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TÜRKİYE'S STRATEGIC RISE AS A GLOBAL MEDIATOR: SHAPING DIALOGUE AND DRIVING CONSENSUS

Türkiye comes forward as a global mediator by facilitating dialogue and diplomatic aptitude for conflict resolution.

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Türkiye has intensified its mediation efforts over the past decade, leveraging its strategic location between Europe and Asia to address crises and conflicts. With a multifaceted foreign policy, it engages diverse actors and employs its diplomatic skills to facilitate dialogue and conflict resolution. As a member of NATO and Organisation of Turkic States as well as partner of entities like the EU, Türkiye translates its geostrategic position into soft power, undertaking initiatives to promote regional and global peace.

The Alliance of Civilisations Initiative With Spain

The initiative was launched by Türkiye and Spain in 2005 with the goal of increasing support for cultural respect and reducing xenophobia and mutual suspicion between Muslim and Western societies. Its significant presence led to its adoption as a UN mechanism, known as "The Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilisations," which comprises 145 members those being countries and international organisations. Up until now, ten global forums have taken place the last one to be on 25-27 November 2024 in Morocco.

Trilateral Mechanisms: A Way to Tackle Bilateral Problems

Türkiye adopts trilateral mechanisms between countries that have historical disagreements which caused regional and even global tension. To secure once strived peace through its own means, Türkiye initiated the trilateral mechanism of Türkiye-Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since its inception in 2010, the parties have met nine times to discuss opportunities for cooperation and ways to support peace. Through such efforts, Türkiye enhances its international prestige, solidifying its role as an actor striving for peace and stability on the global stage.



Astana Process

Türkiye as a part of the Astana Process started in 2017, has encouraged the adoption of the ceasefire along with the UN Resolution 2254 of 2015 and joined the peace talks that took place in Astana, which hence took the name. Even though the process did not result in an outcome and the regime in Syria ended with Assad's fall instead, it still might be stated to help with defining the conditions of the peace and the ways to deliver humanitarian aid.

Russia-Ukraine War: The Grain Deal, Antalya Diplomacy Forum and Prisoner Exchange Operation

Located in the close periphery, Türkiye has been monitoring the war closely since day one. Since the beginning of the war, Türkiye supplied Ukraine with humanitarian aid and invited the parties to act with common sense. Upon the invitation of Türkiye, on 10 March 2022, the high-level representatives of the war were brought together to talk about the conditions of a possible reconciliation. Thanks

to Türkiye's and the UN's efforts, Ukraine's grain could be exported to 45 countries preventing a global food crisis. Around the same time, Türkiye exercised its rights under the Montreux Convention not allowing for controlling the passage of warships through the straits to obstruct escalation of the war. Moreover, Türkiye supported two prisoner exchange events one of which took place in Ankara and marked the biggest prisoner exchange since the Cold War.

Hamas-Israeli Conflict

Defending the two-state solution in the region, Türkiye has been advocating for Palestine's right to self-determination in line with the UN's Resolution 181 of 1947. While Türkiye has long supported Palestine's cause by providing humanitarian aid and constructing a discourse. In this regard, its advocacy has become more prominent with the global public increasingly viewing Israel's aggression as disproportionate. Additionally, Türkiye has lobbied for Palestine to be recognised by other countries and proposed arranging

peace talks between Hamas and Israel. Lastly, Türkiye played a role in the release of five Thai hostages on 30 January by negotiating with Hamas' authorities. Considering Türkiye's overall contributions, its efforts to draw international law's attention to Palestine's plight can be said to have helped amplify Palestine's voice on the global stage.

Somalia-Ethiopia Peace Agreement

Somalia and Ethiopia made a peace deal in the last month of 2024 in Ankara to address long-standing tensions between the two nations, primarily concerning Somalia's territorial integrity and Ethiopia's desire to secure access to the sea. The Ankara Declaration affirmed Somalia's sovereign rights while acknowledging Ethiopia's need for reliable maritime access. This breakthrough followed years of strained relations and failed mediation efforts by other regional and international actors. Türkiye's successful mediation was hailed as a testament to its growing diplomatic influence and commitment to peace and stability in the Horn of Africa.

Feridun Sinirlioğlu's Appointment in the OSCE

Nominated jointly by Türkiye and Greece, Feridun Sinirlioğlu was appointed as the new OSCE Secretary General which is a significant position for addressing global challenges, promoting comprehensive security, and arranging field missions or mediation operations. Considering Türkiye's active mediation stance, it can be stated that Sinirlioğlu, as OSCE Secretary General, will contribute to Türkiye's international diplomacy endeavours. Given his cultural background and outlook, it can also be said that coming from a geography surrounded by conflicts and representing a country with a strong diplomatic skillset, OSCE Secretary General Sinirlioğlu might help Europe's security outlook evolve in a more distinctive, innovative, dynamic, holistic and inclusive direction.

Conclusion

Türkiye, located at the crossroads of civilisations, embodies a unique position as both the East within the West and the West within the East. This positioning is reflected in its tradition of multidimensional diplomacy and its capacity for navigating complex international dynamics. As a mediator, Türkiye has consistently shown its ability to engage with diverse actors at the negotiation table and address challenging issues, particularly over the last decade. It could be argued that Türkiye's recent mediation efforts and advancements in its defence industry have contributed to projecting a convincing image in terms of security, thereby facilitating the appointment of the OSCE Secretary General Sinirlioğlu. Recently, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has stated that Türkiye is prepared to facilitate a reconciliation process between Rwanda and the Republic of Congo, should such a request arise. This indicates Türkiye's ongoing interest in contributing to international mediation efforts and its readiness to support dialogue in diverse contexts.



IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU: “TÜRKİYE-EU RELATIONS SHOULD BE IMPROVED IN TRUMP’S SECOND TERM”

IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu stated that Türkiye-EU relations will also be affected by the second term of the US President Donald Trump and that there is a favourable ground for taking new steps in relations. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu touched upon the consequences of the start of the second term of the US President Trump and noted that factors such as the beginning of the post-Assad era in Syria and the ceasefire in Gaza should also be evaluated.

Chairperson Zeytinoğlu said the following:

“President Trump started his second term very quickly and issued critical decrees whose majority is on domestic politics in his first days in office. However, decisions such as the withdrawal from the World Health Organisation and the Paris Climate Agreement mean that in this new era, the US will not support international organisations and structures unlike the EU which places the relevant agreement at the centre of its foreign policy. While we expect the struggle between the US and China to escalate in various fields especially in technology and AI, the steps such as Trump’s desire to take Greenland, further erode the UN-centred international order. The EU needs partners for European security, trade order and the resilience of international institutions or it will find it increasingly difficult to safeguard its interests between the unpredictable US, an aggressive Russia and a rising China on the other.”



Chairperson Zeytinoğlu then evaluated the situation in Europe and mentioned the document entitled “Competitiveness Compass” published on 29 January 2025:

“The recession in Europe and the challenges of green and digital transformation have also created political instability. The “Competitiveness Compass” announced by the European Commission yesterday touches on the right issues such as further integration of the European market, closing the innovation gap of Europe, lowering energy prices, and channelling investments to more effective areas. However, the strengthening of populist movements in countries like Germany and France are leading to an increase in protectionism and weakening the common European space and makes it difficult for the EU to act together.”

IKV Chairperson Zeytinoğlu also touched upon Türkiye-EU relations and made suggestions on what can be done in this new period of significant changes and delivered the following:

“Under changing and challenging circumstances, it is crucial to update and develop Türkiye-EU relations in a multidimensional manner. Türkiye is already significantly harmonised with the European market through the Customs Union relationship. To the extent that it can adapt to green and digital transformations, it can be more effective in the EU market by increasing its competitiveness. Although Türkiye’s accession process is currently frozen, it is important for Türkiye to distinguish itself from its competitors with its dynamic private sector, continue to aim for EU membership despite all the problems and update the Customs Union to advance candidature process.”

OPENING MEETING OF THE EU INFORMATION CENTRES NETWORK HELD AT IKV



The opening meeting of the 2024-2026 period of the Support Project for the EU Information Centres Network in Türkiye, carried out under the umbrella of TOBB, took place on 16-17 January 2025, at TOBB Plaza in İstanbul, hosted by IKV. The opening speeches of the meeting were delivered by IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu and the Head of the EU Delegation to Türkiye Ambassador Thomas Hans Ossowski, while the session was moderated by Ramunas Janušauskas, Head of Communication Section of the EU Delegation to Türkiye.

In his speech, Chairperson Zeytinoğlu emphasised the importance of EU Information Centres and noted that efforts to improve Türkiye-EU relations are not only valuable for Türkiye’s future but also for the future of Europe, as well as for peace and prosperity. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu highlighted that since the establishment of the EU Information Centres Network in 1996, the geopolitical

landscape has undergone fundamental changes. Despite the achievements of European integration, economic slowdowns, financial crises, migration challenges, security threats and conflicts in and around Europe have created a much more challenging environment.

In his speech, the Head of the EU Delegation to Türkiye, Ambassador Ossowski, highlighted the regional and geopolitical significance of Türkiye-EU relations. Ambassador Ossowski described 2025 as a period of opportunity with the European Commission’s new cabinet taking office, emphasising the need for mutual efforts to seize this opportunity. The meeting was attended by IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit, Communication Officer of the EU Delegation to Türkiye Selda Düzenli, the TOBB project coordination team and coordinators from the 18 cities where the project is being implemented.

POLISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS VISITED IKV

The experts Dr. Jędrzej Czerep and Dr. Aleksandra Maria Spancerska from the Institute of International Relations, which is one of the leading think tanks in Poland visited IKV and met with IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas. Following the briefing on the activities of IKV and the opportunities for cooperation, Dr. Czerep and Dr. Spancerska met with IKV Experts. During the meeting, priorities of the Polish Presidency, Türkiye-EU relations and global developments were discussed.



HEAD OF THE EU DELEGATION TO TÜRKİYE OSSOWSKI VISITED IKV



The Head of the EU Delegation to Türkiye, Ambassador Thomas Hans Ossowski, along with his accompanying delegation, visited IKV on 16 January 2025 and met with IKV

Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu. The latest developments in Türkiye-EU relations were discussed during the meeting, and information was provided on IKV’s ongoing activities.

HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN CAME TOGETHER WITH SLOVAK PRIME MINISTER FICO



Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico paid an official visit to Türkiye on 20 January 2025. President Erdoğan stated that relations with Slovakia had been elevated to the level of a strategic partnership through the signing of a joint declaration and highlighted the fact that during the discussions, various agreements were signed to promote collaboration in areas such as trade, defence industry, culture, and investment.

President Erdoğan stated that the trade volume increased from 1 billion dollars in 2019, to 3 billion dollars now. Moreover, President Erdoğan expressed that he believes the shared target of 5 billion dollars could be surpassed in a short time in which

Joint Economic and Trade Committee would play a critical role. Additionally, President Erdoğan expressed confidence in Slovakia's support for Türkiye's goal of full EU membership. Emphasising Türkiye's determination to continue the accession process, President Erdoğan stated his belief that Slovakia would remain supportive throughout this journey. President Erdoğan highlighted that strengthening Türkiye-EU relations would benefit not only Türkiye but also Europe as a whole.

Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico expressed full support for Türkiye's accession process to the EU, emphasising that Slovakia stands firmly by Türkiye in achieving this goal. Highlighting that the target

of increasing the trade volume between the two countries to 5 billion euros is attainable while also highlighting the importance of Türkiye's peaceful foreign policy approach and its role as an international mediator. Praising Türkiye's rise and leadership role on the international stage, Prime Minister Fico noted that relations between Slovakia and Türkiye will continue to strengthen on a robust and enduring basis. Lastly, Prime Minister Fico stated that Slovakia supports the Gaza ceasefire and efforts for stability in Syria, while also expressing a desire to deepen cooperation in areas such as the defence industry, energy and technology.

FOREIGN MINISTER FIDAN CAME TOGETHER WITH AMBASSADORS OF EU MEMBER STATES

Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan hosted ambassadors of EU Member States on 14 January 2024. The head of the EU Delegation to Türkiye Ambassador Thomas Hans Ossowski, and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay attended the meeting in Ankara. In the meeting where Türkiye-EU relations were discussed, the importance of values, mutual respect and common interests were stressed.

The EU Delegation to Türkiye stated that the two sides reaffirmed mutual respect, shared interests, and values during the discussions



in Ankara. Also, the EU Delegation published the following message: "As Türkiye, an EU accession country,

and the EU, re-engage amidst global challenges, the strong foundation of their partnership was emphasised."

TIMELINE JANUARY 2025

Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan came together with his Belgian counterpart Bernard Quintin.	1	
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Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan came together with the TRNC President Ersin Tatar.	7	
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Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan came together with his Slovenian counterpart, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Tanja Fajon.	13	
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	15	IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu came together with the Head of the Delegation of the EU to Türkiye Thomas Ossowski.
	16	
	17	IKV held Opening Meeting of the EU Information Centres Network in Türkiye.
	18	
	19	
President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came together with Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico.	20	
Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan came together with his Swedish counterpart Maria Malmer Stenergard.	21	
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	23	
Foreign Minister Fidan came together with the EU Foreign Affairs Commissioner and European Commission Vice President Kaja Kallas.	24	
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	27	
President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met with Speaker of the House of Representatives in the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina Denis Zvizdić.	28	Dr. Alexandra Spancerska and Dr. Jędrzej Czapiec from Polish Institute of International Affairs visited IKV.
	29	
	30	IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu made a statement about the future of Türkiye-EU relations in US President Trump's Second Term.
	31	

HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

TÜRKİYE-SWEDEN SECURITY COMPACT MEETING WAS HELD IN ANKARA



The first meeting of the Security Compact between Türkiye and Sweden was held in Ankara on 21 January 2025. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Minister of Interior Ali Yerlikaya, Swedish Foreign Minister Maria Malmer Stenergard and Minister for Justice of Sweden Gunnar Strömmer participated in the Security Compact Meeting.

The Security Compact Mechanism was created at a meeting between President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson and former NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the Vilnius Summit in July 2023. Türkiye-Sweden Security Compact Meeting was held in order to discuss cooperation on security, especially in the field of counter terrorism. The steps taken against terrorist organisations and additional measures were discussed at the meeting.

Minister Fidan, Minister Stenergard and Minister Strömmer attended the joint press conference held after the Security Compact Meeting. Minister Strömmer stated that they know terrorist organisations are transnational criminal groups. Also, Minister Fidan highlighted the importance of joint efforts with allies in investigating, prosecuting and convicting these crimes as well as preventing them. Minister Fidan also noted that a roadmap had been prepared between Türkiye and Sweden to address these issues. Minister Fidan stated that Türkiye will continue to support Sweden in its efforts to combat terrorism. According to Minister Fidan, Sweden is an important partner and ally for Türkiye and, this meeting reaffirmed their determination to strengthen cooperation. Economic cooperation is a key dimension of bilateral relations, he added.

FOREIGN MINISTER FIDAN CAME TOGETHER WITH HIS BELGIAN COUNTERPART QUINTIN



Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan met with Bernard Quintin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs, Foreign Trade, and the Federal Cultural Institutions of Belgium in Ankara on 2 January 2025. The meeting focused on Türkiye-Belgium relations, Türkiye-EU relations, the Ukraine-Russia war, the situation in Syria, and the Israel-Gaza conflict.

First and foremost, Quintin emphasised that Türkiye is a key partner for both Belgium and the EU. He also stated that Belgium would

support Türkiye's EU accession process and the modernisation of the Customs Union.

Regarding ongoing crises, both parties largely share similar views. Starting with Ukraine, they exchanged perspectives on the outcomes of the war and their efforts to bring it to an end. Concerning Syria, both Türkiye and Belgium are aligned on the importance of territorial integrity, protection of minorities, and governance based on international law. Lastly, they called for an end to the violence and the release of hostages in Gaza.

FOREIGN MINISTER HAKAN FIDAN MET WITH EU COMMISSION MEMBER HADJA LAHBİB



Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and European Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management Hadja Lahbib discussed key issues regarding Türkiye-EU relations, post-earthquake support and regional crises during the meeting. Minister Fidan reminded that Lahbib had held meetings in Ankara and Gaziantep and drew attention to her sensitivity to crises in the region while stating that she also had made significant contributions, especially regarding the Palestinian issue. Minister Fidan expressed his gratitude for the EU's aid, support and projects after the earthquake in Türkiye and emphasised that cooperation on this issue will continue. Stating that he conveyed Türkiye's perspective, Fidan commented that they make continuous efforts for the economic normalisation of Syria by removing sanctions and easing the safe return of millions of refugees to their countries. He added that Türkiye will continue to work with the EU in this process.

Hadja Lahbib emphasised that Türkiye is a candidate country and a strategic partner for the EU and highlighted Türkiye's strong cooperation in the EU civil protection mechanism. Expressing that Türkiye hopes for a successful transition process in Syria, Lahbib stated that they aim for a process in which all Syrians are valued and embraced. She also stated the desire for a safe, voluntary and dignified return process. Lahbib noted that the steps taken and support provided by Türkiye for years regarding refugees are of vital importance and that the EU has provided and continues to provide great support on this issue. Reminding that the EU has announced an aid package of 235 million euros for the humanitarian crisis in Syria, she drew attention to Türkiye's critical role in humanitarian corridors. She also highlighted the importance of continued ceasefire in Gaza to continue the release of prisoners and to end the humanitarian crises.

SLOVENIAN FOREIGN MINISTER FAJON VISITED TÜRKİYE



Tanja Fajon, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, paid a visit to Türkiye on 13-14 January 2025. Minister Fajon held talks with Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and attended the 9th Session of Türkiye-Slovenia Joint Economic Commission, co-chaired by Youth and Sports Minister Osman Aşkın Bak.

During the meeting, Minister Fidan touched upon the progress made in relations between the two countries within the framework of the 2024-2026 Strategic Partnership Action Plan. The importance of realising the potential for bilateral cooperation

in the defence industry was underlined, and it was stated that dialogue remains the sole path to resolving issues in the Balkans. Minister Fidan also touched upon the importance of providing support for Syria from the international community while emphasising the urgency of establishing a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and ensuring the uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid.

Minister Fajon highlighted that Türkiye and Slovenia have excellent political cooperation and that economic relations are also strengthening in the current context. While noting that both countries are popular tourist destinations, Minister Fajon said citizens from both countries should visit the other country and that the bilateral relations are being fostered across various sectors including agriculture, infrastructure, energy (particularly renewable energy), and pharmaceuticals. Referring to Türkiye-EU relations, Minister Fajon expressed support for the continuation of Türkiye's EU accession process and highlighted the importance of dialogue.

NATO SECRETARY GENERAL RUTTE: TÜRKİYE IS A VALUABLE MEMBER OF NATO

At the NATO Military Committee meeting in Brussels, Türkiye's role as a crucial ally, ensuring stability in the Euro-Atlantic region was reaffirmed.

During a high-level meeting of NATO Chiefs of Defence in Brussels on 15-16 January, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte reiterated the need for NATO to prepare for potential future conflicts. NATO Secretary General stated, "To prevent war, we must prepare for it. It is time to shift to a wartime mindset." He underscored the importance of increasing defence spending, enhancing NATO's readiness, and strengthening cooperation with global partners.

In the meeting where Türkiye was represented by the Chief of General Staff Metin Gürak, the discussions highlighted Türkiye's ongoing commitment to NATO's collective defence efforts and its role in ensuring security within the Euro-Atlantic region. During the meeting, Secretary General reaffirmed Türkiye's crucial role in the Alliance during a session at the European Parliament, responding to concerns raised by far-right French politician Jordan Bardella. Rutte



emphasised that "Türkiye is a valuable member of NATO," highlighting the country's contributions to regional security and its strategic position within the Alliance while stating a separate European NATO is "not realistic".

On the other hand, addressing questions from members of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs and Security and Defence Subcommittees, Rutte recalled Türkiye's instrumental role in the 2016 migration agreement, which significantly reduced the number of Syrian refugees

arriving in Germany, Sweden, and the Netherlands. He acknowledged Türkiye's efforts to fulfil its NATO responsibilities while also pursuing its national interests, as all NATO members do. Rutte also addressed the broader security landscape, asserting that Europe's security is directly tied to the outcome of the war in Ukraine. Rutte also stressed that NATO must continue to support Ukraine to ensure lasting peace and stability, warning that if Russia achieves its objectives in Ukraine, further aggression would be inevitable.

EXPORTS OF TURKISH DEFENCE INDUSTRY HAVE ACCELERATED



2024 turned out to be a year of records for Turkish defence and aerospace industry in terms of exports. As the goal for the exports were passed by 11% in total defence industry exports and reached 7.2 billion dollars, the EU Member States were also among the countries making deals and cooperating with Turkish firms. For example, Turkish company Otokar won the tender in Romania which enables the company to sell 1059 vehicles amounting to approximately 857 million euros. The deal is the

biggest one in terms of armoured vehicle exports in a single agreement. Likewise, Türkiye and Spain signed a memorandum of understanding in December 2024, which establishes a base for exporting HÜRJET to Spain as training aircraft. Plus, Türkiye will export naval vessels to Portugal with Turkish firm STM's success in tender to provide two provision and supply ships. The agreement was signed in Lisbon on 17 December 2024 and gave way for first Turkish naval exports to a NATO and EU Member State.

SİLİFKE YOGURT GOT EU RECOGNITION



Turkish application to register Silifke Yogurt for official recognition in the EU was finalised on 23 January. Being the 30th product from Türkiye, the yogurt is made from a mixture of milk obtained from goats fed with endemic plants in the Taurus Mountains and cows fed from these regions. The product is unique in Türkiye due to its long shelf life and flavour. Silifke is a district of Mersin in the south of Türkiye which has a coast between Antalya and Adana. TOBB President M. Rifat Hisarcıklıoğlu extended his

congratulations to the President of the Silifke Chamber of Commerce and Industry Nurettin Kaynar, and everyone involved in the significant achievement, emphasising that, "We are fortunate to have a diversity of products that only a few regions in the world possess. As TOBB and the chamber-exchange community, we are making significant efforts to promote local and geographically indicated products." Furthermore, registration process for recognition on 70 geographical indications and three product names continues.

SOCAR TO INVEST 7 BILLION DOLLARS IN TÜRKİYE



Azerbaijan's state-owned energy giant SOCAR has announced a significant 7 billion dollars investment in Türkiye's petrochemical sector. This initiative, which is part of SOCAR's long-term strategic master plan, aims to reduce Türkiye's reliance on imported petrochemical products and enhance the country's production capacity.

The investment will focus on establishing new polyolefin production facilities at Petkim,

SOCAR Türkiye's petrochemical unit in Aliağa, Izmir. SOCAR Türkiye's CEO, Elçin İbadov, highlighted that the company has already invested approximately 18.5 billion dollars in Türkiye over the past 17 years, making it the country's largest foreign investor. "With this new investment, we are reinforcing our commitment to Türkiye's energy sector and economic development," said İbadov during a press conference in İstanbul.

The investment will facilitate the construction of production units with an annual capacity of 1.2 million tons of ethylene, 550 thousand tons of polypropylene, and 827 thousand tons of HDPE/LLDPE. These expansions are expected to boost SOCAR Türkiye's revenues and increase its domestic market share. Following the investment announcement, Petkim's shares surged by 5.5% on the stock exchange.

SOCAR's long-term vision for Türkiye also includes substantial investments in natural gas infrastructure. The company has invested 209 million dollars in Kayserigaz and Bursagaz distribution networks, expanding their reach to thousands of kilometres and servicing over 1.9 million subscribers. Furthermore, with over 10 thousand employees, SOCAR Türkiye plays a crucial role in Türkiye's employment and industrial landscape.

TÜRKİYE TO PARTNER WITH AXIOM SPACE FOR NEW FRONTIERS IN SPACE EXPLORATION



The Turkish Space Agency and US-based space infrastructure company Axiom Space have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to expand Türkiye's role in the global space industry. The agreement will enhance collaboration in fields such as space technology, aviation, textiles, material science, advanced manufacturing, communications, and life sciences. The partnership aims to strengthen Türkiye's position in

the global space supply chain while fostering innovation across multiple sectors. It also emphasises engaging the nation's youth in space-related activities to inspire the next generation of astronauts, engineers, scientists, and leaders. Key goals outlined in the agreement include establishing research laboratories, creating manufacturing facilities for microgravity environments, testing materials for deep space missions,

and developing logistics hubs in low-Earth orbit. The collaboration will also focus on training professional astronauts and advancing platforms for communication and observation.

Axiom Space Chief Revenue Officer Tejpal Bhatia praised Türkiye's progress, particularly on the anniversary of the Ax-3 mission, which marked Türkiye's first astronaut traveling to space. Bhatia added that the partnership will integrate Turkish suppliers into the global space supply chain and leverage Türkiye's strong aviation and technological expertise to achieve new milestones.

As the International Space Station approaches the end of its operational lifespan in 2030, commercial space stations are expected to take the lead in maintaining human activities and research in space. This collaboration positions Türkiye to play a significant role in the next era of space exploration. The agreement reflects Türkiye's growing ambitions in space and its commitment to becoming a key player in the global space economy.

TÜRKİYE TO ACCELERATE RENEWABLE ENERGY INVESTMENTS THROUGH "SUPER PERMITS"

In order to facilitate investments in the energy sector and accelerate the implementation of energy projects, long and complex bureaucratic processes such as EIA, forestry permits, and zoning permits will be completed in a shorter time with the "super permit" mechanism. Coordinated by the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, the mechanism is centred on renewable energy and energy storage facilities.

The Ministry aims to define threshold values for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) decisions, conducting permit applications simultaneously with the EIA process, improving zoning and licensing procedures, simplifying forest permit procedures and turning them into a single permit and providing the opportunity for urgent expropriation.

The current system in place takes up to 48 months for a permit to be granted, and the number of required documents is substantial. These processes also increase the cost of the project and delay supply of renewable energy, leading to costs for Türkiye's economy. The



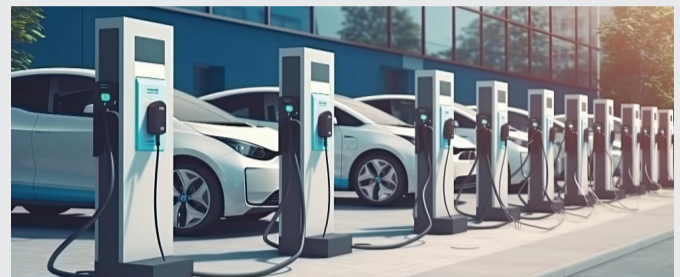
new mechanism aims to reduce the length of the permit process to two years or less.

Transition to renewable energy is crucial for emissions reductions in many sectors. Additionally, the energy sector in Türkiye is responsible for the highest emissions of any other sector. Therefore, this initiative is invaluable

in helping Türkiye achieve its climate pledges.

This development follows similar reforms throughout the world to streamline the processes of investing in renewable energy projects. The steps taken will enable projects to develop faster and increase the growth rate of the renewable energy sector in Türkiye.

TÜRKİYE SURPASSED THE EU IN THE NUMBER OF ELECTRIC CHARGING STATIONS



With investments from 176 licensed companies, the number of electric charging stations has boomed in a short period of time. Türkiye currently has one socket per six cars, surpassing the rates in the EU. Thanks to the investments, Türkiye's electric vehicles have reached 168 thousand, while the number of charging sockets has reached 27 thousand. One-third of Türkiye's charging station network consists of fast DC sockets, allowing electric vehicle users to charge their vehicles faster.

The energy sector has been growing, and with new investments, it is expected to grow even more. In the last two years, the number of electric vehicles in Türkiye has increased from 6 thousand to 168 thousand, while the number of charging stations has grown from 3 thousand to 27 thousand.

Meanwhile, 30 companies that did not meet their obligations are no longer allowed to hold a license. This way, the Energy Market Regulatory Authority (EPDK) managed to ensure that the customers have access to quality and affordable charging services as a result of continuous inspections.

The abundance of charging stations contributes to Türkiye achieving its net-zero emissions goal for 2053 and supports the transition of the transportation sector. It is expected that the number of electric vehicles in Türkiye will reach 1 million 300 thousand in 2030, and the number of charging stations will rise to 142 thousand. In 2035, it is expected that the number of electric vehicles will reach 3 million 300 thousand, while the number of charging stations will rise to 273 thousand.

SPANISH PRIME MINISTER SÁNCHEZ PROMOTED CLOSER TIES WITH TÜRKİYE



Prime Minister of Spain Pedro Sánchez gave a speech on 14 January at the Spanish Ambassadors Conference taking place in Madrid. In his address, he touched upon various topics shaping current international political context. Sánchez said that Spain acts in accordance with international law and respect for human rights on every occasion from the Middle East

to Ukraine. Prime Minister Sánchez underlined that Spain should further enhance its relations with Türkiye as part of Spain's efforts to increase dialogue with countries in the region and also cherished good relations established with Türkiye. Sánchez also put an emphasis on the EU and argued that the EU must be strengthened in terms of foreign policy.

DISCOVERY IN ZONGULDAK REVEALS PERSPECTIVE ON ANCIENT MEDICINE



A stone amulet dating back to the 4th century A.D. was found during excavations in the ancient city of Pisidia Antiokheia in the Yalvaç district of Isparta. On one side of the amulet is a crab figure, and on the other side is a sick girl and the names of her family. Assoc. Prof. Mehmet Özhanlı, who conducted the excavations, stated that this finding could be one of the first documents defining cancer, and added, "Crab is called 'Karkides' in Greek. Galen defines cancer as 'a disease that grasps and kills organs like the legs of a crab which

points to the modern definition of cancer". This discovery provides important clues about the understanding of health and disease in ancient times. The ancient city of Pisidia Antioch contains important ruins from the Roman and Byzantine periods and is also of great importance in terms of Christian history. The St. Paul Church located in the city is considered a pilgrimage centre as it is one of the places where St. Paul propagated Christianity. Assoc. Prof. Özhanlı added that the excavations are expected to continue all year round.

FIRST POSSIBLE TRACES OF THE KASKIANS WERE DISCOVERED



Traces of the Kaskians, which was an ancient society lived in Anatolia, might have been discovered for the first time as reported by Assoc. Prof. Hamza Ekmen, the Head of Excavation in Zonguldak. The İnönü Cave where some relics were found dates to the Early Bronze Age and is the oldest known settlement in the Western Black Sea region. Ekmen added that the cave and its surroundings resemble the environments of the Kaskians as depicted

by the Hittites while the excavated objects show similarities with those associated with the Hittites. According to the Hittites sources, it is known that the Kaskians posed as a threat as they attacked the Hittites especially during the times of vulnerability and instability. The findings are considered a milestone in that they are the first ever discovery attributed to the Kaskians as no evidence related to them had been uncovered until now.

TURKISH FARMER UNCOVERS RARE ANCIENT MOSAIC DEPICTING HUNT



A farmer in Elazığ, while planting fruit in his garden, discovered a largely intact and rare mosaic reflecting ancient hunting practices from the late Roman period. According to experts, the mosaic spans an area of 84 square metres and features depictions of rare animals, such as the Anatolian leopard, making it potentially the largest of its kind ever

found in Türkiye. Emre Çayır, the Excavation Director from the Elazığ State Archaeology and Ethnography Museum, who commented on the discovery, stated that this is the first complete example of its type, illustrating depictions of animals once present in the region, and suggested that even larger similar mosaics might exist in other parts of Türkiye.

THE FIRST CHURCH MADE IN POST-REPUBLIC ERA CONTINUES TO BE SYMBOL OF UNITY

For Ephrem Church, built in 2023, is an Assyrian church that serves the Assyrian Orthodox community of 18 thousand people. Located on the European side of Istanbul, the church features a two-floor parking lot, a wedding venue, and offers services such as baptisms, engagement events, marriage ceremonies, and prayers. The church has reportedly boosted the local economy and positively impacted the surrounding neighbourhood, which sees an influx of visitors on prayer days and during marriage ceremonies. Kenan Gürdal, Chairperson of the Virgin Mary Syriac Orthodox Church Foundation, stated that citizens from various backgrounds contributed to the construction process, noting that people of diverse ethnicities and beliefs continue to support the church. The church has a capacity of 750 people, was built at a cost of



approximately four million Turkish liras and is the first church constructed since the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923.

POLISH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU WAS WELCOMED WITH A CONCERT

In cooperation with the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, a concert was held in Ankara to celebrate the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU. Maciej Przemysław Lang, the Polish Ambassador to Ankara; Thomas Hans Ossowski, Head of the EU Delegation to Türkiye; and Elif Kurşunlu, Director General for Relations with the EU, were among the attendees. Türkiye-EU relations were the key topic discussed by the participants. Ambassador Ossowski emphasised the importance of Türkiye's EU candidacy and the potential contributions Türkiye could make if it became an EU member state.



THE NEW TRUMP ADMINISTRATION: FIVE KEY TRANSATLANTIC ISSUES IMPACTING EUROPE AND TÜRKİYE-EU RELATIONS

Trump's return shifts transatlantic dynamics, presenting both challenges and cooperation opportunities for Türkiye and Europe in security, trade, climate, technology, and migration.

Laura BATALLA ADAM
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Donald Trump's return to the White House marks a seismic shift not just for US domestic policy but for global relations, with significant implications for Europe and Türkiye. From security and trade to climate and technology, the ripple effects of Trump's agenda could alter the balance of transatlantic partnerships and reshape the dynamics between Türkiye, the EU and the US. These five critical issues highlight the challenges and opportunities arising from his presidency.

1. European Security Challenges

The transatlantic security order faces renewed uncertainty. Trump's transactional "America First" approach raises questions about the US commitment to NATO's collective defense. A potential Trump-imposed ceasefire in Ukraine, without a comprehensive settlement aligned with Ukraine's conditions for peace, could see the US retreat from military and financial support. This would leave Europe and NATO vulnerable to further Russian aggression, testing NATO's unity, especially in Eastern Europe.

Türkiye, a key NATO member and one of the few countries meeting the 2% defence spending target, plays a strategic role in this shifting landscape. Its strained relations with Washington over the Russian S-400 missile systems and challenges in Syria highlight a precarious balance in its security alignment. Cooperation with Türkiye will be critical for addressing shared security concerns, including counter-terrorism, refugee management, and regional stability.

For the EU, these developments demand stronger defence coordination and investment in military capabilities. Enhanced



security cooperation with Türkiye would help reinforce NATO's European leg while addressing regional threats.

2. Trade Relations and Economic Pressures

Trump's aversion to trade imbalances is likely to escalate tensions with Europe. His first term saw tariffs on steel and aluminium disrupt transatlantic trade, with Germany's auto industry—the backbone of the European economy—often in the crosshairs. These challenges arise as the EU seeks to balance economic security with decarbonisation and digitalisation goals.

Türkiye's role as a manufacturing and logistics hub places it in a pivotal position. While past disputes, including tariffs on Turkish steel and US sanctions, highlighted the fragility of these ties, Türkiye could benefit from the EU's push to diversify supply chains away from reliance on the US and China. By aligning its economic strategies with the EU, Türkiye can strengthen its role as a critical partner while enhancing its economic resilience.

Additionally, a renewed US-China trade war could see redirected Chinese exports flooding European markets, intensifying competition in clean technology and electric vehicles. Türkiye, by integrating with the EU's green and digital value chains, could bolster its attractiveness to foreign investors

and support Europe's economic security objectives.

3. Climate Policy and Environmental Cooperation

Trump's rollback of federal climate commitments and renewed support for fossil fuels starkly contrasts with the EU's Green Deal ambitions. This shift places additional pressure on Europe to lead global climate efforts.

Türkiye, having ratified the Paris Agreement and adopted a 2050 climate strategy, is positioned to align more closely with EU climate policies. Collaboration on renewable energy, clean technology, and sustainable development offers economic and environmental benefits for both sides. However, failure to meet EU green standards could expose Türkiye to measures like the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, limiting its market access and competitiveness.

Moreover, Türkiye's strategic position as an energy transit hub, particularly with the Southern Gas Corridor, reinforces its importance to Europe's energy security. Coordinating efforts on renewable energy and decarbonisation would not only strengthen the EU-Türkiye partnership but also fill the leadership void created by US disengagement from global climate policy.

4. Big Tech and Digital Sovereignty

The alignment between Trump and figures like Elon Musk raises concerns about the influence of

Big Tech on transatlantic relations. Issues such as election interference, disinformation, and digital security remain pressing challenges for democratic discourse.

The EU has responded with ambitious regulatory frameworks like the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Digital Markets Act (DMA). However, Trump's criticism of these measures highlights the need for the EU to build alliances with partners like Türkiye, who could adopt similar standards to diversify digital value chains and level the playing field.

For Türkiye, aligning its digital policies with European frameworks would enhance its cybersecurity and make it a more attractive destination for tech investments. Collaborative efforts in digital regulation and innovation could set ethical standards for managing emerging technologies while countering the destabilising effects of unchecked Big Tech influence.

5. Migration and Refugee Policies

Immigration remains one of Trump's most contentious issues, with restrictive policies that have significant global implications. For Türkiye, home to over 3.6 million Syrian refugees, managing migration flows between the Middle East and Europe is a critical challenge.

The 2016 Türkiye-EU refugee cooperation framework underscored Ankara's leverage in securing financial support and political concessions from the EU. With a more insular

US under Trump, international cooperation on migration may weaken, leaving Türkiye and the EU to shoulder greater responsibility.

Rather than viewing this as a challenge, it could be an opportunity for deeper collaboration. Joint strategies on border management, refugee integration, and labour market access could provide both regions with sustainable solutions to migration while showcasing leadership on humanitarian issues. This cooperation could also address EU labour shortages and support economic growth by attracting skilled migrants redirected from the US.

Navigating the Transatlantic Triangle

Trump's presidency presents significant challenges for Europe and Türkiye, from security uncertainties and trade tensions to climate, technology, and migration crises. Historical tensions, such as disputes over NATO contributions and trade policies, underscore the need for a united European response to Trump's unpredictability.

Türkiye, with its geographic and strategic importance, is an essential partner in addressing these disruptions. By prioritising cooperation on shared challenges, Türkiye and the EU can strengthen NATO's European leg, deepen economic ties through modernised trade frameworks, and align green and digital strategies to build more resilient value chains.

In migration, a shift toward comprehensive and sustainable policies could set a global example for managing refugee flows and integration, demonstrating Türkiye and the EU's ability to lead on humanitarian issues.

This partnership, grounded in shared responsibility and strategic alignment, offers a pathway to counterbalance the uncertainties of Trump's second term while shaping a more balanced and cooperative transatlantic future.