

Report about FS Inspection Trip to Turkey from 03.04.2023 to 05.04.2023

The Fair Stone inspection trip took place from 03.04.2023 to 05.04.2023 to Izmir province in western Turkey. This was the first trip to Turkey since 2012, when Fair Stone partners de-registered their businesses there. Fair Stone Project Manager Philipp Baisch visited 4 Factories and 1 Quarry in the Bergama county. Since this was the first audit request after more than 10 years, no third-party audit structure was available. For this reason, the audits were conducted as second party audits. Mr. Baisch was accompanied by a translator and a well-connected person in the Granite sector, which was quite helpful for coordination and transportation.

The focus of the inspection trip this time was to build up a network with relevant stakeholders, this includes producers and quarry operators as well as local people for coordination. All factories and quarries were audited the first time under the FS BASIC scheme. The following audits will be conducted by a 3rd Party.



Produced and packed cobbles

In general, the factories are operating on a high level in respect to wet cutting saws, lifting devices and heavy machinery. Stone processing sector is less HR intensive compared to other countries. Personal Protective Equipment is provided to the workers, however its not used properly all the time. In most cases hospital masks were often worn instead of the correct FFP2/N95 masks and hearing protection is not used consequently. Awareness workshops and trainings are a field for improvements. Overall documentation like Contracts, insurance, licenses and attendance records are in place.



State of the art raw block processing

Overall, we also found strong governance and policies of the regional government to address topics of general business operations. Additionally, insurance and service providers are available for relevant support.

On a more general note, suppliers in Turkey have benefitted from high freight rates and cut supply chains from Asia (especially China) during COVID. Clients in Europe placed large quantity orders in Poland, Portugal and Turkey. Early 2023 suppliers still have orders from clients in Europe and are curious if this will last over 2023 and 2024.



Granit raw blocks in Bergama region

Granite products from Turkey are often used for paving and landscape architecture. The country is benefitting from near transport distances to Europe. The port in Aliaga is an important hub for the export industries in Izmir region.

The economic ecosystem in Turkey is facing several challenges (e.g. weak national currency and high inflation rates) over the last years. Minimum wages were raised January 1st 2023 to 8.500 Lira. This is an increase of 50 percent compared to July and 94 percent compared to January 2022.
