**Republic of Turkey**

**Ministry of Justice**

The Human Rights Action Plan of Turkey was announced by the President of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, on 2 March 2021. The Action Plan has 11 fundamental principles, 9 aims, 50 goals and 393 activities.

Aim 4 of the Action Plan is entitled as “Protection And Promotion Of The Freedoms Of Expression, Association And Religion. This aim includes a specific goal (Goal 4.4) on “Improving the Effectiveness of the Fight against Hate Speech and Discrimination” and an activity on the increase of the effectiveness of policies concerning prevention of discrimination in the work life.

In addition, Aim 8 of the Action Plan is entitled as “Protecting Vulnerable Groups And Strengthening Social Wealth”. Under this Aim, the goal and activities are determined as follow;

Goal 8.4

Facilitating the Access of the Elderly and 8.4 People with Disabilities to Public Services

Acvitiy 8.4.a.

The employment of people with disabilities at high-level positions in public administration and public sector posts matching their professions will be encouraged.

Activity 8.4.b.

A standard will be established with regard to the criteria concerning the state and rate of disability indicated on medical reports, which are required in order to be able to benefit from the rights granted to the people with disabilities; the grievances of the citizens with disabilities will be eliminated by means of reviewing the multiple rating scheme.

Activity 8.4.c: The buildings allocated for public use, including courthouses, as well as public spaces and means of transport will be made accessible and friendly for people with disabilities and the elderly. Also, smart applications that facilitate the lives of people with disabilities and the elderly will be rendered widespread.

**Republic of Turkey**

**Ministry of Family and Social Services**

**Information Note on the Current Developments on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Türkiye Regarding the General Comment on Article 27 of the CRPD: Work and employment**

The prerequisites for living a life, worthy of human dignity for all individuals whether with disabilities or not, are benefiting from education and employment opportunities and accessing the support needed while benefiting from these services.

Examining the legal regulations reflecting the disability policy in Turkey, it is seen that the rights of the persons with disabilities are protected in the context of the laws on education, health, employment, social security and full participation in society. Turkey has secured the basic rights of the persons with disabilities both with the international conventions it has signed and its domestic legislation, primarily the Constitution. Although there are various problems in practice, it is seen that there are promising improvements in the employment of the persons with disabilities through some sample applications in recent years.

1. **Employment of Persons with Disabilities as Civil Servants**

In Turkey, in accordance with Article 53 of the Civil Servants Law (No. 657) titled “Obligation to employ personnel with disabilities”, public institutions and organizations have an obligation to employ persons with disabilities at a rate of 3%. With the amendment made in the aforementioned article in 2011, persons with disabilities are allowed to become civil servants by means of the central exam (EKPSS-Disabled Public Personnel Selection Examination). The procedures regarding the organization of the central examination and the appointment of the persons with disabilities as public servants are carried out in accordance with the Regulation on Disabled Public Personnel Selection Examination and Recruitment of the Disabled to the Civil Service, which entered into force in 2014.

EKPSS is carried out by considering the educational status of the candidates with disabilities and the disadvantages of the disability groups. Exam questions are prepared in a way to evaluate the knowledge, abilities and skills of persons with disabilities, based on their learning and perception levels, language development and verbal communication difficulties they experience. In addition, the exam is held in proper environments, taking the disability groups and accessibility needs of the candidates into account.

With these regulations, EKPSS was organized five times between 2012 and 2020, every two years, and 37,740 persons with disabilities were employed as civil servants. With this development; the number of civil servants with disabilities, which was 5,777 in 2002, increased to 62,337 as of November 2021. In addition, qualified employment was supported by ensuring the employment of persons with disabilities in positions suitable for their educational status through central examination.

In order to provide the tools and equipment persons with disabilities need while working and to make the necessary accessibility arrangements, a verdict; “Public institutions and organizations are obliged to make their workplaces and their offices suitable for the accessibility needs of workers with disabilities’, to take the necessary measures to facilitate the work of the persons with disabilities, and to provide the necessary auxiliary and supporting tools and materials for the disability situation in order for the persons with disabilities to perform the tasks required by the position they are in.” was rendered.

1. **Supported Employment**

The supported employment model, which has started to show its presence in the employment of persons with disabilities all over the world since the 1980s and provides positive results, has also started to show its presence in Turkey through various projects. One of these projects was the “Join the Work, Join to Life Project”, implemented by the Ministry of Family and Social Services, General Directorate of Services for the Persons with Disabilities and Elderly, in the provinces of Ankara, Istanbul, Samsun, Manisa, Sakarya and Gaziantep between 2014-2018.

“The Join to Work, Join to Life Project” aims to contribute to the implementation of the supported employment model for individuals with disabilities, who have not received a specific vocational training, to gain professional skills and work practice in real work environments, which are suitable for the individual characteristics of the person, meet the needs of the business world at the local level, and enable them to participate in the workforce. The first phase of the project, which started in 2014, was completed in July 2016 and the second phase in July 2018.

In the first period of the Project, a modelling study was carried out in the provinces of Ankara, Istanbul, Sakarya, Samsun and Gaziantep to develop the supported employment model in Turkey. It is aimed to train job coaches who will guide the persons with disabilities, their families, colleagues and employers in order to employ persons with disabilities in areas suitable for their abilities and skills. In this context, with the support of 60 job coaches trained, it was aimed to employ 300 individuals with disabilities in the open job market in the aforementioned provinces, exceeding this purpose 447 individuals with disabilities were placed in jobs.

Within the scope of the preparatory work in the first phase of the project; an extensive literature review was conducted for the selection of job coaches, the preparation of the training package to be given them, the development of the draft of professional competencies, and the model and necessary material of the work in the field. At the end of this stage, the training package was prepared, the selection of job coach candidates among individuals with job and career consultancy certificates was completed, and job coaching training was given to the selected candidates for not less than 60 hours. 40 percent of the trainings are designed to improve the knowledge level of business coach candidates, and 60 percent to provide them with the skills they will need in the field. Trainings were focused on disability and employment, employment legislation, regulation of behaviour in individuals, skills teaching, job analysis, communication/collaboration, documentation/assessment and problem solving. Job coaches who completed their training started to work in the aforementioned provinces and carried out their job for the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market with the aim of matching the business world with the persons with disabilities.

In the second period of the project, covering the years 2016-2018, it was aimed to measure the effect by making installations under different conditions in various provinces in order to test the efficiency of the model developed in the first stage and to determine the factors affecting the effective use of the model considering the country conditions. The second phase of the project, which targeted 300 placements with 15 job coaches in Ankara, İstanbul and İzmir, resulted in 450 placements.

“Join to Work, Join to Life Project” is the first comprehensive supported employment project and assumed a leading role in the dissemination of supported employment in Turkey. Following this project, a similar one was initiated by the General Directorate of Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR).

1. **Self Employment**

Self-employment of the persons with disabilities has started to gain popularity with the provision of grant support from the Fund of İŞKUR, which consists of fines collected from employers who do not fulfill their obligation to employ persons with disabilities. In order to benefit from this support, it is necessary to have received entrepreneurship training organized by KOSGEB (Small and Medium Enterprises Development and Support Administration) and İŞKUR (General Directorate of Turkish Employment Agency) and to apply with a project.

Supports to be provided are;

**Establishment Transactions Support**: A maximum of 334 Euro, in return for documents, for expenses such as official transactions, approvals, permits, licenses and insurance for the establishment of the workplace,

**Operating Expense Support**: A maximum of 1.000 Euro, not exceeding 60% of the operating expenses (water, electricity, communication, heating, promotion and rent) in return for documents for 12 months after the contract signing date,

**Establishment support**: A maximum of 3.000 Euro support, including taxes, is provided for costs such as machinery, equipment, software, hardware, intermediates, consumables, office supplies related to the main field of activity of the enterprise, for 12 months from the date of signing the contract.

Since 2014, when the implementation started, nearly 6,666,000 Euro of grant support has been provided for 3,090 projects.