



International
Labour
Organization



REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
MINISTRY OF LABOUR
AND SOCIAL SECURITY

► NEWS BULLETIN

JANUARY - APRIL 2025

This newsletter contains information about the activities carried out between January-April 2025, covering the 4-month period of the 'An Integrated Model for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Seasonal Agriculture in Hazelnut Harvesting in Türkiye'.

CAOBISCO
Chocolate, Biscuits and Confectionery of Europe



ULUSAL İSTİHDAM STRATEJİSİ 2025-2028

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► CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

New National Employment Strategy

The 2025 National Employment Strategy document was developed at the beginning of the year, taking into account the needs of the labour market in Türkiye. This document serves as the foundation for the employment strategy over the next four years. The document outlines four main priorities. The first priority focuses on developing skills that can adapt to green and digital transformation processes, as well as strengthening the alignment between education and employment. The second priority is to promote inclusive employment by increasing labour force participation among women, youth, individuals with disabilities, and disadvantaged groups. The third priority is to promote decent work by strengthening the link between social protection systems and employment. The fourth and final priority was to increase productive and sustainable employment opportunities in rural areas. These four priorities aim to create a fair and resilient employment structure in line with Türkiye's development goals. All these priorities are considered in line with the ILO's decent work agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

ILO "Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy" Launch Meeting

The ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (ILO MNE Declaration) The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises provide guidance to promote responsible business conduct and strengthen human rights standards. In this regard, the ILO MNE Declaration defines the duties and responsibilities of governments, workers' and employers' organizations, national and multinational enterprises to protect workers' rights and promote fair working conditions. The Declaration encourages the strengthening of the legal framework in countries where MNEs operate and the alignment of these activities with national development goals and supports the establishment of national focal points to support implementation.

Within this framework, the ILO Office for Türkiye organized an "Introductory Meeting on the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy" on 6 February 2025. The event aimed to provide relevant stakeholders with comprehensive information about the MNE Declaration and to discuss strategies to enhance its implementation at the national level. By

bringing together a wide range of actors—including the MOLSS, the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Industry and Technology, workers' and employers' organizations, civil society organizations, and UN specialized agencies—the meeting sought to raise awareness on the content and application of the Declaration, as well as the impact of multinational enterprises on social policies. In addition, the meeting provided a platform for exchanging views among stakeholders regarding the establishment of a "national focal point" for the MNE Declaration and its implementation in Türkiye. Other topics addressed during the meeting included: the role of Türkiye as a Pathfinder Country within the Alliance 8.7 coalition; promoting responsible business conduct in the private sector; advancing international cooperation; and strengthening social dialogue mechanisms. In this context, Türkiye plays an active role in promoting global partnerships that support sustainable development and decent work. As a Pathfinder Country within Alliance 8.7, Türkiye prioritizes the promotion of responsible business conduct, the adoption of due diligence principles, and the implementation of these processes through social dialogue.



New Circulars on Seasonal Agricultural Workers and Their Children

In 2024, two new national policy instruments were issued to address the needs of seasonal agricultural worker families and their children: a Presidential Circular and a MONE Circular. The Prime Ministry Circular on seasonal agricultural workers, originally issued in 2017, was revised and reissued as a Presidential Circular. This updated circular outlines, in 13 articles, the procedures and principles for addressing the challenges faced by individuals and families who migrate from their home provinces to other regions to engage in seasonal agricultural work. The articles cover the following key areas: improvement of temporary settlement areas; provision of health, education, transportation, and security services; access to employment and social security services; provision of social services; effective use of the seasonal agricultural workers' information system (e-METIP); mobilization and coordination of financial resources; development of action plans for seasonal agricultural workers; implementation of projects aimed at improving working and living conditions; enforcement of inspections; and establishment of provincial and district-level monitoring and evaluation committees on seasonal agricultural work. Compared to the previous circular, the new Presidential Circular provides more detailed guidance on the responsibilities of institutions and organizations, as well as on the roles and functions of the designated committees tasked with implementing and monitoring these efforts.

Similarly, the MONE Circular issued in 2016 on “Access to Education for Children of Seasonal Agricultural Workers and Nomadic or Semi-Nomadic Families” was revised and expanded in 2024. The updated circular aims to ensure uninterrupted access to education for these children by facilitating their enrolment in schools at their temporary



locations, preventing absenteeism resulting from academic underachievement, organizing remedial education programmes to address learning losses, supporting students in reaching expected learning outcomes, mitigating potential adaptation challenges during transitions between education levels, and promoting their social and emotional development. To achieve these goals, activities were structured under four key pillars: prevention, identification, monitoring, and remediation. In addition, Provincial and District Coordination Committees on the Education of Children of Seasonal Agricultural Workers and Nomadic Families were established in both sending and receiving regions. These committees are responsible for the implementation and coordination of all related activities, including School-Based Monitoring and Identification Committees to follow up on student enrolment, attendance, and support needs.

The significance of these updated circulars, in the context of efforts to prevent child labour, lies in the reinforcement of the legal and institutional framework for inter-agency cooperation. By clearly defining roles and responsibilities, the circulars pave the way for broader and more structured collaboration with a wider range of institutions.



Annual Meeting with CAOBISCO in Brussels

The annual coordination meeting of the CAOBISCO public-private partnership project were held in Brussels on 23-24 April 2025, with the participation of ILO representatives from Geneva and Türkiye, as well as senior management from CAOBISCO. The meeting aimed to strengthen the ongoing partnership and to conduct joint reviews on key issues such as due diligence in supply chains, the elimination of the worst forms of child labour in hazelnut agriculture, and the promotion of fundamental principles and rights at work in the hazelnut sector and beyond.



The meeting, held on 23 April and dedicated to exploring future collaboration opportunities, brought together a high-level delegation from the ILO and CAOBISCO. The ILO delegation included ILO Office for Türkiye composed of the Director Yasser Hassan, Senior Project Coordinator Ayşegül Özbek Kansu, and Child Labour Officer Ala Yılmazsoy along with Senior Programme and Operations Officer Audrey Le Guével and Senior Technical Specialist Simon Hills from ILO Headquarters. Also Chief of the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch at ILO HQ Philippe Vanhuynegem and Senior Programme and Operations Officer on Supply Chains Katherine Torres attended online. The CAOBISCO delegation was composed of Can Buharalı, President of CAOBISCO; Aldo Cristiano, Vice-President of CAOBISCO; Muriel Korter, Director General of CAOBISCO; Alicia Bellón Moral, CAOBISCO Sustainability Manager; Rebecca Nguyen, Global Social Sustainability and Stakeholder Engagement Lead at MONDELEZ; Torben Erbrath, Managing Director for Raw Materials, Energy and Cocoa/Chocolate/Confectionery Product Group at BDSI; Barbara Wettstein, Human Rights Manager at NESTLÉ; Meenal Bahirwani, Sustainable Sourcing Manager for India at MARS; Stefano Severi, Responsible Sourcing Manager at FERRERO; Ylenia Maitino, Public Policy Manager at FERRERO Brussels Office; Aslı Köse, Country Manager for Ferrero Values Türkiye; and Hazal Tonguç, Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator for Ferrero Farming Values Türkiye.

In the opening remarks, all parties emphasized significant achievements realized through the 14 years of partnership. The Director of the ILO Office for Türkiye, Yasser Hassan, began his speech by presenting the details of the new implementation agreement for the upcoming harvest season, which includes activities on direct intervention, monitoring, sustainability, and supply chain responsibility. Mr. Hassan also drew attention to the risks that the current global crisis poses to international development cooperation, particularly in the context of approaches to social progress. He referred to the integrated approach to the promotion of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW), adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2024, as well as the action plan adopted by the ILO Governing Body that outlines specific measures

for addressing child labour. He underlined that these instruments not only serve as guidance for strengthening national efforts to eliminate child labour in Türkiye but also shape the strategic direction of the ILO Office in Ankara and its partnerships with CAOBISCO and FERRERO.

A presentation was delivered by CAOBISCO, providing an overview of the association's structure, the sectors in which it operates, and its key trade and export partners. The presentation also included information on ongoing projects with the European Commission, focusing on themes such as competitiveness, agricultural and food sector vision, and the development of a more integrated and equitable single market.

In his presentation titled “Advancing Engagement on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work,” Simon Hills outlined a forward-looking strategy aimed at enhancing the impact of the ILO-CAOBISCO partnership. He emphasized the need to expand the scope of the current model project beyond the hazelnut sector, advocating for the application of the public-private partnership model in other regions and crops where seasonal agricultural labour is prevalent. He also referred to Türkiye's Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Country Roadmap and the forthcoming EU Directive on Forced Labour. Additional key issues addressed included climate change, the strengthening of national child labour monitoring systems, and the importance of robust inspection mechanisms.

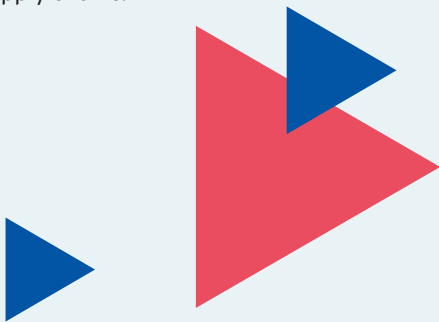
During the open session for comments and reflections, participants referred to the evolving regulatory frameworks within the European Union, emphasizing that aligning business practices with human rights and responsible business conduct—particularly through enhanced supply chain traceability—is essential for improving working conditions and combating child labour. There was a shared recognition among all stakeholders that achieving social justice requires stronger collaboration and cross-sectoral action. In this context, a call was made to expand the scope of cooperation beyond the hazelnut sector to include other export-oriented agricultural products. The need for an integrated and inclusive approach addressing all Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work—including the elimination of forced labour—was also strongly emphasized. Participants underscored that the reduction of child labour has been most successful where enterprises have taken active responsibility. It was also noted that public-private partnerships that incorporate poverty reduction, address systemic vulnerabilities, and strengthen access to education can generate significant positive impact.

Participants also expressed concern that recent global and national crises—such as the COVID-19 pandemic and major earthquakes—may contribute to a rise in child labour. The urgency of coordinated and multi-stakeholder efforts was underscored in this context. Stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to the prevention of child labour and the improvement of working conditions and social protection, while emphasizing the critical role of monitoring and evaluation in tracking progress and ensuring accountability.

The Annual Meeting began with the reaffirmation of CAOBISCO's commitment to aligning its public-private partnership efforts with Türkiye's National Employment Strategy and its role as a Pathfinder Country under Alliance 8.7. Yasser Hassan highlighted that the Global Estimates on Child Labour to be released by the ILO in June 2025 will provide critical inputs for future planning. In her presentation, Ayşegül Özbek Kansu shared key achievements reached at the national policy level throughout the course of the project. The presentation

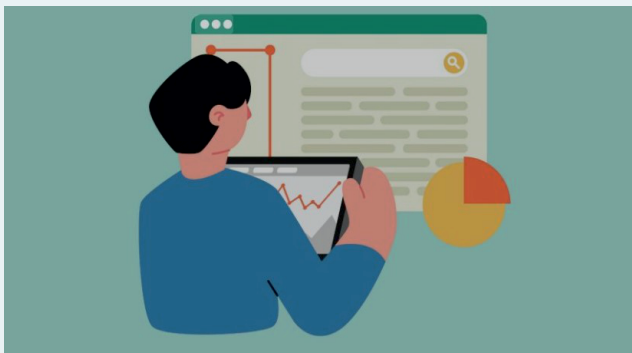
also outlined major milestones achieved in 2024, challenges encountered, lessons learned, and the activities planned for 2025—including the impact assessment to be conducted. Regarding due diligence efforts, it was noted that the ILO's existing tools and guidance materials will be adapted to the hazelnut sector and translated into Turkish to serve as the basis for a self-assessment guide to be developed under the project.

During the meeting held on 24 April with the Director of the ILO Brussels Office, Yasser Hassan briefed Director Carlien Van Empel on the outcomes of the discussions with CAOBISCO members. The meeting particularly focused on translating the conceptual framework into action by organizing workshops with implementing partners and stakeholders to operationalize the project's theory of change. It was emphasized that, to achieve the intended impact within target communities, it is essential to mainstream key approaches—such as gender equality measures and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse—into the codes of conduct of implementing partners. Furthermore, it was agreed that the ILO Brussels Office would take an active role in strengthening coordination with CAOBISCO members on due diligence in supply chains.



Project Impact Assessment Study

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has been supporting Türkiye in its efforts to prevent and eliminate child labour—including its worst forms in seasonal agriculture—by promoting international labour standards and social dialogue, developing programmes and projects that aim to create decent work opportunities for all, and engaging in policy analysis and advocacy. In this context, the project An Integrated Model for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Seasonal Agriculture in Hazelnut Harvesting in Türkiye, implemented for over a decade, is considered a model initiative that has informed



the design and replication of similar interventions both within the organization and in the field. The forthcoming impact assessment of this project is expected to provide a valuable contribution to these ongoing efforts. The specific objective of the assessment is to evaluate the impact of the project over the last ten years (2013–2023), covering

its four phases of implementation, with a view to identifying the prerequisites for sustainable action against child labour in seasonal hazelnut agriculture. The study will also capture good practices, lessons learned and provide recommendations to inform future programming.

The impact assessment, for which preparatory work has been initiated, will examine the social impact of the project through both qualitative and quantitative research methods. In addition to assessing activities carried out across all project provinces, it will also explore key achievements and challenges encountered during implementation. Moreover, the assessment will generate evidence-based findings on the effects and contributions of ILO's policy interventions, as well as the significant efforts of other partners. It will also assess the extent to which the project has responded to the needs of the target groups and stakeholders identified during the intervention design phase.

► DIRECT INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES

Before the regular monitoring activities in this period of the year, 1,235 children participated in the education activities conducted by 74 teachers and school administrators in social support centres across five project provinces in the harvest season in 2024 summer. The families of the children identified were strengthened through informative sessions on the hazards of WFCL. Apart from referral to educational activities; Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media (SCREAM) programme of the ILO reached 395 children in social support centres in Blacksea this summer. And in the winter time, 150 children aged 14 to 18 received counselling on educational opportunities, university exams, career opportunities, children's rights and early marriages in the formal education period. In addition to this, at the beginning of this year as part of project activities, the ILO Office for Türkiye and its implementing partner, Pikolo Association, maintained communication with seasonal agricultural worker families and their children to closely monitor their school attendance status through a systematic follow-up mechanism. When the formal school terms begin, follow-up calls have been made to the families and school administrators. Between January - April this year, follow-up calls were conducted for a total of 150 beneficiary children.



In addition, remedial education sessions for children and information sessions for families continue at the Social Support Centre in Şanlıurfa. For the 14–18 age group, educational support is complemented by socio-cultural and artistic activities.



Field Visit to Şanlıurfa with MoNE

On 14 February 2025, the ILO delegation—comprising Senior Project Coordinator Ayşegül Özbek Kansu and Child Labour Officer Ala Yılmazsoy—conducted a field visit to Şanlıurfa, accompanied by Labour Experts Mustafa Bozkurt and Enis Şahbaz from the MoLSS, as well as Education Expert Mehmet Yıldırım and Assistant Education Expert İrem Dilek from the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). In Şanlıurfa, where a significant number of migrant seasonal agricultural workers reside, the delegation visited Dr. Cavit Özyeğin Primary School and Mehmet Akif İnan Primary School to meet with school administrators and teachers and assess the challenges faced by children on the ground. Key issues raised included teacher shortages, high staff turnover, low teacher motivation due to limited compensation, weak parental engagement, and the negative impact of frequent seasonal migration on children's education. Teachers also highlighted the need for awareness-raising campaigns



targeting families and emphasized the importance of more stable staffing in schools.

During a meeting with Provincial Director Asım Sultanoğlu at the Şanlıurfa Provincial Directorate of National Education, challenges faced by migratory families—particularly in relation to housing, school enrolment, and adaptation—were discussed. The need for stronger coordination between sending and receiving provinces was also emphasized. In the meeting, Ayşegül Özbek Kansu provided an overview of the planned project activities, including upcoming field visits during the harvest period and regional coordination meetings that will be organized to strengthen cooperation between sending and receiving provinces.

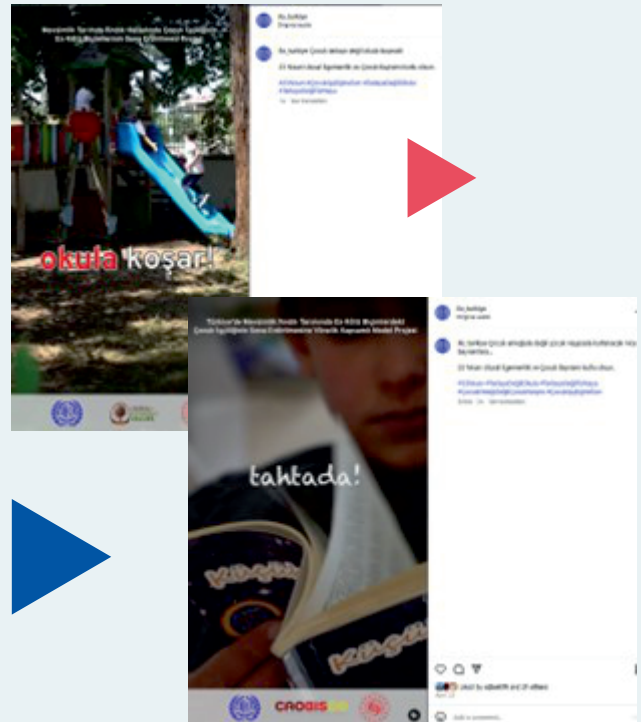
Throughout the field visit, key intervention areas proposed included awareness-raising campaigns targeting parents, measures to promote teacher retention, expanded psychosocial support services, investments in school infrastructure, and more effective use of data systems such as e-METIP.



► AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES

23 April National Sovereignty and Children's Day

On the occasion of Türkiye's National Children's Day, which is celebrated with great enthusiasm by children across the country, the ILO Office for Türkiye and the project shared messages on social media highlighting the importance of associating childhood not with concepts such as labour or work, but with education and rights.



Project Documentary

With over a decade of interventions targeting the worst forms of child labour in Türkiye's hazelnut agriculture, the project now aims to communicate its outcomes and impact to the broader public through visual storytelling. In this context, a documentary film was launched at the beginning of the year, capturing footage from all project provinces both prior to and during the harvest season. The documentary seeks to highlight the positive changes brought to the lives of children and their families, while also providing a platform for all stakeholders—from senior officials to field-level staff—to share their perspectives on the process. It will also serve as a tool for ILO and its partners to deliver comprehensive and compelling information about the issue and related interventions through media channels.



► MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

<https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/t%C3%BCrkiye-moves-forward-responsible-business>

https://www.instagram.com/p/Dly0C_Vvpli/

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Dlx9kCCpiDS/>

<https://www.ilo.org/resource/statement/social-justice-within-our-reach-says-ilo-director-general>

<https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gundem/bakan-isikhan-ulusal-istihdam-stratejisinin-amaclari-is-gucu-piyasasinin-etkinligini-artirmak-issizligi-azaltmaktir/3471308>

<https://tegm.meb.gov.tr/dosya/mevsimliktarimkilavuz.pdf>



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