

Questions for garment brands re Syrian refugees in Turkey

October 2016

Company: Tesco

1. Does your company have a policy specifically prohibiting discrimination & exploitative practices against Syrian refugees? How is this policy communicated to vendors in Turkey?

Yes. If we find any unregistered workers, our policy is to work with our suppliers to support them, ensuring they are treated fairly, while undergoing a process of obtaining work permits for them. Child labour, whether migrant or Turkish, is unacceptable and we would work with suppliers to remove children from the workplace and put programmes in place to support the children and their families financially, plus taking steps to ensure recruitment procedures are tightened to prevent reoccurrence. Our preference is always to support suppliers to improve, but we will end our relationship if we do not believe they are capable or committed to maintaining the standards that we and our customers expect.

We confirmed this to our suppliers by email in English and Turkish in February 2016

[see [here](#)]

2. How many first tier Turkish vendors does your company have?

54 factory sites in total: 14 are located in Istanbul area (10 in the European side & 4 in the Asian side), but none in the most risky areas such as Gunesli,

Bagcilar, Gungoren (Europe side of Istanbul) where factories are smaller and more likely to engage unlawful workers.

Update from Oct 2016:

We are currently using 58 factories in Turkey (not 54), including 45 clothing and 13 General Merchandise.

3. How many have been audited since in the last year? What percentage of audits have been unannounced?

All of our regular audits (by independent auditors) are conducted on a semi-announced basis (within a 4 week window) so suppliers do not know exactly when the audit will take place. In addition, our own team completed unannounced audits to the sites in Istanbul April and July.

4. Does your company carry out audits beyond the first tier? If so what percentage of second & third tier Turkish suppliers have been audited in the last year and what percentage of these audits have been unannounced?

Not at present but we are planning to extend our checks to fabric mills, particularly those in closest to the south-east.

5. Do the audit & monitoring teams have Arabic-speakers who have received special training tailored to the situation of Syrian refugees, and do they speak with the workers confidentially?

One of our recognised audit providers has an auditor that speaks both Turkish and Arabic (all the others speak Turkish). They can access translators if necessary, but so far it hasn't been needed (see qu.7)

6. How does your company address the possibility of undeclared subcontracting in its supply chain?

This is an issue that we have worked hard to address with our Turkish suppliers over the last decade or more. Our suppliers are very clear that they must obtain our agreement to use each factory (each of which have to pass stringent technical and ethical audits). All purchase orders are raised against named, approved factories, so nobody can claim to be unaware of which site is to be used. We conduct checks on production in progress and our suppliers know that there are serious penalties if they sub-contract to unauthorised sites. Several suppliers have been delisted over the past decade for failure to comply, thus reinforcing the message to our remaining suppliers, with whom we work hard to build strong relationships.

7. Has your company identified supplier factories employing Syrian refugees in the last year? If the answer is yes please state how many factories, if possible

NO, although we are always vigilant for signs of any illegal employment. We believe this is partly because of the location of our factories (for example, none in the south-east) and the relatively high-skill levels of work done within them, making it harder for inexperienced workers easily to find employment.

8. Has your company identified supplier factories employing Syrian child refugees in the last year? If the answer is yes please state how many factories, if possible

NO, although we are always vigilant for signs of any illegal employment.

9. When Syrian refugees are identified at a supply factory, what process does your company expect the supplier to follow? In particular please state whether they remain in employment.

Yes (see question 1), albeit we have yet to have this situation in practice.

10. Does your company have a remediation plan that addresses instances of discrimination/abuse against Syrian refugees in its supply chain? If yes please provide details of the plan, how it is communicated to refugees, and examples of outcomes if available.

Yes (see question 1), albeit we have yet to have this situation in practice

11. Does your company work with any local NGOs or trade unions to provide remediation services to refugees?

See "other information".

12. As Syrian refugees cannot receive social security benefits at this time, is your company taking steps to ameliorate the impact of this?

N/A.

13. Has your company undertaken any specific training with its first tier suppliers on this issue?

Tesco approach on Syrian Workers is one of the main topics of a supplier/factory workshop held on 29th June 2016, with a second event to be conducted at the end of July.

Update from Oct 2016:

We have now completed 3 workshop sessions for our suppliers on ethical standards, with Syrian refugees being a specific topic.

14. What steps has your company taken to ensure that your policies/approach are being implemented by suppliers beyond the first tier?

See 4.

15. Does your company engage with local civil society groups and trade unions on this issue, for instance, in negotiating a policy position & carrying out risk mapping?

See “other information”.

16. Does your company work with trade unions on identifying health & safety risks for Syrian refugees (where communication may be difficult)?

See “other information”.

17. Does your company work with trade unions or other partners to offer training and education programmes for refugees?

Not directly, however we are supportive of the ETI’s efforts to initiate a programme in Turkey.

18. Has your company engaged the Turkish Government regarding the legal framework for Syrian refugees?

No.

19. Please provide any further information regarding your company's activities on this issue which you think are relevant.

We are exploring working with a local NGO that specialises in supporting refugees in Turkey, worked with the NGO (SGDD) ASAM, helping them to fulfil refugees primary needs with regards to psycho-social support and first adaptation trainings. This is likely to include support for children in schools with high numbers of Syrian refugees.

We participated in the UNHCR Sector Roundtable in May 2016

We have provisionally committed to support the ETI's emerging 3-year programme in Turkey focused on workers' rights and vulnerable refugees.