



Dear Colleagues,

My name is Hseyin TOPÇU. My current duty is chairperson of Istanbul 7 Numbered Branch of HIZMET-IS Trade Union from Turkey. My syndicate's full name is All Municipal and Public Services Workers' Trade Union. Our union is organized in local governments, known as municipalities in Turkey, an affiliate of HAK-İŖ Confederation at national level.

There are certain personal attributes for fire fighters. These include confidence, resilience, adaptability, ability to communicate effectively, integrity and have a commitment to diversity.

The role of the firefighter is continually changing as new techniques and equipment are introduced. As well as responding to emergencies, you will also be expected to work closely with the community.

Our member figure is over 85.000 in public services such as parks and gardening, funeral and cemetery services, inner city public transportation, water, waste management and fire fighting services. Around 6.500 members of our union are employed fire brigade units of metropolitan, provincial and county municipalities through the country.

In Turkey, it is estimated that total number of fire fighters is around **49.000**.

Around **33.000** of them are recruited in municipalities. The rest is employed in other sectors such as airports, military facilities, and refineries.

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality has 4.687 fire fighters and 719 fire engines at 113 stations to service over 15 million.

ECONOMIC CRISIS AND TURKEY

The financial crisis also known as the Global Financial Crisis and 2008 financial crisis, is considered by many economists to have been the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Today, rising inequality and falling wages is a serious drag on recovery. But, Turkey has not deeply affected by ongoing economic crisis. Economic crisis has negative impacts over Turkey's export volume. As a consequence, wages have been increased slowly in parallel

with annual inflation rates. Turkey has a better budgetary position and a fiscal and monetary framework that has led to inflation dropping substantially in the past decade. Though still high, it's slowed to 7%.

The global economy began 2014 in its strongest shape since before the global financial crisis in 2008, thanks to recoveries in the U.S. and U.K., economic resilience in China and signs of stability in the euro zone. But recently strains in Turkey and other countries such as South Africa and Argentina have led to steep declines in global equity markets, reviving fears of financial contagion that could derail the expansion.

Turkey's economy isn't large enough, by itself, to disrupt the global economy. Its gross domestic product is \$822 billion, according to IMF figures, around 5% the size of the U.S.

Turkey also owes a sizeable amount to overseas creditors. Even though its government debt is relatively low at around 35% of GDP, private debt has grown rapidly, particularly that owed to foreigners. External debt is equivalent to half of GDP. Crossing the 50% level is considered to be risky.

The net minimum wage is TL 891 which approximately equals to 395 US Dollars. A minimum wage earner gets TL 4.3 per hour, equivalent of 1.4 euros.

Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul						
Firebrigade Department						
	YEARS					
SUBJECT	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014/09
Number of Staff	4.803	4.600	4.678	4.343	4.675	4.687
Number of Station	70	77	82	95	108	113
Number of Vehicles	545	590	612	578	660	719
Number of All Cases	87.616	69.884	75.661	93.103	66.147	63.904
Number of Fire Cases	12.549	12.172	13.950	13.712	9.552	9.855

In Ankara, there are **830 persons** and 169 vehicles at its **27 stations**. But, it is required to recruit at least 1.700 persons to service 5 million properly.

Firefighting was formerly an all-male profession. While it is dominated by men in both professional and volunteer contexts today, there are women who actively fight fire alongside their male counterparts. Women are not recruited in fire brigade units due to occupational difficulties and cultural diversities in Turkey.

The major problems which our members meet can be summed up as followings:

- **Recruiting Fire Fighters at different status:** Public servants, contracted workers , sub-contracted workers and closed shop members.

- **Heavy Workload and Extracurricular Duties:** Firefighters in Turkey used to work 24 hours in 3 shifts and rest for 48 hours; but due to shortage of staff;

Firefighters have to be on alert in their rest days as a reserve force for emergencies.

Some firefighters are subject to extracurricular duties. They are sometimes forced to post banners, arrange billboards, sprinkle streets, excavate etc.

- **Wage and social rights variances:** Different recruiting types cause pay variances among fire fighters due to their employment models. This disparity affects their motivation and performance.

- **Lack of adequate basic training for firefighters;** In general, most of municipalities provide a mere one week training session to its workers and then recruit them as qualified fire fighters. This problem is parallel with insufficient OHS trainings.

- **Insufficient OHS Measures:** Occupational health and safety measures are not sufficient enough for fire fighters to protect them fire and other hazardous risks. This is huge risk for fire fighters because many of them are not able to have OHS training before they start working as a professional fire fighter.

- **Lack of Sufficient Amount of Protective Garment:** Lack of fire extinction equipment in districts and townships; for example turnout gears (Bunker gears) are non- existent and fire brigades are putting their lives on the line by always going to firefighting assignments without fully equipping themselves with the requisite gear.

Poor quality of fire extinction equipment which cannot cope with the current technology is a big hindrance.

Extinguishing fires in the higher stores is almost impossible due to lack of fully-equipped fire engines with long turntable ladders.

It is only the municipality of Istanbul which managed to overcome such a problem by increasing the number of its fire engines as it is indicated above.

- **Insufficient Number of Permanent Staff:** There is understaffing in several districts and township authorities. For example; in Ankara, capital city of Turkey, there are **830 persons**. But, it is required to recruit 1.700 persons to service properly.

In our view, all public services including firefighting should be provided by public servants recruited by local governments by ensuring collective bargaining rights for all workers.

Necessity of Public Awareness on Fire Fighting Services: Majority of the people is not aware of the firefighter's duties, its degree of difficulty, its importance for all alive creatures and how hazardous this work is.

Therefore, public awareness programs on importance of firefighting services and their labour force should be developed and extended to all segments of the society.

Ordinary citizens should know how they properly act in case of fire and other emergency cases. One of major issues is to be more sensitive about car parking. This intercepts rapid response to extinguishing fires on time. Everyone should be more careful in this subject.

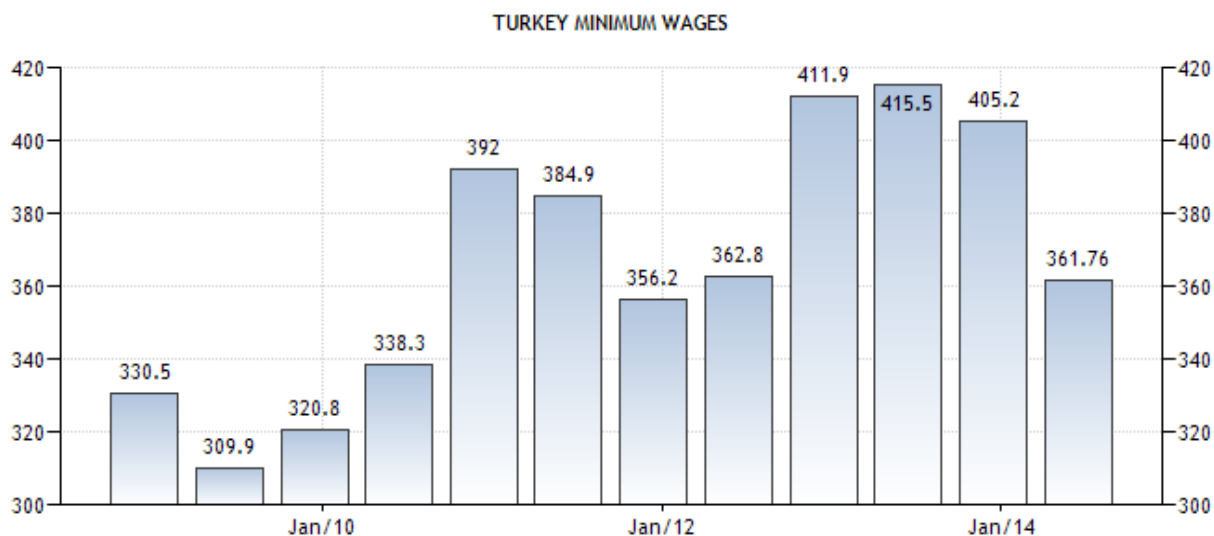
In this content, our union tries to make public opinion attach attention on all working life problems, esp. to workers' ones by using variable means such as press releases, radio-TV programs, publications, web site and social media sharings.

So we should gather more to share experiences ,challenges and insights in a supportive educational sitting and training seminars should be more provided.] So, such a forum like this is very important and crucial in assisting us to share experiences and insights into improving the success of firefighting situations.

Thank you for your attention.

Turkey Minimum Wages 1999-2014 | Data | Chart | Calendar | Forecast

Minimum Wages in Turkey increased to 391.45 EUR in December of 2014 from 361.76 EUR in June of 2014. Minimum Wages in Turkey averaged 291.56 EUR from 1999 until 2014, reaching an all time high of 415.50 EUR in June of 2013 and a record low of 157.40 EUR in December of 2001. Minimum Wages in Turkey is reported by the Eurostat.



SOURCE: WWW.TRADINGECONOMICS.COM | EUROSTAT

Actual	Previous	Highest	Lowest	Dates	Unit	Frequency
391.45	361.76	415.50	157.40	1999 - 2014	EUR	Monthly

This page provides - Turkey Minimum Wages - actual values, historical data, forecast, chart, statistics, economic calendar and news. Content for - Turkey Minimum Wages - was last refreshed on Tuesday, October 21, 2014.

Turkey Labour	Last	Previous	Highest	Lowest	Unit
Unemployment Rate	9.80	9.10	16.10	8.00	Percent
Employed Persons	25791.00	25863.00	26002.00	19349.00	Thousand
Unemployed Persons	2867.00	2654.00	3359.00	1773.00	Thousand
Long Term Unemployment Rate	2.10	2.00	3.20	1.60	percent
Youth Unemployment	17.20	16.20	24.90	14.90	Percent

Turkey Labour	Last	Previous	Highest	Lowest	Unit
<u>Rate</u>					
<u>Labor Force Participation Rate</u>	50.50	50.40	50.50	43.90	Percent
<u>Wages</u>	1512.00	1103.00	1512.00	1103.00	TRY
<u>Wages in Manufacturing</u>	169.44	166.45	169.44	57.70	Index Points
<u>Labour Costs</u>	155.60	150.80	155.60	79.50	Index Points
<u>Population</u>	76.67	75.62	76.67	28.23	Million
<u>Retirement Age Women</u>	58.00	58.00	58.00	41.00	
<u>Retirement Age Men</u>	60.00	60.00	60.00	44.90	
<u>Minimum Wages</u>	391.45	361.76	415.50	157.40	EUR