

**SECOND REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE MADRID
INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON AGEING**

OCTOBER 2012

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to recent studies conducted in Turkey, it can be said that Turkey will go through a rapid aging process due to the decline in total fertility rate. In other words, the decrease in the number of children and young population will increase the share of the elderly population within the total population sooner than expected. Although Turkey is still has a young population, there are two risk factors that need to be noted. First, because of the fast transformation in family structure from large family to nuclear family and the increasing role of women in economy, total fertility rate decreases sharply; therefore, the demographic transition towards being an aged society will be faster than the developed countries. Second, parallel to the economic development and the advances in medicine, the life expectancy in Turkey increases gradually. These risk factors provide a very limited time period to adjust policies according to the new societal structure.

As of 2011, Turkey has nearly 5.5 million people aged over 65, and this number continues to increase due to the reasons mentioned above. For that reason, Turkey has started to take policy measures initiated by “The Current Situation of Elderly People and the National Plan of Action on Ageing” based on Madrid International Plan of Action (MIPAA) and Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS). “National Committee on Aging” prepared the Action Plan with the cooperation of public and private institutions, NGOs, scholars and international organizations. High Council of Planning approved the draft on 01.05.2007.

The Implementation Program for the Action Plan is currently being prepared by the recently established Ministry of Family and Social Policy. It is planned to be implemented starting from 2013, and the primary focal points are social integration of the elderly, improvement of long-term care services, and solving healthcare problems of the elderly.

Furthermore, the establishment of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy General Directorate of Services for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities brought a new angle to the services for elderly. Turkey plan not only to improve the quality of the existing services but also to introduce new service and care models based on societal realities. Currently, Turkey conducts its long-term care services with 106 retirement houses and serving 11.540 people as of 2011. However, new service models like Elderly Solidarity Centers and Elderly Houses have been recently introduced.

In the light of aforementioned information, this country report will evaluate the policy efforts in Turkey for the period of 2007-2012. Furthermore, 10 RIS commitments will be analyzed in relevance to the developments in the social policy in Turkey.

GENERAL INFORMATION

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“The Situation of Elderly People in Turkey and the National Plan of Action on Ageing”:
adopted by High Planning Council at 01/05/2007.

1. National Ageing Situation

Turkey is at a critical point in terms of demographic transformation. The fertility rate, which is estimated as 2.80 for the time period between 2010- 2015, will drop to 1.08 for 2045-2050 according to the UN Population Prospects. Moreover, Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) estimates that the life expectancy at birth in 2025 will be 73.1 for males and 78.9 for females which is 72 for males and 77.1 for females as of 2011. When these two statistical data are taken into consideration, it can be said that the demographic transformation of Turkey will not be different from many developed countries but occur at higher pace.

Another demographic reality in Turkey is that, the dependency rate of the elderly population on the working population will increase from 9% (2010) to 13% (2025) in a short period of time. Among the many reasons of this increase, aforementioned factors, namely the decreasing fertility rate and increasing life expectancy at birth, are quite influential.

Although it can be observed that the family structure in Turkey is in transition from extended family to nuclear family; living with children still can be observed in some families. Therefore, policies regarding the elderly are adopted considering this reality.

Table 1. Selected Demographic Indicators

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total Population	70.586.256	71.517.100	72.561.312	73.722.988	74.724.269
65+ Population	5.000.175	4.893.423	5.083.414	5.327.736	5.490.715
Median Age	28,27	28,47	28,77	29,22	29,70
Elderly	10,65	10,23	10,46	10,76	10,91
Dependency Ratio					

Source: Turkey's Statistical Yearbook, 2011.

In Turkey, services for the elderly are conducted based on the Law Nr. 2828, Law on Social Services and three regulations based on this law. The basic reference documents to determine Turkey's policies are Development Plans. Each Five-Year Development plan starting with the first one addressed the issue of ageing in terms of long-term care or a disadvantaged section within the society. However, the Tenth Five-Year Development Plan, which will be implemented in the period between 2013 and 2017, brought a new adjustment by establishing a Specialized Commission on Ageing. This is the reflection of the changing mindset regarding ageing and aged people. The Commission is in the process of preparing the draft of their report to be integrated to the Tenth Five-Year Development Plan.

There is also a transformation from large families to nuclear families in Turkey. According to the Family Structure Survey conducted in 2006, the ratio of nuclear families in Turkey was 80,7% and continues to rise since then. For that reason, the Ministry of Family and Social Policy is in search of adopting a model that will be applicable to the current societal realities, and transform the elderly services from institutional care to home care.

It can be observed that, ageing has become a relevant policy area in Turkey and the authorities are committed to prevent the adverse consequences of the ageing population.

2. Methodology

The preparation of the Second Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing is mostly based on statistical data retrieved from the existing research, and the studies conducted by the Ministry of Development and the Ministry of Family and Social Policy.

In terms of statistical data, the primary source is Turkey's Statistical Yearbook of 2011, issued by Turkish Statistical Institution every year. The yearbook dedicated whole sections to the data related to population, demography, and social security; and included the numbers regarding the studies of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy General Directorate of Services for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities. Additional data was retrieved from the ministry archives and the research conducted by the Ministry, such as the survey named "Expectations Regarding Old Age in Turkey" prepared by the General Directorate of Family and Community Services in 2011.

3. National Capacities for Follow-up to MIPAA/RIS

In recent years, many policy developments occurred in Turkey regarding ageing. The first important step was to adopt a National Plan of Action on Ageing, as a continuation of the endeavors to implement Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing of 2002. The responsible government body, the State Planning Organization has prepared the National Plan of Action on Ageing in cooperation with several public institutions, NGOs, and scholars in 2007. The plan was confirmed by the High Planning Council in the same year but the implementation program was not prepared.

With the handover of the plan of action to the newly-established Ministry of Family and Social Policy in 2012, the Ministry has started to the preparation of an implementation program based on the plan of action. The program is currently in the process of evaluation by the High Planning Council. It is planned to be implemented starting from 2013.

Turkey is becoming much more aware of the possible outcomes of ageing. The Social Security Reform of 2008 is a really important development in this regard. The reform provided equity in retirement conditions for all working people and improved the retirement pension and social benefits system. Moreover, it is planned to establish a National Institute for Ageing Studies in order to improve scholarly work which would reply to the needs of the elderly population more effectively.

The Ministry of Family and Social Policy General Directorate of Services for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities has been working on critical issues in Services for Elderly like long-term care insurance, retirement pensions, institutional and home care; and the endeavors to improve the quality of the services continue. Table 2 shows the studies regarding services for the elderly between the years 2006-2011. As of August 2012, there are 194 homes for the elderly persons, public or private, serving 19628 elderly people.

Table 2. Studies of General Directorate of Services for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities, 2007-2011

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Organization					
Homes for the elderly persons	70	79	81	97	106
Elderly Solidarity Center	5	5	5	5	5
Rehabilitation Center	64	72	72	79	91
Private Care Centers	-	20	44	77	104
Number of people served					
Elderly	6.477	6.773	8.161	8.929	11.540
In-patient	5.499	5.859	7.161	7.979	10.590
Out-patient	978	914	1.000	950	950

Source: Turkey's Statistical Yearbook, Turkish Statistical Institution, 2011

4. Review and Appraisal by Subject Area

RIS Commitment 1: Mainstreaming ageing

Turkey's focal point in mainstreaming ageing was social security in the form of social insurance and social assistance. Since 2002, many policy initiatives aimed at strengthening social assistance system for elderly population. However, in recent years, ageing started to draw attention as a policy area. The most important step towards mainstreaming ageing is the establishment of the Department of Services for Elderly within the structure of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy, in 2011. With the establishment of this department, not only the economic, but also the social consequences of ageing have become the center of attention, and the Ministry of Family and Social Policy became the sole government body that is responsible for both carrying out the services and coordinating public and private institutions who engage services for elderly.

After it was established, the Department of Services for Elderly began the studies on the Implementation Program for the National Plan of Action on Ageing, which was handed over by the State Planning Organization in 2012, in cooperation with public and private organizations, NGOs, and scholars. The Implementation Program is currently being drafted and it is planned to be initiated in 2013. The formation of a Specialized Commission on Ageing, one of the commissions that contribute to the draft of the Tenth Five-year Development Plan (2013-2018), is another important development showing that Turkey takes the necessary steps towards mainstreaming ageing.

RIS Commitment 2: Integration and participation of older persons

In Turkey, the older persons in a family are well-respected. In many families, children consult the elderly on important issues and behave accordingly. However, despite the endeavors to change the situation, the participation of older persons in Turkey is not at desired levels. For example, the only place that can count as political participation of the older persons is within the villages as village headman or village authorities. For that reason, it is important to raise awareness about increasing social integration of the elderly, and it is in the agenda of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy.

In Turkey, there is no specific union or association that addresses elderly people in their names or establishment aims. However, there are organizations that aim to increase social integration of the elderly even though they do not name themselves as such. Furthermore, retired employees have the right to represent themselves in the administrative structures of the

social security institutions. For example, the Turkish Association of Retired Workers is represented with one member in the Board of Directors of the Social Insurance Institution.

The National Plan of Action on Ageing aims to change this situation by enabling the elderly population to participate further than current situation. The establishment of City Councils, which will encourage the elderly to participate in, can be considered as an indicator of Turkey's endeavors to improve social integration of the elderly. There are also new service models that aim to improve social integration opportunities for the elderly. First one is the formation of Elderly Solidarity Centers all around the country. These centers are designed to be like a day-care center for the elderly. In these centers, there are several social activity opportunities like music groups, art classes, or picnics that bring the elderly together. Other than a symbolic membership fee, benefiting from the facilities is free. However, these centers appeal older people who have higher earnings and in search for social integration. Therefore, it can be a highly successful model for big cities, whereas the situation in smaller cities should be researched before implication. The second system is an innovation in Turkey's elderly services. The new service model is called Elderly Houses and started to be implemented very recently. These houses are ordinary apartment flats around the city that can accommodate up to four elderly persons. This model aims to provide the elderly with a real social environment without depriving them from the opportunity of developing neighbor relations, or the feeling secure that may not be the case in crowded care houses. Currently, there are few Elderly Houses in Turkey but models like Elderly Solidarity Centers and Elderly Houses are planned to be spread in the future.

RIS Commitment 3: Promotion of equitable and sustainable economic growth in response to population ageing

Turkey is in the process of rapid ageing and this cause many problems beyond demographic consequences. Under these circumstances, the social security system is one of the first areas that will be affected negatively by the process of ageing in a society. Also, it is obvious that, a possible worsening in the social security system would result in a heavy burden on the whole economy like rising inflation, and instability.

However, Turkey still has a young population, so the social security system should have worked fine and created a surplus, rather than being a burden on the economy. Therefore, it can be said that the system should be revised in a way that can endure itself and also adopt the demographic changes in the future.

For that reason, economic stability program has been implemented in Turkey in recent years. It is designed to control the inflation and lower the pressure created by the social security deficiency. The aim of the program was creating a budget surplus by controlling public deficit, which is to be used for decreasing debt stock and regression and it also increases confidence in economic policies. The greater goal is to fight against unemployment and poverty. Results of the program are very promising. In recent years, Turkey's growth rate is increased whereas inflation and unemployment decreased. Moreover, Turkey has dealt with the effects global economic crisis of 2008 easier than most countries, which is also a positive indicator regarding Turkey's economy.

As a part of the whole program, a social security reform was needed in Turkey, which would have double benefits. First, it will create a functional system that does not get exhausted by the increasing number of people who benefits from it. Because most of the receivers are older people, it would fight poverty among the elderly, which is one of the primary causes that

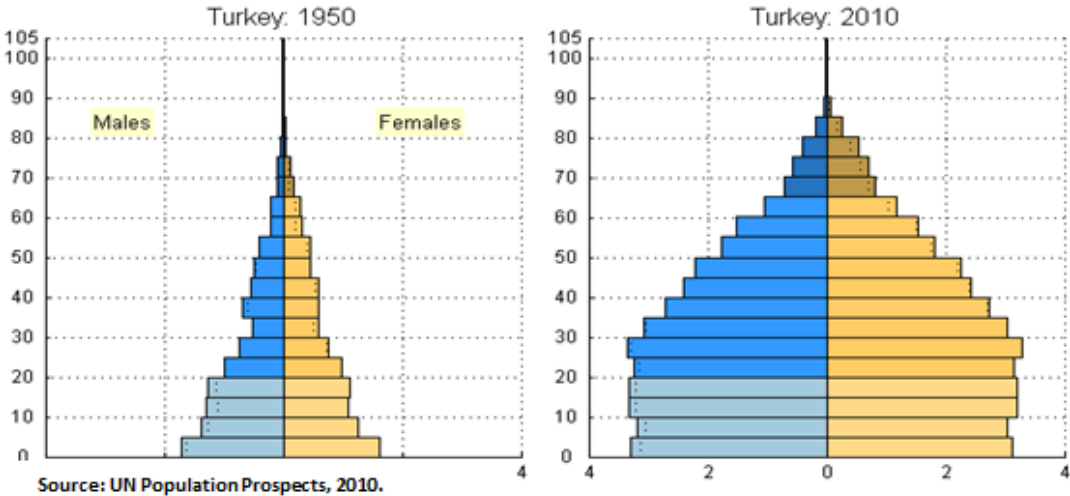
prevent older persons to get integrated in social life. Secondly, it would contribute the economy as a whole.

RIS Commitment 4: Adjustment of social protection systems in response to demographic changes and their social and economic consequences

As it was stated above, the social security system in Turkey is under the risk of inefficiency and it is needed to take precautions before it gets hard to deal with. For that reason, firstly, the studies on ageing should be deepened. As it was stated in the Situation of the Elderly and National Plan of Action on Ageing it is planned to establish a National Institute on Ageing. Turkey is also working on strengthening financial sustainability of social security system since 2001. Among the other reasons of such efforts, changing structure of the population, deficiency of the current system to prevent poverty, and institutional problems can be regarded as the most effective ones.

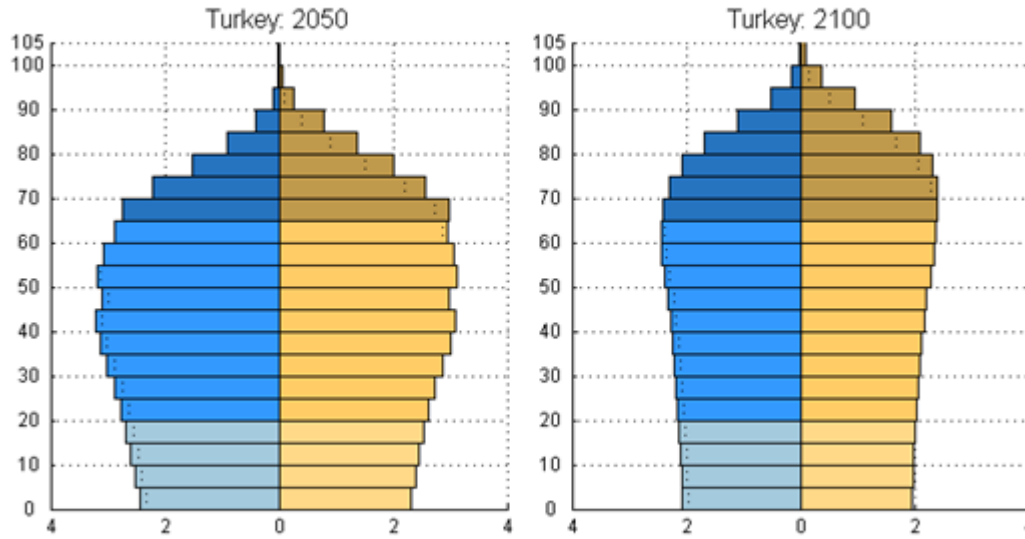
Ever since the beginning 1990s, social security reform is a hot issue in Turkey’s economic agenda. Three major economic crises in 1994, 2001, and 2008 respectively, the unemployment, and inflation, increased pressure on budget balances. Although the social security reform of 1999 helped to ease the burden, which can be fatal otherwise, by adjusting retirement parameters. Since then, efforts related to improve the system in Turkey are getting more effective.

Figure 1. Population Pyramids of Turkey (1950 and 2010)



The reasons behind the need for a social security reform are various. But one of the most important ones is the sudden demographic transformation. In order not to fall behind the pace of ageing, demographic and economic studies should regard ageing as a real determinant in their policy-making processes, because the projections shows that Turkey’s population pyramid will be pillar-shaped in a near future (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Population Pyramids of Turkey (2050 and 2100)



Source: UN Population Prospects, 2010.

As widely known, social security systems primarily designed to fight poverty in a country. Poverty is a factor that can be turned into a vicious cycle if countries fail to take the necessary precautions. However, as Figure 3 indicates, Turkey’s social security system is off balance, and the deficit is increasing year by year.

Table 3. Revenues and expenditures of Social Security Institution, 2006- 2010

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Revenues	53 830 886	56 874 830	67 257 484	78 072 788	95 273 283
Expenditures	71 867 475	81 915 401	93 159 462	106 775 443	121 997 301
Deficit	-18 036 589	-25 040 571	-25 901 978	-28 702 655	-26 724 118

Source: Turkey’s Statistical Yearbook 2011

These factors causing the deficiency of the social security system also affecting the key economic indicators, however, the studies to eliminate the inefficiency of the system has been implemented since the revision of Social Security Law in 2008. The first and the most important regulation brought by the reform is that it created a combined structure. Prior to the reform, there were three autonomous institutions, namely Social Security Organization (SSK), Social Security Organization for Artisans and Self Employed (BAĞ-KUR), and Retirement Fund for civil officials. Currently, these three institutions are amalgamated. However, this was the beginning of a long-term reform plan which includes other components as well.

The first component of the social security reform was to create a General Health Insurance for financing better healthcare for all the population. Currently, General Health Insurance is obligatory for all the people who pass the preset income criteria, whereas people who fail to do so will acquire healthcare for free. In order to increase efficiency, some restrictions were brought to make sure that people only get the necessary treatment within the necessary time period. For example, there is a nationwide database system in pharmacies which prevents to buy additional medicine before the previous one was used or two interchangeable medicines at the same time. Another factor that increase efficiency and decrease the probability of

mistreatment is that, the establishment of the family physician system. These physicians keep all the records for each and every patient which improves the quality of healthcare.

The second component is collecting all the social benefits under one roof and providing social benefits to the people based on objective benefit criteria. The aim of this component is to bring equity to the social benefit system. In accordance with Law No.2022, elderly people who are of 65 years of age or over, or disabled people even if they are less than 65 years old who is in a dependent capacity with no relatives and no financial income have become entitled pension throughout their lives. In line with the Law, those who are entitled to pension are also entitled for free of charge medical treatment at public hospitals. Moreover, home care health services are conducted by the Ministry of Health for the elderly in need of home care. Furthermore, people caring for their elderly receive a monthly wage equal to the minimum wage as a social benefit. As of September 2012, the number of people who receive home care benefit is 393.638. Following the year 2013, it is planned to integrate the beneficiaries who are unable to work due to their home care responsibilities into the social security system through government sponsored insurance premiums. In the past, there were more than one institution responsible for social benefits in Turkey and there was not a database which could provide interaction between these institutions. This was causing people to receive multiple benefits at the same time which was a real burden on the system creating inefficiency. However, with the Decree Law No.633, the whole process of allocating social benefits was transferred to the Ministry of Family and Social Policy General Directorate of Social Benefits. Currently, in every city and town, the officials can see an applicant's social benefit history as a part of evaluation upon the request of the applicant. The system has some features that need to be improved, yet it lessened the burden on the economy caused by multiple benefits.

The third component is creating a single retirement insurance regime and long-term insurance branches apart from health. This is partially achieved with the reform in 2008 which amalgamated the three social security institutions. However, the second part, establishing different insurance branches, primarily long-term care insurance which is to be used in care needs after retirement, is in the process of preparation, and planned to be implemented in the future. New regulations on parametric issues such as the retirement age, replacement rate, and adjustment of salaries has been introduced in 2008. The purposes of these regulations were to balance benefits and burdens, protecting workforce, decreasing informal employment that is caused by the deficiency of the retirement regime. The reform created equal retirement circumstances for civil servants, those working on salaries under labor contracts, those working in agricultural activities on wages, those working for their own accounts and those working in agriculture for their own accounts.

The last component of the reform was institutional structuring, and it was achieved with the 2008 reform. Currently, there is one single entity, namely The Social Security Institution responsible for social security.

RIS Commitment 5: Enabling labor markets to respond to the economic and social consequences of population ageing

Demographic changes also affect the labor market. For that reason, the market should be adaptive to the circumstances of the country in order not to fail when faced with transformations. However, despite serious efforts, a useful flexibility model that both fits into the international standards, and suitable for national realities is yet to be discovered in Turkey. Part of the flexibility problem could be fixed by the social security reform mentioned earlier but there are other regulations that should be regarded as applicable such as active labor

market policies, performance-based wage systems, regulations in the process of job applications. The Implementation Program of the National Plan of Action on Ageing aims to improve employment opportunities for the elderly who desires to work, especially in rural areas and agricultural sector.

RIS Commitment 6: Promotion of life-long learning and adaptation of the educational system in order to meet the changing economic, social and demographic conditions

As the population pyramids indicate, the share of the working population will increase within the total population until they become a part of the older population by 2050. In order not to be burdened by the later deficiency in the workforce, the next couple of decades are highly crucial for Turkey because the share of qualified human resources could be increased through education and training. Turkey's labor market has relatively low labor force participation rate compared to the OECD and European countries. The share of the labor force employed in agriculture is decreasing, but still remains higher than in EU countries. The Non-formal Educational Institutions Decree adopted in 2006 covers the establishment, administration, education, production, counseling, inspection and coordination activities of all courses to be opened by Public Education Centers (PEC) and Educational Rooms (ER), or by any other institution in cooperation or with the approval of PECs, outside of private educational institutions. There are attempts to further improve this system which is an essential part of the lifelong learning because it is still not an integrated part of education in Turkey. These programs generally appeal women, elderly, unemployed, and retirees. Although the primary government body that is responsible for the lifelong learning programs is the Ministry of National Education through the newly-established General Directorate of Lifelong Learning, there are some metropolitan municipalities who also engaged in courses like computer, foreign language, arts and crafts. Additional opportunities include the employment guaranteed vocational training, and women and young entrepreneurship programs of Turkish Employment Organization. Nevertheless, as stated above, the demand for these programs is not at desirable levels yet.

RIS Commitment 7: Striving to ensure quality of life at all ages and maintain independent living including health and well-being

It is impossible to stop ageing as it is an inevitable process but the negative effects of ageing may be reduced with policies towards healthy ageing and improved quality of life. With the establishment of General Health Insurance system, all people are covered with healthcare benefits whether or not they have a stable income. This is a great development because the chance of healthy ageing would increase due to the better access to the healthcare services. Moreover, the Family Doctors keep all the medical record of their patients, and monitor their situation regularly; therefore, the risk of mistreatment or never receiving treatment would be reduced.

Within the scope of the Implementation Program of the National Plan of Action on Ageing, encouraging a balanced diet and active ageing is a priority. It is planned to engage cooperation with the Ministry of Health in order to raise awareness and detect problems before it is late because for most elderly people, cases that treatment has been delayed or neglected and sometimes the patient has lost any chances for early and effective treatment and become completely dependent are common.

In order to achieve a complete improve in the issue, it is needed to raise awareness about elderly health and increase the number of healthcare personnel who specialized in the area.

RIS Commitment 8: Mainstreaming a gender approach in an ageing society

As the population statistics suggests, women have the bigger share within the population over 65, and elderly women tend to stay with their children more than their male counterparts. Considering the fact that these women and men are affected by the social and economic changes differently, a gender approach is required to improve the services. For that reason, the establishment of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy has great importance because it brings the government bodies responsible for the status of women, and for elderly services that were separate before and increased the integration among them. Therefore, it is expected to spread gender approach to the all areas of social policy from economy to social services.

Turkey takes the issue of gender discrimination seriously and elaborates the issues accordingly in policy-making process.

RIS Commitment 9: Support for families that provide care for older persons and promote intergenerational and intra-generational solidarity among their members

In Turkey, younger generations taking care of their elderly in their homes still exist. Even if they live separately, the children still help their parents in many ways. The number of elderly who take care of their grandchildren is also high. Under these circumstances, it is important to balance intergenerational and intra-generational relations to improve solidarity.

In terms of care providers to the elderly within a family, it can be said that in most cases, the daughter or daughter-in-law is the responsible party. A gender approach is really beneficial in these cases as well. The implementation of gender based approach can be observed in the process of allocation of the stipend for aged-home care. In most cases, the stipend is given to the women within a family, and it is planned to integrate them into the social security system in the near future. In most cases, solving economic problems is a factor that contributes decreasing confrontations within the family and also reduces the risk of mistreatment towards the elderly.

In order to support families who conduct care services for their elders, the General Directorate of Services for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities has published a handbook for home care recently, to raise awareness about elderly care, and provide necessary information regarding the issue.

RIS Commitment 10: Promotion of the implementation and the follow-up of the Regional Implementation Strategy through regional cooperation

In order to ensure promotion of implementation and follow up of RIS, a National Committee has been set up to follow-up MIPAA/RIS commitments. The Committee consists of participants from universities, relevant public institutions, NGOs and national organizations (association of retired workers, Federation of Women Associations etc.) who works on ageing. The first thing the Committee did was to prepare a national action plan. With the structural change in the government, the follow-up duty of MIPAA/RIS has been transferred to the Ministry of Family and Social Policy in 2012. Since the handover, the Ministry is working on an Implementation Program for the National Plan of Action on Ageing, which is confirmed by the High Planning Council. There are other initiatives being planned to improve monitoring in the future. Turkish participation to the UNECE meetings, and endeavors for strengthening cooperation internationally are also notable indicators of Turkey's determination to realize MIPAA/RIS commitments.

5. Conclusion

Since 2002, Turkey prioritizes the issues related to social security reforms and social assistance to the disadvantaged people within the population. There are also many efforts to mainstream ageing as a policy area. Although some reforms were realized such as social security reform, and institutional reform regarding social policy, Turkey still needs to attempt more in order to reach the levels foreseen by the adoption of MIPAA/RIS.

In the past, ageing was not regarded as an important social problem because Turkey had still a young population compared to developed countries. Although that is still the case today, there is an increasing awareness in terms of the consequences of ageing. For that reason, Turkey acts wisely and tries to build a system that can handle the rapid change in societal structure before serious consequences occur. The establishment of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy is a solid indicator of Turkey's improvement in the area.

Within the framework of the Implementation Program of the National Plan of Action on Ageing, which is being drafted, Turkey should focus on institutional strengthening together with the research efforts on ageing. Establishing an effective monitoring agency for the MIPAA/RIS Commitments is also planned in 2013.

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Ministry of Family and Social Policy
Ministry of Finance
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Internal Affairs
National Education Health Education Foundation
Social Security Institution
Social Services and Child Protection Agency
Turkish Aid Foundation for Weak and Homeless People
Turkish Employment Organization
Turkish Statistical Institution