

Turkey's Garment Industry Profile and the Living Wage



**Clean
Clothes
Campaign**



**Temiz
Giysi
Kampanyası**

Adil ve sürdürülebilir bir tekstil sektörü için



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1 INTRODUCTION AND METHOD

The report analyzes many different actors and situations in the supply chain of the fashion industry, together with their context, and reveals the wage policies of global brands in the supply chain and the impact of these policies on the lives of workers in the garment industry in Turkey.



Introduction

While the world was under the influence of the pandemic, the attitude of fashion brands in their supply chains was an area we needed to focus on both for the workers and for the future of the garment industry. For this reason, we conducted a field study in which we investigated the wage (employee salaries) policies in the supply chain of global brands. With this research, we evaluated both the wages in the factories in the first ring (Tier 1), where the brands are in direct contact; and the wages of the employees in the factories in the second ring (Tier 2), where they do business through Tier 1, where they are not directly contacted, by interviewing 138 workers in the field. The aim of this report is to create a country profile for 2021 by examining how the garment industry in Turkey is shaped by the wage policies of brands.

Another aim of the report is to calculate a fair cost of living by considering the vital needs in our country in 2021. In this context, we conducted desk research to measure the cost of living, which is the main indicator we focus on. It is important to provide context to the report and to state that as we conducted our research, Turkey was (and still is) going through an economic crisis. Price stability has been damaged and unconventional economic policies are being applied. State institutions do not provide the public with real figures related to important indicators such as inflation, hunger, and poverty line. Instead they partially manipulate the numbers. To ensure the validity and truthfulness of our report, we use statistics provided by independent organizations.

The report you will read, analyzes many different actors and situations in the supply chain of the fashion

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 23.3:

"Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection."



industry, together with their context, and reveals the wage policies of global brands in the supply chain and the impact of these policies on the lives of workers in the garment industry in Turkey. In this report, wages are compared to living conditions in the country. You will also read the wage policies in the supply chains in detail.

Research Method and Field Work

The research on the supply chain of global brands includes desk research and field research. The findings from the field research were used to determine the current wage policies in the supply chain of global fashion brands. Desk research, on the other hand, covers the general overview of the sector, the analysis of the country's economic indicators and the cost-of-living calculations.

The field research included interviews with 138 textile workers living/working in Istanbul and Izmir. Fieldwork started in October 2021. During the fieldwork, face-to-face interviews were held with 138 textile workers.

Interviews held in Istanbul were conducted with workers living/working in Avcılar, Bağcılar, Bayrampaşa, Büyükçekmece and Güngören districts. The interviews held in Izmir were held with the workers working in the factory of a brand that produces in the industrial zone outside the city center.

Since the main purpose of the field research is to examine the wage policies of global brands, the only criterion taken into consideration while creating the sample sets was determined as the workplace of the worker producing for a global brand. For this reason, the supply chain lists published by global brands on

their websites were examined during the sampling phase. In the first stage of the field research, we reached out to the workers of the production sites included in the supplier lists. Then, workshops/factories that are not in the supplier lists of global brands but produce for these brands were also included. Here the link to the brands were established through worker's account of supply chains.

The interviewed worker group manufactures for 12 different global brands in 16 different workplaces (workshop/factory). For this reason, we can say that the sample included in the study and the findings obtained have sufficient diversity to represent the wage policies in the supply chain of global fashion brands.

At the beginning of the interviews, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the interviewees were informed that their personal information would be kept confidential. The interviewees were asked to verbally express their willingness to participate in the interview. Since the interviews were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, distance and hygiene rules were followed, and the risk of contamination of both the interviewer and the interviewee was minimized.

During the data collection process, besides the fieldwork, a desk study was also conducted. The desk research included literature review and media monitoring. We overviewed the textile sector in Turkey and the laws and practices related to wages in the sector. In addition to these, we also analyzed the figures related to the minimum wage, inflation, poverty line and cost of living in the country. The following sections of the report present the data obtained from the research findings and the analysis built on that data.





GENERAL VIEW OF THE TEXTILE SECTOR



The textile and garment industry is one of the important sectors for many countries in the economic development process, due to the added value created in the production process and its high contribution to the export revenues. The industry can be characterized as labor-intensive and low capital investment relative to other industries. The textile sector in Turkey has become one of the most important manufacturing industry especially since the onset of neoliberal economic policies in the 1980s.

The garment industry alone, is the largest exporting industry within the industry goods with a share of 9.0 percent in 2021. When combined, textile and garment exports make up to 15,7 percent of all exports.¹

At the same time, Turkey is one of the **most** important textile

exporters of Europe **and the world**. While the size of textile and garment exports in Turkey was around 18.18 billion dollars in 2019, this figure was 4.35 billion dollars for the months of January-March 2020. Here, when the first 3 months of 2019 and 2020 are compared for the data, a decrease is seen under the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although DERITEKS union states that 1.26 million people are employed in the textile sector, research shows that the real figure is close to 3 times the announced one. The structure of the sector, the abundance of small-scale enterprises, the weakness of the control mechanisms and the pressure of cheap production seem to be the main reasons for the increase in informality in the sector. Research also shows that the migrant workforce is quite high in the sector.

Year	GDP*	Total Exports**	Garment Exports***	Shoes Exports****	Garment and Shoes Exports	The Share of Garment and Shoes in Total Exports
2019	761.425.499.358,20\$	180.870.840.951\$	18.195.644.660\$	932.435.584\$	19.128.080.244\$	10,58%
2016	869.683.121.562,50\$	142.529.583.808\$	16.728.668.951\$	704.163.324\$	17.432.832.275\$	12,23%
2010	776.967.610.957,30\$	113.883.219.184\$	14.205.917.174\$	395.624.111\$	14.601.541.285\$	12,82%

* WORLD BANK: World Development Indicators GDP (current US\$); <https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=2&type=metadata&series=NY.GDP.MKTP.CD>
** İSTANBUL HAZIR GİYİM VE KONFEKSİYON İHRACATÇILARI BİRLİĞİ: Türkiye Genel, Hazirgiyim Ve Tekstil Dış Ticareti 2009-2019 Yıllık. p.1; <https://www.ihkib.org.tr/wp-icce-rik/ia/d/2020/03/12/turkiye-genel-hazirgiyim-tekstil-ihracat-ithalat-2019-yillik-202003121749220390-07701.pdf>
*** İSTANBUL HAZIR GİYİM VE KONFEKSİYON İHRACATÇILARI BİRLİĞİ: Türkiye Genel, Hazirgiyim Ve Tekstil Dış Ticareti 2009-2019 Yıllık. p.2
**** TİCARET BAKANLIĞI İHRACAT GENEL MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ (2020): Ayakkabı Sektör Raporu. p.2; https://ticaret.gov.tr/data/5b87000813b8761450e18d7b/Ayakkabi_Sektoru.pdf



2.1. Contribution of Garment Production to the Country's Economy

"When the textile and garment sector are evaluated together, it is one of the important sectors of Turkey in terms of gross domestic product, share in manufacturing industry and industrial production, exports, net foreign currency inflows to the economy, employment and investment."²

Turkey's GDP is measured as 761 billion dollars in 2019 and the total export value is 180 billion dollars. The total exports of garment and shoes in 2019 amounted to 19 billion dollars, which corresponds to 10.58 percent of the country's total exports.

In 2019, garment and shoe exports constituted 10.58 percent of Turkey's total exports.

In 2019, Turkey's TCL sector (textile, clothing, leather) exports constituted 16 percent of the total country's exports with 28 billion dollars; In 2020, exports in the same group decreased by 1 billion dollars and constituted 18 percent of total country exports with 27 billion dollars (TurkStat, 2020).³

2.2. Major Export Destinations of Garment

The Turkish garment sector is the 7th largest garment exporter in the world with a 3.3% share as of 2019. In the export of garments to EU countries, our country ranks third after China and Bangladesh. As

of 2019, the share of the EU in garment exports is 70.5%.

2.3. Government Incentives and Practices for the Sector

The government supports production and trade with incentives for employers. The government, which allocates large budgets for trade convenience and production continuity, also prepares action plans to shape the structure of the sector.

With the "Textile, Ready-to-Wear and Leather Sector Strategic Action Plan"⁴ prepared for the textile sector in 2008, incentives for companies to move to the provinces in the East and Southeast of Turkey came to the fore. This policy, while trying to encourage industrial cities to produce products with high added value, aims to concentrate and cluster more labor-intensive sectors in other cities.

While the policy carried out in the region causes cuts in wages and social rights, it also includes creating an unorganized mass of workers by destroying the tradition of unionizing that textile workers accumulated in the West.⁵

The government, which does not even fulfill the minimum practices to render the working conditions compatible with the legislation, prioritizes cheap production with such regional policies and puts workers' rights in the background.

Top 5 countries to which Turkish garment sector exports the most*

Country	2019 Garment Exports (\$)
Germany	3.266.152.297
Spain	2.404.603.577
England	1.945.580.834
Holland	1.149.879.662
France	883.972.185

* İSTANBUL HAZIR GİYİM VE KONFEKSİYON İHRACATÇILARI BİRLİĞİ: Türkiye'nin En Fazla İhracat Yaptığı Ülkeler Genel, Hazırgiyim Ve Tekstil 2018 – 2019 Yıllık. p.2; <https://www.ihkib.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/12/turkiye-nin-en-fazla-ihracat-yaptigi-ulkeler-2019-yil-lik-202003121749220407-B8271.pdf>





3 STRUCTURE OF GARMENT INDUSTRY

3.1. Number of Registered Garment Factories

Number of registered workplaces in garment manufacturing (September 2020): 35.497⁶

The share of the manufacturing sector in the total number of enterprises was recorded as 15.8% for 2019. In the manufacturing sector, when the shares of sub-sectors in the total number of enterprises are analyzed, it is noted that the share of enterprises manufacturing garments, which is in the 3rd rank, is 9.3%.⁷

Based on the workplace and current employment data, the manufacturing sector is clearly of great importance in terms of the labor market, with 33.6% of our country's employment in 2020.⁸

Most of the enterprises operating in the sectors are small and medium-sized enterprises. According to the statistics of the Social Security Institution for the period of January-April 2020; the number of companies operating in the clothing, textile and leather sectors in Turkey is around 58,000. Approximately 1,100,000 people are registered in these companies.⁹

Scale	Number of Companies	Number of Employees	Share (%)
Micro	4.837	13706	45,2
Small	3.918	70913	36,6
Medium	1.626	165844	15,2
Large	315	175957	2,9
Total	10.696	426.420	

3.2. Geographical Distribution

61.2% of the companies in the garment sector are located in Istanbul. Istanbul is followed by İzmir (7.8%), Tekirdağ (4%), Kırklareli (3%) and Bursa (2.5%).¹⁰ On the other hand, within the scope of the "Attrac-



tion Center Program" implemented in 2017, 23 provinces to which investment incentives will be given to the textile and garment sector have been determined. These provinces are in the Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia regions.

3.3. The Size of the Workplaces

Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey's report 'Sector Balance Sheets' published in 2019, 45.2% of the 10,696 workplaces in the garment sector were identified as micro, 36.6% small, 15.2% medium and 2.9% large.¹¹

3.4. Union Organization in the Sector

This section provides information on basic union laws regarding union access to the workplace, the minimum number of workers required to organize in a factory, and the minimum number of workers



that must be represented for collective bargaining in a factory. The section also gives information on the existing unions, their sectors and membership numbers.

In 2019, 50 collective bargaining agreements were signed in the weaving, garment and leather sec-

tors. These collective bargaining agreements cover 204 workplaces and 41,531 workers.¹² Considering only 602,800 registered workers in the ready-made clothing sector, the unionization rate is 6.8 percent.

As of January 2020, 14 trade unions operate in the sector.¹³

Worker's Unions

TEKSİF (TÜRK-İŞ)	Textile, Knitting, Clothing and Leather Industry Workers' Union of Turkey	48,673
ÖZ İPLİK-İŞ (HAK-İŞ)	All Weaving, Yarn, Knitting, Ready-to-Weave, Garment and Leather Workers' Union	34.717
DOKU ÖR-İŞ	Weaving and Knitting Workers' Union	53
DERİTEKS (TÜRK-İŞ)	Leather Weaving and Textile Workers Union	3.760
TÖBGİS	Knitwear Knitting Dyeing Clothing and Yarn Industry Workers' Union	31
TEKSTİL (DİSK)	Textile Workers Union	11.708
BATİS	Independent Textile Workers Union	1741
DOKUMA İŞ	Weaving, Knitting, Dying Knitwear, and Clothing Workers' Union	34
TÜM TEKSTİL-İŞ	All Textile Weaving Ready-made Clothing and Leather Industry Workers' Union	93
HÜR TEKSTİL-İŞ	Hür Textile Weaving, Yarn Knitting, Leather and Clothing Workers' Union	8
GİYİM-SEN	Clothing Workers Union	31
DEV TEKSTİL	Revolutionary Textile Workers Union	136
TEKSTİL DERİ	Textile and Leather Workers' Union	28
ÖZTÜM TEKSTİL İŞ	All Weaving Yarn, Knitwear, Ready-to-Wear, Garment and Leather Workers' Union	30

Employers' Associations and Unions

TGSD (Employers' Associations and Unions)

Turkish Clothing Manufacturers Association: 17 thousand of the 36.000 garment companies in Turkey are exporters. Established in 1976, 400 members operating under the umbrella of the Turkish Clothing Manufacturers Association realize 80% of Turkey's ready-made clothing exports.

TTSİS (Turkish Textile Industry Employers' Association)



3.5. Barriers to Organization and Collective Bargaining

Freedom of association and collective bargaining are two of the fundamental rights of all workers around the world. These are often referred to as "enabling rights". The low level of unionization in many countries makes it difficult to raise wages through collective bargaining between workers and employers. Employers are often hostile towards unions and use a range of tactics to prevent unions from emerging, including intimidation, discrimination, dismissal, blacklisting and even physical violence.

Government policies often benefit employers more than unions. The '1 percent threshold' set by the government makes it even more difficult for the unions, which are already trying to organize under pressure. Under the '1 percent threshold' law the unions are allowed to make collective bargaining agreements only if they organize the majority of workers in a factory and organize more than 1 percent of the whole sector. This is almost the output of an exploitative mechanism that has been designed to systematically slow down and/or end the unionization.



Regarding the Right to Organize:

- According to Article 17 of the Law on Trade Unions and Collective Bargaining No.6356; every worker who is over the age of 15 can freely become a member of the unions established in the branch of business they are working in, without seeking permission from anyone. According to Article 25, workers cannot be dismissed or be subjected to different treatment for any reason because they are members of a union or because they participate in the work of a labor union outside of working hours. Otherwise, the employer is obliged to pay compensation to the worker.
- Article 18 of the Labor Law No.4857 prohibits employers from dismissing workers for unfair reasons. According to the current Job Security Law, the employer has to re-employ the worker or pay compensation.
- According to Article 118 of the Turkish Penal Code; The

employer or any authorized person in the organization who prevents the worker from being a member of the union is punished with imprisonment from 6 months to 2 years.

The incidents clearly show how employers revolve around these laws. Almost every month in Turkey, dozens of workers are dismissed from their jobs by the employers who are plotting and citing other reasons because they are involved in the union struggle. Moreover, even at a time when dismissal was prohibited during the pandemic, thousands of workers who were engaged in union organizing activities were dismissed with Code-29, depriving them of their right to compensation, on the grounds that "the worker behaved contrary to moral codes and goodwill".



EMPLOYMENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE WORKFORCE



Number of registered workers in the manufacturing of apparel (September 2020): 602,800.¹⁴

The ready-made clothing industry is one of the sectors that creates the most employment in the country's economy, with 602,800 employees registered in the social security system. According to the data, among a total of 3 million 962 thousand employees registered in the manufacturing industry; the share of ready-made clothing employment is 15.2 percent, that is 2.17 percent of the total employment in Turkey.

Mustafa Gültepe, President of Istanbul Ready-to-Wear and Apparel Exporters' Association (İHKİB), said in a statement to AA correspondent; Expressing that Turkey is an "apparel and textile country", he said that

they are the 5th largest production base in the world and the 3rd largest production base in Europe.¹⁵

4.1. Forms of Informal Employment

An increasing group of workers in the garment industry are employed without formal employment contract/status and without registration. This often happens to home-based workers and workers in small workshops, but it has also extended into factories. There is a continuum between formal and informal work in the garment industry, thus one can find informal laborers with no job security and without regular or partly regular payment next to a formally employed worker in any workplaces. This leads to increased insecurity for the worker and her/his family.



In this section, you will find the comments on the extent of such practices ("informalization") in the garment industry.

In 2019, approximately 29.1 percent of wage workers in the textile industry are not registered with any social security institution.¹⁶

1 in 2 Employees is without Job Security¹⁷

In the news article of the Cumhuriyet newspaper, Ahmet Hamdi Topbaş, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Turkish Textile Industry Employers' Union (TTSIS), stated that at the meeting held about textile incentives, one of every 2 employees is unregistered.

In September 2020, the share of employees without being affiliated to any social security institution in total employees in Turkey (the ratio of unregistered employees) decreased by 3.8 points compared to the same period of the previous year and became 32.2 percent.¹⁸

Informality Among Salary, Wage and Per Diem Workers

Informality rates among wage earners actually declined between 2005 and 2015 and then the decrease in the rate of informality stopped. Although the sources of this horizontal course are not known exactly, one of the possible reasons may be that the state has loosened its surveillance mechanisms. Fighting informality also means cutting off access to livelihoods for many Syrians. There are approximately 3.6 million Syrians under temporary protection status in Turkey. On the other hand, according to the data of the General Directorate of International Labor, affiliated to the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policies, the number of Syrians who can obtain a work permit is around 34 thousand in 2018.

Policies aimed at reducing the economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic seem to ignore informal wage earners. Informal wage earners are the first group to be affected by the economic conjuncture, as they are not under the protection of the service contract. Therefore, they are likely to be laid off due to the pandemic. Moreover, in terms of low wages, it can be assumed that their savings are relatively low and they need more work. On the other hand, they are completely outside the protective umbrella of economic policies.¹⁹

Home Based Work

Along with the 1970s, production practices started to become more flexible; this has caused garment production to overflow out of the factories and into the households.

95 percent of home-based textile and garment workers in Turkey are women.²⁰

Home-based working women mainly state that they had previously worked as workers in a textile production facility, but due to their





working conditions and having children in need of care, they started home-based work. In home-based work, multinational companies are the determinants of the relationship structure between the actors, the quality and duration of production.

Some of the problems experienced by home based working women can be listed as; low-paid work without job security, not being able to get paid collectively, inability to have a say in wage bargaining, uncertain and long working hours, work causing health problems for women (low back pain, anxiety, stress, etc.). Such problem areas are just a few of the experiences.

It is also known that other members, mostly children, of the household also contributes to the production, and that neighbors are usually in solidarity with each other in order to fulfill the orders.

Cemal Bilgin, Organizing Specialist of Social-İş Union; stated that the number of textile workers working home-based increased by 30 to 40 percent due to the COVID-19 epidemic and that these workers demand employer and state support to at least meet the increasing cost expenses such as electricity.²¹

Day laborer

Especially in recent years, the short-term order practices of global fashion brands has created a new form of employment. Subcontractors, who operate like the private employment agencies supported by the state in the past, provide daily unregistered workers in the textile sector. These day laborers either find daily work through subcontractors or wait at the unofficial waiting points at central locations in the neighborhoods close to the workshops and find daily work through subcontractors who are picking themselves up from these points in the morning in line with the needs of the employers. For example, the aforementioned waiting areas in Istanbul are frequently encountered in districts such as Bağcılar, Esenyurt, Güngören and Sultangazi. At the same time, many day laborer advertisements are encountered when wandering randomly on the street in these and similar industrial places. Subcontractors can also reach out to day laborers through daily work groups established on the social media platform Facebook.

4.2. Gender, Age and Ethnic Composition of the Workforce

More than half of the 1 million 67 thousand people employed in the garment and textile industries are women.²²

According to research, 66 percent of the workforce in the garment industry are between the ages of 21–55.²³

Workers working in Istanbul garment workshops mostly consist of workers of Turkish and Kurdish origin. Kurdish workers, who immigrated to Istanbul in the 90s, express that they were discriminated against on the basis of their ethnic identities in terms of getting a job and renting a house in the early days.²⁴

Along with the increasing number of refugees coming to Turkey since 2011, child labor exploitation has also changed shape. The civil war that first started





in Syria and then the increasing refugee migration from countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Somalia, refugee child labor exploitation began to be openly seen in Turkey. Employers were already trying to reduce labor costs by employing child workers. Along with the increase in the number of refugees and immigrants who are seen as a source of even cheaper labor force, employers started to exploit refugee and migrant children labor much more. Refugee children, who work in worse conditions than any other workers, are exposed to discrimination such as working longer for lower wages, receiving their salary late and incomplete, ill-treatment and forced to work under hate speech. Refugee and migrant child workers are employed informally in the fields of service, agriculture, animal husbandry, recyclable waste collection and construction, especially in the textile and shoe industry.²⁵

Merve, one of the interviewees in the Afghan Report of the Migration Research Association, says the following about the working conditions of Afghan refugees: "They mostly work in the textile industry because their leather business is gone. They are employed without insurance. It doesn't matter if the

state doesn't allow refugees to work or to work uninsured. Most Afghans work in the textile industry."²⁶

4.3. Gender-Based Discrimination

This section includes data on the gender pay gap in the country, examples of sexual harassment, discriminatory practices such as the assignment of low-income jobs only to women (for example, ironing), or piecework for women compared to hourly paid jobs for men.

According to the research conducted by ILO Turkey and TurkStat, the gender pay gap is 15.6 percent. This wage gap increases with increasing age. While the wage gap is low (3.8%) at the beginning of working life, it increases remarkably (25.9%) to the detriment of women in their 40s and maintains this high level in the following years.²⁷

The research also addresses the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the gender pay gap: "The social and economic effects of the crisis deepen the wage gaps. Because sectors such as service, retail sales and tourism, where women mainly work, are the sectors most negatively affected by the crisis.



Therefore, women whose domestic and family care burdens have increased due to the epidemic may have to switch to short-term precarious forms of work or even quit their jobs in order to spend more time at home, let alone struggling for managerial positions."

According to the research conducted by DiSK-AR based on TurkStat data, the gender wage gap is 20.7 percent.²⁸

According to researchers,

- Women workers face sexual harassment, sexual abuse, physical and psychological violence in textile and garment workshops.²⁹
- Young adult female workers working in the textile and ready-made clothing sectors work in a hierarchically lower position in the workplace such as carrier and middlemen at an early age, and if they can find the opportunity to develop themselves, they can take a relatively higher position such as machinist, ironer, or overlocker.³⁰
- One of the noteworthy points regarding the textile and ready-made clothing sectors is the statements of working young adult women about payments. The women stated that their payments did not cover their labor, that the employers could demand some of the money they deposited on their bank cards, that they sometimes could not receive their wages for their working hours, and that the payments were made partial and/or late.³¹

Gender-Based Division of Labor

The research carried out by our association during the pandemic period, revealed that there is a gender-based discrimination in the division of labor. 67.7 percent of the interviewed workers stated that men and women work in different positions in their workplace. The interviewees, who stated that there is a position difference between male and female employees in the workplace, stated that this difference usually arises due to the weight of the work done. They said that women work in relatively lighter jobs (such as quality control, overlock), while men work in heavier jobs (such as middleman, mechanic).

In the interviews, it was observed that women mostly work on the overlock, while men mostly work as seamstresses. Some of the workers interviewed stated that this situation arises because overlockers receive less salary than other sewing machines, that is, women are directed to jobs with less income.

4.4 Labor Shortage in the Garment Industry

There are allegations that employers across Turkey have difficulties in finding workers to work in the garment industry. According to the data of the Ministry of Labor; when the professions that are difficult to obtain regionally are examined, it is seen that the machinist (sewing) profession is in first place in 8





of 12 regions.³² According to the Ministry, the main reason for the difficulty in obtaining a machinist (sewing) staff was stated as insufficient applications and not finding staff with the necessary professional skills/qualifications.³³

Considering the data, it seems quite easy to find an alternative job in the garment industry, but in reality the situation is different. In the news based on an interview with a textile worker, it was stated that working based on the performance system in garment workshops is quite stressful, employers frequently threaten to lay-off, and due to the very low wages workers are forced to have an insufficient/unbalanced diet.³⁴

4.5 Unemployment Rate

The labor force statistics of TurkStat for 2020 indicate that unemployment has decreased. The number of unemployed people aged 15 over in Turkey decreased by 408 thousand in 2020 compared to the previous year and became 4 million 61 thousand.

Unemployment rate decreased by 0.5 percentage points to 13.2 percent. Non-agricultural unemployment rate, on the other hand, decreased by 0.7 points to 15.3 percent.³⁵

But the published statistics do not reflect the truth. According to the DISKAR Unemployment and Employment Report, the unemployment rate and statistics declared by TurkStat do not reflect the damage caused by COVID-19 on employment, but rather conceal it. Contrary to what is stated in the report, the unemployment rate is not falling, but rather increasing: The broad unemployment rate is 26.4 percent, not 15.3 percent.³⁶



5 WAGE-RELATED PRACTICES AND THEIR EFFECTS

5.1. Laws Regarding Minimum Wage

The minimum wage is determined each year by the Minimum Wage Determination Commission. The commission is established by three groups; workers, employers and the Ministry of Labor. Five members from each group attend the commission. At the end of 2020, the gross minimum wage of 3,578 TL (383.55 Euros) for 2021 (including social security premium deductions and income tax) was determined to increase 21 percent compared to the previous year. While the monthly net minimum wage for bachelor workers was 2,826 TL (302.9 Euro), it was calculated as 3,013 TL (322.9 Euro) for a married worker with three children and an unemployed spouse.

The main criterion for determining the increase in

the minimum wage was the annual inflation rate, which was 14 percent according to TurkStat. However, with the effect of the pandemic, the inflation rate felt by the workers was much higher.

At the time of writing of this report, the Minimum Wage Commission has clarified and announced the minimum wage for 2022. Despite the demand of net 5200 TL (363.2 Euro) by the trade unions, the minimum wage for 2022 was determined as 5,004 TL (349.5 Euro) gross and 4,253.40 TL (296.7 Euro) net. Accordingly, the net minimum wage increase increased by 50.54 percent. The inflation rate announced by TurkStat for 2021 was 36 percent.

The chart contains the legal minimum gross and net wage information since 2005.

Year	Gross Minimum Wage (TL)	Net Minimum Wage (TL)	Increase in Net Net Minimum Wage (%)	TurkStat inflation rate Dec (%)
2005	488,7	350,15	-	7.72
2006	531	380,46	8,66	9.65
2007*	562,5	403,03	5,93	8.39
2008*	608,4	481,55	19,48	10.06
2009*	666	527,13	9,47	6.53
2010*	729	576,57	9,38	6.40
2011*	796,5	629,96	9,26	10,45
2012*	886,5	701,13	11,30	6,16
2013*	978,6	773,01	10,25	7,40
2014*	1.071,00	846	9,44	8.17
2015*	1.201,50	949,07	12,18	8.81
2016	1.647,00	1.300,99	37,08	8,53
2017	1.777,50	1.404,06	7,92	11.92
2018	2.029,50	1.603,12	14,18	20.30
2019	2.558,40	2.020,90	26,06	12
2020	2.943,00	2.324,71	15,03	14,6
2021	3.577,50	2.825,90	21,56	36**
2022	5.004,00	4.253,40	50,51	-

* Between 2007 and 2015, the minimum wage was determined in 6-month periods. For the clarity of the table, the minimum wage valid in the first half of the year has been taken into consideration.
** The inflation rate declared for the same period by the independent Inflation Research Group (ENAG) is 83%.

Criticisms from Workers' Groups and Trade Unions About Minimum Wage and Determination Procedure

In its report, DISK revealed Turkey's minimum wage realities and minimum wage demands during the pandemic period.³⁷

64 percent of all wage earners (12.5 million workers) earn an amount between the minimum wage or one and a half minimum wage. 3.3 million workers (17 percent of all wage earners) work below the minimum wage.

There are also criticisms regarding the determination process of the minimum wage in the report. Although the minimum wage determination process is Turkey's largest wage bargain, workers and unions do not have the right



The demands of DİSK regarding the 2021 minimum wage

- During the pandemic, the minimum wage should be calculated differently. The gross amount of minimum wage must be paid as a net amount, without any cut!
- The 2021 minimum wage should be calculated taking into account the new burdens brought to households by the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Cash support should be provided from the budget to the minimum wage.
- The minimum wage should be completely exempt from taxation, an income tax exemption amount up to the tax amount calculated over minimum wage would be applicable for all wage-earners.
- During the pandemic period, the minimum wage SSI worker premiums should be covered from the budget.
- In calculating the minimum wage, not only the worker himself, but also his family should be taken into account.
- In determining the minimum wage, living conditions and increase in national income should be taken into account.
- The minimum wage should be determined jointly for all workers and civil servants.
- The minimum wage for 2021 should be determined as 3,800 TL net.

to strike in this bargain. International standards such as UN, ILO and Council of Europe standards in determining the minimum wage are not taken into account. The family of the worker is not taken into account in determining the minimum wage. DİSK wants the minimum wage to be calculated according to universally

accepted rules and principles.

In addition, the report mentions the disproportion of the minimum wage to living expenses.

The minimum wage is below the hunger and poverty

5.2. Existing Regulations Regarding Social Insurance

	2020	2021
Gross Minimum Wage (TL)	2.943	3.577,50
Social Security Premium 14%	412,02	500,85
Unemployment Insurance Premium 1%	29,43	35,78
Income Tax 15% *	154,5	187,82
Minimum Living Allowance	220,73	268,31
Stamp Tax 0,759%	22,34	27,15
Total od Deductions	618,29	751,6
NET MINIMUM WAGE **	2324,71	2.825,90

* In Income Tax Calculation; In accordance with Article 32 of the Income Tax Law No.193, a Minimum Living Allowance has been applied, taking into account that the worker is single and childless and only himself.

** A minimum living allowance of (220,73 TL) has been added to the net minimum wage.

Cost to Employer (TL/ Month)	2020	2021
Gross Minimum Wage	2.943,00	3.577,50
Social Security Premium 15.5% (Employer's Share) ***	456,17	554,51
Unemployment Insurance Premium 2% (Employer's Share)	58,86	71,55
TOTAL COST TO EMPLOYER	3.458,03	4.203,56

*** According to subparagraph (i) of Article 81 of Law No. 5510; a 5-point reduction is foreseen in the employer's share of the SSI premium for the employers who meet the conditions specified in the paragraph, the calculations are made accordingly. For employers who do not meet the necessary conditions, the employer's share of SSI premium is 20.5 percent. With the regulation made with the 9th article of the Law No. 6385, Article 81 of the Law No. 5510, effective as of 01.09.2013, "The premium rate of the short-term insurance branches is 2% of the insured's earnings subject to premium."



line. According to the report published in October 2020, the monthly expenditure for a family of four to eat healthy (hunger limit) is 2,362 TL. According to the calculation based on household consumption expenditures over the hunger limit, the poverty line is 8.169 TL in October 2020. However, the minimum wage determined for 2020 is 2,324 TL net. The 2020 minimum wage remained below the poverty and hunger threshold. Considering the tax and deduction burden of the minimum wage, the current minimum wage is not a living wage.³⁸

5.3. Inflation

Inflation data is announced every month by TurkStat. However, there are huge differences between the figures felt by the public and those announced by TurkStat. TurkStat announced the inflation rate for 2021 as 36.08³⁹ percent in December. In the past, TurkStat announced these data as 14.60 percent for 2020 and 11.84 percent for 2019. Although the 2021 figure seems very high compared to the previous years, it seems to be far below the real inflation felt by the citizens.⁴⁰ It should be also noted that the number of items whose price is measured in the inflation basket has been reduced by TurkStat compared to the previous year. On the other hand, the Inflation Research Group (ENAG), composed of academics and economists, announced the inflation increase for 2021 as 82.81⁴¹ percent in its calculated study before the statement of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat).

5.4. Poverty Line

Poverty, which deepened with the pandemic, deepened even more with the economic crisis fueled by political reasons. Many studies show that a large percentage of workers work below the poverty line, on the hunger limit. According to the hunger and poverty calculations made every month by the Türk-İş Confederation, the hunger limit in Turkey for a family of 4 in December 2021⁴² is 4.013 TL (280.43Euro) and the poverty limit is 13,073 TL (913,55 Euro). This shows that all minimum wage workers live well below the poverty line and on the poverty line. According to the data published by Social Security Institution (SGK), the number of registered workers working in Turkey in 2020 is 15 million 203 thousand 423. 6 million 390 thousand of them worked for minimum wage. This

shows that 42 percent of registered workers work for the minimum wage. DİSK-AR December 2021 Report⁴³, on the other hand, announced the number of employees working around the minimum wage as 69 percent. In the same report, the number of those who could not reach the minimum wage was announced as 21.8 percent. It can be predicted that the informal textile workers, whose number exceeds one million, are also in the group that cannot reach the minimum wage.

5.5. Poverty Indicators

The extent and typical manifestations of poverty differ between countries. The typical symptoms of poverty in our country are stated in the Deep Poverty in the Pandemic Period and Access to Rights Research Report⁴⁴ published by the 'Deep Poverty Network'.

According to the report, in addition to the existing economic crisis, the new conditions brought by the pandemic have left individuals who already have difficulties in living together with hunger and poverty.

Poverty indicators mentioned in the report

- **In the field of employment:** unemployment or daily and unsafe work;
- **In the field of housing:** lack of access to basic housing needs such as not being able to afford rent, lack of tap water and electricity, lack of access to clean drinking water and heating problem;
- **In the field of nutrition:** malnutrition, hunger, skipping meals, collecting food from garbage;
- In the field of personal care and cleaning: difficulty in accessing diapers and food and difficulty in accessing sanitary napkins;
- **In the field of health:** social insecurity, not being able to access medicine, not being able to access psychological support, not being able to access masks and disinfectants;
- **In the field of education:** disengagement from education, barriers to participating in distance education, children not having a space of their own, overlapping of children's lesson times, digital inequality;
- **In the area of access to social life:** increasing unrest and increasing conflict at home due to the ban on children going out during lockdown.



5.6. Overtime Work

Overtime: Refers to the work exceeding 45 hours per week within the framework of the conditions written in the Labor Law, or the work exceeding working time up to 45 hours in cases where the weekly working time is determined by the contracts to be less than 45 hours.⁴⁵ According to the law, the daily working time cannot exceed 11 hours in any way.⁴⁶

Overtime and working hours longer than legal limits are common in the garment industry. One reason for this is low wages at levels that lead to poverty. Workers who are unable to earn enough wages to make a living during normal working hours often work overtime to make a living.

Another reason why overtime is so common can be expressed as the fast-purchasing practices of global

brands. Global brands put pressure on manufacturers to deliver their orders as soon as possible. For this reason, employers put pressure on workers. Many workers state that they work under stressful working conditions, exceeding the daily working time limits, to deliver orders until the morning. This situation threatens the health and safety of workers, harms the psychological health and paves the way for occupational accidents.

The wage to be paid for each hour of overtime is paid by increasing the amount per hour of the normal working wage by fifty percent. The wage to be paid for each hour of overtime work in the cases that working time is less than 45 hours, is paid by increasing the amount per hour of the normal working wage by 25 percent.

"I have difficulties in living, I have debts. If there is no overtime, I am in minus. When children start school, I work more overtime to make a living."





6 LABOR INSPECTIONS AND OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES

Legally Mandatory Duty of the Labor Inspectorate

Labor inspection covers research, examination and inspection regarding the implementation of all legislative provisions related to working conditions and environment such as working hours, wages, occupational health and safety, welfare of workers, employment of children and youth, informality, unemployment, employment and labor market practices.⁴⁷ Labor inspectors carry out their duties under the Labor Inspection Board, reporting directly to the Minister of Labor and Social Security.

How are Labor Inspections Organized?

The section of the General Work Plan on labor inspection is prepared separately for inspections of "work execution" and "occupational health and safety". Labor inspections conducted by the Ministry of Labor are carried out in two ways: "scheduled" and "non-scheduled". Scheduled inspections are inspections made at workplaces that are targeted at a particular industry or risk group. Non-scheduled inspections, on the other hand, are inspections carried out at workplaces due to a specific notification or a complaint.

The details of the inspection reports are not published by the ministry, but statistics are included in the annual reports. The Ministry is responsible for preparing the Labor Inspection General Evaluation Report every year and sending it to the General Directorate of the International Labor Office (ILO). This report is also shared with the public by the ministry.

Findings on Labor Inspections

The Ministry carried out 250 scheduled inspections and 3,088 non-scheduled inspections in 2019.⁴⁸

10 programmed, 223 non programmed occupational health and safety inspections were carried out in the

Textile, Garment and Leather sector.⁴⁹

All 276 inspections in the Weaving, Apparel and Leather sector are out of the program. 34 occupational accidents occurred in the Weaving, Ready-made Clothing and Leather sectors; 1 of the accidents resulted in death, 23 in injuries and 10 in losses of limbs.⁵⁰

Causes of the examined occupational accidents:

Accidents caused by machinery (12), poisoning as a result of accident (1), falling (3), squeezing / crushing / sinking / cutting of one or more objects (9), crashing and overturning of falling objects (1) contact or exposure to harmful substances or radiation (1).⁵¹

In the 2020 data of the Ministry, it is stated that 1851 scheduled inspections were carried out. 763 scheduled inspections were carried out on occupational health and safety in the Weaving, Ready-to-Wear and Leather sectors.⁵² As a result of the inspections, no occupational disease was found, 2 work accidents were detected. All 3 of the 3 workers affected by these occupational accidents are men, one died and the other two were injured.⁵³

Furthermore, the inspectors assigned by the ministry do not work on a sectoral basis.

Occupational disease is difficult to detect with workplace inspection, but it can be found by regular health screening of workers. However, despite the use of many chemicals in the textile industry, seen as a light work and these applications are not carried out. All workers who worked in denim sandblasting in the past suffered from silicosis, and 126 of them have died so far. The state needs to improve itself and restructure the sector on occupational diseases. Inspectors performing inspections need to be trained on the chemicals used and the causes of exposure to other occupational diseases.



7 FIELD RESEARCH

7.1. The place where the research was carried out: Istanbul and Izmir, the complex and organized centers of textile

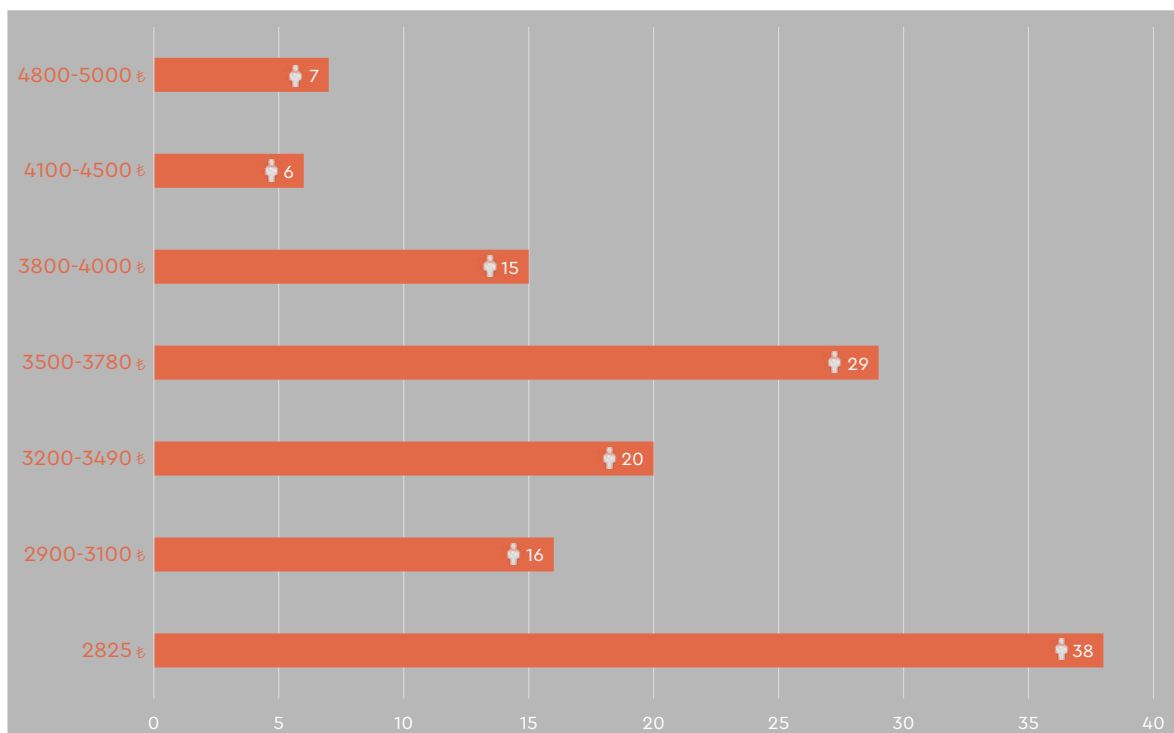
Interviews held in Istanbul were conducted with workers living/working in Avcılar, Bağcılar, Bayrampaşa, Büyükçekmece and Güngören districts. The interviews held in Izmir were held with the workers working in the factory of a brand that produces in the industrial zone outside the city center. The reason why the research focuses on these two locations is that Istanbul and Izmir are the two cities that produce the most textile and ready-made clothing.

Today, more than 60% of Turkey's textile production is still made in Istanbul. Production becomes complex and multi-layered, as the workshops and small-scale factories scattered in certain neighborhoods in the city are scattered and unorganized. The feature of these locations is that they are neighborhoods where workers both live and work.

On the contrary, the "Aegean Free Zone", which is the region focused on in Izmir, is a region where production takes place in large volumes and in an organized manner. Working conditions in the production region, which benefits from the trade facilities offered by the government, vary greatly compared to Istanbul. In this region, employers' control over the workforce is quite high.

7.2. Demographic Profiles of Interviewed Workers

The research was conducted by interviewing 52 female and 86 male garment workers. 61 of the interviewed workers were married, 30 were single and 47 did not want to state their marital status. The interviewees; 8.69 percent (12 people) between the ages of 15-20, 42.02 percent (58 people) between the ages of 21-30, 28.98 percent (40 people) between the ages of 31-40, 15.94 percent (22) in the 41-45 age range, 4.34 percent (6 people) were 46 years or older.



Number of workers for their last salary. Limit values are included to the ranges.



Although the research team made an effort to have equal participation of men and women in the interviews, this number could not be equal. The participation of women in our interviews was limited due to the inequality that is frequently seen in the domestic work division, which is dominated by gender-based division of labor, and the fact that care work is associated with women. Many of our requests to interview with women whose shifts are over were replied as "I urgently need to go home and cook and take care of the chores at home."

7.3. Main Findings of the Field Research

During the interview, the workers were asked whether they had employment contracts at the workshop or factory where they worked, only 3 of them said they had an employment contract. 124 workers answered "No" to this question and 11 workers said "I don't know".

Of the interviewees, 99 stated that they received payroll, 34 did not, and 5 did not prefer to receive them. 89 of the workers who have payroll, stated that the data on the payroll was correct, while the rest stated that it was incorrect or did not understand the data.

Within the scope of the research, how much the wages are, how they are paid and how they appear in the legal payroll were analyzed. 29 percent of the workers interviewed work for a minimum wage (2,825 TL). The rate of those who receive a salary of 3,000 TL is 7 percent, according to the answers given, 15 percent receive a salary of 3,500 TL and 6 percent receive a salary of 3,600 TL and 3,700 TL. The rate of those who received a salary of 5,000 TL was only 3 percent. 22 percent of those who earn a salary higher than the minimum wage said that they received the minimum wage part of their salary from the bank and the rest received by hand.

When the interviewed workers were asked if they had anything to add apart from the specified survey questions, many workers expressed their financial difficulties or poor working conditions in different ways.

- Akin, who is married and has two children, replied, "I have difficulties in living, I have debts. If there is no overtime, I am in minus. When children start school, I work more overtime to make a living."
- A worker working in another factory said, "The salaries of 44 of the 85 workers working at the factory were foreclosed on due to loan debts. I learned it while chatting with the accountant. Our situation is that clear."



- Another 17-year-old worker from a small workshop producing for a global brand said, "This workshop is owned by my brother. Sometimes we stay in the workshop until 1 AM to finish the work. I work without insurance because I have to. I have been working in textile since I was 12 years old." says.
- We saw that some of the interviewed workers were hesitant to talk about the problems and tried to explain the problems through the experiences of other people. This worker we interviewed explains that the working conditions are normal in his workplace, but he gives the name of another workplace and explains the conditions there as follows: "He (the employer) makes the 15-year-old worker work longer than permitted hours. That's why he has the worker's face scanned, making it look like the child worker is out of work, but then the child worker re-enters the workshop. He pays the salary on Saturday. Actually, you don't have to go to work on Saturday, but he forces you to go to work, and if you don't, he doesn't pay you. Their food is also very bad, always pasta or bulgur."
- Another worker we interviewed said that the workplace constantly recruits new workers through the Institution of Providing Jobs and Employees (IPJE) and employs them for minimum wage, thus benefiting from incentives.
- Another worker replies, when she was asked if salary was enough to make a living, "When you look at the expensiveness in the country, our salary is nothing. Although two people in our household are working, it is difficult to make it through the month. The children are going to school, we are 6 people in the household." gives the answer.
- A worker representative who works at a Tier 2 factory states: "I am a worker representative. The workplace environment is generally bad, but when there is an inspection, the workplace gets the news beforehand and fixes almost everything. When I told Zara that I am receiving my salary in cash, and my salary was shown as minimum wage in the official records, the auditor replied 'You can ask your employer to deposit it to the bank if you want. Your pension will increase'. We do not wear masks at

work, but they make everyone wear it when there is an inspection. There are many people who were infected with COVID-19."

Interviewees expressing their problems

- "The salary does not cover our monthly expenses. To support the household, the children work in garment workshops on weekends and school holidays."
- "Because I have debt, my child quit his education and started working. We are in financial trouble."
- "I have a credit debt. My wife also works, two people work in our household, but we still can't get along. My oldest son takes care of his brothers."
- "My husband also works in textiles. I also work because his salary is not enough. I leave my kids at my mother-in-law's in the morning. I pick them up every evening. I will never make my children work in textiles."
- "The wages are very low. My siblings go to school and cannot meet their needs. I was supporting them, but I can't send money to them anymore. I had already left school and started working in textiles to educate my younger siblings. I'm struggling to make a living. Our economic situation is getting worse day by day."
- "My monthly average wage reaches 5,000 TL with overtime work. When I need money, I work till morning in the workshop or find daily work in other workshops. There are 3 people working in our family, but we still have debt."
- "Our flat is a rental; I have difficulty in meeting the school expenses of my children. I have a credit debt."
- "Everyone in the household (my wife and children) is working, we barely cover the expenses."
- "Everyone in the household has debt. 3,000 TL salary is not enough. Even if our household earns 10,000 TL in total, it is not enough. Rent and food costs have incredibly risen."
- "I am from Turkmenistan, my family lives in Turkmenistan, I work here and send money to my family. I work informally."





8 THE LIVING WAGE

The living wage is the wage a worker must receive within the legal working hours and is sufficient to lead a decent life. A living wage is a basic human right.⁵⁴ The living wage is not the minimum wage. It should cover basic food needs (3000 calories per day for an adult), clothing, health, education, rent (invoices), transportation and savings of a family. European Production Focus Group of Clean Clothes Campaign has calculated a living wage benchmark through European Floor Wage⁵⁵. This was benchmark developed using field data and the Asia Floor Wage⁵⁶ methodology. In this study conducted in 2018, the living wage of a family of 4 in Turkey was calculated as 5,095 TL. We will calculate this figure for 2021 and 2022 based on the annual minimum wage increase rates made in recent years, as we cannot visit the families of workers due to COVID-19 restrictions. Accordingly, we can calculate the living wage as 6,419.70 TL in 2019, 7,384.58 TL in 2020, 8,976.69 TL in 2021 and 13,513.51 TL in 2022.



Years	Living Wage for the Previous Year (TL)	Increase in Minimum Wage (%)	Current Living Wage (TL)
2019	5.095	26	6.419,70
2020	6.419,70	15,03	7.384,58
2021	7.384,58	21,56	8.976,69
2022	8.976,69	50,54	13.513,51



Wage Indicators

	TRY	EUR*
subsistence minimum for 4 person household according to official statistics / for 2,5 consumption units (2,5 × 1 person data)	8,976.70 TRY (2021) 13,513.52 TRY (2022)	881,79 EUR (2021) 943.90 EUR (2022)
any poverty line of the country according to official statistics for a family (inflation added to available data of 2020 in EuroStat data)	2525 TRY (2020) 2965,18 TRY (2021)	328 EUR (2020) 373.92 EUR (2021)
Average net salary of interviewed workers within the regular working hours	3396 TRY (2021)	237.20 EUR (2021)
Minimum net salary of interviewed workers within the regular working hours	2825 TRY (2021)	277,50 EUR (2021)
Maximum net salary of interviewed workers within the regular working hours	5000 TRY (2021)	491 EUR (2021)
the current legal minimum gross wage	5,004.00 TRY (2022)	349.52 EUR (2022)
the current legal minimum net wage	4,253.40 TRY (2022)	297.09 EUR (2022)
the demands towards a monthly legal minimum net wage	5,200 TRY (2021)**	363,21 EUR (2021)
Demands/calculations on a living wage / costs of a decent life for a family	13,073 TRY (2021)***	913.13 EUR (2021)

* Converted according to InforEuro exchange rate

** <http://disk.org.tr/2021/11/disk-2022-asgari-ucret-taleplerini-acikladi-gelirde-adalet-vergide-adalet-asgari-ucret-5200-net/>

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CONCLUSION

In general, serious differences between TurkStat data and independent data have been noted through desk research. Although the garment sector adds economic value to the country with its export figures, sectoral development has been noticeably hindered. It is clearly seen that there is no sustainable plan to combat informal employment or improve poor working conditions. Moreover, looking at the inspection data of the sector by the ministry, workplaces were not added to the inspection list in a planned manner, and a small number of inspected workplaces were inspected upon complaint. Although there are laws supporting the workers regarding the union struggle, the workplaces that go against these laws have always been tolerated. Even in severe pandemic conditions where dismissal is prohibited, 176 thousand people have been fired under the pretext of Code-29.

Despite being in the supply chains of various global brands, all the workers interviewed during the field research were found to be very lacking in their knowledge of their rights. However, most of these global brands claim that their standards have been raised by passing a training process to their manufacturers in the supply chain. These raised standards are said to be related to both improving working conditions and informing workers about their rights. Many workers we met in the field thought that the informal payment slip given to them at the beginning of the month was payroll. However, most workplaces only give payroll when the worker takes out a loan or asks for it to be given to an institution. Because there are double bookkeeping habits that we encounter intensely in the sector. The actual process is recorded in a ledger kept to record the accounts in the workplaces. This ledger is kept with real numbers of wages, working hours and overtime pay. The second ledger is kept in a way that complies with legal criteria and is reported to the state and brands.

Although 22 percent of the workers we interviewed received more than the minimum wage, they said that they received as much as the minimum wage from the bank and the rest in cash. Workers we interviewed showed us the informal payment slip issued by the employer as a payroll yet the salary written on the official payroll must be the same amount that is reported to the Social Security Institution (SSI). Employers have legally declared the minimum wage, not the actual salary agreed with the worker to reduce the costs.

Some of the workers said that they had to continue working even though they knew that the fact that their insurance premium was reported lower is a loss of rights. If they left here and went working at other factories, they would do the same. Even though they told this situation to the inspectors coming on behalf of the brands, a few workers stated that there was no solution. This shows that brands are aware of many of these double standards, they just tolerate it to continue producing cheaply.

When we compared past field data with data gathered in this research, we found that workers expressed themselves with even more fear compared to the past. Although we contacted the workers independently and said that the data would remain anonymous, they were afraid that they would be fired if they were heard talking to us.

When we look at the wages and living standards of workers, we observe that many workers either constantly work overtime, do additional work or have more than one person in the family who is working and only survive in this way. We have seen once again the fact that the economic crisis and the cost of living in the country are felt primarily by the workers. For this reason, **it is essential for workers to earn a living wage** to live a dignified and healthy life.

It is essential for workers to earn a living wage to live a dignified and healthy life.



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