



İKVM MONTHLY



ISSUE: 110 JULY 2024

www.ikv.org.tr / contact: ikv@ikv.org.tr

TÜRKİYE'S POTENTIAL BRICS MEMBERSHIP AND POSSIBLE FUTURE RELATIONS

Türkiye's growing interest in BRICS reflects an economic and strategic trend rather than a radical foreign policy transformation.

Ahmet Emre USTA
IKV Researcher

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan visited China between 3-5 June 2024 at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi. On the first day of his visit, Minister Fidan made a speech at the "China and Globalisation Centre" think tank in Beijing and stated that Türkiye has a Customs Union with the EU and is exploring new cooperation opportunities with various partners in different platforms such as BRICS. According to information leaked to the press, in response to the question, "Would you like to join BRICS?" asked during the private part of the meeting, Minister Fidan gave an answer similar to "If it is in Türkiye's interests, why not?". This leaked speech was interpreted by the world press as Türkiye seeking to become a member of BRICS. On the same day, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov stated that Russia welcomes Türkiye's growing interest in BRICS.

Afterwards, Minister Fidan made statements to the local press about Türkiye's BRICS membership and addressed that Türkiye is a member of different economic platforms such as the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, D-8 and the Economic Cooperation Organisation. Underlining that Türkiye is not a stranger to such platforms, Minister Fidan noted that BRICS is at an evolutionary stage, and that steps such as a Customs Union or a common currency have not yet been established and therefore it does not have an institutionalised structure. Minister Fidan expressed that it is very normal for Türkiye to follow how alternative international economic platforms are shaped within the framework of its strategic and economic interests. Minister Fidan also stated that

international platforms should be seen as complementary rather than alternative to each other.

Upon being asked whether Türkiye's membership in BRICS would create a problem for the EU, Minister Fidan stated that there is a rule-based functioning in the EU and that there are obligations within this framework. Minister Fidan emphasised that Türkiye's commitment and obligations to the organisations it is a part of will continue as long as its interlocutors are committed as well. Minister Fidan said, "If we were not in the current situation in the course of our relations with the EU, the EU had the will to take a step forward, and it could act not as transnational but as trans civilisational; our perspective on certain issues here could actually change even more."

What is BRICS and Why is it Important?

Seeking to ensure that developing countries have a greater voice in international issues, Brazil, Russia, India and China established the "BRIC" group in 2006. The group takes its name from the English initials of these countries. In 2011, the group was renamed "BRICS" with the addition of South Africa. Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates joined BRICS in 2024.

Representing 45% of the world's population with 3.5 billion people, BRICS accounts for about 28% of the world economy with 28.5 trillion dollars. BRICS countries also produce 44% of the world's crude oil.

BRICS countries established the New Development Bank (NDB) in 2014, aiming to finance infrastructure

and sustainable development projects in developing countries. By the end of 2022, the NDB had lent 32 billion dollars to developing countries for new road, bridge, railway, and water supply projects.

Is BRICS an Alternative for Türkiye?

In recent years, a shift of power from the West to the East has been observed in the international arena. Experts state that BRICS, consisting of the world's leading countries with large populations, strong industries, and rich energy resources, is rapidly emerging as an alternative power centre in the world order.

Türkiye is a country that is highly integrated politically and economically into Western institutions. Indeed, with more than 40% of its trade going to the EU,

Türkiye is an EU candidate country. Türkiye also plays an active role in NATO and has the second largest army in the organisation. Moreover, BRICS is an institution that cannot replace the EU in terms of democracy, development, and prosperity.

In this context, it is unlikely that there will be a radical change in Türkiye's foreign policy, considering its longstanding alignment with the West since its foundation. Türkiye is aware that the ongoing transformation process brings both risks and opportunities, and its interest in BRICS primarily stems from economic and strategic considerations. As Minister Fidan emphasised, the international platforms Türkiye engages with are seen as complementary rather than alternative and Türkiye's growing interest in BRICS is a part of the versatility of Turkish foreign policy.



IKV ORGANISED A MEETING ON EUROPEAN SECURITY AND TÜRKİYE IN BRUSSELS

IKV organised a panel titled "New Challenges in European Security and Türkiye: Towards a New Paradigm" at the TOBB/IKV Brussels Office on 6 June 2024, in partnership with EPC. Permanent Delegate of Türkiye to the EU Ambassador Faruk Kaymakçı, IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu, IKV Secretary General Çiğdem Nas, IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit, Head of the Türkiye/Eastern Mediterranean Section of the European External Action Service Baiba Aleksejuka-Tavaresa, Senior Fellow of the Europe Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Alper Coşkun, Senior Advisor on Security and Defense Policy at EPC Jamie Shea, Professor of International Relations at Sabancı University Meltem Müftüler-Baç, and Professor of Institute of European Studies at Marmara University Münevver Cebeci were the speakers of the panel.

IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu emphasised that Türkiye's participation in the EU missions and its status as a NATO



ally highlight its pivotal role in the EU defence and security. "I firmly believe in Türkiye's goal of integration and membership," said Zeytinoğlu, underscoring

that Türkiye can contribute to the EU's strategic autonomy not only militarily but also in areas such as economy, migration, green transition, and transportation. IKV

Secretary General Çiğdem Nas noted in her speech that the past five years the EU has been active in fields such as health, economy, and security and that the results of the

upcoming the EP elections will be significant for the next five years. Nas stated, "I believe Türkiye's place will play a crucial role in the future success of the European project."

IKV ORGANISED A WEBINAR ON THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS

IKV organised a webinar titled "European Parliament Election Results, The Effects and Importance for Türkiye" on 14 June 2024. In the webinar, the EP election results and the possible effects on Türkiye-EU relations were discussed. In the opening speech of the webinar, which was moderated by IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit, IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu shared data on the EP election results, gave information about the current parliamentary structure and made general evaluations about the elections. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu discussed that despite the EU's Green Deal and sustainability policies, the rise in the votes of the far right is remarkable and that the disaggregated decision-making structure in the parliament reduces the ability to act collectively in future decision-making processes. Finally, Chairperson Zeytinoğlu expressed that far-right politics will be decisive in the elections to be held in EU Member States in the coming period.



IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit stated the voter turnout in the 2024 EP elections to be similar to the previous elections and shared information about the number of seats held by the political groups within the EP in the previous period and the current number of seats. Noting that the far-right movement has increased throughout the EU and that the situation in Scandinavian countries is being reversed, Kilit

introduced the speakers of the panel section he moderated.

The first speaker of the webinar, TEPAV EU Studies Center Director Nilgün Arsan Eralp, started her speech by stating that the European voters reflected an identical tendency in local elections to what they reflected in the EP elections. Eralp made evaluations about voters' behavioural patterns emphasising the fact that no other factor governs the

voter's behaviour than the tendencies they reflect in local elections. The second speaker of the first part of the panel, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas started her speech by stating that the far-right trend, which has been influential in Europe since the 1990s, was also apparent in these elections. Underscoring that the election results can be evaluated within the framework of the reactions of the EU citizens towards their

governments, Nas pointed out that dissatisfaction with the Green Transition was especially effective in this result. The third speaker of the panel section was Prof. Selcen Öner from Bahçeşehir University and Öner started her speech by stating that even though the right-wing parties differ among themselves on the issues of the Russia-Ukraine war and foreign policy, the common point they share is the need for externalisation and securitisation of migration.

The last speaker in the panel section was Assoc. Prof. Ebru Turhan from Turkish-German University. Turhan pointed out the shift towards the right and stated that a period that will make the legislative processes in the EU difficult is around the corner. Turhan noted that the strengthening of the far right in Europe may have a negative impact on Türkiye's country reports and that Türkiye's accession process could be used as a bargaining counter within election propaganda throughout Europe. The webinar ended with a question-and-answer session.

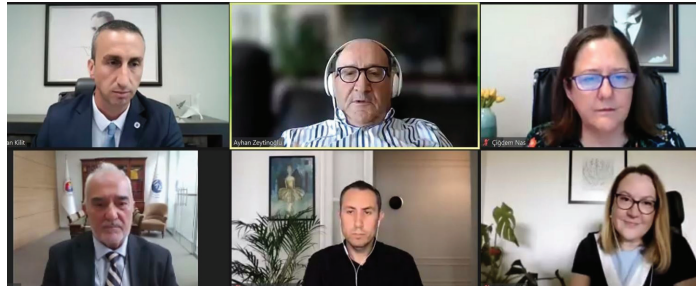
IKV AGENDA

TIMELINE
JUNE 2024

IKV ORGANISED A WEBINAR ON THE NEW ERA IN THE EU INSTITUTIONS AFTER THE EP ELECTIONS

IKV organised a webinar titled "New Era and New Agenda in the EU Institutions After the EP Elections" on 27 June 2024. IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu, who delivered the opening speech of the meeting, began his speech by emphasising the significance of the changes after the EP elections. In his speech, Chairperson Zeytinoğlu emphasised that the centre-right, centre-left and liberal groups could form a composition together, while also stressing that the increase in votes of the far-right was concerning.

IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit who moderated the webinar, introduced the participants and afterwards TOBB-IKV Brussels Representative Haluk Nuray started his speech. Nuray began his speech by stating that the EP election results were not very surprising and that changes in the balance of seats in the EP are normal. The second speaker of the webinar, Senior European Policy Advisor and KAGİDER EU Representative Ayşe Yürekli, started her speech by stating that the EU Council to be held on 27 June 2024, is essential for determining future EU policies.



The other speaker of the webinar, EPC Senior Analyst and VUB Faculty Member Dr. Demir Murat Seyrek, started his speech by emphasising that the spirit of these rules should be emphasised rather than the rules to be introduced by the EU.

As the final speaker of the webinar, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas began her remarks by emphasising that the EU is still undergoing a challenging period from a macro perspective following the elections. Nas stated that the EU has long been defined as a civil power, but recent developments have complicated this role, as the EU is assisting a country where a war is actively ongoing for the first time. Nas suggested that this evolving nature of the EU might lead to new challenges, citing the candidacies

of Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia as examples that could complicate decision-making processes within an expanded EU. Discussing the difficulties of the new era, Nas highlighted the implementation of the Migration and Asylum Pact and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, pointing out that despite public reactions, the Green Deal has not been eliminated. When mentioning Hungary's upcoming Presidency of the EU Council, Nas described it as a contradiction, considering Hungary's risk of deviating from EU values. Nas indicated that maintaining a firm stance against Russia might be difficult due to Hungary's pro-Russia profile, stressing the need for Hungary to work in coordination with Belgium and Poland. The webinar ended with a Q&A session.

IKV ORGANISED A PANEL TITLED "THE ROLE OF METHANE EMISSIONS ON FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE AND POLICY SUGGESTIONS FOR TÜRKİYE"



IKV organised a panel titled "The Role of Methane Emissions on Fighting Climate Change and Policy Suggestions for Türkiye" in cooperation with Daktilo 1984 and Climate Union on 4 June 2024. The speakers of the panel which was moderated by IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit were IKV Secretary General Assoc.

Prof. Çiğdem Nas, Daktilo 1984 Editor-in-Chief İbrahim Enes Özkan, Climate Union founder Akın Ayberk Çilekoğlu and Asterisk 2050 Project Coordinator Selim Yıldırım.

In the panel, methane works in the Türkiye and the EU were discussed including the NGO's works in this field. IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem

Nas stated that they contacted EU officials about potential cooperation with the EU in the fight against climate change and explained IKV's contributions to policy-making processes in Türkiye on issues such as the preparation of the climate law and the determination of the coal phase-out plan.

1	
2	
3	
4	IKV organised a meeting with cooperation of Daktilo 1984 and Climate Union.
5	
6	IKV organised a meeting with cooperation of European Policy Center in Brussels.
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	President Erdoğan came together with his Spanish counterpart Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón in Spain.
14	IKV organised a webinar on the results of European parliamentary elections and its significance for Türkiye.
15	President Erdoğan attended G7 Leaders Summit in Italy.
16	
17	Foreign Minister Fidan attended the Summit on Peace in Ukraine in Switzerland.
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	Czechia Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky paid a working visit to Türkiye and exchanged views with Foreign Minister Fidan.
26	Foreign Minister Fidan attended Türkiye-Poland-Romania Trilateral Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Poland.
27	IKV organised a webinar on post-election situation in Europe.
28	
29	Foreign Minister Fidan attended meeting of the Türkiye-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Croatia Trilateral Advisory Mechanism in Croatia.
30	
31	

HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN WENT TO SPAIN FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL SUMMIT



Türkiye and Spain held the 8th intergovernmental summit in Madrid, Spain on 13 June 2024. The meeting was chaired by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Prime Minister of Spain Pedro Sanchez. Spanish Prime Minister defined the meeting as an indication of close

and deepening ties between Türkiye and Spain.

President Erdoğan arrived in Madrid, one day before the meeting and was welcomed by the Spanish State Secretary for the EU, Mariano Sampedro Marcos, Spanish Ambassador to Ankara Cristina Latorre Sancho and

Türkiye's Ambassador to Madrid Nuket Küçükkel Ezberci along with other officials at the Madrid Torrejon Airport. President Erdoğan met with Spanish King Felipe IV at the Royal Palace of Zarzuela as well before attending the dinner held in his honour by the King of Spain. Both events were conducted closed to the press.

President Erdoğan was accompanied by the Turkish delegation which included First Lady Emine Erdoğan, Family and Social Services Minister Mahinur Özdemir Gökaş, Energy and Natural Resources Minister Alparslan Bayraktar, Industry and Technology Minister Mehmet Fatih Kacır, Agriculture and Forestry Minister İbrahim Yumaklı, Treasury and Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek and Trade Minister Ömer Bolat accompanied President Erdoğan in Spain.

FOREIGN MINISTER HAKAN FİDAN ATTENDED BRICS+ MEETING



Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan travelled to Russia for a two-day visit on 10-11 June 2024 to attend the ministers meeting of BRICS+. Minister Fidan addressed the meeting, emphasising the importance of valuable cooperation with the BRICS and expressing Türkiye's interest in joining the bloc. Minister Fidan stated that the diversity within BRICS is a strong instrument for promoting development and stability. BRICS is an intergovernmental organisation that brings together the world's most important developing economies to ensure

economic cooperation and promote multilateral trade and development.

On 11 June, Minister Fidan held bilateral talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin Palace. President Putin welcomed Türkiye's interest in joining BRICS and assured support for Türkiye's desire to collaborate with BRICS countries on resolving common challenges. President Putin made remarks on Turkish-Russian bilateral relations, noting that the development of relations is satisfactory and acknowledging the leadership and support of the President of the Turkish Republic

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Despite a slight decline in bilateral trade, President Putin expressed hope that this will be corrected in the near future and pick up the previous year's levels. President Putin hailed Türkiye's assistance in brokering the Black Sea Grain Deal and thanked Minister Fidan for supporting negotiations between Russia and Ukraine. Pointing to Türkiye's critical role in the Syrian crisis under the Astana format in promoting long-term settlements, President Putin stressed the significance of continuing the Astana format to help normalise the situation in the region.

FOREIGN MINISTER HAKAN FİDAN'S DIPLOMACY IN SKOPJE



On 13 July 2024, The Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan represented President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) held in Skopje, the capital of North Macedonia. The Summit served as a key forum for political dialogue and consultation, addressing regional issues at the highest level.

As a founding member of SEECP, Türkiye and the other 12 members remain committed to fostering good neighbourly relations among its participants and promoting dialogue and cooperation with a view towards integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. The Summit, chaired by North Macedonian President Gordana Siljanovska Davkova, saw participation from notable leaders, including the President Vjosa Osmani of Kosovo, the President Bajram Begaj of

Albania, the President Jakov Milatović of Montenegro, the President Denis Bećirović of the Presidency Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbian Foreign Minister Marko Đurić, Greek Foreign Minister Giorgos Gerapetritis, as well as ministers and ambassadors from other Member States.

During the Summit, Minister Fidan addressed the participants, highlighting the significance of SEECP as the sole regional cooperation forum encompassing all 13 South-East European countries. Minister Fidan underscored Türkiye's openness to further cooperation and emphasised the forum's crucial role in enhancing regional collaboration and addressing common challenges. In addition to his address, Minister Fidan engaged in bilateral meetings with his counterparts, reinforcing Türkiye's commitment to strengthening ties within the region.

TURKISH DEFENSE MINISTER YAŞAR GÜLER WENT TO BRUSSELS TO ATTEND NATO MEETING

On 13-14 June 2024, all NATO defence ministers participated in a session chaired by Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the alliance headquarters. Turkish Defence Minister Yaşar Güler arrived in Brussels just one day before the session and was greeted by Ambassador Zeki Levent Gümrükçü, Türkiye's permanent representative to NATO, Lieutenant General Göksel Kahya, head of NATO's Turkish Military Representative Delegation (TMR), and other officials.

Kahya and Gümrükçü informed Güler about ongoing activities during his visit to the TMR Presidency and the Permanent Representation of NATO at NATO Headquarters. Güler also gathered with other senior officials from various countries, including Lithuanian Defence Minister Laurynas Kasčiunas. The perspectives on defence



and security issues were exchanged between the defence ministers of Türkiye and Lithuania during an inter-delegation meeting at the office of Türkiye's Permanent Representation to NATO. Minister Güler also participated in a special session about Ukraine under the NATO Defence Ministers Meeting. Before the session, he briefly communicated with other defence ministers, including Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov.

TÜRKİYE AND KOSOVO SIGNED TRADE AGREEMENT

Türkiye and Kosovo signed a memorandum of understanding regarding the establishment of the JETCO between the two countries.

The memorandum was signed between the ministers of the two countries who met in Ankara on 4 June 2024. Turkish Trade Minister Ömer Bolat and Kosovo's Industry, Entrepreneurship, and Trade Minister Rozeta Hajdari finalised the agreement. Minister Bolat reminded that they held a successful economic forum by hosting Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti and his delegation in Istanbul the other day and stated that today they discussed new opportunities in trade and investment relations



with Kosovo Minister of Industry, Entrepreneurship and Trade Rozeta Hajdari.

During their meeting, the ministers explored various opportunities to boost trade and

investment between the two countries. In 2023, the bilateral trade volume reached 785 million dollars, with Turkish investments in Kosovo totalling 162 million dollars. Minister Bolat noted that Türkiye ranks as the sixth largest investor in Kosovo. Turkish construction companies have completed 30 projects worth 1.5 billion dollars, alongside engineering and consultancy firms handling 19 projects valued at 9.3 million dollars.

Minister Bolat emphasised the potential for further enhancing bilateral relations in the year's second

half. He announced plans to hold the first Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) meeting in Kosovo before year-end, with significant involvement from the business sector. He expressed that the new JETCO would serve as a key mechanism for advancing the economic ties between the two countries. Minister Hajdari stated her satisfaction with the MoU on JETCO and highlighted Kosovo's rapid growth. She affirmed that her ministry would continue to work towards strengthening the partnership with Türkiye.

HÜRJET AND GÖKBEY TO MAKE THEIR FIRST INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT



The planes of Turkish Aerospace Industries Hürjet and Gökbey will make their first international flight in the United Kingdom as part of Farnborough International Airshow. The event will take place on 22-26 July 2024.

Several airshows will be available for the attendees and there will be opportunities for corporations to make new contracts and agreements of

purchase and cooperation. Therefore, it is expected for the Farnborough International Airshow to attract visitors and businesspeople who show interest in the industry as the attention and interest towards the aviation industry is increasing day by day.

Hürjet is an aircraft designed to be used for light attack and training missions. The aircraft was started to be developed in August 2017 and made its maiden flight on 25 April 2023. The plan is to produce two aircrafts in a month as of 2025. Gökbey is a helicopter designed for rescue missions, transportation, health and military services. The build phase for Gökbey began in 2013, and it flew for the first time in public on 6 September 2018.

INTERNATIONAL CREW INCLUDING TURKISH ASTRONAUT ATASEVER COMPLETED SUBORBITAL FLIGHT

Tuna Cihangir Atasever, along with Galactic 07 mission team, completed a suborbital flight in Virgin Galactic's VSS Unity where he served as a research astronaut. The space rocket which landed on Earth at 9:40 am local time (1540 GMT) in the US carried six international crew members: two American and one Italian astronaut and two pilots.

Full flight took 70 minutes, during which it ascended to an altitude of approximately 45,000 feet (over 13,700 meters) while attached to a carrier aircraft. Afterwards, it engaged its hybrid propulsion system to reach an altitude of roughly 90 kilometres.

Atasever wore an attachment of Near Infrared Spectroscopy (NIR) device which enabled observing the blood spread from over the prefrontal cortex in the brain and the dynamics of cerebrospinal fluid. After the landing, Atasever quoted in a post-flight press conference, "I will need much more time to try and process what just happened," and added



"It's not something you can describe with adjectives. It's an experiential thing you just feel it in your gut," regarding his experience in the space mission. Atasever became the second Turkish astronaut to fly into the space, after his colleague Alper Gezeravcı who spent 14 days at the International Space Station (ISS) and conducted various scientific experiments.

TÜRKİYE'S RENEWABLE ENERGY SECTOR ATTRACTS INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS



Türkiye's renewable energy sector, with its abundant renewable resources and strategic economic diversification efforts, has become an attraction for international investors. Amelia U. Santos-Paulino, head of the investment research section at the UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) division on investment and enterprise, underscored the sector's allure at the Global Investment Days organised by the International Investors Association of Türkiye (YASED). In an interview with Anadolu Agency, Santos-Paulino highlighted the well-developed infrastructure, services, and profitable investment opportunities that Türkiye's renewable energy market offers. Santos-Paulino pointed out that the sector's maturity is increasingly drawing substantial foreign investment, contributing to economic growth and financial stability. Santos-Paulino stated, "Türkiye has started to become an important investor as

well as holding an important position in attracting investors, showcasing the maturity of its economy."

The Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye's macroeconomic measures have also played a crucial role in sending positive signals to investors amid a challenging global investment climate. Stability, alignment with international objectives such as the Paris Climate Agreement, and adherence to sectoral policies were highlighted as vital factors for boosting foreign direct investment (FDI). Transparency in economic policies is another required aspect for attracting FDI, with YASED playing a critical role. Santos-Paulino pointed out that investors consider returns on investment, a solid institutional framework, and operational facilities. She asserted that Türkiye's commitment to transparency in these areas makes it a more secure and attractive destination than other emerging markets. Despite the

complexities of managing energy projects, which require significant upfront costs and meticulous planning, they offer better investment returns and sectoral job creation. Santos-Paulino advised that developing countries should create conditions to benefit from sustainable investments that promote environmental protection, social equity, and economic development. If the country continues on its current trajectory, Türkiye's renewable energy sector would reach a prime position to attract more international investors. The strategic emphasis on economic diversification and sustainability is in sync with global investment trends, guaranteeing long-term growth and stability in the sector. With the right policies and continued focus on economic stability and transparency, Türkiye can realise its full potential by attracting significant investments that will contribute to its economic and environmental goals.

TÜRKİYE SEEKS SOLUTION TO SPACE POLLUTION

With over 27,000 objects orbiting Earth, primarily composed of used rocket boosters and other debris, space debris has become a significant concern. This debris includes not only parts of rockets and old satellites, but also smaller items such as bolts, detachable fittings, screwdrivers, and even rubbish bags discarded from spacecraft.

In response to this growing issue, Türkiye is now pursuing a 'national solution' to address space junk. Fatih Ayhan, Director of Satellite Programmes at Türksat, highlighted the urgency of the



situation in an interview with Anadolu Agency. "If measures are not taken for space debris, serious accidents, satellite, or spacecraft losses are inevitable," Ayhan pointed

out. He emphasised the need for Türkiye to enhance its radar and telescope systems to monitor orbiting objects and potential collision risks, which would enable

the country to maintain an active presence in the space debris sector.

Ayhan elaborated on the benefits of developing national solutions to space junk, noting that such technologies would significantly contribute to Türkiye's scientific, economic, security, and environmental advancements. "National technologies to be developed against space debris will provide Türkiye with significant advantages in various fields," he said. These advancements are expected to boost employment in the space industry, foster international competition, and

create new business opportunities in sub-sectors. Investments in this area are anticipated to drive progress in engineering, robotics, artificial intelligence, and material science, reducing Türkiye's reliance on foreign technology. Additionally, these efforts would ensure the continuity of safe operations and secure strategic technologies. "Being an actor in the global arena in this regard will strengthen diplomatic relations with countries as well as prestige," Ayhan underlined, highlighting the broader implications of Türkiye's initiatives in tackling space debris.

TÜRKİYE ADVANCES IN ITS SPACE POLICY WITH TÜRKSAT 6A

Launch tests of Türksat 6A, Türkiye's first domestic and national communication satellite were carried out. The tests of the satellite were carried out at SpaceX facilities in Florida, USA. Türksat 6A Satellite was produced with the highest localisation rate with the contributions of Türksat, as well as TÜBİTAK Uzay, ASELSAN, TUSAŞ and C2Tech.

It is also of great importance that all local and domestically made parts in Türksat 6A help Türkiye gain satellite experience. Since it can help Türkiye gain experience in space by serving successfully, it will pave the way for the export of these satellite parts produced in Türkiye to the



whole world. In the future, all countries that already produce communication satellites will be able to import the satellite parts from Türkiye. Therefore, Türkiye will no longer be a country that only produces communication satellites, but also become a country that will export all satellite parts. Each part produced can also be used for satellites with different missions.

Minister of Industry and Technology Mehmet Fatih Kacir, in his statements on the subject, emphasised that space research lies behind innovative projects in many fields from agriculture to transportation, from health to energy. Minister Kacir also mentioned that the opportunities revealed in space field should be used in the most efficient way for Türkiye to be a country that keeps pace with advances in science and technology and offers competitive products and services in high technology fields. Kacir also underlined the importance of increasing R&D and innovation capabilities in the field of space and turning them into economic values.

TURKISH DRONE TB3 SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETES 1ST SKI-JUMP TEST

TB3, which already made its maiden flight in late October last year, now completed tests on low, medium and high-altitude performance and on system identification. In the video shared by the manufacturer company Baykar, the Turkish drone is seen rolling out before taking off from a ramp formed in an upward-curved way which the company said provided the conditions like those of the TCG Anadolu. Reportedly, TB3 was successful in performing four smooth take-offs from a ramp inclined 12-degree while mirroring the ship's deck. The successful testing means emergence of future hopes on finally possible operations from the aircraft carrier TCG Anadolu. So far, TB3 drone is



known to have flown for 445 hours and three minutes.

Domestically constructed drone which can be controlled from very long distances possesses innovative features that sets it apart from other unmanned aerial vehicles in its class. With its top of the range qualities, Türkiye's deterrent power on overseas operations is expected to be increased greatly.

TURKISH RESEARCHERS' MICROPLASTIC DETECTION TECH ENTERS GLOBAL LITERATURE

Turkish researchers, led by Assoc. Prof. Selim Hanay from Bilkent University's Mechanical Engineering Department, have developed groundbreaking technology for quick detection of microplastic particles, which are likely to pose significant environmental and health risks. Published in *Advanced Materials*, a famous international scientific journal, their work has gained international recognition and supported by prestigious funding programmes from the European Research Council (ERC).

Stating that a considerable amount of microplastic enters the human body every day through food, liquid or air, Hanay stated that plastic particles below 100 nanometres



can pass through the blood-brain barrier and cause serious damage to the brain. Hanay also underlined that current detection methods are slow, costly, and limited in their ability to identify nanoplastics, indicating

the need for a cheap, rapid, and easy-to-reach system especially for use in analysing drinking water. Accordingly, Hanay's team innovated a device using microfluidic channels and electronic measurements

to rapidly classify microplastics as small as 20 micrometres. This method offers a quicker and more practical alternative to traditional spectroscopic techniques, crucial for monitoring microplastic pollution in drinking water and various aquatic environments.

Hanay also addressed that their goal is to establish a service that can analyse water samples within a day, also analysing waters such as sea and rivers areas where the particles in question are generally accumulated in. This technology not only addresses the urgency of monitoring microplastic levels, but also aims to provide a cost-effective, portable solution deployable worldwide.

Hanay emphasised the importance of collaboration with stakeholders across Türkiye and Europe to advance this technology and implement it effectively. Considering the growing awareness of the issue and the legislative actions taken so far, the work of Hanay's team stands at the forefront of scientific innovation in dealing with the vital environmental challenges of our day. The findings, entitled to receive support from the ERC for the practical applications of their "groundbreaking" studies, play a leading role in combating against microplastic pollution, which is expected to become an important problem throughout the EU and the world.

GALATA TOWER RESTORED AND REOPENED TO VISITORS



Exterior restoration work and earthquake reinforcement of the Galata Tower started in November 2023 and the Tower has just been reopened to visitors. Visitors showed great interest in the tower on the first day. The restoration works for the Galata Tower were carried out using modern technology in

cooperation with academics who are experts in their fields. During the restoration work, steps were also taken to shelter the migratory swiftlet birds that use the Galata Tower as a nest. A maximum of 100 people per hour are allowed to visit the historically important Galata Tower.

CONCUBINES' QUARTERS OF TOPKAPI PALACE OPEN DOORS FOR ITS FIRST VISITORS



Concubines' quarters of Topkapı Palace, which also includes Turkish baths (hamam), and Kuşhane Kitchen, welcome its first visitors upon completion of the restoration process. Concubines' quarters are located in the Harem section, showcasing the Ottoman harem's organisational hierarchy between the Sultan's family, female servants, concubines and eunuchs.

Concubines' quarters were built in the mid-16th century and include imperial consorts' chambers, pantry, laundry room and bathrooms. Hamam, considered one of the oldest structures in Topkapı Palace, has 120 artifacts on display alone. Objects and statues curated by National Palaces Collections exhibit scenes from the Ottoman Empire period.

Kuşhane Kitchen was used to serve meals to sultans and now the visitors can view the pots and silverware alongside many details of the Ottoman food culture and cuisine.

The Chairman of National Palaces-Topkapı Palace İlhan Kocaman noted that they aim to restore the remaining sections of the palace soon. International curators' contributions to restoration have been instrumental in combining modernity with tradition and displaying this theme in exhibition arrangements. With their contribution, the venues were modernised and equipped with modern security systems, air conditioning and display systems to ensure the protection of the cultural heritage of the Ottoman Palace for future generations.

LEGENDARY TENOR ANDREA BOCELLI FASCINATED FANS IN İSTANBUL

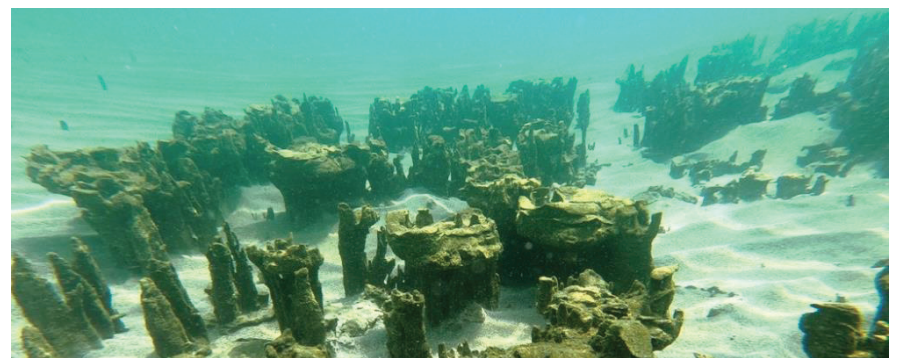


Internationally acclaimed Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli met with fans through a live performance at Beşiktaş Tüpraş Stadium in İstanbul on 8 June 2024. Bocelli fascinated the crowd by presenting a synthesis of classical arias and pieces from his albums.

At the first stage of the concert comprised of two stages, Bocelli was accompanied by the İstanbul State Symphony Orchestra and the İstanbul Opera Chorus, conducted by Marcello Rota. Other artists such as soprano Serena Gamberoni, violinist Anastasiya

Petrysak and baritone Faik Mansuroğlu also were on stage collaborating with Bocelli himself. Second part of the concert featured dancers Angelica Gismondo and Francesco Costa who conducted performances complemented by music of renowned composers such as Giuseppe Verdi, Giacomo Puccini, Gioachino Rossini and Luigi Denza. The concert which attracted great attention was supported by the Turkish Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA), with Togg as an event partner and Turkcell sponsoring it.

NEW MICROBIALITE COLONY DISCOVERED IN LAKE VAN



A new microbialite colony has been discovered in Lake Van's Ahlat district, Bitlis, located in southeastern region of Türkiye. This significant find was made by the Coast Guard Command's Diving, Security, and Search and Rescue (DEGAK) team and documented by underwater cinematographer and documentary producer Tahsin Ceylan and his team during a dive as part of World Environment Day activities.

The microbialites, which resemble stalagmites, were found 100 meters from the shore and measured 17 meters in length. This colony, characterised by its unique structure compared to previously discovered examples, marks a noteworthy addition to the natural wonders of Lake Van. The team also undertook

the task of removing fishing nets that surrounded the microbialites, further revealing the magnificence of the underwater structure. Ceylan emphasised the potential of Lake Van to boost tourism, particularly attracting diving enthusiasts eager to explore its depths. The discovery also highlights the efforts of the Coast Guard Command, which has extended its operations from maritime areas to Lake Van, effectively combating illegal activities, supporting scientific explorations, and contributing to the preservation of Türkiye's natural heritage. The new microbialite colony is expected to draw significant interest from both scientists and tourists, further establishing Lake Van as a site of ecological and recreational importance.

EUROPE'S MIGRATION POLICY: NAVIGATING SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Europe's migration policies are in the spotlight as the New Pact on Migration and Asylum emphasises security and the enduring complexities of the Türkiye-EU deal.

Laura BATALLA ADAM
Analyst

As we celebrate yet another World Refugee Day, Europe's migration policies are once again in the spotlight, highlighting the continent's struggle to strike a balance between security concerns and humanitarian commitments. Over time, the European Union's stance on migration has evolved significantly, shifting from ad hoc national responses to a more coordinated, though still inadequate, European strategy. Yet, it remains a complex and often polarising topic, characterised by inconsistent reactions to managing different refugee influxes and challenges putting a cohesive plan into action.

In December 2023, after three years of intense negotiations, the European Union finalised the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. While this pact represents a comprehensive attempt to reform the EU's migration policies, it marks a significant shift towards a more security-focused approach. The pact introduces stricter border procedures, fewer safeguards for asylum seekers and aims to streamline processes for quicker decisions at the border, including measures to facilitate the repatriation of failed asylum seekers. A notable drawback is that it maintains the Dublin system, which places a disproportionate burden on countries of first entry, such as Italy, Malta, and Greece.

The New Pact on Migration and Asylum also introduces a mandatory but flexible solidarity mechanism. This mechanism's flexibility, however, may limit its effectiveness because it permits Member States to support first-recipient countries through relocations, financial contributions, or other means, without a consistent structure. The implementation of the deal is further complicated by



concerns about arbitrary detention, deportations and racial profiling, which raise serious ethical and human rights issues.

The Ukrainian Refugee Crisis

Europe has faced two unprecedented refugee waves in the past ten years. The first was in 2015, when more than a million people—mostly Syrians, Afghans, and Iraqis—came to Europe in search of safety from persecution, violence, and poverty. The second happened in 2022 following Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. In both instances, Europe's response has been notably different.

Ten days after Russia invaded Ukraine, the EU unanimously decided to activate the Temporary Protection Directive, giving Ukrainian nationals residency rights, labour market access, and housing. In stark contrast to how it handles refugees from other regions, this quick and coordinated effort demonstrated the EU's capacity to mobilise resources and accommodate large numbers of people when there is a perceived urgent need.

More than 4.2 million Ukrainians

have been able to seek refuge in the EU thanks to the Temporary Protection Mechanism, with countries like Germany, Poland and Czechia hosting the majority. Allowing refugees to work has helped them integrate into host communities and provided economic benefits for these countries. However, the temporary nature of the protection raises concerns about the long-term stability and integration of Ukrainian refugees. The protection status is set to expire in March 2025 and there is uncertainty about what will happen next.

The Türkiye-EU Statement

In contrast to its response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, Europe's reaction to the 2015 influx was less welcoming. The Türkiye-EU deal, established in 2016, aimed to curb irregular migration across the Aegean Sea. In exchange for Türkiye's agreement to prevent migrants from crossing into the EU, the EU provided financial aid and other incentives. Since 2011, the EU has mobilised around 10 billion euros to assist refugees and host

communities in Türkiye, achieving significant progress in education, health and socio-economic support. However, the deal has faced numerous challenges, including a significant imbalance between the number of refugees resettled from Türkiye to the EU and the number of irregular migrants returned to Türkiye.

The Türkiye-EU deal has been criticised for lacking transparency, accountability, and undermining international obligations by outsourcing responsibilities to Türkiye, which has a weaker legal framework for protecting refugees. The most successful part of the agreement has been the Facility for Refugees in Türkiye (FRIT), but a recent report by the Court of Auditors has highlighted several issues diminishing its effectiveness, particularly in integrating refugee children into the Turkish education system.

Despite these challenges, the Türkiye-EU deal remains a crucial component of Europe's migration policy. Türkiye continues to be a significant transit country for migration flows towards Europe.

However, the deal only offers EU Member States short-term respite rather than a long-term solution for refugees. In any future revisions of the Statement, a fairer responsibility-sharing model must be adopted, one that takes into account the needs of both Turkish host society and asylum seekers, complies with international human rights and refugee law and is negotiated in a transparent and democratic manner.

The Need for a Humane Migration System

The effectiveness of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum is dependent on coordinated European efforts to develop efficient implementation strategies, assign adequate financial resources and monitor adherence to agreed-upon measures. The recent shift towards right-wing parties across Europe may have an impact on its execution and the direction of migration policy over the next five years. A more security-focused approach may prevail, potentially at the expense of humanitarian considerations. This shift underscores the importance of balancing security and human rights in migration policy.

However, there is another way to look at migration. A fair and humane pact on migration would include a transition to quotas for direct reception of refugees from third countries, as well as addressing potential barriers to ensuring refugee rights and effective management of migratory flows in Europe.

As Europe continues to cope with the complexity of migration, a balanced, humane, and effective migration policy is essential. The New Pact on Migration and Asylum, the EU's reaction to the Ukrainian crisis, and the Türkiye-EU agreement all emphasise the challenges and possibilities of developing a coherent and inclusive strategy that recognizes migration's human and societal potential.