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POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES IN TÜRKİYE-EU RELATIONS AFTER 31 MARCH 2024 LOCAL ELECTIONS

The aftermath of the 31 March 2024 local elections brings opportunities to re-establish Türkiye-EU relations on a value-based basis.

Türkiye held local elections, marking a significant turning point in its political landscape on 31 March 2024. The Republican People's Party (CHP) received 37.77% of the votes in Türkiye, becoming the first party in an election for the first time since 1977. The Justice and Development Party (AKP), which received 35.49% of the votes, finished second in an election for the first time in its 22 years of governance. The vote share of the New Welfare Party (*Yeniden Refah Party*) was one of the biggest surprises of the elections. In fact, New Welfare Party reached 6.19% of the votes in Türkiye and became the third party in a local election that it had entered for the first time.

In the elections, with a voter turnout of 78.55% and 61 million 430 thousand voters casting their votes, CHP increased the number of metropolitan municipalities from 11 to 14 and the number of provincial municipalities from 10 to 21. AKP's number of metropolitan municipalities decreased from 15 to 12, and the number of provincial municipalities decreased from 24 to 12. Consequently, CHP will govern the metropolises, which account for 66.5% of the country's economy, in the next five years.

Both ruling and opposition party leaders made very moderate statements about the election results. Özgür Özel, Chairperson of CHP, emphasized, "There is no loser in this victory. Our success will not be a defeat for anyone, it is not a defeat for anyone. Regardless of their party affiliation, we do not want anyone to feel defeated." Urging party members to express their joy with restraint, Chairperson Özel added, "In order to share this success with our voters who did not vote for us, we are experiencing our happiness within ourselves and as quietly as possible."



AKP Chairperson Recep Tayyip Erdoğan expressed gratitude to all citizens who freely exercised their right to vote, regardless of political affiliation, stating that "AKP won the elections alongside those who voted for AKP and everyone who contributed to the democratic process by fulfilling their civic duty." Congratulating the elected mayors, Chairperson Erdoğan assured ongoing government support for all local authorities elected by the votes of the nation.

Prominent Statements on the EU Side

On 31 March 2024 local elections, the statements made by three EU officials were quite remarkable. In a statement on his social media account, Josep Borrell, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, said that the calm and professional

conduct of the elections honoured Türkiye and showed the commitment of its citizens to local democracy, adding that "fundamental rights and democracy are at the heart of our relations. I look forward to bringing Türkiye closer to the EU by working together on reforms." EP Türkiye Rapporteur Nacho Sánchez Amor congratulated all elected mayors and especially the CHP, which he described as the clear winner of the elections. Manfred Weber, President of the conservative European People's Party (EPP), the largest political group in the EP, underlined that they are ready to deepen the Customs Union and partnership with Türkiye if it shows more openness, but emphasised that Türkiye's EU membership would put an excessive burden on both sides. Weber had previously argued that Türkiye's EU membership target should be terminated.

Relationships Can Be Built on a Values-Based Basis

If the usual timetable holds, no new elections are expected in Türkiye for four years until the presidential elections in 2028. On the EU side, EP elections will be held next June and there will be a reorganization of the European Commission. In this respect, it can be said that the future of Türkiye-EU relations may be seriously discussed again following the summer months, subsequent to the changes in the EP and the Commission. Considering that the EU issue has a political response in Türkiye and the Türkiye issue has a political response in the EU, the parties should carefully assess the 4-5 year period without elections.

At a time when international tensions are amid unprecedented levels, Türkiye and the EU need each other more than ever. Indeed, both sides are facing the geopolitical

and economic consequences of the Russia-Ukraine war that erupted in the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis and the growing tensions in the Middle East, particularly the Israeli-Palestinian war. However, it should be noted that in bilateral relations, which have evolved into a pragmatic and interest-based 'transactional' dimension, especially since the 18 March Statement, merely addressing immediate concerns once again forced by the current circumstances would be inadequate. On the other hand, there are significant opportunities for re-establishing bilateral relations on a basis of shared values.

The EU, which claims to be one of the biggest defenders of democratic values, needs to correctly assess the local elections of 31 March 2024, their potential impact on Turkish democracy and the importance the Turkish people attach to the ballot box. Indeed, the Turkish people and democracy have shown to the world that change can be brought about in Türkiye through the ballot box, contrary to those who thought this would not be possible. In this context, at a time when enlargement is at the top of the EU agenda, the revival of the stalled membership process may encourage Türkiye to take important democratic steps towards EU harmonisation. In addition, the issue of updating the Customs Union could bring significant benefits to both sides and could lead to a gradual expansion of relations strengthened in the economic sphere to the political sphere. Finally, it can be said that the green transformation process initiated by the EU after the Green Deal brings important cooperation opportunities.



IKV CHAIRPERSON ZEYTİNOĞLU: “REFORMS SHOULD BE PRIORITISED AFTER LOCAL ELECTIONS”



IKV Chairperson Ayhan Zeytinoğlu made a statement after the local elections held on 31 March 2024 Sunday. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu highlighted the importance of the elections for local democracy and emphasised the importance of reforms in the post-election period. Chairperson Zeytinoğlu

said the following:

“We have entered a new era after the local elections. The elections were very lively and the success of women candidates in particular gave hope for the future of Türkiye. We congratulate all political parties and candidates who fought a democratic struggle

and congratulate the new mayors and council members who won the elections. It is now crucial for Türkiye to accelerate economic and political reforms in the period ahead. As a rapidly growing and developing country, our country needs to continue its policies to fight inflation and support exports. Initiating the modernisation of the Türkiye-EU customs union is critical for attracting more qualified foreign investment and adapting to green and digital transformations. In addition to these aspects, which are essential for increased stability and prosperity, the revitalisation of Türkiye’s EU process will contribute to strengthening its international position. Pushing Türkiye out of the EU enlargement process in line with the EU membership goal will lead to its exclusion from the new European structure. It is important to step up efforts both in this respect and in line with the EU membership goal. Primary, we can start with the fulfilment of the 6 criteria that have not yet been completed in the visa liberalisation roadmap, which is one of the most prioritised agenda items in Türkiye-EU relations.

IKV SECRETARY GENERAL NAS SPOKE AT THE WEBINAR TITLED “GLOBAL TRADE AND ITS EFFECTS ON POLITICS”



On 16 April 2024, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas participated as a speaker in the webinar titled “Global Trade and its Impact on Politics” organised

by TUSIAD Global Politics Forum in cooperation with Global Affairs Forum.

The webinar discussed the changing dynamics of global

supply chains, international cooperation and the political context of Türkiye’s economic resilience in light of these new developments. Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Global Relations Forum Ambassador (Ret.) Selim Yenel delivered the opening speech at the webinar, and other speakers were Founding Director of TEPAV and Professor at TOBB-ETU Prof. Dr. Güven Sak, President of the Ankara Policy Center Ambassador (Ret.) Fatih Ceylan and Professor at City University of London Dr. Mustafa Kutlay.

IKV SECRETARY GENERAL NAS PARTICIPATED IN THE CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EU ENLARGEMENT



IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas attended the meeting on “Progressive Views for the Future of EU Enlargement” organised by the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) in Brussels on 16-17 April 2024. Participants from EU candidate countries discussed the EU enlargement process, institutional reforms and

expectations of candidate countries from the EU.

Opening speeches were delivered by FEPS President Maria João Rodrigues, FEPS Secretary General Laszlo Andor and FES EU Office Director Christiane Kesper, during which Assoc. Prof. Nas expressed Türkiye’s priorities and expectations as a candidate country. The conference continued with working group sessions and panel discussions.

IKV SECRETARY GENERAL NAS ATTENDED THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CENTER FOR APPLIED TÜRKİYE STUDIES



IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas attended the annual meeting of the Center for Applied Türkiye Studies (CATS) established by the German think tank Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik in Berlin on 18-19 April 2024. During the meeting, the situation after the local elections in Türkiye, Türkiye-EU relations and developments in Turkish foreign policy were discussed.

Touching on the recent developments in Türkiye-EU relations, Assoc. Prof. Nas stated that Türkiye will be a very important partner in the EU’s quest for strategic autonomy and emphasised the importance of cooperation and coordination on issues such as energy, security and green transformation. The meeting continued with discussions of the working groups and a closing session.

CULTURE AND ART AGENDA

TURKISH TOURISM SHINES BRIGHT, SURPASSES TARGETS



Tourism is one of the rising stars for Türkiye recently. As the international competition in the sector heats, Türkiye stands firm and looks its way in optimistic lens as the data for bookings seem quite satisfying for reaching the 60 billion dollars tourism revenue target set by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism for 2024.

The Chairman of the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB) Firuz Bağlıkaya stated that tourism is a highly strategic sector when its employment-creating and value-added structure are taken into consideration. Likewise, Müberra Eresin who is the President of the Hotel Association of Türkiye (TÜROB) said that the total tourism investments reach nearly 90 billion

dollars and the number of people employed in the sector is 1.5 million. She said that the target set for 2024 is likely to be reached as the number of visitors up until now and international expo signals seem positive. Adviye Bergemann, the founding President of the International Sustainable Tourism Association (USTUD) emphasised Türkiye's advantages in tourism in spite of the competitors in the sector.

MUSEUM GAMES EVENT HELD IN İSTANBUL MODERN



A three-day event called "Museum Games" was held at the Istanbul Museum of Modern Arts to celebrate 23 April National Sovereignty and Children's Day. The event, which aims to introduce children to art, was supported by United Colours of Benetton. Children between the ages of 2-10 participated in the

program free of charge. One of the main purposes of the event is for children to feel like an artist, get to know works of art and learn how artists work.

The event included exhibition tours, art practices, drama activities and creativity seminars for parents. One of the important aspects of

the event was that it hosted a series of seminars for parents conducted by speakers who are experts in their fields. In these seminars, while parents learned about child development, they also had the opportunity to improve themselves on how to create a road map for their children's growth.

TIMELINE APRIL 2024

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15	Permanent Delegate of Republic of Türkiye to the European Union Ambassador Faruk Kaymakcı came together with EU Commission Vice-President for EU Green Deal Maroš Šefčovič.
16	IKV Secretary General Nas spoke at the webinar titled "Global Trade And Its Effects On Politics".
17	IKV Secretary General Nas participated in the conference on the future of EU enlargement.
18	IKV Secretary General Nas attended the annual meeting of the center for applied Türkiye studies.
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23	Deputy Foreign Minister and Director for EU Affairs Ambassador Bozay came together with EU Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms Elisa Ferreira.
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26	Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Burak Akçapar came together with his Greek counterpart Konstantinos Fragkogiannis.
27	IKV Secretary General Nas introduced IKV at Think Tanks Summit.
28	Foreign Minister Fidan came together with his Norwegian counterpart Espen Barth Eide and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Josep Borrell.
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30	TOBB President Hisarcıkloğlu hosted Latvian CCI President Aigars Rostovskis.
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TÜRKİYE CULTURE ROUTE FESTIVAL EMBARKS ON A JOURNEY OF ART AND DIVERSITY



The festival, which had been named with the cities it had taken place previously, has been given a new name "Türkiye Culture Route Festival" and a new and single logo embracing Turkish culture and art with all of its features and varieties. This year's festival began in Adana through Orange Blossom Carnival celebrated between 13-21 April, which stands as a kick-off event of the eight-months long marathon.

Turkish southeastern city Şanlıurfa will host the second leg of the festival from 25 May to 2 June, and various Turkish cities from Samsun to Van and Çanakkale will be venues for the festival during the rest of the year.

Like the previous ones, there are more than one stars of this year's festival. Famous painter Pablo Picasso is one of them and his approximately 80 original artworks will meet art-lovers all around

Türkiye. Works of Sebastio Salgado, who is a renowned documentary photographer and photojournalist, will be exhibited in Tophane-i Amire, İstanbul. Moreover, digital arts will hold a significant role in the festival as the digital installation Holoflux by Turkish architect and artist Güvenç Özel and the digital exhibition "From Sketch to Pixel Digital Art", "Anatolian Edition" made up by young talents in Türkiye will be available for visitors.

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH RESTORATION GAINED MOMENTUM



In the İçkale district of Diyarbakir, St. Petersburg is a remnant of Roman architecture and dates back 1600 years. St. George Church was damaged in the 6 February earthquakes in Türkiye. After the earthquakes, restoration work started on July 26, 2023. It is aimed to restore the church to its former state by the Sur Cultural Road Festival, which will be held between 12-20 October 2024.

Diyarbakir Surveying and Monuments Director Cemil Koç stated that 25% of the restoration process of the church has been completed. He also addresses that the preparation and approval phase has been completed to strengthen the cracks along the east-west axis on both the walls and domes of the south facade of the church. With the reinforcement projects carried out for the

church, the hanging works in the interior and the manufacturing process in the exterior were completed. Excavations continue to strengthen and support the foundations of the church. Since the restoration process is a somewhat laborious and time-consuming process due to its reliance on scientific data, it is expected to be completed in October 2024.

43RD İSTANBUL FILM FESTIVAL DRAWS RECORD ATTENDANCE WITH STELLAR LINEUP AND SPECIAL GUESTS



Organised by the İstanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV), the 43rd İstanbul Film Festival was held between 17-28 April 2024. The 43rd İstanbul Film Festival, where 132 feature films and 12 short films met with moviegoers in 352 sessions in 6 movie theatres in 12 days with additional sessions, included interviews with guest directors and actors and special events in addition to film screenings. Nearly 90 thousand viewers followed the 43rd İstanbul Film Festival screenings. 83 screenings were organised with the participation of film crews and guests.

Wim Wenders, one of the leading directors of world cinema, was in İstanbul for the first time as the guest of honor of the festival. Three films by Wenders were screened at the

festival: Anselm, Alice in the Cities Perfect Days. Koji Yakusho was also in İstanbul for the festival on the 100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Türkiye. Koji Yakusho starred in 13 Assassins, Under the Open Sky, Shall We Dansu? and Perfect Days, for which he won the Best Actor Award at Cannes.

Festival guests, including directors and actors such as Wim Wenders, Koji Yakusho, Levan Akin, Ferzan Özpetek, Tarsem Singh, Dimitris Skyllas, Manuel Martin Cuenca, Türkan Şoray, Matthias Glasner and Lars Eidinger, met and chatted with the audience at the cinemas during the screenings of their films. The 44th İstanbul Film Festival will be held between 11-22 April 2025.

THE HEART OF DIGITAL ART TO BEAT IN İSTANBUL



One of the highlights of the festival is its gaming segment, curated by Rahim Ünlü under the title "Regarding the Impossibility of the Norm and the Solemn Verdict of a Paradox". This segment will push the boundaries of avatar experiences using video games and virtual reality technology. By delving into the historical evolution of avatars, the exhibition seeks to challenge visitors' perceptions of reality through interactive art experiences, prompting contemplation on the intricate relationships between reality, virtual reality, identity and gaming.

The fourth edition of the İstanbul Digital Art Festival (IDAF) is all set to commence this year, promising a captivating journey into the realm of digital creativity. Scheduled to take place 2-5 May at the Atatürk Cultural Center, the festival will be a melting pot of global artists and their cutting-edge digital creations. With a thematic focus on the fusion of digital art and reality, IDAF aims to explore the transformative power of technology on the human experience.

In the realm of music, the festival presents the exhibition "Stanza," which explores the concept of reality in music. Just like a stanza in poetry, these musical artworks weave together recurring patterns of rhyme and subject matter, transcending conventional boundaries of musical styles and performing arts. Crafted by an international collective of trailblazing figures at the intersection of digital art and music, "Stanza" promises to be a mesmerising auditory journey.

HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

GERMAN PRESIDENT STEINMEIER PAID A WORKING VISIT TO TÜRKİYE



German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier paid an official visit to Türkiye between 22-24 April. President Steinmeier's first point of call was Sirkeci railway station in İstanbul, from which thousands of Turkish guest workers set off by train for Germany. Here President Steinmeier met the Mayor of İstanbul, Ekrem İmamoğlu. On the second day of his trip, President Steinmeier travelled to Gaziantep Province, where he visited a shelter for earthquake victims and a school built with funding from Germany. There, President Steinmeier celebrated Children's Day with the school pupils. On the last day of his visit, President Steinmeier was hosted by President Erdoğan at the Presidential Complex.

Expressing his pleasure to host German President Steinmeier in Ankara, President Erdoğan said that the visit was valuable in that it was Steinmeier's first visit to Türkiye as President and it coincided with the 100th anniversary of the Türkiye-Germany Friendship Treaty. Underlining that Türkiye has intensive relations with its NATO ally Germany in every field from security to economy, from culture to science, President Erdoğan underlined that the bilateral trade volume of 50 billion dollars is aimed to reach 60 billion dollars. President Erdoğan stressed that Türkiye is willing to advance its cooperation in the field of defence industry in accordance with the spirit of alliance and that it is hoped to talk about joint production projects

from now on, not obstacles in the field of defence. Underlining that in 63 years the Turkish community has started to take on critical roles in Germany, President Erdoğan stated that he sees the legislation enabling dual citizenship in Germany as an important step. Finally, President Erdoğan stated that as long as the Israel's attacks continue, threats to both regional and global peace increase and that efforts to achieve a ceasefire will be stepped up.

Expressing that German-Turkish relations have a long and rich history, Steinmeier said: "It was very important for me to come to Türkiye on the 100th anniversary of the beginning of our diplomatic relations" and 'we are indispensable for each other as two countries, we need each other'. Stating that Germany does not have such intensive friendly and familial relations with any country in the world, Steinmeier reminded that approximately 3 million people of Turkish origin have been living in Germany since the signing of the labour agreement in 1961. Referring to the importance of legal security and the rule of law, Steinmeier emphasised that press freedom and the rule of law are of utmost importance in the relations between Türkiye and the EU.

TÜRKİYE-ROMANIA RELATIONS STRENGTHENED THROUGH PRESIDENTIAL DIALOGUE



President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his Romanian counterpart Klaus Iohannis engaged in a productive discussion over the phone on 19 April. During the conversation, various aspects of bilateral relations between the two countries as well as relevant global and regional issues were discussed. Erdoğan emphasised that it is vital to strengthen the high-level dialogue between Türkiye and Romania. In line with this objective, Erdoğan proposed the establishment of a bilateral High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council mechanism, underlining its potential to significantly enhance mutual cooperation.

Among the issues discussed was Klaus Iohannis' candidature for

NATO Secretary General. President Erdoğan underlined the importance of electing a Secretary General who will effectively address the security and interests of NATO countries in the face of evolving global and regional challenges, particularly terrorism. President Erdoğan stressed the importance of strengthening alliance unity, preserving solidarity and prioritising NATO's important role in defence and security consultations.

The dialogue between President Erdoğan and his counterpart Iohannis highlights the strong commitment of both Türkiye and Romania to enhance their bilateral relations and actively contribute to broader regional and international security efforts.

FOREIGN MINISTER FIDAN MET WITH HIS COUNTERPARTS AT THE NATO MEETING

NATO Foreign Ministers came together in Brussels on 3-4 April for the first meeting of 2024. The main agenda of the meeting included general deterrence issues, the fight against terrorism and developments in Ukraine. Following the membership of Sweden and Finland to NATO, the current situation of the Alliance and the preparations for the Washington Summit were also on the agenda. Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan, who attended the meeting on behalf of Türkiye, stated that the sanctions and restrictions imposed by the allies on each other in the field of defence industry are against the spirit of the alliance. Minister Fidan conveyed Türkiye's views on how to effectively ensure the defence and security of Europe.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Fidan met with his counterparts at the NATO meeting at the same time. Minister Fidan held separate meetings with the foreign ministers of Greece, Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, South Korea, and Finland



on the sidelines of the meeting.

Minister Fidan focused on bilateral and regional issues during his meeting with his counterpart, Greek Foreign Minister Yorgos Gerapetritis. Preparatory talks were also held regarding the visit of Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to Türkiye. Minister Fidan's meeting with Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen was mostly about the fight against terrorism and security cooperation. In addition, discussions were held on the implementation of the Türkiye-Finland-Sweden Tripartite Memorandum. The parties emphasized the importance of resolving the conflict as soon

as possible by evaluating the current situation of the war in Gaza. In his contact with South Korea, Minister Fidan focused on developments in the Asia-Pacific, bilateral cooperation focusing on the defence industry, economy and energy sectors. Minister Fidan also met with Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mariya Gabriel and discussed the current situation in Ukraine and ways to support Kiev. Finally, Minister Fidan talked about cooperation regarding the conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine during his meeting with British Foreign Secretary David Cameron.

FOREIGN MINISTER HAKAN FIDAN PAID A WORKING VISIT TO THE NETHERLANDS

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan paid a visit to the Netherlands in April in order to attend the 10th Wittenburg Conference. Fidan met Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, who also runs for the NATO



General Secretariat Office in these days, and Foreign Minister of the Netherlands Hanke Bruins Slot.

The meetings held in the Hague were part of the Wittenburg Conference, which was established based on a memorandum of understanding signed between Türkiye and the Netherlands in 2008. The main aim was to increase cooperation between the parties and initiate a conference for this cause. The conferences chaired by

the foreign ministers of Türkiye and the Netherlands have been organised since then and have not been a venue not just for ministerial level meetings but also for technical level ones attended by

a lot of working groups from various ministries.

Two countries have a huge trade volume while the Netherlands has been the largest foreign investor in Türkiye for the period of 2005-January 2024 with 29 billion dollars in total. As the cooperation fields are varying, there is still a vast opportunity for both countries to work together especially in green and digital transformation, energy and technology.

WORLD BANK ANNOUNCES NEW PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK FOR TÜRKİYE

World Bank will provide Türkiye with an additional 18 billion dollars in financing.

The World Bank announced a new country partnership framework (CPF) for Türkiye covering the 2024-2028 fiscal years to support the country's transition to high-income status. Within this framework, the World Bank will provide Türkiye with an additional financing support of 18 billion dollars.

The World Bank's financing will focus on high and sustainable productivity growth, with objectives ranging from promoting climate-smart agriculture to strengthen resilience to climate change and food security, to supporting economic recovery in areas affected by the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes on 6 February 2023. It will also prioritise eliminating income and other inequalities, inclusive services to improve jobs for women, youth and vulnerable groups, and strengthening resilience to



employment and natural disasters.

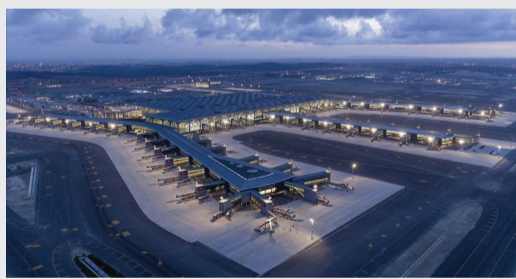
Commenting on the related financing support, Turkish Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek stated that after the announcement of the Medium-Term Programme, the World Bank decided to increase the number of resources it transferred to Türkiye to 35 billion dollars by adding 18 billion dollars to the ongoing 17 billion dollars programme. Minister Şimşek noted that Türkiye ranks third in the world and first in its region among the countries utilising loans with favourable conditions from the World Bank. Minister

Mehmet emphasised that it is planned to provide World Bank support in many areas such as resilience against disasters, energy, green transformation, combating climate change, supporting exports, real sector, infrastructure, logistics, industry, agriculture, education and health. Minister Şimşek also added that in this

process, an approach focusing on the solution of country-specific challenges, aiming to increase private sector participation and aiming to achieve holistic results in operations will be followed. Humberto Lopez, World Bank Country Director for Türkiye, stated that Türkiye has made tremendous progress in the last 20 years, significantly improving the living standards of its people, developing a modern infrastructure and integrating its economy into the global economy and global value chains.

İSTANBUL AIRPORT TO PROVIDE ELECTRICITY FROM SOLAR POWER

Istanbul Airport, a global transportation hub renowned for its bustling activity, is poised to pioneer a remarkable feat in sustainability. In a groundbreaking initiative, it is set to become the world's inaugural airport to meet all its electricity requirements through solar power. Spearheaded by IGA Airport Operations, the ambitious endeavour entails the establishment of a vast solar plant in Eskişehir, Türkiye. This project involves the installation of a staggering 439,000 photovoltaic panels, covering an expansive area of approximately 3 million square meters. With a projected capacity of 199.32 megawatts, the Eskişehir solar power plant aims to generate a substantial 340 million kilowatt-hours of clean energy annually, representing a significant step towards environmental responsibility.



Selahattin Bilgen, the CEO of IGA Istanbul Airport, underscored the airport's steadfast commitment to sustainability, citing the imperative to address the pressing challenges of global warming and climate change. Emphasising the pivotal role of the solar plant in reducing carbon emissions, Bilgen articulated a broader vision of fostering a cleaner, more sustainable future for generations to come. In alignment with its ambitious 2050 Net Zero Target, Istanbul Airport is actively pursuing a multifaceted approach to environmental stewardship. This includes ambitious targets to reduce Scope 1 and 2 carbon

emissions by 45% and 73% respectively by 2040, alongside initiatives to enhance energy efficiency and promote renewable energy sources.

Moreover, the airport has implemented concrete measures to minimize its environmental footprint, including substantial reductions in waste emissions and the adoption of electric vehicle fleets. Notably, a significant portion of the airport's water consumption is sourced from recycled water, reflecting its commitment to resource conservation and sustainability. As Istanbul Airport continues to expand and evolve, it remains steadfast in its dedication to environmental sustainability. With the completion of all four phases and six runways slated for 2028, the airport is poised to accommodate a staggering 200 million passengers annually, while setting a new standard for eco-friendly aviation infrastructure on a global scale.

MITSO TAKIS NOTES CYPRUS ISSUE WILL DETERMINE THE WAY IN TÜRKİYE-EU RELATIONS



Council in recent years." He also expressed his content due to open and direct reference tying the progress of the relations to the progress on the Cyprus issue. The resolutions of the UN Security Council are the sole framework for the solution in the island, and reaching a solution via the process under the new UN envoy is their expectation, Prime Minister Mitsotakis pointed out.

Cyprus issue is a long dispute started in 1950s. Ethnic attacks increased in 1960s forced Turkish Cypriots to live in enclaves in the island. In 1974, a military coup in the island seeking for annexation of the island to Greece led to the military intervention of Türkiye as a guarantor country to protect the Turkish Cypriots from persecution and violence. In 1983, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was proclaimed. The last peace talks failed in 2017 as a lot of peace initiatives and talks also remained inconclusive for decades to find a fair solution to the issue.

In a speech he made on 17 April, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis mentioned the special meeting of the European Council held in Brussels. He said that Türkiye-EU relations are also one of the discussion topics and added that "For the moment, I am satisfied with the conclusions we have reached, which recognize the fact that relations between the European Union and Türkiye may progress, but always within the framework of the decisions taken by the European

TÜRKİYE'S 1ST INDIGENOUS EARTH OBSERVATION SATELLITE COMPLETES 1ST YEAR IN SPACE



Türkiye's first indigenous high resolution Earth observation satellite, İMECE, completed its first year in space. This important project developed by TÜBİTAK UZAY has once again proved Türkiye's competence in the field of space technologies worldwide. The İMECE Satellite was designed, manufactured and tested entirely with domestic facilities. Launched on 15 April 2023 from the Vandenberg Spaceport, the satellite has been successfully performing its mission in orbit for a year.

Industry and Technology Minister Mehmet Fatih Kacir wrote on X that Türkiye has proved its competence in space technologies with the introduction of İMECE, which has been successfully performing its mission since the moment it was placed in orbit and has been developed domestically and nationally with all its critical components, including its electro-optical camera, which allows high-resolution imaging from approximately 700 kilometres.

TOGG TO MOVE FORWARD WITH NEW MODEL

TOGG is embarking on the development of a fresh T8X model, a compact SUV for the B-segment, as CEO Gürcan Karakaş unveiled. This new model is set to be revealed once sales for the T10F sedan commence next year. Karakas, speaking during a test drive held at TOGG's campus in Bursa, mentioned plans to introduce a limited edition all-wheel-drive variant of the T10X in June or July. The company has been steadily advancing its presence in Europe since the close of last year, with the establishment of TOGG Europe GmbH in May 2021. Karakas indicated ongoing efforts to lay down infrastructure, with intentions to commence pre-orders for the T10X in Europe by year's end and kick off deliveries of the 2025 model thereafter.

Karakas emphasised the unprecedented demand for their latest models, highlighting that last year they managed to sell their entire planned production within a mere 18 hours. He noted that this surge in sales indicates Türkiye's



readiness to embrace electric vehicles, with customers making conscious decisions to purchase the T10X. Notably, over 80% of sales were for the highest-end version of the vehicle, with deliveries of the first 20,000 vehicles made between April 2023 and the year's end.

He further remarked, "To our knowledge, no other company globally has achieved the feat of producing and selling 20,000 units in their inaugural year of production. This success stands as a remarkable achievement for our nation and

each individual involved, marking a promising beginning. Consequently, we are diligently working day and night to build upon this initial triumph." Karakas stressed that their success story will persist with the introduction of new models. "While we unveiled the T10F in January, our efforts began a year prior, and likewise, we are dedicated to replicating this success with our upcoming models following the T10F. We are currently preparing the B-segment SUV T8X for release around this time next year."

TÜRKİYE IMPROVES IN AI-POWERED DEFENCE

Nowadays, in an era where we face complex security threats, AI supported defence systems come to the forefront. Due to the rapid detection and prediction capabilities of artificial intelligence supported defence systems, their adaptation to unpredictable situations, and their continuous improvement, these technologies are vital for ensuring national security and improving defence capabilities. Turkish companies, which are getting stronger in the defence industry, are also developing in artificial intelligence-supported defence.

Turkish artificial intelligence defence firm RobotEye AI responds to intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance needs with artificial intelligence-supported devices specially developed for large and difficult terrains. The firm's innovative systems offer cost-effective and fully autonomous solutions



thanks to specially developed, field-proven artificial intelligence algorithms. The command-and-control software platform "Central" increases the efficiency of existing defence systems by making older generation devices more intelligent, thus reducing human dependency. The firm's patented core product "Smart Trailcam-Solo" combines satellite connectivity and in-device edge artificial intelligence to ensure safety at critical transitions. The 'Eye' system, developed for tactical and special operations units, provides situational awareness in the field without the need for communication infrastructure, strengthening units operating in sensitive border and cross-

border areas against infiltration and sabotage targets. RobotEye AI has provided a strong resource for developing border security solutions to meet defence and security demands from Western Europe, North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and Indo-Pacific countries.

RobotEye AI, which is becoming increasingly renowned for these contributions, recently received a significant investment from ARZ Portfoy, an important investor in Turkish technology start-ups. "With this investment, we will accelerate our growth, expand our technological capabilities and increase our capacity to respond to international security threats." said CEO of RobotEye AI Ferit Çakıcı. This investment, valued at 12.5 million dollars, underlines the growing importance of AI-powered defence technologies in addressing worldwide security challenges.

TURKISH SCIENTIST TO IMPLEMENT AI TO LIBRARIES



Professor Şahin Albayrak, from the Technical University of Berlin, carries out artificial intelligence studies in the fields of autonomous, driverless vehicles, workplaces of the future and health, as well as artificial intelligence studies for libraries. Most recently, Professor Albayrak has been working on the Centre of World Knowledge: The Future European Library, which integrates and presents information to readers by combining libraries with artificial intelligence.

Professor Albayrak emphasised that this project aims to create significant changes in physical access to libraries. Stating that libraries generally offer information to the reader with an open shelf system and serve as a repository of information for countries, Professor

Albayrak said that printed works will gradually become digitalised and there may no longer be any books on library shelves. However, Professor Albayrak said that it may take another five to six years for libraries to be completely transformed with artificial intelligence. Nevertheless, he emphasised that they foresee that artificial intelligence will become functional in daily life in many parts of the world and in many fields in about 10 years. Professor Albayrak highlighted that archives are the memory of states and should be kept up to date and stated that it is a more logical policy to digitise information in libraries and make it available to the whole society. Professor Albayrak also underlined that copyright law practices will also be affected by this change.

TURKISH ACADEMICIANS CONCEPTUALISE THE FEAR OF JOB LOSS STEMMING FROM AI



As AI is increasingly being used in many industries to automate or optimise jobs previously performed by manpower, people's fear of losing their jobs due to artificial intelligence is increasing. Especially in the field of communication (public relations, advertising and journalism), with the spread of artificial intelligence technologies, concerns are increasing in professions that require interpersonal communication. Academicians from Sivas Cumhuriyet University, together with researchers from Punjab University in Pakistan and Belgrade University in Serbia, examined the fear of losing a job due to AI.

In the study, which investigated the effects of AI technologies on professions in the field of communication, the interaction between AI and the human labour force was discussed. Academicians described the fear of job loss because of AI as "post-Luddism" in the study published in the journal "Technological Forecasting and Social Change". Academicians state that they are influenced by Luddism, the name given to the protest movements initiated by craftsmen in the United Kingdom in the early 19th century on the grounds that the increasing use of machinery in production leads to unemployment.

TÜRKİYE'S GREEN REVOLUTION: ACCELERATING CLIMATE ACTION TOWARDS NET ZERO EMISSIONS

As Türkiye accelerates its climate action, strategic measures focus on energy efficiency, renewables and sustainable practices across sectors.

Bared Çil
IKV Junior Expert

Türkiye has recently announced its climate change action plan, showing that it is working in a similar way with the EU on this important issue and is open to cooperation in different areas. The adverse effects of Climate Change have started to be clearly felt today and there has been an increase in the occurrence of extreme climate and weather events such as extreme heat waves, sudden and heavy rainfall, floods and droughts both regionally and globally. The main reason for this situation is seen as the rapid increase in greenhouse gas emissions released into the atmosphere as a result of the increasing use of fossil fuels with the industrial revolution. As a result, the average global temperature increased by approximately 1.1°C from 1850 to 2020, and if this trend continues, the global temperature increase is expected to reach 3°C by the end of this century.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992, the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 and the Paris Agreement in 2015 were adopted to jointly combat climate change on a global basis. With the Paris Agreement, a paradigm shift was made in the fight against climate change and numerical targets were set to limit the global temperature increase. In order to achieve the goal of limiting the global temperature increase to 1.5°C set by the agreement, it was stated that 45% emission reduction should be achieved by 2030 and net zero emissions should be achieved by mid-century. Within the framework of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and relative capabilities of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to which Türkiye became a party in 2004, Türkiye continues to work on both reducing



greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the negative impacts of climate change. Türkiye became a party to the Paris Agreement on 21 September 2021, and the 2053 Net Zero Emission Target was announced on 27 September 2021 with the green development revolution. Following these developments, Türkiye became a party to the Paris Agreement on 11 November 2021. Türkiye has demonstrated its determination in the fight against climate change by both setting a net zero emission target and becoming a party to the Paris Agreement.

Upon becoming a party to the Paris Agreement, Türkiye started to work on updating its National Contribution Statement, preparing the Climate Change Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan and the 2053 Long Term Climate Change Strategy in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program. In this framework, the national mitigation target, which was announced as up to 21% mitigation in 2015, was updated and increased

to 41% and the Updated First National Contribution Declaration was submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on 13 April 2023.

The 12th Development Plan also includes a measure under the heading of "Environmental Protection" to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen climate change adaptation actions, taking into account national conditions within the framework of the Paris Agreement and Türkiye's National Contribution Declaration. On the other hand, in the Medium Term Program 2024-2026, under the title of "Green Transformation", it is stated that "In line with the 2053 net zero emission target and national development priorities, the green transformation process of our country will be accelerated with an approach that supports greenhouse gas emission reduction, increases adaptation capacity to climate change, prioritizes competitiveness and efficiency, considers fair transition and develops national incentive mechanisms by

making maximum use of global financing resources". The Presidential Decree assigns the Climate Change Presidency to determine policies, strategies and actions at national and international level within the scope of Türkiye's efforts to combat and adapt to climate change, to carry out negotiation processes, and to ensure coordination with institutions and organisations.

In this regard, within the framework of the Climate Council Decisions, there are decisions and measures for the preparation of the Climate Change Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan, and the Directorate of Climate Change has been assigned in this context.

The main sectoral strategies include the wide dissemination of energy efficiency, maximising the use of renewable energy, reducing the carbon footprint and carbon intensity of the industry on a product-by-product basis, increasing sustainability reporting, promoting circular economy and resource efficiency in manufacturing sectors, and expanding the use of nearly

zero-energy buildings, increasing the use of district heating and cooling systems, developing electrification systems in the transport sector, expanding integrated transport systems, ensuring transition to zero/low emission transport systems, protecting and increasing sink areas to combat climate change, ensuring the transition of forestry and agricultural enterprises to circular bioeconomy, increasing environmentally friendly agricultural practices, encouraging the conscious use of fertilizers, reducing methane emissions from livestock, preventing and reducing waste before it is generated, increasing the use of waste as raw materials/resources in production, establishing an emissions trading system in Türkiye, and carrying out infrastructure studies for other carbon pricing mechanisms. The development and dissemination of clean technologies, ensuring digitalisation in all sectors, developing incentives and support mechanisms for greenhouse gas mitigation, developing sustainable investment instruments, transitioning to a low-emission economy with a fair transition, developing capacity for fair transition and transformation of employment, integrating Türkiye's net zero emission target into the education system.

The Action Plan, which sets out mitigation policies for sectors with a participatory and inclusive perspective, provides a roadmap for responsible and relevant organisations with the main strategies and actions directly aimed emission mitigation determined to achieve the targets. Effective implementation and monitoring of the Action Plan requires cooperation and coordination among various sectors and levels of government. In this context, it is of great importance that the strategies and actions determined in this context are implemented sensitively by the relevant institutions and organisations.