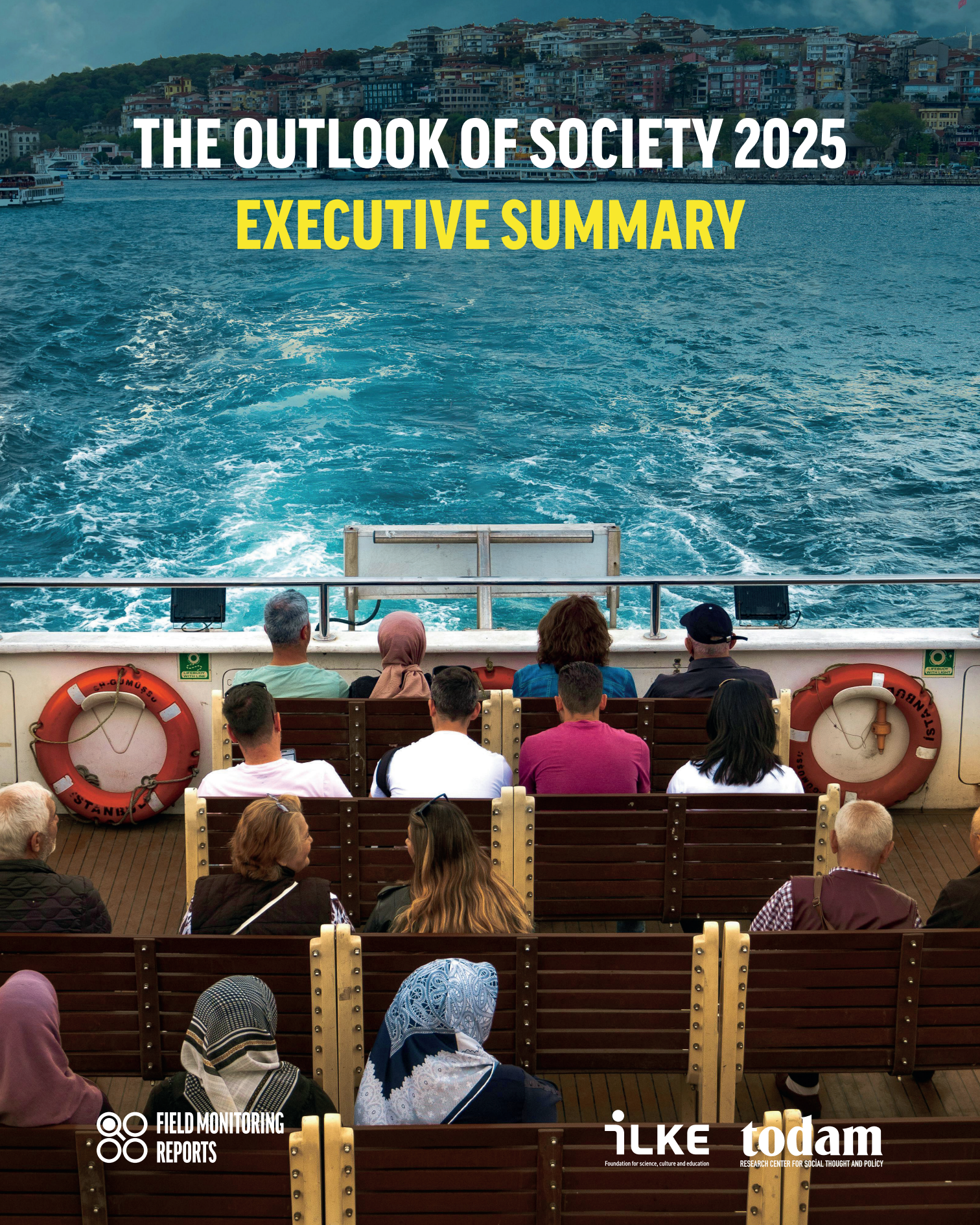


THE OUTLOOK OF SOCIETY 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This summary is a brief
version of the Outlook of
Society 2025.

For the full version of the
report, please scan
the QR code.



İLKE PUBLICATIONS: 281
FIELD MONITORING REPORTS: 28
THE OUTLOOK OF SOCIETY REPORTS: 5

Project Coordinator: Ahmet Sait Öner

Project Advisors: Elyesa Koytak, Ömer Torlak

Editor: Mehmet Fatih Aysan

Authors: Alim Arlı, Emine Özmete, Halim Baş, Hediyeullah Aydeniz, Mehmet Ali Eryurt, Murat Anıl Mercan,
Nihat Bulut, Orhan Koçak, Rana Atabay Kuşçu, Şeyma Ayyıldız, Yusuf Süha Kulu

Publication Coordinator: Mehtap Nur Öksüz

Publication Secretary: Enes Kuru

Data Collection and Visualization: Enes Kuru

Contributors: Neslinur Kayabaşı, Meryem Demir Cengiz, Betül Alkan

Design: iyicalismalar.tr

Cover Photo: Esmanur Ece/Pexels

© İLKE Foundation for Science, Culture and Education

E-ISBN: 978-625-8350-02-9

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.71174/air28>

► İLKE Vakfı (2026). *Toplumun görünümü 2025: Demografik ve toplumsal dönüşüm* (Ed., M. F. Aysan).

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.71174/air28>

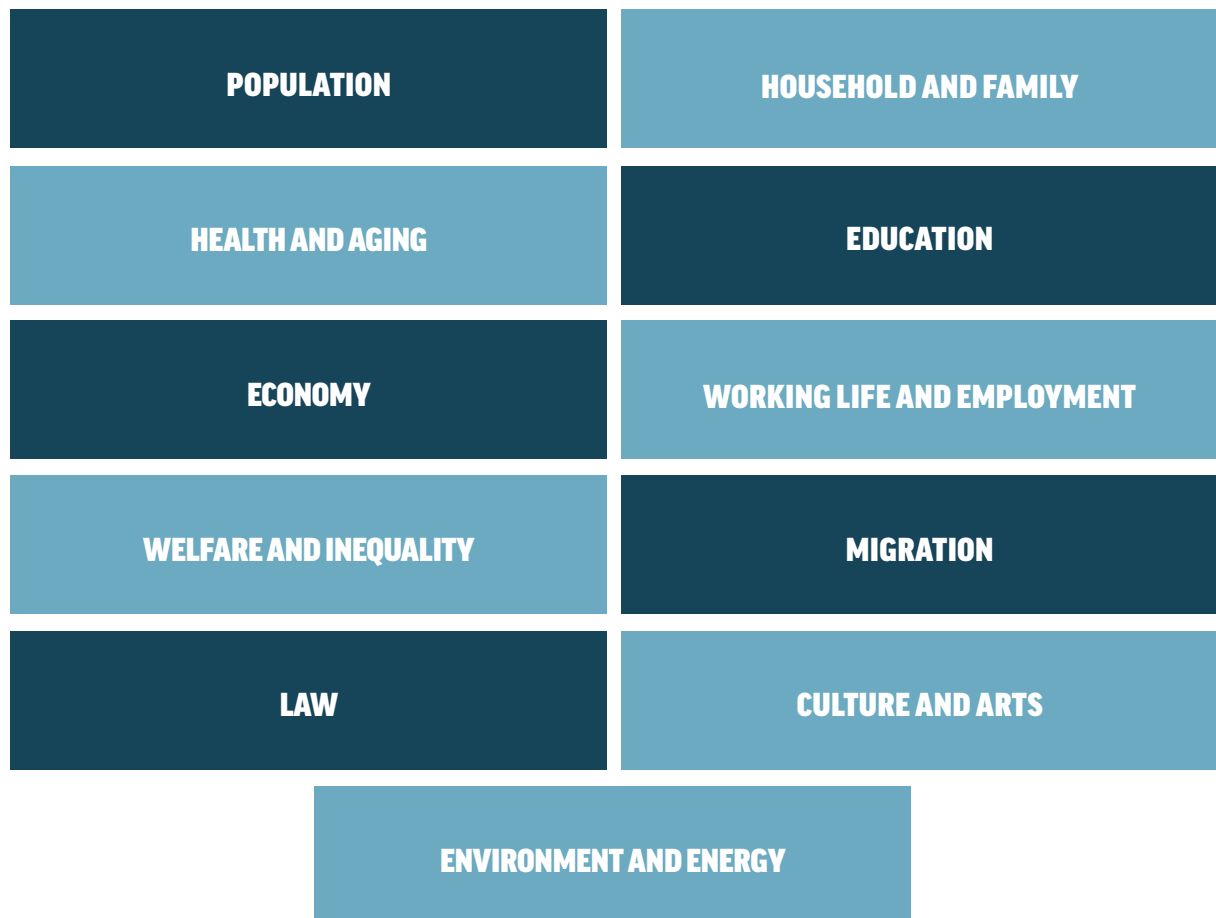


About the Report

The Outlook of Society 2025: Demographic and Social Transformation, prepared by the Research Center for Social Thought and Policy (TODAM), is the fifth publication in The Outlook of Society report series. Drawing primarily on Türkiye Statistical Institute (TÜİK) data alongside national and international open data sources, the report aims to monitor and assess annual developments in Türkiye's social structure within a multidimensional framework. It offers an interdisciplinary perspective grounded in data; each chapter presents key findings and develops concrete policy recommendations.

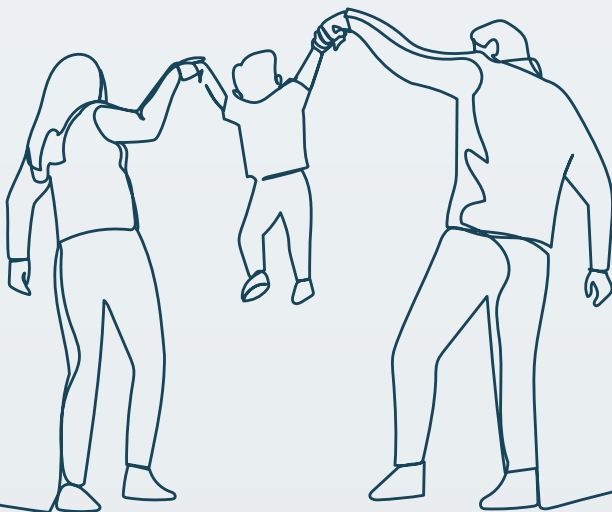
This year's report is structured around the theme of "demographic and social transformation." The lowest fertility rate in the history of the Republic, an aging population, shrinking households, and a rapidly changing social fabric form the common backdrop for 11 chapters spanning population, family, economy, working life, welfare, law, culture, and the environment.

SCOPE OF THE REPORT



THE OUTLOOK OF SOCIETY 2025

- The fertility rate declined to its lowest level in history at **1.42**.
- The median age of Türkiye's population rose to **34.9**.
- **43%** of births are to women over **30**, and 16% to women over **35**.
- The average age at first marriage rose to **28.5** for men and **26.0** for women.
- The fertility rate among female higher education graduates fell to **1.22** children.
- The average household size shrank from **3.84** to **3.08** over the past **15** years.
- One in five households (**20.5%**) is a single-person household.
- The divorced population increased from **1.56** million to **3.57** million over **15** years.
- **1.84** million elderly people live alone.
- The share of the population under age five is at its lowest level in history at **5.6%**.
- The elderly dependency ratio rose to **16.2%**.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Life expectancy is **78.1** years; healthy life expectancy is **57.6** years.
- The proportion of higher education graduates in the **25** to **29** age group rose from **11.8%** to **45.9%**.
- The economy grew by **3.6%**; per capita GDP is **\$18,040**.
- Inflation fell to **31%**; in housing, it is **49.5%**.
- **One in four** workers is in informal employment.
- Female employment is **32%**, and male employment is **66.4%**.
- The top **20%** receives **48.1%** of the total income.
- Türkiye has become a net emigration country for the skilled population aged **20** to **34**.
- The prison population increased by **91%** over **8** years, reaching **383,000**.
- **71.2%** of the Constitutional Court's violation rulings pertain to the right to a trial within a reasonable time.
- While **58.8%** of environmental expenditures go to waste management, the share allocated to climate remains below **2%**.



Key Dynamics

- While Türkiye's population reached 86.1 million by the end of 2025, the population growth rate hovered at 5‰, one of the lowest levels in the history of the Republic. Türkiye has been one of the countries with the fastest-declining fertility rates over the past decade.
- Türkiye is in the final phase of its demographic window of opportunity, which is expected to remain open until the mid-2030s; this window does not generate welfare on its own and is dependent on the quality of education and the condition of productive employment.
- The average household size declined from 3.84 in 2010 to 3.08 in 2025; while single-person households rose to 20.5%, the proportion of nuclear families consisting of spouses and children fell to 37.5%. The divorced population increased from 1.56 million in 2010 to 3.57 million in 2025.
- While life expectancy at birth reached 78.1 years, healthy life expectancy remains at 57.6 years. The gap of approximately 20 years indicates a heavy burden of chronic illness and caregiving needs.
- The proportion of higher education graduates in the 25 to 29 age group rose from 11.8% in 2008 to 45.9% in 2024. However, the net enrollment rate has leveled off at 46.3%, and open education is the primary source of the increase in the gross rate.
- The Türkiye economy grew by 3.6% in 2025, extending its uninterrupted growth to 22 quarters, and per capita GDP reached \$18,040. However, this economic growth failed to reduce the high income inequality in our country.
- While the unemployment rate fell to 8.4%, the labor underutilization rate is approaching 30%.
- While the top 20% income group receives 48.1% of the total income, the share of the bottom 20% group remains at 6.4%.
- Türkiye has become a net emigration country for Turkish citizens and the skilled population, particularly in the 20 to 34 age group. In internal migration, women have become the main actors, with mobility exceeding 1.4 million.
- The fact that economically motivated crimes rank first in the category of property crimes demonstrates that crime has a strong link to socioeconomic dynamics.
- The total number of convicts and detainees in prisons has increased by 91% over the past 8 years, reaching 383,000.
- Total cultural spending exceeded 408 billion TL, an increase of 83.3% compared to the previous year, but 49.1% of the sector is dependent on public funding.
- Greenhouse gas emissions rose from 228.4 million metric tons to 584.5 million metric tons between 1990 and 2024. Energy sources account for 71.7% of the emissions, and the carbon intensity per unit of income is approximately twice the EU average.

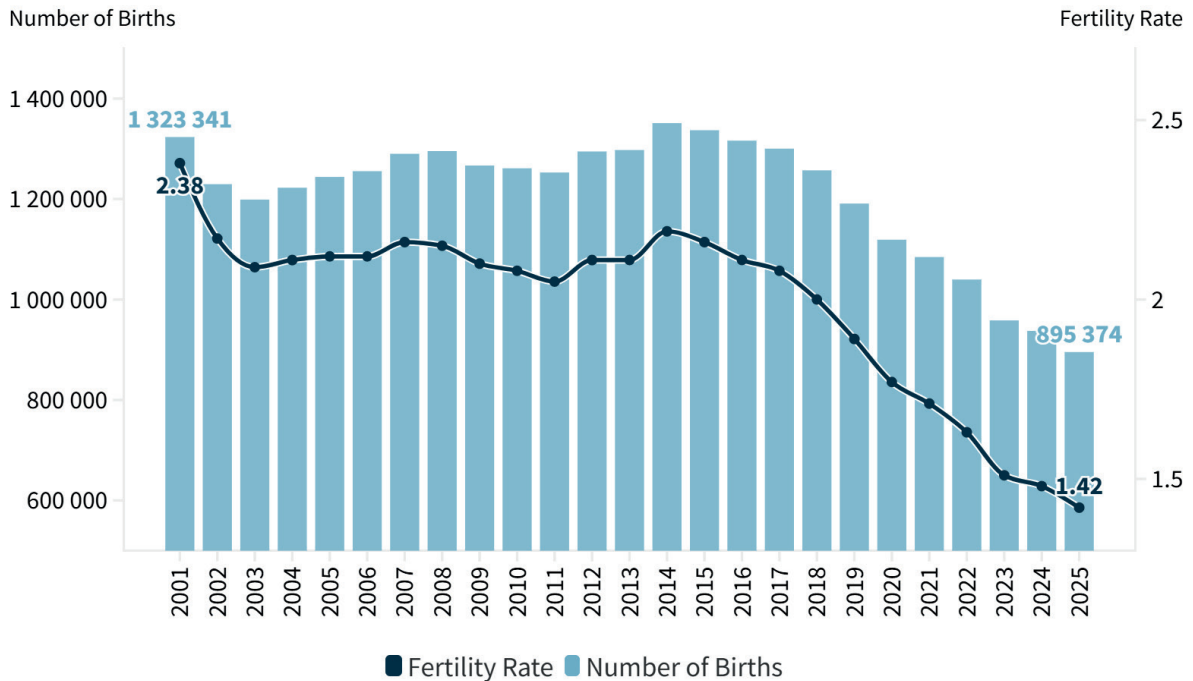
Recommendations

- In order to effectively capitalize on the demographic window of opportunity, the quality of education should be improved, and the young population's access to productive employment should be strengthened; housing, care, and social policy tools that enable families to have the number of children they desire should be developed.
- In line with the increase in single-person households and the elderly population living alone, care and social support services should be expanded; flexible working models and care services that support women's employment while also considering fertility should be made more widespread.
- Preventive healthcare services tailored to the needs of the aging population should be strengthened, institutional care capacity should be increased, and active aging programs that support community participation should be expanded.
- Policies that directly increase the housing supply should be pursued to alleviate the pressure on housing prices and rents; R&D, skilled workforce, and artificial intelligence investments that will bring the high-tech share of manufacturing exports, currently at 3.8%, closer to the OECD average (20%) should be prioritized.
- Inclusive employment policies should be implemented, the fight against informality should be strengthened, particularly in the agricultural sector, and it must be ensured that the minimum wage is not eroded by inflation.
- Social support programs should be expanded in regions where the risk of poverty and social exclusion is high; taking into account the decisive role of education in poverty risk, conditional education assistance and academic mentoring mechanisms should be expanded.
- To halt the outflow of the young and skilled population, policies that strengthen quality of life and sense of belonging along with productive employment opportunities should be developed, and migration management should be conducted with a data-driven and multidimensional governance model.
- To reduce the judicial burden, alternative dispute resolution methods and non-custodial sanctions should be expanded, and digitalization in the judiciary should be accelerated; social policies aimed at crime prevention should be made a part of judicial reform.
- To reduce the culture economy's dependence on public funding, a sponsorship law and tax incentive mechanisms should be put into effect; a 10 to 15-year culture and arts plan should be prepared through participatory processes, and geographic access inequality should be eliminated.
- The Emissions Trading System infrastructure should be integrated with low-carbon transition in industry, and the focus of environmental expenditures should be shifted from crisis management to prevention and climate adaptation.
- Taking into account the impacts of the demographic transformation ranging from education to healthcare, and from social security to housing, population policy should be designed within an economic, institutional, and cultural totality that offers a meaningful future perspective to the youth.



Population growth, which had been adding approximately 1 million people each year from the early 2000s through 2022, slowed significantly in 2023, falling to the lowest growth rate in the history of the Republic; it remained at historically low levels in 2024 and 2025 as well. With its total fertility rate falling to 1.42, Türkiye has been one of the countries in the world where this rate has declined the fastest over the past decade. Childbearing has been postponed to later ages, and the average age of mothers at childbirth has risen to 29.3. Forty-three percent of births are now to mothers aged 30 and older.

The shift in the age structure is striking. While the number of children under five has fallen to levels last seen in the 1960s, the proportion of the elderly population is rising rapidly, and the median age is increasing. In the past year, the population has declined in 33 provinces, while it is becoming concentrated in certain metropolitan areas and coastal provinces. Türkiye is currently within a demographic window of opportunity that is expected to remain open until the mid-2030s. Capitalizing on this opportunity depends on improving the quality of education and ensuring young people’s access to productive employment.



Fertility Rate and Total Number of Births (2001–2025)

Source: TÜİK, Birth Statistics, 2025



As fertility rates decline and life expectancy increases, the proportion of the elderly population is rising, placing structural pressure on health and social security systems. While life expectancy at birth has risen to 78.1 years, healthy life expectancy remains at only 57.6 years, indicating that individuals spend approximately 20 years of their lives living with chronic diseases and functional limitations.

As people age, the risks of obesity, diabetes, and chronic diseases increase; 36.8% of individuals aged 75 and older describe their overall health as “bad/very bad.” Physical and cognitive challenges become more pronounced in older age groups, and the demand for healthcare is undergoing a structural transformation. Meanwhile, the annual number of doctor visits per person has reached 12.2, doubling the OECD average (6.5) and ranking as the second-highest after South Korea. The continuous increase in this figure poses a serious risk to the sustainability of the healthcare system.

Number of Physician Visits Per Capita

Average Annual Number of Physician Visits per Capita



OECD



6,5



Türkiye



12,2

0

Source: Ministry of Health of Türkiye, Health Statistics Yearbook 2024

While improvements have been observed in indicators related to physician, nurse, and bed capacity within the healthcare infrastructure, the long-term care capacity required by the aging population remains at a certain level. Türkiye's Active Aging Index (29.7) remains below the EU average (36.8); in particular, the “participation in society” component stands out as the area with the lowest performance.

Active Ageing Index

EU Average
36,8



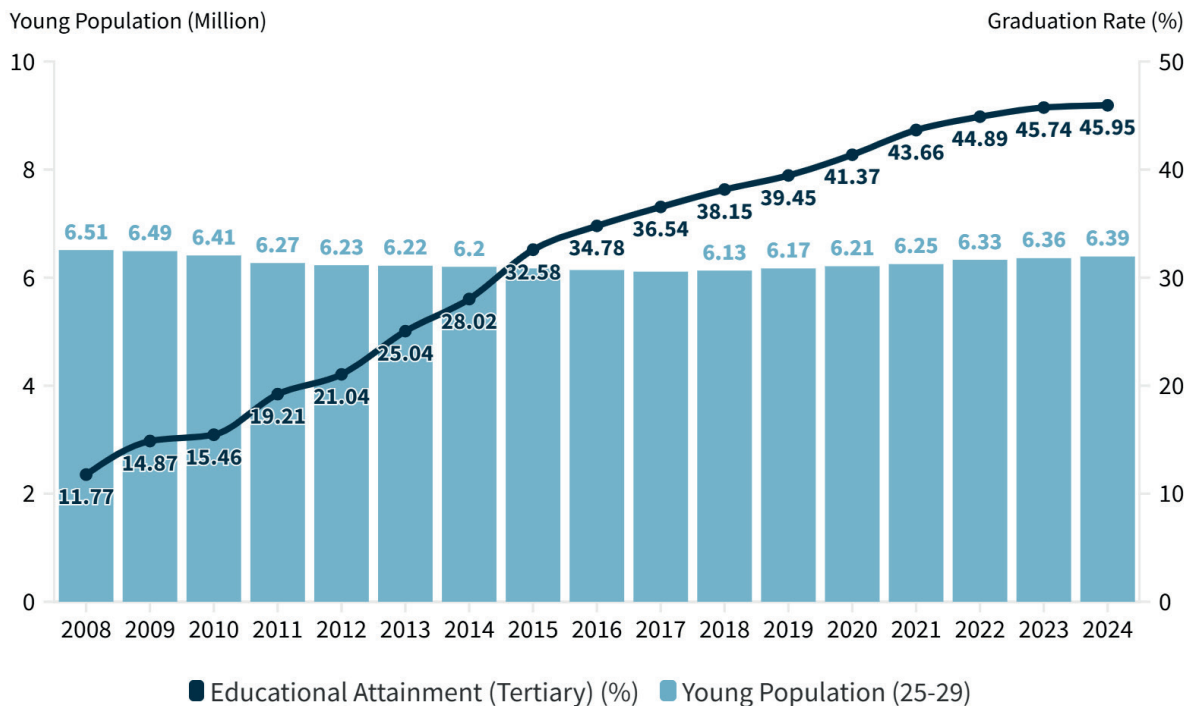
Türkiye:
29,7

Source: TÜİK, Active Ageing Index, 2024



Over the past quarter-century, Türkiye has undergone a major quantitative transformation in education. The proportion of higher education graduates in the 25–29 age group rose from 11.8% in 2008 to 45.9% in 2024, generating a strong cohort effect. The gross enrollment rate in higher education has reached 100.6%. The primary driver of this increase has been open education programs, while the net enrollment rate has leveled off at 46.3%.

A deep polarization persists among provinces. While the proportion of higher education graduates stands at 32.5% in Ankara, it remains at 12.8% in Ağrı. Although the gender equality index in education has risen from 0.77 to 0.86, women’s average years of schooling are approximately 1.4 years shorter than men’s. Intergenerational transmission mechanisms are among the strongest determinants of educational inequality. As a country that has largely overcome the challenge of access to education, Türkiye’s key challenge in the coming period will be to manage the transition from quantity to quality and to develop a comprehensive policy perspective that takes into account geographic inequalities, gender disparities, and the effects of marketization trends on equal opportunity.



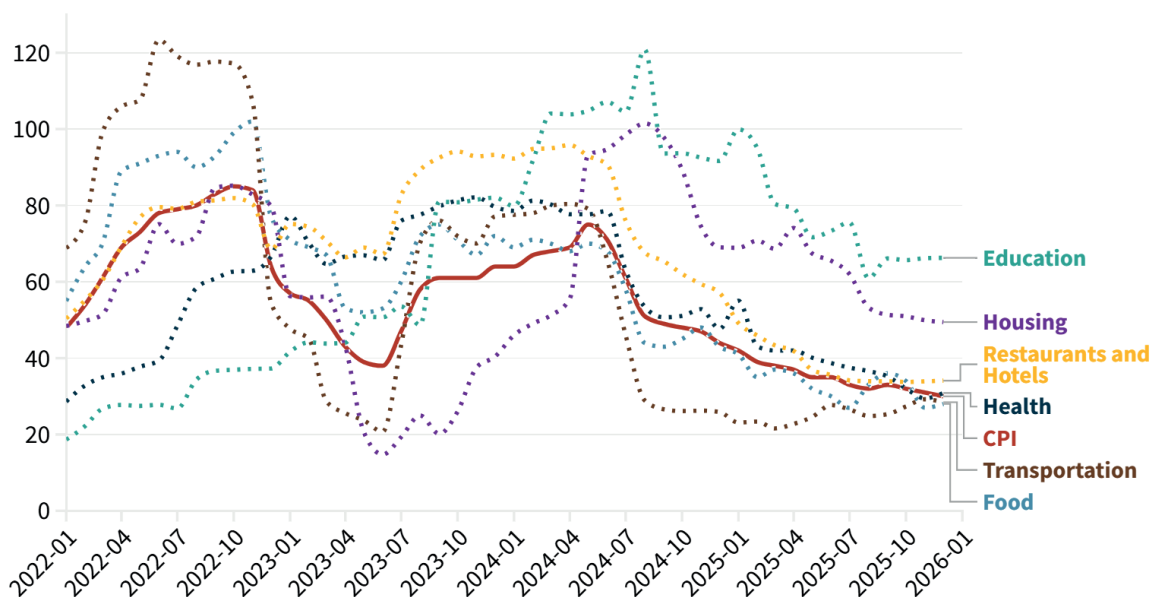
Educational Attainment (Tertiary) of the Population Aged 25–29 (% , 2008–2024)

Source: Calculated using TÜİK MEDAS National Education Statistics data.



The year 2025 was a period in which the effects of tight monetary policy were felt more clearly. The Türkiye economy grew by 3.6%, raising per capita GDP to \$18,040. However, this growth did not result in a reduction in income inequality. Annual inflation, which stood at 72% in 2022, had fallen to 31% by the end of 2025. A 49.5% increase in housing costs indicates that citizens perceived inflation to be higher than the official figures. Driven by reconstruction efforts in the earthquake-affected region, the construction sector grew by 10.8%, while agriculture contracted by 8.8% due to an agricultural frost disaster, and the industrial sector managed to grow by only 2.9% due to high production costs.

In foreign trade, exports reached \$273.4 billion, but as imports grew at a faster rate, the trade deficit increased by 11.9% to \$92 billion. Excluding energy products and non-monetary gold, the export-to-import coverage ratio rising to 90% confirms that energy imports are the primary source of the deficit. The share of high-tech products in manufacturing exports stands at 3.8%, well below the OECD average (20%). In contrast, the rise in the proportion of enterprises using artificial intelligence technologies, from 2.7% in 2021 to 7.5% in 2025, represents a positive start, signaling the role of human capital quality in sustaining demographic gains.

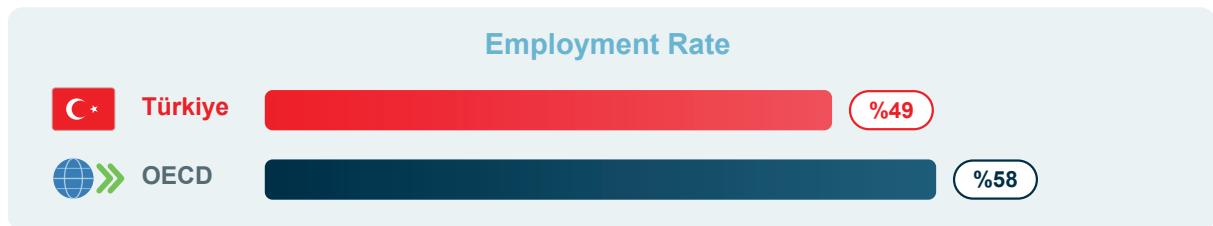


Annual Rates of Change in CPI Main Expenditure Groups (% , 2022–2025)

Source: Compiled from TÜİK Consumer Price Index data.

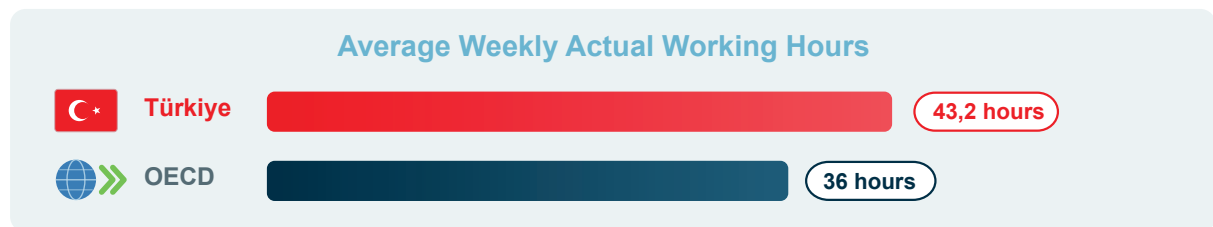


In 2025, the labor force participation rate for those aged 15 and older remained at its highest level of 53.5%, while the employment rate hovered around 49.1%. The unemployment rate fell to an annual average of 8.5%, dropping to 7.7% in December 2025 to reach one of the lowest levels in the past twenty years. Despite this positive headline figure, structural problems persist. Approximately 8 million people are informally employed; one in four workers is in informal employment, and informality is much more prevalent in the agricultural sector.



Source: TÜİK, Labour Force Statistics, 2025

Indicators related to the quality of the labor market also remain weak. The average weekly working hours in Türkiye stand at 43.2 hours, significantly above the OECD average (36 hours). Nevertheless, the employment rate remains below the OECD average. Significant wage disparities based on educational attainment and the income gap between employers and employees reflect the multidimensional nature of inequalities, while unemployment in the eastern regions is higher than in the west. Comprehensive policies that improve the quality of employment, protect vulnerable groups, and reduce regional imbalances are of critical importance for a sustainable and inclusive working life.



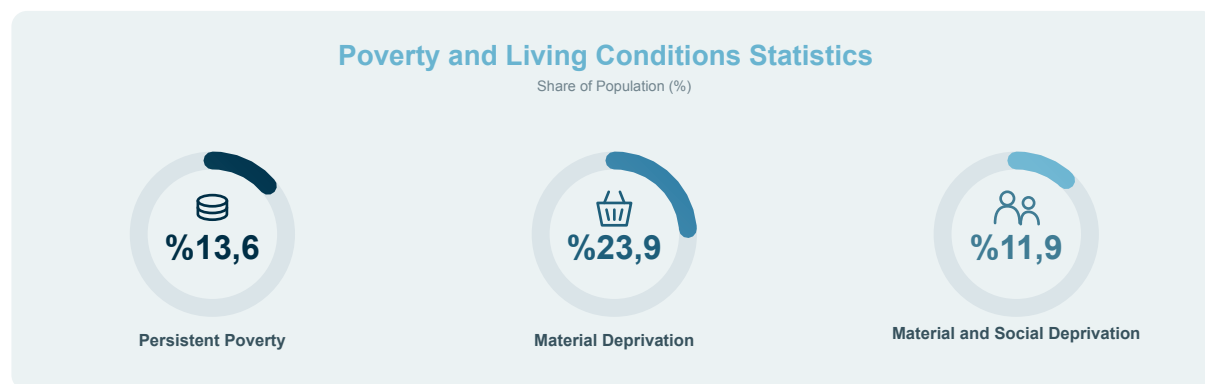
Source: Eurostat, Actual and usual hours of work



Social welfare in Türkiye has followed a fluctuating trajectory over the past twenty years, and inequalities have increasingly taken on a structural character over the past decade. While the top 20% income group accounts for approximately half (48.1%) of total income, the share of the bottom 20% remains at 6.4%. An analysis of income types reveals a striking trend: while the share of entrepreneurial income has declined, the weight of passive income, such as social transfers and income from securities, has increased.

Socioeconomic status is strongly transmitted across generations. Among those who spent their childhood in a household with a “very poor” financial situation, 24.4% remain in the lowest income group as adults. Education is the most fundamental factor in reducing the risk of poverty. While the poverty rate among higher education graduates hovers around 4–5%, it rises to 33–40% among those who did not complete any formal schooling.

Objective losses in well-being are directly reflected in subjective perceptions. As of 2025, the cost of living (31.3%) and poverty (16.5%) stand out as society’s most fundamental problems. The findings reveal that well-being is shaped not only by current income but also by the legacy of inequality of opportunity; they underscore the need for targeted, regionally differentiated, and education-focused interventions.

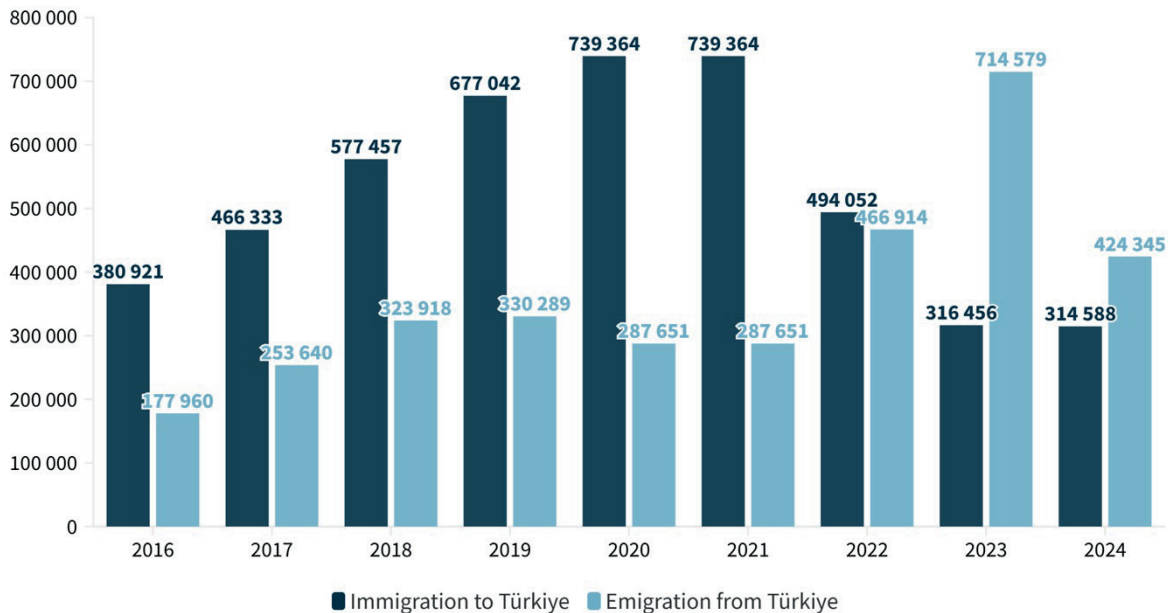


Source: TÜİK, Income Distribution Statistics, 2025



Türkiye’s migration landscape is undergoing a profound transformation. Moving away from its “destination country” profile of a decade ago, the country is evolving into a “source and bridge country” that is seeing its productive and skilled young population, particularly those aged 20 to 34, migrate to the West. It is becoming a net emigration country for Turkish citizens and skilled young people. This trend represents one of the most critical warning signs in terms of human capital loss.

In internal migration, the classic rural-to-urban flow is being replaced by mobility between metropolitan areas. The 2023 earthquakes demonstrated that natural disasters can drastically alter the demographic structure, and these post-disaster effects continue to influence internal migration dynamics. While Istanbul, Ankara, and Antalya maintain their status as global hubs, high costs of living are triggering “reverse migration,” and the systematic population loss in the provinces of Eastern and Central Anatolia continues. Sustainable management of migration cannot be achieved through border policies alone. It will be possible through employment opportunities that strengthen the younger generation’s sense of belonging, development investments that reduce regional inequalities, and comprehensive social policies that support post-disaster social recovery.



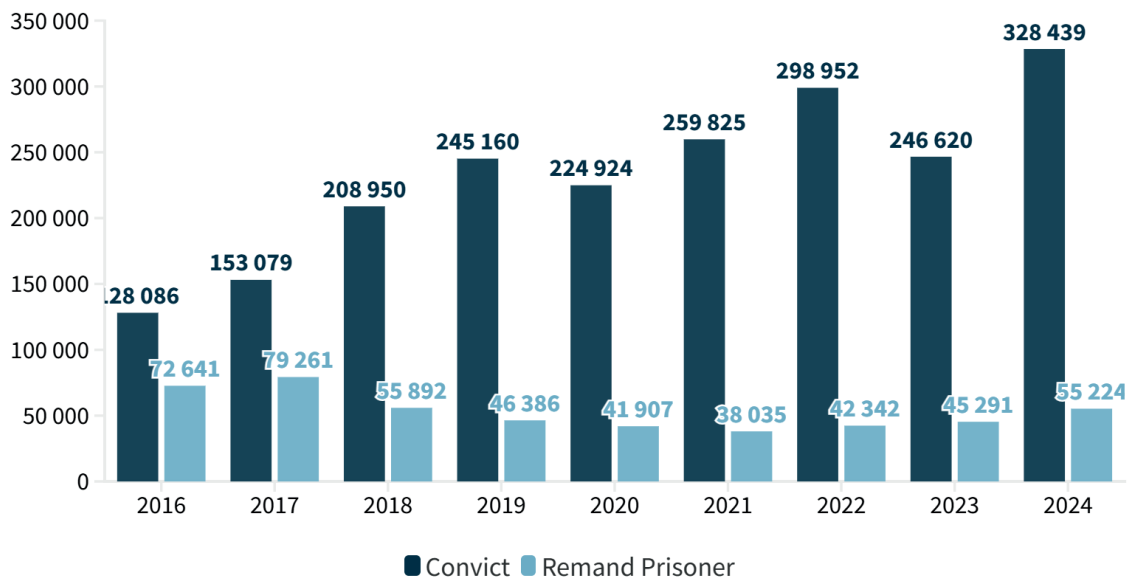
Immigration to and Emigration from Türkiye (2016–2024)

Source: TÜİK, International Migration Statistics, 2024



Türkiye’s legal system faces structural pressures both quantitatively and qualitatively. The number of case files in the criminal justice system has increased by 49.6% over the past decade. The fact that economically motivated crimes rank first in the category of property crimes demonstrates the strong link between crime and socioeconomic dynamics. The number of convicts and detainees in prisons has increased by 91% over the past eight years, reaching 383,000, while the number of cases in the civil courts of peace has exceeded 1.6 million due to the impact of rental disputes.

Of the Constitutional Court’s violation rulings, 71.2% pertain to the right to a trial within a reasonable time. In contrast, mediation and conciliation filtered approximately 2 million cases in 2024, resolving 25 to 30% of the total caseload in the judicial system without going to court. For a sustainable justice system, digitalization, the expansion of alternative dispute resolution methods, the strengthening of non-custodial sanctions, and the simultaneous execution of social policies aimed at crime prevention alongside judicial reform are of great importance.



Number of Remand Prisoners and Convicts in Penal Execution Institutions (2016–2024)

Source: Penal Execution Institutions Statistics, 2024



Türkiye is experiencing relative economic momentum in the field of culture and the arts. Total cultural spending exceeded 408 billion TL in 2024, an increase of 83.3% compared to the previous year; cultural employment reached 957,000, and the value added by cultural sectors surpassed 188 billion TL. However, the ratio of spending to GDP remains below international averages at 0.9%, and 49.1% of the sector is dependent on public funding.

Cultural consumption is undergoing a profound transformation. Approximately 73% of household cultural expenditures are directed toward activities consumed in the home environment; the share of information processing equipment has doubled over the past decade to reach 25%, while the share of newspapers and periodicals has declined from 3.5% to 0.6%. While digital-heavy subsectors such as digital games, creative arts, and cultural education are growing rapidly, traditional publishing is clearly in decline.

The fact that the number of enterprises in the cultural sectors increased by 28% while the number of employees grew by only 17% indicates a proliferation of small-scale, low-employment enterprises. On the access front, the number of visitors to museums and historical sites exceeded 61 million, and theater attendance surpassed 8 million. On the other hand, the concentration of activities in major cities, the 52.6% decline in movie theater attendance, and the existence of 91 districts without libraries indicate that access inequality persists.

The lack of a data, monitoring, and governance infrastructure aligned with the sector's development plan objectives remains a structural problem, highlighting the need for a long-term culture and arts plan, along with sponsorship and incentive mechanisms that will reduce dependence on public funding.

Main Objectives in the Field of Culture and Arts in the Eleventh and Twelfth Development Plans

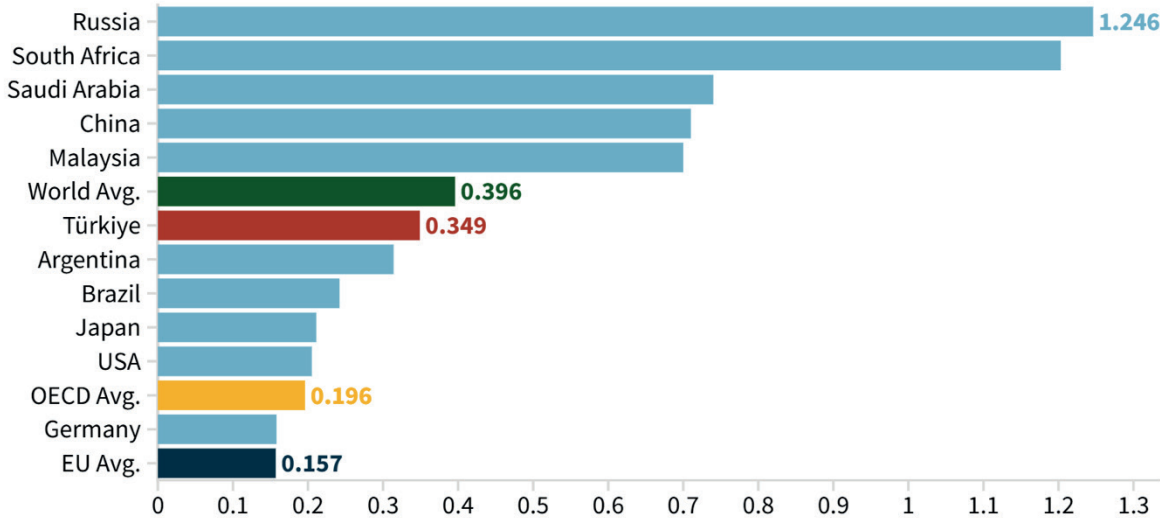
Eleventh Development Plan (2019–2023)	Twelfth Development Plan (2024–2028)
<p>Preserving and developing cultural richness and diversity to pass it on to future generations, expanding culture and arts activities, strengthening social cohesion and solidarity around national culture and shared values, and increasing the multidimensional impact of culture on development.</p>	<p>Preserving and developing the richness and diversity of our cultural and artistic heritage to pass it on to future generations, strengthening social cohesion and solidarity around national culture and the shared values of our ancient civilization, and expanding culture and art activities across society to increase their multidimensional impact on development.</p>

Source: Presidency of Strategy and Budget of the Republic of Türkiye



Türkiye's environmental indicators reveal the extent of the pressure that demographic and social transformation exerts on the environment. Greenhouse gas emissions rose from 228.4 million metric tons to 584.5 million metric tons between 1990 and 2024; the energy sector was the primary source of these emissions, accounting for 71.7%. Türkiye's carbon intensity per unit of income is approximately twice the EU average.

Electricity demand rose from 97.2 TWh to 360.9 TWh between 2000 and 2025. Regarding water, 54.6% of the water abstracted in 2024 was seawater, and 54.4% of the water supplied was used by thermal power plants. Wastewater treatment coverage remains at 76.9%, with significant capacity disparities among provinces. Environmental protection expenditures have risen to 441 billion TL; however, while 58.8% of these expenditures went toward waste management, the share allocated to climate and air quality remained below 2%. The findings indicate that environmental policy must be designed as a public administration domain that ensures the sustainability of social welfare; they also highlight the need to simultaneously prioritize absolute emissions reductions through energy transition, climate resilience in water and wastewater infrastructure, and circularity in waste management.



Carbon Intensity of GDP (2015 Constant \$, kg CO₂ equivalent per GDP)

Source: World Bank, Carbon intensity of GDP

Conclusion

When the analyses across these eleven areas are evaluated together, it becomes evident that Türkiye is in the midst of a period of sociological transition. The fact that the country has reached the lowest population growth rate in the history of the Republic and that the total fertility rate has fallen significantly below the replacement level reveals that not only demographic indicators but also needs in the areas of education, employment, welfare, health, the environment, and culture are rapidly being reshaped.

The most critical message emerging from the report as a whole is that Türkiye's social way of life, along with its population structure, is undergoing a profound transformation, and this transformation must be addressed not as a set of independent problems but as a system of interconnected dynamics. In a rapidly aging society composed of smaller and more vulnerable households, the burden of care, housing demand, social security needs, and consumption patterns are changing, while the outflow of skilled young people is increasing the value of the demographic window of opportunity.

While Türkiye is experiencing the final phase of its demographic window of opportunity, it must simultaneously confront an entirely new policy agenda necessitated by an aging population. Constructing this agenda, centered on environmental sustainability, technological development, inclusive employment, and intergenerational justice, through a data-driven, holistic, and coordinated approach is a prerequisite for transforming demographic transition into a sustainable model of social welfare.

Türkiye is experiencing the fastest demographic transformation in the history of the Republic. As the fertility rate declines, the proportion of the elderly population is rising; households are shrinking, family structures are diversifying, and the population is concentrating in certain metropolitan areas. As the demographic window of opportunity closes rapidly, the time available to translate this period into a societal gain is narrowing.

The fifth in The Outlook of Society report series, this study addresses Türkiye's critical threshold from a data-driven perspective. In this edition of the annually published report series, demographic and social transformation takes center stage. Türkiye's transformation in recent years is analyzed through key indicators across 11 domains spanning population, family, health and aging, education, economy, working life, welfare and inequality, migration, law, and culture and the arts. Going beyond a mere assessment of the current situation, the report presents concrete policy recommendations in each domain.

The Outlook of Society 2025 is the product of an effort to grasp, within a holistic framework, social dynamics that appear independent of one another but are profoundly interconnected. In doing so, it aims to serve not only as a resource for academic research, but also as a guiding reference for decision-makers and practitioners in building a more just and prosperous society.



📍 Aziz Mahmut Hüdayi Mh. Türbe Kapısı Sk. No:13 Üsküdar / İst.

🌐 ilke.org.tr 📞 +90 216 532 63 70 📧 bilgi@ilke.org.tr 🌐 🌐 ilkevakfi