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EUROPE DAY 2023: TÜRKİYE IN THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Europe Day coinciding with the centenary of the Turkish Republic this year requires a reflection of the past of Türkiye-EU relations and the possible options for the future.

Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas
IKV Secretary General

As the EU commemorates Europe day 73 years after the declaration of the Schuman Plan, Türkiye celebrates the centenary of the Republic's foundation by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The precursor of the Republic, the Ottoman Empire was recognized as a member of the European system of states at the Paris Congress of 1856. It was declared in Article 7 of the ensuing peace treaty that "the Sublime Porte [is] admitted to participate in the advantages of the public law and system (concert) of Europe." Some historians also argue that the Ottoman Empire had earlier been accepted as part of the system and benefited from its "advantages" since it concluded treaties with European states such as the Treaty of Carlowitz of 1699. According to Hurewitz, the Empire was the first non-Christian country to take part in the European state system and the first to fully accept the rules of European diplomacy.

The Ottoman Empire participated in World War I on the side of Germany, experienced defeat and was imposed harsh peace conditions with the Treaty of Sevres. Atatürk united the country to support his resistance and fight the War of Independence that nullified the Sevres conditions and established a new Republic. The Turkish Republic was based on the model of a European nation-state adopting the principles of nationalism, secularism and populism. Atatürk's motto of "catching up with contemporary civilization" reflected the overarching aim of making a new start and achieving a rapid pace of development based on science and technology. Education and culture were very important aspects of this new start and aimed to carry the country to the level of equality with European peers.

Türkiye found a place for itself in the post-World War II European order by becoming a member of the Council of Europe and NATO and also making a transition to multi-party politics. The Turkish government of the time showed an early interest in the European Communities as well and applied for an association with the European Economic Community in 1959. This 9 May Europe day also reflects upon 64 years of relations with the European Community/ Union. Most of this period witnessed a slow progress of the association relationship culminating in the Customs Union of 1996. Türkiye then became a candidate to join the Union in 1999 and started accession negotiations in 2005. However, the accession process could not be successfully executed and ran into several problems due to problems in Türkiye, changes in the EU's approach towards the country and changes in the overall enlargement strategy. One of the most important issues was linked with questions of culture and identity. The Christian Democratic

Party convention in 1997 put forth that Türkiye could not be a member due to differences in culture and identity while President Sarkozy of France argued that Türkiye did not belong to Europe. While such opinions rested on perceptions about Türkiye and Europe based on difference, Türkiye's eligibility has already been accepted both in Article 28 of the Ankara Agreement and also in the commission's opinion on Türkiye's application dating back to 1989. Later the Member States also agreed to give Türkiye a membership perspective and even to start accession negotiations due to Türkiye's success in sufficiently fulfilling the political aspects of the Copenhagen criteria.

The General Affairs council of the EU in 2018 decided not to open and close any chapters in the negotiations and not to start the customs union modernization process. Problems over hydrocarbon explorations off the coast of Cyprus and in the Aegean brought further tensions in the relations resulting

in sanctions being implemented against Türkiye. The positive agenda which was initiated in 2020 in order to moderate the tensions and revitalise the relations could not achieve the intended outcome. The result of the elections to be held on 14 May in Türkiye is anxiously awaited in order to reflect on the future of the relations based on the political configuration which will be shaped after the elections.

The last decade witnessed many crises both in Europe and the world. While the financial crisis and the pandemic had global implications, the refugee crisis, Brexit and Russian aggression against Ukraine mostly impacted on Europe and the EU. As the EU struggled to survive through the crises, it was also able to renew itself and assume new prerogatives. Since 2019 the twin priorities of the green deal and the digital agenda were adopted by the EU as the major processes which could carry the union to the new century and create a bond with new generations. The EU entered into an accelerated period

of legislative activity including new initiatives in the area of renewables, decarbonisation, carbon border adjustment, semiconductors, digitalisation, personal data protection, cybersecurity, etc. The Union initiated the first ever regulation on the use of artificial intelligence. While the strategic compass aims to lay the basis for a strengthened security and defence policy in the new decade, the digital compass aims to lay the basic parameters of a digital European marketplace.

As Türkiye stands on the centenary of the Republic, its future in Europe and the EU is also being questioned and discussed. While its importance as a regional actor and a neighbouring country is acknowledged by many, its future as a candidate to join the Union is being contested since the accession process has de facto been frozen and the possibility of a restart seems far off. Alternatives to membership such as privileged partnership or strategic partnership have been proposed before. However, such schemes were quite thin in terms of content and could not keep the relations on track since they lacked a consistent and credible framework. At the same time, it should also be acknowledged that the relations have to be revitalised with a view to initiating an honest, effective and mutually-beneficial dialogue between the parties. One way to do so could be to associate Türkiye in the twin priorities of the EU, the green deal and digital agenda. This need not take the place of the accession framework. However, it may serve to keep the relations on track while the geopolitical landscape becomes clearer and more understandable. In this way, Türkiye may be affiliated with the EU on the basis of these critical agendas while such engagement will also form a preparatory background regarding the Customs Union modernization and accession processes.



HİSARCIKLIOĞLU RE-ELECTED AS TOBB PRESIDENT ONCE AGAIN



On 31 May 2023 M. Rifat Hisarcıklıoğlu was re-elected as the President of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye (TOBB). Hisarcıklıoğlu became the President of TOBB for the next four years in the election held at the 79th General Assembly at TOBB University of Economics and Technology.

The new TOBB Board of Directors consists of the following names:

-Ali Kopuz (President of İstanbul

Commodity Exchange)
-Selçuk Öztürk (President of Konya Chamber of Commerce)
-Salih Zeki Murzioğlu (President of Samsun Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
-Tamer Kiran (President of İMEAK Chamber of Maritime Commerce)
-Faik Yavuz (President of Ankara Commodity Exchange)
-Cengiz Günay (President of Tekirdağ Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
-Zeki Kivanç (President of Adana

Chamber of Industry)
-Engin Yeşil (President of Diyarbakır Commodity Exchange)
-Hakan Ülken (President of Aydın Chamber of Commerce)
-Şaban Aziz Karahmehmetoğlu (President of Rize Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
-Mehmet Büyüksimitçi (President of Kayseri Chamber of Industry)
-Mustafa Cihat Lokmanoğlu (President of Mersin Chamber of Maritime Commerce)
-İbrahim Burkay (President of Bursa Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
-Seyit Ardıç (President of Ankara Chamber of Industry)
-Şekib Avdağ (President of İstanbul Chamber of Commerce)
-İşinsu Kestelli (President of İzmir Commodity Exchange)
-Ali Çandır (President of Antalya Commodity Exchange)
-Ender Yorgancılar (President of the Aegean Region Chamber of Industry)
-Mehmet Tuncay Yıldırım (President of Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce)
-Saim Özkalın (President of Erzurum Chamber of Commerce and Industry)



IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU: "A FRESH START SHOULD BE MADE WITH THE EU IN THE NEW ERA"

IKV President Ayhan Zeytinoğlu made a statement following the finalisation of the results of the second round of the presidential elections. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu said the following:

"We congratulate Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on his re-election as President. We wish the new era to be auspicious. Revitalizing the relations with the EU carries great importance in this new period. As a candidate and a member of the customs union, Türkiye should open a new chapter with the EU. The EU continues to be our most important export market. The green and digital transformations in the EU economy requires an

update in Türkiye's relationship with the EU. Therefore, initiating the modernization of the customs union and establishing a green and digital agenda with the EU are of great importance. Otherwise, we may risk losing our competitiveness in the EU market. Resolving Türkiye's significant problems, especially in the economy, may be possible through reviving the EU process. In this new era, adapting to the significant changes within the framework of the green consensus and digital agenda in the EU, as well as addressing the issues in our relations with the EU, will form the most important elements of this fresh start."

IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU: "A NEW PAGE MUST BE OPENED WITH EU AFTER THE ELECTIONS"



IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu, made a statement for the occasion of 9 May Europe Day. In his statement, Chairperson Zeytinoğlu said:

"This year, we are celebrating the 9 May Europe Day, five days before the critical elections in Türkiye. This coincidence also brings a critical agenda with itself. No matter what political

picture emerges after the 14 May elections in Türkiye, the EU process needs to be revived. Türkiye's relations with the EU were halted after 2016. Subsequently, developments such as the COVID-19 epidemic and the Russia-Ukraine War seriously affected the European agenda. Under the difficult conditions created

by these developments, the EU gave priority to taking the necessary steps to bring into action the Green Deal and digitalization goals. In fact, the whole world is going through a great transformation. While economic processes, production and consumption patterns and ways of doing business are changing, the laws and legislation accompanying this transformation are also being renewed.

In this process, we see that the EU has taken strategic steps within the scope of the European Green Deal and the digital transformation, especially after 2019, and is implementing many new legal regulations and we also see that the European economy and policies are rapidly being renewed with different dimensions from strategic autonomy in raw materials to support of chip production, from cyber security to the carbon regulation mechanism at the

border. It is critical for Türkiye to adapt to this change and transformation in the EU, to which Türkiye is a candidate, has a Customs Union relationship and is the largest export market and source of foreign investment. As we celebrate the 9 May this year, we must evaluate where Europe is heading and Türkiye's position in this change very accurately.

After the upcoming critical elections, the government and Parliament that will govern Türkiye for the next five years will be determined. One of the most important priorities of the government to be established in this new period should be relations with the EU. While maintaining the goal of full membership, it should also be aimed to rapidly develop relations in areas such as updating the Customs Union, ensuring visa liberalization, compliance with the European Green Deal, cooperation in renewable energy, global gateway initiative,

transportation networks, resilience of supply chains and digital infrastructure. The revitalization of the EU process will also have a significant impact in terms of Türkiye's recovery from the economic crisis it is in, the recovery of the region after the earthquake, the development of exports by focusing on high-value-added and high-tech products, and the continuation of attracting international investment.

As the global system changes, the EU, as the main organization of Europe, is struggling to respond to new challenges and renew itself. It aims to fulfil the requirements of the 21st century and to take the lead in global competition. In this process, Türkiye's preparation and adaptation to developments and changes in the EU should be the top priority as a candidate country, Customs Union partner, and trade and investment partner."

İKv AGENDA

İKv HELD "THE FUTURE OF EUROPE AND THE ROLE OF TÜRKİYE IN THE POLARISED WORLD" MEETING



On Europe Day this year, İKV, with the contributions of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF), organized a meeting titled "The Future of Europe and Türkiye's Role in a Polarized World". The meeting which took place on 9 May was moderated by İKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit. In the first part, the speakers were the Friedrich Naumann Foundation's Permanent Representative in Türkiye Beate Apelt, İKV Chairperson and the Vice President of TOBB Ayhan Zeytinoğlu, and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay. In the second part of the meeting, there was a panel consisting of İstanbul Aydın University Dean of Faculty of Science and Literature Prof. Tark Oğuzlu, President of Institut du Bosphore Dr. Bahadır Kaleağası, Director of TEPAV EU Studies Nilgün Arsan Eralp, Academic Staff Member of TOBB Economy and Technology University Faculty of Law Prof. Sanem Baykal, Academic Staff Member of Turkish – German University Department of Political

Science and International Relations Assoc. Prof. Ebru Turhan, and İKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas.

Representative Apelt discussed the recent need to support peace and stability in the region as a result of the great transformation taking place in Europe due to the Ukraine-Russia war and emphasized the importance of Türkiye-EU relations in this respect. İKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu, stressed the need for revitalisation of the EU accession process in Türkiye and highlighted the direct link between foreign direct investments coming from EU countries and the continuation of the Türkiye-EU relations. Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay stated that Europe Day has been a day of celebration of peace and stability in Europe and emphasized the importance of the EU returning to its founding values. He also underlined that Türkiye plays a key role for the EU at this point and that Türkiye-EU relations will determine the direction the EU will take going forward.

In the second part of the meeting, the panellists discussed the ways in which the Russia-Ukraine

war is impacting Europe in general and the EU specifically in terms of illiberal and populist discourse and different policies like enlargement and migration; In the light of recent developments, Türkiye-EU relations have become crucial. Various concepts, such as mutual principles, communication, mutual trust, conditionality, identity, and reconciliation policy, play significant roles in shaping and improving the current state of affairs. These concepts support international cooperation and directly impact Türkiye-EU relations. They also touched upon the recent progress of artificial intelligence and the effects of great technological changes on human life. Finally, the need for the revitalization of communication channels, taking concrete steps, the importance of continuity, insistence on goals and internalizing the process with respect to Türkiye's relations with the EU were highlighted, whereas the customs union, Green Deal and digital transformation were suggested as areas important for improving relations with the EU.

İKv SECRETARY GENERAL NAS PARTICIPATED IN VARIOUS PROGRAMMES AND EVENTS

İKv Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas gave a presentation on "Developments in EU Health Policy and the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic" on 30 May 2023. The event took place within the scope of the Jean Monnet Module titled "Global Risk Assessment Dataset and the EU's Role in the Governance of Global Risks" at Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University.

On 23 May, İKV Secretary General Nas participated in the "Digital Single Market Harmonization Strategy 2nd Stakeholder Workshop" organised by İstanbul Apparel Exporters' Association (İHKİB) and gave a presentation titled "EU Digital Agenda and Artificial Intelligence Strategy". In her presentation,



Assoc. Prof. Nas evaluated the digital agenda, which is one of the

most important priorities of the EU, and gave information on the EU's objectives, actions and legislative development in this context.

On 18 May, İKV Secretary General Nas, attended a roundtable meeting titled "Türkiye-EU Relations in 2023" held in Ankara. During the meeting organised in partnership with TEPAV, Ankara Policy Center, and the Embassy of Spain, she delivered a speech discussing the current state of Türkiye-EU relations and provided an assessment. The meeting addressed the current status of Türkiye-EU relations, issues, proposed solutions, and expectations for the future. İKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit also participated in the meeting.

TIMELINE MAY 2023

	1	
Türkiye-EU subcommittee for customs, taxation, drugs, and money laundering meeting took place.	2	
	3	
Permanent Delegate of Türkiye Ambassador Faruk Kaymakcı came together with Executive Vice President of the EU Commission.	4	
	5	
	6	
	7	İKv Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu, made a statement in the occasion of 9 May Europe Day.
	8	
Türkiye held a reception to celebrate Europe Day.	9	İKv held "The future of Europe and the role of Türkiye in the polarised world" meeting.
	10	
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	12	
	13	
	14	
Deputy Minister Ambassador Burak Akçapar participated in the panel discussion at the EU Meets the Balkans Forum in Sofia.	16	
	15	
Deputy Minister Ambassador Kemal Bozay attended the 4 th summit of the Council of Europe.	17	
	18	İKv secretary general Nas attended the meeting titled "TÜRKİYE-EU relations in 2023".
	19	
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	23	İKv Secretary General Nas gave a presentation on the EU digital agenda and artificial intelligence.
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	26	
	27	
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan re-elected as President of Türkiye.	28	
	29	
	30	İKv Secretary General Nas gave a presentation on EU health policy and the Covid-19 pandemic.
	31	

HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

TÜRKİYE CELEBRATES 9 MAY AS EUROPE DAY

Türkiye, an EU membership candidate, held a reception on 9 May to celebrate Europe Day. The anniversary of the Schuman Declaration has been celebrated in Türkiye since 1999. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu also made a statement emphasising the importance of Europe Day. In his message, he underscored Türkiye's key role in the region and the international system, stating that it is capable of making a significant contribution to security and stability. The current situation compels us to reconsider the contributions that Türkiye-EU relations can make particularly regarding accession negotiations. The EU continues to develop new policies and understandings in response to changing circumstances and multi-layered challenges, as exemplified by the war in Ukraine. Türkiye has started accession negotiations with the goal of full membership in the EU, and Türkiye expects these negotiations to be finalised in a fair and result-oriented manner, without being instrumentalised in national politics. Çavuşoğlu also extended Türkiye's appreciation for the EU's solidarity with the Turkish people after the twin earthquakes on 6 February 2023.

This year, in commemoration of the twin earthquakes on 6 February, Europe Day embraced the main theme of "solidarity". Additionally, a digital photo exhibition titled "we are stronger together" organised with the contributions by Türkiye Photojournalists Association was inaugurated. The Ankara leg of the events held throughout Türkiye took place at CerModern and was hosted by the EU Delegation to Türkiye. Head of the EU Delegation to Türkiye Ambassador Nikolaus Meyer-Landrut, who was recently presented



with a state medal, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay, foreign mission representations of some countries, and other guests attended the program. Ambassador Bozay expressed that it is significant to come together under the theme of "we are strong together" on Europe Day and stated, "Türkiye and the Turkish nation will never forget the support from the world, especially from the EU, immediately after the earthquake."

On this day, the Antakya Civilizations Choir gave a concert, which was also broadcasted online on the Directorate for EU Affairs' YouTube channel. Ambassador Nikolaus Meyer-Landrut mentioned that Europe Day has been celebrated for two years in the shadow of the Russia-Ukraine war, which has been ongoing for more than a year. He also emphasised the importance of standing together with NATO ally Türkiye, which is a crucial key and long-term partner, particularly in difficult times, as well as being a candidate country. He highlighted the significance of art in bringing people together, regardless of the type or medium, and expressed pleasure that the Antakya Civilizations Choir, which having lost seven members in the earthquakes, was still able to give a concert for the occasion of Europe Day.

AMBASSADOR KEMAL BOZAY ATTENDED FOURTH COUNCIL OF EUROPE SUMMIT



Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay, attended the Fourth Summit of the Council of Europe in Reykjavik, Iceland, on 17 May 2023. In his speech, Ambassador Bozay expressed his support for the Council of Europe and called for stronger cooperation.

Ambassador Bozay reminded the audience that the Council of Europe is a peace project that embraces democracy, the rule of law, and human rights as fundamental values. He underlined that Türkiye is also a part of this project. The most important topics mentioned by Ambassador Bozay, were the support for the earthquake victims in Türkiye, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the issue of immigrants.

Ambassador Bozay pointed out that the Russia-Ukraine war is a great struggle on the

continent. He reiterated Türkiye's full support for Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and unity. He also underlined the need to prevent the rising xenophobia and hate speech in Europe. In addition, Ambassador Bozay emphasised the necessity of protecting the European Convention on Human Rights and the Statute of the Council of Europe regarding immigrants and asylum seekers, which is one of Türkiye's main concerns.

Ambassador Bozay expressed his belief that Türkiye will do its part in all crises. He reminded the audience that prosperity and security can only be achieved together. He often stressed the importance of jointly tackling problems around European values. The summit was also a chance to discuss the importance of solidarity and cooperation in the face of crises.

GREEK FOREIGN MINISTER DENDIAS EXPRESSED HIS OPTIMISM FOR THE GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS

In an interview done by public broadcaster ERT, Nikos Dendias declared that the two countries can create many opportunities together. The Greek Minister stated that giving an end to issues between Greece and Türkiye and initiating a collaboration phase would be a dream. He expressed that settling the dispute on maritime zones based on international law is his number-one dream for Greek foreign policy. Dendias also mentioned that the summer of 2020 was a difficult time for him as the Foreign Minister because of the escalation between Greece and Türkiye; fortunately, nothing disastrous happened thanks to the rational attitudes presented by both sides.

Then, the Foreign Minister Dendias mentioned the opportunity of reconciliation through the window of hope coming to existence after the destructive earthquakes that hit the southern provinces of Türkiye on 6 February 2023. Greece was one of the first countries to convey its condolences and to offer aid, as Türkiye was the first country to offer its condolences and aid after the deadly train accident on 28 February.



High-level meetings between Greece and Türkiye are also continuing. On 20 March, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu met his counterpart Dendias and agreed to support Greece's efforts for a seat at the UN Security Council in 2025-2026 while Greece agreed to back Turkish candidacy for Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization.

On 4 April, the Minister of National Defence Hulusi Akar met his Greek counterpart Nikolaos Panagiotopoulos during his visit to the earthquake stricken Hatay, and the two ministers held a joint news conference.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING WAS HELD BETWEEN TÜRKİYE AND THE EU COMMISSION



The 18th Round Meeting of the Subcommittee No. 8, one of the eight sub-committees operating under the Türkiye-EU Association Committee, was hosted by Türkiye on 27-28 April 2023, with the General Manager of EU Affairs Elif Kurşunlu and the European Commission Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Head of Türkiye Unit, Bernard Brunet. The meeting took place online, with Bernard Brunet co-chairing.

In the meeting attended by the relevant public institutions from Türkiye and the relevant general directorates from the EU Commission, within the framework of Türkiye's EU accession process, 23rd Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, 24th Justice, Freedom and Security, 4th Free Movement of Goods, 16th Taxation and 32nd The developments in five chapters, namely Financial Control, were discussed.

During the meeting, the relevant public institutions from Türkiye and the relevant general directorates from the EU Commission shared mutual information on the current developments in the judicial system, fundamental rights, immigration and border management, visa policy, fight against organized crime, police cooperation, fight against terrorism, fight against corruption, financial control and taxation in Türkiye and the EU.

These committee meetings are of a significant importance for the continuity of Türkiye-EU Relations. Although the progress of the membership process has faced obstacles, the continued communication and meeting network highlight Türkiye's status as an EU candidate country. Therefore, the sustainability of the sub-committee meetings and the communication link between Türkiye and the EU Commission are significant.

TÜRKİYE HAS DISCOVERED A NEW OIL RESERVE

The discovery of oil reserves is said to contribute approximately 2.9 billion dollars to the economy on an annual basis.



Türkiye has recently made a new breakthrough in oil and natural gas exploration. A new oil reserve has been discovered as a result of exploration work carried out on land and at sea since 2020. A new discovery was made in Gabar, where drilling activities are ongoing. According to official information, it has been announced that this field will reach a production capacity of 100,000 barrels per day with 100 wells.

Stating that investment and exploration activities in the country will increase thanks to the economic contribution of the discovery, Petroleum and Natural Gas Platform Association (PETFORM) Secretary General Murat Kalay said, "If we consider that the production of a well in Türkiye is 50-60 barrels per day, a well that produces 1,000 barrels

per day really adds a dimension that changes the equation and the game. Considering the quality of the crude oil, it is also pleasing news that the discovery is an oil with high gravity, which we can sell at a better price and be subject to less costly refining."

For Türkiye, one of the most important problems of which is foreign dependency on energy, resources such as natural gas and oil are of vital importance. The oil and natural gas exploration activities, which have gained momentum recently, have yielded remarkable gains, although they did not generate huge profits in the past period. It is thought that oil and gas exploration studies, which are currently in their infancy stage, will enable much more significant discoveries and returns in the future.

TÜRKİYE'S NATIONAL AIRCRAFT PROJECT: A NEW ERA FOR TURKISH AVIATION



and has features such as high situational awareness, optimised pilot workload, combat damage detection, new-generation mission systems, low observability, precision strikes, and an internal weapon bay.

The Hürjet, Türkiye's first national supersonic combat aircraft, aims to replace aging jet trainers. The Hürkuş, a single-engine turboprop aircraft developed for basic training, has carried out more than 2,000 hours of test flights to date. These improvements are expected to provide Türkiye with a more comprehensive array of aircraft and establish a complete air force. These aircraft boast advanced features, such as high situational awareness, optimised pilot workload, precision strikes, and low observability, which solidify Türkiye's position as a key player in the global aviation industry.

Türkiye's defence industry has developed three national aircraft: the Hürkuş, the Hürjet, and the KAA. These aircraft will enable the country to create an air force from scratch. The KAA, Türkiye's fifth-generation fighter jet, will replace the aging F-16 fleet

SALMON FARMING INCREASES IN TÜRKİYE



According to the data provided by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), more than 190,000 tons of salmon were produced in Türkiye in 2022. With this output, Türkiye ranked second after Iran which produced almost 194,000 tons last year according to the same data.

As Turkish salmon farming increases, it is demonstrated in the data that nearly 70,000 tons were exported from Türkiye and created

a revenue of 451 million dollars. The main importers of Turkish salmon were Russia and EU Member States last year.

Salmon farming centres seem to spread across the country rather than being limited to one province in Türkiye.

The Eastern province of Elazığ, the Black Sea province of Samsun, and the western province of Muğla are the leading locations of salmon farming.

TÜRKİYE'S SPACE TRAVELLERS ARE GETTING READY FOR THEIR FIRST SPACE MISSION

The first Turkish space travellers are preparing for their historic space mission. Last month, during the major technology event TEKNOFEST in İstanbul, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced the names of the individuals who will represent Türkiye. Alper Gezeravcı and Tuva Cihangir Ataserver are the first space travellers from Türkiye who will be sent into space in the last quarter of 2023.

Alper Gezeravcı, a 42-year-old Turkish Air Force pilot, and Tuva Cihangir Ataserver, a 31-year-old system engineer at Roketsan Turkish missile manufacturer, are currently being trained at the Johnson Space

Center in Houston, Texas. The two astronauts will embark on a 14-day mission to space to research on algae from Antarctica.

The exact timetable for their mission will be announced soon once it is confirmed. Currently, both travellers are in a training period in Houston, Texas. Their upcoming training sessions will be in Germany, Japan, and Alabama. They will receive familiarization training on the subsystems and modules of the International Space Station, including the European Space Agency's Columbus module and the Japanese Space Agency's Kibo module.



As part of TÜBİTAK Space's "Science Mission" projects, the ALGALSPACE project, led by Prof. Dr. Didem Balkanlı Özçimen, a faculty member at the Bioengineering

Department of Yıldız Technical University, will test microalgae in space for the first time. The project aims to gather data that will contribute to the development of

future space technologies. Prof. Dr. Özçimen stated, "Microalgae is easy to grow and rich in nutrients, making it suitable as food for space travellers. Additionally, it can contribute to various areas of space missions, such as improving air quality and waste treatment." She further added, "One of the challenges of long-duration space missions, such as human settlement on the Moon or Mars, is the limited life support resources that can be carried on board. We will explore the use of microalgae, which have adapted to harsh conditions such as the poles and are resistant to these conditions in space."

TURKISH AIRLINES MARKS 90 YEARS IN BUSINESS

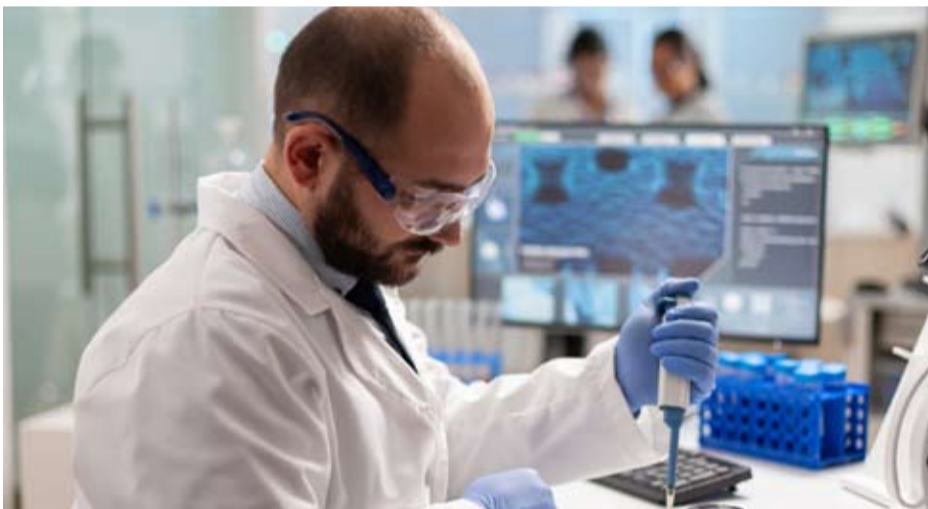
Turkish Airlines, which flies to most countries in the world, celebrates its 90th anniversary in the sky. Established in 1933 with a fleet of five aircraft, Turkish Airlines now has 415 aircraft as of 2023. Having made its first international flight between Ankara, İstanbul and Athens in 1947, Turkish Airlines today delivers millions of guests to 344 destinations in 129 countries.

Turkish Airlines has been recognised as one of the best airlines in the world by several international institutions. The airline has been named "Best Airline in Europe", "Top-10 International Airline", "Five Star Global

Airline", "Best Airline of Eastern Europe" and "Top-3 Global Airlines". The CEO of Turkish Airlines, Ahmet Bolat, proudly announced that the airline is commemorating its 90th anniversary this year. With an ambitious vision for the future, the airline aspires to expand its fleet to a staggering 800 aircraft by 2033. Moreover, they plan to establish connections to an impressive 400 destinations worldwide, catering to the ever-growing demand for air travel. To support this substantial growth, Turkish Airlines aims to employ a dedicated workforce of approximately 150,000 talented professionals.



TÜRKİYE OPENS ITS DOORS TO FOREIGN RESEARCHERS



The Council of Higher Education (YÖK) has launched a program to encourage Turkish and foreign academics working in internationally recognised foreign higher education institutions to work at universities in Türkiye. This initiative will pave the way for qualified researchers from both the private and public sectors

to take part in universities in Türkiye.

With the presentation of different perspectives by experts in their fields, students' knowledge of the private sector will increase and they will be able to better absorb university-industry collaborations.

In addition, YÖK has published a document that includes the eligibility

levels and expected criteria of qualified researchers. Another important issue that was emphasised within the scope of this initiative was the necessity of conducting scientific research projects and R&D activities. All these opportunities will facilitate the employment of young people after graduating from universities.

TURKISH SURGEONS PERFORM SUCCESSFUL ROBOT-ASSISTED BRAIN SURGERY



The world's first two robot-assisted brain surgeries were performed at Ankara University's İbni Sina Hospital in Türkiye. The surgeries were conducted by brain and nerve surgery faculty member Dr. Ümit Eroğlu under the supervision of neurosurgery department head Dr. Şükrü Çağlar using robotic intervention through the skull on intracranial tissue with the Da Vinci robot. While robotic-assisted surgery has been used globally for various procedures, the newly developed technology is claimed to offer more precision.

The method used is a combination of traditional and robotic technology as the surgeries started using the routine method but carried out by the Da Vinci robot. The Da Vinci robot was originally designed to operate on astronauts in space. However, it requires 7G technology to be successfully implemented in neurosurgeries in the future. The result of the surgery is expected to be published in one of the top-tier neurosurgery journals.

BURSA'S GEMLİK OLIVE GETS EU RECOGNITION

Turkish application to register Gemlik olives, also known as Trilye olives, for official recognition in the EU is finalised on 28 May. The geographical indication of the Gemlik olive in Türkiye, was granted by the Turkish Patent and Trademark Office under the Ministry of Industry and Technology, and currently it is also registered in the Official Journal of the European Union.

Minister of Industry and Technology Mustafa Varank said that this is part of an ambitious plan to protect Türkiye's local and



regional agricultural products and specialties effectively at the international level. He added

that 41 ongoing applications are currently being reviewed by the EU Commission. Türkiye aims to register

a total of 100 Turkish products with high commercial potential at the international level; the number of Turkish local and regional products registered in the EU will be 10 with the addition of the Gemlik olive. Gaining the status of an EU recognised product is expected to raise the reputation of this variety of olive native to the Gemlik region of the city of Bursa and to open new marketing opportunities in European markets. It will also help gain a competitive advantage in terms of branding, marketing, and consumer

trust, leading to an increase in exports and the promotion of local Turkish products and specialties.

Other registered geographical indications for Turkish products and specialties in the EU are Antep Baklava, Aydın Fig, Malatya Apricot, Aydın Chestnut, Milas Olive Oil, Bayramiç White Nectarine, Taşköprü Garlic, Giresun Chubby Hazelnut and Antakya Künefe. Next in line for EU registration are Bursa Peach, Bursa Black Fig, and Bursa Chestnut, Suruç Pomegranate, and Çağlayançerit Walnut.

ISTANBUL'S MAIDEN TOWER REOPENS AFTER TWO YEARS OF RESTORATION

Istanbul's Maiden's Tower reopened to the public on 11 May after a two-year restoration project. The restoration project was carried out by a team of experts from Istanbul Technical University, under the supervision of a scientific committee. The team used a variety of technologies, including chemical analysis, laser scanners, and georadar imaging, to assess the condition of the tower and to develop a restoration plan.

The tower, with a history dating back to 410 BC, has been restored to its original state from the time of Sultan Mahmud II, who reigned from 1808 to 1839. The restoration project included several crucial interventions, such as the strengthening of the historical walls, restoration of the original walls of the castle section, the reconstruction of the walls and dome to their form in the early 19th century



form, and construction of walkways around the ramparts of the courtyard walls to enable visitors to climb up

to the tower and enjoy the view of Istanbul. There is also a light and laser show every evening at 21:00.

ATATÜRK AIRPORT NATIONAL PARK OPENS TO VISITORS

Atatürk Airport National Park, which is the fifth largest city park in the world and the largest in Türkiye, is starting to host its guests. In the first stage of the National Park, playgrounds, libraries, zero waste workshops, concert areas were created for adults and children. There are 145,300 trees representing the conquest of Istanbul in the park, which will have approximately 13,000 meters of a walking path. Atatürk Airport National Park will be operational on an area of approximately 2 million square meters when completed.



The first 499,000 square meters of Atatürk Airport National Park, which will be the largest city park

in Türkiye, is now open to visitors. The National Park will be a large city covering 2 million square meters, with approximately 70,000 square meters of indoor spaces.

Atatürk Airport National Park will have nine different entry points. There are greenhouses and orchards at these entrances. Natural products can be grown in these greenhouses. Citizens will be able to obtain natural organic products from here if they wish. There will be an artificial creek with a length of approximately 2.5 kilometres in the south-north direction.

THE CITY OF BURSA DISPLAYS 700 YEARS OF TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP

Starting from 11 May 2023, an exhibition under the title "Keskin Miras Bursa Bıçağı/ Sharp Heritage of Bursa Knives" will be on display at the Bursa City Museum for a year. Organised by the Metropolitan Municipality of Bursa, the exhibition aims to celebrate the cultural heritage of making handcrafted knives in the city of Bursa, the origin of which goes back 700 years to the Ottoman conquest of the city.

Therefore, the exhibition offers a retrospective approach bringing together all stages of the profession



from the past to the present, with 1,300 important pieces composed of

a collection of swords, wedges, axes, and spears from different periods since the 18th century as well as a collection of the more recent examples of the famous handcrafted Bursa knives.

Both Metropolitan Mayor Alınur Aktaş and the museum's director and art historian Goncagül Meriç stated that they aim to transfer this cultural heritage to future generations. They also emphasised that they are working on the development and branding of Bursa Knife and keeping the craft alive with master-apprentice relationship and traditional methods.

RESTORATION OF HISTORIC OTTOMAN-ERA HEREKE CARPET BEGINS IN İSTANBUL



The historic Hereke carpet, measuring 161.5 square meters and weighing over 700 kilograms, is set to undergo restoration in Istanbul. The carpet was gifted to the Peace Palace in The Hague by the Ottoman Empire in 1911. The restoration is being carried out as per a protocol signed by the Carnegie Foundation and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Türkiye. The carpet holds great

significance as it has borne witness to numerous important peace agreements and negotiations throughout its century-long history. Once the restoration is complete, the carpet will be returned to the Peace Palace, symbolizing the enduring Turkish-Dutch friendship. The entire restoration process is being documented by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Dutch Embassy in Ankara.

COFFEE FAIR ADMITTED VISITORS IN İSTANBUL



As of 4 May, the Haliç Congress Center opens its doors to visitors of the fifth edition of the Istanbul Coffee Fair, bringing together coffee lovers, experts, and coffee recipes from all over the world. There are almost 80 booths in the fair occupied by both national and international brands where the guests are offered a chance to taste different recipes from different roasters. The fair also

provides opportunities for the guests to attend workshops and conferences in which they can learn and ask questions about all the details of coffee and coffee production processes.

Fair Coordinator Reha Kadak reminds us that the fair hosts approximately 20,000 visitors each year, and these visitors are not only consumers but also agents of the firms seeking to develop business partnerships.

EU'S CUSTOMS UNION REFORM AND TÜRKİYE-EU CUSTOMS UNION IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF MULTIPLE CRISES

Moving forward with a very ambitious process relating to green transformation and digitalisation, the EU is now initiating a serious reform of its customs union. The current circumstances mean that modernising the problematic Türkiye-EU Customs Union becomes more urgent than ever.

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In recent years, the EU customs union has faced one crisis after another: the Brexit process, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Russia-Ukraine War. The UK's withdrawal from the EU has changed the boundaries of the EU customs union. EU customs authorities took steps to adapt until the end of the transition period, which lasted until 31 December 2020, and eventually all customs IT systems in the Union recognized the UK as a third country on 1 January 2021. EU customs played a critical role in monitoring the cross-border movement of vaccines and medical equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic and in adapting to disrupted and changing global supply chains. Moreover, import and export controls imposed as part of the sanctions in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine have demonstrated how important customs regulations are, in so far as their impact goes beyond trade to security.

While the customs union has withstood these challenges, the Member States have taken action both to address the weaknesses of the current system and to build a stronger customs system to face future crises.

Under the EU's customs union governance framework, customs legislation and common tariffs fall under the exclusive competence of the Union, while the Member States are responsible for its implementation. This structure leads to significant and large differences in the implementation of the customs legislation between the Member States. Some commercial actors and organized crime groups target entry points where low-level controls are in place, undermining the security of the EU and the integrity of the Single Market. Products that do not comply with EU standards enter the Single Market, reducing the competitiveness of economic actors that do comply and posing serious risks to the EU consumers.

The range and number of tasks within the customs governance framework are ever growing. In recent years, the EU has adopted a lot of new



legislation, especially in the context of the twin transformations, imposing new standards for companies to comply with both inside and outside the Single Market. The continuous increase in tasks related to the implementation of prohibitions and restrictions which are EU compliant is putting significant pressure on customs and poses a serious threat to the EU's ability to achieve its ambitious twin transformation goals.

Moreover, the enormous growth of e-commerce, with more and more small packages of largely low-value goods entering the EU market, is putting an unprecedented strain on customs. The 2017 VAT e-commerce reform, which was originally intended to address some of the problematic areas of e-commerce, introduced several simplifications for tax collection on e-commerce transactions and removed the VAT exemption on imported goods. While the reform did not abolish the 150-euro customs duty exemption, it did introduce an obligation to file an electronic customs declaration. This led to 1 billion additional customs declarations in 2022. In addition, the 150-euro customs duty exemption left the door open to abuses such as undervaluing goods to avoid this tax.

What will the EU Customs Reform Bring?

Under the reformed Customs Union, companies wishing to import goods into the EU market will be able to register all information about their products and supply chains in a single online platform called the EU Customs Data Hub. The EU Customs Data Hub will

enable goods to be imported into the EU with minimal customs intervention, without compromising safety, security or anti-fraud requirements. The technology will compile data provided by companies and provide authorities with comprehensive information on supply chains and the movement of goods. Companies will also only interact with a single portal when submitting customs information and will only need to submit data once for multiple shipments. Some trade actors that meet the necessary transparency criteria, so-called most trusted traders, will be able to circulate their goods in the EU without any active customs intervention. E-commerce companies are expected to gain access to the system in 2028, whereas other importers will be included on a voluntary basis in 2032 and the system will be mandatory for all trade actors from 2038.

Under the new system, all Member States will have instant access to data and the capacity to respond to risks more quickly, consistently and effectively. Artificial intelligence will be used to track and analyse data. Through data analysis, EU customs authorities will be able to more easily identify products that enter the EU market illegally or do not meet EU standards, focusing on areas of greatest need.

A new EU Customs Authority will use the data provided by the EU Customs Data Hub to help Member States prioritize decreasing serious risks and coordinate controls and inspections, especially in times of crisis. It will also significantly improve cooperation

between customs, market surveillance, and law enforcement authorities at EU and national level.

The reform will make online platforms the main actor in ensuring that goods sold online into the EU comply with all customs obligations. Platforms will be responsible for ensuring that customs duties and VAT are paid at the time of purchase. Consumers will no longer face hidden fees or unexpected paperwork. EU consumers will also be able to ensure that all taxes are paid and that the products they buy are safe and comply with EU environmental, safety and moral standards.

The reform will remove the heavily abused practice of exempting goods under 150 euros from customs duties. It will also simplify the calculation of customs duties for the most common low-value goods purchased outside the EU, making it much easier to calculate customs duties for small packages.

EU Customs Reform and Türkiye-EU Customs Union

According to 2022 Türkiye Report prepared by the European Commission, Türkiye maintains a good level of preparation for the Customs Union, but Turkish Customs Law has yet to comply with the EU Customs Code and more efforts are needed to improve risk-based controls and simplified procedures to facilitate legitimate trade while ensuring security and safety. Alignment with the EU's customs reform will become more difficult for Türkiye, which is already lagging in harmonization. Therefore, Turkish Customs Law needs to quickly adapt to the current situation and closely follow the EU custom reform.

Moreover, the current Türkiye-EU Customs Union has serious problems. Although Türkiye-EU Customs Union has significantly increased the value of bilateral trade in goods, the growth of welfare, and the quality of production and international competitiveness. Twenty-five years have passed since the creation of the Türkiye-EU Customs Union, and the situation has completely changed. Since then, the global trade and world economy have evolved and become more interlinked, rendering the

Customs Union outdated.

The Customs Union's problems are mainly derived from its asymmetric nature which does not include Türkiye in any policy-making procedures or negotiation process of FTA with third countries, its narrow scope which only covers industrial and processed agricultural products, and issues such as visa obligation, limited transportation quotas, and insufficient dispute settlement mechanism. Therefore, modernising the Customs Union, which is an economic matter, has turned into a political issue and has been conditioned upon political developments.

Global logistic issues in the supply of critical products which occurred during the pandemic made reorganising supply chains necessary today. In this context, with the objective of achieving a climate-neutral, sustainable, resource-efficient, and resilient economy by 2050, the EU on 18 February unveiled to the public its renewed trade strategy aimed at recovering more resiliently in the post-pandemic era and implementing a green and digital transformation. Within the framework of this strategy, the EU, which envisages increasing investments in clean energy and promoting circular, responsible and sustainable supply chains, declared that it would aspire to adopt higher standards in areas such as the environment, human rights, and the labour market. In addition, the EU emphasised that in its new trade strategy, production and investment can be shifted to countries geographically closer to it to make supply chains more resilient. Thanks to the Customs Union, Türkiye could undertake a vital role in the supply chains. Türkiye has the capacity to align its production with the needs of the EU market. Thus, the EU's aim to diversify its supply chains by moving away from China and instead engaging more with countries from closer geographies within the scope of its new trade strategy provides an advantage for Türkiye. Considering this, the modernization of the Customs Union and Türkiye's preparedness for the EU customs reform will allow the Turkish economy and trade relations with the EU to develop further.