

CSR Risk Check



TURKEY

26 country risk(s) have been identified

- **LABOUR RIGHTS (13)**

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION (3 RISKS)

According to the ITUC Global Rights Index, this country is one of the world's ten most difficult countries for workers concerning trade union rights.

Sources: [ITUC-CSI, ITUC Global Rights Index, 2019](#)

To conclude a collective labour agreement in Turkey, a trade union has to fulfill a double threshold. Firstly, a union should represent at least one percent of the workers employed in a given branch of industry. Unions which fulfill this threshold then have to cover 50% of the workers in a single workplace. According to several trade unions, this double threshold is a large limitation against freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

Sources: [Fair Wear Foundation, Turkey country study, 2016](#)

Turkey scores a 5 on the ITUC Global Rights Index (scale 1-5) for freedom of association and workers' rights, which stands for no guarantee of rights. Countries with the rating of 5 are the worst countries in the world to work in. While the legislation may spell out certain rights, workers have effectively no access to these rights and are therefore exposed to autocratic regimes and unfair labour practices.

Sources: [ITUC-CSI, ITUC Global Rights Index, 2019](#)

DISCRIMINATION & GENDER (3 RISKS)

While women enjoy the same rights as men by law, societal and official discrimination are widespread. Women face discrimination in employment.

Sources: [US Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2018, 2019](#)

There are strong signals that persistent discrimination, impunity for violence, and lack of legal recognition and protection for LGBT people in Turkey remains a problem.

Sources: [Human Rights Watch, Dispatches: Violent Crackdown at Istanbul's Pride Parade, 2015](#)

In recent years, the state of religious freedom in Turkey has worsened. The Turkish government has indiscriminately designated those affiliated with Muhammed Fethullah Gülen (Gülen movement) as part of a terrorist organization. Government officials also engage in anti-Semitism in the form of public statements and comments made on social media platforms, while progovernment newspapers and media outlets propagated hate speech directed against both Christians and Jews.

Sources: [United States Commission on International Religious Freedom \(USCIRF\), 2019 Annual Report, 2019](#)

FORCED LABOUR & HUMAN TRAFFICKING (2 RISKS)

In Turkey, an increasing number of Syrian refugees (including children) are forced to engage in street begging, work in restaurants, textile factories, markets, shops, and agriculture.

Sources: [US Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report, 2019](#)

Around 250,000 Syrians are now working illegally in Turkey. They don't have employment rights or sound legal protection. Turkish government is working on a labour permit law for Syrians in order to provide them with legal status and protection.

Sources: [Thomson Reuters Foundation, Cheap and illegal, Syrian workers show underside of Turkey's refugee crisis, 2015](#)

CHILD LABOUR (2 RISKS)

According to research, 80% of Syrian refugee children in Turkey are working and not attending school. If they do attend school, they often leave early to work. Refugees in Turkey do not earn the same wages as Turkish employees and are paid far below the minimum wage. As a result, children have to work in order to put food on the table for the family. Children have reported that their bosses sometimes beat them.

Sources: [The Guardian, From war in Syria to a Turkish sweatshop for child refugees, 2016](#)

Thousands of Syrian children who fled to Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey due to the war, are working. They often work in agriculture, the construction sector or in small shops. Almost 60% of the children interviewed by Terre des Hommes indicated that they work more than 7 hours per day, and a third of the children works 7 days per week.

In this way, they try to provide for their families, or are themselves breadwinners. Many are exposed to pesticides, toxic chemicals, heavy loads and exhausting hours.

Sources: [The Guardian, Adults before their time, Syria's refugee children toil in the fields of Lebanon, 2015](#), [Terre des Hommes, Because we struggle to survive. Child labour among refugees of the Syrian conflict, 2016](#), [US Department of Labor, 2018 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, 2019](#), [US Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report, 2019](#)

WAGE & REMUNERATION (2 RISKS)

Large numbers of Syrians are now working illegally in Turkey. They get paid below the minimum wage.

Sources: [Thomson Reuters Foundation, Cheap and illegal, Syrian workers show underside of Turkey's refugee crisis, 2015](#)

Syrian refugees in Turkey do not earn the same salaries as Turkish employees and are paid far below the minimum wage. As a result, children have to work in order to support their family in terms of food.

Sources: [The Guardian, From war in Syria to a Turkish sweatshop for child refugees, 2016](#)

LABOUR CONDITIONS (CONTRACTS, WORKING HOURS) (1 RISK)

Turkey has ratified the relevant conventions of the ILO (International Labour Organization). However, the ILO and the EU have been criticizing Turkey for years, because of its negligence to align national labour legislation with these international standards. Turkey's large informal economy is one of the reasons for its poor compliance with labour legislation. Many companies do not register their employees and outsource their production to informal workplaces. In this way, employers can easily avoid inspections and social security requirements.

Sources: [Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland, MVO Turkije: arbeidsomstandigheden, 2017](#), [Fair Wear Foundation, Turkey country study, 2016](#)

• ENVIRONMENT (5)

BIODIVERSITY & DEFORESTATION (1 RISK)

Industrial pollution, Construction of dams and power plants, the use of pesticides, excessive grazing and forest fires have a very negative influence on the Turkish flora and fauna. In practice, international treaties on the area of nature protection and biodiversity are not properly complied with. Turkish forests are under heavy pressure by illegal logging, illegal construction and

livestock farming. Also forest fires are intentionally started to use the land for construction and tourism.

Sources: [RVO, MVO in Turkije, 2020](#), [Environmental Justice Atlas, 2017](#)

WATER USE & WATER AVAILABILITY (1 RISK)

Turkey faces moderate to severe freshwater scarcity in the spring-summer period.

Sources: [Science Advances, Four billion people facing severe water scarcity, 2016](#)

AIR POLLUTION (1 RISK)

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), this country suffers excessive air pollution.

The annual average PM_{2.5} level here is higher than 35 ug/m³, which the WHO describes as the first intermediate target for countries. At this level, there is a 15% greater risk of long-term mortality than at the recommended maximum annual average of 10 ug/m³. This means your employees in these countries (depending on the precise work location) are likely to be exposed to air pollution, with illness and premature death as possible consequences.

Sources: [WHO, Ambient \(outdoor\) air quality and health, 2018](#)

SOIL & (GROUND)WATER CONTAMINATION (1 RISK)

Water sources and rivers in Turkey are becoming polluted by urbanisation, industrialisation and the use of chemicals in agriculture.

Sources: [RVO, MVO in Turkije, 2020](#)

ENVIRONMENT & WASTE (GENERAL) (1 RISK)

Urbanization in Turkey has led to uncontrolled waste dumping. Due to inadequate infrastructure for disposal of industrial waste (half of it dangerous waste) and only one available incinerator for dangerous waste, the majority is disposed of by municipalities. This creates severe pollution (through, among others, toxic substances or heavy metals) of garbage dumps and other dumpsites.

Furthermore, the import of plastic waste from the UK is increasing according to the Guardian. Turkey recycles just 1% of its domestic waste, sending the rest to landfill.

Sources: [RVO, MVO in Turkije, 2020](#), [The Guardian, Turkey's plastic waste imports from the UK are booming – but at what cost?, 2018](#)

• FAIR BUSINESS PRACTICES (4)

CORRUPTION (3 RISKS)

Bribes and irregular payments during customs procedures are common in Turkey. Time-predictability and reliability are low.

Sources: [Business Anti-corruption Portal, Turkey Corruption Report, 2018](#)

According to the Corruption Perceptions Index, the corruption score of Turkey is 39, on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). This means that the risk of corruption in Turkey is high.

Sources: [Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2019, 2020](#)

Corruption may occur regularly in governmental organizations and business partners, for instance paying bribes, reducing import charges or falsifying official documents. Especially in customs corruption plays a role, but also labour inspectors are supposedly easily bribed. Additionally, when competing for public tenders you may be confronted with corruption.

Sources: [RVO, MVO in Turkije, 2020](#), [Business Anti-corruption Portal, Turkey Corruption Report, 2018](#)

TAXATION (1 RISK)

According to OECD, Turkey is only partially compliant with the international standard of transparency and exchange of information for tax purposes. This means that Turkey could be seen as a 'tax haven'.

Sources: [OECD Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes, Tax Transparency, 2020](#)

• HUMAN RIGHTS & ETHICS (4)

GOVERNMENT INFLUENCE (3 RISKS)

Turkey is considered to be "not free" according to the Freedom House Country List. This means that there is an oppressive regime, with regard to political rights and civil liberties.

Sources: [Freedom House, Freedom in the World, 2020](#)

The Turkish media environment continued to deteriorate as the government moved more aggressively to close the space for dissent. In addition to enacting

new legislation that expanded both government powers for website blocking and the surveillance capability of the intelligence service, officials detained prominent journalists which were largely critical of the government.

Sources: [Freedom House, Freedom of the Press 2015](#)

Turkey is ranked 154 out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index with a score of 50.02 on a scale from 0 (best possible score) and 100 (worst possible score). This means that press freedom is limited.

Sources: [Reporters Without Borders, 2020 World Press Freedom Index, 2020](#)

CONFLICTS & SECURITY (1 RISK)

This country is marked as a 'high risk' country for terroristic attacks on the Aon Terrorism Risk Map. It is considered as level 4 on a 1-5 scale.

Sources: [Aon, Terrorism risk map, 2020](#)
