**The Republic of Turkey**

**Ministry of Family and Social Policy**

**General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly**

***Contribution to the Questionnaire from OHCHR Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Ms. Catalina Devandas Aquilar***

**General Information**

Organization and functions of the governing structure in Turkey is based on the principles of central administration and decentralization. In terms of central administrative structure, Turkey is divided into provinces on the basis of geographical situation, economic conditions, and public service requirements; provinces are further divided into lower levels of administrative districts (Art. 126 of the Constitution). Nationwide institutions of Ministries are called “Provincial Organizations”. The provincial organizations constitute of provincial and county administrations and all ministries have administrations at provinces.

Local administrations are public corporate bodies established to meet the common local needs of the inhabitants of provinces, municipal districts and villages, whose principles of constitution and decision-making organs elected by the electorate are determined by law (Art. 127 of the Constitution).

Services for persons with disabilities (PwDs) in Turkey are rendered by separate ministries and local governments. Central organizations of ministries steer activities of provincial organizations by way of making policies and planning activities in conformity with their policies. Monitoring activities of the central administration are carried out either by central or provincial organization, depending on the relevance.

Having been established in 1997 affiliated to Prime Ministry as an institution responsible for making policies and planning services for PwDs, Administration for Disabled People (OZIDA) was structured as a coordination organization due to the fact that disability related issues/services were being rendered by various ministries. In 2011, the Administration was renamed as General Directorate of Services for PwDs and the Elderly (EYHGM) and thus it was restructured at central and provincial levels under the organization chart of Ministry of Family and Social Policy (ASPB) that was established by Decree Law no 633.

EYHGM is a public institution affiliated with the legal entity of ASPB and it carries out activities in coordination with related organizations and institutions with the aim of supporting PwDs enjoy their rights and developing policy and services for PwDs. Within this scope, it works towards mainstreaming disability in instruments of governmental planning with a holistic approach and besides, it prepares and implements plans of action for the priority areas determined in line with the basic problems of PwDs. To give an example to such plans of action that have been prepared recently, one can cite *2010-2011 Strategy and National Plan of Action on Accessibility* and *2011-2013 Strategy and Plan of Action on Care Services.*

Due to the fact that the number of persons with autism spectrum disorders has been increasing in Turkey, “Draft National Action Plan on Autism” was prepared with the purposes of increasing the quality of life for individuals with autism and their families, supporting parents and forming a basis for development of proper policies that would facilitate provision of quality care services. In line with the draft version of the action plan, EYHGM conducted Regional Awareness and Information Seminars in 11 provinces of Turkey. 4062 persons including the families with children with autism spectrum disorders, representatives of civil society organizations, universities, local governments and public institutions participated to these seminars. The Action Plan for 2016-2019 was recently submitted to High Planning Board which approved it with the Decision no. 2016/8 on 13.04.2016. However, this Decision has not been published on the Official Gazette yet.

The measures for promoting and ensuring full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by PwDs in Turkey have been set at the level of national policy. Pursuance of the issue of disability in all fields of policy under a rights based approach and ensuring participation of PwDs to decision making processes constitute the basis of disability policy in Turkey. Especially since the second half of nineties, many significant institutional or legal arrangements have been actualized with the aim of ensuring participation of PwDs to decision making processes and social life in many fields such as employment, accessibility, social security, education and vocational education.

Understanding of disability policy in Turkey was shaped by Turkish Disability Act that can be defined as a framework law on disability. This law established that developing policies to prevent any possible governmental abuse of disability or PwDs in the provision of disability services in the light of immunity of human dignity and honour; ensuring anti-discrimination forms the basis of disability focused policies. Furthermore, ensuring that the opinions of PwDs, their families and voluntary agencies taken into account during decision making processes or service provision was also included in the general principles.

This process which aimed for developing disability policies and programmes through researches focusing on PwDs and the society’s perception of disability, contributed significantly to the change in the traditional attitudes towards PwDs by means of national and/or local awareness raising activities. A remarkable increase in the funds allocated for disability related services, reinforced international cooperation in the field of disability and higher utilization of international funds also gave acceleration to improvements in this field in Turkey.

1. **Policies Aimed at Implementing and Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals:**

The Republic of Turkey, having been represented at the High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Disability and Development in New York on 23 September 2013, is committed to achieve sustainable development goals and to mainstream disability in all national development programmes.

United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) that promotes full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities (PwDs) was signed by the Government of The Republic of Turkey on 30 March 2007 and ratified on 28 September 2009. The Optional Protocol of the CRPD was signed on 28 September 2009 and ratified on 26 March 2015. Being an international agreement duly put into effect as per Article 90 of the Constitution, the CRPD - like all other conventions on human rights - has the same force with the Constitution in the hierarchy of norms. Within this scope, the CRPD not only forms a basis for all legal and administrative arrangements, but also constitutes a principle of law to which independent Turkish courts can directly refer.

Within this scope, preparations for a Strategy Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have started and various awareness raising activities have been planned and implemented across the country.

EYHGM, as the focal point for promoting the implementation and monitoring of the CRPD, conducted a project titled "Awareness Raising Seminars on Human Rights and Disability" in 2012 funded by the national budget. The aim of the project was to hold awareness and knowledge raising seminars on human rights and disability to promote the realization and the protection of human rights of persons with disabilities in Turkey targeted to four major target groups, which are namely representatives of [public authorit](https://eposta.aile.gov.tr/owa/redir.aspx?C=55011a0a10544f9d8da0eaf05aa89896&URL=http%3a%2f%2ftureng.com%2fsearch%2fpublic%2520authority)ies, civil society organizations, members of judiciary and [legislative bod](https://eposta.aile.gov.tr/owa/redir.aspx?C=55011a0a10544f9d8da0eaf05aa89896&URL=http%3a%2f%2ftureng.com%2fsearch%2flegislative%2520bodies)y experts, in order to facilitate the process of fulfilling obligations imposed by UNCRPD. The project have the following outputs that will contribute to sustainability of the project: Four implementation manuals that are prepared and published for the different target groups are reference materials in providing human rights perspective for their field of work and how they will act in dealing with disability issues. Besides disseminating the implementing materials to the target groups of the seminars, they have also been distributed to the relevant stakeholders working in these areas. Thus, the information covered in this material has been shared by wider audiences as dissemination activity. Publication and dissemination of the CRPD in Turkish language and in accessible formats has contributed to raise awareness among persons with disabilities and various groups of society to promote equal and full enjoyment of all fundamental rights and liberties without facing disability based discrimination for persons with disabilities. Dissemination of the CRPD in accessible formats to participants of the seminars, relevant stakeholders and wider audiences through web-site has raised awareness of the rights guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities among persons with different types of disabilities in Turkey. These types of awareness rising seminars has been continued for all stakeholders including persons with disabilities themselves.

As mentioned above, within the scope of National Action Plan on Autism, EYHGM conducted Regional Awareness and Information Seminars in 11 provinces of Turkey. 4062 persons including the families with children with autism spectrum disorders, representatives of civil society organizations, universities, local governments and public institutions participated to these seminars. Similar awareness raising activities will be continued widely during the implementation process of the 2016-2019 Action Plan with the cooperation among relevant Ministries and the governmental institutions including Ministry of Family and Social Policy, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labor and Social Security.

“Improved Integration of Disabled Persons into Society Grant Scheme” (TR2009/01​35.01-04/I​DP-EuropeA​id/133144/​M/ACT/TR) was implemented under the framework of IPA-1 programme (capacity building) 2009 financial agreement. The overall budget of the Grant Scheme was 3.600.000 EUR and the objective was to ensure equal access to goods, services and all aspects of life, to people with disabilities. The specific objective was to enhance the dialogue between the EYHGM and CSOs in the realm of disability by strengthening capacities of CSOs of persons with disabilities and of CSOs defending the rights of persons with disabilities. In this framework, 23 projects that are implemented by CSOs in cooperation with local authorities were financed. Moreover, 16 regional seminars were realized to increase the capacity of CSOs of PWDs and CSOs working in disability field in Turkey. The seminars will be continued in different regions of Turkey during the year 2016.

Inclusion of disabled people’s themselves to the decision making process has had a critical importance in terms of development and application of disability policy. With legal steps that starting from the end of 1990’s increasingly continued in time and important legal steps aim to promote participation of persons with disabilities in first instance on the point of preventing disability, education, professional education, employment, social security and accessibility of disabled people. After this, disability policy principles were specified with Turkish Disability Act no. 5378 that was enacted in 2005 and is crucial for disability field in our country. Fighting against discrimination and participation of persons with disabilities to decision mechanism were defined as basic of disability policy with Disability Act. In this regard persons with disabilities participate into policy making processes that affect their life as a crucial partner.

Additionally, civil society including organizations of persons with disabilities and other NGO’s participate into decision making process, legislation, service provision and exchange information through workshop, seminars and conferences etc. in co-operation with government units. They also contribute to raise public awareness on the subject matter.

**Strategies and Action Plans**

1. **Development Plans**

Development Plans that have been carried out with the purpose of setting the framework of policies and implementations in Turkey since the period of 1963-67 have great importance in mainstreaming disability related issues to planning documents. In the first periods of development plans, measures for PwDs generally recognized them as people in need of care and protection. However, starting from 1990, such measures was replaced by the ones aiming for ensuring full and equal participation of PwDs to social life.

The Tenth National Development Plan (2014-2018) establishes the medium-term priorities of Turkey in terms of regional policy. Under the plan, regional development policies will contribute to national development, competitiveness and employment by increasing the productivity of regions, while addressing the basic objective of reducing regional and rural-urban disparities. Priority areas include: increasing the consistency and effectiveness of policies at the central level, creating a development environment based on local dynamics, increasing institutional capacity at the local level and accelerating rural development.

The measures regarding persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups in the Tenth National Development Plan are as follows below;

* During the economic crisis period, while social expenditures have fallen globally, rise in social expenditures and enhancement of social assistance implementations both in quantity and in scope in Turkey has mitigated the adverse effects of the crisis on poverty and income inequality. Due to these developments, improvements have been recorded on income distribution. Important steps on the integration to social and economic life of women, children, ***persons with disabilities and elders*** and improvement of life quality of these groups have been taken, regional social development programs especially Social Support Program (SODES) have been implemented to provide social inclusion in underdeveloped regions. However, need for increasing the auditing of social expenditures and for enhancing the support practices so that the citizens participate more in the economic production process, still exists. (Paragraph 110)
* Full access to primary and secondary education, especially of ***female students and students with disabilities***, will be ensured. Grade repetition and drop outs will be decreased (Para. 147).
* In accordance with inclusive special education, human capital and physical infrastructure will be strengthened in order to ensure appropriate learning environments for ***students with disabilities*** and gifted individuals who require special education (Para. 148).
* Objective criteria has been set to identify individuals and groups who would benefit from social services and assistances, coordination and cooperation has been enhanced between the institutions and organizations that function in the area of social assistance and works toward strengthening the link between social assistance and employment have been carried on. For the vulnerable children, the service model has been shifted to care house and child house models; for ***persons with disabilities***, the scope of house care and education supports has been extended, and employment incentives have been introduced (Para. 273).
* Needs for establishment of service standards in the area of social services and assistances, employment of qualified personnel and improvement of supervision, making the environmental circumstances available for ***persons with disabilities*** alongside establishing alternative models for the children in need of protection besides institutional care, increasing the participation ***of persons with disabilities*** to education and labour market, and raising the quality of care services, diversification and extension of the services towards the mounting older population have still maintained their importance (Para. 275).
* Efficiency and auditing of education, employment and care services for ***persons with disabilities*** will be increased. In this context, resources will be used more efficiently and physical environmental conditions will be made suitable for ***persons with disabilities*** (Para. 284).
* Spatial planning and urban design schemes which target improvement of liveability for different segments of the society; giving priority to senior citizens, ***persons with disabilities and children***; protect equal opportunities and equity, will be put into practice (Para. 945).
* The need for; striking balance between supply and demand in the housing market, development of housing finance, construction and organization methods and supply of land with infrastructure; directing the housing production with respect to the needs of income groups, development trends and features of settlements; designing and construction of housing and environment that respond to the needs of senior citizens, children and ***persons with disabilities***, continues (Para. 957).
* Due to the decreasing population density at villages, local service delivery capacity of public institutions will be strengthened and innovative models will be developed to make it easier for aging citizens and ***persons with disabilities*** to participate in social life and to have better access to personal care and other social services (Para. 1021).

1. **1st Strategy Paper and Plan of Action on The Rights of Children (2013-2017)**:

The Strategy Paper and Plan of Action was prepared with the participation of public organizations, NGO's and children acknowledges that the best interest of children is more prior to all other interests and it has the aims of basing policies on children's rights to life, development, protection and issue opinion on decision making processes and ensuring that childhood period is spent on the basis of children's rights.

The Strategy Paper was finalized in parallel with all related sectors and it was started being implemented in 2013. Being based on the values of civilization and the criteria and principles set by the Convention on the Rights of the Children, the strategy paper determines the future implementations.

The Paper aims harmonizing national activities and implementations with children's rights, protecting children against all affecting parties and ensuring access of children to basic needs and services. It has a non-discriminative perspective that covers all children with or without disabilities. The principle of ensuring participation of children to decision making processes constitutes one of the keystones of the Strategy Paper.

1. **2023 Tourism Strategy:**

With the purpose of ensuring that persons with disabilities benefit from tourism services more effectively, the objective of evaluation and promotion of social tourism projects with the cooperation of public and private sectors was included in *2023 Tourism Strategy*

1. **2015 - 2018 Plan of Action and Strategy Paper on Information Society**

Within the framework of the efforts toward finding innovative solutions to access to information and communication, public and private sector together with NGOs have been taking steps to ensure accessibility of ICT for persons with disabilities.***2015 - 2018 Plan of Action and Strategy Paper on Information Society*** was prepared by Ministry of Development adopted the basic principle of designing ICT infrastructure and applications in line with accessibility rules and included various measures to increase access of PwDs to ICT. In accordance with this document, *Standards for Websites of Public Institutions* and *Website for Support to Standardization of Websites of Public Institutions* were prepared. Having been obligated by Prime Ministry Circular No 2007/4 of 27 January 2007, *Guiding Principles for Websites of Public Institutions* covers the methods and principles of making websites accessible for persons with disabilities.

**e) National Strategy for Regional Development (2014-2023)**

The National Strategy for Regional Development (2014-2023) seeks to ensure national level coordination for regional development and regional competitiveness, strengthen the linkages between spatial and socio-economic development policies and establish a general framework for sub-scale plans. The Strategy paper includes the following measure for persons with disabilities;

* Local institutional substructure will be developed in order to render efficient social services for persons with disabilities and the elderly (515).

*Strategy papers and action plans do not have either a special budget allocated for the implementation of envisaged actions or any monitoring mechanisms. However, the general budget of the relevant ministries/governmental institutions is utilized for the implementation of the concerned papers/strategies and the monitoring process is also undertaken by the ministries.*

Measures taken for *women and girls with disabilities* are included in the ones taken for all women in Turkey. Additionally, measures taken for persons with disabilities are not segregated in terms of gender. All measures focusing on persons with disabilities cover women and girls with disabilities. Article 10 of the Constitution provides that everyone is equal before the law without distinction as to language, race, color, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any such grounds. With an amendment made in this article in 2004, it was provided that men and women have equal rights and state is responsible for ensuring this equality. As per an amendment made in the Constitution in 2010, the measures to be taken to ensure this equality exist in practice shall not be considered as violation of the principle of equality. Besides, the amendment of 2010 also guaranteed that Measures to be taken for children, the elderly, disabled people, widows and orphans of martyrs as well as for the invalid and veterans shall not be considered as violation of the principle of equality.

The General Directorate on the Status of Women affiliated with the Ministry of Family and Social Policy is responsible for promoting women's rights; improving women's social, economic, cultural, and political status; and ensuring that women enjoy equal rights and opportunities in all walks of life and it carries out activities for women including women and girls with disabilities.

**2. Legislative and Policy Framework Concerning Non-discrimination/Equality**

Right to legal remedies is a constitutional right for all citizens including persons with disabilities. Everyone has the right of litigation either as plaintiff or defendant and the right to a fair trial before the courts through legitimate means and procedures. As per Article 36 of the Constitution, no court shall refuse to hear a case within its jurisdiction. Everyone whose constitutional rights and freedoms have been violated has the right to request prompt access to the competent authorities. The State is obliged to indicate in its proceedings, the legal remedies and authorities the persons concerned should apply and time limits of the applications (Constitution, Article 40).

In Turkey, the principle of equality and non-discrimination regulated within the scope of constitution and other related Laws forms the basis of disability policy. The Constitution provides that everyone is equal before the law without distinction as to language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any such grounds (Constitution, Article 10).

Understanding of disability policy in Turkey was shaped by Turkish Disability Act No. 5378 of 2005 that can be defined as a framework law on disability. This law established that developing policies to prevent any possible governmental abuse of disability or PwDs in the provision of disability services in the light of immunity of human dignity and honor; ensuring anti-discrimination forms the basis of disability focused policies. Furthermore, ensuring that the opinions of PwDs, their families and voluntary agencies taken into account during decision making processes or service provision was also included in the general principles.

This Law was restructured on 6 February 2014, by the Law No.6518, in line with the obligations stipulated by the CRPD. First and foremost, the principles of the CRPD are strongly reflected to the Law. Moreover, ‘person with disability’ was redefined based on human rights approach of the CRPD so as that a persons with disability refer to persons who have various levels of physical, intellectual, mental or sensory impairments which in interaction with attitudes and environmental conditions may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (Art.3). Besides various terms including "disability based discrimination, types of discrimination, reasonable accommodation and accessibility" were defined in accordance with the CRPD (Art.3). Within the amendments made in 2014 in the Turkish Disability Act No. 5378 a separate article was regulated to prohibit all forms of discrimination based on disability (Art.4/A). Moreover, it is regulated that to provide de facto equality, necessary measures shall be taken to provide reasonable accommodation. Besides, it is stated that the measures to be taken to ensure the equality exist in practice shall not be considered as violation of the principle of equality. Furthermore, by the additions made to the Basic National Education Law (Art.4) and Labour Law (Art.5), disability based discrimination is prohibited in the respective areas.

The terms "person with a disability", "types of discrimination", “reasonable accommodation”, “multiple/direct/indirect discrimination” and “abuse” which are vital with respect to anti-discrimination or fighting against disability discrimination have recently been defined by **Law No. 6701 on Equality and Human Rights Institution** (Law no 6701 of 6 April 2016). The law provides penal sanctions/fines to be imposed against the violators. According to the relevant provision of the law (Article 4/1-f), denial of provision of reasonable accommodation is deemed as one of the types of discrimination and it is clearly stated that all persons or institutions responsible for the provision of services are obliged to take into consideration the needs of persons with disabilities and provide reasonable accommodation (Article 5/2). Due to the fact that the law has recently been enacted, the legislation on the implementation process will be published within 6 months in parallel to the structuring of the Institution and the details of implementation will then be clarified.

Another significant legislative arrangement made in terms of ban on disability discrimination is 2005 dated amendment made in disability related provision of Turkish Criminal Law No. 5237. By means of this amendment, the term disability was added to the conditions of discrimination which shall be deemed to be offensive action and thus disability discrimination became a crime (Article 122). Within this scope, any person who perpetrates any one of the actions deemed as offense in Turkish Criminal Law and thus makes discrimination between individuals in terms of disability shall be sentenced to imprisonment from six months to one year or imposed punitive fine.

National Education Basic Law No. 1739 underlines the principle that education institutions are open to everyone without discrimination. According to the provisions of this law, all Turkish citizens hold the right to primary education. Men or women, all persons are equalized in terms of educational opportunities or chances. The law also provides some provisions on applying special measures for ensuring children in need of special education and social protection exercise their right to education.

Labor Law No 4857 bans discrimination based on language, race, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sex or similar reasons within employment relationship. TDA also underlines the ban on disability discrimination in its provisions regarding education (Article 15) and employment (Article 16) related provisions.

Together with enforcement of TDA, ratification of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol has also been one of the most significant steps taken in improving anti-discrimination legislation. In line with the provisions of Article 90 of the Constitution, the internationally accepted definitions of disability discrimination and reasonable accommodation have, thus, directly been applied to Turkish Legislation.

Additionally, Article 14 of European Convention on Human Rights for which the procedure of individual communication was recognized by the Republic of Turkey also prohibits discrimination. Although the term "disability based discrimination" is not mentioned openly in the article, there are court decisions that deem the concerned article to include disability based discrimination. As a result of the right of individual communication to European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), the court has the function of higher control mechanism for Turkish citizens. For this reason, all Turkish citizens including the ones with disabilities who exhausted domestic remedies have the opportunity of applying to ECHR for violation of their rights. In addition, Protocol No 12 of the European Convention on Human Rights was signed by Turkey on 18 April 2001.

When it comes to independent mechanisms stipulated by the second paragraph of Article 33 of Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, one can mention about two separate structures in Turkey. The first is the ***Ombudsman Institution*** that was established in 2012 under the National Assembly, with the following objectives; to establish an independent and efficient complaint mechanism regarding the delivery of public services and investigate, research and make recommendations about the conformity of all kinds of actions, acts, attitudes and behaviours of the administration with law and fairness under the respect for human rights. One of the five ombudsmen is responsible for disability related issues.

As mentioned above, the second mechanism to be applied to in cases of violations is the ***Equality and Human Rights Institution*** that has been established by Law No 6701. Indeed the Institution, established in 2012 as a financially and administratively independent structure under the title “Human Rights Institution”, has been restructured with extended responsibilities. The duties of the institution covers protecting and promoting human rights, avoiding violations and discrimination, fighting against torture and degrading treatment, examining complaints and applications - taking necessary action in order to solve the problems and carrying out researches on human rights.

*Within this scope, Equality and Human Rights Institution, the Ombudsman Institution and the EYHGM affiliated with Ministry of Family and Social Policy are the main institutions to guarantee the realization of rights of PwDs and affective protection against discrimination.*

With regard to provision of reasonable accommodation; as per the Regulation on employment of persons with disabilities in private sector, employers can recruit employees with disabilities either through the agency of Turkish Employment Organisation (ISKUR) or through their own means. In both cases, employers are obliged to take reasonable accommodation measures, charge employees with disabilities in accordance with their professions and provide them with the equipment and tools necessary for the concerned work.

Subjecting all persons with or without disabilities to the same procedures may result in actual inequalities and thus persons with disabilities may become disadvantaged in terms of performing certain rights. Some additional measures are needed for ensuring full enjoyment of disability rights. As per an amendment made in the Constitution in 2010, the measures to be taken to ensure the equality exist in practice shall not be considered as violation of the principle of equality. For example, pursuant to the relevant Turkish legislation, employers are bound to charge employees with disabilities in accordance with their professions and provide them with the equipment and tools necessary for the concerned work. Besides, beginning and quitting time for workers with disabilities employed in public or private sector can be flexible, provided that the provisions of the Labor Law are taken into consideration. On the other hand, workers with disabilities cannot be charged with underwater, subterranean or other works defined in disability reports of the workers. However, there are no promotions or incentives for arrangements to be made in working environment.

*List of some other legislative arrangements about persons with disabilities that have been put into place since 2008 (affirmative actions)*

* The scope of level income criteria for disability allowance paid to unemployed persons with disabilities was extended.
* The income criteria for calculating home care eligibility in families with more than one member with a disability were improved in 2014.
* By means of a legal arrangement made in 2008, the Treasury started to pay 50% of the total amount of employer’s share of insurance premium as an incentive if the employer recruits more disabled people than the legal requirement. If the employer employs the exact number of persons with disabilities as obligated by the law, then the total amount of their share of insurance premium is paid by the government.
* In 2008, persons with disabilities who run their own businesses and mothers with children with disabilities in need of special care were given the opportunity of early retirement.
* In order to provide an equal platform of competition for persons with disabilities, State Personnel Law was amended and a special and central exam was developed in 2013 for persons with disabilities who want to become civil servants.
* In 2011, prohibition of night employment or night shift for persons with disabilities provided opportunity for PwD's to have different working or out-of office hours.
* On 06.01.2016, the practice of delivering income support to operators of transportation services has started as part of free transportation of persons with disabilities.
* As per Circular No 2010/20 on Patient Transportation Service, persons who were assessed to receive ambulatory care at regular intervals within a treatment plan are transported from their homes to the health care facilities in an accessible transportation vehicle.
* Persons with disabilities can benefit free of charge or with reduced fees from the sports facilities and activities of 81 Provincial Directorates of Youth and Sports and autonomous or non-autonomous federations.
* Citizens with 40% or higher disabilities can benefit from free transportation by using their disability ID Cards on intracity and intercity lines of public railway and maritime vehicles and on intracity lines of mass transport vehicles operated either by municipalities or by real persons or transportation companies authorized by municipalities. Relatives of citizens with a severe disability can also benefit from the right of free transportation as attendants.

**3. Legislative and Policy Framework Concerning Accessibility for PwDs**

Recently in Turkey, some significant legislative arrangements have been made in order to ensure independent and secured access of all buildings, open spaces and transportation vehicles by persons with disabilities.

The most outstanding of these arrangements is the amendment of Construction Law No 3194 by provisions of Law No 572 on 30 May 1997. The amendment provides for the obligation of abiding by the related standards of Turkish Standards Institution (TSE) on planning for accessibility in construction plans; urban, social and technical infrastructure plans and buildings. Thus, the obligation of ensuring accessibility in planning, certification, implementation and monitoring activities was imposed to all relevant parties that are responsible for rendering urban services with regard to built environment (Additional Article 1). Besides, related amendments were made in building bylaws in 02 September 1999 in order to take necessary measures to ensure accessibility.

Accessibility related standards of Turkey that include the basic accessibility principles are prepared and revised by TSE in coordination with EYHGM. There are currently standards on buildings, open spaces, tactile ground surfaces, elevators and transportation stations.

In 2005, a legal obligation was imposed about accessibility arrangements with the related provision of TDA. As stated in the related provision: "The existing official buildings of the public institutions and organizations, all existing road, pavement, pedestrian crossing, open and green areas, sporting areas and similar social and cultural infrastructure areas and all kinds of structures built by the natural and legal persons serving to public shall be brought to suitable condition for the accessibility of the disabled people within seven years after the date of effect of this Law (Provisional Article 2). Besides, TDA also provides for ensuring accessibility of public transportation services operated or audited by municipalities or metropolitan municipalities within 7 years (Provisional Article 3). Prime Ministry Circular no 2006/18 of 12 July 2006 and Prime Ministry Directive of 12 August 2008 were issued with the purpose of promoting the implementation of these provisions.

Despite all arrangements and measures taken, it was assessed at the end of the granted period that the related parties did not fully and satisfactorily carry out their responsibilities in terms of ensuring accessibility. Therewith, a monitoring and auditing mechanism was established on 12 July 2012 as per related provisions of Law No 6353. Thus, general and special sanctions were provided for those who did not fulfill accessibility obligations. Following a legislation amendment in 2012, the period of time given for accomplishing accessibility arrangements was extended for 1 more year. The aim of the extension was establishing an audit and monitoring mechanism that will help in facilitating and accelerating accessibility arrangements. This arrangement concluded the establishment of accessibility monitoring and auditing commissions consisting of representatives of related ministries and disability confederations in all provinces. As a result of the audits made by these commissions, an extra period was granted (until 7 July 2015) to municipalities, public institutions and the owners of the public buildings, open spaces and public transportation vehicles for the elimination of accessibility shortcomings and it was determined to impose an administrative fine to natural and legal persons who do not fulfil their obligations (Provisional Article 3).

"Regulation on Monitoring and Auditing Accessibility Arrangements" was enacted and published on 20 July 2013. The aim of the regulation is; assessing accessibility level of public buildings, open spaces and public transport vehicles in line with the accessibility standards in force; establishing an electronic infrastructure that will facilitate the monitoring process; imposing fine for inaccessibility, generalizing and pioneering accessibility works by means of National System on Monitoring Accessibility which covers NGO’s and obtaining reports and statistical data.

In addition, various facilitative measures were taken in Property Ownership Law No. 634 for the project revision of the dwellings where persons with disabilities reside Moreover, necessary amendments were made in the Highway Traffic Law No 2918 with the purposes of allocating special parking lots for the use of drivers with disabilities, prohibiting use of such lots by other drivers and designing parking cards for persons with disabilities.

Principles for production of accessible vehicles to be used in public transportation and technical features of modifications to be made in vehicles in use were established by the provisions of Type Approval Regulation on Special Provisions on Vehicles with More than 8 Passenger Seats and Vehicles Used for Passenger Transportation that was put into practice on February 2009. Additionally, a circular titled "Modification of Inner-City Public Transportation Buses for Accessibility of Persons with Disabilities" was issued in order to facilitate the implementation of Provisional Article 3 of TDA. Besides, another regulation was put into effect in 2011 in order to ensure the necessary measures taken for facilitating the ship to shore and shore to ship passage of persons with disabilities. "Barrier Free Airports" Project was initiated by Directorate General of Civil Aviation for ensuring accessibility of all airports in Turkey. Within the scope of this project, 13 airports were found eligible for the award of "Barrier Free Airport Organization" to which 23 other organizations have applied.

With the intention of steering efforts of creating accessible built environments, the year of 2010 was declared as "Year of Action for Accessibility for All" as per the Consent of Prime Ministry. Within this framework, "Strategy Paper and Plan of Action on Accessibility" was prepared by contributions of related NGO's and governmental institutions under the coordination of OZIDA (repealed) and it was approved by Decision No 2010/35 of Higher Planning Council.

Within the context of the action plan, Council of Higher Education in coordination with EYHGM issued and disseminated a circular on including the principle of *Accessibility for All* into the curricula of the following departments of Universities; architecture, urban and regional planning, interior architecture, industrial design of products, landscape architecture. Regulation on Monitoring and Auditing Accessibility Arrangements has achieved progress in removing barriers and discriminatory practices experienced by persons with disabilities both in physical environment and public services. The definition of “accessibility” has been included to Turkish Legislation by means of this regulation. Owing to the Forms of Accessibility Assessment for Open Spaces and Buildings prepared in 2011, barriers have been detected in line with accessibility standards.

With an amendment made on Turkish Disability Act, the task of monitoring and auditing accessibility was imposed to Ministry of Family and Social Policy. Regulation on Monitoring and Auditing Accessibility Arrangements, that was prepared in accordance with this amendment, was published and put into effect on 20 July 2013 and thus Accessibility Monitoring and Auditing Commissions were set up in provinces under the structure of governorates with the participation of representatives of public institutions, persons with disabilities and disability CSO’s confederations. Using an assessment and auditing form attached to the Regulation, the Commissions assess the accessibility level of public buildings, open spaces, mass transport services in the city provided or audited by metropolitan municipalities and municipalities.

Accessibility focused awareness raising activities were organized between 2011 and May 2016 with the purpose of informing persons with disabilities and their families about their rights regarding accessibility. Besides, Training courses were held for the technical personnel employed at related public institutions or municipalities. Within the scope of Accessibility Meetings which have been held for 30 times so far, over 9.000 top managers and technical personnel were informed about accessibility.

Accessibility Support Project (ERDEP), that is being carried out by EYHGM, aims extending accessibility to provincial and national borders by means of good practices and raising awareness on accessibility. EYHGM provides specialized and technical knowledge support for piloting areas or modelling practices that aim ensuring accessibility of vital physical environments such as sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, parks, playgrounds, public toilets, parking lots, mass transportation stops and public buildings with high numbers of visitors such as provincial directorates of ministries, municipality service buildings, governor’s buildings, museums, health care centres, hospitals and schools. Though the main objective of the project focuses on implementation, it also aims at awareness raising and extending accessibility practices. The project has a budget only for piloting applications, but the public institutions have to demand and allocate a special budget for accessibility or reasonable accommodation arrangements.

All kind of plans, projects, constructions, audits or the tenders to be realized with such purposes have to comply with the zoning legislation and TDA.

**4. The Legislative and Policy Framework Concerning Support Services for PwDs**

Ministry of Family and Social Policy aims to provide appropriate support and services for persons with disabilities and elderly people in the light of “Human First” principle and “Universal Human Rights” approach and by means of producing comprehensive, permanent and modern solutions in line with international documents. In provision of all services, the Ministry takes a stand against all types of discriminative actions and outdated understandings.

Within this scope, the social services provided under authority and responsibility of General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly are as follows;

1. **Health and Care Services for Persons with Disabilities**

Institutional care services in Turkey have recently started to transform in parallel with the approach of "community based care". Within this context, Barrier Free Life Centers that provide institutional care service and living environments to PwDs in need of care in single floor houses with gardens for 10 to 12 persons and Hope Homes that aim for ensuring active participation to social life by means of providing care services to small groups of PwDs in apartment houses have put into service since 2006.

The primary goal of care services is to ensure that persons in need of special care are provided with necessary service at their homes and social environments with accompaniment of their family members and to give financial support to families in order to sustain this service. Within this scope, the following social support services are rendered;

**Home Care Allowance:** For persons with disabilities who receive care by their relatives at home, net minimum wage is paid to the person offering care, under the framework of home care services. Since the person providing care is a relative and lives with the disabled under the same roof, it is considered that the minimum wage paid constitutes a contribution for the family income. As per December 2015 data, 508.481 persons receive financial support within the scope of home care services.

With the purpose of supporting “Home Care Services”, citizens who can not benefit from care services are provided with the support of professional care workers. Besides, Foster Parents who are voluntary to take over care of children in need of care support can adopt children.

**Home Care Support:** If families of persons with disabilities need support in terms of delivery of care, care personnel of public care centers go to the dwelling and provide half time service. By December 2015, 30 families and persons with disabilities benefited from this service.

**Care for Temporary Visitors and Guests:** This is a new service model which includes provision of care service free of charge to a person with disability whose family members cannot deliver care to him/her as they have to travel to another city or country with the purposes of a vacation or health care etc.

In such cases, persons with disabilities can stay and receive care in public care institutions for maximum 30 days in a year. All needs of persons with disabilities are covered by the institution during this period. As per December 2015 data, 290 persons with disabilities benefit from this service.

**Day Care Services:** Along with the residential care and rehabilitation centers affiliated with the Ministry, there are also Rehabilitation and Family Consulting Centers that provide day service for out-patients. These centers, providing either half day or full day service, combine rehabilitation and care services for individuals or groups and also provide consultancy service for families - especially for mothers of persons with disabilities. These centers are opened nationwide on demand. By the end of 2015, there are 5 centers that render service to 432 persons with disabilities.

**Public Institutions:**

**Care and Rehabilitation Centers:** Care and Rehabilitation Centers are social services institutions established to make up for the loss of function of those persons who cannot carry out the ordinary requirements of daily life due to their physical, mental, and psychological disabilities, as well as to help them acquire skills which would make them be self-sufficient in the society, and to provide permanent care for those who cannot acquire such skills. Persons with disabilities are placed in these centers in categorization by age, sex, or type of disability. Currently, 6204 persons with disabilities benefit from 24 hours institutional care in 87 care and rehabilitation centers.

**Barrier Free Life Centers:** Institutional care services of Turkey are in the process of transformation in parallel with the approach of community based care in recent years. Within this scope, the work on establishing principles and standards of care services for PwDs who need personal care has gained acceleration since 2006 in order that the services are rendered without prejudice to human dignity. Besides, as the new service models reflecting this transition in institutional care, “Barrier Free Life Centers” have been put into service. The Project "Barrier Free Life Centers" was designed with the purpose of increasing the quality of residential care services in institutions and the number of barrier free care centers. The centers provide institutional care service and living environments to PwDs in need of care in single floor houses with 4 bedrooms and a garden for 12 persons. Currently, there are 25 Barrier Free Life Centers in Turkey.

**Family Consultation and Rehabilitation Centers** offer services for disabled children and their families with a view to helping the disabled children become self-sufficient, preparing them for school, and attaining domestic harmony at home.

**Domestic Social Service Units (Hope Houses):** The Project “Hope Houses” was initiated with the aim of providing care services through active participation to society to PwDs who reside in care and rehabilitation centers and whose conditions are assessed to be suitable for receiving such a service. In line with the aims of the project, persons with disabilities are provided with the opportunity of active participation to social life and receiving care and rehabilitation services. Each house provides service to between four to six people with disabilities in company with one home care personnel and under supervision of a care professional. Currently, approximately 600 persons with disabilities benefit from care at home environment in 111 Hope Houses.

**Private Care Centers**

Persons in need of special care can also receive daily or institutional service from private care centers operated by natural or private entities and audited by provincial directorates of Ministry of Family and Social Policy. The government pays approximately 2 minimum wages (approx. 750 Euros) to private care centers for 24 hours inpatient care service. By December 2015, the total number of these centers is 156 and 10.823 persons with disabilities benefit from them.

As per Circular No 2010/20 on Patient Transportation Service, persons who were assessed to receive ambulatory care at regular intervals within a treatment plan are transported from their homes to the health care facilities in an accessible transportation vehicle.

Persons with disabilities, when they need physiotherapy and rehabilitation services, can benefit from physical medicine and rehabilitation departments of public hospitals, physiotherapy and rehabilitation hospitals or directly from private centers on rehabilitation and physiotherapy. In line with the *Communication on Implementation of Health Care Services*, the fee of such services provided to PwDs is covered by Social Security Institution.

With the purposes of diagnosing and intervening disability at the earliest stage as possible, some extra measures have been taken by Ministry of Health. These measures include extending the scope of free vaccination service, development of medical screening and prevention schemes, free iron reinforcement, promoting breast feeding and increasing the number of infant friendly schemes and particularly medical programmes aimed at newborn at hospitals.

Accessibility arrangements in hospitals are also being carried out as per provisional Articles 2 and 3 of TDA that stipulates the accessibility of public institutions. Circular No 2010/79 of Ministry of Health stipulates that indoor and outdoor environments of hospitals should be accessible by PwDs. The circular also includes measures on providing parking lots and assistance to PwDs during all processes in hospitals, employing a sign language interpreter in hospitals, facilitating transfer of patients with disabilities to other hospitals and holding regular trainings for the personnel of hospitals. Additionally, Circular No. 2010/73-80 of the Ministry puts forward the provision on giving priority to PwDs in polyclinic services.

In provision of medical rehabilitation services in Turkey, informed consent of the beneficiary or his/her legal guardian is received initially. Besides, vocational and social rehabilitation services are provided in voluntary basis. Persons who want to benefit from such services are supposed to apply to the suppliers.

The right to rehabilitation services in equal terms with all citizens was stipulated by TDA. The Act provides that; training programmes are developed in order to the train the personnel needed in all areas of the rehabilitation and necessary measures are taken for the employment of these personnel and the active and effective participation of the PwDs and their families is essential in all stages of the rehabilitation including decision making, planning, executing and terminating rehabilitation services (Art. 10). In addition, the Decree Law No. 573 on Special Education Services necessitates receiving consent from families in all stages of educational rehabilitation including identification, assessment and placement (Art. 5).

In accordance with the provisions of *Social Security and General Health Insurance Law no. 5510,* PwDs who need to receive physiotherapy and rehabilitation services can benefit from this service in physiotherapy and rehabilitation departments of public hospitals, physiotherapy and rehabilitation hospitals or in private physiotherapy centers. The cost of such services and the devices used in rehabilitation processes are covered by the government in line with *Communication on Implementation of Health Care Services*

1. **Education Support for Persons with Disabilities**

Education system in Turkey is based on Article 42 of the Constitution which includes the following provisions; "No one shall be deprived of the right of education. Primary education is compulsory for all citizens of both sexes and is free of charge in state schools". Education policy is based upon the principle that all citizens have the right to education without facing any discrimination on the basis of language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion or sect and conducted along the lines of contemporary scientific and educational principles.

Decree Law No 573 on Special Education Services which was enacted in 1997 ruled that pre-school education starting from early childhood period is obligatory for all children with special needs and it regulated the principles regarding primary, secondary, higher and non-formal education. Educational environments for children with disabilities were also regulated in line with contemporary approaches. In addition, as per Primary Education and Training Law No 222, all parents or guardians are obliged to ensure regular attendance of their children to compulsory education institutions (Art. 52).

Ministry of National Education (MEB) which is responsible for providing equal education to all children also ensures that all children with disabilities use their right to education. Basic Law No 1739 on National Education provides for special measures to be taken in order to create equal opportunities for persons with special education needs (Art. 8).

TDA clearly underlines that the right of education of PwDs cannot be prevented by any reason and that children, youth and adults with disabilities shall be provided with education in equal terms with others and in inclusive environments by taking special conditions and varieties of individuals into consideration (Art. 15). In addition, an amendment made in Social Services Law No 2828 in 2011 ruled that equality of opportunities shall be taken as one of the basic principles of education/training services provided to PwDs at all ages, including pre-school and school ages and adults. On the other hand, parents were given the opportunity to participate in all levels of education of their children (Decree Law no 573 - Art. 4; TDA - Art. 16).

With the enactment of Law No 6287 on Amendments in Law on Primary Education and Certain Other Laws in 2012, duration of compulsory elementary education was increased to 12 years and this brought about a need for reform in the structure and names of existing special education schools and institutions. In this context, by means of amendments made in Regulation on Special Education Services, existing education rights of persons with special education needs were maintained together with introduction of new rules on the use of these rights. As per this regulation, educational assessment and evaluation of persons with special education needs are performed through assessment tools that are appropriate to the characteristics of the individual. Guidance during the transfer of students with special education needs to higher education institutions, determination of the type of supportive education, preparation of Individualized Education Programme (IEP) are among the issues regulated by this regulation. When necessary, opinions of parents and individuals are taken during education process or placement of such students to education institutions (Art. 8). All procedure regarding guidance, placement or monitoring of students with special education needs is performed by guidance services of schools and counseling and research centers (Art. 11, 12, 13, 22). Guidance and psychological consultation services for persons with special education needs are rendered in accordance with *Regulation on Guidance and Psychological Consultation Services*.

Persons with special education needs receive education in mainstreaming/inclusive classes together with their peers without disabilities, in special education classes, in special education schools for separate types of disabilities or in private special education schools established by natural and legal persons or special education and rehabilitation centers. These education services, including early childhood period, are provided at pre-school, primary and secondary education levels and in non-formal education.

Pre-school, primary, secondary and high-school education of persons with special education needs who receive inpatient treatment in public or private health-care institutions and/or have a chronic illness is provided in hospital classrooms which were opened within the framework of Regulation on Special Education Services and in line with protocols signed between MEB and Ministry of Health or universities.

The home schooling services provided to children who are not able to attend education institutions directly due to health problems at pre-school and primary education levels was extended to high school students with the enactment of Law No 6287 of 30 March 2012. The number of students benefiting from home schooling services is approximately 4500.

As per Decree Law No 573 on Special Education, special education support at each level and type of education shall be rendered to individuals who are in need of special education in order to realize the goals of educational programmes, and individual and group education possibilities are provided to meet this goal. Education costs of persons with special education needs whose disabilities were certified to be at the rate of 20% at least with a medical board report and who were found eligible for special education and rehabilitation services upon an assessment of special education assessment boards are covered by MEB budget at a certain rate to be set each year (Law No. 3797, Additional Art. 3). Within this scope, one person with a disability receives at least 8 sessions of individual education and 4 sessions of group education in special education and rehabilitation centers.

General Directorate of Special Education Institutions and General Directorate of Life Long Learning affiliated with MEB carry out joint activities for PwDs whose ages are not eligible for compulsory education. The courses demanded by persons with special education needs are opened within the body of *Adult Education Centers*. Besides, literacy courses are opened every year in July and August for illiterate adults with visual or hearing disabilities whose ages are over the compulsory education age.

MEB has some supportive practices for persons with special education needs such as free transportation to public institutions of special education, free provision of lunches, education materials and course books prepared in accessible formats.

With the purpose of providing accessible course materials, MEB prepared and distributed 20 different guide books in Braille for primary education and 16 course books in Braille for secondary education free of charge to teachers with visual disabilities. Course books are prepared in Braille alphabet for students with visual disabilities and they are distributed free of charge every school year.

Course books for students with hearing disabilities and teachers who teach them have been prepared and distributed free of charge since 2010-2011 school year.

Course books for students with mental disabilities who attend to vocational education centers or application centers of special education have also been prepared and distributed free of charge since 2008-2009 school year.

MEB issued circulars in parallel with the related standards of Turkish Standards Institution in 1992, 2000 and 2009 with the purpose of enhancing accessibility of schools for PwDs. Since 1998, all school projects and buildings, especially entrances, playgrounds and indoors of schools have been designed and built barrier free and accessible as per this legislation. Furthermore, multi layered buildings of education have been built with elevators for PwDs. MEB have been communicating to its provincial organizations that measures should be taken as much as possible in order to plan educational environments for students with physical disabilities in the ground floors of all pre-existing schools.

Measures to ensure accessibility of secondary or higher education exams are taken on the basis of personal needs. In this respect, persons with special education needs who attend to inclusive classes and persons with special education needs who attend to primary education, general education or vocational/technical training programmes in special education schools/institutions can take central exams or other exams held in provinces on request.

There are special measures for students with disabilities in exams such as allocation of a class for the person (if required by the type of disability), granting of extra time, assignment of assistants for reading questions or coding answers and replacement of some questions with its equivalent. Guidebook on Student Selection and Placement System is prepared in audio-visual format by Student Selection and Placement Center (OSYM). The sign language interpretation of the guidebook was also recorded in video format for the use of applicants with hearing disabilities. Besides, audio format of the exam booklets as well as code sheets or a reader and a code sheet are provided to persons with visual impairments on request or extra time is given. Moreover, questions with visual contents are replaced with other questions for persons with visual disabilities. Consulting and Coordination Unit for persons with Disabilities affiliated with Student Selection and Placement Center provides consultancy to students with disabilities about the university programmes that can be chosen through Transition to Higher Education Examination. In addition, official website and information system of MEB is in an accessible format.

TDA stipulates establishment of *Consulting and Coordination Centers for Persons with Disabilities* in universities within the body of the Council of Higher Education with the tasks of providing education materials, preparing special education materials, planning for and ensuring environments appropriate for education, sheltering or study of PwDs (Art. 15).

University students with disabilities are given priority in public dormitories and state grants. However, due to the fact that non-refundable grants are subject to the condition of academic achievement, students with disabilities are also supposed to meet this condition for continuing their grants.

TDA stipulates establishment of *Turkish Language System* by Ministry of Family and Social Policy with the aim of enabling PwDs benefit from their educational rights and public services effectively (Art. 15).

Within this scope, a regulation on establishment of the Turkish sign language and training of sign language interpreters and instructors was issued in 2006. The Regulation initiated the work towards preparing National Sign Language under the chairmanship of Turkish Language Association and with the participation of related institutions. *Science and Approval Board of Turkish Sign Language* was established affiliated with Turkish Language Association with the aim of preparing grammar rules and a dictionary of sign language. After specification of Turkish Sign Language Finger Alphabet, all words in Online Turkish Dictionary of Turkish Language Association were illustrated in finger alphabet. Besides, the website of Turkish Language Association includes a voice dictionary of Turkish, which is indeed the audio version of Updated Turkish Dictionary. There are currently efforts to print this dictionary in Braille Alphabet.

With the purpose of providing a common use of symbols in sign language and eliminating discrepancies, MEB prepared the Turkish Sign Language Dictionary. The Dictionary was published in 5000 copies and sent to the related public institutions for revision. Furthermore, within the scope of related activities with this dictionary, a training course for trainers of sign language was organized with the participation 81 persons. It is planned to extend the use of the dictionary after revision to be made in line with the opinions and recommendations of related organizations and institutions. The work on preparation of grammar rules of Turkish Sign Language is currently in progress. Within this context, the research project on Turkish Sign Language was carried out in 2015 with the purposes of preparing a Turkish Sign Language Grammar Book and a sample dictionary. The research was initiated with the participation of 113 persons in 26 provinces in 6 geographical regions of Turkey. During the interviews with the participants, approximately 800 thousand words were analyzed and 200 thousand of these words were deciphered. Turkish sign language grammar book and a sample dictionary were prepared as the outputs of the project.

The Project titled “Strengthening Special Education” financed by European Union was initiated by MEB in 2011 and it was concluded in June 2013 with the coordination of General Directorate of Special Education, Guidance and Counselling Services. The objective of this project was to ensure and improve social inclusion of PwDs by means of enhancing education environments and increasing education opportunities through mainstreaming. Within this scope, training courses were organized with the participation of trainers, families, teachers, principals and school personnel in pilot schools. Besides, the outcomes of the Project; the books titled “Guidebook for Teachers on Mainstreaming Practices in Education”, “Integration Practices in Vocational Education and Technical Training”, Standards for the Models of Barrier Free Schools and a Road Map for Performance Indicators” were published and disseminated. The Guidebooks are published online on the website of MEB. The Project activities also cover the work on drafting a plan of action and a strategy paper aimed at raising public awareness in pilot provinces and elaborating policy recommendations on inclusive education.

In cooperation with all related Ministries, ASPB has completed legislative arrangements necessary for providing special education to all children with disabilities who were assessed to be in need of special education by special education assessment boards. The number of students receiving special education in special education schools or inclusive classes has reached up to 288.489 in school year of 2015 – 2016.

In order to provide equality of opportunities in education and to encourage children with disabilities for education, studies have been carried out for “free transportation of children in need of special education to schools and institutions”. Within the scope of mobile education system, 69.954 students were carried to their schools in the education year of 2014-2015.

Furthermore, ASPB has been working in cooperation with relevant institutions with the purpose of delivering or producing education materials to university students with disabilities or preparing special education – research or accommodation environments.

1. **Support for Employment of Persons with Disabilities**

As per the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey; everyone has the right and duty to work. The State shall take the necessary measures to raise the standard of living of workers; and to protect workers and the unemployed in order to improve the general conditions of labor, to promote labor, to create suitable economic conditions for prevention of unemployment and to secure labor peace (Art. 49). No one shall be required to perform work unsuited to his/her age, sex, and capacity. Minors, women, and persons with physical and mental disabilities, shall enjoy special protection with regard to working conditions (Art. 50).

Employment is thought to be prerequisite in full and equal participation into social life. Employment policies towards persons with disabilities are mainly based on Quata/levy scheme. Quota/levy scheme practiced in such a way that both public and private employers under these laws are forced to employ a certain proportion of persons with disabilities. The people who will be employed based on quota system have to have at least 40% loss of working capacity.

In accordance with the Civil Servants Law numbered 657, the government funded agencies and organizations are obliged to employ disabled civil servants so that they represent 3% of the full vacancies in that agency or organization.

In accordance with the Labour Law numbered 4857, every private sector is obliged to employ at least 50 disabled employees -according to their working capacity- so that they represent 3% of the total number of employees and every public sector should employ 4% of its employees from persons with disabilities. In accordance with the same Law, employers must pay a levy for each person below the required quota of persons with disabilities that they should have employed (the current amount of the levy is; 2098 Turkish Liras – approx. 650 Euros per person per month by 2016 May). It’s ruled that fines collected from employers will be collected in State Employment Agency and will be used in the projects like employment, self-employment, vocational training and rehabilitation of people with disabilities. In accordance with the Labour Law numbered 4857, the Grant System for employing disabled persons has been established based on contribution for employers.

Treasury pays the total amount of employer’s share of insurance premium as an incentive for each disabled worker if the employer meets it legal requirement. Besides the Treasury pays 50% of the total amount of employer’s share of insurance premium as an incentive if the employer recruits more disabled people than the legal requirement, even when he/she has no such legal obligation. There are also subsidies for people with disabilities. Persons with disabilities who are active in the labour market benefit from tax reductions. The amount of reduction differs according to the degree of disability.

As per December 2015, a total of 20.197 persons with disabilities were employed by the private sector in Turkey within the scope of quota/levy scheme.

TDA takes special measures to ensure the employment of disabled people. During the employment, no discriminative practices can be performed against PwDs. It is obligatory that measures in the employment processes in order to reduce or eliminate the obstacles and difficulties that may be faced by the PwD who work for a job are taken and the physical arrangements are done by the establishments and organizations.

Ministry of National Education provides vocational training to persons with disabilities through the general education system including persons with disabilities. Besides, persons with disabilities can also get vocational training with their non-disabled peers through apprenticeship training system. Moreover, Turkish Employment Agency arranges vocational courses for people with disabilities.

In TDA, new concepts were introduced regarding training and employment of PwDs. According to the Article 12 of the Law, work and occupation analyses of the disabled people are anticipated to be developed. Again, according to the Article 13 of the Law, “vocational rehabilitation” has been specially designed. “Regulation on Private Vocational Rehabilitation Centers” came into force in 2006. The aim of these centers is to provide training for disabled people suiting to their abilities, and to increase their social and economic welfare.

Another issue that was brought by Disability Act is related to the decision about which education will be provided for the disabled people who want to enroll in education centers. The educational evaluation and diagnose of the disabled people are carried out by the special educational evaluation board in the guidance research centers. The board decides the vocational branch of the training for the disabled people willing to take apprenticeship training in line with their interest, desire, ability, and skills and by taking the health board report into account. Relevant arrangement has been included in the Regulation on Special Education Services.

Furthermore, self-employed persons with disabilities and mothers of children with disabilities have the right of early retirement.

“Regulation on Conditions of Employment of Persons with Disabilities as Public Servants and the Procedure of Central Exam and Lot Draw” that was issued as per the amendment made in Law No. 657 was published on 03.10.2011.

As stated in the Regulation; persons with disabilities who were graduated from education institutions providing secondary, associate or undergraduate degree programs by the year of the Public Personnel Selection Examination for Persons with Disabilities (OMSS) shall be eligible for the exam. However, persons with disabilities who were graduated from primary education schools shall be subject to lot draw procedure. In addition, OMSS questions shall be prepared by taking into consideration the education level of Persons with Disabilities and the disability types. The first OMSS was held on 29 April 2012 with the participation of 60367 applicants. As per December 2015 data, 40.656 persons with disabilities are employed as civil servants.

Article 5 of The Labor Act imposes the “burden of proof” in discriminative practices or termination of contracts to employees as a rule. For instance, when an employee who was excluded from certain practices such as social rights or rise in wages enter an action against his/her employer and demand to benefit from the concerned rights/rises, he/she will try to prove that he/she is not different than other employees in his/her workplace. In accordance with the Act, the burden of proof on the employee should not be heavy. However, when an employee puts forward a situation indicating negligence of the employer, the burden of proof will belong to the employer. Besides, in case the labor contract of an employee with job security is terminated in violation of equal treatment obligation, the burden of proof will again belong to the employer.

As per the Regulation on employment of PwDs in private sector, employers can recruit employees with disabilities either through the agency of ISKUR or through their own means. In both cases, employers are obliged to take reasonable accommodation measures, charge employees with disabilities in accordance with their professions and provide them with the equipment and tools necessary for the concerned work.

In accordance with the Regulation on employing PwDs as workers in public institutions and organizations, examination or lot drawing procedures are applied in recruiting workers with disabilities. An upper limit of disability or a certain type of disability cannot be stipulated either in public or private sectors in the recruitment processes mentioned above.

TDA provides that the freedom of vocational choice and the right to access trainings cannot be restricted for PwDs. In this regard, vocational rehabilitation services formed the basic principle in training PwDs for a vocational activity in line with their capabilities and making them productive in employment. Article 12 of TDA stipulates that job and profession analyses, taking the types of disability into account, shall be made and vocational rehabilitation and training programmes shall be developed accordingly by the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Labor and Social Security under the coordination of the ASPB. The Act also lays down the condition that measures to develop the job and skills of the individuals according to their individual developments and abilities in the private vocational rehabilitation centers to be opened by natural or legal persons, skill improvement centers and/or various types of sheltered workshops should be taken.

Vocational rehabilitation services are also provided by the municipalities. Municipalities, when they deem necessary during the provision of these services, cooperate with the people’s training and apprenticeship training centers. In the event that the rehabilitation request of the disabled person cannot be met, he/she takes the service from the nearest center and the concerned municipality pays the service fee. In accordance with the relevant Regulation, the centers shall render physiotherapy, rehabilitation, ergotherapy, social rehabilitation; vocational training and consultancy services (Art. 13).

Besides, the provisions also regulate that sheltered workshops shall be established for employing persons with mental or psychological disabilities who have challenges in joining the labor force.

EYHGM took an active role in establishment of sheltered workshops. The General Directorate carried out legislative studies and sent the draft version to all related ministries.

**Projects on Employment of Persons with Disabilities**

1. **Project: “Begin to Work, Join the Life”:** EYHGM have conducted a project titled "Begin to Work, Join the Life" and it represents a completely new understanding that hold promise for the future of employment of persons with disabilities in open labor market. Having taken a start from the understanding of "each individual can take part in working life", the project targets at improving the supported employment system in Turkey by means of focusing on abilities instead of disabilities and to individuals instead of groups. This project was initiated by a protocol signed between MFSP and Garanti Bank on 19 June 2014. Being the first comprehensive project carried out by the government in cooperation with the private sector, it is expected to constitute a model in the field of employment of persons with disabilities.

Indeed, the project is a modeling study to be carried out in the provinces of Ankara, Istanbul, Sakarya, Samsun and Gaziantep. It aims at employing three hundred persons with disabilities with the help of sixty job coaches and ensuring those persons lead an independent life as wageworkers. The ultimate goal of the Project is promoting the employment right of persons with disabilities.

As mentioned above, the first phase of the Project started in Ankara and at the end of 6 months the target of 75 placements was surpassed with 108 persons with disabilities placed in employment. The second phase of the Project has started in Sakarya in February 2015. The target figure was surpassed in this province too with a total placement of 72 persons with disabilities.

Implementation of the project in Gaziantep and Samsun started in June 2015 and currently the placements continue. The implementation has started in İstanbul by September 2015. Job coaches have recently started field visits in this province.

1. **Sheltered Workshops Project**

In addition, Project on Sheltered Workshops was initiated with the coordination of ISKUR and Ministry of Family and Social Policy’s General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly with the aim of establishing sheltered workshops for persons with mental or emotional disabilities who face difficulties in labor market. As part of the Project activities, temporary financial support and a grant of maximum 150.000 TL (Approx. 46.000 EUR) will be given to the establishments that are found eligible to become a sheltered workshop.

The project underlines the necessity to have persons with mental/emotional disabilities who face much more difficulties in employment when compared to other groups of disabilities employed through the agency of sheltered workshops that have been accepted as a means of transition to employment.

Two workplaces have been entitled to be funded and have the status of sheltered workshops. Four workplaces are currently waiting for the accomplishment of the process.

1. **Project “Entrepreneurs Stop At No Barriers”**

Within the context of the Cooperation Protocol signed between ASPB and Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology, a Joint Project titled “Entrepreneurs Stop At No Barriers” was initiated by EYHGM and KOSGEB (Small and Medium Industry Development Organization). The Project aims to promote entrepreneurship among PwDs through entrepreneurship trainings and guiding activities and thus enhance their economic and social conditions. By October 2013, 436 PwDs 199 of which are women attended entrepreneurship trainings and a financial assistance of 306.619,46 TL in total (approx. 100.000 EUR) was given to 29 new entrepreneurs with disabilities. It is expected that 2.000 PwDs from different regions of the country will also attend to these trainings within the context of this project.

**5- Other Relevant Information**

**Disability Data**

In parallel with the global trends, the criteria on disability related data collection in Turkey does also undergo a transformation. Within this context, the Turkey Population and Housing Survey carried out by TUIK in 2011 across the country included a disability module in accordance with Washington Group criteria. According to the results of the Survey based on 2011 population projection, 6,9% of the total population declared that they have at least one disability, 3.3% declared that he/she has difficulty in walking or climbing stairs, 1.4% difficulty in seeing, 1,1% difficulty in hearing, 0.7% difficulty in speaking, 2% difficulty in learning, doing simple calculations, remembering and concentrating when compared to their peers and 4.1% declared that he/she has difficulty in holding or lifting something. In terms of sex, disability ratio is 5,9% for males and 7.9% for females. When assessed in terms of age groups, it is evident that the rate of people who declare that he/she has at least one disability increases in parallel with age. Whereas disability rate is 2,1% at age group of 10-14, 16,5% at age group 60-64 and 46,5% at age group 75 and over. In general, the rate of having at least one disability increases in parallel with age both for males and females.

Regarding the education level of the population with at least one disability, it appears that the education level of this population is lower when compared to the general population. Whereas the rate of literacy of the general population is 95.5%, it is 76.7% for the population with disabilities. This rate is 89.1% for males with disabilities and 67.6 for females with disabilities. Labor force participation rate of the population with at least one disability is quite low when compared to the participation rate of general population. Whereas the labor force participation rate is 45.5% for the general population, it is 22.1% for PwDs.

**Population and Housing Survey 2011**

**Table 2.1: Proportion of population with at least one disability by age groups\*, (%)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Male** | **Female** |
| **Total** | **6.9** | **5.9** | **7.9** |
| 3-9 | 2.3 | 2.5 | 2.1 |
| 10-14 | 2.1 | 2.4 | 1.8 |
| 15-19 | 2.3 | 2.6 | 2.0 |
| 20-24 | 2.7 | 3.4 | 2.0 |
| 25-29 | 2.6 | 3.0 | 2.3 |
| 30-34 | 3.2 | 3.4 | 3.0 |
| 35-39 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.1 |
| 40-44 | 5.1 | 4.7 | 5.6 |
| 45-49 | 6.9 | 5.9 | 7.8 |
| 50-54 | 8.8 | 7.1 | 10.7 |
| 55-59 | 12.1 | 9.2 | 15.0 |
| 60-64 | 16.5 | 12.3 | 20.4 |
| 65-69 | 23.0 | 18.3 | 27.2 |
| 70-74 | 31.9 | 26.3 | 36.3 |
| 75+ | 46.5 | 40.9 | 50.3 |

\*( Population of 3 years of age or over)

**Table 2.2: Proportion of population with at least one disability by type of disability\*, (%)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Type of Disability** |  |
| Difficulty in walking, descending/ascending stairs | 3,3 |
| Difficulty in seeing | 1,4 |
| Difficulty in hearing | 1,1 |
| Difficulty in speaking | 0,7 |
| Difficulty in learning, doing simple calculations, remembering and  concentrating when compared to peers | 2 |
| Difficulty in holding or lifting something | 4,1 |

\*(Population of 3 years of age or over)

1. A person may have more than one disability.
2. Persons who declared to have a lot difficulty in seeing or not being able to see at all even by using an aid were covered in the group of persons who have difficulties in seeing.
3. Persons who declared to have a lot difficulty in hearing or not being able to hear at all even by using a hearing aid were covered.

**Table 2.3: Proportion of population with at least one disability by sex and educational attainment\*, (%)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Educational Attainment** | **Total Population** | **Male** | **Female** |
| Illiterate | 23.3 | 10.9 | 32.4 |
| Literate but no school completed | 19.0 | 17.6 | 20.1 |
| Primary school | 36.1 | 38.5 | 34.3 |
| Primary education/ junior high school or equivalent | 12.5 | 19.3 | 7.6 |
| High school or equivalent | 6.5 | 9.7 | 4.2 |
| Higher education | 2.6 | 4.0 | 1.5 |
| Unknown | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 |

\*(Population of 6 years of age or over)

**Table 2.4: Population by the type of disability and educational attainment\*, (%)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Educational Attainment** | **Difficulty in seeing** | **Difficulty in hearing** | **Difficulty in speaking** | **Difficulty in walking or descending/ascending stairs** | **Difficulty in holding or lifting something** | **Difficulty in learning, doing simple calculations, remembering and concentrating when**  **compared to peers** |
| Illiterate | 23,2 | 29.1 | 32.9 | 27.4 | 26.1 | 34.9 |
| Literate but no school completed | 17.7 | 19.7 | 27.2 | 18.3 | 17.7 | 27.1 |
| Primary school | 33.7 | 32.8 | 21.0 | 37.4 | 38.3 | 24.9 |
| Primary education/ junior high school or equivalent | 13.4 | 10.3 | 12.2 | 9.7 | 10.4 | 9.2 |
| High school or equivalent | 8.2 | 5.7 | 5.2 | 5.2 | 5.5 | 3.0 |
| Higher education | 3.7 | 2.4 | 1.5 | 2.0 | 2.1 | 0.9 |
| Unknown | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

\*(Population of 6 years of age or over)

**Table 2.5: Basic labour force indicators of population by educational attainment, population with at least one disability\*, (%)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Educational attainment** | **Rate of participation to labour force** | **Employment rate** | **Unemployment rate** |
| **Total** | **22.1** | **20.1** | **8.8** |
| Illiterate | 8.7 | 8.5 | 2.6 |
| Literate but no school completed | 15.0 | 14.3 | 4.5 |
| Primary school | 23.2 | 21.7 | 6.4 |
| Primary education/ junior high school or equivalent | 38.9 | 33.0 | 15.0 |
| High school or equivalent | 38.2 | 32.9 | 13.9 |
| Higher education | 44.9 | 41.0 | 8.7 |
| Unknown | 99.2 | 98.5 | 0.7 |

\*(Population of 15 years of age or over)

**Table 2.6: Basic labour force indicators of population by type of disability\*, (%)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Educational attainment** | **Rate of participation to labour force** | **Employment rate** | **Unemployment rate** |
| Difficulty in seeing | 23.2 | 20.9 | 10.2 |
| Difficulty in hearing | 18.5 | 17.1 | 7.5 |
| Difficulty in speaking | 12.9 | 11.7 | 9.4 |
| Difficulty in walking, descending/ascending stairs | 15.1 | 13.9 | 8.2 |
| Difficulty in holding or lifting something | 18.1 | 16.6 | 8.6 |
| Difficulty in learning, doing simple calculations, remembering and  concentrating when compared to peers | 16.0 | 14.9 | 6.4 |

\*(Population of 15 years of age or over)

**Labour Force:** It comprises employed and unemployed working-age population.

**Employment:** It comprises all working age population who is economically active during the reference week (last week of September 2011) for at least one hour as a regular employee, casual employee, employer, self-employed and unpaid family workers; and all regular employees, employers and self-employed persons who have a job but not at work in the reference week for various reasons are considered as employed.

**Table 2.7: Proportion of population with at least one disability by provinces and sex\*, (%)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Male** | **Female** |
| **Total** | **6.9** | **5.9** | **7.9** |
| Adana | 6,7 | 5,9 | 7,5 |
| Adıyaman | 7 | 6,6 | 7,5 |
| Afyonkarahisar | 7,3 | 5,7 | 8,9 |
| Ağrı | 8,7 | 7,3 | 10,3 |
| Amasya | 10,2 | 8,3 | 12,1 |
| Ankara | 5 | 4,2 | 5,8 |
| Antalya | 5,9 | 5,2 | 6,5 |
| Artvin | 10,3 | 8,5 | 12,1 |
| Aydın | 9,6 | 8,1 | 11 |
| Balıkesir | 8,5 | 7,1 | 9,9 |
| Bilecik | 8,9 | 7,3 | 10,6 |
| Bingöl | 8,4 | 7,8 | 9 |
| Bitlis | 7,7 | 6,8 | 8,7 |
| Bolu | 8,2 | 6,6 | 9,8 |
| Burdur | 10,7 | 8,6 | 12,8 |
| Bursa | 5,7 | 4,8 | 6,5 |
| Çanakkale | 6,1 | 5 | 7,2 |
| Çankırı | 11,4 | 8,7 | 14,1 |
| Çorum | 12,4 | 10,2 | 14,6 |
| Denizli | 10 | 7,8 | 12,1 |
| Diyarbakır | 8,3 | 7,6 | 9 |
| Edirne | 8,9 | 7,3 | 10,5 |
| Elazığ | 8 | 6,9 | 9 |
| Erzincan | 12,4 | 9,8 | 15 |
| Erzurum | 7,4 | 6,1 | 8,6 |
| Eskişehir | 5,6 | 4,7 | 6,5 |
| Gaziantep | 7,1 | 6,5 | 7,8 |
| Giresun | 13,5 | 10,7 | 16,2 |
| Gümüşhane | 9,7 | 7,3 | 12,2 |
| Hakkâri | 7,3 | 6 | 8,9 |
| Hatay | 6,8 | 6,3 | 7,3 |
| Isparta | 7,6 | 6,5 | 8,7 |
| Mersin | 7 | 6,4 | 7,6 |
| İstanbul | 5,2 | 4,5 | 5,9 |
| İzmir | 5,4 | 4,6 | 6,2 |
| Kars | 8,1 | 6,8 | 9,6 |
| Kastamonu | 9,8 | 8,2 | 11,5 |
| Kayseri | 5,8 | 4,9 | 6,7 |
| Kırklareli | 7,7 | 5,8 | 9,7 |
| Kırşehir | 11,4 | 8,9 | 13,9 |
| Kocaeli | 4,6 | 4,1 | 5,1 |
| Konya | 6,4 | 5,3 | 7,4 |
| Kütahya | 7,5 | 6,2 | 8,7 |
| Malatya | 9,7 | 8,1 | 11,3 |
| Manisa | 6,9 | 5,6 | 8,1 |
| Kahramanmaraş | 8,7 | 7,7 | 9,7 |
| Mardin | 6,8 | 6,2 | 7,4 |
| Muğla | 7,9 | 6,2 | 9,5 |
| Muş | 4,3 | 4,1 | 4,6 |
| Nevşehir | 8,6 | 7 | 10,1 |
| Niğde | 10,5 | 8,5 | 12,5 |
| Ordu | 8,7 | 7 | 10,3 |
| Rize | 9,7 | 7,6 | 11,8 |
| Sakarya | 6,1 | 5,2 | 7 |
| Samsun | 9,2 | 7,7 | 10,7 |
| Siirt | 6,3 | 5,6 | 7 |
| Sinop | 11 | 9 | 12,9 |
| Sivas | 8,9 | 7,5 | 10,2 |
| Tekirdağ | 5,6 | 4,6 | 6,6 |
| Tokat | 11,2 | 9,1 | 13,3 |
| Trabzon | 9,1 | 7 | 11,1 |
| Tunceli | 11,4 | 9 | 14,7 |
| Şanlıurfa | 6,7 | 6,2 | 7,1 |
| Uşak | 8 | 6,6 | 9,5 |
| Van | 5,2 | 4,7 | 5,7 |
| Yozgat | 9,7 | 8,1 | 11,4 |
| Zonguldak | 9,9 | 8 | 11,7 |
| Aksaray | 9,9 | 8,3 | 11,5 |
| Bayburt | 7,4 | 6,3 | 8,6 |
| Karaman | 9,3 | 7,8 | 10,8 |
| Kırıkkale | 7,7 | 6,7 | 8,8 |
| Batman | 5,6 | 5,3 | 5,8 |
| Şırnak | 7,4 | 6,7 | 8,1 |
| Bartın | 11,1 | 9,2 | 12,9 |
| Ardahan | 7,8 | 6,3 | 9,4 |
| Iğdır | 7,2 | 6 | 8,4 |
| Yalova | 8,8 | 7,4 | 10,2 |
| Karabük | 9,1 | 7,7 | 10,5 |
| Kilis | 9,5 | 8,2 | 10,8 |
| Osmaniye | 7,9 | 7,1 | 8,8 |
| Düzce | 9,9 | 8,1 | 11,6 |

\*(Population of 15 years of age or over)

**Statistics on Care Services for Persons with Disabilities (December 2015)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Years** | Private Care Center | | | Public Centers of Care and Rehabilitation | | Number of Persons Receiving Home Care Fee | Number of Hope Houses |
| Capacity | | Number Care Recipients with Disabilities | Capacity | Number of Care Recipients |
| **2015** | 13.473 | 10.823 | | 6.880 | 6.494 | 508.481 | 111 |
| **2014** | 13.443 | 10.319 | | 6.682 | 6.284 | 450.031 | 86 |
| **2013** | 13.325 | 10.169 | | 6.293 | 5.892 | 427.434 | 48 |
| **2012** | 12.869 | 9.328 | | 6.055 | 5.572 | 398.335 | 17 |
| **2011** | 8.651 | 6.707 | | 5.833 | 5.162 | 347.756 | 7 |
| **2010** | 7.065 | 4.331 | | 5.468 | 4.905 | 284.595 | 3 |
| **2009** | 3.744 | 2.144 | | 4.758 | 4.569 | 210.320 | 1 |
| **2008** | 2.003 | 768 | | 4.098 | 4.272 | 120.000 | 1 |

|  |
| --- |
| **Types of schools/institutions that were established for persons with special educational needs are listed below:** |
| 1. Early childhood education centers for children between 0-36 months old. |
| 1. Nursery schools providing special education to children between 37-66 months old; Nursery classes established within schools and education institutions that provide special education to children between 48-66 months old. |
| 1. Primary and secondary schools providing education to persons with visual, hearing, orthopedical or mild mental disabilities |
| 1. Special education application centers providing Level I and II education to persons with moderate or severe mental disabilities or autism |
| 1. Special education and vocational training centers that provide service to persons with visual disabilities and persons with mild mental disabilities below 23 years old that accomplished primary education but cannot continue with general or vocational secondary education programmes. |
| 1. Special education and job practice centers (schools) for persons with moderate or severe mental disabilities below 23 years old that cannot continue with general or vocational secondary education programmes. |
| 1. Vocational and special educational high schools for persons with hearing and orthopedical disabilities |

**OTHER AWARENESS-RAISING ACTIVITIES**

* **Support Programme for Persons with Disabilities**

With the purpose of increasing social awareness on disability issues, a Programme titled “Support Programme for Persons with Disabilities” (EDES) was initiated in 11 provinces located in Central and Eastern Black Sea Regions where the disability rate is the highest in Turkey. Within the scope of this programme, financial resources were allocated to offices of the governors in order to support disability focused projects. In 2011, 2 Million Turkish Liras (TL) was allocated for 33 projects that were found eligible among 158 projects. In 2012, 4 million TL were allocated for 63 projects out of 109. In 2013, the programme was extended to other provinces in the Black Sea Region and 4 million TL were allocated for 60 projects out of 156. In 2014, the programme continued to be extended by adding four new provinces and 3 million TL were allocated for 69 projects out of 170. In 2015, 4 million TL were allocated for 60 projects out of 204.

* **Communication Campaign: “There is another you”:**

The Campaign «There is Another You» was carried out by the General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly in cooperation with UNICEF with the purposes of ensuring dignity, promoting self-reliance and facilitating the children's active participation in the community. The activities of the campaign included organisation of outdoor meetings and recreational activities for children with or without disabilities and their families.

* **National Action Plan on Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Due to the fact that the number of persons with autism spectrum disorders has been increasing in Turkey, “Draft National Action Plan on Autism” was prepared with the purposes of increasing the quality of life for individuals with autism and their families, supporting parents and forming a basis for development of proper policies that would facilitate provision of quality care services. In line with the draft version of the action plan, EYHGM conducted Regional Awareness and Information Seminars in 11 provinces of Turkey. 4062 persons including the families with children with autism spectrum disorders, representatives of civil society organizations, universities, local governments and public institutions participated to these seminars. The Action Plan for 2016-2019 was recently submitted to High Planning Board which approved it with the Decision no. 2016/8 on 13.04.2016. However, this Decision has not been published on the Official Gazette yet.

* **“The Project of Awareness and Information Seminars” carried out within the scope of Draft National Action Plan on Autism Spectrum Disorder**

In accordance with “National Action Plan on Autism Spectrum Disorder”, Ministry of Family and Social Policy has conducted a Project titled “Awareness and Information Seminars” in 7 regions of Turkey. Within the scope of the Project, that aimed organizing seminars for publicizing and raising awareness about Autism Spectrum Disorder, 4062 persons including the families with children with autism spectrum disorders, representatives of civil society organizations, universities, local governments and public institutions participated to these seminars held in 11 provinces between 16 September and 19 December 2014. On 2 April 2015, World Autism Awareness Day, a meeting was organized with the participation of representatives from all relevant public institutions, civil society organizations and families and the results of the impact analysis of these seminars was publicized.

* **The research project on how society perceives persons with disabilities**

The research project on how society perceives persons with disabilities was carried out in 2008 with the purposes of obtaining reliable and comprehensive national data on the attitude towards persons with disabilities that can contribute to the development of national disability policy and strategies. The research focused on a large scale of questions such as how individuals defined disability, whether they had any relatives with disabilities or not; from which group of persons with disabilities they would like to get in touch in a social context; what their opinions were on abilities of persons with disabilities in an independent life; the level of their knowledge on the education level of persons with disabilities and on problems, challenges and discriminatory attitudes faced by persons with disabilities etc. The Ministry of Family and Social Policy currently utilizes the findings of this research for further activities and services for persons with disabilities.

* **Research Project on Turkish Sign Language**

The research project was carried out in 2015 with the purposes of preparing a Turkish Sign Language Grammar Book and a sample dictionary. The research was initiated with the participation of 113 persons in 26 provinces in 6 geographical regions of Turkey. During the interviews with the participants, approximately 800 thousand words were analyzed and 200 thousand of these words were deciphered. Turkish sign language grammar book and a sample dictionary were prepared as the outputs of the project.

* **Project on “Support to the Implementation and Monitoring of the UNCRPD in Turkey**

EYHGM has been implementing the Project on “Support to the Implementation and Monitoring of the UNCRPD in Turkey” since 2013 in coordination with the Turkish Office of United Nations Development Fund to strengthen the Government of Turkey in her current efforts on monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as wells as its preparation of the report on the progress of the implementation in Turkey. Within this project, the awareness among line ministries, relevant public authorities and civil society organizations on CRPD and their required inputs for Turkey’s Report preparation process increased through seminars and workshops. In addition, indicator and related data sets under seven titles that will be used for monitoring of implementation of the Convention are developed in coordination with all relevant public authorities, civil society organizations especially the ones of persons with disabilities, human rights organizations and academia.

* **Project on Ensuring Free Access of Students with Special Needs to Schools**

By means of Project on Ensuring Free Access of Students with Special Needs to Schools that was initiated in 2004, attendance of persons with special education needs to schools is promoted. The project started its activities by free transportation of autistic students or students with mental disabilities in 2004-2005 school year and the service was extended to cover students with visual, hearing or orthopedical disabilities and students that attend to special education classes after 2005-2006 school year. In 2014-2015 school year, free transportation service was provided to 69.954 students.

* **The Project on Researching the Efficiency Level of Supportive Special Education**

General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly conducted a project on researching the level of efficiency of supportive special education in 2013. The project aimed at identifying the problems and assessing the current situation in special education and rehabilitation centers that provide service to individuals with special education and preparing new policy models in order to achieve more efficient and operative services.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_