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2024 ANTALYA DIPLOMACY FORUM: PRIORITISING DIPLOMACY IN TIMES OF GEOPOLITICAL CRISES

The 3rd Antalya Diplomacy Forum, held in Antalya, the Mediterranean city that has witnessed thousands of years of history, continued to serve as a diplomacy platform in the midst of high-tension points around the world.

The Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF), which hosted around 5,000 participants from 148 countries, including 19 state leaders and 52 foreign ministers, and attracted great interest on a global scale, was held on 1-3 March. The 52 panels organised at the Forum brought together not only high-level policy makers and policy implementers, in addition to journalists, businesspeople and students from all over the world. Thus, with its multi-stakeholder nature, the ADF has cemented its status as a multi-level diplomatic gathering. The ADF was established during the pandemic and was cancelled due to the earthquake disaster last year, which was inevitably thought to have a negative impact on the development and expansion of the forum. However, ADF has become a platform where all global and regional developments are discussed in detail, different perspectives are discussed at the intellectual level, and especially the perspectives of emerging developing countries and the Global South on world issues are presented in detail.

The Main Theme of the Forum

Held at a time of rising and spreading geopolitical crises, the ADF aimed to promote dialogue and cooperation against the challenges in the international system with the main theme of "Advancing Diplomacy in Times of Turmoil". The main issues that came to the fore at the forum were as follows: Ensuring peace and security in the Middle East against Israel's war in Palestine, growing terrorism and criminal threats, on going instability, irregular migration flows and migrant smuggling, rise of xenophobia and Islamophobia,

the role of digital technologies and especially artificial intelligence in diplomacy, rising xenophobia in the world, Africa's potential, the EU's security and self-defence capacity, sustainable development and the climate crisis, food security and the geopolitical and geostrategic importance of space. Around these topics, important issues on the world agenda were discussed among the participants and stakeholders throughout the forum. In his opening speech, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan emphasised that the 21st century has become an era of crises in which the international community has failed to fulfil its responsibilities towards humanity and stressed the importance of multilateral diplomacy in solving current problems.

Ukraine and Gaza

The forum, which made a name for itself in March 2022 by

hosting the Ukraine-Russia contacts, discussed the Ukraine-Russia war this year. While Russia was represented at the forum at the Foreign Minister level, Ukraine's Foreign Minister did not attend the forum. Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, who held bilateral talks with his Russian counterpart, said that both sides had reached the end of possible military advances. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán emphasised the urgent need for a ceasefire in the Ukraine-Russia war and stressed the urgent need for pluralism in international relations.

Another issue that was high on the agenda during the Forum was Israel's actions in Palestine. Drawing attention to the atrocities in Gaza and other parts of the Middle East and the need for urgent action, President Erdoğan emphasised the importance of multilateral diplomacy in solving such problems. South Africa's Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor, known for

her long struggle against apartheid, actively participated in several panels, advocating concrete action rather than rhetoric in response to Israel's actions.

The Rising Voice of the Global South and Africa, Reforming the UN System

The forum attracted the attention of representatives from the Global South and African countries. In addition, with panels such as "Understanding the Global South" and "Unlocking Africa's Potential", the Forum reaffirmed its role as a powerful platform for dialogue between the countries of the Global South and Africa and the countries of the Global North. Representatives of countries of the Global South and Africa criticised foreign interventions that were clearly ineffective in addressing their problems and the disregard for local realities.

Other prominent issues at the forum were the dysfunctionality of the UN in ending crises, conflicts and wars and the need to reform the UN system. At the closing press conference, Fidan noted that many participants criticised the current multilateral system as unfair and unequal. In particular, representatives from the African continent targeted the UN Security Council and the veto power of the 5 permanent members. Participants also strongly criticised the US veto of ceasefire proposals in Gaza.

Diplomacy, Dialogue and Cooperation

As a diplomacy platform in the heart of high tension points around the world, with Ukraine-Russia to the North and Israel-Hamas to the South, ADF served as a very significant platform in terms of emphasising diplomacy in times of crises and serving as an important platform for dialogue and cooperation.



IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU PARTICIPATED IN "EU-KAYSERİ BUSINESS FORUM 2024"



IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu attended the "EU-Kayseri Business Forum 2024" hosted by the Kayseri Chamber of Commerce on 4 March 2024. In addition to TOBB President M. Rifat Hisarcıklıoğlu, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay, AK Party Kayseri MP and Türkiye-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee Member Murat Cahid Cıngı, Kayseri Governor Gökmen Çiçek, Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Memduh Büyükkılıç, ambassadors

of 17 EU countries, KTO Chairman Ömer Gülsoy, members of the protocol and business people attended the forum which was held at Kayseri Chamber of Commerce Conference Hall.

The speakers of the panel titled "The Future of EU-Türkiye Economic Relations, Green Transformation and EU Support for Digitalisation" organised within the scope of the Forum were Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay, Head of the EU Delegation

to Türkiye Ambassador Nikolaus Meyer-Landrut, TOBB President M. Rifat Hisarcıklıoğlu, AKP Kayseri MP and Member of the Türkiye-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee Murat Cahid Cıngı and Kayseri Chamber of Commerce President Ömer Gülsoy. During the forum, opinions on Türkiye-EU relations in the context of green and digital transformation were discussed, with particular emphasis on the modernisation of the customs union, visa and transport quotas.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MESSAGE FROM IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU



IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu made a statement on the occasion of 8 March International Women's Day. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu said that 8 March International Women's Day is an important opportunity to address the situation of women and gender equality issues.

Drawing attention especially to the issues of women's employment and wage inequality, Chairperson Zeytinoğlu stated the following:

"As we celebrate 8 March, International Women's Day, we once again remember that women's participation in social life, economy and politics is of great importance for achieving the goals of freedom, equality and sustainable development. Societies where women lack education, employment and participation in governance are doomed to remain backward. Gender equality needs to be a mainstream principle in all policies and a comprehensive strategy needs to be implemented to achieve it. The EU's gender equality strategy

can be an important model in this respect. The strategy aims to achieve a Europe of equality by 2025. The strategy includes goals such as preventing gender-based violence, combating gender-based stereotypes, closing the gender gap in the labour market, eliminating wage inequality, and ensuring gender equality in decision-making processes and politics. Today we once again remember the words of the Great Leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. 'Our women will have knowledge and science and will pass through all the educational steps that men pass through. Women will walk together with men in the life of society and will be each other's helpers and supporters.'"

IKV İSTANBUL EUIC PARTICIPATED IN THE ANTALYA YOUTH FORUM



IKV İstanbul EU Information Centre participated in the Antalya Forum on "Critical Digital Literacy" on 24-27 March 2024. On the first day of the forum, EU Information Centre Coordinators working in 19 different provinces, together with Delegation of the European Union to Türkiye, Head of Section in Political Affairs Minister Counsellor Stefano Fantaroni, held a discussion on Türkiye-EU relations.

The second day of the forum started with the speech of Ali Bahar, President of Antalya Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Then, Minister Counsellor Stefano Fantaroni made the opening speech of the event. The panellists,

who took part as speakers at the forum, shared information on areas such as critical digital media literacy and verification, misinformation, disinformation, artificial intelligence, and ChatGPT.

A disinformation simulation was carried out on the last day of the forum. In the simulation, which was moderated and briefed by Katarzyna Sumislawska, Information and Communication Officer from the European External Action Services and Strategic Communication and Foresight Department, students carried out studies and analyses on a predetermined case and shared information.

IKV SECRETARY GENERAL NAS MET WITH THE EMBASSY UNDERSECRETARIES OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES



IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas met with the Deputy Chiefs of Mission and Undersecretaries of Sweden, Norway and Denmark on 26 March 2024. During the meeting, Türkiye-EU relations, IKV's activities and current issues were discussed. After emphasising Türkiye's goal

of EU membership, Assoc. Prof. Nas touched upon the difficulties encountered in the process.

Stating the importance of revitalizing Türkiye-EU relations, Nas said that among the steps to be taken for this, issues such as updating the customs union and visa liberalisation stand out. Speaking about Türkiye's contribution to the future of Europe, Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas stated that Türkiye is a part of Europe and wants to increase its contribution as an EU member. During the meeting where the difficulties experienced in the Schengen visa process were also on the agenda, the continuation of the visa liberalisation process was emphasised.

IKV AGENDA

TIMELINE MARCH 2024

IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU ATTENDED THE EU ENLARGEMENT CONFERENCE



IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu gave a speech at the conference entitled "EU Enlargement: A Business Perspective" organised by EUROCHAMBRES in Brussels on 20 March 2024. In his speech, Chairperson Zeytinoğlu said that Türkiye is the oldest candidate among the current candidate countries and as a customs union partner, it

has largely harmonised with the EU acquis. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu suggested that the modernising of the customs union, green and digital harmonisation topics should be implemented as new areas of cooperation without wasting time and pointed out that the process should be revitalised to reach the membership target.

TOBB President M. Rifat Hisarcıkıoğlu, Former European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood and European Commission President Vladimir Dlouhy, Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Gennadiy Chyzykhov and many European business world representatives attended the meeting.

IKV ORGANISED A MEETING ON FREE MOVEMENT AND MIGRATION



IKV organised a meeting titled "Current Issues in Türkiye-EU Relations: Free Movement and Migration - The Limits of Transactional Cooperation" on 28 March 2024. Moderated by IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit, the first speaker of the meeting was IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, who started her speech by mentioning that visa-free travel and customs union are very important issues for Turkish citizens. Nas mentioned that IKV has been focusing on the visa issue for a long time and many studies have been carried out by IKV on this issue. Stating that the visa issue continues to be one of the most problematic

areas in Türkiye-EU relations, Nas drew attention to the EU's goal of creating an internal security area where internal borders are abolished, and common policy areas are applied on external borders. Lastly, Nas gave information about the digitalisation process of the Schengen visa and concluded his speech by stating that this process will be completed by 2028; on the other hand, this digitalisation process will not bring a solution to the visa problems experienced by Türkiye.

The second speaker of the meeting was Prof. Murat Erdoğan from Ankara University. Erdoğan stated that the relations between Türkiye and the EU have had a

strategic dimension since the beginning and that the issue of migration has recently started to intersect with this strategic dimension. The last speaker of the meeting, Prof. Sanem Baykal from TOBB University of Economics and Technology, started her speech by stating that human mobility is an area that has been regulated and foreseen since the beginning of Türkiye-EU relations. However, Baykal emphasised that Türkiye-EU relations have been shaped within the framework of institutions, rules, principles and standards from the very beginning. The meeting ended after the questions from the participants were answered.

Antalya Diplomacy Forum was held.	1	
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	4	IKV Chairperson Zeytinoğlu participated in "EU-Kayseri Business Forum 2024".
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President Erdoğan came together with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.	8	
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Deputy Foreign Minister Burak Akçapar came together with his Greek counterpart Alexandra Papadopoulou.	11	
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Foreign Minister Fidan came together with his Spanish counterpart José Manuel Albares in Ankara.	19	
	20	IKV Chairperson Zeytinoğlu attended the EU Enlargement Conference.
Foreign Minister Fidan attended at Nuclear Energy Summit in Belgium.	21	
	22	
Araban Garlic got EU recognition.	23	
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	25	IKV Secretary General Nas met with the Embassy Undersecretaries of European Countries.
	26	
Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Türkiye to the European Union Ambassador Faruk Kaymakçı came together with the new EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator Bartjan Wegter.	27	IKV İstanbul EUIC participated in the Antalya Youth Forum.
	28	IKV organised a meeting on free movement and migration.
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HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN EXTENDED HIS CONGRATULATIONS TO HIS RUSSIAN COUNTERPART

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan extended his congratulations to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on his recent re-election victory during a phone call on 18 March. According to Türkiye's Communications Directorate, Erdoğan expressed confidence in the continued positive trajectory of Turkish-Russian relations, foreseeing even stronger ties in the future.

Furthermore, Erdoğan reiterated Türkiye's readiness to play a facilitating role in efforts to bring parties back to the negotiation table concerning the ongoing Ukraine conflict, now entering its third year. The



incumbent Putin secured an overwhelming 87.28% of the vote in Russia's three-day presidential

election, as confirmed by the country's election authority, after counting 100% of the ballots.

UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT ZELENSKY PAID A WORKING VISIT TO TÜRKİYE

On 8 March, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy paid a working visit to Türkiye and exchanged views with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at Dolmabahçe Presidential Office. The two leaders discussed important agenda items in Türkiye-Ukraine relations, including the Russian-Ukrainian War and the Grain Corridor Agreement.

Alongside with President Zelenskyy, Minister of Defence of Ukraine Rustem Umerov were also came to the visit to Türkiye. The Ukrainian President also inspected the second Ada-class corvette that Türkiye is building for the Ukrainian navy. Zelenskyy expressed his gratitude



to Türkiye and said "Ensuring the food security of our country, the entire region and the global food security

requires unconditional security of navigation in the Black Sea. We can achieve this by working together."

TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER ATTENDED NUCLEAR ENERGY SUMMIT

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan arrived in Brussels on 20 March 2024 to attend the First Nuclear Energy Summit. Recognising the role of civil nuclear energy in energy security and combating climate change, Minister Fidan noted that Türkiye already has an ambitious clean energy transition agenda and is implementing an energy and resource diversification strategy and added Türkiye, as a fast-growing industrial economy, is implementing new energy supply programmes, which is why it has stepped into the civil nuclear field. Emphasising that the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant is



Türkiye's pioneering project. Minister Fidan also pointed out that the plant will meet 10% of Türkiye's electricity demand when it becomes fully operational, and that it is aimed to increase this level. Emphasising that the Middle East is the region under the most pressure, Minister Fidan

stated that Türkiye calls for the denuclearisation of the region.

Minister Fidan also held bilateral meetings in Brussels, where he travelled to attend the First Nuclear Energy Summit. Minister Fidan first met with Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte and received Executive Director of the International Energy Agency Fatih Birol. Minister Fidan then met separately with his Pakistani counterpart Muhammed Ishaq Dar, his Azerbaijani counterpart Ceyhun Bayramov and his Italian counterpart Antonio Tajani. Minister Fidan also met with his Belgian counterpart Hadja Lahbib.

TURKISH AND SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTERS AFFIRM STRONG TIES, DISCUSS EU MEMBERSHIP

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan hosted Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain José Manuel Albares Bueno in Ankara. A joint press conference was held after the meeting. Stating that Spain has been among the countries that have sincerely supported Türkiye's EU membership process from the beginning, Minister Fidan said that he conveyed to his colleague that EU membership continues to be a strategic goal for Türkiye and that Türkiye's EU membership process is of great importance that cannot be left to the vicious political agendas of some members.

Minister Fidan stated that Spain is one of the biggest trade partners of Türkiye in the EU. Indicating that the bilateral trade volume target was to reach 20 billion dollars, Minister Fidan noted that as of last year, it was close to reaching this target and this year the trade volume between the two countries exceeded 19 billion dollars. Indicating that the Mediterranean region and its surroundings are facing challenges such as clashes, terrorism, climate change and irregular migration, Minister Fidan said that Türkiye and Spain, which are located at the eastern and western ends of the



Mediterranean, feel these crises closely and are especially trying to improve their security co-operation.

Minister Albares drew attention to the political, economic and cultural relations between Spain and Türkiye and said that as two Mediterranean countries, the friendship has deepened. Pointing out that both countries are members of the Union for the Mediterranean and NATO, Minister Albares said that they support Türkiye's EU membership process and want the membership to be approved. Minister Albares said that he would like to bring the Alliance of Civilisations Forum back together, noting that this is a necessary platform to tackle the challenges facing the two societies. Lastly, Minister Albares stated that they discussed the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and added: "I reiterated Spain's wish that a ceasefire be reached as soon as possible and permanently."

DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER BURAK AKÇAPAR CAME TOGETHER WITH HIS GREEK COUNTERPART



Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister Burak Akçapar and his Greek counterpart Ambassador Alexandra Papadopoulou convened in Ankara on 11 March, reaffirming their dedication to advancing the positive momentum outlined in the Athens

Declaration, a significant accord endorsed by the leaders of both nations last December.

In a statement released by the Turkish Foreign Ministry, it was highlighted that Akçapar and Papadopoulou engaged in constructive political discussions, delving into matters of bilateral significance and international collaboration.

The statement further elaborated that the two diplomats meticulously assessed the groundwork for the upcoming visit of Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis to Türkiye scheduled for May, while also taking account of the substantial headway made within the existing dialogue mechanisms, encompassing a comprehensive spectrum of bilateral affairs.

İSTANBUL AIRPORT CLINCHES 'AIRPORT OF THE YEAR' AWARD FOR FOURTH CONSECUTIVE TIME

Istanbul Airport wins 'Airport of the Year' for the fourth time at Air Transport Awards, showcasing excellence in global aviation.

IGA, the operator of Türkiye's expansive Istanbul Airport, proudly announced on 18 March that the airport has been honoured with the prestigious "Airport of the Year" title at the 2024 Air Transport Awards, marking its fourth consecutive win.

Having previously received this esteemed recognition in 2021, 2022, and 2023 by Air Transport News, Istanbul Airport continues to impress, securing the title once again amidst stiff competition and approximately 4,000 votes across 14 different categories.

The CEO of IGA İstanbul Airport Selahattin Bilgen, expressed immense pride during the award ceremony held in Greece, emphasising the collective efforts of the airport teams in achieving operational excellence. He highlighted the airport's commitment to raising standards in efficiency, sustainability, innovation, and passenger satisfaction to ensure



a delightful travel experience. Bilgen further stated that this accolade underscores their unwavering dedication and pioneering initiatives in the aviation sector, extending gratitude to the 'Air Transport Awards' team for the esteemed recognition.

The general director and CEO of Air Transport News Kostas Iastrou commended Istanbul Airport for its resilience and innovative approach amid the challenges posed by the

pandemic. He lauded the airport's swift recovery to pre-pandemic passenger levels and the expansion of airline diversity, solidifying its position as a prominent global hub. Iastrou attributed this success to the hard work of airport staff and their commitment to providing guests with a pleasant travel experience, echoing the sentiment reflected in the award bestowed upon Istanbul Airport.

TÜRKİYE'S AI-DRIVEN NETWORKING SOLUTION SPOTLIGHTED AT MOBILE WORLD CONGRESS



Ulak Communications, a pioneering firm in Türkiye's tech landscape, has unveiled a groundbreaking innovation to revolutionize the network infrastructure. At the forefront of this stride is "uMAYA SD-WAN," an AI-driven solution designed to fortify wide area network

infrastructures with enhanced security and streamlined operations. Introduced at the Mobile World Congress 2024 in Barcelona, "uMAYA SD-WAN" represents Türkiye's inaugural foray into AI-infused network management solutions. This cutting-edge offering embodies

a software defined approach, empowering administrators with centralised control, network abstraction, and bolstered cybersecurity measures.

"uMAYA SD-WAN" stands out for its commitment to end-to-end encryption, ensuring the confidentiality and integrity of communications across diverse networks. By harnessing multiple carrier networks simultaneously, the solution guarantees uninterrupted service while centralising management through a cohesive control layer. In essence, Ulak Communications' pioneering endeavour represents Türkiye's stride towards technological excellence on the global stage. With "uMAYA SD-WAN," the company aims not only to rival but surpass global competitors, setting a new standard for network security and management in the digital era.

TÜRKİYE TO RAMP UP GAS PRODUCTION 8-FOLD BY 2050



By 2050, Türkiye is projected to reach an annual production of 13 billion cubic metres of natural gas, positioning it between Western markets and major energy suppliers in the Middle East and Russia. Türkiye's natural gas production in the Black Sea is expected to increase year by year, according to a report prepared by the Gas Exporting Countries Forum. Production at the Sakarya gas field in the Black Sea is estimated to reach 1.6 billion cubic metres this year, while the highest production in the first phase of the field is projected to be 3.5 billion cubic metres. With the completion of the development of the second phase of the Sakarya gas field, production is expected to reach a

total of 11 billion cubic metres per year.

The report also stated that Türkiye is advancing towards becoming a regional gas hub, strengthened by its pipeline connections to Europe and regasification terminals. It was pointed out that Russia and Türkiye plan to establish an international gas hub in Türkiye from 2022 onwards, with Russian gas being significantly involved in this initiative. Emphasising Türkiye's diversity of natural gas sources, the report stated that Türkiye receives natural gas from Russia, Iran and Azerbaijan through pipelines and has 5 LNG (liquefied natural gas) terminals with a total annual capacity of 27 million tonnes.

SAFRANBOLU JOINS UNESCO'S CITTASLOW NETWORK

Safranbolu, a picturesque town in northern Türkiye, has recently earned a prestigious spot on the UNESCO World Heritage List as part of the esteemed Cittaslow network, also known as the "network of calm cities." Mayor Elif Köse proudly announced this milestone, attributing it to the municipality's dedicated efforts to preserve the town's rich heritage and elevate its global standing. The culmination of Safranbolu's efforts came on 23 March 2023, with the official certification ceremony held in Brussels, Belgium, following an invitation extended on March 4. The recognition has further enhanced Safranbolu's appeal as a tourist destination, with over 1.2 million visitors flocking to the town in 2023, including tourists from Taiwan, Thailand, and China, drawn by its tranquillity and cultural allure.

Preserving the distinct identity of cities amidst the tide of globalisation is paramount, according to Köse, who



emphasised Safranbolu's historical significance and its successful fulfilment of the criteria set forth by the committee. The town's well-preserved Ottoman-era structures and stately mansions stand as testaments to its rich cultural heritage. As Safranbolu embraces its new status as a "calm city," Mayor Köse anticipates an increase in European visitors, marking a significant milestone in the town's journey towards sustainable tourism. "We are one step closer to realising this vision. May it bring prosperity to our beloved Safranbolu," Köse remarked optimistically.

TÜRKİYE-UK FREE TRADE AGREEMENT UPDATE SIGNALS STRONGER TRADE TIES

Head of the British Chamber of Commerce in Türkiye Chris Gaunt said that Türkiye will continue to be a priority market for trade and investment for the UK. Following the review of the existing Free Trade Agreement between Türkiye and the United Kingdom to make it a more comprehensive agreement, the decision to start the update negotiations was taken on 18 July 2023. The first round of the FTA update negotiations is planned to be held in London on the week of 10 June this year.

Stating that the FTA to be renegotiated is an indicator of how the UK and Türkiye want to grow their trade in the coming years, Chris Gaunt, head of the British Chamber of Commerce in Türkiye (BCCT) said the purpose of the renegotiation is to include more sectors in the agreement, which will increase trade volume and value. Gaunt pointed out that the services sector will gain more importance with the updated FTA and stated that the UK wants to establish a more comprehensive agricultural relationship with Türkiye. Indicating that Türkiye has all the



necessary elements to become a major producer and exporter of agricultural products, Gaunt stated that the UK can provide support in agriculture and technology in this field.

Gaunt stated that the commercial relations between the United Kingdom and Türkiye have always been strong and will continue to be strong. Gaunt said that there was a decline in bilateral trade volume during the pandemic period, but in the current situation, an increase in exports

from Türkiye to the UK was seen and the bilateral trade volume reached approximately \$ 28 billion. Gaunt stated that the general trend is to create a stronger investment environment between Türkiye and the UK and said, "Türkiye will continue to be a priority market for trade and investment for the UK." Finally, Gaunt stated that as BCCT, they play an important role in the trade between the two countries and that their focus is to support Turkish SMEs and bring them together with UK SMEs.

ARABAN GARLIC GOT EU RECOGNITION



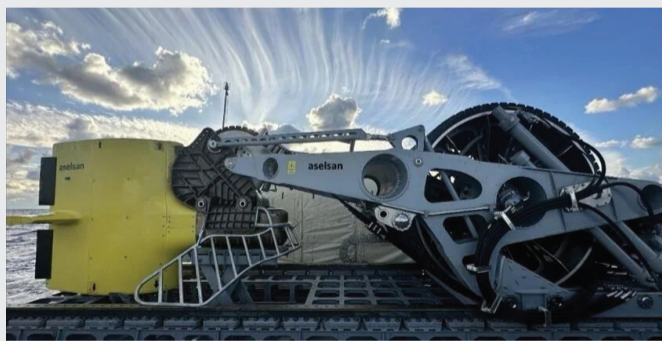
Turkish application to register Araban garlic of Gaziantep for official recognition in the EU finalised on 21 March 2024. Araban garlic is grown across the villages within the Araban district of Gaziantep province. The distinct climatic conditions and soil composition of the area contribute significantly to its exceptional taste and aroma characteristics. Being the 21st product that received EU recognition, the Head of the EU Delegation to Türkiye Ambassador Nikolaus Meyer-Landrut expresses his satisfaction with the EU's

acknowledgment and highlighted the significance of the EU PDO registration for Araban garlic, stating that it will enhance its recognition among consumers, who can now identify the authentic Araban garlic through the PDO logo.

TOBB President M. Rifat Hisarcıklıoğlu extended his congratulations to everyone that is involved in this significant achievement. Furthermore, work for recognition on 48 geographical indications and five traditional product names continues.

TÜRKİYE UNVEILS 1ST BEYOND THE HORIZON SUBMARINE SONAR SYSTEM

Aselsan, a leading defence technology company in Türkiye, has made a significant breakthrough by unveiling the country's first indigenous beyond-the-horizon submarine defence sonar system. This development marks a substantial stride towards enhancing the Turkish Navy's underwater detection and defence capabilities, using entirely domestic technology. Named the Low-Frequency Active Sonar System (DÜFAS), this project was carried out under the auspices of the Presidency of Defence Industries (SSB) in response to the specific needs of the Naval Forces Command. DÜFAS is designed to detect and pinpoint underwater threats such as submarines and torpedoes over long distances, thereby providing critical situational awareness beneath the surface. The system is a testament to the Turkish defence industry's commitment to self-reliance and technological advancement, particularly in the domain of naval warfare.



One of the standout features of DÜFAS is its versatility, encompassing both active and passive sonar capabilities. The active sonar function involves emitting acoustic signals that bounce off targets, with the reflections being captured by the system's passive sonar components. This dual capability enables DÜFAS to construct a comprehensive tactical underwater picture, enhancing the navy's ability to detect, track, and respond to threats with greater range and accuracy.

DÜFAS is distinguished not only by its operational capabilities but also by its technological

innovation. Its sophisticated technology allows for adjustable depth settings and supports a sonar performance modelling capability, making it a formidable tool in underwater defence. Furthermore, the system's architecture is designed for bistatic/multistatic operation, a feature that significantly enhances its effectiveness in detecting and neutralising enemy submarines. Haluk Görgün, the head of the Presidency of Defence Industries, said the system was a gift to the Turkish nation on the 109th anniversary of the Çanakkale naval victory.

TÜRKİYE'S 1ST INDIGENOUS SATELLITE TO BE LAUNCHED SOON



An official announcement on 20 March confirmed the successful completion of flight model and antenna tests for Türkiye's pioneering communication satellite, Türksat 6A, marking a significant stride towards its imminent launch. Türksat CEO Hasan Hüseyin Ertok, speaking from Washington, revealed that the satellite's comprehensive testing phase is nearing conclusion, with preparations now underway for packaging and transport to the launch site. Reflecting on a decade-long journey involving the dedication of hundreds of engineers, Ertok expressed anticipation for the impending launch, originally targeted for late June but subject to potential delays. He underscored the monumental achievement represented by Türksat 6A, emphasising its status as the

largest domestically developed satellite in Türkiye's history.

Scheduled for liftoff via a Space X Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral Base, Florida, Türksat 6A is poised to occupy a pivotal role in Türkiye's space endeavours, with its deployment set to significantly expand coverage across regions extending from India to Indonesia. Meanwhile, at the Satellite 2024 Conference in Washington, Turkish prowess in satellite technology was prominently showcased, with Türksat alongside industry stalwarts Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) and Aselsan, drawing admiration for their contributions. Enver Iskurt, deputy transportation and infrastructure minister, lauded the trio's presence at the global event, highlighting Türksat 6A's distinction as a testament to Turkish innovation and self-reliance.

TRAIN FROM PLASTIC BARRELS MAKING DAYS BETTER FOR STRAY DOGS



Buket Özgünlü, an avid animal lover and Chair of the Association of Paws Holding to Life, has launched a heartwarming initiative aimed at bringing joy to disabled dogs residing in an animal shelter in Ankara. Recognising the special needs of these dogs, she ingeniously crafted a train using plastic barrels to offer them uplifting rides within the shelter premises. With over 600 rescued dogs housed in the shelter, a significant portion of them being disabled, Özgünlü's initiative brings much-needed happiness and stimulation to their lives. Inspired by a similar project she came across on social media, she took it upon herself to replicate the idea, and thus, the train rides for the shelter's disabled residents began.

Witnessing the overwhelmingly positive impact of these rides on the dogs' well being, Özgünlü decided to institutionalize the tours, ensuring they became a regular part of the shelter's activities. The initiative quickly gained traction on social media, garnering widespread attention and admiration. However, Özgünlü's dedication to animal welfare doesn't stop there. Despite the success of the train project, she remains committed to exploring and implementing further initiatives aimed at improving the lives of sheltered animals. Her compassion and creativity continue to inspire others to make a difference in the lives of animals in need.

İSTANBUL'S CONSULS GATHERED AT PERA PALACE FOR WOMEN'S DAY



On Women's Day, the İstanbul Consular Section (ICC) at Pera Palace hosted a special event to highlight gender equality. Consuls and their spouses graced the stage, showcasing their talents alongside renowned artists. Farzana Haque Boby, wife of Mohammed Nore-Alam, Consul General of Bangladesh, kicked off the evening with a moving poem by Maya Angelou. Dr Ivana Zerec, Consul General of Croatia and President of ICC, emphasised

the unifying power of music in her opening speech. Notable performances included Turkish artist Nihan Atalay on piano, Shri Mijito Vinito, wife of Consul General of India, enchanting the audience with pieces by Claude Debussy, and Polish soprano Elżbieta Nowotarska-Leśniak's rendition of Mimi from La Boheme. Among the esteemed guests was Turkish businesswoman Demet Sabancı Çetindoğan, joining in the celebration of women's achievements.

TURKISH COMMUNITY ART EXHIBITION OPENS IN LONDON



Organised by the Consulate General of the Republic of Türkiye in London and the London Yunus Emre Institute with the call of "Let's meet with art" and held for the sixth time this year, the "Turkish Community Art Exhibition" was opened to visitors at the London Yunus Emre Institute Gallery.

Since its launch in 2019, the exhibition has presented hundreds of unique and remarkable pieces from artists with various skill levels and mediums. This year, it attracted 113 submissions and chose 66 distinctive pieces from 46 artists,

encompassing a broad spectrum of artistic forms, including traditional art, digital art, photography, and handmade crafts.

The exhibition was curated by a distinguished jury of seven members: Türkiye's Consul General in London Bekir Utku Atahan, Yunus Emre Institute London Director Mehmet Karakuş, Ali Haydar Yeşilyurt, Cevdet Akman, Nagihan Seymour, Nilay İşlek, and Rümeyşa Memiş. The opening ceremony of the exhibition was attended by artists, art lovers, diplomats, journalists and academics.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S TESTIMONY EXHIBITON OPENS IN İSTANBUL MODERN



Istanbul Modern Photography Gallery organised an exhibition dedicated to Ozan Sağdıç, one of the most important names in the field of photography in Türkiye, entitled "Ozan Sağdıç: The Photographer's Testimony" exhibition was organised.

The exhibition highlights a comprehensive collection of Ozan Sağdıç's work, focusing on documentary photography to explore Türkiye's diverse historical aspects since the 1950s. Sağdıç, with a 70-year career, notably documents the contrast between progress and

standstill, mainly in İstanbul and Ankara, alongside various locations nationwide. His work, characterised by a diverse range of subjects and an ironic perspective on human experiences, positions him as an observer of Türkiye's changing landscape over the decades.

Curated by İstanbul Modern's photography curator and department head Demet Yıldız Dinçer, along with photographer and writer Merih Akoğul, the exhibition features Dr. Ruhi Oğuz Sağdıç as a consultant.

TÜRKİYE'S MEDIATOR ROLE IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

As the war in Ukraine enters into its third year, Turkish position emphasising the importance of a lasting peace has not changed.

Tunç İbrahim Ceylan
IKV Junior Expert

Before the war started, most of the analyses commenting on the relations between Russia and Ukraine gave little chance a war to break out despite all issues. In financial, economic and several other fields like energy, the comments went on, interdependence between countries was too high to start a war which could affect all the stability both in the region and world. However, on 24 February 2022 statements coming out of the news agencies announcing the beginning of the war in Ukraine stroke everyone. The war was real; and it was in Europe, again.

What Has Been Done Until Now?

An overwhelming majority of the countries condemned the acts of Russia against Ukraine which violate the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. On 2 March 2022 United Nations General Assembly held a voting for condemning Russia and demanding withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukrainian territories. From the day 1 onwards, Türkiye has made clear that it put great importance on the Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity, and these could never be violated. With these higher ideas on the minds, Turkish diplomacy has searched for a way towards reconciliation, getting the warring parties together around the same table and to give an end to the conflict causing huge loss of life and property.

Türkiye has preferred to be a mediator in this conflict; and in line with this policy, Turkish state officers have met both Russian and Ukrainian counterparts. In spite of the sensitivity and given significance to the Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by Türkiye and declaration of this attitude clearly on every occasion, Turkish authorities have sought to refrain from make harsh statements, that have a potential of alienating one



side to the conflict, with the intention of keeping the ground as a mediator.

The relations between Türkiye and the two countries have tried to be maintained without any disruption. Plus, Türkiye has meticulously abided by the terms of the international agreements it is a part of such as Montreux Convention regarding the Regime on the Straits. It has contributed to the predictability of the geopolitical situation of the region, which was greatly shaken by the war.

Moreover, Turkish efforts for mine clearance being carried out jointly by Türkiye, Bulgaria and Romania in Black Sea should also be mentioned here. As the mines laid throughout the northern coast of Black Sea were drifting southward and jeopardising safety of navigation in a highly important sea route for transportation, Türkiye, Bulgaria and Romania have jointly started to perform a de-mining operation. This operation has undoubtedly contributed to the safety and stability of the region as well while the war on the northern coast of the Black Sea has been constantly continuing to produce instability, unpredictability

and risk for lives and properties.

Moreover, maybe the most important achievement of the Turkish diplomatic efforts in the conflict, which is the "Grain Deal" ought to be given a paragraph in this article. Ukraine is one of the biggest grain exporters of the world; however, the war damaged the agricultural and logistical infrastructure of the country to a great extent. In order for Ukraine -and also Russia- to continue its grain transports safely, an agreement was needed. At this point, thanks to joint efforts shown by Türkiye and the United Nations, the Black Sea Grain Initiative became materialised in July 2022. This initiative had significant impacts worldwide through preventing a global food crisis and weaponisation of food supply. Other than "the Grain Deal", Türkiye also played a crucial role in prisoner exchange between Russia and Ukraine.

What Can Be Expected Next?

Turkish position in the conflict seems to go in the way it has been up until now. In a speech he gave on 18 March Gallipoli Victory and Martyrs Memorial Day, Turkish

Defence Minister Yaşar Güler said that Türkiye has become an effective actor in ensuring global peace and stability through multifaceted diplomacy; and, the country has also become an indispensable member of the negotiating table and the international security framework, he added. On the war in Ukraine, the Minister emphasised the Turkish ongoing determination to give an end to the conflict via multifaceted diplomacy from the beginning.

On 9 March Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan hosted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Istanbul. Türkiye's willingness and readiness to hold a peace meeting which will make Russian and Ukrainian parties meet was expressed once again. Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova stated that Russia appreciates President Erdoğan's peace initiative as Russia is grateful for every call for peace "...at time of endless aggressive statements by the collective West".

Türkiye is one of the countries continuing to meet both Russian and Ukrainian Presidents and other high-level officials. Its geographical

proximity to the conflicting parties, historical and economic ties with both sides make Türkiye's position more unique among others. If Türkiye maintains its current attitude towards the conflict, which puts the real emphasis on international law, Ukrainian territorial integrity and sovereignty and peaceful settlement of the dispute while not alienating the other side, it can be argued that it will probably keep its credibility and trustworthiness for both sides. Under these circumstances, Türkiye might have an active and effective role on the road to peace, which firstly starts with permanent ceasefire and then goes towards constructive dialogue, negotiation and a lasting peace.

Türkiye with its long and rooted diplomatic tradition has a vision and capability for assuming a role in ending the ongoing war and settling conflictual subjects among the parties with diplomacy and peaceful tools. It can be claimed that Türkiye's position towards the war and the way in which Türkiye has been managing the uncertainties stemming from this conflict make it one of the credible mediator candidates both sides can prefer to see at the table.