

Country plan Turkey 2015

1. Introduction

Since 2002 Fair Wear Foundation (FWF) has been active in Turkey. In terms of production volume for FWF affiliates, Turkey ranks number five after China, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Italy. The majority of suppliers are based in the Istanbul region, with the Izmir region as the second most-important region. 165 Factories in Turkey are listed in the overall supplier list of FWF members. For approximately thirty FWF affiliates, manufacturing in 2013 took place in 104 of those factories.

The most common problems found in FWF's audits in Turkey over the previous years are freedom of association and the falsification of wage records to avoid paying full social security costs. This affects the workers' pensions and severance payments negatively when they are dismissed or retire. Other common problems found concern working hours, payments of overtime and annual leave. Subcontracting is often seen. Several suppliers do the sampling and finishing themselves, outsourcing the sewing to either in-house or external subcontractors. This leads to additional risks of violating labour rights.

In 2015 Fair Wear Foundation's work in Turkey will focus on the implementation of the Workplace Education Programme (WEP), to raise awareness about labour rights and grievance mechanisms. Trainings will be arranged for both management and workers over the year.

The verification will focus on factory audits with the local FWF audit teams as well as effective complaints handling.

In spring of 2015 an international stakeholder visit to Turkey is planned, including a seminar with local stakeholders and FWF suppliers.

Following the current Syrian refugee crisis and the subsequent 1.6 million plus refugees flooding into Turkey, FWF will publish a guide entitled *Guidance for Affiliates: Risks related to Turkish garment factories employing Syrian refugees* (February 2015). Affiliates are asked to monitor their suppliers closely in relation to the risk of violation of worker rights of Syrian refugee workers, especially in relation to the risk of unauthorised subcontracting. This will also be a special point of attention during audits.

FWF's own investigations, consultations with stakeholders, and news reports all indicate that there is currently a high risk in the Turkish garment sector of the following issues:

- employment of Syrian refugee children
- discrimination against undocumented Syrian refugees. For example, widespread failure to pay legal minimum wages (payment of as little as 50% of the legal minimum has been reported), social security, and other legally-mandated benefits).
- first-tier suppliers subcontracting work to 'hidden' factories employing large numbers of refugees, often working in unhealthy and dangerous conditions.

2. Country study

To remain aware of recent trends in the Turkish garment industry, to support member companies in the process of code implementation and to contribute to the dissemination of information that supports local stakeholders in their work, Fair Wear Foundation will publish a report on the important challenges in the Turkish garment industry based on stakeholder interviews and desk research.



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Deliverables

- An updated version of the country study on Turkey based on key indicators on industrial relations and working conditions as well as stakeholder information and relevant regulation to be published and shared with stakeholders (April 2015).
- Key information about Turkey is updated on www.fairwear.org (March 2015).
- New benchmarks are collected for FWF's wage ladder on Turkey (Jan-Dec 2015).

3. Audit training and audits

Fair Wear Foundation verifies the process of code implementation in production countries. This includes audits done by local audit teams.

Deliverables

- New auditors have been trained and observed audits (May-August 2014).
- Auditors are updated on new FWF developments (Jan-Dec 2015).
- During 2015 about 20 factory audits will be carried out in Turkey.

4. Complaints procedure

Fair Wear Foundation has a complaints procedure enabling workers or their representatives in garment factories supplying FWF member companies to make complaints about their working conditions and the way the code is implemented. FWF has a local complaints handler.

Deliverables

- The complaints handling procedure is functioning well.
- During factory visits and audits, FWF checks that the Code of Labour Practices is posted (Jan - Dec 2015).
- Business cards with information for workers with the complaints handler's telephone number in local languages are developed and distributed, increasing awareness of FWF's complaints procedure among workers (Jan - Dec 2015).
- Implementation of the Workplace Education Programme for workers and factory managers to raise awareness on labour rights and mechanisms that offer access to solutions.
- The Workplace Education Programme (basic module) is implemented in twelve factories (Feb – Dec 2015) to explain how the FWF complaints hotline functions as well as the benefits of setting up functional grievance mechanisms. Trainings will be carried out in cooperation with the use of input of local stakeholders (Feb – Dec 2015).

5. Stakeholder consultation and engagement

Cooperation with stakeholders in production countries is essential for improving labour conditions in the countries where production for affiliates takes place. FWF cooperates with stakeholders in production countries particularly for consultation on FWF policies and on local labour conditions. Thus the stakeholders that partner with FWF are organisations that have a role in influencing or shaping the social dialogue in a production country. Therefore, stakeholders in production countries are instrumental



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in providing policy advice to FWF, solicited and unsolicited. FWF will consult the stakeholders in production countries on important issues within their field of competence.

FWF tries to find a workable and effective way to involve local partners in the work of FWF in Turkey. In its strategy plan 2011-2015, FWF committed to develop best practice examples on improving industrial relations in its four priority countries.

During 2015 part of the stakeholder consultation will follow up on a social dialogue project implemented in 2012. The outcomes of that project will provide a hands-on example on how to improve dialogue at factory level. This will be shared with the social partners in Turkey and the Netherlands.

Deliverables:

- Stakeholder dialogue included in the updated country study.
- A local liaison officer coordinates activities and events and maintains contact with stakeholders in Turkey.
- An international FWF mission to Turkey with the new chair of FWF and representatives of Dutch business association Modint, Dutch trade union FNV and IndustriALL Global Union (April 2015). This includes factory visits, exchange on FWF audit methods and factory activities (audits, trainings, complaint handling etc.).
- During the international mission an FWF stakeholder seminar will be organised in Istanbul (April 2015) centering around these challenges: 'The Case of Turkey: How to build sustainable garment supply chains. How brands and factories can work together to improve labour conditions for garment workers in Turkey. How to develop industrial relations for better business in the interest of and benefit for all?' The seminar will bring together national and international trade unions, branch organisations, Turkish suppliers of FWF member companies and the Turkey export association.
- A public report on the international mission and the FWF stakeholder seminar.
- The international mission and Stakeholder Seminar should contribute to the support of Turkish employers and factories of the FWF social compliance system, as well as local mechanisms of social dialogue in connection to the Workplace Education Programme.
- Input from local stakeholders is integrated into support and advice given to companies in the process of improving working conditions (December 2015).