

# Turkey



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10%

Population below international poverty line

€554

per month

National minimum wage

€393

per month

Rural living income

18%

Agricultural workforce

6%

Agriculture share of GDP

5

very high

Risk to workers' rights

## Context

Turkey has a population of 84.3 million people.<sup>[1]</sup> The country is highly urbanised, with 76% of the population inhabiting cities.<sup>[2]</sup> The agricultural sector in Turkey assumes 18% of total employment<sup>[3]</sup> and represents 6% of the national GDP.<sup>[4]</sup>

Turkey holds the title of the 7<sup>th</sup> largest agricultural economy globally. Nevertheless, employment in agriculture is decreasing, reflecting the general unemployment issue the country is facing. Specifically, lack of opportunities in the rural parts of Turkey is forcing young people to migrate in search of better prospects. Turkey's agricultural sector however, can still be characterised as one of high potential, since the country is a key player in both the European and the Middle Eastern food-oriented markets. Taking advantage of this potential however, would require serious investments in order to increase productivity as well as modernize the current agricultural practices.<sup>[5]</sup>

The top produced commodities in Turkey are sugar beet, wheat, cow milk, tomatoes and barley.<sup>[6]</sup> As for the top exported commodities in terms of quantity, these are wheat flour, macaroni, tangerines, sunflower oil and chicken meat.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Wages

## Minimum wage

The gross minimum wage in Turkey is set by law at 5,004 Turkish lira (554 EUR) per month, while the net minimum wage is 4,253 Turkish lira (470 EUR) per month.<sup>[8]</sup> The law established workweek is 45 hours with one rest day per week. The government however, has not been effective in enforcing labor law regarding the aforementioned minimum wage and working hours. In addition, the law does not protect informal workers, even though they represent more than one fourth of the workforce. Workers in many sectors report not being able to avoid dangerous situations for their health or safety, in fear of losing their employment. Especially vulnerable to such dangerous and unacceptable working conditions are migrants and refugees who work informally.<sup>[9]</sup>

The **Global Living Wage Coalition** has developed developed 2 Reference Value studies for Turkey based on the Anker methodology, one for living income in rural Turkey and one for living wage for urban Turkey.

## Living wage

The Anker Living Wage Reference Value for 2021 for urban Turkey is estimated at 4,954 (548 EUR) per month. It is important to note that this is an average living wage for an urban worker to be able to afford a basic but decent living standard for himself or herself and his/her family in a typical urban area of Turkey. Living costs vary considerably across the country, which is a very large and diverse country ranging from Istanbul which is a major city, besides partially European, to relatively poor Asian regions in the South-East and East<sup>[10]</sup>.

This is almost four times more than the World Bank determined poverty line wage for an upper middle-income country, and 38% higher than the official gross minimum wage. The Anker Living Wage Reference Value is also 92% higher than the average wage of agricultural workers. It's important to keep in mind that this Reference Value is an average value for the year of 2021 and so does not consider the recent runaway inflation and plummeting exchange rate which Turkey has been experiencing.

## Living income

The Anker Living Income Reference Value for rural Turkey is estimated at 3,551 Turkish lira (393 EUR) per month. This is the income necessary for a typical family in rural regions to cover the monthly cost of a basic but decent standard of living. The living income estimate was 42% higher when compared to the family income at the national poverty line. However, when compared to the income of a family whose adult members earn the national minimum wage, the living income estimate was found slightly lower. Nevertheless, although the minimum wage in Turkey is high, especially for rural areas, it only applies to formal workers. Informal work though, is very common in Turkey, especially in the rural areas. Therefore, these high wages are certainly not a reality for all workers in the country.<sup>[11]</sup>

## What's happening

### RESOURCE

#### [Living Wage Reference Value, Urban Turkey](#) ↗

Living wage estimate for a worker to afford a basic but decent standard of living in urban areas of Turkey.

### RESOURCE

#### [Living Income Reference Value, Rural Turkey](#) ↗

Living income estimate for a typical family in rural Turkey to cover the monthly cost of a basic but decent standard of living.

### RESOURCE

#### [Seasonal Agricultural Work in Turkey](#) ↗

### RESOURCE

#### [Health Risks in the Turkish Agricultural Sector](#) ↗

This report by Support to Life gives an overview concerning the seasonal agricultural sector in Turkey, based on field research conducted in various areas of the country.

This scientific report summarises the physical and psychological health risks faced by agricultural workers in Turkey.

## Footnotes

1. World Bank (2020). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=TR>
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5. IFAD. Country Reports: Turkey. <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/country/id/turkey>
6. FAOSTAT (2020). [http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#rankings/commodities\\_by\\_country](http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#rankings/commodities_by_country)
7. FAOSTAT (2020). [http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#rankings/commodities\\_by\\_country\\_exports](http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#rankings/commodities_by_country_exports)
8. Wage Indicator Foundation (2021). Minimum Wage-Turkey. <https://wageindicator.org/salary/minimum-wage/turkey>
9. [2] U.S. Department of State. 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Turkey. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/turkey/>
10. Global Living Wage Coalition (2021). Anker Living Wage Reference Value: Urban Turkey 2021. [https://www.globallivingwage.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/LI-Reference-Value\\_Rural-Turkey-FINAL.pdf](https://www.globallivingwage.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/LI-Reference-Value_Rural-Turkey-FINAL.pdf)
11. Global Living Wage Coalition (2020). Anker Living Income Reference Value: Rural Turkey 2020. [https://www.globallivingwage.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/LI-Reference-Value\\_Rural-Turkey-FINAL.pdf](https://www.globallivingwage.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/LI-Reference-Value_Rural-Turkey-FINAL.pdf)