

local platform, bringing together business, trade unions and civil society that will raise business and human rights awareness, promote workplace social dialogue and address the root causes of human rights issues in the sector. With the support and engagement of the ETI member brands, employers associations, trade unions and NGOs in Turkey, the ETI has achieved to establish a platform, which completed its first year. Accordingly, various activities took place in three Working Groups: Business and Human Rights Due Diligence, Purchasing Practices and the Workplace Social Dialogue.



The first working group focused on syrian refugees, unregistered work and legal work permits. In this framework a workshop for supplier companies was organised in cooperation with IMPR/UNHCR. Working Group members discussed possible cooperation with among brands and United Work on developing the capacity of suppliers in employing Syrian workers as well as managing their own sub-contractors. Within the scope of the Purchasing Practices Working Group ETI's Guide to Buying Responsibly was promoted, and preparatory work was started to undertake a study on purchasing practices in Turkey. The Group also aims to coordinate ETI's activities with the work of ACT (Action, Collaboration, Transformation) Initiative towards living wages in global textile and garment supply chains. The third working group on Social Dialogue developed a training programme on workplace social dialogue that has so far been delivered at two supplier factories nominated by ETI member brands. The social dialogue project introduced these supplier factories worker representative system and provided managers, supervisors and elected worker representatives with trainings. He finished his speech with identifying the necessary steps for future activities such as the capacity building of the ETI Turkey Office and increasing the ownership of the ETI Turkey Platform, with inclusion of local actors such as brands or public agencies and trade unions into future projects.

These introductory speeches were followed by two panel discussions and one break-out session.

Panel discussion 1: "Social Dialogue: Achieving Decent Work and Inclusive Growth: the Global Agenda and Experiences from Turkey".

This session was inspired firstly by the vision of the “Global Deal”, which is a global initiative led by the Swedish government with the objective of jointly addressing the challenges in the global labour market and enabling all people to benefit from globalisation; and secondly with UN 2030 agenda, focusing on decent work, inequalities and partnerships.

The panelists of this session chaired by Beverly Hall, ETI senior industrial relations advisor, were the representatives of ETI member brands Inditex and H&M, Turkish Textile Employers Association (TTSIS), a manager and worker representative of supplier company Gamateks as beneficiaries of the ETI Workplace Social Dialogue Project.



The brands were represented by Serkan Tanka, H&M Europe Country Regional Manager and Murat Akkun, Inditex Sustainability Country Manager. Both brands stated their commitment to human-centered policies at production level and expressed their welcoming to the social dialogue programme as they mainly aim to shift from an audit framework to a new understanding of rights and responsibilities at the workplace. H&M references that they have clear targets by 2021 all direct factories must have social dialogue mechanisms through elected worker representatives in place. Increasing number of supplier factories started workers representatives system and this would be the main trend in the coming years. It is too early to assess the impact but both brands have evidence of improved productivity and reduced worker turnover due to support for social dialogue. Building off the presentation of H&M, Inditex placed social dialogue in the global context referencing the UN Guiding Principles and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. They mentioned as a challenge the difference between brands and producers in the understanding of social dialogue. Both indicated their willingness to cooperate with supplier companies and trade unions in order to develop functioning social dialogue mechanisms and living wages alongside the work of the ACT.

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from the employers association and BOSSA raised concerns about the audit systems and this is not bearable for producer companies anymore. They believe that the brands now would like the producers to do audits themselves. The TTSIS representative underlined that there are inequalities between producers, as some of them invest seriously on the social dialogue system as well as cooperate actively with trade unions, while other do nothing but still supported by the brands. This speaker pointed two issues: first, a request to brands to support first these producers cooperating with trade unions as they also have to carry heavy costs of existing social dialogue systems; second, a need of brands to establish common principles and audit systems.

Tuğrul Erdoğan beneficiary factory manager underlined their difficulty at the beginning to understand what they really needed to do, when they received an invitation from the main purchasing brand to join a social dialogue project. After receiving the training programme, it became clear to them: workers' motivation increased significantly and the managers started understanding what the workers really want. They look forward to seeing the results of the evaluation of the training programme.

Nubar İbişçe worker representative stated that a social dialogue programme had been something far away from the workers. They did not know their rights and how to communicate with the management in order to solve workers' problems at their workplace. After the trainings they understood that without prejudices and by listening to each other they could start an effective communication and cooperation. They enjoyed the trainings very much and wished to receive further trainings in the near future.

None of the trade unions participated in this event and this was criticised in this panel discussion. A few people stated the need for organised structures like unions in the social dialogue system and some others indicated the ineffectiveness of unions in general.

The summary of this panel discussion was a need to transformation in the textile and clothing sector in Turkey and that social dialogue provides this necessary space and platform. The importance of both rights and responsibilities and flexibility of brands and producers in the understanding of audit and social dialogue were underlined. The session ended with an agreement that a human-centred approach to trade, production and purchase is good both for the workers and the business.

Panel discussion 2: "Syrian Workers & Transparency in the Supply Chain: reflecting on the Journey from Crisis to Institutional Support".

The panelists of this discussion chaired by Martin Buttle, ETI Apparel & Textile Lead, were the representatives of the IOM, ILO, United Work and Turkish Garment Manufacturers Association (TGSD). All of the speakers deriving from their own work mentioned that progress has been made by stakeholders to create the institutional framework to support employment of Syrian refugees according to the decent work goals and criteria. However, challenges remain in the garment and textile sector particularly in the extended supply chain.



Can Aydın , IOM representative started his speech with explaining how the UN's policy recently shifted from a security perspective towards the social integration of migrants in receiving countries. Human development and supporting labour migration are at the centre of IOM's new framework. Turkey started understanding migration and developing policy first after the Syrian crisis and the very first step was to deal with emergency situations and having a temporary migration framework. The challenge now is that the refugees are becoming permanent residents and their needs differ and grow. After introducing a new law on the employment of foreigners, 78,000 refugees received work permits and 19,000 of them were Syrian refugees. The IOM Office is conducting profiling study of the refugees that helps all the interested institutions to develop particular projects. The main difficulty was identified as the lack of knowledge from the employers side.

Nejat Kocabay ILO representative identified two goals from the beginning in order to respond to the largest displacement case in the world. The first one was, increasing the number of good examples to be told to the companies and second, a strategy to share the responsibilities in a regional refugee programme. The ILO projects provided 18.000 refugees with occupational trainings and 28,350 with skills training. However, only 1487 refugees have been employed by the local institutions. The challenge created by the employment of syrian refugees in Turkey was the decline of wages in both skilled and non-skilled jobs, which in turn led to a social tension. He stressed that the wages are now better balanced at a living wage level. There is still a need for institutional structures to eliminate unregistered employment.

Bülent Akanlı TGSD representative mainly complained about the over-flexibility of Turkish garment manufacturers. All the urgent needs of the brands are supplied by Turkish companies and this is a failure of the Turkish sector. Despite an unacceptable disaster resulted in many deaths in a garment factory, the manufacturers in Bangladesh were still the second importers to Europe. He underlined structural problems of garment sector in Turkey that there are 52,000 garment manufacturers, most of which employ less than 49 workers. It is only 24 companies employing more than 1000 workers and these are

the ones producing garments for international brands. He also called attention to Syrian business people investing in Turkey such as establishing 368 small garment manufactures in Gaziantep, a hub city of syrian refugees. He finalised his speech by indicating four gaps to be filled in the work of ETI Turkey Platform in the future. First, the State should be included in the platform as soon as possible; second, retail sector must be included and the platform should turn into Turkey Ethical Trading Platform; third, workers' own institutions, unions are absent; and fourth, not only the CSR departments of brands but also purchasing departments should be taking part in the activities and programmes of the platform.

Enis Kösem **United Work representative** introduced first the institution itself and its Turkey project. Being a non-profit organisation funded by the Dutch government, United Work aims to support Syrian refugees being employed in Turkey, with a motto "From refugee to Employee". It actually operates as an agency, collecting job opportunities, finding the right candidates and help them to adapt themselves into the work culture. It also does advisory work on work permits. In 2017 they assisted 900 syrian refugees to work legally and helped 600 candidates for their job interviews.

In this session, some of the participants of the event mentioned the importance of profiling studies on refugees to develop adequate policies. Some others questioned the lack of any initiative dealing with child refugee workers.

Break-up Session: This session facilitated by Ercüment Çelik, ETI Workplace Social Dialogue Programme Trainer, aimed at encouraging platform stakeholders to contribute to the ongoing work streams of the ETI Turkey project and promote cross dialogue among the working groups. Three groups were formed to focus on Social Dialogue, Syrian Workers and Emerging Needs and Cooperation. There were three generic questions for all groups worked for an hour:

- 1- What are the existing gaps of work?
- 2- What are the opportunities and challenges for work in this area?
- 3- What more can be done collectively?



The Social Dialogue Group identified the gaps as the lack of social dialogue and communication itself; not having reached to the universal standards on protecting workers rights; workers' lack of knowledge about their own rights; lack of complaining mechanisms; lack of education including children and parents, and lack of trade unions.

The challenges were identified as the cost of building social dialogue structures for companies; brands having not enough knowledge about the country and its particular sectoral characteristics.

The opportunities were identified as good faith of stakeholders, the engagement of civil society organisations and the experience of institutions and organisations both at local and international level.

This group finally recommended that the meetings with the participation of all stakeholders should be better organised and happen more frequently. A workshop should be organised as soon as possible to decide on common goals and principles. The representatives of purchasing and planning departments too should be a part of these activities.

The Syrian Workers Group listed a wide range of gaps. The producers/employers are not afraid of violating laws and any investigations by the state, as the state institutions and inspectors let them operate quite freely in many senses. There is no free labour mobility. There are so many refugees which are not only registered in employment relations, but also in population records. There is the lack of state subsidy or promotion to motivate employers. Many producers need informative meetings and trainings to gain awareness about all these issues. Syrian refugees need help to overcome the language barrier. There is no tool of control except from the audits of the brands. Finally, the group mentioned that the length of work permits become problematic because of the system update need, which slows the learning process down.

The group recommended that the right to apply for a work permit should not only be given to the employers. The workers have no chance to choose their employers. The work permit fees are still a

negative aspect that demotivates small enterprises. The local brands should also take part in the platform and its activities. The brands should have some unity in drawing common goals and demands.

The Emerging Needs and Cooperation Group turned into a small group focusing mainly on cooperation. This group developed an idea aiming at buyer incentivisation by creating supplier scorecards. They pointed out the example of “betterbuying.org” an initiative that provides clear, relevant, transparent, and timely information and analysis about good purchasing practices that will change relationships between multinational brands and retailers (buyers), the suppliers responsible for manufacturing their products, and other intermediaries up and down supply chains. It is based on a buyer rating system that examines key buyer purchasing practices that affect a supplier’s ability to adhere to the terms of any contract and operate efficiently while providing a safe work environment and maximizing profitability.

The group also recommended to prepare a toolkit for employers that could help them while employing Syrian refugees. The point here was that the suppliers would hire workers with correct paperwork.

End of Report