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HISTORIC DEAL BROKERED ON GRAIN CORRIDOR AS A RESULT OF SUCCESSFUL TURKISH DIPLOMACY

With the historic deal, the hopes are high that the İstanbul facility will speed up grain shipments through the Black Sea.

Since Russia's invasion on 24 February 2022, Ukrainian grain has been in short supply worldwide. The fact that Ukraine accounted for 10% of global wheat exports in 2021 caused concerns in global food security with the outbreak of the war. While the war has also driven up food prices, the concerns have increased as more than 20 million tons of grain have been stuck at Black Sea ports in Ukraine. Hence, to ensure global food security, Ukraine and Russia signed the historic deal with Türkiye and the UN on 22 July 2022. Türkiye's efforts to mediate the Russia-Ukraine crisis resulted in two Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) signed in İstanbul to restart grain shipments from Ukrainian Black Sea ports. The deal was signed by Ukrainian Infrastructure Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov and Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu while Defence Minister Hulusi Akar and UN Secretary-General António Guterres signed the deal on behalf of Türkiye and the UN, respectively.



How Will the Deal Work?

The primary aim of the deal is to secure the passage of grain and essential goods from three Ukrainian ports, Odesa, Chornomorsky and Yuzhny. The deal also seeks to guarantee the safe passage of Russian-made fertiliser products, amidst efforts to ease a global food crisis provoked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

According to the deal, the entire operation will be managed by a coordination centre established in İstanbul. Officials from Türkiye, Russia, Ukraine, and the UN will be represented in this centre so that the security of vessels on their way to the world markets and to the Ukrainian ports in Odesa, Pivdennyi, and Chornomorsk will be jointly monitored.

The agreement will be effective for 120 days and will be renewed after without further negotiations. This was necessary in order not to interrupt the supply of food and fertilisers to the world market.

As demining the surrounding of these ports will take time, the parties agreed that the commercial vessels will be guided by the Ukrainian navy until they reach a safe corridor in the Black Sea. Russia's concerns over the possibility of Ukrainian empty vessels carrying weapons and military equipment were also taken into consideration. Before the deal was signed, the Ukrainian government warned Russia against any provocations. The Ukrainian side added that in case of provocations, they will use an immediate military response and that Ukraine did not sign an agreement with Russia,

but with Türkiye and the UN as mediators.

Under the deal, Ukrainian naval vessels will guide the ships carrying the grain through the mined areas on the coast, using a map of safe channels provided by the Ukrainian side. The ships will then cross the Black Sea towards Türkiye's İstanbul Strait.

Ukraine plans to ship around 25 million tons of wheat to the world markets. Many countries in Africa depend on Ukrainian and Russian wheat to escape the shortage of food. The deal will also allow the unimpeded access of fertilisers from Russia, which is one of the major producers in the world, to global markets.

As a result of Türkiye's and UN's efforts, both the US and the EU provided assurances that there will

be no sanctions on the companies and vessels transporting Russian products to the world markets. Banking and insurance procedures will also be exempted from these sanctions. On the other hand, Russian President Vladimir Putin stressed that Russia could export around 50 million tons of wheat until the end of this year.

Türkiye's Role on the MoUs

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan expressed his gratitude to those who contributed to making these deals possible, including Russia, Ukraine, and the UN, stressing that all parties involved have the right to feel proud of this initiative in resolving the global food crisis. President Erdoğan emphasised that millions of people will be relieved of the danger of starving as a result of

the deal. He added his expectation that the deal signed in İstanbul will revive hopes for ending the war in Ukraine.

On the other hand, UN Secretary-General Guterres started his speech by thanking Türkiye for its endeavours and persistence, stressing that Ankara's efforts in the process have proved essential to brokering the deal. While stating that the deal did not come easy and should be implemented thoroughly in order to avoid a food crisis, Guterres also emphasised the role Türkiye will play in the implementation of this humanitarian mission in the Black Sea. Lastly, Guterres highlighted that the deal would pave the way to significant volumes of food exports from Ukraine and alleviate a food and economic crisis in the developing world.





IKV CHAIRMAN ZEYTİNOĞLU HELD CONTACTS IN BRUSSELS

IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu held contacts in Brussels between 18 and 20 July 2022. Participating in the TOBB Board of Directors' visit to Brussels in his capacity as TOBB Vice President, Zeytinoğlu carried out several meetings and visits. The TOBB Board of Directors' delegation first

visited Türkiye's Permanent Delegate to the EU Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay and exchanged views on the latest developments in Türkiye-EU relations.

Then, the delegation discussed the increasing importance of NATO and Türkiye's role in the framework

of the Russia-Ukraine war with Türkiye's Permanent Representative to NATO Ambassador Basat Öztürk. Later, the delegation visited Türkiye's Ambassador to Belgium Hasan Ulusoy.

Within the scope of the meeting held at the TOBB-IKV

Brussels Representation with the participation of EUROCHAMBRES Secretary General Ben Butters, the relations and cooperation between the Turkish and EU business communities were discussed. IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu also came together

with the cabinet of European Commission Executive Vice President Frans Timmermans and received information about the latest developments in the European Green Deal and emphasised the importance of Türkiye in this process.

A COOPERATION AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED BETWEEN TOBB AND WTCA

On 21 July 2022, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye (TOBB) and the World Trade Centers Association (WTCA). The cooperation agreement signed by TOBB President M. Rifat Hisarcıkloğlu and WTCA Business Development Executive Director Robin van Puyenbroeck aims to promote and facilitate trade. Speaking at the signing ceremony, Hisarcıkloğlu emphasised that TOBB supports the opening up of its members to the external world. He also stated "Exports of goods and services and joint investments within and outside the country are extremely important. We are striving to bring more direct investment to our country".

Stating that the modernisation of the Customs Union between Türkiye and the EU is an important priority, Hisarcıkloğlu added "Including agriculture, services, and public procurement to the scope of the Customs Union and overcoming the mutual problems encountered in the functioning of the current structure will create new opportunities for the business world of Türkiye and the EU. Yesterday,



we were in Brussels for the same purpose. Following the Brexit, the free trade agreement entered into force between Türkiye and the UK also presents significant opportunities to our companies."

Stressing the importance of taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the existing free trade agreements with countries such as South Korea, Singapore, and Malaysia, Hisarcıkloğlu urged on the efforts that would make this one of the priorities of TOBB. Hisarcıkloğlu expressed that mutual support would be provided to the organisation of trade delegations to and from outside the country with the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by TOBB and WTCA.

WTCA Business Development Executive Director Robin Van Puyenbroeck expressed that he has been visiting Türkiye for the last thirty years and that Türkiye has now become a very developed state. Puyenbroeck also emphasised that Türkiye evolved into a giant both in terms of industry and trade. Congratulating Hisarcıkloğlu for all his efforts, van Puyenbroeck further added "You have made very serious efforts to attract investment here and abroad". Stressing that WTCA aims to expand, promote, and facilitate international trade, van Puyenbroeck stated that they cooperated with TOBB for this purpose and that the Memorandum of Understanding aims to keep this at a practical level.



IKV CHAIRMAN ZEYTİNOĞLU HOSTED HEAD OF THE EU DELEGATION TO TÜRKİYE MEYER-LANDRUT

IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu hosted Head of the EU Delegation to Türkiye Ambassador Nikolaus Meyer-Landrut at the Kocaeli Chamber of Industry's (KSO) Assembly Meeting on 6 July 2022.

In his opening speech at the KSO Assembly Meeting, Chairman Zeytinoğlu addressed the problems that hinder the progress of Türkiye-EU relations and stated that overcoming these bottlenecks would benefit both sides. Chairman Zeytinoğlu emphasised that launching the modernisation process of the Türkiye-EU Customs

Union would also facilitate Türkiye's participation in the European Green Deal and Türkiye's contributions, especially in renewable energy.

Speaking at the special address of the meeting, Ambassador Meyer-Landrut summarised the latest developments in Türkiye-EU relations. Emphasising that Türkiye is a very important partner for the EU, Ambassador Meyer-Landrut drew attention to the close cooperation between Türkiye and the EU on important issues such as migration, energy, security, trade, and climate.

IKV AGENDA



TIMELINE JULY 2022

IKV CHAIRMAN ZEYTİNOĞLU ATTENDED THE GREEN DEAL WORKGROUP MEETING

On 25 July 2022, IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu made a speech at the online Green Deal Workgroup, convened under the chairmanship of Deputy Minister of Trade Mustafa Tuzcu.

The meeting, which started with the opening speech of Mustafa Tuzcu, continued with the speeches of the Deputy Ministers. During the speeches, while the endeavours of the institutions and organisations on the Green Deal were disclosed, information

was also given about the actions included in the Green Deal Action Plan and the activities of the specialised workgroups.

Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu, who spoke at the meeting, stated that the Russia-Ukraine war revealed the importance of energy supply and drew attention to the significance of renewable energy investments. Stating that it would be beneficial to send the Climate Law to the private sector for an opinion before it is

presented to the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (TGNA), Chairman Zeytinoğlu added that an Emission Trading System should be established as soon as possible, and the pilot phase should be brought forward.

Chairman Zeytinoğlu also narrated the works carried out by TOBB. Stating that the Climate Portal will be implemented soon, he added that the Carbon Footprint Calculation Software will be offered to the members free of charge.



IKV CHAIRMAN ZEYTİNOĞLU CHAIRED THE MEETING OF THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE

The meeting of the Digital Transformation Studies Committee was held under the chairmanship of IKV Chairman Ayhan Zeytinoğlu on 25 July 2022. At the meeting attended by TOBB Board of Directors Members Davut Çetin and Mehmet Büyüksimitçi and Chamber Presidents, who are members of

the Committee, Prof. Güven Sak tackled the developments in digital transformation.

Giving information about the SME e-Carnet Project conducted by TEPAV, Prof. Sak touched upon the survey conducted within the scope of the project, which revealed the diversity of companies' needs

for digital transformation. He also requested more contributions from the Chambers to the survey.

Following Prof. Güven Sak's presentation, the committee members shared their opinions on the actions that can be taken to further the digital transformation process.

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4	Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu and Interior Minister Soylu met with their Austrian counterparts Schallenberg and Karner.
5	The 3 rd Türkiye-Italy Intergovernmental Summit convened in Ankara.
6	Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu visited Indonesia to attend the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting and to chair the 21 st MIKTA Foreign Ministers' Meeting.
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18	IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu held contacts in Brussels.
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22	A historic deal to resume Ukraine's Black Sea grain exports was signed by Türkiye, the UN, Russia, and Ukraine in İstanbul.
23	IKV Secretary General Nas addressed Ukraine's EU membership application on <i>Haber Global</i> and <i>Medyascope</i> .
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25	IKV Chairman Zeytinoğlu attended the Green Deal Workgroup Meeting and chaired the meeting of the Digital Transformation Committee.
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29	German Foreign Minister Baerbock paid her first official visit to Türkiye.
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IKV SECRETARY GENERAL HAS PARTICIPATED IN VARIOUS PROGRAMMES AND EVENTS

In July 2022, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas discussed Türkiye-EU relations and crucial foreign policy issues in various events and programmes.

On 5 July 2022, IKV Secretary General Nas participated in the “Sustainable Development and Green Economic Transformation” panel organised within the scope of the 2nd International Social Sciences Conference by Çanakkale 18 Mart University. Assoc. Prof. Nas made a presentation on “European Green Deal and Its Implications for Türkiye”. In her presentation, Assoc. Prof. Nas discussed the new strategies proposed within the framework of the European Green Deal, the measures taken by the EU in the field of energy after Russia’s attack on Ukraine, the “Fit For 55” package within the scope of 2030 climate targets, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, Türkiye-EU relations and its effects on the Türkiye-EU Customs Union. The panel was moderated by Assoc. Prof. Esra Yüksel Acı and the other speakers were Funda H. Sezgin, Assoc. Prof. Rana Atabay Kuşçu and Duygu Erten.

On 7 July 2022, Nas gave an interview to Metin Aktaşoğlu from *Haber Global* in which she briefed the latest developments in post-Brexit relations between Türkiye and the UK. Assoc. Prof. Nas stated



that relations gained momentum in strategic areas such as security, trade, and climate. Assoc. Prof. Nas stated that:

“A Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was signed between Türkiye and the UK following the Brexit. Previously, when the UK was in the Türkiye-EU Customs Union, it was Türkiye’s second trading partner in the EU after Germany. The signing of an FTA

was of great importance in order to maintain this close commercial and economic relationship. While this FTA serves to protect trade relations, a more comprehensive FTA is also on the agenda. A deep and comprehensive FTA can bring new openings in sectors such as services and agriculture. In addition, the UK is an important country in terms of foreign direct investments.

The deepening of trade relations is also important in terms of attracting foreign investments, which is very important for the Turkish economy. Since the UK has left the EU, it is no longer a part of the EU agricultural policy and internal market, especially for products such as fresh fruit and vegetables. In this respect, cooperation on agricultural products can also be carried forward.

Considering bilateral trade, it is seen that Türkiye’s exports to the UK, which was 10 billion 870 million dollars in 2019, reached 13 billion 704 million dollars at the end of 2021. In addition to trade, the fact that both countries are non-EU NATO members, and the importance of their military forces may lead to further development of cooperation in the defence industry. The UK’s removal of restrictions on arms exports and its interest in purchasing armed UAVs, as well as cooperation in the construction of warplanes, may lead to the further development of the partnership in this field”.

On 23 July 2022, IKV Secretary General Nas commented on Ukraine’s EU membership application and its EU candidacy status in the interview she gave to Burak Siperli from *Medyascope*. Assoc. Prof. Nas stressed that receiving EU candidacy status is generally greeted with great enthusiasm, adding that it may take a long time to examine how well the concrete criteria are met. Reminding that Türkiye is also going through the same process, Nas emphasised that this decision is more of a morale booster for Ukraine.

THE PROJECT REPORT ON SOLVING GLOBAL PROBLEMS THROUGH LOCAL COOPERATION HAS BEEN PUBLISHED

The report entitled “Overcoming Global Problems Through Local Cooperation: The Case of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality”, conducted by IKV, Istanbul Policy Center (IPC), CATS Network, and TEPAV was published. It is the first report published within the scope of the “Overcoming Global Problems through Local Cooperation: The Case of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality,” a joint project carried out by IKV, IPC, and TEPAV.

The report makes up the first stage of a three-step project that involves an in-depth stocktaking of the existing policies and measures adopted by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (*Istanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi*) to adapt to climate change. It also addresses challenges regarding governance in implementing climate change policies and the protection of vulnerable groups in the city—namely,

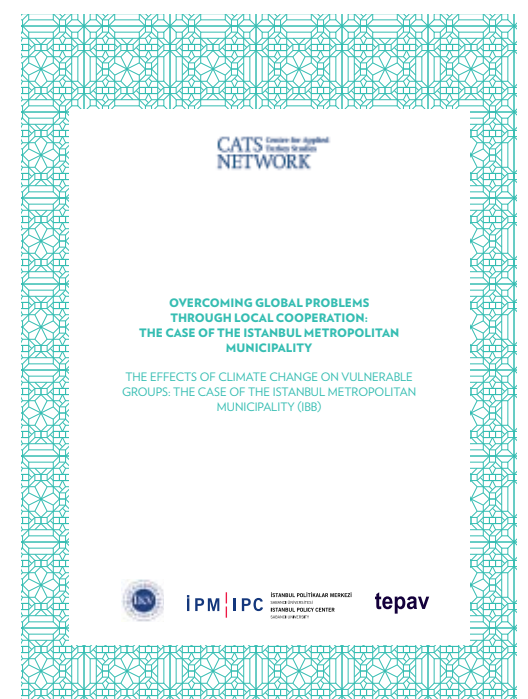
refugees, women, and those who live below the poverty line.

The report, “Overcoming Global Problems through Local Cooperation: The Case of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality”, focuses on the effects of climate change on the vulnerable groups as outlined in Istanbul’s local climate action plans. It is based on a qualitative research model, carried out with an extensive literature review of international, national, and local research papers related to climate change and vulnerability. It is also fed by several news articles on the current developments in climate change, urbanisation, and the clash of authority between the local and central governments.

In terms of field research, the report also includes in-depth interviews made with several people representing the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and its

stakeholders. The interviews mainly focus on the municipality’s current work in the fields of climate change and the protection of vulnerable groups (refugees, women, and the urban poor), and their opinions on the next steps that can be taken to protect vulnerable groups against the effects of climate change. The report assesses the climate vision of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality through the eyes of vulnerable groups. It concludes that considering climate change and vulnerability within the context of the local governance structure is a useful framework for Istanbul, which can facilitate new possible forms of cooperation with European counterparts, who have effectively implemented climate policies within their city governance structures.

Finally, the report debates Türkiye’s perspective on urban management as regards the clash of centralisation-decentralisation.



HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

3RD TÜRKİYE-ITALY INTERGOVERNMENTAL SUMMIT TOOK PLACE IN ANKARA

On 5 July 2022, Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi paid a visit to Türkiye at the invitation of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. After visiting the Anıtkabir, mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Italian Prime Minister Draghi met with President Erdoğan at the Presidential Palace. Together with President Erdoğan, Draghi co-chaired the 3rd Türkiye-Italy Intergovernmental Summit, which took place for the first time in ten years. In the joint press meeting, nine cooperation agreements were signed between Türkiye and Italy in various fields such as defence, trade, diplomacy, and economic development.

During the bilateral meeting, two leaders exchanged views on Türkiye-EU relations, regional and global matters as well as the bilateral relations between Türkiye and Italy. The agreement of both committees on deepening their industrial



defence collaboration was amongst the most significant outcomes of the summit. Both parties emphasised that collaboration in defence would

be valuable to their national interests. Preventing irregular immigration was one of the key topics of the meeting. President Erdoğan

remarked that Greece's efforts to push migrants back from its borders pose a threat to Italy, rather than the EU.

President Erdoğan also stated that bilateral relations with Italy are developing day by day and the trade volume between the countries continues to increase. The trade volume between Türkiye and Italy increased by 34% last year to over 23 billion dollars. According to the official data of Italy, Türkiye was Italy's number one trading partner in the Balkans and the MENA region in 2021. The trade volume between the two countries increased by 27.7% in the same year. In addition, Italy came in first place with 970 million dollars FDI in Türkiye, according to the official data for 2020-2021.

The leaders also evaluated the establishment of a safe grain corridor from Ukraine. Regarding the issue, Italian Prime Minister Draghi mentioned that Türkiye played a key role in establishing a secure grain corridor.

FOREIGN AND INTERIOR MINISTERS OF TÜRKİYE AND AUSTRIA HELD A JOINT MEETING IN ANKARA



MINISTER ÇAVUŞOĞLU MET WITH HIS GERMAN COUNTERPART BAERBOCK

Foreign Minister and Chief Negotiator Çavuşoğlu hosted German Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Annalena Baerbock in İstanbul on 29 July 2022.

During the joint press conference following the meeting, Minister Çavuşoğlu firstly voiced Türkiye's concern over Germany's counterterrorism endeavours and reminded Türkiye's expectations from its allies to take concrete steps to support its anti-terrorism efforts. Minister Çavuşoğlu added that

the arms embargo placed by Germany is against the "spirit of alliance".

Minister Çavuşoğlu also recalled the non-military status of Aegean islands, guaranteed by the Lausanne and Paris Peace treaties, and invited Germany to adopt an "unbiased" and "balanced" stance against Greece's militarisation of these islands. Çavuşoğlu iterated Türkiye's expectations on the removal of the obstacles in front of Türkiye's membership into the EU.

Foreign Minister and Chief Negotiator Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu and Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu came together with their Austrian counterparts Alexander Schallenberg and Gerhard Karner, who paid a joint working visit to Türkiye on 3-4 July 2022. Bilateral relations between Türkiye and Austria, Türkiye-EU relations, counterterrorism, illegal migration as well as regional issues including the Russia-Ukraine war were the main items on the agenda of the quadruple meeting held in Ankara on 4 July 2022.

Following the meeting at the Turkish Foreign Ministry, a joint press conference was held. Speaking at the joint press conference, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu highlighted Ankara's willingness to maintain the positive momentum recently achieved in bilateral relations and praised the role of the Turkish community in Austria in advancing the cooperation between the two countries. Referring to the bilateral trade volume, which is expected to exceed 3.5 billion dollars, recording a 30% increase, Çavuşoğlu stated that setting a 5-billion-dollar target for next year would be a realistic expectation.



Meanwhile, Interior Minister Soylu announced their decision to establish a joint mechanism with Austria in the security domain which he described as an important step for counterterrorism and fighting transnational crime. Moreover, Soylu voiced Ankara's expectation for the renewal of the Türkiye-EU Statement dated 18 March 2016. For his part, Austrian Foreign Minister Schallenberg praised the important role Türkiye has been playing as regards the Russia-Ukraine war and migration management.

According to the press release issued by the Austrian Foreign Ministry after the joint meeting, as regards food insecurity resulting from the Russia-Ukraine war, the ministers discussed how "green corridors", which could be used to

export grain from Ukraine by sea, could alleviate the effects of the global food crisis triggered by the war in Ukraine. Expressing Vienna's support for international initiatives aimed at resuming the export of grains from Ukraine, Austrian Foreign Minister Schallenberg hailed Türkiye's central role in forming green corridors and mediating a way out of the food crisis. Concerning illegal migration and growing migratory movements intensified by Russia's war on Ukraine, Schallenberg pointed out the immense migratory pressure on the EU's external borders and underscored the importance of closer cooperation with Türkiye in this area. The Austrian Foreign Minister also praised Türkiye's generosity in hosting around four million refugees mostly from Syria.

DIPLOMATIC TRAFFIC INTENSIFIED IN INDONESIA



On 7-8 July 2022, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chief Negotiator Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu paid a visit to the Indonesian island of Bali to attend the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting and to chair the 21st MIKTA Foreign Ministers' Meeting. Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu firstly held bilateral meetings with the representatives of the UN, Russia, Mexico, Argentina, and Fiji within the margins of the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting. Minister Çavuşoğlu, who has been acting as a mediator since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine war, also met with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov and discussed the war in Ukraine, food security, as well as the recent developments in Syria.

During the G20 Meeting, Minister Çavuşoğlu exchanged views with his counterparts on "strengthening multilateralism in the face of current challenges that require global joint efforts" and "ensuring food and energy security". The G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting also addressed the latest

developments in Ukraine, joint efforts to address the grain crisis as well as the Syrian issue. One of the highlights of the meeting was the G20 foreign ministers' refusal to be pictured together with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov for the traditional G20 family photo.

In the second phase of the diplomatic traffic, Minister Çavuşoğlu participated in the 21st MIKTA Foreign Ministers' Meeting. Since Türkiye took over the presidency of MIKTA in March 2022, Minister Çavuşoğlu opened the 21st Foreign Ministers' Meeting on the behalf of Turkish MIKTA Presidency. Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi, South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin and Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong attended the meeting chaired by Minister Çavuşoğlu. At the end of the meeting, Çavuşoğlu stated that it had been a highly fruitful meeting in which the representatives of MIKTA countries assessed the situation in Ukraine, food security, and migration issues.



YEREBATAN CISTERN REOPENED AFTER RESTORATION

The Yerebatan (Basilica) Cistern Museum, one of the most famous historical buildings in Istanbul that is also placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, was reopened to visitors after the completion of the restoration period started in 2017. The renovation was launched because the Yerebatan Cistern has been damaged by earthquakes several times in the past.

Following the renovation, the ferro-concrete walkway was replaced with a new modular walking platform due to the excess load on the building. The Million Stone, which dates back to the 4th century, and the 500-year-old water gauge next to it were amongst the places that have been restored. The cistern, which is 140 metres long and 70 metres wide, was descended by a 52-step stone staircase, and there are 336 columns, each nine 9 metres high, most of which seem to have been collected from older buildings. It also covers an area of 9,800 square metres

and a water storage capacity of 100,000 tons.

The cistern, built in the 6th century by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I, supplied the city's water need for centuries by distributing the water obtained from waterways and rain to the Great Palace where the emperors resided, and to the surrounding buildings. The first restoration of the Cistern, which was rediscovered by the topographer Petrus Gyllius after the Ottoman conquest of İstanbul, was made by the architect Sedefkar Mehmet Ağa during the reign of Ahmet III.

Two Medusa heads, the most famous symbol of the building, were discovered in the restoration carried out between 1985 and 1987. The Yerebatan Cistern, which was opened as a museum by the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality in 1987, continues to offer visitors to witness the magic of history along with İstanbul's other attractions, such as the Hagia Sophia and Grand Mosque.

TURKISH GAMING START-UPS ATTRACT THE HIGHEST INVESTMENT IN EUROPE

According to data from *Startups.watch*, 333 million dollars worth of investment agreements have been made for gaming start-ups in Türkiye between January and June 2022. Thanks to the investments made for 13 Turkish gaming ventures, Türkiye has become the country that attracts the most investment in the gaming industry in Europe. Gaming start-up companies in Türkiye, which attracted 1 million dollars worth of investments in 2017, 2 million dollars in 2018, and 8 million dollars in 2019, have started to show a serious leap and received a significant amount of investments as of 2020. With the investment agreements of 333 million dollars in the first half of 2022, Türkiye left behind the UK (158 million), Norway (60 million), Finland (53 million), and Sweden (24 million).

In addition, it was observed that diversified start-up companies in Türkiye attracted a significant amount of investment of 1.3 billion dollars in total in the first half of 2022. Especially, investments in Getir (768 million dollars), Dream Games (255 million dollars), Insider (121 million dollars), Spyke Games (50



million dollars), Param Group and Rubibrands (23 million dollars) made up 90% of all investments.

Istanbul came to the fore as the leading city in Türkiye's rising gaming venture. The entire investment of 333 million dollars was made to İstanbul-based gaming start-up companies. İstanbul was followed by European cities London, Oslo, Helsinki, and Stockholm. This shows that İstanbul, with its solid infrastructure and dynamic population, has become an important centre for gaming start-up companies within a short span of time.

The first six-month data in 2022 reveals that the Peak Games

example seen in 2020 is not a coincidence and that Türkiye has become a rising actor in the gaming industry. As known, Peak Games became Türkiye's first "unicorn" with a value of over 1 billion dollars and was purchased by the US-based game giant Zynga for 1.8 billion dollars. The recent developments following the Peak Games' success demonstrate that Turkish software developers and mobile game companies are highly successful and able to carry out desirable projects. This situation has attracted the attention and interest of Western investors, especially from Europe, in recent years.

EU APPROVED TÜRKİYE'S TURKAEGEAN TOURISM TRADEMARK

"TurkAegean" tourism trademark granted by the EU gives Türkiye the right to its exclusive use until July 2031.



Türkiye's application to register the country's new tourism campaign trademark "TurkAegean" was approved by the EU. Having been granted the trademark in December 2021, Türkiye will have the right to its exclusive use for a wide variety of services until July 2031.

The application has been made by the Turkish Tourism Promotion and Development Agency to the European Union Intellectual Property Office as part of its "TurkAegean Coast of Happiness" campaign. The motivation behind the campaign is stated to come from an assessment of the statistics of destinations of foreign tourists in Türkiye in 2019 by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Turkish Tourism Promotion and Development Agency. It turned out that 10% of Türkiye's visitors

had their destination as Türkiye's Aegean coast, which is "one of the most exquisite regions Türkiye has to offer," as stated by the Minister of Culture and Tourism Mehmet Nuri Ersoy.

The tourism campaign launched by Türkiye focuses on promoting the 2,800 km long coastline of Türkiye on the Aegean Sea, the region famous for its beaches as well as historical and cultural sites such as Efes and the ancient city of Truva. Go Türkiye website describes the Aegean Region of Türkiye as offering "beautiful landscapes, dazzling coastlines, immaculate beaches, pine woods and olive groves; perfect for nature lovers, photographers, history buffs and adrenaline junkies. Many popular holiday villages and fishing harbours are scattered up and down the coast."

TÜRKİYE'S STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE INCREASES AFTER THE RECENT EU-AZERBAIJANI GAS DEAL

The EU continues to negotiate with various countries in order to diversify the energy supply and slow down the increases in energy prices. On 18 July 2022, the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson met with Azerbaijani President İlham Aliyev and Azerbaijani Energy Minister Parviz Shahbazov in Baku to strengthen the energy cooperation between the EU and Azerbaijan. The two Presidents signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the energy field.

As stated by the European Commission President von der Leyen, "the EU is moving towards more reliable energy suppliers; the Commission desires to expand the Southern Gas Corridor, in beliefs the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) can ensure secure and predictable gas supplies in Southeast Europe and potentially the Western Balkans. Trans-Anatolian Gas Pipeline (TANAP) is the central part of the Southern Gas Corridor, which connects the giant Shah Deniz gas field in Azerbaijan to Europe through the South Caucasus Pipeline and the TAP.



Although the EU plans to double the natural gas purchased from Azerbaijan with the MoU it signed with Azerbaijan, according to the agreement between Türkiye and Azerbaijan, the first right to use of the additional capacity for the TANAP is granted to Türkiye. Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson also confirmed that in accordance with certain clauses of the intergovernmental agreement signed between Türkiye and Azerbaijan in 2012, priority will be given to Türkiye in the capacity expansion related to TANAP.

Due to these developments, Türkiye has increased its geopolitical importance by holding a critical position in the energy supply security of the EU. In the coming period, it is expected that with the increase of energy cooperation between the EU and Türkiye, a new diplomacy channel will be created between the parties.

TÜRKİYE'S FIRST LADY EMİNE ERDOĞAN RECEIVED CLIMATE AND DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP AWARD

First Lady Emine Erdoğan was awarded the "Climate and Development Leadership Award" given for the first time by the World Bank for her contributions on climate change with the Zero Waste Project.

Minister of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change Murat Kurum, Minister of Industry and Technology Mustafa Varank, Minister of Treasury and Finance Nureddin Nebati, World Bank Country Director for the Republic of Türkiye Auguste Tano Kouamé, and guests from World Bank Climate and Development Leadership Award Programme attended the award ceremony, which was held at the State Guest House in Turkish Presidential Complex in Ankara on 21 July 2022.

In her award ceremony speech, First Lady Erdoğan stated that climate change is a serious multidimensional problem that requires integrated collaboration of several sectors such as industry, agriculture, and transportation. Stating that Türkiye has made significant progress in combating climate change, First Lady expressed her gratitude that the World Bank leads the way for the countries with its 2021-2025 Climate Change Action Plan. Moreover, the First Lady drew attention to the financing and technology support provided by the World Bank to ensure the implementation



of the Paris Agreement, and she expressed her excitement about the upcoming joint projects with the World Bank.

In addition to its improvements in waste management, Türkiye also made progress in the reuse of treated water. According to a statement from Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change, as of the first half of 2022, the year-end target of the reuse rate of treated wastewater as 4% has been exceeded and the reusing treated wastewater ratio has already reached 4.2%. Furthermore, the Ministry stated that efforts are ongoing to extend the overall use of treated wastewater and to decrease the amount of water used in industrial facilities in Türkiye in accordance with the European Green Deal.

TÜRKİYE FILED AN OBJECTION TO THE PACE CITING THE "ABUSE OF THE SCHENGEN VISA SYSTEM"

A report that details the problems Turkish citizens face when they try to obtain a visa for their trips to the Schengen Area was presented to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The report entitled "Abuse of the Schengen Information System as a Politically Driven Sanction by the Member States of the Council of Europe" was prepared by Ziya Altunyaldız, a parliamentary of Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, who is also a member of PACE.

The report noted that the average rate of denials for Turkish citizens' applications to the Schengen Area has increased almost threefold, rising from 4% in 2014 to 12.7% in 2020. The report criticised that in order to obtain a Schengen visa, Turkish citizens are charged high fees ranging from 60 to 90 euros, have to provide an unnecessary and large amount of documents such as proof of accommodation and proof of financial means, and that they are obliged to submit their application in person. It also pointed out the challenges businesspeople face, especially when it comes to the duration of their Schengen visas they are granted, even



if they prove they are going on business trips to the Schengen countries.

Underscoring that the compulsory Schengen visa is used as a political sanctioning tool, the report highlighted that the difficulties Turkish citizens have been experiencing to obtain a visa may have resulted from the abuse of the

Schengen Information System. The report added that Schengen countries should use the system with "minimum common standard principles."

The report recalled that despite the resolutions of PACE such as "the Schengen system aims to ensure the free movement of people" and "restrictions on the freedom of movement of individuals as punishment for political positions cannot be accepted", Turkish citizens continue to experience politically motivated visa restrictions. As a solution, the report asserted that the Schengen visa must be issued according to certain and clear rules.

The report was approved by a PACE committee and will be classified as a "recommendation" by the assembly for Member States.

TOWARDS TÜRKİYE'S FIRST CLIMATE LAW: THE CLIMATE COUNCIL'S FINAL DECLARATION UNVEILED

The Final Declaration, published about four months after the Climate Council, provides some clues about how the Climate Law will be shaped.

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Türkiye has come a long way in combating climate change. After years of declining to be a part of the Paris Agreement due to its position in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Türkiye finally ratified the Agreement just a month before the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26). Türkiye's advancement in climate change policies wasn't limited to this since it also announced a 2053 net zero emissions target.

Following the developments, the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change realised the first-ever Climate Council in Konya on 21-25 February 2022 to discuss more ambitious climate targets on the way to Türkiye's first Climate Law. The Climate Council, which lasted for five days, aimed to determine the roadmap and key policies in the fight against climate change with many stakeholders from the public and private sectors. In addition, it was announced that the conclusions of the Climate Council would shape Türkiye's new Intended National Determined Contribution (INDC) and Long-Term Strategy and Action Plan, which are planned to be updated and submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat in 2022.

The participants of the Council worked on the outcomes of previous online commission meetings on "greenhouse gas reduction", "science and technology", "green finance and carbon pricing", "climate change adaptation", "local governments and migration", "just transition", as well as other social policies. While it was stated that different perspectives in the mentioned areas would serve as a scientific basis for Türkiye's upcoming Climate Law, it was announced that the basic components of establishing a carbon pricing mechanism in Türkiye would also be shaped.

The work of the commissions, which lasted for three days and was carried out on the basis of consensus,



was completed on 22 February 2022. Thereafter, the roundtable committees finalised and shared the recommendations with the General Assembly. However, several environmental organisations criticised that the consensus recommendations agreed by the commissions were largely changed by the roundtable committees before being presented to the General Assembly. It was implied that this was due to the absence of commission participants in the roundtable delegation and the weak NGO representation in the delegation.

Despite the criticisms, the final declaration comprised of 217 recommendations was unanimously accepted following the Council; however, it had not been shared with the public for a long time even though it was expected to be published on 25 February 2022. Moreover, while it was stressed that the Final Declaration of the Climate Council would be announced by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the near future, no date was shared with the public as to when it would take place. It was speculated that the Russia-Ukraine war, which started on 24 February 2022 and deeply affected global energy security, was one of the most important factors causing a prolongation in this process.

The participants also criticised the Climate Council for failing to make progress in ensuring democratic participation and setting more ambitious climate and energy

targets. The criticisms especially focused on the fact that the "2030 coal exit target" urged by the Climate Envoys was not included in the recommendations, and that there was no implication Türkiye would significantly reduce the use of fossil fuels.

How Was the Final Declaration Perceived?

The Final Declaration of the Climate Council was published on 27 June 2022, nearly four months later than expected. Climate-Friendly Agriculture, Drought Action Plan, Environmental and Clean Transportation Network, Green Energy, Green Economy, and Climate Education were some of the most important topics covered by the document.

76 of the 217 recommendations in the Final Declaration focused on transportation, industry, agriculture, sink areas, reduction of waste, while some of the other recommendations centred on science and technology (34), green finance and carbon pricing (21), adaptation to climate change (20), local governments (24), health, education, just transition, climate justice and climate migration (42). The Final Declaration also included the priorly criticised recommendations accepted in the Climate Council. Amongst all the recommendations, the absence of provisions related to the "2030 coal exit target" raised the most concern.

Contrarily, support for carbon capture, utilisation, and storage technologies in electricity generation from coal and the use of heat generated by thermal power plants were recommended as before, while the support for natural gas and nuclear energy was reiterated in the Final Declaration.

The "Energy" section of the Final Declaration included recommendations to ensure renewable energy use would be maximised and a Hydrogen Strategy and Roadmap would be prepared in late 2022 to fulfil Türkiye's hydrogen potential. The Final Declaration also implied that Türkiye aims to update its energy strategies in line with its 2053 net zero emission target. The National Energy Efficiency 2030 Vision and Strategy is expected to be prepared by the end of 2022, while the 2024-2030 National Energy Efficiency Action Plan by the middle of 2023. It was also recommended that the Long-Term Energy Plan should be prepared before COP27 accordingly.

When it comes to the industrial sector, the Final Declaration emphasised the need to establish roadmaps and support mechanisms to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in manufacturing sectors, especially in carbon-intensive ones. It was also stated that the efforts to establish an Emissions Trading System (ETS) in accordance with Türkiye's INDC which will be updated in line with the 2053 net zero emission target

and the corresponding EU legislation, will be accelerated and that this system will be completed by 2024. The document estimated that at least 55% of the revenues generated under the ETS will be provided for activities that support the green transformation of the real sector.

The Final Declaration also suggested significant progress in waste management. The importance of preparing the "National Waste Prevention, Reduction and Recovery Strategy Document", "National Waste Management and Action Plan" and the "Circular Economy Action Plan", which includes some objectives including the product life cycle criteria for the use of wastes as raw materials, was stressed in the document. While it was stated that efforts to collect waste separately at the source will be increased, it was also emphasised that the recovery rate will be increased to 60% in 2035 and as of 2053, wastes that are not subject to pre-treatment will not be accepted for landfill.

Although Türkiye has taken important steps in its fight against climate change in the last year, it can be seen that it is somewhat reluctant to realise its full potential. The Final Declaration became a source of disappointment, mostly due to the absence of concrete actions to be taken in its fight against climate change and Türkiye's unwillingness to include recommendations on the reduction of fossil fuel use in the near future.

One other disappointing factor was that the declaration, originally expected to be announced by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was published quietly by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change. It had limited media coverage, which in turn, raised some questions about the importance given to the Final Declaration especially considering that these recommendations will form a basis for Türkiye's Climate Law. Hence, the question arises whether the Climate Law will include ambitious climate actions and take into account the demands of Turkish civil society on fossil fuel use reduction.