



IKVM NTHLY

ISSUE: 118 MARCH 2025

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TÜRKİYE'S CIRCULAR ECONOMY STRATEGY AND COMPLIANCE WITH EU LEGISLATION

Türkiye published its own circular economy strategy in order to align with the measures undertaken as part of the EU's circular economy policy.

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The closing meeting of the "Technical Assistance for Assessment of Türkiye's Potential on Transition to Circular Economy" (DEEP), carried out under the Pre-Participation Assistance Instrument (IPA) 2014-2020 period Environmental and Climate Action Sector Operational Programme, was held in Ankara on 11 February 2025. Within the scope of the project, Türkiye's transition to a circular economy was analysed in detail, and significant work was undertaken in areas such as waste management, resource efficiency, and sustainable production. During the closing meeting, where the project outcomes were shared, Türkiye's "National Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan" was introduced.

During the event, Deputy Minister of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change Fatma Varank stated that this plan will play an important role in achieving Türkiye's net-zero emission targets. Varank also remarked, "this model not only supports sustainable resource management but also provides opportunities for innovative business models and job creation."

The Head of the EU Delegation to Türkiye, Ambassador Thomas Hans Ossowski, who noted that Türkiye has made significant progress in environmental standards, emphasised that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of the century and highlighted the importance of Türkiye and the EU being closely and collaboratively engaged in this transformation. Ossowski stated, "together, we can transform not only the environment but also the Turkish economy."

General Manager of Environmental Management Fatih Turan explained that, based on the analyses conducted within the project, 6 strategic objectives, 22 goals, and a total of 52 actions were



identified. Turan emphasised that 27 of these actions involve legislative development responsibilities, while 25 focus on implementation measures encompassing infrastructure, financing, and institutional frameworks.

EU's Circular Economy Policy

On 11 December 2019, the European Commission announced the European Green Deal, a new growth strategy described as "a response" to the environmental challenges posed by climate change. The strategy aims to make the EU the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, decouple economic growth from resource use, and build a resource-efficient and competitive economy.

It was stated that, under the Green Deal, many new policies and strategies incorporating environmental considerations would be developed, and a new circular economy action plan would also be presented.

Accordingly, on 11 March 2020, the European Commission published a Communication titled "A New Circular Economy Action Plan for a Cleaner and More Competitive Europe," which builds on circular economy actions implemented since 2015 and aims to accelerate the transformational change required by the Green Deal.

The Action Plan prioritises seven product value chains that are considered critical and to have high circularity potential: electrical and electronic equipment, batteries and

accumulators, packaging, plastics, textiles, construction and buildings, and food, water, and nutrients. It should be emphasised that since the EU Action Plan was announced in 2020, many steps have been taken towards transitioning to a circular economy.

Türkiye's "National Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan"

The primary basis for preparing the National Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan is Türkiye's status as a candidate country for EU membership and its aim to take the necessary measures to align with EU targets and policies. In this regard, Türkiye is striving to comply at every level with the legislation and initiatives introduced by the EU Circular Economy Action Plan, which is one of the core components of the Green Deal.

According to current data, Türkiye's circularity rate was 4.5% in 2018. It is apparent that this rate is significantly below the global average of 9.1% and the EU average of 11.7%. The vision of the strategy published by Türkiye is to achieve a net-zero emissions target for Türkiye by 2053 through a Türkiye-specific circular economy model that extends product lifespans while reducing raw material usage and waste generation.

Within the framework of the strategy, seven sectors have been

selected in line with the key product value chains prioritised in the EU Circular Economy Action Plan:

1. Electronic and Information Communication Technologies

In order to increase circularity in the Electronic and Information Communication Technologies sector, the Turkish Regulation on the Management of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and the Regulation on the Restriction of the Use of Certain Hazardous Substances in Electrical and Electronic Equipment will be revised in accordance with the relevant EU legislation.

2. Batteries and Vehicles

In order to increase circularity in the batteries and vehicles sector, a legal framework to ensure compliance with the EU Regulation on Batteries and Waste Batteries (2023/1542) will be established, a National Critical Raw Materials Strategy and Action Plan will be prepared, and the Regulation on the Control of End-of-Life Vehicles will be revised in accordance with the updates in the relevant EU legislation.

3. Packaging

In order to increase circularity in the packaging sector, Türkiye's legislation will be harmonised with the new legal framework to be established under the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation.

4. Plastics

In order to increase circularity in the plastics sector, compliance with the EU policy framework regarding single-use plastics, microplastics, and bio-based, biodegradable, and compostable plastics will be ensured, and a national strategy and action plan concerning plastics will be prepared in accordance with international developments.

5. Textile

In order to increase circularity in the textile sector, the eco-design legislation for textile products to be sold in the EU will be harmonised in accordance with the EU Sustainable Textile Strategy, and a regulatory framework will be established to meet the requirements of the revised EU Waste Framework Directive.

6. Building

In order to increase circularity in the building sector, Türkiye's legislation will be harmonised with the new legal framework to be established under the EU Construction Products Regulation, and a guide document regarding the management of disaster waste in line with circular economy principles will be prepared.

7. Food and Biomass

In order to increase circularity in the food and biomass sector, a national bioeconomy strategy will be published, a legal framework will be prepared to accelerate the sale of products approaching their recommended consumption date and expiration date (SKT) as well as to enable the donation of products nearing their recommended consumption date within the framework of food banking, and a digital data collection infrastructure will be established to register facilities where agricultural and food waste can be processed into animal feed.

Conclusion

At a time when the dynamics of the international system are rapidly changing, Türkiye is among the leading third countries that can share the goals of the EU's Green Deal—an initiative aimed at both enhancing geopolitical strength and establishing a new green economic order. Indeed, the EU already maintains advanced political and economic relations with Türkiye. As an EU candidate country with a Customs Union, Türkiye conducts over 40% of its trade with the EU. Moreover, because its bilateral trade relations are directly affected, Türkiye must closely follow the transformation process underway within the framework of the Green Deal. In line with this, Türkiye published its Green Deal Action Plan on 15 July 2021, outlining 81 actions under nine headings, and has embarked on a rapid adaptation and transformation process to keep pace with the EU's green transition. The publication of Türkiye's own Circular Economy Strategy represents the final link in this transformation effort.



TOBB PRESIDENT HİSARCIKLIOĞLU WAS RE-ELECTED AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD CHAMBERS FEDERATION



On 8 February 2025, TOBB President M. Rifat Hisarcıklioğlu was re-elected as the President of the World Chambers Federation (WCF), which unites the Chambers of Commerce and Industry in 150 countries under one roof. President Hisarcıklioğlu received the majority of the votes cast in the

electronic voting conducted by the members of the WCF General Council. Hisarcıklioğlu's new term will continue for 3 years starting on 1 July 2025.

Making a statement after the election, Hisarcıklioğlu said: "The world economy and the global trade system are going through a difficult

period. At a time when protectionism is on the rise and trade and tariff wars are raging, institutions like the WCF, the main global advocate for free and fair trade, have a big role to play. During my term as WCF President, the organisation's main priority will be to promote rules-based free and fair trade."

IKV ORGANISED A WEBINAR TITLED "THE IMPACT OF THE GERMAN ELECTION RESULTS ON THE EU AND TÜRKİYE-EU RELATIONS"



IKV organised a webinar titled "The Impact of the German Election Results on the EU and Türkiye-EU Relations" on 28 February 2025. At the event, the new political outlook that emerged after the early elections held in Germany on 23 February 2025 was evaluated. Discussing the potential effects of the political transformation in Germany on the balance within the EU, the reflections of the

elections on Türkiye-Germany and Türkiye-EU relations were also analysed in detail. The event was moderated by IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit and the speakers of the event were IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, Assoc. Prof. Ebru Turhan from Turkish-German University and Researcher at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Dr. Yaşar Aydın.

IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU: "WE MUST CLOSELY MONITOR THE GERMAN ELECTION RESULTS"



IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu commented on the results of the German federal elections held on 23 February 2025. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu stated:

"The results of the elections in Germany are of critical importance for both the country itself and the future of Europe. The election results are also significant for Türkiye because the new government's policies to be formed will be decisive both for bilateral relations with Türkiye and for the trajectory of the EU. The election results, as expected, reveal the rise of the far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party.

One of the most important challenges ahead for Merz will be relations with the United States. Merz sees that during the Trump era, U.S. support for Europe came to an end and turned into a directly anti-EU approach. Europe now needs to adopt a policy

independent from the United States and, particularly in the field of defence, become self-sufficient. In this regard, in addition to Franco-German cooperation, forming a broader consensus within the EU is also important.

As Türkiye, we must closely monitor the election results. Immigration and citizenship policies are important for Turkish people in Germany. Citizenship acquisition and residence may be restricted. Additionally, while the new government is expected to impose restrictions on the right to asylum, it may also simplify the process of attracting skilled labour. Merz may increase cooperation with third countries in controlling immigration and may turn to Türkiye in this regard. From an EU perspective, gaining independence from the United States and pursuing a self-sufficient Europe will increase Türkiye's importance."

HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN CAME TOGETHER WITH HIS UKRAINIAN COUNTERPART ZELENSKYY

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on 18 February 2025. In a joint press conference, President Erdoğan stated that Türkiye has made great efforts to help establish peace in Ukraine by hosting peace talks in 2022 and facilitating the Black Sea Grain Initiative and achieving substantial results. Thanking President Zelenskyy for his efforts in taking steps to protect the rights of Crimean Tatars, President Erdoğan reiterated his message about the urgent need for peace and the importance of Ukraine's territorial integrity. President Erdoğan also stated that Türkiye is an ideal location for peace talks to be conducted between Ukraine, Russia, and the US, as Türkiye's peace-seeking efforts over the last three years align with those of the US.

President Zelenskyy expressed that Türkiye has maintained a very principled stance since the beginning of the war in advocating for Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. President Zelenskyy also stated that both Türkiye and the EU should be included in the peace



talks. Adding that the talks hosted by Saudi Arabia between the Foreign Ministers of the US and Russia came as a surprise to Ukraine, President Zelenskyy conveyed Ukraine's demand for security guarantees and support for its NATO membership, as well as stating that the first step should be another prisoner exchange.

Moreover, Türkiye and Ukraine signed two cooperation agreements in the fields of education and media, aiming to further develop bilateral

relations. The agreements were signed in the presence of Türkiye's National Education Minister Yusuf Tekin and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha. Additionally, Turkish Communications Director Fahrettin Altun and Minister Sybiha were also present for the signing of a memorandum of understanding on media and communication cooperation between Türkiye's Communications Directorate and Ukraine's Culture and Strategic Communications Ministry.

THE EU COMMISSIONER LAHBIB PAID A WORKING VISIT TO TÜRKİYE

The EU Commissioner for Preparedness, Crisis Management and Equality Hadja Lahbib visited Türkiye from 20 to 22 January 2025. During her visit, Commissioner Lahbib met with high-level government officials, aid partners, civil society organisations, Turkish and Syrian people displaced by the 2023 earthquakes, and visited cooperation projects. The Commissioner held contacts in both Ankara and Gaziantep during her visit. One of Commissioner Lahbib's key meetings was with the Vice President of Türkiye Cevdet Yılmaz. Their discussions covered the ceasefire in Gaza, developments in Syria, and Türkiye-EU relations and cooperation. Following the meeting, Vice President Yılmaz stated, "We emphasised the importance of deepening our cooperation, particularly in humanitarian crises, the situation in Gaza and Syria, voluntary returns, and the fight against irregular migration."



Commissioner Lahbib also met with Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, after which a joint press statement was issued. Minister Fidan highlighted that their discussions focused on EU-supported projects following the earthquakes in Türkiye. Lahbib reaffirmed Türkiye's status as a candidate country and key EU partner, stressing the importance of cooperation on the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Commissioner Lahbib also underscored the ongoing instability in Syria and emphasised the value of working closely with Türkiye. During her meeting with Türkiye's

Minister of Family and Social Services Mahinur Özdemir Göktaş, Commissioner Lahbib discussed collaborative efforts to support women, children, and people with disabilities. They also exchanged views on humane and safe voluntary returns to Syria, the role of women in Syria's reconstruction, and international cooperation on these issues. Additionally, Commissioner Lahbib met with the Head of the EU Delegation to Türkiye, Ambassador Thomas Hans Ossowski, as well as Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Fatma Şahin and Gaziantep Governor Kemal Çeber.

TIMELINE FEBRUARY 2025

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5	President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came together with his German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier.
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8	TOBB President M. Rifat Hisarcıkıoğlu was re-elected as the President of the World Chambers Federation.
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16	Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan attended the 60 th Munich Security Conference.
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18	Deputy Minister and Director for EU Affairs Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay attended the Informal Meeting of EU Ministers for European Affairs in Warsaw.
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20	Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan attended the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting.
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22	President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came together with former Greek Foreign Minister Dimitris Avramopoulos.
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24	President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came together with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.
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27	
28	IKV organised a webinar titled "The Impact of the German Election Results on the EU and Türkiye-EU Relations".

PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN CAME TOGETHER WITH GERMAN PRESIDENT STEINMEIER



President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan hosted German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier at the Presidential Complex in Ankara on 23 April 2024, marking another significant diplomatic engagement between Türkiye and Germany. During the joint press conference, President Erdoğan emphasised the strength of Türkiye-Germany relations, noting that the two nations celebrated the centennial of their friendship treaty in 2023 and stated that recent high-level visits illustrate the close dialogue between Ankara and Berlin.

Economic and trade relations featured prominently in the talks, with both leaders reaffirming their commitment to increasing bilateral trade and investment. President Erdoğan noted that Germany remains Türkiye's largest trade partner in Europe, with a trade volume exceeding 50 billion dollars in 2023 and stated, "We are determined to

strengthen our economic ties with Germany and the EU, ensuring a win-win approach that benefits both parties." President Erdoğan also highlighted the need to modernise the Customs Union agreement between Türkiye and the EU, which would enhance economic cooperation. Finally, President Erdoğan stressed the importance of resolving key issues such as visa liberalisation for Turkish citizens and fostering collaboration in the defence industry.

Regarding developments in the Middle East, President Erdoğan and Steinmeier exchanged views on Gaza and Syria. President Erdoğan stressed the importance of maintaining the recent ceasefire in Gaza and reaffirmed Türkiye's support for a two-state solution. Steinmeier echoed this sentiment, stating, "Germany stands firmly behind a two-state solution, and we will continue to work towards a lasting peace in the region."

HR/VP KAJA KALLAS MADE HER FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO TÜRKİYE



The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP) Kaja Kallas made her first official visit to Türkiye on 24 January 2025. During her visit to Ankara, the High Representative held discussions with the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye Numan Kurtulmuş and Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan.

Minister Fidan and the High Representative Kallas came together at the Ministry and exchanged ideas about the present and future of Türkiye-EU relations at the meeting they held. During the meeting, Minister Fidan emphasised that Türkiye and the EU should work together for the stability and prosperity of Europe. In the meeting where global and regional developments were also discussed, including the Russia-Ukraine war, the ceasefire in Gaza and the latest developments in Syria were among the topics focused on. Speaking at a joint press conference following the meeting, Minister Fidan reaffirmed that EU membership remains a strategic goal for Türkiye. Minister Fidan underlined the need to restart the Türkiye-EU High-Level Political Dialogue and Association Council meetings and called on

the EU to take the necessary steps to launch negotiations for the modernisation of the Customs Union.

High Representative Kallas highlighted Türkiye's crucial role in European security as a candidate country and NATO ally. High Representative Kallas expressed optimism about strengthening the partnership between the two sides, emphasising its untapped potential. Kallas, who also included regional issues in her speech, drew attention to the importance of Türkiye's hosting of Syrian refugees. Addressing regional issues, High Representative Kallas acknowledged Türkiye's efforts in hosting Syrian refugees and stated, "The Syrian people need a government that represents all its diversity." On Gaza, she underscored the need for sustainable peace, affirming, "The EU remains a strong supporter of the Palestinian people." In the meeting between the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye Numan Kurtulmuş and Kaja Kallas, Kurtulmuş expressed his wishes for significant developments in relations with the EU. Speaker Kurtulmuş reiterated the Turkish Parliament's commitment to EU membership and emphasised Türkiye's ongoing reform efforts.

TÜRKİYE AND ITALY TO STRENGTHEN STRATEGIC COOPERATION IN AEROSPACE AND DEFENCE

Türkiye and Italy continue to advance their bilateral relations with a renewed focus on strategic cooperation in high-tech industries. On 18 February 2025, Turkish Minister of Industry and Technology Mehmet Fatih Kacır met with Italian Minister of Enterprises and Made in Italy Adolfo Urso at the Presidential Dolmabahçe Office in Istanbul.

Minister Kacır highlighted the robust economic ties between Türkiye and Italy, stating that Italy remains one of Türkiye's top five export markets. Trade between the two countries surpassed the 30 billion dollars, driven by strong partnerships in textiles, chemicals,



pharmaceuticals, automotive, and machinery. The ministers expressed a shared vision to push this figure even higher and

enhance investment flows in both directions.

Over the past two decades, more than 1,500 Italian companies

have invested over 5 billion dollars in Türkiye, benefiting both economies. Meanwhile, Turkish firms have made significant investments in Italy, strengthening their presence in the European market. A significant milestone in Turkish-Italian industrial cooperation was the acquisition of Italian aerospace company Piaggio Aerospace by Türkiye's leading defence firm Baykar. Minister Kacır described this move as a historic step toward deepening Türkiye-Italy industrial ties. This acquisition is expected to pave the way for expanded joint projects in unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technology, a sector where both

countries have strong capabilities.

Additionally, Minister Urso and Stefano Pontecorvo, Chairman of Leonardo S.p.A., Italy's largest defence company, visited Baykar's facilities, reflecting Italy's growing interest in Türkiye's defence advancements. The visit highlighted the potential for joint development of advanced UAV systems and other aerospace technologies, particularly for the European market. Furthermore, Baykar's leadership reaffirmed its commitment to integrating Italian supply chain elements into its aerospace operations, ensuring continued industrial synergy between Türkiye and Italy.

THE WORLD BANK PUBLISHED A REPORT ON TÜRKİYE'S TRANSITION TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The World Bank report on Türkiye's circular economy transition, examines how companies in Türkiye are adapting to circular economy principles, the challenges they face, and the opportunities offered by this transformation.

The World Bank published a report titled "Türkiye's Circular Economy Transition in the EU's Global Value Chain Ecosystem" on 15 January 2025. The report examines how companies in Türkiye are adapting to circular economy principles, the challenges they face, and the opportunities offered by this transformation. Speaking at the report's launch event in Brussels, Türkiye's Permanent Representative to the EU, Ambassador Faruk Kaymakçı, stated, "Türkiye, as an EU candidate country and a member of the Customs Union, needs to work closely with the EU on its circular economy transformation." Ambassador Kaymakçı also noted that the EU Green Deal is being implemented in Türkiye through the National Green Deal Action Plan, emphasising that the Green Deal is not solely about environmental concerns but also encompasses key areas such as production, supply, consumption, and waste management, with financing and international cooperation playing significant roles.

The report compares the current status of various circular economy indicators between Türkiye and the EU. Regarding resource efficiency, in Türkiye, an average of 1.8 units of economic value is produced per



kilogram of raw material, whereas in the EU this value reaches 2.3 units. In terms of carbon intensity, Türkiye's industrial sector generates higher emissions compared with its EU counterparts.

In the field of recycling, it was observed that in 2020 only 12.3% of municipal waste was recycled in Türkiye. However, recycling rates improved significantly in subsequent years, reaching 27.2% in 2021, 30.1% in 2022, and 35% in 2023, although this still falls short of the EU average of 48.7%. On a sectoral basis, the report points out that recycling in the textile sector remains very limited, with less than 10% of post-consumer textile waste being recovered. In the automotive sector, where the recycling rate for end-of-life vehicles is notably low, the underdeveloped scrap vehicle recycling system in Türkiye has led to challenges in accessing recycled raw materials.

Furthermore, the report highlights that only 19% of firms have adopted circular economy practices such as waste minimisation, recycling, or waste management. While more than 40% of companies in the textile and ready-made garment sector have implemented these practices, the adoption rate is considerably lower in sectors like machinery and metal industries.

Finally, the report stresses the importance of developing digital infrastructures such as those required for the EU's Digital Product Passport to ensure traceability of carbon footprints and recycled content ratios, increasing the use of recycled materials, and promoting waste reduction technologies. It also calls for enhanced research and development investments and improved financing opportunities for sustainable business models.

JOINT EU PROJECT AIMS FOR PRODUCTIVE OLIVE AND OLIVE OIL SECTOR



The European Innovation Council and SME Executive Agency (EISMEA) is supporting a new initiative aimed at enhancing productivity and sustainable practices in the olive and olive oil sector. The Innovative Sustainable

Cluster for Olive Value Chain (OASIS) project, led by a consortium of Türkiye, Italy, and Spain, seeks to strengthen sustainability and climate resilience among SMEs in olive and olive oil production. The project also aims to improve resource efficiency,

reduce food waste, and enhance competitiveness in the industry.

Türkiye plays a leading role in the global olive sector. According to the Chair of the Aegean Olive and Olive Oil Exporters' Association Emre Uygun, Türkiye produced 750 thousand tonnes of table olives and 475 thousand tonnes of olive oil in the last harvest season. As part of the OASIS project, SMEs will receive training and consultancy in various areas, including digital transformation and smart agricultural technologies. A total of 50 Turkish SMEs will participate in the initiative, alongside counterparts from Italy and Spain.

TÜRKİYE'S APPLICATION FOR EU CERTIFICATION OF DÖNER FACES OBJECTIONS



Türkiye's application for the EU's Traditional Specialty Guaranteed certification for döner has encountered objections from seven EU Member States, including Germany. These objections, mostly centred on technical reasons, will be reviewed by EU authorities before a final decision is made. Despite the objections, Türkiye remains confident that the certification will be granted later this year.

Döner generates 3.5 billion euros in revenue in Europe annually, and approximately 400 tonnes of döner are consumed daily. There are approximately 40 thousand döner businesses

operating in Europe, with 16 thousand located in Germany.

The EU's Traditional Specialty Guaranteed scheme focuses on a product's traditional qualities, such as the traditional methods of production. The Traditional Specialty Guaranteed recognition of döner will allow Türkiye to protect the originality of the product and prevent unfair competition. It will also contribute to gastronomy tourism in Türkiye. Additionally, certain standards around production are expected to be set, protecting customers and providing them with safe products of established quality.

EU'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE CRAVINHO: TÜRKİYE CAN PLAY A KEY ROLE IN SAHEL



EU Special Representative for the Sahel Region João Gomes Cravinho has highlighted the challenges faced in the Sahel region: instability, uprisings, governance issues, and drug trafficking. He emphasised the need for an international coalition to address these problems and stated that Türkiye could play a key role in forming this coalition. However, despite the necessity of

such an initiative, he noted that ongoing crises, such as the Russia-Ukraine war, the Gaza-Israel conflict, and developments in Sudan, make it difficult to attract the attention of global leaders. The Sahel region -from West Africa to the Red Sea- includes countries such as Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, and Sudan. Given the region's vast size, it holds crucial importance.

VICE PRESIDENT YILMAZ AND THE TRNC PRESIDENT TATAR HELD A JOINT PRESS MEETING



Vice President Cevdet Yılmaz came together with the TRNC President Ersin Tatar where they exchanged views on ongoing infrastructure projects in the TRNC and they highlighted the mutual interest in achieving a two-state solution. In the joint press statement, Vice President Yılmaz stated that Türkiye has been supporting infrastructure developments in the TRNC through the financial aid of 15.9 billion Turkish liras used in critical infrastructure such as healthcare, education, agriculture and energy. He added that, the projects of Nicosia

Northern Ring Road and Hospital and Kyrenia Military Hospital of 1963 as well as the extension of EBA Project in the education system helped increase the life quality and boost the economic sustainability of the Turkish Cypriots. The Irrigation Transmission Tunnel Project, which aims to supply water to the Güzelyurt and Mesarya Plains to increase agricultural fertility, was also highlighted as a key initiative supporting the TRNC's overall regional development.

The TRNC President Tatar expressed that the TRNC had introduced 2025-2029 Five-Year

Development Plan to enhance the country's economic, social, and cultural development while improving the well-being of the Turkish Cypriot people. Additionally, President Tatar touched upon the informal meeting hosted by the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres with Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Christodoulides on 15 October 2024 noting that they agreed on three points, as was disclosed in UN Secretary General's written statement. President Tatar outlined them to be the lack of common ground, the need for an extended meeting with the participation of guarantors Türkiye, Greece and Britain, and the opening of additional two-way entry points on the island. Stating that the details of such a meeting would be clarified after his meeting with UN Under-Secretary-General Rosemary A. DiCarlo, President Tatar emphasised the strong need for a mutual, win-win understanding rather than focusing on a one-sided gain.

TURKISH DEFENCE INDUSTRY EXTENDS TO GERMANY



Turkish defence firm Repkon has signed an agreement with a leading German artillery manufacturer to establish a 155-millimeter explosive filling facility. This partnership marks a significant step in Türkiye's expanding defence cooperation with European countries. The agreement comes at a time when global demand for artillery ammunition is on the rise, driven in part by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. As a key supplier of military aid to Ukraine, Germany has been seeking to enhance its production capabilities. The facility, expected to be operational by early 2027, will significantly contribute to Germany's ammunition production capacity.

Turkish defence firm Repkon, known for its expertise in artillery production, has previously established similar production facilities in the United States,

Pakistan, and Azerbaijan. The new German facility will feature state-of-the-art automation, allowing for high-volume production with minimal workforce involvement. The agreement also includes the production of 155-millimetre artillery shells, further reinforcing Türkiye's role as a critical player in the international defence supply chain.

This partnership follows Repkon's recent acquisition of Bowas, an engineering firm operating in Austria, Italy, and Switzerland. Bowas specialises in military and civilian explosive production, further enhancing Repkon's capabilities to meet rising global demand. With this acquisition, Repkon has positioned itself as the only company that independently builds metal parts production facilities, explosive filling plants, and explosive production facilities.

NEW ERA IN TÜRKİYE-HUNGARY DEFENCE COOPERATION

The first Ministerial Meeting of the Türkiye-Hungary Defence Innovation Working Group was held at the Ministry of Industry and Technology of the Republic of Türkiye. The meeting was attended by Mehmet Fatih Kacır, Minister of Industry and Technology of Türkiye, and Kristof Szalay Bobrovniczky, Defence Minister of Hungary, as well as representatives of leading institutions and organisations in the defence industry of Türkiye and Hungary.

Both parties signed a document on the procedures and principles of the joint working group. In this context, a draft action plan was created for 2025. Minister Kacır said, "Hungary is a valuable friend and an important trade and investment partner for our country. The fact that we have increased our trade volume, which was only 524 million dollars in 2002, by approximately 8 times in 22 years to over 4.4 billion dollars has been an important result of the common understanding in this regard."

Addressing the issues discussed at the meeting, Minister Kacır emphasised, "We took the first steps to establish new partnerships in strategic areas



such as unmanned air and land systems, simulation and training technologies, test and innovation centres. We introduced our ecosystems to each other to work together within the scope of NATO high visibility projects and the DIANA Programme."

Hungarian Defence Minister Bobrovniczky also highlighted that Hungary has strong ties with Türkiye at the level of a strategic partnership and that cooperation in the field of defence is an important part of this. Recalling that Turkish-made "Ejder Yalçın 4x4" armoured combat vehicles are used in the Hungarian Army, Minister Bobrovniczky said that such projects further strengthen

the ties between the two countries. Minister Bobrovniczky stated that Hungary attached great importance to developing Türkiye-EU relations during its EU Presidency and said that Türkiye is an indispensable partner for the EU in critical areas such as energy security, trade, regional stability, the fight against terrorism and illegal migration. Emphasising that the protection of the TurkStream pipeline is a strategic priority for the EU, Minister Bobrovniczky said "the Turkish army is the second largest force in NATO. Hungary is proud to be allied with Türkiye directly and through NATO. Türkiye's innovation and defence industry are among the leading forces in the world."

TÜRKİYE MARKS 73RD ANNIVERSARY OF NATO ACCESSION

Türkiye has been a key player in NATO since 1952 with its strong military capacity and strategic location. Türkiye, which joined NATO on 18 February 1952, after being signed by then-President Celal Bayar, has continually strengthened NATO for 73 years. Türkiye, which has the second strongest army in NATO with around 355 thousand personnel, is among the top five contributors to NATO, with its support for operations and missions. Türkiye's presence in the alliance is considered a reliable ally that strengthens NATO's air, land and sea capabilities and its military position on its southern flank.

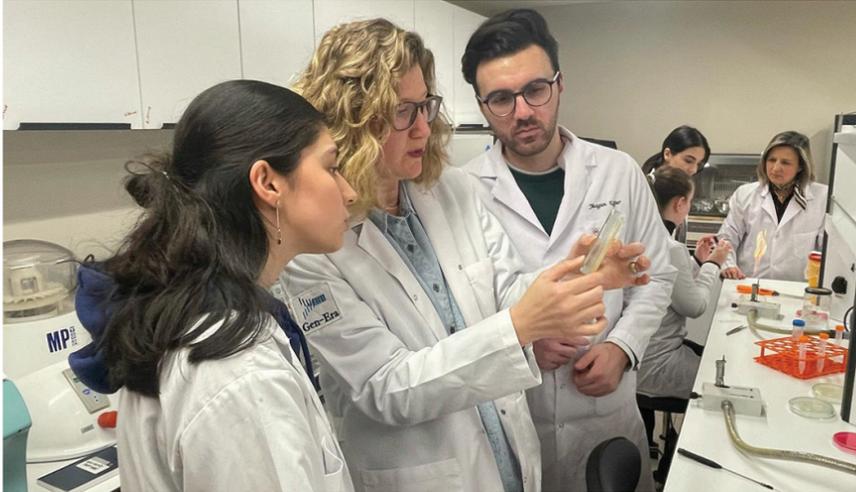
The Turkish army, one of the leading contributors to NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR), carried out the KFOR command for one year from 2023 to 2024 and is currently serving as deputy commander. As one of the countries that have joined the KFOR Reserve Battalion, which is rotated among the allies, Türkiye also contributes to securing Kosovo and the surrounding area.



In addition, Türkiye is among the countries that contribute the most personnel to the NATO Mission in Iraq, which was established in 2018 to advise and train Iraq's security forces.

With an estimated 2024 defence expenditure to GDP ratio of 2.09%, Türkiye is one of the 23 NATO countries that have achieved this target; meanwhile, it ranks 8th among the countries that contribute the most to the military budget within the scope of contribution shares to NATO common funds with 4.59%, and 7th in terms of personnel contribution to all personnel included in the NATO's command structure.

SCIENTISTS AT İSTANBUL UNIVERSITY HAVE DISCOVERED A NEW STRAIN OF BACTERIA IN AIRCRAFT FUEL



Faculty members of İstanbul University Faculty of Science, Department of Biology, Department of Basic and Industrial Microbiology, Prof. Esra Sungur, Assoc. Prof. Miray Onan and Lecturer Dr. Simge Arkan Özdemir, examined samples taken from aircraft fuel and discovered a new bacterial genus. Dr. Özdemir discovered the genus by analysing samples taken from aircraft fuel. This bacterium, called *Facivitalis Istanbulensis*, stands out due to its highly resistant nature to environmental conditions. Providing information about the naming of the bacterium, Prof. Dr. Sungur said, "Facivitalis means living in aircraft fuel, *Istanbulensis* was given in reference to İstanbul University."

Pointing out that the bacterium, which is capable of surviving in extreme conditions, possesses significant characteristics, Prof. Dr. Sungur said, "Not all bacteria can survive in these conditions. As a result of our advanced molecular analyses, we determined that our bacterium has some special genes. These genes play an important role in the fight against virulence and pathogenicity while providing adaptation to environmental factors." The new bacterium discovered can be used in critical areas such as the prevention of environmental pollution and sustainable energy production.

ROMAN-ERA TREASURES SEIZED IN HOME RAID



Authorities in western Türkiye's Aydın province confiscated 277 historical artifacts, believed to date back to the Roman era, during a raid in the Karacasu district. The operation led to the discovery of 223 items, including coins and arrowheads, as well as 54 other artefacts such as a column capital, a sarcophagus fragment, and a relief sculpture.

The artefacts were transferred to the Aydın Museum Directorate for analysis

and preservation. During the Roman era, Aydın was an important region in western Anatolia, home to thriving cities that played a significant role in trade and culture. The area, previously known as Phrygia, was later absorbed into Roman rule and became home to several notable settlements. Under Roman administration, the region thrived, experiencing advancements in architecture, culture, and economic activity.

MARCUS AURELIUS STATUE TO BE REPATRIATED TO TÜRKİYE

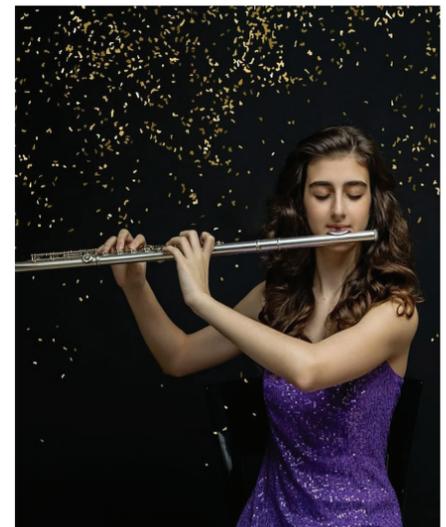


According to a written statement made by Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, a bronze statue of Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius will be repatriated to Türkiye following extensive efforts. The statue was found during illegal excavations conducted in 1960s in ancient city of Boubon, located in Türkiye's Burdur province. After being smuggled abroad, it changed hands multiple times before ending up in the Cleveland Museum of Art. In a social media post, Turkish Minister of Culture and Tourism Mehmet Nuri Ersoy highlighted the effective collaboration between Turkish and American authorities in securing the statue's return. The repatriation process is expected to be completed later this year.

YOUNG TURKISH MUSICIAN CAME FIRST IN FLUTISSIMO 2025 DESPITE NOT GETTING A VISA TO FRANCE

Duru Bulam, a student at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University İstanbul State Conservatory, won first place in the Flutissimo 2025 Flute Competition despite being unable to attend in person due to visa issues. The competition took place on 30 January 2025 in Nice, France. However, Bulam was unable to secure a visa appointment in time and instead participated by submitting recorded performances. Highly praised by a panel of five jurors, she won first place in her age category.

Organised by A Travers la Flûte Association, founded in 2002, the festival brings together flutists from around the world. Winners of the competition receive lessons from master flutists. Competing in the 15-18 age category, Bulam secured first place in a competition that featured flutists aged 6 to 32.



MERSİN'S SEAGULL SPECIES SPOTTED BY BIRDWATCHERS IN MEDITERRANEAN

The Turkish Society of Anonymous Birds (TRAKUS) organised an event to photograph seagull species in the Eastern Mediterranean, bringing together 40 participants, including birdwatchers and photographers from various parts of Türkiye, to capture images of diverse seagull species. The team boarded from the Fishermen's Harbor across the Mediterranean Sea to document various marine bird species such as "pirate gull", "black-headed gull", "silver-backed gull", and "black-backed gull". While the team had the chance to observe a wide variety of seagulls, they are also left with captivating photographs of the seagulls in the blue waters of Mediterranean.



TÜRKİYE AND THE EU IN A CHANGING SECURITY ORDER: RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND STRATEGIC CHOICES

As Europe navigates an increasingly uncertain security landscape, Türkiye's strategic role in NATO and regional stability makes its deeper integration into European defence cooperation an important priority.

Laura BATALLA ADAM
Analyst

The 2025 Munich Security Conference (MSC) underscored not only deepening geopolitical tensions but also Europe's growing realisation that it must rapidly rethink its security architecture. The war in Ukraine, Russia's persistent revisionist ambitions, and the rise of hybrid threats have forced European countries to confront hard realities about their defence capabilities. At the same time, the United States is recalibrating its global strategy, placing greater focus on countering China in the Indo-Pacific. This shift has intensified calls for Europe to assume greater responsibility for its own security, as traditional assumptions about transatlantic defence guarantees come under strain.

In this evolving landscape, Türkiye occupies a critical yet often contested role. As a NATO member with one of the alliance's largest militaries and a unique geopolitical position bridging Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia, its contributions to regional security are significant. However, despite its strategic importance, Türkiye has increasingly found itself excluded from high-level European security discussions. Türkiye's continued absence from these discussions is not just a strategic oversight but a potential liability for Europe's broader security framework. The question is no longer whether the EU can afford to sideline Türkiye but how it must integrate Ankara into its security architecture to ensure a more resilient and adaptive defence strategy.

The Erosion of Transatlantic Security

The MSC highlighted that the post-Cold War transatlantic security order is no longer as stable as it



once seemed. NATO remains the foundation of European defence, but internal disagreements and shifting global priorities have weakened cohesion within the alliance. US Vice President JD Vance's speech at the conference deepened existing concerns, as his sharp criticisms of European policies exposed the growing divergence in strategic outlooks between Washington and its European allies. His remarks were met with strong pushback from leaders such as the former German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron, underscoring the tensions within the transatlantic relationship. Meanwhile, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte reinforced the need for European nations to take greater ownership of their security, making it clear that continued reliance on the United States is no longer a sustainable approach.

Despite these warnings, Europe faces structural challenges in strengthening its defence posture. Disagreements persist over the balance between NATO's role and European efforts to build independent security structures, while financial constraints further complicate efforts to increase military spending. Proposals such as the European Security Funding Facility (ESeFF) aim to address these gaps, yet political divisions and bureaucratic inertia have slowed progress.

Meanwhile, security negotiations that directly affect Europe are

increasingly happening elsewhere. The recent US-Russia discussions in Saudi Arabia, where European countries played only a marginal role, reinforced concerns about the continent's diminishing influence over its own security future. In response, France has called for a more proactive European defence policy, but progress remains slow amid competing national priorities. These developments raise an important question: How can Europe build a security architecture that not only strengthens its own defence capabilities but also ensures the inclusion of key regional actors and candidate countries, including Türkiye, Ukraine, and the Western Balkans?

Türkiye's Integral Role in European Security and Strategic Contributions

Türkiye's exclusion from key European security dialogues contrasts sharply with its role as a major military and geopolitical actor. However, the reality is that Türkiye is already an integral part of Europe's security architecture. As NATO adapts to new realities, Türkiye remains essential in securing the alliance's southeastern flank, ensuring stability in the Black Sea, and contributing to regional crisis management. Its military capabilities, particularly its advancements in drone warfare, naval security, and air defence, have enhanced NATO's operational effectiveness and demonstrated its ability to respond to evolving threats.

Beyond military considerations, Türkiye's geopolitical position makes it an indispensable partner in energy security, counter-terrorism efforts, and regional diplomacy. Its ability to facilitate negotiations between Russia and Ukraine has underscored its diplomatic leverage, reinforcing its importance beyond traditional military contributions. For instance, Türkiye's role in the Black Sea Grain Initiative demonstrated its capacity to mediate complex international agreements, ensuring global food security while maintaining regional stability. Analysts argue that with growing uncertainty over US commitment to NATO, Europe must reassess its engagement with Türkiye. Rather than viewing Ankara as an external player, European policymakers must recognise that its participation is essential in shaping a more cohesive and resilient security order.

Strengthening Türkiye-EU Security Cooperation

While Türkiye remains committed to NATO, its increasingly autonomous foreign policy has at times created divergence with European security priorities. This strategic flexibility has allowed Türkiye to strengthen its defence industry and diplomatic influence, but it has also raised concerns about long-term alignment with European security objectives. A structured security dialogue between Türkiye and Europe is no longer optional; it is an imperative. This requires

not only political will but also an institutionalised framework that facilitates collaboration on military modernisation, counter-terrorism, and strategic coordination.

At the same time, Europe must recognise the limitations of its current security approach. The European Union has historically lacked a strong institutional framework for defence, and while efforts to build a more cohesive European defence identity are ongoing, they remain constrained by legal and political complexities. Given these realities, European security cannot be defined solely within the confines of the EU; rather, it must be shaped through a broader coalition that includes key strategic partners like Türkiye.

Türkiye's deeper integration into European defence initiatives is not only about military capabilities but also about enhancing Europe's strategic depth and crisis response capacity. In return, a stronger engagement with European security structures would offer Türkiye increased influence in shaping the continent's defence policies, reinforcing its role as a key NATO ally and a stabilising force in the region.

While political and diplomatic complexities persist, pragmatic engagement is essential. Security cooperation should not be viewed solely through the lens of past disagreements but as an opportunity to build a more resilient and adaptive European security order. Beyond NATO collaboration, joint investments in defence industry cooperation, research, and innovation must be prioritised. Whether through reinforced NATO collaboration, structured security dialogues, or new defence initiatives, Türkiye and the EU have a shared interest in fostering a more integrated approach to security.

The decisions made in the coming months and years will shape the future of European security. Exclusion is not a viable strategy, active cooperation remains the only path toward a stronger, more secure Europe.