



## EXPERIENCES FROM IYS 2020, PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND AWARENESS ACTIVITIES IN TURKEY

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### ABSTRACT

The year 2020, which has been designated as the International Year of Sound with the intention of celebrating and promoting the importance of sound for science and society was ironically started as a silent and isolated year with the global COVID-19 pandemic. However, these unprecedented times and activities around the world, which explored the interaction between sound, technology and the society, presented sound experiences for humanity and the ecosystem that they have never had the opportunity to experience before. This study reports on the activities of Turkish Acoustical Society during these times and aims to draw attention to the benefits, challenges, and opportunities of the instruments for widening participation and spreading knowledge relating to sound. The main activities were public opinion survey on noise annoyance in dwellings before and during the pandemic, Turkish Glossary of Acoustic Terms, IYS Drawing and Composition Competition in Turkish schools and various seminars, interviews, podcast on social media channels. Our experience and findings suggest that designing and implementing activities that actively includes researchers, teachers, students and ordinary people may help increase public engagement behaviorally, emotionally, and

cognitively, there by positively affecting awareness in sound related subjects.

**Keywords:** *International Year of Sound, Acoustic education, public awareness, IYS 2020*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 was declared the International Year of Sound with the intention of promoting awareness of the importance of sound in all aspects of society and leading to an understanding of sound-related issues at national and world-wide levels. This global initiative faced an extra ordinary challenge with the global outbreak of COVID-19 pandemics, which ironically created a silent and isolated year around the world. The International Year of Sound 2020, extended to 2021, has presented an unprecedented scientific opportunity to explore the new soundscapes on the global scale. The lock-downs and curfews led to the absence of people in the streets and the decline of daily activities and commuting, which caused profound silencing on a large scale. This study describes works under-taken by the Turkish Acoustical Society in conjunction with IYS 2020 activities and discusses the impact they have locally in relation to raising awareness in sound related subjects in society.

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## 2. ACTIVITIES

### 2.1 2020 Noise Awareness Day Public Opinion Poll

An online opinion poll about noise annoyance in the times of Covid-19's first wave was started by Turkish Acoustical society in April 2020 (On Noise Awareness Day 2020) – as part of the activities of IYS 2020 and International Noise Awareness Day. The aim of the research was to assess how noise conditions have changed and how occupants perceived the noise conditions inside the dwellings during the first wave of the pandemic. Additionally, environmental noise levels were measured during weekdays and weekends at two locations in İstanbul and the results were compared pre-the pandemic results. Finally, the third section included questions related to general assessment of noise satisfaction.

The results indicated that traffic noise annoyance has decreased and noise annoyance due to neighbor noise did not change significantly; however, noise annoyance due to one's own dwelling increased. It seems that people have been annoyed by the sounds of their own household more than ever before. The longer periods of time spent in our homes during the lockdowns also highlighted the importance of sound insulation in buildings and the acoustic conditioning of our schools or homes.

The results also confirmed an overall increase in dwelling satisfactions mainly due to lower environmental noise levels. One of the interesting findings was the 5dB increase of noise levels in the residential complex with greenery during the full lock-down period. The green spaces around the residential areas served as a new meeting place and activity area for people because parks and other recreational facilities were closed and everyone was at home.

### 2.2 IYS 2020 Drawing and Composition Competition in Turkish Schools

An international drawing and composition competition for primary, secondary, and high school students from around the world was held as part of IYS 2020 activities. The students were asked to paint with the theme "My World of Sounds" which was inspired by the melody and lyrics of the song "The Sounds of the World" and the IYS2020 slogan, "Importance of Sound for Society and the World." The competition's national coordinator was the Turkish Acoustical Society. Turkish Acoustical Society prepared 5

short-films to promote IYS student competition and also to introduce acoustics to children. The short films included the following themes: Absorption and reflection, words to describe sounds, experiment of tremble-bass sound and experiment of sound propagation.

Interviews were made with the students about the competition and the national award ceremony was held at The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) National Metrology Institute (UME) on October 22, 2021. After the ceremony, the students had the opportunity to visit the acoustic laboratories of TÜBİTAK-UME. A booklet that has the drawings of all the students participating in the competition was published and sent to all students along with a participation certificate.

### 2.3 Turkish Glossary of Acoustic Terms

The project of Turkish Glossary of Acoustic Terms from Turkish to English was started. An open call to the Members of the Turkish Acoustical Society, to participate in working groups in different disciplines of acoustic were made in 2020. Four major working groups were established on June 1, 2020, and each working group has experienced researchers as consultants. It was aimed to expand the list of acoustic terms to cover current acoustic research and application areas, to scan the translations used in current studies, and to determine the translations that most accurately match the meanings of the terms in Turkish.

### 2.4 Seminars, Congress and Social Media Presence

On 7-8 October 2021 a national congress on acoustics was organized. The topic of the congress was 'Sounds and Silence after 2020' and it covered three major events experienced in 2020 in Turkey that re-emphasized the importance of the acoustics in: Pandemic, Earthquake, and Protests. During the congress 3 panels with distinguished researchers on these 3 topics were invited.

## 3. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the activities of the Turkish Acoustical Society to create awareness in sound related subjects during IYS 2020 resulted in creating digital content, and platforms and showed that NGOs can play a critical part in improving communities and promoting citizen participation in sound related subjects; especially in dwelling sound satisfaction, children's perception of sound, establishing a comprehensible terminology agreement in acoustics.