



# IKVMNTHLY



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## MULTILATERALISM BEYOND INSTITUTIONS: WHO SHAPES COOPERATION IN A FRAGMENTED WORLD?

Traditional multilateral institutions are under strain, yet diplomacy unfolds in flexible, informal settings, with Türkiye playing a growing convening role.

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In April, diplomats, ministers and heads of state gathered on the Mediterranean coast for the Antalya Diplomacy Forum, one of several forums that now function as practical venues for diplomatic engagement. Once treated as side events to institutional processes, these gatherings are increasingly used for conversations that are difficult to accommodate within more rigid formats.

This comes at a time when the traditional architecture of multilateralism, anchored in institutions such as the United Nations and NATO, is under visible strain. Political divisions, geopolitical rivalry and, at times, uncertain commitment from key actors have made consensus-building more difficult. Multilateral cooperation continues, but it is less confined to its traditional institutional settings than it once was.

### Strains and Limits of Traditional Multilateralism

The limits of existing institutions are longstanding, but they have become more evident in recent crises. The United Nations Security Council has struggled to respond effectively, bringing renewed attention to questions of representation and legitimacy. Türkiye has been among those calling for reform, arguing that decision-making structures no longer reflect current geopolitical realities. Similar concerns are increasingly voiced elsewhere, pointing to a gap between the system's global scope and the distribution of influence within it.

Within NATO, unity has held, but not without friction, particularly around burden-sharing and strategic priorities. At the same time, political debates in the United States continue to raise questions about the consistency of its long-term commitments. This does not point to a collapse of multilateralism, but it does underline the difficulty of operating through existing structures alone.



### The Rise of "Platform Diplomacy"

In parallel, diplomatic engagement has found other outlets. When formal processes become slower or politically constrained, discussions tend to move into less structured environments.

The Antalya Diplomacy Forum sits alongside gatherings such as the Munich Security Conference, the World Economic Forum, and the Doha Forum. These forums do not produce binding outcomes, but they offer space for exchange, signalling and, in some cases, early positioning ahead of formal negotiations. Their role is pragmatic rather than institutional: they provide continuity where formal channels face limits.

This year's forum reflected a closer connection to ongoing diplomatic efforts. Discussions linked to tensions involving the United States and Iran took place on the sidelines, with Turkish officials engaging counterparts from countries such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Egypt.

These exchanges remained informal, but they suggest a more operational use of such gatherings, where ideas can be tested and positions explored before entering more formal channels. In situations where official negotiations are difficult, this type of engagement offers an additional layer of contact.

### Türkiye as a Convening Power

Türkiye's role in hosting the Antalya Diplomacy Forum, together with a series of high-level meetings this year, including NATO's Summit and COP31, reflects a broader evolution in its foreign policy.

While its accession process to the European Union remains stalled, Türkiye has expanded its diplomatic engagement across regions and formats. This creates a clear paradox: politically at a distance from the European Union yet closely connected to many of the issues that shape its external neighbourhood. Whether in security, migration or regional stability, Türkiye remains a necessary interlocutor.

Hosting major international meetings strengthens this position by placing Türkiye at the centre of multiple diplomatic tracks, while remaining engaged with a range of institutional and regional partners.

### Europe's Position: Still Central, But Evolving

For Europe, this evolving landscape requires a more flexible approach to external engagement. The European Union remains one of the most developed examples of multilateral cooperation, with institutions that continue to provide stability and peace.

At the same time, responding collectively to external crises remains complex. Decision-making can be slow, and internal differences can limit the speed of action. In practice, this has led the EU to rely more on a combination of institutional tools and external partnerships, allowing it to remain engaged even where it is not the primary convening actor.

Looking ahead, this may involve investing more consistently in these complementary channels, ensuring that European positions are reflected

both within formal institutions and in the more fluid settings where diplomacy increasingly takes place.

### Opportunities for Cooperation: Beyond Institutional Deadlock

In this context, Türkiye's role as host of major international gatherings also creates openings for cooperation. Even without progress on EU accession, these formats offer practical ways to sustain dialogue and coordination.

NATO-related meetings and the upcoming COP31 provide opportunities for continued engagement on shared priorities, including security and climate governance. Such interactions are unlikely to resolve deeper political differences, but they can help maintain working relationships and support incremental cooperation.

### The United States and The Uncertainty Factor

The role of the United States remains central, but its approach to multilateralism has become less consistent over time. Across both Trump administrations, longstanding assumptions about U.S. support for international institutions and alliances have been openly questioned, whether through criticism of NATO burden sharing, withdrawal from climate agreements, or a more selective engagement with the United Nations system.

While some of these positions have since been adjusted, they have left a lasting imprint on how U.S. leadership is perceived. For many

allies, the question is no longer only about current policy, but about the reliability of that policy over time.

At the same time, U.S. strategic priorities have shifted. Greater attention to competition with China and the Indo-Pacific has gone hand in hand with expectations that European partners take on more responsibility for their own security. This has reinforced ongoing debates within NATO but also encouraged a more pragmatic approach among allies.

In practice, this does not amount to a disengagement from multilateralism, but it does reflect a more conditional form of engagement—one that is shaped by domestic politics, strategic competition and changing priorities. For others, this has meant adapting accordingly, placing greater emphasis on flexibility and on maintaining multiple channels of cooperation.

### Adapting to a Changing Diplomatic Landscape

What emerges from these developments is a more layered picture. Multilateralism remains present, but it is no longer confined to formal institutions. Alongside this, there is a gradual redistribution of how diplomatic work is carried out, with some functions moving beyond traditional institutional settings.

At the same time, this evolution has limits. These forums do not produce binding outcomes, and their informal nature can make follow-up more difficult. They also tend to operate within existing power structures, rather than fundamentally altering them. For that reason, they are best understood as part of a broader ecosystem, complementing institutional frameworks rather than replacing them.

The question is therefore less whether multilateralism will endure, and more how its different components can remain connected in practice. For Europe, Türkiye and their partners, this means ensuring that institutional frameworks and more flexible formats continue to reinforce each other. How these different layers interact will increasingly shape the credibility and effectiveness of multilateral cooperation in the years ahead.



# PRESS RELEASE REGARDING EUROPEAN COMMISSION PRESIDENT VON DER LEYEN'S REMARKS ABOUT TURKISH INFLUENCE IN EUROPE

President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen made a speech at the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the German Newspaper Die Zeit in which she reportedly made the following remarks:

"We must succeed in completing the European continent so that it does not fall under Russian, Turkish or Chinese influence. We must think bigger and more geopolitically."

IKV Chairperson Dr. Ayhan Zeytinoğlu reacted to von der Leyen's remarks and underlined the status of Türkiye as a candidate country to join the EU:

"I find European Commission President von der Leyen's remarks about 'completing the European Continent so that it does not fall under Russian, Turkish or Chinese influence' quite controversial and paradoxical. Türkiye is a candidate country since 1999 and started accession negotiations in 2005. When Türkiye made its first application to



join the EU in 1987, several of the EU's current Member States and candidate countries either did not exist as independent states or were

within the Eastern bloc. Türkiye has determined its European vocation much earlier with the foundation of the Turkish Republic by Atatürk,

entry into the Council of Europe in 1949, and NATO in 1952. It has signed an Association Agreement in 1963 which stipulated Türkiye's

membership when Türkiye is in a position to fulfil the membership requirements. To equate Türkiye's status in Europe with that of Russia or China is at best a misunderstanding or fallacy due to the long history of Türkiye's EU relationship and its unending aim to become an EU member state. Türkiye has a Customs Union with the EU dating back to 1996 which does not only include free trade but also approximation of legislation and adoption of the EU's common commercial policy. Türkiye is a participant in several EU programmes and agencies such as Erasmus and Horizon. Türkiye cooperates with the EU in several critical issues such as migration, security and connectivity. Moreover, Türkiye is not Russia, meaning that it has not waged war on another European country nor has it threatened European interests elsewhere. Türkiye is part of Europe and European integration is not complete without Türkiye."

## IKV CHAIRPERSON DR. ZEYTİNOĞLU: "SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE IN EUROPE THREATENS DEMOCRATIC RESILIENCE AND THE RULE OF LAW"

The report published by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), titled "Civic Space Update: Enabling Civil Society to Uphold EU Values and Strengthen Democracy", reveals that pressures on civil society organisations (CSOs) and human rights defenders have reached alarming levels across Europe. The report highlights that civic space is becoming increasingly fragile in terms of the legal environment, protection of actors, access to funding and participation in policymaking, thereby directly undermining the institutional resilience of European democracies.

Evaluating the striking findings of the FRA's latest report and the implications of shrinking civic space for Europe's democratic security, IKV Chairperson Dr. Ayhan Zeytinoğlu stated:

"Civil society constitutes a fundamental pillar of European democracies in terms of upholding the rule of law, protecting fundamental rights and ensuring transparency in decision



making processes. However, the FRA's latest report dated 31 March 2026 presents a clear and alarming picture of the shrinking civic space across Europe. The fact that 75% of organisations working in the field of human rights face obstacles in carrying out their activities, and that nearly half of respondents report a general deterioration, demonstrates that the issue has evolved beyond

isolated rights violations into a systemic crisis of democracy. It is unacceptable that organisations working on sensitive issues such as migrant rights, minority rights and the environment are subjected to systematic institutional intimidation through online threats, negative media campaigns and Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs)."

In the continuation of his statement, IKV Chairperson Dr. Ayhan Zeytinoğlu also addressed the issues of funding constraints and the weakening of democratic oversight highlighted in the report: "We see that one of the most critical factors suffocating civic space is the difficulty in accessing funding. As revealed by the report, the fact that 44% of organisations have faced unexpected funding

cuts or freezes within the past year, and that only 7% possess financial reserves sufficient to sustain their activities for more than 12 months, represents a highly dangerous level of vulnerability. This funding problem, often instrumentalised for political purposes, brings long-term rights advocacy, judicial follow-up and public policy monitoring processes to a standstill.

In order for initiatives such as the 'European Democracy Shield' and the 'Civil Society Strategy', launched by the EU in 2025, not to remain merely on paper, it is essential for Member States to urgently establish binding consultation procedures and develop national strategies to protect civic space. As Türkiye, in our EU accession process, we must interpret this situation accurately. A pluralistic, independent and financially supported civil society ecosystem is our strongest safeguard both in combating disinformation and in embedding a culture of the rule of law. Defending civic space means directly defending our shared democratic future."

## IKV AGENDA

# IKV CHAIRPERSON DR. ZEYTİNOĞLU: “GREEN TRANSITION BECOMES ONE OF THE NEW DRIVERS OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE EU”



The data published by Eurostat on 8 April 2026 shows that employment in the EU environmental economy has increased significantly over the past decade. Accordingly, employment in the environmental economy rose from 3.6 million euros in 2014 to 5.8 million dollars in 2023, marking an increase of 2.2 million euros over ten years. The 4.2% year-on-year increase recorded in 2023 indicates that a broad range of green economic activities, from waste and wastewater management to energy efficiency, renewable energy and resource management, are

becoming increasingly influential in the labour market. Eurostat data also show that the output of the environmental economy reached approximately 1.33 trillion euros over the same period.

Evaluating this expansion in the environmental economy, IKV Chairperson Dr. Ayhan Zeytinoğlu stated that the green transition is no longer limited to climate objectives but has become a strategic field directly linked to growth, competitiveness and employment.

In his statement, Dr. Zeytinoğlu said: “The latest data published by Eurostat clearly demonstrate the employment-creating capacity of the green transition in the EU. The increase in employment in the environmental economy from 3.6 million to 5.8 million between 2014 and 2023, particularly the strong growth in areas linked to renewable energy and energy efficiency, shows that green policies now generate not only environmental but also economic and social outcomes. The 124.2% increase in environmental economy-related employment in the construction sector over the

same period also clearly reflects the impact of this transformation on the real economy. This picture shows that green investments in Europe are creating new jobs, expanding production capacity and contributing to a more resilient economy.

As Türkiye accelerates industrial transformation, energy efficiency, renewable energy, circular economy and clean technology investments, it can both create new employment opportunities and strengthen its long-term growth performance. Considering Türkiye’s young population, industrial infrastructure and production capacity compatible with the green transition, the development of the green economy can yield positive outcomes not only in environmental terms but also in terms of job creation, increased competitiveness and deeper economic integration with the EU. Therefore, Türkiye should approach the green transition not only as a process of alignment but also as a core element of its development and employment strategy.”

## IKV CHAIRPERSON DR. ZEYTİNOĞLU HELD MEETINGS IN BRUSSELS



IKV Chairperson Dr. Ayhan Zeytinoğlu and IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas held a series of meetings in Brussels, the capital of Belgium, between 8-10 April 2026.

Chairperson Dr. Zeytinoğlu delivered a speech on the EU and Türkiye-EU relations at a meeting held for the 2025–2026 academic year Jean Monnet scholars. The Q&A session held with the Jean Monnet scholars and the Jean

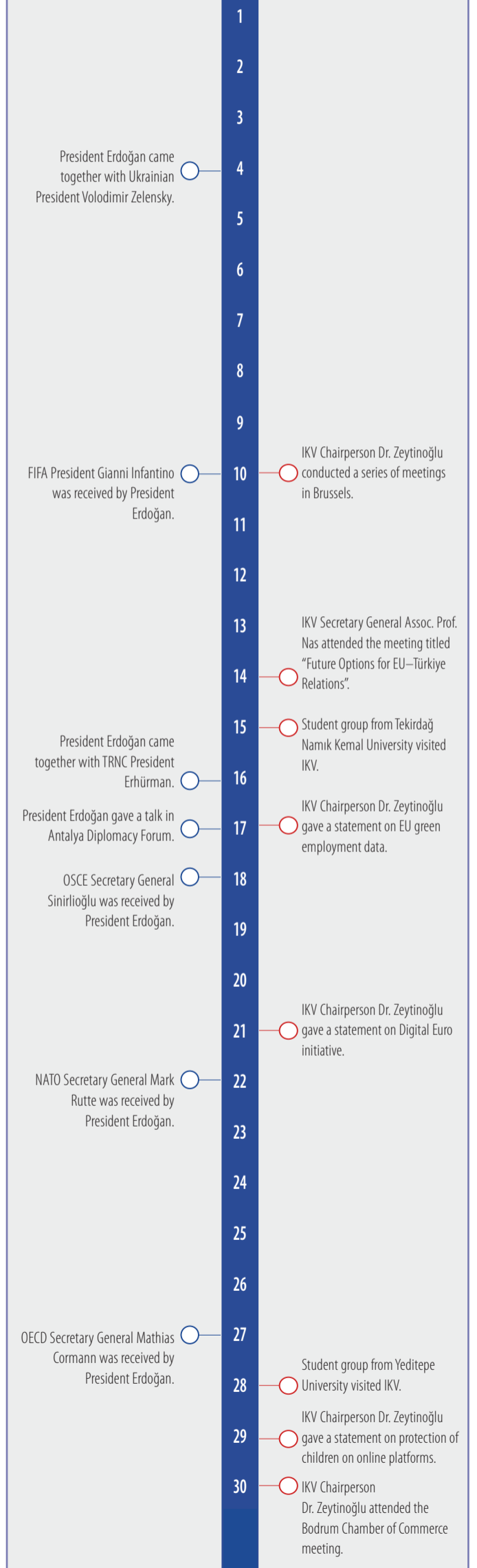
Monnet team took place with the active participation of the scholars.

IKV Chairperson Dr. Zeytinoğlu attended the High-Level Roundtable meeting on the “Multilateral Trading System” organised by the International Chamber of Commerce and EUROCHAMBERS at the TOBB IKV Brussels Representation, where Minister of Trade Prof. Ömer Bolat participated as the keynote speaker. Subsequently,

Chairperson Dr. Zeytinoğlu attended the General Council meeting of the World Chambers Federation held in Brussels.

On the margins of the meeting, Chairperson Dr. Ayhan Zeytinoğlu came together with Minister of Trade Prof. Ömer Bolat, Deputy Minister of Trade Mustafa Tuzcu, President of TOBB M. Rifat Hisarcıklioğlu and President of Çorlu Chamber of Commerce and Industry İzzet Volkan.

## TIMELINE APRIL 2026



## IKV CHAIRPERSON DR. ZEYTİNOĞLU ATTENDED THE BODRUM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEETING

IKV Chairperson Dr. Ayhan Zeytinoğlu, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas and IKV Research Director Çisel İleri participated in the April Ordinary Assembly Meeting of the Bodrum Chamber of Commerce (BODTO), held on 30 April 2026.

During the meeting, chaired by BODTO Assembly President İlhan Ersan and Vice-President Sinan Cingöz, key topics such as Türkiye-EU relations, the modernisation of the Customs Union, the green transition, digitalisation and the current state of the tourism economy were discussed. In his opening remarks, BODTO Vice-Chairperson of the Board İbrahim Akkaya emphasised that Bodrum is not only a major tourism destination but also an important production and service centre contributing to the Turkish economy. He drew attention to challenges stemming from unplanned growth, infrastructure deficiencies and population pressures, highlighting the importance of collective action for coastal protection, combating illegal construction and ensuring sustainable solutions.



IKV Chairperson Dr. Ayhan Zeytinoğlu underlined that Türkiye's EU process is critical for its economic transformation, noting that the country has attracted approximately 148 billion dollars in investments to date and that 43% of its exports are directed to EU countries. Addressing the importance of updating the Customs Union, he stated that 66 out of 72 criteria in the visa liberalisation process have been

fulfilled and that efforts should be intensified to meet the remaining requirements.

IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas highlighted the EU's leading role in green transition and digitalisation, emphasising that Türkiye's alignment with these processes is essential for maintaining competitiveness. Following her remarks, IKV Research Director Çisel İleri delivered a presentation on access to EU funds.

## IKV SECRETARY GENERAL NAS ATTENDED A WORKSHOP ON THE FUTURE OF TÜRKİYE-EU RELATIONS



IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas attended the scenario workshop titled "Future Options for EU-Türkiye Relations", organised in Brussels by the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies on 14 April 2026.

Held in a closed-session format, the workshop addressed different scenarios regarding the future of Türkiye-EU relations. The outcomes of the workshop, organised within

the framework of a project led by Dr. Peter Hefe and Ayşe Yürekli, are expected to be compiled into a comprehensive report analysing the conditions, opportunities and challenges that could shape the future of Türkiye-EU relations.

The Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies is the think tank of the European People's Party, the largest political group in the European Parliament.

## A GROUP OF STUDENTS FROM TEKİRDAĞ NAMIK KEMAL UNIVERSITY VISITED IKV



Members of the International Relations Community of Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University, accompanied by faculty member Prof. Halit Burç Aka, visited IKV and the İstanbul EU Information Centre on 15 April 2026.

During the visit, IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit

provided an overview of IKV's history, its role in Türkiye-EU relations and its activities. IKV Research Director Çisel İleri gave information on the Foundation's publications and work, while IKV Press Counsellor and İstanbul EU Information Centre Coordinator Mehmet Poyrazlı introduced the

internship programme and the activities of the EU Information Centre.

The visit concluded with a Q&A session, during which students' questions regarding the Foundation's activities and Türkiye-EU relations were addressed.

## STUDENTS FROM YEDİTEPE UNIVERSITY VISITED IKV



Dr. Hande Tek Turan from the Department of Public Administration at Yeditepe University, together with her students, visited IKV and the İstanbul EU Information Centre on 28 April 2026.

During the visit, IKV Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Nas provided an overview of the current state of Türkiye-EU relations, while IKV Deputy Secretary General M. Gökhan Kilit

delivered a presentation on the history, activities and role of IKV in Türkiye-EU relations. IKV Media Advisor and İstanbul EU Information Centre Coordinator Mehmet Poyrazlı introduced the internship programme and the activities of the EU Information Centre.

Following the presentations, students' questions regarding the Foundation's activities and Türkiye-EU relations were answered.

## HIGH-LEVEL EXCHANGES

# THE 5<sup>TH</sup> ANTALYA DIPLOMACY FORUM ADDRESSES GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN AN AGE OF UNCERTAINTY

**H**eld on 17-19 April in the Belek region of Antalya under the main theme “Designing the Future in an Age of Uncertainty”, the Antalya Diplomacy Forum served as a platform for addressing both global and regional issues. In addition to panels and sessions, bilateral meetings were also conducted. The forum hosted 6,400 participants from 150 countries and 66 international organisations, including 23 heads of state and government, 13 deputy heads of state and government, speakers of parliament, 50 ministers, and senior representatives of 87 international organisations.

In his opening speech, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan began by congratulating the forum. He stated that the turbulence in today’s international system stems not only



from shifts in power balances, but also from a crisis of direction rooted in moral and existential challenges. In his remarks, he addressed numerous regional and global issues, including the conflicts in Gaza and Iran, the Cyprus issue, and

developments in Libya. President Erdoğan also held bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the summit with several leaders and representatives, including President Maia Sandu of Moldova and President Nataša Pirc Musar of Slovenia.

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus President Tufan Erhürman also attended the forum giving a talk in one of the sessions where he answered questions about foreign policy of the TRNC and the Presidency’s expectations regarding the future of the negotiations in the island. Furthermore, EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa Annette Weber, EU Special Representative for the Gulf Luigi Di Maio, EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus Magdalena Grono, EU Special Envoy for non proliferation and Disarmament Stephan Klement, as well as Under Secretary of State for Foreign and Security Policy of Finland Outi Holopainen, Foreign Minister of Portugal Paulo Rangel, President of the EESC’s External Relations

Section Stefano Palmieri, Minister of State for European Affairs and Defence of Ireland Thomas Byrne were also present in the forum.

At the closing press conference, Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan noted that a comprehensive program with diverse formats and content had been successfully carried out, emphasising that current crises were addressed collectively across 52 sessions. Reflecting on various global and regional challenges, Minister Fidan stated: “At a time when uncertainty and multiple crises have become the defining characteristics of the international system, and when dialogue is increasingly being replaced by polarisation, the ADF has emerged as a rare platform of hope, dialogue, and solutions in the world.”

## PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN HELD TALKS ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAN



**P**resident Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has conducted a series of diplomatic talks regarding the latest developments in Iran.

The unfolding situation in Iran, along with the subsequent crisis in the Strait of Hormuz, has triggered widespread global concerns over energy security and supply chains. As these concerns intensify, a dense wave of international diplomacy has emerged, with President Erdoğan engaging in discussions with numerous world leaders.

Among those leaders was Russian President Vladimir Putin. During their meeting on 3 April, President Erdoğan stated that Ankara does not approve of the attacks carried out against Iran, while also emphasising that Türkiye

does not endorse Iran’s retaliatory actions directed toward countries in the region.

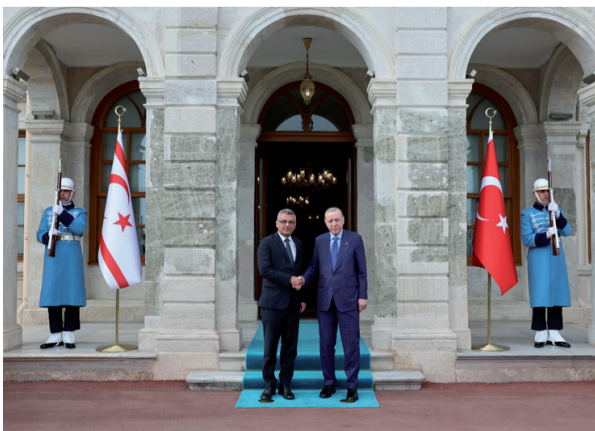
On 4 April, President Erdoğan held a phone call with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte. During the conversation, Erdoğan warned that developments surrounding Iran were moving toward a geostrategic deadlock and called on the international community to intensify efforts to end the conflict. The leaders also commemorated NATO’s 77<sup>th</sup> anniversary and reiterated hopes that the upcoming summit in Ankara in July would strengthen the alliance’s resilience against future challenges.

In addition, Erdoğan held talks with Spanish Prime Minister

Pedro Sánchez, where both leaders expressed their intention to enhance cooperation, particularly in the field of defence, and exchanged views on regional developments.

Following the announcement of a ceasefire with Iran, President Erdoğan also spoke by phone with US President Donald Trump on 8 April. During the call, President Erdoğan welcomed the ceasefire, stressing the importance of using this opportunity effectively and advising against any actions that could undermine the process. Also, President Erdoğan added that Türkiye would continue to increase its support for diplomatic initiatives conducted with friendly countries, particularly Pakistan, aimed at achieving a resolution.

## PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN CAME TOGETHER WITH TRNC PRESIDENT ERHÜRMAN



**T**he TRNC President Tufan Erhürman arrived in Türkiye on 16 April to attend Antalya Diplomacy Forum. Upon his arrival, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan welcomed TRNC President Erhürman with an official ceremony at the Dolmabahçe Presidential Office. Following the ceremony, President Erdoğan and TRNC President Erhürman held talks where they discussed Türkiye-TRNC relations and regional issues. In the meeting, President Erdoğan underlined that the forces in the Cyprus island sent off by some European states due to the war in Iran

should not be permanent. Moreover, President Erdoğan stated that Türkiye is ready to take every step necessary for the defence of the TRNC and that Türkiye will never allow the interests of the Cypriot Turks to be undermined, as has consistently been the case. The meeting also was attended by Turkish Intelligence Agency’s Director İbrahim Kalın, Directorate of Communications Burhanettin Duran, Chief Adviser on National Security and Foreign Policy to the President Akif Çağatay Kılıç, and Chief Advisor to the President Zafer Çubukcu.

President Erhürman also attended a session at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum on 18 April, where he answered questions regarding Turkish Cypriot sovereignty. Reiterating that the Turkish Cypriot people are one of the two equal founding partners on the island, President Erhürman emphasised that they possess sovereign rights just like the Greek Cypriot people and stressed that these rights cannot be disregarded nor undermined by agreements or alliances concluded without Turkish Cypriots’ consent.

## COMMISSIONER KOS HIGHLIGHTS TÜRKİYE'S STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE FOR THE EU

As the EU increasingly frames enlargement as a geopolitical necessity, Commissioner Marta Kos underlines Türkiye's strategic importance while signalling that deeper cooperation depends on reciprocal political steps.



**E**U Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos has placed Türkiye at the centre of the Union's evolving geopolitical outlook, stating in the European Parliament that "in light of changing geopolitical realities in Europe and the Middle East, we need Türkiye." Her remarks point to a growing recognition in Brussels that Türkiye is not only a candidate country but

also a key strategic partner.

Kos emphasised Türkiye's economic weight, noting that it is the EU's fifth-largest trading partner and that bilateral trade exceeds the EU's exchanges with partners such as Mercosur or India. She also highlighted Türkiye's role as a critical transit hub, underlining the increasing importance of trade corridors passing through Türkiye and the South Caucasus, particularly since 2022.

Security considerations also featured prominently in Kos's statements. Referring to the war in Ukraine, Kos stressed that "any future peace arrangement will require Türkiye," linking this to Ankara's role in the Black Sea and its position within NATO. She also pointed to Türkiye's military

capabilities and regional influence as key factors in Europe's security architecture.

At the same time, Kos made clear that stronger cooperation would require bold steps on both sides. While welcoming ongoing dialogue on reducing trade barriers, Kos stressed that the process cannot be one-sided, stating that the EU expects Türkiye to take steps, including in relation to Cyprus.

Kos's remarks were delivered within a broader argument that enlargement has become a strategic imperative for the EU, particularly following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In this context, she underlined the need for the Union to offer credible prospects to candidate countries while maintaining reform conditionality.

## GERMANY HIGHLIGHTS TÜRKİYE'S MEDIATION ROLE IN IRAN TENSIONS



**G**ermany has underscored Türkiye's growing diplomatic role in the ongoing tensions surrounding Iran, as Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl expressed gratitude for Ankara's mediation efforts. Speaking at a press conference following the Sudan Conference in Berlin, Wadepuhl stated that "Türkiye and Egypt are in a special mediator position," emphasising their constructive roles in facilitating dialogue.

Wadepuhl's remarks come at a time of heightened regional tensions and renewed international efforts to prevent further escalation. Stressing the importance of diplomacy, the German Foreign Minister reiterated that the conflict cannot be resolved through military means and must

instead be addressed through negotiations. He also confirmed that efforts are ongoing to maintain a ceasefire and sustain diplomatic channels.

Referring to the broader negotiation framework, Wadepuhl pointed to the longstanding objective shared by the EU and the US, ensuring that Iran does not pose a future nuclear threat. He indicated that recent developments suggest a potential window for progress, expressing cautious optimism about the possibility of reaching an agreement in the near term.

In addition to mediation efforts, Wadepuhl drew attention to the strategic importance of safeguarding global trade routes, particularly the Strait of Hormuz. Referring to an upcoming conference in France, he noted that Germany and its European partners are prepared to contribute to ensuring the continued openness of the Strait. He stressed that restricting passage or imposing unilateral controls would be unacceptable, given the vital role of maritime trade for the global economy.

## TÜRKİYE AND UK SIGN EUROFIGHTER SUPPORT AGREEMENT



**T**ürkiye and the UK signed a technical and logistical support agreement linked to Türkiye's Eurofighter Typhoon programme on 25 March 2026, as bilateral defence cooperation continues to expand. The agreement was concluded in London during talks between Türkiye's National Defence Minister Yaşar Güler and the UK's Defence Secretary John Healey, with both sides framing the deal as part of a longer-term effort to deepen cooperation within the Eurofighter Typhoon Project.

The new contract focuses on sustaining the aircraft through maintenance and operational support which was also described as covering technical and logistical assistance designed to support the

long-term readiness of the Typhoon fleet once it enters service. The agreement follows earlier steps in the programme, with officials confirming that a separate contract for the procurement of aircraft, equipment, and munitions had already been signed in October 2025.

The agreement was presented by both governments as a practical step to ensure the Typhoon platform can be operated effectively over the long term, including through predictable support arrangements and sustained training. UK officials additionally emphasised the NATO dimension of the cooperation as Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft continue to be used in allied air missions and deterrence tasks.

## İSTANBUL'S NEW MEGA RAILWAY GETS GREEN LIGHT WITH EUROPEAN FUNDING



**T**ürkiye has obtained 1.67 billion euros in preferential financing from the World Bank for the İstanbul North Rail Crossing Project (INRAIL), an initiative launched to strengthen the strategic transport networks connecting Asia and Europe and to reinforce its position in the global supply chain.

Signed on 14 April 2026 at the World Bank's headquarters in Washington in the presence of Treasury and Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek, the agreement aims to enhance the competitiveness of Türkiye's national and intercontinental transport corridors. Marking the third-largest project ever approved in the history of the World Bank, the investment has a total scale of 8.1 billion dollars, with 83% of its financing sourced from international organisations.

Under the INRAIL project, which will be led by the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, a new double tracked and fully electrified railway, approximately 127 kilometres in length and independent of the existing infrastructure, will be constructed. The line, starting from Çayırova on the Asian side and extending across the Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge to Çatalca on the European side, will not only enable high-capacity freight transport but also connect İstanbul Airport with Sabiha Gökçen Airport. Comprising 44 tunnels totalling 59.1 kilometres and 42 bridges spanning 22.4 kilometres, this strategic infrastructure will be integrated with the Halkalı-Çerkezköy High-Speed Railway Line, which is currently under construction in Çatalca.

Minister Şimşek emphasised that the project is not merely an infrastructure investment, but a structural transformation initiative that will create employment for more than 400,000 people and support regional development. World Bank Managing Director of Operations Anna Bjerde highlighted that INRAIL will strengthen connectivity along three strategic corridors, namely the Middle Corridor, the Development Road, and the Türkiye-Europe Corridor, and underscored that the project will transform Türkiye from a simple transit route into a fully functional global logistics hub.

# FENERBAHÇE OPET RECLAIMS EUROLEAGUE WOMEN'S TITLE IN ZARAGOZA

**F**enerbahçe Opet Women's Basketball Team won the 2026 EuroLeague Women title by defeating fellow Turkish club Galatasaray Çağdaş Faktoring 68–55 in an all-Turkish final at the Final Six tournament in Zaragoza, Spain, on 19 April 2026. The championship game was played at the Pabellón Príncipe Felipe, where Fenerbahçe secured its third EuroLeague Women crown after earlier triumphs in 2023 and 2024.

The final opened with both Istanbul sides struggling to find an offensive rhythm, with

Fenerbahçe edging the first quarter 17–16. Galatasaray briefly took the initiative in the second period through an 8–0 run to lead 27–25, but Fenerbahçe responded with inside production, carrying a 37–32 advantage into halftime. Momentum swung further in the third quarter as Julie Allemand hit consecutive three-pointers, helping Fenerbahçe preserve a 51–45 lead heading into the final period. In the fourth quarter, Fenerbahçe extended the margin into double digits and closed out the contest with a controlled finish.



# WORLD'S ONLY DISABLED FEMALE RALLY PILOT WON TWO AWARDS



**T**he world's only disabled female rally pilot Kübra Denizci Keskin, secured second place in both her class and the women's category at the Marmaris Aegean Rally, part of the 2026 Türkiye Rally Championship. At a young age, Denizci Keskin was involved in an accident resulting in a severe spinal injury. As a result, she lost the ability to walk. Nevertheless, she obtained her driver's license at the age of 18.

In 2023, driving a specially adapted vehicle, she competed in the Turkish Hillclimb Championship and secured first place in the women's division of her category. Keskin went on to compete in both the Turkish and European

Rally Championships in 2024. During the Rally di Roma, she was officially recognised by the FIA and introduced to the international level as the world's only disabled rally pilot. She continued to compete successfully at the Barum leg of the European Rally Championship, securing a podium finish by taking first place among female drivers and third place in the RC5 category. Beyond her impressive racing achievements, the accomplished athlete was also appointed to the FIA Disability Commission in 2024. Competing for Team Binance TR, she will represent Türkiye at the European Rally Championship, competing in Italy and Czechia in July and August.

# ABOUT "BETRAYAL: THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CYPRUS CASE"

**B**ook written by Mustafa Ergün Olgun published by Palgrave Macmillan/Springer Nature, 2025. Since December 1963 the 'Cyprus question' has proven to be among the top of the most intractable inter-ethnic conflicts within the international system. Repeated negotiations since 1964 have failed to yield an equality-based result despite intense UN facilitated negotiations between the Turkish Cypriot Community and the Greek Cypriot Community, the two equal co-founders of what used to be the 1960 partnership Republic of Cyprus.

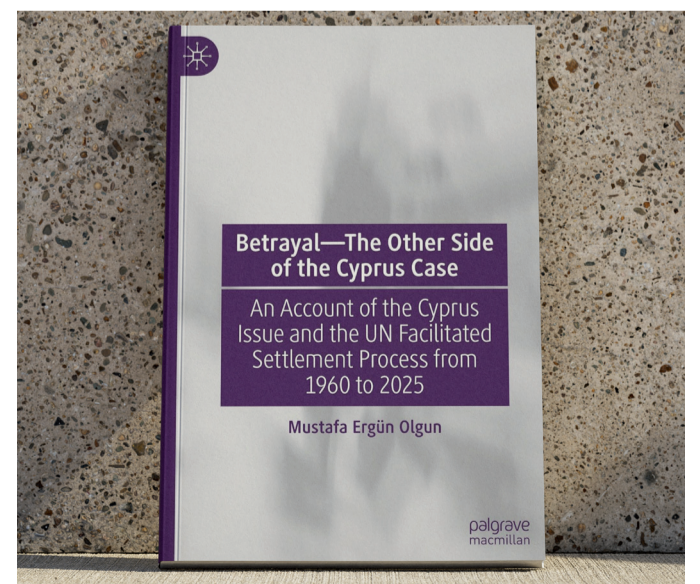
This book explores the little known root cause and nature of the Cyprus question; fills the huge gaps that have been, over time,

airbrushed out of Cyprus's post-colonial history, traces the UN led settlement process from 1964 to 2025, sharing Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot positions at the talks; identifies the key reasons that have contributed to the failure of the talks; and sheds light on the needs of an equality-based, fair and sustainable settlement in the critical/strategic geography that Cyprus finds itself.

Much has been written on the many aspects of the Cyprus question, many reflecting it from the angle of the Greek Cypriot side. Very little has been written about what Turkish Cypriots went through, what they experienced at the talks and what their genuine outlook is.

Though this book is primarily framed around chronologically narrating the Cyprus conflict from the Turkish Cypriot perspective based on the author's experience and research as a Turkish Cypriot negotiator for many years, it goes beyond this in the Conclusions section and reflects on the needs of facilitation/mediation and resolution in the case of equality-based identity-related conflicts.

The author has been actively involved in Cyprus settlement negotiations in key positions for nearly 20 years, has a post graduate degree in governance from George Washington University and has been a long-time student of conflict resolution studies.



# BOOK ON CYPRUS ISSUE SHEDS LIGHT ON THE STORY OF THE CYPRIOT TURKS

Drawing on decades of negotiation experience, Olgun presents the Cyprus question from the perspective of those whose voices have long been overlooked.

**M**ustafa Ergün Olgun's book published in London by Palgrave/Macmillan is a must for someone who wants to understand the causes of the Cyprus problem. The 649-page book is entitled *Betrayal—The Other Side of the Cyprus Case (An Account of the Cyprus Issue and the UN Facilitated Settlement Process from 1960 to 2025)* London, 2025.

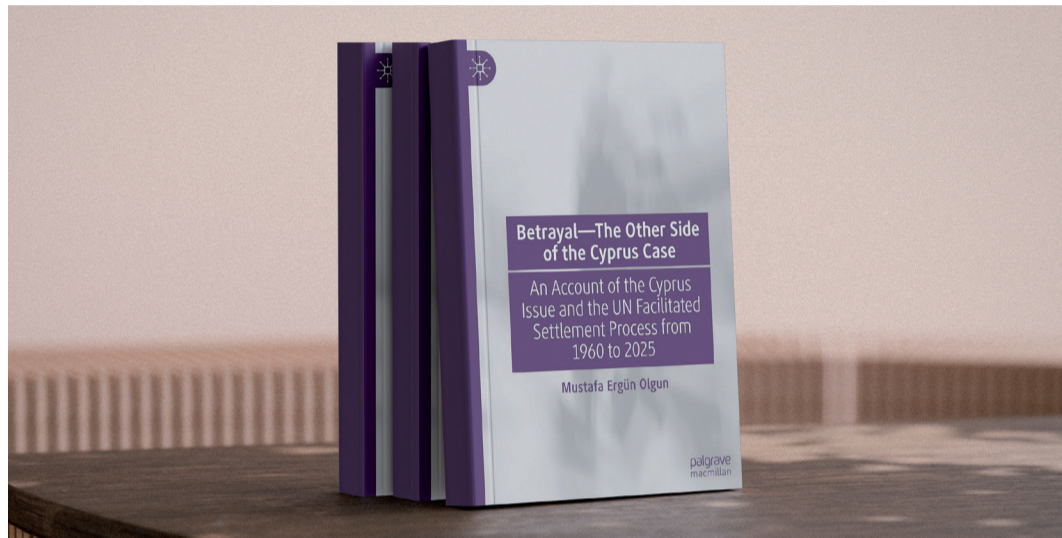
Foreword by Air Chief Marshal Michael Graydon, GCB, CBE and former British diplomat Ambassador Alp Mehmet (Member, Royal Victorian Order) gives an excellent view about the content of the book:

"The Cyprus problem has attracted attention sporadically over many years. But 65 years after Cyprus gained its independence from Britain, it continues unresolved and will remain so until its roots are acknowledged by international players like the UN and EU and exposed to impartial, objective review. Ignorance and indifference prevail on a bloody history which added to the national interests of Security Council member countries, who have conveniently accepted the narrative shaped by Greek Cypriots, ensures that a status quo prevails.

The treatment of the Turkish Cypriots over the last 70 years has been shameful and while this book focuses on the negotiations which have taken place since the late 1970s, it is the background, the period between 1955 and 1974, touched on in personal terms by M. Ergün Olgun that the reader should keep in mind.

The writer of the book, M. Ergün Olgun was just 12 years old when the Greek Cypriot guerrilla organisation EOKA launched its attacks on the British. Its principal aim was to unite the island with Greece (ENOSIS). Independence was a step on the way.

Along the path, in addition to the British, the Turkish Cypriots were targeted; a largely unarmed community had to come to terms with the relentless attack which left them in wretched conditions and enclaved in less than 4% of the island of Cyprus.



Ergün was schooled at the English School with Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot children, but ENOSIS was on display here as well. It was during this time that he witnessed the brutal terror campaign by EOKA fanatics against both the British military and civilians and Turkish Cypriots. Their aim was to secure independence from Britain and the eventual union of Cyprus with Greece.

The first part of the plan was achieved with the agreement in 1960 on a constitution for an independent state based on partnership and the equality of the two island communities. It was a clear constitution, agreed between all parties with the UK, Greece and Türkiye acting as guarantors. Independence followed on 1 August 1960.

By 1963 Archbishop Makarios, the Greek Cypriot President of the new Republic of Cyprus, had in effect torn up the Constitution, ejected the Turkish Cypriots from their government offices and turned a blind eye to the attacks on and massacres of Turkish Cypriots. Ergün was then at university in Ankara and along with fellow students returned to the island as military volunteers. He was wounded at Erenköy/Kokkina, and it took the intervention of the Turkish Air Force in 1964 to put a stop to

the murderous attacks of the Greek Cypriots.

The intervening years until the 1974 coup, orchestrated from Athens and carried out in Cyprus by the Greek military and the Greek Cypriot EOKA members led by the former terrorist, Nicos Sampson, was aimed at uniting the island with Greece and totally subjugating the Turkish Cypriot people.

Following the coup, which saw Makarios supporters murdered and Makarios himself rescued by the British, the coup instigators next attention would have been the elimination of the Turkish Cypriots. Ergün, a reservist, was called up and was again wounded. The military attempt to unite the island with Greece and, following the realisation of this, to eliminate the Turkish Cypriot people led to Türkiye's intervention in July 1974. It was both successful and legitimate and it changed the landscape.

In due course Ergün found himself in the front line of the negotiations between the parties which have taken place for over 50 years with no discernible progress. The reasons for this, which we believe, are all too clear are:

1. The Greek Cypriots are not prepared to recognise Turkish Cypriots as equal and as expressed in the 1960 Constitution.
2. They purport to represent the Republic of Cyprus which was constituted as a bi-communal and equality-based partnership; the international community has consistently failed to accept and address this critically important and foundational factor.
3. The EU took in the solely Greek Cypriot and thus illegal Republic of Cyprus as a member. It did this because Greece threatened to veto EU enlargement consisting of former Soviet Warsaw Pact members unless Cyprus was included. Blackmail by any other name.
4. Security Council members with their own interests have found it more convenient to settle for a status quo and ignore the illegalities.
5. The Greek Cypriots wish for a federal solution that would in essence set in stone a Greek Cypriot island with Turkish Cypriots a constituent minority rather than equals in a partnership state, as envisaged in the constitution. The Turkish Cypriots' principal concern now is for a solution that ensures they will never again leave themselves open to the abuse they suffered in 1963 and 1974 which necessitated Türkiye's intervention.
6. As a result of the murderous attacks on Turkish Cypriots from

the 1950s up to 1974, and their experience of Turkish security presence thereafter, they have no confidence in the promises of security from the United Nations or from membership of the European Union within a Greek-dominated federalism.

It is this tortuous story that has both informed and assisted M. Ergün Olgun in taking his place on the front line of negotiation which to his great credit he has pursued with balance and equanimity in attempting to find a solution to the Cyprus problem.

There has been a multitude of meetings, resolutions and confidence-building measures that bestride this account of the doomed attempts at negotiation over 50 years. But the reader will in the end surely conclude, as have we, that the Greek Cypriots have all too often stone-walled and prevaricated often engineering the collapse of negotiations while blaming the Turkish Cypriots.

They have done this because they saw it in their interests to do so; the stark reality being that they have attained international recognition, then (illegal) membership of the European Union as the Republic of Cyprus bringing major leverage to bear.

In parallel for over half a century they have relentlessly pursued a policy of totally isolating and marginalising the Turkish Cypriots. Having achieved all this without making concessions or compromising, why would they give ground in any future negotiations? The status quo suits them and they can continue to blame the Turkish Cypriots for each failure.

The British government has been involved in this sorry saga from its beginnings, and it has chosen to ignore its role as a guarantor power, to ensure that the constitution was correctly and legally followed. As a permanent member of the Security Council, it could and should play a major part in restoring an equality based outcome to the Cyprus problem."