

## The Multilingual Situation in Turkey

As of 31 December 2011, the total population in Turkey is 74.724.269 inhabitants, 50.2% of whom are reported to be women (Turkish Statistical Institute News Bulletin, 2012). Article No. 3 of the Turkish Constitution states that the official language of the Turkish Republic is Turkish, though many other languages are used as dominant and additional languages.

Unfortunately, there are very few studies that attempt to quantify the languages spoken in Turkey. According to one of these studies, the large-scale survey report by KONDA, approximately 85% of the population in Turkey reports Turkish as the native language, followed by Kurdish (12%), Arabic (1%) and Zaza (1%). Other languages reported as native languages in Turkey (all reported as less than 1%) are Armenian, Anatolian Greek (Romaic), Ladino, various Balkan Languages, various Caucasian languages, the Laz language, Circassian, various Turkic languages and the Coptic language, among a few others (KONDA Social Structure Research Report, 2006). In the population exchanges of 1924, Anatolian Greek speakers emigrated and Turkish speakers immigrated from Greece. A century of migration of Turkish speakers from Bulgaria continued into the 1990s. Recent refugee migrations have brought limited numbers of speakers of Farsi and Pashto, among a few others.

There are no reliable figures on multilingualism in Turkish schools. Even the most recent report of the Ministry of Education (2011) does not provide any figures on the number of students with nationalities other than Turkish or the dominant languages of students in formal education. The only relevant statistics provided are those on the number of minority and foreign educational institutions and the number of students. It is stated in the report that there are 12 minority and 1 foreign nursery classes in which a total of 362 students receive education, 5 minority kindergartens (196 students), 34 private minority primary schools (2314 students), 1 private foreign primary school (42 students), 11 minority high schools (1001 students) and 14 foreign high schools (7920 students).

KONDA Research and Consultancy. (2006). *Who are We? Social Structure Research*. Istanbul.

The Turkish Ministry of National Education. (2011). *National Education Statistics*. Ankara.

The Turkish Statistical Institute. (2012). *News Bulletin*, No. 16. TÜİK: Ankara.