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Responses to Information Requests

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20 November 2020

TUR200362.E

Turkey: Identity documents, including biometric passports, Republic of Turkey Identity Card, birth certificates, and driving licences; requirements and procedures to obtain such documents; appearance and security features (2018–November 2020)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Information on identity documents was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraint of this Response.

1. Issuing Authority

Sources report the following information on the issuing authority responsible for the specified identity documents in Turkey:

- Sources report that [as of April 2018 (US n.d.)] the authority to issue passports resides with the Ministry of Interior's Citizenship Directorate (Duvar 17 Sept. 2020) or General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship (US n.d.) and is no longer a function of law enforcement (Duvar 17 Sept. 2020; US n.d.).
- The US Department of State's reciprocity schedule reports that the Turkish ID cards (*Kimlik Kartı*, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Kimlik Kartı*) are issued by the Ministry of Interior's General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship (US n.d.).

- The US reciprocity schedule reports that the "Extract of Vital Record" (*Vukuatlı Nüfus Kayıt Örneği*) [extract of civil registry, *Nüfus Kayıt Örneği*] or birth certificate is issued by the General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship and the "e-Government website," which "offers users access to all public services from a single entry-point" (US n.d.).
- Sources report that the authority responsible for the driving license has been transferred from law enforcement to the Ministry of Interior's General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship (Duvar 17 Sept. 2020; *Hurriyet Daily News* 30 Oct. 2020).

2. Biometric Passport

Turkey's Anadolu Agency (AA), a state-run news agency (BBC 8 Oct. 2018), reports that the new Turkish biometric passport is available as of 1 November 2016 and will include a chip that contains fingerprint and facial image data (AA 31 Oct. 2016). According to Keesing Technologies' Documentchecker, the Turkish passport, first issued in 2018, is valid for a maximum of ten years, or "5 years for bearers younger than 18," and contains an International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) compliant "contactless chip in the biodata card" (Keesing Technologies n.d.a). Similarly, the EU's Public Register of Authentic Travel and Identity Documents Online (PRADO) reports the Turkish passport was first issued in 2018 (EU 13 Oct. 2020).

2.1 Requirements and Procedures to Obtain

In a country information report, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) describes the requirements and procedures to obtain a passport as follows:

The Interior Ministry approves and issues passports. Passport applicants must apply in person at the General Directorate of Population and Citizenship Affairs offices located in every province. Applicants must provide two passport photographs, their national identity card, proof of payment, and an original copy of their previous passport (if applicable). Applicants are also required to provide their fingerprints, which are stored in a centralised computer database along with the applicant's photograph. Once the application has been centrally approved, the passport is delivered to the applicant's address. Procedures and requirements to obtain a passport from abroad are the same as within Turkey. Applicants must apply in person at a Turkish diplomatic mission and make payment in local currency. (Australia 10 Sept. 2020, para. 5.36)

The website of Turkey's General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship indicates that passport applicants can make an appointment through their website [1] (Turkey n.d.a). The same website provides the following information on passport fees for 2020:

Validity	Total Amount
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Validity	Total Amount
6 Months	368.30 Turkish Lira (TRY) [C\$58]
1 Year	464.40 TRY [C\$73]
2 Years	657.00 TRY [C\$103]
3 Years	865.90 TRY [C\$135]
3+ Years	1,154.80 TRY [C\$180]

(Turkey n.d.b)

2.2 Appearance and Security Features

According to sources, Turkey issues four categories of passports with the following covers: red for [national (Keesing Technologies n.d.b)] passports, black for diplomatic passports, green for special passports and grey for service passports (EU 13 Oct. 2020; Keesing Technologies n.d.b; Turkey 16 Oct. 2020).

Sources report that the Turkish national passport measures 125 x 88 mm and contains 38 pages (EU n.d.a; Keesing Technologies n.d.a). According to Keesing Technologies' Documentchecker, the Turkish national passport includes the following data: surname, first names, date of birth, place of birth, nationality, bearer's signature, gender, personal ID (kimlik) number [see section 3 of this Response], passport number, date of expiry, date of issue, issuing country and issuing authority; it also has the following security features: microprint, nanoprint, relief embossing, photo repetition, hologram (Keesing Technologies n.d.a).

Samples of the Turkish passports, provided by Turkey's General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship through the Turkish Embassy in Ottawa, are attached to this Response (Attachments 1–4).

3. Identity Card

The Australian DFAT report indicates that the national ID card is compulsory and mandatory to carry (Australia 10 Sept. 2020, para. 5.33). The same source adds that [t]he cards are required for a wide range of everyday activities, including work, access to health and social services, registration to vote, access to courts, obtaining a passport or driver's licence, registration for school or university, registration of property or vehicle ownership, and obtaining telephone, internet, and home utilities. (Australia 10 Sept. 2020, para. 5.33)

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to AA, pilot distribution of the "new biometric identity cards" began in 2016 in Kirikkale province (AA 23 Mar. 2016). Keesing Technologies reports that the Turkish ID card "was first issued in March 2016" (Keesing Technologies n.d.c). The US Department of State's reciprocity schedule for Turkey states that the new Turkish ID card was available as of January 2017 (US n.d.). The Australian DFAT report indicates that "[b]iometric identity cards went into effect in January 2017" (Australia 10 Sept. 2020, para. 5.33). Sources report that the biometric cards store both finger and palm print information (AA 23 Mar. 2016; Australia 10 Sept. 2020, para. 5.33).

AA indicates that the ID cards are valid for ten years (AA 23 Mar. 2016). Keesing Technologies reports that the validity period varies, and the expiry date is indicated on the front of the card (Keesing Technologies n.d.c).

The US reciprocity schedule reports that the *nüfus cüzdanı* (old version of the ID card) is still valid (US n.d.). The Australian DFAT report states that "citizens are required to surrender their old ID cards for the new biometric cards by 2023" (Australia 10 Sept. 2020, 51). For additional information on the *nüfus cüzdanı*, see Response to Information Request TUR105166 of June 2015.

3.1 Requirements and Procedures to Obtain

The website of Turkey's General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship indicates that ID card applicants can make an appointment through their website (Turkey n.d.a).

The US reciprocity schedule reports that the fee for an ID card is 16 TRY [C\$2.50] (US n.d.). The website of the General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship provides the following information on ID card fees for 2020:

[translation]

Reason for Application	Fee Amount (TRY)
ID card "issued for birth after the legal notification period"	25 TRY [C\$3.90]
ID card "issued for replacement"	25 TRY
"Loss of an ID card" (<i>nüfus cüzdanı</i>)	25 TRY
"Loss of a Republic of Turkey ID Card" (<i>Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Kimlik Kartı</i>)	50 TRY

(Turkey n.d.b)

Further and corroborating information on the requirements and procedures to obtain the ID card could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3.2 Appearance and Security Features

The US reciprocity schedule describes the ID card as being "credit card size[d]" and containing a photo if the bearer is over 14 (US n.d.). Similarly, Keesing Technologies indicates that the ID card is polycarbonate, measures 86 x 54 mm and may not contain a photograph if the person is under 15 years of age (Keesing Technologies n.d.c).

According to Keesing Technologies, the ID Card displays the following information: surname, first name(s), date of birth, nationality, bearer's signature, gender, kimlik number, document number, expiry date, issuing country and issuing authority; the security features include: multiple laser image, guilloche, nanoprint, offset printing, hologram, 1D barcode and optically variable ink (Keesing Technologies n.d.c). The Australian DFAT report describes the ID card as follows:

The front page of the biometric national ID cards contains the following information: holder's photograph, full name, sex (E for male and K for female), date of birth, and TR identity number ["a unique 11-digit individual identity number" (Australia 10 Sept. 2020, para. 5.32)], in addition to the ID card serial number, and card expiry date. The back page contains the holder's parents' names and ID card serial number. (Australia 10 Sept. 2020, para. 5.34)

4. Birth Registration

UNHCR reports that birth registrations are made through the population office and that there is no cost to register a birth in Turkey if done within 30 days (UN 31 Aug. 2017). Similarly, a country report on Turkey for the Asylum Information Database (AIDA), coordinated by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) [2] indicates that

[t]he notification needs to be made to the Population and Civil Registry Departments within 30 days. After birth registration, a birth certificate will be issued for the child. The registration process and the issuance of the certificate are free of charge. (ECRE 2019, 111)

The US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019* reports that "[t]here was universal birth registration, and births were generally registered promptly" (US 11 Mar. 2020, 55). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

UNHCR reports that registering a birth in Turkey does not automatically confer citizenship on the child (UN 31 Aug. 2017). US *Country Reports 2019* states that a child receives citizenship through a parent who is a Turkish citizen, not through birth in the country (US 11 Mar. 2020, 55-56).

4.1 Birth Certificate

The US reciprocity schedule indicates the following:

Birth certificates are available to all Turkish citizens. For non-Turkish persons, they are available only if the birth was registered with the Turkish authorities during the parents' stay in Turkey with a legal residency permit. This document is not available for children born in Turkey during a temporary or illegal stay of the parents or who were on a diplomatic status. (US n.d.)

4.2 Requirements and Procedure to Obtain

According to sources, birth registration can be completed by the child's mother, father, legal guardian, grandparent, adult sibling, or "persons accompanying the child" (ECRE 2019, 111; UN 31 Aug. 2017).

The US reciprocity schedule indicates that "[b]irth certificates can be obtained through the e-Government website or by personally applying to the General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship" (US n.d.). The same source adds that "[t]he legitimacy of the document obtained at e-Government can be verified online with its barcode number" (US n.d.). The website of Turkey's General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship indicates that appointments for birth registration can be made through their website (Turkey n.d.a).

4.3 Appearance and Security Features

The US reciprocity schedule describes the format of the extract of vital record as follows:

[A g]overnment of Turkey seal in red color [is] placed at [the] right bottom side of the document - white paper with black ink. Signed by [the] preparer and approver. Currently available in A4 sized paper. It is a chart printed in landscape format with the holder's name, last name, father's name, mother's name, [place and date of birth], [m]arital [s]tatus on the first line. The following lines would list [the] holder's family members and their biographic information [would be] written in the next columns in the same order. If it is obtained through [the] e-Government website, the document would have a barcode on upper right[,] instead of red stamp and signatures. (US n.d.)

For further information on the extract of vital record, see Response to Information Request TUR105610 of September 2016.

5. Driving License

Sources report that as of September 2020 the Turkish ID card will also be able to hold the bearer's driving licence information, negating the requirement to carry both (*Daily Sabah* 18 Sept. 2020; Duvar 17 Sept. 2020). Citing information provided by the Ministry of Interior to the Demirören News Agency, *Hurriyet Daily News* [3] indicates that approximately 420,000 individuals have connected their driving license information with their ID cards as of October 2020 (*Hurriyet Daily News* 30 Oct. 2020).

5.1 Requirements and Procedures to Obtain

Just Landed, an information, resource and service website for people moving abroad (Just Landed n.d.a), reports that drivers "must be at least 18 years old in order to drive a car and at least 17 to drive a motorbike" in Turkey (Just Landed n.d.b). The same source states that a medical certificate and eyesight test are required for a driving license (Just Landed n.d.b). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources report that to apply for a driving license, students must attend a driving school, achieve a minimum score of 70 percent on a theory test, and pass a practical road test (Just Landed n.d.a; KU n.d.a). The International Community Office (ICO) of Koç Üniversitesi (KU) in Turkey, responsible for providing information to its staff and students including international students (KU n.d.a), indicates that upon passing the exams, the applicant can collect the driving license by making an appointment on the website of the General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship (KU n.d.b). The website of Turkey's General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship similarly indicates that driving license applicants can make an appointment through their website (Turkey n.d.a). The ICO of KU adds that the following documents are required:

- 4 biometric photographs,
- education certificate,
- address registration certificate,
- criminal report,
- health report, and
- passport and residence permit card (KU n.d.b).

5.2 Appearance and Security Features

According to sources, the driving license, first issued in 2016, measures 86 x 54 mm and contains a photo (EU n.d.b; Keesing Technologies n.d.d). Keesing Technologies' Documentchecker reports that the Turkish driving license includes the following data: name, first name, date of birth, place of birth, bearer's signature, document number, expiry date, date of issue, issuing country and issuing authority; and the driving license contains the following

security features: laser engraving, optically variable ink, microprint, asymmetric print, hologram, guilloche, quick response code and "[o]ther security features" (Keesing Technologies n.d.d).

A sample of a driving license is provided on the website of the EU's PRADO (EU n.d.c)

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

Notes

[1] Accessing Turkey's General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship requires a log-in (Turkey n.d.a).


[2] The Asylum Information Database (AIDA) is a database coordinated by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), providing "up-to-date information on asylum practice in 23 countries" (ECRE 2019, ii). The ECRE is an "alliance of 106 NGOs across 40 European countries" that aims to "protect and advance the rights of refugees, asylum-seekers and other forcibly displaced persons in Europe and in Europe's external policies" (ECRE n.d.).

[3] The Media Ownership Monitor Turkey website, a project of Bianet and Reporters Without Borders (Reporters sans frontières, RSF), reports that the Demirören Group, a private company operated by a family with close ties to Turkish President Tayyip Erdoğan, owns a news agency and the *Hürriyet Daily News*, a Turkish newspaper (Bianet and RSF [2019]).

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Assistant professor of international relations with a focus on Turkey; associate professor of international relations and political science with a research interest in migration and citizenship; associate professor of international relations with a research interest in citizenship studies in Turkey; associate professor of political science with a research interest in citizenship studies in Turkey; California-based American and Turkish immigration lawyer; computer engineer specializing in smart cards and identification; Istanbul-based law firm; Massachusetts-based American and Turkish immigration lawyer; New York-based American and Turkish immigration lawyer; researcher with an area of expertise in official documents and Turkey; software engineer specializing in smart card and biometrics; US-based immigration lawyer.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International; Belgium – Commissariat général aux réfugiés et aux apatrides, Centre de documentation et de recherches; BiometricUpdate.com; Denmark – Danish National ID Centre; ecoi.net; Edison TD; EEMA; EU – European Asylum Support Office; France – Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides; Global Citizenship Observatory; Henley Passport Index; International Air Transport Association; Ipek Eviz; Netherlands – Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Norway – Landinfo: Country of Origin Information; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; Passport-collector.com;

Refugees International; Security Document World; Thales; Turkey – National Research Institute of Electronics and Cryptology; Turkish Airlines; Turkey iResidence; UK – Home Office; UN – International Civil Aviation Organization, Refworld; World Bank.

Attachments

1. Turkey. N.d. Ministry of Interior, General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship Affairs. Passport. Sent to the Research Directorate by the Embassy of Turkey in Ottawa, 16 October 2020.
2. Turkey. N.d. Ministry of Interior, General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship Affairs. Diplomatic Passport. Sent to the Research Directorate by the Embassy of Turkey in Ottawa, 16 October 2020.
3. Turkey N.d. Ministry of Interior, General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship Affairs. Service Passport. Sent to the Research Directorate by the Embassy of Turkey in Ottawa, 16 October 2020.
4. Turkey. N.d. Ministry of Interior, General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship Affairs. Special Passport. Sent to the Research Directorate by the Embassy of Turkey in Ottawa, 16 October 2020.

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