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► Occupational diseases and effective management for employees diagnosed with occupational diseases

Labour Inspection and Guidance
Handbook Series
June 2026



**DIRECTORATE OF GUIDANCE
AND INSPECTION**



**International
Labour
Organization**



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► What is an occupational disease?

ILO definition	According to the 2002 Protocol to the 1981 Occupational Safety and Health Convention, the term “occupational disease” covers any disease contracted as a result of exposure to risk factors arising from work activity.
Definition under the Occupational Safety and Health Law No. 6331:	Disease arising as a result of exposure to occupational risks
Definition under the Social Insurance and General Health Insurance Law No. 5510:	Occupational disease refers to temporary or permanent disease, or physical or mental disability, suffered by the insured person due to a recurrent cause arising from the nature of the work performed or from the conditions under which the work is carried out.

► What is a work-related disease?

Work-related diseases are diseases that may exist before starting work or may arise during the course of work. The working environment, the way work is performed, and certain other factors jointly play a role in the occurrence and progression of these diseases.

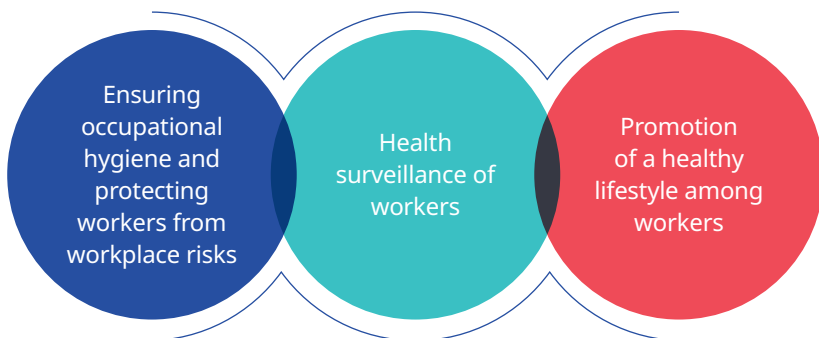


In occupational diseases, the source of the disease is the workplace. However, this is not necessarily the case for work-related diseases. For this reason, work-related diseases are not specific only to workers performing a particular job and may also be observed in different segments of the population. In short, every occupational disease is a work-related disease, whereas not every work-related disease is an occupational disease.

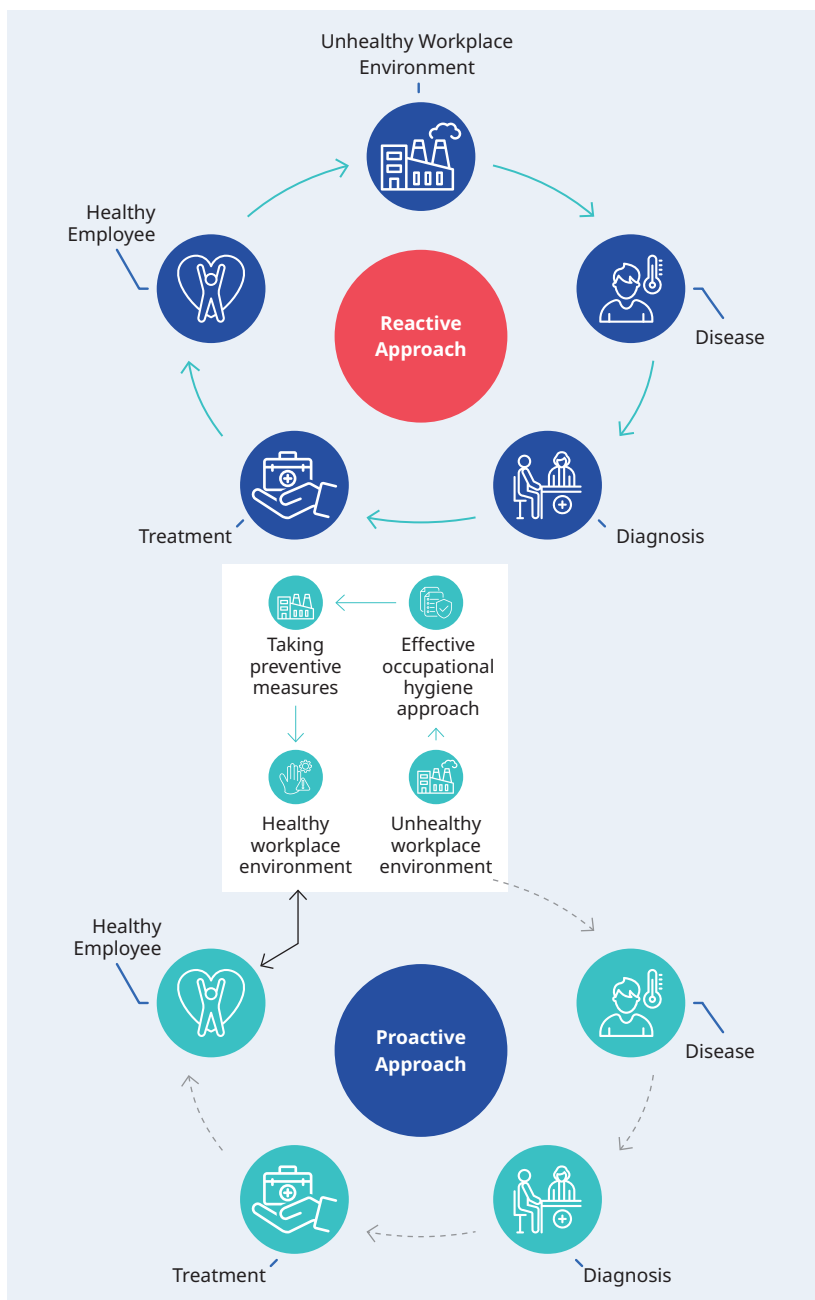
► What elements are included in effective occupational health management?



For effective occupational safety and health (OSH) management, the following three elements must be present together:

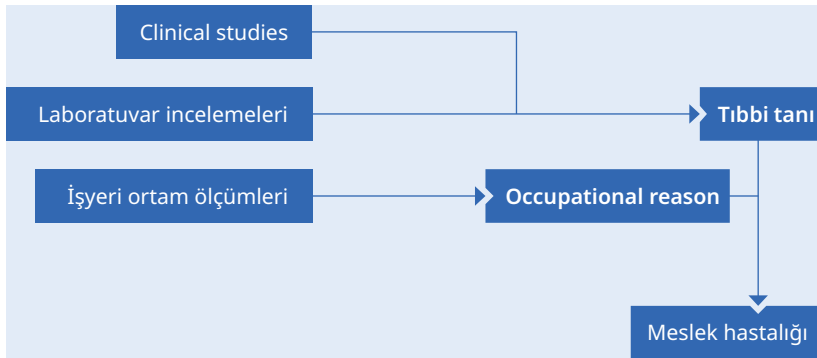


Workplace Health Triangle - British Occupational Hygiene Society, 2016, www.bohs.org.uk



www.iloencyclopaedia.org/part-iv-66769/occupational-hygiene-47504

► How is an occupational disease diagnosed?



*Ministry of Health, General Directorate of Public Health, Occupational Disease Awareness and Notification Physician Training

hsgm.saglik.gov.tr/depo/birimler/calisan-sagligi-db/Dokumanlar/Sunumlar/Meslek_Hastaligi_Farkindalik_Egitimi-6.9.21.pdf

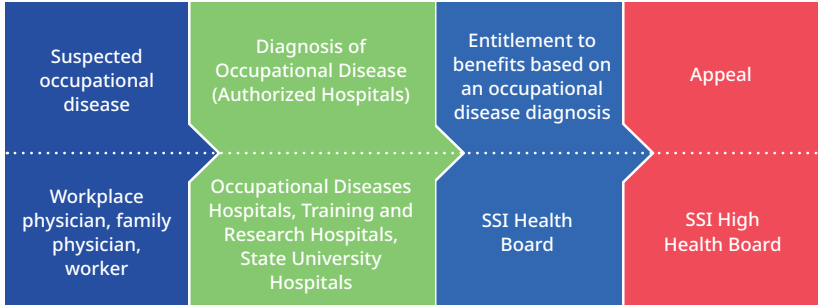
► How is occupational disease documented? Which hospitals are authorized?

It is determined and documented, by means of a report issued by the health boards of health service providers authorized by the Social Security Institution, that the insured person has contracted an occupational disease due to the work he or she performs.

Authorized hospitals

- Ministry of Health Occupational Diseases Hospitals
- Ministry of Health Training and Research Hospitals
- State University Hospitals

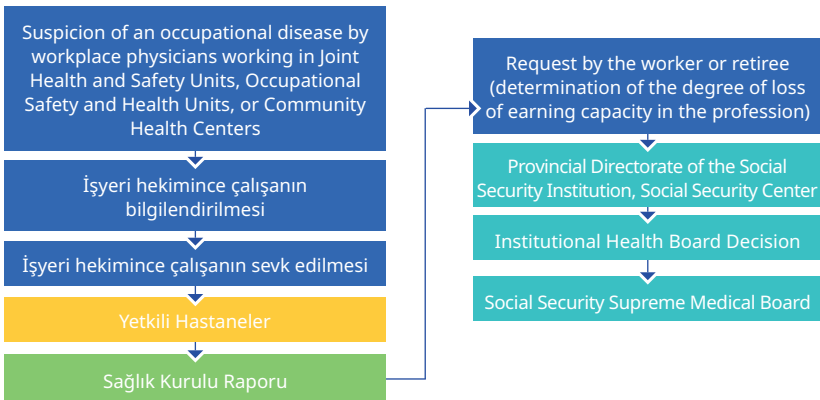
► What is the occupational disease diagnosis process like?



*Ministry of Health, General Directorate of Public Health, Occupational Disease Awareness and Notification Physician Training

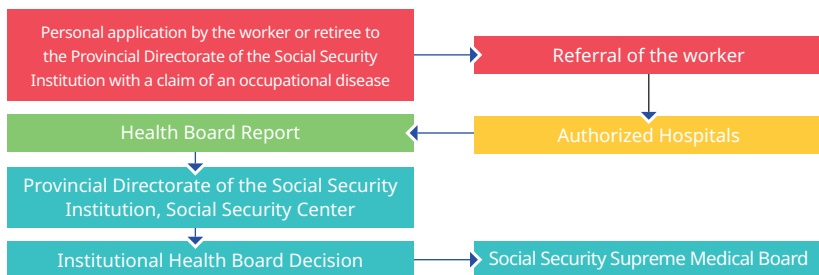
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► What is the process if the workplace physician suspects an occupational disease?



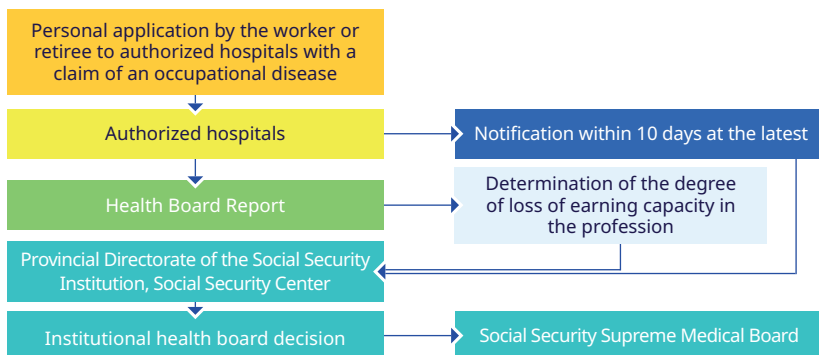
*Ministry of Labour and Social Security Occupational Diseases Notification Guide
www.csgb.gov.tr/Media/ilzl2gqn/rehber19.pdf

► What is the process if the insured person applies to the Social Security Institution with a claim of an occupational disease?



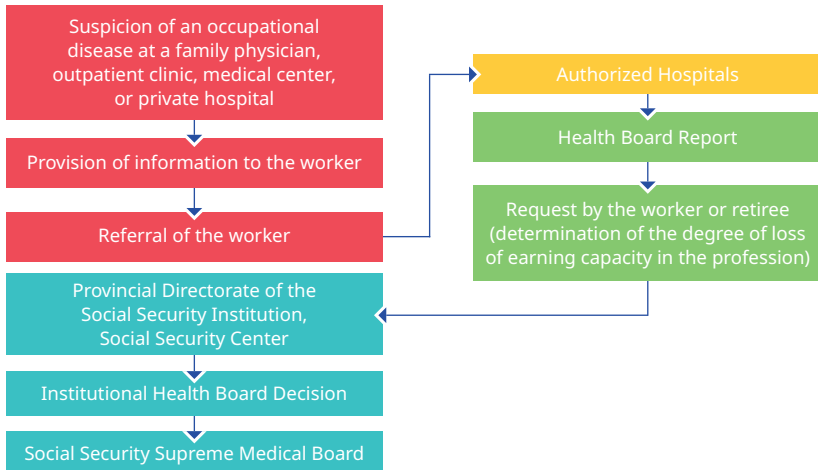
*Ministry of Labour and Social Security Occupational Diseases Notification Guide
www.csgb.gov.tr/Media/ilzl2gqn/rehber19.pdf

► If the insured person applies to authorized hospitals with a claim of an occupational disease, what is the process?



*ÇSGB Meslek Hastalıkları Bildirim Rehberi
www.csgb.gov.tr/Media/ilzl2gqn/rehber19.pdf

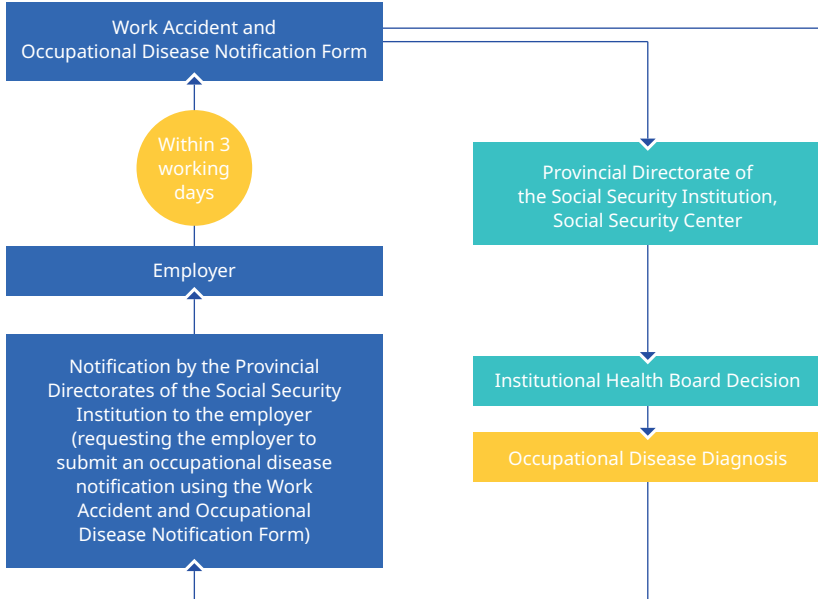
► If an occupational disease is suspected at health service providers, what is the process?



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► What is the employer's notification process for a diagnosed occupational disease?



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► Frequently asked questions

What is occupational health?

According to the definition of the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization: *“Occupational health is the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of workers in all occupations; the prevention of workers’ ill health caused by working conditions; the protection of workers in their employment from risks resulting from factors adverse to health; the placement and maintenance of workers in an occupational environment adapted to their physiological and psychological capabilities.”*

What is occupational health surveillance?

Occupational health surveillance covers the joint implementation of workplace surveillance (occupational hygiene) and the health surveillance of workers. The health surveillance of workers is a comprehensive process that includes, primarily preventive health services, the promotion of health, early diagnosis of diseases, treatment, emergency response, and occupational rehabilitation services.

The health surveillance of workers should primarily include the following:

- Pre-employment health examinations, additional and supplementary health assessments
- Early-stage examinations and pre-return-to-work health checks
- Periodic health screenings
- Post-employment late-stage health examinations
- Correct and effective use of personal protective equipment (PPE) suitable for the worker and the work performed
- Immunization practices
- Early diagnosis of diseases
- Arrangements for changes in the workplace or job assignment
- Information and training activities for workers
- Recording, analysis, and reporting of health data to the relevant authorities
- Conducting incident analyses in cases of work accidents, occupational diseases, or suspected situations

Who is responsible for ensuring that occupational health surveillance is carried out in the workplace?

The employer shall ensure that workers are subject to health surveillance, taking into account the health and safety risks to which they will be exposed in the workplace. The costs arising from health surveillance and any additional costs resulting from such surveillance shall be borne by the employer and *shall not be charged to the worker*.

Where should I start if I want to carry out occupational health surveillance in the workplace?

The first stage of effective occupational health surveillance in the workplace is to conduct a realistic risk assessment that reflects the actual conditions of the workplace. As a result of the risk assessment conducted, workers identified as being at risk in terms of health shall be subject to appropriate health surveillance.

At this stage, the necessary organization shall be established in the workplace, and the employer, occupational safety expert, workplace physician, and workers with relevant knowledge shall work together. In order to correctly identify health hazards, it is essential that the occupational safety specialist and the workplace physician carry out joint site visits and examine each task on-site.

When conducting a health risk analysis, the following aspects shall generally be taken into account:

- The types of physical, chemical, biological, ergonomic, psychosocial, etc. factors that may lead to adverse health conditions, work-related diseases, or occupational diseases, and their hazards and harms in terms of health and safety,
- The type, level, and duration of exposure,
- Environmental measurement results,
- Occupational exposure action values and limit values, biological limit values,
- Effectiveness of the preventive measures taken or to be taken,
- Results of previous health surveillance,
- Information obtained from the manufacturer or supplier of the causative agent that may lead to disease,
- Effects on the health and safety of workers requiring special policy measures,

- ▶ Interaction between chemical substances, equipment, etc. involving multiple risks present in the workplace and the effect of this interaction on exposure,
- ▶ Information contained in safety data sheets.



Not only the substances entering the process but also intermediate, final, and unintended products released during the process must be identified.



The workplace physician shall also:

- ▶ Assess general cleanliness
 - ▶ Assess the canteen (areas where food is prepared and consumed)
 - ▶ Assess drinking and utility water
 - ▶ Assess changing areas, lockers, stools, etc.
- ▶ Determine the general hygiene conditions in washbasins, showers (washing facilities), and toilets, and these aspects shall also be evaluated in the risk analysis.

How frequently should the health surveillance of workers be conducted in the workplace?

- 1 At the start of their employment
- 2 In the event of a job change
- 3 Upon return to work after repeated absences due to a work accident, occupational disease, or health reasons, if requested
- 4 During the continuation of the work, at regular intervals determined by the Ministry, depending on the nature of the worker and the work, and the hazard class of the workplace



Workers to be employed in hazardous and very hazardous classes of work must not be allowed to start work without a medical report confirming that they are fit for the job to be performed.

How frequently should periodic health examinations be conducted in the workplace?

Taking into account, as a priority, the personal characteristics of the worker, the hazard class of the workplace, and the nature of the work, and in line with international standards and the results of the risk assessment conducted in the workplace;

- ▶ **At least** once every five years for work in the low-hazard class,
- ▶ **At least** once every three years for work in the hazardous class,
- ▶ **At least** once every year for work in the very hazardous class,
- ▶ For workers in the group requiring special policy measures, including children, young persons, and pregnant workers, periodic examinations shall be repeated **at least** once every six months.

However, these periods shall be shortened if deemed necessary by the workplace physician.

Medical reports required under this Law shall be obtained from the workplace physician. **For workplaces with fewer than 50 workers and classified as low-hazard**, such reports may also be obtained from Employee Health Centers, family physicians, or other public health service providers.

Common mistakes made when issuing periodic health reports



A common mistake frequently made in the conclusion section of periodic health reports is that, instead of stating the worker's fitness for the specific job to be performed (for example, "fit to work as a welder"), the name of the workplace department is indicated (for example, "fit to work in the manufacturing department").



A common mistake frequently made in the conclusion section of periodic health reports is the inclusion of the statement "the worker is fit to work on the condition that spirometry (SFT), chest X-ray (PA), and audiometry tests are performed." If the workplace physician requires diagnostic tests in order to determine whether the worker is fit for the job performed, the tests in question must be arranged by the employer, and their results must be evaluated by the workplace physician, recorded in the relevant section of the medical report, and the workplace physician must clearly state whether the worker can perform that job in their current condition.

Am I, as an employer, required to employ personnel for occupational health surveillance?

The employer shall appoint, from among the workers, an occupational safety specialist, a workplace physician, and, in workplaces classified as very hazardous with ten or more workers, other health personnel. If personnel with the required qualifications are not available among the workers, the employer may fulfill all or part of these services by procuring them from joint health and safety units or Employee Health Training Centers.

In workplaces with fewer than 50 workers and classified as low-hazard, employers or employer representatives may carry out occupational safety and health services, **except for pre-employment and periodic examinations and tests**, provided that they complete the training announced by the Ministry.

What should be done if, as a result of health surveillance, a worker exposed to a hazardous chemical substance in the workplace is found to have a diagnosable disease or adverse health effect caused by that substance, or if it is determined that a biological limit value has been exceeded?

- The worker shall be informed of the situation and provided with the necessary information and advice regarding the required health surveillance.
- The risk assessment conducted shall be reviewed and, where necessary, revised.
- Existing measures aimed at preventing or reducing the risk shall be reviewed, and the necessary measures shall be taken, including removing the worker from the job performed and assigning him or her to another job where there is no risk of exposure to hazardous chemical substances.
- If there are other workers exposed to hazardous chemical substances, their health status shall also be checked and they shall be kept under continuous health surveillance.

There is dust in my workplace. How should I carry out health surveillance?

The employer shall be obliged to take all necessary protective and preventive measures to prevent workers' exposure to dust and to protect workers

from hazards related to dust in workplaces where any type of dust is generated.

- ▶ The employer shall ensure that dust measurements are carried out at periodic intervals determined based on the risk assessment and that the measurement results are evaluated in accordance with the occupational exposure limit values specified in Annex-1 of the Dust Control Regulation.
- ▶ The health surveillance of workers shall be repeated at intervals determined by the workplace physician; reports shall be prepared in accordance with the Pre-Employment / Periodic Examination Form provided in the annex to the Dust Control Regulation, and a health record shall be maintained for each worker.
- ▶ In periodic health examinations conducted for pneumoconiosis, the “Pneumoconiosis Diagnostic Scheme” set out in Annex-2 of the Dust Control Regulation shall be taken into account.



Occupational hygiene measurement firms are accredited only for measurement activities and are not authorized to evaluate measurement results by comparing them with occupational exposure limit values. Occupational hygiene measurement results shall be jointly evaluated by the employer, the workplace physician, and the occupational safety specialist.

Do I, as a workplace physician, have responsibilities regarding health surveillance?

The workplace physician, appointed to provide guidance and consultancy to the employer on matters related to occupational safety and health, shall, taking into account the relevant legislation and technical developments in the workplace where he or she is assigned, identify deficiencies and shortcomings related to OSH, as well as necessary measures and recommendations, and shall notify the employer in writing. The employer shall be responsible for remedying deficiencies and shortcomings and for implementing the measures and recommendations.



Entries made in the Approved Logbook by the workplace physician and the occupational safety specialist shall be deemed to have been notified to the employer in writing.

As a workplace physician, the deficiencies I have notified to the employer regarding health surveillance have not been remedied. Do I have a notification obligation in this matter?

In the event that the employer fails to take the necessary measures regarding the deficiencies and shortcomings reported in relation to the presence of environments that may cause occupational diseases, this situation shall be reported by the workplace physician, the occupational safety expert, and/or the management of the Joint Health and Safety Unit to the competent unit of the Ministry, and, where applicable, to the authorized trade union representative, or, if none exists, to the workers' representative. If it is determined that the workplace physician or the occupational safety specialist has failed to make the required notification, their certification shall be suspended for three months, and for six months in case of recurrence; the authorization certificate of the joint health and safety unit shall be suspended for six months, and for one year in case of recurrence.



This booklet provides a basic framework; workplace-specific conditions, the individual needs of workers, sectoral differences, and similar factors shall also be carefully assessed.

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This publication has been prepared within the scope of the project titled “Strengthening Workplace Compliance through Labour Inspection Guidance and Social Dialogue,” implemented in cooperation between the International Labour Organization’s Türkiye Office and the Directorate of Guidance and Inspection (DoGI) of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

This publication is funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the ILO and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.