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TÜRKİYE'S ROLE IN EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE

Türkiye's defence industry is becoming competitive, and this creates opportunities for partnerships with the EU and the Member States.

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Türkiye has long been a strategic partner for the EU in many key areas, and this position has remained unchanged over the years. Today, the world is going through a difficult period marked by escalating crises. The need for cooperation has not been this urgent in decades. Rising conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine War and the Gaza-Israel confrontation have brought allies closer together.

Although Türkiye is an EU accession country and a close partner to Europe, it has not been fully involved in defence and security issues concerning the EU. However, it is important to highlight the natural bond between Türkiye and Europe through NATO. As the country with the second-largest army in NATO, Türkiye plays a crucial role in maintaining security in Europe.

Despite this, Türkiye's inclusion in the EU's security architecture has not yet been fully endorsed by the EU. Apart from participating in some military operations conducted by NATO and the EU, Türkiye's application to PESCO and its requests to join other defence projects have largely been overlooked. One reason for the limited alignment between Türkiye's foreign and security policy and that of the EU is the lack of high-level dialogue initiatives from the EU in these areas. While mutual distrust is the primary factor behind this situation, the EU also cites Türkiye's failure to fully meet the Copenhagen criteria and the uncertainties in its foreign policy. Nevertheless, shifts in the international landscape are fostering positive developments in Türkiye-EU relations. Many believe



that Türkiye could assist the EU in building an independent security framework-especially one less reliant on the United States.

Is There a Chance for Türkiye to be Part of the SAFE?

The EU's efforts to manage its own security somewhat independently from NATO include the ReArm Europe Plan and the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) defence and investment instrument. The first part of the plan focuses on increasing national-level public defence spending, while the second offers Member States a 150 billion euros credit facility for defence expenditures. Notably, SAFE allows participation from candidate countries.

However, Türkiye's involvement in this mechanism depends on a formal agreement to be signed with the EU under Article 17 of the SAFE regulation. Recently, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Kaja Kallas, stated that Türkiye would be included in EU defence industry financing and joint procurement programs, such as SAFE, through formal cooperation agreements. Türkiye has officially submitted

its application to the European Commission to join SAFE. In this context, a decision by the EU Council of Ministers is expected in the later stages of the process. Obstacles may arise, such as some Member States like Greece and the Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus reflecting their bilateral issues with Türkiye onto the process of joining SAFE and using their veto rights under the unanimity principle.

Existing Examples of Security and Defence Cooperation Between Türkiye and the EU

Current cooperation between Türkiye and the EU can serve as a model for the future. With its strong military and growing defence industry, Türkiye is well-positioned to help fill critical gaps in Europe's defence planning. A notable example is the collaboration between Türkiye's Baykar and Italy's Leonardo, which highlights the potential for deeper industrial partnerships in Europe.

In 2024, Türkiye's defence exports rose by 29%, reaching 7.1 billion dollars. Over 55% of these exports were directed to NATO countries, with a particular focus

on Ukraine. Additionally, Türkiye's HÜRJET training aircraft is set to be used at NATO's pilot training centre in Spain. Türkiye has also taken part in multinational EU defence projects in the past, such as the A400M aircraft program.

New Developments on Cooperation Between Türkiye and the EU

At the International Defence Industry Fair (IDEF) 2025, a memorandum of understanding was signed between Türkiye's Minister of National Defence, Yaşar Güler, and the UK Secretary of State for Defence, John Healey, regarding Türkiye's purchase of Eurofighter Typhoons. This agreement marks a significant step in Türkiye's long standing search for interim combat aircraft solutions following its removal from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program in 2019.

To maintain operational capability and deterrence until the National Combat Aircraft (KAAN) enters service, Türkiye prioritised acquiring Eurofighters. Initially, the country also pursued upgrading 79 existing F-16s and purchasing 40 F-16Vs from the US. However,

this package was later revised to include the acquisition of 40 new aircraft. Simultaneously, the Özgür Project which involves equipping existing F-16s with next-generation domestic mission systems is ongoing.

Additionally, Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) signed a partnership agreement with Airbus to accelerate the export of Türkiye's jet trainer Hürjet to Spain. The final sales contract is expected to be signed by the end of 2025, with deliveries scheduled to begin in early 2028. The Hürjet is a supersonic advanced jet trainer designed to prepare pilots for fifth-generation fighter aircraft, offering high performance, modern avionics, and connected training systems. With over 210 test flights and speeds reaching Mach 1.4, its smart, single-engine design ensures reduced fuel consumption and easier maintenance.

Turkish defence firm ASELSAN also introduced several new systems that will be integrated into Türkiye's Steel Dome multilayered air defence system. These include the jamming-resistant strike system Gökten, the enemy-silencing Koral, the electromagnetic shield Ejderha, the seamless communication bridge Turan, and an autonomous missile defence system.

Conclusion

Türkiye has been a reliable partner to the EU, and defence and security are now key areas that could significantly advance their relationship. Given Türkiye's powerful and rapidly advancing defence and security industries, the prospects for stronger cooperation are high. Recent agreements on Eurofighter and HÜRJET highlight this positive trend. Moreover, the EU High Representative's remarks regarding Türkiye's potential participation in SAFE are critical indicators of future possibilities.



HİSARCIKLIOĞLU RE-ELECTED AS CHAIR OF ICC WORLD CHAMBERS FEDERATION

TOBBA President Rifat Hisarcıklioğlu has been re-elected as Chair of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) World Chambers Federation (WCF) for the 2025–2028 term. Representing the world's largest network of chambers of commerce and industry, WCF plays a pivotal role in advancing global trade and fostering international cooperation among chambers. TOBB President Hisarcıklioğlu was selected from among 59 candidates with broad international support, following an election involving over 500 chambers worldwide.

The new term began on 1 July 2025 and will run through 30 June 2028. With a renewed mandate, TOBB President Hisarcıklioğlu aims to further enhance WCF's

global impact and strengthen its inclusive governance structure. He has appointed 20 new members to the WCF Council and six new vice chairs, ensuring geographical and gender diversity in leadership. Notably, plans are underway to designate a Vice Chair for Africa, underlining the Federation's commitment to regional representation.

Following his re-election, TOBB President Hisarcıklioğlu emphasised the importance of inclusivity and representation, stating that the WCF will work with renewed energy to amplify the voice of chambers in global trade. He expressed confidence in the new leadership's capacity to shape a more inclusive and impactful future for the international chamber community.



AYHAN ZEYTİNOĞLU RE-ELECTED AS IKV CHAIRPERSON

The 63rd General Assembly of the IKV was held in Istanbul on 21 July 2025, with the participation of the Founding and Trusteeship Institution Chairpersons, Supporting Institution representatives and delegates. The General Assembly was chaired by President of the Istanbul Chamber of Industry (ISO) Erdal Bahçivan, with President of the Sakarya Chamber of Commerce and Industry Akgün Altuğ, and the duty of the Council Secretary was assumed by IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas.

The opening remarks of the General Assembly were delivered by IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu, ISO President Erdal Bahçivan, TOBB Vice President Ali Kopuz, and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and EU Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu was elected to the presidency of IKV for the sixth time.

Chairperson Zeytinoğlu, in his address, marked the 51st anniversary of the Cyprus Peace Operation and highlighted IKV's 60th anniversary. He reviewed the Foundation's recent activities, including numerous events, regular publications, and digital outreach. Emphasising key areas in Türkiye-EU relations, he called for the removal of barriers to Türkiye's involvement in European



defence projects, the modernisation of the customs union, and the elimination of transport quotas. He also underlined the importance of preparing for the green and digital transitions, particularly in light of the EU's Emissions Trading System and Carbon Border Adjustment

Mechanism, stressing the need to support industrial stakeholders. On visa liberalisation, he noted recent improvements but stated that further steps are needed to meet the remaining criteria.

ISO President Erdal Bahçivan highlighted IKV's vital role in

Türkiye-EU relations and stressed the need to modernise the Customs Union, enhance Türkiye's role in EU trade and supply chains, and address visa-related challenges hindering economic ties. TOBB Vice President Ali Kopuz underscored IKV's key role in Türkiye-EU

relations and reaffirmed TOBB's support. He called for an updated Customs Union and improved visa procedures, highlighting Türkiye's strategic importance to the EU in trade and geopolitical stability. Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay highlighted IKV's longstanding role in Türkiye-EU relations and the value of civil society. He stressed Türkiye's strategic importance in Europe's economic security and called for deeper cooperation on green and digital transitions, while reaffirming the priority of modernising the customs union without political blockages.

Finally, IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu concluded the meeting by expressing his gratitude on behalf of the IKV Board of Directors. The newly elected Board of Directors of the IKV consists of Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu, Prof. Dr. Halûk Kabaalioğlu, Sedat Zincirli, Dr. Zeynel Abidin Erdem, Hakan Sefa Çakır, Murat Hazıroğlu, Ömer Gülsoy, Fatih Çapraz, Hakkı İsmet Aral, Şadan Eren, Ali Sami Aydın, Yavuz Altun, Ercan Özboyacı, Mustafa Şenocak, Adil Erkoç, Feyyaz Ünal, and Akansel Koç, while Abdurrahman Aslantaş and Mustafa Zeytin serve as members of the Audit Committee.

IKV AGENDA

IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU: “WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL?”

IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu made a statement about the recent developments regarding the European Green Deal (EGD), highlighting its ongoing relevance and impact on Türkiye-EU relations. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu noted that the legal groundwork of the EGD was largely laid between 2020 and 2024, with significant legislative updates in areas such as energy, agriculture, biodiversity, and transport. Türkiye has taken important steps to align with the EGD, including the adoption of a Climate Law and a 2053 carbon neutrality target.

Chairperson Zeytinoğlu underlined that while the EU remains on track to meet its 2030 climate targets, progress is also evident in the expansion of renewable energy and the implementation of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which will fully enter into force in 2026. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu noted the exemption



for imports below 50 tons and ongoing efforts to simplify CBAM procedures. The Net-Zero Industry Act and forthcoming circular economy legislation are also shaping a more sustainable industrial framework, backed by significant EU funding.

Chairperson Zeytinoğlu stressed the importance of Türkiye actively engaging in these evolving processes, particularly in carbon pricing, clean technologies, and waste management, to ensure closer alignment with the EU's green transformation agenda.

IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU: “THE SCHENGEN VISA PROCESS IS FULL OF OBSTACLES AND UNACCEPTABLE”

IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu made a statement about the current Schengen visa application process, describing it as unacceptable for citizens of Türkiye, a long-standing EU candidate and customs union partner. He stressed the urgent need to conclude the Visa Liberalisation Dialogue, which has been ongoing since 2013. Although Türkiye has fulfilled 66 of the 72 required criteria, progress has stalled, particularly on issues such as revising anti-terror legislation and enhancing judicial cooperation.

Chairperson Zeytinoğlu pointed out the stark contrast between Türkiye and other EU candidate countries, all of which currently enjoy visa-free access to the EU. Turkish citizens, however, face long wait times, high costs, and a high rate of visa rejections affecting students, academics, and businesspeople alike. Over the past



15 years, Turkish applicants have paid 775 million euros in visa fees, excluding other related expenses.

He further emphasised that visa barriers contradict the spirit of the Türkiye-EU Customs Union, where goods move freely but

people do not. Zeytinoğlu argued that the modernisation of the customs union must go hand in hand with resolving the visa issue, which continues to obstruct economic, educational, and people-to-people ties.

TIMELINE JULY 2025

1	
2	IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas participated in a roundtable discussion on Türkiye-EU Relations.
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8	IKV participated in EUROCHAMBRES event.
9	Deputy Foreign Minister and Director for EU Affairs Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay received Ambassador of Serbia to Ankara Aca Jovanovic.
10	President Erdoğan had a phone call with Chancellor of Austria Christian Stocker.
11	
12	Deputy Foreign Minister and Director for EU Affairs Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay, participated in the Ministerial Meeting of the Ukraine-Southeast Europe Summit.
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17	Foreign Minister Fidan attended Informal Talks on Cyprus.
18	IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas participated online workshop titled “Global Governance and Climate Change”.
19	
20	
21	Ayhan Zeytinoğlu was re-elected as IKV Chairperson.
22	
23	President Erdoğan came together with the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine Andrii Yermak.
24	
25	Foreign Minister Fidan came together with EU Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos.
26	Foreign Minister Fidan attended Balkans Peace Platform Foreign Ministers' Meeting.
27	President Erdoğan had a phone call with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron.
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IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU: “THE CLIMATE LAW WILL BE THE COMPASS OF OUR INDUSTRY”

IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu welcomed the adoption of Türkiye's Climate Law, calling it a critical milestone in aligning with the European Green Deal and advancing the country's green transition. He underlined that the law would provide the legal and institutional framework necessary for meeting climate targets under the Paris Agreement and for harmonising with EU regulations, including the Emissions Trading System (ETS) and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

Chairperson Zeytinoğlu stressed that the law outlines responsibilities for all stakeholders, public authorities, civil society, and the business sector, while establishing mechanisms such as provincial climate coordination boards and a national ETS. He noted that, although the EU has operated its ETS since 2005, Türkiye is only now introducing similar obligations, making support for SMEs and industrial adaptation a top priority.

Highlighting the growing impact of CBAM on Turkish exports to the EU, he urged rapid adoption of green technologies and emission



reduction strategies. He also emphasised that revenues from the ETS should be used to fund the green transition in industry. As global heatwaves intensify and environmental disasters become more frequent, Zeytinoğlu called for the climate crisis to remain at the top of Türkiye's policy agenda.

IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU: “DEVELOPMENTS AIMED AT FACILITATING SCHENGEN VISAS ARE PROMISING, BUT MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE”



IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu welcomed the European Commission's recent decision to simplify the Schengen visa process for Turkish citizens, calling it a positive step towards easing mobility. Under the new rules, Turkish citizens who have previously obtained and complied with Schengen visas will be eligible for longer-term, multiple-entry visas, ranging from six months to five years, depending on their prior visa history. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu noted that this new system rewards compliant applicants and will help reduce visa congestion and processing delays.

However, he expressed disappointment that truck drivers, essential to Türkiye-EU

trade, are excluded from the new facilitation scheme due to perceived risks. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu stressed that driver visa challenges continue to hinder the free movement of goods and highlighted the need to address the 90/180 day rule affecting transport operations.

While viewing the new measures as a step in the right direction, Chairperson Zeytinoğlu emphasised that broader reform is still required. He called for improvements in the visa appointment system, transparency on fees, and a reduction in rejection rates. He also urged both applicants and consulates to act responsibly, noting that timely and fair processing is essential for building mutual trust.

IKV PARTICIPATED IN EUROCHAMBRES EVENT

IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit and IKV Brussels Representative Haluk Nuray participated in the event titled “Connecting European Chambers” organised by EUROCHAMBRES in Brussels on 8-9 July 2025. As part of the programme's 10th anniversary, European and Turkish chambers came together for an event featuring presentations, roundtable discussions and workshops on EU programmes related to sustainability and innovation, while sharing the challenges encountered in project processes.

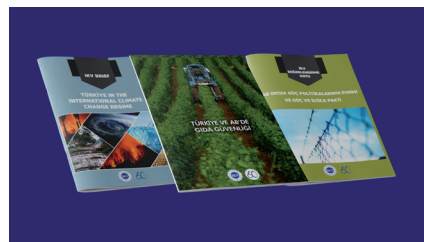
IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit and IKV Brussels Representative Haluk Nuray welcomed representatives of



chambers and stock exchanges participating from Türkiye to the IKV Brussels Office and briefed them on the latest developments in Türkiye-EU relations. Projects that could be jointly implemented were discussed during the programme.

IKV RELEASED THREE NEW PUBLICATIONS

IKV released three new publications about food safety, migration and climate change. First publication titled “Food Safety in Türkiye and the EU” written by IKV Junior Researcher Aygen Torun analyses Common issues and areas of cooperation regarding food safety in Türkiye and the EU. The second publication published under IKV Brief series titled “Türkiye in the International Climate Change Regime” written also by IKV Junior Researcher Aygen Torun assesses Türkiye's climate policies, its alignment with the EU Green Deal, and the impacts of EU climate mechanisms on Türkiye's emission reduction strategies and renewable energy potential. Lastly, third publication published under IKV Brief series



titled “Evolution of EU Migration Policies and the Pact on Migration and Asylum” written by IKV Junior Researcher Tunç İbrahim Ceylan addresses the Pact on Migration and Asylum in detail through evaluating the historical background of the EU's common migration and asylum policies.

IKV SECRETARY GENERAL NAS PARTICIPATED IN VARIOUS PROGRAMMES AND EVENTS



IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas participated in various programmes and events in July 2025. On 2 July, Assoc. Prof. Nas participated in a roundtable discussion on “Türkiye-EU Relations” as part of the EU Values Conference. In her speech, Assoc. Prof. Nas drew attention to the stagnation and deterioration in Türkiye-EU relations over the past decade. Noting that current security concerns have prompted the EU to develop its defence sector, Assoc. Prof. Nas emphasised that the need to develop economic and trade relations alongside security and defence creates common goals and opportunities for Türkiye and the EU.

On 18 July, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas participated online in the workshop titled “Global Governance and Climate Change” organised by Ankara University Faculty of Political Sciences and China Foreign Affairs University. In her speech, Assoc. Prof. Nas provided information about Türkiye's climate policies. Assoc. Prof. Nas referred to Türkiye's obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Climate Agreement and stated that the European Green Deal had an impact on the development of climate policies.

HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN SPOKE BY PHONE WITH AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR STOCKER

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan spoke by phone with Austrian Chancellor Christian Stocker. During the call, bilateral relations between Türkiye and Austria as well as regional and global issues were discussed.

President Erdoğan underlined that Türkiye and Austria should make efficient use of their potential in the fields of trade and investment and stated that steps would continue to be taken to enhance cooperation. President Erdoğan also stressed that Türkiye is making efforts to end wars, emphasising that any emerging opportunity to end the war between Russia and Ukraine should not be wasted, and described the humanitarian situation in Gaza as catastrophic, highlighting the



urgency of delivering humanitarian aid to the region without delay. Furthermore, President Erdoğan noted that Türkiye continues its efforts to ensure lasting stability in

Syria and underlined the importance of improving social and economic conditions in order to enable the voluntary return of Syrian refugees to their homeland.

MINISTER FIDAN PARTICIPATED IN THE 17TH BRICS SUMMIT



Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan attended the 17th BRICS Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 6-7 July 2025. During the Summit, Minister Fidan held a series of bilateral and multilateral meetings and delivered speeches representing Türkiye during prominent sessions.

During the Summit where Minister Fidan delivered a speech, he stated that stepping back from multilateralism is not an option that can be afforded, emphasising that this structure has long been a driving force behind progress.

Moreover, drawing attention to the fact that Israel's attacks in Gaza have reversed decades of development in the region, Minister Fidan expressed that the tragedy endured by the Palestinian people now lies at the heart of our discussions on multilateralism. Minister Fidan emphasised that the ongoing situation involving Israel's actions could have wide-reaching global repercussions if de-escalation efforts are not pursued. Minister Fidan further noted that Türkiye has intensified its efforts towards a peaceful resolution and

de-escalation, expressing Türkiye's readiness to support a lasting peace.

Minister Fidan also delivered a speech representing Türkiye during the session titled "Environment, COP30 and Global Health" held within the framework of the Summit.

Finally, on the margins of the Summit, Minister Fidan held a series of intensive bilateral meetings. Minister Fidan met separately with Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Abbas Arakchi, Belarusian Minister of Foreign Affairs Maxim Ryzhenkov, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Murat Nurtleu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov, and United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. During these meetings, regional and global developments were discussed, and views were exchanged on areas of cooperation.

TRADE MINISTER BOLAT CAME TOGETHER WITH GEORGIAN COUNTERPARTS IN TBLISI



On 16 July 2025, Turkish Trade Minister Ömer Bolat met Georgian Minister of Finance Lasha Khutsishvili

and Georgian Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development Mariam Kvrivishvili respectively during his visit to Tbilisi in order to attend Türkiye Georgia Business Council meeting. Minister Bolat emphasised the strong economic ties between two countries with approximately 3.4 billion dollars trade volume.

Türkiye has ranked first among the top-import countries of Georgia,

which can be considered as a gate towards the Caucasus and Central Asia beyond its importance of Türkiye as a neighbour and friendly trading partner, Minister Bolat added. Additionally, Minister Bolat touched upon that registered 2.216 corporates with Turkish partners contribute to Georgia's economy through investment, production, employment and exports.

CYPRUS TALKS HELD IN NEW YORK UNDER UN AUSPICES

On 17 July, a new round of Cyprus talks was held at UN Headquarters in New York, chaired by UN Secretary-General António Guterres. The meeting was attended by the TRNC President Ersin Tatar, Greek Cypriot Administration Leader Nikos Christodoulides, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Greek Foreign Minister George Gerapetritis, UK Minister of State for Europe Stephen Doughty, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary A. DiCarlo, and the UN Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Relations with Cyprus María Angela Holguín Cuéllar.

Following the meeting held in Geneva in March this year, the meeting focused on the progress of the eight-point confidence building measures agreed upon by the powers that be. It was reported that four of the six points had been completed, including the establishment of a technical committee on youth, environmental and climate change initiatives, cemetery restoration, and agreement on demining.

It was stated that the actual issues of opening four crossing



points between the two sides and the solar energy project in the buffer zone had not yet been finalised, but that negotiations were continuing. President Tatar stated that the most effective step is strengthening the expansion of crossing points but noted that progress has not yet been made on this issue. Emphasising that the Greek Cypriot leader has not yet submitted a proposal, President Tatar stated that they had submitted proposals regarding Haspolat and Akincilar, where indications suggest that the roads are suitable for vehicle passage.

Furthermore, the leaders agreed to cooperate in new areas, such as establishing a formalised body for civil society interaction, cultural exchanges, improving air quality monitoring, and addressing microplastics. UN Secretary-General Guterres emphasised that these steps would benefit the whole island.

CYPRUS PEACE OPERATION'S 51ST ANNIVERSARY WAS COMMEMORATED



President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and TRNC President Ersin Tatar marked the 51st anniversary of the Cyprus Peace Operation and Peace and Freedom Day with a wreath laying ceremony and commemorative speech. President Erdoğan expressed pride in celebrating the occasion, emphasising the operation's alignment with guarantor duties and its role in supporting the Turkish Cypriot community and noted Türkiye's continued backing of TRNC in sectors like tourism, education, and technology, citing the success of TEKNOFEST in Lefkoşa. He also stressed Türkiye and TRNC's unity in overcoming challenges and embargoes through shared resolve.

TRNC President Ersin Tatar described the 1974 Cyprus operation as a key moment for Turkish Cypriots, noting their relief and joy at the arrival of Turkish forces while emphasising its role in ending intercommunal violence and restoring peace. Reflecting on past suffering, he drew parallels with current events in Gaza. President Tatar criticised the Greek Cypriot side for rejecting peace initiatives like the Annan Plan and Crans-Montana talks, despite gaining international recognition. Reaffirming his support for a two-state solution, he called for renewed momentum and equal representation under UN-sponsored negotiations.

TÜRKİYE'S PARLIAMENT HAS ADOPTED FIRST-EVER CLIMATE LAW

Türkiye's first-ever climate law was adopted on 2 July 2025 at the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye.

The Türkiye's first climate law was adopted on 2 July 2025, and was published in the Official Gazette, thereby entering into force. The Climate Law prepared to combat climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, aims to plan climate change adaptation activities and procedures.

Climate Justice, Climate Finance, Net Zero Emissions, Just Transition, Emissions Trading System (ETS) and Carbon Credit are the concepts that defined under the Climate Law. The Climate Law is highly significant for accelerating the fight against climate change and for maintaining trade volume with the EU. Türkiye's is continuously aligning its climate and environmental legislation with the EU's green politics and promoting policies for the protection of the environment.

The Directorate of Climate Change is authorised to formulate regulations and ensure policy implementation in order to take the necessary measures. The



Directorate of Climate Change will be responsible for inter-agency coordination, defining activities and standards, and regulating market-based mechanisms concerning carbon pricing.

Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change Minister Murat Kurum said "With this law, the most critical threshold of our 2053 Net Zero Emission and

Green Development targets, we will provide a freer research and development environment without being influenced by any country in developing new technologies." According to Minister, The Climate Law will enhance Türkiye's trade, industry and production as it is protecting it from environmental disaster and negative effects of the climate crisis.

TÜRKİYE CLIMBS TO EUROPE'S FIFTH LARGEST ELECTRIC CAR MARKET

In the first five months of 2025, Türkiye sold 59,092 battery-electric cars, overtaking Norway and the Netherlands to become Europe's fifth-largest market after Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Belgium. Electric vehicles captured 14.98% of domestic car sales in Türkiye (positioning it near the EU average of 15.4%) signalling a rapid shift in consumer preferences. Analysts attribute the rise to a 10% special consumption tax incentive, an expanding fast-charging network, and a wave of models configured specifically for Türkiye's 160 kW power threshold.

Large summer deliveries of Tesla's Model Y and the debut of Togg's second model, the T10F, are expected to erase the 5,000-unit gap with Belgium, potentially pushing Türkiye to fourth place by year-end. Meanwhile, plug-in hybrid sales have skyrocketed 1,402% on the back of a tax cut linked to BYD's planned production investment, demonstrating a



sustained appetite for electrified options.

The Turkish Energy Ministry aims to establish 180,000 public charging points by 2030, while the Industry Ministry is implementing battery-cell incentives to encourage local gigafactory projects. Domestic supply chains are maturing: Turkish suppliers now export battery housings and power-electronics components to several EU automakers, positioning

the country as both a consumer and a producer in the clean mobility ecosystem. With total EU and EFTA electric-car sales up 27.8% so far this year, Türkiye's fast-growing market is poised to shape regional demand patterns. Industry observers say a 20% market share by December 2025 is within reach, underscoring Türkiye's emergence as an important player in Europe's transition to zero emission mobility.

TURKISH AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT IS ON THE RISE

Minister of Agriculture and Forestry İbrahim Yumaklı announced the increase in Turkish agricultural output. Minister Yumaklı stressed that agricultural output of the country hit 74 billion dollars in 2024 which indicates 5.1 billion dollars rise compared to 2023 numbers. This 7% increase has put Türkiye among the top seven in the world.

Minister Yumaklı made this development public via a social media post. In this post, he also emphasised that these numbers signified the country's surpass of the 70 billion dollars limit for



the first time. Minister Yumaklı concluded his statement by conveying the thanks to the contributors to this success, namely producers and industrialists.

NUMBER OF PASSENGERS HIT A RECORD 3.95 MILLION AT SABIHA GÖKÇEN AIRPORT

According to HEAS data, 3.95 million passengers passed through Istanbul's Sabiha Gökçen Airport in May 2025. It signifies a 14.9% increase in comparison to May 2024 numbers which can be considered as a solid manifestation of success for the airport. The data reveals that the airport is the ninth in terms of passenger numbers for 2025 until now.

2.17 million of these passengers visited the airport for international flights while the rest was domestic passengers as the airport serves flights from Istanbul to 148



destinations. The airport's success was also proved with the European Airports Council (ACI) report. Sabiha Gökçen Airport became the fastest growing airport in Europe as the ACI May 2025 Traffic Report.

TÜRKİYE-UK FREE TRADE AGREEMENT MODERNISATION TALKS SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED

Türkiye and United Kingdom finished the first round of negotiations on the modernisation of the Türkiye-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The updated FTA is expected to open new market opportunities for agricultural products and further enhance the momentum of bilateral economic relations.

The statement highlighted that the updated FTA aims to foster reciprocal market access for agricultural products and will include discussions on potential joint initiatives to ease investment. The agreement will also ensure the mutual recognition of geographical indications. In addition, steps will be taken to increase awareness among SMEs. Furthermore, areas



of cooperation will be concretised in fields such as innovation, consumer protection, and the economic empowerment of women. It was stressed in the statement that sustainability in trade will be promoted by addressing environmental and labour issues in a cooperative framework. Finally, it was emphasised that, as part of trade facilitation efforts, customs procedures will be streamlined via both conventional and digital platforms.

SÖNMEZ MADE HISTORY AS FIRST TURKISH WOMAN TO REACH WIMBLEDON THIRD ROUND

Zeynep Sönmez has made history at Wimbledon by becoming the first Turkish woman to reach the third round. The 23-year-old, ranked 88th in the world, faced Russian player Ekaterina Alexandrova on Court 12 in the third round match.

Sönmez exited Wimbledon after a 6-3, 7-6 loss to Russia's Alexandrova. After struggling in the first set, she led 5-2 in the second but couldn't close it out, eventually losing in a tie-break. Despite the defeat, her powerful baseline game and strong backhand earned praise. Earlier in the tournament, Sönmez



impressed with straight set wins over world No. 52 Jaqueline Cristian and No. 32 Xinyu Wang. With a

previous career-high ranking of 76, she is expected to climb the rankings again following this run.

Her achievement is seen as a historic step for Turkish tennis. Previously, Bahtije Musluoğlu reached the third round at the 1950 French Open, while İpek Şenoğlu and Çağla Büyükakçay represented Türkiye in Grand Slams. Many Turkish fans supported her in the stands, showing how inspiring her journey is. Sönmez also reached the last 32 in doubles with partner Polina Kudermetova but lost to Dabrowski and Routliffe on 4 July, exiting the tournament.

HAKKARI WILL BE CONVERTED INTO AN ARTISTIC LOCATION



Türkiye's far-southeast is set for a remarkable transformation as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism unveils an initiative to reshape Hakkari's Cilo Mountains into a year-round magnet for sport, nature and the arts. During an on-site inspection, Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy outlined a master plan that designates Cilo and its neighbouring area, Kamışlı, as new tourism zones, backed by presidential approval. With six months of reliable snow, the project envisions a modern ski resort, expanded trekking routes and fresh accommodation capacity, including four-star hotels and social facilities.

Cultural programming is integral to the vision. The State

Opera and Ballet will add Hakkari to its Anadolu Festival circuit, staging open-air performances amid alpine scenery. At the same time, the State Theatres prepare touring productions to foster local talent. Digital campaigns on the "Go Türkiye" platform will feature Cilo's glaciers, wildflower meadows and ancient rock carvings, aiming to attract international eco-tourists and culture lovers alike.

Officials expect new air links, tax incentives and a coordinated marketing push to lift annual arrivals into the hundreds of thousands within five years, positioning Hakkari as one of Türkiye's promising destinations of creative and sustainable tourism.

TUNÇELLİ WON HIS THIRD CONSECUTIVE EUROPEAN JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

Türkiye's national swimmer Kuzey Tunçelli has achieved an impressive milestone by winning his third consecutive European Junior Championship title. Competing in the men's 1500-meter freestyle event at the European Junior Swimming Championships, Tunçelli secured the gold medal once again.

The third day of the competition was held in the town of Šamorín, Slovakia, where Tunçelli claimed first place in the gruelling 1500-meter freestyle with an outstanding time of 14 minutes and 45.05 seconds. This victory marked the third consecutive time Tunçelli has been crowned



European Junior Champion in this event, highlighting his consistent dominance at the continental level and his status as one of Türkiye's most promising young athletes.

With this success, the total medal count for Turkish athletes

at the championship rose to three, including two gold medals and one bronze. Tunçelli's performance not only adds to Türkiye's growing reputation in the sport but also inspires young swimmers aspiring to reach international heights.

32ND İSTANBUL JAZZ FESTIVAL BROUGHT GLOBAL SOUNDS TO CITY'S ICONIC STAGES



The İstanbul Jazz Festival once again captivated music lovers with an unforgettable programme from 1-17 July. Celebrating its 32nd edition this year, the festival has been a staple of İstanbul's cultural scene every July since 1994. This year's

festival welcomed globally acclaimed artists known for their innovative and experimental styles, drawing inspiration from the liberating spirit of jazz. Emerging young talents who are already leaving their mark on the future of jazz also found their place

on the festival stage. The programme served as a reminder that music can keep us grounded and united, no matter the circumstances.

Concerts took place across a range of stunning venues, from Harbiye Cemil Topuzlu Open-Air Theatre to the French Palace to Esmâ Sultan Mansion, bringing together jazz masters and rising stars from Türkiye and around the world. The festival opened with a mesmerising performance by the legendary Afro-Cuban jazz pioneer and seven time Grammy Award winner Chucho Valdés. Other artists who took part in the festival included Max Richter, Hermanos Gutiérrez and Jazzmeia Horn.

ANCIENT FOSSILS DATING BACK 7.7 MILLION YEARS FOUND IN KAYSERİ



The area where excavations commenced in 2017, following the discovery of fossils reported by a local goat herder near Kayseri's Yamula Dam, has been scientifically dated to around 7.7 million years ago. A team of 12 researchers conducted studies at the dam located on the Kızılırmak River in the Kocasinan district.

Prof. Okşan Başoğlu and Prof. Pınar Gözlük Kırmızıoğlu supervised the excavations. The excavation has been conducted under the authority of the Kayseri Museum Directorate since 2018, with the permission of the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Culture and Tourism. In this region, which is rich in fossil diversity, giraffes, elephants,

mammoths, rhinoceroses, three-toed horses, bovids (such as sheep, goats and antelopes), turtles and pig fossil have also been discovered.

Anthropologist Ömer Dağ, who participated in the excavation efforts, provided a statement regarding the plenty fossils discovered around the Yamula Dam area. Dağ said "Previously, dating relied on geological or faunal estimates. Our precise layer dating provides a clear geological timeframe for the Middle Kızılırmak Basin, making this site an important reference for future paleontological studies." Dağ noted that the high level of diversity was surprising and added that a pig skull had been unearthed last year.

OPENING NEW DOORS: THE EU'S CASCADE REFORM EASES SCHENGEN VISAS FOR TURKISH CITIZENS

The EU's new cascade visa regime for Turkish citizens signals a reactivation of the long-stalled visa liberalisation agenda-offering practical relief while testing whether incremental trust-building can reinvigorate broader Türkiye-EU political alignment.

Laura BATALLA ADAM
Analyst

In July 2025, the European Union took an important step toward easing the mobility of Turkish citizens by reforming Schengen visa rules. This new regime, known as the "Cascade Rule", is more than a procedural change; it represents a cautious yet symbolic gesture toward re-engaging with the stalled visa liberalisation agenda, a core component of the Türkiye-EU political relationship that has suffered from years of inertia and distrust. For Turkish students, professionals, entrepreneurs, and civil society actors, the reform offers immediate, tangible benefits, while signalling the EU's intent to re-engage with Türkiye on key mobility and enlargement issues.

A Long-Pending Commitment Revisited

Türkiye's aspiration for visa-free travel to the EU dates back decades. The 1963 Ankara Agreement and its 1970 Additional Protocol envisioned closer integration, including the free movement of people. When Türkiye gained EU candidate status in 1999, these aspirations began to feel more attainable. The launch of the Visa Liberalisation Dialogue (VLD) in 2013, coinciding with the Readmission Agreement, signalled a structured path toward this goal, setting out a roadmap of 72 benchmarks ranging from document security to fundamental rights and judicial cooperation.

By 2016, Türkiye had met 66 of these benchmarks. However, six key areas, particularly anti-terrorism legislation, judicial independence, data protection, and cooperation with Europol, remained unresolved. Following the 2016 coup attempt and democratic backsliding, the dialogue stalled. The EU accession process lost momentum, and visa liberalisation became a casualty of broader political fatigue. The cascade reform does not resolve these challenges but reintroduces mobility as a strategic, confidence-building measure.

Barriers That Go Beyond Paperwork

For many Turkish citizens, the visa application process has become a costly and frustrating experience, marked by long waits, inconsistent criteria, and an overall sense of opacity. Applying for a Schengen visa has often involved navigating an unpredictable, time-consuming, and increasingly commercialised process. While official EU statistics report a 14.5% rejection rate for Turkish applicants, below the global average, this masks a deeper problem.

According to IKV's 2025 report The State of Türkiye-EU Visa Liberalisation Dialogue and Challenges in the Schengen Visa Application Process, between 2014 and 2023, Schengen visa rejection rates for Turkish citizens rose sharply, from just 4.42% in 2014 to 16.05% in 2023, marking a nearly fourfold increase. This trend reflects a broader deterioration in visa accessibility, with some countries showing even steeper rejections. For instance, the rate of refusals by Germany surged from 9.09% (2014-2019) to 21.89% by 2023.

The financial burden has risen in parallel. In 2023 alone, Turkish nationals spent over 12.3 million euros in non-refundable application fees for visas that were ultimately denied by the ten most frequently applied to countries, with Germany alone accounting for more than 4.4 million euros of that total.

A particular point of concern is the growing difficulty in securing visa appointments. Consulates, constrained by staffing and infrastructure limitations, have become bottlenecks rather than facilitators, often relying on third-party intermediaries that add layers of cost and complexity. For students pursuing Erasmus exchanges or researchers planning academic stays, delays and refusals translate into lost opportunities. Journalists and human rights defenders also report disproportionate scrutiny, reinforcing perceptions of politicisation in the visa process.

This widening gap between Türkiye's formal EU candidate status and its citizens' day-to-day access to the Schengen Area raises questions



about the EU's consistency and credibility in applying its enlargement principles uniformly across all candidate countries. The introduction of the cascade reform, therefore, not only aims to streamline access but also restores a measure of proportionality and fairness that has long been absent.

Cascade Visas: A Step Forward, But Not A Leap

Against this backdrop, the European Commission's July 2025 rollout of the cascade visa regime represents a modest breakthrough. Under the new system, Turkish nationals who have received and properly used two short-stay Schengen visas within a three-year period may be eligible for longer-term, multi-entry visas, progressively valid for one year, three years, and eventually five.

However, this mechanism is not automatic. Consulates retain full discretion, and while prior compliance is a prerequisite, it does not guarantee approval. The logic is straightforward: travellers who have complied with visa rules in the past may be rewarded with more flexible access, but this remains subject to the institutional discretion and practical capacity of consular services.

The reform signals a new model of trust-building through behaviour, but its success will depend on implementation. Many consular offices in Türkiye are under-resourced and technologically outdated. Without significant investment in digital

systems and staffing, the cascade reform risks falling short in practice, despite its promise in principle.

Sectoral Impacts Of The Cascade Rule

The cascade rule carries tangible benefits for specific sectors. For students and academics, it means fewer disruptions to education and more certainty when planning exchange semesters, research collaborations, or international conferences. Many have faced the frustration of short-term visas expiring mid-programme or forcing costly reapplications.

For the business community, particularly SMEs that rely on quick mobility for trade fairs, supplier visits, or negotiations, the reform cuts red tape and lowers planning risks. The ability to move more freely can improve both competitiveness and cross-border collaboration.

Civil society organisations also stand to benefit. NGOs, artists, and human rights advocates depend on international mobility to build coalitions, amplify voices, and represent Turkish perspectives abroad. Longer-term visas reduce logistical friction and support the broader goal of mutual understanding, a goal often endorsed by EU and Turkish officials yet rarely prioritised in practice.

That said, the discretionary nature of the cascade rule means outcomes will likely remain uneven. Without clearer guidance and transparency

in decision-making, applicants may still face inconsistencies and opacity. Professionals in politically sensitive fields, such as journalists, lawyers, or activists, may continue to experience disproportionate scrutiny unless deeper shifts occur in institutional culture within consulates.

From Technical Fix To Political Signal: Visa Policy As Trust-Building

Despite its limitations, the cascade regime offers a platform for renewed momentum. To capitalise on it, both Türkiye and the EU must return to fully implementing the Visa Liberalisation Dialogue.

For Türkiye, this means addressing the six outstanding benchmarks. Some, like aligning data protection laws or deepening judicial cooperation, can be achieved through legislative and technical adjustments. Others, including reforming anti terror legislation and ensuring judicial independence, require a broader political commitment.

On the EU side, clarity and consistency in consular practice are essential. Significant investment in digital infrastructure and staffing is also necessary to make the cascade regime viable. Without these changes, the reform risks being perceived as merely symbolic rather than genuinely transformative.

As EU Ambassador to Türkiye Thomas Hans Ossowski noted, the cascade rule is a meaningful step, but not a substitute for full liberalisation. His call for renewed engagement on the final benchmarks must be heeded if this reform is to be more than a temporary fix.

The cascade reform, if implemented equitably and supported politically, can serve as a bridge toward a more balanced and strategic partnership between Türkiye and the EU. The journey toward visa-free travel has been long and often frustrating. But the cascade rule shows that meaningful, incremental steps are still possible. Both sides now face a choice: allow this reform to become another isolated fix or use it to restore credibility to a long-standing promise made more than sixty years ago.