not in education or employment to economic and social life are targeted.

6. Budget / Public expenditure allocated to youth

National level

Total 9.676.240.000 TL is allocated as the Ministry of Youth and Sports' budget for 2016 (http://www.gsb.gov.tr/Public/Edit/images/GSB/201602/2016_butce_giderlerinin_gelisimi.pdf)

Regional level: N/A

7. European Dimension of youth policy

The National Youth and Sports Policy Paper (October 26, 2012; The Legislative Decree Number 2012/4242) which shall be a national guide in the field of youth and sports was prepared in order to reach a mutual understanding, vision, policy and targets in the field of youth and sports and provide co-ordination and co-operation in the services and activities of the relevant public institutions and organisations and non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders.

This policy paper outlines 20 fundamental policy areas:

1. Education and Lifelong Learning,
2. Family,
3. Ethics and Humanitarian Values,
4. Employment, Entrepreneurship and Vocational Training,
5. Disadvantaged Young People and Social Inclusion,
6. Health and Environment,
7. Democratic Participation and Civic Consciousness,
8. Culture and Art,
9. Science and Technology,
10. Youth In The International Arena And Intercultural Dialogue,
11. Leisure Time Activities,
12. Youth Information,
13. Voluntary Work and Mobility,
14. Sports Management,
15. Sports Culture And Sports For All,
16. Training Elite Athletes,
17. Sports Law,
18. Disadvantaged People And Sports,
19. Athletes' Health,
20. International Sports Organizations and Olympics

The objectives of Turkey's youth policy are in line with European Union Youth Strategy, Europe 2020 Strategy and common objectives agreed at EU level.

7.1 Council of Europe.

Most of the Council of Europe co-operation activities with Turkey have been undertaken via Council of Europe/EU joint programmes and Turkey has been for many years the biggest beneficiary of the Council of Europe/EU joint programmes. In 2012 the co-operation between the Council of Europe and the EU in Turkey amounted to a cumulative budget of €27, 8 million - representing more than 25% of the total volume of Council of Europe/EU joint programmes.

Turkey nominates a correspondent to the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy and is usually represented in the Pool of European Youth Researchers managed by the EU-CoE youth partnership. Civil society participates actively in other activities run by the partnership.

According to 2014 data, 323 applications were submitted to the European Youth Foundation, while 159 received a grant. Out of this 159 granted activities 29% were international activities, 29% were pilot activities, 17% work plans and the final 25% were given to structural grants.

More than 500 NGOs are registered in the new online system launched by the Foundation in 2013.

9 local youth NGOs from Turkey are registered with the European Youth Foundation.

1860 Turkish young people took part in EYF supported projects.

2 international activities took place in Turkey in 2014. More updated information can be obtained from the European Youth Foundation.

International activity is a meeting of young people or youth leaders in Europe, which contribute to the work of the youth sector of the Council of Europe.

7.2 European Union.

7.2.1 Implementation of the Youth in Action programme

Youth in Action programme is being implemented in Turkey in a wide range. National Agency of Turkey is responsible for the planning, running and disseminating the projects and provides information to those who are interested in the programmes. Both Erasmus+ (<http://www.ua.gov.tr>) and Eurodesk (<http://eurodesk.ua.gov.tr/tr/>) programmes are run by the National Agency.

7.2.2 Follow up of the EU Youth Strategy (2010 – 2018) on the national level

Although Turkey is not a member of the EU, the National Agency has been running the programmes and providing support for individuals and groups to carry out Projects. The Turkish National Agency currently has the 3rd largest budget of 33 countries with regard to activities carried out by the Agency and the participation of Turkish citizens in the EU Education and Youth Programmes. The Ministry for EU Affairs is undertaking every effort to support participation in the Programmes with the scope of its budget.

8. Further sources of information on youth policy in Turkey

Please list relevant websites and print publications (not older than two years)

National Youth and Sports Policy Paper

<http://www.gsb.gov.tr/public/edit/files/Mevzuat/TheNationalYouthandSportsPolicy>