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BOOSTING “EU COMPETITIVENESS” THROUGH TÜRKİYE: INSIGHTS FROM THE DRAGHI REPORT

The Draghi Report identifies key areas the EU must step up including innovation, energy, and securing critical supply chains where Türkiye emerges as a vital partner in achieving its goals, particularly by boosting Europe's energy security and reducing single-sided reliance on external suppliers.

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Released on 9 September 2024, the Draghi Report calls for bold EU action to secure its place in the global economy. Under the leadership of Mario Draghi, former ECB President, the report outlines strategies focused on innovation, energy independence, and economic sovereignty, all of which require significant reforms and financial investments. Annual investments worth 750-800 billion euros are essential to address current challenges, including lagging R&D, high energy costs, and supply chain vulnerabilities linked to external dependencies. As Europe seeks to secure its place in the global economy, Türkiye appears as a possible partner in fostering innovation, energy independence, and supply chain resilience.

Commercialisation of Innovation Matters

One of the most pressing concerns in the Draghi Report is Europe's struggle with innovation. The EU produces 17% of global patents but falls short in turning them into commercial successes. With 270 billion euros invested in R&D to be less than the US in comparison, the EU lags in sectors like artificial intelligence (AI), quantum computing, and biotechnology. Draghi calls for more research and development funding and reforms to the Horizon Europe program to eliminate barriers to innovation.

In contrast, Türkiye's technology sector demonstrates significant growth potential, supported by government-backed initiatives like Teknoparks and various incentives that have spurred growth in fintech, e-commerce, and AI. However, much like the EU, Türkiye faces challenges in scaling its innovations globally.

Enhanced Türkiye-EU cooperation in R&D could help address this gap, with joint ventures and cross-border projects offering



mutual benefits in bridging Europe's innovation divide. By integrating Türkiye's innovation centres into EU programs, such as Horizon Europe, both sides stand to gain from a more dynamic technological landscape. Türkiye's proximity to European markets and its growing tech startup ecosystem position it as a partner in the EU's pursuit of increased technological competitiveness.

Energy Costs: A Barrier To EU Competitiveness

Another major issue flagged in the Draghi Report is energy costs. European industries pay two to three times more for electricity and four to five times more for natural gas compared to the US, weakening Europe's industrial competitiveness. Draghi emphasises the need for the EU to transition to renewable energy sources to break the link between energy costs and fossil fuel volatility while also cautioning against sacrificing industrial performance.

Türkiye's renewable energy potential is key to overcoming these challenges. With heavy wind, solar, and geothermal investments, Türkiye aims to produce 30% of its electricity from renewables by 2030. This aligns with the EU's Green Deal, opening doors for deeper cooperation. Moreover, projects like the Trans-Anatolian Natural

Gas Pipeline (TANAP) demonstrate Türkiye's importance in Europe's energy landscape, and deeper cooperation in energy infrastructure, hydrogen development, and energy storage technologies could further secure the EU's energy independence. Türkiye's growing role in green energy makes it a promising partner in helping the EU meet its decarbonisation goals, particularly by reducing dependence on Russian energy sources.

A key example of cooperation between both parties is the “Atlas Project”, designed to enhance energy efficiency and align Türkiye's energy infrastructure with EU standards. The initiative aims to reduce Türkiye's energy consumption by 16% by 2030, supporting both Türkiye's sustainability goals and the EU's broader decarbonisation objectives. The Atlas Project not only strengthens Türkiye's energy transition but also deepens the alignment process between Türkiye and the EU, contributing to Europe's energy security and reducing reliance on external energy sources.

Critical Materials and Strategic Dependencies

The Draghi Report also stresses the importance of economic sovereignty, focusing on the EU's reliance on external suppliers

for critical raw materials, such as semiconductors and rare earth elements. Currently, the EU imports 75% of its semiconductors from non-EU countries, leaving it vulnerable to geopolitical risks, particularly in China and some other Asian countries. Draghi calls for increased domestic manufacturing capacities and diversified supply chains to reduce these dependencies.

Here, Türkiye's vast mineral wealth including boron, nickel, and chromium can provide a much-needed solution for Europe. Türkiye is home to one of the world's largest boron reserves, critical for producing clean technologies like electric vehicle batteries and wind turbines. By partnering with Türkiye in sustainable mining and resource processing, the EU could secure a stable supply of these essential materials. Joint ventures in critical material processing would not only help Türkiye's economy and green energy sector but also bolster Europe's resilience in the face of supply chain disruptions.

Conclusion: Strengthening Türkiye-EU Ties

The Draghi Report provides a roadmap for enhancing Europe's global competitiveness, particularly in innovation, energy, and supply chain resilience. Realising these

ambitious goals, however, will require a significant financial commitment. Draghi, calls for the EU to increase its investments by 5% of GDP annually, amounting to 750-800 billion euros per year.

To support this level of investment, Draghi advocates for common borrowing mechanisms similar to those used during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this may face resistance from some fiscally conservative Member States, Draghi emphasises that the risks of inaction, including further economic decline and geopolitical vulnerabilities, far outweigh the costs. By pooling resources and enlarging its strategic partnerships with other countries to diversify its dependencies, the EU can secure its future competitiveness. Such collaborations could also redefine Europe's strategic autonomy in the coming decade.

Looking ahead, the success of Türkiye-EU cooperation will depend on sustained investment in joint projects, policy alignment, and the ability to overcome political and economic challenges. Given the alignment between Türkiye's assets and the EU's strategic goals, there are clear opportunities for closer collaboration in fields like energy, technology, and critical raw materials.

Türkiye's drive to position itself as a green energy hub presents the EU with valuable opportunities to achieve its decarbonisation goals through collaboration on renewable energy projects, including solar farms and hydrogen development. Such cooperation would diversify Europe's energy sources and give Türkiye access to advanced green technologies. In technology, Türkiye's growing tech ecosystem offers potential for joint R&D initiatives that can drive digital transformation across both regions. To secure its future competitiveness, the EU needs bold investments and strategic partnerships. Strengthening ties with Türkiye in energy, technology, and critical materials can unlock mutual benefits, boosting both regions' autonomy and global standing.



IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU: “WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR GERMANY TO REINTRODUCE BORDER CONTROLS?”

IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu made a statement on Germany's launch of internal border controls. Stressing the importance of clarifying this issue, Chairperson Zeytinoğlu said the following:

“Last June, Germany announced that it would reintroduce border controls at its borders with Poland, the Czech Republic and Switzerland, taking advantage of an exception to the Schengen system. Now, as of 16 September 2024, it will start controls at the borders of its other border neighbours Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Luxembourg and Denmark. As is well known, the Schengen Area constitutes a free movement zone where internal border controls are lifted. According to the Schengen system, there must be some force majeure border controls. These may be due to a serious threat to internal security or public policy. They should be applied in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort. As for Germany's reasons, they are listed as follows: Security risks associated with irregular migration, smuggling, increasing illegal entries at the EU's external borders, dwindling



accommodation opportunities for refugees, pressure on the asylum system, security challenges from terrorist groups in the Middle East. The reintroduction of border controls is not the end of the Schengen Area. However, it points to serious problems regarding migration and asylum.

The regulation introduced by Germany means passport and ID checks at all border crossings. It is not a special case for Turkish citizens. However, officials have the right to refuse entry even if they have a visa. The German Embassy in Ankara said the

checks will not affect the visa issuance process for Türkiye. However, the long waits and increasing rejection rates in the visa process pose a serious problem for Turkish citizens and especially businesspeople traveling to Germany and other Schengen Area countries. In Germany, where the approach to illegal immigration has already hardened, applications from Türkiye are treated with security concerns. However, this approach also blocks the path of citizens who are going to Germany for purposes such as education, conferences, business and trade. It also negatively affects relations.”

IKV SECRETARY GENERAL NAS, SPOKE AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ORGANISED BY ÇAĞ UNIVERSITY

BEYOND VISION: SUSTAINABLE FUTURES IN ACTION INNOVATE TO SUSTAIN

Conference

SEPTEMBER 26-27, 2024



IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas participated as a speaker at the conference “Beyond Vision: Sustainable Futures in Action - Innovate to Sustain”, organised by Çağ University on 26-27 September 2024. Assoc. Prof. Nas joined the hybrid-format conference online and delivered a presentation titled “European Green Deal and Its Effects.” In her speech, Assoc. Prof. Nas highlighted the European Green Deal as a green growth strategy for the EU, significantly altering rules and standards within the single market of the EU.

After explaining the characteristics and elements of the European Green Deal, Assoc. Prof. Nas emphasised its substantial impact not only on Member States but also on candidate countries and trade partners like Türkiye. She touched upon Türkiye's Green Deal Action Plan, coordinated by the Ministry of Trade, and the draft Climate Law. Furthermore, Assoc. Prof. Nas pointed out the driving influence of policies such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), one of the crucial components of the European Green Deal, on climate policies.

IKV PARTICIPATED IN THE INDUSTRY 5.0 SESSION AT THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE



IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas attended the meeting of the “Consultative Commission on Industrial Change” (CCMI) under the European Economic and Social Committee, representing IKV with the status of “Enlargement Candidate Member” on 24 September 2024. In the discussion session titled “Industry 5.0: Towards a Systemic Change”, the opinion prepared by the CCMI Commission rapporteurs Giuseppe Guerini and Guido Nelissen was voted and adopted. In the panel discussion following the vote, three civil society organisations invited from

Türkiye as a candidate state for accession were given the floor. On behalf of IKV, Assoc. Prof. Nas made a presentation titled “Industry 5.0 Process in Türkiye: Problems and Opportunities”. The other speakers were KAGIDER Brussels Representative Ayşe Yürekli and HAK-İŞ Representative Cavit Demiral.

In her speech, Assoc. Prof. Nas mentioned that Industry 5.0 is a new concept in Türkiye and revealed its differences with Industry 4.0. She emphasised that Industry 5.0, which draws attention to a human-centred, sustainable and resilient industrial policy, is a suitable approach for the Turkish economy, which has a relatively young population and needs to create new jobs. Assoc. Prof. Nas stated that digital access, technological infrastructure, a workforce with digital skills, business environments where the representation of the workforce is strong and effective digitalisation strategies are needed for Industry 5.0 to be implemented appropriately.

IKV DISCUSSED TÜRKİYE-EU RELATIONS IN DİYARBAKIR

IKV organised a meeting hosted by the Diyarbakir Chamber of Commerce and Industry, addressing the topics of “Updating the Türkiye-EU Customs Union, the European Green Deal and the Border Carbon Adjustment Mechanism, Duty of Care, EU Funds and Programs” on 11 September 2024. The opening speech of the meeting was delivered by President of the Diyarbakir Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mehmet Kaya. In his address, President Kaya stated that updating the Customs Union has long been on the agenda and must be resolved as soon as possible, particularly by addressing it through green and digital transformation.

The panel session of the meeting began with a presentation by IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit titled “Updating the Türkiye-EU Customs Union”. Kilit touched upon the current problems and update scenarios in the Customs Union. The panel continued with a presentation by IKV Secretary General Assoc.



Prof. Çiğdem Nas on “The European Green Deal and the Border Carbon Adjustment Mechanism”. Assoc. Prof. Nas explained the new obligations introduced by the European Green Deal and the Emissions Trading System. The third speaker of the panel, Faculty Member at TOBB University of Economics and Technology Prof. Sanem Baykal addressed the topic of “Duty of Care” with its legal perspective. Lastly, IKV Research Director Çiğdem İleri presented on “EU Funds and Programs”, covering the financing of green transformation. The event concluded with a question and answer session.

ANCIENT SANCTUARY IN MUĞLA IS SET TO BE RESTORED



The Temple of Hecate which is a 3000 year old pagan temple located in Muğla is currently undergoing restoration. The head of the excavation team, Professor Bilal Söğüt, stated that the region where the Temple is located, Lagina, was an important religious centre in the ancient city of Stratonikeia. Söğüt emphasised that the Temple

is significant for being dedicated to the goddess Hecate. He also highlighted that the area is the largest sacred site dedicated to the goddess.

The Temple of Hecate is the Temple's most sacred area, the naos, is surrounded by columns. As a part of the restoration process, these columns are going to be

re-erected. Professor Söğüt mentioned that both excavation and drawing works are taking place year round, alongside the process of temporary anastylosis. The relevant process involves the reconstruction of structures using original remains, as the blocks that make up the Temple date back 2.100 years and are being used in the restoration.

RESTORATION OF THE MOSAICS OF A 4TH CENTURY CHURCH HAS BEEN COMPLETED



As other parts of the country, south of Türkiye hosts unnumerable historical and cultural artifacts enabling us to take a look at the past in these lands. Şahitkamil district of Gaziantep province provides such an opportunity and experience as well. The ancient city Dülük is one of the first settlements in the history of

humanity. This city became home to various cultures and civilisations, and various artifacts have been passed down to today. The 1.600 years old church in this ancient site is one of these monuments.

The mosaics of Dülük Church got full restoration in joint work of Ministry of Culture and Tourism and

the University of Münster. Excavation Director Michael Blömer said that they focused on completing the restoration and reinforcement work as soon as possible to prevent further deterioration of the already found mosaics. The ancient site could become a significant touristic point, he also added.

TIMELINE SEPTEMBER 2024

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5	Foreign Minister Fidan came together with his North Macedonian counterpart Timčo Mucunski.
6	Foreign Minister Fidan came together with his Kosovan counterpart Donika Gervalla-Schwarz.
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11	İKv conducted a meeting in Diyarbakır on modernisation of Customs Union, Green Deal and EU funds and programmes.
12	Foreign Minister Fidan attended to a meeting on Palestine in Madrid along with several EU members.
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14	President Erdoğan came together with Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Denis Bećirović.
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17	İKv Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu made a statement about Germany beginning expanded border controls.
18	President Erdoğan came together with Speaker of the Sejm of Poland Szymon Hołownia.
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22	İKv Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas attended debate conducted by European Economic and Social Committee Consultative Commission on Industrial Change.
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26	İKv Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas attended international conference conducted by Çağ University.
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ESTONIAN ATHLETE CROSSED FROM ASIA TO EUROPE BY WALKING ON A TIGHTROPE



Estonian athlete Jaan Roose, 3-time world champion in the field of slackline, walked on a tightrope from Asia to Europe in İstanbul. In the Continental Pass event held with the contributions of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure and the General Directorate of Highways, Jaan Roose managed to cross from the Asian continent to the European continent in 47 minutes on a special rope of 1074 meters at the top of the 15 July Martyrs Bridge, 165 meters above sea level. Roose thus became the first person to make an intercontinental crossing on a rope.

Jaan Roose said after his walk, "The Bosphorus has thousands of years of cultural significance and incredible natural beauty. Combined with changing weather conditions and strong sea currents, it was a unique experience to walk on a tightrope. I made history, so I am very happy." Stating that he may conduct other projects in Türkiye in the future, Roose said, "Ideas can change over time. I came to İstanbul 12 years ago and I took a photo of the bridge then, but I could conduct this project only now. Türkiye has many beautiful places. I can conduct more projects in this country in the future."

TÜRKİYE BEGINS RESTORATION OF THE SELJUK-ERA VAN GRAND MOSQUE



The Van Grand Mosque in the ancient city of Van, which is a legacy from the Seljuk-era, will be rebuilt in accordance with its original form. The Van Governorate and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism launched the "Preserving our cultural heritage for the future" project in order to restore the historical structures in the ancient city of Van. Within the scope of this project, in addition to the 750 years old Grand Van Mosque, other notable sites such as the Kızıl Minare Mosque and the Miri Granary will also be rebuilt.

After the analyses were performed, 26 centimetres of separation was discovered in the mosque's minaret following a static load balance analysis; the minaret's core had lost its strength, prompting the High Council for the Protection of Cultural Properties to order its complete dismantling down to the base. According to Büşra Boz, the architect and project manager of the Van Grand Mosque, the project is expected to be completed in August 2025, but it may take longer due to the intricate nature of the work.

ANCIENT TOMB DATING BACK TO ANCIENT ROME WAS REVEALED IN A CONSTRUCTION SITE



During the construction work carried out in Nurdağı, an ancient four room tomb from the Roman period was discovered. The excavations were stopped, and it was announced that the examinations were continuing. An ancient four-room tomb from Ancient Rome was found during the construction of a reconstructed house in the Nurdağı district, which was affected by the earthquakes on 6 February 2023, centred in Kahramanmaraş.

When the ancient tomb was discovered during the excavation work carried out by heavy construction equipment, the work was stopped, and the authorities were informed. During the initial examinations, bones belonging to three people were found in the ancient tomb. This discovery once again revealed the existence of prehistoric findings from the Roman era in the region and showed why archaeological studies are significant.

5.200 YEAR OLD DISCOVERY IN ESKİŞEHİR



In the excavations conducted by Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University Archaeology Department in the Seyitgazi district of Eskişehir, findings belonging to the burial practice generally identified with the Neolithic Period encountered in the Southeastern Anatolia Region were reached. In the archaeological excavations conducted in the Küllüoba Mound in the Seyitgazi district, a structure deliberately buried 5.200 years ago was unearthed.

The excavations was headed by the faculty member of the Archaeology Department of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University Prof. Murat Türkteki. It was determined that the houses and the elements such as hearths, ash pits and silos inside the 5.200 years old Early Bronze Age structures in the west of the mound were completely emptied and cleaned and then

buried with red sterile soil called caliche. It was also determined that even the silo made of mud, which could easily be broken into pieces, was deliberately left underground to be protected without being destroyed. Prof. Murat Türkteki stated that while under normal conditions only the foundations of structures are encountered in a mound, here the walls of the structures are preserved almost up to the roof. "Before this process, the doors or ventilation areas were covered with stone, and then this filling process was carried out. There was obviously a ceremony, a ritual during the filling process. Parts of sacrificed animals were left inside the covered door and window spaces. Again, one of the containers used in that ceremony was thrown into the structure. This example in Küllüoba is the first example identified in the literature from this period to date" he added.

HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN ATTENDED THE 79TH UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

President Erdoğan headed to the US to attend the 79th UN General Assembly held in New York between 23-27 September 2024. The President held bilateral meetings with leaders from many countries including Germany, Italy, Iran, Serbia, Ukraine, Greece, Albania and Armenia, and his speech to the UN General Assembly received considerable attention from international media. President Erdoğan urged the international community to address the Gaza situation in his speech at the UN General Assembly. Describing the events in Palestine as “genocide,” President Erdoğan defended the resistance of the Palestinian people and called on the international community to take action against this “massacre.” President Erdoğan also emphasised the inadequacy of the UNSC while criticising the humanitarian tragedy in Gaza. President Erdoğan reiterated his oft-cited phrase, “The world is bigger than five,” and added, “We need the values represented by this phrase more and more nowadays.” President Erdoğan stated “We witness that international peace



and security are too important to be left to the arbitrariness of the “privileged five”.

Following his speech at the General Assembly, President Erdoğan gave an interview to NBC News and emphasised the Israeli massacres in Gaza, saying, “From 1947 until today, Palestine has come to this day by losing its lands repeatedly. I wonder how many Palestinians have been martyred here, how many Palestinians have been killed, when we examine this behind the scenes, the situation reaches very different places.” In addition to his speech at the General

Assembly, President Erdoğan also held intensive diplomatic meetings with his counterparts and met with American and Turkish businesspeople within the scope of the 15th Türkiye Investment Conference held by Türkiye-US Business Council (TİİK).

President Erdoğan held a meeting with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres at the UN Headquarters. During the meeting, President Erdoğan stated that the Gaza situation was a new source of shame for humanity. Türkiye was closely following the case filed against Israel at the International Court of Justice and would take part

in it, he added. President Erdoğan also received the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Karim Khan, at the Turkish House and discussed the Israel and Gaza situation. President Erdoğan presented the publications “The Evidence” and “Witness” prepared by Anadolu Agency to the Chief Prosecutor Han, which reveal the crimes committed by Israel in Gaza.

President Erdoğan, in his meeting with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, stated that Türkiye and Germany are two allies with deep rooted relations and ties and that efforts to develop cooperation in every field, evaluate opportunities and diversify them are ongoing. Pointing out that it is necessary to revitalize relations between Türkiye and the European Union, President Erdoğan remarked that Germany is expected to provide support, particularly for the visa issue to be resolved as soon as possible. The President’s meeting with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni centred on the increasingly difficult situation in the Middle East, as well as the common commitment to support Ukraine’s territorial integrity

and the search for a just and lasting peace. The President held another important meeting with Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis. During the meeting, bilateral relations between Türkiye and Greece as well as regional and global issues were discussed. Lastly, the two leaders agreed on holding sixth High Level Cooperation Council (HLCC) in 2024 in Türkiye.

Stating that Türkiye and Greece can move forward with confident steps towards the future on the basis of good neighbourliness, President Erdoğan pointed out that strengthening the dialogue between the two countries and acting in accordance with the wording and spirit of the Athens Declaration will benefit both countries. The President, who also received Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, discussed the normalisation process between Türkiye and Armenia as well as the peace processes between Armenia and Azerbaijan. President Erdoğan presented the book “A Fairer World is Possible” to Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan, whom he received at the Turkish House.

PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN CAME TOGETHER WITH BOSNIAN PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN DENIS BEĆIROVIĆ



President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the Chairperson of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Presidential Council Denis Bećirović held a meeting at Dolmabahçe Palace in İstanbul on 14 September 2024. It was part of the regular meetings conducted by both countries in light of their enduring historical and cultural ties. While no details had been given regarding the agenda of the meeting beforehand, the joint press conference made by President Erdoğan and Bećirović focused on the situation in Gaza.

President Erdoğan stated that the current situation in Gaza, which he characterised as a massacre, bears resemblance to the atrocities witnessed in Bosnia during the 1990s. President Erdoğan also emphasised the importance of holding Israel accountable for the deaths of the civilians including peace activists like Ayşenur Ezgi Eygi and more than 41.000 Palestinians through the international courts. In the same way, Denis Bećirović defined the situation in Gaza as “the greatest disgrace in the world.”

THE GAZA CONTACT GROUP INCLUDING MINISTER HAKAN FİDAN GATHERED IN MADRID TO EVALUATE THE DEVELOPMENTS IN GAZA

The Gaza Contact Group formed by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab League convened in Madrid with the foreign ministers of European and Arab countries coming together. Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan also attended the meeting for representing Türkiye. The foreign ministers of Türkiye, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Slovenia, Norway and Spain, Qatari Minister of State Mohammed Bin Abdulaziz Al Khulaifi, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell, Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit, OIC Secretary-General Hussein Ibrahim Taha and high level representatives from Bahrain, Nigeria and Ireland attended this Contact Group meeting hosted by Spain.

The most important reason for holding the meeting was to revive the two-state solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan called for an urgent end to the conflict in the region, a ceasefire



and uninterrupted humanitarian aid. Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares made a press statement before the meeting. When asked about the EU’s stance on the two-state solution, Minister Albares stated that he could not give a response on behalf of the EU. However, Spain had implemented sanctions considering the two-state solution. Moreover, Minister Albares mentioned the letter sent to the EU with Ireland to impose sanctions on Israel. Minister Albares called for all measures to be taken against the killing of civilians in relation to the

American-Turkish activist Ayşenur Ezgi Eygi, who was killed in the occupied West Bank. Stating that the Contact Group should focus on what happened in Gaza. Minister Albares addressed that what was necessary should be done to establish peace between Israel and Palestine. Underlining that the only way to achieve a just and lasting peace was a two-state solution, Minister Albares said, “There must be a Palestinian State with real sovereignty, with defined borders that include Gaza and the West Bank, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and recognised by Israel.”

SÖKE COTTON, HÜYÜK STRAWBERRY AND BURSA BLACK FIG RECEIVED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION FROM THE EU

Söke Cotton, Hüyük Strawberry and Bursa Black Fig received geographical indications from the EU, raising the number of Türkiye's geographically indicated products from the EU to 27.



Türkiye's food and agricultural products continue to receive geographical indications from the EU. Konya's Hüyük Strawberry received geographical indication on 3 September, followed by Bursa Black Fig on 4 September. On 10 September, Söke Cotton also received geographical indication from the EU, marking Türkiye's 27th geographically indicated product. Türkiye's Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, İbrahim Yumaklı, shared the news on social media, highlighting that geographically marked products will continue to enrich Türkiye's lands.

A product can be granted a geographical indication if it has a specific link to the geography in which it is made. Depending on the strength of the relationship between the place and the product, different types of geographical indications are granted. So far, Türkiye's products received Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI). If the whole production process takes place in the region, the product is granted PDO, and if at least one stage of production process takes place in the region, the product receives PGI. Regardless of the type of geographical indication, products

are protected against imitation and misuse both in the EU and non-EU countries where a special agreement exists. Geographical indications promote the unique characteristics of a product, contributing to economic gains, rural development and tourism. Producer groups can apply for a geographical indication mark through Turkish Patent and Trademark Office (TÜRKPATENT). Before applying for geographical indication in the EU, the product should be geographically indicated in Türkiye. TÜRKPATENT forwards the application to the Commission, also providing technical assistance.

TÜRKİYE RANKED FIRST IN THE GLOBAL UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE SECTOR

A new report by Centre for a New American Security revealed that Türkiye has surpassed China to become the world's leading supplier. The data uncovered the fact that 633 drone transfers have been done between 1995-2023 and forty percent of those transfers account for ones reserved for European buyers.

Between the period of 1995-2023, Türkiye has transferred 47 drones, rising to become the top exporter after China which transferred 34 drones. With the drone technologies getting more developed in the last 30 years, Türkiye has been one of the newcomers in the



unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) sector. Especially since 2021, Türkiye has been dominating the market, becoming the top exporter for the first time, followed by the US, China, Iran, and Israel. While the report suggests that the entrance of Türkiye in 2018 and China in 2011 to the market increased

the total transfers of the UAVs, it marks the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War as a milestone for the global drone purchase and use to be more extensive. As Türkiye becoming the leader of the UAV market, it also receives an increasing interest by the EU Member States including Poland and Romania.

AMBASSADOR THOMAS OSSOWSKI APPOINTED AS HEAD OF DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO TÜRKİYE

Ambassador Ossowski, who was appointed as Head of Delegation of the EU to Türkiye, will start his duty for the next four years. A farewell reception was organised for Ambassador Ossowski in Brussels by the Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Türkiye to the EU Ambassador Faruk Kaymakçı. The farewell reception was attended by many ambassadors, EP members and officials from various EU institutions. Ambassador Ossowski was sent off to Ankara at the reception hosted by Ambassador Kaymakçı.

Speaking at the reception, Ambassador Kaymakçı emphasised Ambassador Ossowski's positive aspects and stated that his new



duty in Ankara will provide an opportunity to discover Türkiye, the cradle of European civilisation. Ambassador Kaymakçı also expressed his pleasure that Ossowski will represent the EU in Türkiye. Ambassador Ossowski's previous work focused on security issues, indicating that Türkiye and the EU can work together in the field of defence and security.

Ambassador Thomas Ossowski, who will be starting

The concert was attended by many representatives of foreign missions and citizens and the opening speech was delivered by Jurgis Vilcinskas, Deputy Head of Delegation of the EU to Türkiye. In his speech, Mr. Vilcinskas said: "Welcome to this beautiful evening where we celebrate music, a universal value with its power to unite us. It gives me great pleasure to introduce our newly appointed Ambassador, Mr. Thomas Hans Ossowski, Head of Delegation of the EU to Türkiye, and to welcome him and his family. Tonight, we are celebrating not only the power of music, but also our common values and culture."

EU DELEGATION TO TÜRKİYE HOSTED A CONCERT CELEBRATING SHARED CULTURE AND VALUES



A concert in the Turkish capital of Ankara that was hosted by the EU Delegation to Türkiye, celebrated the power of music, and shared values and culture. "Our Shared Culture and Values" concert at Bilkent Odeon was attended by the Head of Delegation of the EU to Türkiye Ambassador Thomas Ossowski, Deputy head Jurgis Vilcinskas and other guests. Pop, jazz and classical music artist Barbaros and Cecilia Krull, whose "My Life is Going On", the theme song of the famous TV series La Casa De Papel, has reached more than a billion listeners worldwide, took part in the concert.

NATO SECRETARY-GENERAL JENS STOLTENBERG HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE OF TÜRKİYE AT HIS FAREWELL SPEECH



On 19 September 2024, NATO Secretary-General Stoltenberg gave a farewell speech at the German Marshall Fund event. There has been a myriad of crucial developments: Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, the rise of ISIS, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, growing competition with China, the COVID-19 pandemic, and cyberattacks. He also stated that NATO has become stronger each day by enhancing its defences, maintaining tens of thousands of combat-ready soldiers on its eastern flank, ensuring Allies spend at least two percent of their GDP on defence, strengthening NATO as an institution, and increasing the number of Allies and partners, such as Montenegro, North Macedonia, Finland and Sweden, who have joined the Alliance.

During his speech, he pointed out five lessons. The

first is the willingness to pay the price for peace; greater funding would strengthen defences and make deterrence more effective, ultimately enhancing security. The second lesson is that freedom is more important than free trade. The third lesson is that military strength is a prerequisite for dialogue, as demonstrated in Ukraine, where only by providing Ukraine with more weapons can we make Putin realise that his forceful ambitions will fail, thereby changing his calculations and ultimately paving the way for a credible peace backed by strong military support and security guarantees for a stable Ukraine within NATO. The fourth lesson is that military power has its limits, with Afghanistan being a main example of overreach. The last lesson is that the bond between Europe and North America must never be taken for granted, as it results from

deliberate choices and political will.

Most significantly, he emphasised the importance of Türkiye within the Alliance. Stoltenberg warned the US not to isolate itself from its partnership with Europe while calling on Europe to acknowledge its need for NATO's security umbrella, from Türkiye in the south to Norway in the north. Lastly, he stated that Greece and Türkiye are important NATO allies that contribute to collective security and play key roles in decision-making. When bilateral challenges arise, they should be resolved through dialogue, which NATO is ready to facilitate. NATO has previously helped address risks of incidents in the Aegean Sea and has established military lines to prevent such occurrences. Ultimately, the goal is for allies to maintain friendship.

TÜRKİYE'S CONSTRUCTION SECTOR RISES TO GLOBAL PROMINENCE



Türkiye has emerged as a dominant player in the global construction industry, ranking second after China in the number of international contractors. At a contracting award ceremony organised by the Turkish Contractors Association in Ankara, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced that Turkish firms had completed over 12,000 projects worth 515 billion dollars in 137 countries since 1972. In 2023 alone, Turkish contractors undertook 28 billion dollars in projects despite global challenges such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The sector has witnessed remarkable growth, with the average project size increasing from 21 million dollars in the early 2000s to 65 million dollars by 2023. This expansion underscores the sector's growing influence, bringing foreign currency into Türkiye and enhancing its international brand value.

President Erdoğan underlined the key role of the construction sector in enhancing Türkiye's global influence. He highlighted that Turkish contractors are renowned for their reliability and

efficiency, a fact evident in their consistent presence in the Top 250 International Contractors List. With 43 companies currently on this list and eight among the world's largest technical consultants, Türkiye is solidifying its position as a global leader in construction and engineering services.

In 2023, Turkish companies managed to secure substantial contracts despite the pressures of global instability. The Turkish Contractors Association expects further growth, with total international revenues of the world's largest construction companies projected to reach 750 billion dollars by the 2030s. The rising project sizes indicate that Türkiye is taking on more complex, large-scale projects. President Erdoğan pointed out that while the Turkish construction sector initially focused on smaller projects, it now handles significant infrastructure and development undertakings. These efforts align closely with the country's broader economic goals, including reducing the budget deficit and maintaining fiscal discipline.

TURKISH ATHLETES ACHIEVED HISTORIC SUCCESS IN PARIS 2024 PARALYMPIC GAMES



Turkish athletes participated in Paris 2024 Paralympic Games where 182 countries and Refugee Team also attended to score a historic victory by winning a total of 28 medals of which the six are gold, ten silver and twelve bronze. Türkiye, attending the Paralympic Games for the 8th time and with the most extended and successful team of its history scored medals in all competed sports such as para-swimming, para-archery, shooting para sport, para-taekwondo, para-athletics, para-table tennis, para-fencing, para-power lifting, para-judo, para-goalball. Turkish para-athletes achieved two world records one of which is Aysel Önder in para-athletics with 54.96 seconds and Öznur Cüre Girdi in para-archery with 740 points.

While the sport where any medals have ever been won by Turkish athletes for the first time is para-fencing, the sports where first gold medals have been won are para-judo, para-taekwondo, para-swimming. Moreover, the national goalball team has been winning gold medals since 2022, winning third gold medal in a row in Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. Additionally, Turkish para swimmer Umut Ünlü has been one and only national athlete that brought home double-gold medals. Participating in the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, Türkiye has achieved a total of 66 medals since the first time it participated in the paralympic games in Barcelona 1992 Olympic-Paralympic Games.

NEW COMMISSION, NEW DIRECTIONS: HOW COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENTS COULD SHAPE TÜRKİYE-EU RELATIONS

Under Ursula von der Leyen's leadership, the proposed 2024-2029 European Commission signals a strategic shift in addressing key challenges like economic security, migration, and enlargement, opening new avenues for Türkiye-EU relations.

Laura BATALLA ADAM
Analyst

As the European Commission begins its 2024-2029 term, the proposed Commissioners under the leadership of Ursula von der Leyen signal a significant shift in the EU's approach to key challenges such as ensuring economic security, managing migration flows, and navigating a complex global geopolitical environment. The selection of these new Commissioners reflects the EU's broader strategic objective to strengthen its resilience and increase its global influence by responding proactively to new challenges.

The concept of enlargement has been central to von der Leyen's political guidelines, opening new avenues for candidate countries, including Türkiye, which has long aspired to join the EU. However, this prospect is tempered by Türkiye's gradual shift away from democratic values and emerging political tensions that need to be addressed.

The Nomination Process: A Delicate Balancing Act

Nominating Commissioners is often a politically charged exercise, requiring a balance of national interests, power struggles, and EU-wide priorities. Meeting von der Leyen's demand for gender parity, where each Member State must nominate one male and one female candidate, was a significant challenge. Some countries struggled with this requirement, highlighting ongoing gender representation issues within EU institutions. Despite these challenges, women now hold five of the seven highest leadership positions, although the majority of the Commission's members remain men, indicating a need for further progress toward a more inclusive EU.

Geographical alignment also played a significant role in



shaping the new Commission. The nomination of candidates from Central, Eastern, and Northern Europe to important foreign policy portfolios reflects an effort to rebalance political priorities within the EU, which could directly influence its relations with Türkiye. These regions have undergone their own transitions in recent decades and may provide different perspectives on managing enlargement.

However, the Commission's portfolio allocation appears complex, with several Commissioners responsible for overlapping issues. This structure consolidates power within von der Leyen's office, where the president is expected to have a stronger role in shaping policy, potentially limiting the influence of individual Commissioners.

Key Appointments and Their Implications for Türkiye

Appointments like Marta Kos as Commissioner for Enlargement and Dubravka Šuica as Commissioner for the Mediterranean illustrate the EU's commitment to strengthening ties with candidate countries, including Türkiye. Kos is expected to take a pragmatic yet firm stance on Türkiye's

EU aspirations. Her diplomatic background suggests she will engage strategically with Türkiye while demanding meaningful reforms, particularly in areas such as the rule of law and human rights, before advancing its EU membership bid.

Šuica's Mediterranean portfolio presents its own set of challenges, requiring her to navigate complex relationships in a geopolitically tense region. Türkiye's historical and strategic significance in the Mediterranean could offer both opportunities and challenges as the EU strives for stability.

Marta Kos and Dubravka Šuica's Balkan backgrounds provide valuable perspectives on EU enlargement. Having joined the EU relatively recently, they understand the challenges faced by candidate countries. Both come from a region that has undergone significant reforms and conflict resolution on its path to EU integration. Their regional experience in managing conflicts and navigating political transitions enhances their ability to balance reform requirements with strategic engagement, making them well-suited to manage candidate countries' aspirations.

For Türkiye, having interlocutors who understand its regional context and aspirations is crucial. Despite the lack of progress in recent years, Türkiye regards its candidacy status and process as essential. The recent return to the Gymnich format, where EU foreign ministers meet informally, provides Türkiye with an important opportunity to re-establish its presence in EU discussions. This renewed engagement could allow Türkiye to address existing tensions while reaffirming its strategic importance in the region and finding ways to work together to achieve EU goals.

Migration Management and Strategic Cooperation

Migration is expected to be a key area of collaboration between Türkiye and the EU. Magnus Brunner, nominated as Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration, brings a pragmatic approach that aligns well with Türkiye's role in managing migration flows into Europe. He is likely to frame the Türkiye-EU partnership around efficient migration management, emphasising the need to allocate resources to curb irregular migration. This approach

could foster a more stable, goal-oriented relationship between Türkiye and the EU, potentially facilitating collaborative efforts on migration issues. However, the risk remains that such a pragmatic stance could lead to the instrumentalisation of migration for political and economic interests, potentially compromising refugee rights and humanitarian considerations.

Navigating the Parliamentary Landscape

As the European Parliament scrutinises the new nominations, it will conduct a thorough assessment of each Commissioner's qualifications, focusing on their competencies, commitment to EU values, and potential conflicts of interest. Given the contentious nature of some appointments, adjustments may be necessary. If any nominees face strong opposition, the Commission may need to propose replacements swiftly, as has occurred in the past.

The designations of Commissioners under Ursula von der Leyen present both opportunities and challenges for Türkiye as it seeks to strengthen its ties with the EU. The emphasis on enlargement, economic security, and migration management reflects a strategic approach that could facilitate collaboration, provided Türkiye makes progress in governance, human rights, and regional stability.

The final composition of the European Commission will be critical in defining the course of Türkiye-EU relations. The interplay of personalities and portfolios within this new Commission will ultimately determine how effectively the EU can engage Türkiye in addressing shared challenges in the Mediterranean while balancing expectations for deeper integration and stability. Türkiye's readiness to engage constructively with the EU and commit to necessary reforms will be the litmus test for future relations, potentially reshaping the dynamics of the region.