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CONSOLIDATING CLIMATE POLICY: TÜRKİYE SUBMITTED NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION 3.0

Having substantiated its climate targets with concrete policies in its new Second Nationally Determined Contribution, Türkiye is preparing to host COP31 next year.

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Although there is no mandatory global timetable for Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) submissions under the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), many countries choose to submit their NDCs in parallel with the COP agenda, forming a common practice. Türkiye submitted its Second Nationally Determined Contribution on 9 November, ahead of COP30 just as many other countries did. In this regard, Türkiye commits to reduce its 2035 greenhouse gas emissions by 466 Mt CO₂-eq compared to the BAU scenario, thereby limiting total emissions to 643 Mt CO₂-eq in 2035. In Türkiye's NDC 3.0 document, this commitment is presented as both ambitious and realistic, and aligned with the 2053 net-zero vision and the outcomes of the first Global Stocktake concluded at COP28.

Unlike the 2023 updated NDC, which used 2012 as the emissions reference year, the new NDC uses a more recent reference year, 2018. While the reasoning for that change is said to be the need for establishing more ground data, it also attracted some criticisms from the climate activists. Moreover, Türkiye's reliance on BAU scenarios in setting its targets has been questioned, as questions remain regarding whether such scenarios might overstate future projections. In other words, although this signals a stronger commitment internationally, it has also prompted discussion domestically and internationally, given that emissions are still on an upward trend. In response to such concerns, Türkiye emphasises its relatively limited share of global emissions and frames its position



within the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) as a developing economy. Nevertheless, the ongoing debate focuses on whether Türkiye's targets can be regarded as a sufficient contribution toward achieving the 1.5°C pathway.

On the other hand, Türkiye's new NDC brings commendable updates. Unlike earlier submissions, Türkiye's Second NDC appears more responsive to criticisms and increasingly grounded in legal frameworks with a more concrete action plan. With the adoption of Türkiye's first Climate Law by the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye on 2 July, concrete objectives were established; mechanisms such as the Emissions Trading System (ETS) and Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) were incorporated into Turkish legislation. The Climate Law is expected to strengthen transparency and accountability in carbon monitoring and reporting processes, as well as Türkiye's alignment with international carbon markets.

Türkiye's 2053 Net-Zero Vision

In the introduction to the document, it is stated that, following

the updated first NDC, Türkiye adopted the Climate Change Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan (2024–2030) and the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (2024–2030), which set out thematic targets and policies across various environmental sub-sectors. It is also emphasised that the 2053 Long-Term Climate Strategy was announced at COP29 and that Türkiye adopted its first Climate Law. Beyond ETS, the law introduces several mechanisms including the Green Taxonomy Guideline, Local Climate Action Plans, and institutional structures including the Climate Change Adaptation Coordination Board.

The document also underlines Türkiye's commitments under the Montreal Protocol and the Kigali Amendment, noting that national reduction efforts and regulations on fluorinated greenhouse gases ensure compliance with international obligations and contribute to domestic mitigation.

The document emphasises that Türkiye's climate policy is based on an integrated approach addressing environmental, economic, and social dimensions together, and is designed in alignment with the 2053 net-zero objective. The wide range of

strategies and action plans, spanning energy efficiency, industry, transport, buildings, water management, agriculture, education, child rights, and women's empowerment, demonstrate that climate action is not confined to specific sectors but envisions economy-wide and society-wide transformation.

Within this framework, Türkiye states that it strengthens its just transition vision by establishing targeted support mechanisms for women, children, low-income groups, and SMEs; prioritising workforce training for green jobs, social protection systems, and inclusive infrastructure investments. It is also noted that climate mitigation and air-quality policies have been integrated to deliver co-benefits for environmental and public health, and that the Industrial Emissions Regulation entering into force in 2025 is expected to support efforts to strengthen the resilience of health systems to climate risks.

The document highlights the critical importance of adequate international finance for achieving these targets and underscores that global cooperation and support mechanisms are necessary alongside national efforts. Moreover, it is stated that achieving the net-zero target will require additional annual investments of at least 1.7% of GDP, particularly in the energy, buildings, industry, transport, and LULUCF sectors.

Finally, Türkiye:

- reaffirms its strong commitment to climate action while promoting sustainable development, economic growth, and social equity without compromising food security;
- states that the submitted NDC reflects a whole-of-society approach that advances innovation, policy coherence, and multi-stakeholder cooperation towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient future.

COP31 to be Held in Türkiye

Negotiations at COP30 held in Belém, Brazil concluded with the decision that next year's COP31 will be hosted and chaired by Türkiye while Australia will contribute as a negotiator and the Pre-COP will be organised in one of the Pacific countries. After a negotiation process including a series of long and heated debates, Türkiye and Australia eventually agreed to find a middle ground.

This marks a historic diplomatic achievement: for the first time, Türkiye will host COP, the UN's most important conference in the fight against climate change. Leaders from 196 countries will gather in Türkiye to discuss commitments, policies, and solutions to the climate crisis. Türkiye's presidency theme will be guided by the vision of a fairer and more inclusive diplomacy where no country is left behind.

The main sessions of COP31 are planned to be held in Antalya where the G20 Summit and Informal Meeting of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs were held before, cementing the city's diplomatic profile. However, it was reported that the Leaders' Summit is planned to be held in İstanbul.

Conclusion

It is clear that Türkiye has substantiated its climate targets with concrete policies, particularly following the adoption of the Climate Law in July. Although the stylistic framing of Türkiye's BAU scenario remains open to criticism, the country's increasing efforts inspire greater optimism for the future of its climate policies. Ultimately, Türkiye has the potential to play a stronger role in the global fight against the climate crisis if it continues to advance more assertive measures, especially as it will have the opportunity to showcase its climate leadership during next year's COP in Antalya.



IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU: "WHILE THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT OPENS A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY FOR TÜRKİYE'S EU GOAL, OBSTACLES PERSIST"



IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu commented on the European Commission's 2025 Türkiye Report following its announcement by the Commissioner responsible for Enlargement Marta Kos. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu said:

"As IKV, we have been monitoring Türkiye-EU relations for 60 years, producing analysis to support Türkiye's path toward EU membership. Even during difficult periods, IKV ensured dialogue continued. Today, accession negotiations have been suspended since 2018. The Customs Union, a key pillar of relations, remains unupdated, while the visa issue and the Cyprus problem continue to strain ties. Türkiye's strategic importance has increased due to Europe's growing defence needs."

During his visit, German Chancellor Merz highlighted strategic dialogue and expressed the desire to see Türkiye close to the EU. While this aligns with his party's preference for privileged partnership, full EU membership remains Türkiye's ideal, requiring the revival of reforms from law and justice to the economy.

The report notes that Türkiye is a functioning market economy capable of facing competitive pressures. However, it flags regression in rule of law, human rights, freedom of expression, and anti-corruption efforts. Alignment with the EU acquis is strong in economic policies, company law, and free movement of goods, but gaps remain in state aid, public procurement, social policy, and climate action. Recommendations include aligning education with

labour market needs, diversifying energy supply, expanding renewables, and improving SME access to finance.

EU reports increasingly emphasise foreign, security, and defence policy. Türkiye's compliance with EU foreign policy statements fell from 6% in 2024 to 4% in 2025, underlining the need for deeper coordination. The EU's stance on Cyprus and Eastern Mediterranean issues largely reflects Greece and the Republic of Cyprus, making a balanced approach essential.

A key shortcoming of the report is the lack of guidance on reviving accession talks. Despite challenges, Türkiye is better prepared than other candidates to adopt the acquis. With renewed EU reform efforts and political will, membership could return to the agenda."

DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER AMBASSADOR BOZAY VISITED IKV



Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay visited IKV on 7 November 2025 and had a meeting with IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, IKV Deputy Secretary General

M. Gökhan Kilit and IKV team. Discussing the future of the EU and current issues in Türkiye-EU relations, Bozay highlighted the critical role of the business world and civil society in the EU process and was briefed on the activities of the IKV.

IKV ORGANISED A MEETING ON TÜRKİYE-EU RELATIONS ON THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEGOTIATIONS



IKV, in cooperation with IPM, TURABDER and TEPAV, organised a meeting titled "Türkiye-European Union Relations on the 20th Anniversary of the Negotiations" on 27 November 2025. In the first part of the event, which consisted of two main sessions, a panel titled "A 20-Year Journey: A Retrospective Look at the Accession Process,"

moderated by TURABDER President Mehmet Emre Gür, was held.

In this session, Director of TEPAV's Centre for European Union Studies Nilgün Arısan Eralp, Retired Ambassador Volkan Ural, and IPM senior researcher Prof. Atila Eralp took part as speakers. Subsequently, the meeting continued with the second panel

titled "Beyond Accession: Building a New Strategic Partnership," moderated by IPM Director and Sabancı University Faculty Member Prof. Senem Aydin-Düzgit.

The speakers of the panel were IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, EDAM Director Sinan Ülgen, and Prof. Meltem Müftüler-Baç.

IKV AGENDA

İSTANBUL UNIVERSITY POLITICAL ACADEMY CLUB VISITED IKV

Students from the Political Academy Club at İstanbul University visited the IKV on 28 November 2025, meeting with IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas, IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit, and IKV Research Director Çișel İleri.

During the visit, IKV Secretary General Nas provided information about the Foundation's activities and then assessed the current state of Türkiye-EU relations. After discussing the history of bilateral relations, the problems encountered today, and how they could be overcome, the students' questions



about our Foundation and Türkiye-EU relations were answered. During the visit, which also included an introduction to the activities of the İstanbul EU Information Centre and

the documentation library under the umbrella of the IKV, the IKV experts shared their current work, regular publications, and ongoing projects.

IKV PARTICIPATED IN THE DELPHI ECONOMIC FORUM

IKV Media Advisor Mehmet Poyrazlı attended the Fourth Delphi Economic Forum Brussels held on 6 November 2025. Speakers at the forum included European Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans Costas Kadis, former Vice President of the European Commission Margaritis Schinas, and Director General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood at the European Commission Gert Jan Koopman.

The forum featured several panels that addressed key challenges and opportunities for Europe. Discussions covered Europe's external actions in a changing global environment, the strategic importance of raw materials for green, digital, and defence transitions, and the EU's trade strategies amid rising protectionism. Panels also explored how the GCASC and Greece plan to



strengthen unity and advance policy agendas during their presidencies, strategies to enhance energy security and regional cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean and South-Eastern Europe, and the financial, military, and political investments required for Europe to assume greater responsibility for its own defence. Further sessions highlighted the geopolitical importance of EU enlargement for collective security

and stability, as well as economic growth prospects and strategies for deeper integration and investment in South-Eastern Europe.

During the forum, IKV Media Advisor Mehmet Poyrazlı met with former Vice-President of the European Commission Margaritis Schinas, who is also a former intern at the foundation, and briefed Schinas on the foundation's activities.

REPRESENTATIVES OF POLISH BASED THINK TANKS VISITED IKV

IKV Caucasus and Central Asia Department at the Centre for Eastern Studies in Poland Head of Türkiye Karol Wasilewski, Head of the Polish Institute for Turkish Studies Dr. Karolina Wanda Olszowska, and Researcher at the Polish Centre for Eastern Studies Zuzanna Krzyzanowska visited the IKV on 19 November 2025 and met with experts. During the meeting held as part of the visit, a presentation was given on the work of the Polish Institute of Turkish Studies. Following the presentation, discussions took place between the Polish delegation and IKV experts.



TIMELINE NOVEMBER 2025

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| 1 | IKV İstanbul Information Centre held a beach clean-up event. |
| 2 | |
| 3 | Foreign Minister Fidan came together with his Finnish counterpart Elina Valtonen. |
| 4 | IKV attended the Delphi Economic Forum and attended the 2025 study visit of the Project to Support the Network of EU Information Centres in Türkiye to Brussels. |
| 5 | |
| 6 | Foreign Minister Fidan came together with his Romanian counterpart Oana Toiu. |
| 7 | Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs Ambassador Mehmet Kemal Bozay visited IKV. |
| 8 | |
| 9 | |
| 10 | |
| 11 | Foreign Minister Fidan came together with Ukrainian National Security and Defence Council Secretary Rustem Umerov. |
| 12 | |
| 13 | President Erdoğan came together with his TRNC counterpart President Tufan Erhürman. |
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| 15 | |
| 16 | |
| 17 | |
| 18 | President Erdoğan came together with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy. |
| 19 | Representatives of Polish-Based Think Tanks visited IKV. |
| 20 | |
| 21 | |
| 22 | President Erdoğan came together with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. |
| 23 | |
| 24 | |
| 25 | |
| 26 | IKV celebrated its 60 th anniversary. |
| 27 | IKV held a meeting titled "Türkiye-EU Relations in the 20 th Anniversary of the Negotiation Talks." |
| 28 | İstanbul University Political Academy Club visited IKV. |
| 29 | IKV İstanbul Information Centre attended EU-Türkiye Youth Forum. |
| 30 | |

IKV İSTANBUL EUIC PARTICIPATED IN THE EU-TÜRKİYE YOUTH FORUM IN MARDİN



IKV İstanbul EU Information Centre participated in the EU-Türkiye Youth Forum on "Sustainable Agriculture, Clean Food and Water

Resilience" in Mardin from 26 to 29 November 2025, as part of the EU Green Diplomacy Week, with six students studying at various

universities in Istanbul. The official opening session of the forum began with speeches by the Head of the Communication

Section and First Counsellor of the EU Delegation to Türkiye Ramunas Janusauskas, Central Coordinator of the TKDK Dr. İlhan Demirkan, and Dean of the Faculty of Tourism Prof. Lokman Toprak at Mardin Artuklu University.

This year's EU-Türkiye Youth Forum was held in the city of Mardin, where agriculture is part of daily life and tradition. Together with young people from 18 provinces, the topics of sustainable agriculture, clean food and water resilience, which were the themes of this year, were examined in depth. Throughout the forum, young participants shared their ideas for building a greener and fairer future. These exchanges took place not only through panel discussions but also through the EU Youth Consultation meeting on

Fundamental Rights, ensuring that young people's voices contributed to the Türkiye-EU dialogue. In addition, a colourful cultural exhibition showcasing Türkiye's rich heritage and the creative energy of the participants opened at the Sabancı Museum.

On the sidelines of the forum, Head of the Communication Section and First Counsellor of the EU Delegation to Türkiye Ramunas Janusauskas and Coordinator of the IKV İstanbul EU Information Centre Mehmet Poyrazlı visited President of the Mardin Chamber of Commerce and Industry Hatip Çelik, TKDK Mardin Provincial Coordinator Erdal Çelik at the International Office and Erasmus Office of Mardin Artuklu University and the Mardin Joint Women's Cooperation Association.

IKV İSTANBUL EUIC PARTICIPATED IN A STUDY VISIT TO BRUSSELS



The 2025 study visit of the Project to Support the Network of EU Information Centres in Türkiye, carried out under TOBB, took place in Brussels, between 3-6 November 2025. The visit was attended by Head of the Communication Section of the EU Delegation to Türkiye Ramunas Janusauskas, Press and Communications Officer of the EU Delegation to Türkiye Selda Düzenli, IKV Media Advisor and EU Information Centre Coordinator Mehmet Poyrazlı, the TOBB project coordination team and the coordinators of the cities where the project is being implemented.

The study visit began with a visit to DG ENEST Head of Unit Türkiye Antoine Colombani. This visit was followed by a

meeting with Head of Unit for Strategic Coordination and Communication Natalie Pauwels and her team. During the meeting, views were exchanged on the accession negotiations process and various aspects of Türkiye-EU relations, focusing on the country report on Türkiye adopted by the Commission.

Following discussions at the Commission, the EU Information Centre Coordinators met with MEPs and Türkiye Rapporteur Nacho Sanchez Amor at the European Parliament. The meeting addressed current developments in Türkiye-EU relations, as well as the visa issue and customs union update. Following the European Parliament visit, the EU Information Centres Coordinators met with TOBB President M. Rifat

Hisarcıklıoğlu at the TOBB Brussels Office and briefed President Hisarcıklıoğlu and his delegation on the project.

The Coordinators of the EU Information Centres visited Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Türkiye to the European Union Ambassador Faruk Kaymakçı. The meeting focused on recent developments in Türkiye-EU relations, centred on the report on Türkiye adopted by the European Commission.

The visit ended with a working lunch held with Head of the Communication Section of the EU Delegation to Türkiye Ramunas Janusauskas, during which ideas were exchanged on the activities to be carried out by the EU Information Centres in the coming period.

IKV İSTANBUL EUIC ORGANISED AN EU BEACH CLEANUP EVENT



IKV İstanbul EU Information Centre, in collaboration with the EU Delegation to Türkiye and Kadıköy Municipality, held an EU Beach Cleanup event on 1 November 2025, at Caddebostan Beach. The opening speeches of the programme were delivered by IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökan Kilit and Deputy Mayor of Kadıköy Soydan Alkan. The event, organised worldwide as part of EU Climate Diplomacy Week, aimed to raise awareness and sensitivity among young people on climate change, environmental pollution and waste separation. Participants, including representatives from the consulates and missions of EU Member States in İstanbul, university students, and members of civil society organisations, came together to contribute to raising environmental awareness and

helping to clean up the beaches. The EU Beach Cleanup campaign aims to raise awareness about marine pollution and how our habits affect our oceans. It is estimated that up to 37 million tonnes of plastic waste will reach the oceans annually by 2040. It is jointly run by the European Commission's Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the United Nations. Clean-up efforts play an important role in advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by addressing environmental degradation, promoting sustainable consumption and production, protecting biodiversity, improving public health, and encouraging community participation and cooperation.

HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

PRESIDENT ZELENSKYY MET WITH PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN IN ANKARA

President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy visited Ankara on 19 November 2025, shortly after his European tour, for a meeting with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, National Intelligence Organisation Director İbrahim Kalın, and the President's Chief Advisor on Foreign Policy and Security Akif Çağatay Kılıç also attended the meeting. President Erdoğan and Ukrainian President Zelenskyy discussed key issues of global concern during their meeting. At the heart of the talks were bilateral relations and recent developments in the Russia-Ukraine war. In this context, they reviewed ongoing efforts related to the Istanbul talks, the establishment of a ceasefire, and the achievement of a lasting peace.

At their joint press conference, President Erdoğan stressed the urgency of ending the war and securing peace. He called for the Istanbul talks to be expanded in a pragmatic, results-oriented way, including discussions on recent attacks against energy



infrastructure. He reaffirmed Türkiye's support for Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence, underlined continued backing for the Crimean Tatars, and reiterated the goal of raising bilateral trade to 10 billion dollars despite the war. He added that Türkiye is ready to discuss proposals with Russia for a just and lasting peace and highlighted the importance of US involvement in this process.

Zelenskyy thanked President Erdoğan for Türkiye's consistent support and cooperation. He underlined that defending

Ukraine's sovereignty is a shared responsibility and an exercise of its legitimate right to self-defence, referring also to recent Russian attacks and their victims. He noted that Turkish and Ukrainian teams will continue working on future defence cooperation, stressed the importance of security guarantees for any peace arrangement, and said they trust the strength of Turkish diplomacy and its credibility in Moscow. He also pointed to Türkiye's role in the Coalition of the Willing and stated that Black Sea security can only be ensured together with Türkiye.

PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN CAME TOGETHER WITH TRNC PRESIDENT ERHÜRMAN

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came together with his Cypriot Turkish counterpart Tufan Erhürman on 13 November 2025. Following his Anıtkabir visit, President Erhürman was welcomed with a formal ceremony by President Erdoğan. Following their bilateral meeting, they held a press meeting where the leaders expressed their pleasure in coming together.

President Erdoğan underlined that the meeting was broad and productive, and affirmed that the goal of achieving a just and lasting solution in Cyprus, one reflecting the realities on the island, would continue in close coordination with the TRNC President. He noted that the current state of the Cyprus issue and possible joint steps were discussed. President Erdoğan reiterated that their long-standing position favours a two-state solution, adding that Greek Cypriot policies reduce



the matter to isolating Turkish Cypriots, a situation he attributed partly to the UN Security Council's missteps and to the EU's decision to admit the Greek Cypriot administration despite its rejection of the Annan Plan.

TRNC President Erhürman underlined Türkiye's key role as one of the three guarantor states and stressed that strengthening TRNC-Türkiye relations would be a priority during his term. He highlighted rising militarisation

in the region and reiterated that Turkish Cypriots are one of the two equal founding partners of Cyprus, whose role cannot be ignored in matters such as energy, hydrocarbons, maritime jurisdiction, and trade routes. Erhürman added that any settlement excluding the Turkish Cypriots is unacceptable and that they are open to dialogue but will only negotiate once their equal representation on the island is acknowledged.

TÜRKİYE AND FINLAND AIM TO STRENGTHEN DEFENSE AND ECONOMIC TIES



Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan visited Finland on 4-5 November 2025, meeting with Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen to discuss enhancing bilateral cooperation, particularly in the defence industry. The visit included meetings with Finnish Parliament Speaker Jussi Halla-aho, participation in a think tank event at the Finnish Parliament, and a reception with representatives of the Finnish Tatar community.

During a joint press conference, Minister Fidan expressed pleasure at visiting a friendly and allied country, noting that Türkiye-Finland trade reached 1.8 billion dollars in 2024. He highlighted opportunities for closer collaboration in information technology and renewable energy sectors. Referring to the Defence Industry Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding signed in June, Fidan emphasised that the agreement opens a new era for joint production, technology sharing, and capability development. He added that concrete projects by institutions and companies will further strengthen defence cooperation, contributing to NATO's

deterrence and Europe's overall security.

Fidan also stressed Türkiye's strategic role as a NATO ally and underscored the importance of integrating Türkiye into EU defence and security initiatives under the SAFE program. He noted that activating high-level dialogue mechanisms between Türkiye and the EU is crucial, alongside updating the Customs Union and advancing visa liberalisation discussions, which would benefit both sides.

Minister Valtonen reaffirmed Finlandia's support for Türkiye's EU membership aspirations, emphasising that reforms, a transparent market economy, and the rule of law remain essential conditions for accession. She expressed Finlandia's willingness to assist Türkiye in meeting these criteria.

The visit signals a renewed commitment to deepen Türkiye-Finlandia ties across multiple domains, from defence and technology to trade and regional security, reflecting both countries' shared interest in strengthening NATO capabilities and fostering European stability.

FOREIGN MINISTER HAKAN FIDAN MET WITH HIS ROMANIAN COUNTERPART

Foreign Minister of Romania Oana Toiu visited Türkiye on 7 November 2025. Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and his Romanian counterpart Toiu had a joint press conference which underlined the strong relations between Türkiye and Romania and desire to deepen the ties. Minister Fidan touched upon the high volume of trade between the countries, projects to enhance connectivity, defence and security and Türkiye's expectation that EU Black Sea Strategy will be implemented through coordination with Türkiye.

Romanian Foreign Minister Oana Toiu also expressed her country's desire to improve relations and cooperation with Türkiye in parallel



with the strategic partnership. She noted that they support Türkiye's EU candidacy, and Türkiye's accession is a key element for ensuring security in the Black Sea. Romanian Minister Toiu said that Türkiye is the most important partner of Romania other than the EU and stressed the desire to deepen the relations further.

TÜRKİYE-EU WATCH

POPE LEO XIV VISITED TÜRKİYE



Pope Leo XIV began his Türkiye visit in Ankara on 27 November 2025, first paying respects at Atatürk's mausoleum before being welcomed by President Erdoğan with an official ceremony. He then flew to İznik to attend a prayer marking the 1,700th anniversary of

the Council of Nicaea. On 29 November in Istanbul, he met bishops privately, visited the Blue Mosque, and the Mor Efrem Syriac Orthodox Church in Yeşilköy. That evening, he celebrated a historic Mass at Volkswagen Arena, the first ever held outside a church in Türkiye, with about 4000 attendee.

SIX TURKISH PRODUCTS GOT EU RECOGNITION

Six iconic Turkish Products have been granted EU PGI and PDO status, marking another milestone in Türkiye's growing recognition for its unique regional specialities.

November was an important and exciting month for Turkish products as six of them got EU recognition. Commission announced that the EU approved "Hatay Kaytaz Böreği", "Gaziantep Lahmacunu" and "Bursa Kestane Şekeri" as Protected Geographical Indication while "İpsala Pirinci" and "Yenice İhlamur Bali" as Protected Designation of Origin. Meanwhile "Türk Kahvesi" received Traditional Specialities Guaranteed status from the EU.

On 5 November, Hatay Kaytaz Böreği and Gaziantep Lahmacunu received geographical indication. Hatay's Kaytaz Böreği is a savoury pastry made of rolled dough filled with minced meat, onion, tomato paste, and spices, and baked traditionally in stone ovens. Meanwhile Gaziantep Lahmacunu is a thin, stone oven baked flatbread topped with high-quality, chopped lamb mixed with garlic, parsley, green



pepper, tomato, and spices. Also on the same day, Turkish coffee got Traditional Specialities Guaranteed status as Türkiye's first TSG registered product in the EU, recognising its centuries old roasting, grinding, and brewing tradition.

İpsala Pirinci and Bursa Kestane Şekeri received the EU recognition on 17 November. İpsala Pirinci is a long grain, matte and glassy-looking rice grown in Edirne's İpsala Plain, prized for its firm texture, aromatic flavour.

Bursa Kestane Şekeri is a traditional confection made from whole, peeled chestnuts slowly cooked in sugar syrup until they become soft and richly sweet.

Lastly, on 20 November, Yenice İhlamur Bali received Protected Designation of Origin status. Yenice Linden Honey was granted geographical indication status in the EU, officially recognising its unique amber colour and delicate linden flower aroma grown in the forests.

TÜRKİYE ACCELERATES DIGITAL FUTURE WITH MAJOR 5G EXPANSION PLAN

Türkiye is entering a new phase in its digital transformation with the planned nationwide rollout of 5G technology. According to the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, the implementation of 5G is expected to contribute up to 100 billion dollars to the country's economy and generate as many as 1.5 million new jobs by 2030.

Deputy Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Ömer Fatih Sayan stated that the adoption of 5G at the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye represents an important step in the country's technological development. The pilot deployment in the parliament, he noted, reflects



Türkiye's intention to advance its digital infrastructure and support the broader goals of the "National Technology Move".

The Deputy Minister said that 5G is expected to enhance connectivity and improve performance across sectors, including the economy, health,

education, and security, through high-speed, low-latency communication. The Deputy Minister added that Türkiye aims to expand its digital systems in line with national standards, transparency, and security principles. The first phase of nationwide deployment is scheduled to begin in April 2026.

Test implementations have already been conducted at key sites, including IGA Istanbul Airport, the TBMM, and the stadiums of Türkiye's top football clubs. Additionally, more than 30 facilities across the country are hosting trial installations to evaluate network performance and infrastructure compatibility.

TRNC PRESIDENT ERHÜRMAN CAME TOGETHER WITH GASC LEADER

The newly elected President of the TRNC Tufan Erhürman, met with the leader of the GASC Nicos Christodoulidis, in the buffer zone at the residence of UNFICYP Mission Chief Khassim Diagne on 20 November 2025. Following the meeting between the delegations accompanying both sides, the leaders held a fifteen minute bilateral discussion, during which it was noted that the issues previously raised by former President Ersin Tatar in Geneva and New York remain on the table.

The meeting was described as an exchange of views with no decisions taken, though further rounds are expected. Held in a constructive atmosphere, the talks featured a ten point proposal by the TRNC delegation, covering issues such as citizenship rights for children of mixed marriages, easing crossings at Metehan, Youth Technical Committee activities, joint visits to the Committee on Missing Persons, concerns over property related arrests, challenges faced



by Green Line traders, support for halloumi exports, the consequences of abolishing the ATOK Committee, establishing a communication channel between security forces, and road widening works in the buffer zone.

It was learned that the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Cyprus María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, is going to meet with President Erhürman on 5 December 2025 and with Hristodoulidis on 6 December 2025, after which a trilateral meeting would be held. Until 5 December 2025, the fully authorised delegations appointed by the leaders are expected to continue meeting to exchange views on various issues.

TÜRKİYE HAS BEGUN CONSTRUCTION OF FIRST REPLENISHMENT AND LOGISTIC SUPPORT SHIP FOR THE PORTUGUESE NAVY

Türkiye has achieved a first in its defence industry by formally launching its first-ever naval vessel project to be built for a NATO Ally and an EU Member State. The steel cutting ceremony for the first of two Auxiliary Oiler Replenisher and Logistics Ships to be constructed for the Portuguese Navy under the main contractor STM was held at Ada Shipyard in Tuzla, İstanbul.

This project, which stems from the contract signed in Lisbon on 17 December 2024, has opened the doors of the European market to Türkiye's shipbuilding industry. Around 30 domestic companies are involved as suppliers, and a large share of the critical systems and technological equipment to be used on the ships will likewise be produced by Türkiye's defence industry. The vessels are planned to be delivered to the Portuguese Navy in 2028.

These ships will be capable of providing replenishment at sea by transferring fuel and supplies to units underway, delivering logistic support to theatres of operation and, when required, offering medical assistance



as a mobile sea base. They will also be able to transport troops and vehicles for amphibious operations and be deployed in search and rescue as well as humanitarian relief missions.

With a range of up to 14,000 nautical miles at economical speed, the ships will be able to deploy continuously to the opposite shores of the Atlantic and to undertake other long-range ocean missions, thereby significantly extending the Portuguese Navy's area of operations. In addition to a core crew of around 100 personnel, they will provide temporary living and accommodation facilities for a further contingent of up to roughly 100 people, giving them the characteristics of a floating base for sustained operations.

TÜRKİYE OPENS RESTORED ATATÜRK HOUSE IN THESSALONIKI

On 9 November 2025, the house where the founder of the Republic of Türkiye, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was born, was opened after restoration works by Türkiye's Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The house is in Thessaloniki of Greece, and it attracts thousands of visitors who want to pay tribute to Atatürk.

Minister of Culture and Tourism Mehmet Nuri Ersoy was also present on the occasion of inauguration of the restored house, said that Atatürk cannot be described only as a statesman; but rather, as a leader who left an indelible mark on the nation's heart. The project of restoration of Atatürk's house was planned in 2022 and started on 19 December 2024. The restored house contains renovated rooms, an ethnographic



exhibition, a library and floors designed to tell the story of both the house and Atatürk.

Minister Ersoy declared that the house should be seen as a sign of peace between Türkiye and Greece, as President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

suggested. Likewise, Greek Deputy Minister of Tourism Anna Karamanli stressed that the opening of the house presents a significant chance to both countries in order to strengthen bilateral relations and good neighbourly relations.

13TH BOĞAZİÇİ FILM FESTIVAL HONORS TURKISH CINEMA WITH GLAMOROUS AWARDS NIGHT



The 13th Boğaziçi Film Festival, organised by the Boğaziçi Cultural Arts Foundation and supported by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's Directorate General of Cinema, concluded with its awards ceremony, honouring the finest in Turkish cinema. Held from 7 to 14 November 2025 at Beyoğlu's Atlas 1948 Cinema, AKM Yeşilçan Cinema, and İstiklal AVM Cinema Pink, the festival presented 56 films in 61 screenings and attracted 30% more viewers than last year.

Festival President Oğün Şanlı highlighted the growing audience interest, noting that the increase brings renewed optimism for both the festival and Turkish cinema. Artistic Director Enes

Erbay emphasised that cinema is not only about what appears on screen but also the courage, effort, and belief of those behind it. Erbay added that the festival aims to unite the industry, foster collaboration, and provide a platform for emerging filmmakers alongside seasoned professionals. Plans are underway to relaunch the Bosphorus Film Lab next year, with a focus on supporting project development and international partnerships.

In the National Feature Film category, Hasan Tolga Pulat's *Parçalı Yıllar* won Best Film and Best Screenplay, while Seyfettin Tokmak earned Best Director for *Tavşan İmparatorluğu*, which also won Best Producer. Other winners included Naim Kanat

for Best Editing (*Kesilmiş Bir Ağaç Gibi*), Claudia Becerril Bulos for Best Cinematography (*Tavşan İmparatorluğu*), Didem İnsele for Best Actress (*Kanto*), and Engin Altan Düzyatan for Best Actor (*Bir Adam Yaratmak*).

Internationally, Iraq's Hasan Hadi received Best International Feature Film for *The President's Cake*, with acting awards going to Arif Jakup (DJ Ahmet) and Saga Gardarsdottir (The Love That Remains). Hlynur Palmason won Best International Director (The Love That Remains), and DJ Ahmet received the Jury Special Prize. Documentary honors included Best National Documentary for *Kavak Ağacının Gölgesi* and Jury Special Prize for *Özgür Kelimeler: Gazzeli Bir Şair*. Spain's Ne Me Quitte Pas won the Ahmet Uluçay Grand Award, and Hamdi Furkan Yıldırım's *Defne* earned the Young Talent Award. Best International Short went to *Video Store 2001*, while Best National Short was awarded to *Kesik Kulak*.

The festival reaffirmed its role as a celebration of cinematic artistry, bridging generations of filmmakers and showcasing Türkiye's creative potential to audiences both domestically and internationally.

KAHRAMANMARAŞ HAS BEEN NAMED A UNESCO CITY OF LITERATURE



Kahramanmaraş, which has been named a UNESCO City of Literature, became the first city in Türkiye to join the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. It was stated that the new members of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network were determined in Paris, on 31 October 2025. Kahramanmaraş Mayor Fırat Görgel said "Kahramanmaraş became the first city from Türkiye to be selected in this field by joining this prestigious network in the 'literature' category." In his statement, the Mayor Görgel noted that Kahramanmaraş's deep literary heritage, strong poetic tradition, and growing cultural scene have played a role in contributing to this achievement.

Another development within UNESCO was Türkiye's re-election to the UNESCO Executive Board for the 2025–2029 term. In the statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, it was noted that Türkiye was re-elected in the elections held on 7 November in Uzbekistan within the framework of the 43rd UNESCO General Conference. It was emphasised that Türkiye will assume this role for the third consecutive time, following the 2017–2021 and 2021–2025 terms. In addition, it was added that Türkiye, as one of UNESCO's founding members, will work to contribute to UNESCO's goals, missions and ideals.

TURKISH ATHLETES WON GOLD AT WORLD TAEKWONDO CHAMPIONSHIPS



Turkish athletes Emine Gögebakan and Nafia Kuş Aydin won gold medals at the World Taekwondo Championships in Wuxi, China. Competing in her first senior-level world championship in the women's 46 kg category, 24-year-old Gögebakan delivered an impressive performance and claimed gold in her debut. This was not Türkiye's only triumph, as Kuş Aydin also

secured gold in the women's +73 kg category on the same day. She became the first Turkish taekwondo athlete to win consecutive world titles, having secured another gold medal with her performance in Paris in 2024. Overall, Turkish taekwondo athletes earned 10 gold, 5 silver, and 3 bronze medals in the juniors category, and 6 gold, 3 silver, and 12 bronze in the cadets.

A NEW MOMENTUM FOR ENLARGEMENT: WHAT'S DIFFERENT IN 2025?

The 2025 Enlargement Package shows an EU rediscovering enlargement as a geopolitical priority, advancing faster with the Western Balkans and new eastern candidates while keeping Türkiye's accession perspective alive but on a more conditional and uncertain footing.

Laura BATALLA ADAM
Analyst

The European Commission's 2025 Enlargement Package arrives at a moment when the Union's geopolitical instincts have sharpened, and the purpose of enlargement has shifted from a slow, technical process to a strategic tool for stability and influence. Under Commissioner Marta Kos, the EU is approaching enlargement with an urgency that has been missing for years. Enlargement is no longer portrayed as the mere continuation of EU's reform agenda beyond its borders, but as an investment in Europe's future security, resilience, and political weight. The core principles remain familiar—rule of law first, the merit-based nature of accession, and a strict reading of democratic benchmarks—but the tone of this year's package shows an EU more willing to act and less eager to wait.

One of the clearest developments in this mandate is the embrace of gradual integration as a central feature of the accession process. Instead of treating membership as a distant reward, the Commission wants candidates to benefit from early and concrete steps into the EU's economic and political space. This includes partial entry into the single market, mobility arrangements, and participation in industrial and digital partnerships. These measures point to a more flexible and realistic accession path: one that starts earlier, moves in increments, and rewards reform with visible gains. Commissioner Kos underlined this momentum by noting that enlargement is moving faster today than at any time in the past fifteen years, and that the EU must make use of this political window before it closes. Her message reflects a Union that wants to keep enlargement credible without weakening its foundations.



Reading Between the Lines of the 2025 Reports

Within this broader frame, the country assessments of accession and potential accession countries offer a mixed picture. Montenegro and Albania stand out as the most advanced candidates, supported by steady reform and clearer political commitment than in previous years. Their progress has brought them close enough to the finish line that the Commission can now imagine the possibility of concluding negotiations within this decade, a cautious but notable shift from the usual pessimism surrounding enlargement timelines.

Ukraine and Moldova also receive strong recognition. Despite the burden of war, hybrid threats, and economic strain, both countries have advanced reforms at a speed few expected. They completed the screening of the *acquis* rapidly and put in place reform plans aligned with EU standards in justice, public administration, and democratic governance. Their efforts show that their European path is now tied directly to their national security and identity, leaving little room for ambiguity. Yet the Commission also knows that political enthusiasm is not enough; the enlargement system still relies on unanimity, making the risk of internal vetoes inside the EU a real constraint. This is why the package hints at the need for stronger internal

mechanisms to protect momentum and prevent political blockages.

The picture in the Western Balkans remains uneven. Serbia, once seen as a state capable of guiding the region forward, is now described as losing ground on the fundamentals, especially the independence of the judiciary, corruption control, and democratic checks and balances. Domestic polarisation has made reforms harder to anchor, and public trust remains fragile. North Macedonia continues to struggle with constitutional amendments required to open the first negotiation cluster, illustrating again how bilateral disagreements can paralyse even the most committed candidates. Bosnia and Herzegovina remains locked in deep institutional fragmentation that overshadows isolated moments of progress. Kosovo, although more aligned with the EU politically, faces its own internal tensions and the long shadow of its unresolved relationship with Serbia.

Georgia receives perhaps the starker evaluation. Despite earlier promise, the Commission believes that democratic backsliding has eroded the value of its candidate status, weakening judicial independence and putting pressure on civil society. The implication is clear: the EU will not reward formal alignment without genuine and consistent democratic reform.

Türkiye in the 2025 Report: A Stalled Process with Strategic Importance

Türkiye remains, on paper, a candidate country, but the assessment leaves little doubt that its accession process is frozen. The Commission recognises Türkiye's crucial role in regional stability, migration management, energy, and trade, yet stresses that serious democratic backsliding makes progress towards accession impossible under current conditions. The concerns are familiar—judicial independence, human rights, space for civil society—yet the tone is more direct than in previous years.

At the same time, the report highlights ongoing structured engagement in areas of shared interest. High-level dialogues have resumed on migration, economic cooperation, climate, and trade, showing that Brussels and Ankara still depend on one another in practical and strategic ways. Still, the Commission carefully frames this cooperation as conditional and reversible, making a clear distinction between functional engagement and accession progress. The implicit message is that Türkiye occupies a different place in the enlargement landscape than it once did, still essential as a partner, but no longer on a credible path toward membership given the present political climate.

The Realignment of EU Enlargement

The shift in emphasis becomes clearer when considering the political atmosphere surrounding the package. The first EU Enlargement Forum held in November 2025 marked a turning point in the narrative surrounding enlargement. The event brought political leaders, civil society, youth and experts together in a setting designed to advance a collective conversation on the future of the Union. In his keynote address, European Council President António Costa framed enlargement as central to Europe's future security and global standing, arguing that a larger and more cohesive Union

would be better prepared for a world defined by uncertainty. He insisted, however, that enlargement must remain anchored in democratic principles and the rule of law; without these, membership would neither strengthen the Union nor serve the candidates.

Türkiye's absence from the centre of these discussions is telling. It reflects a reorientation of the EU's enlargement horizon toward the Western Balkans and the eastern neighbourhood. The political momentum now sits with those candidates whose reform paths are clearly tied to their national strategies and whose governments present fewer contradictions between stated ambition and domestic policy.

The Commission's narrative, supported by Member States, now emphasises the need to turn this geopolitical momentum into a coherent enlargement strategy—not only by demanding sustainable reforms from candidates, but also by preparing the EU itself to absorb new members. This includes questions of decision-making, financial planning, and more effective post-accession safeguards.

Taken together, the 2025 Enlargement Package tells two parallel stories. One is the story of an EU rediscovering the strategic value of enlargement and acting on it with energy not seen in years. The other is a story of differentiation, where candidates advance at different speeds and remain at varying distances from the Union's core values. Türkiye finds itself in the second story, positioned more as a partner than a member-in-waiting. Yet this does not have to be permanent. The door remains open, and it is in the EU's and Türkiye's mutual interest to keep the membership perspective alive, even if the route toward it is difficult and demands renewed effort on both sides. Ultimately, the credibility of the EU's enlargement policy will depend on whether the EU can match its renewed geopolitical ambition with the political will and institutional readiness needed to welcome a new group of countries as fully-fledged members of the Union.