

## ONE THIRD OF CHILDREN LIVE IN SEVERE MATERIAL DEPRIVATION

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### Executive Summary

According to the European Union (EU)'s material deprivation definitions, approximately one third of children, in other words more than 7 million children are living in households that suffer from severe material deprivation. Compared to European countries, the rate of children living under severe material deprivation is higher in Turkey than in some countries with lower levels of GDP per capita as well as in countries that were seriously affected by the Great Recession. The problem of child material deprivation becomes more severe in the eastern regions of Turkey. More than half of the deprived children reside in the area covering the Mediterranean, Northeast Anatolia, Central East Anatolia and South East Anatolia regions. A closer look at the components of severe material deprivation reveals that three quarters of children are deprived from a one-week holiday away from home and more than half of the children live in households that do not own a car. In addition, almost 40 percent of children cannot meet their protein needs sufficiently since they cannot afford a meal with meat, chicken or fish every other day. As a result, Turkey is in urgent need of more efficient social policies fighting severe child material deprivation.

### Turkey holds the highest severe child material deprivation rate among EU countries

The material deprivation measure is one of the methods used to evaluate and analyse countries' poverty level. Based on the individual's self-assessment of their living standards, this measure provides another approach to quantifying the country's poverty. The material deprivation rate, as an outcome of long term income poverty, might be temporary for adults whereas for children, it may last a lifetime and be transferred to next generations. In this context, it is important for all countries to define and identify child poverty and to fight against it resolutely.

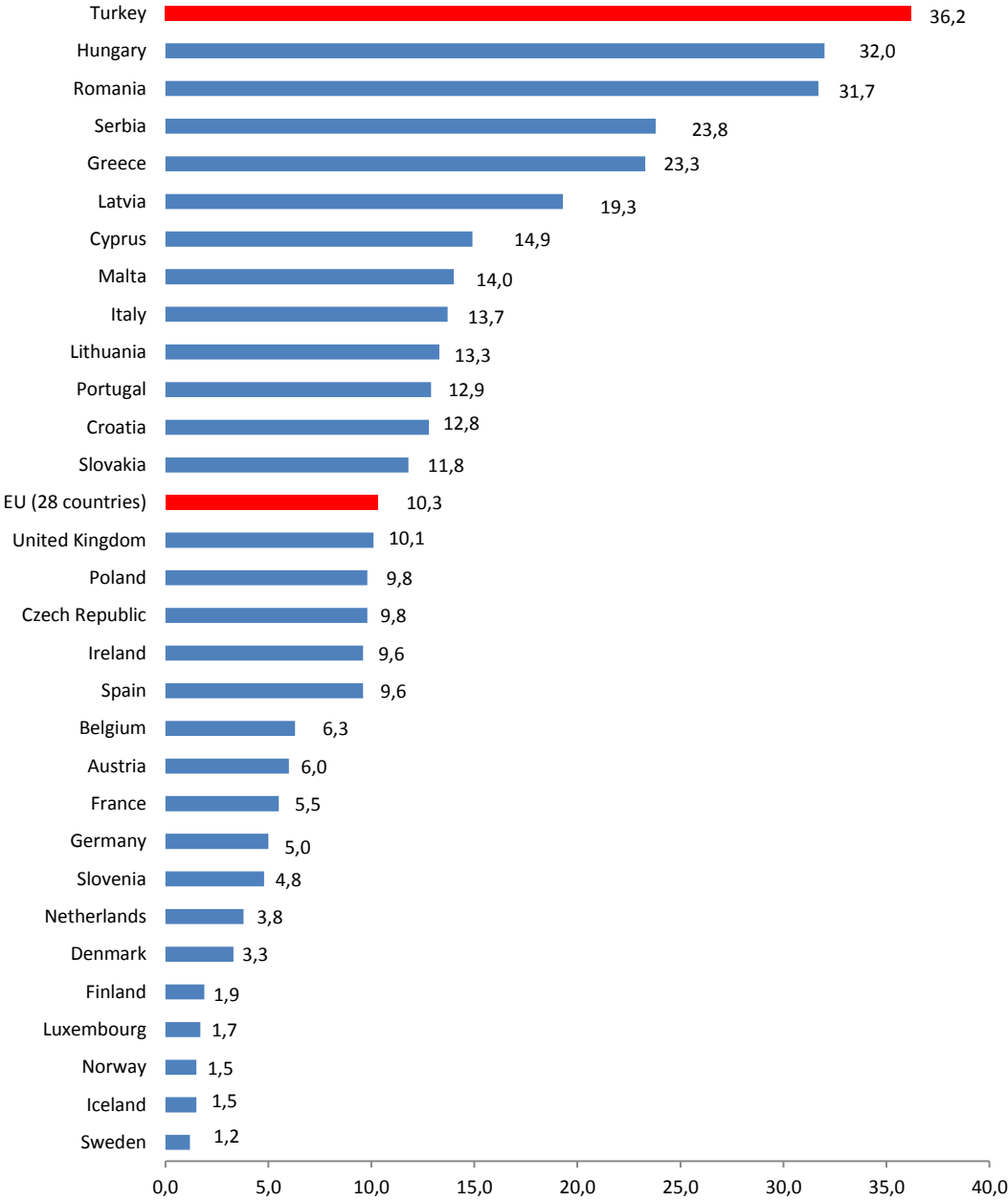
Child poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon and thus, it is calculated by several different measures. In this research brief, we use the severe material deprivation measure which is defined by Eurostat. The severe material deprivation is defined as the proportion of people living in households that cannot afford at least four of the following nine items: (1) mortgage, loan repayments, or rent payments, (2) heating to keep the home sufficiently warm, (3) unexpected financial expenses, (4) a meal with meat, chicken, fish or vegetarian equivalent at least three days a week, (5) one week's holiday away from home, (6) a car, (7) a washing machine, (8) a colour TV, (9) a telephone (including mobile phone).

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**Figure 1: Severe material deprivation rate among children aged under 16 (%), 2014**



Source: Eurostat; Turkstat, 2014 Survey on Income and Living Conditions; Betam

Figure 1 shows the severe child material deprivation rate among children under 16 for most of the European countries. For Turkey, 36 percent of children live in severe material deprivation in 2014. Romania and Hungary follow with severe material deprivation rates above 30 percent. Despite the devastating effects of the recent economic crises, child deprivation rates in Greece and Portugal are 23.3 percent and 12.9 percent, respectively. Moreover, the rates in developed countries such as Germany, Netherlands and France are around 4-5 percent. Lastly, Nordic countries holds the lowest severe child material deprivation rates with the example of Sweden at 1.2 percent. Consequently, Turkey has the highest severe material deprivation rate among children in spite of having a higher GDP per capita and better economic performance than some of the countries on the list.

## The most prevalent deprivation component is "holiday away from home"

Table 1 represents the components of severe material deprivation definition and shows the proportion of children who are deprived of the indicated items. According to the data, it has been observed that severe material deprivation is centred on several components. 74.6 percent of children live in households that cannot afford one-week holiday away from home. In addition to that, 53 percent of the households do not have a car. Besides, deprivation of paying rent and bills on time and adequate nutrition are also prevalent among children living in Turkey. 51.3 percent of children live in households which cannot pay their rent and bills on time in the last 12 months. Finally, it has been recorded that nearly 40 percent of children cannot afford to eat meat, chicken or fish every two days. This situation implies that a substantial proportion of children are having difficulties to meet their primary needs such as nutrition, thus an urgent amelioration of their living conditions are needed.

**Table 1: Severe child material deprivation rate by components (2014)**

	<b>Number of deprived children (thousand)</b>	<b>Ratio of deprived children (%)</b>
<b>Severe material deprivation</b>	7,243	36.2
<b>Heating</b>	3,821	19.1
<b>Unexpected financial expenses</b>	6,665	33.3
<b>Nutrition</b>	7,851	39.2
<b>One-week holiday away from home</b>	14,936	74.6
<b>Colour TV possession</b>	57	0.3
<b>Washing machine possession</b>	468	2.3
<b>Car possession</b>	10,517	53
<b>Telephone possession</b>	20	0.1
<b>Rent payments and bills</b>	10,272	51.3

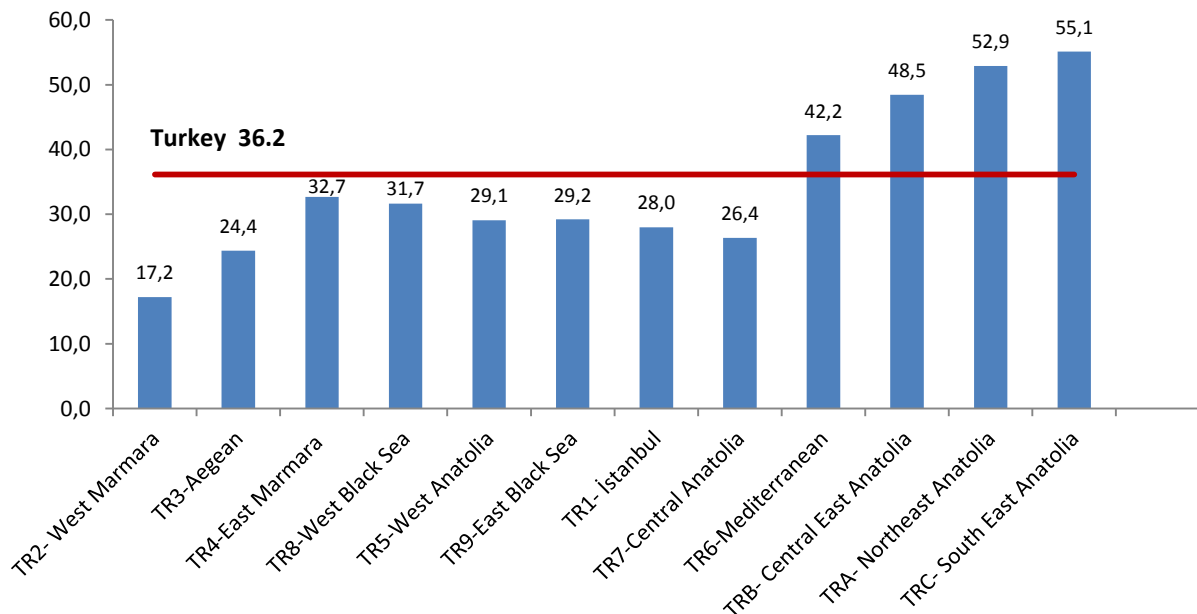
Source: Turkstat, 2014 Survey on Income and Living Conditions; Betam

## South East Anatolia has the most severe material deprivation rate

Table 2 shows regional severe child material deprivation rates in Turkey. Severe child material deprivation rates in eastern regions are higher than the ones in western regions. Eastern Anatolian and Mediterranean regions hold higher severe material depreciation rates than Turkey average (36.2 percent) whereas other 7 regions record a lower percentage. Child material deprivation rate becomes more severe particularly in Southeast Anatolia (55.1 percent) and Northeast Anatolia (52.9 percent) regions. In other words, more than half of the children living in the aforementioned regions are facing severe material deprivation. On the other hand, western regions recorded relatively lower severe child material deprivation levels. For example, this rate is measured 17.2 percent in West Marmara which is the lowest in Turkey. Aegean region follows by 24.4 percent. There is a serious divergence, 37.9 percent points, between the most deprived region South East Anatolia and the least

deprived region West Marmara. There are two reasons behind this. First, the median income levels are very different across regions, indicating high inequality. According to Survey on Income and Living Conditions 2014, annual median household income in West Marmara region is measured as 26047 TL whereas in South East Anatolia it is calculated as 19003 TL. Second, the number of children living in households in the eastern regions are relatively larger.

**Figure 1: Severe child material deprivation rates by regions (% , 2014)**



Source: Turkstat, 2014 Survey on Income and Living Conditions; Betam

To sum up, more than 7 million out of 20 million children living in Turkey are facing severe material deprivation. More than half of these children are residing in Mediterranean, Central Anatolia, Northeast Anatolia and South East Anatolia regions. It is clear that child poverty is a more pressing problem in the eastern regions of Turkey.

## Conclusion

According to Survey on Income and Living Conditions 2014, more than one third of children in Turkey live in severely deprived conditions. In this respect, Turkey is doing worse than some countries that were affected adversely from recent economic crises (Greece and Portugal) and some countries which have relatively lower GDP per capita levels (Romania and Serbia).

Another striking point is that the significant regional difference in terms of severe child material deprivation rates. This situation points to substantial income inequality between regions. Concordantly, children are affected by regional income inequality which leads to deprivation of certain primary needs. Taking into consideration the long-lasting and potentially intergenerational effects of material deprivation among children, Turkey clearly needs more efficient and multilateral social policies on this matter.

**Table 2: Number and Percentage of Children in Severe Material Deprivation (2014)**

<b>Regions</b>	<b>Number of deprived children (thousand)</b>	<b>Total number of children (thousand)</b>	<b>Ratio of deprived children(%)</b>
TR2- West Marmara	104	608	17.2
TR3-Aegean	527	2,163	24.4
TR4-East Marmara	530	1,621	32.7
TR8-West Black Sea	325	1,027	31.7
TR5-West Anatolia	525	1,805	29.1
TR9-East Black Sea	170	582	29.2
TR1- Istanbul	955	3,413	28.0
TR7-Central Anatolia	277	1,051	26.4
TR6-Mediterranean	1,158	2,744	42.2
TRB-Central East Anatolia	564	1,164	48.5
TRA- Northeast Anatolia	399	754	52.9
TRC- South East Anatolia	1,708	3,100	55.1
<b>Turkey</b>	<b>7,243</b>	<b>20,034</b>	<b>36.2</b>

Source: Turkstat, 2014 Survey on Income and Living Conditions; Betam