



The Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) Helping Refugees in Turkey

What is the ESSN?

ESSN is a multi-purpose cash transfer scheme providing monthly assistance through debit cards to more than one million of the most vulnerable refugees in Turkey.

Those receiving assistance decide for themselves how to cover essential needs like rent, bills, food, and medicine.

The ESSN is the largest EU humanitarian aid programme ever and is part of the EUR 3 billion Facility for Refugees in Turkey.

It was launched in December 2016 and is funded until the end of January 2019 thanks to a contribution of EUR 1 billion from the EU.

What are the objectives?

- ⇒ help vulnerable refugees to meet their basic needs;
- ⇒ reduce families' use of coping strategies such as sending children to work instead of school;
- ⇒ reduce household debt and help families regain financial control and independence;
- ⇒ facilitate the integration of refugees into national social protection schemes;
- ⇒ enhance national crisis response capacities.

Who receives assistance?

Registered families living in Turkey under international protection or temporary protection can apply to ESSN.

ESSN selects those most in need, such as large families, the elderly, single females, single-headed households, and people with disabilities.

Those employed with a valid work permit or who own registered assets in Turkey are not eligible to receive assistance.

Why Multi-Purpose Cash?

Cash empowers people to manage their families' priorities and needs with a degree of choice and independence. Women take part in most decisions relating to the use of assistance.

Turkey's markets function well, so MPC allows recipients to stretch their budgets further. At least 85 percent of all ESSN funding ends up in the hands of those in need.

In Turkey, 72 percent of beneficiaries prefer cash to other modalities. This preference is increasing. Cash also supports the local economies where it is spent.

Who Does What?

In an unprecedented approach, WFP and Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) implement the ESSN from shared Joint Management Cell (JMC) premises in Ankara.

WFP provides monitoring and technical support and plays a key role in coordinating Basic Needs assistance in Turkey.

TRC manages the delivery of the programme nationwide, working with the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and its welfare centres, which process applications for the ESSN.

The Ministry of Interior's Directorates General for Migration Management (DGMM) and Population and Citizenship Affairs (DGPC) are responsible for ID issuance and address registration respectively; both are ESSN prerequisites.

ECHO, the EU agency funding the ESSN, and the Government of Turkey Disaster and Emergency Presidency (AFAD) co-chair the ESSN Governing Board, providing oversight, problem solving, and strategic direction for the ESSN programme.



How does it work?

Each eligible household receives a card like this. Every month, it is topped up with 120 Turkish Liras (USD 30) for each member of the household. They also receive periodic “top-ups”.

The card can be used at ATMs or to pay in shops.

What Other Support Is There?

The Government of Turkey has welcomed more refugees than any other country, providing them with services such as healthcare, education, and camp accommodation.

The Government’s response is supported by the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan, including WFP’s food assistance to families living in camps, UNICEF’s conditional cash transfers for education (CCTE) using the ESN card, language or vocational training, and more. The plan coordinates the response to maximise assistance to those in need.

What Comes Next?

ECHO, WFP, and the Government of Turkey are working to extend ESN assistance for 2018 and beyond.

ESN establishes a sustainable and nationally-integrated system to support refugees over the long term. Lessons learned from the unique approach and scale of ESN will help design assistance elsewhere in future.

ESN embodies Grand Bargain commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit: increased cash assistance, support for national responders, and multi-year funding.

Ahmad’s Story

After seeing his neighbour’s house destroyed in a bomb attack, Ahmad took his wife and children—and no belongings—and fled to Turkey in 2014.

Although his income from a shoe factory in Gaziantep did not cover his family’s needs, Ahmad used his first ESN payment to share food with his neighbours who had helped him by donating old furniture and clothes.

His family uses ESN assistance mainly for paying the rent and bills and buying food. “It takes a huge burden off our shoulders and brings us confidence and peace of mind,” he says.

Most Syrian refugees in Turkey hope to return home to rebuild their lives after the war is over.



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