

# Türkiye perspective

DEI backlash spillover and resilient gender equality initiatives



# Türkiye: workforce & gender equality snapshot

## Headline indicators

**36.3%**

Female labor force participation (2024)

Modeled ILO estimate (World Bank)

**71.4%**

Male labor force participation (2024)

Modeled ILO estimate (World Bank)

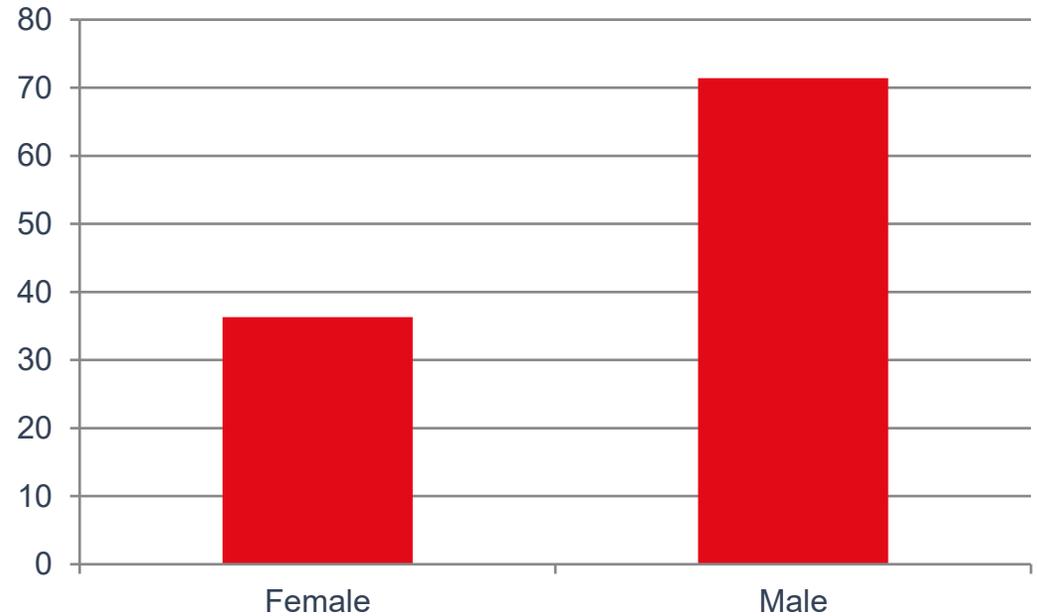
**64.5% → 63.3%**

WEF Gender Gap parity score (2024 → 2025)

Türkiye cited as lowest parity score in Europe section

- Contextual drivers often highlighted in Türkiye:
  - Unpaid care burden and childcare constraints
  - Lower return to work after childbirth
  - Large “participation gap” is the major contributor to overall earnings gap

## Labor force participation (Türkiye, 2024)



Implication for employers: the business case often sits less in “headline commitments” and more in removing friction—recruiting, retention, flexibility, safety, and advancement.

# Türkiye: legal anchors for equitable workplaces

Even if global DEI language shifts, core obligations in Türkiye remain: non-discrimination, equal treatment, and safe workplaces.



## Equal treatment (Labour Act No. 4857)

- Article 5: prohibits discrimination (incl. sex) in the employment relationship
- Equal pay for equal work principle; compensation remedies for violations



## Anti-discrimination body (Law No. 6701 / TİHEK)

- Defines and prohibits multiple forms of discrimination
- Covers employment and self-employment contexts (complaints channel)



## Harassment prevention (TCO Art. 417)

- Employer duty to protect employee personality
- Explicit reference to preventing psychological and sexual harassment

International reference point: ILO Convention 190 (Violence & Harassment) is widely used as a benchmark. As of early 2026, multiple sources report it has not been ratified by Türkiye, but sector agreements and employer policies may still align to its principles.

# Implications for employers in Türkiye



# Resilient gender equality initiatives (Türkiye-friendly)

## What tends to work (focus on friction removal)

- Recruiting: structured interviews, skills-based criteria, diverse slates where lawful, and bias-resistant scoring
- Retention: flexible work options, predictable scheduling where possible, and return-to-work pathways after leave
- Care infrastructure: childcare partnerships, caregiving support, and manager enablement (especially post-birth)
- Safety & dignity: clear anti-harassment policy, reporting channels, and fast, fair investigations
- Pay & progression: periodic pay equity review, transparent promotion criteria, sponsorship/mentoring for pipeline
- Leadership accountability: track outcomes (turnover, promotions, engagement) rather than slogans

## EY emphasis

Multiple EY summaries emphasize that inclusion strategies can support productivity, innovation, and talent—especially when interventions are evidence-based and manager-enabled.

In Türkiye, this maps naturally to a “growth + compliance” narrative: strengthen fair opportunity while meeting non-discrimination and safety obligations.

Türkiye message to leaders:

**Keep the intent. Upgrade the evidence.  
Calibrate the language.**

# Language & governance: reduce legal risk, keep outcomes

If your organization is “renaming”, ensure you do not weaken controls, reporting channels, or equal treatment practices.

## What changes (headline)

Rename “DEI” to:

- Inclusive culture
- Belonging
- Fair opportunity
- People experience

Move from “targets” → “outcomes”

- Pipeline & progression
- Turnover & engagement
- Pay equity metrics

## What stays (substance)

- Non-discrimination & equal treatment controls
- Anti-harassment policy + reporting + investigations
- Manager capability (inclusive leadership, fair performance reviews)
- Support for caregivers and return-to-work pathways

## Türkiye watch-outs

- Local law still expects equal treatment and safe work practices
- Be cautious with sensitive demographic data collection; align to KVKK (Law No. 6698)
- Keep documentation: “why this intervention”, “how it’s measured”, “how complaints are handled”

# Practical operating model for multinationals in Türkiye



## Risk controls checklist (especially for gender initiatives)

- Clarify objective: equal opportunity, safety, and talent outcomes (not preferential treatment)
- Use neutrally framed interventions: barrier removal, capability building, transparent criteria
- Document decisioning: recruitment, performance, promotion, pay adjustments
- Data governance: minimize sensitive data; apply KVKK rules; define access & retention
- Speak consistently: internal narrative (why), external narrative (what + outcomes)

## 9. A practical 90-day plan (Türkiye teams)

### Weeks 1–2: Assess

- Map which initiatives are “US-sensitive” vs globally safe
- Review policies against Türkiye law (4857, 6701, harassment controls)
- Identify 3–5 outcome metrics you can track reliably

### Weeks 3–6: Stabilize

- Refresh manager toolkit: fair performance, inclusive leadership, case handling
- Strengthen reporting & investigation playbooks (speed + confidentiality)
- Pilot a return-to-work pathway (post-leave) in one business unit

### Weeks 7–12: Scale

- Run a pay equity diagnostic; prioritize fixes with clear justification
- Expand mentorship/sponsorship for women in critical roles (pipeline)
- Update comms: “inclusive culture” narrative + evidence of progress

**Success metric: fewer barriers for women to enter, stay, and advance—while keeping messaging legally robust across jurisdictions.**