Honorable Recep Tayyip Erdoğan  
President of the Republic of Turkey  
Cumhurbaşkanlığı Külliyesi, Beştepe /Ankara, Turkey  

Subject: Regarding the Employment of Foreigners Covered by Temporary Protection Regulation  

Since the outbreak of civil war in 2011, a growing number of Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) citizens have been coming to the Republic of Turkey (Turkey) to seek shelter. Turkey has granted these people “temporary protection”. The rapid increase in human rights violations in Syria since 2012 has led to a substantial increase in the need for humanitarian aid. The “open door” policy pursued by Turkey—which has had strong historic, cultural, and cross-border relations with Syria—towards Syrians and the equal social rights that Turkey (unlike many other countries) has granted them on an equal footing with Turkish citizens, including access to the labour market, is being followed by all international organizations and institutions with appreciation. First and foremost, we would like to express our thanks to Your Excellency for this selfless work.  

In this respect, foreigners under temporary protection in Turkey were granted access to the labour market when the decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Turkey (January 11, 2016) was promulgated by its publication in the Official Gazette (January 15, 2016) no 8375 as “Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection”. Among many countries where Syrian asylum-seekers are present, only in Turkey and Jordan is this permit granted. In that regard, we believe that efforts on the following issues would help further the achievement of the intended goals of the work permits and help Turkey gain more recognition for the opportunities it provides to Syrian asylum-seekers in the international arena:

- Work permits shall be valid not only in the city where residency is originally registered, but in all cities, nationwide (Relevant Legislation: Regulation on Temporary Protection, Article 24 and Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection, Article 7);
• Foreigners under temporary protection who have been granted work permits shall be paid all their wages and wage components arising from the relevant law and written business contracts through banks, and they shall be able to open accounts in all public and private banks to prevent off-the-book transactions. (Relevant Legislation: Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection, Article 13/1, and Regulation on Payment of Wages, Premiums, Bonuses and Any Other Remuneration of this Nature through Banks, Article 10/1);

• Effective participation of foreigners under temporary protection in vocational and career development courses offered by İŞKUR shall be ensured in order to enhance their qualifications in all professions in demand by the labour market and to increase their employability, with direct involvement of the Directorate General of İŞKUR. (Relevant Legislation: Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection, Article 12);

• The fee and expenses, in the amount of nearly 600 TL, incurred for the application of a work permit upon initial recruitment and subsequently on an annual basis upon renewal, shall be rescinded. (Relevant Legislation: Law no 492 on Fees and the second paragraph of Article 27 of the Law no 6735 on International Workforce and the amended Law no 210 on Valuable Papers);

• To aid them in their job search, Syrian asylum seekers shall be provided with a vocational qualification evaluation and where a Vocational Qualification Certificate is required for employment, they shall be provided with an official document of similar import. (Relevant Legislation: Article 17 of the Law no 6331 on Occupational Health and Safety and Articles 5 and 6 of the Regulation on Vocational Training for Those to be Employed in Hazardous and Very Hazardous Work);

• In cases where foreigners are employed without a work permit, Syrian asylum seekers shall be exempt from the fine imposed on employees. (Relevant Legislation: Article 23 of the Law no 6735 on International Workforce).
We would like to bring these points to your kind attention as we truly believe that such complementary steps will increase the number of work permits granted, which currently stand at thousands despite all well-intentioned efforts, to tens, and even hundreds of thousands, and will serve to alleviate the suffering endured by these people who had to flee their country under terrible conditions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sharon Waxman
President and CEO
Fair Labor Association

Representatives of international workers’ rights organizations and multi-national companies doing business in Turkey:

**Brands:**

William Anderson
Vice President, Social & Environmental Affairs, Asia Pacific
adidas Group

Andrew Magowan
General Counsel and Company Secretary
Asos

Aleix Gonzalez Busquets
Head of External Stakeholder Engagement
C&A

Leslie Shull
Global Compliance Director
Delta Galil Industries Ltd.
Lary Brown
Vice President and Head of Global Social & Environmental Sustainability
Esprit

Annette Koch
Head of Corporate Responsibility
Gerry Weber

Per-Johan Swartling
Chief Executive Officer
Gina Tricot

Jay J. Herring
Business Unit Leader
Gore Bike Wear and Running Wear

Serkan Tanka
Turkey Country Manager
H&M

Felix Poza Peña
Head of Sustainability Department
Inditex

Britta Schrage-Oliva
Head of Corporate Communications and Public Affairs
KiK Textilien & Non-Food GmbH

Lena Trend Hansen
Director
LauRie

Anna-Karin Dahlberg
Global Production Sustainability Manager
Lindex
Fredrika Erlandsson
Assortment & Purchasing Manager
MQ

Monica Oberkofler Gorman
Vice President of Global Compliance
New Balance

Subathra Vaidhiyanathan
Head of Corporate Social Responsibility
New Look

Noel Kinder
Vice President, Sustainable Manufacturing & Sourcing
Nike, Inc.

Maren Barthel
Corporate Social Responsibility Manager
Otto Group

Stefan D. Seidel
Head of Corporate Sustainability
Puma

Roz Adams
Product and compliance Manager
Whistles
Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations:

Christian Ewert
Director General, Foreign Trade Association (FTA)

Karen Tramontano
President
Global Fairness Initiative

Nina Smith
Chief Executive Officer
GoodWeave

Michael H. Posner
Director
New York University Stern Center for Business and Human Rights

Meg Roggansack
Georgetown Law School

Jim Silk
Binger Clinical Professor of Human Rights
Yale Law School