

SYRIANS BAROMETER 2021

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACHIEVING SOCIAL
COHESION WITH SYRIANS IN TÜRKİYE

Prof. Dr. M. Murat ERDOĞAN

EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY



Syrians Barometer-2021 is one of the most comprehensive field-studies on the subject of Syrians in Türkiye conducted simultaneously with the Turkish society and Syrians. SB research is repeated every year. The research aims to understand and analyze the social encounters, opinions, attitudes, anxieties, expectations and, most importantly, perceptions through comprehensive surveys and focus group meetings. It also attempts at observing the trends of change and suggesting policy recommendations regarding these.

Included in this Executive Summary are SB-2021's General Framework, Main Findings and Research Profile. The detailed "Policy Recommendations" section in the SB-2021 study is not included in the executive summary. Those interested in the subject can find it in the book.

The full Syrian Barometer-2021 study & Executive Summary are available in Turkish, English, Arabic at:

<https://www.unhcr.org/tr>
www.mmuraterdogan.com

with the support of



SB
2021

November 2022

SB-2021 RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS TEAM

Prof. Dr. M. Murat ERDOĞAN - Project Director / Concept & Reporting
Ankara University SBF Mülkiye Migration Research Center - MÜGAM & CATS-SWP

Assist. Prof. Dr. Nihal EMİNOĞLU - Project Coordinator/ Senior Expert
Çanakkale 18 Mart University

Tülin Haji MOHAMAD - Project Officer for Syrians/Senior Expert
Tulia Domna Research & Consulting Center

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fulya MEMİŞOĞLU - Senior Expert
İstanbul Yıldız Technic University

Deniz AYDINLI - Senior Expert

Rabia Gizem ŞENOĞLU - Project Assistant

SYRIANS BAROMETER ACADEMIC ADVISORY BOARD

Prof. Dr. Nermin ABADAN-UNAT- Boğaziçi University

Prof. Dr. Mustafa AYDIN - Kadir Has University

Prof. Dr. Banu ERGÖÇMEN - Hacettepe University

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ali ERYURT – Hacettepe University

Prof. Dr. Elisabeth FERRIS – Georgetown University-USA

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Nuri GÜLTEKİN – Gaziantep University

Prof. Dr. Ahmet Kasım HAN – İstanbul Aydın University

Prof. Dr. Ahmet İÇDUYGU – Koç University

Omar KADKOY - TEPAV

Prof. Dr. Neeraj KAUSHAL – Columbia University, USA

Prof. Dr. Ayhan KAYA – İstanbul Bilgi University

Prof. Dr. Fuat KEYMAN – Sabancı University

Ümit KIZILTAN – DG Canadian Ministry of Migration, Canada

Prof. Dr. Kemal KİRİŞCİ – Brookings Institute, USA

Prof. Dr. Nilüfer NARLI – Bahçeşehir University

Dr. Kathleen NEWLAND – Migration Policy Institute-MPI, USA

Prof. Dr. Barbara OOMEN - HZ University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands

Prof. Dr. Ludger PRIES – Bochum University, Germany

Assoc. Dr. Saime ÖZÇÜRÜMEZ – Bilkent University

Prof. Dr. H.Halil USLUCAN – Duisburg-Essen University, ZfTI, Germany

Prof. Dr. Nasser YASSİN – American University Beirut, Minister, Jordan

Assoc. Dr. Ayselin YILDIZ – Yaşar University

UNHCR Türkiye Team

Philippe LECLERC, Representative

Neşe KILINÇOĞLU

Alev Örsel KARACA

Selin ÜNAL

Gökçe SARAYDIN

ANAR Research:

Funda USLU, Ahmet BABAOĞLU

Translation:

Turkish-English: **Onur UNUTULMAZ**

Turkish-Arabic: **Tülin Haji MOHAMAD**

Design:

Yelis Erbil, Sude Ajans

Contents



1. JUSTIFICATION / FRAMEWORK	4
2. SB-2021 MAIN FINDINGS: TURKISH SOCIETY (TURKS)	9
3. SB-2021 MAIN FINDINGS: SYRIANS (uTP)	17



JUSTIFICATION FRAMEWORK

SYRIANS BAROMETER 2021

As the anti-administration demonstrations that started in March 2011 spiraled out of control and turned into a civil war encompassing all of Syria, the tragedy surrounding the plight of Syrians who had to escape from their countries to save their lives and sought asylum in neighboring countries has been continuing over 11 years. According to UNHCR's data, the number of Syrians who escaped out of the country, which had a national population of 22.5 million in 2011, has surpassed 6.6 million. Additionally, there are around 7 million displaced people within Syria.

Sharing 911 km of land border with Syria, one of the most significantly affected actors from this immense crisis is Türkiye. The first mass movement of Syrians into Türkiye took place with the arrival of a group of 252 individuals through the Cilvegözü border gate in Hatay. Just 3 years later, in 2014, Türkiye has become the country with the highest number of refugees¹ in the world. The influx of Syrian refugees to Türkiye continued until 2017. Entries from Syria to Türkiye have been minimal after 2017, but the increase in numbers has continued until recent years, with an annual average of 100 thousand Syrian babies born in Türkiye. According to the official figures provided by the Presidency of Migration Management (PMM) of the Ministry of Interior, the number of Syrians “under temporary protection” is 3,737,369 as of 31 December

2021.² This figure, which corresponds to 4,34% of Türkiye's national population of 82.210.952. According to the numbers announced by the Turkish Government, the number of Syrian babies born in Türkiye since 2011-2021 is 750 thousand, the number of Syrians who have received citizenship is 200 thousand, and the number of Syrians who have returned to Syria is around 500 thousand.

Although Türkiye is no stranger to migration and refugee movements, the recent experience with Syrians is unprecedented in terms of its scale and how quickly it had unfolded. In fact, while the number of individuals under international protection in the country was 58 thousand, by the end of 2014 the figure reached millions making Türkiye the country hosting the largest number of refugees in the world. With the issue of Syrian refugees perceived to be ever so intimately linked to the political developments in Syria, neither the Turkish public nor the political authorities nor the Syrian refugees themselves had predicted that the process would unfold in this way with millions of refugees ending up staying in Türkiye for many years. Until 2013, an effort was made to ensure the settlement of Syrians in the camps set up along the border regions. With the increasing numbers and capacities strained, it had become inevitable to let Syrians move to other parts of Türkiye. Thus, started a new sociolog-

1. In general, those who are forcibly displaced from their countries or within the country are called “refugees” in the sociological context. By 2022, the total number of displaced people, including refugees, is almost 100 million. However, according to UNHCR's data, in 2022, there are 27.1 million refugees in the world, 53.2 million internally displaced and 4.6 million asylum seekers. In other words, the concept of refugee is also used for those other than those who receive refugee status. It is also known that the number of people officially accepted as refugees in Türkiye is less than 50.

Even though Türkiye is party to both 1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 New York Protocol Relating to Legal Status of Refugees, it retains the geographical limitation in the Convention. The Law on Foreigners and International Protection, which entered into force in 2013, also adopted this approach while regulating the statuses of “refugee”, “conditional refugee”, and “subsidiary protection”. For Syrians who came to Turkey en masse after 2011, another type of protection, “Temporary Protection” status has been given. As used by academics and even from time to time by Türkiye public institutions, SB study, being fully aware of this legal context and its official definition of a refugee, prefers to use the concepts of “Syrians”, “asylum-seekers” or “refugee” to refer to the displaced Syrians arriving in Türkiye since 2011. (For the use of the concept of refugee by public institutions in Türkiye in the sociological context See: <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/138450/-our-country-has-been-home-to-the-highest-number-of-refugees-for-the-past-7-years->

2. The PMM gave the number of Syrians under temporary protection as 3,603,724 on November 3, 2022.

ical phase. Around 90% Syrians have become “urban refugees”, settling all across different towns and cities around Türkiye and living side by side with the Turkish society largely with their own accord. Currently, 99% of Syrians in Türkiye live outside of camps.

29 April 2021, marked the 10th anniversary of the arrival of first Syrians in mass groups in Türkiye, where the average duration of their stay exceeded 5 years. Because of the continuing war and the environment of violence that is becoming chronic in their country as well as the significant destruction these had brought on the country and other political and security-related problems, Syrians’ future prospects of returning to Syria have become uncertain. While their return is becoming more complicated, Syrians’ lives in Türkiye tend to become normalized in every facet. This is evident by the facts that a vast majority of Syrians are “urban refugees” living side by side with the Turkish society all around the country, at least 535 thousand Syrian babies were born in Türkiye, Syrians are actively involved in the working life with around 1 million Syrians working, up to 680 thousand Syrian children are enrolled to Turkish public schools with 33 thousand Syrian students at Turkish universities, and they are making their livelihood in Türkiye largely themselves. While it is difficult to predict what the future will hold for Syrians in Türkiye, the observable sociological fact is that the lives that they have established over the years here and the hopelessness regarding the situation in Syria deeply affected their plans for the future. It is seen that the Turkish society and Syrians ended up having to live together irrespective of either side’s expectations or desires. As their possibilities, motivations, and tendencies for returning to Syria has been weakened, there is a significant need for planning as well

as developing effective policies in social, political, and security fields.

SYRIANS BAROMETER: A FRAMEWORK FOR ACHIEVING SOCIAL COHESION WITH SYRIANS IN TÜRKİYE

SYRIANS BAROMETER (SB) research is conceived of as a regularly held study to be simultaneously conducted on Syrians under temporary protection in Türkiye, whose number has exceeded 3,7 million as of 31 December 2021, and the Turkish society. Structured as a continuation of two previous studies, “Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration” published in 2014 and “Syrians Barometer: A Framework for Achieving Social Cohesion with Syrians in Türkiye” published in 2017, 2019 and 2020; the study aims to measure and analyze the views, opinions, and attitudes of both Syrians in Türkiye and the Turkish society. The main aim of the SB is to take the most realistic scientific photograph possible of social reality, which is the most comprehensive study on social cohesion in this field and the main objective of which is to provide a “a framework for achieving social cohesion with Syrians in Türkiye”, being done once every year.

SB research is expected both to provide reliable data on a regular basis to public institutions, researchers, academics, civil society organizations, international organizations, and other interested parties; and to serve as a resource for empirical data-based policies. SB attempts to remain outside of the political discussions as much as possible and to draw attention to the social reality between Syrians and the Turkish society. In addition, it aims to examine the mutual perceptions and, more importantly, to track, measure, and analyze the transformation/development in the perceptions. It is in this context that the expe-

riences, foresights, expectations, anxieties, collaborations, and social cohesion processes are examined and analyzed, within the inevitable limitations of a social science research. Undoubtedly, the findings, which come from the comprehensive surveys and focus group meetings and which are used as the basis of analysis here, cannot be fully generalized. In other words, what is presented here as the views of the “Turkish society” or “Syrians in Türkiye” are obviously the views of the participants of this research and can only be related to the wider populations in a limited manner. In the same way, neither the findings that are based on the empirical data nor the analysis and interpretation that are conducted based on these findings are or can be presented as “the truth”.

One of the areas of social cohesion discussions created by mass human mobilizations is related to the “public” sphere, in other words, to the state’s preferences, capacity and practices. But more important for the issue of social cohesion is the societal sphere. **Syrians Barometer** study, by mainly focusing on the area of society, aims at investigating a social

situation, making empirical observations, and providing a *framework* on “integration”. **This study defines social cohesion as “the way of life in which different communities, whether came together voluntarily or involuntarily, could live in peace and harmony on a common ground of belonging where pluralism is embraced in a framework of mutual acceptance and respect.”** The study preferred to engage with the empirical findings of the field study and to underline the essential significance of perceptions and social acceptance for isocial cohesion, instead of elaborating theoretical discussions on the issue.

The surveys and focus group meetings of SB-2021 research were conducted in December 2021 and January 2022. In the face of dynamic nature of the process, during the course of time, there has been very significant developments concerning the subject matter of this study. However, the findings of the study naturally reflect and represent the context of the time that the data was collected.



SB-2021 MAIN FINDINGS

SYRIANS BAROMETER 2021



SB-2021 MAIN FINDINGS: TURKISH SOCIETY (TURKS)

The main findings of SB-2021, which were also evaluated in comparison to SB-2017, SB-2019 and SB-2020 studies where relevant, can be summarized as follows:

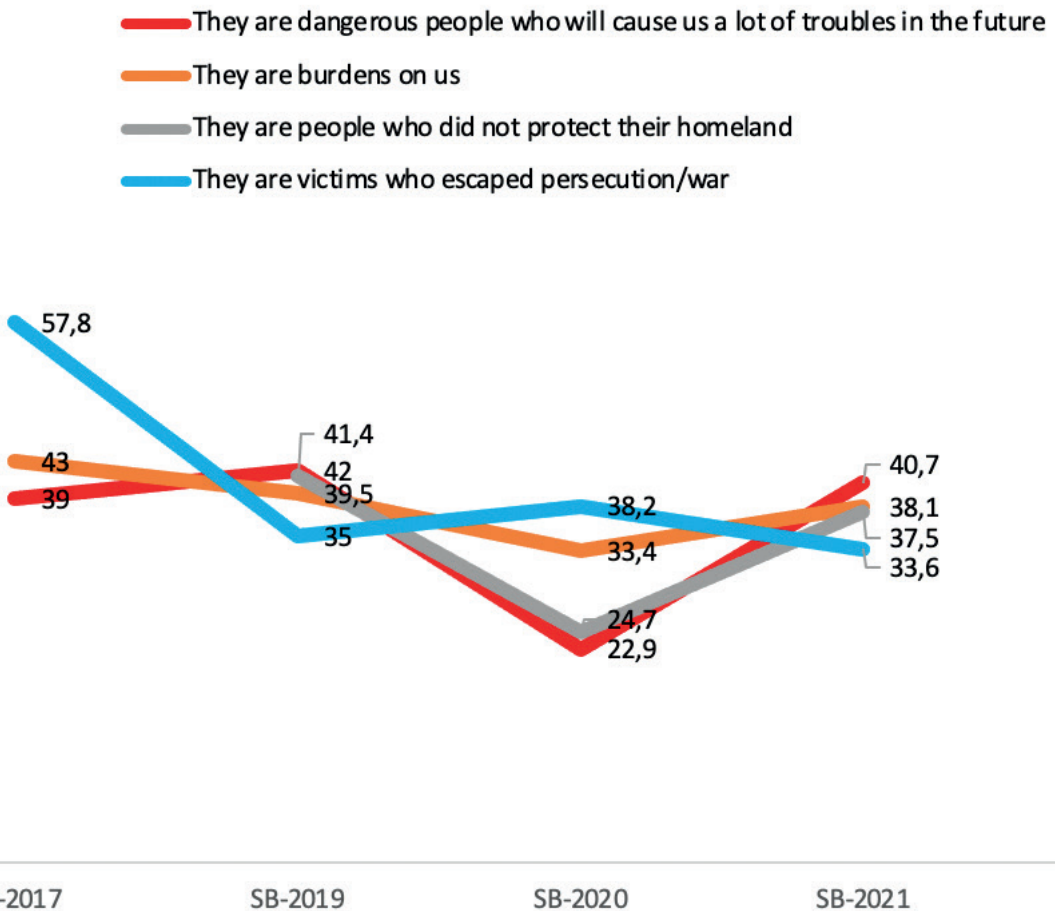
- A significant decrease in social acceptance and solidarity and an increase in concerns are observed in Turkish society. **It is observed that the “solidarity” in the first years has turned into “fragile social acceptance” first and then “tolerance” in the last period.** In the findings of SB-2017, SB-2019, SB-2020, and SB-2021 there has been a remarkable stability and determination in the general approach and attitude of Turkish society regarding Syrians. Turkish society desires Syrians to go back, but thinks that Syrians will be permanent in the country and that they will not return voluntarily. This creates anxiety. **The demand and expectation of the majority of Turkish society is that the Syrians are sent back to their countries.** It is observed that this demand is similar in all social and political identities.
- When the general findings of the SB study for both Turks and Syrians are tested with demographic variables such as sex, age, education level, and occupation, usually no significant changes are observed. Among all the features, **the most serious distinction is observed between the opinions of Turkish citizens living in the border cities with the large number of Syrian population and those living in other regions.** In general, it is observed that Turks living in border regions have bigger concerns and complaints about Syrians.
- **It can be said that the elections that will be held in Türkiye in 2023 are an important factor in the politicization of the process. Criticisms about refugees and refugee policy receive serious response from the society.** According to Turkish society, Syrians in Türkiye are among the top three most important problems the country is facing. The total rate of those who consider the issue of Syrians as Türkiye’s “most important”, “second most important” and “third most important” problem was 60% in SB-2019, 52,3% in SB-2020, and 60,4% in SB-2021. Among the top 10 problems, when the average number is calculated from the respondents’ answers, Syrians are perceived to be problem number 3.3 in SB-2019, 3.8 in SB-2020, and 3.3 in SB-2021. However, this finding needs to be carefully evaluated. Because, when a survey is applied on a specific issue – as in the SB – the degree of caring for that issue may increase.
- **High numbers, spatial concentrations, economic problems, turning the process into a tool of politics, continuing influx of irregular migrants and uncertainties indicate that we are moving towards a difficult process in terms of adaptation processes.** Both the living practices of the Syrians brought about by the spatial concentration, and the social distance and the

politicization of the process by the Turkish society towards the Syrians, the quantitative and qualitative development of the relations, limit and even complicate the adaptation processes in general. It is observed that this process also paved the way for a reactive identity formation process and even a new nationalism among Syrians.

- **There are changes in Turkish society’s definition of Syrians, in which concepts emphasizing concerns come to the fore.** Turkish society, which has defined Syrians

as “the oppressed, the victims, people fleeing war/oppression” for a long time, is increasingly preferring to define Syrians with the expressions of “concern/anxiety” in recent years. In SB-2021, the first three expressions that come to mind when Syrians are mentioned for Turkish society are “dangerous people who will cause problems in the future”, “people who are a burden to us” and “people who do not protect their own country”.

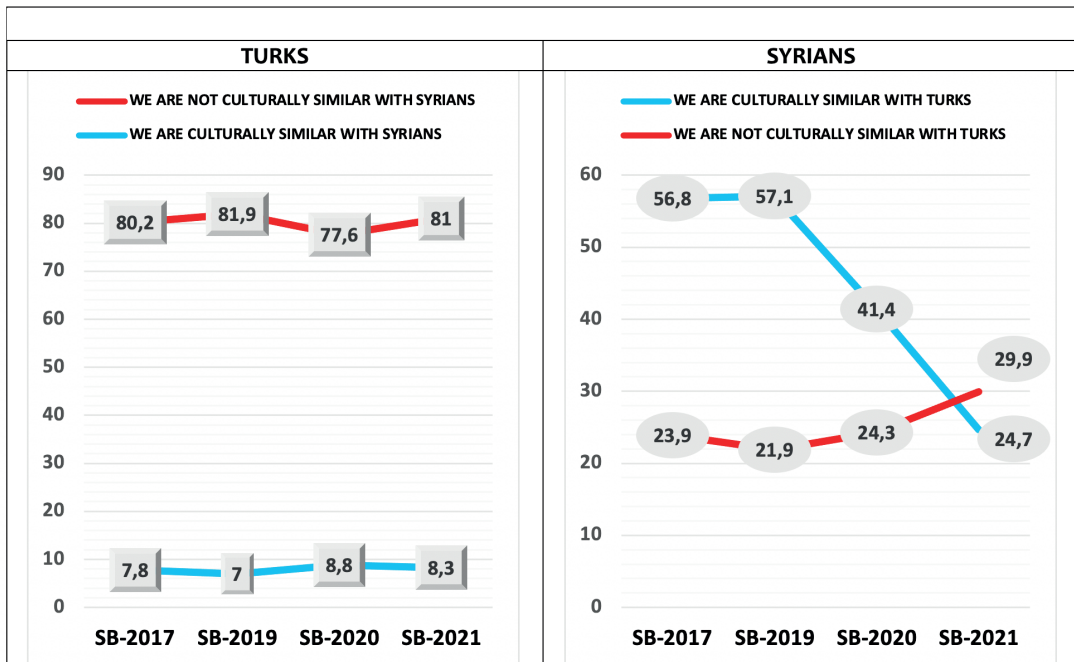
SB-2021-TABLE: Describe Syrians (Multiple Responses -Top 4 responses) (%)



The issue of cultural similarity between Turks and Syrians is followed in SB studies in the context of its effect on social cohesion. Among Turkish society, the combined share of the responses “not similar at all + not similar” was around 80% in all 4 SB surveys. The fact that the response “we are not culturally similar” in regions close to the Syrian border and even partially in Arabic-speaking regions is at the same or higher level than the Turkish average is also considered as a remarkable reaction expression. The answer given by the Syrians in Türkiye to the same question has undergone a serious change. It appears that in the earlier studies Syrians felt themselves culturally quite similar to the Turkish society, as the combined share of those replied with “similar” and “very similar” was 56,8% in SB-2017 and 57,1% in SB-2019. However, it appears

that a significant breaking point was reached in SB-2020 when the combined share of those who believe that Syrians and Turks are culturally similar dropped to 41,4%. In SB-2021, in turn, this decreasing trend has continued and this figure has further dropped to 24,7%. In SB-2021, the rate of Syrians who were of the opinion that “we are similar” (24.7%) dropped to 5.2 points less than those of the opinion that “we are not similar” (29.9%) for the first time. This situation also reveals how the perception of “similarity” can change rapidly when co-habitation begins.

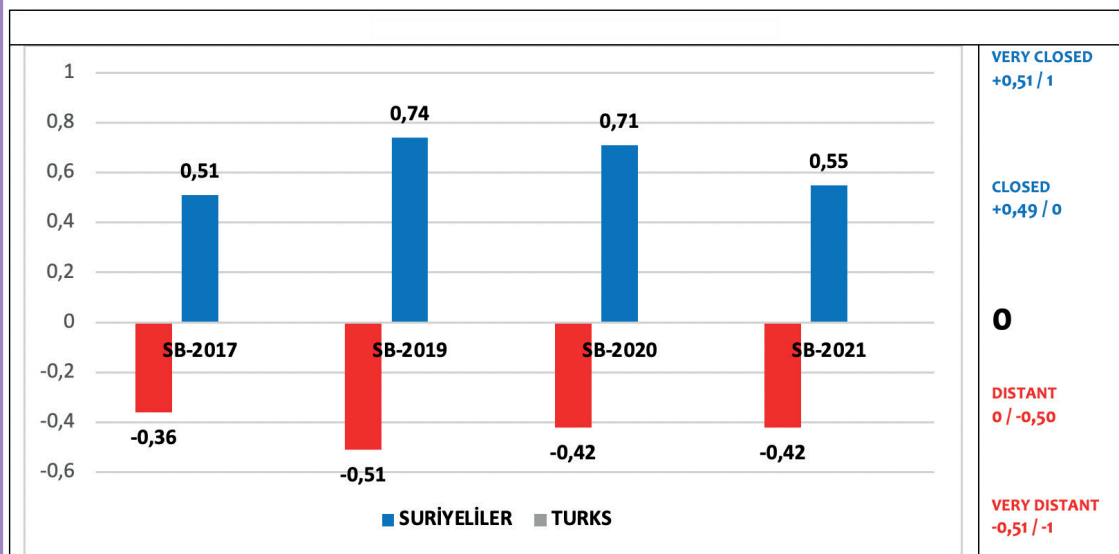
SB-2021-TABLE: Mutual Perception of Cultural Similarity between Turks and Syrians



Social distance: The “**Social Distance**” measurement developed by Emory S. Bogardus in 1925 has been identified as one of the important targets of the SB study regarding the Syrians, whose number exceeds 3.7 million and more than 98% of whom live outside the camps. The “social distance” scales that the SB study regularly applies are of great importance, especially in terms of common living practices. Findings on “social distance”, which is operationalized through ten different propositions, show us that the high level of social distance that Turkish society puts forward for

Syrians continues in the SB-2021 as well. What is noteworthy here is that although the social distance of Syrians towards Turks is still very little, it is in a process of serious change and it is observed that the social distance has grown on the Syrian side as well. It is also remarkable that the relative cultural closeness of the population in border cities with Syrians did not reduce social distance, but rather increased it. In this context, it is also revealed that there is not always a direct causal relationship between “knowing” and “empathizing” or “getting closer”.

SB-2021-TABLE: SOCIAL DISTANCE



In terms of **relations / communication with Syrians**, it appears that although Turkish society helps Syrians, Turkish society does not prefer to be in communication with Syrians. The fact that the rate of “having a conversation”, which is one of the simplest forms of social relations, was 46,1% in SB-2017 and increased only to 47,7% after 5 years in SB-2021,

shows how slow the process has been. In other forms of relationship, on the other hand, a decline is observed.

In order to determine the perception of the “**financial burden**” of the Syrians in Türkiye, the question “How do the Syrians in Türkiye make

a living?” was asked where the respondents could provide multiple answers. It appears that more than 80% of Turkish society (SB-2017: 86,2%, SB-2019: 84,5%, SB-2020: 80,6%, SB-2021: 82,5%) believe that Syrians make their living on “the assistance provided by Turkish state”. The option “by working” climbed to the second rank for the first time in SB-2021. Findings of the SB studies show that, Turks are also increasingly more aware that Syrians are working.

Turkish society’s concerns about Syrians are detected at a very high level in all SB studies. The reasons and depth of Turkish society’s concerns about Syrians have been considered within the framework of the four main concerns that emerge in cases of mass human mobility: “losing a job”, “increasing crime rates”, “disruption of public services” and “corruption of identity/demography”. In SB-2021, it is understood that the **most serious concern** regarding Syrians in Turkish society is that they will “harm our country’s economy” with 70,3% (a score of 3.7). This concern was in the top place in the last three barometer studies as well. While the statement “I think that there will be reduction or deterioration in the public services provided by the state because of Syrians” is ranked second with 67,4%, it was followed by the statements “I think that Syrians will harm Türkiye’s socio-cultural” with 67,1% and “I think that Syrians disturb social peace and morality by engaging in violence, theft, smuggling, and prostitution” with 65,9%. The concern of “demographic change and corruption of identity”, which has been on the agenda frequently in the last two years in Türkiye, is also represented at a high rate of 64,2%.

In order to observe the relationship between having suffered “personal harm” from Syri-

ans and “concerns” regarding them, Turkish society is asked whether themselves, their families or people in their personal environment have actually experienced harm. According to SB-2021 findings, the share of those who reported having experienced “personal harm” was 11,7%, while 7,1% suggested “someone in their family” and 32,2% said “someone in their personal environment” have experienced harm from a Syrian. In the SB studies, the 18.8% group of respondents who stated that they or their families were harmed directly, is also asked the question “What kind of harm have you experienced?”. The reported harms were included, from top to bottom, “bullying/harassment”, “violence”, “theft”, and “unrest/noise”.

Even though the concerns over working rights and the fear of losing one’s job are at a very high level, it can be said that they are overshadowed by other concerns in Turkish society. Regarding the question “What kind of an arrangement should be made concerning the working of Syrians in Türkiye?”, the rate of respondents who said “Under no circumstances should they be allowed to work/given work permits” is consistently decreasing (with the exception of SB-2019). This rate has decreased to 43% in SB-2021. Despite this decreasing trend, this rate still shows that Turkish society is highly concerned regarding working rights of Syrians. When asked “**Under which conditions should Syrians be able to open workplaces?**”, 54,2% of the respondents said “They definitely shouldn’t” in SB-2021. In these matters, the objections of those living in the border cities are well above the average of Türkiye.

Although Turkish society demands the **return of Syrians to their countries**, they are not hopeful about this. In the attitude of the Turk-

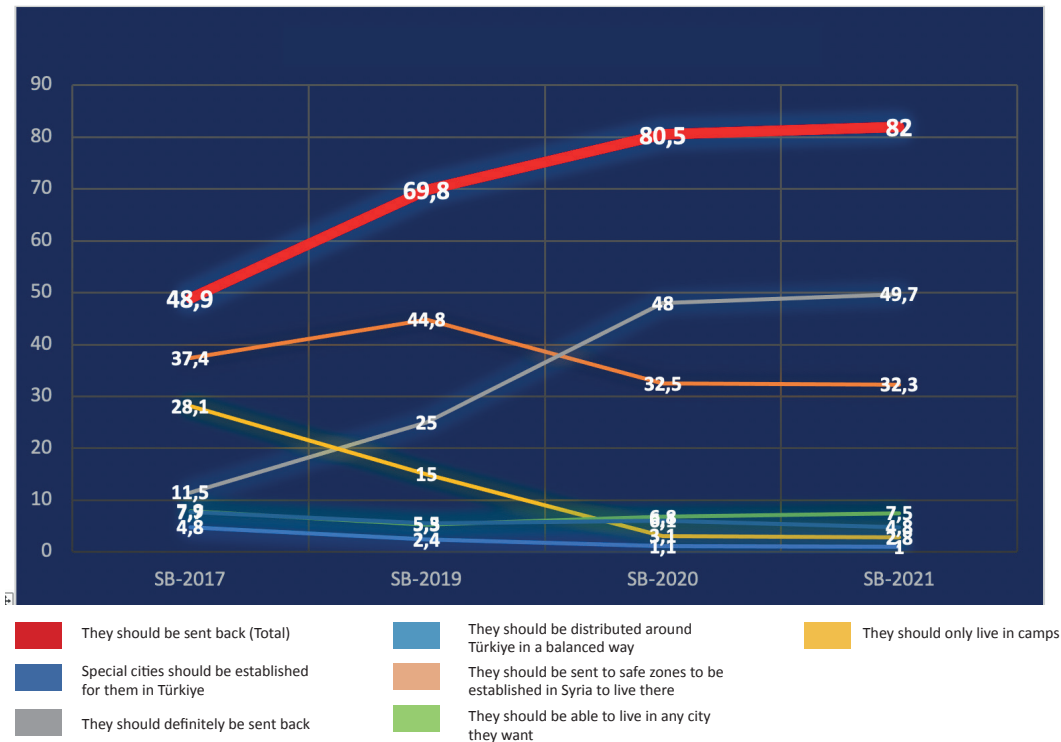
ish society towards Syrians, as the perception that they will be permanent grows stronger, it is observed that the concerns, pessimism and objections grow. Regarding the question “Do you believe that Syrians in Türkiye will return to their country when the war is over?”, nearly 80% of Turkish society appears to believe that all or most of Syrians will permanently stay in Türkiye.

“Can we live together with Syrians in serenity” is one of the most central questions that SB studies aim to analyze. Even though Turkish society seems to consider the permanent stay of Syrians in Türkiye as a fact, it is possible to suggest that the will to live together is very weak and there is an “involuntary (forced) acceptance” in Turkish society regarding Syrians. The rate of those who disagreed with the statement “we can live together with Syrians in serenity” was found to be very high at 75%

in SB-2017, 82,6% in SB-2019, 77,9% in SB-2020, and 78,5% in SB-2021. This state of anxiety and despair can be interpreted as an extremely strong statement of will that will put politics under pressure.

To the Turkish society who thinks that Syrians are permanent in Türkiye the question “Where should Syrians live” was asked and it is observed that the society rejects the expectation of living together and basically demands the return of the Syrians. The sum of the rates of those who suggests that “Syrians should definitely be sent back” (SB-2017: 11,5%, SB-2019: 25%, SB-2020: 48%, SB-2021: 49,7%) and those who said “They should be sent to safe zones to be established in Syria to live there” (SB-2017: 37,4%, SB-2019: 44,8%, SB-2020: 32,5%, SB-2021: 32,3%). The percentage in total was 48,9% in SB-2017, 69,8% in SB-2019, 80,5% in SB-2020, and 82% in SB-2021.

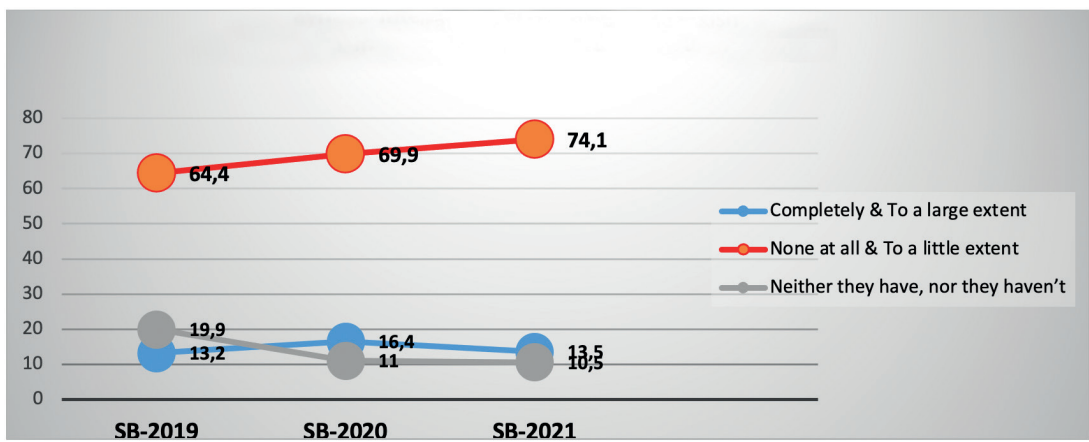
SB-2021-TABLE: WHERE SHOULD SYRIANS IN TÜRKİYE LIVE?



The SB study is essentially a study that tries to reveal the situation on social cohesion. The responses given to the question **“To what extent have Syrians integrated into Turkish society/Türkiye?”** show that Turkish society is quite pessimistic regarding the issue of social cohe-

sion. Strikingly, Turkish society finds the social cohesion process of Syrians less and less “successful” every year. In other words, although the duration of joint life is extended, the Turkish society’s view that Syrians do not integrate is getting stronger.

SB-2021-TABLE: Syrians’ Integration Level According to Turkish Society



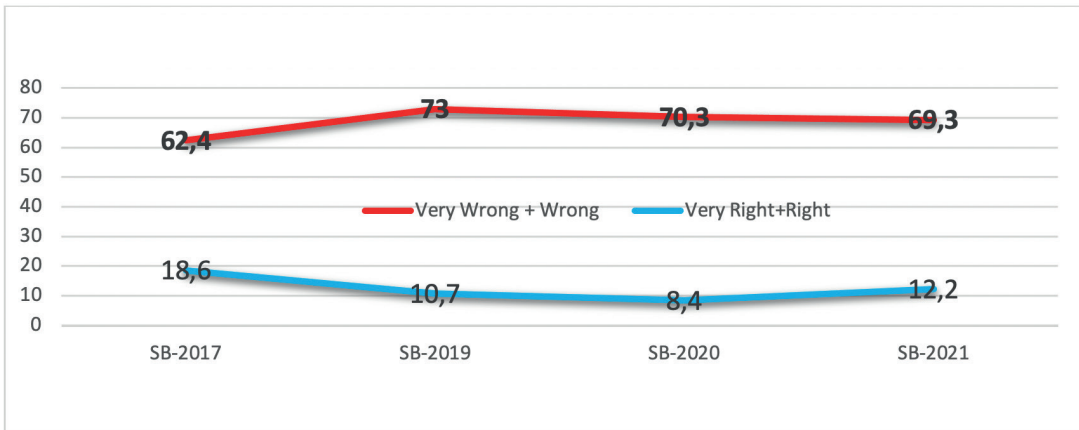
According to the findings of SB studies, the issue of **political rights and citizenship** is among the most serious concerns of Turkish society about Syrians. To the question *“What kind of an arrangement should be made regarding Syrians and political rights?”*, Turkish society clearly and decisively responds with *“They should not be given any political rights”* (SB-2017: 85,6%, SB-2019: 87,1%, SB-2020: 83,8%, SB-2021: 67,9%). Regarding the question *“What kind of an arrangement should be made regarding giving Turkish citizenship to Syrians?”*, a very high rate of respondents replied with *“None of them should be given citizenship”*.

The issue of Syrians and other refugees/irregular migrants in Türkiye is becoming one of the priority issues of politics, unlike previous periods. This situation also creates space for the instrumentalization of the subject. It is clear that the breach of trust created by the numbers and images of irregular migrants, especially those from Afghanistan and Pakistan, has also played a role in this process creating a more serious awareness in the society in the last two years. The anxieties and reactions of the society, which are not taken seriously enough, seem to have opened up a very useful area politically.

In order to understand **Turkish society’s views on Turkish State’s policy on Syrians**, the question “How do you find the state’s policies regarding Syrians? (Syrian policy in general)” was asked. The total rate of those who find the state’s policies “right” and “very right” was 12,2% in the SB-2021, similar to previous SB studies. The combined rate of those who

find the policies “wrong” and “very wrong”, in turn, was around 70% in all four SB studies. The combined rate of those who find state’s social cohesion policies to be right is 13,7%, while that of those who find these policies wrong is 66,3%.

SB-2021-TABLE: How do you find the government’s policies regarding Syrians?

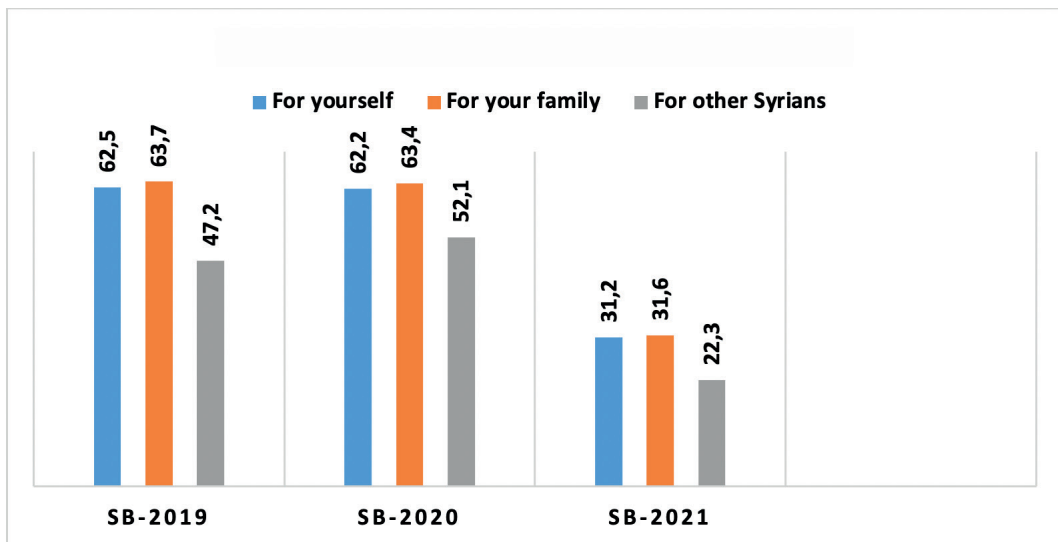


SB-2021 MAIN FINDINGS: SYRIANS (uTP)³

- **There are serious changes in the views of Syrians on their life and future in Türkiye in SB-2021.** Contrary to SB-2017, SB-2019 and SB-2020, it is observed that Syrians are increasingly worried about their future in Türkiye and their search for moving to a third country is getting stronger in SB-2021.
- The issue of **future expectations for Syrians in Türkiye** provides extremely important clues for both tendencies to become permanent and social cohesion processes. Within

this framework, the Syrians were asked the following question based on three actors: “Do you believe that there is a future for ‘yourself’, for ‘your family’, and for ‘other Syrians?’” The picture that emerged in SB-2021 reveals that the future expectations of Syrians in Türkiye have undergone a serious change. In SB-2019 and SB-2020, more than 62% of Syrians believed that there was a future for them in Türkiye, this ratio decreased by half to 31.2% in SB-2021.

SB-2021-TABLE: Future Expectatlns In Türkiye (%)



3. The views expressed by Syrians on “social distance” and “cultural similarity” regarding Turks are evaluated in the above section (SB-2021 Key Findings: Turkish Society) in order to emphasize the difference with Turkish society and to make a comparison.

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with Syrians, as is often the case, **have reached different findings** than survey results. In particular, in the context of relations with Turkish society, it is observed that Syrians experience many problems and their dissatisfaction has grown. Even though it is not reflected in the surveys, Syrians express their discomfort with the “exclusion”, “discrimination” and the negative attitude of the Turkish society towards them, which is becoming more evident with each passing day. The statement **“Syrians are excluded in Türkiye”**, which is among the statements related to Syrians’ relations with and feeling about the Turkish society, received agreement from 26,3% of the respondents.

But the rate of those who agreed with this statement was higher than those who did not. In other words, the perception that Syrians are excluded seems to be getting stronger.

When Syrians were asked the **question “Have you received assistance from any institution or individual in the last 12 months?”**, the rate of those who said yes was 22% in SB-2017, 36,3% in SB-2019, 46,2% in SB-2020, and 31,8% in SB-2021. According to SB-2021 data, it can be said that nearly 1.4 million of the 3.7 million Syrians have access to assistance. More than 73% of this assistance is provided through the ESSN (Emergency Social Safety Net) support program funded by the EU.

Have you received assistance from any institution or individual in the last 12 months?				
	SB-2017 %	SB-2019 %	SB-2020 %	SB-2021 %
Yes	22,0	36,3	46,2	31,8
No	77,1	63,2	53,7	68,0
No idea / No response	0,9	0,5	0,1	0,2
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

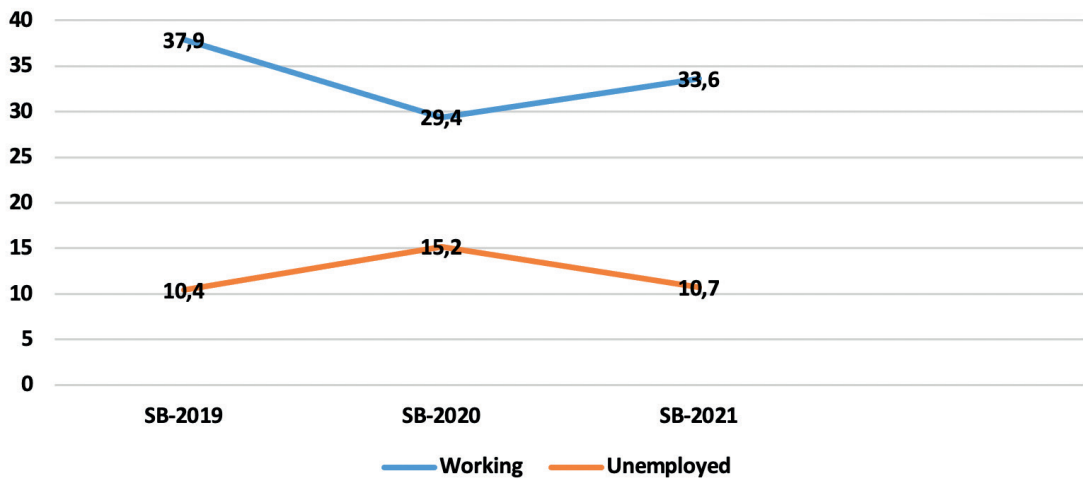
Working status of Syrians: Accordingly, the responses given to the question **“are you currently working in an income-generating job”** suggest that 33,6% of Syrians who are 12 years old or older appear to be “actively working”

in SB-2021. Therefore, the number of Syrians above the age of 12 who are actively working in Türkiye in 2021 can be estimated to be between 800 thousand and 1.1 million. The ILO study entitled “Syrian Refugees in Turkish La-

bor Market” estimates this figure in 2017 to be 940 thousand. Although the number of those Syrians who are officially working in Türkiye remains around 60 thousand, it is a fact expressed by international institutions as ILO, event by government officials recently that

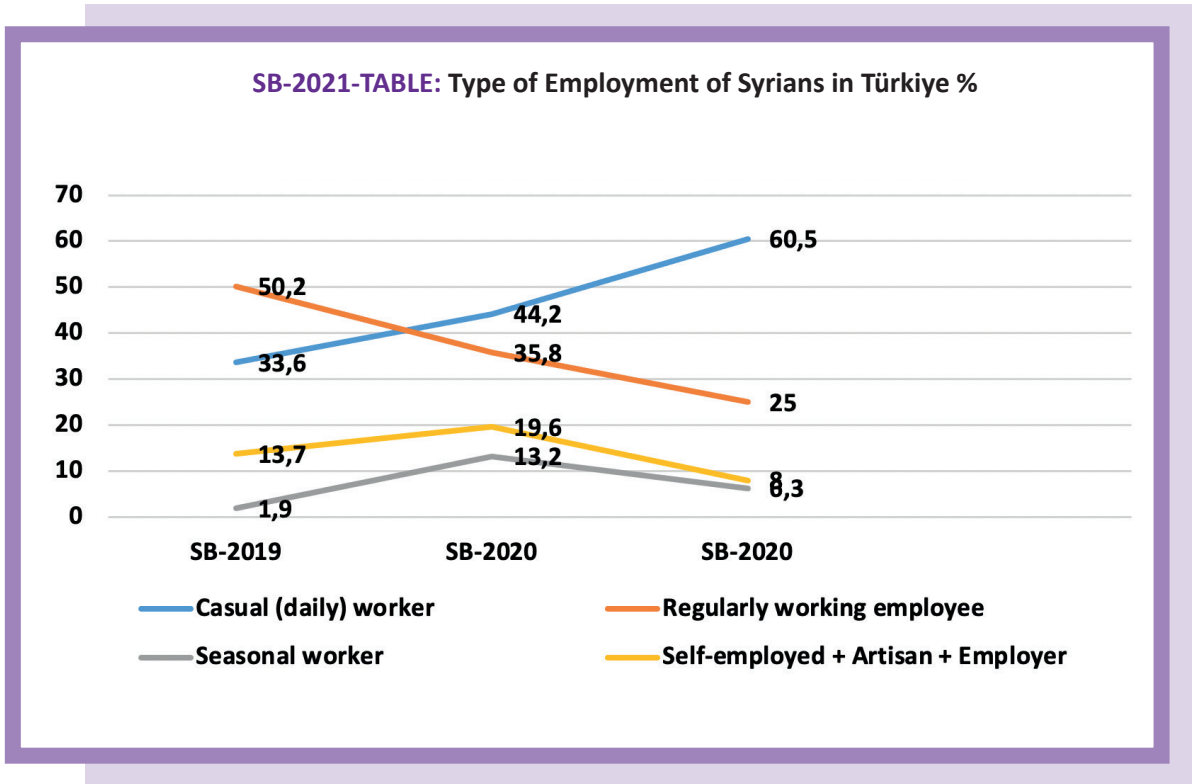
Syrians work informally. Meanwhile, SB-2021 show that the working life of Syrians has been adversely affected during the Pandemic process. Syrians have both experienced serious job losses and had to work in less secure and short-term jobs.

SB-2021-TABLE: The Shares of Those “Working”, “Unemployed”, and “Working+Unemployed” among Syrians %



The data on **what kind of jobs Syrians are working in** are also quite remarkable. Accordingly, the rate of Syrians working in jobs that bring regular wages is decreasing. It decreased to 25% in SB-2021. On the other hand, the number of casual/daily workers is in an increasing trend. The rate of those Syrians who work in such “casual (daily) work” was 33,6%

in SB-2019, 44,2% in SB-2020, and 60,5% in SB-2021. In other words, it is understood that the Syrians, who already have problems in terms of working securely, have become even more insecure with such daily work.



The **working status of Syrians in Türkiye by sex** indicates a highly unbalanced situation. While the proportion of women among the total working Syrians was 7,8% in SB-2020, it was found to be 6,3% in SB-2021. When the active working age group is taken into consideration, the rate which is 65,4% in men decreases to 4,4% in women.

SB-2021 data shows that, **among the selected nine areas, Syrians in Türkiye are the most disturbed/complaining about working conditions.** Complaints about working life, along

with the issue of discrimination, are among the issues that Syrians focus on the most in focus group discussions. It is followed by problems in provision of food (in reaching daily food needs), cost of living, and accommodation. A noteworthy change in the ranking of problems of Syrians is the increasing trend in “discrimination”. This issue has become the most frequently complained about one in the FGDs along with the working conditions. It is observed, especially in FGDs, that another problem area that comes to the fore more and more every day is the **education of children.**

SB-2021-TABLE: Please state to what extent do you experience problems as a family regarding the following areas (Scored)

		2017	2019	2020	2021
1	Working conditions	3,2	2,9	3,4	3,3
2	Provision of food/Food*	2,7	2,7	3,2	3,0
3	Communication (Language)	3,1	2,9	2,7	3,0
4	Accommodation	2,7	2,7	3,0	2,9
5	Discrimination	2,6	2,6	2,3	2,8
6	Health	2,5	2,5	3,0	2,6
7	Protection/Legal support*	-	-	2,1	2,5
8	Security	-	-	-	2,3
9	Education	2,1	1,9	2,4	2,2



0 – 2,99 (less problems)



3,0- 5,0 (more problems)

Another significant change is observed regarding **Syrians' perception of happiness in Türkiye**. The combined share of respondents who either “completely agreed” or “agreed” with the statement “*Syrians are happy in Türkiye*” was 30,1% in SB-2017. While it significantly increased to 48,1% in SB-2019, the SB-2020 and SB-2021 findings record an equally significant decrease in this combined percentage to 31,8% and 20,7%, respectively.

How Syrians perceive the way Turkish society treats them is being investigated by SB studies in the context of social cohesion. It is understood that Syrians show more interest in negative suggestions as “*Turkish society*

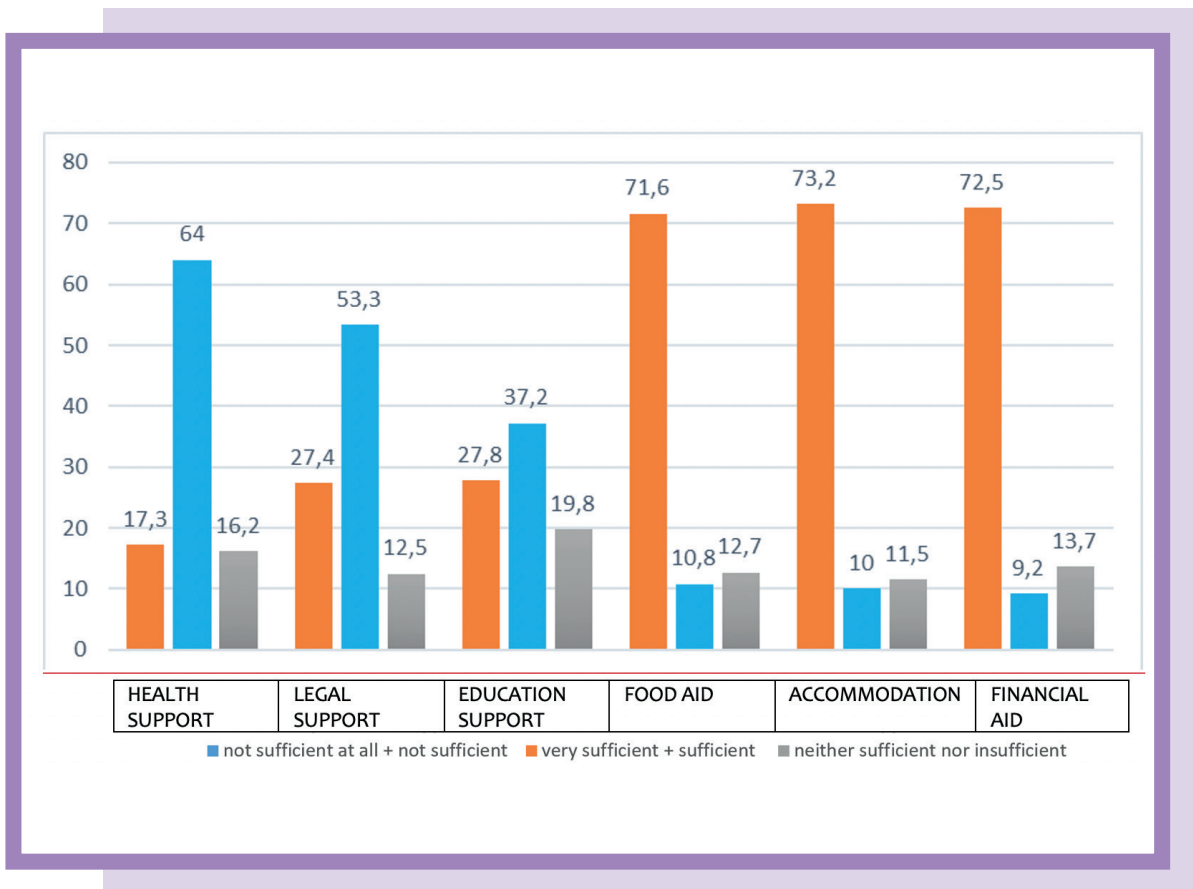
treats Syrians badly”, “*Turkish society looks down on Syrians*” “*Turkish society exploits Syrians as cheap labor*”. This situation shows that the post-2020 period has created a very important breaking point between the Syrians and the Turkish society.

The concepts of “**integration**” and “**social cohesion**” are directed to both groups of society in SB surveys. When asked the question “*To what extent have the Syrians integrated into Turkish society?*” and in contrast with the dominant opinion among Turkish society, 51,6% of Syrians in SB-2019 and 46,3% of them in SB-2020 believe that Syrians either “completely” or “to a large extent” integrated into Turkish society. However, this figure dramat-

ically dropped to 18% in SB-2021. In fact, this situation points to the pessimism in the social cohesion processes for ten years of living together.

the Turkish state to Syrians in 6 main areas (health, protection/legal support, education, shelter (accommodation), food supply and monetary/financial) compared to SB-2020.

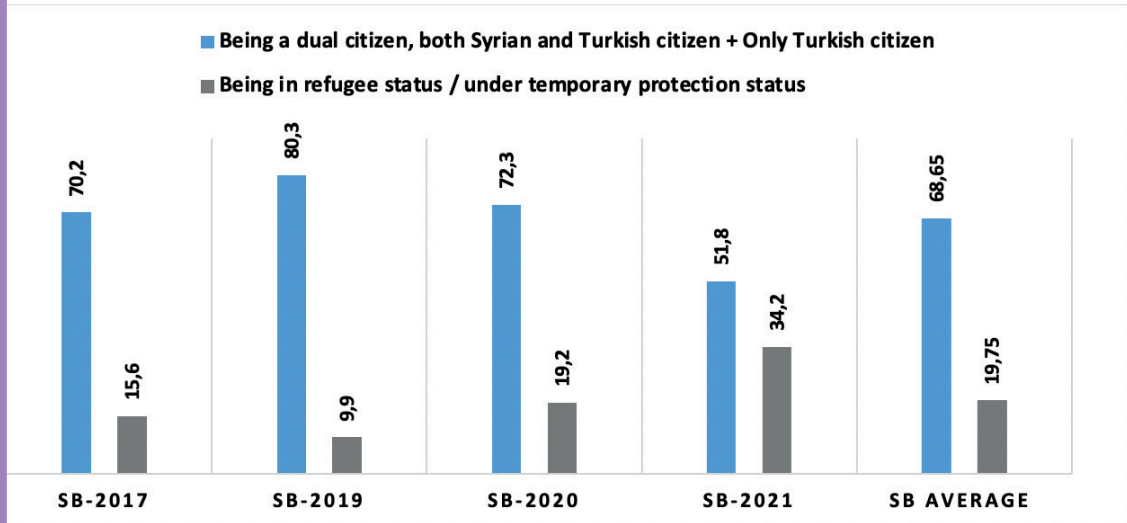
It is understood that Syrians are **less satisfied with the support/services provided by**



Among the responses to the question of what status Syrians want to have, **“citizenship”** strikingly takes the lead. The combined share of those who replied with either “dual citizenship- both Syrian and Turkish” or “only Turkish citizenship” was 70,2% in SB-2017; 80,3% in SB-2019; 72,3% in SB-2020; and 51,8% in SB-2021. Even though this option is still at the top rank, the decrease in its rate is noteworthy. It

is striking that in SB-2021 the support given to these to “refugee status / under temporary protection status / same as my current status” was almost doubled from 19,2% in SB-2020 to 38,2% in SB-2021. With the intensification and increasingly politicization of the debates on Syrians in Türkiye, both the status demands related to international protection and the demands to go to a third country are increasing.

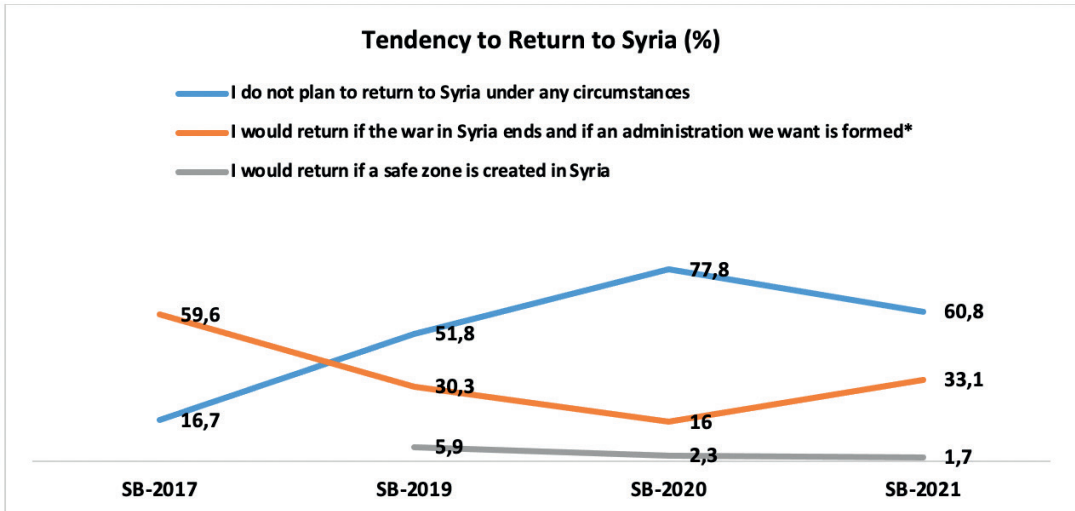
SB-2021-TABLE: Which status would Syrians want to have in Türkiye?



It is understood that **Syrians** experience a serious reluctance and uneasiness regarding **voluntary return to their countries**. However, it has been observed in all surveys and FGDs that there has been a serious transformation in the last year in Syrians' views and hope of seeing the future for themselves in Türkiye. For example, the statement **"Syrians want to go to another country"** received agreement from a record-high 64,2% of the respondents. More importantly, the rate of Syrians who say *"I can try to go illegally if necessary"* also shows a serious increase. In this sense, a significant difference in interest is observed between the tendency of Syrians to go to a third country between SB-2020 and SB-2021. In this context, it would not be a surprise if more Syrians attempt to take action to cross Türkiye's western borders to Europe.

Regarding **"return to Syria"**, the top response in SB-2021 was *"I don't plan to return to Syria under any circumstances"*, as it was in SB-2019 and SB-2020. However, while the rate of this answer was 16,7% in SB-2017, it dramatically increased to 51,8% in SB-2019 and further increased once again to 77,8% in SB-2020. However, this figure strikingly dropped to 60,8% in SB-2021, by decreasing 17% compared to 2020. This 17-point drop was directed towards the second option, *"I would return if the war in Syria ends and if an administration we want is formed."* However, despite all this, two clear points among the Syrians are that over 60% of the participants do not want to return at all, and they almost never want to return to the "safe zones". These show that the "voluntary return" tendencies of Syrians are still not sufficiently strong enough to bring about serious change.

SB-2021-TABLE: Tendency to Return to Syria (%)

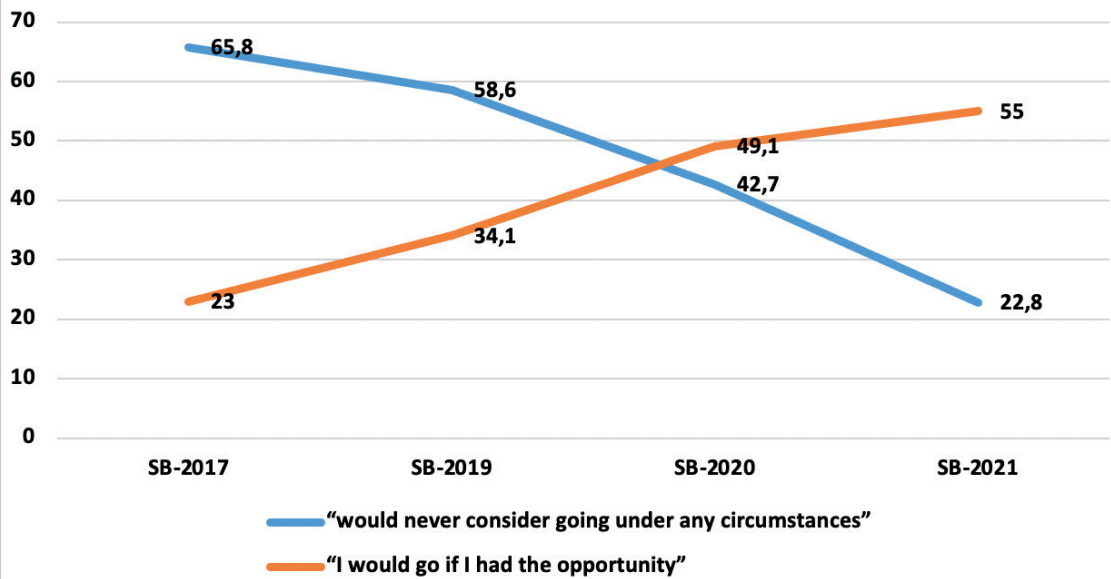


To understand whether Syrians have **concrete plans of returning to Syria**, they were asked the question “What are your plans for return within the next 12 months?”. The share of those respondents who replied with “I do not plan to return” has significantly increased from 56,1% in SB-2019 to 89% in SB-2020, but dropped to 80,7 in SB-2021. As expected, when a concrete plan and timing is put forward, concerns and reluctance to return among Syrians rise.

It can be said that while the security concerns in Syria are at the forefront among **the reasons why Syrians do not want to “return”** in the short, medium and long term, the effort to hold on to the life established in Türkiye becomes more visible with each passing day. With a rough calculation, it can be said that the total average of the 7 “push” factors is 24.1%, and the total average of the 7 “pull” factors is 9.9% in SB-2021.

Striking findings have been obtained in SB-2021 regarding the **tendency of Syrians in Türkiye to go to and settle down in a third country (apart from Türkiye and Syria)**. Responses given to the question “Would you want to move to a country other than Türkiye and Syria?” show that the intentions of Syrians to move to a third country has been strengthened. The response “I would go if I had the opportunity” has emerged as the top answer both in SB-2020 with 49,1% and in SB-2021 with 55%. The same response ranked second in 2017 with 23% and 34,1% 2019. The response “would never consider going under any circumstances”, which used to be the top answer in both SB-2017 and SB-2019 with the endorsement of, respectively, 65,8% and 58,6% of the respondents, moved down to the 4th place with 22.8% in SB-2021. This situation is not surprising in terms of general findings. In the last two years, the desire of Syrians to go to other countries from Türkiye has increased significantly.

SB-2021-TABLE: “Would you want to move to a country other than Türkiye and Syria?” (%)



The desire to go to the third country, to Europe in general, was tested with another question. As you know, on February 28, 2020, Türkiye announced that it had lifted the controls at the Greek border gate. In SB-2020 and SB-2021, asked the Syrians in Türkiye whether they would “go if Türkiye decides again not to control (i.e. open) the borders?”. While 8% of the respondents suggested that they

“would go”, 2,5% said they “definitely would go” (in sum 10,5%). In SB-2021, the rate of the response “would go” increased to 19.2%, and the response “definitely would go” increased to 16.7% (in sum 35,9%). The fact that Syrians show more and more interest in going to third countries, if necessary, illegally, increases the potential for serious political debate and actual developments in the near future.

Would you go if Türkiye decides again not to control (open) the European borders?		
	SB-2020%	SB-2021%
Definitely wouldn't go	28,4	28,0
Wouldn't go	51,7	27,1
Undecided	8,3	7,2
Would go	8,0	19,2
Definitely would go	2,5	16,7
No idea / No response	1,1	1,8
Total	100,0	100,0

The Covid-19 pandemic, which was declared as such on 11 March 2020 by WHO, has led to major health, social, and economic problems throughout the world. In this context, it is observed that Syrians in Türkiye have been severely affected by this pandemic through job losses and impoverishment in addition to health problems. It has been tried to be understood in the context of Syrians' access to health services, especially regarding the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in relation to vaccination. "Have you been vaccinated against COVID-19?" The answer to the question was "yes" at a very high level (71,7%). SB-2021 stated that Syrians did not have any problems in accessing health services during the pandemic period.

Problems in Education: Recent general observations, academic studies, and FGDs made within the framework of the SB reveal that Syrians face serious problems in the field of education. Among these, practices such as not being able to enroll in school, peer bullying and even discrimination come to the fore. In this context, in the SB-2021, the Syrians were asked, "What are the educational problems faced by Syrian children in Türkiye?" By asking the question, the problem areas were tried to be determined. The highest rate among the answers to this question, which has multiple responses, is "Syrian children do not face any problems" with 31.5%. However, in all other responses, both the financial problems encountered for education, with the answer "Syrian families cannot afford their children's education" (30%), and the negative experiences encountered in school with the statement "Syrian children do not go to school because they have to work" (14.7%) were expressed. In this

regard, according to 24.2% of Syrians, "Syrian children face discrimination in schools", while according to 11.8%, "Syrian children are mistreated by their peers". The issue of children dropping out of school due to these problems was frequently mentioned. It has also been frequently stated that Syrians face serious problems in enrolling their children in school in FGDs. Despite a very important capacity problem in this regard, the schooling of more than 700 thousand Syrian children every year is a great achievement that cannot be underestimated. However, the existence of around half a million children out of education also points to an important problem despite all efforts. Education has a very important place both for the reduction of lost generations and for the processes of social cohesion. Increasing the capacity in education and increasing the access of Syrian children to education is seen as a policy area that cannot be postponed.

To detect any perceived **change in the attitude of Turkish society because of economic problems and the effects of the Pandemic**, Syrians were asked "Do you think that there is a change in the attitude of Turkish society towards Syrians due to the economic problems in Türkiye?" 43.6% of the Syrians answered "yes" to this question. Syrians who said perceptions have changed completely or partially were asked, "In what way do you think perceptions have changed?" 63.9% of Syrians are of the opinion that the change was "**from positive to negative**". According to Syrians who believed such negative change took place, the most important reason was the increase in economic problems, with 69.9%.

NOTE:

The detailed "Policy Recommendations" section in the SB-2021 study is not included in the executive summary.

Those interested in the subject can find it in the book.

SB-2021 Field Survey & FGD Technical Details

SB-2021 Field Survey (Implemented Questionnaire: 2.353 + 1.423 = 3.776)

	Turkish Citizens	Syrians (uTP)
Sample Size	2.253 individuals 2.253 individuals selected according to a quota to be representative of Turkish society in 26 cities which are determined based on their populations on NUTS-2 level	1.423 households 1.423 households from the 15 cities with the highest number of Syrian residents (The Syrian-uTP population in the 15 provinces included in the study corresponds to 89.4% of the total number of Syrians uTP in Türkiye.)
Universe of the Research	The average size of Turkish households is taken to be 3,3 in accordance with TUIK 2020 data.* The number of households was calculated by dividing the population by this average: 84.680.273 (TUIK-ADNKS 2021) / 3,3 = 25.660.689.** The sample size, in turn, was calculated on the basis of these figures on a 95% confidence level and ±2,06 confidence interval to be 2.253.	The average size of Syrian households is taken to be 6 in determining the research universe. Total number of Syrian households in Türkiye is calculated by dividing the Syrian population by this number: 3.737.369 / 6 = 622.895 (PMM 2021).*** (The Syrians part of the study does not include the Syrians who reside in the camps, corresponding to around 1.36% of the total number of Syrians uTP as of December 2021, and those living in Türkiye with other statuses (residence, citizenship, etc.)****)
Mode of Survey Application	Person Based / (CAPI – Computer-Assisted Personal Interview method)	Household Based/ (CAPI - Computer-Assisted Personal Interview method)
Survey Application	21 December 2021-2 January 2022	28 December 2021 - 19 January 2022
Confidence Level	% 95	% 95
Confidence Interval	±2.06	±2,59
Method of Determining and Applying the Quota (Although the surveys were carried out at home within the framework of the province-district-neighbourhood, some surveys were carried out outside the home in compulsory situations due to the pandemic conditions.)	The survey questionnaires for Turkish citizens were administered in the city centers of 26 cities in NUTS-2 level, with individuals of 18 years of age or older who have the capacity to understand and answer the questions. In the selection of individual respondents simple random sampling was used and the number of surveys to be conducted in each city was determined according to their respective populations. The selection of households to conduct surveys was done applying the random walk rule by the city field managers. Maximum effort has been paid to ensure proportional representation of different sex, age, educational attainment, and occupational groups since the study aimed to include these as potentially relevant categories for analysis.	The survey on Syrians, on the other hand, was conducted as household research. In this framework, a survey questionnaire was applied face to face to Syrians living outside of camps. The surveys were conducted with one competent individual from each household. The average size of Syrian households is taken to be 6 in determining the research universe. Total number of Syrian households in Türkiye is calculated by dividing the Syrian population by this number: 3.737.369 / 6 = 622.895 (PMM 2021). The sample size, in turn, was calculated on the basis of these figures on a 95% confidence level and ±2,06 confidence interval to be 1.423. Through this survey, information on the sex, age, education, and working status of 7.591 Syrians who live in these households was collected.

SB-2021 Focus Group Discussion (FGD) (Total FGD: 23 / Participants: 169)

	Turks	Syrians
Number of FGD	9	14
Provinces where FGD is applied	İstanbul, Ankara, Hatay, Gaziantep	İstanbul, Ankara, Hatay, Gaziantep, Mardin, Şanlıurfa
Number of FGD participants	55 Participants / Average: 6	114 Participants / Average: 8
FGD Groups	Artisans-Workers / Unemployed Youth-Newly Graduated / Women / Students	Artisans-Workers / Women / Students / Journalists / Lawyers / NGO Workers / Academics
FGD Application	December 2021-January 2022	December 2021-January 2022

SYRIANS BAROMETER 2021

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACHIEVING SOCIAL COHESION WITH SYRIANS IN TÜRKİYE



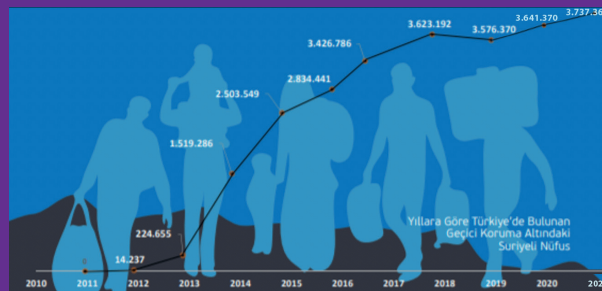
Prof. Dr. M. Murat Erdoğan
Ankara University
Faculty of Political Science
SBF Mülkiye Migration Research
Center-MÜGAM

When the first group of 252 Syrians arrived in Türkiye on 29 April 2011 through the Hatay border, nobody expected these movements either to reach such a scale or to last this long. However, just three years after, in 2014, Türkiye has become the country hosting the largest number of refugees in the world. After 11 years, the number of Syrians in Türkiye has exceeded 3,6 million, accounting for 4,54% of the Türkiye's population. More than 98% of Syrians in Türkiye are living together with the Turkish society as "urban refugees"; between 2011 and 2021, 750 thousand Syrian babies have been born in Türkiye; more than 730 thousand Syrian children have enrolled in Turkish public schools; more than 45 thousand young Syrians have been studying at Turkish universities; around 193 thousand Syrians have obtained Turkish citizenship. There is a significant decrease in the voluntary return trends among Syrians due to the war, which has turned into a chronic issue in Syria, and the efforts of Syrians to rebuild their lives in Türkiye. However, despite this, serious concerns and complaints caused by large numbers and prolonged durations are coming to the fore in the social sphere each day and the issue is becoming a particular concern for daily politics.

"Syrians Barometer: A Framework for Achieving Social Cohesion with Syrians in Türkiye", as an effort to understand the social aspects of social cohesion, instead of the institutional or formal aspects, has been designed and regularly conducted since 2014 by Prof. M. Murat Erdoğan the study. The study, which aims at understanding the developments related to the "common social life", social cohesion processes and tensions, from both the perspective of the Turkish society and Syrians, and developing related policy recommendations, is conducted through highly representative public opinions surveys and focus group discussions (FGD). The primary objective of the study is to take, in consideration of the academic limitations, the best possible realistic snapshot of this significant and highly dynamic process and build on this, to share with the public the assessments and recommendations focusing on social peace. SB-2021 field study was conducted in December 2021 in 26 cities according to NUTS 2 classification with 2,259 individuals on "individual basis" from among the citizens of the Republic of Türkiye (confidence level: 95%, confidence interval: ± 2.06), and with 1.423 Syrian households under temporary protection living outside of camps on "household basis" (confidence level: 95%, confidence interval: $\pm 2,59$). Within the scope of SB-2020, 23 FGDs were held in 6 cities with 169 participants.

The SB-2021 study was chaired and drafted by Prof. M. Murat Erdoğan and commissioned by UNHCR Türkiye. Dr. Nihal Eminoğlu, Tülin Haji Mohamad, Assoc.Prof. Dr. Fulya Memişoğlu and Deniz Aydınlı took part in the research team.

In addition, comprising the most esteemed/distinguished academics in the field of migration, refugees, and social research both from Türkiye and abroad, "Syrians Barometer Academic Advisory Board" including Prof. Dr. Nermin Abadan-Unat, Prof. Dr. Mustafa Aydın, Prof. Dr. Banu Ergöçmen, Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ali Eryurt, Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Ferris, Prof. Dr. Mehmet Nuri Gültekin, Prof. Dr. Ahmet Kasım Han, Prof. Dr. Ahmet İçduygu, Omar Kadkoy, Prof. Dr. Neeraj Kaushal, Prof. Dr. Ayhan Kaya, Prof. Dr. Fuat Keyman, Ümit Kızıltan, Prof. Dr. Kemal Kirişçi, Prof. Dr. Nilüfer Narlı, Kathleen Newland, Prof. Dr. Ludger Pries, Doç.Dr. Saime Özçürümez, Prof. Dr. H.Halil Uslucan, Prof. Dr. Nasser Yasin, Assoc. Prof. Ayselin Yıldız and UNHCR-Ankara Team provided invaluable support and contributions.



with the support of



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency