



TURKISH YOUTH STUDY 2023

Executive Summary

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Two years ago, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Türkiye conducted an extensive survey to evaluate the social and political opinions of the Turkish youth. Following the positive reception of the 2021 Turkish Youth Survey, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Türkiye decided to prepare an updated version for 2023, outlined in this summary.

This year's Turkish Youth Study approached 2,140 participants aged 18-25 from 16 provinces. As indicated by its subtitle, the study primarily focuses on the Turkish Youth's Views on Politics, the Economic Situation, and Migration. Additionally, it covers topics such as participation, activism and international politics as well as questions about cultural, religious, and social preferences. As a result, the study provides a comprehensive overview on the major trends and shared opinions among the young generation in Türkiye, coinciding with the 100th year of the Republic.



To facilitate a comparison with the first edition of the Turkish Youth Study, relevant segments from the 2021 volume are annexed at the end of this executive summary.

The complete version of the Turkish Youth Study 2023 (only in Turkish) can be accessed via the QR-Code provided.

Indeed, understanding the perspectives of the Turkish youth, the so-called “Generation Z” (1997-2005), is crucial for policymakers, academics, and journalists to develop policies and strategies that can effectively address the challenges faced by the country. The fact that almost five million young Turks were eligible to vote for the first time in the 2023 election highlights the significance of their opinions and attitudes. Moreover, given that the youth represents the future of the country, it is essential to identify their convictions, aspirations, and concerns devising resilient and inclusive policies that can shape Türkiye’s future.



Methodology

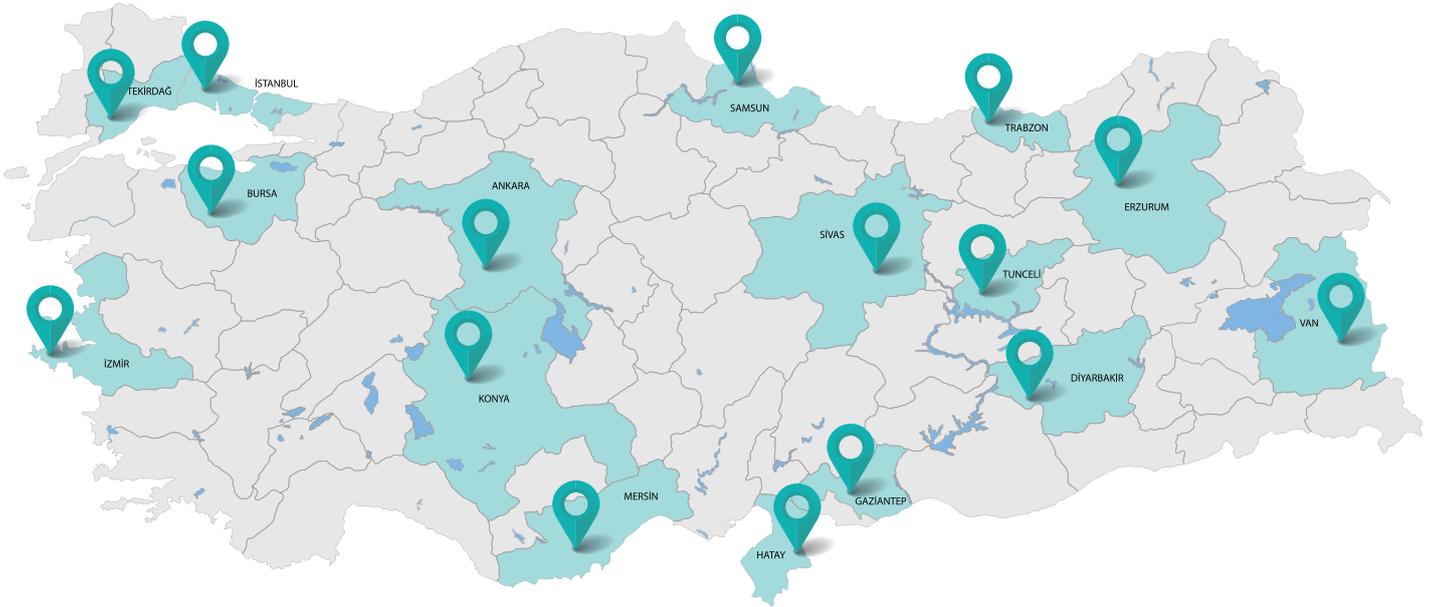
The Turkish Youth Study 2023 was designed, conducted and evaluated by Dr. Ali Çağlar (Hacettepe University, Ankara) and a team of experts from across Türkiye.

The research was conducted with the face-to-face interviews-questionnaire technique with the participation of **2,140 people** in city centers in **16 provinces** between **05 December 2022** and **20 January 2023**. The target group of the research is young people between the ages of **18 and 25**.

The research report consists of a frequency and a cross-analysis. First, flat frequency distributions are presented in tables. In addition, cross-analysis – tabulations were performed based on province, gender, education, and age variables. The research was carried out in the provinces identified according to the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statics (NUTS) regional classification.

The research was conducted in the following provinces:

Provinces and Number of Participants		
Provinces	Number	Percentage
Ankara	257	12.0
Bursa	145	6.8
Diyarbakır	106	5.0
Erzurum	92	4.3
Gaziantep	122	5.7
Hatay	108	5.0
Mersin	102	4.8
İstanbul	375	17.5
İzmir	196	9.2
Konya	121	5.7
Samsun	100	4.7
Sivas	78	3.6
Tekirdağ	102	4.8
Trabzon	85	4.0
Tunceli	52	2.4
Van	99	4.6
Total	2,140	100.0



A total of 50 questions were asked. The questions can be divided into **four segments**

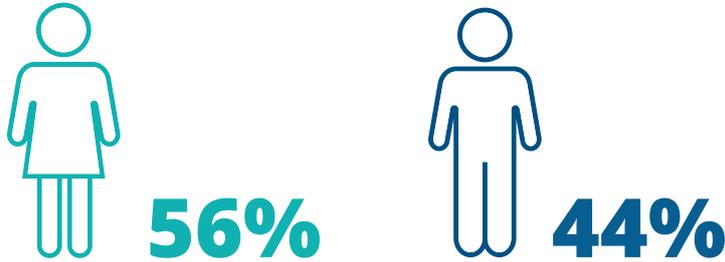
- ▶ Sociodemographic Status
- ▶ Economic Situation
- ▶ Political Situation
- ▶ Migration

Synopsis of the main topics

- ▶ Sociodemographic, identity, values
- ▶ Expectations for the future – living in Türkiye or abroad
- ▶ Satisfaction with life, basic needs (nutrition, housing, ...)
- ▶ Economic situation and occupational status
- ▶ Political convictions, party and alliance affiliation as well as leadership
- ▶ Migration and integration

Sociodemographic Results

- **2,140 people in 16 provinces** participated in the research.
- **56% of the participants are female** and **44% are male**.



- The age of the participants in the research ranges from **18 to 25**. Among them, the most represented age group is the **20-21 ones, with 32.3%**.
- Most of the respondents, **63.3%, are high school graduates or equivalent**. However, since participants in our study were asked about their most recent high school diploma, those who are still university students, for example, were recorded as high school graduates or equivalent. That's the reason why the number of high school or equivalent school graduates seems to be the highest.



Employment Status

- **27.4%** are **currently employed**.
58.4% of those who reported being employed are **employed as laborers**.
- Among those who state that they are employed, **13.5% are civil servants**, while **12.1% are qualified professionals** such as lawyers, doctors, etc.
- **88.5%** of those not employed indicated being **students**.

Education and Economic Status

- Among student participants, **23.7%** express that they have received a **good education**, while **60.4% indicate moderate satisfaction** with the education they have received.
- **61.3%** face economic difficulties while pursuing their education.

Level of difficulties in covering

▶ Nutritional expenses	55.4%
▶ Communication costs (internet-telephone)	51.4%
▶ Educational expenses	50.4%
▶ Education-related mobility	42.2%
▶ Accommodation costs	37.6%

- Only **17.3%** of respondents reported feeling **happy**. The majority, comprising **52.5%**, described themselves as moderately happy, while **30.1%** considered themselves **unhappy**. The most prominent aspiration for the future is to **achieve a good life (46.7%)**.
- A significant proportion, **63%** of young people, expressed a desire to **live in another country** if given the opportunity. The top five preferred countries are as follows:

▶ Germany	14.5%	 63%	 14.5%
▶ USA	13.8%		
▶ UK	9.8%		
▶ Canada	7.0%		
▶ Norway	6.7%		
		 17.3%	 30.1%

- The primary motivation behind the desire to live in another country, cited by **47.8%** of respondents, is the prospect of **improved living conditions**. The second most significant reason, identified by **20.7%** of participants, is the belief that these countries offer more **freedom**.
- Among the youth, **80.3%** have a **religious faith** and **believe in God**, **7.8%** identify as **deists** and **6.7%** as **atheists**. Additionally, **5.2%** chose not to answer the question regarding their religious affiliation.

Economic Situation

- **73.0%** of respondents believe that Türkiye is an economically underdeveloped or developing country.
- **80.6%** express the view that Türkiye's current economic policies are unsuccessful.
- **86.2%** describe the economic situation in Türkiye as bad.
- **88.7%** perceive income distribution in Türkiye as unequal and unbalanced.
- **84.6%** believe that there is excessive unemployment in Türkiye.
- **84.4%** admit to having limited their consumption.

Political Situation

Views on government practices:

Level of disagreement with the government's

▶ Governing style	70.4%
▶ Judicial practices	81.2%
▶ Economic practices	83.8%
▶ Education policies	75.7%
▶ Privatization practices	66.9%
▶ Minimum wage policies	75.0%
▶ Immigration policies	86.3%
▶ Climate and environmental policies	56.9%
▶ Human rights policy	73.3%
▶ Sale of real estate to foreigners	81.1%
▶ Current administration of Türkiye Türkiye is very badly governed	69.6%

Estimation of Türkiye's future

▶ Optimism	39.4%
▶ Pessimism	27.2%

- **98.4%** say there are problems in Türkiye. The most common problems are the economic circumstances, law and justice, unemployment, nepotism, corruption and bribery.
- **71.3%** think that qualifications and merit are not considered in the recruitment process for public sector positions.
- More than half of the youth do not align with any political ideology. With **51.4%** stating that they do not see themselves within the political spectrum.
- Ideologically, **37.6%** of the young people describe themselves as “followers of Atatürk”. The second-largest group identifies as apolitical, with no specific ideology (**17.1%**). The majority of young people in Türkiye are politically inactive, with only **5.2%** being members of a political party. More than half of the young participants in the survey have never voted (**53%**).
- Respondents who cast a vote in the last election, voted predominantly for the CHP, with **33.6%**. The AK Party received **14.9%** of the votes. Those who do not want to say which party they voted for are **28.4%**.
- However, **79.6%** stated that they would vote if an election were held tomorrow, indicating a turnout slightly below that of the 2023 election turnout (**86.2%**).



- If elections were held tomorrow, the CHP would receive the most votes with **33.8%** support. The AK Party is supported by **7.1%** Furthermore, **33.6%** of respondents preferred not to disclose which party they would vote for. The main reason young people do not want to vote is a lack of trust in any of the existing parties (**65.5%**) followed by a belief that their vote will not make a difference (**31.4%**).
- The alliance receiving the highest number of votes is the Nation Alliance with **46.7%** support, followed by the People's Alliance with **10.3%**. The percentage of undecided voters is **20.4%**, while **22.5%** of respondents prefer not to align with any alliance.
- Regarding the formation of political alliances, **36.2%** of young people think it is appropriate for political parties to form alliances. On the other hand, **31.6%** disagree with the idea, and **32.2%** have no opinion on the matter.
- A significant majority of young people (**85.5%**) follow the national agenda.
- When it comes to staying updated with the news, **52%** of young people primarily rely on social media platforms.
- **42%** of young people have a favorable opinion of Mansur Yavaş and appreciate him as a politician.
- More than half of the young participants (**53.5%**) would have preferred Mansur Yavaş as their presidential candidate.
- The majority of young people (**74.3%**) believe that the parliamentary system is more suitable for Türkiye.
- Nearly all young participants (**98.3%**) anticipate that Türkiye will encounter problems in the near future.
- The most expected problems in Türkiye are primarily related to:
 - ▶ Economy **32.2%**
 - ▶ Refugees / Migration **27.3%**
 - ▶ Terrorism **15.8%**

Migration Situation

- A significant majority of **91.8%** disagree with the government's current refugee policies and practices and believe that a policy change should be pursued.
- **62.7%** of the participants say that refugees should get help only with their basic needs, while **26.8%** believe that Türkiye should not help them at all.
- **87.1%** of the respondents do not think that refugees will be able to adapt to Turkish society.
- **67%** of the participants believe that refugees should be sent back to their countries.
- A vast majority of **91.4%** express discomfort with the large number of refugees in Türkiye.
- **90.1%** fear that refugees disrupt the demographic structure of Türkiye.
- **78.8%** disagree that refugees make a significant contribution to Türkiye's economy.
- **80.8%** strongly believe that refugees pose a threat to Türkiye's future.
- **89.6%** strongly disagree with granting citizenship to refugees in Türkiye.



The 2021 Results

Views on the economic structure of Türkiye

- **48.5%** of respondents perceive Türkiye as an economically underdeveloped country, while **45.1%** consider it to be moderately developed.
- The majority of respondents (**82.9%**) believe that income distribution in Türkiye is unequal.
- A significant proportion (**87.3%**) of participants stated that there is a high level of unemployment in Türkiye.
- An overwhelming majority of participants (**95%**) reported following both the national and global agenda. Among them, **55%** stated that they closely follow the agenda of both Türkiye and the world, while **40%** mentioned following it partially.
- Nearly all of the participants (**99.1%**) expressed that they believe there are problems in Türkiye.
- When asked about the area that will face the most problems in the future, economic problems were identified as the highest priority issue, with **74.5%** of participants expressing concern.
- **62.8%** of respondents have a pessimistic outlook on Türkiye's future. Among them, **35.2%** express complete hopelessness, while **27.6%** maintain a sense of hope despite their pessimism.
- **72.9%** of participants expressed a desire to live in another country if given the opportunity. Popular destinations mentioned include Germany, England, France, as well as Sweden, Norway, Finland and the USA and Canada. On the other hand, **27.1%** of respondents stated their unwavering commitment to remain in Türkiye under any circumstances.

Trust in people and institutions

- The most trusted individuals by the participants were scientists, with **70.3%**.
- Soldiers and the army garnered significant trust from respondents, with **61.8%**.
- Only **47.5%** of the participants trust the police.
- Only **19.4%** of respondents expressed trust in the President, while **77.6%** stated a lack of trust.
- A significant majority of participants (**83.1%**) expressed a lack of trust in religious representatives and clericals, with only **16.9%** expressing trust.

- The courts and the judicial system were not trusted by the vast majority of respondents, with only **11.9%** expressing trust.
- Journalists and television broadcasters were not trusted by the majority of participants, with only **6.9%** expressing trust.
- Political parties garnered trust from a mere **4.4%** of respondents.
- Politicians received trust from only **3.7%** of participants.
- The trust in specific foreign countries including the USA, Russia, China, Germany, France and England was also below **10%**. Germany had the highest level of trust at **11.7%**.

Social Structure and Issues

- The level of membership in any NGO is low among the participants, at **14.2%**.
- “Being a good person” ranked first (**40.9%**) among their most important future goals.
- The breakdown of religious beliefs among the participants is as follows: **29.8%** believe in God and consider themselves very religious, **56.9%** have religious beliefs but are not religiously observant, **7.3%** believe in God but not in organized religions, and **4.6%** identify as atheists or agnostics.
- They have a moderate level of satisfaction with their current lives, with **55.2%** expressing satisfaction.
- Most of the participants (**46.9%**) make decisions about their lives in consultation with their parents.
- A high percentage (**87.8%**) claim to have free time, and they primarily spend it on Internet, playing computer games (**35.2%**) and socializing with friends (**22%**).
- **71%** of the participants read books beyond academic requirements.
- Over half of the participants (**58.3%**) engage in some form of sports, although not regularly.
- Almost all of them (**92.3%**) consider premarital relationships as normal.
- The majority (**80%**) believe in gender equality, while **10.6%** believe that women are superior. Only **9.4%** think that men are superior to women.
- A majority (**71.6%**) encounter problems with other people in their daily lives. Their most common issues are with family members (**28.2%**) and close friends (**23.4%**).

Political tendencies and thoughts

- **42%** believe Türkiye's EU membership would be highly beneficial. Those opposed to Türkiye's EU membership in any form make up **14.2%** while **40.6%** do not have a clear opinion.
- Over half of the youth (**62.5%**) express dissatisfaction with the government in Türkiye.
- Nearly all participants (**99.1%**) acknowledge existing problems in Türkiye today.
- Common issues include a poor economic situation (**17.8%**), unemployment (**16.1%**), a substandard education system (**15.8%**) and widespread nepotism, corruption, and bribery (**15.4%**).
- "Government and opposition parties together" (**38.9%**) are considered primarily responsible for the problems in Türkiye, followed by the "President" (**34.6%**).
- A small group (**5.7%**), believes the opposition parties bear responsibility for the problems in Türkiye, citing their failure to effectively challenge the ruling AK Party and thereby perpetuating its power.
- A significant majority (**65.9%**) feel that human rights are not respected in Türkiye.
- Participants identify themselves as ideologically Kemalist and followers of Atatürk (**20.5%**), while the second-largest group defines themselves as apolitical with no specific ideology (**18.8%**).
- Except for the 18-19 age group, **87.9%** of others have previously voted in Türkiye's elections.
- In the last election (March 31, 2019), **28.2%** voted for the CHP and **20.1%** for the AK Party.
- When asked about their most admired political leader among current party leaders, **20.1%** responded with "none." **Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** ranked second with **16.8%**. Although not listed as an option, **16.3%** of participants chose **Mansur Yavaş** as the political figure they liked and appreciated the most.

Views on Syrian refugees

- The majority (**80.4%**) believe that the government's migration policy should be changed.
- They express a desire for Syrians to be repatriated to their countries (**56.8%**) once peace is restored in Syria. The percentage of those who prefer Syrians to be sent to countries other than Türkiye is **19.9%**.
- They believe that Syrians should be assisted with healthcare and nutrition (**26.6%**) but they also emphasize that assistance should be provided to Turkish citizens (**41.5%**). Their opinion is that priority should be given to helping Turkish citizens rather than Syrians.
- The majority (**75.8%**) believe that Syrians would struggle to adapt to Türkiye if they were to stay. The main reason cited is cultural and lifestyle differences.
- The most significant issues anticipated for Türkiye in the near future are economic collapse, increased inflation, and cost of living (**74.5%**). The presence of a large number of migrants in Türkiye (**27.4%**) ranks second. Additionally, the high unemployment rate (**25%**) is mentioned as another concern.
- The participants identified global warming, climate change, (**28.3%**) as the most significant issues the world will face in the near future. Wars, drought, conflicts and disputes between countries (**26.3%**) were mentioned as the second most important concern. Economic crises (**23.1%**) were mentioned as the third major problem.



About the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Türkiye

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is a political foundation with 16 regional offices in Germany and over 100 offices abroad, which combined oversee projects in more than 120 countries. KAS Türkiye began its work in 1983 with the invitation and initiative of the Former Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal and Former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. The focus of our work is to provide practical support to the Turkish democratization and reform processes, and thereby contribute to the harmonization of Turkish institutions to those of the European Union. An important goal in conducting these activities is to strengthen relations and promote political and economic dialogue both between Türkiye and Germany as well as between Türkiye and the EU. To achieve this, we work collaboratively with numerous Turkish institutions that focus on a wide range of topics. To these ends, KAS Türkiye sets up meetings between Turkish and German experts and politicians as well as organizes discussion events and field trips so that German cabinet ministers, members of parliaments, and young politicians are able to meet in person with their Turkish counterparts.



For more results, more detailed information on the data and media requests please get in touch with Bruno J. Hamm-Pütt with his contact details below.

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