



IKV MONTHLY

ISSUE: 114 NOVEMBER 2024

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2024 ENLARGEMENT PACKAGE AND TÜRKİYE REPORT: 'SEMPER VIGILO FORTIS PARATUS ET FIDELIS'

The EU's enlargement process faces significant challenges with Türkiye's complex path to membership highlighting the need for internal reforms and renewed political will on both sides.

Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem NAS
IKV Secretary General

It has been eleven years since a new Member State joined the EU. In the past decade, one notable Member State chose to leave the Union, raising concerns about the potential for a wave of withdrawals. Fortunately, that has not occurred. While the EU focused on managing Brexit and later the Covid crisis, the enlargement policy was sidelined. This left candidate countries feeling as though they were stuck in a permanent waiting room, with no immediate prospect for accession. However, Russia's aggression against Ukraine suddenly placed enlargement back at the forefront of the EU's priorities, leading to new membership applications from Ukraine, followed by Georgia and Moldova. The list of candidates and potential candidates has now grown to ten, increasing pressure on the EU to offer a clear perspective to these nations. While enlargement is often seen as a key tool for stabilising the EU's neighbourhood, it also risks creating instability if the process drags on and the ultimate goal of membership remains elusive.

With the revised enlargement methodology, the European Commission aimed to enhance the credibility, predictability, dynamism, and political governance aspects of the accession process. In addition to Türkiye, which has been a candidate country for nearly 26 years without a clear prospect of near-term accession, the nine other candidate and potential candidate countries are also struggling to complete the process in the foreseeable future. Before the EU can expand to include new members, it must reform its internal decision-making and institutional mechanisms. Otherwise,



a Union of 35 or 36 states that makes strategic decisions by unanimity may become ineffective and devolve into a mere discussion forum. To facilitate enlargement, the EU should reform itself by adopting majority voting, even on foreign and security policy issues, and by reorganising the Commission, Parliament, and other relevant bodies. The need for reform was highlighted by Chancellor Scholz in a 2022 speech and further detailed in the Report of the Franco-German Working Group on EU Institutional Reform, titled "Sailing on High Seas: Reforming and Enlarging the EU for the 21st Century." Additionally, President Macron of France warned of the "death of Europe" if action is not taken to address the Union's challenges. Two recent reports by Enrico Letta and Mario Draghi on the internal market and EU competitiveness also underscored the need to revitalise

the EU economy in relation to its competitors and to keep pace with rapid changes.

The 2024 enlargement package and country reports represent the latest developments in the European Commission's monitoring of candidate countries. Commission President von der Leyen stated: "The tense geopolitical context makes it more compelling than ever that we complete the reunification of our continent under the same values of democracy and the rule of law. We have already made significant progress in integrating new Member States, and enlargement will remain a top priority for the new Commission." Thus, more than ever, EU enlargement has acquired geopolitical significance for the future stability of Europe. The situation regarding Türkiye is particularly unique and complex in this context.

While Türkiye is undoubtedly a strategically significant country and regional actor, the EU is more focused on fostering a "cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship" with Türkiye than on its potential future accession. Numerous obstacles remain, as highlighted in the 2024 report, particularly in the "fundamentals first" cluster. Issues such as deficiencies in democracy, human rights and freedoms (including freedom of expression, media freedom, and freedom of association) as well as challenges in the rule of law, particularly regarding judicial independence and impartiality, are of particular concern.

While the report notes that Türkiye demonstrates positive aspects of a functioning market economy and is sufficiently prepared in some chapters of the acquis, issues such as the autonomy of regulatory bodies like the Central

Bank, transparency in policy-making, the absence of a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy, and ongoing challenges in public administration reform remain significant obstacles to alignment with EU standards.

Additionally, fundamental divergences in foreign policy and regional issues, especially the GCASC issue, impede progress not only in accession negotiations but also in other areas of cooperation, including Customs Union modernisation, defence collaboration, and visa liberalisation. The report also highlights the differing positions between Türkiye and the EU regarding sanctions against Russia and their respective stance on Hamas. It recommends that Türkiye works toward greater alignment with EU statements and common positions in the future.

The 2024 report is the 25th of its kind prepared by the Commission since 1998. While the report provides a thorough assessment of Türkiye's progress toward meeting membership conditions, it does not generate momentum on Türkiye's path to EU integration. Achieving this would require political will on both sides, supported by the impetus of geopolitical developments and mutual interests that go beyond shared identity and solidarity. While Türkiye remains "semper vigilo, fortis, paratus et fidelis" (It. Always strong, ready and faithful), it should intensify its efforts toward renewed reforms in democratisation, sustainable development goals, and alignment with the common values and norms of the European continent. Ultimately, it is up to the EU to offer guidance and leadership, helping to prevent further alienation of Türkiye and ensuring that Türkiye-EU relations do not fall victim to the GCASC issue.



IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU ATTENDED THE 42ND JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE



IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu attended the 42nd Türkiye-EU Joint Consultative Committee Meeting held in Cappadocia on 9-11 October 2024. Türkiye-EU JCC Co-President and TOBB President

M. Rifat Hisarcıkloğlu, who made the opening speech of the meeting hosted by the Nevşehir Chamber of Commerce and Industry, stated that the meeting symbolised the strong partnership between the EU

and Türkiye. President Hisarcıkloğlu emphasised that the representatives and members of workers' and civil servants' union confederations, employers, tradesmen's, agricultural, women's organisations that make up the Turkish side of the Joint Consultative Committee have visa problems.

Chairperson Zeytinoğlu expressed his views on "Entrepreneurship for the Disabled" and made a presentation about Bizimköy Production Centre for the Disabled, which is an exemplary project in Türkiye. He stated that the project should be expanded to other provinces, with priority to the provinces that experienced earthquakes.

IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU: "LACK OF PROGRESS IN THE EU PROCESS IS ALARMING"



IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu made statements on the European Commission 2024 Enlargement Package and Türkiye report. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu emphasised the steps that need to be taken to make progress in Türkiye's accession negotiations, which have been effectively frozen since 2018. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu evaluated the content of the 2024 Türkiye report as follows:

"The 2024 European Commission report on Türkiye largely mirrors previous assessments, focusing on its status within EU criteria

and acquis chapters without proposing measures to revitalize accession talks. Prioritised areas include rule of law, democracy, and fundamental rights, with criticisms over a lack of progress. Türkiye remains a crucial EU partner, notably in trade and refugee cooperation. The report encourages alignment in areas such as energy, renewable growth, and the customs union while highlighting gaps in democratic reform. Türkiye's EU accession hinges on renewed reform efforts, with civil society's ongoing support for enhanced EU relations and economic alignment."

IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU ATTENDED THE WORLD CHAMBERS FEDERATION SUMMIT

IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu participated in the World Chambers Federation's (WCF) Europe and Asia Summit in İstanbul on 14-15 October 2024. The Summit, chaired by President of both TOBB and the WCF M. Rifat Hisarcıkloğlu, took place as part of the WCF Europe and Asia Summit and was attended by Minister of Trade Prof. Ömer Bolat, Minister of Environment, Urban Planning and Climate Change Murat Kurum, ICC President Philippe Varin, ICC Secretary General John W. H. Denton, along with nearly 700 businesspeople from over 40 countries.

The Summit, held under the theme "A Collaborative Approach to Climate Action", addressed the new competitive conditions emerging from climate change regulations and technological innovations. At the Europe and Asia Summit of the WCF, chambers representing the global business community finalised their views on



climate change ahead of the B20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro on 24 October 2024 and the COP-29 Summit set to begin in Baku on 11 November 2024.

IKV DISCUSSED TÜRKİYE-EU RELATIONS IN HUNGARY

IKV organised a meeting on 18 October 2024, bringing together Turkish-Hungarian academics and officials to discuss EU enlargement and Türkiye-EU relations, in cooperation with Hungary's leading think tank, MCC Centre for European Studies. The meeting was hosted on the occasion of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU, within the framework of IKV's project titled "Presidencies of the EU Council and Türkiye's EU Accession Process".

The opening speeches of the meeting titled "EU Merit-Based Enlargement: Utopian, Dystopian, or Simply Realistic?" were delivered by Head of Centre for European Studies MCC Budapest Rodrigo Ballester, IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu and Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to Hungary Gülşen Karanis Ekşioğlu. In his opening remarks, IKV Chairperson



Ayhan Zeytinoğlu emphasised that European integration is a key achievement of the 21st century and noted that merit-based enlargement unites candidate countries around common goals while contributing to the EU's security and the search for strategic autonomy. Pointing out that Türkiye has a vital role in this context, Chairperson Zeytinoğlu emphasised the need to revitalise the accession process.

IKV SECRETARY GENERAL NAS PARTICIPATED IN VARIOUS PROGRAMMES AND EVENTS



IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas participated in various programmes and events this month. On 23 October, Assoc. Prof. Nas moderated the workshop titled

"Just Transition: Insights from Various Phases of the Coal Transition" organised by the Istanbul Policy Centre on 23 October 2024. The speakers of the panel were Jannis Beutel from the Wuppertal Institute, Andrea Furnaro from the European University of Flensburg and Corinna Zierold from industriAll European Trade Union.

On 24 October, Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas attended the "High-Level Forum on Enlargement" organised by the European Economic and Social Committee. The forum discussed the importance of the EU Enlargement process, the role of civil society in this process, social rights and social dialogue. IKV Secretary General Nas attended the High-Level Forum on Enlargement and met with EESC and NGO representatives.

HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN PAID AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO SERBIA AND ALBANIA

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan paid an official visit to two Balkan countries which are Albania and Serbia on 10-11 October. President Erdoğan held bilateral meetings with Albanian President Bajram Begaj and Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama. Subsequently, Prime Minister Edi Rama and President Erdoğan attended the 2nd High-Level Cooperation Council. President Erdoğan signed three agreements in the fields of agriculture, higher education, public relations and communication. Furthermore, he underlined the importance of trade and historical ties between Türkiye and Albania in the joint press statement.

Following his visit to Albania, President Erdoğan paid an official visit to Serbia and he held a bilateral meeting with Serbia President Aleksandar Vučić. Following their talks, the two leaders attended the



High-Level Cooperation Council and the Türkiye-Serbia Business Forum. In their joint press conference, President Erdoğan stated that they signed

11 agreements and emphasised that they exchanged views on global and regional issues, particularly the Balkans, the Middle East and Ukraine.

TÜRKİYE HOSTED FINLAND FOR THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Finnish President Alexander Stubb held a one-on-one and inter-delegation meeting on 1 October 2024. Following the meeting hosted by Türkiye, a joint press conference was held. During the meeting held specifically for the 100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Türkiye and Finland, targets aimed at strengthening cooperation between both states were presented. President Erdoğan expressed his satisfaction with the addition of NATO alliance to the ties of friendship and relations. President Erdoğan also addressed that the bilateral trade volume increased by 6% compared to the previous year, exceeding the level of 2.2 billion dollars.

In addition to bilateral relations, current issues such as Gaza, Lebanon and Türkiye-EU relations were also discussed during the meeting. President Erdoğan conveyed to his counterpart Stubb his expectations that Finland will continue to increase its support for Türkiye's EU accession process. Moreover, President Erdoğan once again emphasised



Türkiye's support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. In his statements, Finnish President Stubb stated that Türkiye is an important country because the conflicts taking place around Türkiye. President Stubb also stated that both countries are great military power and security actors. Stating that an agreement has been reached with Türkiye on the protection of Ukraine's territorial integrity, Finnish President Stubb addressed that Türkiye is one of the rare countries that can talk to both Russia and Ukraine and therefore has the power

to mediate. Emphasising that Israel has the right to defend and protect itself in the conflicts taking place in the Middle East, President Stubb called on Israel to act in accordance with international law. President Stubb also expressed that he supports a two-state solution and that the inhumane incidents taking place in Gaza and the West Bank should be ended by establishing a cease-fire. Following the joint press conference, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Finnish President Alexander Stubb had dinner at the Presidential Complex.

TIMELINE OCTOBER 2024

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came together with his Finnish counterpart Alexander Stubb.	1	
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Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan attended Third Ukraine – Southeast Europe Summit.	9	İKVM Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu attended the 42 nd Türkiye-EU Joint Consultative Committee Meeting.
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	14	İKVM Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu participated in the World Chambers Federation's Europe and Asia Summit.
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President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came together with Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary László Kövér.	17	İKVM organised a meeting hosted by Mathias Corvinus Collegium on the occasion of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU.
	18	
President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came together with German Prime Minister Olaf Scholz.	19	
	20	
President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came together with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiba.	21	
	22	İKVM Secretary General Nas moderated the session on "Exit from Coal".
The Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Türkiye Thomas Hans Ossowski presented his letter of credence to the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.	23	
	24	İKVM Secretary General Nas attended Enlargement High Level Forum by the EU Economic and Social Committee.
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TOBB President and Co-Chair of the Türkiye-EU Joint Consultative Committee M. Rifat Hisarcıklıoğlu and the committee delegation visited TUSAŞ and conveyed their condolences after the terrorist attack.	29	
	30	İKVM Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu made a statement about the EU Enlargement Package Türkiye Report.
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PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN ATTENDED BRICS MEETING IN KAZAN

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan attended the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, on 22-24 October 2024, underlining the country's expanding role in non-Western economic and political spheres. On the summit's sidelines, President Erdoğan held noteworthy bilateral discussions, including a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin and a separate meeting with his Congolese counterpart Denis Sassou Nguesso. President Erdoğan's talks with Putin focused on enhancing the Türkiye-Russia economic partnership, with trade volumes between the two nations reaching 55.4 billion dollars. During the meeting, President Putin emphasised the growing energy ties, pointing out that Türkiye remains a reliable partner in natural gas supply. According to the President, Russia exported 20.5 billion cubic meters of gas through the TurkStream and Blue Stream pipelines. Both leaders also



discussed the progress on the natural gas hub project, which President Putin describes as pivotal for regional security and aligns with Türkiye's strategic aim to become a key player in Eurasian energy networks, bolstering economic growth and geopolitical influence.

Beyond bilateral talks, President Erdoğan's participation in the summit included critical interactions with

other BRICS leaders, where he voiced concerns over global and regional stability. President Erdoğan stated Türkiye's readiness to collaborate with BRICS countries on various global challenges and added Türkiye's interest in strengthening ties with the BRICS bloc. Both leaders acknowledged Türkiye's geostrategic position as an asset for potential joint initiatives within Eurasia. Moreover,

President Erdoğan highlighted Türkiye's aspirations for economic and political engagement with the group in reference to the geostrategic positioning by stating, "With our geographic location bridging Europe and Asia, we see critical opportunities for deeper collaboration within the BRICS framework".

The Turkish delegation at the summit included Energy and Natural Resources Minister Alparslan Bayraktar, Foreign Policy and Security Advisor Akif Çağatay Kılıç and Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan. During the summit, President Erdoğan addressed other BRICS leaders, urging a united stance against escalating regional conflicts. Specifically, he called on BRICS members to oppose unrestrained military support to Israel, warning that such actions contribute to ongoing instability in the Middle East. President Erdoğan's statement highlighted Türkiye's

stance on seeking a peaceful resolution to the ongoing conflict in Gaza and reflected a broader appeal for support within the UN framework to halt arms exports to Israel. Türkiye's position resonated with Russia's similar views on peaceful resolutions, highlighting a shared commitment to regional peace.

After the meeting, President Erdoğan extended a renewed invitation to Putin, encouraging his visit to Türkiye, an invitation that Putin acknowledged positively. This positive response underlines the potential for improved relations between Türkiye and Russia. While President Erdoğan shortened his participation in the summit due to domestic concerns, including a recent terror attack on Turkish Aerospace Industries facilities, his diplomatic engagements at BRICS spotlighted Türkiye's aim to diversify its alliances and extend its influence on the global economy.

TURKISH-GERMAN FRIENDSHIP ENTERS A NEW ERA ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

On 19 October, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz met at Istanbul's Dolmabahçe Palace to discuss a broad agenda centred on defence, migration, counterterrorism and regional stability. This high-level meeting, held on the 100th anniversary of the German-Turkish Treaty of Friendship, marked a deepening phase in their strategic partnership.

President Erdoğan expressed Türkiye's commitment to overcoming past challenges in defence cooperation and emphasised the importance of moving forward with Germany to support regional stability. President Erdoğan said: "One of the important topics we have focused on with Mr Chancellor Scholz has been our cooperation in defence industry. We want to improve our cooperation, leaving behind some setbacks experienced in the past in the supply of defence industry products. I would like to note once again that I appreciate my treasured friend Mr. Scholz's efforts on this issue." President Erdoğan also highlighted the social and economic ties between the two nations, citing the Turkish community of 3.5 million in Germany and the annual visits of six million German tourists to Türkiye.

Chancellor Scholz reiterated Germany's intention to enhance defence cooperation and recognised Türkiye's stabilising influence in the Middle East and Eastern Europe.



Referring to Türkiye's role in NATO, he pledged further approvals for defence projects, including Eurofighter jets, a collaborative project with the UK stakeholders. Chancellor Scholz also affirmed Germany's support for Türkiye's efforts in managing the Syrian refugee crisis, an area where Germany aims to maintain close cooperation. The leaders also discussed ongoing security challenges and Türkiye's measures against extremist threats, specifically targeting groups such as the PKK and FETÖ, which are of concern to both countries. Chancellor Scholz affirmed Germany's commitment to collaborative efforts on security, noting that these align with Germany's recent initiatives against extremism, including efforts to counter rising Islamophobia across Europe.

On the economic front, President Erdoğan said, "Our bilateral trade has reached 50 billion dollars. Our goal is to reach 60 billion dollars. We have increased our efforts to realise this goal." Stating that he has shared his

views and expectations with German Chancellor Scholz about Türkiye's relations with the EU, President Erdoğan noted that he has stressed at the talks that the EU's steps for especially the update of the Customs Union and visa liberalisation will benefit everyone. In addition to bilateral matters, the leaders discussed the ongoing crises in the Middle East, particularly the humanitarian situations in

Gaza and Lebanon. President Erdoğan called for an immediate ceasefire and increased humanitarian aid, while Chancellor Scholz maintained Germany's commitment to a two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Scholz emphasised that Germany remains dedicated to regional peace and supports measures to prevent further destabilisation, endorsing UN Resolution 1701 as a means to alleviate tensions related to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Erdoğan-Scholz meeting highlighted a renewed alignment in defence and security cooperation between Türkiye and Germany. German media referred to it as a "new beginning," reflecting Berlin's recognition of Türkiye's strategic role amid global challenges. With the upcoming German elections in 2025, the strengthened bilateral ties could play a favourable role in Germany's domestic policy landscape and contribute positively to NATO's regional partnerships.

FOREIGN MINISTER FIDAN ATTENDED TO UKRAINE SOUTHEAST EUROPE SUMMIT



Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan attended the Ukraine-Southeast Europe Summit in Dubrovnik on 9 October 2024. Minister Fidan, who was in Croatia within the scope of the Summit, additionally came together with the Croatian Foreign Minister Gordan Grlic Radman.

In his address at the Summit, Foreign Minister Fidan reaffirmed Türkiye's unwavering support for Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence. Minister Fidan underscored that Türkiye has consistently pursued diplomatic efforts to end the conflict from its outset, facilitating high-level talks between the warring parties, ensuring the effective operation of the Black Sea Grain Corridor and playing a crucial role in facilitating prisoner exchanges.

In his address, Minister Fidan highlighted the increasing risk of the Ukraine

war, now in its fourth year, escalating further and warned of the potential involvement of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Minister Fidan noted that the conflict has intensified global polarisation and stressed that a sustainable resolution requires engaging all relevant parties, including Russia, in negotiations.

Following the outbreak of the war between Russia and Ukraine, the Summit, the first of which was held in Greece in August 2023 and the second in Albania in February 2024, brings together Ukraine and the countries of the region at the level of leaders. Since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine War, Türkiye has been taking steps to mitigate the effects of the war in both humanitarian and economic dimensions while continuing its bilateral and multilateral initiatives and contacts with the parties to the war.

TURKISH ECONOMIST DARON ACEMOĞLU AWARDED THE 2024 NOBEL PRIZE IN ECONOMICS

Turkish economist Daron Acemoğlu was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics for his work on the role of institutions as long-term determinants of economic prosperity.

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has decided to award the 2024 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel to Prof. Kamer Daron Acemoğlu, Prof. Simon Johnson and Prof. James A. Robinson for their work on how institutions are formed and how they affect welfare. The work of Acemoğlu, Johnson and Robinson contribute to innovative research on what influences the economic well-being of countries in the long run. Their empirical research reveals the fundamental importance of the type of political and economic institutions put in place during colonisation. Moreover, their insights on how institutions affect prosperity show that working to promote democracy and inclusive institutions is an important way to foster economic development.

Daron Acemoğlu is widely recognised as a leading scholar in his field, known for his influential research on political economy, economic development, economic growth, income



and wage inequality, labour economics, economic theory, human capital and education. A Turkish economist and professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, one of the foremost universities in the United States, Acemoğlu has received numerous

accolades throughout his career. With this Nobel Prize, he has now made history as the third Turkish laureate. Previously, Orhan Pamuk received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2006 and Aziz Sancar was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2015.

TÜRKİYE'S PREMIER TECH EVENT TEKNOFEST WELCOMED 1.1 MILLION VISITORS



Türkiye's major technology event Teknofest was organised and it hosted nearly 1.1 million visitors in Adana between 2-6 October 2024. Workshops, competitions, airshows, seminars and concerts were part of Teknofest. As part of the five-day event, Turkish electric carmaker TOGG presented its new fastback model-T10F. It will be launched in the first quarter of 2025 to collect pre-orders. Additionally, the Head of premier tech event Selçuk Bayraktar emphasised AI's transformative potential for humanity, particularly in health and education, while cautioning against its misuse in warfare. He highlighted Baykar's advancements in UAV technology, including the mass production of the Kızılelma jet. Bayraktar praised Teknofest as an inclusive educational platform and noted

its expansion beyond Türkiye. Additionally, other Turkish defence firms presented their products. Turkish Aerospace Inc (TAI)'s aircraft deliveries, TAI Engine Inc (TEI)'s turbofan engine, Ulak's 5G solutions and Aselsan's Radar vehicle ALP 100-G. Trendyol collaborated with the T3 Foundation for organising its first-ever e-commerce hackathon for the event. It mobilised 16 teams to develop technologies for assisting local producers transition to e-commerce. The winning team "BazLLaMa Is All You Need" received their prize from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. On the other hand, Selçuk Bayraktar gave the prizes of the second team "Sebil" and the third team "Kermit". The next Technofest events will be held in TRNC and İstanbul next year.

42ND MEETING OF THE TÜRKİYE-EU JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE TOOK PLACE IN CAPPADOCIA

The 42nd Meeting of the Türkiye-EU Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) convened from 9-11 October 2024 in Cappadocia, hosted by the Nevşehir Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Attendees included key figures such as the Head of the EU Delegation to Türkiye Ambassador Thomas Ossowski, Director General for Financial Cooperation and Project Implementation at the Directorate for EU Affairs Bülent Özcan, Co-Chair of the Türkiye-EU JCC and President of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye M. Rifat Hisarcıklıoğlu, Co-Chair of the Türkiye-EU JCC and Member of the European Economic and Social Committee Veselin Mitov and İKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinioğlu. Representatives from various civil society organisations were also present.



Established to strengthen cooperation and deepen socio-economic dialogue between Türkiye and the EU, the JCC meeting focused on critical themes aligned with this mission. Key topics included "Migration," "Entrepreneurship for Persons with Disabilities," "Artificial Intelligence and Digital Skills" and "Agriculture." Each thematic session

aimed to assess the current landscape within these areas and identify actionable steps moving forward. In the session on migration, participants discussed its pivotal role in Türkiye-EU relations and explored collaboration opportunities in migration management and integration policies, emphasising the need for coordinated efforts. The discussion

on entrepreneurship for persons with disabilities highlighted successful initiatives from the EU countries and considered projects that could enhance labour market participation for individuals with disabilities. The artificial intelligence and digital skills session underscored the importance of training and infrastructure to boost workforce capacity in adapting to

digital transformation amid rapid technological advancements. Finally, in the agriculture session, sustainable practices, and measures to mitigate climate change effects were key areas of focus.

The meeting concluded with a joint statement affirming both sides' commitment to enhancing socio-economic dialogue and cooperation. The statement underscored the importance of taking concrete steps in areas such as improving migration and integration policies, promoting economic inclusion for people with disabilities, advancing digital skills and supporting sustainable agricultural practices. It also called for reinforcing cooperation mechanisms for financing and implementing projects within these domains.

GERMAN SPD LEADER EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR TÜRKİYE'S ACCESSION TO THE EU

The mayor of İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality Ekrem İmamoğlu hosted German party SPD leader Lars Klingbeil in İstanbul. SPD leader Klingbeil expressed support for Türkiye's accession to the EU and stated that they support Türkiye on rebeginning its accession negotiations. He also maintained that the memorandum of cooperation signed between SPD and CHP will allow both parties to further the cooperation and the dialogue.

Mayor İmamoğlu emphasised that there are strong ties between Germany and Türkiye and pointed to the migration from Türkiye to



Germany that began in 1960s. He underlined that he intends to bring together a city from Germany and İstanbul to hold a conversation about both Türkiye-Germany and Türkiye-EU relations. Mayor İmamoğlu held that the

memorandum of cooperation signed between CHP and SPD is very valuable in the context whereby the influence of far-right parties is increasing in Europe. He also expressed his support for Türkiye's full accession to the EU.

TÜRKİYE TO BUILD RAILWAY ON THIRD BOSPHORUS BRIDGE

Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge, which was opened to traffic in 2016 as the third bridge over İstanbul Strait, has connected two sides of İstanbul and Asia and Europe for eight years. Now, there is a railway project on the bridge in the scope of Development Road Project aiming to create an uninterrupted railway from Iraq to the United Kingdom. Turkish Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Abdülkadir Uraloğlu gave a speech at the International Road Federation (IRF) World Congress 2024 which is a quadrennial event and this year took place in İstanbul between 15-18 October 2024.



Minister Uraloğlu emphasised that Türkiye is a country located at the crossroads of continents. Beside other projects linking Asia and Europe, Minister Uraloğlu Türkiye is working on new projects which will connect the two continents such as Development Road Project. As a

part of the project, there is a plan to construct a railway on Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge, the Minister noted. Minister Uraloğlu also underlined that various lenders have shown interest in the railway project including the World Bank. The project is planned to be completed in 2030.

TOPRAK RAZGATLIOĞLU BECAME THE 2024 SUPERBIKE CHAMPION

National motorcyclist Toprak Razgatlıoğlu, known worldwide by superbike enthusiasts as "El Turco", became the 2024 Superbike Champion for the second time. In 2021, Razgatlıoğlu became the superbike champion with the Yamaha Team. This year, he competed as part of the Rokit BMW Team that won its first superbike championship in its history with Razgatlıoğlu in the race that was held in Circuito de Jerez racing track in Spain.

Razgatlıoğlu took the podium in 2024 on 25 separate occasions, 17 times in the first, six times in the second and two times in the third place. The 27-year-old champion took the podium 140 times out of



220 times he raced during his career.

Speaking to Anadolu Agency, Razgatlıoğlu expressed his joy and pride in his victory. He stated that he is happy to have won Türkiye another world championship. He maintained that he wishes to keep

up his performance to win world championships in the upcoming seasons. President of the Turkish Grand National Assembly Numan Kurtulmuş shared a social media post, congratulating Razgatlıoğlu's victory.

ATLAS PROJECT STRENGTHENS TÜRKİYE-EU TRANSPORT ALIGNMENT



Türkiye's EU integration process is gaining momentum with the launch of the ATLAS Project, a major initiative focused on aligning Türkiye's transport regulations with EU standards. In partnership with the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, the project aims to create a transport system that meets EU norms by updating infrastructure, sustainability practices and legal frameworks to be fully compatible with EU requirements.

At the heart of the ATLAS Project is the ambition to strengthen Türkiye's integration with EU transport regulations, which is seen as a strategic step towards improving relations in the transport sector. Speaking at the closing ceremony of the project, Türkiye's Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Abdülkadir Uraloğlu, highlighted the importance of the initiative, stating: "This project is a clear demonstration of our commitment to advancing our relations with the EU in the field of transportation. As the first comprehensive initiative covering all aspects of transport regulations, the ATLAS Project is particularly significant." Minister Uraloğlu emphasised the potential for Türkiye and the EU to work together on easing challenges in international transport by developing alternative routes, saying, "We view Türkiye's strategic location as a major advantage." This potential for collaboration opens up a promising future for transport relations between Türkiye and the EU.

The project is set to revolutionise Türkiye's transport infrastructure, enhancing critical corridors between Europe, Asia and Africa. Uraloğlu emphasised Türkiye's strategic role in major projects such as the Middle Corridor and the

Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway, which enable uninterrupted transportation between Asia and Europe. "With the activation of the BTK railway, freight trains now reach Türkiye from China in just 12 days and Europe in 18 days through the Middle Corridor. We are also expanding the capacity of the European side with the construction of the Halkalı Kapıkule high-speed rail line."

Minister Uraloğlu also noted that Türkiye has invested over 277 billion dollars in its transport and communication infrastructure since 2002, demonstrating our commitment and dedication to the sector. This investment continues as Türkiye seeks to position itself as a logistics hub. He added that Türkiye is working to increase the share of rail freight transport from 5% to 22% by 2053, which aligns with the EU's goals of shifting 75% of freight transport from roads to rail and inland waterways.

Minister Uraloğlu emphasised the importance of environmental sustainability in transportation, explaining Türkiye's alignment with the EU's climate goals with the introduction of Türkiye's "Net Zero Emission Target: Transportation Roadmap," focuses on reducing emissions in the transport sector and promoting green transformation. Uraloğlu also repeated Türkiye's commitment to furthering transport cooperation projects with the EU, stressing the benefits these partnerships bring both sides. "Transportation improvements go beyond sectoral goals," he noted. "They also support broader industry, energy and tourism development objectives. In this sense, we are fully committed to enhancing our cooperation with the EU in the most constructive way possible."

A NEW EXHIBITION IN MADRID CONNECTS SPAIN AND TÜRKİYE



A new exhibition at the National Museum of Anthropology in Madrid was opened for visit on 12 October 2024. The exhibition "A New History" has aimed to bring Göbeklitepe and Spanish culture together through demonstrating the ancient site's influence on contemporary Spanish art and culture.

The exhibition was prepared by Spanish photographer Isabel Muñoz and has been supported by Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Turkish Embassy in

Madrid. Photographer Muñoz said that Göbeklitepe has required everyone to revise their ideas about history. And in the exhibited photographs, Muñoz has tried to relate findings in Göbeklitepe with the items of contemporary Spanish culture such as bullfighting and paintings of Pablo Picasso. The exhibition which enables visitors to see a newly discovered item, a wild-boar statue, from Göbeklitepe will remain open for visits until January 2025.

TURKISH BALLET SHINES IN ATHENS WITH DEBUT OF 'ZORBA'



Turkish ballet İlhan Durgut has been invited to perform in the ballet "Zorba" in Athens. Durgut, the principal dancer of Ankara State Opera and Ballet, will portray the character "John" in this production, based on the internationally acclaimed novel by Nikos Kazantzakis. The Greek National Opera extended an invitation for him to perform the play "Zorba" at the opening of the new season on 9 October.

Durgut, in a pre-departure interview, mentioned that the rehearsals were difficult and tiring. He mentioned that the ballet Zorba has been staged intermittently for 15 years and added that he had previously played another character in "Zorba". Durgut stated that he was invited with a very nice letter and added that he is the only representative from Türkiye. He said that he would be dancing abroad for the first time and emphasised that it is important for his career.

TEMPLE OF ATHENA RESTORED AFTER CENTURIES



The Temple of Athena built around seventh century A.D. was re-erected using the artifacts from the collapsed pillars after hundreds of years. The Director of the Antalya Surveying and Monuments Regional Directorate, Veysel Akin quoted "Only one pillar which did not even have a pillar heading was standing before the restoration work. Thanks to the restoration work, 20 pillars have just been raised using steel hoops to further strengthen the raised pillars." Additionally, Akin stated "We are conducting renovation works accordingly with our identifications regarding the initial state of the area."

During the restoration work started last year, original marble steps were discovered in the East front of the structure and replica steps were made using a mixture of marble dust with plaster to replace the missing ones. As the next step, we are planning to finish the restoration works as soon as possible and illuminate the area to open it as a night museum as a part of the Ministry's 'Legacy for The Future' project. Located in Side, Antalya; the newly renovated temple is located near the recently renovated Temple of Apollo. Both temples continue to amaze the local and international tourists with their enduring beauty.

ANTALYA'S SYEDRA ANCIENT CITY TO OFFER NIGHTTIME TOURS



Antalya is set to launch a "Night Museum" at Syedra Ancient City, joining a growing trend of evening access to Türkiye's historic sites. Located in the Seki neighbourhood, Syedra boasts a history of about three thousand years, with ongoing excavations led by Associate Professor Ertuğ Ergürer. Recent discoveries include a 250 metre colonnaded street, theatre, council house, bathhouse and infrastructure like workshops and cisterns.

Efforts to ready Syedra for nighttime visits include organising ancient streets, clearing

pathways and installing lights to enhance the evening experience. Supported by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the project aligns with broader goals to promote heritage tourism. Ergürer notes that excavation efforts prioritise areas where locals live and work, adding staircases and alleyways that connect the main streets, enriching the visitor experience. Other sites in Antalya such as Aspendos, Patara, Side, Alanya Castle, Perge, Phaselis, Olympos, Limyra and Myra will also participate to stay open until midnight.

SAINT GEORGE CHURCH IN TÜRKİYE REGAINS ITS DOME AFTER 100 YEARS



The dome of the 1600 years old Saint George Church in Diyarbakır, which was heavily damaged in the Kahramanmaraş centred earthquakes on 6 February 2023, was restored after 100 years.

Diyarbakır Museum Deputy Director Müjdat Gizligöl emphasised that Diyarbakır is exceptionally rich in cultural heritage, noting that

significant civilisations have flourished in the region for approximately 10,000 years, from the Neolithic period to the present. Highlighting that Diyarbakır is home to numerous mosques, churches, inns, baths and bridges, Gizligöl emphasised that one of these historic structures is the Church of Saint George. Gizligöl further explained that this church, built during the

Roman Empire, is among the earliest places of worship in the Christian world within this region and noted that the Church of Saint George was severely damaged in the 6 February 2023 earthquake and stated that the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye promptly initiated restoration efforts, which are now nearing completion.

HOW COULD TÜRKİYE CONTRIBUTE TO EUROPE'S ENERGY SECURITY?

Türkiye's strategic location and energy infrastructure make it a crucial partner for Europe's energy security, offering alternative gas routes and renewable potential to support the EU's diversification and sustainability goals.

Laura BATALLA ADAM
Analyst

Europe's energy security has changed drastically in recent years as geopolitical tensions and supply chain challenges have revealed vulnerabilities. As the EU seeks stable alternatives to meet its energy needs, Türkiye has emerged as a key potential partner, offering critical routes for diversified and secure energy sources.

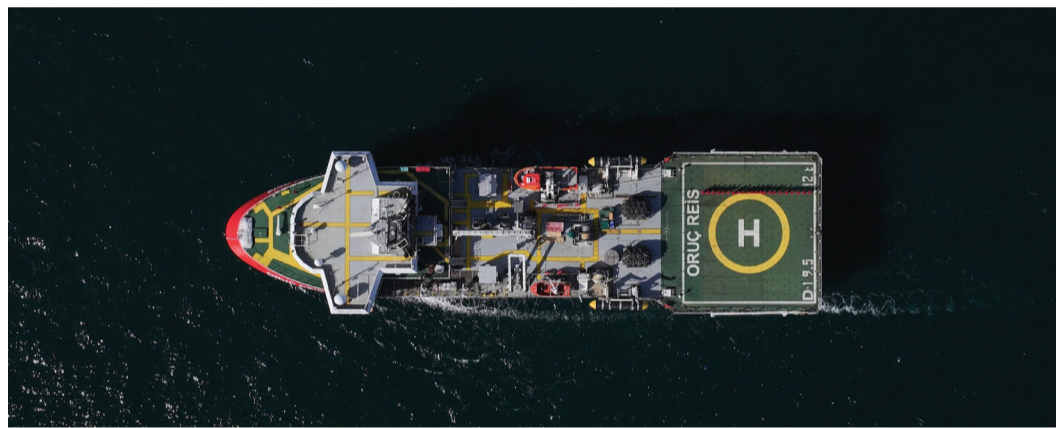
The Russian War and Its Implications on Europe's Energy Security

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has exposed Europe's reliance on Russian energy, showing just how vulnerable the continent is to disruptions used as geopolitical tools. Before 2022, nearly 45% of EU gas imports came from Russia, prompting the EU to take immediate actions to lessen this dependency. Initiatives like the REPowerEU plan, which focus on investing in renewable energy and diversifying supply sources, were implemented. As a result, imports from other countries increased and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) grew to 42% of EU gas imports between 2021 and 2023, compared to 20% before.

The EU's 2022 Energy Platform advanced these efforts further by coordinating joint gas purchases and expanding infrastructure, especially for LNG. However, with natural gas still playing a significant role in Europe's energy mix, finding dependable external partners remains essential for energy security in the short to medium term.

Türkiye as a Strategic Partner in Europe's Energy Security

Türkiye's location makes it an important bridge between Europe and energy-rich areas like the Caspian Sea and the Middle East. Major projects such as the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) and



TurkStream highlight Türkiye's role as a pathway for gas into Europe, supplying Azerbaijani and Russian gas, respectively. However, this positioning also highlights Türkiye's need to balance Russian and EU interests due to its significant ties with both, posing challenges for Türkiye's alignment with the EU's diversification objectives.

Due to its strategic location, Türkiye provides Europe an opportunity to diversify its gas sources from countries like Azerbaijan and potentially Turkmenistan. The Southern Gas Corridor (SGC), which includes TANAP, is central to this goal, currently delivering 16 billion cubic meters (BCM) of Azerbaijani gas annually to Europe, with plans to expand to 31 BCM. Nonetheless, the SGC faces significant infrastructural and political challenges, limiting its immediate capacity to offset Europe's dependence on Russian gas. Expanding TANAP and the Trans Adriatic Pipeline would require significant investments and international collaboration.

Despite Türkiye's efforts to diversify its energy sources, Russian gas remains crucial due to historic ties and economic factors. The TurkStream pipeline, which channels Russian gas to Europe through Türkiye, strengthens Türkiye's position as a key transit country, aligning it with Russian energy

interests and complicating its EU relationship. Although TurkStream boosts Türkiye's role as an energy hub, it raises concerns in the EU as it bypasses Ukraine, which some see as undermining European security interests. Balancing its ties with Russia while serving as an energy bridge for the EU, Türkiye could better align with the EU's energy independence goals by reducing its reliance on Russian energy; however, this shift would likely bring economic and political challenges.

Building on its established pipeline infrastructure, Türkiye could further solidify its position by enhancing transit routes from other regions, such as the Eastern Mediterranean. This region presents a promising alternative for Europe's energy needs, but unresolved political tensions and territorial disputes with regional actors hinder progress. Improved cooperation with neighbouring countries could create new energy routes, allowing Türkiye to serve as a bridge to transport these reserves to Europe. However, realising this potential depends on overcoming longstanding political disagreements in the region.

Türkiye's Evolving Energy Policy

Over the last two decades, Türkiye has transformed its energy policy, balancing security, price stability and geopolitical interests. Türkiye

has made major investments in diversifying its imports, decreasing reliance on a single supplier, particularly from Russia. This includes enhancing its domestic LNG infrastructure, like Floating Storage Regasification Units (FSRUs), which boosted Türkiye's import capacity to approximately 156 million cubic meters (MCM) per day. Additionally, the discovery of the Sakarya gas field in the Black Sea (Türkiye's largest to date) promises to raise domestic production, potentially reaching 14 BCM annually in the next phase.

In addition to these diversification efforts, Türkiye is expanding its investments in renewable energy, with renewables accounting for 54% of its installed power capacity by the end of 2022. A sustained commitment to implementing renewables and clean energy sources would more closely align Türkiye with the EU's long-term goals for sustainability and decarbonisation under the Green Deal.

Clean Energy and Collaborative Potential

As Europe speeds up its transition to clean energy, Türkiye's expanding LNG infrastructure and geographic advantages open unique opportunities for EU collaboration. Türkiye has made notable progress in renewable energy, especially in wind and solar, setting the stage for

further growth. Enhanced renewable infrastructure would enable Türkiye to meet its own needs while also potentially supplying clean energy to Europe.

Türkiye has also shown interest in green hydrogen development as a renewable energy source, aligning with the EU's decarbonisation agenda. Green hydrogen partnerships between Türkiye and the EU would provide energy diversity and contribute to the EU's Green Deal targets. Collaborative efforts in renewable energy and hydrogen production would not only support EU climate goals but also bolster sustainable energy security for Türkiye, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship.

Path Forward

Türkiye's role in Europe's energy security framework is complex and multifaceted. Its strategic position offers Europe access to diverse gas sources from regions like the Caspian and Middle East, while the Eastern Mediterranean holds promise if political tensions are resolved. Projects such as the proposed expansion of TANAP and potential green hydrogen partnerships highlight Türkiye's capacity to support Europe's energy diversification strategy.

However, Türkiye's energy policy also reflects a delicate balance with Russia, which complicates full alignment with EU diversification goals. The continued flow of Russian gas through Türkiye poses challenges for both Europe and Türkiye in achieving true energy independence from Russian sources.

To maximise these opportunities, Türkiye and the EU should explore deeper collaboration on clean energy and renewable projects under the EU's existing mandate. By working together, both regions can enhance energy security and support sustainable development, setting the stage for a more resilient Türkiye-EU energy partnership.