

We Are Monitoring Violations of Musicians' Rights

2021



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Image 1 Duran Ay used to perform in venues in Beyoğlu district of Istanbul. He lost his job during the pandemic, faced economic hardship, and committed suicide on December 15, 2020.

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1. Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic, which started in China in December 2019 and was first seen in Turkey in March 2020, has created an unprecedented worldwide crisis. The pandemic continues to negatively affect Turkey along with the rest of the world. The field of culture and arts is among

the most negatively affected by the pandemic. Turkey has implemented effective curfews and restrictions within the last year. As part of these restrictions, music halls, culture centers, cafes, bars, venues for live music performances, and public entertainment venues were closed, and events and activities such as concerts, festivals, fairs, festivities, and music performances were banned, creating serious financial hardship for the hundreds of thousands of music workers who made a living in this sector.

The Anatolian Music Cultures Association counts among its members academicians working in the field of music, professional and amateur musicians and street performers, and composers. It also cooperates and has close relations with other NGOs working in the field of music. This means that the Association has been a first hand witness to all the problems encountered in the sector. At some point, bearing witness necessarily turned into taking action with a focus on developing solutions.

Out of this necessity, the Anatolian Music Cultures Association initiated a series of activities to make violations of music producers' rights visible, identify the basic needs of music producers, create a roadmap on the basis of these needs, and establish a solidarity network for music producers.

The activities consisted of three stages following and complementing one another. In the first stage, meetings were held for "Networks of Solidarity for Music Producers." This activity was supported by the Think Civil EU program, and the meetings were attended by about 100 people from the field of music. Following the exchange of ideas and experiences in these meetings, a series of recommendations were developed regarding the field of culture and arts, which is important in terms of social rights, as well as how to meet the vital needs of producers in this field, and these recommendations were recorded to be shared with relevant agencies and organizations.

In the second stage, in line with one of the recommendations of these meetings, a "Solidarity Night for Music Producers" was held with the support of Ankara City Council and Ankara Metropolitan Municipality. The night was attended by 31 musicians. Proceeds from the night went to music producers in need of income. Following this event, relevant NGOs and local governments were called upon to organize solidarity campaigns, and the process was monitored. Awareness was raised to keep the troubles of music producers on the agenda and develop emergency action plans.

The report titled “We Are Monitoring Violations of Music Producers’ Rights” constitutes the third stage in this process.

We do not have official figures on the number of people working in this field, in part because music industry workers are not employed formally or on a regular basis. Because they are not formally registered as such with the government, the hundreds of thousands of music industry workers are treated as if they don’t exist. This attitude also prevents the development of policies needed to deal with the problems faced. The neglect of the basic rights of music industry workers during the pandemic is a severe violation of human rights. It shows that the government needs to develop urgent policies to provide the necessary and sufficient support to people who earn a living in the music industry.

A work schedule was created as part of this study, and data collected following this schedule were reported in order to call attention to the ongoing violations of rights, which have so far remained invisible to the larger society and government.

The process of reporting began by distributing a questionnaire developed by experts taking part in the study, which was eventually filled out by a total of 310 professional, amateur, and street musicians. Following the survey, focus group meetings were held with 30 music industry workers, including experts taking part in the study, and a detailed summary of these meetings was prepared. This report is mainly based on data obtained from the survey and the focus group meetings held. Measures taken in other countries regarding the music industry and musicians were also examined. and included in the report.

This report aims to call the attention of official agencies, local governments, NGOs, culture centers, and private companies operating in the field of culture and arts to violations of musicians’ rights and make these violations visible. This visibility would contribute to strengthening human rights advocacy in Turkey, particularly in the field of culture and arts.

2. Introduction

2.1. The Current Situation

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which was first seen in China at the end of December 2019,¹ was declared to be a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11th, 2020. With high numbers of cases reported by different countries, the issue quickly turned into a global crisis. The first Covid-19 case in Turkey was reported by the Ministry of Health on March 11th, 2020. The first death due to the coronavirus took place on March 15th, 2020, and the disease was reported to have spread throughout the country by April 1st, 2020.²

Numerous circulars issued during the pandemic forced many employers and employees to suspend their work. Towards the end of 2020, when the pandemic reached dramatic proportions, many workplaces including small businesses had to stop their operations. According to data released by the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) in December 2020 on companies that were founded or shut down within the year, a total of 15,949 companies were shut down in 2020.³ According to data published in Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen Registry, cited by Veli Ağbaba, a member of parliament from the Republican People's Party,⁴ a minimum of 99,588 tradesmen shut down their businesses in 2020. This means that an average of 273 tradesmen a day have shut down their businesses in 2020. However, these data do not include legal or real persons who have gone bankrupt in practice but are unable to apply for closing their business due to back taxes or social security premiums owed.

With the beginning of the pandemic, Turkey started to take a series of measures like the rest of the world. To stop the increase in the number of cases and control the pandemic, the current government placed severe restrictions on business and social life, including on education. The process first began with the cancellation of Wuhan-Istanbul flights by China Airlines, and continued with a circular by the Ministry of Interior dated March 16th, 2020 and sent to all 81

¹ <https://covid19.saglik.gov.tr/TR-66300/covid-19-nedir-.html> Sağlık Bakanlığı, 2020

² <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/koronavirus/saglik-bakani-koca-turkiyede-ilk-koronavirus-vakasinin-goruldugunu-acikladi/1761466>

³ <https://www.tobb.org.tr/BilgiErisimMudurlugu/Documents/ResmiDosya/2020/2020-12.xls>

⁴

<https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/2020de-istanbulda-9-bin-587-izmirde-ise-6-bin-537-esnaf-kepenk-ka-patti-1808828>

governor's offices,⁵ which temporarily suspended the operations of theater halls, movie theaters, performance centers, concert halls, engagement/wedding halls, restaurants/cafes with live music, casinos, pubs, taverns, coffee houses, cafeterias, gardens, hookah lounges, hookah cafes, internet lounges, internet cafes, all kinds of gaming rooms, all kinds of indoor children's playgrounds [including those inside shopping malls and restaurants], tea gardens, association clubs, amusement parks, swimming pools, Turkish baths, saunas, spas, massage parlors, and gyms. Three days after this circular by the Ministry of the Interior, another circular banned all sorts of meetings, activities, and large-scale events bringing people together. According to data released by the Ministry, a total of 149,382 workplaces suspended their operations between March 15th and 18th, 2020.⁶ Of these workplaces, 18,836 were businesses that mainly employed music industry workers (bars, pubs, restaurants/cafes with live music, discotheques, night clubs, performance centers, concert halls, and taverns). After the closure of businesses/venues that brought people together, which went into effect on March 17th, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced on June 9th, 2020 that theaters, performance centers, and wedding halls would be able to resume their operations from July 1st, 2020 onwards.⁷ Venues such as wedding halls and performance centers are currently allowed to operate subject to certain conditions (regarding curfew, restrictions on the number of participants allowed, etc.). Venues such as night clubs, bars, pubs, and discotheques, on the other hand, which employ many music industry workers, remain closed since March.

Restrictions placed on culture and arts activities have affected, in particular, amateur and professional musicians who work on a seasonal basis in these fields and have no social security or regular income, rendering them unable to meet their basic needs. Similarly, street musicians had to stay away from streets, where they used to earn all their income and meet their needs.

This process denied musicians and music industry workers the opportunity to live with dignity, and violated their right recognized by the following article in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."⁸

⁵ <https://www.icisleri.gov.tr/81-il-valiligine-koronavirus-tedbirleri-konulu-ek-genelge-gonderildi>

⁶ <https://www.icisleri.gov.tr/koronavirus-tedbirleri-genelgesi-kapsaminda-149382-is-yeri-gecici-sureligine-faaliyetlerine-ara-verdi>

⁷ <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-52985369>

⁸ <http://www.multeci.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Insan-Haklari-Beyannamesi-1.pdf>

According to Article 64 of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, “The State shall protect artistic activities and artists. The State shall take the necessary measures to protect, promote and support works of art and artists, and encourage the spread of appreciation for the arts.” Although there have been efforts to take the necessary measures as per this provision of the constitution, the measures taken and the support provided were largely insufficient. Therefore, musicians in Turkey had their right specified in Article 64 of the Constitution violated.

The first restrictions that began in March 2020 were somewhat relaxed in June 2020, but this failed to change the negative effects endured by music industry workers. The tendency of people to stay away from crowded places, restrictions on hours when music activities can be held, and the requirement that indoor venues must work at half capacity meant that music industry workers continued to suffer from the negative effects of the pandemic.

The effect of the global coronavirus pandemic on working life was not uniform across all industries. For example, businesses that manufacture and supply materials, hygiene products, etc. have seen a significant rise in their profit margins, whereas those in transportation, education, tourism, and service sectors suffered heavy losses. As a result, the process of post-crisis recovery will be different for different sectors (Yusuf Balcı, 2020, s. 43). Music workers are known to be employed by businesses that operate in the service sector (entertainment venues such as cafes, bars, restaurants, etc.). However, many of these workers are employed on an hourly/daily/seasonal basis. We do not have exact figures regarding the number of people working in the music industry in Turkey because many of them are employed informally. Employers of musicians who work as informal employees prefer informal arrangements for various reasons, and many music industry workers have no choice but to go along. According to a report published by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) in November 2020, informal employees make up 29.7% of the total workforce.⁹ It is estimated that more than one million people work in the music industry. In a column published on *birgun.net* on October 24th, 2020, Güvenç Üstündağ cites Hasan Aldemir, a board member of Müzik-Sen (Union of Musicians and Stage Artists), who says there are over 900,000 musicians in Istanbul alone.¹⁰ According to data obtained from the survey conducted as part of the study titled “We Are Monitoring Violations of Musicians’ Rights,” the music industry is the sole source of income for 80% of the respondents.

⁹ <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Isgucu-Istatistikleri-Kasim-2020-37480>

¹⁰ <https://www.birgun.net/haber/muzik-sen-sinifta-kaldi-320346>

Music industry workers, because a majority of them are employed informally, face problems such as being unable to benefit from the state support provided and being unable to apply for bank loans. We have seen tragic consequences such as the suicides of about 100 musicians who lost their jobs in this process. On February 19th, 2021, the media reported that yet another musician had committed suicide because he was unemployed for almost a year.¹¹ In a story published on *Evrensel.net* on January 4th, 2021, street musician Ümit Taşkıran summed up the situation as follows: “...Overall, many people are suffering from depression. Besides musicians, the industry employs many people who work in other positions. Backstage, road crew, tonmeisters, even venue owners, all of them were destroyed at once, and I don’t know how they can ever recover. The state provides no support at all because they prefer to deny the existence of this industry. No bar owner is given subsidies or support until they can recover or are able to open their venues again. Musicians, on the other hand, are not even formally employed. I am unable to apply for short work allowance, unemployment benefit, or anything else. Come to think of it, it would be absurd to expect anything of the sort from this government. Many musicians are planning to leave the country. Those who remain either rely on their families for support, or switch industries. There are many musicians who consider or even commit suicide out of desperation.”¹²

2.2 An Overview of the Music Industry in Turkey

In this report, the industry referred to as the “Music Industry” is divided into two general categories: recorded music and live music. Recorded music refers to all sorts of musical content recorded on vinyls, cassettes, CDs or digital media and offered to listeners, who buy them through music stores, web sites, or online applications [such as YouTube, Spotify, etc.] for their personal consumption¹³; live music, on the other hand, refers to playing/organizing or providing technical services for live performances in concerts and festivals, as well as in venues such as bars, restaurants/cafes with live music, discotheques, pubs, night clubs, performance centers, concert halls, and taverns.

¹¹ <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/issiz-muzisyen-intihar-etti-1814939>

¹²

<https://www.evrensel.net/haber/422695/kadikoylu-muzisyenler-pandemiden-etkilendi-demek-hafif-bir-tabir-yok-olduk>

¹³ İstanbul Müzik Endüstrisi- Sektör Araştırma Raporu [Music Industry in İstanbul - Industry Research Report], 2010(http://www.envanter.gov.tr/files/yayin/ISTANBUL_MUZIK_ENDUSTRISI.pdf, Accessed February 25th, 2021)

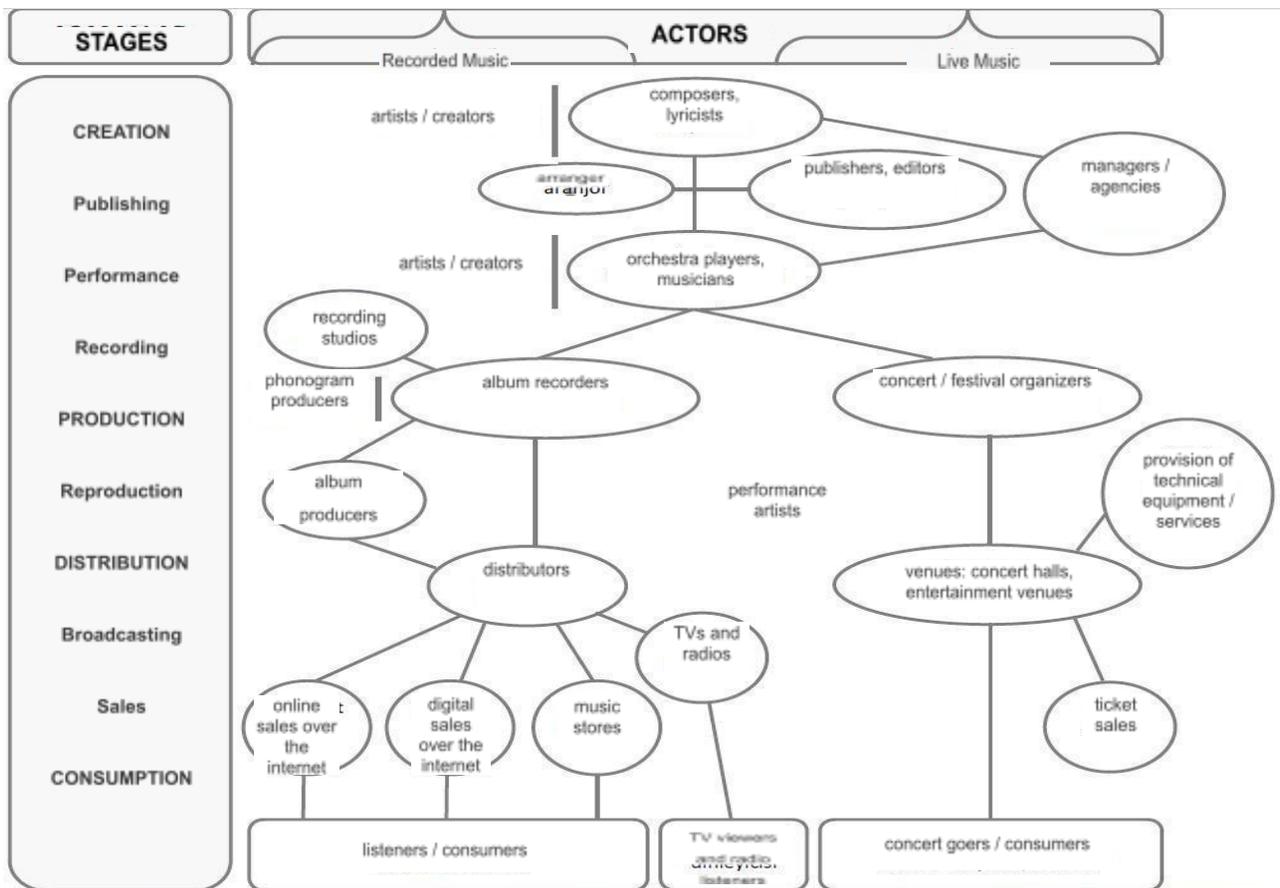


Figure 1 shows the subfields within the music industry, based on the Industry Research Report published in 2010 with the title “Music Industry in Istanbul.”

Figure 1 Music Industry in Turkey

The subfields shown in Figure 1 provide an overview of a significant portion of the music industry in Turkey, which, nevertheless, is not limited to these fields. Turkey is home to a deep and rich cultural heritage, and contains numerous musical cultures. Today, as a result of this deep heritage, music is an inseparable part of special days and occasions for almost all segments of society. Indeed, this table leaves out street musicians, wedding musicians, minstrels, and musicians serving in music education institutions (public or private). Therefore, the number of people who make a living through music is much larger than reflected in official figures.

Problems experienced by music industry workers during the pandemic became more severe over time, giving more visibility to violations of their rights. Violations of economic and social rights in Turkey increased significantly with the Covid-19 pandemic. On the other hand, there has been a corresponding increase in the number of studies and efforts to monitor violations of

rights.¹⁴ For example, according to a December 2020 report by the Human Rights Association,¹⁵ which has been publishing human rights reports on a regular basis since 1994, there has been a significant increase, compared to previous years, in the number of applications concerning violations of economic and social rights. This increase parallels the restrictions in the first three months of the pandemic and in September. (İnsan Hakları Derneği Ekonomik ve Sosyal Haklar Komisyonu, 2020, p.4).

3. Aims and Scope of the Study

The measures taken and restrictions imposed with the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a visible increase in violations of the rights of music producers and music industry workers in Turkey. This rights-based study aims to shed light on the problems experienced and violations of human rights suffered during the Covid-19 pandemic by professional and amateur music producers and workers, who were rendered unable to work and earn a living to meet their most basic needs when culture centers, entertainment venues, and concerts were cancelled or closed down as part of the measures taken and restrictions imposed to limit the spread of the pandemic. One of the aims of the study is to raise public awareness and offer recommendations for the solution of these problems.

3.1. Methods of the Study

This study, conducted to monitor violations of musicians' rights during the Covid-19 pandemic and raise awareness of this issue, began with a series of meetings held prior to actual research, where preliminary work was undertaken and potential participants were identified. After gaining access to the participants, data for the study were collected using quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

3.1.1. Data Collection Methods and Participants in the Study

This study, conducted to identify violations of musicians' rights during the pandemic, utilized multiple data collection methods given the limitations of relying on a single method. (Şimşek, 2016, s. 86) In order to accurately identify the current situation and provide a detailed picture of the severity of the violations of musicians' rights to the extent possible, as well as to achieve a

¹⁴ https://sugender.sabanciuniv.edu/sites/sugender.sabanciuniv.edu/files/pandemi_raporu.pdf

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5PvpM2G_VShrD__Ew5ZvzQ

https://www.stgm.org.tr/sites/default/files/2020-11/pandemi-surecinde-engelli-kadinlarin-hak-ihlalleri_dijital.pdf

¹⁵

<https://www.ihd.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Covid-19-Pandemisi-S%C3%BCrecinde-Ekonomik-ve-Sosyal-Haklar-Raporu-1.pdf>

more consistent interpretation of the data to be collected, data were triangulated (Glesne, 2015, s. 63); (Creswell, 2017, s. 185).

All news, official statements, reports, and similar documents released after the Covid-19 was recognized as a pandemic were accessed through a literature search. Moreover, a survey with wide participation and focus group meetings served as important sources of data for the study.

The study used survey methodology, an instrument used in social sciences to standardize observations.(Balci, 2018, s. 150) As Singleton and Straits note, survey methodology, which is mainly used in quantitative studies, involves systematically administering questionnaires consisting of open or closed-ended questions to large numbers of people, depending on the aims of a study (Ahmet Güler, 2015, s. 49). In this study, a questionnaire prepared to identify violations of the rights of music industry workers in Turkey was distributed online to ensure having participants from different cities and regions. A total of 310 participants filled out the questionnaire.

In addition to the survey, online focus groups meetings were held with participants from different cities in Turkey (Ankara, İzmir, İstanbul, Niğde, Kayseri, Muğla, and Kırşehir, among others), in different professional roles (lyricists, composers, performers, trainers, producers, employers, and music students). “Focus group meetings have become a recognized method in social sciences around the middle of the 20th century (Merriam, 2018, s. 93). In focus group meetings, a specific topic is discussed with a small group of participants. Groups usually consist of 6 to 10 people with similar backgrounds, and the meetings last 1 to 2 hours (Patton, 2018, s. 385). Focus group meetings were planned to last around 1 hour, and meetings were held online from January 19th to January 21st, 2021, in three sessions with the participation of music producers with similar backgrounds. During the focus group meetings, participants were asked semi-structured interview questions. Prior to the meetings, participants were informed in detail about the aims of the study and focus groups.

4. Findings

Findings regarding violations of musicians’ rights during the pandemic, based on a literature review and data from focus group meetings and the survey, are reported in the following under separate headings.

4.1. Demographics

Of the 310 participants in the study, 80% were male (n=248), 20% were female (n=61), and 1 participant did not wish to specify their gender.

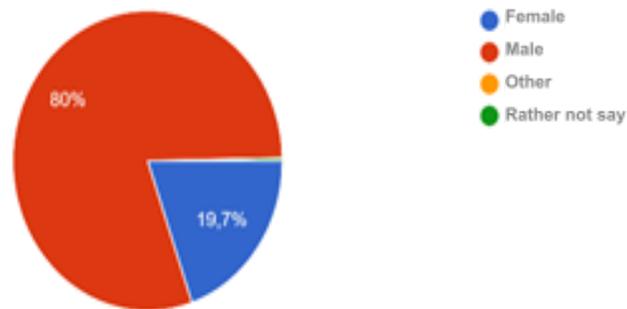


Figure 2 Gender Distribution of Participants

74% of the participants were under the age of 44, and can be classified as young. Half of the music industry workers who participated in the study were married, 53.5% did not have children, 20.3% had 1 child, 17.4% had 2 children, 6.5% had 3 children, and 1.3% had 4 children.

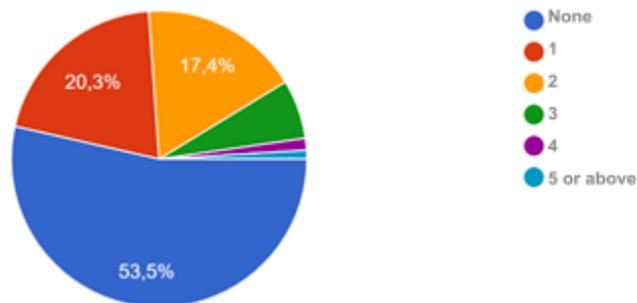


Figure 3 Number of children

In terms of household size, there is balanced distribution between the categories. 15.2% of the participants lived alone, whereas 46.5% lived in a household with 3 or more other members.

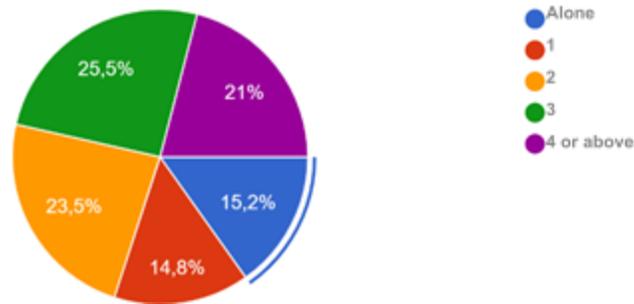


Figure 4 Number of Other People Sharing the Same Household

According to TURKSTAT’s 2019 “Population and Housing Survey,”¹⁶ the average household size in Turkey is 3.35 persons. In 1990, on the other hand, the average household size was 5.05. About half of music industry workers live in households that are larger than the country average. 21% of participants, on the other hand, had a household size close to the average household size in Turkey in 1990.

Data on educational attainment of participants are as follows:

- 35.2% of the participants were high school graduates or less, and 64.8% had undergraduate or graduate degrees in music or other fields.
- 66% of participants who had undergraduate or graduate degrees majored in fine arts or other art-related fields. Participants who received fine arts education or other arts-related education made up 42.6% of all participants.
- 71% of participants played instruments, 36.1% were vocal performers, 17.7% were composers, and 11.9% were lyricists.
- Other participants had different professional roles, including arranger, trainer/academic, instrument maker, state artist, choirmaster/conductor, music researcher, musicologist, soloist, stage technician, and music teacher.

4.2. Pre-Pandemic Economic Situation and Social Rights of Music Industry Workers

A significant proportion of music industry workers, namely 70.3%, reported being gainfully employed prior to the pandemic. According to studies conducted by Confederation of

¹⁶<http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do;jsessionid=nz17W2ZZGnMPMkSDnhpqIFjwjrcTDKDV61rKmK420W46GyYy7h3rl671394295?id=15843>

Revolutionary Trade Unions (DİSK),¹⁷ the unemployment rate in 2019 was 20.7%, using the broad definition of unemployment.¹⁸ Among the participants, on the other hand, unemployment rate in the same period was 29.7%. This rate shows that even before the pandemic, unemployment among music industry workers was higher than the average in Turkey.

Did you have a job that provided regular income prior to the pandemic?

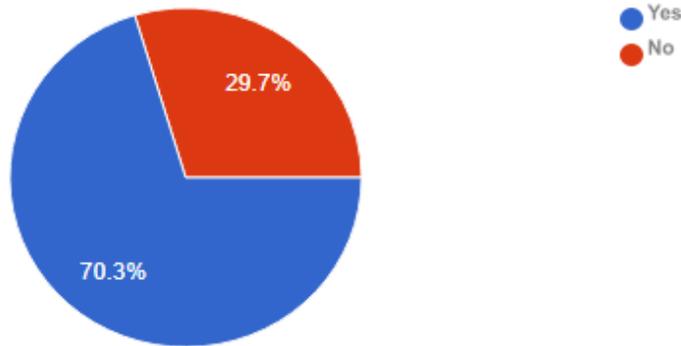


Figure 5 Regular Income Prior to the Pandemic

Only 24.7% of the participants in the study reported having a formal job providing regular income in the public or private sectors, and 63.3% reported being employed on a per diem or hourly basis. Together with per diem and hourly workers, 78% of the participants did not have any social security prior to the pandemic.

This means that music industry workers who lost their jobs during the pandemic were unable to benefit from rights such as Unemployment Benefit, Short Work Allowance (SWA), and health services, endangering their right to life and health under pandemic conditions.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) requires states parties to the covenant to recognize the right of everyone to work, and to take necessary measures to protect this right. This leads to the conclusion that the state did not carry out its

¹⁷<http://disk.org.tr/2020/03/2019-yili-issizlik-ve-istihdam-raporu-issizlik-patladi-istihdamda-deprem-yasandi/#:~:text=%C4%B0%C5%9Fsizlik%20oran%C4%B1%20%2C7%20puanl%C4%B1k,%13%2C7%20seviyesinde%20ger%C3%A7ekle%C5%9Fti.>

¹⁸ Broad Definition of Unemployment: This definition expands the narrow (standard) definition of unemployment used by TURKSTAT, counting people who have looked for but were unable to find a job in the last four weeks, people who lost hope of ever finding a job, seasonal workers, people who are available for work even though they not are actively looking for a job, and the underemployed.

obligations regarding the protection of music industry workers' right to work even before the pandemic.

70.3% of music industry workers were gainfully employed prior to the pandemic, but 29.4% of the participants had a monthly personal income of less than TRY1,000. 74.2% of participants had a monthly personal income of less than TRY4,000. A similar picture emerges with regard to the household income of participants. 42.4% of the participants had a monthly household income that was less than the minimum wage, 71.6% had an income less than TRY5,000, and 90% had an income less than TRY8,000.

According to a study conducted by the Class Studies Center of the metal workers union Birleşik Metal-İş (BİSAM),¹⁹ the hunger threshold, which denotes the minimum amount of money for a family of four to meet their basic nutritional needs, was TRY2,584 in January 2021, and the poverty threshold, which takes into account food, shelter, health, and care needs of a family of four, was TRY8,939 TL. Close to half of music industry workers had a monthly household income less than the minimum wage and the hunger threshold, and 90% had a household income less than the poverty threshold.

Even before they lost their jobs and access to a source of regular income, half of music industry workers earned less than the hunger threshold, and 90% earned less than the poverty threshold.

90% of the music industry workers had an income less than the poverty threshold, which denotes the minimum amount of money needed for a family to meet their basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, etc., and 62.9% of the participants reporting living in rented houses. Only 12.1% of the participants lived in houses they owned, 19.7% lived in houses owned by other family members, and the rest selected the option "other." 78% of the survey participants reported that they did not have any social security.

¹⁹ <http://arastirma.disk.org.tr/?p=4964>

What is your monthly household income?

264 responses

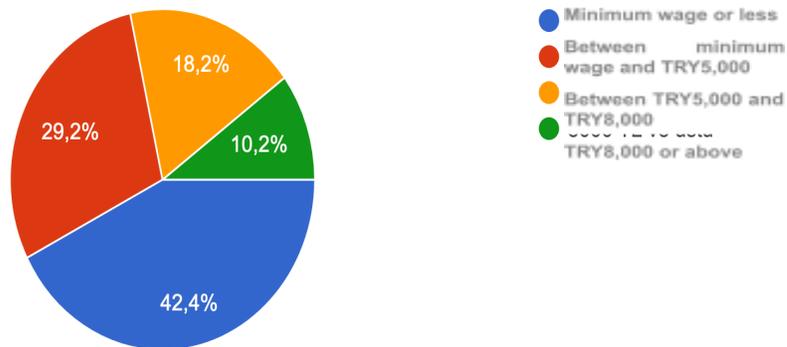


Figure 6 Monthly Household Income

During the pandemic, 17 out of 130 people were unable to access health services because they did not have social security. The right to social security was violated by employers in many cases, but many of the music industry workers did not demand social security either. For example, O.K., one of the participants in the focus group meeting, said the following:

“...Health insurance is very important. Now, when I think about it, when I think for myself and for my friends in the orchestra, we never demanded that from the venues. We just got paid and left, we took our money and left, we played and left, and went to a dinner or something. We did not really have that concern.”

Do you have social security for your music-related work?

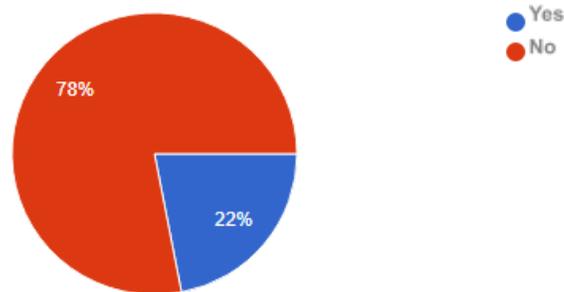


Figure 7 Access to Social Security

Employers and workers did not take the necessary steps for social security, and the government did not perform inspections or impose sanctions for non-compliance. H.T., one of the focus group participants who reported having worked in the music industry in Istanbul and Ankrara for more than 30 years, observed that many musicians were deprived of social security: *“The fees, the daily wages were already hard given the market conditions. Social security and health insurance was something that venues tried to avoid. There was no enforcement either. This meant that we were unable to benefit from the Short Work Allowance. With the pandemic, we were unable to benefit from social security rights and support programs because we did not meet the conditions, which had always been neglected.”*

It is clear that music industry workers were denied the right to live with dignity even before the pandemic. This is a violation of the principle, stated in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.” It also constitutes a failure on the part of the state to carry out its obligation as per the following provision in Article 4 of the European Social Charter:²⁰ “All workers have the right to a fair remuneration sufficient for a decent standard of living for themselves and their families.”

²⁰ <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyon/kefe/docs/sosyalsart.pdf>

4.3. Pre-Pandemic Economic Situation of Music Industry Workers

29.7% of the music industry workers were unemployed prior to the pandemic, and 89% lost their jobs during the pandemic. Moreover, 6.1% of the participants reported benefiting from the Short Work Allowance. As is well known, Short Work Allowance was initiated within the scope of the "Economic Stability Shield" package announced on March 18th, 2020.²¹ To benefit from this allowance, "the worker be included in the short work program must meet conditions regarding minimum work duration and payment of social security premiums (in case of short work applications due to Covid-19, having paid social security premiums for a minimum of 450 days within the last 3 years, and being employed on the basis of an employment contract for the last 60 days)," among others.²² A majority of music industry workers were unable to benefit from the Short Work Allowance because they were not formally employed and did not have social security records. This explains why very few of the respondents to the survey were able to benefit from the Short Work Allowance. Moreover, if the restrictions remain in place, even those who did benefit from this allowance are highly likely to lose their jobs once the benefits run out. These figures show that apart from a small group employed in the public sector (8%), as well as those formally employed in the private sector with job security, almost all music industry workers lost their jobs during the pandemic.

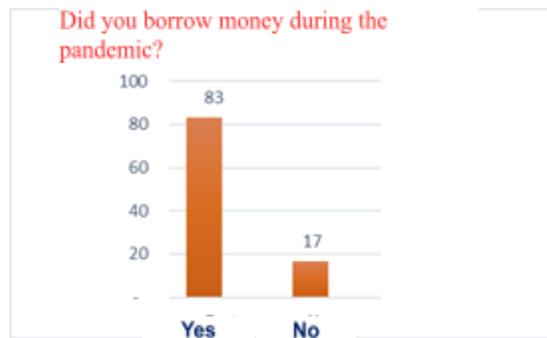


Figure 8 Borrowing Money During the Pandemic

Mass unemployment among music industry workers removed their ability to earn a regular income. 78% of the participants reported that they did not have a regular income, and 90.5% said their economic situation worsened during the pandemic.

²¹ <https://www.iskur.gov.tr/duyurular/kisa-calisma-odeneji-hakkinda/>

²² <https://www.iskur.gov.tr/isveren/kisa-calisma-odeneji/genel-bilgiler/>

O.P., a musician who participated in the focus group meeting, said, “I lost a quarter of my income compared to before the pandemic. I had to sell some of my instruments to make some money,” showing that musicians even resorted to selling their instruments, which are necessary for them to practice their profession and make a living.

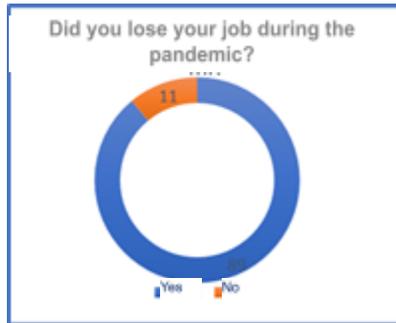


Figure 9 Loss of Jobs During the Pandemic

Survey data show that there has been a significant loss of income, and many interviews and press reports show that the pandemic had negative economic and social effects on musicians and the music industry.

A story published on *bbc.com*²³ on October 6th, 2020 reported that Jehan Barbur, who used to give many concerts before the pandemic, now worked in jewelry making to make a living, and another musician had to sell their instruments because their concerts and lessons were cancelled.

As was noted in a show on Açık Radyo, titled “The Music Industry in Turkey and Its Dilemmas,” official announcements regarding social distance rules and curfews exacerbated the problems that music industry workers experienced for many years. Many musicians were rendered unable to meet their most basic needs²⁴.

Given that prior to the pandemic, music industry workers who had a monthly personal income of less than TRY1,000 and less than TRY4,000 made up 29.4% and 74.2% of the respondents, respectively, 71.6% had a monthly household income of less than TRY5,000, and 62.9% lived in rented houses, and during the pandemic, 89% lost their jobs and 78% lost a regular income,

²³ <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-54416998>

²⁴ <https://acikradyo.com.tr/acik-dergi/turkiyede-muzik-sektoru-ve-acmazlari>

these people now face a situation of “deep poverty”²⁵ in which they are not even able to meet their most basic food and shelter needs.

Music industry workers deprived of a regular income had to resort to borrowing. 83% of the participants in the study said they borrowed money during the pandemic, and only 17% did not feel the need to borrow or did not choose to borrow. Because informal employment without social security benefits is widespread in the industry, many music industry workers have been unable to take out subsidized loans from public or private banks.

11% of the participants borrowed between TRY1,000 and TRY3,000, the lowest category on the questionnaire. As the amount of money borrowed increases, so does the percentage of respondents who say they borrowed money. 44% of music industry workers had to borrow money in excess of TRY10,000. Given that 74.2% of music industry workers had a monthly personal income of less than TRY4,000, and 90% had a monthly household income of less than TRY8,000 prior to the pandemic, more than half of these people had to borrow money in excess of their usual income during normal times.

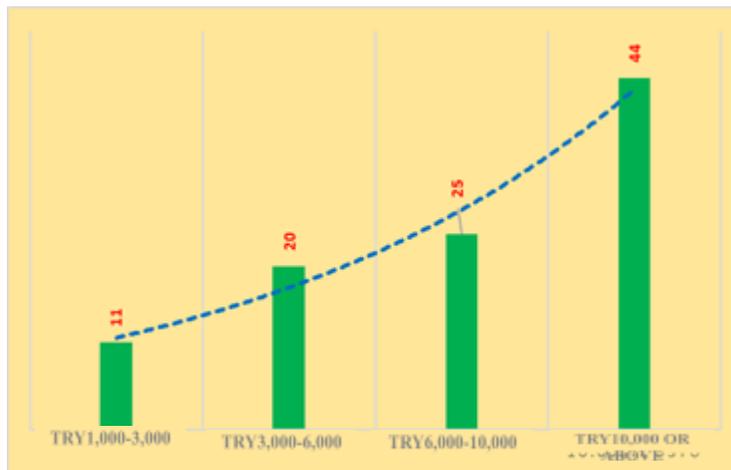


Figure 10 The Amount of Money Borrowed During the Pandemic

Because 89% of music industry workers are unemployed and have no regular income, they started having problems paying back their debts. 31.4% of the participants faced legal action including having their belongings confiscated because they defaulted on their debts.

²⁵ <https://derinyoksullukagi.org/2020/08/25/287/> (Deep Poverty: Earning less than the poverty threshold, being unable to meet basic expenses for food, care, sheltering, health, and psychosocial support)

These difficulties forced music industry workers to seek work in other fields during the pandemic. Close to half of the participants (47,3%) said they had no choice but work in a non-music related field during the pandemic. E.B., one of the participants in the focus group meeting, said the following about having to work in another field during the pandemic: *“I used to play music at a hotel restaurant before the pandemic. I lost my job because of the pandemic. Now I work at a flower shop.”*

Some of the focus group participants said they had to take on additional loans, move in with their families, switch houses because they were unable to pay rent, or see the support they received from their families cut.

Borrowing money, defaulting on debts, and facing legal action will likely continue and even exacerbate if pandemic restrictions remain in place. The entire music industry is under a heavy load of debt that needs to be repaid. Therefore, the end of the pandemic or the lifting of the restrictions will not mean an automatic end to the problems faced by the industry.

At a time when they faced high rates of unemployment and loss of regular income, music industry workers had to seek other sources of financing to meet their basic needs. 51.5% of the participants sought support from their family and relatives, and 22% took out loans to meet their basic needs.

22% of the participants, on the other hand, used their savings to meet their needs during the pandemic. The percentages show that some participants resorted simultaneously to borrowing, receiving support from family, and using their savings. For example, H.B., a musician who reported having economic difficulties during the pandemic, said he used his savings during the time he was unable to work: *“...Since March, I have been trying to live on what little savings I had, the so-called money under the pillow.”*

New problems that arose during the pandemic added to problems inherited from before the pandemic, making them more severe, and the government failed to develop policies to give citizens hope that the problems would be resolved in the near future, increasing the need for psychological support among music industry workers. 60.2% of the participants in the study said they needed psychological support during the pandemic and 89% of those who needed psychological support were unable to access such support.

4.4. Right to Life

Turkey signed the European Convention on Human Rights in 1952, and published it in the Official Gazette on March 19th, 1954. Accordingly, provisions of Article 2 of the ECHR are guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey. According to Article 17 of the Turkish Constitution, titled Personal inviolability, corporeal and spiritual existence of the individual, “Everyone has the right to life and the right to protect and improve his/her corporeal and spiritual existence.” Yet, music industry workers struggled to survive under conditions of deep poverty during the pandemic, sometimes with the tragic consequence that they were denied the right to life, which is the most basic human right.

Erdem Topuz from İzmir, a father of two who had been suffering economic hardship because he was unemployed for almost a year, took his own life on January 31st, 2021, along with musician Mehmet Mert El, who worked as a percussionist in various venues in İzmir and was unemployed for a year,²⁶ Duran Ay, who used to perform in different venues in Beyoğlu district of Istanbul²⁷, and close to 100 other musicians who committed suicide during the pandemic²⁸.

This shows that lifting the restrictions would not be sufficient on its own, and the government needs to develop urgent policies to provide the necessary and sufficient support to people who work in the music industry.

Suicides due to economic problems now make up a larger percentage of all suicides in the country. In 2018, 7.3% of all suicides were due to economic problems, and this figure increased to 9.4% in 2019. Even though we do not have data for the period after the start of the pandemic, the number of musicians who committed suicide indicate that the figure would be much higher.

4.5. Copyrights

Looking at the developments regarding the rights of artists in Turkey, the Law on Intellectual and Artistic Works was passed in 1951 to protect copyrights:

“The purpose of this Law is to establish and protect the moral and economic rights, on their products, of authors who create intellectual and artistic works, performers who perform or interpret such works, phonogram producers that make the first fixation of

²⁶ <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/1-yildir-issiz-muzisyen-intihar-etti-haber-1513779>

²⁷ <https://onedio.com/haber/gecim-sikintisi-bir-can-daha-aldi-muzisyen-duran-ay-intihar-etti-947334>

²⁸ <https://dokuz8haber.net/emekdunyasi/salgin-doneminde-issiz-kalan-100e-yakin-muzisyen-yasamina-son-verdi/>

*sounds, producers that make the first fixation of films, and radio-television organizations; to regulate the conditions of exploitation of such products and to determine the sanctions for exploitation in breach of such rules and procedures.*²⁹

However, musicians/songwriters who were unemployed, lost income, or lost health insurance with the pandemic started to experience loss of royalties as well.

Burhan Şeşen, Chairman of the Board of Directors of MÜYORBİR (Professional Union of Music Performers), sums up the problem of declining royalties as follows: *“Right now, hotels, bars, restaurants, and night clubs are closed. These public venues are an important source of royalties for us. The income that we are unable to derive from these venues because they are closed due to the pandemic corresponds to almost forty percent of our income. This is why our members experienced serious declines in their royalties.”*³⁰

4.6. Job Description-Professional Organization

Participants' opinions regarding the visibility of the job description of a musician are based on their experiences. Turkish Employment Agency's *Tüm Meslekler Sözlüğü* [Comprehensive Dictionary of Professions]³¹ and the Social Security Institution's list of professional codes contain job descriptions concerning music performers such as “Musicians,” “Other Musicians and Singers,” and “(Musical) Instrument Players,” but it is questionable how much music as a profession is known. One of the participants said that musicians are not well-known in Turkey, unlike other professionals (such as doctors, architects, engineers, etc.), and the profession that musicians practice is not visible. A related issue is the extent of professional organization in the field of music.

In focus group meetings, participants identified a lack of professional organization among musicians as one of the most important causes of the violations of their rights and the problems that became more salient with the pandemic.

Mutual help and solidarity require permission from the Ministry of the Interior during the pandemic,³² and in comments to BBC,³³ musician Rewşan Çeliker said musicians had no choice but to unionize in this process. Bülent Forta, a member of the Board of Directors of MÜYAP (Turkish Phonographic Industry Society) made the following statement about the issue:

²⁹<https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/anasayfa/MevzuatFihristDetaylframe?MevzuatTur=1&MevzuatNo=5846&MevzuatTertip=3>

³⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-54416998>

³¹ <https://esube.iskur.gov.tr/Meslek/meslek.aspx>

³² <https://www.icisleri.gov.tr/yardim-toplanmasi-hususuna-iliskin-kamuoyu-bilgilendirmesi>

³³ <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-54416998>

“The most important thing is to create a legal framework to guarantee the status and social rights of artists. This, in turn, requires building a new legal framework that suits the structure of the sector. The state should view the music sector as an industry as well. Supporting the industry along with art and artists would serve as a precaution against such crises.”

Focus group participants expressed their opinions about the professional organization of musicians as follows:

A common thread that emerges from the statements of music industry workers who participated in focus group meetings is that there are no efforts to organize in the music industry, and very few if any musicians make this demand. Until the beginning of the pandemic, participants always worked on an hourly or per diem basis, and were not interested in organizing to protect their rights. Music teacher S.K. had the following to say about the issue: *“I did not have social security before the pandemic. Once the pandemic started, this fact became even more clear (...) Personally, I don’t think I took action to protect my rights (...). I believe musicians should make efforts for collective organization and protect their rights. From now on, I would like to be a part of this as well (...).”*

However, the following comments by H.B., one of the participants, are also important in terms of showing that music industry workers can make gains and achieve positive change when they organize: *“Until 2004, we were content with what we earned from the stage, our work, and the continuity in our jobs. Yes, we still had problems with insurance and what not, but Müzik-Sen began an important initiative at that time. A new law was passed that allowed musicians to retire if they paid the social security premiums they owed. About a thousand musicians took advantage of this and retired. No such law was passed after this, and the government did not give this opportunity to musicians again.”*

4.7. Measures Taken by the State to Protect Musicians During the Pandemic

During the pandemic, very few musicians benefited from the social support provided by central and local governments. Only 9.5% of the participants said they benefited from such support, with 69.3% who were unable to do so.



Figure 11 Receipt of Social Support

21.2% of the participants, on the other hand, said they did not apply for such support. V.O., one of the participants in the focus group meeting, pointed out some of problems associated with the provision of state support: *“The state ensures that everyone learns about the bans as soon as possible. When it comes to state support, on the other hand, we have not heard anything.”*

One of the musicians referred to state support as “a tiny amount of support,” which is an apt description of the support provided by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. In particular, there was a program covered by “media” that is supportive of the government and its policies as follows: “The government took action to support musicians who lost their jobs and are unable to work due to COVID-19, and announced, with the slogan ‘let the music continue,’ that musicians would be provided a state support of TRY1,000.” This program was implemented as a call for projects rather than social support for musicians.

The support, announced by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, required meeting certain conditions, and consisted of monthly payments of TRY1,000 for three months, totaling TRY3,000. Applicants for the support to be provided by the Ministry were required to prepare video recordings that would show them practicing their profession. The video recording to be prepared was to meet the following criteria:

- The recording should show artists performing their art (artists are to sing if they are singers or play their instruments if they are instrument players),
- Other industry workers should talk about their knowledge or memories of practicing their profession,
- Video duration should be between 2 and 5 minutes, and
- The recording should have reasonable audio and video quality.

Musicians felt this was more of a call for projects by the government than social support. 24,522 musicians received the support, out of 29,679 who applied. About 18% of the applicants, in other words, did not benefit from this support³⁴.

One of the items on the questionnaire was *“Did you receive any subsidies or support that the government or other agencies or organizations announced for art and artists?”* Only 25 out of 264 respondents said they received state support; of the 239 respondents who were unable to receive such support, 136 said they did not meet the conditions to apply or their application was rejected.

During the pandemic, the government transferred TRY240 billion to large corporations, and provided a mere TRY8.4 billion to about 8.4 million families. In other words, during the first 9 months of the pandemic, low-income families were provided a monthly support of TRY111. The TRY3,000 to be paid to musicians corresponds to a monthly support of TRY250 when entire duration of the pandemic is taken into account.

Supporting survey data, participants in focus group meetings said state support to musicians during the pandemic was insufficient. O.K., a musician who runs an art house, said the support provided by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism was insufficient: *“I don’t believe we received the necessary support. I was unable to benefit from the support package of the Ministry; I was deemed ineligible because I am insured. In any case, we are talking about a support of TRY1,000. I have friends whose only source of income is music. They paid the debts and the bills they had accumulated, and the money was gone in a couple of hours. What are they going to do now?”*

The policies and the preferences of the government meant that the right of music industry workers to benefit from social support was violated, which is a common problem faced by many poor people who were negatively affected by the pandemic.

*“Resources Allocated to Fight the Social and Economic Effects of Covid-19 in Turkey and in the World,”*³⁵ a report prepared by DİSK-Research Center (DİSK-AR), provides a clear picture of the government’s policies in comparison to other countries.

³⁴<http://www.gazetevatan.com/muzisyen-destek-programi-sonuclari-aciklandi-muzisyen-destek-ode-1365881-ekonomi/>

³⁵<http://arastirma.disk.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Covid-19-Harcamalar%C4%B1-Raporu-OCAK-2021.pdf>

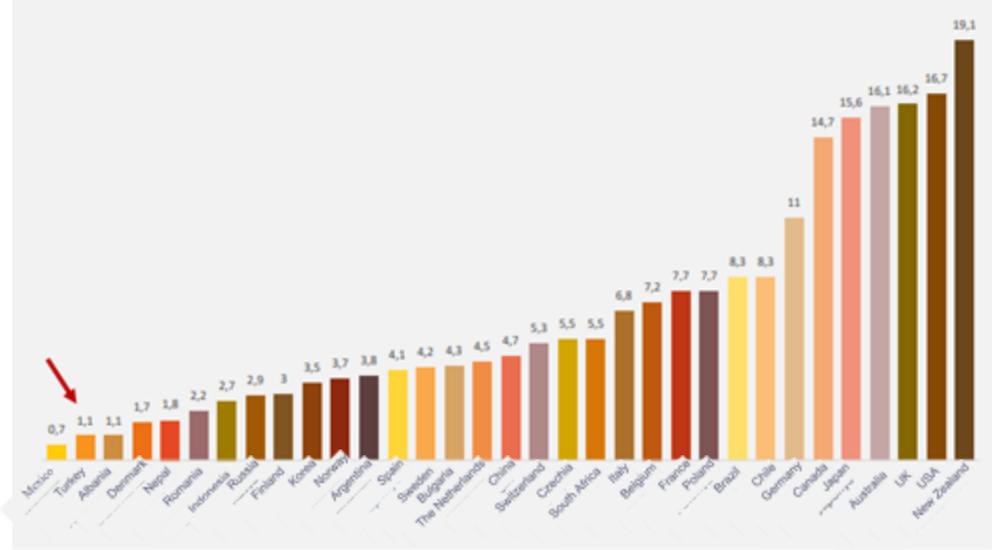


Figure 12 Additional Spending Including on Healthcare and Income Support to Fight Covid-19, as a Share of GDP³⁶

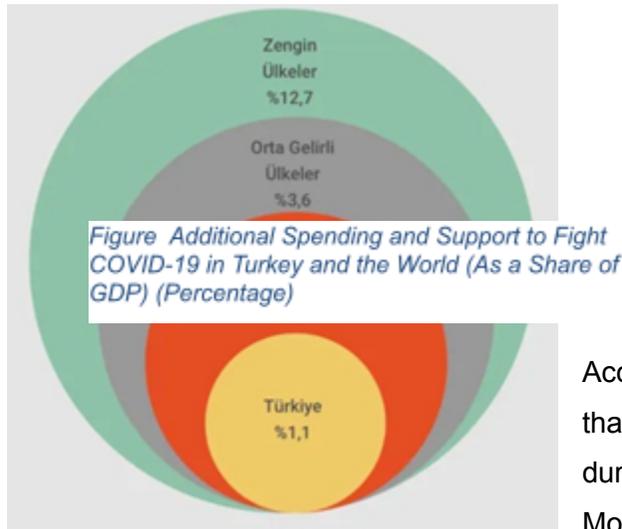


Figure Additional Spending and Support to Fight COVID-19 in Turkey and the World (As a Share of GDP) (Percentage)

According to this report, Turkey was the country that provided the least cash support to its citizens during the Covid-19 pandemic, after Mexico. Moreover, Turkey took the last place in terms of

the ratio of cash support to total economic support.

According to this study, on average, high-income countries provided support worth 12.7% of their GDP to their citizens, in terms of additional spending and income support; this figure was 3.6% in mid-income countries, and 1.6% in low-income countries. In Turkey, on the other hand, additional spending and income support over the same period corresponded only to 1.1% of GDP³⁷.

³⁶ Taken from <http://arastirma.disk.org.tr/> Sources: International Monetary Fund (IMF), Database of Country Fiscal Measures in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic; and IMF staff estimates. January 2021.

³⁷ Taken from <http://arastirma.disk.org.tr/>

Policies followed by the government were unable to protect poor people from the negative effects of the pandemic, which applied to music industry workers as well.

45.5% of the participants said they knew about the provision in the Constitution that “The State shall protect artistic activities and artists. The State shall take the necessary measures to protect, promote and support works of art and artists, and encourage the spread of appreciation for the arts,” and 95.1% said the state failed to carry out this obligation.

One of the participants had the following to say about the issue: *“I am sure the obstacles they create are intentional and planned. Had they taken the necessary measures, Duran AY would be with us now, rather than taking his own life. The state acts as if I don’t exist. The government did not provide any aid or support... they just said we weren’t allowed to work...”*

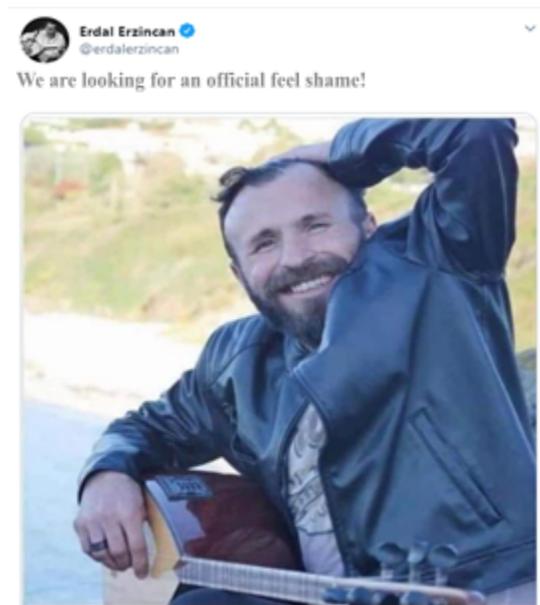


Image 1 Duran Ay used to perform in venues in Beyoğlu district of Istanbul. He lost his job during the pandemic, faced economic hardship, and committed suicide on December 15, 2020.

The following table reports the responses to the question “Do you believe the following agencies or organizations supported artistic activities and artists during the pandemic?”

Table 1 Assessment of Support Provided by Various Agencies and Organizations to Artists

Agency/Organization	Yes, I Believe They Provided Support (%)	No, I Don’t Think They Provided Support (%)
Presidency of the Republic	7.9	91.2

Ministry of Culture and Tourism	12,1	87.9
Local Governments	36.2	63.8
Governors' Officers and District Governors' Offices	5.6	94.4
Civil Society Organizations	29	71
Political Parties	6.8	93.2
Labor Unions	14.7	85.3
Private Companies	11.3	88.7

91.3% of the music industry workers who participated in the study were of the opinion that the government was not fair or just in distributing the support it provided. This is probably one of the most important reasons why participants thought policies followed by various agencies and organizations during the pandemic were insufficient, as reported in *Table 1*.

95.1% of the participants thought policies followed by agencies and organizations were insufficient and the state failed to carry out its obligation to support artistic activities and artists, and the following responses to the question "If you had worries about your job, which agency or organization would you turn to for support?" were based on their official duties and responsibilities.

- 59.5% said they would apply to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 35.2% to the Presidency of the Republic, 34.8% to local governments, 24.6% to governors' offices and district governors' offices, and 20.1% to civil society organizations, whereas 22.7% said they would not apply to any of these agencies or organizations.
- 92% of the music industry workers said they were thinking of making changes in their future plans.

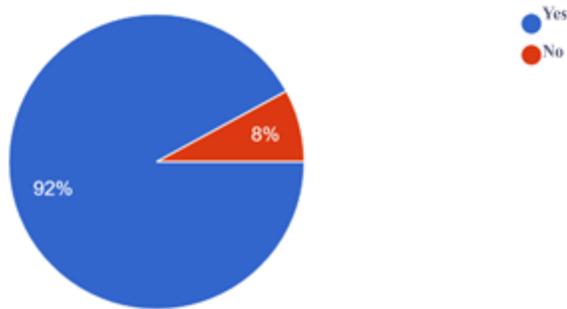


Figure 14 Did your future plans change with the pandemic?

Change of plans is probably due to factors such as unemployment during the pandemic, loss of regular income, inability to meet basic needs, having to borrow money, having difficulty paying back the debts incurred, and facing legal action for defaulting on debts.

Changes in music industry workers' future plans include switching to a non-music field. One of the negative consequences of this switch would be that people who are trained in this field, have worked for years in the field, and developed expertise would be unable to practice their profession; another negative consequence would be that the field of culture and arts, which is crucial for social progress but has been suffering in recent years, would become even more barren.

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), meeting in Belgrade from 23 September to 28 October 1980 at its twenty-first session, recommended³⁸ that states parties to the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights should

- Recognize that the arts in their fullest and broadest definition are and should be an integral part of life and that it is necessary and appropriate for governments to help create and sustain not only a climate encouraging freedom of artistic expression but also the material conditions facilitating the release of this creative talent;
- Affirm the right of the artist to be considered, if he so wishes, as a person actively engaged in cultural work and consequently to benefit, taking account of the particular

³⁸

<https://www.muziksen.org.tr/index.php/component/content/article/7-blog/85-sanatcinin-statusune-iliskin-unesco-tavsiye-karari-1>

'conditions of his artistic profession, from all the legal, social and economic advantages pertaining to the status of workers; and

- Affirm further the need to improve the social security, labor and tax conditions of the artist, whether employed or self-employed, taking into account the contribution to cultural development which the artist makes.

In addition to national-level support provided by the government to musicians during the pandemic, local governments have also made attempts to provide support. However, given that the number of musicians in Turkey is estimated to be over 1 million, the aid and support provided by local governments have not been sufficient, either. “Artist support” and food aid projects and similar activities undertaken by various municipalities, particularly by Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir Metropolitan Municipalities,³⁹⁴⁰ were not sufficient. C.B., one of the participants in focus group meetings, said the following about support provided by local governments: *“I don’t think local governments provide sufficient support. (...) I know Mr. Yavaş in Ankara is making some efforts. I received help from them too. They really are making an effort, but it is limited.”* O.K. recounted a similar experience, this time with a district municipality in Istanbul: *“Silivri Municipality is doing what they can to support musicians. For example, I performed on a stage today. A video was shot in the form of live broadcast. We did receive some compensation, me and a couple of my musician friends.”*

4.8. Practices in Other Countries

Australia

Government Action Against the Coronavirus⁴¹

The Australian government announced an AUD10 million package for Support Act within the scope of ‘Music Support Fund.’ The funding is planned to provide crisis relief to artists, crew, and music workers who lost their jobs and income due to the Covid-19, and to expand the Support Act’s Wellbeing Helpline to all members of the art community. Moreover, the government announced a subsidy package of AUD130 billion to provide biweekly cash support of AUD1,500 per worker for six months.

New Zealand

³⁹<https://www.izmir.bel.tr/tr/Haberler/buyuksehir-den-sokak-sanatcilarina-ve-muzisyenlere-pandemi-destegi/44568/156>

⁴⁰ <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2021/gunun-icinden/mansur-yavastan-bir-destek-paketi-daha-6269117/>

⁴¹ <https://www.arts.gov.au/covid-19-update>

In New Zealand, where the pandemic has been relatively milder, the government provides wage subsidies to musicians.⁴² Criteria for eligibility and aid amounts are as follows:

- NZD585.80 for people who work 20 or more hours a week,
- NZD350.00 for people who work less than 20 hours a week.

The subsidy covers 12 weeks per employee, and is paid in a single payment.

Government art agencies have created an NZD16 million Emergency Response Package to support the art community as a first step. The fund, created to support artists who could face a devastating loss of income and opportunities, provides up to NZD10,000 per person.

Singapore

Singapore's government⁴³ has created an SGD55 million support package to support art and culture industry, activities, and training.

Portugal

AUDIOGEST (Association for the Collective Rights of Phonographic Producers)⁴⁴ has created a fund for music professionals in Portuguese music industry.

Audiogest, together with the artists' association, created a crisis office to provide information about public support programs and legal assistance available to micro-businesses and freelance workers affected by cancellations of live performances. Moreover, Audiogest created, together with artists and audio-visual associations, an assistance fund of EUR1.5 million.

Ireland

*Culture Ireland*⁴⁵ is responsible for worldwide promotion of Irish art. Many international events featuring Irish artists were cancelled due to the pandemic. Culture Ireland undertook to refund expenditure for grants which have been awarded for these events.

Culture Ireland provided support to employees and self-employed people who lost their jobs or had their hours of work reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, self-employed

⁴² <https://www.recordedmusic.co.nz/covid-19-update-information-from-the-music-organisations-26-march/>

⁴³ <https://www.nac.gov.sg/whatwedo/support/sustaining-the-arts-during-covid-19/Sustaining-the-arts-during-COVID-19.html>

⁴⁴

<http://audiogest.pt/noticias/audiogest-cria-fundo-de-apoio-a-profissionais-do-espetaculo-e-de-producao-musical->

⁴⁵ <https://www.cultureireland.ie/news/article/culture-ireland-covid-19-update>

artists are eligible for the new Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) provided by the Department of Social Protection.

IMRO, IRMA and FMC⁴⁶

Irish Music Rights Organization (IMRO), Irish Recorded Music Association (IRMA), and First Music Contact (FMC) set up a fund to support Irish music creators. In addition to the financial contributions by IMRO and IRMA, Spotify is making a donation and is also matching donations made to the Irish Music Industry Covid-19 Emergency Relief Fund via its Spotify COVID-19 Music Relief page, dollar for dollar.

UK

BPI - COVID-19 Crew Relief Fund⁴⁷

The BPI/BRIT Awards announced the donation of £54,000 to the COVID-19 Crew Relief Fund administered by Stagehand – the Production Services Association (PSA) Welfare and Benevolent Fund.

This special fund is meant to support live music crews such as expert technicians and event specialists who help stage BRIT Awards and Hyundai Mercury Prize every year, along with many other events.

The contribution from the BPI and BRIT Awards comes on top of £1.62 million of BPI-co-ordinated funds donated earlier this year by the recorded music sector to charities and organisations supporting artists, managers and venues through the pandemic – bringing the total distributed to date to £1.67 million.

Belgium

Fund Belgian Music⁴⁸

Fund Belgian Music was set up by the Belgian organizations Galm, Facir, Sabam For Culture, and PlayRight+ to support Belgian music projects, and in particular, provide support in an atmosphere of uncertainty created by the Covid-19 pandemic. The fund is focused on supporting musical creation, production, promotion, presentation, international branding, and export.

⁴⁶ <https://www.imro.ie/featured-article/irish-music-industry-covid-19-emergency-relief-fund-launched/>

⁴⁷

<https://www.bpi.co.uk/news-analysis/bpibrit-awards-donate-54-000-to-stagehand-s-covid-19-crew-relief-fund/>

⁴⁸ <https://www.fundbelgianmusic.be/?lang=en>

BEA⁴⁹ began a media campaign under the name #PlayLocal calling people to listen to and support Belgian music and artists.

Fransa⁵⁰

The French government announced an action plan for artists and authors with the following benefits:

- A one-time payment of up to EUR1,500,
- Deferral of the payments of water, gas, and electricity bills and rent in case of default, without any penalties,
- Restructuring of taxes and social security premiums owed,
- Access to illness aid,
- Exemption from the requirements for unemployment benefit,
- Simplified and rapid processing of social aid, health, and pension transactions,
- Extension of unemployment aid to actors, artists, and musicians for 12 months,
- An additional grant of EUR50 million to the National Music Center (CNM).

Germany

GEMA⁵¹ set up an emergency relief fund of up to EUR40 million in a two-stage program. The fund provides cash support to composers and lyricists who also work as performers and face financial hardship due to the cancellation of live concerts. Financial support is planned for individual cases of hardship among the songwriters community.

Serbia

*State51 Conspiracy & MASCOM - StayCreative*⁵²

State51 Conspiracy and Mascom created a €50.000 fund under the name "StayCreative" to help musicians overcome the pandemic's effects on the music industry.

⁴⁹<https://www.belgianentertainment.be/en/bea-news-blog/2020/3/26/playlocal-play-belgian-music-and-support-artists-from-belgium>

⁵⁰<https://www.culture.gouv.fr/Presse/Communiqués-de-presse/Etat-d-urgence-sanitaire-Covid-19-le-minist-re-de-la-Culture-presente-un-premier-plan-d-action-en-faveur-des-artistes-auteurs>

⁵¹ <https://www.gema.de/en/>

⁵² <https://www.mascom.rs/sr/50-000-evra-za-podrsku-muzicarima-nid-426.1.126.html>

Switzerland

The Swiss Federal Council⁵³ passed a comprehensive package of measures to alleviate the economic effects of Covid-19. Specific measures were taken for the culture industry in addition to general economic measures, and an emergency relief category was created.

⁵³ <https://www.bak.admin.ch/bak/de/home/themen/covid19/massnahmen-covid19.html>

5. Conclusion

Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states that “The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to respect the freedom indispensable for scientific research and creative activity.” Supporting artists and artistic activities in the field of culture and arts aims to strengthen the creativity of an entire society and achieve social progress. Nevertheless, the goal should be to implement the principle, state in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”

Restrictions placed on culture and art activities during the pandemic, leaving people who work in this field to deal with unemployment on their own, and failing to provide effective and sufficient support constitute a violation of human rights, and turn the culture and arts scene in the country into a barren field.

At a time when stadiums are filled, political parties’ general assemblies are held, and these events are described as positive developments, the closure of theaters, museums, exhibitions, and concert halls cannot be attributed solely to measures taken to limit the spread of the pandemic. These decisions are shaped by political preferences, which have negative effects on not only music industry workers, but on all workers in the field of culture and arts, along with the rest of the society.

On the one hand, artists are rendered unable to practice their profession and thus are deprived of the right to live with human dignity, and on the other hand, society is deprived of culture and art activities, which are an important instrument for social progress and enlightenment, constituting another violation of fundamental rights. Priority should be given to planning and implementing, in a rapid manner and without any conditions or requirements, effective support programs for all music industry workers and other workers in the field of culture and arts to live with human dignity.

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