

## SITUATION REPORT

### Syrian Refugees in Turkey, 15 February 2013

#### OVERVIEW

Violent conflict between the Assad regime and the armed opposition groups continue to deteriorate the humanitarian situation in Syria. The non-international armed conflict has internally displaced over 1.2 million Syrians, with the number of affected people in need of humanitarian assistance reaching beyond estimations inside the country. As of 6 February, Syrians registered or awaiting registration in neighbouring countries have reached 787,019 ([UNHCR, 08 February 2013](#)). According to UN officials, more than half of the refugees are children ([AlertNet, 17 January 2013](#)).

Turkey has experienced large influx of Syrian refugees during the month of January 2013. According to official figures, on average more than 400 refugees were registered by government authorities per day. However this figure only reflects those who are registered. No official records are available for those who are not registered by the Turkish authorities. According to estimations, number of unregistered Syrian refugees in Turkey is over 100,000 ([UNHCR, 05 February 2013](#)).

Country/Region	Refugees Registered and Awaiting Registration
Turkey	170,700
Jordan	242,649
Lebanon	260,943
Iraq	84,852
Egypt	15,057
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>787,019</b>

Source: [UNHCR, 08 February 2013](#)

#### METHODOLOGY

This report is aimed to fill the information gap on the situation and needs of the conflict-affected Syrian population in Turkey.

For the situation analysis provided here, data is collected during Support to Life (STL) assessments and aid distributions to Syrian refugees residing in Turkey, as well as through observations of STL teams on the ground, complemented by secondary data obtained from meetings with local authorities and aid agencies on the ground.

Surveys and semi-structured interviews are used by STL staff to assess the profile, condition and needs of the conflict-affected Syrian population since September 2012. STL has been in regular contact with key informants (mukhtars, community leaders, local CSO members and activists) in areas populated by Syrian refugees. STL is in close cooperation with the mukhtars of the villages and towns who facilitate the flow of information, including updates on the figures of Syrian refugees having settled outside the camps. During its assessments, STL team interviewed more than 1,100 Syrian families in Hatay, Kilis and Sanliurfa provinces. Out of this, information gathered from 1,024 was used in writing this report for data reliability reasons.

The information obtained through secondary sources is triangulated by STL own assessments. However, as the situation changes rapidly and simultaneously, most population figures provided through local contacts remain unconfirmed. Also, high mobility of Syrian refugees limits the monitoring of their numbers and movement patterns. Therefore, STL strongly recommends a detailed profiling exercise with the objectives of uncovering the immediate to mid-term needs of the conflict-affected Syrian population in Turkey.

#### SUMMARY

Syrian refugees in Turkey report that their basic needs are generally well met in the government controlled refugee camps. STL had previously observed that protection issues did not seem to be a consideration of

camp managers and the authorities alike. Recent information suggests that authorities have started putting more focus on protection issues in the camps.

Contrary to the elaborate assistance being provided in the camps, Syrian refugees in urban areas, towns and villages have not been supported by the Turkish government.

Depending on the source of information, there are between 70,000 and 100,000 Syrian refugees living in urban areas and villages in Turkey. Support to Life (STL) focuses its relief operation on this target group due to limited support received by Syrian refugees living outside the camps. Most of the information provided here is collected directly from the Syrian refugees during STL assessments and aid distributions, meetings with local officials and humanitarian agencies, as well as through observations of STL teams on the ground.

In assessments conducted since September 2012, Syrian refugees have prioritized their main needs as follows:

- Income for meeting their daily needs of food and NFI, including hygiene materials
- Mental health support
- Health care and supplies
- Advice on their legal status
- Education
- Clothing, particularly underwear

During the month of January 2013, STL has continued supporting refugee families with food aid, hygiene materials, kitchen utensils and winterization items. To date, STL has reached more than 1,500 families, with a population of approximately 7,500 Syrian refugees. STL will continue distributing food and hygiene packages while also starting protection interventions for those living out of the camps.

Despite the presence of a number of international NGOs on the ground in Turkey, the ambiguous legal framework for aid agencies is still

making it difficult for NGOs to plan their humanitarian assistance within and through Turkey.

To date, security management has not been a high concern for agencies working in Turkey. However, according to government officials, 46 different types of ammunition have been dropped onto Turkish soil in the last six months, landing in Altinozu, Reyhanli and Yayladagi districts of Hatay ([Evrensel, 12 January 2013](#)). Also, a recent attack at Cilvegozu border gate killed 9 persons ([AlertNet, 11 February 2013](#)). In large city centers like Antakya, it is difficult to identify the unregistered refugee population, which is limiting the support provided to them.

### NUMBERS IN REFUGEE CAMPS

As of 8 February 2013, 170,700 Syrians are registered in Turkey. At the moment there are 15 camps and one transit center in 7 provinces.

According to the latest figures of the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency ([AFAD, 08 February 2013](#) only in Turkish), current number of refugees per location is as follows:

Location	Province	No. of Syrian refugees
Hatay	Hatay	13,692
Islahiye	Gaziantep	8,905
Karkamis	Gaziantep	7,325
Nizip	Gaziantep	18,851
Ceylanpinar	Urfa	38,913
Akcakale	Urfa	34,322
Harran	Urfa	6,838
Kahramanmaras	Kahramanmaras	16,806
Osmaniye	Osmaniye	8,035
Adiyaman	Adiyaman	9,983
Kilis	Kilis	13,544

The number of Syrians undergoing treatment in Turkish hospitals was last reported by the Turkish government to be 173 ([AFAD, 08 February 2013](#)).

Due to several reasons, some families have chosen to not be settled in refugee camps. Among the reasons listed are the following:

- Fear of recruitment of children and youth into armed groups
- Gender based violence (sexual harassment, rape)
- Religious pressure (to pray, for instance)
- Ethnic tensions (mostly discrimination against the Kurdish minority)
- Restricted mobility (in and out of the camps)
- Fear of political violence (especially for ex-public workers)

## **REFUGEES LIVING OUTSIDE THE CAMPS**

The refugee camps that are run by the Turkish government are operating in full capacity. Given the services provided in the camps, some Syrian families are interested in settling in the camps but are unable to do so, as the Turkish government needs to establish additional camps before it can start admitting more refugees despite the fact that they have recently opened 2 new camps. Consequently, the number of Syrian refugees living outside the camps has increased, possibly higher than 100,000 according to some estimates ([UNHCR, 05 February 2013](#)).

Unregistered Syrian refugees are mostly located in Hatay, Kilis, Gaziantep and Sanliurfa, which are all border provinces in Turkey. Increasing number of Syrians choose to enter into Turkey because of:

- harsh winter conditions,
- increased violence and
- the lack of resources or limited access to resources inside Syria.

Numbers are very roughly estimated as 50,000 Syrians in Hatay, 30,000 in Kilis, 20,000 in Gaziantep and 20,000 in Sanliurfa. A detailed profiling of the movement patterns, access to and availability of life saving services and resources is yet to be carried out both in Turkey.

STL operations are concentrated in the border districts of Hatay province, namely Yayladagi, Kirikhan, Altinozu and Reyhanli. According to STL assessments and the data obtained from local sources, the breakdown of the population is as follows:

Kirikhan: Over 1,000 Syrian families according to local sources. Before 25 December 2012, Kirikhan was hosting approximately 266 families (1,321 individuals) according to STL assessments. Therefore, it is estimated that Kirikhan district could be hosting approximately 5,000 Syrian refugees.

Reyhanli: According to local contacts in Reyhanli, the refugee population in the district has experienced dramatic increase of refugees in the last two months. The local police in Reyhanli have identified more than 15,000 Syrian refugees. However, local contacts and other agencies suggest an even higher number. The number of refugees is now estimated to be between 20,000 and 30,000 (4,000 to 6,000 families).

Yayladagi: STL assessed 305 families (1,586 individuals) in Yayladagi district.

Altinozu: STL assessed 421 families (2,315 individuals).

Antakya Centre: STL has assessed only 58 families in Antakya city centre due to difficulties in tracking the families. Hence, STL believes there is a huge information gap with regard to the Syrian refugee numbers in Antakya center.



Other: Local sources have confirmed the presence of Syrian refugees in Kumlu and Belen districts, where STL is not yet operational. Local sources inform that in Kumlu there are 150 families (750 to 900 persons). STL does not have information on the figures in Belen. Breakdown of the Syrian population per district can be seen below:

Location	STL assessment figures		Estimations	
	Family	Individual	Family	Individual
Kırkhan	266	1,321	+1000	+5000
Reyhanli	53*	309*	N/A	20000-30000
Yayladagi	305	1,586	N/A	N/A
Altinozu	421	2,315	N/A	N/A
Antakya Centre	58*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kumlu	N/A	N/A	150 (est.)	N/A
Belen	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

It is important to note that STL field teams have conducted only limited assessments in Reyhanli and Antakya center, not covering all settlements.

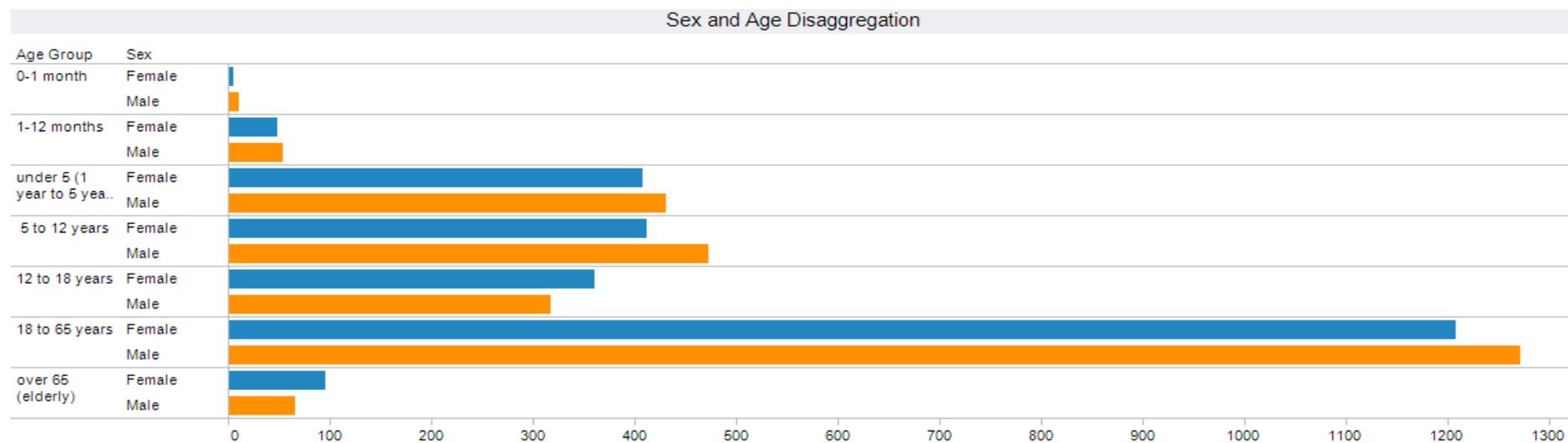
Data suggest that there might be a correlation between home of origin and displacement area of Syrian refugees in Turkey. As can be seen in the table below, those fleeing Latakia tend to seek refuge in the Yayladagi district of Hatay, while those fleeing Aleppo prefer Kirikhan and those fleeing Idlib prefer Altinozu district.

In the light of this, it can be suggested that increasing severity of humanitarian needs in these provinces in Syria might result in increased number of refugees in some particular districts of Hatay.

Hometown	District			
	Altinozu	Kirikhan	Reyhanli	Yayladagi
Aleppo	12	108	7	3
Damascus	1	7		
Hama		5	1	1
Homs		1		2
Idlib	193	39	29	9
Latakia		22		100
Tartus				2



Another interesting finding suggests that contrary to expectations, most Syrian refugee families are full families. Consequently, the number of male and females within the family do not differ greatly.



## SECTORS

### Shelter and NFI

During the earlier months of the winter, warm clothing, stoves and other winterization items had been among the highest priorities of the Syrian refugees in Turkey. However, as spring approaches, such requirements are no longer among the highest priorities in terms of needs. This being the case, especially undergarments are reported by many Syrian refugees as still a crucial need.

Improvement of shelter conditions is a priority concern for those living in collective shelters, mainly in public areas. STL has identified several locations where refugees are living in large numbers in semi-constructed shelters, communal buildings (such as mosques, wedding halls) or farms. Under such conditions, refugees are seen to prefer separating their living areas with makeshift tents within the buildings. Mattresses are also identified as a need for most refugee families. Evidence suggests that most refugee families are living on rent in Turkey. Considering that many refugees are lacking income, rent fees can be seen as a high burden for more than 70% of the unregistered refugee population.

## WASH

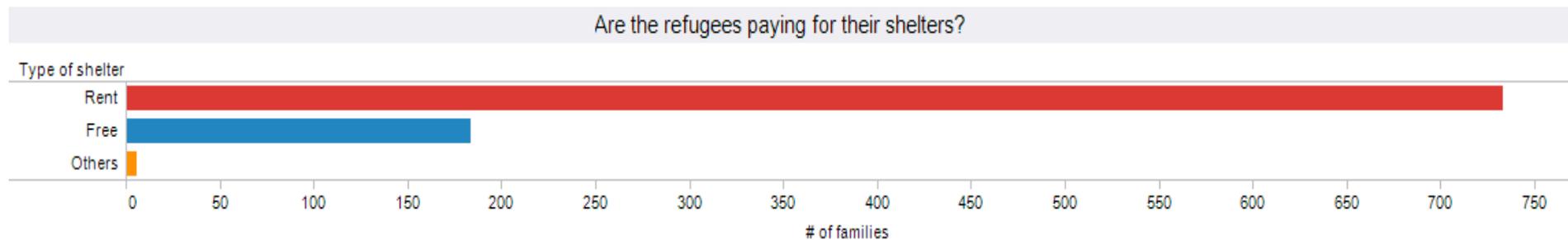
Basic hygiene items such as towels, diapers and sanitary pads are still needed, given the fact that most of the refugees prefer to spend their limited money for purchasing food items.

Sanitation facilities are much more problematic in collective shelters. In some shelters there is only one latrine available for more than 40 persons. Under such conditions, open defecation is also practiced.

### Food Security and Livelihoods

A large number of unregistered Syrian refugees are working as seasonal workers in agriculture sector in and around Hatay. Each worker is paid a daily wage of 15 Turkish Lira (equivalent to 7 Euro), which is less than half the official rate for seasonal agricultural workers in Turkey. Reports suggest Turkish employers see many unregistered refugees as easy targets for exploitation ([IRIN, 26 December 2012](#)).

Other than those staying with host families or relatives in Turkey, Syrian refugee families find daily work to pay their rents. Rents in the villages range between 100-200 TL (45-90 Euro), while this goes up to 350 TL (160 Euro) and even higher in the urban areas.



Refugees settled in the rural areas have greater access to a variety of food items such as eggs, chickens, vegetables from the garden, home made bread, and so on, compared to those choosing to settle in urban areas, where food items need to be purchased from the market.

Most refugees complain about the lack of bread. Refugees state that they have to pay 20-30 TL (9-14 Euro) for 2 hours rent of tandir ovens, which are traditional ovens for making bread.

**Health**

Access to health care is limited due to:

- Financial limitations ([RI, 5 December 2012](#))
- Political will (hospital management discretion and political will of local authorities)
- Limited information on available services

During a meeting in Altinozu district of Hatay during January 2013, the local mukhtars were informed by higher-level state representatives that the Syrian refugees would be accepted in state run hospitals. Information from the ground suggests that this has already started showing its signs as some refugees (pregnant women, people with chronic diseases) have already been accepted to public hospitals.

Data suggests that more than 10% of the visited families state one or more members of their families being in need of medical assistance. Whether these are chronic diseases is unknown. While families with

pregnant members equal to 9%, families with one or more people in special needs equal to %3.

There are also alternative initiatives such as the self-run “Syrian Hospital” accepting all Syrians for treatment. Some of these are also supported by NGOs. These facilities are usually lacking capacity in terms of supplies and space ([Washington Post, 15 January 2013](#)).

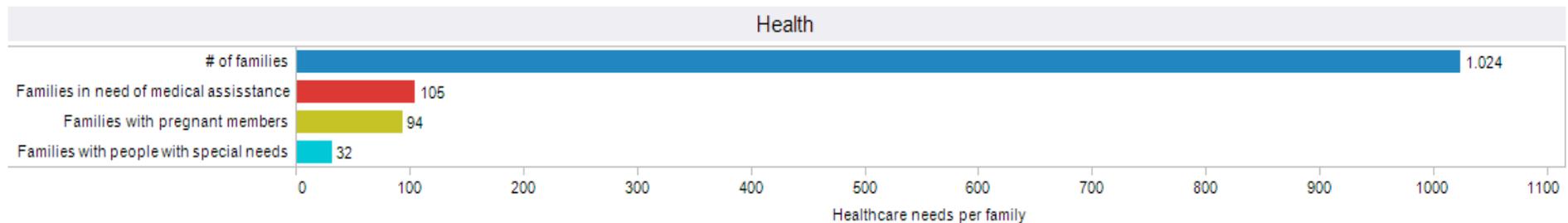
Syrian refugees in villages complain about the lack of medicine. There are many who were receiving medical treatment in Syria but are unable to continue their treatment in Turkey.

Bronchitis due to cold weather is widely common among the children who are under 3 years of age. Poor winterization of shelters and lack of NFIs (mainly blankets and clothing) is seen as the main cause of such health problems.

**Education**

The percentage of school attendance among unregistered refugee children is very low. Assessment figures reveal that only 9 out of 690 questionnaire respondents stated that the school-aged children in the family were attending school in Turkey.

In some cases, for instance in Yayladagi district of Hatay, unregistered Syrian children are able to attend the school inside the refugee camp but there is no transportation facilities for distant villages. Reports suggest Syrian children are attending a Turkish school in Gaziantep as



well ([Evrensel, 25 January 2013](#)). In some exceptional cases, Syrian Turkmens are able to continue their education as guest students in Turkish public schools given their knowledge of the Turkish language.

There are several self-run education facilities founded in most cases by the Syrian refugee population themselves. There is one school in Kilis ([AFP, 18 December 2012](#)), one in Antakya centre and one in Reyhanli district of Hatay.

### **Protection**

There are many Syrians who have been subjected to violence during the conflict in Syria. OCHA states that three quarters of refugees are women and children, many of who have suffered unbearable violence and abuse before they could flee ([OCHA, 11 November 2012](#)).

Reports suggest protection interventions for those refugees in Turkey affected by sexual and gender based violence during the conflict is lacking ([Washington Post January 14 2013](#), [The Guardian 14 January 2013](#)).

While a number of families have asked STL staff for mental support, the figures of those suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder could be quite high. According to observations, the numbers of those in need of PTSD has dramatically increased in the last months. According to a research conducted in Gaziantep province, almost half of the children affected by war have PTSD and elevated levels of depression ([NPR, 26 December 2012](#)), which is also shared by other reports from Kilis ([AFP, 18 December 2012](#)).

Cases of sexual and gender-based violence in the camps have been reported to STL staff. The situation out of the camps is not known, although in many cases, newly arrived refugees tend to spend their first days and weeks in communal buildings such as mosques, wedding halls and schools. Under such conditions, privacy becomes an important issue.

Reports suggest that children are recruited, trained and used by armed groups within Syrian territory ([AlertNet 29 November 2012](#), [Birgun 6 February 2013](#), only in Turkish). Whether there are any Syrian children recruited from Turkey to be used by armed groups in the conflict is unknown.

Many Syrians have very limited information on their current legal status in Turkey. Turkish authorities issued a directive in April 2012 on the temporary protection policy for the Syrian population, however this has not been public and therefore this directive offers no guidance to local authorities, agencies and refugees themselves ([RI, 5 December 2012](#)). One of the frequently asked questions to STL staff is with regard to their legal status, both residence permits in Turkey and possible resettlement to third countries. Refugees want to know who and where to contact for such legal issues.

### **CCCM**

Shelter heating has been seen to cause safety problems at the refugee camps. Recently 4 persons were killed due to fire caused by the heater of a tent ([Evrensel, 15 January 2013](#), only in Turkish).

Reports also suggest that there was a riot in Nizip camp ([Evrensel, 3 February 2013](#), only in Turkish).

### **HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND GAPS**

There are many gaps in the assistance provided to Syrians living in urban areas and villages in Turkey. These have been identified by STL team as follows:

- Food supplements
- Hygiene materials
- Stoves, blankets, fuel for heating and winter clothes where applicable,
- Legal advice and guidance

- Mental health support
- Health care support
- Education

Although not mentioned by Syrians, STL is highly concerned about the possible future impacts of unexploded ordinances (UXOs) in the Syria-Turkey border area. This is an area in which awareness raising campaigns can be conducted.

In order to create the foundation for better humanitarian programming for out-of-camp Syrians, a structured analysis of the Syrian refugee profile in Turkey needs to be conducted.

## **STL RELIEF ACTIVITIES**

For more than five months, Support to Life field team, with a base in Antakya city of Hatay province, has been providing humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees living with host families and in rented shelters. Aid is being given to Syrian families in Hatay province, both in the city center and in the towns and border villages.

A total of 1,260 food packages, 11.1 tons of flour, 1,760 hygiene sets, 1,400 kitchen sets, 8,108 blankets, 909 plastic carpets, 403 stoves, 20 tons of heating fuel, 2,423 raincoats, 2,423 polar sweaters, 2,423 undergarments and 4,846 pairs of socks were distributed to more than 1,500 Syrian households in villages and urban areas of Yayladagi, Altinozu, Reyhanli, Kirikhan and Antakya.

Each Syrian household is assessed individually and based on pre-set vulnerability criteria, the beneficiaries are selected. Door-to-door deliveries of relief goods are conducted. Brief survey data is collected from each household assessed.

**Food Security:** In February 2013, STL aid distributions continue with the provision of food packs. STL is also planning to establish a commodity voucher system for food in Hatay province.

**WASH:** Commodity vouchers for the provision of hygiene materials, in kind distribution of hygiene/cleaning materials, and improvement of sanitation facilities in collective shelters are STL's planned WASH interventions for the coming months.

**Protection:** In addition to its food security and WASH activities, STL is opening community centres where protection services will be provided to those Syrians affected by the conflict. In addition to rehabilitative activities, one aspect of the community centres will be to provide a referral system to Syrian refugees in linking them up with services provided by other actors on the ground in Turkey.

**Profiling:** STL is planning to conduct a detailed profiling exercise for the Syrian and host community population located in STL operational area. STL expects this profiling exercise to provide input to the activities of other aid agencies on the ground.

STL works in partnership with international NGOs that are based in Germany, Spain, Japan and Denmark.

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