



# SYRIANS BAROMETER

SB-2021

**"A FRAMEWORK FOR ACHIEVING  
SOCIAL COHESION WITH SYRIANS IN TÜRKİYE"**

**Prof. Dr. M. Murat ERDOĞAN**



*with the support of*



November 2022

**M. MURAT ERDOĞAN**

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*to*

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*Professor of Professors (Hocaların Hocası),  
the pioneer of migration studies in Türkiye  
my dear Hocam in Mülkiye,*

***Prof. Dr. Nermin Abadan-Unat***  
*in her **101st** birthday*

*with admiration, respect and gratitude...*

## Acknowledgements

When the first group of 252 Syrian asylum-seekers arrived in Türkiye on 29 April 2011, nobody had expected the crisis to have continued this long and the number of refugees to have increased this much. No one had probably predicted that this date would become such a significant symbolic turning point for Türkiye's history. In the face of changing dynamics of the process, which had been even more significant than the increasing numbers on strengthening the tendencies of Syrians to remain permanently in Türkiye, I have started conducting studies on various aspects of this issue since 2013, firstly as part of Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Center (HUGO) and then of Turkish German University Migration and Integration Research Center (TAGU), of which I am the founding director. My studies usually have been based on fieldwork. When the first product of this research was published by HUGO in 2014 under the title of "Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration", the number of Syrians in Türkiye was 1.6 million. In a relatively early phase, this study argued that a large part of the Syrians would remain in Türkiye permanently and that serious groundwork was needed for social cohesion, having emphasized the significance of "social acceptance" in this context. This was followed by studies focusing on the impact of Syrians on the business world in 2015, Syrian children living in camps in 2016; and in 2017, Syrians and media, and Syrians and municipalities in process management. In this framework, "Syrians Barometer: a framework for achieving social cohesion" was published in 2017 as the most comprehensive academic research in the field. Syrians Barometer developed a model through which social realities and perceptions are encountered to build a peaceful future for the Turkish society as well as the Syrians. This model envisioned to work in a "barometer" mentality whereby regularly repeated studies with a carefully crafted questionnaire could follow the changing attitudes and tendencies in response to major developments.

Syrians Barometer, which aims to provide reliable data to interested researches and policy-makers as well as the general public, has been possible through the cooperation of a large team and sincere support provided by various institutions and individuals. I thank everyone who has contributed to various aspects of this study. First of all, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude and appreciation to the Hacettepe University family for giving me the opportunity to be a proud member of this institution between 1987-2017 and to conduct significant studies through HUGO that I founded in 2010. I would like to thank the faculty members and especially my dear students of the Turkish-German University, where I worked between October 2017 and February 2022, for their support. I am very excited -and proud as an alumnus- to continue my studies at Ankara University Faculty of Political Sciences, Mülkiye Center of Migration Research-MÜGAM, where I started working in February 2022. I would like to express my gratitude particularly to the Rector of the University, **Prof. Necdet ÜNÜVAR**, and the Dean of the Faculty of Political Sciences, **Prof. Orhan ÇELİK** for their efforts and support.

One of the aspects related to Syrians Barometer-2020 that makes me the proudest is the "**Academic Advisory Board**" which includes some of the most esteemed academics in the field in Türkiye and the world. I would like to express my gratitude, starting from **Prof. Dr. Nermin ABADAN-UNAT** who is one of the founding academics in this field in Türkiye and used to teach me at Mülkiye, to all the members of this board for their invaluable contributions in this study: **Prof. Dr. Mustafa AYDIN**, **Prof. Dr. Banu ERGÖÇMEN**, **Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ali ERYURT**, **Prof. Dr. Elisabeth FERRIS**, **Prof. Dr.**

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I would like to thank the administrators and employees of the **Presidency of Migration Management**, which was established in 2014 and paid extraordinary effort in a short while to manage the process quite successfully for their help and support. Specially I would like to thank to PMM President **Dr. Şavas ÜNLÜ**, General Director of Harmonization and Communication **Dr. Gökçe OK**, General Director of Combating Irregular Migration and Deportation Procedures **Ramazan SEÇİLMİŞ**, General Director of International Protection **M.Selami YAZICI** for their support.

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And certainly, I offer my limitless and special gratitude to my daughter Rüya and my beloved wife Prof. Dr. Armağan ERDOĞAN, who remain constantly by my side at all times with unparalleled support, patience, and sacrifice.

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This study is a humble attempt to contribute to building a peaceful future for the Turkish society, who has been the real hero during this challenging process, and an honorable life for everyone in the country. Therefore, my last and most important thanks go to the **Turkish society**, who -despite their doubts and concerns - welcomed over 4 million refugees with a remarkable degree of devotedly.

**M. Murat Erdoğan**



## Foreword

The number of people forced to flee their homes has increased every year over the past decade, reaching the highest level since records began. The number of forcibly displaced people globally surged to 103 million in the first half of 2022, the biggest six-month increase recorded in data. Two-thirds of the 32.5 million refugees included in this number have found themselves in exile for five years or more in their country of asylum. Each number represents lives torn apart by trauma, torment or the threat of conflict, persecution, insecurity or human rights violations.

Decades of crises in Afghanistan and Syria, as well as many more crises, including numerous prolonged displacements, are losing media attention with no global action. New refugee situations are emerging as current situations remain unresolved and re-ignite. In 2022, the war in Ukraine caused a 15 per cent increase in the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide. Never before in the world have so many people been on the move, in need of protection and humanitarian assistance. The fact that one in every 77 people is forcibly displaced illustrates a horrific reality.

Since 2014, Turkey has been home to the largest refugee population in the world, with close to 4 million refugees and asylum-seekers, more than 3.5 million of whom are Syrians under temporary protection. Only some 1.36% of this population live in Temporary Accommodation Centres, while the vast majority live across Turkey's 81 provinces among the host community in urban, peri-urban or rural areas.

2021 marked the tenth anniversary of the arrival of refugees en-masse from Syria into Türkiye. Türkiye's comprehensive legal framework encompassing the Law on Foreigners and International Protection and the Temporary Protection Regulation have provided an exemplary model which has enabled the protection of refugees from Syria, together with the brotherly and neighbourly ties that largely define the relationship between the two countries. The pandemic of the past two years also helped to bring people together in support and solidarity despite social distancing measures. Nevertheless, with the protracted refugee situation and the deteriorating security, political and economic situation in Syria, social cohesion between the refugee and host populations in Türkiye is largely at risk of fracture, both in the public sphere as well as in the political arena in the build up to the 2023 presidential elections.

UNHCR has been supporting the Syrians Barometer since 2019. The research conducted through surveys and focus group discussions by Professor Murat Erdogan and his team has provided an extensive analysis of the current social reality in everyday aspects of life including people's opinions and attitudes as the situation becomes more a matter of co-existence than a temporary hosting of a displaced population. The Syrians Barometer is, and continues to be, a source of reliable data to all those working and interested in the fields of forced migration and displacement, policy development, and humanitarian assistance. Though it cannot be fully generalized, the data is a representative sample with empirical observations providing a comprehensive framework on social cohesion and harmonization.

We wish to acknowledge the effort and commitment of the research team through the guidance of Professor Erdogan. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution made by the Academic Board to the Syrians Barometer 2021. We hope that the results of the study will be useful for present-day analysis and will help to guide future policies for the benefit of a society that is able to encompass both the needs of its citizens and those of the population it so responsibly hosts.

Philippe Leclerc  
UNHCR Representative in Türkiye





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## Chronological Review of Recent Developments Concerning the Syrians in Türkiye

**SB-2020-TABLE 1: A Chronological Review of Recent Developments Concerning the Syrians in Turkey and International Protection**

DATE	DEVELOPMENTS	# OF SYRIANS IN TÜRKİYE
<b>25 March 2005</b>	Türkiye's National Action Plan Regarding the Absorption of European Union's Acquis on Asylum and Migration	
<b>March 2011</b>	Beginning of anti-administration demonstrations in Syria	
<b>2011</b>	Number of individuals under international protection and/or those applied for international protection in Türkiye: 58.018	
<b>15 March 2011</b>	Beginning of pro-democracy, anti-administration demonstrations in Deraa, Syria	
<b>29 April 2011</b>	Arrival of the first Syrian group of 252 individuals in Türkiye	<b>252</b>
<b>April 2011</b>		<b>252</b>
<b>26 April 2011</b>	Syrian Army enters Deraa, where the first demonstrations started	
<b>October 2011</b>	A "Temporary Protection" regime started to be implemented regarding Syrians	
<b>January 2012</b>		<b>14.237</b>
<b>30 May 2012</b>	Türkiye demanded all Syrian diplomats in Ankara to leave the country	
<b>30 June 2012</b>	UN-backed Geneva Talks take place for the first time under the initiative of Syrian Action Group	
<b>January 2013</b>		<b>224.655</b>
<b>11 April 2013</b>	Law on Foreigners and International Protection enters into effect	
<b>14.11. 2013</b>	The Regulation on the Establishment, Missions and Working of the Provincial Organization of Directorate General of Migration Management is adopted	
<b>16 December 2013</b>	A Readmission Agreement is signed between Türkiye and the European Union concerning the irregular migrants	
<b>January 2014</b>		<b>1.519.286</b>
<b>22 January 2014</b>	Second Round of Geneva Talks commences	
<b>11 April 2014</b>	As overseen by the LFIP, one year after the Law entered into effect, Directorate General of Migration Management becomes active	
<b>22 April 2014</b>	The Regulation on the Establishment, Management, Administration and Auditing of the Reception and Accommodation Centers and Repatriation Centers is adopted	
<b>11 June 2014</b>	IS takes control of Türkiye's Consulate General in Mosul, Iraq	
<b>28 June 2014</b>	IS declares the establishment of an Islamic State and Caliphate	
<b>10 August 2014</b>	R. T. Erdoğan is elected President of the Republic of Türkiye	
<b>September 2014</b>	Establishment of the Provincial Organization of Directorate General of Migration Management starts	
<b>22 October 2014</b>	The Regulation on Temporary Protection is adopted	

<b>November 2014</b>	IS attack on Kobane starts	
<b>January 2015</b>		<b>2.503.549</b>
<b>18 April 2015</b>	The works and proceedings previously conducted by the Directorate General of Security's Section for Foreigners are transferred to Provincial Migration Management Units	
<b>September 2015</b>	Daeth of Aylan Kurdi	
<b>January 2016</b>		<b>2.834.441</b>
<b>January 2016</b>	The Free Visa Agreement between Turkey and Syria is terminated	
<b>15 January 2016</b>	The Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners Under Temporary Protection enters into effect	
<b>25 January 2016</b>	Third Round of Geneva Talks commences	
<b>March 2016</b>	EU-Turkey Statement on Refugees is signed	
<b>17 March 2016</b>	Regulation on Fight Against Human Trafficking and Protection of Victims is adopted	
<b>17 March 2016</b>	Regulation concerning the Implementation of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection is adopted	
<b>26 April 2016</b>	Regulation on the Working of International Protection Holders and International Protection Applicants is adopted	
<b>August 2016</b>	Operation Euphrates Shield commences	
<b>January 2017</b>		<b>3.426.786</b>
<b>January 2017</b>	The process of updating and completing the missing bits of the information that was collected from Syrians during their registration by the Police or Provincial Migration Management Directorates commences	
<b>23-24 January 2017</b>	The First Round of Astana Talks takes place under the initiative of Turkey and Russia	
<b>January 2018</b>		<b>3.623.192</b>
<b>January 2018</b>	Operation Olive Branch commences	
<b>March 2018</b>	The administration of the Camps is transferred from AFAD to DGMM	
<b>January 2019</b>		<b>3.628.120</b>
<b>22 July 2019</b>	Istanbul Governorate decides to expel from the city Syrians who are not registered or who are registered within different provinces	
<b>6 December 2019</b>	Revisions were made in LFIP with the Law numbered 7196 (Law Regarding Revisions of Some Laws and the Decree Law numbered 375)	
<b>31 December 2019</b>		<b>3.576.370</b>
<b>28 February 2020</b>	Turkey decided not to control its borders with Greece	
<b>11 March 2020</b>	World Health Organization declared "Pandemic". The first COVID-19 case was detected in Turkey.	
<b>December 2020</b>	Construction of a 837-kilometers-long wall is completed on the 911-kilometers-long Turkey-Syria border	
<b>31 December 2020</b>		<b>3.641.370</b>
<b>31 December 2021</b>		<b>3.737.369</b>

## Abbreviations

3RP	: UN Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
AFAD	: Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, Turkish Ministry of Interior
AK PARTY	: Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)
DGMM	: Directorate General of Migration Management, Turkish Ministry of Interior
DTM	: Displacement Tracking Matrix
ECHO	: European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ECHR	: European Court of Human Rights
EU	: European Union
FGM	: Focus Group Meeting
FRIT	: Facility for Refugees in Türkiye
HDP	: Peoples' Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi)
HUGO	: Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Center
IOM	: International Organization for Migration
LFIP	: Law on Foreigners and International Protection
MEB-MoNE	: Turkish Ministry of National Education (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı)
MPM	: Migrants' Presence Monitoring Programme
MÜGAM	: Mülkiye Center of Migration Research
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
PMM	: Presidency of Migration Management, Turkish Ministry of Interior
SB	: Syrians Barometer
ŞEY	: Conditional Education Support (Şartlı Eğitim Desteği)
SUY	: Social Cohesion Assistance (Sosyal Uyum Yardımı)
TAGU	: Turkish German University Migration and Integration Research Center
TEC	: Temporary Education Center
TNSA	: Türkiye Population and Health Research, Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies
TÜİK	: Turkish Statistical Institute
UN	: United Nations
UNHCR	: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WHO	: World Health Organization



SYRIANS BAROMETER  
2021

**1**

INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

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 10 years. The number of people who were forcefully displaced in Syria, which had a national population of 22.5 million in 2011, has surpassed 13.5 million according to the data released in UNHCR 2021 Global Trends. Of this figure, 6.8 million escaped the country while 6.7 million became internally displaced persons within Syria.<sup>2</sup> More than 80% of Syrian refugees live in neighboring countries particularly including Türkiye, Lebanon and Jordan. Around 15% of Syrian refugees live in European countries, particularly including Germany and Sweden. It is still very difficult to be able to predict how the situation in Syria will unfold with any degree of certainty. However, significant changes can be observed in Syrians' possibility of motivation and tendency to return, both due to the current conditions in Syria and the fact that they have been establishing new lives for themselves in their countries of residence. This, in turn, demonstrates the necessity of undertaking serious planning and adopting large-scale policies in social, economic, political and security-related fields for the countries hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees, particularly including Türkiye.

The High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, describes what has been happening in Syria as "the biggest humanitarian and refugee crisis of our time".<sup>3</sup> Sharing 911 km of land borders 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, following which the mass movement of Syrian refugees into the country has continued until 2017 thanks to the "open door policy" implemented by Türkiye.<sup>4</sup> According to the official figures provided by the Presidency of Migration Management (PMM) of the Ministry of Interior, the number of Syr-

1. The "Introduction" and "Syrians Under Temporary Protection in Türkiye" parts in this study were taken from the SB-2019 report, only with the update of developments that took place in 2020-2021.

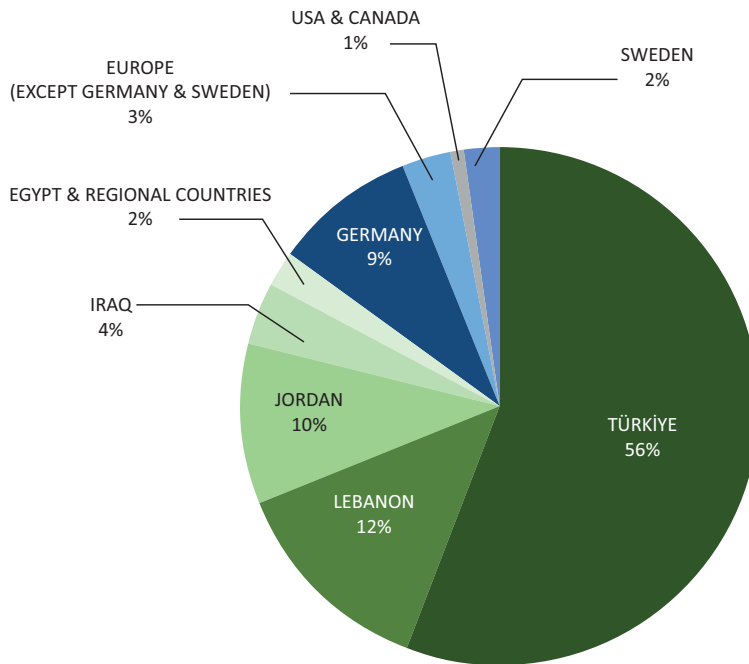
2. UNHCR-Global Trends in Forced Displacement – 2020 2020 <https://www.unhcr.org/60b638e37/unhcr-global-trends-2020>, p.7 (Access: 06.09.2022) and IOM-World Migration Report 2020, p.43 ([https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr\\_2020.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf)) (Access: 06.09.2022)

3. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees-UNHCR: <https://www.unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html> (Access: 06.09.2022)

4. 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 national legislation has also been produced in this context and therefore Türkiye only grants refugee status to individuals coming from Europe (interpreted as Council of Europe member countries) and carrying the conditions of a "refugee" described in the 1951 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". The asylum-seekers arriving from Syria, on the other hand, were granted another protective status, namely "Temporary Protection". In the current legal framework, asylum-seekers arriving from outside of Europe are granted the "conditional refugee" status, upon assessment of their application and if they fulfill the criteria set by the 1951 Convention. This study, being fully aware of this legal context and its official definition of a refugee, prefers to use the concepts of "Syrians" or "asylum-seekers" to refer to the displaced Syrians arriving in Türkiye since 2011. It also occasionally uses the concept of "refugee" to refer to Syrians due to the sociological context and the common use of the concept. . (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->, <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/president-erdogan-slams-west-over-refugee-policy-174721>)

ans “under temporary protection” is 3.737.369 as of 31 December 2021.<sup>5</sup> This figure, which corresponds to 4,38% of Türkiye’s national population<sup>6</sup>, displays a tendency to increase - albeit on a smaller scale compared to previous years. This increasing tendency is due mostly to the natural population growth (by births) of the Syrian community and despite those Syrians who acquired Turkish citizenship or voluntarily returned to Syria over the years. The number of Syrians scored a significant growth between 2011 and 2017, having stabilized at 3.5 to 3.7 million since then. The number of individuals under international protection has also significantly grown in the same period. Given that the total number of individuals ‘under international protection’ and those with an application for international protection in Türkiye was 58.018 (in 2011 17.925), the scope of the immense transformation that Türkiye has undergone becoming the “country hosting the largest number of refugees in the world”<sup>7</sup> should be noted.

**SB-2021- FIGURE 1: Syrian Refugees by Country of Residence (6.6 Million / 31 December 2021)**



According to the UNHCR study entitled “Global Trends-2021”, there are 6,6 million Syrian asylum-seekers living in 126 different countries around the world. In addition, 86% of these

5. SB-2021 takes 3.737.369 as the reference number of Syrians Under Temporary Protection in Türkiye. This figure was released by the Presidency of Migration Management as of 31 December 2021.

6. This figure is calculated by dividing the number of Syrians Under Temporary Protection as of 31 December 2021 to the number of Turkish citizens as of the same date (83.154.997). It would be 4.17% if it were calculated by including the number of Syrians under Temporary Protection into the whole population. Indeed, PMM has used this latter technique in calculating the ratio of Syrians to Türkiye’s population as of September 2022 and found it as 4.29% (3.654.866 / 84.680.273 + 3.654.866)

7. IOM World Migration Report 2020, s.40 [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr\\_2020.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf) (Access: 18.04.2021)



Syrians live in neighboring countries.<sup>8</sup> As of 31 December 2021, the number of Syrians registered in Türkiye<sup>9</sup> was 3 million 737 thousand, which corresponds to 56,6% of all Syrians who were forced to leave their country. Following Türkiye were Lebanon with 12,7% (840 thousand), Jordan with 9,98% (672 thousand), (Northern) Iraq with 3,84% (254 thousand), and Egypt with 1,95% (136 thousand) of Syrian refugees. Since the total number of Syrian refugees living in the neighboring and regional countries as of 31 December 2021 is 5 million 684 thousand, it appears that approximately 15% of Syrian refugees live in European Union countries, other European countries, Canada, and USA. More than 75% of Syrian refugees in Europe live in Germany (635 thousand)<sup>10</sup> and Sweden (113 thousand)<sup>11</sup>.

8. UNHCR-Global Trends in Forced Displacement – 2021 <https://www.unhcr.org/60b638e37/unhcr-global-trends-2021>, p.7 (Access: 06.09.2022) and IOM-World Migration Report 2020, p.43 ([https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr\\_2020.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf)) (Access: 06.09.2022)

9. There have been significant data problems since the beginning of the process regarding Syrian refugees. There are also discussions about the number of Syrians who have taken refuge in other countries from time to time. This study is based on the number of registered Syrians per country accepted by UNHCR. For example, 831 thousand registered Syrians in Lebanon are taken as a basis. However, Lebanese authorities mention that this number is 1.5 million.

10. According to UNHCR-Global Trends-2020 data, 102,600 new asylum applications were made in Germany in 2020, among which Syrians ranked first with 34,400, followed by Afghans with 9,900, and Iraqis with 9,800 (p.39). When UNHCR-Global Trends-2019 (p.40) and 2020 data are evaluated together, Germany was the country with the highest number of asylum applications with 2.2 million between 2010-2020. Among this number, Syrians take the first place with approximately 635 thousand. Syrians are followed by Afghans (242,000) and Iraqis (213,000). (UNHCR-Global Trends-2019 (<https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5ee200e37/unhcr-global-trends-2019.html>))

11. UNHCR provides and updates the figures in the regional countries in the context of 3RP. (<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria>). However, there are problems related to accessing the figures in European countries, the USA, Canada. Therefore, the figures used here cannot be presented as absolutely accurate ones.



## 1. Refugee Law and the Legal Framework Concerning International Protection in Türkiye<sup>12</sup>

The most important foundation of the Refugee Law is the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (UDHR) which was adopted on 10 December 1948. Its Article 14, which states that “Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution”, provides a framework for all national and international regulations. Specifically related to asylum-seekers and refugees, the legal background is set in international law by the 1951 “Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees” and its complementary 1967 “Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees”. As of 2015, there are 146 state signatories of the 1951 Convention and 146 state signatories of the 1967 Protocol.<sup>13</sup> According to this Convention, a refugee is a person who:

*“owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it”.*<sup>14</sup>

According to United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) data, there are currently 89,3 million displaced people around the globe in various statuses in 2021. Among these, 27,1 million have the “refugee” status and approximately 4,3 million are “stateless”, with the rest having other statuses.<sup>15</sup>

Unfortunately, the number of displaced people in the world is increasing every day. 30 new individuals are displaced every minute around the world. Of course, these figures are the ones which could be detected by the relevant UN bodies and the UNHCR itself present them by stating that “at least” these many people were displaced. Another significant fact is the injustice that exists in how the responsibilities and burden stemming from asylum-seekers and refugees are shared. The issue of fair burden-sharing and the efforts under UN leadership since 2016 to increase solidarity with refugee-hosting countries have culminated into the “Global Compact on Refugees”. However, while such initiatives would certainly play a significant role in raising awareness concerning various inequalities, their effectiveness in implementation is expected to remain limited.

This limitation was lifted with the 1967 Protocol.

Türkiye has moved in cooperation with the international community since the beginning of the process.<sup>16</sup> Türkiye, while having signed the Geneva Convention on 24 August 1951, retains the original geographical limitation of the Convention in order to reduce the risks stemming from its location in an unstable region<sup>17</sup>. In fact, originally there were two limitations in the Convention for all parties. The first limitation concerned the “time period” included in the Convention. Accordingly, the refugee status was meant for only the people who were displaced by “the events that occurred pre-1951”. The second limitation, which

12. Information and explanations in this section have been partly derived from M.M.Erdoğan, *Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration* (2015), Bilgi University Press, p.43 et al.

13. UNHCR (2021) <https://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/3b73b0d63.pdf>

14. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 1 (2) <https://www.unhcr.org/4ca34be29.pdf> (Access: 10.09.2019)

15. UNHCR, “Figures at a Glance-2020”: <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html> (Access: 02.06.2021)

16. For a comprehensive analysis of Türkiye's experiences on migration, see: A İcduygu, K Kirisci (2009) *Land of Diverse Migrations: Challenges of Emigration and Immigration in Türkiye* Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Yayınları

17. 1951 Convention 1(B)

Türkiye still retains, is the “geographical” one. Because the Convention includes the phrase “events occurring in Europe”, which only associates refugee with Europe. Both of these restrictions were removed with the 1967 protocol. However, although Türkiye deems it appropriate to remove the date restriction, it has decided to continue the geographical restriction determined with Europe, where Türkiye defines Europe as the member states of the Council of Europe. Today, there are only 4 countries (Türkiye, Congo, Madagascar, and Monaco) still retain the geographical limitation from the original Geneva Convention of 1951.

The first significant internal legal action concerning the asylum applicants in Türkiye was adopted in 1994 through a Regulation. It was named “The Regulation Concerning Foreign Individuals who Applied to Türkiye for Refugee Status or who Applied for a Residence Permit in Türkiye to Apply Another Country for Refugee Status AND The Mass Movements of Asylum-Seekers That Arrive at Our Borders and Potential Population Movements”. This Regulation, which has been controversial in terms of international law and which was the reason for many of the problems that were brought to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), was revised in 2006. The expectation from developing a comprehensive legislation that is in accordance with the international law has become more urgent and important, particularly in the context of membership negotiations with the EU. In the 2001 Accession Partnership Document, the demand for “lifting the geographical limitation to 1951 Geneva Convention and developing social support units for refugees” was included among “medium term” priorities under the title of “Expanded Political Dialogue and Political Criteria”. This same demand was repeated, in a more detailed way, in the 2003 and 2006 Accession Partnership Documents. The last Accession Partnership Document, released by the EU in 2008, included these issues in its 24th Chapter and particularly emphasized the importance of “integrated border management”, “de-militarization”, and “lifting the geographical limitation”. The “EU Council Directive”, which was adopted by the EU in 2001 and which introduced the temporary protection status, was also embraced by the Turkish legislation. This Directive was adopted as an outcome of the developments that occurred in the Balkans in 1990s. This important EU document suggests that the main objective of temporary protection is to provide quick passage for asylum-seekers to safety and to secure their basic human rights. According to the EU Council Directive concerning the temporary protection status during mass inflows, temporary protection is overseen as an exceptional tool to be employed during mass inflows which put the asylum systems under strain, but without undermining or extorting the regular asylum procedures. In Türkiye, one of the most important documents in this field is the “National Action Plan for the Adoption of the EU Acquis in the Field of Migration and Asylum” which was adopted in 2005.<sup>18</sup> This plan has also served as a significant background for the new and comprehensive law on migration in Türkiye.

### a. Law on Foreigners and International Protection (2013)

It is well-known that there is a close relationship between the developments in the sphere of migration management in Türkiye and Türkiye’s relations with the EU. After Türkiye was declared a “membership candidate” by the EU in December 1999, the Turkish “National Plan” and EU’s “Accession Partnership Document”<sup>19</sup> prepared in 2001 gave special empha-

#### 18. The National Action Plan states in its introduction:

In parallel with the developments towards accession to the European Union and for the fulfillment of the legislative obligation on the European Union and the Member States, Turkish Government undersigned the Accession Partnership Document of 2001 and subsequently revised the said document on 19 May 2003. For this endeavor, Turkish Government follows a National Program for the adoption of the EU legislation... In order to comply with the EU Acquis (legislation) on Justice and Home Affairs in the field of migration and asylum, Türkiye has formed a special task force where various state agencies responsible for border control, migration and asylum are represented. Türkiye has established three different working groups in respective fields (borders, migration and asylum) for developing an overall strategy. As a result of activities carried out by the Special Task Force following papers have been produced; “Strategy Paper on the Protection of External Borders in Türkiye” in April 2003, “Strategy Paper on Activities Foreseen in the Field of Asylum within the Process of Türkiye’s Accession to the European Union (Asylum Strategy Paper)” in October 2003, “Strategy Paper to Contribute Migration Management Action Plan in Türkiye (Migration Strategy Paper)” in October 2003.

sis on preparations for the full implementation of the Schengen Agreement, fight against irregular migration, and integrated border management issues. This document and the ones that followed frequently mentioned the issues of civilianization of migration management in Türkiye and following a border management policy that is in tune with the EU's. In this context, the efforts to make a law on migration management and to create an institution in Türkiye had begun much earlier than the mass Syrian immigration. The Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) numbered 6458 has entered into force on 11 April 2013 when published in the Official Gazette. Thereby, LFIP became the first comprehensive legislation on the topic and the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) was established under the Ministry of Interior. DGMM became active on 11 April 2014<sup>20</sup>, bringing the Law fully into effect.

LFIP has brought some concepts related to international protection into Turkish legislation which had not existed before. In this context, it defined various types of international protection as "refugee", "conditional refugee", and "subsidiary protection". The mass inflows from Syria, which had started during the period of law's preparation, has also caused the "temporary protection" to be included in the law. LFIP defines these statuses in the following way:

***"Refugee:*** *A person who as a result of events occurring in European countries and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his citizenship and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it, shall be granted refugee status upon completion of the refugee status determination process."* (LFIP-Article 61)

Embracing the geographical limitation included in the 1951 Geneva Convention, LFIP defines "conditional refugees" in the following way:

***"Conditional Refugee:*** *A person who as a result of events occurring outside European countries and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it, shall be granted conditional refugee status upon completion of the refugee status determination process. Conditional refugees shall be allowed to reside in Türkiye temporarily until they are resettled to a third country."* (LFIP- Article 62)

The number of individuals with the official "refugee" status was 28 as of 2019.<sup>21</sup> The more significant group in Türkiye is obviously that of individuals who were displaced by events occurring outside of Europe. Reaching hundreds of thousands in number, these international protection applicants could get the status of "conditional refugee" in Türkiye, if their applications are accepted. Those applicants who cannot be given the conditional refugee status but who nonetheless requires international protection are given the status of "subsidiary protection" as defined by LFIP's Article 63:

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20 With the Presidential Decree No. 85 published in the Official Gazette on 29 October 2021 and numbered 31643, the status of the DGMM was changed to the Presidency.

21 The TV speech by the Minister of Internal Affairs Suleyman Soyulu, dated 24 July 2019 on NTV (from 7 minutes 18 seconds onwards) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSzHgMMIkxw> (Access: 24.11.2019)

**“Subsidiary Protection:** A foreigner or a stateless person, who neither could be qualified as a refugee nor as a conditional refugee, shall nevertheless be granted subsidiary protection upon the status determination because if returned to the country of origin or country of [former] habitual residence would: a) be sentenced to death or face the execution of the death penalty;

b) face torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; c) face serious threat to himself or herself by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or nationwide armed conflict; and therefore is unable or for the reason of such threat is unwilling, to avail himself or herself of the protection of his country of origin or country of [former] habitual residence.” (LFIP- Article 63)

Regarding **mass migration movements, the approach of LFIP appears to be based on “temporary protection”**. The status of “temporary protection”, which currently covers the Syrians in the country, is immensely important considering the ongoing mass migration movements in the region. Concerning temporary protection, the law includes the following:

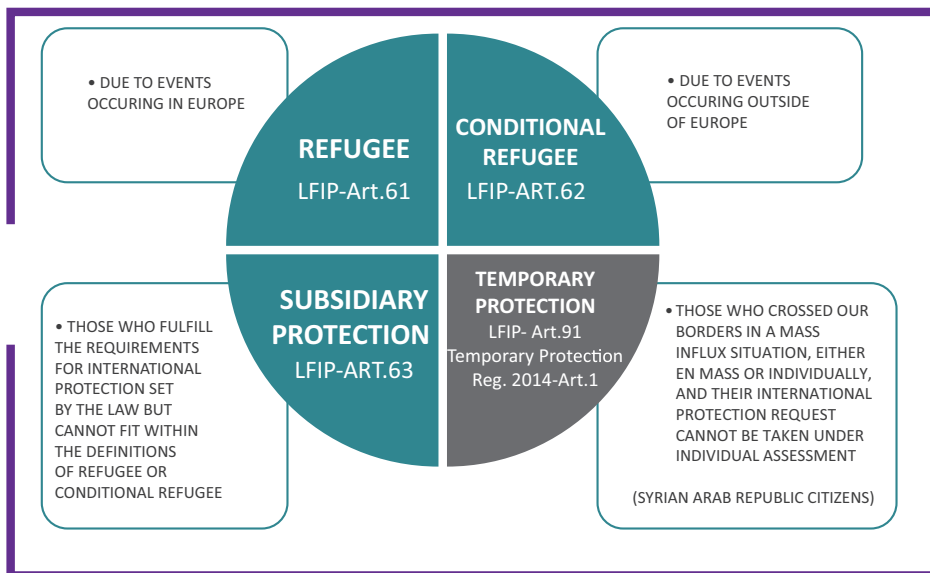
**Temporary Protection:**

(1) Temporary protection may be provided for foreigners who have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the country that they have left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Türkiye in a mass influx situation seeking immediate and temporary protection.

(2) The actions to be carried out for the reception of such foreigners into Türkiye; their stay in Türkiye and rights and obligations; their exit from Türkiye; measures to be taken to prevent mass influxes; cooperation and coordination among national and international institutions and organizations; determination of the duties and mandate of the central and provincial institutions and organizations shall be stipulated in a Directive to be issued by the Council of Ministers. (LFIP- Article 91)

**SB-2021- FIGURE 2: International Protection in Turkish Legislation**

**Law on Foreigners and International Protection (6458 / 4.4.2013) and Temporary Protection Regulation (6883/22.10.2014)**



It can be observed that more restrictive and protective policies are being adopted against refugees throughout the world. This situation, in turn, causes the countries neighboring or with geographical proximity to crises to be further negatively affected by mass inflows. As also stated by the UN, 83% of refugees live in developing or poor countries. The restrictive approaches of developed and rich countries, which are becoming increasingly more evident, can be seen from various data particularly including those on resettlement. The number of refugees who were resettled was in 2019 107.800, in 2020 34.400, in 2021 57.500. This figure is one-third of that of its previous year.<sup>22</sup> This context inevitably affects Türkiye's refugee policies in various ways as well. While Türkiye has significantly improved its asylum system and become the country hosting the largest number of refugees in the world since 2014, it continues to implement the geographical limitation concerning refugees in Geneva Convention to which it has been a party. The long-standing discussions concerning this, however, appear to be sidelined by the Syrian crisis and Türkiye's policies.

## **b. Principle of "Non-Refoulement" in LFIP**

LFIP has openly defined and guaranteed the principle of "non-refoulement" regarding foreigners including those under international and temporary protection in accordance with Türkiye's own law and its obligations under international conventions.

Article 33 of the Geneva Convention, of which Türkiye is a party, defines the principle of "non-refoulement" in the following way:

*"No Contracting State shall expel or return a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."*

Türkiye is also a party to the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which holds that:

*"No State Party shall expel, return or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture."* (Article 3/1)

LFIP has also endorsed this principle as laid out by the above-mentioned Conventions with an even wider scope:

*"No one within the scope of this Law shall be returned to a place where he or she may be subjected to torture, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment or, where his/her life or freedom would be threatened on account of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."* (Article 4)

As part of Türkiye's national legislation, the above-cited article places all foreigners, -and not only refugees, conditional refugees, or individuals under temporary protection- under its protection from being returned to a place where they may be subject to torture, inhuman treatment or degrading punishment.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> UNHCR-Global Trends in Forced Displacement – 2021, p.3. (<https://www.unhcr.org/publications/brochures/62a9d1494/global-trends-report-2021.html> (Access: 02.09.2022))

<sup>23</sup> A Decree Law numbered 676 on some changes in the Law numbered 6458 was adopted on 03.10.2016. A case was opened at the



### c. Temporary Protection Regulation<sup>24</sup>

Article 91 of LFIP defines “Temporary Protection” and states that the details of what this entails would be determined by the Cabinet of Ministers through a Regulation. This Regulation was adopted in 2014 and it entered into force on 22 October having been published in the Official Gazette.<sup>25</sup> Then, with Türkiye’s transition to the Presidential Government System on 9 July 2018, there have been revisions both in LFIP and the Temporary Protection Regulation.<sup>26</sup> The term “Council of Ministers” was replaced with “President” and the term “by the Council of Ministers” with “by the President” with the Article 71 of the Decree Law numbered 703 on 2 July 2018. In the same way, the term “Council of Ministers” in the Temporary Protection Regulation was replaced with “President” by the Presidential Decree published on 25 December 2019 in the Official Gazette numbered 30989. In this framework, Article 9 of the Regulation states that “Temporary Protection decision is taken by the President upon the proposal of the Ministry”. The Paragraph 2 of Article 10 says “following the temporary protection decision taken by the President, the individual decisions regarding those benefiting from temporary protection is taken by the Directorate General”.

The Regulation included the requirement of “biometric” inputs of foreigners including taking finger prints and addresses to be saved in a separate system to prevent any current and future issues concerning registration. The right of foreigners to access to basic services and other social assistance programs is defined to be conditional upon them remaining in the cities where they are registered. According to the Regulation, the rules and procedures concerning employment and working of those under temporary protection would be determined by the Presidency, upon the proposals prepared by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (formerly the Ministry of Labor and Social Services) having received the views of the Ministry of Interior. These foreigners are allowed to work only in the sectors, vocations and geographical regions determined by the Presidency. They need to apply to the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services to obtain a work permit.

The regulation clearly mentions the “**non-refoulement**” principle (Art.6) in line with the definitions laid out in the 1951 Convention (Article 3) and LFIP (Article 4). According to the Regulation, no one within the scope of this of this Regulation shall be returned to a place where he or she may be subjected to torture, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment or, where his/her life or freedom would be threatened on account of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

The Article 11 of the regulation is on how to terminate temporary protection. According to this:

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Constitutional Court regarding this Decree Law. The Constitutional Court decided on 30.05.2019 that this Decree Law in effect intervened with individuals’ right to appeal in relation to inhuman treatment. It has further decided that this violation stemmed from a structural problem between several articles of the law and the Decree Law. (Constitutional Court [AYM], Y. T. Appeal. Number: 2016/22418, Decision Date: 30.05.2019)

24 Turkish Official Gazette (22.10.2014): <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/10/20141022-15-1.pdf> (Access: 02.06. 2022)

25 A detailed discussion of the Temporary Protection Regulation was included in the study “Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration”. The information included under this title is taken from the mentioned source.

26 The Updated LFIP as of June 2021: <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.6458.pdf> (Access: 02.06.2022), the updated Temporary Protection Regulation: <https://mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuat?MevzuatNo=20146883&MevzuatTur=21&MevzuatTertip=5> (Access: 02.06.2022)

**“ARTICLE 11-** (1) The Ministry may make a motion to the President for the termination of temporary protection. Temporary protection may be terminated by the decision of the President.

(2) The President may decide in the following ways after the decision on termination

a) Complete termination of temporary protection and repatriation of those who were under temporary protection,

b) Giving those under temporary protection the status of which they fulfill the criteria en masse or making individual assessments of their applications for international protection,

c) Allowing those who were under temporary protection to remain in Türkiye under the conditions which would be determined by Law.”

Termination or cancellation of temporary protection on an individual basis is regulated by Article 12 of the Regulation in the following way:

**“ARTICLE 12-** Temporary protection is terminated individually if those under temporary protection

a) Leave Türkiye on their own accord,

b) Benefit from the protection of a third country,

c) Are accepted by a third country for humanitarian reasons or on resettlement grounds OR arrive in a third country,

d) Die,

e) Obtain another legal way of residence in Türkiye as defined by the Law,

f) Obtain Turkish citizenship.”

Another reason for individual termination of the temporary protection was added with a revised Paragraph 3 in 2019, which included failure to fulfill “obligation to report” as a reason for termination:

“(3) The Governorate terminates the temporary protection of those who fail to fulfill their obligation to report three times in a row without excuse. In the implementation of this paragraph the provisions of Article 13 are used.”

#### **d. The Status of Syrians in Türkiye**

The issue of what kind of status will be given to the Syrians who came to Türkiye en masse, fleeing the war and conflict environment, was discussed until 2014. Due to both the mass nature of the inflow and “geographical limitation”, studies have been made for status other than “refugee”. The first important regulation in this regard was made with the Law on Foreigners and International Protection enacted in April 2013, and it was stated that “international protection” could be applied for individual applications and “temporary protection”

could be applied in mass cases. LFIP, which the Regulation used as a legal basis, defines temporary protection in its Article 91 in the following way:

*“(1) Temporary protection may be provided for foreigners who have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the country that they have left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Türkiye in a mass influx situation seeking immediate and temporary protection.*

*“(2) The actions to be carried out for the reception of such foreigners into Türkiye; their stay in Türkiye and rights and obligations; their exit from Türkiye; measures to be taken to prevent mass influxes; cooperation and coordination among national and international institutions and organizations; determination of the duties and mandate of the central and provincial institutions and organizations shall be stipulated in a Directive to be issued by the Presidency.”*

The Temporary Protection Regulation, which entered into force on 22 October 2014 based on Article 91 of LFIP, has clearly defined the legal status of Syrians in Türkiye. According to the Provisional Article 1 of the Regulation,

*“The citizens of the Syrian Arab Republic, stateless persons and refugees who have arrived at or crossed our borders coming from Syrian Arab Republic as part of a mass influx or individually for temporary protection purposes due to the events that have taken place in Syrian Arab Republic since 28 April 2011 shall be covered under temporary protection, even if they have filed an application for international protection. Individual applications for international protection shall not be processed during the implementation of temporary protection.”*

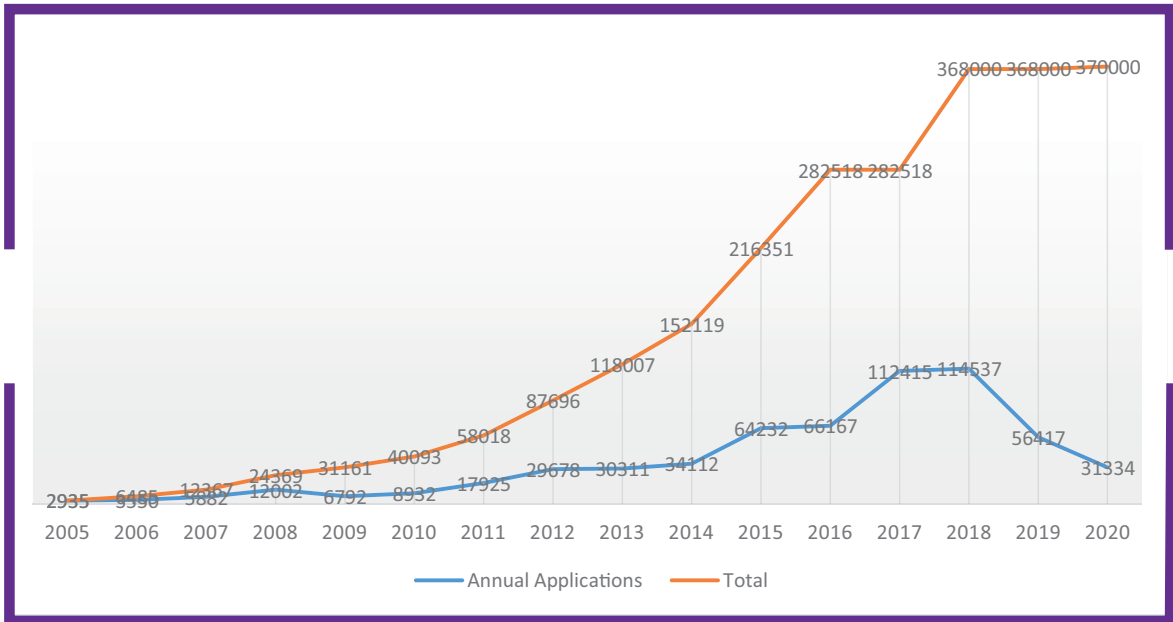
Thus, “temporary protection” status was given to Syrians in Türkiye.

### **e. International Protection Applicants in Türkiye**

There has always been human mobility, on an individual or mass scale, towards Türkiye due to its geographical location and the instability in the region. In addition, the intense and durable crises experienced in neighboring countries have significantly increased the number of displaced people moving towards Türkiye. The statistics released by the PMM (formerly DGMM) in 2017 with the table entitled “The Number of Applications for International Protection in Türkiye between 2005-2016” amply demonstrate the remarkable increase (see Figure below). According to these figures, it is noteworthy that the cumulative number of applications by the year 2011, when the Syrians started to arrive in mass numbers, was 58.018 (application in 2021 was 17.925). The fact that the number including the international protection applicants and those under temporary protection has reached to millions in a matter of few years and exceeded 4 million by 2019 should be seen as a major reference in understanding the scale of the situation experienced in terms of management as well as its social implications.



### SB-2021- FIGURE 3: The Number of Individuals Applied for International Protection in Türkiye, 2005-2021



**Note-1:** According to PMM data, the number of new applications in 2021 is 29.256. This number, however, is not included in the figure.

**Note-2:** PMM used to provide the annual figures and cumulative sums together until 2016. However, since 2017 cumulative numbers are not provided. The Total figures for 2018 and 2020 are taken from UNHCR sources on those years. Since there is no clear data on 2021 figure, the 2020 figure is repeated.

Source: PMM, <https://www.goc.gov.tr/uluslararasi-koruma-istatistikler> (Access: 06.09.2022) and <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNHCR%20Türkiye%20General%20Fact%20Sheet%20September%202020.pdf>

Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) Türkiye Country Chapter 2020-21 gives the total number of international protection beneficiaries and applicants in Türkiye in 2020 to be around 320 thousand.<sup>27</sup> While the PMM (DGMM) annually announces the number of applications for international protection (112 thousand in 2017, 114 thousand in 2018), total numbers of existing international protection beneficiaries are not shared. In this context, possibilities such as applicants’ voluntary return or migration to a third country may lead to changes in the total figures.<sup>28</sup> However, in March 2020, UNHCR-Türkiye gave the total number of refugees and asylum-seekers registered in Türkiye to be 330 thousand.<sup>29</sup>

The official records suggest that the total number of individuals under various international protection and temporary protection (Syrians) statuses in Türkiye by the end of 2021 is over 4 million. This figure doesn’t include those individuals residing in Türkiye with a form of residence permit and the unregistered individuals/irregular migrants.

27 3RP Türkiye Country Chapter 2021-2022 (2021) [https://www.unhcr.org/tr/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2021/03/3RP-Türkiye-Country-Chapter-2021-2022\\_TR-opt.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/tr/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2021/03/3RP-Türkiye-Country-Chapter-2021-2022_TR-opt.pdf) (Access: 25.04.2021)

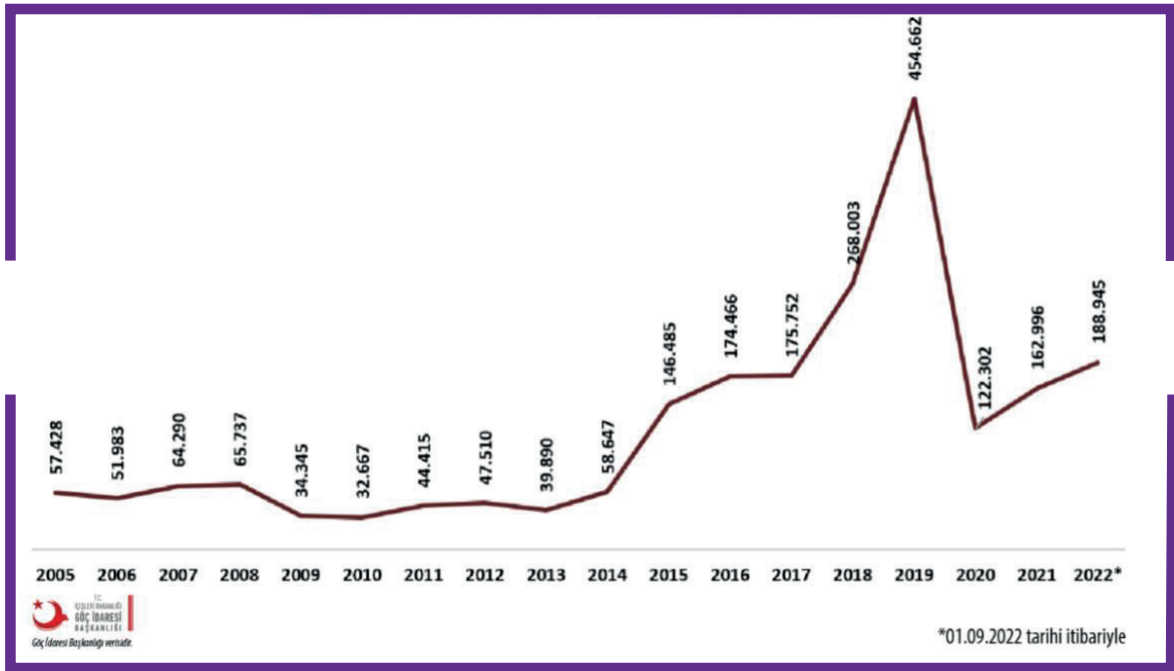
28 DGMM: [http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/goc-idaresi-genel-mudurlugu-istisare-toplantisi\\_350\\_359\\_10676\\_icerik](http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/goc-idaresi-genel-mudurlugu-istisare-toplantisi_350_359_10676_icerik) (Access: 05.09.2017). The Minister of Internal Affairs Süleyman Soylu gave the number of those under international protection to be “around 337 thousand” in a TV statement on 24 July 2019. He declared the number of people residing in Türkiye with a residence permit to be 1 million 23 thousand. In combination, he suggested that the total number is around 4.9-5 million: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSzHgMMIkxw> (Access: 24.11.2019)

29 UNHCR declares this number to be 330 thousand. UNHCR-Türkiye, March Operational Update: <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2020/05/UNHCR-Türkiye-Operational-Update-March-2020.pdf> (Access: 18.04.2020)

## f. Irregular Migrants in Türkiye

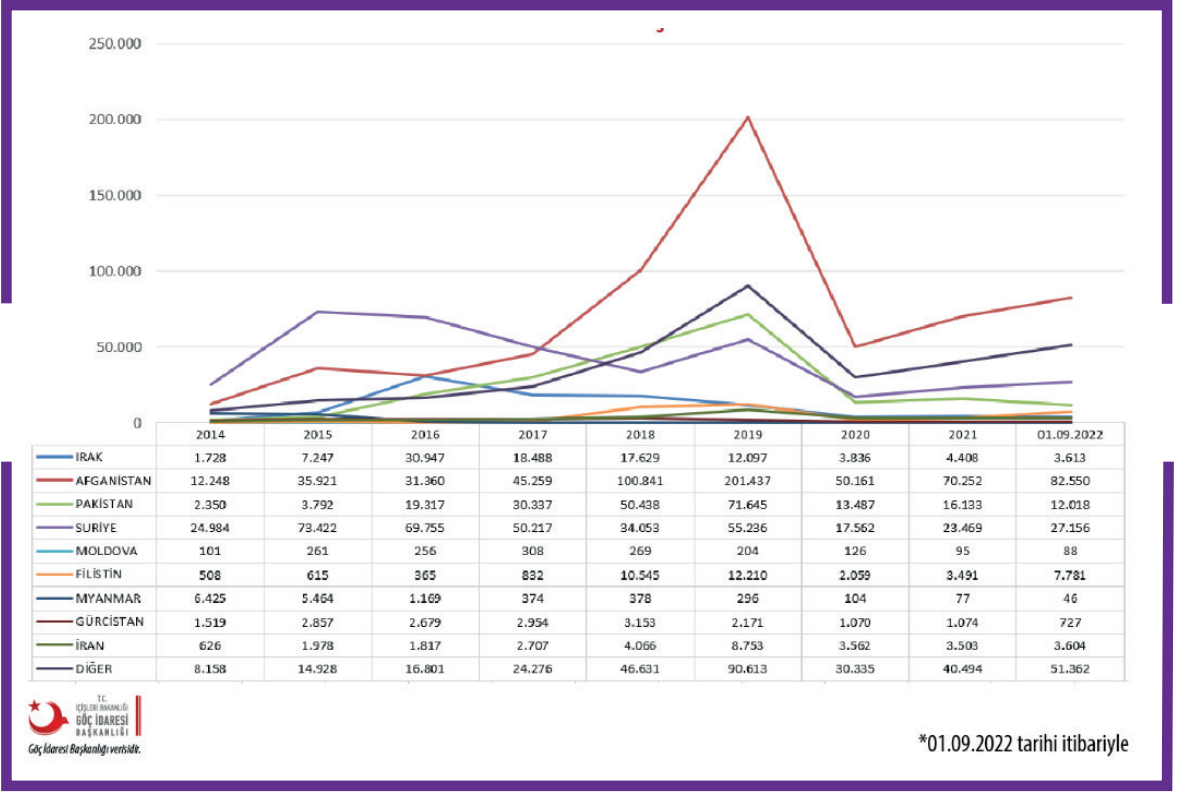
There is a remarkable increase in the number of irregular migrants in Türkiye, particularly after 2015. According to data released by PMM, more than 1 million 340 thousand irregular migrants, a majority of whom being from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan have been apprehended between 2015 and 2021. Around 70% of these irregular migrants were those who committed border violation, while 30% were Syrians who overstayed their visa or who departed from Türkiye. According to the data released by the Migration Committee meeting held on 15 September 2021, the number of apprehended irregular migrants in Türkiye until September 2021 was 1.293.662. The largest groups among the apprehended irregular migrants were Afghans (470 thousand) and Pakistanis (190 thousand). However, 195 thousand or 15% of these apprehensions were repetitive, i.e. it includes individuals who were apprehended multiple times. According to the same declaration, 283.790 apprehended immigrants were deported back to their countries of origin between 2016-2021. Furthermore, it was reported that 2.327.000 irregular migrants were prevented from entry into Türkiye since 2016.<sup>30</sup>

**SB-2021-FIGURE 4: Number of Apprehended Irregular Migrants in Türkiye, 2005-2021**



Source: PMM, <https://www.goc.gov.tr/duzensiz-goc-istatistikler> (Access: 25.08.2022)

**SB-2021- FIGURE 5: Number of Apprehended Irregular Migrants in Türkiye by Nationality, 2005-2021**



Source: PMM, <https://www.goc.gov.tr/duzensiz-goc-istatistikler> (Access: 06.09.2022)

## 2. Social Acceptance and Social Cohesion

Syrians Barometer study aims to make an analysis of the current situation concerning the Syrians in Türkiye and contribute in the processes of social cohesion through providing “a framework for peaceful and honorable coexistence”. Mass human mobility brings with itself the issue of how to live together concerning the “native/home society” and the “newcomers”- in whatever way or for whatever reason they may have arrived in the country. In this context, it is important to provide a brief evaluation of the conceptual discussions on “harmonization” (or similarly used concepts in the literature such as “integration”, “cohesion” or “adaptation”, etc.) and specifically “social cohesion”.<sup>31</sup> Such an evaluation is necessary to explain how the essential concept “social acceptance” is defined in this study, which is argued to serve as the basis of harmonization and social cohesion.

As human mobility and mass movements have been intensifying, a number of concepts have been developed and discussed concerning how to ensure the cohabitation of social groups from massively different religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds “with the least amount of problems”; and how, if possible, this social diversity can be molded so as to produce “social benefits”. Among these, the most popularly used concepts include integration<sup>32</sup>, harmonization, social cohesion, inclusion, adaptation, assimilation, acculturation, multiculturalism, interculturalism, and tolerance/toleration, among others. New concepts are emerging every day in this lively field as human mobility intensifies. For instance, while the number of international migrants was around 150 million in 2000, it has increased to 281 million in 2021. In the same years, the number of refugees and internally displaced persons increased from 38 million to 89,3 million.<sup>33</sup> The issues concerning harmonization of Syrians in Türkiye, the scale and pace of whose mass movement have been extraordinary, provide fertile ground for new conceptual discussions in this literature. In fact, they make such discussions inevitable.

The main motivation of the concept of “harmonization”, which was used as the framework of this study, is similarly to prevent potential social, economic, and political problems; and if this is impossible, then, to minimize such problems and conflicts amongst the various social groups that are living together, while trying to increase the social benefits that could be accrued from the emerging social diversity. In the context of this study, the concept of “social cohesion” is used in an attempt to reveal the conditions of and the road map for the peaceful coexistence of foreigners (migrants, refugees, etc.), in other words the “others” who are in numerical minority in the society, and the rest of the society where they are not perceived as a “threat to social peace” and all segments of society live without conflict and tensions.

31 For a recent and comprehensive review on “social cohesion”, see IOM-World Migration Report 2020, p.185 et al. ([https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr\\_2020.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf)) ve R. Bauböck –M.Tripkovic (Eds.) (2017) *The Integration of Migrants and Refugees*, An EUI Forum on Migration, Citizenship and Demography, European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies) [https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/45187/Ebook\\_IntegrationMigrantsRefugees2017.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y](https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/45187/Ebook_IntegrationMigrantsRefugees2017.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y) (Access: 01.12.2019)

32 The IOM Migration Dictionary defines integration as follows: “The two-way process of mutual adaptation between migrants and the societies in which they live, whereby migrants are incorporated into the social, economic, cultural and political life of the receiving community. It entails a set of joint responsibilities for migrants and communities, and incorporates other related notions such as social inclusion and social cohesion. Note: Integration does not necessarily imply permanent residence. It does, however, imply consideration of the rights and obligations of migrants and societies of the countries of transit or destination, of access to different kinds of services and the labor market, and of identification and respect for a core set of values that bind migrants and receiving communities in a common purpose” <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms#Integration> (Access: 31.12.2019)

33 UNHCR (2022) <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>, IOM (2022) <https://www.iom.int/data-and-research>

As an inalienable part of migration discussions, the concepts of "integration", "harmonization", and "social cohesion" which have been more frequently used in recent years, are all produced in different contexts and with various priorities. However, the most popularly used and discussed concept of "integration" has been widely criticized for taking a static existing culture granted and assuming an organic national identity. In this context, the criticisms towards this concept include -at least- 4 main charges. The first criticism against the concept of "integration" relates to the problems created by the fact that the concept belongs to engineering/mechanical fields, instead of the social field, and was only later applied to this field to which it did not belong. Integration refers to the action or process of mechanically combining one thing with another to make a whole. Application of this concept to the social world would obviously be problematic. Another major criticism against integration derives from the "hierarchical essence" of the concept. This is also closely related to the third charge against the concept: "Integration into what, by whom, and how?". These questions relate to the inherent vagueness of the concept and their answers are inevitably political/ideological. The political power that manages the process, which is usually the state of the local society, defines "integration" in such a way that takes the "existing"- referring to the local society - as primary and imposes that on the newcomers. What is more, this political process is usually shaped by security concerns and political anxieties. This perspective also leads the way for an understanding of "the locals have the right to determine the rules". Such an approach to integration as the newcomers adapting themselves to what is existing as the rule/necessary background to living together is thereby legitimized. And this is exactly where another significant problem related to the concept emerges: since integration is defined as a justified acceptance that the newcomers adapt themselves to what is existing, in time this could justify the expectation of "assimilation"<sup>34</sup> This is why, for many social scientists, integration is just a concealed stepping stone to assimilation.<sup>35</sup> K.J.Bade defines cohesion (integration) as 'the highest degree of participation possible on an equal basis in social life (education, training, advancement, economy and labor market, health care, legal and social system, etc.) in central areas.'<sup>36</sup> The study of L.Pries "Teilhabe in der Migrationsgesellschaft: Zwischen Assimilation und Abschaffung des Integrationsbegriffs (Participation in the immigration society: between assimilation and abolishing the concept of integration) draws attention to the need for a new approach in this regard.<sup>37</sup>

Perhaps the main agreement among the migration researchers is that there is no universally agreed upon definition of "harmonization", "social cohesion" or similarly developed concepts

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34 The book "Europe without an identity" written by Bassam Tibi, a German citizen of Syrian origin, contains very interesting hints regarding the discussions on the "hierarchical structure" of the concept of immigrant integration and the questions of "integration into what, integration into whom?" with its discussion on integration of Muslim immigrants in Germany and Europe and the proposed concept of "Leitkultur" ("lead culture"). See Bassam Tibi (1998) *Europa ohne Identität? Leitkultur oder Wertebeliebigkeit*, Siedler V.

35 For the approach of Prof. Dr. Nermin Abadan-Unat, one of the pioneering names of migration studies in Türkiye, who often mentions that the concept of integration by its nature leads to assimilation and objects to this concept see N.Abadan-Unat, (2017) *Bitmeyen Göç / Konuk İşçilikten Ulus-Ötesi Yurttaşlığa* (Unending Journey: From Guest-workers to Transnational Citizens). Istanbul: Bilgi University Publishing, 3rd Edition

36 Klaus J. Bade (2009) *Wirtschaft und Arbeitsmarkt als Integrationsmotor*. Statement auf dem Integrationskongress der FDP-Bundestagsfraktion, ›Wege zu einer erfolgreichen Integration‹, Berlin, 29.6.2009, [http://kjbade.de/bilder/Berlin\\_Wirtschaft\\_und\\_Arbeitsmarkt\\_FDP](http://kjbade.de/bilder/Berlin_Wirtschaft_und_Arbeitsmarkt_FDP), S. 1

37 Ludger Pries () *Teilhabe in der Migrationsgesellschaft: Zwischen Assimilation und Abschaffung des Integrationsbegriffs* IMIS-BEITRÄGE, Heft 47/2015, Herausgeber: Vorstand des Instituts für Migrationsforschung und Interkulturelle Studien (IMIS) der Universität Osnabrück, s. 7.35. ([https://www.imis.uni-osnabrueck.de/fileadmin/4\\_Publikationen/PDFs/imis47.pdf](https://www.imis.uni-osnabrueck.de/fileadmin/4_Publikationen/PDFs/imis47.pdf))

that would be valid for everyone, everywhere and at all times. In the absence of such standard agreed upon definitions, there emerge many subjective and context-specific evaluations and conclusions concerning these concepts. “The Guidebook for Local Bodies and Operators on Integration of Immigrants in Europe”<sup>38</sup>, which was published by the EU, states “that integration is a dynamic and two-way process involving mutual participation of immigrants and citizens; that education and employment are crucial for helping migrants to become active participants in society; and that as an essential requirement for integration, immigrants need to learn the language and history of the host society”. While there is an emphasis on the rights and opportunities to be provided for the “newcomers”, it can still be observed that the host society is prioritized.

Demireva, in her study entitled “Immigration, Diversity and Social Cohesion”, similarly suggests that there is no universal definition for “social cohesion” and that this concept is usually associated with concepts such as “solidarity”, “togetherness”, “tolerance” and “harmonious coexistence”. Demireva here refers to the social order of a specific society and argues that “what proves the existence of social cohesion are a common vision and sense of belonging shared by all social groups in society; acceptance and appreciation of diverse backgrounds of different people; ability to provide similar opportunities to individuals coming from very different backgrounds; and the existence of strong and trust-based relations amongst people of diverse backgrounds at workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods”.<sup>39</sup> This definition appears to enjoy widespread acceptance and it generally conforms to the “durable solutions” that the UNHCR offers regarding cases where prolonged refugee experiences: i.e. 1. “working for voluntary repatriation”, 2. “attempting to resettle in a third country”, and 3. “implementing local integration policies”.<sup>40</sup>

Undoubtedly, the discussions on how to prevent conflict, dissipate tensions, and live together in peace have a long history among human beings going back to the times they started living in groups. However, beginning with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, gradual emergence of nation states and coming to prominence of national identities, partly through processes explained by Anderson in his “imagined communities”<sup>41</sup>, brought a new dimension to these debates. As also suggested by Castles and Miller, prominent migration scholars and the authors of the seminal book “Age of Migration”, human mobility and migration have existed in every period of human history, producing significant influences for human beings.<sup>42</sup> The authors suggest that the current age, defined by intense trans-border migrations, brings along two important questions for the states; one concerning the issue of “state sovereignty” and the other concerning “social transformation and integration processes”. They also argue that “trans-border migration does not only damage physical borders, but also emotional and cultural borders”, highlighting the significant implications of migration. Even

38 The Guidebook for Local Bodies and Operators on Integration of Immigrants in Europe [http://www.ll2ii.eu/pdf/Guidebook\\_for\\_Local\\_Bodies\\_and\\_Operators\\_on\\_Integration\\_of\\_Migrants\\_in\\_Europe\\_TR.pdf](http://www.ll2ii.eu/pdf/Guidebook_for_Local_Bodies_and_Operators_on_Integration_of_Migrants_in_Europe_TR.pdf) (Access: 12.01.2020).

39 N. Demireva (2017) Immigration, Diversity and Social Cohesion. Briefing, The Migration Observatory, University of Oxford, also UNHCR: Solutions for Refugees (<https://www.unhcr.org/solutions.html>) and IOM World Report 2020-p.343.

40 UNHCR: Solutions for refugees (<https://www.unhcr.org/50a4c17f9.pdf>) (Access: 10.12.2019)

41 B.Anderson (2015) Hayali Cemaatler (Imagined Communities), Metis Yayinevi, İstanbul.

42 First published in 1993 by Castles and Miller, later editions of the book included contributions from Haas as well. For the most recent edition, see S. Castles, H. De Hass, and M. Miller (2018) The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World, Sixth Edition, The Guilford Press.



though migration brings some difficult and painful processes, it is now almost impossible to imagine a social structure that is completely cleansed from migration and its implications. As Faist argues, today many politicians around the world see migration as the “new normal”<sup>43</sup>. Faist also emphasizes that the issue of social cohesion does not only concern people coming from outside of the borders. Accordingly, similar discussions concerning “social exclusion” and “social cohesion” take place within a country amongst citizens from different ethnic, religious, or cultural backgrounds.<sup>44</sup>

There has been a wealth of studies as well as theories concerning the impacts of trans-border migration on the local societies. These studies elaborate on or emphasize different aspects of social cohesion. The Chicago School of Sociology is the first scientific theory on integration in an urban context.<sup>45</sup> Established in early 20th century in the US which is a traditional country of immigration, the Chicago School has focused on inter- group relations in Chicago, where more than one third of the population was constituted by people who were born outside of America, with the ultimate aim of “building a unifying national identity”. The Chicago School argues that social cohesion requires different groups living together to merge with one another. The famous concept of “Melting Pot” defends the process of different ethno-cultural and religious identities of immigrants to be melted in the same American pot to produce a single culture having somewhat distanced themselves from their such previous identities. In other words, it defends “assimilation” albeit in a different - and positive - conceptualization. This is because this school of thought as well as others influenced by it perceive the probability of immigrants keeping their pre-migration identities and cultures as a threat and danger for the social context in which they arrived. Developed by Bogardus in 1925, and used in the present study of Syrians Barometer, the “social distance scale” aims to understand the social life and social differentiations as well as to improve social relations.<sup>46</sup> One of the pioneering American urban sociologists, R. E. Park, argues in his theory of “Race Relations Cycle”<sup>47</sup> that integration processes among different groups go through four different phases: “contact and establishing relations”, “competition over scarce resources”, “state’s efforts to include the newcomers in the public space”, and “accommodation or assimilation”. However, the “melting pot” approach which produces assimilation and promises to be a “project of serenity” has not become as successful as expected. Instead of forgetting them to some extent, many immigrants displayed a tendency to hold firmly on to their identities to cope with the structural and psychological challenges produced by migration.<sup>48</sup> In other words, expectation of assimilation brought further segregation, increasing the potential for conflict.

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43 T.Faist (2018) A Primer on Social Integration: Participation and Social Cohesion in the Global Compact. (COMCAD Working Papers, 161). Bielefeld: Universität Bielefeld, Fak. für Soziologie, Centre on Migration, Citizenship and Development (COMCAD). <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-58138-7>

44 OECD conducts the study “social cohesion index” to assess cohesion among the citizens of the same country and reveals interesting results: <https://www.oecd.org/dev/inclusivesocietiesanddevelopment/social-cohesion.htm>

45 A. Kaya (2014) “Türkiye’de Göç ve Uyum Tartışmaları: Geçmişe Dönük Bir Bakış” (Migration and Integration Discussions in Türkiye:A Look to the Past) , İdealkent Kent Araştırmaları Dergisi, Vol. 14, 2014, p.12

46 E.S.Bogardus (1925) “Social Distance and Its Origins.” *Journal of Applied Sociology* 9 (1925): 216-226, and Emory S. Bogardus (1947) *Measurement of Personal-Group Relations, Sociometry*, 10: 4: 306–311.

47 See, Stanford M. Lyman (1968) The Race Relations Cycle of Robert E. Park, *The Pacific Sociological Review*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring, 1968), pp. 16-22.

48 A.Kaya, *ibid.* p. 13.

As assimilationist theories had failed and “social diversity” increasingly turned into a defining characteristic of societies in every field, starting from 1960s, the assimilationist policies started to be rejected. They were replaced by “multiculturalism” in philosophy and “integration” in practice.<sup>49</sup> Based on the premise that different groups can live together in harmony<sup>50</sup>, the concept of “multiculturalism” was first used by an education expert from New Mexico named A. Medina in 1957. Medina has presented multiculturalism as the “key for a successful life together” suggesting that a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic society requires multicultural perspectives and policies to live in peace and harmony. Multiculturalism can be defined as the “process or policy of maintaining and supporting the group identities of different cultural groups in a multicultural society”. The “Canadian Multiculturalism Act” of 1971 had a significant effect on the popularization of the concept. With the Act, Canada defined the different cultures and cultural groups in the country as indispensable parts of its national heritage and a major richness of the country, announcing that each of them is morally equal in the eyes of the state. This approach gives official recognition to each cultural group, allows them to live their cultures in the sense of being able to freely carry out cultural practices, and hence, supports each group to build and manage their own places of worship or schools, and so on.

Studies on immigrant integration have usually focused on the processes of social cohesion, thereby investigating the necessary conditions for social cohesion or the minimum standards of cultural, legal or political integration. The main objective appears to understand the conditions in which the “newcomers” (immigrants) are brought to an equal position in education, working life, and enjoying the services provided by the state, without being excluded from public institutions.<sup>51</sup> Kaya highlights the significance and effectiveness of the state suggesting that “the issue of integration has always been important for societies in which groups from different ethno- cultural and religious backgrounds live. The discussions concerning integration are to a large extent based on the approaches of the receiving societies and states.”<sup>52</sup>

Providing one of the most familiar definitions of integration, Hynie suggests that “integration, in its broadest sense, refers to inclusion and participation, both socially and economically” and that it is a “process whereby both the receiving communities and the newcomers change, and change each other”.<sup>53</sup> In their important paper entitled “Understanding Integration”, Ager and Strang define integration in terms of “assumptions and practice regarding citizenship and rights; processes of social connection within and between groups within the community; and lack of structural barriers to such connection related to language, culture and the local environment” specifically emphasizing the importance of achievement and

49 For a liberal perspective, see W. Kymlicka, (1995), *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

50 B.Kartal ve E.Başçı, (2014) *Türkiye’ye Yönelik Mülteci ve Sığınmacı Hareketleri (Refugee and Asylum Movements Towards Türkiye)*, CBU Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 12 (2) pp.222.

51 See: A.Yükleyen & G. Yurdakul (2011) *Islamic Activism and Immigrant Integration: Turkish Organizations in Germany, Immigrants & Minorities*, 29:01, 64-85 .

52 A.Kaya (2014) “Türkiye’de Göç ve Uyum Tartışmaları: Geçmişe Dönük Bir Bakış” (*Migration and Integration Discussions in Türkiye: A Look to the Past*) , *İdealkent Kent Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Vol. 14, 2014, p.12

53 M. Hynie (2018). *Refugee integration: Research and policy*. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 24(3), 265-276.



access across the sectors of employment, housing, education and health.<sup>54</sup> Jenson investigates the structural aspects of social cohesion in five dimensions: belonging/isolation (a cohesive society is one in which citizens “share values”), inclusion/exclusion (social cohesion is related to economic institutions, particularly the markets, and it requires capacity to include), participation/non-involvement (social inclusion requires involvement and participation in a wide array fields including politics), recognition/rejection (respect for plurality, tolerance, and recognition- individuals’ feeling that others accept them and recognize their contributions are essential for social cohesion), and legitimacy/illegitimacy (social cohesion depends on maintaining the legitimacy of public and private institutions that act as mediators).<sup>55</sup> Bernard has added a new dimension, i.e. equality/inequality, to the five that were offered by Jenson.<sup>56</sup> Schmitt defines social cohesion in terms of goals to be attained. These goals include elimination of inequalities and social exclusion and strengthening of social relations, social interactions, and social ties.<sup>57</sup> Having emphasized trust, participation, and the willingness to help as important aspects of social cohesion, Chan’s perspective on the concept is based on a dual framework. While “horizontal dimension” is related to cohesion amongst social groups, “vertical dimension” is related to state-citizen cohesion.<sup>58</sup> As Unutulmaz argues, however, all integration policies are ultimately the products of a “political vision” that is developed by the receiving country depending on its conditions, agenda, and capacity.<sup>59</sup>

One of the very important concepts in the context of social cohesion debates is “multiculturalism” and it has been subject to heavy criticism in Western Europe particularly in relation to Muslim immigrants. Here, it is important to differentiate the two meanings of multiculturalism: while in the sense of presence of multiple cultures in a society it refers to a social fact; the concept gains a normative substance in its second meaning asking for the recognition of equal moral value and standing of each culture.<sup>60</sup> However, multiculturalism in this latter normative sense and multiculturalist policies developed based on it have frequently been criticized for encouraging different communities to become inward-looking, closed groups and thereby leading to segregation instead of social cohesion. In the British context, one particular criticism was that multiculturalism had produced “parallel societies”, living side-by-side but not sharing anything with one another.<sup>61</sup>

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54 A.Ager, & A.Strang (2008). Understanding integration: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21, 166-191.

55 J.Jenson “Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Canadian Research”, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Ottawa, 1998, p. 15

56 P.Bernard (2000) “Social Cohesion: A Dialectical Critique of a Quasi-Concept”, Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate, Department of Canadian Heritage, Ottawa, s. 19.

57 R. Berger Schmitt, Social Cohesion as an aspect of the quality of Societies: Concept and Measurement. EuReporting Working Paper No 14, Centre For Survey Research and Methodology, Mannheim, 2000, p. 28

58 J.Chan, Ho –pong to & E.Chan, “Reconsidering social cohesion: Developing a Definition and Analytical Framework for Emprical Research”, *Social Indicators Research*, 2006, 75(2), p. 294

59 On this subject, see: O.Unutulmaz (2016) *Gündemdeki Kavram: Göçmen Entegrasyonu-Avrupadaki Gelişimi ve Britanya Örneği* (The Hot Topic: Integration of Immigrants- Its Development in Europe and the Case of Britain), Gülfer Ihlamur-Öner, A.Ş. öner (eds.) *Küreselleşme Çağında Göç Kavramları ve Tartışmalar*, İletişim Yayınları İstanbul, 2016, p. 157

60 See: N.Yurdusev: *İflas eden çok kültürcülük mü yoksa Almanya mı? (Is it Multiculturalism that is failing, or is it Germany?)* (<https://www.dunyabulteni.net/iflas-eden-cok-kulturculuk-mu-yoksa-almanya-mi-makale,14912.html>) (Access: 29.12.2019) Also, see: W.Kymlicka (1995).

61 The riots that erupted in England and UK government’s commissioning of a report by Ted Cantele have become a significant turning point. The research conducted in the events and the ensuing publication of the “Cantele Report” in 2001 argued that state multiculturalism

Attempts were made to resolve the problems encountered in the “assimilationist” and “multiculturalist” models through the employment of the concept of “integration”. In this context, integration was offered as an ideal in-between approach where newcomers would join host society quickly and with equal rights through embracing the values of this society, whilst preserving their existing cultures. It needs to be noted that underlying all these discussions is the view that sees the society as an organic whole. However, in an age of globalization and communications, it should not be forgotten that individuals could foster more than one cultural belonging. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion, which was established in the UK in 2007, was a manifestation of this view which presented the concepts of integration and social cohesion as desired alternatives to the perils of multiculturalism and assimilation. In migration and integration debates, there is a reductionist tendency to see all migrants as a single block with more or less homogenous experiences. However, immigrant communities are neither homogenous nor static entities, which mean that in addition to having significant degrees of inner diversity, they change over time. Therefore, there are heterogenous and increasingly complex identity structures within migrant communities. Foroutan describes these with the notion of “hybrid identities”.<sup>62</sup> This new reality further complicates the social cohesion processes, whereby new identities need to be defined again.

One of the most frequently discussed concepts within social cohesion debates is “belonging”. While this concept can be defined in such a way to imply assimilationist expectations, it can also be seen as an opportunity for the newcomers and the local society to bind themselves together under a common culture and sense of belonging. Defining belonging with a dominant group would inevitably legitimize assimilationist policies and re-animate the hierarchical understanding for integration. The lack of any belonging and “simply living on a land together”, however, could lead to breakups, parallel lives, and even conflicts. The 3Bs, i.e. “Being / Belonging / Becoming” should be very carefully balanced so that a society that includes an emotional attachment and sense of ownership could be established in the face of diversity, without asking for assimilation. This should be done not with the state in the center of the process and through ideology and coercion, but with the society in the center and voluntarily. This could only be realized through a strong social acceptance.

Having paid significant efforts to establish its own migration management system since early 2000s, Türkiye appears to address the issue of social cohesion for the first time with the adoption of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) in 2013, of which harmonization was a significant part. Recognizing the issue of harmonization as an inalienable part of the process, the Law embraces a philosophical stance on the issue and declares that it draws a clear line between integration and assimilation. The preference to use the concept of “harmonization” in the Law can even be partly attributed to this clear rejection of assimilation given the above discussed criticism of the concept of integration being a sugar-coated version of assimilation. In its Article 96, LFIP assigns certain missions to the Directorate General of Migration Management in terms of harmonization emphasizing the importance of inter-institutional cooperation without providing a clear definition of the concept: “The Directorate General may, to the extent that Türkiye’s economic and financial capacity

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has caused segregation in society and created parallel societies, which lived side by side but never meaningfully interacted. See: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/25\\_05\\_06\\_oldham\\_report.pdf](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/25_05_06_oldham_report.pdf) (Access: 29.12.2019)

deems possible, plan for harmonization activities in order to facilitate mutual harmonization between foreigners, applicants and international protection beneficiaries and the society as well as to equip them with the knowledge and skills to be independently active in all areas of social life without the assistance of third persons in Türkiye or in the country to which they are resettled or in their own country." The Law also establishes a Department of Harmonization and Communication within the Directorate General to carry out and coordinate activities related to harmonization of immigrants. The philosophical background of the adopted perspective is presented in the following way: "harmonization is neither assimilation, nor integration. It is the harmonization that emerges when the immigrants and the society understand each other on a voluntary basis."<sup>63</sup>

Many of these debates concerning the philosophical content of the concept, what exactly is meant by it, and how its practice in the real life is envisaged will most likely continue in the future. Developing new concepts related to these debates appears ambitious and naturally risky. This is both because of the fact that social cohesion is not something that is only related to migration and because there are thousands of different harmonization processes simultaneously underway all around the world. It is not possible, or realistic, to explain the integration processes as experienced by the Syrians in Türkiye, Turks in Germany, Somalians in Canada, Chinese in Japan, and Algerians in France with a single concept. In the face of these limitations and the risk of being seen as "too general", "vague" or "abstract", it has been inevitable for the Syrians Barometer study to offer a humble definition of the concept of social cohesion to explain how it is used and understood in this study as well as to provide it as a background concerning integration policies and future projections. This definition endeavor tries to distance the concept from ideology and a hierarchical structure, and contains a foundational principle as expressed by Kant. Even though the Syrian Barometer research mainly aims to highlight social perceptions and social acceptance in the context of social cohesion rather than engaging in theoretical discussions, it also offers a definition of social cohesion in the light of Kant's maxim "I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law"<sup>64</sup>. 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."**

Social cohesion processes in the aftermath of mass forced migration involve many different conditions, actors, obstructions, opportunities, and principles. This study argues that one of the most sensitive and important issues concerning these processes is "social acceptance". It is important to note that the level of "acceptance" in a society differs significantly depending on the quality of migration. In other words, social cohesion processes of voluntary immigrants who had chosen to move themselves and asylum-seekers/refugees who were the victims of forced migration as well as the relations each could establish with the local society differ on many occasions, and therefore their presence in the society produces different outcomes. When we look at the main regions in which the 281 million international

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63 Directorate General of Migration Management "Uyum Hakkında": <https://www.goc.gov.tr/uyum-hakkinda> (Access: 02.01.2020)

64 Bkz.: Immanuel Kant (2013) Ahlak Metafiziğinin Temellendirilmesi (Çev. İ. Kuçuradi), Türkiye Felsefe Kurumu Yayını, Ankara.

migrants and approximately 89,3 million refugees around the world live as of 2021,<sup>65</sup> we can clearly see the immense differences in the policies the developed countries adopt concerning these two different groups. As it is well-known, while 73% of the displaced people live in neighboring countries and 86% live in developing countries, only around 14% of the refugees live in developed countries. However, when it comes to voluntary migrants, or “economic migrants” as they are more frequently called in the literature, the figures change radically. This is clearly no coincidence. While regular and especially qualified immigrants are perceived as “added values” to their countries of residence, refugees and asylum-seekers are perceived as problems and risk factors. The respective state policies, in turn, are determined based on these perceptions. In this context, there is a clear need to increase and improve the social cohesion policies and their implementation concerning the high number of refugees.

What Türkiye has lived since 2011 is an extremely intense forced migration experience on a mass scale. Türkiye has found itself in a situation where it needs to develop social cohesion policies for millions of asylum-seekers.

We can identify five different domains related to mass international migrations:

1. The policies and precautions adopted in the public sphere; border and process management,
2. The social solidarity and acceptance displayed by the host society,
3. The attitudes of the “newcomers”,
4. The conditions in the origin country,
5. The approach of and the actions taken by the international community.

These domains, which are certainly inter-related and intersecting, play an especially vital role in overcoming the difficult times, undermining the potential problems related to living together, and even attempting to transform potential problems into potential benefits. In addition to these, there are some other factors that play significant roles in social cohesion processes:

**“The motivations of the newcomers”**, in other words whether they are voluntary immigrants or refugees, appear as one of the most significant elements of the social cohesion process, as they shape the perceptions and reactions of the host society towards these groups. This is because while voluntary migration is perceived as manageable and orderly; asylum is perceived to bring along uncertainty, temporariness, unpredictability, trauma, and lack of documentation. This approach can also be seen in EU’s “New Pact on Migration and Asylum”, which was published in September 2020.<sup>66</sup>

In this context, it is necessary to note the global effort displayed by the UN for migrants and refugees. The process that was initiated by the UN in 2016 in New York has produced two important international documents in 2018. These are entitled as “Global Compact on Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration”<sup>67</sup> and “Global Compact on Refugees”<sup>68</sup>. The reason for producing two distinct documents was the fact that migrants and refugees are subject to different regimes due to the differences in their respective legal frameworks and rights.

65 UNHCR gives the total number of displaced people, including refugees, is almost 100 million in 2022. UNHCR-Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2020 <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html> (Erişim: 21.06.2022)

66 EU Commission (23.09.2020) New Pact on Migration and Asylum ([https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/new-pact-migration-and-asylum\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/new-pact-migration-and-asylum_en)). For an assessment on this, see M. Murat Erdoğan (& Kemal Kirişçi, and Nihal Eminoğlu) The EU’s “New Pact on Migration and Asylum” is missing a true foundation, November 6, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/11/06/the-eus-new-pact-on-migration-and-asylum-is-missing-a-true-foundation/>

67 IOM: Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018) (<https://www.iom.int/global-compact-migration>)

68 UNHCR: Global Compact on Refugees (2018) (<https://www.unhcr.org/the-global-compact-on-refugees.html>)

Both of the Global Compacts emphasize the importance of fair burden-sharing, sustainable solutions, and naturally, social cohesion.

**Actors:** It is possible to identify six main actors as the determinants of the process of social cohesion: the host (local) society; host state institutions; “newcomers” (immigrants / asylum-seekers / refugees); international organizations, especially including ones that play a larger role concerning the refugees such as relevant UN institutions; NGOs; and lastly, the “origin country” institutions. Each of these actors has the potential, albeit at varying degrees, to facilitate or obstruct the social cohesion process and their coordination, or the lack thereof, is a very important determinant in the process.

### **Which one is more Effective: Cultural/Religious/Ethnic Closeness or Numerical Size?**

The cultural closeness or familiarity of the newcomers with the host society initially appears as an important factor. In other words, the higher levels of cultural closeness could facilitate the social cohesion process. It is clear that the religious and ethnic closeness, which found its manifestation in the then popularly used concepts of “Ensar and Muhacir”<sup>69</sup>, was influential especially in the initial periods in ensuring a high level of social acceptance and solidarity displayed towards Syrians. However, this positive influence is increasingly overshadowed by rising numbers, perception of increasing tendencies to remain in Türkiye permanently, and certain negative experiences regarding public services and employment. The local society seems to deliberately emphasize how “different” they are from the newcomers in an attempt to put a distance between the refugees and themselves.

**Importance of the Numerical Size:** In addition to the quality/status of the newcomers (i.e. whether they are immigrants, asylum-seekers or refugees), the numerical size of the group is also an important determinant in terms of the social cohesion process. While a reasonable number in comparison to the population size, economic situation, and administrative capacity of the country might make the process more easily manageable; when the number increases, with the growing anxieties of the host society, the process becomes inevitably more complicated. Failure to create social cohesion and inability to manage the process, in turn, would lead the asylum-seekers to turn within themselves and become ghettoized, which in its turn would further exacerbate the anxieties of the host society. This vicious cycle could bring a number of serious problems including deterioration of public services, increasing trends in crime rates, job losses, and anxieties over identity. In addition, the newcomers increasingly experience the comfort and security of their growing numbers, expanding their living space while becoming more self-reliant as a community. Even though this process, sometimes referred to as “ghettoization” or “forming parallel societies” in the literature, appears to increase the security of the newcomers, it also leads to isolation and social segregation. This segregation might mean in some cases that the minority group might construct their cultural identities in opposition to the host society identities, seeing the latter as their “other”.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, it can be suggested that the numerical size is a more effective factor than cultural closeness in the context of social cohesion processes in the medium and long terms.

**Placement Policies and Local Governments:** Many developed countries implement a planned policy of placement of asylum-seekers in the country. In Germany, for instance, there is a placement system called “Königsteiner Schlüssel” which is established on the basis of the federal state system to oversee a balanced geographical distribution of refugees in the country. In this way, the distribution of burden is largely balanced among states, cities, and districts. This, in turn, is an important advantage in migration management for the country.

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69 Both Arabic words, Ensar refers to the Muslims who helped Prophet Mohammed during his migration from Mecca to Medina; while Muhacir literally means migrant.

70 A.N.Yurdusev (1997). Avrupa Kimliğinin Oluşumu ve Türk Kimliği (Emergence of the European Identity and the Turkish Identity), A.E-ralp (Ed.), Türkiye ve Avrupa: Batılılaşma, Kalkınma, Demokrasi (Türkiye and Europe: Westernization, Development, Democracy). Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 17-85.



However, in cases of mass inflows and particularly for the neighboring countries, it becomes very difficult to centrally plan and implement a placement strategy concerning the refugees. When they first started to arrive since 29 April 2011, a majority of the Syrians were first admitted to the camps (temporary residence centers) in the cities neighboring Syrian border. At their peak, there were 26 camps with a capacity to host 270 thousand refugees. However, as the number of Syrians kept growing, the Turkish state “tacitly permitted” the Syrians to move and settle wherever they wished. The fact that Syrians are scattered all across Türkiye in a very unbalanced way became apparent with regular registrations. There emerged very significant discrepancies in the number of Syrian residents, not only among regions, but also among cities, districts, and even neighborhoods. Syrians have chosen where to reside on the bases of whether or not they have family members or friends living there, the working opportunities, and the living conditions. While the Syrians constitute 4,5% of the national population in Türkiye, their respective proportions to the populations of different cities in which they live are extremely unbalanced. For instance, the Syrian residents living in the city of Kilis corresponds to over 80% of this city’s population<sup>71</sup>, this figure is 3,6% in Istanbul and 0,11% in Ordu. There are noteworthy differences in the number of Syrian residents living in different districts of the big cities. In Sanliurfa, for instance, while one of the 13 districts has 2 thousand Syrian residents, in another one the number of Syrian residents exceeds 80 thousand. Similarly, in Istanbul, while one of the 39 municipalities is home to less than 100 Syrian residents, there are over 70 thousand Syrians living in another one. It is crystal clear that this extreme imbalance makes it more difficult to manage the process.<sup>72</sup> However, it can be suggested that the experience of “spontaneous placement” of Syrians in Türkiye is highly noteworthy and it proved to be an effective factor that has led Syrians to feel secure and establish self-sufficient lives in Türkiye. As suggested, the meaning and implications of rising number of asylum-seekers is different for the host society and for the asylum-seekers themselves. One of the important issues that need to be emphasized here concerns the risks that this model of unregulated settlement of refugees poses for local governments. In fact, in the absence of additional resources to be used for the refugees, the local governments that receive large numbers of refugees end up using the scarce, and at times already insufficient, resources to respond to the local challenges created by this inflow. Such cases will inevitably mean increasing tensions in the local contexts. In addition, in the absence of additional resources to be transmitted, there is an additional risk for the successful municipalities which can manage to process well and provide good services to turn into centers of attraction for even more refugees and additional burden.<sup>73</sup>

## 2-a- PMM Harmonization Strategy Document and National Action Plan

Türkiye’s institutional approach to harmonization<sup>74</sup> places PMM (formerly DGMM) to its center. This is plainly mentioned by Article 96 of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection:

71 PMM switched to a new calculation system for the ratio of Syrians to the population in 2022. The number of Syrians registered in a province before, the number of Turkish Citizens in that province. A ratio was obtained by dividing the number of citizens by the population. With the change in 2022, the registered Syrian population is added up with the population of that province and then divided by the registered Syrian population to determine the rates. It is clear that the new calculation is more statistically significant. In this case, for example, the ratio of Syrians in Kilis to the total population living in Kilis decreased from 80% to around 38%.

72 For an important study on this subject, see: S.Özçürümez- A.İçduygu (2020), *Zorunlu Göç Deneyimi ve Toplumsal Bütünleşme: Kavramlar, Modeller Ve Uygulamalar İle Türkiye*, (Experience of Forced Migration and Social Integration: Türkiye with Concepts, Models and Practices) İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi.

73 For an up-to-date study on this topic, see: S. Özçürümez, & J.Hoxha (2022). Expanding the boundaries of the local: Entrepreneurial municipalism and migration governance in Türkiye. *New Perspectives on Türkiye*, 1-19. doi:10.1017/npt.2022.19

74 PMM also provides an (unofficial) English translation of the YUKK on its page. Here the word “uyum” (integration) is used as “harmonization”.

LFIP- Article 96 - (1) *“The Directorate General may, to the extent that Türkiye’s economic and financial capacity deems possible, plan for harmonization activities in order to facilitate mutual harmonization between foreigners, applicants and international protection beneficiaries and the society as well as to equip them with the knowledge and skills to be independently active in all areas of social life without the assistance of third persons in Türkiye or in the country to which they are resettled or in their own country. For these purposes, the Directorate General may seek the suggestions and contributions of public institutions and agencies, local governments, non-governmental organizations, universities and international organizations.”*

The “Harmonization Strategy Document and the National Action Plan, 2018-2023”<sup>75</sup>, which outlines the perspective and strategy of the Turkish state, was prepared and published by the DGMM based on the above-mentioned article of the law. According to this document, “the mission” is “to regulate all aspects related to immigrants in a holistic approach based on a human rights perspective within the framework of Türkiye’s historical background and the national & international legislations in a way to establish social cohesion and to manage inter-institutional coordination”, while “the vision” is “to maintain social cohesion through migration management that is human-oriented, transparent, and rights-based”. It further states that the work is done “in a collaborative manner under the coordination of DGMM taking the views of relevant public bodies, municipalities, international organizations, civil society organizations, and foreigners living in Türkiye in order to lay the foundations of an effective harmonization policy”. Moreover, the document states that “through establishing effective coordination among institutions that provide services to foreigners, the quality of those services will be enhanced”.

The document also touches upon the security aspect of the issue by stating that “harmonization of people living in the country will diminish their risk of marginalization, thereby providing an indirect support to public order and security”.

Prepared by the PMM, “Harmonization Strategy Document and the National Action Plan, 2018-2023” can be considered as the most important official document regarding social cohesion. It defines social cohesion in the following way:

*“... social cohesion is defined as the ability to develop a shared sense of belonging through facilitating the cultural, social, and economic inclusion of immigrants into the society in which they live; mutual recognition of differences in the framework of intercultural interactions, deliberations, and social dialogue; upholding respect and ensuring coexistence. Social cohesion generally aims at the social acceptance of immigrants and a culture of coexistence. ... [R]ecognition of linguistic, religious, and cultural differences of immigrants for them to participate in the social life without facing discrimination, and a healthy recognition of their identities and in short, social acceptance of diversity is important for social cohesion. In addition, ... perception of immigrants as useful individuals by the society is very important for social cohesion.”*

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75 PMM (23.07.2020) Harmonization Strategy Document and the National Action Plan 1: 2018-2023 <https://www.goc.gov.tr/kurumlar/goc.gov.tr/Yayinlar/UYUM-STRATEJI/Uyum-Strateji-Belgesi-ve-Ulusal-Eylem-Plani.pdf> (Access: 02.03.2022)

The Harmonization Strategy Document and the National Action Plan defines the general philosophy behind harmonization practices as follows:

*“The importance of harmonization policies as an integral part of effective migration management is further accentuated by the fact that there are millions of foreigners in different legal statuses, with different nationalities, having different cultures and faiths living in our country together with the Turkish society. To lay the foundations of an effective harmonization policy, a “Harmonization Strategy Document and the National Action Plan” has been prepared under the coordination of DGMM in a collaborative manner taking the views of relevant public bodies, municipalities, international organizations, civil society organizations, and foreigners living in Türkiye. Coordination will be established among institutions that provide services to foreigners, thereby enhancing the quality of such services through these documents. Providing services that are needed will support the mutual harmonization of foreigners in our country and the society. With the harmonization of these individuals to our country, their risk of marginalization will decrease and this will indirectly support public orders and security”.*

Accordingly, the basic objective of harmonization is to enable foreigners to get actively involved in all aspects of the social life, without the help of any third persons. The Harmonization Strategy Document and the National Action Plan states that “social cohesion generally aims at the social acceptance of immigrants and a culture of coexistence”, while identifying six thematic dimensions of harmonization: social cohesion, informing the migrants, education, health, labor market, and social support (social services and assistance).

It is extremely valuable not only that PMM has prepared a harmonization strategy and action plan document, but also it has done so through widespread consultations with experts, academics, local governments, and NGOs. As it is known, one significant dimension of social cohesion processes regards the actions of the state and public institutions. However, the real determinant is the space that the society will open regarding social cohesion. In this context, it is vital that the state handles this issue with a medium to long-term perspective, drawing attention to various problems related to coordination. The fact that PMM defines social cohesion underlining such concepts as “social acceptance”, “inclusion”, and “belonging” while emphasizing the importance of “recognition of differences” and “culture of coexistence” provides evidence of the existence of a pluralistic and modern social cohesion vision.

Even though the general expectation and desire in Türkiye regarding Syrians is for them to return to their homes, harmonization efforts have moved upwards in the agenda as their tendency to remain in Türkiye has been getting stronger. In fact, a large number of projects targeting foreigners living in Türkiye, particularly including Syrians, conducted by PMM, MoNE, Ministry of Family and Social Services and the Ministry of Labor and Social Security<sup>76</sup> are designed and implemented in the framework of harmonization policies. While some of the policies are built upon an expectation of “temporariness” due to the dynamism of and uncertainties within the process, a “de-facto harmonization policy” can be observed in many fields. A part of the work conducted in this context is defined on the basis of access to basic



rights and freedoms instead of social cohesion, such as access to education of school-aged children.

Another important document in Türkiye regarding these issues is the Eleventh Development Plan covering 2019-2023. This document frequently refers to “harmonization of foreigners”<sup>77</sup> and assigns that as a duty to public institutions.<sup>78</sup>

## 2-b. Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) and Social Cohesion<sup>79</sup>

Another important document regarding social cohesion in Türkiye is the “3RP Türkiye Country Chapter 2021-2022”. According to UNHCR, covering Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) combined humanitarian and development responses into a single plan, under UNHCR and UNDP. It addresses the protection and humanitarian needs of refugees as well the resilience, stabilization and development needs of impacted people and institutions. A general evaluation of the current situation, together with a brief assessment of the effects of the pandemic in the past year is presented in this document as follows:

*“The comprehensive legal framework in Türkiye concerning Syrians under temporary protection includes social cohesion components and efforts aimed at harmonization. The inclusive policy framework of the Government of Türkiye and the generally welcoming attitude of host communities has proven crucial not only to reduce the marginalization of Syrians under temporary protection, international protection applicants and status holders, but also to foster positive relations with the host community. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected many sectors of the society, and therefore investment in fostering social cohesion needs to be scaled up in 2021/22 to address the risk of growing social tensions. The loss of livelihoods and growing competition over jobs, misinformation and language barriers are among the primary factors affecting social cohesion in Türkiye, requiring sustained and coordinated support.”<sup>80</sup>*

The 3RP document emphasizes in its section on social cohesion that Republic of Türkiye has adopted a Harmonization Strategy Document and the National Action Plan in 2018. It also mentions that harmonization activities are encouraged to take place, both at the provincial and the national levels, between the host society and Syrians as well as international protection applicants and status holders under the coordination of PMM. An inter-sectors

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<sup>77</sup> In the English version of the Development Plan, concepts of “integration” and “social adaptation” are used, but remarkably, “harmonization” is not.

<sup>78</sup> Republic of Türkiye, Eleventh Development Plan (2019-2023): Art.96. external migration increases and concentrates in certain provinces due to instabilities in the neighboring countries, effective policies are needed to address the population distribution and the integration of migrant population with urban life

Art. 546. Social adaptation of migrants will be ensured; the capacity of migration management will be strengthened.; Art. 661.2. The institutional structure of migration management will be strengthened to enhance the integration of foreigners in our country to social and economic life. See the whole document in English: [https://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/On\\_BirinciPlan\\_ingilizce\\_SonBaski.pdf](https://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/On_BirinciPlan_ingilizce_SonBaski.pdf)

<sup>79</sup>3RP Türkiye Country Chapter: 2021-2022 [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/3RP%20Türkiye%20Country%20Chapter%202021%202022\\_TR%20opt.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/3RP%20Türkiye%20Country%20Chapter%202021%202022_TR%20opt.pdf) (Access: 12.05.2022)

<sup>80</sup> 3RP Türkiye Country Chapter: 2021-2022 [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/3RP%20Türkiye%20Country%20Chapter%202021%202022\\_TR%20opt.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/3RP%20Türkiye%20Country%20Chapter%202021%202022_TR%20opt.pdf) (Access: 12.05.2022)

framework has been developed in the context of 3RP regarding social cohesion, which was updated to be in harmony with the Harmonization Strategy Document and the National Action Plan. In the 2021/2022 period, 3RP partners will increase the awareness raising efforts, address the challenges related to misinformation that leads to social tensions, and support locally-managed interventions including the host society and opinion leaders.

The 3RP document further states that *“the introduction of harmonization into Türkiye’s legal framework has allowed for the mainstreaming of social cohesion components into national service provision (such as health and education) by different public actors and processes. This helps increase the social and economic inclusion of persons under temporary and international protection to contribute to their self-reliance.”*

3RP document also suggests that *“promoting self-reliance and resilience of Syrians under temporary protection, international protection applicants and status holders is a key element of harmonization, made more important and challenging by the pandemic.”* Promising continued support of the 3RP partners to livelihoods activities in all economic sectors, promoting access to formal education, vocational training and life-skills development as well as addressing barriers to the formal labor market; the document makes particular reference to local governments. It states that *“Municipalities play a vital role in the implementation of social cohesion and harmonization programming as they are at the center of community interactions and perceptions. Local service providers and facilities need further support (e.g. digitalization tools) to respond to the pressures of increased population numbers and counter negative perceptions among host community members. 3RP partners will continue supporting local institutions and civil society actors in taking up a leadership role in mediating and enabling dialogue between communities.”*

### **2-c. Social Acceptance and Social Cohesion in the Case of Syrians in Türkiye**

It is possible to suggest that the almost nine-year period with more than 3,6 million Syrians in Türkiye was passed with “minimum conflict” and, given the circumstances, even that it was “quite successful”. The public institutions in Türkiye have paid extraordinary efforts to deal with this humanitarian crisis, the scope of which has gone beyond all the expectations in the beginning, in cooperation with many international organizations, especially including the UN institutions. It can be suggested that these institutions have done a very admirable and successful job given the unprecedented scale of the crisis and the many institutional disadvantages including the fact that main authority managing the process, the Directorate General of Migration Management, was established in 2014. The main point of criticism has been the lack of a more long-term strategic perspective and instead implementation of usually more short-term projects mostly in a “problem-solving” mentality, which is partly understandable given the dynamic nature of the whole process. The expectation in Türkiye has been that the war and political crisis in Syria would come to an end and the Syrians would leave Türkiye to return to their homes. This expectation has been the reason why the management of the process was built on a “short term” approach of “problem-solving”. Despite this expectation of eventual “return”, it can also be observed that an unnamed social cohesion policy has been implemented in the field with various institutional actors responding to the realities in the field.

There has been a serious erosion in the level of social solidarity and social acceptance towards Syrians in Türkiye, especially in the last two years, and the tension and pessimism

arising from the politicization of the issue have become palpable. Moreover, there are many indications that this will continue to exist in the near future. In fact, this shouldn't come as much of a surprise. Moreover, the presence of people coming from other countries, most of whom are irregular migrants, seems to have fueled the uneasiness in the society in recent years. Although Turkish society has responded to the many challenges brought by the arrival of millions of asylum seekers and irregular migrants in a short time with a high level of social acceptance and solidarity, it is clear that a new era has begun. Even though there was a "social shock" with almost all of the Syrians living and working side by side with the Turkish society, there hasn't been serious tensions or conflicts until 2019. It can be suggested that one of the most important issues to account for this change is the fact that Turkish society has lost its hope that the Syrians will return. Another important issue is that the worries and concerns that Turkish society has been experiencing for a long time were not taken seriously enough and that emotional discourses dominate the process instead of a reliable communication strategy. There is a clear break between the findings of SB-2017, SB-2019, and partially SB-2020, and those of SB-2020 regarding the level of social acceptance of Syrians by the Turkish society and Syrians' level of satisfaction with their lives in Türkiye. The emergence of a rather pessimistic picture for both Turkish society and Syrians is not surprising in this respect. It can even be said that the politicization of the process has been delayed. There is no doubt that in this process, it can be said that religious/cultural affinity and the expectation of "temporariness" played an important role in the beginning, and that the Turkish society showed great solidarity and success.

Without a doubt, in the initial periods of the crisis and even until 2013, it wasn't expected either that the numbers would rise to their current levels or that the crisis in Syria would last this long. However, expectations were proven wrong. This has created unexpected conditions for Syria, Türkiye, and the Syrians in Türkiye. Türkiye has adopted an "emergency", and even a "disaster management", approach and the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD)<sup>81</sup> assumed a central role in the process, including the establishment of the camps and provision of emergency services. Syrians who arrived between 2011 and 2013 were settled into these camps that were quickly formed or built. When the capacities of these camps became insufficient, Syrians started to settle by their own means outside of the camps, including cities that are not in the border region. This was the beginning of a county-wide spread of Syrians in a rather short while. Still, however, it can be suggested that until 2014 the factors that dominated Türkiye's management of the process were "the direct link between the future of the administration in Syria and Syrians' return to their country", "emergency management", and "temporariness".

It is known that social cohesion policies are complicated, dynamic, and multi-faceted. In addition, there is a perceived risk that social cohesion policies might encourage permanent settlement, which in the Turkish case made them undesirable. In this context, it has been very difficult to make a definitive decision and develop a clear agenda for social cohesion. In contrast, very contradictory policies and discourses could dominate the agenda sometimes simultaneously (e.g. "encouraging voluntary return and taking necessary steps for return within Syria" and "developing social cohesion policies").

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81 Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) was established by the Law numbered 5902 in 2009 under the Prime Ministry. With the institutional regulations in the framework of moving to a Presidential system, AFAD was placed under the Ministry of Interior by Presidential Decree numbered 4.

It can be said that cultural closeness played a positive role in increasing social acceptance in the initial phases. It is, however, impossible to explain the high and sustained levels of social acceptance that lasted until the last couple of years in Türkiye with cultural closeness alone. Three important dynamics to account for this fact could be identified. The first one is the fact that Türkiye has had a long and intense history of internal migration, which has led to a very mobile social dynamic. This extremely dynamic social structure is one of the factors that reduce the reactions and anxieties concerning the newcomers. The second important factor relates to a structural economic problem in Türkiye: the existence of a large informal economy. Accounting for more than 36% of the national economy, the informal economy in Türkiye has led Syrians create employment opportunities for themselves and earn a livelihood without causing loss of employment for the host society. While this can be seen as a positive development considering the scale of mass immigration, it needs to be stated that this is not sustainable in the long run. The SB research findings reveal that 37,9% of Syrians in Türkiye are actively working. Even though this figure cannot be officially verified and therefore needs to be considered with caution, it does give us an important idea concerning the economic activity of Syrians. These findings show that Syrians have found themselves a space among more than 10 million Turkish citizens who are working in the informal economy. As another important factor in the overall process, it is necessary to mention the performance of Syrians: they certainly need to be given credit for the relative lack of social problems in Türkiye as they live without causing conflict. "Quickly increasing crime rates", a common fear among societies that receive mass immigration in a short time span, has not generally realized in Türkiye. Syrians have both achieved to stand on their own feet and refrained from actions that could disturb the social peace. How sustainable all these will be is to be seen, however, it can be said that the past 10 years have been relatively successful due mostly to Turkish society's solidarity and social acceptance.

How the future will unfold concerning Syrians in Türkiye will probably be determined more by the Turkish society than by the state policies. Therefore, it is necessary to highlight some social vulnerabilities prevalent in Türkiye. There appears to be two major problem areas for Türkiye which has received over 4 million refugees in a short period of time. The first of these is the fact that the issue at hand concerns refugees, not voluntary immigrants, and that both the Turkish society and the state were caught unprepared. The other one is the existing fragility and the recent state of "rage" within the Turkish society which runs the risk of getting worse with the newcomers. In 2018, a study in Türkiye has developed a social cohesion index based on the social cohesion model of Eurofound and Bertelsmann Stiftung. Entitled "Social Cohesion in Türkiye", the main components of social cohesion were argued to be connectedness, social relations and an understanding of common benefits. According to the findings of this study, while the sense of connectedness and social relations are strong in Türkiye, the same cannot be said concerning trust and perception of justice. Finding a very positive approach to acceptance of differences, the research has suggested that the level of an understanding of common benefits, in contrast, was medium-to-low. A quote by F. Keyman in this study reveals that the issue concerns the Turkish society as a whole, and not merely related to newcomers or non-citizens: *"Türkiye appears to be a weak 'country of values' in creation of common values, participation in civil society, and trusting strangers. In this context, we can say that we are not living in a 'Türkiye of values' but in*

a *'Türkiye of identities'*.<sup>82</sup> From this perspective, one can speculate about the risk of developing new vulnerabilities in Türkiye's social structure regarding the refugees in general and Syrians in particular.<sup>83</sup>

A similar approach is evident in the article written by G. Sak in 2016 in which he discusses the fact that Türkiye was placed 120th in a list of 155 countries compiled by OECD ranking social cohesion. Sak argues that this ranking reflected that there is a high potential for internal conflict in the society as well as that the social capital is very weak, meaning that significant problems could be experienced in the future.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to underline the risks posed by living with a new group of people who will likely be demographically significant in Türkiye's future. It can be suggested that such risks are growing and a new social vulnerability is emerging to take its place among Türkiye's existing ones. Furthermore, this new vulnerability has an additional quality that it is open to external manipulation. While it may not be possible to get rid of this completely, there are many steps that could be taken to reduce the potential negative impacts. There are significant responsibilities and duties for the state, the society, and the Syrians to create a harmonious common life in dignity.

Migration and social cohesion policies refer to a political vision. The objective may be, direct or indirect, assimilation of the newcomers or, sometimes, the existing society may be designed using the newcomers. However, it needs to be reiterated that this study does not use the concept of social cohesion in an ideological or hierarchical way. Instead, it employs an understanding of a pluralist society which can foster a common sense of belonging. Social cohesion inevitably has a subjective aspect. Therefore, while the newcomers usually believe that they have successfully adapted to the life in the new context, the host society usually holds a contradictory belief that the refugees have failed to integrate. The complex, multi-actor, and dynamic nature of the subject makes it even more difficult to develop a framework. Obviously, it is not possible to talk about a flawless social cohesion model or a flawless social cohesion policy. The essential issue is to get closer to a harmonious and peaceful life for societies having ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. Therefore, it can be suggested that what this study attempts to develop is not a model, but a framework.

Because the issue of refugees and irregular migrants, especially Syrians in Türkiye, is placed at the center of politics with the effect of the Pandemic and economic problems, a serious erosion in the level of social acceptance, a serious increase in anxiety and social distance are observed in the society. It is observed that the high levels of social acceptance that were detected by earlier studies should more be seen as a form of "forced tolerance" rather than "acceptance". The fact that the issue of asylum seekers and refugees in Türkiye has not turned into a factor that dominates politics for a long time can be associated with the facts that there were high expectations that they will return, that the society did not directly convey their concerns and complaints to the Syrians, and that the Syrians live in the country without causing problems and conflict. It can be said that the limited realization of the issues that most disturb the local society in mass movements, especially the concerns of "losing jobs due to cheap labor" and "rapidly increasing criminality", were also effective in this attitude. However, it has been observed that the debates in the context of identity and

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82 A.Ataseven, Ç.Bakiş (2018) "Türkiye'de Sosyal Uyum" (Social Cohesion in Türkiye), İstanbul Politikalar Merkezi, İstanbul.

83 A.Ataseven, Ç.Bakiş ibid. pp.5.

84 G.Sak (2016) "Türkiye sosyal uyum endeksinde 155 ülke arasında 120'nci", TEPAV web page: <https://www.tepav.org.tr/tr/blog/s/5513> (Access: 29.12.2019)

demographics have come to the fore much more frequently in recent years. In other words, it appears that Turkish society is more concerned with identity-related threats that may rise in the future instead of the immediate and real threats. However, it can be said that this change mostly stems from the underestimated and unanswered anxieties and concerns of the society. It may be misleading to explain the politicization of the process only by the efforts of populist politicians or opinion leaders who exploit this issue. Although widespread securitization is a reality regarding migration and refugees, it is also a reality that sometimes society motivates politicians in this direction. This situation, which can also be defined as “Securitization from Society”<sup>85</sup>, presents a very convenient perspective in terms of explaining the process in Türkiye.





SYRIANS BAROMETER  
2021

# 2

SYRIANS UNDER  
TEMPORARY  
PROTECTION IN  
TÜRKİYE



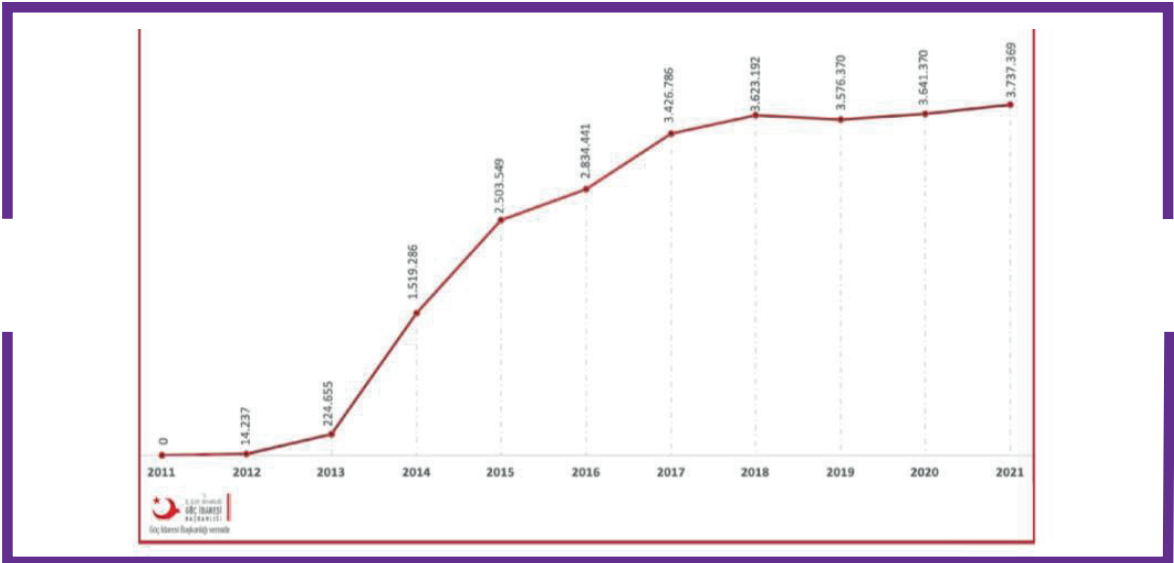
## I. SYRIANS UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION IN TÜRKİYE

### 1. Numerical Data Regarding Syrians in Türkiye

#### a. General View

The first migrations from Syria to Türkiye took place on 29 April 2011 when the first group of 252 Syrians arrived in Türkiye. Syrians continued to arrive ever since albeit in gradually smaller numbers over the last few years. The number of Syrians under temporary protection in Türkiye was 14 thousand in 2012, 224 thousand in 2013, 1 million 519 thousand in 2014, 2.5 million in 2015, 2.8 million in 2016, 3.4 million in 2017, 3.6 million in 2018, 3.5 million in 2019, 3.641.370 as of 31 December 2020, and 3.737.369 as of 31 December 2021. This number corresponds to 4.41% of Türkiye's population of 84.6 million in 2021, according to TUIK data, and to 4.22% if the number of Syrians is added to the total population.<sup>86</sup>

**SB-2021- FIGURE 6: Numerical and Proportional Change of Syrians Under Temporary Protection in Türkiye, 2011-2021**



YEAR	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
TOTAL NUMBER OF SYRIANS	14.237	224.655	1.519.286	2.503.549	2.824.441	3.426.786	3.623.192	3.576.370	3.641.370	3.737.369
NET NUMBER OF SYRIANS EACH YEAR	14.237	210.418	1.294.631	984.263	330.892	592.345	196.406	-46.822	65.000	95.999
POPULATION OF TÜRKİYE (IN MILLIONS)	73.7	74.7	75.6	76.6	77.7	78.7	80.8	82.0	83.1	82.2
SYRIANS AS % OF TÜRKİYE'S POPULATION <sup>87</sup>	0,01	0,3	2,00	3,26	3,63	4,35	4,48	4,36	4,38	4,54

Source: PMM- <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638> (Access: 05.01.2022)

While more than 93% of the Syrians living in Türkiye are under Temporary Protection, as of December 31, 2021, 104 thousand Syrians are living in Türkiye with a residence permit. In addition, at an accelerated pace in the last four years, some of the Syrians under Temporary Protection were granted Turkish citizenship. This number was announced as 193 thousand 293 as of 31 December 2021, 84 thousand 152 of whom were children.<sup>88</sup> Foreigners' right to apply for Turkish citizenship can be realized through "marriage," living in Türkiye with a permanent residence permit for at least 5 years, and making a certain amount of investment.<sup>89</sup> However, the relevant articles of the Temporary Protection Regulation, which determines the status of Syrians in Türkiye, clearly states that living in Türkiye with this status does not provide the right to apply for citizenship.<sup>90</sup> In this context, naturalization of Syrians in Türkiye is realized through "exceptional citizenship". Article 12 of the Turkish Citizenship

87 The General Directorate of Migration Management and the Presidency of Migration Management calculated the ratio of Syrians under Temporary Protection to the population of Türkiye and the province by dividing the Syrian population by the population of Türkiye or the province. In this case, the percentage of comparison was determined, not the percentage of Syrians within the total. For example, the rate was determined as 75.9% for the 141 thousand provincial population and 106 thousand Syrians in Kilis. However, in March 2022, the rate determination started to be made on the total population. In other words, a more realistic ratio is determined by dividing the sum of the local population (the total of Turkish population in Türkiye or in the relevant province and the foreigners excluding the Syrians under temporary protection) and the number of registered Syrians (TP-temporary protection) in that province by the number of Syrian-TP. In this case, the Syrian-TP ratio in Kilis is determined as 42.91% with the same numbers as on 31 December 2021. The same is true for Türkiye in general. Although the PMM data gives the mean as 4.54%, the statistically correct rate should be 4.34% ( $3.737.369 / 82.210.952 + 3.737.369 = 4.34$ ).

88 The news given by the ENSONHABER website and other media institutions based on the statement of Interior Minister S. Soylu on the subject: ENSONHABER (<https://www.ensonhaber.com/gundem/vatandaslik-alan-suriyeli-sayisi-2022-kac-suriyeli-turk-vatandasi-oldu>) (Access: 07.07.2022). According to the information given by the Directorate General of Population and Citizenship Affairs of the Ministry of Interior on 21 August 2022, the number of Syrians whose Turkish citizenship was granted increased to 211.908 at the mentioned date. While there are 91,270 children in this number, the number of men who obtained citizenship is 64,271 and the number of women is 55,862 (<https://www.ensonhaber.com/gundem/turk-vatandasligi-kazananlarin-sayisi-yayinlandi>).

89 Article 11 of the Turkish Citizenship Law No. 5901:

A foreigner who wishes to be received into citizenship shall; be of the age of consent possessing the distinguishing power according to his/her own national legal system, or according to the Turkish Civil Code No. 4721 if s/he is stateless; have been resident in Türkiye for five years, without interruption, prior to her/his date of application; have the intention of settling in Türkiye and prove this intention with action, such as purchasing real estate in Türkiye, establishing a business, investing, transferring his/her trade and business center to Türkiye, working in a workplace with a work permit and through similar acts or marrying a Turkish citizen, applying as a family, having previously obtained Turkish citizenship, having a mother, father, sibling, or child who has earned a job or to complete his education in Türkiye. not have any disease that constitutes a danger to public health; be a person of good morals; speak an adequate level of Turkish; have an income or profession to provide for his own livelihood and those of his/her dependents in Türkiye; not pose a threat to national security and public order.

90 Temporary Protection Regulation: ARTICLE 25- (1) "Temporary protection identification document shall grant the right to stay in Türkiye. However, this document shall not be deemed to be equivalent to a residence permit or documents, which substitute residence permits, as regulated by the Law, shall not grant the right for transition to long term residence permit, its duration shall not be taken into consideration when calculating the total term of residence permit durations and shall not entitle its holder to apply for Turkish citizenship.

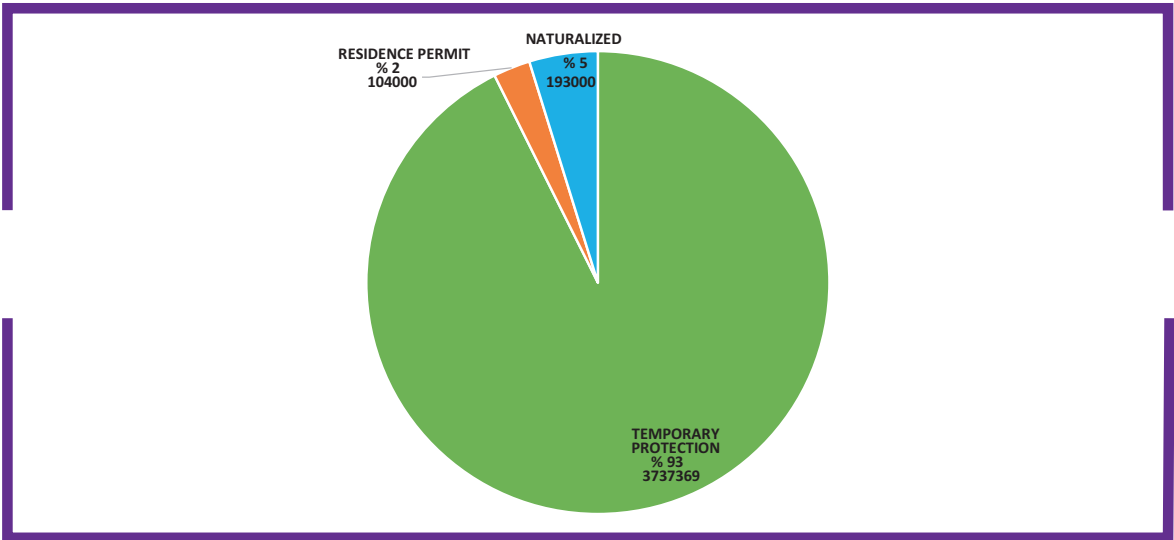
Law regulates the persons who can be granted exceptional citizenship and the procedure as follows:

*“Provided that there is no obstacle regarding national security and public order, foreigners, as set out below, may be received into Turkish citizenship upon a proposal by the Ministry of Interior and decision of the Council of Ministers.*

*Those persons who bring into Türkiye industrial facilities or have rendered or believed to render an outstanding service in the social or economic arena or in the fields of science, technology, sports, culture or arts and regarding whom a reasoned offer is made by the relevant ministries.*

*Foreigners who have a residence permit pursuant to subparagraph (j) of the first paragraph of Article 31 of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection dated 4/4/2013 and numbered 6458, and foreigners holding Turquoise Card and their foreign spouses, minor or dependent foreign children of themselves and their spouses.”*

**SB-2021- FIGURE 7: Syrians in Türkiye and Their Statuses<sup>91</sup> (31 December 2021)**



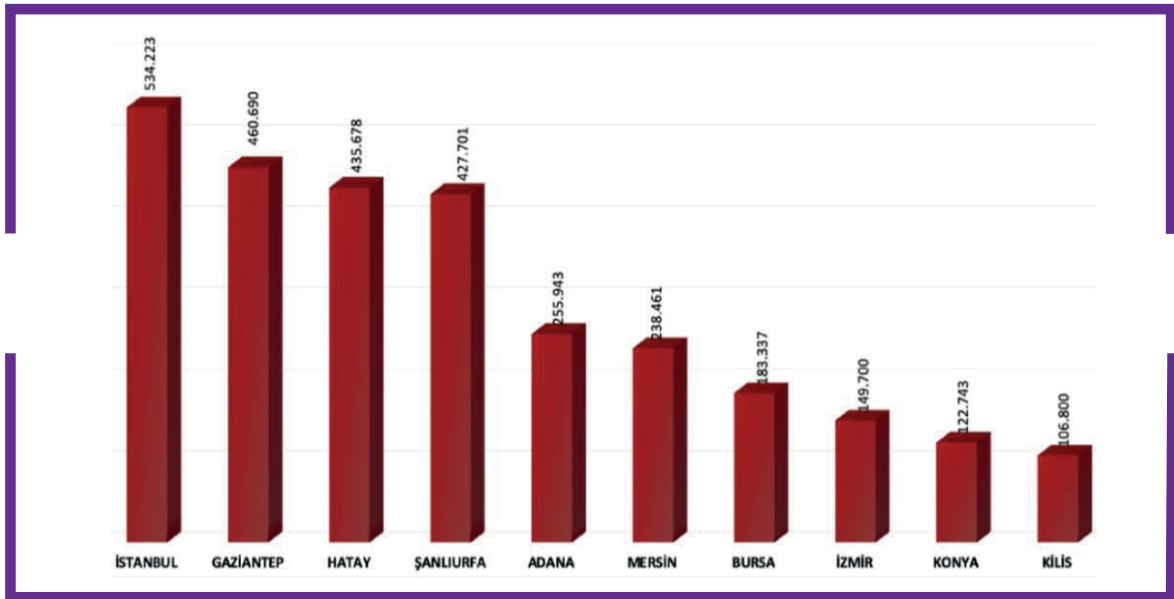
Source: PMM: (<https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>) <https://www.goc.gov.tr/ikamet-izinleri>, (Access: 07.07.2022)

<sup>91</sup>“Naturalized Syrians” were included in this table among “Syrians in Türkiye” to be able to make evaluations regarding social cohesion. In addition, it is known that, with only few exceptions, Syrians who obtained Turkish citizenship retain their Syrian citizenship. In this context, the “Syrian community” in Türkiye appears to be a little over 4 million.

## b. Distribution of Syrians in Türkiye by Cities

The distribution of Syrians in Türkiye by cities is known through their registration data. However, the number of registered Syrians in a city and the number of Syrians who actually live in that city might differ. This situation is observed especially in terms of those living in areas close to the Syrian border and Syrians living in western provinces and especially in metropolitan areas.<sup>92</sup> In the DTM (Displacement Tracking Matrix) and FMS (Flow Monitoring Surveys) surveys conducted between 2017-2019 in cooperation with the PMM and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), important data were obtained regarding the Syrians living outside the provinces where they are registered, especially in Istanbul.<sup>93</sup> In this respect, the Press Statement of Istanbul Governorship on “Combating Irregular Migration”<sup>94</sup> on 22 July 2019 can be considered as an important milestone. After July 2019, within the scope of “fight against irregular migration”, the process of registration/number detection started to be carried out directly by the PMM and the processes of sending to registered provinces were accelerated in Türkiye, especially in Istanbul.

**SB-2021-FIGURE 8: Top Ten Cities in Türkiye where Syrians Under Temporary Protection Live (31.12.2021)**



Source: PMM- <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638> (Access: 05.01.2022)

92 Interior Minister S. Soylu gave an important example to this situation in his statement on 16.06.2022. Stating that the population of Kilis is 145 thousand, Soylu said there are a total of 109 thousand 687 Syrian records here, while they have determined that 18 thousand 504 of them have not been in Kilis for 2 years, and thus the Syrian population in Kilis is 91 thousand 183. AHABER (16.06.2022) (<https://www.ahaber.com.tr/gundem/2022/06/16/son-dakika-turkiyedeki-suriyeli-sayisi-ne-kadar-icisleri-bakani-suleyman-soylu-acikladi>) (Access: 07.07.2022)

93 IOM-Türkiye: [https://displacement.iom.int/sites/default/files/public/reports/T%C3%BCrkiye\\_Compilation\\_06\\_June\\_22.pdf](https://displacement.iom.int/sites/default/files/public/reports/T%C3%BCrkiye_Compilation_06_June_22.pdf); IOM-Türkiye: <https://Türkiye.iom.int/migrant-presence-monitoring> (Access: 21.02.2020)

94 İstanbul Governorate (22.07.2019) “Press Release on Combating Irregular Migration” (“Düzensiz Göç İle Mücadele Konusunda Basın Açıklaması”), <http://www.istanbul.gov.tr/duzensiz-gocle-mucadele-ile-ilgili-basin-aciklamasi> (Access: 07.07.2022)

According to the registration-based data as of 31 December 2021, the largest number of (534.223) Syrians live in Istanbul. The registered Syrian residents of Istanbul account for 3.56% of city's population. In terms of absolute numbers, Istanbul is followed by Gaziantep where 460 thousand Syrians live (21.73% of its population), Hatay with 435 thousand Syrian residents (24.55% of its population), and Şanlıurfa with 427 thousand registered Syrians (20.29% of its population). In terms of the percentage of population, Kilis is the city with the largest Syrian community. With a local population of 141 thousand, Kilis is home to 106 thousand Syrians. In other words, the number of Syrians in Kilis corresponds to 75.59% of this city's population. The number of Turkish cities with more than 100 thousand registered Syrians is 10. Considering the fact that many of these cities already had various structural problems, arrival of large numbers of Syrians has led to an increase in poverty as well as some problems regarding access to public services.

The distribution table of Syrians under Temporary Protection in Türkiye according to the provinces they are registered reveals important differences between provinces. The number of provinces that are above the Türkiye average of 4.54% is 12. Ranking in terms of density by population: Kilis (75.59%), Hatay (24.55%), Gaziantep (21.73%), Şanlıurfa (20.29%), Mersin (12.94%), Adana (11%, 48), Mardin (10.74%), Osmaniye (8.05%), Kahramanmaraş (8.21%), Bursa (6.0%), Kayseri (5.59%), and Konya (5.52%).<sup>95</sup>

95 There are occasional debates over the registration numbers of Syrians in Türkiye. As of 31 December 2021, the number of Syrians under Temporary Protection registered in the PMM is 3,737,369, but this number decreased by approximately 100 thousand in July 2022. The reason for this decrease is the Syrians who could not be found in registration updates and address checks. In the PMM data system, if he/she or a member of his/her family does not make any transactions in the online system within a year, the records are taken as "passive". This situation was also experienced in 2019, and the number on 28 December 2019 decreased by approximately 120 thousand three days later. Regarding the issue, Minister of Interior S. Soylu said there are 109,687 Syrian records in total in Kilis, while they determined that 18,504 people have not been in Kilis for 2 years, so the Syrian population in Kilis dropped to 91,183." (Anadolu Agency, 15 June, 2022, "Syrians will go back to their countries when there is peace" ("Suriyeliler huzur olduğu zaman kendi ülkelerine geri gidecekler") <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gundem/icisleri-bakani-soylu-turkiyede-yilbasindan-bugune-kadar-13-we-found-grain-de-as-live-bomb/2614374>). İsmail Çataklı, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Interior, told the members of the Human Rights Commission of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye on June 21, 2022 that 122 thousand Syrians "disappeared" and their records were "suspended". In the data of the PMM updated in July 2022, it was observed that the number of Syrians in the border region of Gaziantep, Hatay, Şanlıurfa, and Kilis decreased radically. (<https://onedio.com/haber/icisleri-bakan-yardimcisi-catakli-122-bin-suriyeli-nin-kayip-oldugu-nu-soyledi-aradik-taradik-yoklar-1077298>).

## SB-2021- FIGURE 9: Distribution of Syrian Refugees under Temporary Protection by Cities

NO	PROVINCE	REGISTERED	POPULATION	TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE SYRIANS TO THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN THE CITY	RATE OF THE NUMBER REGISTERED SYRIANS TO THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN THE CITY	NO	PROVINCE	REGISTERED	POPULATION	TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE SYRIANS TO THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN THE CITY	RATE OF THE NUMBER REGISTERED SYRIANS TO THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN THE CITY
1	ADANA	233.943	2.244.748	10,42%	11,40%	42	KAHRAMANMARAŞ	95.810	1.384.273	6,92%	8,21%
2	ADYAMAN	22.816	631.039	3,61%	3,63%	43	KARABÜK	1.451	234.171	0,62%	0,62%
3	AFYONKARAHİSAR	12.424	725.813	1,71%	1,71%	44	KARAMAN	428	251.791	0,17%	0,17%
4	AĞRI	1.261	534.186	0,24%	0,24%	45	KARS	193	383.119	0,05%	0,05%
5	AKSARAY	3.928	408.101	0,96%	0,96%	46	KASTAMONU	2.835	370.439	0,77%	0,77%
6	AMASYA	1.097	331.283	0,33%	0,33%	47	KAYSERİ	82.740	1.402.943	5,90%	5,90%
7	ANKARA	101.838	5.506.786	1,85%	1,85%	48	KIRIKALE	1.932	270.486	0,72%	0,72%
8	ANTALYA	3.787	2.454.014	0,15%	0,15%	49	KIRKLARELİ	1.013	358.249	0,28%	0,28%
9	ARDAHAN	118	95.920	0,12%	0,12%	50	KIRŞEHİR	1.893	229.516	0,82%	0,82%
10	ARTVİN	80	168.890	0,04%	0,04%	51	KİLİS	106.800	141.454	75,50%	75,50%
11	AYDIN	8.947	1.108.734	0,75%	0,75%	52	KOCAELİ	58.244	1.983.304	2,94%	2,94%
12	BALIKESİR	4.893	1.229.782	0,41%	0,41%	53	KONYA	122.743	2.234.384	5,52%	5,52%
13	BARTIN	242	197.422	0,12%	0,12%	54	KÜTAHYA	1.847	367.438	0,50%	0,50%
14	BATMAN	15.919	619.021	2,57%	2,57%	55	MALATYA	31.871	801.767	3,98%	3,98%
15	BAYBURT	34	81.372	0,04%	0,04%	56	MANİSA	14.290	1.442.186	0,98%	0,98%
16	BİLECİK	699	215.480	0,32%	0,32%	57	MARDİN	91.433	451.922	20,24%	20,24%
17	BİNGÖL	1.097	281.433	0,39%	0,39%	58	MERSİN	238.461	1.839.875	12,96%	12,96%
18	BİTLİS	1.218	350.663	0,35%	0,35%	59	MUĞLA	11.306	961.139	1,17%	1,17%
19	BOLU	4.429	304.628	1,45%	1,45%	60	MUŞ	1.618	430.692	0,37%	0,37%
20	BURDUR	8.548	262.897	3,25%	3,25%	61	NEVŞEHİR	13.133	298.236	4,40%	4,40%
21	BURSA	183.537	3.057.247	6,00%	6,00%	62	NİĞDE	6.730	358.034	1,88%	1,88%
22	ÇANAKKALE	3.130	536.513	0,58%	0,58%	63	ORDU	947	754.282	0,13%	0,13%
23	ÇANIRI	808	186.603	0,43%	0,43%	64	OSMANIYE	44.083	347.323	12,70%	12,70%
24	ÇORUM	3.411	519.193	0,66%	0,66%	65	RİZE	1.190	342.769	0,35%	0,35%
25	DENİZLİ	14.005	1.028.179	1,36%	1,36%	66	SAKARYA	15.743	1.017.864	1,55%	1,55%
26	DİYARBAKIR	24.230	1.782.256	1,36%	1,36%	67	SAMSUN	9.646	1.327.875	0,73%	0,73%
27	DÜZCE	1.725	389.471	0,44%	0,44%	68	SİRT	4.773	330.574	1,44%	1,44%
28	EDİRNE	1.082	402.237	0,27%	0,27%	69	SİNOP	230	234.076	0,11%	0,11%
29	ELAZIĞ	12.843	585.450	2,19%	2,19%	70	SİVAS	3.548	429.795	0,83%	0,83%
30	ERZİNCAN	132	231.136	0,06%	0,06%	71	SANLIURFA	437.701	3.188.013	13,73%	13,73%
31	ERZURUM	1.170	753.742	0,16%	0,16%	72	ŞIRNAK	14.914	536.990	2,78%	2,78%
32	ERŞEHİR	5.367	805.111	0,67%	0,67%	73	TEKİRDAĞ	12.590	1.074.236	1,18%	1,18%
33	GAZİANTEP	480.690	2.089.795	22,99%	22,99%	74	TOKAT	1.204	391.518	0,31%	0,31%
34	GİRESUN	236	443.544	0,05%	0,05%	75	TRABZON	3.641	799.376	0,46%	0,46%
35	GÜMÜRHANE	150	139.712	0,11%	0,11%	76	TUNCELİ	41	83.157	0,05%	0,05%
36	HAKKARİ	5.114	279.858	1,83%	1,83%	77	UŞAK	5.130	361.541	1,42%	1,42%
37	HATAY	435.078	1.654.907	26,30%	26,30%	78	VAN	2.130	1.345.279	0,16%	0,16%
38	İÇÖZ	77	200.635	0,04%	0,04%	79	YALOVA	3.932	253.134	1,55%	1,55%
39	İSPARTA	7.825	431.143	1,82%	1,82%	80	YILDIZ	5.272	409.249	1,29%	1,29%
40	İSTANBUL	534.233	15.011.868	3,56%	3,56%	81	ZONGULDAK	737	586.358	0,12%	0,12%
41	İZMİR	149.790	4.365.022	3,43%	3,43%						

Source: PMM- <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma> (Access: 05.01.2022)

**SB-2021- TABLE 1: The Numerical and Proportional Sizes of the 16 Provinces with the Highest Number of Syrians under Temporary Protection in Türkiye (31.12.2021)**

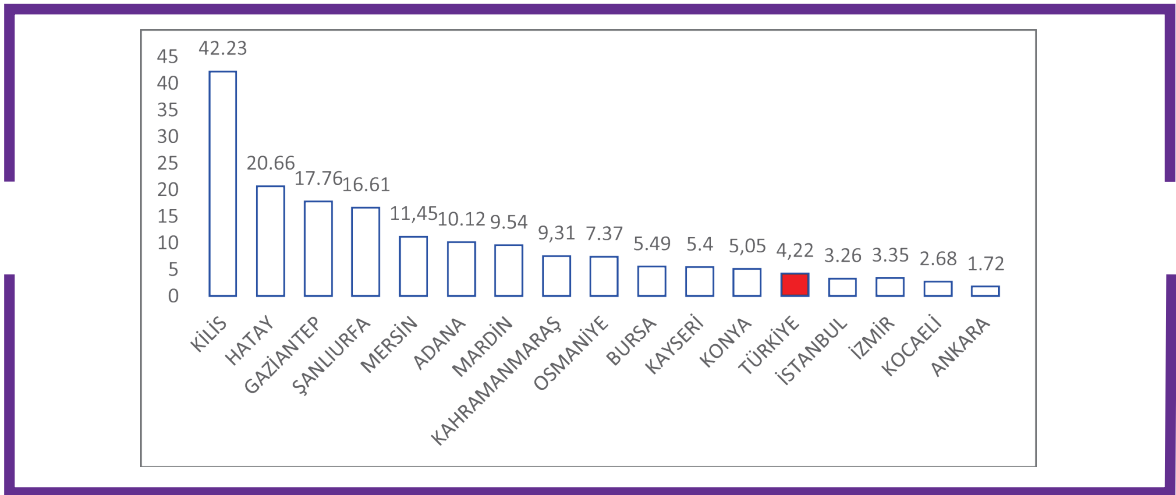
Top 16 Provinces with the largest number of Syrians uTP	Province	Population	Number of Syrians uTP	Share in Population as %*	Rank Among Provinces with the Largest Share of Syrians uTP
	<b>Türkiye</b>	<b>84 680 273</b>	<b>3.737.369</b>	<b>4,22</b>	
1	İstanbul	15 840 900	534.223	3,26	14
2	Gaziantep	2 130 432	460.690	17,76	3
3	Hatay	1 670 712	435.678	20,66	2
4	Şanlıurfa	2 143 020	427.701	16,61	4
5	Adana	2 263 373	255.943	10,12	6
6	Mersin	1 891 145	238.461	11,17	5
7	Bursa	3 147 818	183.337	5,49	10
8	İzmir	4 425 789	149.900	3,35	13
9	Konya	2 277 017	122.743	5,08	12
10	Kilis	145 826	106.800	42,23	1
11	Ankara	5 747 325	101.858	1,72	16
12	Kahramanmaraş	1 171 298	95.610	7,50	8
13	Mardin	862 757	91.455	9,54	7
14	Kayseri	1 434 357	82.740	5,40	11
15	Kocaeli	2 033 441	56.244	2,68	15
16	Osmaniye	553 012	44.083	7,37	9

More than 90% of Syrians under temporary protection in Türkiye are registered in the 15 cities on this list, each of which have 44 thousand or more Syrian uTP residents. Remaining 10% is registered in the other 66 provinces. 40% of Syrians live in five border cities (Gaziantep, Hatay, Şanlıurfa, Kilis, Mardin). Syrians living in three major metropolitan cities (İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir) account for 21% of the Syrian population in Türkiye.

\*The calculation was made by dividing the number of Syrians under temporary protection registered in the relevant city by the sum of the population of the city and the registered Syrian uTPs in that city according to the ADKNS system.



**SB-2021- FIGURE 10: Ratio of Syrian Population to Populations of Provinces -31 December 2021 (Top 16 Provinces with the largest number of Syrians uTP)**



**c. “Urban Refugees”**

One of the most significant characteristics of Syrians in Türkiye is that they have turned into “urban refugees”, especially since 2013. As of 31 December 2021, only 1.36% (51,471) of the total number of 3 million 737 thousand Syrians in Türkiye live in the 7 temporary shelter centers (camps) located in the following 5 cities: Hatay (3), Kilis, Adana, Kahramanmaraş, and Osmaniye. The decrease in the number of people living in the camps continues. In other words, Syrians live outside the camps as urban refugees, spread almost all over Türkiye.

**SB-2021- FIGURE 11: Number of Syrians in Temporary Shelter Centers (31 December 2021)**

**DISTRIBUTION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN THE SCOPE OF TEMPORARY PROTECTION ACCORDING TO SHELTER CENTERS (7 SHELTER CENTERS IN 5 PROVINCE)**

PROVINCE	NAME OF TEMPORARY SHELTER CENTERS	TOTAL	GRAND TOTAL
<b>ADANA (1)</b>	Sarıçam	16.957	16.957
<b>HATAY (3)</b>	Altınözü	2.451	8.368
	Yayladağı	3.320	
	Apaydın	2.597	
<b>KAHRAMANMARAŞ (1)</b>	Merkez	9.663	9.663
<b>KİLİS (1)</b>	Elbeyli	8.212	8.212
<b>OSMANİYE (1)</b>	Cevdetiye	8.271	8.271
<b>TOPLAM</b>		51.471	

Source: PMM- <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638> (Access: 05.01.2022)

#### d. Distribution of Syrians in Türkiye by Age and Sex

It is noted that the average age of Syrians in Türkiye is 10 years younger than that of the Turkish society. According to the 2021 TUIK data, the average age of the Turkish population is 33.1, while the average age of the Syrians under temporary protection is 22.54. According to the results of TUIK's Address Based Population Registration System (ADNKS), as of the end of 2021, the population of Türkiye was 84 million 680 thousand 273 people, of which 22 million 738 thousand 300 were children. This number shows that 26.9% of Türkiye's population consists of children between the ages of 0-17. Although this rate is above the average of EU member countries, a significant decrease in the child population, which includes the 0-17 age group, is observed in Türkiye. While the 0-17 age group constituted 48.5% of the total population in 1970, this rate decreased to 41.8% in 1990 and to 26.9% in 2021.<sup>96</sup> For Syrians in Türkiye, however, the share of the 0-17 age group in the total Syrian population in the country is 45.65%.

The number of Syrian babies born in Türkiye increases day by day since 2011.<sup>97</sup> This increase in the number of births, which can be seen as an indicator of normalization in the lives of Syrians, has particularly accelerated since 2016. According to data provided by the Ministry of Health, there were 116 thousand Syrian births in Türkiye between 2011 and 2015; 82.850 in 2016; 111.325 in 2017, 113 thousand in 2018; 107 thousand in 2019<sup>98</sup>, 101 thousand in 2020<sup>99</sup>, and around 110 thousand in 2021.<sup>100</sup> According to the official data of the Ministry of Health, the number of Syrian babies born in Türkiye between 2011 and 2021 has exceeded 750 thousand. As of 31 December 2021, the number of babies and children aged 0-9 among Syrians, most of whom were born in Türkiye, is 1 million 83 thousand, of which 511 thousand are in the 0-4 age group and 571 thousand are in the 5-9 age group. Approximately 75% of babies and children in the 0-9 age group were born in Türkiye.

According to the Türkiye Population and Health Research (TNSA)<sup>101</sup> conducted by Institute of Population Studies at Hacettepe University in 2018, the fertility rate<sup>102</sup> in Türkiye is 2.3. This figure is 2.2 in urban places while it is 2.8 in rural places. The highest regional fertility rate in Türkiye is in Eastern Anatolia, which is 3.2 and the lowest is 1.6 in the Black Sea region.<sup>103</sup> In the "Türkiye 2018 Demographic and Health Survey: Syrian Migrant Sampling"

96 TUIK: Children in Statistics-2021 (20 April 2022) <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Istatistiklerle-Cocuk-2021-45633> (Access: 07.07.2022)

97 According to the information provided by the Ministry of Health, the number of Syrian babies born in Türkiye was 198.948 as of 31 December 2016. BY 30 September 2017, this number has increased to 276.158. Source: Presentation by Migration Health Department of Directorate General of Public Health, Ministry of Health (Hacettepe University- 16 October 2017).

98 President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan suggested at the Global Refugee Forum organized in Geneva on 17 December 2019 that around 516 thousand Syrian babies were born in Türkiye in the past 8 years. See: (<https://www.tccb.gov.tr/konusmalar/353/113993/kuresel-multeciler-forumu-nda-yaptiklari-konusma>.) (Access: 09.01.2019)

99 The number of Syrian babies born in Türkiye in 2020 (101.203) was provided by PMM.

100 The number of Syrian babies born in Türkiye between 2011- 30 June 2022 is 798.667. Info was provided by PMM and Health Ministry.

101 Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies (2019) [http://www.hips.hacettepe.edu.tr/nufus\\_arastirmalari.shtml](http://www.hips.hacettepe.edu.tr/nufus_arastirmalari.shtml) (Access: 10.04.2021)

102 Total fertility rate: It is the total number of children a woman will give birth to during her fertility life if age-specific fertility rates are valid.

103 Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies (2019) Türkiye 2018 Demographic and Health Survey: Syrian Migrant Sampling

section of the same study, which was conducted specifically for Syrians in Türkiye, the total fertility rate for Syrian migrant women was determined as 5.3 children per woman. This fertility rate, which is more than twice that of Türkiye, has been frequently mentioned in recent years in the context of discussions regarding demographic transformation where projections for the future are made in this regard. However, experts on the subject draw attention to the fact that such a fertility level was not observed in Syria before 2011, and they state that a part of the high fertility rate in Syrians in Türkiye is due to “delayed marriages and delayed births”, and that this high rate is not expected to continue.<sup>104</sup>

The number of Syrian children aged 5-17, in other words those who are in the “mandatory schooling age”, is around 1 million 195 thousand as of 31 December 2021.

The active working age population (15-64) among Syrians in Türkiye is around 2.2 million at the end of 2021, as it was in 2020. However, if child workers are also taken into account, the active working population of 12 years and over is 2.4 million.

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([https://fs.hacettepe.edu.tr/hips/dosyalar/yayinlar/2019\\_tnsa\\_SR\\_compressed.pdf](https://fs.hacettepe.edu.tr/hips/dosyalar/yayinlar/2019_tnsa_SR_compressed.pdf) , p.55 (Access: 07.07.2022))

104 Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies Faculty Member Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ali Eryurt, drawing attention to the effect of delayed marriages and births in this high fertility, states that there is no scientific basis for the 5.3 level to remain constant or to increase further among Syrians. Prof. Eryurt, relying on past experiences and migration theories, emphasizes that the fertility behaviors of immigrants should be expected to converge to the local population over time, which was also observed in internal migration process in Türkiye. Some projections take the Syrian population of 1 January 2020 as the starting population with assumptions of a constant fertility rate (5.3 in this case), a constant mortality rate and zero migration, which yield the result of 8.95 million Syrians in Türkiye by 2050. Since the population of Türkiye in 2050 will be 93.4 million according to TUIK projections, the proportion of Syrians among the total 102 million population in Türkiye would reach 8.77%, based on this unrealistic hypothetical model. It should not be forgotten that this scenario, obtained in the context of a scenario such as fertility is constant at 5.3, life expectancy is constant at birth, and there is no migration, is by no means a scientific and realistic scenario, and that a decrease in fertility is a more realistic expectation.

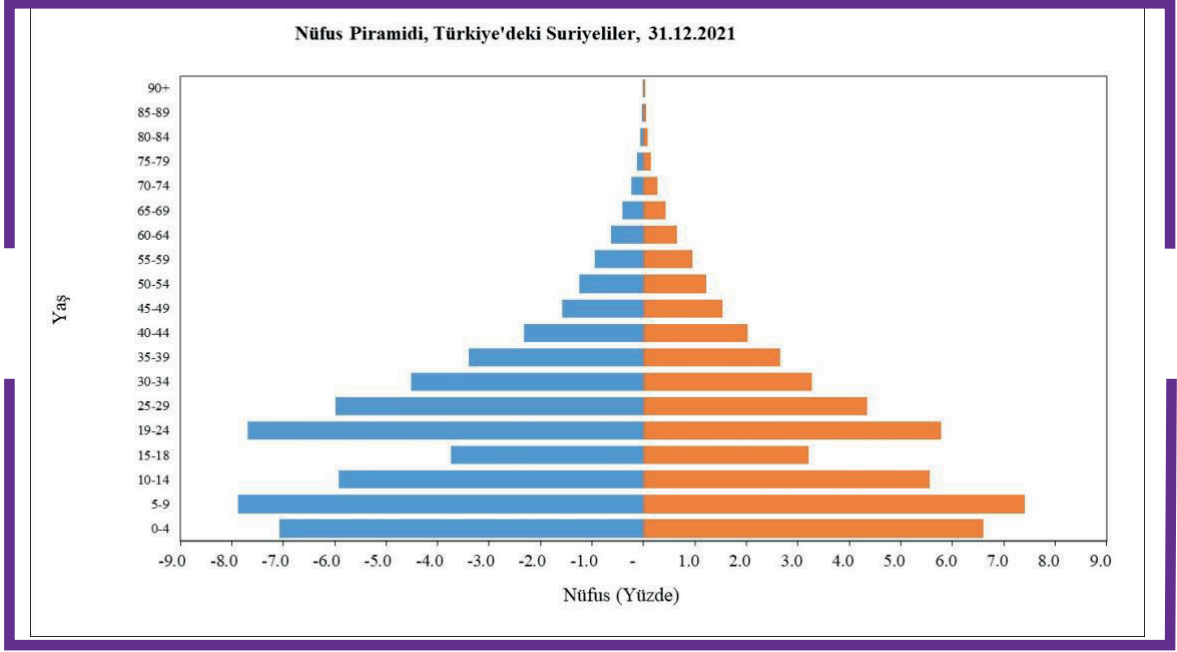
**SB-2021- FIGURE 12: Distribution by Age and Sex of Syrians Under Temporary Protection in Türkiye (31.12.2021)**

AGE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
<b>TOPLAM</b>	2.010.301	1.727.068	3.737.369
<b>0-4</b>	264.347	246.770	511.117
<b>5-9</b>	294.583	276.673	571.256
<b>10-14</b>	221.408	207.994	429.402
<b>15-18</b>	139.826	119.752	259.578
<b>19-24</b>	287.169	216.350	503.519
<b>25-29</b>	223.898	162.492	386.390
<b>30-34</b>	168.839	122.538	291.377
<b>35-39</b>	126.687	99.212	225.889
<b>40-44</b>	86.570	75.476	162.046
<b>45-49</b>	58.679	57.367	116.046
<b>50-54</b>	46.550	45.404	91.954
<b>55-59</b>	35.419	35.472	70.891
<b>60-64</b>	23.349	24.110	47.459
<b>65-69</b>	15.209	16.056	31.265
<b>70-74</b>	8.987	9.900	18.887
<b>75-79</b>	4.420	5.478	9.898
<b>80-84</b>	2.421	3.232	5.653
<b>85-89</b>	1.152	1.701	2.853
<b>90 ve üstü</b>	788	1.091	1.879

Source: PMM- [http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma\\_363\\_378\\_4713\\_icerik](http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik) (Access: 05.01.2022)

The sex distribution of Syrian population in Türkiye, similar to those observed in Lebanon and Jordan, is quite interesting. 2 million 10 thousand or 53.78% of the Syrians under temporary protection in Türkiye are male while 1 million 727 or 46.21% are female. As can be seen in Figure 13, the number of Syrian males is higher than that of females in all age groups between the ages of 0-54. The age group in which the sex distribution is the least balanced is 19-29. In this age group, males constitute 57.5% while females make up of 42.4%. In other words, there are 136 Syrian men in Türkiye compared to every 100 Syrian women between the ages of 19-29<sup>105</sup>.

## SB-2021-FIGURE 13: Population Pyramid of Syrians in Türkiye



Source: Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ali Eryurt (Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies)

### e. “Plan to Combat Spatial Concentration” and Closure of Neighborhoods<sup>106</sup>

Syrian refugees, who have started to come to Türkiye since April 2011, were generally settled in the border region and camps in 2011 and 2012. However, when the 26 camps with a capacity of 250 thousand became insufficient, settlement of Syrians in Türkiye took place spontaneously as of 2013.<sup>107</sup> In general, Syrians moved from the regions close to the Syrian border, especially including Hatay, Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep and Kilis, to the big cities in western parts of Türkiye, particularly including İstanbul. Following the efforts to update the records on Syrians, who are normally subject to permission to leave their registered provinces, more stringent measures were taken to regulate their settlement or travel outside these provinces. However, since there was no settlement policy for Syrians in Türkiye, very serious numerical/proportional differences occurred in the settlements of Syrians in urban areas. As expected, when choosing a place to settle, Syrians made their choices by considering the ease with which to find jobs, number of residing Syrians, affordability and availability of housing, access to public services, and the cost of living. This situation created extraordinary numerical/proportional differences between the districts of the provinces and between the neighborhoods of the districts, and more importantly, it led to the creation of ghettos. For example, around 100 thousand Syrians in Ankara live in only 4 districts and certain neighborhoods of those districts. Similarly, in İstanbul, while the number of Syrians residing

<sup>106</sup> Since this policy was implemented in 2022, relevant considerations will be covered extensively in SB-2022. See: About the Neighborhood Closure Announcement of the PMM (30 June 2021). (<https://www.goc.gov.tr/mahalle-kapatma-duyurusu-hk2>)

<sup>107</sup> AFAD (2016) [https://www.afad.gov.tr/kurumlar/afad.gov.tr/25327/xfiles/14a-Turkiye\\_nin\\_Afet\\_Yonetimindeki\\_Basarili\\_Uygulamalari\\_Turkce\\_.pdf](https://www.afad.gov.tr/kurumlar/afad.gov.tr/25327/xfiles/14a-Turkiye_nin_Afet_Yonetimindeki_Basarili_Uygulamalari_Turkce_.pdf)

in certain districts is only in a few thousands, it can reach hundreds of thousands in some other districts.

Registration of Syrians was not allowed in some provinces in Türkiye, especially including Antalya, from the very beginning. However, it can be said that the first important step regarding regulation of spatial concentration was taken with the “Press Statement on Combating Irregular Migration”<sup>108</sup> by the Governorship of Istanbul on July 22, 2019. Two articles of this statement are in specific reference to Syrians:

- “Foreigners with Syrian nationality who are not under temporary protection (those without registration and/or identity card) are to be transferred to the provinces determined by the instructions of the Ministry of Interior. Istanbul is closed to new temporary protection registrations.”
- “Syrians under temporary protection who are not registered in Istanbul (those registered in other provinces) have been given time until 20 August 2019 to return to the provinces where they are registered. Those who are identified not to have returned after the specified period will be transferred to the provinces where they are registered in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Interior.”

The second important step shared with the public in this regard was in the context of Fatih and Esenyurt districts of Istanbul. With the announcement of the PMM on its social media accounts on January 24, 2021, the “first applications” of foreigners in Istanbul’s Esenyurt and Fatih districts have been limited as of January 15th. <sup>109</sup>

Following the events that took place on 10 August 2021 in the Battalgazi neighborhood of Ankara’s Altindag district where one person died, the issue of “spatial concentration” of Syrians once again came to the fore. The Ministry of Interior resettled approximately 5 thousand Syrians living in Altindag to other provinces, districts, or neighborhoods.

On 22 February 2022, a new and more comprehensive phase was started with the announcement of a plan called “Combating Spatial Concentration” by the Minister of Interior.<sup>110</sup> Within the framework of this policy, which was carried out on a neighborhood basis and implemented in 2022, neighborhoods with more than 20% foreigners in their population were closed to new registrations.

108 Istanbul Governorate (22.07.2019) “Press Statement on Combating Irregular Migration” <http://www.istanbul.gov.tr/duzensiz-goc-le-mucadele-ile-ilgili-basin-aciklamasi> (Access: 07.07.2022)

109 PMM (24 January 2021) (<https://www.goc.gov.tr/ikamet-izni-talepleri-hakkinda>)

110 TRT News (22 Şubat 2022) “The share of refugees will not be over 25 percent” (<https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/sigincilarin-yerli-nufusa-orani-yuzde-25i-gecmeyecek-657342.html>)

## 2. Syrians in Türkiye and Education<sup>111</sup>

There are four main issue areas related to the education of Syrians in Türkiye. The first one of these relates to the general educational attainment level of Syrians. The second issue is the access to education of Syrian children and youth, while the third and the fourth concern higher education, and language and vocational education, respectively.

### a. General Educational Attainment Level of Syrians in Türkiye

The general level of educational attainment is very important concerning Syrians' social cohesion processes as well as the future education policies that regard their access to education in Türkiye. The existing data on this subject, limited as it is, suggests that the average level of educational attainment is significantly below the Turkish national average. To emphasize, this is extremely relevant for the social cohesion and education policies. One of the most important implications of the level of education in the community is apparent in the support that the families display to their children's education. Similarly, level of education could play an important role in terms of learning Turkish, entrepreneurship, participation in social life, and ability to acquire local values and norms. Moreover, efficiency of vocational training courses designed for adults, which are very important for the inclusion of Syrians to economic and social life, is also closely related to the educational attainment levels.

The overall illiteracy rate in Türkiye, according to 2021 data, is 2.5%; it is 0.7% among men and 4.3% among women.<sup>112</sup> As of 31 December 2021, information regarding the general education level of Syrians in Türkiye, who correspond to 4.2% of the national population, is quite scarce. Perhaps the only relevant official data that was prepared on the basis of registrations and released publicly was within "First Stage Needs Assessment Covering 2016-2018 Period for Syrians with Temporary Protection Status in Türkiye"<sup>113</sup>, which was prepared by the Ministry of Development in the framework of negotiations with the EU. This study has formed an important background for the "EU-Türkiye Statement" negotiations with the EU that finally came out on March 18, 2016.<sup>114</sup> According to this document, which was taken as the basis of the document published by the EU Commission entitled "Needs assessment report for the preparation of an enhanced EU support to Türkiye on the refugee crisis"<sup>115</sup>, 33% of Syrians in Türkiye were illiterate while 13% were literate but not graduated from any formal school.

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111 For the information partly used in this section see: M.Murat Erdoğan and Metin Çorabatır (2019) "Suriyeli Mülteci Nüfusunun Demografik Gelişimi, Türkiye'deki Eğitim, İstihdam Ve Belediye Hizmetlerine Yakın Gelecekte Olası Etkileri" (Demography of Syrian Refugees and Potential Impacts on Education, Employment and Municipal Services in Türkiye), GIZ, Quadra Program.

112 According to 2021 data in Türkiye, the province with the highest rate of illiteracy is Mardin with 5.56%, followed by Şanlıurfa with 5.17%, and Siirt with 5.13%. TÜİK: <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Kategori/GetKategori?p=Egitim,-Kultur,-Spor-ve-Turizm-105> ve <https://cip.tuik.gov.tr/#> (Access: 07.07.2022)

113 Ministry of Development: First Stage Needs Assessment Covering 2016-2018 Period for Syrians with Temporary Protection Status in Türkiye, March 2016, S.6.

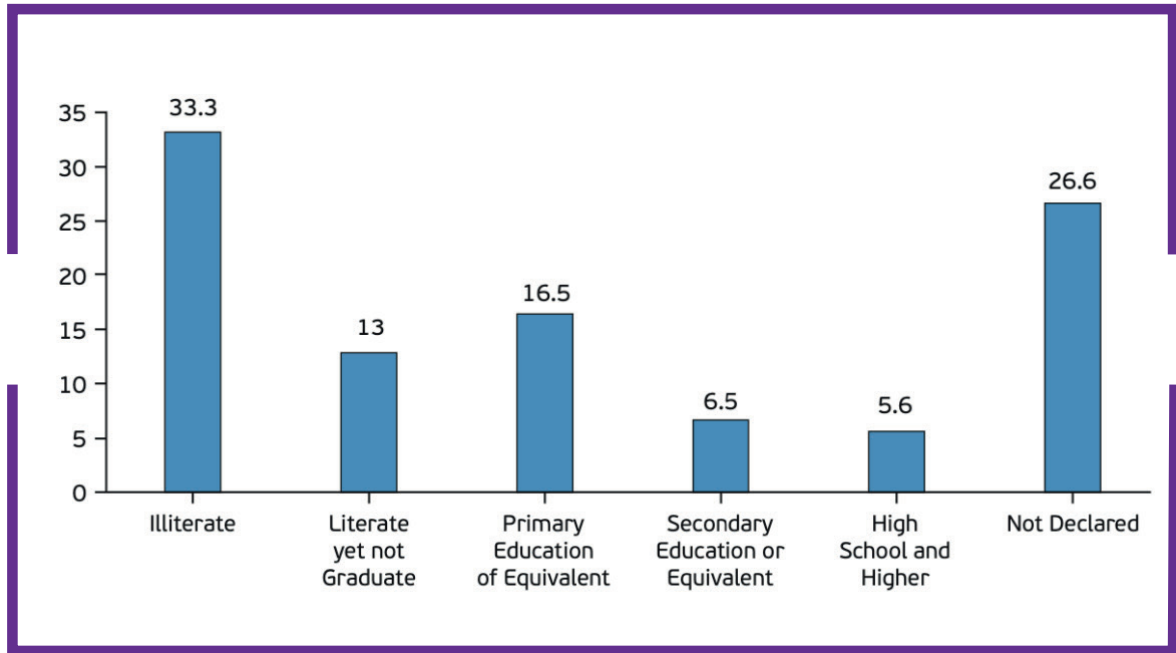
114 "EU-Türkiye Statement" (<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkiye-statement/>) ([https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-ab-arasinda-18-mart\\_ta-varilan-mutabakata-iliskin-soru-cevaplar.tr.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-ab-arasinda-18-mart_ta-varilan-mutabakata-iliskin-soru-cevaplar.tr.mfa)). (Access: 07.07.2022)

115 European Commission (June 2016) Framework Contract Commission 2011 EUROPEAID/129783/C/SER/multi Lot 1: Studies and technical assistance in all sectors Letter of Contract No. 2015/366838 Technical Assistance for a comprehensive needs assessment of short and medium to long term actions as basis for an enhanced EU support to Türkiye on the refugee crisis Needs assessment report for the preparation of an enhanced EU support to Türkiye on the refugee crisis June 2016. ([https://www.avrupa.info.tr/fileadmin/Content/2016\\_April/160804\\_NA\\_report\\_FINAL\\_VERSION.pdf](https://www.avrupa.info.tr/fileadmin/Content/2016_April/160804_NA_report_FINAL_VERSION.pdf)) (Access: 07.07.2022)



Another important source on the level of educational attainment of Syrians in Türkiye is the 2018 study of Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies. Accordingly, among all Syrians over the age of 6, those who had never attended school or who had not completed primary school constitute 40% of women and 35% of men.<sup>116</sup>

**SB-2021-FIGURE 14: Educational Attainment Levels of Syrians (%) (2016)**



**Source:** First Stage Needs Assessment Covering 2016-2018 Period for Syrians with Temporary Protection Status in Türkiye, Ministry of Development, March 2016, p.7

According to this March 2016 study that was based on the initial registration data of 2.7 million Syrians provided by PMM, 33% of Syrians in Türkiye were illiterate while 13% were literate but not graduated from any formal school. Another 26,6% in this study were marked as “no response”. This shows, unfortunately, a significant lack of education. However, it has been frequently suggested that this information obtained in 2016 might not be very reliable and there might be significant errors in the figures due to some technical difficulties and intensity experienced during the collection of data. Syrians Barometer-2017 has found that 18,5% are illiterate and another 11,8% are literate but not graduated from any school. Similarly, “2016 Research on Health Context of Syrians in Türkiye” conducted by AFAD and WHO has found that 14,9% of Syrians have no official education and 14,3% have a lower than primary school level of education.<sup>117</sup> According to a Hacettepe University IPS research in 2018, those with no primary school diploma constitute 35% among men and 40% among women in the Syrian community in Türkiye.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies (2019) Türkiye 2018 Demographic and Health Survey: Syrian Migrant Sampling [https://fs.hacettepe.edu.tr/hips/dosyalar/yayinlar/2019\\_tnsa\\_SR\\_compressed.pdf](https://fs.hacettepe.edu.tr/hips/dosyalar/yayinlar/2019_tnsa_SR_compressed.pdf) (Access: 07.07.2022)

<sup>117</sup> Assoc. Prof. Mehmet Ali Eryurt -Hacettepe University, Institute of Population Studies: 2016 Research on Health Context of Syrians in Türkiye, AFAD-SB-WHO.

<sup>118</sup> This study has found that those with no primary school diploma constituted 14% among men and 25% among women. 2018-TNSA,

A large-scale household survey conducted with a representative sample throughout Türkiye, Syrian Barometer studies constitute another significant source regarding the educational status of Syrians in the country. The picture that emerges on the issue of “educational status”, which is an extremely important factor for social cohesion, reveals that the Syrians in Türkiye have an educational average that is far behind the Turkish average.<sup>119</sup> While the shares of those identified as “illiterate” were 19.7% in SB-2017, 8.2 in SB-2019, 9% in SB-2020, and 14.4% in SB-2021, those who “did not go to school but can read and write” make up 10.1% in SB-2017, 16.7 in SB-2019, 17.5% in SB-2020, and 19.6% in SB-2021. In other words, the rate of Syrians in Türkiye who are illiterate or have not completed any school is 29.8% in SB-2017, 24.9 in SB-2019, 26.5 in SB-2020, and 34% in SB-2021. To understand the general picture, the data from MoNE on pre-war Syria also gives some clues. Accordingly, the schooling rates in Syria before 2011 were 92% in primary education, 69% in middle-school level, and 26% in high-school education. At around the same dates, the schooling rates in Türkiye were 99% in primary education, 93% in middle-schools, and 70% at high-school education. In other words, while the average schooling rate in Syria was 62.3%, it was 87.3% in Türkiye.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, these averages are even lower in Northern Syria, from where the largest population came to Türkiye. Therefore, many sources of indirect data on the general education level of Syrians in Türkiye reveal that the general level of educational attainment is well behind the Turkish average.

**SB-2021-TABLE 2: Educational Attainment Levels of Syrians (2017-2021)**  
Educational Attainment of Individuals in the Household (Aged 6+)

%	SB-2017 (Outside of Camps)	SB-2019	SB-2020	SB-2021
Illiterate	19,7	8,2	9,0	14,4
Literate but no formal education	10,1	16,7	17,5	19,6
Illiterate + Literate but no formal education	29,8	24,9	26,5	34,0
Primary school	27,5	31,7	38,1	33,6
Primary education/middle school	20,0	22,0	19,0	18,7
High school or equivalent	10,9	11,4	9,4	9,4
2-year associate degree	3,2	2,7	2,0	1,6
Undergraduate degree	7,9	7,0	4,9	2,6
Master/PhD	0,7	0,3	0,1	0,1

[http://www.hips.hacettepe.edu.tr/tnsa2018/rapor/2018\\_TNSA\\_SR.pdf](http://www.hips.hacettepe.edu.tr/tnsa2018/rapor/2018_TNSA_SR.pdf) (Access: 04.12.2021)

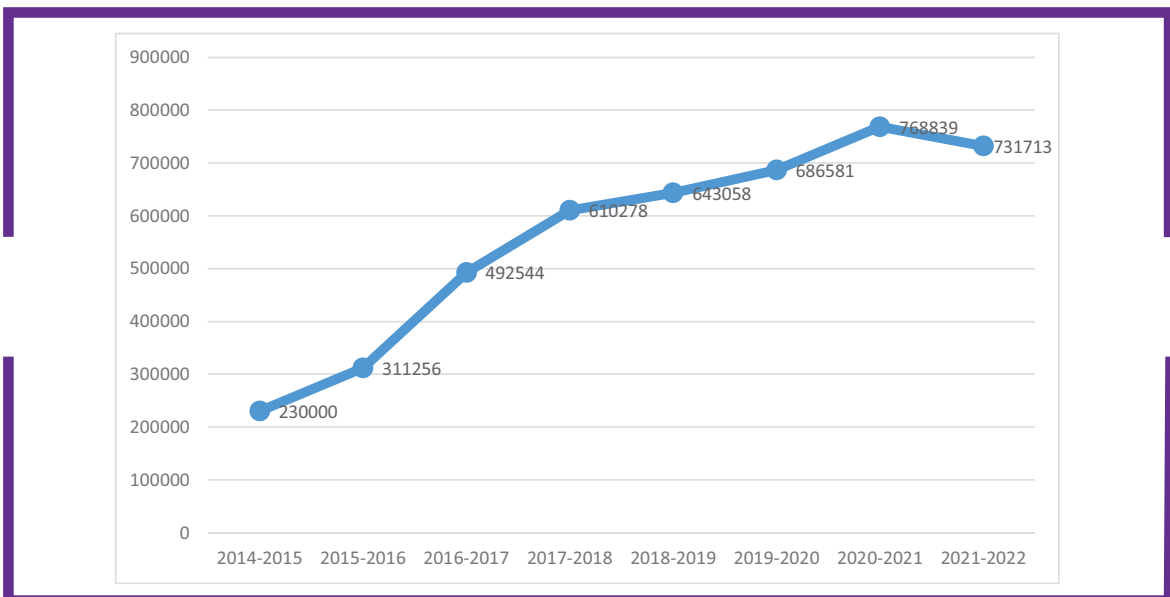
119 According to TUIK data, the rate of illiterate people in the +6 age group in Türkiye as of 2021 is 0.7% for males and 4.3% for females, a total of 2.5%. See: <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Kategori/GetKategori?p=egitim-kultur-spor-ve-turizm-105&dil=1>.

120 Syrian Barometer-2017, p.44, Syrian Barometer-2019, p.127.

## b. School Age (5-17 Years of Age) Syrian Children in Türkiye<sup>121</sup>

Education of Syrian children in Türkiye is of vital importance both for preventing lost generations from emerging and for any vision of a future peaceful cohabitation to be realized. According to data from DGMM and MoNE, the number of school age Syrian children, i.e. 5- to 17-year-olds, is 1 million 195 thousand in Türkiye as of 31 December 2021. This number constitutes 31.97% of all Syrians under temporary protection in the country. Türkiye has been displaying a huge effort in the face of this unprecedented and massive number, which had put significant strain on the capacity of national education. The numbers of schooled Syrian children for the past few academic years are as follows: 230 thousand in 2014-2015, 311 thousand in 2015-2016, 492 thousand in 2016-2017, 610 thousand in 2017-2018, 643 thousand in 2018-2019, 686 thousand in 2019-2020, 774 thousand in 2020-2021, and 731 thousand in 2021-2022. While 98.5% of these students are enrolled in public schools, 1% of them (7,796 students) receive education at the Temporary Education Centers (TECs), where the language of education is Arabic with intense Turkish language courses. According to the most recent available data, 61.17% of the Syrian children in this age group have been schooled. In terms of different levels of education, schooling rates differ significantly: it is 32.5% at kindergarten (preschool), 77.7% at primary school, 82.6% at middle-school, and 30.8% at high-school levels. It is clear that one of the most important problems in education is the school dropout, which becomes especially more evident in higher grades and as children get older.

**SB-2021- FIGURE 15: Number of Syrian Students with Access to Education in Türkiye by Years**

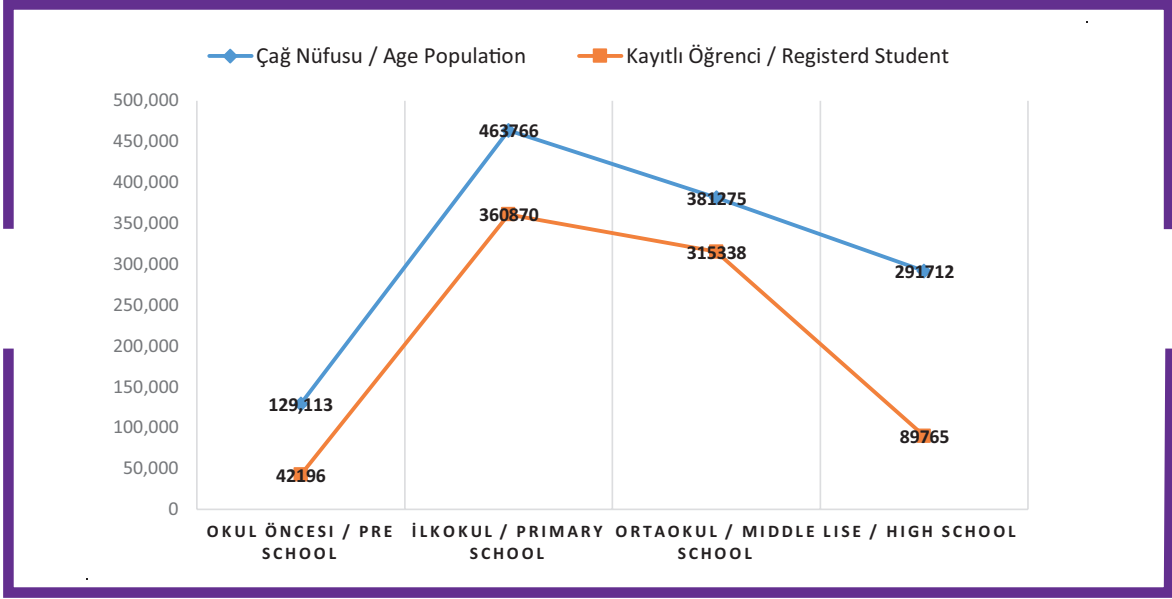


**Source:** MoNE/DGLLL Monitoring and Evaluation Report- 2021 ([http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2022\\_04/15173151\\_HBOGM\\_Yzleme\\_ve\\_DeYerlendirme\\_Raporu-2021.pdf](http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2022_04/15173151_HBOGM_Yzleme_ve_DeYerlendirme_Raporu-2021.pdf)) (Access: 16.07.2022)

<sup>121</sup> Information in this section is retrieved from the “MoNE/DGLLL Monitoring and Evaluation Report-2021” published by the Ministry of Interior, Presidency of Migration Management and MoNE- DGLL ([http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2022\\_04/15173151\\_HBOGM\\_Yzleme\\_ve\\_DeYerlendirme\\_Raporu-2021.pdf](http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2022_04/15173151_HBOGM_Yzleme_ve_DeYerlendirme_Raporu-2021.pdf)) (Access: 16.07.2022)

Information regarding the distribution of Syrian school-age children in Türkiye by gender was not disclosed in 2021. However, it is observed that there is a fairly balanced distribution in the 2020 data, which is the last data available. Accordingly, in 2020-2021, the ratio of female students was 49.18% and the ratio of male students was 50.82%, out of a total of 684,728 students.

**SB-2021- FIGURE 16: Number of Syrian Students with Access to Education in Türkiye by Years (April 2021)**



**Source:** MoNE/DGLLL Monitoring and Evaluation Report- 2021 ([http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2022\\_04/15173151\\_HBOGM\\_Yzleme\\_ve\\_DeYerlendirme\\_Raporu-2021.pdf](http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2022_04/15173151_HBOGM_Yzleme_ve_DeYerlendirme_Raporu-2021.pdf)) (Access: 16.07.2022)

It is known that after the Covid-19 Pandemic, which was announced by WHO on March 11, 2020, the closure of schools and the transition to distance education in general, the access of Syrian children to online education and their success have been seriously hit.<sup>122</sup>

122 See. Hakan Gülerce, Fatma Kaçar, Hüsnüye Kablan (2022) Suriyeli Sığınmacı Çocukların Covid-19 Pandemisi Sürecinde Eğitim Hayatında Yaşadığı Sorunlar (Problems Experienced by Syrian Refugee Children in their Education Lives during the COVID-19 Pandemic), AVRASYA Journal of International Research 10 (31), 92-108

([https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361460503\\_SURIYELI\\_SIGINMACI\\_COÇUKLARIN\\_COVID-19\\_PANDEMISI\\_SURECINDE\\_EGITIM\\_HAYATINDA\\_YASADIGI\\_SORUNLAR/link/62b2c3aedc817901fc721830/download](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361460503_SURIYELI_SIGINMACI_COÇUKLARIN_COVID-19_PANDEMISI_SURECINDE_EGITIM_HAYATINDA_YASADIGI_SORUNLAR/link/62b2c3aedc817901fc721830/download)), (Access: 16.07.2022); UNHCR Report (2020): Coronavirus is a big threat for the education of refugees – half of the refugee children in the world do not go to school (<https://www.unhcr.org/tr/25197-unhcr-raporu-koronavirus-multecilerin-egitimi-icin-buyuk-bir-tehdit-dunyadaki-multeci-cocuklarin-yarisi-okula-gitmiyor.html>) (Access: 16.07.2022); SGDD Migration Academy (2020) A Systematic Review Based on Reports on the Impact of COVID-19 on Refugees ([https://sgdd.org.tr/yayinlar/asam\\_academy\\_rapor\\_201008\\_tr\\_c.pdf](https://sgdd.org.tr/yayinlar/asam_academy_rapor_201008_tr_c.pdf)) (Access: 16.07.2022).

### c. Regulations of Ministry of National Education Concerning Education of Syrians in Türkiye

MoNE has made several regulations concerning the education of Syrians from the beginning. The first major step was the adoption of “MoNE Regulation on Secondary Education Institutions” on 7 September 2013. This Regulation, in its 29th Article, under the title of “Students of Foreign Nationality”, has made the first comprehensive regulations related to this field.<sup>123</sup> With the process moving very quickly, the Ministry issued a new Circular in September 2014 entitled “Education Services For Foreign Nationals”, which has lifted the requirement of a residence permit for Syrian children’s registration to a school. The Regulation on Temporary Protection, published in the Official Gazette on 22 October 2014, regulates education-related issues in its 28th Article. Here, education is defined as a right for those under temporary protection and the MoNE is authorized to coordinate and audit policies. The 35th Article of this Regulation on the “limitations on the enjoyment of rights” is quite noteworthy. This article states that *“Those who partially fail to fulfill their obligations or who couldn’t fulfill their obligations in the determined time frame would be warned by relative authorities; legal and administrative action would ensue for those who fail to comply”*. Having said this, however, the Article goes on to exclude “emergency health services” and “education”: *“Those who fail to fulfill their obligations could face complete or partial restrictions in enjoying their rights, except for education and emergency health services.”*<sup>124</sup> In addition, MoNE has implemented a “High School Proficiency and Equivalency Exam for Foreign Students” in June 2015. As a result, the successful ones of 8.500 attendees were issued a certificate of equivalency or graduation diplomas by MoNE. Those who already graduated from high schools were given the chance to enroll to various universities in Türkiye.

There were other significant steps taken for Syrian students in Türkiye by MoNE in 2016. The first of these was an agreement concluded with the EU Türkiye Delegation which devoted 300 million € from the EU Facility for Refugees in Türkiye (FRIT) to be spent for education expenses. An even more important step was taken in August 2016 when the MoNE had finalized a “road map” for the education of Syrian children in Türkiye. Here, a remarkable change of approaches is apparent compared to 2011-2015 period. This road map that was adopted by the Ministry also established a new institutional framework with the formation of a “Department of Migration and Emergency Education” under the Directorate General of Lifelong Learning.<sup>125</sup> The new planning has established inclusion of Syrian children into Turkish education system as the main objective and regulated the rights of refugees in the national education framework as well as the various services to be offered to them. As a natural result of this, gradual elimination of TECs, where education is offered in Arabic and using a Syrian curriculum, within three years to be completed in 2020.

There is an urgent need to build additional capacity including additional teachers, classrooms, and school buildings to be able to provide a high-quality education for the Syrian children without causing the local society to suffer. Such a capacity building and improvement of existing capacities is essential to minimize the risk of lost generations as well as

123 MoNE Regulation on Secondary Education Institutions: <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2013/09/20130907-4.htm> (Access: 03.07.2019)

124 Temporary Protection Regulation [http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/03052014\\_6883.pdf](http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/03052014_6883.pdf) (Access: 03.07.2019)

125 MoNE: <http://www.meb.gov.tr/suriyeli-cocuklarin-egitimi-icin-yol-haritasi-belirlendi/haber/11750/tr> (Access: 03.07.2019)

to prevent social tensions that might arise as a result of deteriorating education services. However, it is obvious that this would take a lot of time and resources to accomplish. MoNE data concerning current education practices in Türkiye suggests that an average classroom would serve 30 students and an average primary school has a capacity of 720 students, with one teacher to be employed per 20 students. In this framework, integrating 1 million 195 thousand Syrian students into the national education system requires substantial capacity and financial resources.

Another component of the additional costs would relate to the aforementioned need to increase the number of teachers, classrooms, and schools. The July 2017 needs-analysis exercise conducted by MoNE includes both the accumulated general needs and the city-based needs.<sup>126</sup> The most striking bit of information in this analysis was that there was a need for 1.189 new schools to cater to the needs of 856 thousand school age Syrians at the time, while the number of planned new schools to be built in the framework of EU-funded projects was 183, accounting only for 15,3% of the need.<sup>127</sup> According to this exercise, the number of school age Syrian children in Şanlıurfa was 142.042 at the time with 197 new schools needed. However, in October 2018 the number of school age children has grown to 152.742 and the needed number of new schools increased to 212. The number of new schools to be built in the framework of EU projects, in the meantime, remained unchanged at 14. Of course, there are new schools that are planned or built by the MoNE, private sector or other charitable donors. However, it is obvious that it will take quite a long time for the whole need to be satisfied.

The cost of education is another important issue. According to the calculations made by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) with the data obtained from MoNE, the education costs per student in Türkiye in 2020 are 1,781 USD per year for pre-school students, 1,354 USD per year for primary school students, 1,330 USD per year for secondary school students, and 1,469 USD per year for high school students. The share of the state in this cost is calculated to be 75%. Therefore, it can be calculated that the annual average cost of 12 years of compulsory education for children of school age (5-17) is 1.112 USD in Türkiye. With this figure, the total cost of providing education to Syrian children from 2014 to 2021 is calculated to be over 4 billion 976 million USD.<sup>128</sup> It appears from this that education of an average of 700 thousand Syrian students a year since 2014 has placed a cost of around 778 million USD on the public. It can also be calculated that when 90% of Syrian children in the 5-17 age group in Türkiye have access to education, this annual cost will increase to 1.9 billion USD. However, there is no doubt that although this cost is very high especially for Türkiye, the main concern should not be the high cost of education. The cost of not providing a proper

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126 Presentation on “Education Services towards Students under Temporary Protection” by the Department of Migration and Emergency Education, Directorate General of Lifelong Learning, Ministry of National Education. July 2017 (PPP: Slide 37).

127 For the purpose of supporting the education infrastructure for Syrians under temporary protection, it is planned to transfer EU funds in the context of FRIT (150 million Euros constructing 75 reinforced concrete school buildings), in the context of MADAD2 (68 million Euro constructing 30 school buildings- reinforced concrete and prefabricated), and in the context of additional FRIT funds (45 million Euro constructing 46 prefabricated schools). Presentation on “Education Services towards Students under Temporary Protection” by the Department of Migration and Emergency Education, Directorate General of Lifelong Learning, Ministry of National Education, July 2017 (PPP-Slide 36)

128 TUIK- Education Expenditures Statistics, 2020 (<https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Egitim-Harcamalari-Istatistikleri-2020-37199>) (Access: 11.07.2022)



education to millions of Syrian children and creating lost generations is much higher for the future of the country.<sup>129</sup>

A Project on “Promoting Integration of Syrian Children into the Turkish Education System” (PIKTES), implemented by MoNE and supported by the EU was also conceived within the framework of March 2016 Statement and started on 3 October 2016.<sup>130</sup> The expected outcomes of the project included “increasing Syrian children’s access to education”, “improving the quality of education provided for Syrian students”, and “enhancing the operational capacity of educational institutions and staff members”.<sup>131</sup> There is a significant risk that without such capacity enhancement, merely schooling Syrian children in Türkiye would produce negative influences on the education system. Therefore, prevention lost generations without making the local children suffer from a decrease in quality of education requires taking such issues concerning capacity into consideration.

It is seen that the MoNE has taken significant initiatives in 2016 for Syrian students in cooperation with EU funding and UNICEF. One of the important ones is the “Conditional Cash Transfer for Education” (CCTE), which proved to be an important financial assistance for the poor Syrian families. The program started in May 2017 and was financed in the amount of 66,5 million USD.

### Conditional Cash Transfer for Education

The MoNE DGLL, in cooperation with the MoNE Directorate General of Information Technologies, UNICEF, and the Turkish Red Crescent, “Conditional Cash Transfer for Education” (CCTE) is provided for foreign students in Türkiye. Payments are made to the Red Crescent cards of families per student every two months, provided that they do not miss more than 4 school-days a month. While the total number of beneficiaries was 56,245 in May 2017, the number increased to 525,000 as of September 2019<sup>132</sup>, according to UNICEF, and reached 706,067 in November 2021. Within the scope of the program, the monthly amount paid to female students is higher than male students in order to encourage female students to continue their education and to prevent their school dropouts. In addition to the additional payment, at the beginning of each academic year, 100 TL is paid to all beneficiaries and 150 TL is paid to secondary and high school students.

129 In the calculations made here, the cost of Syrian university students, whose number has increased to 47,482 in the 2020-2021 academic year, is not included. According to TUIK data, the annual cost of a university student is 2,961 USD. When the calculation is made using the same 75% benchmark as covered by the state, which corresponds to approximately 2,220 USD annually, it can be said that the additional approximate cost of Syrian university students from 2012 to 2021 is 366 million USD. See: TUIK: Statistics on Education Costs, 2020 (<https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Egitim-Harcamaları-Istatistikleri-2020-37199>) (Access: 11.07.2022)

130 The entire budget of PIKTES is covered by the European Union with direct grant method within the framework of the “EU Facility for Refugees in Türkiye (FRIT)” agreement. The Project, which was started on 03.10.2016, is still continuing in 26 provinces in Türkiye. The PIKTES Project, which started its second phase in December 2018, is planned to continue until October 2022.

131 PIKTES- Regarding Integration of Syrian Children into Turkish Education System Project: <https://pictes.meb.gov.tr/izleme/> (Access: 13.07.2019) and “MoNE/DGLL Monitoring and Evaluation Report-2021 ([http://hboqm.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2022\\_04/15173151\\_HBOGM\\_Yzleme\\_ve\\_DeYerlenen\\_Raporu-2021.pdf](http://hboqm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2022_04/15173151_HBOGM_Yzleme_ve_DeYerlenen_Raporu-2021.pdf))” (Access: 16.07.2022)

132 UNICEF-Türkiye: Statistical report on the education of children under temporary protection in Türkiye (2020-2021) <https://www.unicef.org/Türkiye/media/10711/file/Ge%C3%A7ici%20koruma%20alt%C4% %20%C3%A7children%C4%B1n%20e%C4%9Fit%20statistics in B1.pdf> (Access: 01.05.2021)



#### d. Syrians in Turkish Higher Education System

The number of Syrian students, some of whom being university drop-outs from Syria and others being graduates of Turkish primary and secondary schools to proceed to higher education through taking the central Foreign Students Examination (*Yabancı Öğrenci Sınavı-YÖS*) and relevant language exams, enrolled in Turkish universities has been steadily increasing.<sup>133</sup> The number of Syrian university students in Türkiye was 14.747 in the 2016-2017 academic year, 20.701 in 2018-2019, 27.606 in 2018-2019, 37.236 in 2019-2020, and 47.482 in 2020-2021. Of these Syrian university students, 29.400 (61,91%) were male and 18.082 (38,08%) were female in the 2020-2021 academic year.<sup>134</sup> Syrian students are in the first place in the last four years among all foreign students in Türkiye in terms of numerical size constituting 21% of around 224,000 international students.

In the 2017-2018 academic year, there were 410 doctoral and 1.650 graduate students among Syrians. There are many national and international institutions, especially including the Presidency of Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), who provide scholarships to Syrian students. Among these EU support, DAFI, HOPES, and SPARK scholarships have a special place. According to existing studies, however, only around 15% of Syrian university students receive a scholarship.<sup>135</sup>

The Turkish state and its relevant institutions, MoNE and Higher Education Council (YOK), have been making significant efforts to increase the number of Syrian students in Turkish higher education. There appear to be four main reasons for this strategy:

1. To provide a peaceful and honorable future for the Syrian youth who had escaped war and destruction in Syria; prevent lost generations from emerging; developing human capital
2. To help Syrian university students to create bridges between the more than 3.6 million Syrians and the Turkish society, thus making them important actors of a peaceful future together
3. To make them contribute in Türkiye
4. To help them assume a pivotal role in the reconstruction of Syria should they return to their country of origin

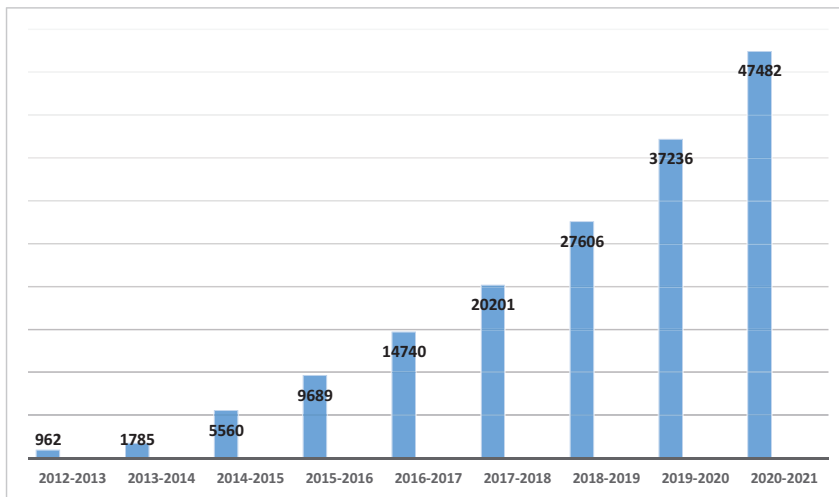
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133 M. Murat Erdoğan, Armağan Erdoğan, Başak Yavçan, Tulin Haji Mohamad (2019) *Elite-Dialogue-II: "Elite Dialogue-II: Project on Dialogue with Syrian Refugees in Türkiye through Syrian Academics and Graduate Students"*, TAGU-TMK.

134 There are 224,000 international students in Türkiye in the 2020-2021 academic year. Of these, 142 thousand (64%) are male and 81 thousand (36%) are female. Higher Education Council-YÖK: <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/> (Access: 10.07.2022)

135 A.Erdoğan, M.M.Erdoğan O.K.Unutulmaz, S.G.Decker (2021) "How are the Prospects for Refugees to Become Active Members of Society? - The Vision and Practices in Turkish Adult Education", in *Adult Education as a Means to Active Participatory Citizenship in Europe*, ed. by Natasha Kersh, Hanna Toiviainen, Georgios Zarifis and Pirkko Pitkänen Springer, Lifelong Learning Book Series, 79-101. [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-65002-5\\_5](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-65002-5_5)

SB-2021- FIGURE 17: Syrians in Higher Education



Source: YOK- <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/>

Table created using yearly numbers released by YOK

It should also be stated that international institutions have an important role in Türkiye's efforts in this regard, especially in terms of financial support. However, it is very important to strengthen this role and make it sustainable in the longer run. Preventing young people from being lost generations and developing the human capital in the society should be defended as universal values.

#### e. Turkish Language Courses and Vocational Training

The Directorate General of Lifelong Learning (DGLLL) of the Ministry of National Education organizes general courses, vocational courses, Turkish Teaching Courses, Turkish literacy courses through different channels, particularly including Public Education Centers, for Syrians in Türkiye. According to the data in the 2021 Monitoring and Evaluation Report of the DGLL, the number of Syrians who have attended the courses so far is 1 million 487 thousand, of which 59% are women and 41% are men 877 thanks to these modules. For the first time, Türkiye had to develop Turkish training modules for "foreigners".

**SB-2021 Table 3: Number of Participants of Courses Developed Regarding Syrians in Türkiye**

Type of Course	Female	Male	Total
General Courses	477.011	356.740	833.751
Vocational Courses	91.205	35.701	126.906
Turkish Teaching Courses	277.996	188.279	466.275
Turkish Literacy Courses	30.943	29.941	60.884
TOTAL	877.155	610.661	1.487.816

**Source:** MoNE/DGLLL Monitoring and Evaluation Report-2021 ([http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2022\\_04/15173151\\_HBOGM\\_Yzleme\\_ve\\_DeYerlendirme\\_Raporu-2021.pdf](http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2022_04/15173151_HBOGM_Yzleme_ve_DeYerlendirme_Raporu-2021.pdf)) (Access: 16.07.2022)

One of the strategic goals is to increase the participation rate of Syrians in courses conducted through Public Education Centers (PECs). As the data of the DGLLL show, a significant effort is being made in both Turkish language education and vocational training for Syrians in Türkiye. Within the framework of the cooperation protocol between the PMM and the DGLL, an 8-hour "Social Cohesion and Life Program" has been developed with the aim of facilitating the harmonization of legally residing adult foreigners (17-65 years old) who have the legal right to stay in our country. The program is carried out through PECs. Trainings are given by PEC teachers and/or master trainers in a flexible model during the weekdays or evenings and weekends taking into account the social life of foreigners. The program is implemented in required languages, especially including Turkish, Arabic and Persian, accompanied by an interpreter. The program includes information about the culture, traditions and customs, general morals and social life rules in Turkey as well as the rights and obligations, education, legal and health opportunities, and access to livelihoods. The Social Cohesion and Life Program is implemented in İstanbul, İzmir, Bursa, Ordu, Karabük, Çankırı, Yozgat, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, and Ankara (it is implemented in camps in Adana, Kahramanmaraş, Hatay, and Kilis). Training of the trainers for this program has been completed. The target audience of the trainings, which initially aimed to reach a total of 503,500 people in one year, has been increased to 1,000,000.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>136</sup> MoNE/DGLLL Monitoring and Evaluation Report-2021 ([http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2022\\_04/15173151\\_HBOGM\\_Yzleme\\_ve\\_DeYerlendirme\\_Raporu-2021.pdf](http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2022_04/15173151_HBOGM_Yzleme_ve_DeYerlendirme_Raporu-2021.pdf)) (Access: 16.07.2022)

### 3. Livelihood Sources of Syrians in Türkiye<sup>137</sup>

One of the most sensitive issue areas in mass migration contexts concerns working. The local society is worried that the newcomer immigrants/refugees, who would often assume the role of “cheap labor”, would take their jobs and incomes. This is not a completely unsubstantiated expectation. Especially in contexts where there is high unemployment, this concern against the newcomers could be even higher. Türkiye has not experienced any significant concern against “incoming foreigners” until 2011. Arrival of Syrians starting from 2011 has brought this “phenomenon” to the agenda of Turkish society. As a natural outcome of receiving in a short while a remarkable number of asylum seekers, whose number corresponds to more than 5% of the national population, the issue of employment has come to the fore. A TISK report<sup>138</sup> in 2015 revealed that laborers who were scared due to the fear of losing their jobs in the face of a huge supply of cheap labor were not the only ones who were concerned in Turkish economy. Employers were found to be worried as well concerning the potential negative effects this mass inflow of asylum-seekers could have through the informal economy. The corporate businesses mentioned the difficulties of competing against cheap labor and production in the informal economy, and suggested that it would be better for the economy if the Syrians would be permitted to work. Here, a stark difference emerges between such corporate businesses which cannot employ foreign workers without a work permit and the non-corporate, smaller businesses which can, partly or wholly, engage in activities in the informal economy. The second stark contrast can be observed among workers and can be said to be class-based. Those who work as non-skilled, manual laborers are much more strongly against giving Syrians the right to work than highly-skilled individuals.

This issue became increasingly important particularly since 2013. Until 2013, a much smaller number of Syrians were in Türkiye and they generally stayed in camps. Therefore, approaching to the issue with an emergency management mentality, the Turkish state provided for all basic needs of Syrians in the country. However, as the number of Syrians in Türkiye kept increasing and Syrians who lived outside of the camps started to outnumber those in the camps, a new era has begun since the end of 2013. This transformation whereby Syrians started to live in urban centers also de facto brought them into economic activity.

In the absence of central planning concerning where Syrians would live in the country, they primarily preferred to move to such urban centers where they can work and where their relatives or acquaintances lived.

#### a. Regulations Concerning Right to Work

The “Regulation Concerning Work Permits of Foreigners Under Temporary Protection”, which was prepared based on the 29th Article of “Regulation on Temporary Protection”, which was itself based on the 91<sup>st</sup> article of LFIP, entered into force on 15 January 2016. According to this legislation, regulations concerning working of Syrians under temporary protection are as follows:

137 For the information used in this section see: M.Murat Erdoğan and Metin Çorabatır (2019) “Suriyeli Mülteci Nüfusunun Demografik Gelişimi, Türkiye’deki Eğitim, İstihdam Ve Belediye Hizmetlerine Yakın Gelecekte Olası Etkileri” (Demography of Syrian Refugees and Potential Impacts on Education, Employment and Municipal Services in Türkiye), GIZ, Quadra Program.

138 M.Murat Erdoğan and Can Ünver [2015] Perspectives, Expectations and Suggestions of the Turkish Business Sector on Syrians in Türkiye, TISK.

1. Duration Condition: To have remained in Türkiye with the temporary protection status for at least 6 months
2. Location Condition: Working is only possible in the city where the individual is registered, apart from exceptional cases
3. Quota: The number of workers under temporary protection cannot be more than 10% of the total number of workers at a business (if the citizens do not apply to a vacancy notice in 4 weeks, the quota can be surpassed)
4. Employer Condition: Application for the work permit must be made by the employer with whom the foreigner under temporary protection will work
5. Wage Condition: A wage under the official minimum wage cannot be paid
6. İŞKUR: Foreigners under temporary protection can participate in the courses and programs organized by İŞKUR
7. Exception: An exception to the requirement of a work permit can be issued by provincial governorates for those who will work in seasonal agricultural and husbandry workers.
8. Limitation: Syrians cannot apply to jobs and occupations which are exclusively limited for Turkish citizens by law.

This Regulation has been a very important step allowing Syrians under temporary protection to legally work in Türkiye. However, it has had a limited impact on formalizing the Syrian labor that is employed in the informal economy. The number of work permits issued to citizens of Syrian Arab Republic was reported to be 34.573 (31.526 men, 3.047 women) in the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services report entitled "Foreigners' Work Permits".<sup>139</sup> According to 2019 data released by the Ministry, the total number of work permits issued to foreigners was 145.232, of which 63.789 belonged to the citizens of Syrian Arab Republic.<sup>140</sup> In 2020 data, the number of work permits issued to Syrian Arab Republic citizens, out of a total of 123,574 work permits given to foreigners, decreased by 1,420 compared to the previous year and was given as 62,369. It is also known that the number of Syrians in Türkiye with a residence permit is 95 thousand. However, there is no indication as to how many of these are Syrians under temporary protection and how many are individuals with residence permit in Türkiye. Two separate UNHCR publications both report higher figures. A document released in August 2019 suggests Türkiye had issued 80 thousand work permits<sup>141</sup>, while another document dated 2020 reports that a total of 132.497 work permits were issued.<sup>142</sup> However, different numbers are observed from different institutions regarding the number of registered employees. It is possible that some of this difference may be

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139 T.C. Ministry of Labor and Social Security: Work Permits of Foreigners <https://www.csgb.gov.tr/media/31746/yabanciizin2018.pdf> and <https://www.csgb.gov.tr/media/63117/yabanciizin2019.pdf> (Access: 10.04.2021).

140 T.C. Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı <https://www.csgb.gov.tr/media/87487/yabanciizin2020.pdf>

141 Update: Durable Solutions for Syrian Refugees (July-August 2019) <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/70892>

142 UNHCR- 3RP Regional Strategic Overview (2020) <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/73116> (Access: 02.05.2020)

due to the exemption areas<sup>143</sup> in the legal regulation and yearly renewals of permits by the same individuals.

**SB-2021 Table 4: Total Number of Work Permits Issued to Citizens of Syrian Arab Republic, 2011-2020**

Overall Total: 140.310

	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
	22	96	26	194	70	724	157	2.384	280	3.739	1.145	12.145	1.641	19.325	3.047	31.526	4.383	59.406	3.967	58.402
Number of Work Permits	118		220		794		2.541		4.019		13.290		20.966		34.573		63.789		62.369	
Temporary / Indefinite	117+1		219+1		794 +0		2.541 +0		4.019+ 0		13.288+2		20.966+0		34570+3		63.789+0		62.369+0	

**Source:** Ministry of Labor and Social Security (2020) Work Permits of Foreigners-2019 <https://www.csgb.gov.tr/istatistikler/calisma-hayati-istatistikleri/resmi-istatistik-programi/yabancilarin-calisma-izinleri/> (Access: 07.01.2022)

Work Permit figures also include those Syrians who are in Türkiye with a Residence Permit. There is no information on how many of the work permits are granted to Syrians under Temporary Protection. The overall figure also includes the extension of the same person's work permit. Therefore, even though the total number of work permits granted to Syrians is 140 thousand, the number of people who work with a work permit is lower than that.

It is a well-known fact that Syrians in Türkiye have made space for themselves and work in the informal economy. However, it is very difficult to know exactly how many of them work here, due to the nature of the informal economy, except for some projections. A study, which was published in 2020 entitled "Syrian Refugees in the Turkish Labor Market" by the International Labor Organization (ILO) Türkiye office, mostly analyzes the 2017-2018 situation and gives important clues.<sup>144</sup> According to the study conducted with the "indirect detection method", the number of Syrians working in Türkiye is 940,921 as of 2017. In the same study, it is stated that "862,039 (91.6%) are working informally in low-skilled positions where productivity is relatively low ". It is also stated in the research that there are 126 thousand children working in the 5-14 age group, of which approximately 17 thousand are girls and 109 thousand are boys.

143 Work permit exemption is provided for those who will work in seasonal agriculture or animal husbandry jobs by applying to the governorships..

144 See. Luis Pinedo Caro (2020) "Syrian Refugees in the Turkish Labor Market", ILO Türkiye (9 February 2020), p. 13. ([https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-ankara/documents/publication/wcms\\_739463.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-ankara/documents/publication/wcms_739463.pdf)) (Access: 01.08 .2022)

**SB-2021 Table 5: Syrians in Türkiye by Economic Activity**

Activity	Statistics		
	Total Number of Syrians	Share among Syrians	Within the Sector Share
Agriculture	63.110	7.8	1.2
Production	392.350	48.2	7.4
TGDA	(252.888)	(64.5)	(16.1)
other	(139.462)	(35.5)	(3.7)
Construction	107.389	13.2	5.2
Transportation and Communication	11.492	1.4	0.8
Trade and Accommodation	144.273	17.7	2.6
retail	(51.572)	(35.7)	(2.0)
food	(43.363)	(30.1)	(3.5)
other	(49.338)	(34.2)	(3.0)
Occupation Activities	12.843	1.6	0.5
Education	22.258	2.7	1.4
Health	8.990	1.1	0.8
Other Services	51.076	6.3	5.0
Total (1)-(2)/Average (3)	813.781	100,0	2.9

**Source:** ILO-Türkiye (2020), Household Employment Survey-2017 and author's own calculations

Notes: The table presents (i) the number of Syrian refugees working in each economic activity, (ii) the share of Syrian workers in each economic activity by nationality, and (iii) the share of Syrian workers by sector.

86.9% of Syrians in Türkiye work in 4 sectors (manufacturing 48.2%, trade and accommodation 17.7%, construction 13.2%, and agriculture 7.8%). Remarkably, it is observed that Syrians are less active in agriculture and animal husbandry. In this regard, in line with the policies of the EU, it can be expected that some incentive policies can contribute to employment and social cohesion with the support of the EU.<sup>145</sup>

## **b. Social Cohesion Assistance Program (SUY/ESSN)**

Some financial support programs for Syrians have started with the resources that were devoted by the EU through the March 2016 Türkiye-EU Statement that committed the EU to transfer 3+3 billion Euros over the following 4 years to Türkiye to be used for Syrian refugees. One such significant program in the context of "The EU Facility for Refugees in Türkiye" (FRIT-I and FRIT-II) is the Social Cohesion Assistance Program (SUY) which was organized as part of EU's "Emergency Social Safety Net for Refugees in Türkiye" (ESSN). Turned into the world's largest cash transfer program, SUY has become a significant source of relatively stable financial income for a large number of Syrian and other refugees in Tür-

145 For an important study on this, see: Kemal Kirişçi (February 2020) How the EU can use agricultural trade to promote self-reliance for Syrian refugees in Türkiye, TENT Foundation. (<https://www.tent.org/resources/self-reliance-for-syrian-refugees/> Access: 01.04.2021)



kiye since 2016.<sup>146</sup> SUY program provides a monthly cash payment of 120 TL (13 €<sup>147</sup>) per person to foreigners under international protection in Türkiye who live outside of camps. The amount of SUY support was raised to 155 TL in April 2021 and 210 TL in July 2022. Also, an additional support can be provided on a family basis in every three months. The support is provided through KIZILAYKART after an “evaluation of neediness”<sup>148</sup> is conducted. SUY program, widely known as “Kızılay Kart”, is financed by EU’s ECHO office. The program is implemented by Türkiye’s Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services<sup>149</sup>, Turkish Red Crescent, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); while DGMM and Directorate General of Population and Citizenship Affairs of the Ministry of Interior assume supportive roles.<sup>150</sup>

**SB-2021- FIGURE 18: Institutional Organization of the SUY Program (2021)**



According to May 2021 data, the number of people receiving regular assistance through the SUY program is 1.847.218 and the number of households is 326.918. The number of people applying to benefit from the program is over 2,8 million (608 thousand households). Within the framework of the support, which is 155 TL per person per month, 286 million TL per month and 3.4 billion TL per year are distributed. As of May 2021, 89.7%, or 1 million

146 EU Turkish Delegation: <https://www.avrupa.info.tr/tr/turkiyedeki-multeci-krizine-avrupa-birliginin-mudahalesi-710> (Access: 12.12.2019)

147 1 euro is 9.1 TL as of 31 December 2020.

148 In this assessment, the following were considered to be in need: families with 4 or more children, families with a high number of “dependent” individuals (i.e. those families with 1.5 or more dependent individuals per healthy member), single parents of at least one minor child, families with disabled members, individuals with more than 40% disability, single women, senior individuals of 60 years of age or older who lives alone. There are also who were included by the initiatives of Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations. This last group contained 28.312 individuals accounting for 1,7% of SUY beneficiaries as of December 2019.

149 According to the decision published on 21 April 2021 in the Official Gazette, the Ministry of Labor and Social Services was divided into two: Ministry of Family and Social Services and Ministry of Labor and Social Security. SUY Program is relevant for both Ministries. It is not clear what kind of a division of labor will take place between the two as of April 2021.

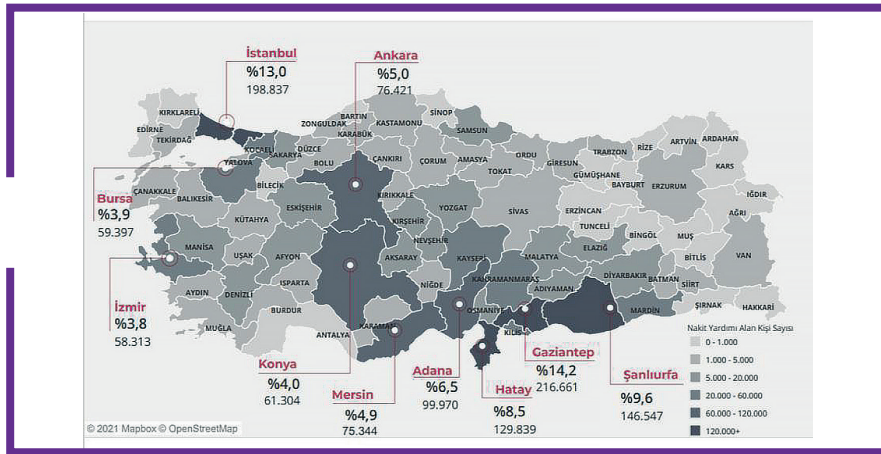
150 In the first period of implementation (2016-2019) of SUY, implementing partners included UN World Food Program (WFP) and supporting institutions included firstly the Prime Ministry and then AFAD, as a unit of Ministry of Internal Affairs.

657 thousand, of the beneficiaries of the SUY program are Syrians under temporary protection, 5.9% (109,463) are Iraqis, and 3.6% (66,552) are Afghans. This resource is extremely important for refugees, particularly for the urban refugees who face additional sources of living expenses such as rent, electricity, and transportation on top of their basic expenses.

SUY assistance has become an important regular financial resource for 45%, ie 1.6 million, of Syrians under temporary protection and approximately 200 thousand foreigners with other nationalities under international protection. However, it is clear that this support is not sufficient. In fact, there are at least 2 million Syrians who cannot benefit from these aids.<sup>151</sup> In this context, it becomes mandatory for Syrians and other refugees to work for a living. Furthermore, SUY program started in December 2016 and the number of its recipients only gradually increased reaching 1.1 million by 2018, 1.5 million by 2019, 1.7 million by December 2019, and 1.8 million after 2020; which shows that a very large number of Syrians had to provide for themselves by working from the start, as Syrians started to arrive in the country since April 2011.

The largest group of beneficiaries of the SUY Program contains families with “at least 4 children in the household”. Their share in the total is 55.2% (1 million 20 thousand people). The second largest group is those with an “dependency rate” higher than 1.5. Their share in the total is 23.5%, and the number of beneficiaries is 435 thousand. The ratio of those receiving support with at least 1 disabled person in the household is 9.3% (171 thousand); The share of those beneficiaries with at least one child in the household in SUY is 8.6% (158 thousand).

**SB-2021- FIGURE 19: Regular SUY Support by Top 10 Provinces**



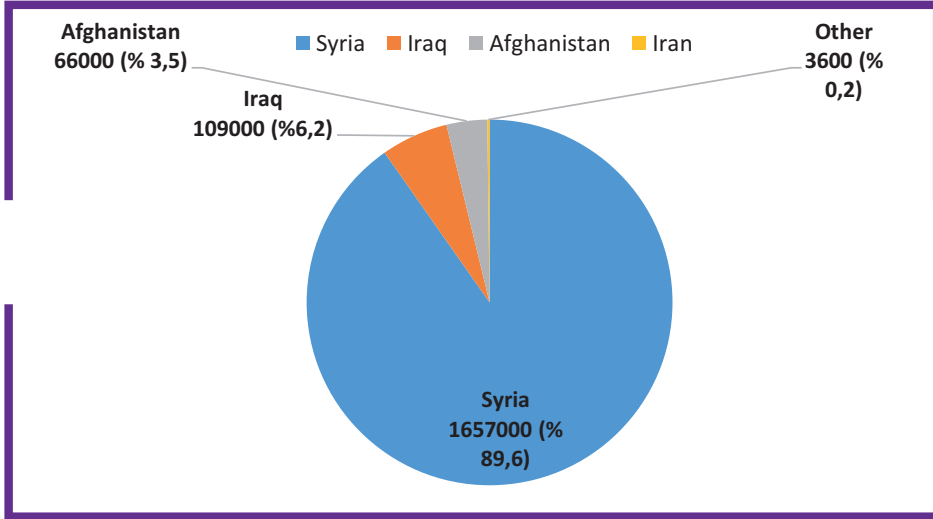
**Source:** Kızılay, Kızılaykart Programs Monthly SUY Program Infographic- November 2021 ([https://kizilaykart.org/arsiv/suy/2021/11/report\\_tr.pdf](https://kizilaykart.org/arsiv/suy/2021/11/report_tr.pdf))

Another significant contribution of the SUY program has been its indirect effect for the cities hosting large concentrations of refugees through the cash inflow that it caused. This has played a significant role in the strengthening of local economies through external support. For instance, for the city of Gaziantep, where 258 thousand refugees benefit from the SUY program, this means a monthly inflow of 40 million TL and an annual inflow of 480 million

151 The average household size of Syrians under Temporary Protection in Türkiye is calculated as 5.8

TL. Sanliurfa receives an annual inflow of 350 million TL through 188 thousand beneficiaries, while Hatay receives an annual inflow of 312 million TL through 168 thousand recipients. This proves that SUY supports are not only essential for its direct recipients, but they are also a limited yet valuable resource for local economies.

**SB-2021-FIGURE 20: SUY Support by Nationality of Beneficiaries (Top 4 Nationalities, May 2021)**





SYRIANS BAROMETER  
2021

# 3

JUSTIFICATION  
AND RESEARCH  
INFORMATION

## II. SYRIANS BAROMETER-2021 JUSTIFICATION AND RESEARCH INFORMATION

**SYRIANS BAROMETER (SB)** research is conceived of as a regularly held study to be simultaneously conducted on Syrians under temporary protection in Türkiye and the Turkish society. The most comprehensive study in its field, SB is based on survey research conducted on large representative samples, which is further complemented with focus group discussions. The present study is structured as a continuation of three previous studies, “Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration” published in 2014 and three “Syrians Barometer: A Framework for Achieving Social Cohesion with Syrians in Türkiye” studies published in 2017, 2019, and 2020. SB aims at drawing attention to the social realities in the field, deliberately trying to stay away from the contentious politicized debates, while striving to analyze the mutual social perceptions and, crucially, the changes and developments in these perceptions. In this context, the study also endeavors to reveal and discuss the existing experiences and relationships in the field, future projections and concerns, and prospects for social cohesion. It is not possible, of course, to suggest that the findings of this study’s survey and focus groups can be directly generalized to the entire populations. 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, as neither is a homogenous and static community. This study strives to present the most accurate picture that is possible in a social scientific context with the most diligent application of research, data collection, and analysis methods. Even so, however, the final product is ultimately derived from fieldwork and will inevitably have certain limitations.

It is planned to repeat this study, the main objective of which is to provide a “a framework for achieving social cohesion with Syrians in Türkiye”, once every year. It is expected and hoped that this study would provide reliable data on a regular basis for the relevant public institutions, the interested researchers, academics, civil society organizations, and international institutions as well as producing a useful resource for data-based policies.

Mass migration movements create concerns among receiving societies. In particular, the issue of refugees is defined as a problem area that causes more concern than “regular” migrants, who are also defined as “economic” all over the world. This is reflected in the fact that while developed and high-income countries host very large part of international immigrants, these same countries are much more reluctant in receiving refugees.<sup>152</sup> Partly as a result of this, only 17% of refugees are able to arrive in such developed, high-income countries.<sup>153</sup> This figure was even lower, only 14%, before the crisis in Ukraine. This observable difference concerning migrants and refugees is also visible in the context of social cohesion policies, which prove to be more complicated and challenging in the case of refugees than migrants. It can be suggested that social cohesion discussions as well as initiatives are increasingly becoming commonplace in Türkiye and that what is at issue in the Turkish context is almost exclusively refugees.

<sup>152</sup> The top 10 countries hosting most immigrants are: USA (50.7 million), Germany, Saudi Arabia, Russia, United Kingdom, France, Canada, Australia, and Italy- World Migration Report 2020, p.10.

The top 10 countries hosting most refugees are: Türkiye, Pakistan, Uganda, Sudan, Germany, Iran, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Jordan - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees-UNHCR: <https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2018/> (Access: 15.01.2021)

<sup>153</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees-UNHCR:

[https://www.unhcr.org/cy/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2021/03/10-Facts-About-Refugees\\_2021\\_TR.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/cy/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2021/03/10-Facts-About-Refugees_2021_TR.pdf) (Erişim: 15.07.2022)

Syrians Barometer survey is one of the most comprehensive research studies conducted in Türkiye that investigate both the Turkish society and the Syrians under temporary protection in Türkiye. The most important characteristic of this type of a study is that it allows one to track various changes and transformations. In this framework, SB will be repeated in the next years using the same model of research and asking, to the most extent, the same questions. In this study, the data from the research conducted by M.M.Erdoğan in 2013 and published in 2014 (“Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration”) are reminded as a partial reference for the past. In SB-2021, the findings of the SB-2017, SB-2019 and SB-2020 researches, which were applied on the same model, are presented in a comparative way.<sup>154</sup> The research questions were formed by the MUGAM team and project advisors, while the analysis of the findings and the preparation of the report was conducted by MUGAM.<sup>155</sup>

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154 To access SB studies online in Turkish, English and Arabic; SB-2019: <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2020/09/SB2019-TR-04092020.pdf>, SB-2020: <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2022/03/SB-2020-turkce-son.pdf>

155 Prof. M. Murat Erdoğan, who has developed the SB research as well as been managing the research processes and writing research reports, together with his team, carried out the “Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration” (2013-2014), the predecessor study of the Syrians Barometer study, and then the SB-2017 studies at Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Center-HUGO, of which he was the director. He carried out SB-2019 and SB-2020 studies at the Turkish-German University Migration and Integration Research Center-TAGU, of which he was also the director. Prof. Erdogan transferred to Ankara University in February 2022, where he was appointed as the Director of the Mulkiye Center for Migration Studies-MUGAM. For this reason, the SB-2021 study was carried out at MUGAM.



SB-2021 Survey Data

SB-2021 Table 6: Technical Details of Survey Research

	Turkish Citizens	Syrians (uTP)
<b>Sample Size</b>	2.253 persons  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  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.
<b>Universe of the Research</b>	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.)****
<b>Mode of Survey Application</b>	Person Based / (CAPI – Computer-Assisted Personal Interview method)	Household Based/ (CAPI - Computer-Assisted Personal Interview method)
<b>Time of Survey Application</b>	21 December 2021-2 January 2022	28 December 2021 - 19 January 2022
<b>Confidence Level</b>	% 95	% 95
<b>Confidence Interval</b>	±2,06	±2,59
<b>Method of Determining and Applying the Quota</b>  (Although the surveys were carried out at home within the framework of the province-district-neighborhood, 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.

\* Source: TUIK – Family with Statistics, 2020 –<https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Istatistiklerle-Aile-2020-37251> (Access: 01.03.2022)

\*\* Source: TUIK – Address Based Population Registration System (ADNKS) Results , 2021 - <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Adrese-Dayali-Nufus-Kayit-Sistemi-Sonuclari-2021-45500> (Access: 01.03.2022)

\*\*\* Source: Ministry of Interior, Presidency of Migration Management, Statistics on Syrians under Temporary Protection, 2021 - <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638> (Access: 01.03.2022)

\*\*\*\* Source: Ministry of Interior, Presidency of Migration Management, Statistics on Syrians under Temporary Protection, 2021 - <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638> (Access: 01.01.2022)



In addition, in the analysis and presentation of the responses to some specific questions, particularly when responses are collected on a “Likert” scale for more advanced comparison, a special system of point-based assessment is also used.<sup>156</sup>

The field implementation of the surveys was conducted by Ankara Centre for Social Research (ANAR), one of the most experienced institutions in this sector.<sup>157</sup>

## Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

As part of the Syrians Barometer (SB) 2021 study, primary data was collected through the FGDs, as well as two large-scale surveys with Turkish citizens (“Turkish society”) and Syrians under Temporary Protection (“Syrians”). In total 23 FGDs, 9 with Turkish citizens and 14 with Syrians under temporary protection, were conducted in 4 cities (Istanbul, Ankara, Hatay, Gaziantep, Mardin, Şanlıurfa). The Syrians part of the study does not include the Syrians who reside in the camps and those living in Türkiye with other statuses (residence, citizenship, etc.).<sup>158</sup>

FGDs were carried out in order to better understand, exemplify, and deepen the data collected through the survey questionnaires, as well as to ask the participants during the group discussion some questions that could not be asked due to the methodological limitations of the surveys. For this reason, as in the survey study, FGDs were applied to the Syrian and Turkish participants separately.

- Within the framework of SB-2021, a total of 23 FGDs were carried out in 6 cities of which 2 are in the metropolitan area and 4 in the border region (Istanbul, Ankara, Hatay, Gaziantep, Mardin, Sanliurfa).
- 9 of the FGDs were conducted with Turkish citizens in 4 cities and 14 of them were conducted with Syrians (uTP) in 6 cities.
- The total number of Turkish citizens participating in FGDs is 55 (9 FGD, an average

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156 In some of the questions that used a 5-point Likert scale, a scoring was conducted in order to simplify the presentation of the findings and make it easier for them to be comparatively analyzed. This scoring was done in the following way: A point-score from 1 to 5 was assigned for each response option on the relevant scale, i.e.

1= Very insufficient/ completely disagree/ not worried at all, etc.

2=Insufficient/ disagree/ not worried, etc.

3=Neither sufficient, nor insufficient/ neither agree, nor disagree/ neither worried, nor not worried, etc. 4=Sufficient/ agree/ worried, etc.

5=Very sufficient/ completely agree/ very worried, etc.

6= No idea/ Don't know

7= No response

When calculating the scores, the numerical codes were given weight in the following way:

1→1, 2→2, 3→3, 4→4, 5→5, 6→0, 7→0

Using these weights, arithmetic mean was calculated for every relevant statement/question.

These calculations were made automatically on the SPSS software.

Lastly, depending on the scale used in each statement/question, the scoring was evaluated to be either on the “negative” or “positive” side of the scale.

a) 0,0-2,99: Negative side- i.e. Insufficient, disagree, not worried, etc.

b) 3,0-5,0: Positive side- i.e. Sufficient, agree, worried, etc.

157 ANAR Araştırma: <http://www.anarastirma.com.tr/tr/>

158 As of 31 December 2021, the number of Syrians under temporary protection staying in 7 Temporary Accommodation Centers in 5 provinces in Türkiye decreased to 51,471. This means 1.36% of the total Syrians under temporary protection. See. PMM- <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638> (Access: 05.01.2022).

of 6 participants), and the number of Syrian participants is 114 (14 FGDs, an average of 8 participants), making a total of 169 people.

- Overall, the average number of FGD participants is 7.3.
- In FGDs, 5 different socio-economic groups were created for Turkish citizens and 7 for Syrians as categories.

The experience gained in previous SB studies has shown that especially the responses given by Syrians to the survey and the evaluations obtained from the participants in the FGDs can differ, and that the Syrians express themselves more comfortably in the FGDs. On the other hand, when the surveys conducted with the Turkish society and FGD results were compared, it was seen that the results were largely similar. For this reason, in the SB-2021 study, it was decided that it would be more useful to carry out more FGDs with Syrians. Therefore, while an equal number of FGDs (10+10) were conducted with both groups in SB-2020, in SB-2021 **14 FGDs** were conducted with Syrians and **9** with Turkish citizens, increasing the total number of FGDs to **23**.

A significant level of diversity among the participants was aimed so that the data to be obtained in FGDs can provide information about a large part of the society, while not overlooking the different views and experiences of smaller important groups. Therefore, instead of generating random groups, the participation of individuals with selected profiles in each of the FGDs was targeted (Table 1).

In addition to the surveys, a more in-depth understanding of the attitudes, experiences, and expectations of Turkish society was sought through conducting FGDs. While representativeness was not aimed in the FGDs, a significant degree of diversity was intended so that different opinions and experiences of various groups of specific attention would be obtained. Therefore, instead of inviting random groups, each FGD aimed at bringing together individuals with specific profiles. One significant criterion was the occupation of participants and FGDs were conducted with artisans, workers, and students. The FGDs were voice-recorded, after having obtained prior informed consents of all participants, to be later fully transcribed for analysis. To effectively and systematically analyze the comprehensive and qualitative data collected through FGDs, a qualitative data analysis software, namely MAXQDA, was used. In this context, the full transcript of each FGD was uploaded to the program to be coded by a list of codes and sub-codes. Later, retrieving the coded segments of texts across all FGDs allowed a thorough and comparative analysis of the collected data, including specialized analyses based on the FGD type and city.

Since SB studies are aimed at understanding social perceptions and views, the quotations in FGDs are important in terms of reflecting the views of the participants. The quotations herein reflect the views of OGG participants directly, not the authors', institutions', or the "real situation".

**SB-2021 Table 7: Focus Group Discussions**

Cities		Turkish Citizens / Turkish Society	Syrians (uTP)	Total Number of FGDs
		Categories	Categories	
Metropolitan Cities	Istanbul	* Artisans-Workers (5) * Unemployed Youth/Newly Graduated (5) * Women (5)	* Artisans-Workers (6) * Students (7) * Journalists (8)	6
	Ankara	* Students (7)	* Students (9) * Women (8)	3
Border Cities	Hatay	* Artisans-Workers (6) * Students (6)	* Lawyers (7) * Women (9)	4
	Gaziantep	* Artisans-Workers (7) * Students (8) * NGO Workers(6)	* Women (7) * Artisans-Workers (6) * Artisans-Workers (7) * NGO Workers (10)	7
	Mardin		* Academics (8) * Students (9)	
	Sanliurfa		* Students (13)	
<b>Total FGDs</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>23</b>
* Number of Turkish FGD participants: 55 (9 FGDs / average number of participants: 6)				
* Number of Syrian FGD participants: 114 (14 FGDs / average number of participants: 8)				
<b>Total number FGD participants: 169 (Average per FGD: 7.3)</b>				

SB-2021 study has used a mixed research methodology employing a range of data collection and analysis techniques:

- A detailed literature review,
- A review of existing statistical data, including official sources and others,
- Examination of relevant legal texts,
- Review of SB-2017, SB-2019, and SB-2020 data to prepare/update survey questionnaires.
- Conducting the comprehensive SB surveys:
- Conducting Focus Group Discussions

- Sharing the research findings with the SB-Academic Advisory Board and receiving their input.

The surveys and focus group discussions of the SB-2021 research were carried out in December 2021 and January 2022. The research findings naturally reflect the situation in the mentioned dates.



SYRIANS BAROMETER  
2021

# 4

TURKISH SOCIETY  
(CITIZENS OF  
REPUBLIC OF  
TÜRKİYE)  
RESEARCH  
FINDINGS

### III-SB-2021: TURKISH CITIZENS (Citizens of Republic of Türkiye)

#### III-A. SB-2021: TURKISH SOCIETY (Citizens of Republic of Türkiye) RESEARCH PROFILE

##### 1. Survey Background and Profile

The survey in the scope of SB-2021 study aimed to collect data on the views and perceptions of Turkish society regarding Syrians was 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. Only one person in each household was surveyed. 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 in NUTS-2 level. 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 research sample for Turkish citizens was formed on a representative basis over 26 provinces based on the Statistical Territorial Units Classification (NUTS)- Level 2 (NUTS-2) determined by TUIK. Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics-NUTS used by EU countries was accepted as a result of studies under the law 2002/4720 in line with Türkiye's EU integration process. NUTS serves as a guide for the standardization and reliability of research conducted in Türkiye. Depending on the subject and purpose of the study, the relevant level (1,2, or 3) is selected. For the SB study, NUTS-2 (IBBS-2, Level-2) covering 26 cities was used within the framework of universal reliability and validity rules.

For the SB-2021 Turkish society survey, a total of 2,253 valid questionnaires were applied. The sample of 26 provinces was calculated not only on the basis of the province where the application took place, but also considering that province and its surroundings as determined by TUIK. Quotas were applied in the research regarding region, socio-economic status, gender, and age of the respondents. The survey was carried using the CAPI - Computer-Assisted Personal Interview method between 10 and 25 December 2021. The confidence level of the study was 95% and the confidence interval was  $\pm 2.06$ .

**SB-2021 TABLE 8: City-Based Turkish Society Sample**

		#	%			#	%
1	İstanbul	419	18,6	14	Gaziantep	67	3,0
2	Ankara	155	6,9	15	Kayseri	66	2,9
3	İzmir	124	5,5	16	Konya	65	2,9
4	Bursa	116	5,1	17	Tekirdağ	56	2,5
5	Kocaeli	111	4,9	18	Balıkesir	55	2,4
6	Adana	107	4,7	19	Mardin	52	2,3
7	Antalya	92	4,1	20	Van	50	2,2
8	Aydın	91	4,0	21	Malatya	47	2,1
9	Manisa	87	3,9	22	Kırıkkale	44	2,0
10	Hatay	84	3,7	23	Kastamonu	33	1,5
11	Şanlıurfa	83	3,7	24	Ağrı	32	1,4
12	Samsun	80	3,6	25	Zonguldak	31	1,4
13	Trabzon	76	3,4	26	Erzurum	30	1,3
<b>Total</b>						<b>2253</b>	<b>100,0</b>

To be able to provide a more thorough and accentuated analysis, the findings from this representative sample were further broken down into various categories based on sex, age group, geographic location (i.e. border cities / metropolitan cities / others)<sup>159</sup>, educational attainment, and ethnic origin. Where relevant and significant, cross-tabulations are presented to show differences in data according to these categories.

<sup>159</sup> In SB-2017, the regional/geographical categorization only included a binary distinction between “border cities” and “other cities”. In SB-2019, Türkiye’s biggest cities of İstanbul, İzmir, and Ankara were also grouped together and the new regional category of “metropolitan cities” was added.



**SB-2021- TABLE 9: Profile and Demographic Characteristics of Participants in SB-2019 Survey on Turkish Society (In total 2.253 individuals)**

	#	%		#	%
<b>Sex</b>			<b>Region</b>		
Female	1115	49,5	Border Cities	393	17,4
Male	1138	50,5	Metropolitan Cities	698	30,9
			Non-metropolitan Cities	1162	51,5
<b>Age Groups</b>			Other Cities*	1860	82,4
18-24	366	16,2	Occupations **		
25-34	491	21,8	Private Sector Employee	590	26,2
35-44	541	24,0	Housewife/girl	488	21,7
45-54	413	18,3	Artisans/Tradesmen	424	18,8
55-64	265	11,8	Retired	269	11,9
65 and above	177	7,9	Student	146	6,5
<b>Educational Attainment</b>			Unemployed	136	6,0
Illiterate	40	1,8	Public Sector Employee	112	5,0
Literate	37	1,6	Self-Employed	54	2,4
Primary school	528	23,4	Businessperson	27	1,2
Middle-school	416	18,5	Farmer	2	0,1
High-school or equivalent	779	34,6	No Answer	5	0,2
University/Graduate degree	453	20,1	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.253</b>	<b>100,0</b>

\* "Other Cities" refer to the combination of "metropolitan" and "non-metropolitan" cities.

\*\* In some of the upcoming data tables on "occupations", answers "Farmer" and "No answer" are not presented due to very low number of these answers.

5 of the 26 cities in which the survey was conducted (i.e. Adana, Sanliurfa, Hatay, Gaziantep, Mardin) are located close to Türkiye’s Syrian border and host very large numbers of Syrians compared to their populations. Therefore, data collected from these “border cities”, where dynamics of cohabitation can be observed most clearly, is compared with data collected from other cities. Among the remaining cities, 3 (Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir) were selected as the “metropolitan cities” and 18 constitute the category of “non-metropolitan cities” (i.e. cities that are not metropolitan and not located at the border) to give a fuller representation of Türkiye. 17,4% of the surveys were conducted in the border cities while 30,9% and 51,5% of the surveys were conducted in the metropolitan and other cities, respectively.

**SB-2021-TABLE 10: Survey Sample by Regions**

Region	Border Cities	Other Cities			
		Metropolitan Cities	Non-metropolitan (and non-border) Cities		
İller	Adana	Ankara	Ağrı	Kastamonu	Manisa
	Gaziantep	İstanbul	Antalya	Kayseri	Samsun
	Hatay	İzmir	Aydın	Kırıkkale	Tekirdağ
	Mardin		Balıkesir	Kocaeli	Trabzon
	Şanlıurfa		Bursa	Konya	Van
			Erzurum	Malatya	Zonguldak
<b>Number of Surveys Conducted</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>1.162</b>		
<b>%</b>	<b>% 17,4</b>	<b>% 30,9</b>	<b>% 51,5</b>		
<b>(out of 2.253)</b>	<b>% 17,4</b>	<b>% 82,4</b>			

## 2. Focus Group Discussions

In SB-2021, 9 FGDs were conducted with Turkish participants in 4 cities. A total of 55 Turkish citizens participated in these FGDs. As it was done in SB-2020, FGDs were conducted online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the health of the participants was not put at risk while the risk of low attendance to FGDs due to the epidemic has been prevented.

CITIES		Turkish Citizens / Turkish Society FGD Groups	Total Number of FGDs
		Categories	
Metropolitan Cities	Istanbul	* Artisans-Workers (5) * Unemployed Youth/Newly Graduated (5) * Women (5)	3
	Ankara	* Students (7)	1
Border Cities	Hatay	* Artisans-Workers (6) * Students (6)	2
	Gaziantep	* Artisans-Workers (7) * Students (8) * NGO Workers(6)	3
	Average number of participants at the FGDs was 6		

In the present SB-2021 study, data and findings from both the surveys and the FGDs were used in conjunction with one another. The empirical base of the study was provided by the survey findings while FGD data was instrumental in interpreting various findings and reaching a deeper understanding.

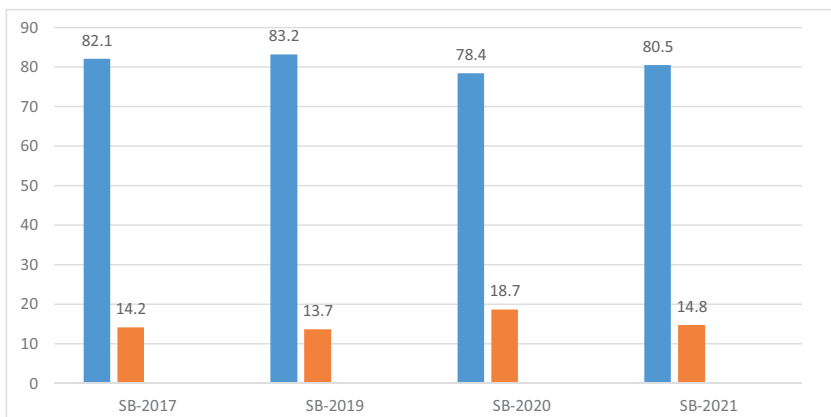
### III-B. SB-2021- TURKISH SOCIETY RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 1. Turkish Society’s Spatial Proximity with and Awareness of Syrians

SB research, which aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of the field and then to provide a conceptual vision for social cohesion, started with a question on how much Turkish society and Syrians shared their physical living spaces. As already mentioned, only 1,36% of Syrians in Türkiye live in camps while the vast majority of the remaining population live in urban places. There is, however, a remarkable degree of difference regarding the population density of Syrians amongst different regions, cities, districts, and even neighborhoods. This is why the survey began with the question “Are there Syrians living in your neighborhood/district?” This question is doubly important both as a question on level of awareness and as a potential variable the influence of which on later questions bears significance. In all four SB surveys, the total share of those who responded with “yes, there are a few” and “yes, there are many” was around 80%. In SB-2021 this figure is 80,5%. This high percentage is, in fact, a significant indicator of the fact that more than 90% of Syrians live in urban spaces together with the Turkish society. Sharing physical spaces with Syrians is not peculiar to border cities, but it is observed in other big cities as well.

**SB-2021-TABLE 11: Are there Syrians living in your neighborhood /district?**

	2017		2019		2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	1715	82,1	1890*	83,2*	1772*	78,4*	1814*	80,5*
No	297	14,2	311	13,7	422	18,7	333	14,8
No idea /No response	77	3,7	70	3,1	65	2,9	106	4,7
<b>Total</b>	<b>2089</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2271</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2259</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2253</b>	<b>100,0</b>



\* Yes” category presents the sum of “Yes, there are many” and “Yes, there are a few” responses.

Note: While in previous studies the question was “Are there Syrians living in your neighborhood /district /region?”, it was changed to “Are there Syrians living in your neighborhood /district?” in SB-2021.

**FGD Findings (SB-2021-T)**

When the responses given to the questions “Are there Syrians living in your neighborhood /district” and “Where do you encounter Syrians in your daily life?”, as in previous SB studies, it is seen that people living in border provinces such as Gaziantep and Hatay encounter Syrians more often and reside in the same/closer places. Many of the FGD participants in border cities stated that there are Syrians in their apartments and that they encounter many Syrians on the streets.

In the FGDs held in Ankara and Istanbul, however, the majority of the participants stated that they did not have any Syrians in their neighborhood or that they met only occasionally. On the other hand, many of the participants who stated that there are not Syrians in their neighborhoods said that they encounter Syrians from time to time in public transportation and workplaces. Most of the participants emphasized that the Syrians they encounter in their daily life are generally quiet and calm and they do not have a very close communication/interaction.

## 2. How does the Turkish Society See the Syrians?

It is important to look at how various communities see or define each other in order to understand their social encounters and interaction. Therefore, SB research includes this question of definition. In this context, the respondents were given a list of 10 concepts and asked which concepts best reflected their view of Syrians. They were given the chance to provide multiple responses. In SB-2017 the top answer to this question was that “They are victims who escaped persecution/war” with 57,8%. This option had significantly regressed to become only the fourth most frequently mentioned answer with 35% in SB-2019. The responses that appeared to be at the top were those that reflect perceptions of threat, social distance, and anxieties.<sup>160</sup> In SB-2020, the “victims” perception appears to have gone up to the top again. However, other concepts that reflect various anxieties continued to be frequently mentioned. In SB-2021 the top answer was “they are dangerous people who will cause us a lot of troubles in the future” (40,7%) followed by “they are burdens on us” (38,1%) and “they are people who did not protect their homeland” (37,5%).

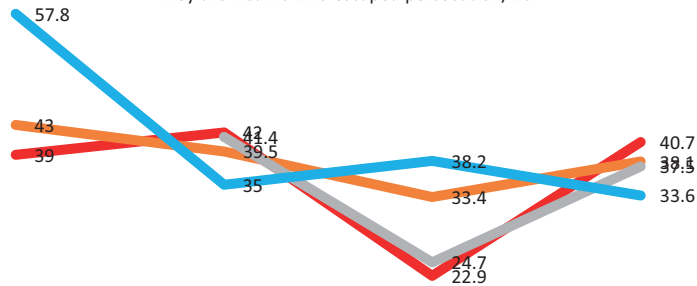
**SB-2021-TABLE 12 (+FIGURE): Most appropriate expressions to describe Syrians (Multiple Responses)**

		2017		2019		2020		2021	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1	They are dangerous people who will cause us a lot of troubles in the future /*They are people who will cause social and economic problems in our country in the future	814	39,0	954	42,0	518	22,9	917	40,7
2	They are burdens on us	899	43,0	896	39,5	755	33,4	859	38,1
3	They are people who did not protect their homeland	-	-	940	41,4	559	24,7	846	37,5
4	They are victims who escaped persecution/war	1208	57,8	794	35,0	863	38,2	758	33,6
5	They are guests in our country	424	20,3	495	21,8	512	22,7	409	18,2
6	They are people exploited as cheap labor	298	14,3	308	13,6	290	12,8	399	17,7
7	They are different from and strangers to us	376	18,0	448	19,7	206	9,1	373	16,6
8	They are our brothers and sisters with the same religion	433	20,7	446	19,6	366	16,2	270	12,0
9	They are beggars/people who entirely rely on assistance	509	24,4	343	15,1	257	11,4	216	9,6
10	They are harmless people	306	14,6	158	7,0	165	7,3	197	8,7
11	Other	15	0,7	42	1,8	14	0,6	21	0,9
	No idea/ No response	32	1,5	20	0,9	33	1,5	27	1,2

<sup>160</sup> The question in Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration-2014: was asked with a single response option and the first was “People fleeing from persecution” (41.1% ), followed by “guests in our country” (% 20.8), “brothers and sisters with the same religion” (12.1%) “burdens on us” (20.1%).

**Most appropriate expressions to describe Syrians (Multiple Responses)  
(Top 4 responses)  
(%)**

- They are dangerous people who will cause us a lot of troubles in the future
- They are burdens on us
- They are people who did not protect their homeland
- They are victims who escaped persecution/war



\*The statement “They are dangerous people who will cause us a lot of troubles in the future” in SB-2017, 2019 and 2020 was updated as “They are people who will cause social and economic problems in our country in the future” in SB-2021.

In terms of demographic groups, it appears that women, those who are 65 or older, those who are illiterate, those who live in border cities, and housewives more strongly embrace the perception of “oppressed/victim” regarding Syrians as represented by the response “They are victims who escaped persecution/war” in SB-2021. The response “They are people who will cause social and economic problems in our country in the future” was more strongly supported by women, those in the 25-34 age group, those with the highest level of educational attainment, those who live outside of the border region, and retired respondents compared to other groups.



**SB-2021-TABLE 13: Most appropriate expressions to describe Syrians (Multiple Responses %)**

	They are people who will cause social and economic problems in our country in the future	They are burdens on us	They are people who did not protect their homeland	They are victims who escaped persecution/ war	They are guests in our country	They are people exploited as cheap labor	They are different from and strangers to us	They are our brothers and sisters with the same religion	They are beggars/ people who entirely rely on assistance	They are harmless people	Other	No idea/ No response
<b>Sex</b>												
Female	42,2	38,9	38,1	34,2	19,0	17,3	16,6	10,0	10,3	9,4	0,6	1,6
Male	39,3	37,3	37,0	33,1	17,3	18,1	16,5	14,0	8,9	8,1	1,2	0,8
<b>Age Group</b>												
18-24	35,2	35,5	40,2	30,9	17,5	15,8	18,6	13,4	12,3	10,1	0,3	1,4
25-34	44,6	40,5	35,6	30,3	15,5	21,8	15,5	8,6	10,6	9,4	0,8	0,6
35-44	40,1	37,3	39,7	32,9	17,0	17,9	14,0	11,5	8,1	7,2	1,1	1,7
45-54	43,3	37,5	37,8	35,4	19,6	14,0	21,8	11,9	8,7	8,5	0,7	1,0
55-64	37,4	39,2	35,5	37,0	22,6	17,4	13,6	14,0	8,3	8,7	1,9	0,8
65 +	41,8	39,0	33,3	41,8	20,3	18,6	15,3	17,5	9,6	9,6	1,1	2,3
<b>Educational Attainment</b>												
Illiterate/ Literate	29,9	31,2	15,6	58,4	32,5	10,4	5,2	18,2	5,2	18,2	2,6	5,2
Primary School	34,7	36,9	34,3	36,6	23,7	13,8	15,3	12,1	7,8	10,8	0,4	2,3
Middle-School	43,0	38,9	45,0	31,0	14,2	15,9	18,5	10,3	10,6	7,2	0,7	1,0
High-School or equivalent	39,9	38,5	39,3	31,8	15,7	16,6	17,8	12,5	10,9	8,1	1,0	0,8
University/ Graduate Degree	48,8	39,3	35,3	31,6	17,2	27,2	15,9	11,5	9,3	7,3	1,3	0,2
<b>Region</b>												
Border cities	39,2	44,0	30,3	38,2	27,5	9,2	9,4	3,1	1,0	14,8	0,5	3,1
Other cities**	41,0	36,9	39,1	32,7	16,2	19,5	18,1	13,9	11,4	7,5	1,0	0,8
Metropolitan cities	41,0	34,5	39,3	32,7	14,0	22,3	20,9	11,2	8,5	7,7	1,1	0,4
Non-metropolitan cities	41,0	38,3	39,0	32,7	17,5	17,8	16,4	15,5	13,2	7,3	0,9	1,0
<b>Occupations</b>												
Private sector employee	42,9	38,6	41,9	27,3	15,8	20,0	19,8	9,5	11,4	8,5	0,8	0,5
Housewife/ girl	34,8	40,8	31,8	42,4	23,0	11,7	12,7	11,3	6,6	10,7	0,6	2,7
Artisan/ Tradesman	39,9	35,8	42,7	34,9	13,2	14,4	18,4	13,7	8,3	9,0	0,7	1,4
Retired	48,0	37,2	36,1	33,5	18,6	19,3	18,6	14,9	6,7	7,1	2,2	0,7
Student	43,2	35,6	44,5	26,7	15,8	15,1	17,8	8,9	15,1	7,5	-	1,4
Unemployed	36,8	40,4	27,2	30,9	19,9	25,0	11,0	9,6	14,0	9,6	0,7	0,7
Public sector employee	42,9	30,4	33,0	37,5	25,0	22,3	13,4	19,6	9,8	8,9	0,9	-
Self-employed	44,4	42,6	33,3	29,6	18,5	40,7	18,5	11,1	14,8	1,9	3,7	-
Business person	29,6	40,7	29,6	37,0	25,9	18,5	-	18,5	11,1	11,1	-	-
General	40,7	38,1	37,5	33,6	18,2	17,7	16,6	12,0	9,6	8,7	0,9	1,2

When the findings of SB-2017, SB-2019, SB-2020, and SB-2021 are considered together, it is possible to observe that the sentiments of social conscience and solidarity are mentioned simultaneously with those of discomfort and anxieties regarding the future. For the first time in SB-2021, however, it is observed that the top three descriptions are all ones involving anxieties and negativity, and that the statement “they are victims who escaped persecution/war” received the least amount of support (33,6%) retreating to the fourth rank.

**SB-2021-TABLE 14: Most appropriate expressions to describe Syrians (Multiple Responses %)/**

**Are there Syrians living in your neighborhood /district?**

	Most appropriate expressions to describe Syrians (Multiple Responses)	Are there Syrians living in your neighborhood / district? (%)				
		Yes, there are many	Yes, there are a few	No	No idea/ No response	General
1	They are people who will cause social and economic problems in our country in the future	42,6	40,3	35,4	41,5	40,7
2	They are burdens on us	41,4	34,7	38,7	29,2	38,1
3	They are people who did not protect their homeland	39,9	36,8	30,3	42,5	37,5
4	They are victims who escaped persecution/war	30,9	36,7	34,8	34,0	33,6
5	They are guests in our country	15,4	19,9	21,9	20,8	18,2
6	They are people exploited as cheap labor	16,3	19,5	20,7	8,5	17,7
7	They are different from and strangers to us	16,6	17,9	16,5	5,7	16,6
8	They are our brothers and sisters with the same religion	9,9	13,1	13,8	18,9	12,0
9	They are beggars/people who entirely rely on assistance	8,5	10,3	11,4	9,4	9,6
10	They are harmless people	7,6	10,6	8,1	7,5	8,7
11	Other	0,7	1,2	1,5	-	0,9
	No idea/ No response	0,8	1,3	1,2	4,7	1,2

When the responses to this question are considered in conjunction with whether or not the respondents report living in close proximity to Syrians, it would be possible to detect some trends. Accordingly, similar to the finding of SB-2020, those who reported that there aren't any Syrians living in their region/city/neighborhoods appears to more strongly support the perception that they “are victims who escaped persecution and war”. However, those living in places with Syrians appear to give the responses that “they are burdens on us”, “they are people who did not protect their homeland”, and “they are dangerous people who will cause

us a lot of trouble in the future” more frequently. This seems to show that the sentiments of compassion are stronger among the respondents who don’t experience living together with Syrians, while negative perceptions towards Syrians are stronger among those respondents living together with Syrians. Therefore, it can be deduced that the expectation that closer contacts and daily encounters would positively influence mutual perceptions might not be realized in all contexts. In fact, the data appears to suggest that sometimes “getting to know the other” through physical closeness and daily interactions may strengthen the negative perceptions. A significant observation in SB-2021 findings compared to those of SB-2020, however, is that the support to the statement involving “oppressed-victim” perception is wearing down even in places where few Syrians live.

### ***FGD Findings (SB-2021-T)***

In order to measure the perceptions towards Syrians, participants in FGDs were asked what comes to their mind when they hear the word “Syrian”. In other words, they were asked what concepts they use to describe Syrians.

In the border cities, in line with the findings of previous SB studies, it is observed that mostly negative concepts such as “self-indulgent”, “cheap labor”, “ungrateful”, “uneducated” are used to describe Syrians.

- ▶▶ “The people of my country see less value than them. The support provided to Syrians needs to be provided to us as well.”
- ▶▶ “They are self-indulgent... They earn enough and spend the rest. They do not think about their future” (Hatay-TR-Student)

However, again in border provinces, statements by a few participants (especially prominent in the statements of NGO workers) emphasized the victimization of Syrians with expressions such as “being stuck in the middle”, “lack of belonging” and “shy people”. In the FGDs conducted in Ankara and İstanbul, also similar to the findings of earlier SB studies, expressions akin to “war victims” were dominant. For example, expressions such as “disadvantaged”, “scapegoat”, “orphans”, “other” were frequently used.

- ▶▶ “The same people who were forced to emigrate are the marginalized class in Türkiye. And the reason is the events they had to endure in their own country.” (İstanbul-TR-Worker)
- ▶▶ “The other and guest. It comes as a phenomenon that is not from us, foreign, that we cannot include within ourselves.” (İstanbul-TR-Newly Graduated)

In terms of the way Turkish society defines Syrians, it is seen that similar responses to the survey results have emerged in FGDs. While the participants in the border cities, that is, people who interact more with Syrians in daily life, use more reactive, critical and negative expressions when describing Syrians, it is seen that people from metropolitan cities and who encounter Syrians less often have a more compassionate approach.

### 3. The Definitions / Labels that Fit Syrians According to the Turkish Society

When the adjectives and labels suggested by the Turkish society to describe Syrians are considered, it can be seen that there is a significant social distance and prejudice, which was also evident in both SB-2017, SB-2019, and SB-2020, but at a much stronger degree. The survey has found that Turkish respondents refrain from describing Syrians using positive adjectives and tend to use more negative ones. In SB-2021, while the most frequently given response was “unreliable” (52,7%), among the positive labels “hard-working” is the one most often used with 24,9%.



**SB-2021-TABLE 15: To what extent of Syrians in Türkiye do the following characteristics fit? (%)**

		Fits to None of them	Fits to a Minority of them	Minority + None	Fits to Half of them	Fits to a Majority of them	Fits to All of them	Majority + All	No idea/ No response
1	Hard-Working	33,0	17,0	<b>50,0</b>	20,0	19,7	5,2	<b>24,9</b>	5,1
2	Kind	45,1	21,7	<b>66,8</b>	19,0	6,4	1,4	<b>7,8</b>	6,4
3	Reliable	47,7	19,3	<b>67,0</b>	17,8	4,7	1,3	<b>6,0</b>	9,2
4	Nice	32,0	18,7	<b>50,7</b>	29,2	9,7	1,6	<b>11,3</b>	8,8
5	Lazy	12,6	12,6	<b>25,2</b>	21,5	27,3	19,8	<b>47,1</b>	6,2
6	Rude	8,8	10,9	<b>19,7</b>	21,1	28,1	23,5	<b>51,6</b>	7,6
7	Unreliable	7,9	7,6	<b>15,5</b>	22,4	29,0	23,7	<b>52,7</b>	9,4
8	Bad	8,2	10,6	<b>18,8</b>	30,8	21,9	17,1	<b>39,0</b>	11,4

When the findings of all SB studies are considered together, it is observed that there was a significant leap in the usage of negative definitions from SB-2017 to SB-2019, followed by a relative softening in SB-2020, probably as a result of the social conditions during the pandemic. In SB-2021, in turn, the emphasis on the negative labels is

significantly on the rise once again. However, it is observed that the support that Turkish society gives to all the positive adjectives towards Syrians in this question (such as good, polite, reliable) has increased steadily with the highest one being “hardworking”.

**SB-2021-TABLE 16: To what extent of Syrians in Türkiye do the following characteristics fit? (Scored)**

		2017	2019	2020	2021
1	Unreliable	2,9	3,3	3,2	3,3
2	Rude	2,8	3,3	3,1	3,2
3	Lazy	2,8	3,3	3,0	3,1
4	Bad	2,7	3,1	3,0	2,9
<b>Average Score</b>		2,3	2,5	2,5	2,5
5	Hard-working	2,0	2,0	2,1	2,3
6	Nice	1,9	1,7	1,9	2,0
7	Kind	1,7	1,7	1,7	1,8
8	Reliable	1,7	1,6	1,6	1,7
		 0-2,99	 3,0-5,0		
<p><b>Note:</b> Some adjective options, namely “dirty”, “distant”, “friendly”, and “clean”, that were included in SB-2017, 2019, and 2020, were removed in SB-2021. The answer options were limited to 4 positive and 4 negative adjectives.</p>					

When the perception of the Turkish society regarding Syrians is examined in terms of characteristics such as gender, age, education, and employment status, very close results are generally observed with no significant differences.

**SB-2021-TABLE 17: To what extent do the following qualities describe Syrians in our country? (Scored)**

	Unreliable	Rude	Lazy	Bad	Hard-working	Nice	Kind	Reliable	Average Score
<b>Sex</b>									
Female	3,2	3,2	3,1	2,8	2,3	2,0	1,7	1,6	2,5
Male	3,3	3,3	3,1	3,1	2,4	2,1	1,8	1,7	2,6
<b>Age Groups</b>									
18-24	3,3	3,3	3,1	3,1	2,4	2,1	1,8	1,6	2,6
25-34	3,3	3,2	3,1	3,0	2,4	2,0	1,8	1,7	2,6
35-44	3,3	3,3	3,2	3,0	2,3	2,0	1,7	1,6	2,6
45-54	3,3	3,3	3,2	2,9	2,2	2,1	1,8	1,7	2,5
55-64	3,2	3,2	3,0	2,9	2,3	2,0	1,8	1,7	2,5
65 +	2,9	3,1	2,9	2,7	2,2	1,9	1,7	1,6	2,4
<b>Educational Attainment</b>									
Illiterate/ Literate	2,8	2,8	2,6	2,6	2,7	2,3	2,2	2,0	2,5
Primary school	3,1	3,2	2,9	2,8	2,4	2,1	1,8	1,7	2,5
Middle-school	3,4	3,3	3,2	3,1	2,3	2,0	1,8	1,6	2,6
High-school or equivalent	3,3	3,3	3,2	3,0	2,3	2,0	1,7	1,6	2,6
University/ Graduate degree	3,2	3,2	3,2	3,0	2,2	2,0	1,7	1,7	2,5
<b>Region</b>									
Border cities	3,1	3,1	3,0	2,9	2,6	2,1	2,0	1,8	2,6
Other cities	3,3	3,3	3,1	3,0	2,3	2,0	1,7	1,6	2,5
Metropolitan cities	3,3	3,3	3,2	2,9	2,3	2,1	1,7	1,7	2,6
Non-metropolitan cities	3,3	3,2	3,1	3,0	2,2	2,0	1,7	1,6	2,5
<b>Occupations</b>									
Private sector employee	3,4	3,4	3,3	3,2	2,3	2,0	1,7	1,6	2,6
Housewife/girl	3,0	3,0	2,9	2,5	2,4	2,0	1,8	1,7	2,4
Artisan/ Tradesman	3,3	3,3	3,1	3,0	2,4	2,0	1,8	1,7	2,6
Retired	3,2	3,3	3,1	2,9	2,3	2,0	1,7	1,6	2,5
Student	3,4	3,3	3,2	3,1	2,2	2,0	1,8	1,7	2,6
Unemployed	3,5	3,4	3,1	3,2	2,4	2,2	1,9	1,7	2,7
Public sector employee	3,3	3,2	3,2	2,9	2,2	2,1	2,0	1,8	2,6
Self-employed	3,0	2,9	3,0	2,8	2,1	2,1	1,7	1,6	2,4
Businessperson	3,2	3,4	2,9	3,0	2,5	2,1	1,9	1,9	2,6
<b>General</b>	<b>3,3</b>	<b>3,2</b>	<b>3,1</b>	<b>2,9</b>	<b>2,3</b>	<b>2,0</b>	<b>1,8</b>	<b>1,7</b>	<b>2,5</b>

#### 4. Perception of Cultural Similarity

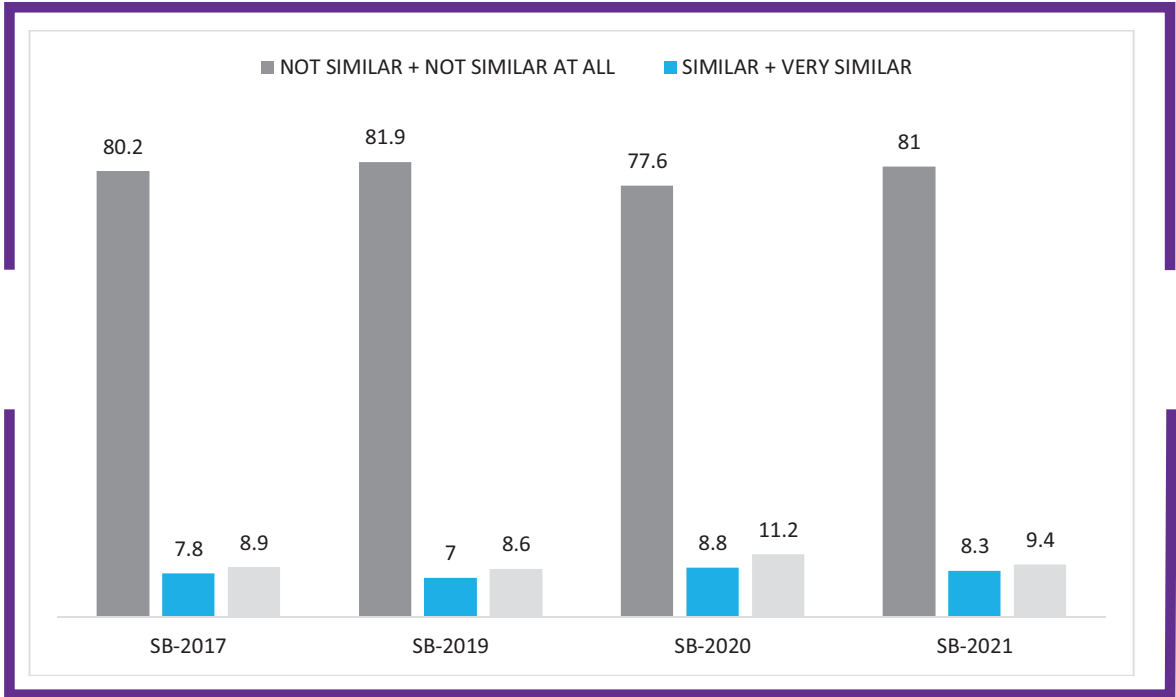
The role played by cultural similarity between a host/local society and newcomers (migrants or refugees) both in the period of arrival and later in years of living together has been an important topic in the migration studies literature. Despite sharing a significant common history and 911 kilometers of land borders as well as a common religion observed predominantly by both societies, Sb research has consistently found that the Turkish society places a significant social distance between them and the Syrians. While the political discourse makes frequent references to “ensar” (solidarity with refugees as a tradition of Islam), “religious fellowship”, “neighborhood”, and “common history”, it appears that these are either not fully embraced by the society. When asked the question “To what extent do you think Syrians in Türkiye are culturally similar to us?”, the combined share of those replied with “they are not similar at all” and “they are not similar” is 81% in SB-2021. Those who suggested that “they are similar” and “they are very similar” constitute only 8,3% of the respondents.<sup>161</sup> The combined share of those who said “they are not similar at all” and “they are not similar” was 80,2% in SB-2017, 81,9% in SB-2019, and 77,6% in SB-2020, which increased again to 81% in the present SB-2021 study. The highest percentage of respondents who believed that Syrians are culturally similar in all four studies has been 8,8%.

**SB-2021-TABLE 18 (+FIGURE): To what extent do you think Syrians in Türkiye are culturally similar to us? (SB-2017/SB-2019/SB-2020/SB-2021)**

	2017		2019		2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Not similar at all	853	40,8	1147	50,5	1177	52,1	1219	54,1
Not similar	823	39,4	712	31,4	575	25,5	607	26,9
Neither similar, nor not similar	185	8,9	196	8,6	253	11,2	211	9,4
Similar	152	7,3	153	6,7	192	8,5	179	8,0
Very similar	10	0,5	7	0,3	7	0,3	7	0,3
No idea/ No response	66	3,1	56	2,5	55	2,4	30	1,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2089</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2271</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2259</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2253</b>	<b>100,0</b>

<sup>161</sup> In the 2014 study, “Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration”, the rate of those who “completely disagreed” with the statement “I believe we are culturally similar with Syrians” was 45,3%, while 25,3% “disagreed” with this statement (in total 70,6%). The total share of those who “agreed” and “completely agreed” with the statement was 17,2%. By region, those who disagreed was 75,6% at the border cities and 69,6% at the other cities. See: pp.139





When the responses to this question were broken down demographic and socio-economic categories of the respondents in BS-2021, the most striking divergence is observed between men and women. While 85,2% of female respondents suggest that “they are not similar”, this figure is 77% among male respondents. A more surprising finding comes from the respondents in “border cities”. From an objective point of view, it could be suggested that this group, who lives in cities bordering Syria or those connected to the border region, shares a significant number of commonalities with Syrians such as language, religion, ethnicity, customs, and culture. However, in SB-2020, the share of respondents from these cities who say “Syrians are not culturally similar” to them was a staggering 83,4%, while the Türkiye average for this answer was 77,6%. In SB-2021, in turn, with the national average of 81%, this share in the border cities has dropped to 79,6%. This surprising observation was also made in the previous Şanlıurfa Barometer study.<sup>162</sup> The fact that the values are very close to each other between the Türkiye average and the border provinces are actually surprising in itself. However, the fact that from time to time those in the border region think that “they are not similar” even more strongly than the Türkiye’s average, shows that making immigration and social cohesion policies based on the assumed cultural similarity is not always enough to get the desired results. However, it is known that discourses based on commonalities such as cultural similarity, kinship, having the same faith, etc. play a significant and positive role in the beginning stages of mass human movements. “Helping out brothers and sisters in a difficult situation” does work as strong motivator. As the duration of stay is prolonged and the numbers grow, however, this perception of cultural similarity and its positive contribution both grow dimmer.

<sup>162</sup> Şanlıurfa Barometer study was conducted by Şanlıurfa Governorship in 2018, in cooperation with the GAP Administration, UNHCR and the Turkish-German University Migration and Integration Research Center-TAGU in 2018 under the direction of Prof. Dr. M. Murat Erdoğan.

**SB-2021-TABLE 19: To what extent do you think Syrians in Türkiye are culturally similar to us? (%)**

	Not similar at all	Not similar	Combined not similar	Neither similar, nor not similar	Similar	Very similar	Combined similar	No idea/ No response
<b>Sex</b>								
Female	54,5	30,7	<b>85,2</b>	7,9	4,8	0,3	<b>5,1</b>	1,8
Male	53,7	23,3	<b>77,0</b>	10,8	11,0	0,4	<b>11,4</b>	0,8
<b>Age Groups</b>								
18-24	54,6	27,6	<b>82,2</b>	12,8	4,6	-	<b>4,6</b>	0,4
25-34	57,2	28,1	<b>85,3</b>	7,3	5,9	0,4	<b>6,3</b>	1,1
35-44	55,6	28,9	<b>84,5</b>	7,9	6,8	-	<b>6,8</b>	0,8
45-54	50,8	27,6	<b>78,4</b>	10,7	8,5	1,0	<b>9,5</b>	1,4
55-64	54,0	22,6	<b>76,6</b>	6,4	14,0	0,4	<b>14,4</b>	2,6
65 +	47,4	21,5	<b>68,9</b>	13,6	13,6	-	<b>13,6</b>	3,9
<b>Educational Attainment</b>								
Illiterate/ Literate	39,0	31,2	<b>70,2</b>	11,7	14,3	-	<b>14,3</b>	3,8
Primary school	54,5	24,2	<b>78,7</b>	8,7	9,1	0,6	<b>9,7</b>	2,9
Middle-school	56,5	27,9	<b>84,4</b>	9,6	4,8	0,5	<b>5,3</b>	0,7
High-school or equivalent	53,5	29,4	<b>82,9</b>	8,9	7,7	0,1	<b>7,8</b>	0,4
University/ Graduate degree	55,0	24,3	<b>79,3</b>	10,4	8,8	0,2	<b>9,0</b>	1,3
<b>Region</b>								
Border cities	59,5	20,1	<b>79,6</b>	11,7	7,6	-	<b>7,6</b>	1,1
Other cities	53,0	28,4	<b>81,4</b>	8,9	8,0	0,4	<b>8,4</b>	1,3
Metropolitan cities	54,7	25,2	<b>79,9</b>	9,8	8,8	0,4	<b>9,2</b>	1,1
Non-metropolitan cities	51,9	30,3	<b>82,2</b>	8,4	7,6	0,3	<b>7,9</b>	1,5
<b>Occupation</b>								
Private sector employee	57,1	28,3	<b>85,4</b>	9,5	4,6	-	<b>4,6</b>	0,5
Housewife/girl	52,5	29,9	<b>82,4</b>	8,8	5,7	0,2	<b>5,9</b>	2,9
Artisan/ Tradesman	56,1	22,9	<b>79,0</b>	9,7	9,9	0,7	<b>10,6</b>	0,7
Retired	50,6	22,3	<b>72,9</b>	10,4	13,8	0,7	<b>14,5</b>	2,2
Student	52,1	31,5	<b>83,6</b>	12,3	4,1	-	<b>4,1</b>	-
Unemployed	56,6	27,2	<b>83,8</b>	7,4	8,1	-	<b>8,1</b>	0,7
Public sector employee	46,4	25,9	<b>72,3</b>	10,7	14,3	0,9	<b>15,2</b>	1,8
Self-employed	53,7	33,3	<b>87,0</b>	3,7	9,3	-	<b>9,3</b>	-
Businessperson	55,6	22,2	<b>77,8</b>	-	22,2	-	<b>22,2</b>	-
General	54,1	26,9	<b>81,0</b>	9,4	8,0	0,3	<b>8,3</b>	1,3

Another important issue is whether the Turkish society perceives the presence of Syrians as a positive contribution to cultural diversity and richness. When asked to what extent they agreed with the statement “*Syrians are culturally enriching us*”, a huge 88,2% in SB-2021 of the respondents disagreed. Similarly, 87,5% of the respondents disagreed with this statement in SB-2020. The share of those who believe that there is cultural similarity between the Turkish society and Syrians varies between 8,2% and 4,3% in all four SB studies. This shows that people with quite different social, economic, and political tendencies all share similar opinions on this matter. In this context, it appears that Turkish society does not believe that Syrians would play an enriching role for culture in Türkiye.

**SB-2021 - TABLE 20: To what extent do you agree with the following statement concerning the impact of Syrians living in Türkiye? (%) “Syrians are culturally enriching us”**

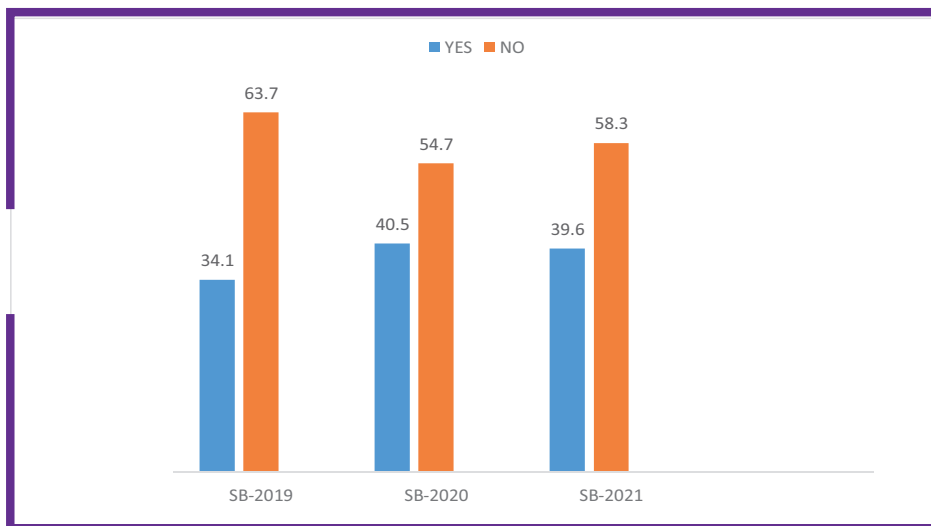
	Com-pletely Disagree	Disa-gree	Combined DISAGREE	Neither agree, Nor disa-gree	Agree	Com-pletely Agree	Com-bined AGREE	No opin-ion/ No response
SB-2017	52,8	31,8	84,6	7,7	5,7	0,5	8,2	1,5
SB-2019	79,3	11,1	90,4	3,3	3,7	0,6	4,3	2,0
SB-2020	68,1	19,4	87,5	5,8	4,8	0,5	5,3	1,4
SB-2021	62,0	26,2	88,2	5,0	3,9	0,6	4,5	2,3

## 5. Support to Syrians

It is obvious that there was a considerable degree of social solidarity and support towards Syrians by the Turkish society since the arrival of first Syrian groups in 2011. Independently from the support services provided by Turkish public institutions, this solidarity and support has become more visible particularly with Syrians living outside of the camps and in urban places. To better understand the quality of and changing trends in the attitudes towards Syrians, it is important to collect data on the support “in cash or in kind”. The survey respondents, thus, were asked “Have you ever provided in cash or in-kind assistance to Syrians (except for giving money to beggars)?”. While the share of the respondents who said “yes” was 34,1% in SB-2019, and 40,5% in SB-2020, it became 39,6% in SB-2021.<sup>163</sup> A demographic breakdown of responses doesn’t appear to yield any significant and meaningful differences. The most noteworthy finding could be that while the support provided by the respondents in the border cities was below the overall average in SB-2020, in SB-2021 44,3% of the respondents in the border cities suggested that they did provide support. This figure is higher than the Türkiye average of 39,6%.

**SB-2021-TABLE 21 (+FIGURE): Have you ever provided in cash or in-kind assistance to Syrians (except for giving money to beggars)?**

	2019		2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes, I have	774	34,1	914	40,5	893	39,6
No, I have not	1446	63,7	1237	54,7	1313	58,3
Don't remember/ No idea / No response	51	2,2	108	4,8	47	2,1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2271</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2259</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2253</b>	<b>100,0</b>



163 In the 2014 study “Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration”, those who stated that they have provided assistance to Syrians was around 30%. See: p.129.

**SB-2021-TABLE 22: Have you ever provided in cash or in-kind assistance to Syrians (except for giving money to beggars)? (%)**

	Yes, I have	No, I have not	Dont remember/ No idea/ No response
<b>Sex</b>			
Female	34,9	62,9	2,2
Male	44,3	53,7	2,0
<b>Age Groups</b>			
18-24	35,5	62,0	2,5
25-34	36,5	60,9	2,6
35-44	41,6	56,9	1,5
45-54	44,3	53,0	2,7
55-64	40,8	57,7	1,5
65 +	38,4	60,5	1,1
<b>Educational Attainment</b>			
Illiterate/ Literate	40,3	58,4	1,3
Primary school	43,4	54,7	1,9
Middle-school	36,1	62,3	1,6
High-school or equivalent	38,3	59,2	2,5
University/ Graduate degree	40,8	57,2	2,0
<b>Region</b>			
Border cities	44,3	54,5	1,2
Other cities	38,7	59,1	2,2
Metropolitan cities	40,8	56,7	2,5
Non-metropolitan cities	37,3	60,5	2,2
<b>Occupation</b>			
Private sector employee	35,1	63,1	1,8
Housewife/ girl	34,2	63,5	2,3
Artisan/Tradesman	52,4	46,0	1,6
Retired	41,6	57,2	1,2
Student	31,5	65,1	3,4
Unemployed	33,8	64,0	2,2
Public sector employee	47,3	48,2	4,5
Self-employed	38,9	57,4	3,7
Businessperson	59,3	40,7	-
<b>General</b>	<b>39,6</b>	<b>58,3</b>	<b>2,1</b>

\* Other provinces include metropolitan and non-metropolitan provinces.

\*\* These are the results of 27 business people.

Note: Working status: "Farmer" and "No response" are not shown in the table because they are few in number.

It was observed in the previous studies that there had been a decreasing trend in the motivation to support Syrians among Turkish society, which had been at a remarkable level particularly in the first years with a growing realization that Syrians were going to be permanent in the country and that they were meeting their own needs by working. However, with the influence of the pandemic, it appears that the level of support has grown again. The 893 respondents who said that they have provided a form of assistance to Syrians were further asked how they provided the assistance. Since Syrians had to struggle with more severe economic challenges amidst the pandemic for the past 2 years, the below question was also thought to be useful in understanding more about the dynamics of solidarity during the pandemic. When asked “Have you provided in cash or in-kind support to Syrians in the past 1 year?”, 79,7% in Sb-2020 and 79% of the respondents in SB-2021 replied affirmatively.

**SB-2021-TABLE 23: Have you provided in cash or in-kind support to Syrians in the past 1 year?**

	2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%
Yes, I have	728	79,7	705	79,0
No, I have not	174	19,0	168	18,8
Don't remember/ No idea / No response	12	1,3	20	2,2
<b>Total</b>	<b>914</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>893</b>	<b>100,0</b>
<b>Note:</b> Results from those respondents who said “Yes” to the question “Have you ever provided in cash or in-kind assistance to Syrians (except for giving money to beggars)?”.				

**SB-2021-TABLE 24: Have you provided in cash or in-kind support to Syrians in the past 1 year? (%)**

	Yes, I have	No, I have not	Don't remember/ No idea / No re- sponse
<b>Sex</b>			
Female	76,1	20,0	3,9
Male	81,1	17,9	1,0
<b>Age Groups</b>			
18-24	76,2	19,2	4,6
25-34	77,7	20,7	1,6
35-44	81,8	16,0	2,2
45-54	79,8	18,0	2,2
55-64	76,9	22,2	0,9
65 +	79,4	19,1	1,5
<b>Educational Attainment</b>			
Illiterate/ Literate	58,1	32,3	9,6
Primary school	77,3	21,3	1,4
Middle-school	80,9	17,4	1,7
High-school or equivalent	81,1	16,2	2,7
University/ Graduate degree	79,9	18,4	1,7
<b>Region</b>			
Border cities	79,9	18,4	1,7
Other cities	78,7	18,9	2,4
Metropolitan cities	75,1	21,8	3,1
Non-metropolitan cities	81,1	17,1	1,8
<b>Occupation</b>			
Private sector employee	78,3	20,8	0,9
Housewife/ girl	75,4	19,8	4,8
Artisan/Tradesman	81,1	17,1	1,8
Retired	81,2	18,8	-
Student	76,1	19,6	4,3
Unemployed	67,4	26,1	6,5
Public sector employee	86,8	11,3	1,9
Self-employed	81,0	19,0	-
Businessperson	87,5	12,5	-
General	79,0	18,8	2,2
* "Results from those respondents who said "Yes" to the question "Have you ever provided in cash or in-kind assistance to Syrians (except for giving money to beggars)?".			



Those respondents who replied “no” were further asked the question “why haven’t you provided any support to Syrians?”. There is a striking divergence between the responses provided in SB-2020 and SB-2021 to this question. In SB-2020, the top rank was occupied by the response “I didn’t want to give support”, followed by “I have preferred to provide support to our own citizens that are in need” and “I don’t believe that they need support”, respectively. In SB-2021, in turn, the top spot was taken by the response “I have preferred to provide support to our own citizens that are in need” (28,9%), which was closely followed by “I don’t have sufficient financial resources to give support”. The very high share of those who gave the response “I didn’t want to give support”, which was 42,2% in SB-2020, decreased to 27,9% and the third rank in SB-2021.

**SB-2021-TABLE 25: Why haven’t you provided any support to Syrians in the past 1 year? (Multiple Responses)**

		2020		2021	
		#	%	#	%
1	I have preferred to provide support to our own citizens that are in need	332	23,5	428	28,9
2	I don’t have sufficient financial resources to give support	204	14,5	427	28,8
3	I didn’t want to give support	595	42,2	413	27,9
4	They are already receiving support from many institutions	217	15,4	393	26,5
5	I don’t believe that they need support	261	18,5	329	22,2
6	I couldn’t find a way/ an opportunity to help	172	12,2	109	7,4
7	Providing support to them would make them lazy, I wouldn’t want them to get used to it	43	3,0	52	3,5
8	Other	7	0,5	9	0,6
	No idea/ No response	33	2,3	11	0,7

**Not:** Results from the 1481 respondents who said “No” to the questions “Have you ever provided in cash or in-kind assistance to Syrians (except for giving money to beggars)?” and “Have you provided in cash or in-kind support to Syrians in the past 1 year?”

## 6. Interactions and Communication with Syrians

The number of Syrians under temporary protection has exceeded 4,38% of Turkish population as of December 2020, while only 1,36% of the Syrians live in camps. However, it is known that there are significant differences concerning the respective Syrian populations among regions, cities, districts, and even neighborhoods. This situation, which arose because a central placement planning was not carried out, is now being tackled by the Ministry of Interior through the "Plan to Combat Spatial Concentration".<sup>164</sup> This plan involves closing some provinces, districts, and neighborhoods for new registrations and even transferring of Syrians under temporary protection from areas where they are extremely concentrated to other places.

**SB-2021-TABLE 26: Please state whether or not you have ever established the following types of social relationship with Syrians. (%)**

		2017			2019			2020			2021		
		Yes	No	No idea/ No re- sponse	Yes	No	No idea/ No re- sponse	Yes	No	No idea/ No re- sponse	Yes	No	No idea/ No re- sponse
1	To have a conversation	46,1	53,0	0,9	38,0	61,5	0,5	48,4	50,6	1,0	47,7	52,2	0,1
2	Support/ Solidarity	-	-	-	-	-	-	30,5	67,9	1,6	26,5	73,0	0,5
3	To shop (from a Syrian)	26,5	72,7	0,8	19,6	79,9	0,5	27,4	71,3	1,3	23,8	75,7	0,5
5	To be friends	14,2	84,0	1,8	12,1	87,5	0,4	21,3	77,5	1,2	15,1	84,4	0,5
4	To establish a business relationship	15,6	82,8	1,6	12,2	87,3	0,5	19,6	79,0	1,4	14,8	84,9	0,3
6	To have a problem*	10,6	87,2	2,2	12,9	86,7	0,4	19,7	79,0	1,3	-	-	-
7	To fight*				7,7	91,9	0,4	13,2	85,7	1,1	11,2	88,5	0,3
8	To flirt	3,4	94,9	1,7	0,6	99,0	0,4	4,9	93,8	1,3	2,0	97,6	0,4
9	To get married	2,9	95,6	1,5	0,4	99,2	0,4	4,9	93,9	1,2	1,9	97,7	0,4

\* "To have a problem" and "to fight" were included within a single statement in SB-2017.

Spatial concentration is considered to be important in SB studies to analyze social cohesion processes and to develop more effective policies. As in previous studies, the findings obtained in the SB-2021 research reveal that the social relations of Turkish society with Syrians have increased in almost every field. However, the findings show that these relations are not in a serious increasing trend and that the intensity/quality of the relations is quite "distant". It is noteworthy that the rate of "to have a conversation", which is one of the simplest forms of social relations, which was 46.1% in SB-2017, rose only to 47.7% in SB-2021 after 5 years have passed, and that the change in almost all types of social relationship is low. The facts that Syrians are increasingly sharing common spaces in the daily life, that they can now speak -albeit limited- Turkish, and that they are involved in the economic life explain the existence of both the positive and the negative types of social relations. However, both the living practices brought by the spatial concentration of the Syrians and the social distance of the Turkish society towards the Syrians limit the quantitative and qualitative development of relations.

When the demographic profiles of the respondents are considered, no significant difference is observed in the tendencies or experiences of respondents from different sexes, age groups, educational attainments, occupations or regions. (Details can be seen in the Additional Tables.)

**FGD Findings (SB-2021-T)**

In response to the question **“What kind of a relationship/communication do you have with the Syrians? Can you share your experiences?”**, only some participants shared their own experiences. While not many negative experiences were encountered in the testimonies, it was observed that only a few participants emphasized that they carried “anxieties”. No major differences were found between border and metropolitan cities, in other words, all participants talked about their experiences with Syrians, albeit deriving from only one example, regardless of their regions.

- ▶▶ We helped them, but there were also arguments over time. They make a lot of noise, they fight among themselves. Then we would argue and the police would come. The police would take them into custody, and they were afraid of being deported. (Hatay-TR-Student)
- ▶▶ “I deal with Syrians every day, there are Syrians in my neighborhood. But I mostly communicate with children, I talk to them, I know their language, but I have no friends” (Istanbul-TR-Woman)
- ▶▶ “I shopped at their markets, there is not much communication due to language difference. No matter how good the education level of the incoming group is, their language skills are weak because they arrived recently.” (Istanbul-TR-Worker)
- ▶▶ “In the beginning, the Syrians were hesitant, but now they have their own order, their workplace, their neighborhood... They act in a nationalist way. There became Syrian neighborhoods. I am worried about this in terms of security...” (Hatay-TR-Student)

## 7. Social Distance

Measuring the “social distance” between the Turkish society and Syrians under temporary protection whose number has surpassed 3,7 million and more than 98% of whom live outside of camps was determined as one of the key objectives of Syrian Barometer research. The concept of “social distance”, developed by Emory S. Bogardus in 1925, provides a very useful tool for discussing the terms of social cohesion.<sup>165</sup> The scales applied regularly by the Syrian Barometer research to measure social distance are important to uncover dynamics of living together. In calculating a social distance measure with Syrians, Cluster and Discriminant analyses were used. In this framework, scoring was conducted by assigning “1” to those who said “I agree”, “0” to those who said “I partly agree”, and “-1” to those who said “I disagree”. Next, the average score for each question was calculated to reach the overall social distance score. In this calculation, considering the distribution of the data, the “Cluster analysis” was used to form 5 groups. The appropriateness of these groups was confirmed by the “Discriminant analysis”. A strong correlation of 98,5% was found between the scoring and these 5 groups.<sup>166</sup>

To measure social distance, the respondents were given 10 statements in this context and asked to state to what extent they agreed with each of these. The findings suggest that a significant social distance put forth by Turkish society towards Syrians continues to exist, even though there is a slight decrease in SB-2021. Even though the Turkish society has had the experience of living together with Syrians especially since 2013, the social distance score of -0.42, though it decreased from -0.51 in SB-2019, is still in the “distant” category. A remarkable change, however, is observed in the social distance of Syrians to Turks, the details of which will be presented later. Even though it is still in the “very close” category, the social distance score of Syrians towards the Turkish society has decreased from +0.71 to +0.55.

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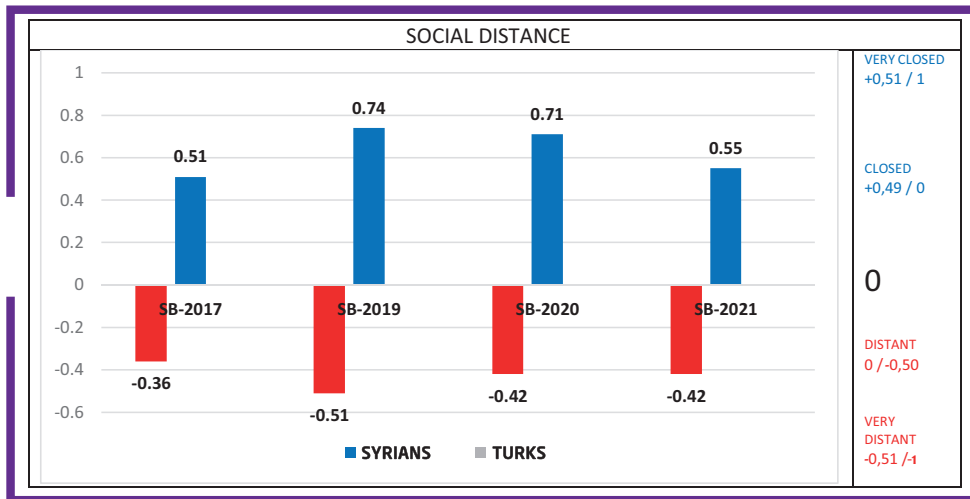
165 Emory S. Bogardus (1925) “Social Distance and Its Origins.” *Journal of Applied Sociology* 9 (1925): 216-226.

166 For more details on Cluster and Discriminant Analysis See: C. Fraley and A. E. Raftery (1999) *Software for Model-Based Cluster and Discriminant Analysis* ( <http://132.180.15.2/math/statlib/S/mclust/old/mclust.pdf>)

**SB-2021-TABLE 27 (+FIGURE): Social Distance Groups**

	2017			2019			2020			2021		
	#	%	Social Distance Score	#	%	Social Distance Score	#	%	Social Distance Score	#	%	Social Distance Score
Very distant	748	36,1	-0,95	1157	51,0	-0,97	792	35,2	-0,99	932	41,4	-0,95
Distant	555	26,8	-0,51	347	15,3	-0,55	589	26,2	-0,62	552	24,6	-0,52
Neither distant, nor close	363	17,5	-0,02	383	16,9	-0,10	428	19,1	-0,11	396	17,6	-0,01
Close	220	10,6	0,44	244	10,8	0,36	282	12,6	0,38	192	8,5	0,45
Very close	186	9,0	0,88	135	6,0	0,87	156	6,9	0,86	178	7,9	0,90
<b>General</b>	<b>2072</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>-0,36</b>	<b>2266</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>-0,51</b>	<b>2247</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>-0,42</b>	<b>2250</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>-0,42</b>

Scores bt -1,00; -0,80 Very Distant      Scores bt -0,79; -0,40 Distant      Scores bt -0,39; -0,19 Neither Distant, Nor Close      Scores bt -0,20; -0,69 Close      Scores bt -0,70; -1,00 Very Close



**Note:** 17 persons in SB-2017, 5 in SB-2019, 12 in SB-2020, and 3 in SB-2021 were not included in the social distance groupings since they did not respond to social distance statements (10 items).

When the details of social distance findings are considered, the highest degree of acceptance appears to concern education. Here, the statement “It wouldn’t disturb me if Syrian children would enroll to the same school as my children” returned the highest percentage of agreement with 41,3%. This was followed, with decreasing support, by “working in the same work place”, “living in the same building”, and “living in the same neighborhood”, respectively. The social distance is the biggest, in turn, regarding “getting married” (for self, children, and/or siblings of the respondents) and “forming a business partnership” with Syrians. When the SB-2020 and SB-2021 data are compared, it is observed that social distance was reduced -albeit slightly- on all statements.

**SB-2021-TABLE 28: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (%)**

			I disagree	I partially agree	I agree	No idea/ No response
	It wouldn't disturb me if Syrian children would enroll to the same school as my children	2021	<b>41,9</b>	<b>13,6</b>	<b>41,3</b>	<b>3,2</b>
		2020	43,7	16,3	37,0	3,0
		2019	52,0	13,2	32,3	2,5
	It wouldn't disturb me to work with a Syrian in the same work place	<b>2021</b>	<b>48,2</b>	<b>15,7</b>	<b>32,5</b>	<b>3,6</b>
		2020	48,1	17,1	32,4	2,4
		2019	56,3	12,6	28,2	2,9
	It wouldn't disturb me to live with a Syrian in the same building	<b>2021</b>	<b>55,9</b>	<b>14,6</b>	<b>27,4</b>	<b>2,1</b>
		2020	53,4	17,9	26,5	2,2
		2019	60,4	14,8	23,3	1,5
	It wouldn't disturb me if some Syrian families settled down in the neighborhood that I live	<b>2021</b>	<b>51,1</b>	<b>16,4</b>	<b>30,7</b>	<b>1,8</b>
		2020	53,0	18,2	26,3	2,5
		2019	59,4	14,2	24,7	1,7
	I can be friends with a Syrian	<b>2021</b>	<b>55,7</b>	<b>15,9</b>	<b>26,8</b>	<b>1,6</b>
		2020	54,7	17,8	25,6	1,9
		2019	61,1	15,4	21,8	1,7
	It wouldn't disturb me to settle down in a neighborhood where the majority of residents are Syrian	<b>2021</b>	<b>64,8</b>	<b>12,3</b>	<b>21,1</b>	<b>1,8</b>
		2020	62,3	14,5	20,9	2,3
		2019	70,5	11,3	16,7	1,5
	I can form a business partnership with a Syrian	<b>2021</b>	<b>76,8</b>	<b>7,9</b>	<b>11,9</b>	<b>3,4</b>
		2020	72,7	12,1	11,9	3,3
		2019	75,3	10,2	12,1	2,4
	It wouldn't disturb me if my brother/sister married a Syrian	<b>2021</b>	<b>78,3</b>	<b>7,2</b>	<b>11,3</b>	<b>3,2</b>
		2020	77,4	9,5	10,4	2,7
		2019	81,3	8,5	8,2	2,0
	I would allow my child to get married with a Syrian	<b>2021</b>	<b>79,0</b>	<b>7,0</b>	<b>11,1</b>	<b>2,9</b>
		2020	78,7	9,4	9,3	2,6
		2019	81,5	8,5	7,6	2,4
	I can get married to a Syrian	<b>2021</b>	<b>85,0</b>	<b>4,8</b>	<b>7,9</b>	<b>2,3</b>
		2020	84,7	6,1	6,6	2,6
		2019	86,9	6,6	5,0	1,5



When SB-2017, SB-2019, SB-2020, and SB-2021 findings are considered together, the social distance towards Syrians displayed by the Turkish society falls in the category of “distant” in all four studies. However, it is noteworthy that while the respondents in the “very distant” group constituted 36,1% of all respondents in SB-2017, it increased to 51% in SB-2019, decreased again to 35,2% in SB-2020, and increased again to 41,4%. The combined share of the “very close” and “close” groups was 19,6% in SB-2017, 16,8% in SB-2019, 16,8% in SB-2020, and 16,4% in SB-2021. In other words, the lowest level of all four SB studies was observed in SB-2021. In this context, it can be suggested that while the Turkish society does not tend to get closer with Syrians, there is a decrease in its efforts to put distance between them. Instead, it could be argued, Syrians appear to have been taken for granted.

The social distance scale applied here shows that there is a considerable social distance put forth by Turkish society towards Syrians. In terms of different demographic groups; women, those with medium-level of educational attainment, those who live in the border cities with a higher concentration of Syrians, retired and unemployed respondents displayed a higher level of “very distant” positioning. It is noteworthy that the relative cultural closeness with Syrians in the region does not reduce social distance. In fact, to the contrary, a significantly larger social distance is measured in these cities.

**SB-2021-TABLE 29: Social Distance Groups (%)**

	Very distant	Distant	Neither distant, nor close	Close	Very close
<b>Sex</b>					
Female	43,6	24,3	18,2	8,1	5,8
Male	39,3	24,8	17,0	9,0	9,9
<b>Age Groups</b>					
18-24	38,5	24,9	20,5	10,4	5,7
25-34	44,4	24,2	17,1	7,7	6,6
35-44	40,6	26,7	17,2	8,5	7,0
45-54	38,3	24,9	19,4	8,5	8,9
55-64	44,5	24,5	15,5	4,9	10,6
65 +	44,6	17,1	13,1	12,6	12,6
<b>Educational Attainment</b>					
Illiterate/ Literate	39,5	19,7	17,1	13,2	10,5
Primary school	40,2	24,7	19,4	7,0	8,7
Middle-school	49,3	24,5	13,5	7,2	5,5
High-school or equivalent	41,5	24,0	18,1	9,1	7,3
University/ Graduate degree	35,8	26,1	18,6	9,7	9,8
<b>Region</b>					
Border cities	45,4	17,6	20,7	9,4	6,9
Other cities	40,6	26,0	17,0	8,3	8,1
Metropolitan cities	39,1	24,1	18,1	8,9	9,8
Non-metropolitan cities	41,5	27,2	16,3	8,0	7,0
<b>Occupation</b>					
Private sector employee	42,6	28,2	15,8	8,1	5,3
Housewife/ girl	42,2	24,4	19,5	8,6	5,3
Artisan/Tradesman	40,3	22,6	17,0	8,5	11,6
Retired	45,3	20,2	13,5	9,4	11,6
Student	32,2	31,5	19,9	9,6	6,8
Unemployed	44,9	20,6	18,4	9,6	6,5
Public sector employee	37,5	21,4	25,0	8,0	8,1
Self-employed	38,9	25,9	22,2	1,9	11,1
Businessperson	37,0	7,4	22,2	14,8	18,6
General	41,4	24,6	17,6	8,5	7,9
<p><b>Note:</b> 3 persons were not included in the social distance groupings since they did not respond to social distance statements (10 items).</p>					

**FGD Findings (SB-2021-T)**

The social distance scale was also evaluated in FGDs and when asked the hypothetical questions on social relations like “doing business”, “being friends”, “being neighbors”, and “getting married” with a Syrian, FGD participants generally responded by saying that “it wouldn’t disturb them” to establish these relations with a Syrian. These responses are completely in line with the survey findings. It needs to be underlined, however, that a majority of the participants mentioned that “their family wouldn’t want them to” when asked about the intimate relationship of getting married. In other words, although the participants did not see this as a problem for themselves, they stated that their views might differ due to the influence of the family and the environment. Therefore, while the fact that young participants would raise any objections to getting married to a Syrian shows the existence of positive perceptions, when the possible social and familial reactions are taken into account, the decision tends to be changed. In this context, it is possible to see that the distance to “marriage”, which appears in the surveys, is partially similar in FGDs.

The participants were also asked why their families would not want them to marry a Syrian to better understand various perceptions towards Syrians. When the answers are considered, it is noteworthy that participants suggested that their families consider Syrians to be more conservative and nationalistic and therefore they would not give consent. These answers are also noteworthy in terms of showing some existing stereotypes regarding Syrians (e.g., being conservative and nationalistic). On the other hand, while some of the families were warmly supportive of their children marrying a “European/Western” person, they stated that they would object if they were not. In this context, it is seen that there is a difference in the approach that is understood to originate from a distinction of “Western” vs. “Oriental” towards different nations. While none of the participants stated that their family would be willing for them to marry a Syrian person, it is noteworthy that only one participant stated that neither she nor her family would want such a marriage, saying that Syrians are conservative. It is also worth noting that there are similar views between border and metropolitan cities on this issue.

- ▶ “Love is universal... It wouldn’t be a problem... Issue of conservativeness would be a problem for my family, though.” (Ankara-TR-Student)
- ▶ “I would only be interested if he is a good person. My family would make trouble, though. They would be OK with a European but not with a Syrian.” (Ankara-TR-Student)

## 8. Livelihood Sources: How Syrians in Türkiye earn their living

It is observed in many studies on social cohesion that a significant part of the complaints by the host societies against newcomers stems from the actual or perceived “financial burdens” created by them. In SB studies, it is seen that one of the most important concerns of the Turkish society regarding Syrians is that they harm the country’s economy (See Table 31). Support to refugees or immigrants by public institutions financed by the taxes of citizens could invite criticisms as well as leading to negative perceptions. This issue is accentuated in Türkiye where there is a significant lack of reliable information regarding Syrians. In fact, SB studies have uncovered that despite years of living together with Syrians, Turkish society has insufficient information regarding the livelihoods of Syrians, which is mostly based on prejudices and misinformation. When the Turkish respondents were asked the question “How are the Syrians in Türkiye making their living?” with the chance of producing multiple responses, more than 80% of the respondents included “through assistance of the Turkish state” in their responses in all three SB surveys (SB-2017: 86,2%; SB-2019: 84,5%; SB-2020: 80,6%; SB-2021: 82,5%). In other words, more than 80% of the Turkish society reveals that there is an opinion that the Syrians live with the in kind or in cash support of the Turkish state.

**SB-2021-TABLE 30: How are the Syrians in Türkiye making their living? (Multiple Responses)**

		2017		2019		2020		2021	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1	Through assistance from the Turkish state	1801	86,2	1918	84,5	1820	80,6	1858	82,5
2	By working	1040	49,8	1155	50,9	1123	49,7	1447	64,2
3	By begging	1359	65,1	1231	54,2	1199	53,1	1113	49,4
4	Through support from charitable people	666	31,9	478	21,0	478	21,2	623	27,7
5	Through support from international organizations/ foreign states	101	4,8	181	8,0	152	6,7	384	17,0
6	Through NGO (associations/ foundations) support	170	8,1	218	9,6	201	8,9	339	15,0
7	Other	-	-	22	1,0	41	1,8	163	7,2
	No idea/ No response	19	0,9	31	1,4	41	1,8	20	0,9

As it can be seen in relevant sections below, the number of Syrians who receive support from various public institutions, including the SUY support, accounts for around 40% of all Syrians. Even though SB research as well as other studies, particularly those conducted by IOM, show that Syrians predominantly work for their livelihood, it appears that the widespread perception among Turkish society has it differently.

SB studies have found that according to Turkish society Syrians are mostly living with the

support of Turkish state. It is followed by the options “by begging” and “by working”. The facts that Syrians settled in urban centers and that some Syrian children or adults are seen begging have led to the perception among Turkish society that Syrians are widely begging. In SB-2021 this option is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> and received support from 49,9% of the respondents. However, the option “by working” has climbed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> rank in SB-2021 for the first time. Turkish society is more and more aware of the fact that Syrians are working. The statement that Syrians make a living by working was supported by 49,8% in SB-2017, 50,9% in SB-2019, 49,7% in SB-2020, and 64,2% in SB-2021. This situation can be seen as balancing the perception that Syrians are a burden to society/state. This reflects positively on the level of acceptance in the society. The two effects of the fact that Syrians are working, one positive and the other negative, are frequently discussed regarding social cohesion. On the one hand, the subject is discussed in the context of being a burden to the society/state, and those who do not work and live with the help of the state are described as a “burden”. However, if Syrians work, there is a risk of job losses in Turkish society.

**SB-2021-TABLE 31: How are the Syrians in Türkiye making their living? (Multiple Responses %)**

	Through assistance from the Turkish state	By working	By begging	Through support from charitable people	Through support from international organizations/ foreign states	Through NGO (associations/ foundations) support	Through the support of Syrians in Türkiye	Through the support that come from relatives/ acquaintances living abroad	Other	No idea/ No response
<b>Sex</b>										
Female	87,2	62,3	50,5	27,3	16,4	14,4	3,6	1,7	1,0	0,9
Male	77,9	66,1	48,3	28,0	17,7	15,6	4,5	2,2	1,5	0,9
<b>Age Groups</b>										
18-24	80,9	58,2	55,5	26,5	12,8	17,2	6,3	3,3	1,1	0,8
25-34	81,5	64,4	48,9	27,3	16,1	14,5	4,3	2,6	1,4	1,0
35-44	83,4	62,1	47,3	25,3	14,4	16,1	4,3	1,3	1,3	0,9
45-54	82,8	69,2	47,9	30,0	22,3	13,3	2,9	1,5	1,5	-
55-64	83,8	68,3	46,8	27,5	15,1	14,0	2,6	1,5	0,8	0,4
65 +	83,1	65,0	52,0	32,8	27,1	14,7	2,8	1,1	1,1	3,4
<b>Educational Attainment</b>										
Illiterate/ Literate	81,8	75,3	32,5	35,1	9,1	6,5	3,9	1,3	1,3	3,9
Primary school	86,1	65,4	54,3	26,0	14,7	13,0	3,8	2,4	1,0	0,5
Middle-school	80,2	62,6	53,1	27,3	18,4	16,2	4,6	1,9	1,9	0,6
High-school or equivalent	79,9	60,3	50,6	30,0	20,8	20,5	4,9	2,2	1,3	0,9
University/ Graduate degree	85,8	65,9	27,2	21,1	12,2	8,4	1,0	0,8	0,5	0,8
<b>Region</b>										
Border cities	85,8	65,9	27,2	21,1	12,2	8,4	1,0	0,8	0,5	0,8
Other cities	81,8	63,9	54,1	29,0	18,1	16,5	4,7	2,2	1,4	0,9
Metropolitan cities	85,5	76,1	55,9	37,7	27,4	22,6	6,0	3,3	0,9	0,3
Non-metropolitan cities	79,5	56,5	53,0	23,8	12,5	12,7	3,9	1,5	1,7	1,3
<b>Occupation</b>										
Private sector employee	82,9	63,2	55,9	29,3	18,8	18,5	5,6	2,0	1,2	0,8
Housewife/ girl	88,5	67,0	42,6	24,6	12,1	10,5	1,8	1,2	0,8	1,4
Artisan/ Tradesman	76,7	70,5	47,2	28,8	13,4	15,8	5,0	2,8	1,4	0,2
Retired	84,0	65,8	52,0	30,5	24,9	16,0	2,2	1,5	0,4	1,9
Student	80,1	53,4	56,8	21,9	14,4	18,5	6,2	2,1	1,4	1,4
Unemployed	87,5	55,9	36,0	30,1	20,6	9,6	3,7	1,5	1,5	-
Public sector employee	78,6	58,9	52,7	26,8	21,4	11,6	1,8	3,6	2,7	-
Self-employed	74,1	55,6	51,9	29,6	18,5	18,5	11,1	1,9	5,6	-
Businessperson	70,4	66,7	44,4	22,2	18,5	22,2	-	-	-	-
Generall	82,5	64,2	49,4	27,7	17,0	15,0	4,0	2,0	1,2	0,9

Ten years of experience regarding this issue has shown that the concerns have not materialized to a large extent, that is, there have been no job losses at a significant level, with the exception of some border cities where Syrians live in quite large numbers. The most noteworthy point in the analysis made according to demographic and regional characteristics of the respondents is that although the perception that Syrians make a living by working in the SB-2017, 2019, and 2020 was stronger in the border cities, it found a stronger support in the metropolitan cities in SB-2021. In fact, while the overall share of this answer was 64,2% across Türkiye, it was 76.1% in the metropolitan cities. The belief that Syrians make a living out of the support provided by foreign institutions/states was also significantly above average in these cities.



## 9. Looking at the Society from Outside

SB studies wanted to understand the attitude of Turkish society regarding Syrians, so surveys include some statements evaluating the society. The most frequently given response in all three previous SB studies to the question “How is our society treating Syrians in Türkiye?” was “Turkish society has embraced Syrians” (SB-2017: 32,9%, SB-2019: 29,1%, SB-2020: 35,8%).<sup>167</sup> In SB-2021, “Our society are very tolerant towards Syrians” was added as an option that was mentioned in previous studies and especially in FGDs. This option makes it difficult to compare with data from three previous studies. Interestingly, in the SB-2021, the option “Our society have embraced the Syrians” dropped to the fourth place with 10.2% support, while the option “Our society is very tolerant towards Syrians” took the first place with 28.5% support. In the second place comes the option “Our society is doing everything it can for Syrians”. The statement “Our society is exploiting Syrians as cheap labor / Syrians are being used as cheap labor” received around 18% support in SB-2017 and SB-2019 and then rose to second rank in SB-2020 with 25,1% support. It retreated to third rank in SB-2021 with 16,5%. The support for the statements “Our society looks down on Syrians” and “Our society treats Syrians badly” was below 9% in all studies.

### SB-2021-TABLE 32: Which one of the following statements best reflects how our society treats Syrians?

(For other versions of cross-tabulations with this question, see Additional Tables)

		2017		2019		2020		2021	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1	Our society is very tolerant towards Syrians	-	-	-	-	-	-	641	28,5
2	Our society is doing everything it can for Syrians	681	32,6	699	30,8	428	18,9	635	28,2
3	Our society is exploiting Syrians as cheap labor / Syrians are being used as cheap labor	391	18,7	410	18,0	568	25,1	372	16,5
4	Our society has embraced Syrians	687	32,9	660	29,1	809	35,8	229	10,2
5	Our society treats Syrians badly	121	5,8	131	5,8	167	7,4	154	6,8
6	Our society looks down on Syrians	144	6,9	137	6,0	200	8,9	104	4,6
7	Other	-	-	-	-	23	1,1	37	1,6
	No idea/ No response	65	3,1	234	10,3	64	2,8	81	3,6
<b>Total</b>		<b>2089</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2271</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2259</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2253</b>	<b>100,0</b>

<sup>167</sup> Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration-2014: “Turkish society has embraced Syrians”: Agree: 78%, Disagree: 9,8%

## 10. Anxieties: Security, Serenity, and Social Acceptance

It is clear that Turkish society has displayed an exceptionally high degree of “acceptance” and “solidarity” towards Syrians. It is becoming equally clear that it simultaneously has serious anxieties regarding them. As underlined and substantiated by SB-2017 and SB-2019, the “high level yet fragile support” appears to be turning into “toleration” due to these concerns and anxieties. As the crisis, which was expected to be quickly resolved in 2011, got prolonged and the numbers reached beyond millions in a short while, it can be observed that feelings of solidarity are getting weaker while anxieties are mounting. SB research attempted to uncover the reasons, types, and scope of the anxieties that Turkish society has regarding Syrians. In the anxiety/concern questions, the four main concerns that arise in mass humanitarian mobilizations, i.e. “losing their jobs”, “increase in crime rates”, “deterioration of public services” and “corruption of identities”, were specifically addressed to the Turkish society.

**SB-2021-TABLE 33: To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding Syrians? (Scored)**

		2017	2019	2020	2021
1	I think that Syrians will harm our country's economy	3,4	3,8	3,7	3,7
2	I think that Syrians will harm Türkiye's socio-cultural structure	3,3	3,6	3,6	3,6
3	I think that there will be reduction or deterioration in the public services provided by the state because of Syrians	-	3,7	3,6	3,6
4	I think that Syrians will disturb social peace and morality by engaging in violence, theft, smuggling, and prostitution*	3,4	3,7	3,5	3,5
5	I think that Syrians will corrupt Turkish society's identity	-	3,5	3,5	3,5
<b>Average Score</b>		<b>3,2</b>	<b>3,6</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>3,5</b>
6	I think that Syrians will strip us of our jobs	3,1	3,5	3,4	3,4
7	I think that Syrians will harm me, my family, my children	2,9	3,4	3,0	3,2
8	In SB-2019, this statement was “I think that they will become citizens and play a role on deciding Türkiye's destiny and future”/ ** I am worried that Syrians will become citizens	-	3,5	3,8	-168
9	I think that Syrians will harm our society	3,3	3,6	3,5	-
<p>* The statement “I think that Syrians will disturb social peace and morality by engaging in violence, theft, smuggling, and prostitution” used in SB-2017, Sb-2019, and SB-2020 was replaced by “I think that Syrians disturb social peace and morality by engaging in violence, theft, smuggling, and prostitution” in SB-2021</p> <p>** In SB-2019, this statement was “I think that they will become citizens and play a role on deciding Türkiye's destiny and future”. It was replaced with “I think that Syrians will harm our society” in SB-2021.</p>					

In the SB-2017 and SB-2019 studies, it was observed that the anxieties in all areas were in an increasing trend. However, in SB-2020, a decrease in these concerns has been detected, albeit at a very micro level. While the overall level of anxiety was calculated to be 3.2 (out of 5) in SB-2017, it increased to 3.6 in SB-2019 and declined to 3.5 in SB-2020, which was repeated in SB-2021.<sup>169</sup> These figures point at a quite high level of anxiety, which should not be ignored. All data also reveal that a necessary and sufficient response to the concerns in Turkish society has not been given. This, in turn, has been effective in the politicization of the process. The anxieties and reactions of the society, which have not been taken seriously enough, seem to have opened up a very useful area politically.

It appears that the strongest concern/anxiety within Turkish society regarding Syrians in SB-2021 is that “they will harm Türkiye’s economy” with 70,3% (a score of 3.7). This concern is in the first place in the last three SB studies. In the second rank is the statement “I think that there will be reduction or deterioration in the public services provided by the state because of Syrians” (%67,4), followed by “I think that Syrians will harm Türkiye’s socio-cultural structure” (67,1%) and “I think that Syrians disturb social peace and morality by engaging in violence, theft, smuggling, and prostitution” (65,9%). The concern of “demographic change and corruption of identities”, which has been on the agenda frequently in the last two years in Türkiye, is also represented at a high rate of 64,2%. The interesting finding is that the two statements “I think that Syrians will strip us of our jobs” and “I think that Syrians will harm me, my family, my children” received the least support out of the 7 statements. This seems to show that Turkish society holds Syrians relatively less responsible for job losses or criminality.

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169 SB-2017 included 6 statements on anxieties over Syrians in different areas, while SB-2019 and SB-2020 included 9.

**SB-2021-TABLE 34: To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding Syrians? (%)**

		Com- pletely dis- agree	Dis- agree	Com- bined Disa- gree	Nei- ther agree, nor disa- gree	Agree	Com- pletely agree	Com- bined Agree	No idea/ No re- sponse
1	I think that Syrians will harm our country's economy	6,9	12,2	<b>19,1</b>	8,9	42,8	27,5	<b>70,3</b>	1,7
2	I think that there will be reduction or deterioration in the public services provided by the state because of Syrians	5,7	12,1	<b>17,8</b>	10,3	41,1	26,3	<b>67,4</b>	4,5
3	I think that Syrians will harm Türkiye's socio-cultural structure	6,5	12,1	<b>18,6</b>	11,5	43,4	23,7	<b>67,1</b>	2,8
4	I think that Syrians disturb social peace and morality by engaging in violence, theft, smuggling, and prostitution	5,8	11,2	<b>17,0</b>	12,4	40,1	25,8	<b>65,9</b>	4,7
5	I think that Syrians will corrupt Turkish society's identity	7,0	15,1	<b>22,1</b>	10,5	39,4	24,8	<b>64,2</b>	3,2
6	I think that Syrians will strip us of our jobs	9,5	17,9	<b>27,4</b>	10,8	39,8	20,4	<b>60,2</b>	1,6
7	I think that Syrians will harm me, my family, my children	13,7	19,8	<b>33,5</b>	11,5	38,1	15,3	<b>53,4</b>	1,6

It has been found that individuals in the border cities are significantly more worried than other respondents. This holds true for all 9 statements attempting to measure anxiety and all SB studies to date. In SB-2021, the average anxiety score for border cities is 3.7, while the Türkiye average is 3.5. This situation shows that the anxieties and the related tension are higher in the border cities, where Syrians' both number and share in population are higher. Respondents in the border cities agreed with the statements "I think that Syrians will harm Türkiye's socio-cultural structure" and "I think that Syrians will corrupt Turkish society's identity" on a significantly higher level than the Turkish national average. So much

so that, for them, even the concern to “lose jobs over Syrians” appears to come after these two concerns. This reveals that the relationship between assumed cultural similarity and social cohesion processes is not a very linear one, as has been stated on different occasions before. Another noteworthy finding of SB-2021 concerns the attitudes of unemployed respondents. These individuals displayed a higher-than-average level of anxiety on every statement, particularly including the one concerning harm to national economy. The anxiety score of this group is 3.7. Similarly, the anxieties of “private sector employees” appear to be relatively higher, having a score of 3.6.

**SB-2021-TABLE 35: To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding Syrians? (Scored)**

	I think that Syrians will harm our country's economy	I think that Syrians will harm Türkiye's socio-cultural structure	I think that there will be reduction or deterioration in the public services provided by the state because of Syrians	I think that Syrians disturb social peace and morality by engaging in violence, theft, smuggling, and prostitution	I think that Syrians will corrupt Turkish society's identity	I think that Syrians will strip us of our jobs	I think that Syrians will harm me, my family, my children	Average Score
<b>Sex</b>								
Female	3,7	3,6	3,6	3,6	3,5	3,4	3,2	<b>3,5</b>
Male	3,6	3,6	3,5	3,5	3,5	3,3	3,1	<b>3,5</b>
<b>Age Groups</b>								
18-24	3,7	3,6	3,5	3,7	3,6	3,4	3,2	<b>3,5</b>
25-34	3,7	3,6	3,7	3,6	3,6	3,4	3,3	<b>3,6</b>
35-44	3,6	3,7	3,7	3,6	3,6	3,4	3,2	<b>3,5</b>
45-54	3,7	3,6	3,6	3,5	3,6	3,4	3,2	<b>3,5</b>
55-64	3,6	3,4	3,4	3,3	3,3	3,3	3,0	<b>3,3</b>
65 +	3,5	3,3	3,3	3,3	3,2	3,2	2,9	<b>3,3</b>
<b>Educational Attainment</b>								
Illiterate/ Literate	3,3	3,1	3,2	3,2	3,0	3,1	2,7	<b>3,1</b>
Primary school	3,6	3,4	3,5	3,5	3,4	3,4	3,1	<b>3,4</b>
Middle-school	3,8	3,7	3,7	3,7	3,6	3,5	3,3	<b>3,6</b>
High-school or equivalent	3,6	3,6	3,6	3,6	3,6	3,4	3,2	<b>3,5</b>
University/ Graduate degree	3,7	3,7	3,5	3,6	3,5	3,3	3,1	<b>3,5</b>
<b>Region</b>								
Border cities	3,8	3,7	3,9	3,8	3,6	3,7	3,3	<b>3,7</b>
Other cities	3,6	3,5	3,5	3,5	3,5	3,3	3,1	<b>3,4</b>
Metropolitan cities	3,6	3,5	3,4	3,5	3,6	3,3	3,1	<b>3,4</b>
Non-metropolitan cities	3,6	3,6	3,5	3,5	3,4	3,3	3,2	<b>3,5</b>
<b>Occupation</b>								
Private sector employee	3,8	3,8	3,7	3,7	3,7	3,5	3,3	<b>3,6</b>
Housewife/ girl	3,6	3,3	3,5	3,4	3,4	3,4	3,1	<b>3,4</b>
Artisan/Tradesman	3,6	3,6	3,5	3,5	3,5	3,3	3,1	<b>3,4</b>
Retired	3,7	3,6	3,6	3,4	3,4	3,4	3,0	<b>3,4</b>
Student	3,6	3,7	3,4	3,6	3,5	3,3	3,3	<b>3,5</b>
Unemployed	3,8	3,8	3,9	3,8	3,8	3,7	3,3	<b>3,7</b>
Public sector employee	3,7	3,5	3,4	3,6	3,5	3,4	3,2	<b>3,5</b>
Self-employed	3,7	3,5	3,4	3,5	3,4	3,3	3,1	<b>3,4</b>
Businessperson	3,3	3,3	3,0	3,2	2,9	3,0	2,8	<b>3,1</b>
General	3,7	3,6	3,6	3,5	3,5	3,4	3,2	<b>3,5</b>

### **FGD Findings (SB-2021-T)**

In order to evaluate the effects of Syrians on social life in Türkiye, FGD participants were also asked about the effects of Syrians on the socio-cultural structure, economy and politics of the country, and they were asked to evaluate these effects as “positive” and “negative”.

In the FGDs held in all cities, there were very few participants who talked about the issues that could have a positive impact on the economy. The mentioned positive effects include the arguments that Syrians filled the labor shortage in agriculture, that they worked in heavy jobs that no one else could do, they kept many sectors afloat because they worked unregistered and cheap, and thus they had a positive effect by keeping the economy alive.

In almost all of the FGDs, the participants stated - similar to the survey results - that the Syrians had a negative impact on the country’s economy. Following this, the participants were asked “In what sense was the economy negatively affected?”, they cited - unlike the surveys - the decrease in job opportunities for Turks, the increase in unemployment, and the increase in informality in the country as reasons. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that some participants suggested that the unemployment problem also exist among Syrian youth. It is also noteworthy that most of the participants think that Syrians are exempt from taxation and that this creates unfair competition.

- ▶ *“It has a completely negative effect. We buy half a kilo, they buy a lot, they raise prices, they are exempt from taxes and they seize the business of Turks.” (Hatay-TR-Student)*
- ▶ *“With the services provided by the state, when the Syrians came, more problems began to be experienced. There are disruptions in public services in some areas.” (Ankara-TR-Student)*

It was observed that some of the participants stated that the Syrians were more advantageous in many respects, that they received a lot of support from the state, and therefore the local people were victims.

- ▶ *“There may be hostility when newcomers take over the jobs of old ones by working for cheaper. If we make an assessment based on the results, the view towards Syrians will be negative. Rents have gone up, our salaries have gone down. If you look from the perspective of landlords, it looks positive, if you look from the perspective of workers and their rights, it can be seen as negative” (Gaziantep-TR-Employee)*

In addition, it is noteworthy that there were participants who stated that Syrians were also victimized, deprived of their workers' rights, and that some employers abused this situation, especially in the FGDs held in Ankara and Istanbul, which had negative effects on the economy.

- ▶ *"If there is a negative economic situation, the people to blame here are employers, not the refugees who work very cheaply. The reason why it negatively affects the economy is the employers who have them work cheaply or the civil servants who do not do what needs to be done if in the face of unlicensed workplaces and do not carry out inspections as necessary" (Istanbul-TR-Woman)*
- ▶ *"The effects are negative. This is a situation that is in favor of the employer who can fire refugee workers whenever they want or have them work without insurance and without security at low wages. He can even usurp rights as he pleases." (Istanbul-TR-Worker)*
- ▶ *"It is negative in terms of workers' rights and standards. The informal economy is on the rise." (Ankara-TR-Student)*

Regarding the effects on the socio-cultural structure, only a few participants in FGDs, both in border cities and in metropolitan ones, mentioned the limited positive impact of Syrians on the socio-cultural structure. Considering the border cities in particular, while most of the participants in Gaziantep did not mention any positive effects, it is remarkable that the participants in Hatay, which is widely known as a gastronomy city, made positive evaluations on the culinary culture and suggested that Syrians enriched the city in this area.

In the FGDs held in metropolitan cities, the only positive evaluation was received from the "Women's FGD" in Istanbul. Most of the women who participated in the FGD stated that the Syrians are not homogeneous, they have different cultural dynamics within themselves, and when they are considered together with the local people, they diversify the socio-cultural structure in many ways and have a positive effect.

- ▶ *"It is culturally and socially positive because it makes society more diverse. Syrians also came with their differences; I find it positive... They added diversity" (Istanbul-TR-Woman)*
- ▶ *"I think it's culturally positive. We organize social cohesion programs, and I see that cultural diversity creates positive results here as well" (Istanbul-TR-Woman)*

In most of the FGDs, the participants stated that the Syrians negatively affect the socio-cultural structure. The opinions of the participants on the negative side of the effects of Syrians on the socio-cultural structure generally focus on three issues. The first of these is the argument that Syrians are culturally very different from the Turks, which causes conflict between the two communities. Secondly, it was argued that Syrians are different in terms of moral values and family structure. Lastly, the FGD participants mentioned the tendency of Syrians to concentrate in ghettos and the perception of segregation created by it.



Those who think that Syrians are culturally different and that this negatively affects the social structure, did not specify what they mean by “cultural difference”. However, it can be deduced from their statements that this perceived cultural difference refers to things like adaptation to urban life, living in a civilized society, and incompatibilities due to language differences. It is noteworthy that these issues came to the fore especially in the Istanbul and Ankara FGDs.

- ▶▶ *“We are having problems with integration because of things like they are having many children and language differences. As a result, cohesion cannot be achieved” (Istanbul-TR-Newly graduated)*
- ▶▶ *“They are experiencing the psychological problems of being displaced from their home and living here. Culturally, they have difficulties in adapting here. The culture they left behind is a feudal culture, compared to the one in Türkiye, it reflects 50 years ago.(Ankara-TR-Kadın)*

Another issue that came to the fore in the discussion of Syrians’ effects on the socio-cultural structure in Türkiye was the perceived **tendency of Syrians to form ghettos** and especially their concentration in some neighborhoods/regions, reportedly making the local people felt like tourists/foreigners. The tendency of ghettoization and the anxiety caused by it emerged in the FGDs conducted both in the border cities and in the metropolitan ones.

- ▶▶ *“We feel like we are in Syria because there are so many Syrians in some places. Tourists also find it strange.” (Hatay-TR-Student)*
- ▶▶ *“I think there is ghettoization in Ankara, there is no cohesion. Even though I live in Keçiören, we are separated.” (Ankara-TR-Student)*
- ▶▶ *“There is a lot of density in some neighborhoods, labels become attached to those neighborhoods. It becomes no longer an attractive neighborhood for the local people” (Istanbul-TR-Newly graduated)*

In response to the question of the effects of Syrians in Türkiye on politics, negative effects were mostly mentioned in all the FGDs. Among the negative effects, most of the participants said that the refugee issue was instrumentalized, in other words, it became a “political material”, and stated that this triggered both segregation in the society and racist attitudes and behaviors towards Syrians.

- ▶▶ *“They are used as pawns and trump cards in the interests of politicians. The negative effect is that they see people as pawns and use humanitarian ties” (Istanbul-TR-Worker)*
- ▶▶ *“Especially in the language of politicians, there is a discourse based on whether Syrians stay or leave... ‘Sending them back’ is used as a campaign to collect votes over Syrians, it is presented as an election promise. I think this is also divisive” (Istanbul-TR-Woman)*

- ▶▶ *"Syrians are an election card. They are not really on the agenda of the government or the opposition." (Ankara-TR-Student)*
- ▶▶ *"Political language has been poisoned. The polarization has grown." (Ankara-TR-Student)*
- ▶▶ *"I think that political parties create hostility with populist shallow rhetoric for politics" (Istanbul-TR-Worker)*
- ▶▶ *"I am worried that they will decide our future by voting" (Hatay-TR-Worker)*
- ▶▶ *"If there is an election right now, they are in a position to win the election. This disturbs the people of Hatay" (Hatay-TR-Worker)*

In addition, there were participants who emphasized that the discourse and policies towards Syrians were criticized in the international arena, especially by European countries, and that this damaged Türkiye's image.

- ▶▶ *"A negative image on Türkiye has been formed from the European perspective" (Istanbul-TR-Worker)*

Very few comments were made about the perceived positive impact of Syrians on politics in Türkiye in the FGDs. The most striking one among these was the argument that, in contrast to those who believed that Türkiye's policies on Syrians have damaged Türkiye's image in Europe, Türkiye was seen in a positive light in and even receiving much praise from Europe.

- ▶▶ *"This issue has revived relations in EU-Türkiye relations for a while, but not now." (Ankara-TR-Student)*
- ▶▶ *"Türkiye gets more praise from the EU." (Ankara-TR-Student)*
- ▶▶ *"It had a positive impact on the opposition party. Anti-refugee hostility is increasing and the opposition is using it... The government is negatively affected... They are limited to saying that they are your brothers." (Ankara-TR-Student)*

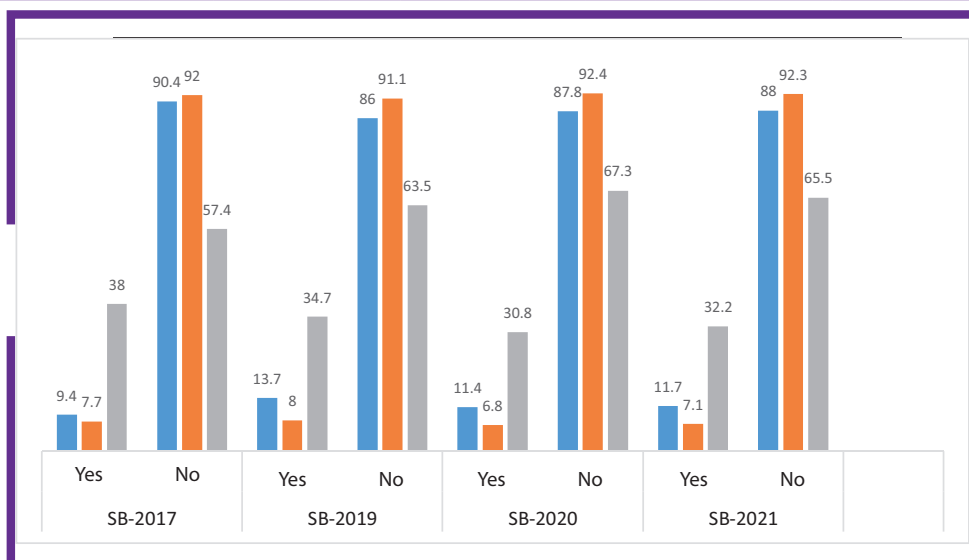
## 11. Experiencing “personal harm” from Syrians and things “heard”

### a. Experiencing Actual Harm

It is important to analyze the relationship between the anxieties regarding Syrians in the society and the experiences that would justify such concerns. Given that 57,4% in SB-2017, 61,1% in SB-2019, 45,8% in SB-2020, and 33,5% in SB-2021 agreed with the statement “I think that Syrians will harm me, my family, my children”, it was inquired whether any actual harm was experienced by the respondents. In this context, the respondents were asked the question “have you experienced any harm from a Syrian in the last 5 years?”

**SB-2021-TABLE 36 (+FIGURE): In the last 5 years, have you experienced the following caused by a Syrian? (%)**

	2017			2019			2020			2021		
	Yes	No	Don't remember/ No response	Yes	No	Don't remember/ No response	Yes	No	Don't remember/ No response	Yes	No	Don't remember/ No response
Personal harm	9,4	90,4	0,2	13,7	86,0	0,3	11,4	87,8	0,8	11,7	88,0	0,3
Harm to someone in your family	7,7	92,0	0,3	8,0	91,1	0,9	6,8	92,4	0,8	7,1	92,3	0,6
Harm to someone in your personal environment	38,0	57,4	4,6	34,7	63,5	1,8	30,8	67,3	1,9	32,2	65,5	2,3



Those who replied affirmatively to this question constitute 11,7% of the respondents in SB-2021. The same share was 9,4% in SB-2017, 13,7% in SB-2019, and 11,4 in SB-2020. The SB-2019 figure of 13,7% was the highest recorded in all SB studies. There is a very slight increase from 11,4% in SB-2020 to 11,7% in SB-2021. The share of those who reported that their family has experienced harm was 7,7% in SB-2017, 8% in SB-2019, 6,8% in SB-2020, and 7,1% in SB-2021. The number of respondents who said “yes” to the question “have you experienced harm to someone in your personal environment” was much higher accounting for 38% in SB-2017, 34,7% in SB-2019, 30,8% in SB-2020, and 32,2% in SB-2021.

The demographic breakdown in this question shows that all values are higher in the border region where the Syrian population is densely populated. To be exact, the share of those who reported having experienced personal harm was 16%, harm in their family was 8,1%, and harm in their personal environment was 34,9%.

**SB-2021-TABLE 37: In the last 5 years, have you experienced the following caused by a Syrian? (%)**

		Personal harm	Harm to someone in your family	Harm to someone in your personal environment
Border Cities	Yes	16,0	8,1	34,9
	No	84,0	91,9	64,6
	Don't remember/ No response	-	-	0,5
Other Cities (Metropolitan cities & Non-Metropolitan cities)	Yes	10,8	6,9	31,6
	No	88,9	92,4	65,6
	Don't remember/ No response	0,3	0,7	2,8
Metropolitan cities	Yes	11,7	7,2	33,7
	No	87,8	92,0	64,9
	Don't remember/ No response	0,5	0,8	1,4
(Non-) Metropolitan cities	Yes	10,2	6,8	30,4
	No	89,5	92,6	66,1
	Don't remember/ No response	0,3	0,6	3,5
<b>General</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>11,7</b>	<b>7,1</b>	<b>32,2</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>88,0</b>	<b>92,3</b>	<b>65,5</b>
	<b>Don't remember/ No response</b>	<b>0,3</b>	<b>0,6</b>	<b>2,3</b>

## b. Types of Harm Experienced

To better understand the anxieties, an additional question was added since SB-2019 regarding the type of harm that was reported. The respondents who said that they or someone from their family / personal environment experienced harm from Syrians were further asked “what kind of harm” they have experienced. They were given the chance to provide multiple responses on a list of 9 items. The majority of the responses appear to concentrate on 5 types of harm. These were ranked as follows: “bullying/harassment” (SB-2019: 40,5%; SB-2020: 45,4%; SB-2021: 48,5%), “violence” (SB-2019: 38,2%; SB-2020: 40,7%; SB-2021: 46,1%), “theft” (SB-2019: 43,5%; SB-2020: 47,9%; SB-2021:44,6%), “unrest/noise” (SB-2019: 38%; SB-2020: 36,7%; SB-2021: 42%), and “occupation of property” (SB-2019: 9,8%; SB-2020: 14,8%; SB-2021: 10,9%).

**SB-2021-TABLE 38: What kind of harm have you experienced because of a Syrian? (Multiple responses)**

		2019		2020		2021	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
1	Bullying/Harassment	360	40,5	365	45,4	384	48,5
2	Violence	339	38,2	327	40,7	365	46,1
3	Theft	386	43,5	385	47,9	353	44,6
4	Unrest/Noise	337	38,0	295	36,7	333	42,0
5	Occupation of property	87	9,8	119	14,8	86	10,9
6	Disruption of family order due to affair/ marriage	45	5,1	22	2,7	33	4,2
7	Loss of a job	57	6,4	45	5,6	28	3,5
8	Financial/ economic damage/ fraud	17	1,9	9	1,1	10	1,3
9	Other	48	5,4	12	1,5	23	2,9
	No idea/ No response	8	0,9	8	1,0	3	0,4

**Note-1:** Data from the respondents who said that they or someone from their family / personal environment experienced harm from Syrians in the last 5 years.  
**Note-2:** The ranking was done based on the findings of the last research (SB-2021) from highest to lowest.

The figures given here are based on a perception-based study. Therefore, they cannot be read as factual data. Available data that can be reached through official means, albeit limited, shows that crime rate amongst Syrians is well below average.<sup>170</sup> However, this study

170 For the Minister of Interior S. Soylu’s statement on this matter, see: Onedio.com.tr (23.03.2022) Minister of Interior S. Soylu said, “The crime rate of our own citizens in Türkiye is 2.2%, that of Syrians is 1.3%, almost half.” (<https://onedio.com/haber/suleyman-soylu-nun-suriyeli-ve-turk-vatandaslarinin-suc-oranini-karsilastirmasi-tepkilerin-odaginda-1056050>). See also: Aysegul Yilmaz Kayaoglu (2022) Do refugees cause crime? <https://avesis.itu.edu.tr/publication/details/48a8e872-517a-45ef-9845-049f71e236a4/do-refugee>

finds that on average one in ten people reports having experienced “personal harm”. In SB-2021, up to 50% of the respondents stated that themselves or someone in their family/ personal environment experienced harm from Syrians in the last 5 years. Most frequently mentioned types of harm in SB-2021 included “bullying/harassment”, “violence”, “theft”, and “unrest/noise”. Here, the fact that respondents were given the chance to provide “multiple responses” due to the possibility of a person experiencing more than one damage/problem within five years makes it difficult to determine the real situation.

It is noteworthy that among types of harm experienced, “loss of a job” was listed only as sixth, both in SB-2019 (6,4%) and SB-2020 (5,6%), and seventh in SB-2021 (3,5%).

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es-cause-crime (Do refugees cause crime: “In doing so, the paper employs instrumental variables, difference-in-differences (DiD), and staggered DiD methods to explain if the conflict-fleeing Syrians have pushed Türkiye’s crime rates higher in the short and the long run. It also controls for a multitude of time-varying provincial characteristics and presents a battery of robustness checks against various identification threats. As a result, DiD estimates show that refugees do not have any causal effect on the crime rates in Türkiye. More strikingly, its IV estimates provide evidence for a rather negative effect on the crime rates per capita whilst finding a null effect on the crime rates per native resident in particular.”)

**SB-2021-TABLE 39: What kind of harm have you/they experienced because of a Syrian? (Multiple responses %)**

	Bully- ing/ Har- ass- ment	Vio- lence	Theft	Unrest/ Noise	Occu- pation of prop- erty I	Disruption of family order due to affair/ marriage	Loss of a job	Finan- cial/ econom- ic dam- age/ fraud	Oth- er	No idea/ No re- sponse
<b>Sex</b>										
Female	51,5	42,6	42,6	39,0	9,5	5,6	1,9	0,6	3,6	-
Male	46,0	49,0	46,2	44,6	12,0	3,0	4,8	1,8	2,3	0,7
<b>Age Groups</b>										
18-24	54,5	48,7	44,8	48,7	8,4	2,6	3,2	-	1,3	0,6
25-34	45,3	43,0	46,4	40,8	10,6	8,4	7,3	1,1	0,6	-
35-44	49,3	44,3	41,8	43,8	10,0	1,5	3,0	1,0	3,5	0,5
45-54	48,6	50,7	40,6	37,7	11,6	3,6	2,2	2,9	4,3	0,7
55-64	49,4	44,2	49,4	44,2	15,6	7,8	1,3	1,3	7,8	-
65 +	34,9	46,5	53,5	25,6	14,0	-	-	2,3	2,3	-
<b>Educational Attainment</b>										
Illiterate/ Literate	52,0	52,0	60,0	40,0	16,0	12,0	4,0	-	4,0	-
Primary school	48,3	46,6	34,3	36,0	10,1	2,2	2,2	2,2	4,5	-
Middle-school	55,0	50,3	53,3	41,4	10,1	4,7	2,4	0,6	0,6	-
High-school or equivalent	47,3	46,6	47,7	44,1	11,4	4,3	4,6	0,7	3,6	0,7
University/ Grad- uate degree	42,4	38,1	38,1	46,8	10,8	4,3	4,3	2,2	2,2	0,7
<b>Region</b>										
Border cities	50,3	58,7	51,0	39,9	10,5	12,6	4,2	0,7	2,1	-
Other cities	48,1	43,3	43,1	42,5	10,9	2,3	3,4	1,4	3,1	0,5
Metropolitan cities	49,4	54,4	41,1	46,0	9,5	4,2	2,7	1,5	5,3	0,4
Non-Metropoli- tan cities	47,2	35,8	44,6	40,2	11,9	1,0	3,9	1,3	1,6	0,5
<b>Occupation</b>										
Private sector employee	50,4	46,5	41,6	46,5	9,3	3,5	3,1	0,9	2,7	0,4
Housewife/ girl	49,0	44,3	48,3	32,2	10,1	6,0	2,0	-	1,3	-
Artisan/ Trades- man	47,4	44,9	51,9	38,5	11,5	3,2	4,5	3,2	5,1	1,3
Retired	42,9	44,2	44,2	37,7	11,7	-	1,3	2,6	5,2	-
Student	57,1	48,2	42,9	53,6	12,5	5,4	3,6	-	1,8	-
Unemployed	48,3	53,3	35,0	46,7	5,0	10,0	6,7	-	-	-
Public sector employee	45,2	41,9	29,0	35,5	19,4	3,2	6,5	3,2	3,2	-
Self-employed	33,3	50,0	50,0	54,2	12,5	4,2	8,3	-	4,2	-
Businessperson	58,3	50,0	50,0	66,7	33,3	-	-	-	-	-
<b>General</b>	<b>48,5</b>	<b>46,1</b>	<b>44,6</b>	<b>42,0</b>	<b>10,9</b>	<b>4,2</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>1,3</b>	<b>2,9</b>	<b>0,4</b>

## 12. Right to Work and Anxiety over Loss of Jobs

During mass migration inflows, anxiety over loss of jobs in the face of newly arrived cheap labor emerges in all receiving societies. This plays a significant role in galvanizing reactions against the newcomers. While this had been a widespread concern among Turkish society in the early years, it appears that it increasingly tends to become less of a priority. In other words, even though Syrians predominantly live and work in urban centers, according to SB findings, the fear of losing jobs doesn't seem to be among the major anxieties. Naturally, such effects on the local population are felt more intensely in the border cities that are more densely populated by Syrians, compared to the overall average.

SB field surveys show that at least 33.6% of Syrians in Türkiye, that is around 1 million Syrians, are in active working life (See: Working Situations and Livelihoods of Syrians). These numbers are approximately the same in the studies conducted by the ILO.<sup>171</sup> However, a relationship between this and the rising unemployment in Türkiye cannot be established. This has a lot to do with one of Turkish economy's most significant structural problems: a large informal economy. It is understood that most Syrians create themselves a space within this informal economy, thereby imposing a limited negative impact on the local labor force. This is why the fear of losing one's job ranks quite low among the anxieties of Turkish society. As it was described in detail under the heading "Anxieties: Security, Serenity, and Social Acceptance", the statement "I think that Syrians will strip us of our jobs" was ranked 5<sup>th</sup> out of 6 statements involving anxieties in SB-2017, 8<sup>th</sup> in 9 statements in SB-2019 and SB-2020, and 6<sup>th</sup> in 7 statements in SB-2021.

The respondents were asked the question "*What kind of an arrangement should be made concerning the working of Syrians in Türkiye?*". When the responses in SB-2017, SB-2019, SB-2020, and SB-2021 are considered together, it is found that the share of the response "*Under no circumstances should they be allowed to work/given work permits*" was 54,6% in SB-2017, 56,8% in SB-2019, 49% in SB-2020, and 43% in SB-2021.<sup>172</sup> Those who suggest that "*They should be given work permits to work only in specific jobs*" accounted for 29,8% in SB-2017, 21,4% in SB-2019, 24,4% in SB-2020, and 14% in SB-2021. The share of those who suggested that "*They should be given permanent work permits to work in any job*", in turn, was 5,5% in SB-2017, 3,8% in SB-2019, 7,4% in SB-2020, and 8,4% in SB-2021.

In sum, Turkish society still appears to be highly concerned about giving work-permits to Syrians, with 43% of the respondents objecting to this. It is interesting, however, that the same significant part of the society is simultaneously aggrieved by the widespread discourse of "Syrians are living off the support by Turkish state" thereby constituting a heavy burden on the Turkish taxpayers and by the prospects of Syrians having work-permits in Türkiye. As stated above in another context, the fact that this objection, which was 56.8% in SB-2019, decreased to 43% at the end of three years, on the other hand, shows that Turkish society is coming to terms with the fact that Syrians' working. In fact, it is possible

171 ILO Türkiye (2021) [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-ankara/documents/publication/wcms\\_738602.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-ankara/documents/publication/wcms_738602.pdf)

172 Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration-2014: Working Rights: Under no circumstance they should be allowed to work (47,4%), They should be given temporary work permits to work only in specific jobs (29,5%), They should be given temporary work permits to work in any job (13,2%), They should be given permanent work permits to work in any job (5,4%), they should be given permanent work permits to work only in specific jobs (4,5%).



to say that Turkish society finds it more appropriate for Syrians to work than to live on the support of the Turkish state, that is, Turkish taxpayers, if they do not directly cause job losses, and this tendency is strengthened.

**SB-2021-TABLE 40: What kind of an arrangement should be made concerning the working of Syrians in Türkiye?**

	2017		2019		2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Under no circumstances should they be allowed to work/given work permits	1141	54,6	1290	56,8	1107	49,0	968	43,0
They should be given temporary work permits to work in any job / * They can work in any job with a temporary (fixed-term) work permit.	169	8,1	336	14,8	363	16,1	732	32,5
**They should be given work permits to work only in specific jobs	621	29,8	487	21,4	552	24,4	316	14,0
They should be given permanent work permits to work in any job / *** They can work in any job with a permanent (indefinite) work permit.	115	5,5	85	3,8	168	7,4	189	8,4
Other	-	-	-	-	13	0,6	11	0,5
No idea/ No response	43	2,0	73	3,2	56	2,5	37	1,6
<b>Total</b>	<b>2089</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2271</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2259</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2253</b>	<b>100,0</b>
<p>*The response "They should be given temporary work permits to work in any job" was replaced in 2021 with "They can work in any job with a temporary (fixed-term) work permit."  ** The 2017 value of "They should be given work permits to work only in specific jobs" is calculated by adding "They should be given temporary work permits to work only in specific jobs" and "they should be given permanent work permits to work only in specific jobs".  *** The response "They should be given permanent work permits to work in any job" was replaced in 2021 with "They can work in any job with a permanent (indefinite) work permit."</p>								

A closer inspection of those who replied with "Under no circumstances should they be allowed to work/given work permits" suggests that the most concerned groups include women, those over the age of 35, and those with the lowest level of educational attainment. The biggest reaction, however, appears to be coming from the border cities, where the share of respondents giving this answer was 47,3% which is 4,3% higher than the national average. It is obvious that job losses because of the arrival of Syrians can be felt much more strongly in this region and that reflects on respondents' preferences regarding work permits of Syrians.

**SB-2021-TABLE 41: What kind of an arrangement should be made concerning the working of Syrians in Türkiye? (%)**

	Under no circumstances should they be allowed to work/given work permits	They can work in any job with a temporary (fixed-term) work permit.	They should be given work permits to work only in specific jobs	They can work in any job with a permanent (indefinite) work permit.	Other	No idea/ No response
<b>Sex</b>						
Female	42,8	33,4	15,0	6,7	0,3	1,8
Male	43,2	31,6	13,1	10,0	0,7	1,4
<b>Age Groups</b>						
18-24	36,6	33,9	18,3	7,9	0,8	2,5
25-34	41,8	32,0	15,1	8,8	0,6	1,7
35-44	44,0	31,8	14,2	8,5	0,4	1,1
45-54	45,5	32,9	11,4	8,5	-	1,7
55-64	45,7	34,7	11,3	6,8	0,8	0,7
65 +	46,3	28,8	11,9	10,2	0,6	2,2
<b>Educational Attainment</b>						
Illiterate/ Literate but not graduate of any school	33,8	35,1	14,3	10,4	-	6,4
Primary school	42,6	33,9	10,8	10,6	0,2	1,9
Middle-school	46,6	31,0	13,9	7,5	-	1,0
High-school or equivalent	43,6	32,9	15,1	6,9	0,3	1,2
University/ Graduate degree	40,4	31,1	15,9	8,8	1,8	2,0
<b>Region</b>						
Border cities	47,3	29,3	13,2	9,2	-	1,0
Other cities	42,0	33,2	14,2	8,2	0,6	1,8
Metropolitan cities	44,7	34,4	9,5	8,9	1,1	1,4
Non-metropolitan cities	40,4	32,4	17,0	7,8	0,3	2,1
<b>Occupation</b>						
Private sector employee	45,6	30,2	15,8	7,1	0,3	1,0
Housewife/ girl	41,2	36,9	13,9	6,4	-	1,6
Artisan/Tradesman	41,7	31,4	10,8	13,0	1,2	1,9
Retired	49,4	33,5	6,7	8,9	-	1,5
Student	30,8	37,0	21,2	6,8	0,7	3,5
Unemployed	44,9	31,6	17,6	5,1	-	0,8
Public sector employee	39,3	26,8	22,3	8,0	0,9	2,7
Self-employed	46,3	27,8	14,8	5,6	1,9	3,6
Businessperson	40,8	29,6	3,7	22,2	3,7	-
General	43,0	32,5	14,0	8,4	0,5	1,6

### **FGD Findings (SB-2021-T)**

The answers given by the FGD participants to the question In your opinion, what kind of policy should be followed regarding the working of Syrians in Türkiye? reveal that they do not have a strict objection regarding the working of Syrians. In fact, it was stated that there is a need for workers in sectors such as construction and agriculture and that Syrians can be employed in such sectors. However, almost all of the participants stated that they were against undocumented employment in the informal economy, and they expressed this with saying things like “the wages should be balanced”, “they should not reduce the wages” in order to create an equal and balanced competition with the local society, and they also stated that Syrians needed to work in fair and decent conditions for Syrians. have stated that.

- ▶▶ *“A real inspection system needs to be established. For this reason, the first thing to do should be a serious revision of the inspection policy. By regulating their working rights, they will also have better access to health rights.” (Istanbul-TR-Worker)*
- ▶▶ *“Arrangements should be made about education. Particular attention should be paid to children and women. They need to be empowered academically, not only focusing on vocational courses. There is an urgency to help them gain a profession, but this should also be addressed through education.” (Istanbul-TR-Worker)*
- ▶▶ *“Ideally, work places above a certain size could have quotas for them, like they have quotas to have a certain number of disabled people work. I don’t want to limit this to Syrians, it can be applied to immigrants in general.” (Istanbul-TR-Newly graduated)*
- ▶▶ *“However, among these people, there are people who know agriculture well, for example. We can evaluate them. If we make these people a part of production and added value, they will also contribute to harmony. They will not temporarily feel themselves in Türkiye.” (Gaziantep-TR-Employee)*

### 13. Opening Workplaces / Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship plays an important role for Syrians' self-reliance and economic integration. Entrepreneurship means that the person provides employment firstly to him/herself and, then, to others. Such enterprises could range from employing only one person to employing hundreds and even thousands of people. It needs to be noted, however, that there is a strong societal opposition to Syrians' opening their own businesses / workplaces. In fact, as discussed in the previous section, while the share of respondents that suggest that "under no circumstances should Syrians be given work permits" was 54,6% in SB-2017, 56,8% in SB-2019, and 49% in SB-2020; the share of those who suggested that Syrians definitely shouldn't be able to open workplaces was 67,2% in SB-2019, 55% in SB-2020, and 54,2% in SB-2021. This shows a stronger refusal on the prospects of Syrians to open workplaces than on their prospects to be employed as workers. This can be interpreted as an indirect indication of the refusal of Syrians' permanence in Türkiye. However, the flexibility of Turkish society in the last 3 years in terms of both work permits and permission to open a business is remarkable in terms of social acceptance and social cohesion.

**SB-2021-TABLE 42: Under which conditions should Syrians be able to open workplaces?**

	SB-2019*		SB-2020		SB-2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
They definitely shouldn't	1.526	67,2	1253	55,5	1221	54,2
Only if they pay their taxes	469	20,6	564	25,0	716	31,8
Only for specific work fields	193	8,5	257	11,4	196	8,7
They should be able to open any type of workplace in any work field	-	-	60	2,6	62	2,7
Only if they will open large workplaces where Turkish citizens will also work	38	1,7	79	3,5	29	1,3
Other	-	-	2	0,1	2	0,1
No idea/ No response	45	2	44	1,9	27	1,2
<b>Total</b>		<b>100,0</b>	<b>2259</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2253</b>	<b>100,0</b>

\* This question was not asked in SB-2017.

In SB-2019, there was no option "They should be able to open any type of workplace in any work field". The option "They definitely shouldn't" in SB-2020 and SB-2021 was formulated as "it definitely shouldn't be allowed" in SB-2019.

In terms of demographic characteristics of the respondents, it is observed that refusal to let Syrians open a business is stronger in women, middle-aged group, primary school graduates, and people living in the border cities in SB-2021.

**SB-2021-TABLE 43: Under which conditions should Syrians be able to open workplaces?  
(%)**

	They definitely shouldn't	Only if they pay their taxes	Only for specific work fields	They should be able to open any type of workplace in any work field	Only if they will open large workplaces where Turkish citizens will also work	Other	No idea/ No response
<b>Sex</b>							
Female	57,7	28,0	9,1	2,0	1,6	0,1	1,5
Male	50,8	35,5	8,3	3,5	1,0	0,1	0,8
<b>Age Groups</b>							
18-24	50,8	33,3	9,0	3,3	2,5	-	1,1
25-34	53,2	32,4	9,4	3,1	0,8	0,2	0,9
35-44	57,7	30,5	7,8	2,0	0,6	0,2	1,2
45-54	53,8	33,4	7,3	3,1	1,2	-	1,2
55-64	57,4	27,9	10,2	2,6	1,1	-	0,8
65 +	49,7	32,8	10,2	2,3	2,8	-	2,2
<b>Educational Attainment</b>							
Illiterate/ Literate	42,9	28,6	13,0	7,8	3,9	-	3,8
Primary school	63,5	25,7	7,0	2,4	0,2	-	1,2
Middle-school	53,3	33,2	8,6	2,6	1,4	-	0,9
High-school or equivalent	49,7	33,1	10,2	3,1	2,2	0,4	1,3
University/ Graduate degree	56,7	26,5	12,7	1,8	1,3	-	1,0
<b>Region</b>							
Border cities	56,7	26,5	12,7	1,8	1,3	-	1,0
Other cities	53,7	32,9	7,8	3,0	1,3	0,1	1,2
Metropolitan cities	54,6	38,0	3,2	2,6	0,7	0,1	0,8
Non-metropolitan cities	53,1	29,9	10,7	3,2	1,6	0,1	1,4
<b>Occupation</b>							
Private sector employee	58,3	30,5	6,8	2,2	1,2	-	1,0
Housewife/ girl	56,6	29,7	9,2	1,4	1,2	-	1,9
Artisan/Tradesman	49,3	39,2	6,6	3,8	0,9	-	0,2
Retired	53,5	31,2	8,9	3,0	1,5	-	1,9
Student	50,0	32,9	10,3	4,1	2,1	-	0,6
Unemployed	57,4	22,1	14,0	3,7	1,5	0,7	0,6
Public sector employee	47,3	31,3	12,5	3,6	2,7	0,9	1,7
Self-employed	55,6	29,6	9,3	1,9	-	-	3,6
Businessperson	48,2	33,3	14,8	3,7	-	-	-
General	54,2	31,8	8,7	2,7	1,3	0,1	1,2

**FGD Findings (SB-2021-T)**

It is seen that the participants had serious reactions about the Syrians opening a business, especially in the interviews in the border provinces.

- ▶ *"There should be a restriction on opening businesses... For example, most of the Syrians are property owners in Mersin, but Turks are not." (Hatay-TR-Student)*
- ▶ *"The Çarşamba neighborhood is completely Syrian, there are no Turkish shops... It's gotten out of hand... You think you're in Damascus." (Hatay- TR-Student)*

When the issue was discussed in conjunction with the issue of travel restrictions imposed on Syrians, some of the participants emphasized that the travel restriction was reasonable and should continue, while others argued that travel restriction for Syrians should be lifted so that they could find employment in other cities.

- ▶ *"I think work rights should stay that way. Anyone who wants to work can also find a job in their own city" (Gaziantep-TR-Student)*
- ▶ *"First of all, freedom of movement should be ensured. This will also increase the opportunity to find a job" (Gaziantep-TR-Employee)*

## 14. "Will Syrians Return?"

It is observed that as the perception that Syrians will be permanent in Türkiye grows stronger, concerns, pessimism and objections also grow in the attitude of Turkish society towards them. In 2014, when there were just 1.6 million Syrians in Türkiye, the survey found that 45,1% of Turkish respondents reported believing that all Syrians in the country will return.<sup>173</sup> However, after 2017, it is observed that the perception in the society has changed drastically. When the responses given to the question "Do you believe that Syrians in Türkiye will return to their country when the war is over?" are considered, the combined share of "none of them will return" and "even if some of them return, majority of them will stay" was 70,5% in SB-2017, 78,4% in SB-2019, 80,3% in SB-2020, and 79,1% in SB-2021. In other words, approximately 80% of Turkish society think that all or most of Syrians will become permanent in Türkiye. In SB-2017, 70% of the Turkish respondents reported that they expect all or most Syrians to stay in Türkiye, while only 6,7% said "almost all of them will return". A similar picture was repeated in SB-2019, where only 10% of the respondents suggested that they believed most Syrians will return ("Majority of them will return, less than half will stay" (6,4%), "Almost all of them will return, only few will stay" (2,8%), "All of them will return" (1,8%)). This combined share has further dropped to 7% in SB-2020, while 47,4% said "none of them will return" and 32,9% said "Even if some of them return, majority of them will stay". Adding to this the 10,9% of the respondents who suggested that "Half of them will return, half of them will stay", it appears that 90% of Turkish society believe that at least half of Syrians will remain in Türkiye in the future. In other words, while the objections to Syrians' becoming permanent in Türkiye has been growing, the hope and belief that Syrians will return is also waning.

**SB-2021-TABLE 44: Do you believe that Syrians in Türkiye will return to their country when the war is over?**

		2017		2019		2020		2021	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1	None of them will return	793	38,0	1106	48,7	1070	47,4	950	42,2
2	Even if some of them return, majority of them will stay	679	32,5	674	29,7	744	32,9	831	36,9
3	Half of them will return, half of them will stay	238	11,4	203	8,9	247	10,9	231	10,2
4	Majority of them will return, less than half will stay	189	9,0	145	6,4	103	4,6	132	5,9
5	All of them will return	-	-	42	1,8	53	2,3	55	2,4
6	Almost all of them will return, only few will stay	141	6,7	63	2,8	-	-	-	-
7	Other	-	-	-	-	1	0,1	-	-
	No idea/ No response	49	2,4	38	1,7	41	1,8	54	2,4
<b>Total</b>		<b>2089</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2271</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2259</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2253</b>	<b>100,0</b>

173 Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration-2014:

"There are over 1,5 million Syrian asylum-seekers in Türkiye at the moment. Which of the following statements best describes your opinion on the return of Syrians after the war is over?":

I expect all of them to return (45,1%)

I expect less than half of them to stay in Türkiye (9,4%)

I expect all of them to stay (12,1%)

I expect more than half of them to stay in Türkiye (15,7%)

I expect at least half of them to stay (%17,6).

Regarding the return of Syrians, important and meaningful distinctions were not observed in the demographic analysis in SB-2021.

**SB-2021-TABLE 45: Do you believe that Syrians in Türkiye will return to their country when the war is over? (%)**

	None of them will return	Even if some of them return, majority of them will stay	Half of them will return, half of them will stay	Majority of them will return, less than half will stay	All of them will return	No idea/ No response
<b>Sex</b>						
Female	43,1	36,4	10,2	4,9	2,3	3,1
Male	41,3	37,3	10,3	6,8	2,6	1,7
<b>Age Groups</b>						
18-24	46,4	33,3	11,7	3,6	3,6	1,4
25-34	44,0	38,1	9,6	5,1	1,8	1,4
35-44	42,7	36,4	11,1	5,2	2,8	1,8
45-54	42,1	36,6	10,4	7,3	1,2	2,4
55-64	36,2	38,5	8,7	9,1	3,4	4,1
65 +	35,6	40,7	8,5	6,8	2,3	6,1
<b>Educational Attainment</b>						
Illiterate/ Literate	28,6	37,7	16,9	6,5	2,6	7,7
Primary school	39,6	34,5	10,6	8,5	3,0	3,8
Middle-school	49,0	32,5	9,6	4,3	2,6	2,0
High-school or equivalent	43,9	36,5	10,0	5,4	2,8	1,4
University/ Graduate degree	38,2	44,4	9,7	4,9	0,9	1,9
<b>Region</b>						
Border cities	43,8	31,8	10,2	7,6	4,1	2,5
Other cities	41,8	38,0	10,3	5,5	2,1	2,3
Metropolitan cities	41,8	39,3	10,0	6,7	0,9	1,3
Non-metropolitan cities	41,8	37,2	10,4	4,7	2,8	3,1
<b>Occupation</b>						
Private sector employee	46,3	34,9	9,3	5,1	3,6	0,8
Housewife/ girl	42,0	33,8	10,7	5,7	2,7	5,1
Artisan/Tradesman	43,4	37,2	9,2	7,8	1,2	1,2
Retired	32,7	42,8	8,9	7,8	3,7	4,1
Student	41,1	40,4	13,0	2,1	2,1	1,3
Unemployed	47,8	34,6	10,3	4,4	0,7	2,2
Public sector employee	33,0	45,5	11,6	6,3	0,9	2,7
Self-employed	40,7	38,9	13,0	5,5	1,9	-
Businessperson	48,2	29,6	22,2	-	-	-
<b>General</b>	<b>42,2</b>	<b>36,9</b>	<b>10,2</b>	<b>5,9</b>	<b>2,4</b>	<b>2,4</b>



### **FGD Findings (SB-2021-T)**

Opinions of FGD participants on the future of Syrians in Türkiye were discussed and evaluated through two main questions.

When asked **“will Syrians in Türkiye return to their countries when the war is over?”**, almost all participants responded negatively by saying “they will not return”. When further asked why they thought so, it is seen that the answers were justified with reasons such as “they are comfortable in Türkiye”, “they have many opportunities here”, and “most of their children were born here”.

- ▶ *“They wouldn’t return... They are comfortable in Türkiye, they cannot find it in Syria.” (Hatay-TR-Student)*
- ▶ *“People who migrate cannot return anyway. Their children were born here.” (Gaziantep-TR-NGO worker)*
- ▶ *“Most of them will return. They established a good or bad order with long efforts, and they may not return with the fear that they will not find the same peace as the previous order after the war” (Istanbul-TR-Worker)*

When I empathize, I think it doesn’t make sense to go back. The effects of the war continue” (Istanbul-TR-Worker)

- ▶ *“At least one million people will not return, others will look at the conditions” (Istanbul-TR-Employee)*
- ▶ *“I don’t think there will be a return, especially for those who get married and start a business (Istanbul-TR-Newly graduated)*

It should be noted that those who gave the answer that Syrians will return to their country qualified their answers by saying things like “very few of them will return” and “about 15 percent of them will return”. In this respect, it can be said that there is not much difference between these participants and those who say “Syrians won’t return” and that these results are in line with the survey findings.

## 15. "Where Should Syrians Live?": "Are We Ready for Living Together?"

Turkish society appears to believe that prospects of Syrians' long-term presence in the country are growing. Almost 90% of the society seems convinced that at least half of Syrians will stay in Türkiye. It should be noted that, however, despite this acknowledgement of permanent stay, the will and desire for living together is extremely weak. In other words, there appears to be a case of "involuntary acceptance" in Turkish society regarding Syrians. When asked the question "*where should Syrians live?*", it is observed that two demands are strongly emerging: sending them back and isolation. In a context where more than 98% of Syrians are already living with the Turkish society all across the country, the statement "*they should live with Turkish society wherever they want*" was respectively supported by the 7,9%, 5,3%, 6,8%, and 7,5% of the respondents in SB-2017, SB-2019, SB-2020, and SB-2021. In addition to this, 4,8% of the respondents in SB-2021 (together with 7,7% in SB-2017, 5,5% in SB-2019, and 6,1% in SB-2020) suggested that "*Syrians should be distributed around Türkiye in a balanced way*". These two responses, which could be seen as indications of the will for living together, make up on average close to 15% of respondents. This means that, while 90% of Turkish society believes that Syrians will permanently remain in the country, 85% suggest that Syrians should either be returned or segregated instead of living together with them.<sup>174</sup> The recommendations regarding the future of Syrians in SB-2021 are ranked in the following way: "*they should definitely be sent back*" (SB-2017: 11,5%; SB-2019: 25%; SB-2020: 48%, SB-2021: 49,7%), "*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%), "*They should only live in camps*" (SB-2017: 28,1%; SB-2019: 15%; SB-2020: 3,1%; SB-2021: 2,8%), "*Special cities should be established for them in Türkiye*" (SB-2017: 4,8%; SB-2019: 2,4%; SB-2020: 1,1%; SB-2021: 1%). These figures appear to indicate that the Turkish society is neither ready nor willing for a life together with Syrians. It is observed that the most preferred option in SB-2021, which received significant support in every study, is "*they should definitely be sent back*", followed by the option "*they should be sent to safe zones to be established in Syria to live there*", which was the strongest response in SB-2017 and SB-2019. Combined together, these two answers received support from a significant majority of the society, except for in SB-2017 (48,9%), with 69,8% in SB-2019, 80,5% in SB-2020, and 82% in SB-2021.

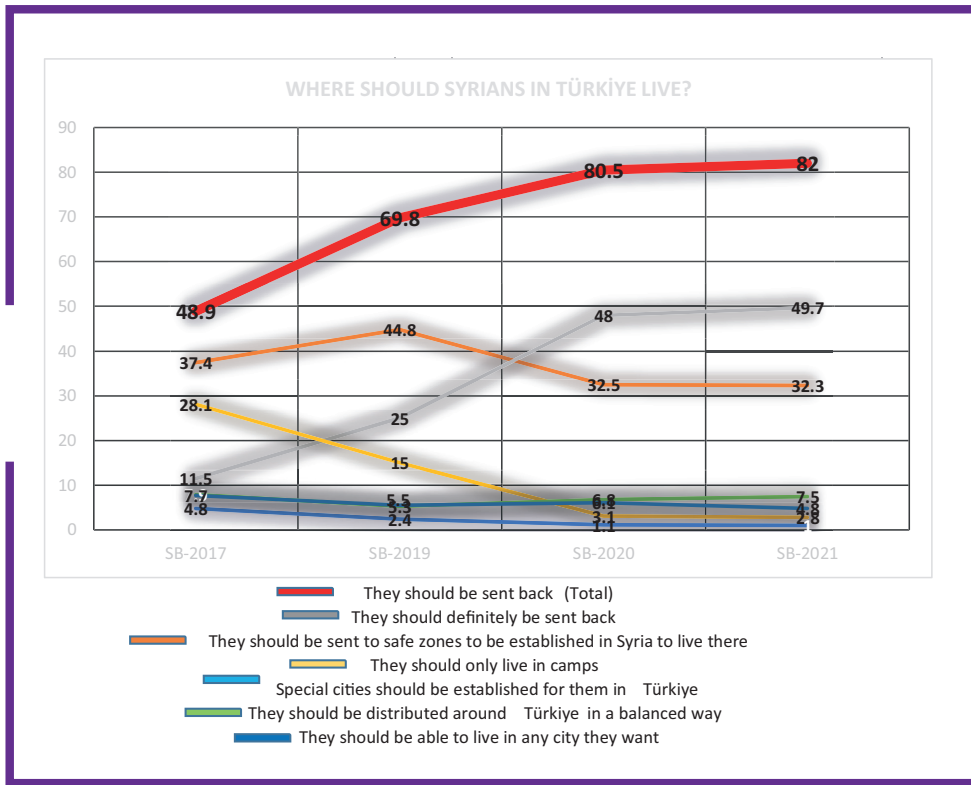
<sup>174</sup> Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration-2014:

"Asylum-seekers should only reside at the camps in Türkiye": Agreed: 73,3% / Disagreed: 19%

"Asylum-seeker should reside at the camps that will be established within the buffer zone to be established in Syrian territories near border" Agreed: 68,8% / Disagreed: 18,1%

**SB-2021-TABLE 46 (+FIGURE): Where should Syrians in Türkiye live?<sup>175</sup>**

		2017		2019		2020		2021	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1	They should definitely be sent back	240	11,5	568	25,0	1083	48,0	1121	49,7
2	They should be sent to safe zones to be established in Syria to live there	781	37,4	1017	44,8	735	32,5	727	32,3
	<b>They should be sent back (1+2 Total)</b>		<b>48,9</b>		<b>69,8</b>		<b>80,5</b>		<b>82,0</b>
3	They should be able to live in any city they want	166	7,9	120	5,3	153	6,8	169	7,5
4	They should be distributed around Türkiye in a balanced way	161	7,7	126	5,5	138	6,1	108	4,8
5	They should only live in camps	587	28,1	341	15,0	70	3,1	62	2,8
6	Special cities should be established for them in Türkiye	100	4,8	54	2,4	24	1,1	23	1,0
7	Other	-	-	-	-	12	0,5	-	-
	No idea/ No response	54	2,6	45	2,0	44	1,9	43	1,9
<b>Total</b>		<b>2089</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2271</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2259</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2253</b>	<b>100,0</b>



175 The ranking of the answers in the table is based on the data collected in SB-2021. However, to allow for easier analysis, the sum of the options “they should definitely be sent back” and “they should be sent to safe zones to be established in Syria to live there” is also presented under “they should be sent back (total)”.

When the demographic analysis of the answers to this question is made, it is observed that women, the 45-54 age group, those with secondary school education, those who live in metropolitan cities, and private sector employees support refoulement at a higher rate.

**SB-2021-TABLE 47: Where should Syrians in Türkiye live? (%)**

	They should definitely be sent back	They should be sent to safe zones to be established in Syria to live there	They should be able to live in any city they want	They should be distributed around Türkiye in a balanced way	They should only live in camps	Special cities should be established for them in Türkiye	No idea/ No response
<b>Sex</b>							
Female	50,3	34,1	6,8	3,7	2,1	0,8	2,2
Male	49,2	30,5	8,2	5,8	3,4	1,2	1,7
<b>Age Groups</b>							
18-24	47,5	31,4	9,6	4,4	3,6	1,1	2,4
25-34	49,5	33,4	7,7	4,3	1,6	1,4	2,1
35-44	50,5	32,5	6,1	5,7	2,8	1,1	1,3
45-54	49,4	35,1	6,3	4,6	3,6	0,2	0,8
55-64	49,4	31,3	7,2	5,3	3,4	0,8	2,6
65 +	54,2	24,9	10,2	4,0	1,1	1,7	3,9
<b>Educational Attainment</b>							
Illiterate/ Literate	40,3	27,3	18,2	5,2	1,3	2,6	5,1
Primary school	51,1	30,7	8,1	3,6	2,8	1,1	2,6
Middle-school	56,3	29,8	7,0	2,6	2,2	1,4	0,7
High-school or equivalent	49,8	33,0	6,2	5,1	3,5	0,8	1,6
University/ Graduate degree	43,7	36,0	7,7	7,5	2,2	0,7	2,2
<b>Region</b>							
Border cities	44,8	39,7	8,9	4,1	1,3	-	1,2
Other cities	50,8	30,7	7,2	4,9	3,1	1,2	2,1
Metropolitan cities	54,3	28,7	5,4	6,3	2,9	1,1	1,3
Non-metropolitan cities	48,7	31,9	8,3	4,1	3,2	1,3	2,5
<b>Occupation</b>							
Private sector employee	55,4	30,7	6,1	4,1	2,9	0,3	0,5
Housewife/ girl	50,0	33,8	6,8	3,1	2,3	0,8	3,2
Artisan/Tradesman	47,6	30,7	9,9	6,8	2,1	0,9	2,0
Retired	53,9	29,0	7,8	4,5	1,9	1,5	1,4
Student	43,2	38,4	8,2	2,7	3,4	2,1	2,0
Unemployed	45,6	36,0	5,9	5,1	5,1	0,7	1,6
Public sector employee	38,4	37,5	4,5	10,7	2,7	3,6	2,6
Self-employed	42,6	35,2	13,0	1,9	3,7	-	3,6
Businessperson	29,6	25,9	14,8	11,1	11,1	-	7,5
<b>General</b>	<b>49,7</b>	<b>32,3</b>	<b>7,5</b>	<b>4,8</b>	<b>2,8</b>	<b>1,0</b>	<b>1,9</b>

## 16. Perspective on Common Social Life

Another set of questions was used within the SB study in order to reveal the views and concerns of the Turkish society about the Syrians in Türkiye. Through the four separate propositions with a “positive” emphasis, the views of the Turkish society were tried to be understood. The combined share of these who “agreed” and “completely agreed” with the statement “we have shown the world that we are a strong state by accepting Syrian refugees” was 30,7% in SB-2017, 21% in SB-2019, 18,2% in SB-2020, and 15,3% in SB-2021. It appears that there has been a steady decrease in the number of respondents who agreed with this statement and a steady increase in the number of those who disagreed with it.

The share of those who “agreed” or “completely agreed” with the statement “Syrian refugees are good for our country’s economy” was 8,2% in SB-2017, 6% in SB-2019, 7,5% in SB-2020, and 11,8% in SB-2021. The combined share of those who disagreed was much higher, ranging between 79,2% and 87,4%.

**SB-2021-TABLE 48: To what extent would you agree with the following statements concerning the effects of Syrians living in our country? (%)**

	Completely disagree	Disagree	COMBINED DISAGREE	Neither agree, nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	COMBINED AGREE	No idea/ No response
<b>We have shown the world that we are a strong state by accepting Syrian refugees</b>								
SB-2017	34,2	20,3	54,5	12,5	23,9	6,8	30,7	2,3
SB-2019	60,8	10,1	70,9	5,6	18,3	2,7	21,0	2,5
SB-2020	53,7	17,4	71,1	8,5	12,8	5,4	18,2	2,2
SB-2021	52,6	20,5	73,1	8,0	12,9	2,4	15,3	3,6
<b>Syrian refugees are good for our country’s economy</b>								
SB-2017	54,1	27,9	82,0	8,3	7,4	0,8	8,2	1,5
SB-2019	77,5	9,9	87,4	4,3	5,5	0,5	6,0	2,3
SB-2020	67,4	17,5	84,9	5,8	6,7	0,8	7,5	1,8
SB-2021	55,3	23,9	79,2	6,5	10,2	1,6	11,8	2,5
<b>Syrian refugees are culturally enriching us</b>								
SB-2017	52,8	31,8	84,6	7,7	5,7	0,5	6,2	1,5
SB-2019	79,3	11,1	90,4	3,3	3,7	0,6	4,3	2,0
SB-2020	68,1	19,4	87,5	5,8	4,8	0,5	5,3	1,4
SB-2021	62,0	26,2	88,2	5,0	3,9	0,6	4,5	2,3
<b>We can live together with Syrians in serenity</b>								
SB-2017	46,5	28,5	75,0	11,8	10,3	1,1	11,4	1,8
SB-2019	70,8	11,8	82,6	7,0	7,7	0,9	8,6	1,8
SB-2020	60,7	17,2	77,9	10,4	9,3	1,2	10,5	1,2
SB-2021	54,2	24,3	78,5	9,1	9,1	1,5	10,6	1,8
* The statement “Syrian refugees are good for our country’s economy”, which was used in SB-2017, SB-2019, and SB-2020, was updated to be “Syrians are making a contribution to Türkiye’s economy” in SB-2021.								

The combined share of those who “agreed” and “completely agreed” with the statement “Syrian refugees are culturally enriching us” was 6,2% in SB-2017, 4,3% in SB-2019, 5,3% in SB-2020, and 4,5% in SB-2021. The combined share of those who disagreed ranged between 84,6% and 90,4%.

The answers to the statement “We can live together with Syrian in serenity”, which is extremely important in terms of understanding the concerns of the Turkish society for the future, reveal a rather pessimistic picture. The share of those who “agreed” or “completely agreed” with this statement was 11,4% in SB-2017, 8,6% in SB-2019, 10,5% in SB-2020, and 10,6% in SB-2021. Between 75% and 82% of Turkish society do not believe that they can live together in peace with Syrians.

The lack of support to the statement “*We can live together with Syrians in serenity*” manifests the existence of widespread anxieties concerning the future and “involuntary acceptance” of living together. Pessimism is also evident in the answers to this statement. The combined share of those who “completely disagreed” and “disagreed” with this statement was 75% in SB-2017, 82,6% in SB-2019, 77,9% in SB-2020, and 78,5% in SB-2021. Total share of those who agreed with this statement, in turn, varied between 8% and 12%. (SB-2017: 11,4%; SB-2019: 8,6%; SB-2020: 10,5%; SB-2021: 10,6%).<sup>176</sup> The same striking anxiety is observed when the findings are scored.

Turkish society’s approach to Syrians has been generally pessimistic since the SB-2017. The changes in the scores presented in the table below show that in each statement either similar findings or a more negative/pessimistic answer is preferred reflecting the views of the Turkish society.

**SB-2021-TABLE 49: To what extent would you agree with the following statements concerning the effects of Syrians living in our country? (Scored)**

	2017	2019	2020	2021
We have shown the world that we are a strong state by accepting Syrian refugees	2,4	1,8	1,9	1,8
We can live / are living together with Syrians in serenity	1,9	1,5	1,7	1,7
Syrian refugees are good for our country’s economy / * Syrians are making a contribution to Türkiye’s economy	1,7	1,4	1,5	1,7
<b>Average Score</b>	<b>1,9</b>	<b>1,5</b>	<b>1,6</b>	<b>1,7</b>
Syrian refugees are culturally enriching us	1,6	1,3	1,5	1,5
* The statement “Syrian refugees are good for our country’s economy”, which was used in SB-2017, SB-2019, and SB-2020, was updated to be “Syrians are making a contribution to Türkiye’s economy” in SB-2021.				

**SB-2021-TABLE 50: To what extent would you agree with the following statements concerning the effects of Syrians living in our country? (%)**

	Completely disagree	Disagree	COMBINED DISAGREE	Neither agree, nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree	COMBINED AGREE	No idea/ No response
<b>2017</b>								
We have shown the world that we are a strong state by accepting Syrian refugees	34,2	20,3	54,5	12,5	23,9	6,8	30,7	2,3
We can live together with Syrians in serenity	46,5	28,5	75,0	11,8	10,3	1,1	11,4	1,8
Syrian refugees are good for our country's economy	54,1	27,9	82,0	8,3	7,4	0,8	8,2	1,5
Syrian refugees are culturally enriching us	52,8	31,8	84,6	7,7	5,7	0,5	6,2	1,5
<b>2019</b>								
We have shown the world that we are a strong state by accepting Syrian refugees	60,8	10,1	70,9	5,6	18,3	2,7	21,0	2,5
We can live together with Syrians in serenity	70,8	11,8	82,6	7,0	7,7	0,9	8,6	1,8
Syrian refugees are good for our country's economy	77,5	9,9	87,4	4,3	5,5	0,5	6,0	2,3
Syrian refugees are culturally enriching us	79,3	11,1	90,4	3,3	3,7	0,6	4,3	2,0
<b>2020</b>								
We have shown the world that we are a strong state by accepting Syrian refugees	53,7	17,4	71,1	8,5	12,8	5,4	18,2	2,2
We can live together with Syrians in serenity	60,7	17,2	77,9	10,4	9,3	1,2	10,5	1,2
Syrian refugees are good for our country's economy	67,4	17,5	84,9	5,8	6,7	0,8	7,5	1,8
Syrian refugees are culturally enriching us	68,1	19,4	87,5	5,8	4,8	0,5	5,3	1,4
<b>2021</b>								
We have shown the world that we are a strong state by accepting Syrian refugees	52,6	20,5	73,1	8,0	12,9	2,4	15,3	3,6
Syrians are making a contribution to Türkiye's economy	55,3	23,9	79,2	6,5	10,2	1,6	11,8	2,5
We are living together with Syrians in serenity	54,2	24,3	78,5	9,1	9,1	1,5	10,6	1,8
Syrian refugees are culturally enriching us	62,0	26,2	88,2	5,0	3,9	0,6	4,5	2,3
* The statement "Syrian refugees are good for our country's economy", which was used in SB-2017, SB-2019, and SB-2020, was updated to be "Syrians are making a contribution to Türkiye's economy" in SB-2021.								

***FGD Findings (SB-2021-T)***

When asked whether they believed **Syrians and Turkish society will be able to coexist peacefully in Türkiye in the future**, in line with the survey findings, most FGD participants replied negatively. Especially in the FGDs in border cities, almost no positive opinions and hopes were found on this issue. On the contrary, the participants frequently emphasized that peace is very difficult or even impossible.

It was noted that the few participants, who stated that they could live together in peace with Syrians, stated that this could only be possible with the implementation of the right policies, and that some participants “wanted to believe” that they could live peacefully. It should also be noted that these comments, which can be considered positive, emerged mainly in the FGDs held in metropolitan cities.

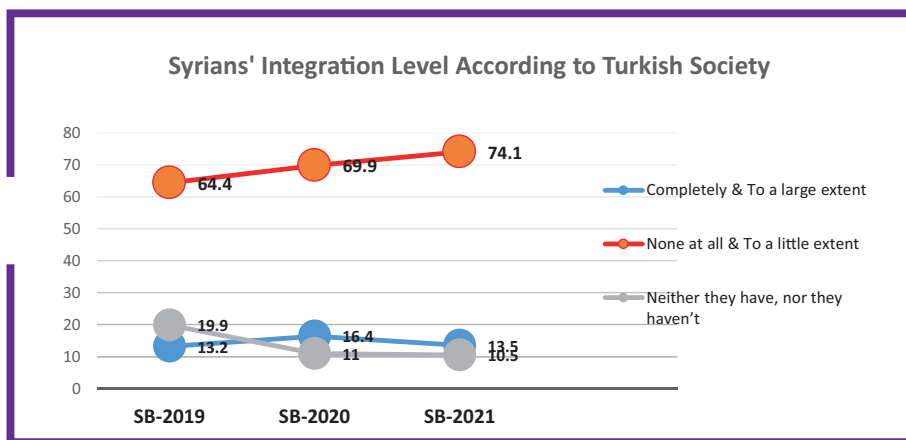


## 17. Social Cohesion and Syrians in Turkish Society

Syrians Barometer, at its heart, is a study that aims to uncover the existing context in terms of harmonization and social cohesion. Both harmonization and social cohesion are extremely complicated sociological concepts that bring together subjective and objective elements. In this context, social reactions and perceptions are as, if not much more, important as the decisions and policies of the state. Therefore, it is very difficult to measure the existence or level of social cohesion among different social groups that ended up living together. The SB study considered that the concept of “social acceptance,”<sup>177</sup> which was first introduced to the literature in 2013, is the most important basis of this process in the context of the social cohesion issue in host societies.

**SB-2021-TABLE 51 (+FIGURE): To what extent have Syrians integrated into Turkish society/Türkiye?**

	2019		2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
None at all	1050	46,2	1081	47,9	1103	48,9
To a little extent	413	18,2	497	22,0	567	25,2
Neither they have, nor they haven't/ Partially*	452	19,9	248	11,0	236	10,5
To a large extent	248	10,9	300	13,3	264	11,7
Completely	52	2,3	69	3,1	40	1,8
No idea/ No response	56	2,5	64	2,7	43	1,9
<b>Total</b>	<b>2271</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2259</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2253</b>	<b>100,0</b>



In SB-2019, the “Partially” option has been updated to “Neither they have, nor they haven’t” in SB-2020 and SB-2021.

177 The concept of “social acceptance” was first used by M.Murat Erdoğan in a 2013 study: See M. Murat Erdoğan (2013), Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Cohesion (Türkiye’deki Suriyeliler: Toplumsal Kabul ve Uyum), Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Center Report.

It is known that the concept of social cohesion is interpreted differently by the host society and the newcomers. Therefore, even though the collected data does give us some hints, it is not sufficient to measure the level and quality of social cohesion. The responses provided for the question *“To what extent have Syrians integrated into Turkish society/Türkiye?”* show that the Turkish society is quite pessimistic about the issue of Syrians’ social cohesion. In SB-2021, 1.8% of the Turkish society stated that the Syrians “completely” integrated into the Turkish society, 11.7% said they integrated “to a large extent”, while 25.2% said “to a little extent” and those who said “none at all” were at 48.9%. In other words, while the total rate of those who said they “fully and largely integrated” is 13.5%, and the total rate of those who said the Syrians integrated “none at all and to a little extent” made up the 74.1%. Remarkably, Turkish society finds the Syrians’ social cohesion processes less and less “successful” every year. In the SB-2019, 13.2% of those thought they were able to integrate, while 64.4% said they couldn’t integrate. In SB-2020, these rates are 16.4% and 69.92%, respectively. In other words, although the duration of cohabitation extends, the Turkish society’s approach that Syrians are not integrating gets stronger. Whereas, when Syrians were asked “Do you think you are integrating,” the result indicates the opposite and Syrians find themselves more and more integrated into Turkish society with each passing day. (See. SB-2021-TABLE-106). This point is exactly where the questions “integration to what, integration to whom” become relevant. It also needs to be mentioned here that there are other examples around the world (like Turks in Germany) where the “newcomers” consider themselves to be “well-integrated”, while the host society see them as “unintegrated”.<sup>178</sup>

Looking at the social cohesion processes within the framework of demographic data, it is observed that the majority of those who stated that the Syrians “do not integrate” in the SB-2021 are mostly women, the 18-24 age group, secondary school graduates, and private sector employees. In the SB-2020, Syrians were described as “not able to integrate” by those in border provinces with a rate of 75.8%, above Türkiye’s average of 64.4%. In SB-2021, the rate was found to be slightly higher in other provinces compared to border provinces and metropolitan provinces. However, it was observed in FGDs that those living in border provinces were more pessimistic about the integration of Syrians.

178 The Euro-Turks-Barometer study on the social cohesion processes of Turks in Europe has found that Turks consider themselves to be very- well integrated to the countries in which they live. See: M.M.Erdoğan (2013) Euro-Turks-Barometer. [http://fs.hacettepe.edu.tr/hugo/dosyalar/ETB\\_rapor.pdf](http://fs.hacettepe.edu.tr/hugo/dosyalar/ETB_rapor.pdf) (Access: 12.10.2019).

**SB-2021-TABLE 52: To what extent have Syrians integrated into Turkish society/ Türkiye? (%)**

	None at all	To a little extent	Neither they have, nor they haven't	To a large extent	Completely	No idea/ No response
<b>Sex</b>						
Female	49,9	25,1	10,6	10,0	1,7	2,7
Male	48,1	25,2	10,4	13,4	1,8	1,1
<b>Age Groups</b>						
18-24	45,4	32,5	10,1	8,5	1,1	2,4
25-34	50,1	25,3	11,4	11,4	1,6	0,2
35-44	51,0	23,1	10,7	11,1	2,4	1,7
45-54	46,2	24,9	11,4	13,1	1,9	2,5
55-64	51,7	23,4	7,5	14,0	1,5	1,9
65+	49,2	19,2	10,2	14,7	1,7	5,0
<b>Educational Attainment</b>						
Illiterate/ Literate but not graduate of any school	33,8	27,3	15,6	11,7	2,6	9,0
Primary school	47,0	23,5	9,1	15,5	1,3	3,6
Middle-school/Secondary school	52,2	28,4	8,4	7,7	2,6	0,7
High-school or equivalent	49,2	24,8	11,3	11,4	1,8	1,5
University/ Graduate degree	50,6	24,5	11,7	11,5	1,3	0,4
<b>Region</b>						
Border cities	45,0	22,1	8,7	19,6	3,1	1,5
Other cities*	49,8	25,8	10,9	10,1	1,5	1,9
Metropolitan cities	42,6	28,9	12,6	12,2	1,6	2,1
Non-metropolitan cities	54,1	23,9	9,8	8,8	1,5	1,9
<b>Occupation</b>						
Private sector employee	52,0	26,9	9,5	8,5	1,5	1,6
Housewife/ girl	44,5	26,8	11,9	11,3	1,2	4,3
Artisan/Tradesman	51,2	20,5	11,8	12,5	2,8	1,2
Retired	53,2	20,8	8,2	15,6	1,5	0,7
Student	41,8	32,9	8,2	11,0	2,7	3,4
Unemployed	50,0	27,2	9,5	11,8	1,5	-
Public sector employee	42,0	30,4	11,6	14,3	0,9	0,8
Self-employed	44,4	20,4	18,5	14,8	1,9	-
Businessperson **	55,6	11,1	3,7	25,9	3,7	-
<b>General</b>	<b>48,9</b>	<b>25,2</b>	<b>10,5</b>	<b>11,7</b>	<b>1,8</b>	<b>1,9</b>

**FGD Findings (SB-2021-T)**

In FGDs, it was aimed to learn how the participants defined social cohesion and to what extent they thought Syrians have integrated into Türkiye and the Turkish society. Based on this, the following questions were asked to the participants.

The question of whether social cohesion has been created regarding Syrians in Türkiye depends, first of all, on how the participants interpret the concept of "social cohesion". In order to fully analyze this, the facilitators did not provide any "social cohesion" definition during the interview, on the contrary, they directly asked the participants what they understood from social cohesion. When the answers given to this question were examined, it was seen that the participants often defined social cohesion with expressions such as "living together", "to keep up with social dynamics", "respect for difference and diversity", "meeting on a common ground".

- ▶▶ *"A real inspection system needs to be established. For this reason, the first thing to do should be a serious revision of the inspection policy. By regulating their working rights, they will also have better access to health rights." (Istanbul-TR-Worker)*
- ▶▶ *"Legal, economic and social harmonization to the new society, internalization without compromising own culture." (Istanbul-TR-Worker)*
- ▶▶ *"Mutual tolerance, reciprocity" (Istanbul-TR- Worker)*
- ▶▶ *"The acceptance of differences, the normalization of mutually different lifestyles, living with respect." (Istanbul-TR- Worker)*
- ▶▶ *"Culturally and daily feeling of belonging. I look both ways. The two groups somehow accept each other without a third factor, feeling of belonging to daily life." (Istanbul-TR- Worker)*
- ▶▶ *"Living together, making mutual sacrifices in order to produce something together is social cohesion. What both we and they need to do makes up social cohesion." (Istanbul-TR- Newly graduated)*
- ▶▶ *"What needs to be done to keep up with social and cultural life and to become a part of the country." (Istanbul-TR- Newly graduated)*
- ▶▶ *"Think of it as a house. You need to know where the living room and kitchen are. It is necessary to try to make guesses in a house that you do not know, to act according to that house. Social cohesion is conforming to the place one lives in." (Gaziantep-TR- Worker)*
- ▶▶ *"When they first came, they were nervous, afraid, lost their sense of confidence. That's why I say 'feeling safe' for both communities. (Gaziantep-TR- Worker)*

It is noteworthy that there were only two participants - among all cities - who said "social cohesion was achieved" in the interviews. Both participants emphasized that it is important for Syrians to try to learn languages and continue their education in Türkiye, and that this is a part of social cohesion.

- ▶ *"The field they are most compatible with is education. The schooling rate is high. The translation needs are met by the children of the families." (Ankara-TR-Student)*
- ▶ *"I came across a cafe in Istanbul, immigrants had established a Turkish speaking club. There were other groups, including Syrians, among them. They will stay here, they want to learn the language too." (Istanbul-TR- Newly graduated)*

Apart from this, a great majority of the participants are of the opinion that Syrians do not and cannot integrate. It is noteworthy that most of the participants in the interviews held in border provinces stated that social cohesion with Syrians could not be possible due to cultural differences.

- ▶ *"I think they won't be able to achieve social cohesion no matter what we do. Perceptions, our worldview are very different. We don't have a common history" (Hatay-TR-Student)*
- ▶ *"To achieve social cohesion, we must be equal in all respects. Family upbringing, economic situation, etiquette." (Hatay-TR-Student)*
- ▶ *"I don't think there will be social cohesion. They don't know manners." (Hatay-TR-Student)*
- ▶ *"I don't think there is social cohesion. Neither can there be. Our cultures, the education we receive are very different." (Gaziantep-TR-Student)*
- ▶ *"We see that some people want to dress and act like us, but no matter how hard they try to do it, I don't think they're adapting to us. We have two very different cultures, so both sides are struggling." (Gaziantep-TR-Student)*
- ▶ *"We had to adapt to them. They don't know the language, but we tried to communicate with them. For example, in 2010, a work that's supposed to be done for 100 liras (by one person) was done by the whole (Syrian) family for 10 liras. Still, they earned 100 liras as a household, but we (Turks) could not do it. It's not like that today, but they are still setting the prices in the market." (Gaziantep-TR-Worker)*
- ▶ ***"I think they cannot establish a bond with their country or with Türkiye." (Gaziantep-TR-NGO worker)***

In the interviews held in Istanbul and Ankara, the participants stated that some of the Syrians integrate and some do not, and they approached the issue from the social class perspective. Similarly, they underlined that while social cohesion was achieved in some subjects, there were still social cohesion problems in some fields. On the other hand, the emphasis that social cohesion is a two-way process, that the host society is also a part of the social cohesion process, comes to the fore in these provinces. In fact, many of the participants criticize the local people on this issue and state that it is an approach that embraces those coming from the West and marginalizes those coming from Syria.

- ▶▶ *"We welcome those who come from the West. We do not embrace Syrians. We don't (try to) adapt either." (Istanbul-TR- Newly graduated)*
- ▶▶ *"I think it's purely a self-interest to embrace those who come from the West. We speak to them (those coming from the West) in English, but we have no interest in speaking Arabic. I think this power and interest relationship comes to the fore, there is no such situation with the Syrians." (Istanbul-TR- New graduate)*
- ▶▶ *"I think it was a little difficult for us to accept them because they were not popular. We are integrated with the West, the series we watch etc. We are soft power oriented, but this is not the case with the Syrians." (Istanbul-TR- Newly graduated)*
- ▶▶ *"There cannot be a yes or no answer. There are those who integrate and those who do not. The reason for this is not the Syrians, this is due to Turkish state policies." (Istanbul-TR-Worker)*
- ▶▶ ***"When I think of social cohesion, a very long time comes up to my mind. There are those who live among themselves and those who try to integrate. The same is true for local people. There are those who try to accept them, and there are those who do not. Those who try to adapt to each other and those who never contact with each other. This delays the social cohesion." (Istanbul-TR-Worker).***
- ▶▶ *"Some of them integrated, some of them did not. Where I work, I see Syrian university students, some of them get along very well, some of them remain withdrawn because they think they are excluded. I see it as a problem of not being able to feel like belonging." (Istanbul-TR-Worker)*
- ▶▶ *"They did not integrate in education and housing... Primary school children - there is inequality of opportunity in education - so they cannot adapt to education... In terms of shelter, there is ghettoization. There is no space to live together." (Ankara-TR-Student)*
- ▶▶ *"Employment! Syrians who graduated from good faculties work here under bad conditions... So it cannot be seen as social cohesion for them. Labor exploitation prevails." (Ankara-TR-Student)*

## 18. Syrians' Attitudes towards Turkish Society According to Turkish Society

In the SB research, in order to see the concerns and expectations of the Turkish society more clearly, survey respondents were asked to reflect on some positive and negative statements concerning how they think Syrians see and treat Turkish society. The interest in these statements, four of which can be considered "positive" and three of them "negative", clearly reveals the rejection and negation in the society. According to the SB-2021 data, the opinion that the Turkish society agreed with the highest rate among these propositions was "Syrians do not like Turkish society at all", as in SB-2020. This view was supported by 30.9% in SB-2019, 34% in SB-2020, and 31.9% in SB-2021. In the second place comes the statement "Syrians are exploiting the Turkish society", which received 32.2% support in SB-2019, 33.2% in SB-2020, and 27.3% in SB-2021. In the third place, the statement "Syrians are not making an effort to integrate into Turkish society", which was a statement added in SB-2021, comes with a 11.5% support. Other statements remained below 9%. The table clearly shows that Turkish society stays away from "positive" statements and emphasizes negative ones.

**SB-2021-TABLE 53: Which of the following statements best describe how Syrians treat Turkish society?**

	2019		2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Syrians do not like Turkish society at all	702	30,9	769	34,0	719	31,9
Syrians are exploiting Turkish society	731	32,2	751	33,2	614	27,3
Syrians are not making an effort to integrate into Turkish society	-	-	-	-	259	11,5
Syrians are making an effort to integrate into Turkish society	302	13,3	180	8,0	186	8,2
Syrians are grateful to Turkish society	132	5,8	214	9,5	124	5,5
Syrians love Turkish society very much	66	2,9	119	5,3	104	4,6
Syrians are treating Turkish society with respect	90	4,0	70	3,1	77	3,4
Other	-	-	17	0,7	6	0,3
No idea/ No response	248	10,9	139	6,2	164	7,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2271</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2259</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2253</b>	<b>100,0</b>

In the demographic analysis, it is clearly seen that those in border provinces are more pessimistic. For example, while the rate of those who support the statement "Syrians do not like Turkish society at all" was 60.6% in SB-2020, it is 50.6% in SB-2021.

**SB-2021-TABLE 54: Which of the following statements best describe how Syrians treat Turkish society? (%)**

	Syrians do not like Turkish society at all	Syrians are exploiting Turkish society	Syrians are not making an effort to integrate into Turkish society	Syrians are making an effort to integrate into Turkish society	Syrians are grateful to Turkish society	Syrians love Turkish society very much	Syrians are treating Turkish society with respect	Other	No idea/ No response
<b>Sex</b>									
Female	31,7	27,5	11,4	8,1	6,1	3,7	3,9	0,2	7,4
Male	32,2	27,0	11,6	8,4	4,9	5,5	2,9	0,4	7,1
<b>Yaş</b>									
18-24	35,8	24,9	13,1	7,9	4,6	4,6	3,0	0,3	5,8
25-34	30,1	31,6	10,2	10,6	5,7	2,2	3,1	0,4	6,1
35-44	32,5	30,1	11,3	7,6	5,0	3,9	2,2	0,4	7,0
45-54	35,4	21,3	11,1	7,0	6,3	6,5	4,4	-	8,0
55-64	29,4	27,5	10,9	9,8	4,2	6,0	3,8	-	8,4
65+	22,6	24,9	14,1	5,1	8,5	6,8	6,2	0,6	11,2
<b>Educational Attainment</b>									
Illiterate/Literate	39,0	18,2	3,9	7,8	5,2	6,5	9,1	-	10,3
Primary school	32,6	24,0	11,4	7,3	5,1	6,3	4,4	0,2	8,7
Middle-school/Secondary school	38,7	28,1	11,1	5,5	6,0	3,6	1,9	0,2	4,9
High-school or equivalent	32,0	26,8	11,6	9,6	4,9	5,0	2,8	0,1	7,2
University/ Graduate degree	23,6	32,5	13,2	9,5	6,6	2,6	3,8	0,7	7,5
<b>Region</b>									
Border cities	50,6	19,8	2,8	5,3	8,1	2,3	5,9	-	5,2
Other cities	28,0	28,8	13,3	8,9	5,0	5,1	2,9	0,3	7,7
Metropolitan cities	29,5	23,6	16,9	11,9	4,9	2,9	2,3	0,3	7,7
Non-metropolitan cities	27,0	31,9	11,2	7,1	5,0	6,5	3,3	0,3	7,7
<b>Occupation</b>									
Private sector employee	36,1	26,6	11,9	7,1	5,9	2,7	2,7	0,3	6,7
Housewife/ girl	30,3	27,5	8,8	8,2	7,4	4,3	4,1	-	9,4
Artisan/Tradesman	32,8	21,2	15,1	10,4	3,5	6,6	2,6	0,5	7,3
Retired	29,0	26,4	13,8	7,4	6,7	5,6	3,7	0,4	7,0
Student	30,1	29,5	9,6	11,6	3,4	4,8	2,7	-	8,3
Unemployed	33,1	38,2	11,0	6,6	3,7	2,2	1,5	-	3,7
Public sector employee	31,3	27,7	9,8	6,3	8,0	3,6	6,3	-	7,0
Self-employed	16,7	48,1	3,7	7,4	1,9	7,4	9,3	-	5,5
Businessperson	22,2	29,6	11,1	3,7	-	18,5	7,4	3,7	3,8
<b>General</b>	<b>31,9</b>	<b>27,3</b>	<b>11,5</b>	<b>8,2</b>	<b>5,5</b>	<b>4,6</b>	<b>3,4</b>	<b>0,3</b>	<b>7,3</b>



## 19. How Significant a Problem are Syrians in Türkiye?

As in every society, it is natural for the Turkish society to have problems sometimes constantly and sometimes periodically. It can be said that in recent years, Turkish society has been dealing with problems in many areas such as fight against terrorism, economy, employment, social tension, foreign policy, etc. To understand whether or not the issue of Syrians is perceived by the Turkish society as a major problem, SB research included the question “Among the top 10 problems of Türkiye, how would you rank the priority of the issue of Syrians?” In SB-2019, those who considered Syrians to be Türkiye’s “first”, “second” and “third” most important problems had a combined share of over 60%. In SB-2020, this has reduced to 52,3%. In SB-2021, the sum of these three categories increased to 60.4% again. Considering the scores/numerical average, the Turkish society perceives the issue of Syrians at a priority ranking of 3.3 in SB-2019, 3.8 in SB-2020, and 3.3 in SB-2021. In other words, this shows that Turkish society considers Syrians to be among the top 3-4 problems of the country. Those who believed that “Syrians are not a problem/The issue of Syrians wouldn’t be in the top 10” were 5.4% of the respondents in SB-2019 and 5,6% in SB-2020, while it decreased to 3.2% in SB-2021.

**SB-2021-TABLE 55: Among the top 10 problems of Türkiye, how would you rank the priority of the issue of Syrians?**

	2019		2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1st rank	617	27,2	418	18,5	572	25,4
2nd rank	325	14,3	340	15,1	398	17,7
3rd rank	426	18,8	422	18,7	406	18,0
1+2+3		60,3		52,3		60,4
4th rank	196	8,6	212	9,4	209	9,3
5th rank	191	8,4	278	12,3	215	9,5
6th rank	64	2,8	106	4,7	73	3,2
7th rank	61	2,7	80	3,5	56	2,5
8th rank	44	1,9	61	2,7	62	2,8
9th rank	17	0,7	37	1,6	23	1,0
10th rank	115	5,1	116	5,1	102	4,5
Syrians are not a problem/The issue of Syrians wouldn’t be in the top 10	123	5,4	126	5,6	73	3,2
No idea/ No response	92	4,1	63	2,8	64	2,9
<b>Total</b>	<b>2271</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2259</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2253</b>	<b>100,0</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>3,3</b>		<b>3,8</b>		<b>3,3</b>	

There are no serious differences in the demographic analysis regarding seeing the Syrians as a more important problem. However, it is understood that those over the age of 65, secondary school/primary school graduates, metropolitan and non-border provinces and the unemployed stand out in terms of seeing Syrians as more of a problem.

**SB-2021-TABLE 56: Among the top 10 problems of Türkiye, how would you rank the priority of the issue of Syrians?**

Average		Average	
Sex		Region	
Female	3,3	Border cities	3,4
Male	3,4	Other cities*	3,3
Age Groups		Metropol iller	Metropolitan cities
18-24	3,4	Non-metropolitan cities	3,2
25-34	3,3	Occupation	
35-44	3,3	Private sector employee	3,4
45-54	3,5	Housewife/ girl	3,4
55-64	3,2	Artisan/Tradesman	3,4
65+	3,1	Retired	3,2
Educational Attainment		Student	3,5
Primary school	3,9	Unemployed	3,0
Middle-school/Secondary school	3,2	Public sector employee	3,4
High-school or equivalent	2,9	Self-employed	2,8
University/ Graduate degree	3,4	Businessperson**	4,4
Primary school	3,6		
General			3,3
* Other provinces include metropolitan and non-metropolitan provinces.			
** These are the results of 22 business people.			
<b>Note1:</b> Occupation status: "Farmer" and "No response" are not shown in the table because they are few in number.			
<b>Note2:</b> The average was calculated over those that specified the priority.			

Within the framework of this question, we would like to draw attention to an important "limitation notice". When fieldwork is carried out on a specific subject in social sciences, the opinions of the interviewee may increase subjectivity and generally, answers may be received showing that he attaches more importance to the topic being discussed at that moment. Since the SB survey was conducted specifically on Syrians in Türkiye, it is clear that there is a similar possibility of mistake. For this reason, "Among the top 10 problems of Türkiye, how would you rank the priority of the issue of Syrians?" the answers given to the

question should be approached with caution. In another field study conducted throughout Türkiye, the fact that the Syrians/refugees took place in a different order can be explained by this problem in the nature of the survey technique. Therefore, the order here should be approached with caution.

## **20. Political Rights and Citizenship**

While the SB surveys indicate that around 90% of Turkish society believe that at least half of Syrians will permanently stay in the country, there are significant objections and anxieties regarding giving Syrians political rights and Turkish citizenship. In fact, as discussed above under the heading "Anxieties: Security-Serenity and Social Acceptance", one of the main anxieties voiced by Turkish society is the prospects of Syrians obtaining citizenship. SB research also included specified questions on political rights and citizenship to obtain a deeper understanding. The respondents were asked the question "*What kind of an arrangement should be made regarding Syrians and political rights?*". 83,8% of the respondents replied with "*they should not be given any political rights*" in SB-2020. The share of this response was 85,6% in SB-2017 and 87,1% in SB-2019. For this reason, in the SB-2021 study, the question of political rights was abandoned and it was decided to ask only the question about citizenship.

**SB-2021-TABLE 57: What kind of an arrangement should be made regarding giving Syrians Turkish citizenship? (Multiple responses)**

No.		2017*		2019		2020*		2021*	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1	None of them should be given citizenship	1584	75,8	1737	76,5	1621	71,8	1529	67,9
2	Well-educated ones should be given citizenship	124	5,9	114	5,0	223	9,9	325	14,4
3	Those who got married to a Turkish citizen should be given citizenship	-	-	65	2,9	106	4,7	212	9,4
4	Those who were born in Türkiye should be given citizenship	101	4,8	48	2,1	180	8,0	193	8,6
5	Those who have been living in Türkiye for a certain time period should be given citizenship	153	7,3	135	6,0	184	8,1	156	6,9
6	**Turkish-origin ones/Turkomans should be given citizenship	63	3,0	53	2,3	91	4,0	147	6,5
7	Those who know/learn Turkish should be given citizenship	47	2,2	9	0,4	55	2,4	73	3,2
8	All of them should be given citizenship	84	4,0	35	1,5	82	3,6	50	2,2
9	Young ones should be given citizenship	11	0,5	-	-	13	0,6	30	1,3
10	Other	-	-	-	-	6	0,2	31	1,4
	No idea/ No response	61	2,9	75	3,3	45	2,0	72	3,2

\* It is a multiple response in the 2017, 2020 and 2021 periods.  
\*\* The response of "Turkish-origin ones/Turkomans should be given citizenship" in previous periods has been updated as "Turkish-origin ones/Turkomans should be given citizenship" in SB-2021.

When asked the question "What kind of an arrangement should be made regarding giving Syrians Turkish citizenship?" and given the chance to provide multiple responses, 67.9% of the respondents suggested "none of them should be given citizenship" (SB-2017: 75,8%; SB-2019: 76,5%; SB-2020: 71,8%). On the opposite end of the spectrum, 2,2% % of the respondents said "they should all be given citizenship" (SB-2017: 4%; SB-2019: 1,5%, SB-2020: 3,6%)<sup>179</sup>. The options that included "conditional support" for granting Syrians citizenship such as "being educated", "being born in Türkiye", "being an ethnic Turkoman", "speaking Turkish" or "being young" drew support from around 20-25% of the respondents in SB-general.<sup>180</sup> This table shows that Turkish society has serious anxieties regarding the citizenship policy of Türkiye, which appears to cut across political orientations.

179 Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration-2014:

"Syrian asylum-seekers should be given Turkish citizenship": Agreed: 7,7% / Disagreed: 84,5%

180 Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration-2014:

"Syrian asylum-seekers should be given Turkish citizenship": Agreed: 7,7% / Disagreed: 84,5%

**SB-2021-TABLE 58: What kind of an arrangement should be made regarding giving Syrians Turkish citizenship? (Multiple responses %)**

	None of them should be given citizenship	Well-educated ones should be given citizenship	Those who got married to a Turkish citizen should be given citizenship	Those who were born in Türkiye should be given citizenship	Those who have been living in Türkiye for a certain time period should be given citizenship	Turkish-origin ones should be given citizenship	Those who know/learn Turkish should be given citizenship	All of them should be given citizenship	Young ones should be given citizenship	Other	No idea/ No response
<b>Sex</b>											
Female	70,9	12,6	9,4	8,6	6,2	5,8	2,4	1,3	1,7	1,0	3,6
Male	64,9	16,3	9,4	8,5	7,6	7,2	4,0	3,2	1,0	1,8	2,8
<b>Age Groups</b>											
18-24	64,2	15,3	9,0	10,4	6,6	7,4	3,0	2,2	2,5	0,8	3,0
25-34	66,6	16,7	9,2	7,9	7,9	5,7	3,5	2,9	0,8	1,0	3,7
35-44	72,6	11,6	7,6	7,6	5,2	6,3	2,6	1,7	1,1	1,7	2,2
45-54	67,1	16,0	11,1	8,7	6,3	7,5	3,6	1,9	1,5	2,9	3,1
55-64	72,1	9,1	7,9	6,4	7,2	4,2	3,0	2,6	0,8	0,8	3,0
65+	59,9	19,2	14,7	12,4	11,3	9,0	4,5	2,3	1,7	-	5,6
<b>Educational Attainment</b>											
Illiterate/Literate	55,8	10,4	16,9	11,7	5,2	9,1	2,6	3,9	3,9	-	10,4
Primary school	72,2	10,2	9,5	8,9	5,7	3,8	2,7	2,3	0,9	1,1	3,8
Middle-school/ Secondary school	74,8	10,6	8,7	7,9	5,0	4,3	3,8	2,9	1,0	0,5	1,4
High-school or equivalent	65,7	16,6	7,8	8,5	7,1	8,0	2,6	1,9	1,3	1,4	3,2
University/ Graduate degree	62,3	19,9	11,5	8,4	10,2	8,8	4,6	1,8	1,8	2,6	2,9
<b>Region</b>											
Border cities	74,8	7,6	12,2	10,7	6,6	3,1	3,1	2,3	0,8	0,8	2,5
Other cities*	66,4	15,9	8,8	8,1	7,0	7,3	3,3	2,2	1,5	1,5	3,3
Metropolitan cities	63,0	17,3	12,5	12,3	11,0	8,2	3,7	1,7	1,0	2,3	2,7
Non-metropolitan cities	68,4	15,0	6,6	5,6	4,6	6,7	3,0	2,5	1,7	1,0	3,7
<b>Occupation</b>											
Private sector employee	70,0	14,2	8,5	8,8	6,6	6,1	2,7	2,0	1,2	1,2	2,0
Housewife/ girl	72,5	11,3	9,8	8,2	6,4	4,7	2,0	0,4	1,4	1,0	4,7
Artisan/Tradesman	63,4	16,5	9,7	7,8	6,8	8,7	3,1	4,2	1,2	1,7	3,3
Retired	69,5	14,1	10,4	8,9	8,6	7,1	4,1	3,3	1,5	0,4	2,6
Student	58,2	19,9	10,3	11,0	6,8	9,6	4,1	-	2,7	1,4	4,1
Unemployed	70,6	14,7	11,0	11,0	7,4	4,4	5,1	2,2	1,5	0,7	2,2
Public sector employee	61,6	13,4	9,8	6,3	8,9	5,4	5,4	1,8	0,9	3,6	3,6
Self-employed	64,8	14,8	5,6	7,4	7,4	9,3	5,6	1,9	-	1,9	1,9
Businessperson**	66,7	18,5	3,7	7,4	-	3,7	3,7	3,7	-	11,1	3,7
General	67,9	14,4	9,4	8,6	6,9	6,5	3,2	2,2	1,3	1,4	3,2

\* Other provinces include metropolitan and non-metropolitan provinces. \*\* These are the results of 27 business people.  
Note: Occupation status: "Farmer" and "No response" are not shown in the table because they are few in number.

When a demographic analysis is made on citizenship, the remarkable point comes from the citizens of the border provinces where the Syrian population lives in high numbers and rates. While Türkiye's average is 69.9% in terms of "not to be granted citizenship", this rate rises to 74.8% in border provinces. In addition, it is understood that women, the age group of 35-44, secondary school graduates, and the unemployed have objections to citizenship above the average of Türkiye. It has been observed that there is a much stronger opposition to citizenship in FGDs than in the surveys.

### **FGD Findings (SB-2021-T)**

The participants in FGDs, asked about **how the citizenship regulation should be**, said the citizenship policy is not transparent, and this has been a point of criticism in all cities. The vast majority of the participants stated that they did not know how this policy was carried out, that is, under which conditions Syrians were granted citizenship, and that this process should be carried out transparently. Again, the vast majority of the participants stated that "2-thirds of the Syrians have been given citizenship".

- ▶ *"Şeffaf olmalı... Kim vatandaş bilelim... Belli kriterlere göre verilebilir." (Ankara-TR-Student)*
- ▶ *"Vatandaşlık başvurusu nasıl yapıyorlar bilmiyoruz bence onlar da bilmiyor." (Ankara-TR- Student)*

As for **who should be given citizenship**, most of the participants said it should be given to those who have been residing in Türkiye for a certain period of time (not specified), those who add value to the culture, and those who offer added value to the country.

- ▶ *"Let a candidate citizenship process (to begin)... They should not have rights such as election and civil service... Those rights should be given to qualified people." (Hatay-TR-Worker)*

Do you think Syrians should have the right to vote in Türkiye? While the emphasis in the answers given to the question that "naturalized individuals may have the right to vote" stands out - especially in metropolitan areas, participants interviewed in border provinces said **"no" to granting Syrians the right to vote under all circumstances**, without even emphasizing/exception of citizenship. On the other hand, while many participants in the "Istanbul-working" group said Syrians, even though they are not citizens, could vote in local elections, when the same question was asked by the facilitator to the participants in the border provinces, the Hatay group in particular replied "never" due to demographic concerns, because they are worried that they can even win the elections such as mukhtar elections in small places, as their (Syrians') number is high.

**Expressions of those who say that there "should" or "shouldn't" be the right to vote and to be elected;**

- ▶ *"We are in a critical situation in terms of voting in the general elections.. They should have known the country well.. But they can give locally. Because they are also exposed to municipal services"" (Ankara-TR-Student)*
- ▶ *"Not now, but in the future, they can give both in general and locally. When adapting over time and getting to know this place well... It will be meaningful to give after understanding the political arena better... It takes experience." (Ankara-TR-Student)*
- ▶ *"Citizenship can be granted but they should not vote" (Gaziantep-TR-NGO worker)*

## 21. The Views on Education Opportunities for Syrian Children

As the prospects of Syrians' permanent stay in Türkiye get stronger, the issue of education become more prominent. As of December 2021, the number of Syrian school-aged children (5 to 17 years of age) is 1 million 195 thousand.<sup>181</sup> Around 65% of these children have access to school.<sup>182</sup> It is, however, also a fact that there are lost generations who don't have access to any formal education. The number of Syrian children with no access to schooling in Türkiye is over 400 thousand.

### SB-2021-TABLE 59: What kind of an arrangement should be made regarding education of Syrian children in public schools in Türkiye?/

#### \* What kind of arrangements should be made for the education of Syrian children?

No.		2017		2019		2020		2021	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1	They should be able to freely enjoy education opportunities at all levels including university education **They should be able to benefit from all kinds of education rights	198	9,5	136	6,0	675	29,9	660	29,3
2	They should be able to freely enjoy the 12-year mandatory education	491	23,5	608	26,8	521	23,0	357	15,8
3	They shouldn't be able to receive any education	680	32,6	326	14,4	275	12,2	355	15,8
4	They should only be taught Turkish language	537	25,7	380	16,7	381	16,9	325	14,4
5	Syrian children should be able to receive education in separate classes at public schools	-	-	355	15,6	155	6,9	319	14,2
6	They should receive education in Arabic at separate schools apart from Turkish children	-	-	218	9,6	138	6,1	78	3,5
7	They shouldn't be able to go to public schools but should be able to receive vocational training	103	4,9	30	1,3	46	2,0	58	2,6
8	Other	-	-	-	-	11	0,5	8	0,3
	No idea/ No response	80	3,8	218	9,6	57	2,5	93	4,1
<b>Total</b>		<b>2089</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2271</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2259</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2253</b>	<b>100,0</b>

\* Previously, the question of "What kind of arrangement should be made regarding the education of Syrian children in public schools?" was updated as "What kind of arrangement should be made for the education of Syrian children?" in the 2021 period.

\*\*Previously, the answer of "They should be able to benefit from all kinds of education opportunities, including university education" has been updated as "They should be able to benefit from all kinds of education rights" in the 2021 period.

\*\*\*Previously, the answer "They should not be able to go to schools, but they should be able to get vocational training" has been updated as "They should only be able to receive vocational training" in 2021.

181 Turkish Ministry of National Education's Directorate of Life Long Learning (2021) [https://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2021\\_05/21110500\\_MayYs2021\\_internet\\_bulteni\\_.pdf](https://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2021_05/21110500_MayYs2021_internet_bulteni_.pdf) (Access: 23.05.2021)

182 8,437 registered students, 1.09% of the total, are in YOBİS system, Temporary Training Centers.



According to SB-2017, SB-2019, SB-2020, and SB-2021 data, Turkish society displays a high degree of “sensitivity” regarding the education of Syrian children. The survey respondents were asked the question “*What kind of an arrangement should be made regarding education of Syrian children in public schools in Türkiye?*” There was a significant increase in the percentage of respondents who suggested “*they should be able to freely enjoy education opportunities at all levels including university education*”, which rose to 29,9% in SB-2020 from 9,5% in SB-2017 and 6% in SB-2019, while it remained at a similar rate (29.3%) in SB-2021. The 23.5% support given to the proposition “*they should be able to freely enjoy the 12-year mandatory education*” in SB-2017 increased to 26.8% in SB-2019, and in SB-2020 - dropping a little bit as the previous one also covered this - it was recorded as 23%. In SB-2021, this rate decreased to 15.8%. It was stated that 14-17% of the population in the society regularly supported the statement “*they shouldn’t be able receive any education*”, which was at 25.7% in SB-2017, 16.7% in SB-2019, 16.9% in SB-2020, and 14,4% in SB-2021.

In the SB-2021 study, the border provinces, particularly where the Syrian population is densely populated, reflect significant objections and criticisms, and give signs that this risk will have a negative impact on social cohesion. Although the response to general education in the border provinces was above the Türkiye average in SB-2021, a record level of support was received for the response “No education should be given”. While the average for Türkiye is 14.4%, this rises to 19.8% in border provinces. Similarly, the propositions “Syrian children should be able to receive education in separate classes in public schools” and “Syrians should be given education in schools that provide education in Arabic separately from Turkish children” received support in border provinces, well above Türkiye’s average. It is possible to read all these as objections brought about by the disruptions in education, which is one of the important public services.

**SB-2021-TABLE 60: "What kind of arrangement should be made for the education of Syrian children?"(%)**

	They should be able to benefit from all kinds of education rights	They should be able to freely enjoy the 12-year mandatory education	They should only be taught Turkish language	They shouldn't be able to receive any education	Syrian children should be able to receive education in separate classes at public schools	They should receive education in Arabic at separate schools apart from Turkish children	They should only be able to receive vocational training	Other	No idea/ No response
<b>Sex</b>									
Female	26,4	17,4	14,9	13,5	17,1	3,4	2,2	0,5	4,6
Male	32,2	14,3	16,6	15,4	11,2	3,5	3,0	0,2	3,6
<b>Age Groups</b>									
18-24	28,1	14,8	16,7	16,7	12,0	3,3	4,4	0,3	3,7
25-34	31,8	15,5	17,7	12,6	12,8	2,9	3,5	0,2	3,0
35-44	28,1	15,7	15,7	14,0	16,3	3,9	2,4	0,6	3,3
45-54	27,8	18,2	14,0	14,8	16,2	2,9	1,0	0,5	4,6
55-64	27,5	14,3	16,2	14,3	14,7	5,3	1,9	-	5,8
65+	34,5	16,4	11,9	15,2	10,2	2,8	1,7	0,6	6,7
<b>Educational Attainment</b>									
Illiterate/Literate	26,0	18,2	6,5	14,3	15,6	10,4	-	-	9,0
Primary school	28,6	16,1	13,4	14,6	15,0	5,1	1,1	0,4	5,7
Middle-school	24,0	12,3	17,5	17,8	17,8	2,6	3,1	0,5	4,4
High-school or equivalent	30,0	18,0	15,1	14,4	12,1	3,5	3,1	0,4	3,4
University/ Graduate degree	34,2	14,8	19,4	11,3	13,2	1,1	3,3	0,2	2,5
<b>Region</b>									
Border cities	34,1	8,4	1,3	19,8	23,2	9,2	0,8	-	3,2
Other cities	28,3	17,4	18,8	13,3	12,3	2,3	3,0	0,4	4,2
Metropolitan cities	31,4	19,6	11,6	17,3	12,3	1,0	3,3	1,1	2,4
Non-metropolitan cities	26,4	16,1	23,1	10,8	12,2	3,0	2,8	-	5,6
<b>Occupation</b>									
Private sector employee	29,5	14,1	15,6	16,1	16,3	2,7	2,7	0,5	2,5
Housewife/ girl	25,0	17,2	13,7	12,9	18,6	4,5	1,4	0,2	6,5
Artisan/Tradesman	34,0	13,0	17,7	15,6	12,5	3,1	1,2	0,2	2,7
Retired	32,0	16,0	12,3	15,6	12,6	3,3	1,5	0,4	6,3
Student	28,8	17,8	24,7	6,8	8,9	2,1	6,2	0,7	4,0
Unemployed	26,5	22,1	8,1	17,6	8,1	7,4	5,1	0,7	4,4
Public sector employee	28,6	21,4	19,6	8,9	11,6	3,6	4,5	-	1,8
Self-employed	18,5	14,8	25,9	22,2	9,3	-	5,6	-	3,7
Businessperson**	37,0	14,8	18,5	11,1	7,4	-	3,7	-	7,5
General	29,3	15,8	15,8	14,4	14,2	3,5	2,6	0,3	4,1

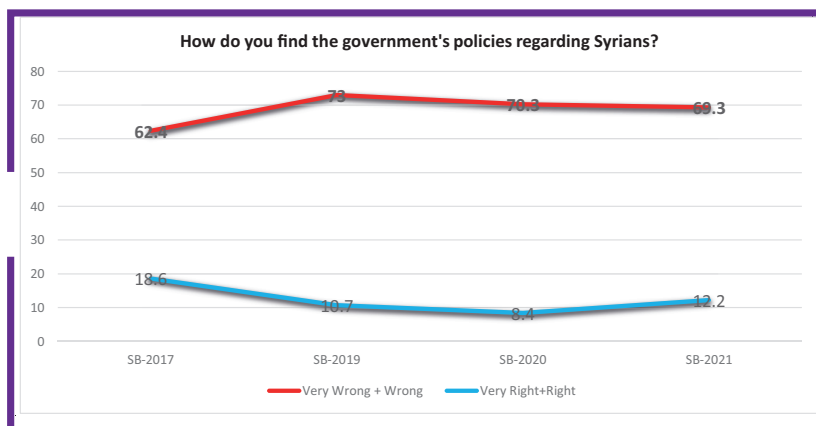
## 22. Society's Perspective on the State's Policy on Syrians

In order to analyze the situation and process management that the Turkish society has faced since 2011, some questions are included in the SB. One of them is "How do you find the policies of the state regarding Syrians? (Syrian policy in general)". While the total rate of those who find the government's policies "right" and "very right" was 18.6% in SB-2017, this figure is 10.7% in SB-2019, 8.4 in SB-2020, and 12.2% in SB-2021. While the rate of those who found the government's policies "very wrong" and "wrong" was 62.4% in SB-2017, this was 73% in SB-2019, 70.3 in SB-2020, and 69.3% in SB-2021. This situation reveals that around 70% of the society is not satisfied with the Syrians policy of the state and even finds it "very wrong" draws attention.

**SB-2021-TABLE 61 (+FIGURE): How do you find the policies of the state regarding Syrians? (Syrian policy in general)**

	2017		2019		2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Very wrong	505	24,2	823	36,2	761	33,7	874	38,8
Wrong	799	38,2		36,8		36,6		30,5
								<b>69,3</b>
Neither wrong nor right	331	15,8	290	12,8	323	14,3	276	12,2
Right	307	14,7	210	9,3	169	7,5	241	10,7
Very right	81	3,9		1,4		0,9		1,5
								<b>12,2</b>
No idea/No response	66	3,2	80	3,5	158	7,0	142	6,2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2089</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2271</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2259</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2253</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Note: In the SB-2017, 2019 and 2020 studies, the question of "How do you find the government's policies regarding Syrians?" was asked. In the SB-2021, the question of "To what extent do you think the government's policies regarding Syrians are right?" was asked, with "Syrians policy in general" among the items.



After this general assessment, an additional question was asked in SB-2021 to understand how Turkish society views the issue in terms of policy areas. Among the answers to the question of “To what extent do you think the government’s actions in policy areas (which we will be reading) are right regarding Syrians?” it is understood that those who responded that the policy is “very wrong” and “wrong” has a general average of 69.3% and the most disturbing policy is the settlement/distribution policy of Syrians in Türkiye (68.5%), followed by the “financial support policy”. The policy that Turkish society finds most right, albeit at a limited level, is the state’s “health” policy towards Syrians (23.9%), followed by education (20.9%). Those who find the social cohesion policies of the state right are 13.7% in total, while 66.3% find them wrong.

**SB-2021-TABLE 62: To what extent do you think the government’s policies regarding Syrians are right? (%)**

	Very wrong	Wrong	Wrong	Neither wrong nor right	Right	Very right	Right	No idea/ no response
Health policy	32,2	26,7	<b>58,9</b>	10,8	21,8	2,1	<b>23,9</b>	6,4
Education policy	28,6	26,6	<b>55,2</b>	13,7	19,4	1,5	<b>20,9</b>	10,2
Financial support policy	42,5	25,5	<b>68,0</b>	9,3	14,8	2,7	<b>17,5</b>	5,2
Settlement policy within Türkiye	38,3	30,2	<b>68,5</b>	10,7	12,1	2,0	<b>14,1</b>	6,7
Harmonization policies	34,9	31,4	<b>66,3</b>	11,0	12,3	1,4	<b>13,7</b>	9,0
Syrians policy in general	38,8	30,5	<b>69,3</b>	12,3	10,7	1,5	<b>12,2</b>	6,2

### **FGD Findings (SB-2021-T) I**

In order to understand how Türkiye's policies towards Syrians are seen and evaluated by the participants, data were also collected from FGDs.

The question of "Do you think the Turkish state's policies regarding Syrians are right?" is essentially a general question, and in order to understand what first comes to mind as a policy from the participants, it has been tried to get an answer without mentioning a specific policy, that is, without directing. Other than two exceptions, all participants in FGDs made statements criticizing Türkiye's policies and emphasizing that they found it wrong.

In the policy criticisms towards Türkiye, the criticism that it is not a systematic and holistic policy was frequently voiced, it was emphasized that there was no resettlement policy, and the security weakness was underlined. On the other hand, many of the participants criticized the open-door policy and stated that strict controls were not applied at the entrances to the country. It has been determined that similar issues have been raised in the interviews held in border provinces and metropolises regarding criticism. Only one participant from Istanbul stated that the "open door" policy was right, and another participant from Gaziantep stated that good steps were taken in the schooling of Syrian children.

- ▶ *"There is no settlement policy... Everyone dispersed in their own way. this shouldn't happen... The state should have controlled it" (Hatay-TR-Worker)*
- ▶ *"People were taken into the country without control... Proper registration was not made. There was a clustering in the cities... In fact, the country has no policy. (No settlement policy) When I saw this question, I didn't even think about a policy..." (Ankara-TR-Student)*
- ▶ *"Instead of creating an area of polarization from here, the parties should come together and produce a common policy for both Syrians and Turks." (İstanbul-TR-Newly graduated)*

## 23. SB-2021: Views on Some Current Issues

### 23-a- The Views on Other Refugees

Syrians began to come to Türkiye on April 29, 2011. However, especially after 2013, there has been an extraordinary increase in the number of irregular migrants and asylum seekers coming to Türkiye from many countries, especially from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq. Apart from Syrians who were given temporary protection, the number of asylum seekers who applied for international protection or received status has exceeded 300 thousand in a short time.<sup>183</sup> Even more striking is the extraordinary increase in the number of irregular migrants. The number of irregular migrants captured by the Turkish security forces in 2019 alone is 454 thousand. The influx of irregular migrants and asylum seekers continues, especially from the Iranian border, despite all the precautions of Türkiye. This situation has also been effective in increasing the reactions towards Syrians in Turkish society in recent years. The perception that the process cannot be managed and the borders cannot be protected is getting stronger in the society. Especially in the last two years, when images of too many male asylum seekers and irregular migrants entering or traveling to Türkiye spread on social media, the anxiety and objections in the society against all foreigners, with the Syrians being the main target, intensified, and the process started to become politicized rapidly.

In this context, in order to understand whether they make a difference between Syrians and other refugees/asylum seekers, the Turkish society was asked "Which of the statements I will read to you about Syrians and other refugees in Türkiye reflects your opinion?" By far the first strongly accepted proposition was "No refugees should be admitted to Türkiye" with a rate of 71.7%. However, the second one, "It is correct that Türkiye gives protection to all refugees," received 16.2% support. This support shows that 15-20% of the Turkish society has a positive view on international protection. However, the Turkish society, with a very strong rate of over 71%, shows a very clear refusal to accept those who come to Türkiye regardless of who and where they come from.

**SB-2021-TABLE 63: Which of the following statements about Syrians and other refugees in Türkiye reflects your opinion?**

No.		#	%
1	No refugees should be admitted to Türkiye	1616	71,7
2	It is right that Türkiye gives protection to all refugees	365	16,2
3	Only Syrians should be accepted, other refugees should not be accepted	45	2,0
4	Only Afghans should be accepted, not other refugees	40	1,8
5	Only Iraqis should be accepted, not other refugees	15	0,7
	No idea/no response	172	7,6
Total		2253	100,0

<sup>183</sup> Interior Minister S. Soylu announced on 7 November 2022 that 321,052 people remained under international protection in Türkiye.. (<https://www.haber7.com/guncel/haber/3266086-son-dakika-bakan-soylu-turkiyedeki-suriyeli-sayisini-acikladi>)

When we look at the demographic analysis on this subject, the highest rate of support for the view “No refugees should be admitted to Türkiye” is from women, from those between the ages of 23-34, secondary school graduates, those living in border provinces, and from the unemployed. Those living in border provinces represent the highest rejection rate with 79.6% compared to all other groups. The highest rate among those who share the view that “ It is right that Türkiye gives protection to all refugees ” is men, those aged 45-54, university graduates, metropolitan provinces, tradesmen and self-employed.

**SB-2021-TABLE 64: Which of the following statements about Syrians and other refugees in Türkiye reflects your opinion? (%)**

	It is right that Türkiye gives protection to all refugees	No refugees should be admitted to Türkiye	Only Syrians should be accepted, other refugees should not be accepted	Only Afghans should be accepted, not other refugees	Only Iraqis should be accepted, not other refugees	No idea/ no response
<b>Sex</b>						
Female	13,0	76,3	1,6	1,1	0,5	7,5
Male	19,3	67,2	2,4	2,5	0,9	7,7
<b>Age Groups</b>						
18-24	14,2	68,3	3,8	1,6	1,4	10,7
25-34	14,5	74,1	2,6	1,0	0,4	7,4
35-44	15,9	73,0	1,5	2,0	0,7	6,9
45-54	19,1	70,5	1,0	1,5	0,5	7,4
55-64	15,8	73,2	1,1	2,3	0,8	6,8
65+	19,8	68,9	1,7	3,4	-	6,2
<b>Educational attainment</b>						
Illiterate/Literate	13,0	67,5	3,9	-	-	15,6
Primary school	16,9	72,7	1,1	1,9	0,8	6,6
Middle-school/secondary	13,9	76,4	3,4	1,9	0,7	3,7
High-school or equivalent	16,2	70,7	2,4	1,8	0,5	8,4
University/ Graduate degree	18,1	68,7	0,7	1,8	0,9	9,8
<b>Region</b>						
Border cities	13,7	79,6	2,5	0,3	0,3	3,6
Other cities	16,7	70,1	1,9	2,1	0,8	8,4
Metropolitan cities	18,2	68,6	2,6	0,4	0,9	9,3
Non-metropolitan cities	15,8	70,9	1,5	3,1	0,7	8,0
<b>Occupation</b>						
Private sector employee	14,2	72,7	1,5	2,2	1,5	7,9
Housewife/ girl	13,3	76,6	1,4	1,0	0,2	7,5
Artisan/Tradesman	20,8	69,6	1,2	0,9	0,7	6,8
Retired	17,5	71,0	1,5	3,7	0,4	5,9
Student	13,7	66,4	6,8	1,4	-	11,7
Unemployed	13,2	77,2	2,2	0,7	0,7	6,0
Public sector employee	19,6	63,4	4,5	1,8	-	10,7
Self-employed	20,4	63,0	3,7	3,7	-	9,2
Businessperson**	37,0	59,3	-	3,7	-	-
General	16,2	71,7	2,0	1,8	0,7	7,6

\* Other provinces include metropolitan and non-metropolitan provinces.

\*\* These are the results of 27 business people.

Note: Occupation status: "Farmer" and "No response" are not shown in the table because they are few in number.



### 23-b- Statements Some Municipalities

It is seen that the issue of Syrians has entered the politicization process in Türkiye in the last two years. In this context, the following question was asked in SB-2021 in order to understand the view of the Turkish society on some issues that are much discussed in Türkiye: "To what extent do you think it is right that some municipalities charge refugees in Türkiye higher fees for services such as water, electricity, natural gas, and official transactions?" The answers to this question show that 61.3% of the Turkish society is not satisfied with such explanations or practices of the municipalities. The rate of those who find this very right and right is 27.6%.

**SB-2021-TABLE 65: To what extent do you think it is right that some municipalities charge refugees in Türkiye higher fees for services such as water, electricity, natural gas, and official transactions?**

	#	%	
Very wrong	471	21,0	61,3
Wrong	909	40,3	
Neither right, nor wrong	144	6,4	6,4
Right	387	17,2	27,6
Very right	235	10,4	
No idea/No response	107	4,7	4,7
Total	2253	100,0	

Among those who oppose the municipalities' policy of demanding higher fees for services for refugees, men, those aged 45-54, primary school graduates, people living in non-border or non-metropolitan provinces, and artisans/tradesmen reacted above Türkiye's average. Among those who find such policies right, those living in the provinces in the border region have a special place. This group supports the policy with 38.6%. In addition, men, those aged 25-34, secondary school graduates and self-employed find this policy above the average.

**SB-2021-TABLE 66: To what extent do you think it is right that some municipalities charge refugees in Türkiye higher fees for services such as water, electricity, natural gas, and official transactions? (%)**

	Very wrong	Wrong	Com- bined wrong	Neither right, nor wrong	Right	Very right	Com- bined Right	No idea/ No re- sponse
<b>Sex</b>								
Female	20,0	40,6	60,6	6,6	17,3	9,3	26,6	6,2
Male	21,8	40,1	61,9	6,2	17,0	11,5	28,5	3,4
<b>Age Groups</b>								
18-24	20,5	38,0	58,5	8,7	17,5	11,2	28,7	4,1
25-34	21,8	39,3	61,1	6,7	18,5	10,4	28,9	3,3
35-44	19,4	43,1	62,5	4,6	17,9	10,5	28,4	4,5
45-54	21,5	41,2	62,7	7,3	15,0	11,1	26,1	3,9
55-64	20,4	40,8	61,2	5,7	16,2	10,6	26,8	6,3
65+	23,2	37,3	60,5	5,1	16,9	6,8	23,7	10,7
<b>Educational Attainment</b>								
Illiterate/Literate	26,0	32,5	58,5	10,4	11,7	3,9	15,6	15,5
Primary school	23,9	42,4	66,3	4,9	14,4	8,0	22,4	6,4
Middle-school/Second- ary school	19,0	35,8	54,8	6,0	22,8	11,8	34,6	4,6
High-school or equiv- alent	20,1	41,6	61,7	6,2	17,4	11,6	29,0	3,1
University/ Graduate degree	19,6	41,3	60,9	8,2	15,7	11,3	27,0	3,9
<b>Region</b>								
Border cities	32,8	18,8	51,6	5,9	24,4	14,2	38,6	3,9
Other cities	18,4	44,9	63,3	6,5	15,6	9,6	25,2	5,0
Metropolitan cities	18,6	43,0	61,6	6,4	16,2	9,9	26,1	5,9
Non-metropolitan cities	18,2	46,0	64,2	6,5	15,3	9,5	24,8	4,5
<b>Occupation</b>								
Private sector employee	20,8	38,0	58,8	6,8	19,2	10,5	29,7	4,7
Housewife/ girl	21,9	40,6	62,5	5,9	16,8	6,1	22,9	8,7
Artisan/Tradesman	23,8	39,6	63,4	5,2	14,2	14,9	29,1	2,3
Retired	20,8	40,1	60,9	4,5	18,2	10,4	28,6	6,0
Student	17,1	43,8	60,9	11,6	19,2	7,5	26,7	0,8
Unemployed	19,9	44,8	64,7	8,1	14,0	11,7	25,7	1,5
Public sector employee	12,5	44,6	57,1	7,1	17,9	12,5	30,4	5,4
Self-employed	14,8	38,9	53,7	7,4	22,2	13,0	35,2	3,7
Businessperson	33,3	48,2	81,5	-	11,1	7,4	18,5	-
General	21,0	40,3	61,3	6,4	17,2	10,4	27,6	4,7

### ***FGD Findings (SB-2021-T)***

Except for some of the participants in Hatay, all FGD participants found the issue of different (higher) prices to be applied by municipalities to refugees negatively, criticized them and evaluated them as racism and the words they said for their political interests. While a group of students in Hatay found the explanations appropriate, they stated that it is possible for other municipalities and Hatay to adopt such practices, provided that they do not miss the dosage (that is, not be excessively racist).

Those who disapprove of such policies and statements generally expressed their reactions with harsh expressions.

### 23-c- Social Media and Syrians

It can be said that the general discussion area about Syrians in Türkiye is social media. In many areas, especially on Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok, it is frequently seen that both the Turkish reaction to the Syrians and the Syrians' own lives or criticisms are shared. Taking into account the videos taken with "banana" debates in October 2021, some questions were asked in SB-2021 to understand the views of the Turkish society on social media posts.

The Turkish people were asked "Regarding the news about refugees on social media, which of the following statements reflects your opinion?" Two very close answers to the question are "I think it is provocative" (20.6%) and "I believe it is true news" (20.5%). Yet another strong response is "I think they are expressing the dangers Türkiye faces" (14.8%). There is no doubt that all over the world, social media (also called "individual media") has become the factor that directs societies more and more and is almost impossible to control. It is clear that Turkish society is also very active in the use of social media. In recent years, many social media posts, titled Syrians, have been setting the agenda, with generally negative reporting.

**SB-2021-TABLE 67: Regarding the news about refugees on social media, which of the following statements reflects your opinion?**

No.		#	%
1	I think it's provocative	464	20,6
2	I believe it's true news	462	20,5
3	I think they are expressing the dangers Türkiye faces	334	14,8
4	I think it's exaggerated	190	8,4
5	I think it's political	171	7,6
6	I think Syrians are treated unfairly	26	1,2
7	Other	6	0,3
	No idea/I don't know	573	25,4
	No response	27	1,2
<b>Total</b>		<b>2253</b>	<b>100,0</b>

After a Turkish citizen interviewed in Izmir on a television program in October 2021 said, “The economic situation of Syrians in Türkiye is better than Turkish citizens,” and “I can’t eat bananas, they buy kilos of bananas”, some Syrians in Türkiye shared videos of eating bananas on social media. The issue was brought to court with a criminal complaint by a politician, and immediately afterwards, 45 Syrians were detained on the grounds of “posting provocative banana images” and it was stated that they would be deported.<sup>184</sup> For the first time since April 2011, this kind of collective action of Syrians in Türkiye, which has been very popular, has been discussed for a long time. SB-2021 tried to take the views of the Turkish society on this issue through the question of “How do you evaluate the visuals of some Syrians in Türkiye eating bananas on social media?”

Among the answers received, the rate of those who stated that they did not watch the footage, that is, they were not aware of the subject, ranks first with 31.6%. The first response that followed defines the subject as “ingratitude” (17.3%), “an insult to the Turkish society” (16.4%) and “provocative and negative sharing (12.2%). The total rate of those who describe the issue as “fun” or “quite normal behavior” is 3.2%.

**SB-2021-TABLE 68: How do you evaluate the visuals of some Syrians eating bananas on social media in Türkiye?**

No.		#	%
1	I did not watch it	713	31,6
2	It is ingratitude	390	17,3
3	It is an insult to Turkish society	369	16,4
4	It is a provocative and negative post	274	12,2
5	It is an insult to the Turkish state	156	6,9
6	It’s a post with entertainment purpose	45	2,0
7	It’s pretty normal behavior	26	1,2
8	Other	12	0,5
	No idea/no answer	268	11,9
<b>Total</b>		<b>2253</b>	<b>100,0</b>

<sup>184</sup> In a statement made on 12 November 2021, the Directorate of Migration Management said, “45 foreign nationals who shared provocative images of bananas on social media were identified, and these individuals were referred to removal centers for deportation after judicial proceedings.”

When the Turkish community was asked, “Do you think sanctions should be applied to those who share such posts?”, the answer “I think they should be deported” came in the first place with 39.1%, and “I definitely think there should be a sanction/punishment” with 16.3%. The percentage of those who said “I don’t think it’s an issue requiring a sanction/punishment” and “Sanctions may apply but I think their deportation is wrong/exaggerated” remained at 8.7% in total.

**SB-2021-TABLE 69: Do you think that sanctions should be applied to those who share such posts?**

No.		#	%
1	I think they should be deported	881	39,1
2	I definitely think there should be a sanction/punishment	366	16,3
3	I haven’t watched such posts	299	13,3
4	I don’t think it’s an issue requiring a sanction/punishment	122	5,4
5	Sanctions may apply but I think their deportation is wrong/exaggerated	75	3,3
	No idea/I don’t know	491	21,8
	No response	19	0,8
Total		2253	100,0

### **FGD Findings (SB-2021-T)**

“There are FGD participants who think that the **discussions about ‘eating/not eating bananas’** are exaggerated on social media, and there are also heavy criticisms.

#### **Criticisms of Syrians through images;**

- ▶ *“When I saw the banana issue, I was very angry and upset. I was angry that people who took refuge in this country made fun of that like this. Of course, this is not something that can be reflected in general, it should be evaluated on the basis of those who did that action.” (Istanbul-TR-Woman)*
- ▶ *“(It’s) Disrespect, they don’t know manners” (Hatay-TR-Student)*

Statements expressing that they are exaggerated and that the issue should be approached sensitively;

- ▶ *“It’s exaggerated because of too much sensitivity, they are trying to put the blame (on them), so it’s dangerous.” (Istanbul-TR-Worker)*
- ▶ *“There are no limits to the expression of one’s opinion and political thought. It has no place in national and international law. This issue is used as a political material.” (Gaziantep-TR-Worker)*

### 23-d- Altındağ (Ankara) Tension

During Altındağ incidents that involved arguments between a Syrian group and 2 Turkish citizens in the Battalgazi neighborhood of Altındağ district of Ankara on August 10, 2021, the Syrian group stabbed 2 Turkish youths and one of the injured died. However, Altındağ events are considered as one of the important breaking moments of 11 years of common life. For this reason, the FGDs tried to obtain the views of the Turkish society on the subject. While some members of the Turkish society spoke of the individuality of the crime and expressed their concerns about the fact that the actions from the Turks were directed against all Syrians and even all foreigners, some others stated that the Syrians should be more careful and that if they turn to crime, they should be sent out en masse.

It is possible to say that most of the FGD participants were disturbed by the images in the Altındağ events and were worried about the emergence of provocative actions. It is very important to evaluate the effects and reflections of an event that seems to be regional and individual, as this incident, which occurred specifically in Ankara, resonated in many places, including the border provinces, and that the participants were able to express their opinions on the event.

- ▶▶ *“Not all Syrians are considered criminals when a Syrian migrant commits a crime. Just like when thousands of Turks commit crimes, not all Turks are guilty. Crime is personal, subjective.”* (Istanbul-TR-Worker).
- ▶▶ *“Existing problems deepened.. Events were overlooked.. There was no societal reaction either.”* (Ankara-TR-Student)
- ▶▶ *“It seems that such reactive incidents will increase.. There are even those around me who say ‘this was what would happen’. There are many who do not talk about the incident, naturally those who do these actions find strength (from this). The media should also report more accurately.”* (Ankara-TR- Student)
- ▶▶ *“If such a thing is used as a political material, it will first start from Gaziantep or Hatay.”* (Hatay-TR-Worker)





SYRIANS BAROMETER  
2021

**5**  
SYRIANS  
(UNDER TEMPO-  
RARY PROTEC-  
TION)  
RESEARCH  
FINDINGS

## IV- SB-2021: SYRIANS RESEARCH PROFILE AND FINDINGS

### IV- A. SB-2021: SYRIANS RESEARCH PROFILE

#### 1. Research Background, Profile, and Confidence

In the framework of Syrians Barometer-2021, research on Syrians under temporary protection in Türkiye included a “household-based surveys” conducted on a sample of 1.423 households outside of camps in 15 cities. 881 of these households were in “border cities” (Adana, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Mardin, Mersin, Şanlıurfa), 341 were in metropolitan cities (i.e. Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir), and 201 were in non-metropolitan cities. These surveys were conducted using CAPI (computer-assisted personal interviewing). In addition to the region quota (i.e. “border cities”, “metropolitan cities”, and “non-metropolitan cities”), the sample included quotas on socio-economic status, sex, and age groups of the respondents in order to include sufficient diversity. The research was conducted on a representative sample, for which city-based representation was taken into consideration. Like it was the case in SB-2019 and SB-2020, around 50 thousand Syrians were left outside of the research scope in SB-2020. Since the essence of SB research is to offer a vision for social cohesion, the selection of Syrians almost all of whom live in urban centers alongside with the Turkish society as the research subject reflects this mentality. In presenting comparisons between SB-2017, SB-2019, SB-2020, and SB-2021 only the data from Syrians living outside of camps were used for SB-2017.

**SB-2021-TABLE 70: SB-2021 Survey Regional Categories**

	Region	Cities	#	%	#	%
Border Region	Border cities	Adana, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Mardin, Mersin, Şanlıurfa	881	61,9	881	61,9
Other Cities	Metropolitan cities	Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir	341	24,0	542	38,1
	Non-Metropolitan cities	Bursa, Kayseri, Kocaeli, Konya	201	14,1		
Total			1423	100,0		

The household-based surveys with Syrians were conducted using CAPI method.<sup>185</sup> The surveys were conducted with an individual authorized to give information on behalf of the household. When determining the universe of the research, the average size of a household was determined to be 6. Total number of households, in turn, was calculated by dividing the

total number of Syrians in Türkiye by this average household size-  $3.737.369 / 6 = 622.895$ . The sample size was determined, according to these figures on a 95% confidence level and  $\pm 2,59$  confidence interval, to be 1.423. Since it was applied as a household survey, demographic information such as sex, age, education and occupation of 7,591 Syrians in 1423 households was obtained. The surveys with Syrians were conducted between 18 December 2021 and 19 January 2022.

To be able to make comparisons regarding social cohesion between regions where Syrians densely populate and those where relatively fewer Syrians live, three regional categories (border cities, metropolitan cities, and non-metropolitan cities) within two main regional categories (border region and other cities).

**SB-2021-TABLE 71: SB-2021 Syrians, City-based Sample**

	Cities	#	%		Cities	#	%
1	İstanbul	229	16,1	9	Konya	55	3,9
2	Hatay	197	13,8	10	Kilis	45	3,2
3	Gaziantep	182	12,8	11	Ankara	43	3,0
4	Şanlıurfa	181	12,7	12	Mardin	39	2,7
5	Adana	102	7,2	13	Kayseri	37	2,6
6	Mersin	100	7,0	14	Kahramanmaraş	35	2,5
7	Bursa	80	5,6	15	Kocaeli	31	2,2
8	İzmir	67	4,7		<b>Total</b>	<b>1.423</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Since SB-2020 was conducted on a representative sample selected on a  $\pm 2,6$  confidence interval, it is believed that, with certain reservations, it provides the most reliable and accurate information concerning the profile of all Syrians under temporary protection living outside of camps in Türkiye. However, it shouldn't be forgotten that the study bears no claim of presenting "the truths" or "absolute perceptions" or "the reality". Instead, being aware of its limitations, it attempts at approaching to the social reality the best way it can in such a dynamic and complex process.

## 2. Profile and Demographic Characteristics of Syrian Participants

**SB-2021-TABLE 72: Profile and Demographic Characteristics of Syrian Participants (15 cities - 1423 households - 7951 individuals)**

	#	%		#	%
Sex (Household Distribution)			Educational Attainment of Individuals in Households **		
Female	3690	48,6	Illiterate	876	14,4
Male	3901	51,4	Literate but not graduate of any school	1195	19,6
Total	7591	100,0	Primary school	2043	33,6
Age Groups in Households			Middle school	1135	18,7
0-5	1510	19,9	High-school or equivalent	573	9,4
6-11	1136	15,0	2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	97	1,6
12-17	1018	13,4	University	160	2,6
18-24	1112	14,6	Graduate degree / PhD	2	0,1
25-34	1195	15,7	Total	6081	100,0
35-44	816	10,8	Occupational Status of Individuals in Households*		
45-54	447	5,9	Working	1664	33,6
55-64	254	3,3	Housewife	1612	32,6
65 +	103	1,4	Student	889	18,0
Total	7591	100,0	Unemployed	527	10,7
Status in Türkiye of Individuals in Households			Unable to work/disabled or old	218	4,4
Temporary protection identification document	6884	90,7	Retired	35	0,7
Temporary protection registration document	603	7,9	Total	4945	100,0
No documents / Undocumented	50	0,7	Type of Jobs of Individuals in Households***		
Republic of Türkiye citizenship identification	31	0,4	Casual (daily) worker	1006	60,5
Residence permit	23	0,3	Regularly working at unregistered/uninsured jobs	338	20,3
Total	7591	100,0	Seasonal worker	104	6,3
Marital Status of Individuals in Households *			Self-employed / Artisan	93	5,6
Married	2962	59,9	Regularly working at registered jobs	78	4,7
Single/Never married	1749	35,4	Employer (Employing at least 1 individual)	41	2,4
Widowed	156	3,1	Unpaid family employee	4	0,2
Divorced	57	1,2	Total	1664	100,0
Separated	21	0,4			
Total	4945	100,0			

\* Results from individuals of at least 12 years of age. / \*\* Results from individuals of at least 6 years of age.

\*\*\* Results from individuals of at least 12 years of age who is reported to work at an income-generating work.

SB study covers Syrians under temporary protection in Türkiye. In this context, 98,6% (7.487) of the 7.591 individuals in the sample of 1.423 households are holders of either “Temporary Protection Identification Document” or “Temporary protection registration document”. The total number of individuals in these households with other statuses in Türkiye (no documents/undocumented, Turkish citizens, and residence permit holders) is 104. Since the survey was conducted on a household basis with one individual giving the information of individuals living in the household, demographic characteristics of the individuals living in the household could be different from those of the individual with whom the actual survey was conducted. 40,9% of the individuals with whom the surveys were conducted were female while the remaining 59,1% were male. However, 48,6% of the people in all households were female and 51,4% were male.

**SB-2021-TABLE 73: Distribution based on Sex**

Sex of Interviewed Individuals			Sex of Individuals in the Households		
	#	%		#	%
Female	582	40,9	Female	3690	48,6
Male	841	59,1	Male	3901	51,4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>7591</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**SB-2021-TABLE 74: Distribution based on Marital Status**

Marital Status of Interviewed Individuals (18 + year-olds)			Marital Status of Interviewed Individuals (12 + year-olds)		
	#	%		#	%
Single / Never married	1224	86,0	Single / Never married	2962	59,9
Married	86	6,1	Married	1749	35,4
Separated	69	4,8	Separated	156	3,1
Widowed	34	2,4	Widowed	57	1,2
Divorced	10	0,7	Divorced	21	0,4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>4945</b>	<b>100,</b>

**SB-2021-TABLE 75: Distribution based on Marital Status**

Legal Status of Interviewed Individuals			Legal Status of Individuals in the Household		
	#	%		#	%
Temporary protection identification document	1401	98,5	Temporary protection identification document	6884	90,7
Temporary protection registration document	22	1,5	No documents / Undocumented	603	7,9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>100,0</b>	Temporary protection registration document	50	0,7
			Republic of Türkiye citizenship identification	31	0,4
			Residence permit	23	0,3
			<b>Total</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>100,0</b>

As it was discussed in detail under the heading “General Educational Attainment Level of Syrians in Türkiye”, SB research contains significant information regarding educational attainment of Syrian community in Türkiye. All four SB fieldworks conducted in 2017, 2019, 2020, and 2021 reveal that the average educational attainment among Syrians is significantly lower than the Turkish average. Even though there has been an important improvement in the educational averages with the incorporation of Syrian children to Turkish public schools after 2016, the number of Syrians with little or no education still appears to be very high. The total share of “illiterate” and “literate but not graduate of any school” was 30,3% in SB-2017, 24,9% in SB-2019, 26,5% in SB-2020, and 34% in SB-2021. This situation closely concerns the social structure, habits, expectations, efficiency and, more importantly, the education processes of Syrian children who are or will be schooled in Türkiye.

**SB-2021-TABLE 76: Distribution based on Educational Attainment  
(Individuals in the Households)**

\* Results from individuals of at least 6 years of age.

	SB-2017		SB-2019		SB-2020		SB-2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Illiterate	1200	18,5	436	8,2	513	9,0	876	14,4
Literate but not graduate of any school	768	11,8	891	16,7	995	17,5	1195	19,6
Primary school	1817	28,0	1690	31,7	2167	38,1	2043	33,6
Middle school	1278	19,7	1170	22,0	1082	19,0	1135	18,7
High-school or equivalent	709	10,9	608	11,4	532	9,4	573	9,4
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	213	3,3	141	2,7	110	2,0	97	1,6
University	463	7,1	373	7,0	279	4,9	160	2,6
Graduate degree / PhD	37	0,6	15	0,3	6	0,1	2	0,1
Total	6485	100,0	5324	100,0	5684	100,0	6081	100,0

**Education and Knowledge of Language**

SB-2021 tried to learn about Syrians’ level of fluency in Turkish language based upon their subjective evaluations and statements. The respondents were asked “at what level do the individuals know Turkish?” Of all the individuals on whom data was collected, 20,2% were reported to be at an “advanced” level, while 30,3% were “intermediate”. It needs to be remembered that the data comes from an individual at each household who gave information regarding other individuals living with them. They are presented here to give an impression and should be treated as such. Moreover, what is meant by “advanced level Turkish” is very difficult to know. It may refer to having the ability to “understand / be understood” in Turk-

ish in the daily life. In fact, it was found that 7% of the illiterate individuals were reported to be at an advanced level in Turkish.

**SB-2021-TABLE 77: At what level do the individuals know Turkish? (At least 6 years of age)**

	#	%
Mother Tongue	293	4,8
Advanced	1229	20,2
Intermediate	1841	30,3
Beginner	1631	26,8
Don't know at all	1087	17,9
Total	6081	100,0

As in the SB-2020 study, it is observed that those who do not "speak Turkish at all" in SB-2021 occur more frequently among women, at the age of 45 and above, and lower education levels.

**SB-2021-TABLE 78: At what level do the individuals know Turkish? (%)**

	Mother Tongue	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginner	Don't know at all
<b>Sex</b>					
Female	5,0	18,5	24,4	28,4	23,7
Male	4,6	21,8	35,7	25,4	12,5
<b>Age Groups</b>					
6-11	4,6	19,6	30,1	27,4	18,3
12-17	5,5	42,0	35,2	11,4	5,9
18-24	5,0	27,2	32,0	21,9	13,9
25-34	5,0	14,1	37,5	28,7	14,7
35-44	3,7	9,2	28,5	38,6	20,0
45-54	5,2	4,0	17,5	40,9	32,4
55-64	3,9	4,3	6,7	37,4	47,7
65	5,8	2,0	8,7	24,3	59,2
<b>Educational Attainment</b>					
Illiterate	5,0	7,0	16,3	26,7	45,0
Literate but not graduate of any school	5,9	18,5	35,3	28,7	11,6
Primary school	5,3	21,1	30,9	26,7	16,0
Middle school	3,9	26,3	31,3	25,4	13,1
High-school or equivalent	3,5	27,1	33,5	25,6	10,3
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	-	21,6	39,2	34,0	5,2
University/Graduate degree/ PhD	3,7	24,7	37,0	25,3	9,3
General	4,8	20,2	30,3	26,8	17,9



## Focus Group Discussions

FGDs are particularly instrumental in getting a deeper understanding of the experiences and opinions of Syrians. While representativeness was not aimed in the FGDs, a significant degree of diversity was intended so that different opinions and experiences of various groups of specific attention would be obtained in addition to obtaining insights about large groups. Therefore, instead of inviting random groups, each FGD aimed at bringing together individuals with specific profiles.

In this context, 14 FGDs were conducted with Syrian participants. The greatest number of FGDs were conducted with groups of women. The reason for this was the desire to be aware of gender-specific experiences as well as to include women’s perspectives, expectations, and opinions. Besides women, FGDs were conducted with Syrians from different occupational groups. These included in SB-2021, “students”, “academics”, lawyers”, “artisans”, “workers”, “local journalists”, and “NGO workers”. FGDs took place in 4 border cities where dense Syrian populations live (Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Hatay, and Mardin) in addition to 2 metropolitan cities (İstanbul and Ankara) in December 2021-January 2022. These FGDs were moderated by SB research team’s Syrian senior expert in Arabic. In addition, at least one other member of the research team participated in each FGD with the help of a translator. Each FGD hosted 6 to 13 participants (on average 8 persons), reaching in total the views of 114 individuals through 14 FGDs.

**SB-2021-TABLE 79: SB-2021 FGDs with Syrians**

CITIES		Syrian (uTP) Categories
Metropolitan Cities	İstanbul	* Artisan/Workers (6) * Students (7) * Journalists (8)
	Ankara	* Students (9) * Women (8)
Border Cities	Hatay	* Lawyers (7) * Women (9)
	Gaziantep	* Women (7) * Artisan/Workers (6) * Artisan/Workers (7) * NGO Workers (10)
	Mardin	* Academics (8) * Students (9)
	Şanlıurfa	*Students (13)
	<b>TOTAL</b>	14 FGDs 114 participants (on average 8 persons per FGD) 6 Cities





SYRIANS BAROMETER  
2021

# 6

SYRIANS (uTP)  
FINDINGS

## IV- B. SB-2021: SYRIANS RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 1. How do Syrians Make Their Living in Türkiye?

How the Syrians in Türkiye make their living is a controversial topic and has a significant influence on social cohesion. Even though Syrians were legally provided with the right to work since 15 January 2016, conditional upon the invitation of an employer who is willing to pay them at least the minimum wage, it is known that a very large part of Syrians in Türkiye work informally. According to the latest figures released by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security<sup>186</sup>, the number of Syrians with a work permit in Türkiye was 63.789 in 2019 and **62.369** in 2020<sup>187</sup>. There is, however, no additional information concerning a breakdown of this number based on legal status of Syrians such as under temporary protection or living with a residence permit.

The most important financial support program for Syrians under temporary protection in Türkiye is the Social Cohesion Assistance (SUY / Kızılay Card). Provided through EU funds, this financial support of 120 TL per person per month benefits 1.8 million individuals under international protection in Türkiye, 1.6 million of whom are Syrians and the rest are individuals with other nationalities under international protection. This financial support was distributed as 155 TL per person per month in 2021.<sup>188</sup>

When asked the question "Have you received assistance from any institution or individual in the last 12 months?", those who said yes were 22% in SB-2017, 36,3% in SB-2019, and 46,2% in SB-2020. The latter increase can probably be attributed to the increase in financial assistance in various forms due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In SB-2021, in turn, this rate decreased to 31,8%.

#### SB-2021-TABLE 80: Have you received assistance from any institution or individual in the last 12 months?

	2017		2019		2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	195	22,0	515	36,3	653	46,2	452	31,8
No	684	77,1	896	63,2	759	53,7	968	68,0
No idea / No response	8	0,9	7	0,5	2	0,1	3	0,2
<b>Total</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1418</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1414</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>100,0</b>

186 Labor and Social Security Ministry (2020) Yabancıların Çalışma İzinleri-2019 / Work Permits of Foreigners-2019, <https://www.csgb.gov.tr/istatistikler/calisma-hayati-istatistikleri/resmi-istatistik-programi/yabancilarin-calisma-izinleri/> (Access: 22.05.2021)

187 T.C. Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı <https://www.csgb.gov.tr/media/87487/yabanciizin2020.pdf>

188 SUY supports started with a monthly payment of 120 TL, which was increased to 155 TL in 2021 and 230 TL in 2022 (Social Cohesion Assistance for Foreigners (SUY) Program: <https://platform.kizilaykart.org/tr/suy.html> (Access: 10.09.2022). When SUY payments are calculated in Euros, while 120 TL paid in December 2016, when the program started, corresponded to 32 € (1€ = 3.66 TL), it decreased to 12.61 € in December 2020 (1€ = 9.51 TL). The SUY aid, which was 150 TL in 2021, increased to 15 € again in June 2021 rate (1€=10.4 TL). In June 2022, the equivalent of 230 TL (1€ = 17TL) was 13.5 €.

When those who said “yes” were further asked where this assistance came from, more than 90% reported that they received support from SUY/Kızılay Card in SB-2019 and SB-2020. This share dropped to 73,9% in SB-2021. “UN organs (UNHCR, IOM, WFP, UNDP, UNICEF, etc.)”, an option added for the first time in SB-2021, was mentioned by 10,2%, “International Organizations” by 3,3% and “PTT” by 2,2%. It can be said that this situation is due to the fact that Syrians do not have enough information about which support program they receive financial support from, rather than the diversification of support programs for Syrians. It is noteworthy that, after scoring a significant decline in 2020, support programs by municipalities received a surge in SB-2021 (SB-2019: 7%; SB-2020: 2,1%; SB-2021:6,2%)

**SB-2021-TABLE 81: Where have you received the assistance from? (Multiple response)**

		2019		2020		2021	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
1	Kızılay Card / SUY	481	93,4	592	90,7	334	73,9
2	UN Organs (UNHCR, IOM, WFP, UNDP, UNICEF, etc.)	-	-	-	-	46	10,2
3	Municipalities	36	7,0	14	2,1	28	6,2
4	International Organizations	10	1,9	60	9,2	15	3,3
5	Civil Society Organizations	20	3,9	32	4,9	12	2,7
6	Family/relatives in Syria	11	2,1	-	-	10	2,2
7	PTT	-	-	-	-	10	2,2
8	Other	12	2,3	32	4,9	20	4,4
	No idea / I don't know	-	-	3	0,5	5	1,1

\* Results from respondents who stated that they have received assistance in the last 12 months.

As presented earlier, Turkish society has a significantly different perception on this matter. More than 80% of the Turkish society in all three SB studies (86,2% in SB-2017; 84,5% in SB-2019; 80,6% in SB-2020; and 82,5% in SB-2021) believe that Syrians make their living through “the support of Turkish state”. Naturally, such a perception amongst Turkish society leads to Syrians being seen as a burden on the Turkish state and society. Additionally, 54,2% of the Turkish respondents in SB-2017, 65,1% in SB-2019, 53,1% in SB-2020, and 49,9% in SB-2021 reported believing that Syrians make their living through “begging”. The share of those Turkish respondents who suggested that Syrians work to make their living in Türkiye was 49,8% in SB-2017, 50,9% in SB-2019, 49,7% in SB-2020 (3<sup>rd</sup> rank), and 64,2% in SB-2021 (2<sup>nd</sup> rank).

## 2. Working Status of Syrians and Sources of Livelihood

Rules and guidelines regarding the working of Syrians in Türkiye are regulated by the 29th Article of the Temporary Protection Regulation which was adopted on 22 October 2014 in the framework of the LFIP<sup>189</sup>. Based on this regulation, the “Directive on Working Permits for Foreigners Under Temporary Protection” was adopted on 15 January 2016.<sup>190</sup> As stated above, in the 2019 data of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, the number of work permits given to Syrian Arab Republic citizens is 63,789 out of a total of 145,232 work permits given to foreigners. In the Ministry’s 2020 data, the number of work permits issued to Syrian Arab Republic citizens, out of a total of 123,574 work permits issued to foreigners, decreased by 1,420 compared to the previous year and became 62,369. However, it is known that the actual number of working Syrians is much higher than this. In a context where more than 98% of Syrians live outside of camps, there isn’t any source of readily available regular income for Syrians, apart from some exceptional programs such as the SUY program which is funded by the EU and from which around 1.6 million Syrians benefit by receiving a monthly payment of 120 TL. Moreover, it is obvious that not only those Syrians who don’t benefit from the SUY program, but also those who do benefit from it need to work as 155 TL per person is not sufficient for people living in urban contexts. Considering that at most 40% of the Syrians in Türkiye received limited financial support after 2016 through SUY aid, more than 90% of them live in urban areas and the total number of Syrian households is around 600-650 thousand, it would not be an exaggeration to estimate that the number of Syrians working in Türkiye is around 1 million. As mentioned in the “Regulations Concerning the Right to Work” section above, the ILO study, which was announced in 2020 but analyzed 2017 data, estimates the number of Syrians working in Türkiye to be 940 thousand.<sup>191</sup>

Using the advantage of being implemented as a household survey, SB studies obtain -albeit limited- details regarding the working and occupations of Syrians. Accordingly, respondents were asked whether they, i.e. themselves and any member of the household over the age of 12, “are currently working in an income-generating job”. Results suggest that 37,9% of Syrians in SB-2019, 29,4% in SB-2020, and 33,6% in SB-2021 were “actively working”.

As of December 2021, the number of Syrians above the age of 12 was around 2,4 million. When the percentage detected by this research (33,6%) is taken into consideration, the number of Syrians above the age of 12 who are actively working can be estimated to be between 800 thousand and 1.1 million. In the above cited study, “Syrian Refugees in Turkish Labor Market”, ILO estimates this figure in 2017 to be 940 thousand.<sup>192</sup> When SB-2019, SB-2020, and SB-2020 findings are compared, it appears that while this rate decreased in 2020, probably due to the effects of pandemic, it increased again in 2021. In a fitting way,

189 Regulation on Temporary Protection, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/10/20141022-15-1.pdf> (Access: 10.05.2019)

190 Regulation on the Working Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection, Official Gazette (15.01.2016) (<http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/3.5.20168375.pdf>) (Access: 20.10.2019).

191 See. Luis Pinedo Caro (2020) “Syrian Refugees in the Turkish Labor Market”, ILO Türkiye (9 February 2020), p. 13. ([https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-ankara/documents/publication/wcms\\_739463.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-ankara/documents/publication/wcms_739463.pdf)) (Access: 01.08.2022)

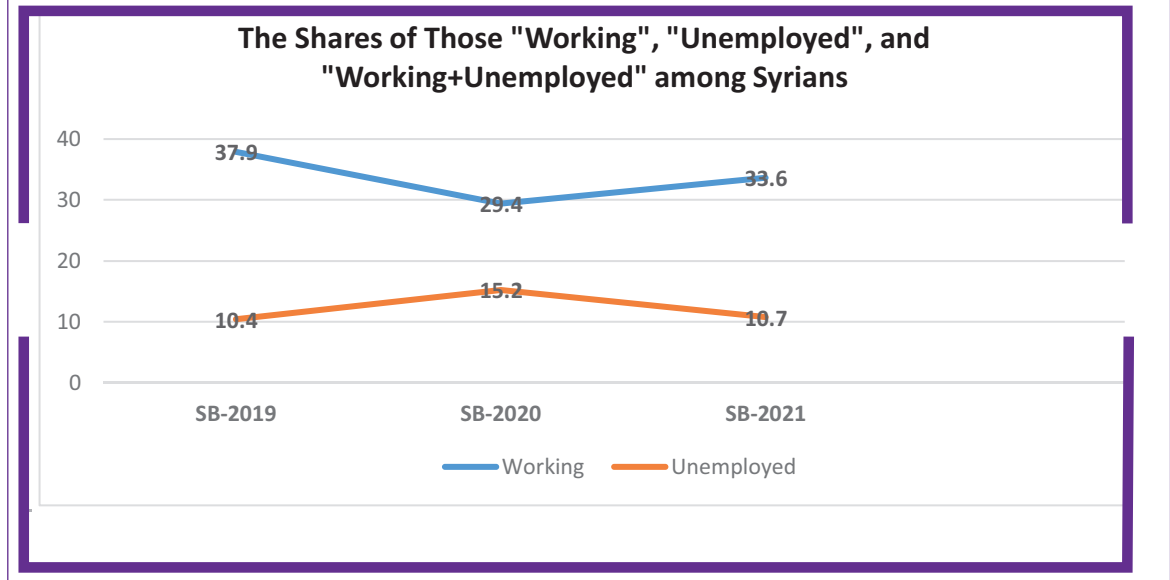
192 ILO in this study makes this statement within the framework of the age group of 15 and over. See ILO Syrians in The Turkish Labour Market, Data from TURKSTAT Household Labour Force Survey (HHLFS) 2017, [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-ankara/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_738618.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---ilo-ankara/documents/genericdocument/wcms_738618.pdf) (Access: 18.03.2020)

while the rate of those who define themselves or relative members of their household as "unemployed" was 10.4% in SB-2019, it increased to 15.2% in SB-2020 and decreased back to 10.7% in SB-2021. The sum of those actively working and those declaring to be unemployed appears to be around 45% at active working age.

**SB-2021-TABLE 82 (+FIGURE): Profile of working status among Syrians in the Households**

		SB-2019		SB-2020		SB-2021	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
1	Working	1.648	37,9	1343	29,4	1664	33,6
2	Housewife	1.420	32,7	1488	32,5	1612	32,6
3	Student	635	14,6	900	19,7	889	18,0
4	Unemployed	451	10,4	697	15,2	527	10,7
5	Unable to work / disabled or old	182	4,2	136	3,0	218	4,4
6	Retired	7	0,2	10	0,2	35	0,7
<b>Total</b>		<b>4.343</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4.574</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>4.945</b>	<b>100,0</b>

\* Results from individuals who are 12 years old or older.



The employment status of Syrians in Türkiye by gender indicates a highly unbalanced situation. While the proportion of women among the total working Syrians was 7,8% in SB-2020, it was 6,3% in SB-2021. When the active working age group is taken into account, the rate which is 65,4% in men decreases to 4,4% in women. According to TUIK data, as of January 2021, the labor force participation rate among Turkish citizens is 50,3%. The labor force participation rate is 69,4% for men and 31,5% for women.<sup>193</sup>

193 TUIK: Labor Force Statistics, January 2021, <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Isgucu-Istatistikleri-I-Ceyrek:-Ocak--Mart,-2021-37545> (Access: 29.05.2021)

**SB-2021-TABLE 83: Profile of working status among Syrians in the Households**

	#	%
Working	1664	33,6
Female	105	6,3
Male	1559	93,7

The data obtained from the SB studies also reveal that the labor force participation rate of Syrian women is far below the Türkiye average. Of the Syrian women, 32,7% in SB-2019, 32,5% in SB-2020, and 32,6% in SB-2021 defined themselves as “housewives”.

**SB-2021-TABLE 84: Profile of working status among Syrians in the Households**

	#	%
Female (aged 12 +)	2412	65,4*
Working	105	4,4
Male (aged 12 +)	2533	64,9**
Working	1559	61,5
* Percentage among all females		
** Percentage among all males		

The share of Syrians who are younger than 18 (12-17 year-olds) among the working population appears to remain stable, which was 7,7% in SB-2019, 6,9% in SB-2020, and 7,4% in SB-2021.

**SB-2021-TABLE 85: Age Distribution of Those Who are Working in the Households**

	SB-2019		SB-2020		SB-2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
12 years old	5	3,9	1	1.1	0	0
13 years old	7	5,5	6	6,4	9	7,3
14 years old	12	9,4	9	9,7	12	9,8
15 years old	29	22,7	13	14,0	24	19,5
16 years old	32	25,0	30	32,2	30	24,4
17 years old	43	33,5	34	36,6	48	39,0
Total	128	100,0	93	100,0	123	100,0

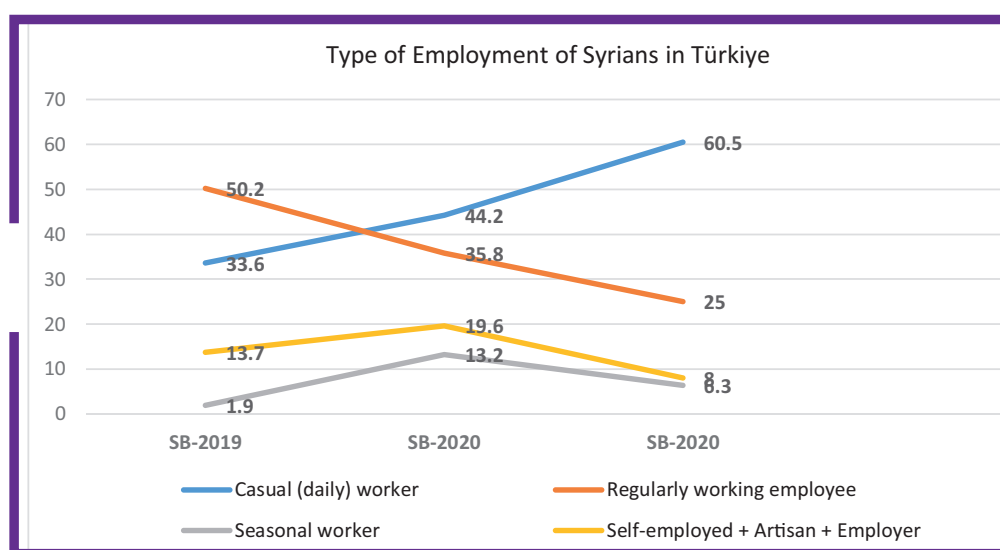
The findings related to the types of work Syrians are involved with and which statuses they have are noteworthy. It is observed that while 50,2% of Syrian respondents reported being “regularly working employees” in SB-2019, it was 35,8% in SB-2020 and it further decreased to 25% in SB-2021. This is the sum of “regularly working employee” and “regularly working at registered jobs”, which was added to the options for the first time in SB-2021.



There is a significant fall in the numbers of Syrians regularly working. This has reflected to the number of those working as “casual (daily) workers”. In SB-2019, those who were involved in such “casual (daily)” work constituted 33,6% of working Syrians. Their share has increased to 44,2% in SB-2020 and 60,5% in SB-2021. In other words, it appears that more Syrians are involved in insecure and precarious works. The combined share of those Syrians who are self-employed, artisans and business people was 13,7% in SB-2019, 6,4% in SB-2020, and 8% in SB-2021.

**SB-2021-TABLE 86 (+FIGURE): Type of Employment of Individuals in Households (12 + year-olds)**

		SB-2019		SB-2020		SB-2021	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
1	Casual (daily) worker	553	33,6	593	44,2	1006	60,5
2	Regularly working employee	828	50,2	481	35,8	338	20,3
3	Seasonal worker	32	1,9	178	13,2	104	6,3
4	Self-employed / Artisan	184	11,2	66	4,9	93	5,6
5	Regularly working at registered jobs*	-	-	-	-	78	4,7
6	Employer (employing 1 or more individuals)	41	2,5	20	1,5	41	2,4
7	Unpaid family employee	10	0,6	5	0,4	4	0,2
<b>Total</b>		<b>1648</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1343</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1.664</b>	<b>100,0</b>



\* The option “Regularly working at registered jobs” was added in SB-2021.

Any possible link between Syrians' working status and their knowledge of Turkish language is investigated through cross-tables. Accordingly; 24% of those who reported that Turkish was their mother tongue or that they know Turkish on an advanced level are actively working. On the other end of the spectrum, 31,7% of those Syrian respondents who know Turkish on a beginner level or not at all are actively working. The rate of employees in the group who state that they know Turkish at an intermediate level is 44.3%. This situation reveals that knowing the language does not provide an advantage for Syrians to work in Türkiye. The linear relationship between knowing Turkish and education level shows that educated people who expect a qualified job generally have less chance of finding a job.

**SB-2021-TABLE 87: Level of Turkish knowledge (%) X Type of Employment of individuals in the households**

Type of employment	Mother Tongue	Ad- vanced	Interme- diate	Beginner	Don't know at all
Casual (daily) worker	5,1	17,9	44,2	24,9	7,9
Regularly working at unregistered/ uninsured jobs	2,4	22,8	43,8	25,1	5,9
Seasonal worker	2,9	19,2	48,1	24,0	5,8
Self-employed / Artisan	4,3	16,1	34,4	39,8	5,4
Regularly working at registered jobs	7,7	28,2	51,3	11,5	1,3
Employer (employing 1 or more individuals)	19,5	12,2	48,8	9,8	9,8
Unpaid family employee *	-	25,0	50,0	25,0	-
<b>General</b>	<b>4,8</b>	<b>19,2</b>	<b>44,3</b>	<b>24,7</b>	<b>7,0</b>

\*\* Results from 4 individuals.  
Note: These are the results from 1664 people aged 12 and over who said they were working in any income generating job.

### **FGD Findings (SB-2021-S)**

Participants in FGDs with Syrians stated that they mostly wanted to work with insurance, but this was not preferred by the employer. They even underline that there is a perception in Turkish society that “Syrians work informally and they want to work this way”, but on the contrary, according to the participants, this is due to employers.

- ▶ *“The Turks look at us as criminals in this regard, but the situation is actually the opposite. Of course, we want to work in an insured way. Most of my friends had work accidents and nobody helped them and they became unemployed.” (Gaziantep- SR- Worker)*

On the subject of work permits, most of the participants stated that the majority of Syrians have to accept working at unregistered and uninsured jobs for low wages due to the current policies and the difficulties created by it. For these reasons, it was also emphasized that the grievances of Syrians who had to work in precarious environments and even had occupational accidents from time to time increased. Importantly, the participants pointed out that working conditions also lead to unfair competition between Turkish and Syrian workers. According to the participants, there is an expectation from the state in facilitating the process of obtaining work permits and enabling especially qualified immigrants to find jobs suitable for their qualifications.

- ▶ *“Syrian workers are experiencing large and serious problems. Because they do not have work permits, employers employ workers cheaply. Some of them do not pay their salaries and do not pay any compensation in case of work accidents. They don't even pay for the hospital.” (Gaziantep -SR- Workers)*
- ▶ *“Employers do not want to employ Syrians legally. Most of them want to have Syrians work for low wages. If Turkish employers do not receive a serious warning, this situation will continue.” (Gaziantep-SR- NGO Workers)*
- ▶ *“The work permit process takes a very long time, sometimes 3 months, sometimes 4-5 months. Although I am an employer, the procedure is very slow and conditions are constantly changing. If I am having such a hard time, then what should the workers and other Syrians do?” (Istanbul- SR- Workers)*
- ▶ *“I wish work permit processes and procedures were concluded easier and faster. Türkiye started to experience serious economic problems after COVID and we are working to be beneficial to both ourselves and Türkiye, it will be much more beneficial for everyone if we deal with our business instead of dealing with such things.” (Istanbul - SR- Workers)*

### 3. Problem Areas of Syrians

It was intended to know more about the problems faced by Syrians who have come to Türkiye since April 2011 and have lived in Türkiye for more than 5 years on average. So, questions were posed in 7 categories in SB-2017 and SB-2019 and in 9 categories in SB-2020 and SB-2021 to learn about the problem areas and analyze their effects on social cohesion. It appears that the responses given to the question "Please state to what extent do you experience problems regarding the following areas" in SB-2017, SB-2019, SB-2020, and SB-2021 remain quite consistent in terms of the ranking of problem areas. For instance, at the top of the list has been "working conditions" across all SB surveys. However, when the percentages of the responses are scrutinized, it appears that while there was a slight decrease in the intensity of problems from SB-2017 to SB-2019, which depicts a more optimistic picture; it is observed that problems are increasing again in SB-2020 and SB-2021. It seems safe to think that the pandemic in SB-2020 and the politicization of the process in SB-2021 have a significant role in this change.

**SB-2021-TABLE 88: 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
<b>Average score</b>		<b>2,7</b>	<b>2,6</b>	<b>2,8</b>	<b>2,7</b>
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)		

The most significant problem area for Syrians out of the 9 topics appears to be working conditions in SB-2021. It is followed by provision of food, that is, in reaching daily food needs, language/communication problems, cost of living, and housing. The remarkable change in the catalog of problems of Syrians is the increasing trend in the complaints about "discrimination". SB-2017, SB-2019 and SB-2020 studies show us that Syrians are most satisfied with health services. The subjects that Syrians complain about the least are generally security and education. However, despite all this time and common life, it is noteworthy that Syrians state the language/communication issue as a third-order problem. Although the limited opportunities for language learning are understandable, it is understood that the interest is not high enough.

**SB-2021-TABLE 89: Please state to what extent you experience problems as a family regarding the following areas. (%)\***

		Experiencing a lot of problems	Experiencing problems	COMBINED PROBLEMS	Sometimes experiencing, sometimes not experiencing problems	Not experiencing problems	Not experiencing problems at all	COMBINED NO PROBLEMS	No idea / No response
<b>SB-2017</b>									
1	Health	5,0	15,9	20,9	15,0	55,8	7,8	63,6	0,5
2	Accommodation	10,4	15,6	26,0	16,5	49,7	7,0	56,7	0,8
3	Discrimination	8,5	16,6	25,1	18,5	45,0	7,7	52,7	3,7
4	Education	6,9	11,4	18,3	13,4	40,5	10,1	50,6	17,7
5	Food	5,7	15,3	21,0	28,2	44,2	5,9	50,1	0,7
6	Communication (language)	16,7	23,7	40,4	23,8	26,9	7,0	33,9	1,9
7	Working conditions	17,8	32,5	50,3	17,6	25,0	2,4	27,4	4,7
<b>SB-2019</b>									
1	Health	5,3	11,7	17,0	14,6	65,4	2,3	67,7	0,7
2	Education	3,0	4,4	7,4	10,1	61,9	3,5	65,4	17,1
3	Discrimination	9,0	12,1	21,1	14,4	59,8	2,0	61,8	2,7
4	Accommodation	8,7	17,6	26,3	15,5	55,0	2,8	57,8	0,4
5	Food	5,6	21,1	26,7	19,0	49,7	1,0	50,7	3,6
6	Communication (language)	11,3	21,9	33,2	17,7	44,3	4,1	48,4	0,7
7	Working conditions	9,6	26,6	36,2	18,4	43,1	0,9	44,0	1,4
<b>SB-2020</b>									
1	Discrimination	5,0	7,8	12,8	10,5	67,3	7,9	75,2	1,5
2	Protection/Legal support	5,3	5,0	10,3	8,6	63,7	10,7	74,4	6,7
3	Education	5,5	16,3	21,8	14,4	48,5	7,1	55,6	8,2
4	Communication (language)	7,5	14,4	21,9	26,9	43,6	4,7	48,3	2,9
5	Health	12,7	26,4	39,1	12,9	42,4	5,0	47,4	0,6
6	Accommodation	9,3	31,2	40,5	15,2	37,4	6,1	43,5	0,8
7	Food	10,3	38,2	48,5	16,8	29,2	4,9	34,1	0,6
8	Working conditions	15,5	41,6	57,1	16,1	22,6	3,5	26,1	0,7
<b>SB-2021</b>									
1	Security	4,1	10,2	14,3	11,1	60,4	11,9	72,3	2,2
2	Protection/Legal support	7,1	15,0	22,1	11,9	53,8	6,9	60,7	5,3
3	Health	6,0	20,7	26,7	13,2	49,1	10,3	59,4	0,7
4	Education	4,1	16,4	20,5	13,2	41,6	7,9	49,5	16,8
5	Accommodation	9,3	22,9	32,2	18,9	43,5	4,7	48,2	0,7
6	Discrimination	8,6	22,3	30,9	17,8	41,7	5,9	47,6	3,7
7	Provision of food	9,1	28,8	37,9	21,4	36,5	3,9	40,4	0,3
8	Communication (language)	8,5	27,3	35,8	23,6	34,4	5,1	39,5	1,1
9	Working conditions	16,0	34,4	50,4	20,9	24,9	2,5	27,4	1,2
<p>* The ranking is made for each Barometer from the area with least problems to the one with most problems. The first two areas with the most stated problems are marked in blue in the first column.</p> <p>** The options "Protection/Legal support" and "Security" were added in SB-2020 and SB-2021, respectively. The option "Food" was changed to "Provision of food" in SB-2021.</p>									

In all four SB studies, "working conditions" ranks first among the issues that Syrians complain about. The combined share of those who stated having experienced problems in this area was 50,3% in SB-2017, 36,2% in SB-2019, 57,1% in SB-2020, and 50,4% in SB-2021.

It seems that the problems experienced in health and education are closely related to the conditions of the pandemic period.

**SB-2021-TABLE 90: Please state to what extent do you experience problems as a family regarding the following areas. (%)**

Problem Areas		Experiencing a lot of problems	Experiencing problems	COMBINED PROBLEMS	Sometimes experiencing, sometimes not experiencing problems	Not experiencing problems	Not experiencing problems at all	COMBINED NO PROBLEMS	No idea / No response
Working conditions	2021	16,0	34,4	50,4	20,9	24,9	2,5	27,4	1,2
	2020	15,5	41,6	57,1	16,1	22,6	3,5	26,1	0,7
	2019	9,6	26,6	36,2	18,4	43,1	0,9	44,0	1,4
	2017	17,8	32,5	50,3	17,6	25,0	2,4	27,4	4,7
Provision of food	2021	9,1	28,8	37,9	21,4	36,5	3,9	40,4	0,3
	2020	10,3	38,2	48,5	16,8	29,2	4,9	34,1	0,6
	2019	5,6	21,1	26,7	19,0	49,7	1,0	50,7	3,6
	2017	5,7	15,3	21,0	28,2	44,2	5,9	50,1	0,7
Accommodation	2021	9,3	22,9	32,2	18,9	43,5	4,7	48,2	0,7
	2020	9,3	31,2	40,5	15,2	37,4	6,1	43,5	0,8
	2019	8,7	17,6	26,3	15,5	55,0	2,8	57,8	0,4
	2017	10,4	15,6	26,0	16,5	49,7	7,0	56,7	0,8
Health	2021	6,0	20,7	26,7	13,2	49,1	10,3	59,4	0,7
	2020	12,7	26,4	39,1	12,9	42,4	5,0	47,4	0,6
	2019	5,3	11,7	17,0	14,6	65,4	2,3	67,7	0,7
	2017	5,0	15,9	20,9	15,0	55,8	7,8	63,6	0,5
Communication (Language)	2021	8,5	27,3	35,8	23,6	34,4	5,1	39,5	1,1
	2020	7,5	14,4	21,9	26,9	43,6	4,7	48,3	2,9
	2019	11,3	21,9	33,2	17,7	44,3	4,1	48,4	0,7
	2017	16,7	23,7	40,4	23,8	26,9	7,0	33,9	1,9
Education	2021	4,1	16,4	20,5	13,2	41,6	7,9	49,5	16,8
	2020	5,5	16,3	21,8	14,4	48,5	7,1	55,6	8,2
	2019	3,0	4,4	7,4	10,1	61,9	3,5	65,4	17,1
	2017	6,9	11,4	18,3	13,4	40,5	10,1	50,6	17,7
Discrimination	2021	8,6	22,3	30,9	17,8	41,7	5,9	47,6	3,7
	2020	5,0	7,8	12,8	10,5	67,3	7,9	75,2	1,5
	2019	9,0	12,1	21,1	14,4	59,8	2,0	61,8	2,7
	2017	8,5	16,6	25,1	18,5	45,0	7,7	52,7	3,7

(The option "protection /legal support", which was used for the first time in SB-2020, and the option "security" that was used for the first time in SB-2021 are not included in this table because they do not allow for a comparison.)

In the demographic analysis of the data obtained in SB-2020 and SB-2021 on the areas where Syrian families have problems, it appears that not only men and women identify problem areas differently from one another, but also women report having experienced more problems than men in every proposed problem area.

**SB-2021-TABLE 91: Please state to what extent do you experience problems as a family regarding the following areas. (%) Sex**

		Experiencing a lot of problems	Experiencing problems	COMBINED PROBLEMS	Sometimes experiencing, sometimes not experiencing problems	Not experiencing problems	Not experiencing problems at all	COMBINED NO PROBLEMS	No idea / No response
Accommodation	Female	11,0	28,2	39,2	18,6	39,3	1,9	41,2	1,0
	Male	8,1	19,3	27,4	19,1	46,4	6,7	53,1	0,4
Health	Female	6,0	28,7	34,7	15,0	44,3	5,3	49,6	0,7
	Male	6,1	15,2	21,3	12,0	52,3	13,7	66,0	0,7
Provision of food	Female	9,8	34,9	44,7	23,1	30,1	1,9	32,0	0,2
	Male	8,6	24,6	33,2	20,1	40,9	5,4	46,3	0,4
Working conditions	Female	15,3	40,7	56,0	21,3	19,6	0,9	20,5	2,2
	Male	16,5	30,1	46,6	20,6	28,7	3,7	32,4	0,4
Education	Female	3,8	23,0	26,8	12,4	37,8	5,5	43,3	17,5
	Male	4,3	11,8	16,1	13,8	44,2	9,6	53,8	16,3
Discrimination	Female	6,5	28,2	34,7	16,3	39,0	4,3	43,3	5,7
	Male	10,1	18,3	28,4	18,8	43,5	7,0	50,5	2,3
Communication (Language)	Female	8,4	36,4	44,8	22,5	28,0	2,7	30,7	2,0
	Male	8,6	20,9	29,5	24,3	38,9	6,7	45,6	0,6
Protection/ Legal support	Female	5,7	20,3	26,0	9,5	54,8	3,1	57,9	6,6
	Male	8,1	11,4	19,5	13,6	53,0	9,5	62,5	4,4
Security	Female	4,3	13,4	17,7	10,8	62,4	6,0	68,4	3,1
	Male	3,9	8,0	11,9	11,3	59,1	16,1	75,2	1,6

According to SB-2021 data, the overall average of those who reported having experienced problems was 31%. The average among women is 36%, which is almost 10 points higher than the average among men (25,9%).

**FGD Findings (SB-2021-S)**

The Syrian participants were asked how they generally evaluated the policies and practices towards Syrians in Türkiye in FGDs, and the criticisms of the participants and their expectations for change regarding the policies are discussed in detail below. It should be noted that while a significant number of participants expressed their satisfaction with some policies and practices towards Syrians in Türkiye, the most prominent policy and public service area among them was “health services” – as also seen in the survey results. As a matter of fact, it is remarkable that no criticism or improvement expectation has been expressed in this field.

On the other hand, the issues that stand out in terms of policy and implementation problems and the expectation of change include diploma equivalence, job finding processes, difficulties in learning Turkish, travel and settlement restrictions, practices in working life, the uncertainties brought about by the temporary protection status, decisions of refoulement, and the argument that the state does not adequately fight the increasing “discrimination” against Syrians in society. In some of these problem areas, important opinions were put forward in FGDs:

**Language Problems: Communication with Local Society and Public Institutions**

Many of the OGG participants stated that they had problems due to not being able to speak Turkish, because of which they reported having had difficulties in carrying out their business, especially in public institutions. Some participants also stated that they applied to Syrian and other Arab consultancy companies to act as intermediaries in order to reach public institutions due to the fact that Syrians do not speak Turkish, and that they had to ask these people for help and pay them money to get their work done.

- ▶ *“Those who speak Turkish now open a consultancy company and ask us for money to issue official documents. Those who do not speak Turkish pay them money instead of waiting at the PMM Office for eight hours (...) If there was no language problem and they opened free language courses to us like EU countries, this money would not go to these companies.” (Istanbul - SR- Workers)*
- ▶ *“We Syrians have a hard time communicating with people around us because we still don’t know the language.” (Ankara- SR- Student)*

**Discrimination:**

A large part of the FGD participants stated that especially their children were exposed to discrimination at school and underlined that their psychology was harmed as a result. It is noteworthy that it is stated that discrimination against Syrian children at school comes from both students and teachers. It is another point to note that issues such as peer bullying and discrimination in schools are encountered at an equal level both in metropolitan and border provinces.

- ▶ *“Unfortunately, discrimination has increased in schools recently.” (Ankara- SR-Women)*



- ▶ *“Even though our children go to Turkish schools and now only speak Turkish at home, they are sometimes discriminated against by Turkish students and sometimes by teachers.” (Hatay- SR- Women)*
- ▶ *“When I walk down the street with my daughter, she walks 50 meters away from me and finally she explained to me why. My daughter dreads being seen with me because I speak Arabic. I said, ‘Okay, I won’t speak Arabic, but stay with me now’, and she got angry with me again because I don’t speak Turkish like Turks. Do you know why a 7-year-old Syrian girl says this to me? Because she hears it in the school.” (Ankara- SR- Women)*
- ▶ *“The first social life that develops and builds an individual’s personality is his/her childhood at school. Our children no longer have this social life. There are social pressures in schools.” (Gaziantep- SR- Women)*
- ▶ *“Hate speech is increasing, especially in schools. I wish this hatred was only by children. Many times, these hate speeches are made by teachers and principals.” (Hatay- SR- Women)*

While in SB-2020, the participants mostly talked about discrimination they experience in public institutions; in SB-2021, Syrian participants talked about discrimination arising from Turkish society everywhere (on the streets, in public institutions, in shops, etc.).

- ▶ *“Adding any crime to the word “Syrian” is commonplace and discrimination is on the rise.” (Istanbul - SR- Journalist)*
- ▶ *“People in Antakya treat us better because they speak Arabic. Turks are angry with those who do not speak their language.” (Gaziantep- SR- NGO Workers)*
- ▶ *“Recently, discrimination is our most important problem, they discriminate against us just because we are Syrian without doing anything. This happens in every city now.” (Mardin - SR- Student)*
- ▶ *“A friend of mine says to me: I no longer dare to carry an Arabic book on the street, and when my wife calls me, I mutter in a low voice for fear that those around me will hear Arabic words from me and find out my true nationality.” (Istanbul - SR- Journalist)*
- ▶ *“Even our license plates are different, this simple thing encourages discrimination and hatred. In the past, they used to take pictures of Syrians with their IDs, as if they had committed a crime or committed a murder.” (Gaziantep-SR- NGO Workers)*
- ▶ *“After the Ankara events, we see that the cases of discrimination have increased and unfortunately the situation continues to get worse.” (Gaziantep - SR- NGO Workers)*

### **Role of Media in Discrimination:**

Another problem raised in the FGDs is that the issues related to Syrians in the news and

social media are often associated with criminal elements, and as a result of all these, the reaction of the local people towards Syrians increases. While Syrians think that these news have a great impact on widening the distance between them and the local people and increasing discrimination, they say that they are afraid of speaking Arabic and revealing that they are Syrians in the community and that they try to hide it because they are afraid of reactions. It is also noteworthy that the assessment that these concerns and social media news increase discrimination against Syrians is expressed in all the cities.

- ▶ *"We often hear the words Syrian harasser, Syrian thief or Syrian beggar in the media. We see that the anger of Turkish citizens is increasing. Now the Syrians have started to hide their identities and this is very sad and a very big problem." (Istanbul - SR- Journalists)*
- ▶ *"Negative discourse in the media has increased, especially after the arrival of those from Afghanistan, such discourses have increased a lot." (Ankara- SR- Student)*
- ▶ *"My daughter had very good Turkish friends at the university. After studying normally at the university for two years, there was the pandemic and universities closed because of it and then came bad economic conditions. After she returned to university, she wanted to contact them, but she told me that the situation had changed and that her friends were affected because of what was published in the media." (Gaziantep- SR- Women)*
- ▶ *"We used to complain about the news in the press, but now posts in the social media affect us more." (Ankara- SR- Student)*

As for the fight against discrimination against Syrians in Türkiye, most of the FGD participants think that the state does not carry out serious policies regarding this issue.

- ▶ *"There needs to be serious efforts and laws against discrimination. If the situation continues like this, it will get very bad. We came here for our children, but our children are experiencing great pressure at schools right now." (Gaziantep - SR - Female)*
- ▶ *"The cases of discrimination have increased a lot after the Ankara events, the state and even the opposition should prevent this discrimination." (Istanbul - SR - Student)*
- ▶ *"Our children now hate their identities and are estranged from their families. I wonder if the Turks are ready to embrace our children? Because now our children want to stay away from us." (Ankara - SR - Woman)*

### **Discourses of Political Parties:**

The vast majority of the participants pointed to the increasing political pressure and discourses against Syrians recently as one of the biggest problems of Syrians in Türkiye.

- ▶ *"Opposition parties in Türkiye are feeding discrimination against Syrians." (Gaziantep-SR- NGO Workers)*

- ▶ *“As the elections approach, the damage done to us always increases.” (Ankara - SR- Women)*
- ▶ *“The Turkish opposition is constantly talking about freedoms and human rights related to Turkish activists, but it should not be forgotten that human rights and freedoms also apply to Syrians.” (Hatay- SR- Lawyers)*

### **Restrictions on Syrians and the “Deportation” Debate**

Many of the participants stated that some Syrians around them were unjustly deported or detained, and that there were Syrians who filed lawsuits regarding the accusations against them, and even that some Syrians started to demand relocation to a third country. Syrian lawyers interviewed within the scope of FGD also cited the following examples of the situations their clients were exposed to in this regard. Generally speaking, it is noteworthy that participants mentioned that practices such as illegal and often arbitrary deportation and/or unjust punishment of Syrians are common.

- ▶ *“Syrians are deported in any administrative case. This is not just at all. A murderer and a person whose identity is registered in another city should not be subjected to the same evaluation.” (Hatay- SR- Lawyers)*
- ▶ *“Lately we feel that we are living in a big prison. Laws are constantly changing. Of course, they change in a negative way. That’s why Syrians have a hard time here.” (Istanbul-SR- Tradesmen)*
- ▶ *“My friend has a courtcase. He didn’t come to court one day, so it was decided that he would be deported.” (Hatay-SR- Lawyer)*
- ▶ *“Many Syrians in Hatay are not registered in this city and schools no longer accept children registered in other provinces. We, as lawyers, try to help and try to contact all institutions, but no one helped us.” (Hatay- SR- Lawyer)*
- ▶ *“The details and procedures of deportation are not included in the Temporary Protection Regulation. Unfortunately, deportation decisions are taken according to the preferences and moods of the personnel or the economic and political conditions of the country.” (Hatay-SR- Lawyer)*
- ▶ *“Syrians are currently under house arrest and we cannot claim any rights.” (Istanbul- SR- Journalist)*

### **Problem of Documents Requested from the Syrian Government:**

Many FGD participants stated that the documents requested by the public institutions in Türkiye should be obtained from the Syrian regime, but thousands of dollars must be paid to the regime for this. For this reason, it has been emphasized that these documents cannot be obtained in general and that there are grievances due to this, and even this problem is tried to be prevented by preparing fake documents.

- ▶ *“We pay thousands of dollars to the regime. For data updates or to obtain a residence, for example, the staff here ask us for a passport approved by the Syrian*

*consulate or a certified family book. If you don't live in Istanbul, we have to pay 300 dollars to get notary approval. We pay 100 dollars just to make an appointment. " (Hatay- SR- Lawyers)*

- ▶ *"We are regularly asked for documents for identity updates, and the Syrian regime complicates our work. This opens the door to penalties." (Gaziantep-SR-NGO Workers)*

## 4. Cultural Closeness between Syrians and Turks

There are significant debates regarding the influence of cultural similarity or closeness between communities on their relations in general, and on social cohesion in particular, following mass human mobilities. Many experiences in the world show that initially, cultural closeness and senses of “brotherhood”, “consanguinity”, and “religious affinity” help support solidarity. However, through time, the role of these moral and emotional factors appears to fade away and those more objective, material, and practical matters become increasingly more important. In this context, the perception that the movement is turning into permanent settlement and the increasing number of the refugees appear particularly to be important. It should be underlined that the issue of similarity between communities is ultimately a matter of perception. Therefore, the respective perceptions of different communities regarding cultural similarity could diverge from one another, sometimes at extreme degrees.

The relationship between cultural closeness and social cohesion processes in the context of Syrian refugees in Türkiye offers a significant testing case for the general discussions over “harmonization” and “social cohesion”.

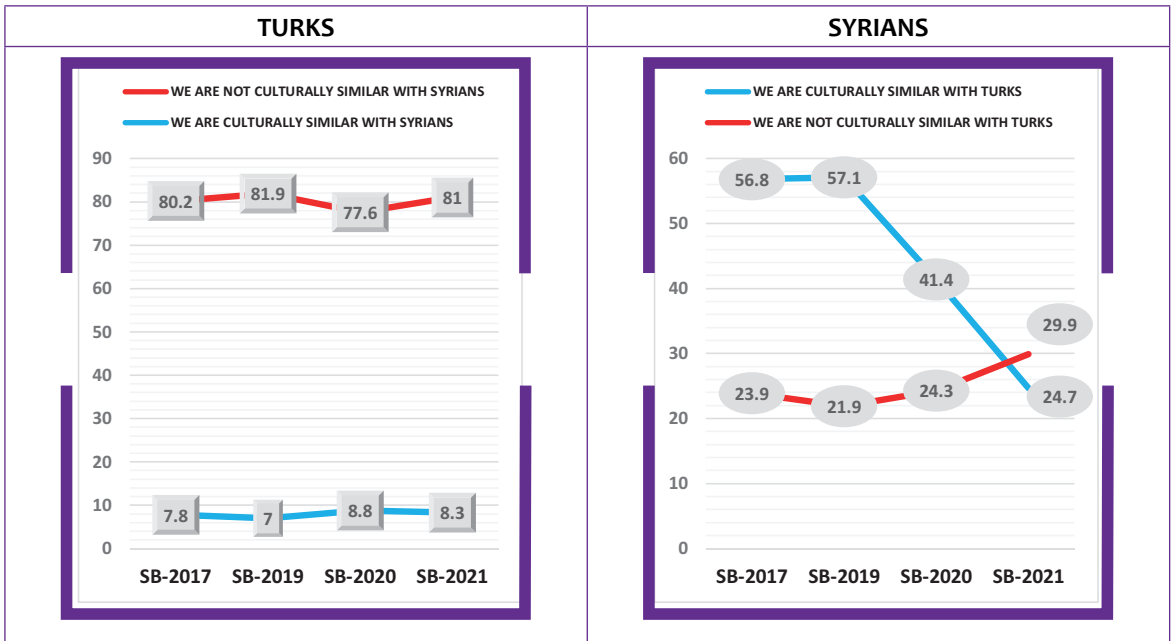
In parallel with the question asked to Turkish society “How much do you think the Syrians in Türkiye are culturally similar to us?”, SB surveys also asked the Syrian respondents the question “To what extent do you think Syrians are culturally similar to Turks?”. The responses reveal an interesting picture.<sup>194</sup> In fact, the combined share of the responses “not similar at all + not similar” was around 80% in all 4 SB surveys (i.e. 80,2% in SB-2017, 81,9% in SB-2019, 77,6% in SB-2020, and 81% in SB-2021). In this context, a clear stability in the view of Turkish society is noteworthy. What is even more interesting is that the “we are not similar” assessment is above the Türkiye average in the provinces close to the Syrian border. 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%. As can be seen in the table below, the share of those who think that Syrians have a similar culture to Turks has steadily decreased over time. The share of those who think Syrians and Turks are not culturally similar, on the other hand, was 23,9% in SB-2017, 21,9% in SB-2019, 24,3% in SB-2020, and 29,9% in SB-2021. 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. The share of those who said Syrians were culturally “neither similar, nor not similar” was 15,8% in SB-2017, 19,8% in SB-2019, 32% in SB-2020, and 40,3% in SB-2021, marking a record high and becoming the top answer. This situation also reveals how the perception of “similarity” can change rapidly when coexistence begins.

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194 In the 2014 study “Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration”, which was the predecessor of the SB studies, the rate of those who “completely disagreed” with the statement “I believe we are culturally similar with Syrians” was 45,3%, while 25,3% “disagreed” with this statement (in total 70,6%). The total share of those who “agreed” and “completely agreed” with the statement was 17,2%. By region, those who disagreed was 75,6% at the border cities and 69,6% at the other cities. See: pp.139

**SB-2021-TABLE 92 (+FIGURE): To what extent do you think Syrians are culturally similar to Turks?**

	2017		2019		2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Not similar at all	71	8,0	51	3,6	91	6,4	103	7,3
Not similar	141	15,9	259	18,3	253	17,9	322	22,6
Neither similar, nor not similar	140	15,8	281	19,8	452	32,0	573	40,3
Similar	417	47,0	669	47,2	527	37,3	302	21,2
Very similar	87	9,8	141	9,9	58	4,1	50	3,5
No idea / No response	31	3,5	17	1,2	33	2,3	73	5,1
<b>Total</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1418</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1414</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>100,0</b>



In the figure, the figures on “we are similar” are the sum of the “similar” and “very similar” responses; and the figures on “we are not similar” are the sum of the “not similar” and “not similar at all” responses. Data from the Turkish respondents is given in rectangular and that from the Syrian respondents is given in the triangular boxes.

It is observed that, among Syrian respondents, women, those in the 18-24 age group, the less educated, and those who live in the border cities believe more strongly that Syrians and Turks are not culturally similar. Those who believe in the cultural similarity of Syrians and Turks are over-represented among men, those in the 25-34 age group, university graduates, and those who live in non-metropolitan or non-border cities.

**SB-2021-TABLE 93: To what extent do you think Syrians are culturally similar to Turks? (%)**

	Not similar at all	Not similar	COMBINED NOT SIMILAR	Neither similar, nor not similar	Similar	Very similar	COMBINED SIMILAR	No idea / No response
<b>Sex</b>								
Female	6,0	32,1	38,1	37,8	16,2	2,2	18,4	5,7
Male	8,1	16,1	24,2	42,0	24,7	4,4	29,1	4,7
<b>Age Groups</b>								
18-24	6,0	29,5	35,5	34,0	22,0	2,5	24,5	6,0
25-34	9,1	22,8	31,9	38,3	23,8	2,4	26,2	3,6
35-44	6,8	22,5	29,3	40,2	18,9	5,3	24,2	6,3
45-54	7,1	19,7	26,8	44,4	19,7	4,0	23,7	5,1
55-64	2,4	15,5	17,9	52,4	21,4	3,6	25,0	4,7
65 +	4,2	12,5	16,7	58,3	12,5	-	12,5	12,5
<b>Educational Attainment</b>								
Illiterate	8,5	24,6	33,1	36,9	20,8	2,3	23,1	6,9
Literate but not graduate of any school	7,8	25,6	33,4	33,3	23,3	5,6	28,9	4,4
Primary school	8,6	25,4	34,0	39,2	16,6	3,4	20,0	6,8
Middle school	6,0	21,6	27,6	41,5	24,1	2,3	26,4	4,5
High-school or equivalent	5,2	20,5	25,7	42,4	24,3	4,3	28,6	3,3
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	6,2	14,6	20,8	39,6	31,2	4,2	35,4	4,2
University	7,2	11,4	18,6	51,4	22,9	7,1	30,0	-
<b>Region</b>								
Border cities	8,6	25,9	34,5	37,9	20,2	3,9	24,1	3,5
Other cities	5,0	17,3	22,3	44,1	22,9	3,0	25,9	7,7
Metropolitan cities	5,0	16,1	21,1	50,1	18,8	1,2	20,0	8,8
Non-metropolitan cities	5,0	19,4	24,4	33,8	29,8	6,0	35,8	6,0
General	7,3	22,6	29,9	40,3	21,2	3,5	24,7	5,1

“Cultural similarity” is one of the most important areas of social cohesion policies. In general, there is a perception that societies with cultural similarity will have little problem living together. However, in-depth analysis of Syrians in Türkiye seems to show that although cultural proximity plays a positive role in the beginning, its positive effect decreases as the durations get longer and the stay of refugees become increasingly permanent. In other words, although societies appear to give importance to cultural similarity and closeness in supporting communities at difficult situations and in their time of need, when the question is one of a common future, ties such as ethnicity, religion, and culture seem to become irrelevant. Especially if there are job losses, disruption in public services, increase in crime rates, and emergence of a fear of identity loss due to newcomers, the perception of cultural similarity cannot find a response. Here, the main determinants appear to be growing prospects of “permanence” and more importantly, numerical quantities. SB studies also reveal that Syrians increasingly see Turkish society as “foreign” with each passing day. This situation is also reflected in social distance scales. In other words, even if they came from similar cultures and lived together for a long time, social distance can grow between communities and searches for new identities can emerge. All of this also reveals the risk that social cohesion policies, which have an extremely emotional and volatile nature, may become blocked in time if built on “cultural affinity”.



### **FGD Findings (SB-2021-S)**

In order to understand the views of Syrians on cultural similarity, this question was also discussed in FGDs and the participants were asked to explain and justify their views as detailed as possible, that is, to exemplify in what sense they are similar, dissimilar or partially similar.

A large majority of Syrian FGD participants argued that Syrians and the Turkish society are culturally similar to one another. According to these participants, Turks and Syrians share many customs and traditions, as well as having important commonalities in religion and language. It has been stated that this cultural similarity stems from the common history and geographical proximity.

- ▶ *“Of course we are similar. For example, we are not that similar to the people of Jordan, and we are not that similar to other Arab countries.” (Hatay - SR - Women)*
- ▶ *“I think there are a lot of similarities. Syria and Türkiye are very close to each other and there have been strong relations and kinship ties between the two societies.” (Gaziantep - SR - NGO Workers)*
- ▶ *“We differ only in language, but even the two languages are very similar.” (Istanbul - SR - Student)*
- ▶ *“Our traditions, food and habits are very similar to each other or even the same.” (Ankara - SR - Women)*

## 5. Social Distance of Syrians from Turkish Society

Identifying the mutual social distance between the Turkish society and Syrians in Türkiye would provide a significant contribution in reducing or eliminating social problems that may arise in a potential common future. The findings from SB-2017, SB-2019, SB-2020, and SB-2021 all suggest that Turkish society is inclined to reject any argument for cultural closeness between themselves and Syrians. Turkish society appears to perceive a very large "social distance" between themselves and Syrians, although it was slightly reduced in SB-2020 and SB-2021. Measured between +1 (closest) and -1 (furthest), the social distance between the two communities as perceived by Turkish survey respondents was scored at -0,36 in SB-2017, -0,51 in SB-2019, -0,42 in SB-2020, and also -0,42 in SB-2021. These figures fall into the "distant" category.

In contrast to the attitude of Turkish society and with a decreasing trend since SB-2019, Syrians in Türkiye display a very different attitude in terms of their social distance. While in SB-2017, the combined share of "very close" and "close" was 73,5% with an overall social distance score of +0,51; the same figures were 85,7% and +0,74 in SB-2019, 85,6% and +0,71 in SB-2020, and lastly, 74,3% and +0,55 in SB-2021, respectively. All four scores fall into the category of "close" or "very close". Despite the clear "distance" put forward by the Turkish society in the research, the "closeness" emphasis by the Syrians, albeit in a decreasing trend, is remarkable.

**SB-2021-TABLE 94: Social Distance Groups<sup>195</sup>**

#	2017			2019			2020			2021		
	%	Social Distance Score	#	%	Social Distance Score	#	%	Social Distance Score	#	%	Social Distance Score	#
Very distant	13	1,5	-0,87	13	0,9	-0,85	50	3,6	-0,99	32	2,3	-0,90
Distant	35	4,0	-0,21	32	2,3	-0,29	26	1,9	-0,22	51	3,6	-0,31
Neither close, nor distant	186	21,0	0,16	156	11,1	0,18	125	8,9	0,17	282	19,8	0,16
Close	359	40,6	0,53	328	23,2	0,53	309	22,0	0,54	454	31,9	0,50
Very close	291	32,9	0,91	882	62,5	0,97	893	63,6	0,97	602	42,4	0,92
<b>General</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>0,53</b>	<b>1411</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>0,74</b>	<b>1403</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>0,71</b>	<b>1421</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>0,55</b>

-1,0 - -0,80: Very Distant // -0,79 - -0,10: Distant // -0,09 - +0,39: Neither close, nor distant // +40 - +0,79: Close // +0,80 - +1,0: Very close

When the social distance findings in SB-2021 are analyzed at a level of specific questions, it is observed that very high values were reached, except for partial hesitations about Syrians themselves, their children or siblings marrying a Turkish person. In the light of this data, Syr-

ians have a very positive view regarding living together, working together, being neighbors, and forming friendships and partnerships with the Turkish society.

**SB-2021-TABLE 95: To what extent would you agree with the following statements concerning your feelings about Turkish people? (%)**

		Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	No idea / No response
1	It wouldn't disturb me to live in the same building as a Turk	3,7	2,5	93,2	0,6
2	It wouldn't disturb me if Turkish children go to the same school as my children	2,7	3,7	92,8	0,8
3	It wouldn't disturb me if some Turkish families were to move in my neighborhood	3,6	2,7	92,7	1,0
4	It wouldn't disturb me to move to a neighborhood where predominantly Turks live	4,5	2,8	91,5	1,2
5	It wouldn't disturb me to work in the same workplace as a Turk	4,6	3,4	90,9	1,1
6	I can be friends with a Turk	8,0	6,0	83,8	2,2
7	I can be business partners with a Turk	22,8	6,2	64,6	6,4
8	I would allow my child to marry a Turk	37,8	5,9	48,3	8,0
9	It wouldn't disturb me if my sibling were to marry a Turk	36,8	6,3	48,0	8,9
10	I can get married with a Turk	60,4	5,0	30,1	4,5

Although there doesn't seem to be a significant divergence regarding the social distance groups across different demographic groups, there are some interesting findings in some groups. In particular, it appears that men, those above the age of 65, university students or graduates, and those who live in non-metropolitan cities are socially placed even closer with the Turkish society. This finding shows that the effects of "cultural similarity/closeness" on social cohesion might not be as positive as apparently assumed by many. It can be argued here that what matters more in this regard is not "cultural similarities" but "numerical sizes".

The cross-analysis of social distance and Turkish language knowledge reveals some interesting findings. In this context, those whose mother tongue was Turkish are found to be "closer" to Turkish society with a closeness percentage of 78,1%, which is 5 point higher than the Syrian average. Those who reported "advanced" or "intermediate" levels of knowledge in Turkish language, however, appeared to have social distance scores of 0,78 and 0,79. This finding shows that having Turkish as one's mother tongue, or even obtaining citizenship, doesn't automatically mean it will be easy to establish a close relationship with the society.<sup>196</sup>

196 In a study conducted by M.M.Erdoğan et al. on Syrian university students in Türkiye, the social distance of those students who ob-

**SB-2021-TABLE 96: Social Distance Groups (%)**

	Very distant	Distant	Neither close, nor distant	Close	Very close
<b>Sex</b>					
Female	2,6	2,6	26,6	34,4	33,8
Male	2,0	4,3	15,1	<b>30,3</b>	<b>48,3</b>
<b>Age Groups</b>					
18-24	3,5	4,0	26,5	26,5	39,5
25-34	2,4	3,0	19,0	31,2	44,4
35-44	2,2	3,9	18,9	32,5	42,5
45-54	2,0	3,6	19,7	33,3	41,4
55-64	-	6,0	14,5	41,0	38,5
65 +	-	-	16,6	<b>41,7</b>	<b>41,7</b>
<b>Educational Attainment</b>					
Illiterate	4,6	3,9	26,9	32,3	32,3
Literate but not graduate of any school	1,1	6,7	18,9	33,3	40,0
Primary school	2,5	4,2	22,6	31,0	39,7
Middle school	2,0	2,8	17,7	35,0	42,5
High-school or equivalent	1,4	2,9	15,8	28,7	51,2
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	-	2,1	20,8	33,3	43,8
University	2,9	1,4	10,0	<b>30,0</b>	<b>55,7</b>
<b>Region</b>					
Border cities	3,2	4,2	20,8	31,2	40,6
Other cities	0,7	2,6	18,4	33,1	45,2
Metropolitan cities	0,6	2,9	22,7	36,9	36,9
Non-Metropolitan cities	1,0	2,0	10,9	<b>26,9</b>	<b>59,2</b>
<b>General</b>	<b>2,3</b>	<b>3,6</b>	<b>19,8</b>	<b>31,9</b>	<b>42,4</b>

tained citizenship was found to be greater than those students who did not. See: Erdoğan, M.M, Erdoğan, A, Yavcan, B., Mohamad, T.H. (2019) Elite Dialogue-II: Dialogue with Syrian Asylum-Seekers in Türkiye through Syrian Academics and Graduate Students, Unpublished research, TAGU&HOPES.

**SB-2021-TABLE 97: Social Distance Groups (X Turkish Speakers\* %)**

	Very distant	Distant	Neither close, nor distant	Close	Very close
<b>Sex</b>					
Female	2,6	2,6	21,5	28,8	44,5
Male	1,9	4,7	13,5	30,2	49,7
<b>Age Groups</b>					
18-24	5,1	5,9	22,1	23,7	43,2
25-34	1,9	1,9	16,0	30,5	49,7
35-44	1,1	5,4	13,0	32,4	48,1
45-54	1,5	7,6	12,1	30,3	48,5
55 +**	-	5,9	5,9	29,4	58,8
<b>Educational Attainment</b>					
Illiterate	5,3	5,3	21,0	23,7	44,7
Literate but not graduate of any school	2,4	9,8	14,6	29,3	43,9
Primary school	3,5	5,3	19,5	25,2	46,5
Middle school	1,1	3,2	15,4	35,1	45,2
High-school or equivalent	0,7	2,3	10,6	30,3	56,1
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	-	3,3	20,0	33,4	43,3
University	2,0	2,0	6,2	32,7	57,1
<b>Region</b>					
Border cities	3,7	5,2	15,8	28,2	47,1
Other cities	0,3	2,8	15,4	31,8	49,7
Metropolitan cities	-	2,4	17,2	37,3	43,1
Non-Metropolitan cities	0,9	3,5	12,2	21,7	61,7
<b>General</b>	<b>2,2</b>	<b>4,1</b>	<b>15,6</b>	<b>29,8</b>	<b>48,3</b>
<p>* "Turkish speakers" include those 704 individuals who reported to know Turkish at a "native", "advanced" or "intermediate" level.  ** Data from 17 individuals.</p>					

**FGD Findings (SB-2021-S)**

Measuring and better understanding the social distance between Syrians and Turkish society has also been one of the main objectives of FGDs. For this, firstly, perceptions on cultural similarity were tried to be measured, and then, Syrians were asked several hypothetical questions regarding “establishing a business”, “getting married”, “becoming neighbors”, “becoming friends”, etc. with Turks.

Among these types of relationships, marriage is the one that was seen as the deepest and most intimate for almost all of the FGD participants. Because in other types of relationships, almost no objections were raised, in other words, all of the participants stated that they did not see any problem with being friends with Turks, doing business together, being neighbors, and having their children in the same class. They even stated that they would be happy if this was the case in many of these areas and that they would tend to establish these relations if the Turkish society left the door open on these issues. Only a small number of participants in this group expressed that they may not be very enthusiastic about “doing business together”. It should be emphasized, however, that the vast majority of participants also gave a positive opinion on this question.

However, as mentioned above, the situation changes when it comes to marriage. So much so that in this question, the participants were divided into two almost equal groups, and the numbers of those who said “I would like to marry a Turkish person” or “it would not be a problem for me” and those who stated that they did not want such a marriage or that it would pose a serious problem for them were very close to each other. Despite emphasizing that this is a hypothetical question for discussion, some participants were still reluctant to answer it. So, in order to include them in the discussion, the question was also posed as “Would it be a problem for you if your child wanted to marry a Turk?”. Participants who answered this question saying “yes, I would like it / it wouldn’t be a problem for me” stated that they think that marriage is about the characters of the people, that nationality or ethnicity should not matter, and that two people can get married if they love each other and get along well. On the other hand, some participants said that they were already married to a Turk or that their relatives who married with Turks did not have any problems in this regard. There are also participants who suggested that they could specifically want or prefer this.

On the other hand, a large number of participants stated that they would not prefer to have such a marriage or, to put it more strongly, they did not want it. There are two most important reasons put forward by the participants who think this way. The first is the expectation that the cultural differences between Syrians and Turks can cause significant problems in marriage. Accordingly, it will be very difficult for these two people, who have very different customs and traditions, to get along well in marriage. The second reason was the expectation that language difference would constitute an important barrier in marriage. Accordingly, two people who do not speak the same language will not be able to adequately get along, communicate in sufficient depth, and understand each other. A quite striking example of this sentiment was expressed by one of the participants as “the need to speak the same language while arguing”. However, it can be seen as a positive detail for the future that the participants who answered the question through their children stated that even if they do not want such a marriage for themselves, they will not put pressure on their children and will respect their decisions.

## 6. Levels of Social Relations of Syrians

To better evaluate their level of social interaction and social distance of Syrians, who have been living in Türkiye on average 6-6,5 years, with the Turkish society, SB studies try to understand the types and intensities of social relationships. Social relationships can be ordinary, compulsory, positive or negative. It is of great importance in terms of social cohesion to determine which of these come to the fore and how they evolve over time.

The question *"Have you ever engaged in any of the following social relations (e.g., having a conversation/shopping/fighting/...) with a Turkish citizen?"* was asked to survey respondents. The list included a number of social relations from low-intensity ones like "having a conversation" to very intimate ones like "getting married". Among all social relations, "having a conversation", "shopping", "friendship", and "business relationship" come to the fore. As might be expected, the most frequently engaged one was "having a conversation" which had a share of 75,5% in SB-2017, 81,7% in SB-2019, 78,7% in SB-2020, and 75,8% in SB-2021. It was followed by "shopping" (72,9% in SB-2017; 74,8% in SB-2019; 75,3% in SB-2020; 73,8% in SB-2021) and "business relations", the latter of which was in a consistent trend of increase until SB-2021 (SB-2017: 62,5%; SB-2019: 68,1%; SB-2020: 70,9%; SB-2021: 64,1%). These relationship styles reveal that despite the distanced stance of Turkish society, Syrians are getting closer to Turkish society in terms of both social distance scales and social relationship intensities, and they strive for this. Syrians' "fights" with Turks, on the other hand, appears to be in an increasing trend, although it slightly dipped in SB-2020 probably due to the effects of the pandemic (SB-2017: 6,5%; SB-2019: 6,8%; SB-2020: 4,1%; SB-2021: 9,3%).

**SB-2021-TABLE 98: Have you ever engaged in any of the following social relations with a Turkish citizen?**

	(%)	2017			2019			2020			2021		
		Evet	Hayır	Hatırla-mıyorum	Evet	Hayır	Hatırla-mıyorum/cevap yok	Evet	Hayır	Hatırla-mıyorum/cevap yok	Evet	Hayır	Hatırla-mıyorum/cevap yok
1	Having a conversation	75,5	24,1	0,4	81,7	18,1	0,2	78,7	20,7	0,6	75,8	23,3	0,9
2	Shopping	72,9	26,6	0,5	74,8	24,6	0,6	75,3	23,7	1,0	73,8	25,4	0,8
3	Being friends	56,9	41,7	1,4	73,8	25,4	0,8	70,7	27,9	1,4	71,2	28,0	0,8
4	Forming a business relationship	65,6	33,9	0,5	68,1	31,2	0,7	70,9	27,6	1,5	64,5	34,7	0,8
5	Support / Solidarity	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,2	76,5	10,3	16,1	81,4	2,5
6	Fighting - To fight / To argue*	6,5	92,4	1,1	6,8	91,0	2,2	4,1	87,4	8,5	9,3	86,6	4,1
7	Flirting -Romantic relationship*	5,2	93,2	1,6	3,1	95,7	1,2	1,7	89,6	8,7	5,0	90,5	4,5
8	Marriage	3,4	94,3	2,3	2,8	96,3	0,9	5,7	85,6	8,7	3,4	92,2	4,4
9	Having a problem	10,6	87,7	1,7	6,7	91,0	2,3	4,0	87,6	8,4	-	-	-

\* "To fight/to argue" and "Romantic relationship" were added in SB-2021.

## 7. Syrians' Perceptions Regarding Life in Türkiye, Turkish Society, and Syrian Community in Türkiye

In order to learn the perception of Syrians regarding life in Türkiye, the Turkish society, and the Syrian community in Türkiye, 11 statements were posed to receive responses on a 5-point likert scale. In SB-2019 and, with a significant decrease, in SB-2020 the statement "Syrians want to obtain Turkish citizenship" was ranked top with a combined "completely agree + agree" share of 63,4% and 49%, respectively. In SB-2021, however, the most strongly supported statement was "Syrians want to go to another country" with 64,2%, while the statement "Syrians want to obtain Turkish citizenship" moved down to third rank with 44,4%.

In SB-2021, it is understood both in the survey and especially in the FGDs, that there are serious differences compared to previous studies regarding the views on social relations, future expectations in Türkiye and prospects of going to a third country suggesting that Syrians in Türkiye became quite pessimistic. It is thought that the process of politicization of the issue, which has intensified in Türkiye in recent years, and upcoming 2023 elections play an important role in this.



The statement “Syrians are making an effort to adapt to Turkish society”, which was included for the first time in SB-2021, was ranked second. According to SB-2021 data, 47,6% of Syrians think that Syrians “are grateful to Turkish society”.

**SB-2021-TABLE 99: To what extent would you agree with the following statements regarding the situation of Syrians in Türkiye? (Scored)**

		SB-2017	SB-2019	SB-2020	SB-2021	Average
1	Syrians want to go to another country	2,6	2,8	2,7	3,6	2,92
2	Syrians are making an effort to adapt to Turkish society	-	-	-	3,4	3,40
3	Syrians are grateful to Turkish society	3,0	3,2	3,0	3,2	3,10
4	Syrians want to obtain Turkish citizenship	3,5	3,4	3,1	3,2	3,30
5	Syrians are being exploited/ * Turks are exploiting Syrians	2,8	2,3	2,2	2,9	2,55
<b>Average Score</b>		2,7	2,7	2,5	2,9	2,70
6	Syrians want to stay in Türkiye	2,7	3,1	2,8	2,7	2,82
7	Syrians are excluded in Türkiye	2,5	2,3	2,3	2,7	2,45
8	Syrians are happy in Türkiye	2,7	3,0	2,7	2,6	2,75
9	Syrians are getting what their labor deserves	2,2	2,6	2,1	2,5	2,35
10	Syrians can get work easily	2,2	2,6	2,2	2,4	2,35
11	Syrians don't like Turks	2,3	2,0	1,9	2,2	2,10
* The statement “Syrians are being exploited” was updated to “Turks are exploiting Syrians” in SB-2021.						
		0-2,99	3,0- 5,0 (more)			

**SB-2021-TABLE 100: To what extent would you agree with the following statements regarding the situation of Syrians in Türkiye? (%)**

		Com- pletely disa- gree	Disa- gree	COM- BINED DISA- GREE	Neither agree, nor dis- agree	Agree	Com- ple- tely agree	COM- BINED AGREE	No idea / No re- sponse
1	Syrians want to go to another country	1,7	4,1	5,8	21,9	39,0	25,2	64,2	8,1
2	Syrians are making an effort to adapt to Turkish society	3,1	5,8	8,9	21,7	47,9	13,3	61,2	8,2
3	Syrians are grateful to Turkish society	2,1	11,2	13,3	31,7	40,2	7,4	47,6	7,4
4	Syrians want to obtain Turkish citizenship	1,5	10,5	12,0	34,6	32,7	11,7	44,4	9,0
5	Turks are exploiting Syrians	4,9	16,1	21,0	27,3	32,0	9,5	41,5	10,2
6	Syrians want to stay in Türkiye	3,4	20,9	24,3	35,9	22,8	5,2	28,0	11,8
7	Syrians are excluded in Türkiye	5,4	20,9	26,3	34,9	24,2	3,6	27,8	11,0
8	Syrians are getting what their labor deserves	11,5	35,2	46,7	25,9	20,4	1,6	22,0	5,4
9	Syrians are happy in Türkiye	7,0	22,1	29,1	42,7	18,1	2,6	20,7	7,5
10	Syrians can get work easily	12,9	42,9	55,8	20,2	18,1	2,4	20,5	3,5
11	Syrians don't like Turks	16,0	35,5	51,5	26,1	12,0	2,3	14,3	8,1

The tables and figures shared here and below provide important clues in order to follow the trends. However, an important point needs to be underlined here. While evaluating these statements, which have a special place in SB studies, the fact that the options "neither agree or disagree" and "I have no idea/no response" receive significantly high support should be taken into account. The sum of these two options was seen on average to be 40.2%. This hesitation and/or indecision, which is the lowest at 27.4% and the highest at 44.1%, undermines our ability to form stronger opinions and make more decisive evaluations, and reveals the need for more cautious analysis. FGDs are especially useful instruments in contributing to fill this gap.

**SB-2021-TABLE 101(+FIGURE): To what extent would you agree with the following statements regarding the situation of Syrians in Türkiye? %**

**(+ : Sum of “Completely agree” and “Agree”, - : Sum of “Disagree” and “Completely disagree”; Sum of “neither agree, nor disagree” and “no idea/no response”)**

		SB-2017 **		SB-2019		SB-2020		SB-2021		Average	Average	neither agree, nor disagree + no idea/ no response
		+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	
1	Syrians want to obtain Turkish citizenship	65,6	12,4	63,4	5,7	49,0	3,8	44,4	12,0	55,6	8,47	36,0
2	Syrians are grateful to Turkish society	42,6	20,8	54,9	8,4	45,3	4,8	47,6	13,3	47,6	11,8	40,4
3	Syrians want to go to another country	31,9	30,3	40,4	24,1	33,6	9,1	64,2	5,8	42,5	17,3	40,2
4	Syrians want to stay in Türkiye	32,4	29,6	54	8,0	39,3	8,2	28,0	24,3	38,4	17,5	44,1
5	Syrians are happy in Türkiye	30,1	31,4	48,1	16,4	31,8	12,6	20,7	29,1	32,6	22,3	45,0
6	Syrians are being exploited/ * Turks are exploiting Syrians	40,0	32,7	20,0	43,0	19,6	22,7	41,5	21,4	30,2	29,9	40,0
7	Syrians are excluded in Türkiye	23,9	40,4	19,2	44,5	18,4	23,4	26,3	27,8	21,9	34,0	44,1
8	Syrians are getting what their labor deserves	16,2	64,2	29,1	43,4	17,3	38,1	22,0	46,7	21,1	48,1	30,8
9	Syrians can get work easily	19,7	63,2	26,3	46,3	17,2	41,7	20,5	55,8	20,9	51,7	27,4
10	Syrians don't like Turks	15,9	53,9	11,2	57,4	8,0	49,2	14,3	51,5	12,3	53,0	34,7
11	Syrians are making an effort to adapt to Turkish society	-	-	-	-	-	-	61,2	8,9	61,2	8,9	29,9

\* In the ranking, the general average in the four SBs was made from the most supported proposition to the least supported proposition. Proposition 11, which was asked for the first time in SB-2021, was excluded from the evaluation as it would not be statistically significant and was not included in the average.

\*\* SB-2017 data belongs to Syrians living outside the camps.

Note: Places marked in blue are the highest propositions in each barometer. In the average evaluation, the first three highest level propositions were marked.

SB-2017, SB-2019, SB-2020, SB-2021

Sums of "Agree+Completely Agree" on Each Statement (%)



The most striking finding of SB-2021 is that the statement “Syrians want to go to another country” was ranked at the top for the first time with a very strong support of 64,2%. This statement was ranked only the fourth in SB-2017, SB-2019, and SB-2020. While an almost all-time record share of survey respondents agreed with it (64,2%), second only to the statement “Syrians want to obtain Turkish citizenship” in SB-2017 with a share of 65,6%, only 5,8% of the participants disagreed with this statement. The statements “Syrians are grateful to Turkish society” and “Syrians want to obtain Turkish citizenship” have been consistently the most strongly supported options. The statements about which the respondents appear the most undecided/unsure, as reflected with a high combined average level of “neither agree, nor disagree” and “no idea/no response”, are “Syrians want to stay in Türkiye” (44,1%), “Syrians are excluded in Türkiye” (44,1%), “Syrians are grateful to Turkish society” (40,4%), and “Syrians want to go to another country” (40,2%). The lowest level of hesitation, in turn, appears to be regarding the statements “Syrians can get work easily” (27,4%), “Syrians are getting what their labor deserves” (30,8%), and “Syrians want to obtain Turkish citizenship” (36%). Another noteworthy finding in the general table is that the three statements with which Syrian survey respondents most clearly disagreed are “Syrians are getting what their labor deserves”, “Syrians can get work easily”, and “Syrians don’t like Turks”.

In the average figures from all four SB studies, when we considered the sum of “completely agree” and “agree”, the top option remains to be the statement “Syrians want to obtain Turkish citizenship” with an average of 55,6%. This is followed by “Syrians are grateful to Turkish society” (47,6%) and “Syrians want to go to another country” (42,5%) with a serious rising trend. When the average sums of “completely disagree” and “disagree” are considered, the three statements that are rejected by Syrian survey respondents at the highest level are “Syrians don’t like Turks” (53%), “Syrians can get work easily” (51,7%), and “Syrians are getting what their labor deserves” (46,7%).

### **8.a-The Future Perspective of Syrians**

In order to have a better understanding concerning the future perspectives of Syrians, the three relevant statements; i.e. “*Syrians want to obtain Turkish citizenship*”, “*Syrians want to stay in Türkiye*”, and “*Syrians want to go to another country*” are analyzed together. While in the average of SB-2017, SB-2019, SB-2020, and SB-2021, the top rank belongs to the statement “Syrians want to obtain Turkish citizenship”, the statement “Syrians want to go to another country” has scored an extraordinary increase (64,2%) in SB-2021. It is possible to say that this situation is closely related to the politicization of the Syrian issue in Türkiye in recent years, and the desire to go to a third country has increased due to the concern that the Syrians, whose hopes and desires to return to their country have largely disappeared, will face problems in Türkiye in the medium and long term. It is considered that the problems in the working life, which is one of the main problem areas, are also effective in the desire to go to a third country. The uneasiness of the Syrians about their future in Türkiye and their search for a third country were frequently expressed in FGDs.

### **8.b- Relations with and Feelings about the Turkish Society**

The responses to the statements related to Syrians’ relations with and feeling about the Turkish society reflect very clearly a positive perception. These statements include “Syrians are grateful to Turkish society”, “Syrians don’t like Turkish society at all”, “Syrians are

excluded in Türkiye", and, "Syrians are making an effort to adapt to Turkish society", which was asked for the first time in SB-2021. While the first statement involving "gratefulness" receives a strong level of agreement with 47,6%, the statement "*Syrians don't like Turks*" received an even stronger level of disagreement with 51,5%, showing a 2-point increase from SB-2020. The share of those who agreed with this statement has also increased to 14,3%. Another important finding concerning the level of social acceptance comes from the responses given to the statement involving perception of "exclusion" in Türkiye. While 26,3% of the respondents agreed with the statement "*Syrians are excluded in Türkiye*", a sizable 27,8% disagreed with this statement. When the data from all four SB surveys is considered, the share of those who agreed with this statement is 21,9% while that of those who disagreed is 34%. The statement "Syrians are making an effort to adapt to Turkish society" has received a very high level of support in SB-2021. In FGDs with Syrian participants, as is often the case, findings differing from the survey results are obtained. In particular, it is observed that Syrians experience many problems and their complaints increase in the context of relations with Turkish society. Although it is not reflected in the surveys as prominently, it is observed that the 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.

### **8.c-Working Life**

It is clear from the SB findings that the most problematic area for Syrians is perceived to be the working life. This finding is clearly confirmed repeatedly by the answers given to many questions and statements. Among the 10 statements, "*Syrians are getting what their labor deserves*" is rejected by 46,7% and 55,8% disagreed with "*Syrians can get work easily*". The share of those who agreed that "*Turks are exploiting Syrians*" has increased to 41,5%. All of these manifest that Syrians experience significant levels of problems in their working life.

### **8.d-Perception of Happiness**

The question regarding how happy Syrians are in Türkiye, while being necessarily subjective and completely based on perceptions, has been important for the SB research. Even more important is the changing trends in this emotion. 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. Conversely, the combined share of those who "completely disagreed" or "disagreed" with this statement was 31,4% in SB-2017, 16,4% in SB-2019, and 12,6% in SB-2020. It has increased to 29,1% in SB-2021. In summary, even though the average figures of four SB studies ranging between 32,6% and 22,3% still portray a positive picture, both the fact that the share of those who are undecided or unwilling to respond is very high at 45% and the negative findings of SB-2021 point to Syrians' problem.

### **8.e- Demographic Evaluation**

As the below table indicates in detail, a demographic breakdown suggests that those Syrians in the 25-44 age group, illiterate ones, and those who live in border cities appear more prone to believe that Syrians want to go to another country. Those who seem to want

Turkish citizenship the most are men, those in the 45-54 age group, those with higher educational attainment levels, and those who don't live in metropolitan or border cities. Those who believe Syrians are happy in Türkiye are overrepresented among men, those in the 45-54 age group, and those who don't live in metropolitan or border cities. Lastly, those who agreed with the statement "Turks are exploiting Syrians" are mostly men, those in the 18-34 age group, those with a primary school degree or higher, and those who live in the border cities.

**SB-2021-TABLE 102: To what extent would you agree with the following statements regarding the situation of Syrians in Türkiye? (Scored)**

	Syrians want to go to another country	Syrians are making an effort to adapt to Turkish society	Syrians are grateful to Turkish society	Syrians want to obtain Turkish citizenship	Turks are exploiting Syrians	Syrians want to stay in Türkiye	Syrians are excluded in Türkiye	Syrians are happy in Türkiye	Syrians are getting what their labor deserves	Syrians can get work easily	Syrians don't like Turks	Average Score
<b>Sex</b>												
Female	3,6	3,5	3,0	2,9	2,9	2,6	2,6	2,6	2,4	2,3	2,2	2,8
Male	3,6	3,3	3,3	3,3	3,0	2,8	2,7	2,7	2,6	2,6	2,3	2,9
<b>Age Group</b>												
18-24	3,4	3,4	3,0	3,0	3,0	2,7	2,6	2,6	2,4	2,3	2,2	2,8
25-34	3,7	3,4	3,2	3,2	3,0	2,6	2,7	2,6	2,6	2,4	2,4	2,9
35-44	3,6	3,3	3,2	3,1	2,9	2,7	2,7	2,6	2,4	2,5	2,2	2,8
45-54	3,4	3,4	3,3	3,3	2,9	2,9	2,6	2,8	2,6	2,6	2,2	2,9
55-64	3,4	3,2	3,3	3,2	2,9	2,9	2,6	2,6	2,5	2,3	2,1	2,8
65 +	3,3	3,5	2,8	2,8	2,8	2,3	2,8	2,5	2,4	2,7	2,2	2,7
<b>Educational Attainment</b>												
Illiterate	3,7	3,2	3,1	2,9	2,8	2,5	2,8	2,6	2,5	2,5	2,2	2,8
Literate but not graduate of any school	3,4	3,2	3,3	3,3	2,8	2,9	2,4	2,7	2,6	2,5	1,9	2,8
Primary school	3,6	3,3	3,1	3,2	2,9	2,7	2,5	2,6	2,5	2,4	2,3	2,8
Middle school	3,6	3,4	3,2	3,0	3,0	2,7	2,7	2,7	2,6	2,4	2,3	2,9
High-school or equivalent	3,5	3,5	3,1	3,3	3,1	2,6	2,9	2,7	2,5	2,4	2,3	2,9
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	3,5	3,6	3,3	3,6	3,1	3,0	2,9	2,7	2,4	2,2	2,3	3,0
University	3,6	3,6	3,4	3,6	3,2	2,8	2,8	2,8	2,4	2,5	2,2	3,0
<b>Region</b>												
Border cities	3,8	3,4	3,2	3,1	3,0	2,7	2,7	2,6	2,5	2,4	2,3	2,9
Other cities	3,2	3,4	3,1	3,2	2,8	2,7	2,7	2,7	2,5	2,5	2,2	2,8
Metropolitan cities	3,5	3,2	2,9	3,0	2,8	2,6	2,7	2,6	2,5	2,5	2,3	2,8
Non-metropolitan cities	2,8	3,8	3,5	3,7	2,9	2,9	2,7	2,8	2,5	2,5	2,1	2,9
General	3,6	3,4	3,2	3,2	2,9	2,7	2,7	2,6	2,5	2,4	2,2	2,9



## FGD Findings (SB-2021-S)

### Are Syrians Happy in Türkiye?

When the answers given to this question were examined, it was seen that the majority of the Syrian FGD participants stated that they were not happy to live in Türkiye, unlike the SB-2017, SB-2019 and SB-2020 FGDs. Most of the participants stated that they no longer live happily in Türkiye due to the problems/fights and pressures experienced in the last year and that they think they will be “expelled” from Türkiye at any moment. A significant part of the participants also said that the Syrians had to leave their country and they were not happy because they were not living in their own country here. In addition, some participants also stated that the bad economic conditions in Türkiye and the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic prevent Syrians from being happy. In addition, many Syrian participants who complained about the instability in Türkiye and the unclear vision for the future stated that they were negatively affected by the events and the way the media handled the news.

- ▶ *“We are not happy, but we have to live here and get used to it.” (Ankara- SR- Student)*
- ▶ *“To be happy one has to live steadily and of course it has to be earned with dignity. That is why not all Syrians are happy.” (Istanbul- SR- Worker)*
- ▶ *“If someone needs permission to meet their family, that person cannot be happy. We cannot see our children studying in other provinces whenever we want. How can we be happy?” (Gaziantep- SR- Women)*
- ▶ *“To be happy, you should not be discriminated against on the street every day. When we leave our homes and lately even before we leave our homes, they hurt us and they talk to us.” (Ankara- SR- Women)*
- ▶ *“Of course we were happy in the past, but now we are not. Political discourses and social media broadcasts have greatly affected the happiness of Syrians in Türkiye.” (Ankara - SR- Student)*

While most of the participants in the interviews stated that they were not happy in Türkiye for the reasons mentioned above, a small part of the participants stated that they were partially happy. As a reason for this, they stated that the happiness of Syrians is closely related to their financial situation and that their financial situation greatly facilitates their livelihood. Some participants, on the other hand, stated that there are many Syrians who feel satisfied and happy because of the improvement in their living conditions after coming to Türkiye. Some participants, on the other hand, compared Türkiye with countries such as Jordan or Lebanon, based on their personal experiences or the experiences of the Syrians around them, and shared their opinion that Türkiye is the most livable country for Syrians.

## 9. Anxieties of Turkish Society According to Syrians

Several factors that cause the host society to worry in the aftermath of mass movements of people are almost universal. Some major ones of these include the fear of losing one's job as well as the anxieties regarding a potential increase in the crime rates or deterioration of public services or even the loss of national identity through demographic change. Similarly, a fear that the newcomers might someday possess decisive power in the political arena (e.g. participation in the elections, obtaining citizenship in large numbers, and so on) is very common. SB research has asked the Syrian respondents to what extent they think Turkish society is worried regarding such factors and whether they believe such concerns are justified or meaningful. Here, it is also inquired whether and "how much empathy can Syrians make with Turkish society".

Syrian respondents were asked the question "to what extent does Turkish society have the following concerns because of Syrians?" They are provided with a list of 7 major anxieties, one more compared to SB-2020. As a result, it appears in SB-2021 that Syrians see a significantly raised level of worries among Turkish society compared to the situation in SB-2019 and SB-2020. While in general the combined share of they are "not worried" and "not worried at all" is 21,7%, sum of "worried" and "very worried" has increased to 45,8%. This reveals an almost completely changing trend from SB-2019 and SB-2020. What is interesting is that, according to Syrians, the most important concern of Turkish society is "the increase in the Syrian population in Türkiye". While this option received a very high level of support from Syrians at 59%, it was followed by the fear of "losing jobs" and the concern that Syrians will participate in the elections as voters. This radical change that emerged in the last three studies also reveals the fact that Syrians are aware of the debates in Türkiye.

**SB-2021-TABLE 103: To what extent is Turkish society concerned about the following issues regarding Syrians? (%)**

		Not worried at all	Not worried	COMBINED NOT WORRIED	Neither worried, nor not worried	Worried	Very worried	COMBINED WORRIED	No idea / No response
1	Increase in the Syrian population in Türkiye*	4,3	8,0	12,3	11,1	45,0	14,0	59,0	17,6
2	Losing their jobs because of Syrians	8,1	9,3	17,4	12,3	41,1	15,3	56,4	13,9
3	Concerns on Syrians' political participation (elections)	5,6	14,8	20,4	9,6	31,1	12,3	43,4	26,6
4	Reduction or deterioration in public services because of Syrians	9,3	15,7	25,0	11,2	31,1	11,8	42,9	20,9
5	Concerns that Syrians will obtain Turkish citizenship and have a say in Türkiye's future/fate	6,8	15,2	22,0	9,0	31,1	11,8	42,9	26,1
6	Security problems the Syrians would cause	9,7	16,7	26,4	11,2	30,1	10,9	41,0	21,4
7	Concerns that Syrians would damage the identity of Turkish society	7,5	21,5	29,0	8,5	24,9	10,5	35,4	27,1

\* The statement "Increase in the Syrian population in Türkiye" was added in SB-2021.

When the findings of SB-2019 SB-2020, and SB-2021 are compared on a scored table, it appears that there is an increase in every single field. The overall average score, which was 2.14 in SB-2019 and 2.02 in SB-2020, increased to 2.57 in SB-2021. This seems to underline the processes in which Syrians develop empathy towards and get better informed about Turkish society. The concerns regarding “losing their jobs because of Syrians” and “increase in the Syrian population in Türkiye” are the two most strongly supported options among all demographic groups.

**SB-2021-TABLE 104: To what extent is Turkish society concerned about the following issues regarding Syrians? (Score)**

		2019*	2020	2021
1	Losing their jobs because of Syrians	2,6	2,6	3,0
2	Increase in the Syrian population in Türkiye**	-	-	3,0
<b>Average Score</b>		<b>2,1</b>	<b>2,0</b>	<b>2,6</b>
3	Reduction or deterioration in public services because of Syrians	2,3	2,2	2,6
4	Security problems the Syrians would cause	2,4	2,1	2,5
5	Concerns on Syrians’ political participation (elections)	2,0	1,8	2,5
6	Concerns that Syrians will obtain Turkish citizenship and have a say in Türkiye’s future/fate	1,8	1,8	2,5
7	Concerns that Syrians would damage the identity of Turkish society / *** Concerns that Syrians would corrupt the identity of Turkish society	1,8	1,7	2,3
	<b>AVERAGE ****</b>	<b>2,14</b>	<b>2,02</b>	<b>2,57</b>
<p>* In SB-2019 this question was asked as “To what extent does Turkish society have the following concerns because of Syrians?”  **The statement “Increase in the Syrian population in Türkiye” was added in SB-2021.  *** The statement “Concerns that Syrians would damage the identity of Turkish society” in SB-2019 and SB-2020 was updated as “Concerns that Syrians would corrupt the identity of Turkish society” in SB-2021  **** The statement number 2 was not added in the calculations of the average score.</p>				

**FGD Findings (SB-2021-S)**

As mentioned in various parts of the report above, one consistent finding of SB research has been that significant and growing concerns exist within Turkish society regarding Syrians. If these economic, political, cultural, and security-related concerns and anxieties are not effectively managed, they may contribute in the creation of major problems regarding living together in the future. Therefore, Syrian FGD participants were also asked about their perceptions regarding the concerns of Turkish society.

In this context, participants were, first, asked what concerns they thought the Turkish society had about Syrians. According to many participants, Turkish society considers Syrians as a rival to its members and feels like Syrians are already causing harm to it. Economy is perceived by Syrian participants to be the epicenter of the fears and worries of Turkish society, where Turks are thought to believe that Syrians have stolen their jobs leading to growing unemployment. The majority emphasized that it is the duty of the Turkish government and the independent media to reveal the truth through official channels and correct misconceptions. Following this, FGD participants were asked whether they thought Turkish society was justified in holding these concerns. The discussions reveal that, even though there are some that find these concerns as justified, a majority of participants suggested that those concerns were mostly unwarranted. Those who believe that Turkish society is right to be worried argued that when they look at the situation from the perspective of Turks, they could easily understand them. Accordingly, it is normal for the host society to feel this way when a large number of refugees arrived in the country in a very short time. Other participants, on the other hand, think that the concerns they observe in Turkish society are unfounded. According to those who hold this view, the concerns are based on misinformation spread from the media and social media channels and stem from prejudices.

Lastly, the participants were asked how they thought these worries and concerns could be alleviated. It can be suggested that a majority of participants were quite optimistic. Accordingly, since most of these worries were based on unjustified and irrational fears, they could easily be destroyed. According to some participants, the bigger responsibility falls on the shoulders of Syrians. According to some other participants, in contrast, the responsibility falls primarily on the shoulders of Turkish state, media, and society

- ▶▶ “Turks, who used to empathize because of economic difficulties, are now starting to dislike us.” (Istanbul - SR - Workers)
- ▶▶ “There are 3.5 million Syrians in Türkiye, which is a huge number. This is a figure that exhausts countries and governments and even destroys governments. We should not forget that 2 million Syrians entered the country in the first two years, it was very difficult for them to adapt from the beginning. I can therefore understand the concerns of Turkish society.” (Hatay - SR - Lawyer)

## 10. According to Syrians, How does Turkish Society Treat Syrians?

Perhaps as important for social cohesion as the legal and physical infrastructure is the existence of a ground enabling intimate social relations. Having finished their 11<sup>th</sup> year of residence in Türkiye, Syrians were welcomed with extraordinary support and solidarity. Although the number of Syrians has exceeded 3.7 million, there are significant concerns among society and the fact that the issue has increasingly become politicized, the Turkish society still provides this solidarity and “social acceptance”. This is extremely important. However, how Syrians assess the way Turkish society treats them is also a significant issue. This issue without any doubt an area of perception. So, the assessments would remain speculative. However, a trend from “acceptance” to “tolerance” becomes evident.

The Syrians were asked the question “in your opinion, how does the Turkish society treat Syrians” with a “multiple answer” system and a mix of 3 “positive” and 3 “negative” statements as responses. In SB-2019, the two positive statements were ranked at the top two, while the negative ones received much less agreement from respondents. This has changed in SB-2020. According to a large majority of respondents, 63,3% in SB-2019 and 62,3% in SB-2020, “*Turkish society embraced Syrians*”. This figure scored a significant decrease in SB-2021 to become 45%. The statement “*Turkish society exploits Syrians as cheap labor*” was placed second receiving an almost identical rate of support in SB-2019 and SB-2020, which significantly increased to 43,3% in SB-2021. The statement “*Turkish society does everything it can for Syrians*”, which was ranked second with 42,7% in SB-2017 and 32,7% in SB-2020, dramatically decreased to 11,4% in SB-2021 to be placed only fifth.

One of the negative statements, i.e. “*Turkish society treats Syrians badly*”, received support from 8,3% in SB-2019, 3,3% in SB-2020, and 14,1% in SB-2021. Another striking change is observed regarding the statement “*Turkish society looks down on Syrians*”. It was supported by 3,8% in SB-2019 and 2% in SB-2020. In SB-2021, however, it scored a remarkable increase and climbed to 9,1%. This situation shows that the post-2020 period has created a very important breaking point between the Syrians and the Turkish society, where significant social distance and mutual accusations emerged.

**SB-2021-TABLE 105: How do you think the Turkish society treats Syrians? (Multiple Responses)**

		2019		2020		2021	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
1	Turkish society embraced Syrians	898	63,3	881	62,3	640	45,0
2	Syrians are being exploited as cheap labor/ Turkish society exploits Syrians as cheap labor*	500	35,3	491	34,7	616	43,3
3	Turkish society treats Syrians tolerantly**	-	-	-	-	526	37,0
4	Turkish society treats Syrians badly	117	8,3	46	3,3	200	14,1
5	Turkish society does everything it can for Syrians	605	42,7	463	32,7	162	11,4
6	Turkish society looks down on Syrians	54	3,8	28	2,0	129	9,1
	No idea / No response	110	7,8	83	5,9	143	10,0

\* The statement “Syrians are being exploited as cheap labor” used in SB-2019 and SB-2020 was updated to be “Turkish society exploits Syrians as cheap labor” in SB-2021.

\*\* The statement “Turkish society treats Syrians tolerantly” was added in SB-2021 for the first time. Thus, 3 “positive” and 3 “negative” statements were posed to respondents.

**FGD Findings (SB-2021-S)**

Syrian FGD participants were also asked how Turkish society treats them. The perception that Turkish society treats them badly and in a discriminatory way is common among the participants. In addition, it was stated that the attitude towards Syrians and the behavior of Turkish society turned to negative as time passed, and that even those who showed positive behaviors in the previous years changed their attitudes over time. Some participants stated that Turkish society approaches Syrians with a 'sneering' and 'contemptuous' attitude.

- ▶ *"I also hate the word Syrian. A negative sentence always comes next to the word Syrian." (Ankara-SR-Student)*
- ▶ **"In the past, Turks used to empathize, but that empathy is gone. They are only tolerating us now." (Hatay - SR- Women)**
- ▶ *"While many things were much easier in the past, Turkish society no longer tolerates simple or small things. If a Syrian makes a mistake, generalizations are made immediately." (Hatay - SR - Lawyers)*
- ▶ *"Even though I speak Turkish - some of them treat me well but - most Turks are prejudiced against me." (Ankara-SR- Student)*
- ▶ **"When we want to buy something, we become brothers, but when we want to sell something, we become Syrians." (Ankara - SR- Student)**
- ▶ **"I think they are treating us badly because false claims are being spread on social media." (Istanbul-SR- Student)**
- ▶ *"The cases of discrimination have increased tremendously after the escalating problems and incidents." (Istanbul-SR-Employee)*

Regarding this question, another part of the participants stated that it would not be possible to make a general judgment about how Turkish society treats Syrians. According to these people, the concepts of "Turkish society" and "Syrians" do not refer to homogeneous communities. Therefore, people's education levels, socio-economic status, occupations, the density of Syrians living in the region, etc. are the variables that determine how Syrians are treated. In this context, according to these participants, one of the most important factors determining how Syrians are treated is their Turkish language level. Accordingly, Syrians who speak Turkish well are perceived by Turkish society as more integrated and are treated better.



## 11. "Integration" / "Social Cohesion"

SB studies approach the concepts of "integration" and "social cohesion" in line with the "durable solutions" approach of the UNHCR.<sup>197</sup> UNHCR focuses on three "durable solutions" for refugees.<sup>198</sup> These are "voluntary return", "resettlement to a third country", and, if the first two solutions are inaccessible or ineffective, "local integration". In Türkiye, the concept of "local integration" is also being used to refer to the processes at the local level towards social cohesion, mostly coordinated by local governments.

Using clear statements regarding the future of Syrians in Türkiye, such as "they will leave" or "they will stay", doesn't seem to be right. However, it appears safe to suggest that Syrians' motivation for and interest in voluntary return has significantly diminished over the years in the face of an environment of chronic war and a devastated country. In this context, SB research aims to understand the views and experiences of Syrians regarding social cohesion.

Due to the nature of the subject, it is quite difficult to follow and determine the social cohesion processes of Syrians in Türkiye. Almost all of the questions or statements in the SB studies can be evaluated within this framework. In this context, statements like "Syrians want to obtain Turkish citizenship", "Syrians are grateful to Turkish society", "Syrians want to go to another country", "Syrians want to stay in Türkiye", "Syrians are happy in Türkiye", "Syrians are being exploited in Türkiye/Turks are exploiting Syrians", "Syrians are excluded in Türkiye", "Syrians can get what their labor deserves", "Syrians can get work easily", "Syrians don't like Turks", "Syrians are making an effort to adapt to Turkish society", "Turkish society embraced Syrians", "Turkish society is exploiting Syrians as cheap labor", "Turkish society treats Syrians tolerantly", "Turkish society treats Syrians badly", "Turkish society is doing everything it can for Syrians", and "Turkish society looks down on Syrians" are all open to evaluation in terms of positive or negative integration processes. Here, it is observed that Syrians have a more pessimistic and negative view on almost every issue in the process. For instance, the support for the statement "Turkish society is doing everything it can for Syrians" was 42,7% in SB-2019, which decreased significantly to 32,7% in SB-2020 and much further to 11,4% in SB-2021. A similar significant decrease can be observed regarding the statement "Turkish society embraced Syrians" (SB-2019: 42,7%; SB-2020: 32,7%; SB-2021: 11,4%). Even though the statement "Turkish society treats Syrians tolerantly", which was added in SB-2021 for the first time, received support from 37% of the respondents, there is an increasing trend in the support given to the statement "Turkish society treats Syrians badly" (SB-2019: 8,3%; SB-2020: 3,3%; SB-2021: 14,1%). Similarly, another statement that bears significance regarding Turkish society's level of social acceptance, "Turkish society looks down on Syrians", displays a remarkable trend of increase (SB-2019: 3,8%; SB-2020: 2,0%; SB-2021: 9,1%). The support given to the statement "Syrians want to go to another country" has also been steadily growing (SB-2019: 30,3%; SB-2020: 33,6%; SB-2021: 64,2%). Even though it still receives a high level of support, there is a continuous decrease in the share of those who agreed with the statement "Syrians want to obtain Turkish citizenship" (SB-2017: 65,6%; SB-2019: 63,4%; SB-2020: 49%; SB-2021: 44,4%). All these show that both the complaints of the Syrians in Türkiye and the erosion in the social acceptance level of the Turkish society are in a remarkable change.

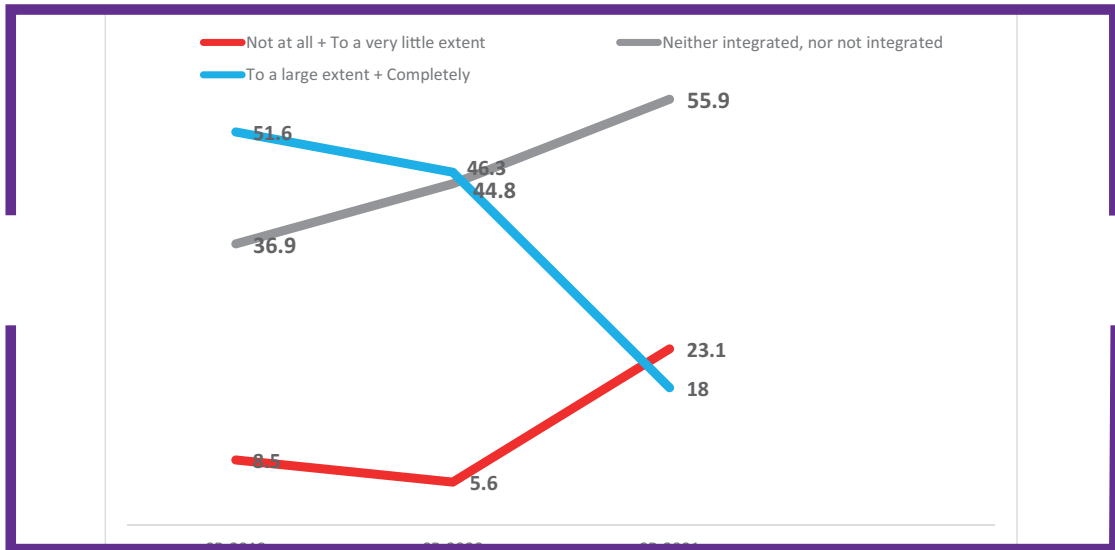
197 For conceptual discussions regarding these see Syrians Barometer-2020: <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2022/03/SB-2020-Ingilizce-son.pdf> (Pages: 37-53).

198 UNHCR (2021) Durable Solutions: <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/kalici-cozumler> (Access: 03.02.2021).

The issues briefly discussed above were discussed in detail in the relevant sections. However, in this section, it will be evaluated how satisfactory and successful the adaptation processes are from the point of view of the Syrians.

**SB-2021-TABLE 106 (+FIGURE): To what extent have the Syrians integrated into Turkish society?**

	2019*		2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Not at all	25	1,8	17	1,2	121	8,5
To a very little extent	95	6,7	62	4,4	208	14,6
Partially - **Neither integrated, nor not integrated	523	36,9	634	44,8	796	55,9
To a large extent	613	43,2	566	40,0	230	16,2
Completely	119	8,4	88	6,3	26	1,8
No idea / No response	43	3,0	47	3,3	42	3,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1418</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1414</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>100,0</b>



\* This question was worded as “To what extent have the Syrians integrated into Türkiye/Turkish society?” in SB-2019  
 \*\* The option “partially” which was used in SB-2019 and SB-2020 was updated to be “Neither integrated, nor not integrated” in SB-2021.

The issue of “social cohesion” is very complicated, starting from the fact that there is no agreed-upon meaning of the concept. It can be suggested that the decisive determinant of social cohesion is the “level of social acceptance”<sup>199</sup> in the host society, which can be



discerned in its attitudes and approach towards the newcomers. The other main factors in the process include the capacity of the host society, existing vulnerabilities, the issues concerning public services caused by the newcomers as well as their number. How Syrians perceive their level of harmonization is also an important issue. The question "Have Syrians integrated into Türkiye / will they integrate?" concerns the 3,6 million Syrians accounting for around 5% of Türkiye's population as much as it does Turkish society. Therefore, the respondents were asked the question "*To what extent have the Syrians integrated into Turkish society?*". 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. This figure dramatically dropped to 18% in SB-2021. The share of Syrian respondents who believe that Syrians "partially" integrated or "neither integrated, nor not integrated" has been on the rise starting from 36,9% in SB-2019 and increasing to 44,8% in SB-2020 and 55,9% in SB-2021. Those who believe that Syrians either integrated to "a very little extent" or "not integrated at all" make up of 8,5% in SB-2019, 5,6% in SB-2020, and with a huge increase, 23,1% in SB-2021. These findings could be interpreted to reveal a pessimistic picture regarding social cohesion processes at the end of a more than 10 years of living together. The radical decrease in the share of the respondents who believed that Syrians have integrated into Turkish society in SB-2021 can be associated with the politicization process of the subject. This picture also suggests that the existence of common life practices will not be sufficient for a positive rapprochement and social harmony by itself.

Syrian men, those in the 35-44 age group, and those who don't live in the border or metropolitan cities supported more strongly the statement that Syrians integrated "completely" or "to a large extent". Women, those who live in border cities, those in the 18-24 age group, and those with lower levels of educational attainment appear to be more pessimistic regarding this issue.

**SB-2021-TABLE 107: To what extent have the Syrians integrated into Turkish society? (%)**

	Not at all	To a very little extent	Neither integrated, nor not integrated	To a large extent	Completely	No idea/ No response
<b>Sex</b>						
Female	11,3	16,8	54,7	12,7	0,9	3,6
Male	6,5	13,1	56,9	18,5	2,5	2,5
<b>Age Groups</b>						
18-24	10,5	11,0	53,0	16,0	3,0	6,5
25-34	8,9	16,1	56,5	14,5	1,6	2,4
35-44	8,7	13,3	54,5	18,6	2,2	2,7
45-54	6,1	17,2	57,1	16,7	1,5	1,4
55-64	6,0	14,3	63,1	13,1	-	3,5
65 +	8,3	16,7	58,3	16,7	-	-
<b>Educational Attainment</b>						
Illiterate	10,0	13,1	54,6	16,9	0,8	4,6
Literate but not graduate of any school	11,1	14,5	52,2	17,8	1,1	3,3
Primary school	9,4	14,0	55,8	14,9	1,7	4,2
Middle school	7,4	16,2	57,4	14,2	2,6	2,2
High-school or equivalent	7,1	14,8	58,6	17,1	1,4	1,0
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	4,2	12,5	58,3	22,9	2,1	-
University	8,6	15,7	47,1	24,3	2,9	1,4
<b>Region</b>						
Border cities	12,4	17,6	52,5	13,6	1,4	2,5
Other cities	2,2	9,8	61,4	20,3	2,6	3,7
Metropolitan cities	1,4	10,0	66,6	16,1	2,1	3,8
Non-metropolitan cities	3,5	9,5	52,7	27,3	3,5	3,5
General	8,5	14,6	55,9	16,2	1,8	3,0

## **FGD Findings (SB-2021-S)**

The issue of social acceptance and social cohesion has been one of the most fundamental questions of SB research since the beginning. In this context, just as the FGD participants from the Turkish society were asked, the Syrian participants were first asked what they understood from the concept of 'social cohesion', and then to what extent they believed the Syrians in Türkiye have adapted to the country. Then, the participants were asked to evaluate the direction in which the social cohesion processes should continue.

Considering the answers given by the participants to the question of what they understand by the concept of "social cohesion", it can be said that three themes stand out. 1. Adapting to the customs and traditions of the society, 2. being able to live together and 3. everyone respecting each other and both parties (host community and Syrians) carrying out this process together and in cooperation. It is also noteworthy that most of the participants emphasized the importance of knowing the language for social cohesion.

- ▶ *"Social cohesion means getting to know each other. The Syrians did not integrate because they felt alien here, so they started to settle in the neighborhoods of other Syrians they knew and started to create ghettos." (Ankara- SYR- Student)*
- ▶ *"It means knowing and respecting the laws found in the country and also sharing the existing traditions." (Ankara- SR- Student)*
- ▶ *"Social cohesion is two-sided. It is a process of cooperation between two parties, and it can only be successful with the cooperation of both parties." (Istanbul- SR- Workers)*
- ▶ *"Social cohesion in Türkiye means speaking Turkish." (Istanbul-SR-Student)*

Secondly, some of the participants define social cohesion mostly through a transformation that the local people will experience. Accordingly, social cohesion is the local people's "acceptance" of newcomers. According to these participants, social cohesion will only be achieved when Turkish society does not see Syrians as foreigners or strangers and sees them as natural members of the society.

- ▶ *"It means living the same life we used to live in Syria." (Ankara- SR- Student)*
- ▶ *"Social cohesion means looking at refugees with a kind eye, not harming them, and accepting them." (Ankara- SR- Women)*
- ▶ *"If they treat us more tolerantly then there will be social cohesion. Social cohesion takes place when the other party, namely the refugees, is not viewed as strangers and thieves." (Gaziantep- SR- Workers)*

### **To what extent do Syrians think that Syrians in Türkiye have social cohesion?**

One consistent finding of SB research is that there is a significant disparity between the perceptions of Turkish society and Syrians regarding the extent to which the latter has integrated. Syrian participants generally state that they think that social cohesion has been

achieved to a large extent. This question was also discussed in FGDs so that this finding could be further explored. In parallel with the survey findings of the SB studies in previous years, it was determined that the Syrian FGD participants mostly thought that the Syrians had a significant level of harmonization to Türkiye. However, it was observed that there was pessimism on this issue both in the SB-2021 surveys and FGDs. Despite this, the majority of the participants stated that they believed that the Syrians were making an effort to integrate into the Turkish society, and stated that they achieved this thanks to various side factors such as obtaining Turkish citizenship, financial stability, and not being affected by the problems in their environment.

- ▶ *"I think of course we have integrated. Most of us work here and our children study in Turkish schools." (Hatay- SR- Women)*
- ▶ *"Syrians who obtained Turkish citizenship started to integrate. I think they even became more eager to integrate because they now live here on a stable basis." (Gaziantep- SR- Workers)*
- ▶ *"A large part of them have integrated, every day Syrians shop with Turks, work with them and live in the same places. I think most of the Syrians have integrated to Türkiye." (Gaziantep- SR- Women)*
- ▶ *"We did not have any difficulty in integrating because most of us learned Turkish and we have Turkish friends. And because most of us are students, we got citizenship, so we live in harmony with Turks." (Mardin- SR- Student)*
- ▶ *"I think we have integrated, there have been a lot of incidents, but Syrians still love Türkiye and the Turkish people, for example, since many Turks defended us in the Altındağ incidents, we cannot ignore it and of course we want to integrate with those good people." (Ankara- SR- Women)*

There seems to be a broad consensus among Syrians that some groups adapt more easily and to a much greater extent, compared to the rest of the Syrian community. Accordingly, Syrian children studying in Turkish schools and Syrian youth studying at universities in Türkiye have mostly integrated to Türkiye and Turkish society easier and better than adults, as they come to Türkiye at an early age, go to school, and learn Turkish earlier. In fact, according to some participants, it is no longer possible to distinguish Syrian youth from Turkish youth. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that a few of the participants interviewed in Istanbul and Ankara said that their children learned the Turkish National Anthem as an indication that they have integrated. As a result, although there are differences of opinion about all Syrians, the majority of the participants seem to agree on the harmonization of Syrian children and youth.

- ▶ *"Of course we have integrated. Our children speak Turkish to each other at home and they translate everything for us. If you see my children, you would definitely say they are Turkish, not Syrian" (Ankara- SR- Women)*
- ▶ *"The part of the Syrian society that can integrate into Turkish society the most is university students, because there are various auxiliary factors for them, for ex-*

ample, they can speak and communicate in Turkish adequately. "(Gaziantep-SR-NGO Workers)

- ▶ *"Because our university students communicated with the educated people of the Turkish society, they were able to integrate into the society more quickly. And I think that's a big factor that helps with social cohesion."* (Istanbul- SR-Workers)
- ▶ *"Of course, we have integrated, now our children have forgotten Arabic, and those who do speak Arabic, do not speak it correctly. They read Turkish history and learn the Turkish anthem. Many now also comment on the political situation in Türkiye. Frankly, I think our kids just didn't integrate. Our children became Turkish citizens without obtaining citizenship, and they live in Türkiye with a completely different life and a different thought than we do."* (Ankara- SR- Women)
- ▶ *"Children who go to school here integrated because they learned the national anthem and history. The second generation integrates everywhere."* (Istanbul - SR - Tradesmen and Employees)

In addition, some participants state that both communities are responsible for the lack of social acceptance and social cohesion. According to some participants, many Syrians are not accepted by the Turks, which leads to the isolation of the Syrians.

- ▶ *"I think there is no such thing as social cohesion right now, Turkish society only accepts us, but there is no social cohesion."* (Hatay- SR- Women)
- ▶ *"I think they got used to us, but they definitely don't want to live in harmony with us."* (Gaziantep- SR- Women)
- ▶ *"Turkish society does not want to live in harmony with us because false information is being spread."* (Ankara- SR- Student)
- ▶ *"I think there is no such thing as social cohesion. If there was, there would not have been so many incidents and fights."* (Istanbul- SR- Student)

### **According to Syrians, Is the Situation Getting Better or Worse Regarding Social Cohesion?**

A substantial number of Syrian participants in FGDs shared their pessimistic future expectations. According to these, there are increasing negative perceptions and attitudes towards Syrians in Turkish society, and Syrians are increasingly exposed to discriminatory and racist treatment. The most important reasons for this situation are suggested to be the fact that the number of Syrians is increasing, the prolongation of their stay in Türkiye, and the increase in the media's misleading and provoking news about Syrians.

- ▶ *"Social cohesion is not on the horizon in Türkiye. Why? Because of racism, of course. There is something negative in the media every day right now because unfortunately some opposition parties are promoting racism to win the elections. Things were better when we first came, but now perceptions and behavior are getting worse."* (Istanbul- SR- Student)

- ▶ *"Since the stay is longer and they see us everywhere, as they say, and they are increasingly uncomfortable with us, unfortunately, I think it will be much worse, that is, there will be no social cohesion at all, and on the contrary, when the elections approach, things will get worse." (Hatay- SR- Women)*

In this part of the discussion, the majority of participants suggested that the improvement or worsening of the situation in terms of social cohesion depend on some factors. People with this view are divided into three main groups. According to the first group, the further increase in the social cohesion of Syrians into Türkiye depends mainly on the steps that the Turkish state and society will take, such as enacting laws that preventing discrimination.

- ▶ *"I think the government needs to do something to make it go for the better. Because now, social cohesion has become a very necessary thing, especially after the increasing fights and incidents." (Hatay- SR- Women)*
- ▶ *"The Syrians did their best to integrate, but Turkish society does not accept them. I think NGOs and most importantly the state should work to solve this situation. Or at least there needs to be laws to prevent discrimination." (Istanbul- SR- Workers)*
- ▶ *"We are doing our best under these conditions, but we are not the hosts. Both the Turkish society and the state should take a step towards social cohesion." (Ankara- SR -Women)*

According to the second group, the main responsibilities and duties in this regard fall on the Syrians themselves. In this context, it was stated that Syrians should make more of an effort to integrate. Accordingly, by learning Turkish and adapting to the cultural norms in Türkiye, Syrians will be able to come to a better point in the eyes of the Turkish society, and this will help overcome some obstacles before social cohesion.

- ▶ *"We also need to put some effort into it. Most of us do not know Turkish, but if we want to live in this country, especially in a country like Türkiye, we need to learn the language." (Gaziantep- SR- Workers)*
- ▶ *"When we speak Turkish with Turks, we can express ourselves more clearly. If all Syrians learned Turkish, it would not be such a problem." (Istanbul- SR- Student)*
- ▶ *"If we learn the language and culture like our children do, I think our affairs will be solved more easily. For example, we may have fewer problems with the employees of public institutions." (Istanbul-SR -Journalists)*
- ▶ *"For social cohesion to happen, everyone needs to work and everyone needs to work in coordination with each other. Everyone has a role to play in ensuring social cohesion; NGOs, government, society and Syrians." (Hatay- SR - Lawyers)*

Some participants, in turn, drew attention to the problems in the social cohesion processes deriving from the concept of "guesthood":

- ▶ *"They see us as guests, you treat the guest hospitably for three days, then the*

guest leaves your home again and leaves, but they say, "Why are the Syrians still staying here? It would be better if Syrians were presented as refugees instead of guests." (Ankara- SR- Student)

- ▶ *"We came to Türkiye because we were looking for security. Not to become guests. The guest stays for a maximum of one year, but we live here now." (Gaziantep- SR- Women)*
- ▶ *"They called us guests and we know that the stay has been prolonged, but we are currently experiencing these problems because we do not know the Turkish language and they do not facilitate our social cohesion." (Hatay- SR- Women)*

### **Do you think those who obtained Turkish citizenship have integrated? Why?**

The majority of the participants think that even the Syrians who have obtained Turkish citizenship has not integrated into Turkish society. This situation was explained due to two reasons: First, some Syrians did not know Turkish even though they obtained Turkish citizenship, and secondly, Turks continued to see them as "Syrians" despite them being Turkish citizens.

- ▶ *"Nothing has changed for me socially. Turks look at me like any other Syrian." (Istanbul - SR - Journalists)*
- ▶ *"They just get rid of the requirements like travel permit and the work permit. But since they do not speak Turkish, everyone knows them as Syrians." (Istanbul - SR- Workers)*
- ▶ *"I have rights like any Turkish citizen in public institutions and at the legal level, for example, in terms of property and travel, and a lot of psychological pressure has been lifted from me. But nothing has changed in my social life. According to Turks, I am still Syrian." (Istanbul - SR- Journalists)*

Considering that the majority of FGD participants believed that a significant portion of Syrians would be permanent in Türkiye, it was asked whether they thought Turkish society and Syrians could live together in peace in the future. It can be said that the answers given to this question generally do not have optimistic expectations, and it should be noted that this is a different outcome from previous studies. On the other hand, it should be noted that there are few participants who answered "yes, they can live in peace". According to these participants, the conditions for living together in peace depend on many factors such as discrimination, instability and insecurity they experience. According to the participants, one of the most important determinants of living in peace is who will be in government. Based on the impressions they obtained from various segments of the society, these participants expressed that if the current government changes, a peaceful coexistence between the Turkish society and the Syrians will be at risk.

Although they did not give a negative answer to this question, it is important that some participants emphasized that Syrians should make more of an effort to live a more peaceful life in Türkiye. In other words, according to these participants, the biggest responsibility of whether they can live together in peace in the future belongs to the Syrians.



- ▶ *“The state has done its best. We also need to take a few steps by learning the language, then we can live peacefully with the Turks.” (Istanbul - SR - Workers)*
- ▶ *“We should not throw all the responsibility on the Turkish people and the Turkish state. In order to live a more peaceful life, we need to work more frequently and in harmony with both the state and Turkish NGOs.” (Istanbul- SR - Journalists)*
- ▶ *“I think the Turkish state did its best. There is sensitivity, but we also need to make an effort.” (Mardin - SR - Student)*

Syrians' view on the harmonization performance of Syrian community in Türkiye revealed a very positive picture in SB-2020, as it did in SB-2017 and SB-2019 studies. However, in SB-2021, both the survey and the FGD findings of Syrians show a serious differentiation from previous SB studies in terms of their views on social cohesion processes, as in many other areas. Growing despair, disappointment, and anxiety, as well as serious self-criticism, draw attention among Syrians. In the studies before SB-2021, the positive approach of Syrians towards social cohesion was approached within the framework of the concept of “self-integration”. However, it is understood that as the limits of this concept are now being reached, the anxiety of the Syrians has increased, and their tendency to see a future in Türkiye has decreased fueling the tendency among Syrians to move away from social cohesion efforts.

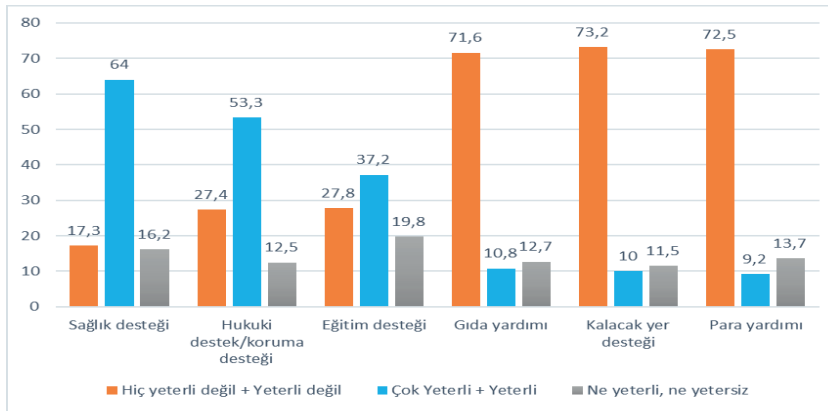


## 12. The Support Provided by the Turkish State to Syrians

The survey aimed to gather information on the perceptions and experiences of Syrians regarding the various public services they receive, which would be important in terms of process management. In this context, respondents were asked the question of *"To what extent do you find the support and aids the state provides for the Syrians in Türkiye in the following areas sufficient?"* referring to the 6 main areas (health, protection/legal support, education, housing, food, and Money/financial aid) for which the Turkish state provides support. While in SB-2017, the total rate of those who responded "sufficient" and "very sufficient" to this question on average was 28.62%, this rate has risen to 34,96% in SB-2019, 31,5% in SB-2020 and 30,7% in SB-2021. There is a decreasing trend in Syrians' level of satisfaction in the past 2 years.

**SB-2021-TABLE 108: To what extent do you find the support and aids the state provides for the Syrians in Türkiye in the following areas sufficient? (%)**

		Very insufficient	Insufficient	COMBINED INSUFFICIENT	Neither sufficient, nor insufficient	Sufficient	Very sufficient	COMBINED SUFFICIENT	No idea / No response
1	Health support	3,7	13,6	17,3	16,2	51,2	12,8	64,0	2,5
2	Protection / Legal support	14,1	13,3	27,4	12,5	43,8	9,5	53,3	6,8
3	Education support	5,8	22,0	27,8	19,8	30,4	6,8	37,2	15,2
4	Food aid	28,7	42,9	71,6	12,7	9,7	1,1	10,8	4,9
5	Housing support	28,8	44,4	73,2	11,5	7,8	2,2	10,0	5,3
6	Financial support	28,8	43,7	72,5	13,7	8,3	0,9	9,2	4,6



HEALTH SUPPORT	LEGAL SUPPORT	EDUCATION SUPPORT	FOOD AID	ACCOMMODATION	FINANCIAL AID
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In all four SB studies, the highest level of satisfaction was found in the field of “health” (72% in SB-2017; 71,8% in SB-2019; 61,9% in SB-2020; 64% in SB-2021). The question “protection/legal support” was included for the first time in SB-2020. 47,8% and 53,3% of the respondents replied with either “sufficient” or “very sufficient” to this new question in SB-2020 and SB-2021, respectively. Education”, the percentage of which declined significantly, came in the third rank. While a combined 58% and 64,6% of the respondents found services sufficient in SB-2017 and SB-2019, respectively; this figure retreated to 47% in SB-2020 and 37,2% in SB-2021. It seems safe to believe that implementation of the pandemic-induced restrictions on education and the experience of online education had a significant role in this fall.

The most significant dividing line in the context of this question was the region in which the respondents lived.<sup>200</sup> In 4 of the 6 fundamental areas of public service, the Syrian respondents living in the border cities appear to be less satisfied.

**SB-2021-Table 109: To what extent do you find the support and aids the state provides for the Syrians in Türkiye in the following areas sufficient? (Scored)**

	Health support	Protection / Legal support	Educa-tion sup-port	Food Aid	Financial Support	Housing support	Average Score
<b>Sex</b>							
Female	3,3	3,0	2,4	2,1	1,9	2,0	2,5
Male	3,6	3,0	2,8	1,9	2,0	1,9	2,5
<b>Age Groups</b>							
18-24	3,5	3,0	2,4	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,5
25-34	3,5	3,0	2,5	2,0	1,9	1,9	2,5
35-44	3,5	3,0	2,8	1,9	1,9	1,9	2,5
45-54	3,5	3,2	3,0	2,0	2,1	2,1	2,6
55-64	3,4	3,1	2,6	2,1	2,0	2,0	2,5
65 +	3,3	3,3	2,4	2,2	2,0	2,3	2,6
<b>Educational Attainment</b>							
Illiterate	3,4	3,0	2,6	2,0	1,8	1,9	2,4
Literate but not graduate of any school	3,5	3,1	2,4	2,0	2,0	2,1	2,5
Primary school	3,5	3,0	2,5	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,5
Middle school	3,5	3,1	2,8	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,6
High-school or equivalent	3,5	3,0	2,7	1,9	1,9	1,9	2,5
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	3,4	2,9	2,8	1,8	1,8	1,6	2,4
University	3,7	3,0	2,9	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,6
<b>Region</b>							
Border cities	3,5	2,9	2,6	1,9	1,9	1,9	2,4
Other cities	3,4	3,3	2,7	2,1	2,1	2,0	2,6
Metropolitan cities	3,3	3,1	2,8	2,2	2,2	2,2	2,6
Non-metropolitan cities	3,6	3,5	2,6	2,0	1,8	1,7	2,5
General	3,5	3,0	2,7	2,0	2,0	1,9	2,5

200 For a study on social cohesion in the border region, see: M.N.Gültekin (2021) Gaziantep Monitörü 2020 Uyum / Gaziantep Monitor 2020 Cohesion, Sosyal Hizmetler Araştırma, Belgeleme, Eğitim Vakfı Yayınları.

When average scores are calculated for each of the areas for SB-2017, SB-2019, SB-2020, SB-2021; it appears that the average scores tend to increase until 2020 and they show a slight decrease in 2021. However, it should be emphasized that satisfaction is below the average in areas other than health and legal protection.

**SB-2021-Table 110: To what extent do you find the support and aids the state provides for the Syrians in Türkiye in the following areas sufficient? (Scored)**

		2017	2019	2020	2021
1	Health support	3,6	3,6	3,5	3,5
2	Protection / Legal support	-	-	3,0	3,0
3	Education support	2,9	3,3	2,9	2,7
<b>Average Score</b>		2,2	2,5	2,6	2,5
4	Food aid	1,6	1,8	2,0	2,0
5	Financial support	1,4	1,8	2,0	2,0
6	Housing support	1,5	1,8	1,9	1,9

### **FGD Findings (SB-2021-S)**

The issue of services provided by the Turkish State to Syrians was also discussed with Syrian participants in FGDs. As in the surveys, the Syrians expressed their satisfaction with the the most, especially in the field of health. Although there is a general satisfaction in education, it is understood that there have been problems in enrollment in schools, peer bullying and discrimination in the last period. On the other hand, Syrian students brought up the issue of diploma equivalence and expressed their concerns about the post-university graduation process.

The issue that was frequently mentioned in FGDs held with Syrian students and academics was the difficulties in ensuring the equivalence of certificates/diplomas obtained from Syria. What is most emphasized in this regard is that the equivalence process takes too long, the procedures are not well known and/or they are not reasonable/understandable to the Syrians.

Another major problem of Syrian university students is reported to be their difficulties in finding a job after graduation. It is noteworthy that students interviewed in both border cities and metropolitan ones stated that finding a job for graduates is a priority beyond financial aid from the state. Another important issue that emerged in the interviews is that the graduates are looking for a job suitable for their education level and their profession, and they do not prefer to work in cheaper and unqualified jobs.

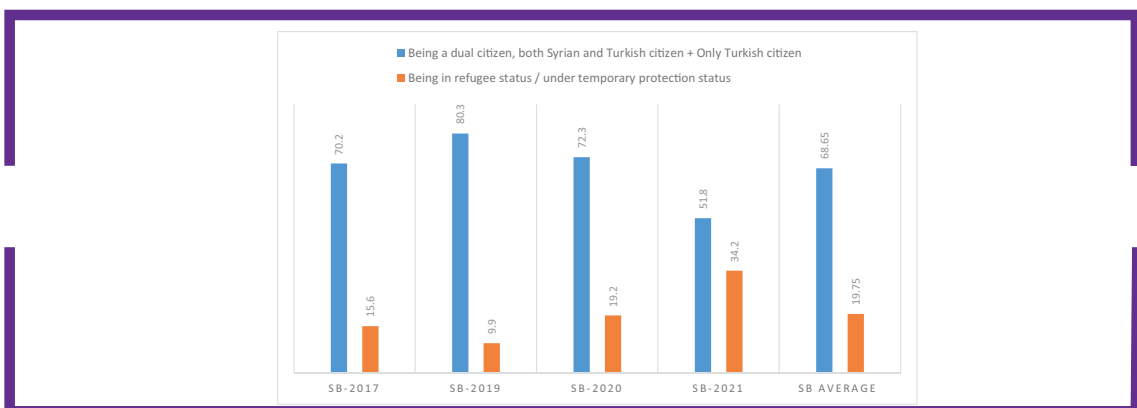
- ▶▶ *“Syrian students cannot find jobs after graduation and no one supports them. Instead of providing financial assistance, I wish the Red Crescent and other non-governmental organizations would offer Syrians job opportunities.” (Mardin - SR- Academic)*
- ▶▶ *“Syrian graduates cannot do their jobs, they go to jobs that are not suitable for their qualifications in return for very low wages. We no longer want help, we want to work.” (Gaziantep- SR- NGO Workers)*
- ▶▶ *“We obviously need to look to the future, not the past, at this stage. Instead of receiving help, we need to be active individuals in Türkiye and they need to support us in this regard.” (Ankara- SR- Women)*

### 13. Status Syrians would prefer in Türkiye

Syrians' status of "temporary protection" is one of the most frequently discussed topics. Therefore, it is important to learn about how Syrians evaluate their own status and the legal prospects that wait for them in Türkiye. Among the responses to the question of what status Syrians want to have, "citizenship" strikingly takes the lead, even though there was a significant decrease in 2021. 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. The option of "refugee status / under temporary protection status" was divided into two separate options in SB-2020. In SB-2020 the share of the option "continue with under temporary protection status" was 17,9%.

**SB-2021-TABLE 111 (+FIGURE): Which status would you want to have in Türkiye?**

		2017*		2019		2020		2021	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1	Dual citizenship- both Syrian and Turkish	376	61,8	818	57,7	911	64,4	652	45,8
2	Refugee status / under temporary protection status	95	15,6	140	9,9	-	-	-	-
	Refugee status	-	-	-	-	19	1,3	343	24,1
	Continue with under temporary protection status	-	-	-	-	253	17,9	200	14,1
3	Only Turkish citizenship	51	8,4	320	22,6	111	7,9	86	6,0
4	Long term /unlimited residence permit	21	3,5	9	0,6	8	0,6	30	2,1
5	Same as my current status	35	5,8	45	3,2	-	-	-	-
6	Work permit	13	2,1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	No idea / No response	17	2,8	86	6,0	112	7,9	112	7,9
<b>Total</b>		<b>608</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1418</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1414</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>100,0</b>



In SB-2019, the option “refugee status / under temporary protection status” was preferred only by 9,9% of the respondents. This increase may be related to the perception that those Syrians who obtain citizenship, and thus lose their “under temporary protection status”, are forfeiting some of their privileges associated with this status. Other options than the above mentioned three received almost no interest. When the support given for the option “refugee status” is added to that, the combined share was 19,2%. It is striking that in SB-2021 the support given to these two options was almost doubled to increase to 38,2%. The remarkable development here is that this increase is actually mostly related to the debates in Türkiye. 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.

It appears that men, those in the 45-54 age group, those with a university education, and those who live outside of border and metropolitan cities show a higher level of interest for dual citizenship. Men, those in the 55-64 age group, those who are literate but not graduate of any school, and those who don't live in metropolitan cities, in turn, are more interested in obtaining Turkish citizenship only. Those who want to have a “refugee” or “temporary protection” status are more likely to be the men, those in the 25-34 age group, those who are illiterate, and those who live in border cities.

These findings clearly show the strong demand among Syrians for citizenship, even though there is a slight decrease recently. The average percentage of those Syrian respondents who preferred Turkish citizenship in all four SB studies is 68,65%, while the same figure for those who want a status based on international protection is only 19,75%.

**SB-2021-TABLE 112: Which status would you want to have in Türkiye? (%)**

	Dual citizenship – both Syrian and Turkish	Refugee status	Continue with under temporary protection status	Only Turkish citizenship	Long term / unlimited residence permit	No idea / No response
<b>Sex</b>						
Female	40,0	28,4	13,7	5,5	1,5	10,9
Male	49,8	21,2	14,3	6,4	2,5	5,8
<b>Age Groups</b>						
18-24	45,0	29,5	10,5	6,0	2,0	7,0
25-34	43,7	23,8	15,9	6,7	2,2	7,7
35-44	46,7	22,8	15,7	4,8	0,7	9,3
45-54	51,0	25,3	10,1	5,6	3,0	5,0
55-64	44,0	19,0	15,5	9,5	2,4	9,6
65 +	45,8	16,7	4,2	4,2	16,7	12,4
<b>Educational Attainment</b>						
Illiterate	38,5	22,3	21,5	5,4	3,1	9,2
Literate but not graduate of any school	46,7	26,7	7,8	8,9	2,2	7,7
Primary school	40,5	26,4	15,5	7,3	1,5	8,8
Middle school	44,3	27,0	14,5	4,5	2,8	6,9
High-school or equivalent	55,7	20,5	11,0	4,3	1,0	7,5
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	56,3	18,8	8,3	8,3	-	8,3
University	68,6	7,1	8,6	5,7	5,7	4,3
<b>Region</b>						
Border cities	40,5	37,3	10,9	4,5	1,5	5,3
Other cities	54,4	2,6	19,2	8,5	3,1	12,2
Metropolitan cities	45,2	2,3	26,1	5,6	4,7	16,1
Non-metropolitan cities	70,1	3,0	7,5	13,4	0,5	5,5
General	45,8	24,1	14,1	6,0	2,1	7,9



## **FGD Findings (SB-2021-S)**

A significant number of Syrian FGD participants criticized the “Temporary Protection Status” and stated that this caused the future of Syrians to be uncertain. According to a significant number of participants, the vast majority of Syrians in Türkiye do not know what rights they have, and they do not know enough about the laws and their obligations before these laws. In this context, it is necessary for the state to inform Syrians more about the legal order and system in Türkiye, and to raise awareness of their rights in order to ensure that they can protect themselves.

- ▶ *“11 years have passed and we are still under temporary protection. Our relatives in Europe got citizenship but they are deporting us from here. Temporary protection should not be granted for 11 years” (Istanbul-SR-Worker)*
- ▶ *“If we don’t fix the statuses and laws, there will be no social cohesion. At the very least, we need to inform about refugee rights and duties. They need to know what temporary protection means, under what conditions temporary protection is granted or removed.” (Hatay -SR- Lawyer)*
- ▶ *Even Syrians who are naturalized and do not speak Turkish are discriminated against. ” (Gaziantep- SR- NGO Employees)*

## 14. Going Back to Syria?

One of the most sensitive topics of research for SB studies has concerned the views and tendencies of Syrians about voluntary return. The issue of permanency of Syrians in Türkiye should be considered in two dimensions. The first is the desire or condition of staying in Türkiye without any reason, while the second is the desire or condition of not returning to Syria. For this reason, the SB study, specifically conducted on social cohesion, considers Syrians' opinions on return as one of the most significant areas.

In a process of extraordinary uncertainties, it is obvious that the Syrians' views on return would be very relative. Because the developments in Syria, and the host country Türkiye's attitude in the context of the state and society would also play significant roles as much as the desire of Syrians. For this reason, besides asking direct questions to Syrians, such as "*are you planning to return?*", other indirect findings also need to be considered to analyze their intentions and hesitancy.

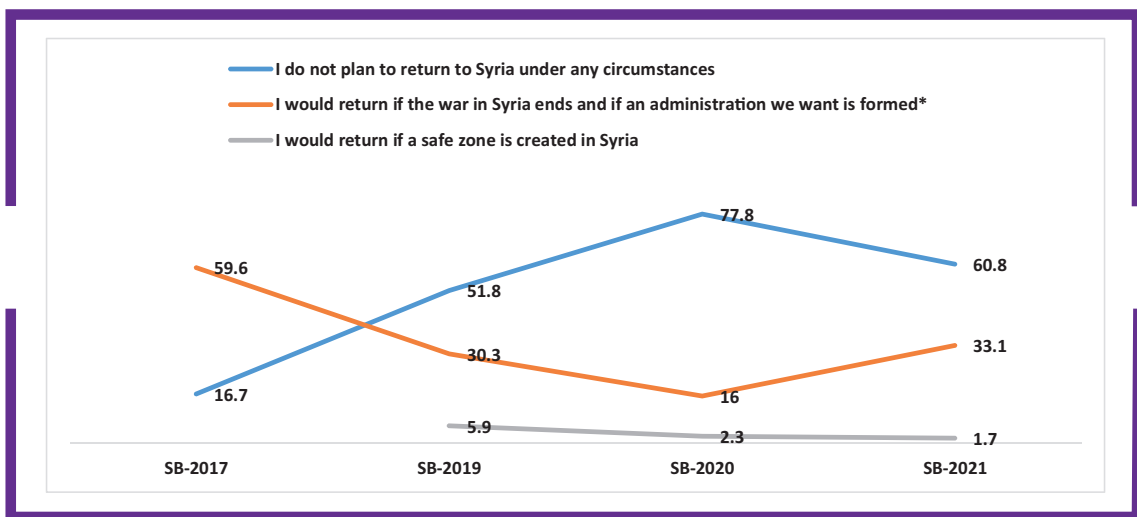
Especially in recent years, the issue of the return of Syrians in Türkiye has been on the agenda of the public with an increasing intensity with each passing day. It is observed that the SB, which is one of the most comprehensive studies on this subject, is also a reference source from time to time in these discussions. However, as it is often stated in this study, although it is a study with a high confidence level, the findings of the SB reflect the views of those who participated in this study rather than all Syrians in Türkiye.

### 14-a. Opinions of Syrians in Türkiye about returning to Syria

In the SB study, the basic question of "*In general, which of the following statements better explains your attitude in returning to Syria?*" was asked to get some clues on return tendencies. The most striking finding here is that the rate of those who responded to this question by saying "*I don't plan to return to Syria under any circumstances*" was 16,7% in SB-2017, which 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, in the SB studies, there was a steady increase in the tendency not to return to Syria, regardless of the end of the war, and a decrease in the proportion of those who wanted to return when the war was over.

**SB-2021-TABLE 113(+FIGURE): In general, which one of the following statements better explains your attitude on returning to Syria?**

	2017		2019		2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
I do not plan to return to Syria under any circumstances	148	16,7	735	51,8	1059	77,8	813	60,8
I would return if the war in Syria ends and if an administration we want is formed*	529	59,6	429	30,3	218	16,0	442	33,1
I would return if a safe zone is created in Syria	-	-	83	5,9	32	2,3	23	1,7
I would return if the war ends in Syria, even if an administration we want is not formed**	114	12,9	78	5,5	9	0,7	9	0,7
I would return if the economic conditions in Türkiye continue to get difficult	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0,2
I would return even if the war continues in Syria	19	2,1	3	0,2	-	-	2	0,1
No idea / Don't know	46	5,2	64	4,5	38	2,7	39	2,9
No response	31	3,5	26	1,8	6	0,5	6	0,5
Total	887	100,0	1418	100,0	1362	100,0	1337	100,0



\* The present statement "I would return if the war in Syria ends and if an administration we want is formed" was "I would return if the war ends and if a good administration is formed" in SB-2017.

\*\*Similarly, the statement "I would return if the war ends in Syria, even if an administration we want is not formed" was "I would return if the war ends, even if a good administration was not formed" in SB-2017.

**Note-1:** These are the results of those that responded to the question of "What are your plans for returning to Syria in the next 12 months?" as 'I don't plan to return', 'I am undecided', 'I have no idea/I don't know', and 'No response'.

**Note-2:** The question of "Please specify under which conditions you would like to return", which was asked in SB-2019 but could not get enough meaningful results, was not asked in SB-2020 and SB-2021. This issue was mostly tried to be clarified in focus group discussions.

It seems related to the agenda in Türkiye that the attractiveness of the option “I would return if the war in Syria ends and if an administration we want is formed” among Syrians decreased steadily in SB-2017, SB-2019 and SB-2020, but increased in SB-2021. While the rate of supporters for this option was 59.9% in SB-2017, it decreased to 30.3% in SB-2019, 16% in SB-2021, and increased to 33.1% in SB-2021. The rate of those who say, “I would return if the war ends in Syria, even if an administration we want is not formed” decreased from 12.9% in SB-2017 to 5.5% in SB-2019, and 0.7% in SB-2020, and remained at the rate of 0.7% in SB-2021. The option “I will return if there is a safe zone in Syria” added to SB-2019 is seeing steadily decreasing support. The rate of those who supported this response decreased to 5.9% in SB-2019, to 2.3% in SB-2020, and to 1.7% in SB-2021.

Regarding the tendency of Syrians to return, a 17-point decrease in the response “I do not plan to return to Syria under any circumstances” in the SB-2021, and an increase of 17% in the response “I would return if the war in Syria ends and if an administration we want is formed” should be considered. We have entered a period in which it cannot be easily predicted in which direction this change will evolve in the upcoming period. The increase in the tendency of Syrians to go to third countries actually reveals their uneasiness in Türkiye and the break in their future expectations. The developments in the lives of Syrians in Türkiye, political debates, developments in the economy affect their views on return. 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.

It is understood that among the Syrians, those who say “I do not plan to return to Syria under any circumstances” are generally women, those in the 35-44 age group, those who are illiterate and those who are not in metropolitan or border provinces. It is understood that those who support the option “I would return if the war in Syria ends and if an administration we want is formed” are mostly men, those between the ages of 45-54, high school graduates, and those living in border provinces.

**SB-2021-TABLE 114: In general, which one of the following statements better explains your attitude on returning to Syria? (%)**

	I do not plan to return to Syria under any circumstances	I would return if the war in Syria ends and if an administration we want is formed	I would return if a safe zone is created in Syria	Other	No idea/ No response
<b>Sex</b>					
Female	62,9	31,5	1,4	0,9	3,3
Male	59,3	34,2	1,9	1,1	3,5
<b>Age Groups</b>					
18-24	61,6	32,1	2,1	1,6	2,6
25-34	59,5	33,7	1,9	0,6	4,3
35-44	65,6	29,7	1,5	0,8	2,4
45-54	55,3	38,9	1,1	1,6	3,1
55-64	55,7	35,4	2,5	-	6,4
65+*	63,2	26,3	-	10,5	-
<b>Educational Attainment</b>					
Illiterate	65,0	30,0	1,7	1,7	1,6
Literate but not graduate of any school	60,0	31,8	2,4	1,2	4,6
Primary school	62,9	31,6	0,8	0,8	3,9
Secondary/Middle school	56,5	37,5	2,1	0,9	3,0
High-school or equivalent	61,5	31,8	1,5	1,5	3,7
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	55,3	38,3	4,3	-	2,1
University	62,1	28,8	4,5	1,5	3,1
<b>Region</b>					
Border cities	59,5	34,6	2,1	0,8	3,0
Other cities	63,1	30,4	1,0	1,4	4,1
Metropolitan cities	63,1	31,9	0,6	1,3	3,1
Non-metropolitan cities	63,1	27,8	1,7	1,7	5,7
General	60,8	33,1	1,7	1,0	3,4

Note: These are the results of 1337 people who answered the question "What are your plans for return within the next 12 months?" as 'I don't plan to return', 'I am undecided', 'I have no idea/I don't know', 'No response'.

#### 14-b. Is there a return plan within the next 12 months?

To get some clues on return tendencies, the Syrians in Türkiye were asked the question of “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. This rate is significantly higher than the rate of the response “I don’t plan to return under any circumstances” (60,8%). Also, the share of those who replied with “I plan to return in the next 12 months” has reduced from 6,8% in SB-2019, to 3,7% in SB-2020, and increased to 6,1% in SB-2021. As expected, when a concrete plan and timing is put forward, concerns and reluctance to return among Syrians rise.

**SB-2021-TABLE 115: What are your plans for return within the next 12 months?**

	2019		2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
I do not plan to return	795	56,1	1259	89,0	1149	80,7
I am undecided	266	18,8	75	5,3	152	10,7
I plan to return	96	6,8	52	3,7	86	6,1
No idea / No response	261	18,3	28	2,0	36	2,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1418</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1414</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>100,0</b>

### 14-c. Reasons for Not Returning<sup>201</sup>

It is illuminating to look at the reasons why the Syrians in Türkiye **do not plan** to return. When participants were asked the question of "Provide the most important 3 reasons why you are not planning to return to Syria", through a multiple response system, the first response with the highest rate is "because it's not a safe place" (SB-2019: % 42,9, SB-2020: %69,9, SB-2021: % 64). In the second place is the option "because the war still continues" (SB-2019: % 31,2, SB-2020: %25,3, SB-2021: % 57,7), followed by "there is nothing left in Syria for us" 2019: % 14,6, SB-2020: % 18, SB-2021: % 30,8). There are two points worth noting here. The first of these is that the option "Because I want to obtain citizenship in Türkiye", which was in the 2nd place in SB-2020 and received 30.4% support, fell to the 7th rank with 8.5% support in SB-2021. The second important change is the preference for the "to go to another country" option, which received 17.4% support. All the findings reveal that Syrians are hesitant about the future in Türkiye and are in search of some alternatives, especially going to a third country.

In SB-2021, when we follow the rankings on the reasons for not returning, the top responses were followed by, in descending order, "because we established a new life in Türkiye" (% 14,3), "to provide a better future for my children" (11,2%), "because I am working in Türkiye" (%9,1), "because I want to obtain citizenship in Türkiye" (% 8,5), "because education in Türkiye is better" (%5,3), "For being wanted by the current Syrian government" (% 4,9), "because I have serious concerns about the future of Syria"(% 4,7), "Because of the bad economic situation in Syria" (% 4,2), "Because I am happy here" (% 3,7), "In order not to enlist in the army / If we return to Syria, because we are afraid of being drafted- \*If we return to Syria, we fear that I or the men in our family will be drafted" (% 3).

It can be said that while the security concerns in Syria are at the forefront among the reasons why Syrians do not "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. When we consider the return of Syrians in terms of the "push-pull" factors that are frequently used in traditional migration discussions, 7 of the 14 reasons are "pushing" over the adverse conditions and risks in Syria, and 7 reasons are "pulling" in the context of living and living standards established in Türkiye.<sup>202</sup> In this context, it can be said that 7 pull and 7 push factors determine the attitudes of Syrians not willing to return. 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. This shows us strikingly that the main obstacle to the return of Syrians is the situation in Syria. This is partially valid for Syrians living in countries such as Lebanon and Jordan.

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201 In the SB study, it was tried to give as many options as possible to the participants for the tendency to return-not return. Although the total number of options was 17 in SB-2020 and 23 in SB-2021, options with more than 3% support were taken into account.

202 Since the reason "to go to another country" was described as "an advantage to be created by staying in Türkiye", it was included among the attractive factors.

**SB-2021-TABLE 116: Please provide the reasons why you are not planning (don't want) to return to Syria (Multiple responses) (%)**

**(Results for 1259 people who do not plan to return to Syria in the next 12 months.)**

		2019		2020		2021	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
1	Because it is not a safe place	341	42,9	880	69,9	735	64,0
2	Because the war still continues	248	31,2	318	25,3	663	57,7
3	There's nothing left in Syria for us	116	14,6	226	18,0	354	30,8
4	To go to another country	-	-	203	16,1	199	17,3
5	Because we established a new life in Türkiye	-	-	132	10,5	164	14,3
6	To provide a better future for my children	33	4,2	149	11,8	129	11,2
7	Because I am working in Türkiye	164	20,6	53	4,2	105	9,1
8	Because I want to obtain citizenship in Türkiye	-	-	383	30,4	98	8,5
9	Because education in Türkiye is better	67	8,4	61	4,8	61	5,3
10	For being wanted by the current Syrian government	21	2,6	44	3,5	56	4,9
11	Because I have serious concerns about the future of Syria	-	-	-	-	54	4,7
12	Because of the bad economic situation in Syria	-	-	245	19,5	48	4,2
13	Because I am happy here	82	10,3	38	3,0	42	3,7
14	"In order not to be enlisted in the army / If we return to Syria, because we are afraid of being drafted- *If we return to Syria, we fear that I or the men in our family will be drafted	10	1,3	34	2,7	34	3,0
15	Other	27	3,4	19	1,5	29	2,5
	No idea/no response	31	3,9	3	0,2	2	0,2

\* In SB-2019 and SB-2020, the options In order not to be enlisted in the army / If we return to Syria, because we are afraid of being drafted" have been updated to "If we return to Syria, we fear that myself or the men in our family will be drafted " in 2021.

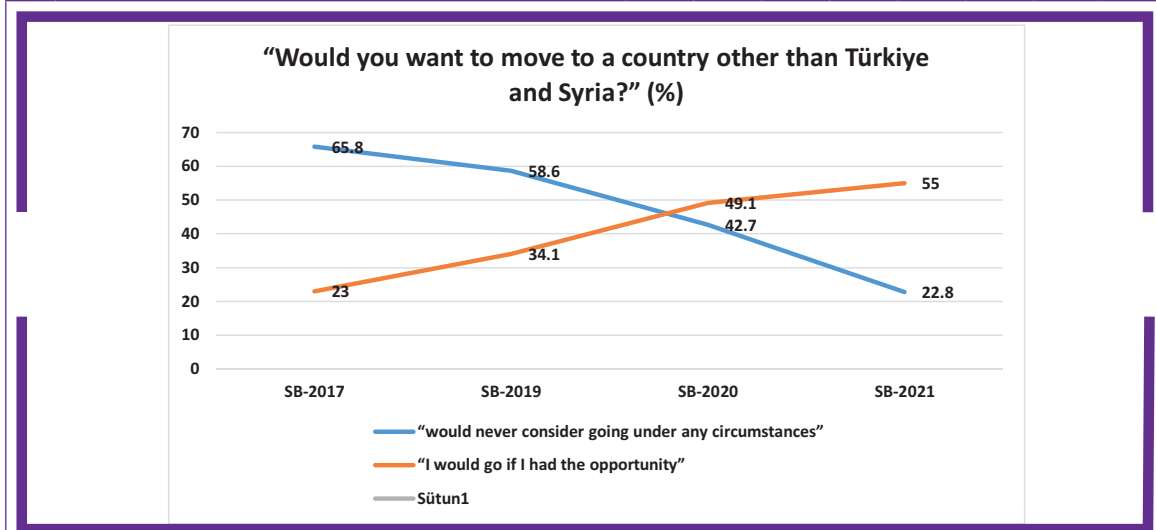


#### 14-c. Moving to a Third Country (Other Than Türkiye and Syria)

Tendency of Syrians living in Türkiye to go to a third country was tried to be understood with the question of *"Would you want to move to a country other than Türkiye and Syria?"* Significantly differently from the findings of SB-2017 and SB-2019, the findings of SB-2020 and SB-2021 on this question show that the intentions of Syrians to move to a third country has been strengthened. In fact, the response *"I would go if I had the opportunity"* has emerged as the top answer for the first time in SB-2020 with a rate of 49,1%, and with 55% in SB-2021. The same response ranked second in 2017 with 23% and 34,1% 2019. This situation shows that the rate of those who want to go in case of an has increased. Among the replies to this question, having the opportunity of multiple responses, 42,7% of the respondents suggested that they *"would never consider going under any circumstances"*, placing this response to the second rank. This response used to be the top one in both SB-2017 and SB-2019 with the endorsement of, respectively, 65,8% and 58,6% of the respondents, while in SB-2021, it moved down to the 4th place with 22.8%. It also appears that the idea of moving to a third country if certain "conditions" are met is also becoming more popular.

**SB-2021-TABLE 117 (+FIGURE): Would you want to move to a country other than Türkiye and Syria?\* (Multiple responses)**

		2017		2019		2020		2021	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1	I would go if I had the opportunity - **I would go if I receive an invitation/ visa	204	23,0	483	34,1	694	49,1	783	55,0
2	I would go if I cannot find a job in Türkiye	24	2,7	64	4,5	27	1,9	355	24,9
3	I would go if I am provided a job opportunity	36	4,1	202	14,2	72	5,1	327	23,0
4	I would never consider going	584	65,8	831	58,6	604	42,7	324	22,8
5	I would go if I encounter discrimination	-	-	-	-	-	-	181	12,7
6	I would go if I cannot get education in Türkiye	4	0,5	23	1,6	8	0,5	156	11,0
7	I would go if I cannot earn the money worth my efforts / *** I would go if I cannot earn the money worth my efforts in Türkiye	8	0,9	19	1,3	3	0,2	144	10,1
8	I would go if I have a relative/acquaintance to help me there	3	0,3	196	13,8	99	7,0	143	10,0
9	I would go if I cannot become a Turkish citizen	-	-	71	5,0	123	8,7	129	9,1
10	I will go if the legal ways are blocked to reunite with my family members in Europe	-	-	-	-	-	-	58	4,1
11	I would move abroad after I become a Turkish citizen	-	-	43	3,0	14	1,0	31	2,2
12	Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	58	4,1
13	I would go if my child is provided health support	-	-	-	-	1	0,1	-	-
No idea/no response		24	2,7	23	1,6		1,3		1,3



\* In SB-2017 and SB-2019, this question was worded as "Would you want to go to and live in a country other than Türkiye and Syria?" while in 2020 as "Do you plan to go to a third country other than Türkiye and Syria?" and in 2021, as "Would you want to move to a country other than Türkiye and Syria?"

\*\* The response of "I would go if I had the opportunity" was updated as "I would go if I receive an invitation/ visa" in 2021.

\*\*\* The response of "I would go if I cannot earn the money worth my efforts" was updated as "I would go if I cannot earn the money worth my efforts in Türkiye" in 2021.

### **FGD Findings (SB-2021-S)**

The majority of FGD participants stated that they think that a large part of the Syrians will not return to Syria. It is possible to say that the participants expressed their views on three main grounds in FGDs, where very shocking answers were also given.

First of all, it was stated that there is still no security in Syria and there is no belief that it can be provided. In other words, many participants think that if they return, they will experience the fear that Syrians will be punished or they will find themselves in violence again.

- ▶ *“Definitely they cannot return to Syria. 11 years have passed and the situation in Syria is still very bad. Now the situation in Damascus and Aleppo is more difficult and worse than Idlib and the free zones.” (Ankara-SR-Woman)*
- ▶ *“Even if the regime changes, they cannot return. There are many groups and militants in Syria now. Frankly, I cannot live there anymore, Syria has become a foreign country for me, Aleppo has completely changed, the psychology and lives of our acquaintances there have changed a lot.” (Ankara - SR - Woman)*
- ▶ *“If I had a billion liras in Syria, I wouldn’t return even to get my money back as long as the Syrian regime controls Syria, I can’t go back and stand it.” (İstanbul - SR - Journalists)*
- ▶ *“If the Syrians return to Syria right now, maybe they will kill them. Everyone has fears and anxieties about returning.” (İstanbul - SR - Journalists)*

Secondly, some participants said that they have nothing left in Syria, that they either lost all their assets in the war or sold them on their way to Türkiye. Therefore, they think that they have no assets or acquaintances to return to in Syria.

- ▶ *“Syrians are aware of the developments and discussions in Türkiye. They started to think about going to Europe for this. But they certainly don’t want to go back to Syria and they don’t think because there is nothing left of them.” (Gaziantep - SR - NGO workers)*
- ▶ *“There is nothing left of us there. I have neither a home nor a family. Most Syrians are in the same situation, I think most of them will either stay here or go to another country.” (Gaziantep - SR - Woman)*
- ▶ *“Actually, there is nothing that encourages us to stay in Türkiye. But there are many things that frighten us in Syria, we are not that much willing to stay here, and if the immigration gate to Europe is opened for us, we will leave immediately.” (İstanbul - SR - Journalists)*

Third and lastly, the participants stated that Syrians have now started **a new life in Türkiye**, they have received diplomas that can only be valid here, and they have acquired property and established a business here with all their knowledge. According to these participants, it is very unlikely that Syrians will want to give up and return from the lives they have built from scratch.

- ▶ *"No one wants to return, most of them built their lives here. Children no longer speak Arabic, they speak Turkish, how will they return, what will our young people do there?" (Ankara-SR-Woman)*
- ▶ *"Our children are Turks now, they don't want to go there, they don't remember Syria and they don't feel like they belong there at all" (İstanbul- SR - Artisans and workers)*
- ▶ *"Obviously, it is difficult for them to go back after establishing their business in Türkiye and working here." (İstanbul - SR - Artisans and workers)*

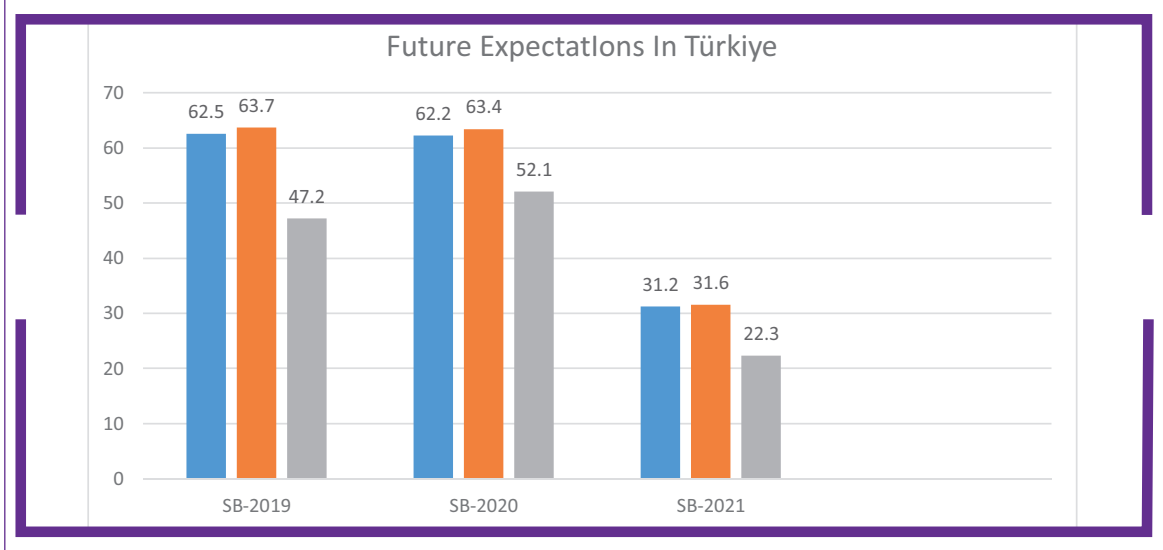
## 15. Future Expectations of Syrians in Türkiye

Whether Syrians see a future for themselves in Türkiye gives important clues both on their permanency trends 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?’”

### SB-2021-TABLE 118 (+FIGURE): Do you believe that there is a future in Türkiye for yourself, your family, and other Syrians? (%)

(For other versions of cross-tabulations with this question, see Additional Tables)

		Yes	No	No idea/no response
For yourself	2019	62,5	30,1	7,4
	2020	62,2	30,8	7,0
	2021	31,2	59,2	9,6
For your family	2019	63,7	28,9	7,4
	2020	63,4	29,7	6,9
	2021	31,6	58,6	9,8
For other Syrians in Türkiye	2019*	47,2	21,7	31,1
	2020	52,1	24,4	23,5
	2021	22,3	37,7	40,0



The picture that emerged in SB-2021 reveals that the future expectations of Syrians in Türkiye for “themselves”, their “family” and Syrians in general 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. The same table applies

to “their families”. Among Syrians, who believed that there was a future for their families in Türkiye, with a rate of more than 63% in SB-2019 and SB-2020, this rate decreased to 31.2% in SB-2020. While the expectation for a future “for Syrians in Türkiye” was 47.2% in SB-2019 and 52.1% in SB-2020, this decreased to 22.3% in SB-2021.<sup>203</sup>

Among those who believe that there is a future for themselves and their families in Türkiye, those with the strongest belief were the individuals who lived in border cities. While the general average of those who say “I am waiting for a future for myself” is 62.2%, this rate rises to 72.9% in border provinces. This response was least popular among the respondents from metropolitan cities.

A serious break in the SB-2021 draws attention regarding the general situation, hopes and future expectations of Syrians in Türkiye. It is predicted that there are many different reasons for this. However, the most important of these is the uncertainty of their status in Türkiye, the process becoming more politicized, the belief that they will have to leave Türkiye in case of a change in power, the knowledge about the refugees in Europe being in better conditions, less solidarity from the Turkish society than before, hard working conditions, the economic situation in Türkiye, criticism and attacks in daily life and especially in social media. Because of all these, the only solution for those who are restless and pessimistic about the future in Türkiye is to go to third countries. However, it is also known that this happens in exceptional cases. In the meantime, it is striking that the option that Syrians care about the least is to return to their country.

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<sup>203</sup> This question was asked differently in SB-2017. It was posed as “Do you believe that there is a future for you and your family in Türkiye?” with the possible responses of “Yes”, “No”, and “I don’t want a future in Türkiye”. The rate of those who said “yes” to this question was 49,7% among Syrians living outside of the camps.

### **FGD Findings (SB-2021-S)**

FGD participants were first asked whether they believed that Syrians had a future in Türkiye. The responses received can be grouped into four main categories: (1) 'yes, Syrians believe they have a future in Türkiye', (2) 'no, they don't believe it', and (3) 'Whether Syrians believe this or not depends on some factors'. (4) The impact of the 2023 elections.

Those who said they believed that Syrians have a future in Türkiye stated that Syrians have now established a life in Türkiye and do not intend to live in another country. Accordingly, there are many Syrians who receive education in Türkiye, whose children study here, who set up businesses and obtain citizenship, and they naturally see their future in this country. It was also stated that the increase in intermarriage between Syrians and Turks should be seen as the mixing and unification of the two communities.

- ▶ *"I believe that, many of my friends are married to Turks. I think we have a future here, but unfortunately we have been having problems in these last two years." (Gaziantep - SR -NGO workers)*
- ▶ *"We established a business here and bought a house, of course we believe that. Even if it is difficult, we want to live here." (İstanbul - SR - Artisan and workers)*

According to the participants who answered negatively to the question, the vast majority of Syrians do not believe that they have a future in Türkiye because they cannot obtain citizenship and still have temporary protection status. Another point emphasized by the participants in this opinion is the discrimination, deportation and oppression that Syrians are experiencing in Türkiye.

- ▶▶ *"People who work long hours here and are under temporary protection are neither happy in Türkiye nor can they have any dreams about the future here" (Gaziantep -SR - NGO workers)*
- ▶▶ *"I honestly don't think we have a future right now. Syrians no longer communicate with Turks so that no problem or incident occurs" (Hatay - SR-Woman)*
- ▶▶ *"We came here because we had to. We dream of a future, our only problem is discrimination." (Gaziantep - SR -Workers)*
- ▶▶ *"I don't think they feel that way because they are under temporary protection and all of us don't think so since all the Syrians have started to get scared lately. Maybe we all had an imaginary plan here in the past, but lately we've started not to think so." (Gaziantep-SR - Tradesmen and Employees)*
- ▶▶ *After the Ankara events, we see that the cases of discrimination have increased and unfortunately the situation continues to get worse. " (Gaziantep - SR- NGO Employees)*

There are also participants who avoid making generalizations on this issue. According to these participants, the future imagination of Syrians in Türkiye depends on two basic elements. The first of these is the profile, economic situation and legal status of the Syri-

ans, which have been hinted at in other answers. In this context, those who are more educated and qualified, those who are wealthier and those who have obtained citizenship are dreaming of a future in Türkiye. On the other hand, those who are uneducated and unqualified, those with limited financial means and those who cannot obtain citizenship cannot imagine their future in Türkiye. Another factor that is stated to be decisive in this regard is the political administration in Türkiye.

- ▶ *“Many Syrians bought houses and started businesses here. Of course, they have a future, but those who work for low wages have no future in Türkiye.” (İstanbul - SR - Artisans and workers)*
- ▶ *“Our children are studying here and of course I believe they have a future, but I do not know how good our future will be in Türkiye.” (Woman - SR- Hatay)*

#### Citizenship:

Most of the participants emphasized that there are no certain criteria and conditions for the acquisition of Turkish citizenship, there is no transparent flow of information on this issue, and therefore the future of Syrians in Türkiye is uncertain, and they said that because of this, Syrians cannot make future plans. Particularly, the interviewed students complained that the citizenship process took too long and the criteria were too vague.

- ▶ *“Many of our Syrian friends obtained citizenship, but many students did not get citizenship after waiting for three years and many students could not enter the citizenship list, (...) We still do not understand what kind of system there is, the process is very mysterious and no one knows anything about it.” (Mardin- SR- Student)*

On the other hand, it is remarkable that a few participants stated that the most important problem of Syrians is not citizenship, and that even if they are citizens, they think that the problems will not be solved. So much so that one of the participants, who stated that he obtained Turkish citizenship, emphasized that Turks continue to see him as a “Syrian”. This situation shows that the negative perceptions towards themselves and the belief that the generalization of “Syrian” will disappear once they obtain citizenship, but when this is not met, disappointment arises.

- ▶ *“I got (Turkish) citizenship and everyone still treats me like a Syrian. Only the travel permit has become a good use for me, but frankly, nothing much has changed. Even if all Syrians acquire citizenship, problems and issues will continue.” (Hatay - SR- Woman)*
- ▶ *“I think citizenship is not the biggest problem for Syrians. Discrimination, travel authorization and temporary protection are our biggest problems.” (Gaziantep- SR- Artisans and workers)*



## 16. Would you move to another city in Türkiye, if you had the chance?

In the early years of their arrival, and particularly between 2013 and 2018, Syrians were able to move to and settle in any Turkish city they preferred. However, since 2018, the Temporary Protection Regulation was revised and certain restrictions were imposed on Syrians' ability to travel, thereby regulating their movement between cities. Syrians prefer their places of settlement by considering the whereabouts of their relatives, employment opportunities, and their access to public services and support. However, the "Migrant<sup>204</sup> Presence Monitoring" research conducted by IOM-PMM for the first time in 2019 and the policies implemented by the Istanbul Governorship in the same year revealed that Syrians, especially those living in the border region and registered there, live in the western provinces of Türkiye. It is known that within the framework of the "Management of Migration", a serious struggle has been made against those who are not in the provinces registered in the policies of the Presidency of Migration Management after 2019, and in this context, this problem is tried to be solved with the field studies carried out by the PMM itself. In accordance with the legislation, Syrians under Temporary Protection in Türkiye can only leave the province they are registered in for travel or settlement purposes only by obtaining permission. SB-2020 included the question **"If you had the chance/permission, would you want to move to and live in another city in Türkiye?"**. The responses reflect that Syrians are generally content with the cities in which they live. Only 11,5% of the respondents in SB-2020 and 17,2% in SB-2021 suggested that they would consider moving to another city in Türkiye. Despite this increase, it can be said that Syrians generally live in the provinces of their choice, and therefore they show little will to make changes.

**SB-2021-TABLE 119: If you had the chance/permission, would you want to move to and live in another city in Türkiye?**

	2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%
I definitely would not	877	62,0	508	35,7
I would not	307	21,7	582	40,9
I am undecided	35	2,5	68	4,8
I would	138	9,8	166	11,7
I definitely would	38	2,7	79	5,5
No idea / No response	19	1,3	20	1,4
Total	1414	100,0	1423	100,0

204 Here, residents, Syrians under temporary protection or not, international protection holders or those whose application has been accepted, and irregular migrants are all considered within the concept of "immigrant".

**SB-2021-TABLE 120: If you had the chance/permission, would you want to move to and live in another city in Türkiye? (%)**

	I definitely would not	I would not	Combined "I would not"	I am undecided	I would	I definitely would	Combined "I would"	No idea / No response
<b>Sex</b>								
Kadın	29,0	48,8	77,8	4,1	9,8	5,8	15,6	2,5
Erkek	40,3	35,4	75,7	5,2	13,0	5,4	18,4	0,7
<b>Age Groups</b>								
18-24	33,0	40,0	73,0	5,0	10,5	10,5	21,0	1,0
25-34	35,7	39,9	75,6	4,6	12,7	5,6	18,3	1,5
35-44	36,3	40,4	76,7	4,1	13,1	4,6	17,7	1,5
45-54	38,4	38,9	77,3	5,6	10,1	5,1	15,2	1,9
55-64	32,1	53,6	85,7	4,8	8,3	1,2	9,5	-
65+	37,5	50,0	87,5	12,5	-	-	-	-
<b>Educational Attainment</b>								
Illiterate	37,7	43,1	80,8	6,2	6,9	4,6	11,5	1,5
Literate but not graduate of any school	37,8	41,1	78,9	2,2	6,7	10,0	16,7	2,2
Primary school	38,2	40,7	78,9	4,0	11,1	4,6	15,7	1,4
Secondary/ Middle school	36,7	44,0	80,7	3,1	10,2	4,9	15,1	1,1
High-school or equivalent	25,7	42,9	68,6	7,1	16,7	6,2	22,9	1,4
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	33,3	27,1	60,4	8,3	18,8	12,5	31,3	-
University	37,1	25,7	62,8	10,0	18,6	5,7	24,3	2,9
<b>Region</b>								
Border cities	32,2	41,7	73,9	4,9	13,3	6,2	19,5	1,7
Other cities*	41,3	39,7	81,0	4,6	9,0	4,4	13,4	1,0
Metropolitan cities	34,6	54,0	88,6	4,7	5,6	0,6	6,2	0,5
Non-metropolitan cities	52,7	15,4	68,1	4,5	14,9	10,9	25,8	1,6
General	35,7	40,9	76,6	4,8	11,7	5,5	17,2	1,4

The top 5 provinces that those who expressed their desire to change provinces remained the same in SB-2020 and SB-2021. 46% of those who want a change in SB-2020 and 47.8% in SB-2021 state that they want to settle in Istanbul.

**SB-2021-TABLE 121: Which city would you want to go? (Multiple responses)****SB-2020-SB-2021**

SB-2020			SB-2021		
CITY	NUM-BER	%	CITY	NUMBER	%
İstanbul	81	46,0	İstanbul	117	47,8
Gaziantep	12	6,8	Gaziantep	20	8,2
Mersin	10	5,7	Bursa	19	7,8
Bursa	10	5,7	Ankara	13	5,3
Ankara	10	5,7	Mersin	8	3,3

Note: Results from 176 individuals in SB-2020 and 245 individuals in SB-2021 who responded with "I definitely would" or "I would" to the question "If you had the chance/permission, would you want to move to and live in another city in Türkiye?"

## 17. Travel Permit / Road Permit

Syrians under Temporary Protection in Türkiye are required to apply for a travel permit document when they need to or want to travel to cities other than the one in which they are registered. This applies not only to Syrians but to all international protection applicants in Türkiye. Called by the respondents "travel restrictions" in short, this issue has been frequently brought up by my Syrian FGD participants. Therefore, SB-2020 survey incorporated a question on it.

The respondents were asked the question "How does the obligation to obtain a travel permit affect your life?" and given the chance to provide multiple responses. 45,3% of the respondents in SB-2020 and 59,6% in SB-2021 suggested that they "*feel like their freedom is restricted*" as the top response. Another 44,3% in SB-2020 reported that it "*does not affect*" their lives as the second-most response. In SB-2021, the second-place answer is "It harms our family/relative relations". The third most supported response to this question in SB-2021 is "It does not affect my life" with 25.7%. The answer "it does not affect" here can be interpreted as either from stable life and the lack of need, or as "there is no control mechanism anyways". In SB-2021, these three options are followed by "It reduces our chances of finding jobs" with 30.1%, "I want to be free of problems we face in the process of obtaining a travel permit" with 19.5%, and "It adversely affects my psychology" with 12.7%. In the general picture, it is observed that there is a serious decrease in the rate of those who say "it does not affect" and that there is a serious increase in the issues mentioned as complaints.

**SB-2021-TABLE 122: How does the obligation to obtain a travel permit affect your life? (Multiple responses)**

		2020		2021	
		#	%	#	%
1	I feel like my freedom is restricted	641	45,3	848	59,6
2	It harms family/relative relations	240	17,0	384	27,0
3	It does not affect my life	627	44,3	366	25,7
4	It reduces our chances of finding jobs	426	30,1	310	21,8
5	I want to be free of problems we face in the process of obtaining a travel permit	175	12,4	277	19,5
6	It adversely affects my psychology	137	9,7	181	12,7
7	It reduces my chance to better access public services	15	1,1	50	3,5
8	It restricts my access to health services	13	0,9	43	3,0
9	Other	5	0,4	16	1,1
	No idea / No response	49	3,5	48	3,4

### **FGD Findings (SB-2021-S)**

Although the rate of those who say “it does not affect” in the survey results is in the second place with 44% in SB-2020 and in the third place with 25.7% in SB-2021, almost all Syrian participants in FGDs say that they have a very difficult time in obtaining intercity travel permits.

- ▶ *“My grandmother passed away, my mother could not visit her for eight years. This incident happened to my family and all Syrian families live like this.” (Istanbul-SR- Journalists)*
- ▶ *“We are now getting married through social media due to travel permission. ” (Istanbul - SR- Student)*
- ▶ *“Most Syrians turn identity (cards) into touristic residency, paying huge sums just to be able to travel. 205” (Istanbul - SR- Journalists)*

Regarding **travel and residential restrictions**, it has been stated that it is not a correct practice for some districts to close to new registrations, especially with the latest regulation. In addition, it has been stated that the ongoing travel permit application and restrictions for Syrians cause them not to see their family members living in other provinces, and not to go to help them even when they are sick. It is noteworthy that many participants stated that they turned to illegal ways when they had to, because they had problems for these reasons.

- ▶ *“Many Syrian families had to move between several different cities in order to obtain a Temporary Protection ID for each of their members. Later, family members began to suffer from the hassle of moving between cities because they could not get service, because they needed a travel permit. Currently, a family member no longer benefits from health and education services if their identity is registered in another city. ”(Istanbul - SR - Journalists)*

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205 If a Syrian under temporary protection in Türkiye has a valid passport, fulfills the conditions for entry and exit to the country, and has obtained a short-term residence, etc., it is possible in principle to continue this. This path is more open especially for those who have a residence permit with a work permit. However, the number of people obtaining residency through this means is quite small in general.

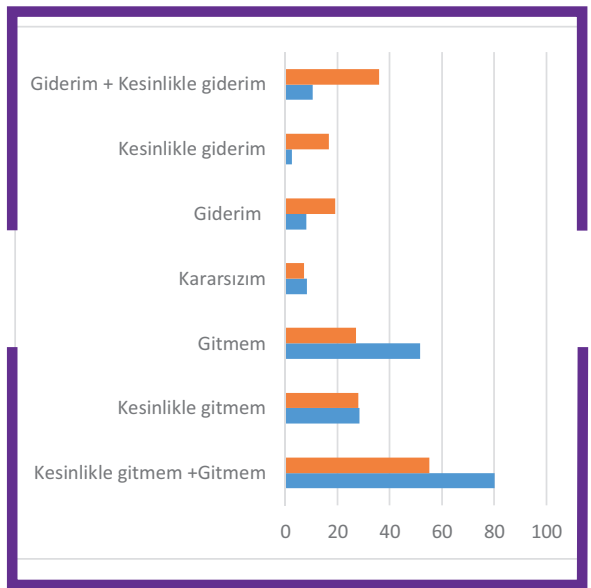
### 18. The Decision to Not Prevent Passage of Refugees at Border Crossings<sup>206</sup>

After the developments following the loss of life of 33 Turkish soldiers as a result of an attack on Turkish Army in Idlib on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Türkiye announced that it would not prevent the passage of Syrian and other refugees to Europe.<sup>207</sup> Since the developments between February 27<sup>th</sup> and March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 had Syrians at their center, some additional questions regarding these events were posed to SB respondents.

The first of these questions was “Did you plan to go when Türkiye in February decided not to control crossings at Pazarkule/Greece border (to allow transit of refugees to Europe)?” A vast majority of Syrian respondents in SB-2020 (83%) suggested that they didn’t plan to go and they didn’t go. Only 2,5% said that they went to the border but couldn’t cross it, while 13,9% suggested that they planned to go but ended up not going.

**SB-2021-TABLE 123(+FIGURE): Would you go if Türkiye decides again not to control (open) the European borders?**

	2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%
Definitely wouldn't go	402	28,4	399	28,0
Wouldn't go	731	51,7	385	27,1
Undecided	118	8,3	103	7,2
Would go	113	8,0	273	19,2
Definitely would go	35	2,5	238	16,7
No idea / No response	15	1,1	25	1,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1414</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>100,0</b>



The question of “Would you go if Türkiye decides again not to control (open) the borders?” in SB-2020 was updated as “Would you go if Türkiye decides again not to control (open) the European borders?” in SB-2021.

SB-2020 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 “definitely would go”. However, 80.1% of the Syrians, as the sum of the answers “Wouldn’t go” (51.7%) and “definitely wouldn’t go” (28.4%), declared that they would not go. In SB-2021, on the other hand, the rate of the response “would go” increased to 19.2%, and the response “definitely would go” increased to 16.7%.

206 For developments in this issue, see: Association for Migration Research-GAR (2020) What happened at Türkiye-Greece Border? (Türkiye-Yunanistan Sınırında Neler Oldu?), (<https://gocarastirmalaridernegi.org/attachments/article/160/turkiye-yunanistan-sinirinda-neler-oldu..pdf>) (Access: 12.04.2021)

207 Turkish daily Hurriyet (29.02.2020) President Recep Tayyip Erdogan: “We opened the borders, the number (of refugees passing to Europe through the borders) has reached 18,000 by this morning. It may hit 25,000-30,000 today. We will not close these borders after this process. We are not supposed to have these many refugees.” (<https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-kapilari-actik-bundan-sonraki-surecte-de-kapatmayacagiz-41458102>) (Access: 12.04.2021)

It can be said that those who generally answer the question of “Would you go if Türkiye decides again not to control (open) the European borders?” as “Wouldn’t go” are women, those over the age of 65, those with a low level of education, and those living in provinces other than the metropolitan and border provinces. Those who say “I Would go” are mostly seen among men, in the 25-34 age group, those with higher education and those living in border provinces.

**SB-2021-TABLE 124: Would you go if Türkiye decides again not to control (open) the European borders? (%)**

	Definitely wouldn't go	Wouldn't go	Combined "Wouldn't go"	Undecided	Would go	Definitely would go	Combined "Would go"	No idea / No response
<b>Sex</b>								
Female	23,5	34,4	57,9	5,8	17,7	16,7	34,4	1,9
Male	31,1	22,0	53,1	8,2	20,2	16,8	37,0	1,7
<b>Age Groups</b>								
18-24	30,0	26,0	56,0	7,0	22,5	11,5	34,0	3,0
25-34	26,2	26,0	52,2	7,3	20,8	18,3	39,1	1,4
35-44	27,6	26,4	54,0	9,2	16,7	17,9	34,6	2,2
45-54	31,8	29,3	61,1	4,5	19,7	13,6	33,3	1,1
55-64	29,8	27,4	57,2	4,8	16,7	20,2	36,9	1,1
65+	20,8	50,0	70,8	4,2	4,2	20,8	25,0	-
<b>Educational Attainment</b>								
Illiterate	30,8	24,6	55,4	3,1	21,5	20,0	41,5	-
Literate but not graduate of any school	32,2	26,7	58,9	6,7	16,7	14,4	31,1	3,3
Primary school	29,1	27,5	56,6	6,5	21,0	14,5	35,5	1,4
Secondary/Middle school	25,6	28,7	54,3	7,1	17,3	19,6	36,9	1,7
High-school or equivalent	24,3	30,0	54,3	11,0	18,1	15,7	33,8	0,9
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	29,2	14,6	43,8	8,3	27,1	20,8	47,9	-
University	32,9	20,0	52,9	10,0	11,4	15,7	27,1	10,0
<b>Region</b>								
Border cities	22,2	28,1	50,3	8,3	22,9	17,0	39,9	1,5
Other cities*	37,5	25,3	62,8	5,5	13,1	16,2	29,3	2,4
Metropolitan cities	22,9	32,6	55,5	6,2	13,2	22,3	35,5	2,8
Non-metropolitan cities	62,2	12,9	75,1	4,5	12,9	6,0	18,9	1,5
General	28,0	27,1	55,1	7,2	19,2	16,7	35,9	1,8

## 19. Pandemic

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. This process naturally created more negative effects on the poor masses and refugees who had to make a living with daily work. There is also a well-known risk that these economic problems and growing poverty could cause a significant deterioration of the already negative attitudes among societies towards foreigners, immigrants, and refugees. 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. In fact, the finding that the ratio of Syrians who are actively working has significantly decreased, from 37,9% in SB-2019 to 29,4 in SB-2020. Although it partially increased to 33,6% in SB-2021, it is understood that the most important reason why it lags behind SB-2019 is the pandemic process. Another finding that supports this concerns the changing figures related to the types of work that Syrians are involved in. For instance, while 50,2% of employees stated that they work in "regular jobs" in SB-2019, this increased to 35,8% in SB-2020 and 25% in SB-2021. On the contrary, the ratio of those working in daily jobs increased from 33,6 in SB-2019 to 44,2 in SB-2020 and to 60,5% in SB-2021.

During the pandemic period, some questions were asked about what kind of problems the Syrians faced, to what extent they had access to health services, what kind of support they received, and what kind of changes there were in their relations with the Turkish society.

It is observed in both SB-2020 and SB-2021 studies that the pandemic has generally negatively affected the lives of Syrians in Türkiye. The rate of those who say "It hasn't affected my life at all" is 11,3% in SB-2020 and 10,2% in SB-2021. However, the first point that Syrians put forward in both studies was "It adversely affected my financial situation" (SB-2020: 64,2%, SB-2021: 56,5%). This is followed by "It adversely affected my emotional/psychological state" (SB-2020: 63,8%, SB-2021: 55,3%); and "I lost my job" (SB-2020: 47,9%, SB-2021: 50,2%). The emphasis on the deterioration of the financial situation and the loss of jobs clearly reveals the devastating impact of the pandemic on vulnerable groups.



**SB-2021-TABLE 125: How has the pandemic period affected your life in Türkiye?  
(Multiple responses)**

		2020		2021	
		#	%	#	%
1	It adversely affected my financial situation	908	64,2	804	56,5
2	It adversely affected my emotional/psychological state	902	63,8	787	55,3
3	I lost my job	678	47,9	714	50,2
4	It hasn't affected my life at all	160	11,3	145	10,2
5	My health got deteriorated	156	11,0	131	9,2
6	I/someone from my family couldn't access education/had difficulty in accessing education	85	6,0	64	4,5
7	I couldn't implement my plans (travel to a third country / return to Syria / open a workplace / education, etc.)	30	2,1	48	3,4
8	Our dialogue with our Turkish neighbors/friends/co-workers got reduced/disturbed	223	15,8	44	3,1
	No idea / No response	13	0,9	14	1,0

In SB-2021, the groups that said there were no effects of the pandemic at all among the Syrians were at the highest level among their demographic groups; It is seen that there are men, those aged 18-24, the educated at the literate level, and those living in the provinces in the border region.

**SB-2021-TABLE 126: How has the pandemic period affected your life in Türkiye?  
(Multiple responses)**

	It adversely affected my financial situation	It adversely affected my emotional/psychological state	I lost my job	It hasn't affected my life at all	My health got deteriorated	I/someone from my family couldn't access education/had difficulty in accessing education	I couldn't implement my plans (travel to a third country / return to Syria / open a workplace / education, etc.)	Our dialogue with our Turkish neighbors/friends/co-workers got reduced/disturbed	No idea / No response
<b>Sex</b>									
Female	57,6	67,7	50,0	8,8	10,7	6,0	4,1	2,4	1,2
Male	55,8	46,7	50,3	11,2	8,2	3,4	2,9	3,6	0,8
<b>Age Groups</b>									
18-24	54,5	52,0	46,0	14,5	9,5	2,0	4,5	2,5	3,5
25-34	57,3	58,9	53,2	8,5	7,5	4,2	4,0	2,8	0,2
35-44	59,3	53,3	54,5	9,2	10,4	6,5	3,4	3,1	0,7
45-54	56,6	50,0	45,5	11,6	11,1	3,5	1,5	4,5	1,0
55-64	46,4	60,7	36,9	10,7	9,5	1,2	1,2	2,4	1,2
65 +	41,7	66,7	33,3	12,5	4,2	16,7	4,2	4,2	-
<b>Educational Attainment</b>									
Illiterate	54,6	56,9	57,7	8,5	10,8	4,6	3,1	1,5	-
Literate but not graduate of any school	62,2	50,0	47,8	12,2	6,7	3,3	2,2	1,1	1,1
Primary school	54,3	54,7	50,7	10,9	6,7	3,8	3,4	2,9	1,9
Secondary/Middle school	56,8	54,3	50,0	9,4	11,1	4,3	0,6	2,8	0,3
High-school or equivalent	61,4	57,6	45,2	11,4	9,0	4,8	5,7	3,3	1,0
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	54,2	62,5	56,3	6,3	16,7	6,3	4,2	6,3	-
University	54,3	57,1	47,1	8,6	14,3	10,0	11,4	8,6	-
<b>Region</b>									
Border cities	63,3	54,5	53,2	11,9	10,2	4,4	4,3	3,7	1,1
Other cities*	45,4	56,6	45,2	7,4	7,6	4,6	1,8	2,0	0,7
Metropolitan cities	44,6	74,8	42,2	5,3	8,5	2,3	0,6	0,6	1,2
Non-metropolitan cities	46,8	25,9	50,2	10,9	6,0	8,5	4,0	4,5	-
<b>General</b>	<b>56,5</b>	<b>55,3</b>	<b>50,2</b>	<b>10,2</b>	<b>9,2</b>	<b>4,5</b>	<b>3,4</b>	<b>3,1</b>	<b>1,0</b>

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%). Vaccination rates of men over 65 years old, those with higher education, and those living in border provinces seem to be above the average.

**SB-2021-TABLE 127: Have you been vaccinated against COVID-19? (%)**

	Yes, I have	No, I haven't	No response
<b>Sex</b>			
Female	66,5	32,3	1,2
Male	75,4	23,4	1,2
<b>Age Groups</b>			
18-24	58,5	41,0	0,5
25-34	66,9	31,9	1,2
35-44	79,7	18,6	1,7
45-54	78,3	20,7	1,0
55-64	72,6	26,2	1,2
65 +	91,7	8,3	-
<b>Educational Attainment</b>			
Illiterate	72,3	27,7	-
Literate but not graduate of any school	63,3	32,2	4,5
Primary school	73,8	25,4	0,8
Secondary/Middle school	69,6	28,1	2,3
High-school or equivalent	72,8	26,7	0,5
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	66,7	33,3	-
University	77,1	22,9	-
<b>Region</b>			
Border cities	73,7	25,1	1,2
Other cities*	68,6	30,3	1,1
Metropolitan cities	68,9	29,6	1,5
Non-metropolitan cities	68,2	31,3	0,5
General	71,7	27,1	1,2

In SB-2021, those who had the Covid-19 vaccine were asked how many doses they had, and it was seen that the rate of 1 dose was 18.2%, 2 doses 76.9%, and 3 doses of vaccine was 4.2%. In other words, the majority of Syrians had 2 doses of vaccine as of December 2021.

**SB-2021-TABLE 128: Could you indicate how many vaccine doses you have had?**

	#	%
I had 1 dose	192	18,8
I had 2 doses	785	76,9
I had 3 doses	43	4,2
I had 4 doses	1	0,1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1021</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**Note:** These are the results of those who answered “Yes, I have” to the question “Have you been vaccinated against COVID-19?”

When asked why they weren’t vaccinated, it was understood that this was generally their own decision for different reasons. For Syrians, 15.3% say “I wasn’t eligible for the vaccine”, 14% say “I don’t want to be vaccinated”.

**SB-2021-TABLE 129: Could you indicate your reason for not being vaccinated?**

		#	%
1	I’m undecided about getting vaccinated	185	48,1
2	“I wasn’t eligible for the vaccine	59	15,3
3	I don’t want to be vaccinated	54	14,0
4	I’m pregnant/breastfeeding	39	10,1
5	I couldn’t find the time/I’ll get vaccinated	26	6,8
6	I have health problems	14	3,6
7	Other	8	2,1
<b>Total</b>		<b>385</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**Note:** These are the results of those who answered “No, I haven’t” to the question “Have you been vaccinated against COVID-19?”

In order to understand what kind of problems Syrians under temporary protection experience in accessing health services in Türkiye, especially during the pandemic period, they were asked the following questions: “Have you experienced problems in reaching hospitals/ accessing health services over the last year? / \*”Have you experienced problems regarding hospital visits/access to health services during the pandemic?” The answers to the questions reveal a very important success. 88.3% of Syrians in SB-2020 and 72.7% in SB-2021 stated that they did not have any problems in accessing health services during the pandemic

period. In SB-2021, 9.6% mentioned the lack of translators, 4.3% said “the hospital did not accept me”, and 3.2% mentioned that the hospital was full. All these indicators show that health services for Syrians continue at a very high standard and largely without any problems during the Pandemic period.

**SB-2021-TABLE 130: “Have you experienced problems in reaching hospitals/accessing health services over the last year? / \*\*“Have you experienced problems regarding hospital visits/access to health services during the pandemic?”**

	2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%
No, didn't experience any problem	1248	88,3	1034	72,7
Yes, I got sick but there was no translator	31	2,2	137	9,6
Yes, I got sick but the hospital didn't accept me	50	3,5	61	4,3
Yes, I got sick but the hospital was full	25	1,8	45	3,2
Yes, I got sick but couldn't go to hospital	30	2,1	38	2,7
Yes, the hospital did not accept me because I'm registered in another city	-	-	27	1,9
Other	10	0,7	59	4,1
<b> </b>				
No idea/no response	20	1,4	22	1,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1414</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>100,0</b>
* The question of “Have you experienced problems regarding hospital visits/access to health services during the pandemic?” in SB-2020 was updated as “Did you have any problems in going to hospitals/accessing health services over the last year?” in SB-2021.				

## 20. Opinions on Recent Developments

In SB-2021, Syrians were asked questions about some current issues. In this process, in which extremely dynamic and different actors play a role, it is thought that evaluating the issues that attract the attention of both Syrian and Turkish society will be important in terms of determining the status of social cohesion and identifying problem areas.

### 20-a- Interest and Participation in Social Cohesion Activities

One of the most important shortcomings in the social cohesion studies to be carried out on the Syrians in Türkiye is to attract the Syrians to the studies on this issue. In this context, they were asked the question "Have you ever participated in any social cohesion activities?" 21.8% of Syrians answered yes to this question. It is seen that the most participants in these activities are women, those aged 18-24, those with a high education level, and those living in metropolitan cities.

**SB-2021-TABLE 131: "Have you ever participated in any social cohesion activities?" (%)**

	Yes, I participated	No, I didn't participate	No idea/no response
<b>Sex</b>			
Female	26,7	72,3	1,0
Male	18,4	81,1	0,5
<b>Age Groups</b>			
18-24	26,0	73,5	0,5
25-34	20,8	78,6	0,6
35-44	21,3	77,7	1,0
45-54	21,2	78,8	-
55-64	22,6	76,2	1,2
65+	16,7	79,2	4,1
<b>Educational Attainment</b>			
Illiterate	13,8	84,6	1,6
Literate but not graduate of any school	10,0	88,9	1,1
Primary school	17,8	81,5	0,7
Secondary/Middle school	23,3	76,1	0,6
High-school or equivalent	34,8	64,8	0,4
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	25,0	75,0	-
<b>University</b>	32,9	67,1	-
<b>Region</b>			
Border cities	18,4	80,7	0,9
Other cities	27,3	72,3	0,4
Metropolitan cities	29,6	70,1	0,3
Non-metropolitan cities	23,4	76,1	0,5
<b>General</b>	<b>21,8</b>	<b>77,5</b>	<b>0,7</b>

When asked to those who said they participated in social cohesion activities, "Which social cohesion activities did you participate in?" three issues stand out in the answers (I participated in social cohesion activities in community centers (34.5%), "I attended a language course" (31%), "I went to public education centers" (26.5%), while the answers "I attended the awareness-raising trainings", "I attended a vocational training course", "I attended a paid vocational training course" and "I participated in activities of a cooperative" also attracted more than 5%.

**SB-2021-TABLE 132: Which social cohesion activities have you participated in? (Multiple responses)**

		#	%
1	I participated in social cohesion activities in community centers	107	34,5
2	I attended a language course	96	31,0
3	I went to public education centers	82	26,5
4	I participated in trips	32	10,3
5	I attended awareness-raising trainings	30	9,7
6	I attended a vocational training course	29	9,4
7	I attended a paid vocational training course	26	8,4
8	I participated in activities of a cooperative	16	5,2
9	I attended online events	14	4,5
10	Workshops	13	4,2
11	Culture and art activities	13	4,2
12	I participated in psychosocial support activities	10	3,2
13	I participated in sports activities	5	1,6
14	Other	16	5,2

\* These are the results of 310 people who stated that they participated in any social cohesion activity to date.

## 20-b- Problems in Education

In the SB studies, it is known that one of the three public services that Syrians under temporary protection are most satisfied with is “education”. Thanks to the policy of admitting Syrian children to Turkish public schools and providing them with Turkish education since 2016, the number of students has reached over 700 thousand today. Although this number, which corresponds to 65% of the total compulsory school age children (5-17), is a great success, it is also known that there are more than 500 thousand children who cannot go to school.

**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.

Although the problems experienced in the field of education are not reflected in the survey, they are clearly discussed and criticized in FGDs. Many criticisms were expressed in FGDs that the enrollment of children became difficulties.

**SB-2021-TABLE 133: What are the educational problems faced by Syrian children in Türkiye? (Multiple responses)**

		#	%
1	Syrian children do not face any problems	448	31,5
2	Syrian families cannot afford their children’s education	429	30,1
3	Syrian children face discrimination in schools	344	24,2
4	Syrian children do not go to school because they have to work	209	14,7
5	Syrian children are mistreated by their peers	168	11,8
6	Syrian children don’t have electronic devices (tablet/computer/phone) for education	132	9,3
7	Syrian children only receive education in Turkish, they lose their identity	103	7,2
8	Teachers treat Syrian children badly	99	7,0
9	Schools do not accept Syrian children	52	3,7
10	Other	36	2,5
	No idea/no response	249	17,5



## 20-c- Are There Problems in Health Services Recently?

The area that Syrians in Türkiye have been satisfied with at the highest level from the beginning is "health services". However, in the last year, the situation of Syrians in the field of health in the last year has been tried to be determined due to both the effect of the pandemic and the increase in the antagonism in the society. For this, the question of "Have you experienced problems in reaching hospitals/accessing health services over the last year? / \*Have you experienced problems regarding hospital visits/access to health services during the pandemic?" was asked. It is observed that the rate of those who say "No, I didn't experience any problem" decreased from 88.3% to 72.7% with a difference of more than 15%. In SB-2021, "lack of translators" has an important place in health services. In the demographic analysis, it is understood that those who have problems are mostly Syrians living in the provinces in the border region.

**SB-2021-TABLE 134: Have you experienced problems in reaching hospitals/accessing health services over the last year? / \*Have you experienced problems regarding hospital visits/access to health services during the pandemic?**

	2020		2021	
	#	%	#	%
No, I didn't experience any problem	1248	88,3	1034	72,7
Yes, I got sick but there was no translator	31	2,2	137	9,6
Yes, I got sick but the hospital didn't accept me	50	3,5	61	4,3
Yes, I got sick but the hospital was full	25	1,8	45	3,2
Yes, I got sick but couldn't go to hospital	30	2,1	38	2,7
Yes, the hospital did not accept me because I'm registered in another city	-	-	27	1,9
Other	10	0,7	59	4,1
<b> </b>				
No idea/no response	20	1,4	22	1,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1414</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>100,0</b>
*The question of "Have you experienced problems regarding hospital visits/access to health services during the pandemic?" in SB-2020 was updated as "Did you have any problems in going to hospitals/accessing health services over the last year?" in SB-2021.				

## 20-d- Change of Living Place

There have been some important policy changes and problems regarding the Syrians in Türkiye recently. Some Syrians may have to change their homes, and sometimes their cities, as they are no longer allowed to live under the “plan to combat spatial concentration”, while others are no longer allowed to live in the province where they are not registered. In SB-2021, some clues about the changes in this issue were tried to be determined, through the question “Have you moved/relocated between cities or in your own city in the last 6 months?” The rate of those who answered “yes” to this question is 14.3%. This indicates a fairly high number for the last six months.

**SB-2021-TABLE 135: Have you moved/relocated between cities or in your own city in the last 6 months?**

	#	%
No, I haven't relocated/moved	1218	85,6
Yes, I relocated/moved	203	14,3
No response	2	0,1
Total	1423	100,0

Among the “relocation reasons” of Syrians, the reasons related to the landlord reach 61.6% in total (“the landlord made me move out” 36.5%, “the rent increase” (25.1%). Other reasons were “For a healthier living space”, “To find a job”, “Family reasons”, “To feel safer”. This is also in line with the nature of the situation. What is naturally unknown here is the reasons of the homeowners to evict the Syrians.

**SB-2021-TABLE 136: What are your reasons for relocation/moving? (Multiple response)**

		#	%
1	Because the landlord made us move out	74	36,5
2	Due to the rent increase	51	25,1
3	For a healthier living space	28	13,8
4	To find a job	24	11,8
5	Family reasons	20	9,9
6	To feel safer	10	4,9
7	Due to problems with neighbors	6	3,0
8	To be issued a temporary protection ID	5	2,5
9	For education	5	2,5
10	To be together with other members of my family	5	2,5
11	Because my house was demolished due to urban transformation	4	2,0
12	Because I had to/because I was sent from where I was	4	2,0
13	Other	5	2,5

**Note:** These are the results of 203 people who said “Yes, I have moved/relocated” as a response to the question “Have you moved/relocated between cities or in your own city in the last 6 months?”

## 20-e- Attitude Change in Turkish Society

Syrians who have lived in Türkiye for an average of 6-6.5 years and spend most of their lives in urban areas with the Turkish community 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", 12.4% "partially" and 32% "no".

**SB-2021-TABLE 137: Do you think that there has been a change in the attitude of Turkish society towards Syrians due to the economic difficulties in Türkiye?**

	#	%
Yes	620	43,6
Partially	176	12,4
No	463	32,5
No idea/no response	164	11,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Among those who emphasized the change in attitude most were women, the 25-34 age group, those with higher education, and the border region.

**SB-2021-TABLE 138: Do you think that there has been a change in the attitude of Turkish society towards Syrians due to the economic difficulties in Türkiye? (%)**

	Yes	No	Partially	No idea/ no re- sponse
<b>Sex</b>				
Female	49,5	23,9	10,8	15,8
Male	39,5	38,5	13,4	8,6
<b>Age Groups</b>				
18-24	44,5	33,5	7,0	15,0
25-34	46,2	29,2	13,7	10,9
35-44	42,9	35,4	12,1	9,6
45-54	43,9	35,4	12,6	8,1
55-64	34,5	26,2	19,1	20,2
65+	20,8	45,9	8,3	25,0
<b>Educational Attainment</b>				
Illiterate	50,0	30,0	6,9	13,1
Literate but not graduate of any school	36,7	33,3	5,6	24,4
Primary school	40,0	35,9	12,4	11,7
Secondary/Middle school	42,0	35,5	13,6	8,9
High-school or equivalent	51,4	23,8	13,8	11,0
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	54,2	27,1	14,6	4,1
University	44,3	25,7	18,6	11,4
<b>Region</b>				
Border cities	47,4	32,5	7,6	12,5
Other cities*	37,3	32,6	20,1	10,0
Metropolitan cities	41,9	29,9	18,2	10,0
Non-metropolitan cities	29,3	37,3	23,4	10,0
<b>General</b>	<b>43,6</b>	<b>32,5</b>	<b>12,4</b>	<b>11,5</b>

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".

**SB-2021-TABLE 139: How do you think perceptions have changed?**

	#	%
Changed from positive to negative	509	63,9
Changed from negative to positive	34	4,3
Changed both positively and negatively	168	21,1
No idea/no answer	85	10,7
<b>Total</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**Note:** “Do you think that there has been a change in the attitude of Turkish society towards Syrians due to the economic difficulties in Türkiye?” These are the results of those who answered “Yes” and “Partially” to the question.

Another follow-up question on this subject was asked to those who stated that there was a “negative change”, asking for the reasons. According to Syrians, the most important reason for this change is the increase in economic problems, with 69.9%. The following responses were for the mistakes in the communication strategy and the politicization of the process.

**SB-2021-TABLE 140: What are the reasons for this negative change? (Multiple responses)**

		#	%
1	We have been seen as responsible for the increasing economic problems in recent years.	356	69,9
2	Türkiye’s alleged expenditures for Syrians have created a reaction against us in society.	190	37,3
3	Statements made by some political parties or their members about Syrians	137	26,9
4	Prioritizing Syrians in access to health and other public services	117	23,0
5	Provocative publications about Syrians on social media	73	14,3
6	Other	2	0,4
	No idea/no response	34	6,7

**Note:** These are the results of 509 people who answered the question “How do you think perceptions have changed?” as “Changed from positive to negative”.

## 20-f- Social Tensions, Altındağ Events and Pessimism

In order to identify and analyze the tensions that Syrians have experienced with Turkish society in the last period, the Syrians in SB-2020 and SB-2021 were asked "To what extent do you, your family, and other Syrians in Türkiye experience social tension with the Turkish community in your neighborhood or places of work in the last 12 months/year? If you score between 1-Never experienced and 5-I have experienced a lot, how much would you give?"

The rate of those who said (personally) "I didn't experience any problems" decreased from 79.2% in SB-2020 to 35.8% in SB-2021. Those who said "I experienced problems" increased from 10.7% to 27.2%. When it comes to families, while the state of not having problems was 79.5% in SB-2020, it decreased to 72% in SB-2021; the state of having problems increased from 10.4% to 19.3%. In the "Syrians in Türkiye" tab, the percentage of those who said "they did not experience any problems" increased from 59.6% to 72.5%, and the percentage of those who said "they experienced problems" increased from 13.4% to 17.7%. In other words, the rates of not experiencing problems at all levels between SB-2020 and SB-2021 have decreased, and experiencing problems has increased. This change in one year also indicates a serious break. In particular, the drop in the number of having personal problems from 79.2% to 35.8%, the increase in having problems from 10.7% to 27.2%, and at the same time the increase in the I have no idea / no answer tab to 26.3% are remarkable and alarming.

**SB-2021-TABLE 141: To what extent do you, your family, and other Syrians in Türkiye experience social tension with the Turkish community in your neighborhood or places of work in the last 12 months/year? If you score between 1-Never experienced and 5-I have experienced a lot, how much would you give? (%)**

		Never experienced	I didn't experience	Combined "not experienced"	Partially experienced	Experienced	Experienced a lot	Combined "experienced"	No idea/ no response
SB-2020	Your-self	49,4	29,8	<b>79,2</b>	9,5	8,1	2,6	<b>10,7</b>	0,6
SB-2021		17,3	18,5	<b>35,8</b>	10,7	19,1	8,1	<b>27,2</b>	26,3
SB-2020	Your family	49,5	30,0	<b>79,5</b>	9,3	7,9	2,5	<b>10,4</b>	0,8
SB-2021		32,1	39,9	<b>72,0</b>	7,7	14,4	4,9	<b>19,3</b>	1,0
SB-2020	Syrians in Türkiye	32,5	27,1	<b>59,6</b>	13,7	9,6	3,8	<b>13,4</b>	13,3
SB-2021		31,5	41,0	<b>72,5</b>	8,4	14,0	3,9	<b>17,9</b>	1,2

## **FGD Findings**

Syrian FGD participants were also asked whether they had any conflicts, tensions or problems with the Turkish community. Three issues stood out among the answers given: (i) discrimination, racist attitudes and negative attitudes towards Syrians from various sections of the society; (ii) problems and adverse treatment in government institutions and public hospitals; (iii) being attacked on a massive scale.

The statements about discrimination and racism against Syrians in some parts of the society are as follows:

- ▶ *“Although discrimination is slightly less in Gaziantep compared to other provinces of Türkiye, it is generally prevalent in poor areas and Syrians who do not speak Turkish are exposed to discrimination, although some of them have acquired Turkish citizenship.” (Gaziantep- SR- NGO workers)*
- ▶ *“I hate the word Syrian now. I can see the way they look at us every day and how they treat our women, children and elders with disrespect” (İstanbul- SR- Student)*
- ▶ *“At school, they say to my child, ‘We will send you to Syria.’” (Gaziantep- SR- Artisans and workers)*
- ▶ *“We can and do tolerate discrimination in a way, but the publications in the press and the sharing on social media increase discrimination and this is reflected in schools. Children’s psychology is affected and this will definitely affect their future and their characters.” (Ankara - SR- Woman)*

It is noteworthy that the participants in both metropolitan provinces and border provinces have similar views on the problems experienced in public institutions and the negative attitude and treatment made by some representatives.

- ▶ *“We all saw how attackers were allowed in the Altındağ incidents. People’s homes, jobs and cars were gone!” (Ankara- SR- Woman)*
- ▶ *“We are now witnessing discrimination and bad behavior everywhere. In a state, if employees in public institutions make discrimination, then everyone would do it.” (İstanbul- SR- Artisan and worker)*

It can be easily understood from the examples given in the FGDs that especially after the Altındağ incidents the tension increased about being attacked on a massive scale. In addition, it is noteworthy that the FGD participants stated that the level of reaction and attack towards them increased day by day and turned into physical teasing and fighting. It is important to see to what extent the definition and perception of “Syrian” is generalized in the society, as a couple of participants said people from other Arab countries were also mistaken for Syrians and were reacted by the local people.

- ▶ *“I live in Altındağ, needless to say, but I witness something every day. In the last attack, they broke the windows of our house and for a week me, my husband and my children did not leave the house. My husband’s salary was cut, but*

*of course our Turkish neighbors helped us and brought us bread and food, but something happens every day in my neighborhood.” (Ankara- SR- Woman)*

- ▶ *“In Altindag incidents, my spouse had taken the boss’s car and when the Turks attacked us that day, they also attacked the car, even though the license plate of the car was registered in Türkiye. Every day, there is a fight between the children. I no longer allow my son to go out on the street. Unless it’s very important, I don’t go out anymore and my spouse does all the shopping.” (Ankara- SR- Student)*

It is seen that FGD participants in SB-2021 FGDs drew a more pessimistic frame about social cohesion and expressed the idea that social cohesion did not occur. It is noteworthy that according to the participants, many positive steps towards social cohesion changed negatively after the Altındağ events. It was even stated that the effects of this incident were seen not only in the Syrians in Ankara, but also in many provinces, especially the border provinces, and that the Syrians did not leave their homes for days out of fear.

- ▶ *“In an incident involving me, 60 thousand Syrians were trapped in Altındağ, then 4 million Syrians also felt trapped there.” (Istanbul - SR- Journalists)*
- ▶ *“Syrians did not sleep at all during those two nights in Altındağ incidents. Not only those living in Ankara, but all Syrians in Türkiye were affected by this event. Even those who received citizenship felt very insecure. When these events happen and I think they will increase in the future, Syrians will no longer make any effort to adapt.” (Gaziantep- SR- Artisans and workers)*
- ▶ *“There are very few who adapt. There is a serious distance between us because there is no stability and we have problems, we are still far from social cohesion.” (Gaziantep - SR- NGO workers)*
- ▶ *“After these Altındağ incidents, Syrians became very introverted and felt that they needed protection. Because of that, the social cohesion process slowed down.” (Gaziantep- SR- NGO workers)*
- ▶ *“I think the Altindag events affected even those who integrate. If you live in a place with hatred and fear, you don’t think about social cohesion. Many Syrians no longer want to integrate.” (Istanbul- SR- Student)*
- ▶ *“We hear the word Syrian on the street every day, and always with a negative look or a negative comment. I don’t think anyone has adjusted to anyone. Everyone tolerates each other because they have to live.” (Gaziantep- SR- Workers)*
- ▶ *“If there is discrimination, there is no place left for social cohesion. Since there is discrimination, many Syrians do not even want to communicate with Turks and they are afraid now.” (Istanbul- SYR- Student)*



## 20-g- Afghans and Other Refugees, Irregular Immigrants

With the arrival of Syrians in Türkiye, especially after 2013, an influx of both asylum seekers and irregular migrants from many countries, especially Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Iran, started into Türkiye. According to the latest data, the number of non-Syrian refugees (applicants for international protection or status holders) is around 321 thousand.<sup>208</sup> Afghans rank first among them. According to the information provided by the PMM, irregular migration mobility has also shown an extraordinary increase in recent years. The number of irregular migrants held in Türkiye between 2015 and December 2021, that is, people who cross the border into Türkiye without permission, who try to leave Türkiye without permission or who violate visas, is over 1.6 million.<sup>209</sup> In the interviews with the PMM officials, it was stated that approximately 55% of the aforementioned number consisted of those who crossed the border without permission, 30% of those who violated visas, and 15% of them were Syrians in a “special situation”. Crossings to Türkiye, especially from the Iranian border, have been one of the most important topics of discussion for the Turkish public. Especially in the last two years, the images of irregular migrants reflected on social media as people entering Türkiye via Iran have been influential in discussions and sometimes in targeting the existence of Syrians who came to the country with Türkiye’s permission and were given temporary protection.

“Which of the following statements about Afghans and other refugees who have recently arrived in Türkiye reflect your opinion?” addressed to Syrians within the framework of SB-2021. Interestingly, the answers to the question show two features. The first of these is that 47.7% of the Syrians prefer the option “No idea/no answer”. The second striking point is that 44% of the respondents gave the answer “They also need protection, it’s normal for them to come”. This is followed by the option “Their arrival puts us in a more difficult situation, Turkish society is angry with us because of them” with 6.3%. Other options received extremely low support, between 3.5% and 1%. However, it should be emphasized that although there are multiple options, half of the respondents do not express their opinion and concentrate on a single option with 44%, which makes it difficult to evaluate the resulting picture. Another remarkable point here is that Syrians living in metropolises and other provinces have a much higher level of “They also need protection, it’s normal for them to come” response compared to those living in provinces in the border region.

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208 Haber7com (07.10.2022) <https://www.haber7.com/guncel/haber/3266086-son-dakika-bakan-soylu-turkiyedeki-suriyeli-sayisini-actikladi>

209 Presidency of Migration Management (2022) Irregular Migrant (<https://www.goc.gov.tr/duzensiz-goc-istatistikler>) (Access: 07.07.2022)

**SB-2021-TABLE 142: Which of the following statements about Afghans and other refugees who came to Türkiye recently reflect your opinion? (Multiple responses %)**

		Border cities	Other cities			General
			Metropolitan cities	Non-metropolitan cities	General*	
1	They also need protection, it's normal for them to come	33,3	63,3	58,2	61,4	<b>44,0</b>
2	Their arrival puts us in a more difficult situation, Turkish society is angry with us because of them	4,8	8,2	9,5	8,7	<b>6,3</b>
3	With their arrival, the burden of the state increases, which affects us adversely	2,6	3,5	7,5	5,0	<b>3,5</b>
4	Increase in house rents	2,0	4,4	5,0	4,6	<b>3,0</b>
5	Increases our visibility and negative news/perceptions	1,7	2,9	8,5	5,0	<b>3,0</b>
6	I'm worried about fewer job opportunities	2,0	4,4	2,0	3,5	<b>2,6</b>
7	I didn't want them to come because their culture isn't similar to ours	1,8	0,9	2,5	1,5	<b>1,7</b>
8	I'm worried that house rental prices would increase	1,5	0,9	1,5	1,1	<b>1,3</b>
9	They make the aids to decrease	1,4	0,6	-	0,4	<b>1,0</b>
	No idea/no response	60,4	24,9	30,8	27,1	<b>47,7</b>

## 20-h- “Banana Videos” in Social Media and Deportation Discussions

After a Turkish citizen interviewed in Izmir on a television program in October 2021 said, “The economic situation of Syrians in Türkiye is better than Turkish citizens. I can’t eat bananas, they buy kilos of bananas”, some Syrians in Türkiye shared videos of eating bananas on social media. The issue was brought to court with a criminal complaint by a politician, and right after that, 45 Syrians were detained on the grounds of “posting provocative banana images” and it was stated that they would be deported.<sup>210</sup> For the first time since April 2011, such and highly resounding collective actions of Syrians in Türkiye were discussed for a long time. The police’s assessment of the issue as “inciting the public to hatred and enmity or humiliation” and therefore the announcement that deportation proceedings were/will be made for some of those who shared these videos also created significant debates. In SB-2021, this issue was asked to Syrians and it was tried to understand how they evaluated both the “incident” and the sanctions applied.

“To what extent do you think the social media posts by some Syrians with bananas are right?” 79.8% of the Syrians answered the question “I did not find it right at all” and “I did not find it right”. The rate of those who find the “action” right is only 0.7%, while 16.3% said “I have no idea or no answer”.

**SB-2021-TABLE 143: To what extent do you think the social media posts by some Syrians with bananas are right?**

	#	%	
Not right at all	851	59,8	79,8
Not right	285	20,0	
Neither right nor wrong	46	3,2	3,2
Right	9	0,6	0,7
Very right	1	0,1	
No idea/no response	231	16,3	16,3
Total	1423	100,0	

<sup>210</sup> The Presidency of Migration Management made the following statement on October 27, 2021: It was seen that after a Turkish citizen said “I can’t eat bananas, you get kilos of bananas...” in a street interview, videos of “eating banana” action were posted and circulated on various social media platforms by people for provocative purposes who were considered to be foreign nationals. In line with the first findings obtained as a result of the studies carried out by the relevant units of our General Directorate of Security regarding the provocative posts in question, 7 foreign nationals were arrested and deportation proceedings will be initiated against them after the completion of the judicial proceedings. Another statement made by the Presidency on November 12, 2022 said: “45 foreign nationals who shared provocative images of bananas on social media were identified and these individuals were sent to removal centers for deportation after judicial proceedings.”

**SB-2021-TABLE 144: To what extent do you think the social media posts by some Syrians with bananas are right? (%)**

	Not right at all	Not right	Combined "not right"	Neither right nor wrong	Right	Very right	Combined "right"	No idea/ no response
<b>Sex</b>								
Female	51,5	26,3	<b>77,8</b>	2,4	0,5	-	<b>0,5</b>	19,3
Male	65,5	15,7	<b>81,2</b>	3,8	0,7	0,1	<b>0,8</b>	14,2
<b>Age Groups</b>								
18-24	52,0	25,0	<b>77,0</b>	1,5	0,5	0,5	<b>1,0</b>	20,5
25-34	62,1	22,4	<b>84,5</b>	2,8	0,4	-	<b>0,4</b>	12,3
35-44	63,0	17,2	<b>80,2</b>	4,4	1,0	-	<b>1,0</b>	14,4
45-54	59,6	14,6	<b>74,2</b>	4,5	0,5	-	<b>0,5</b>	20,8
55-64	52,4	21,4	<b>73,8</b>	2,4	-	-	-	23,8
65+	50,0	16,7	<b>66,7</b>	-	4,2	-	<b>4,2</b>	29,1
<b>Educational Attainment</b>								
Illiterate	60,8	16,2	<b>77,0</b>	0,8	0,8	-	<b>0,8</b>	21,4
Literate but not graduate of any school	63,3	15,6	<b>78,9</b>	2,2	-	-	-	18,9
Primary school	59,1	18,9	<b>78,0</b>	4,6	0,8	-	<b>0,8</b>	16,6
Secondary/Middle school	59,4	23,0	<b>82,4</b>	2,0	0,9	0,3	<b>1,2</b>	14,4
High-school or equivalent	61,0	22,4	<b>83,4</b>	1,0	-	-	-	15,6
2-year associate degree / Vocational school of higher education	43,8	27,1	<b>70,9</b>	12,5	2,1	-	<b>2,1</b>	14,5
University	68,6	14,3	<b>82,9</b>	5,7	-	-	-	11,4
<b>Region</b>								
Border cities	57,3	20,7	<b>78,0</b>	3,6	0,9	-	<b>0,9</b>	17,5
Other cities	63,8	19,0	<b>82,8</b>	2,6	0,2	0,2	<b>0,4</b>	14,2
Metropolitan cities	54,8	24,3	<b>79,1</b>	1,8	-	0,3	<b>0,3</b>	18,8
Non-metropolitan cities	79,1	10,0	<b>89,1</b>	4,0	0,5	-	<b>0,5</b>	6,4
<b>General</b>	<b>59,8</b>	<b>20,0</b>	<b>79,8</b>	<b>3,2</b>	<b>0,6</b>	<b>0,1</b>	<b>0,7</b>	<b>16,3</b>

The second question following this issue is about sanctions: “Which of the following statements best reflects your opinion about the decision of deporting Syrians in Türkiye due to their social media posts?” The answers to the question reveal that this decision is generally unfair, and that the Syrians are uneasy and feel insecure. It is noteworthy that 10.8% of the Syrians said “I found this decision fair”, while the rest expressed their views through the statements “I found this decision unfair”, “I felt insecure and restless”, and “Made me concerned about my future in Türkiye”.

**SB-2021-TABLE 145: Which of the following statements best reflects your opinion about the decision of deporting Syrians in Türkiye due to their social media posts?**

		#	%
1	I found this decision unfair	428	30,1
2	I felt insecure and restless	284	19,9
3	I found this decision fair	154	10,8
4	Made me concerned about my future in Türkiye	100	7,0
5	I hesitate to post on social media	38	2,7
6	I was scared to go outside	22	1,5
7	Worsened my relations with the Turks where I work/in my neighborhood where the decisions are made	18	1,3
8	Other	15	1,1
	No idea/no response	364	25,6
<b>Total</b>		<b>1423</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**FGD Findings (SB-2021-S)**

Most of the respondents interviewed about Syrians starting a banana-eating trend on social media in response to the “banana eating” event said it was wrong for Syrians to join this trend and that they were dragged into a propaganda designed specifically to motivate them to share such images and words.

- ▶ *“From the very beginning, I thought such posts were wrong. We even wrote an article and interviewed another colleague to stop these posts.” (İstanbul-SR-Journalists)*
- ▶ *“The posts were exaggerated, and both Turks and Syrians used this issue and shared posts in a very vindictive way.” (İstanbul - SR - Artisan/Tradesman)*
- ▶ *“Syrians were not supposed to share such posts, which negatively affect the relations of Syrians with Turks and increase hatred” (Gaziantep - SR - NGO workers)*
- ▶ *“At first we saw the posts and laughed, we could not take it seriously, but then we stood against the Turkish flag when we saw the posts.” (Ankara - SR - Woman)*

On the other hand, it should be noted that a considerable number of participants stated that these posts emerged as a reaction to the discrimination made by Turks and that they were understandable. In this context, some participants stated that the decisions taken after this event were shocking and that the state should take tougher decisions when Syrians are also exposed to discrimination or violence from the Turks.

- ▶ *“Since the person (Turk) who started the banana incident made discrimination and shared such a video on social media, Syrians made such posts” (Hatay - SR - Woman)*
- ▶ *“Every time I open Twitter, I find a thread for Syrians. They started this event, but then the Syrians became the scapegoats.” (İstanbul - SR - Student)*
- ▶ *“The problem has nothing to do with bananas. The income of most Syrians is generally either above or below average, but their lifestyle reflects an image that suggests they are from the wealthy class. Their consumption habits sometimes lead to misunderstanding, I think the banana incident was a reaction.” (İstanbul - SR- Journalist)*

When asked about the evaluations of the participants regarding the decisions taken after the banana incident, it was understood that most of the participants found the deportation decision wrong.

- ▶ *“Türkiye is a country where the rule of law applies. The deportation decisions taken after the ‘banana incident’ were purely administrative decisions. With the influence of the Syrian media, it was possible to prevent some deportation decisions and those decisions were stopped. But we cannot do this every day.” (Hatay - SR- Lawyers)*

- ▶ *“The deportation decision shocked us, it was very bad that they imposed such a large penalty for such a small incident. When those decisions were taken, not only those Syrians were affected, but the whole Syrian society in Türkiye.” (İstanbul - SR- Student)*
- ▶ *“Destroying Syrians’ houses or hitting them is a much bigger thing than sharing banana posts. Why didn’t they give the same punishment to the people who were involved in the Altındağ incidents?” (Ankara - SR- Woman)*
- ▶ *“Syrians feel insecure now. New decisions come out in every event and all of these decisions are against Syrians” (Gaziantep - SR - Artisan/Tradesman)*

Regarding the deportation decisions, many participants drew attention to the need to change the administrative laws that are incompatible with the concept of temporary protection provided to Syrians in Türkiye. They also stated that deportation decisions are usually arbitrary and in fact unlawful, that is, a decision that is easily made even due to simple mistakes and crimes, and that this puts Syrians in a difficult situation. 211

- ▶ *“Laws need to be improved, deportation decisions should not be so easy. If a person has committed a crime, he should not be deported until his trial is over.” (Hatay- SR- Lawyers)*
- ▶ *“When you deport a person from Türkiye, you can’t just deport that person, the life of a whole family ends. Children go to schools and most family members work.” (Woman- SR- Ankara)*
- ▶ *“As for the deportation decisions, I can summarize this issue in one sentence: Syrians in Türkiye are guilty until they prove their innocence. Unfortunately, they cannot prove anything and are deported, since most of them cannot hire lawyers and do not speak Turkish.” (Gaziantep- SR- Workers)*

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211 If there is no objection to the deportation decision, the action can be taken. However, if a procedural objection is made to the Administrative Court, then the outcome of the court must be awaited.







SYRIANS BAROMETER  
2021

**7**  
RESEARCH  
FINDINGS

## V. SYRIAN BAROMETER- 2021 RESEARCH FINDINGS

### V-A: MAIN FINDINGS

- **It is observed that the “fragile social acceptance” is turning into “toleration”.** 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 thinks that Syrians will be permanent in the country and that they will not return voluntarily. This creates anxiety among Turkish society, who do not show the will to live together, and as a result tend to reject the vision of a common future to a large extent. In this context, a serious erosion is observed in the level of “social acceptance” towards Syrians in Turkish society, especially after 2016. It is observed that the attitude of the Turkish society is now at the level of “tolerance” rather than “social acceptance”.
- **The demand and expectation of the 75-80% of Turkish society is that the Syrians are sent back to their countries.** In Turkish society, it is presented as a general and common demand that Syrians be sent to Syria, whether to “safe areas” under the protection of Türkiye or to other parts of the country.
- **There are serious changes in the views of Syrians on their life and future in Türkiye:** The most striking general finding in SB-2021 survey and FGDs is that while Turkish society’s general concern about Syrians and their repeated views on their “removal” from Türkiye continue; there are serious changes in the perceptions and views of Syrians. 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.
- 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 and those living in other regions.** In general, it is observed that Turks living in border regions have bigger concerns and complaints about Syrians.
- In SB studies, the place of cultural closeness and solidarity discourse in social cohesion has been investigated. In this context, it has been possible to make a general evaluation based on the “social distance scales” calculated for both communities and the answers given to the question “are we culturally similar?”. Turkish society has consistently displayed a large social distance and insisted that Syrians are culturally dissimilar to them throughout SB studies, including the SB-2021. However, perhaps one of the most striking aspects of SB-2021 for Syrians is that the social distances of Syrians towards Turkish society are increasing day by day, and more strikingly, Syrians are less supportive of the discourse of cultural similarity with Turkish society. All of this also reveals the risk that the social cohesion policies, which have an extremely emotional and volatile nature, might be blocked in time if they are built on an assumed “cultural affinity”.

- **The process regarding Syrians in Türkiye is quickly becoming politicized:** The issue of Syrians and other refugees in Türkiye is very clearly becoming politicized. However, as in all aspects of society, human mobility, whether in the form of migration or asylum, cannot be considered independent of politics. As it is known, the issue of human mobility, especially migration (economic migration), is perceived as a development policy tool. Victims of forced migration, namely asylum seekers and refugees, are generally discussed in relation to security and politics. While the total number of foreigners (asylum seekers) who were either under or applying for international protection on April 29, 2011, when Syrians first came to Türkiye, was around 58 thousand, this number exceeded millions in a short time and Türkiye has even become the country hosting the highest number of refugees in the world since 2014. As of 2021, at least 6 million foreigners are mentioned to live in Türkiye, of which 3.7 million are Syrians. It is inevitable that this situation will find itself a place in the politics of Turkish society as well as in daily life. In this context, it can even be said that the politicization of the issue was a bit late. It has been observed that Turkish society has kept this issue in the background until the last few years, especially not reflected it in their political decisions.
- **The transformation of the process into a political tool has become evident especially in the last two years.** This can be associated with the fact that almost all of the Syrians, whose number is over 3.7 million, live together with the Turkish society in urban areas, the perception that Syrians cannot return to their country has strengthened, the economic problems that have increased with the pandemic, the 2023 election process in Türkiye and the political style dominated by populism. 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 all these processes, it can be said that rather than a “securitization from above” approach, which is often discussed in the field of migration studies, securitization from the society, that is, from below, played a more prominent role and dragged politicians into this field. In other words, with the significant contribution of not taking the concerns of the Turkish society seriously enough and the failure to implement a satisfactory communication strategy, the issue of Syrians has become one of the most important political debates in Türkiye.
- **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.** The fact that the policies and practices regarding refugees are being turned into criticism against the government by opposition parties appears to find a serious response among the society. The fact that Turkish society considers the issue of Syrians and irregular migrants among Türkiye’s top three most important problems has been effective in the opposition’s greater attention to the issue.
- **It is observed that it is progressing towards a problematic process in terms of social cohesion 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. The facts like spatial concentration of Syrians and the associated living practices, social distance put forward by the Turkish society, politicization of the process, and the qualitative and quantitative transformations of the relations limit and complicate social cohesion processes.

- The number of Syrians under Temporary Protection has grown to correspond to 4,38% of the population of Türkiye and the share of Syrians residing in camps is 1,36% of the Syrian population. However, the lack of a central settlement planning has created serious population density differences between regions, cities, districts, and neighborhoods. The **"Plan to Combat Spatial Concentration"**, which has been put into practice recently to both facilitate the process management by realizing reasonable burden sharing within the country and to prevent ghettoization, can be seen as manifesting the fact that concerns among the society are shared by the state.
- **Focus Group Discussions** 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.
- 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, although those who say "I do not plan to return to Syria under any circumstances" are still in the first place, there is a 17% decrease compared to 2020. Syrians appear to increasingly consider going to a third country. 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. When asked **"Would you go if Türkiye decides again not to control (open) the European borders?"** in SB-2020, 8% said "I would go" and 2,5% said "I would definitely go" (10,5% in total). In SB-2021, the share of those who said they would go increased to 19,2% and that of those who said they would definitely go increased to 16,7% (35,9% in total). 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.
- The COVID-19 Pandemic, announced by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020, has led to an important experience in terms of both social cohesion and health services. It is observed that the **effect of the Pandemic** has "de-prioritized"

or “postponed” the concerns of the Turkish society towards Syrians to some extent, especially in 2020. With the economic problems in the post-Pandemic era and the politicization of the process, however, the discomforts are now expressed louder and stronger.

- The **pandemic** appears to have caused serious job losses and financial problems for Syrians. However, it is understood that during the pandemic process, Syrians in Türkiye do not encounter a problem that is qualitatively different from those encountered by Turkish society, particularly in terms of accessing health services and vaccines. SB-2021 also revealed that Syrians are vaccinated at a level very close to the vaccination rates of the Turkish society and do not experience additional problems in health services.

### **V-A-1: SB-2021 Main Findings: Turkish Society**

**Syrians live together with the Turkish society, especially in urban areas.** It is known that Syrians living under temporary protection in Türkiye moved towards urban areas especially after 2014 and the number of people living in camps decreased to 1% of the total. In the SB studies, it was specifically questioned whether the Turkish society lived in the same spatial areas as the Syrians. This was important in better analyzing the social cohesion and social acceptance processes between the places with a dense Syrian population and other regions. When asked “*Are there Syrians living in the same neighborhood/district/region as you?*”, combined shares of those who said “Yes, there are” was around 80% in all 4 SB studies.

**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”. Defining Syrians as “people fleeing war and persecution”, which was in the first place in previous studies, dropped to fourth place. This radical change has been strengthened with the politicization of the process in recent years. When the responses to this question are examined together with whether there are Syrians living in the region respondents live in, it is observed that, similar to SB-2020, those who state that there is no Syrian near them are more likely to define Syrians as “victimized people fleeing from persecution/war”. Those who see Syrians as “problems, threats, source of concern” etc. are the ones who report to live together with dense Syrian populations.

**The Turkish society’s concerns about Syrians** are also reflected in the adjectives deemed appropriate for Syrians. It is understood that the serious distance and prejudice in Turkish society continues in SB-2021 even stronger than it was found in SB-2017, SB-2019 and SB-2020. The research reveals that Turkish society refrains from describing Syrians with positive adjectives, and regards negative qualities more strongly for Syrians. The research reveals that Turkish society refrains from describing Syrians with positive adjectives, and finds negative qualities more suitable for Syrians.



Findings on the perception of cultural similarity in social cohesion processes, which are an important part of the SB studies, reveal that Turkish society consistently distances itself from Syrians both socially and culturally. Although there are references to “religious fraternity”, “neighborhood”, “sectarian similarity”, “common past” in the language of politics, it is understood not only that these find a decreasingly little response in society, but also that they are being increasingly “rejected” in a reactive way. When asked “*To what extent do you think the Syrians have cultural similarities with Turkish people*”, a combined 81% of respondents said “not similar” and “not similar at all” in SB-2021. The fact that the same figure is higher in cities that are closer to the Syrian border can be seen as another noteworthy expression of reaction.

Similar to the issue of cultural affinity, **contribution to cultural diversity** is an important area of discussion. The combined share of those Turkish respondents who disagreed with the statement “*Syrians are culturally enriching us*” was extraordinarily high (SB-2020: 87,5%; SB-2021: 88,2%). In this context, it appears that Turkish society has almost no expectations/hopes that Syrians will contribute to culture in Türkiye.

The question “*Have you ever provided in cash or in-kind assistance to Syrians (except for giving money to beggars)?*” was asked to investigate whether Turkish society was providing **active support to Syrians**. It usually receives around 40% of “yes” answers. This shows a very high level of solidarity. Those who said yes were further asked “Have you provided in cash or in-kind support to Syrians in the past 1 year?” and a quite high percentage of nearly 80% reported having provided such aid. Those who said never having provided such aid to Syrians were also asked why they didn’t. The four most frequently given responses to the question “*Why haven’t you provided assistance to Syrians?*”, except for “*I don’t have sufficient financial resources to give support*” which can be considered as a neutral answer, all reveal that there was a deliberate preference for not to help.

In terms of **relations / communication with Syrians**, it appears that 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. It seems that the increase in sharing common spaces, the fact that Syrians can speak Turkish, albeit on a limited level, and take part in business life has hardly affected the intensity of the relationship between Turkish society and Syrians, in fact, it made it decline. In terms of social cohesion, it is possible to say that the living practices of the Syrians brought about by the spatial concentration, the devastation caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic especially in the economic field, the social distance that the Turkish society has revealed towards the Syrians, limit and complicate the quantitative and qualitative development of relations as well as social cohesion processes.

**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 and getting closer”.

In studies on social cohesion, it is known that an important part of the host society's objections to the newcomers are motivated by the “financial burdens” that they create or are perceived to have created. 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*”. It was followed by the options of “*by begging*” and “*by working*”. The option “*by working*” climbed to the second rank for the first time in SB-2021. Findings of the SB studies show that even though Turkish society believe by far that Syrians live with the support of the Turkish state, they 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. As expressed in SB-2017 and SB-2019, because of growing worries and concerns, “high but fragile acceptance” turns into a form of “tolerance”. 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”. All the findings also reveal that there is still no satisfactory response from public institutions regarding the reduction or elimination of concerns in Turkish society. This situation is also effective in the politicization of the process. The anxieties and reactions of the society, which are not taken seriously enough, seem to have opened up a significant area in politics that is vulnerable to exploitation.

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%. When a demographic analysis is made for the concerns expressed regarding Syrians, it is striking to observe that those living in the border cities with the dense Syrian populations are at a level much higher than Türkiye's average in every concern area and in almost all SB studies.

In order to observe **the relationship between having suffered “personal harm” from Syrians and “concerns” regarding them**, Turkish society is asked whether themselves, their families or people in their personal environment have actually experienced harm. In order to make the question more specific and concrete, it was posed in the following way: “Have you/your family/those in your personal environment experienced any harm from a Syrian in the last 5 years?”. 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. Similar figures have been obtained in all SB studies. In the demographic analysis of this question, it is observed that all values in the border cities, where the Syrian population is densely populated, are significantly above the Türkiye average.

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”. It is noteworthy that the option “loss of a job” was placed at the bottom ranks (SB-2019: 6,4%; SB-2020: 5,6%; SB-2021: 3,5%).

**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. It is possible to say that this is related to the lived experience, and that the expected negative scenarios were not realized to the extent that will cause the society to worry. 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. The reaction against Syrians’ opening a business is even higher. However, it is observed that the reactions are in a decreasing trend in this regard as well. 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 Turkish 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. The belief among Turkish society that all or most Syrians will return is dwindling throughout SB studies. The rate of the respondents expressing this belief was 2,4% in SB-2021. It is observed that around 90% of Turkish society believe that at least half of Syrians will stay in Türkiye even if the war ends.

“**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 Syr-*



*ians 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%) was 48,9% in SB-2017, 69,8% in SB-2019, 80,5% in SB-2020, and 82% in SB-2021.

To better understand the **views on a shared social life**, another set of questions was asked by SB studies. Here, the existence of "**possible positive effects**" of Syrians in Türkiye has been tried to be measured. However, the pessimism and anxieties of the Turkish society clearly reappeared in all the statements. The combined rate of those who "completely agreed" and "agreed" with the statement "*We have shown the world that we are a strong state by accepting Syrian refugees*" has regularly decreased from 30,7% in SB-2017 to 15,3% in SB-2021. The statements "Syrian refugees are good for our country's economy and "Syrian refugees are culturally enriching us " were also highly objected.

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 cohesion. 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. In SB-2021, the rate of those who stated that the Syrians have integrated "totally" or "to a large extent" to the Turkish society was 13,5%, while the total rate of those who said they have integrated "very little" or "not at all" is 74,1%.

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**. In other words, Turkish society states that they see the issue of Syrians as one of Türkiye's top three or four problems. It is also observed that this issue has turned into a higher priority problem area in the eyes of Turkish society through politicization in 2022.

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. Even though nearly 90% of Turkish society believe that at least half of Syrians will stay in Türkiye permanently, there are vocal objections against giving Syrians political rights and Turkish citizenship. 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%). 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*”.

It can be said that there is a general consensus in the Turkish society about the **education of Syrian children**. However, it is observed that Turks living in the border cities have a higher level of objection than Türkiye in general regarding the inclusion of Syrians into education, especially due to the perceived burden placed on the capacity of the education system.

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. This situation reveals that a large part of the society is not satisfied with the Syrians policy of the state. A continuous increase in the rate of those who find the policies “very wrong” is noteworthy.

In order to understand how Turkish society looks at the issue in terms of **policy/implementation areas**, the question “*How right do you think the government’s actions in policy areas (to be read) are regarding Syrians?*” was asked in SB-2021. It was found that the policy area that causes the biggest discomfort among Turkish society was “settlement/distribution policy of Syrians”, which was found “wrong” or “very wrong” by 69,3%, followed by the “financial support policy”. The policy that Turkish society finds most right, albeit still at a low level, is the state’s “health” policy towards Syrians (23.9%), followed by education policy (20.9%). 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%.

In order to understand the perspective of Turkish society on the **politicization process** of the issue of Syrians and other refugees in Türkiye, the question “*To what extent do you think it is right that some municipalities charge refugees in Türkiye higher fees for services such as water, electricity, natural gas, and official transactions?*” was asked. Despite the concerns regarding Syrians and other refugees as well as the demands for their return, it is understood that 61,3% of the Turkish society is not satisfied with such explanations or practices. The rate of those who find this “very right” and “right” was 27,6%.

The role of **social media** in the issue of Syrians in Türkiye was inquired with the question “*Regarding the news about refugees on social media, which of the following statements reflects your opinion?*”. The concrete case for this question was the social media posts known as “**the banana-eating protest**”. Turkish society saw this action mostly as “*provocative*” with a rate of 20,6%. More interesting was the attitude of Turkish society regarding the necessary sanction for this act. When asked “*Do you think that sanctions should be applied to those who share such posts?*”, 39,1% said “*I think they should be deported*”. This response was followed by “*I definitely think there should be a sanction/punishment*” in the second rank with a rate of 16,3%.

## V-A-2: SB-2021 Main Findings: Syrians (uTP)

The main findings regarding Syrians under Temporary Protection in Türkiye which were obtained through the public opinion survey and focus group discussions could be summarized as follows:

**How the Syrians in Türkiye make their living** is a controversial topic and has a significant influence on social cohesion. Throughout the SB studies, it was found that more than 80% of Turkish society believe that Syrians make their living through the assistance provided by Turkish state. However, 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 SUY support program funded by the EU. However, the answers given by the Syrians about how the remaining 2.3 million Syrians who did not receive help are making their living are illuminating. With the advantage of the household-based survey in the SB studies, some clues, albeit limited, about working status have been obtained. 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 Labor 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 government officials recently that Syrians work informally.

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.

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.

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

When the problem areas of Syrians in Türkiye are examined, it is seen that most complaints are made about “working conditions”. However, when the rates of responses are considered, it is observed that there was a limited decrease in the reported problems from SB-2017 to SB-2019 indicating an increasing optimism. However, problems appear to be increasing again in SB-2020 and SB-2021. It is thought that the effects of the Pandemic in SB-2020 and the fact that the process is becoming politicized in SB-2021 played major roles in this trend. Complaints about working life, along with the issue of discrimination, are among the issues that Syrians focus on the most in focus group discussions.

SB studies provide a very important testing opportunity in the discussions of “harmonization” or “social cohesion” which will closely affect the migration literature in terms of the relationship between cultural closeness and social cohesion processes. As it is known, “cultural similarity” is among the most important areas of social cohesion policies. In general, there is a perception that societies with cultural affinity will have little problem living together. However, in-depth analyzes on Syrians in Türkiye reveal that although cultural closeness plays a positive role in the beginning, its positive effect decreases as the durations get longer and as the newcomers are perceived to become permanent in the country. Here, it can be argued that one of the most important determining factors, perhaps the most important one, is the “numerical size” of the newcomers. In fact, numerical size is effective in being divisive by promoting self-awareness and becoming important in new identity construction processes. This can turn into an important obstacle for social cohesion processes.

Regarding the issue of **cultural similarity between Syrians and Turks**, in parallel with the question asked to Turkish society “*How much do you think the Syrians in Türkiye are culturally similar to us?*”, SB surveys also asked the Syrian respondents the question “*To what extent do you think Syrians are culturally similar to Turks?*”. The responses reveal an interesting picture. Among Turkish society, the combined share of the responses “not similar at all + not similar” was around 80% in all 4 SB surveys. 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%. The share of those who think Syrians and Turks are **not** culturally similar, on the other hand, was 23,9% in SB-2017, 21,9% in SB-2019, 24,3% in SB-2020, and 29,9% in SB-2021. 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 cohabitation begins.

The issue of **social distance** is addressed in a mutual way in SB studies. The findings from SB-2017, SB-2019, SB-2020, and SB-2021 all suggest that Turkish society is inclined to reject any argument for cultural closeness between themselves and Syrians. In contrast to the attitude of Turkish society and with a decreasing trend since SB-2019, Syrians in Türkiye display a very different attitude in terms of their social distance. While the combined share of “very close” and “close” was 73,5% in SB-2017, it was 85,7% in SB-2019, 85,6% in SB-

2020, and 74,3% in SB-2021. Findings from all four studies fall into the category of “close” or “very close”. Despite the clear “distance” put forward by the Turkish society in the research, the “closeness” emphasis by the Syrians, albeit in a decreasing trend, is remarkable.

The **intensity and levels of social relations between Syrians and Turkish society** were inquired by a series of questions. Among all social relations, “having a conversation”, “shopping”, “friendship”, and “business relationship” come to the fore. These relationship styles reveal that despite the distanced stance of Turkish society, Syrians are getting closer to Turkish society in terms of both social distance scales and social relationship intensities, and they make an effort for this.

In order to learn the **perception of Syrians regarding life in Türkiye, the Turkish society, and the Syrian community in Türkiye**, 11 statements were posed. Considering the sum of “completely agree” and “agree” in the average of four SB studies “*Syrians want to obtain Turkish citizenship*” continues to rank at the top with 55,6%. It was followed by “*Syrians are grateful to Turkish society*” (47,6%) and “*Syrians want to go to another country*” (42,5%).

Regarding the **future perspectives of Syrians in Türkiye**, a remarkable change is observed in SB-2021, where the statement “***Syrians want to go to another country***” (64,2%) came to the fore. It is possible to say that this situation is closely related to the politicization of the Syrian issue in Türkiye in recent years, and the desire to go to a third country has increased due to the concern that the Syrians, whose hopes and desires to return to their country have largely disappeared, will face problems in Türkiye in the medium and long term.

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. 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.

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.

According to Syrians, the most important concern of Turkish society regarding Syrians is “*the increase in the Syrian population in Türkiye*”. The second and third most important concerns of Turkish society regarding Syrians, according to Syrians, are “*loss of jobs*” and “*political participation/voting*”, respectively.

**How Syrians perceive the way Turkish society treats them** is being investigated by SB studies in the context of social cohesion. The Syrians were asked the question “*in your opinion, how does the Turkish society treat Syrians*” with a “multiple answer” system and a mix of 3 “positive” and 3 “negative” statements as responses. According to a large majority of respondents, 63,3% in SB-2019 and 62,3% in SB-2020, “*Turkish society embraced Syrians*”. This figure scored a significant decrease in SB-2021 to become 45%. One of the negative statements, “*Turkish society exploits Syrians as cheap labor*”, received an increased support from 34,7% to 43,3% in SB-2021. Another one of the negative statements, i.e. “*Turkish*



society treats Syrians badly”, received support from 3,3% in SB-2020, which increased to 14,1% in SB-2021. Similarly, the statement “Turkish society looks down on Syrians” was supported 2% in SB-2020, which surged to 9,1% in SB-2021. This situation shows that the post-2020 period has created a very important breaking point between the Syrians and the Turkish society, where significant social distance and mutual accusations emerged.

SB studies approach the concepts of “**integration**” and “**social cohesion**” in line with the “durable solutions” approach and terminology of the UNHCR. Due to the nature of the subject, it is quite difficult to follow and determine the social cohesion processes of Syrians in Türkiye. 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 dramatically dropped to 18% in SB-2021. Similarly, those who believe that Syrians either integrated to “a very little extent” or “not integrated at all” make up of 8,5% in SB-2019, 5,6% in SB-2020, and with a huge increase, 23,1% in SB-2021. This figure is even higher among the Syrian respondents living in border cities, reaching 30%. In fact, this situation points to the pessimism in the social cohesion processes for ten years of living together.

Regarding the **support provided by the Turkish state to Syrians**, respondents were asked the question of “*To what extent do you find the support and aids the state provides for the Syrians in Türkiye in the following areas sufficient?*” referring to the 6 main areas (health, protection/legal support, education, housing, food, and Money/financial aid) for which the Turkish state provides support. While in SB-2017, the total rate of those who responded “sufficient” and “very sufficient” to this question on average was 28.62%, this rate has risen to 34,96% in SB-2019, 31,5% in SB-2020 and 30,7% in SB-2021. As in many areas, it is observed that the positive atmosphere in 2020 decreased in 2021 in this field as well.

The **status that Syrians would prefer in Türkiye** is immensely important in terms of social cohesion processes as well as understanding the future perspectives of Syrians. 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.

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 for “themselves”, their “family” and Syrians in general 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. The same table applies

to “their families”. Among Syrians, who believed that there was a future for their families in Türkiye, with a rate of more than 63% in SB-2019 and SB-2020, this rate decreased to 31.2% in SB-2021.

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.*” A new period has started in which it cannot be easily predicted in which direction this change will evolve in the upcoming period. The increase in the tendency of Syrians to go to third countries actually reveals their uneasiness in Türkiye and the breaking in their future expectations. The developments in the lives of Syrians in Türkiye, political debates regarding a possible change in government, developments in the economy affect their views on return. 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.

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.

The **reasons of Syrians for not returning** were inquired with the probe “Provide the most important 3 reasons why you are not planning to return to Syria”. The first response with the highest rate is “*because it’s not a safe place*” (SB-2019: % 42,9, SB-2020: %69,9, SB-2021: % 64). In the second place is the option “*because the war still continues*”. There are two points that need to be underlined here. Firstly, the option “*because I want to obtain citizenship in Türkiye*” which was at the second place in SB-2020 with 30,4% dropped to 7<sup>th</sup> rank with only 8,5% in SB-2021. Second one is the fact that the option “*to go to another country*” received a higher degree of support from 17,4% of respondents. All the findings reveal that Syrians are hesitant about the future in Türkiye and are in search of some alternatives, especially going to a third country.

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. When we consider the return of Syrians in terms of the “push-pull” factors that are frequently used in traditional migration discussions, 7 of the 14 reasons are “pushing” over the adverse conditions and risks in Syria, and 7 reasons are “pulling” in the context of living and living standards established in Türkiye.<sup>212</sup> In this context, it can be said that 7 pull and 7 push fac-

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212 Since the reason “to go to another country” was described as “an advantage to be created by staying in Türkiye”, it was included among the attractive factors.

tors determine the attitudes of Syrians not willing to return. 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.

The will to go to another country was tested with another question. As it is known, the passage of Syrians from Türkiye to Europe via the Greek islands or land borders was largely stopped as of April 2016. After the developments following the loss of life of 33 Turkish soldiers as a result of an attack on Turkish Army in Idlib on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Türkiye announced that **“Türkiye took a decision not to prevent the passage of Syrian and other refugees to Europe”**. This situation, specifically in the Pazarkule border region, caused a very intense debate in Türkiye and Europe. New questions were developed in SB-2020 and SB-2021 in order to understand how Syrians view this issue and what their reaction would be in case of a repeat of this action by Türkiye. In response to the question first introduced in SB-2020 *“Did you plan to go when Türkiye in February decided not to control crossings at Pazarkule/Greece border (to allow transit of refugees to Europe)?”* 2,5% of Syrians said that they went to the border but couldn’t cross it, while 13,9% suggested that they planned to go but did not. SB-2020 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.

When asked **“If you had the chance/permission, would you want to move to and live in another city in Türkiye?”**, the rate of those who said “I would” or “I definitely would” increased from 11,5% in SB-2020 to 17,2% in SB-2021. The combined rate of those who said “I would not” and “I definitely would not” was 83,7% in SB-2020 and 76,6% in SB-2021. Despite these changes, it can be said that Syrians generally live in the provinces of their choice, and therefore they show little will to make changes.

Syrians under Temporary Protection in Türkiye are required to apply for a **travel permit document** when they need to or want to travel to cities other than the one in which they are registered. Serious objections have been raised, especially in the FGDs, to this regulation. While 45,3% of the respondents in SB-2020 and 59,6% in SB-2021 suggested that they



*“feel like their freedom is restricted”*, 44,3% in SB-2020 and 25,7% in SB-2021 reported that it *“does not affect”* their lives. Objections and complaints regarding this regulation were voiced much more vocally during FGDs. Participants expressing the difficulties of obtaining travel permits state that they sometimes try to overcome this obstacle by resorting to illegal ways or that they receive support from intermediaries.

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. Some questions were asked about what kind of problems the Syrians faced, to what extent they had access to health services, what kind of support they received, and what kind of changes there were in their relations with the Turkish society during the pandemic period. It is observed in both SB-2020 and SB-2021 studies that the pandemic has generally negatively affected the lives of Syrians in Türkiye. The rate of those who say “It hasn’t affected my life at all” is 11.3% in SB-2020 and 10.2% in SB-2021. However, the first point that Syrians put forward in both studies was “It adversely affected my financial situation” (SB-2020: 64.2%, SB-2021: 56.5%). This is followed by “It adversely affected my emotional/psychological state” (SB-2020: 63.8%, SB-2021: 55.3%); and “I lost my job” (SB-2020: 47.9%, SB-2021: 50.2%). The emphasis on the deterioration of the financial situation and the loss of jobs clearly reveals the devastating impact of the pandemic on vulnerable groups.

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%). In SB-2021, those who had the Covid-19 vaccine were asked how many doses they had, and it was seen that the rate of 1 dose was 18,2%, 2 doses 76,9%, and 3 doses of vaccine was 4,2%. The answers to the questions reveal a very important success. When asked “Have you experienced problems regarding hospital visits/ access to health services during the pandemic?”, 88.3% of Syrians in SB-2020 and 72.7% in SB-2021 stated that they did not have any problems in accessing health services during the pandemic period.

**Interest and Participation in Social Cohesion Activities:** One of the most important shortcomings in the social cohesion studies to be carried out on the Syrians in Türkiye is to attract the Syrians to the studies on this issue. In this context, they were asked the question “Have you ever participated in any social cohesion activities?” 21.8% of Syrians answered yes to this question. It is seen that the most participants in these activities are women, those aged 18-24, those with a high education level, and those living in metropolitan cities.

**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 encoun-

tered 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.

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%.

In order to identify and analyze the tensions that Syrians have experienced with Turkish society in the last period, the Syrians in SB-2020 and SB-2021 were asked “To what extent do you, your family, and other Syrians in Türkiye experience social tension with the Turkish community in your neighborhood or places of work in the last 12 months/year? If you score between 1-Never experienced and 5-I have experienced a lot, how much would you give?” The rate of those who said (personally) “I didn’t experience any problems” decreased from 79.2% in SB-2020 to 35.8% in SB-2021. Those who said “I experienced problems” increased from 10.7% to 27.2%. Between SB-2020 and SB-2021, the rates of not experiencing problems at all levels between SB-2020 and SB-2021 have decreased, and experiencing problems has increased. This change in one year also indicates a serious breaking point. In particular, the drop in the number of having personal problems from 79.2% to 35.8%, the increase in having problems from 10.7% to 27.2%, and at the same time the increase in the I have no idea / no answer tab to 26.3% are remarkable and alarming.



SYRIANS BAROMETER  
2021

8

POLICY  
RECOMMENDATIONS

## V-B: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Syrian Barometer study aims to take a scientific snapshot on Syrian refugees, who caused what can be termed “a social shock” for Türkiye due to its development, volume and duration. Based on this snapshot, the team that carried out the study is trying to present its own unique academic contribution, not the views of the institutions of the Republic of Türkiye or the UN institutions, especially the UNHCR.

The future of Syrians in Türkiye is going through an extremely dynamic and ambiguous process. Although Turkish society believes that most of them will stay in Türkiye and Syrians do not show any interest in voluntary repatriation, it is very difficult to make very clear statements about the developments in the near and medium term. This situation has become more complex in Türkiye with the politicization of the process in recent years. However, although the concerns and objections of the Turkish society are clear, the global migration trends, the situation in Syria and the experience in Türkiye in the last 11 years reveal an image that a very serious part of the Syrians will stay in Türkiye. Although it is not a very realistic scenario, if Syrians return to their country or go to a third country in the near future, then the discussions and efforts on social cohesion in Türkiye may come to an end. However, if this scenario does not happen and most of the Syrians, whose number exceeds 4 million, stay in Türkiye, then the necessity of preparing both Turkish society and Syrians for this common life arises. Social cohesion studies are generally planned and implemented with a security motivation, not for the “late-comers”, but for the peace of the local people and for the new-comers to make an additional contribution to that society. In this context, it can be said that the following policy recommendations take into account the expectation of a general “permanence”. The main purpose here is to understand the social shock, widespread concerns and the tension caused by the politicization of the process in a process where the number of refugees, which was 58 thousand in 2011, suddenly reached millions, and in addition to that, irregular migration movements are intensified, and to share ideas about what can be done. In other words, the main objective of policy recommendations is to prevent this “social shock” from turning into a trauma and chronic problem which would lead to social segregation and conflict, and to contribute into drawing a framework for a peaceful and honorable cohabitation.

In SB studies, “social cohesion” is used not in a hierarchical and ideologically-biased way, but is meant to refer to “an honorable life together in peace and serenity” that would be established by a rights- and individual-oriented approach. This study in general 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.”

In SB studies, it is observed that SB-2021 reaches different findings than other studies. It can be said that the most important reason for this is the politicization of the Syrian issue in Türkiye and the negative effects on the economy. In fact, the “anxiety” and “endurance”-based approach in Turkish society continues in SB-2021. However, it is understood that the real turning point was experienced by the Syrians. In this context, it is clear that

policy proposals for Syrians will be more specific. The policy recommendations below were developed by evaluating the findings of the SB-2021 studies together with the findings of SB-2017, SB-2019, and SB-2020. The new findings emerging in SB-2021 and the policy recommendations put forward considering the agenda in Türkiye and the region are naturally included in this study. In fact, this situation also reveals the fact that there has been no change in some issues or that policy changes have/could not been made.

**» CONCERNS OF THE SOCIETY SHOULD BE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED WHETHER THE CAUSE IS PERCEPTION OR REAL:**

Turkish society has been hosting one of the most important humanitarian mobilizations in world history since 2011, without any preparation. In the Turkish society, which has shown a high level of solidarity and acceptance for more than 11 years, an increasing level of concern has arisen in recent years. In these concerns, the weakening of the belief that the Syrians, whose number is around 3,7 million, will return, the physical closeness caused by the Syrians living together with the Turkish society in the city centers, the unsatisfactory communication strategy, the economic difficulties of the country, the pandemic process and the “uncontrollability” triggered by the irregular migrants in particular, and the perception of “inability to manage” play an important role. The reasons for the concerns of the society may not always be based on real information. Flows of irregular migrants and asylum-seekers on a mass scale, similar to the one Türkiye has experienced after 2011, create an understandable degree of concern and anxiety among states and societies. In this context, Turkish society’s anxieties and concerns should be taken seriously for social cohesion. If the security concerns of the society are not taken seriously and policies and explanations convincing the public are not realized, the issue can be politicized and the conflict potential may rise.

The issue of Syrian refugees living in Türkiye is not a regulated, foreseen or planned migration process. Due to the nature of the open-door policy and forced migration, Turkish society had to live together with millions of Syrians in a very short time. This situation, in which process management is also very difficult, has also created concerns in the society such as “losing a job”, “increasing crime rates”, “deteriorating public services” from the very beginning. On the other hand, it is known that the process managers in Türkiye try to respond to the concerns of the society with a “vision” that the process is “temporary” and through emotional discourses such as “fraternal solidarity”. This shows that the concerns of the society are not taken seriously enough. This is exactly why, in other words, the political space opened up by social concerns that are not taken seriously has made it possible to make politics on populist and, more specifically, “removal of Syrians” discourses. Those responsible for the process management should take the concerns of the society seriously and inform the society regularly and continuously with reliable information. Failure to do so creates space for both increasing concerns in the society and populist discourses. While rich/developed countries have difficulties even in regular migration manage-

ment and extreme right-wing and racist parties dominate the systems, irregular and mixed migration movements, that is, uncontrolled human mobility dominated by uncertainty, should not be expected to be experienced without problems. If the security concerns from the society are not taken seriously and if explanations and policies that will convince the society are not implemented, the potential for the issue to quickly become instrumental in a populist way and turn into a conflict environment may increase. For all these reasons, the extent of the problem faced by the Turkish state and society should be recognized, while realistic and transparent policies that would strengthen the Turkish society's resistance are needed.<sup>213</sup>

**» MORE POLITICIZATION OF THE SYRIAN ASYLUM-SEEKERS IN TÜRKİYE IS A LEGAL AND UNDERSTANDABLE SITUATION. BUT THE INSTRUMENTIZATION OF THE PROCESS BY POPULIST DISCLAIMERS BRINGS ADDITIONAL OBSTACLES TO REASONABLE DISCUSSION AND RESOLUTIONS:**

At the end of the 11 years that have passed, the issue of Syrians in Türkiye is a matter of political interest, which is understandable and can even be described as belated. The place of discussion and solution of every issue belonging to society is politics. In this context, it can even be criticized that the issue of Syrian refugees has been out of the political agenda for a long time. However, the problem here is not the politicization of the issue. Because in a matter that concerns the society so closely, it is inevitable that politics, that is, the solution institution, come into play. However, the instrumentalization of the issue through politics creates an extremely uncontrolled populist ground that will bring additional problems. In other words, the quality of the discussion is important in Türkiye, not the discussion of the issue and the solutions. Recently, it has been observed that the rhetoric of "Syrians' return to Syria" has found a response in the society, and this has led to expectations that it will be effective in the election process. The main problem here is to what extent the expectations created by populist discourses coincide with sociological and political realities. Political institutions or leaders who are in the administration of the country or who aspire to the administration should consider not only their short-term interests, but also the medium and long-term needs of the country, and offer realistic solutions to the society instead of positive or negative emotional discourses. The social and political cost calculations of the dynamic and multidimensional, multi-actor process should be taken into account. The short-term promises of political institutions or leaders should not only increase the tension in the society, but also take into account the risks of negatively affecting the feelings of Syrians living in the country towards the Turkish society and state.

**» ALTHOUGH THE SOCIOLOGICAL REALITY AGAINST SYRIANS AT THE END OF 11 YEARS DOESN'T CREATE SATISFACTION IN TURKISH SOCIETY, STRENGTHENING OF THE PERMANENT STAY OF SYRIANS IS OBSERVED AS A REALITY:**



What has started in April 2011 with the arrival of first Syrian groups to Türkiye, and was seen to be “temporary” by all parties, has undergone a tremendous transformation through time, although this emphasis on temporariness still exists in political discourse, often the emotional ones, and in terms of the status of Syrians. During the process, the Turkish society’s view of Syrian refugees seems to have undergone serious changes in the life practices of Syrians and their future perspectives about themselves. More than 3,7 million Syrians are now living all across the country, in mostly urban places, and their presence is felt in every facet of life in Türkiye. **Türkiye’s policy on Syrians**, which has been built since the beginning on the expected transformations within Syria, **has to be revisited considering the sociological realities of the past nearly 10 years and the fact that establishing a peaceful and stable environment within Syria appears to be a remote prospect for the short and medium terms.** When these years and the potential conflict environment created by the existence of different power centers in Syria are taken into consideration, it can be speculated that any prospective political changes in Syria will have a much more diminished influence on the Syrians in Türkiye. The Syria of 2022 has turned into a situation where the existence of very different power centers exceeds the current government in Syria. Although a political solution is the general expectation, in the sociological context; the issues of ending of the war environment in Syria and ensuring stability and the return of Syrians in Türkiye to their countries are two issues that diverge from each other day by day. Therefore, it is clear that more realistic policies are needed. If policies are built on “**temporariness**” and with a short-term “**problem-solving**” mentality, there is a very real risk that these may lead to serious social costs in the future, both for the Syrians and the Turkish society.

» **IN ADDITION TO “TEMPORARY PROTECTION” STATUS, OTHER ALTERNATIVE STATUSES SHOULD BE DISCUSSED FOR SYRIANS THAT HAVE A 10-YEAR PAST:**

The “Temporary Protection Status” of Syrians needs to be re-evaluated as their average duration of stay in Türkiye has exceeded 5.5-6 years and their tendencies to return are decreasing continually. Even though the relevant regulation mentions the possibilities of other legal statuses (e.g. residence permit, citizenship or international protection) for Syrians if and when this status is terminated, an evaluation of the prospects of alternative statuses for temporary protection could contribute in the process particularly in terms of basic rights and social cohesion processes.

» **CHANNELS TO CITIZENSHIP, WITH SPECIFIED PROCESSES, SHOULD BE CONSIDERED INSTEAD OF “EXCEPTIONAL CITIZENSHIP”:** SB studies reveal that one of the biggest concerns of Turkish society about Syrians is their possibility of “becoming citizens”. For this reason, it is significant for the “exceptional citizenship” to actually turn into an “exceptional” implementation in terms of those who will be given citizenship and the sensitivities of Turkish society. A significant deficiency of the exceptional citizenship process is its lack of transparency. In this context, if citizenship prospects will be made available to Syrians, alternative channels other

than exceptional citizenship should be discussed. Those who live in Türkiye with a residence permit for 5 years acquire the right to apply for citizenship. However, as the Temporary Protection Regulation does not specify Syrians' existence in Türkiye from the residence perspective, it is not possible for Syrians to acquire this right. Considering the new situation, enabling Syrians who have been living in Türkiye under temporary protection for 5 years to acquire this right after living with residence permit for another 5 years might be evaluated, which may open the way apply for citizenship in 10 years. So, the last decision can be given by Turkish authorities given specific criteria and needs through special legal regulations. Special legal arrangements can be made to transform the status of Syrians under Temporary Protection into residence. As is known, Article 34 of the Geneva Convention also encourages citizenship processes for refugees. However, the current naturalization processes are seen as a problem area in terms of not knowing the criteria, being far from transparency and not being able to convince the society in this regard, and also negatively affects the social cohesion processes. Remarkably, the fact that the process is not carried out in a transparent and based on criteria that everyone knows creates anxiety not only in the Turkish society but also among the Syrians.

**“A DEVELOPMENTAL AND SUSTAINABLE PROCESS MANAGEMENT” SHOULD LEAD THE WAY:**

Whether it is desired or not, the very likely prospects of cohabitation should be built upon a developmental approach that structures this cohabitation in a way that would contribute to every segment in society. A development-based migration and asylum policy could potentially open up a significant new space for the peaceful cohabitation. As it has been emphasized in the 11th Development Plan of the Turkish Republic, a very important starting point for such a policy would be the social cohesion policies. Here it should be noted that there is an important difference between migrants and refugees, so in implementing development-based migration policies, the differences this makes among refugees and the host communities should be considered. For a development-based process management, it is necessary to reconsider the process of obtaining work permits for Syrians, and to make plans to match the occupational qualifications of Syrians with sectoral and regional analyses in Türkiye.

**» CONTINUANCE OF SUY/ESSN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IS VALUABLE FOR THOSE IN URGENT NEED OF HELP AND FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES. BUT THE RESOURCES NEED TO BE RESTRUCTURED WITH “DEVELOPMENT” SET AS A PRIORITY OBJECTIVE:**

Through the SUY/ESSN program, which is funded by the EU, around € 1 billion is transferred to needy asylum seekers in Türkiye, 90% of whom are Syrians. An average of 1.6 million people annually benefit from this aid, which was delivered to 239 thousand households in total. Although this aid is 155 TL per person per month (230 TL in 2022), it is extremely important for asylum seekers. Like the ESSN benefits, Supplementary Social Cohesion Assistance (350 TL) and Conditional Education As-



sistance, which started in 2021, also reach a significant number of recipients. These aids also provide resources to the local economy. The resources used for the SUY need to be transformed into more education, development/investment efforts, and directed towards medium and long-term policies, including primarily those in urgent need and more vulnerable groups. It is extremely important that development principles are taken into account in updating the criteria for those to be included in the SUY program. The fact that the program is basically family-based can cause problems especially due to naturalized and registered employees. Similarly, the criticism that supporting families with multiple children encourages increasing child births should be taken into account.

» **THE POLICY OF TRAVEL PERMITS FOR SYRIANS SHOULD BE REFORMED:**

After 11 years of living in Türkiye, the two most frequently voiced complaint of Syrians concerning their lives in the country are working conditions and travel restrictions - as revealed mostly in FGDs. In line with the general practice worldwide, the place of residence of those who applied to or who are already under international protection is determined by the state and they are only allowed to travel outside of this place with a proper reason. However, the case of Syrians needs to be considered as a special case. As mentioned above, there was no advance planning in the beginning of the process concerning Syrians and they were told to remain in their cities of registration after the registrations were completed. This has created significant differences in terms of number of Syrian residents among cities, districts, and even neighborhoods. Moreover, due to the largeness of the number, mobility could not be prevented. 3.7 million Syrians have complex networks of relationships which may facilitate mobility, for instance, one can move to another city for work or for university education that may divide families. The existing experience has shown both that applying such travel permit requirements are difficult to implement and it is not clear why they are necessary. It is very clear that there is a need to reform travel restrictions of Syrians and that the reasons for this need to be shared with the Turkish society.

» **“INFORMAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES” AS AN IMPORTANT AND COMMON PROBLEM OF THE TURKISH ECONOMY SHOULD BE EXPLAINED TO TURKISH SOCIETY THAT IT IS NOT A PROBLEM RESULTING FROM MIGRATION**

While informal economic activities are neither sustainable nor ethically defensible, the prospects of developing a sufficient employment capacity for the Syrians in the short and medium term in Türkiye do not seem realistic. Even though employment in the informal market seems to provide an opportunity for the Syrians to support themselves economically in the short term, this practice is also known to create risks and losses as well as leading to serious exploitation. New arrangements need to be made in this field considering the economic capacity and the needs of Türkiye. However, it should not be forgotten that the informal economy constitutes more than 32% of the Turkish economy and that there are around 10 million Turkish citizens

working in the informal economy. Therefore, informal economic activities should not only be seen as a problem of Syrians, and this should be explained to the Turkish society. Although informal economy cannot be accepted and sustained, it does not seem realistic that this issue would be resolved for Syrians in the medium- or even in the long-term period. However, informality cannot be ignored for employees to get paid for their labor and become secure under the principle of “decent job”; also in terms of reducing the other burdens of the state, especially the tax loss, and increasing the contribution to the economy. In this context, the state should be determined to fight against informality and develop short, medium and long-term projects to reduce informality. However, since this process is known to be difficult and time-consuming, it is valuable to have some temporary regulations and support relevant for the current situation, particularly for the individual security and safety of those in the workforce. The state should make some regulations and spend efforts to meet the financial needs through external funding, particularly through the EU.

**» THE ROLE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD BE ENHANCED:**

The issue of Syrians in Türkiye has created an important opportunity to experience how important a role the civil society can play. While the civil society organizations had to rely on their cooperation with international organizations and the international NGOs in the beginning, the development of a serious capacity has been possible through the passing time. This development of capacity has also led to a development in terms of international cooperation. The cooperation between the public institutions and the NGOs has also developed into an impressive level. New NGO formations of Turks and Syrians should be supported in the process. However, it is also necessary to establish mechanisms that would allow conducting impact analysis studies on activities as well as openly displaying cooperation opportunities and possible support resources through a transparent NGO mapping.

**» IF PROSPECTS OF PERMANENCY ARE STRONG, POSTPONING/NOT IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL COHESION POLICIES INCREASE THE RISKS AND COMPENSATION MAY CREATE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS**

Adopting social cohesion policies for temporary immigrants and especially refugees is not a popular choice for many countries because of the uncertainties surrounding the process and because it is believed that social cohesion policies “encourage permanency”. However, the long-term stay of Syrians in Türkiye, in the same way, has developed outside of the political expectations. As of the end of 2021, there are more than 1.7 million Syrian children and youth under the age of 18. More than border regions, Syrians are living in more developed parts of Türkiye. Their likelihood of return is decreasing both because of the conditions in Syria and because of the lives that they have established in Türkiye over the years. Thus, a common life and future, even though not preferred, appears to be increasingly inevitable. Therefore, social cohesion policies are an essential requirement, not a preference, for the creation of

an honorable and peaceful common life and for preventing many potential problems in social and political realms, as analyses and developments such as SB studies also present strong evidence on the tendency that Syrians will stay in Türkiye.

**» IT SHOULD BE EXPLAINED TO THE SOCIETY THAT SOCIAL COHESION AIMS TO REDUCE THE RISKS RELATED TO THE PEACE OF THE HOST COMMUNITY, NOT FOR THE NEWCOMERS:**

The issue of social cohesion is extremely complicated. Even though it may be possible to identify certain principles, it is impossible to talk about a model that would effectively work everywhere. In the absence of a common definition for “social cohesion” and “social cohesion models”, what is essentially meant by social cohesion policies is taking the necessary steps so that the “newcomers”, no matter what their status might be, can live a decent life in the duration that they will stay in the country, in cooperation with all stakeholders. Therefore, the need for social cohesion exists not only regarding immigrants but also all foreigners living in a country, regardless of their status. There are many actors that are relevant in this regard. However, the three main actors can be identified as the “state”, as the maker and implementor of decisions, the “local society” as the ones that need to display social acceptance, and the “newcomers”. One of the biggest handicaps before social cohesion policies is the perception of temporariness particularly regarding those who are under temporary protection and irregular migrants. The role of the state in this process includes providing protection to everyone based on basic rights, status determination, making strategic decisions, and process management in the public realm. However, states’ policies cannot be expected to be effective and successful by themselves in the absence of social acceptance and support. The attitude of the native society towards the newcomers is one of the most important factors for a peaceful and honorable life together. In other words, it should not be forgotten that the real process will take place among the society and at the local level. Here, neither policies that ignore universal legal principles in order to satisfy the society, nor practices that refer to universal legal principles but do not receive the support of the society, even at a minimum, cannot be expected to be functional.

**» LOCAL SOCIAL COHESION PROCESSES NEED TO BE STRENGTHENED:**

Social cohesion policies are conducted through local and community-based approaches. This is even more important in the case of Syrians in Türkiye because a settlement policy regarding where the Syrians will live in Türkiye has not been implemented. This situation has led to an unbalanced distribution amongst various cities, districts, and even neighborhoods. While there is a settlement system in place for applicants and beneficiaries of international protection regarding how many need to settle in which cities, this system couldn’t be/wasn’t used for Syrians. Both positive and negative implications of this could be underlined. It has become almost impossible today to adopt a new settlement policy concerning Syrians. Therefore, particularly the local social cohesion processes need to be encouraged through mu-

municipalities and civil society organizations. This requires not only opening a legal space for local governments, but also transferring financial and other resources to them depending on the foreigners that live within their boundaries.

» **MUNICIPAL LAW SHOULD IMMEDIATELY AMENDED, AUTHORITY AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED FOR THE WORK OF MUNICIPALITIES FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS/MIGRANTS**

In Türkiye, local governments', especially municipalities' services to foreigners within their borders are evaluated within the framework of citizenship law, but they are not given special authority and, more importantly, no additional financial resources are provided for their activities. It is a serious need to allocate financial resources to municipalities, taking into account all foreigners registered within their borders, so that local services are not disrupted, local processes are strengthened and social cohesion is not disrupted. As it is known, some municipalities host foreigners who are almost all or half of their population. In this context, the amendment of the Municipality Law gives the municipalities the powers to work on this issue, while the central resource given to the Republic of Türkiye should be transferred for everyone residing within the boundaries of that municipality, not by the number of Turkish citizens.

» **A FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM ("BEL-SUY") IN COOPERATION WITH THE EU NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED FOR MUNICIPALITIES:**

In the short term, some of the resources transferred by the EU to Türkiye within the framework of FRIT should be directly transferred to local governments to be used in the services to be provided for Syrians and other international protection applicants within the borders of municipalities. With a planning similar to the SUY model currently in practice, support such as "Municipal Social Cohesion Assistance" ("BEL-SUY") can be transferred to municipalities on a project-based but direct basis. Here, for example, by transferring a resource of €10 per month per refugee, municipalities can provide project-based and supervised services to asylum seekers. Such a program would monthly cost €37 million, annually around €450 million if it only targets Syrians, and if it covers other asylum-seekers in Türkiye (4 million), then it would monthly cost €40 million and around €480 million annually. It is thought that such a resource transfer will be valuable in terms of meeting the need for resources in local social cohesion processes, reducing the complaints such as "*the resource that comes to us is used for asylum seekers, we become victims*", alleviating the pressure of the issue on politics and contributing to social cohesion processes. However, it should not be forgotten that this solution will be a short-term and temporary solution.

» **APPLICATION LIMITATIONS OF PERMANENT SOLUTIONS**

The UNHCR offers 3 "durable solutions" regarding refugee cases. These include "working for voluntary repatriation", "attempting to resettle in a third country", and "implementing local integration policies". It is not possible to talk about a single op-

tion among these three permanent solutions. These durable solutions should be implemented simultaneously at different weights. However, the general tendencies across the world show that the voluntary return of refugees and their resettlement remain limited. 10-year war in Syria and uncertainties about the future remove the opportunities of voluntary return to Syria in the short- and medium-term. Resettlement in a third country is at around 0.3% globally, while the refugee quotas decrease each day. Since 2011, 34,584 Syrians have been resettled from Türkiye to EU countries as of 30 August 2022 in accordance with the "1-1" rule, and 19,502 Syrians have been resettled to third countries by UNHCR, that is, a total of 54,086. This is around 1% of the number of Syrians under temporary protection in Türkiye. Although the discourse of global responsibility and burden sharing is on the agenda and Türkiye rightly expects solidarity on this issue, unfortunately, there is no compelling provision in this regard, so the system does not work. In this context, it is generally accepted that the Syrians' resettlement alternative is not an effective alternative that can change the current situation for millions of refugees, and that resettlement will have a very limited contribution. The limitation on the voluntary return of Syrians to their homes and resettlement in a third country necessitates the introduction of the third alternative, "integration" (local integration) policies. However, aside from what is meant by integration, it is also a situation where integration processes are very hard to achieve, especially in environments where there are millions of people, there is no chance to make any preparations beforehand, an extremely dynamic process is experienced and the issue is becoming more and more politicized, while also encouraging permanence. Considering that numerical sizes are the most significant determinant in the social cohesion processes, it should be noted that the current numbers make the process difficult, that the Syrians are at risk of becoming introverted and more concerned than the local people. In this context, the different obligations and efforts of both the state and the society and the newcomers are decisive. Perhaps most important of all, however, is the level of "acceptance" of a local community and newcomers' avoiding of behaviors that would confirm the existing concerns of the host community. In this context, everyone has a role to play.

**» SPECIAL EFFORTS SHOULD BE SPENT FOR MORE BURDEN AND RESPONSIBILITY SHARING BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY:**

The attitude of international society unfortunately creates a big disappointment. Advanced countries, within the reach of only 17% of current refugees, are to a less extent meeting their moral obligations about financial support and settling refugees. They are openly following externalization policies. The agreement between the United Kingdom and Rwanda in this regard has been a striking and alarming practice. Countries making refugee policies are often acting with a concern of self-protection. When resettlement and financial aid support that need to be given to countries hosting high number of refugees such as Türkiye are not provided, it means that countries applying open door policy and the refugees are punished, while authoritarian regimes causing the refugee problems are also encouraged. Due to the lack of global

responsibility and burden sharing, it is observed that the open-door policy has made the countries that are neighboring the crisis-country victimized. Türkiye, Lebanon and Jordan, which have implemented an “open door policy” to save people’s lives due to the crisis that broke out in Syria in 2011, have become victims of the process over time and have taken additional burdens and risks. It should be noted that in a world where responsibility sharing is not effective, countries that will implement an “open door policy” will decrease in crises that will occur, and this will cause refugees to be left alone with practices contrary to human dignity, including even torture and killing. The avoidance of responsibility and the policy of externalization of rich/developed countries also bring risks that will facilitate the persecution of people by dictatorial systems. Being the country hosting the highest number of refugees in the world on these issues, Türkiye can take a more active role in close cooperation with the UN institutions and produce concrete projects to raise the awareness of the world public on the issue. The issue of “resettlement” to third countries should be on the agenda as well as “voluntary repatriation” and “local integration”.

**» SHARING EXTERNAL FUNDING INFORMATION COMING FROM EU AND OTHER SOURCES WITH THE SOCIETY WOULD HELP REDUCE THE PRESSURE OF SOCIAL REACTIONS:**

The external funds received by Türkiye are far from meeting the needs. The lack of solidarity in the international community is once again observed despite the Global Compact and discourses of responsibility/burden sharing. After 2011, the largest financial support arriving in Türkiye for Syrians is EU-origin. With the 18 March 2016 EU-Türkiye Statement, a €6 billion (€3+3 billion) of support was agreed on and around €4,5 billion of this source has been transferred to projects in Türkiye by the end of 2021. The remaining funds will be transferred to Türkiye in line with the development of projects. It is known that some additional resources have been transferred to Türkiye by the EU or EU member states in the last two years, especially to reduce the impact of the Pandemic. An additional €3 billion resource from the EU has been committed to be used between 2021-2024 for the refugees in Türkiye. Although the EU is the institution that gave the biggest support to Türkiye in this process, it is also known that the support provided is well below the need. Although the known and unknown burdens are on the Turkish taxpayers, the sharing of these incoming external financial sources is significant both in terms of transparency and social cohesion processes. According to more than 80% of the Turkish society, the survival of Syrians in Türkiye is ensured by the support of the Turkish state. This perception, which does not overlap with reality, is also a handicap for social cohesion. Various claims and statements suggesting that no external resources are being received and that huge amounts of public funds are being spent on Syrians create social reactions among both the Turkish society and the asylum-seekers themselves. Explaining to the Turkish society the fact that this funding, albeit insufficient, is provided by external resources would help reduce social reactions in many fields. Although the financial supports from the EU and other external sources are



of great importance for meeting some of the needs of refugees in Türkiye, in order to eliminate the negative impact of the externalization approach in these supports on Turkish society, the EU's taking responsibility, especially in resettlement, is also important in terms of social cohesion.

» **AGRICULTURE-LIVESTOCK, INDUSTRY, RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGY SECTORS CAN PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE EMPLOYMENT FOR SYRIANS:**

Most of the Syrians in Türkiye work in the service, construction and production sectors, and some of them work in seasonal agricultural works. The very large industries of agriculture and animal husbandry in Türkiye, which are open to investment, and the industrial sector in some regions such as Istanbul, Kayseri, Bursa, Izmir, Gaziantep, and Mersin can provide very good opportunities for the employment of the newcomers. The experience so far has shown that agriculture could be a particularly convenient industry for Syrians as it is one of the economic spaces where anxieties concerning Syrians remain relatively low. Developing projects in this area in close cooperation with the EU, including tax reductions and incentive policies can bring along a policy the outcomes of which can be reached in a short while.

» **TÜRKİYE SHOULD DEVELOP ITS OWN SHORT, MEDIUM, AND LONG-TERM SOCIAL COHESION STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION REGULATIONS:**

After 2011, the support of international organizations and institutions in providing protection, capacity, and financial resources and cooperation in Türkiye cannot be underestimated. However, one of the most significant problems concerning the Syrians in Türkiye is that various projects, particularly those developed by international agencies and NGOs, are implemented in the field in an incoherent manner. More efficient implementation of these projects is only possible through a comprehensive planning or making them parts of a general strategy. Therefore, **“project dominated era of short-term solutions” should be replaced by “the era of projects framed by Türkiye on a needs-based approach”**. For this reason, **Türkiye within the framework of its own priorities and capacity should develop its own strategy and use external sources under this strategy. So, moving away from the chaos of unconnected “projects” towards relevant projects framed by a general strategy would help attract more resources and their efficient use.**

» **INSTITUTIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN TÜRKİYE SHOULD UNDERTAKE MORE INITIATIVES IN THE EFFICIENT USE OF EU AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL FUNDS:**

Türkiye requires a new structuring where public institutions, local administrations and NGOs would play more roles. That would help plan the transferred international resources, mainly the EU resources, and their efficient use for refugees. Although the project-based use of resources and their controlled distribution is understandable, it would also a risk of waste of resources when local initiatives are disregarded along and when there is a lack of effective needs and impact analyses. **In this**

context, Türkiye's institutions should have a more say in financial cooperation agreements with the EU as well as in the planning and implementation processes of all external resources. Over the past decade, Türkiye's public institutions, local administrations, and NGOs have improved their capacity and increased their experience. It is a must for Türkiye's institutions to have a more say in order to maintain the efficient and relevant use of resources.

**» THOSE WORKING IN NGOS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING IN THE AREA OF HUMANITARIAN AID SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS MANAGEMENT:**

After 2011, many NGOs operating in the humanitarian field in Türkiye have become stronger, grown or newly established. Similarly, UN agencies, international organizations, foreign missions have increased their staff numbers and activities. This enabled emergence of a new sector in fields of humanitarian aid, protection, process management, etc. There are still around 50,000 Turkish staff, and thousands of foreign experts are working in this sector. The said group has well acknowledged the problems faced during the process as well as what needs to be done. This led to an expansion of the capacity through international cooperation. Their impact in the process management should be further strengthened. Also, opportunities of Türkiye's public institutions to work with such NGOs and international organizations should be expanded.

**» EMOTIONAL APPROACH BASED ON CULTURAL/RELIGIOUS APPROACH IN PROCESS MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL COHESION POLICIES CANNOT BE EFFECTIVE AS IT WAS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROCESS. IT IS NEEDED TO GENERATE REALISTIC POLICIES AND SHARE WITH THE SOCIETY BY CONSIDERING THE SPECIFIC SITUATIONS:**

"Cultural closeness" may play a role for solidarity in mass human mobilities in the beginning but as time passes, numerical size becomes the determinant. Although it is a fact that religious and cultural affinity exists between the Turkish society and Syrians, society's perception on this can change with increasing numbers or negative experiences. Therefore, Turkish society's characterization of Syrians, particularly those living in border cities, as "a group that is very culturally different from us" can be considered a deliberate reaction. The perception of "cultural foreignness" is observed more among those who are living in border regions and have closeness with Syrians in terms of language, customs, kinship, etc. This provides important evidence for producing realistic policies instead of policies based on emotions. What becomes the determinant factor here is the numerical size, which is seen to have exceeded the manageable levels. While bringing uneasiness among the host society in multiple ways, growing numbers usually increase the self-confidence of the newcomers in the meantime making it possible for them to live within their social networks without needing the host society. This, in turn, could further increase the distance and contribute in the emergence of "parallel societies". For these reasons, building social



cohesion on cultural closeness may be unrealistic and such emotional statements may not be found to be satisfying for either of them. The trend of Syrians in Türkiye in SB-2021 to find themselves culturally less similar to Turkish society compared to previous studies can actually be seen as a sign of a new identity formation. In other words, there is a growing need for realistic policies that transcend sentimentality not only for Turkish society but also for Syrians.

» **THE HEALTH AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC SHOULD BE MONITORED CAREFULLY AND ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS SHOULD BE PREVENTED:**

General impoverishment in the society during the pandemic has been raising the tension in the society, causing the refugees to further become targets. The pandemic has also been causing Syrians to lose their jobs and work at places without social security and with less payments. The health damage that Syrians face due to the pandemic seems to be around the average in Türkiye, while the impoverishment has become clearer. It will not be surprising to see its multi-faceted negative effects in the future. For this reason, preventing anti-migrant and anti-refugee discourses that increase during health and economic crises as well as implementing policies that would minimize the negative experiences which affect refugees during this difficult process are very significant.

» **COMMUNICATION STRATEGY BASED ON COMPREHENSIVE AND ACCURATE INFORMATION SHOULD BE DEVELOPED:**

SB studies have shown that a large part of the negative opinions and attitudes concerning Syrians among the Turkish society are based on misleading or incomplete information. It is essential for the Turkish society and Syrians to be regularly informed about the process using accurate and reliable information. Preparation of an urgent and **comprehensive communication strategy** could ease the anxieties that exist in the Turkish society as well as encouraging Syrians' efforts to become a part of the society. **An effective communication strategy based on accurate data** would fight against misinformation and gossiping, which spread very quickly and often through the social media. Such a communication strategy would also be important in terms of bringing **transparency** to the subject. In a similar way, informing the public regarding the legislation and legal processes in a transparent way would significantly contribute in social cohesion. The approach that ignores the concerns of the society and is content with emotionally-based discourses should be abandoned quickly. If the concerns of the society, whether arising from facts or perceptions, are not taken seriously and the society cannot reach satisfactory information and explanations on these issues, populist discourses will find very suitable areas for them. However, it should not be forgotten that it is not possible to solve the process only with the tools of the communication strategy, and when there is a separation between the information that is revealed within the framework of the communication strategy and the experiences of the society, the state will lose confidence even more and this will be reflected in the social cohesion processes.

**» PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS SHOULD COLLECT HEALTHY DATA AND PROVIDE THIS DATA TO THE USE OF ACADEMICS AND RESEARCHERS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE**

The biggest problem the experts face on the subject is the difficulty of accessing healthy official data. However, the first step of healthy migration management is reliable data. The second important part involves sharing this official data with academics and researchers. Without sharing this data, it would not be possible for the academics and researchers to carry out sound analysis and provide useful policy recommendations. Preparing plans and projections concerning millions of immigrants and refugees requires the contribution of the experts on this subject in addition to the efforts of bureaucrats and politicians. There is no doubt that data production and data sharing require special sensitivity in the protection of personal data. However, if even the simplest aggregated data is not shared with the society, it further increases the uneasiness of the society on this subject, which is open to speculation.

**» SYRIANS SHOULD BE PROVIDED WITH SUPPORT SO THAT THEY MAKE THEIR LIVING THROUGH THEIR OWN EFFORTS INSTEAD OF EXTERNAL SOURCES AND AIDS**

In Türkiye, Syrians, with almost all living together with Turkish society in urban areas, make their living through their own efforts. It is known that in Türkiye there are still over 1 million Syrians in the workforce and active as entrepreneurs. Supporting these efforts, known as "self-reliance" in the literature, is very significant for both contributing to the country's economy and for social cohesion and an honorable life.

In this context, it is necessary to re-evaluate different alternatives regarding work permits. In a state of law that takes into account employee rights, the state cannot be expected to tolerate work without obtaining a work permit. Except for the SUY assistance, which started in 2016 and reached 1.4 million Syrians, it is known that in very exceptional cases, Syrians can receive regular and continuous support. In other words, it is known that more than 60% of the Syrians in Türkiye cannot reach any financial support and they have to work for this. Since the Syrians' obtaining work permits depends on the demands of the businessmen, the number of annual permits has remained at 60 thousand. However, if the Syrians do not work, it is clear that the state must transfer resources to support at least 2.5 million people, which is almost impossible. However, considering the magnitude of the crisis, the conditions of the Turkish economy and the actual situation regarding the informal economy, alternatives should be developed in the short, medium and long term.

**» SCHOOLING, LITERACY AND TURKISH LEARNING CAPACITY OF SYRIANS NEED TO BE INCREASED:**

It is known that the subject of education does not only consist of schooling children that are at school age. It is clear that a great success has been achieved in schooling due to the annual number of students standing at 700 thousand. However, it is also a fact that nearly 40% of children and youth in the 5-17 age group are left out of the

education system as “lost generations”. Aside from the efforts in this regard, the situation regarding the general education level of Syrians in Türkiye shows that there is a very serious need to increase the opportunities for adult literacy and learning Turkish.

» **POLICIES NEED TO BE DEVELOPED REGARDING THE EQUALITY OF THE SYRIANS’ DIPLOMAS, PROFESSIONS AND EQUIVALENCE OF THEIR EDUCATION:** In order for Syrians to improve themselves and at the same time increase their contribution to Turkish society, it is necessary to further strengthen the mechanisms on diploma, profession and education equivalence without compromising educational standards.

» **“COMBATING SPATIAL CONCENTRATION (DISPERSION) PROJECT” DEVELOPED FOR PREVENTION OF GETTOIZATION AND FOR SOCIAL PEACE MAY CREATE NEW VICTIMS IN EDUCATION, WORK AND HOUSING ISSUES:**

The “dispersion policy”, announced by the government, started to be implemented in 2021 and more than a thousand neighborhoods were closed to new registration. The policy suggests that if the foreign population in a neighborhood reaches more than 20% of the local population, the neighborhood is closed to new registrations, and in places exceeding this rate, Syrians are sent to other places on a voluntary basis. Although the implementation of this policy is late, it is clear that it is important to prevent the unrest of the local community and to manage the process. However, the second part of the project, namely the transfer of Syrians from densely populated areas to other places, may cause significant problems. Although it is stated that this practice will be carried out on the basis of “voluntariness”, it is clear that many families are uneasy because of the long-term settlement situation. This issue can also bring with it very concrete problems in enrolling children in schools, finding a job and finding a place to live. In this respect, volunteering and, if necessary, incentives should be put into practice under the dispersion policy.

» **RESOURCE AND CAPACITY PROBLEMS THAT MAY RESULT FROM ASYLUM-SEEKERS/MIGRANTS IN THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS SHOULD BE AVOIDED, PHYSICAL AND HUMANITARIAN CAPACITY MUST BE STRENGTHENED**

Disruptions arising from newcomers is playing a significant role in the politicization of average complaints and disturbances towards the “newcomers” and their turning into hate speech. Therefore, the state needs to consider the necessary steps in ensuring a speedy increase in the capacity of such public services, especially including health, education, and municipal services, to contribute to the management of the process and social cohesion. Otherwise, the society will suffer and social acceptance will be negatively affected. Voicing objections and reactions to deteriorating public services is a natural situation that should be expected. Therefore, labeling the voiced concerns or reactions simply as “anti-Syrian discourse”, “racism”, or “hate speech” might make the social cohesion process more complicated.

» **SYRIANS SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE POLICY-MAKING AND SOCIAL COHESION PROCESSES:**

**More effective involvement of Syrians in the policy-making processes** should be ensured. Syrian academics, university students, NGO representatives that are living in Türkiye can potentially play a very significant role in this regard. There should be also more efforts to make City Councils to join this process in a more effective way.

» **SYRIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS SHOULD BE UTILIZED AS STRATEGIC ACTORS IN THE SOCIAL COHESION PROCESSES**

The special social group of **over 45,000 university students and alumni of Turkish universities need to be identified as strategic solution partners.** They should be enabled to facilitate the communication and interactions between the Turkish society and Syrians. It should be ensured for the university students and alumni to **assume an active role in social cohesion processes as social bridges and role models.** The opportunities for Syrian university students in Türkiye to find jobs after their graduation and their individual choices should be monitored carefully and there should be a special effort to prevent them from leaving Türkiye. However, although the numerical increase of Syrian students enrolled in universities in Türkiye is important, it should not be forgotten that a qualitative increase is more valuable for both the social cohesion processes and the development of the Syrian society itself. Unlike the first years, the fact that Syrian students now have to pay their university fees is a situation that will make it difficult for Syrians to attend university. In this regard, the state needs to make strategic evaluations.

» **THE MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY CENTERS SHOULD BE IMPROVED:**

The number of the multi-purpose community centers should be increased and their qualities should be improved. These centers should be used both to inform and direct individuals concerning activities in education and employment; and to provide support regarding legal rights and social cohesion. These centers would also be important in creating opportunities for the local people and Syrians to come together and interact with one another for social cohesion.

» **IT SHOULD BE ENSURED THAT SYRIAN WOMEN ARE EMPOWERED AND THAT THEY PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE PROCESSES:**

46% of the Syrian population in Türkiye are women. Syrian women are the main actors not merely at an individual level, but also at the family level. Syrian women, however, appear to have a quite low level of educational attainment in comparison to Syrian men, who already have much lower levels of educational attainment compared to the Turkish averages. Therefore, empowerment of Syrian adult women through literacy, language, vocational, and entrepreneurial courses, participation in the work force, among others, would not only lead to their self-improvement but also create a much wider influence in their respective communities.

» **MORE EFFORT IS REQUIRED IN THE FIELD OF MANDATORY EDUCATION TO PREVENT SYRIAN CHILDREN FROM TURNING INTO “LOST GENERATIONS”:**

Despite Türkiye’s extraordinary efforts and success and schooling of over 700,000 Syrian children, more than 40% of school-aged Syrians do not have access to formal education. Some of the main reasons for this are the differences in the formal education systems in Syria and Türkiye, language barrier, the families’ perception/expectation of “temporariness”, the fact that boys over a certain age are working, some families’ preference of not sending girls to school, and capacity issues at schools. There is obviously **a need for a new initiative and a leap concerning the schooling of Syrian school-aged children**. However, to prevent this from aggrieving the native people particularly in regions with high Syrian population, there is an urgent need to strengthen the capacity including the number of schools, classrooms, teachers, and other educational equipment. In addition, further precautions need to be taken to tackle peer bullying, prevent drop-outs, and take the necessary steps to recover from the serious negative impact of the Pandemic on education, which have particular importance both for the reduction of lost generations and for social cohesion processes. Policies should be developed with the awareness that the problems that have arisen in the school enrollment of Syrian children in recent years, or those who give up going to school due to the negativities experienced even though they are enrolled in school, are a situation that will cause significant problems in the future.

» **IT IS NECESSARY TO EMPOWER TEACHERS AND INCREASE THEIR NUMBERS:**

It is plainly obvious that education of Syrians is crucial both for preventing Syrian children from turning into lost generations and for the serenity of the Turkish society and a harmonious cohabitation. It is also known that there is a serious capacity problem in this field. Over 770,000 Syrian children have been placed into Turkish public schools over the past few years. The teachers, who are the bearers of the heaviest burden stemming from this policy of placement of Syrians, need to be supported and strengthened as they work extremely hard in firstly teaching a new language and its alphabet to foreign students, and then trying to give them education.

» **VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND VOCATIONAL COURSES FOR SYRIANS MUST BE STRENGTHENED:** It is very valuable and necessary to direct Syrian youth and adults to vocational training. However, a reduction of interest in vocational training in Türkiye creates a handicap, while the vocational schools are still attractive alternatives for Syrian youth and their families, which might even be effective in encouraging Turkish youth and their families.

» **VOCATIONAL COURSES MUST BE DEVELOPED ON A FUNCTIONAL AND NEEDS BASIS:** Turkish Ministry of National Education’s Directorate of Life Long Learning, international organizations and NGOs organize courses to help Syrians in Türkiye acquire occupations. However, the efficiency and necessity of these courses **should be questioned** as they are mostly funded by international organizations and man-

aged by NGOs. They devalue the studies in this field as they are unrelated to the actual economic needs and far from helping with employment. Some vocational courses are carried out merely for meeting the demands of participants to receive financial support, even limited, demand of in the short term. These courses which do not have cooperation with industry, trade, and commerce chambers merely create an overabundance of certificates. Even at the planning stage, there should be a central structure led by chambers of commerce, MoNE, Labor and Social Security Ministry, and ISKUR. This is very significant in terms of certification and employment processes.

**» ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE “GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES” AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS CONCEPTS MAY BRING IMPORTANT BENEFITS:**

It would be very important for Türkiye to re-evaluate its asylum policy on the basis of the 2018 Global Convention on Refugees of the UN, bringing its solidarity elements into action. The world needs to be aware of the immense support that Türkiye has been providing to over 4 million asylum- seekers using its limited resources and the risks that it has been taking. It may be possible for Türkiye to assume a leadership role in this regard. This way, Türkiye can become an example to other countries as well as utilizing the international capacity that had been accumulated within itself to improve its policies.

**» THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL VULNERABILITY AND CONFLICT AREAS WITHIN TURKISH SOCIETY ARE THE BIGGEST OBSTACLES BEFORE THE “NEWCOMERS”:**

The biggest obstacle before a society in its struggle with the social problems is its inner social vulnerabilities and conflicts. If a society has inner tensions and vulnerability, together with a harshness leading to hate speech, the attitude towards newcomers becomes even more problematic. In other words, for a society composed of individuals that don't like one another, the hate speech - in an even stronger way - will be extended against others. For this reason, it is important to spend efforts to remove areas of social tension and conflict in general.

**» THE ANXITIES OF THE TURKISH SOCIETY THAT HAVE GROWN AS A RESULT OF HIGH TRAFFIC OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION OVER THE LAST YEARS SHOULD BE REMOVED THROUGH RELIABLE COMMUNICATION:**

One of the most important sources of anxiety in the society has been the perception that the state doesn't have sufficient control on the process. This perception, in turn, exacerbates the anxieties among society regarding Syrians. This would be prevented by keeping sound communication channels open. The intensive irregular migration flow into Türkiye since 2015 has been adversely affecting the policies about Syrians as well as Syrians' lives in Türkiye. The desperation and anxiety in the society would make implementation of all sorts of social cohesion policies even more difficult.

## » TURKISH SOCIETY SHOULD ALSO BE THE TARGET GROUP OF SOCIAL COHESION POLICIES

Social cohesion policies and programs usually target the newcomers. In Türkiye, similarly, social cohesion efforts have generally targeted Syrians and other foreign groups. However, since social cohesion is not a uni-directional process, Turkish society should also be targeted in social cohesion policies and programs to strengthen social acceptance and to foster the support of local communities for social cohesion. It is a fact that Turkish society is concerned about the permanent existence of Syrians in Türkiye and they want Syrians to leave Türkiye. It will not be surprising that the society approaches the social cohesion policies, which will encourage permanence to some extent, with a distance. For this reason, efforts should be made to increase the resilience of Turkish society and to understand the aims of social cohesion efforts. In addition, although it is known that social cohesion studies are developed to enable those who come after them to lead a dignified life, to have the opportunity to develop themselves and to contribute to the society they come from, it cannot be denied that it is basically a security concern. In this context, it should be well explained to the Turkish society that a social cohesion policy for Syrians is actually aimed at preventing the Turkish society from encountering additional problems, reducing risks and harms, and preventing the formation of social tensions and conflicts.

## » EFFORTS SHOULD BE SPENT TO SOLVE GENERAL AND LOCAL COORDINATION PROBLEMS AND TO STRENGTHEN COOPERATION:

Coordination problems among and within the institutions should be taken seriously and policies solving these problems should be developed. Otherwise, the services are delayed, their efficiency is decreased, and the social anxieties would further be fueled.

## » STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY:

The first important legal regulation on immigrants and refugees in Türkiye is the LFIP, which was enacted in 2013. LFIP is also the law that regulates the establishment of DGMM. DGMM was transformed into the Presidency of Migration Management in 2021 and was strengthened in a bureaucratic sense. However, it is clear that Türkiye, which hosts the largest number of refugees in the world and has been exposed to an extraordinary influx of irregular migrants since 2014, needs more capacity and experts. The central and field personnel of the Ministries of Health, Education, and Family, especially the PMM personnel, who make an effort with great sacrifice, need to have better personal rights and receive in-service training.

## » IT APPEARS THAT INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF THE PROCESS OPENED A NEW FIELD FOR POPULIST POLITICIANS. REALISTIC APPROACHES ARE NEEDED, WHICH WILL CONSIDER SOCIETY'S CONCERNS, BUT WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE STATE OF LAW AND FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS:

The issue of politicization of the process, which has been increasing in recent years in Türkiye, brings a new responsibility. Each political movement or politician can make



some suggestions or practices by considering the interests of his country. However, let's not forget that both unrealistic emotional political processes and policies built on scaring the society through exaggerated false data make a peaceful life difficult. Strengthening the institutional and legal framework to combat all forms of discrimination; Increasing awareness activities to combat discrimination is a need not only for asylum seekers/migrants but also for Turkish society.

» **POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING SYRIANS MAY LEAD TO A NEW MOVEMENT TOWARD EUROPE.** The reluctance of Syrians in Türkiye to return to their country is extremely strong. The desire of Syrians, who have been seriously worried about their future in Türkiye, to go to third countries has been increasing radically. A very serious group of Syrians who wanted to enter the EU only legally in the previous years, express that they are ready to cross illegally if necessary. There is no doubt that these desires of Syrians worry other countries, especially EU countries, and more comprehensive measures are on the agenda especially for the security of Türkiye-Greece and Türkiye-Bulgaria borders. Despite this, the possibility of Syrians moving to the border en masse to cross from Türkiye's western borders to the EU in the near future is increasing. In this case, if there is no serious cooperation between EU countries and Türkiye, it is clear that there is a potential for conflict. The EU will need to both take sincere steps on responsibility sharing and produce policies to reduce the political pressure on those who govern Türkiye.

The purpose of this study is to draw a picture that is as realistic as possible using the views of both the Turkish society and Syrians. This picture makes it possible to analyze social cohesion and the social "acceptance" among the most critical actor in the process, the host society. Even though the purpose of this study is not to develop a conceptualization of social cohesion, it is generally defined here as **"a way of life and emotion enabling peaceful cohabitation in the framework of mutual acceptance and respect, on the basis of a common belonging where plurality is accepted, for communities that come together either spontaneously, voluntarily, or forcibly"**. In the framework of this definition, it is obvious that a lot of different actors, the political and social structure, various priorities, the capacity, and most importantly, social acceptance can/will play a role in the process of social cohesion. It is also obvious that in the case of refugees, there are many additional complexities concerning the social cohesion policies. Moreover, there are difficulties stemming from the dynamism, volatility, and uncertainty of the process.

What started in 2011 in Türkiye appears to be a very important process that moves towards permanent stay of refugees. The large number of Syrians in Türkiye is both causing anxieties among the Turkish society and enhancing the risk for Syrians to form inward-looking communities. In other words, there is a risk of ghettoization where Syrians could produce the social spaces that they need by themselves. Policies should be developed by taking these risks seriously, while also considering the possibility of voluntary return of Syrians. The structure of the social cohesion poli-



cies should be **dynamic, modular and prioritizing local integration** and they should be based on rights and centered around individuals so that they can contribute in minimizing current and future problems. Making social cohesion policies that consider new sociological realities and Syria's situation -- which is not expected to improve in the short- and medium-term - is not a preference but a must for maintaining peace in the society that should be shared with the society itself.

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He was between 2017-2022 at Turkish German University. He was also the founder and director of the Migration and Integration Research Center of TGU between November 2017, May 2021; and Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Center (HUGO) between 2009-2017. He carried out the research of his PhD dissertation from Ankara University -titled "The Relationship between Turkey and European Union after the Cold War: Geo-Strategic Perspective: 1990-2005"- as a Konrad Adenauer Foundation fellow at Bonn and Freiburg universities in Germany in 1994-1999. In 2000-2003, Erdoğan worked at the Press Section of the Turkish Embassy in Berlin, and later as an advisor at the Turkish Grand National Assembly's Commission on EU Integration (2004), also as an advisor to the president of Turkish Higher Education Council, and to the Rector of Hacettepe University (2012-2016). Prof. Erdoğan carried out studies as a visiting researcher with different fellowships at universities of Duisburg-Essen (2007), Berlin-Humboldt (2010), Oxford University (2012), Johns Hopkins University-AICGS (2014), and Humboldt University (2019).

His academic research interests include voluntary and forced migration, refugees, people of Turkish origin living abroad, EU, political cartoons, political behaviour, Islamophobia, and Germany and Turkish foreign policy. He conducts comprehensive public opinion research on a regular basis and publishes particularly the "Euro-Turks-Barometre" on Turkish diaspora in Europe, and the "Syrians Barometer" on Syrians in Turkey.

Prof. Erdoğan's recent books include the following:

- Syrians Barometer-2020: A Framework for Achieving Social Cohesion with Syrians in Turkey (2020)
- Demographical Development of the Syrian Refugee Population and its Potential Impacts on The Education, Employment and Municipality Services in Turkey in Near Future (& M. Çorabatır) (2019) (in Turkish&English)
- Göç Uyum ve Yerel Yönetimler (2019) (Migration, Integration and Local Governments) (in Turkish) (2018)
- Perspectives, Expectations and Suggestions of the Turkish Business Sector on Syrians in Turkey
- Syrians Barometer-2017: A Framework for Achieving Social Cohesion with Syrians in Turkey (2018)
- Syrian Refugees and Process Management of Municipalities: The Case of Istanbul (2017)
- Perspectives, Expectations and Suggestions of the Turkish Business Sector on Syrians in Turkey (2015)
- "Türkiye'nin Göç Tarihi: 14. Yüzyıldan 21. Yüzyıla Türkiye'ye Göçler" (with A. Kaya) (2015)
- "Syrians in Turkey: Social Acceptance and Integration" (2015)
- Turks in German Cartoons, 50 Jahre 50 Karikaturen/50 Years 50 Cartoons: Turken in Deutschland aus der Sicht Deutscher Karikaturisten (2012) • Turks Abroad: Fifty Years of Migration and Integration (2010)

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