

DECLARATION ABSTRACT

SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIAL SERVICES TOWARDS THE ELDERLY IN TURKEY

In Turkey, the strength of family structure and the welfare of the elderly is ensured by means of utilising a holistic understanding of *rights and family based* social policy instead of social assistance driven services focusing on individuals. Efforts are being made to strengthen the traditional and nuclear family structure. With the purpose of ensuring that the elderly lead a “dignified, esteemed and healthy old age”, carrying out tasks in coordination among public, private and volunteering sectors is the most significant aspect of social policy in this field.

As a country whose aged population gradually increasing, marriage and starting a family is the keystone of the society in Turkey and ageing together with a spouse is one of the most significant needs. Demographic and sociologic structure of Turkey is changing day by day; population in city centres and county seats increases while the population of villages and towns regularly decreases. This indicates the fact that the elderly population is focused in districts and provinces.

As a ministry, our goals are to enhance the quality of life for the elderly and to ensure that the elderly live together with or close to their families so that they can participate in the social life actively under protection against all possibilities of abuse, exclusion or negligence or discrimination. An aged population leading a long and healthy life, producing, transferring knowledge and experiences to next generations is one of the most important values in economic, social and cultural domains.

As an indicator of the value given to the elderly, “*Implementation Programme of National Action Plan on Ageing*” was prepared in 2013 with the purpose of implementing the activities embedded in the Action Plan and determining the priority levels of the actions to be taken. The action recommendations are categorized in 3 priority areas. They are namely: elderly people and development, enhancement of well-being and health in old age and providing secured, facilitating and supportive environments. The Action Plan is implemented by responsible Ministries, Universities and civil society organizations.

The care services provided to elderly people by General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and Elderly People are handled in 3 groups which are **residential care homes, day care services and home care**.

In contemporary Turkey, care and rehabilitation for the elderly is preferred to be provided at homes of elderly persons. In case care at home seems inapplicable, then the service is provided at low capacity nursing homes or care and rehabilitation centers which resemble house environments. With the utilization of health care, elderly care and support services at home, development and use of assistive technology for the elderly gains importance.

Moreover, taking into consideration the increase in the health problems and accessibility problems in benefiting from all services, in particular from health care; we plan initiating awareness-raising and transformation campaigns with the purpose of creating “Age Friendly Cities” in line with the principle of “Active Ageing”.

We carry on determining our policy on making ageing a productive period of life in accordance with comments and contributions of the elderly.